

FITZGERALD, DAVID (died 1176), bishop of S. Davids, 1148-76

Name: David Fitzgerald
Date of death: 1176
Parent: Nest ferch Rhys ap Tewdwr
Parent: Gerald de Windsor
Gender: Male
Occupation: bishop of S. Davids
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Thomas Jones

Son of Gerald de Windsor and **Nest**, daughter of **Rhys ap Tewdwr**, and uncle to **Giraldus Cambrensis**. He is first heard of as archdeacon of Cardigan and a canon of S. Davids. After the death of **bishop Bernard** a conflict arose between the Welsh canons, on the one hand, and the English and French canons, on the other: the former in favour of appointing a Welshman as bishop, and the latter opposed to such an appointment. A compromise was reached by the election of David, for he was of both Welsh and Norman stock. He was consecrated bishop by archbishop Theobald on 19 December 1148 at Canterbury, and he undertook to acknowledge the authority of Canterbury as a metropolitan see with power over and above S. Davids. On 3 June 1162, along with Nicholas, bishop of Llandaff, he assisted in the consecration of Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury; and on 19 May 1163 he was present at the council which pope Alexander III held at Tours, having taxed the clergy to cover his travelling expenses. Some time between 1148 and 1163 there was a dispute between him and the bishop of Llandaff about diocesan boundaries, and Gilbert, bishop of Hereford, offered his services as mediator between them. On 30 January 1164 he signed the Clarendon Constitutions. In 1167 he prevailed upon the **lord Rhys ap Gruffydd** to release his half-brother **Robert Fitz Stephen** from prison, where he had been for three years. When, about the beginning of October 1171, Henry II came on a pilgrimage to S. Davids, the bishop invited him to stay with him; the king declined his invitation but dined with him. Between October 1171 and April 1172 the king granted the bishop a charter confirming all his possessions according to Henry I's charter to **bishop Bernard**. On 18 May 1175 he attended the council of Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, in London, before Henry II and his son Henry. About the same time a deputation of the canons of S. Davids went to London to lay twenty-seven charges against their bishop before archbishop Thomas, but David FitzGerald met them before they appeared before the archbishop and implored them not to proceed further with the matter, promising to restore to them all that he had taken from them. In the same year he completed the transference of the church of Llanbadarn-fawr, Cardiganshire, to the abbey of S. Peters, Gloucester. On 14 March 1176 some of the canons of S. Davids went to the council of Hugh, cardinal of S. Angelo and legate of England, to plead the claims of S. Davids to be a metropolitan see, claims which the bishop had renounced upon his consecration. On 8 May 1176 he died intestate, of a fever, and was buried at S. Davids. He was succeeded as bishop by **Peter of Lee**.

His nephew **Giraldus Cambrensis** gives us a picture of him which is on the whole favourable, although he does criticize him a little for not defending the ancient rights of S. Davids. His 'Life' (probably written by one of the canons) presents us with a less favourable picture.

Author

Professor Thomas Jones

Sources

Vita Davidis, ii (Giraldus Cambrensis, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* (London 1861-91), iii, App. 2)

Giraldus Cambrensis, De Jure et Statu (*Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* (London 1861-91), iii, 154-5), De Rebus a se Gestis (*Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* (London 1861-91), i, 40-1), Expugnatio Hibernica (*Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* (London 1861-91), v, 229)

J. C. Davies, *Episcopal acts and cognate documents relating to Welsh dioceses 1066-1272* (1946-48), i, 270 ff.

Menevia Sacra. Arch. Camb. (1927), 38-9

Henry Thomas Payne, *Collectanea Menevensia* (N.L.W.)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [David FitzGerald](#)

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