

DYFRIG (DUBRICIUS), saint (fl. 475?),

Name: Dyfrig
Parent: Ebrdil ferch Pebiau Claforawg
Gender: Male
Occupation: saint
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Hywel David Emanuel

is associated mainly with south-eastern Wales, and in particular with the west and south of the modern county of Hereford. The ' Vita Samsonis,' a 7th century composition and the earliest source of information concerning Dyfrig, makes him considerably older than **Saint Samson**, and contemporary with, or slightly senior to, **Saint Illtud**. It also connects the saint with Caldey Island (Ynys Bŷr) off Tenby, Pembrokeshire. But the consequent identification of Dyfrig with the person referred to in the defective Ogam inscription on the Caldey Island stone has not as yet been justified. Of the three extant 'Lives' of Dyfrig, the two later versions composed by **Geoffrey of Monmouth** and **Benedict of Gloucester** are of little importance. The earliest 'Life' is contained in the 'Liber Landavensis,' where it is preceded by grants of land purporting to have been made to Llandaff during Dyfrig's lifetime. According to this 'Life,' Dyfrig was the son of Ebrdil, daughter of Pepiau, king of Erych. The manner of his birth at 'Matle' (probably Madley, five and a half miles west of Hereford) was miraculous, and he immediately revealed his own miraculous powers by curing his grandfather of a long-standing malady. The boy developed into a scholar of great repute, and founded the monastery of 'Hennlann' (now Hentland on the Wye), where he instructed disciples from far and wide for seven years. His second establishment, which was near his birthplace, was called 'Mochros' (now Moccas); there he remained for many years. Finally, oppressed by bodily afflictions and advancing years, he withdrew to live a hermit's life on the island of Enlli (Bardsey Island), where too he was buried. The translation of the saint's body to Llandaff was carried out centuries later, during May 1120. This event may indeed have inspired the composition of this 'Life,' which is little more than a collection of traditions current at the time of its composition. Even these traditions have been used to emphasize the antiquity and pre-eminence of Llandaff. Thus the claim made in the 'Liber Landavensis' that Dyfrig was bishop of Llandaff and archbishop of southern Britain reflects the conscious propaganda of the 12th century rather than historical facts about the 5th and 6th century. His 'Life' agrees with *Ann. C.* in placing Dyfrig's death in the year 612. But the nature of his traditional associations with other Welsh saints, as also the correlation of his sphere of activity and of the sites of churches named after him with the highly Romanized area to the west of the Severn, both suggest that this date is at least a century too late. Dyfrig's feast-day is usually given as 14 November

Author

Hywel David Emanuel, (1921 - 1970)

Sources

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Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dubricius](#)

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