

= Ljótólfr =

Ljótólfr is a minor character in the mediaeval Orkneyinga saga , who is purported to have flourished in the mid @-@ 12th century . The Orkneyinga saga was compiled in about 1200 , and documents the reigns of the earls of Orkney . It depicts Ljótólfr as a nobleman who lived on the Outer Hebridean island of Lewis . During the 12th century , the Hebrides formed part of the Kingdom of Mann and the Isles .

The Orkneyinga saga relates how Ljótólfr was a friendly acquaintance of the Viking chieftain Sveinn Ásleifarson , who is one of the major characters of the entire saga . The saga states that Ljótólfr housed Sveinn for some time on Lewis , and took in Sveinn 's brother , who was banished from Orkney . Ljótólfr 's son , Fugl , appears in the saga , although he is depicted at being at odds with Sveinn , until a relative of Fugl 's negotiates peace between the two . Several historians have considered Ljótólfr to be an ancestor of Clan MacLeod ; one of these considered Ljótólfr to be the eponymous ancestor of the clan ? although the current understanding of the clan 's ancestry regards another man as the eponym .

= = Background = =

Ljótólfr is a minor character in the Orkneyinga saga . He is purported to have flourished in the mid @-@ 12th century , and to have lived on the Outer Hebridean island of Lewis . Ljótólfr has a son , Fugl , another minor character in the saga , who is also described as being from the island .

= = = The Hebrides in the 12th century = = =

In the 11th century , the earls of Orkney were at the height of their power . The Earl of Orkney , Þórfinnr Sigurðarson , also ruled Caithness and Sutherland , and seems to have controlled the western seaboard of Scotland , and the Hebrides . Historian Magnús Stefánsson described the political situation of the Hebrides and the Isle of Man during the 11th and early 12th century as being unstable , and suffering from the rivalries of petty kings and chieftains . In 1079 , the Hebridean warlord Gofraidh Crobhán was able to unite the Hebrides and the Isle of Man into an effective independent kingdom . In 1098 ? 9 , the Norwegian king Magnús Óláfsson invaded the Hebrides , and asserted his right over the islands ; he did so again in 1102 ? 3 . He is thought to have planned to unite Orkney , the Hebrides , and the Isle of Mann , under the control of his son . In 1103 , Magnús was slain in Ireland , and no Norwegian king set foot in the islands for over a century and a half . With Magnús ' death , the Outer Hebrides were brought back under the control of the Kingdom of Mann and the Isles , whose kings tactfully recognised Norwegian sovereignty . In 1156 , the kingdom was partitioned following an inconclusive sea battle between the warlord Somhairle mac Gille Brighde , and the Manx king Gofraidh mac Amhlaibh : the Outer Hebrides remained under the control of Gofraidh , but the Inner Hebrides were ruled separately by Somhairle . Two years later , Somhairle successfully invaded the Isle of Man , took the throne , and ruled the entire Kingdom of Mann and the Isles until his death in 1164 .

= = Ljótólfr in the Orkneyinga saga = =

One of the most prominent characters of the Orkneyinga saga is the Viking chieftain Sveinn Ásleifarson , who lived on the island of Gairsay , in Orkney . The saga relates how Sveinn 's father , Óláfr Hrólfsson , was one of several chieftains who supported Páll Hákonsson , Earl of Orkney , in a victorious sea battle against a fleet led by Ölvir Rósta in support of Rögnvaldr Kolsson , who had been appointed the earl of half of Orkney by the King of Norway . Óláfr was later burned to death inside his own house by Ölvir , the grandson of Frakökk , an ambitious woman , portrayed as a villain in the saga . Frakökk attempted to win the Earldom of Orkney for her descendants ? particularly Ölvir .

The saga relates how in Orkney , Sveinn murdered one of the earl 's followers , and immediately

fled to the Bishop of Orkney . The bishop protected Sveinn by sending him away to the Suðreyjar , into the care of Holdboði Hundason , a chieftain on the Inner Hebridean island of Tiree . Later , in early spring , the saga relates how Sveinn travelled to Atholl , where he stayed for a long period of time . From Atholl , Sveinn made his way back towards Orkney by land , and on the journey northwards , he passed through Thurso , in Caithness . The saga notes that Sveinn was accompanied by Ljótólfr , and that Sveinn had spent much of the previous spring with Ljótólfr . The chieftain who lived at Thurso was an earl named Óttarr , who is described as " a man worthy of honour " . Earl Óttarr was a brother of Frakökk , and the saga relates how Ljótólfr negotiated a truce between Sveinn and Earl Óttarr , after Sveinn 's father was killed by Ölvir .

The saga states that Sveinn made numerous Viking expeditions throughout the Hebrides , and into the Irish Sea zone . On one such occasion , Sveinn set up a base on the Isle of Man , where he married a wealthy widow . Some time later , Sveinn and his men were attacked by a force led by Holdboði , and in consequence Sveinn left the island and sailed north into the Hebrides to Lewis .

Further on in the saga , it is stated that Sveinn 's brother , Gunni Ólafsson , had children with Margrét Hákonardóttir , mother of Haraldr Maddaðarson , Earl of Orkney , Mormaer of Caithness . Because of this relationship with his mother , Haraldr banished Gunni from the earldom , and enmity arose between Sveinn and the earl . Sveinn then sent Gunni to stay with Ljótólfr on Lewis , with whom Sveinn himself had stayed at an earlier time . The saga also states that at this time , Ljótólfr 's son , Fugl , was with Haraldr , and consequently there was a " coldness " between Fugl and Sveinn . The saga relates that Sveinn stole a ship from Fugl , who had been travelling to Orkney to meet Haraldr . However , subsequently a relation of Fugl 's , named Anakol , who became a friend of Sveinn , succeeded in making peace between the two . Historian Garreth Williams noted that Anakol 's name is Gaelic in origin , and like Ljótólfr and Fugl , he is described as being originally from the Hebrides . The saga also states that he was from a good family .

= = Links to Clan MacLeod = =

Captain F. W. L. Thomas , a 19th @-@ century antiquarian , proposed that Ljótólfr was the eponymous progenitor of Clan MacLeod . However , today the accepted understanding is that the clan 's eponymous ancestor is another man , Leod , who flourished about a century after Ljótólfr . Leod 's name , and the modern surname MacLeod , are considered to be ultimately derived from the Old Norse personal name Ljótr . This name is derived from the Old West Norse word ljótr , meaning " foul " , " ugly " , " misshapen " . The personal name Ljótólfr is composed of two elements ? the first , liút , is derived from the Germanic word meaning " light " , " shining " ; the second element , ólfr , is derived from a Germanic word meaning " wolf " . While the current understanding of Leod 's ancestry does not include a man named Ljótólfr , the 20th @-@ century clan historian Alick Morrison considered it possible that Ljótólfr could be an ancestor of Leod , albeit on his distaff side ; Morrison even suggested that Leod 's name could have been derived from Ljótólfr .

The MacLeods have two main branches ? Siol Thormoid (Scottish Gaelic : " seed of Tormod ") and Siol Thorcaill (" seed of Torcall ") . Siol Thorcaill was the dominant family on Lewis from the Late Middle Ages until the end of the 16th century . The Gaelic names Tormod and Torcall are derived from the Old Norse names Þórmóðr and Þórketill . Thomas noted that these names were also those of two men with Lewis connections , who are both recorded in the 13th @-@ century kings ' saga Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar . One of these men was Þórketill Þórmóðsson , who according to the saga , was slain near the Isle of Skye in about the year 1230 . Thomas proposed that this man could be a grandson of Ljótólfr . Another man who appears in the saga , Þórmóðr Þórketilson , was forced to flee Lewis , leaving behind his wife , retainers , and goods ; according to Thomas , this shows that Þórmóðr was a resident on the island . Thomas noted that Þórmóðr Þórketilson was married in about 1231 , and on the assumption that each generation could be estimated to be 30 years , Thomas gave Þórmóðr 's birth at 1201 ; his (supposed) father , Þórketill , at 1171 ; Þórketill 's father Þórmóðr at 1141 ; and this man 's father at 1111 . Thomas concluded that the elder Þórmóðr would have been born at about the time Ljótólfr flourished on Lewis .