

= Bjaðmunjo Mýrjartaksdóttir =

Bjaðmunjo Mýrjartaksdóttir (also known in Old Norse as Bjaðmynja ; and in Gaelic as Ben Muman , Bé Binn , Blathmuine , and Bláthmín ; fl . 1102 / 1103) was a daughter of a Muirchertach Ua Briain , High King of Ireland . In 1102 whilst still a child , she was married to Sigurðr , son of Magnús Ólafsson , King of Norway . At this time , Magnús appears to have been in the process of setting up his son as king over the Earldom of Orkney , the Kingdom of the Isles , and the Kingdom of Dublin . The marriage itself temporarily bound Muirchertach and Magnús together as allies before the latter 's death the following year . Sigurðr thereupon repudiated Bjaðmunjo , and left for Scandinavia , where he proceeded to share the Norwegian kingship with his brothers .

= = Background = =

Bjaðmunjo was a daughter of Muirchertach Ua Briain , High King of Ireland (died 1119) . In the late eleventh century , following the death of his father , Muirchertach seized control of the Kingdom of Munster and moved to extend his authority throughout Ireland as High King of Ireland . In so doing , he gained control of the Norse @-@ Gaelic Kingdom of Dublin , and as a result began to extend his influence into the nearby Kingdom of the Isles . There is uncertainty concerning the political situation in the Isles in the last decade of the eleventh century . What is known for sure is that , before the end of the century , Magnús Ólafsson , King of Norway (died 1103) led a marauding fleet from Scandinavia into the Irish Sea region , where he held power until his death in 1103 .

The catalyst for this Norwegian intervention may have been the extension of Muirchertach 's influence into the Irish Sea region following the death of Gofraid Crobán , King of the Isles (died 1095) . The region itself appears to have degenerated into chaos following Gofraid 's demise , and Magnús seems to have taken it upon himself to reassert Norwegian authority . Magnús made two expeditions into the Irish Sea region . One arrived in 1098 ; the other in 1102 . The focus of the second overseas operation appears to have been Ireland itself . Following an apparent Norwegian conquest of Dublin , Magnús and Muirchertach negotiated a peace agreement , sealed through the marriage of Magnús ' son , Sigurðr (died 1130) , and Bjaðmunjo herself .

= = Marriage = =

The marriage agreement between Magnús and Muirchertach is noted in several sources . The Annals of Inisfallen and the Annals of the Four Masters reveal that the marriage took place in 1102 . Other sources reporting the marriage include Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum , Orkneyinga saga , and Magnúss saga berf?tts within Heimskringla . The forms of Bjaðmunjo 's name in these Scandinavian sources (Bjaðmunjo and Bjaðmynja) suggest that they may represent the Gaelic Bé Binn , a name known to have been borne by other members of the Uí Briain . Other Gaelic names equated to that of Bjaðmunjo include Ben Muman , Blathmuine , and Bláthmín . Sigurðr was apparently twelve @-@ years @-@ old at the time of the marriage , although Bjaðmunjo 's age is uncertain . The remarkably young age of the newlyweds , and the fact that the union is recorded at all in historical sources , suggests that a dynastic marriage was required for the conclusion of peace between their fathers .

There seems to be some confusion in several historical sources regarding the marriage . For example , the twelfth @-@ century monk Ordericus Vitalis (died 1142 x) claimed that Magnús himself married the daughter of an Irish king in about 1093 . According to Morkinskinna , Magnús was at one point set to marry a certain Maktildr , described as an " emperor 's daughter " . It is possible that Maktildr represents Matilda (died 1118) , a woman who was a sister of the reigning Étgar mac Maíl Choluim , King of Scotland (died 1107) , and who is known to have married Henry I , King of England (died 1135) in 1110 . In fact , the episode concerning Magnús and Maktildr in Morkinskinna may have influenced the erroneous claim preserved by the same source and Fagrskinna purporting that Sigurðr married a daughter of Máel Coluim mac Donnchada , King of

Scotland . At about the same time as the marriage between Bjaðmunjo and Sigurðr , the former 's father secured yet another marital alliance through another daughter and Arnulf de Montgomery , Earl of Pembroke (died 1118 x 1122) , an English magnate in the midst of a revolt against the reigning King of England .

= = Ramifications = =

Just prior to the settlement of peace between the Uí Briain and the Norwegians , Muirchertach was not only contending with the arrival of Magnús , but was also locked in an extended struggle with Domnall Mac Lochlainn , King of Cenél nEógain (died 1121) . The agreement of a year 's peace between Muirchertach and Magnús , however , turned Magnús from an enemy into an ally . Whilst Magnús appears to have intended for Sigurðr to rule over his recently @-@ won overseas territories ? a region stretching from Orkney to Dublin ? Muirchertach appears to have intended to exert influence into the Isles through his new son @-@ in @-@ law . In fact , during the following year , Muirchertach and Magnús cooperated in military operations throughout Ireland . Unfortunately for Muirchertach , and his long @-@ term ambitions in Ireland and the Isles , Magnús was slain in Ulster in 1103 . Thereupon Morkinskinna and Fagrskinna reveal that Sigurðr immediately repudiated Bjaðmunjo ? their marriage apparently having been unconsummated ? and returned to Norway . There Sigurðr proceeded to share the Norwegian kingship with his two brothers , Eysteinn (died 1123) and Óláfr (died 1115) . It would over one hundred and fifty years until another King of Norway ventured into the Isles .