

= Magnus Barefoot =

Magnus Olafsson (Old Norse : Magnús Ólafsson , Norwegian : Magnus Olavsson ; 1073 ? 24 August 1103) , better known as Magnus Barefoot (Old Norse : Magnús berfœttir , Norwegian : Magnus Berrføtt) , was King of Norway (as Magnus III) from 1093 until his death in 1103 . His reign was marked by aggressive military campaigns and conquest , particularly in the Norse @-@ dominated parts of the British Isles , and he extended his rule to the Kingdom of the Isles and Dublin .

As the only son of King Olaf Kyrre , Magnus was proclaimed king in southeastern Norway shortly after his father 's death in 1093 . In the north his claim was contested by his cousin , Haakon Magnusson (son of King Magnus Haraldsson) , and the two co @-@ ruled uneasily until Haakon 's death in 1095 . Disgruntled members of the nobility refused to recognise Magnus after his cousin 's death , but the insurrection was short @-@ lived . After securing his position domestically , Magnus campaigned around the Irish Sea from 1098 to 1099 . He raided through Orkney , the Hebrides and Mann (the Northern and Southern Isles) , and ensured Norwegian control by a treaty with the Scottish king . Based on Mann during his time in the west , Magnus had a number of forts and houses built on the island and probably also obtained suzerainty of Galloway . He sailed to Wales later in his expedition , winning control of Anglesey (and possibly Gwynedd 's submission) after repelling the invading Norman forces from the island .

Following his return to Norway Magnus led campaigns into Dalsland and Västergötland in Sweden , claiming an ancient border with the country . After two unsuccessful invasions and a number of skirmishes Danish king Eric Evergood initiated peace talks among the three Scandinavian monarchs , fearing that the conflict would get out of hand . Magnus concluded peace with the Swedes in 1101 by agreeing to marry Margaret , daughter of the Swedish king Inge Stenkilsson . In return , Magnus gained Dalsland as part of her dowry . He set out on his final western campaign in 1102 , and may have sought to conquer Ireland . Magnus entered into an alliance with Irish king Muirchertach Ua Briain of Munster , who recognised Magnus ' control of Dublin . Under unclear circumstances , while obtaining food supplies for his return to Norway , Magnus was killed in an ambush by the Ulaid the next year ; territorial advances characterising his reign ended with his death .

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

= = Background = =

Most information about Magnus is gleaned from Norse sagas and chronicles , which began appearing during the 12th century . The most important sources still available are the Norwegian chronicles *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium* by Theodoric the Monk and the anonymous *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum* (or simply *Ágrip*) from the 1180s and the Icelandic sagas *Heimskringla* (by Snorri Sturluson) , *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* , which date to about the 1220s . While the later sagas are the most detailed accounts , they are also generally considered the least reliable . Additional information about Magnus , in particular his campaigns , is found in sources from the British Isles , which included contemporary accounts .

Magnus was born around the end of 1073 as the only son of King Olaf Kyrre . His mother 's identity is uncertain ; she is identified as Tora Arnesdatter (daughter of otherwise @-@ unknown Arne Låge) in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* , as Tora Joansdatter in *Heimskringla* , *Hrokkinskinna* and *Hryggjarstykki* and an unnamed daughter of " Ragnvald jarl " from Godøy , Sunnmøre in the genealogical text *Af en gl. ætleg* (commonly known as *Sunnmørsættleggen*) . The historical consensus (including P. A. Munch and Claus Krag) has favoured Tora Arnesdatter , but the other claims have also gained support . Anders Stølen has argued that she was a daughter of Ragnvald

jarl (who has been identified as Rognvald Brusason , Earl of Orkney by Ola Kvalsund) , while historian Randi Helene Førsund has considered Tora Joansdatter more likely .

Magnus grew up among the hird (royal retinue) of his father in Nidaros (modern Trondheim) , de facto capital of Norway at the time . His father 's cousin , the chieftain Tore Ingeridsson , was foster father to Magnus . In his youth , he was apparently more similar to his warlike grandfather , King Harald Hardrada , than to his father (who bore the byname Kyrre : " the Peaceful ") . According to Snorri Sturluson , Magnus was considered handsome and gifted in learning ; although he was shorter in stature than his grandfather Harald , he was reportedly known as " Magnus the Tall " . Magnus ' more common byname , " Barefoot " or " Barelegs " , was ? according to Snorri ? due to his adopting the Gaelic dress of the Irish and Scots : a short tunic , which left the lower legs bare . Another version (by Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus) maintains that he acquired the nickname because he was forced to flee from a Swedish attack in his bare feet , while a third explains that he rode barefoot (like the Irish) . Due to Magnus ' aggressive nature and his campaigns abroad , he also had the nickname styrjaldar Magnús (" Warrior Magnus " or " Magnus the Strife lover ") .

= = Reign = =

= = = Establishing authority = = =

Norway had experienced a long period of peace during the reign of Magnus ' father , Olaf . Magnus may have been present when Olaf died in Rånrike , Båhuslen (southeastern Norway) in September 1093 and was probably proclaimed king at the Borgarting , the thing (assembly) of the adjacent region of Viken later that month . When Magnus became king , he already had a network of support among the Norwegian aristocracy . Although sources are unclear about the first year of his reign , it is apparent that Magnus ' focus was on the west (towards the British Isles) . Since conditions were chaotic in Norse dominated parts of the British Isles since the death of Thorfinn the Mighty , this provided Magnus an opportunity to intervene in local power struggles . According to some accounts , he made his first expedition west in 1093 ? 94 (or 1091 ? 92) , helping Scottish king Donald Bane to conquer Edinburgh and the Scottish throne and possibly gaining control of the Southern Isles (Suðreyjar) in return . It is unclear if this early expedition took place , since it is not directly referenced in early reliable sources or the sagas .

Magnus was opposed by his cousin Haakon Magnusson , son of King Olaf 's brother and short lived co ruler King Magnus Haraldsson , who claimed half the kingdom . Haakon was proclaimed king in the Uplands and at the Øyrating , the thing of Trøndelag (in central Norway) . According to Førsund , Haakon took control of the entire portion of the kingdom once held by his father (also including the Frostating ? the thing of Hålogaland in northern Norway ? and the Gulating ? the thing of western Norway) . Haakon secured support by relieving farmers of taxes and duties (including taxes dating back to the Danish rule of Sweyn Knutsson during the early 1030s) , while Magnus pursued costly policies and demanded lengthy military service . After Magnus settled at the new royal estate in Nidaros for the winter of 1094 ? 95 , Haakon also travelled to the city and took up residence at the old royal estate . Their relationship became increasingly tense , culminating when Haakon saw Magnus ' longships fully rigged at sea . Haakon summoned the Øyrating in response , leading Magnus to sail southwards . Haakon attempted to intercept Magnus by travelling south to Viken by land (over the mountains of Dovrefjell) , but he died unexpectedly while hunting in February 1095 .

The strongman behind Haakon 's monarchy had been his foster father Tore Tordsson (" Steigar Tore ") , who refused to recognise Magnus as king after Haakon 's death . With Egil Aslaksson and other noblemen , he had the otherwise unknown Sweyn Haraldsson set up as a pretender . Although later sagas maintain that Sweyn was Danish , some modern historians have speculated that he may have been a son of Harald Hardrada . The revolt was based in the Uplands , but also gained support from noblemen elsewhere in the country . After several weeks of fighting ,

Magnus captured Tore and his supporters and had them hanged on the island of Vambarholm (outside Hamnøy , Lofoten , in northern Norway) . Magnus was reportedly furious because he could not pardon Egil , a potentially useful , young and resourceful nobleman . As king , his honour would only allow a pardon if other noblemen pleaded for Egil 's life ; this did not happen .

Magnus ' final domestic dispute was with the noble Sveinke Steinarsson , who refused to recognise him as king . Although Sveinke reduced piracy in Viken , he was forced into exile for three years after negotiating with Magnus ' men . Since piracy increased soon after Sveinke 's departure (possibly encouraged by Sveinke himself) , Magnus met him in the Danish province of Halland to request his return to Norway . They reconciled ; Sveinke became a loyal supporter of Magnus , now the undisputed king of Norway .

= = = Other developments = = =

Since the Norse sources (including the skaldic verses which were the sagas ' main sources) chiefly describe war @-@ related matters , less is known about other events during the reigns of the early Norwegian kings . Snorri , for instance , wrote fifteen pages about Magnus and only two pages about Magnus ' peaceful father Olaf Kyrre (despite Olaf 's reign lasting almost three times longer than Magnus ') . Modern historians have noted that this probably has made the image of kings like Magnus Barefoot one @-@ sided (in Magnus ' case , skewed towards his deeds as a warrior) .

Magnus ' rule was generally marked by Norway 's increasing similarity to other European kingdoms . Royal rule became established , and he consolidated power through a network of powerful noblemen (some of whom were relatives) ; church organisation also developed . The Nordic bishops belonged to the Archdiocese of Hamburg @-@ Bremen until a year after Magnus ' death (when the Archdiocese of Lund was formed) ; priests and bishops were largely foreigners from England and Germany . In reality , however , Magnus ruled the church in Norway .

Through numismatics , it is known that minting reform began during Magnus ' reign . The reform restored silver content in coins to around 90 percent , the level at Harald Hardrada 's 1055 reform (Haraldsslåtten) which reduced silver content to about 30 percent (the remainder of the coin was copper) . Coin size in Magnus ' reform was reduced to .45 gram , half the previous weight . Although the silver value of a coin remained about the same , copper was not needed in coins .

= = = First Irish Sea campaign = = =

Magnus sought to re @-@ establish Norwegian influence around the Irish Sea . He attempted to install vassal king Ingemund in the Southern Isles in 1097 , but the latter was killed in a revolt . It is unclear what Magnus ' ultimate ambitions were , and the significance of his campaign has been downplayed by modern English historians . English chronicler William of Malmesbury believed that Magnus sought to capture the throne from William II of England (in common with the ambitions of his grandfather , Harald Hardrada) . Historians have speculated that he wanted to establish an empire which included Scotland and Ireland , although most modern Norwegian and Scottish historians believe his chief aim was simply to control the Norse communities around the Irish Sea . While he may have been influenced by Ingemund 's murder , the Orkneyinga saga claims that Magnus was persuaded by a son of an Orkney earl , Haakon Paulsson , who wanted an earldom for himself . It is also possible that Magnus wished to provide a realm outside Norway for his eight @-@ year @-@ old son Sigurd , who accompanied him . Magnus sailed into the Western Sea in 1098 , arriving in Orkney with a large fleet . The Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles claim that he had 160 ships , but English chronicler Orderic Vitalis states that his fleet consisted of 60 ships . Based on this , P. A. Munch suggests an initial fleet of 160 ships , of which 100 were from the *leidang* (public levy) and returned shortly after arrival ; the fleet accompanying Magnus southward in the campaigns consisted of 60 royal and baronial ships . According to Førsund , the low estimate of 120 men per ship means 8 @,@ 000 men in the royal and baronial ships and 12 @,@ 000 from the *leidang* ships . However , many historians believe that ship numbers in old naval campaign accounts are exaggerated .

After his arrival , Magnus began negotiations with Scottish and Irish kings about the hird and control of land in Scotland , Ireland and the surrounding islands . Upon arriving in Orkney , he sent the earls Paul and Erlend Thorfinnsson away to Norway as prisoners on a leidang ship , took their sons Haakon Paulsson , Magnus Erlendsson and Erling Erlendsson as hostages and installed his own son Sigurd as earl . Magnus then raided Scotland , the Southern Isles and Lewis . Meeting no significant opposition , he continued pillaging the Hebridean islands of Uist , Skye , Tiree , Mull and Islay , and the peninsula of Kintyre ; Iona was visited , but not pillaged . Magnus is also recorded as warring in Sanday , although the exact location is unclear (there are three islands with that name in the region) . Entered the Irish Sea , he lost three leidang ships and 120 men in Ulster . Magnus then continued to Mann , where the earl Óttar fell in a violent battle ; he also chased (or captured) Lagman Godredsson , King of the Isles . Mann came under Norwegian control , and Magnus and his men stayed on the island for a time . During his time there , he organised Norwegian immigration to the island and had several forts and houses built (or rebuilt) using timber from Galloway on the Scottish mainland . This implied he had subdued part of that region too , reducing its chieftains to tributaries .

Magnus may have intended to invade Ireland next , only to find he had overextended himself . He may have been approached by Gruffudd ap Cynan , King of Gwynedd , who had been driven to Ireland by the Norman earls Hugh of Montgomery and Hugh d 'Avranches . With six ships (according to Orderic Vitalis) , Magnus steered towards Anglesey in Gwynedd , Wales . Appearing off the coast at Puffin Island , he interrupted a Norman victory celebration after their defeat of the Gwynedd king ? for the Welsh , " so opportunely it was ascribed to divine providence " according to historian Rosemary Power (although Magnus had not necessarily intended to side with them) . In the ensuing battle (known as the Battle of Anglesey Sound , according to Power " the most widely reported event in the history of Magnus ") , Magnus shot Hugh of Montgomery dead with an arrow through his eye and defeated the Norman forces . The sources indicate that Magnus regretted killing Montgomery , suggesting that he may have been interested in an alliance with the Normans . He abruptly returned to Mann with his men , leaving the Norman army weak and demoralized . After this battle , Anglesey was considered the southern border of Norway . Gruffudd ap Cynan soon returned to the island , awarding Magnus gifts and honour (which may indicate that Gwynedd had capitulated) . The extension of Magnus ' kingdom probably began to concern the English , who remembered the invasion of Magnus ' grandfather Harald Hardrada in 1066 , war with Danish king Sweyn Estridson in 1069 ? 70 and the threat of invasion by Cnut IV in 1085 .

In Scotland internal fighting continued between rival kings , although King Edgar had gained a slight advantage . Perhaps fearing to meet Magnus in battle after the internecine strife , according to the sagas Edgar ? mistakenly called Malcolm ? told Magnus he would renounce all Scottish claims to islands west of Scotland in exchange for peace . Magnus accepted the offer , which reportedly gave him every island a ship could reach with its rudder set . He gained recognition of his rule in the Southern Isles , including Kintyre after demonstrating that it should be included by sitting at the rudder of his ship as it was dragged across the narrow isthmus at Tarbert . Historian Richard Oram has claimed that references to a formal agreement with the Scottish king is a " post @-@ Norwegian civil war confection " designed to legitimise the agenda of Haakon IV Haakonsson . Rosemary Power agrees with the Norse sources that a formal agreement with the Scots was probably concluded , and Seán Duffy notes that Edgar " happily ceded " the isles to Magnus since he had " little or no authority there in any case " . Magnus spent the winter in the Hebrides (continuing to fortify the islands) , while many of his men returned to Norway . There may have been talks at this time of Magnus marrying Matilda , daughter of late Scottish king Malcolm Canmore , but no marriage took place . Magnus returned to Norway a year later during the summer of 1099 , although many of the islands he had conquered (such as Anglesey) were only nominally under Norwegian control .

== = Campaign in Sweden == =

After returning to Norway , Magnus turned east . By claiming an ancient border between Norway

and Sweden , he set his course for the Swedish provinces of Dalsland and Västergötland in late 1099 . In Magnus ' view , the border with Sweden should be set further east : at the Göta älv river , through the Vänern lake and north to the province of Värmland . He claimed all land west of Vänern (chiefly Dalsland) . Swedish king Inge Stenkilsson refuted the claim , and Magnus began a campaign in response . He raided his way through the forest villages , and Inge began amassing an army . When advised by his men to retreat , Magnus became more aggressive ; he believed that once begun , a campaign should never be aborted . In a surprise nighttime attack , Magnus assaulted Swedish forces east of Göta älv at Fuxerna (near Lilla Edet) . After defeating the Swedes at Fuxerna , he conquered part of Västergötland . According to a skald , Magnus conquered " fifteen hundreds from the Geats " . He had a wooden fort , surrounded by a moat , built on the island of Kållandsö in the southern portion of Vänern . Before returning to Norway , Magnus left 300 men on the island for the winter (led by Finn Skofteson and Sigurd Ullstreng) .

According to Randi Helene Førsund , the Norwegians in Kållandsö appear to have been characterized by arrogance (perhaps due to their successes under Magnus) and taunted the Swedish king for taking so long to arrive . After newly formed ice connected the island to the mainland , Inge arrived with about 3 @, @ 000 men . Although he offered several times to allow the Norwegians to return home in peace (with their plunder and possessions) , Inge 's offers were rejected . The Swedes finally attacked , burning the fort . The Norwegians were spared and allowed to return home , after being beaten with sticks and surrendering all their possessions . Angry at the humiliating defeat , Magnus planned revenge . He entered Sweden the following year , reconquering the same areas . During the hasty campaign Magnus and his men were ambushed by Swedish forces and forced to flee back to their ships , suffering heavy losses . The war continued until 1100 or 1101 .

Danish king Eric Evergood , concerned that the conflict would escalate , began peace talks between the two kings . Relations had been strained between Denmark and Norway after Magnus ' 1096 raids into Halland , and Eric feared that the conflict might spill over into his own country . The three Scandinavian kings eventually agreed to negotiate peace in the border area near Göta älv . After a constructive meeting , they agreed to preserve ancestral borders ; by marrying Inge 's daughter Margaret (who acquired the byname Fredkulla : " Colleen @-@ of @-@ Peace ") , Magnus acquired the lands he claimed on behalf of his ancestors . Since the marriage was childless , Dalsland never became established as a Norwegian province and was returned to Sweden after his death .

= = = Second Irish Sea campaign and death = = =

Magnus again set his course for Ireland in 1101 or 1102 , this time probably with a greater army than he had in his previous campaign . One of his biggest challenges was the number of petty kings and alliances on the island . Irish sources maintain that Magnus came to " take Ireland , " " invade Ireland " or " besiege Ireland . " He received reinforcements from Orkney on his way to Mann , where he set up a base to survey conditions . Tensions ran high between Magnus and the king of Munster and High King of Ireland , Muirchertach Ua Briain (Mýrjartak) , who was struggling with his rival Domnall Ua Lochlainn . Magnus may have tested the situation in 1101 , when unnamed sailors are said to have raided Scatterry Island (near Muirchertach 's base) . After his arrival at Mann , Irish sources describe Magnus as agreeing to " a year 's peace " with the Irish (suggesting enmity ; such agreements were diplomatic devices , usually negotiated between two sides in war) . The marriage agreement described in other sources was part of the treaty ; Magnus ' son , Sigurd , married Muirchertach 's daughter Bjaðmunjo . On their wedding day , Magnus named Sigurd his co @-@ king and put him in charge of the western lands . Muirchertach also recognised Magnus ' control over Dublin and Fingal .

Around the same time Muirchertach married a daughter of Arnulf of Montgomery , brother of Hugh (who was killed by Magnus in 1098) . The account in Morkinskinna concerning a " foreign knight " named " Giffarðr " , who appeared at the court of Magnus before his Swedish campaign , is suggested by Rosemary Power as evidence that Magnus may have conspired with the Norman

Walter Giffard , Earl of Buckingham (or a family member) in the revolt against Henry I of England . According to Orderic Vitalis , Magnus left treasure with a wealthy citizen in Lincoln which was confiscated by King Henry after Magnus ' death . This treasure could have been paid by Norman earls for Magnus ' support , and possibly arranged by the Giffarðr who is said to have visited Magnus ' court in the sagas . This could have provided Magnus with a lucrative return for his costly western campaigns , which were unpopular in Norway at the time .

Muirchertach was skilled in diplomacy , and negotiation with the dowries of his daughters may have been part of a political game . While he may not have intended to honour his agreements with Magnus (or others) , he needed the latter 's assistance to crush Domnall . Magnus and Muirchertach went on joint raiding expeditions after the peace agreement , only interrupted by the winter of 1102 ? 03 . The sagas claim that Magnus wintered in Connacht , but since Connacht is incorrectly claimed to be Muirchertach 's kingdom the location was corrected to Kincora , Munster by modern historians . Rosemary Power considered it more likely that Magnus would have kept his fleet near Dublin . Magnus was probably allied with Muirchertach during his campaigns against Domnall and the Cenél nEógain in 1103 , but (in contrast to the Norse sources) Irish sources (the Annals of Ulster and Annals of the Four Masters) do not describe their campaigns as successful . On 5 August 1103 , Muirchertach unsuccessfully tried to subdue Domnall in the Battle of Mag Coba . Magnus did not take part , but his Dublin subjects fought with Muirchertach . Since Magnus was closing in on the Irish throne , Muirchertach may have wanted him out of the way . According to Morkinskinna and Heimskringla , the two agreed that Muirchertach was to bring Magnus and his men cattle provisions for their return to Norway ; as this dragged on past the agreed time , Magnus became suspicious that the Irish planned an attack . He gathered his men on St. Bartholomew 's Day (or the day before , according to Ágrip) , 24 August 1103 , and ventured into the country . It is possible that Magnus and his men made an incautious landing to raid cattle , or the Ulaid mistook the Norwegians for cattle @-@ raiding Hebrideans . Alternatively , Muirchertach may have ordered the Ulaid to bring provisions to Magnus , inciting the Ulaid to ambush the Norwegians .

Norse sources describe a large force emerging from hiding places in an ambush . The Norwegian forces were taken by surprise , and were not in battle order . Magnus attempted to assert control over his disordered army , ordering part of his force to seize secure ground and use archery fire to slow the Irish . In the melee Magnus was pierced by a spear through both thighs above the knees but he fought on , attempting to get his men back to the level campsite . An axe @-@ wielding Irishman charged him , striking a lethal blow to his neck . When his men said that he proceeded incautiously in his campaigns , Magnus is reported to have responded " Kings are made for honour , not for long life " ; he was the last Norwegian king to fall in battle abroad .

Perhaps betrayed by Muirchertach , Magnus may also have been betrayed by his own men (in particular the contingent of nobleman Torgrim Skinnluve from the Uplands , who fled to the ships during the battle) . It is possible that Torgrim and his men may have been directed by powerful men in Norway , who wanted Magnus removed from the Norwegian throne . More Irishmen than Norwegians fell in the battle , according to Snorri Sturluson , and Magnus ' reign could have been different if Torgrim and his men had fought as directed . Magnus ' son Sigurd returned to Norway without his child bride after his father 's defeat , and direct Norwegian control in the region came to an end . Although Norwegian influence remained , no Norwegian king returned for more than 150 years .

= = Descendents = =

Magnus married Margaret Fredkulla , daughter of Swedish king Inge Stenkilsson , as part of the peace agreement of 1101 . Their marriage did not produce any children . His three sons (who succeeded him as king) were born to different women , and he had two known daughters by unidentified women :

Eystein : Born 1089 to a mother " of low birth " .

Sigurd : Born 1090 ; his mother 's name was Tora .

Olaf : Born c . 1099 , his mother was Sigrid Saxesdatter from Vik in Strinda , Trøndelag .

Ragnhild : Married Harald Kesja , Danish pretender and son of Danish king Eric Evergood .

Tora : Married Icelandic chieftain Loftur Sæmundsson .

Years after Magnus ' death , other men came forward claiming to be his sons ; however , it is impossible to ascertain the veracity of these claims :

Harald Gille : Born 1103 in Ireland , his claim was recognised by Magnus ' son Sigurd .

Sigurd Slembe : His mother was Tora Saxesdatter from Vik ; his claim was not recognised (by Harald Gille) .

Magnus Raude : Mentioned only in Fagrskinna .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Burial = = =

Magnus probably died in the vicinity of the River Quoile . According to the Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles , Magnus was " buried near the Church of St Patrick , in Down " . About two miles (1 @.@ 2 km) south of the cathedral on Horse Island is a mound which became known as Magnus ' Grave after its identification on an 1859 map attributed to Danish archaeologist Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae . Snorri Sturluson 's description of the marshy and difficult terrain where Magnus and his men were attacked fits the conditions in and around Horse Island , making it a strong candidate for the burial site . According to Finbar McCormick , the people who ambushed Magnus may not have wanted a Christian burial for him and his men , instead burying them near where they had been slain . The Downpatrick runestone monument marking the site was erected in March 2003 to mark the 900th anniversary of his death . The burial site is largely only accessible via the heritage railway in Downpatrick ; a halt overlooking the barrow and runestone has been built by the Downpatrick and County Down Railway .

= = = Succession = = =

Magnus was succeeded peacefully by his three sons : Sigurd , Eystein and Olaf . Near the end of Sigurd 's reign (he having outlived his brothers) during the late 1120s , the previously unknown Harald Gille came to Norway from the west claiming to be a son of Magnus Barefoot and legitimate successor to the kingdom . Sigurd recognised Harald as his brother (and successor) after Harald walked uninjured over nine burning ploughshares in a trial by ordeal , and he was proclaimed king after Sigurd 's death in 1130 with Sigurd 's son Magnus Sigurdsson . Since Harald was accompanied by his mother to Norway , Sigurd may have recognised a former lover of his father .

Relations between Harald and Magnus Sigurdsson soured , and several years later Harald had Magnus mutilated and deposed (hence his byname " the Blind ") . Soon afterwards , Harald was murdered by another pretender : Sigurd Slembe , who also claimed to be a son of Magnus Barefoot and had been outlawed by Harald . After Harald 's death Slembe allied himself with Magnus the Blind , but they were defeated by chieftains loyal to Harald Gille 's family in the Battle of Holmengrå . Magnus was killed during the battle ; Sigurd was captured , tortured and executed . This began what would become the century @-@ long Norwegian civil @-@ war era .

= = = Legacy = = =

The earliest @-@ known native Irishman to have been named Magnus may have been the son of Muirchertach 's greatest rival , Domnall Ua Lochlainn ; Magnus became a name among the Ulaid during the 12th century . According to Morkinskinna , tribute from Ireland was received in Norway as late as about twelve years after Magnus ' death .

Magnus became the subject of at least two Gaelic ballads as the character Manus Mór . In the best @-@ known version , he returns to Norway after an expedition to the west ; he is killed in the second version . The different versions are probably derived from Magnus ' two expeditions . There

are also traditions concerning Magnus in Scotland in legends , poems and local history .

In modern times a " Magnus Barelegs festival " has been held in Ireland and a beer named after his sword , Legbiter . In Norway , according to Førsund , Magnus has " been reduced to a sigh " in history books ; little remains to commemorate him .

= = Ancestry = =