

# King John's Attack on Man in 1210

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*Anno m.cc.x. [...] iohannes rex anglie classem quingentorum nauium ad yberniam duxit, eamque sibi subiugauit. Et mittens partem exercitus sui cum comite quodam nomine fuco ad mannam, eam in una quindena fere omnino deuastaureunt & suscipientes obsides ex ea reuersi sunt in patriam suam.*

In the year 1210 [...] John King of England took a fleet of five hundred ships to Ireland, and he subjected the place to his sway. He then sent part of his army with a certain earl called Fuco to Man, where in a fortnight they laid waste almost the whole island. They took hostages from there and returned to their own country.<sup>1</sup>

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1 *Cronica Regum Mannie et Insularum (Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles)*, ed. G. Broderick, Douglas 1995/6, f.41r, 41v.; henceforth CM (Brod); cf *Cronica Regum Mannie et Insularum, The Chronicle of Man and The Isles*, with historical notes and additional documents, ed. P.A. Munch, re-ed. Goss, Publications of the Manx Society vols. XXII, XXIII, Douglas, 1874: 83; henceforth CM (Munch). Cf also *Annals of Furness* s.a.1210, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ii, ed. R. Howlett, Rolls Series 82, London, 1879-94, ii: 511, *Early Sources of Scottish History, AD 500-1286*, ed. A.O. Anderson, Edinburgh, 1922, revised edn. P. Watkins Stamford, 1990 (henceforth ES) ii: 388 n.1. Cf *Annals of Loch Cé*, ed. and trsl. W. Hennessy, Rolls Series, London, 1871 (henceforth ALC) i: 242 for the information that John sent a fleet to Man after occupying Carrickfergus. John's Irish campaign in 1210 is well-recorded in the sources, overview ES ii: 383-388. A recent discussion is S. Duffy "King John's Expedition to Ireland, 1210: The Evidence Reconsidered" *Irish Historical Studies* 30 (1996); cf idem "John and Ireland: The Origins of England's Irish Problem" in S.D. Church (ed) *King John: New Interpretations*, Woodbridge, 1999/2003, esp. 240-242 (Duffy does however not mention Man at all); S.D. Church "The 1210 Campaign in Ireland: Evidence for a Military Revolution?" in C. Harper-Bill (ed) *Anglo-Norman Studies* 20, Proceedings of the Battle Conference Dublin 1997. Also W.L. Warren "John in Ireland, 1185" in J. Bossy, P. Jupp (eds.) *Essays Presented to Michael Roberts*, Belfast 1976; W.L. Warren "King John and Ireland" in J.F. Lydon (ed.) *England and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. Otway-Ruthven*, Dublin 1981.

THIS entry in the *Cronica Regum Mannie et Insularum* (commonly called the *Manx Chronicle*) describes the first-ever recorded English attack on the Isle of Man. As far as can be judged from the meagre sources, until 1210 relations between the Guðröðarson kings of Man and the Isles, and the Norman and Angevin kings of England had been diplomatic and peaceful. Whether the founding father of this Manx/Isles dynasty, Guðröðr Crobán (reigned c.1079-95), had any direct contact with the Norman kings, cannot be established.<sup>2</sup> His son Óláfr (reigned 1103x14-52) however, grew up at William II Rufus's and Henry I's courts, where he seems to have become imbued with English values sufficiently to become an English client-king for the Irish Sea and Western Seaboard region.<sup>3</sup> Óláfr's son Guðröðr (reigned 1152-87) received payments from Henry II on several occasions, and this Guðröðr's envoy met the English king in person at Mont-St-Michel in 1166.<sup>4</sup>

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- 2 There is no academic convention of how to render the names of the Norse-Celtic kings of Man & the Isles during the period 1079-1266. They were presumably bilingual, so both the Old Norse and the Middle Irish versions of their names are correct, thus Guðröðr or Gofraid, Óláfr or Amlaíb, Rögnvaldr or Ragnall, Haraldr or Araílt, Magnús or Manus. Since this article discusses them in a mainly Norse milieu, Old Norse versions are used here (cf S. Duffy "Irishmen and Islesmen in the Kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052-1171" ... *riu* 43 (1992): 95 note 10, who uses this criterion to justify Irish versions for the kings of Dublin). In addition, the names appear in Latinised versions in the sources (Godredus, Olauus, Reginaldus, Haraldus, Magnus), in turn Anglicised in some translations.
- 3 CM (Brod) f.33v., 35r., 35v. Óláfr would have been spirited away from the political turmoil in the west at some point after his father Guðröðr Crobán's death in 1095, and presumably before or at least simultaneously with the first appearance of Magnús berfútr in 1098. Woolf, personal communication, wonders whether Óláfr was taken to England as a hostage by William II Rufus (r.1087-1100) during his expedition to Carlisle in 1092. Cf discussion I. Beuermann *Man Amongst Kings and Bishops. What Was the Reason for Godred Olafsson's Journey to Norway in 1152/53?* Oslo 2002: 83-88, 137-160; I. Beuermann *Masters of the Narrow Sea. Forgotten Challenges to Norwegian Rule in Man & the Isles 1079-1266*, doctoral dissertation University of Oslo 2006: 32-32.
- 4 Guðröðr received payments in 1157-58, Pipe Roll 4 Henry II, *Publications of the Pipe Roll Society*, London, 1884 ff: 155; *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, 21 vols., Christiania/Oslo, 1849-1976 (henceforth DN) XIX no 35; cf *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, i 1108-1272*, ed. J. Bain, Edinburgh, 1881 (henceforth CDS i) no 56; *Regesta Norvegica I 822-1263*; ed. E. Gunnes, Oslo, 1989 (henceforth RN i) no A11, Pipe Roll 4 Henry II: 168; CDS i: no 60, cf *Early Sources of Scottish History, AD 500-1286*, ed. A.O. Anderson, Edinburgh, 1922, revised edn. P. Watkins Stamford, 1990 (henceforth ES) ii: 246 n.4 (with wrong date of 1160). Guðröðr received payments two more times (three, if one includes the bishop of Sodor) between 1164 and 1167, Pipe Roll 11 Henry II: 43; DN xix, no.43; CDS i: no.102; RN i: A14; Pipe Roll 12 Henry II: 3; DN xix, no.44; Pipe Roll 13 Henry II: 158; DN xix  
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Guðröör's son Rögnvaldr (reigned 1188-1229), during whose reign Man suffered King John's attack, had visited England, had been taken under John's protection, and had received lands from him.<sup>5</sup> All seemed to be well between the Guðröðarsons and the English kings.

In search for an explanation for the attack of 1210, attention has first been drawn to Rögnvaldr Guðröðarson's contacts with Anglo-Norman Ulster. John de Courci, *princeps Ulidiæ*, had probably around 1180 married Rögnvaldr's sister Afreka.<sup>6</sup> This connection potentially endangered relations between the Guðröðarsons and the English kings. While Henry II (reigned 1154-89) may still have encouraged de Courci's 'conquest of Ulster' since 1176/77, and while Richard I (reigned 1189-99) was arguably too busy elsewhere to object, John (reigned 1199-1216) began to eye freelancers like de Courci with suspicion. If a distrustful English king then considered de

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no.45; RN i: A15. For Mont-St-Michel Robert of Torigny: *Chronica in Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, IV, ed. R. Howlett, Rolls Series, London, 1889: 228, 229, English translation *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers*, ed. A.O. Anderson, London, 1908, revised edn. P. Watkins, Stamford, 1991 (henceforth SAEC): 245. Also *Annals of the Reigns of Malcolm and William, Kings of Scotland* ed. Sir A.C. Lawrie, Glasgow, 1910: 114, 115. Discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 224ff. Cf also below.

5 Cf discussion below.

6 Affrica in CM. The date of the marriage is given only in the *Dublin Annals of Inisfallen*; MS. H.1.7, Trinity College Dublin, a none too reliable compilation written in 1765 for John O'Brien bishop of Cloyne and Ross. Cf C. Ó Cuilleanáin "The Dublin Annals of Inisfallen", in S. Pender (ed.): *Féilscribhinn Torna*, Cork 1947: 183-202. 1180 is the year usually quoted, but as S. Duffy "The First Ulster Plantation: John de Courcy and the Men of Cumbria", in Barry, T.B.; Frame, R.; Simms, K. (eds.) 1995: *Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland: Essays presented to J.F. Lydon*, London: 25 n. 167 points out, it may be unsafe to trust these annals. For Afreka's influence on ecclesiastical patterns of patronage M.T. Flanagan "John de Courcy, the first Ulster Plantation and Irish Church Men" in Smith, B. (ed.): *Britain and Ireland 900-1330, Insular Responses to Medieval European Change*, Cambridge 1999: 154-178; R. Bartlett "Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints in Twelfth-Century England", in Smith, B. (ed.): *Britain and Ireland 900-1330, Insular Responses to Medieval European Change*, Cambridge 1999: 67-86; K.J. Stringer *The Reformed Church in Medieval Galloway and Cumbria: Contrasts, Connections, and Continuities*, Eleventh Whithorn Lecture 14 Sept 2002, Whithorn 2003. Cf for John de Courci also J.F. Lydon *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages*, Dublin 2003: 59-61, 68, 69; J.F. Lydon "John de Courcy (c.1150-1219) and the Medieval Frontier" in C. Brady (ed.): *Worsted in the Game, Dublin 1989*: 37-46; R. Frame *Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369, Dublin 1981*: 26-28; E. Curtis *A History of Medieval Ireland from 1086 to 1513, London 1938*: 77-79; G.H. Orpen *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1333, Oxford 1911-1920*, ii: chs.xii, xvii; A.J. Otway-Ruthven *A History of Medieval Ireland*, London 1980: 58, 59, 62; J.H. Round "John de Courci, Conqueror of Ulster" *Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer*, 3 (Jan-June 1883): 69-71, 122-126, 246-248, 305-310; 4 (July-Dec 1883): 177-181, 288-292; J.H. Round "The Conquest of Ireland" in *The Commune of London and Other Studies*, London 1899: 160-163.

Courci's brother-in-law Rögnvaldr of Man and the Isles unreliable as well, he might clip the Guðröðarsons' wings together with those of de Courci.

That King John acted against de Courci is well-established. In 1203-5, John was chastising de Courci through trusted intermediaries.<sup>7</sup> The Irish annals note for 1203-5 that *Slóigheadh la mac Hugo De Lati co n-druing do Ghallaibh Midhe i n-Ultaibh co ro díochuireadh Iohn Do Cuirt a h-Ulloibh iar c-cor chatha eturra i n-Dun Da Letglas, in ro marbhadh sochaidhe*, 'an army was led by the son of Hugo de Lacy and a party of the English of Meath into Ulidia; and they banished John de Courci from thence, after they had defeated him in a battle fought at Dundaleathglas (Downpatrick), in which many had been slain'.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, de Courci sought support outwith Ireland – in Man. He *uenit ad regem reginaldum a quo honorifique susceptus est quia erat gener eius*, 'came to king Reginald and was honourably received by him, because he was his son [*recte* brother]-in-law'.<sup>9</sup> And Rögnvaldr apparently offered more than asylum to de Courci, who was not prepared to be ousted from his hard-won province. In 1205 de Courci *congregauit copiosam multitudinem* ('collected a massive force'), to which Rögnvaldr contributed *centum ferme nauibus* ('about a hundred ships').<sup>10</sup> In the ensuing battle at Strangford

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7 This was part of John's first approach to Ireland, his "brief experiment of governing Ireland through a feudal structure of great baronies", R.V. Turner *King John. England's Evil King?*, Stroud 2005: 107; cf Warren "King John and Ireland": 33. Cf however the far more critical assessment of John's Irish policy by Duffy "King John's Expedition" and "John and Ireland", above n.1.

8 *Annals of the Four Masters; Corpus of Electronic Texts (CELT)* [www.icc.ie/celt/published/G100005A/header.html](http://www.icc.ie/celt/published/G100005A/header.html) (Irish), [www.icc.ie/celt/published/T100005A/header.html](http://www.icc.ie/celt/published/T100005A/header.html) (English trsl) (henceforth AFM) s.a.1203. Ibid. s.a. 1204: "*Iohn De Cuirt indredhach ceall, & tuath do ionnarbadh lá mac Hugo De Lati h-i Tír Eoghain ar comairce Cenél n-Eoghain go rainicc go Carraicc Ferghusa, & ro marbsat Goill Ulladh sochaide dia mhuintir.*" ("John de Courci, the plunderer of churches and territories, was driven by the son of Hugo de Lacy into Tyrone, to seek the protection of the Kinel-Owen. He arrived at Carrickfergus, and the English of Ulidia slew great numbers of his people"). Cf *Annals of Ulster, CELT*, [www.icc.ie/celt/published/G100001A/header.html](http://www.icc.ie/celt/published/G100001A/header.html) (Irish), [www.icc.ie/celt/published/G100001A/header.html](http://www.icc.ie/celt/published/G100001A/header.html) (English trsl) (henceforth AU) s.a.1205 "*h-Eoan do Chuirt, inmredhach ceall Erenn & tuath, do innarbadh do mac Uga de Laci i Tír n-Eogain ar comuirce Ceniuil Eogain.*" ("John De Courci, destroyer of the churches and territories of Ireland, was expelled by Ugo the son of Ugo De Lacy into Tir-Eogain, to the protection of Cenel-Eogain."). Cf CM (Brod) f.41r. "*Anno m.cc.iiii. hugo de lacy uenit cum exercitu ultoniam & commisit bellum cum iohanne decursi. eumque comprehendit & uinculis mansipauit & ultoniam sibi subiugauit.*" ("In the year 1204 Hugh de Lacy came with an army to Ulster and joined battle with John de Courci; he seized and put him in chains, and subjugated Ulster to himself.").

9 CM (Brod) f.41r.

10 CM (Brod) f.41r.

Lough, however, de Courci and Rögnvaldr were defeated. De Courci's rule of Ulster had come to an end; and, one might surmise, so had Rögnvaldr's good relations with King John. In Arthur Moore's words, 'it is possible that, on account of this action of Reginald's, King John had threatened to attack him'.<sup>11</sup> If Rögnvaldr sided with de Courci against King John this could explain why John considered teaching the Manx a lesson in 1205, and eventually did so in 1210. When he moved against Ulster again in the course of his Irish campaign in 1210, then directed against Hugh de Lacy who had been his earlier agent of de Courci's destruction, John might have considered it opportune to forestall a possible re-make of 1205. By taking hostages from Man, John would remind Rögnvaldr not to waver again in his loyalty to the English crown.<sup>12</sup> What the Manx/Isles king could still avoid in 1205, caught up with him in 1210. Manx/Isles-Ulster contacts would have brought John's displeasure upon Rögnvaldr.

Two arguments can be advanced against this interpretation. Contrary to Moore's established version,<sup>13</sup> it may be doubted that Rögnvaldr was losing King John's favour in the years 1203-5. The entry in the *Manx Chronicle* and the exact dating of King John's 'protection' for Rögnvaldr in 1205 might allow some speculation as to whether Rögnvaldr hesitated to back de Courci, and to oppose King John's agent, de Lacy. The Chronicle's wording is *Anno m.cc.v. Iohannes de cursi iterum resumptis uiribus conragauit copiosam multitudinem, sed & reginaldum regem insularum cum centum ferme nauibus secum duxit ad ultoniam*, 'in the year 1205 John de Courci regained his strength and collected a massive force, and also took with him Reginald King of the Isles with about a hundred ships to Ulster'.<sup>14</sup> If one considers the implications of Broderick's translation of *ducere* as 'taking', or if one goes further and renders *ducere* as 'leading, commanding', the *Manx Chronicle* might seem to contradict the view of Rögnvaldr as 'a potent ally and formidable enemy' who conducted an 'Irish campaign on behalf of his brother-in-law'.<sup>15</sup> Would the wording imply that Rögnvaldr did not wholeheartedly support de Courci's attempt to regain his position in Ulster?

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11 A.W. Moore *A History of the Isle of Man*, London 1900, i: 116.

12 A. Forte, R.D. Oram, F. Pedersen, F. *Viking Empires*, Cambridge 2005: 248 are very short in their evaluation "when in the same year King John invaded Ulster and drove out its earl, Hugh de Lacy, and sent his fleet to raid Man, the destabilisation was complete".

13 Moore *History*, i: 116; also R.A. McDonald *The Kingdom of the Isles*, East Lothian 1997: 87.

14 CM (Brod) f.41r.

15 McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 87.

Not too much should be hinged on one verb. Yet a close look at King John's charter granting protection to Rögnvaldr yields surprising results.<sup>16</sup> The document is dated precisely *apud Wodestock, viii die Februarii, anno [...] vi, 'at Woodstock, the eighth day of February, in the sixth year'*.<sup>17</sup> The dating to 1205 given by the editor of *Monumenta Insulae Manniae* is correct: John was crowned on 27 May 1199, which makes the year May 1204 to May 1205 the sixth of his reign. John's charter, given on 8 February in his sixth year, was consequently given on 8 February 1205.<sup>18</sup>

This must have been *before* Rögnvaldr set out on the expedition with de Courci to Ulster in the same year; indeed, Rögnvaldr must have been granted the charter at precisely the time when de Courci was staying with him. Possibly already while de Courci was fighting for his survival in Ulster, while he was being attacked, imprisoned and released by Hugh de Lacy, and certainly while de Courci was in exile in Man, there was contact between Rögnvaldr and King John (who contacted whom is speculation), in the course of which John granted his protection to Rögnvaldr.

There is not enough evidence to determine conclusively whether Rögnvaldr's loyalties were divided between English king and brother-in-law, whether he possibly even acted as a go-between, or whether he was playing foul with either of them. The surviving sources show consistent English protection and support for Rögnvaldr – English goodwill that was

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16 *"quod suscepimus dilectum consanguineum nostrum Reginaldum Regem Manniae in custodiam, protectionem et defensionem nostram, et omnes terras et homines suos. Et prohibemus ne quis ei vel suis inferat injuriam, vel gravamen, quia si quid ei forisfactum fuerit, id nobis factum reputabimus."* ("that we have taken our beloved kinsman, Reginald, King of Mann, under our keeping, protection, and defence, and all his lands and people. And we forbid any person to inflict injury or annoyance upon him or his, wherefore if any offence be committed against him, we will reckon the same done to ourself."). *Monumenta de Insula Manniae* II, ed. J.R. Oliver, Douglas, 1861; in *Publications of the Manx Society*, Douglas, 1859-1874 VII (henceforth *Mon Ins Man*): 25.

17 *Mon Ins Man*: 25.

18 Confusingly, John's exchequer and chancery used different regnal years. I was unfortunately unable to consult Thomas Hardy's chronology of John's reign appended to the introduction to the Patent Rolls (*Rotuli litterarum patentium in Turri londinensi asservati*, ed. T.D. Hardy, London 1835). However, May 1204-1205 is also given as "6 John" in the timeline derived from Hardy's chronology, published as part of the SIMILE project of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, [http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Team\\_Members](http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Team_Members) and <http://home.myuw.net/jjcrump/Timelines/JohnItinerary2.html>. Cf also Church "The 1210 Campaign in Ireland", 47-49 for August 1210 as John's 12th regnal year.

in all likelihood actively courted by the Manx/Isles king. Consequently, what needs to be underlined is that depicting Rögnvaldr as de Courci's firm ally may be too simple – which is the first argument against these Manx/Isles-Ulster contacts as the explanation for King John's attack on Man in 1210.

The second argument considers the years between 1205 and 1210. Moore conjectures that King John had been threatening Rögnvaldr in 1205, and that as a result 'Reginald had promised to do homage to him. Consequently, at the end of the same year, John took him under his protection'.<sup>19</sup> As shown above, this charter was in reality granted already in February 1205. Moore therefore overlooked evidence for Rögnvaldr's possible double-dealing. However, Moore is right to assert that, after 1205, relations between John and Rögnvaldr were friendly. Exactly one year after the first surviving record of Rögnvaldr receiving John's protection, on *Octavo die Februarii [...] anno septimo*, 'on the eighth day of February [...] in the seventh year', i.e. 1206, Rögnvaldr was granted a safe-conduct from John for a journey to England *usque a die Paschæ, in quindecim dies*, 'for fifteen days from Easter'.<sup>20</sup> To have been granted this safe-conduct in early February 1206, Rögnvaldr must have been in contact with the English crown since – at the very latest – autumn/winter 1205/6. It looks as if Rögnvaldr reported back to King John as soon as he returned from the Ulster campaign. Whatever his feelings before, with de Courci beaten, Rögnvaldr's best course of action would have been to reassure the English king that Man and the Isles were loyal to him. And Rögnvaldr seems to have succeeded. Two more English royal charters, dated to 28 and 29 April 1206, grant Rögnvaldr thirty marcates of land in Lancaster and a gift of thirty marks (presumably intended to cover the period until the lands-to-be-assigned to him yielded returns).<sup>21</sup> On 17 June 1207 then, King John ordered the sheriff of Lancaster to assign yet more lands, twenty librates, to Rögnvaldr, *quas ei debemus juxta convencionem inter nos factam*, 'which we owe to him according to an agreement made between us'.<sup>22</sup>

So much for the second argument against Rögnvaldr's contacts with de Courci as the explanation for John's attack on Man in 1210: if Rögnvaldr had

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19 Moore *History*, i: 116.

20 Mon Ins Man: 26.

21 Mon Ins Man: 27, 28.

22 Mon Ins Man: 29.

fallen foul of John in 1205, in the intervening period he seems to have regained John's favour. It follows that the first explanation, that Manx/Isles 'troubles were to begin' in the early thirteenth century because of the Rögnvaldr's association with de Courci, cannot be upheld.<sup>23</sup>

The second development mentioned in connection with King John's attack on Man in 1210 refers to contemporary events further north.<sup>24</sup> *Sub anno* 1209 the Annals of Ulster report that *Cath tucsat meic Raghnaill mic Somurligh, for feraibh Sciadh, dú in ramarbadh a n-ár*, 'a battle was fought by the sons of Raghnaill, son of Somurlech, against the men of Sciadh, wherein slaughter was inflicted upon them'.<sup>25</sup> For the following year, the *Manx Chronicle* notes that *Anno m.cc.x. engus filius sumerledi cum tribus filiis suis occisus est*, 'in the year 1210 Angus, son of Somerled, was killed along with his three sons'.<sup>26</sup> This was no minor casualty; Aongus was one of the three prominent sons of Somairle of Argyll, who in 1157 had forced Rögnvaldr's father Guðröðr to share the Isles with him.<sup>27</sup> Aongus's and his sons' elimination removed one branch of competitors for kingship in the Isles. Unfortunately though, the extremely meagre sources do not allow any judgement on whom Aongus might have been competing with – one or both of his own brothers Ragnall and Dubgall and /or their sons, or Rögnvaldr or his brother Óláfr Guðröðarson?<sup>28</sup> Also where exactly the fighting took place is unclear. Ragnall's sons need not have fought the men of Skye in the island itself,<sup>29</sup> and no place is mentioned for Aongus's and his sons' deaths. All that can be affirmed is that there was unrest in the Isles.<sup>30</sup>

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23 Moore *History*, i: 116.

24 Cf McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 80.

25 AU s.a.1209.

26 CM (Brod) f.41r.

27 Discussion Beuermann *Masters* 55-130.

28 Since the AU mention only Ragnall's sons it is possible that Ragnall himself was dead by 1209. He had fought against Aongus in 1192, CM (Brod) f.40v; cf ES ii: 327, after which date he is not attested anymore. Cf McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 78, 79 for Ragnall's death at some time between 1192 and 1227. Aongus had a nephew Gille Easbuig mac Dubgaill, better known as Óspakr suðreyski (For the identity of Óspakr suðreyski or Uspak (-Hákon) and Gilla Easbuig mac Dubgaill, a son of Somairle's eldest son Dubgall, most recently A. Forte et al. *Viking Empires*: 250.). Rögnvaldr and Óláfr Guðröðarson were at loggerheads during the first three decades of the thirteenth century, cf below.

29 As pointed out by McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 80.

30 The Icelandic Annals' entry s.a.1210 that there was "*hernaðr in Svðréyiom*" ("*warfare in the Hebrides*"), *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578*, ed. G. Storm, Christiania, 1888 (henceforth ISLA) (Continued on next page)



The connection to King John's attack on Man has thus been drawn only in very general terms, betraying the lack of clarity around these events. It seems to rest mainly on the coincidence of dates.<sup>31</sup> But why should John direct part of his fleet to Man because of the (undoubted) Hebridean unrest? There is a cryptic sentence in the *Manx Chronicle* that when the English laid waste the island, *Reginaldus autem rex & optimates eius non erant in mania*, 'Reginald and his nobles, however, were not in Man'.<sup>32</sup> It is possible to imagine a range of connections; and one of the more likely ones is that Rögnvaldr was taking part in the fighting in the Hebrides – but it is difficult to see why the mere unrest there, or Rögnvaldr's possible participation in it, should have triggered John's attack on Man.

A slightly different approach considers the unrest in the Isles not as a *reason* for John's activities in 1210, especially in the Irish Sea, but – at least partially<sup>33</sup> – as a *result* of John's deeds in Ireland. There, he was successfully reasserting and expanding the English crown's authority.<sup>34</sup> This inevitably implied that he reduced the scope for independent action by local leaders, who might have considered it opportune to seek advancement elsewhere, at least as long as English control in Ireland was in the ascent. Connections between northern Ireland and the Isles were close, and it is perfectly possible to envisage for example meic Somairle dynasts leaving Antrim for the Isles.<sup>35</sup> It has been considered whether John drove another potential

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s.a.1210: 123 (*Annales Regii*); cf 182 (*Skálholts-Annálar*) for "hertekinn i Svöðr eyjóum", has been taken by McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 79, 80 to refer also to meic Somairle-Godredsson battles. However, as the comment "Rénnt éy hin helga" ("burning of the Holy Isle"), *ibid*: 123; "þa var rænnit eyin helga", *ibid*: 182 indicates, the Icelandic chronicler seems to describe the Norwegian attack, discussed below.

31 Cf McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 80 "Given the date, it is tempting to connect the death of Angus with King John's expedition to Ireland, or else with his invasion of Man, both in the same year. Whether or not this was so, the western seaboard remained disturbed." Cf the very careful formulation "when in the same year King John invaded Ulster and drove out its earl, Hugh de Lacy, and sent his fleet to raid Man, the destabilisation was complete", Forte et al. *Viking Empires*: 248.

32 CM (Brod) f.41v.

33 The Hebridean fighting in 1209 pre-dates these events.

34 Cf the references given above, note 1.

35 If one accepts the *mac Scelling* of the AFM s.a.1154, also ES ii: 226, 227 as identical with *Gall MacSgillin* of the *Book of Clanranald. The Macdonald History in Reliquiae Celticae*, ed. A. Cameron, Inverness 1892-4, ii: 157, and therefore as a son of Somairle in the Glens of Antrim, any descendants of his might easily have upset the balance of power in the Isles in the 13th c. Discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 59-63, W.D.H. Sellar: "Family Origins in Cowal and Knapdale", *Scottish Studies* 15 (1971): 29 and esp.35, n.26, cf S. Duffy "Irishmen and Islesmen": 125 n.157.

'troublemaker', the next scion of the meic Uilleim, Gofraid son of Domnall, from Ireland during his campaign in 1210. Gofraid appears in Ross early in 1211, continuing his family's opposition to the Scottish crown. If he indeed left Ireland because of John's campaign there, he probably sailed the whole length of the western seaboard.<sup>36</sup>

If John's actions in 1210 were elements of a grander plan to establish his authority as far as northern Ireland (of which the reverberations were felt as far away as the Hebrides), then one step to make sure of this could have been to secure the Isle of Man. At least since William Rufus English kings had realised the benefits of good contacts with the Manx, and relations with the Godredssons had become closer and closer throughout the twelfth century,<sup>37</sup> a point which shall be taken up again in a different context below. This then might be a possible indirect link between the Hebridean unrest and John's attack on Man in 1210: the former were the reverberations of John establishing his authority on his north-western borders, and control of Man would have been part of that political aim. This interpretation however, while linking the Hebridean unrest and events in Man, does not answer the question why King John attacked Man in the first place.

Neither of the two developments so far considered in connection with the attack of 1210 can therefore convincingly explain it. Given the recorded friendly relations between Rögnvaldr and John shortly before, one would

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36 The meic Uilleim risings against the Scottish crown have been discussed by R.A. McDonald since his University of Guelph doctoral dissertation *Kings and Princes in Scotland: Aristocratic Interactions (in the Anglo-Norman Era) in Scotland A.D.1093-1230*, 1993; e.g. idem *Outlaws of Medieval Scotland: Challenges to the Canmore Kings, 1058-1266*, East Lothian 2003; idem "Soldiers Most Unfortunate": Gaelic and Scoto-Norse Opponents of the Canmore Dynasty, c.1100 – c.1230" in R.A. McDonald (ed.) *History, Literature, and Music in Scotland, 700-1560*, Toronto 2002; idem "Rebels without a Cause?" in J.E. Cowan, R.A. McDonald, (eds.) *Alba. Celtic Scotland in the Medieval Era*, East Lothian 2000; idem "Coming in from the Margins: the Descendants of Somerled and Cultural Accommodation in the Hebrides, 1164-1317" in B. Smith, (ed.): *Britain and Ireland 900-1330, Insular Responses to Medieval European Change*, Cambridge 1999; idem "Treachery in the remotest territories of Scotland: northern resistance to the Canmore Dynasty, 1130-1230" *Canadian Journal of History*, 33 (1999); idem "Matrimonial Politics and Core-Periphery Interactions in Twelfth- and Early Thirteenth-Century Scotland", *Journal of Medieval History*, 21 (1995). Cf also recently R.D. Oram *David I. The King Who Made Scotland*, Stroud 2004; and idem (ed.): *Scotland in the Reign of Alexander II*, Leiden 2005. Cf McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 80 for the possibility that a raid on Derry in 1212 by Thomas of Galloway had been encouraged in King John's interests.

37 For such a general picture cf McDonald *Kingdom of the Isles*: 80. For the Isle of Man as a nodal point coveted by English kings since the late 11th c Beuermann *Masters*.

expect a decisive reason for the apparently furious attack on Man which according to the *Manx Chronicle* devastated almost the whole Isle.<sup>38</sup> Searching for specific indications of what the Manx might have done to bring John's wrath upon them in 1210, one notes an entry in the *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et des Rois d'Angleterre* which mentions that Hugh de Lacy, Matilda de Briouze, her daughter, and her sons William and Reginald, all prominent members of the baronial families who were the targets of King John's wrath in Ireland, managed to escape from Carrickfergus Castle shortly before the king's arrival, and, crucially, fled to the Isle of Man. There they remained for four days, before sailing on to Galloway, where Donnchadh (Duncan fitz Gilbert) of Carrick captured Matilda and William de Briouze and delivered them to King John.<sup>39</sup> It is also known that King John's attack on the Isle of Man was ordered from Carrickfergus.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, considering King John's political aims and personal character, it is quite plausible to assume that he detached a force to Man as soon as he was informed that the rebellious fugitives had sailed there. King John would in all likelihood have ordered his captain Falkes de Breauté to attempt at all costs to capture the de Lacys and Briouzes, in the process also reminding the Manx not to shelter his enemies. A thorough 'search' of a frustrated Falkes might then well have devastated the island. In effect, this scenario explains the attack on Man as a short-term decision, part and parcel of King John's main aim of catching the baronial rebels wherever they fled to, Ireland or Man.<sup>41</sup>

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38 CM (Brod) f.41v.

39 *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et des Rois d'Angleterre* ed. F. Michel, *Société de l'Histoire de France*, Paris 1840: 112-114; cf ES ii: 387; for the background *ibid*: 383-386 n.4. William de Briouze the elder, Matilda's husband and William and Reginald's father, was in rebellion against King John in Wales. Cf for John's Irish campaign also above, n. 1. Alan, lord of Galloway 1200-1234, had marriage ties with the de Lacys, while his relative Donnchadh (a cousin of Alan's father Roland) had been an ally of de Lacy's former enemy, John de Courcy. Hugh de Lacy had apparently not confirmed Donnchadh's lands in Ulster granted to him by John de Courcy. Donnchadh and his nephew then received lands in Ulster from King John as a reward for the capture of the de Briouzes (but far less than Alan in 1212). Alan and Donnchadh might therefore have clashed over their relative interests in Ulster, although in general the relation between them "was good if not exactly close", R. Oram *The Lordship of Galloway*, Edinburgh 2000: 104, discussion *ibid*: 112-118. Matilda de Briouze and her elder son were imprisoned in Windsor Castle where they died shortly afterwards, possibly starved to death.

40 ALC i: 242.

41 When William de Briouze the elder had fallen into disgrace with King John, he and his family had first fled from England to Ireland; overview ES ii: 383-386 n.4.

It is possible that King John's actions in 1210 were in addition motivated by other, more long-term considerations, directed against other specific addressees. It has been pointed out that, with the attack on Man, King John signalled "a rigorous re-assertion of the overlordship over the island kingdom formerly exercised by Henry II" – to King William of Scotland.<sup>42</sup> Although King William was generally more interested in the recovery of the Northumbrian territories than in expansion towards the west, he did for example have unprecedented close links with the ruling dynasty of Galloway, thus encroaching into areas which were part of England's sphere of interest, and approaching the Irish Sea zone. With his actions in Man King John might therefore very well have served notice to King William that he intended to control Britain and Ireland up to – at least – the North Channel.<sup>43</sup>

Yet the Scottish crown may not have been King John's only or even greatest worry in 1210. The *Manx Chronicle's* information that Rögnvaldr was absent when the English attacked, quoted above, does indeed provide the point of departure to understand developments, but it is necessary to look further away than Britain and Ireland, to events originating on the other side of the North Sea. *Böglunga Sögur*, the Sagas of the *Baglar* ('Crozier'), one party in the Norwegian wars of succession, are not only the most important source for Norwegian developments 1202-17, they also contain evidence on the Hebrides not found anywhere else. Unfortunately, *Böglunga Sögur* are only preserved in two defective versions, of which the shorter but earlier one from the *Eirspennill* manuscript stops in 1209/10, whereas the longer but later and defective one, preserved in a Danish translation, continues until 1217. This renders dating for the years 1209-10 rather difficult.<sup>44</sup>

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42 Oram *Lordship of Galloway*: 116.

43 The most recent discussion of William's relations with John is by A.A.M. Duncan *The Kingship of the Scots, 842-1292*, Edinburgh 2002: ch. 6. Overview over English (incl. Anglo-Irish) relations with Galloway in Oram *Lordship of Galloway*: esp. 54-68 for Fergus's time (until 1161), 93- 119 for Uhtred, Gillebrigte, Roland and Alan (1173-1213).

44 *Böglunga Sögur* fill the gap between *Sverris saga* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. The best edition, and the one quoted here, is *Böglunga sögur. Söga om Birkibeinar og Baglar*, 2 vols, ed. H. Magerøy, Norsk-Historisk Kjedeskript-Institut, Norrøne Tekster no.5, Solum 1988. (Note esp. that *Böglunga sögur* in *Formanna sögur*, eds. C.C. Rafn et al., vol. 9, Copenhagen 1828-46, a re-translation into Old Norse, is not a scholarly edition.) There are two redactions of the sagas: the shorter one is preserved in *Eirspennill* and

(Continued on next page)

*Böglunga Sögur* records a Norwegian campaign to the Hebrides during this critical period: *þat sumar foro þeir i viking i Suðreyjar*, ‘that summer they went on piracy to the Sudreys’, notes the shorter version. The longer version’s exact time of the year (*om Vaaren der efter*, ‘in the following spring’) is more plausible for a departure from Norway, but the important point is that both versions note a Norwegian expedition in spring or summer after the previously recorded event, the meeting at Hvitingsøy.<sup>45</sup> Since this is safely dated to 1208, the Norwegians would seem to have set sail in 1209. Both versions of *Böglunga Sögur* agree on this, and there are also no breaks within the remaining chronology. One should therefore not take the Icelandic Annals’ entry *s. a. 1209* that merely *Herför bvin til Svðréyja af Noregi*, ‘a military expedition [was] prepared, from Norway, to the Hebrides’,<sup>46</sup> to indicate that the expedition in fact only set sail in 1210 – which is the year for which the Icelandic Annals note *Hernaðr in Svðréyiom. Rénnit éy hin Helga*, ‘warfare in the Hebrides; the holy island was pillaged’.<sup>47</sup> Rather, Per Munch’s interpretation of the sources, that the fleet left Norway in 1209, harried there, overwintered there, and returned to Norway in 1210, seems convincing.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, a Norwegian fleet would have operated in the Hebrides before and possibly still while King John was attacking Man in summer 1210. Is there any connection? To answer this, the details of the Norwegian expedition merit closer scrutiny. A glance at what *Böglunga Sögur* say about the preparations in Norway seems to indicate a mere private plundering expedition. The sagas claim that the initiative came from certain high-ranking individuals, impoverished after the internal Norwegian warfare of the preceding years, and unemployed because of the peace accord of Hvitingsøy of 1208. Not for the first time in Scandinavian history, the

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*Skálholtsbók yngsta* vellums and a parchment fragment, from the early 1300s and mid-1400s, respectively. It may be only a compacted version of the original saga. Crucially here, this version ends in 1209/1210. The longer version, covering the whole period 1202-1217, is preserved in four medieval parchment fragments, but the most useable and single most complete text is a Danish translation by Peder Clausson Friis from c.1600. Magerøy’s edition gives both versions, henceforth quoted as BSö (E) for the shorter redaction from *Eirspennill*, and BSö (PCF) for the longer one from Friis.

45 BSö (PCF), ii: 117-118. BSö (E), ii: 117-118.

46 IslA s.a. 1209 (*Annales Regii*: 123, cf *Skálholts-Annaler*: 182), trsl ES ii: 378.

47 IslA s.a. 1209 (*Annales Regii*: 123, cf *Skálholts-Annaler*: 182), trsl ES ii: 381, 382.

48 P.A. Munch *Det Norske Folks Historie*, 5 vols. Christiania 1852-63: 541, also accepted by Magerøy, BSö i: 161 n.251, 167 n.260.

decision was therefore taken to go plundering in the west, to raid in the British Isles in order to replenish one's purses.<sup>49</sup> The twelve ships that set sail then only got as far as Iona. All that is known of their military achievements is that this holy island was plundered. After this deed, the Norwegians quarrelled, separated, and the survivors made their way back to Norway. The Isle of Man remained untouched.<sup>50</sup> This is not the description of an awe-inspiring royal descent upon the Norwegian dependencies in the west à la Magnús *berfættr* in 1098-1103, and King Hákon Hákonarson's ill-fated campaign in 1263 is also in a completely different league. It even seems to compare badly to King Eysteinn Haraldsson's achievements in c.1152.<sup>51</sup>

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49 BSö (PCF), ii: 117-118: "Der bleff et stor bulder baade blant Birkebenerne oc Baglerne, fordi der vaar mange ypperlige Mænd som hafde mist alt deris Gods oc Pendinge i den Feide, da bleff det raad paafundet, at om Someren der efter skulde de drage Vester til Suder Øer i Refuerii det forhufue sig Gods oc Pendinge igien, oc de lafuede skibe til paa begge sider." ("There was a great noise both among Birchlegs and Croziers because there were many high-ranking men who had lost all their goods and riches in this conflict, [and] then the counsel was adopted that in the following summer they should sail west to the Sudreys for plundering to get goods and riches again, and both parties built ships for that." my trsl.). BSö (E), ii: 117-118: "þá gerðisk kurr í hvárutveggja liðinu af þeim mönnum, er félausir váru ok höfðu þó nafnbútr. Var þá þat ráðgert, at eptir um várit skyldu þeir herja til Sudreyja ok afla sér fjár. Ætluðusk þá til menn af hvárutveggja liðinu." ("There arose a murmur in both armies among those men who had no riches, but yet had rank. Then this plan was made, that in the following spring they should plunder in the Hebrides, and procure wealth for themselves. Men from both armies then purposed to do this." trsl. ES ii: 378).

50 ES ii: 378-382 collects, translates and comments on the sources.

51 A recent appraisal of the expedition is in R. Power "Meeting in Norway: Norse-Gaelic Relations in the Kingdom of Man and the Isles, 1090-1270" *Saga-Book*, Viking Society for Northern Research 2005. Most importantly for Magnús *berfættr*'s expeditions *Magnúss saga berfætts* in Snorri Sturluson: *Heimskringla* ed. Bjarni Aðalbarnarsson, Íslenzk Fornrit. XXVIII. Bindi, Reykjavík, 1951/1979, henceforth Hkr (trsl Snorri Sturluson: *Heimskringla*. L. Hollander, Austin, Texas, 1999): chs. 8-11, 23-25; and *Orkneyinga Saga*, ed. Finnboði Guðmundsson, Íslenzk Fornrit XXXIV. Bindi, Reykjavík, 1965 (trsl *Orkneyinga Saga*, A.B. Taylor, Edinburgh and London 1938, *Orkneyinga Saga*, H. Pálsson and P. Edwards, London 1978): chs. 37-43; CM (Brod) f.34r.-f.35r. Overview ES ii: 101-136. Discussion of all sources R. Power "Magnus Barelegs' Expedition to the West" *Scottish Historical Review* 65 (1986): 107-111. *Ibid.* 112-115, and already A.A.M Duncan, A.L Broun "Argyll and the Isles in the Earlier Middle Ages", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 90 (1956): 92-94 for two expeditions, contrary to the older view of three (e.g. Munch *Historie*: 468-559). Cf also R. Power "The Death of Magnus Barelegs", *Scottish Historical Review* 73 (1994), and idem "Meeting in Norway"; Beuermann *Man, Kings, Bishops*: 37-48, idem *Masters*: 29-32. For King Hákon cf e.g. Sturla Þórðarson's *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar in Eirspemill AM 47 fol Noregs konunga sögur: Magnús góði – Hákon gamli*. ed. Finnur Jónsson, Den norske historiske kildeskriftkommission Christiania, 1913-1916; or *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, *Det Arnamagnæanske Håndskrift 81A Fol*. (Skálholtsbók yngsta) eds. A. Kjær, (Continued on next page)

If the campaign of 1209/10 was nothing but an old-style Viking raid it would be difficult to see any connection to King John's attack on Man. The *Manx Chronicle's* description of English devastation and hostage-taking does not allow us to depict John as defending Man against the Norwegians (which might otherwise explain why the Norwegians did not advance further south). John was clearly punishing the Manx. The other scenario seems just as unrealistic: it is unlikely that John was punishing the Manx for their equally unlikely collusion with the Norwegians. However, the saga-style with its focus on personal motivations and its notorious reluctance to note political reasons behind events might be misleading. To evaluate it properly, it is necessary to look more closely at the background and the consequences of the campaign.

To begin with, it needs to be stressed that it was the first Norwegian military intervention in the Isles for more than a century, the first since King Magnús *berfútr's* expeditions to the west in 1098-1103 (King Eysteinn in c.1152 only sailed to the Orkneys, and then down the Scottish and English east coasts). Any Norwegian resuscitation after such a long slumber might well send shock-waves down the Hebrides. A close reading of *Böglunga Sögur* also raises doubts about the private 'Viking' character of the Norwegian expedition. The sagas underline the actors' wish to raise money, but they also note that the deliberations about a campaign began immediately after the meeting at Hvitingsøy had concluded its main business, a peace treaty between the warring Norwegian factions. This compromise reached at Hvitingsøy marked the beginning of the end of the Norwegian wars of succession. As such, it is an important milestone in the recovery of the Norwegian crown.

The Norwegian wars of succession had begun in the 1130s, when King Magnús Sigurðarson attempted to abolish the system of joint kingship, under which any Norwegian king's son was entitled to reign as (co-)king with his relatives. During the 1150s, the strengthened Norwegian church

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L. Holm-Olsen, Den norske historiske kildeskritikkommisjon, Christiania/Oslo, 1910-1986; (trsl. *The Saga of Hacon and a Fragment of the Saga of Magnus with appendices*, by Sir G.W. Dasent, Facsimile Reprint, Felinfach, 1997). Most recent discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 323-352. Just as the campaigners of 1209/10, King Eysteinn was also reprimanded for raiding ecclesiastical institutions upon his return to Norway. Eysteinn had secured Earl Haraldr Maddaðarson of Orkney's submission. Cf *Haraldssona saga* in Hkr: ch.20, *Orkneyinga Saga*: ch.91; discussion Beuermann *Man, Kings, Bishops*: 52-61; idem *Masters*: 244-248.

joined the conflict, fighting for a single Christian king who would succeed under the rules of primogeniture. Although there was no shortage of then officially disqualified illegitimate kings' sons who challenged these new rules militarily, until King Sverrir's appearance in 1176/7 it seemed as if the crowned and anointed King Magnús Erlingsson together with Archbishop Eysteinn would be successful in monopolising the throne. Then Sverrir and his *Birkibeinar* ('Birchlegs') managed to fight their way to the crown, but the supporters of Magnús Erlingsson's line and the church, the *Baglar* ('Crozier'), continued to oppose his rule. After Sverrir's death, his son King Hákon reached a first compromise with the church, which broke up the hitherto clear lines of conflict. The church gave up its almost unanimous opposition to the militarily stronger Birchlegs and its continuing support to the Croziers, which had precluded a clear victory for either side throughout the second half of the twelfth century. It came to adopt a more impartial stance, and in 1208, it brokered a general peace deal, known as the treaty of Hvitingsøy. There was to be only one king of Norway, the Birchlegs King Ingi Bárðarson (reigned 1204-17). His half-brother and the Crozier king were accorded the lower title *jarl*.<sup>52</sup>

At Hvitingsøy this fundamental agreement was reached in the presence of Birchlegs and Crozier kings, of archbishop, bishops, and important nobles. It is unlikely that an expedition debated in connection with such an important meeting was nothing more than a private outing of impoverished fighters who *begierede* [...] *Orloff*, 'wanted war'.<sup>53</sup> And although there is at first sight no mention of the Norwegian crown in the planning, there are indications that it might indeed have supported or even devised the plan. That the Icelandic Annals take note of the preparations for a campaign might imply activities more formal than the private outfitting of a fleet.<sup>54</sup> *Böglunga Sögur's* short version records in detail the names of the main participants – as is to be expected in a saga – and surprisingly, this was a joint expedition of Birchlegs and Croziers:

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52 For the treaty of Hvitingsøy cf *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* ch.5; for the whole period also *Böglunga Sögur*. Outlines over the Norwegian developments 1202-1210 are in Munch *Historie*: 421-545; K. Helle *Norge Blir en Stat 1130-1319*, Oslo 1964: chs. 14-17; idem *Under Kirke og Kongemakt 1130-1350, Aschehougs Norges Historie bind 3*, Oslo 1995: 70-74. Biographic entries on the Norwegian kings for the period 1202-1217 are in J. Skaadel, S.E. Skarsbø *Norske Kongar og Regentar*; Oslo 1998: 54-57.

53 BSö (PCF), ii: 119, my trsl.

54 ISLA s.a. 1209 (*Annales Regii*: 123, cf *Skálholts-Annaler*: 182), trsl ES ii: 378, cf above note 40.



*Þat sumar fóru þeir í viking í Suðreyjar Þormóðr Þasrámr ok Þormóðr fylbeinn, Óspakr suðreyski. Þessi váru af Birkibeinum. En af Böglum var Eiríkr Tófason ok Eiríkr ok Erlendr Þíkr, Bergr maull, Nikulás gilli.*

That summer, Thormod Thasramr, and Thormod Foal's-leg, [and] Uspak the Hebridean, went on piracy into the Hebrides; these were Birchlegs. And of the Croziers there were Eric, Tofi's son, and Eric, and Erlend Þíkr, Berg Maull, Nicholas Gilli.<sup>55</sup>

Might these Birchlegs and Croziers have been sent out together, by King Ingi Bárðarson? A common expedition abroad, made up of former adversaries, might support his newly-accepted status as sole king of Norway. At the very least, potential troublemakers would be out of the country for a time, allowing King Ingi to secure what had been achieved at Hvitingsøy. And with luck, old enmities might even be buried in the face of a common aim or foe. If the campaign was not initiated by King Ingi, it would at least have been in his interest to support it.

If one leaves the inner-Norwegian scene, the argument that the Norwegian campaign of 1209/10 was more than a Viking raid becomes even stronger. *Böglunga Sögur's* long version has one half-sentence which might indicate political aims beyond Norway's shores: *Kongerne i de yjer hafde indbiurdis Feide met huer andre*, 'the kings in the islands had civil war among themselves'.<sup>56</sup> This could refer to the fighting involving the meic Somairle mentioned above. It may equally mean the long, dramatic and eventually fratricidal conflict between Rögnvaldr and his brother Óláfr over who was the legitimate king of Man and the Isles.<sup>57</sup> Icelanders and Norwegians would have known about the conflict at least since 1202, since in that year the Icelandic bishop-elect Guðmundr Arason met Óláfr konungr on his way to

55 BSö (E), ii: 119-120, trsl. ES ii: 379. This is all the short version notes about the Norwegian-Manx/Orcadian contacts of 1209-1211, since it ends shortly afterwards, cf above note 38.

56 BSö (PCF) ii: 119, trsl. ES ii: 379.

57 CM (Brod) f.41v.-44v. When the conflict began is not clear. In c.1208 Olaf was imprisoned. The conflict ended with Rögnvaldr's killing on 14 Feb. 1229, but it rekindled after Óláfr's death in 1237 amongst the brothers' descendants on several occasions until at least 1254, cf CM (Brod) f.47r., 49r.; notes in CM (Munch) 179, 180, 184, discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 290-294.

Norway.<sup>58</sup> Such serious unrest would of course weaken the Isles, and might therefore simply have been mentioned because it facilitated raiding by the Norwegians. But it might also have invited King Ingi Bárðarson's attention as official overlord of Man and the Isles. In similar situations, his successor King Hákon Hákonarson (reigned 1217-63) intervened quite forcefully on several occasions, attempting to make peace in Man and the Isles by establishing his preferred candidates as sub-kings there.<sup>59</sup> In 1229/30, Hákon named Gille Easbuig mac Dubgall, a grandson of Somairle who was then in Norway, king of the Isles, and put him in command of an (unsuccessful) expedition to make good this claim. This individual is probably better known as Óspakr *suðreyjski* or Uspak (-Hákon).<sup>60</sup> The expedition of 1229/30 was Óspakr's second one to the west. The first was the one of 1209/10, where he appears among the Birchlegs (see above). Admittedly, this alone can neither prove that King Ingi Bárðarson did in fact send Óspakr and the others to the Isles, nor, if he did, that Ingi intended to have a say in Manx/Isles kingship.<sup>61</sup> However, as the following discussion shall show, it might well have been the case.

While proof for King Ingi Bárðarson's hand in the Hebridean part of the expedition is lacking, *Böglunga Sögur's* long version gives highly significant information about the Orcadian part: *Den Sommer som Vikingerne (det er de Norske Siørøfuere) drog Vester ofuer Hafuit, efter Kongernis forligelse, da fore Kongen Befalningsmænd met dennem til Ørknøi oc Hætland*, 'in that summer in which the vikings (that is, the Norwegian pirates) went west beyond the sea, after the reconciliation of the kings, the king's officers went

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58 Guðmundr Arason was blown off course to the Hebrides on the way from Iceland to Norway in 1202. A somewhat unseemly conflict ensued between him and an *Óláfr konungr* over landing-dues to be paid, probably on Canna, before a compromise was eventually agreed upon. The Icelander then continued their journey to Norway. *Hrafnis Saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, ed. G.P. Helgadóttir, Oxford 1987: 20-22, and notes: 76 (cf there and Power "Meeting in Norway": 41-43 also for Canna); trsl ES ii, 358-360. *Guðmundar saga goða* in *Sturlunga Saga*, ed. G. Vigfusson, Oxford 1878, i: 125 mentions the stay in the Suðreyjars briefly. Discussion Á. Egilsdóttir "Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, Pilgrim and Martyr" in G. Williams, P. Bibire (eds.) *Sagas, Saints and Settlements*, Leiden and Boston 2004: 29-39, and notes CM (Munch) 180.

59 Discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 324-339.

60 Cf above note 11. CM (Brod) f.44v. describe him as "*uirum quendam nobilem de regali genere nomine Husbac filum Owmundi*" ("*a certain nobleman of royal stock by the name of Ospak, son of Owmund*").

61 It is also interesting to note that both Birchlegs and Croziers (with Nicholas Gilli) each included an individual with Hebridean connections, BSö (E), ii: 119-120.

with them to Orkney and Shetland'.<sup>62</sup> This is, finally, direct evidence for the Norwegian crown's involvement in the campaign of 1209/10. The expedition *may* have 'descended into anarchy' in the Isles,<sup>63</sup> but it at least *also* had an official political duty, to send messengers to the earls of Orkney. The (joint) earls of Orkney, Jón and Davíð Haraldsson, had contacted King Ingi Bárðarson first, as soon as they heard about the treaty of Hvitingsøy and realised the implications for Norwegian royal power.<sup>64</sup> One wonders whether a newly strengthened Norwegian king had not also received a message from Óláfr Guðröðarson. The *Manx Chronicle* records how Óláfr approached his brother Rögnvaldr, reminding him that their father Guðröðr had named him as his successor, and as king over more lands than the Isle of Lewis to which he had hitherto been confined. Rögnvaldr reacted by bundling his brother off to Scotland, where Óláfr was imprisoned by King William.<sup>65</sup> Rögnvaldr's action is surprising, even if Óláfr enjoyed wider support in Man and the Isles. Óláfr was not kept in one of Rögnvaldr's castles, but outwith Man and the Isles. With that, Óláfr was also outwith the lands officially under the Norwegian king's overlordship, and if this was what Rögnvaldr really intended with this move, then this might indicate that Rögnvaldr feared King Ingi Bárðarson's intervention, possibly because Óláfr had brought his grievances to Ingi's notice. Óspakr, amongst others, might have been sent in reply.

In short, the foregoing discussion of the background for the Norwegian expedition of 1209/10 justifies reservations that it was a mere Viking raid. A consideration of events in the campaign's wake leaves no doubt that rulers in Man and the Isles saw it as something far more serious. It has been

62 BSö (PCF), ii: 120-121, trsl. ES ii: 380, 381.

63 Power "Meeting in Norway": 39.

64 John and David, "*holt Landene ligesom deris fader [Haraldr Maddaðarson] saa lenge som indbyrdis Feide var i Norrig, men der de spurde at Kongerne vaare forligte, sende de Bisp Biørn til Norrig, hand fand K. Ingi oc Hagen Jarl i Bergen, oc gaff dennem Grefuernis ærinde tilkiende, at de begierde at forligis met dennem, oc det kom saa langt at hand tog Leide paa deris vegne aff Kongen oc Grefuen, at Grefuerne skulde komme til dennem den Sommer der efter, oc forligis met dennem.*" ("held the lands as their father had done, so long as there was civil war in Norway. But when they heard that the kings were reconciled, [the earls] sent bishop Biarni to Norway. He found king Ingi and earl Hakon in Bergen, and acquainted them with the earls' message, that they desired to be reconciled with them. And this went so far that he got safe-conducts for them from the king and the earl, that the earls might come to them the following summer, and be reconciled with them.") BSö (PCF), ii: 120-121, trsl. ES ii: 380, 381.

65 CM (Brod) f.41v., 42r. Cf above note 51.

pointed out that the *Manx Chronicle* notes Rögnvaldr's absence from Man when the English attacked in 1210.<sup>66</sup> The question is where exactly Rögnvaldr was at that time. One possibility is that he was simply further north, possibly in Skye, where he might have been involved in the fighting noted above. The other possibility is that Rögnvaldr was in fact in Norway in 1210. *Böglunga Sögur* give evidence for Rögnvaldr's presence there, but due to the only partial survival of the sagas' two versions, questions have been raised about the date of Rögnvaldr's visit, 1209, 1210, or 1211. Obviously, there can only be a connection with the Norwegian campaign of 1209/10 if Rögnvaldr's journey postdates the appearance of the Norwegians in the west. And there can only be a connection with King John's attack if Rögnvaldr's departure predates it.

A close reading of sources and scholarly comments establishes that Rögnvaldr must have been in Norway in 1210. *Böglunga Sögur* note: *Der de Norske Vikinger nu hafde suærmæt der omkring Øen, oc ruit oc brent, [...] droge [Kongerne] til Norrig*, 'when the Norwegian Vikings had now swarmed there about the island, and plundered and burned [...] [the kings] went to Norway'. This happened *den anden Sommer der efter*, 'the next summer after that', after the beginning of the campaign in 1209.<sup>67</sup> Although Ole Worm's dating to 1211 is printed in the margin of Magerøy's edition (for the expedition!), Magerøy himself notes that this is erroneous. He agrees with Munch in dating the beginning of the Norwegian expedition to the west to 1209, and, crucially, the ensuing visit by Rögnvaldr to 1210.<sup>68</sup> This result based on *Böglunga Sögur*'s internal dating is supported if the evidence of the Icelandic Annals is added. They note clearly that ecclesiastical contacts were re-established between Man and the Isles and Norway (see below) in 1210.<sup>69</sup> Since it is highly likely that the ecclesiastical and secular visits were connected, the year 1210 for Rögnvaldr's journey to Norway appears

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66 CM (Brod) f.41v.

67 BSö (PCF) ii, 120, 121, trsl. ES ii: 381.

68 For 1211 in the margin BSö ii, 120. For Magerøy's comment: "ikkje år '1211', som Ole Worm har sett i margen, men år 1209" for the campaign, and " 'sommaren etterpå, [...] d.e., år 1210" for the Orkney earls's visit, BSö i: 167 note 260. For Rögnvaldr cf his comment "Kongane på Suderøyane og Man for truleg til Noreg same året som Orknøyjarlane", BSö i: 167 note 261. Ole Worm was the Danish scholar who printed Friis' translation in 1633. Cf Munch 1852-63: 541, 542; also ES ii: 381, 382.

69 IslA s.a. 1210: *Annales regii* (C-version, Storm: 123), *Skálholts Annaler* (D-version, Storm: 182), *Oddaveria Annal* (L-version, Storm: 478).

convincing. It is difficult to be more precise, but it may be assumed that, after the Norwegian fleet had turned up in 1209, Rögnvaldr would have sailed there in the spring of 1210, as soon as weather permitted, i.e., possibly in April or May. Consequently, Rögnvaldr would have left Man before King John's attack on Man which was only ordered from Carrickfergus at some time between 16 and 29 July 1210.<sup>70</sup>

Having established that the likely dating of Rögnvaldr's visit to Norway would allow for it to have been a consequence of the Norwegian raid, and a cause of the English one, it remains to examine what exactly happened during Rögnvaldr's stay in Norway. The whole entry in *Böglunga Sögur's* longer version, the only source for events, runs as follows:

*Ragnwald Konge aff Møen oc syder ø, oc Gudroder Konge paa Manø hafde icke udi land tid gifuit Kongerne udi Norrig skat. Der de Norske Vikinger nu hafde suærmet der omkring Øen, oc ruit oc brent, oc Kongerne fornomme at der var fred giort i Norrig, da frycte de sig, oc droge til Norrig oc forligte sig met K. Ingi oc Hagen Jarl, oc betalede den Skat, som igienstod, oc suore dennem troskab oc lydighed, oc toge deris Land udi Læn aff Norrigs Koning, oc droge saa hiem igjen.*

Rögnvaldr king of Man and the Sudreys, and Guðröðr king in Man had not for a long time given tribute to the kings in Norway. When the Norwegian Vikings had now swarmed there about the island, and plundered and burned; and [when] the kings understood that there was peace made in Norway, they were afraid, and went to Norway, and reconciled themselves with king Ingi and earl Hakon, and paid the tribute that stood over, and swore them loyalty and obedience, and took their land in fief of the king of Norway, and so went home again.<sup>71</sup>

Firstly, with this *Böglunga Sögur* make it quite clear that Rögnvaldr was alarmed by the re-invigorated Norwegian crown, and by its 'envoys', and

70 ALC i: 242. King John sent a fleet to Man after occupying Carrickfergus, where he was between 16 and 29 July 1210 (ES ii: 383 n.4). John's Irish campaign apparently lasted from 16 x 20 June to 24 x 26 August 1210, ES ii: 383 n.4.

71 BSö (PCF), ii: 120-121, trsl. ES ii: 381, where I have changed *Ronald, king of Möen in the Hebrides, and Godfrey, king over the island of Man to Rögnvaldr king of Man and the Sudreys, and Guðröðr king in Man; and taxes to tribute.*

that his journey was a result of this. Secondly, this entry in *Böglunga Sögur* gives evidence for the most far-reaching submission documented for any Manx/Isles king to the Norwegian crown since 1079.

Around 1100, King Magnús *berfútr* took the initiative and might have envisaged direct Norwegian rule also of Man and the Isles through his son Sigurðr and ultimately the latter's expected issue with his Irish bride, but these plans came to nothing.<sup>72</sup> In 1152x54, Guðröðr Ólafsson sailed to Norway of his own accord; he probably paid tribute (although there is no record of this), and *hominium suum ei fecit*, 'he paid him [King Ingi Haraldsson *krokryggr*] homage'.<sup>73</sup> There is no record of Guðröðr's official dealings with the Norwegian crown for 1160-4. He probably repeated his homage, but it is doubtful whether he then paid tribute. The most detailed clarification of Manx/Isles-Norwegian relations was given to King Henry II by Guðröðr Ólafsson's envoy, the bishop of Sodor in 1166, and recorded by Robert of Torigny. He notes that Man and another thirty-one islands

*sunt inter Scotiam et Hiberniam et Angliam. Illas xxij. insulas tenet rex Insularum tali tributo de rege Norwegiae, quod, quando rex innovatur, rex Insularum dat ei decem marcas auri, nec aliquid facit ei in tota vita sua, nisi iterum alius rex ordinetur in Norwegia*

are between Scotland and Ireland and England; these thirty-two islands the king of the Isles holds of the king of Norway in such tribute that, when a new king succeeds, the king of the Isles gives to him ten marks of gold, and does naught else for him in his whole life, unless again another king is appointed in Norway.<sup>74</sup>

Between 1164 and 1210 there is no record of any visits between Manx/Isles kings and the Norwegian crown. In short, Norwegian kings were the official overlords and entitled to tribute upon their (!) accession since at least 1152/3, a tribute which had *de facto* hardly ever been paid.<sup>75</sup> There is no

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72 Cf the references quoted above, note 45.

73 CM (Brod) f.36r.

74 Robert of Torigny *Chronica* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, IV, ed. R. Howlett, Rolls Series, London 1889: 228, 229; trsl SAEC: 245. Also Lawrie *Annals of Malcolm and William*: 114, 115.

75 Discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 244-248.

mention of the Guðröðarsons' territorial dependency on Norway, of any *lèn* or *beneficium* until 1210.<sup>76</sup>

*Böglunga Sögur*'s claim that in 1210 the Manx/Isles kings *toge deris Land udi Læn aff Norrigs Koning*, 'and took their land in fief of the king of Norway'<sup>77</sup> is also quite trustworthy. Rögnvaldr was not the only ruler from the British Isles to sail to Norway in that year. The two new earls of Orkney, Jón and Davíð Haraldsson, also paid a visit to King Ingi Bárðarson, with similar results: they swore *troskab oc lydighed, men paa det sidste giorde K. Ingi dennem til sine Grefuer ofuer Ørknøi oc Hætland*, 'loyalty and obedience, [b]ut in the end, king Ingi made them his earls over Orkney and Shetland'.<sup>78</sup> This was after *Kongens Befalingsmend* travelling with the fleet had visited them in Orkney in 1209.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, what *Böglunga Sögur* show is that in 1210 King Ingi was deliberately re-defining his position as overlord of Norse rulers in the British Isles. This concerned the Orkney earls, whose dependent status had already been established in 1195,<sup>80</sup> and, crucially here,

76 Arguably, Rögnvaldr did not intend to honour his oaths to Ingi. Cf the entry in CM (Brod) f.33r. "*Unde accidit ut usque in hodiernum diem tota insula solius regis sit & omnes redditus eius ad ipsum pertineant.*" "*Whence it has come to pass that up until the present day the entire island is the property of the king alone, and all dues belong to him.*") describing Guðröðr Ólafsson's understanding of his 'title' to Man and the Isles following his conquest of Man in 1079. Since this was written in 1257, Guðröðr's distant descendant Magnús Ólafsson apparently did (still) not accept Norwegian territorial overlordship. Rögnvaldr himself offered the Isle of Man to the Roman church in 1219, to be held in fief in return for an annual payment of twelve marks sterling. He asserts that he rules "*Insulam nostram de Man, quae ad nos jure hereditario pertinet, et de qua nulli tenemur aliquod servitium facere*" ("*our Island of Man, which of hereditary right belongs to Us, and for which We are bounden to no one in any manner of service*"). For Rögnvaldr's letter to Pope Honorius Mon Ins Man: 53-57; CM (Munch) 290-293 (quote at 290). For Honorius' reply Mon Ins Man: 64-66; DN vii: no.9; CM (Munch) 301, 302; cf ES ii: 455. An early 17th c fresco in the Vatican Secret Archives commemorates the event, cf [http://asv.vatican.va/en/visit/p\\_nob/p\\_nob\\_3s\\_10.htm](http://asv.vatican.va/en/visit/p_nob/p_nob_3s_10.htm), details Beuermann *Masters*: 378.

77 BSö (PCF), ii: 120-121.

78 BSö (PCF), ii: 121, trsl. ES ii: 381.

79 BSö (PCF), ii: 120.

80 In the case of Orkney the submission of 1210 is less surprising than for Man & the Isles: after his participation in the failed *Eyskjeggjar* ("island-beards") rebellion in support of Sigurðr, son of King Magnús Erlingsson, and against King Sverrir in 1193/94, Jón and Davíð's father Haraldr Maddaðarson submitted in 1195, suffering as a punishment the dismantlement of the old-style earldom of Orkney. Shetland was placed under direct royal Norwegian control; the earl received Orkney as a fief and became himself a

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it also affected the kings of Man and the Isles. In 1210, Rögnvaldr saw his official status reduced from tributary client-king to enfeoffed vassal.

This was paralleled by the re-establishment of closer Norwegian-Manx/Isles contacts in the ecclesiastical sphere. Until 1210, the only bishop of Sodor consecrated by the archbishop of Nidaros had been Rögnvaldr *norwegiensis genere*, 'Norwegian by birth', who in all likelihood arrived in Man from Norway together with Guðröðr Ólafsson in 1154. Then, the Manx king had been desperate to secure a bishop for his vacant see, in order to safeguard the independence of the Manx/Isles church from Dublin.<sup>81</sup> Bishop Rögnvaldr's successors, Bishops Christian of Argyll and Michael of Man, were probably consecrated either at York and or Armagh, certainly not at Nidaros and also not at Lund during archbishop Eiríkr's exile there.<sup>82</sup> The Norse world was acutely aware of this (in its view) deplorable situation, which had of course also been canonically irregular since Sodor's inclusion into the church province of Nidaros in 1153. The entry in the Icelandic Annals for 1210 makes no bones about the Norwegian view that the English- or Irish-consecrated bishops of Sodor during those four decades did not count: *Pá hafði þar xl vetra byskoplávst verit síðan Nemar byskop var*, 'they had

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(Continued from previous page)

member of the king's hirð (body-guard/court). With that, any pretensions to independent princely rule of the earls of Orkney were over. In the light of these developments Jón and Davíð's submission to King Ingi Bárðarson a few years later was to be expected. OSa ch.112, *Íslenzk Fornrit* (ÍF) 297; trsl. *Orkneyinga saga*, Hermann Pálsson & Paul Edwards (HP&PE) 224. Cf S. Imsen "Earldom and Kingdom. Orkney in the Realm of Norway 1195-1379" (*Norsk Historisk Tidsskrift* 79 (2000)); B.E. Crawford "The Earldom of Caithness and the Kingdom of Scotland, 1150-1266" in K.J. Stringer (ed.): *Essays on the Nobility of Medieval Scotland*, Edinburgh 1985, and in gen. J.S. Clouston *A History of Orkney*, Kirkwall 1932; W.P.L. Thomson *History of Orkney*, Edinburgh 1987. For the 1195 reorganisation *Sverris saga* in *Eirspennill AM 47 fol Noregs konunga sögur: Magnús góði – Hákon gamli*, ed. F. Jónsson, Den norske historiske kildeskriftkommission, Christiania 1913-1916: chs. 124, 125; cf ES ii: 331-341, 344-346. Outline Thomson *History*: 68-78.

- 81 CM (Brod) f.36v., 50v., discussion Beuermann *Man, Kings, Bishops*; idem "Metropolitan Ambitions and Politics: Kells-Mellifont and Man and the Isles", *Peritia* 16 (2003); idem *Masters*: 26-53. Rögnvaldr was in all likelihood the envoy sent by Guðröðr Ólafsson to Henry II in 1166. He died around 1170. CM (Brod) f.50v. For his death *IslA* s.a. 1210; where the note of Nemar's death in 1170 refers to Rögnvaldr; cf ES ii: 382.
- 82 For Archbishop Eiríkr (el.1188, cons.1189, res.1205, d.1206) *IslA*: 122 (s.a. 1202: "*Eiríkr erchibyskup kom i lannd*"); *Guðmundar saga goða* ch.60. Cf O. Kolsrud "Den norske Kirkes Erkebiskoper og Biskoper indtil Reformationen", *DN XVII B* i: 200, 201. In Denmark, Eiríkr stayed with Archbishop Absalom of Lund (1178-1201) from 1190-1202.



been forty years without a bishop since Nemar was bishop there'. Nemar is taken to refer to the Bishop Rögnvaldr in the mid-twelfth century.<sup>83</sup> In 1210, this withdrawal of Sodor from its metropolitan, the archbishop of Nidaros, was to end: *Vigðr Koli byskop til Svðréyja*, 'Koli was consecrated as bishop in the Sudreys'.<sup>84</sup>

There is one more important piece of information in this context. The Icelandic Annals' 'Koli' was probably not a Norwegian, but he is in all likelihood identical with the *Manx Chronicle's nicholaus ercheadiensis genere*, Nicholas, 'a native of Argyll'.<sup>85</sup> This means that King Rögnvaldr was not presented with a bishop during his stay in Norway, but that Nicholas/Koli must have travelled there together with him. With that, Nicholas/Koli would be the first native bishop of Sodor to be consecrated at Nidaros.

Reconciled after the treaty of Hvitingsøy, the Norwegian crown and church together had indeed tightened the reins on which they kept the Manx/Isles kings and bishops. And this, from the English point of view, must have been alarming. Taken together, the various sources show that in 1210 the king of Man and the Isles sailed to the resurgent crown of Norway in the company of his son Guðröðr, of the bishop-elect Nicholas/Koli, and of his *optimates*, his nobles.<sup>86</sup> King, son, bishop-elect and nobles – this was a major embassy of all the most important people in Man and the Isles. Worse, the implication is that Rögnvaldr did not travel to Norway for some other unknown reason, and that, once there, his arm was twisted so that he reluctantly had to accept what surprising terms King Ingi and archbishop fiÚrir dictated.<sup>87</sup> A careful interpretation of this exodus of high-ranking people immediately after the shock of the Norwegian military expedition is that Rögnvaldr knowingly journeyed to Norway in order to address important political and ecclesiastical matters. A less careful interpretation sees Rögnvaldr travel to the reunited Norwegian crown and archbishop in order to do homage, pay tribute, receive Man and the Isles in fief, and have

83 IsIA s.a. 1210 (C-version: 123), my trsl; (cf D-version: 182); also ES ii: 381, 382.

84 IsIA s.a. 1210 C-version (Storm: 123), my trsl; cf D-version (Storm: 182); also ES ii: 381, 382.

85 CM (Brod) f.41r.; after Michael's death in 1203 there was probably a vacancy in Sodor; cf D.E.R. Watt *Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticanae Medii Aevi ad Annum 1638*: 200; J. Dowden *The Bishops of Scotland*, Glasgow 1912: 274, 275; Kolsrud *Erkebiskoper*: 321-323.

86 BSö (PCF) ii: 121 for Rögnvaldr and his son Guðröðr (cf ES ii: 381); CM (Brod) f.41r. for Nicholas/Koli of Argyll; CM (Brod) f.41v. for the nobles.

87 Þórir Guðmundarson succeeded Eiríkr Ívarsson in 1206; Kolsrud *Erkebiskoper*: 201.

Nicholas/Koli consecrated bishop of Sodor. And, undoubtedly, the less benevolent view was King John's.

John was not the first English king to be wary about Manx/Isles' connections with Norway. King Henry II's relations with Wales and Scotland have received rather more attention than those with Man and the Isles, when he resumed his grandfather Henry I's more active policy within the British Isles after his accession in 1154. But Henry II reacted quickly when a king of Man and the Isles travelled to Norway. The above-noted clarification of Manx/Isles-Norwegian relations recorded by Robert of Torigny in 1166 occurred shortly after Guðröðr Ólafsson had returned from there. Guðröðr's prior contact with Henry II had been friendly, but limited, and Guðröðr had not received greater gifts.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, Henry II was interested to know what exactly the Manx/Isles kings owed to the Norwegian crown, and the wording in Torigny's *Chronica* seems to indicate that Guðröðr reassured Henry II that his obligations were limited.<sup>89</sup>

Contrary to his father Guðröðr, Rögnvaldr had received more valuable gifts from the English crown. As detailed above, in 1206 and 1207 King John had granted him money, and, especially, property in Lancaster – not a one-off payment as to Godred in 1158, but English lands that would yield these revenues yearly.<sup>90</sup> It is no wonder that King John was not amused when the recipient of these gifts three years later travelled to Norway to submit to King Ingi.

The reasons for John's greater interest in the west lie in the geo-political changes of the intervening four decades. Whereas, in 1166, Henry II as ruler of an English-Continental Angevin Empire was inter alia keeping an eye on Man and the Isles, in 1210 his son John, much reduced on the Continent (having lost Anjou, Normandy and Brittany) but lord of Ireland, required pliable client-kings in the west, to safeguard English control of the Irish Sea.<sup>91</sup> What the English crown wanted from the Godredssons is probably

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88 Cf above note 4.

89 "*nec aliquid facit ei in tota vita sua, nisi iterum alius rex ordinetur in Norwegia*" (and does naught else for him in his whole life, unless again another king is appointed in Norway."), Robert of Torigny *Chronica*: 228, 229, trsl SAEC: 245, Lawrie *Annals of Malcolm and William*: 114, 115.

90 Mon Ins Man: 27-29; cf above notes 20, 21.

91 And, possibly, to forestall a rebellion in favour of his Continental enemy King Philip of France in Ireland, cf only recent overview J. Lydon *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages*, Dublin 2003: 68-73, esp. 70, 71.

most clearly expressed in a later letter written by John's son Henry III to his Justiciar in Ireland, informing him that money, corn and wine would be handed yearly *nostro Olavo, Regi Manniæ et Insularum, pro homagio suo et servitio custodiendi, ad custum suum, costeram maris Angliæ versus Hiberniam et versus insulam de Mannia, et similiter costeram maris Hiberniæ versus Angliam, et versus prædictam insulam de Man' ne dampnum prædictis terris nostris Angliæ et Hiberniæ*, 'to Olave, King of Mann and the Islands, for his homage and service in guarding, at his own cost, the coast of the sea of England towards Ireland, and towards the Isle of Mann, and likewise the coast of the sea of Ireland towards England, and towards the aforesaid Isle of Mann, lest injury might happen to the aforesaid our lands of England and Ireland'.<sup>92</sup>

The Guðröðarsons, adequately recompensed, were employed as coastguards in the west by the English crown. King John, intent on maintaining his authority in the British Isles (as his contemporary contacts with Scotland, Ireland and Wales show<sup>93</sup>), could not accept any divided loyalties on Rögnvaldr's part between England and a resurgent Norway, a constellation which might in a crisis allow Rögnvaldr a bolt-hole. Continuing and intensifying Henry I's and Henry II's policies, John required the Manx/Isles kings as reliable supporters in the west. Hence, when Rögnvaldr was wavering in 1210, John attacked Man, to bring Rögnvaldr back to heel.

In line with his generally successful expansion of the "English Empire" within Britain and Ireland in the early thirteenth century, King John achieved his aims also with regard to Man and the Isles.<sup>94</sup> As soon as possible, in 1212, Rögnvaldr mended the rift with the English crown and announced in a charter: *Sciatis quod deveni homo ligius domini Regis Angliæ, Johannis, contra omnes mortalis quamdiu vixero, et inde ei fidelitatem et sacramentum præstiti*, 'know that I have become the liegeman of our lord, John, King of England, against all men, as long as I shall live, and that I have

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92 Letter by Henry III dated Westminster, 11 July 1235; *Mon Ins Man*: 72, 73.

93 Recent overviews Duffy "John and Ireland"; A.A.M. Duncan "John King of England and the Kings of Scots"; I.W. Rowlands "King John and Wales", all in S.D. Church (ed) *King John: New Interpretations*, Woodbridge, 1999/2003. Also Duncan *Kingship of the Scots*: ch.6; I.W. Rowlands "The 1201 Peace Between King John and Llywelyn ap Iorwerth" *Studia Celtica* 34 (2000).

94 R.R. Davies *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343*, Oxford 2000.

performed fealty, and oath to him'.<sup>95</sup> Rögnvaldr must have visited John in person, since on 3 June 1212 John paid 10 marks to Stephen of Oxford to conduct Rögnvaldr back to Man.<sup>96</sup> And a year later, in 1213, John showed his renewed trust in Rögnvaldr by releasing the hostages he had taken from Man in 1210, and sealing the reconciliation by granting Rögnvaldr a knight's fee at Carlingford in Ulster.<sup>97</sup> Most interestingly here, on the same day John also ordered his officials in Ireland that, *si qui Wikini vel alii* ('if any Wikini, or others') should attack Rögnvaldr, they should defend him against these, Rögnvaldr's and John's enemies.<sup>98</sup> Several possible attackers might have been called Wikini – for example participants of the fighting in the western seaboard, or supporters of Rögnvaldr's imprisoned brother Óláfr. But with regard to the recent show of force by Norway, it is likely that King John was (also) thinking of Norwegians. His attack on Man would thus have been the stick between two carrots.<sup>99</sup>

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- 95 Mon Ins Man: 31; CM (Munch) 289. Duncan "John King of England and the Kings of Scots", 264 discusses contacts between John and Rögnvaldr in the context of King William of Scotland's concerns about his succession and the meic Uilleim rebellions, and proposes that John summoned Rögnvaldr in 1212 to support William against the meic Uilleim, ensuring the Rögnvaldr would not back Gofraid son of Domnall.
- 96 DN xix: no 97.
- 97 For the hostages cf the letter dated 16 May 1213, Mon Ins Man: 33. The grant of lands was on the same day, Mon Ins Man: 35, 36.
- 98 Also dated 16 May 1213, Mon Ins Man: 34. Slightly later, on 3 January 1214, John issued a letter protecting Rögnvaldr's territory, Mon Ins Man: 37.
- 99 Discussion Beuermann *Masters*: 325, 326. The editor of Mon Ins Man explains in connection with Rögnvaldr's charter that this "was not done out of any love for King John, but in order to make [Reginald's] seat on the throne as firm as possible. Reginald, at the time, was in constant fear of his brother Olave, who was trying to dethrone him; and in order to secure himself, [...] became liegeman to the English king", Mon Ins Man: 31. But in 1212 and 1213, when Rögnvaldr published his charter and when John issued his letter protecting Rögnvaldr from the *Wikini*, Óláfr was still safely imprisoned in Scotland, CM (Brod) f.42r. Rögnvaldr may, of course, have anticipated that this would change with the impending death of King William – and indeed, in 1214 Óláfr was released. However, the warriors Rögnvaldr was protected against in 1213 cannot have been led by Óláfr in person. For the interpretation advanced here cf also the comment by A.W. Moore *A History of the Isle of Man*, London 1900, i: 118 that John "also ordered his officers in Ireland to assist Reginald against the Norwegian sea-rovers".