Edward the Exile

Edward the Exile depicted on a medieval genealogical scroll.

Edward the Exile (1016 – late August 1057), also called *Edward Ætheling*, was the son of King Edmund Ironside and of Ealdgyth. He spent most of his life in exile following the defeat of his father by Canute the Great.

1 Exile

After the Danish conquest of England in 1016, Canute had Edward, said to be only a few months old, and his brother, Edmund, sent to the Swedish court of Olof Skötkonung[1][2] (who was either Canute's half-brother or stepbrother), supposedly with instructions to have the children murdered. Instead, the two boys were secretly sent either to Kiev,[3] where Olof's daughter Ingigerd was the Queen, or to Poland, where Canute's uncle Bolesław I Chrobry was duke.[4] Later Edward made his way to Hungary, probably in the retinue of Ingigerd's son-in-law, András in 1046, whom he supported in his successful bid for the Hungarian throne.

2 Return

On hearing the news of his being alive, Edward the Confessor recalled him to England in 1056 and made him his heir. Edward offered the last chance of an undisputed succession within the Saxon royal house. News of

Edward's existence came at a time when the old Anglo-Saxon monarchy, restored after a long period of Danish domination, was heading for catastrophe. The Confessor, personally devout but politically weak and without children, was unable to make an effective stand against the steady advance of the powerful and ambitious sons of Godwin, Earl of Wessex. From across the Channel William, Duke of Normandy, also had an eye on the succession. Edward the Exile appeared at just the right time. Approved by both king and by the Witan, the Council of the Realm, he offered a way out of the impasse, a counter both to the Godwinsons and to William, and one with a legitimacy that could not be readily challenged.

Edward, who had been in the custody of Henry III, the Holy Roman Emperor, finally came back to England at the end of August 1057. But he died within two days of his arrival. The exact cause of Edward's death remains unclear, but he had many powerful enemies, and there is a strong possibility that he was murdered, although by whom is not known with any certainty. It is known, though, that his access to the king was blocked soon after his arrival in England for some unexplained reason, at a time when the Godwinsons, in the person of Harold, were once again in the ascendant. This turn of events left the throne of England to be disputed by Earl Harold and Duke William, ultimately leading to the Norman Conquest of England. He was buried in Old St Paul's Cathedral.

3 Family

Edward's wife was named Agatha, whose origins are disputed.[5] Their children were:

- Edgar Ætheling (c. 1051 - c. 1126) - Elected King of England after the Battle of Hastings but submitted to William the Conqueror.

- Saint Margaret of Scotland (c. 1045 - 16 November 1093) - Married King Malcolm III of Scotland.

- Cristina (c. 1057 - c. 1093) - Abbess at Romsey Abbey.

Edward's grandchild Edith of Scotland, also called Matilda, married King Henry I of England, continuing the Anglo-Saxon line into the post-Conquest English monarchy.

4   Ancestors

Edward the Exile was a direct descendant of a line of Wessex kings dating back, at least on the pages of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, to the arrival of Cerdic of Wessex in 495AD, and from Alfred the Great in the English monarchs family tree.[6] Of his more immediate ancestors, all four of Edward's male-line ancestors shown in the diagram below were Kings of England before Cnut the Great took the crown and sent Edward into exile.[7]

5   See also

- House of Wessex family tree
- Castle Réka

6   References

[1] Onslow, the Rt.Hon.The Earl of, *The Dukes of Normandy and Their Origin*, London, 1945, p.161.

[2] Anderson, Alan O.,*Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers, 500 to 1286*, London, 1908. p.94n.

[3] Anderson and Onslow both say Hungary

[4] MichaelAnne Guido and John P. Ravilious, "From Theophanu to St. Margaret of Scotland: A study of Agatha's ancestry", Foundations, vol. 4(2012), pp. 81-121.

[5] Lauder-Frost, Gregory M.S., FSA Scot.,"Agatha - The Ancestry Dispute" in *The Scottish Genealogist*, Edinburgh, Sept 2002, vol.xlix no.3, p.71-2.

[6] Starkey, David (2004). *The Monarchy of England: The Beginnings*. Chatto and Windus. p. 88.

[7] Ronay 1989, p. 10.

- Ronay, Gabriel (1989). *The lost King of England: the East European adventures of Edward the Exile*. Woodbridge, Suffolk ; Wolfeboro, N.H., USA: Boydell Press. ISBN 0-85115-541-3.

7   External links

- Edward 18 at Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England
- Marek, Miroslav. "Genealogy for Edward the Exile". Genealogy.EU.
- Edward Atheling of Wessex

8 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

8.1 Text

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