

# Seintiau Cymru, Sancti Cambrenses

ASTUDIAETHAU AR SEINTIAU CYMRU  
STUDIES IN THE SAINTS OF WALES

69 36

o bu natw o lo om byddant o bu natw  
 nichys gorsiant heu dal y wae y ger  
 goras or ghyddas yna y wa yrbu

**O**ed yr arallwydd pam waethbwyd y llyfr  
 ydym oedd hynthenghymlynedd a deugam  
 a ffedwar tant a wyl phylit ap wadoc  
 ap jenaf ap jerdweth hias y llyfr ydym

1717  
1455  
0262

**W**rtthun ydym a ysgrifbenwedd hysymna  
**O**eddi ap sant ap tesic ap tyredic  
 ap tuncessa wledic *haec habes in  
 v. hyst. g. m. s.* **D** nom vch sy

**S**yr o gaer gawc y mynws oedd i Sam  
**S**obael ap jisacl hacl ap tyredic ap  
 tuncessa wledic **T**ynnor ap forbu ap ty  
 edic ap tuncessa wledic **T**elard ap aniel  
 ap hyswun ydym ap tyredic ap tuncessa  
 wledic **D**ard boellt ap tesic ap tyred  
 ic ap tuncessa wledic **D** thegbesse vch  
 segis voel o bentllym. **S**am **P**rymullas  
 ap tuncessa wledic **F**ynvelyn ap bledous ap  
 weiran ap tybiad vch tuncessa wledic  
**F**ynniasou vrenu yn llym **D** ferioel ym  
 heuon **D** weirion y weirionnydd ac

Frontispiece. The opening of Bonedd y Saint in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Llanstephan 28, p. 69, reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Wales / Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru

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STUDIES IN THE SAINTS OF WALES

*golygwyd gan / edited by*

David N. Parsons

*a / and*

Paul Russell



ABERYSTWYTH

CANOLFAN UWCHEFRYDIAU CYMREIG A CHELTAIDD

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

2022

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## *Abbreviations / Byrfoddau*

<i>AchS</i>	<i>Achau'r Saint</i> ; printed <i>EWGT</i> 68–71.
<i>BBCS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies</i> [=BBGC].
<i>BBGC</i>	<i>Bwletin y Bwrdd Gwybodau Celtaidd</i> [=BBCS].
<i>BD</i>	<i>Buched Dewi</i> , gol. D. Simon Evans (Caerdydd, 1965).
<i>ByS</i>	<i>Bonedd y Saint</i> ; printed <i>EWGT</i> 51–67, cf. below 66 and n. 4.
<i>CLIGC</i>	<i>Cylchgrawn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru</i> [=NLWJ].
<i>CMCS</i>	<i>Cambrian</i> [formerly <i>Cambridge</i> ] <i>Medieval Celtic Studies</i> .
<i>CYSDT</i>	<i>Cywyddau Ymryson Syr Dafydd Trefor</i> , gol. R. Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2012).
<i>eLALME</i>	Electronic version of <i>A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English</i> , ed. A. McIntosh, M. L. Samuels and M. Benskin (Aberdeen, 1986; rev. edn. 2013) <amc.lel.ed.ac.uk/amc-projects-hub/project/elalme/>.
<i>EWGT</i>	<i>Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts</i> , ed. P. C. Bartrum (Cardiff, 1966).
<i>GBF</i>	<i>Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd ac Eraill o Feirdd Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg</i> , gol. Rh. M. Andrews <i>et al.</i> (Caerdydd, 1996).
<i>GCBM I</i>	<i>Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr; I</i> , gol. N. A. Jones ac A. Parry Owen (Caerdydd, 1991).
<i>GCBM II</i>	<i>Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr; II</i> , gol. N. A. Jones ac A. Parry Owen (Caerdydd, 1995).
<i>GDB</i>	<i>Gwaith Dafydd Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd Hanner Cyntaf y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg</i> , gol. N. G. Costigan (Bosco) <i>et al.</i> (Caerdydd, 1979).
<i>GDLI</i>	<i>Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn</i> , gol. W. L. Richards (Caerdydd, 1964).
<i>GEO</i>	<i>Gwaith Einion Oeiriad a Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug</i> , gol. R. Geraint Gruffydd a R. Ifans (Aberystwyth, 1997).
<i>GGMD III</i>	<i>Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd, III, Canu Amrywiol</i> , gol. A. Parry Owen (Aberystwyth, 2007).
<i>GIBH</i>	<i>Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir</i> , gol. M. P. Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2000).
<i>GIRh</i>	<i>Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch</i> , gol. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2003).
<i>GLGC</i>	<i>Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi</i> , gol. D. Johnston (Caerdydd, 1995).



- GLIBH* *Gwaith Llywelyn Brydydd Hoddnant, Dafydd ap Gwilym, Hillyn ac eraill*, gol. A. Parry Owen a D. Foster Evans (Aberystwyth, 1996).
- GLIF* *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif*, gol. K.A. Bramley *et al.* (Caerdydd, 1994).
- GLLIL* *Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn 'Prydydd y Moch'*, gol. E. M. Jones (Caerdydd, 1989).
- GMB* *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, gol. J. E. C. Williams *et al.* (Caerdydd, 1994).
- GPC* *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (Caerdydd, 1950–2002; ail. arg., 2003–) <[geiriadur.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html](http://geiriadur.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html)>.
- GSHLIF* *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan*, gol. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth, 1999).
- IGE*<sup>2</sup> *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, gol. H. Lewis, T. Roberts ac I. Williams, ail arg. (Caerdydd, 1937).
- LBS* S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, 4 vols (London, 1907–13).
- LL* *Liber Landavensis; The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv*, ed. J. Gwenogvryn Evans and J. Rhys (Oxford, 1893).
- LLA* J. Morris Jones and John Rhÿs (eds.), *The Elucidarium from Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi* (Oxford, 1894).
- MSPVM* Dominic of Evesham, *Miracula Sancte et Perpetue Virginis Marie*; ed. and trans. I. Mittendorf, 'The Middle Welsh Mary of Egypt and the Latin source of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary', in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. E. Poppe and B. Ross (Dublin, 1996), 226–31.
- NLA* *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. C. Horstman, 2 vols (Oxford, 1901).
- NLWJ* *National Library of Wales Journal* [=CLIGC].
- NSB* *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*; see below, 32 n. 4.
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)>.
- PL* J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus ... series Latina* (Paris, 1844–55, 1862–65).
- STC* A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland 1475–1640*, 2nd edn, rev. by W. A. Jackson *et al.*, 3 vols (London, 1976–91).
- TA* *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, gol. T. Gwynn Jones, 2 gyfrol (Caerdydd, 1926).

- VSBG* A. W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff, 1944; new edn, ed. S. Lloyd, 2013 [pagination largely identical, differences are noted]).
- VSD* *Vita S. David*; ed. and trans. R. Sharpe and J. Reuben Davies, 'Rhygyfarch's Life of St David', in *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and J. M. Wooding (Woodbridge, 2007), 107–55.
- VSME* Paul of Naples, *Vita Sanctae Mariae Egyptiacae*; ed. and trans. H. Magennis, *The Old English Life of Saint Mary of Egypt* (Exeter, 2002), 139–209.
- VSW* *Vita Sancte Wenefrede*, ed. and trans. D. Callander, forthcoming at <[welshsaints.ac.uk/theedition](http://welshsaints.ac.uk/theedition)>; see below, 239 and n. 16.
- WLSD* *The Welsh Life of Saint David*, ed. D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, 1988)

## Approaching the Genealogies of the Welsh Saints<sup>1</sup>

BARRY J. LEWIS

[B]eatus Carantocus, Ceretici filius, qui ex chere uicinis parentibus altus est secundum dignitatem seculi, tam facile est generationem illius deducere ad Mariam, matrem Domini, quo nemo inter reges Britonum alior habetur. Sed ad regna terrena tendere noluit.

The blessed Carannog, son of Ceredig, who was born of very famous parents according to the ranking of this world, so easy is it to trace his descent back to Mary, the Mother of the Lord; none among the kings of the Britons is reckoned higher than him. Yet he refused to strive after earthly kingdoms.<sup>2</sup>

The anonymous author of this *vita* of St Carannog, beginning his task with an account of the saint's origins, boasts that Carannog enjoyed a uniquely exalted pedigree, yet immediately he withholds it from us with a dismissive wave of his pen in the face of 'earthly kingdoms'. The *Vita S. Carantoci* was destined for reading on Carannog's feast-day (16 May) and is naturally concise, reading in places like an abbreviation of a longer work. That is enough to explain why the pedigree was left out.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there were sound theological reasons to doubt whether genealogy had any place in a saint's Life. Why should blood ties be considered at all when everyone is equal before God? Family and heredity were matters that pertained to those *regna terrena* in which the saint, as the *Vita S. Carantoci* suggests, was no more than a passing pilgrim. Yet it was hard for hagiographers to ignore a subject so important to the distribution of power, wealth and status in their

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Paul Russell and to Ben Guy for commenting on this chapter in draft. The opinions expressed are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Text: *Vita S. Carantoci* §1 (ed. *VSBG* 142), but this and all translations in this chapter are my own unless marked otherwise. *chere uicinis* is a corrupt reading for which I suggest *celeberrimis*. A. W. Wade-Evans's suggestion *Chereticinis* (*VSBG* 142 n. 1) weakens the force of the phrase *secundum seculi dignitatem*, nor does it account for the following *tam*.

<sup>3</sup> The reference to the Virgin Mary shows that the hagiographer really did have the pedigree to hand and is not merely embroidering. Compare the full pedigree which appears in the materials attached to the end of *Vita S. Carantoci* in the manuscript (printed *VSBG* 148–9). In any case, the descent of the saint's father Ceredig was on record at least as far back as the ninth-century core of the *Harleian Genealogies*, for which see below.

own societies, and the author of the *Vita S. Carantoci* concedes the appeal of the subject even as he avoids getting drawn into detail. What is more, his circumspection was not typical of medieval Welsh hagiographers, for they produced a great deal of genealogical literature pertaining to their saints and even assembled, in the tract known as *Bonedd y Saint*, a dedicated collection of saints' genealogies. *Bonedd y Saint* neither suppresses the connections between the saints and their earthly families nor tiptoes circumspectly around them, but openly puts them on record for posterity. By the time of the earliest manuscript witness in the late thirteenth century, the tract already contained some sixty-three entries, and more were added later on. An impression of the nature of the work and the kind of information that it conveys can be had from the first entry, which is typical of the whole:

Dewi mab Sant mab Kedic mab Keredic mab Cuneda Wledic, a Nonn  
Gerch Kenyr o Gaer Gawch yMynyw y mam.

David son of Sant son of Cedig son of Ceredig son of Cunedda Wledig,  
and Non daughter of Cynyr of Caer Gawch in St Davids his mother.<sup>4</sup>

*Bonedd y Saint* is, like much other genealogical literature, succinct and unforthcoming. It drew its meaning from a cultural context that is now lost. Moreover, it is even more difficult to interpret *Bonedd y Saint* as a work of hagiography, for it seems to be an unusual kind of text within medieval western Christian literature: only in Ireland are comparable collections of saints' genealogies found. The question asked here is how we, who lack direct access to the meaning or meanings of *Bonedd y Saint*, can approach it. Can we establish, within the context of what we know of medieval Welsh textual and religious culture, why *Bonedd y Saint* might have been created? Is it possible, in spite of the distinctiveness of the work, to see it in the wider context of the medieval cult of saints, or was hagiographical genealogy merely a Welsh, or Welsh and Irish, oddity? These are questions that need asking, since the unusualness of *Bonedd y Saint* seems nowadays to put it just beyond everyone's sphere of interest. Too religious for those interested in dynastic politics, but not hagiographical enough to entice scholars of hagiography, not historical enough for historians, and not interesting enough as a piece of literature for literary scholars, *Bonedd y Saint* is a neglected curiosity. Yet a text that survives in more than ninety manuscript versions from the late thirteenth century to the end of the eighteenth cannot always have been so marginal. This essay examines how

<sup>4</sup> *ByS* (= *Bonedd y Saint*) §1. All citations and translations of *ByS* are taken from my forthcoming edition. *mab Kedic* may be a doublet of the next generation but if so, it arose early in the transmission, since it seems to have been in the thirteenth-century archetype which is the ancestor of all known copies of *ByS*.

and why hagiography and genealogy came together to form a work that was read, studied and copied for at least six centuries.

### *Genealogy in hagiography*

Hagiography inherited some of its generic norms from ancient biography, in which the subject's descent and family were given detailed coverage. The sixth-century writer Eugippius, beginning his *Life of St Severinus of Noricum*, notes that it was customary to start a *vita* with this topic, even though Severinus himself, a stranger who wandered into Noricum, somewhat ostentatiously refused ever to tell anyone where he had come from, replying to a questioner with the words, 'Of what use is it to a servant of God to name his homeland or his family, since in keeping quiet about the subject he more easily steers clear of boasting?'<sup>5</sup> Eugippius could only hint that the saint would have had something to boast about, had he chosen to do so. The author of the *Vita S. Carantoci*, in deciding both to suppress Carannog's pedigree and to draw attention to its suppression, likewise satisfies convention while tacitly acknowledging the theological scruple. Yet the habit of beginning with a saint's family did not continue just because of literary conservatism; it endured because such information mattered to late antique and medieval societies that were based on kinship. Furthermore, the topic gained a place within the structure of hagiography because saints renounced the world, and that included the demands of their families. Jesus had told his disciples to leave their home and their brothers and sisters, father and mother, children and fields to follow him (Mark 10.29–30). Martyrs abandoned these ties in the most brutal and final way possible by embracing death, while confessors did so by withdrawing into a life of religion. The leaving of one's family became a turning point in a saint's biography, and the more prestigious the family, and the more impressive the inheritance which the saint rejected, the greater was the sacrifice made for Christ. The king's son who renounced his father's crown became an especially popular trope in the hagiography of the Celtic countries: Welsh examples are St Carannog, St Cadog of Llancarfan and his uncle St Petroc (who settled in Cornwall), and St Cynog of Brycheiniog, as two late-medieval Welsh poems in his honour reveal.<sup>6</sup> Frequently hagiographers enlarged on the point by describing the opposition of the saint's family. In the *Vita I S. Samsonis*, an important early Life from Brittany, the father of St Samson refuses to hand him over to be educated as a cleric, even though he had agreed to do so when the

<sup>5</sup> Eugippius, *Vita S. Severini*, introductory letter to Paschasius, §7, in Theodor Nüsslein, ed., *Eugippius: Vita S. Severini* (Stuttgart, 1986), 10: 'Quid prodest servo Dei significatio sui loci vel generis, cum potius id tacendo facilius possit evitare iactantiam?'

<sup>6</sup> See Barry J. Lewis, *Medieval Welsh Poems to Saints and Shrines* (Dublin, 2015), poems 14 and 15.

boy was conceived; he could not bear to see the son of a family who served as the ministers of kings being deprived of his dignity in this humiliating and emasculating manner.<sup>7</sup> Parents could be just as appalled if their female children rejected their proper social role, which was to marry a man and bear him children. Daughters might be threatened or mistreated if they chose to keep their virginity for Christ: the Irish St Brigit went to the extreme of losing an eye to render herself unattractive, a story known to the sixteenth-century Welsh poet Iorwerth Fynglwyd.<sup>8</sup> The importance of these paradigms encouraged authors to go on presenting their saints as sons and daughters of royal and noble houses who turned their backs on power, wealth and comfort. Nor was this just the fruit of writers' imaginations. Most people who came to be regarded as saints in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages really did belong to powerful and wealthy families, simply because the expectations of contemporaries made that all but unavoidable. Only the powerful and the wealthy could do the sorts of things that generally prepared the way to acceptance as a saint, such as building a church, founding a monastery or serving as an exemplary bishop. The socially marginal saint, even the slave-saint, was not impossible to imagine, as the hagiography of St Brigit shows, but in practice those who did not own property had little freedom to follow a religious life, and saints were, therefore, nearly always men and women of lineage in reality as well as in the pages of their biographies.

A literary model for addressing – or evading – the problem of incompatible value systems was provided by the *Vita S. Martini* of Sulpicius Severus (c. 396), the most influential saint's Life ever written in Latin. Sulpicius had a particular difficulty: St Martin of Tours really had been born to socially unimpressive parents, and even worse, he had followed his father into the Roman army. Such a background created a vast, embarrassing social gulf between Martin and his fellow-bishops in late-Roman Gaul, most of whom came from very wealthy and powerful aristocratic families. Sulpicius circumvented the problem by saying that Martin was born of *parentibus secundum saeculi dignitatem non infimis* – 'not the lowest of parents, judged by worldly standards' – a well-crafted phrase that manages to acknowledge the importance of the topic while gesturing also towards the idea that it was of no consequence.<sup>9</sup> Later hagiographers, seldom facing Sulpicius' problem of a lower-class saint, flattened his phrase into the smoother *parentibus nobilebus*, and many similar variants, employing it just as readily it to cover up a lack of facts

<sup>7</sup> *Vita I S. Samsonis* i.6–7, ed. P. Flobert, *La Vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol: texte édité, traduit et commenté* (Paris, 1997), 154–7.

<sup>8</sup> Howell Ll. Jones and E. I. Rowlands, eds, *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd* (Caerdydd, 1975), 43.39–44.

<sup>9</sup> *Vita S. Martini* i.2, ed. Jacques Fontaine, *Sulpice Sévère, Vie de S. Martin de Tours*, 3 vols (Paris, 1967–9), I, 133–5.

as to gloss over awkward ones. The probably ninth-century *Passion of St Kilian of Würzburg* begins thus: ‘There was a man of venerable Life, called Kilian, born from a mighty family in the land of Ireland.’<sup>10</sup> We can be fairly sure that the author had no clue as to the lineage of this long-dead Irish exile in Franconia. Meanwhile, the dismissive qualifier *secundum saeculi dignitatem* smothered theological doubts, allowing hagiographers to assert that their saint was of noble birth while simultaneously denying that it mattered: the opening of the *Vita S. Carantoci* is an example from Wales, and the trope is found earlier in Brittany in the *Vita I. S. Samsonis*.<sup>11</sup> Any hagiographer still worried by the issue could balance praise of a saint’s lineage by an assurance that the family was marked by especially strong faith or piety, or insist that noble birth was only useful to a saint in strengthening the weak faith of secular-minded people.<sup>12</sup>

The approaches to heredity and family that I have just described were all optional. Hagiography being a vast category of writing practised over a huge area and for a great span of time, there are as many approaches to the subject of the saint’s family background as there are Lives. Generalization is risky, and identifying a specific attitude in Wales or the other Celtic-speaking territories is similarly risky: in the discussion above, it was not difficult to provide Welsh, Cornish, Breton and Irish variants of common European topoi. Nevertheless, there is a strong perception among students of the hagiography of the Celtic-speaking countries that they had a uniquely compelling interest in saints’ pedigrees, one that sets them apart from other cultural areas within Christendom. As was already noted, the circumspection of the *Vita S. Carantoci* was not commonplace: the interest of Welsh and Irish, and indeed Cornish and Breton, hagiographers in heredity is much better typified by the detailed genealogical notice which the author omitted, but whose underlying text travelled with his work into the manuscript.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Wales and Ireland are perhaps unique in

<sup>10</sup> *Passio S. Kiliani* §1: *Fuit vir vitae venerabilis nomine Killena, quem Scottica tellus de magno edidit genere*. Ed. W. Levison, *Passio Kiliani, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum V* (Hannover, 1910), 711–28.

<sup>11</sup> *Vita I. S. Samsonis* i.1: *nobilibus atque egregiis secundum saeculi dignitatem parentibus altus est*.

<sup>12</sup> For the first trope, cf. the seventh-century *Vita Audoini* §2: ‘In the time of glorious King Clothar ... three venerable men were born, begotten as noble from one stock, and made famous by the grace of God from on high: Ado, Dado and Rado. Their father was Audecharius, their mother Aiga, each decorated with the height of Christianity’; trans. in Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640–720* (Manchester, 1996), 153–4. For the second, a Welsh example is in the *Vita S. Teliuai*, ed. J. G. Evans and J. Rhys, *LL* 97–117, at 97: *ex nobilibus illum parentibus scimus fuisse ortum, ut carnis nobilitas honestaret eum inter homines, qui iam animi nobilitate apud Deum erat acceptabilis*.

<sup>13</sup> The nature of the materials at the end of *Vita S. Carantoci* is debated. They consist of a long pedigree of Carannog and a list of the descendants of Cunedda Wledig, followed by an account of how Carannog rejected his father’s kingdom and then what looks like an

pursuing saints' genealogies so far as to produce collections of them. These peculiarities caused Paul Grosjean to describe the 'Celtic' saint's pedigree as a third 'coordinate', alongside those universal *coordonnées*, the place of rest and feast-day, established by Hippolyte Delehaye in a classic study of saints' cults.<sup>14</sup> For Delehaye, place of rest and feast-day were the irreducible minimum of information that was required to identify a historical saint. By adding a third *coordonnée* Grosjean implied, therefore, that in Ireland or Wales a saint's pedigree was as fundamental to his or her identity as these basic features of a cult. The idea was taken up by Pádraig Ó Riain, but with the major alteration that Ó Riain regarded the genealogical record as constructed to match later needs rather than a reliable source of information about the historical individual.<sup>15</sup> Either way, if a pedigree were really a requirement of this fundamental nature, then it is implied that a cult simply could not persist without a pedigree being preserved or, in Ó Riain's view, being adapted or created to accompany it.

Caveats need to be entered. Firstly, the pedigree was not an essential part of every saint's persona. Numerous Welsh saints are presented in texts but given no pedigree: Elli of Llanelli, for instance, or Maches of Llanfaches in Monmouthshire. These cases exemplify alternative strategies for locating saints within established parameters: as the pupil of a more famous saint (Elli was a disciple of St Cadog), or as the beneficiary of a miracle performed by a more famous saint (or, as in the case of Maches,

origin legend of a church, probably Llangrannog in Ceredigion. Wade-Evans called them *Vita II S. Carantoci* (*VSBG* 148–9), whereas Ben Guy now describes them as an addendum to the *Vita S. Carantoci*, rejecting the idea that they comprise a second *vita* (*Medieval Welsh Genealogy* (Woodbridge, 2020), 84; also Chapter 1 above, 28). The *vita* proper clearly ends before them with the phrase *in secula seculorum amen*. They are not rubricated separately from the *vita*, but if the scribe only had these few paragraphs before him, he might naturally add them to the end of the saint's Life rather than rubricating them as a second text. The '*Vita II*' may be an attempt at a fuller, non-homiletic *vita* of the saint which was never taken beyond the opening paragraphs; or a fragment of a longer Life, perhaps transmitted accidentally on the last leaf of the quire that contained the scribe's source-text for the *vita* proper; or perhaps it is an independent origin legend of Llangrannog and one of the sources used by the author of the *vita* proper. At the least, its genealogical section was available to the author of the main *vita*, as I have argued above.

<sup>14</sup> '... dans le cas des saints irlandais et gallois de l'époque ancienne (celle où le droit d'éligibilité, tant pour les charges ecclésiastiques que pour les séculières, se fondait sur des prétentions héréditaires ...), la généalogie ... constitue une coordonnée hagiographique. Son importance, pour les saints celtiques, est égale à celle des coordonnées que le P. Delehaye désignait sous ce nom': P. Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique, no. 42: Déchiffrement d'un groupe de *Notulae* du Livre d'Armagh sur saint Patrice (numéros 28–41)', *Analecta Bollandiana* 76 (1958), 387–410, at 389, n. 1; cf. Hippolyte Delehaye, *Cinq leçons sur la méthode hagiographique* (Bruxelles, 1934), 7–17.

<sup>15</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Towards a methodology in early Irish hagiography', *Peritia* 1 (1982), 146–59, at 157; *id.*, 'Irish saints' genealogies', *Nomina* 7 (1983), 23–9, at 23–4. As Ó Riain notes ('Irish saints' genealogies', 24), Grosjean did not develop his point, which was made in passing in a footnote. Grosjean was at least aware that saints' pedigrees were maintained by interested parties, cf. his wording, cited in the previous note.



being acknowledged as a martyr by St Tatheus of Caerwent).<sup>16</sup> Occasionally authors who lacked any information at all concealed their bafflement behind a general statement, rather like the example we saw from Würzburg. Thus St Brynach of Nevern is described simply as ‘a man from the sons of Israel’.<sup>17</sup> Brynach, then, functioned as a saint without needing a pedigree, and the lack was not made good when his Life was written other than in this vague manner. So a pedigree was not an unnegotiable requirement for cult, and in fact it is likely that many cults functioned without one. A second caveat is not to exaggerate the uniqueness of Welsh or Irish interest in saints’ genealogies. It is a distinction of degree and not of kind. The elaboration of family ties between saints, albeit not ones of great genealogical depth, could form part of hagiographical invention in other regions: Delehaye discusses the case of the Roman *Passion of St Sebastian*, in which various martyrs are linked unhistorically as brothers, children or spouses.<sup>18</sup> Much more explicitly genealogical is the complex of texts from England known as the ‘Mildrith Legend’. The ‘Mildrith’ texts detail at least fourteen saints attached directly or by marriage to the royal family of Kent, mainly female founders and abbesses of religious houses who lived in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>19</sup> An account of the family and its saints seems to have been made in the later eighth century, but the extant versions are all of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, part of the great upsurge in hagiographical writing about the saints of the formative years of English Christianity that we see at that time – perhaps not coincidentally, this is also roughly the period in which the hagiography of Wales’s ‘age of the saints’ was composed, including *Bonedd y Saint*. If saints’ genealogies were especially prevalent in Wales and Ireland, they were not unknown

<sup>16</sup> *Vita S. Cadoci* §14, where Elli is the son of a king and queen, but they are not named; *Vita S. Tatheii* §13. Maches seems later to have been conflated with St Margaret, and thus acquired a father, see Lewis, *Medieval Welsh Poems*, poem 25. For a possible saint associated with a miracle performed by St David, see Barry J. Lewis, ‘Ar drywydd Magna, “chwaer Dewi Sant”, ac eglwys ddiflanedig yn Nyffryn Teifi’, *Studia Celtica* 52 (2018), 33–52. Compare the forging of links between saints of the Orléans region by a succession of Carolingian and eleventh-century writers: Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge, 1990), 114–15.

<sup>17</sup> *uirum de filiis Israel, Vita S. Bernachii*, §1.

<sup>18</sup> Delehaye, *Cinq leçons*, 35–6.

<sup>19</sup> D. W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester, 1982); important revisions in Stephanie Hollis, ‘The Minster-in-Thanel foundation story’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998), 41–64. For the saints, see the convenient chart in Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, 45. For further examples of genealogical interest in Anglo-Latin hagiography, see the remarks of Rosalind Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints’ Lives: Vita S. Birini, Vita et Miracula S. Kenelmi and Vita S. Rumwoldi* (Oxford, 1996), xlvii–xlviii; and, further away in Europe, compare André Vauchez, ‘*Beata stirps*: sainteté et lignage en Occident aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles’, in *Famille et parenté dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. Georges Duby and Jacques Le Goff (Rome, 1977), 397–406.

elsewhere. The next question is to ask why and how saints became the subject of such intense genealogical scholarship in early medieval Wales.

*Saints and genealogy in early medieval Wales*

It is generally accepted that genealogy was pursued intensively in Ireland from the seventh century and that Irish influence radiated into the rest of the Insular regions, all of whom came to share certain common methodological assumptions and procedures.<sup>20</sup> Drawing inspiration from biblical genealogy in particular, the Insular genealogists developed a range of common principles and procedures. In Wales we first encounter a substantial body of their work in the ninth-century Latin historical tract *Historia Brittonum* and in the *Harleian Genealogies*. The latter are extant in a form that was redacted around 954 at St Davids, but which reflects a set of pedigrees first assembled in Gwynedd about a century earlier. These deal with royal lineages, as we might expect, and with lineages that were important for historical narrative, especially ones associated with the Old North, the Brittonic territories of northern England and southern Scotland in the post-Roman period. The *Harleian Genealogies* show us that many of the basic features of Welsh genealogical scholarship were already established, such as the preference for ascending patriline. Just as fundamentally, a set of prominent ancestors had been discovered or invented. For Gwynedd, the chief figure was Cunedda Wledig, from whom were sprung the ruling dynasties of the kingdom. Lesser territories within or claimed by Gwynedd were attached, via eponyms like Ebern and Rhufon, to Cunedda, and behind him lies the important, but frustratingly obscure, figure of Beli Mawr, through whom the Welsh genealogical system was anchored to that of the Bible.<sup>21</sup> The lines of the Old North reach back to Dyfnwal Hen and Coel Hen, and the figure of Maxen Wledig, loosely based on the historical Roman usurper Magnus Maximus (d. 388), assumes great importance as well. These names were to remain genealogical constants in subsequent centuries. In no way can the *Harleian Genealogies*, or even the Gwynedd text that lies behind them, have been the starting point of Welsh genealogy, but the accident of survival has left them our primary witness for the period before the Normans.

There are no saints' genealogies in the Harleian collection, which is entirely a set of patriline of rulers. The only concession to religious interests is that some dynasties are connected to the biblical Virgin Mary and St Helena, wife of the Emperor Constantine and discoverer of the True

<sup>20</sup> A very important introduction to Irish genealogy is Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Creating the past: the early Irish genealogical tradition [Carroll Lecture 1992]', *Peritia* 12 (1998), 177–208. For Wales, Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy* is now fundamental.

<sup>21</sup> His wife Anna (or mother: the wording is ambiguous) was a cousin of the Virgin Mary (this was the basis also for the genealogical claim in *Vita S. Carantoci*, above).

Cross.<sup>22</sup> It is remarkable that genealogy could be so resolutely secular, even though we know that it was pursued in churches: the *Harleian Genealogies* are a St Davids adaptation of a collection that arguably originated in the church of Abergele.<sup>23</sup> Saints are largely absent too from the genealogies in the twelfth-century *Vita Griffini filii Conani*, whose focus is entirely on the royal status of Gruffudd ap Cynan (d. 1137); only one very distant saintly collateral is cited as corroborating evidence for the prestige of Gruffudd's family, and even he is praised as much for his prowess as a king as for his piety.<sup>24</sup> Even the thirteenth-century *Llywelyn ab Iorwerth Genealogies* do not give as much attention to saints as might be thought at first glance. Though they begin with a section on the descendants of Brychan, a lineage prolific in saints, that section is presented merely as the first of a series on heroes, all in the same format, *plant X* 'offspring of X'. Moreover, the married daughters of Brychan, that is, those who were genealogically productive, are given precedence over the unmarried, saintly daughters, an arrangement not found in any other version of the Brychan traditions.

The evidence, then, such as it is, suggests that genealogy originated in the tracing of royal status and only gradually was it extended to other kinds of status. Pedigrees of saints were secondary. This is only to be expected since, as was noted above, holiness and heredity had at first no ideological connection.<sup>25</sup> The genealogies of the saints depended on those of kings and they convey the message that the saints belong to royal families. The pedigree exalts the saint; if the saint exalts the pedigree, that is merely a secondary effect, reflecting glory onto an already impressive lineage. There must be a suspicion, therefore, that saints' pedigrees were not habitually put on record until well after the sixth and seventh centuries, the period in which the historical saints lived, which opens the important question of how, if at all, the pedigrees of the Welsh saints relate to reality. Like the secular genealogies that pertain to this very early period around the sixth century, they are unlikely to be true on a literal, historical, biological level. The material is nearly always later by centuries and the alleged relationships very obviously patterned on longstanding norms of storytelling. It is not an impossibility that details of a saint's family could be transmitted accurately to later generations. The late-seventh-century *Vita I. S. Samsonis* provides a view of possible routeways. The author was

<sup>22</sup> See previous note, also *Harleian Genealogies* §§1, 2, 10, 16, ed. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 333–44.

<sup>23</sup> As argued by Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, Chapter 2.

<sup>24</sup> A certain *Alanum regem et religionis sanctitate et virtutis gloria corporis praestantem*, see Paul Russell, ed. and trans., *Vita Griffini filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff, 2005), 54–5 (§5).

<sup>25</sup> The pedigrees of Christ in the New Testament are not really comparable since they have their context in specific prophetic expectations about the Messiah, though it cannot be ruled out that they influenced the Irish and Welsh saints' pedigrees. They certainly did influence the author of the genealogies of St Cadog, see later.

able to draw on a chain of credible witnesses back to the saint's own lifetime and on the liturgical commemoration of Samson's family at Dol, and so he preserves what is probably an accurate account of Samson's mother, father, uncle, aunt and siblings.<sup>26</sup> But there is no genealogical depth, for Samson is traced back no further than a single generation. What is more, this – for a Welsh saint – uniquely early Life illustrates the ease with which information was lost. It does not seem to have circulated in Wales, nor were its contents remembered until a copy was brought from Dol to Llandaf after the Norman conquest: even though Samson and his relatives founded several religious houses, their cults did not endure in Wales and none of their Welsh foundations can now be identified.<sup>27</sup> Thus it was only the *vita* that saved the information from total oblivion: no oral channel ran in parallel to it, or at least not for long. The amount of detail preserved about the saint's family in the early *Vita I S. Samsonis* reminds us how much more we might know about David, Teilo, Illtud and dozens of other saints if only we had early sources for them, and how easily and completely such information faded away if it was not preserved in writing. The genealogies of the Welsh saints that emerge alongside the rest of Welsh hagiography from the eleventh century on, and which trace their pedigrees back to royal and aristocratic lineages of the sub-Roman period, may conceivably go back to a social reality, but almost none of their concrete information can be verified, and where it can be checked at all, it can be shown to be fabricated, as we will see later on.

As a working assumption, saints' pedigrees are not to be taken as fact but as the outcomes of later genealogical scholarship. Unfortunately their development cannot be traced through the crucial formative centuries, any more than most other aspects of saints' cults, simply because we do not have the early written sources that would allow it. Specimens of hagiographical writing are very rare after the *Vita I S. Samsonis*. The ninth-century historical tract *Historia Brittonum* contains extracts from a *Liber Beati Germani*, a work which evidently linked the fifth-century bishop of Auxerre in Gaul with local churches in north and mid-Wales. No hint of his genealogy is given and it is unlikely that it was considered at all, since the point of the stories about Germanus was that he was an outsider, acting after the manner of a *deus ex machina* to set Welsh society on the right path by defeating the combined forces of heresy, barbarian invasion and internal

<sup>26</sup> On the saint's family, see Richard Sowerby, 'A family and its saint in the *Vita Prima Samsonis*', in *St Samson of Dol and the Earliest History of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales*, ed. Lynette Olson (Woodbridge, 2017), 19–36

<sup>27</sup> On the cult of St Samson in Wales, especially the very limited evidence before the contacts with Dol in the late eleventh century, see K. Jankulak, 'Present and yet absent: the cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales', in *St Samson of Dol*, ed. Olson, 163–80.

sinfulness.<sup>28</sup> However, the *Liber* did contain a fanciful account of the origin of another fifth-century Continental saint, Faustus of Riez, as the incestuous child of the wicked British king Vortigern and his own daughter. The origin and significance of this story remain to be accounted for, but the real Faustus was indeed a Briton, so his absorption into the Germanus-Vortigern ‘saga’ is part-and-parcel of the intense working-over of Continental source-material by Brittonic scholars in the early Middle Ages, scholars who were determined to extract the meagre references to Britain and the Britons and construct mythic narratives around them to fill the void of early British history. Apart from its references to these saints, *Historia Brittonum* provides incidental evidence for the cultivation of secular genealogy, enlarging the picture that we get from the Harleian collection, whose core was probably put together not long after the creation of *Historia Brittonum*. It was upon these secular pedigrees and others related to them or analogous to them that the saints’ genealogies were erected, as we shall see, but evidence is lacking before the eleventh century.

#### *Genealogies in the Latin vitae*

When Lives of Welsh saints finally appear, from the second half of the eleventh century onwards, they reveal an important genealogical dimension. The oldest is the *Vita S. Paterni*, datable not later than 1085 × 1091, the work of an anonymous author of Llanbadarn Fawr, almost certainly a member of the family of Sulien who dominated that church and produced other literary works including poetry and the slightly later *Vita S. David*.<sup>29</sup> This presents Padarn’s father and mother, *Petranus* and *Guean* (?recte *Guenn*), both Bretons. Later, when Padarn chooses the religious life and emigrates to Britain, he joins an expedition led by *Ketinlau*, *Catman* and *Titechon* (?Cynllo, Cadfan, Tydecho). In the next section these men are described as Padarn’s cousins, and they accept him as a fourth leader of the expedition even though he is the youngest among them. The story implies that there was already a genealogical account of the relations of these saints, such as we find later on in *Bonedd y Saint* §§19, 21, 22, where Cadfan, Padarn and Tydecho are all grandsons of Emyr Llydaw (a shadowy

<sup>28</sup> *Historia Brittonum* §§32–5, 39, 47–8, ed. Edmond Faral, *La Légende arthurienne*, 3 vols (Paris, 1929), III, 1–63. The starting point for the British legend of Germanus was the genuine visit that the bishop paid to Britain in 429. Interestingly, *ByS* §61 reveals that the matter of Germanus’ lineage was pursued eventually.

<sup>29</sup> *Vita S. Paterni* is echoed in Ieuan ap Sulien’s poem on the life of his father, which dates between 1085, when Sulien resigned from the bishopric of St Davids for the second time, and 1091, when he died (for these dates, see M. Lapidge, ‘The Welsh-Latin poetry of Sulien’s family’, *Studia Celtica* 8/9 (1973–4), 68–106, at 72). The relevant phrases sit comfortably in the *vita* but are awkwardly adapted to the poetic context and metre, showing that the influence was from the *vita* to the poem, not vice versa. I will argue this in more detail in another place.

figure whose name means just ‘ruler of Brittany’) through different fathers. The antiquity of Padarn’s connection with the group was is open to debate. The curious way in which three leaders become four may suggest that Padarn had been added fairly recently to the story, but how this came about can only be guessed at. Padarn has been conflated with Paternus of Vannes and the *vita* incorporates material from Vannes, very recent material, indeed, since it is obviously bound up with the great dispute over the Breton archbishopric of Dol in 1076–81.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that it was only the arrival of this Breton material in Wales that caused the ‘Bretonization’ of St Padarn and hence his addition to the story of Cadfan and his cousins. A further hint of this is the conflicting story of Padarn’s death told in the Book of Llandaf. In the *vita*, Padarn is buried in *Francia*, not Wales, as was required by the identification with Paternus of Vannes, but in the Book of Llandaf he is buried on the island of Bardsey.<sup>31</sup> This contradiction might suggest that Padarn had only recently been drawn into a nexus of mainly western, and west-coast, Welsh saints whose origins were traced back to Brittany. On the other hand, given the prominence of Vannes as a bishop’s seat, the equation of Padarn with its saint might be expected to be older than the arrival of the Dol material in the Norman period; in which case, it may have been Cadfan and his companions who were at some point regarded as Bretons so as to link them with Padarn. The whole question of these alleged Breton missionaries is difficult, probably impossible, to resolve. At least the story makes clear that genealogical links already formed part of hagiographical thinking by the late eleventh century.

The *Vita S. David*, written by Rhygyfarch ap Sulien before 1099, also describes the family origins of its saint. He is the son of *Sanctus* (Sant), a son of Ceredig of Ceredigion, and of *Nonnita*, a religious woman whose lineage is not given. At the end of the Life in the Vespasian manuscript, the most important collection of Welsh saints’ Lives, there is a full pedigree of David through Sanctus to *Eugen filius sororis Marie*. As the genealogy is given after Rhygyfarch’s colophon and final prayer, and is not found in other versions of the Life, it is unclear whether it belonged to Rhygyfarch’s text or has been added during transmission. The question is quite a minor one, however, since the basic thrust of the pedigree should have been known in Rhygyfarch’s time anyway. Like Carannog, whose *vita* featured

<sup>30</sup> Using the cover of a story about relations between SS. Paternus and Samson of Dol, it acknowledges Dol’s position as honorary head of the Breton church while yet insisting that Vannes was exempt from financial obligations to Dol (*Vita S. Paterni* §§25–6).

<sup>31</sup> The burial place in *Francia* was Avranches, near the eastern border of Brittany. St Paternus of Vannes had already been conflated with the historically different St Paternus of Avranches in the Vannes material that reached Llanbadarn Fawr. Hence the *Vita S. Paterni* ended up conflating three saints. The contradictory account of Padarn’s burial in the Book of Llandaf is contained in the *Vita S. Elgari* (LL 3), whose information was drawn from Bardsey itself in the early 1100s. On the Life, see Karen Jankulak and Jonathan M. Wooding, ‘The Life of St Elgar of Ynys Enlli’, *Trivium* 39 (2010), 15–47.

at the beginning of this chapter, David descended from Ceredig, a son of the Gwynedd dynast Cunedda Wledig whose pedigree could be established from the *Harleian Genealogies*. These trace Cunedda back to Anna, a cousin of the Virgin, and the pedigree at the end of the *Vita S. David* is a divergent version of this Harleian pedigree.<sup>32</sup> Again, as in the case of St Padarn, the pedigree of David lacks historical likelihood. His parents' names, *Sanctus* and *Nonnita*, seem contrived, since one simply means 'saint' and the other is reminiscent of *nonna* 'nun',<sup>33</sup> while the link to Ceredig reflects David's strong connections with Ceredigion, which was the site of his original foundation, Henfynyw, as well as the second-most important of the churches that supported his cult, Llanddewi Brefi.<sup>34</sup> Ceredig in turn is unlikely to have been a son of Cunedda, for two good reasons: firstly, because almost all of Cunedda's sons bear the names of political units in the penumbra of Gwynedd, an arrangement far too good to be true; and secondly because it is rather unlikely that Cunedda ever existed. His name has been chosen to echo that of the kingdom with which he was associated, Gwynedd, yet without actually being related to it.<sup>35</sup> Which join came first, that of David to Ceredig, or of Ceredig to Cunedda, is not known, but once both had been made, David enjoyed a pedigree fit for a 'national' saint as well as a local one, since he was attached both to south and north Wales, an idea which mirrors other aspects of Rhygyfarch's biography, especially the story of the Synod of Brefi at which David is acknowledged as head of the whole British church. But it would be rash to assume that Rhygyfarch invented the pedigree himself. More likely it was the fruit of a lengthy tradition of scholarship, reflecting a developing response by David's successors to changes in the dynasties that ruled over west Wales in the early medieval centuries.

We gain another view of such genealogical scholarship in Lifris's *Vita S. Cadoci*, a work that is difficult to date but was written probably in the same generation as the *Vita S. David*. The first part of the text is genealogical, giving a legend of the founding of Glywysing that follows a similar pattern to the Gwynedd legend summarized in the *Harleian Genealogies*, that is, a founder figure gives his name to the whole territory while his

<sup>32</sup> *Harleian Genealogies* §1. This is also the basis for the pedigree of St Carannog. See Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 234 for the peculiarities of the *Vita S. David* pedigree.

<sup>33</sup> In spite of a recent attempt to rescue them, see Nicholas Jacobs, 'Non, Nonna, Nonnita: confusions of gender in Brythonic hagionymy', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, n. s. 27 (2017), 19–33. Even if Jacobs established that they are genuine and attested personal names, their connotations in context are just too neat for credibility.

<sup>34</sup> On these sites, see Heather James, 'The geography of the cult of St David: a study of dedication patterns in the medieval diocese', in *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge, 2007), 41–83, at 76–9.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. David Dumville's description of Cunedda: 'as a quasi-eponym for Gwynedd by no means certainly a historical figure' (*Saint Patrick, A.D. 493–1993* (Woodbridge, 1993), 112).

sons' names adhere to the smaller districts. Among the sons of the founder Glywys are two saints: Gwynllyw, the eldest son, who at first adheres to the secular life, and Petroc, who abandons his royal inheritance to found the church of Bodmin in Cornwall (the older site of Petroc's cult at Padstow is passed over in this passage). Subsequently Gwynllyw abducts Gwladus, daughter of Brychan of the neighbouring kingdom of Brycheiniog. Their child is Cadog, and it is under Cadog's influence that both Gwynllyw and Gwladus embrace the religious life later on and become the patron saints of churches at Newport and Basaleg – a pattern so similar to that of Samson and his parents that it was very plausibly modelled on the *Vita I S. Samsonis*, though that cannot be proved.<sup>36</sup> Cadog's links to the royal line of Glywysing and Gwynllwg are important for the status and legal rights of Llancarfan, as the *vita* makes plain, and it is highly unlikely that these claims were invented by Lifris. Yet Glamorgan, as it now was in Lifris's time, had ceased to be ruled by the line of Glywys, and an explanation for this was needed. In effect, Cadog's renunciation of the world is made into that explanation. As the eldest son of Gwynllyw, himself the eldest son of Glywys, Cadog is explicitly acknowledged as the 'principal heir of the kingdom' by Gwynllyw's brother, Paul of Penychen, who tries to persuade him to take up the kingship (§8); in refusing, Cadog in effect ends his line. Of course Glywys had many other sons, from whom kings might have come, but the hagiographer circumvents this problem by showing Paul submitting to his nephew, and otherwise by ignoring it. Likewise he leaves out the story of Gwynllyw's conversion and abdication, but in §25 Glywysing is clearly kingless, such that Cadog can appoint the unknown Meurig ab Enynny, who is given to him by God. As we know from the *Jesus 20 Genealogies*, Meurig was an ancestor of the later kings of Glywysing and Glamorgan.<sup>37</sup> The story parallels the elevation of Cadell to the kingship of Powys by St Germanus, as told in the *Historia Brittonum*, and ensures that the dynastic break does not sever the links established by Llancarfan with the ruling families of south-east Wales.<sup>38</sup>

After the Life in the manuscript comes a long genealogical section that traces Cadog back through several lines: firstly through Gwynllyw and Glywys back to Augustus Caesar; next, through Gwladus and Brychan back to a Briscethach and the 'best stocks of the kings of the Irish'; thirdly, through Gwladus's mother Marchell, daughter of the martyr-king, Tewdrig, via his south-eastern-Welsh dynasty back to Anna, cousin of the Virgin Mary (compare the Cunedda tradition); and finally, the Cunedda tradition

<sup>36</sup> The full story is told only in *Vita S. Cadoci* §§53–4, probably a separate document not by Lifris, and in the later *Vita S. Gundleii*. The narrative in §28, focused on Cadog, is compressed, mentioning Gwynllyw's church without a clear narrative of how he came to leave his kingship to found it, and omitting Gwladus altogether.

<sup>37</sup> See discussion by Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 83, 142–3.

<sup>38</sup> For Cadell, see *Historia Brittonum* §§32–5.



is tapped directly by tracing Gwynllyw's mother Gwawl back through Ceredig to Cunedda and to Anna once more. The detailed construction of these pedigrees has recently been explained by Ben Guy, who notes that they contradict Lifris's account of the rise of Meurig ab Enynny – by merging two originally separate pedigrees, the creator of these genealogies has made Meurig into a distant ancestor of Cadog, not a contemporary of his – so that they are unlikely to be Lifris's work, and belong instead to the twelfth century.<sup>39</sup> These *St Cadog Genealogies* cover most of the royalty of south Wales: they attach the saint to the lines of Glywysing, Gwent and Brycheiniog, as well as Ceredigion and hence also Gwynedd in the north. The *vita* and its attached documents make clear that dynasts of several of these lines were claimed as the grantors of Llancarfan's privileges.<sup>40</sup> This suggests that the pedigrees of Cadog had importance for his churches. On the other hand, the scale of these pedigrees is probably fairly new, as the materials for making them must derive from a text closely parallel to the extant *Harleian Genealogies*, formed in the mid-tenth-century. Cadog's patriline, the descent of Glywys, is attested nowhere before the *St Cadog Genealogies*, but it has been extended by attaching it to the line of *Harleian Genealogies* §16 to take it back through the Roman emperors. The line of Marchell, meanwhile, has been conflated with an important south-eastern lineage, as a by-product making Cadog a descendant of the martyr-saint of Mathern. The attachment of Cadog to Ceredig and thus to Cunedda was perhaps invented as a result of the genealogist's other interests if, as Guy very plausibly argues, the genealogy of St Carannog was formed in the same centre from the same materials.<sup>41</sup> That these were all prestigious lines is undeniable, as is the hagiographer's ingenuity and determination in tracing them back such a very long way. But what was the specific, rather than the general, relevance of this material in the 1130s? Glywys's line was long-gone. Brycheiniog was under Norman rule, as was Glamorgan itself. A remnant of the line of Meurig ab Enynny were represented perhaps by the descendants of Iestyn ap Gwrgan, clinging on in the west of the lordship, but that is all. It is not clear that the genealogies made immediately relevant, bankable claims.

<sup>39</sup> Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 83.

<sup>40</sup> Paul of Penychen (Glywysing line) donates the site of Llancarfan (§8). Maelgwn and Rhun of Gwynedd affirm the sanctuary (§§23, 24) as does Rhain ap Brychan (§25).

<sup>41</sup> Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 98–9 puts forward a strong case that the *St Cadog Genealogies* were created by the twelfth-century hagiographer Caradog of Llancarfan. Note that the Ceredigion line does not feature among donors and protectors of Llancarfan, unlike other dynasties to which Cadog was affiliated (above, n. 32), which supports the idea that the attachment was late. On the other hand, through this line Cadog shares an ancestor with Meurig ab Enynny, and indeed falls exactly one generation below him. This structure fits Lifris's account of Meurig marrying Cadog's aunt so neatly that it may have been known in Lifris's time or even earlier.

What does emerge very clearly from the *St Cadog Genealogies* is the close dependence of hagiographical genealogy on secular genealogy. All of the materials drawn on to make them started out as secular pedigrees, as a glance at the *Harleian Genealogies* makes clear. The compiler of the *St Cadog Genealogies* has brought his work closer to a biblical model in reversing the order of the pedigrees, so that they begin with the ancestor and move forward in time using the biblical formula, 'X begat Y'.<sup>42</sup> This is very unusual in Welsh genealogical scholarship. He also made one important hagiographical move in identifying Tewdrig, a maternal ancestor of Cadog, with the martyr-king of Mathern (*Merthyr Tewdrig*) in Gwent. But, taken as a whole, Cadog's ancestry was burnished by an association with kings and rulers more than with other saints. The pagan Roman emperors in his family tree, even such notorious persecutors as Nero and Diocletian, are described as 'most noble' (*nobilissimis*).

It is also difficult to be certain how much of this structure was created for the benefit of Llancarfan, and how much depends on earlier activity carried out for secular rulers. For instance, there is no independent source for the pedigree of Glywys back as far as Magnus Maximus, which leaves open the question of how it was devised, and why. The figure of Meurig ab Enynny raises other problems, besides the chronological dislocation that has already been mentioned. The *Jesus 20 Genealogies*, which may go back to tenth-century scholarship in this section, make Meurig the son of Caradog Freichfras, surely a prestigious enough line, while on his mother Enynny's side he is attached to the resonant lineage of the Cynferching according to the genealogies attached to the *Vita S. Cadoci*: Enynny was, by implication, a sister of no less a figure than Urien Rheged.<sup>43</sup> Both of these constructs strongly hint that the dynasty that traced itself back to Meurig conceived of his legitimacy in ways other than that favoured in Lifris's *Vita S. Cadoci*. Meurig was not, that is to say, selected for inscrutable reasons by God, and the parallel with Cadell of Powys never extended so far as to make him a slave like Cadell. The fact that Meurig is known by a matronymic – an almost unparalleled phenomenon in medieval Wales – also suggests that an origin legend separate to and different from that provided by Lifris is missing here, since Lifris's own account does nothing to explain the peculiarity. The twelfth-century genealogist, whose overriding concern was to trace the lines of each of Cadog's four grandparents as far back as he could, has unwittingly preserved material not in full agreement with the saint's *vita*.

No other Welsh saint ever enjoyed the kind of genealogical treatment awarded to Cadog. Different kinds of document reveal different emphases. Those in the Book of Llandaf, written to reshape the history of the diocese

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Matt. 1.1–16.

<sup>43</sup> *Jesus 20 Genealogies* §9; ed. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 338–44.

in the 1120s and 1130s, vary. In the *Vita S. Dubricii*, Llandaf's first bishop St Dyfrig is traced through his mother back to Peibio king of Ergyng, but his father's identity, remarkably, is totally obscured.<sup>44</sup> Dyfrig's links to Ergyng were important for his cult. His main church was originally Moccas in Anergyng, as Ben Guy has recently concluded, and the Book of Llandaf charters provide evidence for a network of churches that grew up in Ergyng over approximately the seventh century, a network dependent on Moccas and later perhaps on Welsh Bicknor.<sup>45</sup> Dyfrig, it seems, was the chief saint of this complex, which included several churches dedicated to him. In contrast, the *Vita S. Teliaui*, originally composed outside the Book of Llandaf and then revised for inclusion with the other documents, has very little to say about Teilo's background.<sup>46</sup> It uses a bare form of the 'noble parents' topos that derives ultimately, as we saw, from the *Vita S. Martini*.<sup>47</sup> This may be because, like the *Vita S. Carantoci*, it is a brief Life meant for reading on the saint's feast-day, and the information was regarded as superfluous. A belief existed regarding Teilo's lineage, however, as we know from the fact that it is touched on in the third of the Llandaf Lives, the *Vita S. Oudocei*. This *vita* begins with a section on Euddogwy's parents, Buddig son of Cyfrdan, a Breton who was exiled to Dyfed, and Anawfedd daughter of Ensyach, whose own mother is also named, as Gwenaf daughter of Llyfonwy.<sup>48</sup> The couple already have two saintly children, Ismael and Tyfái, but when they return to Brittany they have a third son, Euddogwy, who also turns to religion. Presently it is mentioned that Euddogwy is the nephew of Teilo, revealing that Teilo's pedigree was established as well.<sup>49</sup> Yet it was not included in either redaction of Teilo's Life. Instead, the redactor of the second version chose a different ploy. He gave Teilo a lengthy list of disciples, including Ismael, Tyfái and Euddogwy, the other names being collected from older charters. The same pattern was also used to tie St Teilo to St Dyfrig as a disciple.<sup>50</sup> Llandaf's writers thus used two strategies for linking its saints together, and so strengthening its own claim to their churches. The Llandaf documents confirm the importance of links

<sup>44</sup> LL 78–9. There is a very close parallel with the parentage of St Kentigern of Glasgow that deserves attention.

<sup>45</sup> Ben Guy, 'The Life of St Dyfrig and the lost charters of Moccas (Mochros), Herefordshire', *CMCS* 75 (Summer 2018), 1–37.

<sup>46</sup> For further discussion, see Ben Guy, 'The Vespasian Life of St Teilo and the evolution of the *Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium*', Chapter 1 above.

<sup>47</sup> Above, 68–9 and n. 11.

<sup>48</sup> The original forms which I have presented in modern orthography here are *Budic filius Cybrdan, Anauued ... filiam Ensic and Guenhaf filiam Liuonui* (LL 130).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *ByS* §5 where Ensyach is Teilo's father. This would account for the relationship in the *Vita S. Oudocei* by making Euddogwy's mother a sister of Teilo.

<sup>50</sup> LL 80, 98–9; see G. H. Doble, *Lives of the Welsh Saints*, ed. D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, 1971), 68; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Book of Llandaf as a Historical Source* (Woodbridge, 2019), 33 and 41–3.

between saints as well as the ones between saints and royal lineages. Euddogwy's pedigree not only establishes his descent from an important Breton royal line (that of Cornouaille) but also his attachment to St Teilo, Llandaf's premier saint, along with two south-west-Welsh saints whose churches were claimed as part of the Teilo patrimony. It is highly likely, though not certain, that Euddogwy's family tree was a very recent creation, as there is next to no indication that he was known beyond Llandogo in the period before the Book of Llandaf was assembled. Llandaf's great effort of historical reconstruction promoted the forging of genealogical links between its three patron-saints, but the relationship of master and disciple could also be made to carry the same weight. This was not rare in hagiography in general; compare, in Wales, the training of St Cybi under Hilary of Poitiers (itself patterned on the discipleship of St Martin of Tours), and Cybi's own disciples who appear later in his Life. Several saints of Anglesey were 'explained' in this way as disciples of Cybi, including Maelog, Llibio, Peulan, Cyngar, and Caffo, of whose martyrdom a short account has been incorporated in the extant *Vita I S. Kebii*.<sup>51</sup> The case of Elli, pupil of St Cadog, was mentioned earlier. He has a birth story of his own, in which he is the son of a king and queen in the 'islands of Grimbul', but his parents are not named, and it is only through Cadog's intercession that Elli is conceived at all; what is more, Cadog removes him from his family at the age of three. Elli is Cadog's child in all except biological terms.<sup>52</sup>

### *Brychan and paradigms of political belonging*

In the Brychan tract we move finally from the *vitae* of individual saints to genealogical literature in which saints feature prominently. The Brychan tract exists in several forms, of which the oldest is a Latin text, *De situ Brecheniauc*, preserved in the same manuscript as the bulk of Welsh-Latin saints' Lives. Its date is very uncertain, but as a rough guide, the century 1050×1150 is likely to be correct.<sup>53</sup> It presents an origin legend for the kingdom of Brycheiniog, followed by a list of Brychan's children, first sons and then daughters. Many, though not all, are saints, and their churches are listed with them. The Brychan tract was strongly influenced by hagiography even though it cannot be described as a piece of hagiography itself. Its presentation of Brychan has hagiographical elements – a period of education under a master, a benediction by God, a mention of his place of burial, and his marvellous torque – though the latter belongs essentially to his son Cynog, and Brychan himself is not really convincing as a holy man, nor does the tract explicitly say that he was one. The sheer

<sup>51</sup> *Vita I S. Kebii* §§3–4, 5, 16–17, ed. *VSBG* 234–51.

<sup>52</sup> *Vita S. Cadoci* §14, ed. *VSBG* 54–7. The islands, if not totally fanciful, were perhaps the Channel Islands or in Brittany.

<sup>53</sup> The latest discussion is Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 130–6.

number of Brychan's sons and daughters suggests that there had been a long tradition of attaching local saints to him, an idea supported by the existence of other, very different lists in Irish and Cornish sources.<sup>54</sup> The starting-point and model for this activity was probably his eldest son St Cynog. He was the saint of the important church of Merthyr Cynog and is the most developed figure in the *De situ Brecheniauc* after his father. The other saints perhaps represent initiatives by local churches to forge links with the dynasty, though speculative accumulation by the compiler of the Brychan tract cannot be ruled out. A very similar genealogical structure was erected in the territory of Ceredigion, though it is not so textually developed, nor are the offspring of Ceredig so numerous.<sup>55</sup> Almost certainly, the Brychan tradition grew out of a much smaller structure like this one.

Though the Brychan material, as seen in the *De situ Brecheniauc*, has been shaped by a hagiographically minded ecclesiastical author, at its core there lies the secular identification of eponymous ruler with territory. That is the well-rooted tree onto which the pedigrees of the local saints of Brycheiniog and surrounding areas have been grafted. The paradigm by which the chief saint of a region appears as the son of the dynastic founder is one that we have seen above in the St Cadog dossier. Further examples appear in other texts. For example, the patron-saint of the important Powys church of Meifod, St Tysilio, was the eldest son of Brochfael Ysgithrog, king of Powys of the line of Cadell, and the relationship is celebrated in the Welsh poem composed by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr for the clergy of Meifod in the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>56</sup> St Dyfrig, grandson of Peibio of Ergyng, is another example, and so is the connection between St David and Ceredig of Ceredigion, even though David's chief seat came to be further south in Dyfed.

Ties of blood were not essential to the bond between a dynasty and a saint. The story of St Germanus of Auxerre raising the slave Cadell to the kingship of Powys shows how an intimate dynastic connection could be forged without any genealogical bond between saint and king.<sup>57</sup> The parallel case of St Cadog and Meurig ab Enynny was, as we saw, complicated by the industry of a twelfth-century genealogist, but originally Meurig must have been unrelated to the saint. The Welsh Life of St Beuno shows us a Powys saint settling in Gwynedd and developing ties with the dynasty of Cunedda to complement the patronage of the Cadelling dynasty of his own

<sup>54</sup> Conveniently summarized in Peter Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary* (Aberystwyth, 1993), 64–7. There is no comparable Breton list but St Ninnoca was made a daughter of Brychan in her twelfth-century Life from Quimperlé (*ibid.*, 504).

<sup>55</sup> For the text *Progenies Ceredic*, see *VSBG* 319–20, and cf. the first entries in *ByS*, §§1–7. Discussion: Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 137–42.

<sup>56</sup> For the new edition by Ann Parry Owen, see <welshsaints.ac.uk/theedition/>.

<sup>57</sup> *Historia Brittonum* §§32–5; above, 78.

homeland.<sup>58</sup> Padarn of Llanbadarn, as we saw above, was regarded as a Breton *peregrinus* no later than his eleventh-century Life. Indeed, many saints seem to have their cult centres in ‘foreign’ territory. The conception of the ‘Celtic’ saints as wanderers, which is so prominent in modern scholarly and popular view of them, derives from perceptions shared by medieval people. The pilgrim saint who came from elsewhere was an immensely powerful paradigm, and saints of this kind outnumber the ones who have close kinship with the royal patrons of their churches. Many of Brychan’s children are patrons of churches beyond Brycheiniog, in Cydweli and Dyfed, and even as far away as Anglesey, not to mention the probably secondary growth of ‘Brychan lineages’ in Ireland, Cornwall and Brittany.

For all that, the saints are united by their claim to belong to aristocratic bloodlines: Brychan of Brycheiniog, Cunedda Wledig of Gwynedd, the Powys royal line of Cadell Ddyrnllug, the later Powys line from Tegonwy ap Teon. Other ancestors were important for their role in early Brittonic history and Welsh literature. Urien of Rheged, for instance, was the subject both of the Taliesin poems and of a cycle of verse in *englyn* metre, while Caradog Freichfras is best known through a French romance, reflecting Welsh material that is sadly not extant today. The saints of Wales were made into children, grandchildren and collaterals of the rulers and heroic warriors of early medieval Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and north Britain. These were the Welsh answer to the *parentes secundum saeculum nobilissimi*. The full scale of this genealogical construct is only revealed when we reach the high Middle Ages and *Bonedd y Saint*, to which we finally turn.

*Bonedd y Saint: the main collection of Welsh saints’ genealogies*

*Bonedd y Saint* first appears in Aberystwyth, NLW Peniarth MS 16, part vi, a detached portion of a late-thirteenth-century manuscript from north Wales. Further important early copies are Peniarth 45 and Cardiff, City Library MS 1.363, both from the first half of the fourteenth century. From that time down to the end of the Welsh manuscript tradition *c.* 1800, there are more than ninety copies of *Bonedd y Saint* extant. The text was not stable and tended to grow. Already by the middle of the thirteenth century, when the archetype of the surviving texts was written, it contained 63 entries, not all of which can go back to the original compilation.<sup>59</sup> Later

<sup>58</sup> Patrick Sims-Williams, ed., *Buchedd Beuno: The Middle Welsh Life of St Beuno* (Dublin, 2018). The Life proper makes no genealogical connection between Beuno and Cadell but this is addressed in a pedigree attached to the end of it and in *ByS* §30, which makes Beuno descend from Cadell by a collateral line, thus linking him to the early Powys kings and to the important St Tysilio.

<sup>59</sup> Hence the thirteenth-century archetype must be distinguished clearly from the original compilation, which was older and no doubt shorter. For one early addition to the text, St Peris of Llanberis (§41), see Barry J. Lewis, ‘*Bonedd y Saint*, *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, and

additions would bring the number of entries close to a hundred, and many later copies are full of doublets because they drew on more than one exemplar; indeed the majority of copies of *Bonedd y Saint* are composite in one way or another. Neither the name of the original compiler nor the date when he was working is known.<sup>60</sup> As a rough guide to its date, it is clear that the collection has been influenced by Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum*, which appeared c. 1138, while its orthography makes it unlikely that it was compiled after the desuetude of Old Welsh orthography in the early thirteenth century. The contents point clearly to Gwynedd and, rather less certainly, to the church of Clynnog Fawr.<sup>61</sup> Everything we have seen so far confirms that *Bonedd y Saint* was a comparatively late assemblage of documentation in a well-established vein. The compiler must have drawn on the resources of many churches to do his work. He certainly got material from Clynnog itself and from the network of Clynnog's patron-saint, St Beuno, notably Berriew in Powys. Another source was the Llŷn church of Aberdaron or its dependent island, Bardsey, and from further afield it is quite plausible that St Davids or Llanddewi Brefi contributed material. Beyond these regional centres, individual pedigrees may have been obtained from their own churches, by whatever means. The compiler was surely a well-travelled man, a senior cleric, perhaps with political connections and an administrative role.

*Bonedd y Saint* covers north and central Wales quite well. It is much weaker towards the south and omits the Brychan material altogether, either because the compiler regarded the existing version(s) of that as sufficient or because he was apparently determined to include only saints of Brittonic ancestry (through the patriline, Brychan and his descendants were Irish). Of the 63 entries in the thirteenth-century archetype, only three are not devoted to Britons: St Gwyddfarch of Meifod (§37), is portrayed as an Italian in spite of his Welsh name, but he slips in as the teacher of the important St Tysilio; St Peris of Llanberis (§41) is another saint with a Welsh name who has been exoticized, but he was not part of the original compilation; and St Germanus (§61) had an importance for the story of British Christianity that overrode any other consideration. St Cwyfan (§50), though undoubtedly originating in St Caoimghin of Glendalough, was Cymricized and so cannot be treated as a fourth exception.<sup>62</sup> The

historical scholarship at Valle Crucis abbey', in *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: New Contexts, Studies, and Texts*, ed. Ben Guy et al. (Turnhout, 2020), 139–54.

<sup>60</sup> I use male pronouns as the compiler must almost inevitably have been an ecclesiastic. Moreover, he disregarded female saints almost entirely. St Gwenfrewy/Winefride, for instance, was not included until a block of mainly north-eastern saints were added to the end of the text in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

<sup>61</sup> My full arguments for the date and location of the original compilation are given in my forthcoming edition.

<sup>62</sup> In *ByS* §50 Cwyfan's father has a Welsh name and his mother is attached to a place in Dyffryn Clwyd. On all these entries see the notes in my edition.

pedigrees tend to be short, three or four generations long, and give little extraneous information: the odd place-name, sometimes a mother's line too. Such shallow and laconic pedigrees convey little without an understanding of the secular genealogical construct upon which they rest, which is the one that we have seen presented in earlier sources, according to which the saints were close kin to the kings and heroes of the formative post-Roman centuries. The poor sources for early medieval Wales prevent us from knowing when the idea of an 'age of saints' was constructed to match and overlap with the secular heroic age of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, but the concept itself had some historical justification. It was a fact that the major churches of medieval Wales were indeed founded in those centuries, and they must have been founded by rich, influential people, as elsewhere in Christendom. However, once we turn to the details of individual instances, the ground becomes altogether treacherous, as is apparent from the pedigrees of *Bonedd y Saint*. To take one example: a constructing hand is visible behind the overly neat pattern of St Cadfan and his cousins (§§19, 21–4), all sons of different sons of Emyr Llydaw, and for that matter behind Emyr Llydaw himself, whose generic and unlikely name, 'ruler of Brittany', hints at fabrication. The pedigree of St Llonio (§58) cannot be historically true since his father's name has been appropriated from a ruler of Brittany contemporary with William the Conqueror, and those of Teilo and Cadog (§§5, 32) have been manipulated, to say the least (see below). The interpolated entry for St Peris (§41) rests on a misidentification, while the stories of drowned lands off the coast that underlie §§40 and 42 were legendary. Nor is it a plausible coincidence that the patrons of both northern cathedrals, SS. Deiniol and Asaph (§§12, 13), were both descended from the northern hero Pabo Post Prydain – or, for that matter, that so many figures of northern legend had offspring who settled in Wales. St Gwyddfarch (§37) has been given a fantastic Italian pedigree on no stronger basis than the similarity of his name to that of an eleventh-century prince of Salerno.<sup>63</sup> All this hints at widespread creativity in the rest of the text, if only we had the means to spot it. The effort put into making these retrospective creations suggests that the pedigrees should have had a purpose or at least have carried some specific meaning for their curators. The question is complicated by the likelihood that some or all of the pedigrees are older than the collection, perhaps much older, so that the original motivation for each pedigree may not have been relevant or even remembered when that pedigree was recorded in *Bonedd y Saint*. The pedigrees in other sources which have already been examined, those of David, Cadog, Cynog and others, point to the importance of dynastic ties with founder figures of local political dynasties, yet by the time that

<sup>63</sup> All these cases are discussed in detail in the notes on the individual entries in my edition.



these genealogical claims appear in the eleventh- and twelfth-century *vitae*, the dynasties of Glywys, Brychan and even Cunedda Wledig had been displaced by more recent ones whose blood ties with the older dynasties, and so with their saints, were tenuous at best. Similarly, many saints in *Bonedd y Saint* are attached to dynasties whose historical and literary importance was great, but which were hardly contemporary power-brokers: the heroic families of the Old North, for instance. What, then, was the continuing relevance of these pedigrees in the twelfth century? Were the specific details of each pedigree still relevant, or was no more demanded than a general aura of antiquity?

*The claims made in Welsh saints' genealogies in the light of Irish parallels*

A useful step in considering the question of whether Welsh saints pedigrees mattered in their detail rather than merely in outline is to look at the much larger, richer and better-studied Irish corpus of saints' genealogies. There is plenty of evidence from medieval Ireland to show that the genealogies of important families were maintained at churches attached by rights of property to those families. Those genealogies included saints who were claimed for those families.<sup>64</sup> At some later date, genealogies of saints were taken out of these secular genealogies and put together to make the compilation known as the corpus of Irish saints' genealogies, which has been edited by Pádraig Ó Riain.<sup>65</sup> The oldest extant version is in a manuscript of c. 1130, though the compilation must have had a significant prehistory, of which we catch glimpses in other recensions of the work.<sup>66</sup>

It has been argued, by Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Pádraig Ó Riain in particular, that the Irish saints' genealogies reflect the claims of hereditary ecclesiastical families.<sup>67</sup> These regarded themselves as members of the same lineage as the founder saint. The classic case is Trim, co. Meath, of which there is an account in the ninth-century Book of Armagh.<sup>68</sup> Trim was founded by a British missionary, St Lommán, on land given to him by Fedilmid of Cenél Lóegairi. Fedilmid's son Foirtchern served in the

<sup>64</sup> For examples, see Edel Bhreatnach, 'The genealogies of Leinster as a source for local cults', in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, ed. J. Carey et al. (Dublin, 2001), 250–67.

<sup>65</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1985).

<sup>66</sup> Ó Riain broaches the possibility of a tenth-century origin, but finds a later, eleventh-century date plausible too (*Corpus Genealogiarum*, xvi–xviii).

<sup>67</sup> Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The early Irish churches: some aspects of organisation', in *Irish Antiquity: Essays and Studies Presented to Professor M. J. O'Kelly*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin (Cork, 1981), 327–41, at 328–31; Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Irish saints' genealogies', *Nomina* 7 (1983), 23–9. More generally on the maintenance of Irish cults, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Irish saints' cults and their constituencies', *Ériu* 54 (2004), 79–102.

<sup>68</sup> F. J. Byrne, 'A note on Trim and Sletty', *Peritia* 3 (1984), 316–19; T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Érlam: the patron saint of an Irish church', in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), 267–90.

church. Fedilmid had both secular and ecclesiastical descendants. The latter, termed his *ecclesiastica progenies* in the Book of Armagh, are headed by Foirtchern. These men succeeded to the headship of the church of Trim by hereditary right because Fedilmid had given the land on which it was built. The genealogy of Foirtchern is found too in the corpus of saints' genealogies.<sup>69</sup> He was regarded as one of the patron saints of Trim, and the record of his genealogy should have been kept as part of the documentation that reinforced the hereditary right of the family to succeed him.

Compared with Ireland, Wales has only very poor sources for early genealogy, but it is still worth asking whether any of the information in *Bonedd y Saint* can be associated with what little we know of the families that dominated the larger Welsh churches. Often, the apical figures of the pedigrees were men of continuing relevance. Take the section covering southern Powys, *Bonedd y Saint* §§30 to 38. These lines spring from three ancestors: Cadell Ddyrnllug, Tegoŵy ap Teon and Cyndrwyn. Cadell Ddyrnllug was the ancestor of the early kings of Powys. It appears that his dynasty lost the kingship, perhaps in the mid-ninth century, but at any rate the rise of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn (d. 1075) and his descendants would have directed genealogical interest towards their patriline. It is among the early generations of this later royal line, the one that was in power when *Bonedd y Saint* was compiled, that Tegoŵy son of Teon is found, and there were several minor dynasties descending from him who were prominent in areas of Powys or to the south of Powys. Cyndrwyn, finally, was the progenitor of a family known chiefly through literary sources, especially the well-known poems about the death of Cyndrwyn's son, Cynddylan, and the exile of his daughter Heledd at the hands of the English.<sup>70</sup> Evidently the family was thought to have ruled Powys in the past, although there is no other record of this (unsurprisingly, since the historical record of early Powys is so thin and discontinuous). It emerges that the saints of §§30–8 are claimed as members of royal dynasties, which parallels the Irish situation. All three lines are mentioned in a poem by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (fl. second half of the twelfth century), in which the poet sends his greetings to the fifteen great lineages of Powys.<sup>71</sup> After this, though, things become difficult. Meifod, the church of St Tysilio (§33), was the most important church of southern Powys. We have a poem in honour of Tysilio which places great emphasis on his Cadelling descent and in which he is undoubtedly treated as a political, dynastic saint of Powys.<sup>72</sup> Yet the

<sup>69</sup> Ó Riain, *Corpus Genealogiarum*, §45.

<sup>70</sup> See Ifor Williams, ed., *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Caerdydd, 1935) and Jenny Rowland, ed. and trans., *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the Englynion* (Cambridge, 1990).

<sup>71</sup> In the poem *Gwelygorddau Powys*, see Nerys Ann Jones and Ann Parry Owen, eds, *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, 1 (Caerdydd, 1991), 10.24, 28, 76. The first reference is to the Lleision, descendants of a Lles seven generations below Tegoŵy.

<sup>72</sup> Jones and Parry Owen, *Gwaith Cynddelw* 1, poem 3.

Cadelling were not the current rulers of Powys. Nor can it be demonstrated that the church family at Meifod connected themselves to Cadell, so far as can be seen. A later source gives us the ancestry of one of the patrons named in the poem, Caradog, archdeacon of Meifod.<sup>73</sup> It traces him back to a certain *Kynan*, *twyssoc Powys* ‘prince of Powys’. Unfortunately it cannot be confirmed that this is Cynan Garwyn of the Cadelling. The chronology of the pedigree would place this Cynan in the late tenth century, a stretch even for the credulity of medieval users of pedigrees, as Peter Bartrum acknowledges.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore there are plenty of scribal variants which would remove Caradog from the Cadelling line, notably *Kynfyn* and *Bleddyn ap Kynfyn*, which would place Caradog in a collateral line with the Powys rulers of his own day, and another variant through *Kadwgon ap Elystan Glodrydd*, which would make him a much more distant collateral of theirs as a member of the Iorweirthion of the district between Wye and Severn. None of this can be relied on even as a record of the family’s claims, let alone reality. Caradog certainly belonged to a dynasty of hereditary churchmen at Meifod – other names in this pedigree turn up as clerics in charters – but there can be no confidence that the family attempted to build any genealogical bridge to St Tysilio.<sup>75</sup>

In the next century we have a possible example: Addaf ap Meurig, ‘official’ of Powys, who appears in various charters and other documents. He is described as *rector* of Meifod or one of its *rectores*, and David Stephenson calls him a portioner of the church and the dominant person within it in his day; he was closely associated with the service of the prince, Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn, as well.<sup>76</sup> Most interestingly, his pedigree (again, alas, only available in a late source) traces him back to Gwyn ap

<sup>73</sup> Peter Bartrum, ed., ‘Pedigrees of the Welsh tribal patriarchs’, *NLWJ* 13 (1963–4), 93–146, at 119 (Llawr Grach of Meifod). The earliest manuscript of this is a part of Peniarth 131 written 1494 × 1509 (ex. inf. Ben Guy). The identification of *Kradoc* in the pedigree with Archdeacon Caradog is made likely by the presence of his son Sulien there too; on him see Huw Pryce, ‘Church and society in Wales, 1150–1250: an Irish perspective’, in *The British Isles 1100–1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections*, ed. R. R. Davies (Edinburgh, 1988), 27–47, at 39.

<sup>74</sup> Bartrum, ‘Pedigrees of the Welsh tribal patriarchs’, 139 (note on this pedigree). Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘Powys and early Welsh poetry’, *CMCS* 67 (Summer 2014), 33–54, at 50, takes this unproblematically as a reference to Cynan Garwyn.

<sup>75</sup> On the family see Pryce, ‘Church and society’, and David Stephenson, *Medieval Powys: Kingdom, Principality and Lordships, 1132–1293* (Woodbridge, 2016), 253–4, 256–7. Further doubt is cast on the reliability of Caradog’s pedigree by the fact that it appears in an early sixteenth-century genealogical tract where it is traced no further back than his father, see *Llyma Dalm o Weheliaethau a Llwythau Cymru*, ed. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, Appendix B.6, §T13.2. I am grateful to Ben Guy for this reference.

<sup>76</sup> Stephenson, *Medieval Powys*, 265–6; the charters are in Huw Pryce, ed., *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), nos 358, 601–3, 606.

Gruffudd of the line of the Cadelling of Cegidfa (Guilsfield).<sup>77</sup> Here, possibly, is an example of a member of a lineage associated with a church and bearing an – admittedly very distant – relationship to the patron saint. It is unclear, however, whether the tie with St Tysilio was really of much relevance. Addaf belonged to a family based in the neighbouring territory of Ystrad Marchell. Their main importance was undoubtedly secular and their claim to Cadelling blood a secular claim to status. Indeed, Addaf himself is placed among the secular witnesses to one charter.<sup>78</sup> It would be a stretch, to say the least, to make the line of Gwyn ap Gruffudd of Cegidfa into a church family connected to Meifod, especially as they are not clearly related to the line of Caradog, the archdeacon of Meifod praised by Cynddelw a century earlier.

The church of Cegidfa (Guilsfield) itself is dedicated to St Aelhaearn; in *Bonedd y Saint* §36 Aelhaearn is a descendant of Cyndrwyn. Yet, according to the early thirteenth-century *Llywelyn ab Iorwerth Genealogies*, the dominant family in that part of Powys claimed descent from Cadell, not Cyndrwyn, as we have just seen.<sup>79</sup> It is not a very safe example, since we do not know who controlled the church itself. Again, though, there is divergence between the little we know of contemporary genealogical claims and the pedigree of the patron saint. Indeed some doubt must be cast on the Cyndrwynin as a contemporary family at all. They are known as figures of the remote past, but it is unclear whether anyone in twelfth- or thirteenth-century Powys claimed to descend from them.<sup>80</sup>

At Llandinam in 1132×1151 we find an abbot whose name was Dolffin and who belonged to another side-branch of the rulers of Powys.<sup>81</sup> Again, the local patron saint, Llonio, is not attached to that lineage; he is portrayed as a Breton. This is intriguing, because the pedigree of Llonio must have been forged very close to the time of Abbot Dolffin (as noted earlier, the

<sup>77</sup> *Llyma Dalm o Weheliaethau a Llwythau Cymru*, extant in a manuscript of c. 1510, see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, Appendix B.6, §T9.1.1, and on the tract itself, *ibid.*, 189–91, 219–20.

<sup>78</sup> Pryce, *Acts of Welsh Rulers*, no. 606 (dated 1277).

<sup>79</sup> *Llywelyn ab Iorwerth Genealogies*, §40 (ed. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, Appendix B.4); cf. Stephenson, *Medieval Powys*, 279, n. 40.

<sup>80</sup> They are the last of the dynasties listed by Cynddelw in *Gwelygorddau Powys* (Jones and Parry Owen, *Gwaith Cynddelw* 1, 10.73–6), perhaps because they were legendary by his time, and no later lineage seems to be traced back to Cyndrwyn. Indeed it is a point of the *Canu Heledd* material that the sons of Cyndrwyn all fell in battle, leaving only Heledd behind to mourn them. But quite a few of the families listed in *Gwelygorddau Powys* are otherwise unknown or unidentifiable, and it is worth sounding a note of caution about our ignorance here.

<sup>81</sup> Bartrum, ‘Pedigrees of the Welsh tribal patriarchs’, 118; *Llyma Dalom o Weheliaethau a Llwythau Cymru*, ed. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, Appendix B.6, §T5.2; Pryce, ‘Church and society’, 39; Pryce, *Acts of Welsh Rulers*, no. 480; Huw Pryce, ‘The church of Trefeglwys and the end of the “Celtic” charter tradition in twelfth-century Wales’, *CMCS* 25 (Summer 1993), 15–54, at 24–5; Stephenson, *Medieval Powys*, 259.

father's name was appropriated from a near-contemporary Breton ruler), and yet a choice was made in favour of an overseas origin for the saint: no attempt was made to link the abbot genealogically with his patron.

Moving from Powys to Anglesey, we possess two late-medieval lists of the families who controlled portions in the important church of Holyhead. These were local families of northern and western Anglesey. All claimed to be descendants of two men who date roughly to the twelfth century, Hwfa ap Cynddelw and Llywarch ap Brân, distant collaterals of the royal line of Gwynedd.<sup>82</sup> Alas, neither pedigree has anything to do with St Cybi of Holyhead who, according to both *Bonedd y Saint* §26 and the saint's Latin Lives, was of Cornish ancestry.<sup>83</sup> Again it would appear that from at least the twelfth century onwards, this church was under the patronage of men who made no claim to kinship with the family of their patron saint.

The last example is Llanbadarn Fawr in Ceredigion. When Gerald of Wales visited in 1188 he was shocked to discover the 'vile custom' that the abbot of Llanbadarn was a layman, at this time a man called Ednywain son of Gwaithfoed, whose sons were officiating at the altar.<sup>84</sup> As usual, the pedigree of Gwaithfoed is available only in late and dubious sources. It goes back to the legendary Gwyddno Garanhir, no apparent relation of the patron saint, Padarn.<sup>85</sup> Indeed Gerald gives us an alleged reason for the family's standing at Llanbadarn: their predecessors apparently murdered its bishop, and for that reason they now occupied its temporalities. No doubt Gerald's version of the story, which seems to imply that the family advocated some kind of 'right of conquest' over the possessions of Llanbadarn, is malicious. Had we access to the family's own telling, we might have found it more edifying, perhaps that they undertook to act as secular protectors of the church in recompense for the killing of the bishop. Whatever the story was, the implication is that the family of Gwaithfoed claimed their hereditary rights over the church on account of some extraordinary incident in the past, not through a blood link with Padarn. They had their own origin legend which brought them into the story of Llanbadarn at a date much later than the founding of the church. What is also striking is that the earlier and much better-attested ecclesiastical

<sup>82</sup> Alfred Neobard Palmer, 'The portionary churches of mediaeval north Wales: their tribal relations, and the sinecurism connected therewith', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 5th series 3 (1886), 174–209, at 177–86; *Llywelyn ab Iorwerth Genealogies*, §§48, 50. Hwfa is traced to Cunedda Wledig, Llywarch to Rhodri Mawr.

<sup>83</sup> *Vita S. Kebii (I) and (II)*, §1.

<sup>84</sup> For Gerald's condemnation of this *prava consuetudo*, see *Itinerarium Cambriae*, ii.4, ed. J. F. Dimock, *Giraldi Cambrensis opera* VI (London, 1868), 3–152.

<sup>85</sup> Bartrum, 'Pedigrees of the Welsh tribal patriarchs', §3 (p. 99) and §6.2 (p. 101), in manuscripts of the mid- to late sixteenth century; and it is not even certain that this Gwaithfoed 'of Ceredigion' can be identified with the father of Gerald's *bête noire*. For Padarn, regarded as a Breton not later than the late eleventh century, see *ByS* §21 and the discussion earlier in this chapter.

dynasty at Llanbadarn, that of Sulien (d. 1091) and his descendants, show no sign of having claimed kinship with St Padarn either. Indeed, in his Latin poem on the career of his father, Ieuan ap Sulien praises St Padarn without reference to his ancestry (ll. 69–85) and then immediately goes on to describe Sulien as born in Llanbadarn to ‘a distinguished stock of noble and always wise parents’ (ll. 86–7), using the topos from the *Vita S. Martini* that was discussed at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>86</sup> Neither do their contemporaries at Llancarfan, Lifris and Caradog, ever make genealogical claims for themselves in their hagiography.

The evidence for Welsh ecclesiastical families is less than complete, but it is clear that they existed and that they had a tight grip on the major churches, as in Ireland and indeed elsewhere. Occasionally the evidence shows us that these families belonged distantly to royal lineages; again, that is a point of comparison with Ireland. But it has not been possible to establish that they maintained any genealogical connection with their patron saints in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, nor to make a clear distinction from local families with a predominantly secular role who also had interests in churches. Admittedly, the sources are not really adequate to undertake such an investigation. It is quite possible that genealogical links with patron saints were maintained at the time that *Bonedd y Saint* was compiled, even though we cannot see them.

However, other explanations for the cultivation of the saints’ genealogies should also be sought. Genealogies could carry more subtle meanings than a simple blood link with the people currently in charge. At Trim in Ireland, the original family lost control in the early eighth century, supplanted by another, more powerful branch of Cenél Lóegairi. Later sources present conflicting evidence about what happened to the older cults. The saints of the old line still appear in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* around the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>87</sup> Unless the martyrology was based on old and outdated information, it would seem that the old cults were preserved when the new line took over. Three of these saints, Foirtchern and Áed Mór and Áed Becc, appear in the saints’ genealogies with their old lineage intact.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, they were left out of the account of Trim in the *Vita Tripartita* of St Patrick. Francis Byrne suggests that they were ‘deliberately omitted’ since ‘they had ... become irrelevant.’<sup>89</sup> The Irish evidence is complicated; there are instances where saints’ ancestries were updated to suit the claims of new dynasties, and instances where they

<sup>86</sup> *germine claro / nobilium semper sapientium iure parentum*. Text and translation: Lapidge, ‘The Welsh-Latin poetry’, 84–5.

<sup>87</sup> R. I. Best and H. J. Lawlor, eds, *The Martyrology of Tallaght* (London, 1931), 17 (under 17 February).

<sup>88</sup> Ó Riain, *Corpus Genealogiarum*, §§45, 690.9.

<sup>89</sup> Byrne, ‘A note on Trim and Sletty’, 317.

were not.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, links with church families were not the only consideration. Another case documented by Ó Riain is that of a dynasty of churchmen based at Kilronan in co. Roscommon, the well-known Uí Dhuibhgeannáin.<sup>91</sup> They did not link their patron saints to their own family; instead they forged links for them with surrounding aristocratic lineages, in an attempt, no doubt, to secure the favour of powerful local lords. This involved a series of rather daring identifications with better-known saints. None of this forged any genealogical connection between the saints and the family who controlled their churches, but it did endow their rather obscure saints with much more prestigious connections in other parts of the northern half of Ireland.

Thus there was a variety of genealogical strategies in practice. It is hard to penetrate behind the facade of *Bonedd y Saint* because of the limited sources available for comparison. Nevertheless, it is occasionally possible to discern some tantalizing hints of manipulation. Why, for example, is St Teilo (§5) a nephew of St David? This is the only source that says so. St Teilo is the patron saint of the cathedral of Llandaf in south-east Wales. In the twelfth century St Davids and Llandaf were at loggerheads for years. It is unimaginable that anyone at Llandaf would have accepted this pedigree, because it is a blatant attempt to subordinate Teilo to David. The materials underlying this first section surely come from a David church. Suspicion is aroused also by §32. Here, St Cadog has been crowbarred into the same genealogy as St Beuno, that is, the old royal dynasty of Powys, by the simple expedient of confusing his father Gwynllyw with the quite different Gwynllyw who was Beuno's grandfather. The resulting conflated genealogy completely subverts the view recorded in Lifris's *Vita S. Cadoci* and its later, appended genealogies, from Cadog's own church.<sup>92</sup> It makes the saints uncle and nephew, again a hint of aggrandizement on the part of the adherents of St Beuno, and a sign that this section was based on materials from a Beuno church. These very few cases, in which we seem to catch the creators of the pedigrees red-handed, are reassuring inasmuch as they suggest that the content of the pedigrees was relevant enough to make such interventions worthwhile. But most of the time the very poor comparative evidence leaves us with little choice other than to take the pedigrees or leave them.

Another issue related to the genealogies is the existence of networks between churches. These are well-evidenced in early medieval Ireland, but the Welsh sources allow us only fragmentary hints about them before the

<sup>90</sup> Ó Riain, 'Irish saints' genealogies', 23–9.

<sup>91</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Irish saints' cults and ecclesiastical families', in *Local Saints and Local Churches*, ed. Thacker and Sharpe, 291–302.

<sup>92</sup> See *Vita S. Cadoci*, §§45–7; as we saw earlier, the view at Llancarfan was that Cadog descended from the royal line of his own region and indeed refused the kingship that was his by hereditary right (*ibid.*, §8).

great restructuring of the Church in the twelfth century. An example is the *Vita S. Kebii*, versions (I) and (II), both of which contain hagiographical material from Holyhead in Anglesey and Llangybi in Gwent at the opposite end of the country. The implication is that the churches that maintained the cult of Cybi had institutional links of some kind. The anonymous *Vita S. Wenefrede* indicates that Holywell bore some marks of subordination to Clynnog Fawr: each year Winefride would send Beuno a new vestment.<sup>93</sup> It would seem that Clynnog's network extended to the far south-east of Wales. There is a Beuno church at Llanveynoe, just over the Herefordshire border, while Caerwent plays an important role in the Life of St Beuno.<sup>94</sup> A Welsh poem in honour of St Tysilio sets various episodes in Tysilio's life in different parts of Wales, and it is possible to identify these with known churches of Tysilio.<sup>95</sup> Another poem in honour of St David lists many of the saint's churches, again hinting at affiliations that probably had some institutional basis earlier.<sup>96</sup> It is matter for speculation whether any of the genealogical links in *Bonedd y Saint* are evidence for such affiliations. Were, for instance, the churches of Padarn and his cousins (§§20–4) linked in any way? If so, what is the implication of the forging of a similar pedigree for Llonio of Llandinam (§58) in the twelfth century? Sadly there does not seem to be any way of taking such questions further.

We return then to the question whether the specific lineage of a saint was still important in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, or whether it sufficed simply that a saint could be fitted in somewhere that was prestigiously kingly, heroic and antique. *Bonedd y Saint* is reminiscent of another high-medieval Welsh compilation, *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, in its accommodation of many lineages, some of whom were hostile to one another according to other literary sources. Just as those Triads, which form an index of characters in Welsh storytelling, record indifferently the names of individuals who, in the story world behind the Triads, were bitter enemies, so *Bonedd y Saint* includes saints descended from Dunod ap Pabo (cf. §12) and Gwallog ap Lleennog (cf. §§12, 48), even though these were enemies of Owain and Elffin, sons of Urien, from whom other saints descended (cf. §§14, 15).<sup>97</sup> Neither here nor in the Triads is there any difficulty in presenting members of these families side-by-side. Common membership of the elite of the northern heroic age is what seems to matter,

<sup>93</sup> *Vita S. Wenefrede*, §§15–17.

<sup>94</sup> Sims-Williams, *Buchedd Beuno*, 41–5.

<sup>95</sup> Jones and Parry Owen, *Gwaith Cynddelw I*, poem 3; new edition of 'Canu Tysilio' by Ann Parry Owen at <welshsaints.ac.uk/theedition/>.

<sup>96</sup> Kathleen Anne Bramley *et al.*, eds, *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif* (Caerdydd, 1994), poem 26 (ed. Morfydd E. Owen); James, 'The geography of the cult of St David'. A new edition of 'Canu i Ddewi', by Ann Parry Owen, appears at <welshsaints.ac.uk/theedition/>; see also Chapter 11 below, esp. 282–6.

<sup>97</sup> For the enmity, see Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, 424 (stanzas 37–41).



rather than particulars. It must be regarded as a possibility that, by the time that *Bonedd y Saint* was assembled, any specific political and church-political messages conveyed by the pedigrees had faded in importance. A late fabrication such as the Breton lineage of St Llonio might simply imitate a familiar pattern, and not imply anything about the connections of the church of Llandinam.

The comparison between *Bonedd y Saint* and *Trioedd Ynys Prydain* is worth pursuing further. Both are high-medieval compilations of knowledge from disparate story-traditions, and both act as indexes to their respective narrative worlds. This is evident for the Triads but, on reflection, can be seen to be true of the saints' genealogies too. To be sure, *Bonedd y Saint* only rarely mentions actual stories: the section on St Cadfan and his cousins (§§19–24), for instance, reflects a story of a Breton mission to Wales for which we previously saw evidence in the *Vita S. Paterni*, while the entry for St Germanus (§61) summarizes a complex tradition. Nevertheless, each pedigree implies a story of some kind, just as the Triads do. Some of these stories can be glimpsed in extant hagiography, such as the elaborate conception of St David. Others, for example the arrival of the 20,000 saints on Bardsey, have not survived in any full form and have to be reconstructed from poor fragments.<sup>98</sup> Others still have not come down at all, but there must be some kind of story that connected the saints of §§40 and 42 to the legends of drowned lands, for instance. *Bonedd y Saint* provides eloquent testimony that a huge amount of hagiographical embroidery occurred in early medieval Wales, and it warns us to be wary of taking the small number of extant Latin Lives as representative: there was far, far more storytelling about the saints, and many more churches were involved, than the more conventional record of the *vitae* reveals. It is this breadth of potential material that drove the compilatory nature of *Bonedd y Saint*, and its tendency to be altered and especially to grow, all of which is paralleled in the textual history of *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*. Indeed the two works sometimes accompany one another in the manuscripts, a matter to which I will return.

As compilations, *Bonedd y Saint* and *Trioedd Ynys Prydain* offer broad coverage that is not constrained by local, particular, or particularist, political claims. In Wales, as in Ireland, most saints' genealogies are not preserved in their original context – that is, in a document relevant to the

<sup>98</sup> Two late-medieval poems on the Bardsey saints have survived; see A. Cynfael Lake, ed., *Gwaith Hywel Dafi*, 2 vols (Aberystwyth, 2015), II, poem 93, and *LBS*, IV, 437–8 (this one by Tomas Celli). A third late-medieval poem possibly associates the event with the aftermath of the Synod of Llanddewi Brefi (G. Hartwell Jones, *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrimage Movement (= Y Cymmrodor 23)* (London, 1912), 355–6). In any case, it should be emphasized that there was a story, or stories, in which a vast multitude of saints went to Bardsey: the 20,000 were not imagined simply as a gradual accumulation of deceased pilgrims.

needs of a particular cult or church – but rather they come pre-packaged in a large collection. A genealogy has its place within the cult of the individual saint, but a text that consists of dozens of saints' pedigrees lumped together cannot have the same immediate political or social significance as a single pedigree. A catalogue of saints' genealogies is a secondary and later phenomenon which requires its own explanation.<sup>99</sup> Whatever the local and particular origins of each pedigree, the inclusion of all together in one work makes a clear statement of ownership by a broad community. The same applies to the gathering of the totality of Welsh narrative traditions in the Triads. The accumulation of diverse materials into these works of reference is an act which separated those materials from any local or particularist agenda and appropriated them for what can fairly be called a national agenda. This will be the topic of the last part of this survey.

### Bonedd y Saint *and the question of ethnic identity*

Traditionally, ethnic identity has dominated the study of the medieval European past. Part of the appeal of hagiography is that it opens perspectives on a swathe of alternative identities, as James Palmer has noted.<sup>100</sup> These include gender identities, social and class identities, the family, the lineage, the town or city, the region, the individual church or monastery, secular identities versus religious ones, monastic identity versus that of the secular clergy, and so on. Certainly *Bonedd y Saint* has much to say about some of these, in spite of its laconic wording. But we can hardly ignore the fact that the whole shape of *Bonedd y Saint* has been determined by the ethnic or national identity of Welshness, and as such the work simply has to be investigated in this light. Despite its uneven coverage of the country, *Bonedd y Saint* propagates an idea of Wales as a country and the Welsh as a people. This idea is defined geographically, by the churches covered, and ethnically, by the emphasis on descent from the Brittonic lineages of Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and the Old North, and the near-total exclusion of saints

<sup>99</sup> Compare Máire Herbert in her review of Anne O'Sullivan, ed., *The Book of Leinster*, VI, in *Éigse* 22 (1987), 166–8, at 167: 'The inclusion of saints' pedigrees here [*sc.* in general genealogies] has a contextual significance lacking in the *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum* itself. The latter work ... is, I believe, a secondary compilation ... The excerpting of saints' pedigrees and their cataloguing as a distinct corpus has all the appearance of a scholarly exercise, in which the saint's descent stands as a matter of learned record rather than as an instrument of propaganda ... a mere listing of saints' pedigrees ... discloses almost nothing of the practical functioning of its materials, in the legitimation of claims, or the validation of a politically expedient *status quo*.' Delehayé made a similar point about the general martyrology as opposed to those which mark the devotions of a particular church: 'Comme tout agrégat, il vaut ce que valent ses composants' (*Cinq leçons*, 48).

<sup>100</sup> 'Hagiography helps us to shift focus to the other identities and fora for action that talk of ethnicity might obscure': James T. Palmer, *Early Medieval Hagiography* (Leeds, 2018), 100.

who did not have Brittonic ancestry, however widely culted.<sup>101</sup> Again, a close comparison is *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, for the Triads were similarly a repository of information linking the legendary past of Wales to that of the wider Brittonic world. In both cases the framework is national, even if it is imperfectly achieved.

This national vision raises the question of identity afresh. The genealogy of the Irish or Welsh saint, leaving aside its narrower political aspect, relates to the wider cult of saints because it was about identification: the people who identified with the genealogy felt close to the saint because he or she was ‘one of them’. Such an attitude is rooted in the very concept of the saint. It is precisely because of the closeness of the saints that they were trusted to be advocates in heaven. So much was true all over Christendom, where every church or monastery had its own devotions. The idea of a corpus of hagiography defined by nation is an extension of the same idea, one that accepts a notion of kinship extending beyond individual lineages to embrace a wider community defined by common ancestry and geography. Thus a sense of closeness to local saints merged with a wider attitude in early medieval Wales towards the nature of ethnicity as a fundamentally genealogical category. This linkage of ethnicity and ancestry was central to much genealogical activity in medieval Wales and elsewhere, as Ben Guy as recently argued.<sup>102</sup> In *Bonedd y Saint* we see it extended to the Brittonic contingent in heaven. The Irish corpus of saints’ genealogies is another such national survey of sanctity. To judge by the scale of such works as the *Martyrology of Tallaght* and the *Féilire Óengusso*, the Irish had arrived at the idea of making a national survey of saints’ cults by the early ninth century at the latest.<sup>103</sup> There were certain precedents in the rest of Europe. The collections of Lives made by Gregory of Tours in the sixth century form a survey of the saints of Gaul, while Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*, likewise of the sixth century, do the same

<sup>101</sup> This ethnic exclusivity was not maintained during the late-medieval development of the text, when many saints of diverse background were added. For instance, the north-eastern group added by a writer at Valle Crucis abbey in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (referred to above, n. 59) included the English St Oswald and also St Ffraid, i.e. the Irish Brigit, and in further versions the Irish descent of Cwyfan was reasserted as well. Moreover, many later versions found ways to couple *Bonedd y Saint* with the Brychan materials, hitherto excluded. For a later manifestation of an ethnic definition of sanctity, however, compare the newly discovered collection of hagiographical material in Yale, Beinecke Library, Osborn fb229, an early seventeenth-century manuscript with a very strong tendency to focus exclusively on Brittonic saints. See David Callander, ‘Yale, Llyfrgell Beinecke, Osborn fb229’, *Dwned* 25 (2019), 71–8, at 74, 76.

<sup>102</sup> Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, Chapter 1, esp. 12–19.

<sup>103</sup> On the date of these texts, see Pádraig Ó Riain, ‘The Tallaght Martyrologies, redated’, *CMCS* 20 (1990), 21–38, answered by Liam Breatnach, ‘Poets and poetry’, in *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies*, ed. Kim McCone and Katharine Simms (Maynooth, 1996), 65–77, at 74–5. The precise date does not affect my point here.

for Italy.<sup>104</sup> These regions were arguably less tightly defined than Ireland in the early Middle Ages, and their unity more geographical than genealogical, but even so they were meaningful enough to form the framework of these hagiographical collections. The Gaelic world, a much smaller and more tightly defined region, bound together by strong cultural networks in the shape of the local church and the learned professions, was ripe terrain for this idea, and the importance of genealogy in the construction of Irish identity pointed the way towards a peculiarly genealogical conception of a national sainthood. Most of the great medieval Irish books of historical texts contain a version of the corpus of saints' genealogies, and those in turn are generally part of larger sections devoted to lore of the saints. Other texts that often accompany them are the tract on saints who share the same name and the tract on the mothers of Irish saints.<sup>105</sup> Manuscript contexts tell us something about the scribes' perception of the saints' genealogies. The Irish saints' genealogies were scholarly texts, and part of a larger body of such documents devoted to the scholarly investigation of the saints, and in turn the lore of the saints was part of *senchus*, an even larger body of scholarly activity embracing secular genealogy, origin tales, and the investigation of the Irish past within the framework of universal and Christian history.<sup>106</sup>

The early manuscript contexts of *Bonedd y Saint* are strikingly similar. True, it does not occur with any other material on saints, but it is consistently found next to other texts relating to British history. NLW 5266B (of which Peniarth 16vi is a detached portion), Peniarth 45 and Cardiff 1.363 are all manuscripts of the Welsh translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum*. The first two also contain the Triads, as noted earlier, as is also the case in Peniarth 4 (the White Book of Rhydderch), of the middle of the fourteenth century. Of all the early manuscripts, only Cardiff 3.242 (c. 1400) actually puts *Bonedd y Saint* together with religious texts. This juxtaposition with historical works is telling us something very important: *Bonedd y Saint* was a part of the British history. It was part of the corpus of texts that defined the Britishness of the Welsh, their ancient right to the island of Britain and the links of blood between Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and the Brittonic north. This idea is the cornerstone of medieval Welsh historical understanding. Thus it can be seen that there are grounds for comparison with the Irish compilations.

<sup>104</sup> On Gregory of Tours, see, e.g., Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993). Gregory the Great's work is edited in Adalbert de Vogüé and Paul Antin, eds, *Grégoire le Grand: Dialogues*, II, Sources Chrétiennes 260 (Paris, 1979), book I.

<sup>105</sup> These and other related material are all edited in Ó Riain, *Corpus Genealogiarum*.

<sup>106</sup> F. J. Byrne, 'Senchas: the nature of Gaelic historical tradition', in *Historical Studies, XI: Papers Read before the Irish Conference of Historians, Cork, 29–31 May 1971*, ed. J. G. Barry (Belfast, 1974), 137–59.

To be sure, there was not as much scholarship regarding the saints in Wales as there was in Ireland, but there is a recognizable shared concern with national history, as defined through origins and genealogy. Though *Bonedd y Saint* presents only bare pedigrees without any commentary, there could be few more eloquent statements of historical identity. Such is made clear not just by the way the text is put together, but also by its early partnership with those other talismans of British identity, Geoffrey of Monmouth and *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*.

Of the Insular regions, Wales seems to have come rather late to the idea of a national catalogue of saints. Ireland, as we have seen, produced such catalogues not later than *c.* 800. There is, however, evidence even closer to Wales for quite early cataloguing of national saints, namely in Anglo-Saxon England. The ‘Mildrith Legend’, on the many saints of the royal family of Kent, was put together in that kingdom in the eighth century. Once the kingdom of England was formed, the way was open for a larger vision. Then English writers pursued a different kind of cataloguing: not genealogical, but instead focused on the geography of tomb-cults and saints’ resting places. A collection of these is extant, known as the *Secgan* after its opening words: *Her onginneð secgan be þam Godes sanctum, þe on Engla lande ærost reston* ‘Here begins an account of the saints of God who first rested in England.’ A short extract will convey the nature of the work:

Ðonne resteð sanctus Ecgwinus biscop on Euoesham, neah þare éa Auene. Ðonne resteð sancte Kenelm cynebearn on Wincelescumbe. Ðonne resteð sancte Cuðburh and Cwenburh on Winburnan mynstre, þe ærest þæt minicena lif and þeawas arærde, þe man git on þam mynstre hylt ...

Likewise St Ecgwin, bishop, rests at Evesham, near the river Avon. Likewise St Kenelm king’s-son rests at Winchcombe. Likewise St Cuthburgh and St Cwenburgh rest at the minster of Wimbourne, the first who instituted the regular life and customs which are still maintained in the minster.<sup>107</sup>

The nationalness of the content could not be more pointed: the survey is arranged north to south, roughly from Northumbria to Wessex, and many places are defined by their topography, especially what river they are near.<sup>108</sup> The cataloguing of English geography should be a reminder that

<sup>107</sup> For the text, see Felix Liebermann, ed., *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hannover, 1889), 9–19, and for discussion, D. W. Rollason, ‘Lists of saints’ resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), 61–93.

<sup>108</sup> For the prominence of rivers in geographical imagination, compare the seventh-century account of St Patrick’s perambulations in Ireland by Tírechán; his geographical vision is the subject of Thomas Charles Edwards, *St Patrick and the Landscape of Early Medieval Ireland*, Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lectures 10 (Cambridge, 2012).

Ireland and Wales were not alone in the intertwining of the universal community of saints with one's own soil – *Godes sanctum* and *Engla lande*. The *Secgan* and its relatives are the English equivalent of *Féilire Óengusso*, the Irish saints' genealogies, and *Bonedd y Saint*. When an anonymous cleric in Gwynedd came to produce a national catalogue of saints in the later twelfth century or the early thirteenth, he was participating in an attitude towards sanctity that was widely shared. His own work stands next to other historicizing texts of the same era that emphasized the ethnic distinctiveness of the Welsh: Geoffrey of Monmouth's history and its Welsh translations, the Triads, and the quasi-historical labours of the propagandists of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth that we see in the tale *Breuddwyd Maxen* and the *Llywelyn ab Iorwerth Genealogies*. The saints' pedigrees started out as secular genealogies which were pressed into the service of churches, with the aim of closely associating those churches with secular power. By the time of *Bonedd y Saint*, they were being used to construct the image of a British church in heaven which could reinforce the secular claim to peoplehood in the present.