

REL 250

Lecture 9

St. Patrick

Apostle of Ireland



# Patrician Facts

What we *know*  
about St. Patrick



# The Life of St. Patrick

- Dates: *c.* 390 - *c.* 460
- Roman: **Bannavem Tabernia** (Wales?)
- Family:
  - ✦ **Calpornius** (father) - decurion and deacon
  - ✦ **Potitus** (grandfather) - priest
- Captured by Gaels and sold into slavery (six years)





# The Life of St. Patrick

- Escaped Slavery in Ireland
- Returned to Britain and dedicated life to God (monk?)
- Called to Ireland in a vision c. 433
- Bishop?
- Established church at Armagh
- Muirchu's "The Life of St. Patrick" (c. 670) - hagiography





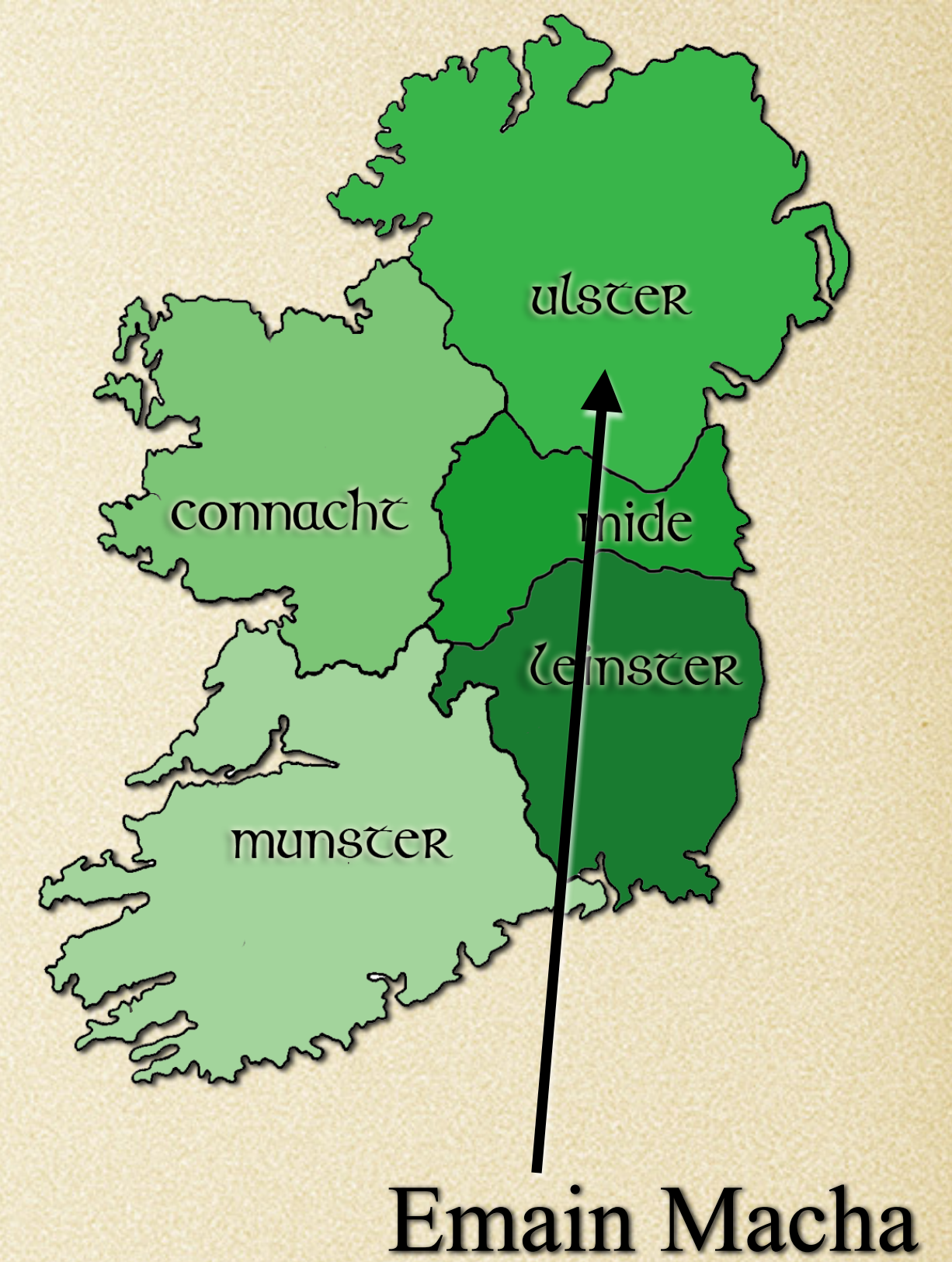
Why Armagh?



# Politics!

## Ulster Province

- Ascendancy of the Ulaid
- Descendants of the Mythic Ulstermen:
  - ✦ Conchobar
  - ✦ Cuchulainn









Armagh  
St. Patrick's Cathedral  
(RCC)





# Patrícian Myths

What everybody “knows” about St. Patrick  
(but just isn’t true)



# Patrick and The Green

- St. Patrick is historically associated with the color **BLUE!**
- Green represents Ireland
- “Wearing of the green” refers to wearing a shamrock (i.e., republicanism)





# Driving out the Snakes

- No native reptiles in Ireland
- Oillipheist (“great beast”)
- Metaphor:
  - ◆ Druidism
  - ◆ Paganism
  - ◆ Evil





# Patrick and the Shamrock

- Metaphor of the Trinity
- Celts had triune gods:
  - ◆ Eriu
  - ◆ Morrigan
  - ◆ Bridgit





# The Apostle of Ireland

- Palladius first bishop of Ireland (Celestine I)
- No apostolic endorsement
- Roman Model initially failed in Ireland
- Monasticism dominates





# St. Patrick's Day





# St. Patrick's Day

## Traditional



- Feast Day - March 17 (death c. 460)
- Usually falls during Lent
- Acceptable to eat meat
- Spring Equinox?



# St. Patrick's Day Modern

- First parade: 1762 New York
- Irish Aid Societies 1848
- The Bank Holiday Act 1903
- You know the rest ...





Other Important days  
associated with  
St. Patrick



# Reek Sunday

## Climbing Croagh Patrick



Last Sunday in July





# Pilgrimage on Croagh Patrick





# Chapel on Croagh Patrick





# Stations of the Reek

Three “stations” along the route are circled with prayer.





# Lugh's Mountain

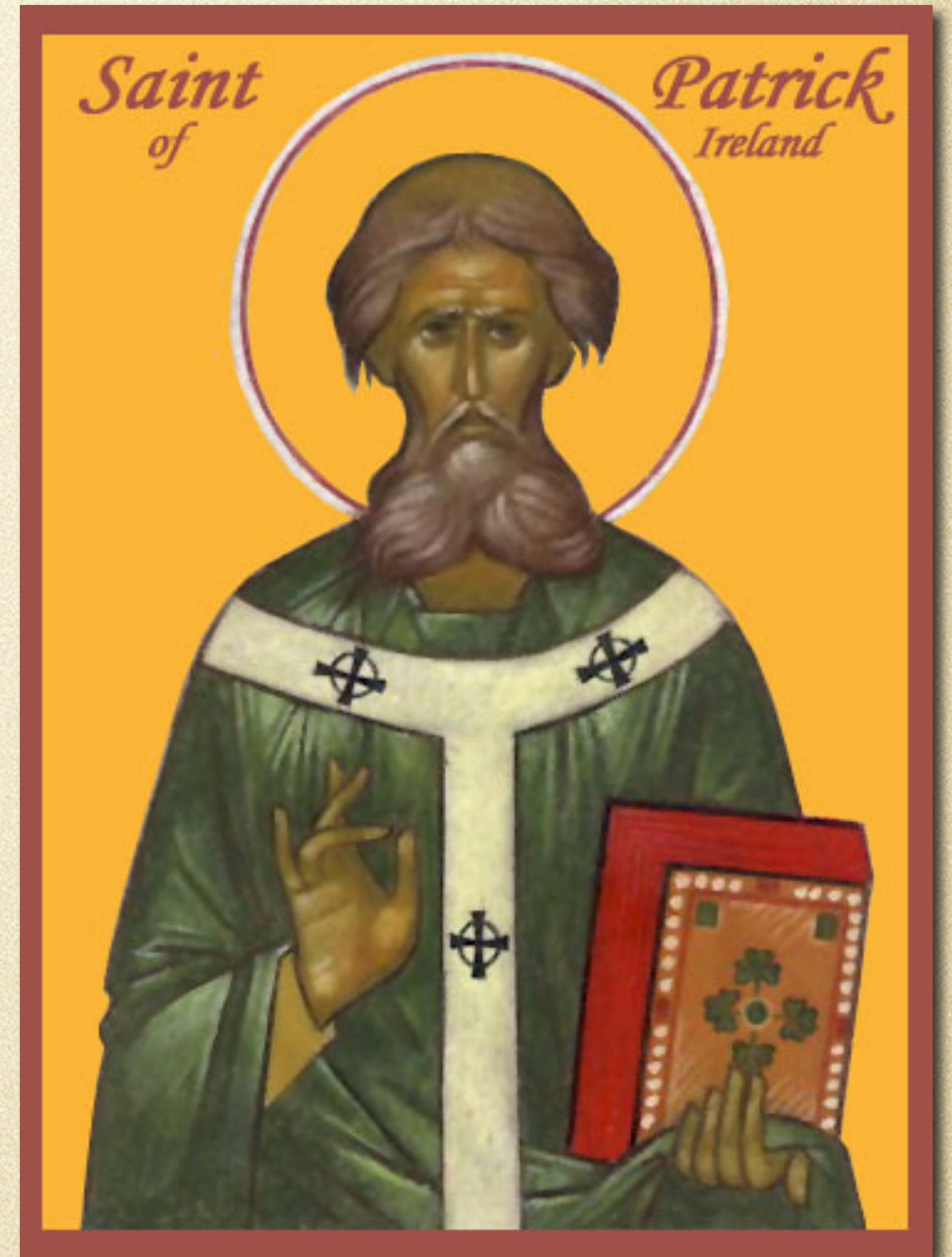


Lughnasadh, first of August



# The Legacy of St. Patrick

- The beginning of Irish literacy:
  - ♦ “The Confessions”
  - ♦ “Epistle to Coroticus”
- Symbol of Irish Nationalism





# Ambiguity of Tradition

St. Pat's *C of I*



St. Pat's *RC*