

Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke

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Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (of the first creation), Lord of Leinster, Justiciar of Ireland (1130 – 20 April 1176). Like his father, he was also commonly known by his nickname *Strongbow* (Norman French: *Arc-Fort*). He was a Cambro-Norman lord notable for his leading role in the Norman invasion of Ireland.

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Career

Richard was the son of Gilbert de Clare, 1st Earl of Pembroke and Isabel de Beaumont.^[1] Richard's father died in about 1148, when he was about 18 years old, and Richard inherited the title Earl of Pembroke. It is probable that this title was not recognized at Henry II's coronation in 1154.^[2]

As the son of the first Earl, he succeeded to his father's estates in 1148, but was deprived of the title by King Henry II of England in 1154 for siding with King Stephen of England against Henry's mother, the Empress Matilda.^[3] Richard was in fact, called by his contemporaries Earl Striguil, for his marcher lordship of Striguil where he had a fortress at a place now called Chepstow, in Monmouthshire on the River Wye.^[4] He saw an opportunity to reverse his bad fortune in 1168 when he met Diarmait Mac Murchada, the deposed King of Leinster.^[5]

Dispossession of the King of Leinster

In 1167, Diarmait Mac Murchada was deprived of the Kingdom of Leinster by the High King of Ireland - Rory O'Connor (Irish: *Tairrdelbach mac Ruaidri Ua Conchobair*). The grounds for the dispossession were that MacMurrough had, in 1152, abducted Derbforgaill, the wife of the King of Breifne, Tiernan O'Rourke (Irish:

Richard "Strongbow" de Clare



Replacement effigy for Strongbow

Born	1130 <div>Tonbridge, Kent, England^{[<i>citation needed</i>]}</div>
Died	20 April 1176 (age 45/46) <div>Dublin, Ireland</div>
Resting place	Originally at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Reputedly disinterred and then reinterred at Ferns Cathedral
Other names	Strongbow (<i>Arc-Fort</i>)
Ethnicity	Anglo-Norman
Spouse(s)	Aoife Ní Diarmait
Children	Gilbert de Clare, 3rd Earl of Pembroke Isabel de Clare, 4th Countess of Pembroke
Parents	Gilbert de Clare, 1st Earl of Pembroke Isabel de Beaumont

Tighearnán Ua Ruairc). To recover his kingdom, MacMurrough solicited help from the King of England - Henry II. The deposed king embarked for Bristol from near Bannow on 1 August 1166.^[6] He met Henry in Aquitaine in the Autumn of 1166. Henry could not help him at this time, but provided a letter of comfort for willing supporters of Mac Murchada's cause in his kingdom. However, after his return to Wales he failed to rally any forces to his standard. He eventually met the Earl of Striguil (nicknamed "Strongbow") and other barons of the Welsh Marches. Mac Murchada came to an agreement with de Clare: for the Earl's assistance with an army the following spring, he could have Aoife, Mac Murchada's eldest daughter in marriage and the succession to Leinster.^[7] As Henry's approval or license to Mac Murchada was a general one, the Earl of Striguil thought it prudent to obtain Henry's specific consent to travel to Ireland: he waited two years to do this.^[8] The license he got was to aid Mac Murchada in the recovery of his kingdom of Leinster.^[3]

The invasion of Leinster

See also: Norman invasion of Ireland

An army was assembled that included Welsh archers. It was led by Raymond FitzGerald (also known as Raymond *le Gros*) and in quick succession it took the Viking established towns of Wexford, Waterford and Dublin^[a] in 1169-1170.^[9] Strongbow, however, was not with the first invading party, only arriving later, in August 1170.^[10]

In May 1171, Diarmuid Mac Murchada died and his son, Donal MacMurrough-Kavanagh (Irish: *Domhnall Caemanach mac Murchada*) claimed the kingdom of Leinster in accordance with his rights under the Brehon Laws. The Earl of Striguil also claimed the kingship in the right of his wife. The old king's death was the signal of a general rising, and Richard barely managed to keep Rory O'Connor out of Dublin. At this time Strongbow sent his uncle, Hervey de Montmorency, on an embassy to Henry. This was necessary to appease the King who was growing restive at the Earl's increasing power. Upon his return, de Montmorency conveyed the King's terms - the return of Strongbow's lands in Normandy, England and Wales as well as leaving him in possession of his Irish lands.^[11] In return, de Clare, surrendered Dublin, Waterford and other fortresses to the King.^[12] Henry's intervention was successful and both the Irish and Cambro-Norman lords in the south and east of Ireland accepted his rule.^[13] Strongbow also agreed to assist the King in his coming war in France.

Marriage and issue

By an unknown mistress, Richard had:

- Aline de Clare,^[b] she married William FitzMaurice FitzGerald, baron of Nass^[14]
- Basilia de Clare, she married Robert de Quenci, Constable of Leinster^[14]

About 26 August 1171 in Waterford, Strongbow married MacMurrough's daughter, Aoife MacMurrough.^[15] Their children were:

- Gilbert de Clare, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, a minor who died in 1185^[16]
- Isabel de Clare, 4th Countess of Pembroke, who became Countess of Pembroke in her own right in 1185 (on the death of her brother) until her own death in 1220.^[17]

King Henry II had promised Sir William Marshal that he would be given Isabel as his bride, and his son Richard I upheld the promise one month after his ascension to the throne. The earldom was given to her husband as her consort.^[18] Marshall was the son of John the Marshal, by Sibylle, the sister of Patrick, Earl of Salisbury.

Strongbow's widow, Aoife, lived on and was last recorded in a charter of 1188.

Legacy

Strongbow was the statesman, whereas Raymond was the soldier, of the conquest. He is vividly described by Giraldus Cambrensis as a tall and fair man, of pleasing appearance, modest in his bearing, delicate in features, of a low voice, but sage in council and the idol of his soldiers.^[19] He was first interred in Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral where an alleged effigy can be viewed.^[19] Strongbow's actual tomb-effigy was destroyed when the roof of the Cathedral collapsed in 1562. The one on display dates from around the 15th century, bears the coat of arms of the Earls of Kildare and is the effigy of another local Knight. Strongbow is actually buried in the graveyard of the Ferns Cathedral where his grave can be seen in the graveyard.^[20]

Ancestry

See also

- Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (London; New York: Longman Press, 1995) pp. 6, 281, 287, 289
- The Song of Dermot and the Earl
- De Lacy
- Kilkenny Castle

Notes

- ^ These were *longphorts* where the Viking raiders wintered, Dublin being the most famous. It wasn't long before some Irish were allied to the Norsemen and through intermarriage a Hiberno-Norse or Norse-Gaels people emerged in and around Ireland's first towns. See: James F. Lydon, *The Making of Ireland: From Ancient Times to Present* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 21.
- ^ Aline was born well before her father married Eve (Aoife), daughter of Dermot. That both she and her unnamed sister were illegitimate is indicated by the fact that neither inherited anything from their father's great holdings. See: Cokayne, *CP*, X, Appendix H, 103

References


- ^ George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage; or, A History of the House of Lords and All its Members from the Earliest Times*, Vol. X, eds. H. A. Doubleday; Geoffrey H. White; Howard de Walden (London: The St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1945), p. 352
- ^ M. T. Flanagan, 'Clare, Richard fitz Gilbert de, second earl of Pembroke (c.1130–1176)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press (2004)



The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife (1854) by Daniel Maclise, a romanticised depiction of the union in the ruins of Waterford

3. ^{a b} Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 193
4. ^a Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1216*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), pp. 85-9
5. ^a Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 114
6. ^a *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland*, ed. R. F. Foster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 57
7. ^a Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1216*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1911), p. 91
8. ^a Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1216*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1911), p. 93
9. ^a Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1216*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1911), p. 184
10. ^a John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin Group, 1993), p. 126
11. ^a A J Otway-Ruthven; Kathleen Hughes, "A History of Medieval Ireland", (London: Ernest Benn Limited; New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1968), p. 48
12. ^a Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 197
13. ^a Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 200
14. ^{a b} George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage; or, A History of the House of Lords and All its Members from the Earliest Times*, Vol. X, eds. H. A. Doubleday; Geoffrey H. White; & Howard de Walden (London: The St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1945), Appendix H, p. 103
15. ^a George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage; or, A History of the House of Lords and All its Members from the Earliest Times*, Vol. X, eds. H. A. Doubleday; Geoffrey H. White; Howard de Walden (London: The St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1945), p. 356
16. ^a George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage; or, A History of the House of Lords and All its Members from the Earliest Times*, Vol. X, eds. H. A. Doubleday; Geoffrey H. White; Howard de Walden (London: The St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1945), p. 357
17. ^a George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage; or, A History of the House of Lords and All its Members from the Earliest Times*, Vol. X, eds. H. A. Doubleday; Geoffrey H. White; Howard de Walden (London: The St. Catherine Press, Ltd., 1945), pp. 358–64
18. ^a Thomas B. Costain *The Conquering Family* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), p. 267
19. ^{a b} Alfred Webb, *A compendium of Irish biography* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1878), p. 130
20. ^a John Finlayson, *Inscriptions on the monuments, mural tablets &c, Christ Church Cathedral* (Dublin: Hodges, Foster, & Figgis, 1878), p. 66

External links

-  Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Pembroke, Earls of". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press
- Catherine Armstrong Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare "Strongbow" (<http://www.castlewales.com/strngbow.html>)
- Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke At Find A Grave (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=5887495>)
- Ancestral to George W Bush (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/jan/27/usa.angeliquechrisafis>)

Political offices		
Preceded by New creation	Justiciar of Ireland 1173–1176	Succeeded by Unknown
Peerage of England		
Preceded by Gilbert de Clare	Earl of Pembroke 1148–1168	Succeeded by Gilbert de Clare

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