

O'Daly, Daniel Dominic (1595-1662), Dominican priest, diplomat and historian, was born at Kilsarkan, near Castleisland in Co. Kerry into the Kerry branch of the hereditary poetic family, the Ó Dálaigh. He entered the Dominican Order at Lugo in Galicia, Spain and studied at Bordeaux, Burgos and Salamanca in 1622-3. He took the religious name Dominic de Rosario. As early as 1625 the nobility of Kerry wanted him as bishop of Ardfert. After a stay in Ireland he went to the Low Countries where the Irish Dominicans had been present from about 1613. By the early 1620s, a Dominican house had been established in Louvain of which O'Daly was the superior in 1626. Worsening relations between Spain and England interrupted the flow of funds from Ireland, endangering the college's financial security. In 1627 O'Daly was given permission to travel to Madrid to organise support for the college and transact business for the province. By 1628 he had left Louvain definitively to take up residence in Madrid.

Once in Spain, O'Daly became involved in efforts to found an Irish Dominican convent in Lisbon. The aim was to provide priests for the Irish church, which, in the relative peace of the 1610s, was undergoing significant administrative and organisational reform. These reforms were inspired by the Council of Trent but, given the impoverished, war-weary condition of the Irish catholic population following the Nine Years War, outside assistance was necessary to kick-start and sustain the reform process. Because of Spanish commitment to Catholicism, Spain and Spanish-ruled Portugal acted like magnets for Irish Catholic exiles in the early 17th century. From as early as 1615 a Dominican college in Lisbon had been mooted. The exiled second earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill had supported the venture and a Portuguese nobleman, Garcias de Norohna had actually donated a site. Pius V's 1615 brief, *In apostolicae dignitatis culmine*, addressed to the papal collector of Portugal,

approved the foundation. However, the proposal lacked the approval of both the Spanish crown and the local Portuguese authorities. By 1623 Philip IV's support had been enlisted but the Portuguese proved more difficult to convince. They had prohibited new religious foundations and questing on the grounds that Lisbon could ill afford to support another religious establishment. Further, they resented the Spanish-backed Irish. They feared that they might prevail on Madrid to use the navy against the Dutch and thus drag Portuguese naval forces into the conflict. O'Daly stepped into this difficult situation on arrival in Lisbon in 1629. Armed with letters of commendation from Philip IV, he mounted a successful charm campaign and won the support of a number of Portuguese religious orders and some high-ranking families. Realising that the question of an Irish Dominican college in Lisbon had become a test case in diplomatic relations between Lisbon, Madrid and Rome, O'Daly cleverly manoeuvred initially for a mere hospice to house Dominican students prior to their embarking for Ireland. Permission for this was eventually granted late in 1629. This gave O'Daly the toehold he desired. He secured the patronage of Luis de Castro do Rio, lord of Barbacena, Grand Alcaide of Covilhã and his wife Catarina Telles de Meneses, who granted the Dominican community more commodious accommodation. This gradually metamorphosed into a convent of which O'Daly was appointed first rector by the Dominican Master General Nicholas Ridolfi in 1634. In its early years the college was involved in serious legal wrangles with the heirs of Andreza de Vargas de Saraina, a benefactor. O'Daly next applied his diplomatic talents to the establishment of a convent of Irish Dominican nuns in Lisbon, partly to provide for exiled Irish noblewomen. In order to secure royal support, O'Daly had undertaken to recruit soldiers for the Spanish army, a venture that brought him to Ireland on at least two visits in 1636-7. In pursuit of the same end he travelled to England where he

briefly lodged in prison, an exploit which greatly enhanced his reputation in Lisbon. He appears to have been in contact with Queen Henrietta Maria, probably on papal business. In March 1639 Philip IV finally assented to a foundation and in November a community took possession of its cloister in the suburbs of Lisbon, under the title *Bom Sucesso*. The royal instrument, authorising the convent designates O'Daly as 'Domingos do Rosario' qualificator or censor of the press for the local inquisition and commissary-general of the mission in Ireland.

O'Daly had a commitment to the Irish foundations he had worked so hard to establish in Lisbon. He was particularly anxious that political changes in Lisbon would not compromise the important role they were playing in providing clergy and pastoral resources for the Church in Ireland. This explains, why, when the *coup d'état* occurred in 1640 and the house of Braganza, in the person of João IV, was restored, O'Daly calmly switched allegiance from Madrid and transferred his college to the Portuguese province of the Dominicans. He became an advisor to the new queen regent, Luisa de Gusmão. She generously endowed the Dominican foundations in Lisbon. In 1644 the Dominican general chapter in Rome recognised his achievement by bestowing on him the prestigious title of *magister sacrae theologiae*. Shortly afterwards he was nominated confessor to Queen Luisa. The combination of her patronage and his own natural flair propelled O'Daly into a diplomatic career in the service of Braganza at the Stuart, Bourbon and Papal courts. O'Daly had already considerable foreign experience. Thanks to his sojourn in the Low Countries in the 1620s, he had valuable contacts there. His negotiations at the Madrid court in 1633 to extend the royal grant or *viaticum* to the Irish Dominicans returning home had further raised his profile. So too had his successful efforts to found the two Dominican convents in Lisbon. Indeed, through these activities O'Daly posed not only as the

representative of Irish Dominican interests but also as a spokesman for Irish interests generally. Given these qualifications and the Portuguese's monarchy's need of experienced envoys to help it gain diplomatic recognition abroad, O'Daly was nominated envoy to Charles I about 1642. The beleaguered Stuart requested that he go to Ireland with a view to uniting the various royalist factions into an effective opposition to the parliamentarians. O'Daly made this proposed Irish mission conditional on royal concessions regarding civil and religious liberties for Irish Catholics. As these were not forthcoming, O'Daly withdrew from the negotiations, thereby missing the opportunity to become involved in the constitutional experiment of the Confederation of Kilkenny in the 1640s. Although O'Daly was a convinced royalist and consistent supporter of the Stuarts, there is evidence that he was capable of bolder political opinions. His remarks supporting a free and independent kingdom of Ireland, probably under some loose form of Stuart authority, provoked appalled comment from the Duke of Ormonde in 1650.

Throughout the 1640s and 1650s, O'Daly's view of Irish politics was informed by his diplomatic activity on behalf of Portugal, a small country struggling to find a sustainable place on the European political stage. Portuguese diplomats like O'Daly recognised that freedom from Spanish domination depended on the French and the English. Portuguese negotiations with these powers troubled the Papal court, then under Spanish influence. Indeed, at this time King João IV had difficulty in obtaining papal confirmation of episcopal nominations in Portuguese territories. In 1650 O'Daly was in Rome to attend the general chapter of the Dominican order and to act as a diplomatic agent for Charles II. He took the opportunity to represent King João's position to the Pope. The problem of episcopal nomination was settled only in 1656, by which time O'Daly was Portuguese ambassador to France. Rumours that

Portugal was contemplating an alliance with France, Sweden and England concerned the Pope. The French, for their part, mistrusted O'Daly as they suspected that João IV was really in league with Spain. France refused to negotiate a new treaty with Lisbon, forcing King João to conclude a treaty with Cromwell, negotiated in 1654. This poisoned relations with Madrid and the situation was defused only by the death of the Portuguese King in late 1656. As councillor of the regent, Queen Luisa, O'Daly maintained the traditional Portuguese diplomatic policy of courting England and France in order to thwart Madrid even at the risk of alienating Rome. O'Daly continued to promote the quadruple alliance with France, Sweden and England, on behalf of the new king, Alfonso VI. Negotiations with the Commonwealth were successfully pursued and O'Daly was clear sighted enough to realise that England's continued support was necessary if Portugal was to avoid Spanish and French domination. Portuguese diplomats managed to keep this scheme afloat without alienating Charles II. Following Charles's restoration in 1660, an Anglo-Portuguese treaty was signed. It included a royal marriage between Charles II and Catherine, second daughter of King João. Thus Portugal edged its way back onto the European political stage, without alienating France, falling under Spanish influence or completely disaffecting Rome. It was an achievement due in no small part to O'Daly's diplomatic talents. His diplomatic endeavours in Rome and France in the 1650s did not distract him entirely from scholarly pursuits. In 1655 he had published at Lisbon his *Initium, incrementum et exitus familiae Geraldinorum Desmoniae...*, an account of the earls of Desmond and the religious persecutions following their demise. It contains significant hagiographical material and commentary on the Confederate Wars in Ireland.

In 1662 he accepted nomination as bishop of Coimbra, dying in Lisbon on 30 June 1662 as bishop-elect and president of the state council of Portugal. He was buried in the Dominican college where his monument is preserved.

O'Daly's activity sought to draw Irish political and religious life into the main stream of European catholic concerns. He envisaged a catholic restoration for Ireland and its integration as a catholic régime into the European family of catholic nations. In Madrid, Habsburg enmity with England and Spain's commitment to the Catholic reform made it easier for him to pursue his mission. His negotiations with the crown to secure the viaticum for returning Irish priests was part of this overall scheme and ensured a sympathy among Spanish-educated Irish priests for Spanish diplomatic aims. This goes some way to explain the Dublin government's nervousness concerning Irish connections with Spain. When he transferred his allegiance to the house of Braganza, O'Daly's room for manoeuvre on behalf of his native country was more limited. He compensated by rendering admirable service to his new patrons.

Sources mentioned by Micheline Walsh, *Spanish Knights of Irish Origin* (3 vols, Dublin 1960-) I.

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