

## FINIAN, saint (fl. 6th century).

**Name:** Finian  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** saint  
**Area of activity:** Religion  
**Author:** Hywel David Emanuel

Of the several versions of a 'Life of S. Finian' which have been preserved, two are of greater importance than the rest. The one is included in Colgan's *Acta SS. Hiberniae*; the other, a fuller version though later in date, is an Irish translation found in the *Book of Lismore*. S. Finian was Irish by birth, and his chief field of activity was Ireland, where his principal foundation was the monastic house at Clonard. But the 'Life' states that Finian received his education and training in Wales. At the age of thirty, Finian crossed over to S. Davids where he met three Welsh saints - **David**, **Gildas**, and **Cathmael**, the first two of whom were then contending for the primacy of Britain. Finian settled the dispute in favour of **S. David**. The saint is said to have remained with the British elders for thirty years, and during this period performed many miracles and helped to repel a Saxon invasion. The story contained in the 'Vita Cadoci' differs from that of the 'Vita Finiani.' It states that **S. Cadoc** brought back with him from Ireland the three saints Finian, Macmoil, and Gnavan, who studied with him at Llancafarn, and performed many miracles there. Both accounts illustrate the traditional friendly intercourse which existed between Britain and Ireland in the age of the saints. S. Finian is commemorated usually on 12 December, but 23 February is also given in some calendars.

### Author

**Hywel David Emanuel**, (1921 - 1970)

### Sources

Baring-Gould and John Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints: the saints of Wales and Cornwall and such Irish saints as have dedications in Britain*ii, 30-7

Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae* (1947) (Irish MSS. Comm., 1947), 393-9

Stokes, *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore* (1890), 75-83, 222-30

J. F. Kenney, *The sources for the early history of Ireland an introduction and guide* (1929), i, 375-6

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Finnian of Clonard](#)

### Additional Links

VIAF: [17615676](#)

Wikidata: [Q622095](#)

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