

Cornwall – Roman Name: Dumnonia & Saint Ursula by John O Goodman

4th Mar 2017

Hello Matt,

My father Eric Oxenham Goodman was born in St Columb Minor in Cornwall. He came to Australia with his parents when he was one year old. The town was named after Saint Columba (521-597) of Ireland, another Celtic nation. Saint Columba Minor has a 15th century church. I noticed several web sites, including your own, which list a large number of Goodmans born in Cornwall. It seems that Cornwall was the place of origin of the patrilineal ancestors of our Goodman family. But can you really prove that we are descended from Thomas Goodman of Lewannick and his wife Margaret Lezant? I wonder if Lezant is a French name or a Norman French name. My mother's father was surnamed Wiggins which is apparently a name used by Breton soldiers in the invading Norman army of William I in 1066.

It seems that the Breton language of France is a very close dialect of the Cornish language and people of Brittany and Cornwall can understand each other without the need for an interpreter. Cornish people frequently migrated to Brittany until the 18th century. Cornish was a common community language until the late 18th century and there was an attempt to revive it in the 20th century. A standard written form was introduced in 2008 which should help further with its revival. However, Cornwall has little more than 500,000 people and that reduces the chances of survival somewhat. One of the tragedies was the Cornish Rebellion of 1497 and the massacre of at least 4000 of its supporters by an English army. I suppose our male ancestor must have spoken Cornish if you go back far enough. The Roman name for Cornwall was Dumnonia and Saint Ursula of Dumnonia lived some time between 238 and 640 AD. I'll send you my drawing of her sometime. One of the asteroids or minor planets is named after her and she features in my 120 drawings of the people who have given their names to the largest asteroids (i.e. those with diameters above 200 kilometres or near that figure). Ursula died in Cologne supposedly martyred by the Huns although historically this cannot be proven and archaeologists largely rejected the story forcing the Catholic Church to withdraw her from their list of saints, although her feast day is still celebrated by some.

6th Mar 2017

Hello again Matt,

These are two of the 124 drawings of the characters who gave their names to some of the biggest asteroids or minor planets in the solar system. One is of Ursula and the other is of Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla the Mexican priest who almost succeeded in overthrowing the Spanish colonial government. He was of mixed race and was imprisoned by the Spanish and executed. The letter he wrote apologising for his actions was likely a forgery written by the prison authorities. That is the view of modern Mexicans who regard him as a national hero. Though he was a priest he fathered several children during the revolutionary struggle. Anyway I tried to make the 124 drawings into a set of playing cards and Amazon published them together with nearly 1000 other drawings in *Astronomical Pencil Drawings*. Another saint appears among the 124 and she is Saint Julia of Carthage. Details about her life are very sketchy leaving severe doubts about her claim to sainthood. Below is a copy of what I wrote in my book *A Selection of Asteroids, Moons and Comets in Art, Myth and History* about Saint Ursula. Ursula is number 82 in the list of 120 asteroids and comets. They are arranged in order of their distance from the sun.

We thought about calling our daughter Ursula because her Chinese pet name is 小熊 Xiao Xiong which means "Little Bear". We always call her Xiao Xiong when talking to her and other parents refer to Tiexia as "Mother of Xiao Xiong" and to me as "Father of Xiao Xiong". Almost every Chinese child has a pet name or baby name. We rejected the name Ursula when we knew the story of Saint Ursula. It was also too difficult for Chinese people to pronounce. Tracey was somewhat easier to pronounce because it sounds like the Chinese words 吹西 Chui Xi meaning "Blow West". Pronunciation was a major factor in choice of a name for our daughter. Most Western names can't be pronounced properly by Chinese people.

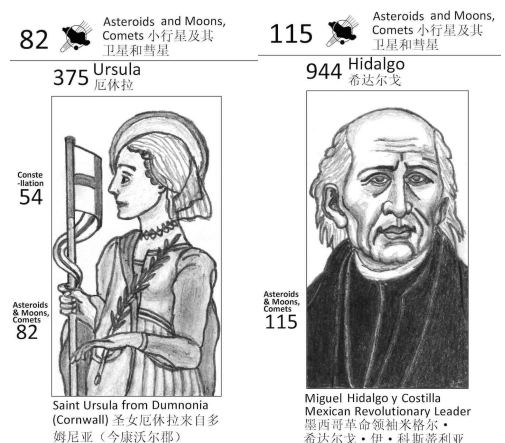
John

375 Ursula, "Little She-bear" St Ursula, Virgin killed by the Huns [82]

Asteroid 375 Ursula was discovered from Nice, France on 18th September 1893 by Auguste Honoré Pierre Charlois (1864-1910).

Ursula in Latin is the diminutive of *ursa* "she-bear". It means therefore "little she-bear", and its meaning is similar to that of the constellation of the Lesser Bear, Ursa Minor. However, we do not know who this asteroid was named after.

The Christian name Ursula is derived from Saint Ursula and the associated legend of the 11,000 virgins, which was popular in medieval times. The story of St. Ursula appears to be largely fictional and no accurate dates are available for the unbelievable



events associated with her life. She is supposed to have been a daughter of King Donaut of Dumnonia, the Roman name for Cornwall in south-western England and we are told that she was to be married to Conan Meriadoc of Armorica which is now called Brittany and is in France. She put to sea with 11,000 virgins who were her servants and a storm miraculously carried them to the coast of Roman Gaul in just one day. Then Ursula decided to go on a pilgrimage to all the holy places in Europe with her virgin servants before she married. She first went to Basel in Switzerland where a street is named after the 11,000 virgins. Then she went on to Rome where she talked Pope Cyriacus (a fictional character) and Bishop Sulpicius of Ravenna into joining the pilgrimage. Unfortunately when they reached Cologne in about 380 AD they found that the Huns (known in China as the Xiōng-nú 匈奴) had laid siege to the city. All the virgins were captured and beheaded while Ursula was shot with arrows by the leader of the Huns. One of the virgins named Cordula is supposed to have initially hidden from the Huns but then to have presented herself for martyrdom.

An inscription from the Basilica of St. Ursula in Cologne dating from the 4th or 5th century commemorates its restoration and states that it had been built on a site where virgins had been martyred. A legend of the 8th or 9th century also mentions the killing of virgins but the name of their leader is Pinnosa or Vinnosa, and the number of virgins is 11 or fewer. The so called relics of the virgins housed at the basilica include the bones of many children less than seven years of age.

The Virgin Islands in the West Indies were named in honour of Ursula's virgins by Christopher Columbus. Then in 1535 the Order of Ursulines was founded by Angela Merici to care for and educate girls, and this has perpetuated the legend of Ursula throughout the Catholic world. Ursula's feast day is October 21st but it was removed from the Catholic calendar of religious celebrations in 1969. This move strengthens the argument that she was a fictional character.