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‘Desperate Father or Murderous Fool? The Genesis of one Migratory Legend of Poverty, Fecundity and Multiple-birth

*Abstract*

**This study explores attitudes expressed in one specific Devon legend, concerning the multiple-birth of seven children, as it was told in early seventeenth century England. A diachronic study of related Western European narratives offers fresh insights. These earlier legends reveal how certain elements were discarded whilst others were retained within this migratory tale. The focal point of this story evolves over time from the medieval stigma attached to multiple births and towards the relationship between faith, fate, family size and household economics.**

Introduction

This article focuses on the local legend of septuplet boys born in Chulmleigh village. I begin by positioning the story as a ‘motif type’ within Thompson’s Motif Index of Folk-Literature, as distinct from ‘tale types’ for which there are specific indexes.<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, where the word ‘type’ or ‘subtype’ stands alone this is used to refer to motif, rather than tale type.

Starting from the premise that the tale is fictional, attitudes towards the events described are discussed by briefly considering how the medieval perspective might contrast with a modern interpretation. This is accomplished by placing the tale in its historical context. The work of Ellen Ettlinger and Jacqueline Simpson, earlier scholars of the Chulmleigh tale, is considered. Their ideas about the interpretation of its meaning, including what the tale might reveal about dominant attitudes of the time, are presented. This study thus acknowledges the potential limitations of textual analysis carried out with a lack of information about performance context. This article relies instead on a diachronic analysis of similar tales with similar motif types in order to speculate about the evolution of

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Reidar Thoralf Christiansen’s *The Migratory Legends* (1958) and Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson’s *The Types of the Folktale* (1961).

particular strands and elements of this tale in terms of the social attitudes they convey.

The work of other scholars is used to compare some Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-century narratives from neighbouring European countries. By looking at the similarities and differences between these tales it is possible to suggest the most likely influences on the Chulmleigh narrative and to detect a shift in attitudes. It will be proposed that three key features of the Chulmleigh tale as a distinct narrative variant are; a move away from the multiple birth stigma as a focal point; a tendency towards describing a more universal, rather than specific predicament involving a named upper-class mother and a narrative 'core' which tends to reinforce rather than challenge social hierarchy.

Narratives about many children being born at one birth were identified as belonging to sub-type T586.1 by Thompson in the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Septuplets were seen as part of this category (T586.1.2), though Thompson gave a separate category (T587) for the birth of twins. Category T586.1.2 also crops up in modern fiction.<sup>2</sup> The Chulmleigh narrative considered here, along with its European antecedents, focus specifically on the circumstances of such births. They emerge as a specific motif type, distinct from other tales about siblings resulting from the same birth, such as the local legend of the conjoined twin sisters in Biddenden, Kent (type F523). This particular story concerns two wealthy sisters and their benevolence towards the poor in adult life.<sup>3</sup>

The narrative examined in this study is a local legend that has captured the attention of scholars in the last forty years, a tale of the 'unexpected' birth of septuplet boys, to a poverty-stricken family in Chulmleigh village, Devon. One of the oldest and most well known tales of an unexpected multiple birth, this local legend dates back to at least the early seventeenth century. The scholarly consensus is that this particular tale is migratory, a similar tale being circulated in Wiltshire as well as much further afield.<sup>4</sup> Ettliger calls it an 'iconical legend' for this reason.<sup>5</sup> A key feature of the following story is therefore that it is a specific narrative 'type'.<sup>6</sup> Rysdon's version is as follows:

An inhabitant of Chulmleigh (for so the tale runneth) being a poor man, had many children, and thought himself too much blessed in that kind; wherfore, to avoid the charge that was likely to grow that way, he absented himself seven years from his wife; when returning and accompanying her as before, she was, within one year after, delivered of seven children, that were male, at one birth; which made the poor man thinking

himself utterly undone, and thereby despairing, put them into a basket, and hasteth to the river with an intent to drown them; but divine Providence following him, occasioned the Lady of the land, coming at that instant in his way to demand him what he carried in his basket, who replied, that he had whelps, which she desired to see purposing to chose one of them; who upon sight, perceiving they were children, compelled him to acquaint her with the circumstance; whom she had sharply rebuked for such his inhumanity, forthwith commanded them to be taken from him, and put to nurse, then to school, and consequently . . . provided a prebendship for every one of them in this parish.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, in terms of English legend, this tale is unusual in exploring infanticide as a legitimate father's dilemma. The nub of the drama relates to whether or not the despairing father will successfully drown his seven newborn sons in the river, seeing them as an unaffordable expense. However, the story weaves together more complex themes of poverty, social class, fate, religion and fecundity.

The meaning of this tale has been much debated. Simpson, like Ettlinger before her, suggests that the tale cannot be 'true' in any literal sense. Since it was collected in the early 1600s, it seems to refer back to the sixteenth century, in which it would not have been possible for septuplets to be delivered and survive. Recent statistics suggest that only one in around 4.5 million pregnancies results in sextuplets.<sup>8</sup> Approximate estimates suggest a total English population of just fewer than 3 million people in the early 1500s, just a proportion of whom would have been of child-bearing age.<sup>9</sup> Hence, the prospect of septuplets in the sixteenth century would be far more implausible.

From a modern perspective, in a world where, "Birth control within marriage, and illegitimacy outside it," displaces, "marriage from its old function as a regulator of fertility," the legend is delightfully anachronistic.<sup>10</sup> Seen in this context, the husband's departure might be regarded as an extreme form of 'abstinence' which comically backfires. The tale appears to be a fictional story that exaggerates a predicament in order to expose a moral dilemma. However, from an early medieval perspective, when marriage was still used as a regulator of fertility, it might be seen more as a tale exposing human frailty. In pre-industrial societies, the act of killing could interfere with, "the balance between the economically productive parts of the populace and a non-working old age population."<sup>11</sup> This would be particularly true of communities where child mortality was high and where male children, especially, were deemed to be economically productive at a much earlier age.<sup>12</sup> Under such circumstances, the father might be seen as

ridiculously short-sighted in not recognising the future potential of his seven sons.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, in a pre-industrial rural community where marriage (seen as a social union) was also a regulator of fertility and dead children were clearly grieved for, the father's intentions might well have been regarded as 'unnatural'.<sup>14</sup>

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Simpson also uses the framework of historical context to uncover meaning. She argues that the Chulmleigh tale's value as a local legend is in expressing the shared values of the specific community in which it was told. Its value as 'truth' is therefore more in terms of the moral codes it promotes, rather than at a factual, or 'literal truth' level.<sup>15</sup>

Ettlinger observes a symmetry within both the Chulmleigh legend and its counterpart tale in Great Wishford. In both tales the number of years' absence (seven) corresponds with the number of children resulting from the multiple birth on the husband's return (septuplets). Hence, the structure of the Chulmleigh legend is significant in terms of its plot.

Simpson argues that it is no co-incidence that the father absents himself for seven years to avoid having children, only to get 'saddled' with seven in one birth. Of the 'repressive moral messages' she identifies, the first is that, "it is a sin to try to avoid one's duty of begetting and bearing children." As a consequence of such a transgression, "God will miraculously frustrate the attempt", hence the reason the father does not succeed in drowning his sons.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, "multiple births are disgraceful or unnatural", due to the comparison between the basket full of babies and 'whelps'. The fact that the countess rescues the entire brood and helps all seven to become priests conveys a further moral message that, "God will provide for what he creates, and that lives saved by him should be dedicated to him."<sup>17</sup> Simpson further claims that, "The pervasive power of religion in the popular culture of past centuries is well illustrated by the way this didactic tale has been adopted into local tradition."<sup>18</sup>

The Chulmleigh tale poses a problem because it remains 'a tale out of context'. It is clear that from the time that Rysdon, the Devon topographer, collected it between 1605 and 1630 the same text has been subject to 'armchair' scholarship in terms of its retellings, or rather reprinting.<sup>19</sup> The tale continues to be reprinted in popular works.<sup>20</sup>

Rysdon's text was collected with little contextual information. We do not know, for instance, about the performance context in which the story's meanings would have been created, received and understood. There is little clue as to how it was interpreted, though Westwood and Simpson argue that the narrator signals his scepticism about its 'truth' in the words 'or so the tale runneth.'<sup>21</sup> An almost identical Irish variant closes with a similar assertion.<sup>22</sup> It is unclear whether Rysdon's scepticism was typical in this respect, as an educated outsider, distanced from the community amongst whom it was circulated.

In the absence of any other contextual information, an alternative option, not previously explored in relation to the Chulmleigh tale, is to examine the legend from a diachronic perspective. Ettlinger traces the narrative type of the septuplets back as early as the eighth century AD.<sup>23</sup> However, the study that follows will confine itself to considering narrative variants circulating in Western Europe within the two-hundred years prior to the early 1600s when Rysdon recorded his version.

Simpson argues that migratory legends adapt in some way to their socio-historical context, even though the attitudes they describe may pre-date the historical moment in which they are told.<sup>24</sup> A diachronic study of narratives circulating in the 1500s (and 1400s in some cases) therefore allows us to speculate about the evolution of particular strands and elements within this motif type T586.1. Such an approach permits us to identify changes in the tale, with particular regard to elements that have been incorporated along the way, stayed the same over time, or discarded altogether. On the level of textual analysis, there is therefore the potential to be able to identify a shift in attitudes from a change in focus over time.

The story of Countess Margaret of Henneberg from the Netherlands presents an interesting comparison with the Chulmleigh tale. Even though it allegedly concerns an event which happened in 1276, the legend first appears more than a century later.<sup>25</sup> The story is set in a village near The Hague. The version which is of most interest to us is found in the *Divisiiekroniek*, written by the Dutch chronicler Cornelius Aurelius (printed in 1517). This version would, "recur in almost every later retelling of the legend" and achieved widest distribution in the early seventeenth century.<sup>26</sup> It is told by Bondeson and Molenkamp as follows:

"A notable Dutch noblewoman, gave birth to 365 children in the year 1276. The haughty Countess had insulted a poor beggar woman carrying twins, since she believed that a pair of twins must have different fathers, and that their mother must be an adulteress. She was punished by God, and gave birth to 365

minute children on Good Friday, 1276. The Countess died shortly after, together with her offspring, in the village of Loosduinen near The Hague.”<sup>27</sup>

A recent study of this legend in *The Prolific Countess Margaret of Henneberg and her 365 Children* examines the development of the narrative and its different strands.<sup>28</sup> Due to the nature of its plot, Bondeson and Molenkamp locate the above version within a wider tradition which they refer to as ‘The beggar with twins and the wicked noblewoman.’<sup>29</sup> The authors show how a version included in a Dutch chronicle, known as the *Divisiechroniek*, written by Cornelius Aurelius and printed in 1517, becomes the dominant version. It is this version which introduces the theme of the beggar woman being insulted by the Countess and the idea that it is the beggarwoman’s prayers that motivate God’s, “wrath on the noble sinner,” in the form of a peculiar multiple-birth.<sup>30</sup>

Significantly, the story as it evolved in writing was not confined to chronicles. ‘The Lamenting Lady’, a black-letter ballad (an illustrated 21 stanza poem created for mass distribution) was printed in London in 1620 and was likely inspired by the tale.<sup>31</sup> It would therefore have been printed at approximately the same time as Rysdon originally recorded the Chulmleigh tale. In this poem, “as a divine punishment for her insult towards a poor woman with twins, an unnamed noble lady gives birth to as many infants as there are days in the year.”<sup>32</sup> The ballad implies that the, “childless noblewoman envies the poor beggar woman who has twin children . . . and she taunts her with the words: ‘Thou art some Strumpet sure I know’ ” implying that the children could only have been born out of adultery. The twins’ mother responds with a terrible curse. The black-letter ballad concludes with the noblewoman repenting her sins, after which, “The minute children all die, to be buried in a grave with a monument over it.”<sup>33</sup>

Bondeson suggests, “Many people found the moral of the story edifying: the haughty noblewoman was punished for her high-handed treatment of the beggar with twins, creating the illusion that God was on the side of the poor, and He was ready to avenge the ills brought on by the evil rich people.”<sup>34</sup>

Bondeson and Molenkamp’s detailed research is useful in providing an indication of how widespread at least one of these multiple-birth narratives may have been. They claim that in the 1500s Loosduinen was famous because of the legend of Countess Margaret which, by then, had its own accompanying tradition. Childless women would complete a pilgrimage to Loosduinen Abbey, believing that water from the stone basins would help them to conceive. The tradition of this pilgrimage

was again revived after the Reformation.<sup>35</sup> It is suggested that several thousand people visited the church of Loosduinen in Samuel Pepys' time, in the 1660s.<sup>36</sup> They demonstrate that the legend's fame spread far outside of the Netherlands and that, "The English national seems to have been particularly interested in the Countess and her numerous brood". The authors list a catalogue of named English travellers who travelled to Loosduinen Abbey in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>37</sup>

In terms of the legend's dissemination in writing, "In the early 1600s, the legend was described in several well-known English books," by writers including Edward Grimeston, Coryat and John Stow.<sup>38</sup> It is suggested that one of these works may have inspired the aforementioned black-letter ballad. In terms of its transmission, once it was established, the legend appears to have become interwoven with written sources, with printed versions influencing oral tradition and vice versa.

So what can we tell about the Dutch legend's distribution in the century before the Chulmleigh tale was first recorded? Bondeson and Molenkamp explain, "The accounts in many 16<sup>th</sup> century popular and scholarly works made the legend well known throughout Europe. Many travellers visited the church in Loosduinen to see and admire the basins and inscription."<sup>39</sup> They go on to mention that, "In the seventeenth century, the legend achieved its widest distribution. Records of it survive from almost all European countries including Denmark, Spain, Wales and Ireland. It was considered . . . a very memorable happening."<sup>40</sup>

Unlike the Chulmleigh tale, it is interesting to observe that the plot of this Dutch legend is not in any way causally connected with a birth-avoidance strategy. It is not preceded by a husband's absence. Rather, the children result from an insult and are presented as a 'curse' in a grossly exaggerated form. Since this story refers directly to the medieval belief that multiple births must have different fathers, the birth of 365 children could be regarded as a form of 'shaming'. Judged by her own standards, this birth would define the Countess as promiscuous. By contrast with the Chulmleigh tale, the *Divisiiekroniek* version implies that the mother and children then die of natural causes. The husband occupies a very marginal position in this Dutch variant, he is absent from the central drama of the tale.

It is interesting to note that the power-dynamic of social class has been inverted in the Chulmleigh legend. It apparently reinforces social hierarchy in casting an upper-class noble woman, not as the chastised but, as the chastiser. She is the

champion of the ill-fated basket of children, reprimanding the poverty-stricken father along the way, and rescuing the children by offering a productive adult life.

This Dutch legend does not exist in isolation.<sup>41</sup> Five other examples from Switzerland and France will be considered here. Their existence suggests that similar types of multiple-birth narrative circulated throughout Western Europe.

The first example is a legend which concerns the House of Guelphs, whose tribal estates were north of Bodensee. The legend tells how Irmentrude, Countess of Aldorf, scolded a mother of triplets for her loose morals. Whilst her husband was away 'on a mission' the birth of twelve children resulted as a punishment for her harsh words. The Countess, shocked and also condemned by her own judgement, asked her midwife to throw eleven of the twelve into the Scherz River. On her way, the midwife was intercepted by the returning husband and, when questioned, dismissed her burden as 'welfs' (meaning puppies). The Count insisted on seeing them, wanting to keep some as hunting hounds. On discovering the children, he ordered the midwife to feed and rear them. They were brought to the castle at six years old and presented to Irmentrude, who was pardoned by her husband. He, "ordered that the boys should be called not Counts of Altdorf but Guelphs", thereafter.<sup>42</sup>

In this Swiss narrative the subsequent events are almost identical to the Chulmleigh legend, except it is the Count who encounters the midwife by the river, questions her and is fed the story about drowning puppies to conceal the newborn children.

In a version published by Jacob Grimm the family become the 'Welfs' rather than Guelphs.<sup>43</sup> It is a similar word, 'whelps', used by Rysdon (as quoted by Ettlinger) in relaying the Chulmleigh tale which might provide a clue about the Swiss/Germanic influences upon this variant.

A second example concerns the French family, the Trazegnies. The earliest version of this variant is from the sixteenth century. By some, this is regarded as an etymological legend since it purports to explain the name origin of the village of Treize-nés in the West Charleroi district of Belgium.<sup>44</sup>

A chatelaine (lady of the manor) met a beggar in the street carrying twin boys. She reproached her, seeing them as the fruits of adultery. The beggar protested her innocence wishing the chatelaine to have as many children as a passing sow with piglets. After giving birth to thirteen babies, the frightened



châtelaine set out to throw them in the river, fearing for her own reputation as her own husband was away at war. The children were discovered concealed in an apron by the returning husband, were saved from drowning and became the Trazegnies, meaning 'thirteen-born'.<sup>45</sup>

In this French narrative the main similarities with the Chulmleigh tale are the attempted drowning of the children, though the husband is once again substituted with a noblewoman in the Devon legend. Mayer mentions that, "a late medieval version of the Guelph legend," attached to the French Castle Batie d'Urfé. This time, twelve offspring are born to the noblewoman as a divine punishment and are saved from being drowned by a servant in the river Lignon.<sup>46</sup>

Another French tale concerns the House of the Porcelets in Provence. This name (and all its variants) means piglet/pig and, "a legend about the origin of the family's name," developed which was locally modified in France.<sup>47</sup> The earliest version of this story is from the sixteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

Sabattier, pregnant wife of Lord Arles, refused an old woman alms. The woman cursed her, wishing her a labour fit for a swine. Sabattier consequently gave birth to nine pigs and had to undergo a penance before normal pregnancies were restored.<sup>49</sup>

Another variant mentions three of the nine being carried to the river and concealed as 'pigs' in the maid's apron. Their rescuer (a neighbouring lord who raises them) named them 'Porcelet'. Their mother was brought before a judge and executed, but 'the Porcelets' became valiant knights.<sup>50</sup>

This version also has clear similarities with the Chulmleigh tale in terms of the intended drowning, even though the stated number of newborns is greater. Again, the noblewoman is substituted with a neighbouring lord who instead intervenes and the mention that the mother was then executed is an additional feature.

It might be tempting to suggest that Rysdon's version of type T586.1 attached to Chulmleigh village because it adapts and 'updates' an earlier plot line to reflect more contemporary attitudes and concerns. A key question would therefore be to ask whether other variants of the earlier European narratives emerge in the South West of England.

Perhaps surprisingly a version of subtype T586.1.2 initially collected in neighbouring Somerset in 1976 has striking resemblances with both the legends of the House of Guelph and of the Porcelets.<sup>51</sup> The following version, told by Harry Adams,

was told as 'Wadham's Castle' a place name known locally as Merrifield. An abridged version, taken from Somerset Scrapbook is as follows.<sup>52</sup>

"There was a lady . . . and a gentleman living in . . . one of the old houses with the moats around . . . And one day there was an old gipsy lady come on, . . . knocked at the door and the gentleman's wife was in there and she shouted to the servant "Who is it?"

So she went and looked. "Oh," she said, "a gipsy woman [is] out here."

"Oh," she said, "tell the old pig to go on. Tell the old sow to go on."

. . . the old gipsy woman, shouted in to her "You're going to have a baby, lady," she said. "When he comes" she said, "you'll have six."

. . . lo and behold, when the baby did come, there was seven. So she had seven babies. And she said to the midwife . . . [who] used to wear they big white aperns (aprons) . . . "pick up six of 'em" she said, "and carry [them] down [to] a little stream . . . just t'other side [of] the castle, see. Drown 'em."

Got half way down there . . . she met the master . . . he'd been out with his gun. "What have you got in your apern?" he said. "Oh," she said, "going [to] drown six little puppies" she said. He said "Let me have a look at them." He looked in, sid [saw] what 'twas and she had to tell 'en, see. So . . . he took these babies and he daresn't tell his wife anything about it. So he took them away and on the seventh year, when they was seven years old, they used always to have a banquet for the kids, you know, these people what was rich - on their seventh birthday, every seven years."

In Harry Adams' version, the initial insult is addressed to an elderly gypsy, rather than a pregnant woman. An attempt to drown all but one of the children 'as puppies' (as with the Guelphs) in order to conceal the multiple-birth is still present.<sup>53</sup> The story continues:

"The night of the banquet come so they was all sat down waiting and she led her daughter in through one of the doors . . . Just as she was leading her in, he led the other six in the other end, and they met half way in the hall. And she looked at 'en, he said "Wouldn't it have been a pity if we'd drowned . . . six little puppies?"

And she collapsed and died, there and then – shock killed her. And they always told me – I haven't never seen it, I think 'twas in Ashill or Ilton church – there was a alabaster stone with the six little babies on, laying on beside of her. It was there for a memorial, like."

Harry adds “I’ve heard them tell about that scores of times; that’s a real old tale, idn’t it?”

Similarly to the story of the Guelphs, the children are saved by the husband who in this case hides them until their seventh birthday. The wife in Harry’s version immediately dies, but of a natural cause rather than being killed, as is the case in the legend of the Porcelets.

Similarly to the Chulmleigh tale, this variant does not feature the explicit theme of multiple-birth as linked to adultery. The association of multiple pregnancies with animal births does, however, remain strong – the gypsy being referred to as an “old sow” in the initial insult preceding the multiple-birth.<sup>54</sup>

It is important to establish what bearing (if any) each of the above narrative variants circulating in the 1500s (and 1400s in some cases) have on the Chulmleigh tale. Taking each narrative in turn, it is helpful to consider possible lines of transmission alongside the similarities and differences of each narrative version.

Starting with Countess Margaret of Henneberg, we are fortunate to have a wealth of information about the distribution of the legend. Clearly, the chronology of how the narrative evolved was not tidy. Bondeson and Molenkamp demonstrate that different versions branched-off at different times creating their own set of variants.<sup>55</sup> However, we can say with some certainty that printed versions were circulating in England within the right time period to have influenced the Chulmleigh tale. To what extent they had infiltrated popular culture is a question outside the scope of this study. The Lamenting Lady (1620), the black-letter ballad closely related to Margaret of Henneberg’s tale, is unlikely to have influenced the Chulmleigh legend. This is because it was printed at approximately the same time that the Devon legend was first published. However, the close connection between the ballad trade and oral tradition might imply that earlier versions of motif type T586.1 were circulating in English oral tradition by the late 1500s.

In terms of their similarities and differences, whilst there are some parallels between this Dutch tale and the Chulmleigh legend, the latter seems rather to have a closer affinity with some of the other European variants from France and Switzerland.

Moving on to the Swiss tale of the noble house of Guelph, we know that the story was circulating in the right time period. According to Ettlinger, the story of the Guelphs, “Was recorded in late 16<sup>th</sup>-century chronicles,” a century before the Chulmleigh tale first appears.<sup>56</sup> Again, the extent to which the

story had infiltrated popular culture would need to be the subject of further research.

In terms of its content, the story of the Swiss Guelphs has some very striking parallels with the Devon legend, providing the biggest clue that one may have strongly influenced the other. Both have in common the 'whelp' motif as a distinctive feature and the carrying of a basket of 'puppies' to their drowning as an essential part of their plot. By contrast, the mention of whelps is entirely absent within all versions of the Margaret of Henneburg tale.

A comparison with both the Henneburg and Guelph narratives almost suggests that the first section of the Henneburg story—the insulting of a poor woman—was retained in the Guelph narrative, but was dropped entirely from the Chulmleigh variant and substituted with a different contentual element altogether. It is instead the struggles of family limitation which provide the motive for the father's absence and a causal connection with the multiple-birth that follows.

The Chulmleigh variant has a very close affinity with a version which seems to have taken hold in Western Ireland and it would be interesting to consider why. The story of 'The Seven Churches', recorded in the Irish language in County Mayo from Pádhraic Ó Huigín in 1936, is practically identical to the Chulmleigh tale. It only diverges in the following passages when we discover that the intervening authority is not a noblewoman, but rather a priest.<sup>57</sup> This adaptation creates a sense of symmetry with the outcome of the tale because each child is both rescued and reared by a priest and in turn becomes one.

#### 'The Seven Churches'

"On the road he met a priest who asked him what he had in the basket. He said he had little pups. The priest didn't believe him and told him to let down the basket to see what was in it. When he did this, the priest saw the seven baby boys and told the father that he should be ashamed to do such a thing. The man said that he couldn't help it, he had no means of rearing them.

Then the priest baptised the first one, and said that he would keep him for himself. He baptised the others too and sent them to be reared by six priests. When the seven grew up, they all became priests. The Seven Churches in Lough Derg are named after them. They say that's a true story, any way!"<sup>58</sup>

In terms of the meanings generated within its performance context, other religious folktales and legends circulating within Mayo in the mid 1930s would be most relevant here. However, O'Sullivan asserts that, "The legend of the seven babies who were saved from drowning and later became bishops was popular in many parts of Ireland. There are many old ecclesiastical centres where seven churches stood in former times." So due to the ubiquity of the tale, the wider narrative context of the Republic of Ireland would be relevant too.

As in English folklore, in many of the Irish religious tales the number seven has a magical significance.<sup>59</sup> 'Saint Martin's Night', also collected within County Mayo, is one such example. To avoid breaking the tradition of seven generations of sacrifice to this saint, a woman sacrifices her own toe rather than offer nothing.<sup>60</sup> The number seven is also linked to the length of a penance in other stories, such as in 'The Priest's Penance', 'The Two Sons', 'The Woman who Went to Hell' and 'A Child's Soul in a Tree'. It also appears demarcating other important periods of time, such as the length of a contractual agreement or a reprieve.<sup>61</sup> The seventh-born child in particular is established as significant in other Irish tales, such as 'The Baby without a Mouth', versions of which have been collected in County Mayo.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of its narrative context, the father in 'The Seven Churches' might therefore be regarded as foolish for failing to understand the divine/magical significance of the birth of seven sons and failing to recognise the 'hand of providence' operating within his situation.

An unlikely comparison can be made between 'The Seven Churches' and the tale of 'The Little Black Sheep' in which the multiple birth of an animal is depicted as a blessing in the face of destitution. The fact that the lambs of each generation also produce twins increases the family's fortunes. Their luck only changes when their gratitude wanes and they kill the original lucky sheep due to age.<sup>63</sup> Viewed in this context, the desperate father would be seen as erring on two counts - taking the abundance of his children for granted along with their 'spiritual' value.

Many tales provide examples of magic solutions to the problem of hunger in general. In the story of 'Our Lady's Visit', the Virgin Mary appears as an old woman to a devout poor woman and her daughter. They are rewarded with potatoes, meat, drink and cake, produced from a magic bag which is left behind for them as a parting gift.<sup>64</sup> In another narrative, a magic cow comes to the rescue of a poor, but devout, old woman when she is visited by St Patrick and provides sustenance for all.<sup>65</sup>

Many tales seem to advocate the importance of stoicism and self-sacrifice in the face of poverty. 'Saint Martin and the Gambler' provides another extreme example connected with Saint Martin's night from County Mayo. A gambler's wife, lacking any other resources, sacrifices the blood of her child and risks its death, in order to have something to offer the saint.<sup>66</sup>

Certain tales specifically address the issue of having 'too many mouths to feed'. Some of these are supernatural faith stories in which resolution to the situation seems to come through trusting in God's provision. In many of these stories, it is the supernatural component of the tale which provides food and sustenance – for example, in 'The Cow from the Sea' a 'magic' animal provides milk for the devout mother of six poor infants over many years.<sup>67</sup>

In 'Miraculous Plenty; the Passion' a poor woman's numerous and 'half naked' children are described as, "valuable jewels" by her 'supernatural' visitor, the Virgin Mary.<sup>68</sup> Miraculous full vessels of milk appear and the woman receives a special blessing of abundance on the next day's labour (measuring cloth). In another tale, 'The Fisherman's Son and the Devil', the six or seven 'half naked' children of a drunkard have gone without food for three days and are supernaturally provided with bread by a stranger.

'The Baby without a Mouth' is particularly relevant here, because it also considers the relationship between faith, fate and household economics. This morality tale concerns a poor shoemaker's wife and her six children. The story initially establishes that they rarely had, "a good meal to eat," and introduces the character of a reproachful older sister.<sup>69</sup> The sister, "told her that it was a great shame and reproach to her to be conceiving further children like that when she had nothing to give them to eat or drink."<sup>70</sup> The critical sister is quickly condemned within the narrative for several reasons: she is uncharitable and dissatisfied with her own wealth; her envy, perhaps motivated by her own childlessness, is defined as a sin; she is a constant and self-interested scold.

The shoemaker's wife uses a strong religious moral in her defence. Her seventh child, she argues, is a gift from God. In Peig Sayer's version she says, "God never made a mouth but he created something to put in it."<sup>71</sup> Nine months later the rich sister gives birth to a deformed, 'mouthless', child as a direct consequence of her unkind words. God's punishment takes an ironic twist because the woman's lack of charity is inverted and her resources are made impotent. The child dies as a result of

her actions, leaving, “the rich sister comfortless for the rest of her life”.<sup>72</sup> Viewed in the context of all these tales, the reluctant father in ‘The Seven Churches’ shows a distinct lack of faith in the face of poverty and an inability to trust in God’s provision for his future.

Religious folktales and legends circulating within County Mayo and beyond promote the idea that there is no shame in poverty, and furthermore that charity should be received as a blessing. This connects to the idea that good material fortune can come and go throughout one’s life (e.g. ‘Generosity Pays’), an idea also encapsulated in traditional Irish proverbs.<sup>73</sup>

Many legends teach that gratitude is the only correct response to abundance. In ‘The Cow from the Sea’, it is only when the husband begins to take abundance for granted and suggests selling livestock that the magic cow disappears, taking her two calves with her (cf. ‘The Little Black Sheep’). The corpus of narratives in Ó Súilleabháin’s *Miraculous Plenty* also portray all human beings as connected. It is only through communal reciprocity that the needs of everyone can be met through the cycle of giving and receiving. In this regard the desperate father ‘sins’ because he fails to understand his connectedness with the wider community.

Many Irish religious folktales and legends epitomize the moral that all sin or wrong-doing has a consequence. This ranges from murder to evicting orphans and minor cases of fraud.<sup>74</sup> Ó Súilleabháin mentions that commonly included in the category of people who will never see heaven are women who kill unbaptised children for payment, child murder thus being defined as a serious act.<sup>75</sup> The story of ‘The Young Priest’ specifically concerns the act of infanticide. An evil female spirit is turned into a pig as a result of this sin, though interestingly it is the killing of her two illegitimate children and then a third child which seems to have damned her, rather than a single act in itself. The narrative context therefore suggests that the killing of seven children would be a very serious act indeed but does not make clear whether a different standard is applied to women than it is to men.

The district of Knock (within the same county in which ‘The Seven Churches’ was collected) provides an interesting comparison here. Eugene Hynes examines evidence recorded within the unpublished memoir of Daniel Campbell relating to the nineteenth century.<sup>76</sup> Hynes argues that an alternative folk narrative genre provided a means of interpretation whereby real acts of infanticide were understood and to a certain extent became sanctioned within the community. These belief narratives, which were, “woven into the cultural fabric”, as an

established body of fairy lore, accounted for and, to a certain extent, colluded with the disappearances and deaths of infants through the belief that fairies could abduct children. Hynes notes in particular the relationship between poverty and infanticide in Mayo in the post-famine period. Both ‘The Seven Churches’, which appears to critique the act of infanticide, and Campbell’s belief narratives, which seemingly endorse it, are likely to have been circulating at the same time. This suggests that the relationship between text, socio-historical and narrative context is a complex one worthy of further examination.

Viewed within the narrative context of Irish religious folktales and legends, narratives about priests are not at all uncommon. It is clear from these tales that the priest is regarded as an authority figure who sometimes possesses miraculous or superior supernatural powers. Nonetheless, priests are not viewed as infallible, as can be seen from the number of tales about priests needing to atone. Because they are often depicted as having a valuable role to play in the redemption of others as well as of themselves, casting a priest in the narrative has noteworthy implications.

In ‘The Seven Churches’, the unbaptised status of the children is made explicit, since the rescuer priest immediately baptises the seven. Looked at in terms of its narrative context, this aspect of the Irish tale is particularly important given the number of religious folktales and legends expressing beliefs about the souls of the unbaptised being endangered (or at the very least occupying a marginal status).<sup>77</sup> Ó Súilleabháin mentions that, “There is . . . frequent reference to the fact that children who died unbaptised travelled about as ghosts after death.”<sup>78</sup> In ‘The Priest’s Judgement’, the souls of the unbaptised are twice named as one of, “the three groups that will never see heaven”<sup>79</sup> In the story of ‘The Priest who Wouldn’t Baptise the Child’, a remiss priest prioritises delivering his sermon over baptising a sick child. When the child dies his conscience forces him to leave his district and perform a penance.<sup>80</sup>

Seen in this context, the father’s actions in killing his seven unbaptised sons could be regarded as having spiritual and not just moral consequences, since he would be endangering their souls as well as potentially his own. In the early seventeenth-century Chulmleigh version of T586.1.2, it is not explicitly stated whether or not the children are baptised, however, this may be one of the reasons why the father believes he could commit infanticide without discovery. In the English Westcountry, similar beliefs persisted into the nineteenth



century about the souls of unbaptised children.<sup>81</sup> Hence the spiritual consequences of the father's actions may also have been one of a range of the meanings decoded by Chulmleigh's seventeenth-century audience.

Returning to the stories of the Trazegnies and Porcelets, they can again be traced to the sixteenth century, early enough to have influenced the Chulmleigh tale. Likewise, the extent to which these stories had infiltrated English popular culture would need to be further examined. However, in terms of their content they have less in common with the Chulmleigh narrative than the legend of the Guelphs. Interestingly, both stories have greater similarities with other Westcountry variants of T586.1, such as those recorded in Somerset and Wiltshire.<sup>82</sup>

I would argue that the most likely possibility is that the story of the Guelphs had the biggest influence in shaping the Chulmleigh tale. However, this thesis must remain at the level of speculation in the absence of further research into paths of transmission. Further investigation would also be needed to rule out the possibility that the Chulmleigh legend's main influence was from an even earlier narrative tradition.

In terms of the above analysis, the question of social attitudes within the Chulmleigh narrative must again be raised. What insights does the diachronic progression of multiple-birth narratives from the 1400s and 1500s offer in this regard?

Seen in its historical context, the Chulmleigh narrative appears to move away from the stigma of multiple births, due to the assumption they are the product of adultery, as an explicit central theme. However, the remnants of the idea that multiple-births are somehow 'animal-like' is still prevalent in the comparison of the seven children to a basket of puppies.

With the loss of this element, there is also a shift in plot. Rather than the multiples being causally connected with an insult, followed by a curse, they come as the result of an absence intended to outwit the 'natural' conception of children and the story moves closer to tale types involving 'The Homecoming Husband.'<sup>83</sup> Though the theme of divine intervention is still strong, this is a less punishing God. The extremes within the earlier narratives are tempered, with a much-reduced number of children and an absence of actual animal births. No deaths result in terms of the woman or children described. The Chulmleigh narrative displays a more gentle humour in which the central themes become the relationships between faith, fate, family size and household economics.

Looked at from a diachronic perspective, the Chulmleigh narrative highlights a shift in class, because the multiple birth

brought about by providence does not attach to a named upper-class woman, but to an anonymised poor man and his family. The tale therefore locates itself more as part of the lives of “ordinary folk” rather than the wealthy elite and the predicament described (birth avoidance) as a theme can therefore be seen as more widely applicable.

The Chulmleigh narrative does, however, subvert the social order described in ‘the beggar with twins and the wicked noblewoman’ narrative type. In all of the earlier narratives considered above it is either God or the noblewoman’s husband who directly intervenes to bring about justice. Though God/providence is seen as intervening in the Chulmleigh narrative by bringing about the birth of the seven children, it is a noblewoman and not the husband, who intervenes to prevent their drowning. It is the same noblewoman who ensures the children thrive and thereby ensures their potential in the religious sphere as priests. In terms of its socio-historical context, the Chulmleigh narrative seems to reinforce rather than challenge the existing social order. It also ends on a more explicitly religious note.

Finally, seen from a diachronic perspective, there is a clear shift in the source of conflict within the Chulmleigh narrative. The action within the narrative does not result from a conflict between two women, the mother being noticeably absent in terms of her influence of the narrative events. The story tends to focus more on the husband’s inner conflict regarding his predicament as a married man, “too much blessed in that kind.” It therefore focuses more on the everyday and the politics of sex, marriage and family planning. It is the external conflict between the upper-class woman and the father which draws the narrative to its conclusion.

The Chulmleigh variant would appear to have settled into what Simpson describes as a ‘stable core’ after it was recorded by Rysdon between 1605 and 1630.<sup>84</sup> However, the evidence does not point to it having continued strongly in oral tradition into the twenty-first century within the South West of England by comparison with other local legends.<sup>85</sup> A more prolific example would be the legend of Jays Grave.<sup>86</sup> This may suggest that the story had become dated by then or that the moral of this class-ridden story, in terms of its anti-contraceptive, pious message, is the reason for its demise.

### Conclusion.

The above study reveals that the Chulmleigh legend, as it circulated in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, did not exist in isolation but was part of a complex web of

multiple-birth narratives from wide-ranging European sources. Since the legend is migratory, the most likely possibility is that it evolved from different variants of its subtype into the 'core' narrative which was collected by Rysdon in between 1605 and 1630.<sup>87</sup>

This nexus of related narratives could have been important in terms of the Chulmleigh legend's performance context at that time. For this reason it is likely that the stigma attached to the birth of multiples, due to the perceived connection with adultery, would not have been lost on the Chulmleigh tale's audience. This could still be part of its decoded meaning, adding further to the irony of the husband's situation when he had clearly fathered the seven children, even if this element of the narrative had been omitted as an explicit theme.

Bondeson and Molenkamp's detailed analysis of one Dutch legend demonstrates how far and wide particular local legends travelled and how they influenced other forms of narrative genre, such as black-letter ballads and songs.<sup>88</sup> It is tempting to suggest that other European local legends had a similar impact on narrative genres circulating in England within this period and may have had a role in shaping the Chulmleigh legend. However, further detailed work would need to be carried out in relation to the transmission of both the French and Swiss narratives previously discussed in order to test this hypothesis. Again, work on antecedents of the septuplet narrative circulating within England, for example within the chronicles, could also be important in deciding whether a different strand of T586.1 was in fact more influential.

This article raises several questions which offer potential for further academic study. This diachronic comparison suggests the Chulmleigh tale subverts the power relationship described within the earlier narrative type 'The beggar with twins and the wicked noblewoman'. It might be interesting to consider why the Chulmleigh narrative apparently reinforces the status quo in terms of the social hierarchy within the performance context of early seventeenth century England in which it was told.

Another interesting line of enquiry would be to carry out a diachronic study of the Chulmleigh tale after 1605-1630 when it was first recorded in writing and to examine its transmission over the next 300 years. Given the striking similarities between this Devon legend and the Western-Irish variant recorded in the Irish language in 1930, it would be worth considering which strand was carried across the Irish Sea and influenced the other. Alternatively, could it be that both the Chulmleigh and Irish tales stem from an earlier common ancestor?

It would also be worthwhile to consider the impact of printed versions of motif type T586.1 on narratives being recited orally. For example, is there any evidence that printed versions promoted within popular culture, such as the black-letter ballad trade, had an impact on oral tradition in this regard? Could this explain why seemingly very different variant strands are told within a specific geographical area at the same time?

Finally, it might be fruitful to look at the genesis of the legend of the Guelphs/Welphs to chart more specifically its transmission and relationship to the Chulmleigh variant.

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<sup>1</sup> Stith Thompson. *Motif Index of Folk-Literature* (vols 1-6) (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Prologue to *Corum Boy* by Jamila Gavin (London: Egmont, 2000), pp 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Westwood and Simpson. *The Lore of the Land* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp 371-374.

<sup>4</sup> Jacqueline Simpson. "The Local Legend: A Product of Popular Culture." *Rural History* 2.1 (1991): p27; Ellen Ettlinger, 'Seven Children in One Birth,' *Folklore*, 81, no 4 (1970), 268-275.

<sup>5</sup> Ettlinger, Op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Bob and Jacqueline Patten. *Somerset Scrapbook* (Wells: INA, 1987), pp.45-46.

<sup>7</sup> Risdon, quoted by Ettlinger, Op. cit., p.273.

<sup>8</sup> 'Sextuplet parents shun media spotlight', *Observer*, 24 May 2009, p.3. These modern figures are likely to include IVF babies and may therefore suggest a higher statistical likelihood of multiple-birth.

<sup>9</sup> John Thomson. *The Transformation of Medieval England 1370-1529* (Harlow: Longman, 1983) pp.10-11.

<sup>10</sup> A. H. Halsey ed. *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p 51.

<sup>11</sup> Halsey, *Ibid.*, p.82.

<sup>12</sup> See Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village 1294-1324*. Trans. by Barbara Bray. 1978 (Reprint, London: Penguin, 1980), pp 220-221 and 210-15.

<sup>13</sup> See Le Roy Ladurie, Op. cit., p.207, p.182, p.354.

<sup>14</sup> See Le Roy Ladurie, *Ibid.*, p.139 and p.182.

<sup>15</sup> Simpson, "The Local", pp. 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> Simpson, "The Local", p.27.

<sup>17</sup> Simpson, *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>18</sup> Simpson, *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Anna Eliza Bray. *A Peep at the Pixies* (London: Grant & Griffith, 1854), pp. 57-73; J.R.W Coxhead. *Legends of Devon, with introduction by C.Hole* (Western Ho: Western Press, 1954), pp. 27-29.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Ralph Whitlock. *The Folklore of Devon* (London: Batsford, 1977), pp.99-101.

<sup>21</sup> Westwood and Simpson, Op. cit., p.187.

<sup>22</sup> Sean O'Sullivan. *Legends from Ireland* (London: Batsford, 1977), pp 148-149.

<sup>23</sup> Ettlinger, Op. cit., p. 275.

<sup>24</sup> Simpson, The Local, pp. 25-36.

<sup>25</sup> J. Bondeson and A. Molenkamp. *The Prolific Countess of Henneberg and her 365 children* (Loosduinen:Stichting oud Loosduinen, 1996), pp. 23-24.

<sup>26</sup> Bondeson, *The Prolific*, p. 29 and p.53.

<sup>27</sup> J. Bondeson and A. Molenkamp, 'The Countess Margaret of Henneberg and her 365 children,' *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 89 (1996), 711.

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 23-42.

<sup>29</sup> Bondeson, "The Countess", 715.

<sup>30</sup> *The Prolific*, p.29.

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- <sup>31</sup> Bondeson, "The Countess", p. 714.
- <sup>32</sup> Bondeson, *Ibid.*, p.714.
- <sup>33</sup> *The Prolific*, p. 49.
- <sup>34</sup> "The Countess", p.716.
- <sup>35</sup> "The Countess", p. 712
- <sup>36</sup> Bondeson, *The Prolific*, p. 10.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Prolific*, pp. 43-44.
- <sup>38</sup> Bondeson, "The Countess", p.714.
- <sup>39</sup> "The Countess", p.713.
- <sup>40</sup> Bondeson, "The Countess", p.714.
- <sup>41</sup> See, for example, Mayer, C. F., Sextuplets and higher multiparous births. Part II: septuplets and higher births. *Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae*, 1 (1952), 242-75 and Bastin, A. Accouchements Multiples, Véridique, legendaires et facétieux. *Aesculape* 19 (1929), 289-98.
- <sup>42</sup> Mayer, p. 265. Mayer's earliest named source is K. Brusch (1518-approx..1559). Also see Bastin, p.292.
- <sup>43</sup> Jacob Grimm. Trans. D. Ward. *The German Legends Vol II* (London: Millington Books, 1981), pp. 139-141.
- <sup>44</sup> Mayer, p.266 and Louis Delattre. *Légend De La Belle Dame au Cochon. Wallonia*, 8 (1900), 53-57.
- <sup>45</sup> Bastin, pp.291-292. For alternative version of the Trazegnies concerning the wife of Gilles le Brun, see Delattre.
- <sup>46</sup> See Mayer, pp 265-266 and Bastin, who both cite Vingtrinier M. E. A. *Historie des journaux de Lyon 1852* as a source.
- <sup>47</sup> Mayer, *Op. cit.*, p. 259.
- <sup>48</sup> Bondeson, "The Countess", p.716.
- <sup>49</sup> Mayer, pp. 259-260 names Witkowski (who quotes the story from Joubert), as one of his sources. Cf. Cork variant (Cow Castle Rock) discussed by Seán Ó Súilleabháin. "Díoltas I nDroch-Bhirt." *Béaloideas*, Iml. 39/41 (1971-1973) pp 251-265.
- <sup>50</sup> Bastin, *Op. cit.*, p.292.
- <sup>51</sup> Patten,*Op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.
- <sup>52</sup> I have added a few words in square brackets for clarity of meaning.
- <sup>53</sup> Cf. translation of Johann Heyl's 'The Entombed Noblewoman' in Multiple Births in Legend and Folklore for similar use of the apron motif in subtype T586.1. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/manykids.html> [accessed August 8, 2015].
- <sup>54</sup> Cf. the story of Madam Steevens in Ó Súilleabháin. "Díoltas".
- <sup>55</sup> *The Prolific*.
- <sup>56</sup> Ettliger, *Op. cit.*, p. 275.
- <sup>57</sup> O'Sullivan, *Op. cit.*, pp 148-149.
- <sup>58</sup> O'Sullivan, *Ibid.*, p.149.
- <sup>59</sup> See 'Seven Loves of a Mother for her Son'; 'The Loaves and Fishes' in Seán Ó Súilleabháin. *Miraculous Plenty: Irish Religious Folktales and Legends* (Folklore of Ireland Council/Four Courts Press, 2011), p.26; pp.30-31.
- <sup>60</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 183-184.
- <sup>61</sup> See Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 49; pp.110- 111; pp. 134-9; 201.
- <sup>62</sup> Kenneth Jackson. "The Baby without a Mouth." *Béaloideas*, Iml. 39/41 (1971-1973), pp.157-164.
- <sup>63</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, 186-188.
- <sup>64</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 42-45.
- <sup>65</sup> See The Miraculous Yield of Milk in Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp.166-167.
- <sup>66</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 183-185.
- <sup>67</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 245-246.
- <sup>68</sup> Ó Súilleabháin. *Miraculous*, pp.38-40.
- <sup>69</sup> Jackson, *Op. cit.*, p.158.

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- <sup>70</sup> Ediphone version, Jackson, *Ibid.*, p.160.
- <sup>71</sup> Jackson, *Ibid.*, p.159.
- <sup>72</sup> Jackson, *Ibid.*, p.159.
- <sup>73</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp.41-42 and p.207.
- <sup>74</sup> See 'The Butcher and the Priest'; 'Donncha Mór Ó Dálaigh' and 'The Poor Mower' in Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp 225-227; pp. 130-134 & pp. 246-247.
- <sup>75</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, note to tale 61, p.265.
- <sup>76</sup> See Eugene Hynes. *Knock: The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008) pp.17-19 and endnote p.273.
- <sup>77</sup> See 'The Stream of Orthalán' in Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, p.159.
- <sup>78</sup> Note to tale 41 Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, p.259. Also see A. O'Connor, 'Child Murderess' and Dead Child Traditions: A Comparative Study' (PhD diss, University College Dublin, 1987).
- <sup>79</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 155-156 & p. 146-149.
- <sup>80</sup> The apathetic priest in 'The Farmer, the Priest and the Schoolmaster' is also judged harshly for neglecting to baptise children. Ó Súilleabháin, *Miraculous*, pp. 49-52.
- <sup>81</sup> See S. Baring-Gould. *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (London, Longmans, 1897) p. 427 & S. J. Davies, 'An Investigation into Attitudes towards Illegitimate Birth as Evidenced in the Folklore of South West England' (PhD diss., University of Plymouth, 1999), pp.134-137.
- <sup>82</sup> Cf. Patten, *Op. cit.*, pp. 45-46 and Ettlinger, *Op. Cit.*
- <sup>83</sup> Jennifer Westwood. *A Guide to Legendary Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 1994), p.65.
- <sup>84</sup> Jacqueline Simpson. *Scandinavian Folktales* (London: Penguin, 1988), p.2.
- <sup>85</sup> Only one version of the Chulmleigh tale appears amongst the Sam Richards Folklore Archive (untitled audio-tape no. 277), a Westcountry archive with over 500 hours of tape-recorded material. It was recorded from Walt Keenor in October 1982. A copy is held in the National Sound Archive.
- <sup>86</sup> See Davies, *Op. cit.*, pp. 292-302.
- <sup>87</sup> Simpson, *Scandinavian*, p.2.
- <sup>88</sup> *The Prolific*, pp. 46-49.