Commemorating the Past:
The Breton Church and its Irish Element, c.800-1100

Elysée Yhuel

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Declaration

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Summary

The thesis examines the cultural memory of Breton monastic institutions, with a focus on the Irish influence on this memory. Rather than concentrating on a saint's individual dossier, this thesis uses the dossiers of ten Breton saints to provide several small case studies and provide a general overview on the Irish influence on Breton hagiography. Using Breton hagiographies written from 800-1100, this thesis studies:

a. how Ireland was represented in a Breton monastic context.
b. If these hagiographies reflect attempts to reconstruct a continuity with the past, a past intertwined with Ireland, that had been broken?
c. Whether the Irish influence on the Breton church affected the manner in which monks navigated through historical ruptures.
d. Whether Breton monastic identity was partly shaped by religious culture shared with Ireland?

The introduction provides some historical context of the period in question (c.800-1100), using the episode of Louis the Pious's visit to Priziac, Brittany and his mandate that the abbey of Landévennec abandon its Irish *conversatio* and tonsure and adopt the Benedictine Rule. Breton monastic writing, which flourished in the ninth century, is discussed within the context of increased Carolingian influence over the region and the rise of more centralized power in Brittany, led by Breton leaders functioning more or less independently. These hagiographies show a keen interest in the Insular world. This section outlines the main questions and aims of the thesis. The introduction also outlines the secondary literature on early medieval Breton hagiography and the relationship between early Ireland and Brittany, pointing out gaps which this thesis seeks to address. The discussion of the literature, which examines hagiography through a positivist lens, is used as a springboard to introduce the methodology of the thesis: cultural memory. Foundational theorists and their works are considered, before explaining the theory of cultural memory as succinctly and clearly as possible. This section argues why cultural memory is useful for studying monastic institutions.

Chapter One lays the groundwork for the subsequent chapters by sketching the beginnings of Brittany as a British colony and with it, the Breton church. It sheds light on

the ecclesiastical structures and spiritual practices of the early Breton church, using a wide variety of sources, before discussing the influence of the Desert Fathers and Ireland on asceticism in early Brittany.

Chapters Two to Four look at the dossiers of ten saints. Chapter Two studies the *Lives* of the saints of Landévennec, Guénolé, Ethbin, and Guenael, and explores the Irish elements in each of these *Lives*. This chapter argues that Landévennec's relationship with Ireland played a key role in the community's monastic memory. Chapter Three analyses the *Lives* of Samson of Dol, Malo, Paul Aurelian, Brioc, and Gildas. While not all of these hagiographies mention Ireland in their narratives, this chapter argues that the Insular origins and careers of these saints were commemorated by their respective monastic communities. The Irish elements in the *Lives* of Samson of Dol, Malo, and Gildas are examined to find out what they may suggest about the authors' perception and knowledge of Ireland, and more importantly, what they mean for the memory of each monastic community. Chapter Four looks at the *Lives* of Judoc and Conwoïon, which do not have Insular, or Irish elements. The former *Life* was produced abroad, likely by a Breton but for a north-eastern Frankish community. Turning to the abbey of Redon, on the Vilaine river, this chapter compares the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* and *Vita Conuuionis*, arguing that there was a shift in the monastic memory of this community between the writing of these two hagiographical texts.

Chapter Five demonstrates that Wales served as an intermediary between Ireland and Brittany, filtering most of the Irish influence we see in Breton hagiography. The chapter first begins by providing evidence of the strong links between Ireland and Wales and Wales and Brittany, before arguing for continuous contact between Welsh and Breton monasteries until at least the ninth century.

The conclusion offers a summary of each chapter, considers the usefulness of cultural memory as a methodology, and returns to the original questions posed in the introduction. It provides a commentary on the significance of the Irish influence in some of the Breton hagiographies explored in this thesis and offers some final thoughts on the future of studies on early medieval Brittany.

Maps

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‘Memory fades, memory adjusts,

memory conforms to what we think we remember.’

-Joan Didion, *Blue Nights*

In the year 818, Louis the Pious, while on military campaign in Brittany, met with Matmonoc, the abbot of Landévennec. There, in Priziac, driven by his recent efforts to have all monasteries in his empire adopt the Rule of St Benedict as a means to create a unified Christian *imperium*, he interrogated the abbot to discover what monastic rule the community was following. Matmonoc attested that the abbey of Landévennec received the *conversatio* (way of life) and *tonsio* (tonsure) which they used *ab scotis* (from the Irish), and confirmed that it was different from that used by the church of Rome. The emperor declared that from then on, the community of Landévennec must follow the Rule of St Benedict to conform with the universal church. A copy of this royal diploma, with the emperor’s mandate, is conserved in the cartulary of Landévennec.

It is against this backdrop that this thesis will examine how Breton hagiography from 800-1100 was used by Breton monasteries to respond to the political and ecclesiastical changes they experienced during this period.[1] This thesis refers to these changes as ‘ruptures’ and argues that these were the impetus behind the redaction of many Breton hagiographies during this period, in an attempt to preserve continuity with a particular past.[2] While acknowledging the influence of the Carolingian Renaissance in Brittany, this thesis argues that it is also no coincidence that Breton monastic writing increased significantly in the ninth

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1 This period has been chosen because c. 800 roughly represents the beginning of Breton hagiographical writing and the eleventh century represents a period of ‘stability’ after the viking invasions. The eleventh century is also when the famous Cartulary of Landévennec, a crucial source, was compiled.

2 This term is borrowed from Pernille Hermann to whose work this chapter later refers. See Pernille Hermann, ‘Concepts of Memory and Approaches to the Past in Medieval Icelandic Literature’ in *Scandinavian Studies*, 81:3 (2009), 287-308.

and early tenth century, when such ruptures were at their peak. The act of choosing a particular past in which to reflect, and setting it in writing was an act of power, resistance, or survival. It is telling, then, that the past most chosen to commemorate was one that was in conflict with the values being advanced by Louis the Pious's reforms. This past was that of the Golden Age of ascetics and *peregrini* that travelled the Celtic maritime zone - Wales, Ireland, Cornwall, and Brittany- before establishing some of the oldest monastic communities, such as the abbey of Landévennec. Even more telling is the fact that Irish saints serve as models to emulate and that motifs from Irish hagiography were incorporated in a time when Irish customs were supposed to be abandoned. It is through this threshold that this work studies Breton hagiography to examine how Breton monks navigated through these historical ruptures.

This thesis will address the following questions: How were Ireland and the Irish represented in a Breton context? Did monastic writings reflect attempts to reconstruct a continuity with the past, a past intertwined with Ireland, that had been broken? To what degree did the Irish influence on the Breton church affect the manner in which monks navigated through the historical ruptures that shook the Continent and which potentially severed this continuity? Was Breton monastic identity shaped by religious culture shared with Ireland?

Scholars who have studied the aftershocks of the Carolingian reforms on Brittany have largely focused on textual transformations, or *réécriture*. While a single definition has not been agreed upon, the general meaning of the term *réécriture* is of rewriting a text in order to improve it or adapt it according to other texts or readers.[3] Another definition for *réécriture* is the right of an author to several states of the same text, states which are

3 Monique Goullet, *Écriture et Réécriture Hagiographiques: Essai Sur les Réécritures de Vie des Saints Dans l'Occident Latin Médiéval (VIIIe-XIIIe S.)* (Turnhout, 2005), p. 20.

distinguishable not just by some variations, but by considerable deviations in the content, form, etc.[4] The motivations behind the redaction of these Breton *Vitae*, or their *réécriture*, have been studied by Merdrignac, who explored stylistic changes, embellishments, interpolations, and plagiarism in re-written *Vitae*. While acknowledging Carolingian ambitions to bring the Breton church into harmony with the universal church, Merdrignac mainly focused on the improvements of Latinity and the shedding of outdated hagiographical themes such as *immram* that were no longer relevant.[5] Similarly, Louis Lemoine perceived Louis's visit in 818 as a catalyst that transformed stylistic choices in Breton *scriptoria*. He noted that the oldest Breton manuscripts were written in Insular minuscule or half-uncial, thus resembling manuscripts written by the Irish, Welsh, and Anglo-Saxons. After 818, Breton scribes began to adopt Caroline minuscule, or at least a hybrid of the old style with the new, but they did not relinquish their Insular abbreviations for quite a while.[6] Joseph-Claude Poulin also studied *réécriture* in Breton hagiography, exploring the intentions of the redactors, in their own words, and the specific alterations made between different recensions of a saint's hagiography. In his analysis, he traced borrowings from previous hagiographies,

4 'Le lecteur a droit à plusieurs états successifs du même texte, états qui se distinguent non seulement par quelques variantes, mais par des différences parfois considérables dans le contenu, la forme, voire l'intention et les dimensions.' Goullet, *Écriture et Réécriture*, p. 21.
There is also the term *remaniement*, or reworking, which authors sometimes use interchangeably with *réécriture*. The definition of *remaniement* is difficult to pin down, however, it refers to a more profound process by which a text is so modified that it affects the structure or composition as a whole, or, the process by which a text which has been modified by substituting words and phrases, by suppression or interpolations. The two terms are quite synonymous, although *réécriture* is preferred among scholars like Goullet because it directly refers to literary composition, or *écriture*. Goullet, *Écriture et Réécriture*, pp 21-2.
5 *Immrama* were early Irish tales of sea voyages. See, Barbara Hillers, 'Voyages between Heaven and Hell: navigating the early Irish immram tales' in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 13 (1993), 66-81 and Jonathan Wooding (ed.), *The Otherworld Voyage in early Irish Literature: an anthology of criticism* (Dublin, 2000). Bernard Merdrignac, 'The process and significance of rewriting in Breton hagiography' in Jane Cartwright (ed.) *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults* (Cardiff, 2003), pp 177-97.
6 Louis Lemoine, 'Notes Paleographiques' in Gwennolé Le Menn and Jean-Yves Le Moing (eds) *Bretagne et pays celtiques: langues, histoire, civilization* (Rennes, 1992), pp 141-47. On the subject of illuminated art, see Jonathan J.G. Alexander, 'La résistance à la domination culturelle carolingienne dans l'art breton du IX siècle: le témoignage des manuscrits enluminés' in Marc Simon (ed.), *Landévennec et le monachisme Breton dans le haut Moyen Âge : actes du colloque du 15e centenaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec , 25-26-27 avril 1985, Association Landévennec 485-1985* (Landévennec, 1986), 269-80.

as well as older patristic texts, among other sources.[7] While these studies are indispensable, this thesis is concerned with exploring what these changes seek to communicate about the hagiographer and their community.

The episode of 818 is cited again and again because it represents one major piece in the fabric that was the effect that Carolingian hegemony had on Brittany. The ninth and tenth centuries were a period of profound change in the ecclesiastical and political landscape of Brittany, which seemed to be the catalyst for increased activity in Breton *scriptoria*. David Dumville noted this, commenting,

> 'On the evidence of surviving manuscripts and texts, ninth- and early tenth-century Brittany was an intellectually lively area, that liveliness deriving partly from a variety of controversies which themselves arose from an interaction of cultures in a context of political conflicts'.[8]

Thankfully, we know what these political conflicts are, as the political history of early medieval Brittany has been well-studied by scholars such as Arthur de La Borderie, André Chédeville, Hubert Guillotel, Jean-Christophe Cassard, Wendy Davies, and Julia Smith. Some recent works will be utilized to briefly outline the historical context. In her work 'Brittany and the Carolingian Empire: A Historical Review', Caroline Brett explored the struggles between the budding Breton political dynasty and the Carolingian empire in the ninth century. The first occasion in which the Carolingians penetrated Brittany was in 751 under Pippin III, but it was in the reign of Charlemagne that the border separating Brittany

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7 Joseph-Claude Poulin, 'Les réécritures dans l'hagiographie bretonne (VIIIe-XII siècles)' in Monique Goullet and Martin Heinzelmann (eds), *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 2003), pp 145-94.

8 David Dumville, 'Writers, scribes and readers in Brittany, AD 800-1100: the evidence of manuscripts' in Helen Fulton (ed.) *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society* (Dublin, 2005), p. 50.

and Francia formally became a march and that Brittany became a target for conquest. While technically conquered, Carolingian authority was nominal, as the dynasty did not place one of its own as leader of the region nor did they push any legislation in it. Most telling, perhaps, is that Brittany 'was not included in the division of the empire drawn up in 806'.[9]

It was during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis that Carolingian political theory fully developed, which was hinged on the idea that the *imperium* and *ecclesia* were 'mirror images of each other, such that the empire was the church in its political guise, the church in its sacramental'.[10] In other words, the success of Carolingian government depended on this unity in belief and administration of the church, and vice-versa. Pressure escalated during the reign of Louis the Pious (r. 814-840), who continued and strengthened his father's efforts to firmly consolidate authority over the church. Monasteries in particular were important institutions for the Carolingians as they held the 'power of prayer' and were centres of educational and ideological dissemination. The *Notitia de Servitio Monasteriorum*, an administrative document highlighting the dues owed from several monasteries to Louis the Pious, showed one method the emperor initiated to bind 'the existence of monasteries to the general state of the empire'.[11] Louis the Pious was also deeply influenced by his close associate Benedict of Aniane and his reforming efforts, so much so that he enacted legislation in 816-17 to regulate the monastic life of all communities in the empire by requiring them to adopt the Rule of St Benedict. Promoting their preferred monastic rule allowed the Carolingians to 'command the loyalty of a regional authority through the agency of just one person'.[12]

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9 Caroline Brett, 'Brittany and the Carolingian Empire: A Historical Review' in *History Compass*, 11:4 (2013), 272.
10 Geoffrey Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Diplomas: The West Frankish Kingdom (840-987)* (Turnhout, 2012), p. 264.
11 Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Diplomas*, p. 177.
12 Rutger Kramer, *Rethinking authority in the Carolingian empire: ideals and expectations during the reign of Louis the Pious (813-828)* (Amsterdam, 2019), p. 176.

This mission for unity was very necessary in Brittany, as Louis the Pious had to contend with Breton revolts in 818 and 822-24.[13] The emperor soon adopted a different tactic and appointed Nominoë, a Breton, as a *missus imperatoris* around 831, and later gave him the county of Vannes. After Louis the Pious's death, Nominoë's loyalty to the Frankish crown crumbled and he was succeeded by his son Erispoë after his death, creating a dynasty which, although still characterized by a degree of instability, marked the nascence of a seemingly unified Breton duchy. The new dynasty, however, had to contend with the succeeding viking incursions which aggravated the existing political turmoil.[14] Neil Price and Jean-Christophe Cassard have shown that these incursions began rather dramatically during the reign of Nominoë with the murder of Bishop Gunhard on the feast of Saint John the Baptist in 843.[15] While Breton leaders occasionally cooperated with Scandinavian mercenaries against their Frankish neighbours, using them as chess pieces in their struggle for independence,[16] the experience Breton monastic communities had with the vikings was entirely negative. One by one Breton monasteries were destroyed by the invaders and the monks, along with their relics, travelled quite far to seek safety in the far reaches of the Continent or across the Channel, in England. It was not until the eleventh century that the monastic landscape in Brittany was relatively restored.

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13 Kramer, *Rethinking authority in the Carolingian empire*, p. 271.

14 Whenever possible this thesis will use the term used in the primary sources to describe the Northmen who led incursions into Brittany and elsewhere. Otherwise, using Caitlin Ellis' definitions, it will refer to these groups of raiders as vikings, in lower case. See, Caitlin Ellis, 'Remembering the Vikings: Violence, institutional memory and the instruments of history' in *History Compass*, 19:1 (2021), 1-14.

15 Neil Price, an archaeologist, and Jean-Christophe Cassard, a historian, have produced the only two comprehensive studies of the vikings in Brittany, which look at a wide range of written sources, including Breton hagiography, as well as archaeological evidence to give a survey of the viking occupation of the region. See Neil Price, *The Vikings in Brittany* (London, 1989) and Jean-Christophe Cassard, *Le siècle des Vikings en Bretagne* (Paris, 1996).

16 Price compares the situation to Ireland, writing 'Interesting parallels exist between the situations in early medieval Ireland and Brittany, for in both regions the animosity felt towards the Scandinavian invaders by the indigenous people simply confused the existing state of civil hostility, as reflected in the frequent use made of the Vikings as mercenaries by the natives in their power struggles.' Price, *The Vikings in Brittany*, p. 19.

Ultimately, this period of Breton history has caused the most contention among scholars and has been used for a number of nationalist agendas. Brett's piece hints at how the French view has informed the historiographical debate, writing that 'Francophones are inclined to emphasize the extension of Carolingian institutions to Brittany, while English historiography minimizes the institutionalisation of politics, in Brittany and increasingly in the Carolingian empire as a whole.'[17] Another feature of the scholarship on medieval Brittany is that it is intensely local and therefore has a tendency to ignore the outside world, neglecting similar developments that occurred in other regions, in favour of advancing the perception of Brittany as an anomaly and a recalcitrant state defiant in the face of foreign (French) intrusion. There is obviously truth in this view, but the matter is not so black and white. One example is how local scholars examine the imposition of the Benedictine Rule in Brittany by Louis the Pious, ignoring the fact that the Benedictine reform roused opposition among a great many clergymen throughout Louis's empire.[18] Further supporting this argument, Amy K. Bosworth's work on ninth-century hagiography during the Carolingian Renaissance demonstrated that hagiographies written in places as far east as Alemannia display a concern for the continuation of regional customs and history so that 'Regionalism trumped the unifying aims of the Carolingian Renaissance even in the traditional heartlands of the Franks'.[19] This reinforces the need for Breton historiography not to box itself in. It is also worth addressing the fact that scholarship on early medieval Brittany has suffered setbacks due to the deaths of the majority of influential Breton scholars in the two decades, leaving a vacuum to be filled which is rather intimidating to the newcomer. One of these losses is

17 Brett, 'Brittany and the Carolingian Empire', 268.
18 J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish church* (Oxford, 1983), p. 230.
19 Amy K. Bosworth, 'Learning from the Saints: Ninth-Century Hagiography and the Carolingian Renaissance' in *History Compass*, 8:9 (2010), 1058.

Bernard Merdrignac, one of the very few experts in Breton hagiography, who unfortunately passed in 2013.

Breton hagiography was and still remains the main corpus of material available for scholars interested in early medieval Brittany and it has accordingly received significant attention, primarily from local scholars. Besides hagiographies, there are the invaluable cartularies of the great abbeys of Landévennec, Redon, and later, Quimperlé and Melaine de Rennes, an eleventh-century chronicle, and some liturgical texts. Fortunately, the future for scholars interested in medieval Brittany seems bright. David Dumville suggested that we are finding more and more manuscripts of Breton provenance during the Carolingian period.[20] Many of these manuscripts are currently being studied by Jacopo Bisagni, who is shedding light on the intellectual exchange between Brittany and Ireland. It is thus worthwhile to reconsider the foundation upon which this exchange was built.

Sources

The corpus of saints' *Lives* that will be studied in this thesis comprises the *Lives* of Winwaloe (Guénolé), Ethbin (also called Idunet), Guenael, Samson of Dol, Malo, Paul Aurelian, Brioc, Gildas, Judoc, and Conwoïon. The *Vita Winwaloei* (*Life* of Guénolé), contained in the cartulary of Landévennec, was written between 860 and 884, and a subsequent, brief *Life* in metrical verse was written in the tenth century or later. The *Vita Ethbini*, included in the same cartulary, also seems to date to the tenth or eleventh century. The *Vita Guenaili* dates to the end of the eleventh century. The *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*

[20] David Dumville, 'L'écriture des scribes bretons au dixieme siècle- Le cas de l'Amalaire provenant de Landévennec' in Gwennolé Le Menn and Jean-Yves Le Moing (eds) *Bretagne et pays celtiques: langues, histoire, civilization* (Rennes, 1992), pp. 129-130.

was written in the late eighth century and the *Vita Secunda* was written in the ninth century.[21] The *Vita sancti Machutis* was written between 866 and 872, and the second *Vita* and *translatio* of Malo date to the tenth century. The *Vita Pauli Aureliani* was written in 884. The *Vita Brioci* dates to the middle of the eleventh century. The *Vita Gildae,* produced in Rhuys, dates to the eleventh century, though it contains ninth-century material. The *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci* was written around 920, and the later metrical version dates to the eleventh century. Finally, the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* was written between 900 and 917, and the *Vita Conuuoionis* was written in the first half of the eleventh century.

It is quickly apparent that there are some Breton hagiographies that possibly, or definitely fall within the window of 800-1100 that are excluded from this thesis. Firstly, this thesis has avoided *Vitae* whose dating is too difficult to pin down. A fine example is the *Vita sancti Ronani*, which tells the story of a sixth-century Irish saint who settled in Brittany.[22] Ronan's cult is attested from the 1030s onwards and his relics were translated to Quimper sometime before 1274, when the Quimper cathedral inventory mentions his head and body.[23] The dating for the *Life*, which is only contained in the thirteenth-century Paris BnF Lat. 5275, ranges from the tenth century to the thirteenth century.[24] Based on its structure and its motifs,

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21 Joseph-Claude Poulin, 'La circulation de l'information dans la Vie ancienne de s. Samson de Dol et la question de sa datation' in Lynette Olson (ed.) *St Samson of Dol and the Earliest History of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp 37-82. All other contributors in this volume prefer a seventh-century dating. The controversy surrounding the dating will be addressed in Chapter 3.

22 For more on Ronan and whether he gave Locronan its name, see Erwan Vallerie, 'Saint Ronan est-il bien l'éponyme primitif de Locronan?' in Sylvain Soleil and Joëlle Quaghebeur (eds), *Le pouvoir et la foi au Moyen Âge: En Bretagne et dans l'Europe de l'Ouest* (Rennes, 2010), pp 119-30.

23 Julia M.H. Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany, c. 850- 1250' in *Speculum*, 65:2 (1990), 329.

24 The *Vita sancti Ronani* was translated by François Plaine in 'Vie Inédite de Saint Ronan, traduite du Latin, Avec Prolégomènes et Éclaircissements' in *Bulletin de la Société archéologique du Finistère* (Quimper, 1889), 263-318. In his analysis, he surmised that the *Vita* was not written before the beginning of the eleventh century. See, *Vita sancti Ronani*, ed. François Plaine,'Vie Inédite de Saint Ronan, traduite du Latin, Avec Prolégomènes et Éclaircissements' in *Bulletin de la Société archéologique du Finistère* (Quimper, 1889), p. 263. Hubert Guillotel argued that it was written between 1159 and 1167 in 'Sainte Croix de Quimperlé et Locronan' in A. Dilasser and Donatien Laurent (eds), *Saint Ronan et la Troménie: Actes du Colloque international (28-30 avril 1989)* (Locronan, 1995), p. 188. André-Yves Bourgès argues that the *Vita* was written in 1127 by a hermit named Robert, who later became bishop of Quimper from 1113-1130. See, Bourgès, 'De Loconan à Locronan: l'ermite Robert ou le profil de l'hagiographe in *Blog Hagio-Historiographie Médiévale* (2016). Joseph-Claude Poulin argues that the *Vita* was written after the middle of the twelfth century, in *L'hagiographie bretonne du*

it is at the very earliest a twelfth-century product and is thus excluded from this thesis. The *Vita sancti Mevenni* is also absent from this project, for the same reason. The saint is regarded as a companion to Samson of Dol, and therefore, scholars have estimated that the *Life* was compiled not long after the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*. Contrary to the arguments of François Plaine and Arthur de la Borderie, who dated the *Life* to the eighth and ninth century respectively, the manuscript evidence suggests a much later dating.[25]

In addition to avoiding *Vitae* with no fixed dates, this project has also excluded *Vitae* whose manuscript evidence is too convoluted and, consequently, has no reliable printed edition. Among these are the *Vita sancti Maglorii*, produced by a monk of Léhon around the 860s.[26] It has survived in ten Latin manuscripts, although none is complete. Among these, five Parisian manuscripts allow us to reconstruct the text somewhat, but even these survive in different forms.[27] There are four partial editions (none are ideal) and one must use these four editions, produced by different editors, to come up with a complete *Vita*. A new, complete edition is desperately needed, but beyond the scope of this thesis. Likewise, the *Vita sancti Iudicaeli*, a *Vita* dedicated to a seventh-century Breton king-turned-saint, was produced in the eleventh century but survives in excerpts from fourteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts. Thus, Judicael's *Life* is largely unedited.[28]

Finally, this thesis has omitted *Vitae* of Breton saints that were not written by Bretons, or at the very least, based on Breton exemplars. This criterion has allowed a wider view of the Breton church, one that recognizes Breton diasporas outside of Brittany.

Haut Moyen Âge: Répertoire raisonné (Paris, 2009), p. 465. More recently, Caroline Brett supposes the *Vita sancti Ronani* dates to either the twelfth or thirteenth century in *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, 450-1200: contact, myth and history* (Cambridge, 2022), p. 219.

25 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 463.

26 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 207.

27 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 202.

28 For more on the pieces that survive of this *Vita*, see André-Yves Bourgès, 'Le dossier littéraire des saints Judicaël, Méen et Léri' in Louis Lemoine and Bernard Merdrignac (eds), *Corona Monastica: Moines bretons de Landévennec: histoire et mémoires celtiques. Mélanges offerts au père Marc Simon* (Rennes, 2004), pp 83-92.

However, there are numerous Breton saints' *Lives* that were written, or rewritten, by non-Bretons outside of Brittany. The *Vita sancti Winnoci* is such a *Life*. Winnoc is part of the Riwal dynasty, a dynasty that stemmed from Domnonia, in Brittany, and gave rise to three saints. Like his predecessor Judoc, Winnoc left Brittany for more distant lands, and wound up in Flanders. While scholars do not agree on a dating for the *Vita prima*, they agree that both *Vitae* were written by non-Bretons in Flanders.[29]

These omissions aside, this project crucially seeks to provide an in-depth survey of key Breton hagiographies from c. 800 to 1100, rather than studying the individual dossier of a saint, as many previous scholars have done. Looking at the corpus of *Vitae* studied in this thesis, it is evident that the ninth century was a particularly active period for the writing of Breton saints' *Lives*. With few exceptions, the majority of these *Vitae* were edited in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and left untranslated.[30] The *Lives* of Guénolé have been translated into French in the recent *Cartulaire de Saint-Guénole de Landévennec*, published in 2015, which conveniently includes a facsimile of the cartulary. The translation of the longer *Life* is not without its problems, as it is merely a translation of Charles de Smedt's edition in *Analecta Bollandiana* and does not account for the entirety of the *Vita*.[31] Moreover, the editors did not find it necessary to translate the short *Vita Ethbini*, a Breton saint who travelled to Ireland and became a hermit in a forest near Kildare, and so his *Life* remains on the pages of the manuscript, some parts barely legible. The *Vita sancti Guenaili* and his *translatio* are available in volume sixty-two of *Acta Sanctorum*, published in 1887, however, there is also a newer edition by Fañch Morvannou, though it is not without its

29 More on Winnoc and the saints of the Riwal dynasty in Chapter four.
30 For a comprehensive study of these saints' *Lives* and their editions, see Joseph-Claude Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne du Haut Moyen Âge: Répertoire raisonné* (Paris, 2009)
31 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, *Cartulaire de Saint-Guenolé de Landévennec*, (Rennes, 2015), p. 109.

problems.[32] The dossier of Samson of Dol has been edited and partly translated - his first *Life* was translated into English by Thomas Taylor in 1925 (reprinted in 1991) and later edited and translated into French by Pierre Flobert in 1997.[33] Samson's second *Life* was edited by François Plaine, a Benedictine monk and a Bollandist, in 1887.[34] Ferdinand Lot produced an edition of Bili's *Vita Sancti Machutis* in 1909.[35] François Plaine collaborated with the great historian of Brittany, Arthur de la Borderie, and the two produced the only edition of the anonymous *Vitae* of Malo in 1884.[36] Plaine also edited the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* in 1882 and the *Vita Brioci* in 1883.[37] Charles Cuissard also wrote an edition of the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* during the same period.[38] Unsurprisingly, the *Vita Gildae* has received some attention, with at least three editions, the most useful being Ferdinand Lot's edition published between 1907 and 1909.[39] The texts related to Judoc and Conwoïon have received more recent attention. The *Vita sancti Iudoci* was edited and translated into French by Hubert Le Bourdellès in 1996 and the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* and the *Vita Conuuoionis* was edited and translated into English by Caroline Brett in 1989.[40] In sum, the hagiographies are more or less

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32 *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou, *Saint Guénaël: Etudes et documents* (Landévennec, 1997).
33 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, *The Life of St. Samson of Dol* (Llanerch, 1991) and *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol,* Sources d'histoire médiévale, 17 (Paris, 1997).
34 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 'Vita Antiqua S. Samsonis Dolensis Episcopi', in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 6 (1887), 77-150.
35 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Mélanges d'histoire bretonne: Vita Sancti Machutis par Bili', 25:1 (1909), 47-73.
36 *Vita anonyma brevior sancti Machutis*, ed. François Plaine and Arthur de la Borderie, 'Deux vies inédites de S. Malo: Vie inédite de Saint Malo, évêque d'Aleth/ Autre vie de Saint Malo', *Bulletin et mémoires de la Société archéologique du department d'Ille-et-Vilaine*, 16 (1883-1884), 137-256.
37 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 'Vita S. Pauli Aureliani', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1 (1882), 209-258 and *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 'Vita S. Brioci episcopi et confessoris ab anonymo suppari conscripta edita studio et opera', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 2 (1883), 161-190.
38 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. Charles Cuissard, 'Vie de saint Paul de Léon en Bretagne' in *Revue celtique*, 5 (1881-1883), 413-60.
39 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Melanges d'histoire bretonne: Gildae vita et translation (Suite et fin) in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 25:3 (1909), 493-519; 'Melanges d'histoire bretonne: Gildae vita et translatio' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 25:2 (1909), 346-365; 'Mélanges d'histoire bretonne: La Vie de saint Gildas' in *Annales de Bretagne* 23:2 (1907), 247-99.
40 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, *Vie de St Josse avec commentaire historique et spirituel* (Spoleto, 1996) and *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium et Vita Conuuoinis*, ed. Caroline Brett, *The monks of Redon. Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium and Vita Conuuoinis* (Woodbridge, 1989).

accessible but most of the editions are outdated. When possible, the original manuscripts of these *Vitae* have been examined.

Brittany is not known for its cornucopia of sources; therefore, a wide range of external primary sources will be used in this project to help piece together Brittany and its place within the wider world. Firstly, this thesis will use late Roman administrative documents, records of ecclesiastical councils, histories, chronicles, prose stories, episcopal correspondence, and early hagiography to provide a thorough but brief history of the formation of Brittany and its church, which is essential to understanding the ecclesiastical landscape of Brittany from 800 to 1100. Further chapters will rely on Frankish sources such as Carolingian royal diplomas, histories, annals, hagiographies, inventory lists, and panegyric poems. These works are indispensable for studying Brittany's Frankish neighbours and provide important glimpses into political and ecclesiastical events in Brittany. Sources from Ireland and Britain that will be used include Irish and Welsh annals, chronicles, liturgical calendars, and of course, hagiographies of Irish and Welsh provenance.

Author	**Title**	**Date**	**Standard Edition(s)**	**Translation(s)**	**Key Manuscripts**	**Reason for Exclusion**
Wrdisten of Landévennec	*Vita longior sancti Winwaloei*	860-884	Stéphane Lebecq (ed.) *Cartulaire de Saint-Guénolé de Landévennec* (Rennes, 2015); Arthur de La Borderie, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec: première livraison*	Stéphane Lebecq (ed.) *Cartulaire de Saint-Guénolé de Landévennec* (Rennes, 2015)	Paris, BnF, Lat. 5610a; Quimper, BM MS 16	

			(Rennes, 1888);			
Clement of Landévennec	Alphabetical Hymn	second half of 9th century	Stéphane Lebecq (ed.) *Cartulaire de Saint-Guénolé de Landévennec* (Rennes, 2015); Arthur de La Borderie (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec: première livraison* (Rennes, 1888);	Stéphane Lebecq (ed.) *Cartulaire de Saint-Guénolé de Landévennec* (Rennes, 2015)		
Anonymous monk of Landévennec	*Vita Ethbini*	10th or 11th century	Arthur de La Borderie (ed.), *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec: première livraison* (Rennes, 1888); Joseph Van Hecke, Benjamin Bossue, Victor de Buck, and Antonius Tinnebroek (eds), *Acta sanctorum: ex latinis et grecis, aliarumque gentium monumentis, servata primigenia veterum scriptorum phrasi, 68 vols, vol. 56,*		Quimper, BM MS 16	

			Octobris VIII (Brussels, 1853), pp 474-88.			
Anonymous	*Vita sancti Guenaili*	end of 11th century	*Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. Charles de Smedt in Acta sanctorum Novembris (Paris, 1887), i	Fañch Morvannou (ed. and trans), *Saint Guénaël: Études et documents* (Brest, 1997)		
Anonymous monk of Dol	*Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*	c. 800	Pierre Flobert (ed. and trans.) *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol*, Sources d'histoire médiévale, 17 (Paris, 1997)	Pierre Flobert (ed. and trans), *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol,* Sources d'histoire médiévale, 17 (Paris, 1997); Thomas Taylor (trans), *The Life of Saint Samson of Dol* (Llanerch, 1991)	Metz, BM 195 (D.74); Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine MS 1708 (1318); Chartres, BM 507 (193)	
Anonymous monk of Dol	*Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*	9th century	François Plaine (ed.), 'Vita antiqua Sancti Samsonis Dolensis Episcopi' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 6 (1887), 77-150.		Vaticano (Città del), BAV Reg. lat. 479; Angers, BM 803 (719)	
Bili, deacon of Alet	*Vita sancti Machutis*	866-872	François Plaine and Arthur de La Borderie (eds), Deux vies inédites de S. Malo: Vie inédite de Saint Malo, évêque d'Aleth/Autre vie de Saint Malo' in *Bulletin et*	Guenael Le Duc (trans.), *Vie de saint Malo, évêque d'Alet: version écrite par le diacre Bili* (Rennes, 1979)	London, BL Royal 13 A.x; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. 535; London, BL Cotton Otho A.viii + B.x; Hereford, Cathedral Library P.7.vi; Roma, S.	

			mémoires de la Société archéologique du département d'Ille-et-Vilaine, 16 (1883, 1884), 137-256.		Giovanni in Laterano, Biblioteca capitolare A. 80 (alias C); Vaticano (Città del), BAV Vat. lat. 1192	
Anonymous monk of St Malo	*Vita anonyma brevior sancti Machutis*	10th century	François Plaine and Arthur de La Borderie (eds), Deux vies inédites de S. Malo: Vie inédite de Saint Malo, évêque d'Aleth/Autre vie de Saint Malo' in Bulletin et mémoires de la Société archéologique du département d'Ille-et-Vilaine, 16 (1883, 1884), 137-256.		Paris, BnF lat. 12404	
Anonymous monk of St Malo	*Vita anonyma longior sancti Machutis*	end of 9th or beginning of 10th century	Ferdinand Lot (ed.), 'Mélanges d'histoire bretonne: La Plus Ancienne Vie de Saint Malo' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 23:4 (1907), 553-79.		Paris, BnF lat. 15638 (Sorbonne 210); Paris BnF lat. 16735; Paris BnF lat. 14651 (St-Victor 85); Lost Fleury MS (used by editor Jean Du Bois in 1605)	
Wrmonoc	*Vita Pauli Aureliani*	884	François Plaine (ed), 'Vita s. Pauli		Orléans, BM 261 (217);	

			episcopi Leonensis in Britannia minori auctore Wormonoco' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1 (1882), 208-258; Charles Cuissard (ed.), 'Vie de saint Paul de Léon en Bretagne' in *Revue celtique*, 5 (1881-1883), 413-60.		Paris, BnF lat. 12942	
Anonymous monk from St-Serge d'Angers	*Vita Brioci*	middle of 11th century	François Plaine (ed), Vita sancti Brioci: episcopi et confessoris ab anonymo suppari conscripta' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 2 (1883), 161-190.		Rouen, BM 1394 (U.119); Angers, BM 814 (730); Paris, BnF, lat. 1149, Paris BnF, frs 22321	
Anonymous monk of St Gildas de Rhuys	*Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*	11th century (contains 9th century material)	Ferdinand Lot (ed.), 'Melanges d'histoire bretonne: Gildae vita et translatio' in Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest, 25:2 (1909), 346-365; Ferdinand Lot (ed.), 'Melanges d'histoire bretonne:			

			Gildae vita et translation (Suite et fin) in Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest, 25:3 (1909), 493-519.			
Anonymous monk	*Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*	c. 920	Hubert Bourdellès (ed. and trans.), *Vie de St Josse avec commentaire historique et spirituel* (Spoleto, 1996)	Hubert Bourdellès (ed. and trans.), *Vie de St Josse avec commentaire historique et spirituel* (Spoleto, 1996)	Rouen, BM 1384; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 9	
Anonymous monk of Redon	*Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium*	900-917	Caroline Brett (ed. and trans.), *The Monks of Redon: Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium and Vita Conuuoionis* (Woodbridge, 1989)	Caroline Brett (ed. and trans.), *The Monks of Redon: Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium and Vita Conuuoionis* (Woodbridge, 1989)	Paris, BnF NAL 662 (R.D. 9444); *Redon, Abbaye Saint-Sauveur (lost)	
Anonymous monk of Redon	*Vita Conuuoionis*	first half of 11th century	Caroline Brett (ed. and trans.), *The Monks of Redon: Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium and Vita Conuuoionis* (Woodbridge, 1989)	Caroline Brett (ed. and trans.), *The Monks of Redon: Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium and Vita Conuuoionis* (Woodbridge, 1989)	*Redon, Abbaye Saint-Sauveur (lost)	
Anonymous	*Vita sancti Ronani*	10th to 13th century?		François Plaine (trans.)'Vie Inédite de Saint Ronan, traduite du Latin, Avec Prolégomènes et Éclaircissements' in *Bulletin de la Société*	Paris BnF lat. 5275	Dubious dating, most likely post-12th century

				archéologique du Finistère (Quimper, 1889), 263-318.		
Anonymous	*Vita sancti Mevenni*	11th century?		Christophe Poulain, Bernard Merdrignac (intro) and Hervé Le Bihan (trans), La Vie de saint Méen: d'après le manuscrit BN lat. 9889, obituaire de Saint-Méen (Lesneven, 1999)	Paris, BnF lat. 9889	Dubious dating
Anonymous monk of Léhon	*Vita sancti Maglorii*	860's			Paris, BnF lat. 15436; Paris BnF lat. 5283; Paris BnF Arsenal 1032 (42 H.L.); Paris BnF lat. 11951 (St-Germain-des-Près 500); Paris BnF lat. 6003	Convoluted manuscript tradition. None of the MS are truly complete.
Anonymous	*Vita sancti Iudicaeli*	11th century	François Plaine (ed.), 'Excerpta ex Vita Inedita S. Judicaeli S. Mevenni Discipuli' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 3 (1884), 157-58.		Paris, BnF lat. 6003 and Paris, BnF lat. 9888	Survives in 14th and 16th century excerpts
Anonymous	*Vita sancti Winnoci*	8th or 9th century	Wilhelm Levison (ed.), 'Vitae Audomari, Bertini, Winnoci' in Bruno Krusch			Written by non-Bretons in Flanders; dubious dating.

			and Wilhelm Levison (eds) *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici*, 7 vols. (Hanover, 1910), iii, 729-86.			

Ireland and Brittany

Ireland and Brittany share a long history which is not always recognized. This history seems to have originated in the pre-historic period, with an active sea route that connected the south of Ireland with Brittany.[41] The mercantile activity that was conducted on this route was the basis for Ireland's later contacts with Brittany. The geographer E.G. Bowen showed this route was still active in the late seventh or early eighth century, explaining 'Special reference is made to the island of Dair-inis at the mouth of the river Blackwater in Munster, on which was located a very early monastery where the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* was drawn up - this being one of the earliest literary works of the Irish church. The work has close associations with Brittany which proves that the well-established Breton-South Ireland sea-route was functioning fully at this time.'[42] Archaeology has also supported this claim. According to Christopher Loveluck and Aidan O'Sullivan, the material evidence we have for trade between Ireland and Western France in the fifth and sixth centuries comes from 'stone

41 E.G. Bowen, *Saints, Seaways, and Settlements in the Celtic Lands* (Cardiff, 1969), p. 10.
42 Bowen, *Saints, Seaways, and Settlements*, pp. 128-129.

sculpture, pottery and glass vessels'.[43] The archaeologist Jeremy Knight also pointed out the similarities between 'incised cross memorials made of stone from the sixth to the seventh century from Nantes (Loire Atlantique) and Pouillé (Vienne), with Irish examples at Inishmurray (Co. Sligo) and Ardwall Isle (Dumfries and Galloway)'.[44] Loveluck and O'Sullivan suggested that mercantile activity between Ireland and the Atlantic coast of France dwindled in the ninth century, with evidence coming solely from salt trading sites in the Bay of Bourgneuf, near Nantes. Nevertheless, with the Viking incursions beginning in the 840s, even trade here diminished.[45]

While there is material evidence that maritime contacts between Ireland and Brittany continued into the medieval period, the written sources say very little. The *Lives* of Columbanus, Filibert, and Guénolé all refer to merchant ships operating between Brittany and Ireland. Aside from the example from Columbanus's *Life*, which will be discussed later, the *Life* of Filibert, written in the eighth century, describes Irish ships arriving in Nantes with clothes and shoes for Filibert and his brothers.[46] It may be that this Irish merchants were also active in the west of Brittany. Inspired by St Patrick and all the miracles he performed in Ireland, the young Guénolé, burning with desire to see the island, waits with some merchants at a port for a favourable wind to take them to Ireland. Patrick however, appears to him in a vision telling him to remain in Brittany. The port which Guénolé travels to is not specified but given that the entirety of the *Vita* occurs in the region of Cornouaille, it may point to the existence of a port on the very western coast of Brittany, far from Nantes.

Traditionally, manuscript evidence, as well as Brittany's geographic location, has convinced us that Brittany served as one of the principal gateways through which Insular

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43 Christopher Loveluck and Aidan O'Sullivan, 'Travel, Transport and Communication to and from Ireland, c. 400-1100: an Archaeological Perspective' in Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (eds), *The Irish in early medieval Europe: identity, culture, and* religion (London, 2017), p. 23.
44 Loveluck and O' Sullivan, 'Travel, Transport and Communication to and from Ireland, c. 400-1100', p. 23.
45 Loveluck and O' Sullivan, 'Travel, Transport and Communication to and from Ireland, c. 400-1100', p. 32.
46 Loveluck and O' Sullivan, 'Travel, Transport and Communication to and from Ireland, c. 400-1100', p. 24.

texts were received in the Continent, although this view is now under re-examination.[47] Roy Flechner has noted that these texts include the *Hisperica Famina*, extracts from the penitentials of Finnian, the *Canones Adomnani*, seventh-century canonical collections, and the late seventh or early-eighth century *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*, among others. Flechner argued that Brittany played a crucial role in the early transmission of the *Hibernensis*.[48] However, more recently, the view of Brittany as a gateway into the Continent has been called into question, notably by the IrCaBriTT project, led by Jacopo Bisagni, which will shed new light on the notion that Brittany was a textual gateway into Francia.[49]

Any discussion about contacts between Ireland and Brittany must include Wales.[50] The majority of Breton saints, after all, are of Welsh origin. For decades scholars have accepted Léon Fleuriot's thesis about the origin of the Bretons, which argued for a two-wave migration from the fourth to the sixth century, the first being military in character and the second led by saints from the south of Britain, particularly Devon and Cornwall.[51] Caroline Brett's recent interpretation, however, particularly stressed the strong Welsh element in the migrations, even suggesting a 'brain drain' phenomenon in which Welsh scholars were supplied to Brittany in the seventh and eighth century, which, she argued, happens to be something of a lacuna as regards our knowledge of for the Welsh church.[52] Ireland's strong links with Wales are evident, and much work has been done on the political and ecclesiastical contacts between the two lands. Perhaps the most useful of these works, *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages,* confirms the presence of Irish communities in Dyfed and Gwynedd during

47 The idea of Brittany as a gateway between Ireland and the Continent is particularly being called into question by the IRCABRITT project. See https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie.
48 Roy Flechner, 'Aspects of the Breton Transmission of the Hibernensis' in *Pecia: le livre et l'écrit*, 12 (2008), 1.
49 Project website available here: https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie.
50 For brevity, Cornwall is omitted from the discussion. Brittany's contacts with Cornwall were obviously important, but Cornwall did not seem to play the same role that Wales did in transmitting Irish cultural/religious influences to Brittany.
51 Léon Fleuriot, *Les origines de la Bretagne: l'émigration* (Paris, 1980).
52 Caroline Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States? The Breton Migrations Revisited' in *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 61 (2011), 33.

the Age of Saints and, overall, shared 'literary and ideological traditions' between the Irish and Welsh.[53] There is strong evidence, primarily from the abbey of Landévennec, of direct links between Ireland and Brittany, but this thesis will also explore how Wales was an important channel for the transmission of Irish influence into other Breton monastic communities.

Given the limited sources available, it is unsurprising that few scholars have studied relations between Ireland and Brittany in the Middle Ages. The common thread in the historiography is the concern with establishing the historicity of the sources that refer to contacts between Brittany and Ireland, made all the more complicated given that the bulk of the sources available are not histories in the strict sense of the genre, but fantastical hagiographies. That is to say, scholars have studied Breton hagiography primarily for tangible evidence of the Irish in Brittany, or at the very least, evidence of the Irish and Bretons interacting. Historians have certainly come far from the days when saints' *Lives* were regarded as utterly useless, but in the study of Breton hagiography, some scepticism still remains. The overall consensus, with a few exceptions, is that the Irish-Breton connection that these hagiographies allude to was, for the most part, a fiction and a cliché. One of these exceptions comes from François Kerlouégan, who wrote what was essentially a survey of relations between Breton saints and Britain and Ireland in order to demonstrate that the Bretons maintained contacts with 'leurs frères de Grande-Bretagne et à leurs cousins irlandais' (their British brothers and Irish cousins) before the tenth century.[54] He argued that, because Breton monks were writing with such surety about events that occurred hundreds of years earlier in Britain and Ireland, this meant that they had access to informants or

53 Karen Jankulak and Jonathan M. Wooding (eds), *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 32-34.

54 François Kerlouégan, 'Les vies de saints Bretons les plus anciennes dans leur rapports avec les Iles Britanniques' in Michael W. Herren (ed.), *Insular Latin Studies: Papers on Latin Texts and Manuscripts of the British Isles: 550-1066* (Toronto, 1981), p. 196.

documents across the sea at the time they were writing.[55] He claimed that a shared, or at least, mutually intelligible language and similar monastic customs on both sides of the Channel was able to facilitate these contacts.[56] While only using the *Lives* of Malo and Guénolé as examples of contacts between Ireland and Brittany, this study contains perhaps the most optimistic view of the extent of relations between Brittany and Ireland during the tenth century. The surety with which Breton monks wrote, however, is not necessarily an indication that they were receiving information from informants across the sea. Aside from the example from the *Vita Prima* of Samson, in which the hagiographer tells the reader that Henoc, a cousin of Samson, wrote a *Life* that he later orally narrated to the hagiographer, other Breton saints' *Lives* which were written with such surety could merely be following the literary convention of adding authority, whether eye-witnesses or older texts, to hagiographies.

Most scholars have been less optimistic in attributing such veracity to *Vitae* that promote the Irish origins of Breton saints. Imbuing saints in Brittany with Irish origins was not just a medieval phenomenon — it was especially popular in the seventeenth century through the works of hagiographers Albert le Grand and John Colgan, among others. This has understandably made scholars cautious about accepting the Irish provenance of saints venerated in Brittany up to this day. In his 'Irish Saints in Brittany: Myth or Reality?', Gwenaël Le Duc scrutinized a list of saints, stripping them of the Irish origins attributed to them or deeming these saints fabricated altogether, leaving us with only Ronan. Karen Jankulak, also concluding that St Fingar's Irish origins were probably fabricated, admitted that:

55 Kerlouégan, 'Les vies de saints Bretons', p. 200.
56 Kerlouégan, 'Les vies de saints Bretons', pp. 202-03.

> ‘The attribution of Irish origins to some Breton and Cornish saints may or may not be without historical foundation; clearly, however, it is a distinctive and fertile hagiographical conceit.’[57]

Most of these hagiographies, however, are fairly late. The *Life* of Fingar, for example, dates to about the fourteenth century. Jean-Michel Picard, in his study of the cult of Irish saints in Brittany and Normandy, commented

> ‘Les travaux de Bernard Merdrignac et Gwenael Le Duc ont clairement montré que les mentions de saints irlandais venus s’installer en Bretagne n’apparaissent que dans des textes de la période romane et que ce cliché ne reflète probablement pas la situation aux époques mérovingiennes et carolingiennes.’[58]
>
> (The work of Bernard Merdrignac and Gwenael Le Duc has clearly shown that the mentions of Irish saints who came to settle in Brittany only appear in texts from the Romanesque period and that this cliché probably doesn’t reflect the situation in the Merovingian and Carolingian periods.)

The impression that emerges from these studies is that Ronan is the only holy Irishman to have settled in Brittany. This approach is limiting because it does not explain why the practice of ascribing Irish origins to Breton saints was a cliché in the first place. Le Duc attempted to do so, writing, ‘The reasons are clear: the need to have something to say

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57 Karen Jankulak, ‘Fingar/Gwinear/Guigner: An ‘Irish’ Saint in Medieval Cornwall and Brittany’ in John Carey, Máire Herbert, and Pádraig Ó Riain (eds), *Studies in Irish Hagiography, Saints and Scholars* (Dublin, 2001), p. 137.

58 Jean-Michel Picard, ‘Entre Bretagne et Normandie, le culte des Saints irlandais’ in Joëlle Quaghebeur and Bernard Merdrignac (eds), *Bretons et Normands au Moyen Âge: Rivalités, malentendus, convergences* (Rennes, 2008), p. 51.

about a saint; perhaps a taste for exoticism; or simply the application of the hagiographical principle expressed in the Life of St Fingar: *Spondet deuotio quod negat scientia* ('Devotion proposes what science denies')'.[59] This is hardly an adequate answer. This approach also ignores the bulk of early Breton hagiography which, for the most part, does not claim Irishness for its saints but incorporates Ireland or the Irish into its narratives.

These scholars have supported their argument by pointing out that the Irish did not seem to have any interest in Brittany and that it was not even their primary route to the Continent. The evidence, or lack thereof, definitely supports this argument, but it is unlikely that it is because Brittany did not suit their spiritual palate. No scholar has produced an answer as to why the Irish were not drawn to Brittany as their final destination for *peregrinatio*. First, we must acknowledge that *peregrinatio* carried multiple meanings and that its nature was not fixed but underwent a transformation by the late eighth century. As the ultimate act of devotion to God, the early *peregrini,* such as Columbanus, renounced the familiar in a desire for social and physical alienation. Aside from embracing an ascetic lifestyle, this meant leaving their *túath*, an act that 'severed multiple bonds of duty and belonging', essentially disenfranchising them.[60] Without disregarding the notion that crossing the sea represented perhaps the most symbolic step in *peregrinatio*, as the crossing of a dangerous boundary into alien territory, it is worthwhile rethinking how much of a boundary the sea was to people who had used the sea as a highway of sorts, even holding lands and possessing kin across the sea. Moreover, returning to the idea that *peregrinatio* meant surrendering the familiar, we must also assess how unfamiliar Brittany would have been to the Irish, considering that at least some of the monasteries of Brittany followed an Irish

59 Gwenaël Le Duc, 'Irish Saints in Brittany: Myth or Reality?' in John Carey, Máire Herbert, and Pádraig Ó Riain (eds), *Studies in Irish Hagiography, Saints and Scholars* (Dublin, 2001), p. 113.
60 Stephanie Hayes-Healy, 'The Concept and Practice of Pilgrimage in Early Medieval Ireland from the Fifth to the Ninth Century' (PhD, TCD, 2006), pp 114-15.

conversatio and venerated Irish saints. Moving forward in time, the evidence we have of Irish monks on the Continent at the start of the ninth century, such as Dicuil and John Scottus Eriugena, shows that while they were undoubtedly inspired by the ideals of *peregrinatio*, their pursuits were arguably mainly scholarly. Brittany, for all its wild forests, plentiful islands, and harsh terrain— making it the perfect desert for any ascetic — did not seem to have the resources, much less a stable political situation, to offer patronage to these Irish *peregrini*.[61] The major monastic centre in Brittany which points to a lively scholarly culture is they abbey of Landévennec, which already partook in Ireland's spiritual and intellectual culture. As Stephanie Hayes Healy concluded in her thesis *The concept and practice of pilgrimage in early medieval Ireland*,

> 'The Irish, once distinguished most by their ascetic rigour, were imported as scholars and teachers for the royalty of western Europe. Rarely after the start of the ninth century do we find intrepid monks and dedicated ascetics hoping to find deserts in the sea or quiet retreats in the mountains and forests of the continent: for the age of the *sancti peregrini* was long since over, and the era of the great scholar-*peregrini* of Ireland had begun'.[62]

Ultimately, this thesis will not dismiss the idea that the Irish *peregrini* were just not interested in Brittany, but will still address the considerations raised above.

In an essay published in 1994, Bernard Merdrignac briefly explored the perception of the Irish in Breton hagiography, focusing on three themes: the origin of the *Scots*, evidence of

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61 The political instability may have also deterred earlier Irishmen from pursuing a monastic life there. Using the example of Columbanus, Ian Wood argues '…the Vannetais was a war-torn region both before and after 590, and however attractive the Golfe de Morbihan may have appeared to someone at the Irish monastery of Bangor, in reality it can scarcely have been conducive to the monastic life.' Wood, 'Columbanus in Brittany' in Alexandra O'Hara (ed.), *Columbanus and the Peoples of Post-Roman Europe* (Oxford, 2018), p. 108.
62 Hayes-Healy, 'The Concept and Practice of Pilgrimage', p. 261.

maritime contacts between Ireland and Brittany, and triangular links between Brittany, Britain, and Ireland.[63] For the first theme, Merdrignac used a reference of a legend from the *Vita Iudoci*, rewritten in the eleventh century in Fleury-sur-Loire, that he argued was evidence that contemporaries considered the Scots to have originated from *Scota*, the daughter of an Egyptian Pharaoh. He admitted, however, that references to this legend are not found in any other Breton text. To make the case for maritime links, Merdrignac made a distinction between historical and hagiographic sources. For the former, he pointed to details of Patrick's escape from Ireland to Brittany in his *Confessio* and Columbanus's brief stay in Brittany awaiting a ship following his exile. From hagiographical evidence, Merdrignac limited himself to the corpus of saints' *Lives* from the abbey of Landévennec, mainly that of Guénolé, to highlight the 'cliché du séjour du saint en Irlande (ou de son désir de s'y rendre)'.[64] Recalling the episode in 818 when the community of Landévennec was compelled to abandon its Irish customs, he suggested that these *Vitae* demonstrate that the community still showed loyalty to its original founders, regardless of the present circumstances. Delving into the theme of triangular relations, he used the dossier of Samson, the *Life* of Guenael, and the *Life* of Gildas to outline the typical trajectory of many saints venerated in Brittany, which involved birth in Britain, voyage and education in Ireland, and the establishment of a monastery in Brittany. Interestingly, Merdrignac began with the argument that the fascination with Ireland in Breton *Vitae* was a cliché, but later concluded by saying that the perception of Ireland in these texts was not all imaginary, nor was it merely a literary fashion.[65] An indispensable work, this survey provides the spring board from which this thesis studies additional Breton saints' *Lives*, whilst reflecting more thoroughly on the historical context in

63 Bernard Merdrignac, 'La perception de l'Irlande dans les Vitae des saints Bretons du haut Moyen Age (VIIe-XIIe siècles)' in Helen Davis and Catherine Laurent (eds), *Irlande et Bretagne—vingt siècles d'histoire: actes du colloque de Rennes (29–31 mars 1993)* (Rennes, 1994), p. 65.
64 Merdrignac, 'La perception de l'Irlande dans les Vitae des saints Bretons du haut Moyen Age', p. 69.
65 Merdrignac, 'La perception de l'Irlande dans les Vitae des saints Bretons du haut Moyen Age', p. 73.

which they were written to argue that Ireland's presentation in these *Lives* was not merely a cliché but a response to contemporary concerns.

Merdrignac later produced another work that was focused on identifying concrete examples of Bretons cooperating with Irishmen on their missions on the Continent. The most notable example comes from Columbanus, who, landing in Alet in Brittany, apparently had among his entourage a few Bretons.[66] After being expelled by King Theuderic of Burgundy, Columbanus travelled to Nantes, where a boat was prepared to take him back to Ireland. Merdrignac refers to the letter Columbanus wrote to his monks at Luxeuil while in Nantes. Columbanus wrote,

> '…quia fratres vestry hic in vicinia Brittonum sunt, vos totos insimul adunate in una parte, quae melior sit, quo facilius contra vitia et insidias diaboli dimicetis…'
>
> (…since your brethren are here in the neighbourhood of the Britons, unite yourselves all together in one party, whichever is the better, that you may the more readily strive against the vices and wiles of the devil…)[67]

Merdrignac used this letter as evidence of trade routes between Brittany and Ireland, but did not interpret it any further. Later he also claimed that it was Breton clergymen who facilitated Columbanus's installation in Vosges and how, according to a hymn from the seventh century, a Breton abbot named Carantoc helped Columbanus and his entourage settle in Annegray, providing them with food and supplies.[68] This Columbanian episode has been milked by others, of course. According to Leon Fleuriot, Columbanus's entourage consisted of Bretons.

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66 Picard, 'Entre Bretagne et Normandie', p. 51.
67 Columbanus, 'Epistula IV', ed. G.S.M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1970), pp 36-7.
68 Picard, 'Entre Bretagne et Normandie', p. 134.

He named Autiernus and Gurganus/Gurgarus as Bretons, and Eunocus as a possible Breton.[69] Ian Wood made the case for Columbanus's landing in the Gulf of Morbihan, due to its association with Gildas, instead of the northeast of Brittany, while also confirming the Breton makeup of Columbanus's entourage.[70] J. Le Goff, a rector at Kernevel (whose patron saint happens to be Columbanus), explored the cult of Columbanus in Brittany, examining place-names and churches with ties to Columbanus or Luxeuil, even drawing attention to an abbey founded around 700 by monks who arrived from Luxeuil.[71] It is possible that Columbanus was not the only Irishman to have received Breton assistance on the Continent, and in fact scholars such as Louis Holtz have stressed the importance the Bretons played as intermediaries between Ireland and the Continent, but the lack of sources cannot strongly support this claim.[72] The evidence we do possess for the Bretons as mediators largely concerns their role as copyists of Irish texts which were then disseminated further into the Continent. Roy Flechner, in his examination of the transmission of the *Hibernensis* via Brittany, argued that the region was one of the main gateways through which Insular texts reached the rest of the Continent.[73]

Breton monks not only copied Irish texts but used them as inspiration for their own writings. Breton hagiographers were drawn to the theme of *peregrinatio* and were keen to present the subjects of their *Vitae* as *peregrini* as well. Although *peregrinatio* meant something quite specific within an Irish context,[74] a major factor that led Irishmen to exile

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69 Picard, 'Entre Bretagne et Normandie', p. 133.
70 Wood, 'Columbanus in Brittany', p. 110.
71 Jean Le Goff, 'Le culte de Saint Columban en Bretagne' in *Mélanges Colombaniens: Actes du Congrès International de Luxeuil 20-23 Juillet 1950* (Paris, 1951), pp. 277-281.
72 Louis Holtz, 'Les grammairiens hiberno-latins étaient-ils des Anglo-Saxons?' in *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 182.
73 Roy Flechner, '*Libelli et Commentarii Aliorum*: The Hibernensis and the Breton Bishops' in Katja Ritari and Alexandra Bergholm (eds) *Approaches to Religion and Mythology in Celtic Studies* (Newcastle, 2008), p. 100.
74 Johnston shows the duality of *peregrinatio* 'as shameful punishment or exalted privilege' by turning to early Irish law tracts to demonstrate that exile was a form of punishment since it severed one from one's *tuath*, or community. For more see Johnston, 'Exiles from the Edge? The Irish Contexts of Peregrinatio' in Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (eds), *The Irish in early medieval Europe: identity, culture, and religion* (London, 2017), pp. 41-44.

themselves as *peregrini* was their own sense of geography, history, and ethnicity - in other words, how they located Ireland within the wider Christian world.[75] Elva Johnston highlighted this using a letter of Columbanus to Pope Boniface IV in which he maintains that 'the Irish who inhabited the world's edge were ideal Christians, free of heresy's taint'.[76] It seems that this sense of peripherality that shaped one's faith was also present in a Breton context. Although once regarded as citizens of the Roman Empire, by the second half of the sixth-century clergymen set a clear distinction between the Bretons and the Romans of Gaul. For example, at the Council of Tours in 567 Venantius Fortunatus upheld that 'We also add that no-one should be so bold as to ordain a Briton or a Roman in Armoricum without the consent of the metropolitan or of the bishops of the same province or letters [of authorization]'.[77] This clerical perception of the Bretons as non-Romans accordingly influenced the Franks. The Bretons, too, were self-aware of their difference because in the subsequent century we see them distinguishing themselves from Romans, notably in the *Vita Prima* of Samson of Dol, which recognizes the region in which the monastery of Pentale was located in *Romania* (now Normandy) and the region west of that as *Brittania*.[78] It comes as no surprise then that the Bretons, also conscious of their peripherality, found the idea of *peregrinatio* appealing.

Pierre Riché dedicated an essay to highlighting passages from chronicles and histories from the sixth to the eleventh century to show that the Bretons were perpetually depicted in a negative light.[79] Probably continuing the tradition of Gregory of Tours who portrayed the Bretons as belligerent savages and their clergymen as drunken ascetics, Continental

75 Johnston, 'Exiles from the Edge?', p. 44.
76 Johnston, 'Exiles from the Edge?', p. 38.
77 T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350-1064* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 231-32.
78 Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350-1064*, p. 238.
79 Pierre Riché, 'Les Bretons victims des lieux communs dans le haut moyen age' in Gwennolé Le Menn and Jean-Yves Le Moing (eds) *Bretagne et pays celtiques: langues, histoire, civilization* (Rennes, 1992)

commentators inherited this unsavoury perception of their neighbours on the margin.[80] We need only read the comments on MSS 858 of St Gall, where a scribe annotated a passage from Horace describing how the Thracian prisoners cleaned the sewers of Rome, writing that it was the same case for the Bretons who cleaned the sewers of Laon.[81] In a similar vein, a charter from 845 giving the monks of Saint-Philibert the monastery of Cunault notes how the monks of Saint-Philibert were forced to flee to Deas, on the edge of Brittany, due to incursions by both vikings and Bretons. Both the vikings and Bretons were called 'barbaric'.[82] It is interesting then, that clergymen on the Continent associated the Bretons with the *Scoti*. Written in the ninth century, the *Vita Alcuini* reveals the ambiguity of the term *Scotus*. When Aigulf goes to visit Alcuin and sees Breton monks in front of the door, he bitterly remarks ''Ce Breton ou ce Scot vient vers cet autre Breton qui se languit a l'intérieur. O Dieu, libérez ce monastère des ces Bretons, car commes les abeilles retournent toutes a leur mere, eux tous viennent a lui.'' (This Breton or Irishman comes to this other Breton who languishes inside. Oh God, liberate this monastery from these Bretons, for as bees all return to their mother, they all come to him)[83] François Duine and Bernard Merdrignac went even further in arguing that the term *Scoti* came to mean all *peregrini* whose origins were not exactly known, including Bretons.[84] The latter also put forth the argument that the term

80 There are several examples of the negative perception of the Bretons, among them the poem *In honorem Hludovici imperatoris* by Ermoldus Nigellus, or Ermold the Black, which provides a scathing description of the Bretons. "Gens", ait, "illa quidem mendaxque superba, rebellis Hactenus existit, et bonitate carens; Christicolum retinet tantummodo perfida nomen, Namque opera et cultus sunt procul atque fides…coeunt frater et ipsa soror. Uxorem fratris frater rapit alter, et omnes Incestu vivunt, atque nefanda gerunt. In dumis habitant, lustrisque cubilia condunt, Et gaudent raptu degere more ferae…' ("This deceptive and proud nation", he said, "has shown itself to be rebellious and lacking goodness. They keep Christianity only in name, works, cult, and faith are far from them…brother and sister copulate, the brother takes the wife from the other brother, and all of them live in incest, and they go on in wickedness. They live in bushes, and others build their beds in dens, and they enjoy rapture and living wildly.") in Ermold the Black, *Carmen in honorem Hludowici*, ed. E. Dümmler, (MGH, Poetae, 2,1884), Liber III, verses 43-51.
81 Riché, 'Les Bretons victims des lieux communs dans le haut moyen age', p. 113.
82 Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity*, p. 149.
83 Bernard Merdrignac, 'Bretons et Irlandais en France du Nord- VIe-VIIIe siecles' in Jean-Michel Picard (ed.) *Ireland and Northern France, AD 600*-850 (Dublin, 1991), p. 141.
84 Merdrignac, 'Bretons et Irlandais en France du Nord- VIe-VIIIe siecles', p. 119.

Scotus was associated with cleverness.[85] The sources which refer to Bretons, however, are derogatory and do not associate them with genius. On the other hand, we know that the Irish were also controversial figures and that their activities on the Continent, which privileged 'Insular authorities in lieu of continental' and at times challenged the local episcopal hierarchy, aroused hostility among the native Franks.[86] There is abundant evidence of anti-Irish sentiment in Francia.[87]

Cultural Memory

Up to now this chapter has demonstrated the classic approach scholars have favoured in regard to using Breton saints' *Lives*. It is clearly a remnant of the 'positivist tradition' which is concerned with sifting through these hagiographies for their historical value, even if these texts were written hundreds of years after the events they describe.[88] These scholars have drawn very firm lines to distinguish the genre of history from the genre of hagiography, even though the Carolingians themselves did not make distinctions between the writing of saints' *Lives* and the writing of secular history.[89] In fact, this thesis maintains that medieval writers recorded their past in genres that were familiar to them and suited their particular needs. Breton monasteries would have obviously been most familiar with saints' *Lives* and would have needed a text that fulfilled a liturgical and didactive function, as well as one that

85 Merdrignac, 'Bretons et Irlandais en France du Nord- VIe-VIIIe siecles', p. 119.
86 Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder, 'Controversies and Ethnic Tensions' in Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (eds) *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture and Religion* (London, 2017), p. 197.
87 Flechner and Meeder, 'Controversies and Ethnic Tensions', pp 195-213.
88 Monique Goullet explained the shift from studying hagiography through a positivist lens to one that now seeks to use hagiography 'pour construire une histoire des mentalités.' Goullet, *Écriture et Réécriture',* p. 9.
89 Felice Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative' in *Viator*, 25 (1994), 95-114. Lifshitz argues that hagiography was a concept that stemmed from the nineteenth century and that 'the ideological construction "hagiography" should not be utilized in analyses of ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-century Francia'.

engendered spiritual reflection. Moreover, Chris Wickham and James Fentress raised the issue with historians who use this approach, supposing that

> 'there is an opposition between a historical text and a literary text, sources that are (potentially) 'true' descriptions of the past and those that are not. Such a distinction is essentially artificial; only by regarding the 'objective' and the 'subjective' as indissoluble can we understand the relationship between the world as it empirically was, and the world as it was represented by writers.'[90]

The priority of this thesis will not be to find concrete examples of the Irish in Brittany or the Bretons in Ireland, nor will it be overly concerned with whether or not the Irish connections presented in Breton saints' *Lives* were grounded in reality. Instead, this thesis refers to James T. Palmer's thoughts on the matter:

> '…we are now better-placed to use hagiography as something more sophisticated than an account of the past to be considered simply for whether or not it is true and what it says about religion. It is a valuable cultural artefact in its own right that reveals much about the world of the people who created it in many forms.'[91]

The world that ninth- and tenth-century Breton monks were living in was one of tremendous change. The effect that the imposition of the Rule of St Benedict had on the Breton ecclesiastical landscape cannot be underscored as it transformed the daily life of these monks. The clothes they wore, the structure of their day, and the limits of the asceticism they were able to pursue were just some of the aspects of their life that were being altered in order

90 James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992), p. 145.
91 James T. Palmer, *Early Medieval Hagiography* (Leeds, 2018), p. 80.

to adhere to the imperatives of the Carolingian empire. The way of life they had followed for centuries was now replaced by a simple royal diploma. Ironically, the Benedictine emphasis on *stabilitas* was not only a contradiction with the Breton admiration for *peregrinatio* but could not even be a reality for these monks because not long after the adoption of this new Rule, Breton monks faced the viking onslaught that forced them to flee their monasteries into communities far from home. Taking advantage of such an eventful *milieu,* this thesis is concerned with how the exigencies of the present affected how Breton monks conceived of their past. It is interested in what they found significant to record in writing and what they thought about this particular vision of the past they created.

This thesis proposes to examine these hagiographies through the lens of memory, which, at its simplest, is the interaction between past and present. This methodology is inspired by Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist who formulated the theory of collective memory. Originally published in 1925, his seminal work *On Collective Memory* argued that 'the mind reconstructs its memories under the pressures of society' and that the present imposes constraints upon us, whereas 'We are free to choose from the past the period into which we wish to immerse ourselves'.[92] Since individuals are inherently social, memory, too, is social, so much so that a particular memory could be held by an entire group. This idea was further developed by the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, who divided collective memory into two branches: communicative memory and cultural memory. Assmann articulated the difference between the two, explaining that communicative memory is contingent on everyday interaction and has a 'limited time depth', whereas cultural memory depends on institutions of 'learning, transmission, and interpretation', is created by 'specialists', is celebrated on special occasions, and is 'formalized and stabilized' in material forms.[93] He

92 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago, 1992), pp. 50-51.
93 Jan Assmann, 'Communicative and Cultural Memory' in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (New York, 2008), p. 111.

attributed five key characteristics to cultural memory: 1) 'the concretion of identity', 2) 'its capacity to reconstruct', 3) 'Formation', 4) 'Organization', and 5) 'Obligation'.[94] To explain briefly, cultural memory acknowledges that shared memories also have the power of creating a sense of belonging within a group, in other words, they facilitate the formation of a group identity. Halbwachs believed that memory was 'structured by group identities' and argued 'We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated'.[95] Similarly, Assmann maintained that 'Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity'.[96] For the second point, the concept of cultural memory recognizes that the past cannot be preserved or transmitted perfectly intact and places great importance on the idea of reconstructing the past within the reference frame of the present.[97] For 'Formation', Assmann argued that collective memories need to become crystallized in order for transmission to take place. This can occur through the medium of written text, but also through 'Pictorial images and rituals'.[98] Elsewhere he emphasized the role material forms can play, writing, 'Things do not "have" a memory of their own, but they may remind us, may trigger our memory, because they carry memories which we have invested into them, things such as dishes, feasts, rites, images, stories and other texts, landscapes, and other "lieux de mémoire"'.[99] For the fourth point, 'Organization' highlights how cultural memory depends on institutionalization, which entails having specialists who are responsible for the transmission and communication of memories. Finally,

94 Jan Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity' in *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995), 130-31.
95 Fentress and Wickham, p. ix and Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 47.
96 Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', 130.
97 Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory: Script, Recollection, and Political Identity in Early Civilisations*, trans. Ursula Ballin (Leiden, 2003), pp 167-69.
98 Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', 131.
99 Assmann, 'Communicative and Cultural Memory' p. 111.

cultural memory assumes that groups possess a sense of obligation to preserve these memories.

The concept of *lieux de mémoire* was coined by French historian Pierre Nora, who published a three-volume collection on the subject.[100] The *lieux de mémoire* refers to places, things, or concepts which retain historical or cultural significance. Nora argued that memory and history were in sharp opposition to one another, writing,

> 'Memory…remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History… is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past…Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again.'[101]

Since the appearance of his publications, Nora's sharp polarisation of memory and history, as well as his insistence that history was 'eradicating' memory, has been critiqued. As mentioned earlier, the binary between history and memory was not always clear-cut, as the hagiographers discussed in this thesis viewed their works as both history and memory, and, at times, viewed themselves as both historians and retrievers of memories. Moreover, his insistence that history was produced in intellectual and secular settings is limited and frankly, incorrect, when we recall that monastic *scriptoria* were both intellectual and sacred environments where history could be produced. Another critique of Nora's work is,

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100 Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris, 1984-1992)
101 Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' in *Representations*, 26 (1989), 8-9 .

unsurprisingly, his overemphasis on the nation-state, which is so broad that it neglects essential histories, such as Napoleonic history and its legacy on the French people, and Nora's overall 'Gallocentrism' which severs France from the rest of Europe and the World.[102] Notwithstanding this, Nora's work has still proven itself a useful model for examining different memory cultures.

It would be remiss to omit the philosopher Paul Ricoeur from this discussion, who has also made an indelible mark on memory studies, with the publication of his book *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* in 2000.[103] Ricoeur divided this dense tome into three parts; the first examining the phenomena of memory, the second the epistemology of history, and the third on forgetting, emblematic of the vulnerability of the 'historical condition'.[104] He categorized remembering as an act of 'exercising memory' which had a 'cognitive aim' and 'practical operation'.[105] He complicates Nora's black and white interpretations of history and memory, pointing to the historian's dependence on memory. Having said that, this book is unequivocally intended for specialists, making it almost inaccessible to the non-philosopher interested in memory studies. Turning back to Assmann's work, the theory of cultural memory is quite appropriate for studying Breton monastic communities. The importance of *memoria* and preserving it in writing is a noticeable feature of Breton hagiography. Wrdisten, the monk who wrote the *Life* of Guénolé, specified in the beginning of the *Vita* 'Haec fuerant denso veterum velamine tecta, Lucidiora nitent sed nostro condita scripto.'[106] (All this was recovered from the thick veil of the past, here it is now which thanks to our writing shines with renewed brilliance) This statement reveals a consciousness for retrieving memories

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102 Michael Rothberg, 'Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de mémoire to Noeuds de mémoire in *Yale French Studies* no. 118/119 (2010), 5.
103 Paul Ricoeur, *Le mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris, 2000)
104 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago, 2004), p. 412.
105 Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 57.
106 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, pp 163-64.

from, in Wrdisten's words, the thick veil of the past, and giving them meaning in a way that suited the needs of the present. Breton monastic communities were groups that, under the pressures of religious, cultural, and political change ushered in by a foreign empire, now sought to recover continuity and stability from the past. These communities were institutions that had specialists, in this case scribes, who were charged with transmitting a particular history through text. Moreover, this history was continuously communicated within the community, whether through reading of a saint's *Life* during meal times, the celebration of a saint's feast day, or the singing of a hymn dedicated to that saint. Many of the texts produced by these monastic communities were what Leópold Génicot called 'textes vivants', which were communicated orally and metamorphosized over the course of several copies.[107] The survival of Breton monastic communities and their identity was contingent upon the constant revitalization or communication of the history of their founder saints. The word history is stressed because, to the monks who wrote these hagiographies, or in some cases re-wrote them, these were not merely stories to convey a moral lesson but the history of the monastic community, the foundation upon which it was built. They believed what they wrote. Chris Wickham, along with the anthropologist James Fentress, underlined this key point in their book *Social Memory*, noting:

> '...the question of whether *we* regard these memories as historically true will often turn out to be less important than whether *they* regard their memories as true. Groups may regard their traditions as a set of amusing stories, possessing, perhaps, a moral lesson to teach, but still only fictions. Yet, in other cases, groups may regard their traditions as

107 Léopold Genicot, *Les généalogies* (Turnhout, 1975), pp. 27-28.

authoritative. In these latter instances, it is important to ask how and why they do so…'[108]

Breton hagiographers were keen to present these hagiographies as a faithful account, untainted by false interpolations, by imbuing them with authority. They did this by citing the Bible and works of the Fathers, referring to witnesses contemporary to the saint, and, occasionally, by referring to an earlier text that was no longer extant. Moreover, other than the book in which these saints' *Lives* are contained, Breton hagiography demonstrates that these memories could also be fixed on a particular site, such as a cave into which a saint retreated, an object like a saint's hand bell, or even the corpse of a saint. In short, using the lens of cultural memory to study Breton hagiography sheds light on the significance of the past Breton monks constructed and chose to focus on, in the process forging the identity of the community. It reveals the specific types of lives and values that they held dear, and that were perhaps discordant with the mode of life they were now expected to abide by, or which were simply not feasible anymore. The part that Ireland and the Irish play in these narratives demonstrates how Breton monks conceived of Brittany's spiritual history in relation to Ireland and the importance of perpetuating it, especially in a period when this special relationship was now vulnerable.

A Breton saint's *Life* clearly held a lot of special meaning to its particular community, but the text itself was not one of a kind. Breton hagiography appropriated much of its material from a variety of authors. From the hagiographical evidence, Breton monasticism, like Irish monasticism, appears to have been influenced by the eastern eremitical movement of the Desert Fathers, which first spread to Gaul in the fourth century.[109] St Athanasius's *Life* of Anthony, which was introduced then, was the first text of its kind, and was immensely

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108 Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory,* p. 26.
109 Nora K. Chadwick, *The Age of the Saints in the Early Celtic church* (London, 1961), p. 31.

popular, providing a paradigm for later hagiographies. We know it was particularly popular in Brittany because certain Breton saints like Guénolé followed rigid ascetic practices inspired by the Desert Fathers. Breton hagiography borrowed from more local texts, of course. François Kerlouégan was the first to catalogue the sources of borrowings in Latin hagiography in early medieval Brittany, showing that the hagiographers' main sources were early saints' *Lives* such as the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius Severus, the *Vita Paterni* of Venantius Fortunatus, and Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, as well as patristic texts by Isidore of Seville, Cassiodorus, and Augustine. He also identified borrowings from Vergil.[110] Neil Wright later revised this catalogue, revealing more passages that drew from these canonical texts and extending the range of borrowings to include Christian Latin poets and historians, 'two classes of writers surprisingly scantily represented in Kerlouégan's catalogue'.[111] Caelius Sedulius, Juvencus, Orosius, and Gildas are just a few among the authors he discusses. Not only does this attest to rich libraries in Breton monasteries that either contained these texts or at least *florilegia* that contained key excerpts of these texts, but it shows that Brittany was very much part of the same intellectual *milieu* as the rest of Christian western Europe.

There are, however, motifs that are almost exclusive to Celtic hagiography. Although Breton hagiography has not received nearly as much scholarly attention as Welsh or Irish hagiography, it still shares in this exclusivity. Julia Smith, in her essay about Celtic asceticism in early medieval Brittany, pointed out that within the ninth-century Breton saints' *Lives*, 'certain themes suggest the influence of Irish ascetic and hagiographical traditions', using the *Vita Machutis*, which includes a version of the *Navigatio Brendani*, as one

110 François Kerlouégan, 'Les citations d'auteurs latins profanes dans les Vies de saints bretons carolingiennes' in *Études celtiques*, 18 (1981), 181-95 and Kerlouégan, 'Les citations d'auteurs latins chrétiens dans les Vies de saints bretons carolingiennes' in *Études celtiques*, 19 (1982), 215-57.
111 Neil Wright, 'Knowledge of Christian Latin Poets and Historians in Early Medieval Brittany' in *Études Celtiques*, 23 (1986), 167.

example.[112] The *Life* of Malo and its connections with the *Navigatio Brendani* and the *Vita Brendani* also received attention by Séamus Mac Mathúna. [113] Only the most popular Breton saints' *Lives* have been probed for their usage of the themes of *imramm* and *peregrinatio*, and therefore more neglected ones, such as the *Vita Ethbini*, will be included in this thesis. Furthermore, the works of Elissa Henken, who has studied and compiled a catalogue of motifs in Welsh hagiography, and Dorothy Ann Bray, who has done the same for Irish hagiography, will be used in this thesis for moving beyond the focus of *peregrinatio* and discovering more minute motifs that are shared by Breton hagiography as well.[114] Overall, these are texts that helped monastic communities position themselves in a wider cultural history and texts that aided them in the construction of their own specific history. Taking into account the complexity of Breton hagiography and its textual loans, this thesis will explore the role of intertextuality in the cultural memory of Breton monastic communities.

This thesis also relies on a lexicon which includes culturally salient terminology to help identify key passages in Breton hagiography.

Hibernia/Hiberniae	Peregrinatio	Conversatio/Conuersatio	Desertum
Hiberni	Potior Peregrinatio	Regula	Transmare/Transmarinus
Britannia/Britanniae	Peregrinus/Peregrini	Tonsio	Philosophus/Philosophi
Britto/Brittones	Túath	Memoria	Cloca
Iren/Erin	Immram	Oblivio	
Scotia/Scottia	Navigatio	Insulani	

112 Julia Smith, 'Celtic Asceticism and Carolingian Authority in Early Medieval Brittany' in *Studies in church History*, 22 (1985), 59.
113 Séamus Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a study of the voyages of St Brendan and St Malo' in Helen Davis and Catherine Laurent (eds), *Irlande et Bretagne—vingt siècles d'histoire: actes du colloque de Rennes (29–31 mars 1993)* (Rennes, 1994).
114 Elissa Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Cambridge, 1987), Elissa Henken, *The Welsh saints: a study in patterned lives* (Cambridge, 1991) and Dorothy Ann Bray, *A list of motifs in the lives of early Irish saints* (Helsinki, 1992).

Scotus/Scoti	Norma	Aegyptum	

The main aim of this thesis is to re-examine Breton sources in an innovative way to study how the Breton church persevered through an exceptionally turbulent period. Analysing the past Breton monasteries chose to record reveals what parts of their history they thought resonated with their own present situation. These different elements reveal not only how each community defined itself in relation to its past, but also how they reconciled with the transformations taking place or resisted them. One of these key elements is Ireland and by exploring how the country and its people are represented this project will uncover how significant the Irish influence was in the Breton church and whether this influence was rooted in the centuries old trade routes that connected the two lands, shared spiritual ideologies, similar identities, and/or mere proximity. The overall contribution of this project will be a greater understanding of Ireland's influence on the Continent, and more specifically, its influence over a fellow Celtic neighbour that has received little attention. The transregional framework of this project, moreover, seeks to depart from the narrative that depicts Brittany as an isolated and peripheral land by studying the region within the context of broader currents.

Chapter One, 'The Spiritual Landscape of Brittany', begins with a detailed discussion of the creation of Brittany and its church, attempting to make sense of the migrations with the few sources available. This chapter provides a survey of the early ecclesiastical structures of Brittany, as well as the spirituality of its people. Looking at sources by outsiders such as Gregory the Great and later commentators, it sheds light on the suspicion the Bretons roused among Frankish ecclesiastics because of their 'unusual' religious practices and their tendency to disregard the authority of the Metropolitan of Tours. Some of these practices are highlighted and connections are drawn with the asceticism of the Desert Fathers. It is through

this window of difference that Ireland is introduced to discuss textual evidence for contact between the two lands. This chapter is a necessary foundation for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Two, 'The Saints of Landévennec', provides a brief history of the abbey of Landévennec and its celebrated *scriptorium*, before examining the *Vita Winwaloei*, along with the rest of Guénolé's dossier, as well as the less-studied *Vita Ethbini* and *Vita Guenaili*. In the section on Guénolé, the Patrician influence on Guénolé and his *Life* is analysed, with the conclusion that Wrdisten was projecting Landévennec's contemporaneous devotion to St Patrick far back into Guénolé's own time, thereby amplifying Patrick's influence on the foundation of the abbey of Landévennec. The connections between Landévennec and the cult of Brigid are explored in the section on Ethbin, and the last section, on Guenael, tackles the saint's vague *peregrinatio* to Ireland.

Chapter Three, 'The Saints in *Bretagne bretonnante*', offers an analysis of the *Lives* of five saints: Samson of Dol, Malo, Paul Aurelian, Brioc, and Gildas. Each section offers a brief history of the communities of Dol, Alet, Pol-de-Léon, Brieuc, and Rhuys. Apart from Paul Aurelian and Brioc, whose *Lives* concentrate on Britain, rather than Ireland, the representation of Ireland and the Irish in the other hagiographies will be investigated. The extent of the hagiographers' knowledge of Ireland and Irish texts will be considered, as well as the role Ireland played in the community's memory of their founding saint and their current cult.

Chapter Four, 'The Dynastic Saints', focuses on the *Vita sancti Iudoci*, while providing commentary on the problematic nature of the *Vita sancti Iudicaeli* and *Vita sancti Winnoci*, also saints from the Riwal dynasty. Later, the chapter looks at the area of the lower Vilaine, considered a frontier by some scholars, before diving into the abbey of Saint-Sauveur-de-Redon, which dealt with the Breton and Carolingian dynasties. In this section, a background on the foundation of Redon and its geopolitical importance is given. Looking at

the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* and the *Vita Conuuionis* together, this chapter argues that an ideological shift occurred between the writing of the *Gesta* and the *Vita*, in which the monks of Redon emphasised the Carolingian influence over the monastery, over the Breton one, largely due to the community's identity as staunch reformers.

The final chapter, 'Wales as Intermediary', explores the strong links between Ireland and Wales and Wales and Brittany. Reconsidering key evidence from Breton and Welsh hagiography and from shared saints' cults, it demonstrates that contact between Wales and Brittany persisted beyond the seventh century. Ultimately, it argues that Wales served as a channel of transmission of Irish influence into Breton monastic communities. Moreover, the Irish influence we see in Breton monasticism was most likely filtered through Wales.

Finally, the Conclusion provides a summary of each chapter, reflects on the overall usefulness of cultural memory as a methodology, and returns to the original questions posed in Introduction. It offers some final thoughts on the future of scholarship on early medieval Brittany.

Chapter 1: The Spiritual Landscape of Early Brittany

In order to understand the foundations of the relation between Brittany and Ireland, it is necessary to trace the foundations of Brittany itself, which is no easy task. Brittany, as its name suggests, was born as a result of two or more migrations of Britons to the peninsula of Armorica. Despite decades of scholarship, our knowledge of this movement remains shaky to this day. We know very little about how this rebellious Roman province transformed into a nation which, very soon after it was established, was inhabited by a people that were known for their strong sense of national identity and their affinity with the Isles. If we squint, we have very few sources for Brittany before the ninth century. We have virtually no contemporary sources for the seventh century. Regrettably, coverage of the west of Brittany, which appears to have been largely untouched by Frankish influence, is meagre compared to the evidence we have of the east. Archaeology provides little to fill the gap the written sources leave behind, as there remains little surviving material that can be datable to the early Middle Ages.[115] More specifically, the Breton migrations, which have traditionally been viewed as a dramatic exodus, have barely left archaeological remains.[116] To put it plainly, early Brittany is far from a treasure trove of material, written or otherwise.

This chapter attempts to piece together the few sources available to make sense of how Brittany, and with it the Breton church, formed. It aims to discern whether or not the early Breton church was known for having a peculiar, regional 'flavour'. This chapter argues that we can see traces of the Breton church (or rather Breton Christians) being 'othered' from the beginning, because of its nonconformity to the Metropolitan of Tours, and more generally, the church of Rome. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, this nonconformity

115 Grenville Astill and Wendy Davies, *A Breton Landscape* (London, 1997), p. 91.
116 Pierre-Roland Giot, Philippe Guigon, and Bernard Merdrignac (eds), *The British Settlement of Brittany: The First Bretons in Armorica* (Stroud, 2003), p. 64.

persisted for many more centuries, creating a spiritual and political tension between Brittany and the Frankish empire.

The Breton migrations

The Breton migrations remain the enigma of Breton history. Like many other national origin stories, they have been clouded by layers of myth. While scholars have roughly settled on the fourth to sixth centuries as the period the migrations took place, they still debate who exactly were the migrants, who led them, and what conditions they found in Armorica when they arrived. There are few primary sources that document the migrations to Armorica, but they are by no means consistent with each other. All accounts, however, suggest that the increasing weakness of the Roman empire and its eventual dissolution mark the impetus of the migrations. The defensive problems of the empire were felt on both sides of the Channel, as Saxon pirates raided the Armorican coasts in the late third century.[117]

The Western Roman empire, which colonized Armorica in 57-56 BC, left behind a key document before its dissolution.[118] This early source is the *Notitia Dignitatum*, an administrative document that records offices in different locations of the late Roman empire. Scholars have dated the *Notitia Dignitatum* to around 400, although it is only extant in a fifteenth-century copy.[119] The *Dux tractus Armoricani* includes a list of the commanders of *laeti* stationed in major *castella* of Armorica, including Nantes, Alet, and Vannes. These *laeti*

117 Nora Chadwick, 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic Britain' in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 51 (1965), 252.
118 Astill and Davies, *A Breton Landscape*, p. 79.
119 Peter Brennan, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum*' in François Paschoud, Bernard Grange, and Charlotte Buchwalder (eds) *Les littératures techniques dans l'antiquité romaine: statut, public et destination, tradition* (Geneva, 1996), p. 148.

were, in Nora Chadwick's words, 'barbarian settlers subject to military duties'.[120] Based on D. van Berchem's estimate of military units in the Roman empire, Patrick Galliou calculates that Armorica had a total of 4,000 troops.[121] Armorica in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is a large geographic area, comprising of Avranches, Coutances, and Rouen, and going as far west as the area occupied by the Osismii, roughly modern-day Finistère.[122] Caution must be used when using the *Notitia Dignitatum* because of its dubious dating. In fact, it probably reflects the military situation in each province around the end of the third century, not 400. Moreover, Peter Brennan has offered a reinterpretation of the document, arguing that

> 'the western list in particular represents the dissolution of [public] authority in the early fifth century. The composite list represents, among other things, a denial, at least ideologically, of that dissolution and an attempt to reclaim the past'.[123]

More importantly, the document does not tell us the origin of the soldiers, so it is not possible to argue that they were Britons. Given a lack of other sources to corroborate it, it is likely that the *Notitia Dignitatum* does not accurately record the military and administrative presence in Armorica, and therefore cannot be used as a source to study the early inhabitants of Brittany.

By far the best-known source is Gildas's *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, an early sixth-century work that recounts the emigration of the Britons following the Saxon invasions. Gildas was a Briton and was probably educated in south Wales, under the tutelage of St Illtud as his later *Vita* describes. Although Brittany is not mentioned in *De Excidio*, Gildas describes the exodus of the Britons, writing ''Others made for lands beyond the sea;

120 Chadwick, 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic Britain', p. 254.
121 Patrick Galliou, 'The Defence of Armorica in the Later Roman Empire: A Tentative Synthesis' in W.S. Hanson and L.J. Keppie (eds), *Roman Frontier Studies 1979* (Oxford, 1980), p. 404.
122 *Notitia Dignitatum, accedunt Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et laterculi prouinciarum*, ed. Otto Seeck (Weidmannos, 1876), pp. 204-206.
123 Brennan, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum*', p. 148.

beneath the swelling sail they loudly wailed, singing a psalm that took the place of a shanty: "You have given us like sheep for eating and scattered us among the heathen."'[124] It is possible that he too was a refugee, as his ninth-century Breton *Vita* describes how he settled in Brittany, where he founded a monastery in the Rhuys peninsula in Morbihan. However, we must take his account with a grain of salt because, as Bernard Merdrignac points out, 'Gildas wants to be a prophet and not a 'historian'…'[125] In Gildas's view, plague and the Saxons, which are God's punishment for the corrupt priests and immoral leaders of Britain, are to blame for the large exodus of Britons, but scholars have agreed that it was the expansion and raids of the Scots from Ireland that was one of the driving forces for the migrations. Moreover, archaeological evidence in Britain does not support the idea that the Saxons drove out or executed an 'ethnic cleansing' of the Britons.

Earlier evidence of the migrations comes from Galicia in the same century. The First Council of Lugo in 569 held by the Suevic King Theodemir reveals that a British colony had been established in Galicia. This Council resulted in the creation of more dioceses as there seemed to be too few bishops for the entirety of Galicia.[126] The very last article of the record registers an episcopal seat of the Britons, along with a monastery dedicated to Maximus, in Asturias.[127] Britonia, the British colony founded by the migrants, never left such a cultural imprint as its associated colony, Brittany, did. Still, the Council record provides concrete evidence of British migrants that sailed all the way to the north of Spain, and therefore it is

124 'alii transmarinas petebant regiones cum ululatu magno ceu celeumatis vice hoc modo sub velorum sinibus cantantes: 'dedisti nos tamquam oves escarum et in gentibus dispersisti nos.' In Gildas, *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London, 1978), pp. 27-28 and p. 98.
125 Giot, Guigon, and Merdrignac (eds), *The British Settlement of Brittany*, p. 98.
126 *Itineraria et Alia Geographica, vol. CLXXV,* ed. P. Geyer et al. (Turnhout, 1965), p. 413. 'Insuper tantae provinciae unus tantumodo metropolitanus episcopus praeest...' (Moreover there is only one bishop in charge of such a large province…)
127 *Itineraria et Alia Geographica, vol. CLXXV*, p. 420.

not inconceivable that Brittany, much closer to Britain and on the route to Spain, would have received most of these migrants.

Later sources frame the migrations quite differently, opting for a narrative that included mythical heroes who restored dignity to the Britons. The *Historia Brittonum*, which dates to about 829-30,[128] tells the history of Britain and 'de origine eorum necnon et expulsione' (about their origin as well as their expulsion).[129] Some recensions attribute its authorship to Nennius, a ninth-century Welsh monk. The most popular recension, the Vatican recension, dates to 943-4.[130] In the *Historia Brittonum*, Maximianus, a Spaniard and a commander of the troops in Britain against the Scots and Picts, obtains rulership over all of Europe after usurping the throne of Gratian, king of the Romans.[131] Unwilling to send his soldiers back to their wives, sons, and lands back in Britain, he gave them lands which stretched from *Montis Iouis* to *tumulum occidentalem* (Mount Jovis to the western tumulus).The author writes 'Hi sunt Bryttones armorici, et illic permanserunt usque in hodiernum diem' (These are the Armorican Britons, and they remain there to this day).[132]

Completed in 1136, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, continues the tradition of the *Historia Brittonum*, but portrays the migrations as a glorious conquest by the British immigrants over the native people of Armorica and the result of dynastic struggles in Britain. Conan Meriadoc, the hero in the *Historia* and an ancestral figure for Bretons, is given Armorica by the King of Britain, Maximianus, as a result of being refused the crown of Britain. Maximianus tells him, 'I will raise you to the kingship of this realm. This will be a second Britain, and once we have killed off the natives we will people it with our own

128 David N. Dumville (ed.) *The Historia Brittonum - 3 The 'Vatican' Recension* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 3.
129 Dumville, *The Historia Brittonum,* p. 62.
130 Dumville, *The Historia Brittonum*, p. 4.
131 Nennius is referring to Magnus Maximus. 'Magnus Maximus', Britannica Academic, https://academic-eb-com.elib.tcd.ie/levels/collegiate/article/Magnus-Maximus/51558, accessed January 29, 2020.
132 Dumville, *The Historia Brittonum*, pp. 78-79.

race.'[133] Conan Meriadoc accomplishes this ethnic cleansing in the story *The dream of Mascen Wledig* in *The Mabinogi*. In this collection of stories, compiled between the twelfth and thirteenth century, Cynan annihilates the native men of Armorica and cuts the tongues of the native women in order the preserve the purity of the British language.[134] Consequently, the newly conquered kingdom 'was called *Llydaw*, or half-silent, and the people were called *Brytanieid*.'[135] While scholars use the *Historia regum Britanniae* with caution, and understandably so, none who have turned to Geoffrey of Monmouth's words on the migration have considered that Geoffrey was probably the son of Breton immigrants to Wales.[136] Nor was Geoffrey the only Welshman of Breton descent; Domesday Book records several Bretons who migrated to the Welsh Marches following the Conquest of 1066.[137] There is the possibility that Geoffrey had an oral tradition to work from, but this story seems to have been created in order to give the Britons an origin story and did not reflect reality. Overall, it is these later sources that have influenced how scholars conceive of the military-based, first wave of migrations. Many Breton scholars, and Nora Chadwick, have been unwilling to let go of the theory that Maximianus's troops did settle in Armorica, particularly after his defeat around 383-8.[138]

Several theories have been proposed by modern scholars to understand the migrations. This section will outline the most salient ones as they are important to understanding the formation of the Breton church. The first of these theories that merits attention is the one proposed by Nora Chadwick in her 1965 work 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic

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133 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, ed. and trans. Lewis Thorpe, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, (Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 139.
134 *The Mabinogion,* eds and trans. Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (London, 1974), p. 88.
135 Elysée Yhuel, 'Brittany and the undoing of Angevin sovereignty during the reign of King John' (MPhil, TCD, 2018) p. 7.
136 Geoffrey Ashe, 'The Prophecies of Merlin: Their Originality and Importance' in Dorsey Armstrong, Ann W. Astell, and Howell Chickering (eds), *Magistra Doctissima: Essays in Honor of Bonnie Wheeler* (Kalamazoo, 2013), p. 71.
137 Yhuel, 'Brittany and the undoing of Angevin sovereignty during the reign of King John', pp. 21-2.
138 Chadwick, 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic Britain', p. 259.

Britain.'[139] Chadwick argued that the need for strengthening the coastal defences of Armorica led Roman authorities to implant Britons in the west of Armorica to populate the region.[140] She wrote, 'Not only is it incredible that the Celtic immigrants could have succeeded otherwise in entirely 'dominating' the country which the Saxons failed to penetrate in force; but it is equally incredible that the Romans could have permitted their penetration and occupation unopposed, even as far as the very borders of Gaul.'[141] Accordingly, she dated the beginning of the migrations to the third century, as opposed to the fourth century, and stressed the Cornish and Devonian origin of the migrants because of Irish raids in those regions. Centuries later, she argued, a 'Celtic Church' that the migrants carried over coexisted with the church of the east, which was under the authority of Tours. The concept of the Celtic Church is outdated and simplistic, and moreover, it seems that the two churches did not, in fact, coexist together, but rather ignored each other.

As mentioned earlier, the most widely accepted and long-held theory is that of Léon Fleuriot, who proposed in his 1980 work *Les origines de la Bretagne: L'émigration* a thesis which envisioned the first wave of the migration composed of soldiers sent as reinforcements to Armorica and the second wave led by saints from Cornwall and Devon. It is perplexing that the majority of French historians have not applied much revision to this theory, seeing as the many of the founder saints are Welsh, not just Cornish. The Welsh genealogies of Breton saints are indeed a key feature in Breton hagiography. Archaeological evidence supports the idea that the first wave of the migration was military in character, although these soldiers are not described as Britons and their ethnic background is disputed.[142] Another theory that has emerged from France and that is accepted by Bernard Merdrignac is Soazick Kerneis's

139 Chadwick, 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic Britain', pp 235-99.
140 Chadwick, 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic Britain', p. 257.
141 Chadwick, 'The colonization of Brittany from Celtic Britain', p. 257.
142 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 6.

argument that these soldiers were actually prisoners of war and mercenaries of British and Irish origin. The evidence to support this argument is unsound.

Gwenaël Le Duc's argument that the migrations were led by British saints is one of the more provocative theories. While obviously pointing to Breton saints' *Lives*, he uses archaeological evidence, specifically the orientation of tombs and lack of artefacts in them, to highlight that the immigrants were Christians 'at a time when the religion of the empire was not Christianity'.[143] The immigrants, then, were small but well-organized groups led by religious leaders that settled in seemingly deserted places in Brittany. This 'peaceful process of colonisation' resulted in parishes, with the prefix *plou* (from *plebs*) following the name of saint, or religious.[144] The idea of the seven founder saints is so widespread in the popular history of Brittany and, as Caroline Brett has pointed out, a rather convenient one to focus on to brush the region's violent and colonialist origin story under the rug. Another issue with this theory is the idea that Brittany, or Armorica at this point, was relatively deserted. The archaeologist Pierre-Roland Giot has cautioned against exaggerating the extent to which Roman *villae* were abandoned in the third and fourth centuries, arguing that layers of 'black earth' are 'a witness to life under different if not simplified conditions' as well as evidence of the building of some permanent structures, the circulation of fourth-century coins, and imported pottery.[145] As Patrick Galliou aptly argued, the life of the inhabitants of fourth-century Armorica was 'that of barbarians for whom Roman living and bathing habits did not mean a thing, and who therefore could afford to ignore all amenities "à la romaine"'.[146]

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143 Gwenaël Le Duc, 'The Colonisation of Brittany from Britain' in Ronald Black, William Gillies, and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (eds) *Celtic Connections: procedings of the tenth international congress of celtic studies, I* (East Linton, 1999), p. 140.
144 Le Duc, 'The Colonisation of Brittany', p. 141. *Plou* designated a Christian people under the care of a priest or some religious leader, and therefore a 'the primary unit of pastoral care.' See Wendy Davies, 'Priests and rural communities in East Brittany in the ninth century' in *Études celtiques*, 20:1 (1983), 177 and Caroline Brett, 'Monastères, migration et modèles. L'église bretonne du haut Moyen Âge' in C.L. Evans & K.P. Evans (eds), *Monastères, convergences, échanges et confrontations dans l'Ouest de l'Europe au Moyen Âge. Actes du Colloque Anciennes Abbayes de Bretagne, Université de Toronto 5-6 mai, 2016* (Turnhout, 2023), pp 27-54.
145 Giot, Guigon, and Merdrignac (eds), *The British Settlement of Brittany,* pp 55-6.
146 Galliou, 'The Defence of Armorica in the Later Roman Empire', p. 410.

However sparse habitation was, we need a better theory to explain the colonisation of Armorica which does not hinge upon the idea that the region was completely deserted.

The most recent theory, proposed by Caroline Brett in her article 'Soldiers, Saints, and States? The Breton Migrations Revisited' in 2011, is more comprehensive.[147] Brett dismisses the interpretation that saints were the pioneers of the migrations. Instead, she argues that we should not think of the migration as 'supervised by saints' but rather as a movement by religious migrants from the sixth to the ninth centuries who 'left indelible marks on Breton toponymy and written culture, and clergy who played a major part in Brittany's social organization'.[148] Her model for the migrations is as follows. A refugee movement, from southern and eastern Britain, having suffered from the collapse of the Roman presence in Britain, migrated to Brittany in the fifth century. Towards the later fifth and early sixth centuries, the political elites of the kingdom of Dumnonia 'formed a bridgehead into Brittany and claimed loose overlordships (or tribute-taking zones) over large parts of it and its inhabitants, settlers (if any) and locals alike.'[149] The sixth century onwards saw the migration of ascetics, led by the so called 'saints'. With the exception of the eastern origin for the migrants and the relatively late beginning, this thesis accepts most of Brett's model, which allows a greater scope of interpretation and acknowledges that there were many ascetics who migrated to Brittany but did not receive hagiographies to commemorate their lives.[150]

147 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 1-56.
148 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 34.
149 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 49.
150 These theories are by no means the only theories about the Breton migrations, but the most provoking ones in regard to this study. For other works see Joseph Loth, *L'émigration bretonne en Armorique du Ve au VIIe siècle de notre ère* (Rennes, 1883); Noël-Yves Tonnerre, *Naissance de la Bretagne. Géographie historique et structures sociales de la Bretagne méridionale (Nantais et Vannetais) de la fin du VIIIe à la fin du XIIe siècle* (Angers, 1994); Ben Guy, 'The Breton migration: A new synthesis' in *Zeitschrift fur celtische Philologie*, 61:1 (2014), 101-156.

The early Breton church

This brings us to our final question. What did the migrants encounter when they arrived? This question cannot truly be answered because the migrants settled primarily in the west of Brittany. Because of a lack of contemporary sources, it is unknown what the pre-existing ecclesiastical structure in the west of Brittany, if there was one, looked like. To the east, there certainly was an established ecclesiastical structure. Nantes, Rennes and Vannes, the dioceses of eastern Brittany, were direct remnants of the late Roman *civitates*. Breton bishops make their first appearance in the Council of Tours in 461. Eusebius, the bishop of Nantes, Athenius, the bishop of Rennes, and Mansuetus, bishop of the Britons, were present at this Council which laid out the Canons of Tours. These canons advanced the idea that the bishops were God's temple on Earth and thus urged the importance of purity, advocating abstinence, citing Romans 8:8 'qui in carne sunt, Deo placere non possunt' (those who are in the flesh, cannot please God), among other instructions. [151] The early date of this Council and the fact that there was an *episcopus Britannorum* show that the new Breton migrants were already making an imprint on the ecclesiastical landscape of Brittany. Of course, we must consider the possibility that this bishop of the Britons may have been a visiting bishop.

The Council of Vannes, from 461 to 491, is the only Council that took place in Brittany. The record for this Council contains a letter to Victorius, bishop of Maur and Thalassius of Angers from bishops Perpetuus of Tours, Paternus of Vannes, Albinus (of Angers?), Athenius of Rennes, Nonnechius of Nantes and Licinius (of Évreux?). The canons of this council, sixteen in total, are more or less a continuation of the Council of Tours, prescribing punishments for those who have sinned in the flesh, but adds some canons which aim to bring monasticism under tighter jurisdiction. One canon inhibits monks from retiring

151 *Concilia Galliae a.314-a.506, vol. 1*, ed. Charles Munier (Turnhout, 1963), p. 144.

to solitary cells, unless they have earned it, in which case, they must still remain within the boundaries of the monastery and under the abbot's authority.[152] Corporeal punishment of monks is also permitted in another canon.[153] Another canon prohibited abbots from maintaining many cells or monasteries. Even with saints' *Lives*, knowledge of monasteries in Brittany at such an early period is poor, but these canons point to a lively monastic culture in the dioceses under these bishops' jurisdiction. Moreover, they suggest that abbots were quite powerful in these dioceses and that the eremitical movement was already influential in this area.

Eumerius, the bishop of Nantes, sent his priest Martilianus to stand in for him at the Council of Orléans in 538 and was present at the Council of Orléans in 541.[154] Fybidiolus, bishop of Rennes, was present at the Council of Orléans in 549. The Council of 567 reveals that there was an increasing ethnic division within Brittany. The ninth canon states that no Breton or Roman in Armorica can be ordained a bishop without the will of the metropolis or his comprovincials.[155] Perhaps at this point the bishops of Vannes felt alienated, because the only bishops we see attending future Councils are those of Nantes and Rennes. Felix, bishop of Nantes (and the foe of Gregory of Tours) was present at the Council of Paris in 573[156] and in 614, at the Council of Paris, we see Haimoaldus, bishop of Rennes and Eufronius, bishop of Nantes in attendance in the basilica of St Peter in Paris. Leobardus, bishop of Nantes, was present in the Council of Clichy in 626-627.[157]

The Councils are, first and foremost, a reflection of the ever-changing boundaries of Brittany. At the first Council of Tours, there is a clear distinction between the bishoprics of

152 *Concilia Galliae a.314-a.506, vol. 1,* p. 153.
153 *Concilia Galliae a.314-a.506, vol. 1,* p. 153.
154 *Concilia Galliae a.511-a.695, vol. 2*, ed. Charles Munier (Turnhout, 1963), p. 130 and p. 144.
155 *Concilia Galliae a.511-a.695, vol. 2*, p. 179. 'Adicimus etiam, ne quis Brittanum aut Romanum in Armorico sine metropolis aut comprouicialium uoluntate uel literis episcopum ordinare praesumat…'
156 *Concilia Galliae a.511-a.695, vol. 2*, p. 214.
157 *Concilia Galliae a.511-a.695, vol. 2,* p. 280 and p. 297.

Rennes and Nantes and a bishopric that constituted the new Breton migrants. There is no way of knowing how large the diocese of the *episcopus Britannorum* was, or how far west into Brittany it stretched. Later, at the Council of Vannes, the bishop of the Bretons is absent. In consideration of this evidence, Caroline Brett is right in her assertion that,

> 'Before the ninth century, the region called Britannia cannot be shown to have had precise boundaries, especially in the north: in the south it included, *de facto*, the city of Vannes from 578-751, but it did not include the territories of Nantes or Rennes.'[158]

By the ninth century, when our Breton sources are plentiful, there exist five key dioceses in Brittany: Vannes, Alet, Dol, St Pol-de-Léon, and Quimper.[159] The latter two are especially important because they are located in the west of Brittany.

Outsiders Looking In

We are forced to rely primarily on outside sources to catch a glimpse of political and religious events in Brittany before the ninth century. The bishoprics of Nantes, Rennes and Vannes, had been under the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese of Tours since the fifth century. A letter from c. 515 by the bishops Licinius of Angers, Melanius of Rennes, and Eustochius of Tours indicates that the British newcomers in Armorica roused suspicion and even scandal among Gallic, and later Frankish, ecclesiastics.[160] In the letter, two Breton

158 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 4-5.
159 Clare Stancliffe, 'Christianity amongst the Britons, Dalriadan Irish and Picts' in Paul Fouracre (ed), *The New Cambridge Medieval History Volume I c.500-c.700* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 442-443.
160 Jean-Christophe Cassard, *La Bretagne des premieres siècles- Le Haut Moyen Âge* (Quintin, 1994), p. 58.

priests, Lovocat and Catihern, are accused of two main crimes. The first crime is carrying a portable altar and performing mass in private homes, or *capanas* (huts and cottages).[161] The second crime, was the inclusion of women, who would administer the wine during mass. These women, called *conhospitae*, presumed to hold the chalice and the blood of Christ and administer it to the people while Lovocat and Catihern administered the Eucharist, a practice which the bishops emphasize was never commended or approved in Gaul. This practice was known as Pepondianism by the Desert Fathers, after its proponent Pepondius. The bishops refer to this practice as schismatic, writing '…. Pepondius auctor hujus scismatis fuerit…' (Pepondius was the author of this schism) and inform the two priests that even the *Patres Orientales* prescribed that whoever pursued this error should be excluded from communion. This letter, which shows two Breton priests ministering to the local Breton populace, helps us understand how pastoral care was administered in early Brittany. It points to the possibility that there may have been more Breton priests ministering outside the jurisdiction or indeed, supervision, of their bishop. Clare Stancliffe also provides a compelling argument, writing that the bishops who wrote the letter 'do not address Lovocat and Catihern as though they were ministering within one of their dioceses, and indeed, the priests' probable sphere of operation was in the territory of the Coriosolites; and yet the bishops address them directly, rather than going through their own diocesan bishop. This may hint at the dislocation of diocesan structures as a result of the British influx'.[162]

Lovocat and Catihern also foreshadow the power that priests had in Brittany in later centuries. In her work 'Priests and rural communities in East Brittany in the ninth century', Wendy Davies uses the eleventh-century Cartulary of Redon to study the many roles that priests performed in their local communities and even across east Brittany.[163] Priests were not

161 Lisa Bailey, 'The Strange Case of the Portable Altar: Liturgy and the Limits of Episcopal Authority in Early Medieval Gaul' in *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, 8 (2020), 35.
162 Stancliffe, 'Christianity amongst the Britons, Dalriadan Irish and Picts', p. 442.
163 Davies, 'Priests and rural communities in East Brittany'.

only in charge of the pastoral care of the community, but were witnesses to settlements and transactions, envoys and representatives, property owners, and even moneylenders! What is more interesting is that the cartulary shows that priests had little or no contact with the diocesan bishops. Apart from the dating of transactions which recognize the episcopates, there is little evidence to suggest that priests were under the strict authority of their respective bishops.[164] The letter to Lovocat and Catihern, therefore, hint at some continuity in terms of the importance of priests in early Breton society and their relative independence from episcopal authority.

This 'British influx' receives some attention in the *Historia Francorum* by Gregory of Tours, which records the tumultuous political relations between the Bretons and the Franks. In fact, his source confirms that, by the sixth century when Gregory was active, Armorica had become *Brittania*, a name that reflected the origin of its new inhabitants, which were called the *Brittani*. Gregory roughly delineates Brittany's geographic boundaries, marking its most eastern point at the rivers Oust and Vilaine. Gregory was a Gallo-Roman, a historian of the Merovingians, and the bishop of Tours, and naturally this colours his view of the Bretons, whom he sees as an impediment to peace. This source is also limited because the Breton political intrigues he records are concentrated in the east of Brittany, namely Nantes and Rennes, where Frankish influence was palpable. Gregory makes this clear when he writes in Book IV, 'Nam semper Brittani sub Francorum potestatem post obitum regis Chlodovechi fuerunt, et comites, non regis appellati sunt.'[165] (For after the death of King Clovis onwards the Bretons were always under the power of the Franks and they were called counts, not kings)

164 Davies, 'Priests and rural communities in East Brittany', p. 195.
165 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, *Libri Historiarum IV*, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, i (Hanover, 1951), pp 136-38.

Whether *potestas* is too strong of a word to use to describe Frankish hegemony over Brittany is debatable. Gregory records instances of the Bretons raiding, burning and stealing property around Rennes and Nantes and having little concern with breaking their agreements with their Frankish overlords. In their retaliatory incursions, the Franks never go further west than the river Oust. What this reveals is that the Franco-Breton border was a very fluid one and suggests that the west of Brittany enjoyed a different political reality. After all, this was before Brittany had undergone a process of subjugation by the Carolingians, beginning with Pippin III in 753.[166] It is evident that Gregory knew some things of Breton culture, though it is likely that he had very little knowledge of, or interest in, western Brittany. In addition to describing nefarious Breton habits like fratricide (which the Franks excelled in too), Gregory tells us about other Breton customs like barrow construction and their unique, short haircuts.

However, Gregory gives us the best source to get a glimpse into asceticism not only in Brittany but in all of Gaul during the sixth century. Gregory introduces a Breton named Winnoc (*Winnocus Britto*) in Book V whose piety moves him.[167] He writes,

> 'Tunc Winnocus Britto in summa abstinentia a Brittaniis venit Toronus, Hierusolimis accedere cupiens, nullum alium vestimentum nisi de pellibus ovium lana privatis habens; quem nos, quo facilius teneremus, quia nobis relegiosus valde videbatur, presbiterii gratia honoravimus.'[168]

(At that time the Breton Winnoc came to Tours from Brittany in total abstinence, desiring to reach Jerusalem, having no other clothing except sheepskins from which the

166 Giot, Guigon, and Merdrignac (eds), *The British Settlement of Brittany,* p. 16.
167 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, *Libri Historiarum V*, p. 229.
168 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, *Libri Historiarum V*, p. 229.

wool had been stripped; in order that we might keep him more easily, because he seemed very religious to us, we bestowed on him the grace of the presbyter)

Winnoc shows his holiness by miraculously filling an empty jar with a single drop of holy water to wash St Martin's tomb, although Gregory naturally attributes the miracle to St Martin. Later in Book VIII Gregory returns to the subject of Winnoc and tells us more about his ascetic practices. Aside from wearing only animal skins, Winnoc ate only 'herbis agrestibus incoctis' (uncooked field herbs) and abstained from wine and would instead lift the cup to his mouth instead of drinking it.[169] However, because of his followers' habit of offering him too much drink, Winnoc grew lax in his self-discipline and became a raging drunk, known for picking up knives, stones, or sticks and chasing after people. He was chained up in his cell for many years and remained mad until his death.

Winnoc is not the only ascetic that Gregory describes, nor do we get the impression that Brittany was the only region producing ascetics. Hospicius, a recluse near Nice whom Gregory introduces in Book VI, was also known for his abstinence and for mortifying his body. According to Gregory he was 'constrictus catenis ad purum corpus ferreis' (bound by iron chains on his pure body) and wore a hair-shirt on top.[170] He ate nothing but dry bread and dates and fed on Egyptian herbs during Lent. Gregory mentions other ascetics, including a few charlatans. One of such charlatans was Desiderius from Bordeaux, who clothed in goat's hair, showed great abstinence in food and drink in public but shamelessly stuffed his face with food in private.[171] Gregory is quite sceptical of ascetics, particularly when they performed miracles without the authority of bishops.

169 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, *Libri Historiarum VIII,* p. 403.
170 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis. *Libri Historiarum VI*, p. 272.
171 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis. *Libri Historiarum IX*, p. 417.

The *Chronicle of Fredegar* is considered to be a continuation of Gregory's *Historia Francorum.* Though its authorship has been disputed by Krush, Lot, Levison and others, the Chronicle is a useful source for seventh-century Francia.[172] Even more so than in Gregory's *Historia*, the Bretons do not feature prominently in the account and the entries the Chronicle includes are limited to the strained political relations between the Franks and the Bretons. As a whole, the Chronicle's focus is entirely political, concerned with recording political events not only in Francia, but ranging from Frisia to Spain. It does not provide anecdotes about solitary hermits or ecclesiastical feuds, as Gregory's text does.

Despite its narrow scope, the *Chronicle of Fredegar* does include an episode that is of some interest. After winning a victory against the unruly Gascons, Dagobert I 'sent a mission into Brittany to require the Bretons to make prompt amends for what they had done amiss and to submit to his rule', threatening to send the Burgundian army that had ravaged Gascony to Brittany.[173] In response, King Judicael of Brittany went to Clichy around 636, where Dagobert was residing, bearing gifts in order to seek Dagobert's pardon. While Judicael promised to make amends and promised that he and his subjects would remain under the lordship of Dagobert, Fredegar relates how Judicael refused to eat or sit with Dagobert, because he was religious and feared God. Instead, Judicael left the palace and had dinner with Dado, whom he knew led a religious life.[174]

This could certainly be read as Judicael snubbing Dagobert, as we have several examples of Breton leaders who do not take their Frankish overlords seriously, but it is possible to tease out a different interpretation from this brief episode. First, it is worth noting that Judicael became a saint in the Breton tradition and has an eleventh-century hagiography. Given this context, Dagobert's piety appears to have been lacking in Judicael's eyes.

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172 Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its continuations,* ed. and trans. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, 1960), pp xiv-xxviii.
173 Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, p. 66.
174 Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, p. 66.

Judicael's preferred dinner companion, Dado, better known as St Audoin or St Ouen, was also the bishop of Rouen. Given that he was born into a powerful, aristocratic Frankish family, we know an adequate amount about Audoin. He received a literary education, which scholars have suggested could have been due to the influence of Columbanus, and moreover, founded several monasteries, including the monastery of Rebais.[175] It is well known that the Irish, who were highly popular in spreading their particular variety of monasticism on the Continent, were also known for their asceticism. As Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Geberding note, 'Their asceticism horrified the ecclesiastical establishment, but their personal fasting, immersion in icy water, and exhilarating way of praying with arms extended entranced the people'.[176] If we believe his hagiography to be reliable, this fervent asceticism clearly inspired Audoin. The writer of the *Vita Audoini*, composed sometime between the eighth and ninth centuries, is anonymous but was most likely a Neustrian monk.[177] The *Vita* describes how

> '…hunger had so weakened him in his body that his flesh was worn away and affected by pallor and emaciation, his cheeks were soaked with the flood of tears, the circumference of his neck weighed down by a ring of iron, and likewise his arms along with the rest of his limbs were fettered by the mark of rings'.

What is more, he used a board of wood as his bed and 'rejected the flattering badges of worldly office'.[178] The picture that emerges of Audoin is a man who, despite his connections to the Frankish court, exercises an asceticism that could rival an Irish saint's. Is it viable then,

175 Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996), p. 139-141.
176 Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 144.
177 Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 134.
178 Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 156.

that Judicael's refusal to dine with Dagobert, was not only the result of his own personal piety but also cultural-religious differences between the Bretons and the Franks. In other words, this episode may speak to the influence the Irish had over Breton Christians during this period.

In addition, there are a few details in these documents that show the influence of the Desert Fathers, in particular St Anthony, in the West. Athanasius's *Life* of Antony narrates Antony's journey as an ascetic and his struggle in the desert against demonic forces which constantly try to lead him astray. Athanasius informs us that it was written with the intention to provide the monks of Egypt a model to pursue an ascetic way of life like that of Antony. One of the key principles in the text is self-denial in greater pursuit of union with God.[179] This self-denial included, but was not limited to, fasting, chastity, and the renunciation of worldly goods and family. There is, however, an emphasis on the body as a vessel for impurity. Athanasius tells us about Antony's own sentiments towards his flesh, writing '…when he was about to eat or sleep or to attend to the other bodily necessities, he was ashamed as he thought about the intellectual part of the soul'.[180] To purify himself and remain in a state of equilibrium, Antony mortifies his flesh by depriving himself of comforts. Antony

> 'subjected himself to an even greater and more strenuous asceticism, for he was always fasting, and he had clothing with hair on the interior and skin on the exterior that he kept until he died. He neither bathed his body with water for cleanliness, nor did he wash his feet at all…'[181]

179 Marcel Driot, *Fathers of the Desert: Life and Spirituality* (Paris, 1991), p. 41.
180 Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, trans. Robert C. Gregg, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, (London, 1980), p.65.
181 Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, trans. Robert C. Gregg, pp 66-7.

There are examples of Antony's moderation elsewhere in the text, including his habit of sustaining himself of loaves of bread over several months and dates from wild palm trees. The arena in which Antony pursues his ascetic lifestyle is also vital to understanding the theology of the Desert Fathers. Retreating into tombs and mountains, Antony sought isolation in the most inhospitable of places to practice his piety, refusing to engage with the outside world, with the exception of the occasional brother or stranger who gave him loaves of bread.

This fourth century text became wildly popular in the West, spawning the ascetic movement in countries like Gaul and Italy, though it was modified to what people in Gaul could handle.[182] As Marilyn Dunn relates, 'The heroic asceticism of the desert, the extreme austerity of sleep, dress and food practised by the monks of Egypt as relayed by texts such as the *Life of Antony* and the *History of the Monks of Egypt*, astonished and even intimidated some western readers.'[183] Indeed, there are echoes of the asceticism of the Desert Fathers in the documents examined earlier.[184] Seeing as they were priests, Lovocat and Catihern do not display examples of ascetic feats. However, unless they were very open-minded and non-misogynistic priests, their adherence to Pepondianism may be evidence of their familiarity with the theology of the East. Winnoc, on the other hand, appears to have tried to emulate Antony, taking his teachings to the next level. Like Antony, he clothed himself in animal skins and pursued an even stricter diet by eating herbs. Whether Gregory was exaggerating to make a point or whether Winnoc did in fact copy Antony, it speaks to the impact that the asceticism of the Desert Fathers had in this part of Gaul in the sixth century. The passages about Winnoc, excluding his demise, provide an early example of the asceticism that Brittany became known for.

182 Athanasius, *The Life of Antony,* p. 3.
183 Marilyn Dunn, *The emergence of monasticism: from the Desert Fathers to the early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2000), pp 78-9.
184 For the ascetic practices of the other Desert Fathers, see Ernest A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *Paradise of the Fathers* (Bristol, 2012).

Trade between Ireland and Brittany

If Egypt found its way into the 'desert' of Brittany, then surely Ireland found its way to Brittany? Movement within Brittany was difficult, as was movement over land more generally.[185] It is no surprise that people from pre-history to the early Middle Ages privileged transportation by water over land. Procopius of Caesarea, a Byzantine historian from the sixth century, described how crossing the Channel to go to Brittany took about 24 hours, or in his words 'a day and a night'.[186] Depending on the weather, this was a fairly easy option, as opposed to the alternative which was travelling by land. Saint Patrick's *Confessio* reveals the difficulty of travelling by land, particularly through Armorica. Patrick's possible voyage to the Continent after he escapes captivity and boards a ship takes him three days.[187] Once he lands, however, he describes how they wandered the wilderness for twenty-eight days.[188] Incidentally, this wilderness was also the theatre for tribulations Patrick faces, both spiritual and physical. E. A. Thompson expresses his doubt for this story of Patrick's voyage through a desert, as he argues that no province in the Western Roman empire would have been thus abandoned or unoccupied.[189] While this may certainly be true of Britain, or even most of Gaul, fifth century Armorica could have fit Patrick's description of a desert. Raymond M. Keogh carefully studies the vague details of the desert Patrick traversed and concludes that it must have been Armorica. Armorica, Keogh explains, was not only 'a remote and poor area which had been neglected by the Romans for a long period of time' but also a land with a low population that was covered with woody vegetation that made it hard to travel through.[190]

185 Wendy Davies, 'The Celtic Kingdoms' in Paul Fouracre (ed.) *The New Cambridge Medieval History I c. 500-c.700* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 233.
186 Giot, Guigon, and Merdrignac (eds), *The British Settlement of Brittany,* p. 99.
187 I am aware that many scholars believe Patrick sailed to Britain after his escape.
188 Patrick, *Confessio*, ed. Ludwig Bieler (Dublin, 1993), 19.
189 E.A. Thompson, *Who Was St Patrick?* (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 31-32.
190 Raymond M. Keogh, 'Does the Armorican Forest Hold the Key to Saint Patrick's Escape?' in *Studia Hibernica*, 28 (1994), p. 156.

Léon Fleuriot rightly stated that 'L'émigration bretonne marque une continuité, non une rupture, en suivant les routes de toujours'(the Breton emigration marks a continuity, not a rupture, in following the routes of always).[191] Thanks to scholars such as Barry Cunliffe, the routes between Britain and Brittany and Britain and Ireland are well documented, however, the routes between Brittany and Ireland are not.[192] As mentioned in the Introduction, the letters of Columbanus and the *Life* of Guénolé provide glimpses into the active trade routes between Brittany and Ireland. Setting aside Ian Wood's tantalizing argument that Columbanus disembarked in the Gulf of Morbihan due to its association with St Gildas, Jonas's *Life* of Columbanus shows that there was a route from Ireland to the north-east of Brittany.[193] Intrepid as he was, Columbanus, like many saints of this Age, was probably using sea routes that had used for hundreds of years, if not millennia. The *Life* of Guénolé, who founded the abbey of Landévennec in the very west of Brittany, gives the possibility of a sea route running somewhere along the west coast of Brittany and Ireland. In fact, Guénolé is described as waiting at a port for merchants to take him to Ireland. Between trading and Viking raids, the mouth of the Loire was obviously the centre of much activity in the early Middle Ages. Columbanus's letters make it explicit that there were ships there that sailed to Ireland. Although not a Breton saint, the *Life* of Filibert is another early medieval text that provides a couple of details about this particular trade route between Ireland and the Loire. At the monastery on the island of Noirmoutier, Filibert and the monks encounter criminal British sailors, as well as Irish ships selling clothes and shoes to the monks. The hagiographer writes 'Nec multum post Scothorum navis diversis mercimoniis plena ad litus adfuit, qui calciamenta ac vestimenta fratribus larga copia ministravit' (Not long after the Scots came to

191 Fleuriot, *Les origines de la Bretagne*, pp 18-9.
192 See works like Barry Cunliffe, *On the Ocean: The Mediterranean and the Atlantic from Prehistory to AD 1500* (Oxford, 2017), Barry Cunliffe and Philip de Jersey, *Armorica and Britain: Cross-Channel Relationships in the Late First Millennium B.C.* (Oxford, 2012) and E.G. Bowen, *Saints, Seaways, and Settlements in the Celtic Lands* (Cardiff, 1969).
193 Ian Wood, 'Columbanus in Brittany'.

the shore on a ship full of various goods, which provided shoes and clothes for the brothers in great abundance).[194] The ports of Alet and the Loire have produced archaeological evidence of cross-Channel trade from the first century B.C, though from Britain.[195] Nevertheless, it is important to note in these examples the role that merchant ships play, especially in facilitating travel for these saints, which again, confirm that these holy men were not reinventing the wheel. Moreover, these examples, however fragmentary they may be, indicate the possibility of various sea routes connecting Brittany to Ireland, as opposed to one Loire-Ireland route.

In sum, the earliest sources we have for Brittany are so varied that they do not form a clear picture of how exactly the Breton migrations took place. It is clear, however, that the formation of Brittany as a nation and the Breton church were fairly synchronous. The migrants who settled Armorica were not homogenous, but probably consisted of soldiers, refugees, aristocrats, hermits, priests, bishops, and the like. Of all these groups, the holy men left the biggest mark on the Breton landscape. Overall, the recently arrived Bretons were viewed with suspicion and even scorn because they threatened the security of the Frankish realms. The clergymen, who evidently exercised great responsibility over the new communities, jeopardized the souls of their flock with their erroneous ways, and worse, exposed the limits of episcopal authority in Brittany. Again, we have no sources for the west of Brittany at this time, but we can imagine that, without ecclesiastical supervision from Tours, the spiritual landscape there was littered with priests, hermits, monks and lay people who either brought their Insular spiritual practices or pursued more exotic ones. This landscape would transform, not only with the formation of Breton bishoprics, but with the advent of the Carolingians.

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194 *Vita Filiberti*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, *Vita Filiberti Abbatis Gemeticensis et Heriensis*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum, 5 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1910), 603, line 19.
195 Cunliffe, *On the Ocean: The Mediterranean and the Atlantic from Prehistory to AD 1500*, p. 337.

Chapter 2: The Saints of Landévennec

On the very western edge of Brittany, in what is now the department of Finistère, lie the ruins of the medieval abbey of Landévennec. In its prime, in the ninth century, it was known for its productive *scriptorium* and for its supposed adherence to an Irish *conversatio*, before adopting the Benedictine rule. Shortly before 913, the abbey was destroyed by the vikings, and though the monks did eventually return after 936 to occupy the abbey, it never recovered its former splendour. So much so that in 1790, the abbey was home to just four monks.[196] Fast-forward centuries later, and the current community of Landévennec, housed in a new establishment metres away from the old abbey ruins, possesses a much larger and more vibrant Benedictine community. This chapter will examine the hagiographical material produced by Landévennec in its heyday; the *Vita longior sancti Winwaloei* (hereafter the *Vita Winwaloei*), the *Vita sancti Idiuneti alias dicti Ethbini (hereafter Vita Ethbini)*, and the *Vita Guenaili*.

The Library of Landévennec

If the abbey was located on the edge of a peripheral region, its library did not reflect it. The main sources for Landévennec's hagiographers were typical of monasteries on the Continent. They included the Bible, an obvious choice, but also early saints' *Lives* such as Athanasius's *Vita Antonii*, Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini* and Venantius Fortunatus's *Vita Paterni*, as well as patristic works such as Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*. Both François Kerlouégan and Neil Wright have combed through Breton hagiography and identified

196 Yves Morice, 'Vivre et écrire l'espace à Landévennec au IXe siècle' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 111:1 (2004), 7.

numerous source borrowings. Kerlouégan argued that many of the sources likely came second-hand from *florilegia*, or collections of literary extracts.[197] Wright demonstrated the considerable debt of Breton hagiographers to Christian Latin poets and historians, using, among other hagiographies, the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* by Wrmonoc and the *Vita Winwaloei* by Wrdisten. He found borrowings from poems by Caelius Sedulius, Juvencus, Arator, Cyprianus Gallus, and Aldhelm.[198] The histories found in Landévennec's library include Gildas, whose *De Excidio Britanniae* is referenced often, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum,* and Orosius's *Historia aduersum Paganos*. The fact that there is a Breton copy of parts of Gildas's work, and indeed use of it in Breton hagiography, is not surprising as it is the history of the Bretons.[199] Most relevant, Wright found that the *Vita Winwaloei* quotes Isidore's *Sententiae*, Cassiodorus's *Expositio Psalmorum*, Augustine's *De Magistro*, and Gregory the Great's *Homeliae in Hezechielem*.[200]

Joseph-Claude Poulin has since reconsidered this study, recognizing the potential existence of intermediaries between a Landévennec author such as Wrdisten and an antique author.[201] For instance, he noted that Ambrose, or Pseudo-Ambrose was not a direct source of Wrdisten's, but was introduced via Cassiodorus. In his re-examination of the intertextuality of the *Vita Winwaloei*, Poulin noted the numerous citations and allusions from the Old and New Testament, sometimes mediated by authors like Gildas and Gregory the Great.[202] Other citations from Christian authors he identified include Augustine, Cassiodorus, Isidore, John

197 François Kerlouégan, 'Les citations d'auteurs latins profanes dans les Vies de saints bretons carolingiennes' in *Études celtiques*, 18 (1981), 181-95 and Kerlouégan, 'Les citations d'auteurs latins chrétiens dans les Vies de saints bretons carolingiennes' in *Études celtiques*, 19 (1982), 215-57.
198 Neil Wright, 'Knowledge of Christian Latin Poets and Historians in Early Medieval Brittany' in *Études celtiques*, xxiiii (1986), 168.
199 Rheims, BM 414 (E. 294); see https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/184.
200 Wright, 'Knowledge of Christian Latin Poets and Historians', 163. Wrdisten himself mentions his use of these authors in the *Life* of Guénolé.
201 Joseph-Claude Poulin, 'L'intertextualité dans la Vie longue de Saint Guénolé de Landévennec', *Études celtiques*, 40 (2014), 166.
202 Poulin, 'L'intertextualité', p. 167.

Chrysostom, Abba Poemen, Alcuin, Defensor, Gildas, Cogitosus or Aldhelm, Arator, Caelius Sedulius, Orose, Juvencus, Saint Benedict, Cassian, Eugene of Toledo, Jerome, and Prudence. For profane authors, he simply listed Virgil.[203] Wrdisten himself notes his primary sources of inspiration when writing the *Vita Winwaloei*, demonstrating how conventional the practice of transparently citing respectable authors was among Carolingian authors. This reveals the strength of the community's infrastructure and by extension its networks of manuscript exchange. There has not yet been a study to reconstruct the contents of the library of Landévennec in the latter half of the ninth century.

A Brief History of the Abbey of Landévennec

Before examining the *Lives* of Guénolé, Ethbin, and Guenael, it is worth discussing the abbey of Landévennec, which Guénolé founded. The abbey of Landévennec was founded sometime around the turn of the fifth to sixth century. According to Wrdisten, the author of the *Vita Winwaloei*, Guénolé and his eleven disciples travel across the Armorican region of Domnonia and first establish themselves on the modern-day Île de Tibidy, then called *Thopepigia*.[204] Far from being an ideal setting to build a monastery, the island is unrelentingly harsh, exposed to the wind, and surrounded by the sea and sharp rocks; in short, unfit for habitation. They persist on this windy and infertile island for three years, until God prepares the site of Landévennec for them. This phenomenon of a Breton saint first living on an island before settling in a more permanent location has been categorized as a hagiographical *topos*. It occurs in numerous Breton hagiographies; Samson has a brief stay in Lesia and Angia (Guernesey and Jersey), Paul Aurelian in Ouessant and the Ile de Batz,

203 Poulin, 'L'intertextualité', 167-77.
204 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 131.

Gildas in Houat, and so on. Stéphane Lebecq has argued that this signifies 'une épreuve initiatique' (an initiation test), in which the saint either arrives in a terrestrial paradise or a wild location that a saint must purify and tame.[205]

In Landévennec, which is described as a Paradise on account of its perfect location (at least compared to the Île de Tibidy), Guénolé establishes his monastic community. This community thrives for a time until they discover a major issue with the location: death was not allowed to enter the place. The poor monks, who had become so advanced in age and wanted to be delivered from their suffering, had to perform some renovations by moving stones within the monastery to allow death access to the monastery. The mention of stone buildings in the *Life* has prompted several archaeological excavations of the old abbey of Landévennec, which have confirmed an early monastic presence in Landévennec, though dating the various remains has proven difficult.[206] By the ninth century, the community had built the monastery in the Benedictine fashion and the scriptorium's production was at its peak. The vikings begin their incursions into Brittany in 843, with the murder of Bishop Gunhard of Nantes on the Feast of St John the Baptist.[207] In the *Hymn to St Guénolé*, Clement anticipates the arrival of the vikings in Landévennec, asking for the Lord's protection against the gentiles, or pagans, as well as demons.[208] Despite these prayers, Landévennec was destroyed by vikings in 913. The abbey of Landévennec was not the only Breton monastery to be put to the flame. Ermentarius of Noirmoutier, a monk of the abbey of Saint-Philibert de

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205 Stéphane Lebecq, 'Guénolé, Landévennec, la mer et l'outre-mer' in Yves Coativy (ed.), *Landévennec 818-2018: Une abbaye bénédictine en Bretagne* (Brest, 2020), p. 89.
206 Annie Bardel, 'L'Abbaye Saint-Gwénolé de Landévennec' in *Archéologie médiévale*, 21 (1991), 54-55. For a more recent study on the excavations see Annie Bardel, Ronan Pérennec, and Véronique Bardel, 'De la cour au *claustrum* et du *claustrum* au cloître: l'avant et l'après 818 à Landévennec' in Coativy (ed.), *Landévennec 818-2018*.
207 Neil Price, *The Vikings in Brittany* (London, 1989), p. 23.
208 'Que par toi le Christ nous accorde, Sa protection infatigable; Qu'il éloigne de nous les incursions des païens, Ainsi que celles des demons.' (May Christ grant us through you, his tireless protection; May he keep us away from the pagans, as well as demons.) Clement, *Hymne Alphabétique*, ed. and trans. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, Armelle Le Huërou, *Traduction de l'Hymne Alphabétique du Moine Clément*, in *Cartulary of Landévennec*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq.

Tournus, tells us that the Northmen who sacked Breton monasteries would cast the ashes of saints into the sea.[209] The monks of Landévennec were able to salvage the relics of St Guénolé when they first exiled themselves to Château-du-Loir and then Montreuil-sur-Mer.[210] The community did not return to Brittany until the middle of the tenth century.

Guénolé

The dossier of Guénolé includes, but is not limited to, the *Vita longior sancti Winwaloei* composed by Wrdisten sometime in the last quarter of the ninth century, probably between 860 and 884, an alphabetical hymn composed by the monk Clement during the second half of the ninth century, and a brief *Life* of Guénolé, written in metric verse, only contained in British Library Cotton MS Otto D VIII. This abridged *Life* was written between 913 and 1200 in northern France or England.[211] The cartulary, housed in the Médiathèques de Quimper as MS 16, was compiled in the eleventh century, around 1050. The cartulary can be divided into two components; the first being the hagiography and liturgy dedicated to Guénolé and the latter part being the charters of Landévennec. There is unfortunately a lacuna in the cartulary from folios 74-88, arguably the most important part of the *Vita Winwaloei*. BnF MS 5610a is complete, so editors such as Charles de Smedt have united these two manuscripts to reconstruct a full version. The lacuna in Quimper BM MS 16 includes the diploma of Louis the Pious, although in a recent work Michèle Gaillard has

209 Ermentarius of Noirmoutier, *De Translationibus et Miraculis Sancti Filiberti Liber I*, ed. Réne Poupardin, *Monuments de l'histoire des abbayes de Saint-Philibert* (Paris, 1905), p. 24.
210 Hubert Le Bourdellès, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920. Leur création culturelle' in *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1997).
211 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 438.

asserted that BnF Lat. 9746, which is a later and direct copy of the complete cartulary, contains the diploma, which Wrdisten himself must have included in the original cartulary.[212]

Wrdisten tells us that there was a previous, brief *Life* of Guénolé, now lost, which he is basing his work on. He tells us,

> 'Haec fuerant denso veterum velamine tecta, Lucidiora nitent sed nostro condita scripto.'[213]
>
> (All these things were concealed by the thick veil of the past, But by our writing they shine brighter)

The birth of Brittany is the opening for Guénolé's story. Gildas's *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* plays a key role in the conceptualization of the Britain that Guénolé's parents are born in. Wrdisten echoes Gildas in describing how pestilence and sin forced the Britons to Armorica, the peninsula of Gaul that later became Britannia, or Brittany, named after its new inhabitants. In fact, Wrdisten references Gildas's work at length, echoing his narrative of a Britain abundant in resources, that, on account of the sins of its inhabitants, became an example of God's divine judgement.[214] He tells readers that if they wish to know more about Britain's history, they should consult Gildas's writings. When describing the exodus of the Britons to foreign lands, he introduces Fracan, cousin to Catovius, king of Dumnonia, and the father of the yet unborn Guénolé. Fracan traverses the 'mare Britannicum' with his wife and children, landing in *Brahec*, or modern-day Langeux, in

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212 Michèle Gaillard, 'La lettre de Lious le Pieux de 818 et l'introduction de la règle de saint Benoît à Landévennec' in Coativy (ed.) *Landévennec 818-2018,* pp 55-56. The MS is online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10034768p and the diploma of Louis the Pious is at fols 38r-38v.

213 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, pp 163-64.

214 Joseph-Claude Poulin argues that Wrdisten had access to a complete version of Gildas' *De Excidio Britanniae* in 'L'intertextualité dans la Vie longue de saint Guénolé de Landévennec' in *Études celtiques*, 40 (2014), 172.

Côtes-d'Armor.[215] Stemming from his father's desire to have a third son, to represent the Holy Trinity, Guénolé is thus born in Brittany.[216] This is significant for three main reasons. One, it provides a brief, yet personal window into the experiences of British migrants who uprooted themselves and relocated their families in Brittany. Second, it implies that it was inhabitants of Dumnonia in Britain that came to populate Domnonia in Brittany. Third, although his parents are British immigrants, Guénolé is born in Brittany, unlike many other Breton saints who are Insular-born. The depiction of Britain, Guénolé's ancestral land, as a place of utter ruin, to the point where it is never returned to in the narrative, is an odd choice in the *Vita*, but one that helps separate Guénolé and Landévennec from Britain in favour of Ireland.[217]

As a child, Guénolé is placed under the care of a knowledgeable and pious man named Budoc, nicknamed Arduum (the Arduous), and taken to the island of *Laurea*, located in the archipelago of Bréhat. Here, we witness one of Guénolé's first miracles, performed at a tender age. On route to *Laurea* with Budoc, the sky darkens with shadows, the earth begins to tremble, the air burns itself, and the sea bubbles in a whirlwind of fire and hail. Guénolé, rather precociously, tells his master not to fear but to have total faith in God. Wrdisten specifies that the hand of God was with Guénolé as the sun suddenly shone brightly, illuminating the lands of Goëllo. This is just one illustration of Guénolé's spiritual maturity. Elsewhere, we are told that, like Christ, he is able to eloquently instruct others in the faith at the age of twelve, a number associated with Christ and his disciples and consequently the spread of the Gospel. The miracle of a saint calming a storm is not unusual and is found in

215 Stéphane Lebecq, 'Guénolé, Landévennec, la mer et l'outre-mer' in Coativy (ed.), *Landévennec 818-2018*, p. 88.
216 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 112.
217 This point will be further elucidated in Chapter 5- Wales as Intermediary.

several Irish saints' *Lives*, including those of Brigid, Brendan, Columba, and Patrick.[218] In Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* for instance, the saint faces numerous storms throughout the story, including one which 'caelum diemque tenebrarum caliginem obducebant' (covered sky and daylight with a mist of darkness).[219] Similarly, the wicked druids in Muirchú's *Vita Patricii* test Patrick's might by conjuring snow, fog, and other such elements. Admittedly, however, there are no exact parallels with Guénolé's miracle.

Guénolé is presented as a loyal disciple of Patrick, who is first mentioned in elegiac verses dedicated to Guénolé. Wrdisten describes Guénolé as a

> 'Discipulus sancti qui constans more Patricii'[220]
> (Holy disciple who is steadfast with the custom of Patrick)

According to Wrdisten, these verses were recited by Guénolé's disciples. The inclusion of Patrick in a liturgical work about Guénolé, meant to commemorate the saint, shows the extent to which Patrick played a key element in the perpetuation of Landévennec's memory of Guénolé. Caroline Brett suggests that the Hymn may point to another tradition of Guénolé in which he did go to Ireland and visit Patrick.[221]

Later in the text, Guénolé has the intention of seeing all the holy places where Patrick lived, in order to learn more about the legacy he left behind in Ireland. Patrick is described as not only illuminating all the churches of Ireland, but indeed the world. He is described as a fighter against heretics and perverts of the world and a vanquisher of all of the *magi* and

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218 It is not an Insular motif, as it is found in the Bible, notably when Jesus calms the storm in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, but it is not surprising that countries with a strong relationship to the sea appropriated this motif.
219 Adomnán's, *Life of St Columba*, ed. and trans. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (Oxford, 1991), pp 144-45.
220 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 119.
221 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 141.

diviners of Ireland. Guénolé departs with some merchants to a port where they all wait for a favourable wind to take them to Ireland, or as the passage puts it, *ad Scotos*. That night Patrick appears to him in a dream and tells Guénolé not to cross the sea, but to remain in his homeland and found a community of his own. He tells him, 'Everything you wish to know in a foreign land, you can know with certitude staying in your own' and confirms that Guénolé has the monastic customs he saw and heard from the Irish.

> 'Omnia quae-cumque desideras nosse in solo alieno, poteris et in tuo manens pro certo scire…habes et nostri quam vidisti et audisti normam.'[222]
>
> (Everything you wish to know in a foreign land, you can know with certitude staying in your own…and you have our rule which you saw and heard.)

No Rule of St Patrick exists, and the diploma of Louis the Pious uses the vague *conversatio* (way of life*)* to describe the supposed Irish customs and tonsure Landévennec was following. The issue of which tonsure was correct was hotly debated in the seventh century, but any discussion, and with that evidence, of it later is slim. The traditional view of the Irish tonsure, presented in the *Catalogus Sanctorum Hiberniae*, described it as a tonsure that went from one ear to the other, *ab aure ad aurem*.[223] Unfortunately, this is not very precise. According to the words of Wilfrid, bishop of York, abbot Ceolfrid, and Stephen of Ripon, who were active in the seventh and eighth centuries and were in frequent contact with Irish monks, it appears that Irish monks left their hair long in the front and at the sides of their head but had the backs of their head shaven.[224] Using illuminated Irish manuscripts, such as the Book of Kells, Daniel McCarthy has reconstructed a delta, or triangular style tonsure used

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222 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 126.
223 Jean-Michel Picard, 'Conuersatio Scottorum. Une mise au point sur les coutumes monastiques irlandaises du haut Moyen Âge (VIe-VIIIe siècle)' in Coativy (ed.), *Landévennec 818-2018,* p. 115.
224 Picard, 'Conuersatio Scottorum', p. 116.

by Irish and some British monks, as opposed to the circular, or coronal tonsures used by the Roman Church.[225] It is entirely possible, as Jean-Michel Picard notes, that different types of Insular, or Irish, tonsures existed. While a technicality, the copyist of Louis the Pious's diploma of 818 tells us that the community of Landévennec received their tonsure *ab scotis*, from the Irish, not specifying that it was *the* Irish tonsure.[226] Interestingly, the eighth-century *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, which was indisputably known in Brittany, dedicates an entire book to explaining why the Roman tonsure was the only correct one. Yet, it is remarkable that the monks of Landévennec were, allegedly, sporting some sort of Irish tonsure into the early part of the ninth century. In the *Epistola ad Gerantium*, a letter from Aldhelm to Gerent, king of Dumnonia, written between 674 and 706, Aldhelm complains about a rumour that the 'priests and clerics' of Gerent's kingdom refused to adopt the 'Petrine', or Roman tonsure, 'on the grounds that they perpetuate that of their founders and predecessors' and stresses the need for conformity within the Church.[227] There is no mention that this tonsure which Dumnonian clergy refuse to give up is Irish; in fact, Aldhelm sees it as a British problem. The question arises then, was there an Insular tonsure which was regarded as either Irish or British, depending on who was asked? Even if the tonsure used by the monks of Landévennec was the same used by the monks across the sea in Dumnonia, it makes sense that the monks of Landévennec called their tonsure Irish, considering how Britain is eschewed in the *Vita Winwaloei*. On the other hand, it is possible that, from its foundation or close to it, the abbey of Landévennec used an Insular tonsure which they later claimed was received by the Irish when Patrick was incorporated within the liturgy, and indeed, spiritual history, of Landévennec.

225 Daniel McCarthy, 'Representations of tonsure in the Book of Kells' in *Studia Celtica*, 51 (2017), 89-103.
226 Picard, 'Conuersatio Scottorum', p. 118.
227 Duncan Probert, 'New Light on Aldhelm's Letter to King Gerent of Dumnonia' in Katherine Barker with Nicholas Brooks (eds), *Aldhelm and Sherbourne: Essays to Commemorate the Founding of the Bishopric* (Oxford, 2010), p. 116.

Regarding the elusive Irish *conversatio* which the diploma mentions, we know of a few Irish rules, though none can be definitely identified as the "Rule" used by Landévennec before 818. The Columbanian Rule, which, according to Jonas, the monasteries of Bobbio, Luxeuil, and Faremoutiers followed, has the spirit of the rigorous asceticism modelled by Guénolé.[228] Besides, at the time of Louis the Pious's meeting with Matmonoc in 818, the Rule of Columbanus was well-known. Columbanus certainly travelled to Brittany and was later venerated there, not to mention the fact that texts attributed to him were copied in Brittany.[229] One of our key pieces of evidence for the liturgy of Landévennec, the *Calendarium*, is the remains of a late ninth or early tenth-century liturgical manuscript from Landévennec.[230] Only the months from January to August have survived, thus it is uncertain whether Columbanus was originally included in the now lost month of November.[231] There is also no trace of Columbanus in Paris, BnF, Lat. 7418A, which includes a calendar written in Landévennec in 1042.[232] Overall, the *conversatio* we can glean from Guénolé's *Life* is not the same Rule created by Columbanus, and there is not enough evidence to support the idea that Landévennec was familiar with it. Another monastic rule, the ninth-century Rule of Tallaght is not only too late to be the Irish rule used by Landévennec but is also based on the life and teachings of Máel Ruain, the first abbot of the monastery of Tallaght, and not Patrick.[233] Again, the specific use of the word *conversatio* implies that the abbey of Landévennec did not follow a specific Rule of any sort, much less an Irish one.

228 Alexander O'Hara, 'The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul' in *Early Medieval Europe*, 17:2 (2009), 136.
229 Ian Wood, 'Columbanus' Journeys' in *Antard*, 24 (2016), 236; Wood, 'Columbanus in Brittany', pp 103-11; Le Goff, 'Le culte de Saint Columban en Bretagne'. Le Goff argued, without presenting enough evidence, that most of the monasteries in Brittany in the fifth and sixth centuries followed the rule of Columbanus. Jacopo Bisagni, 'Breton manuscripts and the transmission of computus between the Celtic West and the Carolingian Empire' in *Kelten*, 82 (2020).
230 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliothek, Thott 239 2°: Calendarium.
231 Columbanus' feast day is November 23rd, but is November 21st in some calendars.
232 Paris, BnF, Lat. 7418A, fol. 7r.
233 Michael Byrnes, 'Máel-Ruain' in Seán Duffy (ed), *Medieval Ireland: an encyclopedia* (Abingdon, 2005) p. 308-09.

Whatever Irish "customs" the abbey of Landévennec followed, Guénolé's practice demonstrates that it was ascetically severe. Wrdisten dedicates a few chapters to describing Guénolé's habits, including the food he eats, the clothes he wears, and the way he prays. Regarding his clothing, Guénolé never wears wool or linen, but only covers himself in the skin of goats. On the rare occasions in which he sleeps, he rests his body on tree bark and covers himself with a mixture of sand and stones instead of the embroidered tapestries from abroad, as Wrdisten writes. He uses two stones for his head and feet instead of pillows, a *topos* inspired by Jacob's use of a stone pillow in Genesis 28 and Columba's use of a stone pillow in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.[234] His diet is no less austere. Except for the bread of the Eucharist, he eats an equal mixture of bread and ashes or some vegetables with very little fat, or a bit of boiled cheese. On fasting days, he subsists on ashes alone. On Sundays, to celebrate the Resurrection, he allows himself a small measure of fish. Wrdisten is quick to note that his founder never eats quadruped animals or birds. Compared to some other Breton ascetics during this period with whom Gregory the Great was familiar, Guénolé is not an alcoholic. Apart from Eucharistic wine, he partakes in a mixture of water and sap or fruit juice.

Suddenly, there is a rupture in the *Vita* itself. Louis the Pious's diploma is inserted here, splitting the section on Guénolé's asceticism. The document, which is the effect of Louis the Pious's monastic capitulary of 817, instructs that the community of Landévennec relinquish the Irish *conversatio* and tonsure and adopt the Benedictine Rule.[235] It is not an umproblematic document, however. In a recent study of the diploma, Michèle Gaillard commented on the unusual structure of the document, noting 'ce document pose beaucoup de

234 Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1100* (Chicago, 1998), p. 388.
235 Michèle Gaillard, 'La lettre de Lious le Pieux de 818 et l'introduction de la règle de saint Benoît à Landévennec' in Coativy (ed.) *Landévennec 818-2018*, p. 55.

problèmes car ce n'est ni vraiment une lettre, ni vraiment un diplôme.' (this document poses a lot of problems because it is neither truly a letter, nor truly a diploma) and reasons that the diploma in the *Vita Winwaloei* was modified from the original.[236] For instance, the diploma includes language that was not used in other diplomas of Louis the Pious.[237] Gaillard argued that the precise insertion of the diploma was to clarify why Landévennec no longer emulated Guénolé's habits and the modification was a result of the increased power that the Roman Church, or the Pope, had on monasteries in Brittany during the period Wrdisten was writing the *Vita*.[238] She hypothesis that after the exodus of the monks to Montreuil-sur-Mer in 913, the original diploma was lost. Thus, there was a need to recreate an authentic act highlighting the abbey's adoption of the Benedictine rule.

It seems that the abrupt insertion of the diploma was meant to reflect a sort of rupture for the monks of Landévennec. The imposition of the Benedictine Rule had the potential to alter the daily life of the monks of Landévennec. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the structure of their day, the vestments they wore, and the limits of the asceticism they were able to practise were just some of the facets of their life that were being reformed to comply with the imperatives of the Carolingian empire. Furthermore, the Benedictine Rule, which pushed communal discipline, obedience, and humility, facilitated a 'transformation of the understanding of the self'.[239] The Rule sought to eradicate the personal memory of the monks and replace it with spiritual ideals which formed the basis for monastic memory. Although

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236 Gaillard, 'La lettre de Lious le Pieux', p. 57 and p.64.
237 Gaillard, 'La lettre de Lious le Pieux', pp 59-60.
238 Gaillard, 'La lettre de Lious le Pieux', p. 65.
239 Catherine Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England' in William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (eds), *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain* (London , 2000), p. 254. For more on how the Benedictine Rule fostered group memory see, Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: studies in the reconstruction of the past* (Cambridge, 1992), pp 129-36. This thesis does not agree with her ideal characterization of the monastic world, namely its utter isolation from the secular world.

this is an idealisation, it is certain that the Benedictine Rule fostered a stronger sense of community.

While the royal diploma suggests that the Benedictine rule abruptly replaced the way of life the monks of Landévennec had apparently followed since the abbey's foundation around 500, it is more likely that this transformation was gradual. Archaeological evidence has shown that around 818 or shortly after, a basilica style church was added to the northern chapel.[240] Awhile later, a gallery was installed and an original eastern closure was replaced by a wall that provided some fortification.[241] Among many developments in the second half of the ninth century, a *claustrum* was built and the old oratory was replaced with a larger chapel. In general, the monastic site began to follow a more 'orthonorm' plan and the archaeological findings demonstrate that the abbey must have received ample funds from donors to fund the abbey's renovation project.[242] In other words, it seems that the community embraced the material changes that came with the adoption of the Benedictine Rule. Given this evidence, it is plausible that the monks of Landévennec did indeed create a copy of Louis' diploma to ensure that this patronage would not cease.

After the diploma, Wrdisten returns to exalt more of Guénolé's ascetic habits, describing his habit of reciting the psalms on his knees with his arms extended as if nailed to the cross. It is evident that this sort of asceticism was inspired by the Desert Fathers. In Wrdisten's discussion of the Rule Guénolé expressed to his followers, particularly the idea of ascetic equilibrium, he explicitly cites St Basil and St Paphnutius, a disciple of St Antony, as authorities. The daily labour of the monks is also compared to that of the monks of Egypt.

240 Annie Bardel, Ronan Pérennec, Véronique Bardel, 'De la cour au *claustrum* et du *claustrum* au cloître: l'avant et l'après 818 à Landévennec' in Yves Coativy (ed.) *Landévennec 818-2018: Une abbaye bénédictine en Bretagne* (Brest, 2020), p. 27.
241 Bardel, Pérennec, Bardel, 'De la cour au *claustrum*', pp 29-30.
242 Bardel, Pérennec, Bardel, 'De la cour au *claustrum*', pp 34-35.

We know that Athanasius's *Life* of Antony, written in the fourth century and translated into Latin by Evagrius, became wildly popular in the West, spawning the ascetic movement in countries like Gaul and Italy, though it was modified to what the inhabitants of these countries could handle. With regard to how the Irish may have influenced Guénolé's asceticism, Wrdisten is not so specific. We know, however, that the saint's habit of performing *crosfigil*, or genuflexions, is also shared by Irish ascetics.[243]

One main question arises: was Guénolé Patrick's disciple, or was Wrdisten? This chapter will not elaborate on the scholarship which seeks to determine when exactly Patrick died, but will instead use two contested dates to demonstrate that Guénolé would not have known about Patrick. For argument's sake, we will first use Ludwig Bieler's argument that Patrick died in 491/2. Guénolé was born around 460 and died on the 3rd of March in 532.[244] This means that Guénolé would have been around eighteen years old when Patrick appeared to him in a dream, around 478. It is not plausible that there was already an established Patrician cult, and one that had already spread into Brittany, because Patrick was still alive at this point. Using the widely accepted date for Patrick's death, 461, it is still inconceivable that a Patrician cult travelled so quickly into Brittany. The meagre evidence available suggests that the cult of St Patrick expanded into Brittany in later centuries. The Calendar of Landévennec, Copenhagen Thott 239 2°, lists Patrick's feast day, along with Brigid's.[245]. Unfortunately, this source dates to the late ninth to early tenth century so we do not get a concrete picture of when Patrick first became included in the liturgy of the abbey of

243 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 93; François Kerlouégan, 'Les Vies de saints Bretons les plus anciennes dans leur rapports avec les Iles Britanniques', p. 203; Alison Beach and Isabelle Cochelin, *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*, I (Cambridge, 2020), p. 121; Peter Jeffery, 'Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours' in Rebecca A. Baltzer and Margot E. Fassler (eds), *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: methodology and source studies, regional developments, hagiography; written in honor of Professor Ruth Steiner* (Oxford, 2000), pp 104–08.
244 Ludwig Bieler, 'Sidelights on the chronology of St Patrick' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 6 (1949), 247-60.
245 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliothek, Thott 239 2°: Calendarium, fol. 2v.

Landévennec. By comparison, one of the earliest references we have to the feast day of Patrick on the Continent is from the Nivelles Calendar, which dates to the first half of the eighth century.[246] Overall, it is very hard to track how the cults of Irish saints spread to the Continent, but we can imagine that they were introduced by Irish missionaries or promoted in churches under Irish influence. Charles Doherty has suggested that the cult of St Patrick was introduced into Neustria by Fursa in the seventh century.[247] The introduction of the cult of St Patrick into Brittany is less clear, but given the presence of Patrick in Carolingian calendars, it would not be surprising if the cult had originally spread to Brittany from Francia.

Another clue is the way in which Patrick is described in the *Vita Winwaloei*. It would appear that the specific image of Patrick as a vanquisher of the *magi* is drawn directly from Muirchú's *Vita Patricii*, which was written in the seventh century. In the scene where Patrick faces the *magi* of Loíguire at Tara, the *magus* Lochru is lifted into the air and struck dead by Patrick after provoking him and insulting Christianity.[248] Muirchú's text was copied on the Continent between 780 and 820, so it is reasonable to assume that Landévennec was familiar with it.[249] On another note, Guénolé's habit of performing one hundred genuflexions a day and a hundred at night is a very specific detail. Tírechán's *Collectanea,* or notes about Patrick, mentions Patrick and his companions fasting for three days and three nights, 'cum <que> centenis oraculis flectenisque assiduis…' (accompanied with a hundred prayers and constant genuflexions...)[250] Tírechàn's work can be firmly dated to the seventh century. A much later source, the early fourteenth-century *Book of Lismore*, describes Patrick as

246 *Nivelles Calendar*, Zentralbibliothek Zürich, MS Rh. 30, f. 334r.
247 Charles Doherty, 'The cult of St Patrick and the politics of Armagh in the seventh century' in Jean-Michel Picard (ed.), *Ireland and Northern France AD 600-850* (Dublin, 1991), p. 53.
248 Muirchú, 'Vita Sancti Patricii' in Ludwig Bieler (ed. and trans.) *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 10* (Dublin, 1979), I.17. https://www.confessio.ie/more/muirchu_latin#, accessed 10 March 2023.
249 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 141.
250 Tírechán, *Collectanea*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler, *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 10 (Dublin, 1979), 19. https://www.confessio.ie/more/tirechan_latin#, accessed 10 March 2023.

performing one hundred genuflexions a day, and one hundred at night. While there is no Breton copy of Muirchú's *Life of Patrick* or Tírechán's *Collectanea* the borrowings from these texts prove that the monks of Landévennec were familiar with them.

It is evident, then, that the cult of St Patrick was most likely not active in Brittany during St Guénolé's lifetime but took root after the seventh century, after Armagh attained ecclesiastical dominance in Ireland and took over the Patrician cult around 640.[251] Therefore, it is not Guénolé who should be called an admirer or disciple of Patrick, but rather Wrdisten and his brothers.

What follows the chapters that centre on Guénolé's asceticism are seven chapters in heroic metre dedicated to King Gradlon, a semi-legendary figure of Breton history, his interaction with Guénolé, and the glory of the region of Cornouaille. King Gradlon is the governor of the people of Cornouaille, but also a sovereign who had subdued lands on the frontier to aggrandize his kingdom and seized the riches of the Normans. This passage will discuss the three chapters that recall the former glory of Cornouaille. During the reign of Gradlon, the region enjoys an era of peace and an episcopal seat at Quimper is established, with St Corentin as its bishop. St Guénolé and St Tugdual are mentioned as bringing brilliance and virtue to the kingdom. Wrdisten compares the region of Cornouaille to a bride dressed in all her finery and continues using this metaphor when he describes her submission, calling her crushed, lamenting, conquered by death, and made to bow under foreign burdens. The final chapter of heroic verse predicts her future restoration, which will bring back heroes and saints. Foreign burdens do not suggest internecine conflict within Cornouaille, but it could be that Wrdisten is referring to the conflict between Erispoë and Salomon. This conflict, which resulted in Erispoë's assassination in 857, ushered in a brief period of

251 Doherty, 'The cult of St Patrick', p. 71.

violence and disorder as Salomon sought to consolidate control over Brittany.[252] However, Salomon met a similar end in 874, when conspirators plotted to kill him and succeeded. Among these conspirators was Wigo, the son of the Riwallon, the count of Cornouaille. As Smith notes, 'Cornouaille was a region with a particularly strong sense of its own identity in the face of outsiders' and, so, the assassination of Salomon was a welcomed change which granted the region more independence from the centralising rule that Nominoë and his successors developed. Unsurprisingly, Salomon's murder heralded yet another period of instability, in which the conspirators not only fell out with each other, but the conflict between Salomon and these conspirators was continued by their kin well into the 880s. When Wrdisten wrote the *Vita Winwaloei* sometime between 860 and 884, the community of Landévennec witnessed this crisis play out. In fact, some scholars argue that the verses written to praise Gradlon were intended to flatter Salomon.[253] He too, like the legendary Gradlon, had extended the borders of his kingdom which had become so vast and defeated an enemy people. In this way, Wrdisten was drawing parallels between the past and present, and patterns the events of his present to those of Cornouaille's early history.

Wrdisten could also have simultaneously been referring to the numerous revolts between Nominoë and his successors and the Carolingian dynasty. Following his predecessor's death in 840, Charles the Bald was forced to contend with numerous Breton revolts from 843 onwards.[254] Notably, he was humiliated with two crushing defeats by the Bretons; the battle of Ballon in 845 and the battle of Jengland in 851. Less than a decade

252 Julia M.H. Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 103. Erispoë was assassinated by Salomon, his cousin, and another Breton named Almarchus.
253 Bernard Merdrignac, 'Aux "extrémités de la Gaule", la Cornouaille' in Bernard Merdrignac, D'une Bretagne à l'autre, Les migrations bretonnes entre histoires et legends (Rennes, 2022) https://books.openedition.org/pur/126765?lang=en#bodyftn26, accessed 1 March 2023, and André Chédeville and Hubert Guillotel, *La Bretagne des saints et des rois Ve–Xe siècle* (Ouest-France, 1984), p. 303.
254 Charles the Bald was West-Frankish king from 840-877 and Emperor of the Carolingian empire from 857-877.

later, in 858, Salomon was deeply involved in the Neustrian revolts and claimed support for Louis the German, challenging Charles the Bald's authority. Though we are not entirely certain what triggered it, hostilities between the Bretons and the Franks resumed in 867 when Charles the Bald readied his army to fight the Bretons once again. Another peace agreement was made between Pascweten, Salomon's son-in-law and the West-Frankish king.[255] Throughout this period, in attempts to secure the loyalty of Breton rulers, Charles the Bald carved out pieces of his kingdom to secure peace. First, he handed Erispoë the counties of Rennes, Nantes, and the Pays de Retz in 851 and then to Salomon he gave land in Anjou in 863 and the counties of Avranches and Coutances in 867.[256] In 856, he betrothed his son, Louis the Stammerer, to Erispoë's daughter, although the marriage was never fulfilled.[257] It is important to note that the goal of Erispoë and Salomon was not to rebut Carolingian hegemony entirely, but to challenge it for personal gain and power. Even as they were given these vast swathes of land and regalia that allowed Salomon, at least, to call himself *rex*, these leaders still swore oaths of fidelity to Charles the Bald.[258]

As Poulin observed,

> 'Le discours hagiographique sur Guénolé sert bien entendu à la louange du saint et à l'édification des moines de son monastère; mais il permet en même temps de mesurer l'avancée d'un processus d'acculturation, du moins chez les élites religieuses.'[259]

255 Smith, *Province and Empire*, p. 107. The likely cause of this resurgence of aggression between the Bretons and the Franks was joint-raiding by the Bretons and the vikings.
256 Smith, *Province and Empire*, p. 87.
257 Joëlle Quaghebeur, 'Landévennec, l'abbaye des rois en Bretagne' in Coativy (ed.), *Landévennec 818-2018*, p. 102.
258 Smith, *Province and Empire*, pp 112-13.
259 Poulin, 'L'intertextualité', p. 189.

(The hagiographic discourse on Guénolé is of course in praise of the saint and on the edification of the monks of the monastery; but at the same time, it makes it possible to measure the advancement of a process of acculturation, at least among the religious elites.)

Overall, there are conflicting elements and tension within the text. The political and religious environment of the present manipulated the way the community remembered their founder, Guénolé. After Guénolé receives the advice from Patrick and tells his mentor Budoc his intention to establish his own monastery, Wrdisten dedicates an entire chapter condemning *gyrovagues*, or wandering monks, who are strongly condemned in the Rule of St Benedict. Before Guénolé and his disciples leave the island of *Thopepigia*, Wrdisten notes that Guénolé is concerned that he would be guilty of the vice of vagrancy, or literally, wandering, and so he waits for divine inspiration from God to find a stable place for his little community. Even though Guénolé does not go on *peregrinatio*, and in fact the term *peregrinatio* is not even mentioned in his *Life*, this passage is interesting given the popularity of *peregrinatio* in other Breton hagiography and shows an attempt to reconcile with the new rule. The customs that the abbey of Landévennec had allegedly received from the Irish were rigorous ones and Wrdisten makes it clear that the introduction of the Rule of St Benedict into the abbey of Landévennec was welcomed by some of the monks. He claims that certain weak (*infirmior*) brothers diverted from the abbey's original monastic way of life because of its harshness.[260] These brothers found, for instance, their wardrobes to be insufficient against the rugged elements of western Brittany. They had to be content with one tunic made of sheepskin and one pair of shoes, and a coat or mantle if travelling was necessary. While still rigid, the Benedictine rule also recognised the necessity of moderation and was not aligned

260 Charles De Smedt, 'Vita S. Winwaloei' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 7 (1888), p. 226.

with the harsh asceticism of the Desert Fathers. Louis's mandate was no doubt embraced by these 'weak' monks. It is noteworthy that the regnal year of Louis the Pious is only used as a dating mechanism in the copy of the diploma and the preceding passage which relates Louis's arrival in Priziac. The rest of the *Vita Winwaloei* by Wrdisten and the Hymn by Clement invoke Breton rulers to situate their texts. In the pentametric verses prior to his Hymn, Clement notes that he is writing the Hymn, at the request of abbot Aelam, at the time when Salomon rightly ruled the Bretons and Rivelen governed Cornouaille. This, coupled with the laudatory verses dedicated to Gradlon (and Salomon) in the *Vita Winwaloei*, could be read as a subtle way of undermining Carolingian authority, but more likely reflects local practices.

What can we conclude about the cultural memory of the abbey of Landévennec, using saint Guénolé's material? Wrdisten, the monk who wrote the *Life* of Guénolé, specified in the beginning of the *Vita* that 'All these things were concealed by the thick veil of the past, but by our writing they shine brighter.'[261] This statement reveals a consciousness of retrieving memories from, in Wrdisten's words, the thick veil of the past, and giving them meaning in a way that suited the needs of the present. The composition of the cartulary and, indeed, the order of the *Vita* itself, was done very consciously. Even though there was tension in the community because of the severity of his example, Guénolé and his way of life are clearly the crux of the community's memory. At some point, probably after the seventh century, the community of Landévennec incorporated Patrick and the supposed Irish *conversatio* and tonsure, into the community's memory. This narrative was then set in writing, in the ninth century, at a time when the constraints of the present attempted to sever this memory. The specialists in the community, the scribes like Wrdisten, served as the keepers and perpetuators of this memory. The abbey of Landévennec's memory was constantly revitalized

261 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 111.

through the recitation of the *Life* and the Hymns dedicated to Guénolé. The *Life* was read on the saint's feast day, to commemorate him. We know, for example, that the Hymn to Guénolé, composed by Clement, was used to sing calends from November to Easter and Sundays after Matins. Ultimately, we see an attempt to preserve a continuity with a past, framed as a Golden Age, in a time of political uncertainty and spiritual change. Times were changing. As Wrdisten aptly wrote,

> 'O beatissime Winvaloee, plus mirari quam imitari vales…' [262]
>
> (Oh blessed Guénolé, it is easier to admire than to imitate you…)

Ethbin (alias Idunet)

The *Vita Ethbini*, also contained within the Cartulary of Landévennec, has been eclipsed by Landévennec's patron saint. Ethbin has also been neglected by the historiography. There is no recent edition of the *Life*, nor is there a thorough study of the saint himself.[263] The brevity of the *Vita*, ten folios in total, and the poor state in which it has survived, is probably the cause of this.[264] Unlike other *Vitae* associated with Landévennec, the hagiographer remains anonymous. The latinity of this text is inferior compared to the latinity of the *Lives* of Guénolé, whose prose is of a much higher calibre. The narrative is fast-paced, and much of it focuses on one miracle, interestingly performed by Guénolé, not Ethbin. Robert Latouche examined the *Vitae* of Guénolé and Ethbin in his 1911 publication, *Mélanges d'histoire de Cornouaille*. A product of his time, he was of course concerned with

262 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 130.
263 The most recent edition is from 1888. See, *Cartulary of Landévennec*, ed. Arthur de La Borderie, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec: première livraison* (Rennes, 1888), pp 137-41.
264 The *Vita Ethbini* is in Quimper BM MS 16. Some folios are barely legible.

establishing the history of Cornouaille but concluded that 'Il n'y a rien à tirer de ces récits imaginaires pour l'histoire de la Cornouaille mérovingienne' (There is nothing to draw from these imaginary works for the history of Merovingian Cornouaille).[265] He noted that the *Vita Ethbini* was badly composed, formed of three distinct parts that juxtaposed each other.[266] François Duine also agreed with Latouche's sentiments, considering the *Vita Ethbini* to have no historical value whatsoever.[267]

G.H. Doble and Hubert Le Bourdellès believed the *Vita* was composed after the monks of Landévennec exiled themselves and sought refuge in Montreuil-sur-Mer.[268] The general consensus is that the *Life* was based on an earlier text about a certain Idunet, who probably had no connection with Landévennec.[269] In the eleventh century, the Montreuil-sur-Mer *Vita*, which is no longer extant, was then copied into the Cartulary of Landévennec.[270] The Cartulary of Landévennec refers to Ediunetus, or Idunet, as Guénolé's brother, although this is the only mention of their kinship.[271]

The *Vita Ethbini* begins by vaguely telling us that Idunet is born out of a part of Britain, to a noble father and an educated mother.[272] He studies at his father's house until his father dies. His mother appeals to St Samson, bishop of Dol, to care for Idunet. At fifteen, Idunet enters monastic orders and is tied to the church of Dol. One day, he hears the words in a sermon 'Qui non renuntiat omnibus quae possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus.' (He who does not renounce all that he possesses, cannot be my disciple)[273] He is compelled by

265 Robert Latouche, *Mélanges d'Histoire de Cornouaille (Ve-XIe siècle)* (Paris, 1911), p. 1.
266 Latouche, *Mélanges d'Histoire de* Cornouaille, p. 42.
267 Erwan Valerie, 'Saint Idunet et le monastère de *Tauracus*' in *Études celtiques* , 24 (1987), 315.
268 Le Bourdellès, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920', p. 48.
269 Valerie, 'Saint Idunet et le monastère de *Tauracus*', 315-16.
270 Le Bourdellès, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920', p. 49.
271 Pierre-Yves Lambert, 'Les noms de personnes dans le Cartulaire de Landévennec' in *Cartulary of Landévennec*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq, p. 44.
272 'In brittanie partibus natus extitit idivnetvs…' Quimper, BM MS 16, f. 135v. Unclear whether this is Britain or Brittany.
273 Quimper, BM MS 16, f. 136r.

these words to leave, with Samson's permission, and join the monastery *Tauracus*, under the charge of St Similien of Nantes. Guénolé happens to be there, and the two become companions. It is at this point that Idunet's name changes, with no explanation, to Ethbin.

Ethbin is present during a miracle performed by Guénolé, which occupies about half of the *Vita.* The two holy men stumble across a person with leprosy, who begs them to help him breathe. Guénolé, overcoming his repulsion, attempts to ease the man's suffering by placing his mouth on the man's nostrils to draw out the pus.[274] Guénolé removes a miraculous stone from the affected man's nostrils, who happens to be Jesus Christ in disguise. Interestingly, this miracle is not included in the *Vita Winwaloei*. The same miracle occurs in the twelfth-century *Life* of Moling, an Irish saint believed to have been active in the seventh century, but the miracle is not found in any other early *Vita*.[275]

Rather abruptly, the story shifts to describe how 'supervenientes enim Franci vastaverunt Britanniam'. In response to the Franks ravaging Brittany, and in the process destroying Ethbin's sanctuary, the saint travels to *Hibernia*. There, 'in silva quae Nectensis dicitur ut pauper peregrinus tugurium fecit.' After making his hut as a poor pilgrim, Ethbin constructs a church in honour of St Silvan the Matryr. A few lines later in the text, a certain woman asks Ethbin to come to her house to heal her paralysed son. The humble Ethbin responds to the woman that he cannot perform the miracle and insists that she go to the sepulchre of holy Brigid, praising her merits. The woman replies by telling him that she already brought her son there, and that night, while she fell asleep keeping vigil, a voice told her in her dream:

274 Quimper, BM MS 16, f. 136v.
275 Whitley Stokes, 'The Birth and Life of St Moling' in *Revue Celtique*, 27 (Paris, 1906), 283. The miracle is discussed in Thomas C. O'Donnell, "It is no ordinary child I foster in my little cell": Fostering the Christ Child in Medieval Ireland', in *Eolas: The Journal of the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies*, 10 (2017), 101-102.

> ‘In silva quae nectensis dicitur, moratur servus dei ethbinus. Si ad eum filium tuum duxeris, sanitatem suis ineritis adquireris. Et vivit dominus quia dete non rediero. Usque filium meum in columem ante te reduxero.’[276]
>
> (In the forest that is called *nectensis*, dwells the servant of God Ethbin. If you take your son to him, you will acquire his healing… I will not return from you until I have brought my son from you unimpaired)

Ethbin goes into his oratory to pray and to prostrate himself before the altar. When he emerges, he heals the boy. The hagiographer describes how Ethbin lives in that forest for twenty years, performing miracles and healing the sick, all while living a life of austerity. Like his mentor Guénolé, Ethbin exercises strict dietary habits. In fact, he only eats bread and water on the fifth *feria*.[277] He refrains from wine, except when he administers holy communion to himself. He dies in that very forest at the ripe age of eighty-three.

Exploring Ethbin/Ethbin is made complicated by the fact that scholars believe that these do not seem to be his only names. Other variations of his name include Egbin, Yben, Édiunet, Diboan, Diboen, Iboan, and Iben.[278] These variations aside, the most pertinent question is why the saint is given two names in his *Vita*. Joseph Le Jollec was tempted to draw connections between the name Ethbin and Cadfan’s companion, Etwin, both Welsh monks.[279] Arthur de la Borderie and Albert Le Grand both believed that the scribe wanted to give a certain Idunet a *Vita*, and he used that of Ethbin. Dom Lobineau hypothesized that the miracle with the person with leprosy was so popular in Landévennec, and because Ethbin’s companion’s name was Guénolé, they confused this particular Guénolé with the founder of

276 Quimper, BM MS 16, f. 139r.
277 ‘Tantemque abstinenciae fuit ibi beatus ethbinus ut inebdomada non intraret meo, nisi solum inquinta feria, panis et aqua.’ Quimper, BM MS 16, f. 139v.
278 Diocèse de Quimper et de Léon, *Bulletin diocésain d'histoire et d'archéologie* (Brest, 1924), 267.
279 Joseph Le Jollec, *Guénolé, le saint de Landévennec: Vie, oeuvre, culte* (Quimper, 1952).

their abbey.[280] Hubert Guillotel, in a more recent work, attributed the name change to a scribal error, writing that the scribe failed to stay consistent in replacing Ethbin's name with Idunet.[281] This error demonstrated the confusion between the memory of Idunet of Châteaulin and Ethbin.[282] Perhaps Ethbin was the religious name adopted by Idunet once he became a churchman.

Idunet was certainly venerated in Brittany as a saint from Cornouaille. From the eleventh century, Idunet became the patron saint of Châteaulin, and his priory was known as *Loc Idunet*. He also had some material remains. Apparently, the monks of Quimperlé received the relics of Idunet from the monks of Landévennec and hid them in Île de Groix. The Bretons who exiled themselves to England following the viking incursions also brought Idunet with them. MS 180 from the Cathedral Library in Salisbury is undeniably Breton and includes among its list of saints Idunet of Châteaulin, along with Irish, Welsh, French, and English saints.[283] Ethbin, on the other hand, was not venerated in the Breton liturgy until the eighteenth century. His body, or at least a part of it, was housed in Montreuil-sur-Mer until revolutionaries desecrated it.[284] Otherwise the only other trace of Ethbin is his hagiography from Montreuil-sur-Mer.

Neither Idunet nor Ethbin left a traceable cult in Ireland, supporting the hypothesis that the story had no basis. That Brigid was venerated in Brittany we have no doubt. The *Life* of Brigid, or the *Vita Brigidae* by Cogitosus, was written around 640.[285] Her cult, like many

280 Albert Le Grand, *La Vies des Saints de la Bretagne-Armorique* (Quimper, 1901), p. 513.
281 Valerie, 'Saint Idunet et le monastère de *Tauracus*' in *Études celtiques,* 24 (1987), 316.
282 Le Bourdellès, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920', p. 49.
283 Le Bourdellès, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920', p.46. Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 180.
284 Le Bourdellès, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920', p. 48.
285 Jean-Michel Picard, 'The Marvellous in Irish and Continental Saints' Lives of the Merovingian Period' in H.B Clarke and Mary Brennan (eds.) *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, (Oxford, 1981), p. 91.

other Irish saints' cults, spread to the Continent beginning in the seventh century.[286] Kissane, in his work on St Brigid, notes 'There are a total of around forty dedications in the three departments of Côtes-d'Armor, Finistére and Morbihan, most likely arising from influxes of settlers from Irish enclaves in southern Wales.'[287] Place-names and dedications are not always useful in dating the spread of a saint's cult, so contemporary, liturgical evidence is needed. As stated earlier, Brigid was included in the liturgical calendar of Landévennec. The entry recording her feast day on the first of February notes 'Natalis Sanctae brigidae virginis.'[288] She is also mentioned in the Landévennec Group, a series of illuminated manuscripts of the Evangelists, probably all from Landévennec.[289] Joseph-Claude Poulin also noted that Wrdisten was influenced by Cogitosus's *Vita Brigidae* in the first fourteen chapters of the *Vita Winwaloei*. [290] While he notes that the text might have been disseminated from northern France, he does not exclude the possibility that the abbey of Landévennec received it directly from Ireland.

The monks of Landévennec knew Brigid well enough, but it has been suggested that they had little knowledge of her homeland given the lack of details they give about Ireland. The inclusion of an unidentifiable forest in Ireland, *nectensis*, is perhaps evidence of this. P. Grosjean argued it is a corruption of *Silvanectensis*, or modern day Senlis.[291] It is more likely that *nectensis* is related to *Nechtan*, an Irish name. Louis Gougaud noted that St Brigid was alive during the reign of Pictish king Nechtan Morbet, son of Erip. The fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Picts and Scots* recounts the story of how Nechtan was exiled to Ireland by his

286 See Noel Kissane, *Saint Brigid of Kildare: Life, Legend and Cult* (Dublin, 2017) for a chapter dedicated to the spread of St Brigid's cult to the Continent. The section on Brittany is brief.
287 Kissane, *Saint Brigid of Kildare*, p. 211. Wales' role in spreading Irish saints' cults and spiritual influences to Brittany will be explored in a later chapter.
288 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, MS Thott 239 2°: Calendarium, f. 9v.
289 I am unable to access a decent digitized version of the Harkness Gospels.
290 Poulin, 'L'intertextualité', p. 173.
291 David Farmer (ed.) *Oxford Dictionary of Saints, Fifth Edition* (Oxford, 2011), p. 150.

brother Drest. Nechtan prayed to Brigid to intercede with God on his behalf. Brigid prayed for him and promised him that if he returned to his country, he would possess the Pictish kingdom with peace.[292] King Nechtan, who did eventually reign in the second half of the fifth century, offered Abernathy to God and St Brigid, while a disciple of the latter, Darlugdach, abbess of Kildare, was present.[293] Even more likely, the author of the *Vita Ethbini* knew of the of the Irish god Nechtan, who is associated with a spring in the River Boyne, which rises near Kildare.[294] While Senlis is certainly closer to Montreuil-sur-Mer than Ireland, and the monks could have certainly stopped in Senlis on the way there, there is no evidence of any connection between the monks of Landévennec or Idunet/Ethbin and Senlis. There is, however, evidence that Saint Brigid was venerated in Senlis. Anne Buckley, in her study of early Irish hymns, notes that the feast of St Brigid was celebrated in Senlis, due to the spread of Irish saints' cults to Frankish houses after the seventh century.[295] Senlis has no special significance as St Brigid was also celebrated in Rebais, Nivelles, Meaux, Corbie, and other Frankish houses. With no explanation as to why a monk of Landévennec at Montreuil-sur-Mer would pick a random Frankish community with no connection to his own community to give a name to an Irish forest, the argument that *nectensis* is related to Nechtan is more compelling. This suggests that the monks of Landévennec had a greater knowledge of Ireland than we give them credit for.

What was the purpose of writing the concise *Vita Ethbini*? It has already been established that the creation of Ethbin's *Life* was intended to confirm his authority over Châteaulin. More importantly, if it is assumed that the original Idunet had no connection with Landévennec, why did the monks of Landévennec include his *Life* in their cartulary, after

292 William F. Skene (ed.) *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and Other Early Memorials of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1867), pp 6-7.
293 Louis Gougaud, *Les Saints irlandais hors d'Irlande* (Louvain, 1936), p. 17.
294 This was suggested to me by Jacopo Bisagni.
295 Anne Buckley, 'Music and Musicians in medieval Irish society' in *Early Music*, 28:2 (Oxford, 2000), p. 185.

Vita Winwaloei? Why was the *Life* of a disciple of Samson of Dol included beside the *Life* of Guénolé? This question has been briefly touched on by Erwan Vallerie, who suggested that it was an attempt to draw attention to a connection between the church of Dol and the abbey of Landévennec. Locquénolé, named after its founder Guénolé, could attest to influences by both Dol and Landévennec, although Vallerie argued that the *Life* could have been composed to bolster Landévennec's claim to Locquénolé. Vallerie explained that *Tauracus*, the monastery of which Idunet was a member of, is the archaic form of Taulé, territory that eventually formed Locquénolé. However, the intention of the *Vita Ethbini* cannot simply be to authenticate Landévennec's claim to Locquénolé or Châteaulin, because so little of the narrative is focused on Idunet's residence of the former and, more importantly, founding of the latter. It also must be mentioned that Ethbin does not remain in either of these communities. Thus, the writing of this *Life* had to serve multiple purposes.

Much more evident, the *Vita Ethbini* serves to add lustre to Guénolé's memory and to further assimilate Landévennec and its saints within the realm of Irish sanctity. Regarding the first point, it is highly unusual that a saint's hagiography would include an especially long miracle that was not performed by that particular saint. If this miracle episode was the only reason why the monks of Landévennec included the *Vita Ethbini* in the cartulary, then they would have simply added this miracle to Guénolé's *Life*. Instead, they introduced the *Vita Ethbini*, an unusually brief *Vita* which pales in comparison with the *Vita Winwaloei*. This choice was made because Ethbin accomplished what Guénolé originally wanted to do: he went to Ireland. Ethbin does not travel to all the places in Ireland associated with Patrick, because his narrative serves to link him with Brigid, as Guénolé is linked to Patrick. Afterall, as Noel Kissane remarked, '…the cult of St Brigid was one of the first Irish cults to become widespread on Continental Europe and she was the Irish saint most widely venerated

abroad.'[296] The passage in which the mother of the paralysed son repeats what the voice in the sepulchre of St Brigid said to her is a key moment. Brigid, in her instruction to bring the paralyzed boy to Ethbin, a servant of God, assigns responsibility and grants authority to Ethbin to heal the locals which are technically in her care. It must be stressed how odd it is that Brigid, in her *locus*, assigns Ethbin to provide healing for a supplicant praying to her. Moreover, by placing this scene in Brigid's sepulchre, the author is implying that Ethbin is working this miracle through Brigid, as her disciple.

When considering Landévennec's Irish influence, the *Vita Winwaloei* and the *Vita Ethbini* cannot be studied in isolation from each other. While the true origins of Idunet and Ethbin are a mystery, it is clear that the monks of Landévennec chose to incorporate into the community's memory a saint whose *Life* enriched the memory of their founder and who had some connection to Ireland that they could exploit. If the *Vita Winwaloei* was written because the new rule extinguished their way of life that had been passed down directly from Guénolé and Patrick, the need to preserve continuity with the past of Landévennec was even more urgent now that they were forced to relocate to Montreuil-sur-Mer, far in the east of Francia. The monastery of Landévennec had been destroyed and all that was left of their history was the written *Lives* of their saints and their relics, which we know little about. Studied together, the *Lives* of Guénolé and Ethbin reveal the extent to which the cultural identity of the community of Landévennec was shaped by the memory of their shared history with Ireland. Their identity as monks of Landévennec who looked towards Ireland was in peril because they no longer followed Irish monastic customs. While the memory of Landévennec's old practices had to be communicated through commemoration abroad, the monks also found it pertinent to write the *Vita Ethbini* to further affirm their identity while in exile.

296 Kissane, *Saint Brigid of Kildare*, p. 209.

Guenael

Guenael is celebrated as being the second abbot of Landévennec and the disciple and successor of Guénolé. He is first mentioned in the Cartulary of Landévennec as 'sanctus Guenhael' in the list of abbots of community, and later in an act mentioning the land of 'Languenoc' as the saint's heritage.[297] He is not mentioned in any other sources of Landévennec, which hints that his story may have belonged to Landévennec's early history. Very few scholars have written on Guenael and thus, there is barely any material on the saint.[298] Worse still, the texts associated with Guenael, as well as their origins, are not fully understood. They are identified by the Bollandists as BHL 8817, 8818, and 8819. BHL 8817 refers to a brief *Life* of Guenael, while BHL 8818-8819 is associated with a longer *Life* and *translatio*. BHL 8817 is based on three sixteenth-century manuscripts: the breviary of Vannes 1589, the Breviary of Quimper c. 1510, and the Breviary of Léon 1516.[299] BHL 8818-8819 is based on Bruxelles, KBR 20673 (3261) and Bruxelles, KBR 8930-31 (3494).[300] These are fourteenth-century copies from an original manuscript produced in St-Victor de Paris.[301]

With one exception, it is accepted that BHL 8818-8819 is the *Vita prima* of Guenael and that BHL 8817 is an abridged version of BHL 8818-8819.[302] Joseph-Claude Poulin identified the *Vita prima* (BHL 8818-8819) as the *Vita longior et translationes* and the brief *Life* (BHL 8817) as the *Vita brevior et translatio.* Poulin posits that the *Vita longior* was

297 Lambert, 'Les noms de personnes', p. 46 and Yves Morice, 'L'abbaye de Landévennec des origines au XIe siècle à travers la production hagiographique de son scriptorium: Culture monastique et ideologies dans la Bretagne du Haut Moyen Age' (PhD, Université de Rennes 2, 2007), p. 134.
298 By far the most comprehensive work on Guenael by Yves Morice is his PhD thesis 'L'abbaye de Landévennec', pp 121-44. Guenael's connection with the other Landévennec saints in briefly discussed in Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 221-22. Other sources on Guenael are Jacques Le Goualher, 'La translation des reliques de saint Guenhaël au Xe siècle' in *Britannia Monastica,* 6 (2002), pp 143-90 and Fañch Morvannou, 'Guénolé et Guenaël' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 81:1 (1974), 25-42.
299 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 390.
300 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 383.
301 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. Charles de Smedt in Acta sanctorum Novembris (Paris, 1887), i p. 669
302 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 392 and Morice, 'L'abbaye de Landévennec', p. 129.

written at the end of the eleventh century in Corbeil, where Guenael's relics were brought as a result of viking incursions in Brittany.[303] Because the *Vita brevior* was written after, it cannot date to before the twelfth century, and is thus excluded from this thesis. Yves Morice is inclined to date the *Vita longior* to the second half of the ninth century or the tenth century.[304] Textual evidence discussed later in the chapter will demonstrate why Poulin's dating is more persuasive. For clarity, we will refer to the *Vita prima* of Guenael as the *Vita Guenaili*.

In addition to the edition in the *Acta Sanctorum*, there is also a 1997 edition of both *Lives* by Fañch Morvannou.[305] Morvannou favoured a pre-818 date for the first *Life*, on account of its 'scoto-bretonne' traits which were prohibited with Louis the Pious's diploma of 818.[306] He did not negate the possibility that the *Life* was written after 818, and that the monks largely ignored the 818 diploma. As there are 'scoto-bretonne' elements in the *Vita Winwaloei* and the *Vita Ethbini*, which were both written after 818, the argument that the text was written pre-diploma does not stand. Moreover, his edition was critiqued by Poulin, who is convinced that Morvannou's edition of the '*Vita Secunda*' is the *Vita longior*, and that his edition of the '*Vita prima*' is actually the *Vita brevior*.[307] In the preface to his edition, Morvannou writes,

> 'La *Vita Ia* de saint Guénaël semble bien avoir été à usage liturgique, vu sa brièveté. C'est le cas aussi de la *Vita IIa* qui, pourtant, est nettement plus longue.'

303 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 384. Brett also believes the *Vita sancti Guenaili* was 'perhaps' written in the eleventh century. Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 226.
304 Morice, 'L'abbaye de Landévennec', p. 133.
305 *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou.
306 *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou, p. 74.
307 *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou, p. 5. See Poulin's comments in 'L'hagiographie bretonne', p. 382 and p. 391.

(The Vita I of saint Guénaël seems to have been used liturgically, seeing its brevity. It's also the case for the Vita II which, however, it noticeably longer.)

For this reason, the Acta Sanctorum version by Charles de Smedt will be used to analyze the *Vita Guenaili*.

According to the *Vita Guenaili*, Guenael was born in Brittany to a Breton count, Romalius, and a mother named Laetitia. On a certain day, as Guénolé and his brothers are returning to Landévennec from a certain cell, they pass through the town where Count Romalius lived. There, they stumble upon Guenael who is lingering on the street with his companions. Already seeing a spark of divinity within the child, Guénolé asks Guenael:

> 'Placet tibi, dixit, fili carissime, ut nobiscum ad monasterium venias, tuo creatori perpetuo serviturus?' [308]
>
> (Would it please you, dear son, he said, to come with us to the monastery, to serve your creator forever?)

Guenael happily agrees. During the early days of Guénael's spiritual instruction in Landévennec, the monastic rule of the community is set forth, as well as the education of the brothers, the poorness of the brothers' garments, the asperity of food, the long duration of vigils, the urgency of prayers, the frequency of readings, the properness of voluntary mortification, the long duration of silence, and hard obedience.[309] The abbot Guénolé justifies these measures to the brothers, in particular Guenael, by invoking the Lord's own words to

308 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 675.
309 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 675.

keep hard lives and fraternal poverty in exchange for immortal delights. These conditions, allegedly, please all the brothers.

Naturally, Guenael engages in the highest forms of this piety and performs all things, such as fasts, vigils, and prayers, in the most strenuous ways.[310] As in most hagiographies, a whole passage is dedicated to Guenael's merits, such as his remarkable understanding of the Scriptures and his magnanimous humility. Most importantly, we get a glimpse into his ascetic practices, which include submerging himself in a freezing river to pray. The author writes:

> 'Denique corpus cum Apostolo castigans et in servitutem redigens, singulis noctibus, dum pausarent fratres, in frigidissimum flumen, quod monasterium praeterfluebat, clam descedens usque ad scapulas, donec septem poenitentiales psalmos pro se cunctisque fidelibus dixisset ibi morabatur'.[311]
>
> (Finally, punishing the body with the Apostle and reducing it to servitude, every night, while the brothers rested, he stayed there in the freezing river, which ran before the monastery, secretly descending up to his shoulders, while he had said seven penitential psalms for himself and all the faithful.)

The number seven has strong biblical significance. It has connotations with God's creation of the world and thus signifies 'creation itself, as well as the completion of anything.'[312] As it also symbolises perfection, having Guenael recite seven penitential psalms is meant to highlight the perfection of his asceticism. Moreover, the practice of immersing oneself in cold water to pray is a motif found in other Irish and Welsh hagiography. There are several

310 'In omnibus enim agebat strenuissimum monachum: frequens in jejuniis, creber in vigiliis, jugis in oratione'. *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 675.
311 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 675.
312 Darcy E. Ireland, 'Navigating the use of biblical numerology in Nauigatio Sancti Brendani' (PhD, Providence College, 2015), p. 27.

examples.[313] In his twelfth-century *Vita*, St Illtud is described as immersing himself in cold water in the middle of the night while he said the Lord's prayer three times.[314] According to his ninth-century martyrology, St Angus of Keld chanted fifty psalms immersed in a river and tied to a tree.[315] Another source worth noting is the tenth-century *Saltair-na-Rann*, an early middle Irish story which details how after their expulsion from Eden, Adam immersed himself in the river Jordan for forty-seven days, while Eve stood in the river Tigris for thirty-three days as penitence.[316] While one might be cautious to label this habit as an aspect of Insular asceticism, the evidence demonstrates that, at the very least, this was an ascetic practice pursued in early Ireland, Britain, and Brittany.[317]

When the abbot Guénolé is seized by a serious illness and feels that his final day is approaching, a convocation is called where it is agreed that Guenael should succeed Guénolé as abbot of Landévennec. Guenael thinks himself unfit for the role, citing his immaturity, lack of wisdom, and overall inexperience with leadership. Guénolé reassures him, telling him, 'Noli, … fili, impositum tibi jugum abjicere…' (Don't, son, cast aside the yoke that has been imposed on you.)[318] Guenael consents with conditions. He tells Guénolé,

> '"…si mihi concesseris, ut, postquam in hac jussione tua septem annos complevero, cura mihi liceat refutata ad meorum peccatorum poenitentiam peragendam peregrinari quocumque me tulerit Domini voluntas."'[319]

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313 See, Wilfrid Bonser, 'Praying in Water' in *Folklore* 48:4 (1937), 385-88.
314 A.W. Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff, 1944), pp 202-03.
315 Whitley Stokes (ed. and trans.), *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee: critically edited from ten manuscripts, with a preface, translation, notes, and indices* (London, 1905), p. 11. For the dating of the text see, Pádraig Ó Riain, 'The martyrology of Óengus: the transmission of the text' in *Studia Hibernica*, 31 (2000/2001), 221-42 and Ó Riain, 'The Tallaght martyrologies, redated' in *Cambridge medieval celtic studies*, 20 (1990), 21-38.
316 Bonser, 'Praying in Water', 385. Whitley Stokes (ed.), Saltair-na-Rann. A collection of early middle Irish poems (Oxford, 1883), lines 1621-1629, https://celt.ucc.ie/published/G202001/, accessed 13 March 2023.
317 For the potential significance of shared hagiographical motifs, see Chapter 5.
318 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 675.
319 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 675.

(..If you will grant me, once I have completed seven years of your order, permission to end my care to go on *peregrinatio* as penitence for my sins wherever God's will carries me)

After making this deal with Guénolé, Guenael serves as abbot of Landévennec for seven years, before undertaking *peregrinatio*. Guenael performs his duty well, teaching and ministering to all, and the choice to have his abbacy last seven years reflects the fulfilment and indeed perfection of his office.

The author of the *Vita Guenaili* is specific about the reason behind Guenael's *peregrinatio* to Britain and Ireland, giving the journey a penitential purpose. It is worth noting that the reason behind Guenael's voyage to Britain and Ireland in his second *Life* is stripped away, hinting at the unpopularity of *peregrinatio* narratives in the twelfth century. In the *Vita Guenaili*, however, the saint does undertake *peregrinatio* to *Britannia Scotiaque* with twelve brothers. We are told that Guenael wishes to live reclusively in these lands, but the light of his virtues makes it impossible for him to hide. Rather, the *insulani*, or islanders, flock to him for corporeal and spiritual remedies which Guenael performs with God's help.[320] The saint gains renown among the magnates and princes of Britain and Ireland, and according to the author, he brings the unbelievers to the faith, the undevoted to fervour, the dejected to faith, the obstinate to reverence, and the melancholy to joy. The great and abundant gifts he receives are given to the poor or towards the building of churches. He constructs two churches, one in Britain and one in Ireland, and places well-taught devotees to serve in them.[321] We are not told where exactly these churches were built, only that they were magnificent. In particular, the church in Ireland is described as the most splendid in the

320 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 676.
321 'Monasteria siquidem duo, alterum in Britannia, alterum in Scotia, construxit.' (Indeed, he built two monasteries, one in Britain, the other in Ireland). *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 676.

country, both in its structure and ornamentation.[322] It is not unusual, given the vagueness of Guenael's career in Ireland, that he left no trace there. There is no evidence of his cult in Ireland, nor is there evidence from toponomy to suggest that he left an imprint on the country.

After those intense years of preaching, an angel appears to Guenael, urging him to return to Brittany. Fifty monks return to Brittany with him, implying that most of these brothers were Irish and Britons. The hagiographer indulges us with a description of the vessel Guenael and his companions travel in, noting that one small boat was made of wicker and there was perhaps a larger boat. Guenael mounts a small wicker boat, or *fiscella*, which was covered in leather and makes his way back to Brittany without an oar or sailor, but with the aid of God.[323] *Currachs*, or small boats made of willow or hazel and covered with leather, feature in early Irish literature such as Brendan's *Navigatio* and the *Vita Columbae*.[324] The description of Guenael's boat as a basket, or *fiscella*, is consistent with the identification of the boat as a *currach* (or perhaps a Welsh *cyrgwl*, 'coracle').[325] Guenael brings numerous books and relics on the boat with him. Guenael's voyage back to Brittany includes a miracle that is meant to parallel Jesus's miracle in Mark 4:35. While on their boats, the saint and his companions are met with a terrible storm that demoralizes the monks. Echoing Jesus's words, Guenael asks them 'Modicae…fidei, quare dubitastis?' (You of little faith, why do you doubt?) and, like Christ, quiets the storm by making the sign of the cross.[326] When the monks arrive on the shores of Cornouaille, they are soon received by a king called Rigimalus, who gifts the monks fifty pairs of sandals and offers himself, his goods, and his lands for their benefit.[327] Guenael builds three monasteries in this kingdom.

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322 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 676.
323 '…intrat solus in fiscellam quam sibi texerat, currit sine remige, sine duce, Dei tamen auxilio…'
324 Muiris O'Sullivan and Liam Downey, 'Currachs' in *Archaeology Ireland*, 29: 1 (2015), 39.
325 O'Sullivan and Downey, 'Currachs' p. 40.
326 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 676.
327 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 676

Like many Breton saints before him, he first travels with his community to an island. His arrival on the Île-de-Groix, an island off the coast of Lorient, is miraculously accompanied by the ringing of church bells which no one had rung, stunning the inhabitants of the island.[328] While on the island, Guenael helps his brothers construct cells and churches, essentially setting up the infrastructure to house fifty monks on the island. Guenael's influence on the Île-de-Groix was still remembered in the eleventh century, as evidenced by the mention of the *inventio* of his relics on the island, in addition to the relics of Idunet, in the *Vita* of saint Gurthiern.[329]

Guenael tries a second time to live an eremitical life. In a vision, an angel commands him to leave the island and seek other lands. During this period, he constructs his final monastery, which was famous for its miracles after Guenael's death.[330] The author tells us that, so many miracles occurred in this place, that it would take many more volumes to recount them. After miraculously saving a stag chased by dogs, word of the miracle travels and reaches the ears of King *Guerrechus* (Waroch*)*. Summoning Guenael, Waroch gives Guenael two properties in perpetuity.[331] The identification of Waroch is important. He is first mentioned several times in the late sixth century by Gregory of Tours in his *Historia Francorum* as count Waroch of Vannes.[332] Much later, he is also mentioned in the *Vitae Gildae* as the father of the poor Trifina, who is slain by Conomor.[333] Waroch's territory was in the Vannetais, which means that Guenael's final monastery was located there. We know virtually nothing of this abbey, or *locus*, of Guenael, which was probably in the territory of

328 For more on bells, see Chapter 5. Also see, Bernard Tanguy, 'La cloche de Paul-Aurélien' in *Collection de l'Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l'Antiquité*, 515 (1994), 611-22. Self-ringing bells occur in the *Lives* of Deiniol, Govan, Teilo, and others. See, Henken, *The Welsh Saints,* p. 166
329 Morice, 'L'abbaye de Landévennec', pp 126-27.
330 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt*,* p. 677.
331 'Duas autem villas optimas dedit ei rex, quas ipse fratribus in monasterio suo Deo servientibus habendas in perpetuum dereliquit.' (Moreover, the king gave him two of his best villages, which he bequeathed in perpetuity to the brothers in the monastery serving God). *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt*,* p. 677.
332 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, *Libri Historiarum V*, p. 214.
333 See Chapter 3.

what is now Lanester, coincidentally, not far from the Île-de-Groix.[334] Whether or not this abbey was a dependency of Landévennec is a mystery. On his deathbed, Guenael bequeaths this abbey, with the agreement of all, to a relative, who the author describes as having the same line of kinship as Guenael.[335]

An entire chapter is dedicated to the saint's *translatio*. The author reiterates that for a long time, entrance into the monastery where Guenael's body was kept was forbidden for lay men and women. This policy changes when Nominoë, *Britannorum rex*, comes to the holy place to pray and obtains access. His patronage precipitates the construction of a grander monastery to house the remains of Guenael and from then on, the monastery is described as open to all, regardless of profession or gender. The author laments about the eventual persecution of churches and Christians in Brittany, resulting in the body of Guenael being carried off to Paris. Although the author does not explicitly name the persecutors, we can be fairly certain, given the period, that the vikings were to blame. Guenael's corporeal relics are received by the city's prefect *Teudon* and placed in *Curcorona* (Courcouronne).[336] *Teudon*, or Thion, viscount of Paris, was invested in Paris in 925, so we can date the arrival of Guenael's relics to around this time.[337] The fragmentary *Translatio sancti Maglorii*, dated to the twelfth century, mentions several Breton relics that were kept in Paris together, among them, Guenael's. The *translatio* does not explain how these relics came to be found together.[338]

In Paris, the body of Guenael performs miracles for the faithful of France, until attacks by the *Saxones* once again force the translation of the body to Corbeil. Haimon, count of Corbeil, constructs a temporary basilica to house Guenael's remains and the saint is given

334 Morice, ''L'abbaye de Landévennec', p. 137.
335 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 678.
336 *Vita S. Guenaili*, ed. de Smedt, p. 679.
337 Hubert Guillotel, 'l'exode du clergé breton devant les invasions scandinaves' in *Société d'histoire et archéologie de Bretagne* (1982), 277.
338 *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou, 31-3.

the borough, with its accompanying rights, customary taxes, and revenues. Once these onslaughts are abated, the body is translated yet again to a new, grander church built by Haimon, which was furnished with copies books, tapestries, and precious ornaments. Four canons are established and given enough resources for their subsistence. Finally, Guenael is given perpetual possession of the aforementioned titles.

There are several clues within the last chapter that confirm that the author was writing at a distance from the events he recounts. First, is the vague statement about the persecution of Christians which prompted the *translatio* of Guenael's remains, where the author is unable to tell us that the monastery of Guenael was physically threatened by vikings. Second, is the strange attribution of this persecution to *Saxones* (Saxons) later in the text, unheard of in other Breton hagiography. This confusion demonstrates that the author of the *Vita Guenaili* was not writing in the tenth century, when the exodus of Breton monks and relics took place, thus supporting a later, eleventh-century dating.

The *Vita Guenaili* is the only *Vita* among this Landévennec group that incorporates post-mortem miracles and more broadly, is concerned with recording the spread of his cult and its interaction with the laity. This indicates that there was a need to promote Guenael's cult. As Julia Smith remarked, 'Writing created these cults in communities into which these saints were intruded, but it did so in conjunction with corporeal relics'.[339] It is rare for Breton and Insular hagiographies to use post-mortem miracles or spotlight the corporeal relics of their saints, mainly because Breton saints' cults were based locally and did not require any propaganda to prove the efficacy of a saint's miracles. The posthumous miracles in the *Vita Guenaili* suggest that it was written in a monastery which had the relics of the saint but needed a *Vita* to give them significance and promote them. Again, Poulin's hypothesis that

339 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles and Relics in Brittany', 337.

the *Vita* was perhaps written in Corbeil seems plausible. Moreover, the specific details provided about Brittany and its geography, such the river that flows by Landévennec, point to a Breton author, and one familiar with the abbey of Landévennec. Relics did not travel by themselves, so there may have been monks from the abbey of St Guenael who also came to Corbeil. The community of Landévennec, who exiled themselves to Montreuil-sur-Mer, returned to Landévennec after 936. Even if the monks of St Guenael in Corbeil returned to Brittany during a similar period, say the mid tenth-century, it is possible that a Breton contingent persisted there.

All this is hypothetical, given the paucity of evidence, but it brings us to the next question: why was the *Vita Guenaili* written and what was its significance? Based on Landévennec's abbatial list, included in the cartulary, Yves Morice makes the argument that the community of Landévennec adopted Guenael and his tradition to fill in a lacuna in its history. There is a noticeable temporal gap between the abbacies of Guénolé and Guenael (fifth and sixth centuries) and that of Matmonoc, who we know was abbot in 818. Morice explains that this lacuna in documentation could have occurred as a result of the viking invasions and the exodus of the monks. However, the fact that the *Vita Guenaili* was not included in the cartulary, he admits, throws a wrench in this argument.[340]

Although the provenance of the *Vita Guenaili* has proven contentious, it is undeniably linked with the abbey of Landévennec. The saint's tutelage by Guénolé, his peregrinatio to Britain and Ireland, and his dedication to an ascetically vigorous life mirror the experiences of Guénolé and Ethbin. If, as the little evidence available suggests, the author was attached to the monastery of St Guenael but wrote the *Vita* in exile in Corbeil, it appears that he was keen to link Guenael with the renowned abbey of Landévennec. This too, could be an indication

340 Morice, 'L'abbaye de Landévennec', p.136.

that the monastery of St Guenael was a dependency of Landévennec. It is possible that the author of the *Vita Guenaili*, conscious that his community was in exile with relics of a saint that really had no significance in northern France, felt the obligation to concretize the memory of Guenael, his connection to Landévennec, and by extension, Ireland, in writing, for fear that the saint's life would be subject to oblivion.

Chapter 3: The saints of *la Bretagne bretonnante*

Scholars have called the cultural, political, and linguistic divide in early medieval Brittany many things. Pierre Flobert referred to the Church west of the marches of Nantes, Rennes, and Vannes as 'l'Église bretonne bretonnante'.[341] Léon Levillain made the distinction between 'la Bretagne française' and 'la Bretagne bretonnante.'[342] Julia M. H. Smith made the distinction between the 'Celtic west' and the 'Gallo-Frankish east'.[343] Both Smith and Levillain identified a Breton March.[344] In the context of the Carolingian empire, marches, including the Breton march, were used to control territories with origins independent from the empire and which tended to be politically insubordinate.[345] They were military regions that consisted of several counties, which were administered by an appointed count or *marchio,* usually not native to the region.[346] The Breton march consisted of the counties of Rennes, Nantes, and Vannes, with the Pays de Retz. As explained in Chapter One, these counties were remnants of late Roman *civitates* and their bishoprics had been under the ecclesiastical supervision of Tours since the fifth century, while the west of Brittany seemed to have more independence, with its own *episcopus Britannorum*. The Vilaine river has also been regarded as a geographic frontier. Although the river was regarded as a boundary between Brittany 'proper' and Gallo-Frankish influenced Brittany by writers in the late sixth and ninth century, the Bretons still had jurisdiction on the land beyond this border.

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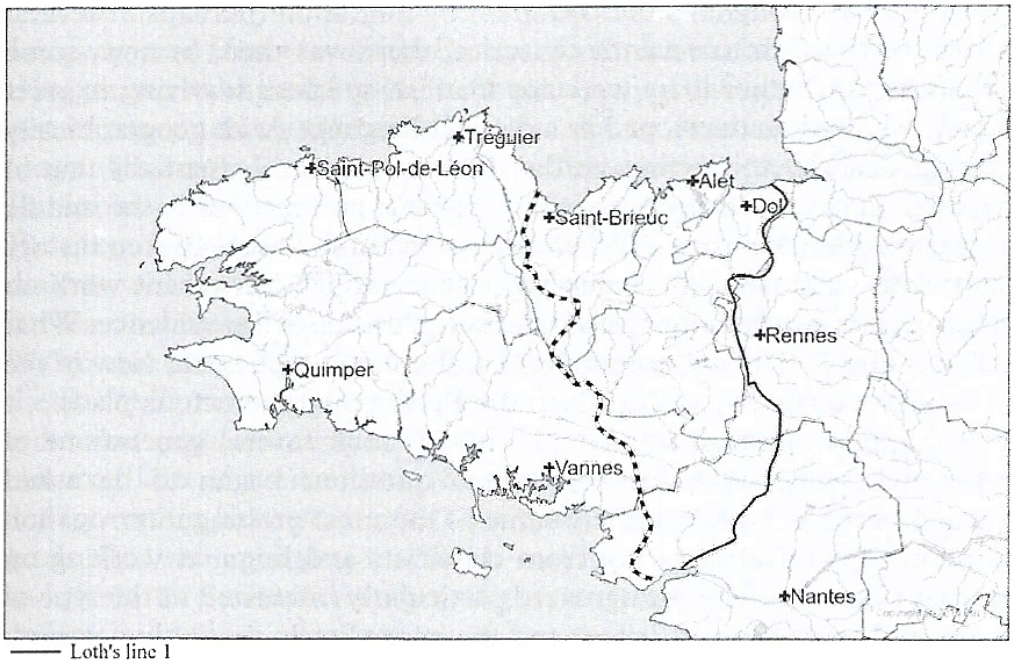
341 Pierre Flobert, 'Le "Schisme breton": une psychodrame?' in Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France, 1994 (1996), 54.
342 Léon Levillain, 'La Marche de Bretagne, ses marquis et ses comtes' in *Annales de Bretagne*, 58:1 (1951), 91.
343 Julia M. H. Smith, 'The "archbishopric" of Dol and the ecclesiastical politics of ninth-century Brittany' in *Studies in Church History*, 18 (1982), 59.
344 Julia M. H. Smith, 'Neustria and the Breton March' in Smith, *Province and Empire* (1992), pp 33-59 and Levillain, 'La Marche de Bretagne', 89-117.
345 André Chédeville and Hubert Guillotel, *La Bretagne des saints et des rois, Ve-Xe siècle* (Rennes, 1984) pp 202-03.
346 Levillain, 'La Marche de Bretagne, ses marquis et ses comtes', p. 89.

Rather than relying on oscillating political borders, language might be a more useful tool to study the apparent east-west divide in Brittany. Afterall, language is one of the most important expressions of identity. In 1907, Joseph Loth analyzed Celtic place-names, which typically had the adjectival ending *-ācon*, and Latinized place-names which ended with *-acum* to identify the border between Breton-speaking Brittany and Latinized Brittany. In Romance-speaking areas of Northern France, the suffix *-acum* usually changed into *-é*, *-ay*, or *-y* endings, whereas place-names in eastern Brittany kept *-ac* endings.[347] Based on his findings, he identified the area where the two types of place-names met and drew a demarcation line.[348] The *ligne Loth* as scholars have called it, is 'an S-shaped line from Mont-Saint-Michel at the extreme north-east of Brittany to the head of the estuary of the Loire near Donges in the south'.[349] It denotes the limit of Breton-speaking settlements. Place-names to the west of the *ligne Loth* are still Brittonic and are similar to place-names in Cornwall, Wales, and northern Britain.[350]

347 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 17-8.
348 For the description of the demarcation line and what villages it runs through, see Joseph Loth, 'Les langues romance et bretonne en Armorique' in *Revue celtique*, 28 (1907), 377.
349 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 18. For maps see Bernard Tanguy, 'La limite linguistique dans la péninsule armoricaine à l'époque de l'emigration bretonne (IVe-Ve siècle) d'après les données toponymiques' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 87:3 (1980), 429-62.
350 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 18. Similar and shared place-names discussed in Chapter 5.



Map I.1 Language zones in Brittany: the two *Lignes Loth*. The ecclesiastical boundaries are from L. Grigoli and B. Maione-Downing 2013, 'France: Diocese and Archdiocese Boundaries ca. 1000', DARMC Scholarly Data Series, Data Contribution Series # 2013-4. DARMC, Center for Geographic Analysis, Harvard University, Cambridge MA 02138 URL: https://darmc.harvard.edu (accessed 19 February 2020). DOI: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/NIAWTY

map 1- Ligne Loth 1 and Ligne Loth 2, in Brett with others, Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, p. 19.

The hagiographies explored in this chapter were all produced east of the *ligne Loth*. The saints Samson of Dol, Malo, Paul Aurelian, Brioc, and Gildas were all sixth-century saints, and most of them had some connection to Ireland. We will begin with the oldest of these hagiographies, on Samson of Dol.

Samson of Dol

Dol emerged as a result of St Samson's emigration from Wales in the sixth century. The seat was the centre of great controversy in the ninth century, when Nominoë pushed for its progression into an archbishopric, in order to gain independence from the archbishopric of Tours. He accused the bishops of Brittany appointed by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious of simony, sending Conwoïon, abbot of Redon, to Rome to settle the matter in 847.[351] Pierre Flobert argued that Nominoë chose to promote Dol because the bishoprics of Rennes and Nantes were not Breton in that period.[352] Rennes and Nantes, while granted to Erispoë, were technically Frankish counties whose ecclesiastical allegiances were to Tours.[353] Before that, they began as Roman *civitates*.[354] As Flobert put it,

> 'Dol servait donc de trait d'union entre la Bretagne et la France et était hautement représentatif de la Bretagne grâce à la personnalité éminente de saint Samson, dont

351 Pierre Flobert, 'Le «Schisme breton»: un psychodrame?' in *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1996), 54.
352 Flobert, 'Le «Schisme breton»: un psychodrame?', 58. The origins of the bishoprics of Rennes and Nantes are discussed in Chapter 1.
353 Richard Sowerby, 'The Lives of St Samson: rewriting the ambitions of an early medieval cult' in *Francia*, 38 (2011), 13.
354 Smith, 'The 'Archbishopric' of Dol and the Ecclesiastical Politics of Ninth-Century Brittany', 59.

l'episcopat avait été entériné par sa convocation au troisième Concile de Paris, en 562.'[355]

(Dol therefore served as a link between Brittany and France and was highly representative of Brittany thanks to the eminent personality of saint Samson, whose episcopate was confirmed by his convocation to the third Council of Paris, in 562.)

The initiative continued into Salomon's reign, where he famously fought Pope Nicholas I to legitimize Dol's claim.[356] During the period of viking activity in Brittany, the clergy of Dol fled sometime after 913/914 and returned before 944.[357] Dol's archepiscopal ambitions were suppressed in 1199 when Pope Innocent III declared Brittany to be under the supremacy of Tours.[358] The episcopal archive of Dol was lost to us when King John Lackland's troops burned the cathedral in 1203.[359] As a result, there is very little documentation available to reconstruct the bishopric's history. The cartulary of Dol, the *Alanus*, was compiled in 1456 and thus is largely unreliable for Dol's early history.[360]

Vita Prima sancti Samsonis

There are two *Lives f*or Samson— the *Vita Prima*, composed around the late eighth century, making it the oldest Breton hagiography, and the *Vita Secunda*, a later composition

355 Flobert, 'Le «Schisme breton»: un psychodrame?', 59.
356 Flobert, 'Le «Schisme breton»: un psychodrame?', 57.
357 Hubert Guillotel, 'Les origines du ressort de l'évêché de Dol' in *Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de* Bretagne (1977), 38.
358 André Rhein, 'La cathédrale de Dol' in *Bulletin Monumental*, 74 (1910), 28.
359 Guillotel, 'Les origines du ressort de l'évêché de Dol', 31.
360 Guillotel, 'Les origines du ressort de l'évêché de Dol', 32.

from around the 860s, during the reign of Salomon, to make Dol an archiepiscopal see.[361] The dating of the *Vita Prima* is still hotly debated. Lynette Olson has identified two main traditions for the dating of the *Vita Prima*. While the British tradition maintains a late seventh century dating, French scholarship prefers a later, late eighth and even early ninth- century dating.[362] Pierre Flobert, one of the editors of the text, dated the *Vita Prima* to c. 750, however, a more recent analysis by Joseph-Claude Poulin demonstrates that the text was probably composed later, in the second half of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth century.[363]

In his most recent study on the subject, 'La Circulation de l'information dans la Vie Ancienne de S. Samson de Dol', Poulin analysed the *Vita* as a system of information and used three approaches. The first two approaches focused on retracing a chain of transmission from Samson and the author of the *Vita Prima* and reconstituting the stages of mediation. Poulin posited that this chain could not extend beyond the end of the seventh century, but even he admitted that this is not a strong argument.[364] Moreover, his insistence that the mediators that the author of the *Vita Prima* mentions are literary inventions denies the possibility of cross-channel connections between monasteries in Wales and Brittany.[365] His third approach, which identifies key formal borrowings in the text, is most convincing. In particular, the author of the *Vita Prima* used two sources that were not circulated on the Continent before the eighth century: Julian Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa* and a homilies by Gregory the Great mediated by a Pseudo-Bede.[366]

There are two more minor points which reinforce a late eighth century dating. First, is the manner in which the Irish clerics are described in *Vita Prima*. The use of the word

361 Sowerby, 'The Lives of St Samson', 11-12; Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 120.
362 Lynette Olson, 'Introduction' in Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol*, p. 2.
363 Poulin, 'Les réécritures dans l'hagiographie bretonne', p. 183.
364 Poulin, 'La circulation de l'information', p. 37.
365 More on this in Chapter 6.
366 Poulin, 'La circulation de l'information', pp 68-9.

philosophi to describe the Irish scholars Samson encounters is resonant of the later eighth century cliché of Irishmen as famous scholars.[367] This cliché is only magnified in the *Vita Secunda*. Second, is the fact that the oldest extant Breton manuscript, Paris BnF NAL 1587, dates to 780.[368] If the manuscript evidence, or lack of, that survives suggests that Breton written culture developed in the eighth century, it seems more reasonable to date a sophisticated hagiography like the *Vita Prima* to c. 800.

The *Vita Prima* survives in its entirety in nine manuscripts, and partially in eleven manuscripts.[369] Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine MS 1708 (1318), a tenth-century manuscript, is one of the oldest of these complete copies.[370] The *Vita Secunda* survives in fifteen copies, half of which date to the eleventh to twelfth century.[371] Both texts were written at the bishopric of Dol. A twelfth-century Welsh *Life* of Samson of Dol was written and is included in the *Liber Landavensis* (Book of Llandaff).[372] The importance of the *Vita Prima* cannot be emphasized enough as it provided a model for every Breton hagiography that came after. The *Vita* takes the reader on a journey from Wales to Ireland, back to Wales, on to Cornwall, and finally, Brittany. Much of the *Vita* is concentrated on Samson's Insular career, and as such, says very little on his activity in Brittany. This is striking for a hagiography that was undeniably produced in Brittany.

In the prologue, the author of the *Vita Prima* dedicates his work to the bishop of Dol, Tigernomaglus, and informs us of his intention to write the 'history and sayings' of St Samson, affirming that his words are not based on his own guesses or on unauthorized rumours,

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367 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol,* Sources d'histoire médiévale, 17 (Paris, 1997), p. 200
368 https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/168.
369 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 320.
370 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne,* p. 322.
371 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 336.
372 Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Book of Llandaf as a Historical Source* (Woodbridge, 2019)

‘sed iuxta hoc quod <audiui> a quodam religioso ac uenerabile sene, in cuius domo, quam ultra mare ipse solus Samson fundauerat, ille, per octogenarios fere annos, catholicam religiosamque uitam ducens, propissimeque temporibus eiusdem supradicti sancti Samsonis, matrem eius tradidisse auunculo suo, sanctissimo diacono, qui et ipse diaconus consobrinus esset sancto Samsoni...’ [373]

(but according to what I heard from a religious and venerable old man, in whose house, which Samson alone founded across the sea, he, for eighty years, lived a catholic and religious life, and very near the time of the aforementioned saint Samson, his mother [Samson’s] recounted [the information] to [the venerable monk’s] his uncle, a most holy deacon, who himself was a deacon cousin to saint Samson…)

To put it simply, the venerable old monk who related the deeds of Samson to the author was a deacon in a monastery founded by Samson across the sea. He, in turn, had received his information from his uncle, a deacon and cousin of Samson, who had received his information about the saint from Samson’s own mother. This deacon’s name was Henoc, and the author of the *Vita Prima* shares that Henoc had written about Samson’s deeds in *Brittania ac Romania* (Brittany and Romania) and that the venerable old monk had read these works diligently while living across the sea.[374] This chain of information, coming directly from those who knew the saint personally, is meant to imbue the *Vita Prima* with authority, but it

373 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, pp 140-43.
374 *Romania* was a region between Brittany and Francia, which ceased to exist after the writing of the *Vita prima*. Samson’s monastery in *Pentale* (now in the Eure department in Normandy) is described as being in *Romania*.

also provides a glimpse into the exchange of information between monasteries across the channel.[375]

The claim that Henoc wrote down the deeds of Samson on the Continent has raised questions about whether an even older *Life* of Samson existed. There is evidence later in the *Vita Prima* that Henoc also wrote about some of Samson's activities in Brittany.[376] While it is beyond the focus of this thesis to determine whether a *Vita primigenia* existed, it has also been debated in recent works.[377]

The *Vita Prima* begins by telling us that Samson is born from noble Demetian stock, from a father named Amon and a mother named Anna, who was from Gwent. Intent on drawing parallels with Abraham and Sarah in Genesis, we are told that Samson was conceived when his parents were old and thought to be barren. Anna had received a vision from God, telling her that this first-born son would be worthy of priesthood and should be called Samson. The author demonstrates knowledge of Samson's parentage and genealogy, noting that he saw them written in the 'emendatioribus gestis' (more elegant acts) and heard the names of Samson's parents and other relatives mentioned at the altar of Samson during Mass. Umbraphel and Afrella, Samson's uncle and aunt, are included as well. This anecdote grants us a small window into how Samson and his familial network were commemorated in the liturgy. Seeing as the author later tells us that he was in Britain, one wonders if the 'acts' he saw written were Henoc's words. Moreover, while it is a hagiographical norm to highlight a saint's illustrious origins, and therefore mention the names of their parents, the author of the *Vita Prima* does more than that. Samson's family plays an unusually significant role in the

375 More on this in Chapter 5.
376 Lynette Olson, 'Introduction' in Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol*, p. 5.
377 Joseph-Claude Poulin argues that there was a previous Life of Samson in 'La "Vie ancienne" de Samson de Dol comme réécriture (BHL 7478-7479)' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 119 (2001), 261-312. Richard Sowerby argues that a 'Cornish Life' of Samson existed in 'A Family and its Saint in the Vita Prima Samsonis' in Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol* (2017), pp 29-31. Barry James Lewis is not convinced by these arguments. See, 'Review of Lynette Olson (ed.), St Samson of Dol and the Earliest History of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales' in *Studia celtica*, 52:1 (2018), 188-92.

Life of Samson because his family had secured ecclesiastical offices and inheritances from him.[378] Later, after his death, they played vital a role in promotion and spread of his cult.

Against his father's initial wishes, the young Samson is sent to study with St Illtud, who is described as a disciple of St Germanus and a master of the Britons (magistri Brittanorum); knowing the Scriptures, philosophy, geometry, rhetoric, grammar, and arithmetic more than any other Briton.[379] He also had prophetic gifts, which are revealed to us when he receives the young Samson from his parents and prophesies that he would become a high priest and a founder of churches in Britain and 'beyond the sea.'[380] The author casually mentions that he visited this renowned school of Illtud, but does not give any details about the place, nor does he identify the monastery as being in Llantwit Major, or at the very least, Glamorgan. Instead, he tells us, 'In cuius magnifico monasterio ego fui' (I was in this magnificent monastery) and brushes past Illtud and the monastery, for fear of straying away from the topic.[381] Samson proves to be a precocious student, educated in the Scriptures and vigorous in his ascetic habits. He shows steps towards fulfilling Illtud's prophetic words when he performs numerous miracles at the monastery. During his ordination by Father Dubricius, a dove appears from the sky and lands under Samson, which all interpret to be a sign of his divinity.[382] Finding the atmosphere in Illtud's monastery to be too lax for his liking, he desires to leave the monastery to pursue 'viam artam quae ducit ad caelum' (the narrow way which leads to heaven), but is afraid of insulting Illtud. Instead, he departs to another monastery, not far from Llantwit Major, and undertakes a spiritual sojourn under the abbot Piro.[383] There, he is able to live a more ascetically rigorous life, praying ceaselessly day

378 Sowerby, 'A Family and its Saint', p. 20.
379 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 156.
380 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 160.
381 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 156.
382 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p 166.
383 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 178.

and night, spending his days performing hard, manual labour, and his nights understanding the mystical interpretations of the Scriptures.[384]

This spiritual retreat is interrupted when messengers from his father's court arrive, informing him that his father is at death's door and wishes to receive Communion from his son. Samson, comparing himself to the Biblical Israelites, tells these messengers,

> 'Repedate ad domum uestram, iam enim nisi fallor *Aegyptum reliqui*…'[385]
>
> (Go back to our house, for unless I am mistaken, I already left Egypt…)

The author is keen to present Samson as an ascetic who has renounced the world and his noble family, a device frequently used in hagiography to highlight the saint's commitment to the ideal. Samson is adamant that he will not enter the secular world again, but Piro softens his resolve and reminds him of his duty to provide pastoral care. On his deathbed, Amon confesses a grave mortal sin in the presence of Samson, and his wife, Anna, and vows to serve God until the day of his death. With this act of contrition Amon avoids death, and the rest of Samson's family follows suit. Amon gives his five remaining sons to serve God, with the exception of his youngest daughter, who Samson deems unfit for the Church. Seeing this example, Umbraphel, Afrella, and their three sons also give themselves to Christ, joining the Church. The result is a network of Samson's kin who become key religious figures in the local ecclesiastical landscape. The author tells us that Samson made provisions for his kin, including the founding of several monasteries, which would be led by his family.[386]

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384 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 180.
385 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 182.
386 'When all these, therefore, had been established in good works and provision had been made for founding monasteries…' in *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, p. 34.

It is undeniable, especially when the author mentions that Amon and Umbraphel accompany Samson to Caldey Island after, that this move to consolidate his family into the church was technically in conflict with one of the main tenets exalted in the *Life*, and in hagiography during this period in general. This was the idea expressed by Christ in the verses of Matthew and Luke, and embraced by many saints after, that one who did not renounce their family, wealth, and home, could not be a disciple of Christ.[387] Although the *Vita Prima* does not explicitly place those verses in the mouth of Samson, the principle is still woven throughout the narrative. One of the signs of Samson's maturity as a child is how easily he parts from his parents and embraces his new life in Llantwit Major under the guidance of Illtud. In his article about Samson and his family, however, Richard Sowerby has argued that,

> '…the VIS sought to rationalize this with the fact that Samson actually ended up spending the remainder of his years in the British Isles once more in the continual presence of his relations.'[388]

In other words, the continual presence of Samson's family in his *Life* and the author's careful framing of it indicates that the author felt the need to justify it. Sowerby has argued that the *Vita primigenia* that the *Vita Prima* was based on, or the 'Cornish Life' as he calls it, was written to explain the foundation of the Cornish monastery and defend Samson's familial network against accusations of nepotism.[389] More on the implications of this familial network of monasteries will be examined in Chapter Six but suffice it to say the fact that this framework was kept in the *Vita Prima* suggests that this 'defense' was still needed.

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387 Matthew 19:29, Matthew 10:29-30, and Luke 14:26.
388 Sowerby, 'A Family and its Saint', p. 23.
389 Sowerby, 'A Family and its Saint', pp 31-2. In addition to the potential accusations of nepotism, Sowerby addresses Samson's sister who is not deemed worthy to enter a monastic vocation. He notes that she 'could easily have represented a small failure in the achievements of this emerging network of family monasteries.'

The author cleverly juxtaposes the passage of Amon's repentance with one of a creature who refuses to embrace God. While journeying to Amon's deathbed, Samson and his companion encounter the *theomacha* while traveling through Cornwall. The *theomacha* (God-foe), which announces herself with a frightful shriek, is described as an old sorceress with shaggy gray hair, clothed in red, and holding a bloody trident.[390] The sorceress, who stabs Samson's companion, is commanded to stay put so that he may interrogate her. During their exchange she tells him,

> 'Theomacha sum, nam et gentes meae hucusque praeuaricatores uobis extiterunt, et nunc nulla in hac silva remansit de meo genere nisi ego sola. Habeo enim octo sorores et mater mea adhuc uiuit, et hae non hic sunt, set in ulteriore silva degunt…'[391]
>
> (I am a *theomacha*, for until now my people have existed as transgressors to you, and now no one of my people is left in this forest except me alone. For I have eight sisters and my mother still lives, and these are not here, but live in a forest more remote…)[392]

When Samson asks her to restore his dead companion back to life, she tells him,

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390 Sowerby, 'A Family and its Saint', p. 27.

391 Note, that in Thomas Taylor's translation he translates *theomacha* as sorceress. See *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, p. 32. Flobert also translates *theomacha* as *sorcière* in 'La vie ancienne', p. 187. Although he too believes it *theomacha* is a word for a witch, Mario Esposito notes that there is no other instance of *theomacha* in Latin recorded and the original Greek version is unknown to us. He thinks it may be a corruption from another word. See, Mario Esposito, 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland.- IV. One the early Latin Lives of Brigid of Kildare' in *Hermathena*, 24:49 (1935), 153.

392 Although I too acknowledge that the *theomacha* in the *Vita* is a sorceress or supernatural woman, I have left the term untranslated as there is not yet an adequate translation, although 'God-foe' might be a more accurate option.

‘Nolo nec possum in melius reparari, bonum enim nullum facere queo; de mea infantia hucusque ad mala semper exercitata sum.’

(I will not and cannot be made better, for I cannot do any good; from my infancy up to now I have always been accustomed to do evil.)

Samson then asks God to determine her fate, and the sorceress is struck dead. Drawing on parallels with the prophet Helizeus, the author of the *Vita* describes how Samson tends to his companion, resurrecting him by placing his mouth on his companion’s mouth, and resting his limbs on his companion’s limbs and weeping.

This episode, which has been studied as an example of ‘the thought-world of biblical apocrypha’ and a possible early example of the eight or nine witch sisters in later Welsh sources such as Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Vita Merlini*, reveals who had authority to regrant life and asserts who or what had the privilege of living.[393] The power of life is characterised as inherently good, and therefore something only a holy person can command. The *theomacha*’s power is recognised but limited as she can only do harm and kill and lacks the power and will to do otherwise. Parallels can be drawn with other saints’ *Lives*, including Muirchú’s *Vita Patricii*, in which the *magus* challenging Patrick casts a spell covering the land with thick snow, but when asked to undo it, cannot. Patrick tells him, ‘You can do evil and cannot do good. Not so I.’[394] Moreover, Samson interrogates the *theomacha* to determine whether she is capable of salvation and therefore worthy of living. God’s judgement of the

393 Bernard Merdrignac, ‘Chapitre IV. Saint Samson contre la théomaque: une course en char dans l’hagiographie bretonne?’ in Merdrignac, *Les Saints bretons: entre légendes et histoire, le glaive à deux tranchants* (Rennes, 2008), https://books.openedition.org/pur/3628?lang=en, accessed 20 March, 2023; Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 116-17.
394 Muirchú, *Vita Sancti Patricii*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler, *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh,* Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 10 (Dublin, 1979), https://www.confessio.ie/more/muirchu_latin#, accessed 10 March, 2023.

theomacha, through Samson, demonstrates how an irredeemable soul with no hope of salvation served no purpose and therefore deserved to die. Richard Sowerby has examined this episode alongside the episode where Samson's father, Amon, is on his deathbed. A sinner as well, though admittedly not to the level of the *theomacha*, Amon repents for his previous misdeeds and vows to serve God, and is thus miraculously cured and brought away from death's door. Again, this scene highlights the value of the life of the redeemable soul, but more importantly, casts Amon in a better light and justifies his later position as abbot in the Cornish monastery.

Samson becomes the abbot in the monastery of Caldey island in Dyfed, replacing Piro, who drunkenly fell down a well and died. While abbot there a passage describes how:

> 'Euenit autem ut aduenirent ad eum quidam peritissimi Scotti de Roma uenientes ac, diligenter perscrutans eos inueniensque philosophos eo esse, ad suam patriam illos comitari fecit…'[395]
>
> (It came to pass that some of the most skilled Irishmen coming from Rome came to him, and after diligently investigating them, he found them to be scholars, and accompanied them to their country..)

Samson stays in Ireland a while, and during that short period performs numerous miracles. He gives sight to those who are blind, heals those with leprosy, casts the devils out of demoniacs, and saves many from the error of their ways. In short, he is venerated as an angel of God by the faithful in Ireland.[396] While Samson waits in *Arce Etri* for a ship to transport

395 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 200.
396 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 200.

him back to Britain, a man from a nearby monastery requests his help in exorcising the abbot, who was possessed by the devil. Samson heals the abbot and in return, the abbot gives Samson his monastery and later follows Samson across the sea to Brittany as his companion. *Arce Etri* which has been identified by Joseph Loth as *Dún Étair*, or the promontory of Howth, directly translated from *arx Etri*.[397] The church at Balgriffin, now dedicated to St Doulagh, was originally dedicated to St Samson, as a result of Welsh settlers in the area, although this occurred after the period in question.[398] We learn later, that after his consecration as a priest, Umbraphel is sent to be the abbot of this Irish monastery.[399]

While the author affirms here and there that he visited places in Britain, he apparently did not travel to Ireland in search for documentary evidence to write the *Vita Prima*. Constant Mews has suggested the inclusion of the Irish episode and the emphasis of Samson's Irish education was done to impress the Irish on the Continent but does not negate the possibility that Samson did make it to Ireland and even names Samson's possible Irish companions.[400] He states that the author 'recalled Samson's early visit to Ireland, probably to win favour in the eyes of Irish monastic communities established on the Continent by Columbanus, who may have seen himself as following in the missionary footsteps of Samson'.[401]

In Cornwall, along the Severn, Samson finds a suitable place to build a *habitaculum* for the other monks.[402] Once again wishing to 'leave Egypt', Samson retreats into a nearby Cornish cave, pursuing an eremitical life there and only emerging on Sundays to attend mass with the other brothers. A loaf of dry bread is brought to him monthly by the brothers. The chapter on his frequent prayers and fast echo the *Lives* of the desert fathers, and the author

397 Joseph Loth, 'Les noms propres d'hommes et de lieux de la plus ancienne Vie de saint Samson de Dol' in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 58:2 (1914), 119.
398 Paul Duffy, 'Balgriffin Cross' in *Archaeology Ireland*, 32:3 (2018), 33.
399 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 204.
400 Constant J. Mews, 'Apostolic Authority and Celtic Liturgies' in Olson (ed.) *St Samson of Dol* (2017), pp 120-21.
401 Mews, 'Apostolic Authority', p. 132.
402 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 204.

specifies that both he and the monks living in the *habitaculum* follow a penitential rule.[403] The author drew from ascetic authors such as Sulpicius Severus, Cassian, Evagrius, Jerome, Pomerius, and Rufinus to carefully construct the narrative of Samson's asceticism, inspired by the East.[404] Overall the depiction of Samson as a man intent on leaving behind worldliness sets the reader up for the subsequent chapters, which centre on Samson's ecclesiastical career. Following a synod, dignitaries track Samson's whereabouts and pressure him to assume the leadership of the monastery built by St Germain of Auxerre (implied to be Llantwit Major) and be consecrated as a bishop.[405] This tradition was repeated in Samson's later Welsh *Life*, which affirms that Germain of Auxerre founded the Welsh monastery and made Illtud its first abbot. Constant Mews notes that 'the connection made in the *Vita* between Samson and Germain, through Illtud, served to strengthen Samson's standing on the eyes of the Gallican Church, while also seeking to impress monks from Ireland.'[406] The author of the *Vita Prima* stresses how Samson reluctantly agrees, justifying the saint's re-entry into the world, but also fulfilling Illtud's early prophecy that Samson would be high priest of the Britons.

He does not stick around for long. One night, during Easter, he has a vision of an angel urging him to cross the sea, where he can become head of the church there. Samson visits his family, scattered in different monastic communities, for a final time, before travelling to Brittany via Cornwall, with a chariot he brought from Ireland, filled with holy vessels and books.[407]

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403 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 206.
404 Mews, 'Apostolic Authority', pp 118-19.
405 Poulin, 'La circulation de l'information', p. 54.
406 Mews, 'Apostolic Authority', p. 121.
407 '…suumque currum in duobus inponens equis quem de Hibernia apud se adportauerat...' (and placing his chariot which he had brought from Ireland on two horses…) *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 214.

The remaining ten chapters of Book I focus on Samson's apostolic career in Brittany and Romania, the main highlight of which, is his help in restoring Iudualus (Judual) to his rightful place as king of Domnonia. An external *iudex*, or chief named *Commorus* (Conomor) had illegitimately usurped the throne and Judual found himself both a prisoner and refugee in the court of King Childebert.[408] In the Frankish court, Samson survives three assassination attempts by the evil queen and slays a dragon terrorizing a village in *Romania*, before building a monastery there.[409] Through his perseverance he is able to free Judual, and accompanies him back to Brittany, where the two are responsible for a swift victory over Conomor. While we are told that Childebert donates extensive properties to Samson, virtually no information is given about Dol's foundation, only that Samson's body was placed in a sepulchre there. To kindle reflection on Samson's holy life on both sides of the sea, Book II provides a spiritual commentary.

The proximity of the author to Samson's own lifetime and the formal and informal channels of transmission present in the *Life* make the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis* a rich source for studying monastic memory. At the time the author of the *Vita Prima* was writing, c. 800, Dol was a relatively young monastic centre. He was able to reconstruct the 'acts' of Samson using authoritative sources which included individuals who personally knew the saint. In his endeavour to communicate the authority of his sources, the author shows the memory of Samson transforming from a communicative one to a cultural one. Aside from the allusion to some sort of written text in Britain on the deeds of Samson, the author of the *Vita Prima* primarily relies on memory that lives in more or less everyday interaction and oral communication, or the 'informal generational memory' of the close circle of Samson.[410] The

408 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 224.
409 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 232.
410 Assmann, 'Communicative and Cultural Memory', p. 112.

Vita Prima was essentially an exercise in ensuring the memory of Samson was 'stable' and invulnerable to oblivion.[411]

As Samson's cult was a recent development, there are not many examples of commemorative practices, although the author does mention the presence of inscribed stones in Wales which commemorated Samson.[412] As such, we know very little about the eighth-century liturgical commemoration of Samson within Dol, which could tell us about the formation of Dol's monastic identity. Nevertheless, we are able to learn something about Dol's monastic identity, based on how the author of the *Vita Prima* places his community within the wider frame of reference. The author regards Dol as belonging within a network of memory that stretched across the Channel and sees Dol as the new centre of Samson's cult. In essence, the author presents Dol as an inheritor of long-established monastic traditions which began in the Insular world and the community of Dol within this wider tradition.

Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis

The author of the *Vita Secunda* found, rightly so, that the *Vita Prima* barely touched on Samson's activities in Brittany. The *Vita Prima* dedicated a measly ten short chapters to the saint's deeds on the Continent, compared to the over fifty chapters he wrote on the saint's Insular enterprises.[413] The rewritten *Life* this Benedictine monk of Dol wrote then, concentrated on more of Samson's activities in Brittany, which were almost exclusively miracles. For this reason, historians have regarded the *Vita Secunda* as less useful since it does not contain the same historical value as the *Vita Prima*. Moreover, the author of the *Vita*

411 Assmann, 'Communicative and Cultural Memory', p. 111.
412 More on this in Chapter Five.
413 Sowerby, 'The Lives of St Samson', 1.

Secunda sought to establish Samson's superiority over the other saints in the *Vita*, such as Illtud and Germain, implying that Samson now had a 'more vigorous cult that had outgrown its early dependency on other saints'.[414] Overall, the *Vita Secunda* follows its predecessor relatively faithfully, but there are a few notable additions.

First, is the increased emphasis on Samson's Irish education and his later status as a *peregrinus*. The passages which recount Samson's time in Ireland are not supplemented with any additional details, but the importance of his time in Ireland is raised later in the *Vita Secunda*. On the Continent, when Samson travels to the court of King Childebert, he is interrogated by the king, who is curious of his origins and his reason for coming to court. Samson tells the king,

> "Transmarinus sum, Demetiana provincia ortus, et divinis disciplinis in Scotia provincia cuidam magistro in opere religiosissimo traditus sum, ibique audivi replicare evangelium in quo dicitur: "Quicumque non dimiserit patrem aut matrem aut sorores aut fratres, et omnia quae habuerit, non est me dignus..." et iterum: "Qui haec omnia dimiserit propter Dominum centuplum accipiet in hoc seculo et vitam aeternam in futuro..." Et ego hoc audiens, omnia mea relinquens, peregrinationem subiens… in Brittonum patriam deveni....'[415]

> (I am from across the sea, born in the province of Demetia, and in the province of Ireland I received a divine education by a certain teacher in religious works, and there I heard him repeat the Gospel which says: "Whoever does not renounce their father or mother or sisters or brothers, and everything they possess, is not

414 Sowerby, 'The Lives of St Samson', 5.
415 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 124.

> worthy of me…" and again: "He who renounces all these things for God will receive a hundredfold in a lifetime and eternal life in the future…" And hearing these things, I relinquished everything of mine, undertaking *peregrinatio*…in the country of the Britons I arrived…)

The second development in the *Vita Secunda* is Samson's affiliation with St Germain of Paris. Samson visits Germain's monastery and the two cultivate a friendship which would later benefit both their monasteries. There, in Paris, Samson miraculously creates a much-needed fountain for Germain's community.[416] After inquiring about Samson's own monastery at Pentale, Germain learns that his community lacked vineyards for making wine. As a token of their friendship, Germain and Samson strike a deal in which Pentale would receive a tenth of the wine produced at the monastery of St Germain in exchange for the same amount of wax produced in Pentale.[417] This exchange took place annually.

The last, and most crucial, addition is the claim that Dol was the archbishopric of 'totius Britanniae' (all of Brittany).[418] Whereas the *Vita prima* states that Samson visited the Channel islands, the author of the *Vita Secunda* goes even further and affirms that the generous donations made to Samson by Childebert were the *plebes* of *Ronau* and the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, and Brecqhou.[419] Childebert is undoubtedly portrayed in a more favourable light in the *Vita Secunda*, particularly when he grants Samson the archbishopric of all of Brittany. On his last visit to the court of the Frankish king, the author states that,

416 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 131.
417 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 132.
418 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 81.
419 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 135-36.

'Tunc vero S. Samson de manu Hilberti imperatoris et verbo et commendatione archiepiscopatum totius Britanniae recipiens…'[420]

(Then Samson truly received from the hand of emperor Childebert and by word and recommendation the archbishopric of all of Brittany.)

While Judual, also strategically called *imperator*, bestows upon Samson the hereditary bishopric of Domnonia, and with it Dol, the author's decision to have Childebert elevate Dol into an archbishopric is critical.[421] It is thus unsurprising that Dol occupies a much more prominent place in the *Vita Secunda* than in its predecessor. After all, the main goal of the *Vita Secunda* was to paint Dol as a centre worthy of being the archbishopric of all of Brittany. Thus, Dol is presented as a 'true centre of the miraculous' and its foundation is framed within a series of healing miracles and angelic visions that prophesize the construction of the monastery.[422]

Considering that the aim of the author of the *Vita Secunda* was to highlight Dol's spiritual prestige and provide concrete proof of its archepiscopal status, it is interesting that he placed such importance on Samson's status as a proud *peregrinus*, as well as his connection with Ireland. By the 860s, when the *Vita Secunda* was written, Dol was, without a doubt, a Benedictine establishment. As Chapter Two on Landévennec demonstrated, the theme of *peregrinatio* was not one in accordance with the Benedictine Rule which stressed the physical stability of monks. Yet, the author saw fit to include Samson's monologue to Childebert in which he identifies as *peregrinus* from across the sea to play up his foreignness and Insular background. Furthermore, Samson's assertion

420 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine, 147.
421 *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, ed. François Plaine,141-42.
422 Sowerby, 'The Lives of St Samson', 10.

that he received an education in Ireland, not even mentioning his upbringing in south Wales, tells us that Ireland was still viewed as a dominant centre of learning in the ninth century. This is not surprising, considering the presence of Irish scholars on the Continent during this period, and suggests that the author of the *Vita Secunda* was merely including building upon the hagiographical *topos* about the Irish as learned scholars that was already present in the *Vita Prima*.[423]

Indeed, the passages which detail Samson's education parallel the words of Irish and Continental commentators alike who associate the Irish with wisdom and learning. The Irish who arrived in Charlemagne's court in the end of the eighth to the beginning of the ninth century were 'proficient in the main subjects of importance to the reform efforts of the Carolingian rulers, namely grammar and the correct understanding of Latin.'[424] By the ninth century the Irish were known for their learning, particularly in grammar. In general, there are several contemporary sources which directly refer to the idea of the Irish as particularly well-educated. In his letter to Pope Gregory the Great c. 600, on the dating of Easter, Columbanus stresses the skills of 'Irish savants'.[425] Likewise, Notker Balbulus, a monk of St Gall, tells the story of two sage Irishmen who land on the shores of Francia and cry out "Whoever wants wisdom let him come to us and get it: we have it for sale".[426] By focusing on this stereotype of the Irish as distinguished scholars, the author of the *Vita Secunda* was reinforcing this known trope and boasting of Samson's own intellect and education. As Sven Meeder expressed,

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423 There are numerous works on Irish scholars on the Continent. For recent ones, see Martin McNamara, 'Irish Scholars: Early medieval Ireland and Continental Europe' in *The Bible in the Early Irish Church, A.D. 550 to 850* (Leiden, 2022), pp 18-31 and Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (eds), *The Irish in early medieval Europe: identity, culture, and religion* (London, 2017).

424 Sven Meeder, 'Irish Scholars and Carolingian Learning' in Flechner and Meeder (eds), *The Irish in early medieval Europe,* p. 182.

425 Robert Stanton, 'Columbanus, "Letter" 1: Translation and Commentary' in *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 3 (1993), 153.

426 McNamara, 'Irish Scholars' in *The Bible in the Early Irish Church* (2022), pp 24-5.

> 'The flaunting of one's Irish heritage was not only a response to the imperial ambitions of multi-ethnicity, but was certainly also meant to spotlight one's advanced level of learning. Christian scholars in Ireland from an early stage were committed to demonstrating their membership of a greater intellectual world and this also inspired Irishmen to confidently present themselves as accomplished scholars. The association of Irishness with learning was stressed by the immigrants themselves.'[427]

While Samson was not Irish, his education in Ireland, however brief, meant that he too could be considered a distinguished figure within the intellectual world of Europe.

Malo

The *Lives* of St Malo represent an interesting case of Breton hagiographers attempting to include Ireland in their works. The *Vita sancti Machutis* was written by the monk Bili around 870.[428] The work is divided into two parts and contains hymns and homilies dedicated to St Malo. There are quite a few extant manuscripts, but the ones held in Oxford as MS Bodleian 535 and in London as Royal 13 A x have been used to form editions of the *Vita*. The former is a copy written in Winchester in the ninth or tenth century, while the latter was probably written in the tenth century, possibly in Winchester also.[429] MS Bodleian 535 is a collection of *Vitae*, including the *Passio* of St Dionysius and the *Vitae* of St Mary Magdalene

427 Meeder, 'Irish Scholars and Carolingian Learning', p. 184.
428 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 155.
429 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, pp 147-48 and p. 151.

and St Neot. The *Vita Sancti Machutis* begins on f. 62r with a prologue.[430] London Royal 13 A x is fragmentary and is included along with the *Homelia in natale Sancti Machutis* and an excerpt from Eutropius' *Breviarium Historiae Romanae*.[431] The two manuscripts are most likely products of the flight of Breton religious to England following the viking incursions which may have contributed to the spread of Breton saints' cults in England.[432] There are two later anonymous *Vitae* of Malo, the *Vita anonyma longior* and the *Vita anonyma brevior*, which date to the late ninth to early tenth century, according to the former's editor Ferdinand Lot.[433] He argues that the anonymous *Vita* which Bili claims to use to compose his own work was probably close to the *Vita anonyma longior*, a representative of this lost original *Vita*. Moreover, he contends that the *Vita anonyma brevior* is based on the *Vita anonyma longior*.[434] François Duine, however, argued that the *Vita anonyma longior* was a tenth-century development based on the *Vita anonyma brevior*.[435] Likewise, Joseph-Claude Poulin holds that Bili's *Vita* is based on the shorter *Vita*, which is also the earliest.[436] Bernard Merdrignac, however, is doubtful that these anonymous *Vitae* represent originals.[437] His hesitance is understandable, as Bili's *Vita* is very different from the anonymous versions, which either censor or are unaware of key details of Malo and Brendan's voyage.[438]

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430 *Vita sancti Machutis*, Oxford, MS Bodleian 535, fol. 62r.
431 https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/80
432 See Caroline Brett, 'A Breton pilgrim in England in the reign of King Aethelstan' in Gillian Jondorf and David Dumville (eds), *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: essays by members of Girton college, Cambridge, in memory of Ruth Morgan* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp 43-70.
433 The *Vita anonyma brevior* has been edited by La Borderie in 'Autre Vie de Saint Malo écrite au IXe siècle par un anonyme' (1884), 137-256 while Ferdinand Lot has edited the *Vita anonyma longior* in 'Mélanges d'Histoire Bretonne: Vita Sancti Machutis' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest* 23:4 (1907), 553-79 and Ferdinand Lot, 'Mélanges d'Histoire Bretonne: Vita Sancti Machutis' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest* 24:1 (1908), 90-106.
434 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 241.
435 François Duine, *Memento des sources hagiographiques de l'histoire de Bretagne: Première partie, Les fondateurs et les primitifs (du Ve au Xe siècle),* (Rennes, 1918), p. 294.
436 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne,* p. 156.
437 Bernard Merdrignac, 'La "désacralisation" du mythe celtique de la navigation vers l'Autre Monde: l'apport du dossier hagiographique de saint Malo' in *Ollodagos*, 5 (1993), 13-43.
438 Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a study of the voyages of St Brendan and St Malo', p. 45.

Bili's *Life* has been described by Julia Smith as 'Carolingianised' as opposed to Insular influenced because of its 'coded support for the archbishopric of Tours, its mainstream promotion of corporeal relics and posthumous miracles, its relatively plain style and its numerous borrowings from Frankish hagiography.'[439] Yet, the *Life* centres on Malo's participation in Brendan's famous *Navigatio,* his ensuing *peregrinatio* to Brittany and later Aquitaine, and according to Caroline Brett's new study, even contains 'hisperic' vocabulary in its opening hymn.[440] Moreover, the 'coded support' for Tours should be discussed within the context of the rivalry between Dol and Alet, rather than viewed as approval for Frankish episcopal authority. André-Yves Bourgès, in his work 'Origines de la rivalité entre Dol et Alet' not only notes the obvious geographic proximity of the two episcopal seats, but the ways in which the *Lives* of Samson of Dol and Malo were curated to claim ecclesiastical pre-eminence over the region, specifically the ancient *civitas* of the Coriosolites.[441] The following section will first examine Bili's *Vita*, before briefly discussing the later renditions.

In his prologue, Bili dedicates his work to Ratuili, bishop of Alet, and highlights the fact that the deeds and virtues of Malo had not been forgotten. Bili even invites the saint to assist in the completion of the work and stresses the gravity of his task, writing,

> 'Nos igitur in hoc multum laboravimus quia videmus aliquorum sanctorum negligentia custodum actus et vitas oblivione delere (sic).' [442]

439 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 333 and Caroline Brett, 'Brittany and Its Insular Past' in Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 128.
440 Brett, 'Brittany and Its Insular Past', p. 128.
441 André-Yves Bourgès, 'Origines de la rivalité entre Dol et Alet' in *Variétés historiques* (2017) https://www.academia.edu/34073187/Origines_de_la_rivalité_entre_Dol_et_Alet
442 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 254.

> (We, therefore, laboured much in this, because we see that the negligence of the custodians deletes with oblivion the acts and lives of some saints)

This, and the prologue in general, acknowledges the other side of memory: forgetting. This aspect of memory has been extensively studied by Paul Ricoeur, who argued that 'memory defines itself…as a struggle against forgetting' and 'our celebrated duty of memory is proclaimed in the form of an exhortation not to forget.'[443] Indeed, this fear of forgetting permeates much of Breton hagiography and is presented as the reason behind the creation, or in some cases, redaction, of *Vitae*.

The *Life* begins with Malo's birth to noble parents in the Welsh kingdom of Gwent. He is born into a distinguished line, being described as the maternal cousin of St Samson of Dol. He becomes a pupil of St Brendan, who is described as the abbot of Llancarfan in Glamorgan, Wales. Brendan is associated with Tralee (his birthplace), Tuam, Clonfert, and the Aran Islands, but in no other source is Brendan associated with Llancarfan. Rather than reading this as ignorance on the part of Bili, it more likely speaks to the channel of communication between Wales and Brittany, or between north-eastern Brittany, where Malo was based, and the monastery of Llancarfan, a subject discussed in Chapter Five.

Llancarfan, on account of proximity to the sea, is used as a site of a miracle involving unpredictable tides. On one occasion, when the young pupils are playing on the shore, God, wanting to showcase Malo's sanctity, causes the sea to flood. While the other boys run back to land in time, Malo is caught unaware, sleeping on a tiny island, or rather, bed of seaweed, only waking later to the sound of waves all around him. In the meantime, believing he has

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443 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago, 2004), p. 413.

drowned beneath the waves, Brendan and his pupils sing the offices for the dead for Malo and inform his parents of the tragedy. Angels finally appear to Brendan informing him that Malo is indeed still alive, urging him to board a boat so that he may find the young Malo unharmed. Found at last, Malo tells his master Brendan that he must spend more time on the island and tells him to send a psalter over the waves to him, stating that if he was meant to stay on the island for one more day, the psalter would reach him intact.[444] The psalter does reach Malo undamaged, and he prays with it for a time before returning to the monastery by boat. Bili notes that this island, called *Rore*, still existed in his time. Unsurprisingly, after seeing the grace of God within Malo, Brendan has him ordained as a priest. During the ceremony, a dove flies above Malo, a good omen, and an immensely popular motif in hagiography.[445]

Malo is regarded as Brendan's favourite pupil and embarks with him on his famous *Navigatio* to an island called *Yma*.[446] It is interesting to note that in Bili's *Vita sancti Machutis*, in contrast with the *Vita Brendani*, God motivates Brendan to seek the island of *Yma* so that His virtues might manifest through Malo more and more.[447] This narrative choice, on the part of the author, not only manipulates the purpose of Brendan's *Navigatio* to centre on Malo's sanctity but sets Malo up to exceed his master. In one episode, Malo resurrects and baptizes the giant Milldu, an episode taken directly from the *Vita Brendani*, in which Brendan performs the same miracle.[448] It is clear, as Séamus Mac Mathúna has noted, 'that Malo takes over the hero's role from Brendan, the latter becoming his spiritual father and teacher'.[449] The journey on the sea lasts seven Easters. Malo, and the other companions

444 '…mittite in mare, et Deus, qui me salvavit inter undas maris, si placet illi me saltim una die hic adstare, mittet illud aquis intactum ad me.' Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 383.
445 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 384.
446 The island of *Yma* is unidentifiable, but it clearly is meant to represent a sort of island of paradise.
447 '…nutu Dei, ut virtus ejus in sancto Machute magis ac magis manifestaretur, incidit in mente magistri in navigio exire et insulam Ymam querere.' Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 386.
448 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 387-88.
449 Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a study of the voyages of St Brendan and St Malo', p. 43.

successfully find the mysterious island. Other episodes include the blessing of a fountain on an island filled with precious gemstones. On their journey back to Llancarfan, needing an island to celebrate mass on Easter Sunday, the company lands on an island which is revealed to be a whale, and Malo celebrates Mass on the back of this whale.[450] As with other episodes, this one is taken directly from Brendan material, which is included in the *Vita Brendani,* but in much more depth in the *Navigatio*, where the whale is named *Jasconius*. The connection between Bili's *Vita Machutis* and the *Vita Brendani* has been made more evident by Mac Mathúna, who has noted that Bili specifies that the brothers spent Easter Sunday on the whale until about nine o'clock on Easter Monday, and an additional night on another island near the whale, which can be compared to the *Vita Brendani* which states that Brendan and his companions spent one day and two nights on the whale.[451]

Bili employs the literary genre of *immrama* and is clearly familiar with the tradition of Brendan's *Navigatio*, which begs the question of what his source was. The dating of the *Navigatio Brendani* and the *Vita Brendani* provide clarity. Jonathan Wooding has suggested a ninth-century date for the *Navigatio* and an earlier date for the *Vita*, while David Dumville argues the *Navigatio* was written pre-786 based on genealogies the text contains.[452] It is widely accepted that the *Vita Brendani* was used to form the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*. Wooding's argument is more compelling, and since Bili appears to have no knowledge of key anecdotes in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, it is most likely that he used the *Vita Brendani* to create Malo's *Life*. The *Vita Brendani* mentions the seven-year voyage and includes an episode of a deceased giant maiden which is resurrected and baptized by Brendan. On the

450 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 391-92.
451 Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a study of the voyages of St Brendan and St Malo', p. 51.
452 Jonathan M. Wooding, 'The date of *Nauigatio S. Brendani abbatis'* in *Studia Hibernica*, 37 (2011), 26; David Dumville, 'Two approaches to the dating of *Nauigatio sancti Brendani'* in *Studi Medievali*, 29:1 (1988).

other hand, Bili identifies Brendan as the abbot of Llancarfan, a claim that makes little sense if his source was the *Vita Brendani*.

The next point that needs to be considered is why Bili has Malo participate in Brendan's famous sea voyage and, later, a *peregrinatio* to Brittany. Afterall, *imramma* and *peregrinatio* narratives were in opposition with the Benedictine emphasis on *stabilitas*. In general, Malo's journeys, first to *Yma* and then his *peregrinatio* to Brittany, are ascetic in their purpose. Bili's *Vita* echoes Matthew 19:29 and possibly one set of manuscripts of the *Vita Brendani*, in his inclusion of the passage which inspires Malo to renounce everything in favour of eternal life and to undertake *peregrinatio*.[453] By contrast, the purpose of Brendan's *peregrinatio* to Britain is driven by penance and missionary zeal, more in alignment with the original penitential purpose of *peregrinatio*.

When the seven-year journey is completed, Malo, Brendan, and the others return to the monastery. There, Malo hears his master preach the words in the Gospel of Matthew, urging the listener to relinquish all to become Christ's disciple and gain eternal life in heaven. Inspired by these words and with the permission of Brendan, Malo undertakes a *peregrinatio* to an alien land with thirty-three disciples who had been educated beside him.[454] The boat's navigator, who happens to be Christ in disguise, gives the crew his blessing.

They land in the island of *September*, or Cézembre, where they are met by Festivus, a priest who had been anticipating their arrival, and, after banishing a murderous serpent, Malo and the others proceed to Alet.[455] Alet is described as derelict, and a new monastery is built on the site, drawing both men and women from the vicinity. One of these men is Domnech, who was praying in his cell when the ruler of that land at the time, Meliau, asks him who he is and what he possesses. When Domnech explains that he merely occupies the cell, Meliau

453 Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a study of the voyages of St Brendan and St Malo', p. 46.
454 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 394.
455 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 395.

grants him two young oxen to tame and all the land that they are able to plow, in perpetuity.[456] The monastery is given further rights when Iudicahel (Judicael), *dux Britanniae multarumque aliarum regionum,* elevates Malo, and consequently Alet, to the episcopy.[457] It is significant that Malo is ordained in the basilica of Saint Martin of Tours, a clear repudiation of Dol's pretensions. Bili also claims Malo's authority over the island called *Aaron,* which today is known as Saint-Malo, describing how the saint accepted many donations there.

The Columbanian influence in the *Vita Machutis* is highlighted by Malo's visit to *Luxodium*, or Luxeuil, the preeminent abbey founded by Columbanus.[458] There, the priestly energy of Malo and his companions are revived. Kerlouégan, Merdrignac, and Bourges have studied Columbanian place-names and have noted in particular two place names near Saint-Malo that allude to the Columbanian connection; 'the parish of Saint-Coulomb, with its church dedicated to Columbanus, and the lake of Saint-Coulman or Coulban.'[459]

Much later in the narrative, Malo, along with seven of the original brothers who had journeyed to Brittany with him, undertakes another *peregrinatio* to Aquitaine, seemingly to escape those he had excommunicated on account of their malice and envy towards him. The exact purpose of this *peregrinatio* is not made clear, but apparently Malo is disillusioned, recalling Matthew 15:8, 'Populus hic labiis me honorat, cor autem eorum longe est a me' (The people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me).[460] In Aquitaine, Malo meets with Leuntius, the bishop of Saintes and performs miracles of healing for the people of

456 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 399.
457 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 401.
458 '…ad monasterium quae (sic) vocatur *Luxodium*, quod venerabilis pater Columbanus abba Scottorum partibus veniens construxit…' Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 204.
459 André-Yves Bourgès, 'Le culte de Colomban en Bretagne armoricaine: un saint peut en cacher un autre' in E. Destefanis (ed.) *L'eredita di san Colombano* (Rennes, 2017) p. 5; Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 96; François Kerlouégan, 'Présence et culte de clercs irlandais et bretons entre Loire et Monts Jura' in Picard (ed.) *Aquitaine and Ireland in the Middle Ages* (1995), p. 195.
460 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 594.

the region, before returning to Brittany to lift a curse he had placed on the people there. Malo journeys to Aquitaine from Brittany not once, but twice, with the purpose of visiting Leuntius and, on the second journey, spending the rest of his days in *Arcambiata*, or Archingeay. We can confirm the existence of Leuntius, who is recorded to have been bishop of Saintes in 627.[461]

The second book of the *Vita Machutis* is concentrated on the saint's post-mortem miracles, which, as pointed out earlier, is uncommon in Breton hagiography. Most of these miracles are stereotypical healing miracles and do not warrant attention here, but there are two chapters which are worth noting. The first is the endeavour by the Bretons, specifically represented by Roeantuuoret, a *dux* of Alet, and Riuuoed, to bring Malo's corpse back to Brittany. As one can imagine, the priests in Malo's sepulchre in Aquitaine are not too pleased at the request, asking the men 'Nunquid et vos insani estis?' (Are you crazy?) and demanding that they leave. The two men petition the Frankish King Filibertus, explaining that King Iudicael, 'vestri fidelis', had ordained Malo bishop of Alet and thus the saint's corpse belonged there.[462] Bili takes great pains in describing, that after three days of fasting and prayers by all involved, Malo's body is partitioned according to God's will. The Bretons would have Malo's head and right arm, the rest would remain with the Aquitanians. These translated relics took no time in helping miracles to occur in Brittany; they are, according to Bili, responsible for numerous miracles, including the end of a drought and protection from Northmen. As the invaders set fire to Alet, a local man named Hetremaon places four denarii over the doorway of his house, petitioning Malo for his protection. Half the village is saved, while the other half, which belongs to a man named Iudicael (not to be confused with King Iudicael) who refused to spend coin and thought his houses would be saved because they

461 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', p. 331.
462 Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Mélanges d'histoire bretonne. Vita Sancti Machuti par Bili', *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest,* 25:1 (1909), 59.

were close together, burns to the ground. Julia Smith has noted that several of the post-mortem miracles in Bili's *Vita Machutis* 'have numerous parallels in the many *translationes* we have from Carolingian churches.'[463] Malo's relics serve as the primary *lieux de mémoire*, material objects that contain the memory of Malo, and more specifically, his post-mortem miracles. As mentioned earlier, relics are not typically the *lieux de mémoire* for Breton saints' cults, which typically prefer physical objects associated with the saint, such as hand bells, or actual locations, such as springs blessed by the saint. The choice of fixing the memory of Malo on his corporeal relics hints at Carolingian influences, indicating changing hagiographical tropes and cult practices. Also interesting is the inclusion of several place names with no sites of commemoration. Rore, the island on which Malo survived on temporarily, is not represented as a *lieu de mémoire*. In the same vein, the passage which describes how half of a village in Alet was saved from the carnage of the vikings due to Malo's intercession does not indicate that this place became a site of memory or commemoration after the miracle.

One of the main differences between Bili's *Vita sancti Machutis* and the two anonymous *Vitae* of Malo is that the anonymous authors are indifferent to the tradition of Malo as a *peregrinus*. Unlike Bili, the anonymous authors do not identify Malo as a *peregrinus* or use the word *peregrinatio* to describe the voyage itself; the author of the *Vita anonyma longior* states how Malo '…adiens patrem et matrem, expetivit ab eis licentiam transeundi mare…' (going to his father and mother, he sought their permission to traverse the sea).[464] This is not unusual, seeing as even in Bili's time, the ideal of the *peregrinus* was out of fashion, despite the popularity of the motif in hagiography. The choice to downplay Malo's experience as a *peregrinus* should not be read as an attempt to eliminate any 'Insular'

463 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 334.
464 *Vita anonyma longior sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Mélanges d'histoire bretonne: La Plus Ancienne Vie de Saint Malo', *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 23:4 (1907), 578.

characteristics from the two anonymous *Vitae*, however, it does betray a reprioritization of the goals and spiritual values held by the anonymous authors.

Admittedly, the two anonymous *Vitae* do include two voyages in search of *Yma*, essentially copying the two voyages (the first unsuccessful and the second successful) voyages of Brendan. Mac Mathúna writes,

> 'Malo's first voyage, however, has no similarity in content with the first voyage of Brendan, but seems to have drawn on the tradition of the *Vita Columbae* in that it refers to the voyagers passing through the Orkney Islands and other northern islands on their way home following their failure to find the island of Ima.'[465]

The purpose of the voyages is also different in the anonymous *Vitae*. Whereas Bili has Brendan set off in search of *Yma* because of a divine suggestion by God to promote Malo's sanctity, the anonymous authors simply state that Brendan and the company wished to go to the famous island of *Yma*.[466] Already, Malo's role in the voyage is demoted and the passage which describes the first voyage omits any miracles performed by Malo. Moreover, Bili used material concerning the voyage to *Yma* that the anonymous authors did not have or chose not to include in their texts.

After failing to find *Yma*, Brendan and his pupils return to Llancarfan, where Malo is made bishop, a choice which contrasts with Bili's decision to have Malo consecrated bishop on the Continent by the archbishop of Tours, giving him spiritual authority in Brittany but also complicating Dol's pretensions as an archbishopric. The anonymous authors, it seems,

465 Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a study of the voyages of St Brendan and St Malo', p.43.
466 *Vita anonyma longior sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 570.

were indifferent to the 'rivalry' with Dol, supporting the view that the anonymous *Vitae* were written after Bili's *Vita*, when Dol's claims could no longer be sustained.

The second voyage in the anonymous *Vitae* are more consistent with the Brendanian material, as the chapter includes the episode in which Brendan, Malo, and the others celebrate Easter, unknowingly, on a giant. The giant, named Milduum, is resurrected and baptized by Malo, and in return, the giant helps them on their journey before dying. Thus, contrary to what some scholars have argued, the two anonymous *Vitae* are not any less 'Insular' than Bili's *Vita*, especially considering that the anonymous versions follow Brendan's voyage more faithfully. Even so, the voyages with Brendan do not occupy such a central role in the anonymous *Vitae* as they do in Bili's *Vita*.

The cult of Malo was obviously a popular one, as it spurred the creation of later *Vitae* and spread further into the Continent, notably Paris, and across the Channel into Wessex, as evidenced by the two English manuscripts containing Malo's *Vita*. Focusing on the area of St Malo, however, the *Vita* can tell us much about the See of Alet during the ninth and tenth centuries. Bili composed the *Vita Sancti Machutis* to develop a cult for St Malo that would rival Dol's cult of St Samson, arguably the foremost Breton saint. He did this several ways; making the two saints cousins and having Malo consecrated bishop by the authority of Tours among them. Yet, having much of Malo's *Life* centre on his Insular, more specifically Irish, contacts shows that this is what Bili believed his intended audience would find noteworthy enough to contend with Samson's image as the original founder saint of Brittany. Firstly, Malo participates and is essentially the pilot in Brendan's famous *navigatio* in search of the island of Yma. The description of Brendan as an abbot in Wales should not minimise the inclusion of the *navigatio* narrative in Malo's Life, nor the hisperic language in the opening hymn. Secondly, the decision to highlight Malo as a *peregrinus* with ascetic aspirations is telling of the spiritual life Bili, and by extension his audience, admired. Finally, however

brief, the passage which recounts Malo's sojourn in Luxeuil adds lustre to Malo's saintly career by associating him with Columbanus. All in all, it is evident that Malo's Insular origins, contacts, and spiritual practices were a vital aspect of Alet's memory of the saint.

Paul Aurelian

In the sixth century, Paul Aurelian, one of Brittany's founder saints, established the diocese of Léon, and with it, the seat at St-Pol-de-Léon. The *Vita Pauli Aureliani* survives in the ninth-century Orléans, Médiathèques, MS 261 (217) A, a codex with many units, and the tenth-century MS 261 (217) B. Both manuscripts, A and B, were probably transferred to Fleury by bishop Mabbo of Saint-Pol-de-Léon around 960.[467] According to Poulin, both A and B contain what can be considered two separate *Lives* of Paul Aurelian, which were later put together to complement each other.[468] Paul Aurelian's *Vita* also survives in MS Lat. 12942, in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, which probably dates to the eleventh or early twelfth century. This manuscript, previously housed in St-Germain-des-Prés, was not written in Brittany but contains Old-Breton materials. This is one indication that it was copied from a Breton exemplar, probably from the eleventh century.[469]

The two editions of the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* are, in Poulin's words, 'pitoyables' (pitiful).[470] François Plaine based his 1882 edition entirely on the Paris manuscript and made several reading mistakes, while Cuissard utilised the Orléans manuscripts in his 1883 edition but relied on Plaine's edition for his chapter order.[471] As is the case with many outdated

467 Elisabeth Pellegrin and Jean-Paul Bouhot (eds), *Catalogue des manuscrits médiévaux de la bibliothèque municipale d'Orléans* (Paris, 2010), pp 328-331.
468 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 270.
469 https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/153
470 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 272.
471 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. Charles Cuissard, 'Vie de saint Paul de Léon en Bretagne' in *Revue celtique*, 5 (1881-1883), 413-60.

editions of Breton hagiographies, a new edition of the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* is desperately needed, but in the meantime, both Plaine and Cuissard's editions will be used in this chapter.

The *Vita Pauli Aureliani* was written by Wrmonoc, a disciple of Wrdisten, abbot of Landévennec and author of the *Vita Winwaloei*. Wrmonoc informs us that he completed the *Vita* in 884 and dedicated it to Hinworetus, the bishop of Leon. Thus, the *Vita* of Paul Aurelian was written by a Landévennec author, but not for Landévennec, and the saint, as Kerlouégan noted, was not part of the spiritual family of Guénolé.[472]

The *Vita* begins with a preface which, like most hagiographies, outlines the reasons for setting the *Vita* in writing. Wrmonoc tells us that by writing down the deeds of Paul Aurelian they have shone more brightly than before. He humbly presents the *Vita* to Hinworetus, bishop of St-Pol-de-Leon, for use 'inter festa episcopalis cathedrae convivia' (during the feasts of the episcopal seat).[473] Already we see the intended commemorative function of the piece, which was to be used in St-Pol-de-Leon's feast days, to celebrate the saint's life and deeds, but also the establishment of the bishopric of Léon. More importantly, there was also a pedagogical function to the text. Julia Smith noted,

> 'The commission resulted in a work written in an elaborate, Gildasian Latin that cannot have been suitable for use in the cathedral without much simplification but which was probably useful as a school text for the episcopal *familia.*'[474]

In other words, the *Life* was used a teaching tool for the pupils in the cathedral school. Wrmonoc highlights this in his *Explicit*, when he addresses Hinworetus's *alumni*

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472 François Kerlouégan, 'La Vita Pauli Aureliani d'Uurmonoc de Landévennec' in Bernard Tanguy and Tanguy Daniel (eds) *Sur le pas de Paul Aurélien, Colloque international Saint-Pol-de-Léon 7-8 juin 1991* (Brest, Quimper, 1997), p. 57.
473 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 'Vita S. Pauli Aureliani', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1 (1882), 210.
474 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 323.

(students).[475] The intention behind the creation of the text aptly reflects the two key aspects of 'obligation', one of the characteristics of cultural memory. *Formative* refers to the 'educative, civilizing, and humanizing functions' of knowledge preserved in cultural memory, while *Normative* provides 'rules of conduct.'[476] In the case of St-Pol-de-Léon, the knowledge preserved in the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* is both formative and normative, as the text was meant to educate and 'civilize' the students at the Cathedral school, while providing a Christian model for conduct, as hagiography generally does.

Wrmonoc begins the *Vita* with details of Paul Aurelian's illustrious birth in Britain. Paul Aurelian, like many Breton saints of this period, is born a Welshman in the region called *Penn-Ohen* in the regional tongue and *Caput Boum* in Latin. The editor of the *Life*, Plaine, compares *Penn-Ohen* with *Pennichen*, a place name in the *Vita Cadoci*, and believes the location to be a cantref in east Glamorgan[477] Paul Aurelian's father is a nobleman by the name of *Perphirius*, a name suitable for his highborn status, but his mother remains unnamed. Paul Aurelian is one of eight brothers and three sisters, some of which the *Life* lists. Determined to fulfill his spiritual calling, he is sent to Llantwit Major to become a pupil of St Illtud, described as 'vir genere nobilis et sanctarum scientia litterarum satis clarus' (a man from noble origin and renowned sufficiently for the science of holy literature).[478] There, Paul Aurelian studies alongside none other than Saint Gildas and Saint Samson of Dol. Overall, Wrmonoc shows a familiarity of South Wales and its people, suggesting that he may have been working with older sources.[479]

475 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 257.
476 Assmann,'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', 132.
477 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 211.
478 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 213.
479 More on this in chapter 6.

One early sign of Paul's sanctity involves a miracle in which he, having been given the custodianship of the monastery's harvest which had been decimated by rapacious birds, leads the birds into the monastery like sheep as punishment, and only releases them when they have restored what they have stolen.[480] Seeing this, Illtud prostrates himself on the ground and dedicates elegiac verses to the Lord, who worked through the young Paul.[481] This miracle was used again in the *Vita Sancti Iltuti*, which dates to around 1140, in which his pupil Samson drives all the untameable birds into a barn until they repent and Illtud releases them.[482] In the eleventh-century Breton *Vita Gildae*, it is Paul Aurelian, Samson, and Gildas who lock the birds up in the barn together.[483] According to Robert Fawtier, in his edition of Samson of Dol's *Life*, this miracle was initially part of Illtud's *Life*, in which an unnamed disciple tames the birds.[484] Given the close association between Samson, Gildas, Paul Aurelian, and Illtud, it is expected that this particular miracle was employed in each *Vita*. This motif was popular later still, as it is present in the Welsh vernacular *Lives* of Cadog, David, and Ieuan Gwas Padrig, which are extant in fifteen and sixteenth century sources.[485]

Paul's eremitical life begins at the age of sixteen when one night, a thought clings to his mind to go find a desert and live a life in solitude. By separating himself from society and through divine contemplation, he would grow closer to God. He recalls the psalms saying, 'Elongavi fugiens et mansi in solitudine' (I have gone far in flight and stayed in the wilderness) and 'Factus sum similis pelicano solitudinis' (I am become like a pelican in the wilderness).[486] He also ruminates on the hermits, like St Anthony, who forsook the company of the world and afflicted their bodies through fear of Christ. He brings these thoughts to his

480 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 219.
481 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 220.
482 Henken, *The Welsh Saints,* p. 81. Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae,* pp 212-15.
483 Henken, *The Welsh Saints*, p. 81
484 Robert Fawtier, *La Vie de Saint Samson: essai de critique hagiographique* (Paris, 1912), p. 39.
485 Henken, *The Welsh Saints,* pp 82-3.
486 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 223.

master, Illtud, and with his consent, embarks on this eremitical journey. It is worth noting that the journey is not characterized as a *peregrinatio*, and Paul is not regarded as a *peregrinus*, however, there is a particularly ascetic flavour to Paul's journey which mirrors that of the Desert Fathers. The author Wrmonoc describes how Paul sought a desert for himself and his brothers and dedicated himself to several days of fasting and a restrictive diet reminiscent of Guénolé's. In fact, this passage which describes Paul's ascetic practices follows that of Guénolé's, and it is evident that Wrmonoc, a monk of Landévennec, used the *Vita Winwaloei* as his blueprint.

Paul Aurelian's good works catch the attention of King Mark, who while known as a Cornish king in Arthurian literature, is described in Wrmonoc's work as a king with 'quatuor linguae diversarum gentium uno eius subjacerent imperio' (four languages of different nations under his rule).[487] This declaration was a 'literary derivation', like that of 'Bede's list of the four languages used in Britain'.[488] Mark's seat is described as being in *Villa Bannhedos*, which has not been identified, although Castle Dore has been tentatively suggested.[489] Wavering between paganism and Christianity, he commands Paul to become his kingdom's spiritual leader, a request which Paul is hesitant to fulfil. Paul educates and converts Mark's people and is offered an episcopal seat in the kingdom. Wrmonoc writes how Paul Aurelian refuses King Mark's request to accept the episcopacy, wishing to pursue an ascetic life in foreign lands, but asks the King for a donation of seven, or at least one, hand-bell, to which the King refuses.

487 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. Charles Cuissard, 431. For Mark's role in folklore, see Gaël Milin, *Le roi Marc aux oreilles de cheval* (Geneva, 1991).
488 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 139.
489 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. Charles Cuissard, 432; Geoffrey Ashe (ed.), *The Quest for Arthur's Britain* (London, 1972), pp 82-5; André-Yves Bourgès, Commor entre le mythe et l'histoire: profil d'un 'chef' Breton du Vie siècle' in *Mémoires de la Société historique et archéologique de Bretagne* (1996), 422.

Liber II of Wrmonoc's *opus* focuses on the career and miracles performed by Paul in Brittany. This section is rich with place-names as well as personal names as Paul interacts with the landscape and the local people. For example, Wrmonoc gives us a list of the names of Paul's priestly companions: Quonocus, Decanus, Jahoevius (who also went by Tigernmaglus), Toseucus (Sittredus), Wohednovius (Towoedocus), Gellocus (Bretowennus and Boius), Wirmanus, Lowenanus (Toecheus and Tochichus) Chielus, and Hercanus (Herculanus).[490] Paul and his companions first land on the island of Ouessant before making their final stop in Domnonia, in a *pagus* called *Achmensis*, or *Telmedoviam* in the old tongue, as Wrmonoc tells us. It is there that they construct a monastery, while some others, such as a monk called *Vivehinus*, seek more secluded places to practice voluntary solitude while still under the supervision of Paul Aurelian. The monastery is called *Lanna Pauli* (presently Lampaul-Ploudalmezeau) by the locals, where 'innumera ejus beneficia omnibus cum recta fide poscentibus usque hodie praestantur' (its innumerable benefits are given to all those who ask for it to this day).[491]

In another town, called *Villa Wiormanni* (Plouguernau), Paul quenches the thirst of his weary companions by striking the ground and creating fountains. These fountains were used as sites of healing and veneration, as Wrmonoc tells us that people pray at these fountains to repel diseases or ailments of any kind. He even mentions an example given by a neighbour (exemplum e vicino est) of a holy man that received the fountains' benefits.[492]

We learn through an interaction between Paul and a local pig herder that an *oppidum* that Paul and his companions travel through is governed in some capacity by King Philibert

490 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 234. For more on *tigernos* as a common Celtic name, see Wendy Davies, 'On the distribution of political power in Brittany in the mid-ninth century' in Wendy Davies, *Brittany in the early Middle Ages: texts and societies* (Farnham, 2009), p. 106.
491 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. Charles Cuissard, 440.
492 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 239.

(Childebert). This town, described in detail by Wrmonoc, would be called after Paul and become Saint-Pol-de-Léon. Another spiritual and political leader Paul encounters happens to be a relation. The local, and more present, lord of the region was his cousin, Count Withur. The two meet in Île de Batz where Withur spent time alone, writing down the gospels.[493]

Paul tells Withur of his troubles with King Mark over dinner and more specifically, King Mark's refusal to offer a bell to Paul. At his cousin's dinner table, he finds his wish granted when one of King Mark's hand-bells appears in the belly of a giant salmon.[494] This miracle demonstrating Paul's power and favour, sways his cousin to gift him Île de Batz. This hand-bell, named *longifulva* by Wrmonoc, but more popularly known as *Hirglas*, was responsible for curing many sicknesses and bringing a dead man back to life.[495] Wrmonoc is careful to use 'audivimus' or 'we heard' to describe how he and the community, either Landévennec's and/or the Church of St Pol, had learned of the bell's healing powers, through actual witnesses to the miracles. He writes,

> 'Haec est autem illa eademque cloca quae per cunctos Latinorum populos *Hirglas* id est *Longifulva* nomine noto vocitatur, cujus per operationem… non solum multos languores fugatos, sed et in quodam loco ejus tactu redivivum quemdam mortuum, eisdem qui viderant attestantibus, audivimus esse suscitatum'[496]
>
> (Moreover, this is the same bell which the whole of the Latin people call by the common name Longifulva (it is Hirglas), by the operation of which…he [Paul] not only chased away many infirmities, but also revived a certain dead man by his

493 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 243.
494 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 229.
495 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. Charles Cuissard, 446.
496 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 245.

touch in a certain place, we have heard that he was revived by the same people who witnessed it.)

Also interesting to note is that the miracles involving *Hirglas* described above seem to be miracles performed during Paul's lifetime, which were transmitted orally from that generation to Wrmonoc's time.

Hirglas is perhaps the most famous handbell in Breton hagiography, other than the one gifted to Brigid by Gildas.[497] It is interesting that Wrmonoc recognizes the bell's common name as *longifulva*, a name which can be roughly translated as 'long tawny', but also gives us its name by the Bretons. *Hirglas* can be translated as 'long blue/green/grey', as *glas* can translate to any of these three colours, which make up the colour of the sea.[498] Thus, there is a discrepancy the bell's colour as either tawny or blue/green/grey. Of course, it is likely that the relic itself could have been rusty in Wrmonoc's day, hence its description as 'tawny.' However, it is also possible that *fulva* denoted another colour altogether. The bell's other name, *Hirglas*, stems from its origins from the sea, inside the belly of a salmon. In general, holy bells are a key motif in Insular hagiography. Just to name a few examples, the Irish saint Mochua also used his bells for healing, although his *Life* is contained in the later *Book of Lismore*.[499] Several Welsh saints had hand-bells, and Cadog's, given to him by Gildas, had to power to heal and bring the dead to life, according to his twelfth century Latin

497 Bernard Tanguy, 'La cloche de Paul-Aurélien' in *Collection de l'Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l'Antiquité* (1994), 611 and Bernard Tanguy, Job an Irien, Saik Falhun, Y.P. Castel, *Sant Paol a Leon - Saint Paul Aurélien: Vie et Culte* (Landerneau, 1991), p. 1.
498 *Glas* – very blue in Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language, https://dil.ie/search?q=glas, accessed 21 March 2023. On the other hand, *glas* in a Breton context can mean blue, gray, or green. See, Pierre d'Hérouville, 'Glaucus et Glas: vert, bleu, gris' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 48:3-4 (1941), 285.
499 Henken, *The Welsh Saints*, p. 71.

Vita.[500] Interestingly, six Breton hand-bells survive to this day, although Cormac Bourke has demonstrated that all but one are most likely imports from Wales and Cornwall.[501]

Given the presence of Insular characteristics in Paul Aurelian's *Life*, namely his Welsh origins, typically Insular motifs such as bells and fountains, the Cornish King Mark, etc., it feels rather abrupt when the Frankish King Philibert makes an appearance. Count Withur knows that Paul will humbly refuse an episcopacy and sends him to the court of Philibert as an ambassador with a sealed letter asking that Paul be made bishop. Indeed, Wrmonoc tells us that Paul would rather be a *peregrinus* than a bishop.[502]

More importantly, it is in this passage that Philibert's authority over this part of Domnonia is confirmed, as Withur explicitly states '…rex Philibertus istam mihi regionem sub suae potestatis conditione ad regendum tradidit...' (King Philibert gave me this country under condition of his power to rule).[503] This passage is very similar to the one in the *Vita Secunda sancti Samsonis*, in which Judual grants Samson spiritual authority over Domnonia and Childebert elevates Dol into an archiepiscopacy. Curiously absent from the entire *Vita Pauli Aureliani* is the see of Dol, even though Samson is mentioned twice in the *Vita*; first, as Paul's schoolmate, and later, as cousin of a *dux* of Domnonia. Furthermore, if we believe Wrmonoc's assertion that Paul and Samson were pupils together, Samson is technically active in Brittany at the same time as Paul. Is Wrmonoc operating within a time frame in which Samson has not yet been consecrated as bishop in Dol? Could the consecration of Paul Aurelian in Paris indicate that Wrmonoc is eliding the conflict between Dol, which claimed archbishopric status,

500 Henken, *The Welsh Saints*, p. 110.
501 Cormac Bourke, 'Early Breton hand-bells revisited' in *Britannia Monastica*, 17 (2013), 4.
502 '…sed etiam velle potius peregrinum fore quam episcopum' (but he would rather be a peregrinus than a bishop) Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 250.
503 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 250.

and the actual archbishopric of Tours? Indeed, other than its pedagogical and commemorative purpose, there may have been another, more strategic intent behind the writing of the *Vita Pauli Aureliani*. Given that it was written in 884, during the period in which Dol asserted its archepiscopal status, it might very well have been a response to Dol's pretensions. As Caroline Brett has noted, Bili's *Vita sancti Machutis* and the abbey of Redon's *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* both engage in and respond to Dol's claims.[504] This explains the ambiguous treatment of Samson and Dol more generally in the *Vita Pauli Aureliani*.

Whereas Paul's journey from Britain to Brittany is not described as a *peregrinatio,* his journey from Brittany to the court of Philibert is:

> 'Post magnos ergo sudores difficilesque longae peregrinationis plurimis diebus atque noctibus labores, tandem fatigatus pervenit ad Parisios civitatem…' [505]
>
> (After much sweat and difficulty of a long journey of many days and nights, he finally reached Paris exhausted.)

Here, we must wonder if Wrmonoc employed this word practically, to imply travel, or if this word was loaded with the spiritual meaning of *peregrinatio*. If the latter, it implies that Paul's journey from Britain to Brittany is not a voyage to a foreign country, but his travel into Francia is. Yet, if we recall that Paul's voyage from Britain to Brittany had a purely spiritual purpose and was not defined as a *peregrinatio*, the later use of the word was probably a casual addition.

504 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 120.
505 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 251.

In Paris, Paul is essentially shamed by Philibert into accepting the episcopate in Léon and consecrates him and grants him the diocese in perpetuity. During his time as bishop, Paul destroys old pagan temples and replaces them with several different churches and monasteries, housing them with clerics that instruct and preach to the local people. When he grows weary of old age, he gives his episcopal office to one of his disciples, Jahoevius, and then another disciple, Tigernomaglus. When both of them die prematurely, Paul serves as bishop a short while before giving his office to Cetomerinus.[506]

During Cetomerinus's ordination, Judual, the *dux* of Domnonia and a cousin of St Samson of Dol, witnesses a miracle where Paul heals a blind woman and consequently gifted him territory in perpetuity. Judual appears in the *Vita Prima* of Samson as the legitimate ruler of Domnonia whose throne was usurped by the evil Conomor. Samson travels to the court of Childebert in Paris, where Judual is detained, to secure his release and restore him to his rightful position. In return, Judual grants Samson land in Dol. This Conomor is likely the same King Mark that appeared earlier in the text, as Wrmonoc notes that he also went by the name *Quonomonum*.[507] Conomor is regarded as a historical Breton 'chief' or king active in the sixth century. He is mentioned by Gregory of Tours and present in multiple Breton *Vitae,* including, but not limited to, the *Vitae* of Samson of Dol and the *Vita* of Gildas of Rhuys.[508] In Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*, he is a Breton count involved in disputes with Breton counts Macliaw and Chanao.[509] He is not portrayed favourably by Gregory, though admittedly, Gregory is hostile to the Bretons in general. In hagiographical

506 Wrmonoc*, Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 252-53.
507 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 226.
508 Bourgès, 'Commor entre le mythe et l'histoire: profil d'un 'chef' Breton du Vie siècle', 419.
509 Gregorii episcopi Turonensis, *Libri Historiarum IV*, p. 137.

sources, as in the *Vita Pauli Aureliani*, Conomor is regarded as a usurper of the crown of Domnonia which rightfully belongs to Judual. André-Yves Bourgès argues that the portrayal of Conomor was favourable until the middle of the eleventh century, as earlier writers depicted him as an ambitious prince, rather than a vicious usurper. This is not entirely accurate, as even Wrmonoc paints him as a stingy and ill-tempered ruler, rather than a sympathetic ruler. There is evidence that Conomor ruled on both sides of the channel, in both Dumnonia (Britain) and Domnonia (Brittany). Toponymic evidence for Conomor's presence in Brittany, particularly the north-east, is scant. The location Rumarc, near the old *castellum* Beuzit, may be related to Conomor, or Mark, as the *Vita* of St Melar describes this *castellum* as the residence of the *comes* Conomor.[510] Textual sources offer more evidence for this cross-channel kingdom ruled by Conomor. In the *Vita Prima* of Samson, Commorus is called 'iniustus et externus iudex', an unjust and external judge, who has usurped Judual's throne.[511] The use of 'externus iudex' is an obvious indication that he was literally an outside ruler, from across the Channel.

Paul migrates to the Île de Batz and spends his final days there living with monks under his care. His living body, while advanced with age, one hundred and four years in fact, is seen as miraculous since he was so transparent that one could see the rays of sun through his palms. Wrmonoc indicates that this demonstrates the incorruptibility of Paul's body. Before his death, he predicts many things that would come to pass, including the great discussion concerning his body by the monks of the island, and the coming of the Northmen, who would destroy everything on the island. Wrmonoc adds, 'Quod vere absque ulla dubitatione jam contigisse, omnibus notum est'

510 Bourgès, 'Commor entre le mythe et l'histoire', 423-24.
511 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 81.

(It is known to all that it has indeed happened without any doubt) and explains that to his day, the vikings continue to ravage the island.[512]

Paul is also correct regarding the discussion over his corpse, post-mortem, or as Wrmonoc called it, the war over his body. On his deathbed, he instructs the monks to bury him in a field in his *oppidum*, in other words, St Pol, rather than the Île de Batz, so than anyone who needed his help would not be cut off by the sea. Despite his specific instructions, a quarrel arises between the monks of Île de Batz and the clerics of St Pol over which community should keep the saintly body. To settle the matter, bishop Cetomerinus arranges two carts with the same number of oxen tied to them. One cart is attached to the island, and the other to the town of St Pol. The coffin is placed between these two carts, so that the saint can decide where he wants to go. Unsurprisingly, he chooses the town of St Pol, as per his final request. Wrmonoc ends the *Vita* by drawing attention to the present day and praising the holy body which still benefitted those who asked for help.

In general, Wrmonoc highlights the importance of Paul's body by drawing attention to the dispute between the communities of Île de Batz and St Pol-de-Léon, and very vaguely hints at the miracles performed by Paul through his grave. We learn that the Cathedral of St-Pol-de-Léon was not the only 'keeper' of Paul Aurelian's memory, but that the laity had their own way of remembering and connecting to Paul Aurelian through time and space. Through Wrmonoc, we learn very little of the post-mortem miracles performed in St-Pol-de-Léon, nor do can we see any commemorative rituals centred around Paul's holy body. Rather, what the *Vita* reveals is a saint whose cult is celebrated by the people through sacred springs and other objects, but whose

512 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 254.

celebration in the Cathedral is limited to the saint's feast day.[513] Paul's shrine, his hand-bell, *hirglas*, and the sacred fountains were *lieux de mémoire*, recognized by both the laity and the religious, that linked Paul Aurelian's 'earthly career' with his 'continuing miracle-working power'. [514] They were, using Nora's terms, 'material, symbolic, and functional'; tangible objects that were not only symbolic of the stories behind them, but provided a practical purpose in the healing miracles they delivered to the lay recipients.[515] The congregants of St-Pol communicated these miracles orally, to the point where, as Julia Smith remarked, 'In the late ninth century, Paul Aurelian's posthumous activities were firmly part of the oral world of Breton speech so familiar to the local congregation of Saint-Pol'.[516] Because they belonged in the 'oral world', these miracles lacked what Assmann calls the 'institutional communication', in other words, the writing required to concretize them.[517] We thus see the lay congregants as custodians of a type of communicative memory, primarily because the cult of Paul Aurelian lacked the institutional backing of the Cathedral of St-Pol-de-Léon and because the commemoration of the saint by the laity lived in the everyday world of communication.[518]

Because the miracles rendered through Paul Aurelian's relics, or *lieux de mémoire*, were circulated orally, Wrmonoc was not concerned with including them in the *Vita*. Afterall, there was no need to promote the saint's cult, as it was already very active. Moreover, it was later unpractical for the religious community of St-Pol-de-Léon to fix their memory of Paul to his corporeal relics, as they were relocated to

513 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 323.
514 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 324.
515 Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' in *Representations*, 26 (1989), 19.
516 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 324.
517 Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory: Script, Recollection, and Political Identity in Early Civilisations*, trans. Ursula Ballin (Leiden, 2003), 165.
518 Assmann, 'Communicative and Cultural Memory', p. 111.

Fleury in the tenth century.[519] To the religious in the Cathedral of St Pol-de-Léon, the principle *loci* in which Paul Aurelian's memory was fixed was the *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, which, as the author tells us, was used both pedagogically and commemoratively. It would soon be a 'textual substitute' for the saint's body.[520] The memory of Paul Aurelian recalled in the *Vita* was different to that remembered by the lay congregants, mainly in that it was not limited to Paul Aurelian's relics. Rather, Paul Aurelian's Insular origin and career play a key role in the way the religious community of St-Pol-de-Léon remembered their founder saint. The religious community of St-Pol-de-Léon saw itself as an institution embedded within a wider spiritual and political history of Britain. Most important, however, are the anecdotes which describe Paul Aurelian's endowment of perpetual authority over Domnonia in religious affairs, primarily granted by king Childebert. Again, these accounts are at odds with those presented in the *Vitae* of Samson of Dol and suggests that the bishopric of St-Pol-de-Léon was pushing back against Dol's jurisdiction and its claim as the spiritual centre of Brittany.

As mentioned briefly, because of the viking incursions in Brittany, the relics of Paul Aurelian, along with other saintly relics, were transferred to Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire in Fleury in the tenth century. Mabbon, bishop of St-Pol-de-Léon, sought refuge in Fleury with Paul Aurelian's relics and several manuscripts. One of these manuscripts, now conserved in Bern as MS 277, contains 'Hunc codicem Mabbo

519 Pierre Riché, 'Relations entre l'abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire et les pays celtique (Xe – Xie siècles)' in *Corona Monastica: Moines bretons de Landévennec: histoire et mémoires celtiques* (Rennes, 2004), https://books.openedition.org/pur/20125?lang=en, accessed 20 March 2023.
520 Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', p. 271.

episcopus dedit sancto Benedicto' (Mabbo gave this book to Saint Benedict) on folio 1.[521] Admittedly, there is no indication that he wrote this manuscript in Brittany.[522]

Unlike St-Pol-de-Léon, Fleury made a conscious decision to create and promote a cult of Paul Aurelian which was centred on his body. There in Fleury, which was now 'becoming a school of Breton hagiography', the *translatio* of Paul Aurelian was written by Aimo of Fleury in around 1004-1010 and a new *Vita* was composed for the saint by Vital around 1005-1030.[523] This new *Vita* not only aimed to promote the cult of Paul Aurelian in Fleury, but eliminate the *britannica garrulitas*, or Breton babbling, of Wrmonoc's *Vita*. Vital was annoyed with the various Breton names Wrmonoc provided, and sought to rid the text of them, but admitted he could not entirely reject the saint's Breton origins.[524] More Breton saints' *Lives* were written in Fleury in the tenth and eleventh centuries, including *Vitae* for saints Leonorius and Gildas. Of course, this was not the only monastic centre outside of Brittany that handled Breton saints, but this example forces us to reframe our idea that Breton saints' cults practices can only be studied in Brittany. Rather, we should look for communities of Bretons both in and outside Brittany.

Brioc

Brioc's eleventh century *Life,* known as the *Vita sancti Brioci Episcopi et Confessori*, survives in four manuscripts: Paris, MS lat. 1149, Paris MS frs. 22321, Angers BM 814, and

521 Riché, 'Relations entre l'abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire et les pays celtique' (2004), https://books.openedition.org/pur/20125?lang=en, accessed 20 March 2023.
522 https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/23.
523 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 207.
524 James Drysdale Miller, 'The afterlife of Breton saints and rewriting the lives of saints outside Brittany' in *Kelten*, 92 (2022).

Rouen BM 1394.[525] While Poulin has noted that the Paris manuscripts date to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the latter two date to the tenth and tenth-to-eleventh century.[526] Angers BM 814 originates from St-Serge-d'Angers, and Poulin proposes an Angers origin for the Rouen BM 1394 as well. The Rouen manuscript concerns us most, as editors, notably Plaine, have used the Rouen manuscript to complete their editions. When he discovered the Rouen manuscript in 1883, he was convinced that he had found a copy of a *Vita* written well before the ninth century, based on documents produced from disciples immediate to Brioc.[527] Plaine, however, is now regarded as a scholar who could not edit texts correctly or completely. For example, he did not include the epilogue in his edition of the *Vita Brioci*.[528] Until a new edition is produced, and made accessible, Plaine's edition must be used.[529] In 1994 Gwen-Vallerie Drapier produced an edition of *Life* of Brioc using the two oldest manuscripts mentioned above, Angers BM 814 and Rouen BM 1394. She concluded that these two manuscripts came from an archetype, a *Vita* of a saint *Briomaglus*, and that the Angers copy was faithful but incomplete. The Angers manuscript corrected the saint's name from *Briomaglus* to *Brioccius*. The Rouen manuscript is much more complete but its scribe probably had access to the Angers manuscript.

Based on the manuscript evidence, it appears that the *Vita Brioci* was written by a monk in St-Serge-d'Angers around the middle of the eleventh century.[530] The author humbly discloses that he used a previous source which was deficient and in 'peregrinae linguae

525 In his edition, Plaine used this Rouen manuscript through an intermediary of an incomplete transcription by Anatole de Barthélemy and Charles de Beaurepaire. Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne,* p. 77.
526 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, pp 74-5.
527 Stéphane Morin, 'Réflexion sur la réecriture de la Vie de saint Brieuc au XIIe siècle: Briomaglus, Primael et Brioccius au temps de la réforme grégorienne' in Sylvain Soleil and Joëlle Quaghebeur (eds) *Le pouvoir et la foi au Moyen Âge: En Bretagne et dans l'Europe de l'Ouest (*Rennes, 2010), p. 1.
528 Bernard Tanguy, 'De Briomaglus à Briocus. À propos de la Vita sancti Briocii' in *Britannia Monastica*, 18 (2016), 13.
529 Gwen Vallerie-Drapier edited the *Vita Brioci* in her thesis *Édition critique et traduction des Vitae Briocci*, Mémoire présentée pour l'obtention de la maîtrise de Lettres Classiques, Rennes, Université de Haute Bretagne, (Masters, Université de Haute Bretagne, Rennes 2, 1994). I am unable to obtain access to it.
530 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 77.

idioma' (idiom of a foreign language) or Breton, but adds that there was not enough material on the saint, as he had not been exalted by his own people.[531] He also states that a Breton king, *Respoius*, or Erispoe (r.851-857) brought Brioc's sacred relics to the basilica of the martyrs St Sergius and Bacchus in Angers.[532]

The *Vita* itself is heavily influenced by the *Vitae* of Samson, and through the Samson material, the *Vita Martini* by Sulpicius Severus.[533] Several episodes from the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis* were copied into the *Vita Brioci*, not uncommon in other Breton hagiography and suggesting that an anterior Breton *Vita* did exist. There are passages in the *Vita Brioci* which draw directly from the Benedictine Rule, additions no doubt made by the monk of St-Serge-d'Angers, a Benedictine monastery. As James Drysdale Miller put it, 'For the Benedictine monks of the abbey of Saint-Serge d'Angers, it must have been reassuring to know that even if their heavenly patron, Briocus, was alien by birth and language, in monastic custom he was one of them.'[534] Later, to reflect changing monastic customs, Brioc's *Vita* was rewritten in the twelfth century, during the time of Gregorian reforms.[535]

Brioc is Welsh born, from the region of Ceredigion. Interestingly, the editor of the *Life*, François Plaine, misidentified 'Coriticianae regionis' as Kerry in Ireland.[536] At an angel's command, Brioc is sent to Paris to study under Germain, the city's bishop. Brioc's schoolmates happen to be Patricius and Heltutus, or Patrick and Illtud.[537] Muirchú's *Life* of Patrick, as well as a later addition to Tírechán's notes, tell us that Patrick's mentor was Germain of Auxerre, not Germain of Paris. Illtud was also a pupil of Germain of Auxerre,

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531 'Quod siquidem in hujus sancti laudabili vita, de quo breviter, prout ingenioli nostri parvitas suffecerit, scribere statuimus, necesse ut fiat non esse satis elucet, **quod non tam illum generis sui nobilitas extulit**…' in *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 'Vita S. Brioci episcopi et confessoris ab anonymo suppari conscripta edita studio et opera', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 2 (1883), 78.
532 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 188.
533 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 80.
534 Drysdale Miller, 'The afterlife of Breton saints and rewriting the lives of saints outside Brittany'
535 Morin, 'Reflexion sur la réécriture de la Vie de saint Brieuc au XII siècle: *Briomaglus,* Primael et Brioccius au temps de la réforme grégorienne', pp 243-60.
536 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 163.
537 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 164-66.

according to the *Vita Prima* of Samson. Poulin seems to believe that this was a conscious change made by the *Vita*'s editor, Plaine, as the original text does mention Auxerre in the beginning. Plaine replaced Auxerre with Paris to explain the later appearances of the bishop of Paris.[538]

Following a brief return to his native Wales where he converts his parents and their subjects, Brioc is compelled by an angel to go on *peregrinatio* across to sea. The angel specifically commands him, 'Oportet te, vir sacer, usque Latium trans mare peregrinationis laborem arripere, ut et aliis sacrae religionis ritum et bonae conversationis ostendas exemplum' (It is necessary for you, holy man, to take up the labour of *peregrinatio* as far as Latium across the sea, to show others the rites of sacred religion and good conduct).[539] Using Vallerie-Drapier's edition of the *Vita Brioci*, André-Yves Bourges argues that *Latium* designates *Letavia*, or northern Brittany.[540] This is too much of a stretch to explain without further explanation, besides, we do find the latinized *Letavia* or *Letovia* in some sources, notably in Angers BM 476, a computistical manuscript which includes a brief chronicle describing the advent of the Bretons to Letavia.[541] Normally, Brittany is described in other hagiographies as 'Brittonum patria', 'Armorica', 'Britannia', or by its people, 'Brittones', 'Brittones Armorici', or 'Britannica gens', among others.[542] The vagueness of *Latium*, suggesting a Latin territory on the others side of the sea, accords well with the fact that the *Vita* was written, or copied, by a monk in Angers.

Brioc takes one-hundred and sixty men with him on his journey across the sea, clearly an exaggerated number meant to echo Moses' one-hundred and sixty days in the desert of

538 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne,* p. 77.
539 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 177.
540 André-Yves Bourges, 'Le dossier hagiographiques des origines de l'évêché de Saint-Brieuc: un silence chargé de sens' in *Blog Hagio-Historiographique médiévale* (2019). *Latium* is also confounded with Letavia, or Brittany in S. Baring-Gould and John Fischer, *The Lives of the British Saints: The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and such Irish Saints as have dedications in Britain*, vol. 1 (London, 1907), p. 63 and p. 128.
541 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 112.
542 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 108-10.

Mount Sinai and highlight the spiritual purpose of Brioc's *peregrinatio*. On the sea journey, Brioc encounters a demon which stands before the ship and terrorizes the crew before being defeated by Brioc's prayers. The boat lands on shore, although the author does not describe the location of the harbour. Instead, the author fast forwards to another day, where Brioc is sitting on his chariot reciting the psalms with his brothers. The inclusion of a chariot shows the influence of the *Vitae* of Samson of Dol, though it is noted that Brioc required the chariot as he was no longer able to walk on foot due to old age.[543] While on his chariot, a wolf pack appears and encircle Brioc as his brothers had fled in fear. Brioc is able to command the beasts, and calls his brothers back to show them, or perhaps shame them for their lack of faith. It happened that a certain general, named Conan, was passing through the area with his army and witnesses this miracle. Affected by the scene before him, Conan receives spiritual advice from Brioc and is baptized with all his people. Although the reader is tempted to identify this Conan with Conan Meriadoc, the next passage confirms that Brioc and his companions were not yet in Brittany, but an unknown stop-off island.

As Brioc and his companions continue their sea journey, they reach Armorica and disembark in a port named *Achim* (Le Conquet) and arrive at a river called *Ioudi* (Jaudy). There, in the area now known as Tréguier, Brioc and the others build a monastery which soon attracts outsiders. A messenger from Brioc's native *Coriticiana*, or Ceredigion, comes to the monastery to find Brioc and urges him to return, informing him of a defeat the region had suffered which had left the inhabitants nearly hopeless. It is revealed a few lines, later, that this devastating defeat was caused by pestilence. Brioc is at first adamant that he cannot return, as he left as a *peregrinus* and cannot return to his parents or to worldly affairs.[544] His

543 'non enim jam prae senectute corporis diu pedestris valebat incedere' in *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, Plaine, 178.
544 'Non debeo, ait, frater, qui pro Christi amore semel peregrinatione suscepta reliqui, patriam iterum parentesque repetere carnalibusque curis et mundialibus negotiis me rursum inserere.' *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 180.

companions, however, much affected by the devastation that has plagued their native Ceredigion, convince Brioc that only he can restore the health of the region. The monastery is left in the care of Brioc's nephew, Papu-Tugualo, or Tugdual while Brioc undertakes a short journey back to Ceredigion, to bless everyone and restore their faith.[545] Following his return to Armorica, he leaves the monastery in Tréguier in charge of Tugdual and continues eastward by boat with eighty-four men. This passage which describes Brioc's return to Tréguier is interesting for two reasons. First, it establishes the pre-eminence of Brioc over Tugdual, who is this narrative is presented as his nephew and a disciple and not the original founder of the monastery of Tréguier. Second, when Brioc returns to assume his position in Tréguier, some brothers embrace him while some are opposed to the idea of him withdrawing the ministry from his nephew Tugdual. In this moment, Tugdual does not speak up on behalf of his uncle, which prompts Brioc's departure from Tréguier. Tugdual is thus cast in an unfavourable light, akin to a usurper.[546] We are unable to determine whether this attitude was present in the original Breton *Vita* which the Angevin monk allegedly used, or whether this was a later insertion by the Angevin monk. Of course, Tréguier and Saint-Brioc were bishoprics, probably with competing interests, but both Tugdual and Brioc's remains were also outside of Brittany. Laval, now in the Mayenne, was a pilgrimage site because it housed the tomb of St Tugdual. As René Couffon suggested, the passage describing Tugdual in the *Vita Brioci* may reflect an attempt to divert pilgrims to Saint Brioc's relics in St-Serge and away from Laval.[547]

On the river *Sanguis* (Le Gouet), Brioc constructs the site which would become Saint-Brieuc. The local lord, Rigual, is told that several holy men dressed in red from across the sea

545 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 180.
546 Morin, 'Reflexion sur la réécriture de la Vie de saint Brieuc au XII siècle: *Briomaglus,* Primael et Brioccius au temps de la réforme grégorienne', p. 23.
547 René Couffon, 'Essai Critique sur la *Vita Briocii'* in *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne*, 48 (1968), 12.

have made camp in his land. He realizes, seemingly based on the colour of their red (rubeus) habits, that this group is led by his cousin, Brioc.[548] Holding a feast in honour of Brioc's work in Ceredigion, Rigual grants him land to build a monastery.[549] Brioc and the monks labour physically to transform the wild landscape into a habitable and abundant location, and labour spiritually as well: 'Erant enim studiosissimi in lectione, frequentissimi in oratione, in vigiliis sobrii, in jejuniis abstinentissimi' (For they were most studious in their reading, most frequent in prayer, most sober in vigils, and most abstinent in fasting).[550] The fact that the red vestments which Brioc and his entourage wore served as an indication that they were from across the sea is an interesting detail which is not mentioned in other Breton hagiographies of this period. There is no evidence that there was a regular monastic habit which monks in Britain and Ireland wore before the Benedictine rule was adopted. Based on evidence from stone carvings in Ireland, Irish monks wore a long tunic and a cloak, but the literature shows that the colour 'varied according to the degree of austerity' and to different religious establishments.[551] The *Life* of St Fintan, for instance, tells us that when the king of Fotharta went to visit his two sons who were in different religious establishments, one was dressed in purple with decorated shoes while the other was dressed in a white tunic, a sheep-coloured cloak, and simple sandals.[552] The seventh-century *Hisperica Famina*, whose manuscript transmission is Breton, note how:

> 'Some wear purple cloaks,
> Some confine their bodies with white garments,

548 '…nuntiat transmarinos quosdam rubies indutos ac pelliceis vestibus advenisse…' (he announced that some people from across the sea have arrived dressed in red clothes and leather) *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 181.
549 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 181-82.
550 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 183.
551 Kathleen Hughes and Ann Hamlin, *The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church* (London, 1977), p. 40.
552 Hughes and Hamlin, *The Modern Traveller*, p. 40.

Others compress their meaty limbs with scarlet robes.'[553]

There is some visual evidence to support the claim that Insular monks wore red, for example, Christ and the Evangelists in the Book of Kells are shown donning dark red mantles.[554] Purple and red, and more generally, dark and rich colours, were associated with elite status. Although a *topos*, early hagiographies typically insist on the noble status of their saints, and it is thus expected that they still retained some pretense of their nobility, even after officially renouncing it. It is difficult to know whether the description of red robes monks came from the original Breton exemplar, or whether it was a later addition by the Angers monk.

Our knowledge of the early history of the monastery, and later, bishopric of Brieuc is scant. In his essay on the *Vita Brioci*, Couffon notes '…le monastère de Saint-Brieuc n'est pas une fondation primitive mais une abbaye établie à une époque sensiblement plus tardive dans la paroisse de Ploufragan; l'on retombe ainsi sur une date très voisine de 560-565' (the monastery of Saint-Brieuc is not a primitive foundation but an abbey established in an era reasonably later in the parish of Ploufragan; we thus fall back on a date very close to 560-565)[555] If this hypothesis is correct, then the monastery did not become a bishopric for quite a long time. In 990, Duke Conan I of Brittany signed a charter confirming nine bishops in Brittany, although the name of the bishop of Brieuc is not specified. Between 1026 and 1034, in documents concerning the foundation of the monastery of St-Georges de Rennes, an Adam, bishop of Brieuc is mentioned. Bernard Tanguy estimates that the bishopric of Brieuc was founded sometime between 866 and 990, based on Pope Nicholas I's letter that

553 Michael Herren, *The Hisperica Famina: I. The A- text* (Toronto, 1974), p. 105; Jacopo Bisagni, 'The newly-discovered Irish and Breton Computistica in Città del Vaticano, BAV MS Reg. Lat. 123' in *Peritia*, 28 (2017), 31.
554 Mary Leenane, 'Visualising the Elite in Early Irish Society' in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 39 (2019), 176.
555 Couffon,'Essai Critique sur la *Vita Briocii'* , 8.

confirmed only seven bishoprics in Brittany.[556] Seeing as the *Vita Briocii* was written, or rewritten, in the eleventh century, indicating an impetus to create a *Vita* commemorating the saint with a see, a late tenth century foundation is likely.

Although the exact rule or custom that the early monks of Saint-Brieuc used is unknown, the author of the *Vita*, a Benedictine monk, is keen to paint the monastery of Saint-Brieuc as a strongly Benedictine house by drawing attention to the monk's adherence to the monastic *horarium*. As previously mentioned, there are passages which are drawn from the Rule of St Benedict. Firstly, the author describes how the community of monks 'Certis semper horis ad explendum opus Dei in oratorio confluebant' (They always flocked at certain hours to fulfill God's work in the oratory).[557] The passage which follows essentially follows chapter forty-eight of the Benedictine Rule. The author of the *Vita* describes how, following a communal meal, the monks went to bed in silence. They rose from their beds in the middle of the night to perform the night office, in accordance with the psalm which states 'Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi' (I rose at midnight to confess to you).[558] After the completion of None, the monks are allowed to return to their beds. The passage continues to detail the monks' participation in the *horarium*.

Foreseeing that the day of his death was approaching, Brioc calls his brothers together and informs them of what was to transpire. Following his death, two of his disciples who were not with him on his death bed, Marcanus and Simaus, have two separate dreams of Brioc ascending into heaven.[559] As the author reflects on the saint's death, he reminds the reader of the innumerable miracles Brioc performed during his life. He also adds proof of Brioc's status as a bishop, noting that an inscription was found on a marble stone placed upon

556 Tanguy, 'De Briomaglus à Briocus', 29.
557 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 183.
558 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 183. From Psalm 118:62.
559 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 186.

his grave. Even the author is aware of how vague the inscription is, as it does not provide more details of his episcopacy. The *Explicit,* later in the text, adds that the inscription read

> 'HIC JACET CORPUS BEATISSIMI CONFESSORIS BRIOCI EPISCOPI BRITANNIAE, QUOD DETULIT AD BASILICAM ISTAM, QUAE TUNC TEMPORIS ERAT SUA CAPELLA, ILISPODIUS, REX BRITANNORUM'.[560]
>
> (HERE LIES THE BODY OF THE BLESSED CONFESSOR BRIOC BISHOP OF BRITAIN, WHO IS BROUGHT TO THAT BASILICA, WHICH IN THAT TIME WAS HIS CHAPEL, BY ILISPODIUS, KING OF THE BRETONS)

This Ilispodius (Respoius), is Erispoë, who was ruler of Brittany from 851 to his death in 857. In the Battle of Jengland in 851, he and his forces defeated Charles the Bald, leading to a treaty concluded in Angers which confirmed Erispoë's title as *rex,* as well as other guarantees, in exchange for a promise of fidelity.[561] According to the Annals of Saint-Bertin, Erispoë, or *Respogius, filius Nomenogii* (son of Nominoë), met with Charles the Bald in the city of Angers in 851 and was given the powers his father, Nominoë held, along with Redon, Nantes, and the Pays de Retz. [562] René Couffon suggests that Erispoë wanted to give the abbey of Saint-Sergius a relic after his investment in Angers. There is no evidence of this,

560 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 189.
561 Smith, *Province and Empire*, pp 100-1.
562 *Annals of Saint Bertin*, ed. Dehaisnes, Chrétien, *Les annales de Saint-Bertin et de Saint-Vaast; suivies de Fragments d'une chronique inédite* (Paris, 1871), pp 77-78. 'Respogius, filius Nomenogii, ad Karolum veniens, in urbe Andegavorum datis manibus suscipitur, et tam regalibus indumentis quam paternae potestatis ditione donatur, additis insuper ei Redonibus, Namnetis et Ratense.' (Respogius, son of Nominoë, came to Charles, and was received in the city of Angers, and is given the royal garments of the power held by his father, adding to it Redon, Nantes, and Pays de Retz.)

apart from the inscription which is of dubious origins. The inscription claims that the basilica of Saint Sergius was previously saint Brioc's chapel, though again, there is no evidence to suggest this. Even the author of the *Vita Brioci* expresses his reticence at spreading incorrect information about the transfer of saint Brioc to Angers, commenting '…nos penitus reticere melius esse judicavimus quam frivolum aliquid sive fictitium ex nostra parte auribus inferre fidelium…' (we judged it to be better to remain deeply silent than to further something frivolous or fictitious from our part to the ears of the faithful…) There was also no practical reason to transfer relics from Brittany to Angers for safety. The Loire was a hot bed for viking activity from 843 onwards.[563] Angers, located along the Loire, was a prime location for viking incursions and in fact was the victim of several in the ninth century. In 854, just three years after Erispoë's investment, the Annals of Saint-Bertin inform us that the city of Angers was burned by vikings.[564] Anger was upriver from an island base the Northmen, led by a certain Oskar, had established on the Loire located between Nantes and Angers.[565] The site of Saint-Brieuc certainly encountered the vikings, though probably in the tenth century when the vikings occupied much of Brittany. The Camp de Péran, located a few kilometers from Saint-Brieuc, is a 'viking fortress' which was either constructed or reoccupied in the early tenth century and later destroyed. Neil Price hypothesizes that it was destroyed by Alain Barbetore, who landed in Dol in 936 and subsequently fought the vikings in a battle near Saint-Brieuc.[566]

563 Bishop Gunhard of Nantes was slaughtered by Northmen in 843, in what would mark the beginning of continuous incursions by the Northmen. Simon Coupland, 'The Vikings on the Continent in Myth and History' in *History*, 88:2 (2003); 191. Pierre Bauduin, *Les Vikings* (Paris, 2018), p. 4.
564 'Piratae Nortmannorum Ligere insistentes, denuo civitatem Andegavorum incendio concremant' (The pirates of the Northmen, persisting on the Loire, set fire to the city of Angers.) *Annals of Saint Bertin*, ed. Dehaisnes, p. 86.
565 Stephen M. Lewis, 'Vikings in Aquitaine and their connections, ninth to eleventh centuries' (PhD, L'Université de Caen Normandie, 2021), p. 149.
566 Neil Price, *The Vikings in Brittany* (London, 1989), p. 56.

However the relics of saint Brioc came to be in Angers, part of the relics were eventually brought back to the Church of Saint-Brieuc in 1210, thanks to the efforts of Saint-Brieuc's *antistes*, or bishop, Petrus. Without incurring the anger of the monks of Saint Sergius and Bacchus, Petrus is able to reach an agreement with them over the transfer of parts of Brioc's body back to Saint Brioc's original church, leaving the rest of Brioc's body in Angers for safekeeping. On the day that Saint-Brieuc received the relics of its patron, a procession was carried out, where clergy and layman alike gathered in great numbers. Count Alan of Brittany was among them, there to worship the saint's relics.[567] The author reports that as the relics entered the church, they began to move on their own, as if wanting to come out of the vessel. This was interpreted as a sign that the saint was overjoyed that his body had arrived back in Saint-Brieuc. The *Vita* ends with one last mention of the shrine's miracles;

> 'Sospitas ibidem diversis aegrotantibus morbis restituitur, pax in patria redditur, sterilitas fugatur, fecunditas propagator…'
>
> (In that very place, health is restored to the sickly with diverse illnesses, peace is restored to the country, sterility is banished, and fecundity is propagated…)[568]

The *Vita Brioci* accomplishes its main function: to create a *Life* for a saint whose relics were already venerated but needed a fully fleshed out written history. Very little of the *Vita* focuses on Saint Brioc's post-mortem activities or the activities of the bishopric of Saint-Brieuc after its founder's death. Instead, the focal point of the *Vita* is Brioc's founding of two monasteries in Brittany, Tréguier and Saint-Brieuc, and his origins and

567 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 190.
568 *Vita Brioci*, ed. François Plaine, 190.

continuous contact with his native Wales. The attention given to Brieuc's insular origins and his activity there is one indication that the Angers monk was indeed using an earlier Breton *Vita* when composing his own *Vita Brioci*. Further evidence to support this, other than the author's own admission, is the inclusion of various Breton place-names to describe Brioc's activities in Brittany. The sole exception is the author's description of Tréguier, as the mention of the port *Achim* is a later, and erroneous, borrowing from the *Vita* of Tugdual. Yet, as Bourges has noted, this seemingly lack of knowledge of Tréguier makes sense when we recall the way that the relationship between Tugdual and Brioc is presented, as kin rather than equals. The author is careful not to present Tugdual as a bishop.[569]

Gildas

The *Vita Gildae* is argued to have been composed in the eleventh century, based on ninth century material, but is unfortunately only extant in later manuscripts. There is a later twelfth century *Life* of Gildas, written by Caradoc of Llancarfan, which is known for its inclusion of Arthurian elements. The earlier Breton *Vita*, however, follows Gildas on his exodus from his native Britain to the newly colonized little Britain, Brittany, and his subsequent eremitical life in the Gulf of Morbihan. The author of this *Vita* is anonymous but was most definitely a monk of Rhuys, Gildas's establishment. Ferdinand Lot, the text's editor, believes the author to be Vitalis, the second abbot of the restored abbey St Gildas of Rhuys, but other scholars remain cautious in attributing the work to a particular individual.[570] Gildas's *De Excidio et conquestu Britanniae* has not failed to receive scholarly attention, but

569 André-Yves Bourges, 'Le dossier hagiographiques des origines de l'évêché de Saint-Brieuc: un silence chargé de sens'.
570 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Mélanges d'histoire bretonne: La Vie de saint Gildas' (1907), 275.

the scholarship on Gildas's first *Life* is surprisingly lacking.[571] Ferdinand Lot provided a useful commentary in his edition of the *Life*, noting that the only surviving texts we have of the *Vita Gildae* are from an edition by Joannes of Bosco in the *Floriacensis vetus bibliotheca* produced in 1605 and an edition by Mabillon from 1668. The latter claimed to have used a manuscript from Rhuys titled *ex cod. Ruyensi prodit integrior*, no longer extant. Lot believed Mabillon probably produced his edition using Bosco's earlier edition. He noted that chapter twelve contains the words 'jam factus monachus' and annotations in the margins which detail 'haec verba desunt in codice Gildasiano' (these words are missing in the Gildasian codex).[572] Both of these are found in Bosco's edition, which led Lot to believe that they result from a collation of both the manuscript from Rhuys and the edition by Bosco. It is worth noting that the monks of Rhuys also preferred Bosco's edition, even though it was incomplete, and it was probably included within the Cartulary of Rhuys. A monk of Rhuys informs us that the missing chapters in Bosco's edition were filled in using a text titled *Légendaire de Saint-Gildas au Bois*. This particular text contained details surrounding the exodus of the monks of Rhuys and Locminé that were unknown to any historian, as well as a third voyage to Ireland.[573]

Based on the passage that tells us that Felix was sent from his abbey of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire to restore the monasteries and churches of Brittany in 1008, scholars have made estimates about the date of the *Life*. Arthur de la Borderie proposed around 1030 as the date,

571 Several works have been written about Gildas and his work *De Excidio*, including Karen George (ed), *Gildas's De Excidio Britonum and the early British Church* (Woodbridge, 2009) and Michael Lapidge and David Dumville (eds), *Gildas: New Approaches* (Woodbridge, 1984). These works focus on Gildas' works and their dating, his latinity, and more generally the world he lived in. A monograph by Caroline Brett which properly discusses the *Life* of Gildas of Rhuys is forthcoming.
572 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1907), 248.
573 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1907), 251.

while Lot favoured the later date of around 1060, based on the author's life and certain incidents the author was eyewitness to.[574]

The history of the abbey of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys remains hazy. As Raphaël Valéry noted, scholars of Breton history do not question the existence of the abbey pre-Viking invasions.[575] The monks of Rhuys who fled around 920 returned after 1008.[576] Once they had returned, they recognized the need to create a reliable and legitimate story of their foundation. Valéry writes, 'Après la guerre de Cent Ans, les moines, en mal d'archives, rédigent un faux célèbre, la donation de Grallon de 399, qui est confirmée sans problème par le duc François II en 1477, puis par la duchesse Anne, et le roi Louis XII, en 1502' (After the Hundred Years War, the monks, in need of archives, write a famous forgery, the donation of Gradlon in 399, which is confirmed without a problem by Francis II in 1477, then by the duchess Anne, and king Louis XII in 1502).[577] In his 1929 article concerning the etymology of the name Gildas, Joseph Loth argued that the abbey did not exist before the Scandinavian invasions, based on the fact that there is no trace of it in archives before then.[578] This argument is frankly too underdeveloped to be accepted. More recent light has been shed on a manuscript of an inventory of books of the monastery of Saint-Sauveur and Saint-Gildas.[579] Scholars confirm that the monastery of Déols in Berry received monks who came from Rhuys, resulting in the inventory. The manuscript, preserved at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève de Paris, includes in its contents Rémi d'Auxerre, an author who died in 908, as its most recent author.[580] Not

574 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1907), 271.
575 Raphaël Valéry, 'La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys' in *Actes du Congrès du Sarzeau, Mémoires de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne*, 83 (2005), 30.
576 Valéry, 'La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys', 30.
577 Valéry, 'La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys', 30-31.
578 Joseph Loth 'Le nom de Gildas dans l'île de Bretagne, en Irlande et en Armorique' in *Études celtiques*, 46 (1927), pp 4-6.
579 Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève de Paris, MS 3340, pièce 23.
580 The list contains works by Alcuin, Jonas of Orléans, Amalaire, Raban Maur, Haymon d'Auxerre, and Jean Scot Eriugena, authors active before the tenth century. Valéry, 'La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys', 42.

ignoring the detail that the writing dates the document to the tenth or eleventh century, Valéry suggests that the list could be contemporaneous with the exile of the monks of Rhuys around 920.[581] Moreover, the list could very well be a copy of an earlier list made by the abbey of Rhuys pre-920.[582] While it is important to establish the foundations of the abbey of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys, this thesis is not concerned with when and how the abbey was actually founded, but rather how the monks of Rhuys remembered the foundation of their abbey.

Gildas is described as being a native of *Arecluta* to noble parents.[583] While *Arecluta* corresponds to modern-day Strathclyde, and most scholars have supported the argument that Gildas was a northerner, N.J. Higham has made a compelling argument based on textual analysis of the *De excidio* that Gildas originated from the south, particularly the region around Cirencester.[584] The opening chapter of the *Vita* contains a passage from Gildas's *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, yet another example of the text's notoriety in early Brittany. Gildas's family included his father Caunus, an unnamed mother, four other brothers, and a sister. All children, apart from one son, Cuillum, who succeeds his father's noble office, lead religious lives. One brother, Mailocus, builds a monastery in Lyuhes in the *pagus* of Elmail.[585] Another brother, Egreus, along with his brother Allecco and Peteova, settle in the remotest part of Wales, each building their own oratory. Gildas, on the other hand, is sent to study under Saint Illtud, who instructs him in divine scripture and liberal arts. Gildas's school companions included Samson, later bishop of Dol, and Paul Aurelian, but the hagiographer notes that Gildas surpassed them in genius. After several years under Illtud's tutelage, Gildas

581 Valéry, 'La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys', 37.
582 Valéry, 'La bibliothèque de la première abbaye de Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys', 41.
583 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Melanges d'histoire bretonne: Gildae vita et translatio' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 25:2 (1909), 348.
584 N.J. Higham, *The English Conquest: Gildas and Britain in the fifth century* (Manchester, 1994) pp 111-13.
585 Lot has identified this as Lowes in Elvael, in current day Radnorshire. See *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 349.

travels to *Iren*, or Ireland.[586] *Iren* appears to be based on the Old Irish genitive (Érenn) or the dative (Érinn) of the name of Ireland (nominative *Ériu*), which may hint at transmission through an oral source.

In Ireland, Gildas seeks out a number of schools of learning so that he may learn from other teachers '…philosophicis atque in divinis literis' (philosophy and divine literature).[587] After having been promoted to the sacred order, Gildas travels to northern Britain to convert the pagans and the un-orthodox Christians that had been led astray by certain heresies.[588] It is there, after successfully converting the people in northern Britain, that St Brigid, who was at the time an abbess in Ireland, sends Gildas a messenger, with the words:

> 'gaude, pater sancta ad semper in Domine polle. Obsecro te ut aliquod indicium tuae sanctitatis mihi transmitere digneris, ut semper apud nos tua vigeat perenniter memoria.'[589]
>
> (Rejoice, holy father strong in the Lord. I beseech you to send to me some indication of your sanctity, so that your memory may thrive among us forever.)

In response, Gildas fashions a bell with his own hands and sends it to her. Brigid is not the only Irish person who knows of his renown. King Ainmericus, who at the time was 'rex per totam Hiberniam' (king throughout all of Ireland), sends for Gildas, asking if he would come back to Ireland to restore ecclesiastical order in his realm because '…pene catholicam fidem in ipsa insula omnes reliquerant.' (almost all had relinquished the Catholic faith in that

586 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 354.
587 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 354.
588 The heresies the author of the *Life* mentions was no doubt Arianism. In his *De Excidio*, Gildas calls Arianism a 'vomiting foreign poison' which infected the Britons. Higham, *The English Conquest*, pp 18-19.
589 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 356-57.

island).[590] Gildas travels to Ireland and after a few days is escorted to King Ainmericus by noble men within whom he was already acquainted. The king presents a dire situation in Ireland: all the churches, from the greatest to the least, had lost the Catholic faith. Gildas travels throughout all the provinces of Ireland to restore churches, instruct clerics in those churches in the Catholic faith, cure people who had been affected by heresies, and drive away the authors of these heresies. He also increases the amount of clergy in Ireland, making monks out of noblemen, orphans, and poor pupils. Finally, he liberates those who had been made slaves by pagan tyrants.[591]

After Gildas's sojourn in Ireland, he travels back to Britain and then to Rome and Ravenna. On his voyage back to his *patria*, he enters Brittany, or *Letavia*, where he is greeted with honours and great praise. Wanting to leave behind worldly honours and lead a solitary life, he retreats to an island which was in the *pagus* of *Reuvisii*.[592] His presence, and his great light, as the *Vita* describes, draws crowds from both the local vicinity and greater distances to his dwelling, entrusting their sons to him so that they may learn from his teachings. Soon, a monastery is built in a *castrum in monte Reuvisii*, where he continues to teach the Christian doctrine and perform miracles.[593] An oratory is also built on the bank of the Blavet river.[594] The monastery draws monks from Britain to join Gildas ten years after he departed his homeland. It is at the behest of these brothers that Gildas writes his famous *epistolarum labellum,* better known as *De Excidio et conquest Britanniae*, a polemic against five contemporary kings of Britain and a lament of the plight of Britain. One of these kings is Conomerus (Conomor), a tyrant from northern Britain who has the cruel practice of slaying his wives upon learning that they are with child. He had disposed of so many women from

590 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 357.
591 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 359.
592 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 361.
593 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 362.
594 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 362.

noble families, that he unsurprisingly alienated these families. Conomerus fails to move Gildas with his petition, but he, according to faithful witnesses, orders Prince Werocus (Waroch), the Count of Vannes, to send his daughter to him.[595] Werocus, completely aware of Conomerus's intentions, resists until he concedes on one condition: that Gildas take charge of her safety. After the marriage, Conomerus slips back into his devious ways and decapitates his bride by the roadside, after she had escaped. At Werocus's insistence, Gildas travels to a Conomerus's lands to see if rumours of the murder were true. Gildas receives no welcome, nor is Conomerus repentant, so the saint leaves the tyrant's fate in God's hands. He prays, circles the fortification, takes a handful of earth, and throws it onto that fortification, causing the whole dwelling to collapse. Gildas finds the beheaded bride with child, Trifina, reattaches her head to her body, and commands her to arise. Trifina rises, with visions of martyrs fresh in her memory, and is restored to her father. Her child is born and is christened after his guardian, Gildas, though the hagiographer notes that the Bretons gave the boy the name Trechmorus. Trechmorus was taught 'liberalibus literarum' (liberal arts) by Gildas and led a holy life, while his mother, Trifina, retired in a nunnery.[596] Caroline Brett notes that stories about 'persecuted women and murdered child-saints' are common in hagiography produced in Wales, Strathclyde, and south-west Britain.[597] Conomor also frequently appears in Breton hagiography as a villain or Bluebeard type character, indicating that the Rhuys author employed a well-known trope. Moreover, the manner in which Conomor dies parallels the deaths of Vortigern and Benlii in the *Historia Brittonum*, perhaps indicating another source available to the Rhuys author.[598]

595 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot, 'Melanges d'histoire bretonne: Gildae vita et translation (Suite et fin)' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 25:3 (1909), 493-94.
596 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 497.
597 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 217.
598 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 217.

Gildas is in the island of Houat leading an eremitical life when an angel appears to him announcing his death.[599] Eight days from thence, Gildas would be released from the burden of his flesh and behold the face of God. He communicates this news to his brethren, and on the eight day, receives the Eucharist in his oratory. Anticipating the potential quarrel over his physical body, he instructs the monks to place him on a ship, with the stone that he originally intended to lie on under his shoulders, and set him adrift. The monks do so, but the inhabitants of Cornouaille try to bring Gildas's body to their territory. While disputing, the ship sinks into the waters, carrying the holy body with it. For months the monks of Rhuys try to find the holy body with no luck. Following three days of fasting, the monks finally find it 'integro et illaeso' (intact and unharmed) in *Croesti*, the house of the holy cross. The body is then transported back to the monastery where, according to the hagiographer, it continued to perform miracles and where

> 'per multa annorum curricula servabatur et ab universa Brittonum gente venerabiliter colebatur, quoniam innumerabiles ibi flebant virtutes.'[600]
>
> (through the course of many years it was kept and revered by all of the Breton nation, since innumerable virtues occurred there.)

The second part of the *Life* of Gildas recounts the geo-political events after his death and in what seems to be around the hagiographer's own time. The first sentence is loaded with implications. It begins by outlining the cruel slaying of the pious King Salomon, internecine warfare within Brittany, the Danes devastating the kingdom, as well as the Gauls who raided the seacoasts. The author describes how Brittany was cruelly ravaged both by its own inhabitants and by foreigners; its cities, monasteries, castles, churches, and homes were

599 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 499.
600 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 503.

burnt until the whole region was reduced to a 'solitudinem et vastum eremum' (desert and wasteland).[601] Alanus and Pasquetenus rule the province of Vannes, also called Bro Guerec, until Pasquetenus is captured by vikings and later murdered. Alanus subsequently rules that province alone with his sons. It is during this tumultuous time, the author explains, that the monasteries of Lochmenech and St Gildas are destroyed and the monks are forced to seek out new homes in 'Byturicensi regione' and other regions, bringing with them the bodies of holy saints, which at that time were venerated by the Bretons.[602] Daiocus, who was abbot of the monastery of Gildas at the time, buries some remains of Gildas, eight large bones, in the sepulchre of the Church, but the monks carry away the rest of Gildas' bones, along with the remains of Saint Paternus and other saints, and books and ornaments. We are informed that the monks of St Gildas are not the only ones suffering this fate, as 'Simili modo ex omni Britannia sanctorum corpora per diversas regiones sunt dispersa' (in a similar way the bodies of saints from all of Brittany were scattered among different regions).[603] In general, the author cannot emphasize enough the plight of the Bretons, who were scattered in several foreign regions, echoing the words of Gildas in his *De Excidio Britanniae*.[604]

Now came the task of restoring the region to its former strength. Those who had remained within the country and those who had exiled themselves band together to drive their enemies out of the region. Geoffrey, Duke of Rennes, summons Felix, a monk from the abbey of Fleury, to restore the monasteries in Brittany that had been destroyed.[605] Geoffrey later dies on a pilgrimage to Rome, but at the insistence of the Duchess Havoise and Judicaël, Bishop of Vannes, Felix, with the help others who flocked to help him, restores churches,

601 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 504.
602 The passage refers to the Bituriges, which were divided into two peoples: the Bituriges Cubi and the Bituriges Vivisci, located near modern day Bourges and Bordeaux.
603 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 505.
604 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 505.
605 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 505.

builds houses, and plants vineyards.[606] It is during this restoration project that the peasants rise up against the nobles, and the nobles rise up against the Duke, forcing Felix to return to Fleury, as he originally wanted, and leave the job to be completed by the late Duke's sons, Alain and Eudo. Felix is later given the abbacy of St Gildas.

With Felix's appointment as abbot of St Gildas, the story recounts local events. One night, Ehoarn, a servant of God living a solitary life in the area, is dragged out of his house attached to the church by robbers. Leopardus, one of the robbers, dashes Ehoarn's brains upon the doorstep of the church with an axe. Leopardus is immediately seized by a demon and wounds himself in the breast with a dagger and from then, never mentally recovers. The author reports that for twenty years they saw the man walking about completely naked, regardless of the season, tearing up any cloth or garment that was offered to him. Such was God's punishment and God's mercy.

The feast of St Gildas, which celebrates the transfer of his body to the church, attracts people from everywhere. One man, who is bedridden due to an illness, is carried by friends and neighbours to the burial place of Gildas, fervently believing that he will be the recipient of a miracle. His friends place him before the sepulchre of St Gildas, and while the vigils are being celebrated, the man stretches and then grows stiff, appearing to be dead. The people crowd around the sepulchre clamouring for him to be carried away but cannot even touch or reach him due to the multitude of people present. The monk Junior takes St Gildas's staff, and marking the cross three times upon the dead man's head, causes the man to rise up and declare 'nunquid non vidistis beatum Gildam stantem super istum lapidem et sua me manu erigentem?' (did you not see blessed Gildas stand upon that stone and raising me with his

606 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 507.

hand?).[607] The author adds that when he was relating this miracle to some nobles before the church in Plomorcat, the very man was there and affirmed with an oath that what he said was true. The story of this miracle spread throughout Brittany and drew people seeking healing from far parts of the region. Dongual, a man from Ilfintic, miles and miles from the monastery of St Gildas, is brought to the sepulchre on account of his severe illness. He is healed in very much the same way, and the author claims that lately saw the man in good health.[608]

The venerable lives of two laymen monks, Gingurianus and Gulstan, are remarked upon in the last three chapters of the *Life*. As the author begins describing a quarrel between monasteries over the holy body of Gulstan, the *Life* stops abruptly and is left incomplete.

Despite the incompletion of the text and the misfortune of the manuscript no longer being extant, the *Vita Gildae* is arguably one of the richest texts of early Brittany. The specificity in several passages indicates that the author, and by extension the community of Rhuys, had sufficient knowledge about the events and characters described in the *Vita* to give the text authority. If we are uncynical, the fact that the author not only knew the names of Gildas's brothers and sisters, but also knew about their subsequent religious lives, including the location of the monastery established by his brother Mailocus, hints at possible networks of information across both sides of the Channel. What is more, the act of remembering the names of Gildas' family was also an act of commemoration.[609] More impressive is the details given about Ireland, which is unusual in a Breton hagiographical context. We can extract a few useful details from the passage which recounts Gildas' service to Ireland. Ainmericus,

607 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 511.
608 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 512.
609 John Mitchell, 'The Early Medieval Monastery as a Site of Commemoration and Place of Oblivion' in A.W. Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel (eds) *Memory and Oblivion: Proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art held in Amsterdam, 1–7 September 1996* (Amsterdam, 1999), p. 455.

king of all of Hibernia, can be identified as Ainmuire mac Sétnai, mentioned in the Irish Annals and by Adomnán in his *Life of Columba*. He is mentioned in the Annals of Ulster and the Annals of Tigernach under 561 as one of the victors of the battle of Cúil Dreimne. In C563, following a description of the battle Móin Daire Lothair, he is called King Ainmire once he has taken the possessions of Sétna, his father. Gildas himself is mentioned in the Annals as well. His death date is recorded in the Annals of Ulster under the year U570. One of the later copies of the *Annales Cambriae*, originally compiled in the end of the tenth century, notes for 565 'The voyage of Gildas to Ireland'.[610] Because this entry does not feature in the Harleian MS of the *Annales Cambriae*, which is the earliest, it is unlikely that the monk of Rhuys used the Welsh Annals as his source. More likely, the monk of Rhuys used Adomnán's work as inspiration. Written sometime between 697 and 700, the *Vita Columbae* recounts the aftermath of the battle of *Cule-Drebene* and Ainmore, son of Setna, as one of the victors.[611] The inclusion of Ainmericus, a king attested as being contemporaneous with Gildas's *floruit*, is curious and we can speculate how a Breton monk of Rhuys knew of him.

The monks of St Gildas of Rhuys also knew something about Irish ascetic ideologies. It is also telling that Gildas's ascetic practices lend the idea that he experienced a prolonged martyrdom. Standing vigil during the night without any support for his body and eating meagre amounts of food only three times a week from the age of fifteen onwards, Gildas is presented as a spiritual warrior who punished his body to resist the temptations of the devil. In particular, the use of the word martyrdom to describe his ascetic life is a unique feature compared to other Breton *Vitae*, which prefer to draw parallels with the Desert Fathers. Instead, it is possible that the composer of the *Life* of Gildas of Rhuys chose to reference the

610 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. James Ingram (London, 1912)
611 Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (Oxford, 1991), pp 30-31.

Irish concept of three types of martyrdom. Although none of the colours of martyrdom is mentioned, Gildas easily falls under the category of white martyrdom, reserved for 'those whose ascetic discipline made their lives a kind of daily immolation for Christ.'[612] The concept of red, white, and blue martyrdom was known in Brittany, as evidenced by the fact that the *Catechesis Celtica*, Vatican reg. lat. 49, was most likely written in Brittany.[613] The *Catechesis Celtica*, which dates to the late ninth or tenth century, features passages interpreting different colours and their association with martyrdom. The collection's glosses make it clear that it was written in a Brittonic speaking area, but the author also incorporates Latin words and phrases that were typically Irish. Clare Stancliffe concludes that the Collection is the result of compilations from Irish and Carolingian sources and took its final form in Brittany.[614]

Aside from demonstrating an adequate knowledge of Ireland, the author of Gildas's *Life* was keen to show his founder's impact on Ireland. Speaking on behalf of the people of Ireland, Brigid asks Gildas to send a sign of his holiness so that he may always live on in their memory.[615] The author believes that Gildas is venerated in Ireland and is a key figure in the memory of the Irish Church. It is not surprising that the author chooses to have perhaps the preeminent Christian authority in Ireland, Brigid, voice these words. It also suggests a link with Leinster, the province most closely associated with Wales. Gildas receives an Irish education and is given sacred orders in Ireland, which he then uses to restore the Christian faith in Britain. He has clearly built a network in Ireland because later, when he is invited by King Ainmericus to restore the churches in Ireland, he is escorted by noblemen known to

612 Clare Stancliffe, 'Red, white and blue martyrdom' in Dororthy Whitelock, Rosamund McKitterick, and David N. Dumville (eds) *Ireland in early medieval Europe: studies in memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 21.
613 Stancliffe, 'Red, white and blue martyrdom', p. 24.
614 Stancliffe, 'Red, white and blue martyrdom', p. 25.
615 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 356-57.

him. His successful mission in Ireland, which not only sees the restoration of its Churches but also the proliferation of new clerics, further confirms his place within the memory of the Irish Church. By highlighting these successful missions, the author gives the abbey of St Gildas of Rhuys a genealogy that stretches across the Channel into Britain and Ireland, before Gildas even settled in Brittany. Through this process the community of St Gildas of Rhuys is given a long history and incorporated into this memory of the Irish Church.

As discussed earlier, the driving force behind the writing of the *Vita Gildae* was the need to establish a reliable history of the abbey and its founder after its destruction and subsequent re-founding in the eleventh century. In the second half of the *Vita*, a national crisis is presented in which the legitimate ruler of Brittany, King Salomon is murdered, the Bretons are at war with one another, and the Gauls and Danes take advantage of the chaos to wreak havoc on the coasts of Brittany. In the middle of this tumult, the monks of St Gildas are forced to flee, hiding some bones of their founder under the sepulchre and bringing the rest with them. Having highlighted the need to write the *Life*, the remaining second half of the *Life* aims to situate the abbey within the wider political and religious currents in Brittany. More specifically, it places the abbey of St Gildas of Rhuys at the axis of these events to confirm its place as an eminent religious center in Brittany.

The *Life* gives us some details regarding commemoration practices within the community. After Gildas' body is found after missing for three months, the author tells us that the monks of Rhuys carried the body to the monastery with hymns and praises, while the lay people followed them 'cum gaudio et laeticia magna' (with great joy and happiness), essentially creating a procession.[616] Ever since then, the eleventh of May, Gildas's feast day,

616 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 503.

was celebrated up to the hagiographer's own time among the provincials of Vannes. The *Vita Gildae* itself was no doubt read among the community of Rhuys on this day as well.

The commemoration of the memory of Gildas manifested also materially, through the veneration of Gildas's sepulchre and the relics contained within. The abbey of St Gildas of Rhuys is a buzzing hub for the Bretons because of the relics of its founder. When the monks are compelled to take the relics of the abbey with them, the author remarks how these relics were venerated by the Bretons. Once the relics are restored, they serve as vehicles for the memory of Gildas. The author notes that on the feast day of St Gildas, God performed many miracles through Gildas' grave, and for that reason it was venerated by all the Bretons.[617] Thus, the miracles that Gildas performs through his tomb draw the lay community within the memory of the monks of Landévennec. The passage which recounts the miracle healing of Dongual, a man from Iffendic, at least a hundred kilometers from St Gildas of Rhuys, demonstrates the extent of Gildas' influence.[618] The author candidly shares that he was a witness to some of these miracles, demonstrating how the memory of Gildas and the memory of the Breton community were joined in his mind.

This oral history of Gildas's miracles best fits Jan Assmann's description of communicative memory, which 'does not extend more than eighty to (at the very most) one hundred years into the past, which equals three or four generations or the Latin *saeculum*.'[619] The author of Gildas's *Vita* recalls miracles within his own generation, but either cannot recall miracles from generations past, or is concerned with showing the continuous power of Gildas' shrine, even in his own time. Both cases are likely, considering that the abbey sought

617 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 503.
618 *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 511.
619 Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', 127.

to bring pilgrims to Gildas's shrine and word of recent miracles served as prime advertisement for the shrine.

The *Vita Gildae* presents the history of an abbey that had long-established links with Britain and Ireland through the origin and activities of its founder, St Gildas, and a position as a preeminent abbey in Brittany for serving the spiritual needs of the Bretons. The abbey of St Gildas of Rhuys was primarily concerned with recalling and preserving Gildas's *Life* in Britain and Ireland, as well his founding of their abbey. While the miracles of the saint are glorified, his post-mortem miracles, particularly those stemming from his shrine, seem to be remembered and passed down among the laity, and used by the monks of Rhuys to exalt the abbey. Thus, the cultural memory and communicative memory of Gildas do not operate in opposition but in tandem.

Chapter 4: The Dynastic Saints

In this chapter we turn further east, to explore two later saints' *Lives* that feature two Breton dynasties: the Riwal dynasty and the dynasty of Nominoë. Oddly enough, knowledge of the Riwal dynasty which stemmed from Domnonia, in north-western Brittany, spread into north-eastern France, Flanders, and Britain as the cults of the Riwal saints developed in these areas.

The Riwal Dynasty

The Riwal dynasty, named after its founder, Riwal, is first mentioned in Wrdisten's *Vita Winwaloei*, which identifies Riwal as *dux* of Dumnonia. The dynasty lay claim to three saints: Judicaël, Judoc, and Winnoc. The Riwal genealogy is featured in the *Vita Secunda Iudoci*, written by Isembard of Fleury around 1020, and the *Vita Secunda Winnoci*, written around 1064. This somewhat historical genealogy was a collaborative creation between the Rennes and Dol-Combour families. Riwal was regarded as the father of Roiantelina, the female founder of the Dol-Combour dynasty, and the name Rivallon was a name that persisted within the dynasty.[620] The genealogy is focused on Judicaël and was produced either at Saint-Méen, where Judicaël relics once were, or in Saint-Jouin-de-Marnes or Saint-Florent de Saumur, where they were subsequently taken following Viking attacks.[621] The genealogy in the *Vita Secunda Iudoci* describes the lineage in great detail:

620 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago,* p. 194.
621 Ibid.

> ‘Riwal, the duke of Brittany, was the son of Deroch, the son of Withol, the son of Urbien, the son of Cathov, the son of Gerento. This Riwal, coming from Britain beyond the sea with a multitude of ships, took possession of the whole of lesser Britain in the time of Chlothar, king of the Franks, who was the son of King Clovis. This Riwal begat a son named Deroch, Deroch begat Riatha, and Riatha begat Jonas, and Jonas begat Judual, and Judual begat Juthael, and Juthael begat the holy king Judicael, and St Judoc, and saint Winnoc…’[622]

This excerpt even includes the names of the daughters of Juthael. An eleventh-century insertion in the *Vita Secunda Winnoci* describes the genealogy similarly, using the same model:

> ‘Riwal duc de Bretagne était le fils de Deroch, fils de Withol, fils d’Urbien, fils de Catov, fils de Gerenton. Ce Riwal, venant de Grande-Bretagne avec une multitude de navires prit possession de toute la petite Bretagne, à l’époque de Clotaire, roi de Francs qui était le fils de Clovis.’ [623]
>
> (Riwal duke of Brittany was the son of Deroch, son of Withol, son of Urbien, son of Catov, son of Gerenton. This Riwal, coming from Great Britain with a multitude of ships took possession of all of Brittany, in the era of Clotaire, king of the Franks who was the son of Clovis.)

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622 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 193-94.
623 Bernard Merdrignac, ‘Généalogies et secrets de famille’ in Louis Lemoine and Bernard Merdrignac (eds) *Corona Monastica: Moines bretons de Landévennec: histoire et mémoires celtiques. Mélanges offerts au père Marc Simon* (Rennes, 2004), open edition https://books.openedition.org/pur/20171?lang=en, accessed 14/2/23.

Although Judicaël settled in Gaël abbey in Brittany, and died in the province, his successors Judoc and Winnoc ventured east, resulting in saintly careers in what is now north-eastern France and Flanders. Because of the manuscript tradition of these saints' *Lives*, which will be discussed below, only part of Judoc's hagiographical dossier can be studied properly.

Judoc

Saint Judoc was a seventh-century Breton saint who settled and died in Ponthieu (Pas-de-Calais) leaving behind the abbey of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer.[624] The details surrounding the origins of this abbey are not well recorded. The first mention of it is in Alcuin's letters in the late eighth century. Alcuin mentions, in several letters, his presence 'apud sanctum Iodocum' (at saint Judoc's) and, according to a letter from Lupus of Ferrières, was granted the cell of St Judoc by Charlemagne, for the purpose of providing hospitality to English and Irish pilgrims on their way to Rome.[625] Therefore, the cell of St Judoc existed from at least the early 790s.[626] Saint-Josse-sur-Mer, near the port of Quentovic, might also have been a key location for missionaries from these lands as well.

There are several patchy *Vitae* and liturgical texts dedicated to Judoc. Most of these texts, if not all, were not even written in Brittany. Furthermore, as can be expected with texts about an early medieval Breton saint, the copies in which they survive are problematic. The first *Life* of Judoc, the *Vita Prima sancti Judoci*, was probably produced around 920 by a

624 Hubert Le Bourdellès, 'Tradition celtique dans la *Vita prima* de Saint Josse' in Louis Lemoine and Bernard Merdrignac (eds) *Corona Monastica, Moines bretons de Landévennec: histoire et mémoire celtiques* (Rennes, 2004), open edition https://books.openedition.org/pur/20136?lang=en, accessed 16/1/2023.
625 Michael Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester' in *Journal of Medieval Latin,* 10 (2000), 259; *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, pp 870-76; Victor Sobreira, 'La pénurie comme instrument dans le conflits fonciers: Loup de Ferrières et la celle de Saint-Josse (840-852)' in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Moyen Âge*, 131:1 (2019), https://journals.openedition.org/mefrm/5439#quotation, accessed 28 March 2023.
626 Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 259.

Breton monk.[627] Hubert Le Bourdellès, the editor of the *Life*, painstakingly pieced together nineteen manuscripts to produce the edition.[628] He proposed that this monk who wrote the *Vita Prima* was a Landévennec monk living in Montreuil-sur-Mer, which happens to be near Ponthieu. It explains, as he would have it, the attention to Breton genealogy, knowledge of King Judicaël and of a Breton monastery, and of the road leaving Brittany, among other details.[629] It also makes sense chronologically, as the Bretons in Montreuil-sur-Mer were present there from 913 to 931.[630] There is also evidence that the author of Judoc's *Vita Prima* was influenced by the *Vita Winwaloei*, further supporting Le Bourdellès's theory.

The *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci* is important not only for studying the evolution of Breton saints' cults outside Brittany, but also for its inclusion of King Judicaël, who is described as Judoc's brother. King Judicaël was a seventh-century Breton king of Domnonia subsequently venerated as a saint who is notably mentioned in the *Vitae* of Samson of Dol and Fredegar's *Chronica*, where he is depicted as a God fearing man who does not want to dine with the Frankish King Dagobert.[631] The *Vita Eligii* also makes reference to this episode with Dagobert.[632] The first mention of Judicaël as a saint appears in a charter of Louis the Pious in the ninth century referring to the church of St Méen and St Judicaël.[633] A *Historia de Sancto Iudicaelo* was written by Ingomar of Saint-Méen in the eleventh century, but only survives in tricky excerpts from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.[634]

627 Le Bourdèlles, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer vers 920', p. 48.
628 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, pp 910-12. For an analysis of two of these manuscripts, see Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne,* pp 105-07.
629 Le Bourdellès, 'Tradition celtique dans la *Vita prima* de Saint Josse'.
630 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 902.
631 'Sed tamen cum Dagobertum ad minsam nec ad prandium discumbere noluit, eo quod esset Iudechaile relegiosus et temens Deum valde.' (But still he would not sit to eat at the table with Dagobert, because Iudicael was a religious man and very God fearing) Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its continuations,* ed. and trans. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, 1960), p. 66.
632 Sowerby, 'The Lives of St Samson', 17.
633 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic* Archipelago, p. 194.
634 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 201.

In the prologue of the *Vita Prima*, the author reveals that they are not working from a previous text, but are relying on local oral traditions of the saint. We also learn that the intended audience of the text is the community of monks at St-Josse-sur-Mer, as the author writes, 'petitionem quidem vestram fratres minime denegare volens, qua me vitam vel actus beati iudoci sacerdotis, secundum narrationum vestrarum exempla scribere rogastis...' (Indeed, not wanting to deny your request, brothers, by which you asked me to write the life or deeds of the blessed priest Judoc, according to the examples of your narratives.)

Le Bourdellès has noted the influence of Alcuin's *Vitae*, particularly his prologues, on the prologue of the *Vita Prima*.[635]

Judoc is described as from the royal line of Brittany, the son of *Iuthail*, or Juthaël, and brother to *Iudichail*, or Judicaël.[636] Judicaël assumed the throne after his father's death, but, after a time, shaved his head and joined the church. He did not remain tonsured for long, because he assumed the crown yet again, though he was repentant a few years into his reign.

The author then introduces Caroth, a servant of God who is meant to advise Judicaël on how he should go about his penitence. Caroth urges Judicaël to abdicate the throne in favour of his brother Judoc, who would manage the kingdom well. Judoc does not find his brother's decision agreeable, and instead heads to a monastery called Lanmailmon, where he dedicates himself to learning his letters. There, he meets eleven people on route to Rome. Although still a layman, Judoc joins them with nothing but his staff and his tablet. After crossing the Couesnon river, Judoc is made a cleric. The author describes the several stages of Judoc's journey to Paris, and mentions the cities *Abrincatis* (Avranches), *Carnotus* (Chartres), and Paris.[637] The travellers reach *Pontivo*, Ponthieu, and are kindly received by the local duke Haymon. Haymon sees that the young Judoc is full of divine grace and

635 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, pp 903-04.
636 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 917.
637 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 918.

exceeds his eleven religious companions in piety. He decides to keep Judoc in his company, and gives the others his blessing to depart and continue on their journey to Rome. This conveniently gives Judoc a legitimate excuse for not progressing to his original destination. Judoc moves up the ecclesiastical ranks thanks to Haymon's patronage and serves as priest for seven years in his chapel. Haymon's son, Ursinus, is baptized by Judoc.

After seven years, Judoc pursues an eremitical life, desiring 'secretiori loco vitam ducere' (to lead his life in a more secret place).[638] In a location named *Brahic*, surrounded on all sides by the river *Aleiae* (Authie), Judoc constructs his hermitage. The construction of his hermitage is soon followed by a church and a *domuncula*, or a small house. Judoc lives in his cell with his disciple Vurmarius. One day, the author recounts, there is only one piece of bread for the both of them. While Judoc is in the church praying to God, a poor man knocks on the door asking for sustenance. Hearing the beggar, Judoc asks his disciple Vurmarius how much bread is left, to which he responds that they have only one to live on for the time being. Judoc tells him to divide the bread into two, and divide it again, and give a section to the beggar. After a short interval, another beggar comes asking for the same and receives another quarter of the bread. Yet another beggar arrives soon after, so that only one quarter of bread remains for the two monks. When Vurmarius suggests that they keep the last quarter of bread for themselves, Judoc echoes Luke 6:38, 'date et dabitur vobis' (give and it will be given to you).[639] With his faith strengthened, Vurmarius gives away the last quarter of bread. Not a second after he finishes lecturing Vurmarius, four boats full of food and drink appear on the river and the two monks are finally provided with their necessary sustenance. The author ends the miracle by stating that even though there was very little bread, Judoc gave it to the needy without hesitation, and received a plenitude of food in return.

638 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 919.
639 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 921.

After eight years, Judoc leaves this place and relocates to *Runiac*, along the river Canche, and after fourteen years, has Haymon find a new location for him in a forest along the sea, at the mouth of the Canche. It is here, while Haymon is hunting a boar and Judoc is scouting for a spot for his hermitage, that Judoc miraculously creates a fountain with his staff to quench his patron's thirst. This fountain was venerated by those far and wide in the author's own day and cured many maladies.[640] Furthermore, it is not far from this fountain that Judoc chooses his final residence and constructs two wooden oratories, one dedicated to St Peter, and the other to St Paul.

With Haymon's permission, Judoc is at last able to complete his pilgrimage to Rome. He brings back with him the relics of numerous saints. On his return, a blind girl's vision is restored when she washed herself with the water Judoc used to wash his hands. The monks of St-Josse-sur-Mer placed a wooden cross on this site, to commemorate this miracle. The author remarks that the cross still existed in their day and that the site was called *Crux*. A stone church dedicated to St Martin is built to house the relics that Judoc has brought back from Rome. Haymon later gives the church and its dependencies to Judoc, along with another property named *Locum*.

Judoc dies on the thirteenth of December, and is succeeded by his nephews, *Winnoch* and *Arnoch*. His incorruptible corpse is regularly washed and maintained, still performing miracles after the soul departed. Haymon's much less pious successor, *Drochtricus*, has the misfortune of forcing open the sepulchre to see if the claims of the body's preservation are true. He cries, 'Ah, sancte Iudoce' and is immediately struck dumb and completely immobile for the rest of his life.[641] To compensate the saint for the insult and save her husband's soul, Drochtricus's wife donates several of her lands to the saint, including properties in Crépigny.

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640 'Revera sepius illic infirmi venientes eiusdem fontis gustu sanitatem recepisse plures qui bene noverunt affirmant.' (In fact, often many affirm that the infirm who came there received health by the taste of the fountain) *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 924.
641 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 927.

The *Vita* ends by lauding the miracles that those who frequented the saint's tomb receive. The mute receive hearing, the blind receive sight, the lame can now walk, and all other infirm individuals leave the tomb in perfect health.[642]

London BL Royal 8.B.XIV (eleventh-century) contains the only early version of the *Vita Secunda* of Judoc, allegedly written by Isembard of Fleury c.1010-1020. Unfortunately, the manuscript is acephalous and only contains fragments of the saint's *Vita*, *Inventio* and *Miracula*, as well as a *Sermo*.[643] It is worth noting that the author of the *Life* knew of the Riwal genealogy and possibly of the *Historia Britonnum*.[644] This only confirms the Breton influence of Fleury.

As mentioned above, the *Vita Secunda* of Judicaël, written by Isembard of Fleury around 1020, survives in three later manuscripts.[645] These are BnF Lat. 6003, BnF Lat. 9888, and BnF Lat. 9889. BnF Lat. 6003 includes the *Chronicon Briocense*, or Chronicle of Brieuc, by Pierre Le Baud, and 'De origine ac rebus gestis Armoricae Britanniae Regum, Ducum et Principum, ab excessu Conani Meriadeci, ad Francisci usque postremi Ducis et Annae ejus filiae tempora, cujus matrimonio in Francorum regiam Ducatus concessit' by Bertrand d'Argentré.[646] The *Chronicon Briocense* in this manuscript is a copy executed in the beginning of the fifteenth century based on an original that is no longer extant. Only the first 143 folios of the manuscript include the *Chronicon* proper, whereas MS Lat. 9888, discussed below, also a copy of the *Chronicon Briocense* from the fifteenth century, contains 147 folios of the *Chronicon*.[647] The text's translators, Gwenaël Le Duc and Claude Sterckx, argued that

642 'Hinc vero mutis loquelam, surdis auditum, caecis visum, claudis gressum, infirmis etiam quibusque venientibus meritis beati ludoci intervenientibus frequenter ad eius tumbam, Dominus et Redemptor noster sanitatem redintegrare plenam dignatus.' *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 927.
643 Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 103.
644 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 193.
645 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 863.
646 BnF MS. Lat. 6003 is available online through microfilm, although the quality is poor. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9077923h, accessed 16/1/2023.
647 BnF MS Lat. 9888 is available online through microfilm, but it is hard to work with due to the poor quality. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90777262/f14.item, accessed 16/1/2023.

the copyist of MS Latin 9888 read the exemplar more carefully.[648] It is Pierre Le Baud who attributed the text to Ingomar. The *Chronicon Briocense* includes an extract of the genealogy of the royal dynasty of Domnonée which includes Judual, Judhaël, and Judicaël. Judicaël's nineteen brothers and sisters are named.[649]

BnF Lat. 9889, an obituary of Saint-Méen, contains the *Vita sancti Mevenni* (f.110), excerpts on Judicael and Judoc (fol. 122 and fol. 150), the *Vita beati Petroci* (fol. 142), and the *Vita Sancti Alani* (fol. 154). The excerpt on Judicaël, titled 'De sancti Judicaelo rege hystoria' in red, is admittedly very difficult to work with because of its overall wordiness. According to André-Yves Bourgès, the excerpt was meant to be read over three nocturnes of the office. This is evident as the excerpt begins with 'Quadam autem nocte cum Iudael…' (fol. 122). The author also tells us that he is an adherent to the Benedictine rule when he writes that the community was, 'sub norma beati Benedicti' (under the norm of Benedict).[650] It is worth noting that Dom H. Morice's 'Extrait des actes de saint Judicaël', which has been regarded as an edition of this excerpt, is not a faithful edition at all.[651] François Plaine edited an excerpt from the *Vita Sancti Mevenni* which describes Judicaël.[652] All in all, these excerpts are so convoluted that any attempt to piece together an intelligible and coherent *Life* for Judicaël would be another project entirely.

The metrical *Vita sancti Iudoci* takes us away from Brittany and to eleventh-century England, where it was produced by the abbey of New Minster in Winchester, a Benedictine abbey founded in 901.[653] There are English sources, namely, the *Liber vitae* of New Minster

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648 *Chronicle of Saint-Brieuc*, ed. Gwenaël Le Duc and Claude Sterckx, *Chronique de Saint-Brieuc, Texte critique et traduction (Chapitres I à CIX),* (Rennes, 1972), i, p. 7.
649 Bourgès, 'Le dossier littéraire des saints Judicaël, Méen et Léri'.
650 BnF MS Lat. 9889, fol. 132v.
651 Bourgès, 'Le dossier littéraire des saints Judicaël, Méen et Léri'. The excerpt is present in Dom. H. Morice, *Mémoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne*, 2 vols (Paris, 1742), i, pp. 204-06. Jean-Luc Deuffic informed me of an unpublished transcription by Gwenaël Le Duc which may be in Landévennec.
652 Part of the excerpt was edited by François Plaine in 'Excerpta ex Vita Inedita S. Judicaeli S. Mevenni Discipuli' in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 3 (1884), 157-58.
653 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, p. 881.

and the Breviary of Hyde Abbey, which confirm the translation of Judoc's relics to Winchester.[654] The metrical *Vita sancti Iudoci* is contained in BL MS Royal 8.B.XIV and has been edited by Michael Lapidge in 2000.[655] The manuscript once consisted of ten separate parts, and in his analysis of the script Lapidge notes that the first nine items relating to Judoc were written in a Continental hand, suggesting composition on the Continent (perhaps St-Josse-sur-Mer), while the metrical *Life* was written by two English scribes later.[656] Even at first glance it is evident that the metrical *Life* was heavily, if not entirely, based on the *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, but the authors, keen to display their extensive reading, show knowledge of several Classical poets, Christian Latin poets, and Anglo-Latin poets.[657]

The metrical *Life* still highlights Judoc's illustrious Breton origins, but some key details are notably absent. Firstly, the author of the *Life* excluded the section which mentions Judoc's stay at the monastery *Lanmailmon*, where he studied letters, to avoid assuming his brother Judicaël's throne. The result is a rather abrupt and awkward transition. The author writes, 'Interea Romam pergentes nam peregrinos ante Dei templum dum staret vidit…' (Meanwhile, as he was standing before the church, Judoc saw some pilgrims on their way to Rome).[658] Moreover, when narrating the itinerary of Judoc and his companions, the author found it apt to insert a note about Chartres, or *Carnotus*, in the text; 'civitas est quedam Carnotus denique dicta' (Chartres is the name of a city).[659] When mentioning Amiens, the author notes that 'Inde reflectentes callem uenere metroplim Ambianis quamdam prisco sub tempore factam.' (Then, turning back to the trail, they arrived at Amiens, a metropolis established in ancient times).[660] This addition of a reference to Amiens' antiquity is not

654 Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 262.
655 Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 255-306. Poulin argues that this metrical *Life* is a separate codicological unit. See, Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 103. BL MS Royal 8.B.XIV is not digitized and I did not have time to consult it in person.
656 Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 264.
657 Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 269.
658 Lapidge's translation, not my own. 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 278-79.
659 Ibid.
660 Ibid.

mentioned in the *Vita prima*. This raises the question of who the intended audience of the metrical *Life* was. The edits, then, tailored the *Life* to suit an English audience who were largely unfamiliar with niche Breton place-names and even larger cities in Francia.

The chapter which describes the miracle where Judoc restores the sight of a blind girl, as well as the venerated site of *Crux*, in Ponthieu, confirms this. The author informs us of the sepulchre of Judoc well before Judoc has gone on pilgrimage to Rome, much less died. He writes that the body was kept in the sepulchre (St. Josse-sur-Mer) for many years but 'Ista tamen nunc Anglia condit eundem (auspice quippe Deo Wentana pausat in urbe), translatum caute per quendam qui fuit inde' (This England now possesses him: through God's protection he lies in Winchester, having been translated circumspectly by someone who was from there).[661] The decision to proudly mention Winchester's possession of Judoc's corporeal relics well in advance, rather than in the chapters which report the post-mortem miracles performed at the tomb, was no doubt meant to place Winchester on higher footing than Judoc's original establishment, which no longer housed his relics. The English metrical *Life* of Judoc would be a useful source to study the impact the expanding Breton diaspora had on religious culture outside Brittany, but is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this thesis.

There is no evidence that the *Vitae* of Winnoc, the last saint in the Riwal dynasty, were written by Bretons, even ones outside of Brittany.[662] Winnoc was a Breton saint who travelled to the monastery of Saint-Omer in Flanders with three Breton companions, Quadanocus, Ingenocus, and Madocus, before founding a cell in Wormhout.[663] He would later become enshrined in Bergues.[664] The first text dedicated to this saint, the *Vitae* of Audomarus, Bertinus, Winnocus, links Winnoc with the *Lives* of Omer and Bertin and was

661 Lapidge, 'A Metrical "Vita S. Iudoci" from Tenth-Century Winchester', 292-93.
662 For a brief discussion of the background of the author see Nicholas Huyghebaert, 'Hagiographie et réforme grégorienne: l'auteur de la "Vita secunda Sancti Winnoci"' in *Revue du Nord*, 204 (1970), 133.
663 Wilhelm Levison, 'Vitae Audomari, Bertini, Winnoci' in Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison (eds) *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici*, 7 vols. (Hanover, 1910), iii, p. 770.
664 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 192.

likely written in the community of Sithiu, founded by Omer and Bertin.[665] Levison, the editor of this collection of *Vitae,* posits that they were written in the ninth century, although David Defries argues for a date of c. 740, primarily based on evidence from the text, such as Winnoc's death in 717 and the fact that the text was written for the community of Sithiu before it split in the 830's.[666] Even Levison observed that although his name was well-known among the Bretons, little is known about the deeds of Winnoc.[667] Even in this first *Vita*, Winnoc is simply described as a Briton.[668] Winnoc's first *Vita* has received very little attention as opposed to the *Vita Secunda Winnoci*, which was also produced in eleventh-century Flanders.[669] Again, while study of Winnoc's dossier would reveal much about the spread of Breton saints' cults outside of Brittany, it is outside the limits of this research.

It is interesting that although there was an active interest in the genealogies of the Riwal saints, their Insular origins played no role in their *Vitae*. With the exception of the *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, the other *Vitae*, or what fragments we have, were written by non-Breton authors, who, although concerned with establishing the Riwal saints' royal lineages, were not concerned with their British ancestry. Although written by a Landévennec monk in exile, the *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci* was not written for the community of Landévennec at Montreuil-sur-Mer, but the community of St Josse-sur-Mer, according to their own 'narratives' as the author reminds us.[670] In other words, the *Vita Prima* of Judoc reflected the *Life* of a saint who, although Breton in origin, was deeply embedded in the religious landscape and culture of north-eastern France.

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665 Levison, 'Vitae Audomari, Bertini, Winnoci', p. 731.
666 Levison, 'Vitae Audomari, Bertini, Winnoci', p. 741 and David Defries, 'Constructing the past in eleventh-century Flanders: Hagiography at Saint-Winnoc' (M.A., Ohio State University, 2004), pp 268-69.
667 'Ceterum de gestis Winnoci, cuius nomen apud Britones saepius occurrit, nihil fere compertum est.' in Levison, 'Vitae Audomari, Bertini, Winnoci', p. 736.
668 'Inter quos quattuor religiosi viri ex longe remota Brittonum terra…' (Among whom were four religious men from the distant land of the Britons.) in Levison, 'Vitae Audomari, Bertini, Winnoci', p. 770.
669 Nicholas Huyghebaert, 'La *Vita Secunda S. Winnoci* restituée a l'hagiographie gantoise' in *Revue Bénédictine*, 81:3-4 (1971), 216.
670 *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*, ed. Hubert Bourdellès, pp 903-04

Saint-Josse-sur-Mer may have still retained some Breton influence from its founder as Le Bourdèlles reminds us that Judoc's successors, Arnoc and Winnoc, were his nephews.[671] Le Bourdèlles was also convinced that Judoc's pilgrimages to Ponthieu and Rome were examples of *peregrinatio* and proof of a 'Celtic trait' in the *Vita Prima sancti Iudoci*.[672] Although Judoc leaves Brittany and never returns, it is not borne out of a need for spiritual exile, rather, an avoidance of secular responsibilities that his brother Judicaël seeks to impose on him. This is contrary to Le Bourdèlles' claims that Judoc's decision to leave Brittany represented a 'mystic exile'. Moreover, although Judoc does demonstrate spiritual detachment in his eremitical life, moving from one hermitage to another in search of complete solitude, nowhere in the text does the author use the word *peregrinatio* to describe his travels or ascetic life, nor is Judoc described as a *peregrinus*. While the exclusion of these key words does not preclude Judoc from being classified as a *peregrinus*, the language in the *Vita* does not present him as a *peregrinus* either. If Wrdisten, writing the *Vita Winwaloei* in Landévennec sometime between 860 and 884, dedicated an entire chapter to condemning wandering gyrovagues even as he carefully framed Guénolé as a good *peregrinus*, the literary theme of *peregrinatio* must have been even less popular in tenth-century Francia.

It is hard to gauge to what extent, if at all, a Breton community persisted in St Josse-sur-Mer. One miracle episode in the fragmentary *Vita Secunda sancti Iudoci* describes how the tomb of the saint was rediscovered in 977 by a Breton named *Pridianus*, or Prigent, who received a vision of the saint speaking Breton to him.[673] Aside from this, there is no further evidence of Bretons in St Josse-sur-Mer. One clue that points to the lack of a Breton community there is the fact that the community of St Josse-sur-Mer commissioned a Landévennec monk in Montreuil-sur-Mer to write Judoc's *Vita*. Landévennec had a reputable

671 Le Bourdèlles, 'Tradition celtique dans la *Vita prima* de Saint Josse'.
672 Le Bourdèlles, 'Tradition celtique dans la *Vita prima* de Saint Josse'.
673 Le Bourdèlles, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer', 45.

scriptorium and it was not the first time another monastic community had commissioned a Landévennec monk to produce a *Vita* for it. The *Vita Pauli Aureliani*, discussed in the previous chapter, was produced by Wrmonoc of Landévennec at the behest of Hinworetus, bishop of Léon, for the Cathedral school of St Pol-de-Léon. In a similar vein, St Josse-sur-Mer commissioned a scribe of Montreuil-sur-Mer with a Landévennec education to produce a *Life* for their particular community. It is also plausible that they commissioned an outsider who was a Breton because no one in the community of St Josse-sur-Mer had personal knowledge of Judoc's homeland. Even though St Josse-sur-Mer could claim Judoc as their own, it was still vital to produce a *Life* for the saint that had authoritative knowledge of his background and origins.

Even though Saint Judoc was undoubtedly Breton, he had become an international saint who was not even venerated in Brittany until the twelfth century.[674] The *Vita Prima* produced for him in the tenth century, although produced by a Breton, was not intended for a Breton audience. In other words, the abbey of St Josse-sur-Mer can hardly be considered a Breton establishment and can tell us very little about the Breton diaspora outside Brittany, or the Breton church for that matter. We now turn to another saint, Conwoïon, who was never venerated outside of Brittany and but whose foundation produced two unparalleled texts that offer a window into the politics of the Breton Church and Breton-Frankish relations in the ninth and tenth centuries.

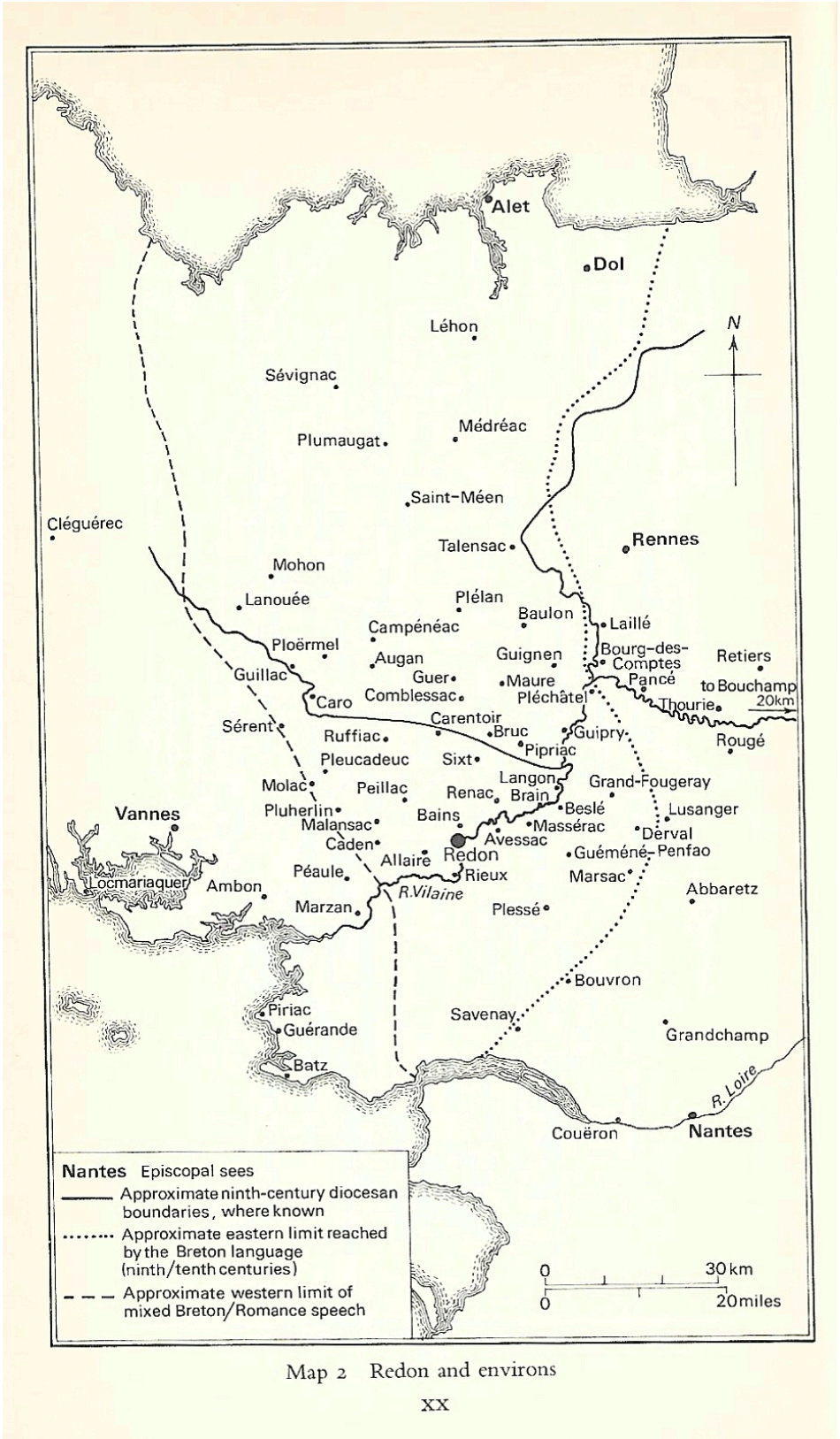
The Vilaine: A Frontier?

Situated in south-eastern Brittany, on the confluence of the Vilaine and Oust rivers, the abbey of Saint-Sauveur-de-Redon was founded in 832. This area, known as the lower

674 Le Bourdèlles, 'Les Bretons à Montreuil-sur-Mer', 46.

Vilaine, was known for its hostile and uncultivated environment, and represented in Bernard Merdrignac's words, the line of demarcation between 'peuples gaulois et gallo-romaines, puis entre Francs et Bretons…' [675] Arthur de la Borderie regarded this area, which he called a frontier, as the nerve centre of Brittany, which not only helped progress the colonisation of Brittany but helped create the political conditions needed for Nominoë's rise to kingship.[676] He made a distinction between the Bretons west of this frontier and those east, writing that the Vannetais was 'gallo-frank'.[677] This description is simplistic and denies the cultural and political complexity of the area. Besides, a frontier implies a military system occupying a static zone that separates two distinct peoples or societies.[678] But the peoples on either side of the lower Vilaine had the same social and political structures, and so this area could hardly be characterized as a sharp cultural divide.[679] Admittedly, the area around Redon was the site of several battles between the Bretons and the Franks; Messac in 843, Ballon in 845, and Jengland-Beslé in 851.[680] There is no denying that the Vilaine river was a 'de facto border' between Breton and Frankish spheres of influence.[681] However, the sources that emerge from Redon reveal a much more nuanced view of the Vilaine, where the abbey of Saint-Sauveur de Redon navigated this border.

675 Bernard Merdrignac, 'Redon, le "border" et La Borderie' in *Études celtiques*, 36 (2008), 149. For more on the physical landscape of Redon and its settlements, see Julien Bachelier, 'Une ville abbatiale bretonne: Redon du IXe au XIV siècle' in *Histoire Urbaine*, 1:48 (2017), 133-154. In this article, Bachelier shows that, contrary to the claims of the monks of Redon, archaeological work has revealed previous gallo-roman settlement in the area.
676 Ibid and Arthur de la Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 6 vols (Rennes, 1898-1914) ii, p. 31.
677 La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, p. 31.
678 Nora Berend, 'Medievalists and the Notion of the Frontier' in *Medieval History Journal*, 2:1 (1999), 59.
679 Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians,* p. 2.
680 Bachelier, 'Une ville abbatiale bretonne', 141.
681 Rutger Kramer, 'The Abbey on the Edge of Forever: Redon and its Monks' in *Austrian Academy of Sciences*, https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/news-1/the-abbey-on-the-edge-of-forever-redon-and-its-monks, accessed 21 February 2023.



Map 2 Redon and environs

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map 2- Redon and the Vilaine river, in Smith, *Province and Empire*, p. xx.

As a young foundation, at least compared to the other major monasteries of Brittany, the abbey of Redon was a strongly Benedictine establishment. The foundation of the abbey coincided with a crucial period in Breton-Frankish relations and sources that emerge from the abbey reveal attempts to cooperate with both Breton and Frankish powers. Following several campaigns to subdue Breton rebel leaders who refused to pay tribute or recognize his authority, however nominal, Louis the Pious changed his tactic and appointed Nominoë, a Breton lord, as his *missus imperatoris* and as count of Vannes.[682] According to the *Vita Conuuoionis*, Nominoë ruled 'almost all' of Brittany, as mandated by Louis the Pious.[683] However, while he was described as Louis the Pious' *fidelis*, and played the part for a time, it is clear that he was biding his time to seize power in his own right. Louis the Pious likely did not expect that his appointment would result in the establishment of a Breton royal dynasty. Nominoë was succeeded by his son Erispoë, who was succeeded by his cousin Salomon, and so on.

Redon acquired Carolingian patronage from Louis the Pious in 834.[684] The *Vita Sancti Conwoionis* demonstrates that this patronage was hard won. From then on, 'Redon rapidly became established as a source of spiritual support for the Carolingian dynasty and empire…and a centre for the dissemination of Carolingian ecclesiastical culture'.[685] In some respects, Redon served as agents of the Carolingian Empire. For instance, Redon was responsible for spreading the Benedictine Rule to other Breton monasteries, aiding in Emperor Louis's aims to create his unified Christian *imperium*.

682 Caroline Brett, 'Brittany and the Carolingians: A Historical Review' in *History Compass*, 11:4 (2013), 271.
683 For a thorough study of Nominoë see, Jean-Christophe Cassard, 'Nominoë, le père de la patrie bretonne?' in Jean-Christophe Cassard, *Les Bretons de Nominoë* (Rennes, 2003), pp 31-57, https://books.openedition.org/pur/21442?lang=en, accessed 20 March 2023.
684 Smith, *Province and Empire*, p. 76.
685 Ibid.

Conwoïon

Aside from the invaluable eleventh-century cartulary, we have two hagiographical texts from Redon: the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* (Acts of the Saints of Redon) and the *Vita Conuuoionis* (*Life* of Conwoïon).[686] Although the *Gesta* survives in a manuscript from the late eleventh or early twelfth century, Caroline Brett, the editor of the text, argues that the author was a monk of Redon who likely wrote the text 'within a generation of the death of Conuuoion'.[687] This argument is based on the fact that the author relates events from Conwoïon's life from a first-hand perspective, and demonstrates that he knew the saint personally. The author also introduces several other characters with background information that reveals the author's familiarity with them. The reason why the *Gesta* is regarded as a hagiographical source is due to the author's utter disregard for chronology and firm dating. He organizes the text thematically and only gives the days and month of the deaths of fellow monks of Redon.[688] Based on the first-hand account of several miracles, but not of the foundation of the abbey, Brett supposes that the *Gesta* was written in 900 or later, but before the exile of the monks in 917.[689]

On the other hand, the *Vita Conuuoionis* relates the life of Conwoïon and the history of the abbey of Redon formally and distantly. The *Vita* itself was based on the *Gesta*, but rewritten by a monk of Redon to fit a format that would suit liturgical use. Unfortunately, the

686 For works on the cartulary of Redon, see: Hubert Guillotel, 'Les cartulaires de Redon' in *Mémoires de la société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne*, 63 (1986), 27-49; Noël-Yves Tonnerre, 'Le Cartulaire de Redon' in Marc Simon (ed.), *Landévennec et le monachisme Breton dans le haut Moyen Âge : actes du colloque du 15e centenaire de l'abbaye de Landévennec , 25-26-27 avril 1985, Association Landévennec 485-1985* (Landévennec, 1986), 115-21; and of course, the edition of the cartulary, *Cartulary of Redon,* ed. l'Association des amis des Archives historiques du Diocése de Rennes, Dol, et Saint-Malo, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Sauveur de Redon*, (Rennes, 1998).
687 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, *The monks of Redon. Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium and Vita Conuuoinis* (Woodbridge, 1989), p. 5.
688 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 7.
689 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 9.

Vita only survives in seventeenth-century copies.[690] There are several pieces of evidence that show that the *Vita* was written much later than the *Gesta*, definitely after the viking occupation of Brittany. Firstly, it describes this viking occupation in the past tense, looking back at it in hindsight. This tells us that it was written after the monks of Redon were exiled in 917 and after the recovery of the monastery around 924.[691] Redon seems to recover from the 990s onwards, as there are glimpses of charters and grants which relate the abbey's recovery of lands and rights lost during the viking occupation.[692] All details considered, Brett estimates that the *Vita* was written in the first half of the eleventh century.

The *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* begins with the monks' petition to Nominoë for his protection and patronage. While still novices, Conwoïon and his companions are struggling to build their abbey and perform their holy duties, on account of the *tyranni*, or local landlords, who will not allow them to complete the construction of the abbey or even live in peace. Conwoïon sends Louhemel to Nominoë's hall *Botnumel*, where Nominoë takes the side of the monks rather than the landlord or *tyrannus*, Illoc, who claims to own the land the monks chose for their community. It is worth noting that Nominoë is referred to as a *princeps*,

> 'qui regebat illo tempore paene totam Britanniam, primitus ex iussione Ludouici imperatoris; postea uero suo arbitrio omnem prouinciam inuaserat'
>
> (who ruled almost all of Brittany at that time, originally by the command of the Emperor Louis; afterwards, however, he had taken over the whole province on his own account).[693]

690 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 11.
691 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 4.
692 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 14-5.
693 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 108-09.

In Nominoë's gentle interrogation of Louhemel, we learn that Conwoïon is the son of Conan, himself a descendant of Melanius, bishop of Rennes. We learn of Conwoïon's companions as well. Uuincalon, also of noble birth, is described as having close and friendly relations with a certain Count Rorgon and Condeloc, a priest, also has cordial connections with a Count Wido. Although portrayed as humble and in need of protection, this small, yet organized community of monks had powerful connections to key ecclesiastical and secular leaders of Brittany. This is later confirmed when a local lord in Vannes, Uuoretueu, mentions that Conwoïon and his companions are all men who come from privileged backgrounds who relinquished their power and wealth to become servants of God.

In the next chapter, the author discloses exactly how the monks of Redon came to be adherents of the Benedictine Rule through Gerfred. Gerfred, a hermit living in the very west of Brittany, is divinely directed by God to find the 'rudes monachos' (new untaught monks) and teach them how to 'secundum regulam uiuere' (live according to the Rule).[694] The new community is instructed by Gerfred for two years, before he retires to a monastery called Saint-Maur, located on the Loire. It is not explicitly stated that Gerfred taught them the Benedictine Rule, but there are several clues within the text that point in that direction. Firstly, the author praises the qualities of Redon, writing that 'Caritas ibidem fulget mira, abstinentia magna, humilitas summa, castitas ante omnia' (Wonderful charity, great austerity, the utmost humility shines forth there, chastity above all).[695] These values, particularly humility, are all stressed in the Benedictine Rule.[696] The manual labour of the monks is also discussed.

694 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 112-13.
695 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 118-19.
696 In fact, chapter seven is dedicated entirely to Humility.

The monastery grows steadily; there are several examples of men in positions of power receiving the tonsure and giving parts of their inheritance to Redon. A *machtiern* called Ratuuili is made a cleric, and not only offers his son Liberius as a new member of Redon, but makes a generous donation of several estates, including Binon, Arguignac, and Moetchar. These men usually did not live for long after taking monastic vows, which suggests that Redon was a popular establishment to which local leaders gave sizable amounts of their inheritance away for the sake of their souls. The author confirms that Redon is populated by men of elite status, writing that sons of noblemen are regularly given to the abbey and 'Sed et sacerdotes magni, qui potestatem magnam in hoc mundo obtinebant, ad eundem sanctum locum uenerunt, mundum spernentes cum desideriis et pompis suis, cupientes in hac uita esse pauperes ut in altera uita cum Christo forent diuites' (Also, high priests, who held great power in this world, came to the same holy place, spurning the world with its pomps and desires, wishing to be poor in this life, that they might be rich in the next life with Christ).[697]

Even while Conwoïon is still living, many miracles occur in the basilica dedicated to the Holy Saviour. A farmer and tenant of the devious Illoc who goes by the name of Iuuoret is one day paralyzed and struck dumb. It is no coincidence that, simultaneously, Illoc and his kin are plotting to take the community of Redon down. Iuuoret is brought to the basilica by his friends and through the unceasing prayer of the monks, is miraculously cured. Thereafter, Iuuoret gives himself a new name, *Libertinus*, or Freedman, and becomes a lay brother, or at the very least, the handy-man of the abbey. We are told that word of this miracle frightens Illoc and his conspirators, and effectively ends the plot.

There is a running theme of conflict between the monks of Redon and the local authorities, or *machtierns*, which they frequently call *tyranni*, as noted above. According to

697 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 116-17.

Wendy Davies, *machtierns* were local rulers with civic functions, although there is not enough evidence to argue whether they operated independently or were actual public officials. Each *plebs* had a *machtiern*, and they held authority over vacant properties in the plebs and collected dues.[698] These episodes suggest that Redon was founded on land that was already owned by locals and thus trampled on their inheritance rights, or, more likely, under the control of the local *machtiern*. The main villain in the *Gesta* is undoubtedly Illoc, who is introduced at the very beginning, as attempting to dissuade Nominoë from protecting the abbey. Illoc argues with Nominoë, 'Meus est enim ille locus quem illi seductores occupauerunt, et mihi debetur iure hereditario' (That place which those frauds have taken over is mine, and is due to me by hereditary right).[699] Illoc and his kin, as well as other *tyranni*, are extortionists, periodically hounding Conwoïon and the community for money and threatening them with violence if they cannot pay up. A *tyrannus* named Risuueten claims that the monks are holding his inheritance unjustly and demands that they return a farm named *Losin* and deliver a horse and breastplate to him. Concerned with the safety of the community, Conwoïon is forced to borrow money to appease Risuueten. Of course, as the cause of the monks is just, the *tyranni* always receive some punishment from God. Risueeten and another schemer, Tredoc, are found by invading Franks hiding in a pile of straw and killed.

Another running theme in the *Gesta* is Redon's position on the Vilaine which again and again places them in the middle of the discord between the Bretons and the Franks. It is apparent, in the way this mutual hostility is framed, that the author is Breton and sympathizes with the Breton cause. Nominoë is portrayed as discerning, able to recognize the bad council of Illoc and responds to the needs of the abbey of Redon with no hesitation. On the other

698 Davies, 'On the distribution of political power in Brittany in the mid-ninth century', pp 108-14; Gildas Bernier, 'Magoer Aurilian, la "Muraille d'Aurélien"' in *Études celtiques*, 19 (1982), 278.
699 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett*,* pp 108-09.

hand, it takes Conwoïon three attempts to speak with the Emperor Louis the Pious, much less secure his favour. Conwoïon travels to the emperor's residence in *Cadrio monte*, Aquitaine, and is thrown out of the palace unceremoniously before he can plead his cause.[700] Later, Conwoïon tries a second time to seek out Emperor Louis in Tours and is thrown out again. He is forced to sell the gift of wax he had intended for the emperor. Nominoë and his retinue visit the abbey of Redon and Nominoë grants a quarter of the parish of Bains to the monks for the soul of Emperor Louis. This donation was intended to soften the resolve of the emperor for the monks' benefit. Nominoë tells Conwoïon to try again, and when Conwoïon and Uuoruuoret travel to meet the emperor in Thionville, they are at last received in a welcoming manner. While Emperor Louis gifts the abbey two parishes and the rights associated with them, it is implied that the protection of the abbey, while formally promised by the emperor, is Nominoë's responsibility. A conflict, or misunderstanding, subsequently arises between Nominoë and Emperor Louis. The author states matter-of-factly, that a conflict arises between the Franks and the Bretons because '…Franci uolebant per uim totam Britanniam occupare, sicut antea solebant facere, sed fortissimus princeps Nominoe, quantum facere ualebat, illis contradicebat' (…the Franks wanted to occupy the whole of Brittany by force, as they had been accustomed to do in the past; but the most valiant governor Nominoi opposed them as much as it was in his power to do).[701] Conwoïon is compelled to meet with the emperor again, charter in hand, to retain the abbey's current lands and rights, as well as petition for more lands to essentially create a buffer zone to protect the abbey. Nominoë asks the emperor if he was behind the incursion, and it is interesting that the author carefully omits who was responsible, to potentially avoid casting blame on their most powerful patron.

700 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 132.
701 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 140-41.

The tensions that were mostly, but not totally, abated with Nominoë's appointment by Emperor Louis resurfaced after the death of both and the succession of Erispoë and Charles the Bald. At one point the author writes,

> '…Carolus rex commouit uniuersum exercitum suum. Putabat enim quia posset totam Britanniam armis capere, et strages et sectas hominum facere, et totiam prouinciam in sua dominatione perducere. At ubi Erispoe, qui tunc Britanniam regebat, haec omnia audiuit, iussit et ipse exercitum suum praeparari, et mandauit ut omnes parati essent et praeirent eum ultra Visnoniae fluuium. Statim cuncti Britones a sedibus suis surrexerunt'

> (…King Charles set his whole army in motion; for he thought that he could seize the whole of Brittany by arms and create battles and divisions of men and bring the whole province under his power. But when Erispoi, who then ruled Brittany, heard of all this, he too ordered his army to be got ready, and he commanded that everyone should be prepared and go before him across the River Vilaine. At once all the Bretons rose from their homes).[702]

While Book One is concerned with chronicling the foundation of the abbey and the various trials and tribulations the monks endured by doing so, Book Two focuses on individual monks of the community and their virtues and miracles. It is an especially personal account of these men, as the author, while defending the simplicity of his writing, tells us '…ne quis spernat ex uobis meam insipientiam, cum praesertim illos uiros sanctos bene nouerim, qui me a pueritia nutrierunt atque in scientia Dei

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702 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 128-29.

educauerunt. Nec debeo reticere quae ab eis uidi uel audiui…' (…none of you should despise my stupidity, particularly as I knew these holy men well, who brought me up from my boyhood and taught me in the knowledge of God… I must not hide what I saw and heard from them).[703] The author's own temporal proximity to the subjects of his text, as well as the way he is the recipient of these memories, which are already communicated within the community but not yet concretized, is an example of the communicative memory of Redon. Communicative memory is categorized as casual and non-specialized, every-day type of communication, such as one person relating a memory to another.[704] One key aspect of communicative memory is its limited temporal horizon, no more than 'eighty to (at the very most) one hundred years into the past'.[705] Although the communication the author alludes to is taking place between a senior member of the community and an oblate, with the intention to educate, it does not have the formal and commemorative quality of cultural memory.

The opening passage to Book Two highlights the author's own view on memory and oblivion and Redon's transition from the realm of 'everyday memory' to cultural memory. He describes the tradition of crystalizing memory into writing, noting 'Mos enim antiquitus fuit, ut si quando imperatores uel milites eorum cum aduersariis confligerent, statim litteris atque annalibus traderent, ne obliuioni traderentur' (For it was a custom of old for emperors or their soldiers, whenever they fought against an enemy, to consign it to writing and annals at once, so that they would not be consigned to oblivion).[706] This is the paradigm he uses to frame the monks' own spiritual battle, or

703 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 144-45.
704 Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity'. 'Everyday communication is characterized by a high degree of non-specialization, reciprocity of roles, thematic instability, and disorganization. Typically, it takes place between partners who can change roles. Whoever relates a joke, a memory, a bit of gossip, or an experience becomes a listener in the next moment.'
705 Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', p. 127.
706 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 144-45.

battle with the 'inuisibili hoste' (invisible enemy), as he calls it. In this sense, the author patterns the events of Redon in his own time with those of secular, Roman history, and places the monastery of Redon within a wider world history. By setting parallels between Redon and secular history from antiquity, rather than, say, Biblical history, the author also identifies himself as historian within a wider history of historians. Stressing the importance of writing down the spiritual battles of Christ's soldiers, he writes, 'Et cum ista leguntur, memoria sanctorum colligitur, aedificatio mentium credentibus traditor, honor monachis exhibetur' (And when these things are read, the memory of the saints is evoked, edification of the mind is provided for the faithful, honour is shown to the monks).[707] This statement reveals the commemorative, as well as pedagogical function intended by setting these memories down in writing. The author compares the hagiographer's task to a farmer's; they too must figuratively work the land and plant the seeds before profiting from the harvest. Here, the book becomes a *lieux de mémoire*, a keeper of the memories that are essentially the crux of the abbey of Redon.

While many of the miracles that the monks of Redon perform are not unique or climactic, they are significant because they typically name the recipients of these miracles and grant us a lens into the interactions between the monks of Redon and the outside community. They also reveal the tight bonds of brotherhood between the monks of Redon. The author reflects on these men fondly and even gives us the exact dates of their death, and the manner in which they died. Moreover, these miracle-making monks are a far cry from the dragon-slaying strong-man saints of the earlier periods, such as Samson. This gives the *Gesta* a touch of humanity, and indeed, relatability. For instance, one passage recounts the miracle accomplished by Condeluc, the simple gardener of the community, who is able to rid the abbey's garden of

707 Ibid.

caterpillars that are eating all of their crops.[708] In the chapter on Fiduueten's virtues, the author summarizes the miracle healing he receives himself. While just a boy in the monastery, he suffers from a toothache so severe his entire head swells up and he is unable to eat or sleep. He seeks Fiduueten to ask for a prayer and when the older monk touches his jaw, the pain vanishes completely. The author later reveals how Fidueeten later joins God 'tertio idus Decembris' (on the third day before the Ides of December) after battling a cancerous ulcer.[709] Elsewhere, he tells us of the holy Tethuuiu, who excels in such intense abstinence from food and sleep that he rouses jealousy in some other brothers. Wishing to test his faith, God inflicts Tethuuiu with paralysis for the remaining five years of his life. The author recounts how he is there when the man dies and that when the body is carried into the church, it emanates sweet and honeyed smells.[710] There are several other anecdotes such as these which display the commemoration of these men by other members of the community, even those that did not know them personally.[711]

Before introducing Book Three, on Brittany's acquisition of the relics of Pope Marcellinus, the *Gesta* gives us its version of Nominoë's deposition of the bishops of Brittany. According to the *Gesta*, simony spread all over Brittany, with Susannus, bishop of Vannes, as the main culprit. Holy orders everywhere in Brittany could, allegedly, only be obtained by payment to the bishops. Conwoïon, brushing up on his knowledge of the canons, warns Nominoë of the heresy infecting his kingdom. At a council ordered by Nominoë, Susannus and other bishops openly flouted canon law and the authority of Nominoë. Susannus, bishop of Vannes, and Felix, bishop of Quimper,

708 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 154.
709 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 164-65.
710 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 168-70.
711 For a great work on the sanctity of the community of Redon see Rutger Kramer, 'Many Lives, One Story: The Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium and the Making of Redon' in *medieval worlds*, 15 (2022), 50-74.

are sent to Rome, accompanied by Conwoïon, so that each party can argue their case before Pope Leo IV. Unsurprisingly, the synod summoned by the Pope finds the bishops guilty of simony and strips them of their office, leaving their bishoprics vacant for reappointment. In exchange for the gold crown that Nominoë gifts the Pope, Conwoïon returns with the holy body of Marcellinus, a martyr from the reign of Diocletian. The body of Marcellinus, which is housed in the monastery of Redon, brings Christians from within Brittany and abroad to the grave. The author of the *Gesta* conveniently leaves out that Nominoë is responsible for the appointing bishops of his choosing to the newly vacant positions, which created great controversy.

There was truth to the accusation that Brittany was victim to simoniac bishops and even Nominoë could not stamp out the problem in his lifetime. More specifically, the seats of bishoprics such as Rennes, Quimper, and even Dol were not only sold but occupied by 'episcopal dynasties', or local families that installed their own kin as bishops. For example, Guy Devailly studied a genealogy which showed that, at one point in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the episcopal seat of Rennes was passed down from a father, Thébaut, to his son, Gautier, to grandson Guérin, and then to Thébaut's other son, Triscan. Thébaut himself was the son of a priest and married the daughter of an archdeacon of Nantes.[712] Likewise, in 1049, having been appointed by the comital house of Nantes, Budic was deposed as bishop of Nantes by Pope Leo IX and replaced by a cardinal of Saint-Paul-hors-les-Murs.[713] Nepotism was not uncommon in the Breton church and there is a particularly old tradition of it, if we use

712 Guy Devailly, 'Une enquête en cours: l'application de la réforme grégorienne en Bretagne' in *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 75:2 (1968), 297-98.
713 Florian Mazel, 'Entre mémoire carolingienne et réforme 'grégorienne', Stratégies discursives, identité monastique et enjeux de pouvoir à Redon aux XIe-XIIe siècles', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, 122:1 (2015), 12.

several Breton hagiographies, most notably the *Vitae* of Samson of Dol and the *Vita Brioci* as examples.

The *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* can be compared with other sources which give a slightly different picture of Nominoë's deposition of the bishops. Papal correspondence shows that in a synod at *Coitlouh*, near Redon, in 849, Nominoë himself deposed all five of the bishops of Alet, Vannes, Quimper, Saint-Pol, and Dol.[714] Pope Leo IV, in correspondence to the Breton bishops and Nominoë, stressed that the matter could only be settled by 'a panel of twelve bishops, with the testimony of seventy-two sworn witnesses'.[715] It appears that the Pope's words were not taken seriously as his successor, Nicholas I, made comments suggesting that he believed Nominoë lay false charges on the bishops and made them confess under duress. A synod conducted in Tours or Angers in 850 or 851 echoed similar sentiments, and accused Nominoë of flat-out ignoring a papal letter without even reading it. Since Nominoë did not have the authority, backed by canon law, to depose the bishops, the new bishops he had installed were excommunicated.[716] In response, Nominoë attacked Rennes and Nantes and replaced the Frankish bishop of Nantes with someone suited to his own interests.[717] In 859, those gathered at the council of Savonnières wrote to four Breton bishops, urging them to recognize the rights of the archbishopric of Tours, and by doing so, avoid ordinations without their consent and contact with those bishops that had been excommunicated under Nominoë's rule.[718] Overall, this conflict which was continued by Nominoë's successor, Salomon, and unsettled until 1199, became a

714 Flobert, 'Le "Schisme breton": un psychodrame?', 56.
715 Smith, *Province and Empire*, p. 154.
716 François Duine, 'Le Schisme Breton: L'Église de Dol au milieu du IXe siècle, d'après les sources' in *Annales de Bretagne*, 30:3 (1914), 440.
717 Smith, *Province and Empire*, p. 155.
718 Duine, 'Le Schisme Breton', 446.

question of whether or not the Breton bishoprics were under the jurisdiction of the archbishopric of Tours or not.[719]

None of this tension comes across in the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium*, which inaccurately portrays Nominoë as adhering to canon law and letting Pope Leo IV depose the Breton bishops. Moreover, Nominoë is not painted as a recalcitrant client king with ambitions to create an independent Breton church loyal to his will, but rather, as a pious king concerned with stamping out the corruption of the church in his kingdom. By glossing over the matter entirely, the author of the *Gesta* frames the deposition of the bishops as a righteous cause, one primarily led by Conwoïon, the founder and abbot of Redon. This strategically places the abbey of Redon at the centre of Breton ecclesiastical politics. Later in the text, the author is more explicit about his views on the matter. When Brithoc, a former abbot of the monastery of Lehon who joined Redon, receives a vision of Bishop Martin, St Hilary, and St Samson, they identify themselves as three 'sancti archiepiscopi' (holy archbishops).[720] Though subtle, it shows that the author recognized Dol as an archbishopric.

Book Three concentrates on the introduction of the bodies of St Marcellinus and St Hypotemius to Redon and the miracles performed by them therein. The author is urged to set these in writing as they '…praetermissa sunt et paene obliuioni tradita propter negligentiam et incuriam scriptorum' (…have been passed over and almost consigned to oblivion owing to the neglect and carelessness of writers).[721] Furthermore, he affirms the veracity of his work by citing the older brothers of the community who had witnessed these miracles with their own eyes and passed down these accounts to the author. The number of posthumous miracles included in the *Gesta* is astounding

719 Flobert, 'Le "Schisme breton": un psychodrame?', 57.
720 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 196.
721 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 184.

compared to other Breton *Vitae*, and unusual considering that these miracles are performed by two martyr saints from Rome and Angers, rather than saints of Redon. One such example is of *Mutan*, a mute child oblate who prays with his mind and soul at the tomb of St Marcellinus and is granted the power of speech after the saint appears to him in a vision. With his own voice, *Mutan* tells everyone in the monastery of his miraculous healing and word of the miracle spreads all over Brittany.[722]

The *Gesta* ends with the advent of the Northmen during the reign of Erispoë. A certain group of pagans had plundered and burnt Nantes and established a camp along the Loire. Erispoë joins forces with the Northman Sidric, and with their combined forces, regains control of the Loire and assaults the camp of the pagans. While the pagans submit to Sidric, they seek revenge from the Bretons. They sail up the river Vilaine with around a hundred ships and establish a camp about two miles from the monastery of Redon.[723] Hearing the prayers of the monks of Redon, God unleashes on the pagans a storm so terrible, that they promise to bring offerings of gold and silver to the church and protect it from plunder if they escape God's wrath. While this is apparently done the next day, this did not help the rest of Brittany, which is despoiled, burnt, and decimated of its population, save those who hide in the monastery of Redon, according to the author.

If the *Gesta* was written by a Breton with sympathies to Nominoë and Breton political and religious autonomy more generally, the *Vita Sancti Conuuoionis* was certainly not. Furthermore, the author of the *Gesta* was too close in time to Conwoïon to write a *Vita* dedicated to him, but the author of the *Vita Sancti Conuuoionis* was distant enough from his subject. The primary goal of the author of the *Vita* is the

722 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 194.
723 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 216.

exaltation of Conwoïon, but because his work is based on the *Gesta*, he is not concerned that the memory of Conwoïon will fade into oblivion. His work, while much more formal and chronologically organized, is largely derivative. There are a few key differences, however, which tell us that the author is either not a Breton or, perhaps less likely, is a Breton who has internalized anti-Breton attitudes.

The first key difference is the way in which Brittany is described. In his description of the physical location of Redon, he praises its natural beauty and states that it surpassed other places in 'Britanniae Gallicanae' (Gaulish Britain).[724] This is a rather unique description of Brittany which tells us that the author must have been an outsider. All of the hagiographies studied in this thesis show that Breton hagiographers called Brittany, *Armorica*, *Britannia*, or *Britannia citra mare* 'on this side of the sea'. Elsewhere the author uses the word *Letavia* to describe the province.[725] While *Letavia* stemmed from the Old Breton *Letau* and the Welsh *Lydaw*, it does seem to be used by non-Bretons to describe Brittany. Most notably, later Welsh hagiographies, such as the twelfth-century *Vita Iltuti*, use *Letavia* to describe Brittany.[726]

The author's perception of the Bretons is also disparaging. He recounts how the Bretons grew 'more suo insolescentibus' (insolent as is their habit) and plotted against the emperor by raising a tyrant, *Marconus*, as king.[727] It is interesting that he distances himself from the Bretons by using *they*, or *suo*, and describes Louis the Pious's subsequent campaign in Brittany with these words: 'patriam suis legibus subdit' (he submits the country to his laws).[728] Much later, when discussing Nominoë's petition to Pope Leo IV to bestow upon Brittany the body of a Roman saint, the author bitterly

724 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 228-29.
725 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p 233.
726 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae,* p. 194.
727 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 232.
728 Caroline Brett translates this passage as 'subjected our homeland to his laws'. In *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 232-33.

remarks that the acquisition of such a relic served 'ad illustrandam occidui climatis paene barbaram nationem' (to bring light to the almost barbarian people of the West).[729] He echoes this sentiment later when he paints Brittany as 'regionem umbrae mortis, ubi nullus ordo' (the land of the shadow of death, where there is no order), though one wonders if this is because Nominoë was now regarded as the undisputed ruler of the province.[730]

The last hint that suggests that the author is not Breton is his view on Nominoë, which is a stark contrast from the devout Nominoë presented in the *Gesta*, and the portrayal of Louis the Pious. With the exception of one brief passage which judges Nominoë as 'armis potens' (powerful in arms) and 'sensu pollens' (flourishing in discernment), he is elsewhere described in less ideal terms.[731] Within the same sentence which confirms Louis the Pious's death and inevitable journey to heaven, Nominoë is described as 'contemptis Gallis' (despising the Gauls) and it is implied that he seized the opportunity presented by Louis's death to bring all of Brittany under his rule.[732] The *Vita*'s account of Nominoë's deposition of the Breton bishops disagrees with the *Gesta*'s version of events. Both accounts agree that Nominoë sent Susannus, Felix, and Conwoïon (as his representative) to Rome, but the *Gesta* and *Vita* disagree on the Pope's judgement. The *Vita* has the simoniac bishops pardoned, rather than stripped of their positions.

In contrast, the author of the *Vita* completely disregards the *Gesta*'s claims that it took serious persistence (and persecution!) on Conwoïon's part to attain Louis the Pious's patronage. After this subjugation of Brittany and on his return to Gaul, the emperor, also called *Augustus* in the text, receives a divine oracle which compels him

729 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 240-41.
730 Ibid.
731 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 232-33.
732 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 238-39.

to go to Redon and meet with Conwoïon and grant him gifts of land and rights.[733] There are no sources which confirm this royal visit, and we can regard it as completely made up, but the author is keen to present the emperor as the initial donor of Redon. In general, the author of the *Vita* overemphasizes Louis the Pious's role as patron of Redon. He references the later grants made by the emperor, which Brett argues, shows that he used the charters of the abbey to exaggerate the emperor's role in the foundation of the monastery.[734]

It is clear that, since the writing of the *Gesta*, the monastery of Redon and its monks have faced significant setbacks. The author of the *Gesta* survived the first wave of violence from the Northmen, but later generations 'during a span of thirty years' suffered blow after blow. Conwoïon and his brothers were forced to uproot themselves and flee by order of King Salomon, who the author feels compelled to write, '[Salomon] rex appellatur, non quod re uera esset, sed quia circulo aureo et purpura concessione Caroli Augusti utebatur, idcirco hoc nominee censebatur' ([Samson]was called king, not because he was so in reality, but because he made use of the gold circlet and purple garments by concession of the Emperor Charles, for this reason he was recognised by that title).[735] We are told that Conwoïon and his brothers settled in Plénan, the royal residence of Salomon, and that the once renowned monastery of Redon was humbled to the 'eremi uastitatem redacto' (desolation of a hermitage).[736] The author is vague about the current circumstances of his own generation, but it is evident that he wrote after the recovery period of 936. One indication is his conflation

733 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 234.
734 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 15.
735 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, pp 242-43.
736 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 244.

of Conwoïon's life, which ended in 868, with the exile of the monks of Redon, which began in 917.[737]

In her 2002 article, Julia Smith argued that it was not 'appropriate' to ask whether the monks of Redon were Breton or Frankish. She argued that,

> 'we should situate their careers in a fluid zone of cultural and linguistic interchange…the monks' identity was rather as *milites Christi*, and Redon was a fragrant, fertile, earthly paradise where the soldiers of Christ stood arrayed in battle order. Redon was, quite simply, a *sanctus locus*. It needed no other identity'.[738]

While the cultural, political, and linguistic fluidity of Redon must be recognized, it is still worth investigating why the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* and the *Vita Conuuoionis* hold such distinct views on Breton and Frankish relations and the overall impact of Carolingian patronage on Redon. Does this suggest various, or conflicting, identities in the abbey of Redon or do we see the monastic identity of Redon transforming?

In the years between 900 and 917, when the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* was written, the community remembered the foundation of their abbey in tandem with the rise of the Breton dynasty which began with Nominoë. This dynasty, and Nominoë in particular, was the original patron of the abbey and was influential in bringing the Carolingians' patronage into Redon. Because of the *Gesta*'s structure, and the author's indifference to providing definitive dates to the events he describes, it is hard to

737 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 8 and p. 14.
738 Julia M.H Smith, 'Confronting identities: the rhetoric and reality of a Carolingian frontier' in Walter Pohl and Max Diesenberger (eds), *Integration und Herrschaft: ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter* (Wien 2002), p. 181.

determine what role it played in the community of Redon. There is no prologue in the *Gesta* which would normally tell us the purpose and audience of the text, and it is only in Book Two where the author reveals his agenda.[739] Although it is not organized chronologically, the thematic structure does have logic to it.

The first three chapters of Book One concern the actual foundation of the monastery of Redon, with the lands acquired, and the monks' instruction by the hermit Gerfred. Chapters Four to seven recount God's punishment of *tyranni* and thieves whose target was Redon. Conwoïon's attempts to garner Louis the Pious's favour, with the help of Nominoë, are covered in chapters eight to eleven. Book Two covers the virtues and miracles performed by the monks of Redon and later, the introduction of exalted foreign relics into Brittany. Chapters one to eight highlight special members of the community, such as Conwoïon, while the remaining chapters nine and ten, introduce the coming of the bodies of saints Hypotemius and Marcellinus to Redon. Book Three then narrates the numerous miracles performed at the tombs of these two saints and ends with the raids made by Northmen on Redon. While there is material missing from the beginning, and possibly from the end, the *Gesta* is still a coherent and linear account.[740] Given this thematic structure, there is no doubt that this text was intended to be read within the community. The author tells us so, when he confirms that the acts of these saints would be read to commemorate the monks and to offer guidance for the faithful of the community.

Brett argues that by the time the author of the *Vita* was writing, there was 'a new political attitude'.[741] The *Vita* itself must have been an exercise fabricating a new monastic identity. With the exception of one act recopied in the cartulary of Redon in

739 The prologue is lost. Joseph-Claude Poulin, 'Le dossier hagiographique de saint Conwoion de Redon: a propos d'une edition récente' in *Francia*, 18:1 (1991), 140.
740 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 5.
741 *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* et *Vita Conuuoinis,* ed. Caroline Brett, p. 16.

924, there is a noticeable lacuna in the cartulary between 913 and the end of the tenth century.[742] When the abbey re-emerges in the early 990's, it is alongside the ducal house of Rennes, which seems to be its main patron.[743] If the *Vita* was, as Brett argued, composed in the first half of the eleventh century, during a period in which the abbey garnered patronage from a Breton ducal house, it is peculiar that the author chose to play up Frankish patronage and heritage. Hence, in Florian Mazel's work on the cartulary of Redon, he found that the initial redaction of the cartulary, completed under the abbacy of Aumod, prioritized Carolingian acts and exaggerated the Carolingian legacy of Redon.[744]

The monks of Redon in the early tenth century and the monks of Redon about a century later, in the early eleventh century both agreed on one aspect of the abbey's cultural memory: Redon's significant involvement in Breton-Frankish politics and its role as a reformer of the Breton church. Redon's geopolitical location meant that it would always be at the crux of relations between the Bretons and the Franks. We see that even several generations after Conwoïon's passing, the abbey successfully embraced neutrality for the benefit of the community. Moreover, the community agreed on Conwoïon's role as a pioneer of reform of the Breton church, even if the early community of Redon remembered Nominoë's ousting of the Breton bishops and his attempts to make the Breton church independent as righteous, as opposed to the later community of Redon, who held an entirely different view on the matter. We cannot point to the exile of the monks to Plénan, north of Redon, as an explanation for this shift in ideologies.

742 Mazel, 'Entre mémoire carolingienne et réforme 'grégorienne', 10.
743 Mazel, 'Entre mémoire carolingienne et réforme 'grégorienne', 10-11.
744 Mazel, 'Entre mémoire carolingienne et réforme 'grégorienne', 4.

Instead, Redon's espousal of reform led the community to embrace their memory of the Carolingian legacy on Redon. This was not the reform that Nominoë envisaged for Brittany, which advocated for a Breton church that was answerable to a Breton archbishopric (Dol). Rather, this was the reform promulgated by Louis the Pious to bring all monasteries into the fold of the 'universal church', and later, Gregorian reform pushed by the papacy. As this thesis has shown earlier, the concept of *ecclesia* was instrumental in Carolingian governance. In addition to referring to the actual church and its hierarchy, it is the 'idea that all the faithful were part of a larger social whole, an apostolic community unified by a shared understanding and practice of liturgy and with the Carolingian court at its heart'.[745] From the beginning, the abbey of Redon had no qualms adopting and endorsing the Benedictine Rule. Afterall, as a new foundation, the community had no tradition of a previous rule, nor could they boast of a monastic founder with Insular roots from centuries past.

In the eleventh century, during the Gregorian reforms, Redon's ties with Rome were strengthened. In 1050, fearing he would be deposed, the abbot Pérénès travelled to Rome with Bishop Main of Rennes to have Pope Leo IX reordain him.[746] Seeing as Bishop Main would attend a council at Tours ten years later, this action on the part of abbot Pérénès indicated explicit loyalty to Rome. During this period more generally, the seats of Rennes, Vannes, and Nantes were recovered as bishops installed by local families were deposed and replaced by the Pope. Budic, who was appointed Bishop of Nantes by the comital house of that city was deposed by Leo IX in 1049 in favour of a cardinal of Saint-Paul-hors-les-Murs, an outsider. Between 1073 and 1084, under the abbacy of Aumod, Redon obtained a papal bull of protection from Gregory VII,

745 Rutger Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire: Ideals and Expectations during the Reign of Louis the Pious (813-828)* (Amsterdam, 2019), pp 37-8.
746 Mazel, 'Entre mémoire carolingienne et réforme 'grégorienne', 12.

formally placing the abbey under the law of Rome.[747] Mazel has identified subsequent forged papal bulls which indicate that Redon continued to claim direct protection, as well as coveted donations, from the Pope.[748] This was done to assert rights over possessions allegedly given by the Pope, to further enrich the abbey, as well as magnify the antiquity and extent of the abbey's relations with Rome. To sum up, the eleventh-century community of Redon no longer remembered themselves as indebted to Nominoë's dynasty and promoters of an independence Breton church, but formed a new history in which the abbey had always operated firmly within a Frankish, and Roman, sphere of influence.

747 Ibid.
748 Mazel, 'Entre mémoire carolingienne et réforme 'grégorienne'', 13-15.

Chapter 5: Wales as Intermediary

In the beginning of this thesis, it was established that any discussion about the relationship between Ireland and Brittany must include Wales. In truth, we cannot underestimate the role that Wales played as intermediary between Ireland and Brittany. Chapter One succinctly examined the primary sources that describe the Breton migrations and more specifically, Brittany's relationship with its motherland, Wales. Using mainly hagiographical sources, this chapter will argue that Wales served as a channel of transmission of Irish influence into Breton monastic communities. In other words, the Irish influence we see in Breton monasticism was largely, though perhaps not completely, filtered through Wales.

This chapter is not suggesting that this was the only channel through which Irish literary and religious culture was brought to Brittany. It has been shown by Jacopo Bisagni that manuscripts containing Hiberno-Latin texts that were copied in the Loire Valley, such as Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire in Fleury, were written from Breton exemplars.[749] The links between Brittany and Fleury are well known.[750] As the previous chapter established, there was a thriving cult of St Paul Aurelian in Fleury, thanks to the transfer of his relics there along with Abbot Mabbon of St-Pol-de-Leon in the tenth century.[751] At present, this triangle of transmission between Ireland, Brittany, and Francia (Loire Valley) is still being worked

749 Bisagni, 'Breton Manuscripts and the transmission of computus between the Celtic West and the Carolingian Empire'; Jacopo Bisagni, 'La literature computistique irlandaise dans la Bretagne du haut Moyen Âge: Nouvelles découvertes et nouvelles perspectives' in Britannia Monastica, 20 (2019), 241-85; Jacopo Bisagni, 'The newly-discovered Irish and Breton Computistica in Città del Vaticano, BAV, MS Reg. Lat. 123' in *Peritia*, 28 (2017), 13-34.

750 See: Pierre Riché, 'Relations entre l'abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire et les pays celtiques (Xe-XIe siècles) in Louis Lemoine and Bernard Merdrignac (eds), *Corona Monastica, Moines bretons de Landévennec: histoire et mémoires celtiques (Mélanges offerts au père Marc Simon*) (Rennes, 2004), pp 13-8 and Louis Gougaud, 'Les relations de l'abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire avec la Bretagne et les Îles Britanniques (Xe et XIe siècles) in *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne*, 5 (1923), 3-30.

751 Guillotel, 'L'exode du clergé breton', 269-315.

out.[752] While we have traditionally assumed that Irish texts came to Francia via Brittany, Bisagni posits that it is also possible that Hiberno-Latin texts first arrived in Francia through places like Péronne or Corbie, before traveling to Brittany at a later stage from Fleury.[753] These networks of connection are being discovered at the moment, and the results will no doubt enrich our understanding of the 'mobility of ideas' in the early medieval west, as well as revealing more about Brittany's networks within the Insular and Carolingian worlds.[754]

However, Breton hagiographical sources tell us a different story. Even though we know that Breton monastic communities, along with their books and relics, fled further into Francia, including the Loire Valley, the hagiographies give no indication of any networks linking Breton monasteries and Frankish monasteries. With the exception of the later, more eastern Breton hagiographies, the others give the impression that their links lie with the Insular world. Hagiographical evidence, coupled with the evidence from the triangle of textual transmission between Ireland, Brittany, and Francia, suggests that there were multiple channels of transmission from Ireland and Brittany, perhaps even operating during different periods.

The sea-routes around Ireland, Britain, and Brittany were highways that connected these lands, rather than impermeable barriers.[755] This is especially true for the Irish sea, which did not prevent communication and cultural exchange between Ireland and Wales, but

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753 Bisagni, 'Breton Manuscripts and the transmission of computus between the Celtic West and the Carolingian Empire'.

754 Ibid. For other works on the subject, see Dominique Barbet-Massin, 'Le manuscrit 477 (461) d'Angers: étude codicologique et textuelle' in *Britannia Monastica,* 19 (2017), 15-43; Dominique Barbet-Massin, Le ritual irlandais de consecration des églises au Moyen Âge: le témoignage des sources irlandaises et bretonnes' in *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, 118:2 (2011), 7-39; Pierre-Yves Lambert, Les commentaires celtiques à Bede le Vénérable' in *Études celtiques,* 20:1 (1983), 119-43; Pierre-Yves Lambert, 'Les commentaires celtiques à Bede le Vénérable (suite)' in *Études celtiques*, 21 (1984), 185-206.

755 For works on the relationship between Ireland and Wales in the early medieval period see: Pauline Stafford (ed.), *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages, Britain and Ireland, c.500- c.1100* (Oxford, 2009); Karen Jankulak and Jonathan Wooding (eds), *Ireland and Wales in the Middle* Ages (Dublin, 2007); Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'Britons in Ireland, c.550-800' in John Carey, John T. Koch, and Pierre-Yves Lambert (eds) *Ildánach Ildírech. A festschrift for Proinsias Mac Cana, iv* (Andover and Aberystwyth, 1999), pp. 15-26; Charles Thomas, *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times, AD 400-800* (London, 1971).

rather facilitated it. We have evidence, for example, of Romano-British contact with eastern Ireland and Irish settlements in Wales.[756] As expected, Irish settlement in Wales occurs in areas closest to Ireland; Anglesey and the Llyn peninsula in the north-west, and Pembroke, Cardigan, and Carmarthen in the south-west.[757] Though scholars do not agree on whether these Irish communities in Wales were established in the fourth or fifth century, Proinsias Mac Cana notes that '..they had already passed through a phase of gradual development before their existence was recognized in political or historico-literary tradition.'[758] How long this Irish colonisation persisted, and in what numbers the Irish came to Wales remains debatable.

Though the Irish held lands elsewhere in Britain, notably Dál Riada, there was a strong Irish community in Gwynedd, various scholars positing a connection between the Welsh place name name Lleyn (Llŷn) and the most south-easterly of the Irish provinces, Laigin.[759] However, we have more evidence for Irish settlement in the south-west of Wales. Ogham stones in Wales, the majority coming from the south-west, show evidence of Irish communities in this area.[760] Ogham stones functioned as 'memorials, grave-markers or territorial markers'.[761] A key difference between the ogham stones in Wales, compared to Ireland, is that they feature the individual's name in both ogham script and Latin characters.[762] In her study of twenty-one stones, Swift concluded that seventeen show fifth-century characteristics. She suggested that if we dismiss the argument that these stones could

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756 Karen Jankulak and Jonathan Wooding, 'Introduction' in *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages*, p. 11; Philip Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical world* (Austin, 2001); Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000); esp. Chapter 4; Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350-1064* (Oxford, 2013).
757 Thomas, *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times*, p. 59.
758 Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages: an overview' in *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages*, p. 18.
759 Ibid; Thomas, *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times*, p. 59.
760 T.M. Charles Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford, 1993), p. 148.
761 Fionnbarr Moore, 'The Ogham stones of county Kerry' in Griffin Murray ed., *The Medieval Treasures of County Kerry* (Tralee, 2010), p. 10; see Damian McManus, *A guide to Ogham* (Maynooth, 1991); Catherine Swift, *Ogham stones and the earliest Irish Christians* (Maynooth, 1997).
762 Catherine Swift, 'Welsh ogams from an Irish perspective' in *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages*, p. 63.

simply reflect the continuance of outdated orthography by later carvers, her evidence suggests that these stones were erected within a relatively narrow period of a hundred years or so, implying a significant amount of Irish settlers in Wales. [763] Furthermore, she noted that Irish parallels for Welsh ogham stones are disproportionally found in eastern Ireland (rather than, as might have been expected in light of the later literary evidence, the lands of the Déisi and Uí Liatháin in Waterford and Cork), which suggests that Irish settlers in Wales may have emigrated from a wider area in the east of the country.[764] In a recent study, Sarah Künzler studied ogham stones in Ireland through the lens of memory studies and argued that these stones were a way in which the Irish *literati* situated themselves in the place they inhabited both spatially and culturally.[765] Elva Johnston had likewise previously argued that the patterning of ogham 'may also have acted as communal identifiers particularly if, as seems probable from their distinction, ogam was strongly associated with certain peoples'.[766] Thus, the distinct bilingual ogham patterning in Wales can be used to study the identity of the Irish settlers in Wales, particularly those of the learned class.

Traditionally, scholars such as Melville Richards and Charles Thomas have argued that there is Irish influence on the toponomy of south-west Wales. To them, the elements *cnwc* 'hillock' and *meudr* 'lane', present in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Cardiganshire (areas associated with Irish settlement) seemed to be borrowed from the Irish *cnoc* and *bóthar*.[767] More recently, however, Iwan Wmffre has shown that, while these

763 Swift, 'Welsh ogams from an Irish perspective', p. 78. In her study she uses McManus's chronology, as proposed in his *Guide to Ogam,* and rejects the dating models of earlier scholars such as V.E. Nash-Williams and Kenneth H. Jackson.
764 Swift, 'Welsh ogams from an Irish perspective', pp 78-9.
765 Sarah Künzler, 'Sites of memory in the Irish landscape? Approaching ogham stones through memory studies' in *Memory Studies*, 13:6 (2020), 1284-1304.
766Elva Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 13.
767 Thomas, *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times,* p. 60; Melville Richards, 'The Irish settlements in south-west Wales, a topographical approach' in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 90:2 (1960), 133-162.

elements are very possibly borrowings from Irish, they are not necessarily borrowings from the fifth to sixth centuries.[768]

Evidence of Irish settlement in Wales also appears in Welsh literature, notably the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*, which describes Cunedda's eight sons expelling the Irish from Wales. In reality, there may never have been such a massive expulsion of the Irish from Wales, but the text is still useful as presumably it preserves a memory of significant Irish presence and ethnic tensions. A passage in *Sanas Cormaic*, an early Irish glossary associated with Cormac mac Cuilennáin (d. 908), also refers to the significant Irish presence in Britain, writing that 'there were as many Irish living across the sea to the east as there were in Ireland itself'.[769] The *Vita Prima sancti Carantoci*, written in the twelfth century but recounting events during Carantoc's *floruit* (6th century), describes, 'In those times the Irish overcame Britannia, the names of whose leaders were Briscus, Thuibaius, Machleius, and Anpacus'.[770] Later, the *Life* mentions that these chiefs subsequently fought against Ceredig, king of Ceredigion, sometimes equated with the Patrician Coroticus.[771] There is also a small, yet revealing anecdote in the twelfth-century *Vita sancti Cadoci*, which describes a poverty-stricken Irish builder and his children living in Wales. Cadog hires the Irish builder to build a house of prayer near the river Neath, and later resurrects the Irishman when he is slain by other jealous builders.[772] It goes without saying that we must exercise extreme caution with

768 Iwan Wmffre, 'Post-Roman Irish settlement in Wales: new insights from a recent study of Cardiganshire place-names' in *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages*, p. 58.
769 Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages: an overview' in *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages*, p. 19. The *Sanas Cormaic* has been edited by Kuno Meyer in 'Sanas Cormaic, An Old-Irish glossary' in O.J. Bergin, R. I. Best, Kuno Meyer, and J.G. O'Keefe (eds) *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* (Dublin, 1907). Whitley Stokes' edition is available digitally in https://www.ucd.ie/tlh/text/ws.tig.001.text.html, accessed January 1, 2023.
770 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, p. 143.
771 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, p. 143 and Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints: The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and such Irish saints as have dedications in Britain*, 2 (London, 1908), p. 80.
772 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, p. 66.

such matter, but there is a sufficient body of material to allow us to infer some reflex of genuine tradition.

It is striking therefore that south-west Wales, which appears to have received the majority of Irish settlers, had strong links with Brittany. The Introduction and Chapter One of this thesis briefly described the British origins of the settlers of Armorica and outlined the main theories regarding the identity of these settlers and the reason they fled Britain. Caroline Brett's theory proposed in 2011 that the Breton migrations consisted of refugees and religious migrants is perhaps the most convincing.[773] She considered a brain-drain phenomenon where clergymen and scholars from Wales emigrated to Brittany in the seventh and eighth centuries, pointing out that this period was somewhat of a lacuna for the Welsh Church.[774] This accords well with the hagiographical evidence we have from Brittany, which gives Welsh origins for the many saints who came to Brittany and founded their own religious establishments. Even the religious that never received a hagiography still made a mark on the physical landscape. Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany have numerous place-names which appear to refer to saints, although it could be that not all belonged to saints, but rather to donors and patrons of sites who were later considered saints.[775] The next question to consider is whether contact between Wales and Brittany persisted from the seventh century onwards. If we use hagiographical evidence, which is by no means unproblematic, the answer, as will be shown later, is yes.

To judge from the evidence of the hagiography, for Welsh or Breton saints, a brief stint in Ireland represented a sort of educational and spiritual internship necessary for further promotion. Some of the saints' *Lives* in this project also reveal a standard pattern of travel the saints would follow before establishing themselves in Brittany. Using the earliest example, the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, Samson studies under Illtud in South Wales and becomes an

773 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 1-56.
774 Brett, 'Soldiers, Saints, and States?', 33.
775 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 242.

abbot in his own right before undertaking a spiritual journey to Ireland with two Irish pilgrims on their way home. There, he performs innumerable miracles and is given leadership of an abbey near what is now Howth. Upon his return to Britain, he travels across Cornwall to Brittany, with a chariot brought from Ireland. In a similar vein, Gildas studies under Illtud, having Samson and Paul Aurelian as schoolmates, before traveling to Ireland to further improve his education. In Ireland, he studies philosophy and the Scriptures and is ordained. At the behest of an Irish king, Ainmericus, he travels back to Ireland and initiates a campaign to reform the churches there and train and install new clerics. Once order in Irish churches is restored, he undertakes a pilgrimage to Ravenna and finally settles in Brittany. While his education begins in Brittany under the guidance of Guénolé, Guenael also journeys to Ireland with eleven disciples as a *peregrinus* and, like Samson and Gildas, performs countless miracles before returning to Brittany.

Of course, there are exceptions. While Guénolé fully intends to go to Ireland for further study and pilgrimage, he is stopped by St Patrick in a vision, who tells him that it is not necessary as Guénolé has all the 'Irish tools' required to emulate his role model, Patrick. Guénolé's pupil, Idunet, seems to travel to Ireland under duress. After his hermitage is obliterated by troublesome Franks, he takes the opportunity to settle in Ireland, where despite trying to live a life of solitude in a forest in Kildare, he is roped into providing pastoral care to the locals, by St Brigid and another stubborn Irish woman.

The *Lives* of Malo, Brioc, and Paul Aurelian do not follow this pattern. For Bili, the hagiographer of St Malo, it is enough that Malo studies under St Brendan and accompanies him on his famous *Navigatio*. Perhaps in Bili's mind, direct tutelage under a renowned Irish saint and incorporating Malo within a famous Irish text was more compelling than having Malo venture to Ireland for a brief spell. The *Vita Brioci* is also an interesting case. Brioc is Welsh born but is sent to study in Paris as Illtud's famous monastic school has not yet been

established. We know this because Brioc's schoolmates, who also study under Germanus, are Patrick and Illtud. The hagiographer thus places Brioc in an early timeline where Ireland does not yet have the spiritual prestige it comes to have with Patrick. Instead of a *peregrinatio* to Ireland, Brioc is sent back to his childhood home to convert his parents and his people to Christianity. Again, this implies that Christianity does not yet have a strong presence in Wales and thus highlights the importance of Brioc's mission. Having established himself in Brittany, Brioc is once again called to return to his native Ceredigion, as his countrymen are in desperate need of spiritual care. Finally, there is the *Vita Pauli Aureliani,* which, although written by a Landévennec monk, shows no interest in giving the saint a brief Irish sojourn. His *Life* initially follows the pattern of other Breton saints; Paul is educated in Llantwit Major under Illtud. However, wishing to flee into the wilderness and live a life of solitude and spiritual contemplation, he travels from Wales, through Cornwall, directly to Brittany, which he deems wild enough.

As touched on in the previous chapter, the *Lives* of Conwoïon and Judoc are reflective of the time and geopolitical situation in which they were written, and it is thus unsurprising that they do not follow the pattern of spiritual and educational progression discussed above.

If these saints' *Lives* lead us to believe that there was an active and steady relationship between Ireland, Wales, and Brittany in the fifth and sixth centuries, when these saints were depicting as living, what evidence is there that this relationship continued to the hagiographers' own time? If we trust the author of the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, we do have tantalizing evidence of cross-channel communication from around 800. The hagiographer is eager to convince us of the authority of the information he knows about Samson. To do this he explains that he was working from a previous *Life*, probably composed in Britain, and that he had contact with Samson's own kin. The man from whom the hagiographer received his information from was a relative of Samson, a nephew of Samson's

cousin Henoc, and had apparently lived with the author at Dol at some point. Although just a casual remark, this might perhaps count as illuminating evidence that there was still communication between monastic institutions in Wales and Brittany. More importantly, on the face of it, it would appear to show that monks were travelling between these monasteries.

The author, based in Dol, frequently mentions that he too had travelled to Wales and Cornwall, giving the impression that he participated in a grand tour of locations associated with Samson.[776] For example, when illustrating Samson's noble parentage and education under Master Illtud, the author notes that he visited Illtud's school. He does not actually describe his visit, or the place itself, fearing that his story would derail the narrative and draw focus away from Samson. We also learn that there are a few monks at Dol, whether before or during the author's time, who previously lived in Llantwit Major. He tells us,

> 'In cuius magnifico monasterio ego fui, cuiusque mirifica gesta si per singular dirimamus, ad excessum de incepto ducemur. Vnum tamen ad confirmandam nostram rem, referentibus nobis catholicis fratribus qui in hoc loco erant, publicamus in medium.'[777]

> (In his splendid monastery I have been, and if we allow ourselves to be led aside by his [Illtud's] wonderful deeds, each one, we shall be led too far from our original undertaking. Nevertheless, in order to establish our point, let me declare before all, one which has been related by our catholic brothers who dwelt in this place).[778]

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776 Burkitt lists all the times the author of the *Vita Prima Samsonis* uses the first person to describe his travels in Britain, or information he learned about Samson. See F.C. Burkitt, 'St Samson of Dol' in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 27:105 (1925), 48.

777 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol,* Sources d'histoire médiévale, 17 (Paris, 1997), p. 156.

778 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, p. 14.

These nameless monks may have been Welsh-born men who originally studied in Llantwit Major before moving to Dol, or alternatively, Breton-born monks based in Dol, who, like their saintly predecessors, briefly resided in Llantwit Major before returning to Brittany. Whatever the case, these monks had brought key information about Illtud to Dol. Corroborating the author's claims, there stand in Llantilltud Fawr (Llantwit Major) today several inscribed stones erected in the eighth and ninth centuries which commemorate an Abbot Samson and King Iuthahel of Gwent.[779]

Further along in the *Vita*, the author tells us crucial information about a place associated with Samson in Cornwall, which he visited first-hand. Samson and his three companions;– his father, Amon, the nameless Irish monk, and another brother– find a *castellum* which Samson deems suitable to house his brothers. This dwelling, possibly a monastery, was nearby Samson's cave, in which he lived alone. An oratory was constructed near his cave, so that he was able to emerge and attend mass every Sunday and receive communion. The author of the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis* tells us that this oratory was still standing when he visited it.[780] In Cornwall, in a district called 'Tricurius', or Trigg, he also saw and touched a cross which Samson had erected and carved himself.[781]

The author never travels to Ireland, or at least he does not tell us so. However, he does have a reputable source for information on Samson's visit to Ireland. The demoniac Irish abbot whom Samson cured apparently travelled with Samson to the Continent, permanently. The author tells us that this Irish abbot not only gave his monastery to Samson but,

779 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 124.
780 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, p. 43.
781 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, p. 49.

'…sanctum Samsonem citra mare secutus est ac comes illius semper fuit. Cuius bona quidem acta ac bonam conuersationem post ruinam scio, sed nomen nescio. Referentibus autem mihi de eo litteris transmarinis supra iam insignatis, in Penetale monasterium quieuisse atque inibi optimam et arduam vitam dixisse certum teneo.'[782]

'followed St. Samson to this side of the sea and was always his companion. Of his good deeds and good conversation after his fall I know full well, but his name I do not know; nevertheless, from letters already noted, sent to me from across the seas concerning him, I hold it certain that he retired to the monastery of Penetal and therein led a very good and strenuous life.'[783]

If we believe the author's words, this is one example of an Irishman, with personal ties to Samson, who migrated to Brittany via Wales and settled in a monastery founded by Samson.

At first glance, the crumbs of first-hand information that the author scatters throughout the text make the reader doubt his claim that he actually visited Wales and Cornwall. As noted earlier, he is quick to refocus his attention to the task at hand, which is the deeds of Samson of Dol. This tendency to raise a side-note or make an exaggerated claim and change the subject quickly is not unique to the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*. In fact, it is a bit of a hagiographical cliché. However, the author of the *Vita Prima* does not employ this cliché to cover any exaggerations or lies. When he mentions his visit to Llantwit Major, he does it when he introduces Illtud, who is obviously not the subject of the *Life* and thus does not merit a thorough summary of his greatness. Afterall, the author makes it clear that

782 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 202.
783 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, pp 40-1.

Samson surpasses his master Illtud. Moreover, it would be unusual to pay too much detail to Llantwit Major, when the *Vita* is supposed to be extolling Dol. The same can be said when the author also mentions that he visited Caldey Island, writing,

> 'Erat autem non non longe ab hoc monasterio insula quaedam nuper fundata a quodam egregio uiro ac sancto presbitero Piro nominee, in qua insula et ego fui, apud quem, inquam, sanctus Samson cohabitare uolebat…'[784]

> (Now there was, not far from this monastery, a certain island recently inhabited by one, an eminent man and holy priest, Piro by name. In this island I too have been, and it was with him, I say, that St. Samson wished to sojourn…).[785]

Although Samson did become abbot of this monastery, it is associated with Piro in the *Vita*. Considering the purpose of the *Vita*, it makes sense that the author does not dwell too much on what are essentially details and side-notes. Instead, he uses his first-hand knowledge of these places to lend authority to his claims about these foreign places.

A major challenge to the author's claims is that none of the sites he visited in Wales became cult sites dedicated to Samson, compared to the numerous sites dedicated to Samson in Brittany and Cornwall.[786] Samson is, strangely enough, absent from the ecclesiastical landscape of Wales and there is no evidence of liturgical commemoration of him in Wales. In her study as to the reasons why this is the case, Karen Jankulak notes that the earliest surviving calendar from a Welsh context with a collection of Welsh saints' *Lives*, London, BL Cotton Vespasian A.xiv, does not include Samson. This omission is unusual as the

784 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 178.
785 *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, trans. Thomas Taylor, p. 26.
786 Karen Jankulak, 'Present and Yet Absent: The Cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales' in Olson (ed.) *St Samson of Dol* (2017), p. 163.

calendar can be traced to a priory at Monmouth, which had strong ties with Dol.[787] She also found that place-names in Wales previously thought to have been associated with Samson of Dol actually relate to the Old Testament Samson.[788] It is only in the Norman period that we have evidence of Welsh interest in the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*. The twelfth-century *Liber Landavensis* (Book of Llandaff) is a collection of documents relating to the diocese of Llandaff.[789] It includes the *Lives* of saints Teilo, Oudoceus, Samson and others.[790] Seeing as the authors of the *Liber Landevensis* must have had Breton texts available, it is likely Llandaff was familiar with Samson through his Breton cult.[791] Although there is evidence of commemoration of Samson in Cornwall, it is worth noting that the places the author associates with the saint in the *Life* are no longer extant.

However, our idea of the way in which saints' cults develop and spread has changed significantly in recent decades. We now know that E. G. Bowen's idea that a saint's cult developed where the saint travelled and lived, according to their *Vita*, no longer holds weight.[792] Moreover, we have had to reconsider our idea of what constitutes a cult site and our expectations of how lasting they were meant to be. Saints' cults did not always result in church dedications, rather, a cult site could be 'a place of informal continuity of commemoration' that was not a permanent fixture.[793] Breton hagiography is a great example

787 Jankulak, 'Present and Yet Absent: The Cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales', p. 164.
788 Jankulak, 'Present and Yet Absent: The Cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales', p. 173.
789 John Reuben Davies, '*Liber Landavensis*: its date and the identity of its author,' *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 35 (1998), 1; Wendy Davies, 'Liber Landavensis: Its Construction and Credibility' in *The English Historical Review*, 88:347 (1973), 335.
790 *Liber Landevensis*, ed. Rev. W.J. Rees, The *Liber Landevensis*, (Llandovery, 1840), pp. 287-305.
791 Jankulak, 'Present and Yet Absent: The Cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales', p 178; John Reuben Davies, *The Book of Llandaf and the Norman Church in Wales* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 130.
792 Bowen, *Saints, Seaways and Settlements,* p. 70;
'The emphasis on the progress of the cult rather than that of the saint or his disciples is in contrast to Bowen's methodology, which connected a geographical distribution to the period of the saint himself, ignoring the discernible temporal levels provided by the place-names themselves.' in Karen Jankulak, *The Medieval Cult of St Petroc* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 74.
793 Jankulak, 'Present and Yet Absent: The Cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales', p. 176. Jankulak also compares Samson with Gildas, who also left no sites of commemoration in Britain. She argues about the two saints, that 'both are accepted as historical figures with a strong British presence; neither is commemorated, as far as we can tell, by church dedications or place-names.' p. 179.

of this, as Breton hagiographers mention casual sites of commemoration for which we have no evidence today. Even in the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, the dwelling in which Samson's companion live in Cornwall has traditionally been categorized as a monastery, though it is not specifically called one in the *Vita*.[794] Consequently, scholars have doubted the veracity of the author's claims that this place was a site of commemoration in his own time, as there is no evidence of the site today. Again, the fact that there is no evidence of this dwelling points to the informal nature of the site, rather than proving it never existed. To sum up, just because no evidence exists today of the cult sites which the author of the *Vita Prima* mentions he visited, does not mean they did not exist at one stage. As Jankulak argued, Samson's status as a *peregrinus* who had left Wales probably had an effect on the presence of his cult in Britain.[795]

Another reason to believe the author's claims is the presence of Samson's own kin during the author's own time. Richard Sowerby's argument that the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis* reflects worries about accusations of nepotism on the part of Samson's family is a compelling one.[796] It suggests, perhaps, that Samson's own kin was still promoting his cult during the time the author wrote the *Vita Prima*, and this kin could be a source of information for Dol.

As previous chapters have shown, it was not just Samson who received his education in Wales before settling in Brittany. Malo, Paul Aurelian, and Gildas received their training in Llantwit Major as well. This could be a Breton hagiographical cliché, but it could also reflect some truth. It hints that leading monasteries in Wales, such as Llantwit Major, served as educational centres for Breton clergy.

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794 Lynette Olson, *Early Monasteries in Cornwall* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp 10-20.
795 Jankulak, 'Present and Yet Absent: The Cult of St Samson of Dol in Wales', p. 180.
796 Sowerby, 'A Family and its Saint'.

The shared saints' cults between Brittany and Wales also confirm continuing contact between Brittany and Wales after the seventh century. The recently published volume, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, 450-1200*, provides a succinct and comprehensive outline of shared saints' cults in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany, using evidence such as the names of saints that survive in place-names in these lands.[797] To summarize, the high proportion of Welsh and Cornish eponyms found in *plou-* place-names in Brittany 'suggest that saints found in Wales and Cornwall were approximately equally likely to manifest themselves in early place-names in Brittany…'Welsh-named' saints form 21.7 percent of the number of 'attested saintly' eponyms of Breton *plous*…'[798] In his 1925 book, René Largillière had argued that this meant that leading Welsh monasteries sent church-founders to early Brittany.[799] Likewise, there are several Breton names in the Llŷn peninsula in Wales, including Ceidio, Edern, Aelhaern and others. The first such, Ceidio, is given family connections to the two Breton saints Gildas and Cof in Welsh genealogical sources.[800]

There is more evidence of a continual relationship between Wales and Brittany when we look at Welsh hagiography which was clearly interested in Brittany and even borrowed from Breton hagiography. As mentioned before, the *Liber Landevensis*, written in the twelfth century, contains a *Life* of Samson of Dol which is basically a Welsh redaction of the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*. The twelfth-century *Life* of Illtud describes Illtud's father as a Breton prince named Bicanus, who married a British princess Rieingulid. It is implied in the *Vita* that Illtud is Breton-born as well. [801] What is more, the *Vita* begins by praising Brittany and acknowledging its British origins. The author writes,

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797 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 256-76.
798 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p 259. *Plou* is a territorial unit used in Brittany, equivalent to the Latin *plebes*.
799 René Largillière, *Les saints et l'organisation Chrétienne primitive dans l'armorique bretonne* (Rennes, 1925), p. 226.
800 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, pp 268.
801 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae,* p. 194.

> ‘Victorious Letavia (that is, Lesser Britannia, *Brittany*), a rich and successful province, powerful in arms, none greater in war-like fame, took its origin from its mother, Britannia. The daughter was taught by the mother; full success in war attends the daughter.’[802]

Samson of Dol is introduced later in the *Life* as Illtud’s pupil, and there are passages which directly echo the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*. One example in the *Vita Iltuti* is the scene of Samson’s ordination by Dubricius, which essentially copied from *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*. Thus, Illtud’s *Life* demonstrates an active interest in Brittany and a feeling of kinship with the land, even in the twelfth century, as well as knowledge of the most preeminent Breton saint’s *Life*. Caroline Brett argued that the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis* was utilized by the Welsh clergy of Llandaff and St David’s in the twelfth century to prove their churches’ claim to archepiscopal status.[803]

Another example is the twelfth-century *Life* of Teilo, which mentions that the saint, along with a retinue of bishops and other men and women, visited Armorica while Samson was still archbishop of Dol. The *Life* describes how Teilo was well received by his fellow brother, who had been educated with him under St Dubricius.[804] Both Teilo and Samson planted a great grove of fruit trees which stretched from Dol to Cai, and the woods in that area were named after the two thereafter.[805] Through prayer, Teilo even helps the Bretons excel in horsemanship to defeat their enemies, and the author of the Life notes that that privilege remained under his own day, ‘according to the testimonies and historical accounts

802 Ibid.
803 Caroline Brett, ‘The Hare and the Tortoise? *Vita Prima Sancti Samsonis*, *Vita Paterni*, and Merovingian Hagiography’ in Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol* (2017), p. 97.
804 *Liber Landevensis*, ed. Rev. W.J. Rees, p. 345.
805 *Liber Landevensis*, ed. Rev. W.J. Rees, p. 346. Cai has been identified as Kerfontin (Car-fenten, Carfentein) in Ille-et-Vilaine by Joseph Loth in ‘*La Vie de S. Teliau’* in *Annales de Bretagne*, 10 (1894), 75-6.

of all the old men of that country'.[806] The *Life* of Oudoceus, also in the *Liber Landavensis*, tells us that Teilo's sister Anaumed, married a Breton king called Budic, who also appears in Teilo's *Life*.[807] Teilo was, and still is, venerated in Brittany and there are a few place-names in Brittany associated with him. However, the cult's centre appears to be in Landeleau, in Finistère, far from Dol, which may imply a later implantation of the saint's cult.

Finally, the twelfth-century Welsh version of the *Vita Sancti Paterni* describes Padarn as Breton born.[808] The Welsh author of this *Life* seems to have used the older, Breton *Life* of Paternus of Vannes, which unfortunately, no longer exists. In the Welsh Life, Padarn travels from Brittany to Britain and is credited with founding many monasteries (notably Llanbadarn), as well as performing some spiritual work in Ireland.[809] Later in the *Life*, he returns to Brittany and becomes bishop of Vannes, with Samson of Dol's blessing. The *Bonedd Y Saint*, a Welsh geneaological tract from the early thirteenth-century, confirms Padarn's Breton origins and identifies his grandfather as 'Emyr Llydar' or the emperor of Brittany.[810] Although these *Vitae* were written in the twelfth-century, they refer to strong relations between Wales and Brittany in earlier periods, especially considering the Breton origins of some of these saints. The borrowings in these *Vitae* from earlier Breton hagiography also point to the circulation of Breton texts, or even stories, in major Welsh monasteries. It is also important to note the prevalence of Breton immigration to Wales, particularly in the Welsh Marches, following the Norman Conquest. Le Patourel argued, 'The Bretons who received lands in England after the battle seem to have formed the largest non-Norman element…in the country'.[811] Indeed, these Bretons, such as Wihenoc, who was made

806 *Liber Landevensis*, ed. Rev. W.J. Rees, p. 349.
807 *Liber Landevensis*, ed. Rev. W.J. Rees, p. 370.
808 'Qui gente quidem Armoricus fuit…' (Who by race was an Armorican…) Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, p. 252.
809 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, p. 254.
810 Brett, 'The Hare and the Tortoise?' in Olson (ed.), *St Samson of Dol* (2017), p. 97.
811 John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), p. 16.

castellan of Monmouth after 1075, may have been responsible for reinvigorating Breton saints' cults in Wales.[812]

Another clue as to the continuous shared literary culture of Wales and Brittany is the many shared motifs present in Welsh and Breton hagiography. While many Breton hagiographies were produced in the ninth or tenth century, extant Welsh saints' *Lives* date from much later, beginning in the late eleventh century, with the Norman Conquest. The most common motifs in a saints' *Life* are those that demonstrate the saint's power through miracles. Scholars such as Dorothy Ann Bray have classified miracles under 'Birth and Childhood', 'The Four Elements', 'Angels and Demons', 'Animals', and 'Food', among others.[813] Elissa Henken, who has compiled a list of motifs from Welsh saints' *Lives*, included miracle stories, as well as motifs which concern the biographical aspects of a saint's Life such as their conception and places associated with the saints such as the foundation of churches or the location of cells. Because this topic is so extensive, it is only possible to provide here a few brief examples of shared motifs between Breton and Welsh hagiography.[814] A well-known example is Paul's struggle with birds in the *Vita Pauli Aureliani*. The author describes how Paul was charged with ensuring the crops at Illtud's monastery would not be devoured by sea birds. Not paying sufficient attention, the birds ravished all the grain. After a day and night fearing the punishment of his master Illtud and praying to God, Paul led the birds, like sheep, into a barn and enclosed them.[815] This episode was used again in the *Vita Iltuti*, which dates to around 1140, in which his pupil Samson drove all the untamable birds into a barn until they repented and Illtud released them.[816] In the eleventh-century Breton *Vita Gildae*, it is Paul Aurelian, Samson, and Gildas who lock

812 Elysée Yhuel, 'Brittany and the undoing of Angevin Sovereignty during the reign of King John' (Mphil, TCD, 2018), p. 25.
813 Bray, *A List of motifs in the lives of the early Irish saints*, p. 21.
814 Ireland shares these motifs too, but will not be in the discussion for the sake of brevity.
815 Wrmonoc, *Vita sancti Pauli Aureliani*, ed. François Plaine, 217-220.
816 Henken, *The Welsh Saints,* p. 81.

the birds up in the barn together.[817] According to Robert Fawtier, in his edition of Samson of Dol's *Life*, this miracle was initially part of Illtud's *Life*, in which an unnamed disciple tames the birds.[818] Given the close association between Samson, Gildas, Paul Aurelian, and Illtud, it is expected that this particular miracle was employed in each *Life*. This motif was popular later still, as it is present in the Welsh vernacular *Lives* of Cadog, David, and Ieuan Gwas Padrig, which are extant in fifteen and sixteenth-century sources.[819]

The giant episode which the *Vita sancti Machutis* borrowed from the *Vita Brendani* is also found in the twelfth-century *Vita sancti Cadoci*. Cadog is baptized and brought up by an Irish hermit named Meuthius, who was 'imbued with sacred literature and liberal training'.[820] Later, while in Scotland (Albania), Cadog encounters a giant called *Caw Prydyn*, or *Cawr*, who begs him to relieve him of his torment in hell. The giant is granted life, in exchange for his devotion to the Christian faith.[821]

Early Breton hagiography, like early Irish and Welsh hagiography, is characterized by its lack of post-mortem miracles and corporeal relics. Memories of a saint were usually fixed onto a physical site, such as a spring, or a physical object belonging to the saint, such as a bell or a cross.[822] Naturally, miracles in which a Breton saint uses an object to perform a miracle are a popular motif. Handbells are used in Irish, Welsh, and Breton hagiography as a tool for miracles, though they are not an Insular invention.[823] One of the most famous hand-bells in Breton hagiography, other than Paul Aurelian's *Hirglas*, is the bell that Gildas gifts to St Brigid. Several Welsh saints had hand-bells, and Cadog's, given to him by Gildas, had the

817 Ibid.
818 Fawtier, *La Vie de Saint Samson: essai de critique hagiographique*, p. 39.
819 Henken, *The Welsh Saints,* pp 82-3.
820 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, pp 28-37.
821 Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, pp 82-5.
822 Smith, 'Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany', 334.
823 The earliest evidence for bells in monasteries stems from sixth-century Carthage, and it is plausible that they came into use in Irish monasteries via Welsh monasteries, who adapted 'Romano-British prototypes.' In Bourke, 'Early Breton hand-bells revisited', 2. Gildas's bell, which he is reluctant to sell to Cadoc, was made in Ireland. Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, pp 86-7.

power to heal and bring the dead to life, according to his twelfth-century Latin *Vita*.[824] Other special objects were books that allegedly belonged to the saint. As such, there are numerous miracles which detail how the saint's book was untouched by the harsh elements, such as rain or the sea. For example, in Bili's *Life* of Malo, Llancarfan, on account of proximity to the sea, is used as a site of a miracle involving unpredictable tides. On one occasion, when the young pupils were playing on the shore, God, wanting to showcase Malo's sanctity, caused the sea to flood. While the other boys ran back to land in time, Malo was unaware, sleeping on a tiny island, or rather, bed of seaweed, only waking later to the sound of waves all around him. When Malo was miraculously found alive, he tells his master Brendan that he must spend more time on the island and tells him to send a psalter over the waves to him, stating that, if he were meant to stay on the island for one more day, the psalter would reach him intact.[825] The psalter does reach Malo undamaged, and he prays with it for a time before returning to the monastery by boat. In the Welsh sources, a similar miracle involving a book untouched by water is found in the late eleventh-century Latin *Life* of St David, where Aidan rushes off, leaving a book open. There is a subsequent downpour of rain, but when David finds the book, it is completely undamaged.[826] This miracle is echoed also in the twelfth-century *Life* of Teilo.[827] Of course, these are small examples but show that Welsh and Breton hagiographers were drawing from the same pool of motifs when compiling the *Vitae* of their respective saints, albeit in different centuries.

As Brett noted, 'the impression created by Breton hagiography is of a Breton Church in a strongly dependent relationship with the Atlantic Archipelago.'[828] While this is an accurate judgement, the other evidence presented can allow us to look at the relationship

824 Henken, *The Welsh Saints*, p. 110.
825 '…mittite in mare, et Deus, qui me salvavit inter undas maris, si placet illi me saltim una die hic adstare, mittet illud aquis intactum ad me.' In Bili, *Vita sancti Machutis*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1908), 383.
826 Henken, *The Welsh Saints*, p. 69.
827 Ibid.
828 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 258.

between Wales and Brittany as a bit more mutual. That being said, even though Breton saints' *Lives* do give the impression that Brittany intimate with its Insular neighbours, the details, or rather, lack of, relating to Ireland cannot be ignored. In some cases, it is quite evident that the information related to Ireland that is presented in Breton hagiography is not coming directly from Ireland. First, let us examine the lack of place-names. With the exception of the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, which tells us that Samson stayed in a monastic house near *Arce Etri* (or *Dún Étair*, now Howth), the other *Vitae* simply tell us that the saint travelled (or wished to travel) to *Hibernia* or to the *Scoti*.[829] To cite a few examples, the *Vita Winwaloei*, which presents Guénolé as a disciple of Patrick, describes how he sought passage to go *ad Scotos*.[830] Guenael, Guénolé's successor, is described in his *Vita* as undertaking *peregrinatio* to *Britannia* et *Scotia* for thirty-four years.[831] The *Vita Ethbini*, despite being so short, does offer us the name of a forest in *Hibernia* by the name of *Nectensis*, where Ethbin constructs a church dedicated to St Silvan the Martyr.[832] The analysis in Chapter Two showed that while we are meant to associate this place with Kildare, it still remains unidentifiable. It is probable, however, that it relates to the Irish name *Nechtan*.

The *Vita Gildae* is a curious case. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the mention of *Ainmericus*-, 'rex per totam Hiberniam', hints that the monk based in Rhuys had access to the Irish annals or Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, both of which make reference to the individual concerned, Ainmere mac Sétnai (d. 569). The latter is more likely to have been the source used, given the presence of Columba's cult in Brittany. Even though we are not given any key place-names, or regions, in Ireland, the author's probable use of the *Vita Columbae* indicates that he obtained the text via Ireland or from an Irish monk on the Continent.

829 Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Samson alias San(c)tán?' in Peritia, 3 (1984), 321.
830 Wrdisten*, Vita longior sancti Winwaloei,* ed. Marc Simon, Louis Cochou, and Armelle Le Huërou, p. 120.
831 *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou, p. 55.
832 Quimper, BM MS 16, fol. 138v.

Granted, there are Welsh hagiographies that are equally vague when they describe Ireland. For instance, the *Vita Prima sancti Carantoci*, written in the twelfth-century, describes Carantoc's time in Ireland succinctly and without any details.[833] This is especially unusual as Carantoc is described as a companion of St Patrick, even dwelling with him at one point. We are told that Carantoc was well-received in Leinster and is given the name Cernach, but the passage which recounts his spiritual work there is ambiguous. We are told,

> 'Et exaltate sunt ecclesie et civitates sub nomine eius in regione Legen. Et quocunque isset, virtutes et prodigia faciebat innumerabilia ex nutu Dei. Sanavit multa hominum milia, variis doloribus impleta, cecos, claudos, lunaticos, atque his similia…'
>
> (And churches and cities were raised in his name in the region of Leinster. And wherever he went, he performed innumerable virtues and miracles by the will of God. He healed many thousands of people, filled with different diseases, the blind, the lame, the lunatics, and those like them…)[834]

Passages like this are also used to describe the sojourns in Ireland made by Samson, Guénael, and Gildas.[835] Could this be a literary *topos* used to describe a saint's travels in a foreign land, such as Ireland?

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833 Though it dates to the twelfth-century, the text survives in a thirteenth-century copy. Andrew Charles Breeze, 'King Arthur's Din Draithou and Trevelgue, A Cornish Cliff-Fort' in *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis*, 137:1 (2020), 11.

834 Wade-Evans (eds), *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, p. 142

835 In the *Vita Prima Samsonis*, Samson travels to Ireland with two sage Irishmen and '…ibique non multum demorans multasque virtutes, Deo auctore, faciens, ab omnibus religiosis illius provinciae ita ut angelus Dei venerabatur; ac per eum Dominus in eadem provincia multos caecos illuminans multosque leprosos mundans ac daemoniacos fugans…' in *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, ed. Pierre Flobert, p. 200.
In the *Vita Sancti Guenaili*, the hagiographer writes, '…ter denos et quattuor annos in Britannia et Scotia peregrinans. Longum est ennarare quanta illic per eum Deus miracula operatus est. Surdis auditus redditur, caecis visus, eriguntur claudi, muti loquuntur, leprosi mundantur, paralytici curantur, vexati a daemonibus

There is another, albeit random, example which reinforces the argument that Brittany was receiving much of its Irish hagiographical material from Wales. Bili's *Vita sancti Machutis* presents Malo as St Brendan's favourite pupil and even has him take part in Brendan's *Navigatio*. As Chapter Three demonstrated, it is indisputable that Bili had knowledge, or access to the *Vita Brendani*, yet Bili chose to identify Brendan as the abbot of Llancarfan in Wales. To reiterate, although Brendan was venerated in Wales, there is no evidence that he was ever associated with Llancarfan, which was founded by Cadog. Cadog was venerated in Brittany; there is even a tradition of him settling there, giving us the Ile de Cado. Moreover, Carantoc, who was also venerated in Brittany, was a student at Llancarfan. There is evidence that there was contact between Saint-Malo and Llancarfan, even in the ninth century, considering Bili's accurate description of Llancarfan and the shared motifs between the *Lives* of Cadog and Malo. The author of the *Life* of Cadog, Lifris, also confirms Llancarfan's contacts with monasteries in Ireland. [836] Hence, when writing the *Vita sancti Machutis*, Bili no doubt used information he received from Llancarfan to construct his account of Malo's affiliation with Brendan.

These bits and pieces of evidence, when considered together, allow a new picture to emerge of relations within the Ireland, Wales, and Brittany nexus. While the role of Welsh clerics in establishing the Breton church is recognized, Welsh and Breton monasteries certainly maintained contact well after the seventh-century. The major Welsh foundations, such as Llantwit Major and Llancarfan, likely still provided further education for Breton monks. These houses also provided Irish (and Welsh) hagiographical traditions to Brittany,

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liberantur, omnibusque infirmitatibus constricti restituuntur integrae sanitati.' *Vita sancti Guenaili*, ed. and trans. Fañch Morvannou, p. 55.
In the *Vita Gildae*, when Gildas travels to Ireland the second time, we are given a similar laundry list to explain his restoration of the Irish Church. Before that, however, he travels to Britain for a similar purpose and the author writes, 'Namque ei tantam dederat dominus noster Jesus Christus gratiam etiam sanitatem, ut ejus orationibus caeci inluminarentur, surdis auditis redderetur et claudis debilibusque gressus, daemoniaci curarentur, leprosi mundarentur et infirmi quique sanarentur.' *Vita Gildae auctore monacho Ruiensi*, ed. Ferdinand Lot (1909), 355.
836 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 130.

such as the Patrician tradition in Landévennec. There is some evidence to suggest that Brittany also provided hagiographies and hagiographical information to Wales as well. While Caroline Brett noted that Breton hagiography gives the impression of a Breton church highly dependent on the 'Atlantic Archipelago', Welsh hagiography shows that the Welsh churches had an active interest in, and knowledge of, Brittany and its saints.[837] Moreover, the borrowings and shared motifs between Irish, Welsh, and Breton hagiography are strong evidence for a shared literary culture that persisted for longer than scholars have previously thought.

Contact between Wales and Brittany may have diminished, but not disappeared, around the ninth century. We can blame part of this on the Scandinavian incursions in both Britain and Brittany, which probably made travel to- and- fro difficult. From at least the ninth century onwards, with the advent of the Carolingian renaissance and the intensification of the viking presence, Brittany begins to look east. Within the *Lives* discussed, we see that Breton hagiographers have begun adopting Carolingian paradigms. Moreover, the tenth-century witnessed an exodus of Breton clergy, and even royalty, who sought refuge from the Northmen who, according to many sources, devastated all of Brittany.[838] It's not surprising then, given these developments, that Brittany cultivated a closer relationship with northern France and to a lesser extent, England.

837 Brett with others, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 258.
838 Alan II, duke of Brittany, also known as Alan Barbetorte, was an exile in King Athelstan's court in England until he returned to Brittany and expelled the Vikings. His exile and eventual defeat of the Northmen is mentioned in the Chronicle of Nantes and Flodoard's entry for 939 in his *Annales*. See, *Chronicle of Nantes,* ed. René Merlet*, La chronique de Nantes*, (Paris, 1896)), pp. 88-97 and Flodoard*, Annals,* ed. Philippe Lauer*, Les Annales de Flodoard*, (Paris, 1905), p. 74.

Conclusion

It is expected that Britain, in particular, Wales, plays such a key role in early Breton hagiographies. The Bretons, after all, were intrinsically tied with the Insular Britons, as Chapter One has shown. While there have been an adequate number of studies on the relationship between Brittany and Wales, this thesis hopes to have proven that contact between the two lands did not disappear after the Breton migrations, but continued beyond the fifth and sixth centuries, facilitating the exchange of ideas, texts, and peoples across the Channel. There is enough evidence to argue that Breton monasteries maintained networks with Welsh monasteries, until at least the ninth century.

This brings us to Brittany's relationship with Ireland. It is fair to say, with the exception of the hagiographies of the Landévennec saints and perhaps that of Gildas, that Ireland did not play such a noteworthy role as Wales did in early Breton hagiographies, but still played an important one. In the hagiographies that do include Ireland, Ireland is always portrayed in the most positive light. Ireland is, in a Breton monastic context, a land of saints and scholars. The extent to which Ireland features in Breton hagiography is significant, as the evidence of contact between Ireland and Brittany is scant. That being said, this thesis began with the hypothesis that Breton monasteries, to some extent, enjoyed direct links with Ireland. The evidence to support this assumption is not strong.

In fact, it seems that Wales has always been the missing link in the puzzle that is early medieval Irish and Breton connections. It was through Wales, as intermediary, that Irish and Welsh ideas merged in Brittany. Brittany's ties with Wales have, perhaps, been taken for granted. Considering the current emphasis on tracing the transmission of Irish texts and ideas into Brittany and the Continent, we must now reconsider Wales and its role in intellectual, cultural, and indeed, textual, transmission. More specifically, more research is needed to

uncover the extent to which monastic institutions in Wales and Brittany communicated and collaborated with each other. For this, we must use the abundant evidence within Welsh and Breton hagiography of cross-channel exchange between monasteries, as well as manuscript evidence which may help us unveil networks of transmission.

Even if the Irish presence in Breton hagiography was mediated, the theory of cultural memory has proven helpful in determining the significance of Irish elements in these texts, rather than the typical approach which is concerned with establishing the historicity of these claims. This positivist agenda, which traditionally put too much of an emphasis on the reliability of certain genres, such as hagiography, dismisses the worldview of early medieval authors as fanciful and useless. We have certainly come a long way from this approach, and now recognize that it does not matter so much whether what a hagiographer says is historically true; what matters is what it reveals about the author's attitude towards their past and present. The scholarship on Brittany's early medieval links with Ireland, has, until recently, used Breton hagiography through a positivist lens and as a result, has not developed very far. While interested in the knowledge and texts that Breton hagiographers had about Ireland, the focus of this thesis has been to study what Breton hagiographers remembered about Ireland's impact on their saints, and Breton monasticism more generally.

As reflected in this thesis and in other works on memory and hagiography, cultural memory as a methodology for hagiographical sources requires more refinement. Consequently, any future work endeavouring to use cultural memory, and even memory, as a lens will benefit from a framework which considers all the nuances of hagiography. Ideally, more time would have been dedicated to studying the actual vocabulary of memory in early hagiography and how Breton hagiography borrowed from this tradition. Moreover, a thorough discussion comparing the genres of history and hagiography and the roles of the hagiography and historian would have strengthened the methodological lens of this thesis.

Granted, the theory of cultural memory is not unproblematic, and this study does not pretend otherwise. The main criticism is the overemphasis on group unity and with it, homogenous memory.[839] Monasteries were not 'harmonious and homogenous communities represented by their rules'.[840] Nor were they static institutions, rather, communities which were not immune to outside influences and trends. Monastic life did not obliterate individualism and individual memories still survived within groups, no matter how cohesive. Moreover, monastic memories could be transformed and reshaped according to the current needs of the present. This thesis has not shied away from the tensions present within monastic communities. Even the community of Landévennec, which arguably had the strongest Irish influence, betrayed conflicting ideologies within the *Vita Winwaloei*. While Wrdisten saw Guénolé ascetic model as one to be emulated, at least as much as possible, there were other brothers who disagreed and were keen to adopt what they saw as a more relaxed monastic rule. While these 'weak' brothers, as Wrdisten calls them, may have agreed with the importance of commemorating the memory of Guénolé, they thought that this monastic example was now unattainable, and belonged to a long-ago past. To them, Guénolé could be commemorated in other ways. Likewise, the texts produced in the abbey of Saint-Sauveur de Redon, the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium* and the *Vita Conuuoionis,* expose dissonant ideas within the monastery. The author of the *Gesta*, who was thoroughly familiar with the community members he wrote about, reflected a monastic memory in which the community was founded on and continued to thrive off of patronage from Breton rulers. It also, perhaps inadvertently, painted Nominoë's cause to elevate Dol into an archbishopric as a righteous one. By the time the *Vita Conuuoinis* was written, the monastic memory shifted into one where the saw themselves as a Carolingian institution which did not support Dol's

839 Gregor Feindt, Félix Krawatzek, Daniela Mehler, Friedmann Pestel, and Rieke Trimçev, 'Entangled Memory: Toward a third wave in Memory Studies' in *History and Theory*, 53:1 (2014), 25.
840 Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', p. 256.

pretensions. The abbey of Saint-Sauveur de Redon is a perfect example of how monasteries were not static institutions, but ones deeply influenced by political and religious currents.

Although this thesis aimed to provide a study of Breton monastic institutions, it showed that it is necessary to go beyond the borders of Brittany to do so. Breton monastic diasporas in Francia and beyond played a crucial role in the transmission of ideas, texts, saints' cults, and relics. Some Breton saints' cults and hagiographies only survive thanks to these Breton diasporas. At the moment, the networks between Breton monasteries, or rather, Breton monks and other institutions and individuals in Francia and elsewhere are being uncovered. Identifying the presence of Breton diasporas outside of Brittany may be the key in unearthing more evidence of Breton participation in networks across the Continent and in the Insular world. Instead of focusing on the nation as a whole, it may prove more fruitful to study groups of individuals or individuals themselves. Thinking in terms of networks, rather than borders, may force us to rethink what constitutes a Breton community and reveal more about the experiences of the Breton diaspora.

By studying several different Breton monastic institutions side by side, this thesis has uncovered a patchwork of different monastic memories which serve to enrich our understanding of Brittany as a highly regionalist region, despite attempts of centralisation on the part of the Breton dynasty of Nominoë and his successors. On the whole, however, based on the dossiers studied, we can generally argue that the monasteries west of the *ligne Loth*- where the Breton language was dominant- remembered the Insular roots of their founder saints.

The abbey of Landévennec possibly had direct links with Ireland. The Irish influence on the community's memory is, arguably, the strongest there. First, is the community's insistence that, before 818, they followed an Irish *conversatio* and wore Irish tonsures. While this 'Scotic' *conversatio* is vague, there is evidence to suggest that the monastic way of life

that Guénolé followed was not only inspired by monasticism from the east, but ascetic practices that were found in Irish examples as well. Moreover, examples from other British monasteries which followed a similar style rule and tonsure uphold the claim that Landévennec followed Insular influenced customs, which may have been also classified as 'Irish'. Further evidence to support the argument that Landévennec had direct links with Ireland is the within the hagiography themselves. The *Vitae* of Guénolé, Ethbin, and Guenael, all associated with Landévennec, place significance on Ireland, which is presented as a saintly and miraculous land. The *Vitae* of Guénolé and Ethbin completely eschew Britain, even though the roots of these saints can be traced there. Given the focus on saints' origins and activities in Britain in numerous other Breton *Vitae,* the examples of Guénolé and Ethbin are unusual. Instead the authors of the *Vitae* of Guénolé and Ethbin privilege Ireland to such an extent that they present them as having special relationships with two preeminent Irish saints, Patrick and Brigid. The literary borrowings in these texts suggests that the community of Landévennec had access to Irish texts and particular details, such as the *silva nectensis* mentioned in the *Vita Ethbini*, reveal that the authors may have known more about Ireland than previously thought. What is more, Wrdisten's insinuation that Guénolé waited to board a ship to go to Ireland from the west of Brittany indicates that there probably were other trade routes between Ireland and Brittany, other than the well-known route between Ireland and the Loire. Even though the authorship of the *Vita Guenaili* is disputed, Guenael is still part of the spiritual family of Landévennec. Whether the author was a Landévennec monk or one who was at least familiar with Landévennec, he recognized Landévennec as having strong links with Ireland, and consequently, had Guenael go on *peregrinatio* to Britain and Ireland. The monastic identity of Landévennec was, to an extent, shaped by the Irish influences on the abbey, which its *conversatio* and *tonsio ab scotis*, the importance of Irish saints' cults in the abbey's liturgy, and the relationship that the abbey's saints had with Ireland itself. The

authors of these *Vitae* saw fit to reiterate this during a period in which the abbey's venerable links with Ireland were being severed, through the adoption of a new rule and through exile.

The *Vitae* of Samson of Dol, Malo, and Gildas also have Ireland occupy an important place in the *Lives* of these saints. In the *Vita Prima sancti Samsonis*, Samson's Irish visit is missionary in purpose, with the intent to portray Samson as having a lasting imprint on Ireland. Samson's Irish connection could still be felt within the author's own day, as he mentions the presence of one of the saint's Irish companions in Pentale. Overall, the community of Dol situated themselves within the wider Insular legacy Samson left behind. In the *Vita secunda sancti Samsonis*, the emphasis is placed on the education Samson received in Ireland and thus the author reiterates the contemporary view of the Irish as learned scholars. The main purpose of the *Vita secunda* was to prove why Dol deserved its place as the spiritual centre of Brittany and its archbishopric, and Samson's connection with Ireland elevated his prestige and placed him above other saints. In the *Vita sancti Machutis*, the author Bili reveals his anxieties about Malo's deeds falling into oblivion and tells us that he laboured strenuously to retrieve them. Yet, his fears were not unfounded, for despite linking of Malo with Brendan, his borrowings from Irish hagiography, and his description of Malo's visit of Luxeuil, it is plain that he did not receive all his information from a direct Irish source. This did not deter Bili from promoting Malo's Insular background. The *Vita Gildae* provides tantalizing evidence of direct networks of transmission between Rhuys and Ireland, based on Irish sources the Rhuys author probably had access to. More to the point, the community of Rhuys found Gildas's legacy in Ireland important to remember, even if the saint's career there had no significance whatsoever in the commemoration of his cult, which centred on his physical relics.

Even though the *Vita Pauli Aureliani* was written by a Landévennec author, Wrmonoc wrote it for the Cathedral school of St-Pol-de-Léon and its pupils. While it had a

pedagogical purpose, it was also concerned with establishing the saint's authority over the area of St-Pol-de-Léon and responding to Dol's archepiscopal pretensions. Paul Aurelian has a colourful beginning in Wales and Cornwall, but has no evident Irish connection. Likewise, the *Vita Brioci* does not include Ireland at all. Based on a Breton source but written for a monastery in Angers, the *Vita* was concerned with remembering Brioc's Welsh roots, but focuses its attention on the saint's career in Brittany.

The hagiographies of Judoc and Conwoïon tell a different story altogether. Judoc's *Vitae* are a fine example of the process by which Breton saints' cults became more international to the point where the saint's Breton origins were not entirely crucial. Both of Judoc's *Vitae* examined in this thesis were written for non-Breton communities, and thus, the saint's Breton and Insular roots did not matter that much. The ninth-century abbey of Saint-Sauveur de Redon could not boast of Insular roots for its founder saint, Conwoïon, who, at the most, had ties with the aristocracy of Vannes. The *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* places the recent history of its community within a wider Roman history, rather than an Insular one, although it presents itself as an institution with benefitted primarily from Breton royal patronage. The *Vita Conuuoinis*, on the other hand, was more removed from Conwoïon's own time, and reflects an overall shift in the identity of the community from one which at least toed the line of both Breton and Carolingian authority to one which envisaged itself as a reformist and staunchly Carolingian institution. One could argue that the *Vita Conuuoionis* represents the successful Carolingianisation of the abbey of Redon.

This thesis has communicated throughout the difficulty one encounters when studying early Breton hagiography. The convoluted manuscript traditions, many of which are still being untangled, as well as outdated editions or no editions at all have limited the framework of this thesis. It cannot be emphasized enough that early Breton hagiographies are among the most essential sources for early medieval Brittany, and yet many are still largely inaccessible.

Far from being useless and fanciful, these colourful texts tell us so much about the early Bretons and their origins and connections with the wider world. From them, we are able to glean information about contemporary politics, religion, and society, the circulation of texts and ideas, macro and micro histories, and much more. They are also deeply personal, and tell us about the ideals and aspirations of those writing them. As such, there is so much more that can be learned from these texts about early medieval Brittany with recent editions.

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