

The Marshals and Ireland

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In the fall of 1947 H. G. Leaske discovered a slab in the graveyard of the church of St. Mary's in New Ross during the repair works to the church ("A Cenotaph of Strongbow's Daughter at New Ross" 65). The slab was some eight feet by one foot and bore an incomplete inscription, *Isabel Laegn*. Since the only Isabel of Leinster was Isabel de Clare, daughter of Richard Strongbow de Clare and Eve MacMurchada, it must be the cenotaph of Isabel wife of William Marshal, earl of Pembroke. Leaske posits the theory that this may not be simply a commemorative marker; he suggests that this cenotaph from St Mary's might contain the heart of Isabel de Clare. Though Isabel died in England March 9, 1220, she may have asked that her heart be brought home to Ireland and be buried in the church which was founded by Isabel and her husband ("A Cenotaph of Strongbow's Daughter at New Ross" 65, 67, 67 f 7). It would seem right and proper that Isabel de Clare brought her life full circle and that the heart of this beautiful lady should rest in the land of her birth.

More than eight hundred years ago Isabel de Clare was born in the lordship of Leinster in Ireland. By a quirk of fate or destiny's hand, she would become a pivotal figure in the medieval history of Ireland, England, Wales, and Normandy. Isabel was born between the years of 1171 and 1175; she was the daughter and sole heir of Richard Strongbow de Clare and Eve MacMurchada. On her mother's side she was the granddaughter of Dermot MacMurchada king of Leinster and Mor, the daughter of Muirchertach Ua Tuathail king of Ui Muiredaig and half-sister to Laurence O'Toole archbishop of Dublin. On her father's side she was the granddaughter of Gilbert fitz

Gilbert de Clare earl of Pembroke and Isabel de Beaumont, sister to Robert earl of Leicester and Waleran count of Meulan. Thus on her father's side she was related by blood to two of the original and most powerful Anglo-Norman barons in England and by half-blood to William the Conqueror. This was a young woman of impressive lineage, and the heiress to one of the greatest conglomerates of lands in all of the Angevin domains. Isabel would bring to her marriage the lordship of Chepstow in southeast Wales, the lordship of Leinster in Ireland, a claim to the barony of Longueville in Normandy, and a claim to the earldom of Pembroke in south west Wales. The man who married Isabel would become "in right of his wife" one of the greatest barons and tenants-in-chief of the Angevin kings. In London August 1189 Isabel de Clare was married to William Marshal, *familiaris Regis*, military commander, and ambassador of King Richard I of England. With this marriage William Marshal acquired the platform of fiefs, wealth, and vassals that allowed him to affect the course of medieval English history. Standing by his side from 1189 onwards was the beautiful Irish princess, Isabel de Clare.

In defining her Irish heritage it is necessary to begin with her grandfather, Dermot MacMurchada. In 1166 Dermot was forcibly ejected from his kingdom of Leinster by Roderick O'Connor, king of Connaught. Dermot knew exactly where to go for help in regaining his kingdom; in August 1166 Dermot sailed for Bristol with his daughter Eve and other members of his household. First, Dermot went to Robert fitz Harding in Bristol to discover where King Henry II was at that time. Discovering that Henry was somewhere in Aquitaine, Dermot left for the continent.

In his prime, there was no shrewder nor more skilled monarch than Henry II of England. When Dermot came to him asking for aid in regaining Leinster, Henry II recognized the opportunity this request presented. With Dermot as an ally in Ireland, Henry II would have a friend who controlled the fleet of Dublin and be of use should Henry II face rebellion in Wales or Scotland. Dermot was asking for men to help him in his pursuit to regain what was his, and Henry knew that if all that was required were knights from his own domains, Henry could gain much with no cost to himself. More than this, if Dermot took some of Henry II's knights from Wales, that would keep Henry's own disgruntled knights out of his lands and occupied in someone else's. Henry II issued a writ that stated that any of Henry's vassals in any of his lands were free to aid Dermot in his quest to regain Leinster (*Expugnatio* 220-28, 246-48, 299 f 65, 66). Thus began the events which would result in the birth of Isabel de Clare.

One of the leading Anglo-Norman knights who agreed to join Dermot was Richard Strongbow de Clare, lord of Chepstow and heir to the earldom of Pembroke. Richard agreed to the proposal of Dermot that if Strongbow would come to Ireland and bring his knights and help take back Leinster, Dermot would give Strongbow his daughter Eve in marriage and the lordship of Leinster on Dermot's death. Strongbow arrived in Ireland on August 23, 1170, with a large contingent of knights and bowmen from his Welsh lands. On August 25, 1170, Strongbow married Eve MacMurchada in Waterford Cathedral (*Expugnatio* 255-56). After the marriage the combined armies of Strongbow, Dermot, Miles de Cogan, and Raymond le Gros proceeded to Dublin and took it. Strongbow and the Anglo-Norman barons who had preceded him managed to re-take all of Leinster as well as Dublin and regain Dermot's kingdom. On Dermot's

death at Ferns in May 1171, Strongbow succeeded to the kingship of Leinster in right of his wife (*Mon Ang* vol. 6 part 2 1141).

With the success of Strongbow and the other barons in Ireland, Henry II knew that he had to gain control of both his vassals there and the lands they had gained. Henry came to Ireland in 1171 and proceeded to enforce his overlordship of both his own barons and the Irish. They would hold their lands in Ireland as tenants-in-chief to Henry II; Henry took their oaths of fealty and homage and reaffirmed their status as vassals and knights of King Henry II. Strongbow held the lordship of Leinster, John de Courcy held the lands of Ulster, and Hugh de Lacy held the lordship of Meath. Dublin would be royal and belong to the king as would the ports of Waterford and Wexford. Henry left Ireland in late 1172 having imposed his will upon that part of eastern Ireland taken by his barons (*Expugnatio* 272-73, 287; *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi* i 24-30).

Richard Strongbow de Clare died in Ireland in April 1176 and was buried at Holy Trinity Church (Christ Church) in Dublin with Lawrence O' Toole, archbishop of Dublin, presiding at his funeral (*Diceto* i 407). Henry II appointed William fitz Audelin as *justiciar* of Ireland and gave him custody of Strongbow's Irish lands. Eve and Strongbow had two children, Gilbert and Isabel. By medieval law all three were now in the custody of King Henry II as the widow and heirs of one of Henry's tenants-in-chief. The birth year of neither child has been recorded. Gilbert apparently died before 1185, but both left Ireland with their mother during 1176. Eve is found receiving an allowance from Strongbow's manor of Weston in 1176-77 (PR 23 Henry II 149; PR 27 Henry II 106). It is possible that Eve held the lordship of Chepstow in Wales as her dower; she is

shown receiving an advance of 20 pounds in 1183-84 for the defense of that fief (PR 30 Henry II 54).

Two facts about Eve MacMurchada are worthy of note. Though she was a very wealthy widow, Henry II never tried to re-marry her to anyone, not even one of his own barons. The second fact is that from the extant records, it seems that Henry trusted Eve to be responsible for Strongbow's large lordship of Chepstow at least until the second half of the 1180's (Flanagan Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers and Angevin Kingship 134). These two facts seem to indicate that Henry II honoured the loyalty and service of Richard de Clare and trusted Eve to be capable of caring for Strongbow's Welsh lordship. In their medieval world where loyalty was considered one of the greatest qualities, this was no small accolade to both Strongbow and Eve.

The date of Eve's death is unknown, but she was buried at Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire near the grave of her father-in-law, Gilbert de Clare, earl of Pembroke (Siddons 38 #9). She must have died in Wales or England; otherwise she would have been buried at Holy Trinity near her husband.

When William Marshal was gifted with the marriage of Isabel de Clare by Richard I in 1189, William had to leave Normandy and go to London to collect his bride-to-be. Isabel was in the custody of the *justiciar* of England, Ranulf de Glanville, and in the Tower of London (*Hist* 9514-9516). Not knowing the year in which Eve died, there is no way to know for certain exactly when Isabel had been placed in de Glanville's custody. What is known is that Henry II returned to England in the spring of 1188 to prepare for a crusade, and that he returned to Normandy in the winter of 1188. If Eve died during this time period, Henry II would have taken the precaution of placing Isabel

in the custody and keeping of de Glanville. He would have done this to prevent any greedy or over-ambitious baron in England from trying to kidnap and forcibly marry such a rich heiress without the king's consent. Isabel's marriage would be a matter of the king's will and discretion as the sole heir of one of Henry's greater tenants-in-chief according to law and feudal custom.

There is a lacuna in the extant records regarding the marriage of William Marshal and Isabel de Clare. They were married before August 13, 1189, but it is not known where they were married in London (*Hist* 9519-9536; Landon Itin. Richard 3). They apparently spent their honeymoon at Stokes d'Abernon in Surrey at the home of Engerrand d'Abernon (*Hist* 9537-9550). With no extant records, one can only imagine the beginning of this marriage between two complete strangers. However they began, Marshal and Isabel would form a union that lasted their entire lives, and together would influence the course of medieval history. With his marriage to Isabel de Clare, William Marshal became "in right of his wife" one of the greatest barons in the Angevin kingdom. History has shown that had Strongbow and Eve personally chosen a husband for their daughter and heir, they could not have chosen a better man than William Marshal.

William Marshal's first act related to Ireland was in August 1189 when Richard came to England for his coronation. John had been given the lordship of Ireland by his father in 1185, but John had treated Isabel's lordship of Leinster as if it was his own personal property. John had granted fiefs to his own men within the lordship, which was not his right as he only held Leinster in custody. Marshal went to Richard and asked that Richard force John to surrender Leinster to Marshal as Isabel's husband and return the lands that John had given to his own men. The only fief that remained was the fief of

Arklow which had been given to Theobald Butler, John's own butler. Theobald would still hold Arklow, but now he would hold it of Marshal as lord of Leinster and become Marshal's vassal (*Hist* 9582-9616, 10312-10340).

In the early 1190s Marshal sent Geoffrey fitz Robert to Leinster as his *seneschal*. The *seneschal* was the chief administrative official of a baron who had full authority in his lord's absence. Twice a year he presided over the *curia comitatus* hearing the major civil and criminal pleas and the minor pleas which were not reserved to the king's courts. These courts entertained pleas commenced under writ such as *novel disseisin* and served as the court of record for the tenants-in-chief. The *seneschal* represented his lord in matters dealing with the royal government in Dublin and in matters concerning the royal government within the lordship. The *seneschal* had to execute writs as if he were a royal agent within the lordship. He collected royal taxes, aids, and scutages and accounted for them at the Dublin exchequer. The *seneschal* was the lord's voice and authority within a lordship when that lord was not present. Geoffrey fitz Robert was given the fief of Kells as his own fief, and he governed the whole area of Kilkenny as well as most of Leinster as Marshal's representative. Geoffrey began the establishment of the port of New Ross under Marshal's orders (*Carta, Privilegia et Immunitates* 80).

The first record of Marshal actually being in Ireland was in 1200. From September 1200 when Marshal was at the court of King John until March 1201 when his presence at John's court is again recorded, Marshal apparently sailed to Ireland. The voyage was hit by a storm in the Irish Sea, and Marshal made a vow that if God saw them safely to shore, Marshal would found an abbey in thanksgiving (Bernard "Foundation of Tintern Minor" 528-29). On reaching the shore safely Marshal took steps to redeem his

vow. He executed a will that granted thirty *carucates* (3600 acres) of land to found a Cistercian abbey with monks from the great Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire. On his return to England, Marshal had King John issue letters patent confirming his will on December 3, 1200, at Hampstead Marshal in Surrey (Bernard “Foundation of Tintern Minor” 529).

In 1207 a series of events occurred that would bring William Marshal and Isabel de Clare back to Ireland. Meiler fitz Henry had been appointed *justiciar* of Ireland by King John. Meiler seized Marshal’s castle of Offaly without cause from Marshal’s point of view since Meiler was also a vassal of Marshal (Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #133). William Marshal sent his bastard nephew John to Ireland to correct this problem of Meiler intruding into Leinster. King John, however, diverted John from his purpose by appointing John marshal of Ireland (Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #353). This appointment immediately made Marshal’s nephew an agent of the king and therefore working against his uncle’s interest in Ireland. In the ensuing battle for control of Ireland between King John and the Anglo-Norman barons who were lords there, Meiler fitz Henry was captured and defeated by Marshal’s knights in Leinster with the help of Hugh de Lacy, lord of Meath. King John had to accept this defeat, but with his usual lack of grace and insight, he forced a new charter on Marshal for Leinster and on de Lacy for Meath (Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #381). These charters reduced the original power and control of these lords granted by the charters of King Henry II to de Lacy’s father and to Richard Strongbow de Clare. These new charters gave to the king the pleas of the crown over arson, rape, treasure trove and forstall and of the crosses (lands of the church which were part of the county of Dublin), and of the jurisdiction of the royal sheriffs of

Dublin. It also gave the king the custody and control of the marriages of any heir or heiress of any military tenant-in-chief within these lordships.

Once these charters were granted, Marshal left for Ireland to join his wife Isabel and his own knights who had been there during the battles with Meiler fitz Henry. Marshal would remain in Ireland from March 1208 until 1213. With Isabel at his side, Marshal would begin to develop the lordship of Leinster to a remarkable degree. His lordship would be characterized by stability and settlement in depth. Marshal organized a chancery for the entire lordship, with separate sheriffs for each of the four major subdivisions of his lordship. He made use of royal assizes and forms of action which were initialized under writs issued from his own chancery under his own name (Altschul A Baronial Family 282-83). Writs of error were allowed to run in his lordship so that judgments could be appealed to the royal courts in the case of failure of justice within the lord's court (Altschul A Baronial Family 283.).

Marshal had a keen business sense; he realized that Leinster was potentially highly suitable for the growing of grains. From his own experience in shipping grains from his Welsh and English lands to Normandy; he knew that grain was in great demand in the low-countries and Germany. Marshal recognized that the soil and climate in Ireland were perfect for the new techniques of spring and winter sowing and three-field crop rotation producing wheat, oats, beans, and peas. He also recognized the value of the Cistercian practice of sheep raising on land not suitable for beef. William Marshal had the same economic instincts as contemporary Italian entrepreneurs, and as the fourth son of a minor baron, Marshal had long ago learned that necessity is the germ of inventiveness. To aid his plans of economic development, Marshal brought large

numbers of settlers from among his free Welsh and English tenants who already knew the new techniques of agriculture.

With the influx of settlers and the development of economic potential, a series of satellite towns began to spring up in Kildare, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Wexford. Kilkenny was Marshal's *caput*, the capital of his lordship. He built a castle in stone at Kilkenny and made it his center of operations (Clohosey "Kilkenny Castle" 50). New Ross became the major port of Ireland under the skilled development of Marshal.

With New Ross' position on the Nore and the Barrow Rivers, it was a deep water port which could allow ships from England and Wales to go deep into the center of Leinster. By 1210 Marshal had the bridge built over the Barrow, and he obtained from King John the right of free passage for any ship bound for New Ross past the royal port of Waterford and favors in trade for his merchants of New Ross (*Pat.* 153b, 161b, 184; Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #674, #725, #862).

Marshal granted New Ross and his other boroughs and towns in Leinster a version of the Laws of Breteuil. These laws were originally created by William fitz Osbern, first earl of Hereford and cousin to William the Conqueror. They were created for fitz Osbern's borough of Breteuil in Normandy, and they came to be a pattern that Anglo-Normans used when they established and/or acquired new boroughs or towns. Generally they provided that the burgesses were allotted specific building sites within the borough and small amounts of agricultural lands outside of the borough for their own use. They could sublet or rent parts of their lots and could engage in trade within the borough. They were charged a maximum of 12 pence (or its equivalent) for these privileges, and the same amount as their annual rent. The burgesses were free to give-up their positions

and leave the borough at will and without penalty. They were protected by laws which stated they could only be forced to serve or stand trial in the court of their borough. They could not be amerced a fine greater than their annual rent (with the exception of some royal offenses). The liberality of these laws greatly encouraged merchants and craftsmen to settle in such boroughs, and with the growth of Marshal's boroughs came grants for fairs and markets that increased their economic success. New Ross quickly overshadowed Wexford as a trade center, and even outpaced the royal port of Waterford. Marshal had proven that by integrating settlement, agriculture, urbanization, and trade a medieval lord who was present and active in his lordship could create a thriving and economically successful fief to the benefit of all who lived there.

William Marshal and Isabel did not neglect the spiritual welfare of their tenants. He had already founded Tintern Minor in Wexford; he and Isabel founded St Mary's in New Ross as the sister priory of St John's at Kilkenny which they had also founded (*Mon Ang* vol. 6 part 2, 1135, 1143). Duiske Abbey was founded with Cistercians from the Abbey of Stanley in Wiltshire and was the largest Cistercian abbey in Ireland (Butler "The Charters of Cistercian Abbey of Duiske" 13-14, 17-19). The delicate detail found in the stonework of both St Mary's and Duiske is very similar and may reflect the hand of Isabel in their design (Cosgrove Medieval Ireland 74). Marshal and Isabel confirmed the gifts of Isabel's father to St. Mary's and to Holy Trinity in Dublin and added to those gifts (Sheehy "*The Registrum Novum*:" 261-263)

As an undefeated knight and warrior, Marshal did not neglect the military and secular side of his fief. He built or had built the stone castles at Kilkenny, Carlow, Ferns, Dunamase, and Carbury (Sweetman Medieval Castles Ireland 34, 37-39, 42-43).

By spring 1213 Marshal and Isabel left Ireland never to see it again. Marshal was once again in King John's favor as John desperately needed Marshal's aid and support. John was at war with Pope Innocent III over the nomination of Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury, and the pope was threatening to excommunicate John if he did not comply with the pope's election of Langton. From this time until the time of King John's death in October 1216, Marshal would serve as military commander, ambassador and *familiaris Regis* to King John. He would be with John at Runnymede and be a witness to the granting of the Magna Carta. He would defend the Welsh Marches for John during the rebellion of the English barons 1215/1216, and fight for John against the invasion of England by Prince Louis of France. On John's death, Marshal would be elected regent of England for the young Henry III and serve until shortly before Marshal's own death in April 1219.

There are two other events which tie William Marshal to Ireland's history. In January 1217, on the 14th and again on the 17th, two orders were sent to Geoffrey de Marisco as *justiciar* of Ireland in the king's name. They were sealed under the seal of William Marshal as regent of England. Both orders stated that de Marisco was to see that no Irishman was elected or promoted to any cathedral church in Ireland (Patent Rolls 1216-1225 22, 23). This order has been laid at Marshal's door, placing the major responsibility for this act upon his shoulders. This is an injustice and fails to consider the complete context in which this order was issued. King John had died 2 ½ months before, the new king was only nine years old, and England was involved with a rebellion of some English barons who were supported with the invading knights of Louis of France. John had submitted his entire kingdom, including Ireland, to the pope and placed all of his

lands under the pope as overlord. Cardinal Guala was the papal legate in England and the official voice and authority of the pope. Though Marshal was regent of England and in charge of issuing writs and orders for Henry III, he did not do this in a vacuum. Marshal had to govern England and all her domains with the advice and council of Guala as papal legate and representatives of the barons who supported Henry III. The pope was concerned with securing the loyalty and support of all to the young Henry III as heir to King John. Marshal was completely involved in trying to defeat the French in England and regain the loyalty of those English barons who had rebelled against King John. The resources of the crown were drastically depleted, and Marshal had to win a war and regain the support of the English rebels. He did not have the time, money, or men to have to contend with the possibility of rebellion in Ireland by either the English lords and/or Irish kings. The Church would have seen and believed that the greatest protection against such a thing would be loyal Englishmen in control of the Church in Ireland since the Church would answer directly to the Pope, not a secular power. The two orders were issued by Marshal as regent and under his seal, but to interpret them as an indication of possible bias against the Irish on the part of Marshal is to fail to recognize that it is more probable that they were issued on the recommendation of Guala as papal legate and an integral part of the regency governing England at this time.

The other event that tied Marshal to Ireland is that in February 1217, the Magna Carta was extended to all the subjects of Ireland so that they could enjoy the same liberties as those granted to the subjects of England (Pat Rolls 1216-1225 31). This was issued under the seal and order of William Marshal as regent of England. Had William Marshal not recognized the importance of the Magna Carta and the necessity that it

survive John's death and Pope Innocent III's annulment of it, all of western law could have been changed. Marshal knew that it tried to correct the abuses of power which had so characterized the reign of John. William Marshal saw that this great charter was extended so that it did give the same rights to the subjects of the king in Ireland, not just those in England.

Isabel de Clare Marshal survived her husband by almost a year; she died on March 9, 1220, and was buried at Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire since she could not be buried in the Temple Church in London next to her husband. There are few extant records to provide a clear idea of Isabel's character and person. Those records that do survive show a young woman who was at her husband's side most of their married life. In *L'histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* Isabel is found among the familial councilors of her husband during the important events of William's life. Isabel was allowed her voice and opinion even when it differed from William's, as it did with regard to Marshal's vassals in Ireland who had sided with Meiler fitz Henry in 1206/1207 (Mullally "The Portrayal of Women in the *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal*" 359). Isabel is found issuing charters in her own name in several records proving that she did exercise her power as heiress to her father (Sheehy "*The Registrum Novum*" 261-263; *Chartes de Priore de Longueville* 96 #XC; Round Cal. Doc. France 64 #193, 79 #229). Shortly after the death of her husband in April 1219, Isabel requested Hubert de Burgh as *justiciar* of England to send writs to the sheriffs of England and to Geoffrey de Marisco, *justiciar* of Ireland, stating that the king had accepted her fealty for *seisin* of her all lands, castles, and vills which were of her inheritance in both countries (Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #871, #880). The cavalier approach that John had taken with her lands in Ireland

while Isabel was still unmarried and in King Henry II's custody had taught Isabel to gain immediate possession and control of her lands on the death of her husband. There would be no diminishment or reduction of the fiefs which she held in right of the inheritance from her father and mother this time. All that she held in her own right and that which was gained by her husband would be protected for the inheritance of their children. This would be equally true of the lands that Isabel held in Normandy in the barony of Longueville by right of inheritance and by the fine of 2000 marks that William Marshal had paid Richard I in 1189 for *seisin* of those lands (*Liber Feodorum* 637-1138; Red Book of Exchequer 633). She went to France and swore fealty to King Philip for the Norman lands and to protect the barony of Longueville which Isabel and William's second son Richard held by the will of William Marshal (*Layettes du Tresor* i #1354, i #1397).

William and Isabel's two oldest sons also played a part in Ireland's history. William II succeeded his father in 1219 and his mother in 1220. From 1220 until his death in 1231, William the younger was in Ireland a total of almost four years. He founded the Franciscan abbey in Kilkenny in 1225 and was responsible for the great castle of Carlow. In May 1224 William was appointed *justiciar* of Ireland. He was sent to Ireland to end the war started there by Hugh de Lacy.

Hugh de Lacy had been deprived of his lordship of Ulster in 1210 because he and his brother Walter had supported William de Braose in de Braose's battle against King John. Hugh had been given a safe conduct to come to Henry III in February 1217 in order to have his lands restored after the death of King John. Hugh was apparently in France taking part in the Albigensian Crusade until 1219 and did not accept the safe

conduct at this time (Ann Mon iii 73). In 1222, after the death of the regent, Hugh was offered only the lands of his wife and a small parcel of lands given to him by his brother Walter; Hugh refused this offer (Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #1073, #1074, #1110).

In 1224 Hugh returned to Ireland without the consent of the king and formed an alliance with Hugh O'Neill and began attacking the lands of the king and Anglo-Norman barons. This became a war which was engulfing Ulster and Meath, and Hubert de Burgh, acting for Henry III, sent Marshal to Ireland as *justiciar* to combat Hugh and his half-brother William. William Marshal took the castle of Trim after a seven week siege, and his cousin William le Gras successfully relieved the siege of Carrickfergus castle. With the taking of the O'Reilly crannog and the capture of William de Lacy's wife and mother the war was over (Shirley Royal Letters i 500-03; Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #1203, #1204, #1205). Hugh de Lacy surrendered and was sent to England to Henry III (Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #1219). Hugh received absolution from his sentence of excommunication and two years later he was restored to his lands in Ireland (Ann Mon iii 91; Sweetman Cal. Doc. Ireland #1371, #1372, #1374, #1385, #1386, #1498, #1499).

William Marshal surrendered his office of *justiciar* of Ireland in June 1226, and from this point until his death on April 9, 1231, he never returned. William was buried in The Temple Church in London near his father.

Richard Marshal was the second son of Isabel and William, and he had been in Normandy as lord of Longueville (part of his mother's share of the Giffard inheritance) probably since 1219 (*Rotuli Normanniae* cxxxviii; *Ann Mon* i 79). Richard had also been in Ireland because he is a witness to at least two charters of his brother between 1220 and 1230 (Cal Ormond i p23 #46, p 36 #76). On the death of his brother William, Richard

succeeded as earl of Pembroke, marshal of England, lord of Leinster, and lord of Chepstow.

Beginning in the summer of 1233 Richard became embroiled in the controversy of King Henry III and Peter des Roches against Hubert de Burgh and the native English barons. Those barons and magnates who were Englishmen, at least second generation, were fighting against the excessive grants of Henry III to foreigners of English offices, castles, and lands. This was against the written clauses granted by the Magna Carta, and Richard Marshal, as marshal of England, was the leader of the opposition. When Henry III illegally took the office of marshal from Richard and began depriving Richard's vassals of their rightfully held lands and giving them to foreigners, Richard took up arms and fought back. Richard formed an alliance with Llywelyn ap Iowerth of Wales and successfully defended his lands and vassals in Wales against the attacks of Henry III and des Roches.

With the failure of des Roches to conquer and destroy Richard Marshal in Wales, he devised another plan. Letters were sent to Ireland with the king's seal attached to Maurice fitz Gerald, Walter and Hugh de Lacy, Richard de Burgh, Geoffrey de Marisco and others telling them that Marshal had been banished and declared a traitor to the king. If Marshal should come to Ireland, they were to bring him dead or alive to the king, and the king would divide Marshal's lands among them (Wendover Giles ii 582). In response to these letters, the same men listed began to attack, take, and destroy Marshal's lands in Leinster (Tout History of England 48-49).

In February 1234 Richard Marshal landed in Ireland, gathered an army of his vassals and began to take back his castles and lands and even the royal castle of

Limerick. Since Richard was proving that he could successfully regain his lands, the conspirators asked for a meeting with him to talk of a truce. On April 1, 1234, Richard met these barons at the Curragh of Kildare. Richard had only fifteen of his own knights with him, and the rest were his supposed loyal vassals, including Geoffrey de Marisco. When no agreement was reached, all but Richard's own knights deserted him. Richard faced Maurice fitz Gerald, Hugh de Lacy, Richard de Burgh and all of their knights. Knowing that he was facing his own death, Richard sent his brother Walter from the field and prepared to defend himself as well as he was able (Wendover, Giles ii 589). Richard defended himself so well that the enemy was forced to cut-off the legs of his horse in order to be able to attack him. While Richard was on the ground, the enemy rushed upon him, lifted his armour, and struck him in the back. Then they took his wounded body to Richard's own castle of Kilkenny which Maurice fitz Gerald had illegally seized (*Brut* 233-34; *Ann Mon* i 92-93).

At Kilkenny, Marshal was shown warrants from Henry III that ordered Richard's capture or death, and Richard was advised to surrender his Irish lands to the king which he did (Wendover, Giles ii 591). When Richard's wound began to swell and show signs of infection, Richard asked fitz Gerald for a physician. The physician's purpose was obviously not to prolong Richard's life; he probed Richard's wounds with a heated instrument so deeply and so often that Richard developed a fever and died on April 15, 1234 (*Mon Ang* v 266). Richard was hurriedly and secretly buried at the Franciscan Abbey in Kilkenny.

In A New History of Ireland: Vol. II Medieval Ireland James Lydon states clearly that there is no doubt that Henry III was complicit in the attack and murder of Richard

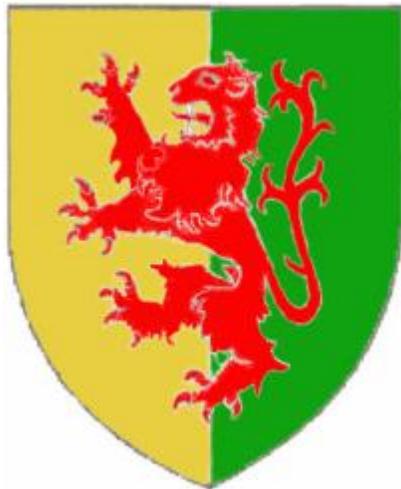
Marshal (168). Two annals of Ireland record this murder; the *Annals of Connaught* refer to it as one of the worst deeds done in that age, and *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn* wrote that Richard was murdered ‘by the Geraldines acting on the part of the king’ (*Ann Conn* 49; *Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn* 7). Further proof of King Henry III’s illegal actions is shown in the fact that in the summer of 1234 Hubert de Burgh initiated proceedings in the royal courts to regain the lands that had been taken from him. The judgment of the *magna curia Regis* was that Henry III had unlawfully outlawed his barons and seized their lands (Turner “Royal Courts” 15).

It is a bitter note in history to realize that some of the descendants of men who owed their very existence in Ireland to Richard Strongbow de Clare were guilty of murdering his grandson and namesake, Richard Marshal.

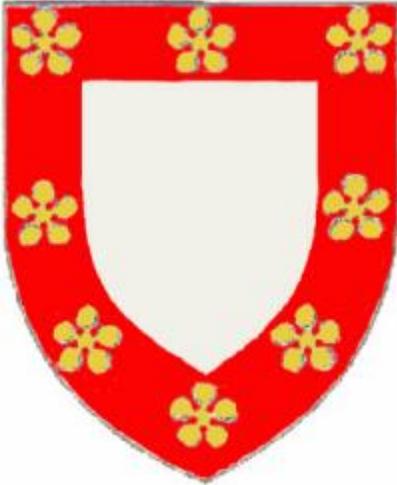
The photograph of the seal of Isabel de Clare on the title page was provided by the Historical Center of the Public Records of the National Archives of Paris, France (D10183 seal of Isabel de Clare). I would like to acknowledge the gracious assistance of Luc Requier, Secretary of the Documentation and Reproduction Department, Jean-Jacques Bois of the Photography and Digitalization Department, and Bruno Galland of the Department of Orientation and Communication. The above enlargement of the face of Isabel de Clare is based upon that photograph of her seal.

Isabel's seal was affixed to a document/charter given by King Philip of France. After the death of her husband, William Marshal (May 1219), Isabel de Clare went to France to insure that her Giffard inheritance of the lands in Longueville would be secure for her son Richard Marshal. Richard held these lands by the gift and will of his father, William Marshal. This document insured that Richard would hold the lands as his father had held them of the king of France, and that if Richard should die, his elder brother William would inherit and hold them as his father and his brother had held them (*Layettes du Tresor i #1354*).

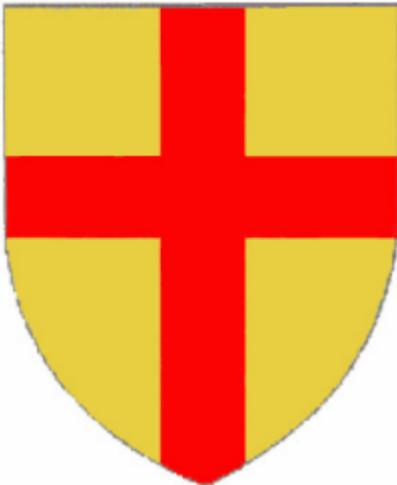
On this seal, Isabel is wearing a tightly fitted gown with a long mantle over it. On her head she wears a high fillet (hat-like covering) with a barbette (a hair net) beneath. Her right hand is on her breast and on her left wrist she holds a falcon by the jesses (Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum Vol. II 392 #6682).



*William Marshal
Marshal of England
“Per pale or and vert, lion rampant gules”
(Herald’s Roll, St. George’s Roll, Vermandois Roll,
Glover Roll)*



Raoul de Tancarville
Chamberlain of Normandy
“Gules an escutcheon argent, a border (orle) cinquefoils or”
(Vermandois Roll)



Roger Bigod
Earl of Norfolk
Grandson of William Marshal
“Or a cross gules”
(Glover’s Roll)



Richard Strongbow de Clare
Earl of Pembroke
“Or three chevrons gules”
(Archaeologia or Miscellaneous Tracts of Antiquity
Volume LXXXIX: MS Harleian 5816, fo. 366)

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