

Shortal, Sebastian (*d.*1639), Cistercian monk and titular abbot of Bective, co. Meath was born in co. Kilkenny. There he received his primary education before travelling to Spain where he became a Cistercian monk at Nucale in Galicia. He taught philosophy in the seminary of St Claudius in Nucale and later in the monastery of Mons Ramorum. In 1619 he set out for Ireland accompanied by the Cistercian chronicler Malachy Harty. En route, Shortal was taken captive by Moors. On his release he proceeded to Ireland where he was appointed abbot of St Mary's in Bective sometime before 1621. The abbey was long deserted so he settled down nearby and engaged in pastoral activity. In 1626 he was among the signatories of an 'Attestation of Cistercians' in favour of the Franciscan Thomas Fleming, archbishop of Dublin, who was experiencing opposition from his clergy. In 1628 he signed a letter to the Abbot of Citeaux and in 1631 he rallied to the defence of certain Dublin regulars in a bitter dispute with a number of secular priests. About this time he became involved in a dispute with the bishop of Meath, Thomas Dease, concerning his title to Bective abbey. Relations between regular and secular clergy were frequently tense at this time due to competition for scarce resources, jurisdictional problems concerning Pre-Reformation privileges and disagreements over disputed titles. In 1633 he participated in the regulation of a serious matter of discipline concerning the titular abbot of Abbeyleix, Gerard Purcell. Just before his death on 11 December 1639 he was one of the readers of Harty's *Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis* which he approved for publication. Shortal was an accomplished composer of Latin verse. He wrote a verse history of the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi called *Historia institutionis Festivitatis v. Sacramenti B. Julianae Corneliensi Ord. Cist. Divinitus revelatae, versu Hexametro*, a verse life of the Irish Cistercian Candidus Furlong (1576-1616) entitled *Vita Candidi Furlongi, monachi Nucalensis, heroico carmine* and a collection of pieces in honour of the same person called *De laudibus Candidi Furlongi. Hymi, variaque ac erudita epitaphia*.

