

Introduction, sample paragraph from p.19

In that culture, legends of Arthur and a past golden age were redrawn and flourished. As did dreams of a future golden age. In the final chapter I show how this cultural matrix was in fact highly political. It led to explicitly pro-British reactions by the Cornish intelligentsia to Geoffrey of Monmouth's writings in the twelfth century. That century saw what might be described as a Cornish cultural-political renaissance. Anti-English and anti-Norman political prophecy surfaced. The cultural resistance of the twelfth century meant that the Cornish had succeeded in resisting cultural integration even as politically they began to sink without trace in an over-arching England. Except that it wasn't without trace, as the cultural resistance and the survival of the Cornish language into the early modern period provided the raw material for later Cornish ethnic re-imaginings to be passed on to future generations. The Cornish exist, and that existence owes a lot to our first golden age, between the fifth and the tenth centuries, with its cultural aftermath extending into the high medieval period.