

Richard, 1st Earl of Cornwall

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Richard of Cornwall (5 January 1209 – 2 April 1272) was **Count of Poitou** (from 1225 to 1243), **1st Earl of Cornwall** (from 1225) and German King (formally “King of the Romans“, from 1257). One of the wealthiest men in Europe, he also joined the Barons’ Crusade, where he achieved success as a negotiator for the release of prisoners, and assisted with the building of the citadel in Ascalon.

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Biography

Early life

He was born 5 January 1209 at Winchester Castle, the second son of King John and Isabella of Angoulême. He was made High Sheriff of Berkshire at the age of only eight, was styled Count of Poitou from 1225 and in the same year, at the age of sixteen, his brother King Henry III gave him Cornwall as a birthday present, making him High Sheriff of Cornwall. Richard’s revenues from Cornwall provided him with great wealth, and he became one of the wealthiest men in Europe. Though he campaigned on King Henry’s behalf in Poitou and Brittany, and served as regent three times, relations were often strained between the brothers in the early years of Henry’s reign. Richard rebelled against him three times, and

Richard of Cornwall



King of the Romans

Reign 13 January 1257 – 2 April 1272

Coronation 27 May 1257

Predecessor William II of Holland

Successor Rudolph I of Germany

Earl of Cornwall

Successor Edmund, 2nd Earl

Spouse Isabel Marshal
Sanchia of Provence
Beatrice of Falkenburg

Issue

John of Cornwall
Isabel of Cornwall
Henry of Almain
Nicholas of Cornwall
unnamed son
Edmund, 2nd Earl of Cornwall
Philip of Cornwall
Sir Richard of Cornwall
Sir Walter of Cornwall
Joan of Cornwall

House House of Plantagenet

Father John, King of England

Mother Isabella of Angoulême

had to be bought off with lavish gifts.

Marriage to Isabel, 1231–40

In March 1231 he married Isabel Marshal, the wealthy widow of the Earl of Gloucester, much to the displeasure of his brother King Henry, who feared the Marshal family because they were rich, influential, and often opposed to him. Richard became stepfather to Isabel's six children from her first

husband. In that same year he acquired his main residence, Wallingford Castle in Berkshire (now Oxfordshire), and spent much money on developing it. He had other favoured properties at Marlow and Cippenham in Buckinghamshire. Isabel and Richard had four children, of whom only their son, Henry of Almain, survived to adulthood. Richard opposed Simon de Montfort, and rose in rebellion in 1238 to protest against the marriage of his sister, Eleanor, to Simon. Once again he was placated with rich gifts. When Isabel was on her deathbed in 1240, she asked to be buried next to her first husband at Tewkesbury, but Richard had her interred at Beaulieu Abbey instead. As a pious gesture, however, he sent her heart to Tewkesbury.

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|---------------|---|
| Born | 5 January 1209 Winchester Castle, Hampshire, England |
| Died | 2 April 1272 (aged 63) Berkhamsted Castle, Hertfordshire, England |
| Burial | Hailes Abbey, Gloucestershire |

On Crusade and marriage to Sanchia, 1240–43

Later that year Richard departed for the Holy Land. He fought no battles but managed to negotiate for the release of prisoners and the burials of Crusaders killed at a battle in Gaza in 1239. He also refortified Ascalon, which had been demolished by Saladin. On his return from the Holy Land, Richard visited his sister Isabella, the empress of Frederick II.

After the birth of prince Edward in 1239, provisions were made in case of the king's death, which favoured the Queen and her Savoyard relatives and excluded Richard. To keep him from becoming discontented King Henry and Queen Eleanor brought up the idea of a marriage with Eleanor's sister Sanchia shortly after his return on 28 January 1242. On his journey to the Holy Land, Richard had met her in the Provence, where he was warmly welcomed by her father Raymond Berenger IV and had fallen in love with this beautiful girl. Richard and Sanchia (whom the English called Cynthia) married at Westminster in November 1243.

This marriage tied him closely to the royal party. Eleanor and Sanchia's youngest sister Beatrice would marry Charles I of Naples, while their oldest sister Margaret had married Louis IX of France. The marriages of the kings of France and England, and their two brothers to the four sisters from Provence improved the relationship between the two countries, which led up to the Treaty of Paris.^[1]

Poitou and Sicily

Richard's claims to Gascony and Poitou were never more than nominal, and in 1241 King Louis IX of France invested his own brother Alphonse with Poitou. Moreover, Richard and Henry's mother, Isabella of Angoulême, claimed to have been insulted by the French king. They were encouraged to recover Poitou by their stepfather, Hugh X of Lusignan, but the expedition turned into a military fiasco after Lusignan betrayed them.

The pope offered Richard the crown of Sicily, but according to Matthew Paris he responded to the extortionate price by saying, "You might as well say, 'I make you a present of the moon – step up to the sky and take it down'."^[2] Instead, his brother King Henry purchased the kingdom for his own son Edmund.

Elected King of Germany, 1256

Although Richard was elected in 1256 as King of Germany by four of the seven German Electoral Princes (Cologne, Mainz, the Palatinate and Bohemia), his candidacy was opposed by Alfonso X of Castile who was elected by Saxony, Brandenburg and Trier. The pope and king Louis IX of France favoured Alfonso, but both were ultimately convinced by the powerful relatives of Richard's sister-in-law, Eleanor of Provence, to support Richard. Ottokar II of Bohemia, who at first voted for Richard but later elected Alfonso, eventually agreed to support the earl of Cornwall, thus establishing the required simple majority. So Richard had to bribe only four of them, but this came at a huge cost of 28,000 marks. On 27 May 1257 the archbishop of Cologne himself crowned Richard "King of the Romans" in Aachen;^[3] however, like his lordships in Gascony and Poitou, his title never held much significance, and he made only four brief visits to Germany between 1257 and 1269.

Later life, death and successors

He founded Burnham Abbey in Buckinghamshire in 1263, and the Grashaus, Aachen in 1266.

He joined King Henry in fighting against Simon de Montfort's rebels in the Second Barons' War (1264–67). After the shattering royalist defeat at the Battle of Lewes, Richard took refuge in a windmill, was discovered, and was imprisoned until September 1265.

In December 1271, he had a stroke. His right side was paralysed and he lost the ability to speak. On 2 April 1272, Richard died at Berkhamsted Castle in Hertfordshire. He was buried next to his second wife Sanchia of Provence and Henry of Almain, his son by his first wife, at Hailes Abbey, which he had founded.

After his death, a power struggle ensued in Germany, which only ended in 1273 with the emergence of a new Roman King, Rudolph I of Habsburg, the first scion of a long-lasting noble family to rule the empire. In Cornwall, Richard was succeeded by Edmund, son of his second wife Sanchia.

Marriages and issue

Richard of Cornwall married firstly, on 30 March 1231 at Fawley, Buckinghamshire, Isabel Marshal, widow of Gilbert de Clare, 5th Earl of Gloucester, and daughter of William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke, by Isabel FitzGilbert. They had three sons and a daughter:^[4]

John of Cornwall (31 January 1232 – 22 September 1232), born and died at Marlow, Buckinghamshire, buried at Reading Abbey.

Isabel of Cornwall (c. 9 September 1233 – 6 October 1234), born and died at Marlow, Buckinghamshire, buried at Reading Abbey.

Henry of Cornwall (2 November 1235 – 13 March 1271), murdered by his cousins Guy and Simon de Montfort, buried at Hailes Abbey.

Nicholas of Cornwall (b. & d. 17 January 1240 at Berkhamsted Castle), died shortly after birth, buried at Beaulieu Abbey with his mother.

Isabel died in childbed at Berkhamsted on 17 January 1240, and was buried at Beaulieu Abbey.

He married secondly, on 23 November 1243 at Westminster Abbey, Sanchia of Provence (c.1225 – 9 November 1261), daughter of Raymond, Count of Provence, and Beatrice of Savoy, by whom he had two sons:^[5]

unnamed son, born July 1246, died 15 August 1246.

Edmund, 2nd Earl of Cornwall, usually styled Edmund of Almain (c. 1 January 1250 – c. 25 September

1300), who married Margaret de Clare (born 1250, died shortly before November 1312), daughter of Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by his second wife, Maud de Lacy, daughter of John de Lacy, 2nd Earl of Lincoln. They had no issue, and the marriage was dissolved in February 1294.

He married thirdly, on 16 June 1269 at Kaiserslautern, Beatrice of Falkenburg, daughter of Dietrich I, Count of Falkenburg. They had no issue.^[6] She was about sixteen years of age at the time of the marriage, and was said to be one of the most beautiful women of her time.^[citation needed] Beatrice died 17 October 1277, and was buried before the high altar at the Church of the Grey Friars in Oxford.^[7]

By his mistress Joan de Valletort, Richard had five children, three sons and two daughters:^[8] Joan was the daughter of Sir Walter de Bath, Knight and Sheriff of Devon in 1217, and the sister of Henry de Bath. Inquisition And Post Mortem of Devon; Thirteenth-Sixteenth Centuries Court of Chancery states: Walter de Bath held land in Clauton of the gift of Guy Norant of land in Fernhull, held of Joan who was wife of Ralph de Valletorta, who has it in dower. History of St. Mary's Abbey of Buckfast in the county of Devon: A.D. 760–1906, p. 7, Sir Ralph de Valletort died 1267, leaving a son, Reginald, under age. As lady of the manor, Johanna, Sir Ralph's widow, made a grant to Abbot Henry her dower lands at Holne. When her brother Henry de Bath fell into disgrace with King Henry 3rd, he was restored to his former places of trust by the intercession of the Earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, according to Devonshire Celebrities, By, T. L. Pridham, p. 12–17. "Cornwall of Court in St. Stephen-Branell, descended from a son of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, by Joan de Valletort. The elder branch of this family became extinct after a few descents in the fourteenth century, the heiress married Hendower. Magna Britannia: Vol. 3: Cornwall, By Daniel and Samule Lysons, p. 118-174." Joan first married Ralph de Valletort who was living in 1246 and dead by 1267; they were the parents of Reginald de Valletort, Inq. p.m. 1270. Reginald granted Trematon to Earl Richard. Joan later married Alexander Okeston and they were the parents of Sir James Okeston. Children of Richard, Earl of Cornwall and Joan were:

Philip of Cornwall, a priest.

Sir Richard of Cornwall, he received a grant from his half-brother Edmund in which he was called brother, he married a wife named Joan, and by her had three sons and a daughter. He was slain by an arrow at the siege of Berwick in 1296. His daughter, Joan of Cornwall, married Sir John Howard, from whom the Howard Dukes of Norfolk are descended.^[9]

Sir Walter of Cornwall, he received a grant of the manor of Brannell from his half-brother Edmund in which he was called brother, he was the father of William de Cornwall and grandfather of John de Cornwall who married Margery Tregago, parents of Margaret de Cornwall who married David Hendower.

Isabel of Cornwall, who received a grant from King Henry III in which she was called niece.

Joan of Cornwall, who received a grant from her half-brother Edmund in which she was called sister, she married firstly, Richard de Champernoun, by whom she had a son, Sir Richard, and secondly, Sir Peter de Fissacre, by whom she had no issue.



Ancestors

Notes

Beatrice of Falkenburg, Richard's widow, depicted as queen of the Romans.

1. ^ Sanders, IJ (1951). "The Texts of the Peace of Paris, 1259". *The English Historical Review* **66** (258) (Oxford University Press). pp. 81–97 [88].
2. ^ Craik, George L., & Macfarlane, Charles, *The Pictorial History of England*, p. 657.
3. ^ Goldstone, Nancy (2008). *Four Queens; The Provençal Sisters who ruled Europe*. Pinguin Books, London, p. 213.
4. ^ Richardson I 2011, pp. 566–71.
5. ^ Richardson I 2011, pp. 566–71.
6. ^ Richardson I 2011, p. 567.
7. ^ Richardson I 2011, p. 567.
8. ^ Richardson I 2011, pp. 573–4.
9. ^ Richardson I 2011, pp. 574–5; Richardson II 2011, p. 265.

References

- Richardson, Douglas (2011). Everingham, Kimball G., ed. *Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families I* (2nd ed.). Salt Lake City. ISBN 1449966314.
- Richardson, Douglas (2011). Everingham, Kimball G., ed. *Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families II* (2nd ed.). Salt Lake City. ISBN 1449966349.

Further reading

- Denholm-Young, Noel. *Richard of Cornwall, 1947*
- Lewis, Frank. *Beatrice of Falkenburg, the Third Wife of Richard of Cornwall, 1937*
- Tyerman, Christopher. *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588*
- Richard of Cornwall and his first wife, Isabel Marshall, appear as characters in Virginia Henley's historical novels, *The Marriage Prize* and *The Dragon and the Jewel*, and in Sharon Kay Penman's historical novel *Falls the Shadow*.

External links

- Charter given by Richard as German King to the town of Zürich, 20.11.1262 (<http://lba.hist.uni-marburg.de/lba-cgi/kleioc/00101KILBA/exec/apply3/width/%226109%22/height/%226109%22/urł%22http:%7B%7C%7D%7B%7C%7D137.248.186.134%7B%7C%7Dlba-cgi-local%7B%7C%7Dpic.sh%7B-%7Djpg%7B%7C%7DF1030.jpg%22>). Photograph taken from the collections of the Lichtbildarchiv älterer Originalurkunden at Marburg University showing Richards's seal.

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| <p>Richard, 1st Earl of Cornwall House of Plantagenet Born: 5 January 1209 Died: 2 April 1272</p> | | |
| Regnal titles | | |
| <p>Preceded by William</p> | <p>King of Germany (formally King of the Romans) 13 January 1257 – 2 April 1272 (contested by Alfonso of Castile)</p> | <p>Succeeded by Rudolf I</p> |
| <p>Preceded by Otto</p> | <p>Count of Poitiers 1209–1225</p> | <p>Succeeded by Alphonse</p> |
| Peerage of England | | |
| <p>New title</p> | <p>Earl of Cornwall 1227–1272</p> | <p>Succeeded by Edmund</p> |

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