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# DOSSIER

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**MATILDA 900: REMEMBERING  
MATILDA OF CANOSSA WIDE WORLD**

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# Middle Age, History, Matilda of Tuscany, Bonizo of Sutri, Daibert of Pisa

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*Countess Matilda of Tuscany played many different roles over the course of her long public career. One of her more important roles was that of patroness and protector to a number of reform minded churchmen. In the turbulent years of the so called Investiture Contest, the countess provided much needed material aid and physical protection to the reform popes and to their episcopal allies in Italy. Though she was genuinely committed to the reform agenda, Matilda's support for it and for its ecclesiastical exponents was not devoid of political calculation or of a healthy concern for the stability of her patrimony. An examination of her relationships with two very different reform bishops, Bonizo of Sutri and Daibert of Pisa, reveals this important aspect to her activities on behalf of ecclesiastical reform.*

One of the most important roles played by Matilda of Tuscany over the course of her long and noteworthy political career was that of patroness to reform minded candidates for the episcopal sees of central and northern Italy. Her sponsorship of these clerics constituted an important service to the reform papacy in its seemingly life and death struggle with Henry IV of Germany. Scholars have long recognized that in the turbulent period of 1076–1094 Matilda's court served as a vital refuge for the many clerical reformers driven from their posts in Germany and

Italy by the hostility of the German crown [Robinson 1973, 185].<sup>1</sup> A number of these clerical exiles, in turn, parlayed the countess' hospitality into successful bids for episcopal sees within and or approximate to her patrimony. Nevertheless, Matilda's support for so called Gregorian episcopal candidates was not driven simply by ideological considerations. Her activity as episcopal sponsor also advanced her own interests as a landed magnate in a region where urban populations were growing in wealth and military power. While Matilda's commitment to the reform agenda is beyond dispute, she attempted to promote it in ways consonant with the sustainability of her rule in her own domain. Contrary to the contemporary imperialist polemic, the countess was not the dupe of the reform papacy.

An examination of Matilda's relationship with two of those clerics who found refuge in her territory in the period 1085–1089 illuminates quite well the complexity of her role as episcopal patroness: namely, Bonizo of Sutri and Daibert of Pisa. The pair differed greatly in many ways. Bonizo, for his part, was a commoner Patarene cleric from Cremona likely elevated to the see of Sutri sometime in 1078 by Gregory VII [Berschin 1972, 5–6].<sup>2</sup> Thus, in ideological terms, Bonizo's pedigree and credentials were impeccable. Daibert, conversely, began his ecclesiastical career as an imperialist, who had received diaconal ordination at the hands of the imperial chancellor, Archbishop Wezilo of Mainz. Nevertheless, despite his questionable ideological credentials, after Daibert entered Matilda's circle sometime in the late 1080s his career flourished under her tutelage. In 1088, he was elected bishop of Pisa

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson cites Book II vv. 266–280 of Donizo of Canossa's *Life of Matilda of Tuscany* as the original source for this designation of Matilda as a protector of reform clerics. Donizo of Canossa, *Vita Mathildis carmine scripta*, V. 2, 65.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pataria* was an often violent urban popular reforming movement that originated in Milan in the late 1050s under the leadership of the deacon, Ariald of Varese. From Milan, the movement spread across Lombardy to other cities. For more details on the history and nature of the *Pataria* see Golinelli 1984.

and consecrated by Pope Urban II. Bonizo, on the other hand, profited very little personally from his association with the «most excellent countess Matilda».<sup>3</sup> Although a member of her clerical entourage since 1085 or even perhaps from a bit earlier date, Bonizo failed to win any material support from her in a bold bid to secure the bishopric of Piacenza for himself in 1089 or 1090. Whereas Daibert eventually went on to become an archbishop, papal confidant, and Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Bonizo was physically disfigured by his opponents in Piacenza and forced into monastic retirement from whence he continued to write and to correspond until his death a few years later [Berschin 1972, 14 n. 46].

This paper will argue that Daibert's elevation to the Pisan see, viewed from an ecclesio-political perspective, was far more consonant with Matilda's needs in the late 1080s than Bonizo's quixotic attempt to secure the episcopal throne of Piacenza. It also fit into a pre-existing pattern of behavior between the countess and the Pisans. Thus, despite what must have been her ideological affinity for the Patarene cleric who had won Gregory VII's favor, Bonizo's specific ambition did not match the exigencies of her situation as a landed potentate operating in an age of urban revival. She was not prepared to commit herself politically and/or militarily to a dispute beyond her territory and fraught with controversy. Like any competent politician, she had to choose her battles carefully.

## **The Situation of the Reform Party following the Death of Pope Gregory VII**

At the death of Gregory VII on 25 May 1085 in his Salerno exile, the papal reform party seemingly faced a most desperate situation. The move-

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<sup>3</sup> Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad amicum*, IX, 620.

ment, ostensibly, was leaderless. The papal partisans, who had been able to make it to Gregory's court in exile, were largely physically separated from their comrades north of Rome in central and northern Italy and beyond the Alps. After having received his imperial coronation in Rome at the hands of his own anti-pope, Clement III, the former Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna, Henry was evidently ascendant in his own German kingdom and unchallenged as well in his Italian territories.

The work of H. E. J. Cowdrey [1983] and Valerie Eads [2000], nonetheless, has demonstrated that the apparently desperate situation of the papal party was something other than what it seemed. The party faced serious challenges for sure. But, its circumstances were more favorable than most scholars have imagined. Most significantly, in the period after Gregory's death, Matilda enjoyed a revival of her military power. The previous four or five years had been very trying ones for the countess. On the eve of the German king's first Italian expedition, his Lombard allies under the command of one of his illegitimate sons dealt her military forces a serious blow on 15 October 1080 at Volta, which lay near Mantua just below the main road to the Alpine Brenner Pass. The Matildine cities north and south of the Po River soon reacted to her defeat with insurrections against her authority. A successful revolt in the strategic Tuscan city of Lucca drove the arch-Gregorian, Anselm II, out of his see. When he entered Italy in April of 1081, Henry accused Matilda of treason for opposing his allies at Volta and commanded her to forfeit all her Lombard and Tuscan lands [Cowdrey 1998, 215]. For the next two years or so, the hostility of the German king and his Italian allies largely restricted the countess' movements to between her Apennine fortifications [Eads 2003, 397-398].

She remained, regardless, a thorn in the collective side of her adversaries. So successful were her small-scale military operations against her Henrican neighbors that they petitioned Henry in 1082 to lift his siege of Rome and campaign against the countess instead [Eads unpublished manuscript]. In this same year, Matilda also managed to deliver a sub-

stantial amount of gold and silver donated by various local churches to the besieged pope in Rome, while providing refuge to exiled reformers like Bonizo and Anselm. Valerie Eads<sup>4</sup> has further observed that the pace of the central Italian leg of Henry's retreat from Rome shortly after his imperial coronation by the antipope Guibert/Clement on Easter Sunday 1084 reveals the effectiveness of Matilda's military resistance even in the bleakest hours of the reform papacy. Based on the dates of the charters that he issued along his return journey to Germany, Eads [2000, 179] has pointed out that Henry's pace noticeably quickened as he passed through Matildine territory. Eads [2000, 191], furthermore, has remarked that Matilda's defeat of an army of Lombard Henricans at Sorbara on 2 July 1084 served notice to Henry's Italian allies that the backing of a distant emperor in Germany was not sufficient to guarantee them success on their own soil. Bernold of St. Blasien's *Chronicon* entry for the following year, 1085, adds to the impression that the countess remained a formidable figure. In his remarks, Bernold attributes the appointment of Catholic (id est, reform) bishops that year in Modena, Reggio, and Pistoia, to Matilda's recovery of her power<sup>5</sup>. The countess also made common cause with the monastery of Montecassino, which had emerged as a leading center of Gregorian activity following the pope's death. She worked very closely with the Roman cardinal-priest and abbot of Montecassino, Desiderius. After Anselm II's death on 18 March 1086, Desiderius, for a variety of reasons, became the leading candidate to succeed Gregory VII. On 24 May 1086, almost a year to the day of Gregory's death, a faction of Roman cardinal clergy elected him Victor III in Rome. However, because of the hostility of the Apulian Normans and the resurgence of the Roman *Guibertistas* under the leadership of the aforementioned Wezilo of Mainz, Desiderius/Victor quickly withdrew from the city without having been

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<sup>4</sup> Unpublished manuscript.

<sup>5</sup> Bernold, *Chronicon*, a. 1085, 443,. See Eads: 2000, 192.

consecrated [Cowdrey 1983, 196-197]. With Matilda of Tuscany's assistance, Desiderius/Victor engaged in a recruiting campaign over the following year among Normans, Lombards, and others to strengthen the political and military positions of the papal party to the point where he or another reform candidate could effectively govern the Roman Church [Cowdrey 1983, 198-200].

This reversal of political and military fortunes aside, the papal party, including Matilda, lacked the necessary strength to prevail on its own against the combined forces of the German emperor, his anti-pope, and the imperialist leaning aristocracy of northern Italy. For Matilda herself, one of her main priorities certainly must have been to repair her relationship with the cities of her patrimony. Henry's Italian forays had created a good deal of mischief for the countess in these places. Interestingly, Victor's successor, Urban II also cast a strategic eye on the cities of Italy as potential weak spots for Henry IV and his Italian partners in the war between papacy and empire. By the late 1080s, therefore, both pope and countess looked forward to forging ententes with the emerging urban powers of central and northern Italy. Each undoubtedly saw these new powers as potentially valuable pieces in their chess match against the imperialist party.

### **Bonizo of Sutri: Popular Activist in the Tuscan Court**

During Henry IV's first Italian expedition, the king's forces drove Bonizo from Sutri and subsequently captured him outside of Rome [Berschin 1972, 9]. Somehow he regained his freedom and ended up in the entourage of the countess of Tuscany by 1085 or 1086 at the latest. One sure piece of evidence for this supposition comes in the form of Bonizo's history of papal-imperial relations, the *Liber ad amicum* (composed circa late 1085 or early 1086) [Berschin 1972, 23]. In particular, the peroration that concludes Bonizo's history ties it to the



orbit of the countess. Its conclusion, indeed, constitutes something of a mini-panegyric to Matilda. Here he extols her as a model holy warrior whom all the soldiers of God should imitate. She is a new Deborah who will surely triumph over Sisera and Jabin (i.e. Henry IV and Guibert/Clement) once again.<sup>6</sup> Bonizo's words, in fact, created a minor literary tradition that cast the countess as a second Deborah. As Walter Berschin [1972, 42] shrewdly observed long ago, throughout his history, Bonizo carefully weaves together the individual histories of the papacy, the House of Tuscany/Canossa, and his own movement, the Pataria. While scholars [Robinson 1978] have characterized the *ad amicum* as a piece of Gregorian polemic connected to the war of words that erupted between papacy and empire from 1076 onwards, and even as a biography of Gregory VII [Robinson 2004, 36], it is fundamentally a Patarene text [Dempsey 2010, 395]. The exiled bishop of Sutri hoped to re-invigorate his popular movement, which had been largely inactive since the murder of its lay leader the Milanese knight Erlembald Cotta in 1075, by convincing his ideological *amici* to return to the barricades so to speak in defense of the deceased Gregory VII's cause in imitation of his protector, the countess of Tuscany [Dempsey 2010, 395-397]. Bonizo clearly anticipated a revival of the Pataria's violent confrontation with the ecclesiastical establishments of the Lombard cities and their allies. Matilda, to an extent, certainly associated herself with the controversial popular reforming movement. In addition to Bonizo, the countess also sponsored Herman, the Patarene Roman cardinal-priest of SS Quattro Coronati. In 1087, with Matilda's aid, Herman was elected bishop of Brescia and served as Urban II's legate in Lombardy [Hüls 1977, 202]. Thanks to the reporting of the exiled conservative bishop of Alba, Benzo, we know that Bonizo and Herman took advantage of the protection afforded them by the countess to attempt to do what Bonizo had called for in the *ad amicum*: revive the Pataria.

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<sup>6</sup> Bonizo, *Liber ad amicum*, XI, 620.

Benzo, in chapter twenty-one of Book I of his *Ad Henricum IV imperatorem libri VII*, relates to the emperor that three demons, *Bonizello*, *Armanello*, and *Morticiello*, have been causing great confusion by usurping ecclesiastical functions in two different locales. He first laments that *Bonizello* is engaged in a great sham or deception in Piacenza.<sup>7</sup> He preaches there diabolical sermons to the people and he has condemned and consecrated churches.<sup>8</sup> According to Schwartz [1913, 191], Piacenza's long serving bishop, the arch conservative Dennis, died sometime between 1082 and 1085. His successor, the Milanese noble Aribert, is known only by one document dated 1 April 1086 [Schwartz 1913, 192]. We know further from the twelfth century *Collectio Britannica* that at some undisclosed time, maybe in 1088 or perhaps in 1089, a faction in Piacenza elected Bonizo bishop [Somerville, Kuttner 1996, 50]. The remnant of the city's Patarene faction was undoubtedly responsible for what was certainly a rump episcopal election. Rump episcopal elections were something of a Patarene hallmark [Dempsey 2006, 63]. Piacenza's Patarenes presumably summoned the exiled bishop of Sutri from Matildine territory to their city either before the aforementioned Aribert could establish himself in the city or, more likely, after he had died. Benzo, in Book twenty-two of his tome, additionally rues the fact that *Armanello* and *Morticiello* were simultaneously causing great trouble in the vicinity of the diocese of Alba.<sup>9</sup> Hans Seyffert [1996, 161 n. 332], the most recent editor of Benzo's work, has pointed out that, as described by Benzo, Herman's activity strongly resembles a Patarene style preaching campaign. The exiled bishop of Alba, most importantly, blames this Patarene plague for the sorry state of his own affairs<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Benzo, *Ad Henricum IV imperatorem libri VII*, I, ch. 21, 160.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, 160.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, ch. 22, 162.

Of the two enterprises denounced by Benzo above, the bishop of Sutri's was clearly the more audacious. By all accounts (including Bonizo's *ad amicum*), Piacenza's Patarene branch had never been able to gain the upper hand in the city.<sup>11</sup> Bishop Dennis, the inveterate foe of Gregory VII, maintained his authority in his diocese throughout his own entire pontificate [Schwartz 1913, 191]. The city, moreover, was a suffragan see of Ravenna, the home base of the anti-pope Guibert/Clement.

All of the direct information about Bonizo's gambit in Piacenza comes from three short texts from Urban II contained in the *Collectio Britannica*: namely, CB 5, 7 and 8. The first of these texts, CB 5, is addressed by the pope to Bonizo himself. The other two texts, CB 7 and 8 are addressed to Urban's legate in Lombardy, the aforementioned Herman and to an 'M' respectively. The three texts obviously belong to the same time period, but it is not clear when Urban composed them [Berschlin 1972, 12; Somerville, Kuttner 1996, 51]. Given the significance of Lombardy in the contest between empire and papacy, one would imagine that Urban would not have waited very long to address a crisis in Piacenza.

The texts make it clear that Bonizo faced serious resistance in Piacenza to his election and they were almost certainly composed in response to a request by Bonizo for papal confirmation of his election. In CB 5 [Somerville, Kuttner 1996, 50], Urban tells Bonizo that «We have heard and thus are saddened that many people, both clerics and laity have dissented from your election to the bishopric of Piacenza and had taken an oath against you»<sup>12</sup>.

In the face of the stiff opposition to him, the pope offered Bonizo only the most tepid support. Urban concluded his very brief message to Bonizo with the following pledge «If in any way it can be accomplished

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<sup>11</sup> Bonizo, *Liber ad amicum*, VI, 598.

<sup>12</sup> «*Audivimus unde contristamur plurimos videlicet tam clericos quam laicos de electione tua in Placentinum episcopatum dissentire et contra te iurasse*».

canonically and preserving the peace of the Church, we wish and desire that your election stands, and, as far as we can, to confirm it»<sup>13</sup>.

The pope's words hardly constitute a ringing endorsement of Bonizo's candidacy. Urban essentially left Bonizo to find his own way out of his difficult situation. In CB 7 and 8 [Somerville, Kuttner 1996, 51], the pope basically repeats the same message which he delivered to Bonizo in CB 5. In CB 7, he tells Cardinal Herman that even though he was neither unanimously elected nor elected by «the better clergy and better laity», Bonizo can stay in Piacenza provided his presence there can be established canonically and peacefully.<sup>14</sup> If this can be accomplished, he approves of Bonizo's election. Undoubtedly, «the better clergy and better laity» that is the noble clergy and laity, were the ones who had sworn an oath against the commoner Patarene.

The pope likewise informed 'M' that he wished Bonizo, «who is said to have labored much in the Church», to be enthroned in Piacenza provided it could be accomplished peacefully.<sup>15</sup> Robert Somerville [1996, 51] has remarked that there is no obvious clue as to whom 'M' refers. He has suggested, however, that Matilda of Tuscany was almost certainly the recipient of the pope's message.

It stands to reason that Bonizo would have turned to his fellow Patarene, Herman, and to the potentate who had rescued him from captivity, Matilda, for help in winning Urban's approval of his election. Yet, from Matilda's perspective as a territorial ruler who understood how hostilely local communities could re-act to interventions in their affairs, Boni-

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<sup>13</sup> «*Volumus enim et amamus, si fieri ullo modo canonice et pace ecclesie potest, electionem tuam permanere, et quantum in nobis est confirmare*».

<sup>14</sup> «*Si potest fieri ut in Placentino episcopatu permaneat Bonizo, quamvis non ab universitate illius ecclesie neque a melioribus tam clericis quam laicis electus sit, salva reverentia ecclesie canonice et cum pace, laudamus*».

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, 52: «*Sutrinus episcopus, qui multum in ecclesia laborasse dicitur, si cum pace et cleri populi que concordia fieri potest, volumus et pro eius reverentia desideramus ut in episcopatu Placentino, sicut olim electus est, sollempniter intronizetur*».

zo's daring foray into Piacenza's domestic affairs failed to serve her own purposes. Her active intervention on behalf of a sectarian episcopal candidate would have contradicted the impression that she may well have wished to create amongst her own townspeople that she respected the rights and aspirations of urban communities. Whatever her sympathies for Bonizo's ideology were, «the most excellent countess Matilda» could not commit herself to his enterprise. Bonizo, as a result, continued his work in Piacenza without any outside support. His opponents eventually assaulted him and rendered him physically unable to perform any public ministry. He likely retreated to his native Cremona and died there some five or so years later [Dempsey 2006, 67-69].

Divisive ideologically charged actions, such as Bonizo's, also did not fit Urban II's formula for advancing the reform agenda in Italy's cities and towns. The pope, from the very beginning of his pontificate, played up Gregory VII's offer of forgiveness contained in his last testament to all Henricans, including to Henry and Guibert/Clement, for their sins if they sincerely repented. He also consistently portrayed the German emperor and the anti-pope as the true agents of the discord and internecine conflict that had plagued the empire since 1080. Urban, ever the astute politician, understood that Henry's penchant for triumphalism and his orchestration of Guibert/Clement's election deeply concerned many of his Italian subjects. He understood quite well the Italian predilection for distant absentee emperors. He, consequently, pursued a détente policy with the ecclesiastical establishments of northern Italy from the earliest days of his papacy. Of particular significance, he managed to engineer a rapprochement between Rome and Milan, the birthplace of the Pataria. The culmination of the reconciliation between the two great Italian sees came in 1088 with the public bestowal of the pallium on the erstwhile imperialist, Archbishop Arnulf III, in Milan itself. It was bestowed on the archbishop by Urban's legate, Herman of SS Quattro Coronati [Cowdrey 1968, 287].

In formulating his détente policy, the pope may very well have been following the counsel of Matilda. As this paper will argue, the countess had recently collaborated with Pope Victor III on the joint Pisan-Genoese military expedition against the Muslim port of Mahdia, which helped reconcile Pisa with the reform papacy [Cowdrey 1977, 17]. It was a military undertaking, in fact, that had repaired a papal-Pisan alliance that she herself had previously helped forge between the city and Gregory VII in the 1070s. Matilda, as an experienced ruler, had learned how to play the game of Italian urban politics.

### **Daibert of Pisa: Erstwhile Henrican Turned Papal and Matildine Favorite**

Sometime in 1088, as he was repairing papal relations with Milan, Urban II personally re-ordained the subdeacon Daibert to the diaconate and then soon afterwards consecrated him bishop of Pisa. Just four or five years earlier, however, as stated above, the new Pisan bishop had been first ordained to the diaconate by the excommunicated Henrican archbishop of Mainz and imperial chancellor, Wezilo [Matzke 1998, 35–36]. Based on Michael Matzke's [1998, 11–36] investigation, it appears that Daibert belonged to one of the many northern Italian episcopal and municipal delegations that followed Henry IV back into Germany after his imperial coronation in the hopes of obtaining an imperial privilege. That he received ordination at Wezilo's hands demonstrates Daibert's initial desire to climb the clerical *cursum honorum* as a Henrican or *Guibertista*. It is not unimaginable that he hoped at some future time to parley his ordination at the hands of one of Henry's episcopal favorites into a bishopric. However, not long after his ordination, Daibert evidently forswore his allegiance to the emperor and crossed back into Italy. Matzke [1998, 33–35] has commented that his subsequent elevation to the Pisan see strongly hints that when he defected to

the papal camp Daibert entered the circle of clerics surrounding Matilda of Tuscany. Pisa lay within her patrimony, and as we shall explain below, she was associated with his last two predecessors there, Landulf and Gerard. Furthermore, just a year before Daibert's election and consecration, Matilda had co-sponsored with Pope Victor III the joint Pisan-Genoese military expedition against the Muslim port of Mahdia in modern day Tunisia [Cowdrey 1977, 16-17]. The flotilla's spiritual leader, a bishop named Benedict, was almost certainly Benedict of Modena, another one of the countess' episcopal clients [Cowdrey 1977, 16-17]. Matilda, therefore, probably did indeed introduce Daibert to the pope and that together, the countess and the pope presented him to the Pisans as a candidate for their then vacant episcopal see.

The political and military benefits of the friendship of a rising power like Pisa for pope and countess were obvious to all onlookers. Urban's actions with regards to Daibert, nonetheless, sent shock waves through the papal camp in Italy. The most direct evidence that we possess of these waves is the letter that the pope addressed to Bishop Peter of Pistoia (a beneficiary himself of Matilda's patronage), CB 30, in the fall or winter of 1088 [Somerville, Kuttner 1996, 105-109]. Urban's language makes it clear that he was responding to an earlier message from Peter in which he had complained about both his promotion of a repentant heretic to a rank higher than the one he had held prior to his defection and his re-ordination of Daibert to the diaconate. While Urban excused his promotion of Daibert on the basis of Daibert's outstanding personal qualities, he justified his re-ordination of Daibert to the diaconate on the basis of Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida's rigorist argument that a heretic (*i.e.*, the simonist Wezilo) cannot validly bestow the sacraments. It was the same theological line that the pope had taken at the Synod of Quedlinburg (20-26 April 1085) which he had presided over as Gregory VII's legate in Germany [Matzke 1998, 31].

It would appear, then, that on the thorny question of the validity of the sacraments of heretics (*i.e.*, simonists), Urban II was a theological

hardliner. Matzke [1998, 32], nevertheless, has remarked that a political motive lay behind the pope's declarations about the nullity of Guibert/Clement and of his ecclesiastical lieutenants' consecrations and ordinations. The political goal was to strike at the spiritual authority and prestige of the Henrican party. His re-ordination of Daibert in 1088, therefore, maintained the ecclesio-political line established at Quedlinburg and advanced the campaign to undercut the spiritual authority of the Henrican party and its anti-pope.

Paradoxically, at the same time, the pope's re-ordination of Daibert signaled his readiness to welcome back into the papal fold all those who had strayed into the Henrican camp. As Matzke [1998, 32-33] has put it, Urban employed a rigorist theological argument in Daibert's case in order to achieve a moderate political goal. He used a radical rationale to justify détente with an erstwhile Henrican. Such a gesture was in perfect keeping with his Milanese policy discussed above. In his letter to Peter, Urban makes sure to mention that Daibert had told him personally of his ordination by the simoniac Wezilo; but Urban also carefully adds that Daibert received his orders non-simoniacally.<sup>16</sup> The pope then offers the vague justification for Daibert's re-ordination that the need of the Church demanded it.<sup>17</sup> He assures his readers that Daibert has forsaken the heretics in body and spirit and that he has been laboring hard on the Church's behalf.<sup>18</sup> Most ironically, the pressing need that demanded Daibert's advancement involved the restoration of a papal-Pisan alliance first devised by Gregory VII and Matilda in 1076-1077.

In 1076, the year of the first major breach between Gregory VII and Henry IV, both men anxiously desired to shore up their strategic posi-

<sup>16</sup> Somerville, Kuttner 1996, 106: «*Porro Daibertum ab eo, licet simoniaci non simoniace, eiusdem confessione, comperimus in diaconum ordinatum*».

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*: «*Et ex integro necessitate ecclesiae ingruente diaconum constituimus*».

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*: «*Daibertum, ab hereticis et corpore et spiritu digressum atque utilitate ecclesiae pro viribus insudantem*».



tion on the Italian peninsula. One of the first cities to attract their attention was Pisa. In April of 1076, the Pisan see was vacant and the pope and Matilda immediately set about to bind the city closer to themselves [Matzke 1998, 51]. With a possible German invasion of her territories on the horizon, the countess recognized the importance of securing Pisa's fidelity. The subsequent upheaval in her cities in 1080 demonstrates the soundness of her instincts. What resulted was an ecclesio-political alliance that benefited pope, countess, and the Pisan *cives* alike.

Sometime before August of 1077, the Pisans elected the Milanese cleric, Landulf as their bishop. Because Gregory immediately embraced him and because of Matilda's subsequent penchant in the future for providing the cities of her patrimony with reform minded bishops, there is every reason to believe that the pair had presented Landulf to the Pisans as a candidate for their vacant see [Matzke 1998, 51]. It seems that part of the payoff to the Pisans for accepting Landulf came in August of 1077. Just seven months after the showdown at Canossa between pope and king, the countess donated a number of valuable *curtes* of land at key points along the Tuscan-Emilian Appenines to Pisa's bishop and cathedral chapter [Matzke 1998, 51]. The charter of donation stipulated that the properties could not be sold and that the cathedral canons had to live communally and chastely [Matzke 1998, 51]. Moreover, the charter practically gave the Pisans a supervisory role over the joint usufruct of the properties by the bishop and cathedral chapter. In September of 1077, Gregory further sweetened the pot for the Pisans by naming Landulf papal vicar for Corsica. A year later, Gregory personally consecrated Landulf and bestowed upon him a papal privilege for the protection of the goods of the Pisan Church. The privilege, however, stipulated that Landulf's successors had to be canonically elected and consecrated, faithful to the Roman Church and willing to help recover the lost portions of the *terra sancti Petri*. Matzke [1998, 51] sees in this last stipulation and in other aspects of Gregorian policy towards Pisa an implicit promise of papal co-operation with the Tuscan city's

designs on the mineral rich island of Sardinia, which once belonged to the papal patrimony.

Upon Landulf's death in 1079, the native Pisan, Gerard succeeded him. Like his predecessor, Gerard was a Gregorian loyalist and the pope personally consecrated him. Despite the great difficulties created for Gerard in Pisa by the second breach in papal-imperial relations in 1080 and Henry's subsequent Italian incursions, he remained faithful to the pope and the countess. With the defeat of Matilda's forces at Volterra in October of 1080, Pisa ostensibly went into the Henrican column. It seems that the cathedral chapter stood out as the center of the most enthusiastic support for the German monarch [Matzke 1998, 53]. In an attempt to draw the maritime power closer to himself, Henry formally abolished Matilda's authority in Pisa, surrendered some of his own privileges there, freed up both margravite and royal land outside the old city, and issued a decree for the maintenance of domestic peace [Matzke 1998, 54-55].

Nonetheless, Matzke [1998, 55] has demonstrated that, for all of Henry's concessions to the Pisans, the city was not staunchly Henrican. In this regard, he points to the telling fact that, unlike Anselm II of Lucca, Gerard never had to abandon his see. He remained active there throughout the years 1080-1084. When the emperor's release of margravite and royal land outside the old city ignited a civil war over the control of these parcels, Gerard stepped forward and negotiated a settlement between the warring factions, which was referred to as the *Lodo di Gerardo*.

With Gerard's death on 8 May 1085, Pisa lost its great authority figure, and Matzke [1998, 56] has speculated that the city's leading men began to search out for another leader, who could help maintain the peace in Pisa. Matzke believes that the Pisan leadership finally opted to revive the papal-Matildine alliance and that the Mahdia expedition of 1087 signaled Pisa's official reconciliation with its former partners. In fact, he believes that for the Pisans the expedition was a penitential act in atonement for its sins against the papacy in the years 1080-84. We know

from the *Carmen pisano*, a literary celebration of the assault written well after the event itself, that many of the campaigners made a pilgrimage to Rome prior to the flotilla's departure for North Africa. We also know from this same source that Pope Victor III received a portion of the expedition's plunder and a tribute payment from the Muslim emir. The flotilla's spiritual leader, Bishop Benedict, was again almost certainly the Matildine favorite, Benedict of Modena<sup>19</sup>.

According to Matzke [1998, 100], Urban II's personal re-ordination of Daibert to the diaconate and his consecration of him as Pisan bishop confirmed the reconciliation with Pisa and marked the formal resumption of the agreement first established during Gregory VII's pontificate. To say the least, Urban employed an uncharacteristically Gregorian measure to rescue a Gregorian policy. In a strange twist, Daibert's shady background made him especially valuable to the pope and countess *vis à vis* the Pisans. How more clearly could Urban and Matilda have conveyed to the city's Henrican holdouts, particularly to those in the cathedral chapter, that the past was in the past, than to rehabilitate and promote Daibert? Matilda also took a number of steps herself to demonstrate concretely her goodwill towards Pisa. She, increasingly, abstained from her rights and privileges in the city. In 1103, she went so far as to donate her residence at the Church of St. Nicola to the cathedral canons [Matzke 1998, 59].

For Matzke [1998, 57], the new bishop was not only a living symbol and guarantor of Pisa's renewed obedience to Rome and renewed fide-

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<sup>19</sup> Matzke has made the intriguing suggestion that given the close proximity in time between the Mahdian adventure and his election and consecration as Pisan bishop, Daibert may have accompanied Benedict to North Africa. His participation in this enterprise would have familiarized the Pisan leadership with Daibert and therefore, he would not have been an unknown quantity to them in 1088. Recall that in his letter of 1088 to Peter of Pistoia Urban writes that Daibert had worked on the Church's behalf after his renunciation of the Henrican cause. Matzke has surmised that Daibert rendered this service as part of Matilda's clerical entourage. If he is correct, then, Daibert could have participated in the countess' negotiations with the Pisans and Genoese about the Mahdia campaign. See 1998, 57.

lity to its seigneur, Matilda. He was also a guarantor of domestic peace within the burgeoning city. His new flock almost certainly expected him to reprise the peacemaking role formerly played by Gerard. In this respect, his Henrican background was especially valuable to the Pisans themselves. He was a living symbol of reconciliation.

### **Conclusion: The Road (Back) to Piacenza**

A year after Daibert's meteoric ascent to the Pisan see Matilda engaged in a still more controversial ecclesio-political enterprise that almost certainly went against her personal and spiritual inclinations. Bernold, in his *Chronicon* entry for 1089, announced that the countess, the daughter of Boniface and widow of Godfrey (the Hunchback), had married Welf V, the heir to the duchy of Bavaria.<sup>20</sup> Bernold assured his audience that Matilda had re-married not out of concupiscence but in obedience to the Roman pontiff so as to better support the Roman Church against the excommunicated, id est, the emperor and his anti-pope<sup>21</sup>.

Bernold's suggestion that the decision to re-marry was not born of Matilda's own personal feelings rings very true. There is the obvious fact that the union between the forty-three-old countess and the seventeen-year-old Welf V lasted for only a few acrimonious years. There is also the strong evidence that after the assassination of her first husband, Godfrey the Hunchback, the countess had taken an oath of holy widowhood [Dempsey 2011, 238-239]. Cinzio Violante [1972, 682-683, n. 324] pointed out long ago that in Italian reform circles there existed the idea that widowers or unmarried male aristocrats could best serve the church by leading pious lives outside of the monastery and actively opposing with arms the enemies of ecclesiastical reform. Robinson

<sup>20</sup> Bernold, *Chronicon*, a. 1089 449.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

[1973, 170] similarly noted that Gregory VII believed that the upper ranks of the laity had a positive duty to defend ecclesiastical interests in secular politics and to wield the sword on behalf of the church.

From both a political and military perspective, however, the union of the houses of Canossa and Welf theoretically offered great advantages to all the parties involved, including to the pope. Welf IV rebelled against Henry in 1089 probably in part as a calculated risk that he had a far greater chance of wresting control of his ancestral land in Este from his half-brother Fulk as a papal ally than as a dutiful subject of an emperor suspicious of ambitious princes. The successful merger of the dynasties also would have created a powerful principality stretching from Tuscany to southern Germany that would have also placed both sides of the Alpine Brenner Pass system into anti-imperial hands.<sup>22</sup> This development, like the defection of Milan and Pisa from the imperial camp, would have impeded Henry's ability to communicate with and defend his anti-pope and his other Italian allies and thus it would have improved considerably Matilda and Urban's strategic positions.

The gravely wounded Bonizo, writing from his refuge in his native Cremona, esoterically excoriated his former patroness Matilda for her second marriage in his highly polemical canonical treatise, the *Liber de vita christiana* [Dempsey 2011, 218]. According to the sidelined popular activist, widows should not possess military command. They should attend rather to domestic duties. They certainly should not don makeup and consort with curly haired boys.<sup>23</sup> In his treatise, he also esoterically castigates Urban II for his deviations from Gregory VII's stances (or from what Bonizo believed those stances to have been). There is, additionally, evidence that he attributes Matilda's scandalous decision to

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<sup>22</sup> For the argument that Urban may have proposed the marriage when he did out of fear that the southern German princes might presently come to terms with Henry IV see Robinson 2003, 280.

<sup>23</sup> Bonizo, *Liber de vita christiana*, VII ch. 29 250

re-marry to the pernicious influence of the pope and of Daibert of Pisa [Dempsey 2011, 245-250].

The real crime, in his eyes, of course, that the countess had committed (and by extension the pope had committed as well) and that Daibert personified, was her failure to re-ignite the Pataria's battles of the 1060s and 1070s as he had wanted her to do. As a responsible territorial ruler, however, Matilda could not comply with his wishes. While she undoubtedly sympathized with the Patarene bishop and almost certainly lobbied Urban II on his behalf with regards to his situation in Pisa, the countess faced the urgent need of finding a way to preserve her patrimony. The barricades that she was interested in putting up were between herself and the emperor and not between citizens of the same cities and towns of central and northern Italy.

The marriage alliance to which Bonizo objected so strongly, in fact, almost brought ruin upon both houses and the reform papacy. The nuptials induced Henry to launch yet another military expedition into Italy (1090-1097). The campaign, initially, went very well for the emperor and once more the countess was desperately fighting for her political survival. Then, in October of 1092, Matilda's forces were able to score a great victory over the emperor's troops as they lay siege to the countess' castle at Canossa. Aided by a thick blanket of fog that had settled over the imperial camp at Canossa, Matilda's garrisons at Canossa and the nearby castle at Bianello were able to launch a surprise coordinated attack on Henry's troops, driving them across the Po River [Eads 2000, 202]. In the wake of this unexpected and humiliating defeat, many of the emperor's Italian allies deserted him and together with Matilda the cities of Milan, Cremona, Piacenza and Lodi formed the first anti-imperial Lombard League in 1093. For the next four long years Henry was pinned down below the Alps cut off from his German kingdom.

The dramatic turn of events in the fog at Canossa made possible Urban II's triumphant tour of 1095 that brought him through central and

northern Italy and over the Alps to the famed council at Clermont. His most important stop prior to Clermont was in Piacenza in March of 1095. There, in the city of Bonizo's great humiliation, Urban convened a major reform council that condemned simony and nicolaitism. Among the many important prelates in attendance were Herman of SS Quattro Coronati, the bishop elect of Brescia, and Daibert of Pisa. Among the lay potentates invited to witness this most public vindication of the reform agenda and grand celebration of victory over the empire was, of course, the patroness of the two aforementioned prelates and Bonizo's one time protector, Matilda of Tuscany [Somerville 2011, 11 n. 62].

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