



The Lives of Daniel Binchy: Irish Scholar, Diplomat, Public Intellectual

Tom Garvin

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Tom Garvin's majestic and fascinating biography explores the life of the indelible Irish intellectual and diplomat, Daniel Binchy, whose personal and public lives spotlight post-independence Ireland at its inception. Binchy had many lives: he was the ambassador to Germany from 1929 to 1932, promoting a modernizing and independent Irish Free State while experiencing the disconcerting rise of Nazism first-hand. His meeting with Adolf Hitler and the landmark 'Studies' article (handsomely restored in the Appendix) ensured that his life would be at risk if he were return to Germany in later years. However, by this time he had reverted to the pursuit of medieval history, becoming perhaps the greatest Celtic Studies scholar of his day, going on to hold senior positions in University College Dublin, Ireland, Corpus Christi College Oxford, Harvard, and the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, amongst others. In this role he was a natural successor to the cultural nationalism that defined the turn of the century, and he surrounded himself by the great intellectuals of the time: Eoin MacNeill, Douglas Hyde, Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain. As such, Binchy was central to the intellectual life of an extraordinary era, supported by a nascent and obliging Free State in bringing a new-found maturity to creative thought and expression following the traumatically internecine decade of the 1920s. [Subject: Irish History, Biography, Politics]

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