

Saint Margaret of Scotland

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Saint Margaret of Scotland (c. 1045 – 16 November 1093), also known as **Margaret of Wessex** and **Queen Margaret of Scotland**, was an English princess of the House of Wessex. Born in exile in Hungary, she was the sister of Edgar Ætheling, the short-ruling and uncrowned Anglo-Saxon King of England. Margaret and her family returned to England in 1057, but fled to the Kingdom of Scotland following the Norman conquest of England of 1066. Around 1070 Margaret married Malcolm III of Scotland, becoming his queen consort. She was a pious woman, and among many charitable works she established a ferry across the Firth of Forth for pilgrims travelling to Dunfermline Abbey, which gave the towns of South Queensferry and North Queensferry their names. Margaret was the mother of three kings of Scotland and a queen consort of England. According to the *Life of Saint Margaret*, attributed to Turgot of Durham, she died at Edinburgh Castle in 1093, just days after receiving the news of her husband's death in battle. In 1250 she was canonised by Pope Innocent IV, and her remains were reinterred in a shrine at Dunfermline Abbey. Her relics were dispersed after the Scottish Reformation and subsequently lost.

Contents

- 1 Biography
 - 1.1 Early life
 - 1.2 Return to England
 - 1.3 Journey to Scotland
 - 1.4 Family
 - 1.5 Religious life
 - 1.6 Death
- 2 Veneration
 - 2.1 Sainthood
 - 2.2 Churches
 - 2.3 Other establishments
- 3 See also
- 4 Citations
- 5 Further reading
- 6 External links

Biography

Margaret of Wessex



Image of Saint Margaret in a window at St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh

Queen Consort of Scotland

Tenure	1070–1093
Spouse	Malcolm III of Scotland <p>m. 1070; wid. 1093</p>
Issue	Edward, Prince of Scotland <p>Edmund, Bishop of Dunkeld</p> <p>Ethelred</p> <p>Edgar, King of Scotland</p> <p>Alexander I, King of Scotland</p> <p>David I, King of Scotland</p> <p>Edith of Scotland, Queen of England</p> <p>Mary, Countess of Boulogne</p>
House	House of Wessex
Father	Edward the Exile
Mother	Agatha
Born	c. 1045 <p>Hungary</p>
Died	16 November 1093 <p>Edinburgh Castle, Scotland</p>
Burial	Dunfermline Abbey, Scotland

Early life



Margaret from a medieval family tree.

Margaret was the daughter of the English prince, Edward the Exile and granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, king of England. After the Danish conquest of England in 1016, Canute had the infant Edward exiled to the continent. He was taken first to the court of the Swedish king,

Olof Skötkonung, and then to Kiev. As an adult, he travelled to Hungary, where in 1046 he supported Andrew I's successful bid for the throne. The provenance of Margaret's mother, Agatha, is disputed, but Margaret was born in Hungary around 1045. Her brother Edgar the Ætheling and her sister Cristina were also born in Hungary around this time. Margaret grew up in a very religious environment in the Hungarian court. Andrew I of Hungary was known as "Andrew the Catholic" for his extreme aversion to pagans, and great loyalty to Rome, which probably could have induced Margaret to follow a pious life.

Return to England

Still a child, she came to England with the rest of her family when her father, Edward, was recalled in 1057 as a possible successor to her great-uncle, the childless Edward the Confessor. Her father died soon after the family's arrival in England, but Margaret continued to reside at the English court where her brother, Edgar Ætheling, was considered a possible successor to the English throne. When the Confessor died in January 1066, Harold Godwinson was selected as king, Edgar perhaps being considered still too young. After Harold's defeat at the battle of Hastings later that year, Edgar was proclaimed King of England, but when the Normans advanced on London, the Witenagemot presented Edgar to William the Conqueror who took him to Normandy before returning him to England in 1068, when Edgar, Margaret, Cristina and their mother Agatha fled north to Northumbria.

Journey to Scotland

According to tradition, the widowed Agatha decided to leave

Saint Margaret



St. Margaret as depicted by Edward Burne-Jones.

Queen of Scots

Honored in	Roman Catholic Church; Anglican Communion
Canonized	1250 by Pope Innocent IV
Major shrine	Dunfermline Abbey
Feast	16 November; 10 June (pre-1970 General Roman Calendar)
Attributes	reading

Northumbria with her children and return to the continent. However, a storm drove their ship north to Scotland, where they sought the protection of King Malcolm III. The spot where they are said to have landed is known today as St.

Margaret's Hope, near the village of North Queensferry. Margaret's arrival in Scotland in 1068, after the failed revolt of the Northumbrian earls, has been heavily romanticized, though Symeon of Durham implied that her first meeting with Malcolm III may not have been until 1070, after William the Conqueror's harrying of the north.

Malcolm was probably a widower, and was no doubt attracted by the prospect of marrying one of the few remaining members of the Anglo-Saxon royal family. The marriage of Malcolm and Margaret took place some time before the end of 1070. Malcolm followed it with several invasions of Northumberland, probably in support of the claims of his brother-in-law Edgar. These, however, had little result beyond the devastation of the province.^[1]

Family

Margaret and Malcolm had eight children, six sons and two daughters:

1. Edward, killed 1093.
2. Edmund of Scotland (c.1070 – after 1097)
3. Ethelred, abbot of Dunkeld
4. Edgar of Scotland (c.1074 - 11 January 1107), King of Scotland from 1097 - 1107
5. Alexander I of Scotland (c.1078 - 23 April 1124), King of Scotland from 1107 - 1124
6. Edith of Scotland (c. 1080 – 1 May 1118), also called Matilda, married King Henry I of England
7. Mary of Scotland (1082–1116), married Eustace III of Boulogne
8. David I of Scotland (c.1083 – 24 May 1153), King of Scotland from 1124 - 1153

Religious life

Margaret's biographer Turgot, Bishop of St. Andrews, credits her with having a civilizing influence on her husband Malcolm by reading him stories from the Bible. She instigated religious reform, striving to make the worship and practices of the Church in Scotland conform to those of Rome. This she did with the inspiration and guidance of Lanfranc, the future Archbishop of Canterbury.^[2] She also worked to bring the Scottish Church in line with the Roman Catholic faith of her childhood. Due to these achievements, she was considered an exemplar of the "just ruler", and influenced her husband and children - especially her youngest son, later David I - also to be just and holy rulers.

She attended to charitable works, serving orphans and the poor every day before she ate, and washing the feet of the poor in imitation of Christ. She rose at midnight every night to attend church services. She invited the Benedictine order to establish a monastery at Dunfermline in Fife in 1072, and established ferries at Queensferry and North Berwick to assist pilgrims journeying from south of the Forth Estuary to St. Andrews in Fife. A cave on the banks of the Tower Burn in Dunfermline was used by her as a place of devotion and prayer. St Margaret's Cave, now covered beneath a municipal car park, is open to the public.^[3] Amongst her other deeds, Margaret also instigated the restoration of the monastery at Iona.^[4] She is known to have been an intercessor for the release of Anglo-Saxon captives as well.

In her private life, Margaret was as devout as she was in her public duties. She spent much of her time in prayer, devotional reading, and ecclesiastical embroidery. This appears to have had a considerable affect on the more uncouth, Malcolm, who could not read; he so admired her devotion that he had her books decorated in gold and

Patronage	Dunfermline; Scotland; The Queen's Ferry; Anglo-Scottish relations
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silver. One of these, a pocket Gospel with lavish images of the Evangelists, is kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.^[5]

Malcolm seems to have been largely ignorant of the long-term effects of Margaret's endeavours, not being especially religious himself. He was content for her to pursue her reforms as she wished, a testament to the strength and affection inherent in their marriage.^[4]

Death

Her husband, Malcolm III, and their eldest son, Edward, were killed in a fight against the English at the Battle of Alnwick on 13 November 1093. Her son Edmund was left with the task of telling his mother of their deaths. Margaret was not yet fifty, but a life of constant austerity and fasting had taken their toll.^[2] Already ill, Margaret died on 16 November 1093, three days after the deaths of her husband and eldest son.

Veneration

Sainthood

Saint Margaret was canonised in 1250 by Pope Innocent IV in recognition of her personal holiness, fidelity to the Church, work for religious reform, and charity. On 19 June 1250, after her canonisation, her remains were moved to Dunfermline Abbey.^[6] The Roman Catholic Church formerly marked the feast of Saint Margaret of Scotland on 10 June, because the feast of "Saint Gertrude, Virgin" was already celebrated on 16 November, but in Scotland, she was venerated on 16 November, the day of her death. In the revision of the Roman Catholic calendar of saints in 1969, 16 November became free and the Church transferred her feast day to 16 November.^[7] However, some traditionalist Catholics continue to celebrate her feast day on 10 June. She is also venerated as a saint in the Anglican Church.



Site of the shrine of St. Margaret, Dunfermline Abbey, Fife



St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle

Churches

Several churches are dedicated to Saint Margaret. One of the oldest is St Margaret's Chapel in Edinburgh Castle, which was founded by her son King David I. The chapel was long thought to have been the oratory of Margaret herself, but is now considered to be a 12th century establishment. The oldest building in Edinburgh, it was restored in the 19th century, and refurbished in the 1990s.

Others include the 13th-century Church of St Margaret the Queen in Buxted, East Sussex,^[8] St Margaret of Scotland, Aberdeen^[8] and the Church of England church in Budapest.

Other establishments

A number of foundations, particularly in Scotland, are named after Saint Margaret:

- Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, which adopted the name in 1972

- Queen Margaret College, Glasgow
- Queen Margaret Union, a student union at Glasgow University
- Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline
- The towns of South Queensferry and North Queensferry mark the location of the ferry established by Queen Margaret
- St. Margaret's R C Primary School (<http://www.stmargaretsprimary.ik.org/>) , South Queensferry, Scotland
- Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr
- St Margaret's Academy, Livingston
- Queen Margaret College, Wellington, New Zealand
- St Margarets School, Bushey (<http://www.stmargaretsbushey.co.uk/default.asp?page=290>)
- St. Margaret's Secondary School and Primary School, Singapore
- St Margaret's School, Melbourne, Australia. (<http://www.stmargaretspri.moe.edu.sg/>) (Both primary and secondary education.)
- St. Margaret of Scotland Episcopal School (<http://www.SMES.org>) , San Juan Capistrano, California, USA
- St. Margaret of Scotland School (<http://www.smos-school.org/>) , St. Louis, Missouri, USA
- St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Elementary (<http://www.dpcdsb.org/SCOTL>) , Erin Mills, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada



St Margaret's Church in Dunfermline

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish, Selden, New York www.saintmargaret.com

See also

- List of Catholic saints
- List of Scottish consorts
- St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh

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External links

- University of Pittsburgh: *Margaret of Scotland* (<http://www.pitt.edu/~eflst4/MofScotland.html>)
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Preceded by Ingibjorg Finnsdottir	Queen consort of Scotland 1070–1093	Succeeded by unknown next known consort: Sybilla of Normandy
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