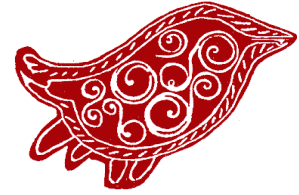


Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society



www.corkhist.ie

Title: The Cistercian abbey of Tracton, Co. Cork

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Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1939, Vol. 44, No. 159,
page(s) 1-15

Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

Digital file created: April 10, 2015

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Journal of the Cork Historical and Archæological Society.

(Forty-seventh year of Issue)

The Cistercian Abbey of Tracton, Co. Cork.

By DENIS O'SULLIVAN.

There is a short notice in Sir James Ware's *Antiquitates Hibernicae*, chapter XXVI, of a thirteenth century abbey which was founded for Cistercians in the County of Cork, namely, the Abbey of Tracton. This is what Sir James Ware has written under the heading of Tracton alias de ALBO TRACTU, M. B. Mariae: "Fundatum anno Dom. 1224, et Monachis Cisterciensibus repletum ex Coenobio de Albalanda apud Marudenses in Wallia. Possessiones confirmavit Edwardus III.—It was founded in the year of our Lord, 1224, and was occupied by Cistercian monks from the Monastery of Albalanda in the territory of the Marudenses, Wales. Edward III confirmed its possessions." (p. 232, Edit. 1658).

Tracton Abbey has long disappeared. Its history is forgotten. The modern Protestant Church erected on the site of the ancient parish church, the ancient burial ground, and the adjacent little hamlet, preserve the name of that one-time important Anglo-Norman monastic institution in Ireland whose Abbots were Lords of Parliament and of whose Community no Irishman was permitted to become member. The site of its buildings was not definitely known—so thoroughly had the work of demolition been carried out. There was not left "a stone upon a stone" and Tracton was only a place-name until some years ago when the present owner of the land—Mr. Fennell Coveney—discovered beneath the soil during the laying out of his kitchen garden, moulded and sculptured stones, fragments of columns, etc. These finds, thanks to Mr. Coveney's interest in the discoveries, were carefully laid aside, and, subsequently, where possible, reconstructions were made. To-day, the scanty remains of Tracton Abbey are to be seen at the rear of that kitchen garden, and viewing them there—melancholy mementoes of an almost forgotten past—one cannot refrain from reiterating the words of a famous writer: "Gone is gone. Lost is lost for ever."

In offering the present compilation on the Abbey of Tracton for publication in the pages of this *Journal* I do so, knowing that I am presenting a subject which has already been dealt with in outline, not only in the pages of this *Journal* but in histories of Irish Monasticism which have appeared from the day of that great antiquarian, Sir James Ware, down to our own time. Materials for our Abbey's story are not wanting, but beyond meagre notices little has been done to accomplish such.

Of late years the publication of Calendars of State Documents preserved in the Public Record Office, London, has materially added to our knowledge

of Tracton Abbey's domestic history, whilst the series known as the *Calendars of Papal Letters* has furnished us with proofs of the Abbey's importance in matters ecclesiastical between Rome and Ireland during the fifteenth century. The destruction by fire of the Public Record Office, Dublin, with its priceless collection of historical documents, has unhappily deprived us of materials both civil and ecclesiastical which were most intimately connected with Ireland. This loss is evidenced by those *Calendars of Inquisitions, Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland, etc.*, which were published by Royal Commission at intervals from 1819 onwards till the conflagration of 1922 wrote "Finis" to the labours of their editors.

In the following pages will be found the results of careful search for materials to furnish a complete history of the Abbey. I have gathered my information from every source available to accomplish this, and at the same time essay to revive interest in the ancient monastic foundations of Cork City and County—for those of which no traces remain, as well as for those ivy-clad crumbling ruins, still adorning our County and mutely appealing to us to rescue their story from the oblivion into which it is surely passing.

Four miles to the south of Carrigaline, in the old townland of Tubrid, barony of Kinalea, Co. Cork, once stood the Abbey of Tracton. Founded in the year 1224 for Cistercians, it was occupied by Cistercian monks from the Abbey of Albalanda, now Whitland, Caermarthenshire, Wales. Being affiliated to Albalanda, Tracton Abbey was named "de Albo Tractu." The parent house, Whitland, was founded in Wales by one Rhys ap Griffin about the time of the Conquest.

That the founders were not the MacCarthys, which Harris, in his edition of Ware (citing Allemande as his authority) states, is definitely proven. Sir James Ware is significantly silent on the subject. The quotation from his work in my opening paragraph shows this. So, too, in his *Coenobia Cisterciensia Hiberniae*, 1626 (Bodleian Library, Oxford), and in Add. MSS. 4787, ff. 30–34, British Museum, the foundation date only is given. "Early in the thirteenth century," writes Orpen, "the eastern part of the county of Cork, as well as the county of Limerick, seems to have been in the hands of the English landholders and to have been thickly settled by them. . . . In 1207, however, Philip de Prendergast and Richard de Cogan received extensive grants of lands from the Crown the former in the district between Cork and Innishannon, where the important manor of "Beauver" (Beauvoir) or Carrigaline was afterwards formed. From the Inquisition taken on the death of Gerald, son of Philip de Prendergast in 1251 we can gauge the importance of the Manor of Beauver. There were eleven tenants at rents, and there were two market towns, Carrigaline and Douglas, each with a large district of burgage lands. In 1224 the Abbey de Albo Tractu was founded for Cistercians at a place about two miles south of Carrigaline. The monks came from Ty Gwyn or Alba Landa, now Whitland near Tenby, (*Brut y Tywys* 1224, and *Ann. in Chart. St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, Vol. ii, p. 235) and the foundation may confidently be connected with the settlers from South Wales."¹

Another writer, the Rev. Canon O'Mahony, states that "Kinalea was

¹ *Normans in Ireland*. (1920). III., 117–119.

the original possession of the Cinel Aodh. There is not a shadow of proof that it ever belonged to the MacCarthys. It was made over subsequently to Robert Fitzmartin, who was in possession in 1240. Some one of these families was in possession when Tracton Abbey was built in 1224. The monks were brought from the country of the Fitzmartins and de Barrys (Alba Landa in Wales)." (*History of the O'Mahony Sept.*)

Further to the above remarks may be added the following from Webster : "The Barrys were in possession in 1240, and appear to have been preceded by Robert Fitzmartin. Moreover, the Abbey was founded for monks of the Cistercian Order who were brought from Whitland, the Welsh Ty gwyner Daf, and the Latin Alba Landa, an abbey situated on the western border of Caermarthenshire and in the diocese of St. David. It was from the name Alba Landa, of the Welsh Abbey, that the house erected in this diocese got its name *Abbatia de Albo Tractu*. A MacCarthy would have sought them nearer home."² A MacCarthy, perhaps, at a later date was a benefactor to the Abbey, and for this reason Allemande honoured him with the title of "Founder" using this word in the sense of "Benefactor."

The earliest record we possess of the Abbey's domestic history is dated the year 1251. In that year Tracton Abbey, through default of the abbot, lost half a carucate of land at Kilmeatom. The record which is preserved in the Public Record Office, London, is as follows :

"HENRICUS dei gratia Rex Anglie Dominus Hibernie Dux Normandie Aquitanie & Comes Andegavie dilecto & fideli sue Johanni filio Galfridi Justiciarii sue Hibernie Salutem. MANDAMUS vobis quod per sacramentum proborum legalium hominum diligenter inquire facientes quantum valent per annum dimidia Carucata terre cum pertinentiis in Kilmetom quam Abbas de Albo Tractu amisit per defaultam quam fecit versus nos in curia nostra Dublin. Et Inquisitionem inde factam sub sigillo tuo & sigillis eorum per quos facta fuerit nobis sine dilacione mittatis & hoc breve. Teste meipso Winton' iij die Junii Anno regni nostri XXXV. Hec est extenta facta de mandato domini regis de dimidia carucata terre cum pertinentiis in Kilmetom quam Abbas de Albo Tractu amisit per defaultam quam fecit versus Dominum Regem in curia sua apud Dublin per hos subscriptos scilicet Willelmum filium Mauricii, Alexandrum Album, Adam Brun, Ricardum Sturlage, Willelmum filium Nigelli, Petrum Ragelan, Rogerum Blaby, Matheum Michach, Henricum Hub, David Martel, Patricium Michach, Henricum Malefaunt. Qui jurati dicunt quod predicta dimidia Carucata terre cum pertinentiis valet per annum sexaginta solidos. In huius rei testimonium pradicti Juratores huic scripto sigilla sua apposuerunt."³

In the year 1252, under date July 30, 36 Henry III. there is record of a gift to the Abbot and Convent of Albotractu, in frank almoin, of the half carucate of land in Kilinekolm in Ireland, which the king recovered in his court before the justices at Dublin against the said abbot and convent by default made by the said abbot in the said court. Mandate was also issued to J., son of Geoffrey, Justiciary of Ireland, to take security from the

² *Diocese of Cork*, p. 188.

³ *Inq. P.M. 35 Henry III.*, No. 11. (C. 145-5 (4)). Public Record Office, London.

said abbot for the payment of 60 marks to the king at the Exchequer of Dublin, half at Easter in the 37th year and half at Michaelmas. I quote the document in full. It runs as follows :

“PRO ABBATE & CONVENTU de ALBOTRACTU HIBERNIA. Rex Archiepiscopis &c., salutem. SCIATIS nos dedisse concessisse & hac carta nostra confirmasse dilectis nobis in Christo Abbati & Conventui de Albotractu illam dimidiam carucatam terre cum pertinentiis in Kilinekolm in Hybernia quam recuperavimus in curia nostra coram Justiciariis apud Dublin’ versus ipsos abbatem & conventum per defaultam quam idem abbas fecit versus nos in eadem curia habendam & tenendam eisdem Abbati & conventui & eorum successoribus de nobis & heredibus nostris in perpetuum in liberam puram et perpetuam elimosinam cum omnibus libertatibus & liberis consuetudinibus ad terram. illam pertinentibus sicut predictum est. Hiis testibus venerabili patre W. Wygornensis episcopo, Galfrido de Lezinghan fratre nostro Magistro Willelmo de Kilkenn’ archideacono Conventensis Roberto Waler’ Roberto Musgros Bartolomeo Pecche. Matheo de Bezill. Willelmo de Chaenny. Nicholao de Sancto Mauro. Roberto le Noreys. Rogero de Lokinton. Henrico Pictavens’ & aliis data per manum nostram apud Farendon XXX die Julii. Hybernia de eodem. Et mandatum est J. filio Galfridi Justiciarii Hybernie quod capiat securitatem a predicto abbate de lx marcis Regi reddendis ad scaccarium Dublin’ ad hos terminos videlicet mediatas ad festum pasche anno &c. xxxvij & aliam mediatam ad festum Sancti Michaelis.”⁴

In the year 1297 the Abbot of Tracton recovered from Philip Mac Owen Barry the right of presentation to Cloncede (Clontead). (MS. F.I.16, 326. Trinity College, Dublin).

In the year 1301 the Abbot de Albo Tractu was cited before the justiciary on the charge of having received and protected his nephew, Maurice Russell, who had committed a grave offence and had claimed privilege of “Sanctuary” from his uncle, the said abbot. The abbot was found guilty and fined the sum of £40. (MS. F.I.16, 326, T.C.D., and King : *Collectanea*, p. 411, Nat. Library of Ireland, Dublin), and under the same date we learn that the chapels of Granagh, Kresdynre and Clonmede, in the Co. Cork having been alienated according to statute, the Abbot of Tracton paid to the king five marks for a respite until the Octave of the Feast of St. Michael.

In the year 1311 it is recorded that one Owen (Audeon) was abbot of Tracton, and that some time later the Abbot Owen was sued by Thomas, Abbot of Weyme Abbey, for possession of one acre of turbary and forty acres of pasturage at Kilmoney. (MS. F.I.16, 326, T.C.D., and King : *Collectanea*, p. 411).⁵

⁴ *Charter Roll*, 36 Henry III., memb. 7, Public Record Office, London. cf. also *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 1.400.

⁵ That Weyme Abbey and the Abbey of St. Finbar were one and the same there can be no doubt. The name of St. Finbar’s Abbey—*Abbatia de Antro Scti. Fynbarri* is but the Latinised version of the Abbey’s native Irish title, *Mainistir an Uaimh*, the monastery of the “Cave.” As the pronunciation of the Irish word “Uaimh” differs from its spelling, it is easy to orthographically connect the various names Weyme, Weym, Wem, Weeme, Lueim, L’Ueim, of the Norman copyists and clerks with the native “Uaimh.” About the time mentioned (1311) one Thomas was Abbot of the Abbey de Antro Scti. Fynbarri, “without the walls of Cork.”

About this time the peace of the king's subjects in the English territory in Ireland was being threatened. Rumours were being brought to the notice of the secular powers of secret meetings of the native Irish septs and their chieftains at which the people were harangued by certain religious of the Irish Tongue belonging to the various monastic Orders in the country who, already for many years by covertly stimulating the national or racial feeling of hatred against the conquerors of their land, now had the people on the verge of revolt. The authorities were advised to cause the removal of religious of Irish sympathies from all the monasteries in the dangerous districts, and that only "select Englishmen, religious of those convents, with English companions," in future should minister to the native Irish.

These disturbing rumours precipitated action on the part of the authorities. At a Parliament convened at Kilkenny in the year 1311, 5. Ed. II, measures were adopted to cope with the dangerous conditions existing. *Inter alia*, it was enacted that neither Irishmen nor enemies of the king should be admitted to Profession in any of the English religious houses established in Ireland. This law, again revived in the year 1367, 4th of Richard II, enacted "Quod nullus Hibernicus nec aliquis inimicus regis ad professionem alicuius domus religiosae inter Anglicos in terra Hibernia admittatur." Then follows a list of those Houses amongst which the Abbey de Albo Tractu is mentioned. (MS. F.1.16, p. 326, T.C.D. and King, *Collectanea*, p. 411).⁶

The abbots of Tracton were Lords of Parliament—"Abbas de Tractona locum habuit et suffragium inter regni proceres Comitii Parliamentariis." So runs the record in the Trinity College MS., copied in all probability from the lost annals of Tracton Abbey. "Rex mandat Abbati de Albo Tractu quod ad Parliamentum apud Dubl' die Sabbati in Octab. Sti. Hilarij prox. in propria persona et non per procuratorem ad diem predictam intersit. 49. Ed. III."—Edward's mandate to the Abbot of Tracton to be present at Parliament.⁷ In the first year of the reign of Richard II mandate was sent to the Tracton Abbot to be present at a Parliament at Tristeldermot.⁸ Again on the 11th Sept., 4th Rich. II, and on the 29th April, 5th of the same king, mandates were issued to the Abbot of Tracton to be present at Parliament.⁹

In the year 1340 the Abbot of Tracton Abbey sued Philip de Midia (Meade) for having made a waste of his (the abbot's) woods in Leighmoney, Co. Cork, which had been leased to Meade up to the end of the year by the above named Owen, now Bishop Owen.¹⁰

In 1350 Richard Brayghnock, Prior of Tracton Abbey, was indicted for the murder of one of his monks, John Cardigan, but was acquitted. (King, *Collectanea*, 411). Under the same date it is recorded that Henry Brayghnock received the king's pardon for all transgressions, felonies, and

⁶ cf. *Rot. Pat. et Claus. Canc. Hib. Cal.* (Dublin, 1828) p. 109, No. 116.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 90, No. 123.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 104, No. 73.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 108, No. 64 and p. 118, No. 123.

¹⁰ MS. F.1.16, 326, T.C.D., cf. also King, *Collectanea*, p. 411, Nat. Library of Ireland, Dublin.

breaches of the king's peace in Ireland, committed by him up to the 13th August, 24th r. Ed. III.¹¹

Under the same date, 1350, we learn that the chapel of Clontead, the Church of Krendre (? Kinure), and the chapel of Granath were alienated according to the Statute of Mortmain to the Abbot of Tracton, who paid the king five marks for having a respite till the Octave of St. Hilary, and the chapel of Clontead was worth ten marks per annum, 1280. (MS. F.1.16, p. 326, T.C.D.).¹²

From the year 1350 until 1363 the records are silent concerning Tracton Abbey. In 1363 the Abbey being, through the death of its Abbot, Thomas, without a superior, one Richard was appointed by Pope Urban V. to fill the vacancy. The text of the mandate whereby "Richardus Monasterio de Albo Tractu in abbatiam praeificitur" is quoted by Theiner in his *Vetera Monum. Scot. et Hibernorum*, p. 326, No. 663 (Rome, 1864). From the Trinity College MS. F.1.16, we learn that Richard Graynell was appointed Abbot of Tracton in 1363, but was deprived the same year. The record of Richard's short term of office as Abbot runs as follows: "In 1363, David de Cornwalshe, abbot of Dunbrody, Wexford, was commissioned by the Abbot of Albalanda (Whitland) in Wales, which abbey was parent house of both Tracton and Dunbrody, to visit the Abbey de Albo Tractu in Cork County for the purpose of enquiring into and reforming the abuses in the said abbey of Tracton. On his arrival there Abbot David found the monks in open rebellion against their abbot, Richard Graynell. Graynell entreated Abbot David to advise and correct the monks, and to satisfy him for his trouble in so doing, he presented to the said David, a horse of the value of twenty marks and ten pounds (£10) in ready money, after which David took from the monks another sum of twenty pounds (£20), and being thus bribed by both parties he deprived the Abbot Richard of his office." We know nothing more of the career of Abbot Graynell; but two years later, in 1365, the Abbot David of Dunbrody was convicted of bribery in connection with the Tracton incident and fined the sum of one mark, but received the king's pardon—"Per finem unius marce quam Frater David de Cornwalshe, Prior Domus Beate Marie de Dunbrothy, fecit cum Domino Rege per plegium Simonis Prendergast et Willelmi Cornwalshe transgressionis in hoc quod ipse die Lune, etc. . . . Pardonatur eidem, etc." (See also King, *Collectanea*, p. 399, National Library, Dublin).

In 1367 the Statute of Kilkenny revived the older edict of 1311, which prohibited the admission of Irishmen to Religious houses within the English territory in Ireland, but it was permitted that men of English race should be admitted whether they had been born in England or in Ireland. Subsequently, royal writs were issued to the various abbots in Ireland to observe these enactments, and those who contravened them were, if proved guilty, liable to attainder, and the temporalities of their institutions seized on behalf of the Crown.

From 1367 till 1375 I can find nothing in the records concerning Tracton

¹¹ MS. F.1.16, 326. T.C.D.

¹² Granath—possibly Granig, townland north of Tracton.

Abbey. In the year 1375 King Edward III confirmed the several possessions of the Abbey and took it under his special protection. (Ware, *De Hibern. et Antiquit. eius*, p. 232, Edit. 1658). Copy of the King's Patent is preserved in MS. F.1.16, p. 327, Library, Trinity College, Dublin, and in King, *Collectanea*, pp. 411-12, National Library, Dublin. From the Trinity College MS. I give a transcript in full :

Rex omnibus Ballivis et Fidelibus suis, etc. Sciat quod nos considerantes subsidia quam plurima quae prelati Religiosi ac alii de clerico Regni ac Terrae nostrae Hiberniae nobis in necessitatibus nostris ante haec tempora fecerunt ac gratitudinem magnam quam in eis et prelatibus religiosis et aliis de clerico predicto semper in opportunitatibus nostris puram et perpetuam invenimus etc., volentes perinde dilectum nobis Ab. de Albotractu favore prosequi gratioso. Suscepimus ipsum Ab., homines, terras, res. redditus, necnon possessiones suas ac bona sua quaecunque in protectionem et defensionem nostras speciales.

Et ideo vobis mandamus quod ipsum Abb., homines, terras, res. redditus, et omnes possessiones suas manteneatis, protegatis, et defendatis, non inferentes eis vel eis quantum in vobis est ab aliis inferri permittentes iniuriam, molestiam, dampnum aut gravamen, et si quid eis foris factum fuerit id ad nos sine dilatione corrigi et debite reformati fac.

Nolumus enim quod de bladis, fenis, equis, carectis, caragiis, bobis, vaccis, porcis, ovibus, aut aliis Grangiis sub custodiis suis aut ballivorum suorum inventis fuerint contra voluntatem suam ad opus nostrum aut alterius cuiuscunque per ministros nostros aut aliorum predictorum quibuscunque capiantur. In cuius, etc., per unum annum duratur, etc. Teste, etc., 1. die Maii, 49. Ed. III.¹³

In the year 1377 it is recorded that the Abbot of Tracton having petitioned the king, received a respite of fifteen days up to the ensuing Easter Day for the payment of a fine of ten pounds (£10) which had been imposed on him for failing to be present at the previous Parliament held at Dublin. The respite was granted to enable the Abbot, in the interim, to make legal suit for pardon either before the king's privy Council or at the Sitting of Parliament. The Abbot's plea was that ill-health prevented him from being present, and that he had delegated his lawyer, William Ilger, to represent him there, and act in all transactions on his behalf.¹⁴

From the year 1377 till the year 1389 we know nothing of the domestic history of Tracton Abbey.

In the twelfth year of the reign of Richard II (1389) it is recorded that the king issued mandate to his Bailiffs, etc., to protect the Abbot of Tracton "quem favore prosequi vult" and his community.¹⁵

From 1389 onwards the records are silent concerning Tracton Abbey, and, with the exception of two entries in the *Papal Regesta* intimately connected with the House, we know nothing of the domestic history of de Albo Tractu. In the year 1450 the Dean of Cork was commissioned by Papal Mandate "to enquire into the case of John Barri, monk of the Cistercian Monastery of St. Mary, Whitland, Wales, Parent House of Tracton." The mandate, in substance, is as follows. The Pope has been informed by John Barri, monk of the Cistercian monastery of St. Mary, Whitland, in the diocese of St. David, Wales—who, without having obtained any canonical dispensation . . . by his own temerity and without any canonical title, and by force and power of his friends and kinsmen intruded

¹³ See also *Rot. Pat. et Claus. Canc. Hib. Cal.* Dublin, 1828, p. 96, No. 125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103, No. 88.

¹⁵ *Rot. Pat. et Claus. Canc. Hib. Cal.*, p. 142, No. 248.

himself into the rule and administration of the Cistercian Monastery of Midleton (de Choro Sti. Benedicti), in the diocese of Cloyne, and detained it for about seven years, taking its fruits, etc., and who, after he had resigned that monastery and had made satisfaction in respect of the said fruits to the late Nicholas, abbot of the Cistercian monastery of St. Mary, Monasteranenagh (de Magio) in the diocese of Limerick, the Father Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of St. Mary, Tracton, in the diocese of Cork, received for some time (under pretext of an amicable composition between him and Simon (now) a monk, then abbot of the said monastery of Tracton, whom by the said power he had vexed in respect of the rule of the said monastery) a number of the goods and a yearly pension on the fruits of the said monastery of Tracton, thereby committing simony and incurring the sentences, etc., therefor; and who, being thus excommunicate, has celebrated Masses and other offices, but not in contempt of the Keys—that Miles (Milo) Roche, abbot of the said monastery of Tracton, has dilapidated the goods thereof, etc. The Pope therefore orders the above Dean to absolve John Barri from simony and the said sentences, etc., enjoining penance, dispense him . . . and rehabilitate him; and after so doing, and if and after he accuses Miles before the said Dean, to summon Miles, and if he find the above or one of them enough for the purpose to be true, to deprive and remove him, and in that event, and if he find John fit, to make provision to him of the said monastery, value not exceeding 50 marks sterling; whether it become void by such deprivation, or be void by the death without the Roman Court of John Flemyng, or of John Cultham, or be void in any other way; and in that event of making the said provision, to grant that John Barri may be blessed by any Catholic Bishop. The Pope hereby dispenses him to rule the monastery, etc. Apostolic solitudinis. Mandate dated 6 Non. Maii, 1450.¹⁶

Under date 1463–(4), dated 3rd February, St. Peter's Rome, there is an Indult of the Pope (Pius II.) to Miles (Milo), elect of Leighlin, to retain the abbacy of Tracton “in commendam” for life together with the church of Leighlin as long as he is bishop thereof. Miles was abbot of Tracton at the time he was consecrated bishop. *Eximie devotionis affectus.*¹⁷

There are several entries in the *Papal Regesta* of mandates to the various abbots of Tracton between the years 1418 and 1483. As these Papal commissions are not directly concerned with the House it is not necessary to quote them here. Summaries of them are to be found in the *Calendars of Papal Letters* (vols. VII to XIII. Vol. XIII is not yet published, but I have made copies from the sheets filed in the Public Record Office, London, of all those mandates in which the House of Tracton is mentioned). These entries are evidence of the importance of Tracton Abbey as an Ecclesiastical foundation in the diocese of Cork during the 15th century. Unfortunately, the names of the Abbots are not mentioned in the mandates, so that it is not possible to make a complete list in the order of succession.

In a mandate dated 1483 (12 Sixtus IV). 14. Kal. Apl. (19th March), St. Peter's, Rome, (*rectius* 1482–3, i.e., if anno 12 be correct), the Abbot of

¹⁶ *Cal. Papal Letters*, X. p. 510.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* XII., p. 222.

Tracton is styled "the Abbot of *Holy Cross* (de Albo Tractu)," and likewise in one addressed to the Abbot of Midleton (de Choro Sti. Benedicti) and the Abbot of Tracton. In the "Regnum Corcagiense: or a description of the Kingdom of Cork" written by Sir Richard Cox, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the following notice is written concerning Tracton Abbey: "Made anno 1224, and confirmed by Edward III, wherein they pretend to have a piece of the Crosse (which Barry Oge at a great price obtained and gave to that Abbey); and this is so firmly believed that on every Holy Thursday vast multitudes from far and near resort to pay their devotions to this relick."¹⁸

From Brady's *Episcopal Successions* are quoted the Papal Bulls of abbatial appointments to Tracton Abbey following that of the monk, John Barry, who in 1450 replaced Abbot Miles Roche who had been deposed.

1464, Feb. 3.

Milo Roch (Bishop of Leighlin, on the 27th June, 1467). Johannes de Tornabonis procter, etc., nomine Milonis commendatarii Mon. de Albotractu, Cisterc. Ord. Corkagen. dioc. obtulit eidem Camerae pro com. servitio dicti monasterii reatione commendae eiusdem factae eidem Dno electo, cum vacaret per promotionem praeerat in Abbatem (per Bullas Dni. Pii Papae II. sub dat. Romae apud Sanctum Petrum tertio nonas Februarii pontificatus eiusdem anno sexto). Florenos auri de Camera 60. Solvit pro com. servitio flor. 30: pro uno 9. Introitus 69. Obligazioni.

1467, May 3.

Robertus O'Callaghan. On the 2nd June, 1467. "R.P.D. Robertus Onhallachayn, monachus B. Mariae de Fonte Vivo, Ord. Cister. Rossen. Dioc. cui per Bullas S.D.N. (Paulus II.) sub dat. quinto non. Maii Pontificatus anno 3, mandat providere dicto mon. B. Mariae de Albotractu dict. ord. Corkag. dioc. vacaturo per privationem R.P.D. Episcopi Leighlin. Monasterii Commendatarii extra Romanam Curiam facturam, in eventu, etc., obtulit Camerae, etc., floren. 60 auri de Camera, etc. Obligazioni."¹⁹

1493, March 23.

Raymond Barry. On the 17th May, 1493. Ven. Vir. D. Raymondus Barry, monachus de Albotractu etc., principalis obtulit, per Bullas sub dat. 12 Kal. Aprilis anno primo Alexandri VI, florenos, etc., 83 cum uno tertio.

Obligazioni.

1499, March 2.

Johannes Barry. On the 5th April, 1499. Dominus Johannes Barri, clericus Corcag. dioc., principalis sponte obtulit, etc., pro com. serv. Mon. B. M. de Albo Tractu etc., commendati etc., per Bullas Alexandri VI., sub dat. Romae, vi. Non. Martii anno septimo concessi, flor. auri de Camera 83, etc.

Obligazioni.

1501, Febr. 21

James Barry. On the 16th June, 1501. D. Jacobus Barri, monachus Monast. B. M. de Albo Tractu, etc., principalis, etc., obtulit, etc. (Bullas 9 Kal. Mart. etc.). 60 florenos auri, etc.

Obligazioni.

Little more remains to be told of the Abbey of the "White Tract Vale." To the end of its story it remained a thoroughly English monastic foundation in Ireland. With the exception of one name, Robert

¹⁸*Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, Vol. VIII, 1902, 2nd series, p. 163.

¹⁹"Robert O'Callaghan." Brady errs in modernising the name given in the Papal Bull—Robertus Onhallachayn (recte, Ohuallachayn). It should have been modernised (Anglicised) either "Houlihan," "Holland," or "Hallihane." Personally, I prefer the modern name "Houlihan," as it is most common in the diocese of Ross, Co. Cork.

Ohuallachayn, monk of Maure (de Fonte Vivo, Dioc. Ross), no Irish name figures amongst those of its abbots which have come down to us. All the names—Richard Graynell, Richard Brayghnock, John Flømyng, John Cultham, Miles Roche, John Barry who succeeded him in 1450, Milo Roch (Roche), 1464, Raymond Barry, 1493, John Barry, 1499, James Barry, 1501, and John Barry, 1541, one of the last if not the last abbot of Tracton Abbey—evidence the English (Cambrian-Norman) influence in appointments, that of the Barry family predominating.

At the Dissolution the Abbey was suppressed, and in the year 1569 was, with its appurtenances, granted to Henry Guilford, Gent. The wording of the Lease runs as follows: "LEASE, under Letters, 20th March, XI, to Henry Guilford, Gentleman, of the site of the Abbey of Traghton, alias Tracton, alias de Albo Tractu, county Cork, the demesne lands, the lands of Traughton, Derva, Ballenemanaugh, Ballyspellan, Co. Cork, the rectories of Traghton, Ballyenhill, Ballyfeard, Clonard, Ballywodan, Kilmorrie, and Ballyfewan. To hold for 60 years at a rent of £7 15s. 0d. Not to alienate without licence, nor to levy coyn. Consideration £7 15s. 0d. 30th June, XI. (Fiants of Elizabeth No. 1405, 11th Report of the Deputy Keeper of Records, Ireland, p. 210).

About this time "the English government had added largely to their difficulties by attempting to force the Reformation upon Ireland while the political and social condition was still unsettled. The suppression of the Catholic Services, enforced wherever the English had power, and hanging before the people as a calamity sure to follow as the limits of that power were extended, created an animosity which no other measure could have produced, and alone, perhaps, made the problem of Irish administration hopelessly insoluble." Thus writes Froude in his History. The peace of the country could not be preserved without soldiers, and the soldiers without regular pay could not be kept under discipline; and money, as usual, "and especially money for Ireland" was a subject on which not one of her ministers approached Elizabeth without terror. As the queen always insisted that Ireland should be made pay the costs of its police duty the only course left to the Council was the establishment of military colonies throughout the country.²⁰

The sequel to this decision of Council brings the story of our Abbey to a close. A band of English gentlemen, chiefly from Somersetshire and Devonshire—Gilberts, Grenvilles, Courtneys, Carews—came forward and volunteered to relieve Elizabeth of all her Irish worries. They only asked from the Queen the Grant "to carry England to Ireland," undertaking to do the rest themselves. The scheme was submitted to Cecil for consideration, and while alarmed at its magnitude and audacity, he suggested that the adventurers should begin their experiment in the County of Cork, and as they achieved success so should they advance their operations. The adventurers persistently asked that the whole coastline from the mouth of the Shannon to the harbour of Cork should be included in their Grant.

²⁰ *Reign of Elizabeth*, Vol. III., Chap. XXIV., pp. 4, seqq. Everymans Library Edition. London. J. M. Dent & Sons, Publishers.

“Wild as the project may appear at first acquaintance,” writes Froude, “it promised better for the settlement of Ireland than any plan which had yet been suggested . . . Accident only, which betrayed the project prematurely and gave the chiefs time to combine, prevented the experiment from being tried.” Froude then relates how the adventurers, Sir Peter Carew, Sir Warham St. Leger, Sir Richard Grenville, Humphry Gilbert and others, laid hold of a number of farms and castles in the neighbourhood of Cork, the property of the Fitzgeralds and the MacCarthys. The properties thus seized lay within the line of intended confiscations.

In the same month of June, 1659, on which the Abbey of Tracton with its possessions was granted to Henry Guilford, James Fitzmaurice, with Lord Clancarthy and others descended with 2,000 men on the lands of Kerriurrihy of which they had been robbed. Lady St. Leger and Mrs. Grenville who were in possession at the time barely escaped to Cork. The rebels attacked and laid siege to Tracton Abbey which was garrisoned by English soldiery, slew all they found within it with the exception of some English soldiers who were later hanged by Fitzmaurice and Clancarthy.

The narrative of the siege and taking of Tracton Abbey is best told by the State Papers relating to the event preserved in the Public Record Office, London, and with it this history of one of Cork's ancient and vanished monastic foundations ends. The Papers are quoted in full—all abbreviations in the originals having been silently extended. They are taken from Vol. XXVIII, State Papers, 35 to 38. The documents are as follows :

1569. From Cork, June 17.

Right honorable my humble duetie vnto your honor premised. it may please the same to be aduertised the fyre of false trecherie and rebellion kendled this long while is now lately burste ovte in a flame, for yesterday being the xvijth. of this Monethe of June, McCartie More whom I dare not name an erle and James Fitz Morice with no smale nombre of horsemen and fotemen came vnto the Country of Kerry currihie the Farme Sir Warehame Sentleger hath of the Erle of Desmonde, and there spoylinge all thinhabitauntes of the same of all the goodes and catells they hadd, to th' utter vndoinge of no smale nombre, laid siege to th' abbey of Traghtan thinkinge to wynne the same, they have continued in Camp all this laste night, which thinge I thought it my duetie to aduertise your honor.

These hopelostes are bent to mischeef and I feare a greate many are joyned with them. My good Lord this outrage ought with expedition to be prevented, so as it be not suffered to take roote, & thereby grove to farther inconvenience.

There is no newes yett comme of their doinges this last night. The abbey is vij myles hence. And thus almightie God send your Lordship prosperitie in all your proceedinges. From Coreke in haste this morninge being the xvijth. of June, 1569.

Your honorable Lordship allwayes to commande,
Andrew Skiddye.”

From Cork, June 17, 1569. Mayor and officers of Cork to the Lord Deputy.

Right honorable and our very goode lorde our humble dutie premised maye hitt please your honor that this daye the xvijth. of June James Fitzmorice and McCarthy More with a great hoste of horsemen, kerne and Galoglasse to the number of two thowsand men or thereabouts haue assaltd the howse of Tractan to spoyle the same with the rest of the countrie in charge with Sir Waram Sentleger and Mr. Grenville. They haue spoyled prayed and robbed as well al these Citezons as many as they haue founde out of the Cittie, as also all the said Syr Waram tenauntes and frendes. There is none of the lordes there that eyther resisted or rescued but the Malefactors att libertie as well to assalte the Queenes Majesties Towne of Kennsaule as also for this her highness Cittie: letting your honor to vnderstand that they arr wyckedly, and most troytoursly bent & dysposed

whiche we thought our duty to aduertise your honor in post to thintent we and the Counrrye may haue such soccour from your Lordship with all convenyent speede accordinge to the present necessitie, such as your honor shall thinke convenient ; Also if ther be any come at Waterforde to spare we wolde wishe to haue the same for our money for our better provision. And we humblie take our leve at your honor with theis sorrowfull newes. From Corke the xvune, oJfij th. 1569."

Your Lordships humble Orators.

The dyrection

Andrew Galewaye	Mayour
John Meaghe	Recorder
William Tyrry	Baylef
David Tyrry	Bayleaf.

To the right honorable
Sir Henry Sydney, Knyght
of the noble order of the
garter Lord president of
Wales & deputy generall
of Ireland. Haste, haste, haste.

1569. June 18, Cork. From Lady Ursula St. Leger to the Lord Deputy.

" My humble duetie remembred to your honor it may please you to understande that on wenesday laste the Sherief went into Englande. On the morowe after James fitzMorrice with iijm (4,000) people was in Kerycurrehe by seven of the clocke wareninge wee had none so that our howses were not so well furnished as thei ought to have been, so my Lorde they have taken Traightone and all that I had there & killed all my men ; all this they did on fryday, my men kepthe the howse till they had gotten pyke axes and then they vndermined the howse & came in. The firste man they killed was Jhon Enchedon, and all that was in the howse ; then the next morninge beinge Saterdaye they came to the Castell of Cardgyleyn. In the mean time I caused them to comme away for they hadde neyther meate, nor drinke, nor powder, for to kepe it one daye. The Castell standes so that there cowlde no provision be brought to them. The enemyes were informed by the tenautes what vittell and provision was in the castell. They understandinge their waunte were determined to tarry the famishinge of them, so the Saterday morninge before James is comminge there, I sent a Bote for them & had not tyme to carrie away my stufe. So my good Lord the best and the grettest store of my stufe is gone and all our horses that wee and the Sheriefe had. James hath confessed and shewed your Lordship lettres that you sent to the Sherief. Good my Lord take pittie on me. They say playnly that they will never leve the towne of Coreke till they have me and the Sheriefes wyfe. My Lord I beseche you pardon my boldness & take presente order for me that I be not destroyed amongste them so in haste I humble take my leave at Corecke the xvijth day of June, 1569.

Your Lordships poore beadswoman,
Vrsula Sentleger."

1569. From Cork, June 18. Jasper Horsey to the Lord Deputy.

" Right honorable. My most humble duetie remembered. Your Lordship shall vnderstande that the Sherief of the countie of Corcke departed this harboroe on Wednesdaye, being the xvth of June, vppon his departure the next morninge came therle of Clancare accompanied with James fitz Morishe with the nvmer of three thowsande men certainly knowen, and went into Kerycurrihe and spoyled all the countrye and so incamped aboute Traketon and the xvijth. daye of this moneth toke the same. Being within sixe Englishe harge-busshears Jhon Enchedon which was prisoner for breaking ovte of the Castle of Dublin and xvi kerne which were all slayne ; saving three or fowre Englishe soldiours which were since hanged as wee are credibly informed by James fitz Morishe and McCarty More, and so spoyled the howse, and took all such furniture and horses as Sir Warhame Sentleger and Mr. Grenville hadd. This beinge done threatened to goe to Kinsale and take such ordinaunce as the Queenes Majesty hath there and firste come and beate downe the Castell of Karigylein which they have taken allso, and that being don determined to come to Corecke town from which they have avowed never to departe vntill they have the towne onlesse the Maior will graunte to deliver owte of the towne my Ladie Sentleger and Mrs. Grenvill with the reste

of the Englishe men that be within the Towne as also to deliver unto them Barry Oge Cormocke McTeigh and his brother with all other prisoners as are within the Cittie. The pray which they have taken is to the number of tenne thowsande kyne. McCartie More and James fitz Morishe declared vnto the people that Sir Edmonde Butler and all the reste of the Butlers are become Frenedes to the Garaldines, and hath sworne to take the heddes of all suche as shall confesse themselves to be trewe subjects vnto the Queenes Majesty. And also James fitz Morishe hath sworne vpon a booke to the countrie heere that Sir Edmonde Butler hath burned all Offallie, and the Cavenaghes Countrey by which Othe he hath broughte the Countrey in such dispeare that without presente helpe doe comme amongst them shalbe driven to yield to ther wicked interprises: Also he maketh them believe that ayde will comme presently owte of Spayne and certaynly it is of a growth that James fitz Morishe hath sent a bishoppe into Spayne for the same purpose, whose answer is not yett returned. It may please your honor to vnderstande that the lordes in these parties which dothe by their sainge affirme themselves to be trewe Subjects have permitted this wicked interprises to goe forwarde, without gevinge any warninge or ayde in the countrey, in no respecte and for prooffe thereof I can assure your honor as James fitz Morishe came towards these partes the day before the committinge of all thees spoyles had a parley with the Lord Roche and there became frendes, and for the trew performance thereof my Lord Roche did put in his pleadges in the handes of James fitz Morishe. Now as towchinge the Lord Barry and Sir Dermot McTeighe James fitz Morishe hath demaunded pleadges at their handes in like wyse as they say to thintente that the Lord Barry and Sir Dermot shoulde followe all such interprises as he meane to do. They as the say themselves hath denied to give any suche pleadges owte of their Countrey and are vpon their keppinge, and it is thoughte that these wicked meanings are agreed betwext them all. The judgement hereof I referre it to your honor. James fitz Morishe hath declared vnto the Lord Roche and the Lord Barry that your Lordship wrote certain lettres vnto the Sherief which lettres he intercepted and hath at this presente to show that the Sherief should apprehende the Lord Roche and the Lord Barry and to kepe them in safe custodie vntill your Lordship's pleasure were farther knowen. Because your honor shall knowe the names of the principall which were at this wicked consorte I thoughte it good to send your Lordship these names in wrytinge.

The firste and principall is James fitz Morice and McCartie More, McDonoghe, the Senescall of Imokellie, the Whyte Knighte, Oswyllvans two sonnes, whose names are Owin Oswillivan & Dermot Oswillivan. The Pryor O'Kallaghan which dwelleth in Nicholas Pettes farme. The Pryor of Killaghe. The yone Abbote of Odrone which dwelleth vnder mc Morishe.

It may please your honor to vnderstande that all the Gallies in the weste partes are manninge forthe and dayly loked for in these partes. Whose intent is to spoyle alonges the sea coaste. And here is a tall shippe of Sir Warhame Sentleger and of Mr. Grenville very well appoincted & all vnrieked and no more kepinge her then fowre men who is dayly threatened to be burned by James fitz Morishe and his wicked companie. But for the safegarde of her I am come to her aborde with suche few Englishe men as are here dayly lokinge for the cominge of these enemyes. If I coulede gett as many mariners as weare able to sayle her and also were able to victuall suche a Companie. I woulde gladly doe suche service as I were able to doe as in meeting the said westerne Gallies.

This is all the newes that I can certifie your honor of vnto this day beinge the xvijth of this Moneth and as occasion will fall owte otherwyse I will be ready to aduertise your Lordship.

And thus I most humble take my leave from Corecke the xvijth June, 1569.

Your honors obedient servaunte,

Jasper Horsey.²¹

In 1579 by a Grant (under Queen's Letter, 9 Nov., XVII.) three carucates of land called Ballinspaly, Co. Cork (3s.) parcel of the lands of the Abbey de Albo Tractu, alias Traghton, Co. Cork, passed into the possession of George Moore, Gent.²²

²¹ See also *Cal. of State Papers, Ireland, 1509-1573*, p. 409.

²² *Fiants of Queen Elizabeth*, 3519, D.K.R. XIII. Ballinspaly—now Ballyspillane, diocese of Cloyne, Co. Cork.

In the State Papers preserved in the Public Record Office, London (65.4) pp. 54, 56d., there is an interesting record :—

“Summa Totalis Valorum Possessionum Pertinentium Diversis Monasteriis et Aliis Domibus Religiosis Jacentibus et Existentibus in Comitatu Cork.” The Abbey of Tracton is noted as follows: TERRA et POSSESSIONES nuper Monasterii de Albo Tractu alias Traughton. Valent in Redditibus

et firmis	}	li.	s.
per			
annum		vij.	xv.

What of the concealed “ Terras et Possessiones ” of the Abbey de Albo Tractu and the other Religious Houses named in the “ Summa Totalis ” ?

In 1600, by Lease (under Queen’s Letter, 27 March XLI.) the site of the Abbey of Traghton, Tracton, alias de Albo Tractu passed to Sir Anthony Sentleger, Knt., Master of the Rolls.²³

In 1610, Sir Anthony St. Leger made over the possessions to Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, with the exception of the portion of the lands of Tracton granted by Elizabeth to George Moore in 1579. Boyle was confirmed in his possession of Tracton (excepting Moore’s portion) by Letters Patent of James, dated 7th March, 1610. (*Lismore Papers*, 2nd series, Vol. I., 183.) From Boyle the Abbey with its possessions passed to Thomas Daunt of Owlpen, Gloucestershire, who took up residence there. In the course of time the old Abbey buildings, owing to their ruinous condition, were demolished by the Daunt Family and a new residence built near the site. The “ site and precincts ” of the Abbey now belong to Mr. Fennell Coveney.

In conclusion. For transcripts, etc., of original documents preserved in the Public Record Office, London, I am indebted to Miss McNeill O’Farrell, of London, and to the Librarians of the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, and of Trinity College, Dublin, who furnished me with photostat copies of MSS. required by me. My sincere thanks are due to Professor S. P. Ó Riordáin, Hon. Secretary of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, to Dr. W. O’Sullivan, and Messrs. J. T. Collins and C. J. F. MacCarthy, of the Editorial Committee of the Society’s Journal, for their many helpful and valuable suggestions to me in the course of the preparation of this paper.

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²³ *Fiants of Queen Elizabeth*, 6411, D.K.R. XVII. See also *Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland*. Vol. II., p. 538. Edited by Morrin. (1862).

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