

MORTIMER, ROGER de (1374 - 1398), sixth of that name, 4th earl of March and 4th earl of Ulster

Name: Roger De Mortimer
Date of birth: 1374
Date of death: 1398
Child: Anne Mortimer
Child: Edmund de Mortimer
Parent: Philippa Mortimer
Parent: Edmund de Mortimer
Gender: Male
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Royalty and Society
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Usk 11 April 1374, son of Edmund de Mortimer (see [Mortimer family](#)) and Philippa, daughter of Lionel duke of Clarence (second son of king Edward III - the marriage is important, as the basis of the 'Yorkist' claim to precedence over the 'Lancaster' house, descended from Edward's third son). Roger's parents died when he was but a boy, so that his estates came under prolonged and careful tutelage; when in 1393 he came of age, he was very wealthy, with personalty amounting to 40,000 silver marks, and widespread lands, including (among others) the lordships of Usk, Caerleon, and Denbigh in Wales, and those of Wigmore and Ludlow on the Border. The chronicler [Adam Usk](#), a man indebted to the [Mortimers](#), expatiates on his wealth and splendour; and more than one witness testifies to his great bravery and generosity, while yet noticing his dissolute conduct.

Richard II was childless, and intrigues for the succession were afoot among Edward III's other descendants. The king took an important step in 1385, when he acknowledged Roger de Mortimer as his heir, knighting him in 1390, and appointing him in 1397 deputy ruler of all Ireland. Probably this was the occasion which moved [Iolo Goch](#), a man of Denbighland and therefore a tenant of Roger's, to compose a cywydd to him. The bard extols Roger's wealth and virtues. And he lays great stress on Roger's connections with Wales. Not only is he heir to the English crown, 'grandson of Sir Lionel ...second after Richard,' but also, when the time comes 'a kinsman of Gwynedd shall wear the crown'; his is the right to 'the diadem of Aberffraw,' and it is time he came to Wales, where 'honour is his due.' True, it required some imagination to see in Roger the 'heir to Aberffraw,' on the strength of the farback marriage (1230) between [Llywelyn ap Iorwerth](#)'s daughter and a [Mortimer](#), but this slender strand could be woven into propaganda of stouter texture. For it is important to remember that in this cywydd we are still in a period far earlier than the accident which associated the [Tudor](#) family of Penmynydd - patrons of [Iolo](#)'s, with the fortunes of the house of Lancaster. At this time (1385), the [Penmynydd](#) clan could have no quarrel with Mortimer, and the declared heir to Richard (a former prince of Wales) might well expect the loyalty of the house of [Ednyfed Fychan](#), leaders of the Welsh official hierarchy of the Principality.

But nothing was to come of Roger's dreams - or of [Iolo Goch](#)'s. The king's feelings towards him cooled - it is difficult to see where he stood in the confused intriguing of Richard's court. In any case, he fell in battle at Kells, 15 August 1398; his corpse was quartered, but it was reassembled for burial at Wigmore with his family. Yet, even later we find an expectation in Wales that a Mortimer would succeed Richard, and the disappointment when this expectation was thwarted may well have been one of the causes of the Glyndŵr rebellion. Once more, [Owain Glyndŵr](#)'s [Penmynydd](#) supporters had no quarrel with a Mortimer, and no cause to love a family which had usurped Mortimer 'rights.' Indeed, many in Wales believed (*E.H.R.*, xxxii, 560; [Lloyd](#), *Owen Glendower*, 28, 53, 69) that Richard II was still alive.

Author

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Sources

Chronicon Adae de Usk. A.D. 1377-1404 (1876, 1904)

H. Lewis, Thomas Roberts, Ifor Williams (eds), *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill, 1350-1450* (Bangor 1925)

T. F. Tout, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Roger Mortimer, 4th Earl of March](#)

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