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Idwal *ap* Meurig

(d. 996/7)

David E. Thornton

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Idwal *ap* Meurig (d. 996/7), dynast, was son of Meurig ab Idwal Foel. He was an aspiring (and possibly actual) king of Gwynedd and dependent regions of north Wales in the early 990s. On the death of Hywel ab Ieuaf, king of Gwynedd, in 985, the kingdom had been contended by a number of rival kinsmen until in 986 Maredudd ab Owain, of the ruling line of Deheubarth in south Wales, possibly slew Meurig ab Idwal Foel and then Cadwallon ab Ieuaf, and took the kingdom for himself. He continued to rule north Wales as well as Deheubarth (after 988) until his death in 999. However, Idwal and the other sons of Meurig ab Idwal challenged Maredudd's position in the north during the early 990s. In 993 they launched an attack on Gwynedd, presumably directed against Maredudd's authority in that kingdom (or, by a different account, because their hostages 'were in Gwynedd'). In 994 they inflicted a heavy defeat upon Maredudd near Llangwm (in Dinmael, north Wales), where his nephew Tewdwr ab Einion was slain. It has been suggested that Idwal had established himself in north Wales before this battle and that it represented an attempt by Maredudd to oust him thence; alternatively, it may have been a further attempt by Idwal and his brothers to regain their rightful kingdom. As it transpired, Idwal *ap* Meurig died in 996 or 997 (slain by Swein Forkbeard in some accounts), thus predeceasing Maredudd by three years. Whether he ever held actual political power or not, Idwal is notable as ancestor of the famous Gruffudd *ap* Cynan, and thereby the later rulers of Gwynedd through his son Iago.

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