Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society



www.corkhist.ie

Title: The abbey of Sancta Mauro, or De Fonte Vivo Author: Burke, J. M. *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 1904, Vol. 10, No 64, page(s) 251-253 Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society Digital file created: August 7, 2013

Your use of the JCHAS digital archive indicates that you accept the Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.corkhist.ie/info/tandc.pdf

The Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (IE-148166, incorporated 1989) was founded in 1891, for the collection, preservation and diffusion of all available information regarding the past of the City and County of Cork, and South of Ireland generally. This archive of all content of JCHAS (from 1892 up to ten years preceding current publication) continues the original aims of the founders in 1891. For more information visit www.corkhist.ie.

of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Royal Irish Academy, the Linnean Society, and the Zoological Society of London; as well as in Reports presented to the British Association, Harvard University, and the "Challenger" Exploration Commission; and also in communications to the "Annals of Natural History," the "Quarterly Journal of Microscopic Science," and other scientific journals.

His more elaborate works are a "Monograph of the Freshwater Polyzoo," 1856; and a "Monograph of the Gymnoblastic Hydroids," 1871-2, both published by the Ray Society, and illustrated with coloured plates.

On the occasion of the General Election in 1874, the Committee formed for the return of a Liberal Member for Bandon selected Dr. Allman, offering, at the same time, to relieve him from any special pledges; but he declined the proffered honour. In later life he was a Liberal-Unionist.

Dr. Allman was an M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.S.I., F.R.S., F.R.S.E., M.R.I.A., Corresponding Member of the Zoological Society, London; and Honorary Member of other British and Foreign learned societies. During the latter part of his life he resided at Parkstone, in Dorsetshire, where he died on the 24th of November, 1898, aged 86 years. He left personal estate valued at over £10,000, and of a gross value exceeding £13,000, which he bequeathed chiefly to his sister and nieces, his wife having predeceased him.

J. C.

The Abbey of Sancta Mauro, or De Fonte Vivo.

BY J. M. BURKE, B.A., B.L.

WARE, Archdall, the "Hibernia Dominicana," and the Rev. D. Murphy, in "Triumphalia Monasterii Sanctae Crucis," all agree in stating that this Abbey was founded in 1172 by Dermot MacCarthy, King of Munster, who was afterwards killed at Kilbibawne, by one of the Butlers. Dr. Smith writes: "In Myross parish was anciently the Abbey of Sancta Mauro, or De Fonte Vivo. At a place called Carrigiliky in this parish the foundation of extensive ruins was discovered, together with a large cemetery with large quantities of human bones; it was probably the site of the Abbey of Mauro, which some falsely place at Abbeymahon, near Timoleague. The house of Abbeystrewry was a cell to this." Of Abbeymahon he writes: "Halfway between Timoleague and Courtmacsherry stand the ruins of Abbeymahon, founded by the Bernardine monks, who were a very rich order. The Lord Barry gave them 18 plowlands,

> This content downloaded from www.corkhist.ie All use subject to CHAS Terms and Conditions Digital content (c) CHAS 2013

252 CORK HISTORICAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

which constitute the parish of Abbeymahon; but the estate was only given to them till it was completed, which never happened, for soon after the dissolution of the monasteries took place, and the lands were seized by the Crown." He adds in a note: "Some have wrongly confounded this Abbey with the celebrated Abbey of Sancta Mauro in Myross."

Following Smith, Lewis, Miss Cusack, Father Denis Murphy, and Dr. Dan Donovan, put the site of Sancta Mauro in Myross. I shall here endeavour to show that Dr. Smith, misled probably by the resemblance between Carrigiliky and Carrigilihy (which latter is in Myross), was mistaken in denying that Abbeymahon was identical with the Abbey of Maur. The ruins of Abbeymahon still exist; on Speed's map it is marked as the Abbey of Mahund; the place is still named Abbeymahon; there is still a graveyard there; and a neighbouring townland is called Aghavanister, i.e., Field of the Monastery. Furthermore, the ruins of Abbeyshrowry, or Abbeystrewry, which was a cell to the Abbey of Maur, likewise remain; and the place is used as a graveyard still. But there is no trace of an abbey in Myross, no tradition, no local name, no ruin to suggest that an abbey was ever there.

Turning to documentary evidence, we find a lease of Jany. 15th, 1554, "to Osborne Eckingham, Knight, of the sight (sic) of the Abbey of Mayo, alias de Fonte Vivo, County of Cork; lands Mayo, Lyslyvan, Carrighewryn, Leynagh, Gradge, and the cell called Manyster-in-horry; rectories Mayo and Lyslie, to hold for 21 years," etc.

1576. Lease to Nicholas Walsh, Esq., Chief Justice of Mounster, of the site of the Abbey of Mawer, alias de fonte vivo, co. Cork, the demesne lands, a fishing weir, lands of Lislivan, Curraghwrin, and Grady in Red Barrie's country, the lands of Mawe, a cell called Manister Inisherrie, and the rectories of Mawe and Lislee.

1583. Lease to Nicholas Walsh, of the site of the Abbey of Mawer, alias de fonte vivo, the demesne lands, the lands of Lyslivan, Curraghwrin, Lenagh, Grady, alias Grange, the Garrans, the Curragh, Cregan, Caheromannagh, Mawer, being lands in Red Barrie's country, and a cell of the Abbey called Manisterenshorry, alias Manisterne Srohourry.

1587. There is a similar grant this year mentioned, in which is the rectory of Mawr, alias Mawe, alias Mawne.

From these grants we learn that the Abbey was called of Maur, of Mawne, i.e., Mahon, and de fonte vivo; that it was situated in Red Barrie's country, i.e., Barryroe; that its rectories were Mayo (Abbeymahon) and Lislee; that it had a cell at Abbeystrewry; that its lands were Lislevane, Curryhevron, Lehenagh, Grange, Ardgehane, etc., all of which are in the parishes of Abbeymahon and Lislee. All these items show that Abbeymahon was identical with the Abbey de Sancta Mauro.

This is confirmed by Dr. Brady's "Records of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross," as follows:---"Abbeymahon; 1634; Rectoria de Abbeymahon, Abbatia de Macrone; Nicholas Walsh, miles, impropriator valet, CVL. li. per annum; he hath eighteen plowlands." (Macrone seems a variant of Maurone, an ablative of Mauro.)

1694. "Abbeystrewrey is an appendix of Abbey-mane." The only inference from these entries is that Abbeymahon is identical with Sancta Mauro.

Little is known of this once celebrated abbey now.

A.D. 1295. Patrick was Abbot of Maur (Archdall).

1392. The Abbot was taxed on the basis of an income of 60 marks per year. 1488. Edmund de Courcey, Bishop of Ross, held this abbey in commendam

This content downloaded from www.corkhist.ie

All use subject to CHAS Terms and Conditions

Digital content (c) CHAS 2013

till this year, when it was given in commendam to (Blessed) Thaddeus MacCarthy.

1492, July 8th. Tateus, Bishop of Ross, paid at Rome 33³/₃ florins of gold for the monastery de fonte vivo (Brady, Epis. Succ.)

1497, May 3rd. Roman entry re Robert Onhallacayn, of the monastery of B. Mary of the Clear Spring, of the Cistercian Order, Diocese of Ross. (Ibid.)

1517. During this year Edmund de Courcey, Bishop of Ross, resigned in favour of John Imurrily, Abbot of Fonte Vivo, according to a document still extant. The retirement was grounded on the Bishop's advanced age, and the merits of Imurrily, as well as certain relationship with him. It was witnessed by Lady Ellinor MacCarthy, of Kilbrittain; Cornelius Cahalane, Guardian of Timoleague Abbey; and Maurice O'Murrily, cleric; and duly attested by a notary apostolic of Dublin. The Abbot Imurrily (i.e., O'Hurley) is described as a priest of the diocese of Ross, grave, of good address, and learned in both civil and canon law. In July of the same year the King wrote to Rome, asking the Pope to accept De Courcey's resignation, and recommending the appointment of John, Abbot of S. Maria de Fonte Vivo, a grave, learned, and discreet man. A Consistory was held to consider the matter. The Abbot O'Hurley was duly presented, and two witnesses were examined on oath, viz., Brother Richard, a professed Cistercian, and Maurice O'Cullinane, aged 40, both priests of Ross diocese, who stated that the Abbey was worth 60 marks. O'Hurley was duly appointed Bishop, and was also allowed to retain the Abbey. Sir James Ware informs us that though he was originally a Cistercian, he died in the habit of St. Francis, May 9th, 1519, and was buried in Timoleague Abbey.

The O'Hurleys (in Irish Ua Muirtuile) were descended from Muirtuile, the great-great-grandfather of Eiderscel, ancestor of the O'Driscolls. They had castles at Ballinvaurd and Ballinacarriga. The name Hurley is distinct from O'Herlihy. The O'Herlihys were settled around Ballyvourney, and were the hereditary wardens of St. Gobnat's Church.

1583, October 2nd, Sir Owen MacCarthy petitions the Queen, praying for the fee-farms of Ballybeg and De Fonte Vivo Abbeys, for the maintenance of his two sons at Oxford; also for the Priory of Ross and the economy of Temple-Faughney.

Oct. 20th. Ormond to Burghley. Reversion of the Abbey of Mawre, alias de fonte vivo, not to pass from Justice Walsh (Calendar State Papers).

1584, April 18th (26 Elizabeth, M. 19), Westminster. Eliz. Regina to Archbishop of Dublin and Sir Henry Loftus, Lords Justices, commanding them to pass lease for thirty years in reversion to Nicholas Walshe, Justice of the Province of Mounster, of the Abbey de fonte vivo (Patent Rolls).

1588. Fee-farm grant to Nicholas Walshe.

Nicholas Walshe, the grantee of Sancta Mauro was Chief Justice of Munster, and one of Carew's advisory council. Bishop Rothe gives a brief account of him in his "Analecta" (edited by Cardinal Moran). He appears to have been a ruthless persecutor of his countrymen; but according to Rothe, made a deathbed repentance, and returned to the Catholic Church.

Abbeystrewry lies about half a mile to the west of Skibbereen. In the centre of the abbey grounds is a small ruin which appears to be that of the parish church that formerly stood there. I doubt if any remains of the Abbey still exist. Lord Barry encamped here when he was accompanying Carew to besiege Dunboy Castle.

This content downloaded from www.corkhist.ie All use subject to CHAS Terms and Conditions Digital content (c) CHAS 2013