THE ORIGIN OF THE MORTEYNES

***by John M. Ellis*[1]**

ABSTRACT

The evidence is reviewed for the early origins of the Morteyne family, ancestors of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire families of that name. Robert de Morteyne was son of Warner de Codnor, who was probably a son of Warner de Lisoriis. Possible links to the Norman Counts of Mortain, and to the House of Boulogne, are explored.

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Further to my series of articles in *The Manchester Genealogist* (Ellis, 1999, 2000, & 2001) I present here some observations on the origin of the Morteynes. In correspondence in 1947 with Sir Anthony Wagner (then Richmond Herald and later Garter Principal King of Arms) he informed me that the history of the medieval Morteines had still to be worked out in detail, but that there was a good short account of them in Farrer (1923-25).

Robert de Morteyne: First to use the surname

Robert de Morteyne son of Warner (known as Warner de Codnor), who was dead by 22 Hen. II (1176), was undoubtedly the ancestor of the Morteynes lords of Eyam and Risley, Co. Derby; of Wollaton and Cossall, Co. Nottingham; of elsewhere in those and other counties; and was the benefactor of Lenton Priory (see below). A proven pedigree can be compiled covering nine generations inclusive of Robert, to Robert Morteyn who, in 8 Hen. IV (1406/07) sued the prior of Thornholme for the manor of Appleby, Co. Lincoln.

At the founding c1108 of Lenton Priory, Nottinghamshire (a cell of Cluny), by William Peverel the elder (d.28 Jan.1113/14), Robert de Moretuein son of Warner and his heirs were benefactors. Robert was present at the founding and witnessed the foundation charter. The entry in *Monasticon Anglicanum* (Dugdale, 1846) is as follows: '*Robertus filius Warnerii in Thonethona, similiter Robertus de Moretuein, et heredes sui decem solidos vel decem solidatas per singulos annos imperpetuum*' [Robert son of Warner in Toton, similarly Robert de Moretuein, and his heirs ten shillings, or the value of ten shillings, each year for ever]. This entry relates only to one person, namely Robert de Moretuein son of Warner, decisively confirmed by the genitive singular pronoun '*sui*'. Statham (1926/27, p.104) confirmed this, having erroneously stated in his earlier article (Statham, 1925, p.197) that it referred to two persons, namely Robert son of Warner and Robert de Morteyne. Adam son of Adam de Morteyne confirmed to Lenton Priory the arms given by his father Adam and his grandfather Robert. Eustace de Morteyne, the younger brother of Adam, also in his turn confirmed to that priory the gifts of his father Adam and of his grandfather Robert (see also Moriarty, 1922 & 1925).

At the Domesday Survey in 1086, Warner de Codnor, a Norman, held six manors in Codnor, Heanor, Langley and 'Smithycote'; a manor and its berewick in Shirland and

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Ufton (Fields), Co. Derby; the manor of Toton with eight bovates of soc in Chilwell; the manor of Wollaton with a berewick in Cossall; six bovates of soc in Bramcote; and 12 bovates of soc in Sutton (Passeys), Co. Nottingham. All these were under William Peverel the elder. In the manor of Cotgrave, Co. Nottingham he had six berewick of the land, held under Ralph of Buron (Keats-Rohan, 1999; Anon, 1977[2], 1978[3]; Page, 1905, 1906).

I submit that it is established beyond reasonable doubt that Robert de Morteyne was the son of Warner de Codnor. When and why he took the surname of Morteyne, and the parentage and identity of Warner, fall to be investigated. Robert son of Warner had taken the name of Morteyne prior to the foundation of Lenton Priory c1108, and perhaps he was so described in the charter for the avoidance of doubt concerning his identity, because that name had only recently been taken by him.

Sundry authors have in the past speculated upon when and why Robert son of Warner took the name of Morteyne. It may have come from some feudal connection, or from his mother, his wife or some other blood relative. Further research is necessary to establish any conclusions regarding these questions. If any reader is able to supply further evidence I shall be delighted to receive it.

Moriarty (1922) considered that Robert might have had a connection with Robert, Count of Mortain, a half-brother of the Conqueror, or with Stephen, Count of Boulogne and Count of Mortain, afterwards King of England. Robert was one of the under-tenants of William Peverel who was one of Stephen's chief adherents, and the name Eustace (a favourite with the Morteynes from the earliest times) suggests a connection with the house of Boulogne. Statham (1925) stated that Warner was a well marked name in the family of de Lusoriis (Lisors), and that it is highly likely that Warner de Codnor was a member of that family, and a son of Warner de Lusoriis (the forester) who witnessed a notification c1055 concerning the Abbey of the Holy Trinity (*Mont Ste. Catherine*), Rouen, Normandy (Round, 1899).

A Connection to Robert Count of Mortain?

Firstly I shall address Moriarty's suggestion that Robert son of Warner might have had a connection with the Conqueror's half-brother, Robert Count of Mortain. Count Robert died on the 8th December 1090, and was buried in the Abbey of Grestain (originally founded in 1050 by his father Herluin de Conteville, Count of Conteville, Departement d'Eure, Normandy). He was laid there next to his first wife Matilda. He was succeeded by his son William, Count of Mortain and Earl of Cornwall, who was to hold his father's estates for only 10 years as he was attained for rebellion against Henry I in Normandy and taken prisoner on 24th April 1106 at Tinchebray, when his honours became forfeit. After many years imprisonment he became a Cluniac monk in 1120 at Bermondsey Priory, where he died[4] in 1130, blind, and without leaving a male heir (Cokayne, 1936). *The Complete Peerage* makes no mention of Count Robert having had issue other than William, but he did in fact have other children by both his wives. His first wife was Matilda (d.c1084) daughter of Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, and Mabel de Bellême, by whom he had William, Emma (wife of William, Count of Flanders), Agnes (wife of André I de Vitré), and Denise (wife of Guy II de Laval). By his second wife Almodis he had further issue, though apparently none survived into adulthood (Keats-Rohan, 1999, pp.371-372). There is perhaps the possibility that an unrecorded sister or other relative

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2 *sub* Warner, **10**: 25, 35; **15**: 10.

3 *sub* Warner, **7**: 5-6.

4 Golding (1991, p.119) states that he died in 1095.

(legitimate or otherwise) of Counts Robert or William could have married Warner de Codnor or his son Robert de Morteyne; and if the latter he could have deemed it approprite to assume the name of Morteyne after the 24th April 1106, and before 1108 when such name had been adopted; but would such an alliance have been entered into by a member of the family of such powerful magnates as Counts Robert and William? However, as Count William was in effect brought low by his rebellion, such a marriage alliance might have been a possibility. In the absence of any proof to substantiate such conjectures, the conclusion must be that no evidence exists that points to any probable or possible blood relationship between the family of Counts Robert and William, and Warner de Codnor or his son Robert de Morteyne.

A Connection to King Stephen of England?

Moriarty's other suggestion was that Robert son of Warner might have had a connection with King Stephen. Although this seems unlikely, such a connection with the house of Boulogne might have some substance. Stephen was the son of Stephen, Count of Blois and Count of Chartres, and his wife Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror. He was born not later than 1100, became king on 22nd December 1135 and died 25th October 1154. In 1125 he married Matilda (d.1152) daughter and heiress of Eustace III, Count of Boulogne and Count of Mortain (d.1125). The latter was the son of Eustace II, Count of Boulogne (d.c1080) who in turn was the son of Eustace I, Count of Boulogne (d.1044). The first of the Morteynes of Eyam etc., to be called Eustace was Eustace de Mortain who confirmed to Lenton Priory the arms given by his father Adam and his grandfather Robert de Morteyne son of Warner (see above). He died c1221 (Powicke, 1961; Wagner, 1975). However no proof of such a connection, or any evidence in support of such, has so far been apparently forthcoming.

If it could be shown that the Morteynes of Eyam etc. had a descent from the house of Boulogne, then they could descend from Eustace III and his wife Mary, daughter of Malcolm Ceann-mor, King of Scots (killed 13th November 1093 invading Norman England), by his wife St. Margaret, Queen of Scots (died 1093), and also a descent through the Dukes of Lower Lorraine, from Charles the Great (Charlemagne) (George, 1916; Wagner, 1975). The name Eustace was also a favourite name in the cadet branch of the Morteyns of Tilsworth and Marston Morteyne, Bedfordshire, and Turville, Buckinghamshire.

Link to the Lisoriis Family

Coming thirdly to Statham's suggestion (see above) that Warner de Codnor was a member of the de Lisoriis family and a son of Warner de Lisoriis (the forester), such a suggestion does have some substance as Warner was a well marked name in that family. Further, there were two manors in Risley, Co. Derby, at the time of the Domesday Survey, one of them held by Fulk de Lisoriis from Roger de Bully. That manor passed to Roger de Morteyne son of Warner de Codnor, Fulk's probable nephew, together with Toton, Wollaton and Codnor, the last being eventually settled on Robert's elder son William de Codnor, the remainder passing to Robert's younger son Adam de Morteyne (Craven & Stanley, 1991; Anon, 1978[5]; Statham, 1925, p.182; Statham, 1926/27, p.105). Fulk was one of the most important of Roger de Bully's under-tenants of the Honour of Tickhill, and held land in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. He was always described as "*the man of Roger de Busli*". Fulk's place of origin was either Lisores, Dept. de

[5] Fulk of Lusore, **16**: 1-2

Calvados, Canton Livarot, or Lisors, Dept. de Eure, Canton Lyons. He was a generous benefactor of Blyth Priory, as were his descendants. He, together with his brother Thorald de Lisoriis, witnessed Roger de Bully's Charter of 1088 on the foundation of the Priory of Blyth, Co. Nottingham. He had a son, Robert, by his wife Albreda. Thorald was also a Domesday under-tenant of Roger de Bully, and early in the 12th century he made a grant to Blyth Priory for the soul of his wife Beatrice, with the assent of his son William. Fulk was alive in the early part of the reign of Henry I (6th August 1100 - 1st December 1135) (Keats-Rohan, 1999, pp.201, 430-431; Loyd, 1951; Timson, 1973; Raine, 186).

Conclusions

From the evidence described in this article, I submit that the following observations are accurate:

1. Robert de Morteyne son of Warner was the proven ancestor in the male line of the Morteynes of Eyam, Risley, etc., and was the first to adopt Morteyne as a surname.
2. Robert had adopted the surname of Mortyne by 1108 when Lenton Priory was founded by William Peverel the elder, and possibly had so adopted the name only recently by that year.
3. Why Robert adopted that surname is not known, but it possibly came from a connection on the female side through the marriage of Warner de Codnor or that of his son Robert de Morteyne with a member of the families of Robert or William, Counts of Mortain, or with a member of the House of Boulogne. Further research is required.
4. Warner de Codnor was probably a member of the de Lisoriis family and a brother of Fulk and Thorald de Lisoriis, all of them being sons of Warner de Lisoriis (the forester). Again further research is needed.

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