

Dr Jane Cartwright,
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The female saints of south-west Wales



‘for a woman would not be the head of a monastery, the chief of a tribe of a Saint, and so could never become a Saint or entitled to be so called...a woman could never fill the office which certainly among the Welsh entitled a person to become a saint’

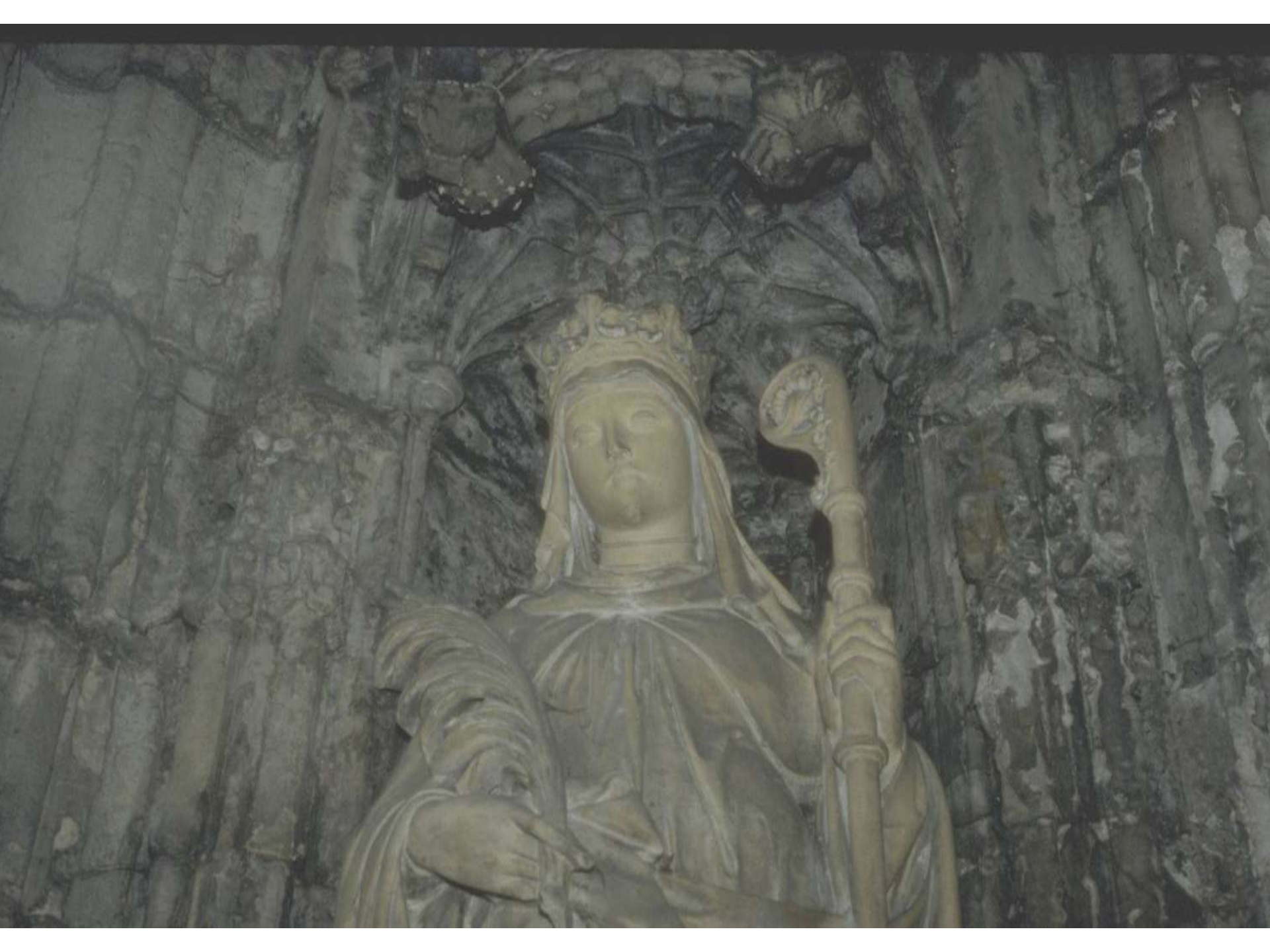
J. W. Willis Bund, ‘Some characteristics of Welsh and Irish saints’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 11, series 5, (1894), 276–91 (279–80).

‘It seems difficult to believe that a woman could, in those wild ages, travel so far, and found so many settlements, and St. Keyne may quite well have been a man, in spite of the later universally accepted tradition of *Cain Wry* [Cain the Virgin].’

G. H. Doble, *S. Nectan, S. Keyne and the Children of Brychan in Cornwall*, Cornish Saints Series 25 (Exeter: Sydney Lee, 1930), p. 47.











Y dydd, y ceisiodd dy dad
wra yt, a'i roi atad,
un o'th lygaid a neidiawdd
o'th ben, hyn a'th boenai'n hawdd;
a thrannoeth aeth yr wyneb
oll yn iach, ni bu well neb.

[The day your father attempted
to find you a husband, and give him to you,
one of your eyes jumped
out of your head, and this inevitably hurt you;
but the next day, all your face healed,
no one had ever felt better.]

Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd (eds) H. L. Jones and E. I. Rowlands (Cardiff:
University of Wales Press, 1975), p. 94; trans. Jane Cartwright





THE YOUNG DEWI SAINT
WITH HIS MOTHER NON

A.M.D.G. GIVEN BY THE THOMAS



SANT FFRAED
LEIAN

FAMILY LATE OF BELMONT LANNON











but the place where the labouring mother was groaning was lit with such serene light that it shone as if God were present, though the sun was obscured by clouds. The mother, in her labour, had a stone near her on which she had leaned with her hands when pressed by her pains, which is why to those who look the rock shows the mark impressed as on wax. It broke in half in sympathy with the mother in her agony; the other part of it jumped over the head of the nun as far as her feet when the mother gave birth. A church has been built in that place, and this stone lies hidden in the base of its altar.

‘Rhygyfarch’s Life of St David’(trans.) Richard Sharpe and John Reuben Davies in *St David of Wales: Cult Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and J. M. Wooding (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), p. 117.



Edudful Dduwsul a ddaw
ar Dduw i wir weddiaw;
bwrw ei phwys yn eglwys Non,
bwrw ei phen lle bo'r ffynnon,
dyrchaf dwylaw yn llawen,
addoli oll i'r ddelw wen,
ennyn y cwyr melyn mawr,
a'i roi oll ar yr allawr;
oddyno heibio'dd â hi
I glos da eglwys Dewi;
offrymu, cusanu'r sant,
iddo gŵyr rhudd ac ariant;

On Sunday Edudful comes
to pray sincerely to God;
She visits Non's church,
puts her head in the well
raises her hands merrily,
worships the holy image,
lights the large, yellow candles,
and puts all of them on the altar
From there she passes to
the good close of St David's
church; makes an offering of
crimson wax and money and
kisses the saint;

Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi (ed.), D. Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p. 371; trans. J. Cartwright



























‘What matters is not so much the origin of a particular cult, or whether its saint was “the same” as another, but the expectation in Celtic areas that a saint *should* be local.’

Oliver Padel ‘Local saints and place-names in Cornwall’ in Sharpe and Thacker (eds), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), n. 51.



‘The said ymage was caryed from thens unto Christes church of Cardigan, and the sayd ymage wold not tarry there, but was founde thre or fowre tymes in the place where now ys buylded the church of our Lady, and the taper brunnynge in her hande.’

Thomas Hore (last prior of the Benedictine house at Cardigan)
Three Chapters of Letters relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries, ed. Thomas Wright (London: Camden Society, 1843), p. 186

‘I chaunched apon another taper of moch
greater credyte and of more shamefull
detestacion, called our ladyes taper of
Cardigan, which I have sent here to your
lordship with convenyent instructyons of
that develish delusyon.’

*Three Chapters of Letters relating to the Suppression of the
Monasteries*, ed. Thomas Wright (London: Camden Society,
1843), pp. 183-4



‘Nyd oes wlad yn holl Gred o gymaint o dir a
chymaint o saint ynddei ag oedd gynt ymhlith
Cymbry’ Anon., *Y Drych Cristianogawl*, 1583
[There is not a land in all Christendom of like
size with so many saints therein as there were
of old among Welshmen.]