



Saint Patrick, AD 493-1993

David N. Dumville

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Anyone working on Britain and Ireland in the fifth century should pay close attention. **MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY** A fascinating work, which sheds light on a number of dark corners. **EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE** St Patrick's place in Irish history is celebrated, but is also the subject of intense controversy - even as to his death. Although the 1500th anniversary of that event was originally celebrated in 1961, there is every reason to think the death date of 461 unsustainable. This collection of essays commemorates a different date, 17 March 493, and takes stock of other difficult issues which require reassessment. These include Patrick's own account of his career, his impassioned *apologia pro uita sua*, and the later Irish sources which may not reveal much about Patrick but possibly contain material about Palladius, sent from Rome in AD 431 as first bishop for Irish Christians: the invention of two Patricks seems to belong, at the latest, to the 8th century, and may be a reflex of a 7th-century conflation of the careers of Palladius and Patrick. The continuing mediaeval development of the legend and cult of St Patrick and a wide variety of other associated historical and literary-historical issues are also explored. **DAVID DUMVILLE** is Professor of Palaeography and Cultural History, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Girton College.

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