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The Career of Roger Mortimer, first earl of March
(c.1287-1330)

By

Paul Richard Dryburgh

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in the
Faculty of Arts.

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ABSTRACT.

This dissertation aims to re-assess aristocratic political culture in England during the early fourteenth century. It shifts the stress from a traditional Anglo-centric focus on baronial opposition to Edward II, to analysing the impact of renascent Scottish militarism, its ramifications in Ireland and Wales, and English attempts to maintain the hegemony established by Edward I across the British Isles. This is achieved by an examination of the career of an individual whose importance to such debates, though widely overlooked, is pivotal.

Roger Mortimer is one of the most enigmatic and influential figures in the history of the medieval British Isles. Lord of Wigmore on the Welsh marches, his career witnessed both loyal service to the person of the king and outright rebellion against it, even marshalling the resistance that precipitated the unprecedented deposition of an anointed English sovereign. An examination of Mortimer's strategies for prosperity and survival is attempted. Moreover, Mortimer enjoyed a landed inheritance spanning the Irish Sea, and showed a consistent desire to defend his Irish estates in person at a time of disengagement in transmarine landholding by the English aristocratic elite. This thesis examines such patterns of lordship in detail and will attempt to show the correlation between Mortimer's transmarine lordship and the increasing prominence he achieved in curial and national affairs.

Focus on the career of Roger Mortimer, above all his contemporaries, may reveal the realities of aristocratic politics during the early fourteenth century, for, alongside his lover, queen Isabella, he attained unprecedented access to the levers of political power. A straightforward analysis of his regime is accompanied by a demonstration that, even though the court dictated political life, Roger Mortimer was able to extend his influence across the British Isles and pose a serious threat to the kingship of Edward III.

Dedicated to the memory of:

Isabella Henderson Dryburgh (1917-1996)

Simon James Speed (1974-1995)

My inspirations.

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Barbara Wright, an independent scholar who claims she is merely an amateur who happens to be interested in Roger Mortimer. Barbara is one of the most dedicated and able people I have met during my research, and her advice, provision of transcripts, and hospitality cannot adequately be returned in kind.

Having recently taken up a temporary research post at the Public Record Office at Kew I am beginning to realise the fantastic job archival staff really do. I should therefore like to express my thanks to the staff of the British Library, the National Library of Ireland, and the National Archives in Dublin, most particularly Dr. Philomena Connolly, a much lamented source of information and advice, as well as to my colleagues in the PRO.

Finally, and above all else, my debt to my parents, who have been eternally encouraging and never questioning despite the rather bizarre career paths I have taken, can never be made up. I hope I have made them proud at least.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION:

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: *Paul Dyburgh.*

DATE: 25 March 2002.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

<i>BIHR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
<i>BL</i>	<i>British Library</i>
<i>CACCW</i>	<i>Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales</i> , ed. J.G.Edwards (Cardiff, 1935)
<i>CAPRW</i>	<i>Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century in the Public Record Office</i> , London (London, 1975)
<i>C.Chanc.R</i>	<i>Calendar of Chancery Rolls Various Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , London, 1277-1326 (London, 1912)
<i>C.Ch.W</i>	<i>Calendar of Chancery Warrants Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , London, 1244-1326 (London, 1927)
<i>C.Ch.R</i>	<i>Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , London, 6 volumes (London, 1903-27)
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1272-1509</i> , 47 volumes (London, 1896-1963)
<i>CDI</i>	<i>Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , London, ed. H.Sweetman, 5 volumes (London, 1875-86)
<i>CDS</i>	<i>Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , London, ed. J.Bain, 4 volumes (London, 1881-8)
<i>CFR</i>	<i>Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1272-1509</i> , 22 volumes (London, 1911-62)
<i>CIM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1219-1422</i> , 7 volumes (London, 1916-69)
<i>CIPM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III-[Richard III]</i> , 16 volumes (London, 1904-74)
<i>CJRI</i>	<i>Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls of Ireland, 1-7 Edward II</i> , ed. H.Wood and R.E.Longman (Dublin, 1905-)
<i>CMR</i>	<i>Calendar of Memoranda Rolls (Exchequer) Preserved in the Public Record Office: Michaelmas 1326 - Michaelmas 1327</i> , ed. R.E.Latham (London, 1962)
<i>Complete Peerage</i>	<i>The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom</i> , 8 volumes, ed. G.E.Cokayne (Exeter, 1887-98); ed. Vicary Gibbs and others, 13 volumes (London, 1910-59)
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: II, Papal Letters, 1305-42</i> (London, 1895)
<i>CPMR</i>	<i>Calendar of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall, A.D.1323-64</i> , ed. A.H.Thomas (London, 1926)
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , London, 53 volumes (London, 1891-1971)

<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Foedera</i>	<i>Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cuiuscunque Generis Acta Publica</i> , ed. T.Rymer (London, 1816-69)
<i>HMDI</i>	<i>Historic and Municipal Documents of Ireland, 1172-1370</i> , ed. J.T.Gilbert (London, 1870)
<i>IHS</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
<i>NAI</i>	<i>National Archives of Ireland, Dublin</i>
<i>NLI</i>	<i>National Library of Ireland, Dublin</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PRIA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</i>
<i>PRO</i>	<i>Public Record Office, Kew</i>
<i>P.W.</i>	<i>Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons</i> , ed. F.Palgrave, 2 volumes in 4 (London: Record Commission, 1827-34)
<i>RCH</i>	<i>Rotulorum Patentium et Clausorum Cancellariae Hiberniae Calendarium</i> , ed. E.Tresham (Dublin, 1828)
<i>Rep.DKI</i>	<i>Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in Ireland</i> (Dublin, 1869-)
<i>Rot.Parl.</i>	<i>Rotuli Parliamentorum</i> , ed. J.Strachey et al (London, 1767)
<i>Rot.Scot.</i>	<i>Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londoniensi in domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi asservati</i> (London, 1800-37)
<i>SHR</i>	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria History of the Counties of England</i>
<i>WHR</i>	<i>Welsh History Review</i>

INTRODUCTION.

On 25 February 1308 the twenty-year-old lord of Wigmore, Roger Mortimer, made his entrance onto the English political stage. Alongside Hugh Despenser, Edmund, earl of Arundel, and Hugh de Vere, he bore the royal robes at the coronation of Edward II.¹ These men belonged to a younger generation of magnates, several of whom had been raised close to the new king, for whom the coronation marked their induction into active politics. Indeed, it was to be hoped that the relations between crown and nobility, which the systematic pursuit of his rights by Edward I had made more rancorous, might be improved by more amicable co-operation between the new king and his barons.² Moreover, it was expected that military supremacy would be re-asserted over the Scots following Robert Bruce's rebellion of 1306, thus helping to confirm English dominance over much of the British Isles. What followed revealed the misplaced faith of contemporaries. The early fourteenth century was one of the most turbulent periods in English history. Increasingly fractious rivalries created political disharmony and endemic violence which not only hamstrung military reaction to growing crises but also fostered social dislocation. Much of the upper strata of English noble society were eradicated in sporadic bouts of civil conflict. This climaxed in the deposition of the anointed sovereign, an act whereby the levers of power and patronage became vested in a man not of royal blood. That man was Roger Mortimer.

Such a monumental rise to prominence and subsequent four-year ascendancy was unprecedented in English medieval history. A man who began life as the heir to one of the most valuable baronies on the peripheries of English royal authority, Roger Mortimer survived and exploited the violence of his day, ending his life as the lover of the queen mother and "king in all but name"³. Nevertheless, in spite of a number of recent scholarly portrayals of other outstanding figures in the politics of the period⁴, Mortimer's *entire* career still awaits academic treatment of any kind.⁵

¹ CCR, 1307-13, p.53.

² For analysis of the deterioration in political relationships, see: M.C.Prestwich, *Edward I* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp.517-55.

³ W.M.Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III* (Stroud, 2000), p.14.

⁴ P.C.Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston, Edward II's Adoptive Brother* (Oxford, 1994); N.M.Fryde, *The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, 1321-6* (Cambridge, 1979); J.S.Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, 1307-12: Politics and Patronage in the Reign of Edward II* (London, 1988); J.R.Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-22. A Study in the Reign of Edward II* (London, 1970); J.R.S.Phillips, *Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, 1307-24* (Oxford, 1972.)

⁵ The work of Reverend Harding has, however, painted a more detailed picture of the period of his ascendancy from 1327-30: D.A.Harding, 'The Regime of Mortimer and Isabella, 1326-30' (M.Phil. thesis: University of Durham, 1985). Similar comments apply to the research undertaken by Paul Doherty, although his focus is Isabella: P.C.Doherty, 'Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330' (D.Phil. thesis: University of Oxford, 1977.) There is also a valuable, if dated, thesis on the Mortimer family

This is all the more surprising when it is considered that in terms of primary source material Roger Mortimer is one of the best-served figures in the history of the period. Three chronicles survive of possible Mortimer provenance.⁶ The *Liber Niger de Wigmore*⁷, the Mortimer family cartulary, compiled for Edmund Mortimer, third earl of March (d.1381), is invaluable for insight into land policy, connections and establishing Mortimer's location at any one time. It covers his actions and those of his ancestors in England, Wales, and even Ireland, a unique record of a career that spanned the British Isles.

Before discussing the reasons for Roger Mortimer's comparative absence in the historiography of the early fourteenth century one consideration provoked by the source material must be addressed. Roger was a popular name for male members of the Mortimer dynasty of Wigmore. In the cartularies the subject of this present study appears alongside his grandfather (d.1282), uncle (d.1326), and grandson (d.1360), who all share the same name. As charters often lack dates, it is sometimes impossible to be certain which Roger is meant. This most frustrating problem is visible in official governmental sources. Only occasionally will a scribe differentiate between *le uncle* and *le Neveu*, or between Chirk and Wigmore, their chief baronies. Consequently, certain conclusions drawn below may be altered in the light of future scholarship, but these are areas I have highlighted.

In the main, however, the lack of attention upon Roger Mortimer is undoubtedly attributable to an underestimation of his importance to the historiographical debates concerning the early fourteenth century, which in turn is due to Mortimer's miserable reputation and the failure of historians to broaden the scope of their analysis. In 1593 the Elizabethan dramatist Christopher Marlowe published his play, *'The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the Second, King of England, with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer.'*⁸ It remains the best-known and most widely available account of the vexatious events of the early fourteenth century. Marlowe's characterization of Mortimer, whilst shot

from the Conquest onwards, which provides a useful account of Mortimer lordship on the marches of Wales: B.P.Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer' (Ph.D. thesis: University of Wales, 1934.)

⁶ The chronicle of Wigmore Abbey is to be found in W.Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, ed. J.Caley (London, 1830); the so-called *Wigmore Annals* is Chicago University MS C5 439, f.M82, but is transcribed in part in Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer', pp.490-501; finally, there is the *Chronicon Landavenses*, which, though not specifically a Mortimer chronicle, is very useful for the history of the family and of Roger Mortimer in general: BL MS Cotton Nero A.iv., ff.8-62v.

⁷ BL MS Harleian 1240. There is also a supplementary cartulary, which includes fresh charters. It can be found at BL Add. MS 6041. Finally in this regard, two rolls involving Mortimer's dealings with Bartholomew Badlesmere, can be found at BL Egerton Rolls 8724, 8730.

⁸ C.Forker (ed.), *Edward the Second* (Manchester, 1994).

through with chronological and historical inaccuracies, leaves us with the impression of a hot-headed, dynamic baronial leader transformed by devotion to the queen and a lust for power into a haughty, arrogant, self-obsessed anti-hero. How far this reflects reality is open to question but it is a wholly negative caricature derived almost exclusively from contemporary reaction to the events surrounding his ascendancy⁹. Without doubt the chronicle depictions of Roger Mortimer have stripped him of any real individuality and consequently made him less attractive as an historical subject.

Scandalized by his “secret band with queen Isabella”¹⁰ and the perceived misrule of the country in their interests from 1327-30, the broad selection of English chronicles that address themselves to the events of the early fourteenth century are almost unanimous in their contempt for Roger Mortimer. Put simply, he is considered an acquisitive royal favourite, a usurper and a regicide, a traitor to king and realm, a man with no redeeming qualities or apologists. In this, he fares worse even than Edward II who in Geoffrey le Baker has a champion of sorts.¹¹ Notably however, Mortimer’s depiction is directly comparable in many aspects with those of Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser junior, his predecessors, so to speak, in monopolising direct access to the king and siphoning off patronage for themselves and their intimates. Indeed, no discussion of chronicle opinion at this time can be complete without an examination of the phenomenon of the “favourite.” Jeffrey Hamilton observed in his analysis of Gaveston’s literary reputation that, in trying to account for such a calamitous interlude in English history and to provide instruction for future generations, chroniclers needed to focus on the malice of one individual who could be made to conform to the role of “evil counsellor” and who could be a foil for an unfit ruler.¹² He also feels that this created a stereotyped “favourite” to whom a number of common, malign qualities could be attributed, which took inadequate regard of the contrasting motivations and actions of an individual. Roger Mortimer has undoubtedly suffered from such stereotyping.

⁹ Marlowe’s principal sources for the historical background to his play were the sixteenth century chronicles of writers such as Raphael Holinshead and John Stow: *ibid.*, pp.41-66. These accounts drew on fourteenth and fifteenth century sources some of which may not have survived. Nevertheless, as E.M.Thompson demonstrated, Stow owed a considerable debt to Geoffrey le Baker, an Oxfordshire chronicler of the fourteenth century: *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynbroke*, ed. E.M.Thompson (London, 1889), pp.185, 204-5.

¹⁰ *Robertus de Avesbury de Gestis Mirabilis Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. E.M.Thompson (London: Rolls Series, 1889), p.281.

¹¹ See, for example, Geoffrey’s lurid description of Edward’s murder at Berkeley, which comes close to hagiography in its emphasis on Edward’s Christ-like forbearance in the face of almost intolerable torture: *Baker*, pp.29-31.

¹² Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, p.14.

One of the most serious charges against him, and that which occurs most frequently, is accroachment or usurpation of royal power. It was the easiest stick with which to beat a favourite and the best way of ensuring reverence might be maintained for the king. Following the successful coup of 1326-7 that elevated Mortimer and Isabella to power on the back of the unprecedented deposition of a reigning English monarch, we are told that a regency council under Henry, earl of Lancaster, was established to govern for the underage Edward III. Instead, however, the king “was directed in all matters by his mother, the lady Isabella, and lord Roger Mortimer.”¹³ Nowhere is Mortimer’s position fully explained but he was the man “*sine quo nihil pene Regina attentare voluit.*”¹⁴ No one would be permitted to approach or counsel the king other than the ruling couple who could manipulate royal power to serve their own ends.¹⁵ This was a charge similarly laid against Despenser. Having become chamberlain in 1318 he repeatedly treated Edward II as his puppet. None could approach the king, even on urgent war business, without first obtaining Hugh’s permission, or that of his father. Worse still, he demanded fines to allow access to the king’s person.¹⁶

It would seem that Roger Mortimer was fully aware of the strength of his position. Such monopolization of power and favour led inexorably to arrogance and over-weaning pride. It was because Mortimer “desirede and couetede an hye state”¹⁷ that he had himself raised to the earldom of March in the autumn of 1328. Thereafter, “he bicomē þo prout þat he wolde lese and forsake þe name þat his Ancestre haden euer before.” Not only was he henceforth adorned in “wonder riche clopes oute al maner resoun”, and wished only to be addressed as “earl”, but also eventually refused to rise to the young king and let him walk before him as befitted his royal station.¹⁸ This was an ostentatious display of his superiority over his peers which he further reinforced by hosting a Round Table at Wigmore in 1329, where he tried to portray himself as a latter-day King Arthur.¹⁹ Much of this behaviour has echoes in Edward II’s reign. The resentment felt towards Gaveston apparently emanated less from the affection in which the king held him and rather more from his arrogant exhibition of his influence. At Edward’s coronation he bore St. Edward’s crown. He was later rewarded with the earldom of Cornwall

¹³ *Avesbury*, p.283.

¹⁴ *Thomas Walsingham, quondam Monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglicana: I, 1272-1381*, ed. H.T.Riley (London: Rolls Series, 1863), p.184.

¹⁵ *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1307 to 1334*, eds. W.Childs & J.Taylor (Leeds, 1991), p.141.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.93; *Walsingham*, p.159; *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicorum*, ed. E.M.Thompson (London: Rolls Series, 1889), p.33; *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*, ed. F.W.D.Brie (London, 1904), p.212.

¹⁷ The following quotes are taken from *Brut*, p.261.

¹⁸ *Baker*, p.45.

¹⁹ *Avesbury*, p.284.

which was usually reserved for the king's brother. Furthermore, he mocked his fellow earls with stinging nicknames and always put on an ostentatious display.²⁰ With Despenser the comparison is particularly close. Avesbury believed he behaved as another king, whilst Baker considered his primacy to have seen England ruled by three kings - his father was included too.²¹ He was able to procure the earldom of Winchester for his father, and some chroniclers wrongly believe he had become earl of Gloucester, which at least reveals the perceived depth of his influence.

Not only was the favourite guided by pride, his access to power fed a deep-seated avarice. Even before the deposition of Edward II Mortimer and Isabella began a plunder of national resources, seizing castles, towns and rents.²² Following the Anglo-Scots peace agreement of 1328 they allegedly seized the £20,000 Scottish peace payment using it to proffer gifts to their following.²³ In 1329 having ravaged Henry of Lancaster's lands near Bedford for the latter's supposed rebellion, the *Brut* chronicler informs us that Mortimer exiled the earl's party. He did so "for þe Mortymer couetede forto haue her landes if he might þrouz any maner comittyng; for he was so couetous, and so miche his wille, and þat was Grete pitee."²⁴ Gaveston was a much easier target. He not only plundered the Treasury, but also siphoned his gain off to his Gascon relatives. His profligacy with the crown jewels greatly damaged the royal estate.²⁵ Despenser, conversely, is consistently charged with wickedly seizing lands to enlarge his own patrimony both before and after his actions on the Welsh marches in 1320-1, which precipitated the civil war that culminated in the surrender and imprisonment of Roger Mortimer and the destruction of several baronial lineages.²⁶

Pride, greed, malevolence, and subversion of national interest towards his own ends were the primary hallmarks of the favourite. That Roger Mortimer must have conformed was self-evident to most writers. Nonetheless, there was never total uniformity of view. Several chroniclers had individual agenda they wished to promote which undoubtedly contribute to the negative nature of his reputation. It is thus necessary to consider both provenance and contemporaneity. Perhaps the most obvious consideration is that within the literary corpus there is a wide divergence in dates of compilation. A

²⁰ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, ed. N.Denholm-Young (Oxford, 1957), pp.1-3.

²¹ *Avesbury*, p.280; *Baker*, p.17.

²² *Brut*, p.268.

²³ *Avesbury*, p.284; *Murimuth*, p.64; *Walsingham*, p.370.

²⁴ *Brut*, pp.260-1.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.206; *Castelford's Chronicle or the Boke of the Brut*, ed. C.D.Eckhardt (London, 1996), p.1051.

²⁶ *Baker*, pp.10-11; *Flores Historiarum: III, 1265-1326*, ed. H.Luard (London: Rolls series, 1890), pp.144-5, 218-21; *Vita*, pp.108-9.

number, and with regard to reflecting elements of contemporary thought processes probably the most crucial, were compiled in the years after Mortimer's death by men who had experienced his period of rule. It would seem that there was a deliberate attempt to blacken Mortimer's name from the start.

The *Brut*, for instance, probably compiled in or around 1333, was the first to record the gruesome details of the death of Edward II at Berkeley and directly associate it with Mortimer. It may well have been written under the patronage of Henry, earl of Lancaster, Mortimer's chief rival for the reins of power during his ascendancy. Indeed, it is possible that it was written as a semi-official justificatory account of the reasons for the capture and execution of Mortimer in 1330 from the Lancastrian perspective to exonerate the young king from any guilt in the more unseemly acts taken in his name. Geoffrey le Baker takes up this thread in his chronicle compiled around 1347. His account is even more explicit but he claims the authority of eyewitnesses to the events he describes, the truth of whose testimony cannot be known. Moreover, it is Baker who develops the story to a natural conclusion, claiming Mortimer ultimately wished to extinguish the blood royal and usurp the throne himself.²⁷ It appears that he had been asked to compile his work by Sir Thomas de la Moore who himself claimed to have borne witness to the events of the ascendancy, most famously the embassy to Kenilworth to renounce national homage to Edward II. Whether Baker wrote to exonerate his patron, or to commit what may have been rather hazy memories to parchment, is difficult to say. However, it is undoubtedly his account, the inspiration for Marlowe, that has survived longest in the literary imagination.

Other chroniclers who lived through the turbulence they describe likewise had little objectivity. Such contemporary and near-contemporary chronicles, which also include those of Ranulph Higden and Thomas Gray²⁸, were written during the lifetime of queen Isabella who died in 1358. To play up Mortimer's misdemeanours was to deflect Isabella's unquestionable guilt and perhaps assist Edward in his efforts to protect his mother. Furthermore, there was no value in looking beyond Mortimer's popular reputation. Mortimer had been condemned as a traitor in 1330, an attain that was not removed until 1354. Moreover, the Franciscan friar who is purportedly the author of the Lanercost chronicle and maybe drew up his account in the mid-1340s had initially witnessed the prolongation of

²⁷ Baker, pp.29-31, 45.

²⁸ *The Polychronicon of Ranulph Higden*, eds. C.Babington and J.R.Lumby (London: Rolls Series, 1865-86); *The Scalachronica of Sir Thomas Gray*, ed. H.Maxwell (Glasgow, 1907), pp.ix-x. For what follows, see A.Grandsden, *Historical Writing in England, ii: c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982.)

Scottish raids upon his beleaguered homeland in Cumberland, and then saw the English king's right to Scotland abrogated.²⁹

There is another branch of important narratives, of course, written several decades after, and possibly even drawing upon, these earlier accounts. The chronicles of the canon of Bridlington and Thomas Walsingham were in the process of compilation in the 1370s and 1380s.³⁰ Their view is naturally guided by their source material, though they do contain insights not found elsewhere, and it is hardly surprising that Mortimer should be condemned as vociferously here as elsewhere. His would always remain a story of adultery, ambition and treachery.

Modern historians have accepted and built upon this narrative tradition. In a nutshell Roger Mortimer is still largely regarded as the "unscrupulous adventurer"³¹ who, relying on the queen's infatuation with him, and their successful mastery of a "puppet king"³², was able to dominate English politics and gorge himself on the richest pickings. Natalie Fryde, particularly, pursues this argument and lambasts Mortimer for his violence and greed.³³ Historians have also generally expressed little caution when it comes to the death of Edward II. D.A.Harding has widespread agreement when he concludes that, "Mortimer was ultimately responsible for the murder at Berkeley."³⁴

This modern image is mainly based on a natural weighting of historical focus on his brief ascendancy in English politics. This is unfortunate for the period from 1327-30 itself has suffered from a paucity of interest. It sits rather uncomfortably in the position of being an unsatisfactory coda to the disastrous reign of Edward II where the will of "the greedy and disreputable couple"³⁵ exacerbated the mistakes of the previous regime, and as an unworthy prelude to the more glorious exercise of sovereign power by Edward III. Historians of the early fourteenth century have also concentrated rather more on patronage and dissent during the reign of Edward II and on the king's reaction to the restraints foisted upon him. In more recent times they have done this by examining the personal motivation of some of the more prominent figures. Roger Mortimer, it can be argued, was no more than a man of his times, except that he might be set apart for an ability to pursue his ambitions that one step further than

²⁹ *Chronicon de Lanercost, 1201-1346*, ed. J.Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1839.)

³⁰ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon Auctore Canonico Bridlingtoniensi*, in W.Stubbs (ed.), *Chronicles in the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ii (London: Rolls Series, 1883), p.xxv; *Walsingham*, introduction.

³¹ M.McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307-99* (Oxford, 1959), p.99.

³² Ormrod, *Edward III*, p.15.

³³ Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, pp.207-27.

³⁴ Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.150.

³⁵ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, p.96.

contemporaries or rivals. His rise to power marked merely the final stage of a career of supreme pragmatism of immense relevance to these debates.

The historiography of the reign of Edward II is dominated by the debate concerning the true nature of opposition to a king who, by chronicle testimony, is perceived to have “dishonoured the good people of his land and honoured its enemies.”³⁶ Traditional accounts contend that the combination of residual animosity from the baronial community towards the crown’s recent centralization of power under Edward I, a desire to return to their rightful role as counsellors to the monarch, repeatedly usurped by successive favourites, and the necessity to provide financial and defensive stability, shaped a consistent baronial opposition to Edward II determined to act in what it perceived to be the king and kingdom’s best interests. The necessary restrictions on the king’s powers of patronage, as enshrined in the Ordinances of 1311, led Edward to develop more personal methods of government, and the barons to try and reform the administrative institutions and personnel to suit their demands. The ensuing conflicts were therefore over the control of the levers of power.³⁷ More recent work emphasising the primacy of personality has significantly modified these views. J.R.Maddicott and J.R.S.Phillips have demonstrated that pragmatic pursuit of self-interest was the only constant; baronial cohesion, if it ever existed at all, was only ephemeral and provoked by national crisis. They maintain that those who took on the king had been frozen out of decision-making and, more importantly, of access to royal patronage, the path to increased personal wealth and standing. As ever definitive conclusions have proved difficult to come by. But, in Roger Mortimer we have a personality who throughout his career moved between close proximity and outright opposition to the king, and whose very elusiveness provides important insights into the motivation of at least one of the senior members of English aristocratic society in the early fourteenth century.

Emanating from a family with connections to the royal house and long-standing traditions of loyalty and service to the crown, the desirability of maintaining proximity to the person of the king was not lost on Roger Mortimer. It was reinforced further by his upbringing at the court of Edward II when the latter was Prince of Wales. Far more importantly, however, youthful curial associations developed into what appear to be close ties of trust and affection. When Edward II and his Gascon favourite incurred the wrath of their baronial accusers in the early years of the reign for their profligacy, the

³⁶ *Anonimale*, p.83.

³⁷ J.Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition to Edward II* (Cambridge, 1918); T.F.Tout, *The Place of Edward II in English History* (second edition, ed. H.Johnstone: Manchester, 1936.)

narrow nature of patronage and government, and the deterioration in the military situation, Roger Mortimer was one of the few members of his caste to side openly with the royal party. Indeed, throughout the first half of Edward's reign (1307-20), he may be counted among the king's more able and reliable lieutenants. This makes him an ideal vehicle to continue the work of Phillips and Hamilton into the under-researched field of curialism in the reign of Edward II. For, whilst several of his colleagues led by Thomas, earl of Lancaster, believed their best interests lay in dissent, Mortimer clung closely to his lord and slowly reaped the reward both financially and in terms of prestige and reputation.

This is not to say, however, that Mortimer slavishly pursued this obligation of loyalty. Indeed, not only are his actions at the time of Gaveston's execution difficult to assess, he has been associated with the "Middle Party," even though few historians explore this issue in detail. According to Tout and Conway Davies it was a grouping of the more reasonable, moderate elements in society who wished to release Edward from the grasp of his evil counsellors and thereby prompt reform.³⁸ The recent modificatory arguments of Professor Phillips, in particular, stress rather the curialist dimensions of those involved.³⁹ An examination of Mortimer's involvement will go a long way to helping to resolve this. For without doubt he was motivated in the negotiations for peace with the party of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, by a strong sense of self-interest and personal profit at the expense of others, but also by a real desire to address the root cause of the country's ongoing problems. Just as importantly, it was this phase in his career from 1316-20, in which he made a number of crucial connections, personal and marital, that had a great bearing on his later success.

This was especially the case when Mortimer, sensing a real threat to his position at court and in the Welsh marches, took the perilous step of embracing the rebellion that transformed his career. In the past the fact that Roger Mortimer survived the civil war and eventually came to political ascendancy in England have coloured investigations of his motivations. In reality, he deserves to be placed firmly amongst those protesting at the excesses of the Despencers, and, indeed, as he was able to share the leadership of the movement, an examination of his actions is all the more pressing. This case is made even more urgent by Mortimer's escape from imprisonment in August 1323, and his subsequent unquestioned leadership of national opposition to the increasingly arbitrary government of

³⁸ Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, pp.425-443; Tout, *The Place of Edward II*, pp.111-36.

³⁹ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.107-71; idem, 'The "Middle Party" and the Negotiating of the Treaty of Leake, August 1318: a Reinterpretation,' *BIHR* 46 (1972), pp.11-27.

Edward and the Despensers. Although Natalie Fryde has constructed a picture of the turbulence of the years from 1323-6, when the royal government became more edgy due to the threat from abroad posed by the fugitive Mortimer and his eventual lover, Isabella, Mortimer's role has yet to be elucidated. That this is important is demonstrated by the success of the coup against Edward launched in September 1326. While the young prince served as a figurehead, Roger Mortimer was the military leader and rallying point for those anxious to recoup favour lost since Boroughbridge.

Indeed, it has too rarely been recognised that Mortimer's rise to power was at least partly as a result of the forces of dissent and reaction loosed during Edward II's reign, whilst his ascendancy witnessed their development to a full and perhaps logical conclusion. However, far more important in this process was Roger Mortimer's position as one of the leading figures in the political culture not just merely of England, but of the British Isles as a whole. It is in this regard that an examination of his career has most to contribute to present historical debates.

After a career of determined campaigning in pursuit of what he perceived to be his rights, Edward I was able to bequeath what amounted to an "English Empire" in the British Isles with colonial administrations imposed on Wales and Scotland, to add to that which had been in operation across the Irish Sea for over a century. Edward II therefore became the first English monarch whose sole task was governance, not conquest, of these territories. Nevertheless, he had to attempt to maintain this hegemony in the face of the indomitable militarism of a resurgent Scottish nation under Robert Bruce, and his cultivation of discontent on the fringes of English authority. English medievalists who provide the bulk of the historiography too often overlook the fact that there cannot be total comprehension of the vicissitudes of English politics without considerable reference to arenas which incessantly impinged upon, and frequently dictated, the course of events in England.

Historians of the so-called "Celtic fringe", on the other hand, are attempting to reinterpret their national histories and the seminal works of Professors Davies and Frame have established new ways of examining national myths and preconceptions in terms of this broader context.⁴⁰ This has produced a significant redrawing of the historiographical map in recent times, Colm McNamee re-

⁴⁰ R.R.Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge, 1990); R.F.Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100-1400* (second edition: Oxford, 1995.)

assessing the early fourteenth century on these lines.⁴¹ However, in spite of these developments, there has been insufficient attempt to assess English reaction to these threats across the whole sphere of influence of the English king. There has, though, been rather more interest in the phenomenon of cross-border, transmarine landholding, particularly on the frontiers of English authority, and attempts to tease out the immensely complex nexus of aristocratic ties which were the essential features of lordship in the British Isles.⁴² Even so, this has been restricted, to an extent, to the two centuries following the Norman Conquest of 1066. The fourteenth century, which may have witnessed the breakdown of such connections, has received considerably less attention from scholars. There can be no question that an investigation of all of the various dimensions to Roger Mortimer's career will address these issues more confidently.

Born in the Welsh Marches, authority over which often lay outside English governmental jurisdiction, Roger Mortimer regularly moved in circles outside of those of the majority of his English baronial colleagues. Marriage brought him lands and contacts in Ireland and he thereafter shuttled between the two halves of his inheritance as lord of Wigmore and Trim. It also placed him within communities with distinctive identities and political cultures. The steeply upward curve in his fortunes throughout his career was due as much to the protection and expansion of these interests as to his ability to roll with the tide of political events in England and turn them to his advantage. For they inevitably involved him in the front line of attempts to hold back the tide of Scottish aggression throughout the British Isles, attempts which brought him greater reward and prestige and forced decisions upon him that would change his career.

Whilst Roger Mortimer does not come to prominence in English chronicle and historical accounts at least until his participation in the negotiations leading up to the peace settlement of 1318 between the king and Lancaster, he was better known outside the country. Anglo-Irish chronicles record his arrivals and departures in the Lordship in 1308, 1309, 1310 and 1315.⁴³ The Tintern *Flores* catalogues his participation in the struggles to put down the uprising of Llywelyn Bren in Glamorgan in

⁴¹ C.McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland, 1306-28* (East Linton, 1997).

⁴² R.R.Davies, 'Frontier Arrangements in Frontier Societies: Ireland and Wales,' in R.Bartlett & A.MacKay (eds.), *Medieval Frontier Societies* (Oxford, 1996), pp.77-101; R.F.Frame, 'Aristocracies and the Political Configuration of the British Isles,' in idem (ed.), *Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450* (London, 1998), pp.151-70; J.R.S.Phillips, 'The Anglo-Norman Nobility,' in J.F.Lydon (ed.), *The English in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1984), pp.87-104.

⁴³ "Laud annals" in *Chartularies of St.Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ii (henceforth *Laud*) ed. J.T.Gilbert (London: Rolls Series, 1884), pp.337, 338.

1316.⁴⁴ Indeed, Mortimer's depiction in the corpus of non-English sources is decidedly more favourable and revealing, for, crucially, his absence in English sources masks the importance of his early career.

Early adherence to Gaveston, for example, brought him into contact with a number of men who, like John Charlton, were important in keeping the regime of Edward II afloat and who would loom large in Mortimer's later career. Furthermore, this association may have seen him join the Scottish campaign of 1310-11 in which he was going against the grain of magnate opinion. Such an overt demonstration of his utility to the king was reinforced in 1312, when Mortimer successfully dealt with serious crises in Ireland and Wales. Most importantly, however, his willingness to establish a presence in Ireland, combined with a growing sense of trust in his abilities from the king, led to his appointment in November 1316 to be chief governor of Ireland. This was no mere sinecure as had perhaps been the case with Gaveston's lieutenancy in 1308, however. As part of an integrated strategy alongside his uncle, Roger Mortimer, lord of Chirk, who simultaneously became Justice of Wales, Mortimer was given the task of fending off the Scottish advance on the western seaboard of the British Isles made since Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland in May 1315. Not only was this at a time of acute domestic disharmony in England, the Scottish manoeuvres perhaps carried a wider threat linked to a union of the Celtic peoples to cast off the "Norman yoke."

Mortimer's lieutenancy, whilst not remedying more pressing problems, did witness the retreat of the Scottish interest in Ireland, the frustration of any wider schemes, and prepared the ground for their ultimate defeat. His reward was re-appointment as justiciar in March 1319 to restore a measure of order and stability to the Lordship. Without question it was his military successes in Ireland that formed the foundation of his subsequent rise to power, earning him widespread respect, royal favour, and wider connections. More immediately, however, it was when he felt his main landed interests on the Welsh marches were being endangered by the accumulation of numerous franchises in south Wales by Hugh Despenser that his carefully cultivated relationship with Edward II shattered, bringing him to the forefront of opposition to the ruling oligarchy. Such were the passions aroused that Mortimer felt forced to defend his interests even in open warfare upon the king. Nonetheless, an unwillingness to press his cause to a bitter conclusion, as others were to do in defeat at Boroughbridge, led him to surrender, and it was his previous service to the king across the British Isles that must have saved him.

⁴⁴ Flores, p.339.

Following his miraculous escape from the Tower and exile in France in 1323, Roger Mortimer constantly exploited these wider political dimensions. Not only did he communicate with the Scottish king, he made use of his vast network of contacts across the British Isles to unsettle the English king and his ministers. It was perhaps fitting that Edward II should be captured in Wales after failing in all probability to reach refuge in Ireland. In addition, far from merely emptying the fund of patronage available to him as the leading politician in England during his ascendancy, Mortimer concentrated his acquisitiveness on those areas in which his influence was at its strongest. His construction of two parallel empires in miniature on either side of the Irish Sea was his greatest legacy, capped off by his creation as earl of March in 1328 which truly affirmed his place as the most important figure in the politics of the British Isles.

CHAPTER 1:
EARLY CAREER, c.1304-15.

Edmund Mortimer, seventh baron Wigmore, died on 25 July 1304.¹ He bequeathed an impressive legacy to Roger, his son and heir, particularly in terms of lands, wealth and standing. Indeed, there could be little doubt that the teenager would be destined to play a significant part in the politics of his day. Nevertheless, despite the advantages he enjoyed none could have foreseen the extent of his future achievement at this juncture. Among historians, moreover, only J.R.S. Phillips has actually provided an assessment of Mortimer's career as a whole, stating that he "was one of the abler men of the period." But he accompanies this with the caveat that "this was not initially obvious."² Such an analysis depends largely on where the historical focus lies. An examination of a broader range of source material makes it clear that, in the first decade or so of his active political and military career, Roger Mortimer made decisions and pursued policies which brought him into closer proximity to the military and political front line. The networks of contacts made in his youth, though potentially deadly, inducted him into more elevated circles, giving him the chance to demonstrate his ability in manifold ways to the person whose opinion mattered most – the king. Despite having a low profile in contemporary English accounts of the early stages of the reign of Edward II, Mortimer quietly and effectively proved himself an important cog in the king's struggles with his baronage and in the maintenance of his father's colonial legacy.

A glance at the inquisitions taken following Edmund Mortimer's death reveals land, rents, fees, and services in twenty-one English counties.³ The backbone of his territory lay in the broad swathe of lordships bestriding the Anglo-Welsh border, in the area known as the "Middle March". Centred on the castle and barony of Wigmore, he claimed title to numerous important Herefordshire manors including Kingsland, Eardisland, Pembridge, Orleton, Thornbury and Much Marcle. In Shropshire Cleobury Mortimer was held as a liberty. When these lands are considered alongside the lordships of Radnor, Maelienydd, Gwerthrynion, Ceri, and Cedewain it is clear that Roger Mortimer would rank prominently among the lords of the Welsh frontier. Much of the credit for the construction of this inheritance must go to Roger's grandfather, Roger Mortimer, sixth baron Wigmore (1232-82),

¹ The Wigmore Abbey chronicle places his death at Wigmore on 26 July: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351. However, a writ of *diem clausit extremum* was issued at Stirling on 25 July, leading B.P.Evans to conclude that he either died in Scotland on that day or shortly before, or at Wigmore some days previously. B.P.Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.196.

² Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.20.

who cultivated a career of service to the crown and, more importantly, to the person of the king, a pattern his grandson would profitably emulate.

During the crisis of 1258 when the protest against the governance of Henry III and his Savoyard favourites was at its height, Roger Mortimer was elected to the “Council of Fifteen”, established to make reforms and re-establish a greater measure of baronial participation in government. He then became one of seven regents when Henry travelled to France to ratify the Treaty of Paris in November 1259.⁴ Pressure on his lands and a personal affiliation to the Lord Edward, however, ensured that his subsequent loyalties were staunchly royalist. Indeed, he became one of the principal players in the struggles against the Montfortians. Following the battle of Lewes (14 May 1264), which saw both king and prince captured, he played a major role in securing the prince’s escape.⁵ At the climactic battle of Evesham (5 August 1265) Mortimer was delegated to lead the royalist rearguard. Thereafter he was clearly close among the confidants of the prince, for when the latter took the Cross in 1270 Roger Mortimer was one of those entrusted with looking after his interests.⁶

It was primarily in the Welsh campaigns of Edward I that the Mortimers came into their own. When Edward I moved against Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, in July 1277, Roger Mortimer was made captain of the forces at Montgomery, and in April 1278 he received the surrender of Dolforwyn castle for the king.⁷ Reward for his work was forthcoming: in 1279 he was granted not only Dolforwyn but also the marcher lordships of Ceri and Cedewain⁸; moreover, he re-asserted and consolidated his lordship over Maelienydd, weakened by a revolt at Cefnlllys in 1262, and Gwerthrynion, where Llewellyn ap Gruffydd had intervened in 1256.⁹ His son Edmund continued this sequence of service and reward.

³ PRO C133/114, no.8; *CIPM*, IV, no.235, pp.157-66. See Appendix 2 below, pp.253-60.

⁴ F.M.Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1962), p.150, n.2.

⁵ Professor Prestwich has doubts about the pivotal role in the escape that Mortimer played – he had apparently given Edward a horse to ride off on – but does agree that the pair met at Ludlow after Edward had made good his escape: Prestwich, *Edward I*, p.49.

⁶ Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, p.225; Prestwich, *Edward I*, p.73.

⁷ Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp.176-7.

⁸ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67r; BL Add. MS 6041, f.16r. The order for the delivery of these estates was issued to Bogo de Knowille on 7 January 1279: *CFR, 1272-1307*, p.106.

⁹ J.J.Crump, ‘The Mortimer family and the Making of the March,’ in M.C.Prestwich, R.F.Frame and R.H.Britnell (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England VI* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp.117-26.

Immediately after his father's death Edmund and his brother Roger¹⁰ became heavily involved in the events surrounding the killing of Llewellyn at Irfon Bridge and, thus, the breaking of effective Welsh resistance to Edward I.¹¹ The king was suitably impressed. On 8 September 1283, Edward knighted Edmund at Winchester. Thereafter, Edmund was married to Margaret, daughter of William de Fiennes, the second cousin of queen Eleanor.¹² His favoured position was enhanced when, having participated in the campaign that finally saw off Prince Dafydd, he received the manors of Thornbury and Marcle in perpetuity on 6 January 1286.¹³ When in June 1287 Rhys ap Maredudd, a prominent figure in south Wales, rose in rebellion, Edmund was again called upon both to provide forces and, in this case, to take on the chief keepership of Cardiganshire alongside Humphrey, earl of Hereford.¹⁴ Although Edward launched persistent attacks on Edmund's liberties on the marches in the 1290s, he soon returned to royal favour.¹⁵ On 26 April 1302, for example, he had received licence to repay his substantial debts and those of his ancestors at £20 per annum, by the king's grant.¹⁶

Military skill and persistent service to the crown had brought the Mortimer family, therefore, a broader territorial base and an entrenched position in baronial society. The contracting of highly profitable marriages deepened this. Edmund's marriage to Margaret de Fiennes brought him into the outer circles of the royal family. His own mother, Matilda de Braose, moreover, had been one of the heirs to the vast Marshal inheritance. She brought with her extensive estates including the lordship of Radnor, one third of Brecon, and claim to one third of Haverford, as well as Bridgwater castle and the manor of Awre in Gloucestershire.¹⁷ She conveyed much more besides, most notably lands at Dunamase and Newburgh in Leix in Ireland.¹⁸ Whilst these were to be given in marriage to Theobald de Verdon junior, claimant to half of Meath, with Edmund's daughter, Matilda, in 1302, by 1307 Roger Mortimer was petitioning for their return to him as part of his Irish inheritance.¹⁹ The Wigmore chronicler proudly boasts of Roger's ancestry which thereby stretched back to Strongbow,

¹⁰ For a more substantial discussion of his influence, see below, pp.17-19.

¹¹ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351; Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp.193-4.

¹² *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351; Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer', p.184.

¹³ *C.Ch.R. 1272-1300*, p.328.

¹⁴ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' pp.188-9; Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp.218-9.

¹⁵ For more details, see Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' pp.367-76.

¹⁶ *CFR, 1272-1307*, p.452. In December 1304 Edward renewed this grant in favour of Roger, the first real evidence of his standing: *CPR, 1301-07*, p.305.

¹⁷ *CIPM*, IV, no.41, pp.19-20.

¹⁸ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117r; BL Add. MS 6041, f.45v.

one of the original Anglo-Norman adventurers in Ireland.²⁰ There is no doubt that this heritage was to be cherished. It was a connection that Roger Mortimer's own marriage would enhance considerably.

His bride was Joan de Joinville. As heiress of her grandmother, Matilda de Lacy, wife of the long-time justiciar of Ireland, Geoffrey de Joinville, she brought Mortimer the marcher lordship of Ewyas Lacy and the castle and a moiety of the town of Ludlow, as well as the Irish liberty of Trim. The balance of the available evidence suggests that theirs was an arranged marriage. The Wigmore annals place the wedding in 1301, even supplying the precise date of 20 September.²¹ It seems clear that Edmund Mortimer believed an increase in the profile of his family across the British Isles was important and wished to sink roots far deeper into Welsh marcher and Anglo-Irish society. On 13 April 1300 the king granted licence to Edmund Mortimer to demise to Geoffrey and Matilda £120 of land in his manors of Stretfield Mortimer, Worthy Mortimer, Cleobury, and Wigmore, for eight years, so as to acquit himself of the debt in which he was bound to them, perhaps evidence of some sort of pre-nuptial agreement.²²

Roger Mortimer had thus acquired a network of valuable transmarine interests. Already a marcher lord of considerable standing, he "was immediately rendered one of the greatest territorial magnates in Ireland," by his marriage.²³ This necessarily broadened his horizons, his responsibilities, and paved the way for new and important alliances. Just as crucially, however, the efforts of his immediate forebears had provided him with the opportunities to build the network of connections and to continue the path of service and reward vital to his future success.

One other major advantage in his family background was the relationship he forged with his uncle, Roger Mortimer. Aged approximately forty-five²⁴ at his elder brother's death in 1304, Roger senior's experience and prestige marked him out as the effective leader of the Mortimer family. His role in the conflict with Llewellyn had inspired Edward I to create a separate marcher inheritance for

¹⁹ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.33; P.Connolly, 'Irish materials in the class of ancient petitions (SC8) in the Public Record Office, London,' *Analecta Hibernica* 34 (1987), p.56.

²⁰ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351.

²¹ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer', p.511. Evans was working from Latin MS 215 in John Rylands Library, Manchester. The Wigmore chronicle, though, believes that Mortimer, in releasing his lands from the wardship of Piers Gaveston at some time before 9 April 1306, bought the right to marry whom he would choose: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351.

²² They were presumably Joan's guardians. Her father, Peter, had died in 1292: *CIPM*, VI, no.344, pp.209-10. For the debt, see *CCR, 1302-07*, pp.170-1. For analysis of how Mortimer managed his inheritance, see the conclusion to this thesis, below, pp.223-5, 228-30.

²³ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.206.

him. By a grant of the forfeited lands of Llewellyn Fychan, lord of northern Powys, effected on 2 June 1282²⁵, Roger became lord of Chirk. He subsequently served in Gascony in 1294/5 and played his part in Edward I's Scottish campaigns.²⁶ When, in 1300, Edward I laid siege to Caerlaverock, Roger and William de Leybourne were made guardians of Prince Edward who was enjoying his first taste of active campaigning.²⁷ It was tribute to the effectiveness and longevity of his service to the crown in that arena, as well as his respected standing in Welsh marcher society, that he was created Justice of Wales on 15 January 1308, an honour he would hold with only a temporary break in 1315-16 until 1322.²⁸

Though a lord of considerable independent standing, Chirk's interests were inherently bound up with those of his nephew. The consolidation and expansion of the Mortimer estates on the Welsh marches were primary aims for both men. When Roger junior headed to Ireland he could do so in the knowledge that his uncle was protecting his interests. Chirk could also exploit his official position. On 26 August 1309, for example, the king granted Mortimer of Wigmore the Welsh commote of Deuddwr following the verdict of an inquisition *ad quod damnum* taken by his uncle, the Justice, that it would not be to the king's loss.²⁹ The association forged between uncle and nephew was undoubtedly one of the most important of Roger junior's career. In a close working relationship which endured until their surrender in January 1322³⁰, the uncle could impart information vital for his nephew's development as a political operator and emphasise where his young charge's priorities should lie.

Conversely, the apparent strength of this relationship is one of the chief factors contributing to the exclusion of Roger Mortimer's *whole* career from the historiography of the early fourteenth century. Chirk himself, who as Justice of Wales was regularly in the front line, has been undervalued, suffering demotion to the ranks of historiographical non-entity alongside other figures like the earls of

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.197.

²⁵ *C.Chanc.R.*, 1277-1326, p.223.

²⁶ *CPR*, 1301-07, p.342. On 4 December 1299 he received a protection for going there: *C.Ch.W.*, 1244-1326, p.105. A similar writ was issued in his favour on 11 March 1303: *C.Chanc.R.*, 1277-1326, p.83.

²⁷ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.200.

²⁸ *CPR*, 1307-13, p.12. T.F.Tout, *The Place of Edward II*, appendix, p.336.

²⁹ *CPR*, 1307-13, p.183; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67r; BL Add. MS 6041, f.16r.

³⁰ See below, pp.81-4

Richmond and Warenne.³¹ J.R.S. Phillips comments that Chirk “was a rather shadowy figure, who appears to have been swept along by the tide of events.”³² Critically, historians of the reign of Edward II have tended to treat the Mortimers as a pair, largely stripping them of individuality in decision-making and connections. B.P. Evans’s conclusion, for instance, that in the period 1318-20 the activities of both Mortimers became identified with each other to the extent that “their careers are best treated conjointly,” is symptomatic.³³ This state of affairs cannot justifiably be maintained for it masks the range of independent connections and affiliations Mortimer of Wigmore was able to accumulate throughout his career.

Aged between sixteen and eighteen at his father’s death³⁴, Roger Mortimer was still technically a minor. Payments for his winter fee and robes recorded in the Wardrobe accounts for 1305-06 confirm that he had entered the protective and challenging environment of the royal household, probably at some point before his father’s death.³⁵ Here he was largely among equals – young men, some heirs to sizeable lordships, growing together in royal service. Indeed, it is noteworthy that several of those similarly receiving fees like Bartholomew Badlesmere, Gilbert Talbot and Hugh Audley junior, loomed large in Mortimer’s later career.³⁶ Mortimer was now in the direct glare of Edward I and initially seems to have grown in stature, to the extent that on 9 April 1306 Edward I ordered his English and Irish escheators to grant him seisin of his inheritance though he was still under age.³⁷

³¹ J.R.S. Phillips has argued that Warenne “played no major part in English politics”, and that Richmond’s association with the king meant that he “had very little independent importance.” Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.9-10, 20.

³² *ibid.*, p.12.

³³ Evans, ‘The Family of Mortimer,’ p.203b.

³⁴ There is some dispute about Roger’s actual birth date. The chronicle sources place his birth in 1288. The Wigmore chronicler asserts he was aged sixteen years and three months at his father’s death, placing his birth in April 1288: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351. The Wigmore annalist is more specific giving 1 May 1288: Evans, ‘The Family of Mortimer,’ p.507. However, the inquisitions *post mortem* offer other evidence. The Berkshire/Hampshire and Gloucestershire inquisitions say Roger was seventeen on St. Mark’s day last, placing his birth at 25 April 1287. Were this correct, he would share the same birthday as Edward II who was born on this day in 1284 – perhaps evidence of a more intimate and binding connection. The Buckinghamshire inquisition, though, says he was aged eighteen on 3 May last, putting his birth in 1286. See *CIPM*, IV, no.235, pp.157-8.

³⁵ PRO E101/369/11, f.159.

³⁶ *ibid.*, ff. 107r, 108v. For Badlesmere and Talbot, see below, pp.158, 188-9. For Audley, see below, chapters 3 & 4.

³⁷ *CCR*, 1302-07, p.377.

The occasion for this was the knighting of the prince at Westminster on 22 May 1306. There Mortimer would join up to 300 other nobles in being knighted.³⁸ Edward I was keen to knit the up-and-coming community to his heir and made special efforts to ensure that several young men would be ready to take their place beside him. Both Edmund FitzAlan and John de Warenne were delivered the respective earldoms of Arundel and Surrey, though under age, in the same week as Mortimer received his father's lands.³⁹ Moreover, Edward issued several writs to Ralph de Stokes, keeper of the Great Wardrobe, ordering him to ensure that Mortimer and other new knights, including Warenne, Fulk FitzWarin, and John Maltravers, had livery suitable for their status, in Mortimer's case for the son of a baron.⁴⁰ Mortimer was now an independent lord of considerable standing. Within a few months, however, he would seriously endanger all he had recently gained.

On 18 October 1306 orders were issued to numerous sheriffs to resume the lands and goods of twenty-two men who had withdrawn from the army in Scotland and had gone overseas to tourney.⁴¹ Mortimer was prominent among these men, some of whom were in the royal household⁴², others of "the younger generation of families well known in court and camp during Edward I's reign."⁴³ Why had they done this?

Extrapolating from the relative leniency of the punishments meted out – Mortimer and fifteen others were pardoned on 28 January 1307⁴⁴ – Hilda Johnstone felt this was a question of bored young men seeking relaxation and respite from a campaign with no special significance. The summer campaign in Scotland had gone relatively well: Aymer de Valence had defeated Robert Bruce at Methven in June, and on 11 July the prince retook Lochmaben castle; in September, he also

³⁸ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351. Estimates vary as to the number of new knights that day from 97 to 297: *French Chronicle of London*, ed. G.Aungier (London: Camden series, vol.28, 1844), p.31; *Walter of Guisborough*, ed. H. Rothwell (London: Camden third series, vol. 89, 1957), pp.367-8.

³⁹ *CCR, 1302-07*, pp.373 (Warenne), 375 (Arundel).

⁴⁰ PRO E101/369/4.

⁴¹ *CFR, 1272-1307*, pp.543-4; PRO E101/369/11, ff.148v-149r. Those involved were Piers Gaveston, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, Henry and Humphrey de Bohun, Walter and William de Beauchamp, John de Wateville, John le Warre, John de Chandos, Gilbert, son of Thomas de Clare, Robert de Tony, Payn Tybotot, Robert Darcy, Phillip de Coleville, John de Haudlo, Giles d'Argentine, Walter de Bermingham, Robert de Kendale, Henry de Leyburn, Ralph Basset, Adam de Swylinton, Thomas de Verdon.

⁴² Piers Gaveston, Payn Tybotot and Gilbert, son Thomas de Clare: PRO E101/370/29.

⁴³ The Beauchamps, Bohuns, and Tonys: H.Johnstone, *Edward of Caernarvon, 1284-1307* (Manchester, 1946), p.116. Her association of Mortimer of Wigmore as the Prince's guardian at Caerlaverock is erroneous. As shown, it was his uncle of Chirk: see above, p.18.

⁴⁴ *CCR, 1302-07*, pp.481-2. Those omitted were Argentine, Chandos, Gaveston and Leyburn. Johnstone, *Edward of Carnarvon*, p.116, n.4.

recaptured Kildrummy, seizing the earl of Atholl.⁴⁵ Mortimer himself seems to have played some part. In September the Prince's pantry and buttery gifted him two tuns of flour and one of wine from the stores at Carlisle.⁴⁶ It appears this may have been Mortimer's first experience of active combat in royal service. Furthermore, the miscreant knights only departed after Edward had established winter quarters at Lanercost.⁴⁷ The Prince also slipped out of Scotland at this time.⁴⁸ Perhaps they took this as their invitation to have some fun. There is certainly evidence to suggest that several of the miscreant knights enjoyed the tournament. Three of them – Tony, Argentine, and Leyburn – had been forfeited in November 1302 for leaving the king to joust at Byfleet.⁴⁹ More notably, twelve of the twenty-two forfeited knights attended the infamous Dunstable tournament before Easter 1309.⁵⁰

On the other hand, there is no question as to the seriousness of their offence. It is clear from the writs of forfeit that Edward considered the band to have been “deserting the king and his son.”⁵¹ The Scottish campaign of 1306 was a response to Bruce's murder of John Comyn at Dumfries on 10 February 1306 and the former's seizure of the Scottish throne. The prince's knighting in May served two purposes: to prepare him for the leadership of a campaigning army in Scotland; and to commit the new generation to the maintenance and defence of the old king's legacy. At the so-called “Feast of the Swans” on the evening of the ceremony Edward swore to avenge Comyn's murder. The prince declared he would not sleep two nights in the same place until he had reached Scotland.⁵² Matthew Strickland has argued that Edward, by communal oath-taking later that day, committed the next generation to a “blood feud” with Bruce and his cohorts.⁵³ If the king was having doubts about his son's ability and commitment to the causes he espoused⁵⁴, it must have been galling to see such a group of aspiring young men abandoning them too. Unless they were either naïve or too full of lust for

⁴⁵ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.24; Prestwich, *Edward I*, p.508.

⁴⁶ PRO E101/369/11, ff.81v, 192v.

⁴⁷ J.S.Hamilton, “‘Menage a Roi’: Edward II and Piers Gaveston,” *History Today* 49 (1999), p.28.

⁴⁸ Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp.509-10.

⁴⁹ *CCR, 1302-07*, p.66.

⁵⁰ They were Argentine, Basset, the Beauchamps, Bermingham, Humphrey de Bohun, Chandos, Darcy, Handlo, Kendale, Leyburn, and Tybotot: *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, iv (London, 1837), pp.61-72.

⁵¹ *CFR, 1272-1307*, pp.543-4.

⁵² Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, pp.515-16.

⁵³ This was a point made by Dr.Strickland in a paper entitled “Rituals of Conquest and Vengeance: Edward I's treatment of opponents in his Scottish Wars, 1296-1307” delivered to the Centre for Medieval Studies at Bristol University on 10 November 1999.

⁵⁴ Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, p.514.

the thrills of the tournament to care, they surely must have anticipated the reactions of a man with so renowned a temper. This, therefore, suggests another interpretation.

To the king's eyes the major miscreant was Piers Gaveston, the Gascon knight whose influence over, and dubious affections for, the prince had been growing alarmingly in the preceding years. It was no coincidence that Gaveston alone amongst this band of young knights was to be punished by exile on 26 February 1307.⁵⁵ To be associated with him in such a venture may appear foolhardy. This is not necessarily the case. Pierre Chaplais in his biography of Gaveston has gone against the grain, suggesting the relationship between Piers and Edward II was the result not of homosexual infatuation, but of a "*fedus fraternitas*" – an oath of brotherhood. It is possible that this association extended in some fashion to such a group of knights who were thus party to a bond of mutual defence, perhaps confident that they had the prince's backing. With the king increasingly beset by illness it might make sense for an aspiring knight to form a closer bond with the man who, in all likelihood, would have the king's ear once the new reign had begun. If Gaveston wished such a role for himself, he too would need a broad base of support at court. How far the Gascon achieved this is questionable but, in as far as Roger Mortimer is concerned, his relationship with Gaveston became as important as that with his uncle, bringing him more firmly into the gaze of the future king and thus increasing his scope for favour and influence. The significance of this has escaped debate, which is unfortunate for it reveals a level of support for Gaveston greater than that usually credited by chroniclers and historians, and thus increases Mortimer's importance.

Roger Mortimer's association with Piers Gaveston had perhaps begun in the immediate aftermath of his father's death. Edward I was swift in awarding the wardship of Roger's lands to Prince Edward. In turn, he requested they be committed to Gaveston.⁵⁶ Both men could thus have become acquainted in the king's or the prince's household. Whether or not Mortimer was with the band of young knights who with the prince and Gaveston allegedly broke into the Treasurer, Langton's wood in spring 1305, cannot be ascertained.⁵⁷ It is worth noting that, although Edward ultimately only delivered Mortimer's lands to their rightful owner on 9 April 1306 after Roger had satisfied Gaveston, the potential expense of releasing his lands from wardship does not seem to have

⁵⁵ *Foedera*, I, ii, p.1010; *CCR*, 1302-07, pp.526-7.

⁵⁶ *CPR*, 1301-07, p.244 (29 July 1304.)

weakened the two men's affiliation as the overseas tournament testifies.⁵⁸ Their apparent affiliation grew far stronger and more political upon the accession of Edward II.

Edward I finally succumbed at Burgh-by-Sands on 7 July 1307. The twenty-year-old Roger Mortimer now belonged to a group of magnates close in age and raised in royal circles. Gaveston, for example, was twenty-three. The earls of Arundel and Warenne were twenty-two and twenty-one respectively. Hugh Despenser junior was in his early twenties, as was Henry, brother of Thomas, earl of Lancaster.⁵⁹ If confirmation were needed of Mortimer's relative status in the new reign, it came at Edward II's coronation on 25 February 1308. He, Arundel, Despenser junior, and Hugh de Vere walked in the procession bearing a great table upon which the royal robes were laid.⁶⁰ None viewing the spectacle that day would have guessed how the reign would develop and that Mortimer would ultimately bring about the deaths of Arundel and Despenser and be strongly implicated in that of Edward II.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the signs of building crisis were clear.

Maddicott and Phillips have persuasively argued that the reign began optimistically. Although Edward had recalled Gaveston from exile rapidly after his father's demise, seven earls were willing to seal the charter enfeoffing Gaveston with the earldom of Cornwall.⁶² Scotland may still be problematic but the rancour caused in Edward I's closing years had been mitigated by the deaths of many of the protagonists. The chroniclers are unanimous in ascribing the collapse of this promising situation to Gaveston. The *Vita* describes the earls' badly wounded pride following Gaveston and his young allies' victory over them at Wallingford on 2 December 1307.⁶³ Mortimer may well have been among his ranks on that occasion. Two days later he witnessed John Fitz Reginald's grant of his

⁵⁷ *Annales Londonienses* in W.Stubbs (ed.), *The Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, i (London: Rolls Series, 1883), p.138.

⁵⁸ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351. Official documentation does not record the amount Mortimer had to render but the Wigmore chronicle quotes the enormous sum of 2,500 marks. This seems excessive but, as the chronicler's sources cannot be traced in full, it cannot be dismissed.

⁵⁹ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.87-8; McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, p.1; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.10-12.

⁶⁰ *P.W.*, II, ii, p.10.

⁶¹ See below, pp.121-3.

⁶² These were Lincoln, Richmond, Pembroke, Warenne, Lancaster, Hereford, and Arundel. For what follows see: Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.70-2; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.24-8.

⁶³ *Vita*, p.2; *Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde, Chronica et Annales*, ed. H.T. Riley (London: Rolls Series, 1866), p.65. It is interesting to note that the Pauline annalist says that Gaveston was due to have a band of sixty knights, but came with 200. This indicates the potential support he might muster: *Annales Paulini*, in W.Stubbs (ed.), *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, (London: Rolls Series, 1882-3), p.259. The defeated earls included Arundel, Warenne and Hereford: Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, p.44; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.25.

Welsh marcher estates to the king alongside not only Gaveston, but also Payn Tybotot and Robert de Tony, two of the 1306 tourneyers.⁶⁴ The earls, it would seem, were not good losers but neither was Gaveston gracious in victory. His widely attested ostentation and accumulation of treasure exacerbated the situation. What perhaps rankled most was his unlimited access to the king, Edward's unwillingness to listen to other counsel, and his dominance of patronage.⁶⁵ His performance at the new king's coronation famously exacerbated the situation.⁶⁶

Tensions were rising and moves that had been taken to avert crisis were now negated. On 31 January, therefore, the earls of Pembroke, Lincoln, Surrey, and Hereford, the bishop of Durham, Robert Clifford, Payn Tybotot, John Botetourt, Henry Grey, and John de Berwick committed themselves, in what is known as the "Boulougne Agreement", to preserve and protect the king's honour and the rights of the crown and to redress all that had been done against the king's honour and his people.⁶⁷ Phillips has convincingly maintained that they were seeking to persuade the king to reform purveyance and other long-standing baronial concerns to head off vociferous opposition. Gaveston's actions ensured they did not succeed. Indeed, the Westminster Parliament begun on 28 February agreed that Edward should only legislate on matters passed by the magnates.⁶⁸ Maddicott maintains that the spring of 1308 saw Edward virtually friendless, naming only Lancaster, Richmond and Oxford as his comital allies.⁶⁹

For Hamilton civil war seemed perilously close. He highlights the events of mid-March as evidence of an offensive by Edward against his opponents.⁷⁰ The period of March 12-20 saw Edward change numerous constables of strategically important royal castles and issue new commissions for keepers of the peace.⁷¹ Edward clearly mistrusted the Boulougne signatories ousting Clifford from Nottingham, Botetourt from St. Briavels, and Tybotot from Northampton. Men to receive commissions included Gaveston himself at Berkhamstead, the household knights, Henry Percy, John

⁶⁴ *CCR, 1307-13*, p.46.

⁶⁵ He was even made *custos regni* on 30 December 1307 when the king voyaged to France for his wedding: *Foedera*, II, I, p.24; *P.W.*, II, ii, appendix, p.19.

⁶⁶ Not only did he bear St. Edward's crown, but his overt display of affection for the king outraged the queen and her French ambassadors: *Paulini*, pp.260-2.

⁶⁷ The text of the agreement is at Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, Appendix 4, pp.316-7. His interpretation is at pp.25-8. See also Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.73.

⁶⁸ Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.17.

⁶⁹ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.87.

⁷⁰ Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, pp.49-50.

⁷¹ *CFR, 1307-19*, p.19.

Chandos, and Robert Fitz Payn, the Steward, and Hugh Despenser senior who was also justice of the southern forests.⁷² Moreover, the post of keeper of Dover castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports was in the hands of Robert de Kendale.⁷³ Three of these custodians – Chandos, John Haudlo who held St.Briavels, and Kendale – had been forfeited with Gaveston in 1306. Another, Roger Mortimer, firmly aligned himself with the court. On 17 March a grant of custody of lands was issued at the simultaneous instance of Mortimer and Gaveston.⁷⁴ In the preceding days Mortimer had recognised a debt of £80 to the Frescobaldi, the king's financiers⁷⁵, and had acquired a pardon for a man accused of murder.⁷⁶ Further corroboration of the Mortimer position is the protection issued to Chirk, the Justice of Wales, who on 17 March, at the height of the crisis, was said to be going to Wales on royal service.⁷⁷ Presumably this was to shore up the royal position there, as, on 6 April, he received orders to ensure his castles were safely guarded.⁷⁸

Ultimately, the opposition to Gaveston, as expressed in the April parliament at Westminster, would make such support futile. The recalcitrant earls, backed by the queen and Phillip, as well as prominent ecclesiasts led by Archbishop Winchelsey of Canterbury, would prove too much for the supporters Edward could muster. Their pressure for Gaveston's removal under the charge that he had disinherited the crown, withdrawn the king from his natural council, and raised himself to the peerage to the damage of the crown, succeeded in persuading Edward to abandon his favourite. On 18 May he agreed to Gaveston's exile.⁷⁹ Conversely, in so openly siding with the king Mortimer had extracted valuable reward. On 16 April, before the parliament recommenced, he was granted a market and fair at Ardmolchan (co. Meath) following his petition to king and council.⁸⁰ Most strikingly, he received pavage and murage upon wares brought for sale into his town of Trim for seven years.⁸¹ This grant was made on 27 April, the day before the barons hammered home their demands. Admittedly, this might infer an attempt to win uncertain support. In the weeks leading up to Gaveston's departure Edward had awarded Thomas of Lancaster the stewardship of England and granted the queen

⁷² *ibid.*, pp.17-19; *CPR, 1307-13*, pp.51, 52, 58.

⁷³ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.5; Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, p.49.

⁷⁴ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.56.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.55.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.52.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.53.

⁷⁸ *CCR, 1307-13*, pp.29-30.

⁷⁹ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.71; *Foedera*, II, I, p.44.

⁸⁰ *C.Ch.R., 1300-26*, p.110.

Ponthieu and Montreuil.⁸² McKisack viewed this as Edward's attempt to secure the co-operation of influential figures in his struggle to prevent the exile.⁸³ But Mortimer's previous and future behaviour all point to reward for consistent support in the crisis, a struggle ended by Gaveston sailing to Ireland as the king's lieutenant on 25 June 1308.

Few English historians have made much of Gaveston's lieutenancy in Ireland, preferring to discuss the reconciliation in England between the king and his baronial opponents and the path to the reforms attempted at Stamford in July-August 1309. The chronicles meanwhile press their usual agenda. The *Annales Paulini* reports that as soon as Gaveston sailed from Bristol royal treasure followed him.⁸⁴ The London annals claim that he lived a wonderful life there enjoying many new customs.⁸⁵ However, whilst the decision to despatch him to Ireland seems spontaneous⁸⁶, his governorship bore fruit. The Anglo-Irish chronicles reveal that he was well liked and for good reason.⁸⁷ His martial skills aided a restoration of order in the Lordship and he launched relatively successful campaigns against aggressive Irish communities. In terms of a study of Mortimer, however, this arena of conflict cannot be ignored for once again the paths of the two men crossed.

Roger Mortimer had acquired the liberty of Trim by his marriage. Edward II first granted him his own Irish inheritance lands on 15 December 1307 "as a special favour" because he was still under age.⁸⁸ Joan's grandfather, Geoffrey de Joinville, received licence to deliver seisin of his wife's lands at Trim on 24 December.⁸⁹ Roger almost immediately put his voyage off, appointing Irish attorneys for one year on 2 January 1308.⁹⁰ Perhaps he still had issues to settle on his marcher estates. Perhaps, in view of his curial contacts, he had decided to ride out the impending storm with them.

⁸¹ *CPR, 1307-13*, pp.70-1.

⁸² *Foedera*, II, I, p.44.

⁸³ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, pp.7-8.

⁸⁴ *Paulini*, p.263.

⁸⁵ *Annales Londonienses*, p.156.

⁸⁶ Gaveston was appointed on 16 June, replacing Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, whose commission had been dated one day before: *CPR, 1307-13*, pp.83, 93; *Foedera*, II, I, p.51. For a more in-depth discussion, see Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, pp.55-7.

⁸⁷ *Jacobi Grace, Kilkenniensis, Annales Hiberniae*, ed. & transl. Richard Butler (Dublin, 1842), pp.54-5; *Laud*, pp.337-9.

⁸⁸ *CCR, 1307-13*, p.15. The writ arrived in Dublin on 30 April 1308: *CJRI*, pp.48-9.

⁸⁹ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.33; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.114v; BL Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

⁹⁰ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.32.

Eventually though, Roger and Joan arrived in Ireland in late-October 1308⁹¹, and Geoffrey is said to have handed over their estates on 16 November.⁹² This means that for at least six months Mortimer and Gaveston were in Ireland simultaneously.⁹³ It also means that Mortimer may well have made the acquaintance of several men in Gaveston's retinue who would prove important in his later career. He must already have known Robert Darcy as one of the 1306 tourneyers and as one of Gaveston's most trusted servants.⁹⁴ The same can be said of Robert de Kendale.⁹⁵ Herbert de Borhunte is an interesting case. After Mortimer's escape from the Tower in August 1323 the authorities instigated an inquiry into members of the Borhunte family who were accused of abetting him.⁹⁶ Probably the most profitable association formed by Mortimer from amongst these men was that with John Charlton, later to become lord of Powys. The two men are regularly associated thereafter and went as far as to bind their lineages together.⁹⁷

It is also tempting to think that Mortimer, as one of the greatest English landowners in Ireland, might have played a role in Gaveston's campaigns. Having attempted to tackle the O'Dempseys and O'Byrnes in Leinster⁹⁸, the lieutenant spent the spring of 1309 rebuilding Newcastle McKynegan and Castle Kevin, as well as the arterial route from Castle Kevin to Glendalough, before going on the offensive in Leinster once more. Unfortunately, there is only one piece of evidence proving that Mortimer and Gaveston did meet. On 12 April 1309 both men witnessed a grant at Dublin by a Thomas de Fysshude to Edmund Butler of his claim to all lands, tenements, homages, and services of all tenants in several villis in Omany.⁹⁹ This places Mortimer firmly among his peers in Anglo-Irish society. Fellow witnesses include Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, John Fitz Thomas, Maurice Rochfort, and Eustace le Poer. For all that the Gaveston connection might mean this was crucial. Brief though it was, this sojourn in Ireland was one of the most important of Mortimer's

⁹¹ The protections for the outward journey were issued on 23 October: *ibid.*, p.141. The Irish annals record his arrival on 27/28 October: *Grace*, p.54; *Laud*, pp.337-8.

⁹² *Grace*, p.55.

⁹³ Gaveston returned to England around 27 June: Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, p.65. Mortimer's return cannot definitively be dated: see below, p.30, n.115.

⁹⁴ Darcy acted as Gaveston's steward. Maddicott transcribed letters written at the height of the crisis in April 1308, showing Darcy to have been preparing a force for Gaveston. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, Appendix 1, pp.335-6.

⁹⁵ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.80.

⁹⁶ See below, p.90.

⁹⁷ See below, pp.185-7.

⁹⁸ *Grace*, p.55; *Laud*, p.338.

⁹⁹ E.A.Curtis, *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, I: 1152-1350* (Dublin, 1932), no.438, p.172.

career. It introduced him to his lands and tenants, operating in an atmosphere widely different from that in his other estates. Also, it placed him in an alien political environment which, though it too looked to the English king, had its own rules. How he came to terms with this would have a great impact on his career.

Both Evans and Harding, neither of whom took any particular interest in Mortimer's Irish affairs, give credence to chronicle claims that his main task there was to fight off the claims to Trim by his wife's kin, the Lacys.¹⁰⁰ Admittedly, when Edward Bruce's invading Scots routed Mortimer in December 1315, the blame was laid at the Lacys' door. They had, it is said, abandoned him and allied with the Scots so as to get aid in wresting his lands.¹⁰¹ It must be stressed, however, that there is no documented evidence of de Lacy attack on Mortimer lordship. Indeed, their initial position alongside him in 1315 might indicate a level of mutual trust.

If any threat existed then perhaps it came rather from the earl of Ulster, Richard de Burgh. The evidence suggests he was moving into Mortimer's sphere of influence around Meath. On 16 August 1309 he was granted the three royal Connacht castles of Athlone, Rindoon, and Roscommon.¹⁰² In 1311 he acquired the former Templar manor of Kilsaran, having previously founded a Dominican friary at Carlingford (co.Louth) in 1305.¹⁰³ It is perhaps in this context that the earl's knighting of the de Lacy brothers, Hugh and Walter, at Trim, at Pentecost 1309, can best be viewed.¹⁰⁴ As leading tenants of the liberty of Trim they might have expected to be knighted by their direct overlord - Mortimer. So it is interesting that it was the earl who performed the ceremony. On the one hand, this may well have been because they were due to accompany him to Scotland on campaign in the near future and he had the right as the force's commander.¹⁰⁵ Mortimer may well have returned to England by then anyway, having been summoned to attend the Westminster Parliament beginning on 27 April¹⁰⁶, and the earl may have stepped in. On the other hand, this may

¹⁰⁰ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.206; Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.101, who argues they made a counter claim to Leix.

¹⁰¹ For discussion of the Bruce invasion, and the role of the Lacys, see below, p.46.

¹⁰² *CPR, 1307-13*, p.182. It is interesting to note that Mortimer received these castles on becoming lieutenant and eventually retained Athlone for life: *CFR, 1307-19*, p.393; NAI RC 8/4, pp.422-3. (15-16 March 1319.)

¹⁰³ B.G.C. Smith, *Colonisation and Conquest in Medieval Ireland. The English in Louth, 1170-1330*. (Cambridge, 1999), p.141.

¹⁰⁴ *Grace*, p.55; *Laud*, p.338.

¹⁰⁵ P.Connolly, *Irish Exchequer Payments, 1272-1446*, (Dublin, 1998) p.602.

¹⁰⁶ *P.W.*, II, ii, p.25.

be evidence that the Lacys were seeking an alternative patron, natural if their cause actually was inimical to Mortimer. Hugh de Lacy is known to have acted as the earl's attorney in 1314, for instance.¹⁰⁷ De Burgh could, of course, also benefit from willing allies. Further evidence of such a stratagem might be gleaned from the earl's intervention on behalf of Simon de Joinville, son of Geoffrey, uncle of Joan, in April 1309. Simon had apparently entered certain lands which his parents had gifted him and which he had returned to them for their lives. When Geoffrey took his monastic vows in 1308, having handed over the Trim inheritance to Roger and Joan, Simon had taken seisin without licence, resulting in the forfeit of Roger and Joan's lands. The earl, who again may have been taking the opportunity to patronise important elements in Meath society, supported Simon's petition for their return.¹⁰⁸

Richard de Burgh would have been by no means alone had he been trying to undermine Mortimer. On 10 December 1309 Edward II ordered the Irish justiciar and treasurer to draw up charters of pardon in favour of Mortimer's men who had killed a number of men of John Fitz Thomas, lord of Offaly, at Carbury. They had seemingly invaded Mortimer's lands near Trim, committing murder and other offences.¹⁰⁹ John had a history of antagonism towards absentees. Agnes de Valence, for example, protested to Edward I in 1303 that he had robbed her of goods and chattels in Ireland worth £1007 4s. 1d.¹¹⁰ It is hard to know what this "invasion" signified. It perhaps relates to a case to be brought before the Irish Council in April 1310. Here, Walter, Hugh, and Richard de Lacy were summoned to appear to receive judgment on divers, unspecified controversies which had arisen between them and John Fitz Thomas and John de Bermingham, another Kildare landlord.¹¹¹ The Lacys had previously been warned not to take action against these men who had submitted to arbitration.¹¹² Perhaps the Lacys, as some of the liberty's leading tenants, had been in the vanguard of efforts to resist them, thus highlighting their probable loyalty to their lord. They certainly appear to have taken further action during the summer, an inquisition recording the devastation wrought in Carbury by a force led by Walter de Lacy.¹¹³ Carbury itself was perennially contentious. In 1329, in

¹⁰⁷ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.221.

¹⁰⁸ *RCH*, p.9, no.104-5.

¹⁰⁹ Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of Ancient Correspondence,' p.25: *CCR, 1307-13*, p.188.

¹¹⁰ *C.Ch.W., 1244-1326*, p.202.

¹¹¹ *RCH*, p.15, nos.240-1.

¹¹² *ibid.*, p.13, nos.58-9.

¹¹³ PRO C143/81, no.22, m.2 (20 August 1310).

the immediate aftermath of the murder of John de Bermingham, now earl of Louth, Simon de Joinville swept in, perhaps representing the interests of Mortimer who bore considerable enmity towards Bermingham.¹¹⁴ Mortimer had entered into an uneasy inheritance. He would leave having gained valuable experience and having laid down the roots of his authority. His return to England, however, ushered in a fresh period of service to the king.¹¹⁵

The summer and autumn of 1309 saw Mortimer receive various awards. On 6 August, for example, he had a commission of *oyer et terminer* granted to investigate offences committed against his authority.¹¹⁶ The same day he sealed the baronial letter to the Curia complaining of papal abuses.¹¹⁷ Later that same month he received a grant for three years of murage at Ludlow.¹¹⁸ Four days later, on 26 August, he was given the Welsh lordship of Cwmwd Deuddwr.¹¹⁹ This accumulation of awards was most likely the result of firm support for the king during the Stamford Parliament and, therefore, for support in securing the Gaveston's recall. Although Maddicott has shown that the majority of magnates had been reconciled with the king in the period leading up to the parliament, the Mortimers are conspicuous amongst those receiving favours in the aftermath.¹²⁰

This trend continued as the apparent concord produced at Stamford disintegrated into the election of the "Ordainers" in March 1310. Once again, if the chronicles are to be believed, Gaveston was at the forefront of the troubles. They give colourful detail of his arrogance and mockery of the senior earls.¹²¹ This, allied with the failure of the Stamford agreement to rigorously curtail excessive and oppressive prise, and the calling of a truce in the Anglo-Scots war, combined to provoke severe disaffection. On 27 February 1310 a council met in London to draw up grievances for the amendment of the king's finances and to correct evil counsel which had divorced Edward from his natural councillors and had retarded the Scottish war effort.¹²² In the few days leading up to this council

¹¹⁴ See below, pp.142-3.

¹¹⁵ His return should probably be dated to the first half of May, for it cannot have been earlier than 12 April: see above, p.27, n.93.

¹¹⁶ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.240. A day before, his uncle of Chirk had similarly had a commission granted to inquire into those who broke his parks at Tedstone Wafers (Herefords.) and Rouley (Salop.)

¹¹⁷ *Annales Londonienses*, p.162.

¹¹⁸ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.183.

¹¹⁹ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67.; BL Add. MS 6041, f.16r.

¹²⁰ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.102-3.

¹²¹ *Brut*, p.207; *Vita*, p.8.

¹²² Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.110-11; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.30.

Edward again paid special attention to enriching the Mortimers. On 24 February Mortimer of Wigmore's commission of *oyer et terminer* issued in August was renewed.¹²³ Two days later he was given custody of the royal castle of Builth in Wales.¹²⁴ On 25 February Mortimer of Chirk was given custody of the castles of Blaenllyfni and Bwlch-y-dinas.¹²⁵ The value of these awards might indicate Edward's attempt to purchase the Mortimers' support in the coming months. After all, if Maddicott is correct, this was one of the few times that the "baronial opposition" achieved a united front.¹²⁶ It seems more likely, however, that the Mortimers were among the "traitors"¹²⁷ surrounding Gaveston who did not assemble for the council. Neither was listed as a signatory to the baronial letter to the king of 17 March, replying to the grant to them of powers to treat for the election of Ordainers.¹²⁸ Why should they have been? Adherence to Edward paid rich dividends. As events unfolded in 1310-11, both men seem to have kept a discrete distance from the dealings in London.

The younger Mortimer's outlook was perhaps betrayed by his possible participation in Edward's Scottish campaign of late 1310-early 1311. Summonses had been issued on 18 June for a muster at Berwick on 8 September.¹²⁹ The *Vita* accused Edward of a sham campaign, using a winter in the north to deflect attention from the Ordainers and to protect Gaveston.¹³⁰ Were this correct, Mortimer might have been expected to figure, judging by their previous proximity. However, the motives of the English force are often too lightly dismissed. Scotland had long been Edward's most serious problem. Political disharmony had already led to the postponement of two previous musters¹³¹, leaving Robert Bruce free to establish his authority both by political persuasion, coercion, and the gradual dismantling of the English military presence there.¹³² At an emergency council meeting on 16 June Edward was informed that his personal intervention was needed.¹³³ Admittedly, such a campaign would have the benefit of removing the king and his favourite from the immediate sphere of

¹²³ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.254.

¹²⁴ *CFR, 1307-19*, p.58.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p.58.

¹²⁶ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.325.

¹²⁷ *Flores*, p.146.

¹²⁸ *Annales Londonienses*, pp.170-1.

¹²⁹ *P.W.*, II, ii, p.395.

¹³⁰ *Vita*, p.14.

¹³¹ One for Carlisle on 22 August 1308: *P.W.*, II, ii, p.373; one for Newcastle on 29 September 1309: *ibid.*, p.382.

¹³² The standard account is G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (third edition: Edinburgh, 1988)

¹³³ *Foedera*, II, I, p.108

influence of the Ordainers, but it was vital to offer succour to the dwindling English presence in Scotland. A victory over Bruce might have not only restored English authority, but would have removed at a stroke one of the central Ordaining complaints.

Enough magnates were willing to believe success was possible. The English force in Scotland during the winter included not only Gaveston and possibly Mortimer, but also at least two Ordainers, the earl of Gloucester and Robert Clifford. Gloucester was the king's nephew whilst Clifford had been made Warden of Scotland in December 1309.¹³⁴ His landed interests lay on the Westmorland border and he regularly figured in English attempts to maintain their grip on Scotland.¹³⁵ These men stand in marked contrast to the rest of the Ordainers. Although they offered due service, the earls of Hereford, Lancaster, Pembroke, and Arundel were determined to play politics in London. Alongside the king were also numerous prominent household knights Henry Percy, John de Segrave, Robert Fitz Payn, John Crombwell, and John de St. John, as well as earl Warenne.¹³⁶ These men provided much of the force of fifty knights and bannerets and two hundred men-at-arms paid for by the household.¹³⁷ Bruce's inveterate Scottish foes, the likes of John MacDougall, lord of Argyll, and Alexander Abernethy, supplied auxiliary forces.

Mortimer's precise role in the campaign is difficult to reconstruct. Having been summoned on 18 June, he was amongst those to whom the king issued a more earnest request for support on 2 August.¹³⁸ However, whilst Edward began his tour of duty in southern Scotland on 1 September, Mortimer appears to have gone to Ireland. A protection for one year whilst going there was issued as early as 16 June.¹³⁹ He was certainly at Conwy on August 31, although two quitclaims of land were issued too him at Wyrhale (Salop.) in the days after Michaelmas.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, Mortimer, his wife, and their men appointed attorneys for their stay in Ireland for one year on 1 October.¹⁴¹ Irish chroniclers put his return around 16 September.¹⁴² Perhaps he was trying to assemble a force for the Scottish campaign.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, II, I, p.100.

¹³⁵ *CIPM*, V, pp.300-05

¹³⁶ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.112; McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, p.49.

¹³⁷ McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, p.49.

¹³⁸ *P.W.*, II, ii, p.399.

¹³⁹ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.231; *C.Ch.W, 1244-1326*, p.307.

¹⁴⁰ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.54v; BL Add. MS 6041, f.11r. His presence was not necessary though.

¹⁴¹ *CPR, 1307-13*, pp.282-3.

¹⁴² *Grace*, p.59; *Laud*, p.344.

Mortimer may have arrived in Scotland sometime late in October or early in November, for various prests beginning on 10 November are recorded in the household accounts.¹⁴³ These had been received from the Berwick stores after the king had decided to rest there for the next six months from 3 November.¹⁴⁴ Robert Bruce had predictably slipped northwards to avoid conflict. Edward then proceeded to contract numerous indentures with certain magnates for the keeping of Scotland. Henry Beaumont was to keep Perth at the fee of £3000, while Robert Clifford was made Warden of the Marches at a fee of £800.¹⁴⁵ Mortimer himself was to receive £1000 for the keepership of Roxburgh castle with 30 men-at-arms.¹⁴⁶ He was therefore prominent among the magnates whom Edward could count on. But, more importantly, he had the opportunity to gain valuable military and administrative experience. In February 1311 Mortimer and Bartholomew Badlesmere, a knight in Robert Clifford's force, presided at a court in which "the county community of Northumberland" paid a fine of £100 for having defaulted on a royal summons.¹⁴⁷

Sadly, as is often the case with Roger Mortimer, his movements thereafter are obscure. He was certainly summoned to join the abortive Scottish campaign of the following summer.¹⁴⁸ But the next time he can positively be located is in Ireland around Easter 1312¹⁴⁹ where he played a major part in averting a serious crisis in Louth.¹⁵⁰ Rioting had broken out there during Lent under the leadership of Robert de Verdon, a junior member of the leading local family. Brendan Smith has argued that increased governmental interference in the area, the prolonged absences of the de Verdon lord, and the nagging aggressive presence of the local frontier Irish kin-groups, the Mic Mathghamhna and the Ui Anluain, combined to create an atmosphere in which such a phenomenon

¹⁴³ PRO E101/373/26, f.28r. They totalled £42 7s. 9d. On the other hand, one account records payments to his force from their arrival at Roxburgh as early as 27 September: BL Cotton MS Nero C VIII, f.13v. This perhaps suggests that Mortimer of Chirk and not his nephew participated in the campaign, although Chirk, like many of the Ordainers, had proffered his service on 17 September: *P.W.*, II, I, p.403.

¹⁴⁴ McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, p.49.

¹⁴⁵ PRO E101/374/5, ff.76r., 77r.

¹⁴⁶ BL Cotton MS Nero C VIII, f.13v. Payment of 100 marks was made on 6 March at Berwick: E101/373/30, f.1v.

¹⁴⁷ PRO E101/374/6, f.2; McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, p.53, n.9.

¹⁴⁸ *P.W.*, II, i, 411.

¹⁴⁹ On 22 April Richard fitz John granted Mortimer Moylagh manor: H. Wood, 'The Muniments of Edmund de Mortimer, third earl of March, concerning his liberty of Trim,' in *PRIA* C 40 (1932), p.337.

might occur. When, in April, the justiciar, John Wogan, was stung into sending a military detachment to deal with the problem, it was surprised at Ardee and numerous leaders killed. The turning point in the crisis came when they agreed to surrender to Roger Mortimer upon their case coming before the Irish council on 26 May 1312. Involvement in such a localized dispute might seem peripheral to an examination of his career, but its import should not be underestimated for main two reasons.

Firstly, the de Verdon crisis runs concurrently with a critical period in English politics and may provide evidence of Mortimer's pragmatism. It is difficult to date his arrival in Ireland. If Joan was there with their children, he may have returned at the first opportunity from Scotland or at some point in the summer of 1311. He certainly played little part in the drafting of the Ordinances. In fact, he and his uncle can be shown to have lost thereby. On 12 December 1310 Edward ordered Roger junior to "restore" Builth to its former keeper, Phillip ap Hywel.¹⁵¹ On 11 October 1311, the day on which the Ordinances were published, a general resumption of grants issued since 16 March 1310 – the date of the commissioning of the Ordainers – was ordered. Chirk lost Blaenllyfni and Bwlch-y-dinas.¹⁵² Although this had been initially awarded on 25 February 1310 during pleasure, he lost it as the king had subsequently granted them to him for life on 20 November¹⁵³, and in fee on 22 March 1311.¹⁵⁴

Perhaps, more importantly, the Ordinances threatened to rid Mortimer of his greatest patron, as they provided for Gaveston's exile. Having spent time in Flanders, though, Gaveston was soon back with the king. Throughout the first half of 1312 Edward and the barons were playing cat-and-mouse, with Edward even suspected of attempting to bribe Bruce into providing a Scottish safe haven for his favourite.¹⁵⁵ There is evidence to suggest Mortimer was still in England on 1 December 1311, the memoranda rolls recording a recognisance made by "Roger Mortimer", though it is not clear whether the uncle or nephew is meant.¹⁵⁶ This might indicate that, in returning to Ireland early in 1312, either his patience with Edward and Gaveston had run out, or that he preferred to sit out what would be the denouement of the Gaveston crises from a safe distance. This way he could escape any taint of

¹⁵⁰ For what follows, see Smith, *Colonisation and Conquest*, pp.97-105; NLI MS 1, pp.399-400, 408; *CJRI*, 1308-14, pp.237-9.

¹⁵¹ *CFR*, 1307-19, p.76.

¹⁵² *C.Chanc.R.*, 1300-26, pp.99-100.

¹⁵³ *CPR*, 1307-13, p.293.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.335.

¹⁵⁵ *Vita*, p.22.

association with Gaveston¹⁵⁷, and prevent himself from being dragged into the conflict. Either way, it is certain that in the dramatic last weeks of Gaveston's life, Mortimer would have no role to play on either side.

Secondly, however, his involvement in Louth was crucial in raising his profile on either side of the Irish Sea. He had brokered a conclusion to the de Verdon crisis which was something John Wogan had been unable to do. The question must be asked why the rebels agreed to surrender to Mortimer specifically. A man with close curial connections might aid their case, while Mortimer, the most prominent landowner in Meath, where the de Verdon lordship centred on Duleek, was the best choice at a local level. Alternatively, in the vacuum created by the protracted absence of Theobald de Verdon, Mortimer throughout his career took calculated steps to court communities outside his liberty of Trim in order to expand his sphere of influence, and the crisis provided him with an important opportunity to make a good impression. Nicholas de Verdon, Robert's brother, who had intervened on behalf of the Louth community but had actually sided with Robert, served Mortimer at a later date as seneschal of Trim¹⁵⁸, while Walter de la Pulle, a leading rebel, later received Mortimer's patronage.¹⁵⁹

Impressing those on the ground was one thing; Mortimer's efforts marked him out as a figure of compromise. The de Verdon gang was not just intent on petty thuggery. Theirs was a serious uprising against the crown, "appropriating to themselves as if by conquest the demesne lands of the king, administering the oath of fealty as well to free tenants and betaghs of the king as to other inhabitants of the said county, and taking homage."¹⁶⁰ As Smith has shown, the government took measures to tackle the rebels.¹⁶¹ There remains the possibility that Edward II, hearing of the rising, asked Mortimer to sort it out as the most prominent figure locally.¹⁶² The compromise he brokered must also have won praise. Having initially received the prisoners and taken them to Dublin Castle, it was at his request, and that of Theobald de Verdon, that mainprises were taken on 17 April 1313, with the effect that forty of the rebels would join the king in Scotland "with forty hobelars and fitting

¹⁵⁶ PRO E159/85, mm.32-33.

¹⁵⁷ It is noticeable that at no stage do the Ordainers explicitly target the Mortimers.

¹⁵⁸ This was in 1330: NAI RC 8/15, p.607 (12 June.)

¹⁵⁹ Smith, *Colonisation and Conquest*, p.118.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp.100-01.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.101.

¹⁶² This does not explain, though, why Theobald de Verdon, the brother of the rebel leader, does not seem to have returned. He would only do so upon his appointment as justiciar in 1313.

arms.”¹⁶³ He had thus aided the transformation of a serious threat to royal authority, and potentially to his own, into a settlement palatable for both sides.

The year 1312 proved tempestuous in England, but marked a great stride forward for Roger Mortimer. His handling of the Louth affair undoubtedly boosted his prestige. He would also blossom as a military operator. On 23 March 1312 Mortimer of Chirk, Justice of Wales, and Robert Holand, Justice of Chester, were ordered to hurry to Welshpool where John Charlton, lord of Powys, was being besieged by Gruffydd de la Pole, his wife’s uncle, and claimant to his title.¹⁶⁴ The order was repeated on 12-13 April with instructions to receive the castle from Charlton and to defend him if necessary.¹⁶⁵ It appears to have been required as on 30 April Gruffydd was forbidden from laying ambushes.¹⁶⁶ This proved futile as Edward had to prohibit both sides from attacking each other on 24 May, an order repeated two days later.¹⁶⁷ The saga rumbled on throughout the summer and on 13 August the Justice was severely reprimanded for having done nothing in the matter.¹⁶⁸ By 4 October, however, Chirk had been ordered to restore the castle to Charlton, he having finally retaken it.¹⁶⁹ The Wigmore chronicle records that the Charltons had been reinstated entirely due to the efforts of Mortimer of Wigmore.¹⁷⁰ Rees Davies, the leading historian of the medieval March, has followed this claim.¹⁷¹ Was Mortimer really involved? If so, how, and with what significance?

Firstly, there is no corroborative evidence for the chronicler’s view. Mortimer of Wigmore is conspicuously absent from the governmental records throughout 1312. It is possible that the chronicler who was writing a history of the dominant Wigmore branch of the family Mortimer in the 1370s, neatly exchanged Wigmore’s name for that of Chirk. Chirk, of course, was the man officially charged with raising the siege, and presumably in charge of strategy.¹⁷² In terms of time scale,

¹⁶³ *CCR, 1307-13*, pp.525-6; *NAI KB 2/4*, pp.1-5, 108-27; *RC 8/8*, pp.1-9.

¹⁶⁴ *CCR, 1307-13*, pp.456-7.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp.417, 419. See also *CACCW*, xxxv, 114, pp.182-3, where Mortimer of Chirk asks for a protection for his son, going in his company. He also says that the problems for which he cannot leave his bailiwick have been partly resolved and will be so shortly.

¹⁶⁶ *CCR, 1307-13*, p.459.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.424.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.544.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.479.

¹⁷⁰ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

¹⁷¹ R.R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), pp.286-7.

¹⁷² In 1315, he petitioned parliament for payment for his expenses in raising the siege, a total of £305 12s. 8d.: *Rotuli Parliamentorum, 1272-1326*, ed. J. Strachey et al (London, 1767.), volume 1, p.305.

though, it is possible that Mortimer of Wigmore could have made it from Ireland. His last recorded act there came on 26 May. There are several other factors which might also make his intervention in Powys likely.

What is striking about the Wigmore chronicle's account is that the Powys affair is the first and only major event of the reign of Edward II recorded before 1321. Why would a chronicler writing sixty years later choose to include this in his story if it were not part of Mortimer collective memory? After all, if helping to destroy the Despensers was heroic, why would helping a prominent royalist, albeit a marcher, need to be mentioned, were it not substantially correct? The chronicler also stresses that Mortimer's heroism led to the formation of a more formal bond between the two with Charlton's son to marry Roger's daughter, Matilda. Charlton also apparently awarded him "*Ucheldre*" forest next to Mortimer's lordship of Cedewain.¹⁷³ Bearing this in mind, it might be argued that Mortimer's intervention had a deeper significance.

Traditional interpretations have emphasised the highly politicised background to the Powys affair which broke as the opposition magnates were preparing to capture Gaveston and outlasted the favourite's execution.¹⁷⁴ John Charlton had risen rapidly through the baronial ranks on Gaveston's coat-tails. A minor Shropshire landholder¹⁷⁵, his association with the royal favourite had brought him the chamberlainship of the household at least as early as 1310.¹⁷⁶ It was a post from which the Ordainers demanded his removal. In addition, he had gained the lordship in 1309 on marrying Hawise de la Pole, Gruffydd's niece.¹⁷⁷ Gruffydd was a Lancastrian retainer whose claims were pressed vociferously during the negotiations over a pardon for the killers of Gaveston, beginning in December 1312.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, in the aftermath of the siege the earl of Arundel, a strong royal opponent, was ordered not to receive the miscreants in his lordship as he had been doing.¹⁷⁹ Two more Lancastrians, Fulk FitzWarin, lord of Whittington, and Fulk Lestrangle, were also involved in the campaign against Charlton.¹⁸⁰ In its initial phases the siege seems to represent the opening of a

¹⁷³ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

¹⁷⁴ Maddicott provides the best recent account in *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.140-1.

¹⁷⁵ R.Morgan, 'The barony of Powys, 1275-1360,' *WHR* 10 (1980-1), pp.1-41.

¹⁷⁶ Tout, *The Place of Edward II*, appendix, p.315

¹⁷⁷ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

¹⁷⁸ *Foedera*, II, I, pp.191-2.

¹⁷⁹ *CCR*, 1307-13, pp.555-6.

¹⁸⁰ *Foedera*, II, I, pp.191-2.

second front against Gaveston's support, or, at least, of Gruffydd deliberately using the deepening crisis to press his claims. The threats this situation posed probably forced Mortimer's hand.

The first five years of Edward II's reign had seen changes in the patterns of lordship in the marches which had conspicuously benefited Charlton and the Mortimers. Mortimer acquired Cwmwd Deuddwr on 26 August 1309. On that day John Charlton and Hawise received Powys.¹⁸¹ At a stroke Edward II had rendered a seismic change in the Middle March. These and subsequent gains were perhaps intended as a bolster against Arundel, the chief royal opponent in the area. The same can be said for Mortimer's custody of Builth castle¹⁸² and his uncle's award of Blaenllyfni and Bwlch-y-dinas which fringed upon the lordship of the earl of Hereford. Mortimer of Chirk was embroiled in a long-running dispute with the earls of Hereford over rights in Brecon.¹⁸³ His new lordships gave him bargaining power. It also explains the Ordainers' determination not to return these two lordships to him in the long term. Having been resumed in October 1311, they were restored briefly with the consent of the Ordainers on 26 December.¹⁸⁴ However, they must have been resumed again for, in February 1315, Chirk petitioned for their restitution, claiming correctly that they had been issued for good service and not as a gift after the institution of the Ordainers' committee. He, of course, conveniently forgot the subsequent extensions.¹⁸⁵ An aggressive compact of Lancastrian and FitzAlan forces in the Powys conflict might threaten to upset this new balance, especially, as with Gaveston out of the way, Charlton particularly might be exposed to pressure. It must be remembered that by the death of Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, in February 1311, Denbigh had passed to Thomas of Lancaster¹⁸⁶, and Mortimer may well have feared the ambitions of such a coalition.

Whatever Mortimer had done in Powys it demonstrated his military merits to the king whose trust in his abilities was soon displayed. On 2 April 1313 orders went out to the bailiffs of Builth to pay him £50 for his expenses in going to Gascony on royal service. This was matched by a writ to the sheriffs of Shropshire (£20) and Herefordshire (£30).¹⁸⁷ The recent poisoning of the Seneschal, John

¹⁸¹ *CFR*, 1307-19, p.68.

¹⁸² It is noteworthy that John Charlton was awarded its custody on 25 January 1314. *CPR*, 1307-13, p.188.

¹⁸³ *CACCW*, xix, 136, pp.102-3.

¹⁸⁴ *CCR*, 1307-13, p.392.

¹⁸⁵ *Rot. Parl.*, I, p.305.

¹⁸⁶ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.9.

¹⁸⁷ *CCR*, 1307-13, p.522.

de Ferrers, and his dispute with Amanieu d'Albret had disturbed Gascony.¹⁸⁸ Mortimer's mission must have been connected with the earl of Pembroke's visit to the Paris Parlement to answer d'Albret's appeal there over his dispute. The earl, the bishop of Exeter, Master Thomas de Cobham, and several Chancery clerks knowledgeable in Gascon affairs were appointed on 4 February. Part of their mission was also to go to Gascony and remove the new Seneschal, Etienne Ferol, and Mortimer's mission probably lay in assisting them to restore order. His noted ability to broker compromise and his rising military reputation would make him an astute choice in executing this task.

To a beleaguered king Roger Mortimer had proven himself a diplomat and a warlord of aptitude. Not only had he bolstered the king's attempts to resist the restraints on his government and court, he had also helped curtail pernicious threats to English hegemony on the fringes of Edward II's authority. Of course, there were setbacks. Scotland could not be calmed. After the debacle of 1310-11 Mortimer was possibly involved in the catastrophe of Bannockburn.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, when news broke that the triumphant Scottish king planned an Irish invasion to press his advantage, it was no surprise that Roger Mortimer was the man Edward II turned to.

¹⁸⁸ Flores, p.153. For what follows, see Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.60.

¹⁸⁹ The evidence to prove definitively his participation is not easy to decipher. On the one hand, the household accounts record payment to him in 7 Edward II [1313-14] of about £265 as a prest on that which he was to receive from the king in the Scottish war: PRO E101/374/20, m.8. Moreover, a continuation of the chronicle of Nicholas Trivet claims that Mortimer was captured at Bannockburn and it was he who returned the lost privy seal. Although Mortimer of Chirk, as a man of greater experience and prestige, may have been a more likely bearer, Antonia Gransden's association of the chronicler with Ilchester puts him in close proximity to Mortimer of Wigmore's Somerset manor of Odicumbe and perhaps privileged information: A.Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, pp.9,16. On the other hand, only a week before the battle on 17 June 1314, a charter of liberties was confirmed to his free tenants of Maeliennydd at Wigmore: BL Harleian 1240, f.58r.; Add. MS 6041, f.12v.

CHAPTER 2:
CRISIS AS OPPORTUNITY, 1315-20.

By the beginning of 1315 Roger Mortimer had laid firm foundations for a promising career. He had secured a large measure of authority over his disparate territorial inheritance. This entrenched his membership of Welsh marcher and English baronial society and established him among the community leaders in the Lordship of Ireland. Moreover, he had constructed a network of personal connections bestriding the Irish Sea, penetrating the circles of power around the king. He had carefully carved out a position of proximity to Edward II which afforded opportunity for reward. The ensuing six years, however, would transform Mortimer's career, seeing his standing enhanced dramatically. He would use the opportunities presented by the succession of crises affecting English authority throughout the British Isles to demonstrate his ability and, to some extent, his indispensability, to the faltering regime of Edward II.

The period 1315-20 was dominated by the consequences of Bannockburn. English historians concentrate on the 'struggle over the implementation of the Ordinances'¹ or, more traditionally, the battle for control over royal administration.² And yet this period was also one of the most pivotal in the history of the British Isles as a whole as Scottish militarism threatened to overwhelm English hegemony. Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland in May 1315, accompanied by the persistent possibility of a further attack on Wales, alongside the prolonged devastation and ransoming of northern England, climaxing in the Scots' capture of Berwick in April 1318, roused deep-seated English fears of encirclement as well as dishonour and humiliation.³ Wrangling over solutions to the Scottish threats paralysed English attempts to combat them. Nevertheless, although historians largely dismiss them as piecemeal, the English government did make concerted efforts to stem the tide and to fight back. At the heart of such reaction was Roger Mortimer.

Despite an initial setback in defeat to the Scots at Kells in December 1315 he was increasingly awarded positions of trust and responsibility on the front line. His participation in the campaigns to subdue rebellions in Glamorgan and Bristol contributed to his appointment as king's lieutenant of Ireland in November 1316. He was eventually moderately successful in restoring order there and returning recalcitrant Anglo-Irish nobles to their loyalty to the English crown. His lieutenancy also laid the groundwork for the defeat of Edward Bruce at Faughart in October 1318. On Mortimer's return to England in May 1318 reward for his services was followed by a prominent role in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Leake, sealed in

¹ C. Bingham, *The Life and Times of Edward II* (London, 1973), p.72.

² Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, p.59; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.160-258; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.83-177.

August 1318, which temporarily reconciled the king and the earl of Lancaster. Early in 1319 Mortimer became one of those elected to stay with the king to offer permanent counsel, a position that indirectly brought about his return to Ireland as justiciar later that year. His one-year tenure of that office witnessed attempts to address more deep-rooted and long-standing political problems in Ireland. Mortimer was by no means a miracle worker but, when compared with the indolence and incompetence in the English military aristocracy, best evidenced by the catastrophic siege of Berwick, he stands out as a man of military and administrative skill. It was this that gradually won him respect, recognition, and reward.

On 26 April 1315 protections were granted for Roger Mortimer and his men 'going to Ireland'.⁴ Superficially, this appears to continue his personal interest in the management of his Irish estates. However, his arrival in Ireland on this occasion coincided with the landing of Edward Bruce and a force of Scottish veterans at Larne on 26 May.⁵ Professor Duncan has convincingly demonstrated that the invasion was, if nothing else, another prong in Robert Bruce's strategy to compel Edward II to recognise his crown and Scotland's independence.⁶ It had been in his thoughts since at least March 1315, following John of Argyll's capture of Man in February and the consequent re-assertion of English naval power in the western seas. The evidence implies Mortimer had perhaps got wind of their plans. On 14 March 1315 he and his wife had appointed attorneys in Ireland for two years.⁷ Six weeks later, he felt obliged to return there in person.

The communication links between his English and Irish estates could have furnished intelligence on the Scots' plans. This would especially be the case if Robert Bruce had at this time indeed despatched his letter to 'all the Kings of Ireland, to the prelates and the clergy, and to the inhabitants of all Ireland' in which he plays on the common Celtic ancestry of Scots and Irish, in order that 'our nation may be able to recover her ancient history'.⁸ Sean Duffy and Colm McNamee have persuasively argued that, in fact, this letter belongs to

³ S. Duffy, 'The Bruce Brothers and the Irish Sea World, 1306-29', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 21 (1991), pp.55-86; J. Beverley Smith, 'Gruffydd Llwyd and the Celtic Alliance', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 26 (1974-6), pp.463-78.

⁴ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.277; PRO SC1/28/31 – a letter requesting Adam de Osgodby, keeper of the privy seal, to hasten the protections for Mortimer's bachelor, Robert fitz Elys, and his company.

⁵ John Barbour, *The Bruce*, ed. & transl. A.A.M Duncan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp.520-22; *Grace*, p.63; *Laud*, p.344.

⁶ A.A.M.Duncan, 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland, 1315,' in R.R.Davies (ed.), *The British Isles, 1100-1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp.100-17.

⁷ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.263. The Dublin government itself almost certainly had gathered intelligence as payments were made to men staying in Ulster to listen to rumours about the Scots' arrival: E101/14/40, m.1.

⁸ Duffy, 'The Bruce Brothers', p.63.

Bruce's sojourn in the Western Isles in 1306-07.⁹ However, their views are not conclusive, and it is possible that the Scottish king sent another letter of similar rhetoric at this time.¹⁰ Moreover, on 14 March 1315 – the same day as Roger confirmed he would be staying in England – Edward II addressed numerous letters to leading native Irishmen as well as the leaders of the Anglo-Irish community. These asked them to give credence to Edmund Butler, the justiciar, Richard de Bereford, the Dublin treasurer and Walter Islip, the chancellor of the Dublin exchequer, who would explain certain of the king's affairs to them by word of mouth.¹¹ It is possible that these were in response to Bruce's propaganda campaign and were an attempt to secure loyalty in an impending crisis. Mortimer's change of mind, therefore, may have been nothing more than a desire to personally ensure his tenants remained loyal and to supervise the defence of his estates.

But the issuing of Mortimer's protection precedes a grant of 30 April to John Botetourt of £500 'for the service he is about to render upon the sea towards Scotland'.¹² On 15 March Botetourt had been made admiral of the eastern seas. In that role he had been sent to Sluys to intercept a Scottish fleet gathering victuals.¹³ Now he was to undertake a blockade of Scottish ports.¹⁴ His campaign was to run parallel to that of John of Argyll who was charged with campaigning in his home waters to try and destabilise Bruce's government by rousing the Scottish king's enemies in the Western Isles.¹⁵ Is it too fanciful to suggest Mortimer's journey was part of a strategy of retaliation against the Scots?

The exact date of Mortimer's arrival in Ireland cannot be ascertained with any accuracy.¹⁶ He had been prominent at court in March as news was filtering through¹⁷, and his retainer, Hugh de Turpilton¹⁸, was appointed constable of Kildare castle on 18 May at his instance.¹⁹ Kildare was an important strategic centre, the defence of which was vital for the security of the midlands, over which Mortimer could claim no

⁹ *ibid.*, p.63; McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, p.37.

¹⁰ Professor Phillips has highlighted the fact that Henry, Robert Bruce's envoy, had been imprisoned in Dublin castle since 16 February 1315, and speculates that he had been circulating this letter at the time: J.R.S. Phillips, 'The mission of John de Hothum to Ireland, 1315-16', *England and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven*, ed. J.F. Lydon (Dublin, 1981), pp.66-7.

¹¹ *CCR, 1313-18*, p. 218; *Foedera*, II, I, pp.202-03.

¹² *CPR, 1313-17*, p.277.

¹³ *CCR, 1313-18*, pp.218-19; *C.Ch.W., 1244-1326*, p.415.

¹⁴ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.168.

¹⁵ For more details see McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, pp.169-70.

¹⁶ The first positive evidence comes on 10 July when he is named amongst those Edward II asks for information on the invasion, and requests they continue in their loyalty: E101/376/7, f.74r; J.R.S. Phillips, 'Documents on the early stages of the Bruce invasion of Ireland, 1315-16', *PRIA* 79, C (1979), p.249.

¹⁷ PRO C53/101.

¹⁸ This is the first real evidence of Mortimer gaining patronage for Hugh. For a discussion of their relationship, and more details on Hugh's career, see chapter 5.

¹⁹ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.285.

jurisdiction. Two days after Turpilton's appointment the sheriff of Dublin received several Scottish prisoners captured on the Isle of Man and was to deliver them to Kildare castle. This was only one of several groups to be removed from Dublin castle in the week before the Scots landed, probably as a security measure and a disincentive to the Scots to attack Dublin.²⁰ It is difficult to know whether Turpilton received them or even acted as constable though. The exchequer accounts do not record payment to any constable between 25 June 1315 and Michaelmas 1316, although William de Wellesley was acting in this capacity both before and after.²¹ Nevertheless, that Mortimer could request such a sensitive appointment seems to indicate at least some active involvement in the defence and government of Ireland during the invasion. He certainly does not seem to have been operating in any official capacity, however, as no commissions were issued to him.

On the other hand, although historians acknowledge Mortimer's presence in Ireland at Kells in December 1315, none seems to have noticed that he was there throughout the summer and autumn of 1315, the time at which the Scots established a foothold in the Lordship. This implies that he must have been involved to a greater extent in the struggle with the Scots than is usually recognised. Perhaps surprisingly, the evidence suggests he was not initially deeply embroiled in a military capacity. Although he was amongst those Anglo-Irish magnates asked to provide information and to continue in their loyalty to Edward II on 10 July²², he is conspicuous by his absence in both chronicle and official accounts depicting the Anglo-Irish reaction to the invasion.²³ Instead, as Robin Frame has shown, despite severe financial straits that left wages unpaid, numerous differences among the Anglo-Irish nobility, and the desultory response of the Westminster government which continued to siphon off Irish resources for their campaigns²⁴ and to concentrate efforts on defending Wales from attacks²⁵, Edmund Butler, the justiciar, managed to raise a sizeable force to at least compete with the Scots. Although the earl of Ulster's defeat at Connor on 10 September was devastating, the

²⁰ NAI KB 2/6, m.6; KB 2/7, m.6. Others were sent to Carlow and Kilkenny.

²¹ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, pp.230, 239.

²² PRO E101/376/7, f.74r; Phillips, 'Documents', p.249.

²³ Certainly, he is not mentioned by any of the Anglo-Irish nobles who replied to the king's request for information: G.O. Sayles, *Documents on the Affairs of Ireland before the King's Council* (Dublin, 1979), pp.72-96, nos. 72-8. Nicholas de Verdon, a man associated with Mortimer during his lieutenancy, even contended that unless more substantial assistance was sent immediately the Scots would bring reinforcements, implying Mortimer himself may not have been considered anything more important than any other local lord.

²⁴ In the summer of 1315 the government was still raising Irish resources for John of Argyll's planned mission to the Western Isles: Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp.66-7.

²⁵ On 21 June orders were sent to the two justices of Wales to survey and munition royal castles there. Constables were to be in permanent residence, coasts were to be guarded, and "tumults" suppressed: *CCR, 1313-18*, p.186.

Dublin government's 'rapid and effective' response had kept the Anglo-Irish lordship afloat.²⁶ So what had Mortimer been doing?

J.R.S. Phillips suggests he concentrated on shoring up the defences of Meath, the Scots' gateway to Dublin and southern Ireland.²⁷ This seems logical. Not only did he need to defend his own lands of Trim, but perhaps also assist with those of Theobald de Verdon, lord of much of western Meath who, having relinquished the justiciarship of Ireland before 4 January 1315²⁸, abandoned the country altogether. More than this, though, the king might profit from Roger Mortimer's knowledge of local conditions. On 1 September 1315 a council at Lincoln confirmed the appointment of John de Hothum, a royal clerk, to go on special mission to Ireland. He was invested with extraordinary powers to supervise the state of the poverty-stricken Dublin exchequer. Moreover, he was given the power to pardon felons on condition they serve against the Scots, and to enter into agreements with those who had, or were about to, proceed against the Scots, remitting debts and awarding wardships and marriages.²⁹ In terms of shoring up loyalty to the English crown and emboldening resistance to the Scots in the Anglo-Irish community this was a sensible and relatively successful expedient.³⁰ Hothum was the central government's expert on Irish affairs, having built his early career in Ireland. In 1314 he had been sent on a similar mission to examine the Dublin exchequer's parlous state.³¹ Although having arrived on 5 November 1315, he presided over the deteriorating military situation – Mortimer's defeat at Kells was followed by Ardscull and Skerries early in 1316 - forces were regularly assembled to meet the Scots and his reports gave invaluable evidence on the state of Ireland and paved the way for a series of sizeable rewards to leading Anglo-Irish nobles in the spring of 1316.³² It can be argued that Mortimer was at least in part the inspiration for Hothum's appointment.

On 26 August letters were sent to Mortimer, Edmund Butler, and Thomas Mandeville.³³ Their content is unknown but they can be seen in this context. Although the decision to send Hothum was ratified by the

²⁶ R.F. Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland, 1315-18', *IHS* 24 (1974), pp.3-37; updated in R.F. Frame, *Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450* (London, 1998), pp.71-98, p.90; *The Bruce*, pp.542-54; *Laud*, p.345.

²⁷ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p.68, n.54.

²⁸ Richardson and Sayles, *The Administration of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1963), p.84.

²⁹ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.347; NLI MS 1, p.424.

³⁰ On 30 August the earl of Arundel was appointed warden of the Scottish marches. Moreover, at the Lincoln council a series of measures were instigated to tackle the Scottish threat in the north: Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p.63; *CCR, 1313-18*, p.310; *Foedera*, II, I, p.275.

³¹ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', pp.64-6.

³² See below, p.50.

³³ PRO E101/376/7, f.74v.

council on 1 September, a protection for his mission was issued on 29 August³⁴, and the letters may well have been to thank the addressees for advice and to confirm to them Hothum's appointment. It is known that the chief justice of the Dublin bench, Hugh Canon, had returned to court from Ireland shortly after 21 August.³⁵ As he had been paid £20 by the Dublin exchequer for returning 'by order of the justiciar and council'³⁶, and as Hothum was to consult the justiciar and council in all³⁷, Mortimer's involvement might seem tenuous. However, there is evidence to suggest otherwise, as he began receiving renewed favour at this time. On 28 August Mortimer had a commission of *oyer et terminer* granted to investigate breaches of his parks at Stratfield Mortimer (Berks.)³⁸ On 1 September the men of his town of Trim received a grant of murage for three years.³⁹ More particularly, the relationship between Mortimer and Hothum is worthy of comment for their paths had crossed much earlier. Both men had had close ties with Piers Gaveston and Hothum had acted as paymaster of Gaveston's army in Leinster in the spring of 1309⁴⁰, a time when Mortimer too was in Ireland. Hothum may also have had connections to Mortimer's liberty of Trim. In 1308 a John de Hothum is named as Geoffrey de Joinville's clerk in preparing debts from the liberty.⁴¹ Therefore, it may be significant to note that, following Hothum's arrival in Ireland, the only sizeable debts to be remitted by the clerks were those of Mortimer for his liberty of Trim.⁴²

J.R.S. Phillips felt that this remittance 'probably reflects Mortimer's role as the defender of a sensitive area of Meath.'⁴³ In a sense, though, the fate of the Lordship might have rested on his shoulders. On 6 or 7 December Roger Mortimer encountered the Scots who had sallied forth again from Ulster, possibly following the return of Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, with reinforcements from Scotland, at Kells in Meath.⁴⁴ Whilst chronicle estimates of Mortimer's force at 15000 men are exaggerated, they may give the correct impression of a force containing more than local contingents. Its rout sent shockwaves throughout Ireland. The Scots spent

³⁴ CPR, 1313-17, p.346.

³⁵ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p.67.

³⁶ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.231.

³⁷ CPR, 1313-17, p.347.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.412. It is interesting to note that shortly after the initial protection on 26 April a like commission was granted for breaches of his parks at Cleobury Mortimer, Earnwood and Leintwardine in Shropshire: p.323 (4 May 1315).

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.349.

⁴⁰ See above, pp.26-7.

⁴¹ NAI RC 8/4, p.186, no.510.

⁴² The total debt was £141.3s.5½d.: NAI RC 8/10, pp.595-6; *C.Ch.W.*, 1244-1326, p.434. The debt was remitted on 18 November, the same day as Mortimer received another commission of *oyer et terminer* for breaches of his manors of Coteridge and Wychbold in Worcestershire: CPR, 1313-17, p.424.

⁴³ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p.68, n.54.

⁴⁴ *Grace*, p.63; *Laud*, p.348.

the early part of 1316 plundering and burning the midlands and even had a chance to capture Dublin, opening the way to a conquest of Ireland and facilitating an attack on Wales. Instead, they continued south, in the process defeating a royal army at Ardscoil on 26 January.⁴⁵ After this battle, in which they had suffered heavy losses, the Scots retired amongst the Irish of Leix.⁴⁶ This may be of some importance in a Mortimer context too for, as Frame has indicated, the chief Irish kin-group there was the O'Mores who were subject to Mortimer's authority as lord of Dunamase.⁴⁷

For Mortimer himself Kells may have seemed like the last nail in the coffin of his authority in Ireland. The battle had been lost, it was claimed, by the desertion of the Lacys.⁴⁸ At Walter de Lacy's trial in February 1317 the accused claimed that Mortimer had sent them to parley with the Scots, and Walter had led them through Meath and Offaly by the most treacherous routes possible.⁴⁹ The jury acquitted him and perhaps his story has elements of the truth. On the other hand, Walter's excuse 'smacks more of ingenuity than honesty'.⁵⁰ Although Mortimer entrusted the defence of Trim to his seneschal, Walter de Cusack⁵¹, following the battle the Lacys must have been freer to exercise power locally. While ultimately they were not able to press home their hard-won victories, the Scots must also have been delighted. Within a few months they had defeated Ireland's two most powerful warlords. It is tempting to speculate that in their alleged contacts with the Lacys and then the O'Mores, they were actively singling out Mortimer as one of the biggest obstacles to future success.⁵² His liberty of Trim, of course, was a major obstacle to free movement between Dublin and Ulster. It can be no surprise, then, that, when Mortimer returned in 1317, one of his first tasks was to pursue and ultimately evict the Lacys, and it is revealing that several of them fled to Scotland.⁵³

Perhaps more galling, though, was the fact that, in fleeing the battlefield and in immediately taking to ship, Mortimer was not only leaving his Irish estates vulnerable, he was returning to England in ignominy. Much that he had worked for in terms of authority and reputation for dependable, effective service was

⁴⁵ Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland*, pp.78-9; *CDS*, III, no.469, p.89.

⁴⁶ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum', p.69.

⁴⁷ R.F Frame, 'English Officials and the Irish Chiefs in the Fourteenth Century', *EHR* 90 (1975), pp.749-77; reprinted in Frame, *Ireland and Britain*, p.260. The tale related by Grace in which Butler led a force to defeat the O'Mores may perhaps, therefore, be dated to shortly after this time, and not necessarily December 1315, *Grace*, p.69.

⁴⁸ *Grace*, p.63.

⁴⁹ *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ii, pp.407-09.

⁵⁰ Frame, 'Bruces in Ireland', p.93.

⁵¹ *Laud*, p.348.

⁵² It is also noticeable that in his report of Ardscoil Hothum prefaces the account by stressing it occurred after Mortimer's departure, again indicating, as Phillips argued, that Kells "was a much more serious defeat for the defences of Ireland than has been realised." Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum,' p.68.

collapsing around him. By all accounts, Roger Mortimer fled from Ireland in the days soon after his defeat. Cautiously assuming that his arrival from Dublin prompted the security measures taken by Hothum to reinforce the city's defences on 8-9 December⁵⁴, it can be estimated that he arrived in England just before Christmas 1315.⁵⁵ Almost as soon as he had arrived, however, he was thrust into another crisis of potentially enormous significance, and in spite of Mortimer's recent troubles Edward II lost none of his faith in him. Indeed, the remainder of this six-year period saw him once more successfully engaged in the frontline of English attempts to maintain hegemony in the British Isles.

On 17 January 1316 Roger Mortimer received a summons to the Lincoln parliament which was to begin on 27 January.⁵⁶ This was an individual summons as he had been in Ireland when the original writs were issued⁵⁷, and Edward urged him to attend personally to give his counsel on affairs touching the state of king and realm.⁵⁸ Mortimer arrived around 6 February.⁵⁹ Ostensibly, the parliament was called for two reasons: to discuss the Scottish threat; and to confirm the recent increase in Thomas, earl of Lancaster's authority, by his election as 'chief counsellor', which led to a firmer observance of the Ordinances and the establishment of a committee to reform the royal household.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the *Vita* contends that little of substance was achieved.⁶¹ This was almost certainly due to the necessary deflection of manpower to combat a revolt in Glamorgan.

On 28 January Llywelyn Bren, the senior Welsh lord of Senghenydd, assaulted Caerphilly castle.⁶² The ensuing weeks saw Glamorgan and Morgannwg aflame with severe damage particularly in Kenfig and Llantrisant.⁶³ Welsh historians generally treat the rising as a 'localised irritation'⁶⁴, owing its origins mainly to

⁵³ *Laud*, pp.356-7.

⁵⁴ On 8 December the Dublin government began arraying men to guard the area around Saggart, co.Dublin, against the Irish: Frame, 'Bruces in Ireland,' p.85. On the following day Hothum took measures to fortify the exchequer buildings: Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum,' p.68; *CCR*, 1313-18, p.293; 1318-23, p.90; *NAI RC* 8/10, pp.452, 459, 479.

⁵⁵ His destination is not known.

⁵⁶ *CCR*, 1313-18, p.320; *P.W.*, II, I, p.156.

⁵⁷ *P.W.*, II, I, p.153.

⁵⁸ *NLI MS* 1 p.425; E101/376/7, f.77r.

⁵⁹ *PRO C53/102*, m.12, nos.36, 37.

⁶⁰ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.179-82; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.93. Lancaster's position was confirmed on 17 February: *Rot. Parl.*, I, p.351.

⁶¹ *Vita*, p.69.

⁶² *Flores*, p.339.

⁶³ J. Beverley Smith, 'The Rebellion of Llywelyn Bren' *Glamorgan County History*, III (Cardiff, 1971), p.79.

⁶⁴ A view expressed by in R.A.Griffiths, 'The Revolt of Llywelyn Bren,' in idem (ed.) *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (Stroud, 1994), p.87.

social and economic dislocation and to a local power struggle. Llywelyn, frustrated by the king's refusal to hear his petitions that he had been unjustly removed from local office by the keeper, Payn Turberville, and by the subsequent accusations of sedition against him, took to arms.⁶⁵ The government sent in local power brokers. On 11 February the earl of Hereford was made captain of forces going there to suppress the rebellion.⁶⁶ In the subsequent campaigning Roger Mortimer, John Hastings, lord of Abergavenny, and John Giffard of Brimpsfield, lord of Cantref Bychan and Iscennen, played prominent roles. On 20 February Mortimer of Chirk got powers to receive Welsh rebels to the king's peace.⁶⁷ His role in the crisis was clearly important for on 24 February he was restored to Blaenllyfni and Bwlchydinas.⁶⁸ Faced by such a force, Llywelyn retreated into the mountains from where he could launch a guerrilla campaign against local strongholds. A brief standoff followed before the royal forces launched a pincer movement to flush their opponents out. Whilst the force led by William Montagu, John Giffard and Henry of Lancaster, lord of Monmouth, routed the rebels in the Black Mountains on, or shortly after, 12 March, Hereford's contingent, including Mortimer, set out from Brecon. On 18 March Llywelyn surrendered to the earl, Hastings, and Mortimer at Ystradfellte in southwestern Brecon.⁶⁹

In their report to the king of 22 March Hereford and both Mortimers describe their efforts and beg Edward not to hang Llywelyn until John Walwayn has brought more information.⁷⁰ Conflicting chronicle reports leave doubt as to the nature of his surrender. The *Vita* believes it to have been unconditional whilst the Tintern *Flores* believes a deal was struck, whereby they would guarantee Llywelyn life and limb for a sum of money.⁷¹ Without this pecuniary element this deal is difficult to explain from Mortimer's viewpoint. One relatively minor point worth noting, though, is that the youngest of Llywelyn's sons was named Roger, a name not prominent amongst the later Clare earls.⁷² Perhaps this implies that the affair had personal as well as local dimensions. Furthermore, a study of this episode in Mortimer's career necessitates placing it within a wider context.

⁶⁵ For a much fuller discussion of the recent administrative changes, and the generally more robust thrust of government in the former Clare lordships, lands without a lord since the death of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, at Bannockburn, see Griffiths, 'The revolt of Llywelyn Bren,' pp.84-7.

⁶⁶ *CPR*, 1313-17, p.432.

⁶⁷ *ibid*, p.443.

⁶⁸ That this grant should come only a week after Lancaster had become chief counsellor is some indication of Chirk's role and the importance his mission carried: *C.Ch.R.*, 1300-26, p.306.

⁶⁹ Griffiths, 'The revolt of Llywelyn Bren', p.88.

⁷⁰ *CACCW*, xv, 75, pp.68-9.

⁷¹ *Vita*, p.68; *Flores*, p.340.

⁷² *CCR*, 1313-18, pp.283, 285.

J.R.S. Phillips has argued that, in flight from Ireland in December 1315, Mortimer deliberately gave up his defence of Trim to take on Llywelyn Bren's rising.⁷³ Strictly speaking, chronologically this cannot be correct. Edward II's summons to the Lincoln Parliament urges Mortimer to attend only if he is not returning to Ireland before it meets, implying he was preparing to return and fight for his lands.⁷⁴ Moreover, the summons came eleven days before Llywelyn actually attacked Caerphilly. On the other hand, in its broader implications Phillips's argument has much to commend it. Mortimer appreciated the intrinsic links bestriding the Irish Sea and was acutely aware of the perils the situation conveyed. The chronicler John Trokelowe emphasises that Llywelyn had rebelled amongst other reasons '*audaciam resistendi a victoria Scotorum sibi assumentes, foedusque et fiduciam cum eis ineuntes.*'⁷⁵ There is no doubt that the English government feared a Welsh rising in sympathy with the Scots' invasion of Ireland and the possibility of Edward Bruce invading Wales from Ireland.⁷⁶ This, in the final analysis, might help explain Mortimer's ultimate decision to stay.

A further letter, the contents of which are obscure, was sent to Mortimer on 30 January.⁷⁷ This was almost certainly to inform him of developments in Glamorgan and to request his attendance on campaign. It is likely that Mortimer's presence at parliament was required to impart both information and advice. However humiliating it may have been for him, Mortimer could supply news of the Irish situation. Perhaps it was his information, as well as the deteriorating military situation in south Wales, which persuaded the government to develop its measures to shore up the Welsh defences further.⁷⁸ On 13 February 1316 the keepers of the castles in north Wales were ordered to attend to their care and were to assemble at Caernarfon, presumably for a special briefing.⁷⁹ The following day saw a number of their fees promptly paid.⁸⁰ The army itself, or at least the contingent led by Montagu, numbered 150 men-at-arms and 2000 foot.⁸¹ There is no reason to suspect Hereford's force was meant to be smaller. Although by the beginning of March 1316 the crisis threatening Dublin had probably passed, the crushing of the Glamorgan uprising was paramount. Even when trouble seemed to have spread to Powys, where rioting broke out on 4 March probably on the departure on the

⁷³ Phillips, 'The Anglo-Norman nobility,' p.92.

⁷⁴ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.320; *P.W.*, II, I, p.156.

⁷⁵ *Trokelowe*, p.92.

⁷⁶ J. Beverley Smith, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', *WHR* 8 (1976-7), pp.147-51.

⁷⁷ E101/376/7, f.77r.

⁷⁸ As J. Beverley Smith has argued, though, the presence at court of marchers like Hereford meant government could be sensitive to the growing problems in Wales: Smith, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', p.147.

⁷⁹ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.267.

⁸⁰ *ibid*, p.266.

⁸¹ *C.Ch.W., 1244-1326*, p.440.

Glamorgan campaign of the lord, John de Charlton, Roger Mortimer and others were strictly ordered on 12 March not to intervene.⁸²

The relief demonstrably felt in government circles following Llywelyn's surrender on 18 March is therefore to be expected. Disaster in Wales was averted and in Ireland it seemed that, at least temporarily, the crisis had subsided. In fact, on 26 March Edward sent letters to fifteen Anglo-Irish barons requesting that they remain loyal and thanking them for past services.⁸³ In the ensuing months he issued sizeable rewards in which Roger Mortimer had noticeable influence. On 14 May John fitz Thomas became earl of Kildare with Mortimer prominent at court.⁸⁴ Mortimer then witnessed the charter by which Edward confirmed the grant to Arnold le Poer of Castlewary and Oughterard.⁸⁵ Of the other witnesses only Theobald de Verdon had strong Irish connections and he had not been there since early in 1315. Is it possible that Mortimer, as much as Hothum, to whom the credit has previously been given⁸⁶, had some influence? He was certainly well acquainted with the merits or demerits of the likes of John fitz Thomas and Arnold le Poer. In 1319 Mortimer definitely recommended the victor of Faughart, John de Bermingham, receive the earldom of Louth. It is likely he had done something similar with John fitz Thomas's promotion to the earldom of Kildare.⁸⁷

On a personal level Mortimer was granted a commission of *oyer et terminer* on 12 May into breaches of his manors in Worcestershire.⁸⁸ On 16 May he was awarded the fines of all men found guilty of breaking his parks at Stratfield. Towards the end of June the king gave his consent to various arrangements concerning the enfeoffment of Roger's son and daughter-in-law with considerable estates.⁸⁹ Such grants represent the continuation of Mortimer's esteemed position. Kells had been a disaster but the early part of 1316 had once more demonstrated Mortimer to be a capable military operator in the service of royal interests. His place amongst royal counsellors proved profitable for crown and himself alike. The latter half of 1316 would serve to prove just how respected Mortimer had become in royal circles and would show the price Edward was prepared to pay for stifling the Scots' ambitions in the British Isles.

⁸² *CCR, 1313-18*, p.276.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p.332. This was also the day on which Llywelyn was sent to the Tower, and on which commissions of array for the July muster at Newcastle were appointed: *ibid.*, pp.274-5; *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.460-2.

⁸⁴ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.288; *C.Ch.R., 1300-26*, p.307. Roger Mortimer is prominent among the witnesses to royal charters from 6-17 May 1316: PRO C53/102, m.5.

⁸⁵ NAI RC 8/10, pp.623-5; *CCR, 1313-18*, p.280 (17 May).

⁸⁶ Phillips, 'The Mission of John de Hothum', p.74.

⁸⁷ See below, p.65.

⁸⁸ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.499.

The year 1316 was an *annus horribilis* for Edward II. The Welsh troubles, even though they were successfully dealt with, rumbled on with fines and ransoms still being taken months later.⁹⁰ The Scots not only scourged the northern half of Ireland, but also put northern England to fire and sword, whilst famine bit hard across the British Isles.⁹¹ Worse still, the entente brokered by Lancaster's acceptance of the chief counsellorship shattered as he returned to his estates, disillusioned with the lack of progress with reform.⁹² In early summer violence erupted in Bristol where members of the civic authority quarrelled with the castle constable, Bartholomew Badlesmere.⁹³ Despite efforts to reach a peaceful settlement, led by the earl of Pembroke, the citizens' refusal to obey royal orders forced a siege to be launched. Although an affair of largely local proportions, its suppression involved nationally prominent figures. On 19 July Roger Mortimer joined Badlesmere, William Montagu, Maurice Berkeley, and John Charlton in investing the city. A week later the citizens surrendered. It will be noted that all of the above had been in the front line in quelling the Glamorgan revolt, and Bristol provides evidence for the association of a group of like-minded individuals close to the king, centred around Pembroke, who would increasingly provide Edward with crucial support in his relations with the Lancastrians.⁹⁴ Indeed, it is probable that his affiliation with this group of courtiers lay behind Mortimer's most prestigious award to date. On 23 November 1316 he was appointed king's lieutenant in Ireland.⁹⁵

The position of lieutenant in Ireland is difficult to define. Most obviously, it meant to take the king's place in government and undertake the judicial, military and administrative functions this entailed. However, the post did not have a long history. Richardson and Sayles argue that the title was merely honorific.⁹⁶ In June 1308 Edward II, in making Richard de Burgh and then Piers Gaveston his lieutenant – the first occasions on which the title was officially held – confirmed this to some extent. J.S.Hamilton has shown this to have been a spontaneous decision, taken on 16 June, to ensure Gaveston and Edward could maintain contact and to

⁸⁹ See chapter 5, p.187.

⁹⁰ On 12 November Mortimer gained a pardon for Llywelyn ap Madoc ap Hywel, a Glamorgan rebel: *CCR, 1313-18*, p.376.

⁹¹ I. Kershaw, 'The great famine and agrarian crisis in England, 1315-1322', *P&P* 59 (1973), pp.3-50.

⁹² Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.101.

⁹³ *Vita*, pp.70-4; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.184-5; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.102-03.

⁹⁴ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.106. Both Maddicott and Phillips have debunked the issue of a "Middle Party" in English politics. Although my narrative of the events of 1315-20 cannot sustain a detailed analysis, I have offered my interpretation of the complexities of the political situation at court and in the country, with a strong emphasis on Mortimer and the connections he forged with these and other magnates, in my analysis of his retinue and personal allegiances. See chapter 5, pp.187-94.

⁹⁵ *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.563-4.

transform the disgrace of Gaveston's exile into a source of honour.⁹⁷ Mortimer's appointment does not follow this example, indicating the post had special military and judicial functions. Butler, the justiciar, had long been doing his best on severely stretched resources and when Mortimer arrived he continued to lead military expeditions as well as perform the usual judicial functions alongside the lieutenant. Irrespective of any political affiliations Roger Mortimer may have had, it was the considerations dictated by the fluctuating events in the British Isles and his own obvious suitability to undertake this sensitive military and administrative role that mainly lay behind the appointment.

There can be no doubt that Mortimer's appointment came at a pivotal moment in the Anglo-Scots war. Despite their failure to seize Dublin the Scots had succeeded in capturing Carrickfergus in September 1316. Such was the importance of this endeavour, vital for controlling the province and in securing the Scots' supply line, that Robert Bruce himself may have joined his brother in July to press the siege.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, the Lordship had lost one of its most important figures with the death of John fitz Thomas in September.⁹⁹ Moreover, on 24 September the earl of Ulster, Ireland's most influential politician, received licence to come to England.¹⁰⁰ Edward Bruce's dominance of Ulster after Connor had left the earl without any real authority. It must have been becoming increasingly clear that stronger military leadership was necessary, and perhaps de Burgh partly inspired Mortimer's appointment, recognising his local knowledge and the respect he may have commanded. This may have been especially so if Bruce motivations are examined.

In January 1317 King Robert returned to Ireland at the head of a large Scottish army. The *Annals of Ulster* claim that his aim was 'to assist his brother to conquer and bring into subjugation this kingdom and to banish all Englishmen here-hence'.¹⁰¹ Robin Frame, pointing to Robert's repeated intervention in the endeavour entrusted to his brother, and the campaign deep into Munster following his arrival, commented that '...nor is there anything in Robert's actions in Ireland which might lead us to believe that he was not interested in conquest'.¹⁰² Such a mission would have required considerable forward planning and

⁹⁶ Richardson and Sayles, *The Administration of Medieval Ireland*, p.12. See also, H.Wood, 'The titles of the chief governors of Ireland,' *BIHR* 13 (1935-6), pp.1-8.

⁹⁷ Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston*, pp.55-7.

⁹⁸ *The Bruce*, p.580.

⁹⁹ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1216-1333*, IV (Oxford, 1920) p.212.

¹⁰⁰ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.549.

¹⁰¹ *Annála Uladh, The Annals of Ulster*, ed. B.MacCarthy (Blackrock, 1998), p.429.

¹⁰² Frame, 'Bruces in Ireland', p.79.

preparation.¹⁰³ If the situation described by Duncan as regards 1315 was mirrored here, then Mortimer's appointment must be examined in this context and, perhaps more due to intelligence of the Scots' manoeuvres arriving at court, this would have met fire with fire from the English viewpoint.

No English monarch had set foot in Ireland since John's reign and none of the leading magnates showed any inclination to personally defend their Irish estates. In such an environment Mortimer, the one man among the front ranks of English baronial society who had consistently involved himself in Irish politics, was an imaginative choice. After all, he had many qualities Edward might look for in the man who would best represent his interests in Ireland against a reinvigorated Bruce threat: local knowledge; a broad range of contacts and a respected position in Anglo-Irish society; a solid military reputation, bolstered by his role in the Glamorgan and Bristol risings; and, above all, he seems to have been trusted by the king. His appointment as lieutenant, moreover, appears to have been just one element of a grander English strategy of re-assertion in the British Isles, a strategy put into action in late 1316 which bore a distinct Mortimer stamp.

On 20 November, three days before Mortimer's appointment, the earl of Arundel was appointed warden of the lands between Roxburgh and the Trent.¹⁰⁴ Supported by contingents supplied by northern lords, well over 1000 men were stationed at strategic locations across northern England.¹⁰⁵ Most noticeable, though, is the appointment on 23 November of Mortimer of Chirk as Justice of Wales, thereby restoring the *status quo* of 1308-15.¹⁰⁶ Chirk was an authority figure in Wales and could be expected to maintain stability there. This might prove crucial if the suspicions about potential further Scottish dabbling in Welsh politics at this time can be established as accurate. The written contact between Edward Bruce and Gruffydd Llwyd, the leading member of the Welsh communities of north Wales, is well known.¹⁰⁷ Bruce's appeal offers the Welsh aid in loosing the bonds of servitude to the English, whilst Llwyd's response is couched in similar rhetoric of Celtic kinship and agrees to help Bruce defeat the English. J. Beverley Smith places this exchange at the end of 1316 as part of the Bruces' scheming in the western seas. However, in questioning the otherwise unstintingly loyal

¹⁰³ Preparations for such an expedition may well have been set in train following the assembly at Cupar where, on 30 September, Robert Bruce granted Thomas, earl of Moray, the English-held Isle of Man, giving him an incentive to take it: *The Bruce*, p.580.

¹⁰⁴ McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, p.149.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp.149-50, especially map 11, p.150.

¹⁰⁶ *CFR, 1307-19*, p.312.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, 'Gruffydd Llwyd and the Celtic Alliance', pp.477-8.

Gruffydd's behaviour, he concludes his reaction was down to his treatment by John Grey, Chirk's predecessor as Justice.¹⁰⁸ Could the exchange of letters have taken place earlier?

On 4 August 1316, at about the same moment as the Scots were besieging Carrickfergus, a Welsh force led by Gruffydd towards Scotland was checked at Chester. Thanks to evidence supplied by the Welsh themselves, they were allowed to return to defend their own lands from an alleged Irish invasion threat. The ensuing weeks perhaps provided significant opportunities for the above exchange, were Gruffydd actually irked by Grey, his superior in the administration of his native lands. It is noticeable that Chirk's return saw Gruffydd's swift arrest on 6 January 1317 and removal as sheriff of Meirionydd.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps this was a first move in a strategy for which only the Mortimers were specially suited. If the Bruces were preparing to exploit the links between Wales and Ireland then, for the English government, two could play at that game. A military strategy in which the English could seize the initiative in the 'Irish Sea World' was perhaps the most important reason behind Mortimer of Wigmore's appointment as lieutenant of Ireland.

Whatever the explanation, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore clearly headed an extremely important expedition. Edward II took great pains to ensure a large, well-paid and equipped force accompanied him. Justiciars usually received a fee of £500 *per annum*. Mortimer's fee was £2000, though there is evidence to suggest Edward promised £6000.¹¹⁰ On 9 December Mortimer received the wardship of the heir of Nicholas Audley.¹¹¹ On 22 December measures for the actual financing of the mission were set in train when the bishops of Exeter, Winchester, and Hereford, and the four Welsh bishops were ordered to pay a total of £1000 from the tithe levied in their dioceses.¹¹² The taxes and collectors thereof in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire were ordered to raise another £500. On 4 January 1317 the Genoese financier, Antonio Pessagno, was asked to forward £400 to Mortimer.¹¹³ The £2000 sum was to be made up by a further £100 contribution from the taxes and collectors of the sixteenth in Shropshire on 29 January.¹¹⁴

The force Mortimer led was to be correspondingly large. John de Norton, a royal clerk, was commissioned to levy twenty great ships from the ports between Bristol and Haverford to convey a force of 150

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.475.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', p.156.

¹¹⁰ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.608; *1317-21*, p.243.

¹¹¹ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.574.

¹¹² *CCR, 1313-18*, p.382.

¹¹³ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.608.

¹¹⁴ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.391.

cavalry and 500 foot.¹¹⁵ There is no record, however, of the precise number Mortimer led to Ireland. Clyn claims Mortimer arrived with thirty-eight knights.¹¹⁶ Protections were issued on 30 December 1316 to thirty-one men of his retinue.¹¹⁷ On 4 January 1317 fifteen prominent absentees headed by John Hastings were ordered to go to Ireland or send a significant force to join Mortimer.¹¹⁸ This had a dual purpose: to encourage absentees to take a more active interest in defending their lands, relieving some of the burden of the Dublin government; and to build up a more permanent force to help lieutenant and justiciar resist the Scots. Little positive can be said about whether this appeal succeeded though.¹¹⁹

The force must have set out shortly after the appointment of John de Athy as admiral of the fleet on 28 March. Grace places its arrival at Youghal on 7 April.¹²⁰ Mortimer had to prevent the Scots exploiting their march deep into southern Ireland and to procure the release of the earl of Ulster who had been arrested by the Dubliners in February. It is slightly ironic, therefore, that by the time he actually arrived much of his first task had already been accomplished, and the primary military function of his mission rendered far less important. Robin Frame has pieced together the Scots' march south from Ulster early in February 1317.¹²¹ He charts their expedition as far as Limerick, where they hoped to exploit spontaneous outbursts of Irish enthusiasm for their arrival and link up with Donogh O'Brien, leader of a prominent faction of the principal Clan Brien. Donogh's defeat by his rival, Murtough, ensuring the Scots a frostier reception, and the skilful and resourceful marshalling of Anglo-Irish forces by Edmund Butler, whose army shadowed the Scots for much of their journey, left the Bruces vulnerable. It seems that, in spite of any thoughts of conquest, Robert Bruce, hearing of Mortimer's arrival to reinforce Butler, immediately decided to withdraw, fearing isolation and annihilation far from his Ulster stronghold. Mortimer commanded Butler on 11 April not to attack before he arrived.¹²² Mortimer may have been steeling himself for the most critical confrontation of his career, but his command proved unnecessary. Ultimately, Mortimer would have to be satisfied with the process of punishing the Scots' adherents and restoring order to areas where the Scots had sparked trouble.

¹¹⁵ *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.574-5.

¹¹⁶ *Annalium Hiberniae Chronicon, ad annum MCCCXLIX digessit Frater Johannes Clyn* (Dublin, 1809), p.13. But, see n.119 below.

¹¹⁷ *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.611, 617, 620.

¹¹⁸ *CCR, 1313-18*, pp.450-1.

¹¹⁹ Evans believes the force numbered 15000, an unlikely figure: Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer', p.208.

¹²⁰ *Grace*, p.84.

¹²¹ Frame, 'Select Documents XXXVII: The campaign against the Scots in Munster, 1317', *IHS* 24 (1985), pp.361-72.

¹²² *Laud*, p.355.

The consequent release of tension allowed Mortimer to concentrate on his other primary obligation. On 22 April Edward ordered him to summon the Irish council and inform himself of the causes of the earl of Ulster's arrest.¹²³ The following day a council assembled at Kilmainham.¹²⁴ Mortimer had probably been sent with direct orders to procure the earl's release. De Burgh had long been petitioning the king about his plight and for permission to come to England. There seems little doubt that Edward pressed for a swift release, having sent letters to that effect to the Justiciar, the earl of Kildare, Richard de Clare, Arnold le Poer, and Maurice fitz Thomas in March 1317.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the tone of this and other orders perhaps reflects concern about the justice of the earl's release. He had been imprisoned by the Dubliners on, or shortly before, 21 February 1317, following a failed 'ambush' on the Scots at Slane. This failure allowed the Bruces to come perilously close to Dublin and led to a further dismantling of the suburbs to shore up the city defences.¹²⁶ Allegations of collusion were rife. The earl had to all appearances been defeated on several occasions by the Scots and he was, after all, Robert Bruce's father-in-law. Edward did not want to take any chances. He ordered Mortimer to enquire whether the earl's release and his transferral to England would be to the profit of the king and to the peace of Ireland.¹²⁷ On 27 April the Dubliners were given a guarantee that they would not be molested for arresting the earl, though their appeal to have his arrest and release referred to them was denied.¹²⁸ Though Edward II strongly desired the earl's release, he was prepared to leave the decision in the hands of a most able broker of compromise, the lieutenant.

G.O.Sayles places de Burgh's release on 8 May.¹²⁹ This fits with a desire to have Ireland's leading magnate back at large as quickly as possible. On 24 May, however, Edward repeated his order to Mortimer to inquire into the arrest, perhaps indicating his continued detention in Dublin castle.¹³⁰ Grace even puts his release as late as 24 June.¹³¹ There is no firm evidence of the earl's liberation until 24 July, when the king informed the community of the lordship that he had taken de Burgh into his protection, and that he was going to England. This letter was attested by Mortimer and probably represented his compromise whereby the earl

¹²³ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.405.

¹²⁴ *Grace*, p.85.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p.81.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p.77; *Laud*, p.352.

¹²⁷ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.404.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, pp.404-5.

¹²⁹ Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland*, no.111, pp.85-6.

¹³⁰ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.469.

¹³¹ *Grace*, p.89.

was released on the condition he would take no revenge upon the Dublin authorities.¹³² It is difficult to be more conclusive than this, although Mortimer may have welcomed the removal of a powerful force which, though he could have proven especially helpful in subsequent campaigns in Connacht and in raising forces, might also be a thorn in his flesh as an alternative focus of authority.

Any delay was also due to Mortimer's preoccupation with destroying the Lacys, a campaign launched in early June.¹³³ This was his first significant military operation and can be seen as part of the wider plan to tackle Bruce's adherents in Ireland. This was certainly what he claimed in an assembly in Dublin where it was discovered that the Lacys had discarded their allegiance to the English king and had allied with the Scots in December 1315. Thus, we have the scenario of men being denounced as traitors who only three months before had been acquitted of all charges of colluding with the Scots at Kells and its aftermath.¹³⁴ On 28 April they had been amongst those to receive royal thanks for services against the Scots.¹³⁵ Despite suspicions of their actual guilt¹³⁶, there can be little doubt that Mortimer's presence forced the issue and that he was primarily motivated by revenge for Kells.

The campaign, launched from Drogheda and Trim, began with a summons to the Lacys to return to the king's peace. Their repeated refusal to attend judicial hearings was exacerbated by their execution of Mortimer's retainer, Hugh de Croft, who had approached them to negotiate on the lieutenant's behalf.¹³⁷ Raising the royal standard, Mortimer defeated Walter de Lacy, lord of Rathwire, on 3 June. Two days later he also managed to see off a counter-attack by Walter, putting him to flight.¹³⁸ The subsequent trial at Drogheda on 18 July proclaimed the Lacys exiled and outlawed as traitors to their oaths of homage and fealty to the English crown. Sometime after Mortimer's death an examination was ordered of the record and process of this trial at the request of Edmund, son of Aymer de Lacy.¹³⁹ Edmund claimed that the exile proceedings were erroneous, as Mortimer had secured them purely on his own record of the events. He had also had the Lacys outlawed without having ever accused them of felony or having informed them of the charges he was levelling. The nature of the surviving evidence does not permit an accurate reconstruction of the communication between

¹³² NAI RC 7/12, pp.399-400.

¹³³ For what follows see: *Chartularies of St.Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ii, pp.410-16.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, pp.407-09.

¹³⁵ *Foedera*, II, I, p.327.

¹³⁶ Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', p.93.

¹³⁷ *Laud*, p.355. Confirmation of his death comes with an order on 15 June to resume his lands: *CFR, 1307-19*, p.331.

¹³⁸ *Chartularies of St.Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ii, p.411; *Grace*, p.89.

¹³⁹ The inquisition was ordered on 12 July 1333.

the forces nor of the trial. However, the proceedings instigated by Edmund dragged on for several years which might imply scepticism about any errors having been committed. In addition, it is vital to remember that Mortimer received notable support in his campaign from both Nicholas de Verdon and John de Bermingham.¹⁴⁰ Mortimer then showed his appreciation for such prominent support by knighting John de Bermingham at a lavish feast.

The symbolism of this ceremony could not have been greater. In three short months Mortimer had presided over the Scottish withdrawal, Robert Bruce abandoning Ireland on 22 May, and the release of the earl of Ulster in a manner intended to ease tensions.¹⁴¹ On a personal level Mortimer authority could now be re-asserted over his liberty of Trim, his chief rivals having been chased away, and the Scots who had previously ravaged his territories were now confined to Ulster.¹⁴² The real work could now begin. In the ensuing twelve months Mortimer, in close association with Butler, attempted to re-assert the crown's position in Ireland, and needed not only to assuage tensions, but also provide a renewed focus for loyalty by astute distribution of patronage and justice. More than the defeat of Bruce, it was accomplishments here that ultimately brought him reward.

The Ireland that faced Mortimer in July 1317 was unusually disturbed as famine bit very hard. Edward Bruce had a tight grip on Ulster and, if the chroniclers are to be believed, the arrival of Robert Bruce sparked off further rumblings of discontent among sections of the Irish nobility. Barbour, for instance, claims that following the Scots' retreat from Limerick, 'all the kings of the islands came to Edward and did their homage to him, except one or two'.¹⁴³ Although this is wishful thinking, the period also witnessed the composition of the so-called 'Irish Remonstrance' which set out Irish grievances against English dominion to the Pope, and declared the Irish willing to accept Edward Bruce as their king.¹⁴⁴ Though the unity this expresses is largely fictional, the fact that Edward Bruce proclaimed himself king of Ireland, and had undergone a coronation ceremony, may well have been a powerful pull on native loyalty. In southeastern Ireland, moreover, feuds simmered between the multifarious kin groupings among the Anglo-Irish community,

¹⁴⁰ *Clyn*, p.13.

¹⁴¹ *The Bruce*, p.582.

¹⁴² It must be remembered that on their retreat north from Limerick the Scots were able to rest outside Trim: *Grace*, p.87.

¹⁴³ *The Bruce*, p.594.

¹⁴⁴ Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, volume 6, ed. D.E.R. Watt (Aberdeen, 1990), pp.386-403.

as authority had been fractured by the consequences of absenteeism.¹⁴⁵ Mortimer had arrived in Ireland in April 1317 with a raft of emergency powers more wide-ranging than those available to Gaveston. If his initial actions are anything to go by, though, it was the re-establishment of a firmer military foothold across the lordship that was his major priority.

The available evidence with which a reconstruction of his military operations can be attempted is unfortunately somewhat restricted. The chronicles give only the highlights and record material is often even more vague. Nevertheless, there are no records of Mortimer holding pleas between 23 July and 13 October, whilst Butler's circuit took in Waterford and Thomastown before returning to Dublin.¹⁴⁶ This tallies with other sources and suggests Mortimer took swift military action from north to south. Payments are recorded to him totalling £422 which he received on 8 July as part of a sum of £500 granted for his expenses in expediting royal business across Ireland in "strengthening the peace and putting down the rebellion and insolence of the English and Irish."¹⁴⁷ Following Mortimer's defeat and exile of the Lacys Grace concludes he headed into Connacht and Longford, possibly in pursuit of the remnants of the Lacy party which had not fled to the Scots, but probably also to restore order in an area denuded of de Burgh lordship.¹⁴⁸ Both Grace and Laud equate this mission with Mortimer's defeat of O'Farrell in Longford.¹⁴⁹ Mortimer then cut back southwards to tackle the Leinster Irish. On 6 September a battle was fought at "Glynseley" with the Irish of "Omayll" in which both sides suffered heavy losses in a royal victory.¹⁵⁰ The real significance was the consequent submission of O'Byrne who was committed to Dublin castle, thereby removing an obstacle to settlement of the Leinster marches. These, of course, were notable successes and testify to Mortimer's capacity as a military commander. However, his achievements probably did little more than scratch the surface and provide breathing space for the administration. Indeed, soon after Donnchad O'Carroll routed a parallel campaign led by Edmund Butler with the loss of 200 lives.¹⁵¹

Room for manoeuvre, though, was exactly what the Dublin administration needed. It allowed Mortimer to address deep-rooted socio-political problems. At his original appointment he had been granted the

¹⁴⁵ R.F. Frame, 'Power and Society in the lordship of Ireland, 1272-1377', *P&P* 76 (1977), pp.16-17.

¹⁴⁶ P.Connolly, 'Pleas held before the chief governors of Ireland, 1308-76', *Irish Jurist* new series 9 (1983), p.107.

¹⁴⁷ "*ad pacis confirmacionem et Anglicorum et Hibernicorum rebellionem et proterviam sedendam*": PRO E101/237/5, m.6; Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.242.

¹⁴⁸ *Grace*, p.91.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.91; *Laud*, p.356.

¹⁵⁰ Mortimer was paid £43.1s.1d. for campaigning in Leinster: Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, pp.248-9.

¹⁵¹ Clyn, p.13.

capacity to remove and appoint ministers, as Piers Gaveston had been.¹⁵² However, and this must surely be connected to the particular circumstances in which Mortimer was nominated, his lieutenancy saw a concession of English law to Irishmen “to expedite royal business against the Scots.” Moreover, he was to receive and pardon felons who might play a role against the Scots or Irish. A good example of his approach is the raft of pardons granted to numerous Irishmen and Englishmen of Fermoy for offences committed up to Martinmas 1317. The fine of 100s. imposed for this solution was later waived on the orders of the lieutenant and council for these men’s service in conserving the peace in Fermoy.¹⁵³ On the other hand, the issue of pardons was controversial. A petition from the “middling people of Ireland”, dated to 1317-19, complains that the peace of Ireland was being undermined by the liberal use of fines for punishing murderers.¹⁵⁴ Another from the earl of Kildare and John de Bermingham rails against the lack of a firm rule of law. Felons were pardoned at the request of great lords or fined for nominal sums.¹⁵⁵ The lack of concrete dating evidence makes it difficult to be sure how these relate to Mortimer’s lieutenancy. It is possible they were drawn up anticipating his arrival as a strong military governor. On 22 April 1317 perhaps in response to these petitions, and to that from the Dubliners¹⁵⁶, Edward ordered Mortimer not to grant pardons for homicides not considered before the council, as the king had heard this encouraged others.¹⁵⁷ Conversely, the petitions may have been prompted by Mortimer’s actions.

The volatile state particularly of southern Ireland demanded a flexible approach. Familial disputes had long dominated politics. Alliances were formed and swiftly broken causing rancour and violent recrimination. It is noticeable that both the lieutenant and the justiciar remained in the south over a prolonged period. Roger Mortimer arrived in Thomastown (co. Kilkenny) with Butler on 3 November. He was not to depart for Dublin until sometime after 26 January 1318, while Butler moved on to Cashel and Limerick.¹⁵⁸ In the intervening period they brokered a series of compromises. A start had been made on 28 October when numerous members of the Archbold family were given peace at Kildare’s instance.¹⁵⁹ It appears, though, to have been among the “progenies” of Cork that the problems were greatest. In November John son of David de Barry was admitted to make fine for himself and his men in 100 marks for all trespasses up to 16 January

¹⁵² *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.563-4; NAI RC 8/4, pp.340-2, no.835.

¹⁵³ NAI KB 2/12, m.9d.

¹⁵⁴ Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland*, no.136, pp.99-101.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, no.137, p.101.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, no.111, pp.85-6.

¹⁵⁷ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.405.

¹⁵⁸ Connolly, ‘Pleas held before the chief governors of Ireland,’ pp.107-8.

1318.¹⁶⁰ This presaged the gathering at Cork on 19 December. There, Mortimer, in the presence of Butler, William, archbishop of Cashel, the chancellor, Kildare, Maurice fitz Thomas, and John Wogan¹⁶¹, presided over the composition of a concord to mitigate the violence between the leading Cork families. The heads of the Barry, Carew, Caunton, Cogan, de Courcy, and Roche dynasties swore to remit the enmities between them and faithfully to observe the king's peace. Fines would be imposed for contempt and, if found guilty, each would be bound in 2000 marks. Maurice de Caunton agreed that if he or his *parentela* were to rise against the king, they would be pursued by the *posse* and would forfeit their goods.¹⁶² Although within eighteen months this agreement would lie in ruins because of the revolt of the Barrys, it is remarkable testament to Mortimer's tenacity and authority that such an agreement could have been made at all.

Many of these agreements share common traits. Most obviously, although brokered in the king's name, Mortimer was the prime mover. Willing to take advice from respected and senior figures, he conducted a policy of persuasion and cajolment, occasionally mixed with military force.¹⁶³ Clearly the government appreciated the nature of the problem to some extent, and regular petitions furthered its knowledge, but there is no doubt that Mortimer was largely left to dictate the course of events. A man who knew violence and how to exploit it, he carefully targeted his abilities as a man of compromise. Peace would never come lightly, but his lieutenancy witnessed a real attempt to bring an end to instability across Ireland.

Force and compromise were only two elements of Mortimer's strategy, however. Crucially, the king granted his lieutenant sweeping powers of patronage. Robin Frame has remarked that the most serious problem facing the Anglo-Irish Lordship was persistent royal absenteeism. Not only was there no royal leadership of military campaigns, equally there was no forum in which Anglo-Irish lords could receive favour and confirmation of their status in the eyes of their liege lord.¹⁶⁴ Mortimer was nevertheless invested with several

¹⁵⁹ *Laud*, pp.356-7.

¹⁶⁰ NAI KB 2/12, m.9d. Forty marks were paid to Mortimer at Dublin on 26 February 1318 and the rest at the following Easter and Michaelmas.

¹⁶¹ Wogan's role during the lieutenancy is an interesting one. G.J.Hand argues he was Mortimer's "principal adviser on local conditions": G.J. Hand, *English Law in Ireland, 1290-1324* (Cambridge, 1967), pp.24-5. This must be correct. He had been justiciar from 1296-1308 and again from 1309-12. He knew the land and its politics better than most other administrators. His initial protection for his journey to Ireland was issued on 11 May: *CPR, 1313-17*, p.646, but he seems to have been there before that, attending the Kilmainham parliament: *Laud*, p.302. It is tempting to think that Mortimer might have specifically requested his company for advice on matters of practicality in military organization, and on the intricacies of politics in areas outside the lord of Trim's jurisdiction.

¹⁶² NAI RC 7/12, pp.148-51.

¹⁶³ Payment was made at this time of £316.14s.6d. for going to Cork and Desmond to curb rebellion: Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.248.

¹⁶⁴ R.F. Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-61* (Oxford, 1982), p.8.

important powers to break this cycle. Pardons and the granting of senior magnates' requests was one facet. Nicholas de Verdon, another who had supported Mortimer in his offensive against the Lacys, was a beneficiary. Towards the end of April 1318 Mortimer allowed two of Nicholas's servants accused of robbery to be admitted to make fine, and they were eventually to be pardoned on 26 February.¹⁶⁵ Mortimer was also able to make covenants with those who had fought the Scots and to remit debts for such service. John de Bermingham, his other co-adjutor in the attack on the Lacys, was pardoned £280 on 27 March 1318.¹⁶⁶

At the beginning of May 1318 Master Walter Islip, Dublin Treasurer, arrived in Ireland to recall Mortimer to England.¹⁶⁷ Later that year Mortimer was commended for his actions in Ireland, taken "for the safety of the land and to repel rebels and many have testified to his good service there."¹⁶⁸ How fair an assessment is this? He had certainly made a start on accomplishing many of his main tasks. Admittedly, his role in ensuring the Scots could not exploit their expedition to Munster was not pivotal. On the other hand, in both tackling recalcitrant Irish kin groups and rebellious Anglo-Irish lords and in making overtures to sections of both communities, he helped create arguably greater stability. It was perhaps this environment, as much as Edward Bruce's notorious headlong dash to catastrophe that produced the Scots' ultimate defeat at Faughart on 14 October 1318.¹⁶⁹ Mortimer's attention to his own sphere of influence in Meath and the surrounding area possibly contributed to the recovery in Anglo-Irish fortunes there that enabled John de Bermingham to triumph over the Scots with only a smallish force of Meath and Louth levies. But, for all that Mortimer had achieved, there was still much more to do. The volatility and fragility of the Lordship was exposed very shortly before his departure. On 10 May 1318 Richard de Clare, the chief Anglo-Irish magnate of Thomond, fell victim to an ambush at Dysart O'Dea, throwing that part of Ireland into turmoil for a number of years.¹⁷⁰

Finally, it is worth remembering the financial bind Mortimer found himself in and to reconsider his achievements in this light. The Laud annalist claims that Mortimer left Ireland still owing £1000 for provisions.¹⁷¹ Despite the instructions for payment of his fee in 1316, the rash of orders for the remainder to be made up after his return is voluminous. On 22 November 1318 the chamberlain of north Wales was ordered to

¹⁶⁵ NAI KB 2/12, m.14.

¹⁶⁶ *RCH*, p.23, no.113.

¹⁶⁷ *Grace*, p.93; *Laud*, pp.358-9.

¹⁶⁸ PRO E159/92, m.177.

¹⁶⁹ *The Bruce*, pp.666-74; *Grace*, pp.93-5; *Laud*, p.359.

¹⁷⁰ *Grace*, p.93; *Annals of Ulster*, p.433; *Clyn*, p.13.

¹⁷¹ *Laud*, p.359.

advance 2000 marks to him from the aid given by the community there for the Scottish war.¹⁷² On 1 December the king granted Mortimer a further 2000 marks in part payment of his fee, here named as 6000 marks, to be received from the customs of Ireland or other Irish issues.¹⁷³ On 20 July 1318 Edward II expressed his desire to provide more substantial compensation. He awarded Mortimer the valuable marriage of the heir to the earldom of Warwick, Thomas de Beauchamp, “in part satisfaction of the sum of money in which the king is bound to him for his time in which he was keeper of the land of Ireland.”¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, there can be little question that Mortimer’s service in Ireland played as great a role in securing its future as did any feelings of guilt or obligation on Edward’s part. Although the job was not complete, Mortimer’s presence in Ireland had brought about a partial revival in the fortunes of the crown there that could probably not have been envisaged in November 1316. Whereas elsewhere in the British Isles the English military position deteriorated, as exemplified by the fall of Berwick in April 1318, the Scots had been cowed in Ireland, and within a few months their removal would be effected.

J.R.Maddicott has described the Beauchamp marriage as “one of the richest prizes in the king’s gift.”¹⁷⁵ He places the award more in the context of English domestic politics and this is worth discussing. Mortimer left Ireland shortly after 14 May 1318 when he last appears as a witness to a letter on behalf of the sheriff of Limerick, sealed in Dublin.¹⁷⁶ He may not, therefore, have arrived at court until the first week in June at the earliest. His return plunged him into the vicissitudes of renewed political crisis. The spring and summer of 1318 saw a series of crucial negotiations and the drawing up of various political deals, as envoys shuttled between the court and Thomas of Lancaster in an attempt to stave off civil war. Mortimer’s absence in Ireland had distanced him from the souring of relations between the two men which had almost resulted in direct combat at Pontefract on 1 October 1317.¹⁷⁷ He had also missed out on the preliminaries for peace. Meetings at Leicester on 12 April and subsequent embassies had thrashed out the terms for a settlement.¹⁷⁸ Lancaster demanded strict observance of the Ordinances, removal of evil and unsuitable counsellors, and a

¹⁷² CPR, 1317-21, p.242.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, p.243.

¹⁷⁴ “*in partem satisfaccionis illius pecunie summe in qua dilecto et fidelis nostro Rogero de Mortuo Mari de Wyggemor tenemur de tempore quo fuit custos terre nostre Hibernie...*”: PRO C66/150, m.30; CPR, 1317-21, p.193.

¹⁷⁵ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.225.

¹⁷⁶ NAI RC 7/12, pp.481-2.

¹⁷⁷ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.119-68; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.203-39.

¹⁷⁸ *Bridlington*, pp.54-6.

resumption of all lands granted contrary to the Ordinances.¹⁷⁹ Despite Edward's agreement on 8 June to accept the counsel and guidance of his barons¹⁸⁰, and the success of an embassy from 4-16 July, in which it was agreed that the evil counsellors be removed and that resumptions be made "*tam in redditibus quam in pecunia*"¹⁸¹, friction eventually arose over the latter question. This is where Mortimer made his entrance.

There seems little doubt that the mission of Walter Islip to Ireland in May 1318 had been to "recall" Mortimer to the king's side. In all likelihood, Roger's proven ability to negotiate and compromise, his contacts with those councillors closest to the king at court, and his own position of trust in the king's eyes, recommended him to Edward in another of his most trying times. On 20 July Mortimer joined an embassy from Northampton.¹⁸² Alongside him were Bicknor, archbishop of Dublin, Hothum, bishop of Ely, the earls of Arundel and Pembroke, and Bartholomew Badlesmere, with whom he had both individual and collective connections.¹⁸³ J.R.Maddicott argues that this embassy was to present Edward's agreement to the proposals outlined above, and the Lancastrian suggestion of a council to govern the realm, but that it failed as certain of the envoys turned the king's mind against it.¹⁸⁴ He singles out Mortimer for particular attention. Although Lancaster's demand that all receiving gifts should be punished had been dropped, his calls for a wholesale resumption and the removal of evil counsellors had not. It was on the very day of the embassy that Mortimer received the Beauchamp marriage, as well as two commissions of *oyer et terminer* for offences committed against him in Berkshire and at Ludlow.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, it is worth noting that the award of the marriage was originally only to be made after the grantee had paid a fine of 1600 marks.¹⁸⁶ Resumption would, therefore, be the last thing Mortimer would have wanted. Considering that the episcopal envoys and Pembroke are said to have stayed firm in their observance of the agreement¹⁸⁷, there are two possibilities. Either the marriage award represented an attempt by an insincere king to alter the motivations of one of his ambassadors, or Mortimer, in receiving an award given in entirely genuine appreciation for his expenses and efforts in Ireland, realised the proposed settlement would be to his disadvantage. There seems no reason not to assign such duplicity to him.

¹⁷⁹ J.Goronwy Edwards, 'The negotiating of the Treaty of Leake, 1318,' in H.W.C.Davis (ed.), *Essays in History presented to R. Lane Poole* (Oxford, 1927), p.364.

¹⁸⁰ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.163-4.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.224.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p.224; Edwards, 'The negotiating of the Treaty of Leake,' p.367.

¹⁸³ See chapter 5, pp.187-94.

¹⁸⁴ For what follows, see Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.224-5; Edwards, 'The negotiating of the Treaty of Leake,' pp.370-2.

¹⁸⁵ *CPR, 1317-21*, pp.274, 275.

¹⁸⁶ *CFR, 1307-19*, p.369.

¹⁸⁷ Edwards, 'The negotiating of the Treaty of Leake,' p.372.

In the final analysis, this strategy paid off. In the peace treaty sealed, amongst others by Roger Mortimer, at Leake on 9 August, Lancaster had to be content with a general affirmation of the Ordinances and a pardon for himself and his followers.¹⁸⁸ The treaty did not require removal of evil counsellors or a resumption of gifts. Mortimer was to gain personally by the treaty too, in being elected to the council to govern royal affairs established by Leake, perhaps even as the principal baron.¹⁸⁹ The council was made up of eight bishops, four earls, and four barons, and there was provision for two bishops, an earl and a baron to stay with the king on a permanent basis so that business could be expedited more smoothly.¹⁹⁰ Mortimer representation was increased further at the York Parliament of October 1318 when Chirk was drafted in. B.P.Evans argues “this is the first clear evidence of their acting even indirectly against the king.”¹⁹¹ This is hardly the case. Phillips has demonstrated that those who had previously been allied to the king in the treaty negotiations dominated the council.¹⁹² More conclusive is the evidence provided by Mortimer of Wigmore’s election at the York Parliament to join the quarterly permanent councillors. There seems no conceivable reason why Edward would have been irked by Mortimer’s presence. Indeed, Mortimer had proved his loyalty to such an extent that he was able to procure the justiciarship of Ireland for himself, on 15 March 1319¹⁹³, alongside the keepership of the royal Connacht castles of Athlone, Rindoon and Roscommon, the former of which for life.¹⁹⁴

It would be a mistake, though, to see the justiciarship as a purely political award. More than anything it recognised Mortimer’s continued service in Ireland over the past five years and beyond, and acknowledged the need for further leadership in the Lordship. Faughart did not change things overnight. The Scots may have gone but animosity lingered. The same problems that Mortimer’s lieutenancy tackled still needed resolution, and it must have seemed sensible to allow Mortimer to reprise his activities.

It is noticeable, therefore, that moves designed to re-assert control over Ulster and the Irish Sea were taken in the period of Mortimer’s permanent residence at court. On 2 March John of Athy, the man who had done most to restore equilibrium on the Irish Sea in defeating the Scottish pirate, Thomas Dun, in July 1317,

¹⁸⁸ *CCR, 1318-23*, pp.112-14.

¹⁸⁹ Tout, *The Political History of England, III: 1216-1377* (London, 1905), p.270.

¹⁹⁰ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.189.

¹⁹¹ Evans, ‘The Family of Mortimer,’ p.212.

¹⁹² Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.179-81.

¹⁹³ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.317.

¹⁹⁴ *CFR, 1307-19*, p.393; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.116v.

was given the custody of Carrickfergus castle.¹⁹⁵ In association with the new justiciar he was to consolidate English lordship in Ulster, having been granted the manor of Glenarm for life to go with his grant in fee of Rathlin issued in February 1319.¹⁹⁶ Frame contends that this partnership helped extend English diplomatic influence further into the Western Isles. Edward II was persuaded to court a MacQuillan chief of Kintyre, an inveterate foe of Bruce kingship.¹⁹⁷ Mortimer had worked with Athy during his lieutenancy, the latter having initially acted as the captain of the fleet bearing him to Ireland in April 1317. Such a relationship could prove crucial in maintaining royal interests and it is therefore tempting to see Mortimer lurking behind Athy's appointment.

The same can definitely be said of John de Bermingham's elevation to the earldom of Louth on 12 May 1319.¹⁹⁸ Both Phillips and Brendan Smith believe this to have been inspired by Mortimer and John de Hothum.¹⁹⁹ There were two main reasons for the award. Firstly, the king displayed desire to reward Bermingham as the victor of Faughart. The new earl had been at court early in 1319, again during Mortimer's councillorship, and had the opportunity to boast of his achievements.²⁰⁰ More importantly, Mortimer's lieutenancy had seen Bermingham working with Mortimer in the campaign of most personal concern to the latter, the Meath offensive against the Lacys. Mortimer appreciated the benefits good lordship could bestow and his may have been the most decisive voice in the appointment. Secondly, Smith argues that creating an earldom of Louth was a radical solution to the area's problems which Mortimer knew well. Absenteeism and the death of Theobald de Verdon in 1316 created a vacuum of lordship and authority there. The rising of 1312 had been the most serious symptom, but one of Mortimer's last acts as lieutenant was to pardon numerous local men for petty offences at the behest of Nicholas de Verdon.²⁰¹ As Smith says, Milo de Verdon could have made an equally good earl, but the family's recent rebellious attitude militated against that. Whether or not Mortimer was the inspiration, he was certainly enough acquainted with Louth politics and the man who would be earl to contribute useful advice if nothing else.

¹⁹⁵ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.311.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, pp.271, 313.

¹⁹⁷ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.135.

¹⁹⁸ *CPR, 1317-21*, pp.334-5.

¹⁹⁹ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum,' p.77; Smith, *Conquest and Colonisation*, p.113.

²⁰⁰ S. Duffy, 'The "continuation" of Nicholas Trivet: a new source for the Bruce invasion,' *PRIA* 91 C (1991), p.308.

²⁰¹ NAI KB 2/12, m.14d.

When Mortimer eventually sailed for Ireland, therefore, probably in early June 1319²⁰², much of value had been set in train, prompting Frame to claim that Mortimer's justiciarship was non-contentious.²⁰³ On the whole the evidence supports this. The powers with which Mortimer was invested suggest an attempt to instigate more constructive government. As before he could remove and appoint royal officials and pardon felons, though this time the powers specifically related to the adherents of Bruce.²⁰⁴ In this way prominent Ulstermen Alan FitzWarin, Hugh Logan, and two members of the Savage family, were received back into the king's favour.²⁰⁵ However, it was the measures introduced on 7 June in response to a series of petitions that would make their mark. Following a plea from the earls of Kildare and Louth²⁰⁶, the justiciar was granted powers to receive all Irishmen into English laws who wished to be received.²⁰⁷ The records list only one example of this where Mortimer was personally involved though. On 14 June 1320, and at the request of Richard de Burgh, the king conceded English law to Eugene O'Madden, two of his brothers and a nephew.²⁰⁸

Mortimer's principal constructive work as justiciar came at the Dublin Parliament of May 1320. Initially, the assembly confirmed the English statutes of Westminster I and II and those of Marlborough and Merton, concerned with public order and administrative efficiency.²⁰⁹ Mortimer then offered to review all English legislation to ascertain what could be applied to Ireland. The most important measure was that directed at curtailing the activities of bands of thugs which roamed Ireland committing heinous crimes. Clearly Mortimer's attempts at reconciliation in 1317 had not had the expected results, as once again the leaders of *familia* were bound to discipline their followings.²¹⁰ This, however, indicates that the long-term benefit of the Lordship was of paramount importance to him.

If Mortimer's career had taught him anything, it was that peace was always the preserve of supreme optimists in Ireland. Fresh from these moves to bring stability, he became immersed in renewed military

²⁰² An order was despatched to him on 2 June to give credence to John de Ufford, a royal messenger: *CCR, 1318-23*, p.139. As early as 18 April, Mortimer was said to be going to Ireland: *CPR, 1317-21*, p.325. However, on 10 May he was certainly at Hereford for the marriage of his daughter, Margaret, to Thomas Berkeley: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.39v; Add. MS 6041, f.5v. It is possible this was a stop off on his way to Ireland, implying he may have arrived there perhaps a week later. Ufford himself only set out for Ireland on 5 June: E101/309/24.

²⁰³ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.161.

²⁰⁴ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.317.

²⁰⁵ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.135.

²⁰⁶ Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland*, p.90, no.120.

²⁰⁷ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.339.

²⁰⁸ Mortimer acted as the witness: *RCH*, p.28, no.93.

²⁰⁹ *Statutes and Ordinances and Acts of Parliament of Ireland, King John to Henry V*, ed. H.F.Berry (Dublin, 1907), pp.280-90; Frame, *English Lordship*, p.161.

²¹⁰ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, p.210.

conflict. Payments made by the Dublin exchequer show he campaigned against the Barrys in Munster in the spring of 1320.²¹¹ On 21 July he was preparing to set out towards Slievemargy “in order to expel ~~the~~ Irish rebels.”²¹² These would be his last campaigns in Ireland.

Roger Mortimer’s return to England in September 1320 provoked a petition from the Dubliners, who warmly commended the king for having “thought much of saving and keeping the peace.”²¹³ This refers to Mortimer’s achievements during the previous six years. Whilst never really obtaining a firm grip on the Lordship’s politics, he had proven a fine military commander and administrator. At his departure Ireland was more stable than at any time since Edward Bruce’s invasion. On a personal level his actions had secured his estates and broadened his network of alliances. His influence at court was reflected in policy and by the material enhancement he enjoyed. Service had brought him to the peak of favour. However, it is a sobering thought that, when his interests were no longer served by the connections he had built up, especially with the king, he was prepared to risk all he had achieved in open rebellion.

²¹¹ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.267.

²¹² NAI RC 8/12, pp.463-4.

²¹³ “*Le Mortimer se ad moult pence de sauver e garder la pees de vostre terre*”: *HMDI*, p.392; Frame, *English Lordship*, p.161.

CHAPTER 3:
OPPOSITION LEADER, 1321-6.

Roger Mortimer's return from Ireland in 1320 marked the close of the first phase of his career. He would never again set foot in the land that had borne greatest witness to his development as a political and military operator. Neither would he continue to enjoy the profits of proximity to the king. Stung into action by threats to his interests in the Welsh marches, Mortimer donned the mantle of opposition, creating an irreparable breach between himself and the king. The traumatic episodes of the ensuing months and years, and the consequent need to reconstruct his identity and his network of alliances, transformed Mortimer's outlook and ambitions.

Mortimer rapidly came to prominence as an architect of the campaign against the Despensers, leading reprisals against their estates in May 1321, and playing a conspicuous part in the moves to obtain their exile later that year. When it became clear that no amount of coercion could impress upon Edward II the need for change, Mortimer even embraced violent rebellion, bringing fire and sword to royal towns and lands in the winter of 1321-2. However, with his submission to the king in January 1322, and subsequent sentence to perpetual incarceration, his career reached its lowest point. Nevertheless, Boroughbridge and its aftermath proved his lucky break, as it decimated the Lancastrians and largely neutralized effective dissent to Edward II. Therefore, when in August 1323 Mortimer escaped from the Tower and fled to France, it was he who quickly became *the* figure around which opposition could be built. He, of all his contemporaries, had the potential to strike in both Wales and Ireland. Royal paranoia grew when both queen Isabella and Prince Edward eventually joined his band of exiles in France in 1325. Mortimer and Isabella injected energy and strategic competence into an opposition that had so frequently misfired. Their invasion of September 1326 succeeded in bringing the regime to its knees and in deposing an anointed monarch, an act unprecedented in English history. Whilst it has been Isabella who has largely been credited for this, Mortimer's role remains shadowy. Yet, there can be no doubt that his military endeavour, his rallying and cultivation of support in the British Isles and on the Continent, and his thoughtful manipulation of public opinion were significant contributory factors. Mortimer's leadership of resistance to Edward II is so often underplayed, but it is a crucial element in the study of this period and is deserving of closer inspection.

Superficially, Roger Mortimer's journey to England in September 1320 was connected with official business. He had not been relieved of the Irish justiciarship and the information and advice he was to provide helped form Irish policy. On 16 November the defences of the Clare lands in Ireland were strengthened on his testimony.¹ Four days earlier allowance had been made to Nicholas de Verdon so he could bolster the security of the de Verdon lands, Mortimer having affirmed the necessity thereof before king and council.² Moreover, Mortimer retained the king's favour. On 10 November a commission of *oyer et terminer* was issued to examine infractions of his parks at Cleobury Mortimer and Earnwood.³ The reality of the situation, however, was highlighted in this same week. On 13 November Edward ordered his southern escheator to take seisin of the lordship of Gower in south Wales.

Undoubtedly, growing concern over his interests in the marches, and probably for those in Gower in particular, prompted Mortimer's return from Ireland. The lordship was a valuable prize, producing £300 in annual revenues in 1315.⁴ When its impoverished lord, William de Braose, decided to sell, Mortimer and his uncle apparently approached and agreed a contract. Although no deed survives several chronicles nevertheless confirm the fact, pointing to the Mortimers' desire to acquire it as it fringed their nearby estates.⁵ The first shock, therefore, may have come at some point late in the summer of 1320 when John Mowbray, de Braose's son-in-law, seized Swansea castle and the barony of Gower. Although in the initial settlement of his lands upon John in 1315 Gower had been excluded, William had eventually granted him the lordship with remainder to the earl of Hereford and his heirs.⁶ The earl had also contracted for its purchase separately, though the Mortimers were apparently unaware of this.⁷ The real crisis came when the king, persuaded of the illegality of Mowbray's actions, first ordered the lordship's seizure on 26 October.⁸ Mowbray, it was claimed, had entered without royal licence upon an inheritance which, in any case, had been alienated without royal

¹ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.523.

² *CCR, 1318-23*, p.277.

³ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.545.

⁴ *Cartae et Alia Munimenta de Glamorgan*, III, c.1271-1331, ed. G.T.Clark (Cardiff, 1910), p.1038.

⁵ *Vita*, pp.108-9; *Flores*, p.345.

⁶ *Cartae*, III, p.1038.

⁷ J. Conway Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan,' *TRHS*, third series, 9 (1915), pp.21-64, p.36.

⁸ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.268.

permission.⁹ Such entry was contrary to English law but was permitted by marcher custom. The mastermind of the king's policy was Hugh Despenser junior. He himself had also made some kind of agreement for the purchase of Gower.¹⁰ His exploitation of his growing proximity to the king in this matter was only the most recent example of his ambitions to consolidate a bloc of territories he had been building up with the king's favour in south Wales.

Ever since the partition of the earldom of Gloucester in 1317 which had brought him the lordship of Glamorgan in right of his wife, Despenser had waged a campaign of extortion and menace against his co-parceners, Hugh Audley junior and Roger Amory. He engineered a favourable land exchange whereby he received the castle and town of Newport from Audley in 1320.¹¹ Despenser had made an indenture with Audley's tenants promising them similar privileges to those enjoyed by his own tenants in Glamorgan in return for their fealty. When Audley tried to take seisin, his tenants resisted him.¹² When marcher lords' privileges could so easily be trampled, there was concern about the fate of marcher custom generally. It was in this atmosphere that, according to the *Vita*, several prominent marcher lords – the two Mortimers, Hereford, Audley, Amory, John Giffard of Brimpsfield and Maurice Berkeley – came together, swearing an oath to pursue and destroy Despenser.¹³

Conway Davies observes that much of the marcher lords' reaction was dictated by "self-preservation."¹⁴ For the Mortimers this may have been the most pressing consideration. The author of the *Vita*, a man well acquainted with the Welsh marches, claims that Despenser "coveted certain castles which Roger Mortimer had a while ago of the king's gift, and so persuaded the lord king to try and get the said castles back again."¹⁵ This must refer to Mortimer of Chirk's lands of Blaenllyfni and Bwlchydinas which he had been gifted in 1309, for in the aftermath of the Mortimers' surrender in 1322 Despenser obtained these lands¹⁶, whilst it was the earl of Arundel who swept up the remnants

⁹ Conway Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan', p.38.

¹⁰ A letter to his steward of Glamorgan, John Inge, dated 21 September 1319, speaks of "*des busoignes touchautes Sire William de Brehouse dount vous nous avez maundee.*" *Cartae*, III, p.1065. Following the chronology established in the chronicles, it can perhaps be inferred that the Mortimers' dealings had taken place before this date, perhaps in the interlude between Mortimer of Wigmore's lieutenancy and justiciarship of Ireland, viz. July 1318-May 1319.

¹¹ The original licence was granted in December 1318: *CPR*, 1317-21, pp.257, 456.

¹² Conway Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan', p.29; *CPR*, 1317-21, p.103.

¹³ *Vita*, p.109.

¹⁴ Conway Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan', p.28.

¹⁵ "*et castra quedam, ex regia munificentia Rogero de Mortemer dudum collata, vehementer affectavit, et dominum regem ad repetitionem dictorum castrorum consequenter induxit*": *Vita*, p.108.

¹⁶ *CFR*, 1319-27, p.143.

of Mortimer of Wigmore's Welsh patrimony on the Middle March.¹⁷ Just as ominously, the *Vita* reports that Despenser "proposed to despoil the one and had promised to avenge the death of his grandfather [who had been killed during the Barons' War] upon each of them."¹⁸ However, there does not seem to have been any occasion where trouble between them could be inferred¹⁹, although whilst the defeat of their plans for Gower and the threats posed to marcher law might have been enough grounds for resentment, perhaps only such an intense personal animosity could have convinced the Mortimers of the need to take up arms.

It is entirely possible that Roger Mortimer of Wigmore had a hand in the first incidence of open resistance. Although Edward II had ordered the southern escheator to take seisin of Gower on 26 October, a force of Welshmen under the leadership of Master Rhys ap Hywel had confronted the Gloucestershire sheriff and sub-escheator, his deputies, when they tried to expedite this command. The Justice, Chirk, was ordered to apprehend Rhys on 1 January 1321²⁰, but Hugh Despenser in a letter dated 18 January tells John Inge, his sheriff of Glamorgan, that he had heard of such resistance and that Rhys was making confederations and assemblies against him.²¹ Rhys was associated with both Mortimer and Hereford and was probably acting as their agent.²²

Throughout the pivotal months of November 1320-January 1321, when it seems resistance was first being co-ordinated, the only positive evidence to locate Mortimer finds him well out of the marches. On 16 November Mortimer was on his Berkshire manor of Stratfield Mortimer granting lands to one of his tenants there.²³ Only a few miles away Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, a man with close Mortimer connections, was staying at his residence at Shinfield.²⁴ Orleton could have related recent events to Mortimer, or perhaps offered support and counsel. It is further possible that

¹⁷ See below, p.84, n.129.

¹⁸ "*unum spoliare disposuit et in utrumque mortem avi sui vindicare promisit*": *Vita*, p.109.

¹⁹ Indeed, as recently as 1316, at a time of crisis in the relations between Edward and Lancaster, all four men witnessed a charter together, and were mainstays of the court: PRO C53/102, m.5, no.12.

²⁰ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.285.

²¹ *CACCW*, pp.219-20.

²² Conway Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan,' p.46, argues that Rhys was acting on behalf of either Mortimer or Hereford. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.263, believes more convincingly he was associated with them jointly. Rhys and his brother Phillip had acted as security for the marriage contract drawn up in May 1319 between Mortimer and Maurice de Berkeley: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.39v.

²³ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.60r; Add. MS 6041, f.14r.

²⁴ R.M.Haines, *The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England: the career of Adam Orleton, c.1275-1345* (Cambridge, 1978), p.127, n.65. He is noted there on 15 November.

Mortimer stayed in Berkshire for some time. On 31 January 1321 he received a quitclaim of lands in the manor of Wokefield.²⁵ If this is the case, then he may have been deliberately keeping a low profile.

The order of 30 January, sent to Mortimer and 28 others, not to attend an assembly to be held on business touching the estate of the crown, probably contradicts this.²⁶ Inquiries into the Gower affair launched on 20 November 1320 had perhaps begun pointing the finger.²⁷ Edward seemed convinced enough of Mortimer's duplicity to strip him of the Irish justiciarship on 1 February.²⁸ His replacement was Ralph de Gorges, a Despenser retainer, which might have led Mortimer to suspect Despenser's wider ambitions. By 11 February Mortimer had returned to Wigmore. On that day he entertained Edmund Butler. Primarily, they met to finalise the arrangements for the marriage of their children.²⁹ Butler, of course, had long been Mortimer's deputy in Ireland and was one of the leaders of Anglo-Irish society. They may also have agreed to look out for each other's interests in the face of this renewed Despenser assault.

Henceforth, Roger Mortimer comes into greater prominence as an opposition figure. By 6 March rumours were rife that Hereford and a large force, presumably including Mortimer, had begun its march towards the borders of Brecon to attack Glamorgan.³⁰ On 27 March Mortimer, along with Despenser, Amory, Hereford, John Charlton and John Hastings, lord of Abergavenny, was ordered to maintain the peace and refrain from allowing warlike musters of men.³¹ The strength of Mortimer's feeling is revealed in that, despite receiving a summons on 28 March to a conference at Gloucester on 5 April to discuss these assemblies with the king, he stayed away. His subsequent actions would prove even more provocative.

On 6 April John de Somery and Robert de Kendale³² approached the king to convey Hereford and Mortimer's excuses for their non-attendance.³³ Some days later the abbot of Dore filled in the detail. They had stayed away for fear of Despenser's presence by the king, and so Hereford demanded

²⁵ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.60v; Add. MS 6041, ff.13v-14r.

²⁶ *P.W.*, II, I, pp.155-6; *CCR*, 1318-23, p.355; *Foedera*, II, I, p.442.

²⁷ *CPR*, 1317-21, pp.547-8. Further inquiries were launched on 20 January 1321: *CFR*, 1319-27, pp.44-5.

²⁸ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.558.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.360.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.259; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.264.

³¹ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.363; *Foedera*, II, I, p.445.

³² A Robert de Kendale was, of course, forfeited alongside Mortimer in 1306 for deserting the army in Scotland: see above, p.19. Somery was a guest at his son's wedding in June 1316. This may bear testament to the continuation of such relationships over a prolonged period: PRO DL 27/93.

Despenser's removal. Until a parliament to discuss grievances met, Hugh could be committed to the custody of Lancaster with Hereford acting as surety. On 23 April Edward cleverly replied that these excuses were insufficient. Not only had Hugh been made chamberlain in full parliament, it would be a pernicious precedent to remove him when no official complaint had been made. He would not hand him over as this infringed his duty, established by *Magna Carta* and the Ordinances, to do justice to all. Maddicott, whilst accepting the adroitness of this response, castigates Edward for its "shortsighted and unimaginative" nature, leaving no recourse but to arms.³⁴ But for Edward to receive such a demand must have cast his mind back to the murder of Gaveston, where Lancaster and Hereford had broken similar offers of security. To have handed Despenser over at the request of one earl and a leading baron would have been dangerous, and it is Hereford and Mortimer who might better be charged with unimaginativeness. Edward was perhaps even prepared to conciliate. On the same day as he condemned their excuses the king appointed a new justiciar of Ireland. Although apparently only a temporary appointment, being officially replaced on 21 May³⁵, Thomas fitz John, earl of Kildare, may well have been chosen as a sop to Mortimer.³⁶ Like Butler, he had acted as Mortimer's deputy and may have been regarded as far more acceptable than a Despenser retainer.

The magnates' attempts at brinkmanship failed. Thus, whilst Edward summoned them to appear at Oxford on 10 May to discuss a date for a parliament, Mortimer and Hereford launched their assault. Despite warnings on 1 May not to attack Despenser³⁷, they assembled an army and on 4 May set out on a six-week rampage through the Despensers' estates in south Wales and southern England. Newport fell to a force numbering, according to the official record, 800 men-at-arms, 500 hobelars, and 10,000 foot soldiers.³⁸ On 9 May Cardiff followed suit, and by 13 May the capture of Swansea paved the way for large-scale destruction.³⁹ The marchers apparently attacked with royal banners displayed, maintaining that they were acting against known enemies of the king.⁴⁰ Their resolve had

³³ For what follows see: *CCR, 1318-23*, pp.367-8.

³⁴ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.266.

³⁵ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.588. Thomas was still acting as justiciar on 23 August 1321 however: Richardson and Sayles, *Administration of Ireland*, p.84.

³⁶ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.578.

³⁷ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.371.

³⁸ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.541.

³⁹ *Flores*, pp.344-5.

⁴⁰ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.541.

been further boosted by a request from 30,000 Welshmen who had asked them to end the Despensers' oppressions.⁴¹

For Mortimer, at least, this was a convenient banner behind which he could achieve his real aims. The Wigmore chronicle claims that during these turbulent weeks Mortimer entered the earl of Arundel's lordship of Clun and took the homage and fealty of the tenants, reviving memories of Despenser's usurpation of Audley's rights in Newport.⁴² Just as scandalously, Mortimer captured Ralph de Gorges at the siege of Cardiff. The Tintern *Flores* states that Gorges and another Despenser retainer, Phillip Joce, were led off to Lancaster's court; the Wigmore chronicle has Mortimer imprisoning his captive at Wigmore.⁴³ The latter appears to be more accurate. Despite an offer on 2 July of 500 marks for his ransom from the king⁴⁴, Mortimer was holding Gorges as late as 3 December⁴⁵, and he was possibly still in prison in May 1322.⁴⁶ Robin Frame believed that his capture was motivated by Mortimer's desire to "seal Ireland off" from his enemies.⁴⁷ This is an attractive argument, but only if Mortimer was unaware of Thomas fitz John's appointment to replace Gorges on 23 April. The fact that Mortimer held Gorges well after the appointment of John de Bermingham as justiciar on 21 May perhaps suggests Mortimer wanted to make personal strikes against Despenser's adherents in areas where he himself enjoyed influence. This impression may be reinforced by the pursuit of Bermingham who had come to England and had contracted to serve Despenser junior.⁴⁸ Although he had apparently been forced to flee to Normandy by Roger Amory, Mortimer's influence must lurk behind the pursuit. Effectively, Ireland was without a governor until Bermingham's arrival on 28 August 1321 and Mortimer may have exploited the confusion to expand his interests there.⁴⁹

⁴¹ *Vita*, p.110.

⁴² *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352. There is a whiff of suspicion about these claims, however, as the chronicler asserts that Clun was Mortimer's by hereditary right, and that Edward III eventually awarded him them after Arundel's execution in 1326. This extract may have more to do with disputed claims to these lands in the time of the composition of the chronicle, and he may be attempting to invent historical precedent.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p.352; *Flores*, p.345.

⁴⁴ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.596.

⁴⁵ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.505.

⁴⁶ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.541.

⁴⁷ Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, pp.161-2.

⁴⁸ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.255.

⁴⁹ Frame, *English Lordship in Ireland*, p.162.

Such devastation was a direct challenge to the king and favourite. Edward's reaction to the initial disturbances was to summon a parliament at Westminster for 15 July, on 15 May.⁵⁰ He later took Despenser into his protection⁵¹, and the favourite may have joined Bermingham in Normandy.⁵² The violence had also been a challenge to Lancaster who Maddicott believes "was regarded as their leader by the barons," to come into more open opposition.⁵³ Despite his assertion that Lancaster had been consulted about their plans, and that several men known to be in his pay had participated in the destruction, the marchers provided the opposition with its real drive and energy. But, on 24 May, shortly before Hereford and Mortimer appealed to the community of Bristol to join them in their campaign⁵⁴, Lancaster called together an assembly of northern lords at Pontefract in an attempt to increase his support base for possible action.⁵⁵ Unsure of the consequences of an offensive strategy, they would only commit to a pact of mutual defence, however, and it was decided to hold another meeting at Sherburn-in-Elmet, summoned for 28 June.⁵⁶

Sherburn has been seen as critical in the formation of opposition to the Despensers, an event which saw Lancaster forge a coalition of marchers and northerners.⁵⁷ Mortimer, Hereford and Charlton⁵⁸, fresh from their devastation of Despenser estates, attended, to make a play for support and to try and create a framework of legitimacy for their actions. The indenture drawn up as a result of the negotiations and grievances submitted to Lancaster formed a basis for the programme put forward in the Westminster Parliament to procure the Despensers' exile. However, despite having sworn an oath to the death to destroy treachery, Lancaster seems to have recoiled from taking a leadership role.⁵⁹ Influenced by the weakness of his northern support – many of those at Sherburn were merely his retainers⁶⁰ - he remained on his estates whilst the marchers headed to parliament. Indeed, on 29 June Lancaster was granted the liberties he claimed in London as pertaining to him as of the honour of

⁵⁰ *P.W.*, II, I, p.235.

⁵¹ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.312.

⁵² A protection was awarded but vacated: *CPR*, 1317-21, p.591.

⁵³ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.267.

⁵⁴ An offer which they declined, earning the king's praise: Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, Appendix, pp.586-7, no.100.

⁵⁵ *Bridlington*, pp.61-2.

⁵⁶ For details, see *ibid.*, pp.62-5.

⁵⁷ Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, pp.478-9; Tout, *The Place of Edward II*, pp.128-9.

⁵⁸ Morgan, 'The barony of Powys', p.25.

⁵⁹ *Walsingham*, p.160.

⁶⁰ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.207.

Leicester, a clear attempt to curry his favour by the king.⁶¹ More importantly, however, Lancaster may well have been influenced by the defection to his camp of Bartholomew Badlesmere, the king's steward, for whom he bore a particular dislike.⁶²

The reasons for Badlesmere's switch are unknown. When, on 28 June, he and the archbishop of Canterbury were sent north to ask the confederates to suspend attacks, Badlesmere allied with the barons. Mortimer and Badlesmere were related by marriage and it is not too difficult to imagine Mortimer persuading Badlesmere to join his campaign, perhaps even warranting his safety against Lancaster. The ease with which a figure of importance in the household could abandon the king is taken by Phillips to imply that "the real nature of magnate opposition to the king in 1321 was that it was led and dominated in practice not by Lancaster but rather by the lords of the Welsh March, notably the Earl of Hereford and Roger Mortimer of Wigmore." B.P.Evans, moreover, argues that the grievances expressed against Despenser were dictated by marcher interest.⁶³ This must be largely correct and it is possible to speculate that Mortimer himself had considerable input.

Having left Yorkshire the marchers headed for London in full array. The Wigmore chronicle notes that they were wore one livery of green to impress their unity of purpose upon the king.⁶⁴ Welshmen from Cedewain attended Mortimer.⁶⁵ Leaving St.Albans on 22 July he took residence in the priory of St.John, Clerkenwell⁶⁶, and on 27 July he and his colleagues met the earls of Arundel, Pembroke, Warenne, and Richmond who apparently agreed to join their cause.⁶⁷ In the subsequent parliamentary wrangling for the Despensers' exile the accusations were a mixture of the general and the specific.⁶⁸ Primarily, although the York Parliament of 1318 had established the committee of government and had nominated those who were to stay permanently with the king, Despenser junior managed to get his father into these councils, and began to accroach royal power. This bore all the hallmarks of the classic Lancastrian complaint. The committee had been one of Lancaster's stipulations in the run-up to the Treaty of Leake.⁶⁹ However, it is worth remembering that Hereford

⁶¹ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.310.

⁶² Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.293-4; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.208.

⁶³ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.218.

⁶⁴ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

⁶⁵ Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.84.

⁶⁶ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.219.

⁶⁷ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.209; *Vita*, p.112.

⁶⁸ *CCR, 1318-23*, pp.492-4.

⁶⁹ See above, pp.63-5.

and the two Mortimers had a place on the committee and Roger of Wigmore was among the first to act as a permanent counsellor. He had also derived significant benefits from his position and such a complaint now would have more than a whiff of self-interest.

The same might be said for the complaint that the Despensers had removed ministers appointed by common assent, Mortimer having been ousted from the Irish justiciarship to be replaced by a Despenser retainer. Despenser senior had also been awarded the wardship of the lands, late of Guy, earl of Warwick, who before his death in 1315 had arranged that his executors should have them during his heir's minority. Maddicott has pointed to the close ties between Lancaster and Warwick and the former's concern for the latter's heir⁷⁰, but it had been Mortimer who had received a share in the boy's marriage behind Lancaster's back in 1318, and perhaps his interests are represented equally here.⁷¹ There is only one claim, however, for which Mortimer can be definitively shown to have responsibility. The Despensers, it was said, had executed Llywelyn Bren, the rebel of February 1316, in breach of Mortimer and Hereford's commitment of him to the king's custody with promises to keep him safely. This was not only to disinherit the crown but was also to their dishonour.⁷²

Edward became convinced of the strength of opposition against his favourites, and, on 14 August the marchers won the decision they desired. Both Despensers were exiled without hope of return and condemned as enemies of the king.⁷³ On 20 August 1321 Mortimer was amongst a large group of magnates pardoned for their role in the devastation of the Despensers' estates, vouching for sixty-one other men. It must have been with relief that Mortimer received his pardon.⁷⁴ Violence had been necessary to achieve a desired end, but to stand in direct opposition to the king's will must have been uncomfortable. Nevertheless, a commitment to the relationships he had forged, and a realisation that the king was not going to demur to his opponents in the longer term, shattered any lingering optimism for reconciliation and a return to his pristine status beside the king.

⁷⁰ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.196.

⁷¹ *CPR, 1317-21*, p.193.

⁷² As Professor Phillips has demonstrated with regard to Pembroke's reaction to the murder of Gaveston, who had been under his safe custody at the time of his seizure in June 1312, such personal slights could have long-lasting, profound consequences: Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.36-7.

⁷³ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.494.

⁷⁴ The individual pardon can be found at BL MS Harleian 1240, f.36r.; *CPR, 1321-4*, p.17; *P.W.*, II, I, pp.164-5.

Despite this parliamentary success, certain chronicles state that following the Westminster Parliament Edward swore revenge on the magnates. Badlesmere was his first target.⁷⁵ The queen was sent on pilgrimage to Canterbury with the intention of returning via Leeds castle, a Badlesmere stronghold, in the hope that she might be refused lodging there and so precipitate armed action against him. Everything went as planned. On 16 October Edward called out levies from Essex, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire.⁷⁶ On 17 October the men of Kent were summoned to Leeds for 23 October in order to accompany the earls of Pembroke, Norfolk, Richmond and Atholl, the advance guard.⁷⁷ The king himself arrived on 25 October to press the siege.⁷⁸ In isolating Badlesmere Edward had chosen the perfect target, for with the known enmity of Lancaster Badlesmere might expect little help from his new colleagues.⁷⁹ Their initial reaction suggests otherwise. With the siege under way Hereford and the Mortimers responded positively to Badlesmere's pleas for relief, reaching Kingston on 27 October. There, Pembroke, the bishop of London, and the archbishop of Canterbury offered to mediate, if the barons were to withdraw.⁸⁰ The response was that the barons would surrender the castle to the king after the next parliament, but only if he were to raise the siege. Conversely, it seems likely that the barons had made an approach to Lancaster for material aid. When his reply arrived, ordering them to help Badlesmere under no circumstances, their resolve evaporated.⁸¹

The magnates' swift withdrawal from Kingston allowed the king to complete the siege on 31 October. The marchers were already on their way to Lancaster at Pontefract, and despite this were accompanied by Badlesmere. Along with his message to the marchers at Kingston, Lancaster had been wresting the initiative back. Spurred on by Despenser junior's activities, on 18 October Lancaster had summoned numerous magnates to Doncaster for 29 November to treat on action to combat the revived threat.⁸² On 12 November Edward issued a stern warning to Mortimer and many other "good

⁷⁵ The story of the siege of Leeds castle is very well known: *Walsingham*, pp.162-3; *Anonimalle*, p.103; *Vita*, p.116; *Flores*, p.199. For a radical re-assessment of the chronology see: Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.83-5.

⁷⁶ *CCR*, 1318-23, pp.504-05; *Foedera*, II, I, pp.457-8.

⁷⁷ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.29; *Foedera*, II, I, p.458.

⁷⁸ PRO E101/378/11.

⁷⁹ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.293-5; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.216.

⁸⁰ *Anonimalle*, p.103; *Baker*, p.12; *Murimuth*, p.34.

⁸¹ Although Lancaster certainly despised Badlesmere, Edward had perhaps been making overtures of to his cousin. On 20 October Lancaster was granted licence to demise land to Elias de Stapleton, parson of Swaveton, in frank almoign: *CPR*, 1321-4, p.32.

⁸² G.L. Haskins, 'The Doncaster Petition of 1321,' *EHR*, 53 (1938), p.479.

peers” not to attend.⁸³ It may have been at this point that the marchers divided, for three days later the king not only ordered Gruffydd Llwyd and Rhys ap Gruffydd to raise the levies of the Principality⁸⁴, but also proclaimed widely that he intended to launch a campaign, not of war, but to remedy trespasses committed by malefactors.⁸⁵ In the indictment against Adam Orleton for abetting Mortimer in the crisis, the jurors claimed Mortimer had led forces on the marches in November 1321.⁸⁶ This is possible, but Phillips has decisively proven that a meeting did take place as scheduled, giving Mortimer little time to act in this way.⁸⁷ On 2 December Lancaster wrote to the Londoners. He stated that he had met with Hereford, “the lord Mortimer”, and other leading marchers⁸⁸, and presented a petition, rehearsing the usual allegations of menace, extortion, and royal protection against the Despensers.⁸⁹ Presumably the meeting had also been a council of war. It seems likely they agreed Lancaster would remain in the north to raise forces and liaise with the Scots whose assistance he had been courting.⁹⁰ The marchers would return to their estates to tackle the royal forces. On 30 November the king had ordered a muster at Cirencester for 13 December and had given permission for widespread attacks on insurgents.⁹¹

Although certain contrarians had captured Warwick castle before 11 November, the marchers’ real target was Gloucester, a vital bridgehead for holding the Severn valley and in preventing Despenser raising forces in his lands in the southeastern marches.⁹² About 6 December the town was stormed and the castle taken by a force probably under the leadership of John Giffard of Brimpsfield.⁹³ It is hard to be sure whether Mortimer joined or not. He was not amongst those forfeited on 6 December, and perhaps arrived after the event.⁹⁴ The conference with Lancaster having

⁸³ *P.W.*, II, I, p.169; *CCR*, 1318-23, pp.505-06; *Foedera*, II, I, pp.459-60.

⁸⁴ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.35.

⁸⁵ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.506.

⁸⁶ PRO Just I/1388; *Placitorum Abbreviatio* (London: Record Commission, 1811), p.345.

⁸⁷ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.218.

⁸⁸ The names of Audley, Amory, Clifford, Mowbray, Giffard, Badlesmere, Henry Tyveys and Thomas Mauduit are given by the Sempringham chronicler: *Le Livre de Reis de Brittanie*, ed. J.Glover (London: Rolls Series, 1865), p.339; *Bridlington*, p.73.

⁸⁹ The full petition is in Haskins, ‘The Doncaster Petition,’ pp.483-5.

⁹⁰ *Vita*, pp.120-1. The letters by which Lancaster is alleged to have colluded with Bruce are in *CDS*, III, no.246, pp.139-40.

⁹¹ *CCR*, 1318-23, pp.506-8; *CPR*, 1321-4, p.38.

⁹² Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.217.

⁹³ *Flores*, p.346; *Baker*, p.12.

⁹⁴ These were Giffard, Audley junior, Amory, Tyes, John Maltravers, William de Whitfield, Nicholas de Percy, Badlesmere, and Phillip, Edmund, John and Robert de la Beche: *CPR*, 1321-4, p.40. The

dispersed, Mortimer seems to have diverted from his journey to raise men in his own lands. At some time around 4 December, he is alleged to have liaised with Orleton on the latter's manor of Bosbury, where the bishop pledged allegiance to him before Mortimer went on to Ledbury.⁹⁵ According to the jurors in Orleton's trial in February 1324, the following day the bishop sent Mortimer mounted reinforcements, including members of his *familia*.⁹⁶ The combined force then headed for Gloucester and its surrounding area to affect a union with his colleagues.

On 8 December the king, having procured Despenser's recall⁹⁷, left London, arriving at Cirencester on 20 December.⁹⁸ Having spent Christmas at Cirencester, the king who dared not risk an assault on rebel-held Gloucester, turned north to Worcester.⁹⁹ It is almost certain that the Mortimers were delegated to hold the left bank of the Severn. Throughout his trek northwards, Edward was assailed by the Mortimers¹⁰⁰ who had committed acts of violence against the king's person, for which he resumed their properties.¹⁰¹ Baulked at Worcester, Edward looked at Bridgnorth as the next crossing point. Despite appointing a new custodian¹⁰² and sending Fulk Fitzwarin, John Pecche, Oliver Ingham and Robert le Ewer to secure the bridge¹⁰³, around the night of 5 January 1322 the Mortimers stormed the town and drove the king's men out, possibly with the assent of the citizens.¹⁰⁴ Whilst Edward was forced to continue on to Shrewsbury, the marchers divided their forces: Hereford attacked Worcester and the elder Despenser's castles at Elmley and Hanley; the Mortimers attempted to keep the Middle March in check.¹⁰⁵ However, on 22 January Edward wrote to the exchequer barons to say the Mortimers had come before him to recognise their disloyalty, putting themselves upon his mercy.¹⁰⁶ How had this come about?

attack on Gloucester, though, was amongst the reasons given at his "trial" for the death sentence passed on Roger Mortimer: BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.38v-40r.

⁹⁵ Orleton's biographer, Roy Haines, places the meeting in late-November, having ascertained Orleton's definite residence at Bosbury on 30 November: Haines, *Church and Politics*, p.135. Mortimer, as we have seen, was in Yorkshire at this time and it seems more likely that the meeting took place on his return, Haines also having certified Orleton's residence there on that date.

⁹⁶ PRO Just I/1388, mm.2, 5; *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.345.

⁹⁷ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.45; *Foedera*, II, I, pp.463-5.

⁹⁸ PRO E101/378/11.

⁹⁹ PRO E101/378/13, m.5.

¹⁰⁰ *Flores*, p.346.

¹⁰¹ *CFR, 1319-27*, pp.84-5.

¹⁰² *CPR, 1321-4*, p.44.

¹⁰³ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.221.

¹⁰⁴ PRO E163/4/48.

¹⁰⁵ This is Maddicott's view: *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.305.

¹⁰⁶ Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, Appendix, no.35, p.561.

Several chronicles, fixated on the falseness of the king and his favourite, suspect deceit. The *Anonimalle* chronicler blames a “conspiracy of messengers.”¹⁰⁷ Robert of Reading claims that the Mortimers had been tricked by the king’s flattery in sending letters to them asking for peace.¹⁰⁸ Negotiations did take place between the Mortimers and the king’s envoys, though no letters of this kind have been found. On 13 January 1322 Edward granted Mortimer of Wigmore and twenty companions safe-conduct to meet the earls of Pembroke, Norfolk, Richmond, Warenne, and Arundel at Betton Lestrange.¹⁰⁹ The choice of envoys is interesting, Pembroke, for instance, enjoying long-standing connections with the Mortimers.¹¹⁰ As no trace of an agreement survives, it is possible that terms were offered to them which turned out to be worthless, for upon their surrender they were sent for imprisonment in the Tower. Perhaps sensing that having separated from the main body of the rebel army they were vulnerable, the king empowered Pembroke to make overtures in the hope that he, of all the king’s confidants, could win them over. The presence of Arundel, though, is more puzzling. It seems Mortimer still held sway in the latter’s lordship of Clun – it was among the castles captured by Gruffydd Llwyd at this time - and Arundel’s appearance cannot but have alienated his rival. It is perhaps for this reason that the king had to issue an order on 15 January for the *posse* to be raised against the Mortimers and their men for the attack on Bridgnorth.¹¹¹ By 17 January, though, Mortimer had renewed the conduct for forty of his men, and it was subsequently re-issued on 20 and 21 January.¹¹² Their “humble submission” came on 22 January.

It seems more likely that the Mortimers had approached the king to initiate negotiations. The official record makes clear that the first conduct was granted at their request.¹¹³ The Wigmore chronicle and Robert of Reading both assert they had surrendered “hoping to find grace.”¹¹⁴ In one sense, this has been viewed with sourness. The Tintern *Flores*, in claiming their surrender had been at the prompting of the Devil and “*propria falsitate*” implies their betrayal of the contrariant cause.¹¹⁵ Ranulph Higden infers something similar in saying they had begun a fresh campaign without awaiting

¹⁰⁷ *Anonimalle*, p.107. See also *Melsa*, p.340; *Murimuth*, p.35.

¹⁰⁸ *Flores*, p.201.

¹⁰⁹ *CPR, 1321-4*, pp.47-8.

¹¹⁰ See below, pp.187-94.

¹¹¹ *CCR, 1318-23*, pp.511-12.

¹¹² *CPR, 1321-4*, pp.48, 51.

¹¹³ *P.W.*, II, I, p.174.

¹¹⁴ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352; *Flores*, p.201.

¹¹⁵ *Flores*, p.346.

the expected Lancastrian reinforcements.¹¹⁶ Perhaps the Mortimers cynically believed they could flatter their way to safety, and possibly the envoys had reassured them of a warm reception were they to surrender. After all, Mortimer of Chirk had enjoyed a long career of loyal service to the king and his father, while his nephew only recently helped avert disaster in Ireland. Conversely, the likelihood is that they felt rather betrayed by Lancaster. Clearly, there had been arrangements for the earl to send reinforcements to the marches. However, he refused to co-operate while Badlesmere remained by their side, even declining to receive him when the panicking barons flooded to the earl after the Mortimers' surrender.¹¹⁷ Once more the Mortimers had been frustrated and put into fear of their lives by the intransigence of the man to whom they looked for assistance. Given this attitude, can they be blamed for surrendering?¹¹⁸

The most probable reason for the Mortimers' submission, though, was the vulnerability of their position in Wales. On 5 January the earl of Arundel replaced Chirk as Justice.¹¹⁹ Gruffydd Llwyd had meanwhile eroded the rebels' position. Around 16 January he seized Welshpool castle, capturing John de Charlton, Mortimer's closest marcher ally.¹²⁰ This accompanied the detention of Clun and Chirk castles. Faced by this onslaught, and possibly pacific overtures from the king's party, their men began deserting. On 7 January 10,000 Welshmen from Brecon and the Mortimer lordships of Maelienydd, Gwerthrynion, Ceri, and Cedewain entered Wyre chase, remaining there for nine days, thereby withdrawing from their lords' campaign.¹²¹ On 22 January, the day of the Mortimers' surrender, Phillip de Middleton, constable of the royal castle of Montgomery, was empowered to receive all those of Ceri and Cedewain who wished to come into the king's peace.¹²² Walsingham revealingly notes that the Mortimers had surrendered because the king had begun to act manfully at

¹¹⁶ *Polychronicon*, VIII, p.310.

¹¹⁷ *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, ii, ed. E.A.Bond (London: Rolls Series, 1867), p.340; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.294.

¹¹⁸ It should be said in Lancaster's defence that he himself was by no means secure. The months after the Westminster Parliament had witnessed a steady trickle of retainers to the side of the king: Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.295-6.

¹¹⁹ Despite irrefutable evidence of his contrariance, the king had still shown faith in him. Even as late as November 1321 he had been ordered to join Edward at Cirencester to discuss the state of Wales: *CCR, 1318-23*, p.506.

¹²⁰ The order for its delivery to Llwyd, Rhys ap Gruffydd, Bertram de la More, and Nicholas Lumbard is at *CPR, 1321-4*, p.49. The order for Charlton to be brought before the king is at p.48.

¹²¹ *CIM, II: 1307-49*, no.682, p.170.

¹²² *CPR, 1321-4*, p.51.

last and they feared the consequences.¹²³ The same applied to several of their allies. Rhys ap Hywel and Aymer Pauncefoot, a Worcestershire retainer, submitted with them, while the news of the Mortimers' surrender induced a like reaction from Maurice Berkeley senior and Hugh Audley senior who submitted at Gloucester some days later.¹²⁴

A final dilemma facing Mortimer of Wigmore was his deteriorating position in Ireland. On 30 November 1321 Edward had ordered the justiciar, John de Bermingham, to appoint men to make an eyre of common pleas in Meath, possibly to root out any Mortimer-oriented conspiracies there.¹²⁵ On 4 December Bermingham was empowered to remove justices and ministers installed by Mortimer in the Lordship's government.¹²⁶ Four days later Bermingham was commanded to examine all suits pleaded before Mortimer as justiciar and to correct errors asserted by complainants. Whether Mortimer was aware of these moves is difficult to know, though his contacts may have been in touch about the king's most strident measure. On 8 February the sheriff of Meath received confirmation of the coming of the Meath eyre. When it met, on 24 March, Mortimer's attorneys appeared before the itinerant justices to show by what warrant Roger and Joan claimed their liberty of Trim. Although they put up a forceful defence, the liberty was declared forfeit.¹²⁷

The loss of Trim was only part of Mortimer's punishment. Despite having acknowledged their misdeeds, he and his uncle were immediately forfeited. On 23 January their marcher lands were resumed and entrusted to royal keepers.¹²⁸ In the course of the next few months these lands were, in some cases, awarded to men profoundly inimical to Mortimer interest. On 25 March 1322 the earl of Arundel acquired Chirk, Ceri and Cedewain.¹²⁹ On 30 March Edmund, earl of Kent, was gifted Maelienydd.¹³⁰ Mortimer's more immediate family suffered too. His wife was placed in safe custody in Hampshire in March 1322.¹³¹ On the other hand, Roger's mother, Margaret, does not seem to have

¹²³ *Walsingham*, p.183.

¹²⁴ On 23 January these men are included with the Mortimers in an order for the resumption of rebel lands: *CFR*, 1319-27, p.91; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.222.

¹²⁵ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.408.

¹²⁶ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.40.

¹²⁷ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.118-20.

¹²⁸ *CFR*, 1319-27, pp.91, 93.

¹²⁹ *C.Ch.R.*, 1300-26, pp.441-2, 446.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p.442.

¹³¹ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.77. Joan, however, was later granted an annuity of £166. 13s. 4d. by the king: E403/196, m.10.

been targeted, an order for restoration to her of the lordship of Radnor being issued on 9 February.¹³² Nevertheless, the keeper, Humphrey de Littleborough, was warned to restore it to her as late as 21 March 1323, having done nothing about the first order.¹³³ All that the Mortimer family had built up for themselves lay in ruins. In overturning the policy of proximity to the crown, the Mortimer lords had effectively brought the progress achieved by past generations to nought.

At a national level, the king's triumph at Boroughbridge on 16 March brought opposition to its knees. Hereford had died in the field¹³⁴, whilst Lancaster and scores of his allies and retainers were tried and executed.¹³⁵ Although men like Maurice Berkeley junior, John Botetourt and William Trussell escaped overseas, many other prominent contrarians were sentenced to life imprisonment.¹³⁶ Giles, Bartholomew Badlesmere's son, John, son of John Mowbray, and the man who would later have a hand in the probable murder of Edward II, Thomas Gurney, joined the Mortimers in the Tower.¹³⁷ Having sealed his victory by ruthlessly persecuting his enemies, Edward at last returned his gaze to the Mortimers. On 14 July he appointed judges to try these "traitors of the king and his realm."¹³⁸ The Mortimers were indicted with having raised war against the king and with attacking Gloucester and Bridgnorth. They had both been "sworn of the king's council", making their treason more contemptible. Their crimes were notorious and the sentence was death by hanging.¹³⁹ However, despite having received an impassioned plea from the "community of Wales" that the king show no mercy or the Welsh would be destroyed¹⁴⁰, Edward commuted their sentence to life imprisonment on 3 August.¹⁴¹ What had prompted this change of heart?

The editor of Orleton's register as bishop of Hereford argues that Orleton and Louis de Beaumont, bishop of Durham, persuaded the king to show clemency.¹⁴² As Haines has shown, Orleton, despite restoration to his temporalities after Mortimer's surrender, was *persona non grata* at

¹³² CCR, 1318-23, p.419. A protection for her was issued on 7 February: CPR, 1321-4, p.50.

¹³³ CPR, 1321-4, p.266.

¹³⁴ Baker, p.13.

¹³⁵ A comprehensive list can be found in Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, pp.161-3.

¹³⁶ *The Lives of the Berkeleys by John Smyth of Nibley, I: 1066-1618* ed. Sir John MacLean (Gloucester, 1883), p.247; *Eulogium Historiarum*, iii, ed. F.S.Haydon (London: Rolls Series, 1863), p.197.

¹³⁷ Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.160.

¹³⁸ P.W., II, ii, pp.213, 215-17; CPR, 1321-4, p.249.

¹³⁹ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.38v-40r.

¹⁴⁰ CAPRW, [6], no.255; *Rot.Parl.*, I, pp.400 (76), 384.

¹⁴¹ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.38v-40r; P.W., II, ii, pp.215-17.

¹⁴² Haines, *Church and Politics*, pp.142-3.

court. Beaumont, though, had been advanced to his see at the queen's behest, and were his involvement demonstrable, it might suggest the queen's intervention.¹⁴³ It is far more likely, though, that the king was advised of the impropriety of executing men who had confessed their misdeeds and had submitted to him. Nonetheless, Mortimer of Chirk's honourable career had come to an ignominious end. He died in prison in August 1326.¹⁴⁴ Without further clemency the career Mortimer of Wigmore had forged would also be curtailed. Such clemency did not come. In fact, having languished in prison for well over a year, Mortimer was to hear in July 1323 that the king wished to execute him with as much publicity as possible. Why?

For Robert of Reading the solution is clear-cut. His victory at Boroughbridge had enabled the king to tyrannise the country. He had instigated a spree of violence, executing rebels and imprisoning their wives and children.¹⁴⁵ The decision to execute Mortimer came after the conclusion of the thirteen-year Anglo-Scots truce at Bishopthorpe on 30 May 1323. Edward, released from the pressures which Bruce had exerted, he having as recently as October 1322 inflicted further humiliation at Byland, revived his campaign of oppression, choosing Mortimer merely as his next victim. But why Mortimer? One explanation suggests itself.

Ever since Lancaster's execution pilgrims had flocked to Pontefract, the site of his "passion", and as Edward ratcheted up the repression devotion increased. A popular cult surrounding the baronial leaders sprang up with tales of miracles being performed in the sight of the rotting corpse of Henry de Montfort at Bristol.¹⁴⁶ Probably in June 1323 an attack was made on the constable of Pontefract who had been deputed to guard the site of Lancaster's execution following Edward's order to have it sealed off to prevent devotion.¹⁴⁷ On 28 June the bishop of London was reprimanded for fostering devotion to the tablet in St.Paul's placed there by Lancaster to commemorate the Ordinances.¹⁴⁸ Admittedly, Mortimer had not participated in the framing of the Ordinances, and had generally sided with the king in his campaign against them. However, if Edward could eliminate the most senior surviving contrariant – for that is what Mortimer effectively was – he could perhaps

¹⁴³ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.204.

¹⁴⁴ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351.

¹⁴⁵ *Flores*, pp.215-17.

¹⁴⁶ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.378.

¹⁴⁷ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.329-30; *CIM, 1307-49*, no.2103; *Flores*, p.215.

curtail such a movement by further demonstrating the consequences of rebellion as well as the iniquity of the barons' cause. Of course, he risked creating another martyr, for Roger Mortimer had now become the focus for opposition in his own right.

Aside from the problems presented by the Scots, the year or so after Edward's triumph was dogged by sporadic dissent. The signs are that those whose sympathies lay with Roger Mortimer largely motivated this. In September 1322, with the king in Scotland¹⁴⁹, attacks were launched against the southern English estates of Hugh Despenser senior. John Maltravers and fellow retainers of the Berkeleys, who had associated themselves with Mortimer after their defection from Pembroke in July 1318, led them.¹⁵⁰ Robert le Ewer may also connect them with the *Vita's* description of the assaults on the elder Despenser's lands.¹⁵¹ During the civil war Ewer had been employed by the king, capturing Lancaster's castle at Holt in January 1322. He had also gone on the offensive against the rebels in the battle at Burton-upon-Trent on 10 March. It was also apparently he, who was charged with accompanying the Mortimers to the Tower on 13 February.¹⁵² Whether this is relevant or not to his subsequent actions is unknown, but at some point he abandoned the king. On 1 November orders were distributed across the marcher shires for his arrest and that of his accomplices.¹⁵³ Four days earlier Thomas le Blount and Gilbert Talbot had been commanded to arrest and imprison those making confederacies in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.¹⁵⁴ Was this in connection with a known attack on Despenser's Worcestershire estates around Malvern by Mortimer's men?¹⁵⁵ Certainly, in a writ of 11 November ordering Ewer's arrest, he is associated with John Wyard, John del Chastel, and Richard and Robert Harley, all of who have confirmed Mortimer connections.¹⁵⁶ Wyard and Robert Harley were pardoned on Mortimer's information for their part in the pursuit of the Despensers, in August 1321.¹⁵⁷ In the six days after Mortimer's surrender Wyard, Robert Harley, and del Chastel took refuge in Wyre chase together.¹⁵⁸ Both Harleys appear as witnesses to earlier Mortimer charters¹⁵⁹, while

¹⁴⁸ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.723; *Foedera*, II, I, pp.525-6.

¹⁴⁹ Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.123-33; *The Bruce*, pp.678-86.

¹⁵⁰ See below, pp.194-5.

¹⁵¹ *Vita*, p.127.

¹⁵² *Bridlington*, pp.74-5.

¹⁵³ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.215.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.254.

¹⁵⁵ Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.151.

¹⁵⁶ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.685.

¹⁵⁷ *CPR 1321-4*, p.17.

¹⁵⁸ *CIM, 1307-49*, no.652, p.170.

Wyard was a close enough confidant of Mortimer to be allegedly employed as a spy against Edward III in 1330.¹⁶⁰ Could their association be evidence of Mortimer men looking for support to keep his cause alive, or were they naturally drawn to Ewer due to his professed enmity towards the Despensers? It is difficult to say, though their long-standing Mortimer affinities are hard to ignore, especially considering that at the height of these troubles Oliver Ingham, Justice of Chester, thought it advisable to question the Mortimers in prison about what they knew of the plotting.¹⁶¹

Harder for the government to ignore, though, was an alleged plot to topple Edward and the Despensers, in which Roger Mortimer may have been pivotal. On 17 January 1323, a week after the king heard about the negotiations between Andrew Harclay, earl of Carlisle, and Robert Bruce for an Anglo-Scots peace¹⁶², Edward ordered the men of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Buckinghamshire to aid the household steward, Richard Dammory, who had been sent to besiege Wallingford castle, and arrest rebels who had seized it.¹⁶³ Wallingford housed Maurice Berkeley senior and Hugh Audley senior, and during a visit by Berkeley's men the captives forced the constable to hand over the keys. Reinforcements were let in and the castle temporarily secured. But, warned by a local child, the town authorities appealed for help and the elder Despenser and the earl of Kent launched a successful siege.¹⁶⁴ A plot to release Berkeley would be fascinating in itself. But, according to Henry Blaneфорde, and to judge by the king's opinion, it was far from an isolated case. Blaneфорde claims that danger arose in the kingdom, as all prisoners tried on one night to take possession of the castles in which they were detained.¹⁶⁵ On 7 April justices were ordered to inquire into the recent plot to take Wallingford, Windsor, and the Tower.¹⁶⁶

On 14 November, however, in reciting the charges against Mortimer, the king refers to his conspiracy to seize the Tower and the castles of Windsor and Wallingford, the latter being secured by Roger de Wauton.¹⁶⁷ A Roger de Wauton had witnessed Henry III's grant of Marden (Herefords.) to

¹⁵⁹ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.40r, 54v, 56v, 59v; Add. MS 6041, f.11r.

¹⁶⁰ *Rot. Parl.*, ii, p.52.

¹⁶¹ Not unnaturally they denied all knowledge: Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.155.

¹⁶² On 8 January Harclay was ordered to come to the king to certify him about his dealings: *CCR*, 1318-23, p.692; *CDS*, III, no.801, p.502.

¹⁶³ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.234.

¹⁶⁴ *Vita*, pp.129-30.

¹⁶⁵ *Blaneфорde*, pp.138-9.

¹⁶⁶ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.314.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.350.

Roger's grandfather in 1270¹⁶⁸, and a William de Wauton belonged to the Berkeley sub-retinue under the earl of Pembroke.¹⁶⁹ If such a plan had been hatched, it would have required a great deal of clandestine preparation and support, and its failure should not necessarily be taken as a lack of either. Edward was sufficiently concerned to appoint a new keeper to the Tower, Stephen de Segrave, in February 1323, and bind him to the tune of £10,000 to keep his prisoners safely incarcerated.¹⁷⁰ Combined with the increase in devotion to the former baronial leaders, it is highly likely that Edward's reaction in planning to execute Mortimer stemmed from a real fear that his escape would have disastrous consequences. The king did not have too long to wait to discover how disastrous, for on the evening of 1 August 1323 Roger Mortimer escaped from the Tower. Having invited his gaolers to dine with him, his squire drugged their drinks and Mortimer slipped through a breach in the wall of the Tower's kitchen.¹⁷¹ With the help of an "ingenious rope ladder", he scaled the inner and outer wards, to be received by friends.¹⁷² By means of a boat and then horses arranged by allies further up the Thames, he made for Portsmouth.¹⁷³ The next day he was on the Continent.

However much time he had been given to act, Mortimer clearly had friends on the inside and outside. Although the king punished Segrave¹⁷⁴, B.P. Evans argues that Mortimer had bribed one of his deputies, Gerard de Allspeth, who had been the man to create the "miraculous" hole in the wall and smuggle in the rope ladder.¹⁷⁵ Allspeth was pardoned for his role in the escape early in Mortimer's ascendancy, so this must be correct.¹⁷⁶ But to have had men waiting by the Thames suggests a wider conspiracy. The king appears to have suspected the involvement of prominent Londoners, arresting Hamo de Chigwell, Hamo Godchepe, Edmund Lambyn, and Roger Palmer.¹⁷⁷ They were later acquitted¹⁷⁸, and attention focused on a taverner, Ralph de Bockton, and John de Patesmere whose warehouses Mortimer had rented.¹⁷⁹ An inquiry at Portsmouth on 10 August found

¹⁶⁸ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.76r.

¹⁶⁹ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.305.

¹⁷⁰ *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.343.

¹⁷¹ *Blaneforde*, p.146.

¹⁷² *Anonimalle*, p.107.

¹⁷³ The *Anonimalle* gives Portchester; *ibid.*, p.107.

¹⁷⁴ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.185.

¹⁷⁵ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.228.

¹⁷⁶ *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.14, 498-9.

¹⁷⁷ *Anonimalle*, p.117.

¹⁷⁸ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.342.

¹⁷⁹ *CFR*, 1319-27, p.242.

that Ralph had commandeered a local boat with the help of Alice de Borhunte¹⁸⁰ to row a group of men out to his boat which was at anchor off the coast.¹⁸¹

Considering the importance of the passenger, it seems unlikely that Ralph masterminded the scheme. Mortimer had numerous powerful and important allies, and Evans follows Baker in attributing the blame to Orleton.¹⁸² The king certainly mistrusted the bishop who was relentlessly pursued by royal justice in the ensuing months.¹⁸³ Roy Haines argues Orleton had little involvement in the escape, being in his diocese at the time, and that in any case the plot had to be drawn up at very short notice.¹⁸⁴ This is not necessarily the case. Both the *Anonimalle* chronicler and Robert of Reading agree Mortimer's destination was Hainault, but this probably has more to do with later alliances than the situation in 1323.¹⁸⁵ Blanfordford claims he joined certain men with whom he had blood ties.¹⁸⁶ This is borne out by Edward's angry letter to John and Robert de Fienles on 1 October 1323, in which he expressed his astonishment at their maintenance of Mortimer on their lands in Picardy.¹⁸⁷ The de Fienles brothers were Mortimer's cousins, as nephews of his mother, Margaret. This perhaps suggests her connivance. Had she appealed to them for help?

His miraculous escape transformed Mortimer's career. With the Lancastrians neutralised, and ultimately in the person of Thomas's brother, Henry, to be cowed by Edward II, Mortimer became *the* focus for opposition to growing oppression in the country. From his continental base he posed varied threats to the king's position across the British Isles. Neither Wales nor Ireland could be counted as secure. The king undoubtedly feared Mortimer and the potential for an invasion. How much this potential was matched by reality requires investigation.¹⁸⁸

Edward was thrown into panic by Mortimer's escape. He had no idea what the fugitive intended. He was unaware of Mortimer's flight to France, for his first action was to commission

¹⁸⁰ She may well have been related to Herbert de Borhunte, who had been with Gaveston in Ireland. See above, p.27.

¹⁸¹ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.228.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p.226; Baker, p.16.

¹⁸³ *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.345.

¹⁸⁴ Haines, *Church and Politics*, p.143.

¹⁸⁵ I have found no evidence to corroborate Robert's claim that the count was Mortimer's kinsman: Flores, p.217.

¹⁸⁶ Blanfordford, p.146.

¹⁸⁷ CCR, 1323-7, pp.140-1. A letter was conveyed to them on 5 October: BL Stowe MS 553, f.130v.

¹⁸⁸ For a broader analysis of the growing opposition to Edward II, see Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*.

Gruffydd Llwyd and Rhys ap Gruffydd to raise all the forces of Wales to pursue and arrest Mortimer.¹⁸⁹ He also ordered the keepers of all ports and the sheriffs of counties in south-east England, as well as the Irish justiciar, to set spies and to inquire whether Mortimer had crossed the Channel, and who had aided him.¹⁹⁰ On 10 August Despenser senior was chosen to head the mission to capture Mortimer and his adherents.¹⁹¹ However, by 26 August information had reached the king that Mortimer had gone overseas and that he intended to go to Ireland.¹⁹² Three suspicious Irish ships had been spotted off the Kent coast and spies were set to ascertain their plans. Two days later the authorities of the major Irish towns, the justiciar, and most of the leaders of Anglo-Irish aristocratic society, were ordered to set spies and to pursue and arrest Mortimer if he came there.¹⁹³ Ultimately, Mortimer did not make any attempt to go to Ireland. This does not, however, mean that nothing was afoot.

On 16 November 1323 Edward II wrote to his brother-in-law, Charles IV, describing the recent disturbances that had arisen in his kingdom.¹⁹⁴ An embassy from Ireland, led by Roger Outlaw, Prior of the Irish Hospital, had reported that Mortimer's relatives and friends were making alliances and stirring up trouble.¹⁹⁵ As Robin Frame has pointed out, Edward's letter was essentially to make excuses for delaying his homage for Gascony. Subsequently, on 24 November, it was revealed to the king's justices that Mortimer had been in contact with numerous men in Ireland, some of whom expected his arrival imminently. Walter Cusack was apparently guarding his war-horses, whilst Richard Tuit held his geldings.¹⁹⁶ Walter had been Mortimer's seneschal of Trim and might be expected to respond positively. Richard, though, had benefited from Mortimer's fall. He had gained the constablership of the royal castle of Athlone in September 1321¹⁹⁷, and, if the allegations against him are true, he also plundered the contents of Trim castle and some of Mortimer's livestock in 1323.¹⁹⁸ Mortimer also seems to have approached more prominent figures, notably the earls of Kildare and Ulster. Although the answers are said to have been encouraging, Mortimer had either a lack of

¹⁸⁹ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.335.

¹⁹⁰ *CCR, 1323-7*, pp.132-4.

¹⁹¹ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.335.

¹⁹² *CCR, 1323-7*, p.133.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, pp.133-4.

¹⁹⁴ P.Chaplais, *The War of St. Sardos (1323-5)* (London, 1954), no.167, p.178.

¹⁹⁵ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.167.

¹⁹⁶ *P.W.*, II, ii, appendix, p.245.

¹⁹⁷ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, pp.298, 305.

will or support to attempt an invasion of Ireland.¹⁹⁹ The government moved quickly to appoint a new justiciar, John Darcy, a man with no real connections to Ireland.²⁰⁰ In the next few months further steps were taken to undermine Mortimer's position there. The 1322 Meath eyre recommenced in May 1324.²⁰¹ On 1 July the earl of Kildare was given the custody of Dunamase, possibly to reward his loyalty.²⁰² On 26 August John Darcy received Mortimer's manor of Moylagh for three years, and in 1326 he took over as constable of Trim.²⁰³ Were Mortimer to attempt a landing he might conceivably not be welcome.

In his letter to Charles Edward also speaks of riots increasing on the marches of his realm and trouble in Wales. He also relates that "*aucunes de ses enemys qi sont fuiz hors de son roialme en divers pais safforcent de faire alliances countre lui en son roialme et de procurer vers lui les malx qils en purront...*"²⁰⁴ Almost immediately upon his arrival in France, Mortimer began sending letters into the territories of the English king. Ireland had not been his only target. The king had heard that Mortimer and others had been sending diverse correspondence to his great peril, and they continued to do so daily.²⁰⁵

On 14 November Edward wrote to all royal ministers in England and several magnates, claiming Mortimer had incited aliens to invade in order to murder the king's counsellors.²⁰⁶ Such revelations had been exposed by the "confessions" of two of Mortimer's agents, Richard Fernhale and Thomas Newbiggin.²⁰⁷ Richard had been sent from St.Omer to expedite the plan concocted between Mortimer and Newbiggin to burn the residences and manors of the Despensers, Arundel, Master Robert de Baldock, and Geoffrey le Scrope, the king's *secretarii*. Several men from Wigmore and the marches were implicated along with prominent Londoners. Furthermore, other agents had been sent to raise money for Mortimer's maintenance, the community of Ludlow having already dispatched a large sum. The abbot of Wigmore and the priors of Leominster and Wormesley had received his

¹⁹⁸ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.166; PRO C49/5/11.

¹⁹⁹ Frame strongly questions the earl of Ulster's apparent show of support. The sources do not say this, but perhaps Mortimer was met with very negative responses.

²⁰⁰ CPR, 1321-4, p.348 (18 November).

²⁰¹ CCR, 1323-7, p.108.

²⁰² CFR, 1319-27, p.288.

²⁰³ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.320.

²⁰⁴ Chaplais, *War of St. Sardos*, no.167, p.178.

²⁰⁵ CCR, 1323-7, pp.137-8.

²⁰⁶ CPR, 1321-4, p.350.

²⁰⁷ For what follows, see *P.W.*, II, ii, appendix, pp.244-9.

agents warmly and promised support. There must have been concern at court that Mortimer was closing in. Possibly in desperation the king turned a blind eye to their crimes and employed Fernhale and Newbiggin as his agents to root out those involved. As a result, twenty-five to thirty men from across the marches and London were arrested and imprisoned.

Doubts can inevitably be cast upon their allegations, however. The commission to Newbiggin and others to go to the marches orders them to pursue and arrest certain rebels “whose names they know.”²⁰⁸ In the atmosphere created by Mortimer’s escape rumours must have been rife. It might be easy for Fernhale and Newbiggin to manipulate them by malicious arrest and extortion. Newbiggin went on a spree of terrorism in London, extorting money from men he later accused. These attacks took place in the two weeks leading up to Fernhale’s appearance to confess his involvement before the sheriffs and deputy coroner of London on 24 November. Perhaps they were accompanied by false promises to keep quiet about the victims’ complicity for payment of a *douceur*. As a result of such behaviour, Edward put Fernhale and Newbiggin on trial. Their evidence was discredited, most of the accused being mainperned and later released after acquittal by jury.

Although it might have been possible for a murder plot to succeed, Mortimer’s choice of assassins doomed it to failure. Nevertheless, the king was sufficiently concerned. Commissions were issued late in 1323 to investigate Orleton, whilst the inquiry into those who had aided or adhered to the rebels in the marches was renewed.²⁰⁹ On 20 April 1324 this was extended to the lordships of Brecon, Hay, Huntinton, Brynlllys, Talgarth, Pencelli, and Blaenllyfni.²¹⁰ On 24 March 1324 a parliamentary ordinance was passed that none should communicate with Mortimer. By 22 April sheriffs were ordered to publish the process touching Mortimer “so it may be fully and openly heard by all.”²¹¹ At a more personal level, Joan, Roger’s wife, was moved from Hampshire to Skipton castle. His daughters were committed to the care of the priories of Shouldham, Sempringham, and Chicksands.²¹² There could now be no question as to whom the king regarded as his biggest threat. Although Edward’s fear grew as events in Gascony began to spiral out of control, Mortimer’s hand to mouth existence meant that the reality of the situation did not quite live up to these perceptions.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.247.

²⁰⁹ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.385.

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.449.

²¹¹ *C.Ch.W., 1244-1326*, p.553.

²¹² *CCR, 1323-7*, pp.87, 88-9; E403/210, m.9.

Bearing in mind his approaches to senior figures in Ireland and his intervention in England and the Welsh marches, it might be suggested that Roger Mortimer foresaw only a brief stay on the continent, perhaps to raise a force from the de Fienles connection. When his machinations misfired, he had to rethink his strategy. An obvious option was an appeal to the French king.²¹³ The protracted dispute over Edward's performance of homage dragged on, and Charles IV was fuming about the attack on his newly constructed *bastide* at Saint Sardos in English-held Agen on 16 October 1323.²¹⁴ However, on 6 December Ralph Basset, seneschal of Bordeaux, informed the king that Mortimer was heading for Germany.²¹⁵ By 13 December he had apparently been received by the count of Boulougne.²¹⁶ Mortimer's next moves, though, are impossible to track. Perhaps he accompanied the count of Boulougne on his march to join Charles at Toulouse from where they would subsequently attack the Agenais. Possibly Mortimer linked up with his son, Geoffrey, who had been allowed to inherit his maternal grandmother's lordship of Couhé²¹⁷, and who had been summoned to join the French king. Indeed, one intelligence report claims that Geoffrey had sworn an oath to accompany Charles wherever he would go.²¹⁸ Geoffrey could have intervened with Charles to press his father's cause, while Mortimer and the other exiles might have joined Charles on the campaign that witnessed the surrender of Agen in August 1324.²¹⁹

Mortimer's next appearance in the documentary record, however, rather implies he had been trawling for allies elsewhere. In December 1324 intelligence reported a large fleet amassing off the Dutch coast.²²⁰ By the beginning of October 1324 Hugh Despenser could write of a suspected attack on Norfolk and Suffolk by "*grant nombre de gentz darmes et autres...quieux gentz doivent estre cheventein Sire Rogier de Mortymer et les autres bannis.*"²²¹ Mortimer, if this can be believed, appears to have approached at least the count of Hainault and "the king of Bohemia" [*le Roi de Boheme*], as well as presumably the counts of Holland and Zeeland, Flanders and Brabant, for support

²¹³ It is interesting to note that the Wigmore chronicle claims Mortimer was received by Charles upon his escape: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, p.352. Baker meanwhile claims he was brought together with exiles favoured by the French king's uncle, Charles de Valois: *Baker*, p.16.

²¹⁴ For more details see Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.141.

²¹⁵ Chaplais, *War of St. Sardos*, no.3, p.2.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*, no.6, p.5.

²¹⁷ G.W.Watson, 'Geoffrey de Mortemer and his Descendants,' *The Genealogist* 22 (1906), pp.1-16.

²¹⁸ Chaplais, *War of St.Sardos*, no.21, p.22.

²¹⁹ Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.143.

²²⁰ Chaplais, *War of St. Sardos*, no.43, pp.58-9 – a letter from the admiral of the eastern seas, John Sturmy; no.44, p.59 – a letter from Walter Reynolds, archbishop of Canterbury.

in an invasion of England. German cogs and Hainault boats were said to have been prepared along with sixty barges from Calais.²²² The Hainaulters were engaged in a trade dispute with the English and perhaps Mortimer had assured them of French support.²²³ A sign of the escalating tensions had been the forfeit of her estates by queen Isabella and the loss of her French entourage in September 1324, acts attributed to the “danger of a French invasion” by McKisack.²²⁴ On 27 September the order was sent out for the arrest of all Frenchmen.²²⁵ It is conceivable that Charles’s reaction to the muster of English forces for a Gascon campaign in August 1324 was to countenance a diversionary invasion. Could the fact that Geoffrey Mortimer pledged his heritage to Charles at some point in the autumn of 1324 to the tune of 16,000 *livres* have anything to do with promises made between Charles and his father?²²⁶ Roger himself could have put nothing up as a guarantee of good faith.

Nonetheless, despite several reports that the French had been equipping as if for war, nothing came of these concerns.²²⁷ Mortimer could not get his allies to commit, Despenser privately reporting that they were waiting “*taunt quil veient quel exploit les autres puissent faire...*”²²⁸ On 20 October Edward wrote to the count of Hainault requesting he seize all the king’s enemies there. Moreover, the ships Mortimer had gathered were small and would be easy to defeat. Nicholas de Huggate, treasurer for the Gascon war, in relaying the information that Geoffrey Mortimer had joined his father towards Gascony, confidently asserted the government had nothing to fear, “*car le peril est toutz jours a douter.*”²²⁹ By 1 November the danger had perceptibly passed, as the king received the favourable verdict of those prelates and magnates delegated to make arrangement for his proposed voyage to Gascony. However, they did accompany their suggestions for the dispatch of a force of over 10,000 men with a concern that this would leave the land vulnerable.²³⁰ On 30 December with hopes high that the Scottish threat had been neutralized²³¹, the king summoned parliament to discuss the Gascon

²²¹ *ibid.*, no.54, p.72.

²²² *ibid.*, no.44, p.59.

²²³ Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ p.141.

²²⁴ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, p.81.

²²⁵ *Foedera*, II, I, p.510.

²²⁶ Chaplais, *War of St. Sardos*, no.87, pp.102-03.

²²⁷ Reynolds, for example, claimed that “*le roi de Fraunce ne voet nule pees aver ove nostre sire le roi*”, *ibid.*, no.44, p.59.

²²⁸ *ibid.*, no.54, p.72.

²²⁹ *ibid.*, no.87, pp.102-03.

²³⁰ *CACCW*, xlix, 39, pp.217-18.

²³¹ On 8 November Edward’s envoys had been empowered to make a final peace with Bruce: *CPR*, 1324-7, p.46; *CDS*, III, no.853, p.556. On 25 November orders were sent out to issue letters to

mission.²³² Furthermore, in all of the negotiations concerning Edward's homage, the king had made it clear that he wished Mortimer and his exiled allies excluded from safe-conducts and pardons.²³³ When, on 7 February 1325 he replied to peace proposals tabled by Charles which included the latter's willingness to receive the queen as a negotiator, and her son as a substitute to render his father's homage, the king stipulated that before he would allow Isabella to travel Charles must ensure Mortimer had been expelled from his lands.²³⁴

On 9 March 132 Isabella left Dover as an "angel of peace."²³⁵ On 31 May Charles IV ratified the peace settlement he and his sister had brokered. Although for Edward the treaty brought a severe loss of face, agreeing to surrender Gascony until homage could be performed, essentially placing Charles in military control of the region, it meant a de-escalation in tensions.²³⁶ Mortimer may have been terrified at the prospect, his hopes resting on the prolongation of conflict. Later that year, on 12 September, safe-conducts were issued to the envoys of the count of Holland so negotiations to settle disputes with Edward could start.²³⁷ Without significant military backing Mortimer would once again be thrown back onto small-scale, hit-and-run warfare, using sympathisers to raise money and cause trouble in the British Isles. Edward may have sensed this for by 28 May he was making contingencies for Mortimer lands to be leased out to farm.²³⁸ On 13 July 1325 Arundel acquired the lordship of Gwerthrynion.²³⁹ And yet, Roger Mortimer struck up the infamous relationship with Isabella, a liaison that transformed their careers. Mortimer's military and organisational skills, combined with his contacts and alliances throughout northern Europe, aligned themselves with Isabella's political clout and the popular sympathy her plight engendered. Within a year of their first romantic encounter they had succeeded in toppling Edward and the Despensers.

sympathetic cardinals and the Pope so he might grant absolution to the Scots for as long as they were treating for peace: *C.Ch.W., 1244-1326*, p.560.

²³² *CCR, 1323-7*, pp.335-6.

²³³ *Chaplais, War of St. Sardos*, no.167, p.194.

²³⁴ *ibid.*, p.196.

²³⁵ *CPL, 1305-42*, p.408.

²³⁶ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.117; Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, pp.147-8.

²³⁷ *CPR, 1324-7*, p.171.

²³⁸ *CFR, 1319-27*, p.348. This, of course, was part of Edward's wider plans to raise his revenues as high as possible. See also *CCR, 1323-7*, p.412.

²³⁹ *CFR, 1319-27*, p.353.

Geoffrey *le Baker* links Isabella's mission to France with a plot to extricate her from the clutches of her husband and his favourites.²⁴⁰ His claim that she had been persuaded to put herself forward as a peace emissary by bishops Orleton and Burghersh for him associates her with the exiled Mortimer faction. Paul Doherty has shown that not only had Mortimer and Isabella shared only minor contact before, Edward himself approved of her mission.²⁴¹ Moreover, far from throwing her lot in with Mortimer and his party immediately upon her arrival, as the *Brut* suggests²⁴², Isabella appears to have acted within her plenipotential powers and, when the affair began, she was still hoping for reconciliation with her husband.²⁴³ It also seems likely that the decision to send Prince Edward to perform homage in place of his father was one with royal approval, for only after the prince's performance of homage on 24 September 1325 did things turn sour.²⁴⁴ Very quickly it became clear that with the prince in her hands Isabella was not going to return to England. Upon Edward demanding her return Isabella replied she could not, as "someone", meaning Despenser, had come between king and queen. Until their removal she would wear the robes of widowhood as a lady who had lost her lord. Edward's reply maintained she had never made such complaints before, but "someone has changed her attitude."²⁴⁵ The king officially laid out his argument in a letter of 1 December 1325, but makes no mention of Mortimer by name.²⁴⁶ Doherty argues that he did not suspect, as no evidence had come to light. He points to the return to England of close members of her household on 23 December as firm evidence of a liaison having begun.²⁴⁷ Walter Stapledon, bishop of Exeter, who had been appointed to accompany Prince Edward to perform homage, slipped away from France too, returning to England around 31 October.²⁴⁸ He claimed that Mortimer had usurped his position beside the prince and that death threats had been made against him.²⁴⁹ It is likely that Mortimer had kept himself abreast of events in England and throughout northern Europe by a combination of trusted agents, fellow exiles, and the agents of those dignitaries he had approached. His party may well have made a number of overtures to the queen in the months after her arrival. It is

²⁴⁰ *Baker*, p.17.

²⁴¹ Without a doubt Doherty's is the best account of Isabella's "exile": Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.107-71.

²⁴² *Brut*, p.233.

²⁴³ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.124.

²⁴⁴ Chaplais, *War of St. Sardos*, p.269.

²⁴⁵ *Vita*, p.143.

²⁴⁶ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.580.

²⁴⁷ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.127.

²⁴⁸ Chaplais, *War of St.Sardos*, p.245, no.1.

possible that a loose affiliation between the two “courts” was initiated around the time of Isabella’s first refusal to return. As her resolve hardened, so perhaps did the connection, and then the sexual attraction.

The first official acknowledgement of Isabella’s relationship with the exiled baronial leader came on 8 February 1326. The queen and her son, the king proclaimed, were not returning as she had “given herself up to the counsel of the Mortimer, the king’s notorious enemy and rebel.”²⁵⁰ By then, however, the situation was rapidly changing. The king called out his troops to be prepared to set out as the queen was making alliances to come to England “to aggrieve and destroy the king’s men and his people.”²⁵¹ Edward was in the process of losing control. Thus, on 25 December 1325, an array of all men in the shires was ordered.²⁵² By 3 January defensive measures were concentrated on southeastern England, commissions being granted to guard the coastline of Kent and Sussex. The king had heard that prejudicial letters were streaming into the country.²⁵³ This order was probably connected with the request to Margaret Mortimer, Roger’s mother, on 28 December 1325, to retire immediately to Elstow abbey in Bedfordshire.²⁵⁴ She had been making “suspicious assemblies”.²⁵⁵ In attempting to dispense with Margaret, Edward launched a pre-emptive strike against Mortimer’s position. Furthermore, on 12 February 1326 the treasury was ordered to victual the royal castles of north Wales and to survey their fabric.²⁵⁶ By 23 February the chamberlain of north Wales had been ordered to repair the buildings of all Welsh castles.²⁵⁷ On 6 March commissioners were sent to Herefordshire and Wiltshire to inquire into Mortimer’s adherents who had been sending victuals, armour, counsel, and aid to the rebels.²⁵⁸ Mortimer had probably been raising the stakes, possibly by disseminating news of the most potentially dangerous alliance he had recently formed.

On 2 January 1326 the archbishop of Canterbury informed the king that Charles IV had written to the count of Hainault to begin negotiations for the marriage of Prince Edward to the count’s

²⁴⁹ Baker, p.20.

²⁵⁰ “*sest done au conseil le Mortimer nostre enemi notoire et rebel*”: PRO C54/143, m.14d.; CCR, 1323-7, p.543; Foedera, II, I, p.619.

²⁵¹ “*a grever et destruer noz bones gentz et nostre people de meisme la terre*”: PRO C54/143, m.14d.; CCR, 1323-7, p.543; Foedera, II, I, p.619.

²⁵² CPR, 1324-7, pp.216-19.

²⁵³ *ibid.*, pp.208-12.

²⁵⁴ CCR, 1323-7, p.533.

²⁵⁵ CPR, 1324-7, p.206. These assemblies were both at Radnor and Worcester.

²⁵⁶ CCR, 1323-7, p.445; repeated on 3 March, p.451.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.450.

daughter, and that Charles had asked for help with an invasion of England.²⁵⁹ Doherty speculates that it had been Mortimer who had “won over” Hainault.²⁶⁰ If so, he may have once again made firm promises about the French commitment to an invasion. The French connection, possibly as much as the presence of the prince in exile, also seems to have brought notable English recruits to Mortimer and Isabella’s side. Until this point Mortimer had probably only been accompanied by his escaped retainers and a number of contrarians like William Trussell, who had fled England after Boroughbridge. On 14 March the sheriff of Sussex was ordered to attach the earl of Richmond to answer why he refused to come to England to advise the king, but instead remained in France.²⁶¹ On 24 March orders were sent to the treasury to resume the lands, goods and chattels of John de Cromwell, John de Chaucombe and the earl of Kent, the king’s half-brother. Cromwell and Chaucombe had accompanied Isabella to France, while Kent had been the military governor in Gascony from March 1324. The king accused Cromwell of inciting the queen to stay in France, “and, what is worse, adhering to Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, the king’s enemy and rebel, and to other rebels in those parts.”²⁶² On a personal level, none of these men had a close working relationship with Mortimer in the past. That they were prepared to accept his leadership says much about Edward’s alienation of men previously unerringly loyal and for the respect Mortimer could command.

A further indication of his standing came in a letter from Edward II to his son in the early summer of 1326. The king had heard that despite his son’s claim that Mortimer was not his adherent or counsellor Mortimer had publicly borne Edward’s robes at the Whitsun coronation of the French queen.²⁶³ Carla Lord has recently disputed Mortimer’s presence, but even accepting her evidence, it seems clear that he was now playing a prominent role in European diplomacy.²⁶⁴ It was perhaps just this ostentation and openness about his relationship with the queen that brought their campaign to a grinding halt, however. The threatened Franco-Hainaulter invasion never materialised. Papal

²⁵⁸ CPR, 1324-7, p.283.

²⁵⁹ PRO SC1/49/91; Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ p.128.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.128, n.3. This might also imply that Mortimer had been patronised by the French court at a rather earlier date.

²⁶¹ CCR, 1323-7, p.552; *Foedera*, II, I, p.622.

²⁶² “*et quod deterius est Rogero de Mortuo Mari de Wygemor inimico et rebeli nostro et aliis inimicis in partibus illis existentibus contra nos adherendo*”: PRO C54/143, m.10; CCR, 1323-7, pp.463-4.

²⁶³ *ibid.*, pp.576-77.

²⁶⁴ C.Lord, ‘Queen Isabella at the Court of France’, a paper delivered at the 2001 International Medieval Congress.

intervention urged restraint, whilst entreaties from Edward helped bring Charles to the conclusion that his sister was as much to blame for her situation and the rising tensions as Edward was.²⁶⁵ Expelled from France somewhat unceremoniously, Isabella and Mortimer found their way to Hainault.²⁶⁶

Edward, meanwhile, was taking steps which might again be interpreted as a direct attack on Mortimer. On 16 July safe-conducts were issued to Hugh de Lacy coming from the protection of the Scottish king.²⁶⁷ Although these were vacated, Edward could have been thinking of re-introducing the Lacys to Meath to counter any potential threat there. It was around this time that John Darcy was made constable of Trim, and on 22 July he was ordered to grant pardons to felons in Ireland.²⁶⁸ By September the king's attention had switched to Wales, as the council, fearing a Mortimer-led landing there, urged the king to provision against it.²⁶⁹ Edward, it appears, was concerned to secure the western fringes of his authority. Mortimer, however, had thrown himself into organising an attack from Hainault.

Convinced by promises that Prince Edward would be betrothed to his daughter, count William of Hainault made his resources available to Mortimer.²⁷⁰ As early as 23-24 July he ordered the Zeeland harbourmasters to help Mortimer assemble a fleet by 1 September.²⁷¹ On 3 August the queen and the count finalised a deal brokered by "*les gens le dit Mortimer*," and William agreed to fit out 140 ships for their mission.²⁷² Preparations gathered pace, and by 24 September the fleet of ninety-five ships had set sail, arriving at Orwell in Suffolk.²⁷³ In spite of odds stacked in the king's favour, a combination of surprise, meticulous planning and preparation, and the mood of the country, ensured a wholesale triumph for their enterprise.

²⁶⁵ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.578.

²⁶⁶ Doherty claims that Charles had contemplated surrendering his sister to Edward: 'Isabella,' p.141.

²⁶⁷ *CPR*, 1324-7, p.296.

²⁶⁸ *RCH*, p.34, no.21; *CPR*, 1324-7, p.301.

²⁶⁹ PRO C49/5/15-16.

²⁷⁰ On 27 August it was formally pledged by Isabella, Kent and Mortimer at Mons: Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.145-6.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, p.144.

²⁷² *ibid.*, p.145.

²⁷³ *Paulini*, p.314; *Baker*, p.21; *Brut*, p.236; *Bridlington*, p.86; *Flores*, p.233; *Walsingham*, p.180; *Murimuth*, p.46; *Scalachronica*, p.72; *Lanercost*, p.255.

Mortimer led a force numbering perhaps 700 men.²⁷⁴ Although Edward seems not to have guessed their destination²⁷⁵, he seemed capable of dealing with them. On 26 September orders were issued for all fencible men in Essex to be arrayed.²⁷⁶ Robert Wateville was appointed to levy all East Anglian men-at-arms to pursue the invaders, and the chief arrayers were to ensure their levies came to the king forthwith.²⁷⁷ It looked as if Edward would make a stand. On 27/28 September orders were issued for the raising of forces to counter the invaders who, it was said, wished to put the king in subjection.²⁷⁸ If this were not enough inspiration to fight, he offered a £1000 reward for Roger Mortimer's head, accompanied by a promise of pardon to any man if he agreed to fight the rebels, and a fulsome commitment to pay those coming to him a prompt wage.²⁷⁹ These measures, though, smack more of desperation than resolve, for if they were an attempt to fracture the coalition of forces ranged against him, they were doomed to failure. Within a few days it became clear that the forces he had ordered were not assembling.²⁸⁰

Roger Mortimer was the undoubted leader of the invasion enterprise, and neither the queen nor the exiles allied with him are likely to have countenanced his sacrifice.²⁸¹ Popular sympathy may have been behind the queen and the young prince, but Mortimer had taken the baton of popular dissent from Thomas, earl of Lancaster. Whilst Mortimer had fled tyranny, others who would now rally to his cause were tainted by collaboration with the Despenser regime. Several of these who joined Mortimer in France had been some of the king's closest associates in the Boroughbridge campaign. Kent and Richmond had even been amongst Thomas's judges at Pontefract.²⁸² The Lancastrian cause was still immensely popular too and the mantle had passed to Thomas's brother, Henry. He, however, had been out of the country at the time of Boroughbridge. After his return he received royal

²⁷⁴ *Brut*, p.237. Walsingham says there were 2757 invaders: *Walsingham*, p.180.

²⁷⁵ Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.151-2.

²⁷⁶ *CPR*, 1324-7, p.322.

²⁷⁷ *CPR*, 1324-7, pp.327-8; *Foedera*, II, I, pp.643-4.

²⁷⁸ *P.W.*, II, ii, pp.292-4.

²⁷⁹ *CCR*, 1323-7, pp.650-1; *Brut*, p.236. Walsingham claims Isabella offered £2000 for Despenser's head: *Walsingham*, p.181; *Foedera*, II, I, p.644.

²⁸⁰ The most famous example is that of Wateville who abandoned his commission. See N. Saul, 'The Despensers and the downfall of Edward II,' *EHR*, 99 (1984), pp.12-14.

²⁸¹ He is described by Thomas Grey as the "chief embraceour" of the enterprise: *Scalachronica*, p.72.

²⁸² *Bridlington*, p.76; *Flores*, p.206.

patronage.²⁸³ On 20 April 1326, during the Franco-Hainaulter invasion scare, he had licence to demise a manor for life.²⁸⁴ As late as 23 July he was called out alongside Despenser junior to survey the arrays in the East Midland shires.²⁸⁵ It was not until 10 October that the king ordered the resumption of his lands. This does not necessarily imply a lack of commitment to the cause espoused by Isabella and Mortimer, though. Amongst Mortimer's companions were prominent exiled Lancastrians like William Trussell, Thomas Roscelyn, and John de Ros.²⁸⁶ If it is accepted that Mortimer was in communication with his men, Henry must have had some intelligence of what was going on, and it is probable that Mortimer and Isabella had sought his co-operation.²⁸⁷ Certainly, he was prominent in the subsequent campaign, and the political programme of Isabella and Mortimer paid considerable homage to Lancastrian traditions.²⁸⁸ Therefore, although in the days following Mortimer and Isabella's landing, the barons rallied to the queen and the prince, they did so in the full knowledge of the debt they owed to Mortimer.

The last week of September 1326 saw the invasion force swelled by large numbers of sympathisers from nearby Norfolk and Suffolk.²⁸⁹ More significant was the appearance of prominent magnates and ecclesiastics at Dunstable on 6 October. The earl of Norfolk, the king's other half-brother, was joined by the bishops of Ely, Hereford, and Lincoln, and the archbishop of Dublin.²⁹⁰ Norfolk was a major landholder in East Anglia, and it had been upon his manor at Walton that the invaders had arrived, demonstrating that they may not have been entirely unexpected. More revealing of the feelers they may have been putting out is the presence of the prelates. Hothum of Ely was a local ecclesiastical lord, but it should not be forgotten that he and Mortimer had been close associates in Ireland.²⁹¹ To follow Geoffrey le Baker, moreover, who depicts Orleton of Hereford and Burghersh of Lincoln as the chief *agents provocateurs* behind Isabella's voyage to France in 1325 and her subsequent stay there, it would be natural to expect their prompt rallying to the queen's cause, and,

²⁸³ An entry in a royal account book, for example, shows that Edward sent a cloth of gold and other jewels for the burial of Henry's late wife, Matilda, in May 1322: BL MS Stowe 553, f.25r. Henry also fought alongside the king in the ensuing Scottish campaign: *ibid.*, f.147.

²⁸⁴ *CPR, 1324-7*, p.261.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp.302-03.

²⁸⁶ *Bridlington*, p.86.

²⁸⁷ Doherty had argued that Henry appeared surprised by the invasion, being at Leicester as late as 3 December: 'Isabella,' p.155; *Knighton*, p.435.

²⁸⁸ See below, chapter 4.

²⁸⁹ The Wigmore chronicle says 20,000: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

²⁹⁰ *Bridlington*, p.86; *Baker*, p.23.

indeed, that they had played a sizeable role in the plans for invasion.²⁹² Haines argues, though, that Orleton had not given Isabella “any indication of support prior to the landing of 1326.”²⁹³ This does not explain his relatively swift traversal of the country, however. Orleton is usually associated with Mortimer, of course, but again Haines plays down the importance and intimacy of this relationship, arguing that in the run-up to invasion Orleton was moving “away from the scene of operations”, spending time at Wigmore and Bromfield on 14-15 September.²⁹⁴ His reason for being there, though, was the burial of Roger Mortimer of Chirk who had expired on 3 August.²⁹⁵ This may have been an occasion on which Mortimer sympathisers gathered both to commemorate Chirk and to discuss the impending crisis. Once again, it is worth restating that although those rallying to the queen and prince joined the invaders, certain defectors may have done so as much through long-standing connections and sympathy with Mortimer as with his royal companions.

Irrespective of burgeoning support and public sympathy, Mortimer and Isabella were at the head of an illegitimate faction for the king was still at large. On 1 October Edward decided to flee west, hoping to raise support.²⁹⁶ On 28 September he had ordered men to be selected to go against Mortimer and the rebels in Wales and Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.²⁹⁷ On 2 October Edward ordered the treasury to respite the accounts of John Inge, the keeper of Wigmore castle, so he might defend it against Mortimer attacks.²⁹⁸ An order to the keeper himself from Gloucester on 10 October to oppose Roger Mortimer reinforces the impression that the king probably assumed Mortimer would head to his own lands.²⁹⁹ This does not seem to be the case, as he remained firmly by Isabella’s side, and London, instead, seems to have been the focus of attention. Isabella’s appeal for support from the city of 28 September had been ignored, but with Edward’s flight the situation changed.³⁰⁰ On 6 October she urged the Londoners to help destroy Despenser and his cohorts and promised reward.³⁰¹ Her broader appeal at Oxford on 15 October, accusing Despenser of accroaching

²⁹¹ See above, chapters 1-2.

²⁹² *Baker*, pp.16-17

²⁹³ Haines, *Church and Politics*, p.157.

²⁹⁴ *ibid*, p.161.

²⁹⁵ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.351.

²⁹⁶ *Baker*, p.23.

²⁹⁷ *CPR, 1324-7*, p.325.

²⁹⁸ *CCR, 1323-7*, p.649.

²⁹⁹ *P.W.*, II, I, p.761.

³⁰⁰ *French Chronicle of London*, p.51.

³⁰¹ *Anonimalle*, p.125; *Walsingham*, p.181.

royal power, damaging Church and kingdom, as well as many great men, their wives and children, and of grieving the populace by excessive tallages, led to an eruption of violence.³⁰² The Tower was stormed and its inmates released.³⁰³ It seems likely that the man who would emerge from this violence and become London's mayor, Richard de Bethune³⁰⁴, had played a major role in manipulating public opinion and the course of events.³⁰⁵ Isabella's proclamation had now outlined her position. Ostensibly, she was working to divorce Despenser from the king and to effect reconciliation with Edward. In a sermon that accompanied this document, Orleton preached on the text, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy and her seed, it shall bruise thy head.*"³⁰⁶ This could equally have applied to Mortimer as Despenser, but Isabella ensured the stress was on a justified campaign against peddlers of wicked counsel. Henceforth, Mortimer slips slightly from view, but his influence in the ensuing campaign can be discerned.

The real boost to the legitimacy of Isabella's campaign came when Edward, having been unable to rouse serious resistance to the rebel forces, boarded ship at Chepstow on 20/21 October, effectively, and to the barons legally, abrogating the governance of his realm.³⁰⁷ He had been given little alternative. Despite orders to commissioners in Wales and the West Country for the levy of men-at-arms, archers and foot soldiers, few had materialised.³⁰⁸ On 16 October a decision seems to have been made regarding the king's flight. Hugh Despenser senior was placed in charge of all forces in southwest England and sent to keep Bristol.³⁰⁹ This had been preceded on 14 October by fresh appointments of keepers of the Forest of Dean and the Welsh marches. Little resistance has been recorded to the rebels, however³¹⁰, and on 25 October the king and his closest followers were driven ashore near Cardiff.³¹¹ Although Edward summoned levies from Glamorgan and much of the rest of

³⁰² *Foedera*, II, I, pp.645-6.

³⁰³ *Lanercost*, p.255; *Baker*, p.23; *Anonimalle*, p.129; *Murimuth*, p.48; *Flores*, p.234.

³⁰⁴ He was admitted as mayor on 17 November, his election having been confirmed by the prince on 7 November: *CMR*, 1326-7, no.830, p.110.

³⁰⁵ Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.18.

³⁰⁶ Haines, *Church and Politics*, p.165.

³⁰⁷ *Anonimalle*, p.131; *Baker*, p.22.

³⁰⁸ *CPR*, 1324-7, p.326; *CCR*, 1323-7, p.651; *CMR*, 1326-7, no.1596, pp.218-19.

³⁰⁹ *CPR*, 1324-7, p.332.

³¹⁰ An explanation for the lack of loyalty the king inspired may be found in these appointments, for prominent among those assigned vital roles in the weeks after the king's flight from London were men with long-standing ties to Roger Mortimer: see chapter 5, pp.166-8.

³¹¹ *Anonimalle*, p.131; *Baker*, p.22; *Brut*, p.239. For an exploration of the rumours the king had been heading to Ireland, see chapter 4, p.114.

south Wales, control of the marches passed to the invaders.³¹² In desperation the king ordered the resumption of the Mortimer lordships of Ceri, Cedewain, Maelienydd, and Wigmore, along with Charlton's lordship of Powys.³¹³ This availed him little, for between 29 October and 4 November Isabella set up court undisturbed at Hereford.³¹⁴ In the ensuing fortnight Edward, bereft of support, and ultimately betrayed by Welshmen, was captured near Llantrisant on 16 November.

Roger Mortimer himself seems merely to have been present at Bristol on 26 October, when a council was held, which ruled that as the king had left his realm without consent his son should be made "keeper" in his stead.³¹⁵ Mortimer was definitely among Hugh Despenser senior's judges there, on 27 October.³¹⁶ Thereafter, as news filtered through of the king's whereabouts – Edward had appealed to the queen for talks concerning reconciliation³¹⁷ – Mortimer seems to have attempted to assume control of the marches. Leaving the business of seizing the king to Henry of Lancaster, Rhys ap Hywel, and William la Zouche, who all had interests in the area where Edward was thought to be hiding, Mortimer headed north. Possibly at his connivance, John Charlton captured the earl of Arundel at Shrewsbury on 16 or 17 November. Several chronicles report that Arundel was then summarily executed "in secret" and at Mortimer's sole behest "*perfecto odio*."³¹⁸ Despenser may have held the country in his thrall, but it had been Arundel who had profited most in terms of lands and offices from the Mortimers' fall.

The spark for Roger Mortimer's switch to opposition to Edward II had been Hugh Despenser's actions in 1320-1, and he must have been overjoyed to hear of the favourite's capture. It was undoubtedly with a sense of tremendous satisfaction that Mortimer sat among Despenser's judges at Hereford, on 24 November, a trial followed by his grisly execution. Mortimer's joy may have been tempered, however, by the realisation that his position had now become anomalous. The invasion had achieved the destruction of the Despensers. Although pockets of resistance survived in Wales, Mortimer's military leadership could be put into abeyance. Moreover, even though the king was in

³¹² *CPR, 1324-7*, pp.333-4, 335; *Foedera*, II, I, p.646.

³¹³ *CFR, 1319-27*, p.421.

³¹⁴ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.164, n.8.

³¹⁵ *Foedera*, II, I, p.646. Mortimer is not named on the close roll however: *CCR, 1323-7*, pp.655-6. His presence is confirmed by in T.F.Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, III, (Manchester, 1928), p.1.

³¹⁶ With Trussell, Kent, Lancaster, Norfolk and Thomas Wake: Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.162.

³¹⁷ An embassy consisting of Rhys ap Gruffydd, Oliver de Bordeaux, John de Harsyk, and the abbot of Neath was sent to treat: *CPR, 1324-7*, p.336.

captivity, Isabella's rhetoric suggested that reconciliation was her aim. Conversely, it is difficult to believe that such a well-planned invasion campaign had not discussed possible outcomes, and, in reality, all the signs were that Isabella would not forsake Mortimer. Indeed, the court having trekked to Wallingford for Christmas, plans were concocted that would confirm Mortimer's status at the pinnacle of English politics.

After her husband's capture Isabella controlled access to the prince and, from its delivery to her at the Mortimer manor of Much Marcle on 26 November, she personally held the Great Seal, effectively putting the country's governance in her hands.³¹⁹ With the king's fate pending, supporters to reward, and defensive and law and order measures requiring attention, a parliament was called for 14 December.³²⁰ London's continuing volatility dictated a prorogation until 7 January.³²¹ The delay allowed Isabella and Mortimer to fine-tune their proposals which now turned to deposition of the king.³²² The unprecedented nature of the process has dictated the confused nature of the sources meaning hard fact is difficult to come by. Roger Mortimer, the chief manipulator of parliamentary opinion, is, as usual, impossible to pinpoint, and the extent of his influence problematic to quantify.

It was probably the Christmas colloquium at Wallingford which made provision for the events that were to follow.³²³ Discussion centred on Edward's fate, with unnamed parties favouring the king's execution. Was Mortimer one of these voices? On the face of it, to be rid of the king would smooth the path to power, removing a focus for dissent. Moreover, bearing in mind the strong links binding Mortimer to Edward's probable murder, hindsight might suggest this had always been his aim. This seems unlikely. Even in this hostile atmosphere to suggest deposition would have been fraught with risks; to go that one step further, surely unthinkable. Whatever malice Mortimer had towards the king, no chronicle makes this allegation. Nevertheless, memories were still fresh of the repeated renegeing on promises to abide by baronial stricture by the obstreperous monarch. To achieve a permanent territorial and political settlement necessitated the removal of this major stumbling block.

³¹⁸ Bridlington, p.87; *Lanercost*, p.256; *Baker*, p.25; *Flores*, p.234; *Murimuth*, p.50.

³¹⁹ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.655.

³²⁰ *P.W.*, II, I, p.453.

³²¹ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.654.

³²² For more detailed analysis, see: Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' pp.38-51; M.V.Clarke, 'Committees of Estates and the Deposition of Edward II', in *idem.*, *Medieval Representation and Consent* (Second edition: New York, 1964), pp.174-95; C.Valente, 'The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II', *EHR* 113 (September 1998), pp.852-81.

Parliament opened on 7 January 1327 and already events had been given a push in the right direction. Bishops Orleton and Stratford had been sent to the king at Kenilworth to request his attendance.³²⁴ Edward was not ready to give the proceedings an air of legality by his presence though. On their return on 12 January the queen proclaimed she could no longer countenance returning to her husband, for he had, it was said, made death threats against her. This provoked the all-important question: whether the community of the realm would now prefer the king or his son. At this moment, the popular will may have frozen, as significant elements, led by archbishop Melton, refused to accept such suggestions. Mortimer turned up the heat. Valente notes the arrival of a letter from the mayor and citizens of London asking the assembly to ally with them and to swear to maintain the cause of Isabella and her son, to “crown the latter and depose his father for frequent offences against his oath and his Crown.”³²⁵ London had played a crucial role in the invasion’s success, and now Mortimer was exploiting the position of Richard de Bethune as mayor and the menace of the London mob.

On 13 January Edward’s fate was effectively sealed. Before the assembled throng, Roger Mortimer delivered the *coup de grace* – the articles of accusation. He announced that the magnates no longer wished to have Edward as their king, due to his insufficiency, his unstinting reliance on evil counsel, and his relentless destruction of the Church and disinheritance of the crown.³²⁶ It must be stressed that Mortimer was *the* voice of the magnates. True, his argument received the stage-managed vocal backing from Thomas Wake, Henry of Lancaster’s son-in-law, and Mortimer’s cousin, but it was clear who was in control. This was further exemplified in the oath taking at the Guildhall, to hold with the prince and his mother, which accompanied this drama. Although it proceeded for three days, Mortimer’s name tops the list.³²⁷ Mortimer’s parliamentary monologue was followed by spiritual censure of Edward and encouragement of the dealings underway in the shape of sermons by Orleton and Stratford. When, at the end of the deliberations, the archbishop of Canterbury asked whether parliament wished the prince to succeed his father, the response was a unanimous “*Fiat!*”

Mortimer and Isabella had masterfully engineered an unprecedented coup by manipulating popular opinion, intimidation, and prosecuting a carefully constructed plan. Although there could be

³²³ *Froissart*, p.45. Those in attendance were the two English archbishops, the bishops of Winchester, Hereford, Lincoln, Ely, Norwich and Coventry, the earl of Kent, and Henry of Lancaster.

³²⁴ *Lanercost*, p.257.

³²⁵ Valente, ‘The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II,’ p.856.

³²⁶ Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.5.41, ff.125r, translated in Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, pp.233-4.

no transfer of power until the old king had assented and homage and fealty officially revoked, as was achieved on 20 January, it is revealing of their perception of success, that orders were issued on 13 January for Mortimer's sons to be provided with suitable robes for knighting at the young prince's coronation, already planned for 1 February.³²⁸ Roger Mortimer himself had first come to prominence via his knighting at the side of Edward II when Prince of Wales. For many years their relationship had grown and both men had reaped the reward. It had taken immense provocation to shatter this bond. Now, with the success of his invasion and coup, Roger Mortimer would seize the opportunity to usurp the powers Edward had been forced to surrender. The transformation in Mortimer's career witnessed in the years 1321-6 would be as nothing beside that achieved in the next four years.

³²⁷ *Paulini*, p.322: *CPMR, 1323-64*, pp.12-15.

³²⁸ *Harding*, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.40.

CHAPTER 4:
THE REGIME OF MORTIMER AND ISABELLA,
1327-30.

An analysis of Roger Mortimer's four-year ascendancy in English politics is essential to an examination of English politics in the early fourteenth century. Centuries of historiography have created a Machiavellian caricature of an "unscrupulous adventurer"¹ who usurped regal authority through his liaison with Isabella and effectively ruled the country beside her. Paul Doherty, however, offers significant modifications to the thrust of the debate, arguing that real power in the regime lay with Isabella. Mortimer is thereby relegated to a supporting role, merely providing the military muscle to stave off opposition. Either way, there has been comparatively little attention paid to Mortimer's individual actions and objectives.

The reality of the situation was somewhat different, for, as Natalie Fryde says, "...in the eyes of outsiders they remained united and seemed to bear joint responsibility."² They had worked intimately together, and Isabella showed every intention of sharing governmental responsibilities. Mortimer was the man, "*sine quo nihil attentare voluit.*"³ Mortimer's military contribution cannot be underestimated, of course. His brutal suppression of the rebellion of Henry, earl of Lancaster, early in 1329 was devastatingly effective. However, his input into decision-making and administration was equally, if not more, important. Due to his experience of the situation on the ground and his wide-ranging networks of allegiance and enmity, he took the lead in managing Ireland and Wales, countries disaffected by the change of regime and destabilised by Scottish interference and propaganda. Coupled with his direct intervention in the moves to neutralise the threats posed by the Scots and the French, as well as the lingering possibility of Edward II's restoration, it can be argued that Roger Mortimer's political and administrative skill helped ensure his regime was able to endure for as long as it did.

It would be churlish, however, to call for a rehabilitation of Roger Mortimer's reputation. The evidence of his acquisitiveness and brutal treatment of rivals militates against this. In principle, few of his peers can initially have borne him ill for profiting from the fall of Edward II, from which they too would gain. It was only when Mortimer ostentatiously displayed the extent of his ill-gotten gains in raising himself to the unprecedented and politically pregnant title of "Earl of March" in October 1328 that recriminations followed. Nevertheless, arguably it was only when his political power became linked with a sinister threat to Edward III's kingship that his fate was sealed. Mortimer's political abilities had contributed to his ascent to power; his unlimited ambitions would bring him down.

¹ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, p.99.

² Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.207.

³ *Walsingham*, p.184.

On 1 February 1327 huge crowds thronged Westminster Abbey for the coronation of Edward III. For Roger Mortimer the ceremony offered the satisfaction of seeing his sons knighted beside the king, and of symbolising his own rehabilitation and restoration to a position of proximity to the throne.⁴ Mortimer's overriding concern remained an official reversal of the judgements passed upon him in 1322 and the recovery of his title and estates. In the Westminster Parliament which opened on 3 February he successfully entered a petition, showing his trial had been erroneous, as he had not been allowed to answer the charges as was his right in peacetime, and he had not been tried by his peers. On 21 February he received both a general pardon and one more specifically relating to his escape from the Tower.⁵ On 28 February the king ordered the exchequer barons to cancel and annul the judgments against Mortimer and his late uncle.⁶ Mortimer's lands were restored and on the same day orders were dispatched for the resumption of the estates late of Mortimer of Chirk, so that his nephew might succeed him.⁷ Mortimer had thus been returned to common law and had re-established the fortunes of his family. He was again free to reap the benefits of the exercise of lordship and engage in politics. This transformed his career once more, providing the basic platform from which he could play out any more grandiose ambitions.

Crucially, the prospect of a minority necessitated the reconstruction of government to help guide the king away from the catastrophic politics of his father, and to create an atmosphere in which the barons might re-assert themselves as the natural counsellors of the king. A request was made to parliament that "*covenables Gentz & Sages*", elected by "*les Grauntz*", be placed around the king, establishing a regency council, ultimately to be led by Henry of Lancaster, "*capitalis custos et supremus consiliarius Regis*."⁸ Peace, stability, and prosperity might thereby be promoted, and the challenge to the Scots and the French reinvigorated. That these hopes proved in vain is, at least in the opinion of the *Brut* chronicler, because, "þat ordenance was sone undone... ffor þe Kyng and alle þe lordes þat shulde gouerne him, were gouernede and reulede after þe Kyngus moder, Dame Isabel, and by Sir Roger þe Mortymer..."⁹

⁴ *Foedera*, II, ii, p.684.

⁵ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.38r-40v; *CPR, 1327-30*, p.14.

⁶ *CMR, 1326-7*, no.639, p.85. The judgments were annulled on 30 May: *ibid.*, no.748, p.98.

⁷ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.28.

⁸ *Chronicon Henrici de Knighton*, I, ed. J.R.Lumby (London: Rolls Series, 1889), p.447.

⁹ *Brut*, p.254. Robert of Avesbury agrees, claiming that after his coronation Edward III "*multis temporibus per dictam dominam Isabellam. Matrem suam, praedictumque dominum Rogerum de Mortuo Mari totaliter ducebatur*": *Avesbury*, p.283.

Almost unanimously, historians have seen in the establishment of the regency council the foundation of Mortimer's real power.¹⁰ As Anthony Tuck comments, "...Mortimer remained outside it, or perhaps more accurately above it, occupying a quasi-regal position as Queen Isabella's lover", which enabled him to bypass conciliar assent for legislation by his access to the king.¹¹ These arguments largely pre-suppose meticulous forward planning and a cynical manipulation of the populist Lancastrian scheme for government by Mortimer and Isabella. They were, it is argued, prepared to tie their colours to this mast whilst simultaneously undermining it. This may indeed be correct, at least superficially.

Even before the coronation Mortimer and Isabella supposedly reshaped government in their interests. Hothum of Ely was appointed chancellor, Orleton of Hereford replaced Stratford of Winchester as treasurer, and Robert de Wyville was made keeper of the privy seal.¹² Doherty argues that these men were Isabella's nominees, although there might be a case for seeing Mortimer's influence behind the promotion of long-standing associates like Hothum and Orleton. Moreover, the new chamberlain was Gilbert Talbot who had been forfeited for adherence to Mortimer in 1322.¹³ February 1327 saw a radical redrawing of the political map in the localities with men more amenable to the ruling couple being appointed to shrievalties.¹⁴ Even so, only one of the appointed, Richard de Hawkeslowe, the new sheriff of Worcestershire, can be shown to have had direct links to Mortimer.¹⁵ Elsewhere, William de Whitfield, the new sheriff of Somerset and Dorset, was a Berkeley retainer and therefore a man with possible connections to Mortimer.¹⁶

Meanwhile, Mortimer and Isabella comprehensively outmanoeuvred Lancaster, the man perceptibly best placed to challenge this supposed Mortimer hegemony. When, finally, on 21 April he received delivery of his forfeited inheritance, Henry had suffered considerable losses. On 1 February many of his estates were granted to the queen, and now he was stripped of those gained from Warenne

¹⁰ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, pp.96-7; M.C.Prestwich, *The Three Edwards. War and State in England, 1272-1377* (London, 1996), pp.111-12; Ormrod, *Edward III*, p.13; Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' pp.67-8. Doherty is, of course, the exception with his emphasis of Isabella, though he too argues the council deflected attention from the couple's machinations: Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.202.

¹¹ A.Tuck, *Crown and Nobility, 1272-1461. Political Conflict in Late Medieval England* (Second edition: Oxford, 1985), p.78.

¹² *CCR, 1327-30*, p.98; *CPR, 1327-30*, p.1.

¹³ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.159; see above, p.87.

¹⁴ *CFR, 1327-37*, pp.15-17.

¹⁵ He is amongst the witnesses of two surviving Mortimer charters: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.41; Add. MS 6041, f.7r (6 December 1329); Harleian 1240, f.117; Add. MS 6041, f.45r. (Easter 1328)

¹⁶ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.265.

by his brother, as well as lands late of the Templars.¹⁷ At the same time Isabella and Mortimer were enriching themselves, Isabella securing a massive increase in her dower lands.¹⁸ Mortimer, on 15 February, received the extremely valuable wardships of the heirs to the earldoms of Warwick and Pembroke and of Nicholas Audley, while two days later he got the marriage of Laurence Hastings, the Pembroke heir.¹⁹ On 20 February he snared the justiceship of Wales.²⁰ McKisack maintains that Mortimer was able to keep a low profile and milk his relationship with Isabella for gain, whilst heaping responsibility onto the earl and his colleagues on the council.²¹ The evidence as far as Mortimer is concerned may be said to dictate minor qualifications, for he took an active role in government and, at least initially, worked alongside his supposed rival.

Doherty has argued, contrary to the mainstream of opinion, that Mortimer actually sat on the regency council.²² He shows that chronicle descriptions of a council of twelve fall two short, in terms of baronial representation, of the number alleged in the charge made at his trial in 1330, that Mortimer had usurped the council's powers.²³ He has also demonstrated that in its composition (four earls, four prelates, and six barons), its rotational system of permanent members to stay with the king, and its demand that all important business be dealt with by the council before approval, it harked back to the council requested by Thomas of Lancaster in the aftermath of the Leake settlement of 1318. Mortimer and Orleton, alone among the 1327 counsellors, had sat on that council. Perhaps Mortimer was considered a natural choice to give continuity and authority to the proceedings. Perhaps he considered himself a rightful member of such an institution. It is even possible that the proximity to the king Mortimer enjoyed came initially as much from his sanctioned position as a permanent councillor.

Much of this argument makes sense, but it is important to state that there is no evidence to support Mortimer's councillorship. No chronicle gives him a role, and no documentary evidence has been presented to reinforce this view. Nevertheless, there was no question that Mortimer would just lie low. Nor could there be any alternative to allowing free rein to the Lancastrian element. Mortimer

¹⁷ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.33.

¹⁸ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.122; *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.66-9.

¹⁹ *CFR*, 1327-27, p.20; *CPR*, 1327-30, p.22.

²⁰ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.19.

²¹ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, p.96

²² For what follows, see Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.199-200. Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.207, and McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, p.96 are explicit in reinforcing the belief that Mortimer stayed aloof, McKisack believing Mortimer was represented by Simon de Bereford.

²³ *Knighton*, p.447; *Brut*, p.254; *Rot.Parl*, ii, p.52. Those counsellors named are the four earls of Lancaster, Warenne, Kent and Norfolk, the two archbishops and the bishops of Winchester and Hereford, and Thomas Wake, Oliver Ingham, Henry Percy and John de Ros.

himself, of course, was probably the chief surviving member of the quarrel of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, and had suffered well-known humiliations. Mortimer and Isabella might have thought it ill advised to permit an institution wholly independent of their authority. Perhaps as importantly, the government could ill afford to openly go against the grain too much, needing to foster some sense of national solidarity and top-level political collaboration.

The repercussions of the coup were slow to die down, and the country long remained vulnerable and unstable. External and internal threats, particularly in the first eighteen months of the regime, deprived the government of the stability it required to entrench itself more completely. However, it was in the interests of all who had participated in, or benefited from, the fall of the Despenser regime that the new administration survived. It seems most unlikely, therefore, that any substantial resistance was offered to the appointments of Hothum and Orleton to the chief offices of state.²⁴ Both men had long, distinguished careers of service and had played important roles in the invasion and deposition. Moreover, there seems no real reason to assume that there was any antipathy to Mortimer being made Justice of Wales. The principality was a major refuge for those sympathetic to a restoration of the late king, while Mortimer, in terms of local authority, was an obvious choice. His military ability too might have ensured concerns were set aside, his colleagues focusing instead on his abilities and on working in association with him on policies formulated and sanctioned by a regency council of which Mortimer was an integral part.

The major cause of instability was the activities of the Scots across the British Isles. On the day of Edward III's coronation, peace negotiations launched on 26 December 1326 having broken down²⁵, the Scots launched a daring, if unsuccessful, attack on Norham castle.²⁶ This prompted a series of hasty defensive measures. On 10 February Anthony Lucy was appointed keeper of Carlisle to secure its defence.²⁷ Two days later the communities of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland were pardoned all debts.²⁸ On 13 February the Treasury was ordered to forward the sum of 1000 marks to Henry Percy who had recently contracted to keep the northern marches with 100 men-at-arms, 100 hobelars, and as many footmen as needed.²⁹ Ostensibly, the Scottish raid may well have been to force

²⁴ Both Lancaster and Mortimer were present to witness these appointments: *CCR, 1327-30*, p.98.

²⁵ *Foedera*, II, I, p.649; *CPR, 1324-7*, p.344.

²⁶ *Lanercost*, p.258.

²⁷ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.6.

²⁸ *ibid*, p.23.

²⁹ *Foedera*, II, ii, p.688. Official notice of his appointment came on 15 February: *CPR, 1327-30*, p.18; *CDS*, III, no.909, p.165.

the government to negotiate. However, one writer sheds a different light on events. The Lanercost chronicler, a man who, writing in the 1340s, had experienced the turbulence of life on the northern marches, claimed that at the height of invasion crisis in England in 1326 Edward II had “written to the Scots on the advice of evil counsellors and granted them the land and kingdom of Scotland, to be held freely and no longer of any king of England, and – much worse – had granted them in addition to Scotland a large part of the north of England which lay close to them.”³⁰

Roger Mortimer may have been concerned about Bruce’s wider ambitions. Lanercost claims that Edward II’s flight west in October 1326 had been intended to end in Ireland where he was to have linked up with the Scots and attempt an invasion of England with Welsh assistance. If so, they would have been striking at the heart of what had been Mortimer authority. Of course, ill winds and Edward’s capture thwarted such notions, and it may have been no more than the lurid imaginings of the chronicler. Harding, moreover, believes that Edward would not have made for Ireland as Mortimer held extensive estates there.³¹ However, Mortimer, far from having numerous allies in Ireland, was on poor terms with many of the Lordship’s leaders.³² Several notables, including the earl of Louth and the justiciar, John Darcy, had benefited from Mortimer’s fall in 1322. As early as 12 December 1326 moves were made in Dublin to ban illegal assemblies in Munster where the local lords had agreed to rise up “to perpetrate various evils against the king’s faithful people.” Frame speculates that some may have been preparing for the arrival of Edward II.³³ On 6 February 1327 the Dublin government paid a Franciscan, Henry de Cogery, for having journeyed to Scotland, “to further certain confidential business touching the lord king”, which, as Edward III’s writ was not proclaimed in Ireland until 13 May, can only refer to Edward II.³⁴ There had clearly been some kind of secret talks going on.

Mortimer was perceptibly uneasy and moved quickly to try to wrest the initiative back in the Lordship. On 13 February, possibly the same day as Percy was contracted to keep the north, Thomas fitz John, earl of Kildare, the man described as Mortimer’s only potential ally in Ireland, was appointed

³⁰ “*scripserat rex Scottis ex consilio suo malo, et concesserat eis libere terram et regnum Scotiae, ne tenerent eam ultra de aliquo rege Angliae, et (quod pejus est) adjunxerat eis cum Scotia magnam partem terrarum borealium Angliae quae vicinis eis jacent...*”: Lanercost, pp.256-7.

³¹ Harding, ‘The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,’ p.14.

³² Frame, *English Lordship*, p.174. This issue is explored below, pp.138-9.

³³ Frame, *English Lordship*, pp.177-8. It may also be relevant to note that Arnold le Poer, Despenser junior’s seneschal of Kilkenny, had visited England in the summer of 1326, perhaps to discuss the mood of his country, and to ensure measures could be taken if the king were forced to flee his kingdom. He took away a grant of the first wardship or custody worth £100 to fall vacant: *CCR, 1327-30*, p.639; *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.280, 282.

³⁴ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.140.

justiciar.³⁵ His appointment was accompanied by letters to the leaders of Anglo-Irish society, informing them that power no longer rested with Edward II, and requesting them to “continue their faithfulness to the king’s royal house.” It was in this atmosphere of uncertainty that Mortimer took the justiceship of Wales on 20 February. This was evidence of a more integrated approach to deal with a Scottish threat determined to transcend national frontiers. Already on 5 February the government had agreed that William de Burgh, though still a minor, could take the wardship of his grandfather’s earldom of Ulster.³⁶ This was in response to his petition to council, but may have partly emanated from Henry, earl of Lancaster who had been awarded the boy’s marriage the day before.³⁷ Mortimer was well aware of the dangers a prolonged vacuum of authority in Ulster might provoke in Ireland. Just how dangerous, he was about to discover.

On or around 12 April 1327 Robert Bruce landed at Larne.³⁸ Frustrated in his efforts to have Scotland’s independence recognised – although English peace envoys were again empowered to treat on 4 March, and the truce of Bishopthorpe confirmed two days later, little actual progress seems to have been made³⁹ - he had returned to Ulster. Despite Mortimer’s efforts Kildare had not been able to take up the justiceship. Another order confirming his appointment had to be sent to Darcy on 12 March.⁴⁰ William de Burgh remained ensconced at court and would do so for some time. It was reported some years later that Bruce had intended to use Ireland as a bridgehead to invade Wales, raise support there, and attack England.⁴¹ More likely, he saw it as a chance to increase the pressure, combining it with simultaneous raiding of northern England and attempts to destabilise English domestic politics through the agency of Donald, earl of Mar, Edward II’s close friend, who had escaped from England as the invaders swept west in October 1326.⁴² Despite an essential reluctance to wage an expensive campaign with little certainty of a positive outcome, Mortimer therefore had his hand forced. But, in leadership of the military reaction, he made genuine attempts to face off the Scottish threat.

Even before news had broken of Bruce’s landing, a summons had been issued on 5 April for a muster at Newcastle on 18 May. Intelligence suggested the Scots were massing men to invade were

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.176; *Foedera*, II, ii, pp.688-9; *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.106-07.

³⁶ *CFR, 1327-37*, pp.4, 5, 14, 28.

³⁷ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.8.

³⁸ Ranald Nicholson, ‘A sequel to Edward Bruce’s invasion of Ireland,’ *SHR* 42 (1963-4), pp.30-40.

³⁹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.35; *CDS*, III, no.913, p.166; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.695.

⁴⁰ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.29.

⁴¹ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.140.

⁴² Harding, ‘The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,’ p.204.

they denied the peace they were seeking at a meeting scheduled for that day.⁴³ This may have been purely a precautionary measure, for when on 23 April news of the Bruce landing filtered through⁴⁴, fresh embassies were appointed to negotiate the place and time for an Anglo-Scots peace assembly.⁴⁵ The impression that the English government was uncertain about the future and was hedging its bets was reinforced in the following months. On 29 April the northern shires were prepared for evacuation and urban centres were commanded to see to the array and dispatch of their contingents.⁴⁶ Mortimer himself seems to have temporarily left court. His destination is not known, but, in addition to making provisions for the campaign⁴⁷, he may well have made a brief survey of the state of Wales and the marches. In any event, the chamberlain of north Wales, Robert le Poer, was permitted to render his account for the Easter term of 1327 by proxy, Mortimer having testified “Robert’s presence is very necessary in those parts for their safety.”⁴⁸ Mortimer was back at court quickly, returning at Nottingham on 8 May.⁴⁹

Henceforth, the campaign got moving, but progress was laboured. Far from reaching Newcastle by the allotted date, the court reached York only on 23 May where it remained for five weeks.⁵⁰ On 29 May pardons were offered to felons to join the army and the promise was made that the captor could retain anything captured.⁵¹ Two days earlier John of Hainault reappeared with 500 mercenaries, thus rekindling the alliance that had swept Mortimer and Isabella to power. However, on 10 June final Anglo-Scots peace negotiations petered out, and on 15 June the Scots had launched a border raid.⁵² It was Mortimer upon whose shoulders the task of defeating the Scots in the field of battle, where so many others had failed, now fell.

The main body of the campaigning army was not to leave York for another two weeks, however. There must have been unwillingness to commit when the domestic situation and that across the Irish Sea was still in doubt. On 26 June the sheriff of Shropshire and the mayor of Shrewsbury were ordered to arrest James Trumwyn and his confederates who were attempting “to do what evils they can

⁴³ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.118; *Foedera*, II, ii, pp.702-03.

⁴⁴ *CMR, 1326-7*, nos.124-5, p.24.

⁴⁵ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.95; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.704.

⁴⁶ *Rot.Scot.*, I, pp.208-09; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.705.

⁴⁷ He may well have been seeing to the array. On 30 April a writ of aid was issued in favour of Thomas Berkeley and John Maltravers, members of his entourage, to raise armour for the campaign in Bristol: *CPR, 1327-30*, p.95.

⁴⁸ *CMR, 1326-7*, no.1289, p.192.

⁴⁹ PRO C53/114, mm.29-34.

⁵⁰ PRO E101/382/9, mm.8-11.

⁵¹ *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.110-13; *Rot.Scot.*, I, p.215.

⁵² *Foedera*, II, ii, p.704; Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ p.217.

against the king and his subjects” in the Welsh Marches.⁵³ Emboldened by the vacuum in authority Mortimer’s leadership of the national war effort would bring, Trumwyn had returned from Scotland where he had taken refuge with Mar. The implication must have been that an attempt was to be made to free Edward II, possibly with Welsh and Scottish assistance. The threat was taken seriously. Obviously, Mortimer could not personally fill his role as Justice of Wales. Nor could he take up the chief keepership of the peace in Herefordshire, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire, to which he had been appointed on 8 June, nor the keepership of Glamorgan, where Despenser supporters may be harboured, awarded on 12 June.⁵⁴ On 1 July, the same day as the army left York, Thomas Berkeley, Mortimer’s son-in-law, and John Maltravers, another long-standing associate, were appointed chief keepers of the peace in numerous counties of western England to tackle the threats posed by armed assemblies.⁵⁵ These were, of course, the men charged with the custody of Edward II who, on 3 April, had been delivered to them at Berkeley, and were men Mortimer implicitly trusted. On 3 July Berkeley’s service in the Scottish war was remitted as he was said to be dealing with “special business of the king.”⁵⁶ By 15 July the governmental reaction had become more nervous. The authorities of Hereford were allowed to remit the service of armed men they owed, so that their city be safely kept.⁵⁷

Simultaneous disturbances in Ireland must have made Mortimer just as uncomfortable. The Scots’ arrival there had caused concern about the Lordship’s defence. Indeed, shortly after the army left York news was received of an assault on Carlisle, possibly reviving memories of July 1315 when the Scots, who had a contingent in Ireland under Edward Bruce, threatened the city on two fronts. The new justiciar had had severe problems in asserting authority over Ulster and in suppressing the threats posed by Irish belligerence. On 8 July the Dublin exchequer was ordered to keep the Lordship’s moneys safely, so as to provide for the Scottish campaign, and to defend the land against increasing Irish attacks. On 12 July the king revealed that he had heard that royal lands and those held by magnates who live in England were being wasted. This certainly sounds as if the lands held hereditarily by Mortimer which he did not officially receive back until August 1327, and those held in wardship, had perhaps come under attack.⁵⁸ Steps were taken to deal with these problems. The exchequer was ordered

⁵³ “*ad mala que poterunt contra nos et nostros faciend’ et procurand’*”: PRO C54/146, m.18d.; CCR, 1327-30, p.212; CDS, III, no.919, p.167.

⁵⁴ CPR, 1327-30, pp.125, 152.

⁵⁵ CCR, 1327-30, p.204.

⁵⁶ CPR, 1327-30, p.130.

⁵⁷ CCR, 1327-30, p.209.

⁵⁸ CCR, 1327-30, p.159.

to forward the justiciar's fee one quarter in advance to enable him to move against such Irish provocation.⁵⁹ On 12 July Kildare was ordered to warn all those owning castles and lands in the marchlands to keep their properties so no damage be done through neglect.⁶⁰ On 16 July a sternly worded reproach was sent to Maurice fitz Thomas, James Butler, John le Poer of Donoil, Maurice Rochfort, and the earl of Louth for their refusal to obey the justiciar. They were ordered to aid him in repelling the Scots.⁶¹

Such measures were of dire necessity, for on 12 July Bruce had drawn up an indenture with Henry Mandeville, seneschal of Ulster. The Scottish king granted a truce in return for yearly renders from the people of the province.⁶² Paul Doherty believes this represented the failure of Bruce's wider scheme to involve Irish and Welsh forces in an attack on England which, of course, did not ultimately materialise.⁶³ Kildare had sent John Jordan to liaise with the king and later accounts credit him with dissuading Bruce from a more concentrated assault. The Irish chancellor also visited Ulster, Roger Outlaw being paid for his mission, "to treat with the men of Ulster and look into their hearts concerning resistance to the Scottish enemies and rebels of the king..."⁶⁴ Bruce's attempt to raise support may have failed, but his strategy of fighting a campaign on several fronts was calculated to play on English fears of encirclement, and thus create maximum discomfort for Mortimer and Isabella. Their reaction was cautious but resourceful, making some attempt to address a worsening situation. Nonetheless, as much as they could postpone military conflict, it must have been increasingly clear to them that the only solution was victory in the field.

On 15 July the English army reached Durham.⁶⁵ Around this time the Scots launched a three-pronged invasion of northern England. The English response was a laboured pursuit into Weardale. On or around 20 July a war council, presumably chaired by Mortimer, decided to abandon the chase and instead block off the Scots' retreat. Having reached Haydon Bridge on the Tyne on the following night, the army remained encamped there for six days in the vain hope that they could engage the Scots.⁶⁶ When, on 27 July, news arrived of the Scots' whereabouts, the chase was rejoined. Eventually, on 30

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.148.

⁶⁰ *Foedera*, II, ii, p.709.

⁶¹ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.206; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.710.

⁶² *CDS*, III, no.922, p.167.

⁶³ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.213.

⁶⁴ "*ad tractandum cum hominibus de Ulton' et eorum corda scrutand' super resistantia Scotis inimicis et rebellis dicti domini Regis...*": PRO E101/239/5, m.11; Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.326.

⁶⁵ PRO E101/382/9, m.11. For what follows see R.G.Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots* (London, 1965) pp.24-31.

⁶⁶ PRO E101/382/9, m.11.

July the Scots came within visible range at Stanhope Park. The farcical events of the following week are well documented elsewhere.⁶⁷ It is probably sufficient to say that despite the odd skirmish the Scots avoided the English attempts to engineer open combat. They were constantly able to outmanoeuvre their ill-supplied, ill-disciplined enemies, and even came close to capturing the young king himself on a daring night raid into the English camp by James Douglas, before fleeing unharmed over the border.⁶⁸ In his first serious military test Mortimer had failed and must bear the responsibility.

The Weardale campaign was merely the latest failure of English arms in the early fourteenth century. However, it was the defeat that precipitated moves towards a final peace and concession of Scotland's independence. Contemporaries, outraged at such developments, cannot bring themselves to accept the superiority of the Scots' strategy, and point to more sinister reasons for the English defeat. Several highlight the "treachery" of unnamed English barons, allowing the Scots to escape.⁶⁹ The *Brut* goes further, arguing that the English army should have defeated the Scots, if only they had engaged them by crossing the river that divided them in Stanhope Park.⁷⁰ It was only by the treasonable advice of Roger Mortimer that this was not done. He had "*priueliche tak made of þe Scottes ham forto helpe, þat þai might wende azeyne into hir' owen contre.*" He apparently urged Thomas of Brotherton, earl Marshal, not to array his forces against the Scots. Thomas, exercising his prerogative to captain the vanguard, warned Henry of Lancaster and John of Hainault not to engage their troops. Moreover, at night Mortimer ordered a watch kept to ensure nothing was done. It was this that enabled Douglas to make his raid. But why would Mortimer do this?

A handful of chronicles believe one of the charges made at his trial was that he had received a bribe to forewarn the Scots of the English advance.⁷¹ The official indictment makes no mention though.⁷² The *Brut*, possibly composed under the patronage of the earl of Lancaster, may therefore embellish his account to explain away a humiliation in which all parties, notably the earl, were involved. Nevertheless, as seems permanently the case with Roger Mortimer, there is an element of suspicion. As Ranald Nicholson points out, Brotherton drew up a schedule of the rights and privileges

⁶⁷ The best account is Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, pp.32-7. For Froissart's more horrific vision, see Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. G.Brereton (Harmondsworth, 1978), pp.48-53. See also *The Bruce*, pp.712-26.

⁶⁸ *Anonimale*, p.137; *Brut*, p.251; *Bridlington*, p.97; *Walsingham*, p.192; *Lanercost*, p.260; *The Bruce*, pp.726-8.

⁶⁹ *Anonimale*, p.137; *Baker*, p.35; *Bridlington*, p.97; *Lanercost*, p.259. The *Eulogium Historiarum* lays the blame firmly at Henry Beaumont's door, an accusation not repeated elsewhere: *Eulogium*, p.201.

⁷⁰ *Brut*, p.250.

⁷¹ *Baker*, p.47; *Brut*, p.271; *Murimuth*, p.64.

⁷² *Rot.Parl.*, ii, p.53.

he claimed as earl Marshal during the campaign.⁷³ Perhaps he was merely concerned with friction amongst the competing leaders.⁷⁴ It is noticeable that on 16 August Brotherton received a substantial grant towards his expenses in the Scottish campaign.⁷⁵ Perhaps there was genuine disquiet about Mortimer's leadership and rumours concerning his motives. In this context it is important to note that the pardon of February 1327 was inspected and confirmed at Haydon Bridge on 24 July, "for the security of Roger Mortimer."⁷⁶ There is no telling what allegations may have been circulating, and, isolated from Isabella, he was vulnerable for the first time. The campaign at that point was not going well, with the Scots continually evading their pursuers. If Paul Doherty is correct, this is hardly surprising.⁷⁷ He argues the whole campaign was a "sham" and that the Weardale debacle showed how half-hearted the regime was about making military commitments. Mortimer and Isabella had no wish to be dragged down by Scottish incursion. They wanted to establish peace and stability in order to entrench their regime and plunder national resources. It is possible Mortimer's colleagues were beginning to fear this too.

This, however, is impossible to prove, and seems unlikely. As Doherty himself notes, Mortimer "was a competent military commander and would have welcomed a great victory against the Scots even if it only was to further his own renown..."⁷⁸ Admittedly, the army's progress north was slow and peace negotiations protracted. Nevertheless, once peace was no longer an option, the Mortimer-led campaign appears entirely genuine. When it came down to it, the Scots were far better equipped to fight a campaign on the terms they had effectively dictated. For a government concerned with expense, the debts to the Hainaulters alone were astronomical.⁷⁹ Mortimer himself was owed £1,395.8s.11d.⁸⁰ More importantly, most accounts believe the English could have succeeded. Barbour claims they had the Scots surrounded in Stanhope Park.⁸¹ With Bruce threatening the whole of English – and Mortimer – authority across the British Isles, Mortimer must have been convinced of the need for

⁷³ Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, p.36.

⁷⁴ Such competition was not unprecedented in recent history. The mind is cast back to the calamitous squabbling of the earls of Gloucester and Hereford as to who should lead the vanguard at Bannockburn.

⁷⁵ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.145.

⁷⁶ "*ad maiorem securitatem ipsius Rogeri le Neveu*": *ibid.*, pp.141-3; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.40r.

⁷⁷ For what follows, see Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.212-20.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.219.

⁷⁹ The wages for the invasion force of 1326 and the Weardale campaign totalled some £54,946. 19s. 2d.: *ibid.*, p.220. The total campaign bill was something over £67,731.

⁸⁰ The wages owed to individuals can be found at PRO E101/383/8, ff.18v-22r.

⁸¹ *The Bruce*, p.734. *Lanercost*, a more sober northern observer, agrees, though he does point to English treachery, p.259.

success. To defeat the Scots would bring peace, domestic harmony, and the chance to solidify his place as England's premier baron.

It is also conceivable that the campaign was not half-hearted, rather distracted. On 27 July, with the army moving from Haydon Bridge, a letter was hurriedly dispatched from Berkeley to the chancellor, Hothum.⁸² The author⁸³ claimed a gang had attacked Berkeley and taken the late king from his guard, presumably some days previously.⁸⁴ Such news would have horrified Mortimer and Isabella. Whether they had wind of it before the campaign collapsed is difficult to know. If so, then there is a possibility he had contacted Douglas, for the threat an escaped Edward could pose was considerable. When, therefore, the army returned to York on 13 August⁸⁵, the ruling couple and the political community faced the prospect of continued humiliation by a rampaging Bruce in northern England, and the dramatic prospect that Edward was at large.⁸⁶ Even if he had been recaptured by that point, concern still lingered over his security. On 18 August an envoy of two Staffordshire plotters was discovered carrying "certain letters to Donald, earl of Mar, the king's enemy... whereof an evil suspicion is held."⁸⁷

The initial governmental reaction was a commitment to continue the war. On 7 August, the day the campaign broke up, summonses had been issued for a parliament at Lincoln on 15 September to discuss measures to tackle the Scots who were preparing to invade again.⁸⁸ On 18 August the government was transferred to York.⁸⁹ On 5 September Henry Percy became chief warden of the northern march, presumably as a defensive precaution whilst parliament debated strategy.⁹⁰ But, as the court moved towards Lincoln Mortimer withdrew, thereby abrogating his responsibilities as leader of

⁸² PRO SC1/35/207; F.J.Tanqueray, 'The conspiracy of Thomas Dunheved, 1327,' *EHR* 31 (1916), pp.119-24.

⁸³ Tanqueray, the letter's editor, believed it to be from Master John Walwayn. Doherty contends Thomas Berkeley, the king's custodian, lord of Berkeley, and keeper of the peace in the region, is more likely, and this seems the most plausible: Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.226.

⁸⁴ The letter refers to a previous report made by the author concerning the attack, and merely demands a further commission naming the men to be indicted.

⁸⁵ PRO E101/382/9, m.12.

⁸⁶ Although Thomas Berkeley had been made chief keeper of the peace in Gloucestershire on 1 August with orders to arrest members of the Dunheved gang, there is no way of knowing if Edward II had either escaped or been recaptured: *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.156-7. A conspirator, William Aylmer, had been arrested by 20 August however: *CCR, 1327-30*, p.158.

⁸⁷ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.157.

⁸⁸ Whether the public believed it or not, the summons turned humiliation into triumph. The Scots, it related, having been summoned had "escaped like beaten men by night from Stanhope Park..." *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.216-17; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.712.

⁸⁹ *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.160-2; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.713.

⁹⁰ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.163; *CDS*, III, no.934, p.169; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.715. He replaced John Darcy who had been left in the north with a small force: *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.315-16.

the military effort.⁹¹ It seems that he felt persuaded of the necessity of dealing with the problems in Wales and the marches himself. On 4 September Mortimer resumed his duties as Justice of Wales, being ordered to pursue and arrest suspected malefactors in north and south Wales who were wandering about making confederacies.⁹² A later account reveals that he was at Abergavenny when he received a letter from his lieutenant in north Wales, William de Shaldeford, sent from Anglesey on 14 September.⁹³ Shaldeford apparently reported that Rhys ap Gruffydd had assembled “the power of south Wales and north Wales by assent of certain great men of the kingdom of England, in order to forcibly release the said lord Edward...” If Edward were freed, “Sir Roger and his men would suffer a cruel death, or would be destroyed forever.” Shaldeford urged reaction. Mortimer thus sent William Oakley, a Ludlow tenant of his, to Berkeley with a letter and personal instructions to the gaolers. By 23 September parliament was informed that the king’s father was dead.⁹⁴ The inference is that Roger Mortimer had ordered Edward II’s murder so as to remove a major obstacle to his personal ascent to power. Tout, the letter’s editor, and Harding, conclude that “Mortimer alone was guilty”, and it is certainly a view common amongst modern interpretations.⁹⁵

It must first be said that much of the evidence is circumstantial and affected by personal, political agenda. Hywel’s motives are unknown, but the case collapsed and no charges were brought against Shaldeford. Nevertheless, Hywel’s offer of trial by battle to justify his claims shows serious intent. Moreover, there are similarities between his story and better-known chronicle accounts. The *Brut* claims Mortimer “sent þe maner of þe dep, and how and in what maner he shulde be done to dep.”⁹⁶ Baker includes even more detail. He relates that the letter sent to Edward’s gaolers was deliberately ambiguous, but displayed the sender’s true intent.⁹⁷ Baker, of course, puts as much of the

⁹¹ He last witnesses a charter at Doncaster on 26 August, and returns on 20 October at Nottingham: PRO C53/114, m.11.

⁹² *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.217-18.

⁹³ The text of this letter is published in T.F.Tout, ‘The Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon,’ in idem (ed.) *The Collected Papers of Thomas Frederick Tout*, III (Manchester, 1934), p.185. Mortimer’s base is interesting. He held Abergavenny in wardship for Laurence Hastings. It is strategically located next to Glamorgan where Despenser loyalties may have lingered despite his possession in wardship of the lordship, and between Berkeley and much of Wales. It is a base he employed again, his charter being witnessed there at Easter 1328, for example: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117v; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

⁹⁴ Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ p.223.

⁹⁵ Tout, ‘Captivity and Death,’ p.165; Harding, ‘The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,’ p.150; Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ pp.223-8.

⁹⁶ *Brut*, p.253.

⁹⁷ *Baker*, pp.32-3. His lurid narrative of the gruesome murder of Edward II is, of course, the best known. He also claims to have used eyewitnesses, notably William Bishop, who testified to Edward’s treatment. The letter, he claims, included the phrase, “*Edwardum occidere non timere bonum est.*”

blame onto the bishop of Hereford, Mortimer and Isabella's evil associate, but Orleton was at the Curia on embassy and has a watertight alibi.⁹⁸ Almost all of the chronicles list the murder of Edward II amongst the charges levelled at Mortimer's trial, and in this case they do reflect reality.⁹⁹ Reluctant as one must be to accept such accounts at face value, the likelihood is that they do reflect something akin to accuracy. Indeed, logic suggests Mortimer *must* have an important role therein.

The plain fact is that Mortimer stood to benefit immensely from Edward II's demise. In terms of the stability of his regime, and its entrenchment, the removal of the alternative focus for loyalty and rallying point for dissent was vital. On more personal terms Mortimer stood to gain ground in Wales too. Removing a king renowned for the affection in which the leaders of the principality's society held him, might smooth Mortimer's path to self-aggrandisement there. He was already justice, but around the time of the king's death, he launched a fresh bid to expand his interests. On 13 September Edward III awarded him custody of Denbigh, late of Hugh Despenser senior, and the former FitzAlan castles of Oswestry, Shrawardine, and Clun.¹⁰⁰ He was thus converted into the March's most powerful landowner. As both Tout and Doherty observe, it is no coincidence that Welsh resistance really spurred into action at exactly this point.¹⁰¹ Doherty even contends that "the motive behind the Welsh conspiracy was undoubtedly hatred of Mortimer rather than any love for Edward II." Whilst this is not entirely fair, as Rhys ap Gruffydd and his supporters like Gruffydd Llwyd had long had an intimate connection and affection for the king, the desire to blunt their influence may have dictated Mortimer's thinking.¹⁰² Indeed, eight Welshmen headed by Rhys fled with Donald, earl of Mar, to Scotland in the immediate aftermath of their attempt.¹⁰³ Although Mortimer was very unpopular among the Welsh-speaking communities of the principality, he was able to use the vacuum of affection created by Edward II's death to exert his authority and reap the reward there virtually unhindered.

Depending on the position of a comma this, as he tells us, could mean "Do not fear to kill Edward, it is a good thing", or "It is a good thing to fear to kill Edward." The gaolers, he says, knew which interpretation to follow. T.F.Tout has dismissed this as nonsense, believing Geoffrey knew far less than he claimed: 'Captivity and Death,' pp.162-3. William Bishop, though, was among those pardoned in August 1321 on Mortimer's testimony for the pursuit of the Despensers: *CPR, 1321-4*, p.17.

⁹⁸ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.61.

⁹⁹ *Baker*, p.47; *Brut*, p.271; *Walsingham*, p.369; *Murimuth*, p.64; *Scalachronica*, p.87; *Rot.Parl*, ii, p.52. Thomas Gurney and William Oakley are both accused of assenting to the murder: *ibid.*, p.53, no.5.

¹⁰⁰ *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, p.55; BL Add. MS 6041, f.36v. The gift was made to fulfil the king's promise, made before he took up governance to reward Mortimer with £1000 worth of lands and rent for his service abroad.

¹⁰¹ Tout, 'Captivity and Death,' p.165; Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.227.

¹⁰² Rhys, as outlined above, was one of those companions with whom Edward II spent his final days of freedom in November 1326: see p.105.

¹⁰³ Smith, 'Edward II and the Allegiance of Wales,' p.169.

What Roger Mortimer did next is unknown. Perhaps he gave his attention to shoring up the situation in Wales. On 6 October the chamberlain of north Wales was ordered to see to the repair of the fabric of royal castles there by the view and testimony of the justice, as the king had heard that, unless such repairs were made, danger would arise.¹⁰⁴ It is certain that he returned to court at Nottingham on 20 October.¹⁰⁵ This means he probably played little active part in the inception of the other major measure that paved the way for him to attain greater power.

On 9 October Henry Percy and William Denum were sent by Isabella to Bruce, who had again invaded in late-September, to open negotiations for a final peace.¹⁰⁶ It is unlikely the queen made such a move without some wider consultation. Denum may have been associated with Henry of Lancaster.¹⁰⁷ The government also had information from Ireland that Bruce was seriously ill, and with a young heir and Edward Balliol waiting on the sidelines, buying time by negotiation seems reasonable. On 18 October Bruce listed his demands.¹⁰⁸ He urged restoration of the independence of the Scottish kingdom, a marriage alliance between his son and Edward III's sister, Joan; an alliance of mutual support, saving the alliance with the French; the end to papal excommunication by English influence at Avignon; and the denial of claims of disinherited lords of either nation to restoration of their estates. In return, he offered peace reparation of £20,000 within three years. The English response was positive, and Mortimer must have played an important part in drafting it. On 30 October Edward told Bruce he was willing to negotiate if he could be assured of the Scots' good faith in terms of the marriage and the peace payment. He wished, however, for more in-depth discussion of the questions of an alliance and the denial of the claims of the Disinherited.¹⁰⁹

Simultaneous with these developments, Mortimer seems to have been exploiting the pacific overtures of Bruce to re-assert English authority in Ireland. On 22 October William de Burgh was again granted seisin of his lands in Ulster by Edward at the request of Lancaster, "and out of confidence that he has of the good service to be rendered to him by William in Ireland and elsewhere."¹¹⁰ Two days

¹⁰⁴ *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.179, 181.

¹⁰⁵ PRO C53/114, m.10.

¹⁰⁶ *Foedera*, II, ii, p.719.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas of Lancaster employed a John de Denum as an envoy in his secretive negotiations with Bruce in 1321-2; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.30.

¹⁰⁸ E.L.G.Stones, 'The Anglo-Scottish negotiations of 1327,' *SHR* 30 (1951), pp.49-54.

¹⁰⁹ Stones, 'The Anglo-Scottish negotiations of 1327,' p.54.

¹¹⁰ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.185.

later Margaret de Badlesmere received delivery of her estates in Ireland.¹¹¹ She was the wife of Mortimer's old colleague, Bartholomew, and Mortimer was pressing her interests against those of Maurice fitz Thomas who had illegally been ravaging her lands. On 30 October Robert le Poer, formerly chamberlain of north Wales and a man who had worked closely with Mortimer, was made Dublin treasurer.¹¹²

Anglo-Scots negotiations thereafter progressed rapidly. Meetings throughout November and December produced a truce until 13 March and thrashed out the claims of the Disinherited.¹¹³ Confident in the negotiations, parliament was summoned on 10 December to meet on 7 February 1328 to discuss the proposed articles of peace.¹¹⁴ Parliament met in the aftermath of Edward II's funeral at Gloucester on 20 December¹¹⁵, and of the young king's wedding to Philippa of Hainault in late-January 1328.¹¹⁶ On 1 March, after meetings with Scottish envoys, the king issued patents conceding Scotland to Bruce and his successors, free from any feudal demand. He also agreed to campaign for the lifting of the papal interdict on Scotland and sent another embassy to arrange the marriage and finalise the treaty.¹¹⁷ Essentially, this represented the concession of what Bruce had been struggling for over two decades. A series of grants was made at this time to Henry of Lancaster probably to assuage his anger. On 2 March Warenne acknowledged a debt to Henry.¹¹⁸ The following day the king inspected and annulled the judgment against Henry's late brother,¹¹⁹ and on 6 March he received licence to grant a manor.¹²⁰ It may also be speculated that these grants were to deflect attention from the fact that Mortimer's nominees now controlled the offices closest to the king. On 3 March John Maltravers replaced the Lancastrian, John de Ros, as steward of the royal household.¹²¹ It must also be of

¹¹¹ *Rep. DKI* 49, p.23.

¹¹² *CPR, 1327-30*, p.183.

¹¹³ Sonja Cameron and Alasdair Ross, 'The Treaty of Edinburgh and the Disinherited (1328-32),' *History* 84 (1999), pp.237-56.; *Foedera*, II, ii, pp.723, 724, 728.

¹¹⁴ *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.240-1; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.725.

¹¹⁵ PRO E101/382/9, m.16.

¹¹⁶ *Anonimale*, p.139; *Brut*, p.254; *Bridlington*, p.99; *Walsingham*, p.191; *Lanercost*, p.261; *Murimuth*, p.58.

¹¹⁷ *Foedera*, II, ii, p.730; Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, p.48.

¹¹⁸ *CCR, 1327-30*, pp.339-40.

¹¹⁹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.290. He also received grant of a market and fair at Melbourne (Derbys.): *C.Ch.R., 1327-41*, p.76.

¹²⁰ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.258.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p.249; PRO C53/115, mm.19, 22, 25. Mortimer, but not Lancaster, was also present at the delivery of the Great Seal on 2 March: *CCR, 1327-30*, p.371; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.737. The nomination of Maltravers is usually included in historical accounts during earlier discussions of Mortimer's influence at the start of the regime. The fact he took over a year to get the man he wanted represents either Lancastrian influence, or Mortimer's preparedness to co-operate with his colleagues rather than merely increase his power base immediately.

significance that on that day Roger Mortimer withdrew from court, not to return until 21 April.¹²² Again, he returned to Wales, being at Abergavenny on 6 April.¹²³ There is no indication of further disturbances there and his business may have been personal. It does seem suspicious, though, that he disappears as one of his and Isabella's most controversial policies neared conclusion.

Nevertheless, after Bruce had ratified the treaty on 17 March,¹²⁴ Mortimer arrived back at court to promote its acceptance in the English parliament. It was ratified by Edward III on 4 May at Northampton.¹²⁵ There has been much debate about the utility of the Anglo-Scots peace. Most agree the Scots had done well.¹²⁶ Bruce achieved both recognition of his title to Scotland and seemed to have secured the succession on his line. For the English, however, the verdict has been damning. And yet, Mortimer and Isabella were not taking an entirely unpopular or unsupported stance. In a sense, they reflected the mood of the country as expressed in the Lincoln parliament of September 1327, which was coming to see the war as costly and futile.¹²⁷ Indeed, in Edward III's patent of 1 March 1328, he admitted that the attempts of his predecessors to exert overlordship had led to prolonged warfare and mutual destruction which could now be brought to an end.¹²⁸ Furthermore, Mortimer himself probably included a measure to ensure the security of the Lordship of Ireland. One clause of the treaty agreed the English would curtail interference in the Western Isles, where Bruce had difficulty in securing authority, if the Scots disengaged in Man and Ulster.¹²⁹ Moreover, the offer of pardons to the prominent Welsh rebels who had fled to Scotland with the earl of Mar might also have temporarily neutralised resistance in the area where Mortimer hoped to court most influence.¹³⁰

For many, moreover, the Anglo-Scots treaty and marriage alliance were symptomatic of the downward spiral into which the country was falling under Mortimer and Isabella. The *Brut* relates that they had procured the marriage with Douglas's assistance against the common will.¹³¹ Edward III refused to attend the ceremony. Furthermore, there was an immense amount of suspicion that the

¹²² PRO C53/115, mm.17, 19, 22, 25

¹²³ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117v; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

¹²⁴ E.L.G.Stones, 'The English Mission to Edinburgh in 1328,' *SHR* 28 (1949), p.126.

¹²⁵ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.235.

¹²⁶ Cameron and Ross, 'The Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton,' pp.239-46; Stones, 'English Mission,' p.52.

¹²⁷ *Rot. Parl*, I, p.425; Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, p.46.

¹²⁸ Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, p.48.

¹²⁹ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.141.

¹³⁰ *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.256, 272-3; *CDS*, III, no.953, p.172.

¹³¹ *Brut*, p.255. The strength of feeling mobilised against the marriage is reflected in the number of chronicles which claim erroneously that a charge at Mortimer's trial was the procurement of the marriage of the king's sister: Baker, p.47; *Chronicon Anglie*, 1328-88, ed. E.M.Thompson (London: Rolls Series, 1874), p.2; *Murimuth*, p.64.

couple had initiated the treaty for personal financial gain. Indeed, at Mortimer's trial, he is charged with having appropriated the 20,000 marks peace payment.¹³² This overlooked the reality that it had been the queen who had received the money rather than her lover.¹³³

Such charges, however, were nothing compared to the perceived reality of the domestic political situation in England. For most chroniclers the treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton created an atmosphere in which '... the queen, mother of the king, and Sir Roger Mortimer usurped royal power and the treasure of the realm and they held the king under their subjection.'¹³⁴ This represents a watershed in the regime's course and in Mortimer's career. With the senior household officials his nominees, and the council now either entirely under his influence, or so thoroughly bypassed as to be impotent, Mortimer claimed mastery over his peers and increased his stake across the British Isles in the coming months. Most striking, though, is his attempt to impose himself on Wales and the March.

Initially, on 23 June, he was acquitted of the issues he owed for the lordship of Denbigh since the grant of 13 September 1327.¹³⁵ On 22 November 1327 he had acquired the much-prized manor of Stretton in Strettondale, late of the earl of Arundel.¹³⁶ On 27 August one of his closest allies at court, Oliver Ingham, was made justice of Chester for life. Mortimer's authority was amplified when, on the same day, he was awarded the justiceship of Wales for life.¹³⁷ There could now be no doubt as to who ruled the principality and its marches. To exemplify this, Roger Mortimer secured further ennoblement in the most public fashion possible.

The Salisbury Parliament of October 1328 witnessed a lavish ceremony in which Roger Mortimer was created earl of March.¹³⁸ This title was no mere honour to reflect his status and power at court although that is what it undoubtedly did. Mortimer had deliberately chosen it for himself, and as

¹³² *Rot. Parl.*, ii, p.53.

¹³³ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.470; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.777. Nevertheless, it is probable that Mortimer received a fraction of the sum in private.

¹³⁴ *Anonimale*, p.141. Very similar claims can be found at *Walsingham*, p.192; *Lanercost*, p.265; *French Chronicle*, p.61.

¹³⁵ *CCR*, 1327-30, pp.300-01.

¹³⁶ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.192 – a grant made at the earl of Kent's request.

¹³⁷ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.317. This award had previously been made on 8 June, but was vacated as he did not have letters of appointment: *ibid.*, p.299. On 4 November the grant was confirmed with the addition of the life justiceship of the bishopric of St.Davids, p.327.

¹³⁸ For chronicle accounts hereof, see, for example: *Baker*, p.42; *Brut*, p.260; *Walsingham*, p.191; *Murimuth*, p.58. A date for the ceremony cannot be fixed precisely, but it must lay between 25 and 30 October, as the latter is the first occasion his new title is employed: PRO C53/115, m.9.

the Pauline annalist commented, “*talis comitatus numquam prius fuit nominatus in regno Anglie.*”¹³⁹ Partly, the title referred to the Joinville inheritance held by his son, Geoffrey, in the comté de la Marche.¹⁴⁰ Mainly, though, it represented the claim to widespread authority he now possessed in Wales and the marches. It had more ominous overtones too. The Welsh March was essentially a collection of consolidated, self-contained lordships.¹⁴¹ Whether mainly English-speaking like Chirk, or Welsh-speaking like Maelienydd, each lordship had its own institutions and officials responsible to the individual lord who operated outside many of the tenets of English common law there. By adopting such a title, therefore, Mortimer can be seen as laying claim to a far broader band of authority than he was entitled to. To be earl of March put him on a higher pedestal than the rest of the marcher lords, and it is noticeable that two of the leaders of resistance to his regime, Henry of Lancaster and Fulk FitzWarin, were lords of Monmouth and Kidwelly, and Whittington respectively.

One of the most important facets of this stage of Mortimer’s career, indeed, is that the accumulation of his personal power and wealth was commensurate with an increase in resistance to his regime. Both in the lead-up to, and the aftermath of, his ennoblement, discontent simmered and ultimately erupted. It was driven by Lancaster. Although Roger Mortimer had worked alongside him, he must have had an acute awareness that Henry was his principal rival for power. Henry enjoyed popular support for his bearing of the Lancastrian banner, and his position as chief counsellor earned him greater respect. His alienation from the inner sanctum of government left him with most to lose, for Mortimer could strike with royal backing at any time. Henry may also have been outraged by Mortimer’s elevation to an earldom, which put the favourite on the same plane as him. Mortimer’s arrogance only inflamed passions. The new earl, it was claimed, ‘*bicome þo prout, þat he wold lese and forsake þe name þat his Ancestre haden ever before.*’¹⁴² He also henceforth held no man his peer. It is noticeable that both of the king’s uncles, Kent and Norfolk, loyal until this point, deserted the regime for Lancaster.¹⁴³ Faced with this changing set of circumstances, Lancaster operated a carefully targeted campaign against Mortimer. However, his desire to release the king from his restrictive bonds merely forced him into a rebellious position, to which he had been cleverly shepherded by Mortimer and Isabella.

¹³⁹ *Paulini*, pp.342-3.

¹⁴⁰ McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, pp.96-7.

¹⁴¹ On this point, see Davies, *Lordship and Society*. For my analysis of marcher lordship as exercised by Roger Mortimer, see pp.225-7, 228-30.

¹⁴² *Brut*, p.262.

¹⁴³ Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ p.263.

Henry of Lancaster had originally withdrawn from court in the aftermath of the Northampton Parliament later claiming the Anglo-Scots peace treaty had been concluded so Mortimer could destroy him.¹⁴⁴ This does not, however, explain why, according to a later version of events presented by the king, Henry had withdrawn from the parliament after having given his assent to a scheme to press Edward's candidature for the French throne. Neither does it account for the assiduous efforts over the summer to involve Lancaster in important decisions. Having met Mortimer and Isabella at Warwick on 23 May to discuss his attendance at a council to work through a campaign in Gascony,¹⁴⁵ Henry repeatedly declined involvement in future councils, most notably that held at York in August.¹⁴⁶ Instead, he seems to have been raising a military force, presumably to defend himself from attack. On 7 July the king commanded the sheriff of Lancashire to disperse leagues of men assembling there and in Cheshire.¹⁴⁷ Henry was approached again late in August, the court sending Thomas de Garton, controller of the Wardrobe, on certain secret, royal business.¹⁴⁸ This could well have been to induce him to attend the Salisbury parliament, summoned on 28 August.¹⁴⁹ It can be speculated that the decision to create the earldom for Mortimer was taken around this time too, he being at court from 27 August, when he received the life justiceship of Wales.¹⁵⁰ Perhaps, therefore, Lancaster was informed, and this might explain his provocative approach to court at Barlings (Lincs.) on 7 September with an armed retinue.¹⁵¹ Whatever the outcome of these negotiations, Lancaster now seems to have attempted to build a network of alliances against the court. In response to a letter from the London authorities, which expressed gratitude for the consideration the earl had given the city, he sent Thomas Wake and bishop Stratford to further garner their support. The upshot was a manifesto, issued on 27 September, outlining the Lancastrian party's requests.¹⁵² Firstly, the king should be allowed to live of his own and have enough financial reserves to combat his enemies.¹⁵³ Secondly, the regency council should have its powers restored. Thirdly, law and order ought to be enforced more stringently, and, finally, the

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.257; Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.169; *CPMR*, 1323-64, pp.77-83.

¹⁴⁵ PRO E101/383/15, m.6; *CPMR*, 1323-64, p.79.

¹⁴⁶ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.251.

¹⁴⁷ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.402; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.745.

¹⁴⁸ PRO E101/383/14, m.1. His expenses were paid for a mission from 27 August – 2 September.

¹⁴⁹ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.412.

¹⁵⁰ PRO C53/115, mm.10-11.

¹⁵¹ *CPMR*, 1323-64, p.71; Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.252.

¹⁵² *CPMR*, 1323-64, pp.68-9.

¹⁵³ Although the documentary record does not specify any further, the implication, as outlined by the *Brut* chronicler, was that the queen should have sufficient to live on from her dower lands, and should return the crown lands (and Lancastrian lands no doubt). Mortimer himself should live off his own estates and no longer oppress the commoners: *Brut*, p.258

proposed parliament should be transferred to Westminster. Armed with this knowledge of demands which clearly could not be countenanced, Mortimer and Isabella could now act. In the ensuing struggle, a classic mix of coercion and manipulation of public opinion helped ensure the couple could see off such threats and emerge in the strongest position they had yet attained.

Before the Salisbury Parliament was due to meet, Mortimer and Isabella retreated west to Gloucester where they almost certainly collected troops from Mortimer's marcher lordships. To reinforce the security of their position Mortimer, on 6 October, was given licence to attend parliament in arms and with armed men, contrary to a general prohibition.¹⁵⁴ When parliament finally opened, Lancaster refused to attend, eventually sending his excuses through Stratford.¹⁵⁵ In a statement, Lancaster admitted he could not get over his fear and mistrust of the favourite. In response, Mortimer swore on the archbishop's cross that he bore Henry no ill, and Edward sent envoys to guarantee his safety. Mortimer's next move, allegedly, was to forcibly break up meetings of prelates convened by Stratford to try and raise support.¹⁵⁶ His subsequent actions gave the lie to his profession of innocence.

Lancaster's refusal to attend could be employed by Isabella and Mortimer to persuade the young king his personal honour was being slighted. When Lancaster pressed his demands once more, he met a stinging reply. The king was not going to be dictated to. No one should question the queen's dowry, nor lecture the king on law and order. Furthermore, the king's own finances had only been impaired by the recent nationwide tensions. It was in this atmosphere of escalating tension that Mortimer was ennobled, alongside the king's brother, John of Eltham, new earl of Cornwall, and James Butler, now earl of Ormond. Although Lancaster had been trying to lever the king away from his mother and her lover, these festivities, and the king's growing anger at the slight to himself and his brother, may have served to weld him and Mortimer closer together, even if the king's uncles decided to flee to Lancaster. The events in the aftermath of the dissolution of parliament may have served to strengthen this bond further.

On 3 November the royal party set out for London.¹⁵⁷ On the road outside Winchester Lancaster's force blocked their path. A standoff ensued, but ultimately Lancaster withdrew on Kent's

¹⁵⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.322.

¹⁵⁵ *Anonimale*, p.141; *Baker*, p.42; *Brut*, p.260; *Walsingham*, p.191.

¹⁵⁶ *CPMR, 1323-64*, p.82; *Rot.Parl.*, ii, p.52.

¹⁵⁷ *CPMR, 1323-64*, p.83. The Wigmore chronicler believes Mortimer and Isabella decamped to Wigmore and Ludlow for celebratory tournaments: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352. This is not really borne out by their subsequent itinerary, although they may have paid a brief visit from Worcester

advice.¹⁵⁸ The court then progressed to London, the authorities of which had been placated by the proposed return of the exchequer announced on 20 October.¹⁵⁹ Whether Mortimer accompanied them here is difficult to know. The fact that Lancaster approached, offering a conditional reconciliation, perhaps suggests not. The king spurned such advances in any case, reiterating his stance that his affairs were his own business.¹⁶⁰ Hereafter, both sides retreated. Mortimer and Isabella again moved to Gloucester, where they arrived on 10 December, and later to Worcester. Clearly, they were preparing for a military settlement of the stalemate, Mortimer himself amassing a large force of “*Anglicorum et Walllicorum*”.¹⁶¹ He and Isabella may have been nervous about their chances of overcoming opposition. On 15 December Mortimer revealingly received licence to alienate in mortmain 100 marks worth of land and rent to nine chaplains to celebrate divine, daily services at St. Mary’s, Leintwardine for the souls of the king, queens Isabella and Phillipa, Henry, bishop of Lincoln, and for himself and his wife, Joan, as well as all of their ancestors, successors and others.¹⁶² Moreover, as tensions rose, Mortimer sent envoys into the heart of Lancastrian country. On 20 December Roger de Heyton, a squire of Hugh de Turpilton, received payment for having gone to Northamptonshire and Leicestershire “to know secret royal business.”¹⁶³ Two days later Thomas Garton received the like for having treated with William de Ros de Hamelake from 12 December. Nevertheless, when the chance came to step back from the brink they declined.

After a meeting of the archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Meopham, and the bishop of London with leading Lancastrians, Wake, William Trussell, and Thomas Roscelyn, on 18 December,¹⁶⁴ a letter was drafted and sent to the king urging him to wait for parliament.¹⁶⁵ Meopham accompanied this with a threat to excommunicate all who would disturb the peace, even the royal party, for the king by *Magna Carta* could not attack anyone without recourse to legal consent. The royal response of 29 December was to declare war. The king announced an advance through the Lancaster-controlled Midlands and would accept submissions from all before he reached Leicester on 6 January 1329,

around 28 December. The itinerary for the court from November-February is at G.A.Holmes, ‘The Rebellion of the Earl of Lancaster,’ *BIHR* 28 (1955), pp.84-9.

¹⁵⁸ *CPMR*, 1323-64, p.72.

¹⁵⁹ *CCR*, 1327-30, pp.324-5.

¹⁶⁰ *CPMR*, 1323-64, pp.77-8.

¹⁶¹ *Knighton*, p.450.

¹⁶² *CPR*, 1327-30, p.343: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.45V; Add. MS 6041, f.18r. He also alienated ten marks of rent to two chaplains at St. Peter’s chapel, Ludlow castle, the chapel he allegedly founded to commemorate his escape from the Tower in 1323: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

¹⁶³ PRO E101/383/4, m.3.

¹⁶⁴ *Paulini*, p.343; *CPMR*, 1323-64, p.83.

¹⁶⁵ *CPMR*, 1323-64, p.84.

excepting Beaumont, Wake, Roscelyn, and Thomas Wyther who had recently killed Robert Holand, the turncoat Lancastrian.¹⁶⁶ The royal force left Worcester on 28 December and travelled east through Warwick, Kenilworth and Coventry.¹⁶⁷ After arriving at Leicester on 6 January Mortimer's force went on the rampage through the surrounding lands. When eventually Lancaster encountered them at Bedford on 13 January it was to surrender rather than fight.¹⁶⁸

In the first authentic challenge to his position in political society, Mortimer had triumphed over his closest rival. On 16 January 1329 the sheriffs were ordered to resume the estates of the rebel earls of Lancaster and Athol, Henry Beaumont, Henry Ferrers, Thomas Roscelyn, William Trussell, Thomas Wyther, William Bradshaw and their adherents.¹⁶⁹ On 18 January orders were issued for the arrest of Beaumont, Trussell, Roscelyn, and Wyther who would escape abroad.¹⁷⁰ Essentially, the ruling couple now had a choice. They could crush their opponents as Edward II had tried and therefore risk further alienating the nation, or they could take a more lenient approach. The *Brut* chronicle grumbles that "*þe Mortymer couetede forto have hir' londes...for he was so couetous, and hade too miche his wille, and þat was grete pitee.*"¹⁷¹ Undoubtedly, he had the opportunity, but does not seem to have taken it. Admittedly, on 1 February a client, Hugh Hakelut, received custody of Kimbolton (Herefords.), late of Thomas Wyther.¹⁷² On 16 February, moreover, Richard de Monmouth was granted Trussell's lands at Grantchester (Cambs.)¹⁷³ The punishment of the exiles was completed by the grant of Roscelyn's lands in fee simple. But in the end the settlement made, at least with Lancaster, was reasonably restrained, providing for the restoration of Athol, Hugh Audley junior and Thomas Wake, as well as the earl.¹⁷⁴ All rebels had to make huge recognisances with the king though¹⁷⁵, and had to

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.85.

¹⁶⁷ Mortimer was forwarded £1,260.6s.6d. for his wages on campaign from 28 December-17 January, an amount which was repaid: PRO E159/105, m.54; E101/384/1, f.1r; Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.284.

¹⁶⁸ *Knighton*, pp.450-1.

¹⁶⁹ *CFR*, 1327-37, pp.116-17.

¹⁷⁰ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.425.

¹⁷¹ *Brut*, pp.260-1.

¹⁷² *CFR*, 1327-37, p.118.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, p.120.

¹⁷⁴ *CCR*, 1327-30, pp.433, 435-5, 437; *CDS*, III, no.975, p.176.

¹⁷⁵ Lancaster for £30,000, Audley for £10,000, Wake for 15,000 marks, and Athol for £5,000. All were cancelled on 12 December 1330 upon Mortimer's fall. At least two recognisances, those of John de Twyford and Roger de Cuylylly, were used to pay Mortimer parts of debts owed to him: *CCR*, 1327-30, pp.528-30.

swear an oath in the Westminster Parliament on 9 February which attempted to secure their pledge to members of the councils of the king, whether great or small.¹⁷⁶

D.A.Harding has argued that the lenient treatment meted out to the rebels “is a clear reflection of the insecurity of his [Mortimer’s] own position.”¹⁷⁷ The Lancastrian rebellion had revealed internecine tensions in aristocratic society to a wider audience, as well as the extent of Mortimer’s power. Those men who had fled into exile always posed a threat Mortimer himself must have appreciated; he had, after all, come to power by exploiting the connections across the Channel these men might now employ. Lancaster might be in abeyance, but his national stature demanded this could not really be expected to persist. However, at this time the strength of Mortimer and Isabella’s position cannot be underestimated. They had overcome serious opposition quickly and for the foreseeable future. The king was more firmly in their control. Mortimer himself received a cape from Edward on 31 January, presumably as a gift for helping defeat the rebellion.¹⁷⁸ This growing affection was also symbolised on 25 May, when the king gave Mortimer an amulet studded with a diamond as a parting gift before he journeyed to France to perform homage to Philip VI.¹⁷⁹ The strength of Mortimer’s standing is further emphasised by the make-up of the party travelling with the king. In Henry Percy, Hugh Turpilton, John Maltravers, Gilbert and Richard Talbot, and Geoffrey le Scrope, Mortimer had provided an entourage of his closest allies at court.¹⁸⁰ For Mortimer, therefore, the future looked bright, and the coming months would see him exploit his dominance to the full and more.

The last two years of Roger Mortimer’s life were characterised by a rapid expansion of his wealth and power. He indulged in lavish displays of his largesse and his courtly influence. His relationship with Isabella became more public and more scandalous as the couple instituted an orgy of acquisition, their vice-like grip on the country meanwhile restricting the flow of patronage. This, combined with widespread suspicion of their intentions, created a background of resistance to their rule. Domestic plotting, involving senior courtiers and perhaps higher authorities, merged with the persistent threat of invasion from the Lancastrian exiles. In turn, Mortimer and Isabella clamped down on subversion, employing all the tools of government to survive. More than this, however, Mortimer

¹⁷⁶ “*d’estere, et de faire, et d’affermer tiele seurte come il plerra a nostre seignur le Roi et a son conseil et ordiner que vous face, que au corps nostre seignur le Roi, mes dames les Reynes, ne des autres grantz ne petiz de lour conseil, ne que sont entour eux, ne ferrez, ne procurez ester fait, en prive n’en apert, mal, moleste, ne damage, ne assentirez estrer fait.*” CCR, 1327-30, p.528.

¹⁷⁷ Harding, ‘The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,’ p.186.

¹⁷⁸ PRO E101/384/1, f.15r.

¹⁷⁹ PRO E101/384/1, f.17v.

¹⁸⁰ CPR, 1327-30, p.390.

may have attempted something altogether more challenging to the political *status quo*, which ultimately cost him his life.

Paul Doherty believed Mortimer's earldom represented the "peak of his ambition", being the "hye state" he "desirede and couetede."¹⁸¹ But at the time his influence was growing, rumours may have been circulating about his real ambitions. The *Lanercost* chronicler, for example, remarks that, "he had seemingly aspired to be king."¹⁸² Geoffrey *le Baker* believed that in 1330 "Roger Mortimer, lover of the queen, master of the king [*amasius regine, magister Regis*], desired to extinguish the royal bloodline and usurp the throne for himself."¹⁸³ Historians generally shy away from such allegations. However much influence Mortimer could exert, his claim to the authority of English kingship with its rights and obligations was non-existent. It is also difficult to suppress the usual thought that these insinuations have more to do with black propaganda than reality. Conversely, there is some evidence to suggest Mortimer posed a considerable threat to the young king, and that Edward appreciated this. Mortimer's final years were characterised by an attempt to re-invent himself once more, projecting an alternative vision of kingship. By fusing legend with the usurpation and exercise of royal authority, Mortimer was not only able to expand his dominance at court, but also return his gaze more wholeheartedly towards Wales and Ireland where he might pitch an appeal to wider elements.

Following Edward's return from France he was quickly reunited with Mortimer and Isabella.¹⁸⁴ On 20 June, indeed, Mortimer was presented with three silver goblets and numerous jewels.¹⁸⁵ Thereafter, the court eventually found its way to Wigmore by 5 September. There, and at Ludlow, Mortimer spent several days entertaining the king, the queens, and almost all the nobles of the kingdom at his own expense.¹⁸⁶ Amidst the feasting, hunting and tourneying the king gifted his host several valuable goblets, including one emblazoned with the arms of France and Navarre.¹⁸⁷ On 6 September Mortimer returned the favour, presenting the king with a gilded goblet.¹⁸⁸ It is possible that

¹⁸¹ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.173; *Brut*, p.261.

¹⁸² *Lanercost*, p.266. Robert of Avesbury reinforces this, claiming Mortimer "was raising himself above others, just like a king, as much as he was able", *Avesbury*, p.284.

¹⁸³ *Baker*, pp.45-6. The French chronicle of London makes similar allegations, believing Mortimer and his allies were those, who, "avoient purpensée d'avoir forfait le roy et tot le saunk de luy." *French Chronicle*, pp.63-4.

¹⁸⁴ He landed at Dover on 11 June: *CCR, 1327-30*, p.549; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.765.

¹⁸⁵ PRO E101/384/1, f.18v.

¹⁸⁶ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

¹⁸⁷ PRO E101/384/1, f.18. Was Mortimer purloining national treasures?

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, f.16v.

these celebrations correspond with the *Brut*'s description of a Round Table held in 1328 "*in Walys to alle men þat þider wolde come*", where the host "*countrefetede þe maner & doying of Kyng Arthurez table.*"¹⁸⁹

In the two years after his ennoblement Roger Mortimer seems to have attempted to appropriate the symbolism and claims to universal authority exercised by the legendary kings of British history. Juliet Vale argues that his regime actively sponsored Arthurian reading groups involving leading courtiers and household officials, even loaning out literature from a central store.¹⁹⁰ Mortimer himself received four unnamed romances which were issued to important members of his household. It is possible that he and Isabella took on the roles of Arthur and Guinevere theatrically at one or more of the series of carefully planned and strategically located tournaments that they were to host. For Mortimer the benefits were obvious. Not only could he emphasise and reinforce his position beside Isabella as the power in the land, but also he was tacitly associating himself with the greatest of Britain's kings, a man who had held sway over the British Isles and much of western Europe. It is perhaps in this context that Mortimer's activities of the late summer of 1329 might best be viewed.

From 8-12 October Mortimer and Isabella hosted another splendid tournament at Dunstable.¹⁹¹ Thereafter, they retired to spend considerable time at Northampton and Kenilworth.¹⁹² Perhaps this corresponds with *Knighton's* description of a Round Table at Bedford in 1328, a tournament not referenced elsewhere.¹⁹³ Mortimer had, of course, recently devastated the surrounding area, including Dunstable, after Lancaster's submission. Kenilworth was a major Lancastrian stronghold, and it might be speculated they had deliberately chosen the locations to impress upon the earl and his adherents the weakness of their position. Mortimer, moreover, may have had a more personal reason for the choice of location, for it had been exactly fifty years since his grandfather hosted a magnificent Round Table there, entertaining Edward I and his court at Kenilworth and carrying off the "Golden Lion."¹⁹⁴ The Mortimers were indeed a family for whom cultural memory had a sizeable role to play. This unfortunately creates a problem with the Arthurian dimension. Much of the evidence to be presented

¹⁸⁹ *Brut*, p.262.

¹⁹⁰ Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context, 1270-1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), pp.49, 169.

¹⁹¹ PRO E101/384/14. It may have been at this time that the order was sent out for the dispatch of a canvas castle from Wigmore to Woodstock, and for the purchase and carriage of four dozen lances from Hereford to Bedford: E101/382/17.

¹⁹² PRO C53/116, mm.5-7.

¹⁹³ *Knighton*, p.449.

¹⁹⁴ *Willelmi Rishanger quondam monachi S.Albani Chronica et Annales, 1259-1307*, ed. H.T.Riley (Rolls Series, 1865), pp.94-5.

shortly concerning the Mortimers' interest in and exploitation of the Arthurian connection, comes from a later era. From the 1370s onward, as Mary Giffin has shown, the Mortimers were in the process of pressing a claim for the English throne, and employed an Arthurian genealogy in the ensuing propaganda warfare. Mortimer's career is not greatly emphasised, and it may be anachronistic to project back to his effort to exploit such myth and ancestral links. Nevertheless, Mortimer had ancestral connections, a prominent presence in Wales, and deep-rooted connections in Ireland. Furthermore, an examination of his actions and policies as leader of the minority government highlights a strategy wherein he sought to reinforce personal claims with an exercise of regal authority.

Wales is the natural place to begin. Mortimer's position as Justice had given him ample opportunity to put in an appearance on the ground and would give him access to royal prerogative there. The earldom of March represented a widespread accumulation of lordships and offices in the March. Even without recourse to legend, therefore, Mortimer exerted a powerful influence. However, he was not the most popular figure there, as the petition of the communities of Wales in 1322 that he be shown no mercy demonstrates.¹⁹⁵ If Mortimer could persuade people that he was the embodiment of the belief that Arthur was not dead, but waiting for his moment to rise and free the Welsh nation, he might harness reserves of support and affection.¹⁹⁶ He could also proclaim a long Welsh ancestry and a blood relationship with Arthur himself. His great-great grandmother, Gwladys Ddû, was the daughter of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, prince of North Wales, who claimed direct descent from the historical Arthur, as well as from Brutus, the legendary founder of Britain, and Cadwaladr, the last of the British kings.¹⁹⁷ Albeit in a distant fashion, this gave the Mortimers a partial claim to the principality of north Wales.

Even if this is too fanciful, Roger Mortimer increased his stake in Wales and the marches inexorably in 1329-30, and at the expense of both the royal estate and his peers. On 2 September 1329, as the court moved into his territories, he was granted the reversions of the royal castles and lordships of Builth and Montgomery with the hundred of Chirbury, all held by Isabella.¹⁹⁸ This was in extension of a grant for life from the queen. By 16 April 1330 the grant had been enlarged further by award in fee

¹⁹⁵ See above, p.85.

¹⁹⁶ M.E.Giffin, 'Cadwaladr, Arthur and Brutus in the Wigmore Manuscript,' *Speculum* 16 (1941), p.109.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp.111, 113. The actual descent was from Arthur's maternal grandfather, Anylwyd, duke of Cornwall. I am grateful to Barbara Wright for advice on this point.

¹⁹⁸ He was to render £113.6s.8d. *per annum* for the former after Isabella's death, so they could be garrisoned and kept in good repair, and eighty five marks for the latter: *CFR, 1327-37*, pp.147-8, 156, 160; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.71v-72r; Add. MS 6041, ff.31v, 33r.

simple of the appurtenances of Montgomery and Chirbury.¹⁹⁹ Another valuable reversion came Mortimer's way on 8 August 1330 when he received that of Clifford castle and the manor of Glasbury, presently held by Ebulo and Alice Lestrangle.²⁰⁰ Mortimer was also to sweep up much of the remnants of the Despenser estate in Wales and the marches. On 1 January 1330 he received grant of any goods late of Despenser concealed in Pembrokeshire.²⁰¹ For the biggest prize, however, Mortimer had to wait a little longer. On 13 September 1330 he gained virtual mastery of the Middle March with a grant that he might hold the estates late of the earl of Arundel as fully as the earl had done.²⁰² On 22 September he was granted all of the earl's inheritance in Wales, Shropshire and the marches with all appurtenances, to be held for life.²⁰³ In October he received all the goods and chattels late of the earl.²⁰⁴ By his fall, therefore, whether by hereditary possession, wardship, or life custody, Roger Mortimer had a degree of influence in probably about three-quarters of the lordships of the Welsh March, and also governed the principality for life.

He may have reinforced this by illegal means. Following his fall in October 1330, parliament was inundated with complaints, specifically accusing men like Robert de Malleve, Mortimer's nominee as deputy justice of St. David's, and William de Shaldeford, who had both survived the coup. The community of north Wales requested that hostages taken by Mortimer and Shaldeford, "without cause" and deprived of maintenance, be freed. Shaldeford seems to have been operating a particularly harsh brand of jurisdiction, ransoming hostages at exorbitant rates and destroying tenants' lodgings in Menai to name a few examples.²⁰⁵ Mortimer himself was not averse to using the same tactics of coercion that Despenser junior had employed. William Corbet of Chaddesley, for instance, accused him, with John Wyard, of enticing him to Berkeley, arresting him, and forcing him to go to Woodstock where he made an assurance to Wyard of 1,350 marks. Thereafter, he was forcibly taken to Pembrokeshire where he had to make a recognisance for that amount to gain his freedom.²⁰⁶ How far such aggression and exploitation was repeated across Wales and the March is impossible to gauge. It seems likely, though,

¹⁹⁹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.506; BL Add. MS 6041, f.31v.

²⁰⁰ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.546.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.471.

²⁰² *CPR, 1330-4*, p.2.

²⁰³ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.44v; Add. MS 6041, f.8r.

²⁰⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.584.

²⁰⁵ *CAPRW* [167], no.8348, pp.282-5.

²⁰⁶ *Rot. Parl.*, ii, p.38. A John Caperiche experienced something similar, though the fine was only £20: *CAPRW* [38] nos.1854-5, p.48.

that Mortimer's men elsewhere were equally as vindictive and prepared to grab the chance to exploit people in the knowledge that Mortimer would protect them.

Ireland presents a different scenario and had consistently provided the biggest check in terms of Mortimer's personal and governmental aims and ambitions since he came to power. Arthur had conquered Ireland and any Mortimer association with Arthur might be taken to imply a desire to demonstrate they could re-establish an Arthurian empire across the British Isles. Mortimer also had another distinct advantage. He could claim descent from Strongbow, one of the original Anglo-Norman adventurers in Ireland, and Dermot McMurrough, last king of Leinster. Whatever the effect of this may be, Mortimer certainly tried to establish a pervasive influence in Ireland during his ascendancy, considerably increasing English governmental interference there. Not only did he rapidly accumulate lands and royal prerogatives, he also tried to assert himself over his contemporaries. In one sense, Mortimer had always operated from a position of strength. His many contacts in the Lordship, his knowledge of local politics, and of the personalities with which he would have to deal could bring more sharpness to governmental policy. There could, furthermore, be no doubt as to who controlled policy towards Ireland, or in whose interests it would operate. This was fortunate, as he had to combat not only widespread and vicious magnate conflict, but also important strands of opinion exercised against him.

As Robin Frame has amply demonstrated, magnates who had reason to fear and mistrust Roger Mortimer, and whom he clearly mistrusted himself, dominated Anglo-Irish society from 1327-30.²⁰⁷ Their lack of respect for his authority and their own volatility left the Lordship unstable and vulnerable. John de Bermingham, earl of Louth, for example, having been raised to the earldom on Mortimer's advice, took full toll of Mortimer's estates following his surrender in 1322, and was not to be reconciled. Maurice fitz Thomas, one of southwestern Ireland's leading warlords, and one of the guarantors of the stability of the region following the demise of the Clare lords of Thomond, had clearly felt threatened by Mortimer's intervention in favour of Margaret Badlesmere. It is noticeable that only a week after the order, on 24 October 1327, for the delivery of her purparty of the Clare estates, which he had invaded, violence erupted in southern Ireland, and rumbled on over the next year almost entirely outside any governmental restrictions.

²⁰⁷ Frame, *English Lordship*, pp.174-95.

Much of the violence that arose in 1327 had been simmering for some time and had its origins in the personal dispute between Arnold le Poer, seneschal of Kilkenny, and a major landholder in Waterford, and Maurice fitz Thomas. The combination of squabbling over the future of the Clare estates in Thomond, Limerick and Cork, the intervention in favour of lady Badlesmere, and Arnold's accusation that Maurice was a "rhymour", set Munster ablaze in the autumn of 1327.²⁰⁸ Maurice ravaged Arnold's lands in Munster and Ossory, forcing Arnold to flee to England.²⁰⁹ William Bermingham and James Butler, men prominent in their kin groupings, had joined Fitz Thomas in these assaults and they shaped a coalition which stood in diametric opposition to the le Poers and the de Burghs, their patrons. The argument of G.H.Orpen that Fitz Thomas and his colleagues constituted a pro-Mortimer faction against the remnants of a Despenser party in Ireland held sway for many years.²¹⁰ Recently, Frame has shown that, in fact, Mortimer was virtually friendless.²¹¹ In his desire to cultivate support he was forced to patronise men of whom he was wary. The re-grant to Arnold le Poer of the seneschalry of Kilkenny on 31 May 1327, and the accompanying grant of £100 *per annum* from the Kilkenny issues, reflected this.²¹² Of course, Arnold fled to the household of the young earl of Ulster and Frame's speculation is attractive that Fitz Thomas's actions against him mirrors a concern by those frozen out of patronage that their rivals were receiving a beneficial hearing.²¹³

Certainly, Mortimer's first major intervention in Ireland showed a desire to favour William de Burgh. Having already repeatedly granted him seisin of his earldom though a minor, the government, in response to his petition, and at the queen's request, restored Carrickfergus castle to his custody on 18 May 1328.²¹⁴ Mortimer realised the benefits of restoring comital authority loyal to the English crown in a region notoriously open to Scottish interference, and possibly also hoped the earl's presence might rally his kin and stabilise the Irish political situation. The weakness of Mortimer's standing in Ireland in 1328 was exposed when William returned in the train of Robert Bruce who remained in Ireland until 15 August.²¹⁵ Nonetheless, William did journey to Dublin for parliament and then headed to Connacht

²⁰⁸ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.172; *Grace*, pp.104-05.

²⁰⁹ *Clyn*, p.19; *Grace*, pp.104-05; *Laud*, p.364.

²¹⁰ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, pp.223-5.

²¹¹ Frame, *English Lordship*, pp.176-8.

²¹² *CPR, 1327-30*, p.108; *CFR, 1327-37*, pp.45-6. It is, however, worth speculating – which Frame does not – that this grant may have been at least partly provoked by the need to employ men of experience and ability in local administration after Bruce had arrived in Ulster just a few weeks previously.

²¹³ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.181.

²¹⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.271; P.Connolly, 'Irish Material in the class of Chancery Warrants 1 (C81) in the Public Record Office, London,' *Analecta Hibernica* 36 (1995), p.6.

²¹⁵ *Laud*, p.367.

to try and re-establish his authority in the province. This in itself was not going to bring peace or radically alter the balance of power. Mortimer also had to show he would be prepared to impose and dispense justice.

On 21 August 1328 John Darcy was re-appointed to the justiciarship of Ireland, replacing Thomas fitz John, earl of Kildare, who had died on 5 April.²¹⁶ On the face of it this might seem a strange choice. Darcy had benefited as much as anyone from Mortimer's fall in 1322 and had not only shown a reluctance to relinquish Trim castle, but also the Lordship's allegiance to Edward II, in the spring of 1327.²¹⁷ Richard Mortimer has also connected him with Lancaster and de Burgh.²¹⁸ On the other hand, Darcy, whose position as a household knight made him a trusted and well-known figure at court, was a man with proven military experience, much of which was in Ireland. In many ways Darcy was akin to Mortimer. Both had built up careers of military service on the margins of English authority and had been successful in managing the Anglo-Irish lordship. Darcy was thus a natural choice and proves that Mortimer could look make a sober judgment when the situation demanded such an attitude. It may also be worthy of note that Darcy's appointment came in the same week as Mortimer obtained the life justiceship of Wales and Ingham the life justiceship of Chester. Was this an attempt by Mortimer to rebuild English mastery of the western seaboard?

Darcy was empowered to grant licences for prelates of cathedral churches to acquire land in marchlands devastated by conflict, on condition they be settled and inhabited, and to demise at farm royal demesne land likewise afflicted for up to twenty years.²¹⁹ This showed a clear governmental commitment to tackle the dangers posed on the margins of the Lordship's authority. Darcy, however, successfully demanded the right to nominate certain Dublin officials.²²⁰ The Mortimer government was clearly prepared to trust his judgment to a point, agreeing to his request to have the power to receive all Irish felons and outlaws and pardon them, and to grant English laws to Irishmen who wished to have them – all powers Mortimer had enjoyed when justiciar. He had also asked that “suitable English

²¹⁶ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.316; *Clyn*, p.19.

²¹⁷ See above, p.114.

²¹⁸ R.H.R.Mortimer, 'Lordship and Patronage: John Darcy and the Dublin Administration, 1324-47' (University of Durham, Ph.D. thesis, 1990), p.37. For my interpretation of this relationship, see chapter 5, pp.201-03.

²¹⁹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.315; *CFR, 1327-37*, p.102; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.749.

²²⁰ Henry de Thrapston, the new second baron of the exchequer, William de Bosworth, custodian of the writs and rolls of the justiciar's court, and the escheator, John Morice, were his nominees: *CPR, 1327-30*, p.316; *CFR, 1327-37*, p.125.

knights” be appointed to keep Rindoon, Roscommon and Bunratty castles.²²¹ As Richard Mortimer rightly says, this shows an appreciation for the maintenance of order on the border between Meath and Connacht, a necessity Mortimer knew only too well. His assertion that this request may have been an attempt to impose Darcy’s men into sensitive posts, however, is more questionable.²²² On 13 December 1328 John de Athy, a long-standing, trusted associate of Mortimer, received the custody of Roscommon for life.²²³ Although a western Meath lord, Walter de Verdon, gained Rindoon on 15 May 1329, Mortimer had been increasing his own authority in the county.²²⁴ On 28 April Nicholas de Turville, a client who had served in the same capacity during Mortimer’s chief governorship, was appointed sheriff of Meath for life at Mortimer’s request.²²⁵ Nonetheless, the working relationship between Mortimer and Darcy would prove crucial in restoring a modicum of order to the Lordship.

Almost certainly “armed with authority to arbitrate and with instructions as to his handling of Maurice fitz Thomas,” Darcy induced him to negotiate.²²⁶ On 2 June Maurice drew up a deed in which he promised to defend Margaret Badlesmere’s claim to Youghal and Inchiquin.²²⁷ Thereafter, both men travelled to Kilkenny where Darcy tried to broker a settlement between the factions.²²⁸ What “instructions” Darcy had been sent with are probably revealed by fitz Thomas’s voyage to England in July, accompanied by James Butler. Following Fitz Thomas’s sealing of another deed at Windsor on 27 July, rendering up Margaret’s lands²²⁹, on 27 August, he was raised to the rank of earl of Desmond, being granted Kerry as a liberty.²³⁰ In essence, this mirrored the earlier ennoblement and rewards given to Butler who had been made earl of Ormond alongside Mortimer at Salisbury in October 1328 with

²²¹ Mortimer, ‘Lordship and Patronage,’ pp.33-4; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.758. On the other hand, there seems to have been considerable wrangling between Darcy and the government over the terms upon which he would take up the justiciarship. Indeed, not only were some of his choices for administrative office refused, his request that as justice he should have the right to assent to ecclesiastical elections, receive fealties, and restore temporalities, was flatly denied: J.F.Baldwin, *The King’s Council in England during the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1913), pp.473-5.

²²² Mortimer, ‘Lordship and Patronage,’ p.34.

²²³ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.339; *CDS*, III, no.970, p.175.

²²⁴ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.134. This grant was confirmed for life on 12 September 1330, p.189.

²²⁵ *ibid.*, p.132.

²²⁶ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.187.

²²⁷ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.563.

²²⁸ *Rep. DKI* 43, pp.28, 65; *NAI RC* 8/15, p.394; 8/16, pp.354-5; Frame, *English Lordship*, p.188.

²²⁹ Frame has highlighted the role of two of the witnesses of this deed, Thomas Berkeley, Maurice’s cousin and Mortimer’s son-in-law, and John Maltravers. Had they been brought along to persuade Maurice of the error of his ways, and by force if necessary? This is another example of Mortimer’s meticulous preparation and tactical awareness of the relationships criss-crossing the Isles: *CCR*, 1327-30, pp.563-4.

²³⁰ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.436; *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.123; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.770.

Tipperary as a liberty.²³¹ Butler had perhaps been easier for Mortimer to persuade, as his father had contracted a marriage alliance between the two families shortly before his death in 1321, and Mortimer could now call in that debt of honour.²³²

At least initially, his efforts were not in vain. Darcy was empowered to receive Fitz Thomas's retainers into the king's peace on 1 November 1329 for all crimes committed since the outbreak of disturbances in autumn 1327.²³³ In January 1330, when Darcy found trouble in subduing the O'Byrnes of Wicklow, he was able to call on the assistance of Maurice fitz Thomas, his chief Irish ally in Thomond, Brian Ban O'Brien, and, allegedly, 1000 men.²³⁴ Nonetheless, Mortimer's preparedness to employ all the resources at his disposal to gain a desired result was best demonstrated by his acquisition of the liberty of Louth, a territory to which he had no rightful claim.

On 10 June 1329 John de Bermingham, earl of Louth, was assassinated at his manor of Braganstown by leading members of the Louth community.²³⁵ Ostensibly, local factors had brought about such a dramatic event. The earl was not popular, having been foisted upon the community from outside following his promotion to the earldom in 1319. More immediately, it was his protection of kernes in his employ who had, it was said, killed local men in a dispute over the maintenance of a limekiln, that brought matters to a head. Bermingham's stout refusal to hand over the suspects to local justice, whilst meanwhile asserting his right as lord of the liberty to hear the case, provoked the bloody conclusion. Brendan Smith speculates, however, that the guiding hand of Roger Mortimer may lurk behind this mysterious incident.²³⁶ This is not beyond the realms of possibility

Prominent figures in the community *posse* included Roger Gernon who had received favour after Faughart at Mortimer's request, Phillip de Repenteney, and John de Cusack. The latter was the son of Walter de Cusack, late Mortimer seneschal of Trim, and he may have engineered the murder with Mortimer's blessing. Certainly, there does seem to have been an element of planning involved.

²³¹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.336.

²³² See above, p.73.

²³³ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.437.

²³⁴ *Grace*, p.115.

²³⁵ *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. D.Murphy (Lampeter, 1993), p.286; *Clyn*, p.20; *Grace*, p.113; *Laud*, pp.369-70. For what follows, see Frame, *English Lordship*, pp.190-1; Smith, *Colonisation and Conquest*, pp.114-18. The official inquests into the murder are PRO C47/10/19, 20.

²³⁶ Smith, *Colonisation and Conquest*, p.116.

But, as Robin Frame argues, the participants definitely had Mortimer backing at a later stage. By 2 September they had been pardoned after approaching the English government.²³⁷

Moreover, there is a suspicion that Mortimer had long been trying to increase his personal stake in Louth. Bermingham's death paved the way for a total redrawing of the local map of lordship entirely in Mortimer's favour. On 23 June 1330 he was granted all of Bermingham's late liberties in Louth.²³⁸ This was in conjunction with a similar grant, confirmed on 23 June, but initially issued on 25 April 1330, of jurisdiction in the late de Verdon lordship of western Meath.²³⁹ These grants were made with cognisance of *all* pleas, which had been denied Bermingham and the de Verdons, although the lords of Trim had been able to claim such prerogative. On 31 May, moreover, the grant of 28 January, awarding Mortimer the custody of Kildare castle and the lands of the vacant earldom, as well as the marriage of the heir of Thomas fitz John, was extended to include all the liberties claimed by the late earl.²⁴⁰ When this is added to the grant in fee of the custody of the royal castle of Athlone on 26 April²⁴¹, and of the custody of Gormanston manor on 25 August²⁴², there seems to be much justice to Frame's conclusion that Mortimer was creating for himself "a large jurisdictional empire on the doorstep of Dublin itself."²⁴³

Of course, although Mortimer concentrated the bulk of his attention in terms of acquisition on the areas where his personal power was strongest, his "attack" on royal prerogative and the position of kingship was more keenly felt in England where his public presence accentuated his perceived pernicious influence. Certainly, he was to expand his personal interests in England during the final months of his regime at the expense of the royal estate. Along with the Welsh marcher estates that Isabella procured for him, she granted him the castle and manor of Hanley (Worcs.), late of Hugh Despenser senior, with the chases of Malvern and Corse. The king, to whom the reversion was

²³⁷ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.191; *CPR, 1327-30*, p.454. Despite this, these proved insufficient. On receipt of a petition, complaining only six locals were named on the pardon, however, seventy-eight men were officially fully pardoned on 31 May 1330: *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.531-2.

²³⁸ *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, pp.175-6; NAI RC 8/15, pp.597-8; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.124r.

²³⁹ *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, pp.176-7; NAI RC 8/15, pp.586-9; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.115; Add. MS 6041, f.45r. In England the de Verdon purparties had been awarded to Bartholomew Burghersh, husband of one of the heiresses of Theobald de Verdon, and a man prominent at court: *CFR, 1327-37*, p.148. In Ireland, though, Mortimer claimed jurisdiction on the basis that his wife was the senior surviving heiress to the estates in Meath, late of Walter de Lacy, despite the order of 16 September 1329 for their delivery to Bartholomew.

²⁴⁰ *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.484, 527; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.115v-116r.

²⁴¹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.515; NAI RC 8/15, p.590; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.119r; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

²⁴² *CPR, 1327-30*, p.551.

²⁴³ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.192.

originally due, agreed on 12 July 1330 that Mortimer should retain the grant after Isabella's death.²⁴⁴ On 16 August Mortimer was granted life custody of Bristol. This was an extension of Isabella's grant to him of the castle and town for life for a render of the farm. Principally, he was to ensure the castle was kept in good repair, but that the king should assent to the granting away of what was the queen's chamber town was extraordinary.²⁴⁵ Finally, Roger Mortimer managed to gain a pardon on 20 April 1330 for all his debts and those of his ancestors, a particularly special sign of favour.²⁴⁶ His real power, however, is unquantifiable, but there are several indications that it continued its inexorable rise right up until the moment of the coup itself. Geoffrey le Baker describes a vivid scene supposed to have taken place at the Nottingham council shortly before Mortimer's capture. Mortimer strutted around, allowing none to address him other than by his newly acquired title. More seriously, he trampled all over ceremony, rising before the king and walking arrogantly that one step ahead of the boy with his ministers.²⁴⁷ It seems likely that Baker gives a flavour of what had been occurring at court since the Wigmore tournament of September 1329. It was Mortimer with whom political power lay and he was determined to display this. This may well have been reinforced by his packing of the court with his retinue, described as "double" that of the king. He and his men proceeded to take prise across the kingdom "as if he were king."²⁴⁸

There has been much criticism of Mortimer and Isabella for the nature of their regime, patronage being increasingly dispersed to an ever-narrowing group of confidants. Indeed, Harding has shown that throughout 1330 the number of men who can be positively identified as court mainstays had shrunk to little more than a handful – these included Warrene, Henry Percy, the chancellor, Burghersh, Oliver Ingham, John Maltravers, household steward, and Hugh Turpilton, his successor from July 1330.²⁴⁹ It is therefore illuminating that the governmental record for the fourth year of Edward III's

²⁴⁴ *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.178; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.42v-43r; Add. MS 6041, f.7v. In the political context, it is noteworthy that a witness to this grant was Henry, earl of Lancaster. This grant also highlights what looks to be a part of Mortimer's design to expand his interests in Worcestershire. On 25 April he had been granted the nearby town of Wych: *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.172; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.50r; Add. MS 6041, f.9v.

²⁴⁵ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.182. The latter argument was recently expressed by Professor Ormrod in a paper delivered at the 2001 International Medieval Congress entitled, "Bristol and the Succession to the Crown, 1326-7."

²⁴⁶ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.511; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.47v. The king, of course, still seems to have been bound to him for payment of wages and arrears thereof. Mortimer was given a life grant on 27 May 1330 of £500 *per annum* from the issues of Wales, beyond his accustomed fee, and was awarded the appurtenances of the Hastings inheritance on 29 July: *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.528, 538, 546-7.

²⁴⁷ Baker, p.45.

²⁴⁸ "sicome il eust este Roī": *Rot.Parl.*, II, ii, p.53.

²⁴⁹ Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.73.

reign highlights a series of contracts drawn up for men who had committed to stay with the king on a more permanent basis in times of war. The presence amongst them of such men as William Montagu, Edward de Bohun, Robert Wateville, and Maurice Berkeley, who were ultimately to accompany the king in his enterprise to oust Mortimer and Isabella in October 1330, might suggest the young king was trying to construct a faction at court more tightly bound to him personally, especially in light of the pregnancy of queen Phillipa and the birth on 17 June 1330 of Prince Edward.²⁵⁰ Conversely, the majority of those retained were close confidants of the Mortimer regime. Men like Percy, Warenne, and Darcy seem natural choices for a king to wish to have beside him in battle.²⁵¹ The same cannot be said with such certainty of John Wyard, the man who Mortimer would set to spy on the king, Hugh Turpilton who died beside Mortimer in the queen's chamber at Nottingham, and Simon de Bereford, hanged on the gibbet at Tyburn.²⁵² It is possible, though, that Mortimer who himself had been retained, was trying to create a corps of men around the king from the men he implicitly trusted and who looked to him for favour.²⁵³

The contracts perhaps also reflect growing concern in court circles over the vulnerability of the regime, being apparently drawn up during a period when revelations about the activities of the earl of Kent were surfacing. The story of the plot of Edmund of Woodstock, the king's uncle, is one of the most complex and mysterious of the early fourteenth century.²⁵⁴ Kent who had flirted with open opposition to the regime during the Lancastrian uprising of January 1329, but had returned to the royalist fold at some point in the summer of 1329, got wind of rumours that Edward II was still alive, and was being detained at Corfe castle. Determined to release him, he lobbied many sympathetic groups for support. If the indictment passed against him is accurate, he had raised both money and men from not only the surviving Despenser party – men like Ingram Berenger and William Clif – but, more worryingly for the government, also from amongst the exiled Lancastrians, the archbishop of York, and even the Pope, not to mention “almost all of the lords of England” who were ready to execute the

²⁵⁰ For Montagu and Wateville, see PRO E101/384/1, f.11r. For de Bohun, see *CPR, 1327-30*, p.517, and for Berkeley, see *ibid.*, p.530.

²⁵¹ For Percy and Darcy, see PRO E101/384/1, f.11r. For Warenne, see *CPR, 1327-30*, p.517. A similar statement might also be made for Maltravers, the long-standing household steward, and Oliver Ingham, the Justice of Chester who, though intimately associated with Mortimer, clearly had some independent value. Ingham, as he had done after 1326-7, went on to serve the new regime: *CFR, 1327-37*, p.174.

²⁵² For Wyard, see PRO E101/384/1, f.11r. For Turpilton and Bereford, see *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.524, 529.

²⁵³ The details of the contract are unfortunately not revealed: PRO E101/384/1, f.11r.

²⁵⁴ For more detailed analysis, see Doherty, ‘Isabella,’ pp.290-300. For chronicle narratives, see particularly: *Brut*, pp.263-7; *Murimuth*, pp.253-6 where Kent's “confession” is printed.

task.²⁵⁵ However, the plotting was revealed and the earl was arrested and summarily executed on 19 March 1330.

Theoretically, this plot had posed serious problems for an increasingly isolated ruling couple whose ephemeral popularity had now dissipated. This, though, is only partly the case, for there is evidence to suggest that Mortimer and Isabella had created the rumours to flush out potential opposition and to close the net around it so as to further strengthen their hand. The *Brut* relates that Kent, having heard the rumours and presumably having procured promises of support for any endeavour he might undertake, desired to certify himself of the veracity of the claims. Upon reaching Corfe, he bribed John Daveril to let him see his brother. Denied this right, but assured of his good health, Kent asked Daveril to pass on a letter to Edward in which he promised to free him and told him of the widespread sympathy for his cause. Daveril was a henchman of Mortimer and promptly hurried to his master with the evidence they had been hoping for. Able to accuse him of treason, Isabella could now persuade her son to act. Kent was arrested, and on 14 March brought before a tribunal at the Winchester Parliament.²⁵⁶ As both the *Brut* and *Avesbury* claim, Kent could now be attainted with pretending the late king was alive, even though, as everyone knew, because it had been seen by many prominent persons, he was long dead.²⁵⁷ Kent protested, demanding trial by his peers, a request which was forcefully denied. Mortimer, as had happened in the case of Edward II's deposition, sealed his prosecution. Showing Kent the letter, he asked him if it was his seal. Kent agreed it was, leaving Mortimer to divulge the contents to an incredulous audience. Condemned for treason on 16 March, the sentence was execution, "*for elles the Kyng wolde forzeue him his deþ, and þat shulde turne ham vnto miche sorwe so as he was enpechede.*"²⁵⁸ On 19 March Kent was finally beheaded, though only after a local prisoner had been persuaded to perform an act others had shied away from.

Although such allegations might conceivably be dismissed as just another chronicle smear campaign against Roger Mortimer, more concrete evidence can be put forward. Certainly, Corfe castle had been put into the hands of Mortimer's close associates. On 24 September 1329 John Maltravers had been named as the new constable, making the *Brut's* assertion that Thomas Gurney was Edward's

²⁵⁵ *Brut*, pp.264-5; *Murimuth*, pp.253-6. He had apparently met both the Pope and the exiles in person, the latter at the court of the duke of Brabant in Paris.

²⁵⁶ The order for the resumption of his estates was made on this day: *CFR*, 1327-37, p.166; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.782.

²⁵⁷ *Brut*, p.266; *Avesbury*, p.284.

²⁵⁸ *Brut*, p.267.

guardian feasible.²⁵⁹ John Maltravers, John Daveril, and Bogo de Bayeux were also condemned for their guilt in bringing about the death of Edmund, earl of Kent.²⁶⁰ Most obviously, Mortimer's own confession before his execution revealed the charges against Kent to have been fallacious.²⁶¹ Kent had been an attractive target: young, clearly naïve, able to raise sympathisers, and thus create an alternative focus for loyalty among the royal family.²⁶² Nonetheless, according to *Baker*, his passing was not mourned as he frequently allowed his *familia* to pass through the country requisitioning provisions without payment.²⁶³ Furthermore, by his "confession", he conveniently implicated significant groups within political society who could now be more legitimately ostracised publicly, and reinforced the impression that no matter what might be thrown at them Mortimer and Isabella could cope. This was hammered home in two ways. Firstly, on 18 March, orders were issued for the arrest of several of those implicated in Kent's plot.²⁶⁴ By 21 March William Trussell, a prominent Lancastrian, had surrendered.²⁶⁵ His humiliation was completed six days later when he was forced to hand over his manor of Grantchester to Richard de Monmouth, an event witnessed by numerous other Mortimer henchmen.²⁶⁶ Kent's lands were then granted to Mortimer's associates as reward for their contracts to serve the king.

In their moment of victory, however, it is clear Mortimer and Isabella had released forces which would provide a sterner test of their mettle. By 13 April 1330 orders had to be issued to sheriffs to proclaim Kent's execution had been for treason and for his false pretence that Edward II was still alive. Worse still, anyone found repeating stories of Edward II's health was to be immediately incarcerated.²⁶⁷ Increasingly, the atmosphere in the final year of the Mortimer regime came to resemble

²⁵⁹ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.149. Corfe, of course, had previously featured in the captivity story of Edward II, having been the location the *Brut* believed the late king was moved to in 1327 when attempts were made to free him. It was Corfe where Edward was murdered in his account: *Brut*, p.253. There seems no logical explanation for this as Berkeley is well attested by most other sources. Gurney and Maltravers had also been Edward's guardians and murderers, and there may well have been some conflation of evidence.

²⁶⁰ *Rot. Parl*, II, ii, p.53, nos.3, 4.

²⁶¹ PRO SC1/38/5.

²⁶² It is noticeable that his elder brother, Thomas of Brotherton, a man connected, unlike Kent, to Mortimer by marriage was far less active in opposition, although his brief flirtation with Lancaster in January 1329 might be taken to show where his sympathies lay.

²⁶³ *Baker*, p.44.

²⁶⁴ *CFR*, 1327-37, pp.168-9. These were Fulk FitzWarin, William la Zouche de Mortimer, John Pecche, Ingram Berenger, George Percy, William Clif, John Cummings, and Edward Monthermer. This was essentially repeated on 31 March with the addition of several more names: *ibid.*, pp.169-70.

²⁶⁵ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.516.

²⁶⁶ *CCR*, 1330-3, pp.132-3. The witnesses were Ingham, Bereford, Maltravers, Ralph Basset, and Roger de Swinnerton.

²⁶⁷ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.557; *CCR*, 1327-30, p.132; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.787.

that of the final year of the reign of Edward II. The trial and execution drove more rebels to flight, building a substantial party across the Channel. Thomas Wake, for example, had his estates resumed on 4 April as a result of his rebellion and secret escape.²⁶⁸ Rumours of an invasion from abroad were rife. From Mortimer's personal point of view the threat posed by recalcitrant Welsh émigrés was perhaps most worrying.

On 4 June 1330 a commission was issued to John de Hinckley and Richard de Hawkeston, men again with whom Mortimer had close ties, to inquire in Shropshire and Staffordshire into those men in league with Richard, son of the late earl of Arundel, who had been stirring up dissent in the region.²⁶⁹ It was Mortimer who eventually dealt with it. On 12 July a writ of aid was issued in his favour as surveyor of the arrays of the counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire.²⁷⁰ Arundel's agitating may have been connected with a threatened invasion by Rhys ap Gruffydd who had a personal reason for despising Mortimer.²⁷¹ Edward II had granted him the lordship of Narberth after Mortimer's forfeiture, but Mortimer had ousted him after his own successful invasion.²⁷² On 8 August 1330 Mortimer was ordered to arrest and imprison all Welshmen adhering to, aiding, or counselling Rhys. They were to provide sufficient hostages to have them brought before the king, almost certainly to have them divulge the rebels' proposals, for Rhys "proposes to enter the realm with certain other enemies and rebels with a multitude of armed men...and the king hears that many in Wales...are of his confederacy and alliance."²⁷³ Again, the situation mirrored that of 1326 and it may be supposed that the government harboured a deep fear of invasion through Wales. It is worth considering that Mortimer may have felt he was being engulfed by a rising tide of resentment and attacks on his personal interest.

On 23 June 1330 news reached the court that Hugh, Edmund, Aymer, and John de Lacy had returned to Ireland and had devastated Mortimer's lands in Meath.²⁷⁴ More generally, his strategy to pacify the lordship had collapsed. On 19 June the king warned Maurice fitz Thomas and William de

²⁶⁸ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.175.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.181.

²⁷⁰ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.563.

²⁷¹ He is named amongst those to be arrested on 31 March, along with Ieuan ap Gruffydd: *CFR*, 1327-37, pp.169-70.

²⁷² *CAPRW* [310], no.15471, pp.492-3.

²⁷³ "*ac dictus Resus una cum quibusdam aliis inimicis et rebellis nostris aggregata sibi ingenti multitudine hominum armatorum idem regni ingredi proponit...ac iam intellexerimus quod plures in dicta terra Wallia...de confederacione et alligacione dicti Resi existunt*": PRO C54/149, m.25; *CCR*, 1330-3, p.51.

²⁷⁴ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.193.

Burgh, earl of Ulster, against making war on each other or assembling gangs of men-at-arms, new disputes having arisen.²⁷⁵ On 28 September Fitz Thomas was summoned to England, a summons he disobeyed.²⁷⁶ One of the most worrying aspects, however, was that the Lacys had returned to Ireland from Scotland, and the English government may perhaps have feared the Scots were once again collaborating in Ireland, this time in a direct attack on Mortimer. The Kent plot had supposedly revealed a plan for an invasion led through Scotland.

All of the schemes outlined above were probably connected with a more general challenge offered by the exiled forces of Beaumont, Wake, Roscelyn, and their fellows. In all likelihood, they had proffered support and men to Kent who had apparently met them in Paris.²⁷⁷ Once this had failed, they attempted to rouse themselves to new efforts. However, the count of Hainault, a long-standing ally of Mortimer and Isabella allegedly revealed the exiles' plot.²⁷⁸ Military preparations, as evidenced by the order of 12 July and the prohibition of tournaments, and the more general array of levies, were sufficient to keep the lid on simmering discontent. It is testament to Roger Mortimer's resourcefulness and connections that no invasion occurred. In Meath it seems the Lacys' revolt was quickly put down. By the end of July Mortimer's servants had regained control of Rathwire castle and his other nearby estates.²⁷⁹ Ultimately, it was to take careful planning of the most secretive nature to overthrow the man who had dominated the country for nearly four years.

The king was approaching his eighteenth birthday and with a newborn son should have been preparing to assume personal power. There is no indication, though, that his mother and her lover were willing to relinquish power. On 9 October Mortimer received papal licence to prorogue a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella for two years, an interesting move considering the Pope knew how things were developing in England.²⁸⁰ John XXII had, it seems, been receiving private correspondence from Edward III himself about the situation he faced.²⁸¹ Edward, who appreciated that he could look forward to prolonged political constriction if Mortimer continued to dominate proceedings, had been privately building up support at court and from other figures at large. His friendship with William Montagu and

²⁷⁵ *CCR, 1330-3*, p.143; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.793.

²⁷⁶ *CCR, 1330-3*, p.157.

²⁷⁷ *Murimuth*, p.256.

²⁷⁸ *Paulini*, p.350.

²⁷⁹ *Laud*, p.373; Frame, *English Lordship*, p.193.

²⁸⁰ *CPL, 1305-42*, p.349.

²⁸¹ C.G.Crump, 'The arrest of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabel,' *EHR*, xxvi (1911), pp.331-2.

a coterie of young knights, men like William de Clinton, Robert d'Ufford, and the de Bohun brothers, created a faction at court rivalling that of Roger Mortimer.

Whether Mortimer and Isabella feared a plot to oust them is difficult to know. The *Brut* comments that, “*some þat were of þe Kyngus conseil louvede þe Mortymer, and tolde him in privitee how þat þe Kyng and his conseil were about from day to day hym forto shende and undo.*”²⁸² If this is accurate, and with the court packed by Mortimer’s men it is quite possible, this is a remarkable illustration of the depths of Mortimer power and, indeed, the loyalty he had come to command. Arriving at Nottingham for the council around 18 October the couple revealingly locked themselves in the castle. The king and his young friends were summoned before the council where Mortimer accused them of plotting to overthrow him and Isabella. The charges were denied strenuously, Montagu cryptically declaring that Edward would do nothing inconsistent with his duties as king. The two parties then went their separate ways. The king was vigorously pressed by Montagu to act.²⁸³ Mortimer was likely to strike and could no doubt easily bring charges of evil counsel against Montagu and the others. Moreover, he had notoriously not shirked from spilling blood royal when it suited his needs. For Edward and his young son an unknown and terrible fate might well await them. This might have seemed even more urgent if the rumours reported by Froissart bear any relation to the truth. He declares that Isabella was pregnant at that time with Mortimer’s child.²⁸⁴ Although the child would be illegitimate and have no claim to the throne, there may have been a degree of fear that Mortimer could create a situation where his child might inherit. Furthermore, according to the *Anonimalle* chronicler, the king “heard and clearly perceived many ways in which he had had foolish counsel and that he and his realm were on the point of being lost by treachery and his people destroyed.”²⁸⁵ Edward had to act quickly.

The same might be said for the ruling couple who that night convened a meeting of their most intimate counsellors – Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, the chancellor, Bereford, and Turpilton – to discuss their next move. They were never given the chance to make it, however, for shortly before midnight the king and a company of around twenty two close associates entered through a subterranean

²⁸² *Brut*, p.268.

²⁸³ *ibid.*, p.269; *Scalachronica*, p.157.

²⁸⁴ Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres, XII-XV: Chroniques, 1322-56*, ed. K.de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1867), p.247. Doherty suspects a pregnancy at a slightly earlier date of spring 1330, citing Isabella’s nomination of Mortimer as her heir to numerous properties, an action she had only taken once before, when pregnant with Edward in 1312: ‘Isabella,’ p.287.

²⁸⁵ *Anonimalle*, p.143.

passage and stormed the queen's bedchamber, killing Turpilton and Richard de Monmouth, and capturing Mortimer.²⁸⁶

Paul Doherty described their success as an "accident", and it is difficult to understand how a large, armoured force could have breached Mortimer's usually meticulously prepared defences.²⁸⁷ However, the conspirators realised Mortimer had to be taken alive and the king protected, so as to give the latter the opportunity to publicly display that power was being transferred. Not only did they bribe, or co-opt, the castle custodian, William Eland, but the principal body of conspirators – Montagu, Clinton, Ufford, John Neville of Hornby, Ralph Stafford, and Humphrey and William de Bohun – were also accompanied and marshalled in all probability by Henry, earl of Lancaster. His self-inflicted exile had conspicuously ended on 16 October, when he returned to court, and it is probable that he assisted in emboldening the king to act.²⁸⁸ Mortimer definitely suspected his intentions, sharply chastising a royal servant for having tried to lodge the earl near to the castle, as he was such a patent enemy of the queen.²⁸⁹ Whatever the reality, Lancaster headed the cavalcade that accompanied the captive Mortimer from Nottingham to his prison cell in the Tower. Within days of his capture, Edward had dismantled Mortimer's political and landed legacy. On 22 October orders were sent out for the resumption of the Mortimer estates.²⁹⁰ The following day saw new appointments to the justiceships of north and south Wales.²⁹¹ On 24 October new escheators were named.²⁹² Parliament was summoned for Westminster on 23 October to meet on 29 November, and on 3 November sheriffs were ordered to proclaim that all wishing to submit complaints of oppressions should come to parliament and receive swift remedy. More strikingly, the king provided for the election of new shire members "of the more loyal and sufficient knights" to compensate for the recent dominance of "men of alliances and maintainers of false suits."²⁹³

When parliament eventually convened, Roger Mortimer was brought before his judges. The charges were numerous and presented both an exposé of his politicking over the previous four years, and a reiteration of the claims voiced by both Lancaster and the king.²⁹⁴ The principal charge was that

²⁸⁶ *Anonimale*, p.143; *Avesbury*, p.285; *Baker*, p.46; *Brut*, pp.269-71; *Murimuth*, p.62.

²⁸⁷ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.313.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp.26-8; Fryde, *Tyranny and Fall*, p.224.

²⁸⁹ *Baker*, p.46.

²⁹⁰ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.194.

²⁹¹ *CPR*, 1330-4, p.10.

²⁹² *CFR*, 1327-37, pp.192-3.

²⁹³ *CCR*, 1330-3, pp.161-2.

²⁹⁴ *Rot.Parl.*, ii, pp.52-3.

by his usurpation of the powers of the council of regency, he had accroached royal power and kept the king's household in his hands. There can be little doubt that Mortimer had repeatedly usurped, or at least abused, royal prerogative, and that his men filled the major governmental and household offices. This, though, had happened only gradually, and his relationship with, or position on, the council was initially co-operative especially with regard to military policy across the British Isles. Catastrophic defeat and the humiliation felt at the Anglo-Scots peace, as well as the charges repeated in the indictment that he had seized royal treasures, procured grants for his relatives and friends, and taken on increasing royal powers including the right of prise, alienated potential support.²⁹⁵ The real fissure in political society came with Mortimer's brutal repression of Lancaster, and his party's victory through the coup is reflected heavily in the charges. Mortimer by accroaching royal power had made himself earl of March at Salisbury in October 1328. When the Lancastrians protested, he then not only broke up their assemblies, he made the king ride against the earl and his men, accepting certain surrenders under ruinous ransom and forcing others into flight.²⁹⁶ Of course, this neatly omits the king's probable support for Mortimer's manoeuvrings and his outrage at Lancaster's effrontery. Mortimer's chicanery in Ireland had also not escaped attention. Almost certainly referring to the Braganstown massacre, he was supposed to have made the king grant 200 charters of pardon to men who had killed faithful servants of the king there.²⁹⁷ Most striking of all the charges is the final damning accusation that he had plotted to destroy the king's children, his intimates, and then to subordinate the king himself.²⁹⁸ Having already procured the murder of the king's late father and the earl of Kent, this had to be the final insult.²⁹⁹ Of course, throughout this process, no mention is made of the queen's guilt. Edward was scrupulous to burden Mortimer with the overwhelming bulk of guilt for the evils of the regime and the potential threat he had posed. Moreover, the king, in scapegoating Mortimer, could deflect any responsibility from his own shoulders and those of Lancaster. It seems eminently likely that Mortimer was seriously considering an act of violence against the body of the king. His appropriation of the symbolism of the Arthurian legend projected a powerful image of a man dominant not only in England, but also across the British Isles. Had Edward not attacked, the prospect of a prolonged "regency" with Isabella and Mortimer at the helm was the very least he could expect.

²⁹⁵ Nos. 10, 6, 12.

²⁹⁶ Nos. 3-4.

²⁹⁷ No. 13.

²⁹⁸ No. 14.

²⁹⁹ Nos. 2, 5.

CHAPTER 5:
FOLLOWERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Of the many factors that contribute to an understanding of Roger Mortimer's career his ability to attract capable supporters is undoubtedly one of the most important. It is also the least appreciated. This is not surprising, for the study of noble patronage in the early fourteenth century is rather limited compared to other periods.¹ In part, this is attributable to the nature of the surviving source material and the earlier historical emphasis on "constitutional" questions. More pertinently, the early fourteenth century represents a problematic phase in the development of feudal relationships. McFarlane implied that the final decades of the thirteenth century witnessed the gradual transition from military service owed from tenurial obligations towards more formal written contracts of retainer outlining the number of men to be provided during peace and war in return for a fee, a process which had not been finalized by 1330. Nevertheless, studies of the careers of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, and Aymer de Valence have illuminated some of the means by which Mortimer's most influential contemporaries recruited, maintained, and ultimately lost support, and provide valuable frames of reference.² To compare them with Mortimer, however, would be slightly misleading. Mortimer himself was not born to an earldom, and for much of his career had fewer resources at his disposal. Conversely, after establishing himself as the country's leading politician, he was in a far better position than even Gaveston or Despenser to recruit supporters.³ Finally, such accounts concern themselves almost exclusively with ties of retainership and clientage. Mortimer's career demands examination of other complementary issues. The fruitfulness of his marriage allowed him to engage in a series of alliances with several families of similar standing, entrenching his family's position both in England and in the aristocratic nexus spanning the British Isles. This combined with his proximity to the crown in consecutive reigns to

¹ The reign of Edward III and Lancastrian England are especially well served. See, for example: C.Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1996); G.A.Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1957); N.B.Lewis, 'The Organisation of Indentured Retinues in Fourteenth Century England,' *TRHS* 4TH series xxvii (1945), pp.29-39; K.B.McFarlane, 'Bastard Feudalism', *BIHR* xx (1945), pp.161-80; idem, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973), pp.102-21, 142-67. Valuable studies relating to earlier periods include: J.R.Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994); Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, pp.149-76. For a more recent update of the debate which challenges the McFarlane thesis, and emphasises the earlier origins of the relationships that characterise "bastard feudalism", see: P.R.Coss, 'Bastard Feudalism Revised,' *P&P* 125 (1989), pp.27-64. Comments from Drs. Carpenter and Crouch and Coss's reply to their criticisms can be found in *P&P* 131 (1991), pp.165-203.

² Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.40-66; idem, 'Thomas of Lancaster and Sir Robert Holand: a study in noble patronage,' *EHR* 86 (1971), pp.449-72; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.253-68.

³ Natalie Fryde does not examine the following of either Despenser closely, but both Nigel Saul and Scott Waugh have contributed substantially in this regard: N.Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II'; S.L.Waugh, 'For king, country and patron: the Despensers and local administration, 1321-1322,' *Journal of British Studies* 22 (1983), pp.23-58. Despite his emphasis on the *fedus fraternitatis* between Edward II and Gaveston, Pierre Chaplais does not investigate Gaveston's relationships with followers. The same can also be said for Jeffrey Hamilton.

involve him in relationships of immense political significance, a number of which outlived national turmoil and helped firm his grip on the country during his ascendancy.

For all that landed wealth could bring in terms of status, in the upper echelons of political society it was the nature of personal relationships and the exercise of lordship over others that displayed a man's importance.⁴ To be at the head of a network of adherents who might wear their lord's livery, or serve in his household, conferred social standing as well as military and political honour and respect. If K.B.McFarlane is correct in asserting that "political capacity or influence had the same power to attract as military reputation"⁵, then Mortimer was unusually well qualified. Indeed, throughout his career he consistently attracted men of substance to his banner.

The evidence around which a study can be based of those who sought protection, favour, and gainful employment from Roger Mortimer, and from whom he sought reliable service, is rich and varied. The principal source must be the charter witness lists contained in the *Liber Niger de Wigmore*.⁶ These provide a reliable guide as to who was in his company at a given time. They may also imply whom he trusted to expedite his personal business, as many witnessed exchanges of land at a local level. In two instances those named stood surety for the marriage of his daughter.⁷ The poor survival rate of primary material, however, means that there are only approximately twenty-five charters that can be confidently associated with Roger Mortimer with which to work. Correlation with other sources is thus essential. In terms of his military supporters most helpful are the protections issued for those accompanying him on missions to Ireland.⁸ Similarly, the pardons issued on 20 August 1321 may be said to demonstrate who fought alongside him in the devastation of the Despensers' estates.⁹ These must be addressed cautiously, several of those pardoned appearing for the first and only time in connection with Roger Mortimer. Equally as potentially untrustworthy, but nevertheless significant, are the documents indicting men for adherence to Mortimer in the civil crisis of 1321-2.¹⁰ Finally, better grounds for the certainty of an association are provided by references to men serving either as an attorney, or as an estate official.

⁴ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.40.

⁵ McFarlane, *The Nobility in Later Medieval England*, p.172.

⁶ BL MS Harleian 1240.

⁷ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.39v, 113v; BL Egerton Roll 8724, mm.1-2.

⁸ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.283 (1 October 1310); *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.611, 617, 620 (30 December 1316); *ibid.*, p.650 (8 May 1317).

⁹ *CPR, 1321-4*, pp.15, 17.

¹⁰ PRO Just I/1388; *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.345.

More generally, it is crucial to note that the sources also impose a number of important restrictions which must be discussed before proceeding. Firstly, the perennial problem remains of distinguishing between those for whom Mortimer of Wigmore was the focus of their loyalty and those who gravitated towards his uncle.¹¹ Secondly, the sources will not permit intimate analysis of the household and council of Roger Mortimer.¹² Instead, it is necessary to concentrate on his military following, the core of his support in political affairs, where information is more plentiful. Even here, however, thorny questions of terminology must be addressed. It has been usual to describe such men as “retainers” of a particular lord, whether formal contracts of service exist or not.¹³ In Roger Mortimer’s case use of such terms is problematic, because no indentures have survived to tie him formally to any associate. Scott Waugh resolved a similar problem in his study of the Despensers by talking of “clientage”, a term resonant with ideas of patronage and obligations, of service and reward. It is, to my mind, a more appropriate expression for those exploring Roger Mortimer’s situation too. This may seem pedantic, especially when it is remembered that a contract for military service drawn up at Wigmore in July 1287 survives, whereby Peter Mauley agreed to provide an unknown number of men to serve Edmund, Roger’s father.¹⁴ It is likely that Roger made similar agreements and it is only the vagaries of the survival of source material that masks them from view. G.A.Holmes has persuasively argued that the paucity of evidence makes it impossible to know that a man was *not* retained, and that the practice spread far beyond surviving evidence.¹⁵ Nevertheless, to speak of “retaining” when lacking concrete evidence can only be speculative at best.

The most basic requirement of this study must be to ascertain who Mortimer’s clients were, and why such men might be drawn into his company. Neither issue is especially straightforward to address for the reasons outlined above. However, it is possible to show that a majority emanated from the ranks of the knightly and gentry societies within Mortimer’s sphere of influence on the Welsh

¹¹ See above, p.2. A similar difficulty has been noted by Waugh with reference to the clients of the Despensers, father and son: Waugh, ‘For King, Country and Patron,’ pp.23-4.

¹² As has been undertaken by Keith Stringer and Mark Hagger, for example: Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, pp.149-76; M.S.Hagger, *The Fortunes of a Norman Family: the de Verduns in England, Ireland and Wales, 1066-1316* (Dublin, 2001), pp.162-206.

¹³ Maddicott and Phillips were both fortunate to have surviving indentures from which to work, but both extrapolate beyond such firm evidence in the majority of cases.

¹⁴ McFarlane, ‘Bastard Feudalism,’ p.163.

¹⁵ Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility*, p.7

marches – northwestern Herefordshire, southern Shropshire, and western Worcestershire.¹⁶ Perhaps the most infamous of his followers, Hugh Turpilton, who died shielding his patron in Isabella's bedchamber, came from a hamlet in the shadow of Wigmore castle, for instance.¹⁷ This argument is borne out more convincingly when examining the holdings of a selection of those who most frequently attested Mortimer's charters. John *Lyngayne*, a witness on seven occasions, who may well have held his land by knight service from Roger Mortimer, probably originated from the Herefordshire vill of Lingen. He also held both Knull in Shropshire for a quarter of a knight's fee of the Mortimers of Richard's Castle and a moiety of the Herefordshire manors of Condhope, Leye, and *Credenhulle*, the latter with successive members of the Talbot family.¹⁸ Gilbert and Richard Talbot played significant roles in Mortimer's career. Both, for example, were pardoned with him in 1321 and were indicted for joining his force assembled before the attack on Gloucester in 1321. Most obviously, Gilbert went on to become Edward III's chamberlain, almost certainly at Mortimer's request.¹⁹ Both men held knight's fees in Greytree hundred (Herefords.), while Gilbert was lord of a moiety of the Gloucestershire manor of Longhope.²⁰ Hugh de Croft and William de la Hulle, both multiple witnesses, held lands in Shropshire.²¹ In 1303 the former held the manors of Croft, Wafreton and Newton each by a quarter of a knight's fee.²² De la Hulle held the manors of La Hulle and Bagardsley in the hundred of Overes.²³ Certain other witnesses, men who can be suspected of having followed Mortimer at one time, also owned property in this same hundred. Hugh Godard, who served in Ireland during Mortimer's

¹⁶ The same confidence cannot be expressed with regard to Ireland as only a handful of charters issued by Mortimer as a private landlord have survived: Herbert Wood, 'The Muniments of Edmund de Mortimer,' pp.312-55; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.114v; *CPR, 1340-3*, p.283.

¹⁷ This is to correct an error made by Professor Saul who believed Turpilton was an Irish retainer: Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II,' p.14. Turpilton, of course, did receive land formerly held by the Lacys from Mortimer in Ireland in 1318. See, for example, *RCH*, p.21, no.5. I am grateful to Barbara Wright for advice on this point.

¹⁸ For his attestations see BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.39v., 40r., 40v., 42v., 56v., 58r., 75v. He is the most frequent witness, but does not appear on any of Mortimer's military campaigns, and his influence may have been targeted more at administration. For Knull, see R.W.Eyton (ed), *Antiquities of Shropshire XI* (London, 1860), p.334. For Condhope, see *P.W.*, II, iii, p.365. For Credenhulle, see *Feudal Aids*, II, p.386. He may well have been the heir of a John de Lyngayn, who died around 29 July 1304, who held of the then underage heir of Edmund Mortimer by knight service: *CPR, 1301-07*, p.245.

¹⁹ For the indictment against them, see *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.345. For Gilbert as chamberlain, see above, p.111.

²⁰ *Feudal Aids*, II, pp.380, 383; *P.W.*, II, iii, p.360.

²¹ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff. 40r., 40v., 75v., 117r. [Croft]; ff.39v., 40v., 56v., 58r., 117v. [de la Hulle].

²² *Feudal Aids*, II, pp.378, 385 (Croft), 381 (Wafreton and Newton).

²³ *Feudal Aids*, IV, p.216; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, IV, pp.344-5 (La Hulle); *P.W.*, II, iii, p.399 (Bagardsley).

lieutenancy, for example, held the vill of Mulston.²⁴ Richard Hawkeston, presumably from the manor of that name in Hodnet, also held Silvington manor.²⁵

Others were even more noticeably tied to Roger Mortimer by connections of tenure and previous service to his family. The inquisitions *post mortem* taken following the death of Roger's father on 25 July 1304 reveal the landed heritage of several men who would later loom large in the personal company of their lord.²⁶ Amongst them is Hugh Kinnersley who held that Herefordshire manor of the honour of Wigmore²⁷ and is noted as journeying to Ireland with Mortimer in October 1310.²⁸ An interesting inclusion is that of Walter Shakenhurst who held the Worcestershire manor of Mamble. He is not among charter witnesses, but on 19 March 1308 was accompanying Walter Thornbury, co-executor of Edmund Mortimer and at that time chancellor of the Dublin exchequer, to Ireland.²⁹ By 2 November 1309 Shakenhurst was being described as Roger Mortimer's "yeoman".³⁰ Moreover, Mamble lies in Doddingtree hundred where other prominent Mortimer clients held lands. Most notable is undoubtedly John Wyard of Curwyard. Wyard, of course, was the man accused of spying on Edward III.³¹ Henry de Ribbesford was proprietor of the Worcestershire manor of that name, as well as the Shropshire manor of Baveney.³² Knighted contemporaneously with Mortimer at Westminster in May 1306, Ribbesford is known to have joined Mortimer's military following to Ireland in 1317.³³ He, furthermore, inherited a tradition of service to the Mortimers exercised by his forebears. His own father, Henry, witnessed three Mortimer charters, and another kinsman, Simon Ribbesford, attested at least one more.³⁴ In 1286 Henry senior, or *his* father, another Henry, was appointed with Leonius son of Leonius, "together with Edmund *de Mortuo Mari* and others in places

²⁴ *Feudal Aids*, IV, pp.216, 234; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, IV, p.348. Hugh attests a charter relating to the manor Marden: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.80r. For his Irish service, see *CPR*, 1313-17, p.620 (30 December 1316).

²⁵ Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, IV, pp.381-2. He witnessed two known Mortimer charters: BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.43v.-44r, 117r.

²⁶ PRO C133/114, no.8; *CIPM*, IV, no.235, pp.157-66.

²⁷ *Feudal Aids*, II, p.377.

²⁸ *CPR*, 1307-13, p.283. For his attestations of Mortimer charters, see BL MS Harleian 1240, f.42v.

²⁹ *CPR*, 1307-13, p.56.

³⁰ *C.Ch.W.*, 1244-1326, p.303. Interestingly, he is actually recorded as being on royal service in Scotland, but no hint is given as to his role.

³¹ *Feudal Aids*, V, p.384; *VCH*, Worcs., IV, p.282. He also held the Worcestershire manor of Bredicot: *VCH*, Worcs., III, p.278, n.25. For Wyard as spy, see *Rot. Parl.*, ii, p.53.

³² *CIPM*, V, no.235, p.164 [Ribbesford]; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, IV, p.259 [Baveney].

³³ *VCH*, Worcs., IV, p.307; *CPR*, 1313-17, p.611.

³⁴ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.58r. [Henry senior]; f.75v [Simon]. On 1 December 1310 a Simon de Ribbesford was presented to the church of Ribbesford by Henry junior: *Registrum Ricardi de Swinfield, episcopi Herefordensis, A.D. MCCLXXXIII-MCCCXVII*, ed. W.W.Capes (London: Canterbury and York Series, vol. 6, 1909), p.540.

where the latter has not leisure to attend”, touching the narrowing of the weirs on the Severn between Gloucester and Shrewsbury.³⁵ Service and responsibility could clearly transcend generations where long-standing ties of trust had been constructed.³⁶

Such familial loyalty was, therefore, by no means isolated to this case. Indeed, one of the most important constituent elements involved in the development of Roger Mortimer’s clientele was the exploitation of exactly those associations built up across generations and within families. Ralph and Adam Darras, successive lords of Sudbury and Neenton in the liberty of Cleobury³⁷, as well as Grimbold and Aymer Pauncefoot, owners of Bentley Pauncefoot (Worcs.) and other estates in Herefordshire and Cambridgeshire³⁸, appear as witnesses to Roger’s charters.³⁹ Adam Darras accompanied Mortimer to Ireland in April 1317⁴⁰, whilst he and Aymer Pauncefoot were pardoned as Mortimer adherents in August-September 1321.⁴¹ Far more prominent were members of the Hakelut family, several of whose members held land on the marches.⁴² Both Peter and Edmund joined Mortimer’s mission to Ireland in the spring of 1317⁴³, Edmund even becoming Irish escheator in April 1318.⁴⁴ Both men were pardoned for the pursuit of the Despensers in 1321 too.⁴⁵ Military competence and personal loyalty were two virtues a family could cultivate. Administration was another. Hugh Hakelut, a five-time witness, is named as Mortimer’s steward of Maelienydd in June 1314.⁴⁶

It might be suspected that the groups discussed above are those elements which constitute the essence of Roger Mortimer’s clientele. Indeed, it is possible to speculate that it was exactly these types of men who made up what might be termed an “inner circle”, distinguished by frequency and longevity of service. Their appearances as witnesses and on military campaigns certainly testify to their utility;

³⁵ “*una cum dilecto et fideli nostro Edmundo de Mortuo Mari et aliis fidelibus nostris de partibus illis locis quibus idem Edmundus ad hoc vacare non potest*”: PRO C66/105, m.19d.; CPR, 1281-92, p.257.

³⁶ In the Ribbesfords’ case, these ties could well have extended back into the twelfth century, the time at which they first became tenants of the Mortimers of Wigmore: VCH, Worcs., IV, p.306.

³⁷ P.W., II, iii, p.398; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, III, p.60.

³⁸ VCH, Worcs., III, p.226 [Bentley Pauncefoot]; *Feudal Aids*, II, pp.378, 384; P.W., II, iii, p.384 [Magna Cowerne, Herefords.]; *Feudal Aids*, I, p.155 [Hildesham, Cambs.]

³⁹ BL MS Harleian, f.117v. [Ralph Darras]; f.39v. [Adam Darras]; f.77v.[Grimbold Pauncefoot]; ff.43v.-44r.[Aymer Pauncefoot].

⁴⁰ CPR, 1313-17, p.650.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 1321-4, pp.17-18. Pauncefoot admittedly was pardoned on the information of Mortimer of Chirk.

⁴² Walter, for instance, held a quarter of a knight’s fee in the Herefordshire barony of Burford from the Mortimers of Richard’s castle in 1303: *Feudal Aids*, II, p.378. Edmund Hakelut received the Worcestershire manor of Crookbarrow in 1314: VCH, Worcs., III, p.517. Edmund witnessed on two occasions in 1316 and 1328: BL MS Harleian 1240, ff. 39v., 56v.

⁴³ CPR, 1313-17, pp.617 [Edmund], 650 [Peter].

⁴⁴ CFR, 1307-19, p.358.

⁴⁵ CPR, 1321-4, p.17.

⁴⁶ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.40r., 40v., 42v., 56v., 58r. (steward).

Mortimer often employed their talents in other directions too. William de la Hulle, for example, was clearly a valuable servant, operating not only as Mortimer's attorney in Ireland in 1320-1 for the receipt of campaign wages, but also as steward of his newly-acquired lordship of Clun in 1329.⁴⁷ Hugh Turpilton acted as Mortimer's attorney in Ireland following the latter's departure for England in May 1318.⁴⁸ There are a number of others whose appearance as witness and/or known administrative service marks them out as potentially some of Mortimer's closest followers. Both Richard le Fort who accompanied Mortimer to Ireland in 1317, and Roger Hopton, for example, are described as "clerk" of Roger Mortimer and may have belonged to his household.⁴⁹ Another cleric, William de Cleobury, described in 1310 as Mortimer's "beloved clerk"⁵⁰ was employed in a variety of administrative roles. Acting as Mortimer's attorney for the receipt of his liberty of Cleobury in 1310 and his Irish attorney in 1327, and as treasurer of his liberty of Trim, he was ultimately rewarded with the parsonage of Trim.⁵¹ Richard Hawkeslowe of Hawksley in Worcestershire, a witness on at least one occasion, acted as Mortimer's steward, and is the one Mortimer client to be identified by Scott Waugh.⁵²

Such cases, however, contribute only a fraction of those possibly associated with Roger Mortimer who might be equally as close as these men seem. Fundamentally, the lack of indisputable evidence makes it difficult to discern whether any individual was a close associate or simply a "passer-by" or "well-wisher" who happened to be there when a surviving instrument was drawn up, or indeed a pragmatist attracted to Mortimer either in the hope of protection in 1321 or in hope of favour after the coup of 1327. In his study of David, earl of Huntingdon, Dr. Stringer contends that those witnessing charters three times or less should be counted as "remote."⁵³ This criterion cannot apply to Roger Mortimer. Whereas some fifty-five charters survive for earl David, the twenty-five remaining with witness lists for Mortimer makes it rare to find someone witnessing this regularly, though not

⁴⁷ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.273; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, X, p.116.

⁴⁸ Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.251.

⁴⁹ NAI RC 8/12, p.69 [le Fort]; p.433 [Hopton]. Richard le Fort had been presented to the church of Nene Solers by Roger Mortimer in 1314, and probably had Mortimer as his unnamed patron in his presentment to Ludlow in November 1326: *Reg. Ricardi Swinfield*, p.543; p.389. However, he is noted as a clerk of Joan de Joinville's mother in 1306: PRO E101/369/11, f.60r.

⁵⁰ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.54; Add. MS 6041, f.11r.

⁵¹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.23; *1340-3*, p.283; *CCR, 1318-23*, p.530. Named alongside him is Walter de Cusack, "steward of Trim." Walter was clearly another of Mortimer's most reliable allies in Ireland, being notably trusted to stave off the Scottish threat in the aftermath of Kells in 1315: see above pp.46-7. William was also in Mortimer's entourage on the journey to Ireland in 1310: *CPR, 1307-13*, p.283. He witnesses one other Mortimer charter too: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.114v.

⁵² Waugh, 'For King, Country and Patron,' p.43, n.92. For his witnessing, see BL MS Harleian 1240, f.41v (6 December 1329). Hawksley was a member of the manor of Bromsgrove, initially a dower manor of Roger's mother, and then passed on to his brother, John: *VCH*, III, pp.183-4.

⁵³ Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, pp.150, 153.

unknown.⁵⁴ What complicates matters further is that, although neighbourhood often determined allegiance⁵⁵, for those seeking good lordship on the Welsh marches there was a multiplicity of powers that would pay handsomely for capable servants, not least amongst whom was the crown itself. For many of those who are associated with Roger Mortimer at one or more points during his career, therefore, he was but one potential patron. Men might serve different lords consecutively or simultaneously without any conflict of loyalties. Several, moreover, were significant figures of independent standing in their own right.

The obvious example is Edmund Hakelut. He probably originally in the royal household late in the reign of Edward I⁵⁶, but seems to have attained prominence as during the Scottish campaign of 1310-11, when he was made a *miles simplices*.⁵⁷ Soon, he is referred to as the steward of Gaveston's household in Scotland.⁵⁸ Having accompanied Mortimer to Ireland in 1317, he was the man trusted by lieutenant and king to be escheator of Ireland. The time at which he joined Roger Mortimer on a more permanent basis can only be guessed. It does seem possible, though, that he was one of Mortimer's longest-serving adherents. On 23 February 1310, shortly before the mission to Scotland, he was recorded as owed £720 by Mortimer of Chirk and other Mortimer associates.⁵⁹ It is conceivable that Mortimer of Wigmore, if he himself did indeed take a force north in 1310-11, recommended his follower's merits to Gaveston. Of course, it is equally possible that Hakelut's military activities, as much as his geographical connections, caught Mortimer's eye. This would certainly not be unknown.

J.R.S. Phillips has argued that one way of increasing a military following was to recruit individuals or small groups of men on a campaign-by-campaign basis.⁶⁰ Certainly in 1316, when drawing up his force to journey to Ireland, Roger Mortimer seems to have taken this approach. Although those receiving protections included many who have already been mentioned⁶¹, a couple of names stand out as being of more especial interest. Firstly, in nominating Nicholas Turville and

⁵⁴ There are seven individuals who fit this category: John de Lyngayn (7), Hugh Hakelut (5), William de la Hulle (5), John de Bromfield (4), Hugh de Croft (4), Richard de Pembridge (3), Robert de Harley (3).

⁵⁵ McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England*, p.170.

⁵⁶ He was already a household squire by 1299: PRO E101/356/8, m.8.

⁵⁷ BL Cotton Nero C VIII, f.90v. (24 October 1310).

⁵⁸ PRO E101/374/5, f.55v. (12 May 1311).

⁵⁹ CCR, 1307-13, p.246. The other debtors were Hugh Croft, Walter Hakelut, Phillip ap Hywel and Thomas de Roshale.

⁶⁰ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.254-5.

⁶¹ CPR, 1313-17, pp.611, 617, 620, 650. Amongst those who seem to be close to Mortimer, who journeyed to Ireland, are Hugh Turpilton, Hugh Godard, Robert de Harley, Henry de Ribbesford, Hugh Croft, Miles Pichard and Edmund Hakelut.

Richard Ideshale, he was choosing men perhaps with prior experience of Ireland and its administration. Both had received protections on 28 March 1310 for accompanying Richard Havering, archbishop-elect of Dublin, to take control of his see.⁶² Turville is a fascinating case, if only because he is difficult to identify. A John *Turvill* is recorded as holding half a knight's fee in Botteley (Hants.) of Edmund Mortimer in 1304.⁶³ It is therefore possible that Nicholas was merely from a family with tenurial connections to the Mortimers. There are, however, other possibilities. A Nicholas Turville is widely recorded as a Buckinghamshire knight, a shire he represented in parliament in 1314.⁶⁴ His main estates were at Weston Turville which he held by a knight's fee from the earldom of Leicester.⁶⁵ It is noticeable that he was amongst those pardoned for adherence to Thomas, earl of Lancaster, then also earl of Leicester, in the pursuit of Piers Gaveston in 1313.⁶⁶ Turville also held lands in Northamptonshire⁶⁷, and seems to have been associated with the Lancastrian knight, William Tuchet, whose major estates were in that county. In 1303 Nicholas was in the latter's company going to Scotland⁶⁸ By 1313 both men were being accused of perpetrating "great outrages" in Northamptonshire, which may well have had some connection to Tuchet's campaign with Lancaster in the earl's dispute with Pembroke over the manor of Thorp Waterville.⁶⁹ They were to be arrested and guarded until they found sufficient mainprise at parliament. Could it be that Turville committed himself to accompanying Mortimer as lieutenant as part of repaying his debt to the crown? One other consideration is that Turville's Buckinghamshire lands lay in the same hundred – Aylesbury – as those of Mortimer's cousins, the Fienles brothers, at Wendover. Perhaps it is their influence we should see behind his employment. Whatever the reasons, Turville became one of the most important of Mortimer's clients, possibly remaining in Ireland, where he eventually became sheriff of Meath.⁷⁰

Others whose military merits may have been their major attraction were Bartholomew Davillers and John Ludham. Davillers, a Suffolk knight⁷¹, particularly seems to have been a regular among important military companies. He and Ludham both received protections for going to France in

⁶² *CPR, 1307-13*, p.372.

⁶³ *CIPM*, IV, no.235, p.163.

⁶⁴ *P.W.*, II, I, pp.133, 158 (1314), 167 (1316).

⁶⁵ *Feudal Aids*, I, p.98.

⁶⁶ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.23.

⁶⁷ *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.250.

⁶⁸ *C.Ch.W, 1244-1326*, pp.80, 87.

⁶⁹ PRO SC 1/61/45. For the dispute, see Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.77-82.

⁷⁰ NAI RC 8/12, p.1 [1319-20].

⁷¹ He held lands at Brom, Onhous and Everwarton, as well as the manors of Belton, Bradwell and Felton from the earl of Richmond: *Feudal Aids*, V, pp.34, 35, 36, 38; *P.W.*, II, iii, pp.313, 316-7.

1313 with Ralph Monthermer for Edward II's performance of homage to the French king.⁷² In July 1322 Davillers joined the retinue of Thomas, earl of Norfolk, on the campaign to Scotland, and in 1324 accompanied Norfolk's brother, the earl of Kent, to Gascony.⁷³ These men may well have been professional soldiers. Davillers himself had perceptibly little to do with Mortimer after this service. On the other hand, Ludham seems to have been patronised by Mortimer during his ascendancy, and such military companionship may have forged relationships of longer standing.⁷⁴

At a local level, the exalted status of certain of those who witness Mortimer charters is confirmed by their elections to serve as shire representatives in parliament. In Herefordshire, for example, Roger Chandos, holder of lands at Wellington, Fowehope, and Snodhill, and the man later implicated in Mortimer's plotting in 1323, and Walter Hakelut, represented their county community.⁷⁵ Miles Pichard, lord of Staunton and Letton, who, whilst not attesting any charter, performed military service on Mortimer's behalf in 1310, did the same.⁷⁶ Hugh Croft represented Shropshire. He further demonstrated his worth by acting as county sheriff,⁷⁷ and was not alone in performing such service. From the end of 1316 up to and beyond Boroughbridge successive sheriffs of Herefordshire can be shown to have enjoyed an association with Roger Mortimer. Hugh Hakelut took up the position on 8 December 1316 to be succeeded by Richard Baskerville in October 1318.⁷⁸ Baskerville, who had performed service in Scotland in 1310 on behalf of William Grandison⁷⁹, had his tenure of the manors of Erdesley, Willardesley, Parton and Wybbenham warranted by Roger Mortimer in the spring of 1318, following the death of the previous lord of Weobley, Theobald de Verdon, from whom these lands were held.⁸⁰ By the end of November 1318 he had been replaced by Roger Elmridge, lord of Elmridge

⁷² *CPR, 1307-13*, p.581. It is possible that Davillers and Ludham constituted part of a sub-retinue, though it is unclear as to which.

⁷³ *CPR, 1321-4*, pp.187, 403.

⁷⁴ He was granted a wardship on Mortimer's information: *CFR, 1327-37*, p.91 (9 May 1328).

⁷⁵ *P.W.*, II, I, pp.188 [Chandos, 1318]; 84, 108 [Hakelut, 1313]. For the lands of Roger Chandos, see: *Feudal Aids*, II, pp.376, 385 (Wellington); pp.380, 383 (Fowehope); pp.380, 387 (Snodhill). Chandos only attested the indenture confirming the arrangements for the marriage of Margaret Mortimer to Thomas Berkeley in 1319: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.39v.

⁷⁶ For his lands, see: *Feudal Aids*, II, p.376; *P.W.*, II, iii, p.365. For this military service, see: *P.W.*, II, I, p.403. For Pichard as shire knight, see: *P.W.*, II, I, p.6.

⁷⁷ *P.W.*, II, I, p.133; *CFR, 1307-19*, p.120 (15 December 1311).

⁷⁸ *CFR, 1307-19*, pp.376-7.

⁷⁹ *P.W.*, II, I, p.406.

⁸⁰ BL Add.MS 6041, f.21r. His name, along with that of a kinsman, Roger, appears in the witness list for the arrangements surrounding the marriage of Margaret Mortimer in 1319: MS Harleian 1240, f.39v. Mortimer, of course, held a moiety of the lordship in right of his wife's de Lacy inheritance.

(Shrops.), whose tenure of the office continued until his rebellion in 1321-2.⁸¹ Questions of time and space dictate that an in-depth survey of the full range of positions such men held cannot be attempted here. Nonetheless, numerous appointments to be keeper of the peace⁸², commissioner of array⁸³ and assessor and collector of royal taxes⁸⁴ can be found in governmental sources. The same trend is reflected in judicial matters. Certain of the above served as justices on local commissions of *oyer et terminer*.⁸⁵ The career of John de Bromfield, a witness to four Mortimer charters⁸⁶, provides the most notable example. Having previously acted as attorney probably for Mortimer of Chirk in 1305, he first became Mortimer of Wigmore's attorney in 1308.⁸⁷ In the years before Boroughbridge, where he was imprisoned for adherence to the Mortimers⁸⁸, Bromfield, a public notary, was commissioned to enquire with William de la Hulle and another into the complaints of tenants in the royal hundred of Chirbury, and later into wastes and assarts in Ellesmere, the queen's lordship.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, he had long been acting as both the attorney and steward of Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, whose connections with Mortimer were scrutinised in 1324.⁹⁰

The best example of this entire phenomenon concerns the ubiquitous Harley family. Principally lords of Harley and Kenleigh in Shropshire, both Richard (d.1316) and his son, Robert, attested separate Mortimer charters.⁹¹ Pardoned on Mortimer's information in 1321, and involved in his rebellion, Robert went on to wreak havoc in Worcestershire alongside John Wyard and others in the

⁸¹ *CFR, 1307-19, pp.381-3; P.W., II, I, p.203. Simultaneously, he served as a parliamentary shire knight: P.W., II, I, pp.188, 229, 238. For his lands see: Feudal Aids, IV, p.234; P.W., II, iii, p.399. Elmridge, like Baskerville, also witnessed the Berkeley marriage indenture in 1319.*

⁸² Richard de Baskerville acted in this role in Herefordshire in 1308, 1314, 1316 and 1320: *P.W., II, ii, pp.14, 75, 103, 149.*

⁸³ In 1311 Baskerville, Chandos, and Pichard were united as commissioners for the Herefordshire levy: *P.W., II, I, pp.409-10. Croft acted in Shropshire in 1314: ibid., p.425.*

⁸⁴ Baskerville acted in this capacity in 1307, 1308, and 1316: *ibid., II, I, pp.34, 39, 164, 168. For Chandos in 1313, see ibid., p.117. Richard Talbot did the same in 1309: ibid., p.39.*

⁸⁵ *ibid., II, ii, pp.77, 83, 117 [Richard de Baskerville]; 119 [Roger Chandos].*

⁸⁶ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.39v., 40r., 40v., 56v.

⁸⁷ *CCR, 1302-07, p.320; CPR, 1307-13, p.141 (23 October 1308).* Only a few months previously John is found acting as attorney for the prior of Wenlock too: *ibid., p.66.* For his future appointment as Mortimer's attorney, see: *CPR, 1313-17, p.277 (26 April 1315).*

⁸⁸ *CFR, 1319-27, p.173.*

⁸⁹ Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, XI, p.73 (8 August 1318); X, p.245 (14 February 1319).

⁹⁰ He was initially appointed to receive the temporalities in August 1317. A writ of 9 November 1326 describes Bromfield as "*attornatum et ballivum nostrum*" by Orleton: *Calendar of the Register of Adam Orleton, bishop of Worcester, 1327-33*, ed. R.M.Haines (London, 1979), p.371.

⁹¹ *Feudal Aids*, IV, p.229. Richard also held the Shropshire manor of Willey in right of his wife, Burga: *Reg. Ricardi de Swinfield*, p.536; Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, III, p.60. Robert, who married the daughter of another local lord, Brian de Brompton, in 1309, acceded to the lordship of the manor of Brompton Brian (Shrops.) as well as the manors of Over Court (Worcs.), Aston (Herefords.) and Foxcotefield (Oxon.): Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, VI, p.235 [Foxcotefield]; XI, p.244 [Brompton Brian]; *VCH, Worcs., III, p.154 [Over Court]; Feudal Aids*, II, p.383 [Aston]. For their charter attestations, see BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.54v. [Richard], 40r., 40v., 56v. [Robert].

summer of 1322.⁹² Nevertheless, he and his immediate predecessors were by no means limited in their associations. Their tenurial situation dictated this was unlikely to be so. Richard, for example, held the Shropshire vill of Bolde from the earls of Arundel.⁹³ In October 1304 he is named as the steward of Oswestry for the count of Savoy who held the wardship of Edmund, the underage earl of Arundel.⁹⁴ At a later date he is found acting as steward for Edward Burnel.⁹⁵ Richard's widow is also recorded as a tenant of Theobald de Verdun in Wildredhope (Shrops.) on the latter's death in 1316.⁹⁶ Certainly, there is evidence highlighting a family connection here, Richard's brother, Malcolm (d.1298), having served as Theobald senior's (d.1309) attorney in the 1270s and 1280s.⁹⁷ Following Mortimer's death, furthermore, another lord of local standing may well have sought out Robert. On 2 April 1339 he is recorded as being retained for life by the earl of Warwick, Thomas Beauchamp.⁹⁸ This is an interesting association. Thomas had, of course, been Mortimer's ward during the latter's ascendancy, and he and Robert may have become acquainted in Mortimer's military following. Thomas's wife was Catherine Mortimer, Roger's daughter, who may perhaps have also had some influence in forging this new connection.

Most strikingly, the Harleys were clearly respected at the local and national levels. Richard was returned to parliament as a shire knight for Shropshire on at least six occasions.⁹⁹ His two sons followed in his footsteps, Malcolm in 1316, and Robert in 1324.¹⁰⁰ Richard was commissioned to keep the peace in the county in 1307, 1308 and 1314.¹⁰¹ He also acted as a supervisor of military array of forces there for numerous Scottish campaigns between 1297 and 1311.¹⁰² In 1324/5 Robert mirrored these achievements, being appointed to lead the Shropshire arrays summoned for the Gascon conflict.¹⁰³ Richard's career included appointments as an assessor and collector of taxes in 1297 and 1307.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, he was even to hold the shrievalty in 1301.¹⁰⁵ His obvious utility to the crown and

⁹² *CPR, 1321-4*, p.17. For his actions in 1322, see above, pp.87-8.

⁹³ *Reg. Ricardi de Swinfield*, p.454.

⁹⁴ *CPR, 1301-07*, pp.287-8; *CIPM*, IV, pp.50-4.

⁹⁵ Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, X, p.64. Burnel was lord of the other moiety of the manor of Willey: *ibid.*, p.56.

⁹⁶ *CIPM*, VI, p.39.

⁹⁷ Hagger, *The Fortunes of a Norman Family*, p.179.

⁹⁸ Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility*, p.79, n.1.

⁹⁹ *P.W.*, I, p.657 (1305-07); II, I, pp.64 (1311), 147 (1315), 158 (1316).

¹⁰⁰ Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, I, p.156; *P.W.*, II, I, pp.648, 662.

¹⁰¹ *P.W.*, II, ii, pp.9, 12, 73.

¹⁰² Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, VI, p.235 (1297, 1299, 1300, 1301, 1306); *P.W.*, II, I, p.409.

¹⁰³ *P.W.*, II, I, pp.409, 703, 718.

¹⁰⁴ Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, VI, p.235; *P.W.*, II, I, p.14.

¹⁰⁵ Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, III, p.17.

his position in noble society is perhaps best demonstrated by his participation in the highly sensitive commission to hear complaints of the abuse of *prise* in 1309, and as a justice of *oyer et terminer* to try disturbers of the peace in 1310.¹⁰⁶

For Roger Mortimer the advantages of the inclusion of such men in his networks of patronage and service were transparent. They could provide administrative experience, local knowledge and authority, and a presence respected outside his sphere of influence. For the individuals concerned Mortimer, with his court connections and standing in the country as well as the locality, would be an attractive force towards which they might naturally gravitate. On the other hand, the independent status of these men, their utility at a local level, and their complex ties of service, suggests that they did not necessarily feel bound by any individual allegiance. The pursuit, as much as the exercise, of good lordship meant casting the net wider. Indeed, in the years of Despenser domination in England after Boroughbridge this is starkly demonstrated. It is remarkable that so many of those men who we might instinctively associate with Roger Mortimer were employed and, in some cases, trusted by the government to perform sensitive administrative tasks.

To those who entered the civil war of 1321-2 apparently in association with the Mortimers, the longer-term effects were not that unpalatable. Only one man whose connections to Mortimer can be established with a degree of confidence suffered execution – Roger Elmbridge.¹⁰⁷ Many others, of course, were forfeited¹⁰⁸, captured, and imprisoned, sometimes, as in the case of Hugh Turpilton and Adam Darras, for prolonged periods.¹⁰⁹ A large number thereof were speedily rehabilitated, particularly in the wake of the commutation of the death sentences against the Mortimers. On 16 August 1322 Aymer Pauncefoot, for example, was freed having promised to render a 200 mark fine, to be followed two days later by John Bromfield.¹¹⁰ Gilbert Talbot was fined the enormous sum of £2000¹¹¹, but on 1 November, the day of his pardon, he was appointed keeper of Gloucester.¹¹² By 1324 he was

¹⁰⁶ *P.W.*, II, ii, pp.25, 33.

¹⁰⁷ Roger was hanged at Gloucester before Boroughbridge: *Brut*, p.224; *Bridlington*, p.78; *Vita*, p.122.

¹⁰⁸ These include Richard and Gilbert Talbot, Robert and Malcolm Harley, Henry de Ribbesford, Hugh Godard, Edmund Hakelut, Aymer Pauncefoot and John Wyard: *CFR*, 1319-27, pp.85-6.

¹⁰⁹ Turpilton's release was seemingly only secured in February 1325. He is recorded as owing the king 100 marks, presumably as security for his good behaviour: *CCR*, 1323-7, p.346; see also, *P.W.*, II, ii, p.268. Darras gave a similar security on 1 April 1325: *CFR*, 1319-27, p.294.

¹¹⁰ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.295. For Bromfield, see *CFR*, 1319-27, p.171. He was officially pardoned on 5 June 1323: *CPR*, 1321-4, p.295.

¹¹¹ *CFR*, 1319-27, p.170.

¹¹² *CPR*, 1321-4, p.211; *CFR*, 1319-27, p.182.

representing not only Herefordshire, but also Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in parliament.¹¹³ Several others were elected in this capacity by their communities that year: Baskerville, Edmund Hakelut, and Lyngayne for Herefordshire, Hugh Godard, Robert Harley, and Richard Talbot for Shropshire, and Edmund Hakelut and Richard Talbot again with Richard Hawkeslowe and Henry Ribbesford for Worcestershire.¹¹⁴ Chandos, indeed, despite being implicated in Mortimer's alleged plotting in 1323, remained as sheriff of Herefordshire from 1321-5.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, there are a couple of examples of Mortimer clients acting in affairs that had connections to Roger Mortimer. In the early months of 1324 Lyngayne was amongst the Herefordshire jurors who judged the alleged misdemeanours of the bishop of Hereford.¹¹⁶ On 6 March 1326 Roger Chandos was appointed to look into the activities of Mortimer's adherents from Herefordshire and Wiltshire.¹¹⁷ No permanent taint of treason, therefore, seems to have been attached to men who had previous links to Roger Mortimer. The king, as had Mortimer, recognised the potential value of their service on the local and national stages. Perhaps he even intended to turn their knowledge of the situation on the ground to his advantage in his subsequent struggles with Mortimer.

This is particularly the case with Edmund Hakelut. He was a household knight, and the personal nature of Edward's wrath as displayed towards Badlesmere and John Giffard of Brimpsfield, for example, might have suggested more drastic punishment after Boroughbridge. Instead, his rehabilitation was relatively speedy. Having paid a fine of £200, he was restored to his lands on 4 December 1322.¹¹⁸ His character and loyalty were soon thrown into question again however. He, along with Chandos and William de la Hulle, amongst others, was accused of supporting Mortimer's machinations from abroad in late-1323.¹¹⁹ If he was ever suspected of complicity, though, such mistrust was not reflected in his future career which, instead, witnessed ever-increasing proximity to the crown. In October 1324 he accompanied the earl of Kent, the king's half brother, on his mission to Gascony.¹²⁰

¹¹³ *P.W.*, II, I, pp.639, 655, 656.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.639 [Herefordshire]; 648 [Shropshire]; 647 [Worcestershire]. Nicholas de Turville was returned for Warwickshire and Bartholomew Davillers for Suffolk, though it is difficult to find evidence of their rebellion in 1321-2: *ibid.*, pp.640, 642.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.251, 321, 338, 617.

¹¹⁶ *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.345.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.283.

¹¹⁸ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.573.

¹¹⁹ *P.W.*, II, ii, appendix, pp.244-9. For more detailed analysis of this affair, see above pp.93-5. William de la Hulle was certainly imprisoned in the custody of John de Charlton, but released on or about 27 December 1323, probably due to lack of evidence: *CCR*, 1323-7, p.51.

¹²⁰ *CPR*, 1324-7, pp.29, 36. His debts were respited at this point too, perhaps a mark of full rehabilitation: *CCR*, 1323-7, p.315.

It is upon his return, however, that he really came to prominence. In the denouement of the crisis afflicting the regime of Edward II, he is conspicuous among a group of men, some of whom had shared adherence to Roger Mortimer, appointed to hold the march of Wales for the crown as Mortimer and Isabella's forces swept west in pursuit of the king. On 10 October 1326, for example, he, Roger Chandos, and Bogo Knowille were ordered to seize the marcher castles and lands of Henry of Lancaster whose rebellious behaviour had now been exposed.¹²¹ Ten days later, with the king preparing to take flight as the rebels approached Bristol, this order was repeated.¹²² On this occasion, however, Hakelut was to act in conjunction with Hugh Despenser junior, assuredly placing him within the most intimate circles surrounding the king.

In this he stood alongside Hugh Turpilton and Richard Talbot. Both were probably retained by Despenser¹²³, and Turpilton probably owed his pardon in 1325 to the favourite's influence.¹²⁴ Despenser may well have deliberately cultivated relationships with former adherents of Roger Mortimer. Apart from these cases, he appears to have retained Robert fitz Elys, the only man known to have accompanied Mortimer to Ireland in May 1315.¹²⁵ In addition, John Bromfield, at least, might owe his release to Despenser's influence, he having been mainprised by John Haudlo, one of the elder Despenser's closest followers.¹²⁶ Anyhow, on 10 October 1326 Talbot replaced Hakelut in the above-mentioned commission. On 14 October Turpilton joined Gregory de Castro and Donald, earl of Mar, Edward II's long-standing personal friend, in a commission to attend to defences on the marches.¹²⁷ Clearly, their previous loyalties were neither held against them, nor especially feared. This perhaps highlights the catastrophic naivety of the king and his favourites, for as far as is known, neither Turpilton nor Hakelut fulfilled their commissions.¹²⁸ Within weeks of Edward II's capture, Hakelut had been restored to the constablership of Dinefwr, and following Edward III's coronation both he, Turpilton, and the Talbots are recorded as household knights.¹²⁹ As Nigel Saul has speculated, it is

¹²¹ *CFR*, 1319-27, p.419.

¹²² *CPR*, 1324-7, p.332.

¹²³ Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II,' p.8.

¹²⁴ The pardon came on 1 September 1325: *CPR*, 1324-7, p.165.

¹²⁵ Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II,' pp.14-15; PRO SC 1/28/31 (c. 26 April 1315). Robert is referred to as "bachelor" of Roger Mortimer.

¹²⁶ *CCR*, 1318-23, p.594. For Haudlo, see Waugh, 'For King, Country and Patron.'

¹²⁷ *CPR*, 1324-7, p.332.

¹²⁸ Turpilton, though, was apparently still with the king on 20 October, and either his desertion helped prompt Edward's escape bid by seas, or Hugh deserted after hearing of this decision: PRO E101/17/16, m.2.

¹²⁹ For Hakelut's custody, see: *CFR*, 1319-27, pp.422-3; *CPR*, 1324-7, p.341 (2 December 1326). For the ranks of Edward III's household knights, see *CMR*, 1326-7, p.375. It should also be noted that

likely that these men had been hedging their bets, perhaps offering aid and succour to the exiled rebel leader, whilst simultaneously offering public loyalty to the king.¹³⁰ In this respect, a seemingly insignificant order for the delivery of a prisoner from Newgate may be of value. Just days after the rebels' landing, Hakelut, Turpilton, Bogo Knoville, and Thomas Wyther of Herefordshire associated themselves with various others to obtain the release of a Thomas Everingham.¹³¹ It is conceivable they discussed the impending crisis and perhaps even settled upon a future strategy, maybe even exchanging intelligence from Mortimer.

Naturally, this can only be speculation. Such men might equally be trimmers, seizing on Mortimer and Isabella's string of successes to elude their penetrating gaze. Nevertheless, there must be some explanation for Edward II's unwillingness to bear any long standing grudges against Mortimer's adherents, and this is particularly pertinent following his escape and the rumours that surrounded it. Is it conceivable that the king had reason to genuinely trust such men? Could such an interpretation be rooted in events surrounding the perceptibly troublesome surrender of the Mortimers in January 1322? J.R.Maddicott has expertly teased out the reasons for Lancaster's failure in his conflict with the king, not least among which were the numerous, high profile defections in the months before Boroughbridge.¹³² It is possible that Mortimer himself shared similar problems. Perhaps as many as 10,000 Welshmen from the Mortimer lordships of Brecon, Maelienydd, Gwerthrynion, Ceri and Cedewain stayed in Wyre Forest in the weeks leading up to the surrender.¹³³ Phillips has argued that Mortimer's men were deserting at this time, due both to the attacks launched against the Mortimers' position by Gruffydd Llwyd, and by the obvious conflict of loyalties involved in a civil war against the king.¹³⁴ Is this a sufficient explanation for the loss of such abundant resources?

In the main this question must be answered in the affirmative. On an individual basis, though, it must be said to begin with that there is no direct evidence to isolate specific clients deserting Roger Mortimer in the months before his surrender. Perhaps the closest to this is the order of 10 June 1322 for the restoration of Hugh Godard, a man pardoned on Mortimer of Chirk's information in August 1321, as the king had recently heard that Hugh had performed military service with the king during the

Roger Chandos himself was appointed to keep Glamorgan and Morgannwg on 1 December: *CFR*, 1319-27, p.429.

¹³⁰ Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II,' pp.14-15.

¹³¹ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.614.

¹³² Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.295-6; idem, 'Thomas of Lancaster and Robert Holand.'

¹³³ *CIM*, 1307-49, no.652, p.170.

¹³⁴ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.225-6.

pursuit of the rebels in February and March.¹³⁵ John Bullesdon, who had previously joined Mortimer in Ireland in 1317, and William de Ockley, the purported messenger between Mortimer and the gaolers of Edward II at Berkeley in September 1327, were sufficiently trusted in March 1322 to take Joan Mortimer to her prison cell in Hampshire.¹³⁶ Such cases merely imply possible shifts of allegiance however. They do not confirm them. It is equally possible that these men merely joined the king to spare their lives in the aftermath of the Mortimers' surrender on 22 January.

The same might be said of those whose rehabilitation was astonishingly swift in the prevailing circumstances. Whilst others languished in custody until after sentence had been passed on the Mortimers, certain men, including Henry Ribbesford, Richard Talbot and John Wyard, were restored to their inheritances by 25 March, and in some cases before Boroughbridge.¹³⁷ On 12 February a protection had been issued for John Wyard.¹³⁸ Interestingly, the above inquisition attests to the fact that after the Mortimers' surrender Wyard, Robert Harley, John *del Chastel*, Roger de Elmbridge, and 100 squires hid out in Wyre Forest. Subsequent events might militate against such an interpretation¹³⁹, but it is possible these men had withdrawn their military backing for Mortimer and were waiting to see how events would develop. Now Wyard was perhaps preparing to offer it to the king. It is noticeable that both Wyard and Harley were ordered to join the infamous royal yeoman, Robert le Ewer, in the Scottish campaign that followed Edward's triumph at Boroughbridge, a sure sign of their return to favour. Again though, the lack of clarity in the evidence makes definitive conclusions impossible.

Another rarely discussed explanation, however, relates to the nature of Mortimer lordship, and the consequent potential alienation of support. The Welsh distaste for the Mortimers is well known, and fears concerning the ramifications of a Mortimer restoration highlight the perceived harshness of their authority.¹⁴⁰ These may have been reflected in the actions of Mortimer's Welsh forces if they did indeed withdraw from the conflict. With regards to English adherents, the inquisitions taken into allegations that the bishop of Hereford provided aid to the rebels in the winter of 1321 provide valuable clues. It is clear that the Mortimers were struggling to raise sufficient men.¹⁴¹ John Mershton, who had been pardoned in August on Chirk's information, complained that violence had been threatened against

¹³⁵ *CCR*, 1318-23, pp.457-8.

¹³⁶ *CPR*, 1324-7, p.77. For Ockley as messenger, see above, p.123.

¹³⁷ *CCR*, 1318-23, pp.419-20.

¹³⁸ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.64.

¹³⁹ See above, pp.87-8.

¹⁴⁰ See above, p.85.

¹⁴¹ PRO Just I/1388, mm.2, 5, 6d.

him to induce him to join the rebels. Roger Chandos made similar allegations. Past history might also indicate that Mortimer lordship could not command total support. As early as August 1309 a commission of *oyer et terminer* was issued to investigate an attack on Mortimer's attorney, Thomas Ace, by a gang led by Roger Foliot, in which Mortimer's deeds and charters were stolen and destroyed.¹⁴² Foliot himself had acted as Mortimer's attorney in Ireland in 1308 and clearly harboured a grievance of some kind.¹⁴³ The year 1315 seems to have witnessed particular disturbance. On 4 May a commission was issued into breaches of Mortimer's parks at Cleobury Mortimer, Earnwood and Bewdley.¹⁴⁴ By 18 November a gang led by Richard Talbot had attacked the Mortimer manors of Coteridge and Wychbold in Worcestershire.¹⁴⁵ Mortimer's absence in Ireland may have brought simmering discontent to the surface. The same reason may have provoked attacks on his Berkshire manors of Stretfield Mortimer, Wokefield, and Shinfield before 22 November 1319.¹⁴⁶ Potentially the most revealing example of tensions beneath the surface of Mortimer lordship came to light on 10 November 1320, probably just as Mortimer had triumphantly returned from his justiciarship. Henry Ribbesford, leading members of his family, and other local dignitaries had apparently broken his Shropshire parks of Cleobury Mortimer, Earnwood and Wyke.¹⁴⁷ To alienate a family whose connections to the Mortimers were of long standing implies a significant loss of trust and respect or irritation at the stringency of their lordship. It is noticeable that Ribbesford is not listed amongst those receiving protections in August 1321. If such irritation were reflected even in a small number of cases, it may well be fairly straightforward to explain a lack of support for the Mortimers during the civil war.

To follow one's lord was natural. But to rebel against the king endangered life and property. On the other hand, it does seem Ribbesford defied the king, as his lands were restored on 14 February 1322. Moreover, a majority of those connected with Roger Mortimer in this study did commit themselves until around the time of his surrender. Men like Wyard and Robert Harley eventually went even further. Such loyalty probably reflected more than ties of tenure and long-standing service. The personal benefits of Mortimer lordship proved equally compelling.

If ability to provide reward and protection for those whose service he coveted established his social and political standing, another crucial element in an analysis of why men were attracted to his

¹⁴² *CPR, 1307-13*, p.240.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, p.32 (2 January 1308).

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 1313-17, p.323.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.424.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 1317-21, p.474.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.545.

side, therefore, is to examine how Roger Mortimer attempted to fulfil these seigniorial obligations. Youthful connections to Gaveston and growing propinquity to Edward II and other senior courtiers in the years leading up to the Despenser war had gradually given Mortimer an influential position at court, extinguished in the spring of 1321. Certainly, he reaped the rewards himself during this period. But did his access to royal patronage impact upon his clientele?

Arguably, the most telling indication of Mortimer's entry onto the political stage as a truly major player is the significant increase in grants to his clients from about the beginning of 1316. Before this point, despite actively striving to make his name, he does not seem to have been able to garner much patronage. Paul Doherty, for example, has highlighted Mortimer's failure in 1311 to intervene successfully on behalf of a disgraced chamberlain of North Wales.¹⁴⁸ Those grants he could procure were generally minor. On 16 March 1308, for example, at the height of the Gaveston crisis, he obtained a pardon for a man indicted for murder.¹⁴⁹ On 20 June 1309 Lingbrook priory received a pardon for acquiring the advowson of Stoke Bliss from him, and the convent was licenced to appropriate it further.¹⁵⁰ Mortimer may have taken an interest in local, ecclesiastical matters. On 9 October 1314 Wigmore abbey was granted free warren in certain of its demesne lands in Shropshire and Herefordshire, possibly due to his influence.¹⁵¹ He certainly also aimed to ensure ecclesiastical and municipal institutions he favoured saw some reward. On 1 September 1315, whilst he was in Ireland, a three-year grant of murage was made to the authorities of his town of Trim.¹⁵² A similar grant of murage, pavage and quayage was procured for Drogheda (Meath) during his lieutenancy.¹⁵³

Direct intervention on Mortimer's part for his actual clients, however, can be shown only irregularly. In 1314, a Kentish man-at-arms, Frank Scoland, was arraigned on a plea by William Grandison concerning services due for lands and rents at Horton. Having answered the charge, Frank got the king's protection, as he was about to go to Ireland in Mortimer's company.¹⁵⁴ On 2 May 1315, around the time of his departure for Ireland, Mortimer received licence to grant Richard Harley £40 of

¹⁴⁸ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.38. Isabella eventually succeeded in getting him a pardon.

¹⁴⁹ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.52. The man in question was a William Sturmy.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.163.

¹⁵¹ *C.Ch.R., 1300-26*, p.245.

¹⁵² *CPR, 1313-17*, p.349.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, 1317-21, p.57 (18 November 1317)

¹⁵⁴ *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, p.319. Scoland is another of those whose participation in Mortimer's lieutenancy force cannot easily be explained. Perhaps service in 1315 had demonstrated his merits. Perhaps he belonged to the same group of men as Bartholomew Davillers. In any event, he was given a protection *quietus de placitis* on 2 May 1318, and in 1327 was pardoned a debt: *CPR, 1317-21*, p.141; *CMR, 1326-7*, no.433, p.62. Much more than this cannot be said, although a man of that name did neglect to take up the degree of knighthood in 1326: *P.W.*, II, I, p.751.

rent in Shropshire.¹⁵⁵ Mortimer was also prepared to use his influence even at this early stage to gain royal commissions for his men. On 29 July 1314 John de Welles, who would accompany him to Ireland in 1317¹⁵⁶, was granted the custody of Newcastle Emlyn in Wales at Mortimer's request. Unfortunately for Welles, his patron's influence may well have been temporarily on the wane, for on 20 September the Justice was ordered to restore it to the previous holder, at the request of Henry of Lancaster whose brother was gradually claiming political ascendancy after Bannockburn.¹⁵⁷ In Irish affairs, on the other hand, Mortimer's voice does seem to have been heard, Hugh Turpilton being granted the keepership of Kildare in the days before the Bruce invasion commenced.¹⁵⁸ Once in Ireland, moreover, Mortimer seems to have tried to dabble in Dublin's administration, despite holding no official governmental position. A petition, dated by Connolly to 1316, claims that he had entered one of his men into the post of chirographer of the Bench during the absence in England of the petitioner, and real office-holder, Nicholas Staveley.¹⁵⁹

Such chicanery, however, merely prefaced Mortimer's two terms as chief governor of Ireland. In the hiatus created by the Bruce invasion he found his first significant, sanctioned opportunity to provide real rewards for at least some of his followers. To follow the administrative thread, it is probable that he secured the Irish escheatry for Edmund Hakelut in April 1318 at a time when his lieutenancy was coming to an end.¹⁶⁰ His influence must also lurk behind the selection of Nicholas Turville as sheriff of Meath in 1319.¹⁶¹ With the weakening of de Verdun lordship on Theobald junior's death in 1316, Mortimer, both for personal and national profit, may have thought it advisable to increase his stake in that part of Meath outside his own liberty of Trim. This may explain the appointment during his lieutenancy of John *del Chastel Richard* as serjeant of Meath.¹⁶² More obviously, the appointment of William de la Hulle on 19 August 1319 to be a justice of the Dublin Bench can only be attributable to Roger Mortimer.¹⁶³ In ecclesiastical affairs Mortimer seems no less prepared to work for his own advantage, and that of those he thought worth cultivating. On 4 April

¹⁵⁵ *CPR*, 1313-17, p.279.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.650 (5 May 1317).

¹⁵⁷ *CFR*, 1307-19, pp.205, 210

¹⁵⁸ *CPR*, 1313-17, p.285 (18 May 1315). See above, pp.42-3.

¹⁵⁹ Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of Ancient Correspondence,' p.59. No name is given for Mortimer's man.

¹⁶⁰ *CFR*, 1307-19, p.358.

¹⁶¹ NAI RC 8/12, p.1.

¹⁶² NAI RC 8/12, pp.486-7.

¹⁶³ *RCH*, p.27, no.56. William had received protection *quietus de placitis* for his journey with Roger Mortimer on 4 June: *CPR*, 1317-21, p.341.

1318 Edward II ordered the removal of Nicholas Balscot from the chancellorship of St.Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, and the prebend of Finglas, to which six months earlier the king had collated James Ardingelli. Meanwhile, Mortimer, who the king believed must have been "ignorant perchance of our collation", had advanced Balscot.¹⁶⁴

Principally, however, it was with grants of forfeited estates that Mortimer provided for his followers during this period. Indeed, following his elimination of the Lacys in June 1317 after a campaign in which many of the later beneficiaries had participated, he had several valuable properties at his disposal.¹⁶⁵ An inquisition of 12 Edward II [1318-19] reveals that former Lacy manors had been awarded to his adherents: John de Athy, the admiral of the fleet that had shipped Mortimer to Ireland, had received Dissard (co. Meath) for life on 20 March 1318; William Preston, a Drogheda merchant, was awarded Arthurstown (co. Meath) in fee on 31 March; and the slippery Richard Ideshale got Foukeston (co. Dublin) on 10 December 1317.¹⁶⁶ The primary beneficiary, however, was Hugh Turpilton who now became a landholder of independent standing. On 2 December 1317 he received Tobyr near Dunlovan, late of Walter fitz Walter Say, an adherent of the Lacys. On 1 February 1318 this grant was renewed¹⁶⁷, along with a fresh grant of the manor of Martry in a deed witnessed by Mortimer, the lieutenant.¹⁶⁸ A month later the king, for Hugh's good service, granted him all of Walter's late lands in the barony of Kells and in Ulster for the nominal rent of one sore sparrowhawk, with 100s. rent from the mills of Kells.¹⁶⁹ To cap things off, it is likely Mortimer had further pressed Turpilton's case for reward at the time of his own advancement to the justiciarship in March 1319. On 28 March the king ordered the Irish escheator to pay Hugh the sizeable sum of 200 marks from the first issues of the Irish escheatry as a gift from the king.¹⁷⁰ He was not the only recipient either. On 16 March the king awarded Roger and John Gernon of Louth reparation from these escheats for their expenses in the triumph at Faughart. It is highly likely Mortimer had given such testimony on their behalf, and it was he who provided the Gernons' reward – the castle and manor of *Taghobreoch*, late of Hugh Lacy.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁴ "*ignorans forsitan collacionem nostram*": PRO C66/149, m.20; CPR, 1317-21, p.132.

¹⁶⁵ See above, pp.57-8.

¹⁶⁶ *Rep.DKI*, 40, p.20.

¹⁶⁷ *RCH*, p.24, nos. 150, 154.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.21, no.5.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.26, no.210.

¹⁷⁰ CPR, 1317-21, p.320.

¹⁷¹ *RCH*, p.28, nos. 91, 92.

That he could provide such awards when endowed with governmental authority is not surprising. In England before 1321, though, he was merely one of any number of courtiers seeking reward. Despite his apparently profitable relationship with Edward II, he was never able to command the same volume of patronage as Gaveston, Pembroke, or the three “upstarts”, Amory, Audley junior, and William Montagu junior. This situation was transformed by the coup of 1326-7. It was indubitably he and his clientele that dominated England from 1327-30.

The composition of Edward III’s household at this time strikingly bears this out.¹⁷² Alongside Mortimer’s two eldest sons, now bannerets, we find not only household knights of longer standing, like Edmund Hakelut and Richard Talbot, but also Hugh Turpilton and Henry Ribbesford. Lower down the scale, John Wyard is found among the squires, along with Edmund Hakelut junior, William Ockley and Geoffrey Beaufoi, a Herefordshire landholder, who had been pardoned in September 1321 on Mortimer’s information.¹⁷³ Among serjeants-at-arms is Robert de Harley. Such men may not have provided Mortimer with a majority of supporters within the household, but he certainly could command a sizeable rump which might be used to intimidate, or display his authority at court. If these were the advantages for Roger Mortimer, those for his clients, whether inside or outside the household, were life-changing.

Essentially of provincial import, men such as Gilbert Talbot could gain national renown on the back of royal patronage. Talbot became the king’s chamberlain, the position last held by Despenser junior, on 23 August.¹⁷⁴ Richard Hawkeslowe became chirographer of the King’s Bench in February 1328 at Mortimer’s request.¹⁷⁵ All were nevertheless thrust more firmly into the gaze of royal favour. On 2 April 1328 Gilbert Talbot received a grant of free warren in his demesne lands in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.¹⁷⁶ This came from the king’s “special grace”, as did the award to Ribbesford on 10 May of free warren in his demesne lands in Worcestershire and a weekly market at his manor of Rook.¹⁷⁷ Only a month earlier the king had ordered the supercession of the levy of what Henry owed of

¹⁷² For what follows, see PRO E 101/383/10, transcribed and reprinted in *CMR*, 1326-7, pp.373-6.

¹⁷³ For his lands, see *Feudal Aids*, II, p.389; *P.W.*, II, iii, pp.364, 366. For the pardon, see *CPR*, 1321-4, p.17.

¹⁷⁴ See above, p.111.

¹⁷⁵ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.229.

¹⁷⁶ *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.81.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.84.

his fine for adherence to Thomas, earl of Lancaster.¹⁷⁸ The primary beneficiaries, though, were undoubtedly Hugh Turpilton and John Wyard.

Turpilton completed his rise from obscurity to national infamy by acceding to the stewardship of the household in the summer of 1330 before dying a few months later protecting Mortimer from the young king's knightly band. In the previous four years he had reaped considerable reward from his close association to Roger Mortimer. On 29 November 1327 he was restored to the custody of Newcastle Emlyn for life.¹⁷⁹ On 7 July 1329 the king granted him the reversion in fee of lands at la Haye (Herefords.), held by John de la Haye. In the weeks before his death he also procured valuable grants, receiving the wardship of the St.Amand inheritance, possibly the first instalment of any number of grants to satisfy the king's promise to him of lands and rents worth 500 marks.¹⁸⁰ Enrichment in terms of land went hand in hand with an increase in his personal, political influence. Even before his appointment as steward, the abbot of St.Peter's, Gloucester, thought it worthwhile approaching him to request licence to absent himself permanently from parliaments.¹⁸¹ Hugh himself, at around the time he first undertook the stewardship, was exempted from ministerial service, perhaps because Mortimer had greater plans for him, which only briefly came to fruition.¹⁸² John Wyard's story is perhaps more revealing of the depth of Mortimer's influence, for, whilst not holding an official governmental position, he seems to have been Mortimer's right eye. The regime saw a steady flow of patronage in his direction which, though individually of a minor nature, consolidated to form a considerable legacy.¹⁸³ Perhaps the most notable is the grant in fee simple of the Berkshire manor of Stanton Harcourt made to him by Roger Mortimer, for his illegal entry into which he had to acquire a royal pardon on 7 October 1327.¹⁸⁴ By 1329 Wyard was even in the position where the king gifted him items from the royal treasury.¹⁸⁵ His prominence at court may also have caused the advancement of at least one kinsman, a Robert Wyard being appointed keeper of Somerton gaol and its appurtenant hundreds on 6 January 1328 at Mortimer's instance.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.377 (11 April 1328).

¹⁷⁹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.238.

¹⁸⁰ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.182.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 1327-30, p.506 (18 April 1330).

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p.536 (29 June 1330) This also applied to his kinsman, Thomas.

¹⁸³ See for example: *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, p.67 (27 January 1328); *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.338, 343 (26 November 1328); *ibid.*, p.504 (23 March 1330)

¹⁸⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.182.

¹⁸⁵ PRO E 101/384/1, f.18r.

¹⁸⁶ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.76.

The majority of appointments probably procured by Mortimer, however, came in areas where Mortimer felt it necessary to bolster his position. Edmund Hakelet was not only restored to the custody of Dinefwr, but on 22 October 1327 he was granted the stewardship of the former Despenser lordship of Cantrefmawr for life. Roger Mortimer's attempts to dominate Wales and the marches continued unabated throughout his ascendancy. Gilbert Ellesfield received the life shrievalty of Anglesey on 29 April 1328 at Mortimer's request, and Thomas Ace was granted that of Caernarfonshire on 17 September 1329.¹⁸⁷ Elsewhere, Roger Chandos continued as sheriff of Herefordshire until replaced on 23 October 1327 by Roger Pichard, only to return on 6 October 1328.¹⁸⁸ John Hinckley, both a former steward of queen Isabella and clerk of Roger Mortimer of Chirk, became sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire on 27 June 1327.¹⁸⁹ In Ireland, Nicholas Turville returned as sheriff of Meath on 28 April 1329 at Mortimer's request, whilst John Stafford, a member of Mortimer's Weardale force in 1327, became serjeant of Meath in 1330, shortly before Mortimer himself gained the shire as a liberty.¹⁹⁰ By the end of August he had acquired the chirographership of the Dublin Bench at Mortimer's request, upon the removal of John de la Bataille.¹⁹¹

Roger Mortimer also seems to have employed several clients to deal with issues in which he had natural interest. On 28 February 1328, for example, Thomas Ace, John Hinckley, William de la Hulle, and John Stafford were associated in a royal commission to inquire into the forfeited lands, tenements, goods and chattels in Shropshire and Staffordshire of Despenser junior, Arundel, and Master Robert Baldock.¹⁹² During the time of increasing tensions towards the end of Mortimer's ascendancy, Richard Hawkeston joined John Hinckley to investigate the activities on the marches of the adherents of Richard of Arundel just days before Mortimer himself was commanded to pursue and arrest the followers of Rhys ap Gruffydd.¹⁹³

Again though, the most obvious signs of patronage came in the increased number of land grants to his followers. Before Edward II's deposition Robert Harley had acquired the manor and forest

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp.88, 148.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p.67, 104.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.51. For Hinckley as Chirk's clerk see: BL Facsimiles 614, f.19r.

¹⁹⁰ For Turville as sheriff, see: *ibid.*, p.132. For Stafford as serjeant, see: *CPR, 1327-30*, p.316. On 18 July 1327 a protection was issued to John and two brothers, accompanying Mortimer against the Scots: *ibid.*, p.147.

¹⁹¹ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.550 (24 August 1330).

¹⁹² *ibid.*, pp.287-8.

¹⁹³ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.181 (4 August 1330); *CCR, 1330-3*, p.51; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.706 (8 August 1330).

of Feckenham on 12 December 1326.¹⁹⁴ On 21 November 1329 Gruffydd de Chirk was granted “*Lercedeaknelande*” near Carmarthen at Mortimer’s request.¹⁹⁵ Favoured institutions were also in line for assistance. On 1 March 1328 not only did Buildwas abbey receive licence to acquire £20 of lands and rents in mortmain, the town of Moneford was granted pontage for five years at Mortimer’s request.¹⁹⁶ Most importantly, Mortimer was repeatedly able to employ forfeited estates as rewards. On 1 February 1329, for instance, Hugh Hakelut, now described as “king’s yeoman”, received the custody of the Herefordshire manor of Kimbolton, a recent escheat of Thomas Wyther, one of those involved in Henry of Lancaster’s uprising.¹⁹⁷ As a result of the contract drawn up in May 1330 for his permanent stay with the king in war, Hugh Turpilton notably received a couple of Devonshire manors, late of the earl of Kent.¹⁹⁸ On 22 September he added the Huntingdonshire manor of Caldicot-under-Brownswood.¹⁹⁹

The examples highlighted above are, of course, only a selection and thus may not fully reflect the volume of favours procured for his clients by Roger Mortimer. Another important consideration in this respect, however, is that, although Mortimer tried to reward those men who had long been in his company, he clearly appreciated the attractiveness of power. Men either with no prior connections to him, or those who had joined him in captivity and exile, would perhaps naturally view him as a vehicle for their ambitions, just as he might regard patronising new clients as crucial to the survival of his regime. Edward III complained that Mortimer had packed the court with a company twice that of the king’s.²⁰⁰ Not only would such a company compare favourably with that of Thomas of Lancaster, but it would also be a monumental step-up from a close following whose size probably fluctuated between about ten and twenty members during much of his career. Even if this is a gross over-estimation, it probably nevertheless reflects contemporary perceptions about the breadth and depth of Mortimer’s influence, and that Mortimer carefully cultivated as much support as possible. Unfortunately, although

¹⁹⁴ *CFR*, 1319-27, p.426.

¹⁹⁵ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.155.

¹⁹⁶ *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.245, 249.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 1327-37, p.118.

¹⁹⁸ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.524.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 1330-4, p.3. This grant was confirmed on the very day of the coup, one of the Mortimer government’s final acts: *ibid.*, p.9.

²⁰⁰ *Rot.Parl.*, ii, p.53.

there could be endless speculation about the affiliations of certain individuals during the regime, only a few names stand out as almost certainly brought into Mortimer's circle of confidants.²⁰¹

Undoubtedly, the most obvious example is that of Simon Bereford. Pardoned for adherence to Lancaster in 1313, returned to parliament for Lincolnshire in 1320, a rebel in 1322, Bereford probably escaped abroad after Boroughbridge and was one of those exiles who sought out Mortimer and Isabella on the continent.²⁰² Clearly, he made a grand impression, for not only did he acquire and keep the southern escheatorship throughout the ascendancy, he was the *only* follower of Roger Mortimer to share his fate after the coup at Nottingham castle.²⁰³ The implication may be that it was he who Mortimer and Isabella trusted above all of their companions and was thus particularly offensive to the king. He was certainly a prime beneficiary of royal favour. On 12 June 1327, just six weeks after his pardon, he received a valuable life grant of Islehampstead manor (Bucks.), late of Despenser junior.²⁰⁴ On 12 May 1328 he received Frithby (Leics.), late of Despenser senior.²⁰⁵ By far the most significant grant, however, was that of the life custody of the royal castle and honour of Tickhill (Yorks.)²⁰⁶ This was complemented on 8 May 1330 by the reward of Torpel and Upton (Northants.), recently forfeited by the earl of Kent, for his contract to stay with the king in war.²⁰⁷

Another notable recruit seems to have been Thomas Blaunkfront whose proximity to Roger Mortimer is confirmed by appointment in 3-4 Edward III [1329-30] to be his attorney to receive the £140 prest for Mortimer's agreement to stay with the king.²⁰⁸ Again his previous connections to Mortimer are obscure. He may have been related to William Blaunkfront who was another pardoned beside Lancaster in 1313.²⁰⁹ Thomas himself does, however, appear alongside Worcestershire rebels forfeited in 1322, several of whom were confirmed Mortimer clients.²¹⁰ Whether his entry into Mortimer's clientele can therefore be traced to this period is difficult to know though. Certainly, he shared the same fate as Joan Mortimer, being imprisoned with her at Skipton, and was then moved as

²⁰¹ There are numerous grants issued "at Mortimer's request" to isolated individuals whose further connection to Mortimer cannot be established. For example, see: *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.145, 149, 159, 198, 200-1, 266, 439, 492, 510-11, 516, 518, 535, 555; *CFR, 1327-37*, pp.60-1, 74, 98.

²⁰² *CPR, 1313-17*, p.24; *P.W.*, II, I, p.224; II, ii, p.201.

²⁰³ *Anonimale*, p.145; *Baker*, p.48.

²⁰⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.104, 125.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.264.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.344. The castle was to be held of Isabella until her death, and then for a yearly rent thereafter.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.529.

²⁰⁸ PRO E 101/384/1, f.11r.

²⁰⁹ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.23.

²¹⁰ *CFR, 1319-27*, pp.85-6 (2 January 1322).

the invasion threat loomed in 1326.²¹¹ Furthermore, the favour he received after the invasion marks him out as an important stalwart of the regime. On 23 February 1327 he was appointed to keep the Warwickshire hundred of Kynnton.²¹² He was clearly an influential personality in that area, for a year later he became sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire.²¹³ Further reward came in a grant of the livestock in the custody of Joan Botetourt, forfeited by Despenser junior, on 13 May 1327.²¹⁴ By 26 December 1329 he was another of those close to Roger Mortimer granted free warren in his demesne lands of the king's "special grace"²¹⁵, and was soon to benefit from the plunder of Despenser junior's former estates.²¹⁶

Perhaps more revealing of Mortimer's loyalties is his maintenance of at least three men involved in his escape in 1323. Remarkably, both Richard Bethune, who was cleared of complicity in 1324²¹⁷, and Gerald Allspeth, a custodian of the Tower, appear as household knights under Edward III.²¹⁸ Richard Monmouth, who had been ensconced in the Tower with Mortimer, became a household squire. All three seem to have been with Mortimer at some time during his exile, Monmouth and Allspeth being pardoned for their escape during the ascendancy.²¹⁹ They appear to have been as favoured as many other Mortimer clients, possibly as much a reward for their utility to the regime as for their assistance in saving his life. Bethune ousted Hamo Chigwell as mayor of London on 7 November 1326, and was one of the masterminds behind the king's deposition.²²⁰ Mortimer granted Allspeth land and rent valued at £40 *per annum* in his Gloucestershire manor of Bisley.²²¹ It was Monmouth, however, who profited most. In fact, he was probably the chief beneficiary of the failure of Henry of Lancaster's rebellion at the turn of 1329. On 16 February 1329 he was granted Grantchester (Hunts.) forfeited by William Trussell. This instantly propelled him into the more senior ranks of the landholding classes. William does not seem to have taken his losses particularly well, for on 27 March 1330 he is found issuing a charter releasing the manor to Monmouth, dauntingly surrounded by

²¹¹ *CCR*, 1323-7, p.590.

²¹² *CMR*, 1326-7, no.104, p.21.

²¹³ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.84.

²¹⁴ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.121.

²¹⁵ *C.Ch.R*, 1327-41, p.138.

²¹⁶ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.166 [Bustesham manor].

²¹⁷ *P.W.*, II, ii, appendix, p.247.

²¹⁸ *CMR*, 1326-7, pp.373-4.

²¹⁹ *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.14 (21 February 1327), 498-9 (20 March 1330).

²²⁰ See above, p.108. For his instalment as mayor, see *CMR*, 1326-7, no.830, p.110.

²²¹ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.240 (28 February 1328).

Bereford and other leading courtiers.²²² Isabella also felt able to reward Richard from her estates as she had done with Bereford. On 19 March Monmouth received her manor of Rowley Regis (Staffs.)²²³ It can only be speculated as to the scale of grants he might have expected had the regime continued. Instead, like Turpilton, he was to suffer the penalty for ultimate loyalty to Mortimer, falling in the Nottingham coup of 19 October 1330.

The case of Richard Monmouth, like that of Hugh Turpilton, is one of the best examples of the benefits that could be accrued by belonging to the relatively close circle of clients, advisers and tenants surrounding Roger Mortimer during his ascendancy. They were fortunate to identify with a man whose exercise of political power has few precedents outside of the monarchical establishment. Nevertheless, it is clear from an examination of his whole career that Mortimer usually attempted, and for much of the time was able, to protect and reward those who were willing and capable servants.

For all that Roger Mortimer's career demonstrates how far *an individual with ability, connections, and good fortune could go*, this was undoubtedly complemented by, and to some extent based upon, the expansion of his familial interests. For all that Mortimer's reputation is based upon calculated exploitation of an adulterous liaison, he was careful to ensure both his close family and more distant kin shared the benefits.

By the fourteenth century the Mortimer name was familiar across the British Isles. The dynasty had, however, splintered into several distinct branches. The most senior, of course, was that of Wigmore with estates in Wales, its marches, Ireland, and several English counties. The Mortimers of Attleborough had long been prominent Norfolk lords. Successive heads, Constantine senior and junior, were rarely, if ever, involved with Roger Mortimer throughout his career, however. Instead, they seem to have gravitated towards Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke.²²⁴ Another branch, of Richard's Castle, were far closer, holding their main estates in Herefordshire and the Welsh marches. They were to die out in the male line in 1304, and played a consequently negligible role in Mortimer's career.²²⁵

²²² *CCR*, 1330-3, pp.132-3.

²²³ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.168. The witnesses to this charter were the earls of March and Warenne, the bishops of Lincoln, Ely and Winchester, and John Maltravers, household steward.

²²⁴ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, appendix 2, p.302. Both were involved as Pembroke tried to raise his ransom from Jean de Lamouilly, p.268.

²²⁵ *CIPM*, IV, no.221, pp.142-4. On the other hand, Mortimer did succeed to certain of their estates, most notably the Worcestershire manors of Coteridge and Wychbold.

The same can perhaps be said for the Mortimers of West Wales.²²⁶ The kinsmen who perhaps contributed most to Mortimer's lordship²²⁷ were the lords of Chelmarsh (Shrops.), established as a cadet branch under Hugh, brother of Roger's grandfather. Hugh and Henry, sons of Hugh Mortimer (d.1317), repeatedly appear in conjunction with their more senior cousin of Wigmore.

Henry Mortimer accompanied Roger to Ireland in 1317.²²⁸ It is possible that he is the as yet unidentified beneficiary of Mortimer's patronage during the lieutenancy. On 1 May 1318 a Henry and Valentine Mortimer received lands in Wardeton forfeited by Walter Lacy.²²⁹ He may also be the same Henry who, along with Valentine, was implicated in Mortimer's plotting in the autumn of 1323.²³⁰ Both Hugh and Henry must have joined Mortimer's rebellion in 1321-2, for both were pardoned and restored. Like so many other intimate clients of Roger Mortimer neither suffered in the long term.²³¹ Indeed, Hugh was even pardoned one-third of his fine to save his life on 26 January 1323 at the earl of Arundel's request.²³² The earl presumably recognised the benefits of followers with possible influence over the tenants of his former rival who, to all intents and purposes, was never going to return. That he did allowed Henry and Hugh to reap further reward. Both were part of Mortimer's domination of Wales. On 26 October 1327 Hugh is recorded as constable of Beaumaris castle, Henry of Conwy for life.²³³ On 2 January 1330 Henry received a life grant of the manors of Kynefare and Stourton with the keepership of Kynefare forest, whilst three months later his brother was granted free warren in his demesne lands.²³⁴

Closer to home, Roger Mortimer could rely on the loyal support of his more direct relations. His mother, Margaret, as has been shown, kept the embers of resistance to Edward II burning in the years of her son's exile.²³⁵ The Mortimer women were incredibly resilient. Joan kept remarkably loyal despite the turbulence of her husband's career, undergoing prolonged imprisonment only to suffer the supreme humiliation of being cuckolded by the queen mother herself. To trace Joan's career is

²²⁶ The problems of identifying individual Roger Mortimers are exacerbated by the presence of a Roger Mortimer of West Wales.

²²⁷ Obviously, the greatest impact on Mortimer's career came for his uncle of Chirk, whose influence I have charted in chapters 1-3.

²²⁸ A protection was issued for his voyage on 30 December 1316: *CPR, 1313-17*, p.620. It is not known whether this is the father or the son however.

²²⁹ *CFR, 1334-8*, p.473.

²³⁰ *P.W.*, II, ii, appendix, p.245.

²³¹ Henry received his Irish lands on 25 March 1322: *CCR, 1318-23*, pp.433, 628. Hugh was released from the Tower on 16 August and pardoned on 30 December: *ibid.*, p.607, 621; *CPR, 1321-4*, p.228.

²³² *CPR, 1321-4*, p.239.

²³³ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.180; *CFR, 1327-37*, p.68.

²³⁴ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.159; *C.Ch.R., 1327-41*, p.161.

²³⁵ See above, p.98.

problematic. Certainly, after the coup she virtually disappears from view, probably residing at Ludlow where she received a gift of a bowl of pears from her son-in-law, Thomas Berkeley, in 1327.²³⁶ This must have been particularly galling, for Joan had performed her primary function marvellously, bearing Roger Mortimer as many as eleven children who served their father equally well and saw the profit of his pre-eminence themselves.

Roger Mortimer's eldest son and heir, Edmund (born c.1302), for example, acted as his father's lieutenant on the Welsh marches in 1327, arresting a renowned Welsh troublemaker, Maredudd ap Einion, at the height of the crisis surrounding the possible liberation of Edward II.²³⁷ Clearly, Roger Mortimer felt he could trust his son's abilities, and maybe intended his appointment to be some kind of apprenticeship for his own later career. Edmund's abilities may well have been recommended to the king too. He entered the royal household in 1327, being knighted beside Edward III at his coronation.²³⁸ Despite intimate involvement in his father's affairs during the ascendancy, he was not singled out for punishment, and was indeed restored to his estates shortly before his death in December 1331. Much the same can be said for his younger brother, Geoffrey (born c.1307), for whom his father had secured an inheritance of considerable worth.²³⁹ In 1323, just as Roger was escaping from prison, Geoffrey inherited his grandmother, Joan de Joinville's French estates in the lordship of Couhé. As has been discussed above, he may well have been able to pressure the French king to aid his father's campaigns in exile.²⁴⁰ During the ascendancy it was he who seems to have played the greatest supporting role beside Roger, ultimately being captured in Nottingham castle.²⁴¹ He seems to have enjoyed a measure of influence at court, procuring a licence for a Gloucestershire petitioner on 2 August 1329.²⁴² He himself garnered valuable royal favour too. On 25 April 1330 he received various forfeitures of Edmund, earl of Kent.²⁴³ On 29 June he gained Musard manor (Gloucs.) from John Maltravers.²⁴⁴ Both brothers had a valuable legacy as their ultimate reward. Roger Mortimer seems to have tried to endow his other sons in a similar way. On 27 August 1328 he and Joan received licence to

²³⁶ Smyth, *Lives of the Berkeleys*, I, p.339. This is the only reference to enable us to locate Joan during the regime.

²³⁷ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.207; *CACCW*, xix, 35, p.102, where it is dated to the years 1317-21.

²³⁸ *CMR, 1326-7*, p.373.

²³⁹ *CPR, 1330-4*, p.183 (21 October 1331).

²⁴⁰ See above, pp.94-101.

²⁴¹ It is possible that Edmund was prone to an illness which led to his early death, and that Roger deliberately ensured Geoffrey was fully involved in his affairs in the event of his heir's death.

²⁴² *CPR, 1327-30*, pp.421-2.

²⁴³ *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, p.176.

²⁴⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.535; BL Add. MS 6041, f.24v.

enfeoff their third son, John, with their Irish properties, probably in an attempt to create a cadet branch of the family across the Irish Sea.²⁴⁵

By far the greatest service his children could perform, and the best profit he could secure for them, however, was as pawns in a policy of dynastic aggrandisement across the British Isles and even onto the continent, through a series of carefully chosen marriage alliances. It is perhaps here that Mortimer had a unique advantage over many of his contemporaries. His production of eleven known children, all of whom survived into adulthood, in the twenty years after 1302²⁴⁶, stands in stark comparison to the barren marriages of Lancaster and Pembroke and the far less fruitful associations of Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser junior. J.R.S.Phillips has also highlighted the transformation wrought in aristocratic society in the early fourteenth century by failure of direct male heirs and prolonged wardships in the earldoms of Richmond, Warwick, Lancaster, Pembroke, and Cornwall.²⁴⁷

It was Mortimer's possession of some of the choicest wardships which allowed him to provide for three of his children. Joan was married to James Audley, heir to sizeable estates in Shropshire, Staffordshire, south Wales and its marches at some time after his father, Nicholas's death in December 1316.²⁴⁸ Agnes was paired with Laurence Hastings²⁴⁹ who after the death of his father in 1325, and the death of Aymer de Valence the previous year, was heir to the sprawling earldom of Pembroke with estates throughout England, south Wales, Leinster, and France.²⁵⁰ There can be no doubt that Mortimer who received the heir's wardship as early into his ascendancy as 15 February 1327 saw him as an ideal vehicle to extend his influence in those areas where he already exercised some power.²⁵¹ G.A.Holmes has even suggested that Mortimer's procurement of the marriage of Aymer de Valence's widow, Marie de St.Pol, for his youngest son, Roger junior, on 8 September 1327, represented an attempt to unite the Pembroke heritage in his hands.²⁵² Finally, Catherine Mortimer wed Thomas Beauchamp, the Warwick heir.

²⁴⁵ CPR, 1327-30, p.317; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.115v, 116r; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

²⁴⁶ Edmund, Geoffrey, John, Roger, Agnes, Beatrice, Blanche, Isabella, Joan, Matilda and Margaret. B.P.Evans did not include Isabella in his genealogical tree, but she is described as Mortimer's daughter when sent to Chicksands priory (Beds.) in 1324: CPR, 1321-4, p.405.

²⁴⁷ Aymer de Valence had no legitimate children, but did have a bastard, Henry, who died before him: Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.18-19.

²⁴⁸ CIPM, VI, no.56, pp.41-3.

²⁴⁹ BL Cotton Nero A, iv, f.58v. (29 May 1328)

²⁵⁰ For fuller details, see Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp. 240-52.

²⁵¹ CFR, 1327-37, p.20. He acquired the marriage two days later: CPR, 1327-30, p.22.

²⁵² Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility*, p.38. Marie, however, was able to escape and the marriage never took place.

By marrying his daughters to the Pembroke and Warwick heirs, Roger Mortimer was thereby re-establishing and firming relationships with important branches of the Marshal inheritance.²⁵³ Scott Waugh has singled out the Mortimer family as a leading exponent of such social endogamy in their marriage policy.²⁵⁴ Roger's own marriage to Joan de Joinville had perhaps been as much down to this consideration as to the understandable wish to expand the family's interests in Ireland and the marches. His aunt, Isabella, had been married to Richard fitz Alan, earl of Arundel; his sister, Matilda, to Theobald de Verdun in 1302.²⁵⁵ This latter relationship had, of course, helped ensure a peaceful settlement of the Louth uprising in 1312.²⁵⁶ It is perhaps in this context that the ultimately unsuccessful plans for a union between Roger Mortimer junior and Joan Butler in 1321 should be seen.²⁵⁷ However, purely in terms of the future networks of allegiance he was to construct, the friendships he wished to honour, and the political consequences of his dynastic policy, three marital alliances in particular demonstrate his ambitions: Matilda to John, son of John Charlton; Edmund to Elizabeth, daughter of Bartholomew Badlesmere; and Margaret to Thomas Berkeley.

It is with pride that the Wigmore chronicler recalls what may have been the first marriage of one of Roger Mortimer's offspring.²⁵⁸ At some time between 1312 and 1319 Matilda Mortimer was betrothed to the son of John Charlton, lord of Powys, in order to cement the excellent relations they had recently forged. The story of Mortimer raising the siege of Welshpool to liberate Charlton from the offensive led by Gruffydd de la Pole has been described at some length above.²⁵⁹ The marriage was but the logical culmination of the development of their relationship.

Although John was Mortimer's senior by about two decades, their careers had overlapped on several occasions, and, as lords of two sizeable marcher inheritances with influence at court, probably shared common interests.²⁶⁰ Both had cultivated the favour of Piers Gaveston and may well have served the latter in his capacity as lieutenant of Ireland in 1308-09.²⁶¹ Charlton even rose to be

²⁵³ His own grandmother was Matilda de Braose, daughter of William de Braose and Eva Marshal.

²⁵⁴ S.L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England: Royal Wardship and Marriage in Eenglish Society and Politics, 1217-1327* (Princeton, 1988), pp.38-45.

²⁵⁵ *CPR, 1301-07*, p.33; *CDI, 1302-07*, p.31.

²⁵⁶ See above, pp.34-6.

²⁵⁷ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.360; *CPL, 1305-42*, p.203.

²⁵⁸ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352. It is difficult to know for sure at what date this marriage took place, though the chronicler places it only a short time after the events he describes.

²⁵⁹ See above, pp.36-9.

²⁶⁰ John only received the lordship of Powys in right of his wife, Hawise de la Pole, on 26 August 1309: *CFR, 1307-19*, p.48.

²⁶¹ For more details of Mortimer's probable links with the favourite, see above, pp.26-8. Protection for Charlton's voyage with Gaveston came on 25 June 1308: *CPR, 1307-13*, p.80.

chamberlain of Edward II's household and perhaps held the post from 1310-1318, despite calls from the Ordainers for his removal.²⁶² After their patron's assassination in 1312 both men belonged to the significant category of magnates who were willing to serve Edward II throughout the tribulations experienced in the middle years of his reign. Moreover, not even the collapse of the fragile peace settlement of Leake could shatter their relationship. When the machinations of Hugh Despenser on the marches emerged into full view, Mortimer could call on Charlton's resources, both men being warned to keep the peace and refrain from making warlike assemblies of men on 27 March 1321.²⁶³ It is conceivable that they fought alongside each other in the actions of the following spring, and Morgan certainly believed Charlton attended the baronial assemblies at Sherburn and Doncaster.²⁶⁴ One important consideration in the discussions concerning the reasons for the Mortimers' unexpected surrender at Shrewsbury on 23 January 1322 may well have been the probable capture of John Charlton at Welshpool some days earlier.²⁶⁵

However, whilst the king clearly held the Mortimers in contempt, Charlton received a fairly swift pardon on 11 September 1322.²⁶⁶ Strangely, his treachery cannot therefore have been perceived as too serious. Having served on the Scottish campaign of 1322, he was later to have accompanied the king to perform homage for Gascony.²⁶⁷ Despite this, Morgan argues "Charlton played a remarkable game of duplicity between 1323 and 1326," communicating with Mortimer whilst displaying loyalty to the king.²⁶⁸ This impression is reinforced by Charlton's capture of the fugitive earl of Arundel on 13 November 1326, and the subsequent delivery of his captive to Mortimer and Isabella at Hereford where he was secretly executed.²⁶⁹ The favour Charlton subsequently received during Mortimer's ascendancy might also support this interpretation. On 6 July 1327 he received wardship of the lands late of John Giffard of Weston.²⁷⁰ Only a few weeks before he had seen his younger brother, Master Thomas,

²⁶² Tout, *Place of Edward II*, appendix II, p.315.

²⁶³ *CCR, 1318-23*, pp.363, 366. Charlton is included in an order to settle marcher disputes on 21 April: *P.W.*, II, ii, pp.159-60.

²⁶⁴ Morgan, 'The barony of Powys,' p.25. For my belief that Mortimer was probably there too, see above, p.80.

²⁶⁵ Morgan has speculated that Charlton was seized by Gruffydd Llwyd: *ibid.*, p.25. On 18 January the king ordered Gruffydd to bring the captive to Shrewsbury. Is it possible that when Mortimer arrived in the town he was confronted by the sight of his captured ally in order to convince him to surrender?

²⁶⁶ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.202.

²⁶⁷ Morgan, 'The barony of Powys,' p.27

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.28.

²⁶⁹ *Bridlington*, pp.87-8.

²⁷⁰ *CMR, 1326-7*, no.140, p.26. On 22 February 1329 he was granted custody of Giffard's heir: *CPR, 1327-30*, p.367.

promoted to be treasurer.²⁷¹ When Adam Orleton procured the bishopric of Worcester against the wishes of the ruling couple, Thomas replaced him. It is possible that Mortimer, who could spend very little time in his lands on the Welsh marches, turned to the Charltons to act in his interest there. On the other hand, it is clear from the parliamentary business enrolled directly after the trial proceedings of Roger Mortimer that Charlton still suffered from the offensive attentions of Gruffydd de la Pole, which no doubt dogged him throughout the Mortimer regime.²⁷² It can therefore be argued that the most important aspect of Roger Mortimer's connection to John Charlton was their common association in the intimate circles of Edward II during the turbulent crisis years of 1316-18, the crucible in which Roger Mortimer emerged to be a real figure of national importance.

In the last week of June 1316 John Charlton was among the guests invited to Earnwood (Shrops.) when Roger Mortimer took the important step of marrying off Edmund, his eldest son and heir. His bride was Elizabeth, the infant²⁷³ daughter of Bartholomew Badlesmere, a Kentish landholder with minor interests in Shropshire, who had until Bannockburn belonged to the following of Gilbert, the last earl of Gloucester.²⁷⁴ On the surface this seems a noble enough marriage, but hardly establishes the pattern of links with families whose territorial interests were similar to Mortimer's own. There seems little doubt that it was probably the most important marriage made for any of his children, however, as the enormous reciprocal recognisances of £20,000 to ensure it went through indicate.²⁷⁵

Roger Mortimer's relationship with Badlesmere was probably of reasonably long standing, though not necessarily of any real depth. Both men had been raised in the household of Edward when Prince of Wales.²⁷⁶ In 1311, if Mortimer of Wigmore campaigned in Scotland, then they were associated in receiving a fine from the county community of Northumberland for failure to react

²⁷¹ Evans, 'Family of Mortimer,' p.238.

²⁷² *Rot. Parl.*, ii, pp.53-4.

²⁷³ It is possible she was about three years old at the time of the marriage, and was Badlesmere's third daughter. She does not seem to have given birth to her first child, Roger, until November 1328: BL Cotton Nero A iv, f.59r.

²⁷⁴ *CIPM*, VII, no.104, pp.89-97; Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, pp.487-88; Phillips, Aymer de Valence, p.144. Badlesmere interestingly held Ideshale manor, and perhaps he is the inspiration behind Richard de Ideshale's accompaniment of Mortimer to Ireland in 1317.

²⁷⁵ Ultimately, though, the agreement stated that if the marriage went ahead, Badlesmere would pay only £2000, whilst Mortimer would provide suitable dower. Elizabeth's dower lands were Stretfield Mortimer (Berks.), Cleobury Mortimer, Bridgwater, Odecumbe and Milverton (Somerset). The arrangements for the marriage can be found at BL MS Harleian 1240, f.113v; Add. MS 6041, f.42v.; BL Egerton Roll 8724, mm.1, 5. Compare the recognisances made with those of £2000 for the marriage in 1319 of Margaret Mortimer to Thomas Berkeley: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.39v.

²⁷⁶ For Badlesmere, see: PRO E101/369/11, f.107.

adequately to a summons to muster.²⁷⁷ Otherwise, evidence for any firmer past connection is slim. So how can the union of their families be accounted for? The clue might come from an examination of other guests at the wedding.²⁷⁸

Alongside Charlton, Mortimer of Chirk and local clients – Edmund Hakelut, Robert Harley, John and Robert Sapy – those attending include Bartholomew and Henry Burghersh, Badlesmere’s nephews, and the two Robert Watevilles, of Orton (Hunts.) and Essex, at least one of whom was retained by Badlesmere, and may have directly represented his interest.²⁷⁹ The presence of Roger Amory and William Montagu, however, might be more surprising. Neither is known to have enjoyed strong affiliations to Mortimer in the past, which makes their attendance the most striking. Moreover, both men, along with Hugh Audley junior, were the rising young favourites of Edward II, whose pernicious pursuit of gain partly engendered the crises of the next two years.²⁸⁰ For Mortimer to be so closely associated with such men might indicate he himself belonged to the group castigated as the “*fautores neqiores*” who had followed Piers Gaveston, and who constituted the personal opposition to Lancaster in this period.²⁸¹

This, however, is likely to be a false assumption, at least initially. It is arguable that these men only really started to accumulate and abuse royal favour from the early months of 1317. Until then, and at the time of the marriage, they, alongside Badlesmere, appear to have adhered to a loose association of more politically moderate courtiers emerging at the time, which, though loyal to the king and eager for reward, made concerted efforts to resolve national difficulties. In all probability, therefore, the marital alliance offered Mortimer the recognition and entrenchment of his position at court and in the country.

²⁷⁷ PRO E101/374/6, f.2; McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, p.53. For evidence of Badlesmere’s service in Scotland, see BL Cotton Nero C VIII, f.67v.

²⁷⁸ For what follows, see PRO DL 27/93. This document is a confirmation by Edmund of the lands with which he intends to dower his bride with the assent of his father. The information it contains is of immense value, and I am very grateful to Ian Mortimer of the University of Exeter for alerting me to its existence.

²⁷⁹ There is nothing to suggest Badlesmere himself attended. Indeed, he may well have been involved in the military activities surrounding his long-running dispute with the burgesses of Bristol. He was certainly at Keynsham by 7 July: Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.103. For the contract of retainer with Wateville “*a tote sa vie en pees et en guerr’ contre totes gentz salve la foi le Roi*”, see BL Egerton Roll 8724, m.6. Nigel Saul has discussed the thorny problems of identifying the two men in ‘The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II,’ pp.13-14.

²⁸⁰ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.194; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.131-5.

²⁸¹ Flores, p.178.

Mortimer's defeat at Kells in December 1315 was not only potentially a personal catastrophe, it was yet another of the many dilemmas facing the government of Edward II.²⁸² For the king himself, this dire situation necessitated a formal recognition of Lancaster's political power in his nomination as "chief counsellor" during the Lincoln Parliament of February 1316. But, as Maddicott and Phillips have amply demonstrated, Lancaster's blinkered pursuit of his own political aims against those of his cousin, and unwillingness and incapacity to participate effectively in government for any substantial length of time, hamstrung the administration and threatened merely to exacerbate problems.²⁸³ Badlesmere himself may have witnessed this firsthand. Not only was he appointed to the largely ineffectual committee instituted at Lincoln to look into governmental reform, on 28 April 1316 he and Pembroke were also associated with Lancaster and his retainer, Robert Holand, in a commission to treat with Bruce. The mission was abandoned, possibly due to doubts over Lancaster's willingness to perform his duties.²⁸⁴ The threat of administrative inertia, increased political tensions, famine, and war appear to have prompted attempts to mediate and address the problems. Indeed, the wedding was sandwiched between two important military campaigns in which Mortimer played a vital role, and which may have served to harden nascent alliances.

On 11 February 1316 Roger Mortimer joined the force abandoning parliament to tackle the increasingly worrying outbreak of violence in Glamorgan. The story of the campaign can be found elsewhere²⁸⁵, but the make-up of the military force is revealing of broader associations. Roger Mortimer arrived at Lincoln for the parliament on, or shortly before, 6 February 1316, having decided not to return to Ireland immediately.²⁸⁶ On that very day, William Montagu and Hugh Audley junior were appointed to head a military detachment to go to Glamorgan. Five days later, the earl of Hereford was appointed captain of the forces due to follow them. His company, which eventually captured Llywelyn Bren, included marcher lords such as John Hastings and Henry of Lancaster. Alongside Roger Mortimer and John Charlton, moreover, were John Giffard of Brimpsfield and Roger Amory. Badlesmere himself may have played an important role too as keeper of Caerphilly castle. Experience at the sharp end and comradeship in common military endeavour may have forged stronger alliances. It can perhaps be speculated that the campaign gave those involved the opportunity to discuss recent and

²⁸² For more detail, see above, p.51.

²⁸³ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp.160-89; Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.95-9.

²⁸⁴ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.101.

²⁸⁵ See above, pp.47-50.

²⁸⁶ PRO C53/102, m.12, nos.36, 37.

impending developments, the uncertainty of a future dominated by Lancaster, and served to harden their resolve to act. If, as in 1312, Lancaster's hand might be suspected behind the actions of Gruffydd de la Pole, this sentiment may have been further enhanced by the outbreak of renewed violence in Powys, possibly sparked by Charlton's departure for Glamorgan.²⁸⁷

Following Bren's arrest most of those involved almost certainly returned to Westminster, Mortimer and Hereford having promised to intercede for their captive.²⁸⁸ Mortimer was certainly there from 6-17 May.²⁸⁹ It is very tempting to therefore connect him with Edward II's letter to Pembroke on 11 May, urging the earl to come to Westminster to render his "good and profitable" advice.²⁹⁰ J.R.S. Phillips believes this marked Pembroke's return to a larger measure of influence to fill the vacuum caused by Lancaster's recent absence on his Leicestershire estates.²⁹¹ Despite opposition to Gaveston as an Ordainer which may have ranged him against Roger Mortimer too, Pembroke was Edward II's most reliable adviser. In the period after Bannockburn, which witnessed somewhat of a fall from grace, he and Badlesmere had regularly been associated. In May 1315, for example, both men were commissioned to liaise with Lancaster to discuss ways to tackle the Scots. Later that year they were contracted to serve on the Scottish marches together.²⁹² His appointment to the reform committee probably brought home the frustrations Lancastrian government might provoke. Pembroke's connection with Mortimer had also been growing. On 4 February 1313 the king had ordered the respite of Mortimer's debts for the relief paid on entering his father's estates on Pembroke's information.²⁹³ This may have been in conjunction with their missions to Gascony.²⁹⁴ Although it is not known conclusively when Mortimer and Badlesmere first contracted their alliance, it is noticeable that on 21 May, only a few days after Pembroke's return to Edward's side, Badlesmere came into chancery to acknowledge a debt to Mortimer of 2000 marks, which seems to be the first documented inkling of what was to come.²⁹⁵ It is therefore conceivable that Pembroke's influence could be behind this agreement.

²⁸⁷ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.184. It is testament to the affinity between the two men that Charlton attended the wedding, his troubles with Gruffydd lingering into the summer.

²⁸⁸ William Montagu perhaps remained behind having been appointed to make local inquiries into the rebels' activities: Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales*, p.88.

²⁸⁹ He witnesses at least three charters within this period: PRO C53/102, m.5, no.11.

²⁹⁰ Phillips, Aymer de Valence, p.101, quoting PRO SC1/49/34.

²⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp.101-2.

²⁹² *ibid.*, pp.88-9; PRO E101/376/7, f.60.

²⁹³ *CCR, 1307-13*, p.566.

²⁹⁴ See above, p.13.

²⁹⁵ *CCR, 1313-18*, p.339. This was cancelled upon payment.

Certainly the actual arrangements for the future of the married couple to some extent reflect courtly influence. On 24 June Mortimer received royal licence to enfeoff Phillip ap Hywel and John Hothum with the bulk of his estates, including those held in dower by his mother, in order that they might re-enfeoff him with remainder to Edmund, so that the future endowment of Elizabeth could proceed unhindered.²⁹⁶ The choice of these men is revealing. Phillip, a Herefordshire landholder, enjoyed territorial connections with the earl of Hereford and Theobald de Verdun, both favoured at court.²⁹⁷ He was the brother of Master Rhys ap Hywel, a leading Welshman whose court connections earned him the lordship of Talgarth in 1309. But, Phillip had long associations with the Mortimers, having acted as Edmund Mortimer's steward of Maelienydd as early as 1297, ultimately being pardoned on Roger's information in 1321 for the pursuit of the Despensers.²⁹⁸ Hothum had equally long-standing associations with Mortimer, as has been outlined above. His very recent mission to Ireland, where the two men had undoubtedly combined to tackle the Bruce threat, had served merely to strengthen bonds which may date back to Gaveston's lieutenancy and beyond.²⁹⁹ Hothum's position on the national stage had, more importantly, been enhanced only days before the wedding, he having been elected bishop of Ely.³⁰⁰

The potential strength of courtly associations was soon to be tested, however, in the cauldron of a new crisis. Just as the guests were massing in Shropshire for the wedding, the town of Bristol had been thrown in to turmoil in the latest instalment of the running dispute between the townsmen and the castle keeper, Badlesmere. On 20 June Pembroke was ordered to inquire and take any action necessary.³⁰¹ He and Badlesmere arrived at Keynsham on 7 July. The townsmen's unwillingness to cooperate necessitated a siege which ultimately ended successfully on 26 July. Badlesmere had been aided in this endeavour by the Pembrokian retainer and local landholder, Maurice Berkeley, William Montagu, whose landed inheritance lay mainly in Somerset and Dorset, and Roger Mortimer, whose interest in the conflict is far more difficult to discern without reference to this set of wider

²⁹⁶ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.491; BL Egerton Roll, mm.1-2. The transfer of lands seems to have been expedited on 3 August 1316: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.40r.

²⁹⁷ Phillip held lands with Roger Pichard in Burghill, Tillington, Kingspyon and Ocle-Pichard, and was sole lord of Michaelchurch: *P.W.*, II, iii, pp.365-6. For his connections with the de Verdons, see *CIPM*, VI, no.54, p.39

²⁹⁸ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' p.194. He witnesses a further two charters of Roger Mortimer in 1316 and 1319: BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.39v., 40r.

²⁹⁹ See above, p.27.

³⁰⁰ Phillips, 'Mission of John de Hothum,' p.76.

³⁰¹ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.489; *CFR, 1307-19*, p.286.

associations.³⁰² It seems eminently possible that both Mortimer and Montagu had come almost directly from the wedding festivities at the request of Badlesmere as it became obvious he was going to need assistance, and knew he could trust their abilities and willingness to work with him.

These abilities were soon to receive due reward. On 23 November 1316 Roger Mortimer was appointed Lieutenant of Ireland, whilst his uncle returned as Justice of North Wales for life.³⁰³ Primarily, these appointments were a serious attempt to address Bruce's offensive that transcended national frontiers. As Phillips noted though, they owed their inspiration to Pembroke.³⁰⁴ An accompanying grant to Mortimer of Wigmore of all lands and rents held of him in Ireland which should escheat to the king, was made on Pembroke's information.³⁰⁵ When the king wished to forward £400 of the 6000 marks promised for Mortimer of Wigmore's voyage, Pembroke and Badlesmere were commissioned to persuade the royal financiers.³⁰⁶ Far from being an attempt to bring the Mortimers into the network of courtiers, it is more likely these were rewards for existing associations.

Crucially, they were only part of ongoing attempts to tie important magnates to the king during his continuing dispute with Lancaster. At around the time of Mortimer's advancement the earl of Arundel became warden of the Scottish marches. Badlesmere, moreover, only two months previously had contracted to stay with the king in peace and war with 100 men-at-arms. His reward was a fee of £600.³⁰⁷ In this context, it is important to note that on 8 November Mortimer witnessed a charter to the burgesses of Harlech at Newburgh alongside Arundel, Badlesmere, Hothum, Warrene, and Despenser junior, who had himself contracted for service on 10 October.³⁰⁸ Such contracts followed the precedent probably established in 1314 by the earl of Hereford. Released from Scottish captivity late in 1314, Hereford contracted to serve with 40 men-at-arms for an annual fee of 400 marks. Thereafter, he joined the king, Pembroke and other courtiers on 2 January 1315 for the interment of Piers Gaveston, the man whose execution he had helped bring about.³⁰⁹ He thus symbolically abjured his previous association with Lancaster which had been effectively broken well

³⁰² *Vita*, p.73.

³⁰³ *CPR, 1313-17*, pp.563-4; *CFR, 1307-19*, p.312.

³⁰⁴ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.106. Phillips has also hinted, and I think very fairly, that Hothum and his intimate knowledge of the Irish situation contributed to this decision: 'The Mission of John de Hothum,' p.76.

³⁰⁵ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.563; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117r.; Add. MS 6041, f.45v.

³⁰⁶ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.608.

³⁰⁷ For details of all indentures to be discussed below, see: Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, appendix 3, pp.312-4 (29 September 1316).

³⁰⁸ *CFR, 1307-19*, p.310.

³⁰⁹ BL Cotton MS Cleopatra D III, f.56v. Roger Mortimer is not named as present, but he may have been one of the unnamed fifty "knights" the Hailes Abbey chronicler mentions.

before Bannockburn. He had also been appointed to the 1316 reform committee. His more recent associations with Roger Mortimer too had tended towards amity rather than the earlier frostiness in relations engendered by a natural territorial rivalry and the former's distaste for Gaveston. Both men were related, of course, Hereford sharing Mortimer's Fienles ancestry.³¹⁰ Moreover, on 28 April 1315 Mortimer, who was about to go to Ireland, had received licence to grant his brother, John, land and rents at Bromsgrove and Norton (Worcs.) at the earl's instance.³¹¹ Whilst Hereford did not attend Edmund's wedding, Master John Walwayn perhaps represented his interests.³¹² Perhaps the most important indenture with Hereford, however, was sealed on 1 November 1316, where he contracted to serve the king in return for a peacetime fee of 1000 marks and 2000 marks in war. The Mortimers' promotions seem therefore to fit a pattern of ever closer links between the king and a growing group of courtiers willing to serve him, perhaps even providing a ready source of military aid when necessary, who would appear to be working towards similar aims. This pattern was extended over the coming year with indentures being sealed with John Giffard of Brimpsfield, William de la Zouche, Roger Amory, and John de Somery to name but a few.

That the likeliest motivation for these men was personal self-aggrandisement, and protection of self-interest, however, must temper any analysis that seeks to find a firmer basis for joint political action. For at the time of Mortimer's lieutenancy, William Montagu had been promoted to the stewardship of the royal household. Two months later he was married to Joan, daughter of the recently deceased Theobald de Verdun.³¹³ At around the same time Roger Amory received his annuity. This set him on the way to an eighteen-month domination of the administration, eventually curtailed by the Treaty of Leake. Indeed, he may have used the vacuum of authority and good counsel brought about by Pembroke, Badlesmere and Hothum's mission to the Curia, launched on 23 December 1316 to negotiate with John XXII on repayment of the huge papal loan of 1313, to push himself into the limelight.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ Waugh, *The Lordship of England*, p.192.

³¹¹ *CPR, 1313-17*, p.276.

³¹² Walwayn is usually described as Hereford's clerk, and this is almost beyond question. For full biographical details, and Denholm-Young's opinion that Walwayn was the author of the *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, see: *Vita*, introduction. On the other hand, he certainly had a Mortimer connection too, having been presented to Old Radnor by Margaret Mortimer, Roger's mother, in 1309: *Reg. Ricardi de Swinfield*, p.539.

³¹³ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.194.

³¹⁴ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.107-8.

Mortimer himself, as with so much of his wider career, is by no means immune from similar doubts over his motivations. The lieutenancy in itself was a singular honour, a title previously occupied by the closest of royal favourites. But during this eighteen-month period he was distanced from court. Moreover, there is some evidence of the persistence of these connections during his lieutenancy. On 24 December 1317, for example, Walter Curtis was named keeper of the writs and rolls of the Dublin Bench by writ of Mortimer as lieutenant *and* at the instance of Pembroke, Amory, John Wogan, and John Hastings.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, upon his recall to an England wracked by the possibility of civil war, Mortimer managed to acquire “the richest prize in the king’s gift,” whilst supposedly acting as one of the principal royal negotiators in the final preliminaries leading up to the Treaty of Leake.³¹⁶ Indeed, his acceptance of the marriage of Thomas Beauchamp on 20 July 1318, just as he was about to set out from Northampton to negotiate with Thomas of Lancaster, may imply his desire to curtail a peace settlement that would be to his disadvantage.

Although this did not cause any breach of faith with the king, Mortimer’s probable duplicity may have begun a process of alienation from the earl of Pembroke. On 31 July, in the midst of peace negotiations, the earl suffered the indignity of an attack on his manor of Painswick (Gloucs.)³¹⁷ The perpetrators were Thomas and Maurice Berkeley, sons of Maurice Berkeley senior, whose father was retained by the earl.³¹⁸ Their gang included William Whitefield, Thomas Bradeston, Thomas Gurney, and John Maltravers. Within a few months, these men had joined the military following of Roger Mortimer.³¹⁹ On 10 May 1319 this new alliance was sealed with the marriage of Thomas Berkeley junior to Margaret, Mortimer’s eldest daughter.³²⁰

Although the reasons for the Berkeleys’ breach from Pembroke are obscure, Phillips speculates that it was caused by Pembroke’s refusal to intervene in the settlement of the estates of the earldom of Gloucester, to which Maurice Berkeley felt he had a claim.³²¹ Maurice was married to the

³¹⁵ NAI RC7/12, p.376. When, during his justiciarship, Mortimer wished to receive arrears of his fee for going to Ireland, which the chamberlain of north Wales was unable to provide, he petitioned Hothum, now the chancellor, to intercede with the king personally: *CCR, 1318-23*, p.179; *CACCW*, xxxv, 195, p.183.

³¹⁶ Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p.225.

³¹⁷ For full details, see PRO Just. I/299/2.

³¹⁸ The indenture is printed in Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.308.

³¹⁹ Even if their later services, as outlined in chapters 3-4 are discounted, Phillips has shown that such men provided Pembroke with a valuable source of men, forming their own sub-retinue in his military following: *Aymer de Valence*, p.305.

³²⁰ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.39v.; Add. MS 6041, f.5v. The agreement was made by Maurice senior, but his own father, Thomas, the family patriarch, contributed too.

³²¹ For what follows, see Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.262-4.

last earl, Gilbert de Clare's stepsister, Isabella, daughter of the previous earl's first wife, Alice de la Marche. Isabella had been excluded from the succession in 1290 by the earl's marriage to Edward I's daughter. Whilst legally, therefore, Maurice's claim was flimsy, if he could muster support at court his hopes of a share might become reality. If Phillips is correct, Maurice approached Pembroke who was related to Isabella, her father being Pembroke's father's elder brother, Hugh XI comte de la Marche and Angoulême. Pembroke, however, refused to co-operate and the partition of the earldom between Amory, Audley junior and Despenser junior, the husbands of the sisters of Gilbert de Clare went ahead on 15 November 1317.³²² This does not, however, explain why the Berkeleys then gravitated towards Roger Mortimer.

It is possible that they viewed Mortimer as a potential new patron and later even as protection from Pembroke's wrath. He too had ancestral connections to Alice de la Marche, his wife's mother being the daughter of Hugh XII, comte de la Marche. Moreover, in their search for a patron, Maurice may have established closer ties with Mortimer through Isabella's proprietorship of lands at Bromsgrove and Norton, lands with strong Mortimer connections. Indeed, Mortimer may have been seen as a viable alternative patron, or as part of a more concerted effort to press their case. Although there is no evidence to prove this, it is possible that Mortimer actually took steps to promote their cause, albeit unsuccessfully, casting him in a far better light than the earl of Pembroke.

Whatever the truth, this connection proved to be one of the most enduring and important of Roger Mortimer's career. When he returned from Ireland in the autumn of 1320 to find Despenser threatening all he had sought to construct, the Berkeleys and their associates rallied to his cause, Thomas junior being pardoned beside Mortimer in August 1321.³²³ Most were forfeited in December 1321.³²⁴ Maurice himself submitted shortly after Mortimer's surrender at Shrewsbury, only to suffer imprisonment for the rest of his life, dying at Wallingford in 1326. Maurice junior and John Maltravers appear to have escaped after Boroughbridge, perhaps eventually joining Mortimer on the continent.³²⁵ More importantly, the supposed plot to seize royal castles by night in 1323 which succeeded, if only briefly, at Wallingford, likely owed its inspiration to the Berkeleys' desire to free their patriarch and

³²² *CIPM*, VI, no.129, pp.81-2.

³²³ *CPR*, 1321-4, p.17. Maurice senior and junior and John Maltravers junior were pardoned at the instance of Roger Amory, p.16.

³²⁴ *CFR*, 1319-27, p.84 - Maurice, Thomas, John Maltravers junior, William de Whitefield and Thomas de Bradeston.

³²⁵ Smyth, *Lives of the Berkeleys*, I, p.247.

their patron. This seems remarkable testament to the vigour of a relationship shaped by war where the punishments were only too imaginable.³²⁶

The civil conflict of 1321-2 built upon some of those connections Mortimer had formed at court. Nevertheless, such men would be far from natural bedfellows. Hereford, beside whom Mortimer led the marchers' campaign of violence and political agitation, was a natural territorial rival. Amory and Audley had driven the country to the brink during the period of his absence in Ireland. Mortimer's participation in the peace negotiations of July-August 1318 might be said to have shown his disgust at their activities. And yet, when crisis struck he could work with them and work well. It was the marchers' efforts which brought the exile of the Despensers on 14 August 1321. Admittedly, the more immediate crisis dictated joint action, but previous experience of operating in a common interest must have smoothed the transition from curialism to rebellion. Indeed, it was even noted by two chroniclers that Pembroke himself adhered to the rebels, if only in secret.³²⁷ Furthermore, as speculated above, Mortimer's marital connection with Bartholomew Badlesmere may have clinched the defection of the king's household steward at Sherburn on 28 June 1321.³²⁸

Of course, this proved disastrous for the contrariant cause in general and for Mortimer in particular, his unwillingness to forsake Badlesmere contributing to his surrender. Moreover, neither Pembroke nor John Hothum³²⁹ felt able to commit themselves fully to the contrariant cause, Pembroke eventually acting for the king as leader of the envoys to discuss Mortimer's surrender in January 1322. Personal self-interest ensured the complete failure of the contrariant ambitions, until, that is, the coup of 1326-7.

A feature of the administration of Roger Mortimer is the survival and exploitation of connections forged in the period 1316-21. Although Bartholomew Badlesmere was executed in 1322, Mortimer tirelessly assisted his widow Margaret in recovering her share of the Clare inheritance in Ireland, having restored her to the tenure of her late husband's English estates as early as 14 December

³²⁶ The same might be said about the marital alliance established with the Grandison family, Blanche Mortimer marrying Peter de Grandison before 10 June 1320: *CFR*, 1319-27, p.26. Peter, a Herefordshire landlord, was another forfeited for rebellion in 1322, despite kinship with the curialist grandee Otto de Grandison.

³²⁷ *Baker*, p.11; *Murimuth*, p.33.

³²⁸ See above, pp.76-7.

³²⁹ Hothum showed his loyalty to the king by appearing at the clerical conference at St.Paul's on 1 December 1321 which decided the Despensers had been exiled in error: *Paulini*, p.300.

1326.³³⁰ Badlesmere's nephews, Bartholomew and Henry Burghersh, however, reaped much greater reward, becoming two of the regime's most stalwart adherents. Henry, of course, was bishop of Lincoln and was a prime mover behind the major events of the 1326-7 coup.³³¹ He became treasurer on 25 March 1327 and later chancellor on 12 May 1328, which he remained until Mortimer's capture.³³² His position at court and in Mortimer's intimate circle during his ascendancy was confirmed by a grant of 2 May 1330, the very time at which other close adherents were being contracted to serve the king.³³³ Much the same can be said for his brother who received manors for life in Hertfordshire, Essex, Northamptonshire, and Surrey, escheated by the earl of Kent, on 3 May.³³⁴ Bartholomew's major official role in the regime was keeper of Dover castle and warden of the Cinque Ports, a sensitive position considering the potential for correspondence arriving from overseas and for invasion. A steady stream of favour flowed his way during Mortimer's ascendancy, particularly as the influence of others ebbed away.³³⁵

Notable among others to benefit from these long-term connections with Roger Mortimer was undoubtedly John Hothum, bishop of Ely. Indeed, it appears that despite his rejection of the contrarians' cause, Mortimer may have wished to use and reward his unquestioned administrative abilities and return the favour procured for him by the bishop during their earlier careers. Hothum, having taken his place on the regency council, was the regime's first chancellor, appointed on 26 January 1327.³³⁶ His rewards were almost immediate. On 21 April he and his successors were granted a yearly fair at Wisbech, whilst on 14 May he received free warren on manors in Warwickshire and Staffordshire.³³⁷ By January 1328 Mortimer was in the position to offer him an invaluable favour - remission of all his debts and acquittance from rendering any account for service in England, Ireland,

³³⁰ For Bartholomew's execution, see: *Lanercost*, p.236; *Murimuth*, p.36; *Walsingham*, p.165. For Margaret's Irish lands, see above, pp.139-40. For her English estates: *CFR*, 1319-27, p.427.

³³¹ For example, he was one of the senior prelates who attended the Bristol "parliament" of October 1326 at which Prince Edward was made *custos regni*: Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.16.

³³² *CPR*, 1327-30, p.58; *CCR*, 1327-30, p.387.

³³³ He received the manor of Wickham (Kent) and the goods and chattels forfeited by Edmund, earl of Kent: *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, pp.173, 177.

³³⁴ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.516.

³³⁵ See, for example, the grant of the Sussex manor of Rye with the town of Winchelsea, awarded him by the queen for his promise to undertake the above office: *CFR*, 1327-37, p.183. See also: *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.175.

³³⁶ *CCR*, 1327-30, p.98.

³³⁷ *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, pp.11, 12.

and Gascony.³³⁸ On 23 October 1328 he was another prominent Mortimer client to receive free warren in certain of his demesne lands of the king's "special grace."³³⁹

By far the most prominent, and indeed notorious, of this group of Mortimer's associates, however, were definitely the members of the Berkeley affinity. The details of Thomas Berkeley, John Maltravers, and Thomas Gurney's involvement in Mortimer's probable manoeuvres to dispose of Edward II do not need repeating. The same can be said of Maltravers's shadowy role in the plot to dupe the earl of Kent in 1329-30. Their contribution to the administration, and the reward they derived from it, have yet to be explored.

After restoration of their estates on 22 February 1327, the brothers Thomas and Maurice Berkeley took on important governmental roles.³⁴⁰ Thomas showed his mettle and utility as chief keeper of the peace in the West Country during the Weardale campaign. Maurice received custody of the vacant manors of Tewkesbury and Sudbury (Gloucs.) on 17 December 1327.³⁴¹ Almost exactly one year later he acquired the keepership of Gloucester castle, a post held by his father at the time of the Despenser war.³⁴² His ultimate reward, however, came on 4 June 1330 when he was granted the farm of Andover (Hants.) for his contract to stay with the king in war.³⁴³

An examination of this phenomenon is especially pressing in the case of John Maltravers junior. From a family with interests in the West Country, but also with lands in Ireland, Maltravers may have been able to extract a share of patronage from the Mortimer government as a man of independent local value. Instead, he seems to have warranted his services to the ruling couple overseas, accompanying their invasion force in September 1326. The volume of patronage that came his way following Edward III's enthronement is striking. Following his pardon for adherence to Thomas of Lancaster, he received his first grant, of lands in Dorset and Wiltshire for life, on 27 March, for services to the king and queen whilst abroad.³⁴⁴ A month later he procured the Northamptonshire manor of Oveston, forfeited by Donald, earl of Mar.³⁴⁵ On 2 July he was granted custody of Alvington,

³³⁸ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.204 (12 January 1328).

³³⁹ *C.Ch.R., 1327-41*, p.91.

³⁴⁰ *CCR, 1327-30*, p.20; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.692.

³⁴¹ *CFR, 1327-37*, pp.73-4.

³⁴² *CPR, 1327-30*, p.345 (26 December 1328).

³⁴³ *ibid.*, p.530.

³⁴⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.59.

³⁴⁵ *CDS*, III, no.915, p.166 (25 April 1327).

held of the honour of Carisbrooke castle (I.O.W.), and on 4 October he added to his haul of important wardships with the lands late of John Giffard of Brimpsfield.³⁴⁶

This merely presaged his advancement to the stewardship of the royal Household on 3 March 1328.³⁴⁷ Despite only a brief tenure³⁴⁸, the rewards kept coming. In October 1328 he was given custody of the Devon stanneries.³⁴⁹ A month later, custody of Carig Cennan castle, late of John Giffard, complemented his hold over the wardship of Giffard's lands.³⁵⁰ His return as steward in March 1329 signalled the respect held for his abilities in administrative circles. This trust was clearly demonstrated further, on 5 April 1329, when he was appointed to keep the southern forests.³⁵¹ As with many others of Mortimer's closest followers, Maltravers reaped the reward in May 1330 for his commitment to stay with the king in war, receiving a life grant of manors in Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Surrey, and Devon.³⁵² Perhaps the ultimate display of the esteem in which he was held at court came in the gift from the king of a silver goblet and ewer in July 1329.³⁵³

Throughout his ascendancy, therefore, Roger Mortimer clearly believed he could trust in the abilities of men with whom he had long-standing and even familial associations. There can be little doubt that in many offices at a national and, in some cases, local level, men who Mortimer had selected dominated affairs. On the other hand, as with his control of the household, this could never be absolute, nor anywhere near it. Too many lords of significant independent standing could hold sway over the areas in which they held the majority of their estates. Henry of Lancaster was not only Mortimer's chief opponent at court he could influence politics across a string of English counties and Welsh marcher lordships. The course that Mortimer and Isabella took necessitated a strategy that was bound to alienate the earl. This was not so in the case of several other prominent figures, and it is noticeable that the ruling couple seem to have put in considerable efforts to attract them into their intimate circles.

On 15 January 1329, just two days after the most alarming rebellion thus far against Mortimer and Isabella had been crushed, and Henry, earl of Lancaster, had submitted, the royal court moved to the relative comfort of St. Andrew's priory, Northampton, where Henry Burghersh, the chancellor,

³⁴⁶ *CFR*, 1327-37, pp.53, 65.

³⁴⁷ Tout, *Chapters*, III, p.43.

³⁴⁸ He was replaced by John de Wysham on 12 May: *ibid.*, p.42.

³⁴⁹ *CFR*, 1327-37, pp.107, 113.

³⁵⁰ *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.117.

³⁵¹ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.128.

³⁵² *CPR*, 1327-30, p.517.

³⁵³ PRO E101/384/1, f.18r.

delivered the great seal to the king. In their moment of triumph Mortimer and Isabella were attended by three men, all of whom played decisive roles in the conflict, and all of whom may be said to have tied their colours firmly to the favourite and his lover's mast. None of them had any notable prior connection with Mortimer himself, but were apparently willing to follow his lead for both profit and influence.

The most senior was John de Warenne, earl of Surrey.³⁵⁴ Throughout the reign of Edward II he had generally supported the beleaguered king, his most notable act being his participation in the abduction of Alice Lacy, wife of Thomas of Lancaster, on 9 May 1317.³⁵⁵ This, of course, precipitated retaliatory strikes against his Yorkshire estates and the loss of his marcher lordships of Bromfield and Yale. Due to this burgeoning enmity, he remained loyal to Edward throughout the crisis of 1321-2 and was actually one of the envoys dispatched to negotiate Mortimer's surrender in January 1322.³⁵⁶ Despite losing valuable estates due to his desire to divorce his wife, the king's niece, he had reached an accommodation with the Despenser regime. This, however, was shattered by news of the invasion, and he rallied to Mortimer and Isabella's cause. He was chosen as one of the regency councillors, possibly due to his recognised distaste for Lancastrian rule.³⁵⁷ This must have made him a desirable ally. D.A. Harding noted that in the first year of Edward III's reign, Warenne is one of the most frequent charter witnesses behind Mortimer and Lancaster.³⁵⁸ The first sign of a personal association with Roger Mortimer, though, comes on 3 March 1328, when both men requested a grant be made to Thomas and *Agnes de Vere of lands late of Robert and Payn Tybotot*.³⁵⁹ Warenne's position beside the ruling couple was reinforced when he was the only earl to attend the marriage ceremony of Princess Joan to David II of Scotland at Berwick on 16 July 1328.³⁶⁰

This, however, may have been because he had effectively chained himself to the ruling couple. On 23 January 1329 payments totalling just under £900 were made to him as part recompense for the indenture he had recently made to stay with the king with 100 men-at-arms.³⁶¹ Increases in the rate of return for the six months from Michaelmas to the end of March suggest that this was almost

³⁵⁴ For full details of his remarkable career, see: E.R.Fairbank, 'The Last Earl of Warenne and Surrey,' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 19 (Leeds, 1907), pp.193-264.

³⁵⁵ Flores, p.178; *Walsingham*, p.148.

³⁵⁶ CPR, 1321-4, pp.47-51.

³⁵⁷ Brut, pp.254-5.

³⁵⁸ Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.71; PRO C53/114.

³⁵⁹ CPR, 1327-30, p.246.

³⁶⁰ Doherty, 'Isabella,' p.250.

³⁶¹ PRO E101/383/14, m.6. It seems, judging from the account made with him, that the indenture stretched as far back as 25 January 1328.

certainly connected with attempts to build up a military force to counteract the unsettling influence of Henry of Lancaster. That Warenne should become involved is not surprising. Not only did he apparently harbour animosity towards the Lancastrian affinity, he appreciated the advantages of staying within the charmed circle around Mortimer and Isabella and ensuring they survived at least a while longer. His loyalty was rewarded. On 16 September 1329 the king gifted him 2000 marks, to be paid from the profits of the first wardships and marriages to fall vacant.³⁶² Eventually, he joined the group of Mortimer's associates that benefited from the downfall of Edmund, earl of Kent. On 5 May he acquired a Kentish manor and shares of the farms of several important towns for life officially attributable to his contract to stay with the king.³⁶³

Another who had so contracted was Henry Percy, the bastion of English lordship on the marches with Scotland. On 13 February 1327 he agreed to defend the marches with 100 men-at-arms, 100 hobelars, and an appropriate number of footmen.³⁶⁴ In essence, this appointment was a sensible response to the deteriorating situation vis-à-vis the Scots.³⁶⁵ However, it seems to have had the further dimension of binding Percy to the Mortimer regime. Throughout 1328 his presence at court spiralled upwards.³⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, this was connected to his campaign for the return of his Scottish lands as part of the peace settlement which was secured by the diligent efforts of queen Isabella.³⁶⁷ He paid the regime back royally, contracting to serve the king with a military force in the crisis months around the turn of 1329.³⁶⁸ His presence in Mortimer circles could still be felt on 12 July 1330, when he witnessed the grant to Mortimer of Hanley castle.³⁶⁹

Nevertheless, probably the most significant of those figures witnessing the handover of the great seal on 15 January 1329 was John Darcy.³⁷⁰ Baron of Knaith (Lincs.), he had spent most of his

³⁶² *CPR, 1327-30*, p.441.

³⁶³ *ibid.*, p.517.

³⁶⁴ *Foedera*, II, ii, p.688. Two days previously he had received Skipton castle to ensure its issues were answered for: *CFR, 1327-37*, p.7.

³⁶⁵ See above, pp.113-14.

³⁶⁶ PRO C53/115.

³⁶⁷ For detailed analysis of the Anglo-Scots peace treaty, see Cameron & Ross, 'The Treaty of Edinburgh and the Disinherited.' For Percy's Scottish estates, see J.M.W. Bean, 'The Percies and their estates in Scotland,' *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, 35 (1957), pp.91-9.

³⁶⁸ PRO E101/383/14, m.6. He was paid for service from 20 December 1328-11 February 1329.

³⁶⁹ *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, p.178; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.42v.-43r.; Add. MS 6041, f.7v. Fellow witnesses include Hothum, Orleton, Gilbert Talbot, the chamberlain, Maltravers, the Steward, and Henry of Lancaster.

³⁷⁰ For full details of Darcy's lengthy career, see Mortimer, 'Lordship and Patronage: John Darcy and the Dublin Administration.'

career in the retinue of Aymer de Valence.³⁷¹ Shortly before the earl's death in 1324 he had left his service to accept the Irish justiciary. There, having successfully, if temporarily, restored a large degree of order to the Lordship's government, he potentially ranged himself against Roger Mortimer, gaining forfeited estates and the custody of Trim castle.³⁷² His alleged part in Edward II's possible schemes to effect an alliance with Bruce and an initial reluctance to accept the appointment of his replacement might have totally alienated him from the ruling couple. This, however, seems not to have been the case. On 25 April 1327 he was granted the custody of the Norfolk manors of Folsham and Aldeby "for good service," until he would receive £100 worth of lands, promised for his contract to stay with the king.³⁷³ Five months later, now a banneret, he acquired the shrievalty of Yorkshire.³⁷⁴ Meanwhile, his prominence in Mortimer government seems to have been affirmed, as it was he who was commissioned to guard the corpse of Edward II during the period of lying in state.³⁷⁵ As rumours of a cover-up were rife, to be in position around the purported body of the monarch implies Darcy had an inside line to the ruling elite, and that they trusted him unreservedly.

Such an analysis might be said to contradict that of Richard Mortimer who has argued that Darcy, whilst holding an important place in governmental circles, owed the advancement of his interests to Henry, earl of Lancaster, and the de Burgh affinity.³⁷⁶ This was an allegiance cemented by Darcy's marriage to Joan de Burgh, aunt of William, the young earl of Ulster. Undoubtedly, Darcy's re-appointment as Irish justiciar on 21 August 1328 partly owed its inspiration to William de Burgh, whose restoration to his Irish estates coincided with the grant. Mortimer, whose appreciation of Darcy's abilities appears most acute, had little reason to install an alternative. Moreover, it may well be that this was one strand in a stratagem to secure Darcy's services for the regime and drive a wedge between him and the earl. If so, the results were more than pleasing.

Darcy was certainly present to witness Mortimer's advancement to the earldom of March in October.³⁷⁷ He later received the valuable manor of Wark-in-Tyndale on 24 November, a time at which Lancaster had begun withdrawing to his estates to prepare for conflict.³⁷⁸ Admittedly, the grant may have been a sop to Lancaster, but a grant to Darcy of £40 on 8 January 1329 at Leicester at the height

³⁷¹ Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, p.309.

³⁷² See above, p.92.

³⁷³ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.38

³⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p.64 (30 September 1327).

³⁷⁵ PRO E101/383/3, mm.2, 5.

³⁷⁶ Mortimer, 'Lordship and Patronage,' p.37.

³⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.32.

³⁷⁸ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.230.

of Mortimer's campaign against the earl surely cannot have been.³⁷⁹ Richard Mortimer has warned against falling into the trap of seeing such awards as Mortimer heaping favour on him. Darcy was indeed a household knight and as such had to remain loyal.³⁸⁰ This is correct. However, such a consideration did not hold back men like Edmund Hakelut, and royal servants like Bartholomew Badlesmere, in the rebellion of 1321-2. Furthermore, a number of the 1329 rebels, including William Trussel, Hugh Audley junior, and Henry Ferrers, were household knights at the time of their rebellion.³⁸¹ Darcy, too, seems to have spent considerable time negotiating the terms upon which he would undertake the Irish justiciarship in 1328-9, witnessing the refusal of several of his suggestions.³⁸²

Nevertheless, while the Lancastrians faced humiliating fines or exile, Darcy accumulated reward. On 19 February he was given a fresh appointment as justiciar, and two weeks later received expenses for his voyage and a quarter of his fee in advance.³⁸³ On 25 April, shortly before he sailed, custody of the peel of Staworth was added to his Northumbrian lands.³⁸⁴ Darcy arrived only to be met by the murder of John Bermingham, earl of Louth. On 2 July, though, he strikingly acquired the wardship of the earl's late lands of Ardee and Donaghmayne.³⁸⁵ As with the life grant of custody of Newcastle McKynegan of 22 September, Richard Mortimer has argued this grant should be seen as nothing more than strategic. Again, there can be little disagreement concerning Roger Mortimer's aims in Ireland, but it does seem likely that he was making efforts to patronise him as well. Darcy's ephemeral military successes in the ensuing months were repayment enough. Richard Mortimer's argument, however, that the grant to Darcy on 31 May 1330 of the marriage of Peter le Poer, the heir to the lordship of Donoil, which fell on the same day as the grant to Roger Mortimer of the wardship of the earldom of Kildare, was purely coincidental, as the council happened to be dealing with Irish affairs that day, is much more difficult to credit.³⁸⁶

Early in 1330 Mortimer felt sufficient trust in Darcy to commission him to lead an English detachment to Gascony. The spring of that year enriched him further via a series of awards.³⁸⁷ The

³⁷⁹ PRO E101/383/14, m.5.

³⁸⁰ Mortimer, 'Lordship and Patronage,' p.38.

³⁸¹ PRO E101/369/11, f.107. All three appear as household bannerets in 1330: *CMR*, 1326-7, p.377.

³⁸² Baldwin, *The King's Council*, pp.473-5.

³⁸³ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.373; *Foedera*, II, ii, p.756; *CCR*, 1327-30, p.439. He does not appear to have taken up his duties before at least 10 May 1329, however, as Roger Outlaw, his deputy, is described as justiciar on 9 May: PRO C143/207, no.26, m.1d.

³⁸⁴ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.385.

³⁸⁵ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.143.

³⁸⁶ Mortimer, 'Lordship and Patronage,' p.42. For the grants, see: *CPR*, 1327-30, pp.527, 529.

³⁸⁷ See, for example: *CPR*, 1327-30, p.538.

most notable was a grant of lands and rents in Lincolnshire and Norfolk in return for his promise to stay with the king in war. If this is comparable to others made to Mortimer clients around this time, there could be little dispute as to where Darcy's loyalties lay. Unfortunately, this is far from clear. The picture is muddled by evidence that Darcy was being retained by the earl of Lancaster in 1330.³⁸⁸ It is conceivable that Darcy had been playing a duplicitous game all along, siding with the two leading political figures as their respective powers waxed and waned. Another possibility concerns Mortimer's ruthless assault on the lands of an Anglo-Irish adherent of Darcy. During Darcy's mission to Gascony in early July, Mortimer's ministers allegedly seized certain of the Meath estates of Herbert Sutton, which the latter held for life of Mortimer's gift, whilst Herbert was in Darcy's company.³⁸⁹ It is also possible that Darcy had genuinely been co-opted into Mortimer's following, but balked at the potential consequences of the murder of the earl of Kent. Lancaster's appearances at court, as on 12 July 1330, may have persuaded him and others of the inherent dangers to king and country of protracted Mortimer government.

The names of at least some of these others may have shocked and disappointed Roger Mortimer. The most notable are undoubtedly Maurice Berkeley and his retainer, Thomas Bradstone, who were in the party which captured Mortimer at Nottingham castle on 19 October 1330. While many others in the *posse* had close connections to Henry of Lancaster, the Berkeleys are more difficult to place. They too may have been outraged by Mortimer's ruthlessness, but as their restoration and enrichment had been founded on his favour, this could easily have been overcome. More likely is the drying up of favour as the distribution of patronage at court narrowed and others in Mortimer's sphere of influence, most obviously their retainer, John Maltravers, received considerable enrichment. A similar loss of favour may indeed have driven them into Mortimer's arms in the first place. In any case, a reversal of fortunes was swiftly experienced after Mortimer's fall. On 31 May 1331 Maurice Berkeley was gifted the former Mortimer manors of Marden and Winforton in Herefordshire.³⁹⁰

This last point, finally, highlights a remarkable phenomenon. Very few of Mortimer's associates, whether clients, allies, or family members, suffered from his downfall, and some, indeed, drew considerable profit. Edward III, in reconstructing English political culture after his coup seems to

³⁸⁸ Holmes, *Estates of the Higher Nobility*, p.67.

³⁸⁹ PRO C47/10/19 (2), (5).

³⁹⁰ CPR, 1330-4, p.148.

have contented himself with scapegoating Roger Mortimer and coming to terms with those whose careers had been based upon the favourite's patronage. Only Simon de Bereford suffered the same fate as Mortimer, although of course Turpilton and Monmouth were killed in the queen's chamber trying to prevent the coup.³⁹¹ Thomas Gurney and William Ockley fled abroad, Gurney supposedly being beheaded at sea some years later in an attempt to silence him so he could not implicate others in the murder of Edward II.³⁹² A manhunt was launched to discover the whereabouts of John Daveril and Bogu de Bayous who had been accused of complicity in bringing down Kent.³⁹³ Although Oliver Ingham, Henry Burghersh, and the Mortimer brothers, Edmund and Geoffrey, were arrested with Mortimer at Nottingham, they were all pardoned relatively speedily.³⁹⁴ Burghersh returned to favour equally swiftly. On 29 October he received licence to impark various of his woods. He was also granted pavage for four years from his town of Newark.³⁹⁵ Forgiveness also came to Mortimer's spy, John Wyard who, on 10 January 1331, received a pardon for adherence to Roger Mortimer and had his lands restored.³⁹⁶

The above does not, however, mean Edward III felt confident enough to maintain such men in his inner circles. A brief glance at the rebuilt household of late-1330 reveals an institution sanitised by the removal of almost all those stained by adherence to Roger Mortimer.³⁹⁷ Of the bannerets only Gilbert Talbot survives, whilst Lancastrians such as Henry de Ferrers and Thomas Roscelyn enter. No other knight whose entry into the household almost certainly owed its inspiration to Mortimer remained to tell the tale. Gilbert, though, was advanced to the justiceship of Wales on 23 October 1330. On 12 December he acquired another Mortimer forfeit, the custody of Builth.³⁹⁸ Other former clients too benefited directly from Mortimer's fall. His former clerk, Thomas Ace, was appointed on 28 October to seize all lands, goods and chattels, late of the earl of March. Robert Harley was similarly appointed in south Wales.³⁹⁹ Two months later Richard Hawkeslowe received commitment of the manors of Hanley (Worcs.) and Tewkesbury (Gloucs.)⁴⁰⁰ The further careers of John Charlton and John Darcy

³⁹¹ *Anonimalle*, p.145; *Brut*, p.269.

³⁹² *Baker*, p.34.

³⁹³ *Rot.Parl.*, ii, pp.53, 55.

³⁹⁴ Ingham was pardoned on 8 December on account of his good service in Gascony: *CPR, 1330-4*, p.22.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.16, 18.

³⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.53.

³⁹⁷ *CMR, 1326-7*, p.377.

³⁹⁸ *CPR, 1330-4*, p.10; *CFR, 1327-37*, p.205.

³⁹⁹ *CCR, 1330-3*, p.66; *CFR, 1327-37*, p.202.

⁴⁰⁰ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.215.

showed similar traits, both men serving as Irish justiciar, and enjoying royal favour well into the 1350s.⁴⁰¹ their experience and local knowledge, as much as their social standing encouraged the young king to maintain and enrich them in his service.

Such, moreover, were the kinds of attractions that convinced patrons of all persuasions of the desirability of recruiting men to their side. Throughout his career Roger Mortimer constantly, and generally successfully, sought both the service and allegiance of men with administrative, military and political competence. More importantly, however, at a local and national level it was Roger Mortimer who was cultivated by a number of men hoping for advancement and royal favour in his company. Although in his early career such hopes might produce limited results, his domination of English, Welsh, and Anglo-Irish political culture from 1327-30 brought a huge variety of men into his company. Not least among such men were those who had become more firmly allied to him by his astute marriage strategy. So astute was it that in May 1328, he could marry his youngest daughter, Beatrice, to Edward, son of Thomas of Brotherton, earl of Norfolk, finally bringing Mortimer more definitely into the royal family.⁴⁰² This is final testament to the influence he could achieve over his peers and the appeal his favour had for them.

⁴⁰¹ Mortimer, 'Lordship and Patronage.'

⁴⁰² BL Cotton MS Nero A iv, f.58v.

CONCLUSION.

When Roger Mortimer faced his judges on 29 November 1330 he was condemned as a notorious traitor. Echoing the “trials” of Lancaster, Despenser, and Kent, Mortimer had the opportunity to defend himself denied. Instead, he was strapped to a hurdle and drawn through the London twilight to Tyburn. There, dressed in the black tunic he had worn to mourn the passing of Edward II, he was hanged on the common gallows, a most excruciating and ignominious end.¹

Initially, local Minorite friars gathered up his corpse.² However, at some point it must have been transferred to Coventry, as on 7 November 1331 Edward III ordered the Franciscans there to release the body to Mortimer’s widow for burial at Wigmore.³ This order was not carried out. In September 1332 Joan had to re-petition the king for delivery. On this occasion she received the blunt response that the body should “remain at peace”, and it is possible that Roger Mortimer did not return to the marches at all.⁴ Why might this have been? Coventry would seem an odd last resting place, until it is remembered that the shamed queen mother had acquired the reversion of part of the city in a settlement of 1327 with Robert Montalt which bore fruit in 1330.⁵ Although exiled from national politics after the coup, Isabella played an increasing role in the city’s politics. It is conceivable that she procured the silent translation of her lover’s body to a location where she could give it greater devotion. By 1332 a more confident Edward may well have been prepared to look favourably upon his mother’s requests. Indeed, Coventry may ultimately be considered a fitting resting place for Roger Mortimer.

Failure to secure the body symptomized the dynastic and political morass into which the Mortimer family plunged in the years immediately after Roger’s execution. His eldest sons, Edmund and Geoffrey, were, of course, seized with their father and incarcerated in the Tower. In common with Edward III’s policy of moderation and reconciliation, though, the brothers did not suffer long-term harm. Geoffrey at least was soon at liberty. On 22 January 1331 he was to be released upon mainprise

¹ *Murimuth*, p.62, n.11; *Anonimalle*, pp.143-5; *Avesbury*, p.285; *Baker*, p.47; *Brut*, p.271; BL Cotton MS Nero A.iv, ff.59v.-60r.

² Thomas Walsingham says that two days later, “*Fratribus Minoribus corpus ejus conceditur et honorifice sepelitur*”: *Walsingham*, p.193. See also: *Bridlington*, pp.101-02; *Lanercost*, p.266; *Anonimalle*, pp.144-5. The Llandaff chronicle places his burial with the Franciscans of Shrewsbury: BL Cotton MS Nero A.iv, ff.59v.-60r. For what follows I am indebted to: Barbara Wright, *The Execution and Burial of Roger Mortimer, first earl of March (c.1287-1330)* (Otley, 1998).

³ *CCR*, 1330-3, p.403; *CPR*, 1330-4, p.213.

⁴ *CAPRW* [61], no. 3028, p.89. Joan’s petition is PRO SC8/61/3027.

⁵ *CPR*, 1327-30, p.96; *CIPM*, VII, pp.335-6.

that he would behave well in the king's realm *without making assemblies*.⁶ On 16 March orders were issued allowing him to slip out of the country and return to the French lands he had inherited from his maternal grandmother.⁷

Edmund's release date, on the other hand, is unknown, but Edward's willingness to conciliate is demonstrated by an inquiry launched on 4 August 1331 to establish Edmund's right to Wigmore, Maclienydd, Cedewain, and Cwmwd Deuddwr.⁸ On 12 October these were restored.⁹ Nine days later his father's goods and chattels in these properties were granted to him.¹⁰ More remarkably, the king does not seem to have wished to suppress the earldom of March, the greatest symbol of Roger Mortimer's rise to power.¹¹ Edward, of course, was in a far stronger position to show leniency. On 18 January 1331 he had detached Denbigh from the Mortimer inheritance, awarding it to his closest ally, William Montagu.¹² Two months hence Edward annexed the lordship of Chirk to the crown forever.¹³ Nonetheless, all seemed set fair for a recovery in Mortimer family fortunes. These prospects were destroyed by Edmund's death at Stanton Lacy possibly on 16 December 1331. Worse still, this precipitated a prolonged period of minority in which the Mortimer widows struggled to maintain the integrity of Roger Mortimer's surviving legacy.

Around the time of her husband's capture Joan Mortimer was with her younger children at Ludlow. Despite royal concern for her welfare in demanding she be undisturbed for her husband's misdemeanours and should receive her expenses from Roger's goods, she lost the estates of her own inheritance in the general forfeiture.¹⁴ By 11 January 1331, however, Mansell Lacy and Wolferlow (Herefords.), as well as her moiety of Ewyas Lacy and lands at Walterstone, had been restored.¹⁵ On the following day the Irish justiciar was ordered to restore her lands and liberties there, whilst the sheriff of Shropshire was commanded to deliver Ludlow and Stanton Lacy.¹⁶ But, on 26 November

⁶ *CCR, 1330-3*, p.178. It is noticeable that the mainpernors included his father's allies, John Charlton, Richard Talbot, Bartholomew Burghersh and John Darcy.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.297.

⁸ PRO C145/112, no.21; *CIM, 1307-49*, no.1137, p.281.

⁹ *CCR, 1330-3*, pp.345-6, 350; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.43r.

¹⁰ *CPR, 1330-4*, p.193; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67r; Add. MS 6041, f.16r.

¹¹ Despite a surviving letter which describes Edmund as "*nuper comitis Marchiae*," it is unlikely that he ever had his title recognised: *CFR, 1327-37*, p.239. The Wigmore chronicler also employs this letter: *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352. Nonetheless, the earldom, unlike those of Carlisle and Winchester, was not put into abeyance, and was revived under his son.

¹² *C.Ch.R, 1327-41*, p.210.

¹³ *CPR, 1330-4*, p.109 (24 March 1331).

¹⁴ *CCR, 1330-3*, p.63; *CPR, 1330-4*, p.13 (26 October 1331).

¹⁵ *CCR, 1330-3*, pp.99, 105.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp.110, 111.

1331 the Irish justiciar was ordered to resume the liberty of Trim as part of the royal scheme to reverse the awards made during the minority.¹⁷

Joan entered her first petition for its recovery at the Westminster Parliament of March 1332, but had to restate her case on 17 June 1332, as well as request custody of her husband's lands during her grandson's minority.¹⁸ Eventual success followed another petition entered at the September parliament, the king ordering the then justiciar of Ireland, Anthony Lucy, and his immediate successor, John Darcy, to restore Joan to her liberty.¹⁹ Any satisfaction Joan might have felt at this proved short lived though. On 3 February 1333 she lost custody of Wigmore and Cleobury Mortimer. Six days earlier they had been committed to Elizabeth, Edmund's young widow, but now Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, received the lands for an annual fee of £230.²⁰ The parlous position of the Mortimer family was reinforced on 13 September 1333 when the king awarded the castle and lordship of Chirk to Richard, the new earl of Arundel, for an annual render of 300 marks.²¹ A year later this increased to a grant in fee.²² In the ensuing twenty years Joan was constantly in conflict with regal authority for control over her lands. The liberty of Trim must have been resumed again, for the king ordered its restoration to her on 12 January 1337.²³ Yet another restoration followed on 7 April 1347, highlighting yet another forfeiture.²⁴ This may have persuaded her of the desirability of enfeoffing her grandson, Roger, who was now approaching eighteen years of age, with the liberty. She entered a petition to this effect on 16 June, requesting custody of Wigmore and other marcher estates in return.²⁵ Her actions may have been motivated by a recognition that young Roger was coming into a position to take on the mantle of her late husband.

Reprising the loyalty and proximity to the crown established by his forebears, Roger matured into one of Edward III's most loyal and able lieutenants. Joining the king's military campaigns on the continent in the 1340s, he distinguished himself at Crécy.²⁶ In 1348 he was one of the founder members of the Order of the Garter. His ultimate reward was the re-establishment of the earldom of March in

¹⁷ PRO SC8/61/3027.

¹⁸ *CPR, 1330-4*, p.347.

¹⁹ *CCR, 1330-3*, pp.489-90 (14 September 1332), 503 (3 October 1332).

²⁰ *CFR, 1327-37*, p.345.

²¹ *ibid.*, p.373.

²² *C.Ch.R., 1327-41*, pp.318-19.

²³ *CPR, 1334-8*, p.348.

²⁴ P.Connolly, 'List of Irish Material in the class of chancery files (Recorda) (C260) in the Public Record Office London', *Analecta Hibernica* 31 (1984), p.11.

²⁵ Connolly, 'Irish Material in the class of Chancery Warrants,' p.15.

²⁶ Ormrod, *Edward III*, p.100.

1354. As Mark Ormrod has pointed out, Edward's generosity did not end there. His influence secured the return of Denbigh from the heirs of William Montagu whose daughter Roger had married. Perhaps more importantly, Roger Mortimer, probably with the king's assistance, was able to come to a private agreement with the earl of Arundel over the lordship of Chirk. A marital alliance was agreed linking the two previously inimical lineages whereby the lordship would revert to the Mortimers.²⁷ Neither his mother nor his grandmother, though, lived to see his eventual reconstitution of his inheritance which was ultimately achieved in 1358.²⁸

Joan Mortimer's remarkable persistence and her grandson's reputation for military ability and service to the person of the king, which bears reasonably close comparison with the early career of his grandfather, finally brought rehabilitation of the Mortimer name. The progress made by the family in the following generations sealed its position at the very pinnacle of English aristocratic society. In 1368 Roger's son, Edmund (d.1381) married into the royal family, wedding Philippa, daughter of Edward III's second son, Lionel, duke of Clarence.²⁹ Ultimately, this gave the Mortimers a claim to the English throne. Indeed, partly as a response to the machinations of his Lancastrian opponents, but partly in respect of tradition for the succession of the nearest heir, Richard II was to name Edmund's son, Roger, as his heir were he to die childless.³⁰ However, Roger's death in 1398 ensured the conflict which brought about the death of Richard II and secured the Lancastrian succession would not be even more fractious. Nevertheless, the Mortimer claim could not be extinguished. Upon the death of Richard, duke of York, at Wakefield in 1460, it passed to his sons, Edward and Richard. The elder Richard was the result of the match between Richard, duke of Cambridge (d.1415), and Anne, the eldest surviving sister of Roger Mortimer. In 1461, in the person of Edward IV, the ancient Mortimer lineage became the blood royal.

With reference to the achievements of Roger Mortimer (d.1282), the grandfather of the subject of this study, J.J.Crump has argued that, "none of his tremendous success would have been possible without the good fortune and tenacity of his predecessors."³¹ There can be similarly little doubt that the Mortimers owed much of their ultimate success to the increase in political influence and expansion of

²⁷ *ibid.*, pp.58, 93.

²⁸ Upon the death of William de Bohun, earl of Northampton, the second husband of his mother, Elizabeth, who herself died in 1355: Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.42. Joan died in 1356 at the age of seventy. In respect of his Irish lands, Roger entered a successful petition in 1355: Connolly, 'Irish Material in the class of Special Correspondence,' p.78; *CCR, 1354-60*, p.163.

²⁹ Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.59.

³⁰ N.E.Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp.396-7.

³¹ J.J.Crump, 'The Mortimer Family and the Making of the March,' p.117.

the family's position and connections within aristocratic society cultivated throughout his whole career by Roger Mortimer, first earl of March.

It is arguable, however, that for all such politicking and the subsequent efforts of individual lords, one of the most crucial elements was the construction and maintenance of a transmarine inheritance. A series of calculated marriage alliances and a stream of patronage throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries created a landed legacy radiating from Wigmore, bridging the Irish Sea, the exploitation of which cannot be divorced from the political achievements of Mortimer lords. These could not have been realized, moreover, without a willingness to establish a *personal* presence in lands separated by great distances, perilous voyages, and distinct political, legal, and cultural codes. As Rees Davies has argued, "great lordship required good management." Capable and efficient administrators were vital, but the personal supervision of the lord was often paramount.³² Established early in the fourteenth century by Roger Mortimer at a time of more general disengagement in cross-Channel landholding within the British Isles, it was a pattern pursued by his successors. Indeed, the third, fourth, and fifth (d.1413) earls of March who, by the marriage of Edmund Mortimer in 1368, had also inherited the earldom of Ulster³³, were to die in Ireland maintaining this connection.³⁴

Primarily in the last two decades historians have increasingly turned their attention to an Anglo-Norman diaspora after the Conquest and the consequent construction of networks of marriage and landholding across national frontiers within the British Isles. Much analysis has focused on the two centuries after 1066, on the creation of a "single aristocratic world that stretched across the Irish Sea,"³⁵ whose origins lay in the Anglo-Norman conquest and settlement mainly of southern and eastern Ireland in the decades after 1170, and whose vibrancy relied on the ebb and flow of men and resources between disparate areas of the British Isles, as well as on the gradual and often piecemeal conquest and colonisation of Wales and Ireland by members of this society.³⁶ Rather less notice has been taken of the

³² Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.199.

³³ Edmund's wife, Phillippa, was the daughter of Elizabeth de Burgh, daughter of William, the previous earl, who was murdered in 1333.

³⁴ Saul, *Richard II*, pp.111, 274.

³⁵ R.F.Frame, 'The "Failure" of the First English Conquest of Ireland,' in idem, *Ireland and Britain, 1170-1450* (London, 1998), p.7.

³⁶ The best overview is undoubtedly Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles*. See also Phillips, 'The Anglo-Norman Nobility.' For a comparison with an individual with similar contacts and concerns to Roger Mortimer, though at a different period, see Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*. For a comparison of a family whose landholding paralleled those of the Mortimers, see Hagger, *The Fortunes of a Norman Family*. The nature of this study does not really provide an opportunity to

fourteenth century developments, particularly during the conflict for hegemony in the British Isles, the period covered by this study. This may be attributed to a perceived increase in absenteeism, as senior English aristocrats gradually withdrew from personal, direct intervention in the management of their Irish and Welsh estates, or even from their possession altogether.³⁷

An exchange with Edward I had removed William de Vescy, a former justiciar of Ireland, from the lordship of Kildare in 1297, for example. Death stripped Carlow and Strigoil, Kilkenny and Glamorgan of more personal lordship. Both Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk (d.1306), and Gilbert de Clare, penultimate earl of Gloucester (d.1295), had visited their Irish estates during the last quarter of the thirteenth century.³⁸ Despite an interest in expanding their position in Ireland³⁹, their successors did not follow this lead: Thomas of Brotherton, Edward II's half-brother, did not venture to Carlow; premature death at Bannockburn extinguished any possibility that Gilbert de Clare, last earl of Gloucester, would emulate his father. Neither man, moreover, could pay adequate attention to their Welsh marcher estates. The benefits of closer intervention, at least in Glamorgan, were fully demonstrated by Hugh Despenser junior from 1317 until his execution.⁴⁰ Even he, however, spent little, if any, time actually on his new estates.⁴¹ As with a personality like Aymer de Valence who, as the senior Marshal heir, inherited the earldom of Pembroke and the liberty of Wexford, involvement in court politics often prevented exercise of hands-on lordship.⁴² Aymer's own demise in 1324 and that of his heir, John Hastings, lord of Abergavenny and Oboy (Leix) in his own right, in 1325, created a more definite breach.⁴³ Furthermore, for Despenser, whose marcher estates were valued annually at around £1000, there might have been less incentive to intervene on the ground when such lands constituted just one element of a larger whole. Meanwhile, at a lower social level a number of families like the Pipards,

explore the Scottish dimension to this phenomenon which has received equal, if not greater, attention. It is, however, addressed, for instance in G.W.S.Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (Oxford, 1980.)

³⁷ The problem of absenteeism in Ireland is dealt with in Frame, *English Lordship*, pp.52-74. See also, Frame, *Political Development*, p.183, where the author argues for a more general disengagement in Ireland by English nobles.

³⁸ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.52.

³⁹ Gilbert de Clare, for example, procured a grant of the issues of the vacant bishopric of Down on 24 February 1314: *CPR, 1313-17*, p.89.

⁴⁰ See above, chapter 3.

⁴¹ The surviving letters to his steward of Glamorgan, John Inge, testify to this: *Cartae*, III, pp.1063-5, 1075-6.

⁴² For Aymer's estates, see Phillips, *Aymer de Valence*, pp.239-252.

⁴³ For John's death, see *CFR, 1319-27*, pp.326-7 (27 January 1325.)

who held sizeable estates in Louth and Surrey, cut their losses and abandoned Ireland for good, whilst in the Welsh marches numerous dynasties suffered extinction.⁴⁴

When, on 9 April 1306, his patrimonial inheritance was forwarded to him, Roger Mortimer received assorted lands in southern and western England, title to the lordship of Wigmore and its appurtenances in the Welsh marches, and a collection of estates in the Lordship of Ireland.⁴⁵ In theory, this entered him into this nexus of aristocratic, cross-Channel connections. In practice, however, his predecessors had not taken up the challenge. In 1247 Matilda de Braose, co-heiress to the Marshal inheritance, brought her husband, Roger Mortimer, lands at Dunamase (Leix), giving the Mortimer family a foothold in Ireland.⁴⁶ The uncertainties of Henry III's reign and Roger's own successful campaign to expand his rights on the Welsh marches militated against any personal stake in the management of his Irish lands.⁴⁷ Following his death in 1282 Matilda quitclaimed Dunamase to her son, Edmund.⁴⁸ Pre-occupied by warfare in Wales and Scotland and protecting his marcher liberties from royal assault, Edmund was unable to visit Ireland. On 28 April 1302 he enfeoffed his daughter, Matilda, and new son-in-law, Theobald de Verdon junior, heir to the western half of Meath, with the castle and land of Dunamase.⁴⁹ By the time Roger Mortimer acceded to his father's estates, therefore, he might persuasively be counted amongst the absentee lords of Ireland, destined to concentrate on the Welsh march. At least up until his surrender in 1322, however, he made every effort to buck the trend of disengagement, making anything up to six return journeys, spending six years in Ireland in total.⁵⁰ Indeed, Robin Frame contends that, "as early as 1327 only the Mortimers remained as a major English family with a lively interest in Ireland..."⁵¹ What prompted this apparent change of direction?

⁴⁴ B.Smith, 'The Concept of the March in Medieval Ireland: the case of Uriel,' *PRIA* C 88 (1988), p.267. Such Welsh marcher dynasties included the Mortimers of Richard's Castle (1304), the FitzHerberts of Blaenllyfni and Talgarth (1307), the Tonys of Elfael, and the Genevilles and de Verdons of Ludlow and Ewyas Lacy (1314-16), the demise of all of whom benefited Roger Mortimer at some point during his career. For a more comprehensive list, see Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.48.

⁴⁵ *CCR*, 1302-07, p.377. For full details of his landed inheritance, see: *CIPM*, IV, no.235, pp.157-65. For the lands he accumulated throughout his career, see Appendix 2, pp.253-60.

⁴⁶ J.R.S.Phillips, 'The Anglo-Norman Nobility,' p.91.

⁴⁷ This issue is discussed below, p.223.

⁴⁸ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117r; Add. MS 6041, f.45v. (29 June 1284)

⁴⁹ *CPR*, 1301-07, p.337; *CDI*, 1302-07, p.31.

⁵⁰ As will be observed from chapters 1 & 2, the arithmetic here is far from simple, as the source material and Roger Mortimer's ability to melt into the background dictate only tentative conclusions concerning his precise whereabouts at any one time. For an attempt to rectify this problem see my itinerary in Appendix 1. The years in which he can definitely be shown to have crossed to Ireland are 1308, 1310, 1315, 1317, and 1319.

⁵¹ Frame, *English Lordship*, p.53.

The key was his marriage settlement. As heiress to Ludlow and Ewyas Lacy, Joan de Joinville must have been viewed as a most satisfactory match, especially in terms of widening the Mortimers' influence across the March.⁵² But, as heiress to her grandmother's portion of the Lacy inheritance in Ireland, she must have seemed an ideal vehicle for the advancement of the family's interests throughout the British Isles. The prospect of the receipt of the lordship of Trim, one of the great liberties of the Lordship of Ireland, which was profitable, widely anglicised, and within easy reach of Dublin, must have been alluring. Even so, it is conceivable that Roger Mortimer, were he to imitate the absentee lordship exercised by the lords of the other Leinster liberties in the early fourteenth century, could have managed his new acquisition at a distance. A combination of factors dictated a more proactive brand of cross-Channel lordship.

First and foremost, the liberty's value made it worth fighting for.⁵³ One of the first acts undertaken by the new lord of Wigmore betrayed his intentions and new perspectives. At some point in 1307 he successfully petitioned for the restoration of Dunamase⁵⁴, and requested licence for Geoffrey de Joinville, his wife's grandfather, to lease all the lands of her Irish inheritance that he held.⁵⁵ The exchange was expedited late in 1308, upon Roger Mortimer's first venture across the Irish Sea.⁵⁶ Other factors were the vulnerability of his lands and the necessity of imposing himself on a community which had no intrinsic loyalty to his name.⁵⁷ Before his first venture to Ireland in the autumn of 1308 concerns were being expressed about the safety of Leix from Irish attack.⁵⁸ About a year later Trim was invaded by the forces of John fitz Thomas whilst Roger was in England.⁵⁹ Inherent loyalty to the lordship itself, and the desire to defend their property, as well as Roger Mortimer's rapid accumulation of a solid stock

⁵² The marriage is discussed above, p.14.

⁵³ Professor Frame estimates the liberty to have been worth approximately £300 *per annum* during the period of its forfeiture from 1322-7. This sum, though, must have been adversely affected by the years of the Bruce invasion. Its probable value in 1308 may have been rather higher. In any case, it compares favourably with the value of other liberties, Kilkenny, for example, fetching £100 *per annum*: Frame, *English Lordship*, p.65. Details of the value of certain of the estates pertaining to the liberty can be found in: *Calendar of the Gormanston Register*, eds. J.Mills & J.McEnery (Dublin, 1916), pp.10-11, 181-2. See also: A.J.Otway-Ruthven, 'The Partition of the de Verdon lands in Ireland in 1332,' *PRIA C* 66 (1967), pp.410-11.

⁵⁴ An inquest of 1306-08 found that Roger's inheritance lands at Dunamase and elsewhere were worth an impressive £69.13s.5d. See *Rep.DKI* 39, p.32.

⁵⁵ *CPR, 1307-13*, p.33; Connolly, 'Irish Material in the class of Special Correspondence,' p.56. The licence was officially granted on 24 December 1307, nine days after Edward II had ordered delivery of Roger's own inheritance lands: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.114v.; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.; *CCR, 1307-13*, p.15.

⁵⁶ He arrived around 27 October 1308: *Laud*, p.337.

⁵⁷ These are issues discussed in far more detail in chapters 1 & 2, but without this more explicit emphasis on the transmarine aspects of Roger Mortimer's career.

⁵⁸ *RCH*, p.7, no.9 (2 August 1308.)

⁵⁹ *CCR, 1307-13*, p.188.

of support during the six months of his first visit, proved enough inspiration for his men to repulse the aggressors. However, after Mortimer's defeat at Kells in December 1315, Trim fell prey to the Scots and their allies, and suffered devastation for several years. On the Scots' retreat from Limerick in 1317 they were able to rest at Trim before returning to Ulster.⁶⁰

Chief amongst the Scots' Anglo-Irish allies, of course, were Joan's relatives, the de Lacys of Meath. It may well be that they provided an alternative focus for men in the liberty, particularly on the occasions when Mortimer was out of the country. Certainly, when, in February 1317, they were tried for aiding the Scots in their campaign of 1315-16, no one could be found who was willing to condemn them.⁶¹ Clearly, Mortimer could not just impose his will on his lordship. On the other hand, as soon as he was able to launch a military attack, he readily accumulated support from powerful men in the locality. Although he was now the king's representative and could represent his campaign as a struggle for justice for the king, such support could surely not have been cultivated and organised without the personal connections established by his previous willingness to move amongst his men in Ireland.⁶² Indeed, while more permanent residency in Ireland was not his long-term intention, it is possible that from 1310-13, at least, his lordship may have acquired an air of permanence. It would always be useful for his public image that several of his children may have been born there. Certainly, Irish annalists made careful mention of his arrivals and departures before his lieutenancy demonstrating the importance attached to his presence locally.⁶³

Furthermore, there seems little doubt that Mortimer bound himself to a proud tradition of transmarine lordship, wishing to emulate the itinerant habits of his predecessors. Geoffrey (c.1226-1314)⁶⁴, brother of Jean de Joinville, biographer and seneschal of St.Louis, had enjoyed a long and fruitful career, including service in Gascony, Wales, and Scotland, and a close relationship with Edward I. As husband of Matilda de Lacy, he came into the possession of half of Meath, Ludlow, Ewyas Lacy and Weobley, as well as estates in several English shires, to add to his own continental holdings. Much of his later career was spent in Ireland, where he served as justiciar from 1273-6. It would surely not be too fanciful to imagine a scene whereby an aging Geoffrey, shortly before he

⁶⁰ *Clyn*, p.13; *Grace*, p.81; *Laud*, p.353.

⁶¹ *Chartularies of St.Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ii, pp.403-05. The jurors included important members of leading local families, the Cusacks, Naptons, Repenteneys, Londons, even his wife's uncle, Simon de Joinville: BL Additional MS 4792, f.211.

⁶² Richard de Burgh, it should be remembered, was abandoned by his earldom of Ulster during the invasion.

⁶³ *Laud*, pp.337-8, 339; *Grace*, p.59.

⁶⁴ For what follows, see *Complete Peerage*, V, pp.628-31.

retired among the Dominicans of Trim⁶⁵, imparted advice on how to deal with such a multi-faceted enterprise from his lifelong experience. While Mortimer of Chirk may have been young Roger's "mentor", in terms of the maintenance of a transmarine legacy he may have viewed Geoffrey as a role model and fount of knowledge. Geoffrey himself, moreover, may have imitated Walter de Lacy, lord of Meath (1190-1241), who made at least thirteen crossings between his Welsh and Irish estates from 1204-37, another possible pre-cursor for Mortimer's actions.⁶⁶

The purpose of this study has been to illuminate the wider dimensions to the political turbulence of the early fourteenth century, and to demonstrate that Roger Mortimer was one of the most prominent players on the British stage. Despite D.A Harding's analysis that Mortimer's pursuit of his own interests in Ireland led to a neglect of his Welsh marcher patrimony,⁶⁷ there could never be any doubt, as Geoffrey and Walter's careers had shown, that *all* parts of the inheritance were treated as one. There seems little value in repeating the evidence outlined throughout the analysis of Mortimer's career merely to reiterate the point. On the other hand, some more general comments might prove useful.

In one important respect Roger Mortimer had a conspicuous advantage not shared by his contemporaries. Throughout his early career he could voyage to Ireland safe in the knowledge that his uncle of Chirk would be attending to his interests on the March.⁶⁸ Moreover, with Chirk as Justice of Wales his passage to and fro across the Irish Sea, and that of communication between his officials, might be smoothed considerably. This must have eased the necessity for eternal vigilance and speeded reaction to crises, as, for example, in 1312, when Mortimer was able to deal very effectively with trouble in Louth and Powys, or in 1320 when news possibly arrived in Ireland of Despenser's machinations on the marches.

Secondly, Roger Mortimer's early career and reputation were shaped by the constant shuttling between his Welsh and Irish estates. Alongside induction into the ways of warfare and lordship he created a network of contacts and landholding on either side of the Irish Sea. Whilst there is no evidence of men from the Lordship being granted lands in the Welsh marches, numerous marchers received Irish estates. Robin Frame has shown that whenever Walter de Lacy journeyed to Ireland he entered an environment in which he felt comfortable, having encouraged his English and marcher

⁶⁵ *Laud*, p.337 (17 November 1308.)

⁶⁶ Frame, 'Aristocracies and the Political Configuration of the British Isles,' p.154.

⁶⁷ Harding, 'The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer,' p.102.

⁶⁸ Gilbert de Clare may, however, have employed the talents of his cousin, Richard, lord of Thomond who, on 14 December 1314, ultimately received custody of Gilbert's Irish estates: *CCR, 1313-18*, p.139.

tenants to settle in Meath.⁶⁹ The same is true for Roger Mortimer. Perhaps the initial frostiness of his reception and his inability to carry the Meath tenantry with him in the acquittal of the Lacys forced such a strategy upon him. Following the defeat and exile of the Lacys he set about reconstructing landholding in the region, introducing men he could trust. One of his closest military adherents, Hugh de Turpilton, received the forfeits of Walter fitz Walter de Say in Tobbyr near Dunlovan and Martry.⁷⁰ Richard de Ideshale, a Shropshire client, was granted lands at Foukeston near Dublin.⁷¹

Crucially, Mortimer appears to have been as keen to cultivate men from the Lordship too. Conspicuous amongst them are his kinsmen Valentine and Henry Mortimer, strengthening the familial connection in Wardeton.⁷² The Drogheda merchant, William de Preston, was granted Arthurstown.⁷³ The king perhaps consented to this policy, granting John de Athy, commander of the flee which conveyed Mortimer to Ireland as Lieutenant, the Meath manor of Dissard on 20 March 1318.⁷⁴ Conversely, Edward was sufficiently attuned to the situation to clamp down and attempted to divert these resources to his own profit. On 5 July 1319 he forbade Mortimer, then the justiciar, to assign lands at Portlek in Meath, late of Hugh de Lacy, “as the king is given to understand that the aforesaid lands are very useful...”⁷⁵ Under a year later a chamberlain of the Dublin exchequer, Thomas de Hereford, was granted the lands for service in the Bruce invasion.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Roger Mortimer may eventually have been able to forge an identity of interest among this new tenantry, giving far more people a stake in the peaceful maintenance of his lordship. Moreover, on sailing for England in both 1318 and 1320 he may well have felt confident in the knowledge that he was leaving men capable of defending his interests.

In many ways his final abandonment of Ireland in 1320 to counteract Despenser machinations on the march marked a watershed in Roger Mortimer’s career - and perhaps betrayed his own perception of where his best interests really lay - but his continued pursuit of an integrated strategy during the civil war belies the reality in this regard. Most notoriously, during the plunder of Despenser junior’s marcher lands in May 1321, Mortimer spirited his replacement as justiciar, Ralph de Gorges,

⁶⁹ Frame, ‘Aristocracies and Political Configuration,’ p.155.

⁷⁰ *RCH*, p.24, nos.150, 154; p.26, no.210 (Tobbyr); p.21, no.5 (Martry.)

⁷¹ *RCH*, p.23, nos.97, 114.

⁷² *CCR*, 1334-8, p.473 (1 May 1318)

⁷³ *Calendar of the Gormanston Register*, pp.53-4 (31 March 1318.)

⁷⁴ *CPR*, 1317-21, p.126.

⁷⁵ “*datum est nobis intelligi quod terre et tenementi...utilia sunt*”: PRO C54/136, m.1; *CCR*, 1318-23, p.91.

⁷⁶ *RCH*, p.26, no.23; Connolly, *Exchequer Payments*, p.273.

away to imprisonment at Wigmore.⁷⁷ There is evidence to suggest he also singled out Irish tenants for rough treatment. Probably in 1324 John fitz Simon, who had been awarded Kildalkey by Mortimer during his lieutenancy, complained that he had later been imprisoned at Mortimer's behest at Dover castle and forced to give up these lands.⁷⁸ What his "crime" had been is not known.

Remarkably, Mortimer's tactics after his escape from the Tower in 1323 bore this transmarine stamp too.⁷⁹ Evidence presented by double agents pointed to what appears to be a co-ordinated strategy linking men in England, Ireland, and Wales. Amongst those accused of forming the gang to assassinate the king's most intimate allies was Roger de Offeton of Stretfield Mortimer (Berks.) who led a sizeable group from Wigmore and Radnor, explicitly demonstrating the potential links between different constituent parts of an inheritance. At the same time Mortimer appears to have been in contact with former ministers and allies in Ireland. The king's reaction to Mortimer's scheming is as revealing. It is very noticeable that Edward thought it necessary to place Mortimer's estates in the hands of men he implicitly trusted and of significant local military standing. Edmund, earl of Arundel, for example, gained custody and ownership of Gwerthrynton and Cwmwd Deuddwr in July 1325.⁸⁰ Rhys ap Gruffydd, the leading Welshman in south Wales, received Narberth on 24 March 1326.⁸¹ In Ireland the custody of Mortimer's caput was committed to the justiciar, John Darcy.⁸² Moreover, the king awarded his Irish lands to those with a significant local presence, like Thomas fitz John, earl of Kildare⁸³, but also to those with strong transmarine links. Milo de Verdon, for example, received Martry and Dissard.⁸⁴ It is certainly worth speculating that Edward was confident enough in these transmarine measures against Mortimer's position to believe he might be able to flee to Ireland in 1326 to seek safety.

Reflection on the past historiography of the subsequent ascendancy of Roger Mortimer might, though, provoke the conclusion that the transmarine element to Roger Mortimer's career became divorced from his pursuit of power from 1327-30.⁸⁵ The tremendous concentration of his time on Isabella and the court, and his pervasive acquisitiveness in Wales and the marches, might dictate

⁷⁷ See above, p.75.

⁷⁸ Connolly, 'Irish Material in the class of Special Correspondence,' p.25; *CPR, 1321-4*, p.406.

⁷⁹ For what follows, see *P.W.*, II, ii, Appendix, pp.244-9.

⁸⁰ *CFR, 1319-27*, p.353 (13 July 1325.)

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.383.

⁸² *RCH*, p.34, nos.21, 69; p.36, nos.98, 102-3.

⁸³ On 1 July 1324 he received custody of Dunamase: *CFR, 1319-27*, pp.288-9.

⁸⁴ *CPR, 1321-4*, p.277 (26 April 1323.)

⁸⁵ The obvious exception is Professor Frame's *English Lordship*, pp.174-96.

restricted involvement with his cross-Channel interests. Certainly, his receipt of a licence on 27 August 1328 to enfeoff his son, John, with all his lands in Ireland in fee tail could be interpreted as an attempt to cast off these estates and to establish a cadet branch of the family in Ireland.⁸⁶ After all, this was his second attempt so to do, the first failing upon the death of Edmund Butler. In 1321 Mortimer had agreed an alliance with his former deputy whereby his youngest son, Roger, would be enfeoffed with the same lands to take into marriage with Edmund's daughter, Joan.⁸⁷ However, it seems doubtful that a withdrawal from transmarine politics and associations ever entered his mind.

Firstly, his marriage policy bore a strong "British Isles" stamp. In September 1327 Mortimer again tried to find a bride for his youngest son, Roger junior being granted the marriage of Marie de St.Pol, dowager to the vast inheritance of the earldom of Pembroke.⁸⁸ Around Whitsuntide 1328 Mortimer's daughters, Agnes and Beatrice, married respectively the heirs to the earldom of Pembroke with its appurtenant liberty of Wexford, as well as Abergavenny and Oboy, Laurence Hastings, and the lordships of Strigoil and Carlow, Edward, son of Thomas, earl of Norfolk. The future of his family could not, therefore, be detached from the nexus of aristocratic connections that criss-crossed the British Isles.

Secondly, although Mortimer's crowning achievement was the creation of the earldom of March, with all its implications on the frontiers of Wales, his parallel construction of an empire in miniature in Ireland must rank a close second.⁸⁹ Perhaps the most noteworthy element of this campaign was Mortimer's assault on Louth, and its appropriation. His manoeuvres to gain privileged jurisdiction across Meath deserve attention, for they involve the exploitation of the dynastic catastrophe in the family which probably bears closest comparison to the Mortimers in terms of their transmarine profile. The original partition of Walter de Lacy's lordship of Meath between Geoffrey de Joinville and John de Verdon, husbands of the co-heiresses, had occurred in 1244.⁹⁰ At that time the lordship had been shorn of its liberty status. However, in 1252 Henry III restored this privileged position to Geoffrey's portion which was centred on Trim. Despite Theobald de Verdon's 1280 petition for similar treatment for his portion, which had its chief centres at Loughsewdy and Duleek, neither Edward I, nor his son,

⁸⁶ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.317; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.115v., 116r.; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

⁸⁷ *CCR, 1318-23*, p.360.

⁸⁸ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.166 (3 September.)

⁸⁹ See above, p.143.

⁹⁰ *CDI, 1171-1251*, no.2699 (13 June.)

was prepared to assent, and the lordship remained shired.⁹¹ Theobald tactically divided his time between his English estates, which mainly included Alton (Staffs.) along with half of the marcher lordships of Weobley, Ludlow and Ewyas Lacy, and those in Ireland.⁹² His son, however, despite being employed as justiciar in 1313-14⁹³, spent almost all his career as an absentee, courting Elizabeth de Clare, leaving the administration of his lands in the hands of his brothers, Milo and Nicholas, and effectively letting his claims lapse, which his death in July 1316 fully achieved.⁹⁴ Roger Amory, who married his widow, showed no inclination to visit Ireland or press his rights.⁹⁵ Although the inquisition of *quo warranto* launched in Meath at the height of the civil war of 1322 stripped Trim of its liberty status, Mortimer, facing no solid familial opposition from the de Verdons during his ascendancy, was able to seize the exercise of jurisdiction in the western half of Meath, but with the cognisance of *all* pleas, the prerogative that the unfortunate de Verdon lords of the fee were consistently denied.⁹⁶ Again, Mortimer proved the benefits of vigilance and giving attention to all spheres of his inheritance, whatever the distance.

This was perhaps best displayed at a more mundane level. As Justice of Wales from February 1327 Roger Mortimer could control sea access to the Principality and would be in a far better position to correspond with Ireland. His appointment of Gilbert de Ellesfield, on 29 April 1328, to the life shrievalty of Anglesey must have developed this further.⁹⁷ Moreover, during the ascendancy, as throughout his career, a detachment of officials from his English and marcher following, with impeccable transmarine credentials, manned important positions in and around the liberty. William de Cleobury, who had experienced life as escheator of north Wales and had served as treasurer of Trim, was appointed Mortimer's Irish attorney on 4 March 1327.⁹⁸ He had also been parson of Trim, but was

⁹¹ Connolly, 'Irish Material in the class of Special Correspondence,' p.25; *CCR*, 1279-88, p.58.

⁹² He spent twelve years in Ireland between 1277 and 1302: Smith, 'The Concept of the March,' p.266.

⁹³ *CPR*, 1307-13, p.568 (30 April 1313.)

⁹⁴ Smith, 'The Concept of the Medieval March,' p.267.

⁹⁵ Only six weeks after delivery of the inheritance attorneys were appointed in Ireland for two years: *CPR*, 1317-21, p.68 (4 January 1318).

⁹⁶ *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, pp.176-7; NAI RC 8/15, pp.586-9 (25 April 1330). The same right was also granted to the Mortimers in Louth on 23 June 1330: *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, pp.175-6; NAI RC 8/15, pp.597-8; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.124r. For the following analysis, see H. Wood, 'The Muniments of Edmund de Mortimer,' pp.312-55. It is also worth speculating that the recognisance for £10,000 drawn up in Mortimer's favour by Thomas de Furnival, one of the co-parceners of the de Verdon inheritance, at some time during the ascendancy, had some connection with Mortimer's usurpation of the family's undoubted rights in Meath: *CCR*, 1330-3, p.470.

⁹⁷ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.88.

⁹⁸ *C.Ch.W.*, 1244-1326, p.296; *CPR*, 1340-3, p.283; *ibid*, 1327-30, p.23.

superseded by Robert le Poer, treasurer of Dublin, and former chamberlain of north Wales.⁹⁹ Nicholas de Turville returned as life sheriff of Meath on 28 April 1329.¹⁰⁰ Nicholas de Verdon, who seems to have curried favour with the ruling couple in England in 1327¹⁰¹, had clearly gained sufficient trust to be appointed to the stewardship of Trim on 12 June 1330.¹⁰²

Such evidence may perhaps gainsay Professor Phillips's statement that, "at the level of practical administration, it is likely that the Irish and Welsh lordships were separate entities."¹⁰³ The situation was not so clear-cut, and to test such analyses it is finally necessary to examine Mortimer *lordship in more detail. However, before this is launched, it is crucial to remember that the nature of Roger Mortimer's inheritance went beyond purely the transmarine. His creation as earl of March provides an insight into how he wished to be perceived by contemporaries. For all of the title's continental connotations, it is clear that it was his construction of an "empire" nominally outside royal authority in the borderlands of Wales which he aimed to parade in public. Furthermore, though, it may be said to highlight the "marcher" status of his Irish lands too, and a perceived triumph in a struggle throughout his career to come to terms with a vast inheritance carved out in frontier conditions, which required knowledge of, and adaptation to, a set of circumstances shaped by both close similarities and inherent differences, and perhaps even an ability to translate experience of frontier lordship in one arena to lordship over the other. For while Roger Mortimer is best remembered as a lord of the march of Wales, it was in Ireland from 1308 onwards that his active career began.*

The concept of the "march" has become one of the major talking points in the history of the medieval British Isles, having a variety of interpretations depending on geographical context.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ NAI RC 8/15, pp.548-50.

¹⁰⁰ *CFR*, 1327-37, p.132.

¹⁰¹ On 5 October he is recorded as "going to Ireland" from England: *CPR*, 1327-30, p.175.

¹⁰² NAI RC 8/15, p.609.

¹⁰³ Phillips, 'The Anglo-Norman Nobility,' p.92.

¹⁰⁴ For Wales the work of Professor Davies is indispensable: R.R.Davies, 'Colonial Wales,' *P&P* 65 (1974), pp.3-23; idem, 'Race Relations in Post-Conquest Wales: Confrontation and Compromise,' *Transactions of the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion* (1974-5), pp.32-56; idem, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties in the March of Wales, 1066-1272,' *TRHS*, fifth series, 29 (1979), pp.41-61. For an unsurpassed over-arching study see idem, *Lordship in the March of Wales*. See also the pioneering work of Professor Rees: William Rees, *South Wales and the March, 1284-1415: a Social and Agrarian Study* (Oxford, 1924.) In the Irish context, in recent years there have been a number of localized case studies of particular interest: Frame, 'English Chiefs and Irish Officials in the Fourteenth Century,' pp.249-78; Cormac O'Cleirigh, 'The Problems of Defence: a regional case-study,' in J.F.Lydon (ed.), *Law and Disorder in Thirteenth Century Ireland. The Dublin Parliament of 1297* (Dublin, 1997), pp.35-56; Ciaran Parker, 'Paterfamilias and Parentela: the le Poer lineage in fourteenth-century Waterford,' *PRIA* C 95 (1995), pp.93-117; Smith, 'The concept of the March in Medieval Ireland: the

Generally speaking, it can be seen as "...a tract of debatable land separating one country or people from another,"¹⁰⁵ where cultures grated against one another. By the early fourteenth century, Ireland, due to the incomplete nature of the original conquest and an inability by the settler community to overcome the native population, was a land interlaced with marches. It was consequently a country at war, mainly at a highly localized level within and between the different communities. Only in the south and east did settlement bear any real stamp of permanence and domination.¹⁰⁶ The Mortimer lordship of Trim principally belonged to this latter category. Certainly the area surrounding the caput was one of the most settled, anglicised regions of Ireland, where lordship perhaps most strongly resembled that prevalent in England.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, by the original partition of Meath, the lord of Trim had not merely received a number of contiguous, manorialized estates. As Professor Otway-Ruthven has demonstrated, Mortimer inherited lands in western Meath, Longford, Offaly, and Cavan, districts of more uncertain control.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Professor Frame has argued that Trim always retained a distinctive marcher character despite its settlement, as the invasion of John fitz Thomas's forces in 1309 reiterated.¹⁰⁹ More obviously, Mortimer's tenure on Dunamase seems to have been particularly fragile. An extent taken after his surrender in 1323-4 revealed that the castle had been burnt down by the Irish of Leix, leaving it uninhabitable, whilst the surrounding area lay waste and in Irish hands.¹¹⁰

Such a scenario therefore required military preparedness, leadership, and the ability to marshal forces quickly. From the very beginning of his career Roger Mortimer had to be on his mettle and learn on the hoof. In a situation in which marches were seen as a "perversion" of the ideal, and the usual exercise of lordship with its concomitant rights and privileges was threatened, efforts were, of necessity, concentrated on restricting them as far as possible.¹¹¹ It would thus be a significant advantage for him to have established semi-residency during the 1310s, while his defeat at Kells and

case of Uriel.' More recent developments have led historians to attempt to place their own work in a wider British context: Davies, 'Frontier Arrangements in Fragmented Societies: Ireland and Wales,' pp.77-100; Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles*, pp.169-224.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, 'The concept of the March,' p.257.

¹⁰⁶ Even here, the Irish of the Wicklow mountains (O'Byrnes, O'Dempseys) could occasionally pose a serious threat to Dublin: Frame, 'English Officials and Irish Chiefs,' p.250.

¹⁰⁷ I am very grateful for the corrective advice of Professor Lydon on this point.

¹⁰⁸ Otway-Ruthven, 'The Partition of the de Verdon lands,' pp.410-11.

¹⁰⁹ Frame, 'Power and Society in the lordship of Ireland,' p.16.

¹¹⁰ PRO C47/10/18 (17). The Lordship's ministers could no longer raise revenue for no Englishmen remained. An inquisition of 1331, moreover, reveals that his former manors of Rathwire and Rathfaigh had been heavily scarred by Irish incursion: PRO C145/112, no.3, m.2.

¹¹¹ Smith, 'The concept of the March in medieval Ireland,' p.258.

subsequent flight was a potential disaster, leaving the field open for the O'Mores and the Lacys.¹¹² To some extent, though, he was always working within certain parameters. His predecessor, Geoffrey de Joinville, had negotiated a series of military arrangements with the lords of Meath, including specification of the arms and armour they should possess. In 1290 his tenants forced a restatement of the local custom upon him, "that they who are maintained in all things upon the cost of the lord, if they take horses and other animals, that the lord ought to have half, and they who are upon his cost have the other half..."¹¹³ In a society where raiding and counter-raiding was part of the lifeblood of lordship this was a significant concession. In war, although the evidence is very minimal, the relationships he enjoyed with the majority of his tenants seem productive enough. Defeat at Kells masked the accumulation of an enormous local force under his unofficial leadership, while the campaign against the Lacys proved he could quickly rally significant local support.

In the Welsh marches, conversely, this military *raison d'être* had been virtually extinguished by the Edwardian conquest of Wales in the 1270s and 1280s. Only during his intervention in the disputes over Powys and Hugh Despenser's subversion of marcher custom did Roger Mortimer wield a sword in anger.¹¹⁴ This is not to say that he could drop his guard, but rather that marcher lordship here now operated under a distinctive set of assumptions and everyday practice. The march of Wales, which was as much a political and psychological as a physical construct, comprised a set of consolidated blocs of territory lying on the frontiers of the Principality, administered in the interests not of the crown, but of the individual lord. Nominally, therefore, they remained outside the bounds of English common law and were subject to a myriad of legal custom built up over the centuries since the Conquest. Due to the slow progress of conquest and colonisation, such privileges were claimed by a mixture of "ancient conquest", stemming from the century or so after the Conquest when individuals carved out lordships in the name of the king, and by royal grant in more recent times as a reward for those who had assisted in the subjugation of the Welsh. In this respect Mortimer's inheritance was nothing out of the ordinary.

Roger Mortimer, of course, belonged to an ancient dynasty which first laid claim to Wigmore in the eleventh century. The ebb and flow of military fortunes on the March in the next two centuries

¹¹² See above, p.45.

¹¹³ "*quod ipsi qui sunt in omnibus super custum domini si ceperint equos vel alia animalia quod dominus inde debet habere medietatem et ipsi qui sunt super custum suum habebunt aliam medietatem...*": *Calendar of the Gormanston Register*, pp.10, 182.

¹¹⁴ Such an assertion of course does not take minor skirmishing with the aim of maintaining or restoring order at a local level into account, events which largely escape documentation.

witnessed the dramatic expansion of the inheritance.¹¹⁵ But in the lifetime of his grandfather the family enjoyed its greatest military and legal successes to date. Roger senior was able not only to acquire several appurtenant lordships, but also to extend Mortimer jurisdiction substantially on the Middle March. Thanks to his companionship with Edward I and relaxation in the royal imposition of its rights on the March, Roger was able to extract Radnor, Knighton, Norton, Chelmarsh, and Cleobury Mortimer from the scope of common law jurisdiction in the 1260s.¹¹⁶ Maelienydd and Gwerthrynion were seized from Welsh hands after a bitter struggle; Ceri and Cedewain, though, came to Roger Mortimer on 6 January 1279 as a result of royal favour.¹¹⁷ The acquisition of Chirk by his son, Roger, in 1282, mirrored this process.¹¹⁸ Yet even with royal favour, this trend could not persist indefinitely. The unfortunate recipient of the royal backlash, inspired by Edward I's notorious pursuit to regain what he perceived to be lost rights, was Roger senior's eldest son, Edmund, who throughout the 1290s faced challenges to his franchises.¹¹⁹ As heir to the traditions of service to the crown and the independence of the marcher lords, however, Roger Mortimer further developed his marcher inheritance during the reigns of Edward II and his son to a point where Rees Davies considered Wigmore to be "the greatest of marcher inheritances of the fourteenth century."¹²⁰

This is most patently demonstrated by the attachment of Cwmwd Deuddwr and Denbigh to the Mortimer patrimony. More infamous are his repeated attempts to exercise lordship over the lands of the earls of Arundel. As with royal lordship, lord-tenant relations and the reciprocal arrangements of loyalty and service, protection and privilege, were initiated by the swearing of homage and fealty. In May 1321, whilst Roger Mortimer led the marcher lords' assault on the lands of Hugh Despenser, he usurped the homage and fealty of Arundel's tenants in Clun, a scandalous breach of the marcher custom which his recent campaign had claimed to uphold.¹²¹ Although the respective situations were reversed following Mortimer's surrender, he wasted little time in imposing his authority on all of Arundel's marcher estates after his coup.

¹¹⁵ The best account of this process is Crump, 'The Mortimer Family and the making of the March.'

¹¹⁶ Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, pp.17, 25; Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' pp.364-7. For the grant by Henry III that Cleobury be exempted from the suit of county and hundred courts and from ministerial interference, see: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.54r.

¹¹⁷ BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67r.; Add. MS 6041, f.16r. The order for delivery was issued a day later: *CFR, 1272-1307*, p.106.

¹¹⁸ *C.Chanc.R., 1277-1326*, p.223.

¹¹⁹ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' pp.367-76.

¹²⁰ Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.24.

¹²¹ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p.352.

Such chicanery was also witnessed within Mortimer's own sphere of influence. Shortly after Mortimer's surrender the abbot of Cwmhir in Maelienydd petitioned the king, protesting that Mortimer had stripped the abbey of the franchises it had enjoyed in its lands for generations, including the prized right of taking venison.¹²² Suspicion might also be aroused as to Mortimer's intentions upon receipt of licence on 19 November 1328 to build a pond and watermill, the most profitable of all instruments of seigniorialism in the marches, on the river Clwyd in his lordship of Denbigh, attach it to the royal lordship of Teigengel at Llewenni, and hold it in fee simple.¹²³ Royal lordship was not, however, the only target. Mortimer's unscrupulous pursuit of his own interests even prompted him to "ride roughshod over family ties and affection."¹²⁴ Despite the crucial role his uncle had played throughout his career, Mortimer had himself declared heir to the lordship of Chirk as soon as his coup had succeeded, negating the claims of his surviving cousins, Roger and John. In March 1328, "in a brazenly cynical act of magnanimity,"¹²⁵ Mortimer re-granted only the commote of Pencelli to Roger for the nominal service of a rose.¹²⁶ Ultimately, Chirkland became annexed to the Mortimer patrimony and passed to future earls of March.¹²⁷

Throughout his career Roger Mortimer had carefully encroached on the rights and jurisdiction of others in the marches. But as a marcher lord he himself possessed a stock of seigniorial privileges, some of which had been forged in the crucible of conquest, others being appropriated from defeated Welsh authorities. As effectively sovereign within their territories, Mortimer and his fellow lords marcher claimed sole fiscal, legal, and economic jurisdiction over their tenants. The courts were their courts, the tolls, rents and renders filled their coffers, instead of filtering back to Westminster. He had the right to adjudicate in legal disputes, even with the powers of pardon, issue his own weights and measures, regulate trade, and had prized seigniorial rights to wardship and custody of heirs, to make his – often exorbitant – profit from mills, and to exercise personal jurisdiction over the forest. Most aspects of daily life, therefore, were usually controlled in his interest. It is interesting that a similar situation prevailed in Ireland.

¹²² *CAPRW* [40], no.1972, pp.54-5.

¹²³ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.335.

¹²⁴ Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.47.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p.48.

¹²⁶ BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.43-44r.; Add. MS 6041, f.7v. (20 March 1328.) Basically, Roger was left only with his mother's lands in Brecon and Tedstone Wafers.

¹²⁷ See above, p.209.

G.J.Hand has argued that, in general, the great liberties of Ireland more closely resembled the great English palatinates like Durham than the lordships of the Welsh March.¹²⁸ This may be so, but at least in the case of Trim itself Mortimer may have been able to adapt his experiences on either side of the Irish Sea reasonably swiftly, and feel comfortable exploiting his rights in a legal environment with certain aspects of which he was familiar.¹²⁹ Despite a prolonged and periodically successful royal assault on the franchises claimed by Geoffrey de Joinville,¹³⁰ Roger Mortimer entered into a unique position in the Lordship. Only his liberty of Trim retained the so-called “four pleas” of arson, rape, forestalling, and treasure trove, elsewhere reserved to crown jurisdiction. Moreover, recent royal concessions had ensured that, as in the Welsh marches, no man of the liberty could be summoned to answer a charge outside, and that the lord had the privilege of return of writs.¹³¹ Mortimer’s attorneys certainly asserted the former on a number of occasions.¹³² Alongside these special privileges, the liberty court of Trim had a “distinct upper court”, where ministerial activities might be examined.¹³³ Within the limits of his liberty, therefore, as was the case on the marches, Mortimer could exercise an unparalleled sovereign jurisdiction. This had irked Edward I, but it was his son who eventually managed to return the whole of Meath to shire government. He took advantage of the civil war to initiate proceedings of *quo warranto* in Ireland in February 1322.¹³⁴ The Mortimers’ attorneys attempted to show their warrant for the liberty went back to Walter de Lacy, an essentially reasonable argument. The king’s pleader, however, managed to demonstrate that in the reign of Edward I, Geoffrey de Joinville and his wife had claimed jurisdiction from the gift of Henry III. Following his triumphant coup, however, Mortimer quickly had his liberty restored. As with his activities in Wales, this would not be the end of the story. Mortimer was able not only to bring western Meath and Louth

¹²⁸ Hand, *English Law in Ireland*, p.113.

¹²⁹ It is difficult to approach firm conclusion in this matter, for the evidence is simply too sparse, few records existing relating solely to the liberty’s internal affairs.

¹³⁰ Edward I repeatedly stripped Trim of its status and tried to return it to shire administration, as he had achieved with the de Verdon portion of Meath, although the full restoration in 1303 seems to have signalled a temporary ceasefire. The best account of the jurisdictional disputes is in Hand, *English Law in Ireland*, pp.123-7. See also: Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland*, nos.51, pp.37-9 (1294); 58, p.47 (1297); 65, pp.54-5 (1301).

¹³¹ Hand, *English Law in Ireland*, pp.117, 125 (1290).

¹³² NA1 RC 8/10, pp.286, 291, 300; RC 8/11, p.778 (1316).

¹³³ Hand, *English Law in Ireland*, p.117.

¹³⁴ Full details of the inquiry can be found at: BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.118-120.

within his compass¹³⁵, he was also able to extend the franchises he enjoyed in Trim over his new acquisitions, an amazing usurpation of royal prerogative and precedent.¹³⁶

On a daily basis, too, there was a degree of similarity in the management of Mortimer's transmarine inheritance. On both sides of the Irish Sea, due to the incomplete and piecemeal nature of conquest and settlement, Mortimer was necessarily involved in relationships with settler and native communities alike. However, both between and within his lordships he would have to come to terms with ethnic diversity which had created stark contrasts in the rights and obligations enjoyed by different groups and often bred discrimination, suspicion, and tension.

In Ireland, whilst his English tenants lived under common law jurisdiction, usually owing military service, rent, and suit at court, the Irish communities which fringed his lands were almost exclusively frozen out. The prevalence of marches, at least away from Trim, and the consequent absence of definitive limits to properties and jurisdictions, and of effective institutions to enforce order, fostered an atmosphere of constant petty warfare. For Roger Mortimer, therefore, lordship may have taken on the appearance of international relations. Not only would he have to show competent military leadership and a thirst for battle, were his rights to be protected or even extended, he would also need to "fathom the workings of Irish tribal politics."¹³⁷ In one sense the Irish had to be respected and treated as something approaching equals, even if this was not how they might be popularly regarded in the settler community.¹³⁸ The lord of Trim claimed the exclusive right to make "private truces" with the Irish, provided the justiciar was not campaigning against them, which was a crucial device to create breathing space in conflicts, but which was frowned upon by the administration.¹³⁹ Moreover, it appears that Mortimer might have entered into an arrangement with a handful of local chieftains. In 1350 a deed was drawn up between the earl of Kildare, Maurice Sionnach, "king" of Fartullagh (Westmeath) and Kilcarney (Offaly), and Fergal Mac Eochagain, "duke" of Moycashel, whereby the two chieftains were to serve the earl against all men except Joinville's heir.¹⁴⁰ This was an agreement that perhaps reflected earlier dealings with the first earl of March, even if it probably related to the soon-to-be second earl. It was exactly this kind of experience, as much as the construction of

¹³⁵ See above, p.143.

¹³⁶ *C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, pp.175-7; *CPR*, 1327-30, p.538; NAI RC 8/15, pp.586-9, 597-8; BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.115, 124r.; Add. MS 6041, f.45r.

¹³⁷ Frame, 'English Officials and Irish Chiefs,' p.251.

¹³⁸ J.F.Lydon, 'The Middle Nation,' in idem (ed.), *The English in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1984), p.13.

¹³⁹ *Calendar of the Gormanston Register*, pp.181-2.

¹⁴⁰ Otway-Ruthven, 'The Partition of the de Verdon lands in Ireland,' p.413, n.57.

relationships with the leading members of the Anglo-Irish community, which recommended Roger Mortimer to Edward II as an ideal choice to be Lieutenant. At a time when any number of the Gaelic kin groupings of Ireland needed to be dealt with carefully, whether by military or diplomatic means, the chief governor required “a stock of knowledge which could only be gained in Ireland”¹⁴¹, and Roger Mortimer may well have accumulated the necessary experience to take up the challenge.

Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly in the Welsh marches that Mortimer could exploit the real potential of his rights as a frontier lord. The nature of the construction of his inheritance, as outlined above, had created a patchwork of lordships starkly divided on ethnic lines. The settler community dominated lowland Radnor, for example, the natives the upland districts. Chirk, Gwerthrynion, Maelienydd, and Cwmwd Deuddwr, on the other hand, had hardly been affected by alien incursion.¹⁴² This meant that Mortimer had to operate two distinct legal codes. The settlers in his manors and boroughs shared the perceived benefits of English law – primogeniture, female succession, dower, and freedom to trade – but also had to submit to tenure by knight service, commercial restrictions, and payment of rents, tolls, and relief. As opposed to Mortimer’s relations with Irish native communities, his lordship over the Welsh was definably tenurial and circumscribed by what English commentators might perceive as arcane and, to some extent, barbaric laws – partibility among heirs, but exclusion of women, death duties, animal renders, a myriad of long-standing personal amercements and fines. Conversely, they retained a certain flexibility which gave Mortimer opportunity to exploit and extend his already burgeoning portfolio of rights, particularly among the communities of unfree tenants.¹⁴³

Servile status survived across the Mortimer march. Especially in the Welshries Mortimer benefited from a raft of hauling, grinding and building services, often based around the seigneurial mill, one of the most profitable instruments of lordship. Indeed, in 1337 the Mortimer mills produced an income of £108 from fines and services, which made up a sizeable portion of the entire annual revenue of £600 from all services.¹⁴⁴ In the field Mortimer could call on compulsory labour for reaping, sowing, and marling.¹⁴⁵ Customary tenants, moreover, often had to contribute to communal heriots, such as the *commorth* or cow-render. Purveyance, a cause for great complaint against Edward II early in his reign, had long been *de rigueur* in Mortimer lordships. On the other hand, whilst traditional

¹⁴¹ Frame, ‘English Officials and Irish Chiefs,’ p.261.

¹⁴² Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, p.304.

¹⁴³ What follows is only a brief selection centred on Roger Mortimer, first earl of March, B.P.Evans having explored this issue in considerable detail, but with regard to the whole family from 1066-1413.

¹⁴⁴ Davies, *Lordship in the March of Wales*, pp.127-8.

¹⁴⁵ Evans, ‘The Family of Mortimer,’ pp.401-03, 441-442.

renders survived, helping to stock the lord's castles and manors and reinforce his pre-dominance in the lives of ordinary people, it appears that commutation gradually became the order of the day during Mortimer's career.¹⁴⁶ Not only did the agricultural focus of Mortimer lordship shift from labour intensive arable farming in areas like Wigmore, Chirk, and Radnor towards large-scale sheep rearing, the political aspirations of Roger Mortimer dictated an even greater drive to raise money rather than payment in kind.¹⁴⁷ This often meant a deliberate increase in the burden facing the tenantry.

Perhaps most outrageous to modern sympathies is his exploitation of the custom of *amobr*, the Welsh virginity tax, levied when a woman first indulged in sexual intercourse. Its potential for profit was most apparent in Maelienydd, where Mortimer was able to raise it "on all occasions of intercourse."¹⁴⁸ In Chirk both he and his uncle attempted to ratchet up the pressure on their tenants. Substantial increases have been noted in the levy of *treth mud*, a tax for licence to harbour cattle safely in wartime.¹⁴⁹ Probably the most important constituent element in Roger Mortimer's drive for profit, however, was the full exploitation of his legal privileges. It seems that while other marcher lords accumulated most profit from the usual sources of rents and renders, in some areas Mortimer relied far more heavily on court issues. In 1323 fines and amercements raised 40% of total revenue. By 1357 they contributed 60% of the total in Maelienydd. Bearing such evidence in mind, it is not difficult to explain the eruption of violence around the time of Roger Mortimer's capture and execution in 1330.

The exercise of a particularly harsh brand of lordship on the marches had long distinguished Mortimer lordship. His relations with Welsh-speaking communities had always been problematic. The misdemeanours of Mortimer and his uncle, the Justice, in assaulting Welsh custom, had brought loud protest from the Principality in 1322 that neither should be shown any mercy after their surrender.¹⁵⁰ In 1330 concerted attacks were launched against the instruments of Mortimer lordship. On 20 October, the day following Mortimer's capture, Gruffydd Llwyd *de Melverley*, accompanied by certain Englishmen, entered Chirk castle and seized the receiver's clothes and bedclothes. Meanwhile, men from Arundel's lordship of Oswestry breached the castle's parks and chased therein for a sustained period. A gang led by Hwfa "the Smith" ("*faber*") chased greyhounds there too. Thereafter, they smashed into the castle's treasury, raided the lord's coffers and burnt rolls, tallies, remembrances, and,

¹⁴⁶ Rees, *South Wales and its March*, p.168.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.182.

¹⁴⁸ Davies, *Lordship in the Marches of Wales*, p.138.

¹⁴⁹ Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer,' pp.472-3. *Treth mud*, for example, had been increased from 5s.7d. to £6.14s.5d. by the Mortimers.

¹⁵⁰ *CAPRW* [6], no.255; *Rot.Parl*, I, pp.387, 400.

more revealingly, corn measures.¹⁵¹ In south Wales there is strong evidence suggesting Mortimer's tenants had been eloining his goods.¹⁵² Furthermore, in Narberth an inquisition returned that there had been serious transgressions of vert and venison which had resulted in the wounding of stags and the felling of trees.¹⁵³

Such an outpouring of emotion was mirrored throughout the realms of the king of England. Just as the Welsh celebrated the release, however temporary, of the suffocating grip of Mortimer lordship, so a wider public fêted the resurrection of English kingship and the possibility that the young king might bring an end to decades of turbulence in the upper echelons of English political society. An age of parvenus, royal favourites, and usurpers might conceivably be at an end.

That the name of Roger Mortimer should be uttered in the same breath as Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser junior, whose stories have largely been told, cannot be questioned. Whatever the conclusion as to the reliability and objectivity of chronicle opinion, it is difficult to challenge the image that has been constructed of an avaricious, even insatiable usurper, an adulterous lover, and a regicide, who had subjugated the king and may even have wished to extinguish the monarchy altogether. The only real objection must be that this tells so little of a most intriguing story, and restricts the historical focus to the climax of Mortimer's remarkable career, rather than exploring it as a whole. Primarily, this disguises the fact that at a time where personality was of paramount importance, in Roger Mortimer we have one of the most enigmatic and influential characters in his own time of the English Middle Ages.

One of the most frustrating elements in building up a picture of Roger Mortimer is his elusiveness in the sources and the lack of real humanity that can be mined from dry documentation. Fortunately, traces of the real personality survive. Roger Mortimer was undoubtedly a man of at least conventional piety, twice alienating lands so that masses might be said for his departed soul.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, among his effects found at numerous private residences were various religious artefacts – sacred texts, altarpieces, psalters, religious robes – which attest to a spiritual dimension to his life.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, his admittedly postponed desire to go on pilgrimage in 1330 might relate to a wish for

¹⁵¹ PRO E 142/36, m.5.

¹⁵² PRO E 142/74, mm.2, 5.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, mm.10, 11.

¹⁵⁴ *CPR, 1327-30*, p.343; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.45v.; Add. MS 6041, f.8r. (15 December 1328); *CPR, 1327-30*, p.494 (10 February 1330.)

¹⁵⁵ PRO E 142/74, m.15.

exculpation after recent events.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, he acquired opulent tastes, as the numerous exchanges of precious vessels, sumptuous vestments and jewellery with Edward III testify. For all of his military endeavour he was a man who also clearly enjoyed the cut and thrust of the tournament. His forfeited effects included an array of military equipment including tourneying helms and aketons. The surviving orders for the movement of a canvas castle from Wigmore to Woodstock, and the attention to detail he and the queen demanded in their preparations for the Dunstable tournament in October 1329, reveal a man deeply involved in the chivalric society of his day.¹⁵⁷ His reading habits and the cultivation of an Arthurian ethic at court reinforce this impression.

On another level he is undoubtedly a character beset by contradictions. An adulterous lover, he was also a family man, taking care of all of his children's future despite apparently abandoning the woman without whom he could not have risen to such heights. He was a harsh landlord who, conversely, repeatedly found himself able to rely on the loyalty of his men, but ultimately provoked attacks on his lordship. A noted and admired war leader and military governor he was, however, twice humiliated by the Scots. A man of passion and energy who could be roused to react violently when his interests were threatened, he retained a cool, calculating edge, enabling him to make the best of a bad situation.

Such ability, combined with tenacity, organisational and administrative flare, and a large degree of luck, transformed the heir to a barony of the front rank into the most powerful man in the realm, whose power eclipsed even that of the king. A rise to prominence of this magnitude was unprecedented. These were crucial, but not clinching, elements in his success, however. Political dexterity, the ability to position and re-position himself and assume a variety of contrasting identities as the situation demanded, was imperative. He could switch comfortably between close proximity to the person of the king and a studied distance when such proximity was potentially inimical to his best interests. In this way Mortimer emerged from the shadows of his uncle and commended his abilities to the king. Moreover, he was able to escape the scorn of the baronial opposition. This meant that when rebellion came he slipped on the mantle of opposition rather easily, for he moved among men with whom he had cultivated contacts at court. Although luck undoubtedly played a critical role, he was able to build himself up as the unquestioned leader of opposition to Edward II and the Despensers. Indeed, it might be argued he became *the* focus for national dissent.

¹⁵⁶ *CPL*, 1305-42, p.349 (7 October 1330.)

¹⁵⁷ PRO E 101/382/17; E 101/384/14.

Equally as elemental to Roger Mortimer's success, therefore, was his ability to link the progression of his career to the advancement of the perceived national interest. This was not merely restricted to the struggle that brought him to power though. In fact, it had distinguished his whole career, and brought him, above all his contemporaries, into the front line of efforts to maintain English hegemony in the British Isles. Although his spells as chief governor in Ireland were not without failure and frustration, he provided the Dublin administration and the beleaguered settler society with energy and focus in the struggle with Bruce and his Irish allies. This put him more firmly in Edward's debt, and in this regard he may be numbered among a group of capable military administrators who procured personal gain and public repute largely by the merit of their achievements in royal service on the fringes of English authority. Whilst the earldom of Carlisle, for example, was a more immediate reward for the vital role Andrew Harclay played at Boroughbridge, it represented tangible reward for a career dominated by holding back the tide of Scottish aggression on England's north-western march. John Darcy, moreover, came to Edward II's attentions through his service on the same march, but made his career in Ireland when he was rewarded with the justiciarship in 1323. Such were his abilities that Mortimer and Edward III shrewdly recognised that to dispense with his service would be foolhardy. His reward was marriage into one of the most senior lineages in the Lordship.

Above all else, it was this exploitation of the wider dimensions to English political culture in the British Isles which brought Roger Mortimer to his ultimate prominence. His actions in the four years of their ascendancy demonstrate this most clearly. Although of necessity the court dominated his daily life, he made concerted efforts to assert a level of political and proprietorial dominance in Wales and the marches, which meant a flagrant breach of the very set of marcher customs he had proclaimed to cherish in 1321-2. Without doubt, this was the financial and military basis of his burgeoning power, but it should not be divorced from similarly successful attempts to build up an empire in miniature on the threshold of Dublin, which brought widespread usurpation of royal prerogative and the negation of the rights of the genuine heirs. Of course, such achievements were neatly rounded off by his advancement to the earldom of March.

This, finally, is perhaps where an assessment of Roger Mortimer should conclude. Here, in the creation of this title, he exudes the confidence that came from being not only pre-dominant on the English stage, but apart from the king of Scots, who in any case was on the brink of death, also the leading player in the British Isles as a whole. This is surely where the real importance of the career of

Roger Mortimer lies, and since we have such a telling insight into how he wished his contemporaries to see him, it makes sense to try and view him in the same light.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX 1:

The Itinerary of Roger Mortimer.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Location:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>
25 April 1287?		<i>CIPM</i> , IV, no.235, pp.157-8
April 1288	Birth (Wigmore?)	<i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , p.351
1 May 1288?		Evans, p.507
20 September 1301	Wedding (Pembrige)	Evans, p.511
<u>1306:</u>		
22 May	Westminster	<i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , p.351
September	Carlisle/ Scotland	PRO E101/369/11, f.81v <i>CCR</i> , 1302-07, pp.481-2
Mid-October	“Overseas tournament”	<i>CFR</i> , 1272-1307, pp.543-4; PRO E101/369/11, ff.148v.- 149r
<u>1307:</u>		
5 July	Kingsland (Herefords.)?	Harley 1240, f.67v.; Add. 6041, f.16r
26 November	Langley	<i>CCR</i> , 1307-13, p.46
2 December	Wallingford	<i>Vita</i> , p.2
<u>1308:</u>		
25 February	Westminster Abbey	<i>CCR</i> , 1307-13, p.53
1 March	Westminster	<i>CCR</i> , 1307-13, p.52
14 March	Westminster	<i>CCR</i> , 1307-13, p.55
16 March	Westminster	<i>CPR</i> , 1307-13, p.52
17 March	Westminster	<i>CPR</i> , 1307-13, p.56
27 April	Windsor?	<i>CPR</i> , 1307-13, pp.70-1
27/8 October	Arrival in Ireland	<i>Grace</i> , p.54; <i>Laud</i> , p.337-8
16/17 November	Trim?	<i>Grace</i> , p.55

1309:

12 April	Dublin	<i>Ormond Deeds</i> , p.172, no.438
28 May	Stepney?	<i>Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica</i> , IV, pp.61-72
6 August	Stamford	<i>CPR, 1307-13</i> , p.240; <i>Annales Londonienses</i> , p.162
26 August	Westminster	PRO C53/96; Harley 1240, f.67r.; Add. 6041, f.16r.; <i>CPR, 1307-13</i> , p.183
29 October	Knaresborough	PRO C53/96
10 December	Westminster?	<i>CCR, 1307-13</i> , p.188
12 December	Westminster	PRO C53/96

1310:

24 February	Westminster?	<i>CPR, 1307-13</i> , p.254
25 February	Westminster?	<i>CCR, 1307-13</i> , p.246
26 February	Westminster?	<i>CFR, 1307-19</i> , p.58
18 July	Wigmore	Harley 1240, f.42v.; Add. 6041, f.7v.
31 August	Conwy	Harley 1240, f.54v.; Add. 6041, f.11r.
16 September	Arrival in Ireland?	<i>Grace</i> , p.59; <i>Laud</i> , p.344
30 September	Wyrhale?	Harley 1240, f.54v.; Add. 6041, f.11r.
1 October		
1 October	Ireland?	<i>CPR, 1307-13</i> , p.283

1311:

1 February- 20 March	Roxburgh castle.	BL Cotton Nero CVIII, f.13v.
23 April	Trim	<i>Chart. St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin</i> , p.278
29 September	Trim	<i>Chart. St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin</i> , p.278
1 December	Westminster?	PRO E159/85, mm.32-3

1312:

22 April	Dublin? Moyleagh? Trim?	Wood, 'Muniments,' p.332
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26 May	Dublin	<i>CJRI, 1308-14, p.238</i>
5 June	Trim?	NAI RC 8/6, p.267
September- October	Powys?	Above, chapter 1, pp.36-8 <i>Monasticon Anglicanum, p.352</i>

1313:

February/March?	Gascony?	<i>CCR, 1307-13, p.522</i>
1 May	Westminster	PRO C53/99
16 May	Westminster	PRO C53/99
29 October	Westminster	PRO C53/100
2 November	Westminster	PRO C53/100
26 November	Westminster?	<i>CCR, 1313-17, p.82</i>

1314:

17 June	Wigmore?	Harley 1240, f.58r.; Add. 6041, f.12v.
23-4 June	Bannockburn?	<i>Foedera, II, I, p.239;</i> <i>P.W., II, ii, pp.421-2;</i> <i>Rot.Scot., I, pp.119b., 122a.</i>
16 September	York	PRO C53/101; C53/114, m.11, no.19; m.12, no.27
1 October	York	PRO C53/101

1315:

2 February	Westminster	PRO C53/101
10 February	Westminster	PRO C53/101
25 February	Westminster?	<i>CCR, 1313-17, p.213</i>
12 March	Westminster	PRO C53/101
14 March	Westminster	PRO C53/101; <i>CPR, 1313-17, p.263</i>
26 April-mid-June	Arrival in Ireland	PRO SC1/28/31
28 April	Westminster?	<i>CPR, 1313-17, p.276</i>
4 May	Westminster?	<i>CPR, 1313-17, p.323</i>
18 May	Thundersley	<i>CPR, 1313-17, p.285</i>
6-7 December	Kells	<i>Grace, p.67; Laud, p.348</i>

7-9 December?	Dublin	Above, chapter 2, pp.45-6
 <u>1316:</u>		
17-18 January	England (location unknown)	<i>CCR, 1313-18</i> , p.320; <i>P.W.</i> , II, I, p.156; Harris, <i>Collectanea</i> , p.425; PRO E101/376/7, f.77r.
6 February	Lincoln	PRO C53/102, m.12, nos.36, 37
18 March	Ystradfellte	Griffiths, <i>Conquerors and Conquered</i> , p.88
22 March	Brecon	<i>CACCW</i> [15] 75, pp.68-9
21 April	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.5, no.17; C53/115, m.5, no.15
6 May	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.5, no.14; m.6, no.19
10 May	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.5, no.10
12 May	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.4, no.6; m.5, nos.9, 16 <i>CPR, 1313-17</i> , p.499
14 May	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.5, no.12
16 May	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.4, no.7; <i>CPR, 1313-17</i> , p.472
17 May	Westminster	PRO C53/102, m.5, no.11
18 May	Westminster	<i>CPR, 1313-17</i> , p.498
21 May	Westminster?	<i>CCR, 1313-18</i> , p.339
29 May	Wigmore	Harley 1240, ff.40v.- 41r.; Add. 6041, ff.6v.- 7r.
27 June	Kinlet in Earnwood	PRO DL27/93; Harley 1240, f.113; Add. 6041, f.42v; Egerton Roll 8724, m.2
28 June	Earnwood	Harley, f.113v.; Add. 6041, f.42v.; Egerton Roll 8724, m.5
30 June- 1 July	Earnwood?	PRO C145/112, no.21, m.1.
19-26 July	Bristol	Phillips, <i>Aymer de Valence</i> , pp.102-3; <i>Vita</i> , pp.70-4
12 August	Pembridge	<i>CCR, 1313-18</i> , p.343
17 August	Wigmore	Harley 1240, f.40r
23 August	Wigmore	Harley 1240, f.56v; Add. 6041, f.12r.

8 November	Newburgh	<i>CFR, 1307-19, p.310;</i> <i>PRO C53/103, m.17, no.45</i>
10 November	York	<i>PRO C53/103, m.17, no.44</i>
12 November	York	<i>PRO C53/103, m.15, no.42;</i> <i>CCR, 1313-18, p.376</i>
20 November	York	<i>PRO C53/103, m.15, no.41;</i> <i>CPR, 1313-17, p.563</i>
22 November	York	<i>PRO C53/103, m.15, no.40</i>
23 November	York	<i>CCR, 1313-18, p.441;</i> <i>Harley 1240, f.117.; Add. 6041, f.45v.;</i> <i>CPR, 1313-17, pp.563-4</i>
9 December	Clipstone?	<i>CPR, 1313-17, p.574</i>
18 December	Clipstone?	<i>CPR, 1313-17, pp.574-5</i>
20 December	Clipstone?	<i>CCR, 1313-18, p.382</i>
22 December	Clipstone?	<i>CPR, 1313-17, p.575</i>
30 December	Nottingham?	<i>CPR, 1313-17, pp.611, 620</i>

1317:

4 January	Clipstone	<i>P.W., II, I, p.484</i>
7 April?	Youghal	<i>Grace, p.84. See also PRO E101/531/15</i>
23 April	Kilmainham	<i>Grace, p.85</i>
3-4 June	Meath	<i>Chart. St.Mary's Abbey, Dublin, ii,</i> <i>pp.410-16</i>
June	Connacht (Longford?)	<i>Grace, p.91</i>
4 July	Dublin	<i>NAI RC 7/12, m.29d</i>
18 July	Drogheda	<i>Chart. St.Mary's Abbey, Dublin,</i> <i>ii, p.410</i>
20 July	Dublin	<i>Laud, p.356</i>
23 July	Drogheda (Meath)	<i>Irish Jurist, p.107</i>
24 July	Dublin	<i>NAI RC 7/12, pp.399-400</i>
26 July	Dublin	<i>CPR, 1327-30, p.453</i>
30 July	Dublin	<i>NAI RC 8/11, pp.354-5</i>
14 August	Trim	<i>CPR, 1340-3, p.283</i>
September	Leinster mountains	<i>Exchequer Payments, p.252</i>

5 September	<i>Logh'</i>	<i>RCH</i> , p.24, nos.130-2
6 September	Dublin	Harley 1240, f.114v.
8 September	Dublin	<i>HMDI</i> , p.403
10 September	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.21, nos.15-16
11 September	<i>Glynsely</i>	<i>Laud</i> , p.356
30 September- 28 November	Leinster	<i>Exchequer Payments</i> , p.248
2 October	Trim?	<i>RCH</i> , p.23, no.116
13 October	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
3 November	Thomastown	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
7 November	Ross	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
9 November	Waterford	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
14 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
21 November	Cork	NAI RC 7/12, pp.148-51; KB 2/12, m.9; <i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
23 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
24 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
26 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
28 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
30 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
1 December	Cork	NAI RC 7/12, p.70; KB 2/10, m.3; <i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.345
2 December	Cork	<i>RCH</i> , p.24, nos. 150, 154; <i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
3 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
5 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
7 December	Cork	<i>RCH</i> , p.24; <i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.210; <i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
8 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
10 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
12 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
14 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
15 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107

16 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
17 December	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
19 December	Cork	NAI RC 7/12, m.21; <i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.107
24 December	Dublin	NAI RC 7/12, p.376
 <u>1318:</u>		
1 January	Clonmel	<i>RCH</i> , p.21, nos.25-6
13 January	Clonmel	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
14 January	Clonmel	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108; NAI RC 7/12, p.123
15 January	Clonmel?	NAI RC 7/12, pp.401-02
26 January	Thomastown	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
1 February	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.21, no.5
16 February	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108; NAI RC 7/12, p.160
19 February	Dublin	<i>Laud</i> , p.357
24 February	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
26 February	Dublin	NAI KB 2/12, m.9d
1 March	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.26, no.210
8 March	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.23, no.103
9 March	Dublin	<i>CPR</i> , 1321-4, p.331; <i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
13 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
20 March	Drogheda Kells (Meath)	<i>RCH</i> , p.23, no.117 <i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
24 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
29 March	Drogheda	<i>CPR</i> , 1330-4, p.301; <i>Irish Jurist</i> p.108; NAI RC 7/12, p.216
5 April	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
7 April	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
8 April	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
10 April	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108; NAI RC 7/12, p.138

1 May	Trim	<i>CPR</i> , 1334-8, p.473; Harley 1240, f.117v.; Add. 6041, f.45r.
5 May	Dublin? (Recall to England)	Richardson and Sayles, <i>The Administration of Ireland</i> , p.84
6 May	Dublin	NAI KB 2/11, m.2
c.7 May	Dublin	NAI KB 2/12, m.14d
10 May	Dublin	NAI RC 7/12, pp.496-7
13 May	Dublin	NAI KB 2/11, m.2
14 May	Dublin	NAI RC 7/12, pp.481-2
29 May?	Wigmore?	Add. 6041, f.21r.
18 July	Northampton	<i>CCR</i> , 1318-23, p.2
20 July	Northampton	PRO C53/105, nos.81, 88; PRO C53/117, m.24, no.58; <i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, pp.193, 274-5; <i>CFR</i> , 1307-19, p.369
26 July	Northampton	PRO C53/105, no.85
29 July	Northampton	Phillips, <i>Aymer de Valence</i> , p.170
30 July	Northampton	PRO C53/105, no.87
1 August	Northampton	Phillips, <i>Aymer de Valence</i> , p.170
9 August	Leake (Leics.)	PRO C53/105, no.83; <i>CCR</i> , 1318-23, pp.112-14
10 August	Leake	PRO C53/105, nos.77, 80
24 September	York	PRO C53/105, no.78
25 September	York	PRO C53/105, no.79
20 November	York	PRO C53/105, no.49
22 November	York?	<i>P.W.</i> , II, I, p.520; <i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.242
30 November	York	PRO C53/105, no.47
1 December	York?	<i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.243 <i>Exchequer Payments</i> , p.259

1319:

15 March	York	PRO C53/105, nos. 24, 27; <i>CCR</i> , 1318-23, pp.61, 129; <i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.317
16 March	York?	<i>RCH</i> , p.28, no.91; <i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.317 <i>CFR</i> , 1307-19, p.393; Harley 1240, f.116v.
17 March	York?	<i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.318
8 May	Shrewsbury	Harley, f.56v.
10 May	Hereford	Harley, f.39v.; Add. 6041, f.5v.
4-12 June	Arrival in Ireland	<i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.341; <i>Exchequer Payments</i> , p.266
14 July	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.26
20 September	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.27
5 October	Dublin	<i>HMDI</i> , p.386
13 October	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
18? October	Kells	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.108
3 November	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
7 November	Waterford	NAI RC 8/12, p.66
10 November	Balygaveran	NAI RC 8/12, pp.89-90
12 November	Ross	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
28 November	Cork	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109; NAI RC 8/18, p.109
12 December	Cork?	NAI RC 8/12, p.75

1320:

1 January	Thomastown	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
13 February	Dublin	PRO C143/136, no.14, m.1d.
20 February	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
21 February	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
28 February	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
3 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
4 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
6 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109

7 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
8 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
10 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
13 March	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
30 March	Dublin	Clarke, 'Irish parliaments in the reign of Edward II,' p.57
13 April	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
15 April	Dublin	PRO C143/136, no.14, m.2.
22 April	Dublin	<i>HMDI</i> , p.350
25 April	Dublin	<i>HMDI</i> , p.347
26 April	Dublin	<i>HMDI</i> , p.334
27 April	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
5 May	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
12 May	Dublin	<i>HMDI</i> , p.461
22 May	Drogheda	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
14 June	Athlone	<i>RCH</i> , p.28, no.93
26 June	Dublin?	<i>RCH</i> , p.26, no.23
Easter-Trinity	Munster/Leinster mountains	<i>Exchequer Payments</i> , p.267
3 July	Trim	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
8 July	Dublin	<i>Irish Jurist</i> , p.109
From 21 July	Slievemargy	NAI RC 8/12, pp.463-4
5 August	Kilkenny	<i>RCH</i> , p.28
10 September	Dublin	<i>RCH</i> , p.28
27 September	Left Ireland	<i>Exchequer Payments</i> , p.266
10-16 November?	Westminster	<i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, pp.523, 545
16 November	Stratfield Mortimer	Harley 1240, f.60r.; Add. 6041, f.14r.
<u>1321:</u>		
31 January	Reading	Harley 1240, f.60r.; Add. 6041, ff.13v.- 14r.
11 February	Wigmore	<i>CCR</i> , 1318-23, p.360
28 June	Sherburn-in-Elmet	<i>Flores</i> , p.197

22 July	St.Albans	See above, chapter 3, p.77
22-7 July	St.John's Priory, Clerkenwell	See above, chapter 3, p.77
1-20 August	Westminster	Harley 1240, f.36r.; Add. 6041, f.5r.; <i>CPR, 1321-4</i> , pp.15-20
14 September	Shotley?	<i>CPR, 1321-4</i> , p.17
24 September	Westminster?	<i>CPR, 1321-4</i> , p.17
25 September	Westminster	<i>CPR, 1321-4</i> , p.17
27 October	Kingston-upon-Thames	See above, chapter 3, p.79
29 November- 2 December	Doncaster	See above, chapter 3, p.80
4 December?	Bosbury (Herefordshire)	See above, chapter 3, p.81
<u>1322:</u>		
13-22 January	Area around Betton Lestrange	<i>P.W.</i> , II, I, p.174; <i>CPR, 1321-4</i> , pp.47-8, 51
15 January	Bridgnorth	PRO E163/4/148
22 January	Shrewsbury	Conway Davies, <i>Baronial Opposition</i> , Appendix, p.561, no.35; <i>P.W.</i> , II, I, p.176
Early-February 1322- 1 August 1323	Tower of London	See above, chapter 3, pp.83-89
2 August	Westminster	<i>CPR, 1327-30</i> , pp.141-2
<u>1323:</u>		
1 August	Escape from the Tower as far as Portsmouth	See above, chapter 3, p.89
2 August	Flight, almost certainly to northern France	See above, chapter 3, p.89
2 August- 1 October	Arrival in Picardy	<i>CCR, 1323-7</i> , pp.140-1
<u>1324:</u>		
Nothing concrete can be said about Mortimer's whereabouts until...		
<u>1325:</u>		
<u>1326:</u>		
11 May	Paris	<i>CCR, 1323-7</i> , pp.576-7

23 July- 24 September	Hainault and Zeeland	See above, chapter 3, pp.100-01
27 August	Mons	Doherty, 'Isabella,' pp.145-6
24 September	Orwell (Suffolk) Walton-on-the-Naze	See above, chapter 3, p.101
1 October	Oxford	<i>Baker</i> , p.23
6 October	Dunstable (Beds.)	See above, chapter 3, p.102
26/7 October	Bristol	See above, chapter 3, p.105
24 November	Hereford	See above, chapter 3, p.105
26 November	Much Marcle (Herefords.)?	<i>CCR</i> , 1323-7, p.655
30 November	Cirencester Abbey	<i>CCR</i> , 1323-7, pp.655-6
Christmas	Wallingford	<i>Froissart</i> , p.45

1327:

7-27 January	Westminster	See above, chapter 3, pp.107-08
28 January	Westminster	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.98
1 February	Westminster Abbey	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.100
2 February	Westminster	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, pp.141-3
14 February	Westminster	PRO C53/114, m.35
15 February	Westminster	PRO C53/114, m.46
26 February	Westminster	PRO C53/114, mm.43, 44
27 February	Westminster	PRO C53/114, mm.43, 44
2 March	Westminster	PRO C53/114, m.44
3 March	Westminster	PRO C53/114, m.38
6 March	Westminster	PRO C53/114, m.35
8 May	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.29
10 May	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.30
11 May	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.30
12 May	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.30
14 May	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.30
16 May	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.30
28 May	York	PRO C53/114, m.28

1 June	York	PRO C53/114, mm.20, 23, 25, 29
3 June	York	PRO C53/114, mm.13, 22, 29
7 June?	York	PRO E143/10/3, m.1.
14 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.32
16 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.25
17 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.25
20 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.16
23 June	York	PRO C53/114, mm.19, 25
24 June	York	PRO C53/114, mm.15, 18
26 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.25
28 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.14
29 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.20
30 June	York	PRO C53/114, m.15
2 July	York	PRO C53/114, mm.13, 25
12 July	Topcliffe	<i>CCR, 1327-30, p.145</i>
15 July	Durham	PRO E101/382/9, m.11
18 July	Tudhoe	<i>CPR, 1327-30, p.140</i>
21-7 July	Haydon Bridge	<i>CPR, 1327-30, pp.141-3; Harley 1240, ff.38v.- 40r.</i>
30 July- 7 August	Stanhope Park	<i>Froissart, pp.48-52</i>
8 August	Durham	PRO C53/114, m.11
14 August	York	<i>CPR, 1327-30, p.145; CFR, 1327-37, pp.60-1</i>
16 August	York	PRO C53/114, m.11
25 August	York	PRO C53/114, m.11
26 August	Doncaster	PRO C53/114, m.11
September	South Wales/Gloucestershire	See above, chapter 4, pp.122-3
20 October	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, m.10
22 October	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, mm.7-8
7 December	Leicester	PRO C53/114, mm.6, 7

25 December	Worcester	PRO C53/114, mm.2, 4
26 December	Worcester	PRO C53/114, m.3
<u>1328:</u>		
1 January	Lichfield	PRO C53/114, m.4
7 January	Nottingham	PRO C53/114, mm.1, 2
1 February	Knaresborough	PRO C53/115, m.28
3 February	Knaresborough	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.235
4 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.26
6 February	York	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.229; PRO C53/115, m.28
8 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.28
10 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.28
21 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.28
22 February	York	PRO C53/115, mm.19, 28
23 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.24
25 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.24
28 February	York	PRO C53/115, m.24
1 March	York, Archbishop's Palace	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.371; <i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.249; PRO C53/115, m.25
2 March	York	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.369
3 March	York	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.246; PRO C53/115, mm.19, 22, 25
20 March	Brecon	Harley 1240, ff.43v.- 44r.; Add. 6041, f.7v
6 April	Abergavenny	Harley 1240, f.117; Add. 6041, f.45r.
21 April	Oundle?	PRO C53/115, m.17
29 April	Northampton	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, p.88
3 May	Northampton	PRO C53/115, m.17
7 May	Northampton	PRO C53/115, m.17
9 May	Northampton	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, p.91; <i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.263

10 May	Northampton	PRO C53/115, mm.16, 17
11 May	Northampton	PRO C53/115, mm.15, 16
12 May	Northampton	<i>CCR, 1327-30, p.387</i>
13 May	Northampton	<i>CPR, 1327-30, p.266;</i> PRO C53/115, m.16
14 May	Northampton	PRO C53/115, m.16
20 May	Northampton	PRO C53/115, m.16
29 May	Hereford	BL Cotton Nero A. iv, f.58v.
26 June	Pontefract	<i>CCR, 1327-30, pp.399-400</i>
4 August	York	PRO C53/115, m.12
5 August	York	<i>CFR, 1327-37, p.98</i>
6 August	York	PRO C53/115, m.11
7 August	York	PRO C53/115, mm.11, 12
8 August	York	PRO C53/115, m.10
9 August	York	PRO C53/115, m.12
16 August	York	PRO C53/115, m.10
17 August	York	PRO C53/115, m.10
20 August	Pontefract	PRO C53/115, m.10
16 September	Wisbech	PRO C53/115, m.4
4 October	Gloucester	PRO C53/115, m.10
16 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.9
18 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.9
20 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.6
21 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.9
23 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.9
25 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.8
26 October	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.9
30 October	Salisbury (Mortimer now <i>Comes Marchie</i>)	PRO C53/115, m.9
3 November	Salisbury	PRO C53/115, m.4
9 November	Wallingford?	PRO C53/115, m.5

14 November?	Windsor	PRO C53/115, m.5
15 November	Windsor	<i>CAPRW</i> [86], no.4291, p.127; <i>C.Ch.R.</i> , 1327-41, p.94 Add. 6041, f.27v.
18 November	Windsor	PRO C53/115, m.1
20 November	Windsor	PRO C53/115, m.5
23 November	Westminster	PRO C53/115, m.5, no.15
25 November	Westminster	<i>C.Ch.R.</i> , 1327-41, p.98; Harley 1240, f.64r.; Add. 6041, f.15v.; PRO C53/115, m.2, no.8
27 November	Westminster	PRO C53/115, m.1
28 November	Westminster	PRO C53/115, m.2
29 November	Westminster	PRO C53/115, m.1
12 December	Gloucester	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.342
13 December	Gloucester	PRO C53/115, m/1
20 December	Gloucester	PRO C53/115, m.3
27 December	Worcester	PRO C53/115, m.1
<u>1329:</u>		
5 January	Hinckley	PRO C53/115, m.1
6 January	Leicester	See above, chapter 4, p.132
13 January	Bedford	See above, chapter 4, p.132
15 January	Northampton, St.Andrew's priory	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.425
25 January	St.Albans	PRO C53/116, m.18
26 January	St.Albans	PRO C53/116, m.18
29 January	Windsor	PRO C53/116, m.18
31 January	Windsor	PRO E101/384/1, f.15
3 February	Windsor	PRO C53/116, m.18
1 March	Eltham	PRO C53/116, m.23
4 March	Eltham	PRO C53/116, m.18
8 March	Guildford?	PRO C143/207, no.26, m.1d.
15 March	Wycombe	PRO C53/116, m.19
19 March	Woodstock	PRO C53/116, m.18

22 March	Woodstock	PRO C53/116, m.19
12 April	Wallingford	PRO C53/116, m.19
28 April	Windsor	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, p.132
15 May	Eltham	PRO C53/116, m.16
20 May	Canterbury	PRO C53/116, m.18
22 May	Canterbury	PRO C53/116, m.19
25 May	Dover	PRO E101/384/1, f.17v.
31 May	Christchurch, Canterbury	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.547
20 June	Windsor	PRO E101/384/1, f.18v.
12 July	Chichester	PRO C53/116, m.16
16 July	Canterbury	PRO C53/116, m.16
26 July	Windsor	PRO C53/116, m.16
27 July	Windsor	<i>CCR</i> , 1327-30, p.563
28 July	Windsor	PRO C53/116, m.15
16 August	Gloucester	PRO C53/116, mm.6, 13
18 August	Gloucester	PRO C53/116, mm.11, 12, 16
26 August	Gloucester	PRO C53/116, m.15
27 August	Gloucester	PRO C53/116, m.15
28 August	Gloucester	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.439; PRO C53/116, m.15
30 August	Gloucester	PRO C53/116, m.14
2 September	Gloucester	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, pp.147-8, 156, 160; Harley 1240, ff.71v.- 72r.; Add. 6041, ff.31v., 33r.
5-6 September	Wigmore	PRO E101/384/1, ff.16v., 18
6 October	Worcester	PRO C53/116, m.9
8-12 October	Dunstable	PRO E101/384/14
16 October	Dunstable	PRO C53/116, m.6
18 October	Dunstable	PRO C53/116, mm.6, 8
19 October	Dunstable	PRO C53/116, m.8
30 October	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, mm.5, 8

10 November	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.8
17 November	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.6
21 November	Kenilworth	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, p.155
24 November	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.7
3 December	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, mm.5, 6
5 December?	Ludlow	Harley 1240, f.41v.; Add. 6041, f.7r.
12 December	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.5
18 December	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.5
20 December	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.5
26 December	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.5
<u>1330:</u>		
1 January	Kenilworth	PRO C53/116, m.5
23 January	Eltham	PRO C53/117, m.42
26 January	Eltham	PRO C53/117, m.40
27 January	Eltham	PRO C53/117, m.40
8 February	Tower of London	PRO C53/117, m.38
16 February	Tower of London	PRO C53/116, mm.1; PRO C53/117, mm.33, 34
21 February	Windsor	PRO C53/117, m.38
22 February	Windsor	PRO C53/117, mm.39, 41
10 March	Winchester	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.492
16 March	Winchester	PRO C53/117, m.38
18 March	Winchester	PRO C53/117, m.32
19 March	Winchester	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, p.168
20 March	Winchester	PRO C53/117, mm.27, 33
21 March	Winchester	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, p.502
28 March	Osney	PRO C53/117, m.18
29 March	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.33
31 March	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.33
1 April	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.26, no.64

12 April	Woodstock	<i>CPR, 1327-30</i> , pp.510-11; PRO C53/117, m.26
16 April	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.38
21 April	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.34
25 April	Woodstock	<i>C.Ch.R, 1327-41</i> , pp.172, 176-7; NAI RC 8/15, pp.586-9 Harley 1240, ff.50r., 115; Add. 6041, f.9v., 45r.
26 April	Woodstock	<i>CPR, 1327-30</i> , p.515; Harley 1240, f.119r.; Add. 6041, f.45r.
27 April	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.34
30 April	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.30
1 May	Woodstock	<i>CPR, 1327-30</i> , p.513; PRO C53/117, m.31
2 May	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.27
4 May	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.39
19 May	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.32
25 May	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.28
31 May	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.28
8 June	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.27
11 June	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.28
18 June	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.26
20 June	Gloucester	<i>CPR, 1327-30</i> , p.535
23 June	Gloucester	<i>C.Ch.R, 1327-41</i> , pp.175-6; NAI RC 8/15, pp.597-8 Harley 1240, ff.50r., 124r.
24 June	Gloucester?	PRO C143/211, no.21, m.1.
10 July	Osney	PRO C53/117, m.28
12 July	Osney	<i>C.Ch.R, 1327-41</i> , p.178; Harley 1240, ff.42v.- 43r.; Add. 6041, f.7v.
15 July	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.22
16 July	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.23
17 July	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.16
22 July	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, mm.23, 25

23 July	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.22
24 July	Woodstock	PRO C53/117, m.21
29 July	Northampton	PRO C53/117, m.22
1 August	Northampton	PRO C53/117, mm.18, 22
2 August	Northampton	PRO C53/117, mm.18, 22
6 August	Kingscliff	PRO C53/117, m.18
10 August	Stamford	PRO C53/117, m.21
14 August	Bourne	PRO C53/117, m.18
24 August	Lincoln?	<i>CPR</i> , 1327-30, pp.524, 550
1 September	Clipstone	PRO C53/117, m.18
6 September	Nottingham	PRO C53/117, m.19
8 September	Nottingham	PRO C53/117, m.19
11 September	Nottingham	PRO C53/117, m.18
13 September	Nottingham	PRO C53/117, mm.15, 18
15 September	Nottingham	PRO C53/117, m.15, no.29
16 September	Nottingham	PRO C53/117, m.15
20 September	Nottingham	<i>CFR</i> , 1327-30, p.190; Harley 1240, f.45r.; Add. 6041, f.8r.
22 September	Clipstone	Harley 1240, f.44v; Add. 6041, f.8r.
19 October	Nottingham (capture)	See above, p.203
29 November	Westminster (trial) Tyburn (execution)	<i>CCR</i> , 1330-3, pp.291-2

APPENDIX 2.

THE LANDED ESTATES OF ROGER MORTIMER:

INHERITANCE AND ACQUISITION.

Lands inherited by Roger Mortimer on the death of his father (25 July 1304.)

1. ENGLAND.

Berkshire:

- A plot of land with watermills at Newbury. (Total value: £6.9s.4d.)
- The manor of Stratfield Mortimer, held of the honour of Wigmore. (Total value: £43.10s.11½d.)
- The manor of Stratfield Say.

Buckinghamshire:

- One-third of the manor of Crendon, with a free fishery and a weir held in chief of the Marshalsea. (Total value: £17.11s.4d.)

Gloucestershire:

- A variety of lands in the manor of Awre. (Total value: £8.13s.2d.)

Hampshire:

- One-third of the manor of Worthy Mortimer. (Total value: £15.2d.)

Herefordshire:

- The castle, town and barony of Wigmore with the appurtenant hamlets of Boriton, Leinthall Starks, Leinthall Earls and Leintwardine; the parks of Wigmore and *Gatelith*; all held with other English and Welsh lands. (Total value: £39.17s.2d.)
- The manors of Kingsland, Earlsland and Pembridge, held of the barony of Radnor. (Total value: £271.6s.8d.)

- The manor of Orleton, held of the barony of Wigmore.
- The manor of Thornbury.
- A messuage, carucate and a watermill in the manor of Much Marcle.
- Half a virgate and a watermill in Leye.
- Ninety-seven acres of arable land and a wood in the manor of Easthope.

Shropshire:

- The liberty and manor of Cleobury Mortimer, by service of being royal steward in the county and of keepership of Bridgnorth castle.
- The hamlet of *Akhull*.
- Rents of customary tenants in the manor of Atferton.
- The manor of Earnwood, held of the manor of Cleobury.
- Rents from certain tenements in *La Boure* and *La Croce* by Earnwood.
- The hamlet of Leintwardine, held of the barony of Wigmore.
- Lands with a watermill and a meadow at Knighton in the Welshry, held in chief of the barony of Wigmore.
- Rents from customary tenants, a watermill, and pleas of court in Norton by Knighton also in the Welshry, held in chief of the barony of Wigmore.
- A variety of arable and pastoral lands at Pullith in the Welshry, held in chief of the barony of Wigmore.

Somerset:

- Two parts of the manor of Odicumbe.
- Bridgwater castle with one-third of the town, and the manor of Milverton. (Total value: £17.2s.8¾d.)
- A messuage and twenty acres of land at *Frodger in Gothurst*.

Worcestershire:

- The manor of Bewdley, held of the honour of Wigmore. (Total value: £4.4s.)

- An accumulation of arable, meadowland, and wood in the manor of *Intebergh*. (Total value: 26s.8d.)
- A messuage and an accumulation of arable and meadowland, held of Hugh Mortimer (d.1304), in the manor of *Yeddefen*. (Total value: 15s.3d.)
- A variety of lands in the manor of Shraveley, held of the earldom of Warwick. (Total value: 19s.8d.)
- Lands and services in the manor of Elvington, held of the abbot of Westminster. (Total value: 51s.2d.)
- £100 annual rent from the manors of Norton and Bromsgrove.

2. WELSH MARCHES:

Cedewain:

- The lordship of Cedewain with Dolforwyn castle.

Ceri:

- The lordship of Ceri.

Gwerthrynion:

- The ancient Welsh commote of Gwerthrynion with the castle, town and commote of Rhayader, with pleas of the Gwerthrynion court, held of the barony of Radnor.

Maelienydd:

- The cantred of Maelienydd with the castle and town of Cefnlllys and a number of appurtenant watermills.
- Dinbaud castle.
- The castle and township of Knucklas, with pleas of court at Cemmaron.

Radnor:

- The castle and town with numerous appurtenant hamlets, the chase of Radnor and other woods, a number of watermills, rents from several townships.
- The township of Presteigne, held of the earldom of Hereford.

Knights' Fees pertaining to his inheritance lands:

An approximate total of seventy fees in the counties of Bedfordshire ($\frac{1}{2}$), Berkshire ($4\frac{1}{2}$), Buckinghamshire ($1\frac{1}{3}$), Cambridgeshire ($2\frac{1}{2}$), Cornwall ($5\frac{1}{2}$), Devon (1), Dorset (7), Gloucestershire (2), Hampshire (4), Herefordshire ($10\frac{1}{2}$), Huntingdonshire (1), Leicestershire (1), Northamptonshire (3), Nottinghamshire (3), Oxfordshire ($2\frac{1}{2}$), Shropshire ($20\frac{1}{4}$), Somerset (8), Suffolk ($1\frac{1}{3}$), Wiltshire ($4\frac{3}{4}$), Worcestershire ($9\frac{1}{2}$), Yorkshire (2).

(The information provided above can be found at PRO C133/114, no.8; *CIPM*, IV, no.235, pp.157-66.)

Dower lands of Margaret Mortimer:

It must also be remembered that throughout Roger Mortimer's career, his mother, Margaret, held several of these estates in dower:

- The castle, town and lordship of Radnor.
- The lordship of Ceri.
- Knucklas castle in the lordship of Maelienydd.
- Rhayader in Gwerthrynion.
- One-third of the manor of Crendon (Bucks.)
- Awre (Gloucs.)
- The lands at Worthy Mortimer, Winchester and Hook (Hants.)
- Manors of Earlsland, Kingsland, Orleton, Nethewode, Pembridge and Presteigne (Herefords.)
- Lands at Bewdley and Intebergh (Worcs.)
- £100 rent in Bromsgrove and Norton (Worcs.)
- Knighton, Pullith and Akhull (Shrops.)
- Castle and manor of Bridgwater and the manor of Odicumbe (Somerset).

(BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67v; Add. MS 6041, f.16r.; *CCR*, 1302-07, pp.171, 175-6; PRO C145/112, no.21, m.6.)

3. IRELAND

- Lands in Leix surrounding the castle of Dunamase with appurtenant lands including Newburgh. (BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117r.; Add. MS 6041, f.45v.)

Lands acquired by Roger Mortimer by his marriage to Joan de Joinville:

- The Irish liberty of Trim with lands in cos. Cavan, Longford, Louth and Kildare (Otway-Ruthven, 'The partition of the de Verdon lands in Ireland,' pp.401-55.)
- The Herefordshire manors of Stanton Lacy, Mansell Lacy and Wolferlowe.
- Ludlow castle and a moiety of the town (Shrops.)
- The marcher lordship of Ewyas Lacy.

Expansion of his rights and estates by Roger Mortimer within his own inheritance lands:

- 18 July 1310 - Quitclaim by Hugh de Croft to Roger Mortimer of his right to the profit of the court in Mortimer's woods of Yetton and Leinthall Earls (BL MS Harleian 1240, f.42v.)
- 30 September/1 October 1310 – Grant and release by William de Colwere, chaplain, to Roger Mortimer of his right in a messuage and two virgates at *Wynnewode*. Further release of all claims to lands in Frogmore (BL MS Harleian 1240, f.54v.)
- August 1313 – Grant to Roger Mortimer by Phillip de Colynton of the manor of Colynton (BL Add. MS 6041, f.25r.)
- 29 May 1316 – Hugh de Yetton granted Roger Mortimer all of his lands and tenements in Leinthall Starks (BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.40v.-41r.)
- 23 August 1316 – Grant to Roger Mortimer by Alice, widow of Walter Hakelut, of all his lands and tenements in Foxcote (BL MS Harleian 1240, f.56v.)
- November 1316 – Grant to Roger Mortimer by Adam de Wethimore of lands and tenements at Wethimore (BL Add. MS 6041, f.6r.)

- 31 January 1321 – Quitclaim by Thomas Danvers to Roger Mortimer of all his rights in the manor of Wokefield and the towns of Stratfield Mortimer, Stratfield Say, Shinfield and Silhamstead Banaster (BL MS Harleian 1240, f.60v.)
- 13 March 1328 – Grant by Robert de Bodenham to Roger Mortimer of the homage and service of John Rogon for the manor of Watestone (BL Add. MS 6041, f.5v.)
- 6 April 1328 – Quitclaim to Roger Mortimer by Isolda Haket of all her lands in Athcor in Ireland (BL MS Harleian 1240, f.117.)

The expansion of Roger Mortimer's inheritance by grants of royal favour.

1. Early career:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 16 April 1308 | Market and fair at Ardmolchan (co.Meath.)
(<i>C.Ch.R.</i> , 1300-26, p.110.) |
| 27 April 1308 | Grant of pavage and murage in Trim for seven years.
(<i>CPR</i> , 1307-13, pp.70-1.) |
| 22 August 1309 | Three-year grant of murage in Ludlow
(<i>CPR</i> , 1307-13, p.183.) |
| 26 August 1309 | Grant in fee of Cwmwd Deuddwr.
(<i>CPR</i> , 1307-13, p.183; BL MS Harleian 1240, f.67r.) |
| 26 February 1310 | Commitment of the custody of Builth castle.
(<i>CFR</i> , 1307-19, p.58.) |
| 23 November 1316 | Grant of all forfeited lands, tenements and rents held directly of him in Ireland, which ought to revert to the king for the Lacys' rebellion.
(<i>CPR</i> , 1313-17, p.563 – a grant reissued on 6 September 1317, whereby Mortimer acquired the lands for the service of a rose: BL MS Harleian 1240, f.114v.) |
| 9 December 1316 | Grant of the marriage of the heir of Nicholas Audley.
(<i>CPR</i> , 1313-17, p.574.) |
| 20 July 1318 | Grant of the marriage of the heir to the earldom of Warwick.
(<i>CPR</i> , 1317-21, p.193.) |
| 16 March 1319 | Life grant of the custody of Athlone castle.
(<i>CFR</i> , 1307-19, p.393.) |

2. The Mortimer ascendancy:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 15 February 1327 | Commitment to Roger Mortimer of the custody of the Audley, Hastings and Warwick heirs.
(<i>CFR</i> , 1327-37, p.20.) |
|------------------|--|

- 17 February 1327 Grant of the marriage of Laurence Hastings.
(CPR, 1327-30, p.22.)
- 20 February 1327 Appointment to the justiceships of Wales, Llandaff and St.Davids.
(CFR, 1327-37, p.19.)
- 3 June 1327 Order for the delivery to Roger Mortimer of Barnard Castle of the Warwick inheritance.
(CPR, 1327-30, p.108; CFR, 1327-37, pp.46-7.)
- 12 June 1327 Appointment to the custody of Glamorgan and Morgannwg.
(CPR, 1327-30, p.125.)
- 29 August 1327 Order for the delivery of two parts of Offele manor (Herts.), late of John de St.Ledger, tenant at will of Roger Mortimer.
(CCR, 1327-30, p.162.)
- 13 September 1327 Award to Roger Mortimer of Denbigh castle and its lordship, the castles of Oswestry, Shrawardine and Clun, and the manors of Ruyton, Conede, Wroxeter (Shrops.) and Chipping Norton (Oxon.), with all of the late earl of Arundel's lands on the Welsh marches,
(C.Ch.R., 1327-41, p.55.)
- 22 November 1327 Grant for life of the manor of Stretton in Strettonsdale.
(CPR, 1327-30, p.192.)
- 27 December 1327 Grant of lands and rent at Bisley (Gloucs.)
(CPR, 1327-30, p.202.)
- 8 June/27 August/
4 November 1328 Commitment to Roger Mortimer for life of the justiceship of Wales.
(CPR, 1327-30, pp.299, 317, 327)
- 9 November 1328 To complement the grant of the earldom of March, Roger Mortimer now received £10 *per annum* from the issues of Shropshire and Staffordshire.
(C.Ch.R., 1327-41, p.94.)
- 15 November 1328 Grant of a market and fair at Ludlow.
(BL Add. MS 6041, f.27v.)
- 25 November 1328 Grant of lands and rent at Wynston (Gloucs.)
(C.Ch.R., 1327-41, p.98.)
- 16 March 1329 Grant, in extension of the heir's custody, of the lands of the Hastings inheritance, to hold with all appurtenances.
(CPR, 1327-30, p.377.)
- 2 September 1329 Grant, in the event of the queen's death of the castles and lordships of Builth and Montgomery with the hundred of Chirbury.
(BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.71v.-72r.)
- 1 January 1330 Grant of all goods late of Hugh Despenser junior, and any debts owing to him, detained and concealed in Pembrokeshire.
(CPR, 1327-30, p.471.)
- 28 January 1330 Grant of the custody of Kildare castle and other lands of the earldom during the minority of Richard, son of Thomas, late earl of Kildare.
(BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.115v.116r.)
- 21 February 1330 Grant of a yearly fair at Oswestry and Chipping Norton.
(C.Ch.R., 1327-41, p.181.)

- 16 April 1330 Grant in fee simple of the castle and land of Montgomery with the hundred of Chirbury after the queen's death.
(BL Add. MS 6041, f.31v.)
- 25 April 1330 Gift of the town of Wych (Worcs.)
(*C.Ch.R.*, 1327-41, p.172.)
Grant of exercise of jurisdiction in western Meath, late of the de Verdons.
(NAI RC 8/15, pp.586-9.)
- 26 April 1330 Grant in fee of the custody of Athlone castle.
(NAI RC 8/15, p.590.)
- 27 May 1330 Life grant of £500 *per annum* from the issues of the justiceship of Wales.
(CPR, 1327-30, pp.528, 535.)
- 31 May 1330 Grant of the liberties and appurtenances of the earldom of Kildare.
(*CPR*, 1327-30, p.527.)
- 23 June 1330 Grant of all of John de Bermingham's late liberties in Louth, with cognisance of all pleas.
(BL MS Harleian 1240, f.124r.)
- Grant in fee simple of the reversion of Westhall manor and the town of Fulbrook (Oxon.)
(BL MS Harleian 1240, f.56r.)
- 24 June 1330 Grant to Roger Mortimer that he may retain the castle and manor of Hanley (Worcs.), previously granted him by queen Isabella.
(BL MS Harleian 1240, ff.42v.-43r.)
- 29 July 1330 Grant of all castles, manors and appurtenances late of John Hastings.
(*CPR*, 1327-30, pp.546-7.)
- 8 August 1330 Grant of the reversion, in fee simple, of Clifford castle and Glasbury manor.
(*CPR*, 1327-30, p.546.)
- 16 August 1330 Life grant of the custody of the castle and town of Bristol.
(*CFR*, 1327-37, p.182.)
- 25 August 1330 Grant of the custody of Gormanston manor (Meath.)
(*CPR*, 1327-30, p.551.)
- 20 September 1330 Life grant of the manor of Stretton in Strettondale without render.
(BL MS Harleian 1240, f.45r.)
- 22 September 1330 Grant of all of the late earl of Arundel's lands in Shropshire and the Marches.
(BL MS Harleian 1240, f.44v.)
- October? 1330 Grant of the goods and chattels, late of Edmund, earl of Arundel (*CPR*, 1327-30, p.554.)

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