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**University College Cork, Ireland**  
 Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Fr Séamas Ó Muraídeagh OP (c.1703–1767):  
an Irish scribe and poet at Louvain

By

Pádraig Ó Macháin

A feature of Irish emigration, from earliest times to the nineteenth century, is that in many cases their books accompanied the emigrants into exile. From either end of the time-spectrum one may cite the example of the seventh-century Antiphonary of Bangor in the Ambrosian Library in Milan,<sup>1</sup> and that of National Library of Ireland manuscript G 1417, the latter written by Patrick Ryan in Co. Tipperary, 1817–26, and brought to Québec City by him when he emigrated in 1827.<sup>2</sup>

In the seventeenth century, the Irish exiles in Europe brought with them manuscripts both ancient and contemporary. Some also set about writing manuscripts in their new home. Most books written in such circumstances were the work of clergy, and those that were not, such as *Duanaire Finn* or the Book of the O’Conor Don, were produced in a decidedly clerical milieu. In this way, such manuscripts written in the Irish language in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries become one of the tokens of the movement of clergy between Ireland and Europe during that period. The Franciscan collection of manuscripts – now in University College Dublin – to which *Duanaire Finn* belongs, exemplifies this mixture of old and new books, as it does the phenomenon of the repatriation of manuscripts, which in the case of this collection occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The case of the Book of the O’Conor Don, on the other hand, shows that individual manuscripts, written on the Continent, could and did make the journey to Ireland independently, and sometimes by ways that are not yet completely understood.<sup>4</sup>

As is well known, Louvain was the focus of significant literary activity in Irish in the first half of the seventeenth century. New poetry was composed,<sup>5</sup> and the great Louvain hagiographical and historical project generated much of what survives of the ‘continental’ element in Irish manuscript production of the time. Though predominantly associated with the Franciscan community and their supporters, Irish literary activity in Louvain was not exclusive to them. For instance, the turbulent Dominican priest and renowned Irish poet, Fr Pádraigín Haicéad, spent much of his time there, where he died in 1654.<sup>6</sup> He must have composed many of his poems in Louvain. In one poem, which the manuscript tradition ascribes to that location in 1630, he records his alienation and loss of status there in contrast to what he had enjoyed in Ireland, and in terms reminiscent of Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird:<sup>7</sup>

Ag ríoghraidh cé bhínnse, do bhárr ar chéad,  
fá dhíol ceana i gcríchoirear Tháil is Té,

<sup>1</sup> Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS C. 5 inf.

<sup>2</sup> Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘A Tipperary emigrant’s manuscript’, *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2012) forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Myles Dillon, Canice Mooney and Pádraig de Brún, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Franciscan library Killiney* (Dublin 1969) xvii–xviii.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of these two manuscripts and the milieu in which they were written see contributions in Pádraig Ó Macháin (ed.), *The book of the O’Conor Don: essays on an Irish manuscript* (Dublin 2010).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘The flight of the poets: Eóghan Ruadh and Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird in exile’, *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 21–22 (2007–2008) 39–58.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh Fenning, ‘Irish Dominicans at Louvain before 1700: a biographical register’, *Collectanea Hibernica* 43 (2001) 112–60; 141–2. Máire Ní Cheallacháin, *Filíocht Phádraigín Haicéad* (Dublin 1962).

<sup>7</sup> Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘The iconography of exile: Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird in Louvain’, in Pádraig A. Breatnach et al. (ed.), *Léann lámhscríbhinní Lobháin: the Louvain manuscript heritage* (Dublin 2007) 76–111.

ní saoiltear sa tír seo acht mar ghárlach mé,  
gan aoinfhios i gcríonnacht tar ‘as er se’.

Though I used to be best loved, one in a hundred, by the royalty of Ireland, in this country I am only considered a child, with no knowledge of wisdom beyond the present.<sup>8</sup>

Outside of the Franciscan project, and long after it had ended, Irish tradition bears witness to literary activity pursued at Louvain and elsewhere on the Continent both by Franciscans and by members of other orders. Single manuscripts attest to individual clergy pursuing their interest in Irish letters as time allowed. A case in point is the anthology of bardic poetry – Royal Irish Academy MS 2 (23 F 16) – written by Fr Nicolás (Fearghal Dubh) Ó Gadhra OSA at Lille and Brussels during the years 1655–9, he having been exiled during the Cromwellian wars. This book later returned to Ireland with Fr Ó Gadhra and was in Co. Sligo with him in 1686. On the other hand, a manuscript that did not return was the compendium of poetry, history (Keating’s ‘Forus Feasa’), and grammar that was written in Prague in 1659 by Fr Antaine Ó Conchubhair OFM, and which remains today in a continental library.<sup>9</sup>

The phenomenon of the exiled cleric’s manuscript continued to the end of the eighteenth century. One such manuscript, begun on the Continent and continued in Ireland, is UCD-OFM MS A 39, a book that was added to the Franciscan collection in the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> It was written by Fr Brian Ó Cathalán while a student-priest at Antwerp, 1773–5, and was continued by him when Parish Priest of Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan, in later years. The manuscript contains additions by Pádraig Ó Cathalán, a student at the University of Louvain<sup>11</sup> and presumably a relative of Brian’s. One of Pádraig’s notes is a testament to the time-honoured phenomenon of the Irish scribe as eye-witness:

Air na scríbhugh le Pattrig Ó Cathalán tareis a theacht air eis dhó on gcach uafasach siud do tugugh air a taobh a muith de Lomhán agus an ar goinnadh móran mór de na Francaigh an feacsiunt fein an dara lá de mhí na Márta míle seacht gcéud 3 bliadhna agus nóchad 7c<sup>12</sup>

*Written by Pádraig Ó Cathalán having returned from that dreadful battle that was fought outside Louvain and where he witnessed very many French being killed, 2nd of March 1793 etc.*

The purpose of the present paper is to bring to greater public attention two manuscripts that survive from earlier in the eighteenth century. They exemplify respectively the exiled book and the book written in exile. What links the two is an association with Louvain and with a Dominican priest of the Derry diocese, Fr Séamas Ó Muraidheagh, alias Jacobus or Jacques Murry (c.1703–1767).

### **British Library, MS Additional 40766**

A number of manuscripts survive from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century that are associated with the Cavan-Fermanagh region and with the inter-related families of Mág Uidhir and Ó Raghallaigh. Among these manuscripts are: TCD MSS 1297 (H.2.6), 1381 (H.5.9), 1383 (H.5.11),

<sup>8</sup> Tadhg Ó Donnchadha, *Saothar filidheachta an Athar Pádraigín Haicéad d’Órd San Doimínic* (Dublin 1916) Poem VI (= Ní Cheallacháin, *Filíocht Phádraigín Haicéad*, Poem VII); where (pp. 120–21) Flemish *as er se* is explained as being the equivalent of German *als es sei* ‘as it is’.

<sup>9</sup> Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Göttingen, Cod. Histor. 773.

<sup>10</sup> Described in Dillon et al., *Catalogue*, 77–88.

<sup>11</sup> Patricius O’Callan, student (Diocese of Clogher) at University of Louvain, December 1791 to August 1793: Jeroen Nilis, *Irish students at Leuven University 1548–1797: a prosopography* (Leuven 2010) 280.

<sup>12</sup> OFM-UCD MS A 39, p. 381.

Cambridge MS 15 (Add. 5205), British Library MS Additional 40766, and Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen MS 1678.<sup>13</sup> The two last-mentioned manuscripts are examples of books carried to the Continent; only one of them returned, however: Additional 40766.

The main scribe of this book does not identify himself, and his subject-matter comprises a good selection of courtly love-poems (*dánta grádha*), together with verse dedicated to members of the families of Ó Raghallaigh and Mág Uidhir. The manuscript appears to have been compiled for Máire Ní Raghallaigh, wife of Rudhraighe Óg Mág Uidhir and previously the wife of Aodh Mág Uidhir. Robin Flower suggests that the manuscript may have been brought to the Continent after 1691: Rudhraighe Óg died at St Germain in 1708.<sup>14</sup>

A commonplace feature of Irish manuscripts of all eras is the filling of blank spaces with material inscribed by later owners and readers, material important to an understanding of the history of any given manuscript. Additional 40766 is no exception.<sup>15</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth century, and at the beginning of the nineteenth, members of the Ó Caiside family of Crossakiel, Co. Meath – Proinsias Ó Caiside in particular – added a number of items to the manuscript.<sup>16</sup> Previous to this it may have been in the Dominican house of Gola, Co. Fermanagh, as a genealogy of one of the priors, Seaán Mág Uidhir (*fl.* 1756), was added to a blank page. This Dominican connection brings us to the earliest recorded secondary owner of the manuscript, Fr Séamas Ó Muraidheagh.

Fr Ó Muraidheagh makes three additions to Additional 40766 as follows.

(a) He signs his name at the bottom of f. 3r: ‘Seamas ua Muraidheagh brathair dord s<sup>l</sup>. Domnic as Doire’.

(b) At the end of the book, on f. 120v, the following *dánfhocal* – perhaps his own composition – occurs in his hand:

A uadh na mogall don chrobhaing dob aoirde craobh  
ad shuainead socair gach tobar ór shín do ghaol  
na smuain ar fhocal do mholladar síotadh saobh  
an uair is suas don obair gur sorairreadh síos an sáor.

This verse may be translated as:

Descendant of the heroes of highest pedigree, confluence of all the springs from which  
your kin are descended, pay no heed to the praise of false sages:<sup>17</sup> as soon as the  
building is completed the mason is [treated as] a lowly fool.

<sup>13</sup> J. Vendryes, ‘Description du manuscrit irlandais de Rouen No. 1678’, *Revue Celtique* 45 (1928) 298–311.

<sup>14</sup> Standish Hayes O’Grady and Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum I–III* (London 1926, 1953) II, 161–73.

<sup>15</sup> For the history of the manuscript in the nineteenth century in particular, see Séamus P. Ó Mórdha, ‘Leabhar Bhantiarna Inis Ceithleann’, *Studia Hibernica* 2 (1962) 218–20.

<sup>16</sup> See Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teacher 1818–1827* (Dublin 2009) 171–2.

<sup>17</sup> The translation assumes MS ‘síotadh’ represents *saoithe*; compare ‘clíodhamh’ (*claidheamh*) and ‘clíon’ (*claoín*) in verse 3 of the poem below.

(c) The third and longest intrusion occurs on ff. 91v–92r. It consists of an autograph poem by Fr Ó Muraidheagh.

Is cradh liom an tasg sin do thriall thar shrúill  
tug mna fionna garrtha go diocrach dubhach  
an tard churradh cnamhgheall don fhiallfhuil úir  
mac arachta Mari agas Bhriain sa núir

A núir mo léun Séamas mhuc [*sic*] Briain ar lár  
an úr ghas reidh sheadir gan fiaradh fáis  
do cru na laoch leadbheach do sialach náidh  
sa guingrach ce dhearfach nach iad do bearr

Is siad do bearr tabhachta a ghleodh na ccliódhiom  
is siad dob bearr cail is badh croga gníomh  
is siad a ttrath gabhadh nár dhóich bheith clíon  
is siad do chráich tainnte is do lionn an tír

Nir lionn mo lionna ce taoim fáca  
gur líonadh tar taoirinn na chathanaig  
is Domhnall do lionaibh sa tír ghallda  
níl gno again da ghoraimh tá an bhuidhonn [. . .]<sup>18</sup>

Buidhíonn arachta a mbearnainn da maireach ná fír  
buidhíonn ladir nách fágbhach an beallach ríomh [*sic*] thruibh  
buidhíonn gharrtha na namhad ar talamh, no ar muir  
is críodhe [*sic*] craite ar an mbás le nár trasgaraibh sib

Ar na chuma, agas ar na sgriobadh le / Séamas ua muraidheagh .b. b. d. s<sup>t</sup>. d.<sup>19</sup> / 1732 a  
lobhán

This text may be translated as follows:

I am tormented by that news that has come over the sea, which has caused fair beautiful women to be deeply depressed: the great bright hero of the noble generous stock, the mighty son of Máire and Brian, is in the earth.

In the earth, alas, Séamas son of Brian is no more, the fine young cedar sapling that grew upright, of the stock of the smiting heroes of the seed of Nár,<sup>20</sup> in harness who would say that they were not the best?

<sup>18</sup> Word obscured by staining; the following line would suggest *árachta*, but the fragments of the lettering visible below and above the stain do not appear to support this. Note that this verse, with disyllabic line-endings, breaks the metrical pattern of the poem, and that the first syllable of ‘Cathánaigh’ fails to assonate. This occurs at the bottom of f. 91v and may have been intended as the concluding verse, before Fr Ó Muraidheagh added a further verse on the next page.

<sup>19</sup> Bráthair Bocht d’ord Sanct Dominic.

<sup>20</sup> MS ‘náidh’. The Í Chatháin were one of the families said to be of the Í Náir (Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach* I–V (Dublin 2003) II, 236; cf. M.A. O’Brien, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1962) 41).

They were best in eminence in the battle of swords, they were the best in fame, and the bravest in action, it is they who would not be found wanting in time of danger, it is they who disturbed herds and wounded the land.

My wounding was no wounding, though I am exhausted, until the Cathánaigh were wounded beyond endurance, and Domhnall was wounded in the foreign country: it serves no purpose for us to enumerate them, the group are [. . .].

A mighty group in a [battle-]gap if [only] the men were alive, a strong crowd who would not yield the road to [any] gang, a crowd who would warm the enemy on land or sea: and a curse on death by whom you were laid low.

Composed and written by Séamas Ua Muraidheagh, a poor brother of the Order of St Dominic, 1732 in Louvain

### Séamas Ó Muraidheagh

The colophon to his autograph poem in Additional 40766, on the death of Séamas (mac Briain) Ó Catháin, supplies enough information to identify Séamas Ó Muraidheagh. He was a Dominican priest in Louvain in 1732, and in his signature inscribed on f. 3v he tells us that he was from Derry. Robin Flower<sup>21</sup> was able to equate him with the Fr Jacobus Murray ‘Conventus Deriensis Filius’ listed in *Hibernia Dominicana* as resident at the Dominican convent in Dublin in 1756. His age in this list is given as 52, and he is professed for 26 years. He is said to preach excellently in the Irish language in the chapel at 7 a.m. every Sunday.<sup>22</sup>

Séamus Ó Muireadhaigh must have been about 28 or 29 years old when he made his additions to Máire Ní Raghallaigh's manuscript in 1732. One supposes that it was in the Dominican College of the Holy Cross (formerly the College of St John the Baptist) at Louvain that he was situated at the time. The research of Fr Hugh Fenning throws further light on general aspects of his biography. An effort was made to transfer him from Louvain to Limerick in 1735, but nothing came of this.<sup>23</sup> He eventually returned to Ireland in 1738, but was imprisoned in 1745 and expelled the following year.<sup>24</sup> We know from *Hibernica Dominicana* that Fr Ó Muraidheagh was back in Ireland by 1756.

We turn next to the ‘History of the Irish College, Paris’ by Fr Liam Swords, with its valuable calendar of the papers of that college.<sup>25</sup> On 7 September 1761 Bartholomew Murry, ‘doctor-regent of the faculty of medicine of Paris’ made a remarkable series of donations to the ‘communauté des clercs Irlandois’ at the Collège des Lombards.<sup>26</sup> It was remarkable both for the amount of money involved and for the detailed instructions regarding the disbursement, covering twenty-eight pages. Among the donations was one of 100L per annum for prizes, divided into 60 for the best preacher of two Irish sermons, and 40 for the same in English. Another donation was to be made in two burses of 500L ‘for

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<sup>21</sup> *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts* II, 161.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas de Burgo, *Hibernia Dominicana sive historia provinciae Hiberniae Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Coloniae 1762) 197; he is also listed as belonging to the Derry convent (ibid., 283). De Burgo would have known Fr Murry well, both being resident at the time at the Dublin convent in Bridge Street.

<sup>23</sup> Hugh Fenning, *The Irish Dominican Province, 1698-1797* (Dublin 1990) 201.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 605, 187.

<sup>25</sup> ‘History of the Irish College, Paris, 1578–1800: calendar of the papers of the Irish College, Paris’, *Archivium Hibernicum* 35 (1980) 3–233.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 103–104 (§404).

those of the name Murry (not Murray), or O Cahane (mother's name), or Lafferty, or O Doherty, (all from dioc. of Armagh)'. Another three burses of 500L each were set aside:

for closest relatives of founder [i.e. donor] with preference for paternal relatives of Co. Clare, of the name Murry – other paternal or maternal relatives – descendants of all families who came from Ulster to Clare in Cromwell's time or since – those from parish of Kilmurry, birthplace of founder – those of parish of Kilferboy – poorest students of Co. Clare, with preference for new converts. *Nomination* by abp of Paris. Presentation by prefect advised by Jacques Murry, OP, brother, presently on mission in Ireland. *Droit d'indication* by oldest male descendant of Denis Murry, cousin.

Bartholomew Murry was renowned in Paris in the mid-seventeenth century as a medical authority.<sup>27</sup> This document, and modifications made to it by Bartholomew in two subsequent letters of December 1761 and November 1766,<sup>28</sup> provide a great amount of information about Bartholomew, about members of his immediate family in Paris at the time, and about his relation to various families such as the McSweeneys of Tirawley, one of whom, a relative of his, was married to Cúchoigríche Ó Cléirigh; or the Davitts, one of whom – a cousin – was married to 'M. Donlevy, doctor'. For present purposes, however, our attention focuses on his brother Jacques Murry OP, who was on mission in Ireland in 1761 at the time the donations were made. He returned to Paris subsequently, and a plaque, formerly in the chapel of the Collège des Lombards (chapel of Saint Ephram le Syrien today), recorded the death of Fr Murry on 14 April 1767:

Hic Jacet  
R.P. Jacobus Murry  
Ord. Praedic. M.  
Bartholomaei Murry  
Frater Dilectissimus  
obiit die 14. Aprilis  
anno. 1767. Aetatis 64  
Requiescat In Pace<sup>29</sup>

The age of Jacobus provided here gives a date of birth that coincides almost perfectly with that calculable from the age of Fr Jacobus Murray given in *Hibernia Dominicana*. This confirms that both priests are one and the same, and are therefore to be identified with Fr Séamas Ó Muraidheagh who inserted the autograph poem, given above, into Additional 40766 at Louvain in 1732. It is of interest to note that his brother Bartholomew predeceased him (8 January 1767) by only three months at the relatively advanced age of 72.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See Richard Hayes, 'Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France', *Studies* 34 (1945) 106–118: 108. Bartholomew was the moderator of a series of medical *quaestiones* defended by students and published as pamphlets in Paris up to the year 1764; he himself had defended a *quaestio* in February 1736: *Quaestio medico-chirurgica . . . Tuebitur Bartholomaeus Murry, Laonensis Hybernus, Baccalaureus . . . Lutetiae Parisiorum 16 Februarii 1736*. (My thanks to my colleague Dr Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha for her help with this aspect of the history of medicine.)

<sup>28</sup> *Archivium Hibernicum* 35 (1980) 114–15 (§433), 126–7 (§471).

<sup>29</sup> Recorded in Ferdinand Guilhermy and Robert de Lasteyrie, *Inscriptions de la France du Ve siècle au XVIIIe V* (Paris 1873) 181. This plaque, if it survives, cannot be located at present.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 195. The plaque to Bartholomew was removed from the chapel of the Collège des Lombards to the portico of the chapel of the Collège des Irlandais, where it may still be seen. I am indebted to Una O'Dwyer, Paris, for her help in this matter

The revelation in the donation of 1761 that Bartholomew's mother, and therefore Fr Séamas's, was of the Í Chatháin probably adds significance to the lament for Séamus and Domhnall Ó Catháin composed by Fr Séamas. Further research may reveal that these were his cousins. The knowledge that Bartholomew was a native of the parish of Kilmurry (barony of Ibracken, diocese of Killaloe), Co. Clare, with the hint that his family had been displaced there in Cromwellian times, adds an element of enigma to the fact that his brother belonged to the community of Dominicans at Derry.

### **St Patrick's College, Maynooth, O'Curry MS 21 (C 21)**

One complete manuscript may now be attributed to the work of Fr Séamas Ó Muraidheagh. As it was written in 1729, it probably also belongs to his time in Louvain – although no location is given – and must therefore be among the last such works of this nature to emanate from there. Most of this manuscript, Maynooth C 21,<sup>31</sup> contains grammatical and lexical material deriving from the Franciscan project of a century earlier; the remainder is filled out with poetry from Co. Clare.

The paper bears the common Dutch watermark of the 'Arms of Amsterdam'. The contents of the 188 pages are made up as follows: a description of the Irish language (pp. 1–32) and Irish prosody (pp. 33–54); and Míchéal Ó Cléirigh's 'Sanasán' or etymology (pp. 55–166). The last twenty pages contain poems by Aindrias Mac Cruitín, the Clare poet: a poetic contention between Mac Cruitín and Brian Ó Conchubhair (pp. 167–75); and a *crosántacht* and poem by Aindrias in honour of Somhairle Mac Domhnaill of Ennistymon (pp. 176–87). Two further short satiric poems were also used to fill up p. 5 of the manuscript.<sup>32</sup>

Séamas Ó Muireadhaigh signs his work four times in the manuscript, as follows:

- (a) 'Ar ná sgríobhadh lé Séamus Ó Muraidheagh' (p. 4).
- (b) 'ar na sgríobhadh lé Seamus Ua Muraidheagh 1729' (p. 7).
- (c) 'Finis hujus libri, Anno Domini 1729. Scriptum per me Jacobum Murry' (p. 166).
- (d) 'Ar ná s[g]ríobhadh lé Séamas Ua Muraidheagh an dara lá do mhí August aois Chríost míle, agas seacht ccéad, agas naoi mbliadhna fíthcid, do Shéamus *U Dala* [MS ull], Finis 1729' (p. 175).

The fourth colophon is the most significant, as it indicates that the manuscript was not written by Ó Muraidheagh for his own use. Séamus Ó Dála is surely to be identified with James Augustine O'Daly OFM, Canon and Treasurer of the cathedral of Tournai, and Bishop of Kilfenora.<sup>33</sup> If that is the case, then the date of August 1729 may be of significance, as it coincided with the only known occasion that Bishop O'Daly visited his diocese, May to November of that year.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the manuscript was written for presentation to the bishop on his return.

<sup>31</sup> Described in Padraig Ó Fiannachta, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Choláiste Phádraig Má Nuad: Clár V* (Maigh Nuad 1968) 45–7.

<sup>32</sup> Beginning *Mairg aga mbí meanmhain mhear* (omitted from catalogue), and *Neamhthinn an galar é an grád*.

<sup>33</sup> Died 20 August 1749, aged 83, and buried in Notre Dame cathedral, Tournai; inscription reproduced in *Mémoires de la Société historique et littéraire de Tournai* 16 (1877) 100, and in Martin Coen, 'The post-reformation Catholic Bishops of Kilfenora', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 12 (1969) 53–62: 62.

<sup>34</sup> Coen, 'Post-reformation Catholic Bishops of Kilfenora', 57.



The association of the manuscript with O'Daly, together with the inclusion of the poems by Aindrias Mac Cruitín, points up the Clare connections of the scribe. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, in his catalogue of this manuscript, has observed a similarity between Ó Muireadhagh's handwriting and that of Mac Cruitín. This is particularly true in the case of the y-shaped minuscule letter *s* employed by both scribes.<sup>35</sup> Mac Cruitín (c. 1650–1738) was from Moyglass, in the Murrays' native parish of Kilmurry, Co. Clare.<sup>35</sup> It is therefore quite possible that Fr Ó Muraidheagh acquired his proficiency in written Irish from Mac Cruitín himself. We may also note a further circumstantial association, in that only a year earlier, 1728, Mac Cruitín's kinsman, Aodh Buidhe (Hugh Mac Curtin), published at Louvain his *The elements of the Irish language grammatically explained in English*.<sup>36</sup> It is difficult to imagine that Fr Ó Muraidheagh and Aodh Buidhe would not have met each other in Louvain.

## Conclusion

Both manuscripts eventually returned to Ireland. Robin Flower made the reasonable suggestion that British Library MS Additional 40766 may have reached the Dominican convent of Gola, Co. Fermanagh, c. 1756, through the agency of Fr Ó Muraidheagh himself. With regard to Maynooth MS C 21, we know that this manuscript made its way back to Fr Séamas's native west-Clare, as it was from Mícheál Ó Raghallaigh of Ennistymon, the well-known Irish scholar, that it was later acquired by Eugene O'Curry in 1839.<sup>37</sup>

Both books attest to the continuity of the scholarly tradition in Irish among members of the Irish clergy on the Continent in the eighteenth century. They also demonstrate the phenomenon of the exiled book and the book written in exile, and the repatriation of such artefacts. More than anything else, however, they serve to highlight the activities of an Irish priest and man of letters, Fr Séamas Ó Muraidheagh OP, a noted preacher of sermons in Irish, and an accomplished poet and scribe. In so doing, they add one more detail to our knowledge of the Irish exiles on the Continent in the eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Thomas F. O'Rahilly, 'Notes on the poets of Clare', *An Claidheamh Soluis* 18 July 1917, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Vincent Morley, *An crann os coill: Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, c.1680–1755* (Dublin 1995) 95–100, where the possibility of an encounter between Aodh Buidhe and Bishop O'Daly at Louvain is mentioned (p. 95). Mac Cruitín's book was the last publication to use the Louvain type: Dermot McGuinne, *Irish type design: a history of printing types in the Irish character* (Dublin 1992) 36.

<sup>37</sup> Note by O'Curry in the upper margin of C 21, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> I am indebted to Dr Pádraig de Brún for commenting on a draft of this paper.