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Cadfan *ab* Iago

(*fl.* c. 616–c. 625)

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Cadfan *ab* Iago (*fl.* c. 616–c. 625), king of Gwynedd, was son of Iago ap Beli of Gwynedd. Cadfan seems to have ruled the kingdom of Gwynedd in north-west Wales during the early decades of the seventh century. Few facts concerning his reign or the extent of his power are known, and the details recounted by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia regum Britanniae* and followed in later Welsh traditions should be rejected as unhistorical. Cadfan was of the traditional ruling line of Gwynedd, allegedly descended from Maelgwn Gwynedd of the previous century. Cadfan's father, Iago ap Beli, had died in the same year as (but not necessarily at) the battle of Chester, in 613 or 616, at which point Cadfan may have succeeded to the kingship. However, as Iago's death-notice has an ecclesiastical flavour (*dormitatio*) it is possible that he had retired from the kingship and that Cadfan had succeeded him earlier. Cadfan did not necessarily fight at the battle of Chester as ally of the unfortunate Selyf ap Cynan Garwyn, though the later genealogies claim that Cadfan's wife was Tandreg Ddu, Selyf's sister. Cadfan in turn may have been dead by the late 620s when his son, the famous Cadwallon, was active politically. His memorial stone, which was probably raised by Cadwallon or his son Cadwaladr, survives at the church of Llangadwaladr on Anglesey and describes Cadfan as 'the wisest and most renowned king of all kings'. However, it was Cadwallon who ultimately achieved greater fame for his struggles against the English. Cadfan is also credited in late sources with a daughter called Efeilian.

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