

Fall of the Ruary Dynasty

Summary

The Ruary dynasty, known as the “Red Kings,” was the second family to rule [Dael Riata](#), succeeding the founding [Riata](#) line. The dynasty collapsed in 528 following the death of Ruaridh X, leading to nineteen years of civil war and the eventual rise of the [Ranald](#) dynasty.

History

The fall of the Ruary dynasty, also known as the “Red Kings,” was a transformative and violent period in Daelian history that spanned nineteen years of conflict following the death of the last male monarch in 528. While the dynasty's end is often summarised as a simple lack of an heir, the histories reveal a complex web of internal betrayal, secret plots, and foreign intervention.

The Death of Ruaridh X

The dynasty formally ended in the male line with the death of Ruaridh X in the spring of 528. While some records suggest a natural end to the line, others indicate a more sinister collapse. The Sioltach family (the Earls of Duffjord) played a significant, though largely secret, role in the dynasty's downfall. Warned by the Fae that the Ruary era was ending, the Sioltach began funding alliances and supporting pirates on the Eastern Isles to undermine royal authority. They eventually supported a group of plotters who successfully deposed the old King. To avoid an immediate civil war, the Sioltach then turned on the very plotters they had supported, ensuring they were punished for the deposition.

The Role of Iain Gilruary

A pivotal factor in the dynasty's fall was the defection of [Iain Gilruary](#), a younger son of Ruaridh IX. Before the wars, Iain was a prominent figure in the royal household and served as the Chancellor of the [University of Dalreoch](#). When Fearchar Ranald began building a coalition to claim the throne, he recognized that he needed Ruary legitimacy to succeed. He persuaded Iain Gilruary to join his cause. Iain's support was particularly valuable because he was married to the third daughter of the “old King”, providing a direct link to the dying dynasty.

In exchange for his support and the legitimisation of the Ranald claim, Iain Gilruary was created the first Earl of [Dalmuir](#) and granted lands that had previously belonged to the Sithech clan, who had refused to support the Ranald claim. This created the House Gilruary, the only surviving cadet branch of the Ruary line.

Foreign Intervention and Civil War (529-547)

Following the dynastic collapse the vacuum left by the Ruarys triggered a foreign crisis. In the autumn

of 529, King Edmund I of Berenicia, a cousin of the Ruary kings, invaded Dael Riata to press his own claim to the throne. This intervention sparked the nineteen year long Wars of Independence. The threat from Berenicia served as the catalyst that eventually united the Dael Riatans. Fearchar and Alasdair Ranald successfully unified the warring tribes and noble houses against the southern invaders. During this time, other powerful families joined the Ranald coalition; notably, Malcolm Murchadh (the 1st Earl of Uisdean) allied with the Ranalds in 530 in exchange for the legitimisation of his status.

The Rise of the Ranalds

Fearchar Ranald and his brother Alasdair successfully consolidated power by 547, ending the wars of independence. Most of the ancestral Ruary lands went directly to the Ranalds as the new Sovereign line. Other families who supported the coalition, such as the [Sioltach](#) and [Murchadh](#), were rewarded with earldoms and lands previously held by Ruary loyalists. While the male line was gone, Ruary blood continued through the female line. The daughters and granddaughters of the Ruary kings were married into the noble families of the Ranald coalition to further legitimise the new order.

Relationships

People

- **Ruaridh X**: The final King of the Ruary dynasty who died without a male heir.
- [Iain Gilruary](#): The Ruary bastard whose support secured the Ranald succession.
- **Fearchar Ranald**: The first King of the Ranald dynasty.
- [Alasdair Ranald](#): The current Sovereign and descendant of the coalition leaders.
- [Murdo Sioltach](#): A descendant of the clan that secretly plotted for the Ruary downfall.

Places

- [University of Dalreoch](#): The institution once led by the Ruary bastard Iain Gilruary.
- [Dalmuir](#): The seat granted to the Ruary cadet branch following the civil war.
- [Caer Riata](#): The ancient capital and former seat of the Ruary kings.
- [Dael Riata](#): The kingdom reshaped by the dynastic transition.

[Skyss - Story Background](#) [Characters](#) [Skyss - Places](#) [Pantheon of Skyss](#) [Other Background](#)

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