

# Medieval Sourcebook: King Harald Harfager of Norway (r. 860-930): Laws for Land Property

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King Harald made this law over all the lands he conquered, that all the udal (allodial) property should belong to him; and that the bondes, both great and small, should pay him land dues for their possessions. Over every district he set an earl to judge according to the law of the land and to justice, and also to collect the land dues and the fines; and for this each earl received a third part of the dues, and services, and fines, for the support of his table and other expenses. Each earl had under him four or more hereses, each of whom had an estate of twenty marks yearly income bestowed on him and was bound to support twenty men-at-arms, and the earl sixty men, at their own expenses. The king had increased the land dues and burden so much, that each of his earls had greater power and income than the kings had before; and when that became known at Throndhjem, many great men joined the king and took his service.

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Source.

From: *The Heimskringla, A History of the Kings of Norway*, trans. Samuel Laing, Esq., in *Anglo-Saxon Classics*, Vol. 1, ed. Rasmus B. Anderson, (New York: The Norroena Society, 1911), pp. 20-21, reprinted in Roy C. Cave & Herbert H. Coulson, *A Source Book for Medieval Economic History*, (New York: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936; reprint ed., New York: Biblo & Tannen, 1965), pp. 28-29

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