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Morgan Hen [Morgan Mawr]

(*d.* 974)

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Morgan Hen [Morgan Mawr] (*d.* 974), king of Morgannwg, was the son of Owain ap Hywel ap Rhys of south-east Wales. Morgan was the dominant king in that part of Wales from about 930 until his death in 974. He is variously known as Hen ('the Old') or Mawr ('the Great'), and has been regarded as the eponym of the kingdom of Morgannwg, though his ancestor Morgan ab Athrwys has also been suggested as a candidate. The exact date of Morgan's accession to the kingship is not known. His father, Owain ap Hywel, was still alive in 926 if he was the Owain, king of Gwent, who submitted to the English ruler Æthelstan, possibly at Hereford, in that year. Morgan had probably become king at least by 931 when he witnessed a charter of Æthelstan. However, he seems to have shared power with his brothers Gruffudd and Cadwgon, who are entitled kings in the Book of Llandaff *c.*925 and *c.*935 respectively. Gruffudd was slain in 935 by the men of Ceredigion (then probably under the authority of Hywel Dda ap Cadell) and Cadwgon met his death at English hands in 949. After this point Morgan was probably dominant.

Along with the contemporary Welsh rulers Hywel Dda and Idwal Foel of Gwynedd, Morgan was a regular visitor to England, where he witnessed royal charters of Æthelstan and later Eadred and Eadwig. Such witnessing was probably a practical recognition of Anglo-Saxon supremacy rather than a deliberately pro-English policy on the part of these Welsh kings. In 931 Morgan witnessed a charter at Worthy (now in Hampshire), though he was not among the Welsh at Luton in the same year. He also witnessed Æthelstan's charters at 'Middleton' in 932, Winchester and Nottingham in 934, and Dorchester twice in 935. He witnessed a charter of Eadred at Kingston in 946 and 'Chetwode' and Bourton in 949; but the charter of Eadwig for 956 is possibly spurious. Less is known of Morgan's relations with other Welsh kings. For example, the episode in the Book of Llandaff, according to which Hywel Dda contested Morgan's hold of the regions Ystrad Yw and Ewias, seems to be a late composition, since the two kings are then said to have gone to the English court of Edgar to settle the dispute (which was resolved in Morgan's favour): the reigns of Hywel Dda and Edgar do not coincide so this exact sequence of events is impossible. However, in 960 Hywel's son Owain, king of Deheubarth, raided Gorfynydd in Morgannwg; and it is also possible that the raid by his son Einion on Gower in 970 was directed against Morgan if he temporarily held this region at that

time. Morgan is conspicuous by his absence from the lists of Welsh kings who are said to have submitted to Edgar at Chester after his 'coronation' at Bath in 973 and rowed him along the Dee. It is possible that after a reign spanning over forty years Morgan, in agreement with his cognomen, was a little too old to engage in these naval activities; indeed, he died a year later in 974. The kingship possibly passed to his son Idwallon, who died in 975, and thence to another son Owain, ancestor of the later rulers of Morgannwg. His other sons were called Cadell and Cynfyn; his wife may have been Lleucu ferch Enflew.

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