

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN AND/OR UNDERAPPRECIATED SOURCES FOR LATE(ISH) CORNISH

by Matthew Spriggs

In the absence of a serious effort to publish the entire corpus of pre-1800 Cornish language texts, reconstruction of the language rests on insecure and partial foundations. Some important texts for the understanding of Cornish seem never to be referred to by revivalists or language scholars or are only known from secondary sources. A prime example of the latter is Pryce's *Archaeologia Cornu-Britannica* (1790), merely an abridged edition of Thomas Tonkin's manuscript of the same title from the 1730s. Parts of Tonkin's master-work also show up in other poorly-edited forms such as in the publications by Davies Gilbert of *Mount Calvary* (1826) and *The Creation of the World* (1827). Tonkin's manuscript was of course itself a compilation of earlier sources, notably the Cornish plays but also including other texts. There are manuscript materials unknown to Tonkin that have come to light since but that have also often not been fully published. Instead of re-ploughing the same few furrows time and time again to understand the Cornish language perhaps it is time to have a go at the entire field.