

GRANHOLM GENEALOGY

SWEDISH ANCESTRY

Vasa Dynasty (1523-1751)

INTRODUCTION

Our Swedish ancestry is quite comprehensive as it covers a broad range of the history. For simplicity the information has been presented in four different books.

Book 1 – Mythical to Viking Era (? – 1250)

Book 2 – Folkunga Dynasty (1250 – 1523)

Book 3 – Vasa Dynasty (1523 – 1751)

Book 4 – Recent Royalty (1751 – Present)

This Book 3 covers a tumultuous part of the Swedish history involving several wars, where Finnish soldiers participated including the wars in Prussia with Swedish armies. **Hakkapeliitta** is a historiographical term used for a Finnish light cavalryman in the service of King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden during the Thirty Years' War (1618 to 1648). The Hakkapeliitta were well-trained Finnish light cavalrymen who excelled in sudden and savage attacks, raiding and reconnaissance. The greatest advantage of the fast and lightly-armored cavalry was its charge. They typically had a sword, a helmet, and leather armor or a breastplate of steel. They would attack at a full gallop, fire the first pistol at twenty paces and the second at five paces, and then draw the sword. The large horse itself was used like another weapon, as it was used to trample enemy infantry. The name came from their battle cry in Finnish, “Hakkaa päälle, Pohjan poika!” (Cut their heads, Bothnia’s son!).



The Hakkapeliittas' Homecoming (a statue) by sculptor Pentti Papinaho in the city of Lahti, in Finland

Book 3 follows just one lineage, different lineages, not indicated here, include the spouses, who sometimes are also relatives, and they are as well **highlighted**, indicating that they are covered in the text. Besides the royals I have included other famous Finnish persons.

Descendants of: Margareta Karlsdotter Sparre av Tofta As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

- 1 **Margareta Karlsdotter Sparre av Tofta** #15031 d. 1429 (16th great grand mother)
m. **Knut Tordsson Bonde** #15030 b. ABT 1377 Vadstena, Sweden d. 1413 (16th great grand father)
[son of Tord Röríksson Bonde #15032 and Ramborg Cecilia Nilsdotter Vasa #15033]
m. **Steen Tureson Lord of Vik and Örby** #16116 m. 1414

[Children of Margareta Karlsdotter Sparre av Tofta and Steen Tureson Lord of Vik and Örby]

- 2 **Birgitta Steensdotter Bielke** #16117 d. 1462 (16th great aunt)
m. **Gustav Anundsson Sture** #16118 b. 1410 d. 1444

- 3 **Sten Sture den äldre** b. 1440 d. December 14, 1503

- 3 **Birgitta Gustavsdotter Sture** #16119 d. 1472 (first cousin, 16 times removed)
m. **Johan Kristiernsson Vasa** #16120 b. 1426 d. 1477 (first cousin, 18 times removed)
[son of Kristiern Nilsson Vasa #16265 and Margareta Eriksdotter Krummedige #16266]

- 4 **Erik Johansson Vasa** #16121 b. 1470 d. 1520 (second cousin, 15 times removed)
m. Cecilia Månsdotter Ekaätten #16122 b. 1476 d. 1522

- 5 **Gustav I Vasa King of Sweden** #16123 b. 1496 d. 1560 (third cousin, 14 times removed)
m. Katarina von Sachsen-Lauenburg #16267
m. **Margareta Leijonhufvud Queen of Sweden** #16270 b. 1516 d. 1551 (4th cousin, 15 times removed)
[daughter of Erik Abrahamsson Leijonhufvud #16282 and Ebba Eriksdotter Vasa #16283]

[Children of Gustav I Vasa King of Sweden and Katarina von Sachsen-Lauenburg]

- 6 **Eric XIV King of Sweden** #16268 b. 1533 d. 1577 (4th cousin, 13 times removed)
m. **Karin Månsdotter Queen of Sweden** #16269 b. 1550 d. 1612

[Children of Gustav I Vasa King of Sweden and Margareta Leijonhufvud Queen of Sweden]

- 6 **John III King of Sweden** #16271 b. 1537 d. 1592 (4th cousin, 13 times removed)
m. **Catherine Jagellon Duchess of Finland** #16272 b. 1626 d. 1583
m. **Karin Hansdotter** #16274 b. 1539 d. 1596
m. **Gunilla Bielke Queen of Sweden** #16280 b. 1568 d. 1597

[Children of John III King of Sweden and Catherine Jagellon Duchess of Finland]

- 7 **Sigismund III Vasa King of Sweden** #16273 b. 1566 d. 1632 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

- 7 **Anna Vasa Princess of Finland** #16284 b. 1568 d. 1625 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

Descendants of: Margareta Karlsdotter Sparre av Tofta As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

[Children of John III King of Sweden and Karin Hansdotter]

7 Sofia Johansdotter Gyllenhielm #16275 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

m. **Pontus De la Gardie** #16276 b. 1520 d. 1585

8 **Jacob Count De la Gardie** #16277 b. 1583 d. 1622 (6th cousin, 11 times removed)

m. **Ebba Brahe Countess** #16278 b. 1596 d. 1674 (6th cousin, 13 times removed)

9 **Magnus Gabriel Count De la Gardie** #16295 b. 1622 d. 1686 (7th cousin, 10 times removed)

m. **Maria Eufrosyne Countess von Palatine** #16299 b. 1625 d. 1687 (6th cousin, 13 times removed)

[daughter of John Casimir Count of Palatine #16292 and Catherine Princess of Sweden #16291]

[Children of John III King of Sweden and Gunilla Bielke Queen of Sweden]

7 **John Duke of Finland** #16281 b. 1589 d. 1618 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

m. **Maria Elizabeth Princess of Sweden** #16279 b. 1596 d. 1618 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

[daughter of Charles IX King of Sweden #15512 and Christina of Holstein-Gottorp Queen of Sweden #15511]

6 **Charles IX King of Sweden** #15512 b. 4 October 1550 d. 30 October 1611 (4th cousin, 13 times removed)

m. **Christina of Holstein-Gottorp Queen of Sweden** #15511 b. 13 April 1573 d. 8 December 1625

[daughter of Adolf Duke of Holstein-Gottorp #15509 and Christine Duchess of Holstein-Gottorp #15510]

m. **Maria von Palatinate Princess of Germany** #16290 b. 1561 d. 1589

[Children of Charles IX King of Sweden and Christina of Holstein-Gottorp Queen of Sweden]

7 **Gustav II Adolf King of Sweden** #15513 b. 9 December 1594 d. 6 November 1632 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

m. **Maria Eleonora von Brandenburg Queen of Sweden** #16285 b. 1599 d. 1655 (18th cousin, 15 times removed)

8 **Christina Queen of Sweden** #16286 b. 1626 d. 1689 (6th cousin, 11 times removed)

[Children of Charles IX King of Sweden and Maria von Palatinate Princess of Germany]

7 **Catherine Princess of Sweden** #16291 b. 1584 d. 1638 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)

m. John Casimir Count of Palatine #16292 b. 1589 d. 1652

8 **Charles X Gustav King of Sweden** #16293 b. 1622 d. 1660 (6th cousin, 11 times removed)

m. **Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein** #16294

Descendants of: Margareta Karlsdotter Sparre av Tofta As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

- 9 **Charles XI of Sweden King of Sweden** #15515 b. 24 November 1655 d. 5 April 1697 (7th cousin, 10 times removed)
m. **Ulrike Eleonora Queen of Sweden** #15514 b. 11 September 1656 d. 26 July 1693 (14th cousin, 10 times removed)
[daughter of Frederick III King of Denmark #15417 and Sofie Amalie Guelph von Brunswick #15418]
- 10 **Charles XII King of Sweden** #15516 b. 17 June 1682 d. 30 November 1718 (8th cousin, 9 times removed)
- 10 **Ulrika Eleonora Queen of Sweden** #16296 b. 1688 d. 1741 (8th cousin, 9 times removed)
m. **Frederick I King of Sweden** #16377 (21st cousin, 12 times removed)
- 5 **Margareta Eriksdotter Vasa** #16506 b. d. 1536 Reval (third cousin, 14 times removed)
m. Joakim Pedersson Brahe #16507 b. 1493 d. 1520 Stockholms blodbad
- 6 **Per Brahe the Elder Greve** #16508 b. 1520 d. 1590 (4th cousin, 13 times removed)
m. **Beata Gustafsdotter Stenbock** #16509 b. 1533 d. 1583
[daughter of Gustaf Olofsson Stenbock d.y. #16510 and Brita Eriksdotter Leijonhufvud #16511]
- 7 **Abraham Pedersson Greve Brahe** #16504 b. 1569 (5th cousin, 12 times removed)
m. **Elsa Nilsson Gyllenstierna** #16503 b. 1577 Kalmar d. 1650
- 8 **Ebba Abrahamsdotter Brahe** #16502 b. 1601 Gävle d. 1638 Stockholm (6th cousin, 11 times removed)
m. **Axel Gustafsson Baner** #16501 b. 1594 d. 1642
[son of Gustaf Axelsson Baner #16500 and Christina Svantesdotter Sture #16499]
- 8 **Per Brahe Greve d. y. (the Younger)** #16505 b. 1602 d. 1680 (6th cousin, 11 times removed)

Descendants of: Bengt Folkesson Folkunga As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

- 11 **Hans King of Sweden and Denmark** #16539 b. 1455 d. 1513 (9th cousin, 17 times removed)
m. **Christina of Saxony Queen of Sweden** #16540 b. 1461 d. 1521
- 12 **Christian II King of Sweden and Denmark** #16541 b. 1489 d. 1551 (10th cousin, 16 times removed)
m. **Isabella of Austria Queen of Sweden** #16542 b. 1501 d. 1526 (17th cousin, 13 times removed)

Sten Sture the Elder

Sten Sture the Elder (**Sten Sture den äldre**; 1440–[December 14, 1503](#)) was a [Swedish](#) statesman and [regent](#) of [Sweden](#) from (1470–1497 and 1501–1503).

Biography

He was born around 1440, the son of Gustav Anundsson of the [Sture](#) family and Birgitta Stensdotter Bielke, half-sister of the future [Charles VIII](#). He was married to [Ingeborg Tott](#) in 1467; she was a renaissance personality interested in theology and science and seemed to have had some importance in the intellectual development during his reign, but the marriage remained childless. According to genealogical research, Sten Sture's father descended from King [Sverker II of Sweden](#) (both through family of Vinga and through family of Aspenäs).



Sten Sture the Elder enters Stockholm. Painting by [Georg von Rosen](#) in 1864.



He came to power after the death of [Charles VIII](#) and consolidated his position through the victory of Brunkeberg. For a quarter of a century he ruled Sweden making the regency almost an office in its own right. He was supported by the [peasantry](#) and the lower nobility, wisely playing them out against the high-ranked nobility and managing a clever act of balance towards the Danish demands of reunion.

At the [Battle of Brunkeberg](#) in 1471, he triumphed against Swedish and [Danish](#) forces in the support of [Christian I](#). This victory elevated Sture to the position of a national savior. The sculpture [St. George and the Dragon](#) created by the German sculptor [Bernt Notke](#) in [Storkyrkan](#) in [Stockholm](#) was raised to commemorate the battle.

The battle

On Thursday, October 10, Sten Sture and [Nils Bosson Sture](#) lead their troops north to the area which is [Hötorget](#) in Stockholm today, near [Brunkeberg](#) after which the battle was named. Sten Sture's battle plan was to catch Christian's troops in a vice; Sten would attack from the west, Nils from the east, and [Knut Posse](#) would strike out from the city itself.

In the ensuing battle, Christian was hit in the face by musket fire. Losing several teeth, he was forced to retire from battle. The decisive turn of battle in favor of Sture's side occurred when Nils' troops broke out of the forest north of the ridge, as Posse's troops attacked from the city. This cut off a contingent of Danish troops at the Klara monastery north of the town. Christian retired with his troops towards the island of K  pplingen (today the [Blasieholmen](#) peninsula). However, Sten's troops destroyed the makeshift bridge Christian's troops had built, causing many to drown. The battle ended a victory for Sten Sture.



*St. George and the Dragon in [Storkyrkan](#) in Stockholm.
The face of the princess is believed to bear the face of Ingeborg Tott.*

Aftermath

Sture's victory over Christian meant his power as viceroy of Sweden was secure and would remain so for the rest of his life. According to legend, Sture had prayed to [Saint George](#) before the battle. He later tributed George by commissioning a statue of [Saint George and the Dragon](#) carved by the [L  beck](#) sculptor [Bernt Notke](#) for the [Storkyrkan](#) church in Stockholm, as an obvious allegory of Sture's battle against Christian. An altar dedicated to George was also built in the church.

In 1493, the Danish and Norwegian king, [Hans](#), concluded an alliance with [Ivan III of Russia](#) against Sten Sture. From 1495 to 1497, Sten successfully repelled a Russian invasion of [Finland](#). However, he subsequently fell out with the majority of the Swedish nobility, most prominently [Svante Nilsson](#), and the Swedish [council of the realm](#) declared him to be deposed as regent on 8 March 1497. In the ensuing war, Sten was supported by peasant forces, but they were defeated by King John, who invaded Sweden in July the same year. On 6 October, Sten surrendered to King John in Stockholm and was reconciled with him. John was crowned King of Sweden, and Sten was given the highest position of authority in Sweden below the King. However, during the next rebellion against the Danes in 1501, he again took office as regent, leading the Swedish struggle for independence until his death.

His closest relatives and heirs were his deceased sister's, the House of [Vasa](#). His great-nephew the future King [Gustav I of Sweden](#) had been born a few years before Sten's death.

Trivia

An underground restaurant in Stockholm, close to the [Royal Palace](#) is named after Sten Sture. In 1792 it was a prison, where the murderer of King [Gustav III of Sweden](#) was jailed before his execution.

Erik Johansson

Erik Johansson (Vasa) was the Lord of [Rydboholm Castle](#) in the [Roslagen](#). He was born around the year 1470 to Johan Kristiersson ([Vasa](#)) and Birgitta Gustafsdotter ([Sture](#)) in a town named [Örby](#) in what was then [Uppland](#) (today: [Uppsala](#)), [Sweden](#). He was one of four children from Johan and Birgitta. He married [Cecilia Månsdotter](#) and had eight children with her. Their children were:

1. [Gustav Eriksson \(Vasa\)](#) (May 12, 1495 - September 29, 1560)
2. [Margareta Eriksdotter \(Vasa\)](#) (1497 - December 31, 1536) Married [Joakim Brahe](#) and [Johan av Hoya](#) (- 1536)

All of their children were born in either [Orkesta](#) or [Rydboholm Castle](#), in the present-day county of [Stockholm](#) (*Swedish*: *Stockholms Län*), in southeastern [Sweden](#). He died on November 8, 1520 in [Stockholm](#), Sweden. Cecilia became a widow when her husband was executed at the [Stockholm bloodbath](#) in 1520. She, as well as her halfsister Christina Gyllenstierna, her mother and her daughter's, belonged to the Swedish noblewomen taken as prisoners by the Danes. They were taken to Denmark in 1521 and imprisoned in the infamous Blaatornet (Blue Tower). She died of the plague in 1523

Erik Johansson was a faithful adherent of the [Stures](#), a powerful and influential family in Sweden from the late 15th century to the early 16th century, and was notorious for his irritable and arbitrary temper. He assisted the Stures in fighting against the [Danes](#), who controlled most of Sweden during the early 16th century. When the Danes, under [Christian II](#), conquered Sweden and took the capital, Stockholm, in 1520 when around 80-90 people (mostly [nobility](#) and [clergy](#)



supporting the [Sture party](#)) were executed in the [Stockholm Bloodbath](#) in November of that year, among whom was Erik Johansson. His first son, [Gustav Eriksson \(Vasa\)](#), future King of Sweden and founder of the [House of Vasa](#), had escaped from Denmark some time previously and survived by hiding.

Stockholm Bloodbath Two scenes from [Blodbadstavlan](#). On the left two bishops are decapitated, on the right the grave of [Sten Sture d.y](#) is dug up..

For a family tree by finnholbek.dk see:

<http://finnholbek.dk/genealogy/pedigree.php?personID=112293&tree=2>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_I_of_Sweden

Gustav I of Sweden

Gustav I portrayed in 1542 by [Jakob Bincks](#)



Gustav I, born **Gustav Eriksson** and later known as **Gustav Vasa** ([12 May 1496](#) – [29 September 1560](#)), was [King of Sweden](#) from 1523 until his death. He was the first monarch of the [House of Vasa](#), an influential [noble family](#) which came to be the [royal house](#) of Sweden for much of the 16th and 17th centuries. Gustav I was elected [regent](#) in 1521 after leading a [rebellion](#) against [Christian II of Denmark](#), the leader of the [Kalmar Union](#) who controlled most of Sweden at the time.

In the Swedish history he has been labelled the founder of modern Sweden, and the "[father of the nation](#)". Gustav liked to compare himself to [Moses](#), whom he believed to have liberated his people and established a state. Gustav was known for ruthless methods and a bad temperament, but he also loved music, and had a certain sly wit.

Early life

Gustav Eriksson's (Vasa) mother was [Cecilia Månsdotter](#) and father was [Erik Johansson \(Vasa\)](#) who descended from Birgitta Gustafsdotter (Sture), the sister of childless Regent [Sten Sture the Elder](#) who had died in 1503 when Gustav was a child. According to genealogical research, Birgitta and Sten Sture (and consequently also Gustav Vasa) descended from King [Sverker II of Sweden](#), through King Sverker's granddaughter Benedikte Sunesdotter (who was married to Svantepolk Knutsson, son of Duke of Reval). Gustav was born in [Rydboholm Castle](#). The Vasa family belonged to the highest level of hereditary Swedish nobility (*högfrälse*) and they possessed some wealth: several [manors](#) etc. Like most Swedes at the time, he used no family name and was originally known by his given name and [patronymic](#), but the name of the dynasty, derived from the main heraldic charge of the family, has often been given to him by later authors.

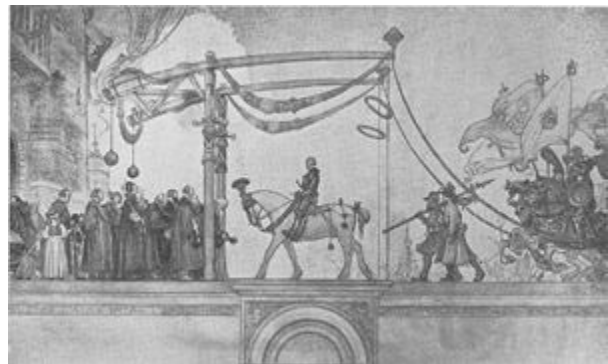
Gustav Vasa's father, [Erik Johansson \(Vasa\)](#), was involved in the party of [Sten Sture the Younger](#) fighting against the Danes in the early 16th century. When the Danes, under Christian II, conquered Sweden and took the capital Stockholm in 1520 several members of the Sture party were executed in the [Stockholm Bloodbath](#) in October that year, among whom was Erik Johansson. The young Gustav survived by hiding.

He got involved in some of the revolts against the Danish king. At the battle of [Brännkyrka](#) on [2 October 1518](#), he was among those captured and taken prisoner. He was held in [Kalø slot](#) but managed to escape, returning by ship to [Kalmar](#) on the southeastern side of Sweden on [31 May 1520](#). From there, he travelled all the way up to the province of [Dalarna](#), in what was then northwestern Sweden. He tried to gather troops to take down the Danish government, but had little success initially.

According to popular history, as depicted in 19th century Swedish schoolbooks, Gustav encountered many adventures while he was fleeing around Dalarna. Their historical validity is questioned, however.

The Entry of King Gustav Vasa of Sweden into Stockholm, 1523, by [Carl Larsson](#).

In 1521 he had managed to gather a small army in Dalarna and become its leader. He also received help by troops from [Leipzig](#), Germany. By August 1521, the men of Dalarna had elected him regent of Sweden, where after [two years of war](#) followed, whereby the Danish troops were gradually defeated.



Gustav was elected king on [6 June 1523](#), at the [riksdag](#) in [Strängnäs](#). This date has later been celebrated as the Swedish [national holiday](#) (Gustav was later crowned in [Uppsala Cathedral](#) on [21 January 1528](#)). His troops had besieged the capital, and on 24 June, they finally could march into Stockholm.

Gustav encountered resistance from some areas of the country. People from [Dalarna](#) rebelled three times in the first ten years of Gustav's reign, as they considered the king to have been too harsh on everyone he perceived as a supporter of the Danish, and as they resented his introduction of Protestantism. Many of those who had helped Gustav in his war against the Danes became involved in these rebellions and paid for this, several of them with their lives.

Gustav Vasa in Dalarna. Fresco in [Uppsala domkyrka](#)



Difficulties with the continuation of the Church also troubled Gustav Vasa. The 1540s saw him imposing death sentences upon both the Petri brothers, as well as his former chancellor [Laurentius Andreae](#). All of them were however granted amnesty, after spending several months in jail. In 1554–1557, he waged [an inconclusive war](#) against [Ivan the Terrible](#) of [Russia](#).

End of his reign

In the late 1550s, Gustav's health declined. When his grave was opened in 1945, an examination of his corpse revealed that he had suffered chronic infections of a leg and in his jaw.

He gave a so-called "last speech" in 1560 to the chancellors, his children and other noblemen, whereby he encouraged them to remain united. On 29 September 1560, Gustav died and was buried (together with two of his wives) in the [Cathedral of Uppsala](#).

Heritage

The memory of Gustav has been honored greatly, resulting in embroidered history books, [commemorative coins](#), and the annual ski event [Vasaloppet](#) (the largest ski event in the world with 15,000 participants). The city of [Vaasa](#) in [Finland](#) was named after the royal house of Vasa in 1606. Gustav is currently portrayed on the 1000 [kronor](#) note. Today most of these stories are considered to have no other foundation than legend and skilful propaganda by Gustav himself during his time.

The tomb of Gustav Vasa in [Uppsala domkyrka](#)



An example of one of his better known adventures among the Swedish people. While Gustav was in exile from the Danish, he was staying over at a farm owned by a close friend for a day's rest. As he was warming himself in the common room, the Danish soldiers got a tip from one of the farm hands

that Gustav was in his landlord's farm house. The Danish soldiers burst into the farm house and began searching for someone that would fit Gustav's description in the common room. As one of the soldiers came close to check Gustav Vasa, all of a sudden the landlady took out a bakery spade and started to hit Gustav and scolded him as a "lazy farmboy" and ordered him to go out and work. The Danish soldier found it amusing and didn't realise this "lazy farmboy" was in fact Gustav Vasa himself who managed to slip away from danger and escaped death.

Gustav Ericsson Vasa in his old age



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Leijonhufvud

Margaret Leijonhufvud

Margaret (*née* *Margareta Eriksdotter*, born 1 January 1516 Ekeberg Castle, [Närke](#), died 26 August 1551) was a Swedish queen consort of King [Gustav I](#), Queen of [Sweden](#) from 1536 to 1551. She belonged to the early **Leijonhufvud** clan of Swedish [nobility](#) (the name meaning *Lion's Head*).

Queen consort of Sweden



Margaret Leijonhufvud was a member of one of Sweden's most powerful noble families, daughter of Erik Abrahamsson Leijonhufvud, a man executed at [Stockholm bloodbath](#), and [Ebba Eriksdotter Vasa](#), (a relative of the king), and already engaged when the king decided to marry her. The engagement was broken off for the sake of the king, and her fiancé was married to her sister instead.

There is a story that describes this: The king caught his new queen and her former fiancé together alone, with the young man, [Svante Sture](#), on his knees before the queen. The King asked in a rage: "What is this?!" and Queen Margaret then swiftly told him; "My lord Sture is asking me for the hand of my sister!", at which the king just as swiftly answered; "Granted!", and Svante Sture was hastily married to the queen's sister [Martha Leijonhufvud](#), a woman known to be so dominating that she was nicknamed "King Martha". It does

not seem that Queen Margaret and Svante Sture ever repeated anything that could be seen as improper again, and if they did, they were not discovered. In August 1551, she and her children made an excursion by boat on [Mälaren](#) between [Gripsholm](#) and [Västerås](#), and on their return, she took ill with [pneumonia](#). When she died, she was deeply mourned by the king.

Children

1. [John III](#) (Johan III) (1537-1592), [Duke of Finland](#), [King of Sweden](#) 1567-1592
2. [Catherine](#) (1539-1610), wife of [Edzard II, Count of East Frisia](#)
3. [Cecilia](#) (1540-1627), wife of [Christoper II, Margrave of Baden-Rodemachern](#)
4. [Magnus](#) (1542-1595), [Duke](#) of Västansång (western [Östergötland](#)) and Count of Dal ([Dalsland](#)), [mentally ill](#)
5. Karl (1544-1544)
6. [Anna Maria](#) (1545-1610), wife of [George John I, Count Palatine of Veldenz](#)
7. Sten (1546-1547)
8. [Sophia](#) (1547-1611), wife of [Magnus II, Duke of Saxe-Lauenburg](#), who was nephew of [Catherine of Saxe-Lauenburg](#)
9. [Elizabeth](#) (1549-1597), wife of [Christopher, Duke of Mecklenburg-Gadebusch](#)
10. [Charles IX](#) (Karl IX) (1550-1611), [Duke](#) of [Södermanland](#), [Närke](#), [Värmland](#) and northern [Västergötland](#), [Regent of Sweden](#) 1599-1604, [King of Sweden](#) 1604-1611

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_XIV_of_Sweden

Eric XIV of Sweden

Eric XIV ([Swedish](#): *Erik XIV*) (13 December 1533 – 26 February 1577) was [King of Sweden](#) from 1560 until he was deposed in 1568. Eric XIV was the son of [Gustav I of Sweden](#) (1496–1560) and [Catherine of Saxe-Lauenburg](#) (1513–35). He was also ruler of [Estonia](#), after its conquest by [Sweden](#) in 1561. While he has been regarded as intelligent and artistically skilled, as well as politically ambitious, early in his reign he showed signs of mental instability, a condition which eventually led to [insanity](#). Eric is said to have been poisoned with arsenic mixed in his pea soup.

Early years

Eric XIV was born at [Stockholm Castle](#), 9 o'clock in the morning on 13 December 1533. Before the age of two he had lost his mother and his father remarried [Margaret Leijonhufvud](#) (1516–55), a Swedish noblewoman, in 1536. Margaret was not happy with Eric's existence since he prevented her own firstborn son, [John](#), from being the [crown prince](#).

Erik XIV. Painting by [Domenicus ver Wildt](#).

Eric's [foreign policy](#) was dominated by his efforts to make Sweden a great power. Unlike his father, who had in general been satisfied with ruling an independent state, Eric tried to expand his influence in the [Baltic](#) and in Estonia. This expansionism made him clash with his cousin, [Frederick II of Denmark](#) (1534–88). Striving for useful political alliances, Eric also made unsuccessful marriage proposals to, among others, [Elizabeth I of England](#) (1533–1603) and [Mary I of Scotland](#) (1542–87), as well as [Renata of Lorraine](#) (1544–1602), [Anna of Saxony](#) (1544–77) and [Christine of Hesse](#) (1543–1604).



In domestic politics Eric's ambitions were strongly opposed by the [Swedish nobility](#), including his half-brother, the later [John III of Sweden](#) (1537–92). John rebelled, but was captured and tried for [high treason](#) in 1563. Most of Eric XIV's reign was then dominated by the [Scandinavian Seven Years' War](#) against Denmark (1563–70), during which he successfully repelled most



Danish attempts of conquest, but was not able to keep his own conquests. During these years, from 1563 onwards, his insanity worsened; his reign became even more high-handed and marked by assaults, among them the killing of several members of the [Sture](#) family in 1566. In 1568 he was deposed and imprisoned by John who took over power. Eric's most trusted counsellor, [Jöran Persson](#) (1530–68), took much of the blame for the actions taken against the nobility during Eric XIV's reign and was executed shortly after John III ascended to the throne.

[Karin Månsdotter](#), Eric XIV and [Jöran Persson](#), in [Georg von Rosen](#)'s painting of 1871

It is unknown whether Karin Månsdotter had any political influence, but a popular image in Swedish history was of her serving as a counterweight to the king's advisor [Jöran Persson](#); a painting by [Georg von Rosen](#) three hundred years later (1871) illustrates this, showing the king on the floor, confused by his inner demons, with Karin Månsdotter at one side holding his hand, looking like an innocent angel giving him strength to resist the demands of Jöran Persson, standing on the other side of him, trying to get him to sign a document.

Eric XIV died in prison in Örbyhus Castle: according to [folklore](#), his final meal was a [poisoned](#) bowl of [pea soup](#). A document signed by his brother John III of Sweden and a nobleman, Bengt Bengtsson Gylta (1514–74), gave Eric's watchmen in his last prison authorization to poison him if anyone tried to release him. His body was later [exhumed](#); forensic analysis revealed evidence of [arsenic](#) poisoning.

Family and descendants

Eric XIV finally married [Karin Månsdotter](#) (1550–1612), on 4 July 1568, their children were:

1. [Sigrid](#) (1566–1633) (born before the marriage), lady-in-waiting, wife of two noblemen.
2. [Gustaf](#) (1568–1607) (born before the marriage), mercenary.
3. Henrik (1570–74)
4. Arnold (1572–73)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karin_M%C3%A5nsdotter

Karin Månsdotter

Ex-Queen Catherine of Sweden in a bust at her grave in [Turku Cathedral](#)



Karin Månsdotter (In English **Catherine**, "Carin", "Karen", in [Finnish](#):**Kaarina Maununtytär**), (November 6, 1550–September 13, 1612) was [Queen](#) of [Sweden](#) and wife of [Eric XIV of Sweden](#).

Karin was the daughter of the Måns, first soldier and later jailkeeper (her last name was simply a patronymicon meaning "daughter of Måns") and his wife Ingrid, said to have sold vegetables on the square, whose family was peasants in [Uppland](#). Both her parents are believed to have

died in c. 1560. She was at one point employed as a waitress at the tavern of Gert Cantor before she was employed at court. She was working as a maid to the King's sister, [Princess Elizabeth](#), when she became mistress to the king in 1565.

Royal mistress

The position seems to have been quite official, as she was given nice clothes and appeared with him openly at court, and was given her own apartment and servants. Thus, she could be regarded as the first official royal mistress in Sweden, although only [Hedvig Taube](#) otherwise is considered an official royal mistress in Sweden. When her daughter Sigrid was born in 1566, she was treated as though she was a legitimate princess. Before this, the king had a whole harem of mistresses, such as [Agda Persdotter](#) and Doredi Valentinsdotter, but when Karin entered his life, he dismissed them all. His treatment of her caused much astonishment. She also received education and learned to read and write.

Karin Månsdotter's portrait was done only in her husband's scribbled drawings in captivity and in a latter-day bust at her grave^[1] (a portrait long believed to be of her has been discovered to be of her sister-in-law). She was described as a very beautiful girl with long blond hair and innocent eyes, and her personality seems to have been calm, humble and natural. The king was mentally unstable, and she seems to have been the only one who could comfort him and calm him down, which made her appreciated by his relatives, who considered her good for him. She had no personal enemies at court, but she was not respected, and their marriage in 1568 was considered a scandal and may have contributed to his dethronement.

Her contemporaries early used her to give Eric appeals on their behalf, especially the nobles at court did this, and it seems as she did her best to do so, which is illustrated in the Sture Murders in Uppsala 1567, which could perhaps describe the form of her influence on Eric. In May 1567, Eric is considered to have suffered from some sort of mental collapse. He had gattered several men from the noble family Sture, among them count Svante sture, and imprisoned them.

[Countess Märta Sture](#), sister of the former queen [Margaret Leijonhufvud](#), sent an appeal to Karin Månsdotter and asked that the prisoners be protected. Karin sent for her and assured her that no one will hurt the prisoners. Later the same morning, the king visited Svante Sture in prison, fell on his knees before him and begged for his friendship. Later the same day, however, the Sture prisoners were executed all the same.

Queen

This detail comes from an 1870s glass painting by [Wladimir Swertschkoff](#) in the [Cathedral of Turku](#) pictures **Karin Månsdotter** "rejecting the crown". At her side are the two children [Sigrid Eriksdotter Vasa](#) and [Gustav Eriksson Vasa](#).

Eric XIV married Karin [morganatically](#) in 1567, and officially in 1568, when she was ennobled and crowned queen under the name Katarina Magnusdotter (a fancified version of her name). The coronation was celebrated with great festivities in Stockholm to confirm the new queen's legitimacy. The wedding was unique; never before had the children of the couple been present at a royal wedding; both the infant son and daughter of Eric and Karin were present to confirm their official status. Karin's relatives were dressed in clothes made for them by the royal tailor. During the coronation, the Lord Chancellor, who was carrying the crown, fainted and dropped the crown to the floor. Immediately afterward, Eric's brothers rebelled and he and his family were imprisoned.

It is said, that during the dethronement, Karin fell on her knees before Queen Dowager [Katarina Stenbock](#), crying out; "Forgive him!", as a reminder of the insanity of the King, of which the wedding was considered a sign, and one of the reasons for the coup, and then to the king's brother, the future King [John III of Sweden](#), crying out the same thing; "Forgive him!", but she was completely ignored. This touching scene, portrayed in an old film about her, was most likely a myth - among other things, the Queen Dowager had left the castle at that time - but it illustrates the probably truthful image of her and her personality.

Queen Karin and her children were separated from her husband in 1573 to prevent the birth of any more legitimate offspring. King Eric described it in his diary as: " My wife has been taken from me by use of violence." Karin and her children were taken to the [Castle of Turku](#) (Åbo) in [Finland](#) where she remained under house arrest until the death of her husband four years later. In 1575, her son was taken from her and sent to [Poland](#) to be placed under the care of the [Jesuits](#), but she was allowed to keep her daughter. In 1577, she received the news of her husband's death, but she was treated with kindness and given a manor in [Kangasala](#), Finland, where she lived the rest of her life.



Widowhood

Karin Månsdotter's monumental grave in the [Cathedral of Turku](#)



She returned to the Swedish court on two occasions; in 1577, newly widowed, she travelled to Stockholm to ask for economic support (which she was given) and in 1582, she met Queen [Catherine Jagiellon](#) and Queen Dowager [Katarina Stenbock](#) in what was called the "Three Queens Visit".

In 1587, her daughter Sigrid was appointed lady-in-waiting to the new king's daughter, Princess [Anna of Finland](#), who followed her brother King Sigismund to Warsaw where he had been elected king. Karin accompanied her on her journey. In Warsaw, she met her son Gustaf again, twelve years after he was taken from her. He was now a Catholic, he had forgotten her and they could not speak to each other because he had forgotten the Swedish language, and Karin knew no other language; she could identify him only by the help of his birthmarks. She

saw him once again in [Estonia](#) in 1595, and unlike the previous meeting, this has been confirmed. He was poor and was working as a [mercenary](#). She tried to help him financially, and for the rest of her life, she tried to get permission for him to return to Sweden, but she never saw him again. Her daughter Sigrid, on the other hand, married two Swedish noblemen and often spent time with her mother.

Karin became respected and liked in Finland; during the great rebellion [Cudgel War](#) in 1596-1597, the rebels refrained from plundering her estate. She is buried in the [Cathedral of Turku](#).

Although three of the queens in Sweden during the same century were not of royal blood, (but noble), Karin Månsdotter was the only Swedish queen before modern times to be a commoner - unless you wish to count [Desiree Clary](#), who was born a commoner but enobled many years before she became royal - and her fate has been regarded as quite unique and romantic.

Family

Karin Månsdotter had the following children with the king;

- [Princess Sigrid of Sweden](#) (1566–1633) (born before the marriage), lady-in-waiting, wife of two noblemen.
- [Prince Gustav of Sweden](#) (1568–1607) (born before the marriage), mercenary.
- Prince Henrik of Sweden (1570–1574)
- Prince Arnold of Sweden (1572–1573)

John III of Sweden

John III ([Swedish](#): *Johan III*, [Finnish](#): *Juhana III*) (20 December 1537 – 17 November 1592) was [King of Sweden](#) from 1568 until his death. He was the son of King [Gustav I of Sweden](#) and his second wife [Margaret Leijonhufvud](#). He was also quite autonomously the [ruler of Finland](#) (as **Duke John**) from 1556 to 1563. In 1581 he assumed also the title [Grand Prince of Finland](#).

John III portraited by Dutch artist [Johan Baptista van Uther](#) in 1582.



Biography

He was the second son of [Gustav Vasa](#) (1523–1560). His mother was [Margareta Leijonhufvud](#) (1514–1551), a Swedish noblewoman. As a [Duke of Finland](#) he opposed his half-brother [Eric XIV of Sweden](#) (1560–1568) and was imprisoned in 1563. After his release from prison, probably because of his brother's insanity, John again joined the opposition, deposed Eric and made himself the king. His important ally was his maternal uncle [Sten Leijonhufvud](#), who at deathbed was made [Count of Raseborg](#). Shortly after this John executed his brother's most trusted counsellor, [Jöran Persson](#), whom he held largely responsible for his harsh treatment while in prison.

John finished the [Scandinavian Seven Years' War](#) in 1570 without many Swedish concessions and during the following years he successfully fought [Russia](#) until 1582, a war that meant a [Swedish](#) reconquest of [Narva](#). As a whole his foreign policy was affected by his connection to [Poland](#) of which country his son [Sigismund III Vasa](#) (1587–1632) was made king in 1587.

In domestic politics John showed clear [Catholic](#) sympathies, inspired by his Polish queen, a fact that created frictions to the Swedish clergy and nobility. He launched the "Red Book" which reintroduced several Catholic customs. In 1575, he gave his permission for the remaining Catholic [convents](#) in Sweden to start receiving novices again. From time to time he was also at odds with his younger brother Duke Charles of Sudermannia (afterwards [Charles IX of Sweden](#)). John III was an eager [patron](#) of art and architecture.

John III as king

John was still concerned about his position as king as long as Eric was alive. The fear of a possible liberation of the locked up king worried him to the point that in 1571 he ordered the

guards that in the event of any suspicion of liberation attempt to murder the captured king. It is possible this is how his life ended in 1577.

John III was reportedly like his father in propaganda, with repeated claims to have "liberated Sweden" from the "bloodhound" Christian II, as well as rescuing the population from the "tyrant" Eric XIV. He was reportedly violent, hot tempered and greatly suspicious.

John married his first wife, [Catherine Jagellonica of Poland](#) (1526–1583), house of [Jagiello](#), in [Vilnius](#) on 4 October 1562. In Sweden she is known as *Katarina Jagellonica* and she was the sister of king [Sigismund II Augustus of Poland](#). Their children were:

- [Sigismund](#) King of Sweden (1592–1599), and King of [Poland](#) (1566–1632), Grand Duke of Finland and Lithuania
- [Anna](#) (1568–1625)

He married his second wife [Gunilla Bielke](#) (1568–c. 1592) on 21 February 1584 and together they had the son:

- [John \(Johan\)](#) (1589–1618), firstly [Duke of Finland](#), then from 1608 Duke of Ostrogothia. The young duke [married his first cousin](#) Maria Elisabet (1596-1618), daughter of [Charles IX of Sweden](#) (reigned 1599–1611)

Tomb of John III in [Uppsala Cathedral](#).



Together with his mistress [Karin Hansdotter](#) (1532-1596) he had at least four illegitimate children:

- Julius Gyllenhielm (1559–1581)
- Augustus (1557-1560)
- [Sofia](#) (1556–1583) who married [Pontus De la Gardie](#)
- Lucretia (1560-1585)

John cared for Karin and his children with her after he married with Catherine Jagellonica of Poland in 1562.

He took care that Karin got a husband that should take care of her and his children. In 1561 Karin was married to a nobleman Klas Andersson (Västgöte), a friend and servant of John. Together they had a daughter named Brita. When John became King in 1568 he continued to support Karin and his illegitimate children. In 1572 Karin was married again, her earlier husband was murdered by Erik XIV in 1563, to a Lars Henrikson. In 1576 he was nobled by John if he took care about his issue with Karin. The same year he sent for his daughter Sofia to be a lady in the castle as a servant to his sister [Princess Elisabet](#). 1580 he married her off to Pontus de la Gardie. She later died giving birth to [Jacob De la Gardie](#).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_Jagellonica_of_Poland

Catherine Jagellon of Poland

Catherine Jagiellon ([Polish](#): *Katarzyna Jagiellonka*; [Finnish](#): *Katariina Jagellonica*; [Swedish](#): *Katarina Jagellonica av Polen*; [November 1, 1526](#) - [September 16, 1583](#)) was [Duchess of Finland](#) 1562-83, [Queen Consort](#) of [Sweden](#) 1569-83 and [Grand Duchess of Finland](#) 1581-83 and heir to her mother's [claim](#) to the title of [King of Jerusalem](#).

She was born the youngest daughter of [Poland](#)'s King [Zygmunt I the Old](#) and [Bona Sforza](#). Catherine became the wife of [Sweden](#)'s King [John III](#) and mother to the future King of the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#), [Sigismund III Vasa](#). Tsar [Ivan IV of Russia](#), was among her suitors.



Catherine Jagiellon.

Duchess of Finland

On [October 4, 1562](#), Catherine was married in the [Lower Castle](#) of [Vilnius](#), [Lithuania](#), to [Duke John of Finland](#), second son of [Sweden](#)'s late King [Gustav I](#) and brother of the then reigning [Eric XIV](#). John had not received his brother's permission for the marriage and there were already tensions between them, since John had an independent foreign policy. The newly-weds set up house in [Turku Castle](#) in [Turku](#), [Finland](#). Duke John's dealings in [Livonia](#) caused Sweden's King [Eric XIV](#), ultimately to declare war on his brother. Eric sent 10,000 men to [besiege](#) the castle. On [August 12, 1563](#), the castle capitulated; Catherine and her husband were taken to [Sweden](#), and imprisoned in [Gripsholm Castle](#).

Catherine Jagiellon in prison, by [Józef Simmler](#)

Her unsuccessful suitor, Tsar Ivan, was in negotiations with Eric over Catherine, asking for her to be separated from John and sent to marry him in Russia. This caused alarm with Catherine and her relations. In popular opinion, this discussion was one of the reasons for the Swedish people's growing dissatisfaction with the

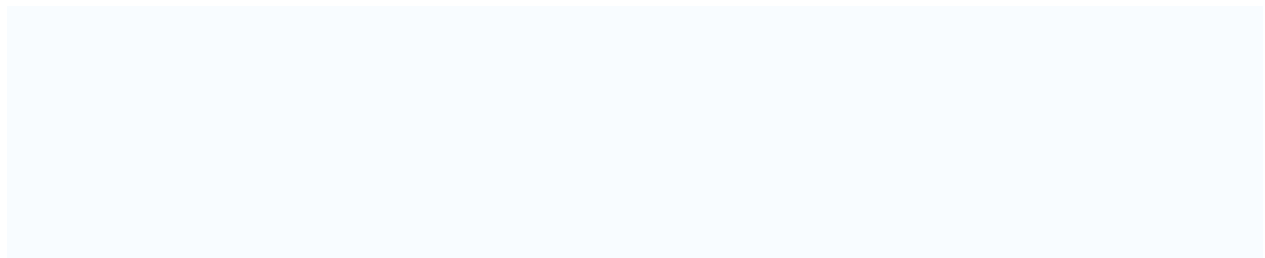


increasingly insane Eric. During the incarceration, Catherine gave birth first to her eldest daughter Isabella of Finland in 1564 (died 1566), then to her son Sigismund in 1566, and finally her youngest child [Anna of Finland](#) on May 17, 1568.

Catholic Queen of Sweden

Catherine and John were released in 1568. In 1569, she was crowned Queen of [Sweden](#), as her husband became [John III of Sweden](#), upon deposing Eric. Queen Catherine had political influence and did much to influence her husband in for the cause of Catholicism and the [counter-reformation](#), just as her successor as queen, her husband's later wife [Gunilla Bielke](#), would influence him in Protestantism. Her husband launched a new church-order which was called "The Red Book". This was a form of mix between Protestantism and Catholicism, which reintroduced numerous Catholic habits, especially within the ceremonial. He even used Latin, which aroused a lot of opposition. She had her own Catholic staff, among them several Catholic [monks](#) and priests, which shocked the Protestants. In 1572, she contacted Cardinal Hosius about re-Catholicising Sweden. In 1575, the remaining Catholic convents were allowed to receive new novices, which had been banned by the Reformation. In 1576, she sent her son to be educated by the Jesuits in [Braunsberg](#). From [Rome](#) came the Norwegian [Jesuit](#), Laurentius Nicolai, whom she housed in the old Franciscan monastery which had been closed during the reformation. She allowed him to open a Catholic school there. The Protestants called him "Kloster-Lasse" ("Convent-Lasse") and the school was stormed and shut down in 1583. A new shrine was made for the relics of the King (Saint Eric) in the cathedral in Uppsala. Queen Catherine also strongly supported the old [Vadstena Abbey](#) where the last [nuns](#) still lived, and often visited it. The first version of the later famous castle [Drottningholm Palace](#) was founded for and named after her.

Catherine raised her son Sigismund as an ardent [Catholic](#). After 1587, he would rule the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#) for forty-five years as Zygmunt III Vasa. After he ascended to the Swedish throne 1592, his overt Catholicism estranged his Swedish subjects, and led to [his deposition in 1599](#). This was followed by [prolonged wars](#) between Poland and Sweden. In her final years, Catherine suffered terribly from [gout](#). She died in Stockholm on 16 September 1583. She is buried in the [Uppsala Cathedral](#).



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karin_Hansdotter

Karin Hansdotter

Karin (Katarina) Hansdotter (1539 - 1596), was the royal [mistress](#) of King [John III of Sweden](#) in the 1550s before his marriage during his time as Prince and Duke of Finland.

Karin is believed to be the daughter of [Hans Klasson Kökkemäster](#), a former [monk](#), which had been made priest in Stockholm after the reformation of 1527, and his wife Ingeborg Åkesdotter, a former [nun](#) and the illegitimate daughter of a nobleman. Her father was later fired from his work because of adultery. Karin was employed at the court of Queen dowager [Katarina Stenbock](#) in 1550. John met her sometime in the middle of the 1550s, and she followed him to his fief in Finland where she was installed as his mistress (1556). In Finland, she lived openly as the hostess of Åbo Castle. In 1560, she and her children left for Sweden.

In 1561, before John's marriage to [Catherine Jagellonica of Poland](#), Karin was married to Klas Andersson Westgöte (d. 1565), a servant (page) of John, and given the [Wääksy Manor](#) in [Kangasala](#) in Finland. She lost a lot of her property at John's rebellion against king Eric in 1563, but when John became King in 1568, he continued to support Karin and his [illegitimate children](#).

In 1572 Karin was married again, her earlier husband was murdered by [Erik XIV](#) in 1563, to a Lars Henrikson Hordeel (d. 1591). In 1576, Lars was nobled by John on the condition that he took care of his issue with Karin. The same year, her daughter Sofia became a [lady-in-waiting](#) of [Princess Elizabeth of Sweden](#), and in 1577, her children was ennobled. The same year, she became the neighbour of the deposed queen [Karin Månsdotter](#), who was given the estate next to her. Karin died in 1596 during the great Finnish peasant rebellion and did not have to witness the plundering of her estate; the rebellion reached her estate soon after her death.

Children and family

Karin and John had four [children](#):

- [Sofia Johansdotter Gyllenhielm](#) (b. 1556 d. 1583) - who married [Pontus De la Gardie](#) (d. 1585),
- August Johansdotter Gyllenhielm (b. 1557 d. 1560),
- Julius Johansdotter Gyllenhielm (b. 1559 d. 1583),
- Lucrecia Johansdotter Gyllenhielm (b. 1560 d. 1585).

Karin and her first husband Klas had one [child](#):

- Brita Klasdotter Westgöte (b. about 1563 d. 1620) - who married [Carl Stenbock](#) (d. 1609).

Karin and her second husband Lars had one [child](#):

- Anna Larsdotter Hordeel (b. 1573 d. 1646) - who married [Hans Roije](#) (d. 1617).

Gunilla Bielke

Gunilla Bielke



Gunilla Bielke (1568 – 1597) was the second wife and [queen consort](#) of [John III of Sweden](#). She was a politically influential queen.

Gunilla Bielke was the daughter of the king's cousin, the former governor of [Östergötland](#), Johan Axelsson Bielke, and had been raised at the royal court since she was ten years old as a playmate of the king's daughter, [Princess Anna](#). In 1582, she was made lady-in-waiting to the queen. Just like two of the previous queens, [Margareta Leijonhufvud](#) and [Katarina Stenbock](#), she was engaged when the king decided to marry her, and initially refused the king's proposal; the king was so enraged by this that he slapped her in the face with his gloves. But her family forced her to agree, the engagement was broken, and she was married to the king in 1585, to the rage of the king's sisters, who considered it a misalliance despite the fact that their own mother was also a noblewoman; the king's

brothers and sisters all refused to attend.

Bielke was a very beautiful, blond girl at the time of her marriage, (no portrait is said to have done her justice) and apparently, the king married her mainly due to sexual attraction and as a remedy for depression in old age, caused by the death of [his first wife](#). These were the reasons he himself told the government and, when asked why he did not marry a princess, he told them he wished to have a beautiful wife and that portraits of foreign princesses were not to be trusted.

She was given a very large allowance and is regarded as one of the richest of the queens of Sweden. Queen Gunilla had a significant influence on the ageing king; she is credited with having influenced him in [Protestantism](#) the same way his former Queen, [Catherine Jagiellon](#), had influenced him in [Catholicism](#), and on several occasions, the king openly admitted to having changed his opinion and his decisions "for the sake of our mistress the dear Queen's wishes".

After the king's death she remained at the Castle in Stockholm, prepared to fight for an inheritance for herself and her son. She was accused by her brother-in-law, the future [Charles IX of Sweden](#), of staying in the capital as the only royal representative to steal from the Royal Castle's belongings. She was also accused by [King Sigismund](#)'s wife [Anna of Austria](#) of having stripped the Castle when the new King and Queen arrived from Poland in 1593. The two Queens hated each other for religious reasons, but Gunilla refused to leave Stockholm before she had secured her inheritance. She was given some of it and then retired to [Bråborg Castle](#), where she remained for the four years until her death. She was interred in [Uppsala Cathedral](#).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigismund_III_Vasa

Sigismund III Vasa

Sigismund III Vasa ([Polish](#): *Zygmunt III Waza*) (20 June 1566 – 30 April 1632 [N.S.](#)) was [Grand Duke of Lithuania](#) and [King of Polish Crown](#), a monarch of joined [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#) from 1587 to 1632, and [King of Sweden](#) (where he was known simply as **Sigismund**) from 1592 until he was deposed in 1599. He was the son of King [John III of Sweden](#) and his first wife, [Catherine Jagellonica of Poland](#).

King of Poland and Sweden, Grand Duke of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, Masovia, Samogitia and Livoni, Painting by [Marcin Kober](#), ca. 1590a



Elected to the throne of the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#), Sigismund sought to create a [personal union](#) between the Commonwealth and Sweden ([Polish-Swedish union](#)), and succeeded for a time in 1592. After he had been deposed in 1595 from the Swedish throne by his uncle, [Charles IX of Sweden](#) and a meeting of the [Riksdag](#) (Swedish *Riksdag*), he spent much of the rest of his life attempting to reclaim it.

Sigismund remains a highly controversial figure in Poland. His long reign coincided with [the apex of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's prestige, power and economic influence](#). On the other hand, it was also during his reign that the symptoms of decline that led to the Commonwealth's future demise surfaced. Common views, influenced by popular books of [Paweł Jasienica](#), tend to present Sigismund as the main factor responsible for initiating these negative processes, while academic historians usually are not that condemning. However, the question whether the Commonwealth's decline was caused by Sigismund's own decisions or its roots were in historical processes beyond his personal control, remains a highly debated topic.

He was commemorated in [Warsaw](#) with [Zygmunt's Column](#), commissioned by his son and successor, [Władysław IV](#).

Sigismund Waza-Jagellon (1566-1632) was elected King of Poland and reigned 1587-1632. By paternal inheritance, he succeeded 1592 as King of Sweden and was regarded as having abdicated 1599 and finally deposed 1604. From his grandmother [Bona Sforza](#) he inherited the title of [King of Jerusalem](#).

Biography

Sigismund III as a child. Painting by Johan Baptista van Uther.



He was born at [Gripsholm](#) during his parents' imprisonment by King [Eric XIV](#). Although [Sweden](#) was [Protestant](#), Sigismund was raised a [Catholic](#). This fact, combined with the troublesome [personal union](#), would later strike back at his attempts to find support in Sweden.

His mother, [Katarzyna Jagiellonka](#), was the daughter of [Sigismund I the Old](#) and his wife [Bona Sforza](#). The [Jagiellon dynasty](#) had held the crown of the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#) since the first Jagiellon ruler, [Władysław II Jagiełło](#), had received it in 1386 through his wife [Jadwiga Angevin](#).

In 1587, he was a candidate for the [monarch](#) of [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#), following the death of previous [Polish king](#), [Stefan Batory](#). The election was held in the shadow of conflict between the Polish nobility ([szlachta](#)), with the two opposing sides gathered around [Chancellor Jan Zamoyski](#) and the [Zborowski](#) family. Sigismund, supported by Zamoyski and the former king's wife, [Anna Jagiellon](#), was elected King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on [19 August 1587](#) and recognized as such by the [interrex](#), the [Primate of Poland](#), [Stanisław Karnkowski](#).

When Maximilian attempted to resolve the dispute by bringing a military force and starting the [war of Polish succession](#), he was defeated at the [battle of Byczyna](#) by the supporters of Sigismund, under the command of Polish [hetman Jan Zamoyski](#). Maximilian was taken captive and released only after intervention by [Pope Sixtus V](#). In 1589, he waived his right to the Polish crown.

In 1592 he married the Austrian archduchess Anna of Austria (1573-1598) Anna Habsburzanka and after his father's death the same year, he received permission from the [Sejm](#) to accept the Swedish throne. After Sigismund promised to uphold Swedish [Lutheranism](#) he was crowned king of Sweden in 1594; for a short time there was a [personal union](#) between Commonwealth and Sweden ([Polish-Swedish union](#)). He tried to rule Sweden from Poland, leaving Sweden under control of a [regent](#), his paternal uncle [Duke Charles](#). In 1596 he succeeded in creating the [Union of Brest](#), which attempted to bring part of the [Orthodox](#) religion into [Catholicism](#). In the same year he transferred the [capital](#) of Poland from Kraków to [Warsaw](#).



King Sigismund III in Spanish costume.

After his wife Anna died in 1598, he married her sister [Constance of Austria](#) in 1605. Troubles were growing on the southern border of the Commonwealth, where Jan Zamoyski and other magnates were engaged in the [Magnate wars in Moldavia](#). Eventually after the defeat of Polish forces in the [battle of Cecora](#) in 1620 Commonwealth would have to relinquish its claims to the [Principality of Moldavia](#).

Due to Sigismund's strong support of the [Counter Reformation](#), his support in largely Protestant Sweden eroded quickly. Charles soon took full control of Sweden and rebelled against Sigismund, ostensibly due to fears that Sigismund might re-Catholicize Sweden. In 1598 Sigismund tried to defeat him with a mixed army from Sweden and Poland but was defeated at the [Battle of Stångebro](#). Sigismund was forbidden to rule Sweden from abroad but nevertheless returned to Poland, and so in 1599 was deposed. This and his decision to incorporate [Livonia](#) into the Commonwealth led to the [Polish-Swedish War](#), which lasted, with minor breaks, to 1629. The kingship was ultimately ceded to Charles. Sigismund, however, did not relinquish his claim to the Swedish throne, and his subsequent foreign policy was aimed at regaining the Swedish crown. This led to bitter relations and several wars between the two countries, to end only after the [Great Northern War](#).

Battle of Stångebro Part of [War against Sigismund](#)
and the prelude to the [Polish-Swedish War of 1600–1611](#)



In 1605 Sigismund attempted to strengthen the monarch's power by asking the [Sejm](#) (the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#)'s parliament) to limit the [liberum veto](#), increase taxes, and augment the military. His opponents, led by [Mikołaj Zebrzydowski](#), declared a [confederation](#) and [rokosz](#) at [Sandomierz](#), leading to a civil war known as [rokosz Zebrzydowskiego](#) (Zebrzydowski's Rebellion). Eventually, royalist forces defeated the *rokoszans* on 6 July 1607 at the [Battle of Guzów](#), but the eventual compromise was a return to the *status quo ante* from before 1605.

[Tsar Shuisky](#) and his Brothers before the King Sigismund III in the Senate Chamber



at the [Royal Castle](#) in [Warsaw](#)

Another important conflict in his reign was the [Polish-Muscovite War \(1605-1618\)](#), also known as The [Dymitriads](#). Sigismund and many Polish magnates attempted to exploit the Muscovite civil war (the [Time of Troubles](#)), and after a lengthy war the 1618 [Truce of Deulino](#) gave some territorial concessions to the Commonwealth (mainly the [Smoleńsk Voivodship](#)). Nonetheless, this war

increased tensions between Poland and Russia, and ruined the prospects for a [Polish-Lithuanian-Muscovy Commonwealth](#).

Sigismund was a talented painter and goldsmith: of his three paintings that survive until the present day one was for centuries erroneously attributed to [Tintoretto](#); from his workshop came the main part of the famous silver coffin of [St. Adalbert of Prague](#) at the [Cathedral](#) in [Gniezno](#).

Sigismund died at the age of 65 in the [Royal Castle](#) in [Warsaw](#).

Sigismund's politics

Many historians believe that Sigismund viewed Poland only as a tool that would allow him to eventually regain the throne of Sweden. To this end he tried to strengthen his royal power and allied himself with [Habsburgs](#) and [Counter-Reformation](#) forces. Those politics were opposed by many from Polish nobility (the [szlachta](#)), most notably the chancellor [Jan Zamojski](#). This led to a semi-legal rebellion against the king ([rokosz](#)), known as [rokosz of Zebrzydowski](#) (1606 – 1608), which was a response to Sigismund attempt to introduce [majority voting](#) in place of [unanimity](#) in the Sejm. Eventually Sigismund's loyalist forces were victorious, but the rebels went unpunished. Partially in order to pacify the restless szlachta, Sigismund supported war with [Muscovy](#) (the [Dimitriads](#), 1608 – 1618).

While Sigismund never managed to regain the Swedish throne, his politics of personal ambition did succeed in provoking a [long series of conflicts](#) between the Commonwealth and [Sweden](#) and [Muscovy](#). While the Commonwealth [Sejm](#) managed to thwart many ambitious (and dangerous) offensive plans of Sigismund (and later of his son, Wladislaw), the Vasa dynasty nonetheless succeeded in partially drawing the Commonwealth into the [Thirty Years' War](#). This senseless conflict with Sweden, combined with wars against Ottomans and Muscovy, eventually culminated well after Sigismund's death in the series of events known as [The Deluge](#), which ended the Golden Age of the Commonwealth.

Gallery



Sigismund of Sweden seal.



[False Dmitry I](#) takes an oath of allegiance to Sigismund III, by [Nikolai Nevrev](#) (1874).



Assassination attempt on King Sigismund III Vasa by Michał Piekarski in 1620.



Sigismund III on catafalque displayed in the Guard Chamber at the [Royal Castle](#).

Anna Vasa Princess of Finland and Sweden

Princess Anna of Sweden



Anna Vasa Anna of Sweden ([17 May 1568](#) - [26 February 1625](#)) was a royal sister of the monarch of Poland, Sweden and Lithuania [Sigismund III Vasa](#) and [starosta](#) of [Brodnica](#) and [Golub](#).

Anna was the youngest child of [Duke John of Finland](#) and [Catherine Jagellonica](#), sister of [Sigismund II Augustus](#) of [Poland](#). Her birth took place in [Eskilstuna](#) and was just after her family was released from captivity at [Gripsholm](#), during which she had been conceived.

Her father ascended in 1569 to the [throne of Sweden](#). Although her mother had raised her in [Catholicism](#), she converted to the [Lutheran](#) faith later in 1580s. She was a specialist in medicinal herbs and kept her own [apothecary](#). In 1587, Her brother became [King of Poland](#) and [Grand Duke of Lithuania](#). Anna went with her brother to Poland in 1587, but was sent back in

1589 because the Polish court greatly disliked her being a Lutheran and the influence she had over her brother. After this she lived in Sweden during the reign of her father. When Sigismund succeeded in Sweden, he planned to make Anna the [Regent](#) of that kingdom, while he was to reside in Poland. Instead, their uncle, [Charles, Duke of Södermanland](#), got the [Swedish council](#) to appoint himself.

When her uncle took the throne in 1598, she left for [Poland](#) to live in her brother [Sigismund III's](#), court, where she spent the rest of her life, although she did return to the Swedish court on several brief occasions, among them in 1618. She became very respected because of her great learning. In Poland, she became her brother's political advisor and acted as protector for the exiled Swedish loyalists and Protestants.

Castle in Golub, Where Anna Vasa had her herb garden

Anna remained unmarried. She was buried at the Church of St.Mary in [Toruń](#), Poland several years after her death, as a Pope had first forbidden the burial of a Protestant in a blessed graveyard in Catholic Poland. Only her nephew, king [Władysław IV Vasa](#), got that decree reversed. He built a beautiful black [Dębnik marble](#) tomb monument with a white alabaster figure of his beloved aunt.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontus_De_la_Gardie

Pontus De la Gardie

Pontus De la Gardie (ca. [1520-5 November 1585](#)) was a [French nobleman](#) in the service of the Kingdom of [Sweden](#).

He was born **Ponce De La Gardie** in [Russol](#) ([Aude](#)), [Languedoc](#), as a son of [Jacques De la Gardie](#) and [Catherine de Sainte-Colombe](#). He became a [mercenary](#) in the service of the Kingdom of [Denmark](#), but changed allegiance to Sweden after having been captured by Swedish troops in [1565](#). In [1581](#) a mercenary [army](#) of Sweden under De la Gardie captured the strategic city of [Narva](#) in [Estonia](#) from [Russia](#).

De la Gardie drowned to the [Narva River](#) and is buried in [Dome Church of Tallinn](#). His [tomb chest](#) is made by well-known artist and architect [Arent Passer](#)^[1].



Pontus De la Gardie.

Family

[4 February 1580](#) he married [Sofia Johansdotter Gyllenhielm](#) (ca.1556-1583), the illegitimate daughter of [John III of Sweden](#) and the [Finnish](#) society lady [Karin Hansdotter](#).

Children

1. [Brita De la Gardie](#) (Pontusdotter) (1581 - 1645)
2. [Freiherr Johan De la Gardie](#) (1582 - 1642), was a [statesman](#) of the [Swedish Empire](#).
3. [Count](#) and [Field Marshal](#) [Jacob De la Gardie](#) (1583–1652), was a significant military leader

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_De_la_Gardie

Jacob De la Gardie

Field Marshal and Count **Jacob Pontusson De la Gardie** ([Reval](#), [20 June 1583](#) - [Stockholm](#), [22 August 1652](#)) was a [statesman](#) and a [soldier](#) of the [Swedish Empire](#).

He was appointed [Privy Councilor](#) in 1613, Governor of the [Swedish Estonia](#) between 1619 and 1622, [Governor General](#) of [Livonia](#) in 1621, and [Lord High Constable](#) in 1628. He introduced reforms based on the then novel [Dutch military doctrine](#) into the [Swedish army](#). He commanded the Swedish forces in [Russia](#) and against the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#). He also served as one of the five [regents](#) jointly ruling Sweden during the minority of [Queen Christina](#).

Jacob De la Gardie in 1606



Jacob [De la Gardie](#) was born in [Reval](#) (today [Tallinn](#)), [Estonia](#) (then part of the [Swedish Empire](#)), as a son of [Pontus De la Gardie](#) and [Sofia Johansdotter Gyllenhielm](#), the illegitimate daughter of king [John III of Sweden](#). His mother died giving birth, and his father perished two years later in [Narva](#). Jacob was raised in [Finland](#) (then part of [Sweden proper](#)) by his grandmother [Karin Hansdotter](#), the mistress of king John III.

De la Gardie married [Ebba Brahe](#) in 1618. They had 14 children, the most famous among them being [Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie](#), born in 1622 and [Gothenburg](#) countess [Christina Catharine De la Gardie](#) (1632–1704), who married [Gustaf Otto Stenbock](#) and was mother of [Magnus Stenbock](#).

Between 1606 and 1608, De la Gardie served under the Dutch general [Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange](#).

Impressed with the Dutch way of waging war, De la Gardie began introducing Dutch methods into the Swedish army upon his return to the service of Sweden.

During the [Polish-Russian War \(1605-1618\)](#), Sweden signed an alliance with tsar [Vasili IV of Russia](#) in 1609. King [Charles IX of Sweden](#) ordered De la Gardie to command the Finnish expeditionary forces of Sweden inside Russia starting in 1608, first against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (known as the [De la Gardie Campaign](#)), and later, breaking the alliance, the [Ingrian War](#) (1610-1617) against [Russia](#).

De la Gardie's forces joined the Russian prince [Mikhail Skopin-Shuisky](#) and advanced from [Novgorod](#) towards [Moscow](#) early in 1610 in support of Vasili IV, whose rule was contested at the time. On their way, they relieved the [Siege of the Trinity Monastery](#). In June of 1610, De la

Gardie's forces marched with the [Russian army](#) under Prince [Dmitry Shuisky](#) (the tsar's brother) to relieve the besieged fortress of [Smolensk](#) but were defeated by the Poles at the [Battle of Klushino](#).

Part of [Polish-Muscovite War \(1605-1618\)](#)



Polish [hussar](#) line at the Battle of Kluszyn

All but a few hundred of De la Gardie's men were killed or fled to the Polish side. This marked the failure of Charles IX of Sweden to place his son, Philip, on the [Novgorodian](#) throne. In 1617, De la Gardie became the chief Swedish negotiator at the [Treaty of Stolbovo](#) whereby [Sweden](#) was able to secure important territorial concessions from Russia, effectively [closing off Russia from access](#) to the Baltic Sea.

After 1621, De la Gardie took part in the [Polish-Swedish War](#) against his mother's half-brother King [Sigismund III of Poland](#) (former king of Sweden) in [Livonia](#), but he was recalled after serving as commander in chief between 1626 and 1628. De la Gardie was an advocate of peace with [Poland](#) and acted as one of the Swedish negotiators at the [Truce of Stuhmsdorf](#) in 1635.

De la Gardie became a member of the state council of Sweden in 1613. In 1620 he became marshal and one of the five regents ruling Sweden during Queen Christina's minority (1632-44). His [pacifist](#) and pro-[French](#) and pro-Polish attitudes often put him at odds with [chancellor Axel Oxenstierna](#), who led Sweden's war effort in the [Thirty Years' War](#) after the death of Gustavus Adolphus in 1632.

Count Jacob De la Gardie died in Stockholm in 1652 and is buried in [Veckholm](#) church in [Uppsala County](#). The city of [Jakobstad](#) in Finland is named after him.

Trivia

- During the De la Gardie Campaign, the Finnish soldiers nick-named their commander *Laiska-Jaakko* ("Lazy Jacob"). This name is still widely remembered in Finland.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebba_Brahe

Ebba Brahe

Ebba Brahe ([March 16, 1596](#) - [January 5, 1674](#)) was a [lady-in-waiting](#) in the [Swedish court](#), [countess](#), and the [mistress](#) of the future king [Gustavus Adolphus](#).

Ebba Brahe



Marriage, relationship with the King

She was born as the daughter of [Magnus Brahe](#) and [Britta Stensdotter Leijonhuvud](#) and was sent to court at the age of fifteen to spend some time as a [lady-in-waiting](#) to the queen dowager [Christina of Holstein-Gottorp](#) to become accustomed to the ways of the fashionable world before marriage.

By the age of 16, in 1613, she was a *mistress* to the then future king, Gustavus Adolphus; this was by no means an official position, but it was well known in the court, and by the letters exchanged between them, it seems that they were both equally in love with each other. There were serious plans

for a marriage, and the young king would not have found this odd, as three previous queens, [Margareta Leijonhufvud](#) (his grandmother), [Katarina Stenbock](#) (his step-grandmother) and [Gunilla Bielke](#) (his aunt) had also been noblewomen, but these plans were prevented by the dowager queen, who was the real ruler during her son's first years and who wanted him to have an arranged marriage of political convenience. The dispute between the dowager queen, the king and Ebba about marriage continued until 1615 and has been the subject of romantic plays, stories and poems for centuries.

The most famous trivia about this dispute is the following; the dowager queen once passed a window, followed by Ebba Brahe. On the windowpane, she wrote with a diamond ring, as a hint of the plans which they did not discuss openly, *One thing you want, one thing you shall; that is the way in cases such as this*, and left. Ebba Brahe then wrote in reply: *I am happy with what I have, and thank my God for the grace of that*. By this, she accepted that the relationship with the king could never be official.

On [June 24, 1618](#) she married Count [Jacob De la Gardie](#), although her relationship with Adolphus continued, (in secret), until his death in 1632.

After her husband's death in 1652 she successfully petitioned [Queen Christina I of Sweden](#) to found the city of [Jakobstad](#) in [Finland](#), named in honour of her late husband. A street in Jakobstad, Ebba Brahe Esplanaden, has been named after her.

As a widow, she became one of the many independent powerful female landlords, who occupy a significant place in the local legends of Sweden during the 16th and 17th centuries, such as [Barbro Pähle](#), [Sophia Drake](#), [Margareta Hvitfeldt](#) and [Margaretha von Ascheberg](#), and spent her days managing her many estates and bought many more, especially from [Skåne](#), that became Swedish in 1658 and had many large estates left behind when the Danish nobility left Skåne. She also played an influential part at court, and was believed to have an influence on queen [Christina of Sweden](#); in 1651, the historian Messenius and his son accused her of having persuaded queen Christina not to marry by using [witchcraft](#), but such an accusation could not be accepted about a noblewoman and they were instead decapitated for treason.



Family

Her marriage with Jacob produced 14 children, seven of whom lived to maturity^[1]. None of her children are believed to have been fathered by King Gustavus Adolphus.

1. Pontus De la Gardie (1619 - 1632).
2. Christina De la Gardie (1620 - d. in infancy).
3. Sophia De la Gardie (1621 - d. in infancy).
4. [Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie](#) (1622 - 1686), [Lord High Chancellor](#) of the [Privy Council of Sweden](#).
5. Brita De la Gardie (1624 - d. in infancy).
6. Gustaf Adolph De la Gardie (1626 - d. in infancy).
7. [Maria Sofia De la Gardie](#) (1627 - 1694), married [Gustaf Gabrielsson Oxenstierna](#), nephew of regent [Axel Oxenstierna](#).
8. [Jakob Kasimir De la Gardie](#) (1629 - 1658).
9. [Pontus Frederick De la Gardie](#) (1630 - 1692).
10. [Christina Catharine De la Gardie](#) (1632 - 1704), married [Gustaf Otto Stenbock](#), mother of [Magnus Stenbock](#).
11. Johann Karl De la Gardie (1634 - d. in infancy).
12. Birgitta Helena De la Gardie (1636 - d. in infancy).
13. [Axel Julius De la Gardie](#) (1637 - 1710), [Field Marshal](#) and [Governor-General](#) over [Estonia](#).
14. [Ebba Margaretha De La Gardie](#) (1638 - 1696).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnus_Gabriel_De_la_Gardie

Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie

Count **Magnus Gabriel [De la Gardie](#)** (1622-1686), [Swedish](#) statesman. He was the son of [Jacob De la Gardie](#) and the grandson of [Ponce \(Pontus\) de la Gardie](#) a French mercenary who had been in Danish service, but made a career in Sweden after having been captured by Swedish troops in 1565, eventually marrying [Sofia Gyllenhielm](#), the illegitimate daughter of king [John III](#). His mother was [Ebba Brahe](#), whose marriage to King [Gustavus Adolphus](#) had been thwarted through the resistance of his mother.

Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie



Biography

After a careful education, completed by the usual grand tour, Magnus learned the art of war under [Gustav Horn](#), and during the reign of [Christina of Sweden](#) (1644-1654), whose prime favourite he became, though the liaison was innocent enough, he was raised to the highest offices in the state and loaded with distinctions. In 1646 he was sent to Paris in order to find Queen Christina musicians for her Swedish court, and on his return married the queen's cousin [Marie Euphrosyne](#) of [Zweibrücken](#) (1625–1687), who, being but a poor princess, benefited greatly by her wedding with the richest of the Swedish magnates. Immediately afterwards, De la Gardie was made a [Privy Councillor](#),

[Governor General](#) of [Saxony](#) during the last stages of the [Thirty Years' War](#), and in 1652, [Lord High Treasurer](#), or *Riksskattmästare*. Charles X Gustav nevertheless, in his last will, appointed De la Gardie, *Riksdrots* or [Lord Chief Justice](#) and a member of the council of regency which ruled Sweden during the minority of [Charles XI of Sweden](#) (1660-1672).

Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie with his spouse Maria Euphrosyne of Pfalz-Zweibrücken, the sister of King Charles X of Sweden. Painting from 1653 by Hendrik Münnichhoven. The picture is filled with symbolic details: Magnus Grabriel is standing lower than his wife because she is sister of the king; they holding hands is symbolizing fidelity, as is the dog; the bean in Maria Euphrosyne's hand is showing that she is pregnant. The painting is regarded as one of the finest from the early Swedish baroque era.



It was De la Gardie who first made Sweden the obsequious hireling of the foreign power which had the longest purse. The beginning of this shameful "subsidy policy" was the [Treaty of Fontainebleau](#) (1661) of the [Northern Wars](#), by a secret paragraph of which Sweden, in exchange for a considerable sum of money, undertook to support the French candidate on the first vacancy of the Polish throne. It was not, however, until [April 14, 1672](#) that Sweden, by the [Treaty of Stockholm](#), became a regular "mercenarius Galliae" pledging herself, in return for 400,000 [écus](#) per annum in peace and 600,000 in war time, to attack with 16,000 men those German princes who might be disposed to assist the [Netherlands](#). The early disasters of the unlucky war of 1675-1679 were rightly attributed to the carelessness, extravagance, procrastination and general incompetence of De la Gardie and his aristocratic colleagues. In 1675 a special commission was appointed to inquire into their conduct, and on [May 27, 1682](#) it decided that the regents and the senate were solely responsible for dilapidations of the realm, the compensation due by them to the crown being assessed at 4,000,000 [Riksdaler](#). De la Gardie was treated with relative leniency, but he "received permission to retire to his estates for the rest of his life" and died there in comparative poverty, a mere shadow of his former magnificent self. The best sides of his character were his brilliant social gifts and his intense devotion to literature and art.

Property owner

During his life, De la Gardie succeeded in adding large numbers of estates and castles to his possession. In his prime, he owned estates and castles in the provinces of [Uppland](#), [Närke](#), [Västmanland](#) and [Västergötland](#). Among these were [Karlberg](#), [Drottningholm](#), Jakobsdal (now: [Ulriksdal](#)), [Venngarn](#), [Ekholmen](#), [Kägleholm](#), [Läckö](#), Traneberg, Mariedal, Katrineberg and Höjentorp. Moreover, De la Gardie owned large properties in [Livonia](#), [Finland](#), [Pomerania](#) and [Mecklenburg](#), at the time all parts of Sweden.^[1]



The De la Gardie family mausoleum in the abbey church of Varnhem. Statues of Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie (right) and his father Jacob.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John,_Duke_of_%C3%96sterg%C3%B6tland

John, Duke of Finland

John, Duke of Ostrogothia (1589 – 1618)



John (in Swedish *Johan*) ([18 April 1589](#) at [Uppsala Castle](#) – [5 March 1618](#) at [Bråborg Castle](#) in [Östergötland](#)) was a [Swedish royal dynast](#). He was 1590-1606 titular [Duke of Finland](#).

His father was [John III of Sweden](#) (1537-92) and mother his second wife [Gunilla Bielke](#) (1568-97) ^[1].

At the age of one the baby John was created Duke of [Finland](#), ^[2] count of [Åland](#) and count of [Bråborg](#).

After the [Battle of Stångebro](#), Duke John's catholic half-brother Sigismund was declared deposed in 1599 from the Swedish throne after a Swedish civil war. The 10-year-old John would have been the next king according to the line of succession. Their uncle Charles, Duke of Södermanland (1550-1611), the closest adult in the line of succession, took up the [regency](#), and until 1604, no king was proclaimed.

In 1604, [Norrköping](#)'s succession pact was made and the then 15-year-old Duke John formally renounced his succession rights. Instead, he received promises of several duchies to him, including northern and western [Östergötland](#), Kinda and Ydre districts in Småland, the county of Läckö, as well as the entire small province of [Dalsland](#).

After King Charles' death in 1611 Duke John participated in the government. At the parliament of Nyköping the same year, Gustav II Adolf was recognized as the king, and duke John renewed his renunciation. Several districts of Västergötland were added to his duchy.

On [29 November 1612](#) Duke John married at [Tre Kronor Castle](#) in Stockholm his first cousin [Princess Maria Elizabeth of Sweden](#) (born [10 March 1596](#) at [Örebro Castle](#), died [7 August 1618](#) at [Bråborg castle](#)), daughter of [Charles IX](#) and his second wife [Christina of Holstein-Gottorp](#). The marriage remained childless and was also very unhappy.

Duke John died in 1618 and left immense debts. He was a true wastrel, and the Johannisborg construction next to ruined the economy of his duchy.

Duke John's marriage was childless. His elder half-brother King Sigismund of Poland and half-sister [Anna of Finland](#) survived him and were his closest relatives.

Duke John is buried in [Linköping Cathedral](#).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Maria_Elizabeth_of_Sweden

Princess Maria Elizabeth of Sweden

Princess Maria Elizabeth of Sweden, (born at [Örebro Castle](#) [10 March 1596](#)- died at [Bråborg Castle](#) [7 August 1618](#), was a Swedish princess, daughter of king [Charles IX of Sweden](#) and [Christina of Holstein-Gottorp](#), and by marriage duchess of Ostrogothia.

Maria Elisabeth was brought up with her brother, [Gustavus Adolphus](#), and her cousin, [John, Duke of Finland](#). She suffered from some sort of mental problems and was reported as having some sort of attacks or "convulsions". She is said to have been very pampered and spoilt by her doting parents, who did everything they could to hide her mental problems. She was also very well educated, interested in literature, and corresponded in [latin](#) with her teachers at the age of ten.

In 1610, Maria Elizabeth was engaged to marry her cousin Prince John of Sweden, Duke of Ostrogothia. The reason for the marriage was political. John was the son of former king [John III of Sweden](#) and had rights to the throne which exceeded those of Maria Elizabeth's father. Although he had given up these rights and was not an ambitious person, the royal family was worried that he would become a threat if he married an ambitious foreign princess.

In [29 November 1612](#), at the age of sixteen, Princess Maria Elizabeth celebrated her wedding to the duke of Ostrogothia. In the summer of 1614, her mental state deteriorated and after this, she is reported to have had periods of insanity, during which she sometimes lost her ability to speak. The royal couple ruled quite independently in the Duchy; Johan had the right to issue new laws, and Maria Elizabeth evidently had influence on his rule. During the six years they lived together in Ostrogothia, a witch hunt was conducted in the duchy, for which they, and Maria Elizabeth in particular, are considered to be responsible.

A woman was executed in Söderköping, after being accused of having cast a spell on the royal couple. The personal priest of Maria Elizabeth, Claudius Prytz, (LG #16289 relative) was very active in this. The duke issued a new law which made it easier to judge and execute witches. "Two evil and reputed sorceresses, which Their Graces Duke Johan and his noble consort Maria Elizabeth upon the word of God destroyed, were burned at a place called Skogby vad".

Seven women were executed in [Finspång](#) in 1617. When the witch frenzy of 1668-1676 broke out, the witch hunt of the 1610s in Ostrogothia was remembered and pointed out as a warning example by those sceptical towards the belief in witches. Prime minister [Per Brahe](#) warned:

"To be strict with those affected, as they believe in too much which is not real, and executions, will only increase this, as happened in the time of Duke John", and: "The Prime minister was reminded of the Princess of duke John. She started to burn some, and in the end, there were not a wife who was not accused". (LG: See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finspång witch trial>).

Ten such executions are confirmed. After the death of Maria Elizabeth, the witch hunt was put to an end.

Charles IX of Sweden

Charles IX ([Swedish](#): *Karl IX*) (1550 – 1611), was [King of Sweden](#) from 1604 until his death. He was the youngest son of King [Gustav I of Sweden](#) and his second wife, [Margaret Leijonhufvud](#).

Charles IX, King of Sweden



He came into the throne by championing the Protestant cause during the increasingly tense times of religious strife between competing sects of [Christianity](#), where forcible conversion was considered a "best course", a period where the Catholics were growing increasingly belligerent— which, in just over a decade, would break out as the [Thirty Years' War](#)—as it had already caused the dynastic squabble rooted in religious freedom that deposed his nephew and brought him to rule as king of Sweden.

With his [brother's](#) death in November of 1592, during the era which marked the start of the final chapter (dated 1648 by some) of both the [Reformation](#) and [Counter-reformation](#), Charles, during the tense political times which prevailed, viewed the inheritance of the throne of [Protestant](#) Sweden by his devout [Roman Catholic](#) nephew and [Habsburg](#) ally,

Sigismund of Poland and Sweden with alarm, and several years of religious controversy and discord followed.

During the period, he along with the Swedish privy council ruled in Sigismund's name while he stayed in Poland. After various preliminaries, his nephew was forced to abdicate the throne to Charles IX as regent in 1595 by the [Riksens ständer](#), which eventually kicked off nearly seven decades of sporadic warfare as the two lines of the divided [House of Vasa](#) both continued to attempt to remake the union between the [Polish](#) and Swedish thrones with opposing counter-claims and dynastic wars.

Duke Charles

In 1568 he was the real leader of the rebellion against Eric XIV, but took no part in the designs of his brother [John III](#) against the unhappy king after his deposition. Indeed, Charles's relations with John were always more or less strained. The matter came to a crisis on the death of John III in 1592. The heir to the throne was John's eldest son, [Sigismund of Sweden](#), already king of [Poland](#) and a devoted [Catholic](#). The fear lest Sigismund might re-catholicize the land alarmed the [Protestant](#) majority in Sweden—particularly the commoners and lower nobility, and Charles came forward as their champion, and also as the defender of the [Vasa](#) dynasty against foreign interference.

It was due entirely to him that Sigismund *as king-elect* was forced to confirm the resolutions at the [Uppsala Synod](#) in 1593, thereby recognizing the fact that Sweden was essentially a Protestant state. Under the agreement, Charles and the Swedish Privy Council shared power and ruled in Sigismund's place since he resided in Poland.

Necessity compelled him to work with the clergy and people rather than the gentry; hence it was that the [Riksdag](#) (Riksdag) assumed under his regency government a power and an importance which it had never possessed before. In 1595, the Riksdag of [Söderköping](#) elected Charles regent, and his attempt to force [Klas Fleming](#), governor of [Österland](#) (Finland of the day), to submit to his authority, rather than to that of the king, provoked a civil war. Charles sought to increase his power and the king attempted to manage the situation by diplomacy over several years, until fed up, Sigismund got permission from the Commonwealth's legislature to pursue the matters dividing his Swedish subjects, and invaded with a mercenary army.

Technically Charles was, without doubt, guilty of high treason, and the considerable minority of all classes which adhered to Sigismund on his landing in Sweden in 1598 indisputably behaved like loyal subjects. In the events that followed, despite some initial successes, Sigismund lost the crucial [Battle of Stångebro](#), and was captured himself, as well as forced to deliver up certain Swedish noblemen who were named traitor by Charles and the Riksdag. With Sigismund defeated and sent packing, and as both an alien and a heretic to the majority of the Swedish nation, and his formal deposition by the [Riksdag of the Estates](#) in 1599 was, in effect, a natural vindication and *ex post facto* legitimization of Charles's position all along, for the same session of the Riksdag named him as the ruler as regent.

Statue of Charles IX in [Karlstad](#).



He did not officially become king until [March 6, 1604](#). The first deed in which the title appears is dated March 20 1604; but he was not crowned until [March 15, 1607](#).

Four and a half years later Charles IX died at [Nyköping](#), [October 30, 1611](#) when he was succeeded by his seventeen year old son [Gustavus the Great](#), who'd participated in the wars. As a ruler, he is the link between his great father and his still greater son. He consolidated the work of Gustav I, the creation of a great Protestant state; he prepared the way for the erection of the Protestant empire of [Gustavus Adolphus](#).

Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden

Gustav II Adolf, (19 December 1594 – 16 November 1632 ([O.S.](#))^[1] or **Gustav II Adolphus**, widely known in English by the [Latinized](#) name **Gustavus Adolphus** and variously in historical writings sometimes as simply just *Gustavus*, or *Gustavus the Great*, or *Gustav Adolf the Great*, ([Swedish](#): Gustav Adolf den store, from the special distinction passed by the [Swedish](#) Parliament in 1634), was founder of the [Swedish Empire](#) (or *Stormaktstiden* – "*the era of great power*") at the beginning of what is widely regarded as the Golden Age of Sweden.

Gustav II Adolf



In the era, which was characterized by nearly endless warfare, he led his armies as [King of Sweden](#)—from 1611, as a seventeen year old, until his death in battle while leading a charge during 1632 in the bloody [Thirty Years' war](#)—as Sweden rose from the status as a mere [regional power](#) and run-of-the-mill kingdom to one of the [great powers](#) of Europe and a model of [early modern era](#) government. Sweden expanded to become the third biggest nation in Europe after Russia and Spain within only a few years during his reign. Some have called him the *father of modern warfare*, or the first great modern general. It is indisputable that under his tutelage, Sweden and the [Protestant](#) cause developed a host of good generals—who continued to expand the empires' strength and influence long after his death in battle.

He was known by the epithets "The Golden King" and "The Lion of the North" by neighboring sovereigns. Gustavus Adolphus is today commemorated in three [city squares](#), one [in Stockholm](#), a second one [in Gothenburg](#) and the third in [Sundsvall](#). Gustavus Adolphus College, a Lutheran college in St. Peter, Minnesota, is also named for the Swedish king.

Biography

Gustavus Adolphus was born in [Stockholm](#) as the oldest son of King [Charles IX of Sweden](#) of the [Vasa dynasty](#) and his second wife, [Christina of Holstein-Gottorp](#). Upon his father's death in 1611, a seventeen year-old Gustav inherited the throne as well as an ongoing succession of occasionally belligerent dynastic disputes with his Polish cousin [Sigismund III of Poland](#) who, in the preliminary religious strife before the [Thirty Years' War](#), was forced to let go of the throne of Sweden to Gustav's father. Sigismund III wanted to regain the throne of Sweden and tried to force Gustav Adolph to renounce the title.

In a round of this dynastic dispute, Gustavus invaded Livonia when he was 31, beginning the [Polish-Swedish War \(1625–1629\)](#). He intervened on behalf of the Lutherans in Germany, who opened the gates to their cities to him. His reign became famous from his actions a few years later when on June 1630 he landed in Germany, continuing Sweden's involvement in the ongoing [Thirty Years' War](#). Gustavus intervened on the anti-Imperial side, which at the time was losing to the Holy Roman Empire and its Catholic allies; the Swedish forces would quickly reverse that situation.

Gustavus was married to [Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg](#), the daughter of [John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg](#), and chose the [Prussian](#) city of [Elbing](#) as the base for his operations in [Germany](#). He died in the [Battle of Lützen](#) in 1632. His early death was a great loss to the Lutheran side and it prolonged the war for many years. This resulted in large parts of Germany and other countries, which for a large part had become Lutheran in faith, to be forced into Catholicism (via [Counter-Reformation](#)). His involvement in the Thirty Years' War gave rise to the old prophecy that he was the incarnation of "**the Lion of the North**", or as it is called in German "**Der Löwe von Mitternacht**" (*Literally: "The Lion from Midnight"*).

Legacy as a general

Gustavus Adolphus was known as an able military commander. His innovative tactical integration of infantry, cavalry, artillery and logistics earned him the title of the "Father of Modern Warfare". Future commanders who studied and admired Gustav II Adolf include [Napoleon I of France](#) and [Carl von Clausewitz](#). His advancements in military science made Sweden the dominant [Baltic](#) power for the next one hundred years. He is also the only Swedish monarch to be styled "[the Great](#)". This decision was made by the Swedish Estates of the Realm, when they convened in 1633. Thus, by their decision he is officially, to this day, to be called Gustaf Adolf the Great.

Gustavus Adolphus was the main figure responsible for the success of Sweden during the Thirty Years' War and led his nation to great prestige. As a [general](#), Gustavus Adolphus is famous for employing mobile [artillery](#) on the battlefield, as well as very aggressive [tactics](#), where attack was stressed over defense, and mobility and cavalry initiative were emphasized.

Gustav II Adolf in Polish '[delia](#)' coat, painting by Merian, 1632

His armies were very well trained for the day, so that his [musketeers](#) were widely known for their firing accuracy and reload speed: three times faster than any contemporary rivals. [Carl von Clausewitz](#) and [Napoleon Bonaparte](#) considered him one of the greatest generals of all time; a sentiment agreed with by [Patton](#) and others. Napoleon thought highly of the achievement, and copied the tactics.



Military commander

When Gustavus Adolphus began his push into northern [Germany](#) in June-July 1630, he had just 4,000 troops. But he was soon able to consolidate the [Protestant](#) position in the north. Meanwhile, a Catholic army was laying waste to [Saxony](#). Gustavus Adolphus met and defeated it at the [First Battle of Breitenfeld](#) in September 1631, in spite of the collapse of his Saxon allies. He then made plans for the invasion of the rest of the [Holy Roman Empire](#).

In March 1632, Gustavus Adolphus invaded [Bavaria](#). He forced the withdrawal of his Catholic opponents at the [Battle of Rain](#). This would mark the high point of the campaign. In the summer of that year, he sought a political solution that would preserve the existing structure of states in Germany, while guaranteeing the security of its Protestants. But achieving these objectives depended on his continued success on the battlefield. Gustavus is reported to have entered battle without wearing any armor, proclaiming, "The Lord God, is my armor!" It is more likely that he simply wore a leather [cuirass](#) rather than going into battle wearing no battle protection whatsoever.

Gustavus Adolphus was killed at the [Battle of Lützen](#), when, at a crucial point in the battle, he became separated from his troops while leading a cavalry charge into a dense [smog](#) of mist and gunpowder smoke. After his death, his wife initially kept his body, and later his heart, in her castle for over a year. His remains (including his heart) now rest in [Riddarholmskyrkan](#) in Stockholm.



Gustavus Adolphus at the Battle at Breitenfeld

In February 1633, following the death of the king, the Swedish [Riksdag of the Estates](#) decided that his name would be styled Gustav Adolf the Great (or *Gustaf Adolf den Store* in [Swedish](#)). No such honor has been bestowed on any other Swedish monarch since.

The crown of Sweden was inherited in the Vasa family, and from Charles IX's time excluded those Vasa princes who had been traitors or descended from deposed monarchs. Gustavus Adolphus' younger brother had died years before, and therefore there were only female heirs left. Maria Eleonora and the king's ministers took over the government on behalf of Gustavus Adolphus' underage daughter [Christina](#) upon her father's death. He left one other known child, his illegitimate son [Gustav, Count of Vasaborg](#).

Timeline

- July 1626. Gustavus Adolphus and his army disembark at [Pillau, Prussia](#), during the [Polish-Swedish War \(1625–1629\)](#).
- [August 18, 1627](#). The King is seriously wounded in the battle of Dirschau ([Tczew](#)).
- June 1629 his troops meet up with imperial troops under [Hans Georg von Arnim-Boitzenburg](#), who used to serve under Gustav Adolph, and is ordered by emperor [Ferdinand](#) to aid [Sigismund III](#).
- May 1630 and [July 6](#) Gustav Adolph lands in [Germany](#).
- September 1631. At the [Battle of Breitenfeld](#), Gustavus Adolphus decisively defeats the Catholic forces led by [Tilly](#), even after the allied Protestant Saxon army had been routed and fled with the baggage train.
- April 1632. At the [Battle of Lech](#), Gustavus Adolphus defeats Tilly once more, and in the battle Tilly sustains a fatal wound.
- May 1632. Munich yields to the Swedish army.
- September 1632. Gustavus Adolphus attacks the stronghold of [Alte Veste](#), which is under the command of [Wallenstein](#), but is repulsed, marking the first defeat in the Thirty Years' War of the previously invincible Swedes. This leads to defection of some mercenary elements in the Protestant army.
- November 1632. At the [Battle of Lützen](#), Gustavus Adolphus is killed in battle, but the Swedish win the fight, thanks to [Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar](#), who assumed command, and defeated Wallenstein. The Swedish war effort was kept up by generals [Gustav Horn](#), [Johan Banér](#), [Lennart Torstenson](#) and chancellor [Axel Oxenstierna](#) until the [Peace of Westphalia](#).

Gustavus Adolphus Day is celebrated in Sweden each year on [November 6](#). On this day only, a special pastry with a chocolate or marzipan medallion of the king, is sold. The day is also an official [flag day](#) in the Swedish calendar. In [Finland](#), the day is celebrated as *svenska dagen* or *ruotsalaisuuden päivä*, "[Swedishness Day](#)", and is a customary [flag day](#).



Battle of Lützen

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Eleonora_of_Brandenburg

Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg

Maria Eleonora of [Brandenburg](#) (11 November 1599 – 28 March 1655) was a [German princess](#) and [queen consort](#) of [Sweden](#).

Maria Eleonora Queen of Sweden



She was the daughter of [John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg](#) and [Anna, Duchess of Prussia](#), daughter of [Albert Frederick, Duke of Prussia](#).

In the year 1620 Maria Eleonora married, with her mother's consent but against her brother's will, the Swedish king [Gustavus Adolphus](#). She bore a daughter, [Christina](#), in 1626.

She was described as the most beautiful queen in Europe, and, as her daughter later said, had "all the virtues and vices" associated with her gender.

Young Gustav II Adolph

In 1616, the 22-year-old [Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden](#) started looking around for a Protestant bride. He had since 1613 tried to get his mother's permission to marry the noblewoman [Ebba Brahe](#),

but this was not allowed, and he had to give up his wishes to marry her, though he continued to be in love with her. He received reports with the most flattering descriptions of the physical and mental qualities of pretty, 17-year-old Maria Eleonore. Elector Johann Sigismund was well inclined towards the Swedish King, but he had become very infirm after an apopleptic stroke in the autumn of 1617. His determined Prussian wife showed a strong dislike for this Swedish suitor, because Prussia was a Polish fief and the Polish King still resented that he had lost Sweden to Gustav Adolph's father.

Marriage and Children

The Elector Johann Sigismund Maria Eleonore's father died on December 23, 1619 and with him the prospect of a Swedish marriage seemed gone. In the spring of 1620, however, stubborn Gustav Adolph arrived in Berlin. The Electress Dowager maintained an attitude of reserve and even refused to grant the Swedish King a personal meeting with Maria Eleonore. All those who were present, however, noticed the Princess' unconcealed interest in the young King. Afterwards, Gustav Adolph made a round of other Protestant German courts with the professed intention of inspecting a few matrimonial alternatives. On his return to Berlin, however, the Electress

Dowager seems to have become completely captivated by the charming Swedish King. After plighting his troth to Maria Eleonore, Gustav Adolph hurried back to Sweden to make arrangements for the reception of his bride.

Gustav Adolph shared Maria Eleonore's interest in architecture and her love of music, while she was sentimentally devoted to her husband. Often, she lamented that she never had her hero for herself. Foreign ambassadors found her gracious and beautiful and she had good taste, although her character showed some extravagant traits. Maria Eleonore had a definite liking for entertainment and sweetmeats and soon she succumbed to the current fashionable craze for buffoons and dwarfs. She spoke French, the court language of the age, but never bothered to learn to write German or Swedish correctly.

Within six months of their marriage, Gustav Adolph left to command the siege of Riga, leaving Maria Eleonore in the early stages of her first pregnancy. She lived exclusively in the company of her German ladies-in-waiting and had difficulty in adapting herself to the Swedish people, countryside and climate. She disliked the bad roads, sombre forests and wooded houses, roofed with turf. She also pined for her husband. A year after their wedding she had a miscarriage and became seriously ill. She was tempestuous, excessive, neurotic and jealous. Her emotional life lacked balance, and everything Maria Eleonore undertook on her own initiative needed careful watching. Soon Gustav Adolph's intimi knew that his married life was a source of grief and anxiety.

The romantic circumstances of her marriage, in which she and her husband had to elope to escape her brother's care, was said to have fostered in her a genuine love for her husband, a very unusual condition for a queen of her time. She displayed her love very openly and inappropriately according to the etiquette of the time, which made people consider her to be emotional and hysterical and very "feminine", which meant she was not considered as very intelligent. Her husband wrote specifically that, if he should die when his heir was still a minor, his widow was not to be allowed any political influence whatsoever. He continued to be in love with [Ebba Brahe](#) their entire marriage, but it does not appear that Maria Eleonora noticed this.

In the autumn of 1623 Maria Eleonore gave birth to a daughter, but the baby died the next year. At that time, the only surviving male heirs were the hated King of Poland and his sons. With Gustav Adolph risking his life in battles, an heir to the throne was anxiously awaited. In the autumn Maria Eleonore was a third time pregnant. In May 1625 she was in good spirits and insisted on accompanying her husband on the royal yacht to review the fleet. There seemed to be no danger, as the warships were moored off just opposite the castle, but a sudden storm nearly capsized the yacht. Queen was hurried back to the castle, but when she got there she was heard to exclaim: "Jesus, I cannot feel my child!" Shortly afterwards the longed-for son, the heir of the throne, was stillborn.

Birth of Christina

With the renewal of the war with Poland, again Gustav Adolph had to leave his wife. It is likely that she gave way to hysterical grief, as we know she did in 1627, and it is probably for this reason that the King let his queen join him in Livonia after the Poles had been defeated in

January 1626. By April, Maria Eleonore found she was again pregnant. No risks were taken this time and the astrologers predicted the birth of a son and heir. During a lull in the warfare, Gustav Adolph hurried back to Stockholm to await the arrival of the baby. The birth was a difficult one. On December 7th, a baby was born with a fleece, which enveloped it from its head to its knees, leaving only its face, arms and lower part of its legs free. Moreover, it had a large nose and was covered with hair. Thus, it was assumed the baby was a boy; and so the King was told. Closer inspection, however, learned that the baby was a girl. It was left to Gustav Adolph's half-sister, Katharina (1584-1638), to inform him that the child was a girl. She "carried the baby in her arms to the King in a condition for him to see and to know and realise for himself what she dared not tell him". Gustav Adolph remarked: "She is going to be clever, for she has taken us all in." Shortly after the birth, Maria Eleonore was in no condition to be told the truth about the baby's gender, and the King and court waited several days before breaking the news to her. She screamed: "Instead of a son, I am given a daughter, dark and ugly, with a great nose and black eyes. Take her from me, I will not have such a monster!"

Gustav Adolph was devoted to his daughter and tried to rear Christina as a boy. At the age of two, she clapped her hands and laughed with joy when the great cannons of Kalmar Castle boomed out the royal salute. Afterwards, Gustav Adolph often took his little daughter with him to military reviews. Maria Eleonore showed little affection for her daughter and was not allowed any influence in Christina's upbringing. The Princess was placed in the care of Gustav Adolph's half-sister, Katharina, and the Chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna.

Widowhood

During the next two years Gustav Adolph marched across a devastated [Germany](#), conquering [Pomerania](#) and [Mecklenburg](#). Early November he went to [Erfurt](#) to say goodbye to Maria Eleonore, who had been in Germany since the previous winter. In the battle of Lützen 39-year-old Gustav II Adolph was shot in the back. He fell and was dragged for some distance by his horse. He managed to free himself from the stirrup, but while lying on the ground "The Lion of the North" was killed by another shot through his head. By nightfall both armies were exhausted, but Bernard of Saxe-Weimar (1604-1639) and the Swedes had captured all the Imperial artillery and were in possession of the key position. The King's body was found, lying face downwards in the mud, plundered of everything but his shirt.

In 1633 Maria Eleonore returned to Sweden with the embalmed body of her husband. In [Nyköping](#) 7-year-old [Queen Christina](#) came in solemn procession to the ship to receive her mother. Later she wrote: "I embraced the Queen my mother, she drowned me with her tears and practically smothered me in her arms." For more than a year Maria Eleonore condemned the active, spirited little Queen to an appalling mourning seclusion in rooms draped with black and lit by candles day and night, from which every ray of light was excluded. She made her daughter sleep with her in a bed over which her father's heart was hung in a golden casket. Christina, who was herself somewhat malformed with one shoulder higher than the other, also detested her mother's dwarfs and buffoons. She became seriously ill; an ulcer appeared on her left breast, causing her terrible pain and a high fever until it burst. In the summer of 1634 the funeral procession finally wound its way to [Stockholm](#). Queen Christina later wrote about her mother: "She carried out her role of mourning to perfection."

Christina of Sweden

Christina ([Swedish](#): *Kristina Augusta*; 18 December 1626 – 19 April 1689), later known as **Christina Alexandra**^[1] and sometimes **Countess Dohna**, was [Queen regnant](#) of [Sweden](#) from 1632 to 1654. She was the only surviving legitimate child of King [Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden](#) and his wife [Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg](#). As the [heiress presumptive](#), at the age of six she succeeded her father on the throne of Sweden upon his death at the [Battle of Lützen](#) in the [Thirty Years' War](#).

Christina, Queen of Sweden



After converting to [Catholicism](#) and abdicating her throne, she spent her latter years in [France](#) and [Rome](#), where she was buried in [St. Peter's Basilica](#).

Early life

Christina was born in [Stockholm](#), and her birth occurred during a rare astrological conjunction that fueled great speculation on what influence the child, fervently hoped to be a boy, would later have on the world stage.^[2] The king had already sired two daughters, both buried in [Riddarholmskyrkan](#) in [Stockholm](#) - a nameless princess born in 1620, and then the first princess Christina, who was born in 1623 and died the following year. So great expectations arose at Maria Eleonora's third [pregnancy](#) in 1626, and the castle filled with shouts of joy when on December 8 she delivered a child that was first taken for a boy - he was so hairy and

screamed with a strong, hoarse voice. Christina writes in her autobiography, "Deep embarrassment spread among the women when they discovered their mistake." The king however was larkhappy, stating that "She'll be clever, she has made fools of us all!"^[3] Christina was born with what [Scandinavians](#) call a *victory-shirt* (meaning a more or less intact [fetal membrane](#) clinging to the newborn baby). This could explain the confusion about Christina's gender; but a victory-shirt was always regarded as a lucky [omen](#). Gustav Adolf was closely attached to his daughter, who admired him greatly, whereas her mother remained aloof in her disappointment at the child being a girl. Before Gustav Adolf left to defend [Protestantism](#) in the [Thirty Years' war](#), he secured his daughter's right to inherit the throne, in case he never returned. (He was killed in battle in November 1632.)

Her father gave orders that Christina should be brought up as a prince,^[4] and Christina took the oath as king, not queen, giving rise to the nickname the "Girl King". Her mother, [Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg](#), came from the [Hohenzollern](#) family. She was a woman of quite distraught

temperament, and her attempts to bestow guilt on Christina for her difficult birth, or just the horror story itself, may have prejudiced Christina against the prospect of having to produce an heir to the throne.

Christina wept for three days after her father's departure, although she was a child who rarely took to tears. Letters still exist, written by her in German to her father when she was five - school lessons were to her the highlight of her days. Her mother had fetched the king home from Germany in a coffin, opening it occasionally to pat the remains - he fell on November 6, 1632, but was not buried until June 22, 1634, more than 18 months later. His daughter, who had inherited his looks, suddenly became centre of her mother's attention. From showing her daughter complete indifference, Maria Eleonora suddenly became perversely attentive to her. Gustav Adolf had sensibly decided that his daughter, in case of his death, should be cared for by his sister, [Catharina of Pfalz](#), who was married to count [Johan Kasimir of Pfalz](#), and had moved home to Sweden after the outbreak of the Thirty Years' war. Christina knew the couple well; their children were [Maria Eufrosyne](#), who later married one of Christina's close friends, and [Karl Gustav](#), who inherited the throne after Christina. But this happy solution did not suit the queen, who had her sister-in-law banned from the castle. She herself was to bring up the child, who suffered with her mother's fits of weeping in the apartment where no daylight was permitted. The chancellor, [Axel Oxenstierna](#), saw no other solution to this than exiling the queen to [Gripsholm](#) castle, while the governing regency council would decide when she was allowed to meet her nine-year-old daughter. This was followed by three good years, with Christina thriving in the company of her aunt Catharina and her family; but when Catharina died in 1639, Oxenstierna had her family moved out of the castle.

Visit from Descartes

Queen Christina in discussion with French philosopher [René Descartes](#).



Christina's good friend, ambassador Chanut, corresponded with the philosopher [René Descartes](#), discussing his ideas with Christina. She became interested enough to start corresponding with Descartes herself, and presently invited him to Sweden. She warned him against the winter cold, suggesting he arrive in spring or summer. Instead he arrived on October 4, 1649, and during the following months the cold climate bothered him considerably. He resided with Chanut, but with Christina's strict schedule he came to the castle library

at 5:00 AM to discuss philosophy with her and librarian [Johan Freinsheim](#). The premises were icy, and in February 1650 Descartes fell ill with [pneumonia](#) and died ten days later. Christina was distraught from feelings of guilt.

The nurses had carelessly dropped Christina to the floor when she was a baby. A shoulder bone broke, leaving one shoulder higher than the other for the rest of her life. Yet she was brilliant on horseback, also taking lessons in the arts of fencing and shooting. She was very mature for her age - on March 15 1633 she became queen at the age of six, and as her first official assignment received the [Russian](#) embassy, who were most impressed with the child. The king had ensured that the theologist [Johannes Matthiae Gothus](#) would be her tutor; he gave her lessons in [religion](#), [philosophy](#), [Greek](#) and [Latin](#). She also learnt Swedish history as well as modern languages; her talent for languages was nothing short of unique. When the ambassador of [France](#), [Pierre Hector Chanut](#), arrived in Stockholm in 1645, he stated admiringly, "She talks French as if she was born in the [Louvre](#)!" [Otto Sperling](#), who was doctor at the household of [Christian IV's](#) daughter [Eleonora Christine](#), met Christina in Sweden in the winter of 1653, talking with her in Italian, which he was in good command of after having lived in [Italy](#) for four years. He was overwhelmed that she, who had never even been to Italy, spoke the language like a native.

Queen regnant

In her autobiography from 1681 Christina wrote: "In my opinion, women should never reign". That is a remarkable comment from a woman who herself reigned a country for ten years, and did it well.

The National council suggested that Christina joined the government when she was sixteen; but she asked to wait until she had turned eighteen, as her father had waited until then. In 1644 she took the throne. Her first major assignment was to conclude peace with Denmark. She did so successfully; Denmark handed the isles of [Gotland](#) and [Ösel](#) (today's [Saaremaa](#) in [Estonia](#)) over to Sweden, whereas Norway lost the districts of [Jämtland](#) and [Härjedalen](#), which to this day have remained Swedish.

Chancellor Oxenstierna soon discovered that Christina held other political views than himself. To the peace congress in Germany in 1645 he sent his son [Johan Oxenstierna](#), presenting the view that it would be in Sweden's best interest if the Thirty years' war continued. Christina however wanted peace at any cost, and therefore sent her own delegate, [Johan Adler Salvius](#). Shortly before the conclusion of peace she admitted Salvius into the National council, against chancellor Oxenstierna's will and to general astonishment, as Salvius was no aristocrat; but Christina wanted opposition to the aristocracy. In 1645 Christina appointed [Benedict \(Baruch\) Nehamias de Castro](#) from [Hamburg](#) as her *Physician in ordinary*.^[6]

She knew it was expected of her to provide an heir to the Swedish throne. Her first cousin Charles was infatuated with her, and they became secretly engaged before he left in 1642 to do army service for three years in Germany. However Christina reveals in her autobiography that she felt "an insurmountable distaste for marriage"; likewise "an insurmountable distaste for all the things that females talked about and did". She slept for 3-4 hours a night and was chiefly occupied with her studies; she forgot to comb her hair, donned her clothes in a hurry and used men's shoes for the sake of convenience. However she was said to possess charm, and the unruly hair became her. Her best female friend was [Ebba Sparre](#), whom she called *Belle*. She hosted Ebba's wedding with [Jacob de la Gardie](#) in 1653, but the marriage would last only five years. Ebba visited her husband in [Elsinore](#) when he was shot down and killed, and their three children

all died when small. Ebba herself died in 1662, after four years of widowhood. Christina kept in touch through letters and always expressed great devotion to her friend.

On February 26, 1649, Christina made public that she had decided not to marry, but wanted her first cousin Charles as heir to the throne. Aristocracy objected to this, but the three other estates - clergy, burghers and peasants - accepted it. Coronation took place in October 1650. Christina went to the castle of Jacobsdal, today known as [Ulriksdal](#), where she entered a coronation carriage drawn with black [velvet](#) embroidered in gold, and pulled by six white [horses](#).

[Sébastien Bourdon](#), Christina of Sweden, 1653.

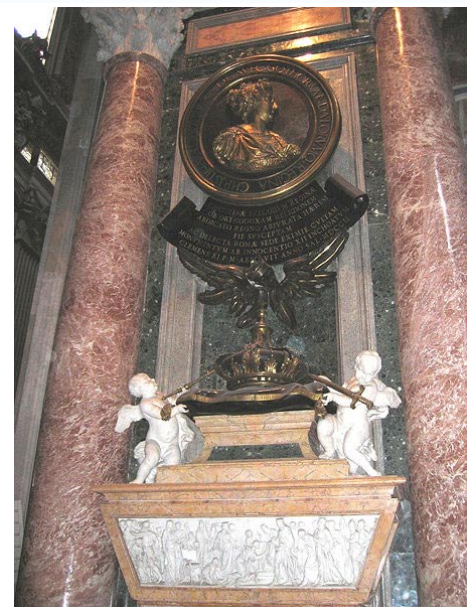


Christina abdicated her throne on 5 June 1654 in favor of her cousin [Charles Gustavus](#) in order to either practice openly her previously secret [Catholicism](#), or to accept the same publicly so as to be at the center of a scientific and artistic renaissance.

During the abdication ceremony at [Uppsala](#) castle, Christina wore her regalia, which was removed from her, one by one; but [Per Brahe](#), who was supposed to remove the crown, did not move, so she had to take the crown off herself. Dressed in a simple white taffeta gown she held her farewell speech with a faltering voice, thanked everyone and left the throne to Charles X, who was dressed in black. Per Brahe felt that she "stood there as pretty as an angel".

Queen Christina's monument
in [St. Peter's Basilica](#)

Christina had asked for a simple burial, but the pope insisted on her being displayed on a *lit de parade* for four days in the Riario Palace. She was embalmed, covered with white [brocade](#), a silver mask, a gilt crown and scepter. Her body was placed in three coffins - one from cypress, one from lead and finally one made from oak. The funeral procession led from Santa Maria in Valicella to [St. Peter's Basilica](#), where she was buried within the papal grottoes - only one of three women ever given this honour.



Catharina of Sweden

Catharina Vasa, Princess of Sweden.



Princess Catherine of Sweden (*Prinsessan Katarina*) (10 November 1584 – 13 December 1638) was the daughter of [Charles IX of Sweden](#) and his first wife [Maria of Palatinate-Simmern](#). Catharina was periodically the foster-mother of Queen Christina. [Katarina kyrka](#) in Stockholm is named after her.

Catharina was described as a happy mixture of her father's *power and wisdom* and her mother's *soft humidity*. She was a good friend to her stepmother, with whom she got along very well, and is believed to have been important to her half-siblings; especially her halfbrother the king, is noted to have been very affectionate towards her; he found her sensible and wise and she is reported to have acted as his confidante and advisor on several occasions. On 11 June 1615, she married [count palatine John Casimir of Palatinate-Zweibrücken](#). They remained in Sweden until 1617, when they moved to Germany. In 1622, her brother the king became worried about them, as the [Thirty Years' War](#) had broken out, and asked them to come to Sweden, and they did, where they were given

[Stegeborg Palace](#) as their residence. She was given charge of Princess Christina when the queen followed the king to Germany and during her stay there 1631-1633. She acted as a foster-mother to the small [Queen Christina of Sweden](#) after her brother's death, when Christina's mother was deemed to be unsuitable as a guardian, and had custody of Christina in 1631-33 and 1636-38, years described as happy for Christina.

Family

On 11 June 1615, she married [count palatine John Casimir of Palatinate-Zweibrücken](#). Five of their children survived infancy:

- [Christina Magdalena](#) (1616–1662); married [Frederick VI, Margrave of Baden-Durlach](#). [King Adolf Frederick of Sweden](#) was her great-grandson
- [King Charles X Gustav of Sweden](#) (1622–1660)
- [Maria Eufrosyne](#) (1625–1687); married [Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie](#)
- [Eleonora Catherine](#) (1626–1692); married [Frederick, Landgrave of Hesse-Eschwege](#), and mother of [Juliana of Hesse-Eschwege](#).
- [Adolf John](#) (1629–1689)

Charles X Gustav of Sweden

Charles X Gustav ([Swedish](#): *Karl X Gustav*) (8 November 1622 – 13 February 1660) was [King of Sweden](#) from 1654 until his death. He was the son of [John Casimir](#), [Count Palatine of Zweibrücken-Kleeburg](#) and [Catharina of Sweden](#). After his father's death he also succeeded him as [Pfalzgraf](#). He was married to [Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein-Gottorp](#), who bore his son and successor, [Charles XI](#). Charles X Gustav was the second [Wittelsbach](#) king of Sweden after the childless king [Christopher of Bavaria](#) (1441–1448) and he was the first king of the Swedish *Caroline era*, which had its peak during the end of the reign of his son, [Charles XI](#).

Charles X King of Sweden



Heir to the throne

In his early childhood raised in the Swedish court alongside [Queen Kristina](#) he got an excellent civil education. Later Charles X learnt the art of war under [Lennart Torstenson](#), being present at the second [Battle of Breitenfeld \(1642\)](#) and at [Jankowitz](#) (1645). From 1646 to 1648 he frequented the Swedish court, supposedly as a prospective husband of his cousin the queen regnant, [Christina of Sweden](#) (1626–89, reigned 1632–54), but her insurmountable objection to wedlock put an end to these anticipations, and to compensate her cousin for a broken half-promise she declared him her successor in 1649.

Early days as King

The beginning of Charles X's reign concentrated on the healing of domestic discords and on the rallying of all the forces of the nation round his standard for a new policy of conquest. He contracted a political marriage on October 24, 1654 with [Hedwig Eleonora](#), the daughter of [Frederick III, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp](#), by way of securing a future ally against [Denmark](#).

War on Poland

On July 10, 1655, Charles X left Sweden to engage in a war against Poland, in what became the Second (or Little) [Northern War](#) (1655-1660). By the time war was declared he had at his disposal 50,000 men and 50 warships. Hostilities had already begun with the occupation of [Dünaburg](#) in [Polish Livonia](#) by the Swedes on July 1, 1655, and the Polish army encamped among the marshes of the Netze concluded a convention on 25 July, whereby the palatinates of [Poznań](#) and [Kalisz](#) placed themselves under the protection of the Swedish King. Thereupon the

Swedes entered Warsaw without opposition and occupied the whole of [Greater Poland](#). The Polish king, [John II Casimir of Poland](#) (1648–68) of the [House of Vasa](#), fled to [Silesia](#).

In the beginning of 1656 King John II Casimir returned from exile and the reorganised Polish army increased in numbers. Charles's retreat from Jarosław to [Warsaw](#), with the fragments of his host - amidst three converging armies, in a marshy forest region intersected in every direction by well-guarded rivers - is considered one of his most brilliant achievements. But on June 21, 1656 the Poles retook Warsaw, and four days later Charles was obliged to purchase the assistance of [Frederick William I](#), by the treaty of [Marienburg](#) (23 June 1656). On 28 July–30 the combined Swedes and Brandenburgers, 18,000 strong, after a three days' [battle](#), defeated John II's army of 40,000 at Warsaw and reoccupied the Polish capital. However, this feat of arms did not have the desired result for Charles, and when Frederick William compelled the Swedish king to open negotiations with the Poles, they refused the terms offered, the war resumed, and Charles concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the elector of Brandenburg ([Treaty of Labiau](#), November 20, 1656) which stipulated that Frederick William and his heirs should henceforth possess the full sovereignty of [East Prussia](#).

War on Denmark

Charles X. Engraving after a painting by [David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl](#)

Labiau involved an essential modification of Charles's Baltic policy; but the alliance with the elector of Brandenburg had now become indispensable for him on almost any terms. The difficulties of Charles X in Poland are believed to have caused him to receive the tidings of the Danish declaration of war on June 1, 1657 with extreme satisfaction. He had learnt from Torstensson that Denmark was most vulnerable if attacked from the south, and he attacked Denmark with a velocity which paralysed resistance. At the end of June 1657, at the head of 8,000 seasoned veterans, he broke up from *Bromberg* [Bydgoszcz](#) south of [Pomerania](#) and reached the borders of [Holstein](#) on 18 July. The Danish army dispersed and the Swedes recovered the [duchy of Bremen](#). In the early autumn Charles's troops swarmed over [Jutland](#) and firmly established themselves in the duchies. But the fortress



of [Fredriksodde](#) ([Fredericia](#)) held Charles's smaller army at bay from mid-August to mid-October, while the fleet of Denmark, after two days' battle, compelled the Swedish fleet to abandon its projected attack on the Danish islands. But soon another and cheaper expedient presented itself. In the middle of December 1657 began the great frost, which would prove so fatal to Denmark. In a few weeks the cold had grown so intense that the freezing of an arm of the sea with so rapid a current as the [Small Belt](#) became a conceivable possibility; and henceforth meteorological observations formed an essential part of the strategy of the Swedes.

March across the Belts

The crossing of the [Great Belt](#)



On January 28, 1658, Charles X arrived at [Haderslev](#) in South Jutland. His meteorologists estimated that in a couple of days the ice of the Little Belt would become firm enough to bear even the passage of a mail-clad host. The cold during the night of 29 January became most severe; and early in the morning of the 30th the Swedish king gave the order

to start, the horsemen dismounting on the weaker spots of ice and cautiously leading their horses as far apart as possible, until they swung into their saddles again, closed their ranks and made a dash for the shore. Swedish arms quickly overpowered the Danish troops lining the opposite coast and won the whole of Funen with the loss of only two companies of cavalry, which disappeared under the ice while fighting with the Danish left wing. Pursuing his march, Charles X, with his eyes fixed steadily on [Copenhagen](#), resolved to cross the frozen [Great Belt](#) also. However, he accepted the advice of his chief engineer officer [Erik Dahlberg](#), who acted as pioneer throughout and chose the more circuitous route from Svendborg, by the islands of [Langeland](#), [Lolland](#) and [Falster](#), in preference to the direct route from Nyborg to Korsør, which would have had to cross a broad, almost uninterrupted expanse of ice. A council of war, which met at two o'clock in the morning to consider the practicability of Dahlberg's proposal, dismissed it as hazardous. Even the king wavered; but when Dahlberg persisted in his opinion, Charles overruled the objections of the commanders. On the night of 5 February the transit began, the cavalry leading the way through the snow-covered ice, which quickly thawed beneath the horses' hoofs so that the infantry which followed after had to wade through half an ell of sludge, facing the risk that the ice would break beneath their feet. At three o'clock in the afternoon, with Dahlberg leading the way, the army reached Grimsted in Lolland without losing a man; on 8 February, Charles reached Falster. On 11 February he stood safely on the soil of [Zealand](#). Sweden had achieved a rare war exploit, in Sweden considered to be matched only by the crusade of the [Livonian Order](#) led by [William of Modena](#) to conquer [Saaremaa](#) ([Osel](#)) in January 1227 and afterwards when two Russian armies crossed the frozen [Gulf of Bothnia](#) from Finland to mainland Sweden in March during the [Finnish War](#).

Charles X Gustav died on the night of February 13, 1660, at the age of 37.

Family

Charles X had one legitimate child by [Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein-Gottorp](#): his successor [Charles XI](#) (1655 - 1697, reigned 1660 - 1697).

Charles XI of Sweden

Charles XI ([Swedish](#): *Karl XI*, 24 November 1655^{old style} – 5 April 1697^{old style}^[1]) was [King of Sweden](#) from [1660](#) until his death, in an unruly period in [Swedish history](#) known as the [Swedish empire](#) (1611–1718).

Charles XI in his coronation outfit. Painting by [David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl](#), circa [1690](#)



Charles was the only son of King [Charles X of Sweden](#) and [Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein-Gottorp](#). His father died when he was five years old, so Charles was educated by his governors until his coronation at the age of seventeen. Soon after, he was forced out on military expeditions to secure the recently acquired [dominions](#) from [Danish](#) troops in the [Scanian War](#). Having successfully fought off the Danes, he returned to [Stockholm](#) and engaged in correcting the country's neglected political, financial and economic situation, managing to sustain peace during the remaining 20 years of his reign. Changes in finance, commerce, national maritime and land armaments, judicial procedure, church government and education emerged during this period.^[2] Charles XI was succeeded by his only son [Charles XII](#), who made use of the well-trained army in battles throughout Europe.

Under guardian rule

Charles at the age of five, dressed as a Roman emperor. Painting by [Ehrenstrahl](#)

Charles was born in the [Stockholm Palace Tre Kronor](#) in November 1655. His father [Charles X of Sweden](#) had left Sweden in July to fight in the [war against Poland](#). After several years of warfare, the king returned in the winter of 1659 and gathered his family and the [Riksdag of the Estates](#) in [Gothenburg](#). In mid-January 1660 he fell ill and one month later he wrote down his last will and died.^[4]



Scanian war

The situation in Europe was shaky during this time and Sweden was going through financial problems. The guardians of Charles XI decided to negotiate an alliance with [France](#) in 1671. This would ensure that Sweden would not be isolated in case of a war, and that the national finances would improve thanks to French [subsidies](#).^[13] France directed its aggression against the [Dutch](#) in 1672, and by the spring of 1674, Sweden was forced to take part by directing forces towards [Germany](#), under the lead of [Karl Gustav Wrangel](#).^[14]

[Denmark](#) was an ally of Germany, and it was evident that Sweden was on the verge to yet another war against Denmark. An attempted remedy was made by chancellor [Nils Brahe](#), who traveled to Copenhagen, in the spring of 1675, to try to get the Danish princess [Ulrika Eleonora](#) engaged to the Swedish king. In mid-June 1675, the engagement was officially proclaimed. However, when news arrived about the Swedish defeat in the [Battle of Fehrbellin](#), Danish king [Christian V](#) declared war on Sweden in September.^[15]

The [Swedish Privy Council](#) continued its internal feuds, and the king was forced to rule without them.^[16] The 20-year old king was inexperienced and considered ill-served amidst what has been called the [anarchy](#) in the nation and dedicated the autumn in his newly-formed camp in [Scania](#) to arm the Swedish nation for battle in the [Scanian War](#). The Swedish soldiers in Scania were outnumbered and outequipped by the Danes and, in May 1676, these invaded Scania, taking [Landskrona](#), [Helsingborg](#), and proceeded through [Bohuslän](#) towards [Halmstad](#). The King had to grow up quickly: he suddenly found himself alone and under great pressure.^{[2][17]}

Charles XI at the [Battle of Lund](#) in 1676



Charles XI at the battle of Lund, by Johan Philip Lemke

The victory at the [Battle of Halmstad](#) (17 August 1676), when Charles and his [commander-in-chief Simon Grundel-Helmfelt](#) defeated a Danish division, was the king's first gleam of good luck. Charles then continued south through Scania and arrived on the [tableland](#) of the flooded [Kävlinge River](#) – near [Lund](#) – on November 11. The Danish army commanded by Christian V were positioned on the other side. It was impossible to cross the river and Charles had to wait for weeks until it froze. On 4 December the river froze and Charles launched a surprise attack on the Danish forces to fight the [Battle of Lund](#).^[2] This battle was one of the bloodiest engagements of modern times. More than half the combatants (8,357, of whom 3,000 were Swedes) perished on the battlefield.^{[2][18][19]} All the Swedish commanders showed ability, but the chief glory of the day was attributed to Charles XI and his fighting spirit. The battle proved to be a decisive one for the rule of the [Scanian lands](#) and it has been described as the most significant event for Charles' personality; Charles commemorated this date for the rest of his life.^{[20][21]}

Battle of Landskrona: Painting by Johan Philip Lemke

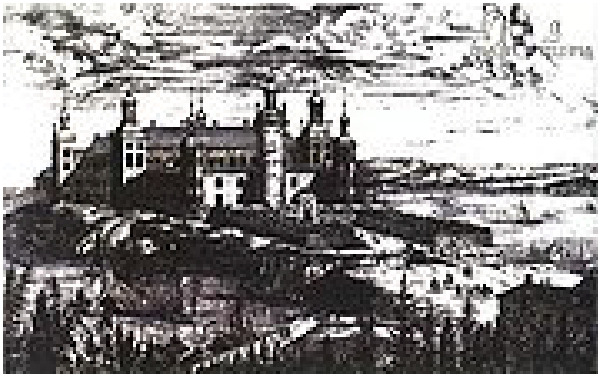


In the following year, 9,000 men lead by Charles routed 12,000 Danes at the [Battle of Landskrona](#). This proved to be the last [pitched battle](#) of the war because, in September 1678, Christian V evacuated his army back to [Zealand](#). In 1679, [Louis XIV of France](#) dictated the terms of a general pacification, and Charles XI, who is said to have bitterly resented "the insufferable tutelage" of the French king, was forced at last to acquiesce in a peace that managed to leave his [empire](#) practically intact.^[2]

Post-war actions

Charles devoted the rest of his life avoiding further warfare by gaining larger independence in foreign affairs, while he also promoted the economy stabilization and a reorganization of the military. His remaining 20 years at the throne were the longest peace time of the [Swedish Empire](#) (1611–1718).^[22]

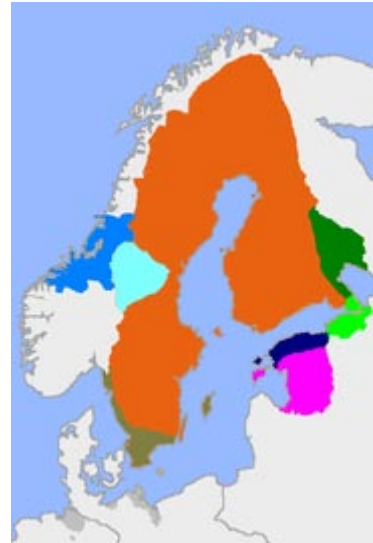
Financial restoration










[Läckö Castle](#), one of many mansions reclaimed by the Crown. Engraving from circa 1700 in [Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna](#)

Sweden's weak economy had suffered during the war and was

now in a deep crisis. Here, the king finally pushed through the [reduction](#) ordeal, something that had been discussed in the Riksdag since 1650. It meant that any land or object previously owned by the crown and lent or given away — including counties, baronies and [lordships](#) — could be recovered. It affected many prominent persons of the nobility class, some of which were ruined. One of them was the former guardian and [Lord Chief Justice Magnus De La Gardie](#), who among many other estates had to return the extravagant 248-room large [Läckö Castle](#).^[26] The reduction process involved the examination of every title deed in the kingdom — including the [dominions](#) — and it resulted in the complete readjustment of the nation's finances.^{[27][28][29]}



Assimilation of the newest dominions

The [Swedish Empire](#) at the time:  [Kexholm](#)  [Ingria](#)  [Estonia](#)  [Livonia](#)  [Swedish Pomerania](#), [D Bremen](#) and [P Verden](#)  [Scania](#), [Gotland](#) and [Bohuslän](#)  [Jämtland](#), [Härjedalen](#), [Idre](#) and [Särna](#)

Queen Ulrika Eleonora, Charles' wife



On 6 May, 1680, Charles married [Ulrike Eleonora](#) (1656–1693), daughter of King [Frederick III of Denmark](#) (1609-1670). She gave birth to seven children, of which only three outlived Charles:

- [Charles XII](#) (1682-1718), his only son and future king,
- [Hedwig Sophia](#) (1681-1708), duchess of [Holstein-Gottorp](#) and grandmother of [Tsar Peter III](#), and
- [Ulrika Eleonora](#) ("the younger", 1688-1741)

Charles XI died on 5 April, 1697, in his forty-first year. An autopsy showed cancer had spread through the entire [abdominal cavity](#).

Ulrika Eleonora of Denmark

Ulrika Eleonora of Denmark (11 September 1656 – 26 July 1693) was the [Queen consort of Sweden](#) as the spouse of King [Charles XI of Sweden](#).

[Queen consort of Sweden](#)



The name *Ulrike* is a [Danish](#) version of the name; in [Swedish](#) she is called **Ulrika Eleonora den äldre**, which in [English](#) means **Ulrika Eleonora the Elder**), to separate her from her daughter, the future queen regnant.

Background

She was the daughter of King [Frederick III of Denmark](#) and his wife Queen [Sophie Amalie of Brunswick-Lüneburg](#). On 6 May 1680, she married to King [Charles XI of Sweden](#). She had seven children, of whom only three survived her, a son Charles, and two daughters, Hedvig Sofia and Ulrika Eleonora. She was promised to Charles XI in 1675. During the [Scanian War](#) between Denmark and Sweden 1675–1679 she was encouraged to break the engagement, and was considered

as a possible bride by the Holy Roman Emperor, [Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor](#), but she refused to break the engagement. She gained a reputation for exhibiting kindness to Swedish prisoners during the war: she pawned her jewelry, even her engagement ring, to care for the Swedish prisoners of war.

Life as queen

Ulrika Eleonora was described as beautiful and kind and was received with enthusiasm among the public in Stockholm and Sweden, mainly because she was seen upon like a hope for peace between the two countries. According to legend, her spouse was never unfaithful to her, which was unusual for a king during this era; when he died, he told his mother he had not been happy since his wife died. However, he was also said to have been by nature cold and unable to show her the love he felt for her, and above all, he was forever under the strong influence of his mother, [Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein-Gottorp](#), who never surrendered the position of queen to her daughter-in-law. While the suspiciousness between Denmark and Sweden caused by the [Scanian War](#) still remained, Hedwig Eleonora (and also the Government) was never fond of the son's idea to marry a Danish princess. Possibly to please them and show that she had no influence over him, the king always simply referred to Ulrika Eleonora as "My wife" and called his mother "The Queen". Aware of this, the foreign ambassadors, when paying their respects to

the members of the Royal family, always visited Hedwig Eleonora first, and then Ulrika Eleonora.

She once tried to get some political influence over her spouse. During 'The Great Reversion' to the Crown of [counties](#), [baronies](#) and large [lordships](#) from the nobility (most of them richly given away by [Queen Christina](#)), she tried to speak on the behalf of the people whose property was confiscated by the government, but the king simply told her that the reason he had married her was not that he wanted her political advice. She then quietly helped the most poor people whose property had been confiscated by secretly compensating them economically from her own budget. She was most known for her great activity within charity; she founded a large number of orphanages, poor-houses, work-houses, widow-houses, schools to teach poor people professions and other such institutions, and in that aspect, she had some political influence in society. Her most well known projects was Drottninghuset (English: The Queenhouse) a home for poor widows in Stockholm (1686), and the [tapestry](#) school at Karlberg, where poor girls were educated to tapestry manufacturing by three unmarried Finnish noblewomen. She supported a large amount of people from her personal budget, such as invalid soldiers and their spouses, converts to Protestantism from Judaism, Islam and Catholicism (especially female converts).

In 1690, her spouse named her as possible regent if he should die during his son's minority. Her health, however, declined due to frequent childbirth, and she died three years later, after having spent the winter of 1692-93 in bed. Only after her death, her spouse referred to her as queen.

There is an old legend about her death. When the Queen lay dead on Karlberg, her favourite lady-in-waiting, Countess Maria Elisabeth Stenbock, lay sick in Stockholm. During the night, Stenbock nevertheless visited Karlberg and was admitted alone to the room containing the remainings of the Queen. The officer in charge, looked in to the key hole, and saw the Countess and the Queen speaking at the window of the room. He was so choked by the sight that he



started coughing blood. The Countess, as well as the carriage she had arrived with, was gone the next moment. When the matter was investigated, it was made clear that the Countess had been in bed, gravely ill the day and not left town. The officer died of the shock he received from the sight, and the Countess also died weeks later. The King gave the order that the affair was not to be mentioned further.

Ulrika Eleonor's coffin in [Riddarholm Church](#).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_XII_of_Sweden

Charles XII of Sweden

Charles XII [Swedish](#): *Karl XII* ([Latinized](#) to **Carolus Rex** "King Charles") ([17 June 1682](#) – [30 November 1718](#)) was the [King of Sweden](#) from 1697 to 1718.

Charles was the only surviving son of King [Charles XI of Sweden](#) and [Ulrika Eleonora the Elder](#), and he assumed the crown at the age of fifteen, at the death of his father.

Charles XII King of Sweden



He left the country three years later to embark on a series of battles overseas. These battles were part of the [Great Northern War](#) and many of them were fought against [Peter I of Russia](#), [Saxony](#), [Denmark-Norway](#), [Russia](#) joined in a coalition to attack [Sweden](#), starting what would later be known as the [Great Northern War](#).

Charles XII was a skilled military leader and tactician. However, although he was also skilled as a politician, his willingness in making peace were lacking. Charles is quoted by [Voltaire](#) as saying upon the outbreak of the Great Northern War, "I have resolved never to start an unjust war but never to end a legitimate one except by defeating my enemies." Although Sweden achieved several large scale military successes early on, and won the most battles, the Great Northern War eventually ended in Sweden's defeat and end of the [Swedish Empire](#).

Early campaigns

In 1700, Denmark-Norway, Saxony, and Russia united in an alliance against Sweden, using the perceived opportunity as Sweden was ruled by the young and inexperienced King. Early that year, all three countries declared war against Sweden. Charles had to deal with these threats one by one.

Charles's first campaign was against [Denmark-Norway](#), ruled by his cousin [Frederick IV of Denmark](#), which threatened a Swedish ally, Charles' brother-in-law [Frederick IV of Holstein-Gottorp](#). For this campaign Charles secured the support of [England](#) and [the Netherlands](#), both maritime powers concerned about Denmark's threats to close [the Sound](#). Leading a force of 8,000 and 43 ships in an invasion of [Zealand](#), Charles rapidly compelled the Danes to submit to the [Peace of Travendal](#) in August 1700, which indemnified Holstein.

Having defeated Denmark-Norway, King Charles turned his attention upon the two other powerful neighbors, King [August II](#) of [Poland](#) (cousin to both Charles XII and Frederick IV of Denmark-Norway) and [Peter the Great](#) of [Russia](#), who also had entered the war against him.

The Swedish Victory at Narva by [Gustaf Cederström](#)



Russia had opened their part of the war by invading the Swedish-held territories of [Livonia](#) and [Estonia](#). Charles countered this by attacking the Russian besiegers at the [Battle of Narva](#). The Swedish army of ten thousand men was outnumbered four to one by the Russians. Charles attacked under cover of a blizzard, effectively split the Russian army in two and won the battle. Many of Peter's troops that fled the battlefield drowned in the [Narva River](#), and the total number of Russian fatalities reached about 17,000 at the end of

the battle, while the Swedish troop lost 667 men.

Charles did not pursue the Russian army. Instead, he then turned against [Poland-Lithuania](#), which was formally neutral at this point, thereby disregarding Polish negotiation proposals supported by the Swedish parliament. Charles defeated the Polish king [Augustus II](#) and his [Saxon](#) allies at the [Battle of Kliszow](#) in 1702 and captured many cities of the Commonwealth. After the deposition of the king of the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#), Charles XII put [Stanisław Leszczyński](#) on the throne.

Part of the Monument to Charles XII in Stockholm
with Charles pointing towards Russia



Charles XII and [Mazepa](#) at the [Dnieper River](#)
after the [Poltava](#) by [Gustaf Cederström](#).



Russian resurgence

While Charles won several battles in the Commonwealth, the Russian Tsar [Peter the Great](#) embarked on a military reform plan that improved the Russian army. Russian forces managed to retake [Ingria](#) and established a new city [Saint Petersburg](#) there. This prompted Charles to attack the Russian heartland with an assault on [Moscow](#), allying himself with [Ivan Mazepa](#), [Hetman](#) of

the [Ukrainian Cossacks](#). The size of the invading Swedish army altogether was 77 400 men. Charles left the homeland, with a defense of approximately 28 800 men.

The Battle of Poltava by [Denis Martens the Younger](#)



By the time of the decisive [Battle of Poltava](#), Charles had been wounded, one-third of his infantry was dead, and his supply train was destroyed. The king was incapacitated by a coma resulting from his injuries and was unable to lead the Swedish forces. The battle was a disaster, and the king fled with a small entourage

south to the [Ottoman Empire](#), where he set up camp at [Bender](#) with about 1,000 men who were called [Caroleans](#) ("Karoliner" in Swedish). The Swedish defeat at Poltava is considered by some historians to be the point where the downfall of the [Swedish Empire](#) started and the [Russian Empire](#) started to rise.

Battle of Poltava: a fragment of the great mosaic
by [Mikhail Lomonosov](#)

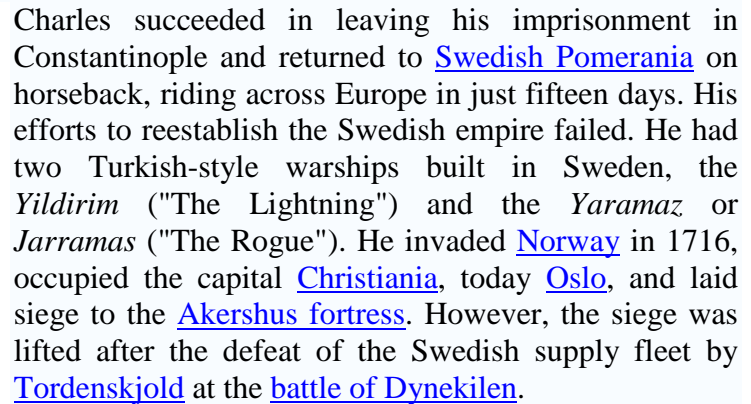
Exile in the Ottoman Empire

The [Turks](#) initially welcomed the Swedish king, who managed to incite a war between the Ottomans and the Russians. His expenses during his long stay in the [Ottoman Empire](#) were covered from the Ottoman state budget, as part of the fixed assets (*Demirbaş* in Turkish), hence his nickname *Demirbaş Şarl* (Fixed Asset Charles) in Turkey. *Demirbaş*, the Turkish word for fixed asset, is literally *ironhead* (*demir* = iron, *baş* = head), which is the reason why this nickname has often been translated as *Ironhead Charles*.



However, the sultan [Ahmed III](#)'s subjects in the empire eventually got tired of Charles' scheming and they besieged the [Topkapi Palace](#) and this uprising was called "kalabalik" (Crowd) which after this event found a place in Swedish lexicon as "kalabalik" referring to uprising. The [Janissaries](#) did not shoot Charles during the [skirmish at Bender](#), but captured him and put him under house-arrest in [Constantinople](#). During his imprisonment the King played chess and studied the [Turkish navy](#).

The skirmish as depicted in 1894



The funeral transport of Charles XII. A romanticized painting by [Gustaf Cederström](#), 1884



Ulrika Eleonora of Sweden

Ulrika Eleonora (1688 – 1741), also known as **Ulrika Eleonora the Younger**, was [Queen regnant](#) of [Sweden](#) from 1718 to 1720, and then [Queen consort](#) until her death.

Ulrika Eleonora Queen of Sweden



She was the youngest child of King [Charles XI](#) and Queen [Ulrika Eleonora the Elder](#) and named after her mother. After the death of her brother King [Charles XII](#) in 1718, she claimed the throne.

Princess and regent

Ulrika Eleonora lived most of her life under the shadow of others, outshone by her brother the king, and by her beautiful sister, who was her brother's informal heir. A princess and spinster, she took care of her dominating grandmother, [Hedwig Eleonora of Holstein-Gottorp](#), during her brother's absence in the [Great Nordic War](#). During this period, her older sister, Princess [Hedvig Sophia of Sweden](#), Duchess of Holstein-Gottorp, was the heir to the throne.

Her situation began to change after the death of her older sister in 1708. As her brother refused to marry, and as she was the only royal representative in Sweden, she was in 1713 named as regent during the king's absence by the government and by her grandmother, and thus became the puppet to many powers struggling for influence in a country without a real heir.

Queen regnant

In 1715 she had married [Landgrave Frederick I](#) of [Hesse-Kassel](#), whose counsel she constantly sought in political matters. He had strong ambitions, and aided her in her way to the throne. When her brother the king was killed in 1718, the "Hesse-party", as they were called, secured Ulrika Eleonora's succession to the throne before her nephew, the duke of Holstein-Gottorp. They managed to secure the support of the opposition, who wanted to abolish the [absolute monarchy](#) from 1680 and reinstate the rule of the parliament. Her reign took place in the middle of the last years of the Great Nordic War.

Queen Ulrika Eleonora died of [smallpox](#) in 1741 after a childless marriage.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_I_of_Sweden

Frederick I of Sweden

Frederick I (**Swedish:** *Fredrik I*) ([23 April 1676](#) – [25 March 1751](#)) was [King of Sweden](#) from 1720 and [Landgrave](#) of [Hesse-Kassel](#) from 1730 until his death.

Frederick I, King of Sweden
Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel



He was the son of [Charles I, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel](#), and Princess [Maria Amalia of Courland](#).

In 1692 the young prince made his [Grand Tour](#) to the Dutch Republic, in 1695 to Italy and later he studied in [Geneva](#).

After this he had a military career, leading the Hessian troops as Lieutenant General in the [War of Spanish Succession](#) on the side of the Dutch.

He was defeated in 1703 in the [Battle of Speyerbach](#), but participated the next year in the great victory in the [Battle of Blenheim](#). In 1706 he was again defeated by the French in the [Battle of Castiglione](#).

Both in 1716 and 1718 he joined the campaign of [Charles XII of Sweden](#) against Norway, and was appointed Swedish [Generalissimus](#).



Battle of Blenheim *The Duke of Marlborough Signing the Despatch at Blenheim.*

Oil by [Robert Alexander Hillingford](#)

King of Sweden

He married his second wife, Princess [Ulrika Eleonora of Sweden](#), in 1715. He served as [prince consort](#) of [Sweden](#) during Ulrika Eleonora's rule as [Queen regnant](#) from 1718 until her abdication in 1720, when he succeeded her on the throne. Making him the only king of Sweden to also have been prince consort, and the only prince consort of Sweden.

As a king, he was not very respected. When he was crowned, it was said; *"King Charles we recently buried, King Frederick we crown - suddenly the clock has now passed from twelve to one"*. It is said about him, that although a lot of great achievements in the country's development happened during his reign, he never had anything to with them himself; when he died, Carl Gustaf Tessin said about him; *"Under the reign of King Frederick, the science has developed - he never bothered to read a book. The merchant business has flourished - he has never encouraged it with a single coin. The castle has been built - he has never been curious enough to look at it."*, and neither did he have anything to do with the fact that the first Swedish speaking theater was founded at [Bollhuset](#) during his reign. One of his few important policies was the banning of [duels](#).

Family and issue

On [May 31, 1700](#), he married his first wife, [Louise Dorothea](#), Princess of [Prussia](#) (1680–1705), daughter of [Frederick I of Prussia](#) (1657–1713) and [Elizabeth Henrietta of Hesse-Kassel](#) (1661–1683). His first marriage was childless.

His second wife, whom he married in 1715, was [Ulrika Eleonora](#), Princess of [Sweden](#), (1688–1741), daughter of [Charles XI of Sweden](#) (1655–1697) and of [Ulrike Eleonora of Denmark](#) (1656–1693). This marriage was also childless.

Frederick I had three illegitimate children with his mistress [Hedvig Taube](#):

- [Frederick William von Hessenstein](#) (1735–1808).
- [Charles Edward von Hessenstein](#) (1737–1769).
- [Hedwig Amalia](#) (1743–1752).

After the death of Hedvig Taube, his official mistress was the noblewoman [Catharina Ebba Horn](#), whom he gave the title and recognition of German-Roman Countess (1745–1748).

Thus, the Hessian line in Sweden ended with him and was followed by that of [Holstein-Gottorp](#). In [Hesse-Kassel](#), he was succeeded by his younger brother [William VIII](#), a famous general.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margareta_Eriksdotter_\(Vasa\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margareta_Eriksdotter_(Vasa))

Margareta Eriksdotter Vasa

Margareta Eriksdotter (Vasa), also called *Margareta Vasa* and *Margareta of Hoya*, (1497-31 December 1536), was a Swedish noble, sister of king [Gustav I of Sweden](#).

Margareta was born to [Erik Johansson](#) and [Cecilia Månsdotter](#). She was married to Joakim Brahe 30 March 1516. In 1520, her husband and father were executed at the [Stockholm bloodbath](#). Margareta, as well as her mother, her sisters and her grandmother, belonged to the women taken prisoner to Denmark with the former regent, her aunt [Christina Gyllenstierna](#), and was imprisoned in the feared [Blue Tower](#) in [Copenhagen](#). There, several of them, among them Margareta's mother and sisters, died of the plague.

Margareta Eriksdotter Vasa, painted by Hillebrandt 1528



In 1524, Margareta was released and returned to Sweden, where her brother was now king. The 15 January 1525, she married the German count Johan of Hoya and Brockenhusen. She had also inherited the estate [Rydboholm Castle](#) after her father. In 1528-29, she visited Germany and [Lübeck](#). At her return, she and Wulf Gyl were held captive by mayor Nils Arvidsson in [Jönköping](#), during a rebellion which broke out at this point. Margareta and her husband eventually came at odds with the king. The queen, [Catherine of Saxe-Lauenburg](#), is said to have slandered the king before them. In 1534, they broke with the king and left for Germany.

Margareta became a widow in 1535, when Hoya died after having participated in the so called [Count's Feud](#) in Denmark. She did not return to Sweden, as she feared that her brother would hurt her children. The king wrote several letters and asked her to return. She died in [Tallinn](#) in [Estonia](#).

Barn:

1. [Per Brahe dä](#) (1520 - 1590)
2. [Brita Joakimsdotter Brahe](#) gm. [Birger Nilsson \(Grip\)](#)
3. [Öllegård Joakimsdotter Brahe](#) (- 1527)
4. Mauritz Brahe

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Per_Brahe_the_Elder

Per Brahe the Elder

Per Brahe the elder (1520 – 1590) Swedish statesman.

Brahe was the nephew of King [Gustavus Vasa](#) and was among the first members of the [Swedish nobility](#) to be created a [count](#) when titles of nobility were introduced by King [Eric XIV](#) on the occasion of his coronation in 1561. Count Peter's county was [Visingsborg](#). He had been member of the [Privy Council of Sweden](#) and Governor of [Stockholm Castle](#) from 1540. At the accession of King [John III](#), he was appointed the [Lord High Justiciar of Sweden](#) (*riksdrot*) and Governor of [Norrland](#) as well as Governor of Stockholm Castle again.

He was the father of [Erik Brahe](#) (1552-1614), [Gustaf Brahe](#) (1558-1615) and [Magnus Brahe](#) (1564-1633), and the grandfather of [Per Brahe the younger](#) (1602-1680).



Dacke-fight

Gustaf Vasa's force at the time of the Dacke-fight



Dacke-fight is named after [Nils Dacke](#), a farmer and agitator in [Småland](#). In this area during the 1500s the farmers were dissatisfied with [Gustav Vasa's](#) taxes and his churchpolitics

Children with Beata Stenbock:

1. [Joakim Brahe d y](#) (1550—1567)
2. [Erik Pedersson Brahe](#) (1552—1614)
3. [Ebba Pedersdotter Brahe](#) (1555—1634)
4. [Gustav Pedersson Brahe](#) (1558—1615)
5. [Magnus Pedersson Brahe](#) (1564—1633)
6. [Abraham Pedersson Brahe](#) (1569—1630)
7. [Margareta Pedersdotter Brahe](#) (...—1638)
8. [Sigrid Pedersdotter Brahe](#) (...—1617)
9. [Katarina Pedersdotter Brahe](#)

Per Brahe the Younger

Count **Per Brahe** ([February 18, 1602](#) - [September 2, 1680](#)) was a [Swedish](#) soldier and statesman.

Per Brahe

Brahe was born on the island of [Rydboholm](#) in [Uppland](#), near [Stockholm](#). He was the grandson of [Per Brahe \(the elder\)](#) (1520-1590), one of [Gustavus Vasa's](#) [Privy Councillors](#), created count of [Visingsborg](#) by [Eric XIV of Sweden](#), known also as the [continuator](#) of [Peder Svart](#)'s chronicle of Gustavus, and author of *Oeconomia* in 1585, a manual for young noblemen. Per Brahe the younger, after completing his education by several years' travel abroad, became in 1626 chamberlain to [Gustavus Adolphus](#), whose lasting friendship he gained.



He fought with distinction in [Prussia](#) during the last three years of the [Polish War](#) (1626-1629) and also, as colonel of a regiment of horse, in 1630 in Germany. After the death of Gustavus Adolphus in 1632 his military yielded to his political activity. He had been elected president or [Lantmarskalk](#) at the [Riksdag](#) of 1629, and in the following year was created a [Privy Councillor](#). In 1635 he conducted the negotiations for an armistice with [Poland](#).

Per Brahe's statue in [Åbo](#), an earlier version is in [Brahestad](#).



In 1637-1640 and again in 1648-1654 he was [Governor General](#) in [Finland](#), to which country he rendered inestimable services by his wise and provident rule. He reformed the whole administration, introduced a postal system, founded ten new towns, improved and developed commerce and agriculture, and very greatly promoted education. In 1640 he opened the [University of Åbo](#), of which he was the founder, and first chancellor. Still today the expression "Kreivin aikaan", or "at Count's Time" in the [Finnish language](#) means "at the correct/good time". The base of his statue in [Turku](#) bears the inscription "I was well pleased with the land and the land with me".

After the death of [Charles X of Sweden](#) in 1660, Brahe, as *Rikskansler* or Chancellor of the Realm, became one

of the regents of Sweden for the second time (he had held a similar office during the minority of Christina, 1632-1644), and during the difficult year 1660 he had entire control of both foreign and domestic affairs. He died on [September 2, 1680](#), at his castle [Bogesund](#) in [Uppland](#). He also held the castles [Visingsborg](#) at [Visingsö](#) and [Brahehus](#) on the mainland by [Gränna](#), where during his lifetime he had held more than regal pomp.

The city of [Raahe](#) ([Swedish](#): *Brahestad*) is named after him.

Per Brahe statue and Brahestad church

Per Brahe married [Kristina Katarina Stenbock](#) (1609–1650)

Child:

1. [Elsa Beata Persdotter Brahe](#) (1629–1653)

[Kristina Katarina Stenbock](#) died in 1650 and was buried in [Brahekyrkan](#) on [Visingsö](#). Per remarried in [1653](#) with [Beata Johansdotter De la Gardie](#) (1612–1680)



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_of_Denmark

Hans of Denmark

Hans ([Danish](#), [Norwegian](#) and [Swedish](#)) (2 February 1455 – 20 February 1513), was union king of [Denmark](#) (1481 – 1513), [Norway](#) (1483 – 1513) [Sweden](#) (1497 – 1501), under the [Kalmar Union](#), and also Duke of [Schleswig](#) and [Holstein](#).

He was born on [February 2, 1455](#) as the son of [Christian I](#) and [Dorothea of Brandenburg](#), daughter of [Margrave Hans of Brandenburg](#). In 1478 he married [Christina of Saxony](#), granddaughter of [Frederick the Gentle](#) of [Saxony](#). This produced the following offspring: [Christian II](#), Franciscus, Knud, and Elisabeth, who later married as princess of Brandenburg. He died on [February 20, 1513](#).

King of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Wends and the Goths



The three most important political goals of King Hans seem to have been the recovery of the union, fight against the [Hanseatic League](#) and the making of a strong Danish royal power. He worked to obtain all three things during his reign.

Hans' father, king Christian I, in 1458 had the Norwegian [Council of the Realm](#) commit to electing Christian's eldest son as next king of Norway upon his death. A similar declaration was made in Sweden. In 1467, Hans was hailed as successor to the throne in Denmark. Hans used the title *heir* to the throne of Norway, in line with Norway's old status as a [hereditary kingdom](#), but this was a claim the Norwegian Council did not immediately recognise. A meeting between the Councils of Denmark, Sweden and Norway was appointed for [13 January 1483](#) at [Halmstad](#), to work out the terms for electing Hans as

king - his [håndfæstning](#). The Swedish Council failed to turn up at the meeting, but the Norwegian and Danish councils proceeded to produce a joint declaration containing the terms for Hans' rule, and electing him king. It was hoped that Sweden would later accept the same document, and also acknowledge Hans as king. Subsequently, Hans was crowned king of Denmark in [Copenhagen](#) on [18 May](#), and king of Norway in [Trondheim](#) on [20 July](#).

During the first years of his rule he carried on a balancing policy. By diplomatic means he tried to weaken the position of the Swedish regent [Sten Sture](#), and he also sought new allies – he was the first Danish king to have established a political co-operation with [Russia](#). After the 1493 treaty, [Ivan III of Russia](#) imprisoned all Hanseatic merchants trading in [Novgorod](#) and instigated the [Russo-Swedish War, 1496-1499](#). The Hanseatic cities were also troubled by a secret war by Danish privateers (a more modest Danish forerunner of the policy of Queen Elizabeth of England against Spain). At that time the position of the Hansabund was also slowly but steadily declining because of the changes in trade routes and the growing opposition against the Hanseatic League in the Northern European naval states.

Hans' domestic politics were marked by an economic support of the Danish merchants and by a widespread use of commoners as officials and even as councillors, something which angered the nobility. The most important of his initiatives was perhaps establishing a permanent Danish navy, one which came to play a role during his later years.

King Hans of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway



In 1497 Hans conquered Sweden during a short and effective military campaign after in advance having undermined the position of Sten Sture by winning most of the Swedish nobility. After the victory the king acted wisely and pardoned his enemies.

In 1500 he made a fatal attempt at conquering the Ditmarshes ([Dithmarschen](#)) in Northern Germany, an area which the kings of Denmark had long viewed as belonging to their realm, but which was in reality an independent peasant republic. Together with his brother Frederick he carried through a large-scale campaign based upon an army of German [mercenaries](#), but the Ditmarshers caught most of the army in a trap after having opened the dykes of the low-land area and flooded the narrow main road.

The defeat hurt Hans's prestige, and in 1501 Sweden renounced him as king. Hans fought an increasingly more bitter war against Sten Sture and his successor [Svante Nilsson](#), and this conflict meant frictions with both the Danish nobility and the Hanseatic cities, especially [Lübeck](#). In 1509, with [the Netherlands](#) acting as arbiters, Sweden agreed to a declaration which recognised Hans as king of Sweden in principle, but he was never allowed into Stockholm as long as he lived, nor crowned king of Sweden anew.

King Hans' gravestone in St. Knud's Church in Odense

After his son was deposed in 1522, Hans' blood returned to the Danish and Norwegian thrones in the person of [Christian IV of Denmark](#), the great-great-grandson of his daughter, Electress Elisabeth.



Christina of Saxony

Christina of Saxony (b. Torgau, [25 December 1461](#) - d. Odense, [8 December 1521](#)), was a Saxon Princess who became [Queen Consort](#) of [Denmark](#), [Norway](#), and [Sweden](#). She was born a granddaughter of [Frederick the Gentle](#) of [Saxony](#), and daughter of [Ernest, Elector of Saxony](#) and [Elisabeth of Bavaria-Munich](#).

Queen Consort of Denmark, Norway and Sweden



Biography

She was married to [Hans](#), King of [Denmark](#), [Norway](#) and [Sweden](#) on [6 September 1478](#). She became queen of Denmark in 1481, but was not crowned until 1483, when she had become queen of Norway also. She was Queen consort of Denmark and Norway from 1483 to 1513 and of Sweden from 1497 to 1501.

She was the mother of [Christian II](#), Francisus, Knud and [Elisabeth](#), who later married [Joachim I Nestor](#), Elector of Brandenburg.

In 1497, her husband was made king of Sweden. In 1499, Christina was crowned queen of Sweden in Uppsala. In 1500, Queen Christina was made regent in Sweden during her husband's absence from this country. This year meant a break in her marriage, when her husband became involved in a

relationship with her [lady-in-waiting](#), Edel Jernskæg. When a rebellion broke out in Sweden against Denmark and the union in 1501, Christina was besieged in the castle of [Tre Kronor](#) in [Stockholm](#). She surrendered on [9 May 1502](#), after the Danish soldiers had been reduced from 1,000 men to 70 by sickness and starvation. When she surrendered her position, she turned herself over to lady [Ingeborg Tott](#), who met her at the castle and followed her to a convent. She was taken prisoner by [Sten Sture the Elder](#) and held at [Vadstena Abbey](#) until the peace negotiations with her husband was completed in 1503, when she was released and returned to Denmark. In 1504, she travelled to pilgrimage to Germany, and also visited her daughter there. After her return to Denmark, she lived the rest of her life separated from her spouse and had her own court at Næsbyhoved. She was interested in art and music, and was a critical Catholic who wished for a reformation of the church and benefitted the order of Francisus and Saint Clare. She became a widow in 1513.

Christina of Saxony died in 1521, aged 59.

Christian II of Denmark

King of Denmark, Sweden and Norway



Christian II (1 July 1481 – 25 January 1559) was a Danish monarch and King of [Denmark](#), [Norway](#) (1513 – 1523) and [Sweden](#) (1520 – 1521), during the [Kalmar Union](#). Christian was born as the son of King [Hans of Denmark](#) and [Christina of Saxony](#), at Nyborg Castle in 1481 and succeeded his father as king and regent in Denmark and Norway.

Politics

Christian took part in [his father's](#) conquest of Sweden in 1497 and in the fighting of 1501 when Sweden revolted. He was appointed viceroy of Norway (1506 – 1512), and succeeded in maintaining control of this country. During his harsh^[2] administration in Norway, he attempted to deprive the Norwegian nobility of its traditional influence exercised through the [rigsraad](#) leading to controversy with the latter.

A peculiarity, more fatal to him in that aristocratic age than any other, was his fondness for the common people, which was increased by his passion for a pretty Norwegian girl of Dutch heritage, named [Dyveke Sigbritsdatter](#), who became his [mistress](#) in 1507 or 1509.

On 12 August 1515, Christian married [Isabella of Burgundy](#), the granddaughter of Holy Roman Emperor [Maximilian I](#). But he would not give up his liaison with Dyveke, and it was only the death of the unfortunate girl in 1517, under suspicious circumstances, that prevented serious complications with the emperor [Charles V](#).

Christian avenged himself by executing the magnate [Torben Oxe](#) despite his having been acquitted of the murder charges by the Privy Council. Oxe was brought to trial at Solbjerg outside Copenhagen in what amounted to a justice-of-the-peace court on vague offenses against his liege lord, Christian II. The verdict as directed by the king was guilty and the death sentence imposed with the comment, 'your deeds not your words have condemned you'.

Dyveke Sigbritsdatter and Christian II



Reconquest of Sweden

Christian was meanwhile preparing for the inevitable war with Sweden, where the patriotic party, headed by the freely elected Viceroy [Sten Sture the Younger](#), stood face to face with the pro-Danish party under Archbishop [Gustav Trolle](#).

Christian, who had already taken measures to isolate Sweden politically, hastened to the relief of the archbishop, who was beleaguered in his fortress of [Stäket](#), but was defeated by Sture and his peasant levies at Vedila and forced to return to Denmark. A second attempt to subdue Sweden in 1518 was also frustrated by Sture's victory at Brännkyrka. A third attempt made in 1520 with a large army of French, German and Scottish mercenaries proved successful.

Sture was mortally wounded at the [battle of Bogesund](#), on 19 January, and the Danish army, unopposed, was approaching [Uppsala](#), where the members of the [Swedish Privy Council](#), or *Riksråd*, had already assembled. The councillors consented to render homage to Christian on condition that he gave a full indemnity for the past and a guarantee that Sweden should be ruled according to Swedish laws and custom; and a convention to this effect was confirmed by the king and the Danish Privy Council on 31 March.

Sture's widow, Dame [Christina Gyllenstierna](#), still held out stoutly at [Stockholm](#), and the peasantry of central Sweden, roused by her patriotism, flew to arms, defeated the Danish invaders at Balundsås on 19 March, and were only with the utmost difficulty finally defeated at the bloody [battle of Uppsala](#), on [Good Friday](#), 6 April 1520.

In May the Danish fleet arrived, and Stockholm was invested by land and sea; but Dame Gyllenstierna resisted valiantly for four months longer and took care, when she surrendered on 7 September, to exact beforehand an amnesty of the most explicit and absolute character. On 1 November, the representatives of the nation swore fealty to Christian as [hereditary king](#) of Sweden, though the law of the land distinctly provided that the Swedish crown should be [elective](#).

Christian descended, through both [Valdemar I of Sweden](#) and [Magnus I of Sweden](#), from the Swedish [Dynasty of Eric](#), and from Catherine, daughter of [Inge I of Sweden](#), as well as from Ingrid Ylva, granddaughter of [Sverker I of Sweden](#). His rival [Gustav I of Sweden](#) descended only from [Sverker II of Sweden](#) and the [Dynasty of Sverker](#) (who apparently did not descend from ancient Swedish kings). Christian's ancestry included almost all ancient Swedish kings.

The Stockholm Bloodbath

Christian II with coats of arms of Norway, Denmark and Sweden



On 4 November, Christian was anointed by Gustavus Trolle in [Stockholm Cathedral](#), and took the usual oath to rule the [Realm](#) through native-born Swedes alone, according to prescription. The next three days were given up to banqueting, but on 7 November "an entertainment of another sort began." On the evening of that day Christian summoned his captains to a private conference at the palace, the result of which was quickly apparent, for at dusk a band of Danish soldiers, with lanterns and torches, broke into the great hall and carried off several carefully selected persons.

By 10 o'clock the same evening the remainder of the king's guests were safely under lock and key. All these persons had previously been marked down on Archbishop Trolle's proscription list. On the following day a council, presided over by Trolle, solemnly pronounced judgment of death on the proscribed, as manifest

heretics.

At 12 o'clock that night the patriotic bishops of [Skara](#) and [Strängnäs](#) were led out into the great square and beheaded. Fourteen noblemen, three burgomasters, fourteen town councillors and about twenty common citizens of Stockholm were then drowned or decapitated. The executions continued throughout the following day; in all, about eighty-two people are said to have been murdered.

Moreover, Christian ordered that [Sten Sture](#)'s body should be dug up and burnt, as well as the body of his little child. Dame Christina and many other noble Swedish ladies were sent as prisoners to Denmark. The massacre and deeds in the [Old Town of Stockholm](#) is the primary reason why Christian is remembered in Sweden, as *Christian the Tyrant* (*Kristian Tyrann*).

Downfall

Sweden, too, was now in open revolt; and both Norway and Denmark were taxed to the utmost to raise an army for the subjection of their sister kingdom. Foreign complications were now added to these domestic troubles. With the laudable objective of releasing Danish trade from the grinding yoke of the [Hanseatic League](#), and making [Copenhagen](#) the great emporium of the

north, Christian had arbitrarily raised the Sound tolls and seized a number of Dutch ships that presumed to evade the tax.

Thus, his relations with the Netherlands were strained, while he was openly at war with [Lübeck](#) and her allies. [Jutland](#) finally rose against him, renounced its allegiance, and offered the Danish crown to Christian's uncle, Duke [Frederick of Holstein](#), 20 January 1523. So overwhelming did Christian's difficulties appear that he took ship to seek help abroad, and on 1 May landed at [Veere](#) in Zeeland.

During the years of his exile, the king led a relatively humble life in the city of [Lier](#) in [the Netherlands](#), waiting for the military help of his reluctant imperial brother-in-law. In the meantime, he became regarded a social saviour in Denmark, where both the peasants and the commoners began to wish for his restoration. For some time, he even became a Protestant, but had to re-convert in order to gain the support of the Emperor.

Eight years later, on 24 October 1531, he attempted to recover his kingdoms, but a tempest scattered his fleet off the Norwegian coast, and on 1 July 1532, by the convention of Oslo, he surrendered to his rival, King Frederick, in exchange for a promise of safe conduct.

But King Frederick did not keep his promise, and King Christian was kept prisoner for the next 27 years, first in [Sønderborg Castle](#) until 1549, and afterwards at the castle of [Kalundborg](#).

Stories of solitary confinement in small dark chambers are inaccurate; King Christian was treated like a nobleman, particularly in his old age, and he was allowed to host parties, go hunting, and wander freely as long as he did not go beyond the boundaries of the town of Kalundborg. But he was still a prisoner, albeit a royal one, and his 27-year captivity is a major blemish upon the reputation of king Frederick I and his son. Christian II was never convicted of any crime.

His cousin, King [Christian III of Denmark](#), son of Frederick I, died in early 1559, and it was said that even then, with the old king nearing 80, people in Copenhagen looked warily towards Kalundborg. But king Christian II died peacefully just a few days later, and the new king, [Frederick II](#), ordered that a royal funeral be held in memory of his unhappy kinsman, who lies buried in [Odense](#) next to his wife and his parents.

Among the six children of Christian II, three must be mentioned. Prince Hans died a boy in exile in 1532. The two daughters Dorothea, Electress Palatine and [Christina, Duchess of Lorraine](#), both in turn, for many years, demanded in vain the Danish throne as their inheritance. Christian II's blood returned to the Swedish and Norwegian thrones in person of [Charles XV of Sweden](#), descendant of [Renata of Lorraine](#) {Ironically Charles XV was also a descendant of the rival [House of Vasa](#)}; and to the Danish throne in the person of [Christian X of Denmark](#). {Ironically Christian X brother King [Haakon VII](#) of Norway was also a descendant of Royal Houses of [Sweden](#) and [Denmark](#)}.

Isabella of Austria

Isabella of Austria (also known as **Isabella** or **Elisabeth of Burgundy, of Habsburg, or of Castile**) ([18 July 1501](#)–[19 January 1526](#)), [Archduchess](#) of [Austria](#), [Infanta](#) of [Castile](#) and [Princess](#) of [Burgundy](#) by birth and Queen of [Denmark](#), [Sweden](#) and [Norway](#) by her marriage to [King Christian II](#), was the daughter of [Philip I](#) and [Joanna](#) of [Castile](#) and the sister of [Emperor Charles V](#). She was born at [Brussels](#).

Queen consort of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway



Background

Isabella spent her childhood in the [Netherlands](#) under the tutorage of the regent of the Netherlands, [Margaret of Austria](#). Her fortune, her succession rights, and her connections made her a valuable pawn in the royal marriage market. The king of Denmark had first intended to marry [Eleanor of Austria](#), but the Habsburgs considered Eleanor too valuable for the throne of Denmark, and therefore, Isabella was selected for the Danish king.

On 11 July 1514 Isabella was married by proxy to King [Christian II of Denmark](#) with [Emperor Maximilian](#), her grandfather, standing in for the king. She remained in the Netherlands, but was said to have fallen in love with her spouse at the sight of his painting, and asked to be taken to Denmark. A year

after the wedding, the Archbishop of Norway was sent to escort her to [Copenhagen](#). The marriage was ratified on [12 August 1515](#).

Queen

Isabella was crowned Queen of Denmark and Norway and given the name *Elisabeth*, but the relationship between her new family and king Christian was quite cool during the first years of the marriage. The King's Dutch mistress, [Dyveke Sigbrietsdatter](#), had been with him since 1507, and he was not about to give her up for a teenager. Dyvekes mother [Sigbrit Willoms](#), was also influential at court, and Isabella was given less influence than both of them. This angered the Emperor, and caused some diplomatic strife between him and King Christian, but the matter was resolved when Dyveke died in 1517, and Isabella's relationship with her husband improved vastly over the next few years; her relationship with Sigrit Willoms improved as well, and both women acted as political advisors to the king.

In 1520, Christian took the throne of Sweden, thereby making Isabella Queen of Sweden. After taking Stockholm, he asked the Swedish representatives to turn over the city of Stockholm and the regency of Sweden to Isabella if he himself should die when his children were minors. She was to be the last Queen of Sweden also Queen of Denmark during the Kalmar union, but she did in fact never visit Sweden. She was pregnant when her husband became king in Sweden and she did not follow him there. Her husband was deposed as king of Sweden the year after.

When king Christian was deposed in 1523 by disloyal noblemen supporting his uncle [duke Frederick](#), the new king wanted to be on good terms with her family. He wrote her a personal letter in her native [German](#), offering her a dowager queen's pension and permitting her to stay in Denmark under his protection while king Christian fled to the [Netherlands](#). But Isabella wrote back to duke Frederick in [Latin](#), stating that : "ubi rex meus, ibi regna mea", that is "where my king is, there is my kingdom".

Exile

Isabella left Denmark with her husband and their children after the deposition of her spouse in 1523 and travelled to the Netherlands. Isabella and Christian travelled around Germany in their efforts to gain help for reinstalling Christian to the throne. Isabella made her own negotiations with her relatives, and also followed her spouse on his travels. They visited [Saxony](#) in 1523 and [Berlin](#) in 1523-24. In Berlin, Isabella became interested in the teachings of [Luther](#), and felt sympathy for protestantism. She never converted officially however. When she visited [Nürnberg](#) in 1524, she received communion on the protestant way, which so enraged her birth family the Habsburgs that Christian decided that she, for political reasons, should hide her protestant views in the future.

In the spring of 1525, Isabella caught some kind of serious illness, which worsened after she travelled through a storm later that year and lasted all summer. Ex-queen Isabella died at Ghent at twenty-four years of age.

Portrait of Isabella, age 2. Isabella is on the right.

She is pictured with her brother [Charles](#) and her sister [Eleanor](#).



Isabella bore three children : Hans, [Christina](#) and [Dorothea](#). Isabella's most famous daughter was the [Christina, Duchess of Milan](#) made famous in [Holbein's](#) portrait, painted when [Henry VIII of England](#) was looking for his fourth wife. Her other daughter, [Dorothea of Denmark](#), married [Frederick II, Elector Palatine](#).