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Muirges (Matthew) Ua hÉnna

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hebis.

Muirges (Matthew) Ua hÉnna (* c. 1140 – † 1206)

1. Name variants: Matha, Mathgamain, Matthaëus, Maurice, Mauricius, Muirgheas, Muirgius, Tatheus, Thadeus (baptismal); O’Heney, Ó hÉanna, Ua hÉnna, Ua hEnni (family)

2. Places: Holycross, Co. Tipperary, Cashel, Ireland

3. Biography: M. entered the Cistercian abbey of Holycross in Tipperary as a young man, gaining a reputation there as a devout and learned scholar. In c. 1185, he succeeded Domnall Ua hUallacháin († 1182) as archbishop of Cashel. He attended the synod held in Dublin in 1186, where he provided a celebrated, witty riposte to the visiting archdeacon Giraldus Cambrensis, who claimed that Ireland had produced no Christian martyrs. He corresponded with Pope Clement III on points of canon law in c. 1190, and served as papal legate in Ireland from 1192–98. He convened a synod at Dublin in 1192 and negotiated a settlement between the archbishop of Dublin and the Cistercians of St Mary’s Abbey. He visited England in 1192/93 and was granted lands at Ludgershall, Wiltshire. M. had the respect of both the English and Irish in the wake of the 1171 English invasion of Ireland, and he helped make peace between the English adventurer William de Burgh and the Munster Irish in 1201. Nonetheless, the later years of his legation were not without controversy. In 1195, he banished the bishop of Killaloe and intruded his own relatives to the see. He was involved in disputed episcopal elections at Waterford, Lismore, Ross, and Ardfert, and he supported the bishop of Waterford’s efforts to absorb the diocese of Lismore. He also acted in place of the archbishop of Dublin, John Cumin, during the latter’s contentious exile. These episodes may explain why Pope Innocent III did not renew M.’s legation in 1198 and suspended him as archbishop in 1201, sending John of Salerno as legate in 1202–4. Though old age prevented him going in person to receive the pope’s absolution, M. resumed as archbishop by 1205. He retired and died at Holycross. Giraldus called him ‘a learned and discreet man’. The Cistercian Annals of St. Mary’s, Dublin praised him as ‘the wisest and most religious man of the natives of that country [Ireland], having founded many churches, having triumphed over the Old Enemy of mankind by working many miracles, voluntarily abandoning all worldly pomp.’

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: –

b. Liturgical commemoration: –

c. Patronage: –

d. Attributes: –

5. Fontes: Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topography of Ireland*, ed. John O’MEARA, Dublin 1951, 99–100; *Annala rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters 3*, ed. J. O’DONOVAN, Dublin 1851 and New York 1966, 145.

6. Literature: E. O’BYRNE/ M. O’HENEY, in: *Dictionary of Irish Biography 7*, Cambridge 2009, 549–550; A. GWYNN, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, ed. G. O’Brien, Dublin 1992, 143–154; M. T. FLANAGAN, *Hiberno-Papal Relations in the Late Twelfth Century*, in: *AHib 34* (1977), 55–70, at 65–66; C. CONWAY, *The Cistercian Abbeys of Tipperary*, Dublin 1999, 67, 101, 169; J. WARE, *History of the Bishops of Ireland*, ed. W. HARRIS, Dublin 1739, 469–470.

7. Illustrations: –

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