

= Thored =

Thored (Old English : *Þoreð* or *Þoreð* ; fl . 979 ? 992) was a 10th @-@ century ealdorman of York , ruler of the southern half of the old Kingdom of Northumbria on behalf of the king of England . He was the son of either Gunnar or Oslac , northern ealdormen . If he was the former , he may have attained adulthood by the 960s , when a man of his name raided Westmorland . Other potential appearances in the records are likewise uncertain until 979 , the point from which Thored 's period as ealdorman can be accurately dated .

Although historians differ in their opinions about his relationship , if any , to Kings Edgar the Peaceable and Edward the Martyr , it is generally thought that he enjoyed a good relationship with King Æthelred II . His daughter Ælfgifu married Æthelred . Thored was ealdorman in Northumbria for much of his reign , disappearing from the sources in 992 after being appointed by Æthelred to lead an expedition against the Vikings .

= = Origins = =

Thored appears to have been of at least partially Scandinavian origin , suggested by the title applied to him in the Anglo @-@ Saxon Chronicle entry for 992 . Here , the ealdorman of Hampshire is called by the English title " ealdorman " , while Thored himself is styled by the Scandinavian word *eorl* (i.e. Earl) .

Two accounts of Thored 's origins have been offered by modern historians . The first is that he was a son of Oslac , ealdorman of York from 966 until his exile in 975 . This argument is partly based on the assertion by the *Historia Eliensis* , that Oslac had a son named Thorth (i.e. " Thored ") . The other suggestion , favoured by most historians , is that he was the son of a man named Gunnar . This Gunnar is known to have held land in the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire .

If the latter suggestion is correct , then Thored 's first appearance in history is the Anglo @-@ Saxon Chronicle recension D (EF) 's entry for 966 , which recorded the accession of Oslac to the ealdormanry of southern Northumbria :

In this year , Thored , Gunnar 's son , harried Westmoringa land , and , in this same year , Oslac succeeded to the office of ealdorman .

The Anglo @-@ Saxon scholar Frank Stenton believed that this was an act of regional faction @-@ fighting , rather than , as had been suggested by others , Thored carrying out the orders of King Edgar the Peaceable . This entry is , incidentally , the first mention of Westmoringa land , that is , Westmorland . Gunnar seems to have been ealdorman earlier in the decade , for in one charter (surviving only in a later cartulary) dated to 963 and three Abingdon charters dated to 965 , an ealdorman (*dux*) called Gunnar is mentioned .

Thored may be the Thored who appears for the first time in charter attestations during the reign of King Edgar (959 ? 75) , his earliest possible appearance being in 964 , witnessing a grant of land in Kent by King Edgar to St Peter 's , Ghent . This is uncertain because the authenticity of this particular charter is unclear . A charter issued by Edgar in 966 , granting land in Oxfordshire to a woman named Ælfgifu , has an illegible ealdorman witness signature beginning with *Þ* , which may be Thored .

= = Ealdorman = =

Thored 's governorship as ealdorman , based on charter attestations , cannot be securely dated before 979 . He did attest royal charters during the reign of Æthelred II , the first in 979 , six in 983 , one in 984 , three in 985 , one in 988 , appearing in such attestations for the last time in 989 . It is possible that such appearances represent more than one Thored , though that is not a generally accepted theory . His definite predecessor , Oslac , was expelled from England in 975 . The historian Richard Fletcher thought that Oslac 's downfall may have been the result of opposing the succession of Edward the Martyr , enemy and brother of Æthelred II . What is known about Thored 's time as ealdorman is that he did not have a good relationship with Oswald , Archbishop of York (

971 ? 92) . In a memorandum written by Oswald , a group of estates belonging to the archdiocese of York was listed , and Oswald noted that " I held them all until Thored came to power ; then was St Peter [to whom York was dedicated] robbed " . One of the estates allegedly lost was Newbald , an estate given by King Edgar to a man named Gunnar , suggesting to historian Dorothy Whitelock that Thored may just have been reclaiming land " wrongly alienated from his family " .

His relationship with King Edgar is unclear , particularly given the uncertainty of Thored 's paternity , Oslac being banished from England in 975 , the year of Edgar 's death . Richard Fletcher , who thought Thored was the son of Gunnar , argued that Thored 's raid on Westmorland was caused by resentment derived from losing out on the ealdormanry to Oslac , and that Edgar thereafter confiscated various territories as punishment . The evidence for this is that Newbald , granted by Edgar to Gunnar circa 963 , was bought by Archbishop Osketel from the king sometime before 971 , implying that the king had seized the land .

Thored 's relationship with the English monarchy under Æthelred II seems to have been good . Ælfgifu , the first wife of King Æthelred II , was probably Thored 's daughter . Evidence for this is that in the 1150s Ailred of Rievaulx in his *De genealogia regum Anglorum* wrote that the wife of Æthelred II was the daughter of an ealdorman (comes) called Thored (Thorth) . Historian Pauline Stafford argued that this marriage was evidence that Thored had been a local rather than royal appointment to the ealdormanry of York , and that Æthelred II 's marriage was an attempt to woo Thored . Stafford was supported in this argument by Richard Fletcher .

= = Death = =

The date of Thored 's death is uncertain , but his last historical appearance came in the Anglo @-@ Saxon Chronicle , recension C (D , E) , under the year 992 , which reported the death of Archbishop Oswald and an expedition against a marauding Scandinavian fleet :

In this year the holy Archbishop Oswald left this life and attained the heavenly life , and Ealdorman Æthelwine [of East Anglia] died in the same year . Then the king and all his counsellors decreed that all the ships that were any use should be assembled at London . And the king then entrusted the expedition to the leadership of Ealdorman Ælfric (of Hampshire) , Earl Thored and Bishop Ælfstan [.of London or of Rochester .] and Bishop Æscwig [of Dorchester] , and they were to try if they could entrap the Danish army anywhere at sea . Then Ealdorman Ælfric sent someone to warn the enemy , and then in the night before the day on which they were to have joined battle , he absconded by night from the army , to his own disgrace , and then the enemy escaped , except that the crew of one ship was slain . And then the Danish army encountered the ships from East Anglia and from London , and they made a great slaughter there and captured the ship , all armed and equipped , on which the ealdorman was .

Scandinavians led by Óláfr Tryggvason had been raiding England 's coast since the previous year , when they killed Ealdorman Brihtnoth of Essex at the Battle of Maldon .

Historians think that Thored was either killed fighting these Scandinavians , or else survived , but became disgraced through defeat or treachery . Fletcher speculated that Thored was removed from office and replaced by the Mercian Ælfhelm as a result of his failure against the Scandinavians . Another historian , William Kapelle , believed Thored was removed because of his Scandinavian descent , an argument based on the Worcester Chronicle 's claim , added to the text borrowed from the Anglo @-@ Saxon Chronicle , that Fræna , Godwine and Frythegyst fled a battle against the Danes in the following year because " they were Danish on their father 's side " .

A man named Æthelstan who died at the Battle of Ringmere in 1010 , " the king 's apum " , was probably Thored 's son . The term apum means either " son @-@ in @-@ law " or " brother @-@ in @-@ law " , so this Æthelstan could also have been Thored 's grandson by an unknown intermediary . Thored 's immediate successor was Ælfhelm , who appears witnessing charters as ealdorman from 994 .