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Hywel *ab* Ieuaf

(*d.* 985)

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Hywel *ab* Ieuaf (*d.* 985), king of Gwynedd, was the son of Ieuaf *ab* Idwal Foel of Gwynedd. He was a contender for the kingship of Gwynedd and other parts of north Wales perhaps from *c.*969, and certainly held that kingship from 979 or 980 until his death in 985. His father, Ieuaf, seems to have shared the kingship of north Wales with his brother Iago from the death of Hywel Dda in 949 or 950.

The first notice of Hywel may date to 955: a later tradition claims that he was summoned from Maen Gwynedd (possibly in Powys) to Ceredigion to aid his father and uncle Iago in an encounter, which may refer to the raid on Ceredigion by the sons of Idwal Foel in 955. When, in 969, Iago imprisoned and (according to one chronicle) hanged his brother Ieuaf, it seems likely that Hywel became the senior representative of his branch of the dynasty. Like his father he seems to have shared power in some way with Iago, though in the light of the events of 969 this can hardly have been an amicable arrangement. Both men, however, were among the Welsh kings said to have submitted to Edgar soon after his 'coronation' at Bath in 973 and to have rowed the English king up and down the River Dee. In the following year Hywel exacted revenge upon his fratricidal uncle who, it is said, was expelled from his kingdom (it is not specified by whom) and replaced by Hywel. However, this new state of affairs in Gwynedd was not permanent and Iago managed to re-establish himself at least by the end of the decade. Thus, in 978, Hywel (with English support) raided the church at Clynnog Fawr and the Llŷn peninsula: this would seem to be a surprising act for a north Welsh ruler unless these areas were under the rule of a rival, in this case probably Iago. In the following year Iago is said to have been captured by Hywel (or in some versions, by vikings) and once again Hywel ruled in his stead. It is possible that Iago died (perhaps slain by Hywel) at this time, for he is not mentioned in the sources subsequently. Thus, it was Iago's son Custennin Ddu who, with Godred Haraldsson (Gofraid mac Arailt), king of Man, ravaged Llŷn and Anglesey in 980: this was no doubt directed against Hywel, for Custennin was slain in the same year by Hywel, possibly at Hiraddug (in modern Clwyd).

These events appear to have put an end to the dynastic rivalry characteristic of Hywel's reign until this point, and he subsequently turned his attention southwards against the north Welsh kings'

traditional enemies in Deheubarth. In alliance with Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia he raided Brycheiniog and all the territories of Einion, son of Owain ap Hywel Dda, king of Deheubarth. This raid proved not to be a great success, for many of Hywel's forces are said to have been destroyed by those of Einion. Hywel's alliance with Ælfhere does not seem to have been long-lived, because two years later, in 985, Hywel was himself slain by the English, though which English is not known. On Hywel's death the kingship of Gwynedd was contended by a number of rival kinsmen, until it appears to have been annexed by Maredudd, another son of Owain of Deheubarth. Hywel's son Cynan reclaimed the kingship on Maredudd's death in 999.

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