

Saints’ Cults in the Celtic World
Edited by S. Boardman, J. R. Davies and E. Williamson

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Standard Abbreviations

Editors’ Introduction

Chapter 1
Professor Thomas Clancy, University of Glasgow
‘The cults of saints Patrick and Palladius in early medieval Scotland’

That both the earliest bishops of Ireland, St Patrick and St Palladius, had cults in medieval Scotland has long been known. St Patrick is associated particularly with the cult site of Old Kilpatrick, reputedly his birthplace, the rights and privileges of which are described in an early 13th-century text. Palladius, on the other hand, is associated with the parish of Fordun in the Mearns. Owing to the fame of both saints, and the propensity of later medieval Scottish clergy to claim Irish saints as their own, these cults have often been viewed as of later origin. This article demonstrates that we have Irish evidence of both cults, at these two sites, dating back to at least the 8th century. It argues that the development of these cults in Scotland is linked to knowledge of versions of Muirchú’s seventh-century Life of St Patrick. In the case of Old Kilpatrick, one strand of Irish textual materials preserves for us a series of anecdotes about Patrick’s early life in on the banks of the Clyde which, it is argued, must come from a local source. The article finishes by reflecting on the significance of the fact that the cults of these two Irish saints must have been established in Scotland not by Gaels, but by Britons and Picts.

Chapter 2
Dr Fiona Edmonds, University of Cambridge
Personal Names as a Source for Irish Saints’ Cults in Northern England and Southern Scotland

Gaelic and Brittonic personal names which attest devotion to a particular saint were popular in northern England and southern Scotland from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. They represent a vast and largely unexploited quarry of information about the saints’ cults which attracted veneration in these regions.

In line with the approach taken by other contributors to the volume, I will focus my investigation on one particular cult which spanned cultural and political boundaries, namely that of St Patrick. The centre of Patrick’s cult lay, of course, in Ireland, but many individuals who lived in northern England and southern Scotland bore the names ‘Gospatric’ and ‘Gillepatraic’ (which mean ‘servant of Patrick’ in Cumbric and Gaelic respectively). The impression that Patrick’s cult enjoyed
popularity in the region is reinforced by the considerable number of medieval northern English and southern Scottish churches dedicated to the saint.

I will argue that the ‘Gospatric’ names were borne almost exclusively by the earls of Bamburgh and Dunbar, and their close relatives. Although the name ‘Gospatric’ is Cumbric, its bearers were Northumbrian in ethnic and linguistic terms. It is therefore necessary to explain why they should have adopted this name. I will argue that the Northumbrian earls began to cultivate Patrick’s cult when their influence expanded into the former kingdom of Cumbria/Strathclyde, and it became necessary for the earls to ingratiate themselves with local churches and dignitaries. Members of the Northumbrian dynasty subsequently settled in Cumbria; they continued to use the name ‘Gospatric’ for several centuries and founded churches in honour of Patrick.

That the Northumbrian earls adopted the Cumbric name ‘Gospatric’ indicates that they were primarily interested in the Brittonic-speaking elite of Strathclyde which adhered to Patrick’s cult. However, the Gaelic name ‘Gillepatraic’ was also popular in the former Cumbrian kingdom; it originated amongst settlers of Hiberno-Scandinavian extraction. Patrick’s cult unified the disparate populations of Strathclyde; it is therefore understandable that the Northumbrian earls should have chosen to adopt it as part of their bid to influence the region.

**Chapter 3**

Dr James Fraser, University of Edinburgh.

*The International Wanderings of St Andrew*

The paper will examine questions surrounding the establishment of the cult of St Andrew at St Andrews, Fife, which was eventually to become the national cult of the kingdom. Although a Pictish monastery is attested at Cennrighmonaidh (now St Andrews) in the middle of the eighth century, the cult of Andrew is not attested there before the twelfth century. Nevertheless, the twelfth-century foundation story of St Andrews places the establishment of the cult in Pictish times, either in the early ninth century, or in middle of the eighth century. The paper will consider the background to this twelfth-century story, and will explore the feasibility of the putative eighth-century foundation. A particular area of focus will be St Andrew's connections with the Scythians in early Christian historiography, alongside Pictish origin material which claims Scythian origins for the Pictish nation. The possibility that Picto-Scottish learning, coupled with a strong San Andrean cult at Hexham in Northumbria, and reformist ecclesiastical thinking in eighth-century Pictland contributed to the establishment of the cult of St Andrews at Cennrighmonaidh will be explored. However, it will be shown that it is not presently possible to be conclusive about the matter.

**Chapter 4**

Dr Karen Jankulak, University of Wales, Lampeter

*Adjacent Saints*: Dedications between Cornwall and Brittany

In 1986, Oliver Padel coined the phrase ‘recurrent adjacency’ for ‘a feature of Brittonic church dedications which has often been noted but never fully explained ... Two saints with adjacent dedications in one country may often turn up, again
adjacent, in another part of the Brittonic world’. The most noticeable nexus of such clustered dedications is that of Cornwall and Brittany. These two areas in particular are replete with otherwise obscure ‘saints’, often known only from church dedications or place-names. Many of these saints are confined to the local area. A significant number, however, are known in both areas (rather fewer have cults in Wales as well). The investigation of the geographical patterns of dedications to saints has changed considerably since the inspiring but somewhat naive work of E.G. Bowen and G.H. Doble. Their approach to patterns of dedications as showing for the most part the movements of the saint in question has been considerably revised. First, dedications themselves are now more critically established according to linguistic and historical criteria. Second, they are viewed as a geographically and chronologically sensitive map of a cult over time; only then are they related, if possible, to the actions of the saint in question, or to those of his immediate followers. If dedications are no longer self-explanatory and ubiquitously original primary data, they are still valuable primary data. What has perhaps not been explicitly appreciated, however, is the significance of church and place-name dedications, especially those commemorating otherwise entirely obscure saints, to the overall picture of a cult. Rather than taking such dedications as relatively stable anchors, upon which one might moor a more amorphous collection of evidence, one might do well to regard dedications as one more potentially shifting piece of evidence. A reconsideration of the ‘recurrent adjacency’ phenomenon, therefore, is in order.

Chapter 5
Dr John Reuben Davies, University of Edinburgh
‘Bishop Kentigern among the Britons’

There is no certain contemporary evidence for the episcopal saint called Kentigern, patron of the dioceses of Glasgow and St Asaph. The basis for modern popular understanding of the saint stems from a Life written towards the end of the twelfth century by Jocelin, a monk of Furness Abbey. The two dioceses in question, Glasgow and St Asaph, both lie in what might be termed ‘old Britain’; areas which escaped Anglo-Saxon conquest, and where forms of the Brittonic language continued to be spoken (although, by the twelfth century, it had long-since ceased to be the language of the men of Strathclyde). Both these dioceses were substantially overhauled in the twelfth century (St Asaph was entirely re-founded), and Kentigern’s association with either of them before that time is difficult to pin down. Yet we do know of ecclesiastical figures called Kentigern from early medieval sources; his name appears, moreover, in one form or another in a number of toponyms from (perhaps) as far south as Brittany (Trégonderne), through south western Wales, to Cumbria, Strathclyde, and Lothian. Annales Cambriae (compiled in ninth-century St Davids) record the death of a bishop called Kentigern (Conthigirnus) in 612, in a section of the annals apparently imported from the Old British North. More intriguingly, however, a bishop of Senlis (province of Reims) by this name attests two Church councils in sixth-century Gaul, one at Orléans in 549 (Gonotiernus), the other at Paris in 556 × 573 (Gonothigernus).

There appear to be three centres of interest in St Kentigern in the twelfth century; one at Glasgow, where there is a cathedral church dedicated to him from at least 1128, and for which Lives of the saint are commissioned; another at St Asaph, where Geoffrey of Monmouth seems to be involved in promoting the saint’s legend when he becomes bishop there in 1152; and there also appears to be a Melrose
connection. Jocelin of Furness, author of the only complete extant Life of St Kentigern also wrote a Life of Waltheof, abbot of Melrose. Waltheof’s father was a native of Senlis, which numbered a Kentigern (Gonothigernus) among its early bishops. Furthermore, Jocelin, bishop of Glasgow, who commissioned the Life of St Kentigern from Jocelin of Furness, had been abbot of Melrose.

This essay examines and assesses the evidence for Bishop Kentigern and the development of his cult, and concludes that, while there undoubtedly was a bishop (or probably bishops) called Kentigern in the sixth century, much of what we think we know of the career of Bishop Kentigern, patron of Glasgow and St Asaph, and his appearance in various Brittonic contexts, can usually be explained in a twelfth-century context. Yet, more positively, I argue that the cult of Kentigern of Glasgow can convincingly be tied to Strathclyde in the early middle ages; but not so convincingly to North Wales or Brittany.

Chapter 6
Dr Sally Crumplin, University of St Andrews
St Cuthbert’s Miracles and Pilgrims: A consummate northern saint for the twelfth century

In the mid-twelfth century a Durham monk named Alan travelled around southern Scotland, taking in much of East Lothian as well as Perth, St Andrews, and Dunfermline, carrying with him a small bag of St Cuthbert relics. St Cuthbert is often seen as an Anglo-Saxon saint - he lived during the great Anglo-Saxon golden age of the seventh century - but he sits far more comfortably in a northern world, where saints’ cults transcend the political border. This is particularly true of the twelfth century: a time when Anglo-Scottish conflicts resulted in the drawing of political borders but when, paradoxically, Anglo-Scottish saintly connections were particularly prominent.

This paper uses Cuthbert’s cult as a lens through which to explore these saintly connections. It looks at the dissemination of Cuthbert’s cult across a region from the Tyne to the Tay, and from east coast to west. Using the hagiographic texts written about St Cuthbert from the ninth to end of the twelfth century, it will examine the locations in which Cuthbert’s cult thrived. I will focus in particular on the late-twelfth-century miracle collection by Reginald of Durham, charting the provenance of pilgrims, locations of miracles and Cuthbertine churches, and associations with other saints from this region, as well as the perambulations of the monk Alan, in that text. This Durham-centric source will be augmented with other evidence of the period: kalendars of Scottish saints, architectural evidence, and the so-called ‘Irish Life’ of Cuthbert which in fact seems to be a composite life of Cuthbert written from Scottish sources. Through the associations of Cuthbert’s cult, the paper will show the complexity of this social, cultural and political milieu in northern England and southern Scotland.

Chapter 7
Dr Joanna Huntington,
David of Scotland: ‘Virum tam necessarium mundo’

Famously, James I of Scotland allegedly said that David I’s extreme generosity towards the Scottish church had rendered him ‘ane sair sanct for the
Croune’. David was also explicitly a saint for Walter Bower, who was reliant for material on John of Fordun, who in turn borrowed heavily from a eulogy written shortly after David’s death by Aelred of Rievaulx. The sanctity attributed to David in these later medieval sources does not, however, simply reiterate or reflect the image of him that is in their twelfth-century source, but rather adapts it to suit the mores and requirements of the authors in their later medieval contexts. Aelred’s David is certainly virtuous and to be emulated, but he is not a saint. This makes him particularly interesting, especially as he was presented as an exemplar to Henry of Anjou, shortly before he was to become Henry II of England. What type of kingship was Aelred recommending to the king-in-waiting? What were the pitfalls of which he believed Henry needed to beware?

This paper will examine this virtuous but flawed David in the context within which he was created. It is now generally accepted that saints’ lives can provide valuable insights into the concerns and requirements of the cultural and political landscape from which they emanate. I will argue here that subjects who could not be seen as saintly could be equally (and perhaps still more) valuable tools in attempts to shape the behaviour of others.

Chapter 8
Dr. Steve Boardman, University of Edinburgh
The Cult of Saint George in late medieval Scotland

In the fourteenth century the cult of Saint George became a significant focus of devotion for the English royal dynasty, a development reflected in, and advanced by, Edward III’s foundation of the Order of the Garter. By the end of the century St George had effectively emerged as an English patron saint, particularly in the military arena, with St George’s banner adopted as the identifying symbol for English troops on their campaigns in France, Iberia and Scotland. Given the close association of St George with the ambitions and iconography of English kingship it might be thought that the cult would have held few attractions for Scottish monarchs and aristocrats in the late medieval period. In fact, however, there is considerable evidence for a growing commemoration of St George in the northern kingdom. The proposed article will concentrate on one aspect of this Scottish engagement with St George’s cult, namely the sudden appearance and proliferation of George as a Christian name within the Scottish aristocracy in the fourteenth century. Overall, it seems that the name was adopted more or less independently, but simultaneously, by a number of families in south-eastern and eastern Scotland. In many cases the individuals involved belonged to noble lineages noted for active and personal involvement in pilgrimage and crusade. As D.A.L.Morgan has observed, Edward III’s enthusiasm for St George reflected the saint’s established and growing international popularity as a protector and intercessor for all Christian warriors. It was George’s cosmopolitan appeal as a crusader/soldier saint that underpinned the spread of the cult in Scotland, regardless of his increased identification with the English monarchy.

Chapter 9
Dr Eila Williamson, University of Edinburgh
The Cult of the Three Kings of Cologne in Scotland
Traces of the medieval cult of the Three Kings of Cologne, or biblical Magi, can be found in the written records and material culture of medieval and early modern Scotland. For example, there is evidence of altar dedications in the parish churches of Haddington and Dundee, and of drama (including the Three Kings) in Aberdeen and Lanark. Furthermore, a fourteenth-century ring brooch, found in Islay, has the names of two of the Kings and one of the fates inscribed on it, while an oak panel from Dundee depicts the Magi and their offerings to the Christ child.

This paper will examine the extant Scottish evidence for the cult in the context of evidence for other parts of the British Isles: for example, the translated versions of the *Historia Trium Regum* by John of Hildesheim; drama in England, Ireland and Wales; jewellery; and Richard II’s devotion to the Three Kings. In addition, the Scottish cases will be explored in relation to Scottish links with Cologne and to the cult in continental Europe. An attempt will also be made to discuss the evidence in relation to the growing devotional interest in the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Family, and the Passion in late medieval Scotland.

Chapter 10
Dr Jonathan Wooding, University of Lampeter

The Medieval and Early Modern Cult of St Brendan: A Study in Transmission

The dedications to St Brendan and the other commemorations of the saint present unusual challenges for the historian. Known medieval dedications of churches to St Brendan number around two dozen. If we add to this number dedications attached to chapels, as well a certain number of what may be judged to be ‘lost’ dedications to the saint, the total dedications amount to around thirty church-sites in Brittany, England, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and, possibly, Wales. The medieval dedications to St Brendan thus amount to a substantial imprint of his cult in archaeological terms: comparable in scale to the international cults of saints such as Patrick and Brigit in the middle ages. When we consider secondary evidence of the cult of Brendan, however, such as legendary associations of Brendan with sites in northern Germany, as well as the wide dissemination of the legend of St Brendan's voyage, we are confronted with a high-medieval cult found almost the entire length and breadth of Europe. A substantial part of the interest of studying the cult of Brendan lies in the interplay of what we may term the 'literary cult', almost entirely deriving from the figure of Brendan as presented in the tale *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis* (the Voyage of St Brendan the Abbot), with the more conventional cult of the saint, based on dossier of the saint, perhaps initially independent of the Navigatio in its extant form. The study of the interplay of these factors offer some valuable insights into the processes of distribution of medieval saints' cults.