

= Rögnvaldr Ólafsson (d . 1249) =

Rögnvaldr Ólafsson (Norwegian : Ragnvald , English : Ranald or Reginald , Old Norse : R?gnvaldr ; died 30 May 1249) was a mid @-@ thirteenth @-@ century King of Mann and the Isles who was assassinated after a reign of less than a month . As a son of Óláfr Guðrøðarson , King of Mann and the Isles , Rögnvaldr Ólafsson was a member of the Crovan dynasty . When his father died in 1237 , the kingship was assumed by Haraldr Ólafsson . The latter was lost at sea late in 1248 , and the following year Rögnvaldr Ólafsson succeeded him as king .

Only weeks after gaining the kingship , Rögnvaldr Ólafsson was slain by a knight named Ívarr and his accomplices . The kingship was then seized by Haraldr Guðrøðarson , Rögnvaldr Ólafsson 's first cousin once removed , suggesting that the killers and the new king had colluded together . The assassination , therefore , appears to have been a continuation of the vicious family feud that had engulfed the Crovan dynasty since the late twelfth century , when Rögnvaldr Ólafsson 's father and Haraldr Guðrøðarson 's grandfather first contested the kingship of the Isles .

= = Background = =

Rögnvaldr Ólafsson was one of several sons of Óláfr Guðrøðarson , King of Mann and the Isles (died 1237) , and thus a member of the Crovan dynasty . Although Óláfr is known to have had two wives , and no contemporaneous source names the mother of his children , there is evidence suggesting that their mother may have been Óláfr 's second wife : Cristina , daughter of Ferchar mac an tSairt , Earl of Ross (died c . 1251) . Specifically , the Chronicle of Mann states that , when Óláfr died in 1237 , he was succeeded by his fourteen @-@ year @-@ old son , Haraldr Ólafsson (died 1248) . This source therefore dates Haraldr Ólafsson 's birth to 1223 , about the time when Óláfr and Ferchar allied themselves in marriage . The ancestral origins of Ferchar 's family are unknown , although he appears to have been a native of eastern Ross . The Norse @-@ Gaelic Crovan dynasty , founded by Rögnvaldr Ólafsson 's paternal great @-@ great grandfather , held royal power in the Isles from the late eleventh to the mid thirteenth century . Consisting of a region roughly encompassing the Hebrides and Mann , the Isles are named in Old Norse sources as Suðreyjar (" Southern Isles ") , and in Gaelic sources as Innsi Gall (" Islands of the Foreigners ") . Various documentary sources , in the form of contemporary chronicles and sagas , reveal that during the dynasty 's tenure of power , the kings of the Isles tended to acknowledge the authority of the kings of Norway .

From the later twelfth- to the mid thirteenth century , the dynasty suffered from bitter factionalism and vicious kin @-@ strife . Rögnvaldr Ólafsson 's father , Óláfr , was a younger son of Guðrøðr Ólafsson , King of Dublin and the Isles (died 1187) . According to the chronicle , before his death in 1187 , Guðrøðr Ólafsson instructed that Óláfr should succeed to the kingship . The latter was only a child at the time , however , and the Islesmen instead inaugurated Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson (died 1229) , Guðrøðr Ólafsson 's eldest albeit illegitimate son . As the first quarter of the thirteenth century began to wane , contentions between the half @-@ brothers broke out into outright war . By the turn of the first quarter of the century , Óláfr managed to put aside the wife that Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson had assigned him ; and afterwards married Cristina , thereby gaining her father 's military assistance . As time wore on , Óláfr gained the upper @-@ hand in the struggle , and at one point had Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson 's son , Guðrøðr Rögnvaldsson (died 1231) , blinded and castrated . The bitter conflict between the half @-@ brothers ended with Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson 's treacherous death in 1229 . For a brief period in 1230 / 1231 , Óláfr co @-@ ruled the kingdom with Guðrøðr Rögnvaldsson . When the latter was slain in 1231 , Óláfr ruled the entire kingdom without any internal opposition until his own death in 1237 .

The main documentary source for the kings of the Crovan dynasty is the Chronicle of Mann , the only contemporary indigenous narrative @-@ source concerning these men . The source itself survives in the form of a fourteenth @-@ century Latin manuscript , which is in turn a copy of a chronicle probably first commissioned and composed during the reign of Magnús Ólafsson , King of Mann and the Isles (died 1265) . About fifteen percent of the chronicle is devoted to the strife

between the half @-@ brothers , and much of the rest of this source deals with the after @-@ effects of the conflict . Although the chronicle 's account of the half @-@ brothers ' struggle appears to be somewhat neutral , its treatment of their descendants is clearly slanted in favour of Óláfr 's sons . In fact , it was only during the reign of Óláfr 's son Magnús , that the former 's sons finally overcame Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson 's descendants once and for all . The chronicle , therefore , may have been composed to further legitimise king 's descended from Óláfr . In consequence , even the chronicle 's claim that Óláfr 's father had chosen him as his successor may be suspect . Whatever the case , the chronicle is the main historical source for the life of Rögnvaldr Óláfsson .

= = Ascension and assassination = =

Having succeeded his father , the chronicle reveals that Haraldr Óláfsson was soon ousted from power by representatives of Hákon Hákonarson , King of Norway (died 1263) . After unsuccessfully repulsing these men , Haraldr Óláfsson voyaged to Norway , where he stayed for about three years , and thus reconciled himself with Hákon , who in turn reinstalled him as king in the Isles . In 1247 , the late mid thirteenth @-@ century Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar states that Haraldr Óláfsson again journeyed to Norway , where he married Hákon 's daughter , Cecília , in the winter of 1247 / 1248 . On the newly @-@ weds ' return voyage in the autumn of 1248 , the chronicle and saga report that their ship foundered off Shetland , with all aboard lost . The kingship was subsequently assumed by Rögnvaldr Óláfsson , with the chronicle dating his accession to 6 May 1249 . The latter 's reign was an extremely short one , lasting hardly a month , as the chronicle states that he was slain on 30 May 1249 . Rögnvaldr Óláfsson 's body was then interred at Rushen Abbey , the site of his father 's final resting place . Following the killing , the chronicle reports that the kingship was seized by Haraldr Guðrøðarson , a grandson of Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson .

Although the chronicle names Rögnvaldr Óláfsson 's killers as a knight named Ívarr and his followers , the precise identity of Ívarr is uncertain . One man bearing the same name was Rögnvaldr Óláfsson 's paternal uncle , Ívarr Guðrøðarson . Although the latter is noted by the chronicle , in an entry concerning his father 's demise , nothing more is known of him , and it is unlikely that someone born before 1187 would have been active in 1249 . The chronicle 's Latin designation of " milite " (" knight ") to Ívarr may be evidence that he was a member of the elite . The fact that he is not accorded a patronym of any sort , however , suggests that he was not a member of a prominent family (such as the Crovan dynasty) . In fact , he appears to be identical to the " domino Yuor ' de Mann " (" Lord Ívarr of Mann ") , who witnessed a Latin charter of Haraldr Óláfsson in 1246 . Ívarr 's identity aside , the chronology of events surrounding Rögnvaldr Óláfsson 's killing suggests that Haraldr Guðrøðarson and Ívarr were allies . A particular letter of Henry III , King of England (died 1272) , dated April 1256 , commanding his men not to receive Haraldr Guðrøðarson and Ívarr ? the men whom the letter states " wickedly slew " Rögnvaldr Óláfsson ? further evidences an alliance between the two .

In light of Ívarr 's possible collusion with Haraldr Guðrøðarson , the slaying of Rögnvaldr Óláfsson may be evidence that the continuing strife between the rival branches descended from the half @-@ brothers , Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson and Óláfr , continued well into the mid thirteenth century . In fact , the killing is the last recorded example of regicide in the Norse @-@ Gaelic realm , and may partly evidence the Europeanisation of the peripheral regions of the British Isles during the twelfth- and thirteenth centuries . As it turned out , the reign of Rögnvaldr Óláfsson 's successor was short @-@ lived , since Haraldr Guðrøðarson was recalled to Norway in 1250 , for having unjustly seized the kingship . Once in Norway , the latter was detained from returning to the Isles , and is not heard of again . Within two years , Rögnvaldr Óláfsson 's brother , Magnús , was installed in the kingship . The latter reigned until his death in 1265 , and was the last member of the Crovan dynasty to rule as king in the Isles . An after @-@ effect of the inter @-@ dynastic warring within the Crovan dynasty was the partitioning of the kingdom between rival factions . For example , from about 1187 to 1226 , and for a brief period in 1229 , the kingdom was divided between the half @-@ brothers ; and for a brief period in 1230 / 1231 it was divided between Óláfr and his nephew , Guðrøðr Rögnvaldsson . Although Haraldr Óláfsson appears to have reigned over a united kingdom , the years between his

death and the installation of Magnús in 1252 is a murky period indeed , and it is possible that the kingdom was divided between rival factions during this brief span of years .

= = Ancestry = =