CHAPTER 1

The Book as Bloodline
The Life of Queen Margaret of Scotland

In the well-known frontispiece of the earliest extant manuscript of the *Encomium Emmae reginae* (Figure 1.1), the image of the book and the characters surrounding it indicate the book's important role in constructing a particular version of familial relations.[1] Emma of Normandy, crowned and enthroned, receives the book from her scribe, while her sons, Edward and Harthacnut, stand to the right of the image, one of them supporting the other side of the book. Emma shares the center of the image with the book itself, whose pages open wide to the viewer, as if to announce its public purpose. Part of this purpose seems to be to connect Emma to her sons: The V shape of the book's pages aligns with Emma's shoulders on one side and her sons' tiered bodies on the other. (As if to underscore the scribe's secondary role in this bodily connection through the book, his hand is shrouded in a cloth, whereas Emma and her sons hold the book with bare hands.)[2] In another image, from a thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Encomium* (Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59), Emma is depicted as meek and maternal, tenderly guiding her small sons with her head bowed and her hand directly placed on one of the boys' shoulders as they meet Duke Richard II of Normandy.[3] By contrast, in the eleventh-century image (Figure 1.1), any representation of physical intimacy or contact that might suggest a biological relationship between mother and sons is replaced by a textual relationship. The book itself becomes the body that connects the family.

The manuscript containing this image was possibly Emma's own copy, or one very like it, of the book she had commissioned about her immediate family.[4] Emma had ample reason to want its frontispiece to offer a different version of her genealogical relationship to her sons from one revolving around paternity. Not only did she, as a woman, face the challenges of her own position in the patrilineal system of inheritance, but also her immediate family's legacy was extraordinarily messy. As daughter of Count Richard of Normandy, Emma was married first to

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Figure 1.1 Frontispiece of the *Encomium Emmae reginae* depicting Emma of Normandy and her sons receiving the book. London, British Library, Additional MS 33241, fol. 1r

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Athelred, King of England, and later to Athelred's Danish usurper, Cnut.[5] When Emma commissioned the *Encomium*, Edward, her son by Athelred, shared rule with Harthacnut, her son by Cnut, though Harthacnut died soon after, requiring a rewriting of the *Encomium*'s end.[6] The *Encomium*'s narrative works hard to smooth out this contentious history and succession – altering genealogies and suppressing complicated relationships – to secure Emma's and her sons' place in it. To the same ends as the text itself, the manuscript's frontispiece reorganizes Emma's family around their relationship to her and her book. Rather than being enemy sons of warring kings, Emma's sons, as presented in the frontispiece, are almost indistinguishable, holding the book as if with a single, unified hand, which connects them to their shared mother.[7]

This chapter explores how books, mainly as depicted in texts, are used to represent women's cross-generational relations of power in early twelfth-century England and surrounding regions. While the *Encomium* frontispiece provides a clear visual example of the way books were employed to represent and construct women's lineages and legacies, verbal descriptions of books within texts could serve a similar purpose. This chapter focuses on the books – both real surviving objects and those represented in texts – central to royal women's political and spiritual legacies in the early twelfth-century *Vita sanctae Margaretae reginae Scotorum*, commissioned by Edith/Matilda, Queen of England and daughter of the life's subject, Margaret of Scotland.[8] To explore the *Vita*'s strategies for conveying genealogy through books and literary patronage, I situate the text in a wide range of contemporaneous sources, including paeans, insular hagiographies, virgin martyr lives, and chronicles. I do not intend to argue that the *Vita* purposely delineates a genealogy of women's texts through women's explicit bequeathing or inheriting of books. Instead, it presents a persistent interest in literacy and books that is pinned first to Edith/Matilda, as the text's patron, and then explored more deeply in relation to her mother, as the text's subject. This interest reflects a broad contemporary understanding, also evident in other texts, of textual practices as symbolic and physical means through which to connect figures across generations to political ends. In the *Vita*, books, rather than land or title, help delicately shift Edith/Matilda's ancestral authority from her paternity to her maternity and, in doing so, offer a different premise for what constitutes a royal genealogy.

Edith/Matilda commissioned the *Vita* of her deceased mother, Margaret of Scotland (d. 1093), in c. 1104–1107, soon after her marriage to Henry I, King of England and son of William the Conqueror and Matilda of

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Flanders. The *Vita* was likely written by Turgot, Prior of Durham. Edith/Matilda's mother's West Saxon royal lineage and renowned piety were crucial to her daughter's authority as she married into the Anglo-Norman ruling family and sought to define her position as queen. The *Vita* serves as a *speculum principium*, written to provide Edith/Matilda, newly queen of England, with an example in her pious mother.[9] But it is also a robust statement of Margaret's and her daughter's political and spiritual power as a process of succession.

Books are effective symbols of genealogy in the *Vita* because of the many types of legacies – political, familial, and spiritual – they convey. The value of medieval codices, particularly in the early and high medieval periods, lay partly in their simultaneously material and literary character and in the human relationships they enabled.[10] As a material object, the codex was expensive and sometimes richly decorated, and its literary content also made it intellectually and spiritually edifying. Parchment – animal skin – not only gave the codex a corporeality that it shared with its human reader but also meant that it was an exceptionally durable means of carrying stories across generations.[11] As discussed later in this chapter, book relics and lives were central to British saints' cults because they were often believed to embody the saint, taking on an almost animate quality.

After a brief review of the *Vita*'s surviving manuscripts, this chapter develops in three sections. The first examines the political context in which Edith/Matilda commissioned the *Vita* and the ways contemporaneous writers depicted her genealogy, particularly her inheritance through her mother. The second section focuses on Edith/Matilda's book, the *Vita*, showing how the prologue imagines an intellectual and material connection through textuality between its intended reader, Edith/Matilda, and its subject, Margaret. The third and main section turns to the *Vita*'s interest in Margaret's own books as material and mobile objects and the ways that books delineate human kinships and genealogies. It focuses on two scenes: first, an episode of book decoration and dedication between Margaret and Malcolm, Edith/Matilda's father, and, second, the *Vita*'s single miracle, a climactic moment of the text in which Margaret's favorite gospel book (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Latin Liturgical f.5) falls into a river. To conclude, this chapter considers the legacy that Margaret and Edith/Matilda's history of succession and literary patronage left for Edith/Matilda's daughter, Empress Matilda, as she fought to claim the English crown.

The *Vita* survives in three manuscripts: the "long version" in London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius D.iii, a legendary of saints from the

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late twelfth to mid-thirteenth centuries; the "short version" in London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius E.i, the sole manuscript of John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium,* which contains the aristocratic matrilineage discussed in the introductory chapter; and a recently discovered late fifteenth-century manuscript, Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS II. 2097 (the Dunfermline manuscript). The Dunfermline manuscript also contains the sole copy of Margaret's miracles, the *Miracula sancte Margarite Scotorum regine*, as well as a description of Margaret's ancestors and descendants, which traces Henry II's lineage back through Empress Matilda, Edith/Matilda, and Margaret in a form similar to that of Aelred of Rievaulx's *Genealogia*.[12] This chapter focuses on the long version previously edited from a now-lost manuscript, which is very similar to the version in Cotton Tiberius MS D.iii, the earliest extant copy of the *Vita*. The *Vita*'s authorship remains debated; the author describes himself as "servorum S. Cutberti servus" (servant of the servants of Saint Cuthbert), while the Dunfermline manuscript names "Turgot," and the Cotton MS Tiberius D.iii manuscript "Theodericus."[13] Turgot of Durham's status as the prior of Durham, dedicated to Saint Cuthbert, fits the description of a "servant to the servants," and his Anglo-Scottish movements and entrepreneurial spirit, as discussed below, make it likely that he knew Margaret personally, as the *Vita*'s author apparently did.[14] I tentatively accept Turgot as the *Vita*'s author with the view that, at the very least, Turgot was likely closely involved in the text's production, considering that he was the prior of the house in which the *Vita* was produced and that the text's patron was the queen of England.

Representing Edith/Matilda's Genealogies

Edith/Matilda commissioned the *Vita* at a pivotal moment in her political career, soon after she married Henry I in 1100. Literary patronage suited Edith/Matilda, who was unusually literate thanks to an "outstanding education" at the abbeys of Wilton and Romsey and possibly to her mother's emphasis on education.[15] Her literacy was also central to her queenship, as she was closely involved in the development of documentary culture in her husband's court from early in her marriage, frequently signing his charters.[16] When Edith/Matilda became queen in 1100, there had been no queen on the English throne for seventeen years (since Matilda of Flanders's death in 1083), so she had no recent role model or queenly predecessor.[17] The new queen's patronage of the *Vita* helped establish her within a literary lineage of royal women attached to the

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English throne: English queens Emma of Normandy and Edith of Wessex, as well as Edith/Matilda's sister-in-law Adela, Countess of Blois, had all commissioned historiographical texts at critical moments in their political careers.[18]

However, whereas most royal women commissioned texts about their husbands, fathers, and sons, Edith/Matilda's *Vita* emphasizes her authority and claim to the English throne through her mother. Edith/Matilda's queenship was highly publicized as restoring the ancient ruling line of Wessex to the English throne for the first time since the Norman Conquest.[19] Henry I's claim to the English throne extended back only to his father, William the Conqueror, but Edith/Matilda's royal lineage through her mother dated back to Cedric of Wessex in the sixth century.[20] Margaret's father, Edward, the rightful heir of the West Saxon royal line and son of Edmund Ironside, had been exiled by the Danish conqueror Cnut; he eventually arrived in the Hungarian court where he married Agatha, a relative of the king, with whom he had three children, including Margaret.[21] Near contemporary sources indicate that Edith/Matilda's matrilineage was considered valuable and politically legitimizing. For example, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* versions D and E draw attention to Margaret's royal line: The E version states that Edith/Matilda is the daughter of Margaret, who is "of the rightful royal family of England."[22] In his *Genealogia*, Aelred of Rievaulx traces Henry II's line through the Empress Matilda, Edith/Matilda, and Margaret, back to the West Saxon kings.[23]

The *Vita* likewise builds Margaret's genealogy through a range of biological, spiritual, historical, and fictionalized lineages from its first chapter. Turgot describes Margaret's ancestors Edmund Ironside, Edward the Confessor, Edgar, and Richard of Normandy, concluding with Margaret's own worthiness in this "seriem progenitorum" (line of ancestors). Turgot is less concerned with an accurate representation of Margaret's bloodlines – Margaret's father, Edward the Exile, is referred to only in passing, and her mother not at all – than with those ancestors who strengthen Margaret's spiritual and political credentials, such as Edward the Confessor and Richard of Normandy.[24] The figures that feature in Margaret's creatively stretched genealogy indicate that her lineage was a means of constructing Edith/Matilda's own inherited authority, as the English and Norman lines represented by Edward and Richard were both important to Edith/Matilda's position as queen of Anglo-Norman England. It is not surprising that the *Vita*, a text Edith/Matilda commissioned about her own mother, is invested in its patron's genealogy, as

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Edith/Matilda appears to have been actively concerned with the perception of her public position and the depiction of her lineage.[25] The twelfth-century historian William of Malmesbury writes in a letter to Edith/Matilda's daughter, Empress Matilda, that he composed the *Gesta regum Anglorum* because her mother wanted an account of the West Saxon kings from whom she was descended.[26] Literature dedicated to her frequently focuses on her prestige, particularly through her kinship ties, and the fact that various poets represent her in similar ways also suggests her influence in shaping her public image.[27]

Turgot's own experience of cross-cultural politics, which may have helped him empathize with the situations of both Edith/Matilda and Margaret, likely also contributed to the text's skillful depiction of the political and spiritual legacies Margaret left her daughter.[28] Turgot came from a well-born family of Saxon origin situated in the Danelaw and had successfully negotiated political complexities between Scotland and Anglo-Norman England most of his life.[29] Before becoming prior of Durham, he fled from the Normans to the Norwegian court, where he was patronized by the king and nobles; he later returned to England and Scotland, where he seems to have served as Margaret's spiritual advisor.[30] Turgot shared with Margaret, therefore, a personal understanding of exile, cross-cultural negotiation, and mobile relations to power and place, which likely made him an insightful writer for Edith/Matilda's book as well.

Depicting Edith/Matilda's Paternal and Maternal Lineages

To understand the significance of books in the *Vita*'s depiction of Edith/Matilda's matrilineage, it is helpful to examine how one of Turgot's contemporaries, the popular Norman poet Hildebert, Bishop of Le Mans, depicted the English queen's paternal and maternal genealogies – as well as the limitations of this depiction.[31] The following excerpt is the first half of Hildebert's epistolary poem to Edith/Matilda. I quote the passage at length because its structure highlights Hildebert's different depictions of Edith/Matilda's relationships to her mother and her male kin, which underscore certain gender assumptions that underlie representations of royal genealogy in the period.

Filia praeteriti, praesentis nupta, futuri
Mater regis, habes hoc speciale tibi.
Aut vix, aut nunquam reperitur femina quae sit
Haec eadem regum filia, nupta, parens.
Nec tua nobilitas est a te coepta, nec in te

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Desinet, et post te vivet et [ut] ante fuit.
Nec tu degeneras, revera filia matris
Talem te genuit qualis et illa fuit.
Casta pudicam, pulchra decoram, provida cautam,
Larga tulit largam, relligiosa piam.
Est rosa de radice rosae; de relligione
Relligio; pietas de pietate fluit.
De stella splendor, de magno nomine majus.
Unum patris erat; sunt duo regna tibi.
Angli reginam venerantur, te comitissam
Normannorum plebs; utraque gens dominam.
Non ad sceptra venis rudis; usum tradit origo.
Est regnare tuum, resque paterna tibi.

[Daughter of a past, wife of a present, mother
Of a future king, you have this special to you.
Rarely or never is a woman discovered who is
These at the same time: the daughter, wife, and parent of kings.
Neither did your nobility start with you, nor in you
Will it end; it will live after you and it was before.
Neither do you debase your birth, revered daughter of a mother
Who bore you of such kind and as she was.
Chaste she bore modest; beautiful she bore glorious; thoughtful she bore cautious;
Generous she bore generous; religious she bore pious.
A rose comes from the root of a rose; from sanctity
Comes sanctity; piety flows from piety.
Brilliance from a star; from a great name, greater.
Your father had one kingdom; you have two kingdoms.
The English venerate you as queen, the Norman people
As countess; both peoples as their lady.
You do not come to the scepter ignorant; birth grants you experience.
To rule is your nature and is a paternal matter for you.][32]

At its beginning and end, this excerpt positions Edith/Matilda in relation to her father, husband, and son; she connects powerful men, both through the alliances she allows and through procreation. Her male kinships convey a strong sense of linear time with a past, present, and future – "Filia praeteriti, praesentis nupta, futuri / Mater regis" (Daughter of a past, wife of a present, mother / Of a future king) – in which Edith/Matilda leaves her mark on history through her ability to unite kings across different generations and kingdoms. Human temporality is central to this string of male relations that Edith/Matilda enables. In the lines "Nec tua nobilitas est a te coepta, nec in te / Desinet, et post te vivet et [ut] ante fuit" (Neither did your nobility start with you, nor in you / Will it end; it

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will live after you and it was before), Edith/Matilda's noble line moves fluidly from past ("est . . . coepta") to future ("desinet") and then from future ("vivet") to past ("fuit"). Similar to the patrilineal notions of genealogy as ownership of time discussed in the introductory chapter, her temporal lineage seems to govern time itself almost by divine decree, as the biblical grandiosity of "ante fuit" suggests.

Through her male relations, Edith/Matilda's influence expands across not only time but also space. She improves on her father's land possession through her male connections: Her father had one kingdom, Scotland, but she, Hildebert enthuses, has two, both England and Normandy ("Unum patris erat; sunt duo regna tibi"). It is through her father, as a "res . . . paterna" (paternal matter), that Edith/Matilda inherits the capacity to rule and through her husband that she expands her geographical influence to include a second kingdom. Hildebert creates a worldly framework of power in which Edith/Matilda's success is marked by her figurative conquest and possession of land and time. However, in this male-oriented framework, Edith/Matilda's inheritance and participation are largely symbolic because, unlike a male monarch, she neither inherits rulership of her father's kingdom of Scotland nor rules her new kingdom of England.

Hildebert's description of Edith/Matilda's relationship with her mother celebrates a more poetic and spiritual lineage. In contrast to the strong sense of temporality and geography in Edith/Matilda's relationships to her male kin, the mother–daughter relationship seems plucked out of time and space. In giving birth to Edith/Matilda, Hildebert states that Margaret "te genuit qualis et illa fuit" (bore you of such kind and as she was). Whereas the English queen has two kingdoms and her father only one, making her patrilineal genealogy a narrative of progress, Edith/Matilda is exactly what her mother was, no more and no less. The matrilineage is a relationship less defined by succession than by deeply intimate replication and similitude; the women are roses from the same root ("est rosa de radice rosae"), a metaphor of reproduction that suggests simultaneity and growth from a common origin rather than serial lineage.

Hildebert's string of similes shifts the poem away from kingly genealogy to more poetic moral and natural realms in which mother and daughter are inseparable and coexistent. Edith/Matilda is to her mother as the light radiating from a star ("de stella splendor") – that is, the outcome and evidence of Margaret's own existence, in cosmic, natural terms. The images of stars, roses, and "flowing" piety connect Margaret and Edith/Matilda's relationship to the natural and spatial world, but in loose, figurative terms very different from Edith/Matilda's "possession" of

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quantifiable kingdoms through her male kin. However, what Edith/Matilda's relationship with her mother lacks in quantifiable terms, it makes up for in poetic abundance – in repetitious metaphors evocative of genealogical lists, transcendental imagery, and the promise of the timeless spirituality of mother and daughter.

While impressive in terms of poetry and piety, Edith/Matilda's relationship to her mother is hard to pin to worldly power, and formal inheritance of land and title between the women is clearly lacking. It is striking that Hildebert chooses to recognize Margaret's centrality to Edith/Matilda's authority by dedicating a central portion of the poem to her but never mentions Margaret's royal West Saxon lineage. Instead of highlighting the unification of the West Saxon and Norman lines in Edith/Matilda's marriage to Henry, Hildebert focuses on how Edith/Matilda brings together England and Scotland in her possession of "two kingdoms." Hildebert's reasons for omitting Margaret's paternal lineage and containing the genealogical relationship between mother and daughter to two generations likely point to the political complexities of depicting her English lineage in the wake of the Norman Conquest. The lines "Angli reginam venerantur, te comitissam / Normannorum plebs; utraque gens dominam" (The English venerate you as queen, the Norman people / As countess; both peoples as their lady) make clear that Hildebert is negotiating the perspectives of the English and Norman peoples – a negotiation that also highlights the ambiguous political and intercultural position that queens frequently occupied.

The *Vita*: Edith/Matilda's Book about Her Mother

Unlike Hildebert's poem, hagiography, particularly in its insular forms, does often depict the concrete power of women's spiritual and political genealogies.[33] As the hagiography of English royal saints had a tradition of being closely tied to the monarchy and of sustaining propagandist aims, commissioning the *Vita* in this genre would also have suited Edith/Matilda's political position and needs.[34] Edith/Matilda may have been familiar with Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's eleventh-century *Vita sanctae Edithae* about the West Saxon princess virgin saint Edith, whose cult was centered at Wilton, where Edith/Matilda (and possibly Margaret) had been educated.[35] In Goscelin's text, Edith, the daughter of King Edgar and his concubine, Wulfthryth – a pious woman who later becomes the abbess of Wilton – embodies the qualities of both her parents and so endows the royal abbey of Wilton with both their legacies.[36] She is so

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politically competent that once her father dies, the English people, according to Goscelin, request that she become sovereign instead of her brothers. But rather than inherit her father's kingdom, Edith chooses to remain a nun at Wilton, in the realm of Wulfthryth, her "spiritualis et carnalis genitricis" (spiritual and natural mother).[37] Goscelin also depicts the transfer of worldly power and official status between women through the succession of abbesses, though such transfers are confined to within the convent. While Goscelin's text provides a more detailed and concrete relationship between Wulfthryth and Edith than that which Hildebert describes between Margaret and Edith/Matilda, in both narratives, spiritual and political power are clearly gendered: The maternal line offers the female subject spiritual authority, while her paternal line offers worldly power.

In the *Vita* of Margaret of Scotland, however, both spiritual and political power are conveyed through Edith/Matilda's matrilineage. Turgot achieves this in part by drawing attention to Margaret and her daughter's genealogy of textual engagement, which remains safely in the realm of piety but also takes on a material, public presence through the women's ownership, readership, and patronage of books. The materiality of books figures frequently in the *Vita*, especially in relation to Edith/Matilda's own book, the *Vita*, and Margaret's favorite gospel book (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Latin Liturgical f.5). As precious and relatively public objects, the books construct a connection between mother and daughter that is not only intimate and spiritual but also erudite and concrete. The remainder of this section focuses on how the prologue carefully positions Edith/Matilda as both an eager recipient and authoritative patron of her mother's story.

Edith/Matilda: Recipient and Patron, Daughter and Queen

The *Vita*'s prologue opens with a description of the *Vita* – Edith/Matilda's book – and situates the English queen at the center of the narrative as the active commissioner of the text.[38]

> Venerandae memoriae matris vestrae placitam Deo conversationem, quam consona multorum laude saepius praedicari audieratis, ut litteris traditam vobis offerrem ... postulando jussistis ... vobis congratulor, quae a Rege Angelorum constituta Regina Anglorum, vitam matris Reginae, quae semper ad regnum anhelabat Angelorum, non solum audire, sed etiam litteris impressam desideratis jugiter inspicere; ut quae faciem matris parum noveratis, virtutum ejus notitiam plenius habeatis.

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> [In requesting you commanded . . . that I offer you, delivered in writing, an account of the conduct, pleasing to God, of your mother of venerable memory, which you have heard proclaimed often by many people with unanimous praise. . . . I congratulate you, having been established as Queen of the English by the King of the Angels, that you have desired not only to hear but also to inspect continuously the imprinted words of the life of your mother, the queen, who always longed for the kingdom of the angels. Even if you barely knew your mother's face, you may have fuller familiarity with her virtues.]

The *Vita*'s emphasis on matrilineage and cultural politics is evident in the prologue. Though the book was written soon after Edith/Matilda's marriage to Henry, the king takes a secondary role in the book's opening as Edith/Matilda is made queen of England by the "King of Angels" ("Rege Angelorum"), rather than by marriage. The phrase "Rege Angelorum" hints at Henry, who is the king of the "Angles," but also involves wordplay that serves to bypass him completely: Edith/Matilda's right to English queenship is bestowed by God, not her husband. Distinguishing her queenship from her husband's kingship, the text instead positions her in close relation to her mother, subtly suggesting that Edith/Matilda's queenship is a reinstatement of Margaret's royal right through the West Saxon regnal line. The wordplay around "Angelorum" and "Anglorum," which occurs several times in the prologue, evokes Bede's famous account of how Pope Gregory encountered English slave boys (Angles) in the Roman marketplace whom he found as beautiful as angels.[39] Turgot's similar play on "angels" and "Angles" recalls England's literary past and long tradition of spirituality, in which the *Vita* participates. But it also hints at the history of displacement lurking behind the *Vita*; Margaret, an English princess, was born in Hungary due to her father's exile and was later driven again from England, ending up in Scotland.[40] Her longing for the "regnum . . . Angelorum" (kingdom of the angels) conflates her spiritual and ancestral longing and right, making Edith/Matilda's position as queen of England, "Regina Anglorum," a fulfilment of her maternal inheritance. It is worth noting here that Edith/Matilda's subtle alignment with her mother rather than her husband in the prologue is not necessarily antagonistic toward Henry, who seems to have respected and shared substantial power with his wife. As mentioned above, it likely benefited him as well to have his wife assert her claim to the English throne as a direct descendant of the West Saxon kings.

In depicting her power as stemming from her parentage rather than her marriage, Edith/Matilda may have had the paean *Adelae comitissae*, addressed to her sister-in-law, Henry's sister Adela of Blois, as an example.

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Baudri of Bourgueil likely wrote *Adelae* in 1101 or 1102, perhaps not long before Turgot wrote the *Vita*.[41] In it, Baudri addresses the poem itself, teaching it about Adela's excellent qualities as well as her paternal and maternal ancestry, with particular emphasis on her status as her father's daughter. Adela "successit . . . patri" (l. 33, follows her father), though they diverge along gender lines as she "non militis arma gerit" (l. 34, cannot bear warrior's arms).[42] However, Baudri points to her alternative strength, specifying that "una . . . res est qua praesit filia patri" (l. 37, one thing there is . . . the daughter has on her father): "Versibus applaudit scitque vacare libris" (l. 38, she has an ear for verse and takes an interest in books), and "rursus inest illi dictandi copia torrens" (l. 41, she herself has a lively talent for writing poems).[43] In contrast to this strong focus on Adela's father, her husband, Stephen, Count of Blois, is almost entirely absent from the poem, referred to only once in passing in the poem's 1368 lines.[44] Likely in contrast to Edith/Matilda, Adela may have sought to deliberately distinguish herself from her husband. Stephen had returned in disgrace from the First Crusade, perhaps prompting Adela to support a poem that instead emphasized her parentage and especially the warriorlike nature of her father, who had successfully conquered England. Adela's literary interests and writing are positioned as a sort of genealogical development of, and improvement on, her father's bearing of arms, attributing real-world power to her verse and book activities.

In the *Vita*'s prologue, the political and spiritual relationship between mother and daughter is similarly reinforced by descriptions of the *Vita* as a textual object. In the quote above, Turgot contrasts his written book with oral accounts of Margaret's story: Edith/Matilda has heard praise of her mother ("audieratis"), but now she wishes to have an account in letters, "litteris impressam desideratis jugiter inspicere" (to be able continually to inspect the imprinted words). She will regain her mother, the text proposes, by inspecting the pages continually ("jugiter") and with longing (as "desideratis" implies) through touch and sight. The connection imagined between mother and daughter through the book is affective, but it also suggests that the book offers a documentary, almost legal aspect to their relationship. The *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* defines "impressare" as "to mark by the application of pressure, to stamp, imprint (with)" and "to make impression (of seal) (in)," which suggests that the phrase "litteris impressam" may refer to the evolving practice of sealing.[45] Edith/Matilda played an important and public role in developing documentary systems in the Anglo-Norman court and used her own seal from about 1100, which was very early use by any European queen.[46] Medieval

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seals were more than a symbol of their owner; a sealed document could stand in for the person whose seal it bore, carrying the authority of their presence.[47] Turgot's choice of "impressam" may be a nod to Edith/Matilda's use of the newest documentary technologies, but it also suggests the authenticity of the *Vita*'s account – the *Vita* is so true to Margaret that it is like her direct impression or presence on the page. The *Vita*, in turn, takes on some of the authority of a charter, providing Edith/Matilda with physical documentation of the authority that she inherits from and shares with her mother.

That Edith/Matilda understood texts as able to evoke the material presence of characters associated with them is clear from a letter she wrote to the archbishop Anselm. In her letter, she describes how she embraces and caresses the parchment of a letter Anselm sent to her, substituting the letter for his own presence:

> Cartulam quidem a vobis missam loco patris amplector, sinu foveo, cordi quoad possum propius admoveo, verba de dulci bonitatis vestrae fonte manantia ore relego.
>
> [I embrace the parchment sent by you in the place of a father, I press it to my breast, I move it as near to my heart as I can, I reread with my mouth the words flowing from the sweet fountain of your goodness.][48]

Edith/Matilda engages intimately with the text and, interestingly in the context of Margaret's *Vita*, in familial terms; the letter takes the place of a "pater" just as the *Vita* reproduces the "faciem matris" (face of [her] mother). Despite the respect implied by "patris," Edith/Matilda's role in receiving Anselm's letter is far from passive as her own actions vivify it and so evoke his presence. She embraces the parchment, associating it with her breast and heart, and gives her own voice to his words ("ore relego"). Anselm's letter seems to serve less as an embodiment of his presence than as a material symbol of the intimate relationship between the archbishop and queen – one consented to and enabled by Edith/Matilda's vigorous reception of the letter at least as much as Anselm's writing of it.

In her letter, Edith/Matilda describes a relationship established through parchment that both Anselm and she have touched. However, her mother, Margaret, had no contact with the *Vita* Edith/Matilda commissioned. In contemporaneous texts, however, physical contact is not essential to relationships described through textual engagement. Readers of Margaret's *Vita* may have been familiar with the Old English life of Margaret of Antioch, the hagiography of a legendary virgin martyr who came to be associated with the Scottish queen, likely through their shared eastern

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European name, which was highly unusual in eleventh-century Britain.[49] In the life, Margaret of Antioch predicts and authorizes book production as a key aspect of her legacy through her final prayers; just before she is beheaded, she prays aloud that God bless "þæt swa hwilc man swa writeþ mine þrowunga oþþe hi geheraþ rædan" (whoever writes out my passion or hears it read) and that all sins be forgiven of "þæt se þe macaðu boc mines martirhades oþþe on his huse hæbbe" (the person who makes a book of my martyrdom or has it in his house).[50] Margaret further petitions that the Holy Spirit be with whoever "awrite mine þrowungey oþþe of his gewinne gebicge" (writes out . . . [a copy of] my passion or buys one with what he has earned).[51] (The Latin *Passio sanctae Margaretae* also specifies that anyone who merely holds the book in their hand, "qui tulerit in manu sua," will be made free of sin.)[52] A voice from heaven responds to her prayers, promising that no evil will approach "þær þine reliquias beoþ oþþe boc þines martirhades" (where your relics are [kept], or a book of your martyrdom).[53] Her life, therefore, makes little distinction between Margaret's relics, which presumably include contact relics (items she touched in her lifetime) and written accounts of her life created after her death.[54] Writing, hearing, making, owning, buying, or holding a book of her life after her death are all ways of laying claim to Margaret's spiritual authority.

In Margaret of Antioch's case, the text claims that, through its very presence, the recipient can benefit directly from Margaret's piety thanks to the saint's explicit foresight and prayers. However, the relationships that books enabled could also be more politically complex and less generous. In the epilogue to Geoffrey Gaimar's chronicle *L'Estoire des Engleis*, written several decades after Margaret's *Vita*, Gaimar attempts to convince his patron, the noblewoman Constance FitzGilbert, to commission from him a new life of Henry I, which Adeliza of Louvain, the second wife of Henry I and dowager queen of England, never "tint . . . en sa main" (l. 6490, held . . . in her hand).[55] Gaimar observes that Constance already owns a copy of a book that Adeliza commissioned, which Constance often reads "en sa chambre" (l. 6496, in her chamber).[56] In commissioning and intimately reading a copy of Adeliza's book, Constance has already positioned herself as imitating the dowager queen. Yet in promising (entrepreneurially) that he can write Constance a book about Adeliza's own deceased husband that Adeliza has never possessed, Gaimar suggests the power of book patronage and ownership to shift social dynamics and to place Constance, a noblewoman, on par with or even as slightly superior to the dowager queen of England.[57] In this case, Constance's competitive

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relationship to Adeliza is based on a *lack* of shared contact or even familiarity with the book. The book will be powerful because Adeliza has not had it first – perhaps the dowager queen will even want a copy of Constance's book, just as Constance made a copy of hers.

In these examples, books – or, more specifically, descriptions of books – become physical symbols, or proof, of relationships that may have no other material presence, establishing and negotiating a range of complex links between characters separated by time, space, or class. Margaret of Antioch, for example, cannot have held or read her life, and Gaimar does not mention any actual contact between Constance and Adeliza and their books, such as direct borrowing (which he does of other books in the epilogue). Similarly, the prologue of Margaret's *Vita* uses book imagery to develop the relationship between Edith/Matilda and her mother without suggesting that Margaret ever gave her daughter a book. Rather, Edith/Matilda's patronage, imagined reading practices, and activity in the court's documentary culture become ways to connect her with her mother (as she is described in the *Vita*'s text) and stake her present claim to her mother's political authority.

Margaret: Protagonist, Mother, and Queen

The prologue's attention to Edith/Matilda as a patron and reader with political and religious motives creates a semblance to her mother, whose own literacy and love of books are described throughout in the main body of the *Vita*. Although Margaret is only ever portrayed as reading scripture, her reading practices and uses of her learning directly influence her public involvement as a queen. Book learning for Margaret is a means of symbolic conquest and a source of political power, with her reading undertaken, as Turgot mentions repeatedly, with zeal ("studens"). The language used to describe Margaret's reading practices renders them almost combative: She prefers "in divinarum lectionum studio sese occupare et in animum delectabiliter exercere" (to occupy herself with the pursuit of divine reading and to train her mind with delight). In a similar way to the parallel between bearing arms and engaging in literary activity in Baudri's *Adelae comitissae*, here the verbs "occupare" and "exercere" suggest not only spiritual improvement, the conquest of the soul, and the *miles Christi* through reading but also hint at worldly militancy – a characteristic of a good (male) ruler.[58]

Margaret's reading has practical implications for her day-to-day ruling responsibilities as well:

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> [I]nter causarum tumultus, inter multiplices regni curas, miro studio divinae lectioni operam dabat, de qua cum doctissimis assidentibus viris etiam subtiles saepius quaestiones conserebat ... Plane sacrorum voluminum religiosa nec parva illi aviditas inerat.

> [Amid the tumult of lawsuits, amid the many responsibilities of royal power, she gave attention to divine reading with wonderful zeal, about which she often engaged in sophisticated inquiry with the most learned men beside her ... Clearly, she possessed a devout, and not small, desire for sacred books.]

Her religious reading is not respite from her public responsibilities but an occupation, an "opus," alongside managing lawsuits. She engages intellectually with equal sophistication to men. The topos of a holy person's conversations with the most learned men of the kingdom recalls Christ in the temple and famous learned saints, like Catherine of Alexandria – figures who subvert traditional hierarchies of power and learning to reveal the (unexpected) spiritual and intellectual superiority of the questioner. In Margaret's case, the topos suggests that she emerges superior to her surrounding male Scottish community, despite being foreign and a woman.

Indeed, Margaret's knowledge of scripture defines and authorizes her queenship and her presence and purpose in Scotland. Rather than being a twice-exiled Anglo-Hungarian princess driven to Scotland, she is characterized as the enforcer of proper Christianity and a ruler in her own right. She attacks the Scots' erroneous Christian practices and other barbaric laws "gladio spiritus, quod est verbum Dei" (with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God) and drives these false customs "de regni sui finibus" (from the borders of her kingdom). She establishes councils and tears down arguments supporting false customs by correcting interpretations of the Gospels and what can be read, "legitur," there. Margaret's ability to reform Scottish Christian practices seems to give her secular power over Scotland too, which, as indicated above, is described as "regni sui" (her kingdom).

Margaret's literacy, through which she performs God's work, makes her superior even to her husband, the Scottish king, in councils on Christian reform. While literate in God's word, she cannot, according to the *Vita*, communicate in the language of the Scots, so her husband translates for her:

> Sed in hoc conflictu Rex ipse adjutor et praecipuus residebat, quodcomque in hace causa jussisset, dicere paratissiumus & facere. Qui quoniuam

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> perfecte Anglorum linguam aeque ut propriam noverat, vigilantissimus in hoc Concilio utriusque partis interpres extiterat.
>
> [And in this conflict, the king himself remained as her particular assistant, very prepared to say and do whatever she commanded in this case. Because he knew the language of the Angles as perfectly as his own, he served as a most vigilant interpreter for both sides at this council.]

Immediately striking in this passage is Malcolm's subservience to his wife, as he stands ready to do whatever she has ordered ("jussisset"). While she assumes regnal authority, he, inversely, adopts the role of cultural negotiator, moving between languages and religious positions, typifying the traditional diplomatic role of foreign royal wives who unite kingdoms through marriage. By contrast, Margaret's apparent inability or refusal to code-switch, which parallels her refusal to budge on her religious convictions, places her firmly in an ideological realm that is English and Christian. The text suggests that to some extent, even when Margaret is physically in Scotland, she occupies and seeks to assert the "regnum . . . Angelorum" that Turgot describes her as longing for in the prologue, which she does largely through her reading of divine texts.

Margaret's Books: Objects of Kinship and Legacy

Books as objects in the *Vita* link Edith/Matilda and Margaret in a slightly different way from the women's shared literacy. While spirituality and literacy are contained within each woman, the books that enable these characteristics possess bodies of their own, which may be related to but also remain independent of a human owner or bearer. The two books described in detail in the *Vita*, to which this section later turns, are part of the text's wide array of objects that establish or reinforce Margaret's political, spiritual, and familial ties. Personal objects are central to Margaret's networks of influence and serve as symbols of her legacy after her death. Turgot describes her as an active maker and gifter of objects, with her chamber full of "cappae cantorum, casulae, stolae, altaris pallia, alia quoque vestimenta sacerdotalia, & ecclesiae . . . ornamenta" (cloaks for singers, chasubles, stoles, altar cloths, and other priestly garments and decorations for the church) created by women in a workshop that she oversees. Her religious patronage includes concern for her descendants; she erects a church in the place where she was married for the redemption of herself and her husband and "ad obtinendam suæ soboli vitæ præsentis [et] futuræ prosperitatem" (to obtain prosperous lives for her present and

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future offspring). In this church, she places a cross of "incomparabilis pretii" (incomparable value), and, in the church of Saint Andrew, an ancient cross that "sicut hodie cernitur, servat imaginem" (can be seen even today, as a likeness remains). Both Margaret's interest in her descendants, which implicitly include Edith/Matilda and her own children, and the fact that the ancient cross can be seen "even today" highlight the *Vita*'s assumption that objects, even when described within the text, are present reminders of Margaret's position and power.

Turgot's understanding that Margaret had a rich legacy in precious objects, including books, seems to have been shared by Reginald of Durham, writing in the second half of the twelfth century.[59] Reginald describes how she "transmiserat" (had transmitted) to Saint Cuthbert, whose cult was centered at Durham, "textum argenteum, cappam sindone praeciosam, et crucem praemirifice unionibus et margaritis expolientibus radiatam, quam etiam moriens in manu sibi tenuerat" (a silver-decorated gospel book, a precious cape of fine muslin, and a shining cross with wonderful large pearls and polished small pearls, which she, dying, had held herself in her hand).[60] Margaret's gifts create a continuity between Reginald's own present, Margaret's relatively recent past, and Cuthbert's four-hundred-year-old past. The cross, in particular, evokes Margaret both physically, as a contact relic, and verbally, through her name. That she held it "in manu" (in her hand) at death closely connects the cross to her person at this key moment between the past and present, while the "margaritis" (small pearls) that cover the cross provide a verbal connection with "Margaret." Margaret's name, derived from the Latin word for pearl, "margarita," was highly unusual in England in her day, and though as a result of Margaret's fame it may have been more common by the time Reginald wrote, its etymology still surely stood out to readers.[61] Although Reginald wrote after Turgot, this anecdote, and the cross it describes, may have already been known to Edith/Matilda and Turgot, whose community at Durham had received the gift.

By the time Turgot wrote the *Vita*, objects had also been associated with Edith/Matilda as a sign of her own queenly legacy and right. A courtier recorded that, at her baptism ceremony, the infant Edith, as she was then named, grabbed the royal headdress of her godmother (and future mother-in-law), Matilda of Flanders, and pulled it over her own head.[62] This was taken as an omen of Edith's future queenship. In this anecdote, the headdress passes on a legacy of female leadership, but it also creates a material, though nonbiological, relationship between Matilda of Flanders, the wife of William the Conqueror, and Edith/Matilda, a descendant of

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the English kings William overthrew. The headdress, therefore, like Emma of Normandy's book in the *Encomium*'s frontispiece, becomes a symbol of a genealogy that negotiates extremely complex diplomatic relations.

Margaret and Malcolm's Book Production

The *Vita*'s first anecdote describes how Malcolm decorates Margaret's favorite books and delivers them to her, providing a striking parallel with Edith/Matilda's own patronage of the *Vita* as described in the prologue:

> Unde et libros, in quibus ipsa vel orare consueverat, vel legere; ille, ignarus licet litterarum, sepe manuversare solebat et inspicere; et dum ad ea quis illorum esset ei carior audisset, hunc & ipse cariorem habere, deosculari, sæpius contrectare. Aliquando etiam advocato aurifice ipsum codicem auro gemmisque perornari præcepit, atque perornatum ipse Rex ad Reginam, quasi suæ devotionis indicium, referre consuevit.
>
> [Although he was illiterate, he often used to turn in his hands and inspect books that she herself used either to pray or to read; and when he heard that a certain book was particularly dear to her, he himself held that one dearer, kissing and caressing it more often. And sometimes, summoning a goldsmith, he ordered the book itself to be adorned with gold and gems, and the king himself would deliver the adorned book to the queen as a sign of his devotion.]

The *Vita*'s scene mimics images of book presentation, like the *Encomium* frontispiece, as Richard Gameson observes, but with the unusual feature of a woman being presented with a book by a man of royal status.[63] As the previous discussion of the *Vita*'s prologue and the *Encomium*'s frontispiece suggests, book dedications could be important spaces for asserting women's power and position within their familial relations, including marriages and genealogies. This description of book dedication is especially interesting because of the literary genealogy it suggests; it comes after Turgot's own dedication of the *Vita* to Edith/Matilda, linking mother and daughter as queenly recipients of texts.

In describing a luxuriously decorated book, Turgot may have had in mind the four lavishly illuminated and jeweled gospel books commissioned by Judith of Flanders, who was an important donor to Durham Cathedral and a relative of Emma of Normandy, Margaret of Scotland, and Edith/Matilda.[64] Two of these books contain dedicatory images of Judith in which she is pictured without her husband.[65] Judith requested the books at a time when her social status was slipping due to her

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husband's political and military action, so her husband's absence in the images, though not unusual, may align with a desire to assert her independent spiritual dedication and material wealth.[66] Like the *Encomium* frontispiece and the *Vita*'s description of Malcolm's book presentation to Margaret, the frontispiece in Judith's gospel book New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 709 characterizes her in part through its emphasis on books. The frontispiece depicts the Virgin Mary holding a book and Saint John writing a book (presumably his gospel) on either side of Jesus on the tree. A smaller figure of Judith, in secular dress, wraps her arms around the base of the tree. As the crucifixion depicts the gospel book's own climactic moment, Judith's embrace of the tree invites the viewer to imagine her pious yet powerful grasp of the book itself.

Judith's frontispiece suggests again that women's interactions with books in dedication images – whether visual or verbal – can be a means of defining their political and familial relations. Judith throws all her physical devotion around the cross and, implicitly, her exceptionally expensive books, with her husband tellingly absent. In the *Encomium* frontispiece, Emma's husband Cnut is also absent, with the book Emma receives, which is about him, taking his place. Unlike these images, in the *Vita*, Malcolm is not only present in the dedication description but also actively participates in the book's embellishment. The sensuality of the way he turns the books over in his hands ("manuversare") and kisses ("deosculari") and caresses ("contrectare") them before having them decorated underscores his physical involvement in the production. Malcolm's attachment to the books' material form and his enhancement of their material value align with the convention of paternal lines transmitting wealth and position in worldly terms, as discussed in relation to Hildebert's poem about Edith/Matilda and Goscelin's life of Edith of Wilton.

In this case of a biological family, where the book episode involves a husband and wife and is recounted in a book written for their daughter, book production has reproductive echoes as well – though in a way that slightly troubles traditional gender hierarchies.[67] Whereas in the Aristotelian model of procreation men provide the character or seed of a child and women only the matter, as discussed in the Introduction, here Margaret reads and approves the spiritual content of the book – its character – while Malcolm supplies only its outer material. The *Vita* also makes clear that, despite Malcolm's significant participation and affection, this form of book production starts and ends with Margaret, who initially shows interest in a certain book through her superior literacy and piety and

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then receives the final product. The dedication description in this case helps to center Margaret as the key parent for her daughter's lineage by highlighting their shared legacy of literary patronage while both including and subtly displacing Malcolm in that legacy.

Margaret's Gospel Book: Submerged Book Miracles

The *Vita*'s second book episode, and only miracle, places Margaret's legacy in a far wider context than her immediate relations and with a stronger connection to the material world, as it concerns an extant book – Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Latin Liturgical f.5.[68] From here on, I use the term "Bodleian codex" to refer to the actual book in contrast to Turgot's description of it in the *Vita*.[69] As the remainder of this chapter focuses on the miracle, the relevant passage is quoted here at length:

> Habuerat librum Euangeliorum, gemmis & auro perornatum, in quo quatuor Euangelistarum imagines pictura auro admixta decorabat; sed & capitalis quæque littera auro tota rutilabat. Hunc codicem, præ ceteris, in quibus legendo studere consueverat, carius semper amplexata fuerat. Quem quidam deferens, dum forte per vadum transiret; liber, qui minus caute pannis fuerat obvolutas, in medias aquas cecidit; . . . Tandem in profundo fluminis apertus jacere reperitur, ita ut illius folia impetu aquæ sine cessatione agitarentur, & panniculi de serico violentia fluminis abstraherentur, qui litteras aureas, ne foliorum contactu obfuscarentur, contexerant . . . Certe integer, incorruptus, illæsus, de medio fluminis extrahitur, ita ut minime ab aqua tactus videretur. Candor enim foliorum, & integra in omnibus formula litterarum ita permansit, sicut erat antequam in fluvium cecidisset; nisi quod in extremis foliis, in parte, vix aliquod humoris signum videri poterat. Liber simul & miraculum ad Reginam refertur: quæ reddita Christo gratiarum actione, multo carius quam ante codicem amplectitur.
>
> [She had a gospel book, exquisitely adorned with precious stones and gold, which was decorated with images of the four Evangelists in a mixture of paint and gold. She was always more attached to this precious book than to any of the others to which she was usually devoted to reading. Once, while the person carrying it was crossing a ford, the book, which had been wrapped carelessly in a piece of cloth, fell into the middle of the water. . . . Finally, it was found lying open in the depths of the river, and its pages were tossed without ceasing by the fury of the water. And the little cloths of silk, which covered the golden letters so that they would not be degraded by contact with the pages, were removed forcibly by the violence of the water. . . . Yet, truly, it was rescued from the middle of the river, intact, incorrupt, inviolate, so that it hardly seemed to have been touched by the water. Indeed, the whiteness of the pages and the intact appearance

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of all the letters remained just as before the book had fallen into the river. Except that, in the very last pages in parts, some evidence of moisture could be seen ever so slightly. Both the book and the miracle were brought to the queen, who, having given thanks to Christ, held this book even dearer than before.]

This miracle of a book recovered from the water (mostly) undamaged recalls similar miracles by several other key British saints, including Cuthbert and Columba, placing Margaret in a landscape of British sanctity. As Michelle P. Brown observes, book miracles and book relics are a particular feature of insular saints' cults.[70] Hence, this saintly evocation not only helps convey the spiritual legacy Edith/Matilda inherits but also reinforces her authority through her British parentage – maternal and paternal – rather than Norman marriage, as hinted at in the prologue.

Turgot, as prior of Durham – a community dedicated to Saint Cuthbert, one of England's most popular saints – likely had an immediate model for a book submersion miracle. Around the same time and in the same place that Turgot wrote the *Vita*, Symeon of Durham wrote *Libellus de exordio*, possibly under Turgot's direction, to celebrate Cuthbert's translation to Durham Cathedral.[71] In the life of Cuthbert contained in the *Libellus*, a miracle of a submerged gospel book, likely the Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library Cotton MS Nero D.iv), occurs after the saint's death. As Cuthbert's followers set sail for Ireland in the hope of founding a new community, having fled Viking attacks on Lindisfarne and wandered for many years, they encounter a violent storm at sea. In this storm, "cadens ex ea [nauis] textus euangeliorum auro gemmisque perornatus, in maris ferebatur profunda" (a gospel book ornamented with gold and gems fell from [the ship] and was carried down to the depths of the sea).[72] With this ill omen, Cuthbert's followers realize their mistake in leaving England and return to land where, on the shores at Whithorn, following a vision from Cuthbert, they find "ipsum sanctum euangeliorum codicem reperiunt, qui sicut forinsecus gemmis et auro sui decorm, ita intrinsecus litteris et foliis priorem preferebat pulchritudinem, ac si ab aqua minime tactus fuisset" (that same holy book of the gospels, which retained its enrichment of gems and gold on the outside, as on the inside it showed the former beauty of its letters and pages, as if it had not been touched by the water at all).[73] It is worth noting how close Symeon's language in these passages is to Turgot's descriptions of Margaret's book in the *Vita*. Just as Cuthbert's book is a "textus euangeliorum auro gemmisque perornatus," Margaret's is a "librum euangeliorum, gemmis & auro perornatum."

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While his is found "si ab aqua minime tactus fuisset," hers is found in such a state that "minime ab aqua tactus videretur."[74]

In linking Margaret to Cuthbert and Durham, Turgot attaches her to a community in which books associated with saints had a well-established and lively legacy. In the *Libellus*, Symeon explains that the gospel book in Cuthbert's life survives thanks to both Cuthbert's saving power and the makers of the book: Bishop Eadfrith, who wrote it with his hand; Athelwald, who ordered it to be decorated with gold and gems; and Saint Billfrith, who did the handiwork.[75] He thus extends the book's power to a community rather than limiting it to an individual. Symeon also describes Bede, whose remains were likely at Durham and who wrote a life of Cuthbert, as having a legacy through books: "Post mortem per uniuersas mundi partes omnibus in libris suis uiuens innotuit" (after his death . . . [he] lived on in his books and became known to everyone all over the world).[76] The book that falls into the ocean is, therefore, also a testament to Cuthbert's influence across time and to the industry and collaboration of his followers, particularly because he himself seems not to have handled the book, which is described as being made after his death.

Durham had material proof of a legacy in actual books. The Lindisfarne Gospels, presumably the book recovered from the ocean, was held at Durham Cathedral. A gospel of John (London, British Library, Additional MS 89000) belonging to Cuthbert was also found in the saint's tomb during a translation ceremony in 1104 likely overseen by Turgot.[77] By the mid-twelfth century, when Reginald of Durham was writing, Durham apparently owned a gospel book belonging to Margaret, as mentioned earlier.[78] Though well after Turgot's time, when Cuthbert's tomb was opened again c. 1153–1154, the saint was found with a version of his own life.[79]

While the *Vita*'s book miracle has important echoes with that in Cuthbert's life, other book miracle analogues would also have had significance for Edith/Matilda. Adomnán's life of the Irish saint Columba, who was credited with establishing Christianity in Scotland, contains two submerged book miracles. Columba was a favorite saint of the kings of Scotland, and the name of Edith/Matilda's father, Malcolm (Maél Colum), signified the "servant of St. Columba."[80] Columba's Christian mission in Scotland also aligns with the *Vita*'s descriptions of Margaret's reinforcement of Christianity, making both Edith/Matilda's parents, in name and deed, respectively, symbolic descendants of the saint. Like Margaret in the *Vita*, Columba was closely associated with books, at least three of which survive today: the Book of Kells (Dublin, Trinity College,

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MS 58), the Book of Durrow (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 57), and Columba's Psalter, or the Cathach (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 12. R.33). The Cathach was allegedly copied by Columba himself, and a special shrine was created for it in Ireland in the late eleventh century, during the lifetimes of Turgot and Edith/Matilda.[81]

In the earliest extant copy of Turgot's *Vita* – London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius D.iii – readers can easily compare Margaret's and Columba's book miracles because Adomnán's life of Columba follows Turgot's life of Margaret, with only Aelred's life of Ninian between them. Interestingly, Aelred's life of Ninian also includes a miracle about a book that remains dry in the rain. Adomnán's life of Columba (bk. II, ch. 8) contains two miracles in which books fall into rivers in Ireland, both of which occur after Columba's death.[82] In the first, a youth falls into the River Boyne with a satchel of books. When his drowned body and satchel are recovered twenty days later, all the books have rotted except for one written by Columba himself, which remains dry and untouched. A second miracle immediately follows about a hymnal, also written by Columba, that falls into another river in Leinster along with the boy who is carrying it. The book lies in the water from Christmas until Easter, when some women discover and return it to its original owner, a Pictish priest, Iogenan, who finds it dry, clean, and unharmed. The enduring nature of both books is emphasized by the fact that they outlive not only Columba but also their drowned porters.

While Edith/Matilda and Turgot were certainly familiar with the lives of Cuthbert and Columba, they may not have known of the Irish saint Monenna, whose apparently very parochial cult was centered at Burton-upon-Trent, England. However, Monenna's submerged book miracle has interesting similarities with Margaret's, as it concerns a female saint and, unlike Cuthbert's and Columba's miracles, occurs while she is still alive. Later twelfth- and thirteenth-century representations of the life of Monenna (Modwenna) are discussed in the following chapter; but at the time Margaret's *Vita* was written, it is likely that only Conchubranus's eleventh-century Latin life of Monenna existed. In Conchubranus's version, one of Monenna's companions, Ite, who is the head of a neighboring religious house, sends a girl, Osid, to Monenna with a book.[83] Crossing a plank bridge over a river, Osid falls into the water. The larger part of this narrative describes how on the third day, with clear allusions to Christ's resurrection, Ite and Monenna meet at the river by chance and go in search of Osid. They pray tearfully at the river bank, and Monenna summons Osid from the waters, from which she arises alive. In Conchubranus's

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version, the book is not mentioned, with the story's focus shifting entirely to the girl; however, in Geoffrey of Burton's account, written c. 1118–1150, the book is recovered unharmed.[84] In both versions, after Osid is resuscitated, Monenna tells the other two women that she cannot remain with them in England but must go to Ireland, and they insist on accompanying her across the sea.

This last detail in the Monenna miracle makes clear a feature found in the book miracles in all three lives – that books cross not only time but also space and, in doing so, lay claim to both. In Columba's life, his books fall into rivers in his Irish birthland, helping situate the saint's legacy there despite his spending most of his career in Scotland. His influence in Scotland, however, is evinced by the Pictish priest, who owns one of the rescued books and verifies its intactness. In Monenna's life, the book miracle is likewise associated with international movement, serving as a pretext for Monenna and her followers' journey from England to Ireland. The trio of women, led by Monenna, is stronger after the book's miraculous resurrection, which provides Monenna's companions with the will to follow her across a larger body of water than the river on their course to Ireland. Indeed, the book participates in the miracle's larger focus on bridging – bridging the river, Ite's and Monenna's religious houses, life and death, and England and Ireland. By contrast, in Cuthbert's *vita*, the gospel book dissuades the saints' followers from crossing from England to Ireland as it seems to throw itself almost deliberately into the water, contesting the monks' flight to Ireland.[85] In all three lives, the miraculously recovered books are not only associated with international movement but also become a symbol of, and authorization for or against, such crossings.

These types of cultural crossings suited Margaret and Edith/Matilda, as well as Turgot. In drawing on a miracle type associated with British saints' movements between England, Ireland, and Scotland, the *Vita* may be gesturing toward the similar cross-regional negotiations of both queens. However, whereas the lives examined above specify the locations, either by country, river, or town name, where or between which the miracle occurred, Turgot states only that Margaret's book falls "in medias aquas" (the middle of the water), without naming even the kingdom in which the river is located. Turgot's omission is striking because he describes the book itself so precisely and takes care to specify where events occur elsewhere in the *Vita*. It is possible that he did not know where the miracle took place and did not want to be accused of fabrication, particularly as the miracle presumably had happened within living memory. Or he felt that "in

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medias aquas" was enough to convey the miracle's purpose. Rivers, Michelle Warren remarks, are "the most unstable of geopolitical boundaries," but they also draw people together more than they separate them.[86] As such, a river would have been a suitable symbol of the fragile and tumultuous Scottish-English-Norman political relations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as well as of the unity of both kingdoms that Margaret and Edith/Matilda were intended to facilitate. Placing Margaret's gospel book miracle in Scotland or England could have been read as placing her legacy more strongly in one of these kingdoms, which Turgot and Edith/Matilda were likely unwilling to do, at least so explicitly.[87] The resurrection of Margaret's book between two banks of a river also serves as an appropriate general symbol for the work of political unification important to Margaret's queenship (between England and Scotland) and crucial to that of her daughter (between the Norman and English lines).

Margaret's Book and the Bodleian Codex

A key difference between Margaret's book miracle and the examples examined above is Margaret's own intimate interactions with her book. In addition to drawing on an insular tradition of book miracles, Turgot seems to have sought to depict Margaret's book as a contact relic and, to do so, also evokes virgin martyr narratives, which often give particular attention to the saint's body. As illustrated in the account of the miracle, quoted earlier, Margaret engages intimately and intensely with the gospel book, holding it – or embracing it, as "amplexata fuerat" implies – and reading it with zeal ("legendo studere"). The book's richly ornate exterior and precious images suit Margaret's worldly position as a queen and recall the earlier description of Malcolm's decoration of her books, further underscoring her royal status. Most important to the miracle, however, is the durability of the book, which emerges intact from a sort of watery death. Given this focus, it is significant that the miracle is placed at the end of chapter 3, right before the long and dramatic description of Margaret's own death in chapter 4.

The miracle makes a strong case for the power of books – particularly when they are also contact relics – to embody their owner. Once Margaret's book falls into the river, it takes on a life of its own. In comparison to the submerged book miracles discussed above, the *Vita*'s focus on the book's experience in the water is unusual. However, it is reminiscent of female virgin martyr lives. For example, in the life of Margaret of Antioch, whose

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elaborate attention to the saint's legacy in books was discussed earlier, the heroine's last torture before death is to be submerged in a vessel of water at the king's command.[88] When she prays to God to make the experience a baptism for her, the ropes holding her hands and feet loosen, and she rises from the water unharmed, leading thousands to convert. In Turgot's *Vita*, the gospel book takes on a similar martyr role, with the water playing the tormenting tyrant. It lies open and exposed ("apertus") on the riverbed, its pages ceaselessly ravaged ("agitarentur") by the water, while the water acts with fury ("impetus") and violence ("violentia"). The water tears at the book's silken protective cloths, put in place to prevent degradation ("obfuscarentur") of the book's letters through contact – a description that evokes attempted rape or the topos of the tyrant's attempts to break the saint's chastity in virgin martyr lives. Yet, like most virgin martyrs, the book survives this torture, emerging intact, incorrupt, inviolate ("integer, incorruptus, illæsus"), except for a few wrinkles.

The gospel book returns from the water, therefore, not only as Margaret's favorite book but almost as its own character, vivified for the reader by the adventures it has undergone. To some extent, the book becomes a surrogate body for Margaret, allowing Turgot to infuse Margaret figuratively with the sanctity of the virgin martyrs while still retaining the *Vita*'s historicity. The slight damage to the final pages, on which "vix aliquod humoris signum videri poterat" (some evidence of moisture could be seen ever so slightly), supports this connection. This description of damage may reflect the state of the Bodleian codex, which Gameson suggests exhibits some signs of water damage.[89] Yet this minor mark of contact with the physical world is unusual in submerged book miracles. In Symeon's *Libellus*, as quoted earlier, Cuthbert's gospel book is recovered from the ocean "si ab aqua minime tactus fuisset" (as if it had not been touched by the water at all), with the book's enduring perfection paralleling the perfection of Cuthbert's own body ("incorruptum . . . corpus"), which also remains undecayed after death.[90]

The small sign of damage on Margaret's book may seek to justify her status as a saint who is, as a mother, no longer virginal and entirely "incorrupt." In saints' lives, decay on a deceased saint's body is often attributed to small sins during their lifetime. In Goscelin's life of Edith of Wilton, Edith, now deceased, comes to Dunstan in a vision before her translation, explaining that on opening her coffin, he will find her body intact, except for her eyes, hands, and feet, which are compromised because of frivolity during her lifetime.[91] This frivolity may refer to

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Edith's penchant for beautiful robes and other luxuries, a tendency Goscelin is ambivalent about, considering her status as a nun, but justifies as necessary to her simultaneous role as an English princess. In another example of bodily degradation, Saint Athelthryth (Audrey, as named in Chapter 3) dies from a tumor on her neck as a punishment for wearing necklaces, though her body is later found healed and intact thanks to her virginity.[92] In light of these analogues of well-known royal holy women, Turgot's decision to mention the minor damage to Margaret's book may similarly point to her worldly flaws – perhaps her concern with material adornments and her intimate relationship with her husband, both of which are gestured toward in the earlier episode of book decoration as well as other places in the *Vita*. These flaws also include her motherhood, which is the very reason why the *Vita* exists. While these characteristics are not ideal in a saint and distinguish her from the virgin martyr type that the gospel book miracle evokes, they are crucial to Margaret's roles as a model queen, wife, and mother.[93] The gospel book miracle, therefore, refigures the terms of female saintliness to suit Margaret's position and to justify her as both a powerful queenly ancestor for Edith/Matilda and worthy of canonization.

Traces in the Bodleian codex suggest that around the same time that Turgot wrote the *Vita*, the codex was being molded into a political and spiritual relic, which Turgot's account may have sought to support. While Turgot describes the book as equally opulent as other famous books, such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and Judith of Flanders's gospel books, the small eleventh-century Bodleian codex is relatively modest. Though it contains illuminated images of the Evangelists, there is no remaining evidence of a jeweled cover.[94] Around 1100, near the time Henry I and Edith/Matilda were married and just before Turgot wrote the *Vita*, a flyleaf containing a verse version of the gospel book miracle was added to the codex. Gameson points out that the poem's scribe attempts to match the earlier hand of the rest of the codex, which dates to c. 1030–1070, giving the poem a "slightly archaic feel."[95] The scribe's deliberate attention to the book's historical value suggests that whoever added the flyleaf poem was concerned with presenting the poem, along with the book, as a remnant of the past. This attention to Margaret's gospel book was likely in part an attempt to promote it as a contact relic for Margaret's growing cult, but, considering that the flyleaf was added around the time when Edith/Matilda ascended to the English throne, it likely had political resonances as well.

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The verse miracle in the Bodleian codex, which is essentially a poem of the book's own history, places the book in a more secular, royal context than the account in the *Vita*. In the poem, the book falls into the water while being transported carelessly by a priest ("presbyter") who intends to use it to swear an oath.[96] This oath appears to be a worldly contract, sworn between people ("inter se"), rather than with God.[97] The poem's secular slant comes largely through its focus for six lines at the center of the poem on a lay soldier ("miles") who saves the book. While the negligent priest does not even notice that he has dropped the book, the soldier sees it and immediately wants to rescue it from a whirlpool.

> Sed miles quidam cernens post multa momenta;
> Tollere iam uoluit librum de flumine mersum;
> Sed titubat subito librum dum uidit apertum;
> Credens quod codex ex toto perditus esset;
> At tamen inmittens undis corpus cum uertice summo;
> Hoc euangelium profert de gurgite apertum;
> O uirtus clara cunctis, O gloria magna.
>
> [Much later, however, a certain soldier caught sight of it.
> Straightaway he wanted to raise the submerged book out of the river;
> but when he saw that the book was open, suddenly he hesitated
> believing that the codex would be utterly ruined.
> Nevertheless, he hurled himself head first into the waves
> and bore the open gospel book out from the whirlpool.
> What virtue clear to all, what a great glory!][98]

Whereas the *Vita* places Margaret and the book at the center of the miracle, the poem focuses on the attention and noble action of the lay soldier. Margaret (assuming the "regina" is Margaret) is referred to only in the poem's last line, "Saluati semper sint rex reginaque sancta / Quorum codex erat nuper saluatus ab undis" (May ever the king and holy queen be well / whose book was lately rescued from the waves). This benediction briefly acknowledges the queen's saintliness with "sancta," focusing instead on the royal couple's secular status as king and queen and attributing the book's ownership to both. Indeed, that the poet omits Margaret's name and refers generally to the "king and queen" leaves open the possibility that the miracle could apply to another king and queen – perhaps the recently married Henry and Edith/Matilda, who was also known for her piety. If the *Vita* was written after the poem in the codex, Turgot may in part have been trying to reclaim the book for Margaret and a particularly British tradition of spirituality from which Edith/Matilda could also benefit.

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Matrilineage through Books

Written in the early twelfth century, when patrilineal genealogies and chronicles were growing in popularity,[99] the *Vita* experiments with various ways of coupling genealogy with written culture beyond patrilineage, particularly considering Edith/Matilda's high degree of literacy and political involvement. Using spirituality associated with textual objects and practices to construct women's legacies is not new to Margaret's *Vita*, as the examples of Margaret of Antioch, Edith of Wilton, Emma of Normandy, and Judith of Flanders suggest. Yet the growing literary and documentary culture of the twelfth-century English royal court, developed in part by Edith/Matilda herself, increasingly tied textual practices to the construction of royal genealogies. In the *Vita*, patterns of book ownership, presentation, and patronage – starting with Edith/Matilda's own request for the book in the prologue – form a basis for the text's genealogical aims, highlighting a shared interest of mother and daughter that creates a matrilineal legacy of piety and queenship.

William of Malmesbury seems to have recognized the power of matrilineage through books when he sought to draw Edith/Matilda's daughter, Empress Matilda, into her mother's literary interests and patronage. In a letter that circulated with some manuscripts of the *Gesta regum Anglorum*, commissioned by Edith/Matilda, William urged Empress Matilda to patronize the chronicle right as she was starting her unprecedented campaign to claim the English throne as her father's heir.[100] In presenting the book to her, William supports her claim, but justifies her right to the throne through her mother rather than her father: "Satis deceret uos imperaticem dominari ubi mater uestra merito ueneranda insignis regina dominabatur" (It seemed to us right and proper that you as empress should rule where your mother . . . ruled as a famous queen).[101] Sara McDougall suggests that Henry I chose his daughter, Empress Matilda, over his illegitimate son, Robert of Gloucester, as his heir precisely because of her West Saxon maternal ancestry.[102]

Whereas the *Vita* focuses explicitly on the line of English rulers only in its first chapter, the *Gesta regum* retains this focus throughout, as its title suggests; William describes how Edith/Matilda initiated the writing of the chronicle by requesting information about her West Saxon lineage and the English kings, telling the Empress that the book "cum totus de uestris tractetur progenitoribus" (deals entirely with your forebears).[103] Along with this genealogy of kings, which suited Empress Matilda's ruling ambitions, William also suggests a legacy of reading and literary patronage

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for her through her mother. He states that books were key to the career of Edith/Matilda, who was devoted to "litterarum negotiis operam" (the business of literary studies), a phrase that echoes the *Vita*'s description of reading as an "opus" for Margaret, incorporated into her other administrative duties.[104] In closing his letter, William again ties the Empress's acceptance of the *Gesta regum* – her mother's book – to her right to rulership: "Suscipiat igitur imperialis clementia uestra exiguum munus, et munere nostro dominationem nostri" (May your imperial Majesty therefore deign to accept our humble gift, and by our gift the right to rule over us).[105] In imploring the Empress to study her ancestry and patronize the *Gesta regum*, William suggests that to claim her mother's political genealogy, she should start by claiming her mother's book.

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