

# ***GRANHOLM GENEALOGY***

***NORWEGIAN VIKING/ROYAL  
ANCESTRY***

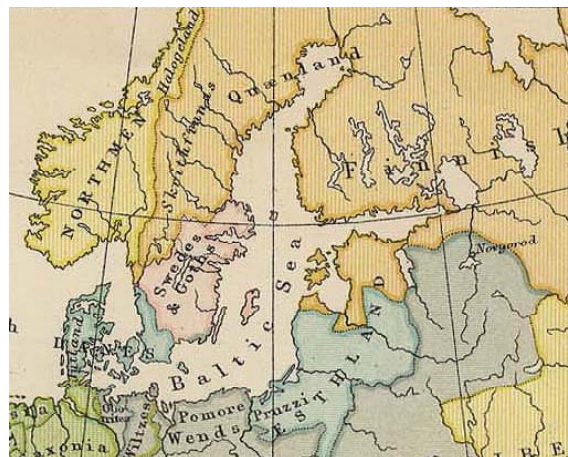
## INTRODUCTION

A previous part covered the Norwegian and Finnish ancestral mythical/historical royalty. This historical part of the Norwegian Royal Ancestry, begins with a united Norway's first king, Harald Fairhair (Hårfager), the son of King Halfdan, the last one in the previous part. This part covers our ancestry from King Harald and our relationship to the present king of Norway. Harald married Snofrid Svåsesdotter from Finland, who thus became the first Queen of Norway. See the saga below:

*King Harald, one winter, went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands, and had ordered a Christmas feast to be prepared for him at the farm Thoptar. On Christmas eve came Svase to the door, just as the king went to table, and sent a message to the king to ask if he would go out with him. The king was angry at such a message, and the man, who had brought it in, took out with him a reply of the king's displeasure. But Svase, notwithstanding, desired that his message should be delivered a second time; adding to it, that he was the Fin whose hut the king had promised to visit, and which stood on the other side of the ridge. Now the king went out, and promised to go with him, and went over the ridge to his hut, although some of his men dissuaded him. There stood Snaefrid, the daughter of Svase, a most beautiful girl; and she filled a cup of mead for the king. But he took hold both of the cup and of her hand. Immediately it was*



*as if a hot fire went through his body; and he wanted that very night to take her to his bed. But Svase said that should not be unless by main force, if he did not first make her his lawful wife. Now King Harald made Snaefrid his lawful wife, and loved her so passionately that he forgot his kingdom, and all that belonged to his high dignity. They had four sons: the one was Sigurd Hrise; the others Halfdan Haleg, Gudrod Ljome and Ragnvald Rettilbeine. Thereafter Snaefrid died; but her corpse never changed, but was as fresh and red as when she lived. The king sat always beside her, and thought she would come to life again. And so it went on for three years that he was sorrowing over her death, and the people over his delusion. ..."*



Political map as of 815

## Descendants of: Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

- 1 **Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway** #15104 b. 850 Hedemark, Norway d. 933 (32<sup>nd</sup> great grand father)  
m. **Ragnhild the Mighty Eriksdotter** #15802 b. 875 d. 897 (32<sup>nd</sup> great grand mother)  
[daughter of Eirik King of Jutland #16458]  
m. Tora Mosterstong Concubine #15803  
m. **Åshild Dagsdotter Queen of Norway** #15178  
m. **Svanhild Eysteinsdotter** #15559  
m. **Snofrid Svåsesdotter** #15105 (32<sup>nd</sup> great grand mother)  
[daughter of Svåse the Finn #15106]

[Children of Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway and Ragnhild the Mighty Eriksdotter]

- 2 **Eric Bloodaxe King of Norway** #15801 d. 952 (31<sup>st</sup> great grand father)  
m. **Gunhild "Mother of Kings"** #15800 b. 910 d. 980  
[daughter of Gorm den Gamle King of Denmark #15149 and Tyra Danebot Queen of Denmark #15148]

- 3 **Harald II Greycloak King of Norway** #15805 d. 976 (30<sup>th</sup> great grand father)

- 4 Bertrade Princess of Norway b. 970 (29<sup>th</sup> great grand mother)  
m. Bernhard II Duke von Sachsen b. 995 d. 1059

[Children of Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway and Tora Mosterstong Concubine]

- 2 **Haakon I the Good King of Norway** b. 920 d. 961 #15804 (32<sup>nd</sup> great uncle)

Children of Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway and Åshild Dagsdotter Queen of Norway]

- 2 Ingebjorg Princess of Norway #15179 (32<sup>nd</sup> great aunt)  
m. Håkon Grjotgardsson Earl of Lade #15809 b. 838 d. 900
- 3 Sigurd Haakonsson, Earl of Lade #15808 b. 895 d. 962 (first cousin, 32 times removed)  
m. Bergljot Toresdatter #15182 d. ABT 970  
[daughter of Tore "den tause" Earl of More #15187 and Ålov Årbot Haraldsdotter Princess of Norway #15186]

- 4 **Haakon II Sigurdsson King of Norway** #15807 d. 995 (second cousin, 31 times removed)

- 5 Aud Haakonsdotter Princess of Norway #15806 (third cousin, 30 times removed)  
m. Erik I the Victorious (Segersäll) King of Sweden #15158 b. ABT 945 d. 995 (31<sup>st</sup> great grand father)  
[son of Björn III "Den gamle" King of Sweden (Uppsala) #15159]

- 5 Eric Håkonarson King of Norway #15811 b. 960 d. 1020 (third cousin, 30 times removed)  
m. Gyda Sveinsdotter Princess of Denmark #15812 b. 980  
[daughter of Svein Tveskægg King of Denmark and England #15152 and Sigrid (Gunhild) Storråde Princess of Poland #15153]

- 6 Håkon Eiriksson Earl of Lade Ruler of Norway #15813 b. 995 d. 1030 Lost at sea (4<sup>th</sup> cousin, 29 times removed)

- 5 Sveinn Håkonarson King of Norway #15817 d. 1016 (third cousin, 30 times removed)

[Children of Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway and Svanhild Eysteinsdotter]

- 2 **Björn Haraldsson Farmann King of Vestfold** #15560 d. 927 (32<sup>nd</sup> great uncle)
- 3 **Gudrød Björnsson King of Vestfold** #15561 d. 968 Norway (first cousin, 32 times removed)
- 4 **Harald Grenski Gudrudsson King of Vestfold** #15092 (second cousin, 31 times removed)  
m. **Åsta Gudbrandsdotter Queen of Norway** #15091 b. 970 Russia d. 1020 [daughter of Gudbrand Kula #15562]
- 5 **Saint Olaf II Haraldsson King of Norway** #15563 b. 995 d. July 29, 1030 (third cousin, 30 times removed)  
m. **Alvhild** #16604
- 6 **Magnus I the Good King of Norway** #15824 b. 1024 d. October 25, 1047 (4<sup>th</sup> cousin, 29 times removed)

- 2 **Olaf II Haraldsson Geirstadalf King of Vestfold** #15814 d. 934 (32<sup>nd</sup> great uncle)

- 3 **Tryggve Olafsson King of Norway** #15815 d. 963 (first cousin, 32 times removed)  
m. **Astrid Eriksdotter** #16614

- 4 **Olaf I King of Norway** #15816 b. 960 d. September 9 1000 (second cousin, 31 times removed)

[Children of Harald I (Hårfager) King of Norway and Snofrid Svåsesdotter]

- 2 **Sigurd "Rese" Haraldsson King of Norway** #15103 b. 895 Norway (31<sup>st</sup> great grand father)

3 **Halvdan Sigurdsson of Hadafylke** #15102 b. 930 d. 1018 Hadafylke, Norway (30th great grand father)

4 **Sigurd Syr King of Ringerike, Norway** #15090 b. 960 Norway (29th great grand father)

m. **Åsta Gudbrandsdotter Queen of Norway** #15091 m. 995 b. 970 Russia d. 1020 [daughter of Gudbrand Kula #15562]

[Children of Sigurd Syr King of Ringerike, Norway and Åsta Gudbrandsdotter Queen of Norway]

5 **Harald III "Hårdråde" King of Norway** #15061 b. 1015 d. 25 September 1066 Battle of Stamford Bridge (28th great grand father)

m. **Tora Torbergsdatter** #15502 [maternal granddaughter of **Erling Skjalgsson** #16731] (30<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)

6 **Magnus II King of Norway** #15822 b. 1048 d. 1069 (28th great uncle)

[Children of Harald III "Hårdråde" King of Norway and Tora Torbergsdatter]

6 **Olaf III Kyrre King of Norway** #15059 b. ABT 1050 Norway d. 22 Sep 1093 Hakeby, Tanum, Bohuslän (27th great grand father)

m. **Thora Ragnvaldsdotter Queen of Norway** #15060 b. 1030 Godoy, Norway [daughter of Ragnvald II Bruesson Earl of Orkney #15076 and Felicia Princess of Normandy #15077]

7 **Magnus III Barfot King of Norway** #15057 b. ABT 1073 Norway d. 24 Aug 1103 Connaught, Ireland (26th great grand father)

m. **Bethoc** #15058

m. **Margrete Fredkulla Princess of Sweden** #15094 b. 1085 Sweden d. 4 Nov 1130 (26th great grand mother)  
[daughter of Inge I Stenkilsson King of Sweden #15165 and Helena Torildsdatter Queen of Sweden #15166]

8 **Sigurd I Jorsalfar King of Norway** #16110 b. 1090 d. 1130 (26<sup>th</sup> great uncle)

m. Malmfred Princess of Kiev #16109 b. 1105 d. 1137

[daughter of Mstislav I (Harald) Grand Duke of Kiev #15212 and Christina Ingessdotter Princess of Sweden #15213]

m. Borghild Olavsdatter #16621

[Children of Sigurd I Jorsalfar King of Norway and Malmfred Princess of Kiev]

9 Kristin Sigurdsdotter Princess of Norway #16615 (first cousin, 26 times removed)

m. Sigurd II Munn King of Norway #16252 b. 1133 d. 1155

[son of Harald IV "Gille" King of Norway #15055 and Tora Guttormsdatter #16251]

m. Erling Skakke Earl in Norway #16616

[Children of Kristin Sigurdsdotter Princess of Norway and Sigurd II Munn King of Norway]

10 Cecilia Princess of Norway #16253 (second cousin, 25 times removed)

m. Baard Guttormson #16256

11 **Inge II Baardsson King of Norway** #16257 b. 1185 d. 1217 (third cousin, 24 times removed)

[Children of Kristin Sigurdsdotter Princess of Norway and Erling Skakke Earl in Norway]

10 Magnus V King of Norway #16617 b. 1156 d. 1184 (second cousin, 25 times removed)

[Children of Sigurd I Jorsalfar King of Norway and Borghild Olavsdatter]

9 **Magnus IV the Blind King of Norway** #16622 b. 1115 d. 1139 (first cousin, 26 times removed)

8 Olaf Magnusson King of Norway #16623 b. 1099 d. 1115 (26th great uncle)

8 **Eystein I King of Norway** #16624 b. 1088 d. 1123 (26th great uncle)

9 Maria Oysteinsdatter Princess of Norway #16626 (first cousin, 26 times removed)

10 Olav the Unlucky King of Norway #16628 d. 1169 (second cousin, 25 times removed)

[Children of Magnus III Barfot King of Norway and Bethoc]

8 **Harald IV "Gille" King of Norway** #15055 b. ABT 1094 Irland d. 14 Dec 1136 Bergen, Norway (25th great grand father)

m. **Bladak** #15056

m. **Ingrid Ragnvaldsdotter Queen of Norway** #16222

[daughter of Ragnvald Ingesson Knaphövde King of Sweden #16427]

m. **Tora Guttormsdatter** #16251

[Children of Harald IV "Gille" King of Norway and Bladak]

9 **Brigida Haraldsdatter Queen of Norway** #15046 b. ABT 1130 (24th great grand mother)

m. **Birger "Brosa" Bengtsson Folkunga** #15045 b. 1134 Bjälbo, Östergötland, Sweden d. 9 Jan 1202 (24th great grand father)

[son of Bengt Folkesson Folkunga #15047 and Ulfhild Björnsdotter Princess of Sweden #15048]

9 **Eystein II King of Norway** #16631 b. 1125 Scotland d. 1157 (25th great uncle)

[Children of Harald IV "Gille" King of Norway and Ingrid Ragnvaldsdotter Queen of Norway]

9 **Inge I Krokrygg King of Norway** #16224 b. 1135 d. 1161 (25th great uncle)

- [Children of Harald IV "Gille" King of Norway and Tora Guttormsdotter]  
 9 **Sigurd II Munn King of Norway** #16252 b. 1133 d. 1155 (25th great uncle)  
 m. **Kristin Sigurdsdotter Princess of Norway** #16615  
 [daughter of Sigurd I Jorsalfar King of Norway #16110 and Malmfred Princess of Kiev #16109]
- [Children of Sigurd II Munn King of Norway and Kristin Sigurdsdotter Princess of Norway]  
 10 **Cecilia Princess of Norway** #16253 (first cousin, 25 times removed)
- 10 **Sverre Sigurdsson King of Norway** #16246 d. 1202 (first cousin, 25 times removed)  
 m. **Margaret Queen of Norway** #16225 d. 1209  
 [daughter of Erik IX the Saint King of Sweden #15222 and Christine Björnsdotter Queen of Sweden #15221]  
 m. **Astrid Roesdatter** #16247
- [Children of Sverre Sigurdsson King of Norway and Margaret Queen of Norway]  
 11 **Sigurd Lavard King of Norway** #16254 d. 1200 (second cousin, 24 times removed)
- 12 Guttorm King of Norway** #16255 d. 1204 (third cousin, 23 times removed)
- [Children of Sverre Sigurdsson King of Norway and Astrid Roesdatter]  
 11 **Håkon III King of Norway** #16245 b. 1170 d. 1204 (second cousin, 24 times removed)  
 m. **Inga of Varteig** #16244
- 12 **Haakon IV Haakonsson King of Norway** #16242 b. 1204 d. 1263 (third cousin, 23 times removed)  
 m. **Margaret Skuladotter** #16243 b. 1208 d. 1270
- 13 **Magnus the Lawmender King of Norway** #16240 b. 1238 d. 1280 (4th cousin, 22 times removed)  
 m. **Ingeborg Eriksdotter Queen of Norway** #16241  
 [daughter of Eric IV Plovpenning King of Denmark #16347 and Jutta of Saxony #16348]
- 14 **Eric II King of Norway** #16600 b. 1268 d. 1299 (5th cousin, 21 times removed)  
 m. **Isabel Bruce Queen of Norway** #16602 b. 1272 d. 1358
- 15 **Ingeborg Eriksdottir Princess of Norway** #16601 (6th cousin, 20 times removed)  
 m. **Valdemar Duke of Finland** #16532 d. 1318 (3rd cousin, 21 times removed)  
 [son of Magnus III Ladulås King of Sweden #16336 and Helvig Princess of Holstein #16337]
- 14 **Haakon V Magnusson King of Norway** #16238 b. 1270 d. 1319 (5th cousin, 21 times removed)
- 15 **Ingeborg Håkonsdotter Princess of Norway** #16237 (6th cousin, 20 times removed)  
 m. **Erik Magnusson Duke of Sweden** #16236 b. 1282 d. 1318  
 [son of Magnus III Ladulås King of Sweden #16336 and Helvig Princess of Holstein #16337]
- 16 **Magnus II (IV) King of Norway and Sweden** b. 1316 d. 1374 (7th cousin, 19 times removed)  
 m. **Blanche of Namur Queen of Norway** b. 1320 d. 1363 (10th cousin, 20 times removed)
- 17 **Haakon VI King of Norway** b. 1340 d. 1380 (8th cousin, 18 times removed)  
 m. **Margaret I Queen of Norway and Denmark** b. 1353 d. 1412
- 18 **Olav IV King of Norway** b. 1370 d. 1387 (9th cousin, 17 times removed)

#### Norway was part of Sweden or Denmark from 1412 to 1905.

##### **Descendants of: Haakon VII King of Norway**

- 1 **Haakon VII King of Norway** #15571 b. 1872 d. 1957 (22<sup>nd</sup> cousin, 2 times removed)  
 m. **Maud Princess of Wales** #15572 m. 1896
- 2 **Olav V King of Norway** #15573 b. 1903 d. 1991 (23<sup>rd</sup> cousin, once removed)  
 m. **Märtha Princess of Sweden** #15574 b. 1901 d. 1954  
 [daughter of Carl Duke of Västergötland #15577 and Ingeborg Princess of Denmark #15576]
- 3 **Harald V King of Norway** #15575 b. 1937 (24<sup>th</sup> cousin)  
 m. **Sonja Queen of Norway** #16194
- 4 **Haakon Crown Prince of Norway** #16195 b. 1973 (25<sup>th</sup> cousin, once removed)



# Harald I of Norway

**Harald Fairhair** or **Harald Finehair** ([Norwegian](#): *Harald Hårfagre*), (c. 850 – c. 933) was the first king (872–930) of [Norway](#).

*King Harald, in an illustration from the 14th century [Flateyjarbók](#)*



Little is known of the historical Harald. The only contemporary sources mentioning him are the two skaldic poems [Haraldskvæði](#) and [Glymdrápa](#). The first poem describes life at Harald's court, mentions that he took a [Danish](#) wife, and that he won a victory at [Hafrsfjord](#). The second relates a series of battles Harald has won. He is credited with having unified Norway into one kingdom.

The sagas tell us that Harald succeeded, on the death of his father [Halfdan the Black](#) Gudrødsson in A.D. 860, to the sovereignty of several small, and somewhat scattered kingdoms in [Vestfold](#), which had come into his father's hands through conquest and inheritance.

The unification of Norway is, according to a tale, somewhat of a love story. The tale 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 that ten years later, he was justified in trimming it; whereupon he exchanged the epithet "Shockhead" or "Tanglehair" for the one by which he is usually known.

*Swords on the hill*



Three large swords stand on the hill as a memory to the [Battle of Hafrsfjord](#) in year 872, when [King Harald Fairhair](#) gathered all of Norway under one crown. The largest sword represents the victorious king, and the two smaller swords represent the defeated kings. The monument also represents peace, as the three swords are stuck in the hill and will never be used again.

In 866, Harald made the first of a series of conquests over the many [petty kingdoms](#) which would compose Norway, including [Värmland](#) in Sweden, and modern day south-eastern Norway, which had sworn allegiance to the Swedish king [Erik Eymundsson](#). In 872, after a [great victory at Hafrsfjord](#) near [Stavanger](#), Harald found himself king over the whole country.

The latter part of Harald's reign was disturbed by the strife of his many sons. 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 favourite son [Eirik Bloodaxe](#), whom he intended to be his successor. Eirik I ruled side-by-side with his father when Harald was 80 years old. Harald died three years later due to age in approximately 933. 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.

# Eric Bloodaxe

Coin of Eric Bloodaxe. The legend reads "ERIC REX", [British Museum](#).



**Eric Haraldsson** (Erik, anglicised form of [Old Norse](#): *Eiríkr*; <sup>[1]</sup> died 954), nicknamed '**Bloodaxe**', was a 10th-century [Scandinavian](#) ruler. He is thought to have had short-lived terms as the second [king of Norway](#) and as the last independent ruler of the [kingdom of Northumbria](#) (c. 947/8–948 and 952–5).

According to *Heimskringla* and *Egils saga*, Eric spent much of his childhood in fosterage with the *hersir* [Thórir son of Hróald](#). Of his adolescent years, a remarkable picture is painted in *Heimskringla*, which recounts that Eric, aged twelve and seemingly possessed of prodigious valour and strength, embarked on a career of international piracy: four years were spent harrying the Baltic coasts and those of Denmark, Frisia and Germany; another four years those of Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France; and lastly, Lappland and Bjarmaland (in what is now northern Russia). Describing the last trip, *Egils saga* notes that Eric sailed down the Dvina River into the Russian hinterland of Permian, where he sacked the small trading port of Permina.

According to *Egils saga*, Eric's consort at was [Gunnhildr](#), the famous "mother of kings"

Eric is convinced by his wife [Gunnhild](#) to kill the [Finnish](#) wizards. From an illustration by [Christian Krohg](#)



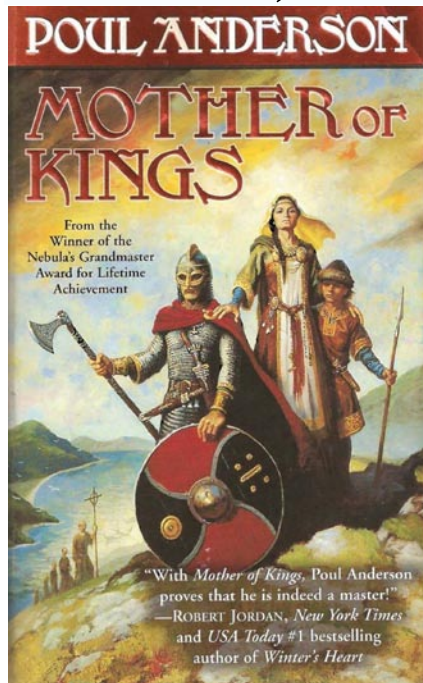
Saga tradition is unanimous that Eric did cohabit with a woman named Gunnhildr. The earliest saga *Historia Norwegiae* describes her as the daughter of [Gorm inn Gamli](#) ('the Old'), king of Denmark (and hence a sister of [Harald Bluetooth](#)).

The dominant theme of the sagas about Harald's numerous sons is the struggle for the Norwegian throne, in particular the way it manifests itself in the careers of Haakon and his foil Eric. According to *Heimskringla*, Harald had appointed his sons as client kings over the various districts of the kingdom, and intended Eric,

his favourite son, to inherit the throne after his death. At strife with his half-brothers, Eric brutally killed Ragnald, ruler of [Hathaland](#), and [Björn Farmann](#), ruler of [Vestfold](#). Some texts maintain that towards the end of his life, Harald allowed Eric to reign together with him. When Harald died, Eric succeeded to the realm, slaughtered the combined forces of his half-brothers [Olaf](#) and Sigrød, and gained full control of Norway. At the time, however, Eric's younger and most famous half-brother Haakon, often nicknamed *Aðalsteinsfóstri*, had been staying at the West-Saxon court, having been sent there to be reared as fosterson to King Æthelstan (r. 924–939). Eric's rule was reputedly harsh and despotic and so he fell rapidly out of favour with the Norwegian nobility. At this propitious time, Haakon returned to Norway, found a nobility eager to accept him as king instead and ousted Eric, who fled to Britain.



# Gunnhild, Mother of Kings



**Gunnhild konungamóðir** (*mother of kings*) or **Gunnhild Gormsdóttir** (c. 910 – c. 980) is a character that appears in the [Icelandic Sagas](#), according to which she was the wife of [Eric Bloodaxe](#) ([king of Norway](#) 930–34).

According to the 12th century [Historia Norvegiae](#), Gunnhild was the daughter of [Gorm the Old](#), king of [Denmark](#), and Erik and Gunnhild met at a feast given by Gorm.

*Heimskringla* relates that Gunnhild lived for a time in a hut with two [Finnish](#) wizards and learned [magic](#) from them. The two wizards wanted to keep her as their slave, so she induced Erik, who was returning from an expedition to [Bjarmland](#), to kill them. Erik then took her to her father's house and announced his intent to marry Gunnhild.

Gunnhild was widely reputed to be a [völva](#), or [witch](#). Prior to the death of [Harald Fairhair](#), Erik's popular half-brother [Halfdan Haraldsson the Black](#) died mysteriously, and Gunnhild was suspected of having "bribed a witch to give him a [death-drink](#)." Shortly thereafter, Harald died and Erik consolidated his power over the whole country. He began to quarrel with his other brothers, egged on by Gunnhild, and had four of them killed, beginning with [Björn Farmann](#) and later [Olaf](#) and [Sigrød](#) in battle at [Tønsberg](#). As a result of Erik's tyrannical rule he was expelled from Norway when the nobles of the country declared for his half-brother, [Haakon the Good](#).

Following Erik's loss of Jorvik and subsequent death at the [Battle of Stainmore](#) (954), the survivors of the battle brought word of the defeat to Gunnhild and her sons in [Northumberland](#).

Gunnhild returned to Norway in triumph when her remaining sons killed King Haakon at the [Battle of Fitjar](#) in 961. Ironically, the battle was a victory for Haakon's forces but his death left a power vacuum which Gunnhild's son Harald, with Danish aid, was able to exploit.<sup>[39]</sup> With her sons now ensconced as the lords of Norway, Gunnhild was from this time known as *konungamóðir*, or "Mother of Kings."

*Battle between Gunnhild's sons and the army of Haakon. Illustration by Krohg.*



During the reign of [Harald Greyhide](#), Gunnhild dominated the court; according to *Heimskringla* she "mixed herself much in the affairs of the country."<sup>[41]</sup> Gunnhild's sons killed or deposed many of the jarls and [petty kings](#) that had hitherto ruled the Norwegian provinces, seizing their lands. Famine, possibly caused or exacerbated by these campaigns, plagued the reign of Harald.<sup>[42]</sup>



Among the kings slain (around 963) was [Tryggve Olafsson](#) whose widow [Astrid Eriksdotter](#) fled with her son [Olaf Tryggvason](#) to [Sweden](#) and then set out for the eastern [Baltic](#).<sup>[43]</sup> According to *Heimskringla* Astrid's flight and its [disastrous consequences](#) were in response to Gunnhild having sent soldiers to kidnap or kill her infant son.

*Haakon Sigurdsson. Illustration by Krohg.*



## Exile and death

[Haakon Sigurdsson](#), [jarl of Hlaðir](#), arranged the death of Harald Greyhide around 971 with the connivance of Harald Bluetooth, who had invited his foster-son to Denmark to be invested with new Danish [fiefs](#). Civil war broke out between Jarl Haakon and the surviving sons of Erik and Gunnhild, but Haakon proved victorious and Gunnhild had to flee Norway once again, with her remaining sons Gudrod and Ragnfred. They went to Orkney, again imposing themselves as overlords over Jarl Thorfinn. However, it appears that Gunnhild was less interested in ruling the country than in having a place to live quietly, and her sons used the islands as a base for abortive raids on Haakon's interests; the government of Orkney was therefore firmly in the hands of Thorfinn.

According to the [Jomsvikinga Saga](#), Gunnhild returned to Denmark around 977 but was killed at the orders of King Harald by being drowned in a bog.

# Haakon I of Norway

**Haakon I** ([Norwegian](#): *Håkon Adalsteinsfostre*), (c. 920–961), surnamed **the Good**, was the third king of [Norway](#) and the youngest son of [Harald Fairhair](#).

*Håkon the Good*, by Peter Nicolai Arbo



Haakon was fostered by King [Athelstan of England](#), as part of a peace agreement made by his father. The English king brought him up in the Christian religion, and on the news of his father's death provided him with ships and men for an expedition against his half-brother [Eirik Bloodaxe](#), who had been proclaimed king. On his arrival in Norway, Haakon gained the support of the landowners by promising to give up the rights of taxation claimed by his father over

inherited real property.

Eirik fled to the [Orkney Islands](#) and later to the [Kingdom of Jorvik](#), eventually meeting a violent death on [Stainmore](#), [Westmorland](#), in 954 along with his son, [Haeric](#). His sons allied themselves with the Danes, but were invariably defeated by Haakon, who was successful in everything he undertook except in his attempt to introduce [Christianity](#), which aroused an opposition he did not feel strong enough to face. He was mortally wounded at the [Battle of Fitjar](#) in 961, after a final victory over Eirik's sons. So entirely did even his immediate circle ignore his religion that [Eyvindr Skáldaspillir](#), his court [poet](#) composed a poem, *[Hákonarmál](#)*, on his death representing his welcome by his ancestors' gods into [Valhalla](#).

*Statue of Hákon the Good in memory of the ,Battle of Fitjar*



The succession issue was settled as [Harald II](#), third son of Eirik, ascended the throne. However the Norwegians were severely tormented by years of war and welcomed the Danish invading force led by [Harold Bluetooth](#).

## In Modern Literature

- Haakon I is a major character in *[Mother of Kings](#)* by the Danish-American writer [Poul Anderson](#).

# Haakon Sigurdsson

*An impression of Jarl Hákon by Christian Krohg.*



**Haakon II Sigurdsson Jarl**, sometimes nicknamed "the Great" (died 995), was the son of [Sigurd Haakonsson](#), Earl of [Lade](#), and thus [Trøndelag](#). [Adam of Bremen](#) wrote that he was "of the stock of Ivar [possibly, [Ivar the Boneless](#)] and descended from a race of giants". In the sagas, Haakon claimed descent from the divine lineage of [Sæming](#).

Haakon became earl after his father was killed by [King Harald Greyhide](#)'s men in 961. He warred with King Harald for some time, until he was forced to flee to [Denmark](#) and [Harald Bluetooth](#). In Denmark he conspired with Harald Bluetooth against Harald Greyhide.

Harald Greyhide was killed in 971. After this, Haakon Jarl ruled [Norway](#) as a [vassal](#) of Harald Bluetooth, but he was in reality an independent ruler. For Harald, he attacked [Götaland](#) and killed its ruler [Jarl Ottar](#). Haakon was a strong believer in the old [Norse gods](#), and when Harald Bluetooth attempted to force [Christianity](#) upon him around 975, Haakon broke his allegiance to Denmark and declared himself king. His title as king was not recognized by the later kings of Norway. A Danish invasion force was defeated at the [battle of Hjörungavágr](#) in 986. In 977 [Vladimir I of Kiev](#) fled to him, collecting as many of the Viking warriors as he could to assist him to recover Novgorod, and on his return the next year marched against [Yaropolk](#).



In 995, a quarrel broke out between Haakon and the [Trønders](#) just as [Olaf Trygvason](#), a descendant of [Harald Fairhair](#) arrived. Haakon quickly lost all support, and was killed by his own slave and friend, [Tormod Kark](#), while hiding in the pig sty in the farm [Rimul](#) in [Melhus](#). His two sons Eric and Sven, and several others, fled to the king of Sweden, [Olof Skötkonung](#), and the [Hakon Jarl Runestones](#) may refer to them.

*When Haakon was in Denmark, Harald Bluetooth forced him to accept baptism and assigned him clergymen to take to Norway to spread Christianity. When favorable wind came for Haakon to leave he commanded the clergymen back ashore.*

Children:

- [Eirik Hákonson](#), would avenge his father at the [battle of Svolder](#) and then govern Norway with his half-brother, [Sveinn Hákonarson](#).
- [Auð](#), married the Swedish king [Eric the Victorious](#), according to [Yngvars saga víðförla](#).
- Bergljót, married [Einarr Tambarskielvar](#).
- Sigrid, mother of Ivar Hvide, Jarl of Uplands.

# Bjørn Farmann

**Bjørn Farmann** ("Bjørn the Tradesman", also called **Bjørn Haraldsson**, **Farmand** and **Kaupman**, c. ? – c. [927](#)) was one of the sons of [Harald Fairhair](#), the first king of [Norway](#), and was the king of [Vestfold](#). He was the great-grandfather of [Olaf II](#) of Norway, through his son [Gudrød Bjørnsson](#).

When his father, Harald Fairhair, died, his kingdom was divided up between his sons. Bjørn became the king of Vestfold, a Norwegian county west of the [Oslofjord](#), and is considered as the founder of [Tønsberg](#), Vestfold.

Bjørn was killed by his brother [Eirik Bloodaxe](#) in a feud, around 927 CE. He is said to be buried in the big [Farmann burial mound](#) (*Farmannshaugen*), outside Tønsberg, in [Sem](#), close to the manor of the [Jarlsberg](#) family.

*The Farmann burial mound in Vestfold, allegedly Bjørn Farmann's mound.*



## Egil Skallagrimsson's account:

[Egil Skallagrimsson](#) tells this of Bjørn: Bjørn var farmaður mikill, var stundum í víking, en stundum í kaupferðum; translated into English: Bjørn was a great traveller; sometimes as [viking](#), sometimes as tradesman.



# Gudrød Bjørnsson

**Gudrød Bjørnsson** was the son of [Bjørn Farmann](#), the king of [Vestfold](#), and consequently a grandson of [Harald Fairhair](#). Gudrød was the father of [Harald Grenske](#), and the paternal grandfather of [Saint Olaf](#).

After Gudrød's father had been killed by [Eric Bloodaxe](#), he lived with his uncle [Olaf Haraldsson Geirstadalf](#), the king of [Vingulmark](#). Olaf rebelled against Bloodaxe, but was killed in battle, and so Gudrød had to escape to [Oppland](#).

When [Haakon the Good](#) had become king, Gudrød was given Vestfold, his father's kingdom, as a [fief](#).

Gudrød was slain in the vicinity of [Tønsberg](#), by [Harald Greyhide](#), who feared a rebellion from his subordinate kings.

# Harald Grenske

**Harald Grenski** (10th century) was the son of [Gudrød Bjørnsson](#). Gudrød was a grandson of [Harald Fairhair](#), and the king of [Vestfold](#).

Harald's cognomen *Grenski* is due to his being raised in the district of [Grenland](#), [Norway](#). His father was slain when Harald was only 11 years old, by the sons of [Gunnhild](#) (i.e. [Harald Greyhide](#) and his brothers). Harald fled to [Oppland](#) and from there to [Sweden](#), where he stayed with the powerful strongman [Skagul Toste](#). He spent the summers pillaging as a [Viking](#).

When the sons of Gunnhild had been banished, Harald Grenske followed [Harald Bluetooth](#) and [Haakon Sigurdsson](#) to Norway, and under Danish sovereignty, Harald became the king of Vestfold and [Agder](#). He married [Asta](#), the daughter of [Gudbrand Kula](#), but abandoned her to woo [Sigrid the Haughty](#), the daughter of Skagul Toste.

As Sigrid found him too eager with his entreaties, she had him burnt to death inside a house. His widow, Asta, promptly gave birth to the son [Olaf the Stout](#), a future king of Norway, and was later remarried to [Sigurd Syr](#), the king of [Ringerike](#).

# Olaf II of Norway

**Olaf Haraldsson** (995 – [July 29, 1030](#)) was king of [Norway](#) from 1015 to 1028, (known during his lifetime as "**the Big**" and after his [canonization](#) as **Saint Olaf** or **Olaus**). His mother was [Åsta Gudbrandsdatter](#), and his father was [Harald Grenske](#), great-grandchild of [Harald Fairhair](#).

*A medieval representation of Saint Olaf*



In 1019 Olaf married the illegitimate daughter of [King Olof of Sweden](#) and half-sister of his former bride, [Astrid Olavsdtr.](#) Their daughter Wulfhild married Duke [Ordulf of Saxony](#) in 1042. The present king of Norway, Harald V and his father Olav V are thus descended from Olaf, since the latter's mother [Maud](#) was the daughter of [Edward VII](#) of the [House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha](#), one of the numerous royal, grand ducal and ducal lines descended from Ordulf and Wulfrid.

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, rallied round the invading [Cnut the Great](#) of Denmark, forcing Olaf to flee to [Kievan Rus](#). During the voyage he stayed some time in Sweden in the province of [Nerike](#) where, according to local legend, he baptized many locals. On his return [a year later](#), seizing an opportunity to win back the kingdom after Cnut the Great's vassal as ruler of Norway, [Håkon Jarl](#), was lost at sea, he fell at the [Battle of Stiklestad](#), where some of his own subjects from central Norway were arrayed against him.

The **Battle of Stiklestad** (Old Norse *Stiklarstaðir*) in 1030 is one of the most famous battles in the history of Norway. In this battle King Olaf II of Norway was killed. He was later canonized.



At Stiklestad, Olav met an army led by [Hårek from Tjøtta](#), [Tore Hund](#) from Bjarkøy and [Kalf Arnason](#), a man who previously served Olav. The peasant army consisted of more than 7,000 men according to Snorre. He states that the battle cry of Olaf's men was "Fram! Fram! Kristmenn, Krossmenn, kongsmenn" (Forward, forward, Christ's men, Cross men, king's men), while that of the opposing army was "Fram! Fram! Bonder" (Forward, forward, farmers).

The battle took place on [July 29, 1030](#) and at the end of the day, Olav's army had lost. During the battle, Olav received three severe wounds -- in the knee, in the neck and the final mortal blow through the heart -- and died leaning against a large stone. His body was carried away and buried secretly in the sandy banks of the Nidelva river south of the city of [Trondheim](#). A spring is said to have begun to flow from the place where he was buried and those who drank of its waters were said to have been cured of their ailments. Later a well shaft to this spring would be incorporated into the wall of the cathedral built on this site.

# Magnus I of Norway

*A meeting between Magnus and Harthacanute. Illustration by Halfdan Egedius*



**Magnus I** (1024 – [October 25, 1047](#)) was the King of [Norway](#) from 1035 to 1047 and the King of [Denmark](#) from 1042 to 1047. He was the illegitimate son of King [Olaf Haraldsson](#), also known as Saint Olaf, by his concubine Alvchild. He is known by the cognomen, **the Good** or **the Noble**.

In the period from 1028 to 1035, he was forced to leave Norway, yet, after the death of [Knut the Great](#), he was called back by the noblemen, tired of living under Danish rule, to be [King of Norway](#). After the death of [Harthacanute](#), he was also made [King of Denmark](#), despite rival claims had by Knut the Great's nephew [Svend Estridsen](#). There was great turmoil south of the Danish border, where in 1043 Magnus won an important victory at [Lyrskov Hede](#) over the Wends who had invaded Denmark. It was a great victory and legends about the battle say that 15,000 Wends fell in a single day. The Norwegians swore they could hear the St Olaf's cathedral bell at Trondheim before the battle which they took to mean that Olaf himself was watching over his son and his army.

*Magnus I, King of Norway, King of Denmark*



Svend Estridsen did not lightly give up his claim to the Danish crown, and numerous conflicts with Magnus followed. A settlement was eventually agreed to, which made Svend Earl of Denmark. Magnus had trouble in Norway also. There, his uncle, [Harald Hardråde](#), was a strong threat to the throne of his nephew. In 1046, Magnus was obliged to share the reign of his kingdom with him. In 1047, Svend Estridsen was driven out of Denmark by the Norwegians, with the assistance of the

[Swedish](#) king [Anund Jacob](#). Svend could not muster enough support, but had to flee to the province of [Scania](#). Magnus died the same year, in [Zealand](#). On his deathbed, he is said to have made Svend his heir in Denmark, and Harald Hardråde his heir in Norway. This was disputed by Harald, who did not approve of Svein being the king of Denmark, Svein was therefore not allowed to rule Denmark in peace until 1062, when Harald started to set his mind on other lands to conquer. Magnus was buried with his father in [Nidaros](#).

St. Olav's direct line ceased its reign with the death of Magnus. It returned to the throne again in 1280, when [Eric II](#), who through his mother descended from Magnus' legitimate sister, succeeded as king. Magnus' own daughter was in a marriage with a Norwegian nobleman, and the one descendant wed to the [Earl of Orkney](#), through which lineage Magnus' descendant [James VI of Scotland](#) became King of England.



# Olaf I of Norway

**Olaf Tryggvason**, (960s – [September 9](#) 1000), was King of [Norway](#) from 995 to 1000. He was the son of [Tryggve Olafsson](#), king of [Viken](#), ([Vingulmark](#) and [Ranrike](#)), and the great-grandson of [Harald Fairhair](#), first King of Norway.

Olaf played an important part in the conversion of the [Vikings](#) to [Christianity](#). He is said to have built the first church in Norway (in 995) and to have founded the city of [Trondheim](#) (in 997).

*Olof Tryggvason, King of Norway*



## Birth and early life

There is some uncertainty regarding the date of Olaf's birth. The [Heimskringla](#) states that he was born shortly after the murder of his stated father in 963, while other sources suggest a date between 964 and 969. The later dates cast doubt over Olaf's claim to be of [Harald Fairhair](#)'s kin, and the legitimacy of his claim to the throne. [Snorri Sturluson](#)

claims in *Olav Tryggvason's saga* that Olaf was born on an islet in [Fjærlandsvatnet](#), where his mother [Astrid](#) daughter of [Eirik Bjodaskalle](#), was hiding from her husband's killers, led by [Harald Greyhide](#), the son of [Eirik Bloodaxe](#). Greyhide and his brothers had seized the throne from [Haakon the Good](#). Astrid fled to her father Erik Biodaskalde's home in Oppland, then went on to Sweden where she thought she and Olaf would be safe. Harald sent emissaries to the king of Sweden, and asked for permission to take the boy back to Norway, where he would be raised by Greyhide's mother Gunhild. The Swedish king gave them men to help them claim the young boy, but to no avail. After a short scuffle Astrid (with her son) fled again. This time their destination was [Gardarike](#), where Astrid's brother Sigurd was in the service of [King Valdemar](#). Olaf was three years old when they set sail on a merchant ship for [Novgorod](#). The journey was not successful -- in the [Baltic Sea](#) they were captured by [Estonian pirates](#), and the people aboard were either killed or taken as slaves. Olaf became the possession of a man named Klerkon, together with his foster father Thorolf and his son Thorgils. Klerkon considered Thorolf too old to be useful as a slave and killed him, and then sold the two boys to a man named Klerk for a [stout](#) and a good [ram](#). Olaf was then sold to a man called Reas for a fine [cloak](#).

## Life in Novgorod

Six years later when Sigurd Eirikson traveled to [Estonia](#) to collect taxes on behalf of Valdemar, he spotted a remarkably handsome boy, who did not appear to be a native. He asked the boy about his family, and the boy told him he was Olaf, son of Tryggve Olafson and Astrid Eiriksdattir. Sigurd then went to Reas and bought Olaf and Thorgils out from slavery, and took the boys with him to Novgorod to live under the protection of Valdemar.

According to Tryggvason's saga, one day in the Novgorod marketplace Olaf encountered Klerkon, his enslaver and the murderer of his foster father. Olaf killed Klerkon with an axe blow to the head. A [mob](#) followed the young boy as he fled to his protector [Queen Allogia](#), with the



intent of killing him for his misdeed. Only after Allogia had paid [blood money](#) for Olaf did the mob calm down.

## Raiding

After leaving Novgorod, Olaf raided settlements and ports with success. In 982 he was caught in a storm and made port in [Vindland](#), where he met [Queen Geira](#) a daughter of [King Burizleif](#). She ruled the part of Vindland in which Olaf had landed, and Olaf and his men were given an offer to stay for the winter. Olaf accepted and after courting the Queen, they were married. Olaf began to reclaim the baronies that while under Geira rule had refused to pay taxes. After these successful campaigns, he began raiding again both in [Skåne](#) and [Gotland](#).

## Death of Geira and conversion

*Geira's death.*

*Olaf in the temple of Thor (Illustration by Halfan Egedius).*



After Olaf had spent three years in Vindland, his wife fell sick and died. He felt so much sorrow from her death



that he could no longer bear to stay in Vindland, and set out to plunder in 984. He raided from Frisland to the [Hebrides](#), until after four years he landed on one of the [Scilly Isles](#). He heard of a [seer](#) who lived there. Desiring to test the seer, he sent one of his men to pose as Olaf. But the seer was not fooled. So

Olaf went to see the hermit, now convinced he was a real fortune teller. And the seer told him:

Thou wilt become a renowned king, and do celebrated deeds. Many men wilt thou bring to faith and baptism, and both to thy own and others' good; and that thou mayst have no doubt of the truth of this answer, listen to these tokens. When thou comest to thy ships many of thy people will conspire against thee, and then a battle will follow in which many of thy men will fall, and thou wilt be wounded almost to death, and carried upon a shield to thy ship; yet after seven days thou shalt be well of thy wounds, and immediately thou shalt let thyself be baptized.

After the meeting Olaf was attacked by a group of mutineers, and what the seer had foretold happened. So Olaf let himself be baptised by St. [Ælfheah of Canterbury](#) in 994. After his conversion Olaf stopped looting in [England](#).



## Ascent to the throne

*According to Heimskringla's account, king Olaf had practitioners of [seid](#) tied and left on a [skerry](#) at [ebb](#).*

In 995, rumours began to surface in Norway about a king in Ireland of Norwegian blood. This caught the

ear of Haakon Jarl, who sent Thorer Klakka to Ireland, posing as a merchant, to see if he was the son of Tryggve Olafson. Haakon told Thorer that if it were him, to lure him to Norway, so Haakon could have him under his power. Thorer befriended Olaf and told him of the situation in Norway, that Haakon Jarl had become unpopular with the populace, because he often took daughters of the elite as [concubines](#), which was his right as ruler.

Olaf seized this opportunity, and set sail for Norway. When he arrived many men had already started a revolt against Haakon Jarl, and he had gone in hiding in a [hole](#) dug in a [pigsty](#), together with one of his slaves Kark. When Olaf met the rebels they accepted him as their king, and together they started to search for Haakon. They eventually came to the farm where Haakon and Kark were hiding, but could not find them. Olaf held a meeting just outside the swine-sty and promised a great reward for the man who killed the Jarl. The two men in the hole heard this speech, and Haakon became distrustful of Kark, fearing he would mutilate him to claim the price. He could not leave the sty, nor could he keep awake forever, and when he fell asleep Kark took out a knife and cut Haakon's head off. The next day the slave went to meet Olaf and presented with the head of Haakon. The king did not reward him, and instead beheaded the slave.

After his confirmation as King of Norway, Olaf traveled to the parts of Norway that had not been under the rule of Haakon, but that of the King of Denmark; they too swore rudely at him. He then demanded that they all be baptised, and most reluctantly they agreed. Those that did not were [tortured](#) or killed.

## Rule as king

*Olaf's ship, the "Long Serpent", is attacked during the Battle of Svolder (Illustration by Halfan Egedius)*



In 997 Olaf founded his seat of government in [Trondheim](#), where he had first held [thing](#) with the revolters against Haakon. It was a good site because the [River Nid](#) twisted itself before going in to the fjord, creating a [peninsula](#) that could be easily defended against land attacks by just one short wall.

Both his Wendish and his Irish wife had brought Olaf wealth and good fortune, but, according to the sagas, Thyre was his undoing, for it was on an expedition undertaken in the year 1000 to wrest her lands from Burislav that he was waylaid off the island Svold, by the combined Swedish, Danish and Wendish fleets, together with the ships of Earl Haakon's sons. The [Battle of Swold](#) ended in the death of the Norwegian king. Olaf fought to the last on his great vessel the "Long Serpent", the mightiest ship in the North, and finally leapt overboard and was seen no more.

## Rumors of survival

For some time after the Battle of Svold, there were rumors that Olaf had survived his leap into the sea and had made his way to safety. Accounts reported by Oddr Snorrason included sightings of Olaf in [Rome](#), [Jerusalem](#), and elsewhere in Europe and the Mediterranean. Both King [Ethelred the Unready](#) and Olaf's sister Astrid allegedly received gifts from Olaf long after he was presumed dead. The latest sighting reported by Oddr took place in 1046.

# Sigurd Syr

Sigurd Syr with Åsta, Olav and Rane



**Sigurd Syr Halfdansson** (sometimes spelled "Halvdansson") (c. 970-1018) was a petty king in Northern Ostlandet of [Norway](#). The traditional view of his pedigree has been that he was a great-grandson of [Harald I of Norway](#), however this is questioned by recent historians and genealogists. He was subking of [Ringerike](#), an ancient territory in the county of [Buskerud](#), southern [Norway](#). Sigurd was stepfather of King [Olav II of Norway](#) and father of [Harald III of Norway](#),

through his marriage with [Åsta Gudbrandsdatter](#).

Sigurd Syr was baptized into the Christian faith in 988. According to the [Heimskringla](#), "...King [Olaf Trygvason](#) came to Ringerike to spread Christianity, Sigurd Syr and his wife allowed themselves to be baptized..."

His nickname *Syr* means "sow", and was not complimentary.



# Harald III of Norway

**Harald Sigurdsson** (1015 – [September 25, 1066](#)), later given the epithet **Hardrada** (roughly translated as "stern counsel" or "hard ruler", *Hardråde* in contemporary Norwegian) was the [king](#) of [Norway](#) from 1047 until 1066. He was also claimed to be the King of Denmark until 1064, often defeating [King Sweyn's](#) army and forcing him to leave the country. Many details of his life were chronicled in the *[Heimskringla](#)*. Among English-speakers, he is generally remembered for his invasion of England in 1066. Harald's death is often recorded as the end of the [Viking Age](#).

*Harald II Hardrada King of Norway*



## Early Life and Wandering in the East

Harald was the youngest of King [Olaf II](#)'s three half-brothers born to [Åsta Gudbrandsdatter](#). His father was Åsta's second husband [Sigurd Syr](#). Harald took part, on the side of Olaf, in the [Battle of Stiklestad](#) in 1030. Although wounded, he managed to escape, leaving Norway in exile. He was able to form a band of warriors out of men who had also been exiled as a result of Olaf's death.

In 1031 Harald and his men reached the land of the [Kievan Rus](#) where they served the armies of [Yaroslav I the Wise](#), the Grand Prince of the Rus whose wife Ingigerd was a distant relative of Harald. Harald is thought to have taken part in Grand Prince Yaroslav's campaign against the [Poles](#) and was appointed joint commander of defense forces. Sometime after this, Harald and his retinue of some five hundred warriors moved on to [Constantinople](#), capital of the [Byzantine Empire](#), where there had been at least since 1034 an elite royal guard composed largely of Scandinavian Rus and called the [Varangian Guard](#). Harald served in the guard until 1042.

In the year 1045, in Rus, where he stayed two years before returning to Scandinavia, Harald married Elisabeth, daughter of Yaroslav. Sources claim they were engaged before his departure but Yaroslav declined to confirm the marriage until Harald distinguished himself. During his service in the Byzantine Empire, Harald wrote a love poem addressed to Elisabeth, citing his many heroic deeds and complaining that "a golden-haired maiden of Gard does not like me".

## Rise to the Throne of Norway

In Harald's absence, the throne of Norway had been restored to [Magnus the Good](#), bastard son of Olaf II. When Harald arrived, he felt his claim to the throne was stronger than Magnus', and the two came close to war. Magnus' advisors, however, recommended the young king not fight his uncle, and a compromise was reached where Harald would jointly rule with Magnus, and Harald would share half of his wealth with Magnus. Less than a year later, in 1047, Magnus was dead, and Harald became sole ruler of Norway.

Having gained sole rule of Norway, Harald then sought the throne of Denmark for himself. Harald's Denmark campaigns were unpopular at home, most notably Uppsala in the north, and this was manifested in some districts withholding taxes to show their displeasure. Harald dealt with this opposition with brutal force. Sturluson comments that he "had the farmers seized. Some he had maimed, others killed, and of many he confiscated all of their property."



# Invasion of England

*Harald is struck in the throat by an arrow during the Battle of Stamford Bridge on September 25, 1066*



With the truce and the recognition that he would not conquer Denmark, Harald turned his attention instead to England. England had, in the early 1040s, belonged to [Harthacnut](#), the son of [Cnut the Great](#). Harald based a claim to the throne of England on an agreement supposedly made by [Magnus](#) and [Harthacanute](#), which stated that if either died, the other would inherit the deceased's throne and lands. When Harthacnut died, Magnus assumed the crown of Denmark, but did not press his claim on England, allowing [Edward the Confessor](#) to take the throne. The claim was very thin, and Harald likely would not even have pursued it independently. He was pressed to do so by [Tostig Godwinson](#), brother of King [Harold Godwinson](#) of England. Tostig pledged his support to Harald, stating, "If you wish to gain possession of England, then I may bring it about that most of the chieftains in England will be on your side and support you."

In September 1066, Harald landed in Northern England with a force of around 15,000 men and 300 [longships](#) (50 men in each boat). With him was Earl Tostig, son of Godwin of Wessex, who had promised him support. At the [Battle of Fulford](#), two miles (3 km) south of York, on 20 September, he won a great victory against the first English forces he met. Believing that King [Harold Godwinson](#) was prepared to surrender, Harald confronted the English, with roughly half of his forces, to accept his claim to the English throne. His forces were carrying light weapons and wore light armour, as opposed to heavy armour.



*Battle of Stamford Bridge Peter Nicolai Arbo (1831–1892).*

However, [Harold Godwinson](#) had ambitions of his own. At the [Battle of Stamford Bridge](#), outside the city of [York, England](#), on 25 September 1066, Godwinson's forces met with Harald's. Godwinson's forces were heavily armed, heavily armoured, and heavily outnumbered Harald's. Although one of Harald's men was able to block one side of the bridge, when he fell, Godwinson's better armed and better equipped forces cut through Harald's forces easily. Harald was killed by an arrow to the throat.

His army was so heavily beaten that 24 of the 300 recorded longboats Harald used to transport his forces to England were used to carry the survivors back to Norway. Soon after his victory over King Harald, Harold Godwinson was defeated by [William the Conqueror](#) at the [Battle of Hastings](#). The fact that Harold had to make a forced march against Hardrada to fight at Stamford Bridge and then move at utmost speed south to meet the Norman invasion, all in a matter of days, is widely seen as a primary factor in William's hard-fought victory at Hastings.

According to [Snorri Sturluson](#), before the battle a man bravely rode up to Harald Hardrada and Tostig and offered Tostig his earldom if he would but turn on Harald Hardrada. When Tostig asked what his brother Harold would be willing to give Harald Hardrada for his trouble, the rider replied that he would be given seven feet of ground as he was taller than other men. Harald Hardrada was impressed with the rider and asked Tostig his name, Tostig replied that the rider was none other than Harold Godwinson. According to [Henry of Huntingdon](#), "*Six feet of ground or as much more as he needs, as he is taller than most men,*" was Harold's response.

## Legacy

Harald was the last great [Viking](#) king of Norway and his invasion of England and death at the [Battle of Stamford Bridge](#) in 1066 proved a true watershed moment. It marked the end of the Viking age and beginning of the High [Middle Ages](#).

Sturluson writes, "One year after King Harald's fall his body was transported from England north to [Nidaros](#) (the present [Trondheim](#)), and was buried in the Mary Church, which he had built.



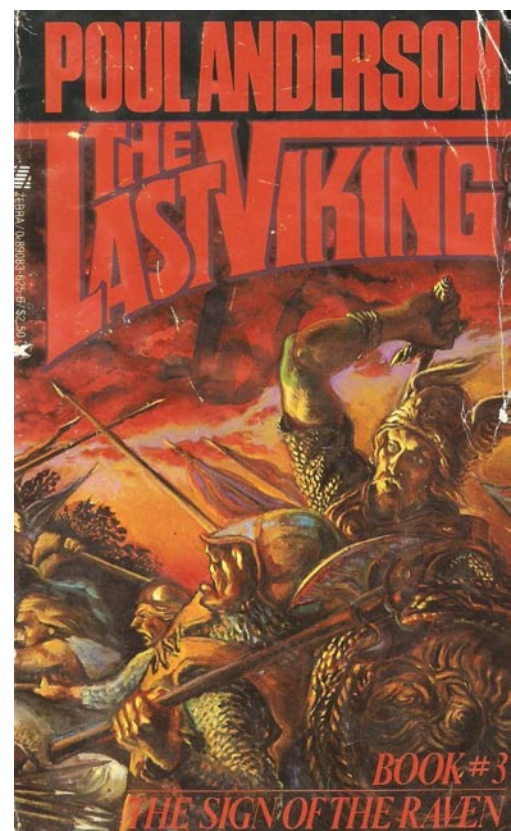
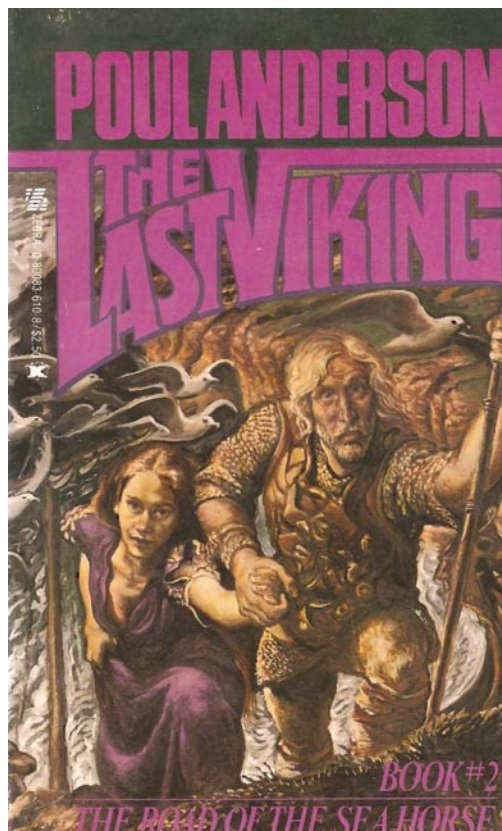
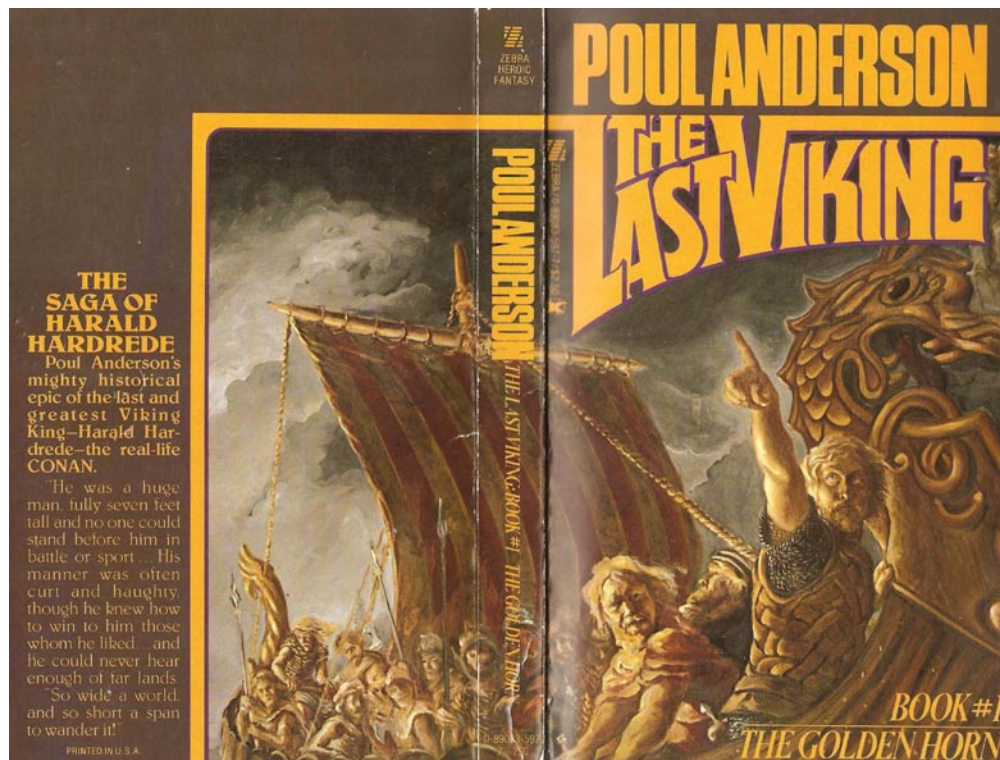
It was common observation that King Harald distinguished himself above all other men by wisdom and resources of mind; whether he had to take a resolution suddenly for himself and others, or after long deliberation. He was, also, above all men, bold, brave, and lucky, until his dying day, as above related; and bravery is half victory." Being remembered is one of the most important wishes for Vikings that went abroad or even those that stayed home.

*Monument of the King Harald Sigurdsson Hardradaa, founder of [Oslo](#).*



## Harald in fiction

In 1980 the [Danish American](#) science fiction and fantasy author [Poul Anderson](#) published *The Last Viking*, a three-volume historical novel about Harald.



# Erling Skjalgsson

Death of Erling Skjalgsson Illustration by Peter Nicolai Arbo



**Erling Skjalgsson** (died 21 December 1027) was a [Norwegian](#) political leader of the late 10th and early 11th century. He has been commonly seen as this period's foremost defender of the historic Norwegian social system. Erling fought for the traditional small, autonomous kingdoms and the [thing](#) system, against the reformists of the [Fairhair](#) family line.

According to the Norwegian-Icelandic saga tradition Erling Skjalgsson belonged to one of the most prominent clans in western Norway. He lived on the farm [Sola](#) in [Nord-Jæren](#).

Erling was established as a political front figure by the farmers of [Gulathing](#), married to [Olav Tryggvason](#)'s sister [Astrid Tryggvesdatter](#), the daughter of [Tryggve Olavsson](#), king of [Viken](#). Erling thus became an important ally during the remaining four years of King Olav's reign. Olav awarded Erling all the land between the [Sognefjord](#) and [Lindesnes](#) to rule.

After the [Battle of Svolder](#) resulted in the defeat of Olav Tryggvason, the victorious leaders split Norway into three areas of control. The three-way rule of Norway during these years suited Erling well. His own power base was strong enough that he could maintain his own autonomy. However in 1015, the relative stability of this arrangement was effected by the arrival of [Olav Haraldsson](#). In 1016 at the [Battle of Nesjar](#), Erling fought against Olav Haraldsson in [Svein jarl](#)'s losing forces. Afterward Olav Haraldsson was forced to form an uneasy alliance with Erling Skjalgsson. The settlement was arranged with Erling having to accept lesser terms than had been granted him by either Olav Tryggvason or Svein jarl.

Erling returned during autumn in 1028 and rallied an army with the intention to fight Olav. However as his army was shipborne, Erling was trapped on a single ship by King Olav's fleet in the [Battle of Boknafjorden](#) near [Bokn](#) in [Rogaland](#). The ship was overwhelmed, Erling was captured and his ship was cleared. Just as Olav was set to pardon him, Erling himself was killed by [Aslak Fitjaskalle](#), from [Fitjar](#) in [Sunnhordland](#), who cleaved Erling's head with an axe.

According to [Heimskringla](#), King Olav said to the killer, *You fool! Now you hewed Norway off my hands!*. The king's prediction turned true. Backed by [Canute the Great](#), Erling's allies went on to drive Olav out of the country, and then finally kill him at the [Battle of Stiklestad](#) in 1030.

Erling's daughter Ragnhild Erlingsdatter was married to [Torberg Arnesson](#) of [Giske](#), the brother of [Finn Arnesson](#). They had a daughter, [Tora Torbergsdatter](#), who was the second spouse of King [Harald Hardråde](#). Tora became the mother of both King [Olav Kyrre](#) and King [Magnus Haraldsson](#).

In the area of the Sola Church Ruins (*Sola Ruinkirke*), there is a monument of Erling Skjalgsson, who was one of Sola's most famous men. This notable Viking leader has been given the honour of having introduced Christianity to Sola. The stone crosses at [Tjora](#) (*steinkors i Sola-bygda*) are also monuments to the passing of the [Viking Era](#).



# Magnus II of Norway



**Magnus II** (1048 – 1069), son of [Harald Sigurdsson](#), was king of [Norway](#) from 1066 until 1069.

## Magnus' expedition to the west

In the late 1050s Magnus led an expedition to the west, to the [Northern Isles](#), the [Hebrides](#), and the [Irish Sea](#). This expedition is only attested in contemporaneous non-Scandinavian sources and is entirely ignored by the [sagas](#). Since the year in which [Thorfinn Sigurdsson](#), [Earl of Orkney](#), died is nowhere recorded with precision—the *[Orkneyinga saga](#)* states that it was in the latter days of Magnus's father—it may be that Magnus's expedition was the occasion on which [Paul and Erlend Thorfinnsson](#) submitted to King Harald. It has been suggested that Magnus also played some part in the war in [Scotland](#) in 1057–1058, perhaps supporting [Máel Coluim mac Donnchada](#) against [Lulach](#). In 1058 Magnus and his forces were active in [Wales](#) and perhaps in [England](#). The *[Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#)* appears to associate the Norwegian fleet with the return to power of Earl [Ælfgār](#). The *[Annales Cambriae](#)* state that Magnus Haraldsson laid waste to parts of England in support of [Gruffydd ap Llywelyn](#), Ælfgār's son-in-law and ally.

## Harald's expedition to England

In the summer of 1066 King Harald prepared for his ill-fated expedition to England. Before departing, he made his son Magnus regent, and caused him to be crowned [King of Norway](#). Harald's younger son, [Olav](#), accompanied him on the expedition. Olav was left in charge of part of his army while Harald advanced. Not expecting opposition, Harald's army traveled light in the warm weather, without the protection of their byrnie. When Harald arrived at [Stamford Bridge](#) the English force fell upon them. Rather than retreating, Harald sent for Olav and his reinforcements. Before Olav's forces arrived the Norse forces were defeated and Harald was fatally wounded. Although a success for the English, the battle set the stage for the defeat later that summer of England's last [Anglo-Saxon](#) king, [Harold Godwinson](#), by [William the Conqueror](#).

## Division of the Kingdom of Norway

At that time, the Kingdom of Norway was looked upon as a property of the king. As such it would be divided among his heirs, like any other private estate under [ancient Norwegian property laws](#). Retreating from England, Magnus' brother Olav spent the winter of 1066–1067 in [Orkney](#) and returned to Norway in the spring of 1067, claiming his portion of the estate. Magnus was to rule the northern half of the country and Olav the southern. This division is the beginning of a long series of partitions of the kingdom between the sons and heirs of the ruling king.

After just a few years in power, Magnus died in 1069, apparently of [ergot](#) poisoning. This left Olav as the sole ruler of Norway.

# Olaf III of Norway



*Title page of the saga of Olav Kyrre in Heimskringla.*

**Olaf III of Norway** (c. 1050 – 1093), also known as **Olaf Haraldsson** (son of Harald) and **Olav Kyrre** (the peaceful or silent), was king of [Norway](#) from 1067 until his death in 1093 in Håkeby. During his reign the nation experienced a rare extended period of peace.

A son of King [Harald Hardråde](#) and Tora Torbergsdatter, Olaf took part in [Viking](#) invasion of England in 1066 and may have fought in the [Battle of Stamford Bridge](#). After his father fell in the battle, which marked the end of the Viking era, Olaf shared the kingdom with his brother [Magnus II](#) (Magnus Haraldsson) from 1067 until Magnus' death in 1069, when Olaf became sole ruler of Norway.

Olaf made peace with [William the Conqueror](#) of [England](#). He also made peace with [Svend Estridsen](#) of Denmark, who held a claim to the throne, and married his daughter Ingerid. The marriage did not produce any children. However, his successor [Magnus III](#), nicknamed Magnus Berføtt (Magnus Barefoot), was a bastard son of Olaf's.

Olaf is said to have founded the city of [Bergen](#) in 1070.

An abstract equestrian statue of Olaf Kyrre was placed in [Bergen](#) in 1998.



Olaf was the first Norwegian king who learned how to read and write. He strengthened the power of the king and instituted the system of [guilds](#) in Norway. Also, the Norwegian law ([Gulatingssloven](#)) was probably put in writing for the first time during his reign. Olaf improved relations with the [pope](#) and founded [dioceses](#) and churches in Bergen en Nidaros ([Trondheim](#)). He was buried at Nidaros.

# Magnus III of Norway

**Magnus Barefoot** (1073, [Norway](#) - August 1103, [Ulster](#)) son of [Olaf Kyrre](#) and grandson of [Harald Hardrada](#), was [King of Norway](#) from 1093 until 1103 and [King of Mann and the Isles](#) from 1099 until 1102. The epithet *berføtt* means *barefoot* or *bareleg* and is commonly understood to come from his habit of wearing Gaelic-style clothing, leaving lower legs bare.

*Title page of The Saga of Magnus Barefoot*



The period of peace during the reign of Magnus' father [Olaf Kyrre](#) came to an abrupt end when Magnus succeeded him in 1093. Magnus made war with [Sweden](#) and [Denmark](#) and sought to build a Norwegian empire around the [Irish Sea](#). In 1093 Magnus Barefoot led a Norse fleet from Mann to [Ynys Môn, Gwynedd](#), and appeared off of the coast at [Ynys Seiriol](#) (*Puffin Island*), interrupting a [Norman victory celebration](#) after they had recently defeated the Welsh of Gwynedd.. In the battle that followed between the Norman occupiers and the Norse, known as the [Battle of Anglesey Sound](#), Magnus shot dead the earl of Shrewsbury with an arrow to the eye. The Norse left as suddenly and as mysteriously as they had arrived, however leaving the Norman army weakened and demoralized. In 1098, he conquered the [Orkney Islands](#), the [Hebrides](#) and the [Isle of Man](#). Magnus returned to Norway in 1099 but in 1102 set out again, this time to conquer [Ireland](#). He captured [Dublin](#) and the surrounding area.

## Death in battle

After the success in capturing Dublin, Magnus turned his attentions to the north. In the following year, 1103, he moved towards [Ulster](#) along with his new Irish ally, the powerful self proclaimed [King of Ireland](#), [Muirchertach Ua Briain](#), whose [daughter](#) had married Magnus's son, [Sigurd I Magnusson](#). The Irish forces opposed to him were defeated in several battles and Magnus's army overran a large part of Ulster. Magnus decided now to return to Norway, while leaving a portion of his forces to hold Dublin and its surrounding lands. Whilst awaiting these supplies, they saw a large dust cloud on the horizon. Magnus ordered his men back to the camp area to get prepared for the embarkation. It was at this point that a large Irish force reared out from their hiding places in the marsh, putting into action an [ambush](#) that had been stalking the Viking army for some time. The Viking forces being taken by surprise were not in battle order and Magnus attempted to assert control over his disordered army, ordering a portion of his force to seize the high ground and provide archer fire to slow down the Irish. In the ensuing [melee](#), King Magnus received wounds to his legs, being pierced by a spear through both thighs above the knees but fought on, attempting to get his men back to the level ground of the camp site. An axe wielding Irishman charged the King and struck him in the neck, before he was himself was killed by Magnus's personal guard. King Magnus died where he fell. The Vikings who escaped the ambush sailed immediately away back to Norway.

After his death, [Harald Gille](#) and [Sigurd Slembedjakk](#) later came forward and both claimed to be his illegitimate sons (and thus heirs to the throne). Harald Gille became king Harald IV of Norway in 1130.



# Sigurd I of Norway

*King Sigurd and King Baldwin ride from Jerusalem to the river Jordan.*

*Illustration by Gerhard Munthe*



**Sigurd I Magnusson** (ca. [1090](#) – [March 26, 1130](#)), also known (in Norwegian) as **Sigurd Jorsalfare** ([Old Norse](#) *Sigurðr Jórsalafari*, translation: *Sigurd the Crusader*, literal translation: *Sigurd, the [Jerusalem](#)-farer*) was [king of Norway](#) from 1103 to 1130. He initially shared the throne with his brothers [Øystein](#) and [Olay](#), but ruled alone from 1123.

In 1098 Sigurd accompanied his father, King [Magnus III](#), on his expedition to the [Orkney Islands](#), [Hebrides](#) and [Irish Sea](#). He was made King of [Orkney](#) the same year, following the removal of the incumbent [jarls of Orkney](#), [Paul and Erlend Thorfinnsson](#). He was also, apparently, made [King of Mann and the Isles](#) in that year, following the overthrow of their king by Magnus.

In 1107, Sigurd led a Norwegian contingent in support of the [crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem](#). He was the first European king to go on [crusade](#), and his crusader feats earned him the nickname *Jorsalafari* ("Jerusalem-farer"). He fought in [Lisbon](#), various [Mediterranean](#) islands and [Palestine](#), and visited king [Roger II of Sicily](#) in [Palermo](#), [Jerusalem](#) and [Constantinople](#) (*Miklagard*). He joined forces with [Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem](#) to [capture the coastal city of Sidon](#) in 1110.

After returning to Norway in 1111, Sigurd made his capital in Konghelle ([Kungälv](#) in present-day [Sweden](#)) and built a castle there, where he kept a [relic](#) given to him by King Baldwin, a splinter reputed to be from the [True Cross](#). In 1123 Sigurd once again set out to fight in the name of the church, this time to [Småland](#) in Sweden, where the inhabitants had renounced their Christian faith and were again worshipping their former gods.

Sigurd died in 1130 and was buried in the Hallvardskirken church in [Oslo](#). Sigurd and his queen [Malmfred](#) (a daughter of [Grand Prince Mstislav I of Kiev](#) and granddaughter of king [Inge I of Sweden](#)) had a daughter, Kristin Sigurddatter, but no legitimate sons. This led to a power struggle following Sigurd's death between various illegitimate sons and other royal pretenders, which escalated into a lengthy civil war.



# Magnus IV of Norway

Death of King Magnus. The loyal guard Reidar Grjotgardsson lifts his king at the final battle, but a spear impales them both.



**Magnus IV** (ca. 1115, [Norway](#) – 1139, [Norway](#)), also known as **Magnus the Blind** and **Magnus Sigurdsson**, was [king of Norway](#) from 1130 to 1135 and again from 1137 to 1139. His period as king marked the beginning of the [civil war era in Norway](#), which lasted until 1240.

Magnus was the son of King [Sigurd Jorsalfar](#) of Norway and Borghild Olavsdotter. When [Sigurd Jorsalfar](#) died in 1130, Magnus became king of Norway together with his uncle [Harald Gille](#). 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](#). Against the advice of his councillors, Magnus disbanded his army and travelled to [Bergen](#) to spend the winter there. Harald then returned to Norway with a new army and, meeting little opposition, reached Bergen before Christmas. Magnus had few men, and the city fell easily to Harald's army on [January 7, 1135](#). Magnus was captured and dethroned. He was blinded, castrated and had one leg cut

off. After this he was known as "Magnus the Blind".

Magnus then spent some time as a monk. [Harald Gille](#) was killed in 1136 by [Sigurd Slembe](#), another royal pretender who had himself proclaimed king in 1135. To back his claim, Sigurd Slembe brought Magnus back from the abbey and made him co-king. They decided to split up their forces, and Magnus headed for eastern Norway, where he had most popular support. There, he was defeated at Minne by King [Inge I](#). He then fled to [Götaland](#) and subsequently to Denmark, where he tried to get support for his cause. An attempted invasion of Norway by King [Erik Emune of Denmark](#) failed miserably. Magnus then rejoined Sigurd Slembe's men, but they continued to have little support in Norway. After some time spent more like bandits than kings, they met King Inge I and King [Sigurd II](#) in a final battle at [Hvaler](#) on [November 12, 1139](#). Magnus fell during the battle, and Sigurd Slembe was captured and killed.

## Norwegian civil war

During the [civil wars period](#) of [Norwegian history](#) (1130–1240) 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 church and king. There were then two main parties, firstly known by varying names or no names at all, but finally condensed into parties of [Bagler](#) and [Birkebeiner](#). The rallying point regularly was a royal son, who was set up as the head figure of the party in question, to oppose the rule of king from the contesting party.

# Eystein I of Norway



*Statue of Eystein I, now on display at Bergen Museum*

**Eystein I** (ca. 1088 – [August 29, 1123](#)) (Norwegian: *Øystein*) was [king of Norway](#) from 1103 to 1123.

Eystein became king together with his brothers [Sigurd](#) and [Olaf](#) when his father [Magnus Barefoot](#) died in 1103. Olaf died in 1115 at a young age, leaving Eystein and Sigurd as co-rulers until Eystein's death in 1123, when Sigurd became the sole ruler of [Norway](#).

While Sigurd was on [crusade](#) from 1107 to 1111, Eystein served as regent for the whole country. His relationship to Sigurd was strained, but open conflict was avoided. Whereas Sigurd made Norway known abroad, Eystein worked for economic and cultural progress within Norway.

Eystein constructed several churches, [Munkeliv Abbey](#) in [Bergen](#), a port in [Agdenes](#) and hostels for travellers. He also brought [Jämtland](#) under Norwegian rule, according to the saga of Sigurd and his brothers in the [Heimskringla](#).

Eystein and his wife Ingebjørg Guttormsdatter had a daughter, Maria Øysteinsdatter, who was the mother of royal pretender [Olav Ugjæva](#) (Olaf the Unlucky). Olaf was named king in 1166, but was subsequently defeated by [Magnus V](#) (Magnus Erlingsson) and forced to flee the country.

# Harald IV of Norway

**Harald Gille** (1103 – 1136), king of [Norway](#), was born in [Ireland](#). His byname Gille is probably from *Gilla Críst*, i.e. servant of Christ.

Around 1127, he went to Norway and declared he was a son of King [Magnus Barefoot](#), who had visited Ireland just before his death in 1103, and consequently a half-brother of the reigning king, [Sigurd](#).

He appears to have submitted successfully to the [ordeal by fire](#), and 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. Then war broke out between himself and Magnus, and after several battles the latter was captured in 1135, his eyes were put out, and he was thrown into prison.

*Harald Gille walks on hot iron bars.*



Harald now ruled the country until 1136, when he was murdered by [Sigurd Slembedjagn](#), another bastard son of Magnus Barefoot.

Harald was married to [Ingrid Ragnvaldsdottir](#), and had a son [Inge](#) with her. He also had sons with other women: [Sigurd](#), [Eystein](#) and [Magnus](#). All four sons were subsequently kings of Norway.



# Birger Brosa (24<sup>th</sup> great grand father)

*Birger Brosa's seal*



**Birger Brosa** ([Old Norse](#): *Birgir Brósa* where *Brósa* means "smiling"), [jarl](#) of Sweden 1174-1202, d. [9 January 1202](#) on [Visingsö](#), was a son of [Bengt Snivil](#) and a member of the powerful [House of Bjälbo](#). In the medieval texts he is either called the *jarl of the Swedes* or the *jarl of the Swedes and the [Geats](#)*.

Birger was appointed to the position of jarl during the reign of [Knut Eriksson](#). He maintained the position during Knut's successor [Sverker II](#) until his death in 1202.

Before 1170, Birger was married to [Birgit Haraldsdotter](#), the daughter of the Norwegian king [Harald Gille](#). She had formerly been married to the Danish pretender [Magnus Henriksson](#), who had briefly ruled in [Uppsala](#) 1160-1161.

Birger appears to have maintained peace in Sweden during the civil wars that ravaged [Denmark](#) and [Norway](#). Many of the pretenders in these kingdoms sought refuge with Birger. Among them were the [Birkebeiner](#) chieftains [Eystein Meyla](#) and [Sverre Sigurdsson](#) who were Birgit's kinsmen.

Birger owned estates in [Östergötland](#), [Nerike](#), [Vermland](#) and [Södermanland](#). He was a great donor to the convent of [Riseberga](#) in [Nerike](#), where Birgitta spent her last years after Birger's death.

As soon as he was dead, a civil war broke out.

## Children

- [Filip Birgersson, Jarl of Norway](#) (d. 1200), one of king Sverre's most staunch supporters and his jarl.
- [Knut Birgersson, Riksjarl of Sweden](#), [jarl](#) of Sweden. According to one source, Knut was married to king [Knut Eriksson](#)'s daughter, named Sigrid in that source. He was killed in 1208 at the [battle of Lena](#) (??[Battle of Gestilren](#) 1210???)
- [jarl Folke Birgersson](#), aka [Folke jarl](#), [jarl](#) of Sweden, killed 1210 at [battle of Gestilren](#)
- [Ingegerd Birgersdotter](#), married to king [Sverker II](#) and became the mother of king [John I of Sweden](#).

## Fiction

I [Jan Guillous roman-trilogi](#) om [Arn Magnusson](#) är Birger Brosa bror till Arns far Magnus.

# Eystein II of Norway

**Eystein Haraldsson**, born c 1125 apparently in [Scotland](#), died 1157 in [Bohuslän, Norway](#), was king of [Norway](#) from 1142 to 1157. He ruled as co-ruler with his brothers, [Inge Haraldsson](#) and [Sigurd Munn](#). He was killed in the power-struggle against his brother, Inge, in an early stage of the [civil war era in Norway](#).

## Origins

Eystein was the son of [Harald Gille](#), who was king of Norway from 1130 to 1136, and a woman whose Gaelic name is rendered in the old Norse sagas as *Bjaðök*. Harald was born and raised in [Ireland](#) or Scotland, and Eystein was born there. When Harald went to Norway in 1127 to press his claim to royal inheritance, Eystein did not go with him. However, Harald let it be known that he had fathered a son before coming to Norway.

## Civil war

*The capture of king Eystein, as imagined by artist Wilhelm Wetlesen*



According to the sagas, relations between the three brothers were peaceful as long as the two younger brothers' guardians were alive. But as the younger brothers grew up, tensions arose. In 1155, a meeting between the brothers in [Bergen](#) resulted in fighting breaking out between the men of king Inge and king Sigurd, in which king Sigurd was killed. King Eystein 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 Eystein. The reasons for the fighting in Bergen remain disputed. According to the sagas, Eystein and Sigurd had plotted to strip Inge of his royal title and divide his share of the kingdom between them. Some modern historians doubt this version, seeing it as Inge's excuse for his own aggressive actions. In any event, peace between Inge and Eystein did not hold for long after the events of 1155. In 1157, both sides gathered their forces for a confrontation. Inge's forces outnumbered Eystein's, and when they met, on the west coast near [Moster](#), Eystein's forces melted away. Eystein was forced to flee, over land to Viken (the [Oslofjord](#)-area). Abandoned by his own men, he was caught, somewhere in the area of present day [Bohuslän](#), and killed by his captors. Whether or not king Inge ordered his killing seems to have been a disputed question at the time. Eystein's body was buried in the church of *Foss* in [Tunge Hundred](#). According to Heimskringla, the local population of the area started worshipping Eystein as a saint.

Eystein was married to Ragna Nikolasdottir, a Norwegian gentlewoman. His bastard son [Eystein Meyla](#) was proclaimed king by the [Birkebeiner](#) party in 1176, but was defeated and killed the year after.

# Inge I of Norway

**Inge Haraldsson**, *old Norse* **Ingi Haraldsson** (1135 – [3 February 1161](#)) was king of [Norway](#) from 1136 to 1161. Inge's reign fell within the start of the period known in Norwegian history as the [civil war era](#). He was never the sole ruler of the country. He is often known as *Inge the Hunchback* (*Inge Krokrygg*), because of his physical disability. However, this epithet does not appear in medieval sources.

## Childhood and accession

Inge was the only legitimate son of king [Harald Gille](#) by his wife, [Ingiríðr Ragnvaldsdóttir](#). At the time, however, legitimate birth was not an important factor in determining succession to the throne. Inge was fostered by *Ögmund* or *Ámund Gyrðarson* in eastern Norway. His father, Harald, was murdered in 1136 by the pretender [Sigurd Slembe](#). The one-year-old Inge was named king at the [thing](#) of *Borgarting* near [Sarpsborg](#). His two half-brothers, also infants, [Magnus](#) and [Sigurd](#), were also named king at other things. Their respective guardians joined forces against Sigurd Slembe and his ally, the former king [Magnus the Blind](#). In 1139, they were defeated and killed. According to the sagas [Morkinskinna](#) and [Heimskringla](#), Inge's infirmity stemmed from having been carried into battle by one of his guardians during a battle in 1137: "...his back was knotted into a hump, and the one foot was shorter than the other; and he was besides so infirm that he could scarcely walk as long as he lived."<sup>[1]</sup> The [Danish](#) chronicler [Saxo Grammaticus](#) offers the alternative explanation that he became a hunchback after having been dropped on the floor by a maid during infancy. During the minority of Inge, Sigurd and Magnus, the country was ruled in peace by their guardians, prominent among whom was Inge's mother, queen Ingiríðr. Magnus, of whom little more is known, died at some point in the 1140s. In 1142, a fourth, older brother, [Eystein](#), came to Norway from [Scotland](#), where he had grown up. Harald Gille had acknowledged Eystein as a son before his death, and Eystein was therefore given a share of the kingdom.

## Adulthood and reign

*King Inge's army at the battle of Oslo in 1161, as imagined by artist Wilhelm Wetlesen.*



The division of the kingdom does not seem to have been territorial, all brothers seem to have held equal regal status over all parts of the country. According to the sagas, relations between the brothers were peaceful as long as their guardians were alive. This period of their reign saw the establishment of an independent Norwegian [Archiepiscopacy](#) in [Nidaros](#) (*Trondheim*) in 1152. As their guardians died, and the brothers grew up, conflict broke out.



In 1155, a meeting between the brothers in [Bergen](#) resulted in fighting breaking out between the men of king Inge and king Sigurd, in which king Sigurd was killed. King Eystein 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 Eystein. The reasons for the fighting in Bergen remain disputed. According to the sagas, Eystein and Sigurd had plotted to strip Inge of his royal title and divide his share of the kingdom between them. Some modern historians doubt this version, seeing it as Inge's excuse for his own aggressive actions. In any event, peace between Inge and Eystein did not hold for long after the events of 1155. In 1157, both sides gathered their forces for a confrontation. Inge's forces outnumbered Eystein's, and when they met, on the west coast near [Moster](#), Eystein's forces melted away. Eystein was forced to flee, he was caught and killed in [Bohuslän](#) later the same year.

Inge was now the last remaining brother. However, the supporters of Sigurd and Eystein united behind a son of Sigurd, [Haakon the Broadshouldered](#). They renewed the fight against Inge. *Heimskringla* notes that Inge was popular among the "chieftains" – the [lendmenn](#) – because he allowed them a great say in the running of the kingdom. Foremost among his advisors was the *lendmann* [Gregorius Dagsson](#), another prominent supporter was [Erling Skakke](#). The king's mother, who survived her son, also appears to have remained influential throughout his reign. [7 January](#) 1161, Gregorius was killed in a skirmish with king Haakon's forces. On [3 February](#) the same year, Inge was defeated and killed, leading his men into battle against King Haakon near [Oslo](#), after many of his men, led by his vassal King [Godred](#) of [Mann](#) defected to King Haakon's side. He was buried in St. Hallvard's church in Oslo.

## Aftermath

The period of peace during the minority of king Inge and his brothers – from 1129 until 1155 - was the longest peaceful period Norway was to see until 1240, as the dispute between the brothers ushered in the Norwegian civil war era. *Heimskringla* describes Inge thus:

*King Inge was the handsomest among them in countenance. He had yellow but rather thin hair, which was much curled. His stature was small; and he had difficulty in walking alone, because he had one foot withered, and he had a hump both on his back and his breast. He was of cheerful conversation, and friendly towards his friends; was generous, and allowed other chiefs to give him counsel in governing the country. He was popular, therefore, with the public; and all this brought the kingdom and the mass of the people on his side.*[\[2\]](#)

After Inge's fall, his supporters rallied behind the *lendmann* Erling Skakke and his son, king [Magnus Erlingsson](#). This party is sometimes referred to as the *lendmann-party*. The sagas of king Inge do not mention any offspring, but one of the pretenders against king [Sverre](#), [Jon Kuvlung](#) (died 1188), claimed to be Inge's son.

# Sigurd II of Norway

**Sigurd 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 [Tora Guttormsdotter](#). He ruled as co-ruler with his brothers, [Inge Haraldsson](#) and [Eystein Haraldsson](#). His epithet Munn means "the Mouth" in Old Norse. He was killed in the power-struggle against his brother, Inge, in an early stage of the [civil war era in Norway](#).

*King Sigurd with his men, as imagined by artist Wilhelm Wetlesen*



Sigurd was fostered by Guttorm [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 [Hvaler](#).

As they grew up, and their old advisors died, hostility began to grow among the brothers. In 1155, all three of them were set to meet in [Bergen](#) in an effort to keep the peace. [Inge](#) accused Sigurd and [Eystein](#) 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 fell on [6 February 1155](#). He was buried by the old cathedral of Bergen, in what is today [Bergenhus Fortress](#).

## Descendants

- [Haakon](#) (*Hákon*), known as *Haakon the Broadshouldered* (1147 - 1162). Made king by Sigurd and Eystein's supporters after Eystein's fall in 1157, in opposition to Inge Haraldsson. Killed in battle against Inge's old supporters and their new king [Magnus Erlingsson](#). Mother: Tora (*póra*).
- [Sigurd](#) (*Sigurðr*), known as *Sigurd Markusfostre* (died 1163). Proclaimed king by Haakon the Broadshouldered's followers in 1162, captured and decapitated by king Magnus' supporters in 1163.
- Harald (*Haraldr*), (died 1170s). Captured and executed by king Magnus' supporters, because his parentage made him a potential threat to Magnus' rule. Mother: Kristin Sigurdsdotter (*Kristín Sigurðardóttir*).
- [Sverre](#)? (*Sverrir*), (died 1202). Ruled as king of Norway from 1184 until his death. Mother: Gunnhild. Whether he was in fact a son of Sigurd is highly dubious.
- Eirik? (*Eiríkr*) (died 1190). Made [jarl](#) by king Sverre. Poisoned. Whether he was in fact a son of Sigurd is unknown.
- Cecilia (died late 1180s). Married [Folkvid the Lawspeaker](#), marriage later annulled. Remarried Bård Guttormsson (*Bárðr Guthormsson*)

# Sverre of Norway

**Sverre Sigurdsson** (*Old Norse*: *Sverrir Sigurðarson*, c. 1145/1151 – **9 March 1202**) was [king of Norway](#) from 1184 to 1202. He married [Margareta Eriksdotter](#), the daughter of the Swedish king [Eric the Saint](#), by whom he had the daughter [Kristina Sverresdotter](#).

King Sverre's trek across the Voss mountains is imagined in this 19th century painting by [Peter Nicolai Arbo](#)



Many consider him one of the most important rulers in [Norwegian history](#). He assumed power as the leader of the rebel group, the [Birkebeiners](#), during their struggle against King [Magnus Erlingsson](#). After Magnus fell at the [Battle of Fimreite](#) in 1184, Sverre ruled as sole king of Norway. Differences with the Church, however, led to his [excommunication](#) in 1194. Another civil war began against the church-supported [Baglers](#), which lasted beyond Sverre's death in 1202.

Painting depicting the Battle of Fimreite

Supposedly, King Sverre was short, so he usually directed his troops from horseback during battles. The contrast is great to the traditional [Norse](#) warrior ideals where the king was expected to lead his men from the front of the battle line. Sverre was a talented improviser, both in political and military life.

In Spring 1201 Sverre sailed out from Bergen with a large *leidang* force in what would be his last campaign season. With this army he could demand war taxes without opposition on both sides of the [Oslofjord](#) during the summer. In September he set up camp at [Tønsberg](#) and laid siege to [Tønsberg Fortress](#), which was garrisoned by Reidar the Messenger and his men. The siege dragged on because the other Bagler leaders dared not send a relief force and the garrison did not fall for any of Sverre's tricks. At last, on [25 January](#), Reidar and his men surrendered, and Sverre decided to sail back to Bergen.



During the return journey Sverre fell ill, and by the time they reached Bergen, the king was dying. On his death bed, Sverre appointed his sole living son, [Håkon](#), as his heir and successor. Sigurd Munn, claimed by Sverre as his father, had been slain by his brother [Inge Krokrygg](#) in 1155. Sigurd's son [Håkon Herdebrei](#) had been chosen to be king by his father's followers.



# Håkon III of Norway

**Håkon III** ([1182](#)–[1 January 1204](#)) was [king of Norway](#) from [1202](#)–[1204](#).

## Biography

He was born as the second illegitimate son of the future king [Sverre](#), then a [Faroese](#) adventurer, by his concubine *Astrid Roesdatter*, at some point in the 1170 during the Norwegian civil wars.

Håkon 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 [9 March 1202](#), declared that he had no other son alive than Håkon. He also wrote a letter to Håkon advising him to settle the longstanding dispute with the church. When the news of Sverre's death reached Håkon and the Birkebeiner assembled in [Nidaros](#), Håkon was first taken as chieftain by the Birkebeiner. The same spring he was taken as king at the [thing](#) in Nidaros.

Håkon appears to have had a troubled relationship with his father's queen, [Margareta Eriksdotter](#). After Sverre's death, Margareta attempted to return to her native Sweden with her daughter by Sverre, [Kristina](#). Håkon's men forcibly separated her from her daughter, as he wanted to keep her at his court. Subsequently, Margareta seemingly settled with Håkon and went to his court. During Christmas in [1203](#), Håkon fell ill after a [bloodletting](#), and on [1 January 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.

Håkon Sverresson 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 of Varteig](#), whom Håkon had taken as a concubine for a time in 1203, appeared at the Birkebeiner court with an infant son who she claimed was Håkon'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.

# Haakon IV of Norway

**Haakon Haakonsson** (1204 – [December 15, 1263](#)), also called **Haakon the Old**, was [king of Norway](#) from 1217 to 1263. Under his rule, medieval Norway reached its peak.

*An illustration of Hakon, King of Norway, and his son Magnus, from [Flateyjarbok](#)*



## Background and childhood

Håkon's mother was Inga of Varteig. She claimed he was the illegitimate son of [Håkon III of Norway](#), the leader of the [birkebeiner](#) faction in the ongoing civil war against the [bagler](#). Håkon III had visited Varteig, in what is now [Østfold](#) county, the previous year. He was dead by the time Håkon was born, but Inga's claim was supported by several of Håkon III's followers, and the birkebeiner recognized Håkon as a king's son.

The [civil war era](#) in [Norwegian history](#) lasted from 1130 to 1240. During this period there were several interlocked conflicts of varying scale and intensity. Håkon was born in territory which was controlled by the [Bagler](#) faction, and his mother's claim that he was a birkebeiner royal son placed them both in a very dangerous position. When in 1206 the Bagler tried to take advantage of the situation and started hunting Håkon, a group of Birkebeiner warriors fled with the child, heading for King [Inge II of Norway](#), the birkebeiner king in Nidaros (now [Trondheim](#)). On their way they came into a blizzard, and only the two mightiest warriors, Torstein Skevla and Skjervald Skrukka, continued on [skis](#), carrying the child in their arms. They managed to bring the heir to safety. This event still is commemorated in Norway's most important annual skiing event, [the Birkebeiner ski race](#).



*19th century impression of the birkebeiner bringing the infant Håkon to safety by artist Knud Bergslien.*

## Early reign

The rescued child was placed under the protection of King [Inge Bårdsson](#). After King Inge's death in 1217 he, at the age of 13, was chosen king. Håkon's mother Inga had to prove his parentage through a [trial by ordeal](#) in [Bergen](#) in 1218.

Haakon was confirmed as king of Norway, as a direct heir of [King Håkon Sverresson](#), king Inge's predecessor.

# Magnus VI of Norway

**Magnus Lagabøte** (*Magnus the law-mender*) or **Magnus Håkonsson** (1238 - 9 May 1280), was king of [Norway](#) from 1263 until 1280.

*Magnus, King of Norway*



## Early life

He was the youngest son of king [Håkon Håkonsson](#) and his wife [Margaret Skuladotter](#). On [11 September 1261](#), he married the Danish princess [Ingeborg](#), the daughter of the late Danish king [Erik Plogpenning](#), after she was practically abducted by king Håkon's men from the monastery she was living in. The struggle to claim Ingeborg's inheritance from her murdered father later involved Norway in intermittent conflicts with [Denmark](#) for decades to come. On [16 December 1263](#) king Håkon died while fighting the [Scottish](#) king over the [Hebrides](#), and Magnus became the ruler of Norway.

In 1273 Magnus gave his eldest son, five-year-old [Eirik](#), the name of king, and his younger brother [Håkon](#) the title of [duke](#), thus making unequivocally clear what the royal succession would be.

*Magnus establishes laws*



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 churches influence over the kingdom. In 1277, the *Settlement of Tønsberg* settled the conflict, with both sides compromising. 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 Icelandic [Sturla Þorðarson](#) 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](#) 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, and died [9 May](#). He had already planned to have his son Eirik crowned at midsummer as co-ruler, instead Eirik now took over as sole king at the age of 12. Real power fell to a circle of advisors, prominent among them Magnus' queen Ingeborg. Magnus was buried in the church of the [Franciscan](#) monastery in Bergen, which is since the 16th century the cathedral of Bergen.



# Eric II of Norway

**Eirik Magnusson** (1268 – [15 July 1299](#)) was the king of [Norway](#) from 1280 until 1299.

He was the eldest surviving son of [king Magnus the Lawmender of Norway](#), and his wife [Ingeborg Eriksdatter](#), daughter of king [Eric IV of Denmark](#). Through his mother (who was daughter of Jutta of Saxony, herself a descendant of [Ulvhild of Norway](#), duchess of Saxony), Eric descended from king St Olav, [Olav II of Norway](#), being the first after [Magnus the Good](#) of that saint's descendants to ascend that throne (i.e, the descendants of St.Olav returned to kingship of Norway).

*Head with the King's crown in the Stavanger Domkirke is considered to be of Eirik Magnusson*



Eirik married princess [Margaret of Scotland](#) in 1281. Margaret died two years later in labour, giving birth to [Margaret, Maid of Norway](#), who became [queen of Scotland](#) in 1286.

He later married [Isabel Bruce](#), sister of King [Robert I of Scotland](#).

Eirik received the nickname "Priesthater" from his less than successful relations with the church. In spite of this he is normally counted a weak and inoffensive man who was mostly guided by his councillors.

Probably because of his claim on his maternal heritage he supported the Danish outlaws like [Stig Andersen Hvide](#) after the murder of King [Erik V](#) and ravaged the Danish coasts for some years.

As Eirik died without sons, he was succeeded by his brother, [Haakon V of Norway](#). He was

buried in the old cathedral of Bergen, which was demolished in 1531. Its site is marked by a memorial, in present-day [Bergenshus Fortress](#).

Eirik's daughter Ingeborg married [Valdemar Magnusson](#) of Sweden.

# Valdemar, Duke of Finland

**Valdemar Magnusson** (died [February 16, 1318](#)), was [Duke of Finland](#), a Swedish prince and the third son of king [Magnus I of Sweden](#) and his queen [Helvig of Holstein](#).

*Seal of prince Valdemar of Sweden, duke of Finland*



He was born in the 1280s. At the coronation of his older brother [Birger of Sweden](#), Valdemar became the duke of [Finland](#), and was at the same time married to Kristina, the daughter of the marshal [Torgils Knutsson](#).

When the marshal was toppled, in 1305, Valdemar divorced his wife claiming that they were spiritually related (baptism siblings), the marshal Tyrgils having been his godfather. In the fall of 1312, in [Oslo](#), he married [Ingeborg](#), the daughter of [Eirik II of Norway](#) and his second wife, queen [Isabella Bruce](#). In 1316, they had a son who probably died young.

In 1315, Valdemar and his elder brother managed to wrest large parts of the Swedish kingdom from their brother. Valdemar gained [Turku](#) and [Häme](#) castles with a lion's share of [Finland](#), the castle of [Stockholm](#), most of [Uppland](#), and [Borgholm](#) castle with the island of [Öland](#).

His career was stopped and his life was shortened by the treachery of his brother King Birger, the [de jure](#) ruler of Sweden. During a call on his brother in [Nyköping](#), he and his brother [Eric Magnusson](#) were arrested and chained, the night between the 10th and 11th of December 1317. No one knows for certain how the two brothers died. They either starved to death or were murdered.

Valdemar's widow survived long. Her dower included the island of Öland, whereby Ingeborg Eiriksdottir was occasionally mentioned as [Duchess of Öland](#).

# Haakon V of Norway

**Haakon V Magnusson** ([1270](#) - [May 8, 1319](#)) was king of [Norway](#) from 1299 until 1319. He was married to [Eufemia of Rügen](#),(16239) and father to [Ingeborg Håkonsdotter](#) who married duke [Eric Magnusson of Sweden](#). He is considered to be the last Norwegian king in the [Fairhair dynasty](#).

He was the younger surviving son of [Magnus the Lawmender, King of Norway](#), and his wife [Ingeborg of Denmark](#). He succeeded when his older brother [king Eirik](#) died heirless.

Through his mother (who was daughter of Jutta of Saxony, herself a descendant of Ulvhild of Norway, duchess of Saxony), Haakon descended from [king Saint Olav](#).

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 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.



*Burial site of Håkon V in Oslo*

Haakon was succeeded by his daughter's son, the infant Swedish [prince Magnus](#). Haakon was buried in [St. Mary's church](#) in [Oslo](#). Remains of two people, deemed to be Haakon and Eufemia, were discovered during excavations of the ruins of that church and reinterred at [Akershus Fortress](#).



# Magnus IV of Sweden

**Magnus II Eriksson** or Magnus VII of Norway and Magnus IV (II) of Sweden was king of [Sweden](#) (spring 1316 – [December 1, 1374](#)), [Norway](#), and [Terra Scania](#), and was son of Duke [Erik Magnusson of Sweden](#) and Ingeborg, daughter of [Haakon V of Norway](#). Also known by his nickname "Magnus Smek" (Eng. "Pet-Magnus").

*Seal of King Magnus*



Magnus was elected king of Sweden on [8 July 1319](#), and acclaimed as [hereditary king of Norway](#) at the [thing](#) of *Haugathing* in [Tønsberg](#) in August the same year. Magnus was declared to have come of age at 15 in 1331. This caused resistance in Norway, where a statute from 1302 made clear that kings came of age at the age of 20, and a rising by Erling Vidkunsson and other Norwegian nobles ensued. In 1333, the rebels submitted to king Magnus.

In 1332 the king of Denmark, [Christopher II](#), died as a "king without a country" after he and his older brother and predecessor had pawned Denmark piece by piece. King Magnus took advantage of his neighbour's distress, redeeming the pawn for the eastern Danish provinces for a huge amount of silver, and thus became ruler also of [Terra Scania](#).

On [21 July 1336](#) Magnus was crowned king of both Norway and Sweden. This caused further resentment in Norway, where the nobles and magnates wished a separate Norwegian coronation. A second rising by members of the high nobility of Norway ensued in 1338.

In 1336 he married [Blanche of Namur](#), daughter of Count Jean of [Namur](#) and Marie of Artois, a descendant of [Louis VIII of France](#).

Opposition to Magnus' rule in Norway led to a settlement between the king and the Norwegian nobility at [Varberg](#) on [15 August 1343](#). In violation of the Norwegian laws on royal inheritance, Magnus' younger son [Håkon](#) would become king of Norway, with Magnus as [regent](#) during his minority. Later the same year, it was declared that Magnus' older son, [Eric](#) would become king of Sweden on Magnus' death. Thus, the union between Norway and Sweden would be severed. This occurred when Håkon came of age in 1355.

Magnus' young favourite courtier was [Bengt Algotsson](#), whom he elevated to [Duke of Finland](#) and [Halland](#), as well as Viceroy of the province of [Scania](#). Because [homosexuality](#) was a mortal sin and vehemently scorned at that time, revelations about the king's alleged love relationship with Algotsson, and other erotic escapades, were spread by his enemies, particularly by some noblemen who referred to mystical visions of [St. Bridget](#) (Birgitta). The allegations earned Magnus the epithet of Magnus the Petter (M. Smek), and caused him a lot of harm. Magnus and Blanche had at least five children, of whom three daughters died in infancy.

Because of the raise in taxation to pay for the acquisition of the Scanian province, some Swedish nobles supported by the Church attempted to oust Magnus, setting up his elder son Eric as king ([Eric XII of Sweden](#)), but Eric died supposedly of the [plague](#) in 1359, with his wife Beatrice of Brandenburg and their two sons.

# Blanka of Namur (10th cousin, 20 times removed of LG)

"Queen Blanka" by [Albert Edelfelt](#)



**Queen Blanche of Sweden and Norway**, (1320 – 1363) was queen-consort of [Sweden](#) and [Norway](#), as the wife of King [Magnus Eriksson](#). She was born as daughter of (daughter of Count Jean of [Namur](#) and Marie of Artois, a descendant of [Louis VIII of France](#).(15893)) the [Count of Namur](#).

## Biography

It is unknown how it came that the Swedish/Norwegian king married a woman from [Namur](#). In June 1334 he travelled from Norway to Namur to propose. In Namur they got engaged and Magnus returned to Sweden in the fall of 1334. Blanka left Namur in the fall of 1335 and the wedding took place in October or early November 1335, possibly at Bohus castle. As a wedding gift Blanka received the province of [Tunsberg](#) as a fief. Blanka's coronation took place in July 1336.

Together they had two sons, Eric and Haakon. It was agreed that Eric should inherit [Sweden](#) and Haakon [Norway](#). When Haakon became [Haakon VI of Norway](#) in 1355, [Eric](#) rebelled against his father and was elevated to co-ruler of Sweden.

Queen Blanka is one of the most interesting of Swedish/Norwegian medieval queens. Apparently, she was very politically and socially active and noticeable as a person and not only as a queen, as many stories and songs were written about her. In Sweden, queen Blanka is also remembered for the song: "*Rida rida ranka, hästen heter Blanka*" ("*Ride ride ranka, the name of the horse is Blanka*"), which can be seen on the famous historical painting by Edelfeldt of her and her son.

Her political influence made her controversial and exposed to much criticism and slander. In 1359 she was accused by people of having poisoned her daughter-in-law [Beatrix of Bavaria](#) and her own son, the co-ruler, king Eric; on his deathbed, her son said, that the same person who gave him life, had now taken it from him - it is possible that he himself believed that he was poisoned by her, but there is no proof that this happened. Historians now believe that both her son and her daughter-in-law died of the plague. From 1359, she lived in [Tønsberg](#) in Norway and ruled the south-east of this country.

She spent her last years, from 1359 until her death, at the [Tønsberg Castle](#). On April 9, 1363, her son Haakon married [Margaret](#), daughter of [Valdemar IV of Denmark](#). Shortly after the wedding Blanka fell ill and died. The cause of death and the place where she is buried is unknown

# Haakon VI of Norway

*Union arms of Haakon VI as king of Norway and Sweden. From the armorial Gelre c 1300*

**Haakon VI Magnusson** ([Swedish](#): *Håkan Magnusson*) (appr. 1340 – 1380), was King of [Norway](#) 1343-80 and co-king of Sweden 1362-64.

He was the younger son of King [Magnus Eriksson](#) of [Sweden](#) and [Norway](#) and [Blanche of Namur](#). In 1343 he succeeded his father to the Norwegian throne, who would still rule during his minority, until 1355 when he reached majority as sovereign of Norway.

[15 February 1362](#) he was elected (co)king of Sweden in Mora stones (representatives of [Finland](#) taking part in the election for the first time) at instigation of nobles, but soon in agreement with his father. In 1363 he married [Margaret of Denmark](#), daughter of King [Valdemar IV of Denmark](#). In 1370 they had the son [Olav](#) who would succeed his grandfather to the Danish throne in 1376.

His cousin [Albert III of Mecklenburg](#) and nobles moved against his father in Sweden, ultimately deposing Haakon and Magnus and taking the old king prisoner.

Haakon then concentrated mainly on business of his Norwegian kingdom. However he succeeded in getting his father released and allowed to settle in Norway where he died. Some occurrences, they made efforts to oust Albert. Haakon continued to claim the Swedish throne, a reason why his wife and later widow Margaret used the title queen of Sweden until her own death.

In 1379 Haakon solved the disputes over succession in the Norse [earldom of Orkney](#), awarding it to [Henry Sinclair, ocean explorer](#), a (youngest) grandson of earl Maol Iosa, over the widower of Maol Iosa's elder daughter and other descendants.

In 1380 King Haakon died and was succeeded by his own son [Olav IV Haakonsson](#) who was also [King of Denmark](#).





# Olav IV of Norway

**Oluf IV Haakonsson** (1370 – [August 23, 1387](#)) was king of [Denmark](#) as Oluf II (1376–1387) and king of [Norway](#) as Olav IV (1380–1387). Oluf was son of King [Haakon VI of Norway](#) and the grandson of [Magnus II of Sweden](#). His mother was Queen [Margaret of Denmark](#) which made him the grandson of [Valdemar IV of Denmark](#). In addition to his claim on the thrones of Norway and Denmark, he was in the direct succession line to the throne of [Sweden](#) (but for the interposition of [Albert of Mecklenburg](#)).

*King of Denmark, Norway, the Vends and the Goths*



Oluf was proclaimed King of Denmark at age five by the National Council (Danish:rigsråd) in 1375 with Queen Margaret as regent. His proclamation included the title "true heir of Sweden" added at his mother's insistence since his grandfather had been king of Sweden until forced to abdicate. Oluf was hailed as king in [Scania](#), including the towns controlled by the [Hanseatic league](#) since the [Treaty of Stralsund](#) in 1370. Queen Margaret signed a coronation charter on behalf of Olaf who was too young to rule until he came of age at fifteen. In the charter Oluf agreed to meet with the Danehof at least once a year and return properties his grandfather [Valdemar IV](#) had

confiscated during his reign.

Oluf became King of Norway on his father's death in 1380. Even when Oluf reached his majority in 1385, his mother ruled through him. Norway and Denmark were thus united in a personal union under Oluf. Denmark and Norway would have the same king, with the exception of short [interregnums](#), until Norway's independence in 1814.

Despite all the hope Margaret and the peoples of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden had for Olaf's future, they were never realized. Olaf died unexpectedly in 1387 at age 17. He was buried in Sorø Abbey on Zealand. Rumors immediately arose that Oluf had been poisoned which gave rise many years later to the story of "false Oluf".

Following his death at [Falsterbohus](#), Oluf's mother Queen Margaret of Norway was proclaimed "all powerful lady and mistress and the Kingdom of Denmark's Regent". Denmark had at the time no provision that enabled a woman to rule in her own right. The next year Norway proclaimed her Norway's "reigning queen". After the defeat and overthrow of King Albrecht in 1389 she was proclaimed "all powerful lady of Sweden". She was able to unite the three Scandinavian kingdoms in a personal union under one crown for her successor King Erik of Pommerania by the [Kalmar Union](#) 13 June 1397.

After Oluf, no Norwegian king was to be born on Norwegian soil for more than 550 years, until prince [Harald](#) was born in 1937. Oluf's death was also the end of the male line of the [Folkung](#) dynasty in [Sweden](#).

# Haakon VII of Norway

**Haakon VII** (Prince Carl of Denmark and Iceland, born **Christian Frederik Carl Georg Valdemar Axel**) (3 August 1872 at [Charlottenlund Palace](#) – 21 September 1957 in [Oslo](#)), known as **Prince Carl of Denmark** until 1905, was the first king of [Norway](#) after the [1905 dissolution](#) of the [personal union](#) with [Sweden](#). He was a member of the [House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg](#). As one of the few [elected monarchs](#), Haakon quickly won the respect and affection of his people and played a pivotal role in uniting the Norwegian nation in its [resistance](#) to the [attack](#) and five-year-long [Nazi occupation](#) during [World War II](#).

*Haakon VII, King of Norway*



Haakon is regarded as one of the greatest Norwegians of the twentieth century and is particularly revered for his courage during the German invasion and his leadership and preservation of Norwegian unity during the Nazi occupation. He died at the age of 85 in 1957, after having reigned for 52 years.

## Early years as a Danish prince

Known in his youth as Prince Carl of Denmark (namesake of his maternal grandfather the King of Norway etc), he was the second son of the future King [Frederick VIII](#) of [Denmark](#) and a younger brother of the future King [Christian X of Denmark](#). He personally became king of Norway before his father and brother became kings of Denmark. He was a paternal grandson of King [Christian IX of Denmark](#) (during whose reign he was prince of Denmark) and a maternal grandson of King [Charles XV of Sweden](#), who was also king of Norway (as Charles IV).

## Accession to the Norwegian throne

*The coronation of Haakon VII and Queen Maud on 22 June 1906*



After the [Union between Sweden and Norway](#) was [dissolved](#) in 1905, a committee of the Norwegian government identified several members of European royalty as candidates for Norway's first king of its own in several centuries. Gradually, Prince Carl became the leading candidate, largely due to the fact that he was descended from independent Norwegian kings. He also had a son (and hence an heir to

the throne), and Princess Maud's ties to the British royal family were viewed as advantageous to the newly-independent Norwegian nation.

# Resistance during World War II



King Haakon VII early on during his reign.

[Norway was invaded](#) by the naval and air forces of [Nazi Germany](#) during the early hours of 9 April 1940. The German naval detachment sent to capture [Oslo](#) was challenged at [Oscarsborg Fortress](#). The fortress fired at the invaders, causing damage to the [pocket battleship Lützow](#) and the sinking of the [heavy cruiser Blücher](#), with heavy German losses that included many of the armed forces, Gestapo agents, and administrative personnel who were to have occupied the Norwegian capital. These events led to the withdrawal of the rest of the German flotilla, preventing the invaders from occupying Oslo at dawn as had been intended in the order of battle. The German occupation forces' delay in arrival in Oslo, along with swift action from the [President of the Storting C. J Hambro](#) in turn created the opportunity for the Norwegian royal family, the cabinet, and most of the 150 members of the Storting to make a hasty departure from the capital by special train.

The Storting first convened at [Hamar](#) the same afternoon, but with the rapid advance of German troops, the group moved on to [Elverum](#). The assembled parliament unanimously enacted a resolution, the so-called *Elverumsfullmakten* ([Elverum Authorization](#)), granting the Cabinet full powers to protect the country until such time as the Storting could meet again.

The next day, German minister [Curt Bräuer](#) demanded a meeting with Haakon. The German diplomat called on the Norwegians to cease their resistance and stated [Hitler's](#) demand that the king appoint Nazi sympathizer [Vidkun Quisling](#) as prime minister of what would be a German [puppet government](#). Bräuer suggested that Haakon follow the example of the Danish government and his brother, [Christian X](#), which had surrendered almost immediately after the previous day's invasion, and threatened Norway with harsh conditions if it didn't surrender. Haakon told Bräuer that he could not make such a decision himself, but only on the advice of the government. Although the [Constitution of Norway](#) nominally gives the king the final responsibility for making such a decision, it is a well-established convention that the king does not make any major political decisions on his own initiative.

In an emotional meeting with the Cabinet in [Nybergsund](#), the king reported the German ultimatum to his cabinet. Although he could not make the decision himself, he knew he could use his moral authority to influence it. Accordingly, Haakon told the Cabinet:

*I am deeply affected by the responsibility laid on me if the German demand is rejected. The responsibility for the calamities that will befall people and country is indeed so grave that I dread to take it. It rests with the government to decide, but my position is clear.*

*For my part I cannot accept the German demands. It would conflict with all that I have considered to be my duty as King of Norway since I came to this country nearly thirty-five years ago.*

Haakon went on to say that he could not appoint any government headed by Quisling because he knew neither the people nor the Storting had confidence in him. However, if the Cabinet felt otherwise, the king said he would [abdicate](#) so as not to stand in the way of the government's decision.



Inspired by Haakon's stand, the government announced its refusal to accept the German terms to the German emissary by telephone. In a radio broadcast that evening, the government and king's refusal to the German ultimatum were announced to the Norwegian people. The government indicated that they would resist the German attack as long as possible, and expressed their confidence that Norwegians would lend their support to the cause.

The following morning, 11 April 1940, bomber aircraft of the [Luftwaffe](#) attacked Nybergsund, destroying the small town where the Norwegian government was staying in an attempt to wipe out Norway's unyielding king and government. The king and his ministers took refuge in the snow-covered woods and escaped harm, continuing farther north through the rugged Norwegian mountains toward [Molde](#) on Norway's northwestern coast. As the British forces in the area lost ground under Luftwaffe bombardment, the king and his party were taken aboard the British cruiser [HMS Glasgow](#) and conveyed by sea to [Tromsø](#) where a provisional capital was established on 1 May. Haakon and Crown Prince Olav took up residence in a forest cabin in [Målselvdalen](#) valley in inner [Troms](#) county where they would stay until the evacuation to the [United Kingdom](#). While residing in Troms the two were protected by local rifle association members armed with the ubiquitous [Krag-Jørgensen](#) rifle.

The Allies had a fairly secure hold over northern Norway until late May, but as the Allies' position in the [Battle of France](#) rapidly deteriorated, the Allied forces in northern Norway were badly needed elsewhere and were withdrawn. The beleaguered and demoralized Norwegian government was evacuated from Tromsø on 7 June aboard [HMS Devonshire](#); and after a 34-knot (63 km/h) dash, under cover of [HMS Glorious](#), [HMS Acasta](#), and [HMS Ardent](#), safely arrived in [London](#). Haakon and his cabinet set up a Norwegian [government in exile](#) in the British capital. Taking up residence at [Rotherhithe](#) in [London](#), Haakon was an important national symbol in the Norwegian resistance. Between March 1942 and the end of the war in June 1945 the King and his son, Crown Prince Olav, lived at Foliejon Park in [Winkfield](#), near [Windsor](#).

Meanwhile, Hitler had appointed [Josef Terboven](#) as [Reichskommissar](#) for Norway. On Hitler's orders, Terboven attempted to coerce the Storting to depose the king; parliament declined, citing constitutional principles. A subsequent ultimatum was made by the Germans under threat of interning all Norwegians of military age in German concentration camps. With this threat looming, the Norwegian parliament's representatives in Oslo wrote to their monarch on 27 June, asking him to abdicate. The king, politely replying that the Storting had acted under duress, declined the request. After one further German attempt in September to force the Storting to depose Haakon failed, Terboven finally decreed that the royal family had "forfeited their right to return" and dissolved the democratic political parties.

During Norway's five years under German control, many Norwegians surreptitiously wore clothing or jewelry made from coins bearing Haakon's "H7" monogram as symbols of resistance to the [German occupation](#) and of solidarity with their exiled king and government, just as many people in [Denmark](#) wore [his brother's](#) monogram on a pin. The king's monogram was also painted and otherwise reproduced on various surfaces as a show of resistance to the occupation.



*The royal family of Norway waving to the welcoming crowds from [HMS Norfolk](#) at [Oslo](#).*

After the end of the war, Haakon and the Norwegian royal family returned to Norway aboard the cruiser [HMS Norfolk](#), arriving to cheering crowds in Oslo on 7 June 1945.

# Olav V of Norway

**Olav V** (2 July 1903 – 17 January 1991) was the [king of Norway](#) from 1957 until his death.

*Olav V, King of Norway*



A member of the [House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg](#), Olav was born in the [United Kingdom](#) as the son of Prince [Carl of Denmark](#) and Princess [Maud of the United Kingdom](#) and given the names Alexander Edward Christian Frederik. He became Crown Prince and only heir to the throne of [Norway](#) when his father was elected king in 1905. He was the first heir to the Norwegian throne to be brought up in Norway since [Olav IV](#), and his parents made sure he was given as Norwegian an upbringing as possible. In preparation for his royal duties, he attended both civilian and military schools. In 1929, he married Princess [Märtha of Sweden](#). During [World War II](#) his leadership was much appreciated and he was appointed [Norwegian Chief of Defence](#) in 1944. At his death, he was the last surviving grandchild of [Edward VII of the United Kingdom](#) and [Queen Alexandra](#).

## Birth and early life

Born in Appleton House, [Flitcham](#), [Sandringham](#) estate, [Norfolk](#), [United Kingdom](#) to Prince [Carl of Denmark](#) and [Princess Maud of Wales](#), (daughter of King [Edward VII of the United Kingdom](#)), he was given the names and title of **Alexander Edward Christian Frederik, Prince of Denmark**. He was given the name **Olav** when his father became King [Haakon VII of Norway](#) in 1905.

Olav was the first heir to the throne since medieval times to grow up in Norway. He graduated from the [Norwegian Military Academy](#) in 1924, and went on to study jurisprudence and economics at [Balliol College, Oxford](#).

He was an accomplished athlete. Olav jumped from the [Holmenkollen ski jump](#) in Oslo, and also competed in sailing regattas. He won a gold medal in sailing at the [1928 Summer Olympics](#) in [Amsterdam](#) and remained an active sailor into old age.

On 21 March 1929 in Oslo, he married his first cousin Princess [Märtha of Sweden](#) with whom he had one son, [Harald](#), and two daughters, [Ragnhild](#) and [Astrid](#). As exiles during [World War II](#), Crown Princess Märtha and the Royal children lived in [Washington, D.C.](#), where she struck up a close friendship with [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#).

An avid sailor, Harald represented Norway in the [yachting](#) events of [Olympic Games](#) in Tokyo in 1964 and in Mexico City in 1968.<sup>[5]</sup> The Crown Prince carried the Norwegian flag at the opening parade of the [1964 Summer Olympics](#). With his sailing crew he won World Championship bronze, silver and gold medals, in 1988, 1982, and 1987, respectively. In July 2005, the King and his crew aboard the royal sailboat *Fram XV* won the gold medal at the European Championships in Sweden. In the 2007 World Championship the King obtained a sixth place.

# Harald V of Norway

**Harald V** (born 21 February 1937) is the [king of Norway](#). He succeeded to the throne of [Norway](#) upon the death of his father [Olav V](#) on 17 January 1991. The son of the then-[Crown Prince Olav](#) and of [Princess Märtha of Sweden](#),

*Harald V, King of Norway*



A member of the [House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg](#), originally from Northern Germany, Harald became the first [Norwegian](#)-born prince since [Olav IV](#), who was born in 1370. As he is the great-grandson of [Edward VII of the United Kingdom](#), he is also in the [line of succession to the British throne](#). He is a second cousin to [Elizabeth II](#) and also a maternal first cousin to [Albert II of Belgium](#).

## Childhood and education

When Prince Harald was born in Skaugum he was the first heir to the throne of Norway to be born in Norway for several hundred years.

In 1940 the entire royal family had to flee their homes because of the [German invasion](#). The dramatic journey northbound was marked by the Germans' repeated attempts to kill the King through bombing. It was deemed safer for the family to split up. The King and Crown Prince Olav would remain in Norway and the Crown Princess was to make her way to Sweden with the three children. The latter party reached Sweden on the night of 10 April, but although Crown Princess Märtha was Swedish-born, they encountered problems at the border station. According to Princess Astrid and others who were present, they were admitted only after the driver threatened to ram the border gate. Another account does not describe the escape so dramatically. However when the King and Crown Prince inquired of Swedish foreign minister [Christian Günther](#) whether they could sleep one night in Sweden without being interned, they were denied.

Prince Harald spent the following days in [Sälen](#) before relocating to [Prince Carl Bernadotte's](#) home in [Frötuna](#) on 16 April. On 26 April the group moved to [Drottningholm](#) in Stockholm. Accounts tell us that [King Gustaf V](#) had an amicable relationship with his Norwegian guests, but the topic of the war in Norway was not to be raised. After the King and Crown Prince had to leave Norway on 7 June they felt Sweden might not be the best place for the rest of the family. They started planning for them to be relocated to the USA. On 17 August the Crown Princess and her children left for the USA from [Petsamo](#), [Finland](#) aboard the ship [American Legion](#).

Harald and his mother and sisters lived in [Washington, D.C.](#) during the war, while his father, Prince Olav, and his grandfather, King Haakon, stayed in London with the Norwegian government-in-exile. One of the notable events he remembers from that time is standing behind [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) when he was sworn in for his fourth term on the South Portico of the [White House](#) in 1945. Such childhood experiences are reflected in a trace of an American accent when he speaks English.