

PADARN (c. 560), a Celtic saint

Name: Padarn
Gender: Male
Occupation: Celtic saint
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Emrys George Bowen

A reputed contemporary of [David](#) and [Teilo](#), is associated with a small group of churches in the counties of Cardigan and Radnor. Very little authentic material concerning him can be obtained from his solitary 'Life' found in the collection of medieval manuscripts known as B.M. MS. Vespasian A, xiv. In this 'Vita' he is said to have come from Brittany, but since Paternus was the latinized name of at least two other Breton saints, it is not surprising that by the time the 'Life' of the founder of Llanbadarnfawr in Ceredigion came to be written his life story was irretrievably mixed up with theirs. Canon G. H. Doble has done much to unravel the skeins entangled by the Norman hagiologists, and comes to the conclusion that the supposed Breton origin of S. Padarn can no longer be maintained. Doble favours the view of modern scholars in seeking for a Welsh 'Llydaw' in south-eastern Wales. If S. Padarn did in fact derive from this area, then it becomes possible to explain the distribution of the ancient churches bearing his name by assuming that he arrived in west Wales by sea - his great church in Ceredigion is within sight of the ocean - and that his cult spread inland over the mountain passes to the Radnorshire valleys. Culture-spreads yielding similar distribution patterns in central Wales and emanating from the same source are well known in the pre-Roman Iron Age. The fame of Padarn's 'clas' at Llanbadarn-fawr in Ceredigion lived on beyond his day, and actually survived into Norman times, for [Gerald the Welshman](#), passing that way in 1188, noted its continuing existence although it was in a decadent state.

Author

Professor Emrys George Bowen, (1900 - 1983)

Sources

G. H. Doble, *Saint Patern, Cornish Saints Series, 43* (1940) (Cornish Saints Ser., 43), 1940

E. G. Bowen, '[The Celtic Saints in Cardiganshire](#)' in *Ceredigion*, i, 1-15, 1950

Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, iv, 39-51

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Padarn](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q770633](#)

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