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Dublin Core

Title

St Cybi in Holyhead – and in Ireland | Cybi Sant yng Nghaergybi – ac yn Iwerddon

Subject

Holyhead

St Cybi

Holy Island

Creator

Martin Crampin

Publisher

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Date

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/8JH4-W499>

Language

English

Coverage

53.313184313924886, -4.618447243646554

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Title (Welsh)

Cybi Sant yng Nghaergybi – ac yn Iwerddon

Lede

The name Holyhead in Welsh is Caergybi (the fort of Cybi), and the saint and his church at Holyhead is surely the reason that Holyhead, and Holy Island on which it is found, acquired its sanctity.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae'n siŵr mai sancteiddrwydd Cybi Sant a'i eglwys yng Nghaergybi yw'r rheswm bod Caergybi ac Ynys Gybi yn cael eu hadnabod yn Saesneg fel Holyhead a Holy Island.

Story

Most Welsh place-names that incorporate the names of saints occur in the form of *llan* with the name of the saint, and places named Llanybi (the enclosure, church or parish of Cybi) can be found elsewhere in Wales on the Llŷn Peninsula, in Ceredigion and Monmouthshire. The name Caergybi will have arisen because the church dedicated to Holyhead is located within the grounds of the former Roman fort. The name Caergybi seems to have been in use by the thirteenth century, although the records that provide evidence for place-names in Wales rarely go back further than the twelfth century.

Forms of the English name Holyhead, from the Old English *hālig* (holy) and *hēafod* (headland) were in use by the early fourteenth century.

The presence of St Cybi on Holy Island seems to be attested a little bit earlier in a Latin Life of St Cybi – a story about the saint that recorded his travels and deeds that was written late in the eleventh century or more probably in the twelfth century. After a prolonged argument with Crubthir Finta in Ireland, Cybi is challenged to leave Ireland in a boat that he and his companions had not yet covered with a hide to make it watertight. The boat is broken apart in a storm but Cybi arrives miraculously on Anglesey and he strikes a rock with his staff that produces a holy well.

According to the twelfth-century story of St Cybi, the saint originally came from Cornwall, but went to Rome and then spent nearly fifty years with St Hilary in Poitiers. Cybi returned to Cornwall and then travelled through Wales and to Ireland before arriving on Holy Island. By the later Middle Ages his shrine was a place of pilgrimage and the church was home to a religious community.

The presence of St Cybi in Holyhead was apparently brought to an end long before the time of the Reformation, when most shrines and relics of saints were destroyed. Writing in the early fifteenth century, Henry of Marlborough recorded that the shrine of St Cybi was taken away by pirates in 1405 and brought to Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin.

The series of images *Esgyrn Cybi* (The Bones of St Cybi) are based on the link between to the cathedral and St Cybi's church in Holyhead. The presence of St Cybi can no longer be found at Christ Church and very little of the medieval church remains in George Edmund

Street's Gothic Revival cathedral of the 1870s, except some stone carving and some medieval tiles. Patterns from these medieval tiles are overlaid on patterns found on the late medieval stone carving from the south side of St Cybi's in Holyhead, bringing together the two medieval homes of St Cybi on both sides of the Irish Sea. The images were exhibited with the Ports, Past and Present Creative Connections exhibition at Ucheldre in Holyhead in October 2022.

Story (Welsh)

Mae'r rhan fwyaf o enwau lleoedd Cymru sy'n cynnwys enwau'r seintiau yn digwydd ar ffurf Llan gydag enw'r sant, ac mae lleoedd o'r enw Llangybi (clas, eglwys neu blwyf Cybi) i'w cael mewn mannau eraill yng Nghymru ar Benrhyn Llŷn, yng Ngheredigion ac yn Sir Fynwy. Bydd yr enw Caergybi wedi codi am fod yr eglwys a gysegrwyd i Gaergybi wedi'i lleoli o fewn tiroedd yr hen gaer Rufeinig. Mae'n ymddangos bod yr enw Caergybi yn cael ei ddefnyddio erbyn y drydedd ganrif ar ddeg, ond anaml y bydd y cofnodion sy'n darparu tystiolaeth o enwau lleoedd yng Nghymru yn mynd yn ôl ymhellach na'r ddeuddegfed ganrif.

Roedd ffurfiau ar yr enw Saesneg Holyhead, o'r Hen Saesneg hālig (sanctaidd) a hēafod (pentir) yn cael eu defnyddio erbyn dechrau'r bedwaredd ganrif ar ddeg.

Mae'n ymddangos bod yna dystiolaeth o bresenoldeb Cybi Sant ar Ynys Gybi yn gynharach mewn fersiwn Lladin o Fuchedd Cybi Sant – stori am y sant sy'n cofnodi ei siwrneiau a'i weithredoedd a ysgrifennwyd yn hwyr yn yr unfed ganrif ar ddeg neu'n fwy na thebyg yn y ddeuddegfed ganrif. Ar ôl dadl hir gyda Crubthir Finta yn Iwerddon, mae Cybi'n cael ei herio i adael Iwerddon mewn cwch nad oedd ef a'i gymdeithion wedi'i gorchuddio eto â chrwyn i'w gwneud yn ddiddos. Mae'r cwch yn cael ei chwalu mewn storm ond mae Cybi yn cyrraedd Ynys Môn yn wyrthiol ac mae'n taro craig gyda'i ffon sy'n creu ffynnon sanctaidd.

Yn ôl stori Cybi Sant o'r ddeuddegfed ganrif, daeth y sant o Gernyw yn wreiddiol, ond aeth i Rufain ac yna treulio bron hanner can mlynedd gyda Sant Hilari yn Poitiers. Dychwelodd Cybi i Gernyw ac yna teithio drwy Gymru ac i Iwerddon cyn cyrraedd Ynys Gybi. Erbyn diwedd yr Oesoedd Canol roedd ei gysegrfa yn denu pererinion ac roedd yr eglwys yn gartref i gymuned grefyddol.

Mae'n debyg bod presenoldeb Cybi Sant yng Nghaergybi wedi dod i ben ymhell cyn amser y Diwygiad, pan ddinistriwyd y rhan fwyaf o gysegrfeydd a chreiriau'r seintiau. Wrth ysgrifennu ar ddechrau'r bymthegfed ganrif, cofnododd Henry o Marlborough fod cysegrfa Cybi Sant wedi'i symud ymaith gan fôr-ladron ym 1405 a'i chario i Gadeirlan Eglwys Crist yn Nulyn.

Mae'r gyfres o ddelweddau Esgym Cybi wedi'i seilio ar y cysylltiad rhwng yr eglwys gadeiriol ac eglwys Cybi Sant yng Nghaergybi. Does dim modd gweld presenoldeb Cybi Sant yn Eglwys Crist erbyn hyn ac ychydig iawn o'r eglwys ganoloesol sydd ar ôl yng nghadeirlan Adfywiad Gothig George Edmund Street o'r 1870au, heblaw ambell gerflun carreg a theils canoloesol. Mae patrymau o'r teils canoloesol hyn wedi'u troshaenu ar batrymau a gafwyd yn y cerfiadau carreg canoloesol hwyr ar ochr ddeheuol Eglwys Cybi Sant yng Nghaergybi, gan ddod â dau gartref canoloesol Cybi Sant at ei gilydd ar ddwy ochr Môr Iwerddon. Cafodd y delweddau eu harddangos gydag arddangosfa Cysylltiadau Creadigol Porthladdoedd, Ddoe a Heddiw yn Ucheldre yng Nghaergybi ym mis Hydref 2022.