

GWENWYNWYN (died 1216), lord of Powys

Name: Gwenwynwyn
Date of death: 1216
Spouse: Margaret Corbet
Child: Madog ap Gwenwynwyn
Child: Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn
Parent: Gwenllian ferch Owain Gwynedd
Parent: Owain Cyfeiliog
Gender: Male
Occupation: lord of Powys
Area of activity: Military; Politics, Government and Political Movements; Royalty and Society
Author: Thomas Jones Pierce

He was the son of [Owain Cyfeiliog](#) and Gwenllian, daughter of [Owain Gwynedd](#). In 1195 he succeeded his father as lord of lower Powys. When, in 1197, Gwenwynwyn acquired the lordship of Arwystli, almost the entire territory lying between the Tanat and the Severn, with extensions into the valleys of the Dovey and upper Wye, came under his jurisdiction. Henceforth, the whole area was known as Powys Wenwynwyn, an area very broadly speaking co-extensive with the modern county of Montgomery; this was to distinguish it from the later Denbighshire portion of ancient Powys, or Powys Fadog - so-called after Gwenwynwyn's second cousin, [Madog ap Gruffydd Maelor I](#), who came into sole possession of that region at about this time.

Apart from having left a permanent stamp on the nomenclature of central Wales, Gwenwynwyn, during the first years of his career, made the boldest bid for Welsh political leadership ever undertaken by a prince of the royal house of Powys. He was not without the requisite courage and ambition, and a critical lull in the domestic fortunes of the royal families of Gwynedd and Deheubarth provided an opportunity for action. After a few easy successes, however, Gwenwynwyn fell victim to the forces which had recurrently in the past kept Powys from achieving anything more than a fleeting pre-eminence among the native dynasties of Wales.

Two attacks on marcher territory between the Wye and the Severn were disastrous for him, and on the second occasion, in 1208, he was deprived by king John of all his lands. Though restored by John in 1210, continuous pressure from [Llywelyn the Great](#) forced Gwenwynwyn, in 1212, to enter into that uneasy alliance with the prince of Gwynedd, which, continuing throughout the years of crisis in England, culminated with the oath of homage sworn by Gwenwynwyn to [Llywelyn](#) in 1215; but the breach of that oath in 1216, though Gwenwynwyn died an exile later in that year, shows clearly how uneasy the new association was, and is ominous for the future relations of the two provinces. Gwenwynwyn was survived by two infant sons - [Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn](#) and Madog.

Author

Professor Thomas Jones Pierce, (1905 - 1964)

Sources

J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (London 1911), Vol. I

J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (London 1911), Vol. II

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Further Reading

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Gift by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1185, May 9](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Gift by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1190/1, Feb. 22](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Sale by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1199](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Gift by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1200](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Confirmation by King John, 1200, April 11](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Gift by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1200/1, March 4](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Grant by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1201](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstey Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Agreement concerning the fishery at Cyfeiliog,](#)

[\[1201x1215\]](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstay Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Gift by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1204/5, Feb. 12](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstay Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Confirmation of sale by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain,](#)

[\[1206x1215\]](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstay Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Gift by Gwenwynwyn ab Owain, \[1206x1215\]](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstay Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Sale by Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, 1207](#)

NLW Archives: [Wynnstay Estate Records: Charters of the Abbey of Ystrad Marchell: Inspeximus and confirmation by Edward de](#)

[Cherleton, lord of Powys, 1420, August 1](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Gwenwynwyn ap Owain](#)

Additional Links

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