

## Chapter 8 - The Ancient Icelandic Pedigree, Vikings, Rulers of Europe (650 - 1500)

**Introduction:** In the next three chapters, the history of the Viking Age will be discovered through the individual histories of our Icelandic ancestors. The existence of these ancestors is found in what I call the “Ancient Icelandic Pedigree.”

I first started my research for our ancestors in Iceland when I found in my mother’s family history box a copy of a 1977 letter sent to Mrs. Bjorn Hall, my mother’s cousin. The letter was sent to her by Indridi Indridason from Iceland. The letter included genealogical information about my great grandparents Jonas Samson and Katrin Asmundsdottir with charts titled *Ættarskra*. (*Ættarskra* means genealogical records in Icelandic). The *Ættarskra* took my Icelandic ancestry back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandparent level on my Great Grandfather Jonas Samson’s line. The *Ættarskra* took my Icelandic ancestry back to the 5<sup>th</sup> great grandparent level on my Great Grandmother Katrin Asmundsdottir’s line. So that is when I discovered that Iceland had some sort of “genealogical database” but it certainly was not yet digitized in anyway.

I set about to research and examine the genealogical records available on microfilm as Iceland had extant church records going back to 1730 and census records going back to 1703. What I found is that the records matched what had been provided in the *Ættarskra* charts exactly. I was even able to extend the lines a few generation beyond what was in the *Ættarskra* charts.

It would be in 2001 that I really hit the jackpot. I had found an obituary for my Great Grandmother Katrin Asmundsdottir in a Winnipeg, Canada Icelandic newspaper. It was published in the Icelandic language. I did an internet search for volunteers that might be able to provide a translation. I typed up a copy of the obituary and sent it to a Magnus Haraldsson in Iceland. He not only did the translation, but since the obituary had my great grandparents names in it, he sent to me two “word documents” that had the complete genealogies of my great grandparents going back to the year 650. It is this information that I have come to refer to as the “Ancient Icelandic Pedigree.” Because the information was well organized in a word processing document, I could see that it most likely came from a digital source that was probably “searchable.” Further Magnus asked that I provide a list descendants of my great grandparents that could be added to this source. So Iceland today has a genealogical database that they call *Íslendingabók*. It is an on-line database that is currently limited to Icelandic citizens and legal residents of Iceland who have been issued an Icelandic ID number. So it is fortunate that I got my Icelandic genealogies years ago.

*Íslendingabók*, named after the medieval *Book of Icelanders*, is a database created by the biotechnology company deCODE genetics and Friðrik Skúlason, attempting to record the genealogy of all Icelanders who have ever lived, where sources are available. *Íslendingabók* takes its name from the first history of Iceland, by Ari (the Lerner) Thorgilsson (a relative of ours, but not a direct ancestor). The database is linked to a genetic and DNA database, this is the reason its use has been limited to only Icelandic citizens.

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As of February 2020, the database contains information on 904,000 individuals, an estimated half of the total population of Iceland since the settlement of the island in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Coverage among Icelanders born in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries is 100% and the database is estimated to contain 95% of individuals born since 1700. In a presentation I attended during my 2023 Snorri Plus program, the deCODE presenter stated that *Íslendingabók* is estimated to be 99.3% accurate.

All of that being said, the information I have derived about our Icelandic ancestors from the “Ancient Icelandic Pedigree” is remarkably accurate. Because the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree has drawn upon many sources such as church records, census records, estate records, Icelandic literature and histories, unlike the Ancient Scottish Pedigree it is well supported and documented. Further, our links to this pedigree have been personally researched by me and subsequently supported by over 50 actual DNA matches. You might remember from a previous chapter that I had estimate that there was at least a 70% chance that our connections to the Ancient Scottish Pedigree were accurate. In the case of the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree, I would estimate our links to it and its accuracy at 90-95%. So there is little doubt that the persons listed in this and the following two chapters are indeed our ancestors.

Genealogical data from the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree can be found in other places besides the restricted *Íslendingabók* database. A lot of information derived from it is duplicated on such sites as the Family Tree on Familysearch.org; the Public Members Trees on Ancestry.com; Geni.com; and Wikitree.com. However, I have found some errors in those databases and I always turn to my Ancient Icelandic Pedigree to verify correct information.

So exactly how did Iceland derive their gigantic family tree? They had several factors in their favor. Iceland was the last country in Europe to become inhabited, and we know more about the beginnings and early history of Icelandic society than we do of any other in the Old World. Also genealogy and history have been pastimes of Icelanders for centuries, with its roots in medieval political agenda. Scriptures from early ages of Icelandic history, containing genealogical information, have survived into the modern age and scholars and enthusiasts have maintained the genealogy knowledge through the ages.

For centuries, Iceland’s genealogists have been building their family tree by extracting and linking data from several important sources. It is interesting to note that until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many scholars did not consider the Icelandic Sagas and historical works of the post-Viking age as reliable guides to history. In fact, when I was in grade school, we learned about Leif Eiriksson’s possible discovery of North American as a mythical story and we were taught that Christopher Columbus was the true discoverer of North America. However, everything that scholars thought about Icelandic literature was over tuned by a discovery made in Newfoundland in 1960. It was then that archeologists unearthed the remains of a Norse (Viking) settlement on the northern tip of Newfoundland at a place called L’Anse Meadows. This event proved that the stories of Leif Eiriksson and other Icelandic explorers was true. So in 2017, Scholar Jens Ulff-Moller would write: “When studying the genealogies of the people mentioned in the *Book of Settlements* I have found them generally reliable.” The Ancient Icelandic Pedigree is derived from the following partial list of sources:

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- *Íslendingabók* or *Book of Icelanders*
- *Landnámabók* or *The Book of Settlements*
- *Heimskingla* or *The Lives of the Norse Kings*
- *The Icelandic Sagas*
- *History of Iceland*
- *Icelandic Church Saga*
- *Syslumannaæfir* or *Sheriff's of Iceland*

*Íslendingabók* or *Book of Icelanders* is a historical work dealing with early Icelandic history. The author was an Icelandic priest, Ari (the Learned) Þorgilsson, working in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century. The work originally existed in two different versions but only the younger one has survived. The older contained information on Norwegian kings, made use of by later writers of kings' sagas. Ari had been given the task of writing the *Book of Icelanders* by Bishops Þorlák Runolfsson and Ketil Thorsteinsson (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather). This book gives a brief description of the settlement of Iceland, naming only five settlers.

*Landnámabók* or *The Book of Settlements* was first compiled by the first Icelandic historians in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It describes in detail individuals' daily life during the Icelandic Age of Settlement. The original version is also believed to have been written by Ari (the Learned) Þorgilsson. The original version is now lost, but its existence is vouched for by Haukur Erlendsson (our 17<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) who compiled his own version of it shortly after 1300. The *Book of Settlements* is believed to have been derived in part from the title of 1096 which was called the *tiundurlog*. The extant versions of this register had identified 430 settlers, over 3,500 personal names, and almost 1,500 farm names.

*Heimskingla* or *The Lives of the Norse Kings* was written sometime in the early 11<sup>th</sup> Century by Snorri Sturlason (our 19<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). It provides much of the history and genealogy of the Viking Age.

*The Icelandic Sagas* are found under various individual titles, too numerous to name here. My source for these is the published work *The Sagas of Icelanders*, translated by various authors and edited by Ornlófur Þorsson in 1997. There are many genealogies as well as history provided here.

The *History of Iceland* has been provided in various versions. The version I have that provides the best details is the 1924 *History of Iceland* by Knut Gjerset.

Because many of the persons in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree were clergy members (either Catholic in the early days, and Lutheran later) a book called *Icelandic Church Saga* written in 1946 by John C.F. Hood provides a lot of genealogical data and history.

*Syslumannaæfir* or *Sheriff's of Iceland* was written by Hannes Þorsteinsson in 1913. He recounts the history of some of sheriffs or lawmen in the various *syslas* (counties) in Iceland.

Access to Icelandic genealogical information became so much easier with the founding of the Icelandic Roots Database. Access to this database became available sometime after 2013. This resulted in a great deal of Icelandic genealogical data that was formerly only available in the restricted *Íslendingabók* database to be available to all through subscription. I subscribed to this database starting in 2021.

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The Icelandic Roots database as we know it today began several decades ago with Icelandic genealogist Hálfðan Helgason. (I had sent him information about our immediate Samson ancestors years ago) His goal was to compile the best Icelandic genealogy database available and with his tremendous work, he created a site that contained over 500,000 names and genealogy information.

Hálfðan's long-term goal was to develop an online site with a knowledge base for the benefit of both Icelanders and people of Icelandic heritage and their families worldwide. For over a decade, Sunna Olafson Furstenau worked with Hálfðan and George Freeman for the "Cousins Across the Ocean" project and collaborated with Icelandic Genealogy.

In the summer of 2013, Hálfðan transferred his information to Icelandic Roots - a qualified nonprofit organization. Since then more volunteers have joined in to add an average of 2,300 new people to the database every month as well as photos, documents, and so much more. The site includes a "relationship calculator" that makes it very easy to determine how some of my Icelandic DNA matches are related to me. This tremendously extends my ability to find many Icelandic relatives.

I developed my list of notable Icelandic ancestors in this and the following chapters based upon whether the individual names appeared in the indices of the above sources. This chapter is about those ancestors who were part of the Viking Age in mainland Europe. The second chapter is about those ancestors involved in the settlement of Iceland. The third and fourth chapter is about those individuals involved in the building up of the Nation of Iceland.

**Oldest Known Ancestors:** Our oldest known ancestors in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree are King Ogvaldur Rugalfsson (our 33<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) of Ogvaldsnesi, Norway, born about 630 and King Ráðbarðr (our 33<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) of Homgardi, Denmark, also born about 630.

Ogvaldur Rugalfsson was the King of the Petty Kingdom of Rogaland, Norway. He was the 5<sup>th</sup> great grandfather of Geirmundur (Hell-Skin) Hjorsson, an early Iceland settler.

Ráðbarðr was a legendary king of Garðaríki. He was the great grandfather of the famous Viking Ragner Lodbrok. Garðaveldi is the Old Norse term used in medieval times for the states of Kievan Rus'.

### **King Sigurdur (hringgur) Randversson (690 - 750)(our 31<sup>st</sup> great grandfather)**

Sigurd Ring Randversson (690 – 750) was a legendary king of the Swedes mentioned in many old Scandinavian sagas. Sigurd Ring was born about 690 in Denmark. According to these sources he was granted rulership over Uppland as a vassal king under his uncle Harald Wartooth. Later he would take up arms against his uncle Harald in a bid to overthrow him and take the crown of Denmark, a conflict which Sigurd eventually won after the legendary Battle of the Brávellir, where it is said that Odin himself intervened and killed Harald. In the Sagas Sigurd is also known for being the father of the Norse Viking hero and legendary king of Denmark and Sweden, Ragnar Lodbrok (our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather).

The Hervarar saga tells that when the Danish tributary king Valdar died, his son Randver became the king of Denmark, while his older brother Harald Wartooth took royal titles in

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Gautland. Then Harald subjugated all the territories (Sweden, Denmark, Curonia, Saxony, Estonia, Gardaríke, Northumberland) once ruled by his maternal grandfather Ivar Vidfamne. After Randver's death in battle in England, his son Sigurd Ring became the king of Denmark, presumably as the subking of Harald. Sigurd Ring and Harald fought the Battle of the Brávellir (Brávalla) on the plains of Östergötland where Harald and many of his men died. Sigurd Ring ruled Denmark until his death and was succeeded by his son Ragnar Lodbrok. Harald Wartooth, however, had a son called Eysteinn Illruler who ruled Sweden until he was killed by Björn Ironside (our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), a son of Ragnar Lodbrok.

According to the extended Saga of Olaf Tryggvason, Sigurd Ring, after having stabilized his Swedish-Danish realm, recalled the lands in England once ruled by Harald Wartooth and Ivar Vidfamne. This territory was now ruled by Ingjald (Ingild), a brother of King Peter of Wessex and a mighty ruler in his own right. Ring therefore summoned the leiðangr and sailed to the west, reaching Northumbria. As Ingjald learned about the invasion, he gathered an army. In the ensuing battle, Ingjald and his son Ubbe (Eoppa) fell with a large part of their army. Ring now subordinated Northumbria and made Olaf Kinriksson tributary king. Ring sailed back to his Nordic kingdom and Olaf reigned for a long time. The Skjöldunga saga tells that Sigurd Ring was married to Alfhild, the daughter of king Alf of Alfheim, and their son was Ragnar Lodbrok. Sigurd Ring died about 750 in Denmark.

### **King Ragnar Lodbrok Sigurdsson (719 - 794)(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Ragnar Lodbrok (791 – 794) is the primary character depicted in the History Channel series *The Vikings*. Although he is a historic figure, the writers of the series took several liberties with the story. First of all he wasn't a Norwegian king of a place called Kattegat. Second, his first wife was Thora Herrudsdottir and not the fictional shield maiden Lagertha. Third, his brother was not "Rollo" (another real historic figure described below). Fourthly, his sons depicted in the series were all by his second wife Queen Aslaug Sigurdardottir.

Ragnar Lodbrok or Lothbrok (Old Norse for "shaggy breeches"), is a historically dubious legendary Viking hero. He is known from Old Norse poetry of the Viking Age, Icelandic sagas, and near-contemporary chronicles. According to the traditional literature, Ragnar Lodbrok distinguished himself by many raids against the British Isles and the Holy Roman Empire during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Ragnar Lodbrok was born about 719 in Denmark. His father was the legendary Swedish King Sigurd Ring Randversson.

According to the Saga of Ragnar Lodbrok, *Tale of Ragnar's sons*, *Heimskringla*, *Hervarar Saga*, *Sögubrot*, and many other Icelandic sources, Ragnar was the son of the Swedish king Sigurd Ring Randversson. Nearly all of the sagas agree that the Danish king Randver was Sigurd's father. So Ragnar's parents are believed to be Sigurd Ring and a Norwegian princess named Alfhild Gand-Alfsdottir.

In their accounts of his reign, the Sagas of Icelandic Prehistory, known as *fornaldarsaga* tell more about Ragnar's marriages than about feats of warfare. According to the *Sögubrot*, "he was the biggest and fairest of men that human eyes have seen, and he was like his mother in appearance and took after her kin." He first killed a giant snake that guarded the abode of the

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East Geatic jarl's daughter Thora Borgarhjort Herrudsdottir, thereby winning her as his wife. The unusual protective clothes that Ragnar wore, when attacking the serpent, earned him the nickname Lodbrok ("shaggy breeches"). His sons with Thora were Erik and Agnar. After Thora died, he discovered Kráka, a woman of outstanding beauty and wisdom living with a poor peasant couple in Norway, and married her. This marriage resulted in the sons Ivar the Boneless, Björn Ironside, Hvitserk, Ragnvald, Sigurd Snake-in-the-Eye, and Olof Ragnarsdottir. We descend from Bjorn Ironside, Sigurd Snake-in-the-Eye, and Olof. We do not descend from Ivar the Boneless, who is depicted as a cruel character in *The Vikings*.

While it is Ragnar Lodbrok who is depicted in *The Vikings* as the leader of a Viking invasion of the kingdom of the West Franks that was The Siege of Paris and the Sack of Paris of 845, the accuracy of this is disputed by historians and the time frames of Ragnar Lodbrok's life do not fit with this.

Kráka was later revealed to actually be Aslaug, a secret daughter of the renowned hero Sigurd Fafnesbane. As the sons grew up to become renowned warriors, Ragnar, not wishing to be outdone, resolved to conquer England with merely two ships. He was however defeated by superior English forces.

Most of the legendary sources say that King Ælla of Northumbria killed Ragnar Lothbrok, in about 865 (the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree says 794), by having him thrown into a pit of snakes. According to traditional accounts, Ragnar is reputed to have exclaimed, as he was dying, "How the young pigs would grunt if they knew what the old boar suffers!" The Saga of Ragnar Lodbrok, Tale of Ragnar's Sons, and Heimskringla all tell of the Great Heathen Army that invaded England at around 866, led by the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok to wreak revenge against King Ælla of Northumbria who is told to have captured and executed Ragnar.

### **Queen Aslaug Sigurdardottir (720 - )(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

According to the 13<sup>th</sup> century Tale of Ragnar Lodbrok, Aslaug (720 – ) was the daughter of Sigurd and the shieldmaiden Brynhildr, but was raised by Brynhildr's foster father Heimer. At the deaths of Sigurd and Brynhildr, Heimer was concerned about Aslaug's security, so he made a harp large enough to hide the girl. He then traveled as a poor harp player carrying the harp containing the girl.

Heimer and his party arrived at Spangereid at Lindesnes in Norway, where they stayed for the night in the house of the peasants Áke and Grima. Áke believed the harp contained valuable items and told his wife Grima. Grima then persuaded him to murder Heimer as he was sleeping. However, when they broke the harp open, they discovered a little girl, whom they raised as their own, calling her Kráka ("Crow"). In order to hide her beauty – the accepted sign of her noble origins – they rubbed her in tar and dressed her in a long hood.

However, once as she was bathing, she was discovered by some of the men of the legendary king Ragnar Lodbrok. Entranced by Kráka's beauty, they allowed the bread they were baking to burn; when Ragnar inquired about this mishap, they told him about the girl. Ragnar then sent for her, but in order to test her wits, he commanded her to arrive neither dressed nor undressed, neither fasting nor eating, and neither alone nor in company. Kráka arrived dressed in

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a net, biting an onion, and with only a dog as a companion. Impressed by her ingenuity and finding her a wise companion, Ragnar proposed marriage to her, which she refused until he had accomplished his mission in Norway.

### **Bjorn (Ironsides) Ragnarsson (740 - )(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Björn Ironside (740 – ) was a Norse Viking chief and legendary king of Sweden. According to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavian histories, he was the son of the notorious and historically dubious Viking king Ragnar Lodbrok. He lived in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, being securely dated between 855 and 858. However, the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree dates his birth around 740. Björn Ironside is said to have been the first ruler of the Swedish Munsö dynasty. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, a barrow on the island of Munsö was claimed by antiquarians to be Björn Järnsidas hög or Björn Ironside's barrow.

Bjorn Ironside's parents were Ragnar Lodbrok Sigurdsson and Aslaug Sigurdardottir. His mother was not the fictional character Lagertha the Shield Maiden depicted in *The Vikings*. After Ragnar Lodbrok became king, he ordered Björn to leave his realm. Björn left Denmark with a considerable fleet and started to ravage in West Francia. The contemporary annals show that he cooperated with another Viking called Sigtrygg and sailed up the Seine in 855, from which his and Sigtrygg's forces raided the inland. Their combined forces were beaten in Champagne by Charles the Bald (our 34<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) of West Francia in the same year, but not decisively. Sigtrygg withdrew in the next year, but Björn received reinforcement from another Viking army and could not be expelled from the Seine area. He and his men took up winter quarters at the so-called Givold's Grave, which served as base for an assault against Paris, which was plundered around the new year 856–857. Björn constructed a fortification on the island Oissel above Rouen which he kept as his stronghold for years. He certainly swore fealty to Charles the Bald in Verberie in 858 but it is not clear if he kept his pledge. King Charles eventually resolved to meet the unruly Seine Vikings with all his available forces and besieged Oissel in July. The siege failed badly, for the pirates defended the fortification with vigor. Moreover, Charles's brother Louis the German of East Francia invaded his lands and many vassals fell from him. Thus the siege was broken off in September.

The Viking warriors in the Seine continued their raids during the following years and even plundered Paris again in 861. In his despair Charles the Bald tried to use another Viking chief, Veland, whose men operated in the Somme region, to attack the Seine Vikings at Oissel. However, this scheme backfired since the two Viking armies made a deal and united their forces. The Norsemen were encamped by the lower Seine in 861–862, but then split again. Veland agreed to become a Christian and joined royal service, while the Seine Vikings went at sea. Some of them joined the fighting between the ruler of Bretagne and some Frankish counts.

A number of Frankish, Norman, Arab, Scandinavian and Irish sources mention a large Viking raid into the Mediterranean in 859–861, co-led by Hasteinn, Björn Ironside and possibly one or more of his brothers. After raiding down the Iberian coast and fighting their way through Gibraltar, the Norsemen pillaged the south of France, where the fleet stayed over winter, before landing in Italy where they captured the city of Pisa. Flush with this victory and others around the

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Mediterranean (including in Sicily and North Africa) during the Mediterranean expedition, the Vikings are recorded to have lost 40 ships to a storm. They returned to the Straits of Gibraltar and, at the coast of Medina-Sidonia, lost 2 ships to fire catapults in a surprise raid by Andalusian forces, leaving only 20 ships intact. The remnants of the fleet came back to French waters in 862. Björn Ironside was the leader of the expedition according to the later chronicle of William of Jumièges.

According to the sagas, Ragnar Lodbrok was captured and killed by King Ælla in England after a foolhardy invasion attempt. Björn and his brothers, seeking revenge, attacked Ælla but were beaten back. As his brother Ivar “the Boneless” realized that the English king could not be defeated right away, he sought reconciliation. He only asked for as much land as he could cover with an ox's hide and swore never to wage war against Ælla. Then Ivar cut the ox's hide into such fine strands that he could envelop a large fortress (in an older saga it was York and according to a younger saga it was London) which he could take as his own. Ivar made himself popular in England and asked his brothers to attack again. During the battle Ivar sided with his brothers and so did many of the English chieftains with their people, in loyalty to Ivar. Ælla was taken captive and in revenge they carved the blood eagle (depicted in an episode of *The Vikings*) on him.

Later Björn and his brothers pillaged in England, Normandy, France, and Lombardy, until they came to the town Luna in Italy. When they came back to Scandinavia, they divided the kingdom so that Björn Ironside took Uppsala and Sweden.

The partly legendary Danish chronicle is the first text to mention Björn Ironside as a King of Sweden. According to this source, Ragnar Lodbrok invaded the Swedish lands in company with his sons Björn, Fridleif and Radbard. Before battle had broken out, the opposing sides agreed to settle the matter through a combat. Ragnar and his three sons met the renowned champion Starkad and his seven sons in the sight of the two armies. "Björn, having inflicted great slaughter on the foe without hurt to himself, gained from the strength of his sides, which were like iron, thus the nickname "Ironside." Ragnar and his sons slew their eight opponents, after which Ragnar then "presented Björn with the lordship of Sweden for his conspicuous bravery and service."

According to the Saga of Erik the Red, Björn had a son named Aslakur, who we descend from.

### **Sigurdur (snake in the eye) Ragnarsson (750 - )(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye (750 – ) was a semi-legendary Viking warrior and Danish King active from the mid to late 9<sup>th</sup> century. According to multiple Saga sources and Scandinavian histories from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and later, he is one of the sons of the legendary Viking Ragnar Lodbrok and Áslaug Sigurdardottir. His historical prototype might have been the Danish King Sigfred who ruled briefly in the 870s.

According to the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree, Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye was born about 750 in Denmark. "Snake-in-the-eye" as part of Sigurd's name denoted a physical characteristic. He was born with a mark in his eye, described as the image of the Ouroboros (a snake biting its



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own tail). The snake mark had been prophesied by his mother Áslaug, the daughter of the Valkyrie Brynhildr.

According to Ragnar Lodbrok's saga, while Sigurd was just a boy, his half brothers Eric and Agnar were killed by Swedish king Eysteinn Beli. When Áslaug heard the news of Eric and Agnar's death, even though she wasn't their mother, she cried blood and asked the other sons of Ragnar to avenge their dead brothers. Since a Swedish king controlled Uppsala and a holy cow named Sibilja, Ivar "the Boneless" believed the gods were on Eysteinn's side and feared the magic that ruled there. But when his little brother, the only three years old Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye wanted to attack Eysteinn, the brothers changed their minds. Sigurd's foster-father assembled five longships for him. Hvitserk and Björn Ironside mustered fourteen, while Aslaug and Ivar the Boneless marshaled ten ships each, and together they took vengeance upon Eysteinn.

The Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus relates that Sigurd, as a young man, was close to his father and sojourned for a time in Scotland and the Scottish Islands. After Ragnar's Viking army had slain the local earls, Sigurd and his brother Radbard were appointed sub-rulers of these territories. Later in life Sigurd and his brothers accompanied Ragnar on a hazardous expedition through Rus' to the Hellespont.

After King Ælla of Northumbria killed Ragnar Lothbrok, Sigurd and his siblings were reportedly informed of their father's fate by an envoy from Ælla. As he heard the news, Sigurd was supposedly so affected that he cut himself to the bone with a knife he held in his hand; his brother Björn Ironside supposedly gripped a spear so tightly that the imprint of his fingers was left in the wood. Sigurd and his brothers swore they would avenge Ragnar's death.

In 865-866 the Viking leaders Ivar the Boneless and Ubbe, crossed the North Sea with a Great Army. Traditional accounts claim that all the surviving sons of Ragnar apart from Ivar launched a first attack on Ælla's kingdom, which however failed. Sigurd's brother, Ivar the Boneless, devised a strategy in which the Great Heathen Army occupied and sacked York, to provoke Ælla into engaging on the Vikings' terms. Under Ivar's plan, the Vikings feigned retreat, leading Ælla to underestimate them and become encircled. According to *The Tale of Ragnar's Sons*, Ælla was captured alive and executed afterwards by blood eagle (depicted in an episode of *The Vikings*).

We descend from each of Sigurd's three children: Horda-Knutur, Thora, and Aslaug.

### **King Halfdan (whiteshanks) Olafsson (680 - )(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Halfdan Whiteshanks Olafsson (680 - ) a petty king in Norway, is described in the Ynglinga saga. The following description is based on the account in Ynglinga saga. Because it draws relationships to Norse gods, it is generally not accepted by modern historians.

Halfdan was born about 680 in Vestfold, Norway. He was the son of Olof Trätälja of the House of Yngling. His father was sacrificed to Odin by the Swedish settlers in Värmland because of a famine. Some Swedes, however, realized that the famine was brought by overpopulation and not by the fact that the king had been neglecting his religious duties.

Consequently, they resolved to cross the Ed Forest and settle in Norway and happened to end up in Soleyar, where they killed king Sölve and took Halfdan prisoner. The Swedish

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expatriates elected Halfdan king in about 700. Halfdan subjugated all of Soleyar and took his army into Romerike and subjugated that province as well.

Halfdan was to become a great king, who married Åsa, the daughter of king Eysteinn, the ruler of Oppland and Hedmark. They had two sons, Eysteinn and Gudrödur. We descend from both Eysteinn and Gudrodur.

Halfdan conquered a large part of Hedemark, Toten, Hadeland and a part of Vestfold. When his brother Ingjald Olofsson died, he inherited Värmland. Halfdan died of old age in Toten and was transported to Vestfold, where he was buried under a mound in Skiringssal.

### **King Eysteinn (fart) Halfdansson (725 - 780)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Eysteinn Halfdansson (725 – 780) was born about 725 in Vestfold, Norway. He was the son of Halfdan (whiteshanks) Olafsson of the House of Yngling and Asa Eysteinsdottir. He inherited the throne of Romerike. Ari Thorgilsson in his *Íslendingabók* calls him Eysteinn the Fart without comment, in his king list, just naming his father and his son. Snorri Sturluson (our 19<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) does not call him by this nickname, but does give us a colorful story of his life.

Eysteinn married Hildur Eiriksdottir, the daughter of the king of Vestfold, Erik Alfsson. Erik had no son, so Eysteinn obtained Vestfold as his wife's inheritance. We descend from their daughter Æsa (the Fair) and also their son Halfdan (the Mild).

According to Ynglingasaga, Eysteinn died returning from a Viking raid in about 780 at Varna, on the eastern side of the Oslofjord. Eysteinn's men had finished looting and pillaging the area and were already almost across the fjord, when King Skjöld of Varna, a great warlock, arrived at the beach and saw the sails of Eysteinn's ships. He waved his cloak and blew into it which caused a sailbearing spar (boom) of one close sailing ship in heavy sea to swing and hit Eysteinn so that he fell overboard and drowned. His body was salvaged and buried in a mound at Borre. Eysteinn was succeeded by his son Halfdan the Mild.

### **King Gudrodur (the magnificent) Halfdanarson (738 - 810)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Gudrödur (the Magnificent)(also “the Hunter”)(738 – 810) is a legendary character portrayed in the Norse sagas as a Norwegian petty king in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century. According to the sagas, he was the father of Halfdan the Black, and thus the grandfather of Harald Fairhair, the first king of unified Norway. He is considered by modern historians to be of a more mythical nature than other ancestors of Harald and Halfdan, and he can not be identified historically. Historians have in turn made a number of proposals seeking to identify him with various would-be contemporary historical figures.

Gudrödur was born about 738 at Vestfold, Norway. He was a member of the House of Yngling. He was the son of King Haldan (whiteshanks) Olafsson and Asa Eysteinsdottir. He was the brother of Eysteinn Fart Halfdansson.

Gudrödur is mentioned in the skaldic poem Ynglingatal, and Snorri Sturluson (our 19<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) elaborates on Gudrödur's story in *Heimskringla*. According to Snorri,

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Gudrødur was called both "the Magnificent" and "the Hunter", while Ynglingatal only refers to him as "the Magnificent".

While Gudrødur is portrayed as a king in Oppland in some older texts, Snorri writes that he was a king in Vestfold. Gudrødur first married Alfhild, a daughter of Alfarin, king of Alfheim. Gudrødur inherited half the province of Vingulmark. They had a son, Olaf Geirstad-Alf. We descend from him. When Alfhild died, Gudrødur sent his men to the king of Agder, Harald Granraude, to propose a marriage with his daughter Åsa. When Harald declined, Gudrødur decided to take Åsa by force. They arrived at night. When Harald realized that he was being attacked, he assembled his men and fought well, but died together with his son Gyrd. Gudrødur thereafter captured Åsa and married her. They had the son Halfdan the Black. We descend from him also.

In the fall, when Halfdan was a year old, Gudrødur was having a feast in an otherwise unknown location called "Stivlesund". He was very drunk and in the evening, as he was walking on the gangway to leave the ship, an assassin thrust a spear through Gudrødur, killing him. Gudrødur's men instantly killed the assassin, who turned out to be Åsa's page-boy. Åsa admitted that the page-boy had acted on her behalf. After Gudrødur was killed, Åsa took the 1 year-old Halfdan and returned to Agder, where Halfdan was raised.

### **King Ingjaldur Frodason (720 - )(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Ingjaldur Frodason was a legendary warrior who appears in early Anglo-Saxon and Norse legends. Ingjaldur was so well-known that, in 797, Alcuin wrote a letter to Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne questioning the monks' interest in heroic legends with: "Quid enim Hinieldus cum Christo?" - "What has Ingjaldur to do with Christ?"

Ingjaldur was born about 720 in Norway. He was the son of petty King Frodi Fridleifsson of Ringsted, Denmark and grandson of King Fridleifur Frodason.

The legends that survive tell of Ingjaldur as an enemy of Hroðgar, Halga and Hroðulf. The conflict between the Scyldings Hroðgar and Hroðulf on one side, and the Heaðobards Froda and Ingjaldur on the other, appears in both *Beowulf* and in *Widsith*. Scholars generally agree that these characters appear in both Anglo-Saxon (*Beowulf*) and Scandinavian tradition (Norse sagas and Danish chronicles). However, in the Norse tradition the Heaðobards had apparently been forgotten and the conflict is instead rendered as a family feud, or as a conflict with the Saxons, where the Danes take the place of the Heaðobards.

In *Beowulf*, Ingjaldur is the son of King Froda of the Heaðobards, and they are involved in a war with the Danes. When Beowulf reports on his adventure in Denmark to his king Hygelac, he mentions that Hroðgar had a daughter, Freawaru. Since Froda had been killed by the Danes, Hroðgar sent Freawaru to marry Ingjaldur, in an unsuccessful attempt to end the feud. An old warrior urged the Heaðobards to revenge, and Beowulf predicts to Hygelac that Ingjaldur will turn against his father-in-law Hroðgar.

We descend from Ingjaldur's son Hrolfur who was the grandfather of Eyvindur "the Easterner" Bjarnsrson.

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### **King Olafur (Geirstad-Alf) Gudrodsson (775 - 840)(our 31<sup>st</sup> great grandfather)**

Olafur Gudrødsson (775 – 840), was known after his death as Olafur Geirstad-Alf "Olaf, Elf of Geirstad." He was a petty king in Norway. A member of the House of Yngling from the Ynglinga saga, he was the son of Gudrødur the Hunter and his first wife Alfhild. According to *Heimskringla*, he was a half-brother of Halfdan the Black. Gudrødur and Olafur ruled a large part of Raumarike.

Olafur was worshiped after his death as an "elf", and was called the Geirstad-alf (the "elf of Geirstad"). The account of this is recorded in the Þátrr Ólafs Geirstaða Alfs in the *Flateyjarbók* version of Óláfs saga. It continues with a fantastical story of how he became a drow (draugr) haunting his own howe (haugr, or grave-mound), but instructed to be destroyed so he can be reborn as Olaf the Saint.

According to this version, Olafur was carried away by a plague that subsided after his death. Olafur had instructed his people to build a howe and lay him to rest inside, forbidding them to worship him after his death seeking propitious boon. But as Olafur suspected, once the next famine arrived, "they resorted to the plan of sacrificing to King Olafur for plenty, and they called him Geirstaðaálfr"

Later, the spirit of Olafur appears in a dream to a man named Hrani, who is instructed to break into the howe, salvage the ring, with the sword named Besing (Bæsingr) and a belt which are to be presented to Queen Ásta for her future son. The man was also bidden to sever the head of the drow though making sure the head was set straight on its neck in the beheading process. The man does as instructed, and the queen gives birth to the future Olaf the Saint (our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). Later on as Olaf the Saint is riding by the howe, one of his men remember him saying he had once been laid to rest there. The king vehemently denies this, saying his soul could not occupy two bodies.

In the Ynglinga saga portion of the *Heimskringla*, Olafur is reported to have died of a "disease in his foot" (fótarverkr) or gout, although the *Flateyjarbók* suggests the king succumbed to a plague epidemic. He died in about 840. We descend from his son Helgi.

### **Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne (748- 814)(our 36<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Charlemagne or Charles the Great (748 – 814), numbered Charles I, was the King of the Franks from 768, the King of the Lombards from 774, and the Emperor of the Romans from 800. During the Early Middle Ages, he united the majority of western and central Europe. He was the first recognized emperor to rule from western Europe since the fall of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier. The expanded Frankish state that Charlemagne founded is called the Carolingian Empire. He was later canonized by Antipope Paschal III.

Charlemagne was born on April 2, 748 in the Frankish Kingdom (Germania). He was the eldest son of Pepin the Short and Bertrada of Laon, born before their canonical marriage. He became king in 768 following his father's death, initially as co-ruler with his brother Carloman I. Carloman's sudden death in December 771 under unexplained circumstances left Charlemagne the sole ruler of the Frankish Kingdom. He continued his father's policy towards the papacy and

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became its protector, removing the Lombards from power in northern Italy and leading an incursion into Muslim Spain. He campaigned against the Saxons to his east, Christianizing them upon penalty of death and leading to events such as the Massacre of Verden. He reached the height of his power in 800 when he was crowned "Emperor of the Romans" by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day at Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Charlemagne has been called the "Father of Europe" (Pater Europae), as he united most of Western Europe for the first time since the classical era of the Roman Empire and united parts of Europe that had never been under Frankish or Roman rule. His rule spurred the Carolingian Renaissance, a period of energetic cultural and intellectual activity within the Western Church. The Eastern Orthodox Church viewed Charlemagne less favorably due to his support of the filioque and the Pope's having preferred him as Emperor over the Byzantine Empire's first female pretender Irene of Athens. These and other disputes led to the eventual later split of Rome and Constantinople in the Great Schism of 1054.

Charlemagne's first relationship was with Himiltrude (a concubine). After her, his first wife was Desiderata. His second wife was Hildegard of the Vinzgau and they were married in 771, By her he had nine children. We descend from their son Louis the Pious. After Hildegard died in 783, he married Fastrada in 784. After her death he married Luitgard,

Charlemagne died on January 28, 814 and was laid to rest in Aachen Cathedral in his imperial capital city of Aachen (Germany).

### **Holy Roman Emperor Louis (the pious)(Lodvik)(778 - 840)(our 35<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Louis the Pious (778 – 840), also called the Fair, and the Debonaire, was the King of the Franks and co-emperor with his father, Charlemagne, from 813.

Louis the Pious was born in August 778 in Cassinooglum, Aquitaine, France. His parents were Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne and Hildegard of the Vinzgau.

Louis was crowned King of Aquitaine as a three year old child in 781. In the following year he was sent to Aquitaine accompanied by regents and a court.

In 794, Louis married his first wife, Ermengarde of Hesbaye. They had three sons and three daughters.

As the only surviving adult son of Charlemagne and Hildegard, Louis was crowned co-emperor with an already ailing Charlemagne in Aachen in 813. On his father's death in 814, he inherited the entire Carolingian Empire and all its possessions and became the sole ruler of the Franks, a position which he held until his death.

During his reign in Aquitaine, Louis was charged with the defense of the empire's southwestern frontier. He conquered Barcelona from the Muslims in 801 and asserted Frankish authority over Pamplona and the Basques south of the Pyrenees in 812. As emperor he included his adult sons, Lothair, Pepin, and Louis, in the government and sought to establish a suitable division of the realm among them. The first decade of his reign was characterized by several tragedies and embarrassments, notably the brutal treatment of his nephew Bernard of Italy, for which Louis atoned in a public act of self-debasement.

In about 820, Louis married his second wife, Judith of Bavaria. They had a daughter and

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a son. We descend from their son Charles the Bald.

Louis made Bernard, margrave of Septimania, one of his chief counselors. However, when Louis issued a decree in 817 that laid out plans for an orderly dynastic succession, Bernard was omitted and he immediately began to conspire to declare himself the independent king of Italy. Bernard surrendered and was taken to Aachen by Louis, who there had him tried and condemned to death for treason.

In 830, at Wala's insistence that Bernard of Septimania was plotting against him, Pepin of Aquitaine led an army of Gascons, with the support of the Neustrian magnates, all the way to Paris. At Verberie, Louis the German joined him. At that time, the Emperor Louis returned from another campaign in Brittany to find his empire at war with itself. Louis had promised his sons Louis the German and Pepin of Aquitaine greater shares of the inheritance, prompting them to shift loyalties in favor of their father to quell the conflict.

The next revolt occurred a mere two years later, in 832. The disaffected Pepin was summoned to his father's court, where he was so poorly received he left against his father's orders. Soon Lothair, another of Louis' sons, with the support of Pope Gregory IV, whom he had confirmed in office without his father's support, joined the revolt in 833. While Louis was at Worms gathering a new force, Lothair marched north. Louis marched south. The armies met on the plains of the Rothfeld. There, Gregory met the emperor and may have tried to sow dissension amongst his ranks. Soon much of Louis' army had evaporated before his eyes, and he ordered his few remaining followers to go, because "it would be a pity if any man lost his life or limb on my account." The resigned emperor was taken to Saint-Médard de Soissons, with his son Charles to Prüm, and the queen to Tortona. Louis was deposed for the period 833–34.

In 837, Louis crowned Charles the Bald king over all of Alemanian and Burgundy and gave him a portion of his brother Louis' land. Louis the German promptly rose in revolt, and the emperor re-divided his realm again at Quierzy-sur-Oise, giving all of the young king of Bavaria's lands, save Bavaria itself, to Charles. Emperor Louis did not stop there, however. His devotion to Charles knew no bounds. When Pepin died in 838, Louis declared Charles the new king of Aquitaine. The nobles, however, elected Pepin's son Pepin II. When Louis threatened invasion, the third great civil war of his reign broke out. In the spring of 839, Louis the German invaded Swabia, Pepin II and his Gascon subjects fought all the way to the Loire, and the Danes returned to ravage the Frisian coast.

Louis fell ill soon after his final victorious campaigns and retreated to his summer hunting lodge on an island in the Rhine near his palace at Ingelheim. He died on June 20, 840 in the presence of many bishops and clerics and in the arms of his half-brother Drogo as he pardoned his son Louis, proclaimed Lothair emperor and commended the absent Charles the Bald and Judith to his protection.

Soon dispute plunged the surviving brothers into yet another civil war. It lasted until 843 with the signing of the Treaty of Verdun, in which the division of the empire into West Francia and East Francia that became the pre-cursors of modern France and Germany respectively.

**King Charles the Bald (823 - 877)(our 34<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

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Charles the Bald (823 – 877) was a 9<sup>th</sup> century king of West Francia (843–877), king of Italy (875–877) and emperor of the Carolingian Empire (875–877). After a series of civil wars during the reign of his father, Louis the Pious, Charles succeeded, by the Treaty of Verdun (843), in acquiring the western third of the Carolingian Empire. He was a grandson of Charlemagne.

Charles was born on June 13, 823 in Frankfurt, Germany. He was the youngest son of Louis the Pious by his second wife, Judith. This was when his elder brothers were already adults and had been assigned their own regna, or subkingdoms, by their father. The attempts made by Louis the Pious to assign Charles a subkingdom, first Alemannia and then the country between the Meuse and the Pyrenees (in 832, after the rising of Pepin I of Aquitaine) were unsuccessful. The numerous reconciliations with the rebellious Lothair and Pepin, as well as their brother Louis the German, King of Bavaria, made Charles's share in Aquitaine and Italy only temporary, but his father did not give up and made Charles the heir of the entire land which was once Gaul. At a diet in Aachen in 837, Louis the Pious bade the nobles do homage to Charles as his heir. Pepin of Aquitaine died in 838, whereupon Charles at last received that kingdom, which angered Pepin's heirs and the Aquitanian nobles.

The death of the Emperor Louis the Pious in 840 led to the outbreak of war between his sons. Charles allied himself with his brother Louis the German to resist the pretensions of the new Emperor Lothair I, and the two allies defeated Lothair at the Battle of Fontenoy-en-Puisaye on June 25, 841. In the following year, the two brothers confirmed their alliance by the celebrated Oaths of Strasbourg. The war was brought to an end by the Treaty of Verdun in August 843. The settlement gave Charles the Bald the kingdom of the West Franks, which he had been up until then governing and which practically corresponded with what is now France, as far as the Meuse, the Saône, and the Rhône, with the addition of the Spanish March as far as the Ebro. Louis received the eastern part of the Carolingian Empire, known then as East Francia and later as Germany. Lothair retained the imperial title and the Kingdom of Italy. He also received the central regions from Flanders through the Rhineland and Burgundy as king of Middle Francia.

Charles married Ermentrude, daughter of Odo I, Count of Orléans, in 842. She died in 869. They had 10 children. We descend from their daughter Judith. Judith would marry Baldwin I, Count of Flanders. Many generations later they had descendants that would find their way to Iceland. In 870, Charles married Richilde of Provence. They had five children.

Besides the family disputes, Charles had to struggle against repeated rebellions in Aquitaine and against the Bretons. Led by their chiefs Nominoë and Erispoë, who defeated the king at the Battle of Ballon (845) and the Battle of Jengland (851), the Bretons were successful in obtaining a de facto independence. Charles also fought against the Vikings, who devastated the country of the north, the valleys of the Seine and Loire, and even up to the borders of Aquitaine. At the Vikings' successful siege and sack of Paris in 845 and several times thereafter Charles was forced to purchase their retreat at a heavy price. Charles led various expeditions against the invaders. He ordered fortified bridges to be put up at all rivers to block the Viking incursions. Two of these bridges at Paris saved the city during its siege of 885–886. Charles struggle with the Viking raids in defense of Paris is depicted in *The Vikings*. In the series, a daughter of Charles named Gisela is depicted as the wife of Viking Rollo Rognvaldsson. However, the marriage and existence of Gisela have not been confirmed.

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Pope John VIII, menaced by the Saracens, urged Charles to come to his defense in Italy. But this expedition was received with little enthusiasm by the nobles, and even by his regent in Lombardy, Boso, and they refused to join his army. At the same time Carloman, son of Louis the German, entered northern Italy. Charles, ill and in great distress, started on his way back to Gaul, but died while crossing the pass of Mont Cenis at Brides-les-Bains, on October 6, 877. He is buried at the Abbey of Saint Denis near Paris, France.

### **King Burislav (760 - )(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Burislav, Burisleif, Buryslaw (760 - ) is the name of a legendary Wendish king from Scandinavian sagas who is said to rule over Wendland. He is said to be father of Gunhild, Elin, Astrid and Geira. There are three possible hypotheses over his identity: first, that there actually was a Slavic prince of that name; second, that this was the name given by saga authors to any Slavic prince; third, that he is a compound person, combining two Polish rulers: Mieszko I of Poland and Boleslaw I of Poland. We descend from his daughter Elin who married Thorgils Gormsson, who was grandfather to two early Iceland settlers.

### **Aslaug Sigurdardottir (770 - )(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Aslaug Sigurdardottir (770 - ) was born about 770 in Denmark. Her parents were Sigurdur (Snake in the Eye) Ragnarsson and Blæja. She was the granddaughter of Ragnar Lodbrok. She had a sister Thora and a brother Horda-Knut. She and Horda-Knut were known to be twins.

Aslaug married Helgi the Sharp Fridleifsson, prince of Ringerike, who was a grandson of king Ring II of Ringerike and the brother of Guðrøður, the king of Ringerike and they lived in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. We descend from their son Sigurd Hart Helgason.

Ragnar Lodbrok's sons Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye, Björn Ironside and Hvitserk had raided in France and after Björn had gone home to Sweden, his brothers were attacked by emperor Arnulf of Carinthia. In the battle 100,000 Danes and Norwegians fell, including Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye and king Guðrøður.

Helgi escaped from the battle with Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye's banner, sword and shield. He went to Denmark and informed Sigurd's mother Aslaug of her loss. Since the next king, Horda-Knut, was still too young to rule, Helgi stayed in Denmark as its regent.

### **Horda-Kari Aslaksson (815 - 880)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Horda-Kåri Aslaksson (815 - 880) was a Viking warlord and hersir of Hordaland and patriarch of the Norwegian Giskeätten dynasty. He was born about 815 in Hordaland to Aslakur Raudi Karason. He was married to Alfhildur Eysteinsdottir. They were known to have five sons and two daughters. We descend from their son Thordur and also their daughter Vilgerdur. Vilgerdur was the mother of Raven-Floki Vilgerarson, one of the discoverers of Iceland.

Horda-Kari was one of King Harald Fairhair's oldest allies and one of his lieutenants at



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the Battle of Hafrsfjord. Horda-Kåri died in about 880 in Hordaland.

### **King Halfdan (the Generous) Eysteinnsson (768 - 815)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Halfdan (the Mild) (meaning the generous and stingy on food) Eysteinnsson (768 – 815) was born about 768 at Hollum, Vestfold, Norway. He was the son of king Eysteinn (Fart) Halfdansson, of the House of Yngling and Hildur Eiriksdottir. He succeeded his father as king, according to *Heimskringla*. He was king of Raumarike and Vestfold. He was said to be generous in gold but to starve his men of food. He was a great warrior who often pillaged and gathered great booty.

He married Hlif, the daughter of king Dagur of Vestmar. We descend from their son Jarl Ivar Halfdanarson. Some sources identify Haldan as the father of Gudrødur the Hunter (the magnificent). However, with about 30 years between the birth of Halfdan and Gudrødur, Gudrødur was more likely his uncle.

According to the historian Halfdan Koht, Halfdan may have been the one to win independence for Vestfold during the turbulent years of 813–14. The Frankish annals state that the kings of Hedeby had to solve an uprising in Vestfold at this time. According to Ynglingatal, Halfdan's people "gained victory" in this uprising, and Halfdan is thus the first independent ruler of Vestfold.

### **King Edmund (Jatmund)(the martyr)(780 - 869)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Edmund the Martyr (780 – 869) also known as St. Edmund or Edmund of East Anglia, was king of East Anglia from about 855 until his death. He was born about 780 in England.

Almost nothing is known about Edmund. He is thought to have been of East Anglian origin and was first mentioned in an annal of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, written some years after his death. The kingdom of East Anglia was devastated by the Vikings, who destroyed any contemporary evidence of his reign. Some versions of Edmund's life relate that he was crowned on December 25, 855 at Burna (probably Bures St Mary in Suffolk), which at that time functioned as the royal capital, and that he became a model king.

The Great Heathen Army advanced on East Anglia and killed Edmund on November 20, 869. He may have been slain by the Danes in battle, but by tradition he met his death at an unidentified place known as Haegelisdun, after he refused the Danes' demand that he renounce Christ: the Danes beat him, shot him with arrows and then beheaded him, on the orders of Ivar the Boneless and his brother Ubba. According to one legend, his head was then thrown into the forest, but was found safe by searchers after following the cries of an ethereal wolf that was calling out in Latin, "Hic, Hic, Hic" – "Here, Here, Here".

King Edmund's daughter Ulfrun married King Osvaldur the Holy.

### **King Osvaldur (Oswald of East Anglia) (the holy)(830 - 880)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Oswald (830 – 880) was king of East Anglia in the 870s after the death of Edmund the

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Martyr. No textual evidence of his reign is known, but some of his coins are known from the same period.

Evidence suggests that during the period between the death of Edmund the Martyr and the return of Guthrum to East Anglia in 880, Oswald and Æthelred ruled the East Angles as client kings. It is possible that the East Anglian aristocracy had been almost, but not entirely, extinguished by the Viking attacks that resulted in Edmund's death, and that in the years when Oswald, Æthelred and Guthrum successively ruled the kingdom, there was a period of opposition or defiance against the Danish leadership. The Vikings ruled the East Angles from the accession of Oswald, until 920, when East Anglia was incorporated into the kingdom of England after the defeat of the Danes by Edward the Elder.

Oswald married Ulfrun, daughter of Edmund the Martyr. We descend from their daughter Vilborg.

### **King Olafur (the white) Ingjaldsson (830 - 875)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Olafur the White (830 – 875) was a Viking sea-king who lived in the latter half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Olafur was born around 820 at Dyfinni, Ireland. His father was the Hiberno-Norse warlord Ingjald the White Helgasson.

Some traditional sources portray Olafur as a descendant of Ragnar Lodbrok – for instance, the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, claims that Olaf's paternal grandmother (Thora) was a daughter of Ragnar's son Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye. However, this connection seems unlikely, given that Sigurd appears to have lived in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century and Ragnar himself may have lived until the 860s. Irish fragments provide a different genealogy, suggesting that Olaf's father was Godfred, son of Ragnall, son of Godfred, son of Godfred.

Olafur was named King of Dublin around 853. According to Irish sources, Olafur ruled jointly with his kinsman Ímar. Olafur married Aud the Deep-minded (Auðr), daughter of Ketil Flatnose, the ruler of the Hebrides, according to Icelandic traditions. Olafur and Auðr had a son, Thorsteinn the Red. We descend from Thorsteinn. Thorsteinn attempted to conquer Scotland in the 870s. At some point Olafur had a falling-out with the clan of Ketil and sent Auðr and their son back to her father's house. According to *Landnámabók*, Olafur and Þorsteinn the Red were both killed in the British Isles. After Olafur's death, Aud would become an early settler in Iceland.

Old Norse sources mention two Olafurs belonging to the 9<sup>th</sup> century house of Vestfold. The first of these, Olafur the White, because of his connections with Dublin and with Ketil Flatnose, must be identified with Olafur king of Dublin, as described in early Irish and Scottish chronicles. We are also told in the *Heimskringla* of Olaf Guthfrithsson of Vestfold who on good archaeological evidence can be identified with the king buried in the Gokstad ship. It is possible that there was only one such king, Olaf Guthfrisson of Vestfold, who in his earlier days ruled from Dublin and raided in Scotland and who later in 871 returned to claim his Vestfold kingdom. The Irish Three Fragments of Annals, while not actually proving such a theory, do support the case for regarding Olafur Guthfrithsson of Vestfold as being the same as Olafur the White of Dublin and the Scottish Isles. The Fragments claim that Olafur of Dublin ended his reign there when in about 871 he returned to Norway to support his father Guthfrith in a struggle for a

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kingdom. This passage, then, would identify Olafur of Dublin, alias Olaf the White of *Landnamabok* with Olaf Guthfrithsson of Norway.

### **King Cearbhall Kjarvaldur MacDunlainq (800 - 888)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Cearbhall MacDúnlainq (800 – 888) was king of Ossory in south-east Ireland. The kingdom of Ossory (Osraige) occupied roughly the area of modern County Kilkenny and western County Laois and lay between the larger provincial kingdoms of Munster and Leinster.

Cearbhall was born about 800 in Ireland. He was the son of Dungal Fergalsson. Cearbhall came to prominence after the death of Fedelm mac Crimthainn, King of Munster, in 847. Ossory had been subject for a period to the Eóganachta kings of Munster, but Feidlimid was succeeded by a series of weak kings who had to contend with Viking incursions on the coasts of Munster. As a result, Cearbhall was in a strong position and is said to have been the second most powerful king in Ireland in his later years.

Cearbhall has been identified in the Norse sagas as Kjarvalur Írakonungr, who was an ancestor of many prominent Icelandic families. Cearbhall was married to a daughter of Máel Sechnaill, the High King of Ireland. Cearbhall was known to have had four sons and five daughters. We descend from four of his daughters: Raforta, Kormled, Fridgerdur and Audney. We also descend from his son Raudur. Raforta, Kormled, Fridgerdur, and Raudur would all have descendants in Iceland and found in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree. Audney's descendants are found in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree and would live in the Orkney Islands and Scotland.

The period of Cearbhall's life covered much of the first Viking Age, and he is notably mentioned in later Nordic sources. The Icelandic *Landnámabók* describes Cearbhall (Kjarvalur) as ruler of Dublin and Earl of Orkney. While several kingdoms in Britain would collapse under the shock of Viking attacks, their impact in Ireland was very much less immediate. Vikings would be both enemies and allies for Cearbhall and other Irish kings. In the long run, the creation of Norse-Gaelic towns by Vikings operating as traders rather than raiders would change the Irish political landscape, but the results of this were seen in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries rather than the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Cearbhall succeeded his father Dúngal as king of Osraige in 842. At this time the High King of Ireland was Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid who was married to Cearbhall's sister. The first report of Cearbhall is in 846, when Vikings attacked into northern Osraige, destroying a church at Coolcashin (near Galmoy), and plundering an unidentified settlement at Cúl Maine. Here the raiders were besieged for a fortnight by Cearbhall's army and lost heavily. The following year Cearbhall defeated an attack by Vikings from the Irish midlands, perhaps from Dublin, led by one Hákon.

In 855, Cearbhall is said to have slaughtered a Viking force under a certain Rodolb. In the aftermath of the battle Cearbhall was captured by other Vikings, but succeeded in escaping. Shortly afterwards Cearbhall aided a force of Danes led by a chief named Horm in their war with the Norwegians. The Danes may well have settled at what is now Waterford. The Munstermen asked Cearbhall's help against the Norse, and Cearbhall with the men of Osraige, Horm's Danes and some of the men of Munster inflicted a heavy defeat on the Norse. His ally Horm was killed

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raiding in Wales by Rhodri the Great. This conflict is described in the *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* as follows:

The men from two fleets of Norsemen came into Cearbhall son of Dúnlang's territory for plunder. When messengers came to tell that to Cearbhall, he was drunk. The noblemen of Osraige were saying to him kindly and calmly, to strengthen him: "What the Norwegians are doing now, that is, destroying the whole country, is no reason for a man in Osraige to be drunk. But may God protect you all the same, and may you win victory and triumph over your enemies as you often have done, and as you still shall. Shake off your drunkenness now, for drunkenness is the enemy of valor."

When Cearbhall heard that, his drunkenness left him and he seized his arms. A third of the night had passed at that time. This is how Cearbhall came out of his chamber: with a huge royal candle before him, and the light of that candle shone far in every direction. Great terror seized the Norwegians, and they fled to the nearby mountains and to the woods. Those who stayed behind out of valor, moreover, were all killed.

When daybreak came the next morning, Cearbhall attacked all of them with his troops, and he did not give up after they had been slaughtered until they had been routed, and they had scattered in all directions. Cearbhall himself fought hard in this battle, and the amount he had drunk the night before hampered him greatly, and he vomited much, and that gave him immense strength; and he urged his people loudly and harshly against the Norwegians, and more than half of the army was killed there, and those who escaped fled to their ships. This defeat took place at Achad mic Erclaige. Cearbhall turned back afterwards with triumph and great spoils.

It has been suggested that the importance of Cearbhall in Icelandic writings stems from the popularity of the *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* among the Norse-Gaels of 11<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, who passed these accounts on to the Icelanders, who then attached this famous and warlike king to their ancestry. Whether Cearbhall was in fact an ancestor of many prominent settler families is, however, of rather less importance than the fact that the Icelanders considered it worth reporting their descent from Cearbhall MacDúnlainq, whether real or contrived. Adoption of Cearbhall's ancestral story in Iceland is an example of the contacts between Norse and Gaelic society in the Viking Age.

Upon Cearbhall's death in about 888, he was succeeded by his brother Riagan MacDúnlainq.

### **Ketil (flat nose) Bjarnason (800 - )(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

There is perhaps more overlap between our Icelandic roots and our Celtic roots in this ancestor than in any other. This is due to both relationships and geography. Ketil Bjarnason (Björnsson), nicknamed Flatnose (800 – ), was a Norse King of the Western Isles in Scotland in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Ketil was born about 800 in Sogni, Norway. His parents were Bjarni (Buna) Vedra-Grimsson and Velaug Vikingsdottir. Bjarni (Buna) Vedra-Grimsson was a Viking and Hersir warlord from Sogni, Norway

In the *Laxdaela Saga* Ketil is recorded as being from Romsdal (Raumsdal), a valley in the county of Møre og Romsdal, between Nordmøre and Sunnmøre and from Sogni in the *Landnámabók*. After Bjarni (Buna) Vedra-Grimsson proclaimed his son Ketil as king of the Sudreys (Western Isles) and then refused to pay taxes to the crown and consequently Harald I

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(Fairhair) of Norway expropriated him of his possessions. Bjarni withdrew his support for Harald and took his children away from real influence.

Like many other medieval histories, all of these Old Norse works were written long after the events they described. No contemporaneous records of Ketil's life are known to exist, with the arguable exception of a single entry in the *Annals of Ulster*.

After Harald Fairhair had won the decisive Battle of Hafrsfjord in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, many fled from Norway. According to the *Orkneyinga Saga*, some of these Vikings began to raid Norway in summer from the Orkney and Shetland islands north of mainland Scotland. For this reason Harald set sail to uproot the attackers. He defeated them and also took possession of the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. This story is retold in the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, but here it is Ketil rather than Harald who led the expedition, and after the initial victory the former retained the islands as "personal domain" rather than bringing them under Harald's rule. In the *Laxdaela Saga* the same story is told, but here Ketil is one of the Vikings who have fled to the Isles to escape Harald's tyranny. In the *Landnámabók* the initial conquest is led by Harald, but as soon as he returned to Norway the raiders regrouped. At this point Harald sent Ketil to win the islands back again. Ketil did so but paid no tribute, at which point Harald took possession of what was owed from possessions of Ketil in Norway and sent away Ketil's sons. Some sources refer to Ketil as "King of the Sudreys" although there is little evidence that he himself claimed that title.

According to the *Landnámabók*, Ketil became ruler of a region already settled by Scandinavians. Tradition has it that he headquartered his Western Isles activity on the Island of Tiree. This is the very island that a great number of our Scottish (Celtic) ancestors were from. He left no successors there, and there is little record of Norse activity in the west of Scotland in the first four decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Ketil was married to Yngveldur Ketilsdottir, daughter of Ketil Wether, a hersir from Ringerike, Norway. They had a number of children, including Bjorn (the Easterner) Ketilsson; Helgi "Bjolan" Ketilsson; Thorunn Ketilsdotter, and Jorunn Ketilsdotter. Ketil's daughter, Aud the Deep-Minded, married Olaf the White, King of Dublin. Their son, Thorstein the Red, briefly conquered much of northern Scotland during the 870s and 880s before he was killed in battle. We descend from Aud, Thorunn, Bjorn (the Easterner), and Helgi "Bjolan." They were all early settlers in Iceland with the exception of Helgi who stayed in Scotland.

Ketil was involved in dealings with the Celtic people. He was likely in charge of an extensive island realm and, as a result, sufficiently prestigious to contemplate the making of agreements and alliances with other princelings. The Norse sources have Ketil's daughters Thorunn marrying Helgi the Lean, a grandson of Cearhball MacDúnlainq, and Aud marrying Olaf the White, both of whom were prominent figures in Ireland, suggesting significant connections between Ketil and the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century political landscape of that region.

Ketil's descendants would be given names of Celtic origin. His son Helgi and his great grandson Áleif had Gaelic nicknames, suggesting a link with Gaelic traditions. (Helgi Bjólan and Olafur Feilan, which mean Helgi "little mouth" and Olafur "little wolf".) His daughter Aud is recorded as a devout Christian, and one of her freedmen, Erpr, has a Pictish name. Ketil's nephew Orlyg Hrapsson is linked to the Celtic church and was a follower of St Columba.

Dal Riada was a Gaelic kingdom in the Argyll and Bute region of Scotland, County

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Antrim of Ulster and much of the Western Isles. Ketil could have taken control of Dal Riada with its islands. There appears to be a relationship between the Gaelic name Dal Riada and the fact that when Aud, settled in the Breiðafjörður region of western Iceland it was in a region later called Dalir or Dalaland (modern Dalasýsla). Furthermore, in the Breiðafjörður area there is an indisputably nostalgic Celtic precedent for quite a few names. Examples include islands called Pjattland (Pictland) and Írland (Ireland) and the nearby Patreksfjörður and Trostansfjörður named in honor of two Celtic saints.

Nothing is known of Ketil's latter years, except that he died in the Western Isles of Scotland before 884. His children had reportedly all adopted Christianity, supposedly under the influence of Iona. His children Aud, Thorunn, and Bjorn the Easterner all migrated to Iceland latter.

There is a character named Ketil Flatnose in *The Vikings* TV series. He is erroneously portrayed as a contemporary of Raven-Floki Vilgerdardson. This Ketil Flatnose supposedly took a group of settlers to Iceland from the village of Kattegat with Raven-Floki. However, the historic Ketil Flatnose never left the Western Isles of Scotland.

### **Asa Haraldsdottir (800 - 834)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Åsa Haraldsdottir of Agder (800 – 834) was a semi-legendary Norwegian Viking Age queen regnant of the petty kingdom of Agder, Norway. She was born about 800 in Norway. Åsa was the daughter of King Harald Granraude of Agder and a reputed woman.

According to sagas referencing the clan Yngling (Ynglingaätten), she was the mother of Halfdan the Black and grandmother of King Harald Fairhair.

King Gudrødur the Hunter (the Magnificent) of Borre in Vestfold proposed marriage to her after the death of his first wife, but her father refused the marriage. Gudrødur then killed her father and her brother, abducted her and married her in 819. One year later, she became the mother of Halfdan the Black. One year after this, Åsa took her revenge and had her servant kill her husband in about 821.

She left the kingdom of Borre to her stepson Olaf Geirstad-Alf and took her own son with her to the kingdom of Agder, her birth country, where she took power. Åsa ruled Agder for twenty years, and after this she left the throne to her son, Halfdan. He also demanded half of his father's kingdom from his half-brother. There are theories that queen Åsa was the woman buried with the famous Oseberg ship shortly after 834, but this has not been confirmed.

### **Eyvindur (the easterner) Bjarnarson (810 - )(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Eyvind "Austmann" (the Easterner) Björnsson (810 - ) was born in Gautland, Norway (an area north of Göteborg) in about 810. His parents were Bjorn "gautski" Hrolfsson and Hlif Hrolfsdottir. He succeeded his father in Norway. When his father died he took over his father's warship and went on Viking raids to the British Isles. There he married Raforta Kjarvaldsdottir. She was the daughter of Cearbhall Kjarvaldur MacDunlainq, King of Ossory, Ireland. Eyvindur and Raforta had at least three children born in Ireland: Helgi the Lean, Bjorg, and Thuridur. We

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descend from all three. Helgi the Lean and Bjorg would be early settlers in Iceland. Thuridur married Thorsteinn the Red Olafsson.

### **Jarl Torf-Einar Rognvaldsson (820 - 910)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Einar Rognvaldson often referred to by his byname Torf-Einar (820 – 910) was one of the Norse earls of Orkney. He was born about 820 in Mæri, Norway. He was the son of the Norse jarl, Rognvald the wise Eysteinnsson and a concubine (Hildur Ragnhildur Hrolfsdottir).

Einar's rise to power is related in sagas which apparently draw on verses of Einar's own composition for inspiration. After battling for control of the Northern Isles of Scotland and a struggle with Norwegian royalty, Einar founded a dynasty which retained control of the Orkney islands for centuries after his death.

Einar's father was Rognvald Eysteinnsson, Earl of Møre, Norway. Rognvald's family conquered the Orkney and Shetland islands in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century. Rognvald's brother, Sigurd Eysteinnsson, was made Earl of Orkney and after his death on campaign he was succeeded by his son, Guthorm, who died shortly afterward. Rognvald then sent one of his own sons, Hallad, to govern the islands.

The *Orkneyinga Saga* states that Einar was one of six brothers, the others being: Hallad, Hrollaug, Ivar, Hrólfr, and Thorir the Silent. The three eldest, Hallad, Einar and Hrollaug, were natural sons of Rognvald, and were "grown men when their brothers born in marriage were still children." Ivar was killed on an campaign with King Harald Finehair, which resulted in the Norðreyar being gifted to his family as compensation. Hrólfr "was so big that no horse could carry him", hence his byname of "Göngu-Hrólfr" ("Hrólfr the Walker"), and he is identified by the saga writers with Rollo, ancestor of the Dukes of Normandy and the progenitor of the Normans and ancestor of William the Conqueror. Thorir the Silent was Rognvald's third son. We descend from both Einar and Hrolfr.

Ari Þorgilsson quotes a short section from the lost Torf-Einar's Saga in the *Landnámabók*. It begins: "Earl Turf-Einar (of Orkney) had a daughter in his youth, she was called Thordis. Earl Rognvald brought her up and gave her in marriage to Thorgeir Klaufi, their son was Einar, he went to Orkney to see his kinsmen; they would not own him for a kinsman; then Einar bought a ship in partnership with two brothers, Vestman and Vemund, and they went to Iceland." The *Landnámabók* goes on to make brief reference to Einar's travels there. It also lists his two sons, Eyjolf and Ljot, and some details about them and their descendants. The sagas describe Einar as tall, ugly and blind in one eye, but sharp-sighted nonetheless. We descend from Torf-Einar's daughter Hlif and also his son Earl Thorfinn "Rollo-Brico," Hlif would emigrate to Iceland. Thorfinn stayed in Orkney. While Hlif is found in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree, Thorfinn is found in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree.

Einar's father offered Einar the position of Jarl (Earl) of the Orkneys, when his brother Hallad failed at this and the other brothers declined the offer. Einar, the youngest of the natural sons, then came forward and offered to go to the islands. Rognvald agreed to provide Einar with a ship and crew in the hope that he would sail away and never return. Despite his father's misgivings, on arrival in the Scottish islands, Einar fought and defeated two Danish warlords,

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Þórir Tréskegg (Thorir Treebeard) and Kálf Skurfa (Kalf the Scurvy), who had taken residence there. Einar then established himself as earl of a territory that comprised the two archipelagoes of Orkney and Shetland.

After Einar had settled in Orkney two of Harald Finehair's unruly sons, Hálfdan Hálegg and Gudrød Ljome, killed Einar's father Rognvald by trapping him in his house and setting it on fire. Gudrød took possession of Rognvald's lands while Hálfdan sailed westwards to Orkney and then displaced Einar. The sagas say that King Harald, apparently appalled by his sons' actions, overthrew Gudrød and restored Rognvald's lands to his son, Thorir. From a base in Caithness on the Scottish mainland Einar resisted Hálfdan's occupation of the islands. After winning a battle at sea, and a ruthless campaign on land, Einar spied Hálfdan hiding on North Ronaldsay. The sagas claim that Hálfdan was captured, and sacrificed to Odin as a blood eagle.

The sagas then relate that Harald sought vengeance for his son's ignoble death, and set out on campaign against Einar, but was unable to dislodge him. Eventually, Harald agreed to end the fight in exchange for a fine of 60 gold marks levied on Einar and the other owners of the islands. Einar offered to pay the entire fine if the landowners passed their lands to him, to which they agreed. Einar's assumption of control over the islands appears well-attested and was considered to be the moment at which the Earls of Orkney came to own the entire island group in fee to the King of Norway.

The remainder of Einar's long reign was apparently unchallenged, and he died in his bed of a sickness in about 894, leaving three sons, Arnkel, Erlend and Thorfinn who became jarls of Orkney after him. Despite his apparent physical shortcomings, as well as his low-born mother, Einar established a dynasty which ruled the Orkney islands until 1470.

### **King Eiríkur (Anundsson) Eymundsson (Weatherhat) (820 - 882)(our 32<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Eiríkur Anundsson or Eymundsson (820 – 882) was a Swedish king who ruled during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Norse sagas describe him as successful in extending his realm over the Baltic Sea, but unsuccessful in his attempts of westward expansion. Swedish historians have identified Eiríkur with the legendary Swedish king Eiríkur Weatherhat who is mentioned in some medieval king-lists as the predecessor of Eric the Victorious.

Eiríkur was born about 820 in Uppsala, Sweden. He was the son of king Anund, and he succeeded his father at Uppsala; he was a rich king. During his reign, Harald Fairhair (our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) came to power in Norway, Harald was the first of his kin to reign as a monarch in Norway.

Eiríkur is called Eymundsson by Snorri Sturluson. Since the preceding king Anund is often identified with an Anund who flourished in the 840s and is mentioned by other sources (Rimbert and Adam of Bremen), Anundsson is probably the correct form of the patronym.

According to *Hervarar saga*, he was preceded by his father Anund Uppsala and uncle Björn at Hauge, and later on succeeded by Björn the Old, the father of Eiríkur the Victorious and Olof Björnsson. We descend from Björn the Old and his two sons.

*Landnámabók* informs that Eiríkur and his son Björn ruled during the time of the Pope



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Adrian II and Pope John VIII, i.e. in the period 867–883, the time of the first settlement of Iceland. Harald Fairhair's saga relates that Eirikur died when Harald Fairhair had been king of all Norway for ten years. Traditionally this would indicate 882, but Harald's ascent to power is nowadays believed to have occurred later, in the 880s or c. 900.

Eirikur is mentioned in several places in the *Heimskringla*. In the saga of Olaf Haraldsson, Thorgny Lawspeaker relates:

My grandfather Thorgny could well remember the Uppsala king Eirik Eymundson, and used to say of him that when he was in his best years he went out every summer on expeditions to different countries, and conquered for himself Finland, Kirjalaland, Courland, Estonia, and the eastern countries all around; and at the present day the earth-bulwarks, ramparts, and other great works which he made are to be seen. And, more over, he was not so proud that he would not listen to people who had anything to say to him.

In Harald Fairhair's saga, Snorri Sturluson relates that Eirikur also wanted to extend Sweden westwards and to make a kingdom for himself as large as that of the Swedish king Sigurd Ring and his son Ragnar Lodbrok (i.e. Raumarike, Vingulmark and Westfold all the way to island of Grenmar). Thus he conquered Värmland and all the land south of Svinesund (modern Bohuslän) and claimed the shores of Viken as his own, naming it all West Götaland. He placed Hrane Gautske (Hrane the Great) as Jarl of the land between Svinesund and Göta älv. In these territories the people accepted Eirikur as their king.

When King Harald Fairhair arrived at Tønsberg (in Viken, and at the time a trading town) from Trondheim, he learned of this and became very angry. He assembled the thing at Fold and accused the people of treason, after which some had to accept his rule, while others were punished. He then spent the summer forcing Viken and Raumarike to accept his rule.

When the winter arrived, Harald learned that the Swedish king was in Värmland, after which he crossed the Ed forest and ordered the people to arrange feasts for him and his entourage. The most powerful man in the province was a man named Åke, who had formerly been one of Halfdan the Black's men, and he invited both the Norwegian king and the Swedish king to his halls. Åke had built a new hall instead of his old one, which was ornamented in the same splendid manner, but the old hall only had old ornaments and hangings. When the kings arrived, the Swedish king was placed in the old hall, whereas the Norwegian king was placed in the new one. The Norwegian king found himself in a hall with new gilded vessels carved with figures and shining like glass, full of the best liquor.

The next day, the kings prepared to leave. Bidding his farewell Åke gave to Harald's service his own twelve-year-old son Ubbe. Harald thanked Åke and promised him his friendship. Then Åke talked to the Swedish king, who was in a bad mood. Åke gave him valuable gifts and followed the king on the road until they came to the woods. Eirikur asked Åke why he, who was his man, had made such a difference between him and the Norwegian king. Åke answered that there was nothing to blame Eirikur for but that he had got the old things and the old hall because he was old whereas the Norwegian king was in the bloom of his youth. Åke also answered that he was no less the Swedish king's man than the Swedish king was his man. Hearing the words of treason, Eirikur drew his sword and slew the impudent Åke.

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When Harald learned of this, he and his retainers mounted their horses and chased after the Swedish king until they spotted him. When Eirikur and his men became aware that they were pursued, they rode as hard as they could until they had reached the wood that divided Värmland and Götaland. At this point Harald considered it best to return. He then spent the rest of the autumn killing all the Swedish king's men in Värmland.

In the winter, Harald plundered and burnt in Rånrike. In the meantime the Geats gathered an army, preparing to resist the Norwegians. When the ice broke up they drove stakes into the Göta älv to stop ships from entering. Nevertheless, the Norwegians invaded Götaland and laid their ships alongside the stakes. The Geats came down to the shore with a sizeable army and gave battle. A lot of people fell, but King Harald gained the victory. He then traveled far and wide in Götaland, winning most of the battles. In one of the battles, Hrane Gautske fell. Harald then proclaimed himself the ruler of all land north of Göta älv and north and west of lake Vänern and placed Guttormur Haraldsson to defend the region with a large force. There were disturbances between Harald and the Geats until King Eirikur died in 882, ten years after Harald's ascension to power. He was succeeded by his son Björn (III) the Old Eiriksson who ruled the Swedes for 50 years.

### **Jarl Hakon Grjotgardsson (820 - 900 )(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Håkon Grjotgardsson (820 – 900) was the first Earl of Lade and an ally of Harald Fairhair, King of Norway. He was born about 820 in Norway. Nicknamed Håkon the Rich (Håkon jarl hinn riki), he was the son and heir of Grjotgard Herlaugsson Lade. He succeeded his father as ruler of the petty kingdom of Trøndelag. Hakon was married to Ingijborg Haraldsdottir. Their daughter Åsa, married Harald Fairhair and was the mother of Guttormur Haraldsson and Halfdan Haraldsson. We descend from Asa through her son Ketilbjorn the Old Ketilsson by another husband. Håkon was also the father of Sigurd Håkonsson and Unnur Hakonardottir. We descend from these two children.

Håkon had his residence at Ørlandet at the mouth of the Trondheimsfjord. The exact extent of his control over the area is not confirmed. Håkon sought to extend his kingdom southwards. Harald Fairhair advanced across the mountains of Eastern Norway to subjugate Trøndelag. After some fighting, Håkon and Harald entered a union of joint forces. Håkon was made earl of Sunnfjord and Nordfjord. He took up residence in the area of Lade gaard in Trondheim.

After Harald Fairhair conquered Møre and Fjordane, he assigned the governance of the former to Rognvald Eysteinsson and the latter to Håkon. Atle Mjove continued to govern Sogn. Håkon and Atle Mjove soon came into conflict over Sogn and fought the Battle of Fjaler, in which Hakon was killed in about 900.

### **King Halfdan (the black) Gudrodsson (820 - 860)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Halfdan the Black (820 – 860) was a 9<sup>th</sup> century king of Vestfold. He belonged to the House of Yngling and was the father of Harald Fairhair, the first king of a unified Norway.

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Halfdan was born about 820 in Raumarike, Norway. According to *Heimskringla* he was the son of the Yngling King Gudrød the Hunter (the Magnificent) Halfdansson. *Heimskringla* also names his mother, as Åsa, daughter of King Harald of Agder, and his half-brother as Olaf Geirstad-Alf. *Heimskringla* relates that when Halfdan's father was killed, Åsa took the 1 year-old Halfdan and returned to Agder, where Halfdan was raised. When he was 18 or 19 years old, Halfdan became king of Agder. He quickly began adding to his kingdom, through political negotiation and military conquest. He divided the kingdom of Vestfold with his brother Olaf and, through military action, persuaded King Gandalf of Vingulmark to cede half his kingdom.

Halfdan next is said to have subdued an area called Raumarike. To secure his claim to Raumarike, Halfdan first defeated and killed the previous ruler, Sigtryg Eysteinnsson, in battle. He then defeated Sigtryg's brother and successor Eystein, in a series of battles. This established Halfdan's claim not only to Raumarike, but also to half of Hedmark, the core of Sigtryg and Eystein's kingdom.

Halfdan's first wife was Ragnhild, daughter of King Harald Gulskeg (Goldbeard) of Sogn. According to *Heimskringla*, Halfdan's second wife, was Ragnhild Sigurdsdotter. Halfdan and Ragnhild's son was Harald Fairhair.

*Heimskringla*, *Fagrskinna*, *Ágrip* and *Historia Norwegiæ* all relate that Halfdan drowned when he fell through the ice at the inlet Røykenvik in the lake Randsfjorden on his return home from Hadeland. His horse and sleigh broke through ice weakened by cattle dung near a watering hole dug in the frozen lake. He was buried in a mound at Stein in Ringerike.

A *Heimskringla* narrative adds that each of the districts of Halfdan's his kingdom wanted to claim his grave, and that it was agreed to divide his body into four pieces so each district could bury a piece of it, resulting in four different sites called Halvdanshaugen. According to this version, only his head is buried in Ringerike.

Halfdan the Black is falsely depicted in the series *The Vikings* as a contemporary of Ragnar Lodbrok. However their generations are separated by at least one-hundred years. Further Halfdan the Black is also falsely depicted in *The Vikings* with a brother named Harald Fairhair, who actually was his son and not his brother.

### **Ragnhild Sigurdardottir (835 - )(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

The saga literature has different versions of the origins of Ragnhild Sigurdardotter (835 - ). Some sources say that she was either the wife of King Halfdan the Black or a woman who lived during the late 9<sup>th</sup> and/or early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, who was the daughter of Sigurd Hart of the Dagling clan. Some say they (and their relatives) lived in differing periods and could not be the same person. However, the genealogists who developed the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree had adopted the traditional accounts that portray these two figures as the same woman.

Among the more unlikely claims in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* are that this Ragnhild Sigurdardotter was the daughter of Sigurd Hart, king of Ringerike. This would make Ragnhild the great-granddaughter of Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye. Some see this as unlikely due to inconsistencies in dating the life of Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye. According to *Heimskringla*, Ragnhild Sigurdardotter was the second wife of Halfdan the Black. However, both of these

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sources agree that Ragnhild and Halfdan were the parents of Harald Fairhair.

Ragnhild was born about 835 In Norway. She was the daughter of Sigurdur Hart Helgasson and his wife Thorny Klaengsdottir. She was the granddaughter of Helgi the Sharp Firdleifsson and Aslaug Sigurdardottir. This indeed makes her the granddaughter of Sigurd Snake-in-the-eye.

Ragnhild came to know King Halfdan the Black and became his queen through the following abridged account from *Heimskringla*:

Now King Halfdan was in Hedemark at the Yule entertainments. . . . he called to him Harek Gand, and told him to go over to Hadeland, and bring him Ragnhild, Sigurd Hart's daughter. . . they broke into the sleeping-room where Hake slept, took Ragnhild, with her brother Guthorm, and all the goods that were there, and set fire to the house-servants' place, and burnt all the people in it. Then they covered over a magnificent wagon, placed Ragnhild and Guthorm in it, and drove down upon the ice. . . . When King Halfdan, who was very quick of sight, saw the party returning over the frozen lake, and with a covered wagon, he knew that their errand was accomplished according to his desire. Thereupon he ordered the tables to be set out, and sent people all round in the neighborhood to invite plenty of guests; and the same day there was a good feast which was also Halfdan's marriage-feast with Ragnhild, who became a great queen. . . .Ragnhild, who was wise and intelligent, dreamt great dreams. She dreamt, for one, that she was standing out in her herb-garden, and she took a thorn out of her shift; but while she was holding the thorn in her hand it grew so that it became a great tree, one end of which struck itself down into the earth, and it became firmly rooted; and the other end of the tree raised itself so high in the air that she could scarcely see over it, and it became also wonderfully thick. The under part of the tree was red with blood, but the stem upwards was beautifully green and the branches white as snow. There were many and great limbs to the tree, some high up, others low down; and so vast were the tree's branches that they seemed to her to cover all Norway, and even much more. . . . Queen Ragnhild gave birth to a son, and water was poured over him, and the name of Harald given him, and he soon grew stout and remarkably handsome. As he grew up he became very expert at all feats, and showed also a good understanding. He was much beloved by his mother, but less so by his father.

### King Alfred the Great of Wessex (847 - 899)(our 33<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather)

Alfred the Great (847 – 899) was King of Wessex from 871 to 886 and King of the Anglo-Saxons from 886 to 899. Alfred was born in the royal estate of Wantage, Berkshire, England in about 847. He was the youngest of five sons of King Æthelwulf of Wessex by his first wife, Osburh. In 853 Alfred is reported by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to have been sent to Rome where he was confirmed by Pope Leo IV, who "anointed him as king". On their return from Rome in 856 Æthelwulf was deposed by his son Æthelbald. With civil war looming the magnates of the realm met in council to hammer out a compromise. Æthelbald would retain the western shires (i.e. historical Wessex), and Æthelwulf would rule in the east. After King Æthelwulf died in 858, Wessex was ruled by three of Alfred's brothers in succession: Æthelbald, Æthelberht and Æthelred.

Alfred was married to Ealhswith in 868 at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England. We descend from their daughter Ælfhryth of Wessex.

In 868, Alfred was recorded as fighting beside Æthelred in a failed attempt to keep the Great Heathen Army led by Ivar the Boneless out of the adjoining Kingdom of Mercia. The

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Danes arrived in his homeland at the end of 870 and nine engagements were fought in the following year, with mixed results.

In April 871 King Æthelred died and Alfred acceded to the throne of Wessex and the burden of its defense. While he was busy with the burial ceremonies for his brother, the Danes defeated the Saxon army in his absence at an unnamed spot and then again in his presence at Wilton in May. The defeat at Wilton smashed any remaining hope that Alfred could drive the invaders from his kingdom. Alfred was forced instead to make peace with them, according to sources that do not tell what the terms of the peace were.

The Viking army withdrew from Reading in the autumn of 871 to take up winter quarters in Mercian London. In 876 under their three leaders, Guthrum, Oscetel and Anwend, the Danes slipped past the Saxon army and attacked and occupied Wareham in Dorset. Alfred blockaded the Viking ships in Devon and with a relief fleet having been scattered by a storm, the Danes were forced to submit. The Danes withdrew to Mercia. In 878 from his fort at Athelney, an island in the marshes near North Petherton, Alfred was able to mount a resistance campaign, rallying the local militias from Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. The year 878 was the nadir of the history of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. With all the other kingdoms having fallen to the Vikings, Wessex alone was still resisting.

Alfred won a decisive victory in the ensuing Battle of Edington in 878. He then pursued the Danes to their stronghold at Chippenham and starved them into submission. One of the terms of the surrender was that Guthrum convert to Christianity. Alfred made an agreement with the Vikings, creating what was known as the Danelaw in the North of England. Alfred also oversaw the conversion of Viking leader Guthrum to Christianity. He defended his kingdom against the Viking attempt at conquest, becoming the dominant ruler in England.

Alfred would once again engage in battles against the Danes in the 890s. At the end of the year 895 the Danes drew their ships up the River Thames. Access to the interior of England had been successfully carried out using their longships. Alfred saw a means of obstructing the river to prevent the egress of the Danish ships. The Danes realized that they were out maneuvered. The next year 896, the Danes gave up the struggle.

Alfred died on October 26, 899 at the age of about 52. How he died is unknown, although he suffered throughout his life with a painful and unpleasant illness, possibly either Crohn's disease or hemorrhoids. Alfred was buried temporarily in the Old Minster in Winchester. Four years after his death, he was moved to the New Minster. The New Minster moved to Hyde in 1110 a little north of the city, and the monks were transferred to Hyde Abbey along with Alfred's body and those of his wife and children, which were presumably interred before the high altar. The abbey was dissolved in 1539 during the reign of Henry VIII and the church was demolished, leaving the graves intact.

Alfred had a reputation as a learned and merciful man of a gracious and level-headed nature who encouraged education, proposing that primary education be conducted in Anglo-Saxon rather than Latin and improving the legal system and military structure and his people's quality of life. He was given the epithet "the Great" during and after the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and, alongside the Danish Cnut the Great, remains the only king of England to be given such a name.

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### King Harald (Fairhair) Halfdanarson (858 - 933)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)

Harald I Fairhair (858 – 933) is portrayed by medieval Icelandic historians as the first King of Norway. According to traditions current in Norway and Iceland in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, he reigned from 872 to 930. Supposedly, two of his sons, Eric Bloodaxe and Haakon the Good, succeeded Harald to become kings after his death. His life is described in several of the Kings' sagas, none of them older than the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Their accounts of Harald and his life differ on many points, but it is clear that Harald was regarded as having unified Norway into one kingdom.

Harald Fairhair was born about 858 in Rogaland, Norway. His parents were Halfdan the Black Gudrodsson and Ragnhild Sigurdardottir.

In the Saga of Harald Fairhair in *Heimskringla*, which is the most elaborate although not the oldest or most reliable source to the life of Harald, it is written that Harald succeeded, on the death of his father Halfdan the Black Gudrödaron, to the sovereignty of several small, and somewhat scattered kingdoms in Vestfold, which had come into his father's hands through conquest and inheritance. His protector-regent was his mother's brother Guthorm.

The unification of Norway is something of a love story. It begins with a marriage proposal that resulted in rejection and scorn from Gyda, the daughter of Eirik, king of Hordaland. She said she refused to marry Harald "before he was king over all of Norway." Harald was therefore induced to take a vow not to cut nor comb his hair until he was sole king of Norway, and obtained the epithet "Fairhair."

In 866, Harald made the first of a series of conquests over the many petty kingdoms which would compose all of Norway, including Värmland in Sweden, which had sworn allegiance to the Swedish saga-king Eirikur Eymundsson. In 872, after a great victory at Hafrsfjord near Stavanger, Harald found himself king over the whole country, ruling from his Kongsgård seats at Avaldsnes and Alrekstad. His realm was, however, threatened by dangers from without, as large numbers of his opponents had taken refuge, not only in Iceland, then recently discovered; but also in the Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, Hebrides Islands, Faroe Islands and the northern European mainland. However, his opponents' leaving was not entirely voluntary. Many Norwegian chieftains who were wealthy and respected posed a threat to Harald; therefore, they were subjected to much harassment from Harald, prompting them to vacate the land. At last, Harald was forced to make an expedition to the West, to clear the islands and the Scottish mainland of some Vikings who tried to hide there.

Harald is depicted as the prime cause of the Norse settlement of Iceland and beyond. Iceland was settled by "malcontents" from Norway, who resented Harald's claim of rights of taxation over lands, which the possessors appear to have previously held in absolute ownership.

The latter part of Harald's reign was disturbed by the strife of his many sons. When it comes to marriage and relationships, Harald was Norway's equivalent to Henry VIII. It is not exactly clear the order in which these marriages and relationships occurred, but it is approximately as follows:

His married his first wife Gyda Eiriksdottir in about 871. They had four sons and one daughter. We descend from their daughter Alov.

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His second wife was Snjalfridur, daughter of Svåse the Finn. They had three sons and one daughter. We descend from their son King Sigurdur Hrisi.

His third wife was Ragnhild Eiriksdottir. They had one son, King Eric Bloodaxe (not our ancestor).

His fourth wife was Svanhildur Eysteinsdottir. Daughter of Jarl Eysteinn Ivarsson. They had three sons. We descend from their son King Olafur “Geirsteadeif”

He may have had several children by concubines. The first concubine Thora Mosterstong, through which Harald had a son named King Håkon the Good (not our ancestor). Another unknown concubine gave him a daughter named Ingibjorg, who we descend from.

His fifth wife was Asa, daughter of Håkon Grijotgardsson. They had four sons.

His final wife was Åshild, daughter of Ring Dagsson. They had two sons and two daughters.

It can easily be seen from this long list of his children that it is not all that unusual for a Norwegian or an Icelander to be a descendant of Harald Fairhair. The number of sons he left varies in the different saga accounts, from 11 to 20. Twelve of his sons are named as kings, two of them over the whole country. He gave them all the royal title and assigned lands to them, which they were to govern as his representatives; but this arrangement did not put an end to the discord, which continued into the next reign. When he grew old, Harald handed over the supreme power to his favorite son Eirik Bloodaxe, whom he intended to be his successor. Eirik I ruled side-by-side with his father until Harald’s death due to age in approximately 933 at Rogaland.

Harald Fairhair is falsely depicted in the series *The Vikings* as a contemporary of Ragnar Lodbrok. However their generations are separated by over one-hundred years. Further Harald Fairhair is also falsely depicted in *The Vikings* with a brother named Halfdan the Black, who actually was his father and not his brother.

### **King Muirchertach Myrkjartan MacNeill (860 - 943)(our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Muirchertach Myrkjartan MacNéill (860 – 943), called Muirchertach of the Leather Cloaks was a King of Ailech (Donegal, Ireland). Muirchertach Myrkjartan was born about 860 in Tyrone, Ireland. He was the son of Niall Glúndub and Gormlaith. He therefore belonged to the Cenél nEógain sept of the northern Uí Néill. His father and both of his grandfathers—Niall's father Áed Finnliath and Gormlaith's father Flann Sinna—had been High King of Ireland. Máel Muire ingen Cináeda, his father's mother, had after the death of Áed been married to Flann Sinna. She was a daughter of king of the Picts, Kenneth MacAlpin (our 33<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree).

Muirchertach's father was killed in battle against the Norse-Gaels of Ireland near Dublin on September 14, 919 along with many other Irish kings. Muirchertach's mother's brother, Donnchad Donn mac Flainn, became the new High King, while Muirchertach became King of Ailech. Muirchertach descends from Njall of the Nine Hostages in 15 generations.

Muirchertach married Donnchad's daughter Flann, but relations between the two men were not good. Conflict between them is recorded in 927, 929, and 938, but it was not until 941, following Flann's death the year previously, that Muirchertach and Donnchad came to blows.

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That year Muirchertach raided Mide, Osraige, and Munster, taking the Munster king Cellachán Caisil hostage as a demonstration of his power and Donnchad's limited authority.

Muirchertach was a hardened warrior, and finally met his death in battle at Ardee, Louth, Ireland on February 26, 943 at the hands of Blácaire MacGofrith, King of Dublin. His obituary in the Annals of Ulster calls him "the Hector of the western world", and the "heir designate of Ireland."

Melkorka Mýrkjartansdóttir, whose story is told in the Icelandic *Laxdæla Saga*, claimed to be the daughter of Muirchertach. Melkorka was sold as a slave to the Icelandic chieftain Höskuldur Dala-Kollsson (our 25<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), with whom she had an illegitimate son named Ólafur Peacock Höskuldsson (our 24<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). Ólafur became a successful chieftain in Iceland, and is one of the major characters of *Laxdæla Saga*.

### **Melkorka Myrkjartansdottir (900 - )(our 25<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Melkorka (900 - ) is the name given in *Landnámabók* and *Laxdæla Saga* for the Irish mother of the Icelandic Goði Ólafur Peacock Höskuldsson (our 24<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). Höskuldur Dala-Kollsson purchased Melkorka, who he believed to be a selective mute thrall-woman, from a Rus' merchant on Brännöyar while on a trading expedition to Norway, and made her his concubine while away from his wife Jorunn Bjarnadóttir. When Höskuldur returned home to Iceland, he took her with him. Despite Jorunn's irritation, the concubine was accepted into Höskuldur's household, though he remained faithful to Jorunn while in Iceland. The following winter the concubine gave birth to a son, to whom they gave the name Ólafur after Höskuldur's uncle, Olaf Feilan, who had recently died. *Landnámabók* mentions that Höskuldur and Melkorka had another son, Helgi.

Ólafur was a precocious child, and could speak and walk perfectly by the age of two. One day Höskuldur discovered Ólafur's mother speaking to her son; she was not, in fact, mute. When he confronted her she told him that she was an Irish princess named Melkorka carried off in a Viking raid, and that her father was an Irish king named "Myrkjartan" (Muirchertach MacNeill). Shortly thereafter squabbling between Jorunn and Melkorka forced Höskuldur to move his concubine and his son by her to a different farm, which thereafter was known as Melkorkustaðir.

Around 956, Ólafur, at Melkorka's urging, decided to go abroad to seek his fortune. Melkorka taught Ólafur Irish Gaelic and urged him to visit her family. Höskuldur was opposed to the expedition and would not provide trade wares, and the property of Ólafur's foster-father Þórður was mostly in immobile goods and land. In part to arrange financing for his expedition, his mother Melkorka married Þorbjörn skjúpur ("the Feeble"), a farmer who had previously assisted her in the management of Melkorkustaðir. Melkorka and Þorbjörn had a son named Lambi.

Ólafur visited Ireland, where he met Melkorka's father and kinsmen, Myrkjartan. He introduced himself as Melkorka's son and explained that their kinship was his reason for visiting. Myrkjartan was not immediately convinced of their kinship, but he was impressed with Ólafur's Irish and sure that he was of high birth nevertheless. Then Ólafur showed Myrkjartan the gold ring on his arm, which Melkorka had given him when he left Iceland. It had originally been a gift



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from her father. After this, Myrkjartan was sure that Ólafur was his kinsman. Ólafur remained with Myrkjartan for a time, and the king, according to *Laxdæla Saga*, even offered to make Ólafur his heir. Ólafur, however, returned to Norway, and then ultimately to Iceland, afraid of provoking Myrkjartan's sons. Ólafur had wanted to take Melkorka's nurse back to Iceland to meet her, but Myrkjartan did not permit it. After his journey, Ólafur became renowned, both for his travels and because he was the grandson of the Irish king.

### **Count of Flanders Baldwin I (830 - 879)(our 33<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather)**

Baldwin I (830 – 879), also known as Baldwin Iron Arm was the first margrave (Count) of Flanders. Baldwin I was born about 830 in Flanders, Belgium.

At the time Baldwin I first appears in the records he was already a count, presumably in the area of Flanders, but this is not known. Count Baldwin rose to prominence when he eloped with Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, king of West Francia. Judith had previously been married to Æthelwulf and Æthelbald, kings of Wessex, but after the latter's death in 860, she returned to France.

Around the Christmas of 861, at the instigation of Baldwin I and with her brother Louis's consent, Judith escaped the custody into which she had been placed in the city of Senlis, Oise after her return from England. She fled north with Count Baldwin. Charles had given no permission for a marriage and tried to capture Baldwin, sending letters to Rorik of Dorestad and Bishop Hungar, forbidding them to shelter the fugitive.

After Baldwin and Judith had evaded his attempts to capture them, Charles had his bishops excommunicate the couple. Judith and Baldwin responded by traveling to Rome to plead their case with Pope Nicholas I. Their plea was successful and Charles was forced to accept the situation. The marriage took place on December 13, 862 in Auxerre, Burgundy, France. By 870, Baldwin had acquired the lay-abbacy of Saint Peter's Abbey in Ghent and is assumed to have also acquired the counties of Flanders and Waasland, or parts thereof by this time.

Baldwin I and Judith had four children. We descend from their son Baldwin II.

Baldwin I developed himself as a very faithful and stout supporter of Charles and played an important role in the continuing wars against the Vikings. He is named in 877 as one of those willing to support the emperor's son, Louis the Stammerer. During his life, Baldwin I expanded his territory into one of the major principalities of Western Francia. He died in 879 and was buried in the Abbey of St-Bertin, near Saint-Omer.

### **Count of Flanders Baldwin II (863 - 918)(our 32<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Baldwin II (863 – 918) was the second margrave (count) of Flanders, ruling from 879 to 918. He was nicknamed the Bald after his maternal grandfather, Emperor Charles the Bald (our 34<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). Baldwin II was born around 863 to Margrave Baldwin I of Flanders and Judith, daughter of Emperor Charles the Bald.

The early years of Baldwin II's rule were marked by a series of devastating Viking raids into Flanders. By 883, he was forced to move north to Pagus Flandransis, which became the

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territory most closely associated with the Counts of Flanders. Baldwin constructed a series of wooden fortifications at Saint-Omer, Bruges, Ghent, and Kortrijk. He then seized lands that were abandoned by royal and ecclesiastical officials. Many of these same citadels later formed castellanies which housed government, militia, and local courts.

In 888, the Western Frankish king, Charles the Fat, was deposed, leaving several candidates vying to replace him. As a grandson of Charles the Bald, who was king of West Francia, Baldwin could have competed for the crown. Instead, Baldwin and others tried to convince the East Frankish king, Arnulf, to take the West Frankish crown, but Arnulf declined.

The Robertine Odo, Count of Paris, was eventually made king. Odo and Baldwin's relationship deteriorated when Odo failed to support Baldwin's attempts to gain control of the Abbey of St. Bertin. Odo attacked Baldwin at Bruges but was unable to prevail. Baldwin continued his expansion to the south and gained control over Artois, including the important Abbey of St. Vaast.

In about 895, Baldwin II married Ælfthryth, the daughter of King Alfred the Great of Wessex. The immediate goal of that Anglo-Flemish alliance was to help Baldwin control the lower Canche River valley. They had four children. We descend from their son Count Arnulf I.

In a dispute over some abbey property in 900, Baldwin had Archbishop Fulk of Reims assassinated and was excommunicated by Pope Benedict IV. When his attempts to expand further into the upper Somme River valley were opposed by Herbert I, Count of Vermandois, Baldwin had the count assassinated as well. Baldwin died on September 10, 918 at Blandijnberg (near Ghent) and was succeeded by his eldest son, Arnulf I of Flanders. His younger son, Adalulf, became the first Count of Boulogne.

### **Count of Flanders Arnulf I (889 - 965)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Arnulf I (889 – 965), called the Great, was a Count of Flanders. Arnulf was born on December 12, 889 in Flanders, Belgium. Arnulf was the son of margrave Baldwin II of Flanders and Ælfthryth of Wessex, daughter of Alfred the Great. Through his mother he was a descendant of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England, and through his father, a descendant of Charlemagne. Presumably Arnulf was named after Saint Arnulf of Metz, a progenitor of the Carolingian dynasty.

At the death of his father in 918, Arnulf became Count of Flanders while his brother Adeloft or Adelolf succeeded to the County of Boulogne. However, in 933 Adeloft died, and Arnulf took the countship of Boulogne for himself, but later conveyed it to his nephew, Arnulf II. Arnulf titled himself count by the Grace of God.

In 934 Arnulf married Adele of Vermandois, daughter of Herbert II of Vermandois. They had three sons and two daughter. We descend from their son Count Baldwin III.

Arnulf I greatly expanded Flemish rule to the south, taking all or part of Artois, Ponthieu, Amiens, and Ostrevent. He exploited the conflicts between Charles the Simple and Robert I of France, and later those between Louis IV and his barons.

In his southern expansion Arnulf inevitably had conflict with the Normans, who were trying to secure their northern frontier. This led to the 942 murder of the Duke of Normandy,

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William Longsword, at the hands of Arnulf's men. The Viking threat was receding during the later years of Arnulf's life, and he turned his attentions to the reform of the Flemish government.

Arnulf died on March 27, 965 in Flanders. He was buried in the Church of Saint-Pierre de Gand in Ghent.

Arnulf made his eldest son and heir Baldwin III of Flanders co-ruler in 958, but Baldwin died untimely in 962, so Arnulf was succeeded by Baldwin's infant son, Arnulf II of Flanders.

### **Count of Flanders Baldwin III (940 - 962)(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Baldwin III (940 – 962), called the Young, was Count of Flanders, who briefly ruled the County of Flanders together with his father, Arnulf I, from 958 until his early death. Baldwin III was born about 940 in Flanders, Belgium. He was the son of Count Arnulf I of Flanders and his second wife, Adele of Vermandois. Shortly before 961, Baldwin III married Matilda, daughter of Duke Hermann Billung of Saxony. They had a son, Arnulf II, who we descend from.

Arnulf I made Baldwin III co-ruler of Flanders in 958. During his short rule, Baldwin was responsible for establishing the wool manufacturing industry at Ghent and markets at other towns in Flanders. Baldwin III died on January 1, 962. After Baldwin's death, Arnulf I arranged for King Lothair of France to become the guardian of Baldwin's son, Arnulf II, who succeeded Arnulf I.

### **Count of Flanders Arnulf II (961 - 987)(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Arnulf II (961 – 987) was Count of Flanders from 965 until his death. Arnulf was born in about 961 in Flanders, Belgium. He was the son of Baldwin III of Flanders and Mathilde Billung of Saxony, daughter of Herman, Duke of Saxony. His father Baldwin III died in 962, when Arnulf was just an infant, whilst Arnulf's grandfather, Arnulf I, was still alive. When Arnulf I died three years later, the regency was held by his kinsman Baldwin Balso.

By the time Arnulf attained his majority in 976, Flanders had lost some of the southern territory acquired by Arnulf I. The latter had given some parts of Picardy to King Lothar of France to help assure his grandson's succession, and gave Boulogne as a fief to another relative. Then early in Arnulf's minority Lothar had taken Ponthieu and given it to Hugh Capet, and the first counts of Guînes had established themselves.

In 976, Arnulf married Rozala of Italy, daughter of Berengar II of Italy, and had two children. We descend from their son Baldwin IV. Arnulf II died on March 30, 987 at age 26. Shortly after Arnulf's death his widow married King Robert II of France.

### **Count of Flanders Baldwin IV (980 - 1035)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Baldwin IV (980 – 1035), called the Bearded, was the count of Flanders from 987 until his death. Baldwin IV was born about 980 in Flanders, Belgium. He was the son of Count Arnulf II of Flanders and Rozala of Italy, of the House of Ivrea.

Baldwin succeeded his father as Count of Flanders in 987, but with his mother Rozala as

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the regent until his majority. In contrast to his predecessors Baldwin turned his attention eastward, leaving the southern part of his territory in the hands of his vassals the counts of Guînes, Hesdin, and St. Pol. To the north of the county Baldwin was given Zeeland as a fief by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II, while on the right bank of the Scheldt river he received Valenciennes and parts of the Cambresis as well as Saint-Omer and the northern Ternois. In his French territories, the supremacy of the Baldwin remained unchallenged. A great deal of colonization of marshland was organized along the coastline of Flanders and the harbor and city of Brugge were enlarged.

Baldwin first married Ogive, daughter of Frederick of Luxembourg, by whom he had a son and heir, Baldwin V. We descend from Baldwin V.

Baldwin later married Eleanor, daughter of Richard II of Normandy, by whom he had a daughter, Judith. We descend from Judith. Judith married Jarl Tosti Gudnason of Wessex. Baldwin IV died on May 30, 1035 in Flanders.

### **Jarl Rognvaldur Eysteinnsson (800 - 894)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Rognvaldur Eysteinnsson (800 – 894) was the founding Jarl (or Earl) of Møre in Norway, and a close relative and ally of Harald Fairhair, the earliest known King of Norway. In the Norse language he is known as Rognvaldur Eysteinnsson (Mærajarl) and in modern Norwegian as Ragnvaldur Mørejarl. He is sometimes referred to with bynames that may be translated into modern English as "Rognvaldur the Wise" or "Rognvaldur the Powerful." Rognvaldur was born about 800 in Uppland, Sweden. He was the son of Jarl Eysteinn the Clatterer Ivarsson and Ascrida Rognvaldsdottir.

The *Orkneyinga saga* says that Rognvaldur was the son of Eysteinn Ivarsson and grandson of Ívar Upplendingjarl. Also according to this saga, He was married to Ragnhild, the daughter of a man named Hrólfur Nose, although in the *Heimskringla* his wife is named Hild. Both sagas refer to six sons. The oldest, "by concubines." Rognvaldur and Hild had at least four sons: Ivar, Hrólfur, Torf-Einar and Thorir. Hrólfur, who "was so big that no horse could carry him", hence his byname of "Gongu-Hrólfur," who was believed to be Rollo, progenitor of the Normans. We descend from torf-Einar and Hrolfur.

Rognvaldur does appear to have had some kind of role in the founding of the Norse Earldom of Orkney. The Saga of Harald Fairhair in *Heimskringla* recounts that Rognvaldur accompanied King Harald Fairhair on a great military expedition. First the islands of Shetland and Orkney were cleared of Vikings who had been raiding Norway and then continued on to Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man. During this campaign Rognvaldur's son Ivar was killed and in compensation Harald granted Rognvaldur Orkney and Shetland.

Rognvaldur was killed by King Harald's son Halfdan Hålegg and Gudrod Gleam, who engineered a sudden attack, surrounding the house in which Rognvaldur was staying, and burned it to the ground with the earl and 60 of his men inside it. Harald "flew into a rage" when he heard about this and sent out a "great force" against Gudrod who was then banished. Halfdan escaped into the western seas and Rognvaldur's death was later avenged by Torf-Einar, who killed him on North Ronaldsay and then made peace with Harald. Rognvaldur's son Thorir was then made Earl

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of Møre by Harald, who also gave Thorir his daughter Alof in marriage.

The sagas thus identify Rognvaldur as the apical figure of the Norse Earls of Orkney who controlled the islands until the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, and a forerunner of important Icelandic families. Furthermore, through his son Hrolfur, Rognvaldur is portrayed as an ancestor of the Dukes of Normandy who, following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, became the kings of England.

### **Gongu-Hrolfur (rollo) “Rolf the Ganger” Rognvaldsson (855 - 930)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Hrolfur Rognvaldsson (Rollo)(855 – 930) was a Viking who became the first ruler of Normandy, a region in northern France. He is sometimes called the first Duke of Normandy. His son and grandson, William Longsword and Richard I, used the titles "count," respectively. His great-grandson Richard II was the first to officially use the title of Duke of Normandy. Rollo was born about 855 in Mæri, Norway. He was the son of Jarl Rognvaldur the Wise Eysteinnsson and Hild Hrolfsdottir.

Rollo seized Rouen in 876. He struck up a friendship in England with Guthrum, the Danish leader whom Alfred the Great baptized with the baptismal name Athelstan, and then recognized as king of the East Angles in 880. Then when Rollo took Bayeux by force, he carried off with him the beautiful Popa or Poppa, a daughter of Berenger, Count of Rennes, took her in marriage and with her had their son and Rollo's heir, William Longsword. We descend from William.

The earliest record of Rollo is from 918, in a charter of Charles III to an abbey, which referred to an earlier grant to "the Normans of the Seine," namely "Rollo and his associates" for "the protection of the kingdom." In return for formal recognition of the lands he possessed, Rollo agreed to be baptized and assist the king in the defense of the realm. Rollo took the baptismal name Robert, as it was custom to take the name of godfather. The seal of agreement was to be marriage between Rollo and Gisla, daughter of Charles.

After pledging his fealty to Charles III as part of the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte, Rollo divided the lands between the rivers Epte and Risle among his chieftains, and settled with a de facto capital in Rouen. When Rollo had been given Rouen and its hinterland in return for his alliance with the Franks, it was agreed upon that it was both in his and his Frankish allies' interest to extend his authority over Viking settlers. This would appear to be the motive for later concessions to the Vikings of the Seine, which are mentioned in other records of the time. When Charles III abdicated the throne to Rudolph of France, Rollo felt that his pledge and oaths to the kings of France null and void, and began raiding in the west to expand his territory, putting pressure on other rulers to propose another compromise. The need for an agreement was particularly urgent when Robert I, successor of Charles III, was killed in 923. Rudolph is recorded as sponsoring a new agreement by which a group of Northmen were conceded the provinces of the Bessin and Maine. These Northmen were presumed to be Rollo and his associates, moving their authority westward from the Seine valley. It is still unclear as to whether Rollo was being given lordship over the Vikings already settled in the region in order to

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domesticate and restrain them, or was given lordship over the Franks around Bayeux in order to protect them from other Viking leaders settled in eastern Brittany and the Cotentin peninsula.

Since being recorded in 918 as the leader of the Viking settlers in the region of Normandy, Rollo continued to reign over Normandy until at least 928. He was succeeded by his son William Longsword in the Duchy of Normandy that he had founded. The offspring of Rollo and his followers became known as the Normans. After the Norman conquest of England and their conquest of southern Italy and Sicily over the following two centuries, their descendants came to rule Norman England (the House of Normandy), much of the island of Ireland, the Kingdom of Sicily (the Kings of Sicily) as well as the Principality of Antioch from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century, leaving behind an enduring legacy in the histories of Europe and the Near East.

Rollo is falsely depicted in the series *The Vikings* as the brother of Ragnar Lodbrok. However, Rollo was the 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandson of Ragnar Lodbrok. But the depiction of Rollo's involvement in the Viking raids on Paris and his ultimate settlement in France is fairly accurate.

### **King Gormur (the old)(860 - 958)(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Gormur the Old (860 – 958), also called Gormur the Languid, was ruler of Denmark, reigning from about 936 to his death. He ruled from Jelling, and made the oldest of the Jelling Stones in honor of his wife Thyra. Gormur was born about 860 in Denmark. He was the son of semi-legendary Danish king Harthacnut Horda-Knutur Sigurdsson.

Chronicler Adam of Bremen says that Harthacnut came from Northmannia to Denmark and seized power. He deposed the young king Sigtrygg Gnupasson, reigning over Western Denmark. When Harthacnut died in 936, Gorm ascended the throne.

*Heimskringla* reports Gormur taking at least part of the kingdom by force from Gnupa. Gormur is first mentioned as the host of Archbishop Unni of Hamburg and Bremen in 936. According to the Jelling Stones, Gormur's son, Harald Bluetooth, "won all of Denmark," so it is speculated that Gormur only ruled Jutland from his seat in Jelling.

Gormur married Thyra Klængsdottir, daughter of King Klængur-Haraldur. Gormur and Thyra were the parents of three sons and a daughter. We descend from their son Harald, later King Harald Bluetooth, and their daughter Sigridur.

Gormur's wife, Thyra, is credited with the completion of the Danevirke, a wall between Denmark's southern border and its unfriendly Saxon neighbors to the south. The wall was not new, but it was expanded with a ditch and earthen foundation topped by a timber stockade above it. The Danevirke ran between the Schlei and the Treene river, across what is now Schleswig. Gormur raised one of the great burial mounds at Jelling as well as the oldest of the Jelling Stones for Thyra, calling her tanmarkar ("Denmark's Salvation" or "Denmark's Adornment").

Gormur died in the winter of 958–959, and dendrochronology shows that his burial chamber was made from wood of timbers felled in 958. By that time Gormur may have been 98 years old. Gormur was buried first in Queen Thyra's grave mound at Jelling, and later moved by his son, Harald Bluetooth, into the original wooden church in Jelling. It is believed, that the skeleton found at the site of the first Christian church of Jelling is in fact Gormur the Old, though the theory is still much debated. During the reign of Gormur, most Danes still worshiped the

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Norse gods, but during the reign of Gormur's son, Harold Bluetooth, Denmark officially converted to Christianity. Harald, accordingly, left the hill where Gormur had originally been interred as a memorial.

### **King Þorsteinn (the red) Olafsson (855 - 888)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Thorsteinn the Red or Thorsteinn Olafsson (855 – 888) was a Viking chieftain who flourished in late 9<sup>th</sup> century Scotland. Thorsteinn was born around 850 and was the son of Olaf the White, King of Dublin, and Aud the Deep-minded, who was the daughter of Ketil Flatnose.

After the death of Olaf the White, Aud and Thorsteinn went to live in the Hebrides, then under Ketil's rule. Thorsteinn eventually became a warlord and allied with the Jarl of Orkney, Sigurd Eysteinnsson. Together Thorsteinn and Sigurd waged a series of campaigns in Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Moray, and a number of other regions, eventually receiving tribute from half of Scotland. However, the Scottish chieftains plotted against Thorsteinn, and he was killed; the exact nature of his death is unknown but it probably took place around 888 or 890. After Thorsteinn's death Aud left Caithness, sojourning for a while in Orkney before settling with other members of her clan in Iceland.

Thorsteinn married Thurid, the daughter of Eyvind the Easterner. Thorsteinn and Thurid had a son, Olafur Feilan, and a number of daughters. We descend from Olafur Feilan and their daughters Groa, Thorgerd, Thorhild, and Vigdis. Groa would marry and raise her family in Scotland. She would become the 9<sup>th</sup> great grandmother of King Robert the Bruce in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree. Olafur Feilan and the other daughters all went to live in Iceland.

### **King Bjolan (880 - )(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

King O'Beolan (Bjolan)(880 – ) a half Viking, was born about 880 and lived in Scotland. O'Beolan was described as a Scottish King of the Vikings in Applecross in Ross and Cromarty, Scotland. His mother was probably a tribal Princess, associated with family names as MacCormac/Ciarmaic, who descend from the Royal House of Tara of old Ireland. King O'Beolan's father is consistent with Helgi Bjolan (Beolan), son of Ketil Flatnose Bjornsson, Norse King of Mann and the Hebrides. The main line of the Highlander Clan Ross was from them.

The Monastery and the Abbey of Applecross had been established in 671 on the western shore of Ross and Cromarty, Scotland. King O'Beolan (Bjolan) became the hereditary lay Abbot of Applecross, and Chief of the Applecross districts in Scotland.

In the Viking sagas he was a Scottish King named Bjolan. And King Bjolan's wife was Kadlin Gongu-Hrolfsdottir. She was the daughter of Gongu-Hrofur Rognvaldsson. From King O'Beolan and Kadlin in Scotland were the O'Beolan Abbot's of Applecross, and from the Abbots were the O'Beolan Earls of Ross. And they had a daughter Nidbjorg by whom many noted families in Iceland descended. We descend from Nidbjorg.

### **King Olafur (geirsteadell) Haraldsson (900 - 934)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

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Olafur Geirsteadell Haraldsson (900 – 934), was born about 900 in Norway. He was a son of King Harald Fairhair of Norway with Svanhildur Eysteinsdotter, daughter of Jarl Eysteinn Ivarsson.

The saga *Heimskringla*, written in Iceland in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the poet and historian Snorri Sturluson, gives King Harald Fairhair three sons with Svanhildur, including Ragnar Rykkel, Bjørn Farmann and Olaf Geirsteadell. Olafur Haraldsson was made king of Vingulmark by his father and then later inherited Vestfold after his brother Bjørn Farmann had been killed by their half-brother Eric Bloodaxe.

Eric Bloodaxe was king Harald's favorite son and his appointed successor, but he was not very popular among his half-brothers. Upon his father's death, Olafur made himself king of eastern Norway, and allied himself against Eric Bloodaxe with another half-brother, Sigrød Haraldsson, king of Trondheim. The three kings met in battle at the farm Haugar outside Tønsberg, Olafur and Sigrød were defeated and they both fell there. Both are presumed to have been buried on the same spot. Haugar became the seat for Haugating and Norway's second most important place for the proclamation of kings.

*Heimskringla* gives Olafur by his marriage a son named Tryggvi Olafsson, who is there said to have become king of Rånrike and Vingulmark and to have been the father of King Olaf I of Norway.

### **King Tryggvi Olafsson (930 - 963)(our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Tryggvi Olafsson (930 – 963) was born about 930 in Vestfold, Norway. He was the son of Olafur Haraldsson, king of Vestfold and Vingulmark, and grandson of King Harald Fairhair.

According to the *Heimskringla*, Tryggvi performed Viking expeditions in Ireland and Scotland. In 946 King Haakon I of Norway went north, and set Tryggvi to defend Viken against his enemies in the south. He also gave him all that he could reconquer of land in the area which the summer before, King Haakon had subjected to payment of taxes. Historically the Danish kings had dominion over the area.

Tryggvi married Astrid, daughter of Eirikur Boldruskalli Vikingsson. They had two daughters and a son. We descend from their daughter Astrid. Trggvi's wife Astrid gave birth to their son Olafur shortly after King Haakon was mortally wounded at the Battle of Fitjar. After Haakon's death, Harald Greycloak, third son of Eirik Bloodaxe, jointly with his brothers became kings of Norway. Tryggvi was subsequently killed in about 963 by Harald Greycloak as part of Harald's effort to establish his own rule over Norway. Reportedly Tryggvi was lured into a trap. Tryggvi's son, Olaf Tryggvason (not our direct ancestor), later became king of Norway.

### **Olafur Björnsson (900 - )(our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Olafur Björnsson (900 – 975) was a semi-legendary Swedish king who was referenced in several Old Norse Sagas including *Hervarar Saga*, *Saga of Harald Fairhair* and the *Styrbjarnar þátr Svíakappa*. Olafur was born about 900 in Sweden. He was the son of Björn the Old Eriksson who ruled as king of Sweden.



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Olafur married Ingeborg Thrandsdotter. They were the parents of Styrbjörn Starke and Gunhild, queen consort of King Harald Bluetooth. We descend for both of these children. Styrbjörn's descendants are found in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree and Gunhild's descendants are found in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree.

After the death of their father in about 970, Olafur ruled jointly with his brother Eric the Victorious. But Olafur died of poisoning during a meal.

### **King Haraldur (bluetooth) Gormsson (910 - 986)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Harald "Bluetooth" Gormsson (910 – 986) was a king of Denmark and Norway. Harald was born about 910 in Blauzhahn, Germany. He was the son of King Gorm the Old and Thyra Klængsdottir.

Harold may have had three spouses. His marriage to Gynrith Olafsdottir gave him at least two sons and a daughter: Herbstus de Crepon, King Sveinn Forkbeard, and Thora. We descend from all three. He may have had two or three other children.

Harald ruled as king of Denmark from 958 until his death. Harald introduced Christianity to Denmark and consolidated his rule over most of Jutland and Zealand. Harald's rule as king of Norway following the assassination of King Harald Greycloak of Norway was more tenuous, most likely lasting for no more than a few years in the 970s. Some sources say his son Sveinn Forkbeard forcibly deposed him from his Danish throne before his death.

During his reign, Harald oversaw the reconstruction of the Jelling runic stones, and numerous other public works. The most famous is fortifying the fortress of Aros (nowadays Aarhus) which was situated in a central position in his kingdom in the year 979. Some believe these projects were a way for him to consolidate economic and military control of his country and the main city. Ring forts were built in five strategic locations with Aarhus perfectly in the middle: Trelleborg on Zealand, Borrering in eastern Zealand, Nonnebakken on Funen, Fyrkat in Himmerland and Aggersborg near Limfjord. All five fortresses had similar designs: "perfectly circular with gates opening to the four corners of the earth, and a courtyard divided into four areas which held large houses set in a square pattern." A sixth Trelleborg of similar design, located at Borgeby, in Scania, has been dated to about 1000 and may have been built by King Harald and a second fort named Trelleborg is located near the modern town of Trelleborg in Scania in present-day Sweden, but is of older date and thus pre-dates the reign of Harald Bluetooth.

He constructed the oldest known bridge in southern Scandinavia, the 6 ft. wide and 2,490 ft. long Raving Bridge at Raving meadows.

While quiet prevailed throughout the interior, he turned his energies to foreign enterprises. He came to the help of Richard the Fearless of Normandy in 945 and 963, while his son conquered Samland, and after the assassination of King Harald Greycloak of Norway, managed to force the people of that country into temporary subjugation to himself.

The Norse sagas present Harald in a rather negative light. He was forced twice to submit to the renegade Swedish prince Styrbjörn the Strong of the Jomsvikings, first by giving Styrbjörn a fleet and his daughter Thyra, the second time by giving up himself as hostage, along with yet

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another fleet. When Styrbjörn brought this fleet to Uppsala to claim the throne of Sweden, Harald broke his oath and fled with his Danes to avoid facing the Swedish army at the Battle of Fýrisvellir.

As a consequence of Harald's army having lost to the Germans at the Danevirke in 974, he no longer had control of Norway, and Germans settled back into the border area between Scandinavia and Germany. They were driven out of Denmark in 983 by an alliance of Obodrite soldiers and troops loyal to Harald, but soon after, Harald was killed on November 1, 986 fighting off a rebellion led by his son Sveinn. According to Adam of Bremen he died in Jomsborg (Wolin), Poland from his wounds.

The details of King Harald Bluetooth's conversion to Christianity is a contested bit of history. It is believed that Harald converted to Catholicism after a peace agreement with the Holy Roman Emperor. Adam of Bremen, writing 100 years after King Harald's death in "History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen", finished in 1076, describes Harald being forcibly converted by Emperor Otto I, after a defeat in battle. However some two hundred and fifty years later, the *Heimskringla* relates that Harald was converted with Earl Haakon, by Emperor Otto II.

Harald's father, Gorm the Old, had died in 958, and had been buried in a mound with many goods, after the pagan practice. The mound itself was first built from around 500 B.C., but Harald had it built higher over his father's grave, and added a second mound to the south. After his conversion, around the 960s, Harald had his father's body re-buried in the church next to the now empty mound.

Harald had the Jelling stones erected to honor his parents. The biography of Harald Bluetooth is summed up by this runic inscription from the Jelling stones:

King Harald bade these memorials to be made after Gorm, his father, and Thyra, his mother. The Harald who won the whole of Denmark and Norway and turned the Danes to Christianity.

### **King Eirikur (the victorious) Bjornsson VI (910 - 995)(our 30<sup>th</sup> Great Grandfather)**

Eirikur the Victorious Bjornsson (910 – 995) was a Swedish monarch as of around 970. Since he is the first Swedish king in a consecutive regnal succession, who is attested in sources independent of each other, Sweden's list of rulers usually begins with him. His son Olafur Skötkonung, however, is considered the first ruler documented to definitely have been accepted both by the original Swedes around Lake Mälaren and by the Geats around Lake Vättern, which peoples were fundamental in forming the nation of Sweden.

Eirikur was born about 910 in Sweden. He was the son of King Bjorn the Old Eiriksson. Various sources and sagas list Eirikur's wives as Sigridur, Swietoslawa, Gunhild and Aud, of which two or three may have been the same person but depicted differently and under different names. Such sources have also given Eirikur a total of four known children. The Ancient Icelandic Pedigree has Eirikur married to Sigridur the Haughty Skogultostansdottir. We descend from their son Olafur Skötkonung Eiriksson.

One Norse saga describes his marriage to the infamous, Queen Sigridur the Haughty, daughter of a legendary Viking, Skagul Toste, and how in their divorce he gave her all of

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Gothenland as a fief. According to Eymund's saga he then took a new queen, Aud, daughter of Haakon Sigurdsson, ruler of Norway.

Eirikur's original territory was in Uppland and neighboring provinces. He acquired the epithet of Segersäll - Victorious or literally blessed with victory - after defeating an invasion force from the south in the Battle of Fýrisvellir which took place near Uppsala.

The extent of Eirikur's kingdom is unknown. In addition to the Swedish heartland round Mälaren it may have extended down along the Baltic Sea as far south as Blekinge. According to Adam of Bremen, he was also King of Denmark after defeating King Sveinn Forkbeard (our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather).

In all probability Eirikur also founded the town of Sigtuna, which still exists and where the first Swedish coins were minted for his son and successor King Olof.

When Eirikur's brother Olafur died, and a new co-ruler was to be appointed, the Swedes allegedly refused to accept Eirikur's rowdy nephew Styrbjörn as such. Eirikur granted Styrbjörn 60 longships in which he sailed away for a seafaring existence as a Viking. He became the ruler of Jomsborg (Wolin, Poland) and an ally of Danish King Harold Bluetooth, whose daughter Thora he married. Styrbjörn returned to Sweden with an army, although Harold and the Danish troops seem to have turned back. Eirikur won the Battle of Fýrisvellir, according to Styrbjarnar þátrr Sviakappa, after making sacrifice to Odin and promising that, if victorious, he would give himself to Odin in ten years.

Adam of Bremen relates that Eirikur gathered a large army and invaded Denmark against King Sveinn Forkbeard. The direct reason for the attack is not given, but somehow it concerned an alliance between Eirikur and "the very powerful king of the Polans, Boleslaw. He gave Eirikur his sister or daughter in marriage." That princess has been identified as Gunhild of Wenden, in some Nordic sources the daughter of a king Burislev. But in other sources, she was identical with a woman known as Sigridur the Haughty. After his victory, Eirikur kept Denmark for a time, while Sveinn was forced to flee, first to Norway, then to England, and finally to Scotland whose king received the refugee with kindness.

Adam of Bremen characterizes Eirikur as a heathen and initially very hostile to the Christian religion. Nevertheless, a number of missionaries were at work during his reign, foreigners as well as some belonging to recently converted Nordic families. Among them was Odinkar the Elder who preached in Funen, Zealand, Scania and Sweden. Eventually Eirikur agreed to baptism, presumably while staying in Denmark; and if so he was the first Swedish king to do so. Due to that significant event, missionaries were allowed to sail over from Denmark to Sweden where they "worked valiantly in the name of the Lord." After some time, Eirikur is to have forgotten the Christian faith and reverted to the religion of his ancestors. When Eirikur died, Sveinn Forkbeard returned from exile and regained Denmark. He married Eirikur's widow. Thus an alliance between the Swedish and Danish royal houses was created.

Eirikur the Victorious died in about 995 in Uppsala, Sweden.

### **Olafur (peacock) Hoskuldsson (938 - 1006)(our 24<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Olafur Peacock Hoskuldsson (938 – 1006) was a merchant and chieftain of the early

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Icelandic Commonwealth, who was nicknamed "the Peacock" because of his proud bearing and magnificent wardrobe. He is a major character in the *Laxdæla Saga* and is mentioned in a number of other Icelandic sources. The son of a slave woman, Olafur became one of the wealthiest landowners in Iceland and played a major role in its politics and society during the latter half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the *Laxdæla Saga* in which he takes a leading role, Olafur also is mentioned in *Egils Saga*, *Njáls Saga*, *Gunnlaugs Saga*, *Kormáks Saga*, *Grettirs Saga* and the *Landnámabók*, among others.

Olafur was born about 938 at Hjarðarholt in Dalasysla, Iceland. He was the son of Hoskuld Dala-Kollsson, a chieftain who lived in the Laxardal region. According to *Laxdæla Saga*, Hoskuld purchased a mute thrall-woman named Melkorka from a Rus' merchant on Brännö while on a trading expedition to Norway, and made her his concubine while away from his wife Jorunn Bjarnadóttir. When Hoskuld returned home to Iceland, he took the concubine with him. Despite Jorunn's irritation, the concubine was accepted into Hoskuld's household, though he remained faithful to Jorunn while in Iceland. The following winter the concubine gave birth to a son, to whom they gave the name Olafur after Hoskuld's uncle, Olafur Feilan, who had recently died. *Landnámabók* mentions that Hoskuld and Melkorka had another son, Helgi, but he does not appear in *Laxdæla*. According to *Laxdæla Saga*, Olafur was a precocious child, and could speak and walk perfectly by the age of two. One day Hoskuld discovered Olafur's mother speaking to her son; she was not, in fact, mute. When he confronted her she told him that she was an Irish princess named Melkorka carried off in a Viking raid, and that her father was an Irish king named "Myrkjartan" (Muirchertach). Shortly thereafter squabbling between Jorunn and Melkorka forced Hoskuld to move his concubine and his son by her to a different farm, which thereafter was known as Melkorkustaðir.

At the age of seven, over his mother's objections, Olafur became the foster son and heir of a wealthy but childless Goði named Thord, who was at the time engaged in complex litigation with the kinsmen of his ex-wife Vigdis Ingjaldsdóttir (another descendant of Thorsteinn the Red). Olafur's adoption complicated the issues in the suit and threatened to lead to a blood feud, but Hoskuld arranged a settlement and compensated Vigdis' kinsmen with gifts. By fostering Olafur, Thord gained the protection of the powerful Hoskuld, and Hoskuld secured an inheritance for his illegitimate son beyond the limited amount he was permitted to leave to Olafur under Icelandic law. Olafur accompanied Thord to the Althing when he was twelve years old, and his fancy clothing earned him the admiring nickname "the Peacock."

Around 956, Olafur, at Melkorka's urging, decided to go abroad to seek his fortune. Hoskuld was opposed and would not provide trade wares, and the property of Olaf's foster-father Thord was mostly in immobile goods and land. In part to arrange financing for his expedition, his mother Melkorka married Thorbjorn the Feeble, a farmer who had previously assisted her in the management of Melkorkustead. Melkorka and Thorbjorn had a son named Lambi. Olafur sailed to Norway with Orn, a sea-captain and hirdman of King Harald Greycloak. He gained great honor at Harald's court, and was a favorite of the king's mother Gunnhild, who had, according to Icelandic sources, been the lover of Olafur's uncle Hrut Herjolfsson. When Olaf expressed a desire to find his mother's people in Ireland, Gunnhild financed his voyage.

Olafur set sail for Ireland with Orn to find his mother's people, taking with him tokens

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and gifts from Melkorka to her father and her nursemaid. During the voyage, their ship became lost in a fog. When the fog lifted, an argument arose between Orn and most of the rest of Olafur's men about the proper course to reach Ireland. When asked if the decision should be put to a vote of the majority, Olafur is supposed to have said, "I want only the shrewdest to decide; in my opinion the counsel of fools is all the more dangerous the more of them there are." With those words, the matter was accepted as settled, and Orn took charge of the navigation.

Upon arriving in Ireland they were stranded far outside the protection of the Norse–Gaelic longphorts (Viking camps). The ship was attacked by local Irishmen, despite the efforts of Olafur, who spoke the Gaelic, to negotiate safe passage with them.

As luck would have it, the local king arrived on the scene, and proved to be Olafur's alleged grandfather Myrkjartan. Olafur introduced himself as Melkorka's son and explained that their kinship was his reason for visiting. Myrkjartan was not immediately convinced of their kinship, but he was impressed with Ólafur's Irish and sure that he was of high birth nevertheless. Then Ólafur showed Myrkjartan the gold ring on his arm, which Melkorka had given him when he left Iceland. It had originally been a gift from her father. After this, Myrkjartan was sure that Ólafur was his kinsman. Ólafur remained with Myrkjartan for a time, and the king, according to *Laxdæla Saga*, even offered to make Ólafur his heir. Ólafur had wanted to take Melkorka's nurse back to Iceland to meet her, but Myrkjartan did not permit it.

Olafur returned to Norway, afraid of provoking Myrkjartan's sons. Olafur returned to the court of King Harald, where he was greatly honored by both the king and his mother Gunnhild.

Olafur returned home to Iceland around 957 with great wealth. After his journey, Ólafur became renowned, both for his travels and because he was the grandson of the Irish king. Upon his return, his father Hoskuld arranged a marriage for him with Thorgerdur Egilsdottir, the daughter of Egill Skallagrímsson. Thorgerdur was initially reluctant to marry the son of a slave, refusing to believe that Olafur's mother was a princess. However, she ultimately agreed to the match after an hours-long private conversation with Olafur. At the wedding Olafur gave Egill an ornate sword from Ireland. Olafur and Thorgerdur lived happily together at Hoskuldstead for some time. They had five sons and three daughters. We descend from their daughter Thorbjorg and also their son Steinthor.

Around 962 Olafur's foster father Thord died, leaving Olafur his property and Goðorð. Olafur bought land and built a new homestead at Hjardarholt, which, according to the saga, he had to cleanse of the draugr (spirit) of its former owner, Killer-Hrapp. As time went on people began to settle near Olafur's hall and regarded him as their Goði. Olafur's ever-increasing wealth caused jealousy from Hoskuld's wife Jorunn. Around the same time Olafur and Thorgerd had a daughter, Thurid. Hjardarholt was renowned for its rich decorations.

Hoskuld died around 965, leaving Olafur a full mark of gold, causing tension between Olafur and Hoskuld's legitimate sons, Bard and Thorleik (our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). As an illegitimate son, Olafur was entitled to one mark of his father's wealth; this was, however, customarily understood to be a mark of silver and not gold. Olafur eased the tension by paying one-third of the communal funeral feast for Hoskuld.

Around 975, over his wife's objections, Olafur went on a second expedition to Norway. There he stayed with a Viking named Geirmund the Noisy and visited Haakon Jarl, the latter of

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whom gave him a cargo of timber to take home as a gift. On his return Olafur reluctantly brought Geirmund with him and Geirmund fell in love with Olafur's daughter Thurid. Though Olafur was opposed to the match, Geirmund bribed Thorgerd to be his advocate, and Olafur relented. The marriage was an unhappy one, and after three years Geirmund decided to return home without leaving any money for the support of his ex-wife and daughter. Enraged, Thurid boarded his ship before he departed, stole his famous sword "Leg-Biter," and left their infant daughter Groa on the ship. Geirmund cursed the sword, and on his return to Norway he and all of his shipmates, including little Groa, were drowned.

Olafur's son Kjartan was very close with his cousin Bolli Þorleiksson (our 25<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). But they grew apart when Bolli married Kjartan's lover Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir. Tensions between the cousins grew until a full-blown blood feud ended with Kjartan being killed by Bolli in 1003. Olafur refused to prosecute Bolli for the killing, and arranged for him to pay a fine instead. Olafur knew that Kjartan, had been involved in a love triangle with Bolli and Bolli's wife Gudrun Osvifrsdottir, and he caused his own downfall by acting aggressively.

Olafur died in 1006, and Olafur's widow Thorgerd subsequently directed a number of revenge-killings herself, including that of Thorkel, a man who had witnessed Kjartan's death but been indifferent to it and had not intervened. Bolli was killed by Olafur's sons and their allies in a raid led by Thorgerd. Some twelve years later, Gudrun, with the help of her friend Snorri Goði, had a number of Bolli's murderers killed in revenge.

### **Earl of Wessex Godwin I (Gudni) Ulfson (987 - 1053)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Godwin of Wessex (987 – 1053) became one of the most powerful earls in England under the Danish king Cnut the Great and his successors. Cnut made Godwin the first Earl of Wessex. Godwin was the father of King Harold Godwinson and of Edith of Wessex, who married King Edward the Confessor. Godwin was born about 987 in Sussex, England. He was the son of Wulfnoth Cild, who was a Saxon who became the thegn of Sussex. His origin is unknown but 'Cild' normally refers to a man of rank.

In 1009 Wulfnoth was accused of unknown crimes at a muster of Æthelred the Unready's fleet and fled with twenty ships; the ships sent to pursue him were destroyed in a storm. Godwin was probably an adherent of Æthelred's eldest son, Æthelstan, who left him an estate when he died in 1014. This estate in Compton, Sussex, had once belonged to Godwin's father. Although he is now always thought of as connected with Wessex, Godwin had probably been raised in Sussex, not Wessex and was probably a native of Sussex.

After Cnut seized the throne in 1016, Godwin's rise was rapid. By 1018 he was an earl, probably of eastern Wessex, and then by around 1020 of all Wessex. Between 1019 and 1023 he accompanied Cnut on an expedition to Denmark, where he distinguished himself, and shortly afterwards married Gytha, the sister of the Danish earl, Ulf, who was married to Cnut's sister, Estrid. Gytha's father was Thorgils Sparkaleggur Styrbjornsson, grandson of King Harald Bluetooth. Godwin and Gytha were known to have at least 11 children. We descend from their son Tosti.

After Cnut's death in 1035, the throne of England was reportedly claimed by Alfred

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Ætheling, younger son of Emma of Normandy and Æthelred the Unready, and half-brother of Harthacnut. Godwin is reported to have either captured Alfred himself or to have deceived him by pretending to be his ally and then surrendering him to the forces of Harald Harefoot. Either way Alfred was blinded and soon died at Ely. According to the contemporary Abingdon manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Godwin had Alfred's retainers executed, blinded, maimed, and scalped.

In 1040, Harald Harefoot died and Godwin supported the accession of his half-brother Harthacnut to the throne of England. When Harthacnut himself died in 1042 Godwin supported the claim of Æthelred's last surviving son Edward the Confessor to the throne. Edward had spent most of the previous thirty years in Normandy. His reign restored the native royal house of Wessex to the throne of England.

Despite his alleged responsibility for the death of Edward's brother Alfred, Godwin secured the marriage of his daughter Edith (Eadgyth) to Edward in 1045. As Edward drew advisors, nobles and priests from his former place of refuge in a bid to develop his own power base, Godwin soon became the leader of opposition to growing Norman influence. After a violent clash between the people of Dover and the visiting Eustace II, Count of Boulogne, Edward's father-in-law, Godwin was ordered to punish the people of Dover. This time, however, Godwin refused, choosing to champion his own countrymen against a (visiting) foreign ruler and his own king. Edward saw this as a test of power, and managed to enlist the support of Siward, Earl of Northumbria and Earl Leofric. Godwin and his sons were exiled from the kingdom in September 1051. Godwin, along with his wife Gytha and sons Sveinn, Tosti and Gyrth sought refuge in Flanders, while his sons Leofwine and Harald fled to Dublin, where they gained the shelter and help of Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, King of Leinster. They all returned to England the following year with armed forces, gaining the support of the navy, burghers, and peasants, so compelling Edward to restore his earldom. This however set a precedent to be followed by a rival earl some years later, and then by Godwin's own son, Tosti, in 1066.

On April 15, 1053 Godwin died suddenly, after collapsing during a royal banquet at Winchester. Contemporary accounts indicate that he just had a sudden illness, possibly a stroke. According to the Abingdon version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, under the year 1053: "On Easter Monday, as he was sitting with the king at a meal he suddenly sank towards the footstool bereft of speech, and deprived of all his strength. Then he was carried to the king's private room and they thought it was about to pass off. But it was not so. On the contrary, he continued like this without speech or strength right on to the Thursday, and then departed this life."

### **Duke of Normandy Richard II (963- 1026)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Richard II (963 – 1026), called the Good, was the eldest son and heir of Richard I the Fearless and Gunnora. He was a Norman nobleman of the House of Normandy. Richard was born on August 23, 963 in Normandy, France. Richard succeeded his father as Duke of Normandy in 996. During his minority, the first five years of his reign, his regent was Count Rodulf of Ivry, his uncle, who wielded the power and put down a peasant insurrection at the beginning of Richard's reign.

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Richard had deep religious interests and found he had much in common with Robert II of France, who he helped militarily against the duchy of Burgundy. He forged a marriage alliance with Brittany by marrying his sister Hawise to Geoffrey I, Duke of Brittany and by his own marriage to Geoffrey's sister, Judith of Brittany in about 1000. Judith was the daughter of Conan I of Brittany. Richard and Judith had at least five children. We descend from their sons Richard, Robert and also their daughter Eleanora. Richard and Robert's descendants are found in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree while Eleanora's descendants are in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree.

Richard married a second wife name Poppa of Envermeu, by he had two sons.

In 1000-1001, Richard repelled an English attack on the Cotentin Peninsula that was led by Ethelred II of England. Ethelred had given orders that Richard be captured, bound and brought to England. But the English had not been prepared for the rapid response of the Norman cavalry and were utterly defeated.

Richard attempted to improve relations with England through his sister Emma of Normandy's marriage to King Ethelred. This marriage was significant in that it later gave his grandson, William the Conqueror, the basis of his claim to the throne of England. The improved relations proved to be beneficial to Ethelred when in 1013 Sveinn Forkbeard invaded England. Emma with her two sons Edward and Alfred fled to Normandy followed shortly thereafter by her husband king Ethelred. Soon after the death of Ethelred, Cnut, King of England forced Emma to marry him while Richard was forced to recognize the new regime as his sister was again Queen. Richard had contacts with Scandinavian Vikings throughout his reign. He employed Viking mercenaries and concluded a treaty with Sveinn Forkbeard who was en route to England.

In 1025 and 1026 Richard confirmed gifts of his great-grandfather Rollo to Saint-Ouen at Rouen. His other numerous grants to monastic houses tends to indicate the areas over which Richard had ducal control, namely Caen, the Éverecin, the Cotentin, the Pays de Caux and Rouen. Richard II died on August 28, 1026. his eldest son, Richard becoming the new Duke.

### **Prince Yaroslav (the wise)(978 - 1054)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Yaroslav I, Grand Prince of Rus', known as Yaroslav the Wise (978 – 1054) was thrice grand prince of Veliky Novgorod and Kiev, uniting the two principalities for a time under his rule. Yaroslav's baptismal name was George (Yuri) after Saint George.

Yaroslav was born about 978 in Russia. He was the son of Vladimir the Great, the first Christian Prince of Kiev. Yaroslav acted as vice-regent of Novgorod at the time of his father's death in 1015. Subsequently, his eldest surviving brother, Sviatopolk I of Kiev, killed three of his other brothers and seized power in Kiev. Yaroslav, with the active support of the Novgorodians and the help of Varangian mercenaries, defeated Svyatopolk and became the Grand Prince of Kiev in 1019. Under Yaroslav the codification of legal customs and princely enactments began, and this work served as the basis for a law code called the Russkaya Pravda. During Yaroslav's lengthy reign, Kievan Rus' reached the zenith of its cultural flowering and military power.

In his youth, Yaroslav was sent by his father to rule the northern lands around Rostov but was transferred to Veliky Novgorod, as befitted a senior heir to the throne, in 1010. While living there, he founded the town of Yaroslavl on the Volga River. His relations with his father were



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apparently strained, and grew only worse on the news that Vladimir bequeathed the Kiev throne to his younger son, Boris. In 1014 Yaroslav refused to pay tribute to Kiev and only Vladimir's death, in July 1015, prevented a war.

During the next four years Yaroslav waged a complicated and bloody war for Kiev against his half-brother Svyatopolk I of Kiev, who was supported by his father-in-law, Duke Boleslaw I Chrobry. During the course of this struggle, several other brothers (Boris, Gleb, and Svyatoslav) were brutally murdered.

Yaroslav defeated Svyatopolk in their first battle, in 1016, and Svyatopolk fled to Poland. But Svyatopolk returned in 1018 with Polish troops furnished by his father-in-law, seized Kiev and pushed Yaroslav back into Novgorod. Yaroslav, at last, prevailed over Svyatopolk, and in 1019 firmly established his rule over Kiev. One of his first actions as a grand prince was to confer on the loyal Novgorodians (who had helped him to gain the Kievan throne), numerous freedoms, and privileges. Thus, the foundation of the Novgorod Republic was laid. For their part, the Novgorodians respected Yaroslav more than they did other Kyivan princes; and the princely residence in their city, next to the marketplace was named Yaroslav's Court after him. It probably was during this period that Yaroslav promulgated the first code of laws in the lands of the East Slavs, the *Russkaya Pravda*.

In his foreign policy, Yaroslav relied on a Scandinavian alliance and attempted to weaken the Byzantine influence on Kiev. To secure this alliance, in 1019, Yaroslav married Ingegerd Olofsdotter, daughter of the king of Sweden. They were known to have four daughters and six sons. We descend from their son Vsevolod and also their daughter Anna Agnesa. Vsevolod descendants are found in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree and Anna Agnesa's are found in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree.

Yaroslav presented his second direct challenge to Constantinople in 1043, when Rus' flotilla headed by one of his sons appeared near Constantinople and demanded money, threatening to attack the city otherwise. Whatever the reason, the Greeks refused to pay and preferred to fight. The Rus' flotilla defeated the Byzantine fleet but was almost destroyed by a storm and came back to Kiev empty-handed.

Yaroslav was a notable patron of book culture and learning. In 1051, he had a Slavic monk, Hilarion of Kiev, proclaimed the metropolitan bishop of Kiev, thus challenging the Byzantine tradition of placing Greeks on the episcopal sees. Hilarion's discourse on Yaroslav and his father Vladimir is frequently cited as the first work of Old East Slavic literature.

Following his death on February 20, 1054, the body of Yaroslav the Wise was entombed in a white marble sarcophagus within Saint Sophia's Cathedral.

### **Prince Vsevolod I Yaroslavna (1030 - 1093) (our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Vsevolod I Yaroslavna (1030 – 1093) ruled as Grand Prince of Kiev from 1078 until his death. Vsevolod was born around 1030 in Kiev, Ukraine. He was the fifth and favorite son of Yaroslav I the Wise by Ingigerd Olafsdottir. On his seal from his last years, he was named "Andrei Vsevolodu" in Greek, implying that his baptismal name was Andrew.

To back up an armistice signed with the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos

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in 1046, his father married Vsevolod to a Byzantine princess, who according to tradition was named Anastasia or Maria. The Ancient Icelandic Pedigree identifies her as the daughter of Constantine IX Monomachos. That the couple's son Vladimir Monomakh bore the family name of the Byzantine emperor, suggests she was a member of his close family. Vsevolod and his first wife Anastasia had a son and a daughter. We descend from their son Vladimir II Monomakh.

Upon his father's death in 1054, he received in appanage the towns of Pereyaslav, Rostov, Suzdal, and the township of Beloozero which would remain in possession of his descendants until the end of Middle Ages. Together with his elder brothers Iziaslav and Sviatoslav he formed a sort of princely triumvirate which jointly waged war on the steppe nomads, Polovtsy, and compiled the first East Slavic law code. In 1055 Vsevolod launched an expedition against the Turks who had in the previous years expelled the Pechenegs from the Pontic steppes. He also made peace with the Cumans who appeared for the first time in Europe in the same year. The Cumans invaded his principality in 1061 and routed Vsevolod in a battle. Vsevolod persuaded his brother, Iziaslav, and their distant cousin, Vseslav to join him and they together attacked the Turks in 1060.

In 1067, Vsevolod's Greek wife died and he soon married a Kypchak princess, Anna Polovetskaya. They had four children.

The Cumans again invaded Kievan Rus' in 1068. The three brothers united their forces against them, but the Cumans routed them on the Alta River. After their defeat, Vsevolod withdrew to Pereyaslav. However, its citizens rose up in open rebellion, dethroned Iziaslav, and liberated and proclaimed Vseslav their grand prince. Vsevolod and Sviatoslav made no attempt to expel the usurper from Kiev.

Vsevolod supported Sviatoslav against Iziaslav. Iziaslav granted Sviatoslav's former principality to Vsevolod, but Sviatoslav's sons considered the Principality of Chernigov as their own patrimony or *otchina*. Oleg Sviatoslavich made an alliance with the Cumans and invaded Chernigov. Iziaslav came to Vsevolod's rescue and they forced Oleg to retreat, but Iziaslav was murdered in the battle.

After Iziaslav's death, Vsevolod, as their father's only surviving son, took the Kievan throne, thus uniting the three core principalities—Kiev, Chernigov and Pereyaslav—in Kievan Rus'. He appointed his eldest son, Vladimir Monomach to administer Chernigov.

The last years of Vsevolod's reign were clouded by grave illness, and his son Vladimir Monomakh presided over the government. Vsevolod died on April 13, 1093 in Kiev, Ukraine.

### **King Sveinn (fork beard) Haraldsson (965 - 1014)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Sveinn Forkbeard (965 – 1014) was king of Denmark from 986 to 1014. He was the father of King Harald II of Denmark, King Cnut the Great and Queen Astridur Margaret Sveinsdotter. Sveinn was born about 965 in Denmark. He was the son of King Harald Bluetooth and Gynrith Olafsdottir.

In the mid-980s, Sveinn revolted against his father, Harald Bluetooth, and seized the throne. Harald was driven into exile and died shortly afterwards in November 986. Sveinn's father, Harald Bluetooth, was the first of the reigning Scandinavian kings to be baptized, in the

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early or mid-960s. Sveinn was baptized "Otto" (in honor of German king Otto I). Harald Bluetooth had already established a foothold in Norway, controlling Viken in about 970.

Sveinn built an alliance with Swedish king Olof Skötkonung and Eirik Hákonarson, Jarl of Lade, against Norwegian king Olaf Tryggvason. The allies attacked and defeated king Olaf in the western Baltic Sea when he was sailing home from an expedition, in the Battle of Svolder, fought in September of either 999 or 1000. The victors divided Norway among them. According to the account of the *Heimskringla*, Sveinn re-gained direct control of Viken district. By 1000, with the allegiance of Trondejarl, Eric of Lade, Sveinn ruled most of Norway.

Sveinn was known to have had eight children with Sigridur the Haughty and Gunhild of Wenden. We descend from Sveinn and Sigridur's daughter Astridur Margaret.

Sveinn was involved in raids against England during 1002–1005, 1006–1007, and 1009–1012 to avenge the St. Brice's Day massacre of England's Danish inhabitants in November 1002. Sveinn campaigned in Wessex and East Anglia in 1003–1004, but a famine forced him to return to Denmark in 1005. Further raids took place in 1006–1007, and in 1009–1012 Thorkell the Tall led a Viking invasion into England. Sveinn acquired massive sums of Danegeld through the raids. In 1013, he is reported to have personally led his forces in a full-scale invasion of England.

Sveinn went with his fleet to Sandwich. He went very quickly through East Anglia. He was given hostages from each shire. He then went to Oxford, and the town-dwellers soon bowed to him, and gave hostages. From there he went to Winchester, and the people did the same, then eastward to London. But the Londoners put up a strong resistance, because King Æthelred and Thorkell the Tall, a Viking leader who had defected to Æthelred, personally held their ground against him in London itself. Sveinn then went west to Bath, where the western thanes submitted to him and gave hostages. The Londoners then followed suit, fearing Sveinn's revenge if they resisted any longer. King Æthelred sent his sons Edward and Alfred to Normandy, and himself retreated to the Isle of Wight, and then followed them into exile. On Christmas Day 1013 Sveinn was declared King of England.

Based in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, Sveinn began to organize his vast new kingdom, but he died there on February 3, 1014, having ruled England for only five weeks. His embalmed body was returned to Denmark for burial in the church he had built. Tradition locates this church in Roskilde, but it is more plausible that it was actually located in Lund in Scania (now part of Sweden).

Sveinn's daughter, Astridur Margaret Sveinsdottir, was the mother of King Sveinn II of Denmark. Her descendants continue to reign in Denmark to this day.

### **Asta Gudbrandsdottir (975 - 1030)(our 24<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Åsta Gudbrandsdatter (975 – 1030) was the mother of two Norwegian kings, King Olaf II (St. Olaf)(our 29<sup>st</sup> great grandfather) of Norway and King Harald III of Norway. The primary source for the life of Åsta is *Heimskringla*. In the chronicle, Åsta is described as "generous and high-minded" and as a keen political player and guiding influence on her royal husbands and children.

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Asta was born about 975 in Norway. Her parents were Gudbrand Kula Gudbjornsson and Gunhildur Thorudottir.

Ásta first appears in Snorri's "Saga of King Olaf Tryggvason" as the wife of Harald Grenske (Grenski), ruler of Vestfold. In the summer of 994, although already married to Ásta, Harald traveled to the Baltic and proposed marriage to his foster-sister Sigrid. He had learned that her landholdings in Sweden were no less extensive than his own in Norway, and promised to abandon Ásta, who although "good and clever" was not as well-born as he was. Sigrid refused, objecting that Harald should feel fortunate in his existing marriage and that Ásta was carrying Harald's child. When she rode off, Harald pursued her back to her estate. That evening, Sigrid hosted a lavish feast at which Harald and his companions became drunk. Under cover of darkness, she ordered her armed men to set fire to the hall in which Harald slept, and he was killed; those of his companions who escaped the flames were put to the sword. Following this episode, Sigrid was called Storráda, "the Haughty."

On learning of her husband's death, Ásta was outraged both by Harald's infidelity and his murder. She returned immediately to the home of her father Gudbrand Kula in Oppland, where later that year she gave birth to a son, whom she named Olaf. He would later be renowned as St. Olaf, King (our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) of Norway from 1015 to 1028.

Soon after Harald Grenske's death, Ásta married Sigurd Syr, king of Ringerike, and brought the child Olaf with her to be raised in the home of his stepfather. When King Olaf Tryggvason of Norway arrived in 998 to convert the populace of Ringerike to Christianity, Sigurd, Ásta, and Olaf were all baptized, with the king himself acting as Olaf's godfather.

Ásta and Sigurd Syr had three sons and two daughters. We descend from their son King Harald and also their daughter Ingridur.

In 1007, Ásta arranged Olaf's first military expedition by ordering her steward Hrane to take the then-twelve-year-old Olaf on board a warship as commander. According to *Heimskringla*, it was custom that a captain of noble descent automatically be afforded the rank "King." Ásta thus strategically secured a title for her son although he did not yet have any lands or holdings. When Olaf returned home in 1014 as an accomplished leader, Ásta ordered her household to receive him in the manner of a great king. When Sigurd Syr heard this, knowing Olaf's ambitions, he questioned whether Ásta could lead her son "out of this business with the same splendor she was leading him into it."

Olaf took his mother into military counsel along with Sigurd and Hrane. When he shared his intention to declare himself sole ruler of Norway, Ásta threw her support behind her son:

For my part, my son, I am rejoiced at thy arrival, but much more at thy advancing thy honor. I will spare nothing for that purpose that stands in my power, although it be but little help that can be expected from me. But if a choice could be made, I would rather that thou shouldst be the supreme king of Norway, even if thou shouldst not sit longer in thy kingdom than Olaf Tryggvason did, than that thou shouldst not be a greater king than Sigurd Syr is, and die the death of old age.

Sigurd Syr lent military support to Olaf in his campaigns and on the occasion of her son's 1018 victory over the Oppland kings, Ásta held a great feast of victory.

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Åsta was also the mother of King Harald III Hardrada, who was fifteen years old when his brother Olaf died at the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030. Harald ruled Norway from 1046 until his death in 1066 at the Battle of Stamford Bridge; his famous defeat by the forces of England's King Harold Godwinson has traditionally been considered the end of the Viking Age.

### **Saint Olaf II Haraldsson (995 - 1030)(our 29th great grandfather)**

Olaf II Haraldsson (c. 995 – 1030), later known as St. Olaf was King of Norway from 1015 to 1028. Son of Harald Grenske, a petty king in Vestfold, Norway, and Asta Gudbrandsdottir. He was posthumously canonized as a Saint at Nidaros (Trondheim) by Bishop Grimkell, one year after his death. Olaf was born in Ringerike, Norway in about 995. His mother was Åsta Gudbrandsdatter, a 4<sup>th</sup> great grandchild of Ragnar Lothbrok, and his father was Harald Grenske, petty king in Vestfold, a 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandchild of Harald Fairhair, Norway's first king. Harald Grenske died when Åsta Gudbrandsdatter was pregnant with Olaf. She later married Sigurd Syr, with whom she had other children, including Harald Hardrada, who later reigned as king of Norway.

In about 1008, Olaf landed on the Estonian island of Saaremaa (Osilia). The Osilians, taken by surprise, had at first agreed to Olaf's demands, but then gathered an army during the negotiations and attacked the Norwegians. Olaf nevertheless won the battle. He also sailed to the southern coast of Finland in that same year. The journey resulted in the Battle at Herdaler, where Olaf and his men were ambushed in the woods. Olaf lost many men but made it back to his boats. He ordered his ships to depart despite a rising storm. The Finns pursued them and made the same progress on land as Olaf and his men made on water. Despite these events they survived. The exact location of the battle is uncertain and the Finnish equivalent of Herdaler is unknown. It has been suggested that it could be in Uusimaa.

As a teenager Olaf went to the Baltic, then to Denmark and later to England. Skaldic poetry suggests he led a successful seaborne attack that took down London Bridge, though Anglo-Saxon sources do not confirm this. This may have been in 1014, restoring London and the English throne to Æthelred the Unready and removing Cnut. Although, it is said that Olaf participated alongside fellow Viking Thorkell the Tall in the Siege of Canterbury in 1011.

Olaf saw it as his calling to unite Norway into one kingdom, as his ancestor Harald Fairhair had largely succeeded in doing. On the way home he wintered with Duke Richard II of Normandy (our 26<sup>th</sup> Great Grandfather). Richard was himself an ardent Christian, and the Normans had also previously converted to Christianity. Before leaving, Olaf was baptized in Rouen in the pre-Romanesque Notre-Dame Cathedral by Richard's brother Robert the Dane, archbishop of Normandy.

Olaf returned to Norway in 1015 and declared himself king, obtaining the support of the five petty kings of the Norwegian Uplands. In 1016 at the Battle of Nesjar he defeated Earl Sveinn, one of the earls of Lade and hitherto the de facto ruler of Norway. He founded the town of Borg, later known as Sarpsborg, by the waterfall Sarpsfossen in Østfold county. Within a few years he had won more power than any of his predecessors on the throne had enjoyed.

Olaf annihilated the petty kings of the South, subdued the aristocracy, asserted his

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suzerainty in the Orkney Islands, and conducted a successful raid on Denmark. He made peace with King Olof Skötkonung Eiriksson (our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) of Sweden through Þorgnýr the Lawspeaker, and was for some time engaged to Olof's daughter, Princess Ingigerdur, though without Olof's approval.

In 1019 Olaf married Astrid Olofsdotter, King Olof's illegitimate daughter and the half-sister of his former fiancée. The union produced a daughter, Wulfhild. He also had a son Magnus by a concubine named Alfhild. We descend from Magnus the Good.

But Olaf's success was short-lived. In 1026 he lost the Battle of the Helgeå, and in 1029 the Norwegian nobles, seething with discontent, supported the invasion of King Cnut the Great of Denmark. Olaf was driven into exile in Kievan Rus. He stayed for some time in the Swedish province of Nerike, where, according to local legend, he baptized many locals. In 1029, King Cnut's Norwegian regent, Jarl Håkon Eiriksson, was lost at sea. Olaf seized the opportunity to win back the kingdom, but he fell in 1030 at the Battle of Stiklestad, where some of his own subjects from central Norway took arms against him.

King Cnut, though distracted by the task of governing England, ruled Norway for five years after Stiklestad, with his son Sveinn and Sveinn's mother Ælfgifu as regents. But their regency was unpopular, and when Olaf's illegitimate son Magnus ('the Good') laid claim to the Norwegian throne, Sveinn and Ælfgifu were forced to flee.

In the times during Olaf's reign, Christianity was already well established in Norway. What seems clear is that Olaf made efforts to establish a church organization on a broader scale than before, among other things by importing bishops from England, Normandy and Germany, and that he tried to enforce Christianity in the inland areas, which had the least communication with the rest of Europe, and which economically were more strongly based on agriculture, so that the inclination to hold on to the former fertility cult was stronger than in the more diversified and expansive western parts of Norway.

Olaf was killed in the Battle of Stiklestad on July 29, 1030. His remains were enshrined in Nidaros Cathedral, built over his burial site. His sainthood encouraged the widespread adoption of Christianity by Scandinavia's Vikings/Norsemen. Bishop Grimkell performed his canonization only a year after his death and Olaf swiftly became Norway's patron saint.

Pope Alexander III confirmed Olaf's local canonization in 1164, making him a universally recognized saint of the Roman Catholic Church. He became an equally important saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church and one of the last famous saints before the Great Schism. Following the reformation he was a commemorated historical figure among some members of the Lutheran and Anglican Communions.

The saga of Olaf Haraldsson and the legend of Olaf the Saint became central to a national identity. Especially during the period of Romantic Nationalism, Olaf was a symbol of Norwegian independence and pride. Saint Olaf is symbolized by the axe in Norway's coat of arms and Olsok (29 July) is still his day of celebration. Many Christian institutions with Scandinavian links as well as Norway's Order of St. Olav are named after him. The cult of Olaf unified the country and consolidated the Christianization of Norway. He is also recognized as the patron saint of the Faroe Islands.

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### **Astridur Sveinsdottir (997 - 1060)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Astridur Sveinsdottir of Denmark (997 – 1060), was a Danish princess and titular Queen, a Russian princess and, possibly, Duchess of Normandy by marriage. The dynasty that ruled Denmark in 1047–1412 was named after her. She was known in Denmark as Dronning Estrid ('Queen Estrid'), despite the fact that she was not married to a King and not a queen regnant.

Astridur was born about 997 in Denmark. She was the daughter of King Sveinn Forkbeard and Sigrídur Skogultostansdóttir. She was reportedly married briefly to an unnamed Russian Prince who died following the Rus' war.

Her brother Cnut then arranged a marriage for her with Ulfur, Jarl of Orkney. By Ulfur Jarl Thorgilsson she was the mother of the later King Sveinn II Estridson and Bjorn Estrithson. We descend from both of them.

In 1026, Ulfur was killed by the order of Cnut. It is possible that the murder took place with Astridur's consent. She did not lose her brother's trust, and was granted large lands by him. She gave her son an education by the church, made donations to the church and is believed to have founded the first church made of stone in Denmark (Roskilde Cathedral). She supported her sons's struggle to gain dominance over Denmark.

In 1047, her son became king in Denmark due to his mother's descent, and is hence known by the matronymic Sven Estridssen ('son of Estrid'). Astridur herself was granted the honorary title of Queen (not Queen mother), the very same variation of the title normally reserved for the consort of the king, and became known as "Queen Estrid", despite the fact that she was not a monarch nor the spouse of one. Ulfur's sister was Gytha married to Earl Godwin, and that put Astridur's family firmly in the Anglo-Scandinavian camp.

The date of her death is unknown, but it may have been about 1060, as it is known that Bishop William of Roskilde officiated at her funeral, and he was in office between 1057 and 1073. She was widely believed to have been buried in the northeastern pier of the Roskilde Cathedral, but a DNA test in 2003 dispelled the myth as the remains belonged to a woman much too young to be Astridur.

### **Ulfur (the Jarl) Þorgilsson (998 - 1027)( our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Ulfur (the Jarl) Þorgilsson was a Danish earl (jarl) and regent of Denmark. Ulfur was the father of King Sveinn II of Denmark and thus the progenitor of the House of Estridsen, which would rule Denmark from 1047 to 1375, which was also sometimes, specially in Swedish sources, referred to as the Ulfinger dynasty to honor him. Ulfur was born about 998 in Denmark. He was the son of Danish chieftain Thorgils Sparkaläggur Stybjornsson. His brother Eilaf was an earl of King Cnut the Great and his sister Gytha Thorkelsdóttir married Godwin, Earl of Wessex.

In 1016, Ulfur participated in Cnut the Great's invasion of England. He participated in the conquest of England as one of Cnut's most trusted men. From about 1024 he was appointed the Jarl of Denmark and King Cnut's appointee as regent of Denmark. In the absence of King Cnut, he ruled as the foster-father and guardian of Cnut's son Harthacnut

In 1015–16, he married Cnut's sister, Astridur Sveinsdottir of Denmark, by whom he had

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sons, Sveinn, who later became the king of Denmark, and Bjørn, who would become an Earl in England. We descend from both of these children.

In 1026, Swedish King Anund Jakob and Norwegian King Olaf II took advantage of King Cnut's absence and launched an attack on the Danish in the Baltic Sea. Ulfur convinced the freemen to elect Harthacnut king, since they were discontented at Cnut's absenteeism. This was a ruse on Ulfur's part since his role as Harthacnut's guardian would make him the ruler of Denmark. When Cnut learnt what had happened, he returned to Denmark and fought naval engagement against the Swedish and Norwegian forces at the Battle of the Helgeå. The victory left Cnut as the dominant leader in Scandinavia. *Heimskringla* gives an account in which Cnut lost the land battle, but he was the overall victor when Ulfur helped him win the accompanying sea battle.

Ulfur celebration of these victories were short-lived. At a banquet in Roskilde, the two brothers-in-law, Cnut and Ulfur, were playing chess and started arguing with each other. On September 22, 1027, Cnut had one of his housecarls kill Earl Ulfur in Trinity Church, the predecessor of Roskilde Cathedral.

### **Gytha Þorgilsdóttir (1000 - )(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Gytha Þorgilsdóttir (1000 – 1069), also called Githa, was a Danish noblewoman. She was the mother of King Harold Godwinson and of Edith of Wessex, queen consort of King Edward the Confessor of England. Gytha Þorgilsdóttir was born in about 1000 in Sweden. She was the daughter of Danish chieftain Þorgils Sprakaleggur Stybjornsson. Gytha was also the sister of the Danish Earl Ulfur Þorgilsson who was married to Estrid Sveinsdóttir, the sister of King Cnut the Great.

Gytha married the Anglo-Saxon nobleman Godwin of Wessex. They had a large family together, and one of her sons, Harold, became king of England. We descend from their son Tosti.

Two of their sons, Harold and Tosti, faced each other at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, where Tosti was killed. Less than a month later, three of her sons, Harold, Gyrth, and Leofwine, were killed at the Battle of Hastings. Shortly after the Battle of Hastings, Gytha was living in Exeter and may have been the cause of that city's rebellion against William the Conqueror in 1067, which resulted in his laying siege to the city. She pleaded unsuccessfully with him for the return of the body of her slain son, king Harald. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Gytha left England after the Norman conquest, together with the wives or widows and families of other prominent Anglo-Saxons, all the Godwin family estates having been confiscated by William. Little else is known of Gytha's life after that time, although it is probable that she went to Scandinavia where she had relatives.

Her surviving (and youngest) son, Wulfnoth, lived nearly all his life in captivity in Normandy until the death of William the Conqueror in 1087. Only her eldest daughter, Queen Edith, still held some power as the widow of King Edward the Confessor.

### **King Edmund (the old) Olafsson (1000 - )(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**



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Edmund the Old (1000 – ) was King of Sweden from 1050 to 1060. His short reign was characterized by disputes with the Archbishopric of Bremen over church policies, and a historically debated delimitation of the Swedish-Danish border. Edmund was born about 1000 in Sweden. He was the son of Olof Skötkonung Eiriksson, the first Christian ruler of Sweden. His mother was Edla, daughter of a Slavic chief from the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. He had two uterine sisters called Astrid and Holmfrid. His half-siblings, born by Olof's legitimate Queen Estrid of the Obotrites, were Anund Jacob and Ingigerður (our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandmother). Estrid was ill-tempered and treated her stepchildren poorly. King Olof later sent Edmund to be raised with his mother's Slavic family. While staying there he failed to hold on to the Christian religion.

Edmund was married to Astrid Njalsdotter of Skjalgaätten. Astrid was the daughter of Norwegian nobleman Nial Finnsson, son of Gunhild Halvdansdotter of the Skjalga family in Hålogaland, Norway. Edmund and Astrid had two known children. We descend from their daughter Ingamoder.

Olof was succeeded by his other son Anund Jacob, who however did not have any known sons of his own. Edmund was ruling in Sigtuna by 1035. Anund Jacob died in or shortly after 1049 and was succeeded by Edmund; there is nothing to suggest that the succession was irregular.

Edmund was baptized but cared very little for the Christian faith. He got into a dispute with the Archbishop of Bremen that was triggered by Edmund's insistence on maintaining a bishop called Osmundus. Originally a protégé of the Norwegian-based missionary Sigfrid, Osmundus had been raised at a school in Bremen but failed to be ordained bishop by the Pope. Eventually he was ordained by the Polish archbishop of Gniezno and proceeded to Sweden where he won the confidence of King Edmund. In the mid-1050s the Archbishop of Bremen sent envoys to Sweden, headed by Adalvard the Elder who was intended as the new bishop. The delegation was highly offended when encountering Osmundus who sported the habits of an archbishop and "seduced the still recently converted wild peoples through incorrect education in our faith." On Osmundus' insistence, Edmund turned the envoys away from an assembly. However, the Swedish magnate Stenkil Rognvaldsson (our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), Edmund's son-in-law, escorted the delegation on its way back.

Some time after the dispute, King Edmund dispatched his son Anund with an army "in order to expand the realm." The Viking expedition crossed the sea and came to Kvenland which was probably situated to the east of the Gulf of Bothnia in present-day Finland. Anund and his army were killed by a poisoning in the spring water. This military disaster was paired with a severe drought and failed harvests. This crop failure can be dated to 1056 from other sources. Allegedly, the calamities caused the Swedes to turn to the Archbishop of Bremen and ask to receive Adalvard back as Bremen-appointed bishop. Adalvard duly arrived to Sweden where he devoted his efforts to the conversion of Värmland towards the border of Norway. Osmundus appears to have submitted to Adalvard in the end, but left Sweden for England some time before 1066.

Edmund was the last king of the ancient royal house of the Swedes (sometimes known in modern history writing as the House of Munsö). He is known to have been alive as late as the summer of 1060, and probably died shortly after. Edmund was succeeded by his son-in-law,

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Stenkil. With him began a new dynasty that would last until the 1120s.

### **Saint Ingigerður Anna Olafsdottir (1001 - 1050)(our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandmother)**

Ingigerður Olafsdottir of Sweden, also known as Irene, Anna and Saint Anna (1001 – 1050), was a Swedish princess and a Grand Princess of Kiev. She was the daughter of Swedish King Olof Skötkonung Eiríksson and Estrid of the Obotrites and the consort of Yaroslav I the Wise of Kiev. Ingigerður or Saint Anna is often confused with the mother of Saint Vladimir “the Enlightener” of the Rus. This is mainly because Ingigerður and Yaroslav also had a son named Vladimir. However, Saint Vladimir was the father of Ingigerður’s husband Yaroslav I “the Wise,” thus making her Saint Vladimir’s daughter-in-law. Saint Vladimir was the son of Sviatoslav and Malusha.

Ingigerður was born a princess in the court of King Olof Skötkonung in about 1001. In 1015, after Olaf II of Norway assumed the throne as King of Norway, he proposed a royal marriage alliance. In 1016, noblemen of both countries tried to arrange a marriage between King Olaf and Princess Ingigerður. Olof Skötkonung agreed at first but later he reneged. Rather he agreed to the marriage of his daughter, Astrid Olavsdatter to King Olaf.

Olof Skötkonung subsequently arranged for the marriage of Princess Ingigerður to the powerful Grand Prince Yaroslav I the Wise of Novgorod with whom Sweden had a flourishing trade relationship. The marriage took place in 1019. Yaroslav and Ingigerður had six sons and four daughters. We descend from their son Vsevolod and their two daughters Elisiv and Anna Agnesa.

Once in Kiev, Ingigerður had her name changed to the Greek Irene. According to several sagas, she received as a marriage gift of Ladoga and adjacent lands, which later became known as Ingria, arguably a corruption of Ingigerður's name. She arranged for her father's cousin, jarl Ragnvald Ulfsson, to rule in her stead.

Ingigerður initiated the building of the Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Kiev (foundation laid in 1037). She also initiated the construction of Cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod (built between 1045 and 1050).

Ingigerður died on February 10, 1050. Upon her death, according to different sources, she was buried in either Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Kiev or Cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod.

Ingigerður was later declared a saint under the name of St. Anna in Novgorod and Kiev. The reason for her sainthood was that she initiated the building of both cathedrals in Kiev and in Novgorod together with many other good deeds.

### **King Harald (hardrada) Sigurdsson (1015 - 1066)(our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather)**

Harald Sigurdsson, also known as Harald of Norway (1015 – 1066) and given the epithet Hardrada ("hard ruler") in the sagas, was King of Norway (as Harald III) from 1046 to 1066. In addition, he unsuccessfully claimed both the Danish throne until 1064 and the English throne in 1066. Before becoming king, Harald had spent around fifteen years in exile as a mercenary and military commander in Kievan Rus' and of the Varangian Guard in the Byzantine Empire. Harald

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was born in Ringerike, Norway in about 1015 to Ásta Gudbrandsdottir and her second husband Sigurd Syr. Sigurd was a petty king of Ringerike, and among the strongest and wealthiest chieftains in the Uplands.

Through his mother Ásta, Harald was the youngest brother King Olaf Haraldsson II (later Saint Olaf)(our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) and three other half-brothers. In his youth, Harald displayed traits of a typical rebel with big ambitions, and admired Olaf as his role model. He thus differed from his two older brothers, who were more similar to their father, down-to-earth and mostly concerned with maintaining the farm.

Following a revolt in 1028, Harald's brother Olaf was forced into exile until he returned to Norway in early 1030. On hearing news of Olaf's planned return, Harald gathered 600 men from the Uplands to meet Olaf and his men upon their arrival in the east of Norway. After a friendly welcome, Olaf went on to gather an army and eventually fight in the Battle of Stiklestad on July 29, 1030, in which Harald took part on his brother's side. The battle was part of an attempt to restore Olaf to the Norwegian throne, which had been captured by the Danish king Cnut the Great (Canute). The battle resulted in defeat for the brothers at the hands of those Norwegians who were loyal to Cnut, and Olaf was killed while Harald was badly wounded. Harald was nonetheless remarked to have shown considerable military talent during the battle. After the defeat Harald was forced into exile to Kievan Rus'. He thereafter spent some time in the army of Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise, eventually obtaining rank as a captain.

Harald and his companions moved on to Constantinople around 1034. In Constantinople, he soon rose to become the commander of the Byzantine Varangian Guard, and saw action on the Mediterranean Sea, in Asia Minor, Sicily, in the Holy Land, Bulgaria and in Constantinople itself, where he became involved in the imperial dynastic disputes. Harald amassed considerable wealth during his time in the Byzantine Empire, which he shipped to Yaroslav in Kievan Rus' for safekeeping. He finally left the Byzantines in 1042, and arrived back in Kievan Rus' where he married Elisiv Yaroslavna of Kiev, daughter of Yaroslav the Wise around 1044, they had at least two daughters.

Seeking to regain for himself the kingdom lost by his half-brother Olaf Haraldsson, Harald began his journey westwards in early 1045, departing from Novgorod (Holmgard) to Staraya Ladoga (Aldeigjuborg) where he obtained a ship. His journey went through Lake Ladoga, down the Neva River, and then into the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea. He arrived in Sigtuna in Sweden, probably at the end of 1045 or in early 1046. In Harald's absence, the throne of Norway had been restored to Magnus the Good, an illegitimate son of Olaf. Since Cnut the Great's sons had chosen to abandon Norway and instead fight over England, and his sons and successors Harald Harefoot and Harthacnut had died young, Magnus's position as king had been secured. No domestic threats or insurrections are recorded to have occurred during his eleven-year reign. After the death of Harthacnut, which had left the Danish throne vacant, Magnus had in addition been selected to be the king of Denmark.

In 1047, Magnus and Harald went to Denmark with their *leidang* forces. Later that year in Jylland, less than a year into their co-rule, Magnus died without an heir. Before his death, he had decided that Sveinn was to inherit Denmark and Harald to inherit Norway. On hearing the news of Magnus's death, Harald quickly gathered the local leaders in Norway and declared himself

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king of Norway as well as of Denmark. Although Magnus had appointed Sveinn his successor as king of Denmark, Harald immediately announced his plans to gather an army and oust his former ally from the country. In response, the army and the chieftains, headed by Einar Thambarskelfir, opposed any plans of invading Denmark. Although Harald himself objected to bringing the body of Magnus back to Norway, the Norwegian army prepared to transport his body to Nidaros (now Trondheim), where they buried him next to Saint Olaf (our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) in late 1047.

Having forced his way to the kingship, Harald would have to convince the aristocracy that he was the right person to rule Norway alone. To establish domestic alliances, he married Tora Torbergsdotter of one of the most powerful Norwegian families around 1048. Harald and Tora had at least two children: We descend from their son Olafur.

Harald also continued to advance Christianity in Norway, and archaeological excavations show that churches were built and improved during his reign. He also imported bishops, priests and monks from abroad, especially from Kievan Rus' and the Byzantine Empire. A slightly different form of Christianity was thus introduced in Norway from the rest of northern Europe. Since the clergy was not ordained in England or France, it nonetheless caused controversy when Harald was visited by papal legates. The protests by the legates led Harald to throw the Catholic clergy out of his court, and he reportedly stated to the legates that "he did not know of any other archbishop or lord of Norway than the king himself."

Not long after Harald had renounced his claim to Denmark, the former Earl of Northumbria, Tosti Godwinson (our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), brother of the newly chosen English king Harald Godwinson (also known as Harald of Wessex), pledged his allegiance to Harald and invited him to claim the English throne. Harald went along and invaded Northern England with 10,000 troops and 300 longships in September 1066, raided the coast and defeated English regional forces of Northumbria and Mercia in the Battle of Fulford near York. Although initially successful, Harald was defeated and killed on September 25, 1066 in an attack by Harold Godwinson's forces in the Battle of Stamford Bridge, which wiped out almost his entire army. Modern historians have often considered Harald's death, which brought an end to his invasion, as the end of the Viking Age. A year after his death at Stamford Bridge, Harald's body was moved to Norway and buried at the Mary Church in Nidaros (Trondheim).

### **King Sveinn II Astridarson Estridesen (1019 - 1076)(our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Sveinn II Astridarson Estridsson (1019 – 1076) was King of Denmark from 1047 until his death in 1076. Sveinn was born in England in about 1019 and was the son of Ulf Thorgilsson and Estrid Svendsdatter, and the grandson of King Sveinn I Forkbeard through his mother's line. He was married three times, and fathered 20 children or more out of wedlock, including the five future kings: Harald III Hen, Canute IV the Saint, Oluf I Hunger, Eric I Evergood, and Niels. We descend from Eric I Evergood (the good). Sveinn grew up a military leader, and served under king Anund Jacob of Sweden for a time. He pillaged the Elbe-Weser area in 1040, but was caught by the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, who released him shortly thereafter.

Sveinn was made a jarl under Danish king Harthacnut and led a campaign for him against Norway, but was beaten by Magnus I of Norway (our 30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). When Harthacnut

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died in 1042, Magnus claimed the Danish throne and made Sveinn the jarl of Jutland. In 1043, Sveinn fought for Magnus at the Battle of Lyrskov Heath at Hedeby, near the present-day border of Denmark and Germany. Sveinn won great reputation at Lyrskov Heath, and had the Danish nobles crown him king in Viborg in Jutland. He was defeated by Magnus on several occasions, and had to flee to Sweden. Eventually he managed to return and establish a foothold in Scania.

The war between Magnus and Sveinn lasted until 1045, when Magnus' uncle Harald Hardrada (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) returned to Norway from exile. Harald and Sveinn joined forces, and Magnus decided to share the Norwegian throne with Harald. In 1047 Magnus died, having stated on his deathbed that his kingdom would be divided: Harald would get the throne of Norway, while Sveinn would be king of Denmark. Upon hearing of Magnus' death Sveinn said, "Now so help me God, I shall never yield Denmark."

Harald, unwilling to relinquish Denmark, attacked Sveinn and fought a long war. Harald sacked Hedeby in 1050, and also sacked Aarhus. Sveinn almost captured Harald in 1050, when Harald attacked the coast of Jutland and loaded his ships with goods and captives. Sveinn's flotilla caught up with the Norwegians and Harald ordered his men to throw out the captured goods, thinking the Danes would stop to get the goods. Sveinn ordered his men to leave the goods and go after Harald. Harald then ordered his men to throw the captives overboard. For them Sveinn was willing to let Harald slip away. Sveinn came close to losing his life at the naval Battle of Niså off the coast of Halland in 1062.

Sveinn's connection to the Danish line of succession was his mother Estrid Sveinsdottir, and he took the matronymic surname Estridsson after her, emphasizing his link to the Danish royalty.

Sveinn sought to consolidate his power through links to the church as well as foreign powers, and actively sought the friendship of the Popes. He wanted his eldest son Knud Magnus crowned by the Pope, but Knud died on the journey to Rome. He also unsuccessfully pressed for Harald Bluetooth, the first Christian king of Denmark, to be sanctified. He was an ally of Henry III, Holy Roman Emperor against Baldwin V of Flanders in 1049, and Sveinn assisted his son-in-law Gottschalk in the Liutizi Civil War of 1057.

After Harald Hardrada was killed, and William the Conqueror had conquered England, Sveinn turned his attention to England, once ruled by his uncle Canute the Great. He joined forces with Edgar Atheling, the last remaining heir of the Anglo-Saxon royal house, and sent a force to attack king William in 1069. However, after capturing York, Sveinn accepted a payment from William to desert Edgar, who then returned into exile in Scotland. Sveinn failed another attempt in 1074/1075.

Sveinn could be ruthless. One New Year's Eve it was reported to the king that several of his guests and hired men had ridiculed him and talked behind his back. The king was so angry that he had them murdered in the church on New Year's Day. When the king arrived at Roskilde Cathedral for mass, his friend Bishop Vilhelm met him at the door and forbade the king and his party to enter. "You stand condemned before God, a murderer, who has defiled the house of God with blood!" cried the bishop and pushed the king back with his shepherd's crook. He declared the king excommunicated from the church. The king's men drew their swords and stepped forward to hack the bishop down, but Bishop Vilhelm held his ground. "Let him be," shouted the

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king and withdrew to his farm. There he removed his New Year's fine clothing and weapons and dressed in sackcloth. Then he walked back to the cathedral in his bare feet and cast himself face down in front of the entrance. Bishop Vilhelm had just begun the mass when he was told the king lay humbled at the door. Bishop Vilhelm stopped the service and went to the door to hear the king's abject confession. When the bishop realized the king was truly repentant, he raised him up, lifted the excommunication and led him into the cathedral.

King Sveinn died at the royal estate Söderup, Denmark on April 28, 1076. His body was carried to Roskilde Cathedral where he was interred in a pillar of the choir next to the remains of Bishop Vilhelm. Later he was called the "father of kings" because five of his fifteen sons became kings of Denmark. He was the last Viking ruler of Denmark and an ancestor of all subsequent Danish kings.

### **King Stenkil Rognvaldsson (1020 - 1066)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Stenkil Rognvaldsson was a King of Sweden who ruled in about 1060 until 1066. He succeeded Edmund the Old and became the first king from the House of Stenkil. He is praised as a devout Christian, however with an accommodating stance towards the old Pagan religion. His brief reign saw an armed conflict with Norway. Stenkil was born about 1020 in West Gotland, Sweden. He was the son of Rognvald the Old and Astrid Njalsdotter, the daughter of Njal Finnsson from Hålogaland in Norway and a cognatic descendant of Harald Fairhair.

Stenkil was married to Ingamoder Edmundsdottir, daughter of King Edmund the Old Olafsson and Astrid. They were known to have two sons. We descend from their son Ingi.

Stenkil spent time in Levene in West Gotland where he was long remembered as the king who "loved West Geats before all his other subjects," and he was lauded as a great archer whose hit marks were long shown with admiration.

Stenkil appears in history around 1056, during the reign of Edmund the Old. At that time he provided support and protection for a delegation from the Archdiocese of Bremen which had been turned away by King Edmund and his bishop Osmundus. Later on a reconciliation between the king and Bremen took place, and Sweden received Adalvard the Elder as its new bishop. Edmund died shortly after, in about 1060. As his son and heir Anund was already dead, Stenkil succeeded to the throne without any known commotion.

As king, Stenkil duly supported the Christianization of Sweden and cooperated with bishops from the Archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. With the help of Stenkil's emissaries, Adalvard the Younger created the Sigtuna bishopric, one day's journey from the old cult center of Uppsala. Adalvard the Younger suggested that they should proceed to raze or burn down the pagan temple. This, they hoped, would have the effect of pushing the population into conversion. However, Stenkil apprehended that the people in the area resented the aim of the bishops, and managed to talk them out of the project. As he argued, the bishops would be executed and he himself deposed since he had allowed miscreants into the land. Moreover, those already Christian would surely revert to paganism. As it was, the bishops reluctantly had to follow Stenkil's advice. Instead, they traversed the lands of the Geats which were apparently less resistant to the new faith, and broke any pagan idols they found, making thousands of converts in the process.

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The later Norse sagas relate that a brief but serious conflict flared up with the Norwegian king Harald Hardrada (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) in 1064–65. One of Harald's foremost chiefs, Jarl Håkon Ivarsson (our 29<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), was married to the king's grandniece Ragnhild and followed Harald on his military expeditions against the Danish ruler Sveinn Estridsen.

The Norwegians were victorious at the Battle of Nissan in 1062, but Jarl Håkon secretly allowed the defeated Sveinn to escape alive. When this was later reported to Harald Hardrada, the enraged king gave orders to kill Håkon, who however managed to escape to Sweden. The escapee stayed with King Stenkil who made him Jarl of Värmland. Harald Hardrada reacted to Jarl Håkon's Swedish position by assembling a fleet and invading Stenkil's kingdom in the cold of the winter. At the entrance of the Göta älv, he took the lighter boats and brought them upriver, to Lake Vänern. The ships then rowed eastwards, to the place where he heard that Håkon's troops had assembled. In the fight that followed, Håkon's troops were defeated with losses.

Stenkil died at the time of the Battle of Hastings in England in 1066. His death triggered a violent civil war, perhaps caused by rising tension between Christianity and adherents of the pagan religion. According to a legend Stenkil was buried in the "royal hill" near Levene in Västergötland (west Gotland). His two sons Halsten and Ingi the Elder would both become kings of Sweden. In a letter to Halsten and Ingi from about 1081, Pope Gregory VII apparently praised Stenkil, since he expressed hope that they might compete with their "predecessor" in honorable lives and deeds.

### **King Harold Godwinson (1022 - 1066)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Harold Godwinson (1022 – 1066), often called Harold II, was the last crowned Anglo-Saxon king of England. Harold reigned from January 6, 1066 until his death at the Battle of Hastings, fighting the Norman invaders led by William the Conqueror during the Norman conquest of England. His death marked the end of Anglo-Saxon rule over England. Harold was born about 1022 in Northumberland, England. He was a son of Godwin I (Jarl Gudni), the powerful Earl of Wessex, and of Gytha Thorkelsdóttir, whose brother Ulf the Earl was married to Estrid Sveinsdatter, the daughter of King Sveinn Forkbeard and sister of King Cnut the Great of England and Denmark.

Harold was a powerful earl and member of a prominent Anglo-Saxon family with ties to Cnut the Great. Upon the death of his brother-in-law King Edward the Confessor on January 5, 1066, the Witenagemot convened and chose Harold to succeed; he was the first English monarch to be crowned in Westminster Abbey. In late September, he successfully repelled an invasion by rival claimant Harald Hardrada (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) of Norway before marching his army back south to meet William the Conqueror at Hastings two weeks later.

Harold became Earl of East Anglia. Harold is called "earl" when he appears as a witness in a will that may date to 1044; but, by 1045, Harold regularly appears as an earl in documents. It was also around this time that Harold began a relationship with Edith the Fair Swannesha, who appears to have been the heiress to lands in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex, lands in Harold's new earldom. The relationship was a form of marriage that was not blessed or sanctioned by the Church, known as *More danico*, or "in the Danish manner," and was accepted by most laypeople

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in England at the time. Any children of such a union were considered legitimate. We descend from their daughter Gytha of Wessex.

In 1049, Harold was in command of a ship or ships that were sent with a fleet to aid Henry III, Holy Roman Emperor against Baldwin V, Count of Flanders (our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), who was in revolt against Henry.

When in 1051 Earl Godwin was sent into exile, Harold accompanied his father and helped him to regain his position a year later. Then Godwin died in 1053, and Harold succeeded him as Earl of Wessex (the southern third of England). This arguably made him the most powerful figure in England after the king.

In 1055 Harold drove back the Welsh, who had burned Hereford. Harold became Earl of Hereford in 1058, and replaced his late father as the focus of opposition to growing Norman influence in England under the restored monarchy of Edward the Confessor, who had spent more than 25 years in exile in Normandy. He led a series of successful campaigns against Gruffydd ap Llywelyn (our 28<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) of Gwynedd, king of Wales. This conflict ended with Gruffydd's defeat and death in 1063.

Due to a doubling of taxation by Jarl Tosti Gudnason (our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) in 1065 that threatened to plunge England into civil war, Harold supported Northumbrian rebels against his brother, Tosti, and replaced him with Morcar. This led to Harold's marriage alliance with the northern earls but fatally split his own family, driving Tosti into alliance with King Harald Hardrada of Norway.

King Edward the Confessor died on January 5, 1066, without having named a successor. When the Witan convened the next day they selected Harold to succeed, and his coronation followed on January 6, most likely held in Westminster Abbey.

In early January 1066, hearing of Harold's coronation, Duke William II of Normandy began plans to invade England, building 700 warships and transports. Harold assembled his troops on the Isle of Wight, but the invasion fleet remained in port for almost seven months. On September 8, with provisions running out, Harold disbanded his army and returned to London. On the same day Harald Hardrada (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) of Norway, who also claimed the English crown, joined Jarl Tosti and invaded, landing his fleet at the mouth of the Tyne.

The invading forces of Hardrada and Tosti defeated the English earls Edwin of Mercia and Morcar of Northumbria at the Battle of Fulford near York on September 20, 1066. Harold led his army north on a forced march from London, reached Yorkshire in four days, and caught Hardrada by surprise. On September 25, in the Battle of Stamford Bridge, Harold defeated Hardrada and Tosti, who were both killed.

On September 27, 1066 Duke William's fleet set sail for England, arriving the following day at Pevensey on the coast of East Sussex. Harold's army marched 241 miles to intercept William, who had landed perhaps 7,000 men in Sussex, southern England. Harold established his army in hastily built earthworks near Hastings. The two armies clashed at the Battle of Hastings on October 14, where after nine hours of hard fighting, Harold was killed and his forces defeated. His brothers Gyrth and Leofwine were also killed in the battle, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.



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### **Jarl Tosti Guðnason (Godwinson)(1026 - 1066)(our 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Tosti Guðnason Godwinson (1026 – 1066) was an Anglo-Saxon Earl of Northumbria and brother of King Harold Godwinson. After being exiled by his brother, Tosti supported the Norwegian king Harald Hardrada's (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) invasion of England, and was killed at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. Tosti was born about 1026 in Wessex, England. He was the third son of the Anglo-Saxon nobleman Godwin, Earl of Wessex and Gytha Thorkelsdóttir, the daughter of Danish chieftain Thorgil Sprakling. In 1051, he married Judith Baldwinsdottir of Flanders the only child of Baldwin IV, Count of Flanders by his second wife, Eleanor of Normandy. Tosti and Judith had at least two sons. We descend from their son Skuli.

The Domesday Book recorded twenty-six vills or townships as being held by Earl Tosti forming the Manor of Hougun which now forms part of the county of Cumbria in north-west England. King Edward the Confessor was pursuing a policy of "Normanization" of England and by doing so was reducing the influence of the Godwins. In 1051 Earl Godwin's opposition to Edward's policies had brought England to the brink of civil war. Because of their opposition to the king the Godwins eventually were banished in 1051.

The banished Godwin, Gytha and Tosti, together with Sveinn and Gyrth, sought refuge with the Count of Flanders. They returned to England the following year with armed forces, gaining support and compelling Edward to restore his earldom. Three years later in 1055, Tosti became the Earl of Northumbria upon the death of Earl Siward.

Tosti appears to have governed in Northumbria with some difficulty. He was never popular with the Northumbrian ruling class, a mix of Danish invaders and Anglo Saxon survivors of the last Norse invasion. Tosti was said to have been heavy-handed with those who resisted his rule, including the murder of several members of leading Northumbrian families. In late 1063 or early 1064, Tosti had Gamal, son of Orm and Ulf, son of Dolfin, assassinated when they visited him under safe conduct.

Tosti was also frequently absent at the court of King Edward in the south, and possibly showed a lack of leadership against the raiding Scots. Their king was a personal friend of Tosti, and Tosti's unpopularity made it difficult to raise local levies to combat them. He resorted to using a strong force of Danish mercenaries (housecarles) as his main force, an expensive and resented policy (the housecarls' leaders were later slaughtered by rebels). Local biases probably also played a part. Tosti was from the south of England, a distinctly different culture from the north, which had not had a southern earl in several lifetimes. In 1063, still immersed in the confused local politics of Northumbria, his popularity apparently plummeted. Many of the inhabitants of Northumbria were Danes, who had enjoyed lesser taxation than in other parts of England. Yet the wars in Wales, of which Tosti's constituents were principal beneficiaries, needed to be paid for. Tosti had been a major commander in these wars attacking in the north while his brother Harold Godwinson marched up from the south.

On October 3, 1065, the thegns of York and the rest of Yorkshire descended on York and occupied the city. They killed Tosti's officials and supporters, then declared Tosti outlawed for his unlawful actions and sent for Morcar, younger brother of Edwin, Earl of Mercia. The northern rebels marched south to press their case with King Edward. They were joined at Northampton by

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Earl Edwin and his forces. There, they were met by Earl Harold, who had been sent by King Edward to negotiate with them and thus did not bring his forces. After Harold, by then the king's right-hand man, had spoken with the rebels at Northampton, he likely realized that Tosti would not be able to retain Northumbria. When he returned to Oxford, where the royal council was to meet on October 28, he had probably already made up his mind.

Harold Godwinson persuaded King Edward the Confessor to agree to the demands of the rebels. Tosti was outlawed a short time later, possibly early in November, because he refused to accept his deposition as commanded by Edward. This led to the fatal confrontation and enmity between the two Godwinsons. At a meeting of the king and his council, Tosti publicly accused Harold of fomenting the rebellion. Harold was keen to unify England in the face of the grave threat from William of Normandy, who had openly declared his intention to take the English throne. It was likely that Harold had exiled his brother to ensure peace and loyalty in the north. Tosti, however, remained unconvinced and plotted vengeance.

Tosti took ship with his family and some loyal thegns and took refuge with his brother-in-law, Baldwin V, Count of Flanders. He even attempted to form an alliance with William. Baldwin provided him with a fleet and he landed in the Isle of Wight in May 1066, where he collected money and provisions. He raided the coast as far as Sandwich but was forced to retreat when King Harold called out land and naval forces. He moved north and after an unsuccessful attempt to get his brother Gyrth to join him, he raided Norfolk and Lincolnshire. The Earls Edwin and Morcar defeated him decisively. Deserted by his men, he fled to his sworn brother, King Malcolm III (our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) of Scotland. Tosti spent the summer of 1066 in Scotland.

Tosti made contact with King Harald III Hardrada (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) of Norway and persuaded him to invade England. One of the sagas claims that he sailed for Norway, and greatly impressed the Norwegian king and his court, managing to sway a decidedly unenthusiastic Harald, who had just concluded a long and inconclusive war with Denmark, into raising a levy to take the throne of England. With Hardrada's aid, Tosti sailed up the Humber and defeated Morcar and Edwin at Gate Fulford.

Hardrada's army and Tosti invaded York, taking hostages after a peaceful surrender, and acquiring provisions. King Harold Godwinson raced northward with an English army from London and, on September 25, 1066, surprised his brother Tosti at Stamford Bridge. Hardrada, Tosti and many of their men were killed. The Norwegians and the Flemish mercenaries hired by Tosti were largely without armor and carried only personal weapons.

### **Jarl Skuli Tostasson (1052 - )(our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Skuli Tostasson (1052 – 1090) was born about 1052 in Wessex, England and was the son of Tosti Godwinsson, Earl of Northumbria, who was the brother of King Harald II Godwinsson.

Skuli became a close friend and advisor of King Olav Kyrre (the peaceful) Haraldsson (our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather). King Olav wanted to give Skuli a county in Norway with all the revenue and debts the king was entitled to. Skuli thanked him for the offer, but said he would rather ask for something else, because - "If there is a change of king, it may be that the gift is

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taken back. I'd rather, "he said," take on some properties, which are close to those outlets where you, sir, are used to sitting and taking Christmas presents. " The king agreed to this and give him land properties east at Konghelle and at Oslo, at Tonsberg, at Borg, at Bergen and north at Nidaros. They were almost the best properties in each place. He also received the estate Rein in Fosen in Sør-Trøndelag, which was later converted to Rein monastery.

King Olav Kyrre also got Gudrun Nefsteinsdottir to be Skuli's wife. Her parents were Jarl Nefsteinn and Ingrid Sigurdsdottir, who was the daughter of Sigurd Syr Halvdansson; the last petty king in Norway. Skuli and Gudrun had two children. We descend from their son Asulfur.

After Skuli's death, it was his son Åsulfur who sat at Rein. Skuli Tostasson is among the ancestors of the family Rein in Trøndelag. From him descended the later King Inge Bårdsson (our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather), and his half-brother, Skuli Bårdsson (our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather), who became Norway's first duke.

### **King Olafur III (the peaceful) Haraldsson (1050 - 1093)(our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Olaf III Haraldsson (1050 – 1093), known as Olaf Kyrre (the Peaceful), was king of Norway from 1067 until his death. Olaf was born about 1050 in Norway. He was a son of King Harald Hadrada and Tora Torbergsdatter.

Olaf joined his father during the invasion of England during 1066. However, he was only 16 years old during the Battle of Stamford Bridge in September 1066. He stayed on a ship and did not participate in the fighting. After the Norwegian defeat, he sailed with the remains of the Norwegian strike force back to Orkney, where they wintered. The return journey to Norway took place in summer 1067.

After the death of his father, Olaf shared the kingdom with his brother Magnus II Haraldsson who had become king the previous year. When King Magnus died during 1069, Olaf became the sole ruler of Norway.

During his reign, the nation of Norway experienced a rare extended period of peace. He renounced any offensive foreign policy, rather he protected Norway as a kingdom through agreements and marriage connections. Domestically he laid emphasis on the church's organization and modernizing the kingdom. The latter resulted in, among other things, the reorganization of the body-guard and of measures under which key cities, especially Bergen, could better serve as a royal residence. According to the *Heimskringla*, Olaf is said to have founded the city of Bergen (originally called Bjørgvin).

The death of Harald Hadrada and the serious defeat suffered by the Norwegians in 1066 tempted the Danish king, Sveinn Estridsen (our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather), to prepare for an attack on Norway. King Sveinn no longer felt bound by the ceasefire agreement signed with Harald Hadrada in 1064, since it would only be valid for the two kings during their own lives. However Olaf made peace with King Sveinn and married the king's daughter Ingerid. Later, Olaf's half sister Ingegerd of Norway married King Sveinn's son and heir Olaf I of Denmark, who would later become the Danish king. Although there were some attacks on England by Danish forces, peace persisted between Denmark and Norway. Olaf also made peace with William the Conqueror of England.

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Olaf also had Thora Arnadottir as a concubine. We descend from their son King Magnus Barefoot.

King Olaf broke with his father's line in his relationship to the church. Harald Hardrada had developed a continuing conflict with the Archbishopric of Bremen due to the archbishop's authority over the Norwegian church. Unlike his father, Olaf recognized that authority fully. Political considerations may have been behind this conciliatory attitude, as may have been Olaf's concern with the church organization. Until his time bishops had formed part of the king's court and traveled with him around the country to take care of the ecclesiastical affairs while the king took care of worldly matters. The bishops established fixed residence in Oslo, Nidaros and Bergen. King Olaf also took the initiative for the construction of churches, including Christ Church in Bergen and Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim.

Olaf strengthened the power of the king and instituted the system of guilds in Norway. There are strong indications that the government of King Olaf began writing secure provincial laws to a greater extent. The Norwegian law Gulatingsloven was probably put in writing for the first time during his reign.

King Olaf died of illness on September 22, 1093 in Haukbø, Rånrike, then part of Norway (now Håkeby, Sweden). He was buried at the Nidaros Cathedral. His marriage to Ingerid did not produce any children. His successor as king, Magnus III nicknamed Magnus Barefoot (Magnus Berrføtt), was acknowledged to be his illegitimate son.

### **King Magnus (barefoot) Olafsson (1073 - 1103)(our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Magnus Olafsson (1073 – 1103), better known as Magnus Barefoot, was King of Norway (as Magnus III) from 1093 until his death in 1103. His reign was marked by aggressive military campaigns and conquest, particularly in the Norse-dominated parts of the British Isles, where he extended his rule to the Kingdom of the Isles and Dublin. Magnus' common byname, "Barefoot" or "Barelegs," was due to his adopting the Gaelic dress (kilts) of the Irish and Scots. Magnus was born about 1073 in Norway. He was the only son of King Olaf Kyrre (the Peaceful) Haraldsson and Thora Arnadottir. Magnus grew up among the royal retinue of his father in Nidaros, de facto capital of Norway at the time. His father's cousin, the chieftain Tore Ingeridsson, was foster-father to Magnus. In his youth, he was apparently more similar to his warlike grandfather, King Harald Hardrada, than to his father.

Norway had experienced a long period of peace during the reign of Magnus' father, Olaf. Magnus was proclaimed king in southeastern Norway shortly after his father's death in 1093. He was probably proclaimed king at the Borgarting, the thing (assembly) of the adjacent region of Viken later that month. When Magnus became king, he already had a network of support among the Norwegian aristocracy. But, in the north his claim was contested by his cousin, Haakon Magnusson (son of King Magnus Haraldsson), and the two co-ruled uneasily until Haakon's death in 1095. Disgruntled members of the nobility refused to recognize Magnus after his cousin's death, but the insurrection was short-lived.

After securing his position domestically, Magnus would campaign around the Irish Sea from 1098 to 1099. He raided through Orkney, the Hebrides and Mann (the Northern and

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Southern Isles), and ensured Norwegian control by a treaty with the Scottish king. Based on Mann during his time in the west, Magnus had a number of forts and houses built on the island and probably also obtained suzerainty of Galloway. He sailed to Wales later in his expedition, winning control of Anglesey after repelling the invading Norman forces from the island.

Following his return to Norway Magnus led campaigns into Dalsland and Västergötland in Sweden, claiming an ancient border with the country. After two unsuccessful invasions and a number of skirmishes, Danish king Erikur the Good Sveinsson (our 25<sup>th</sup> great grandfather) initiated peace talks among the three Scandinavian monarchs, fearing that the conflict would get out of hand. Magnus concluded peace with the Swedes in 1101 by agreeing to marry Margaret, daughter of the Swedish king Inge Stenkilsson (our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather). In return, Magnus gained Dalsland as part of her dowry. He set out on his final western campaign in 1102, and may have sought to conquer Ireland. Magnus entered into an alliance with Irish king Muirchertach Ua Briain of Munster, who recognized Magnus' control of Dublin.

Magnus' marriage to Margaret did not produce any children. Magnus had several unknown mistresses. We descend from his daughter Thora and his son Haraldur Gilli.

Magnus sought to re-establish Norwegian influence around the Irish Sea. He attempted to install vassal king Ingemund in the Southern Isles in 1097, but the latter was killed in a revolt. It is unclear what Magnus' ultimate ambitions were. Historians have speculated that he wanted to establish an empire which included Scotland and Ireland, although most modern Norwegian and Scottish historians believe his chief aim was simply to control the Norse communities around the Irish Sea. Magnus sailed into the Western Sea in 1098, arriving in Orkney with a large fleet.

After his arrival, Magnus began negotiations with Scottish and Irish kings about the control of land in Scotland, Ireland and the surrounding islands. Upon arriving in Orkney, he sent the earls Paul and Erlend Thorfinnsson away to Norway as prisoners on a *leidang* ship, took their sons Haakon Paulsson, Magnus Erlendsson and Erling Erlendsson as hostages and installed his own son Sigurd as earl. Magnus then raided Scotland, the Southern Isles and Lewis. Meeting no significant opposition, he continued pillaging the Hebridean islands of Uist, Skye, Tiree, Mull and Islay, and the peninsula of Kintyre; Iona was visited, but not pillaged. On entering the Irish Sea, he lost three *leidang* ships and 120 men in Ulster. Magnus then continued to the Isle of Mann. Mann came under Norwegian control, and Magnus and his men stayed on the island for a time. During his time there, he organized Norwegian immigration to the island and had several forts and houses built (or rebuilt) using timber from Galloway on the Scottish mainland. Magnus returned to Norway a year later during the summer of 1099, although many of the islands he had conquered (such as Anglesey) were only nominally under Norwegian control.

Magnus again set his course for Ireland in 1101 or 1102, this time probably with a greater army than he had in his previous campaign. He received reinforcements from Orkney on his way to Mann, where he set up a base to survey conditions. Tensions ran high between Magnus and the king of Munster and High King of Ireland, Muirchertach Ua Briain (*Mýrjartak*), who was struggling with his rival Domnall Ua Lochlainn. After his arrival at Mann, Irish sources describe Magnus as agreeing to "a year's peace" with the Irish. Muirchertach was skilled in diplomacy, and negotiation with the dowries of his daughters may have been part of a political game. While he may not have intended to honor his agreements with Magnus (or others), he needed the latter's

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assistance to crush Domnall. Magnus was probably allied with Muirchertach during his campaigns against Domnall and the Cenél nEógain in 1103. On August 5, 1103, Muirchertach unsuccessfully tried to subdue Domnall in the Battle of Mag Coba. Magnus did not take part, but his Dublin subjects fought with Muirchertach. Since Magnus was closing in on the Irish throne, Muirchertach may have wanted him out of the way. Muirchertach was to bring Magnus and his men cattle provisions for their return to Norway; as this dragged on past the agreed time, Magnus became suspicious that the Irish planned an attack. Magnus gathered his men on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1103. They ventured to obtain food supplies in Ireland for his return to Norway, Magnus was killed in an ambush by the Ulaid.

Magnus probably died in the vicinity of the River Quoile. Some sources claimed that Magnus was "buried near the Church of St Patrick, in Down." But others believe the burial site to be about two miles south of the cathedral on Horse Island.

Magnus' legacy has remained more pronounced in Ireland and Scotland than in his native Norway. Among the few domestic developments known during his reign, Norway developed a more centralized rule and moved closer to the European model of church organization. Popularly portrayed as a Viking warrior rather than a medieval monarch, Magnus was the last Norwegian king to fall in battle abroad, and he may in some respects be considered the final Viking king.

### **King Haraldur (gilli) Magnusson (1102 - 1136)(our 25<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Harald Gille (1102 - 1136), also known as Harald IV, was king of Norway from 1130 until his death. His byname Gille is probably from Middle Irish Gilla Críst "servant of Christ". Harald was born about 1102 in Ireland or the Hebrides, more likely the former.

According to the sagas, he became familiar with Norway through an acquaintance with Norwegian merchants including Rögnvald Kali Kolsson, who would later become Earl of Orkney. Around 1127, Harald went to Norway and declared he was an illegitimate son of the former king, Magnus Barefoot, who had visited Ireland just before his death in 1103. But Wikipedia reports that this is not implausible because other descendants of Magnus are reported in Irish sources and he is known to have been particularly fond of at least one Irish woman. However, the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree does indeed show his father as Magnus Barefoot. Harald consequently claimed to be a half-brother of the reigning king, Sigurd the Crusader. Harald appears to have submitted successfully to the ordeal by fire. The alleged relationship was acknowledged by Sigurd on condition that Harald did not claim any share in the government of the kingdom during his lifetime or that of his son Magnus. Living on friendly terms with the king, Harald kept this agreement until Sigurd's death in 1130.

Harald was married to Ingrid Ragnvaldsdotter and they had a son, Inge I of Norway. Among Harald's concubines was Þóra Guthormsdóttir, the daughter of Guttorm Gråbarde, who was the mother of Sigurd II Munnur of Norway. We descend from Sigurd.

Harald was in Tønsberg when he heard of King Sigurd's death. He called together a meeting at the Haugating. At this Thing, Harald was chosen king over half the country. King Magnus was obliged to divide the kingdom with Harald into two parts.

The kingdom accordingly was so divided that each of them should have the half part of

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the kingdom which King Sigurd had possessed. They ruled the country for some time in peace. After four years of uneasy peace, Magnus began to openly prepare for war on Harald. On August 9, 1134, he defeated Harald in a decisive Battle at Färlev in Bohuslän and Harald fled to Denmark. Subsequently, Magnus disbanded his army and traveled to Bergen to spend the winter there. Harald then returned to Norway with a new army and meeting little opposition, reached Bergen before Christmas. Since Magnus had few men, the city fell easily to Harald's army on January 7, 1135. Magnus was captured and dethroned. His eyes were put out, and he was thrown into prison. Harald now ruled the country until he was murdered by Sigurd Slembe, another alleged illegitimate son of Magnus Barefoot, on December 14, 1136 at Bergen.

### **King Sigurdur (munnur) Haraldsson (1133 - 1155)(our 24<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Sigurd II Haraldsson (or Sigurd Munn) (1133 – 1155) was king of Norway from 1136 to 1155. He was son of Harald Gille, king of Norway and his mistress Þóra Guthormsdóttir. He served as co-ruler with his half-brothers, Inge Haraldsson and Eystein Haraldsson. His epithet Munn means "the Mouth" in Old Norse.

Sigurd was fostered by Guttorm (Guthormr) or Sådegyrd Bårdsson (Sáðagyrd̄r Bárðarson) in Trøndelag. When his father was murdered by the pretender Sigurd Slembe in 1136, Sigurd was made king at the thing of Eyrathing. At the same time, his brothers Inge and Magnus were also made kings and co-rulers. Their respective guardians joined forces against Sigurd Slembe and his ally, the former king Magnus the Blind. The battles against these pretenders dominated the early years of Sigurd's reign. In 1139, they were defeated and slain at the Battle of Holmengrå.

During the minority of the brothers, Sigurd, Inge and Magnus, the Norwegian nobility cooperated to rule the kingdom and advise the kings. In 1142, their brother Eysteinn came to Norway from Scotland. His parentage was accepted, since Harald Gille had acknowledged that he had a son overseas. Eysteinn thus became king and co-ruler together with Sigurd and Inge. Magnus, of whom little more is known, died of natural causes at some point in the 1140s.

Sigurd never married. But the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree provides that with a woman named Gunnhildur, he had a daughter Cecilia and a son Sverrir (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather). We descend from both of these children.

As time went on Sigurd's relationship with his brothers became more hostile. In 1155, all three of them were set to meet in Bergen in an effort to keep the peace. Inge accused Sigurd and Eysteinn of planning to have him dethroned. Sigurd denied the accusations, but a few days later one of Inge's guards was killed by one of Sigurd's. At the advice of his mother Ingrid and his senior advisor, Gregorius Dagsson, Inge ordered his men to assault the house where Sigurd was residing. Sigurd had but few men, and no mercy was given. King Sigurd was killed on February 6, 1155. He was buried by the old cathedral of Bergen, in what is today Bergenhus Fortress.

King Eysteinn was late in arriving for the meeting, and only approached the city after Sigurd was already dead. An uneasy settlement was reached between Inge and Eysteinn, but peace between them did not last long. As it turned out, the killing of king Sigurd started the second phase of the Norwegian civil war era, with fighting continuing with only short let-ups until 1208.

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During the following civil wars, several royal pretenders claimed to be the son of King Sigurd. For some, this was probably mostly a political statement, as royal lineage was necessary to be a candidate for the throne. Sverrir Sigurdsson was the most successful by far of these claimants, and eventually succeeded in becoming king of Norway.

### **Prince Vladimar II Monomakh (1053 - 1125)(our 26<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Vladimir II Monomakh (1053 – 1125) reigned as Grand Prince of Kievan Rus' from 1113 to 1125. He was born on May 26, 1053 in Kiev, Ukraine. He was the son of Vsevolod I Yaroslavna and Anastasia.

In his famous Instruction (also known as The Testament) to his own children, Monomakh mentions that he conducted 83 military campaigns and 19 times made peace with the Polovtsi. At first he waged war against the steppe jointly with his cousin Oleg, but after Vladimir was sent by his father to rule Chernigov and Oleg made peace with the Polovtsi to retake that city from him, they parted company. Since that time, Vladimir and Oleg were bitter enemies who would often engage in internecine wars. The enmity continued among their children and more distant posterity.

Vladimir married three times. Some sources cite his first wife as Gytha of Wessex, daughter of King Harold Godwinsson of England. They had at least five children. We descend from their son Haraldur Mstislav I Monomakh.

With his second wife, Eufemia, Vladimir had 6 children. With his third wife, he had a daughter.

From 1094, Vladimir's chief patrimony was the southern town of Pereyaslav, although he also controlled Rostov, Suzdal, and other northern provinces. In these lands he founded several towns, notably his namesake, Vladimir, the future capital of Russia. In order to unite the princes of Rus' in their struggle against the Great Steppe, Vladimir initiated three princely congresses, the most important being held at Lyubech in 1097 and Dolobsk in 1103.

In 1107 he defeated Boniak, a Cuman khan who led an invasion on Kievan Rus'. When Sviatopolk II died in 1113, the Kievan populace revolted and summoned Vladimir to the capital. The same year he entered Kiev to the great delight of the crowd and reigned there until his death in 1125. As may be seen from his Instruction, he promulgated a number of reforms in order to allay the social tensions in the capital. These years saw the last flowering of Ancient Rus, which was torn apart 10 years after his death.

Vladimir Monomakh died on May 19, 1125 in Kiev. He is buried in the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev. Succeeding generations often referred to his reign as the golden age of that city. Numerous legends are connected with Monomakh's name, including the transfer from Constantinople to Rus of such precious relics as the Theotokos of Vladimir and the Vladimir/Muscovite crown called Monomakh's Cap.

### **Prince Haraldur Mstislav I Monomakh (1076 - 1132)(our 25<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Mstislav I Vladimirovich the Great or Mstislav the Great (1076 – 1132) was the Grand



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Prince of Kiev (1125–1132), the eldest son of Vladimir II Monomakh by Gytha of Wessex. He is figured prominently in the Norse Sagas under the name Harald, to allude to his grandfather, Harold II of England. Mstislav's Christian name was Theodore. Mstislav was born on June 1, 1076 in Turov, Belarus, Russia.

As his father's future successor, Mstislav reigned in Novgorod from 1088 to 1093 and (after a brief stint at Rostov) from 1095–1117. Thereafter he was Monomakh's co-ruler in Belgorod Kievsky, and inherited the Kievan throne after his death. He built numerous churches in Novgorod, of which St. Nicholas Cathedral and the cathedral of St Anthony Cloister survive to the present day. Later, he would also erect important churches in Kiev, notably his family sepulcher at Berestovo and the church of Our Lady at Podil. St Nicholas Cathedral, built by Mstislav I near his palace at Yaroslav's Court, Novgorod, contains 12<sup>th</sup> century frescoes depicting his illustrious family.

In 1095, Mstislav married Princess Kristin Ingadotter of Sweden, daughter of King Inge I of Sweden. They had six daughters and four sons. We descend from their daughter Ingibjorg Haraldsdottir. Kristin Ingadotter died on January 18, 1122. Later that year Mstislav married again, to Ljubava Saviditsch and they had two sons.

Mstislav's life was spent in constant warfare with Cumans, Estonians, Lithuanians, and the principedom of Polotsk. In 1096, he defeated his uncle Oleg of Chernigov on the Koloksha River, thereby laying foundation for the centuries of enmity between his and Oleg's descendants. Mstislav was the last ruler of united Rus, and upon his death, as the chronicler put it, "the land of Rus was torn apart." He died in Kiev at age 55 on April 14, 1132.

### **King of Denmark Vlademar I (the great) Knudsen (1131 - 1182)(our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather)**

Valdemar I Knudsen of Denmark (1131 – 1182), also known as Valdemar the Great, was King of Denmark from 1146 until his death in 1182. The reign of King Valdemar I saw the rise of Denmark, which reached its zenith under his second son, and successor, King Valdemar II of Denmark. Valdemar was born on January 14, 1131 in Schleswig, Denmark. He was the son of Canute Lavard Eiriksson, Duke of Schleswig, the chivalrous and popular eldest son of King Eric I of Denmark. Valdemar's father was murdered by King Magnus I of Sweden days before the birth of Valdemar; his mother, Ingibjorg Haraldsdottir of Kiev, daughter of Grand Prince Mstislav I of Kiev and Kristin Ingasdottir of Sweden, named him after her grandfather, Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh of Kiev.

As a possible contender to the throne, and with his rivals quickly gaining power, Valdemar was raised at Ringsted in the court of Danish nobleman Asser Rig of Fjenneslev. Asser was a member of the Hvide noble family and had been raised together with Valdemar's father Canute Lavard. Valdemar was raised together with Asser's sons, including Absalon who would become his trusted friend and minister. The other brother was Esbern Snare.

In 1146, when Valdemar was fifteen years old, King Eric III of Denmark abdicated and a civil war erupted. The pretenders to the throne were: Sveinn III Grathe, son of King Eric II of Denmark, the son of King Eric I; and Canute V, son of Magnus I of Sweden, the son of King

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Niels of Denmark, brother of King Erik I. Valdemar himself held Jutland, at least Schleswig, as his possession. The civil war lasted the better part of ten years.

In 1157, the three agreed to divide the country in three among themselves. Sveinn hosted a great banquet for Canute, Absalon, and Valdemar, during which he planned to dispose of all of them. Canute was killed, but Absalon and Valdemar escaped. Valdemar returned to Jutland. Sveinn quickly launched an invasion, only to be defeated by Valdemar in the Battle of Grathe Heath on October 23, 1157. He was killed during flight, supposedly by a group of peasants who stumbled upon him as he was fleeing from the battlefield. Valdemar, having outlived all his rival pretenders, became the sole king of Denmark.

In 1158, Absalon was elected bishop of Roskilde, and King Valdemar I made him his chief advisor. The king reorganized and rebuilt war-torn Denmark. He built Sønderborg Castle as a fortified fortress, constructed on an islet in the Als Strait (Als Sund) that later was connected to Als Island.

At Absalon's instigation, he declared war upon the Wends who were raiding the Danish coasts. They inhabited Pomerania and the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea. In 1168, the Wendish capital, Arkona, was taken, and the Wends became Christians and subject to Danish suzerainty. Danish influence had reached into Pomerania. In 1175, King Valdemar I built Vordingborg Castle as a defensive fortress and as a base from which to launch raids against the German coast.

Valdemar married Sophia Van Halicz of Minsk, the daughter of Richeza of Poland, dowager queen of Sweden, from her marriage to Prince Volodar of Minsk. She was the half-sister of King Canute V of Denmark. Valdemar and Sophia had seven daughters and two sons. We descend from their son Vladimar.

Valdemar died on May 12, 1182 at Vordingborg Castle, Denmark. He is buried at St. Bendi's Church in Ringsted, Denmark.

Valdemar is an example of an ancestors that is found in both the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree and the Ancient Scottish Pedigree. His father King Knutur Lavard Eriksson is found in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree and his mother Ingibjorg Haraldsdottir is found in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree.

### **King Vladimar II (victorious) Vladimarsson (1170 - 1241) (our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Valdimar II (1170 – 1241), called Valdemar the Victorious or Valdemar the Conqueror, was the King of Denmark from 1202 until his death in 1241. Vladimar was born on May 9, 1170 at Ribe in Jutland, Denmark. He was the second son of King Valdemar I of Denmark and Sophia of Minsk, the daughter of Richeza of Poland, Queen Dowager of Sweden and Volodar Giebovich, Prince of Minsk.

When his father died, young Valdimar was only twelve years old. He was named Duke of Southern Jutland, Duchy of Schleswig, represented by the regent Bishop Valdemar Knudsen, the illegitimate son of King Canute V of Denmark.

Bishop Valdemar was an ambitious man and disguised his own ambitions as young Valdemar's. When Bishop Valdemar was named Prince-Archbishop of Bremen in 1192, his plot

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to overthrow King Canute VI of Denmark (elder brother of Duke Valdemar) with the help of the German nobility and place himself on Denmark's throne, was revealed.

Duke Valdimar realized the threat Bishop Valdemar represented. He thus invited the Archbishop to meet him in Aabenraa in 1192. But the Bishop continued to claim the Danish throne for himself based on the fact that he was the son of King Canute V. In 1193, King Canute VI captured and imprisoned him.

Young Duke Valdimar faced another threat from Adolph III, Count of Schauenburg and Holstein. The Count tried to stir up other German Counts to take southern Jutland from Denmark, and to assist Bishop Valdemar's plot to take the Danish throne. With the Bishop in prison, Duke Valdimar went after Count Adolph, and with his own troop levies, he marched south and captured Adolph's new fortress at Rendsburg. He defeated and captured the Count at the Battle of Stellau in 1201, and imprisoned him in a cell next to Bishop Valdemar. Two years later, due to an illness, Count Adolph was able to buy his way out of prison by ceding all of Schleswig, north of the Elbe, to Duke Valdimar. In November 1202, Duke Valdimar's elder brother, King Canute VI, died unexpectedly at the age of 40, leaving no heirs.

Duke Valdemar was subsequently proclaimed king Valdimar II at the Jutland Assembly. The nearby Holy Roman Empire was torn by civil war due to having two rivals contesting for its throne, Otto IV, House of Guelf, and King Philip, House of Hohenstaufen. Valdimar II allied himself with Otto IV against Phillip.

In 1203 Valdimar invaded and conquered Lybeck and Holstein, adding them to the territories controlled by Denmark. In 1204 he attempted to influence the outcome of the Norwegian succession by leading a Danish fleet and army to Viken in Norway in support of Erling Steinvegg, the pretender to the Norwegian throne. This resulted in the second Bagler War which lasted until 1208. The question of the Norwegian succession was temporarily settled and the Norwegian king owed allegiance to the king of Denmark.

In 1207, a majority of Bremian capitulars again elected Bishop Valdemar as Prince-Archbishop, while a minority, led by the capitular provost Burkhard, Count of Stumpenhausen fled for Hamburg, being the seat of a Bremian subchapter with regional competence and delegating for episcopal elections two participants to the main Bremian chapter. The German King Philip, recognized Valdemar as the legitimate Prince-Archbishop of Bremen, because thus the Prince-Archbishopric would become his ally against Valdimar II.

Valdimar II and the fled capitulars protested to Pope Innocent III, who first wanted to research the case. When Bishop Valdemar left Rome for Bremen against Pope Innocent's order to wait his decision, he banished Valdemar by an anathema and in 1208 finally dismissed him as Bishop of Schleswig. In 1208, Burkhard, Count of Stumpenhausen, was elected by the fled capitulars in Hamburg as rival prince-archbishop and Valdimar II, usurping imperial power, invested Burkhard with the regalia - with effect only in the prince-archiepiscopal and diocesan territory north of the Elbe. In 1209 Innocent III finally consented the consecration of Bishop Nicholas I of Schleswig, a close confidant and consultant of King Valdimar, as successor of the deposed Bishop Valdemar. In 1214 King Valdimar appointed Bishop Nicholas I as Chancellor of Denmark, succeeding the late Peder Sunesen, Bishop of Roskilde.

In the same year Valdimar II invaded with Danish troops the prince-archiepiscopal

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territory south of the Elbe and conquered Stade. In August Prince-Archbishop Valdemar reconquered the city only to lose it soon after again to Valdimar II, who now built a bridge on the Elbe and fortified a forward post in Harburg upon Elbe. In 1209 Otto IV persuaded Valdimar II to withdraw into the north of the Elbe, urged Burkhard to resign and expelled Prince-Archbishop Valdemar.

In 1216, Valdimar II and his Danish troops ravaged the County of Stade and conquered Hamburg. Prince-Archbishop Valdemar finally resigned and entered into a monastery. Valdimar supported Emperor Frederick II and was rewarded with the emperor acknowledging Denmark rule of Schleswig and Holstein, all of the Wendish lands and Pomerania.

From that time on, King Valdimar II focused his efforts on domestic affairs. One of the changes he instituted was the feudal system, where he gave properties to men with the understanding that they owed him service in return. This increased the power of the noble families and gave rise to the lesser nobles, who controlled most of Denmark. Free peasants lost the traditional rights and privileges they had enjoyed since the Viking era.

King Valdimar II spent the remainder of his life putting together a code of laws for Jutland, Zealand, and Skåne. These codes were used as Denmark's legal code until 1683. This was a significant change from the local law-making at the regional assemblies.

Before his first marriage, Valdimar had been betrothed to Rixa of Bavaria, daughter of the Duke of Saxony. When that arrangement failed, he married first Dagmar of Bohemia, also known as Margaret of Bohemia. They were known to have one child.

After Margaret's death, in order to build good relations with Flanders, Valdimar married Berengária of Portugal in 1214. She was the orphan daughter of King Sancho I of Portugal and Dulce of Aragon, and a sister of Ferdinand, Count of Flanders, with whom she stayed until her marriage. Queen Berengária was beautiful, but so hard-hearted that she was generally hated by the Danes until her early death, in childbirth on March 27, 1221. They had three sons and a daughter. We descend from their son Eirikur Plow Money Vladimarsson. Valdimar had two other sons by mistresses.

Vladimar died on March 28, 1241 at Vordingborg Castle, Denmark and is buried at St. Bendi's Church, Ringsted.

### **King Eirikur (plow money) Vladimarsson (1216 - 1250)(our 21<sup>st</sup> great grandfather)**

Eirikur IV Vladimarsson, also known as Eric Ploughpenny or Eric Plowpenny, (1216 – 1250) was king of Denmark from 1241 until his death in 1250. He was the son of Valdimar II of Denmark by his wife, Berengaria of Portugal, and brother of King Abel of Denmark and King Christopher I of Denmark. Eirikur was born about 1216 as the second legitimate son of King Valdimar II by his second wife Berengária of Portugal.

In 1218, when his older half-brother Valdemar the Young was crowned king as their father's co-ruler and designated heir, Eirikur was created Duke of Schleswig. After the premature death of Valdemar in 1231, Eirikur in his turn was crowned king at Lund Cathedral May 30, 1232 as his father's co-ruler and heir. Subsequently, he ceded the Duchy of Schleswig to his younger brother Abel. When his father died in 1241, he automatically ascended to the throne.

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Eirikur was married on November 17, 1239 to Judith (Jutta) Albertsdottir of Saxony, daughter of Albert I, Duke of Saxony. They had three sons and four daughters. We descend from their daughter Ingibjorg.

Eirikur's rule was marked by bitter conflicts and civil wars against his brothers. Especially he fought his brother, Duke Abel of Schleswig who seems to have wanted an independent position and who was supported by the counts of Holstein. Eric also fought the Scanian peasants, who rebelled because of his hard taxes, among other things, on ploughs. The number of ploughs a man owned was used as a measure of his wealth (more ploughs, more farmland). This gave the king the epithet "plough-penny"

Eirikur had only been king for about a year when he first came into conflict with his brother, Duke Abel of Schleswig, in 1242. The conflict lasted for two years before the brothers agreed on a truce in 1244 and made plans for a joint crusade to Estonia. At the same time Eirikur faced trouble from the religious orders who insisted that they were immune from taxes that Eirikur might assess. Eirikur wanted the church lands taxed as any other land holder would be. The pope sent a nuncio to negotiate between the king and the bishops at Odense in 1245. Excommunication was threatened for anyone, great or small who trespassed upon the ancient rights and privileges of the church. It was a clear warning to Eirikur that the church would not tolerate his continued insistence at assessing church property for tax purposes.

Infuriated, in 1249 King Eirikur directed his rage at Niels Stigsen, Bishop of the Diocese of Roskilde who fled Denmark the same year. Eirikur confiscated the bishopric's properties in Zealand, including the emerging city of Copenhagen, as compensation for his troubles with Abel. In spite of intervention from Pope Innocent IV who advocated the reinstatement of the bishop and the return of the properties to the diocese, the dispute could not be resolved. Niels Stigsen died in 1249 in the Clairvaux Abbey and the properties were not restored to the diocese until after the death of King Eirikur in 1250.

In the meantime, the conflict between King Eirikur and his brothers had broken out again in 1246. The conflict started when Eirikur invaded Holstein in an attempt to restore his father's control of the county. Duke Abel of Schleswig, himself married to a daughter of Adolf IV, Count of Holstein and former guardian of his brothers-in-law, the two young counts of Holstein, John I and Gerhard I, forced King Eirikur to abandon his conquest. The following year, Abel and the Holsteiners stormed into Jutland and Funen, burning and pillaging as far north as Randers and Odense. Abel was supported by the Hanseatic League city of Lübeck, as well as by his brothers Christopher, Lord of Lolland and Falster and Canute, Duke of Blekinge.

King Eirikur retaliated immediately, reconquering the city of Ribe and occupying Abel's patrimonial city of Svendborg the same year. In 1247, he captured the castle of Arreskov on Funen, as well as taking Christopher and Canute prisoners. A truce was arranged by Eirikur's sister Sophie of Denmark who was the wife of John I, Margrave of Brandenburg. The terms of the accord left Eirikur in firm control of all of Denmark.

In 1249 the peasants in Scania rose in rebellion against the plow tax. The king restored order with help from Zealand, but the church, Duke Abel, and the German counts in southern Jutland were pushed into an erstwhile alliance against the king.

Eirikur raised an army and sailed to Estonia to secure his base there in 1249. On his way

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home in 1250 he took his army to Holstein to prevent the capture of the border fortress of Rendsburg and to teach the German counts who was still king. His brother, Duke Abel of Southern Jutland offered him hospitality at his house at Gottorp in Schleswig. While they sat in the great hall, Duke Abel reminded Eirikur of the attacks that he had endured early in Eirikur's reign. That evening as the king gambled with one of the German knights, the duke's chamberlain and a group of other men rushed in and took the king prisoner. They bound him and dragged him out of the duke's house and down to a boat and rowed out into the Schlien. They were followed out onto the water by a second boat. When King Eirikur heard the voice of his sworn enemy, Lave Gudmundsen, he realized he was to be killed. The king asked for a priest to hear his last confession, and the conspirators agreed to Eirikur's request. The king was rowed back to shore; a priest was brought to hear Eirikur's confession, and then he was rowed back out into the bay. One of the captors was paid to deliver the king's death blow with an ax. Eirikur was beheaded and his body dumped into the Schlien. The next morning two fishermen dragged the king's headless body up in their net. They carried the body to the Dominican Abbey in Schleswig; his body was later transferred to St. Bendt's Church, Ringsted in 1257.

### **King of Portugal Sancho I (1154 - 1211)(our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather)**

Sancho I, King of Portugal (1154 – 1211) was the second but only surviving legitimate son and fifth child of Afonso I of Portugal by his wife, Maud of Savoy. Sancho succeeded his father and was crowned in Coimbra when he was 31 years old on December 9, 1185. He used the title King of Silves from 1189 until he lost the territory to Almohad control in 1191. Sancho was baptized with the name Martin (Martinho) since he was born on the feast day of Saint Martin of Tours, on November 11, 1154 in Coimbra, Portugal.

On August 15, 1170, Sancho was knighted by his father, King Afonso I, and from then on he became his second in command, both administratively and militarily. At this time, the independence of Portugal was not firmly established. The kings of León and Castile were trying to re-annex the country and the Roman Catholic Church was late in giving its blessing and approval. Due to this situation Afonso I had to search for allies within the Iberian Peninsula. Portugal made an alliance with the Crown of Aragon and together they fought Castile and León. To secure the agreement, Sancho married Dulce, younger sister of King Alfonso II of Aragon, in 1174. Aragon was thus the first Iberian kingdom to recognize the independence of Portugal.

Dulce of Aragon was the daughter of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona and Petronilla, Queen of Aragon. Sancho and Dulce had eleven children. We descend from their daughter Berengaria.

With the death of Afonso I in 1185, Sancho I became the second king of Portugal. Coimbra was the center of his kingdom; Sancho terminated the exhausting and generally pointless wars against his neighbors for control of the Galician borderlands. Instead, he turned all his attentions to the south, towards the Moorish small kingdoms that still thrived. With Crusader help he took Silves in 1188. Silves was an important city of the South, an administrative and commercial town with population estimates around 20,000 people. Sancho ordered the fortification of the city and built a castle which is today an important monument of Portuguese

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heritage. At the time he also styled himself "By the Grace of God, King of Portugal and Silves." However, military attention soon had to be turned again to the North, where León and Castile threatened again the Portuguese borders. Silves was again lost to the Moors in 1191.

Sancho I dedicated much of his reign to political and administrative organization of the new kingdom. He accumulated a national treasure, supported new industries and the middle class of merchants. Moreover, he created several new towns and villages and took great care in populating remote areas in the northern Christian regions of Portugal – hence the nickname "the Populator". The king was also known for his love of knowledge and literature. Sancho I wrote several books of poems and used the royal treasure to send Portuguese students to European universities. Sancho died on March 26, 1211 in Coimbra. He is buried at the Santa Cruz Monastery in Coimbra.

### **Bardur Guttormsson (1150 - 1194)(our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather)**

Bårdur Guttormsson of Rein (1150 – 1194), was born about 1150 in Norway. He was the son of the Guttorm Ásulvsson of Rein in Trøndelag and Sigríð Torkelsdóttir. He descended from such prominent ancestors as King Sigurdur Sow Halfdanarson and Jarl Godwin I Ulfhason.

Bårdur was married three times. Bårdur was a widower after his first marriage to Ulvhild Palsdóttir. Bårdur met King Sigurdur Munnur Halradsson's daughter Cecilia Sigurdsdóttir, who had escaped from her husband Folkvid lagman in Värmland. Her brother Sverrir (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather) was desperate to get Trøndelag to his side, and that he bet everything on this connection shows that he let his sister Cecilia declare the marriage to Folkvid lagman invalid and married her to Bårdur. However, the marriage between Bårdur and Cecilia encountered difficulties on the part of the clergy and seems to have taken place only after the Battle of Fimreite in 1184. Bardur and Cecilia had a son Ingi Bardarson who we descend from.

Cecilia died shortly after the birth of Ingi in about 1185. Bardur had a son named Skuli Bardarson with his third wife Ragnfríð Erlingsdóttir. We descend from Skuli.

From 1181 King Sverrir received support from Bårdur Guttormsson as one of the kingdom's most prominent and highly esteemed men. It also meant a lot to the Trunders when Ingi Bårdarsson, would be someday accepted as king. The support of a man like Bårdur of Rein must have been crucial for Trøndelag's acceptance of King Sverrir. In King Sverre's battle at Florvåg on Askøy in 1194, Bårdur was wounded and died shortly after on April 3, 1194 in Bergen. The body was buried in Christ Church at Holmen in Bergen.

### **Duke of Saxony Albert I (1175 - 1260)(our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Albert I (1175 – 1260) was a Duke of Saxony, Angria, and Westphalia; Lord of Nordalbingia; Count of Anhalt; and Prince-elector and Archmarshal of the Holy Roman Empire. Even though his grandfather Albert the Bear had held the Saxon dukedom between 1138 and 1142, this Albert is counted as the first. He was a member of the House of Ascania. Albert was born about 1175 in Saxony, Germany. He was a younger son of Bernard III, Duke of Saxony, and Judith (Jutta) of Poland, daughter of Mieszko III the Old.

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After Albert's father died in 1212, the surviving sons of the late duke divided his lands according to the laws of the House of Ascania: The elder Henry received Anhalt and the younger Albert the Saxon duchy. Albert supported Otto IV, Holy Roman Emperor, in his wars against the Hohenstaufen.

In 1222, Albert married Agnes of Austria, daughter of Duke Leopold VI of Austria. They had one son and four daughters. We descend from their daughter Judith. In 1238, Albert married Agnes of Thuringia and they had three daughters. In 1247, Albert married Helene of Brunswick-Lüneburg and they had three sons and two daughters.

On 22 July 1227, Albert I asserted as fellow victor in the Battle of Bornhöved, commanding the Holy Roman left flank.

Albert came into conflict with Ludolph I, Prince-Bishop of Ratzeburg, and duly imprisoned Ludolph, where he was badly beaten, and later sent into exile.

After Albert's death on October 7, 1260 at Lehnin Abbey, his sons, the elder John I and the younger Albert II, ruled together as Dukes of Saxony, with John succeeded by his three sons Albert III, Eric I and John II, until before September 20, 1296 they split Saxony into Saxe-Lauenburg and Saxe-Wittenberg, with the brothers jointly ruling the former, and Albert II ruling the latter.

### **King Ingi II Bardarson (1185 - 1217) (our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Ingi II Bárðarson (1185 – 1217) was King of Norway from 1204 to 1217. His reign was within the later stages of the period known in Norwegian history as the age of civil wars. Ingi was the king of the birkebeiner faction. The conclusion of the settlement of Kvitsøy with the bagler faction in 1208 led to peace for the last nine years of Ingi's reign, at the price of Ingi and the birkebeiner recognizing bagler rule over Viken (the Oslofjord area). Ingi was born in about 1185 in Norway. Ingi's parents were Bårdur Guttormsson and Cecilia Sigurdardottir.

Ingi's father, Bårdur, was a prominent lendmann from the Trøndelag region and a descendant of Tosti Godwinson. He was an early supporter of king Sverrir (our 23<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather), who brought the Birkebeiner faction to power in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century after years of war against king Magnus Erlingsson. Ingi's mother, Cecilia, was the daughter of an earlier king, Sigurd Munn. She had been married to the lawspeaker Folkvid in Värmland Sweden. After her brother, Sverrir, had won the throne of Norway, she left her husband and traveled to Sverrir in Norway, claiming she had been wedded to Folkvid against her will. The archbishop annulled her marriage to Folkvid, and Sverrir gave her to his trusted follower Bårdur Guttormsson in marriage. Ingi was Bårdur and Cecilia's only son.

After king Sverrir died in 1202, his son, Haakon, and his grandson, Guttorm, died within two years. The birkebeiner were thus left without any direct successors to Sverrir. Sverrir's old adversaries, the bagler, were exploiting the situation to launch a new invasion of Viken under their king, Erling Steinvegg. After the infant king Guttorm's death in August 1204, the birkebeiner needed a strong leader to oppose the bagler threat. The birkebeiner leaders wanted earl Haakon the Crazy, who had earlier been appointed to rule the kingdom in king Guttorm's infancy. Haakon was Ingi's older half-brother, the son of Cecilia and Folkvid. However, Eirik,



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archbishop of Nidaros, and the farmers of Trøndelag insisted on choosing Ingi, who had until then ruled Trøndelag under Guttorm. A compromise was reached, whereby Ingi became king, while earl Haakon became leader of the army, and received half the royal income.

The next four years saw intense fighting between the birkebeiner and the bagler. The bagler king Erling died in 1206, but the bagler continued the fight under their new king, Philip Simonsson. The bagler controlled the Viken area, with the cities of Tønsberg and Oslo King Ingi controlled Trøndelag with Nidaros, while Bergen in western Norway changed hands several times. On April 22, 1206 the bagler attacked Nidaros during wedding celebrations for Ingi's sister Sigrid and Ingi himself only barely escaped with his life after swimming the Nidelva River in freezing temperatures. The next year, the 'birkebeiner' launched a successful attack on the 'bagler' stronghold of Tønsberg, but the war dragged on with neither side able to gain a decisive victory. In autumn of 1207, archbishop Tore of Nidaros and bishop Nikolas of Oslo, a prominent 'bagler,' started negotiations for a settlement of the dispute. They succeeded in bringing about a meeting between kings Ingi, Philip, and earl Haakon, at Kvitøy in Rogaland in the autumn of 1208. A settlement was made, whereby Philip agreed to give up the title of king and his royal seal. He was to remain in control of eastern Norway with Viken, except Bohuslän, with the title of earl under king Ingi. Earl Haakon was given western Norway with Bergen, while Ingi would be the only king, overlord of Philip and Haakon and direct ruler of Trøndelag with Nidaros. To seal the treaty, Philip married king Sverrir's daughter and king Ingi's cousin, Kristina Sverrirsdottir.

The peace treaty held for the rest of Ingi's reign. However, Philip did not respect its provisions and continued to use the title of king, maintaining his royal seal. The relationship between Ingi and his brother Haakon remained tense. When it became clear that Philip was continuing to call himself king, Haakon made attempts to have himself declared king as well, but Ingi refused to accept this. Instead, an agreement was drawn up by which the brother that survived the other would inherit the other's lands, while a legitimate son of either would inherit them both. Haakon had a legitimate son, while Ingi only had an illegitimate son, Guttorm by a concubine called Gyrid. In 1214, Ingi suppressed a rising by the farmers of Trøndelag; Earl Haakon was suspected of having had a hand in the rising. Open conflict between the two brothers never broke out, however, and Haakon died of natural causes in Bergen just after Christmas of 1214. Ingi took over his part of the kingdom.

In 1217, Ingi fell ill in Nidaros. During his illness, he appointed his younger half-brother, Skuli Bårdsson, earl and leader of the army. On April 23, 1217, Ingi died. He was buried in Nidaros Cathedral. He was succeeded as king by the 13-year-old Haakon Haakonsson, an illegitimate grandson of King Sverrir, who had been raised at the courts of King Ingi and Earl Haakon since they became aware of his existence in 1206. Skuli continued as earl and de facto ruler for the next few years.

### **Duke Skuli Barðarson (1189 - 1240)(our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Skuli Bårdarsson or Duke Skuli (1189 – 1240) was a Norwegian nobleman and claimant to the royal throne against his son-in-law, King Haakon Haakonsson. Skuli Bårdarsson was born

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around 1189 in Norway. His parents were Bårdur Guttormsson and Ragnihildur Erlingsdottir. As a son of Bårdur Guttormsson, he belonged to the Norwegian nobility and was a half-brother of King Ingi Bårdsson who in his last years elevated Skuli to be an earl (jarl).

After King Ingi's death in 1217, Haakon was chosen king at the age of 13, against the candidacy of Skuli Bårdarsson. However, Skuli held much of the real power under a form of power sharing between Skuli and Haakon. Skuli's center of power was mostly in Nidaros. In order to facilitate a compromise between these two rivals, Skuli's elder daughter by a mistress named Ragnhildur, Margaret Skuladottir, was married to King Haakon in 1225. We descend from this Margaret.

Skuli thought he had too little of the power and intermittently participated in opposition against King Haakon. In 1237, as another attempt of compromise, Skuli was given the first Norwegian title of duke (hertug). Later, Skuli restarted his rebellion against King Haakon. Among others, the Icelander writer Snorri Sturlason (our 19th great grandfather) allied with Skuli in the conflict, and the rebellion led to his death.

Skuli allowed his supporters to proclaim him king of Norway at the traditional Thing (Øyrating) in Trøndelag during 1239. Skuli also tried, unsuccessfully, to win his other son-in-law, jarl Knut Haakonsson, to his side. He raised a military host against King Haakon and won a battle at Låka in Nannestad, but lost in Oslo. His party was called the Vårbelgs, a reference to spring pelts of bad quality fur for poor people. In May 1240, Skuli was defeated by King Haakon and his supporters. He sought refuge in Elgeseter Priory in Nidaros but Haakon's men burned down the monastery and killed Skuli on May 24, 1240. With Skuli's death, the civil war era came to an end.

### **King Haakon III (Hinn-Harmdauði) Sigurdsson (1178 - 1204)(our 22<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather)**

Haakon III Sverrirsson (1178 – 1204) was King of Norway from 1202 to 1204. Haakon was born about 1178 in Bergen, Norway. He was the second illegitimate son of the future King Sverrir, then a Faroese adventurer. His mother was Astridur Hroarsdottr, daughter of Bishop Hroar in the Faroe Islands.

The civil war period of Norwegian history lasted from 1130 to 1240. During this period there were several interlocked conflicts of varying scale and intensity. The background for these conflicts were the unclear Norwegian succession laws, social conditions and the struggle between different aristocratic parties and between Church and King. There were then two main parties, firstly known by varying names or no names at all, but finally condensed into the parties of Bagler and Birkebeiner. The rallying point regularly was a royal son, who was set up as the leader of the party in question, to oppose the rule of king from the contesting party. Sverrir and Håakon were leaders of the Birkebeiner party.

Håakon is first mentioned as one of the leaders of his father's armies in a battle against the Bagler in Oslo in 1197. Subsequently, he is mentioned several times as taking part in his father's wars against the Bagler. On his deathbed his father, who died on March 9, 1202, declared that he had no other son alive than Håakon. He also wrote a letter to Håakon advising him to settle the longstanding dispute with the church. When the news of Sverrir's death reached Håakon

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and the Birkebeiner assembled in Nidaros, Håakon was first taken as chieftain by the Birkebeiner. The same spring he was taken as king at the thing in Nidaros.

That same spring the Norwegian bishops, who had been in exile in Sweden and Denmark and had supported the Bagler, returned to Norway and made a settlement with Håakon. It seems likely that he gave in to most of their demands. Norway was released from the interdict it had been placed under during the reign of Sverrir. Håakon is said to have been on friendly terms with the farmers and the common people, and the Bagler party soon lost much of its support. In the autumn of 1202, the Bagler king Inge Magnusson was killed by the local farmers of Oppland and the Bagler party in Norway was dissolved. A new Bagler pretender, Erling Steinvegg, soon appeared in Denmark, but declined to renew the fighting, as he saw little chance of succeeding against Håakon. Håakon was thus the undisputed ruler of the country.

Håakon appears to have had a troubled relationship with his father's queen, Margareta Eriksdottir. After Sverrir's death, Margareta attempted to return to her native Sweden with her daughter by Sverrir, Kristina. Håakon's men forcibly separated her from her daughter, as he wanted to keep her at his court. Subsequently, Margareta seemingly settled with Håakon and went to his court. During Christmas in 1203, Håakon fell ill after a bloodletting, and on January 1, 1204 he died. His death was suspected as poisoning and his stepmother Margareta was suspected of the crime. In the end she had one of her men undergo a trial by ordeal on her behalf to prove her innocence, but the man was badly burned. This was taken as proof of her guilt, and she had to flee back to Sweden.

Håakon Sverrirsson was not married, and at his death no heirs were known. He was therefore succeeded by his 4-year-old nephew Guttorm Sigurdsson. But after his death a woman, Inga Olafsdottir of Varteig, whom Håakon had taken as a concubine for a time in 1203, appeared at the Birkebeiner court with an infant son who she claimed was Håakon's son. The child had been born in present-day Østfold after the death of the putative father. The boy, named Håkon after his father, later became King Håkon IV. In the summer of 1218, Inga underwent a successful trial by ordeal (bore iron) in Bergen to show the paternity of her son. We descend from this son named Hakon.

During Håakon's brief reign, he managed to release Norway from the church's interdict, and end the civil wars, at least for a time. Whether the peace would have lasted if he had been allowed to live is impossible to say. As it turned out, his early death sparked a renewal of the fighting, as the bagler pretender Erling Steinvegg in a matter of months gathered an army and went to Norway to claim the throne.

Håakon was buried in the old cathedral in Bergen. The cathedral was demolished in 1531, and the site is today marked by a memorial.

### **King Hakon IV (the old) Hakonarson (1204 - 1263)(our 21<sup>st</sup> great grandfather)**

Håkon IV Hákonarson the Old (1204 – 1263) ; sometimes called Hakon the Old in contrast to his namesake son, was King of Norway from 1217 to 1263. His reign lasted for 46 years, longer than any Norwegian king since Harald Fairhair. Hakon was born in Folkenborg (now in Eidsberg) to Inga Olafsdottir of Varteig in the spring of 1204, probably in March or

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April. The father was widely regarded to have been King Haakon Sverrirsson, the leader of the birkebeiner faction in the ongoing civil war against the bagler, as Inga had been with Hakon in his hostel in Borg (now Sarpsborg) in late 1203.

Haakon Sverrirsson was dead by the time his son Hakon was born, but Inga's claim was supported by several of Haakon Sverrirsson's followers. Hakon was born in bagler-controlled territory, and his mother's claim placed them in a dangerous position. While the bagler started hunting Hakon, a group of birkebeiner warriors fled with the child in the winter of 1205/06, heading for King Ingi Bårdarson, the new birkebeiner king in Nidaros. As the party was struck by a blizzard, two of the best birkebeiner skiers, Torstein Skevla and Skjervald Skrukka, carried on with the child over the mountain from Lillehammer to Østerdalen. They eventually managed to bring Hakon to safety with King Ingi.

Hakon was notably the first Norwegian king to receive formal education at a school. From the late civil war era, the government administration relied increasingly on written communication, which in turn demanded literate leaders. When Hakon was in Bergen under the care of Hakon the Crazy, he started receiving education from the age of seven, likely at the Bergen Cathedral School. He continued his education under King Ingi at the Trondheim Cathedral School after the Earl's death in 1214. Hakon was brought up alongside Ingi's son Guttorm, and they were treated as the same. When he was eleven, some of Hakon's friends provoked the king by asking him to give Hakon a region to govern. When Hakon was approached by the men and was urged to take up arms against Ingi, he rejected it in part because of his young age and its bad prospects, as well as because he believed it would be morally wrong to fight Ingi and thus split the birkebeiner. He instead said that he prayed that God would give him his share of his father's inheritance when the time was right.

After King Ingi's death in 1217, a dispute erupted over who was to become his successor. In addition to Hakon who gained the support of the majority of the birkebeiners including the veterans who had served under his father and grandfather, candidates included Ingi's illegitimate son Guttorm (who dropped out very soon), Ingi's half-brother Earl Skuli Bårdarsson who had been appointed leader of the king's hird at Ingi's deathbed and was supported by the Archbishop of Nidaros as well as part of the birkebeiners, and Hakon the Crazy's son Knut Haakonsson. With his widespread popular support in Trøndelag and in Western Norway, Hakon was proclaimed king at Øyrating in June 1217. He was later the same year hailed as king at Gulating in Bergen, and at Haugating, Borgarting and local things east of Elven. While Skuli's supporters initially had attempted to cast doubt about Hakon's royal ancestry, they eventually suspended open resistance to his candidacy. As the dispute could have threatened to split the birkebeiners in two, Skuli settled on becoming regent for Hakon during his minority.

Hakon's councillors had sought to reconcile Hakon and Skuli by proposing marriage between Haakon and Skuli's daughter Margaret in 1219. Hakon accepted the proposal, but the marriage between Hakon and Margaret did not take place before 1225. Hakon and Margaret had three sons and a daughter. We descend from their son Magnus. Hakon also had one son and two daughters by a mistress named Kanga.

The relationship between Hakon and Skuli nevertheless deteriorated further during the 1230s, and attempts of settlements at meetings in 1233 and 1236 only distanced them more from

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each other. Periodically, the two nonetheless reconciled and spent a great amount of time together, only to have their friendship destroyed. In 1239 the conflict between the two erupted into open warfare when Skuli had himself proclaimed king. Although he had some support in Trøndelag, Opplandene and in eastern Viken, he could not stand up to Hakon's forces. The rebellion ended when Skuli was killed in 1240, leaving Hakon the undisputed king of Norway. This revolt is generally taken to mark the final end of Norway's civil war era.

While the church in Norway initially had refused to recognize Hakon as King of Norway due to his illegitimate birth, he nonetheless had a strong personal desire to be approved fully as a European king. Several papal commissions were appointed to investigate the matter, and Hakon declared his legitimate son Hakon the Young his successor instead of an older living illegitimate son. Although Hakon had children with his mistress Kanga prior to his marriage with Margaret, it was his children with Margaret who were designated as his successors in accordance with a papal recognition. The Catholic principle of legitimacy was thus established in the Norwegian order of succession.

Hakon employed an active and aggressive foreign policy towards strengthening Norwegian ties in the west. His policy relied on friendship and trade with the English king; the first known Norwegian trade agreements were made with England in the years 1217–23, and the friendship with Henry III of England was a cornerstone in Hakon's foreign policy. As they had become kings around the same time, Hakon wrote to Henry in 1224 that he wished they could maintain the friendship that had existed between their fathers. Hakon sought to defend the Norwegian sovereignty over the islands in the west, namely the Hebrides and Mann, Shetland and Orkney, and the Faroe Islands. Further, the Norse community in Greenland agreed to submit to the Norwegian king in 1261, and in 1262 Hakon achieved one of his long-standing ambitions when he managed to incorporate Iceland into his kingdom by utilizing the island's internal conflicts in his favor. The dependency on Norwegian maritime trade and their subordination to the Nidaros ecclesiastical province were some of the key reasons which allowed Hakon to assert sovereignty over the islands. The Norwegian kingdom was at the largest it has ever been by the end of Hakon's reign.

As part of a new development the Scottish king Alexander II claimed the Hebrides and requested to buy the islands from Norway, but Hakon staunchly rejected the proposals. Following Alexander II's death, his son Alexander III continued and stepped up his father's policy by sending an embassy to Norway in 1261, and thereafter attacking the Hebrides.

In 1263 the dispute with the Scottish king over the Hebrides induced Hakon to undertake an expedition to the islands. Having learned in 1262 that Scottish nobles had raided the Hebrides and that Alexander III planned to conquer the islands, Hakon went on an expedition with his formidable *leidang* fleet of at least 120 ships in 1263, having become accustomed to negotiating backed by an intimidating fleet. The fleet left Bergen in July, and reached Shetland and Orkney in August where they were joined by chieftains from the Hebrides and Mann. Negotiations were started by Alexander following Norwegian landings on the Scottish mainland, but were purposely prolonged by the Scots. Having waited until September/October for weather that caused trouble for Hakon's fleet, a clash occurred between a smaller Norwegian force and a Scottish division at the Battle of Largs. Although inconclusive and of a limited impact, Hakon

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withdrew to Orkney for the winter. A delegation of Irish kings invited Hakon to help them rid Ireland of English settlers as High King of Ireland, but this was apparently rejected against Hakon's wish.

Hakon over-wintered at the Bishop's Palace in Kirkwall, Orkney, with plans to resume his campaign the next year. During his stay in Kirkwall he however fell ill, and died in the early hours of December 16, 1263. Hakon was buried in the St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall for the winter, and when spring came he was exhumed and his body taken back to Norway, where he was buried in the Old Cathedral in his capital Bergen.

Under Hakon's rule, medieval Norway is considered to have reached its zenith or golden age. His reputation and formidable naval fleet allowed him to maintain friendships with both the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, despite their conflict. He was at different points offered the imperial crown by the pope, the Irish high kingship by a delegation of Irish kings, and the command of the French crusader fleet by the French king. He amplified the influence of European culture in Norway by importing and translating contemporary European literature into Old Norse, and by constructing monumental European-style stone buildings.

### **King Magnus VI (the lawmender) Hakonarson (1238 - 1280)(our 20<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

Magnús VI Hákonarson (1238 – 1280) was King of Norway from 1263 to 1280. One of his greatest achievements was the modernization and nationalization of the Norwegian law-code, after which he is known as Magnus the Law-mender. He was the first Norwegian monarch known to have used an ordinal number, although originally counting himself as "IV". Magnus was born on May 1, 1238 at Tonsberg, Norway. He was the youngest son of King Håkon Hákonsson and his wife Margaret Skuladottir. He was baptized in May 1238.

Magnus spent most of his upbringing in Bergen. In 1257 his older brother Håkon died, leaving Magnus the heir-apparent to the kingdom. His father gave him the title of king the same year. On September 11, 1261, he married the Danish princess Ingibjorg Eiriksdottir, the daughter of the late Danish King Erik Plow Penny, after she was practically abducted by King Håkon's men from the monastery she was living in. The struggle to claim Ingibjorg's inheritance from her murdered father later involved Norway in intermittent conflicts with Denmark for decades to come. Magnus and Ingibjorg were crowned directly after their marriage on September 11, 1261, and Magnus was given Ryfylke for his personal upkeep. On December 16, 1263 King Håkon died while fighting the Scottish king over the Hebrides, and Magnus became the ruler of Norway.

Magnus' rule brought about a change from the somewhat aggressive foreign policy of his father. In 1266 he gave up the Hebrides and the Isle of Man to Scotland, in return for a large sum of silver and a yearly payment, under the Treaty of Perth, by which the Scots at the same time recognized Norwegian rule over Shetland and the Orkney Islands. In 1269 the Treaty of Winchester cemented good relations with the English king Henry III. Magnus also seems to have had good relations with the Swedish King Valdemar Birgersson, and in the 1260s, the border with Sweden was officially defined for the first time. When Valdemar was deposed by his two brothers and fled to Norway in 1275, this stirred Magnus into gathering a *leidang*-fleet for the first and only time in his reign. With a large fleet, he met with the new Swedish King Magnus

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Ladulås to try to bring about a settlement between the two brothers, but without success, Magnus of Sweden would not give in to pressure and the Magnus of Norway retreated without engaging in hostile actions.

In internal politics, Magnus carried out a great effort to modernize the law-code, which gave him his epithet law-mender. These were adopted at the Things in the years 1274 (Landslov) and 1276 (Byloven). In 1274 he promulgated the new national law, known as Magnus Lagabøtes landslov, a unified code of laws to apply for the whole country, including the Faroe Islands and Shetland. This replaced the different regional laws which had existed before. It was supplemented by a new municipal law in 1276, Magnus Lagabøtes bylov, and a slightly modified version was also drawn up for Iceland. A unified code of laws for a whole country was at this time something quite new, which had until then only been introduced in Sicily and Castile. His code introduced the concept that crime is an offense against the state rather than against the individual and thus narrowed the possibilities of personal vengeance. It increased the formal power of the king, making the throne the source of justice. The municipal law gave the cities increased freedom from rural control.

The royal succession was an important and prickly matter, the last of the civil wars, fought for decades over disputed successions to the throne, having finally ended only in 1240. In 1273 Magnus gave his eldest son, five-year-old Eric, the title of king, and his younger brother Håkon the title of duke, thus making it unequivocally clear who would be his heir. We descend from the younger brother Håkon.

Although Magnus was by all accounts a personally very pious king, his work with the law-codes brought him into conflict with the archbishop, who resisted temporal authority over the church, and sought to preserve the church's influence over the kingdom. The Tønsberg Concord signed in 1277 between King Magnus and Jon Raude, Archbishop of Nidaros, confirmed certain privileges of the clergy, the freedom of episcopal elections and similar matters. The church preserved considerable independence in judicial matters, but gave up its old claim that the Norwegian kingdom was a fief under the ultimate authority of the Catholic Church.

In cultural terms Magnus continued his father's policy of introducing European courtly culture to Norway. In 1277 he replaced the old Norse titles lendmann and skutilsvein with the European titles baron and riddar (knight), at the same time giving them certain extra privileges and the right to be addressed as lord (herra). Magnus is probably also the first Norwegian king to have named himself using an ordinal number - he called himself "Magnus IV". Immediately after his father's death, he commissioned the Icelander Sturla Þórðarson to write his father's saga, or biography. In 1278, he commissioned the same man to write his own saga. The Saga of Magnus the lawmender (Magnúss saga lagaboetis) thus became the last of the medieval Norwegian kings' sagas; unfortunately only a short fragment of it has been preserved.

In the spring of 1280, Magnus fell ill in Bergen. He planned to have his son Eric crowned at midsummer as co-ruler, but died on May 9. Eric succeeded him at the age of 12. Real power fell to a circle of advisors, prominent among them Magnus' widow, Ingibjorg. Magnus was remembered as a good ruler, who ruled by law rather than by the sword.

**King Hakon V (haleggur) Magnusson (1270 - 1319)(our 19<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)**

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Hakon V Magnusson (1270 – 1319) was king of Norway from 1299 until 1319. Hakon was born on April 10, 1270 at Bergen, Norway. He was the younger surviving son of Magnus the Lawmender, King of Norway, and his wife Ingibjorg of Denmark. Through his mother, he was a descendant of Eric IV, king of Denmark. In 1273, his elder brother, Eirik, was named junior king under the reign of their father, King Magnus. At the same time, Hakon was given the title "Duke of Norway," and from his father's death in 1280, ruled a large area around Oslo in Eastern Norway and Stavanger in the southwest, subordinate to King Eirik. Hakon succeeded to the royal throne when his older brother died without sons.

In 1295, Hakon married firstly with Isabelle, daughter of Jean I, Count of Joigny, but she died in 1297 without issue. In early 1299 he married secondly with Euphemia, daughter of Vitslav II, Prince of Rügen, who in 1301 bore him his only legitimate daughter, Ingibjorg Håkonsdotter, since 1312 wife of duke Eric Magnusson of Sweden, a younger brother of King Birger of Sweden. Their son, Magnus Eriksson would succeed Hakon V as king of Norway. He also had an illegitimate daughter by Gro Sigurdsdottir, daughter of Sigurd Lodinsson and wife Baugeid Steinarsdottir, named Agnes Hakonardottir. We descend from Agnes.

During Hakon's reign, Oslo gradually took over the functions of capital of Norway from Bergen, though there was no official pronouncement of this at any time. Hakon is also associated with the construction of Akershus Fortress and Bohus Fortress. During his reign he revived his brother's war policy against Denmark, but in 1309 he finally concluded a peace that in general was the end of a period of Dano-Norwegian wars. In domestic matters he energetically and successfully tried to limit the power of the magnates and to strengthen the king's power.

Hakon Magnusson died on May 8, 1319 in Oslo, Norway. Hakon was buried in St. Mary's church in Oslo. In 1319, Hakon was succeeded by his daughter's son, Magnus VII, who was an infant. Hakon's daughter Ingibjorg was recognized as formal regent of her son. Hakon is the last of the Scandinavian Kings that we descend from. Our ancestor, his daughter Agnes Hakonardottir was the 4<sup>th</sup> great grandmother of Bishop Gottskalk Nikulasson of Holar in Skagafjardar, Iceland.

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- Various Wikipedia articles. Most of the narratives are extractions from Wikipedia articles which I have abridged and edited.
- A Word Document labeled SamsonGenealogy(Icelandic).docx that I have in my possession. It was sent to me by a amateur genealogist named Magnus Haraldsson in Iceland. It is what I refer to as the "Ancient Icelandic Pedigree." I have had to make some corrections in my own personal database for information found in the file that seemed erroneous. I did this by using what I believed was more reliable information found in Wikipedia.



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- Information on the above named persons can also be found in The Public Members Trees on Ancestry.com; the Geni.com database; and Wikitree.com database.

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