

Saint Margaret of Scotland

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Saint Margaret of Scotland (c. 1045 – 16 November 1093), also known as **Margaret of Wessex**, was an English princess of the House of Wessex. Margaret was sometimes called "The Pearl of Scotland".^[1] 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 Scottish queen. 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 (or four, if one includes Edmund of Scotland, who ruled Scotland with his uncle, Donald III) and of 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 canonized 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.

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Early life

Saint Margaret of Scotland



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

Queen consort of Scotland

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

Saint Margaret

Queen of Scots



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.^[1] 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

Venerated 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
Patronage	Dunfermline; Scotland; Fife; Shetland; The Queen's Ferry; Anglo-Scottish relations

Hungary, where in 1046 he supported Andrew I's successful bid for the throne. He was then also known as "Andrew the Catholic" for his extreme aversion to pagans, and great loyalty to Rome. The provenance of Margaret's mother, Agatha, is legally 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.

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. Whether from natural or sinister causes, Edward died immediately on landing, but Margaret continued to reside at the English court where her brother, Edgar Ætheling, was considered a possible successor to the English throne.^[1] 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 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 a widower with two sons, Donald and Duncan. He would have been 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, in support of the claims of his brother-in-law Edgar, as well as to increase his own power. These, however, had little result beyond the devastation of the county.^[2]

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.^[3] She also worked to bring the Scottish Church practice in line with that of the continental church 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.

"The chroniclers all agree in depicting Queen Margaret as a strong, pure, noble character, who had very great influence over her husband, and through him over Scottish history, especially in its ecclesiastical aspects. Her religion, which was genuine and intense, was of the newest Roman style; and to her are attributed a number of reforms by which the Church of Scotland was considerably modified from the insular and primitive type which down to her time it had exhibited. Among those expressly mentioned are a change in the manner of observing Lent, which thenceforward began as elsewhere on Ash Wednesday and not as previously on the following Monday, and the abolition of the old practice of observing Saturday (Sabbath), not Sunday, as the day of rest from labour (see Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, book ii chap. 8)."^[4] The later editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, however, as an example, the Eleventh Edition, remove Skene's opinion that Scottish Catholics formerly rested from work on Saturday, something for which there is no historical evidence. Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii, chap. 8, pp. 348–350, quotes from a contemporary document regarding Margaret's life, but his source says nothing at all of Saturday Sabbath observance, but rather says St. Margaret exhorted the Scots to cease their tendency "to neglect the due observance of the Lord's day."

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 Firth of Forth 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



Malcolm greeting Margaret on her arrival in Scotland. Detail from a mural by the Victorian artist William Hole

Cave, now covered beneath a municipal car park, is open to the public.^[5] Amongst her other deeds, Margaret also instigated the restoration of the monastery at Iona.^[6] She is also known to have been an intercessor for the release of fellow English exiles, forced into serfdom by the conquest.^[7]

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 effect on the more uncouth Malcolm who could not read; he so admired her devotion that he had her books decorated in gold and silver. One of these, a pocket gospel book with Evangelist portraits, is in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.^[8]

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.^[6]

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 Edgar 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.^[3] Already ill, Margaret died on 16 November 1093, three days after the deaths of her husband and eldest son. She was buried in Dunfermline Abbey. In 1250 her body and that of her husband were exhumed and placed in a new shrine in the Abbey. In 1560 Mary Queen of Scots had Margaret's head removed to Edinburgh Castle as a relic to assist her in childbirth. In 1597 the head ended up with the Jesuits at the Scots' College, Douai, France, but was lost during the French Revolution. Philip II of Spain had the other remains of Margaret and Malcolm Canmore transferred to the Escorial in Madrid, but they cannot now be found.^[9]

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 a chapel in the eastern apse of Dunfermline Abbey.^[10] In 1693 Pope Innocent XII changed her feast day to 10 June in recognition of the birthdate of the son of James VII of Scotland and II of England.^[11] In the revision of the General Roman Calendar in 1969, 16 November became free and the Church transferred her feast day to 16 November, the day of her death, which had always been recognised in Scotland.^[12] However, some traditionalist Catholics continue to celebrate her feast day on 10 June.

She is also venerated as a saint in the Anglican Church.

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.



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

Others include the 13th-century Church of St Margaret the Queen in Buxted, East Sussex,^[13] St Margaret of Scotland, Aberdeen and the Church of England church in Budapest. There is another in Brittany, northern France, near Etel. (Sainte-Marguerite 56550 Locoal-Mendon, France—approximate address)

Other establishments

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

- Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, Scotland, which adopted the name in 1972
- Queen Margaret College, Glasgow, Scotland
- Queen Margaret Union, Glasgow, Scotland, a student union at Glasgow University
- Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline, Scotland
- The towns of South Queensferry and North Queensferry, Scotland, mark the location of the ferry established by Queen Margaret
- St Margaret's High School, Airdrie, North Lanarkshire Scotland
- St. Margaret's R C Primary School (<http://www.stmargaretsprimary.k.org/>), South Queensferry, Scotland
- Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr, Scotland
- St Margaret's Academy, Livingston, Scotland
- St Margaret's School, Bushey, Hertfordshire, England, a private school with boarding facilities for girls aged 4–18 years.
- St Margaret's College, Christchurch, New Zealand
- Queen Margaret College, Wellington, New Zealand
- St. Margaret's Hospital Guild, Indianapolis, Indiana
- St. Margaret's Junior College, Sugunami, Tokyo, Japan, incorporating kindergarten, girls primary, junior and senior high schools
- St Margaret of Scotland Hospice (<http://www.smh.org.uk/>), Clydebank, Scotland
- St. Margaret's Primary School and St. Margaret's Secondary School, in Singapore
- St Margaret's School, Melbourne, Australia, both primary and secondary schools
- 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 of Scotland Parish (<http://www.stmargaretparish.ca/>), Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- St. Margaret's School (<http://www.stmarg.ca/>), Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, primary and secondary school for girls (including both boarding and day students)
- [1] (<http://stmargaret.wcdsb.ca/Pages/default.aspx>) Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic School Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
- St. Margaret's School (<http://www.sms.org/>), Tappahannock, Virginia, USA, a private Episcopal college preparatory school for girls (including both boarding and day students, grades 8-12)
- St. Margaret's School (<http://www.stmargarets.cl/>), Viña del Mar, Chile
- St. Margaret's Chapel (<http://stmargaretschapel.org.uk/>), Glastonbury, England
- St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Parish (<http://www.stmargaretsparish.org>), Lees Summit, MO.
- St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Eltham, Victoria, Australia (<http://www.stmargaretseltham.org.au/Pages/Welcome.aspx>)
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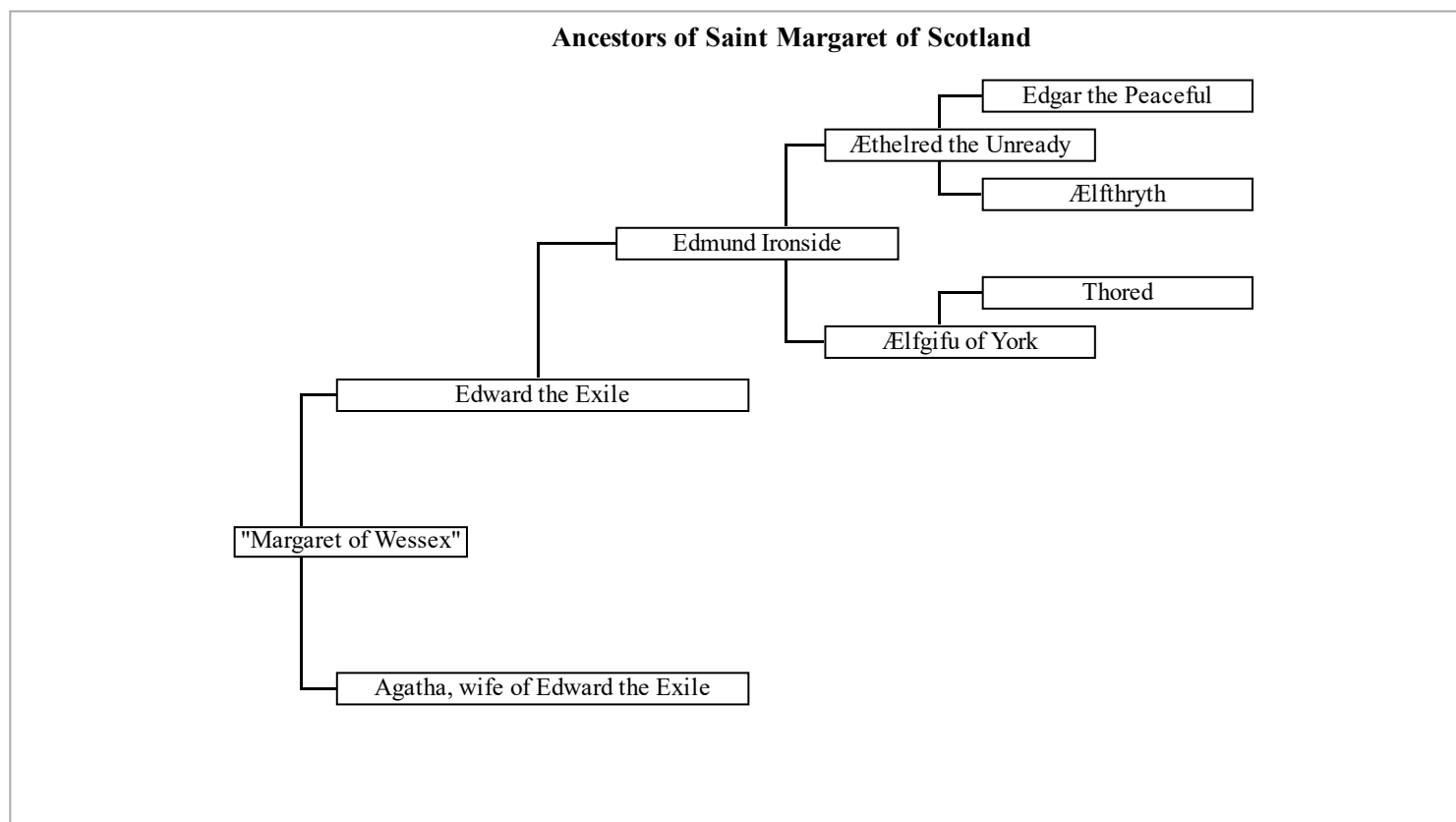


St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle



St Margaret's Church in Dunfermline

Ancestry




See also

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

Notes

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-  This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Margaret, St, Queen of Scotland". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. **17** (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 701.

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External links

- Margaret 1 (<http://www.pase.ac.uk/jsp/ASC/person.jsp?personKey=18382>) at Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England
- University of Pittsburgh: *Margaret of Scotland* (<http://www.pitt.edu/~efl1st4/MofScotland.html>)
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Preceded by Ingibiorg Finnsdottir	Queen consort of Scotland 1070–1093	Succeeded by unknown next known consort: Sybilla of Normandy
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