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The education of Diarmait Mac Murchada

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THE EDUCATION OF DIARMAIT MAC MURCHADA

Diarmait Mac Murchada or Diarmait na nGall¹ was born in or about the year 1110, as one may calculate from an entry concerning him in the list of kings of Leinster contained in the Book of Leinster.² Little or nothing is known for certain of his early years nor can we be sure that he is to be identified with 'the son of Mac Murchada' whom Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht and claimant to the kingship of Ireland deposed in 1126 in favour of his own son, Conchobar, whom he intruded into the kingship of Leinster.³ It is evident from some slightly corrupt entries in the annals that Diarmait had a rival for the kingship of Uí Chennselaig and Leinster in Máel Sechlainn (mac Diarmata) Mac Murchada who is called lord of Uí Chennselaig and who was slain by the north Leinster dynasts led by Augaire Ua Tuathail in 1133.⁴ The existence of this rival has been ignored by historians. Augaire Ua Tuathail fell fighting the Ossraige on the side of Diarmait in 1134 and if their alliance extended back to 1133 we have some indication that as late as that year Diarmait Mac Murchada had still to contend with internal segmentary opposition.⁵

In 1127, the Leinstermen joined forces with the Ostmen of Dublin, revolted against Ua Conchobair and expelled his nominee from the kingship of Leinster. Orpen, after no uncertain fashion, attributes this revolt to the stirring leadership of Diarmait Mac Murchada: 'The young prince of Okinselagh in whose family the sovereignty of Leinster had been for three-quarters of a century was not prepared to waive his claims'.⁶ Nor is Curtis in any doubt that the revolt 'was inspired by a vigorous young prince, Dermot McMurrough'.² The truth is that however likely or unlikely these statements may be we have no direct annalistic evidence whatever to support them. The king-list in the Book of Leinster which states that Diarmait reigned for forty-six years over Uí Chennselaig and Leinster—thus implying that he came to power in 1126-7—was put together after the reign of Mac Murchada by a compiler favourable to the claims of his house and

¹ For a discussion of the antiquity of this term, see Brian Ó Cuív, 'Diarmaid na nGall' in *Éigse* 16 No. 2 (1975) 136-44.

² *Bk. Leinster (facs)* 39d = *Bk. Leinster* (ed. R. I. Best *et al*) i 184. Cf. the parallel text in *BB* 54 a 26-55 d 26 where however the details of Mac Murchada's age are absent.

³ *AU, Ann. Tig., Ann. Inisf., AFM* s.a. 1126; Orpen, *Normans* i 43.

⁴ *AFM* s. aa. 1132, 1133; *A. Clon.* s.a. 1135 [=1133].

⁵ *Ann. Tig., Chron. Scot., ALC, AFM, Misc. Ir. Ann.* s.a. 1134; *A. Clon.* s.a. 1135 [= 1134].

⁶ *Normans* i 44.

⁷ *A history of medieval Ireland* (London: Methuen 1938) 20.

must be treated with caution.⁸ In fact, Mac Murchada is not entitled king of Leinster in annals until 1132 when he perpetrated a notorious outrage on the abbess of Kildare.⁹ What we may deduce from the annals is borne out by the parallel regnal list in the Book of Ballymote which states that Mac Murchada ruled Leinster for forty years i.e. that he became king in 1131 or 1132.¹⁰ On balance, it is not altogether unlikely that Mac Murchada may have been the claimant deposed by Ua Conchobair, a claimant who had rivals and who remained in greater or lesser obscurity until 1132. This is conjecture and in this case we must be satisfied with conjecture.

In this background of general obscurity there seems to shine one gleam of light: most writers on this period state unequivocally that Mac Murchada was educated in the monastery of Terryglass in Ormond by the abbot, Áed Mac Crimthainn. The late Fr. John Ryan states:

Yet the popular picture of him as an ogre or monster of cruelty errs by excess. In his own eyes, at any rate before his appeal to the Normans, he would certainly regard himself as one of the more respectable contemporary rulers. He had been educated in a high-school, that of Abbot Áed Mac Crimthainn at Terryglass, one of the two scholars to whom we owe the Book of Leinster.¹¹

I am in no doubt that Fr. Ryan considered that a good Christian liberal education of a type still available from the admirable congregation to which he himself belonged earned one the respect and esteem of society. What the reaction of a twelfth-century king to such an education would be is a matter on which I am not competent to judge. That Mac Murchada's self-esteem was lowered by his appeal to the Normans I take the liberty to doubt. And it may be suggested with some plausibility that Fr. Ryan's views have more to do with twentieth-century attitudes than twelfth-century realities.

Already, Professor G. T. Stokes in one of those nineteenth-century historical works *de omnibus rebus et de quibusdam aliis* had gone much further than Fr. Ryan and imagined that he could 'recover the books Dermot read, the education he received, the manner of men with whom he conversed'. According to Stokes, 'the Book of Leinster is a . . . bibliotheca or library of documents, written from time to time during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many of them composed some time about 1120 or 1130, by the tutor to whom Dermot Mac Murrough's education was entrusted Any of you can now consult in our

⁸ *Bk. Leinster* i 184, 186.

⁹ *ALC, Chron. Scot.* s.a. 1132; *A. Clon.* s.a. 1135 [= 1132].

¹⁰ *BB* 55 d 18-26.

¹¹ John Ryan, S. J., 'The ancestry of St. Laurence O'Toole' in *Reportorium Novum* 1 (1955) 73. Ryan's footnote (140) is misleading in that it refers not to any authority for his statements but to the authorship of the Book of Leinster.

various libraries and there you will find a volume which lay in the library and exercised the attention of Dermot's early days'. He then embarks on an unfortunate excursus on the pernicious influence of his reading on Mac Murchada's character:

Everyone nowadays recognises the vast influence exercised on men and women by the tales and poems poured by nurses into the ears of innocent childhood . . . And so too this Book of Leinster is most valuable, not alone for the true history which it contains, nor for the genuine annals which it embodies, but most of all as setting forth the social life, the habits, customs, the poetry and literary influences amid which Dermot Mac Murrough and men like him were cradled and reared . . . Mac Murrough's character may be tested by a modern rule. Examine a man's library and you can fairly gauge his habits and character. Examine the Book of Leinster and you will not be surprised that Dermot Mac Murrough's career was stained by bloodshed, vice and falsehood'.¹²

Reverend Professor Stokes, as many another pastor, is in no doubt that wicked literature corrupts innocent minds, a rule to which he finds medieval kings no exception. Though more sympathetic than most, he reflects a certain hostility towards, and fear, of Gaelic Ireland shared by not a few in his own Unionist milieu and not least by a member of his own College, Professor Robert Atkinson.¹³

For Edmund Curtis, a member of the same College, a liberal nationalist historian and a lover of Gaelic Ireland, the education of Mac Murchada took on an altogether different aspect and of course had an altogether different effect:

Dermot was brought up by Aedh mac Criffan, abbot of the Columban house of Terryglass in Ormond, for whom the Book of Leinster was compiled. The instruction of the young prince was in the national sagas such as *Táin Bó Cualgne*. Thus he was moulded in an heroic family tradition which made him determined when the hour came to restore Leinster's ancient greatness going back six centuries.¹⁴

In the view of Curtis then it was proper for a young prince that he should read the national literature and draw the correct inspirations from it, a view which cannot be divorced from his own leanings towards the Gaelic past (amply evidenced elsewhere in his work) and from the contemporary nationalist and cultural resurgence which had

¹² G. T. Stokes, *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman church* 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1892) 17-9.

¹³ *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission. Appendix to the Final Report*, Pt 1 (Dublin 1899) 637-45; David Greene, 'Robert Atkinson and Irish studies' in *Hermathena* No. 102 (1966) 6-15.

¹⁴ *Med. Ire.* 29.

his sympathy and support. And the blood-thirstiness and violence so deprecated by Stokes are duly revealed to be heroic example.

The latest account of Mac Murchada's upbringing is that of Professor J. F. Lydon, who equally considers his education to be a factor of crucial importance in the formation of his character:

As a youth he was tutored by men steeped in the glories of Leinster's heroic past and had been reared to revive the greatness of his kingdom. One of his tutors was the abbot of Terryglass for whom the Book of Leinster has been compiled, that great compendium of Irish history and literature. We can hardly doubt that Dermot was deeply imbued with the spirit of that book, which had as part of its purpose the exaltation of Leinster and the belittling of Connacht and Munster.

His education, if we believe Professor Lydon, had a life-long influence on Mac Murchada (and here he echoes Curtis):

All the time his ambition was to make Leinster great once more. When the time was propitious he even asserted Leinster's rights, based on the historical literature on which he was reared, to the high-kingship of Ireland.¹⁵

Lydon's understanding of the effects on Mac Murchada of his education is consonant with his view of twelfth-century Ireland as a whole. To his mind Ireland was a land bound by legal and other tradition inherited from the past, a country of profound localism and splintered political authority (in which incidentally the *túath* of the archaic law-tracts still survived). What more natural than that his education should be as provincial as the political ambitions of his peers?

The truth is that Mac Murchada was not educated at Terryglass and, further, Áed Mac Crimthainn and his correspondent, Find Ua Gormáin, were Mac Murchada's contemporaries, not his seniors. Neither is there a shred of evidence to indicate that Mac Murchada ever saw the Book of Leinster, much less read it; indeed, it is highly probable that it was put together only after his death. The speculations of the historians on the effects of his education have no basis in fact: they belong to the realm of purest fancy. However, if they do little to enlighten us about Mac Murchada, they do throw a great deal of light on the historians' preoccupations and prejudices. Further, each of the historians here cited was or is a university teacher of history and their groundless speculations bear poignant witness to a belief, evidently shared by all, in the profound effect of history-

¹⁵ J. F. Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin: Gill 1972) 30. It is ironic, given Lydon's views as to its purpose, that the Book of Leinster should once have contained a full recension of *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, surely the most bumptious and successful piece of Munster propaganda in the whole of Irish literature.

teaching (for good or for evil) on the students who are subjected to it. One may add that it is interesting to note how the historians, perhaps quite unconsciously and certainly quite anachronistically give to the word 'tutor', itself a bad translation of *fer léigind* of the original, precisely the same semantic range as it has in the usage of certain British universities with which they can be assumed to be familiar.

This mistaken association of Diarmait Mac Murchada, Áed Mac Crimthainn, the Book of Leinster and the monastery of Terryglass is, I believe, the work of Eugene O'Curry. It is best perhaps to quote his own words:

It can be shown from various internal evidences that this volume [the Book of Leinster] was either compiled or transcribed in the first half of the twelfth century, by Finn Mac Gorman, bishop of Kildare, who died in the year 1160; and that it was compiled by order of Aodh Mac Crimthainn, the tutor of the notorious Dermot Mac Murroch . . . The book was evidently compiled for Dermot, under the superintendence of his tutor, by Mac Gorman, who had probably been a fellow-pupil of the king. In support of this assertion I need only transcribe the following entry which occurs in the original hand . . .¹⁶

O'Curry then goes on to translate the famous letter of Find Ua Gormáin, bishop of Kildare, to Áed Mac Crimthainn, abbot of Terryglass, which is contained in the Book of Leinster, f. ccvi.¹⁷ However, he renders the words *do fir leigind ardrig Leithi Moga* (.i. Nuadat) as '[to] the tutor of the chief king of Leth Mogha Nuadat [or of Leinster and Munster]' and then without further ado he identifies this 'chief king of Leth Moga' with Diarmait Mac Murchada; and, using this assumption as his only argument, he assigns Mac Crimthainn's *floruit* to the early twelfth century.

The title *fer léigind rí* is itself very strange and I have no further examples of it. *Fer léigind* usually means 'master of a monastic school' and is conventionally translated 'lector'¹⁸. Professor Aubrey Gwynn suggests that the king in question is Tairdelbach Ua Briain who died in 1167 but this does little to solve the difficulty posed by the term though it is true that Terryglass lay within the lordship of Ua Briain and had been ruled by abbots closely related to the royal dynasty.¹⁹

¹⁶ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the manuscript materials of ancient Irish history* (Dublin: Hinch and Traynor 1861) 186.

¹⁷ For a modern translation of this letter, see *Bk. Leinster* i p. xvi; *Celtica* 7 (1966) 7.

¹⁸ For exx. see *AU* s. aa. 899, 950, 953, 956 etc. See further Kathleen Hughes, 'The distribution of Irish scriptoria and centres of learning from 730 to 1111' in N. K. Chadwick et al., *Studies in the early British church* (Cambridge University Press 1958) 247-72.

¹⁹ Aubrey Gwynn, S. J., 'Some notes on the history of the Book of Leinster' in *Celtica* 5 (1960) 8-12; for Dál Cais connections with Terryglass, see *Ériu* 24 (1973) 55-6.

It would appear that the opinions of Stokes, Ryan, Curtis and Lydon (apart from their own assumptions) depend ultimately on these ill-considered deductions of O'Curry, though of the four only Stokes acknowledges his source. And more recent studies have effectively demolished O'Curry's arguments. R. I. Best has shown that the Book of Leinster is in fact Lebor na Núachongbála and takes its name from Oughavall in Co. Leix.²⁰ A further study by Mr. William O'Sullivan has shown that the book is the work of four main scribes: Áed Mac Crimthainn, Find Ua Gormáin (or his scribe) and two others (U, T). Of these latter, the one whom he denotes T he considers to be 'the real author of the Book of Leinster as we know it' and he holds that the latest work in his hand falls between 1186 and 1189. It is clear then that the Book of Leinster was put together long after Mac Murchada's school-days were over and Orpen's speculation that it was 'perhaps the chief treasure of Dermot's library' has no basis in fact.²¹ The well-established chronology of Find Ua Gormáin and Áed Mac Crimthainn absolutely rules out any association with Mac Murchada's education. It is generally assumed that Find succeeded to the bishopric of Kildare shortly after the death of his last-recorded predecessor in 1148. As bishop, he attended the synod of Kells in 1152 and died in 1160. In his obit, he is described as bishop of Kildare and abbot of the monks of Newry for a period.²² Áed Mac Crimthainn cannot have been abbot of Terryglass prior to the death of his predecessor, Find Ua Cennétig in 1152²³ by which time his supposed pupil was in his early forties and in mid-career as a busy and ambitious king of Leinster. There is no evidence that Mac Murchada received a monastic education or indeed any education at all of that nature. He was placed in fosterage, most probably at an early age, as members of the Irish nobility usually were and it is likely that the only training he received was in the normal warlike skills of the twelfth-century Irish aristocracy.²⁴ He was fostered by an aristocratic family, Uí Cháellaide, lords of the territory of Uí Berchon which lay in the northern portion of the present barony of Ida, between Arigna and the Barrow and along the valley of the Nore from Rosbercon to Inistioge, to the west of Mac Murchada's hereditary king-

²⁰ *Bk. Leinster* i pp. xi-xviii.

²¹ William O'Sullivan, 'Notes on the scripts and make up of the Book of Leinster' in *Celtica* 7 (1966) 1-31.

²² *AFM* s.a. 1148; Keating, *Foras feasa* iii 317 (quoting the lost Annals of Clonenagh); *Bk. Leinster* i p. xvi; *AU*, *AFM* s.a. 1160.

²³ Aubrey Gwynn and Dermot Gleeson, *A history of the diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin: Gill 1962) 43-7; *Ériu* 24 (1973) 55-6.

²⁴ The detritus of the tract on fosterage, *Cáin Iarraith*, is printed with voluminous commentary *Anc. laws Ire.* ii 146-92. Cf. K. Mulchrone, 'Women and the education of their children' in Thurneysen, Binchy *et al.*, *Studies in early Irish law* (Dublin: R.I.A. 1936) 187-205; Rudolph Thurneysen, *Irisches Recht* (Berlin 1931) 19-22.

dom, Uí Chennselaig.²⁵ That he was fostered by Uí Cháellaide is evident, as Orpen noticed many years ago, from an entry in the annals for the year 1170 which records the execution of Mac Murchada's hostages by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair at the instigation of Tigernán Ua Ruairc. Amongst those executed was *mac a c[h]omalta .i. mac hUí Chaellaidhe* 'the son of his foster-brother i.e. the son of Ua Cáellaide'.²⁶ The Annals of Tigernach further record that the father of the executed hostage was Murchad Ua Cáellaide, a man who played a role of some importance in Mac Murchada's dealings with Ossraige, as we shall see. The evidence of the annals is borne out by Mac Murchada's life-long association with members of his foster-family whom he supported in their secular ambitions and whom he promoted (or helped to promote) to the episcopacy at a time when ecclesiastical power was being transferred from the hereditary abbots to the reformed bishops. Fosterage, as we know from the laws and elsewhere, was a solemn contractual relationship and formed a primary bond between families and individuals so related—a bond, for reasons obvious in a segmentary system, on occasion more reliable and permanent than the bond of actual kinship since supporters acquired in this way could never become one's rivals for office within one's own lineage. And the institution was used by great dynasts, particularly in the form of multiple fosterage, to acquire a political following of lesser nobles. Mac Murchada acted honourably and generously towards his foster-kindred though ultimately he was serving his own political ends in so doing. It will be necessary to glance briefly at the history of Ossraige in order to place this relationship in its context and account for the rise to prominence of Uí Cháellaide in church and state in the twelfth century.

Donnchad mac Gilla Phátraic was the ablest king of Ossraige in the eleventh century. From about 1016 he emerged as the enemy of the declining Uí Dúnlainge kings of Leinster; he seized the kingship of the province in 1037, an office to which he had no hereditary right, and retained it until his death in 1039.²⁷ It seems that the dynasty overreached itself in this attempt and subsequent to his death there was a great deal of infighting and disorder amongst his descendants. Given the poor state of preservation of the Ossraige genealogies in this period²⁸ and the nature of the regnal list in the Book of Leinster²⁹, which was obviously manipulated in favour of the later dominant dynastic group, the descendants of Gilla Pátraic mac Donnchada

²⁵ John O'Donovan, *Topographical poems* (Dublin: Ir. Arch. & Celt. Soc. 1862) pp. 97, 1x; James Carney, *Topographical poems* (Dublin: DIAS 1943) 44.

²⁶ *AU*, *Ann. Tig.*, *AFM*, s.a. 1170.

²⁷ *Ann. Inisf.*, *AFM* s.a. 1016; *Ann. Inisf.*, *AU* s.a. 1037; *AFM* s.a. 1036; *Bk Leinster* i 183; *B. B.* 55 c 12.

²⁸ O'Brien, *Corp. gen. Hib.* 15–17, 101–16.

²⁹ *Bk. Leinster* i 189–90.

(+1055), it is impossible to reconstruct the succession to the kingship with any degree of certainty. It was during this time of troubles that the family of Uí Cháellaide rose to some political prominence in the political affairs of Ossraige. The genealogists, so far as I can establish, throw no light on their provenance and only later sources, based no doubt on twelfth-century materials, describe them as lords of Uí Berchon.³⁰ They make their first appearance as rivals of Meic Gilla Phátraic towards the middle of the eleventh century. In 1036 (or 1041) Muirchertach mac Gilla Phátraic, probably a brother of the better-known Donnchad (+1039) and who is entitled *leth-rí* of Ossraige, was slain by Ua Cáellaide.³¹ It is evident that Uí Cháellaide were already having some success as contenders for the kingship of Ossraige. They make their next appearance after the death of Gilla Pátraic Ruad, king of Ossraige, at the disastrous battle of Mag Coba in 1103. Subsequent to that battle, the kingship was divided between two Mac Gilla Phátraic dynasts, Cerball and Domnall, and Find Ua Cáellaide.³² At this point the succession is very confused and unclear and it is possible that Find Ua Cáellaide may have ruled (or at least claimed to rule) as sole king for a brief period³³ between 1113, when his co-king, Domnall mac Gilla Phátraic, was slain by his first cousin, Goll Gabrán mac Cerbaill,³⁴ and the accession of Donnchad mac Gilla Phátraic Ruaid in 1123.³⁵

The first recorded involvement of Uí Cháellaide with Uí Chennselaig and the family of Diarmait Mac Murchada occurred in 1103. In that year a son of Dúnlaing Ua Cáellaide (perhaps identical with Find Ua Cáellaide above or, if not, at least a relative of his) blinded one Donnchad mac Énna.³⁶ That Donnchad can be none other than Donnchad mac Énna Bacaig of Uí Chennselaig. The segmentary conflict within Uí Chennselaig at this time can best be understood from the diagram on the opposite page:³⁷

It is evident that the descendants of Murchad (sl. 1070) and the descendants of Énna (sl. 1092) were engaged in a bitter struggle for the kingship of Uí Chennselaig and Leinster. And the intervention of Ua Cáellaide on the side of the descendants of Murchad shows that as early as 1103, the immediate family of Diarmait Mac Murchada had already forged an alliance with Uí Cháellaide. Indeed, it is quite possible that the young Mac Murchada was already in fosterage with Ua Cáellaide a mere seven or eight years later than this date for children were placed in fosterage at a very tender age.

³⁰ See n. 25 above.

³¹ *AFM* s. aa. 1036, 1041 (the entry is duplicated and the date consequently uncertain).

³² *Bk. Leinster* i 190.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ann. Inisf.* s.a. 1113.

³⁵ *AU*, *Ann. Inisf.*, *Ann. Tig.*, *AFM* s.a. 1123.

³⁶ *AFM* s.a. 1103.

³⁷ For further details, see *Studia Hib.* 11 (1971) 20, 23-4.

When Mac Murchada came to power in Leinster he maintained friendly relations with Uí Cháellaide and made use of their support in his attempts to divide and dominate Ossraige. In 1146, Gilla Pátraic Mac Gilla Pátraic, who had apparently ruled as sole king of Ossraige since 1123, was killed in treachery by his own followers in his house in Kilkenny.³⁸ The precise identity of these followers is not stated. His successor was his brother, Cerball, but he was soon expelled by Diarmait Mac Murchada who appointed two rulers over Ossraige, Murchad Ua Cáellaide, his foster-brother, and Donnchad Mac Gilla Phátraic, the son of the previous ruler. This arrangement, like many such arrangements, did not last long. Donnchad was attacked and expelled by Mac Murchada, no doubt for some treachery, and Cerball, his uncle, was restored as joint ruler with Murchad Ua Cáellaide. Later, Cerball was again expelled by Mac Murchada and Donnchad restored for he reigned as sole ruler at the time of his death in 1162.³⁹ It is likely that Murchad Ua Cáellaide predeceased him by a number of years. Mac Murchada's plans for the division of Ossraige between Ua Cáellaide and Mac Gilla Phátraic eventually came to nothing. However, even after his death in 1171, Uí Cháellaide still continued to press their claim to the joint kingship of Ossraige and in 1172 Diarmait Ua Cáellaide, who is described as *leth-rí* of Ossraige, was slain by Domnall Mac Gilla Phátraic, the last king of the ancient kingdom of Ossraige.⁴⁰

Mac Murchada's patronage of Uí Cháellaide extended to two notable churchmen of their number. Áed Ua Cáellaide, bishop of Louth, better known as Edan, was almost certainly a member of that family.⁴¹ In 1138 he succeeded to the enlarged see of Louth-Clogher on the death of Gilla Críst Ua Morgair. I must confess I know of no good political reason why a Leinsterman should be chosen as bishop at this point; in fact, Mac Murchada was at that time at odds with the local rulers and I can only suggest that he was chosen on his merits as an advanced ecclesiastical reformer and friend of St. Malachy in a see in which the grip of the reformers was yet far from secure.⁴² In 1148, Ua Cáellaide and Donnchad Ua Cerbaill, king of Airgialla, completed the church of Knock near the town of Louth, an Augustinian foundation which was duly consecrated by St. Malachy.⁴³ Some

³⁸ *Ann. Tig.*, *AFM* s.a. 1146; *Bk. Leinster* i 190.

³⁹ *Bk. Leinster* i 190.

⁴⁰ *AU*, *Ann. Tig.* s.a. 1172.

⁴¹ His name is consistently, incorrectly and misleadingly rendered O Ce(a)llaig(h): Aubrey Gwynn, *The twelfth-century reform* (Dublin: Gill 1968) 47, 59; *IER* 77 (1952) 168; *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 1 (1954) 4-8.

⁴² Aubrey Gwynn, 'Armagh and Louth in the twelfth century' in *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 1 (1954) 1-11; H. J. Lawlor, 'The genesis of the diocese of Clogher' in *Louth Arch. Soc. Jn* 4 (1916-20) 129-53.

⁴³ *AFM* s.a. 1148; Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious Houses; Ireland* (London: Longman 1970) 184.

time between 1161 and 1166 (most probably in 1162 or 1163 when he succeeded in establishing his authority over Dublin)⁴⁴ Mac Murchada granted the lands of Baldoyle with its appurtenances to Áed Ua Cáellaide whom he describes as 'his spiritual father and confessor' for the use of the canons of the church of the daughter of Zola.⁴⁵ Áed Ua Cáellaide died as bishop of Louth-Clogher (*alias* Airgialla) in 1182 and is described in the annals as the 'head of the canons of Ireland' by which we may understand that he was considered to be one of the leading Augustinians of his day.⁴⁶

Mac Murchada also maintained close relations with Dúngal Ua Caellaide, bishop of Leighlin, another member of the same family. Dúngal was present at the synod of Kells, was a witness (under the form Donatus) to Mac Murchada's charter for the Augustinian abbey of Ferns (*circa* 1158) and died as bishop of Leighlin in 1181.⁴⁷

Mac Murchada then was no exception to his peers in the matter of education. He was placed in fosterage as they were and his subsequent relationship with his foster-family throws an interesting light on the institution and its role in the politics of his age. No doubt he was familiar with Leinster tradition and a patron of learning, as has been recently suggested,⁴⁸ but such familiarity required no special training. The everyday realities of twelfth-century power politics and the close links of his east-coast kingdom and its Ostman towns with Britain are quite sufficient to explain his activities. It is my hope that this note may lay the impish ghost of O'Curry's mistake, the result of the ill-considered deduction of a great pioneering scholar working single-handed and in haste, and may serve as a reminder that the blunders we historians perpetrate may outlive our children's children and may even be embellished by our successors in the spirit of their own times.

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⁴⁴ This charter has been dated to 1166 by Ware and Harris and they have been followed by Stokes, *op. cit.* 180, 184 and Gwynn and Haddock, *op. cit.* 171.

⁴⁵ Richard Butler (ed.), *Registrum prioratus omnium sanctorum* (Dublin: Irish Arch. Soc. 1845) 50–51. Butler's rather lame attempt to account for Mac Murchada's relationship with Ua Cáellaide by references to a vague account of an expedition by Mac Murchada into Airgialla provides neither a date for the charter nor grounds for their association.

⁴⁶ *ALC* s.a.1182.

⁴⁷ Gwynn and Haddock, *op. cit.*, 89.

⁴⁸ Ó Cuív, *loc. cit.*, 144.