

IFOR HAEL patron of bards

Name: Ifor Hael
Spouse: Nest wraig Ifor Hael
Child: Tomas ab Ifor Hael
Parent: Angharad ferch Morgan ap Maredudd
Parent: Llywelyn ab Ifor
Gender: Male
Occupation: patron of bards
Area of activity: Philanthropy; Poetry
Author: Ifor Williams

This is the name given by [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#) to his chief patron, Ifor ap Llywelyn, Bassaleg, Monmouth. Although we are accustomed to calling it in Welsh 'Maesaleg' there are definite proofs that the name was 'Bassalec' or 'Basselec' in the 12th century (see the 'Book of Llandaff') and earlier the lineage of Ifor is given in Pen. MS. 133 (*R.*, i, 833) (180), 'tredegyr ymassalec' (Tredegar in Bassaleg), (181) 'Gwern y klepa ymassalec' (Gwern y klepa in Bassaleg) and the ancestry of the Philip who was there in 1550 is traced back to 'Tomas ap Ivor hael ap Llywelyn ap Ivor.' The three brothers, Morgan, Philip, and Ifor Hael are named in Pen. MS. 176, 206 (*R.*, i, 977); see also Mostyn MS. 114 (39-40) and Pen. MS. 140 (74-6). For the complete pedigree see *Dwnn*, i, 218. Their mother was Angharad, daughter of [Morgan ap Meredudd, lord of Tredegar](#) (the Tredegar mentioned above). Her second husband was Dafydd ap Llywelyn, of Rhydodyn; see Pen. MS. 176 (399) where Morgan ap Dafydd is described as 'vnmam ac ifor hael' (uterine brother of Ifor Hael).

Angharad's father died c. 1331 ([J. H. Davies](#), in *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1907, 68); in an official inquisition held on that occasion, sworn testimony was given to the effect that Angharad his heiress was 32 years of age; in 1333 it was testified that she was forty! She must therefore have been born either in 1293 or in 1299, and the birth of Ifor may be assigned to c. 1313 or 1319 at the earliest. He would, therefore, have *fl.* c. 1340-60. It is known that his eldest brother, Morgan, died before 1384 ([Clark](#), *Limbus Patrum*, 310), but there is no certainty as to when Ifor or his wife Nest, died; the year 1380 is a suggestion only. In [Pughe](#)'s edition (1789) of the works of [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#) there were printed four *cywyddau* to Ifor Hael and three *awdlau*, one of the *awdlau* being an elegy upon his death and that of Nest. The authorship of this particular *awdl* is, however, not beyond doubt; [Lewis Glyn Cothi](#) in the 15th century believed that [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#) had predeceased his patron - 'Aeth Dafydd gwawdydd drwy gwr/I Nefoedd o flaen Ifor.' For a further consideration of the matter consult [Williams](#) and [Roberts](#), *Cywyddau Dafydd ap Gwilym*, 1914, xvii-xx, and for Bassaleg see *B.B.C.S.*, vii, 277, and see further the article on [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#).

Author

Sir Ifor Williams, (1881 - 1965)

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