

ROBERT ' OF GLOUCESTER ' (fl. 1099-1147), earl of Gloucester

Name: Robert
Spouse: Mabel Fitzhamon
Child: William FitzRobert
Parent: Harri
Gender: Male
Occupation: earl of Gloucester
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Royalty and Society
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Natural son of king Henry I of England; born before his father's accession to the throne. The legend (found in the 'Gwentian Brut,' *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, ii, 540) that his mother was [Nest](#), daughter of [Rhys ap Tewdwr](#), is one of [Iolo Morganwg](#)'s fabrications, though Henry did, indeed, have a son by [Nest](#) later on. Robert has a great and honourable place in English history (see *D.N.B.*), but the present note will refer only to his contacts with Wales.

The first Norman lord of Glamorgan was Robert Fitzhamon (died 1107) (see *D.N.B.*). He left an heiress, Mabel (' Mabli ' to the Welsh - she died 1157), and Henry bestowed her on his son Robert, raising him, at some time in the year 1121-3, to the earldom of Gloucester, including the lordship of Glamorgan. He is lauded on all sides - as a brave soldier, as a wise statesman, and as a patron of letters. [Geoffrey of Monmouth](#) dedicated one version of his *Historia* to him. Robert Fitzhamon had already built Cardiff castle, and the town is referred to as a 'borough' in his time, but it was Robert of Gloucester and his son William (below) who granted Cardiff its charter in the oldest form known to us (Mathews, *Cardiff Records*, i, 10-11). He favoured the monastic movement : it was under his aegis that Richard de Grenville in 1130 founded Neath abbey, and it was Robert himself, in the last year of his life, who founded Margam. He died 31 October 1147.

All that is remembered of his son WILLIAM (died 1183) is the somewhat ludicrous incident of 1158, when he and his family were abducted from Cardiff castle by [Ifor Bach](#) of Senghennydd. Of William's children, the son, ROBERT, predeceased him in 1166. The eldest daughter, ISABEL (also called ' Hawise ') was married to prince (afterwards king) John; and although the marriage was dissolved, John clung to her lands till 1214. They finally passed to Isabel's sister AMICIA; her marriage to [Roger de Clare](#) ultimately brought Gloucester and Glamorgan into the hands of the [Clare family](#).

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

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 (index)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Robert, 1st Earl of Gloucester](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q462997](#)

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