THE CAMPAIGNS OF COUNTESS MATILDA OF CANOSSA (1046-1115):
AN ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORY AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A WOMAN’S
MILITARY LEADERSHIP

by

David John Hay

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Medieval Studies
University of Toronto

© Copyright by David John Hay 2000
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-53814-1
The Campaigns of Countess Matilda of Canossa (1046-1115): An Analysis of the History and Social Significance of a Woman’s Military Leadership
Ph. D. 2000
David John Hay
Centre for Medieval Studies
University of Toronto

Abstract

The dissertation seeks to dispel some of the mythology surrounding the issue of women’s military leadership through a detailed analysis of the campaigns of Matilda of Canossa, countess of Tuscany (1046-1115). The first three chapters construct a critical, chronological narrative of her military accomplishments. The fourth chapter surveys Matilda’s diplomas and assesses their value as evidence of her involvement in war. The fifth examines medieval legal responses to women’s participation in warfare, while the final chapter surveys literary reactions to Matilda’s command as expressed in the pamphlet literature of the so-called “Investiture Controversy”.

Analysis of Matilda’s campaigns serves to correct several common misconceptions about war and gender in the Latin West. Matilda’s flexible and intelligent generalship indicates that medieval commanders were not ignorant of the principles of strategy, maneuver and surprise. The fact that Matilda was one of the most powerful and successful leaders of her time indicates that military command remained a viable avenue of women’s power in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Responses to Matilda’s career also suggest that the perception of the high Middle Ages as a turning point towards harsher criticism of female commanders needs to be seriously reevaluated. Despite the widespread acceptance by medieval writers of a patriarchal ideology that arrogated to masculinity alone militarily useful qualities (courage, resolution, etc.), Matilda nevertheless maintained a circle of supporters both willing and able to justify her military authority.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of my committee, Professors Michael Gervers, David Townsend, and Mark Meyerson, for giving me help when I needed it and freedom when I did not. I would also like to thank Michael especially for his help in teaching, his honesty and his open-mindedness, all of which were greatly appreciated. I must also mention the people who made important contributions, in various ways, to the production of this thesis: Professors Isabelle Cochelin, Kathleen Cushing, Natalie Davis, Joseph Goering, Bert Hall, Roger Reynolds and Barbara Todd, Dr. John Parsons, and Dana Wessell and Oren Falk. Special thanks to Jacqueline Murray—one could not ask for a better external examiner! Thanks also to Prof. David Klausner, who made my life this past year considerably easier than I had expected it to be. I would also like to thank the Ontario government and the University of Toronto for partially funding this research through the Ontario Graduate Scholarship and University of Toronto Open Fellowship programs.

I would also like to express my thanks to my long-suffering friends, Pete, Jeff, Chris and all the others—you know who you are. Immense gratitude also to my partner Dr. Angela Baker, who helped me in many, many ways, and to my always-supportive family, especially my father, whose hard work and sacrifices made all things possible.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Matilda’s Military Training and her Early Campaigns</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Struggle against Henry IV, 1076-97</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matilda and the Failure of Diplomacy, 1076-80</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Phase of the War: Wibert and Henry’s First Campaign in Italy, 1080-7</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Phase of the War: Matilda’s alliance with Welf and Henry’s Second Campaign in Italy, 1088-97</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Matilda’s Later Campaigns, 1097-1115</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Diplomatic Sources as Evidence of Matilda’s Exercise of Command.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Canonical Approaches to Women’s Military Authority to the Time of Gratian</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Perceptions of Matilda in the Polemical Literature of the Investiture Controversy</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions: The Campaigns of Matilda and the Study of Women’s Military Leadership</strong></td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABBREVIATIONS


Benzo Benzo of Alba, Ad Henricum IV imperatorem libri VII. ed. K. Pertz. MGH SS 11 (1854): 597-681


Donizo Donizo, Vita Mathildis celeberrimae principis Italicae. ed. Luigi Simeoni, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, 2nd ed., Tomo V, Parte II (Bologna, 1940)

Fiorentini Fiorentini, F. M., Memorie della gran contessa Matilda, 2nd ed., with additions by Mansi, G.D. (Lucca, 1756)


Ghirardini, Madonna Idem. “‘Madonna della Battaglia’: lo scontro decisivo della lotta per le investiture (ottobre 1092)”, in Bollettino storico Reggiano 11 (April, 1971): 36-56

Jaffe, RPR


Landulf

Landulfii Historia Mediolanensis usque a. 1085, edd. L.C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, MGH SS 8 (Hanover: 1848)

Mann

Mann, Horace K., The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages (London, 1926-32)

MGH LdL I and II

Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum, Libelli de Lite imperatorum and pontificum, saeculis XI et XII, conscripti, ed. Societas aperiendis fontibus rerum germanicarum medii aevi, voll. I and II (Hannover, 1891 and 1892).

MGH SS

Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum, ed. Societas aperiendis fontibus rerum germanicarum medii aevi

Muratori, Ant. It.

Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi, ed. L. A. Muratori (Milan, 1739)

Muratori, RIS


Pseudo-Bardo

Vita Anselmi episcopi Lucensis, ed. R. Wilmans, MGH SS 12 (1856): 13-35

Ranger


Reg. Greg. # and Ep. Coll. #

Gregory VII, Registrum, in Monumenta Gregoriana, Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum vol. II, ed. Jaffé, Philippus (Berlin, 1865)


Gregory VII, Registrum, Das Register Gregors VII, ed. E. Caspar, MGH Epp. Sel. 2 (1920-3)


Reg. Mat.


Robinson, Authority and Resistance

Robinson, I. S., Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Controversy: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century (Manchester, 1978)

Robinson, G VII


Sant'Anselmo

Simeoni


St. #


SM I, II or III

II: *Notes to Studi matildici, Atti e Memorie del II convegno di Studi Matildici* (Modena, 1971)
III: *Studi matildici, Atti e memorie del III convegno di studi matildici Reggio Emilia, 7-9 October 1977* (Modena, 1978)

Torelli, *Regesto Mant.*

*Regesto Mantovano, Le Carte degli archivi Gonzaga e di Stato in Mantova e dei monasteri Mantovani soppressi* (Archivio di Stato Milano), ed. Torelli, Pietro (Rome, 1914)

Ughelli

*Ughelli, Ferdinando, Italia Sacra* (Venice, 1717-22; rpt. 1973-87)
Emperor Henry IV’s barefooted humiliation before Pope Gregory VII in the snow at Canossa in the winter of 1077 is certainly one of the most famous events of the Middle Ages, but how many medievalists could name the lady whose fortress protected the pope and provided the setting for the drama? It is unfortunate that the military accomplishments of Countess Matilda of Canossa (1045/6-1115), like those of many other medieval women, have been so sorely neglected. Aversion, exclusion and chauvinism have hitherto presented major obstacles to analyses of women’s participation in warfare. Popular feminism has tended to avoid the topic because of the common perception that organized violence is inherently patriarchal (as Helen Nicholson has recently noted). In addition, both popular and academic military history have excluded or at the very least failed to attract large numbers of female authors. Far fewer women than men have enlisted in modern armies, whose veterans continue to produce a great deal of popular military history. At academic conferences, papers on military topics are still given to audiences composed primarily, if not exclusively, of men. The patronizing assumptions of some male academics further discourage research into women’s involvement in war by perpetuating the idea that men alone have historically conducted organized violence. Thus John Keegan, one of the foremost military historians of our time, has recently written:

Warfare is the one human activity from which women, with the most insignificant exceptions, have always and everywhere stood apart. Women look to men to protect them from danger... women, however, do not fight. They rarely fight among themselves and they never, in any military sense, fight men. If warfare is as old as history and as universal as mankind, we must now enter the supremely important limitation that it is an entirely masculine activity.

The underlying assumption, common to both popular and academic discourses, is that violence—especially the organized violence of warfare—is exclusively and essentially masculine and that women have never engaged in it in any significant way. The primary goals of the present dissertation are, firstly, to dispel some of this mythology by producing an accurate record of Matilda’s military campaigns and, secondly, to examine the social and intellectual boundaries of women’s military power and authority by analysing contemporary reactions to Matilda’s career.
The following is not intended as a biography, but as a specific study of these particular issues. The first three chapters will be devoted primarily to establishing a critical narrative of Matilda’s military accomplishments, a task made necessary by the neglect with which military historians have generally treated the countess. In the first chapter I will look at Matilda’s family and her military education, concluding that her closest relatives were accomplished commanders and that she was immersed in an atmosphere of war from an early age. I will also assess the extent (which, it must be acknowledged, has been somewhat exaggerated) of her involvement in her parents’ campaigns. I devote the second chapter to Matilda’s long struggle (1076-1105) against Emperor Henry IV, which was the major conflict of her life and affords some of the best evidence that she led troops in battle. In the third chapter I examine Matilda’s later campaigns, which have been even more neglected than her operations against Henry, but which provide yet more (and sometimes very specific) testimony to her personal involvement in war. My analysis of the accounts of Matilda’s later campaigns will also reveal that the countess was an intelligent and flexible commander, one capable of adapting her methods to face new strategic situations and of organizing different types of military expeditions. Interestingly, these accounts also show Matilda mounting and leading offensive campaigns, while most other medieval women known for their military activities were occupied in a defensive capacity. In the fourth chapter I will adopt a more analytical method by looking at the different types of activities which Matilda performed, as revealed in the diplomatic sources (which have generally been ignored by those who have approached the issue of women’s participation in warfare). Here I will show how Matilda’s own documents offer a fresh and revealing perspective on her military accomplishments that complements the evidence derived from narrative sources. In the final two chapters I will shift my focus from Matilda’s activities themselves to how they were viewed by medieval society. I will explore contemporary attitudes and responses to a woman’s use of military force by examining some relevant early and high medieval canonical texts and then the pamphlet literature (Libelli de Lite) of the so-called “Investiture Controversy”. In these we find that although her opponents harshly criticized Matilda for exercising command, her allies also praised her for the very same activity. Despite their own acceptance of patriarchal ideologies which arrogated to masculinity alone martial virtues like courage and resolution, Matilda’s supporters applauded her character and accomplishments and were even able to cite biblical and historical precedents as justifications of her actions.
From these specific observations we can induce a number of more general conclusions, which are broadly applicable to the history of warfare, canon law and women and gender. From the perspective of a more traditionally defined military history (concerned primarily with strategy, tactics and logistics), Matilda’s campaigns serve to dispel many of the myths that unfortunately continue to surround medieval warfare. Some of these are that commanders were unable to affect the outcome of conflicts, that the numerical and qualitative superiority of troops were the sole determinants of battle, and that strategical reasoning and the principles of maneuver and surprise were all but forgotten in the period. The intelligence, flexibility and effectiveness of Matilda’s generalship put all of these myths to rest. Indeed, the countess was not merely a competent general but one of the best commanders of her time, and certainly far more successful than her major male opponent Emperor Henry IV.

In the area of canon law, Matilda’s campaigns allow us not only to examine the divergence of culturally-defined gender roles and individuals’ actual behaviours, but also to probe the interaction between the two. I will show that perceptions of warfare as essentially masculine and of female combatants as unnatural were continual in the Middle Ages. These perceptions had significant consequences, the most noteworthy being that they led to repressive legislation designed to restrict women’s access to military power and authority. At the same time, however, careful analysis of individual legal texts proves that such legislation was reacting against something, and the reactionary nature of repressive legislation therefore indicates a much greater frequency of women’s participation in warfare than has hitherto been accepted. Nowhere is this fact more fully illustrated than in the career of Matilda, whose actions inspired a fascinating attempt to prohibit women’s military authority on the basis of patriarchal canonical material. Perhaps surprisingly, the canonical prohibitions do not appear to have severely restricted Matilda’s behaviour, even if they may have led her to question the legitimacy of some of her actions. Despite the reservations of her own conscience and the considerable criticism of her opponents, Matilda maintained her own circle of important canonists and polemicists who supported her decision to take part in the war against the emperor and even attempted to justify her campaigns. Consequently, Matilda played a major role not only in the physical conflicts of the investiture struggle but also in the corresponding creation of the reformist ideology of sacred violence, a doctrine which paved the way for later Christian theories of Just War and Crusade.
Matilda’s career also serves to reveal the full scope of women’s power and authority in the Middle Ages. Matilda grew up surrounded by experienced military leaders and received an excellent education in the arts of command and organization. Although her gender was something of a liability both for herself and her allies, she was able to withstand such attacks because of her wealth and prestige, her formidable military acumen and her importance to the reform cause. We can thus conclude that, although it was by no means an easy path, military leadership was a viable avenue of power for some noble women in the high Middle Ages.

**Historiographical Approaches to the Issue of Female Combatants**

In order to appreciate the full significance of Matilda’s campaigns, we need to study them within a comparative context and to be aware of the history and historiography of women’s participation in warfare. Until very recently, the prevailing assumption in the scholarly discourse of military history has been that women rarely if ever served as combatants and that familiarity with their careers is therefore irrelevant to understanding war. This mentality was partly a result of changes in the composition and organization of armies during the nineteenth century (when military history first emerged as an academic discipline) that tended to exclude women from contemporary armies. One consequence of these developments was that women’s service as both combatants and noncombatants (sutlers, porters, washerwomen, etc) tended to be neglected; as Barton C. Hacker has noted, military historians “could see ‘normal’ armies consisting only of men”.

A revision of these assumptions is currently underway, although the seeds of the revision were planted some time ago. In order to empower women in earlier generations, a number of historians (almost exclusively women) had sought to uncover examples of female combatants. Their works, however, tended to be didactic and unscholarly in method—the two English biographies of Matilda are perfect examples—and to be written from a perspective which did little to endear them to the old boys’ networks of military and academic institutions. Anxious to uncover examples of women’s power in the face of a generally unreceptive audience, these historians often fell prey to the temptation to elaborate excessively on ambiguous or laconic evidence, a tendency which, if understandable, unfortunately continues to discredit the study of female combatants to this day. An example of the fallacies which sometimes result from such methods can be seen in a recent work on medieval women, which cites a manuscript illumination depicting a lady with a sword beheading a man as evidence of women’s widespread participation...
in medieval warfare; what the author fails to mention is that the illumination is taken from the entirely allegorical fantasy Roman de la Rose, wherein personified virtues and vices assume the genders of their corresponding Old French terms.10

What finally cleared the path to serious scholarly study of the topic were two closely linked developments: the expanding popularity of feminism and women's history in the 1960's and the highly publicized and controversial debates over assigning women to combat roles in modern Western armies in the last few decades. Only after women began to enter military and academic institutions in large numbers, and only when very real policy decisions began to hinge upon interpretations of the historical record, did the discipline of military history begin seriously to consider the issue. The debate between proponents and opponents of female combatants has been at times bitter and continues to this day, but in the course of it some scholars have succeeded in proving that in previous eras women could and did participate in warfare effectively and in large numbers, as for example did the Soviet women's combat battalions in World War II.11

In the field of medieval history, the debate over the extent and significance of women's participation is still in its infancy. Awareness of female combatants is slow to spread (especially amongst academic military historians), and the assumption that medieval women did not participate in war continues to be made. Even while noting the activities of Joan of Arc, Kelly DeVries, for example, has recently stated "I have found no evidence of late-medieval women warriors other than Joan [of Arc]", and that in Joan's time "those few occasions in earlier medieval history of women leading soldiers were not well known, were thought to be mythological, or were, at best, a distant historical memory".12 Leaving aside the problematic question of the extent to which medieval authors distinguished between myth and history, we may note that DeVries must not have looked very thoroughly for examples of late medieval women taking part in war. Indeed, the evidence is there in the primary sources— one need only pick up the letters of Margaret Paston13 or the records of women such as Countess Agnes of Dunbar and Katherine de Grandison14, to find examples of later medieval women assuming military roles. The common necessity of having to defend one's estates even led Christine de Pisan— herself the author of a treatise on warfare— to inform noble ladies that the wise woman familiarizes herself with all things military:
We have also said that she ought to have the heart of a man, that is, she ought to know how to use weapons and be familiar with everything that pertains to them, so that she may be ready to command her men if the need arises. She should know how to launch an attack, or defend against one.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite the resistance of some military historians, a number of excellent articles devoted specifically to medieval women’s participation in warfare have appeared in the last decade. These have begun to undermine, from within the academic discipline of military history itself, the assumption that men alone have historically conducted warfare. Meghan McLaughlin’s "The Woman Warrior: Gender, Warfare and Society in Medieval Europe" and Jean A. Truax’s "Anglo-Norman Women at War: Valiant Soldiers, Prudent Strategists or Charismatic Leaders?", are perhaps the two best examples.\textsuperscript{16} Both of these authors do a valuable service to the discipline by uncovering and promoting awareness of female soldiers and commanders.

At this early stage in the study of the topic, I feel it is imperative to establish some sound methodological principles, especially if we are to ensure that military historians give the actions of militant women their full due. My own methodology differs from that of McLaughlin in at least one major respect: whereas she makes no distinction between female soldiers and female commanders, I feel that such a distinction is a prerequisite to understanding the boundaries and social context of women’s military power and authority.\textsuperscript{17} McLaughlin rejects the distinction on the grounds that it is anachronistic and lacking in any real significance; in rebutting the charge that the women she describes as “warriors” may more properly be termed “generals”, McLaughlin argues that "The decisive test [of a female combatant] would seem to be whether someone was present at and involved in a battle to a significant degree, not the number of blows she struck" (McLaughlin, 196). Thus, for McLaughlin, all women personally “involved in” warfare (excluding those who merely planned expeditions) are to be considered “warriors”.

I argue that conflating the two terms is even more anachronistic and confusing. Much of the misunderstanding concerning women like Matilda has in fact been the result of the vagueness of the terms which have been used to describe them. The specific actions performed by individual women are highly significant because they serve to reveal to us the effects of differences in class on women’s behaviour and experiences. Certainly, calling women “warriors” is of questionable validity when the women in question may never have used weapons in combat. McLaughlin responds to this by arguing that medieval male leaders could often be considered successful “warriors”—her translation of the words \textit{milites} and \textit{bellatores}—without ever having
delivered a blow (McLaughlin, 196). The problem with such an argument, however, lies in the
different meanings of these Latin terms. Miles, bellator and similar words were indeed often
applied indiscriminately to a wide range of individuals, from commanders in charge of thousands
of troops to landless retainers fighting in the ranks. Nevertheless, as Halsall has recently noted,
when used in this sense the terms are best translated not as “warriors” but as “those who make
war”—that is to say, they refer to the members of an ordo which theoretically possessed a
monopoly of legitimate “public” violence, and which therefore included both people who
fought with weapons and the people commanding them. This usage, however, does not imply
that a conceptual distinction between fighting and commanding was foreign to the period, or that
no vocabulary existed to express this distinction. On the contrary, we find numerous passages in
which these very terms miles and bellator are used in another sense-- the classical, specific one--
to distinguish those who actually wielded weapons from the imperatores or duces who
commanded them. William of Malmesbury’s description of Henry I of England succinctly
illustrates the point: “Disinclined towards personal combat, he [Henry] verified the saying of
Scipio Africanus, ‘My mother bore me to be a general [imperatorem], not a soldier
[bellatorem].’” Moreover, the functions of warrior and commander could be distinguished even
when (as was frequently the case in medieval warfare) a single person was said to have
performed both simultaneously:

To Caesar it was sufficient for his glory and his interest to fight with the Britons or the
Gauls by commanding; indeed he rarely fought with his own hand. This was the normal
custom of the generals of the ancients…. But to William [the Conqueror] it seemed
dishonourable and of little use, in that battle in which he crushed the English, to carry out
the duties of a general [officia imperatoris] unless he also carried out those of a soldier
[officia militis], as had been the custom in other wars. For in every battle in which he was
present he was accustomed to be the first, or among the first, to fight with his sword.

As the people of the Middle Ages were certainly capable of distinguishing between fighting with
weapons and commanding the troops, I will hereafter use the terms warrior and soldier to denote
only those who were known to have been trained or to have fought with weapons, while I will
use commander and general to designate only those who are known to have planned campaigns
or to have issued orders.

Maintaining the medieval distinction between the officia imperatoris and the officia
militis is not only not anachronistic, it also has the benefit of enabling us to explore the effects of
class and social status on the experiences of those participating in war. Divergent social pressures and obligations usually ensured that medieval delineations of military function would correspond to preexisting social boundaries: the uppermost classes were expected to lead, the lower to follow and to fight. As a result, differences in function can help us to understand the effects of class structures on individuals’ behaviour. Furthermore, maintenance of the distinction is necessary if we are fully to appreciate the nature of Matilda’s military activities, since a careful reading of the historical sources supports only the conclusion that Matilda was a commander and leaves open the question of whether or not she was also a soldier/warrior. I had hoped that a fresh analysis of the countess’s campaigns would have allowed me to settle this issue, but regrettably this cannot be done on the basis of the extant evidence (short of stooping to the level of excessive elaboration that, as I noted above, continues to discredit the study of female combatants). The absence of evidence seems to me to be in large part due to the fact that it was Matilda’s exercise of command, rather than any personal violent acts, that had the greatest effect on the course of the investiture struggle and that became the real subject of debate.

Certainly, the fact that she held a position of authority over large numbers of men, rather than any personal use of weapons, was what provoked the harshest criticism of her. The primary emphasis in my study will therefore be on Matilda as a commander, for it is Matilda’s distinguished career as a military leader and the radically polarized responses to it which come through most clearly in the contemporary sources.

With so much of the history of female warriors and commanders remaining to be written, it is dangerous to attempt any generalizations about major trends or historical turning points. Nevertheless, since McLaughlin has advanced an overall paradigm, we should consider whether or not the present study supports her conclusions. Although I will discuss her thesis in more detail in my last two chapters and my conclusions, we should note here that McLaughlin argues that the number of women engaging in warfare in the late Middle Ages was less than that of those in the high Middle Ages and that the female warrior thus appears to her to be a phenomenon of the period 1000-1300 C.E.. McLaughlin also asserts that it was only in the eleventh century that female militancy began to be viewed as unnatural and to attract prohibitive legislation. My own research, especially that which I present in chapters 5 and 6, leads me to somewhat different conclusions. Analysis of Matilda and of earlier medieval women suggests to me that women’s participation in warfare in both the earlier and the later Middle Ages has been
underestimated, and that such activity was condemned as unnatural long before the eleventh century. I have found evidence of both female combatants and attempts to prohibit and condemn their activities in classical, early and late medieval societies. Contrary to McLaughlin, the dichotomy between theoretically and culturally defined roles, on the one hand, and actual behavior, on the other, was remarked upon with alarm by numerous ancient and early medieval authors. Indeed, it is their astonishment that provoked repeated attempts to curtail women’s military activities and thereby supplies us with some of the most reliable evidence that women did participate in war in the earlier periods. Such findings allow me to suggest an alternative paradigm for the history of medieval female warriors and commanders— a continuous cycle of repression and deviance— that I will outline in my concluding chapter.

A Note on Terminology

In the body of the following study I use a few terms which are somewhat problematic but which nevertheless needed to be adopted for brevity’s sake. Firstly, I refer, more or less interchangeably, to Matilda’s supporters as “Gregorians” or “Reformers” and to her opponents as “Imperialists” or “Wibertines”. There were sometimes important differences between Gregorians and Reformers or between Imperialists and Wibertines, but for present purposes we can usually ignore them. When their differences do have an impact upon our interpretation of Matilda’s campaigns, I will specify how and why they are relevant. Secondly, I often mention the “reform party”, which may give some readers the unwanted impression that the reform movement was more ideologically and politically unified than it actually was. The reform party was of course not a political party in the modern sense of the term but a loose and shifting group of individuals who sometimes banded together to promote common ideals. I therefore use this term rather loosely, to include all those with reform sympathies who were allied with Matilda and the reforming popes. Finally, I also use the term “Investiture Controversy”; this is one of convenience and does not mean to imply that the struggle was solely over investiture, which it clearly was not.
Introduction

3 One notable exception being the essays contained in Aristocratic Women in Medieval France, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia, 1999).
4 Fortunately, more recent works and translations have revised many of these myths, although they still tend to be perpetuated by non-medievalist military historians. See J.F. Verbruggen, The Art of Warfare in Western Europe During the Middle Ages, trans. Summer Willard and R. W. Southern (2nd Ed., 1997), esp. pp. 1-5; cf. Matthew Bennett’s introduction to the second edition of Verbruggen, pp. ix-x.
8 Mary E. Huddy, Matilda, Countess of Tuscany (London, 1906); Nora Duff, Matilda of Tuscany, La Gran Donna D’Italia (London, 1909).
11 Even the opponents of assigning women to combat roles in modern armies acknowledge the contributions of Soviet women: Jeff M. Tuten, “The Argument against Female Combatants” and “Germany and the World Wars”, in Female Soldiers—Combatants or Noncombatants?, ed. Nancy Loring Goldman (Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut, 1982). The same volume also contains several other studies of modern women combatants.
14 These ladies and others are discussed, with reference to primary sources, by R. Archer in her article “How Ladies... who live on their manors ought to manage their households and estates’: Women as Landholders and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages”, in Woman is a Worthy Wight: Women in English Society, c. 1200-1500, ed. P.J.P. Goldberg (Alan Sutton: Wolfeboro Falls, NH, 1992), pp. 160-1.
15 Christine de Pisan, Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of Three Virtues, trans. Sarah Lawson (Penguin: New York, 1985), pp. 129. Christine’s military treatise, Le Livre des Faits d’Armes et de Chevalerie, was quite popular and was translated into English by Caxton as The Book of Fayettes of Armes and of Chvalary (the modern edition is edited by A.T. P. Byles (London, 1937)).
17 Unlike McLaughlin, Truax does distinguish between the specific roles women played. As we can see from Truax’s title, she divides these roles into three categories: soldiers, strategists and charismatic leaders. For brevity’s sake, I have generally adopted a simpler division between soldiers and commanders, although I do consider Truax’s distinction between strategists and charismatic leaders to be important and will consider it more fully in my conclusions.
Although the distinction between “public” and “private” violence is admittedly sometimes a murky one, I believe it is still useful to make. On this issue see Halsall, op. cit., 9-10.

20 The term imperator meant, quite literally, commander. Dux was usually synonymous, indicating military command—see, for example, William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi, ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford, 1998), II.40 p. 174, where the term is used to describe Caesar.


23 Unlike McLaughlin (p.196), I believe that operational planning should be reckoned an important component of military leadership, although perhaps not quite so essential as the issuing of orders. Therefore, I will consider Matilda’s involvement in the planning of campaigns as auxiliary evidence of her exercise of command.

24 I generally prefer to use warrior/commander rather than soldier/general, since the latter terms bear some unnecessary associations. “Soldier”, for example, literally implies the payment of a wage, and is therefore sometimes inappropriate for describing feudal troops or local defense forces. “Combatants” I use in a generic sense to refer to both warriors and commanders.
CHAPTER 1
MATILDA'S MILITARY TRAINING AND HER EARLY CAMPAIGNS

In the following chapter we will look at the countess' family and her military experiences in the first thirty years of her life, up until the eve of the war between Gregory VII and Henry IV. I will establish that Matilda came from an accomplished military household and was surrounded by warfare from an early age. I will briefly explore the question—which, unfortunately, must remain an open one—of whether she ever received weapons training, but my primary emphasis will be on evaluating the extent of her participation as a commander and planner of offensive expeditions. I will therefore study in some detail the operations mounted against the Antipope Cadalus, the Normans of southern Italy and the Islamic opponents of Byzantium. I will also set the stage for the second chapter by situating the major events in Matilda's life within the complex social and political geography of eleventh-century Italy. The creation of a reform "party" in Rome and the military activities of the Pataria-- both of which were to have a major impact on Matilda's subsequent military career-- will be briefly examined in addition to Matilda's personal development. My main sources here will be narrative histories and chronicles, letters, and the vitae of Matilda and her contemporaries.

My research reveals that Matilda's involvement in some of these early campaigns has been considerably exaggerated, especially in the works of early modern historians. One of the goals of the chapter, therefore, will be to debunk some of the mythology that has grown up around the countess since the Renaissance. Analysis of the primary sources does, nevertheless, lead us to the conclusions that Matilda was a capable and independent ruler, well-educated in the techniques of politics and the art of command, and that on at least one occasion she helped to plan (and intended to lead) a major offensive military expedition.

Matilda was born in 1045 or 1046\(^1\) to Marquis Boniface of Tuscany (d. 1052)\(^2\) and his second wife Beatrice\(^3\), daughter of the then deceased duke Frederick of Upper Lorraine. Boniface was an accomplished commander who in the past had led several successful military campaigns. In 1021, at the Battle of Coviolo (about a mile and a half from Reggio Emilia\(^4\)), he and his brother Conrad had defeated the army of a group of their rebellious vassals, thereby firmly establishing their authority in the area.\(^5\) In describing this battle, Donizo-- historian of the
house of Canossa, biographer of Matilda and the only source to provide a detailed description of the battle—portrays Boniface as a powerful knight who struck at and beheaded his foes from the vanguard of the army (Donizo, I.6). The fact that Conrad was wounded on the field (Donizo, I.6 ll. 556-565) also tends to support the idea that he and his brother not only commanded troops but also personally fought in their own campaigns.6 After his brother's death, Boniface continued his rise to prominence by allying with the new emperor Conrad II (r. 1024-39) and leading troops to his aid in several campaigns, such as the one conducted against Parma in 1037.7 Boniface was rewarded for his support of imperial interests with the title of Marquis of Tuscany8, which he assumed no later than 1032.9

For reasons that are not altogether clear10, considerable animosity developed between Boniface and the next emperor, Henry III (1039-56). Relations between Henry and the house of Canossa were further strained by the murder of Boniface in 1052.11 Open warfare broke out between the two parties when, in 1054, Boniface's second wife Beatrice married her distant cousin Godfrey II the Bearded, current claimant to the duchy of Lorraine and one of Henry III's most powerful and intractable enemies. Godfrey too was a formidable commander and soldier12, having resorted to armed rebellion in an attempt to force the emperor to invest him with the entire duchy of Lorraine.13 Godfrey's marriage to Beatrice not only strengthened his claim to the duchy—Beatrice being both the daughter of the late duke Frederick and the owner of extensive lands in Lorraine in her own right14— but also united Godfrey's interests with those of the house of Canossa, which the emperor already viewed with some hostility due to Henry's troubles with Boniface. As a result, Henry drove Godfrey out of Tuscany and took Beatrice and her young daughter Matilda prisoner. When Godfrey and his ally Baldwin of Flanders once more stirred up rebellion in the north, the emperor returned to Germany with these captives.15 Eventually, the two sides reached an understanding.16 Although Henry died on October 5, 105617, Godfrey and Baldwin were reconciled with the crown at the assembly of Cologne in December of the same year.18 Godfrey, Beatrice and Matilda then returned to Tuscany19; Matilda, barely ten years old, was now officially recognized as sole heir to one of the greatest duchies in Italy.20

As with so many aspects of Matilda's life, her childhood and early education are shrouded in legend.21 Donizo states that in addition to her native tongue she spoke French and German (Donizo, incipit to book II, ll. 42-3), and while she may have known Latin22, the assertion—made by some modern historians— that she was more learned than a bishop is based on a
misreading of Donizo’s text. Her military training has likewise been the object of considerable elaboration. Several historians have maintained that she was trained in personal combat by a certain Arduino della Palude, who some have alleged was later the grand captain of her armies. Nora Duff writes that Arduino taught Matilda how to ride like a lancer, use a pike and wield axe and sword. Such assertions are, however, almost entirely based on the questionable authority of early modern historians like Vedriani. In fact, the evidence that Arduino taught Matilda these skills is of the most precarious sort, and even if Matilda did receive weapons training in her youth, Arduino apparently would have been far too young to have administered it. Although he is listed as a witness in several of Matilda’s diplomas, the fact that all of these date from the twelfth century poses the problematic question of why someone allegedly so close to Matilda would not appear in her documents until so late a date. Other documents, moreover, attest to the fact that Arduino was still alive in 1122 and perhaps even as late as 1138, which would mean that he would have had to have lived into his eighties simply to have been the same age as Matilda herself. Even Ghirardini, who attempts to resurrect the thesis that Arduino was “Capitano Generale delle milizie Matildiche,” estimates that he was not born until 1055, a date which would make him almost 10 years younger than the Countess.

The unfortunate truth remains that even if Matilda did receive some sort of weapons-training, the assertion that she ever personally fought hand-to-hand with her enemies cannot be definitively proven or disproved on the basis of the available evidence. Matilda does not appear to have suffered from any incapacitating physical disability that would have prevented her from fighting, but neither the narrative nor any other sources provide us with evidence sufficient to conclude that she did actually fight in the ranks alongside her troops. If it were true that she wielded weapons, why is it that Matilda is never recorded as having personally killed, wounded, captured or rescued anyone in the heat of battle, or having been killed, wounded, captured or rescued herself? Of course, the argument based on a lack of evidence is admittedly not conclusive (especially one dealing with the Middle Ages), but many contemporary soldier-commanders whose lives are far more poorly documented than Matilda’s can be linked to similar incidents: Matilda’s stepfather Godfrey is noted as having wielded a sword and gravely wounded a certain count Waleran, her uncle Conrad was wounded himself at Coviolo, and the anti-king Rudolf and one of Henry IV’s sons both met their deaths in battle. As noted above, Donizo himself describes how Boniface used lance and sword with deadly proficiency at
Coviolo, but he refrains from ever providing so obvious a statement of his daughter’s personal prowess. While poets like Donizo and Ranger of Lucca do specifically state that Matilda commanded troops in the field, when we search their works for depictions of her fighting hand-to-hand the most they can provide us with are ambiguous panegyrics and generalized statements—that the Roman church would have been deserted if Matilda had not devoted herself to battle and storm\textsuperscript{35}, that at the battle of Sorbara she was a terror to all her enemies\textsuperscript{36}, etc.\textsuperscript{37}

On the other hand, no source explicitly denies that Matilda bore arms. Donizo’s statement that Matilda “Bella Dei gessit, victrix ob id extat inermis” (Donizo II.20, l. 1373) is not a denial of this sort (as Simeoni has alleged). Simeoni writes that by this line Donizo “ci assicura che Matilde non maneggiò personalmente le armi”.\textsuperscript{38} As Ghirardini persuasively suggests, however, Donizo’s notoriously enigmatic statement (the object of numerous and sometimes widely-divergent translations) means nothing more than that, once victorious, Matilda no longer needed to wage war: “She fought the holy war; being the victor, on account of this she stood unarmed”.\textsuperscript{39} Ghirardini in fact convincingly argues that the line refers not to Matilda’s person but to the general politico-military situation of 1115— that is, the line indicates that Matilda disarmed or disbanded her armies after victory had been won, not that she won her victories without ever having personally borne arms. In support of Ghirardini’s interpretation, I would cite Donizo’s earlier account of how Pope Gregory, sensing the coming violence at the outbreak of the papal-imperial conflict, urged Matilda to arm herself\textsuperscript{40} and Ranger’s description of how Matilda devoted herself to war (Ranger 3789-3818). Even if these authors intended their words to be taken figuratively (indicating that Matilda only directed her soldiers’ efforts), their statements by themselves certainly do not rule out the possibility that Matilda did actually bear arms.

If the poets’ statements are often highly metaphorical and difficult to interpret, the more laconic and straightforward prose accounts are no more helpful in resolving the issue. The closest any contemporary author comes to placing Matilda amidst the hand-to-hand fighting at a specific conflict is when the author of the prose Vita Anselmi writes that “Erat in obsidione cuiusdam castelli veneranda quam praediximus comitissa, ubi Theutonicus ictu petrae vulneratus est in capite...”\textsuperscript{41} This is a relatively reliable source— the author, like Matilda, was apparently present at the siege— but the mere fact that Matilda attended does not prove that she fought hand-to-hand with the enemy.\textsuperscript{42} Like the poets, the prose authors provide numerous general
description of how Matilda “led the military life” or commanded the troops\textsuperscript{43}, but no contemporary sources tie Matilda to any specific mêlée.

What all of these examples do show, however, is that regardless of whether or not Matilda was trained as a soldier, she certainly was well educated in the art of military command. Her father, stepfather\textsuperscript{44}, first husband\textsuperscript{45} and even her mother\textsuperscript{46} (not to mention the militant popes like Alexander II and Gregory VII\textsuperscript{47}, with whom she was closely associated) all proved themselves capable generals. Growing up in such an accomplished military household, Matilda had ample opportunity, whether by formal training or simple observation, to learn the skills involved in mustering and supplying armies, conducting sieges, planning operations and making decisions at the strategical level. Like other medieval noblewomen, Matilda’s relationship to warfare was (to follow Valerie Ead’s analogy) like that of Indira Ghandi to politics: she “grew up with it”.\textsuperscript{48} Matilda’s later military record, which we will now examine in detail, proves that she learned her lessons well.

The fragile peace achieved between papacy, empire and the house of Tuscany at Cologne in 1056 was soon disturbed by disputes over the next three papal elections. When Pope Victor died in 1057, certain reformers, without consulting the imperial authority, elected Frederick of Lorraine, brother of Godfrey the Bearded and abbot of Monte Cassino, as Pope Stephen IX (r. 1057-8) on August 2 of the same year.\textsuperscript{49} Stephen attempted to justify his election to the Empress Agnes (who, as regent for the young Henry IV, was recognized by many as having the right to be consulted in such matters, if not to decide them outright) by sending to her court a delegation led by Bishop Anselm I of Lucca and Hildebrand.\textsuperscript{50} Agnes eventually recognized Stephen\textsuperscript{51}, but discord again broke out following the pope’s death in Florence on March 29, 1058.\textsuperscript{52} Gregory de Alberico (count of Tusculum) and Gerard (count of Galeria) managed to secure in Rome the election of Cardinal-Bishop John II of Velletri as Pope Benedict X on April 5.\textsuperscript{53} The election was contested by some of the reformers\textsuperscript{54}, however, because of the show of force that the two counts had made in the city\textsuperscript{55} and because the election itself had occurred before Hildebrand had returned from his delegation to the empress.\textsuperscript{56} With Godfrey’s support\textsuperscript{57}, the Burgundian Gebhard, bishop of Florence, was chosen as Pope Nicholas II in Siena in December\textsuperscript{58}, escorted to Rome and installed in St. Peter's, while Benedict was forced from the city.

As is well known, Nicholas’ reign was an important one for the reformers. It was notable not only for the decrees on lay investiture and papal elections but also for the new pact
concluded with the Normans of Southern Italy\textsuperscript{59} -- an alliance which was understandably viewed with some disfavour at the imperial court.\textsuperscript{60} Other alliances, equally or even more important for the reformers than the Norman treaty (at least in the short term) were also being strengthened at this time. The fact that Nicholas spent much of his time in his native see of Florence, in close contact with Godfrey, indicates that the connection between the reformers and the house of Tuscany was as strong as ever.\textsuperscript{61} Many reformers were also sympathetic to the “Patarine” movement, a partly-religious, partly-social reaction against the great Lombard prelates and magnates.\textsuperscript{62} The Patarenes viewed the aristocratic bishops as outrageously corrupt because of their involvement in the practices of “simony” and clerical marriage and concubinage. Bishop Anselm I of Lucca (soon to be elected as pope Alexander II\textsuperscript{63}) and Archdeacon Hildebrand, on their aforementioned mission to Germany to have Stephen’s election recognized, had stopped at Milan in 1057 to help settle the dispute between the Pataria and Archbishop Wido (r. 1045-71).\textsuperscript{64} When conflict again broke out between Wido and the Patarenes, Anselm once again travelled to Milan -- this time with Peter Damian -- in order to bring that church back under papal authority.\textsuperscript{65} Eventually, Wido was reinvested by Nicholas at Rome, thereby admitting that his earlier imperial appointment had been simoniacal and void.\textsuperscript{66}

These disputed papal elections give us a sense of the world as it was during Matilda’s adolescence. Her parents lived their daily lives in the charged atmosphere of religious dissent, social upheaval, power politics and open warfare that permeated contemporary North-Italian society. Political fault lines were slowly, even imperceptibly, yet nevertheless inevitably emerging. Tensions between reforming ideals and the imperial authority were building\textsuperscript{67}, while the Pataria and its links to the reform movement were growing stronger. For present purposes, the Patarenes’ relevance lies not merely in the fact that they used violence to attack practices which were criticized by many other reformers, nor even that Matilda later benefitted militarily from their activities, but that the Patarenes provoked conservative criticism and thereby necessitated the articulation of a papal and reforming defense of the legitimacy of organized violence.\textsuperscript{68} Gregory in particular praised the leader of the Milanese Pataria Erlembald as a \textit{miles sancti Petri} and took pains to justify his activities on behalf of “The Church”.\textsuperscript{69} The campaigns of the Pataria, in addition to papally-led military expeditions such as that of Civitate in 1053\textsuperscript{70}, played an important role in setting the precedents for what was portrayed as virtuous and
canonical Christian warfare and in preparing the way both for Matilda's own military career and for the reformers' attempts to provide legal and theological justifications for it.

The death of pope Nicholas in Florence on July 27, 1061 again brought schism to the papacy. Since many historians have alleged that Matilda had her first taste of military command during the course of the fighting over this "Cadalan Schism", it is necessary to examine the circumstances of the conflict in some detail. Upon Nicholas' death, Anselm of Lucca was chosen by the reformers as pope Alexander II. He was installed (with the protection of Norman and Roman troops) on Oct. 1, 1061. Certain Roman barons (led by Count Gerard of Galeria) and most of the Lombard episcopate (led by the new imperial chancellor for Italy, Wibert of Ravenna) objected to the election of such a radical reformer (and perhaps also the electoral process, which all but excluded the emperor or regency from having any role to play in the proceedings). At the council of Basel, with Agnes and the young Emperor Henry IV in attendance, Bishop Cadalus of Parma (a major opponent of the Pataria) was chosen as pope Honorius II, thus beginning the schism.

Near the end of 1061, Cadalus and Wibert gathered an army and marched on Rome. Unable to reach the city on account of the resistance mounted by Beatrice (Godfrey was still north of the Alps at the time), the antipope gathered a larger army and successfully reached Rome the following spring. Although he met with some success in these campaigns, Cadalus' fate was ultimately to be decided back in Germany, where, shortly after Easter of 1062, Archbishop Anno of Cologne kidnapped the young Emperor Henry IV at Kaiserswerth and ousted Agnes from the regency. The "Coup of Kaiserswerth", which Godfrey appears to have supported, ultimately turned the tide against the antipope. Cadalus' former advocate Agnes retired to a Roman convent and sought pardon from Alexander for supporting him, while Anno, sympathetic to the reform movement, appears to have inclined favourably towards Godfrey's candidate Anselm. Godfrey's arrival in Rome in May of 1062 with a powerful army temporarily halted the fighting between the rival popes, forcing them to retire—Cadalus to Parma, Anselm to Lucca—to await imperial arbitration. The council of Augsburg (Oct. 28, 1062) pointed the way towards official imperial acceptance of Anselm/Alexander, who was enthroned in Rome with Godfrey's protection in 1063.

Cadalus, however, was not so easily defeated. Having collected an army from Parma, he again invaded Rome in the same year and not only reached the city but took the Leonine quarter
and St. Peter's (Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 595; Codex A, 258-9). Despite these victories, and the fact that he had some powerful allies in the city—most notably Cencius, son of the prefect Stephen, who controlled the castle of St. Angelo (the citadel of the Leonine quarter)—the antipope was soon forced out of the city and allegedly had to resort to bribery in order to gain his freedom. Cadalus nevertheless continued to call himself pope until his death in late 1071 or early 1072, and long remained a force to be reckoned with in Lombardy. He had considerable support in Milan (where struggles between the Pataria and the clergy again burst violently forth in 1066) and in his native Parma. His partisans even interrupted the council of Mantua in 1064 (until Beatrice's soldiers put them to flight). After this synod, however, he was never able to win wide enough support outside of Lombardy to be a serious threat to Rome or to Alexander's papacy.

Such was the course of the Cadalan Schism. While several modern historians have maintained that Matilda was involved in the fighting, such assertions are usually based on very questionable secondary sources. The primary sources are not specific enough to justify the claims of later historians. Duff writes that Matilda and Beatrice, with a detachment of troops which Godfrey had levied, met the "schismatics" in battle somewhere on the Lombard plain in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent them from pushing on to Rome. Duff cites as her sources, however, the unsubstantiated claims of Early Modern authors like Vedriani and Pozzo, who allege that Matilda, armed like a warrior, personally led a mixed detachment of cavalry, archers and pikemen (Duff, 91-2). A few pages later, Duff writes that Alexander "is said" to have begged Matilda to be ready to aid Rome and that Beatrice, "and doubtless Matilda with her", collected a force of soldiers and sought to trap Cadalus as he marched towards Rome by digging and concealing a trench over the Aemilian way.

Certainly, Godfrey and Beatrice did attempt to prevent Cadalus from establishing himself in Rome, and there is a considerable amount of primary evidence (taken from historians of both parties) to support the claim that they tried to bar the Emilian Way to him. Codex A of the Liber Pontificalis and Bonizo's Liber ad Amicum, for example, give similar accounts of how Beatrice prevented Cadalus from reaching Rome in 1061. Codex A states that after Cadalus had been elected and entered Lombardy, "Quippe sola Beatrice comitissa interdicentie, ipsorum [i.e. the "simonia", supporters of Cadalus] laetitia sicut funus evanuit." (Codex A, I, 257). The author then goes on to describe how, after a time, Cadalus was able to gather money, allies and soldiers
and ultimately to enter Rome (presumably in 1062). Bonizo writes that "Secundum evangelicum verbum omnis exultatio istorum unius mulieris contradictione terrae prostrata est, tantusque superorum potentatus sola Beatrice interdicente velut fumus evanuit", adding that Cadalus subsequently found help in Bologna and resumed his march on Rome (Liber ad amicum, 595). Benzo, recounting Cadalus' expedition of 1063, maintains that Godfrey laid ambushes for Cadalus during the antipope's march on Rome and describes how: "Cornefredus [i.e. Godfrey--Benzo has a habit of demeaning his enemies through bad puns] autem in Montibus et silvis insidias ponit, et ideo per aliquod temporis spacum est iter eius remoratum." (Benzo, II 16, p. 619). Donizo, in his Vita Mathildis, includes a typically cryptic passage about an obstacle placed on the Via Emilia to prevent Cadalus from reaching the city (Donizo, I.18, ll. 1175-81).

No source, however, specifically names Matilda. Not even Donizo, whose sole purpose is to praise Matilda, claims that the young countess accompanied her parents, much less commanded the troops, on this expedition. Bonizo implicitly refutes the hypothesis when he states (Liber ad amicum, p. 599), a few pages after describing Cadalus' second attack in Rome (p. 595), that Matilda's first service to the prince of the apostles was rendered when she accompanied Godfrey's army on the campaign to expel the Normans from Campania--an expedition which took place in 1067 (see below). Other relatively reliable sources are silent on the issue, nor have any recent modern authors been able to substantiate the claims of Vedriani et al. It is possible that she accompanied her parents on some or all of these operations, and, as we shall see, the utilization of ambush and surprise is certainly consistent with the tactics Matilda used in her later life; but the primary sources do not provide sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that she took an active role in the war against Cadalus.

The next campaign in which Matilda is commonly alleged to have taken part was mounted in 1067. With Cadalus expelled from Rome, Godfrey raised an army with the support of the emperor and launched an expedition against Richard of Capua (a.k.a. Richard of Aversa) and his allies in response to their encroachment on the lands south of Rome. Pope Alexander and, according to Bonizo (Liber ad Amicum, 599), Matilda herself joined this expedition. As previously noted, Bonizo describes this as the first service of Matilda to church:

Eodem quoque tempore Normanni Campaniam invadunt. Quod cernens deo amabilis Ildebrandus, continuo Magnificum ducem Gotefridum in auxilium sancti petri evocat. Forte enim his diebus prefatus dux venerat italicam, ducens secum excellcetissimam
cometissam Matildam, incliti ducis Bonefacii filiam. Is congregans universam exercitum sui multitudinem, cum uxore et nobilissima Matilda Romam veniens, Normannos a Campania absque bello expulit et eam Romane reddidit dicioni. Et hoc primum servicium excellentissima Bonifacii filia beato apostolorum principi obtulit; que non multo post per multa et deo amabilia servicia beati Petri meruit dici filia.95

Bonizo’s statement is problematic, however, in at least two respects. The first is that his testimony cannot be corroborated by other contemporary sources. The more detailed accounts of the expedition, such as those contained in the Annals of Altaich and the Chronicle of Monte Cassino, confirm that the campaign took place and that Godfrey led it, but they do not specifically mention Matilda’s participation.96 On this basis, Overmann and others have argued that the question of Matilda’s involvement in the expedition must remain an open one.97 Even Ghirardini shows an uncharacteristic degree of skepticism, for while he holds it as “certain” (Storia Critica, 23) that Matilda came to Rome with her mother and stepfather, he lists it as merely “possible” that she participated on the expedition against the Normans. While it is true that no other sources mention Matilda’s participation, I would point out that no other writer enjoyed as favourable a combination of interest in Matilda and acquaintance with the other figures personally involved in the campaign as Bonizo did.98 After all, should we really expect the laconic chroniclers to mention the fact that Godfrey brought his daughter along?

Bonizo’s use of the term serviciwm to describe Matilda’s involvement in the campaign is also somewhat problematic. In this context, the word could mean the fulfillment of a specific feudal military obligation, but it could also mean the rendering of services in a more general sense. Although the military context of the passage would tend to support the former interpretation, we cannot be absolutely sure that Bonizo meant to indicate that Matilda performed military duties; Gregory VII, for example, often played upon the ambiguities of the term in his letters.99 Given these reservations, the operation against the Normans is perhaps best viewed not as an occasion of Matildine generalship—there are many far better-documented examples than this one— but as an educational opportunity, a trip at least as far as Rome which allowed the countess to observe firsthand the intricacies of mustering, supplying and leading an army on an offensive expedition. Even if she accompanied her father only as far as Rome, she would have been in an excellent position to learn from his experiences on the campaign.

With Pope Alexander and Richard of Aversa reconciled, Tuscany remained relatively peaceful for the next few years. Godfrey the Bearded died in 1069100, but before he passed away
Matilda and Beatrice travelled to Lorraine to meet with him. Shortly thereafter, Matilda married Godfrey's son, Godfrey The Hunchback, and remained in Lorraine for about two years. The marriage was clearly not a happy one, and Matilda revealed her independence of mind by returning alone to Italy near the end of 1071, leaving a protesting husband behind. Back in Tuscany, Matilda attended her mother's courts and witnessed her donations while thwarting Godfrey's attempts to coerce her to return to Germany. In late 1072, Godfrey himself left for Italy, where, in 1073, he held court jointly with Beatrice and attempted once more (by various means) to patch up his marriage. He appears even to have enlisted Gregory's help in the matter in return for a promise of military support. Despite Godfrey and Gregory's best efforts, however, Matilda adamantly refused to return to Germany, and her husband was eventually forced to leave for home by himself. The Chronicle of S. Hugh testifies to the independent spirit that Matilda displayed at this time:

...nam uxor eius Mathildis eo relicito Langobardiam rediit, saepiusque mandante marito ut rediret, non solum non obtempervavit, verum edixit mandanti, ut ad se ille veniret, et sicut se curaret capsam reliquiarum patris sui Bonifacii sibi deferret. Seducs ille spe conciliandae sui coniugis, praefatam capsam eburneam cum reliquis abbati violenter abstulit et Mathildi retulit, relicito tamen altari quod fuerat papae Iohannis. Sed nec sic quidem apud eam maritalem gratiam optimuit, spretusque ab ea et inactus ab Italia Lotharingiam rediit.

From this point until his death in February of 1076, Godfrey had very little to do with either Tuscany or Matilda. He never did send the aid which he had promised to the pope, on account of which Gregory wrote a stern rebuke to him in a letter dated 7th April, 1074: "Ubi est auxilium, quod pollicebaris, ubi milites, quos ad honorem et subsidium sancti Petri te ducturum nobis promisisti?" (Reg. Greg. I.72, April 7, 1074, p. 91-2). Godfrey was, in fact, far more concerned with providing military support for the emperor's campaigns in Saxony than for those of the pope in Italy—an attitude that, as tensions between Gregory and Henry heightened, did little to promote marital harmony. A dispute over Boniface's coffin put still more stress on the marriage. By January of 1076, their relationship was in such a lamentable state that Godfrey was apparently one of the attendees of the imperialist council of Worms who accused Matilda of committing marital infidelity with Gregory.

With Matilda's marriage in tatters, Beatrice continued to groom her daughter for lordship of her vast domains. Under her mother's tutelage, Matilda was educated in law, politics, and
diplomacy. She co-presided over numerous courts and helped to settle disputes and arrange peace treaties.113

Matilda was also gradually being drawn into the emerging struggle between the empire and the reform papacy. Cadalus' death in 1072 had temporarily ended his schism, but the dispute over the archbishopric of Milan in 1071-3 set off a series of events which in the end completely undermined the harmony of Church and State in the German empire. On the death of the Archbishop Guy of Milan in 1071, Eslembalci and the Patarenes made an attempt to install their own candidate Atto114, while the Lombard bishops consecrated Guy's sub-deacon Godfrey, whom Henry had earlier designated to succeed.115 At the Lenten synod of 1073, Pope Alexander responded by excommunicating Godfrey and five of Henry's counsellors.116 The issue was still being contested when Alexander died on April 21 of the same year and the radical reformer Hildebrand was elected as Gregory VII.117

From the beginning of his pontificate, Gregory maintained a close relationship with the countesses of Tuscany. Beatrice— and perhaps Matilda as well— attended his coronation118, and in their subsequent correspondence the pair were frequently addressed jointly by Gregory.119 Mother and daughter received the pope's letters, attended his councils and synods120 and helped him to plan two major military offensives: an expedition against the Normans and an eastern crusade. Gregory's letters, which constitute our main source of information on these proposed campaigns, show that the two operations were quite closely linked.121 Gregory initially envisioned an expedition that would first awe the Normans into submission and then proceed to lend aid to the Christians fighting "pagans" in the East.122 In a letter written to Count William of Upper Burgundy on Feb. 2 1074, the pope outlined his plans and his method of recruitment:

Hence, mindful of the nobility of your faith, we admonish you to make ready your armies to lend aid to the liberty of the Roman Church, and, if need be, to march hither with your troops as servants of St. Peter. We beg you also to instruct to act in like manner, the count of St. Giles [Raymond, the later crusader], the father-in-law of Richard, prince of Capua; Amadeus [second count of Savoy], the son of Adelaide [countess of Turin]; and the others you know to be fideles to St. Peter, and who, with hands raised to heaven, have given the same undertakings as yourself. If you have any definite response to make to us, let your messenger be so instructed as to be able to remove all doubt from our mind; and let him on his way call upon Beatrice, who, with her daughter [Matilda] and son-in-law [Godfrey], is an earnest worker in this matter. We are not labouring to collect this great number of soldiers because we wish to shed Christian blood, but that they [the Normans], seeing the strength of our forces, may fear to fight, and may more readily submit to what
is just. We have, moreover, a hope that perchance a further good may result: viz., that, when the Normans are quieted, we may pass over to Constantinople to assist the Christians, who, suffering terribly under the repeated blows of the Saracens, unceasingly implore us to stretch out to them a helping hand. For if it were a question merely of the rebellious Normans, we have ourselves sufficient forces to deal with them.

As Cowdrey notes, Gregory's use of the first person plural "confirms that he purposed himself to travel to the East." In order to prepare the theological ground for the campaign, Guiscard was excommunicated at the Lenten Council of March 9-14 1074. Present at the council were those who had promised support for the expedition, including Matilda, Gisulf of Salerno and Wibert of Ravenna (Reg. Greg. I.86; Bonizo, Liber ad amicum 602). Cowdrey asserts that these three remained at Rome, but if Matilda did linger there, she did not do so for long; Gregory addressed another letter to her and Beatrice on April 15, and Matilda celebrated Easter with her mother in Pisa on April 20-1. Nevertheless, Gregory's letters and the accounts of Bonizo of Sutri and Amatus of Monte Cassino all testify to the fact that it was upon Matilda and Beatrice that Gregory relied most heavily. Like the polemicists we shall examine in chapter 6, Amatus clearly intended to mock Gisulf and the expedition by stressing the fact that the pope had to rely on the troops and counsel of women: "Mès, qué non trova home en son aide, cercha adjutoire de fame. Et manda adonc message à Beatrix et sa fille Mathilde; et li fait assavoir l'occasion pour quoi voloit lo Pape que elle venist parler lui." According to Amatus, the countesses offered to bring 30,000 troops; when Gregory responded that 20,000 would be sufficient for the Normans, they insisted on bringing the 30,000, and the pope acquiesced. Although we cannot of course accept these inflated numbers for Beatrice and Matilda's army (see below, ch. 2), Amatus's assault on the countesses clearly indicates that both Beatrice and Matilda were involved in the planning of the campaign.

Gregory experienced considerable difficulty, however, in actually mustering the army. As noted above, when the aid that Godfrey had promised for this campaign failed to materialize, Gregory severely admonished the duke. By the middle of June 1074, Gregory, having assembled his own forces, had marched north to San Flaviano (by the woods of Mt. Cimino, between Sutri and Viterbo), where Beatrice and Matilda were to rendezvous with him; but the expedition soon turned into a fiasco. Beatrice and Matilda themselves were unable to link up with the pope because of the sudden rebellion of their Lombard vassals (an insurrection which
some have alleged was stirred up by Wibert and the archbishop of Milan\textsuperscript{135}). Although the pope's plans came to naught and the army quickly disbanded, there is no doubt that Beatrice and Matilda helped to plan the operation and would have accompanied the "expeditio" had their forces not been needed in Lombardy.

Despite this failure, Gregory quickly resolved once more to mount the campaign. The papal letters reveal that Gregory sought to lead the army personally, in the company of Matilda and Empress Agnes. In order to prevent a recurrence of the problems that had broken up the first expedition, Beatrice was to remain behind to take care of domestic affairs. A papal letter to Beatrice and Matilda from October 16 of 1074 indicates that major preparations were already underway at this time (Reg. Greg. II 9, p. 122). In the letter the pope asked the countesses to give him their counsel before one of the two (almost certainly Beatrice\textsuperscript{136}) made her proposed journey over the Alps\textsuperscript{137}:

\begin{quote}
Sed prius, si fieri posset, ambarum colloquio uti multum desideramus; quoniam vestra consilia, sicut sororum nostrarum et filiarum sancti Petri, in causis et negociis nostris habere desideramus.
\end{quote}

Here we have evidence of the pope specifically soliciting Matilda and Beatrice's advice and attesting to the fact that he frequently sought their counsel. Given the context—the pope having already sought to mount one expedition and planning another—we can conclude that Matilda and Beatrice were helping Gregory to plan this campaign as well.

The issue of Guiscard was still very much in Gregory's thoughts at this time. Although the Norman duke had offered to give fealty and submit to the papacy, Gregory stated that he would prefer to await the judgement of divine dispensation ("supernae dispensationis et apostolicae procurationis consilia praestolamur.") on the issue.\textsuperscript{138} In a letter from December 7, Gregory even asked Emperor Henry IV for aid and council regarding the proposed expeditions and asked the emperor to protect the church in his absence.\textsuperscript{139} Gregory went on to inform Henry that many Christians had been roused to fight for the law of Christ and that more than 50,000 were preparing to go, "armata manu", and with Gregory as their commander [pro duce], even to the sepulchre of the Lord (Greg. Reg. II 31, pp. 144-6, Dec. 7, 1074). On Dec. 16 1074 Gregory made another appeal to "all the faithful of St. Peter, especially those beyond the mountains" to stop fighting for earthly goods, to come to him in order to help the Eastern Christians and to martyr themselves by giving their souls for their brothers. The papal soldiers were to cross the
sea and win an eternal reward by fighting in defense of the Christian faith (Reg. Greg. II.37, pp. 150-1, Dec. 16, 1074). The goal of aiding Christians in the East now appears to have been the primary objective.\(^{140}\)

Sometime during this period, most likely in December of 1074\(^{141}\), Gregory addressed another letter exclusively to Matilda, expressing the pope’s desire to cross the sea and give aid to those who were "being slaughtered like beasts by the pagans" (Reg. Greg. Epp. Coll. 11, pp. 532-3). Gregory argued that "if, as they say, it is beautiful to die for the patria, it is certainly most beautiful and glorious to give the mortal flesh for Christ, who is eternal life". He also informed Matilda that the Empress Agnes and many milites were prepared to accompany them, and that with them as his sisters he would cross the sea and offer his soul for Christ. He concluded the letter by requesting that Matilda write back quickly concerning this and her journey to Rome.

In the end, this expedition never passed beyond the planning stage. By January of 1074, for reasons that are not altogether clear, Gregory seems to have given up on the idea.\(^{142}\) The breakdown of papal-imperial relations probably prevented Gregory from any subsequent attempts to mount the expedition.

It is indeed unfortunate that so little attention has been paid to the proto-Crusade of 1074, although it is perhaps understandable (given that the operation never progressed beyond the mustering stage). Yet, when we compare the campaigns mounted against Cadalus and Richard of Capua to these proto-crusades, we must acknowledge that the evidence for Matilda’s involvement in the latter is by far the more reliable. To be fair, the early modern authors, upon whom much later scholarship regarding the earlier campaigns was based, did not so much invent fictions as elaborate on ambiguous and laconic texts. The fortuitous survival of the Gregorian register, however, places the fact that Matilda was involved in the operational planning of the crusade beyond any doubt. In these letters we read that Gregory repeatedly solicited Matilda’s advice and made not one but two attempts to launch the campaign in conjunction with her. Although the pope’s plans never came to fruition, the traces of them which have survived clearly indicate that on both occasions Matilda fully intended to command her own contingent and apparently even to march all the way to Jerusalem if necessary. Born and bred in a climate of war, she had been well prepared to lead armies on offensive military expeditions.
Matilda's Early Campaigns

1 Donizo, I. 1498; see also Simeoni's note to this line.
2 On Matilda's father and ancestors and the rise of their house see Harald Zimmermann, "I signori di Canossa e l'impero (da Ottone I a Enrico III)", in I Poteri dei Canossa da Reggio Emilia all'Europa, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, ed. Paolo Golinelli (Bologna, 1994)
5 For descriptions of the battle see L. L. Ghirardini, "La battaglia di Coviolo", in Canossa prima di Matilde (Camunia, Milan 1990) and Antonio Falce, Bonifacio di Canossa, Padre di Matilda 2 Vols. (Reggio nell'Emilia: Liberaria Editrice Bizzocchi, 1926), I 119-24. For a discussion of the primary and secondary sources on Coviolo, see Falce, II pp. 21-4
6 Although Donizo is a highly partisan source, and only completed his work in 1115, that there actually was a Battle of Coviolo is confirmed by the Catalogue of Nonantola: Catalogi abbatum Nonantulani, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS. Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum (Hannover, 1878) p. 573: "1021. Bellum factum est ad Cuviliolum."
8 Zimmerman notes that unlike other noble Italians Boniface supported Conrad, the first Salian's candidacy for the rule of Italy, and perhaps for this reason replaced his predecessor, Rainer, in the office of the Marquis of Tuscany—Harald Zimmermann, "I signori di Canossa e l'impero (da Ottone I a Enrico III)", in Golinelli, I Poteri, p. 416.
10 According to Donizo (I.14), Henry became jealous of Boniface in the late 1040's and attempted to ambush him. Harald Zimmermann ("I signori di Canossa e L'impero (da Ottone I a Enrico III)", in I Poteri: 413-20, pp. 416-7) argues that there may be a grain of truth to Donizo but admits that the matter is still not totally clear. Henry may have been angered by Boniface's alleged alliance with the Tusculani, who had a long history of interference in papal elections. Cf. H. E. J. Cowdrey [Pope Gregory VII, 1073-85 (Oxford, 1998), 24], who notes that Boniface and Henry seem to have quarreled over Benedict IX's resumption of the papacy in 1047; Vito Fumagalli ["I Canossa tra realta' regionale e ambizione Europee", in Studi malidici III, 35], who writes that Boniface's alliance with the empire cracked at a certain point, in 1047, when the emperor H III decided for the second time and decisively to break at Rome the power of the Tusculani, who controlled the papal seat; and W. V. Giesebrecht [Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit, (Leipzig, 1885), vol. II p. 436], who argues that Boniface had turned from emperor and allied himself with Tuscan barons and prince of Salerno.
11 "His diebus marchio Bonificaci, dum nemus transiret opacum, insidiis ex obliquo latentibus venenato figitur iaculo. Heu senex ac plenus dierum matrum mortem exigu praeoccupavit"—Arnulf Gesta Archiepiscoporum Mediolanensem usque ad A. 1077, Edd. L. C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, MGH SS. VIII, p. 18. Alfred Overmann [Matildae von Tuscien, Ihre Besitzung, Geschichte ihres Gutes von 1115-1230 und ihre Regesten (Innsbruck, 1895), p. 123 (Reg. Mat. b)] lists other primary and secondary sources. Duff (p. 27) herself claims to have found Boniface's epitaph, which reads "Hic jacet egregius Dominus Bonificaci Marchio et Pater Serosimae Dominae Comitissae Matildae Qui obit MLII. Die VI Ma. II. INDCV.". Duff also notes (p. 26) that there was some suspicion that Henry was behind the murder.
12 Evidence that he personally bore arms is found in the Chronicle of Hugh of Flavigny: Chronicon Hugonis monachi Virdunensis et Divionensis, abbatis Flaviniacensis, ed. G. Pertz, MGH SS VIII, p. 401 c. 29, where we find him personally wounding a certain count Walram: "Walerannus quoque comes in bello (c. 1037?) ipso a Godefride Gozelonis ducis filio graviter vulneratus...".
13 After the death of Beatrice's father the upper half of the duchy of Lorraine had passed to Gozelo, duke of Lower Lorraine and father of Godfrey the Bearded, making Gozelo duke of all Lorraine [Horst Fuhrmann, Germany in the High Middle Ages, c. 1050-1200, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), p. 41]. After Gozelo's death in 1044, however, Emperor Henry III had refused to grant the entire duchy to Godfrey, who was
already recognised as Duke of Upper Lorraine but demanded role over Lower Lorraine as well (Fuhrmann, 41). Henry perhaps refused out of the fear that this would set a precedent of hereditary right over the duchy (Fuhrmann, 41; cf. W. Giesebrecht, Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserzeit (Meersburg, 1929 edition), Vol. II pp 327-8). Godfrey had then rebelled and been deprived of Upper Lorraine as well in 1047 (Cowdrey, G VII, 82). On the struggle between Godfrey and Henry in general see Giesebrecht's chapters 10, Grosse Pläne und Grosse Hindernisse and 11 Kaiser Heinrich III un Herzog Gottfried"; Goetz, 27; and Friedrich Dieckmann, Gottfried III. der Bucklige, Herzog von Niederlothringen und Gemahl Mathildens von Canossa (Diss.: Erlangen, 1885).

14 Fuhrmann, 41. It should be noted, however, that by the time of Matilda's death the gran contessa's holdings in the duchy seem to have been rather modest-- Thomas Gross, "Le relazione di Matilde di Canossa con la Lorena", in Golinelli, I Poteri, p. 341
15 Bonizo of Sutri, Liber ad Amicum, p. 590: Annales Admonitenses, MGH SS 9, p. 575 (For 1054, although Overmann, (Reg. Mat. f), dates these events to 1055): "Imperator Henricus Ytalian ingressus Beatricem Mathildis matrem, consanguneam suam, defuncto marito eius Bonefacio marchione, secum reduxit."; Ekkehardi Chronicon Wirzburgense SS VI, 31: "Henricus imperator Italiam cum exercitu petens, omnia cum pace disposit; revertenteque neptam suam Beatricem secum duxit, indigne eam tractans propter quandam eius insolentiam, qua vivere consueverat mortuo viro eius Bonificio duce."; Bertholdi Annales, MGH SS 5, 269 (for 1055).
16 Some sources portray this as the surrender of Godfrey: "Godefroid dux ad ditionem venit"-- Ekkehardi Chron. Wirz., 31. On this interpretation cf. Karl Hampe, Germany under the Salian and Hohenstaufen Emperors, trans. Ralph Bennett (Oxford, 1973), p. 59. Bonizo, who was writing in support of Matilda, not surprisingly portrays these events in a somewhat different light, maintaining that the emperor summoned Godfrey, beseeched him to be faithful to his son (the new Emperor Henry IV) and returned to Godfrey his wife, daughter and all their possessions (Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 590; but on some of the inaccuracies in Bonizo's account of these events see Ludovico Gatto, "Matilde di Canossa nel Liber ad Amicum di Bonizone da Sutri", in Studi Matildici II, pp. 312-4). Interestingly, Lampert of Hersfeld portrays Henry as relenting because of Beatrice's argument that with her husband dead she needed a husband (having whom was her right according to the ius gentium) and because of the Norman menace (Lamberti Hersfeldensis annales 1040-1077, ed. V. Hesse, MGH SS V, pp. 156-7, (a. 1055)).
18 "Coloniae generali convento habito, Balduinus et Godfredus mediate Vinctore papa ad gratiam regis et pacem reducantur, et omnes bellorum motus sedantur." --Chronici Siegerberti Gemblacensis, ed. D. L. C. Bethmann, MGH SS VI, p. 360, (a. 1057): cf. Annales Althenses maiores, ex Recensione W. de Giesebrecht et Edmundi L. B. ab Oeafele (Hannover, 1891), p. 53 a. 1056. The assembly was presided over in the name of the six-year-old Henry IV by Pope Victor II (1055-7). With Imperial acceptance of his marriage Godfrey was thus able to assume the titles Patricius of Rome, Prefect of Ancona, Marquis of Pisa, and Lord of the lands lying between Tuscany and Italy (i.e. Lombardy), in addition to those of Count of Verdon and Duke of Lorraine (Hugh of Flavigny, pp. 580-1).
19 Apparently travelling in the company of the pope himself-- see Overmann, p. 124 (Reg. Mat. i).
20 Matilda's older siblings, her brother Frederick and sister Beatrice, had both died young-- Beatrice in 1052 or 3, and Frederick in 1055: Bertholdi Annales 1054-80, MGH SS 5, p. 269 (a. 1055); Overmann, 123-4 (Reg. Mat. c and e); Elke Goetz, Beatrix von Canossa un Tusziyen: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1995), pp. 20-1.
21 Even Paolo Golinelli, who devotes a chapter of his biography of the countess to "Matilde bambina", admits that the primary sources provide almost no information about Matilda's infancy (Golinelli, Matilde e I Canossan nel cruscote del medievo, p. 115).
22 Duff asserts that she wrote her own letters and was "well versed in jurisprudence", but of course gives no sources for these assertions (Duff, 6-7). Perhaps Duff was basing her remark on the many extant documents which record Matilda rendering judgement in cases before her court (see chapter 4).
23 For a clarification of this problem, see Simeoni's note to L. 1369 of Donizo and references therein. One might also note that Ranger (II. 1727-8) has Matilda say "Non sum docta satis, non novi iura sacrasve/ Leges, sed teneo iustitiam fidei..." although this may be a rhetorical device used to emphasize the countess' humility.
24 Duff, 4, 76-7. The same Vedriani claimed that two suits of Matilda's armour had been sold in Reggio in 1622 [Vedriani, Historia dell' antichissima citta di Modena (Modena: 1666), vol. II, p. 19].
25 See Simeoni's note to Donizo II. 1229-30.
26 On Matilda's documents in general see Roberto Ferrara "Gli anni di Matilde (1072-1115). Osservazione sulla 'cancellaria' Canossiana", in Golinelli, I Poteri, which discusses the different types of documents from Matilda's
Matilda's Early Campaigns

court, the different formulae (which include the standard imposition of the *bannum*) and whether or not she had a chancery.

29 See Ghirardini’s chapter XII “Arduino de Palude, Capitano Generale delle Milizie Matildiche”, in his *Storia Critica*. Ghirardini’s efforts to defend this thesis are unfortunately not very convincing. He advances no real evidence to support the assertion, and the mere fact that Arduino was a *capitaneus* is a very poor foundation upon which to base the argument that he was the “Grand Captain” of all her armies. Fabbi (in SM I, p. 38) argues Arduino remained the captain of the margravate army after Matilda’s death, until the emperor returned in the following year to assert his claims to her alodial goods. He is recorded in a placcum of the emperor’s on April 8, 1116 (Tiraboschi, 322 and 324; Torelli, 172). He is also recorded making a donation to S. Benedetto Polirone in 1109, and is recorded as a “Capitaneum, virum sane moribus, nobilitate fide, et devotione egregiu” [Mercati, L’Evangeliero donata della Contessa Matilde al Monastero di Polirone (Modena, 1925), 13, 17].
30 Ghirardini, *Storia critica*, p. 313 discusses the date of his birth but admits that it remains uncertain. He notes Ferretti’s assertion that he was a bit older than Matilda but suggests that he was more likely born around the year 1055.
31 Although, as noted above, she was taken as a prisoner to Germany by Henry III in 1055, she was obviously too young—even by medieval standards—to have been fighting on the battlefield at this time.
32 Chronicon S. Huberti Andaginensis, ed. L. C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, MGH SS VIII, 581, where, on his deathbed, hands over the sword he had used so well.
33 See note 12 above.
34 We may also note that although he did not die in battle Boniface nevertheless died a violent death when he was transfixed by a spear—see note 11 above.
35 Ranger, 3789 ff.
36 Donizo II.3, l.365: “Inclita Mathildis terror fuit omnibus illis.” For a further discussion of this statement see chapter 2 below.
37 On the enigmatic nature of Donizo’s poetry in particular see Ghirardini, *La Voce*, pp. 48-57.
38 Simeoni, note to Donizo, *Vita Mathildis*, l. 1373, p. 101
40 “Papa, ducatricem verbis corroborat idem/ Ut sit in adversis acerrima, non sit inermis” --Donizo, II.1, ll. 182-8.
41 Pseudo-Bardo, p. 27 c.51.
42 Later in the same work (pp. 34-5), Pseudo-Bardo relates a story about a knight named Lanfranc of Piola, who was imprisoned by a group of Matilda’s vassals when he refused to join in their rebellion against the countess. Lanfranc was eventually rescued by the prayers of Anselm and the timely arrival of Matilda and her army—although again, this is far from an admission that Matilda herself bore arms.
43 E.g. Pseudo-Bardo (p.15) describes how she led a most religious and spiritual life in private but “militarem agebat vitam in manifesto”, and that she retained both the spiritual and the secular, living her life both in and for Christ. Similarly, the *Chron. Estense* [in Trans. S. Gemmimiani, Muratorii, SRI (old series) VI col. 93] reports that “Haec una juventute sua quotidie militiam deduxit.”, although, unlike the prose *Vita Anselmi*, this chronicle was written centuries after Matilda’s death.
44 In addition to Godfrey the Bearded’s rebellion against Henry III (which I have already discussed), see below for some of the duke’s later campaigns. We may also note in passing the statement in the *Jocundi Translatio S. Servatij* (ed. R. Kopke, MGH SS XII, p. 115 c. 56): “Deinde signifer Romanus, marchio Italiae, dux Lotharingiae... abit ad regem maior Godefrudis, cui fide et virtute militari in toto regno non erat secundus, sicut testantur bella, que gessit perplurima in diversis terrarum provinciis.”
45 Godfrey aided Henry IV in his wars with the Saxons. Matilda’s second husband Welf also appears to have commanded armies—see below.
46 Beatrice was involved in a number of campaigns which would serve as interesting topics for further research. For a brief discussion of her participation in warfare see Goez, 72 and n. 7. Beatrice obviously controlled dozens of castles and a host of vassals— in praising her Donizo writes "Oppida, castella, marcham, propriam quoque terram,/ Rite gubernavit, tenuit comitissa Beatrici." (Donizo, I.17, II. 1141-2). Other sources record that she took part in the fighting between Alexander II and the antipope Cadalus. In a letter to her husband Godfrey, Peter Damian, berating
the duke for communicating with the antipope, writes: "et quidem adversus antichristum [i.e. Cadalus] hunc viriliter dimicasti, eiusque conatibus sacrilegis atque perversum cum serenissima atque clarissima uxor tua frequentius obstististi," and includes an exhortation to fight the enemies of God [Des Briefe des Petrus Damiani, ed. Kurt Reindel, MGH Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit (Munich, 1983-93), Letter 154 p. 69]. In Godfrey's absence (Goez, 160, 168-9), Beatrix was capable of employing her own household troops to block Cadalus path to Rome or to quell disturbances such as that fomented by Cadalus' followers at the Synod of Mantua in 1064, as the Annals of Altaich (a. 1064) state: "...et ecce fatores Parmensis episcopi ecclesiain cum magno strepitu irrumebant, Alexandrum papam hereticum vociferabantur, quidam etiam evaginatis gladiis mortem ei minabantur. Quo viso, qui in concilio erant, pene omnes fugere, solus papa vix remansit in loco sessionis suae, adivante et consiliante illi Wenzlao venerabile abbate... mox, ut Beatrix, uxor Gotefridi ducis, templum cum suis intravit, omnis ille tumultus et fragor bellicos in momento et, ut ita dicam, in ictu oculi deficientes cessavit." --Annals of Altaich, p. 65-6, a. 1064. These annals appear to be quite a reliable source, as the "Wenzlao" of the preceding quotation was none other than the abbot of Altaich himself (Mann, 286). For other accounts of the Synod see: Benzonis Episcopi Abelinesis ad Henricum IV Imperatorem, ed. K. Petztz, MGH XI, Bk. III c.27-9, p. 632-4 (who mentions the disturbances of Mantua and notes Beatrix's presence, but does not explicitly discuss her military activities); Watterich, Codex A, 261-3 (which does not discuss the disturbances); Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 596 (whose confused account does not even mention Beatrix and alleges that Godfrey was present). For a more in-depth discussion of Beatrix's role in resisting the antipope on his marches on Rome (1061-3) and in Gregory's crusading plans (1074) see below.

On Gregory's direct involvement in war see Cowdrey, G VII, 51, 56-8, 315, 650-2.

30 Eads 168.

44 Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 590. Duff (p. 72) alleges that the Romans chose Frederick because they wanted to please Godfrey and gain an ally against the Normans.

50 Cowdrey (Gregory VII, p. 35) notes they did not leave until October and stopped at Milan en route.


58 Kathleen Cushing (Cushing, 27) notes that John/Benedict was actually a reformer as well.

59 Peter Damian, amongst others, had fled to Florence when the two had entered Rome—see Leonis Chron. Mon. Cas., MGH VII p. 695.

55 Stephen had apparently stipulated that should he die no new election was to be made until Hildebrand had returned. Damian, Letters, II, no. 58, pp. 193-4; Chron. Mon. Cas., MGH VII pp. 704-5; Cowdrey, G VII, 37-8.

57 "...mox annitente Gotfrido duce..."--Chron. Mon. Cas., MGH VII 705.

58 Cowdrey, G VII, 37-8

59 Hildebrand had previously allied himself with Richard of Aversa (Guiscard's brother-in-law) against the Tuscan barons. In the summer of 1059, Nicholas held the famous Synod of Melfi, at which Robert Guiscard gave fealty to Nicholas and was invested with Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, while Richard received Capua (Hampe, 62-3). For a discussion of the Normans' oaths to popes from Nicholas to Gregory see Cowdrey, Gregory VII 640-2.

60 Cowdrey (Gregory VII, 48) notes that the imperial court initially refused to receive Nicholas' legate, perhaps out of anger at the pope's alliance with the Normans. The Annales Altahenses maiiores, (p. 54, a. 1058), however, claim that the empress did eventually recognize the reform candidate. cf. Giesebecht iii. 25; Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 593. Duff (p. 75) claims that Beatrix and Matilda also came to Rome at this time, but there appears to be no evidence for this assertion.

61 According to his extant documents he remained in or around Florence from at least Nov 7, 1059 to Jan 20, 1060, and he died there on July 27, 1061—Jaffe, R. P. R. pp. 561-2, 566.

62 The word "Pataria" was apparently derived from the Milanese word for rag (Cowdrey, "Papacy, Patarenes and Milan", p. 32 n. 2). The majority of the Patarenes appear to have come from the lower and middle classes. Cowdrey (G VII, 68 and "Papacy, Patarenes and Milan", 28 and 31-2) adds, however, that some of the capitaie and vassaiors (the upper two classes) supported the movement, and that their leaders tended to come from these classes, while crowds of people from the lower classes could also be mobilized against the Patarenes. On the Pataria in general see P. Golinelli, La Pataria. Lette religiose e sociali nella Milano dell'XI secolo (Milan, 1984); C. Violante, La Pataria Milanese e la riforma ecclesiastica, I: Le premesse (Rome, 1955); Cowdrey, "The Papacy, the Patarenes and the Church of Milan" in Popes, Monks and Crusaders: J. P. Whitney, Hildebrandine Essays (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 143-57; and Cowdrey, "Papacy, Patarenes and Milan", p. 28 n. 1.
Anselm, born into a noble family with roots in Baggio and branches in Milan and Vignolo, and educated at Bec under Lanfranc, had recently been elevated to thebishopric of Lucca by Stephen IX [Cushing, 43; The Oxford Dictionary of Popes, J.N.D. Kelly (Oxford: University Press, 1986) p. 152-3; Giesebrecht, III p. 22]. While Anselm came from the Lombard nobility, he was somewhat sympathetic to the Patarenes, although the rumour (circulated by the pro-imperial Benzo of Alba) that he had ties to or even founded the movement is suspect [cf. Benzonis Episcopi Albensis ad Henricum IV Imperatorem, ed. K. Pertz, MGH XI p. 672 II. 30-1, and Cowdrey, G VII, 65]. While historians such as Erdmann believed that Alexander strongly supported the Pataria (e.g. Erdmann notes on p. 143 that all three chroniclers of Milan agree that Alexander II gave Erlembald a vexillum Sancti Petri, indicating papal support for and holy nature of his battles), others, such as C. Violante [La Pataria Milanese, e la riforma ecclesiastica, I: Le premese (Rome, 1955) pp. 147-73] argue that “Alexander sprang from the Lombard aristocracy against whom the Patarenes reacted, and it is a misunderstanding to see him a founder, or even a sponsor, of the Patarene movement”. Nevertheless Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 597-8) includes a letter of Alexander from 1067 which encourages the Patarenes.

While the Pateria was rebuked for its violent ways at least once by a cardinal legation [see Mann, 300 n. 5 (c. 1066)], it is certain that Hildebrand, Anselm’s partner on the mission of 1057 (and subsequently his archdeacon), vigorously supported Erlembald and the Milanese Pateria, as we shall see below.

Bonizo (Liber ad Amicum, pp. 591-2), in addition to mentioning Anselm and Hildebrand’s stay in Milan (which took place while the pair were on their way to Germany to have Stephen IX’s election recognised (Cowdrey, G VII, p. 351), gives us an account of the early history of Patarenes. Cf. Landolfi, Historia Mediolanensis usque a. 1085, edd. L.C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, MGH SS 8 (Hanover: 1848), c. 13 (12), p. 82.

The chronology of the mission is hotly debated, with dates ranging from Jan 24, 1059 to 1061 [see Damian, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani, MGH Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit (Munich, 1983-93) Vol. II, p. 230 n. 10 and Peter Damian, Letters, ed. and trans.Owen J. Blum, Fathers of the Church, Medieval Continuation (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C., 1989) p. 25 n. 9]. In addition to the works of Milanese historians (see Mann, VI, p. 217 n.4), primary sources include Damian’s letter 65 (a.k.a. Opusc. 5), which was written to Hildebrand, and Bonizo’s Liber ad Amicum (p. 593).

Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 593-4; Hampe, 63.

Although at this time few, if any, could have foreseen the sudden and dramatic split which would occur between Gregory and Henry.

On Bonizo’s praise of Erlembald see Erdmann 248. Peter Damian also appears to have supported the Pateria’s actions—see Erdmann, p. 144-5 and Cowdrey, “Papacy, Patarines and Milan,” p. 31. More generally, Erdmann (92-4) writes that “Until the middle of the eleventh century, one may not speak of a mature ethic of Holy war or of an ecclesiastical knighthood such as would exist in the age of the crusades”, noting that it was reformers took the lead in the development of such ideas in the eleventh century.

Erdmann, 153-4. Erdmann also notes (pp. 183-4) that Erlembald was reported to have had a papal banner from Alexander II, which he used to fight the heretics. Arnulf (MGH SS 8.22) criticised this as a symbol of homicide. Elsewhere (p. 214-6), Erdmann argues that Gregory embraced the idea of a Christian knighthood and openly proclaimed the miracles at tombs of Erlembald and Cencius. Erdmann even describes Erlembald as the “first knight-saint in universal history.” (p. 141-2).

On the importance of the Civitate campaign see Erdmann, 121 ff.

Benzo of Alba, p. 672. Alexander received the oath of Richard of Capua the next day (Oct. 2)— see Jaffe, RPR 567 for sources. Cowdrey (G VII 49) notes the prominent Romans involved.

Cowdrey, G VII, 50. The extent of Wibert’s involvement in the schism is somewhat unclear; Cowdrey notes (G VII, 308) that although Wibert may have been directly involved in the schism, his relations with Alexander II and Hildebrand were cordial after it and he does not appear to have compromised his integrity.

Cowdrey, G VII, 50.

Giesebrecht, III.73-4;

Benzo, Book II c.9, pp. 615-6.

Goez, 168-9.


So says Benzo (MGH XI, Bk. II c. 15, p. 618-9), who was personally involved in the struggle on the side of Cadalus.
Matilda's Early Campaigns

79 Boso, Codex Archivi Vaticani A, in Pontificum Romanorum Vitae, Ed. Johann Matthias Watterich, (Leipzig, 1862; rerprint 1966), Vol. I, p. 258, notes that this was only a short time after Cadalus' arrival.


81 See Mann, 280 and sources therein. It should be noted that official imperial acceptance was not given until the Synod of Mantua in 1064. Robinson ("Papacy, Princes and Pactum", 749) argues that in fact the regency government did support Cadalus until this time, and refers to the study of F. Heberhold, "Die angriffe des Cadalus von Parma (Gegenpapst Honorius II. auf Rom in deh Jahren 1062 und 063", Studi gregoriani II (1947) 477-503. In any event, by 1064 Cadalus had been rejected by the regency.

82 Benzo, II 15, p. 618

83 Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 595; Boso, Codex A, 259.

84 This occurred sometime in late 1063 or early 1064: Bonizo, Liber ad amicum 595; Codex A, p. 259.

85 Boso (Codex A, p. 259) alleges that he payed off Cencius. There are also two letters dating from roughly this period from Peter Damian to Godfrey (Letters 67 and 68), in which Damian rebukes the count for refraining from punishing the wicked. Duff (p. 101) takes this as evidence that Godfrey was lenient towards Cadalus. The letters are also noteworthy in that they show Damian repeatedly urging Godfrey to use force to punish evildoers (e.g., quoting Exodus 22.18, "You shall not allow criminals to live."); as discussed above.

86 Yaffe, RPR I.594.

87 Mann, 298 ff.

88 Alexander presided over the synod of Mantua but was also forced to respond to the charge of Simony, which he did successfully. On Mantua see Annales Althanesis, 1064; Sigebert of Gembloux for 1067 (MGH SS 6, 361-2) (as Cushing, 32 n. 85, points out, with the wrong date). Cushing also notes (Cushing, 32 n. 85) Alexander's letter (Epistolae Alexandrini, no. 63, in Collectio Britannica, Brit. Lib., MS Addit. 8873, fo. 49r) to Bishop Rainald of Como in which the pope indicates that he presided over the synod.

89 Fabbri in Studi Matildici I, p. 28, notes that Wibert lost his chancellorship and vicarate of Italy in 1063, and that in the end he recognised Alexander. He attained the title of archbishop of Ravenna through the ruling of the emperor in 1072.

90 Duff, 99, citing Vedriani II.34. Duff also assumes that the army of Beatrice followed them closely.

91 In addition to those mentioned above, there is a brief account of the Cadalan Schism in the Annales Romani, MGH SS 5 (1844): 468-80, p. 472.


93 Goez, 161

94 Lupi Protospatarii annales a. 855-1102, MGH V P. 59 (year 1066) "Et hoc anno princeps Ricardus intravit terram Campaniae, obsedidit Cipheranum, et comprehendit eam, et devastando usque Romam pervenit".

95 Bonizo, Amicum, 599. Codex A, which usually corresponds closely to Bonizo's Liber ad Amicum, differs slightly in its wording; it states (pp. 266-7) that Godfrey took Matilda with him to Rome and that she returned with Godfrey to Alexander's court after the city of Capua had been restored to the Roman church.

96 The Chronicle of Monte Cassino (III.23 p. 714) gives perhaps the most detailed account of the campaign— which allegedly included an 18-day siege of Aquino— but says nothing of Beatrice or Matilda. The Annales Althanesis state that: "...praedictus dux Gotefridus magnam multituidinem Teutonicorum ac Italorum conlegit et ad comprimendam illorum [Nordmannorum] arrogantium perrexit. Cui etiam dominus papa et Romani se coniungebant, quoniam ipsi iam diu potentialiam Nordmannorum nimium metuebant, nec per se resistere illis confidebant. Confestim igitur facile cepereunt quaedam castella, quae reddiderunt illis, quorum pridem erant propria, sed per virum Nordmannorum ablat. Cum ergo urbem Aquinum vallasset obsidione firmissima et iam iamque urbs esset capienda, Ricardus ducem se convenire per legatos oravit, qui mox, precibus eius annuens, ad pontem Karian illi obviam venit, ibique in medio pontis eiusdem secreto se invicem sunt allocuti, et mox dux obsidionem solvit. Sique singuli ad propria sunt reversi." (Ann. Alt. 1067, p. 72-3). If we interpret Bonizo's phrase absque bello as meaning "without a battle" rather than "without war", all the sources are seen to be in agreement; that is, there was a siege at Aquino, but no set-piece battle. The Annales Augustanos (MGH III P. 128, a.1067), on the other hand, give one line about Godfrey being sent against Normans but returning with no effect except "paucis amissis". Another account of the campaign is given by Amatus [Storia dei Normanni di Amato di Manteccasino, ed. V. de Bartholomeis, Fonti per la storia d'Italia, 76 (Rome, 1935), pp. 270-1].
documents and Meyer von Knonau of whom Bonizo must also have known.

Bonizo states that it was Hildebrand, whom Bonizo knew personally, who called upon Godfrey to stop the Norman advance. The Chron. Cassin. says that "Gotefridus itaque apostolico simul et cardinalibus comitatus, mediante iam maio Aquinum cum universo exercitu venit...", thus showing the involvement of other cardinals, many of whom Bonizo must also have known. Bonizo’s silence on the issue is notable, but as we shall see he omits many significant events, both positive and negative, from his account of Matilda’s life.


See Overmann, 125 (Reg. Mat. 1 a) for sources.

Matilda had been betrothed to Godfrey for some time—see Overmann (Reg Mat h). The date of Matilda’s marriage to Godfrey has never been precisely established, although the termini of 1069 and 1072 are generally accepted; see Overmann’s chapter entitled “Die beiden Ehen der Grafin Mathilde, pp. 241-6 and Reg. Mat. 1b; Laurentii de Leodio gesta episcoporum Virdunensium et abbatum S. Vitoni. Ed. G. Waitz, MGH VIII p. 492 c. 2.

Reg. Mat. 4-8.

Fiorentini, IL.54, dated 16 Kal. Feb., 1073 “Dum in Dei Nomine in Civitate Pisense in Palatio D. Regis in judicio residisset Domina Beatrix ac Ducatrix una cum Gottifredo Duce, et Marchione ad causas audiendas...”. For documents relating to Godfrey’s stay in Italy see Overmann reg. Mat. 8a, 9, 13, 13b, 13c, and 15.

See Gregory’s letter to Godfrey from April 7, 1074 (Reg. Greg. 1.72, pp. 91-2): “Ubi est auxilium, quod pollicebatis, ubi milites, quos ad honorem et subsidium sancti Petri te ducetur nobis promisisti?”, and Gregory’s letter of January 3 1074 (Reg. Greg. I.40, p. 59), which is interpreted by Overmann (Reg. Mat 18b) as relating to Matilda’s letter to Gregory about Godfrey’s entreaties.

Duff (113) suggests that Matilda may even have avoided meeting with Godfrey altogether, although in a document from August 18, 1073 [reprinted in P. Ireneo Affb, Storia della Città di Parma (Parma: 1957), Vol. II p. 291], Matilda uses the phrase “consentiente mihi que supra Mathilde Contefiedo [i.e. Godfrey] Duce viro meo”, (“with the consent of Duke Godfrey, my husband”), which seems to imply that they were together at some point. Cf. Overmann, Reg. Mat. 15.

Overmann discusses the date of his departure in Reg. Mat. 15.


Lambert, 255; Reg. Mat. 23a.

Lambert, p.257 (a. 1077): “Haec [Matilda], vivente adhuc viro suo, quandam viduitatis speciem, longissimis ab eo spaciis exclusa, praetendebat, cum nec ipsa maritum in Luteriingiam extra natale solum sequi vellet, et ille, ducatus quem in Luteriingia administrabat negociis implicitus, vix post tercium vel quartum annum semel marcham italicam inviseret.” For which reason, Lambert recounts, there was a rumour of adultery between Gregory and Matilda.

Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 606. Mann (VII, p. 109), notes that Godfrey joined the imperial army which defeated the Saxons at Unstrut on June 9, 1075.

The dispute is mentioned in the above quote from the Chronicle of S. Hugh, and in Duff, 132-3.


Thus one finds Gregory asking Beatrice and Matilda to bring a dispute between Bishop Dodo and Count Ugulino to a just resolution—Reg. Greg. L50 (Mar 4 1074), pp. 70-1. For a more detailed examination of Matilda’s involvement in judging cases and settling disputes, see below, ch. 4.

At this time the Patarenes appear to have grown rather strong. Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 599) indicates they had support of clergy in Milan, Piacenza and Cremona. Bonizo also discusses the struggles between Erlembald, the “miles det”, and Godfrey for Milan and includes a letter of Pope Alexander II encouraging the Patarenes (Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 597-605).


Bonizo, Liber ad amicum 600.


Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 601; Overmann, Reg. Mat. 13e. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 13e) also notes Dieckmann’s hypothesis that Godfrey was also present.
Matilda's Early Campaigns

119 See for example Reg. Greg. I.11 (June 24 1073), pp. 21-2, in which Gregory advises Beatrice and Matilda to avoid the bishops of Lombardy because they have ordained the heretic Godfrey as archbishop of Milan. In the same letter, we may note, the new pope discusses the bishop-elect of Lucca, describing him as learned and expressing the hope that Anselm would choose the right side in the struggle for Milan!

120 For Matilda's presence at the Lenten Synod of 9 to 14 March 1074, see: Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 602 ("Cui synodo interfuit excellentissima comitissa Matildae...""); cf. Codex A, 312. Mann (VII, p. 67) notes that the principle work of council was to renew the prohibitions against simony and Nicolaitism and to excommunicate Guiscard. For the Lenten Synod of Feb 24-8, 1075, see Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 605 and Mann VII 77.

121 Cowdrey (G VII, p. 300) delineates the two phases of Gregory's preparations.

122 In 1071 the Byzantine Empire had suffered two major defeats, having lost both Bari to the Normans and the battle of Manzikert to the Seljuk Turks. Gregory's perception of the Byzantine's need for assistance, if not the formal appeal of the emperor Michael VII (Cowdrey, "Gregory's Crusading Plans", 30), undoubtedly played a major role in his decision to attempt an expedition to the East.

123 Erdmann (123 ff.) notes that the reforming Pope Leo IX (1049-54), who had led the papal army during the disastrous campaign of Civitate, contended that he had never actually made war but had only intended to scare the Normans into acting properly. Although Leo renewed the ban on the clergy bearing arms, he was unable to escape the criticism of Peter Damian, Bruno of Segni and others for his martial activities. In the passage above, Gregory, engaged in a similar expedition, certainly seems conscious of the earlier criticism. Cf. Erdmann, 161 and Cowdrey, "Gregory's Crusading Plans", 31.

124 Reg. Greg. I.46 (Feb. 2, 1074) pp. 64-5. The translation is taken from Mann VII, 61-2. Cowdrey notes that the last sentence is rather artificial—Gregory and his allies were having a great deal of difficulty in containing Guiscard (Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's Crusading Plans", p. 30). Another letter from this period, one dated March 1 1074, was addressed "to all those who wished to defend the Christian faith" and constituted a call to arms to Christians to bring aid to the faithful of the East and to lay down their lives for their Eastern brothers (Reg. Greg. I.49, pp. 69-70).

125 Cowdrey, Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans, 30.

126 Cowdrey, Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans, 31.


128 Bonizo's account of the expedition is in Liber ad amicum 602-4; Amatus, Cf. Reg. Greg. I.85 p. 106-8, written to Agnes, which contains a long passage extolling the diligent labour of Beatrice and Matilda and comparing them to the women who came to Christ's tomb.


130 Amatus, 7.12, pp. 303-4.

131 Reg. Greg. I.85 p. 106-8, written to Agnes, was "Data in expeditione, ad Sanctum Flabianum 17 Kalendas Iulii, indictione 12". Cowdrey ("Gregory's 'Crusading Plans'", 32) and de Bartholomaeis [Storia de'Normanni di Amato di Montecassino, Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis, ed. Fonti per la storia d'Italia 76 (Rome, 1935), p. 305 n. 1] argue that San Flaviano, to the south-east of Lake Bolsena and on the road from Viterbo, is a more likely identification than Fiano, to the east of Viterbo near the Tiber.

132 As Cowdrey notes ("Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans", 32), Amatus and Bonizo differ slightly as to the rendezvous point, with Amatus giving Monte Cimino and Bonizo San Flaviano—Amatus, 7.XIII, p. 305-6; Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, VII p. 604.

133 On the reasons advanced for the failure of the various sources, see Cowdrey, "G VII's 'Crusading Plans'", 32.

134 Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 604) tells us that Gregory came all the way to the castle of S. Fabiani to meet "Duke Beatrice" and invited her and her daughter to the expedition, but a "Langobardicus vavassorum tumultus" prevented them from coming. With "sedition" suddenly arising the expedition broke up, the pope returning to Rome and Beatrice and Matilda to their own lands.

135 Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 129) argues the tumult was a rebellion of Lombard vassals, probably stirred up by Wibert and Tedald of Milan. There is some support for his view in the account of Codex A (I 315-6), which blames the breakup of the expedition on Wibert's machinations: "Unde factum est, quod expeditio, quam Pontifex per duccem Gottfredum eiusque uxorem illustrem comitissam matthidam atque alios nobiles contra Normannos et ceteros ecclesiae hostes de Lombardia excitaverat, in detrimentum ecclesiae disturbata est atque dirupta." Bonizo's account differs slightly, for although it mentions that Matilda and Beatrice were prevented from participating by the aforementioned "Langobardicus vavassorum tumultus", it does state that Wibert promised (albeit insincerely) to lead an army to support Gregory at this time (Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 604).
A voyage which may in part have been designed to determine whether the emperor would support the campaign—see the discussion of Gregory’s letter of December 7 below.

In the same letter Gregory asks Beatrice and Matilda to notify marquis Azzo that he has free passage through their lands "ne occasione vestri timoris in hac parte iustitia christianae legis detrimentum sentiat.". For a discussion on Matilda’s role in facilitating and preventing passage through her lands see chapter 4 below.

A fact which does much to dispel the myth that Gregory’s assumption of the papal throne immediately ruined all harmony between papacy and empire.

Cowdrey ("G VII’s ‘Crusading Plans’", 36) calls into question Erdmann’s assertion that operations against Guiscard were still envisioned as part of this expedition.

On the issue of the dating of this letter see Overmann Reg. Mat. 20i.

Cowdrey, "G VII’s ‘Crusading Plans’", 37.
Chapter 2
The Struggle against Henry IV, 1076-97

I. Matilda and the Failure of Diplomacy: 1076-80
II. The First Phase of the War: Wibert and Henry's Campaign in Italy: 1080-7
III. The Second Phase of the War: Matilda's Alliance with Welf and Henry's Second Campaign in Italy, 1088-97

The war against Emperor Henry IV was the largest and most sustained conflict of Matilda's life, and contemporary accounts of the struggle afford us some of the best evidence that she planned operations and commanded troops. From the time of the emperor's arrival in Italy in 1081 to his final departure in 1097, Matilda was in a near-constant state of war with both the emperor and his Wibertine allies. In the following chapter I will survey these campaigns with a twofold purpose: firstly, to render as accurate an account of the battles, sieges and skirmishes of this period as the sources will allow (pointing out, where necessary, the strategic and logistical context of these engagements and their relevance to the history of medieval warfare); and secondly to assess the extent of Matilda's involvement in all of these operations. The first objective is made necessary by the neglect with which military historians have generally treated the Italian theatre (or more precisely the Matildine front) of the Investiture Conflict; the second objective is contingent upon the first, since a clear understanding of the circumstances of these operations provides the only solid foundation for an assessment of the countess' participation in them. In order to appreciate the full scope of Matilda's activity in this regard, I will also briefly examine major strategical considerations that affected her planning and decision-making processes--the struggle for Rome, her alliance with the Welfs of Bavaria, etc.

What soon becomes obvious is that Matilda exercised her military power to an extent which far surpassed the narrow boundaries that, as we shall see in the fifth and sixth chapters, had traditionally been laid down for women in medieval writings. Although her public involvement in politics was adversely affected to some extent by the conservative criticism that her activities provoked, Matilda's participation in warfare was not similarly circumscribed. Matilda was too important to the reform cause to be restrained by her allies (even when these
included the pope), and was too skilled and too intelligent a commander to be conquered by her enemies (even when these included the Holy Roman emperor).

*Matilda and the failure of diplomacy: 1076-80*

Matilda began the “investiture controversy” as an ambassador of peace. In the period from Gregory’s accession to the Council of Worms in January of 1076, she and her mother employed all their diplomatic skills in a concerted effort to bridge the growing rift between the two heads of Christendom. Gregory, in fact, came to rely heavily upon Beatrice and Matilda in his dealings with Henry, as his letter to Erlembald reveals:

> Episcopos praeterea, inimicum vestrum fulcire conantes, non multum metuatis, cum Beatrix ac filia eius Mathildis, Romanae ecclesiae penitus faventes, cum quibusdam maximis regni proceribus laborent nostrum atque regis animum firmiter unire.¹

With Beatrice and Matilda struggling to preserve the peace, the conflict between Henry and Gregory took several years to develop into open warfare.

Papal and imperial allies, however, resorted to organized violence well before that occurred. In 1075, the flashpoints were Milan and Rome. In Milan, Erlembald, the leader of the Patarenes, was slain on April 5 1075, and his death led to the collapse of the Pataria and a renewal of support for Henry in the city.² The emperor, however, began to squander his good fortune by ignoring his earlier appointee Godfrey in favour of a Milanese subdeacon named Tedald, who had served Henry for some time.³ Henry’s disregard for Godfrey’s earlier consecration by the Lombard bishops provoked considerable anger in Milan and in the long run did much to turn the tide of public sentiment against the emperor.⁴ For the next few years, however, the Milanese in general supported Henry. According to Bonizo, Tedald allied himself with Wibert and Cardinal Hugh Candidus (who had already been excommunicated after failing to attend Gregory’s Lenten Synod of 1075⁵) and attempted to consolidate his hold over the city. Tedald met with only a moderate degree of success (Cowdrey, Papacy, Patarenes and Milan, 40). In the autumn, therefore, Henry sent one of his excommunicate counsellors (Count Ebehard of Nellenburg) to Italy to fight the Patarenes. If Gregory’s reaction to affairs in Milan was not as uncompromising as once thought, the pope’s patience and his faith in Henry’s desire to act...
according to papal will were certainly tested by these events (Cowdrey, Gregory VII, 131-4 and 284).

Meanwhile, at Rome, an attempt was made to kidnap Gregory. The plot was orchestrated by a long-time enemy of the reform party, Cencius Stephani, who (according to Bonizo, Liber ad amicum 604-5) had the cooperation of Cardinal Hugh the White and Wibert of Ravenna. When the kidnapping ended in total failure for Cencius, he was forced to retire to Campagna—Bonizo states that it was only Matilda’s intercession that prevented him from being executed. Afterwards, Cencius ravaged papal lands and was himself excommunicated, while Cardinal Hugh travelled first to Ravenna to meet with Wibert and then to the Imperial assembly at Worms (Jan. 24th, 1076). At Worms, Gregory was accused of a host of sins, amongst which were of allowing women to have undue influence at his court and even of having an improper sexual relationship with Matilda.

The last two charges are very interesting indeed. The first was directed at Matilda and Beatrice (perhaps also at Empress Agnes and Countess Adelaide of Turin), the second at Matilda alone. The first accusation is simply inexplicable unless one accepts the fact that Beatrice and Matilda, contrary to the canon laws we will examine in chapter 5, were advising the pope and taking an active role in papal councils and politics. The second appears to have had some effect on Matilda’s public relationship with Gregory. Cowdrey has recently suggested that Hugh made the charge because many of the German bishops had been angered by Gregory’s attempts to enforce clerical chastity; the accusation thus made Gregory appear a hypocrite (G VII, 135 and 300-1). Cowdrey has also noted that after Worms and the events at Canossa in 1077, Gregory distanced himself from women in general and Matilda in particular so that no hint of hypocrisy would remain to provide ammunition to his enemies. Gregory’s measures seem to have been successful in this regard—but only for a short while. The accusation was not repeated at the subsequent council at Brixen, where Gregory’s personal life did not come under the same scrutiny it had at Worms, but charges of impropriety continued to dog both Matilda and Gregory in later years (as we shall see in chapters 5 and 6). Matilda’s gender, then, was something of a liability not only for her but for her ally Gregory as well. Their public correspondence was less frequent and the subsequent coordination of the war effort was probably made more difficult, although the countess did manage to continue to aid the pope.
Although the Council of Worms decided that Gregory should be deposed, removing a pope *in absentia*, without the consent of the Roman church, was recognized as being beyond even that assembly's power. Nevertheless, all the participants at Worms signed a document renouncing their obedience to Gregory, and a famous and eloquent letter was added in Henry's name commanding the pope to step down. After messengers delivered the news to the pope (who was holding a Lateran council when they arrived), Gregory excommunicated the emperor and suspended and anathematized all the bishops of Lombardy and Germany who had supported him (Reg. Greg. III.10a, Feb 14-22 1076, pp. 222-4).

Gregory's actions had repercussions not only in Italy but north of the Alps as well. For much of the coming war, developments in Germany were to have a significant influence on the strategic situation in Matilda's lands. The countess played a major role in facilitating communication between Gregory and the princes of the empire. In 1076, Gregory had explicitly absolved from their oaths all those who had sworn fealty to the emperor and had thereby greatly encouraged the rebellious Dukes Rudolf of Swabia, Welf of Bavaria and Berthold of Carinthia. These three arranged for a council to meet on October 16 at Tribur, where an assembly of the German princes declared that, if Henry were not received back into the Church by the anniversary of his excommunication, he would forfeit the empire. The princes also asked Pope Gregory to come to Augsburg to hear Henry's case, and forced the emperor to agree to come as well for a diet on Feb. 2, 1077. Gregory began to move north towards Augsburg late in 1076. He wrote that he would be at Mantua by January 8 and arranged for an escort from the German princes to meet him there and lead him across the Alps.

Overmann and Duff have asserted, based on a passage from the chronicler Arnulf of Milan, that Matilda herself attended the council of Tribur. After noting how Rudolf, Welf and Bertold had withdrawn their allegiance from the excommunicated emperor and accused him of many crimes, Arnulf states:

> Interim consilio sanctissimi Cluniacensis abbatis, Agnetis quoque regiae matris, nec non sapientissimae iam dictae Matildae, statuitur generale colloquium inter ipsos regem et apostolicum, pacis ac iustitiae causa. Cumque exiret ab Urbe papa profecturus Alamaniam, Matildae fretus iuvamine, venit Italian. (Arnulf, 30)

As can be seen from this quotation, however, Arnulf does not specifically indicate that Matilda attended Tribur, but only that she played a significant role in the decision to convene a later
council. Ghirardini, apparently aware of the limitations of Arnulf's statements, more cautiously states that Matilda either participated personally or was represented by a legate.  

In the end, no such council ever occurred, and Matilda was forced into assuming an even greater role in the emerging struggle. Her status had in fact risen dramatically in the early part of 1076. Her husband Godfrey the Hunchback had been assassinated on Feb. 26\textsuperscript{11}, and her mother Beatrice had followed him to the grave on April 18 (Donizo I.20, ll. 1355-60). Their deaths put Matilda in the powerful position of sole heir and widow. According to Landulf of Milan, Matilda herself had arranged Godfrey's murder.\textsuperscript{22} While Overmann (Reg. Mat. 23a) dismisses this charge, Ghirardini (pp. 131 ff.) notes that the timing of the assassination is very suspicious: it occurred just after the Council of Worms, at which Hugh the White (apparently with affirmation of Godfrey) had accused Matilda of adultery with the pope. Although it would have been difficult to arrange the killing so soon after the synod, we must reject Overmann's argument that it was "naturally impossible" for Matilda to have been involved in Godfrey's death.\textsuperscript{23} It was no more unnatural than her commanding armies.

The deaths of Godfrey and Beatrice and the failure of the proposed meeting in Germany resulted in Matilda accepting greater responsibilities. Indeed, the task of defending the reform papacy now fell squarely onto her shoulders. Her first duty was to shelter the pope— to provide him with \textit{ducatus} (military escort)—as he travelled north to meet the German princes at Augsburg. The dangers involved in making such a journey were considerable, especially given the enmity of the Lombard episcopate. Bonizo writes "Et sunt, qui dicit eum pontificem incautum voluisse capere; quod satis videtur veri simile" (\textit{Liber ad amicum}, 610). In a letter from February or March of 1076, Gregory acknowledged that all of his supporters (with the notable exception of Matilda) had advised him not to go to the Germans because of the great danger (Reg. Greg. Ep. Coll. 20, p. 545). Gregory told the princes, however, that he would make the journey, provided that he could have "\textit{ducatus}" at a prearranged time and place from them.\textsuperscript{24}

It is clear from analysis of the pope's letters and the narrative sources that Gregory was using the term \textit{ducatus} to indicate military protection. Lampert employs it in this sense when he observes:

\begin{quote}
Interea papa rogatus per litteras a principibus Teutonicis qui in Oppenheim convenerant, ut in purificatione sanctae Marie ad discutiendam causam regis Augustae occurreret, invitis Romanis principibus et propter incertum rei eventum iter illud dissuadentibus,
\end{quote}
Roma egressus est, et quantum poterat profectionem accelerans, statuto die praesto esse satagebat, ducatum ei praebente Matilda...” (Lampert, 256-7).

As it turned out, the pope was prevented from travelling to Germany by the princes’ failure to provide him with just this sort of protection. Thus, in a letter to the Germans from February or March of 1077, Gregory wrote “Et pervenisse quidem potuissemus, si ducatum eo tempore, eo loco quo constitutum erat ex vestra parte habuissemus.” Clearly, then, the ducatus which Lampert records Matilda provided the pope as he passed through her lands was a military escort.26

It is not known exactly how far north the pope travelled before realizing that the escort from the German princes would not materialize. He was in Florence on December 2827 but may have gone as far North as Mantua. Bonizo records that one of the princes’ guides, Bishop Udo of Trier, was captured at Piacenza while another bishop (Gregory) warned the pope that the emperor had arrived secretly in the bishop’s seat of Vercelli (Liber ad amicum, 609-10). When Pope Gregory learned that the emperor was nearby, he retreated, at Matilda’s urging, to the protection of her stronghold at Canossa. During this period, the pope once again relied upon the countess’s formidable military resources:

Igitur papa, dum in Gallias properaret, ex insperato audiens, regem iam esse intra Italiam, hortante Matilda, in castellum quoddam munitissimum quod Canusium dicitur divertit, expectare volens, donec consilium adventus eius diligentius exploraret, utrum scilicet veniam admissi postulare, an iniuriam excommunicationis suae militari manu persequi plenus animorum, adveniret. (Lampert, 257)

Cumque exiret ab Urbe papa prefecturus Alamaniam, Matildae fretus iuvamine, venit Italiam... Fuerat comitissae opidum Canossa nomine, multis moenibus ac loci natura circumquaque munitum, inexpugnabile revera praesidium... Sic Matildae magna prudentia consolidata sunt pacis eorum foedera, invitis episcopis ac in lite manentibus. (Arnulf, 30-1)

The famous events at Canossa hardly need retelling here.28 For present purposes, what is relevant is not only that Matilda’s foremost castle provided the pope with protection but that the countess herself played a major role in interceding on Henry’s behalf.29 Matilda and Adelaide even went so far as to act as sponsors or sureties for the emperor by swearing to the agreement.30 This is particularly interesting given Lambert’s description (p. 259) of how, when “all the princes” swore an oath to make sure Henry lived up to his part of the settlement, Hugh of Cluny...
gave only his word because his monastic vow prevented him from swearing as a layman. Although the clergyman here felt he needed to refrain from secular oaths, the women, it appears, did not.

After leaving Canossa, Henry requested another audience with the pope, and Matilda, (according to Donizo) led Gregory’s escort towards the rendezvous point across the Po. Donizo writes:

Indeed the king at first crossed the Po in vain, practicing to betray the pope with a few men [cum paucis], and certainly the Countess as well if he were able; the wicked man thought to complete the unspeakable deed which was so pleasing to him. Christ, seeing all things, forbade this crime: the prelate and the excellent Matilda with him crossed the Po, hoping to conclude a true peace. To the renowned countess, famous for seeing with many eyes, came a messenger who told her of King Henry’s plan to betray the pope. When she learned of this, the prudent mistress moved herself and her men as quickly as possible. She headed for the strong mountains with the pope. The plot of the king was foiled and made known; the king saw the pope and Matilda no more.

Overmann, noting the skepticism with which many historians have treated this story, states that it “admittedly arouses the strongest doubt.” Ghirardini, on the other hand, holds it as certain that Matilda was with Gregory on February 11 at the monastery of Bondeno di Roncore (near the Po) and seems to accept the story (Storia Critica, 27-8). It should be said in Donizo’s defence that there is nothing inherently unbelievable about the passage. Some support for his account can be found in an edition of the Chronicle of Monte Cassino, which states “Postmodum vero cum imperator papam et Mattildam dolo capere vellet, detecta fraude pontifex a Mattilda monitus et adiutus Romam reversus est.”, although Wattenbach (the chronicle’s editor) has suggested that the passage may have been interpolated from Donizo. We do know for certain that Matilda provided Gregory with military protection for several weeks before (and several months after) the alleged incident. Suspicion of just such an ambush obviously underlies the fact that Gregory did not proceed on to Germany in the first place, and that afterwards, while meeting with Henry at Canossa, he exacted from the emperor an oath guaranteeing safe-conduct to Germany (Reg. Greg. IV 12a p. 258-9, Jan 28 1077).

Moreover, by all accounts, the peace achieved at Canossa began to break down very quickly. The open disdain of the Lombard prelates for Henry’s submission and the election of the Anti-King Rudolf by the rebel German princes in March of 1077 quickly drove a wedge between
pope and emperor. Lampert records that the criticism of Henry was so severe that some of his own supporters in Italy even considered electing his son Conrad as their new king. Many of Gregory’s letters threaten with excommunication anyone who would prevent him or his legates from arriving at the proposed meeting in Germany. Furthermore, within fifteen days of Canossa, Gregory’s legate Bishop Gerard of Ostia was captured by the schismatic Bishop Denis of Piacenza as he proceeded with Anselm II of Lucca on a mission to Milan. In a separate incident, Abbot Bernhard of Marseilles was captured and imprisoned for six months by Henry’s supporter Count Udalric of Lenzburg. Moreover, Tilman Struve has recently noted how Henry’s indifference to the incarceration of two papal legates appeared (at least to the admittedly-partial Bishop of Piacenza) as a violation of the agreement of Canossa, and has also pointed out that Gerald of Ostia was only able to win his freedom through the intervention of Agnes and Matilda.

Even if we were totally to discount Donizo’s testimony on this specific case, we would still have to acknowledge the other sources that confirm that Matilda performed for the pope the common medieval military function of escort duty (*ducatus*), a feudal obligation commonly owed by vassals to their lords. After she had protected him during the aborted attempt to reach Germany, Gregory remained in one Matildine stronghold or another for the next seven months. He is known to have stopped at Bianello, Carpineta, Carpi, Ficarolo, Florence and Siena while attempting unsuccessfully to meet with the German princes. Matilda was personally with the pope for about half of this time. She may also have escorted him back to Rome and brought reinforcements with her in September (although the evidence for this is not particularly compelling). For a span of at least nine months— that is, from the time the pope left Rome in November-December of 1076 until he returned there in September of 1077—the pope’s person was protected from his numerous enemies by the strength of her castles and towns. For a minimum of four or five of these months, he was protected by the countess’s own personal escort. Even after this period, the pope continued to rely heavily upon Matilda’s forces. In a letter written shortly after his return to Rome and addressed to the magnates and prelates of Corsica, Gregory writes: "habemus per misericordiam dei in Tuscia multas comitum et nobilium virorum copias ad vestrum adiutorium, si necesse fuerit, defensionemque paratas", which is quite clearly a reference to Matilda’s troops.
Gregory's return to Rome in the fall of 1077 was in a sense an admission of failure on the part of the princes to provide him with protection and safe conduct on his much-anticipated journey through Germany. Although some modern historians have suggested that the German princes' failure to do so— at least after the meeting between Henry and Gregory at Canossa— was intentional, Gregory for one fully intended to make such a voyage. Moreover, the fact remains that in 1076-7 the pope had been able to travel safely through Tuscany and into Emilia but not to Germany. It is a testament to Matilda's military capabilities that the German princes were unable to provide Gregory with the same degree of military protection for his journey through their lands that Matilda was able to furnish him for the passage through hers.

With the pope unable to meet them in Germany, the rebellious princes chose Rudolf of Swabia as anti-king at Forchheim on March 15, 1077. Gregory's legates did not oppose the election (Cowdrey, G VII, 169-71) and indeed subsequently endorsed it— although Gregory refused to accept his legates' re-excommunication of Henry and repeatedly claimed that their actions had contradicted his commands. According to the agreement reached at Canossa (and contemporary concepts of judicial procedure), Gregory refrained from deposing Henry or fully recognizing Rudolf until both sides had been given an opportunity to present their cases before him. For the next two years, as Gregory made repeated attempts to arrange a council to decide the fate of the kingship and to ensure safe passage to it, hostility between Henry and Gregory simmered in their letters but failed to boil over into open warfare. In a strongly worded letter to Wibert (Reg. Greg. V.13, Jan 28 1078, pp. 303-4), Gregory summoned him to the Lenten Synod of 1078, and the synod excommunicated him when he failed to attend; but Henry's legates, including those who were present at this same synod, continued to travel to, and be received at, the papal court in Rome (Cowdrey G VII 180).

Although later Imperial sources portray her as a breaker of peace (see chapter 6), Matilda continued her efforts to promote concord between pope and emperor after their meeting at Canossa in 1077. In 1079, she suggested that her cousin Theodoric, duke of Upper Lorraine, act as mediator between the two, but Gregory declined because Theodoric was excommunicate (Reg. Greg. VI.22, Mar 3 1079, p. 359). Unable to reach Germany, Gregory finally agreed to hear the case in Rome, where it was pleaded by representatives of both parties at the Lateran Synod of March 1080 (Cowdrey, G VII, 194-9). Rudolf's envoys accused Henry of preventing the meeting in Germany and declared him a bloodthirsty tyrant; Henry's ambassadors, apparently being
treated rather poorly, were not particularly conciliatory (Reg. Greg. VII 14a pp. 403-4). On March 7, Gregory renewed his excommunication of Henry, and, in addition to deposing him, he finally recognised Rudolf as the rightful king. In response, some of Henry's bishops held an assembly at Mainz on May 31 and declared that Gregory was an "execrable disturber of the laws of God and man" who had to be deposed. At the imperial synod at Brixen on June 25, 1080, Gregory was accused of a host of sins— including using money and violence to seize power for himself— and was ordered to step down. Wibert of Ravenna was eventually chosen as Gregory's successor. While Henry turned his attentions to the Saxons, Wibert entered Lombardy to assert his claim to the papacy. Open war finally broke out in Italy as Gregory attempted to muster his lay allies—Matilda, Robert Guiscard, Jordan of Capua— in defense of his papacy.

The First Phase of the War: Wibert and Henry’s Campaign in Italy: 1080-7

Gregory and Matilda began the war by attempting to launch a preemptive strike against Wibert and Ravenna sometime after September 1, 1080 (while Henry was occupied in Germany). In the summer of 1080, Gregory addressed a letter to all the fideles of S. Peter, informing them that Princes Robert Guiscard, Jordan of Capua and others "in Tuscia caeterisque regionibus" had vowed to defend the Roman church. He went on to write:

Unde post Kalendas Septembris, postquam tempus frigescere coeperit— cupientes sanctam Ravennatem ecclesiam de manibus impiis eripere et patri suo beato Petro restituere— partes illas armatu manu, sicut de Domino speramus, petemus; ac per ipsius auxilium nos eam liberaturos, haud dubie credimus.

Whether this attack was ever actually made is unclear, however, for in mid-October of the same year Matilda’s forces were soundly defeated by Henry’s Lombard supporters near her castle of Volta (modern Volta Mantovana, situated about 25 kilometres North of Mantua). The fact that Volta lay within (albeit on the north-eastern edge of) Matildine territory suggests either that Matilda’s army had been surprised or driven back by the Lombard army or that it had never succeeded in mounting its attack on Ravenna in the first place.

The possibility that Matilda’s army was surprised by the Lombards is not at all negligible. Ghirardini dismisses this scenario on the fantastically tenuous grounds that Bernold and Bonizo— both of whom are sympathetic to Matilda— use the terms “most prudent” and
“most excellent” when describing the countess (Volta, 237). This is hardly an effective argument, and a mistake on the part of the Matildine military command would help to explain Donizo’s silence on these events (the author of Matilda’s Vita tended to avoid anything which might reflect poorly on her). Nevertheless, it must be noted that other plausible explanations for the location of the battle could be advanced. Matilda may have decided to abort the invasion when she learned of the mustering of a large Lombard army (under the command of one of the emperor’s illegitimate sons?) or when the support which Robert Guiscard and Jordan of Capua had promised for the invasion failed to materialize. Supporting the latter hypothesis is the fact that after the pope’s letter from the summer of 1080 there is no further mention of Norman support for the expedition, nor do we find any reference to Normans in Matilda’s armies or documents. Certainly, this would not have been the first time that the fickleness of Norman support proved costly to the reform party.

Other than the fact that the engagement at Volta was not a siege but an open-field affair, the specifics of the battle itself are no clearer than the circumstances surrounding it. In fact, we do not even know who commanded the Matildine army. Some historians have assumed that it was Arduino della Palude, sometimes styled Matilda’s “Grand Captain”, but no author specifically states that either he or Matilda was present. As Ghirardini notes, there are several passages in the contemporary histories which state, in a general way, that Matilda led her armies during these years, and her presence at Volta may be implicit in them (Volta, 233-4). The labeling of Matilda as a “dux” in the sources, which is also noted by Ghirardini, surely must be taken into account, but it is far from conclusive proof.

Volta, then, does not provide particularly solid evidence of Matilda exercising direct battlefield command. Even if absent at Volta, however, the countess would not have been far removed from the field, given that the pope had established autumn as the time of the reform offensive in this area. She may have directed her forces by issuing orders to subordinate commanders, as we shall see she did in subsequent operations like Tricontai and Sorbara. At the very least, the papal letters written to coordinate the reformers’ offensive show that Matilda had been involved in the strategical planning of this stage of the war against the Lombard imperialists.

The Battle of Volta had a major effect on Matilda’s position in Lombardy and warrants some attention in and of itself. None of the primary sources give any figures for the numbers
involved in the battle, which unfortunately has prompted some rather wild speculation on the part of modern historians. Ghirardini argues that the “schismatic” forces must have numbered several thousands, that they were “quasi certamente” greater than Matilda’s— which he states probably did not exceed ten thousand—and that both armies relied heavily on the cavalry arm (Ghirardini, Volta, 236). For Ghirardini these numbers are relatively reserved—when compared, for example, to his estimates of the armies involved in the conflict of 1092— but to the military historian they remain far too high. In a footnote to his article on the Battle of Volta, Ghirardini reveals his extravagance in estimating army size: commenting on Amatus of Monte Cassino’s statement that in the proto-crusade of 1074 Beatrice had promised the pope 30,000 cavalry, he writes that the number seems “un po’ eccessiva” (Volta, p. 236 n. 27). This is far more than a little excessive. Even in the mid- to late-twelfth century, large Italian communal armies were hard put to maintain more than a few thousand troops. In the twelfth century, armies of regular governments rarely exceeded a few thousand men. Moreover, the First Crusade, which recruited from throughout Europe and was by far the largest army the participants had ever joined, involved about 5,000 heavy cavalry. Given that the entire servitium debitum of Normandy was about 1,000 knights and that of the very well-organized Norman kingdom of England was about 4,000 to 6,000 knights at this time, we can surmise that Beatrice herself probably had the nominal service of at most about an eighth or a tenth as many cavalry as she supposedly promised to the pope.

Certainly, the armies at Volta would have been of a medium-to-large size for the time. One was composed of the forces of much of Lombardy supplemented by the entourage of the emperor’s illegitimate son, the other was that of a major North Italian prince and her reforming allies. Logistical problems would have been eased by the fact that the Po basin was a rich and populous region with numerous roads and rivers; in the summer and early fall its wide plains could have provided food and fodder for relatively large numbers of troops and horses. The difficulty for Matilda, however, was not so much one of logistics as one of recruitment. Even the armies of the most powerful rulers of the time, who had entire kingdoms and empires from which to draw their forces, rarely exceeded ten thousand individuals. The armies which met at Hastings, for example—the royal English army and a ducal army augmented by large numbers of mercenaries recruited aggressively from throughout France for months before the invasion—each contained considerably less than ten thousand combatants, while even a century and a half later, at Bouvines in 1214, the armies of the French king and the German emperor only approached
these figures. Neither of the opposing forces at Volta were of an imperial or royal, much less of a crusading stature. For them, then, about five or six thousand on either side, including both infantry and cavalry, seems generous.

Even less acceptable are Ghirardini’s assertions that Matilda’s army was heavily outnumbered by that of the imperialists and that her defeat was undoubtedly due to numerical inferiority (Volta, 236 and 7). Ghirardini’s sole foundation for this is, once again, Bernold and Bonizo’s use of the adjectives “most excellent” and “most prudent” to describe Matilda—the reasoning being that if there was not any defect on the part of the Matildine leadership, the only possible cause for the defeat must have been numerical or qualitative inferiority (Ghirardini, Volta, 236-7). There are, of course, a number of serious defects in this argument. Firstly, one must take care not to read too much into the use of the adjectives prudentissima and excellentissima. The fact that they are used to describe the countess by no means proves that she never made a military error; using similar reasoning, one would be forced to deduce from Fulcher’s description of how Urban acted “wisely” the conclusion that he never made a mistake. Secondly, we know that both of these works are sympathetic to Matilda. Perhaps most importantly, Ghirardini makes no mention of the aforementioned papal letter calling for the invasion of Ravenna, which indicates that Matilda’s army had had at least two months to muster before the battle occurred. Given that Matilda’s domains were just as large as those of her adversaries and her vassals still faithful to her at this time, she would have had a relatively numerous force and most likely would not have been greatly outnumbered.

While Ghirardini’s enthusiasm is commendable and his studies valuable in many respects, his knowledge of military realities is highly suspect. In the space of a little over a page (Volta, pp. 235-6) he reiterates nearly every inveterate myth of medieval warfare: that infantry were ineffective and seldom employed; that commanders were relatively unimportant and unable to affect the outcome of battles; that strategy and tactics were non-existent; that the equipment and individualism of the cavalry meant that group action was impossible; that cavalry could do nothing other than charge at each other “in a straight line”; that cavalry battles were simply aggregates of two-man duels; and that armies were incapable of utilizing maneuver, surprise or reserves (the first instance of the latter being dated by Ghirardini, with uncompromising exactitude, to the battle of Tagliacozzo in 1268!). All of these myths seem to be employed in an attempt to insulate Matilda from any blame for the defeat at Volta, but, as we shall see, most of
them are dispelled simply by surveying Matilda's own later campaigns. Indeed, the primary significance of Matilda's campaigns to medieval military history is that they help to dispel these very myths. Like other commanders of her time, the countess certainly affected the outcome of battles, overcame armies of superior numbers and was capable of using maneuver and surprise. Although Ghirardini provides some very important observations, it must be said that his blatant bias in Matilda's favour leads him into obvious contradiction. After devoting over a page to proving that the very nature of medieval warfare rendered commanders incapable of influencing the course of battles or of exercising "the strategic art", he then states that Matilda's victory at Sorbara in 1084 was a "masterpiece of daring and tactical ability".

The battle of Volta itself, however, must remain something of a mystery. The reports of the conflict are too terse to be particularly useful when attempting to gauge the extent of Matilda's involvement. We must resist the temptation to read too much into the few words that the chroniclers do provide. All that we know with certainty is that the expedition that Matilda had planned was not successful and that her forces were defeated in an open-battle near Volta. As this engagement was taking place, the Anti-Emperor Rudolf of Swabia was mortally wounded in battle with Henry on the Elster river (Bernold, 1080, p. 436; Bruno, De Bello, 121 ff.). Buoyed by these victories, Henry entered Italy the following spring and marched to Verona. With most of the great cities of Lombardy now openly supporting Henry, and with many of Matilda's Tuscan cities—most notably Lucca—rebelling violently against her, the countess could not hope to match the emperor's army in pitched battle. Cowdrey has recently argued that Henry's invasion force of 1081 was actually quite small (Cowdrey, Gregory VII 213); while this may be true in a relative sense, the imperialist army, in combination with the armies of the emperor's Lombard allies (who by themselves had heavily defeated Matilda at Volta), was more than a match, in a set piece battle, for anything Matilda could put together, especially after the defection of many of her vassals. Just before Henry's arrival, Gregory had written an appeal for help to Bishop Altmann of Passau and Abbot William of Hirsa that reveals how precarious he felt Matilda's position would be if the emperor were to invade:

*Si vero filiae nostrae [athildi], cuius militum animos ipsi perpenditis, a vobis suffragatum non fuerit, quid alium restat, nisi ut—cum sui resistere recusaverint, quam utique hac in re pro insana habent—ipsa vel coacta paci illius [Henrici] acquiescat aut,*
The Struggle against Henry IV

The fact that Henry not only invaded but won over many of Matilda’s vassals and even received considerable financial support from the Byzantine emperor meant that Matilda was now surrounded by enemies and heavily outnumbered. Since she could not hope to match an imperial army in the field, she retreated to her power base in the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, using her mountain fortresses to threaten Imperialist lines of communication and to shelter friendly troops and refugees. Bringing supplies and reinforcements to beleaguered garrisons where possible, Matilda avoided open battles, dug in and sought to outlast the emperor. Since Henry could not remain in Italy forever, this Fabian strategy was a wise choice and enabled Matilda to hold on (although just barely) for three long years.

Many battles between Matilda and Henry’s forces occurred during this period, although only the major conflicts have been well documented. One of the primary drawbacks of Matilda’s strategy was that it left much of her territory open to devastation, and Henry quickly seized this opportunity to undermine Matilda’s ability to pay and supply her troops. As with Gregory’s letters, there is a decline in the number of Matilda’s diplomas surviving from the period after 1081, which attests to the intensity of the conflict. The imperialist chronicler Benzo of Alba provides an interesting anecdote from 1082 which indicates how frequently Mathildine lands were being pillaged and plundered by the imperial army. He writes that as Henry’s troops were becoming increasingly frustrated by a difficult river crossing, dissension arose "...ubi ceperunt musitare maligni, quod magis valeret reditus ad devastandam Mathildem."

The countess, nevertheless, mounted an energetic defensive. Pseudo-Bardo, amongst others, provides a vivid description of the fighting:

Collecto igitur exercitu Romam tendit [Henricus], atque primo mox ingressu omnem furorem suum in supradictam dominam Mathildam convertit, villas incendit, castella diruit, quae tamen, divina se protegente misericordia, non nium detrimenti sustinuit. Tunc, inquam, hominis ingenium et sapientiam, utpote sancti episcopi Anselmi laudare posses. Nam etsi navis fortis et bene composita est nautaque prudentes, facile tamen periclitatur, nisi sapiens et validus fuerit gubernator. Illa [Mathildis] pro pietate matris solici batur, ille gubernandli artem meditabatur; illa potestatem exercebat, ille regebat; illa praeeptum et ille dedit consilium. Excellebat tamen ille in omnibus, quia obdierunt sanctitati suae tam ipsa, quam sui omnnes, plus tamen ipsa. Nec mirum. Adeo enim singulis per singula provide ac sapienter consiliatus est, ut et dicto quondam regi
cunctisque maioribus ac minoribus, pene totius Italiae sola domus illa resisteret, iniuriam Dei suamque vindicaret, honorem obtinuit, et gratiam Dei non amitteret. Nimium suis id meritis impetratum est, ut laudabilis illa et gloriosa per exteras etiam terras praedicaretur. Quid n? Illa enim nobiliter et magnifice, insolito mulierum more, plus dico quam viriliter agebat, nullum fere periculum metuebat. Quis nam potentum unquam suum, ut illa, deduxit exercitum? (Pseudo-Bardo, 19-20)

Donizo writes that Matilda not only defended her own castles but attacked those of her enemies, sometimes even destroying the strongholds of her own rebellious vassals in an attempt to force them back into her camp:

Arma, voluntatem, famulos, gazam propriamque,
Excitat, expendit, instigat, proelia gessit. (I. 260-1)

Multos cum feudo, multos munus tribuendo,
Pugnando plures, castellaque sepius urens,
Regis ab obsequio iugiter disiungit iniquo. (I. 293-5)

Speaking generally of the period from 1081-4, Hugh of Flavigny likewise testifies to the vigour of Matilda’s resistance. He claims that by matching Henry’s cunning and power in battle, Matilda displayed a masculine intellect and merited being called a “virago”. If we can peer beyond the rhetoric of both sides’ propaganda, we can conclude that Matilda was making strategical decisions and commanding troops during this period.

Despite Matilda’s defiance, Henry was able to rendezvous with Wibert’s forces in Ravenna and march on to Rome late in the spring of 1081. Roman resistance and the onset of the summer heat, however, forced Henry to retire north into Tuscany before the end of June. Adding fuel to the rebellions of Pisa and Lucca, Henry confirmed an alliance with these precocious but increasingly powerful communes by granting them privileges that made them even more independent of the countess. While in Lucca, Henry also held a court in which Matilda was found guilty of high treason; her vassals were released from their feudal obligations and Matilda was formally deprived of her holdings and titles. Many of her major vassals, if they had not gone over to the emperor already, could now do so with considerable justification.

Henry spent the winter of 1081-2 raising an even larger army, and by the end of February of 1082 he was again besieging Rome. He made some headway, fortifying several strongholds in the city and capturing some notable reformers (including Bonizo of Sutri), but Gregory’s stubborn resistance and Matilda’s aid made the city extremely difficult to take. The real
breakthrough did not come until June of 1083, when Henry's forces succeeded in taking the Leonine quarter, thereby making it possible to enthrone Wibert as the Antipope Clement in St. Peter's. 103

Just before Clement's installation, Gregory had begun to run desperately short of funds. The situation was so dire that Matilda was forced to liquidate the treasury of Canossa 104 and send it to the beleaguered pope in order to sustain the resistance. It was probably also around this time that Matilda besieged and took Nonantula and sent to Gregory the treasury of the monastery located therein. Although the date of the expedition has long been disputed, the fact that she seized the treasury is not, since a record of the restitution that she made in 1103 has survived:

In Dei nomine Mathildis comitissa si quid sum...in meorum peccatorum remissionem, et thesauri sanctae Nonantulanae Ecclesiae restauracionem... quem praefatae summae sedis jussione, ejusdemque tuitione quietem temporis adversariis intolerabili infestatione vexabatur, expendi. 105

Two chronicles, both written considerably later, record that Matilda besieged Nonantula--one giving a date of 1083, the other 1084 106--and the events have thus been assumed to have been related.

Certainly, the grant to Nonantula proves that Matilda was assuming much of the responsibility for the logistical support of the papal army. Between 1082 and 4 this army was being very hard pressed. In May of 1082 or 3 Gregory unsuccessfully sought the approval of a Roman council for his plan to liquidate church property in order to pay for the war effort. Many even of the reform-minded clergy strongly objected (with considerable canonical precedent) that the goods of the Church should never be alienated for military purposes. The council ruled: "sacras res ecclesiarum nullatenus in militia saeculari exponendas, nisi in alimonia pauperum, in sancto usu rerum divinarum et in redemptione captivorum". 107 This prohibition was witnessed by several reforming bishops, including Bruno de Segni, Cardinal Benno of S. Martin and Cardinal Bonussenior; Beno and several others actually defected from the Gregorian ranks soon afterwards. 108

Matilda's liquidation of monastic treasuries was thus a drastic expedient which exposed both her and Gregory to further criticism 109, which I shall analyse in more detail in chapter 6. Even sympathetic canonists like Anselm of Lucca and Cardinal Deusdedit upheld, in their collections of law, the principles "Ut possessiones ecclesiae non alienantur nisi religiosis clericis
vel monasteris aut peregrinis, et hoc temporaliter". The inclusion of words like *temporaliter* and *perpetualiter* in the rubrics to these canons, however, may have suggested the remedy (which Matilda was later to adopt) of eventually restoring the property seized. Indeed, the restorative documents cited above stress that the liquidations occurred "cum episcopo Anselmo, qui et vicarius erat papae Gregorii VII in illis diebus in Longobardia", and that they had been expressly ordered by the pope because of the dire necessity of the times (a situation that to some Gregorians justified papal suspension or modification of the canons). Since we do not know with certainty that Anselm’s collection was written after the Roman council—although it seems likely—it would be dangerous to see canons such as IV.28 as a direct response to the concerns of that council. Nevertheless, unto the last years of his life Anselm continued to defend himself from the charge (made by Benzo of Alba and others) that he had incited Matilda to denude monasteries and disperse her goods in vain. Anselm replied that Matilda had done so to win treasures in heaven and that she was prepared not only to give all her earthly goods but to fight "usque ad sanguinem" for the Church, "donec tradat Dominus inimicum suum in manu feminae" (Anselm, *Liber contra Wibertum*, 527). While these polemics did little to silence the criticism, the fact remains that, despite the canonical injunctions and the objections of both reformers and imperialists, Matilda was able to send the treasuries to Gregory and to provide crucial financial support for the Gregorian forces in Rome.

During these years, Gregory and Matilda were on the defensive not only ideologically but militarily as well. In Rome, Gregory was soon forced to retreat to St. Angelo. With the help of his partisans in the city, he did what he could to bolster the city’s defences and managed to prevent Henry from taking the entire city. The emperor, as was his custom, avoided the summer heat by moving north in July of 1083; when he returned in the fall he found that Gregory had been enriched by the money of Guiscard and that the resistance of the Roman nobles had stiffened. Nevertheless, in March of 1084, Henry, aided by other Roman nobles, re-entered and took most of the city (including the Lateran palace) and even captured the papal seal itself (Bernold, 440, 1084; Ekkehard, 1084; Pseudo-Bardo p. 20 c. 22). Gregory was deposed by a Lateran synod and Wibert was elected and consecrated as Clement III. On Easter Sunday, Henry was crowned by the antipope in St. Peter’s (Bonizo, 614-5; Bernold, 1084, 440).

This was a major victory for the Emperor. Gregory was able to dig in at St. Angelo (Bernold, 440, 1084; Ranger I. 6193) and retain control over the Tiber Island, but his position in
Rome was rapidly becoming untenable. With Matilda too hard pressed to bring him aid, Gregory made a desperate appeal to Robert Guiscard, and for once the Norman duke replied in force. Having installed Clement and received the crown from him, Henry had achieved his primary objective and had no desire to face a fresh and powerful Norman army. The emperor therefore left the city on May 21, while Clement retired to Tivoli. Guiscard's army, arriving the following week, retook the Lateran and areas outside the city. Although Henry had departed, the situation in Rome was still quite dangerous for Gregory: Clement entrenched his position in Tivoli, and the Normans' burning and pillaging of Rome (following an altercation with some of the citizens) turned the tide of public opinion firmly against Guiscard. As a result, when the duke retreated in July, he brought Gregory with him to Salerno, where the pope died a year later.

The period from the exile and death of Gregory to the election of Urban II in 1088 marked the general nadir of the reforming cause. In Germany, the Antiking Hermann of Salm (r. 1081-8) never posed as serious a threat to Henry's reign as Rudolf had (Fuhrmann, 67). His election, occurring in the absence of papal representation, appears never to have been confirmed by the papacy (Robinson, Gregory VII, 756; Cowdrey, G VII, 218), and when he died in 1088 the antikingship died with him. In Italy, many bishops openly supported Wibert and Henry, and the antipope was able to retake Rome—happy to be free of Guiscard and his depredations—by Christmas of 1084. The reformers lost a tremendously powerful (if not particularly reliable) defender when Guiscard passed away in July of 1085, and during a span of three years the reformers could produce only a very weak pope (Victor III) or none at all.

Into this vacuum of papal power stepped Matilda, who in many ways assumed leadership of the papal reform movement. She not only protected it militarily but provided for its legal and theological defense by harbouring fugitive canonists and polemics like Anselm of Lucca and Bonizo of Sutri, whose works we will examine in more detail in the last two chapters. We also find Matilda rallying the troops even before Gregory's death. After the pope had been expelled from Rome, the countess wrote a letter to "all the faithful in the kingdom of the Teutons" informing them that the emperor possessed the papal seal and warning them to beware of spurious documents. In the same letter she encouraged them with the news that Sutri and Nepi had been retaken and that Wibert had fled Rome.

Even more importantly, Matilda was able to win a major victory over imperialist forces at Sorbara in July of 1084. The most detailed (if not always the clearest) account of the battle is
provided by Donizo.\textsuperscript{120} He portrays it as the culmination of an assault mounted against Matilda by a certain Marquis Obertus\textsuperscript{121}, in conjunction with Bishops Eberhard of Parma and Gandulf of Reggio, as reprisal for the countess's support of Gregory. Ranger adds that the expedition was specifically ordered by the retreating Henry, who so desired vengeance for being chased from Rome by Guiscard that he ordered the "Italians" (i.e. Lombards) to unite their armies and attack the countess. Pseudo-Bardo writes simply that the Lombards were seeking to conquer Matilda's lands.\textsuperscript{122}

Whatever the immediate cause, it is clear that the emperor himself did not accompany the expedition.\textsuperscript{123} Obertus and the bishops advanced into Matilda's territory, devastating her lands as they went\textsuperscript{124}, but were soon held up by Matilda's fortress of Sorbara, located just to the northeast of Modena, about 18 miles from Canossa.\textsuperscript{125} Matilda hastily mustered a small task-force\textsuperscript{126}, which moved rapidly towards the enemy and managed to surprise the besiegers in their camp on the morning of July 2, 1084\textsuperscript{127}, thereby winning a dramatic and important victory. Bernold gives the most detailed account of the immediate aftermath, which involved the capture of the bishop of Parma, six major nobles (\textit{capitanei}), 100 knights and a horde of booty— all at the cost of only a few casualties.\textsuperscript{128} Gandulf of Reggio, according to Donizo (II. 361-2), hid unarmed (\textit{nudum}) in the bushes for three days, but apparently escaped.\textsuperscript{129} In describing the fate of Marquis Obertus, Donizo adds some interesting lines (II. 356-9) which emphasize the marquis' femininity: "Et quasi voce loquens nonnae, sine fugit honore."\textsuperscript{130} A few lines later (I. 365), Donizo contrasts the weak, feminine Obertus with the powerful Matilda and concludes his discussion of the battle by pronouncing that: "Inclita Mathildis terror fuit omnibus illis." Just when it seemed that the Gregorians had been finally defeated, Matilda's important victory breathed new life into the Reformers' cause.

While this broad outline of events at Sorbara is not in dispute, the question of the precise extent of Matilda's involvement is considerably more problematic. Several of Matilda's biographers have maintained that the countess personally took part in the battle.\textsuperscript{131} Eads, although never specifically addressing the question of whether Matilda personally led her troops, does seem to support the idea when she argues in favour of the credibility of Donizo's statement that "Inclita Mathildis terror fuit omnibus illis" (Eads, 174-5). I would note in addition that a more literal translation of this line would lend support to her position: if read not as "the name of Matilda was a terror to them all" (as Eads translates it) but rather more literally as "The famous
Matilda was a terror to them all", the line more strongly implies that it was Matilda's presence which so terrified her enemies.

On the other hand, we might perhaps expect Donizo to provide a more explicit depiction of Matilda bravely leading her troops into battle if such a portrait were at all credible, and we must acknowledged that his boldest statement in this regard remains a somewhat nebulous passage which is susceptible to a number of interpretations. "The famous Matilda was a terror to them all" could also be read as referring to the reversal of the strategic situation which occurred after the battle itself, when Matilda personally led her forces to the Po and pushed her enemies onto the defensive in Lombardy (actions that I will discuss momentarily). This interpretation is supported by the fact that the line occurs after Donizo's discussion of the booty and captives and forms his concluding statement on this stage of the conflict between Matilda and the Lombard Wibertines.

Ranger and Pseudo-Bardo are not particularly helpful on this point. Their focus is on Anselm rather than Matilda, and Ranger, for one, clearly plays down Matilda's involvement in the battle in order to show that it was Anselm's prayers and the justice of the Gregorian cause which brought about the victory. Thus, his account of the actual battle lasts a mere six lines and is dwarfed by the preceding 40-line harangue (6511-50) of Anselm to the troops. A few lines later (6565-8), Ranger reveals whom he believed to be the true arbiter of the battle:

\[
\text{Sic agit Anselmus, sic pugnat, dumque precatur,} \\
\text{Prosternit, superat, impedit atque ligat.} \\
\text{Quin et Gregorius caelum movet...}^{135}
\]

Nevertheless, even Ranger acknowledges that Matilda was within a day's ride of the battlefield when the news of the enemy army's advance had first reached her forces:

\[
\text{Cum subito [Matilda] didicit, vix fama preveniente,} \\
\text{Undique collectis viribus irruere.} \\
\text{Quid faciat? Quos commoneat? Sic omnia turbat} \\
\text{Tempus, ut una dies non bene restet ei.} \\
\text{Pauci, quos secum retinet, tamen arma capescunt,} \\
\text{Occurunt illis spern faciente fide. (Ranger II. 6503-8)}^{136}
\]

Moreover, both Ranger (6509-10) and Pseudo-Bardo (P. 20 c. 23) state that messengers passed along to the troops Anselm's exhortation before the battle, which implies that Matilda's lines
of communication to the battlefield remained open. Although the attacks of Henry and his Italian allies had forced her onto the defensive for the past three years, other sources attest to the fact that the countess was able to move about quite freely within Lombardy and Emilia at this time.\textsuperscript{128} We have already mentioned the siege of Nonantula, for example, and less than two months before Sorbara we find the countess issuing a diploma at Mantua.\textsuperscript{129} Finally, the use of surprise, swift movement and interior lines is the hallmark of Matilda's generalship when on the strategic defensive. As we shall see, when Matilda was put in a similar situation a few years later\textsuperscript{140}, she personally issued orders to her troops to mount precisely this sort of mobile, stealthy expedition. Even if it is doubtful that Matilda was present at Sorbara, it is nevertheless both consonant with the sources and reasonable to deduce that it was she who, upon learning of the situation through her informants, organized the army and issued the order to attack.

The Battle of Sorbara was certainly an important victory for the reform cause. Matilda, already having fought off an imperial army for three years, now proved to everyone that all her Lombard enemies combined were not sufficient to conquer her. With Henry gone, Matilda and Anselm were able to capitalize upon the momentum of Sorbara and go over to the offensive. Also benefitting from the timely deaths of a number of her most powerful enemies, they took control of the episcopal cathedrals of Modena, Pistoia and Reggio and installed as bishops the Gregorians whom the countess had hitherto sheltered as refugees.\textsuperscript{141} We know that Matilda personally led at least one of these counterattacks because Pseudo-Bardo (an eyewitness) records that she was present at the siege of a castle near Mantua when one of her soldiers was wounded by a rock.\textsuperscript{142} Even the imperialist sources attest (derisively) to her involvement: "Monks and women", laments Benzo, "forced the prelates to flight".\textsuperscript{143}

Although Anselm of Lucca died on March 18 of 1086 (Duff, 184), Matilda's position had by then been stabilized. The post-Sorbara offensives had allowed Matilda to construct a defensive line stretching roughly along the Po river, running from Piacenza through Cremona and Mantua to Ferrara.\textsuperscript{144} She successfully maintained these positions against her Lombard enemies for several years, and she and her new husband Welf even attempted to hold the line against Henry himself when he again invaded her lands in 1090.

Perhaps nothing shows the effects of the reversal of initiative after Sorbara more clearly than the fact that Matilda herself was at last able to leave the region of Lombardy/Emilia and come to Rome in 1087 in an attempt to install Desiderius and drive the Wibertines from the city
by force of arms. Although Sorbara had had a dramatic effect on the situation in the North, Rome had remained as divided as ever. Rival assemblies in Germany just prior to Gregory’s death indicated how bitter the divisions between the Reformers and Imperialists had become, and the death of the pope had not ended the conflict. As in Gregory’s final years, the struggle for Rome continued to pitch back and forth with dizzying rapidity. In the spring and summer of 1085, the Reformers’ Roman allies had mounted a campaign that forced Wibert out of the city and back to Ravenna. After Gregory’s death, Desiderius, abbot of Monte Cassino, had been chosen as the Reformers’ new pope, but he made every attempt to avoid assuming the office. In the spring (c. April-May) of 1086, a number of cardinals and bishops had gathered in Rome and managed to convince Desiderius to meet with them; with much reluctance on his part, they elected him as Victor III.

But Victor never seems to have possessed the same stomach or resources for the war that Gregory had had, and many reformers viewed him as a poor choice for pope. Unnerved by attacks against him in Rome, Victor fled to Cassino mere days after his election and did not return until after the council at Capua, which took place on March 7, 1087 (Chron. Cass. iii.67, p. 749). Having at last fully accepted the papacy, and finding allies in Guiscard’s son Roger and Jordan of Capua, Victor forcibly drove Wibert (who had again returned to Rome from Ravenna) from St. Peter’s (Chron. Cass. iii.68, 749). The pope was then consecrated there on May 9, 1087. He only remained in Rome for about a week, however, after which he retreated once more to his monastery, apparently because Wibert’s forces were still too strong for him to remain in the city.

Before the month was over, Victor was called forth to Rome by Matilda herself, who was marching on the city with her army. With the support of the countess and her troops, he celebrated mass in St. Peter’s on June 11 and entered the city proper from the West on the same day:

Cumque ad Urbem [Victor] pervenisset, a comitia et eius exercitu, ac caeteris beati Petri fidelibus devotissime officiosissimique susceptus est... auxilio et ope praefatae comitissae per Transtiberim Romam intravit. (Chron. Cas. iii.69, p. 750)

The struggle between the rival popes and their allies in the city had continued virtually unabated for six years, and the fighting intensified when the countess arrived. With her help the pope took control over St. Angelo and St. Peter's, established a papal residence on the easily defensible Isle
of St. Bartholomew (in the Tiber), took the towns of Ostia and Porto and advanced into the city. Before the end of the month, however, the imperialists counterattacked with a major assault on St. Peter's and forced the papal forces to retreat to St. Angelo and the Tiber island. Wibert was even able to celebrate mass in the Church of St. Mary before his forces were compelled to retreat.151

The imperialist counterattack appears to have stabilized Wibert's position in Rome and to have stayed Matilda and Victor's advance. After her offensive ground to a halt at the end of June and beginning of July, Matilda left Rome with the Wibertines still unconquered and in control of much of the city.151 Victor died soon afterwards, on September 16 1087.152 Although Matilda's Roman expedition was not a success, it remains one of the better examples of Matilda's exercise of military command. She was both the organizer153 and the major secular leader154 of the expedition, and she met with fierce resistance that necessitated some heavy fighting. As our best source for these events (the Chronicle of Monte Cassino155) indicates, Matilda led at least her own army, if not that of the pope as well.

The Second Phase of the War: Matilda's Alliance with Welf and Henry's Second Campaign in Italy, 1088-97

The death of Victor, like that of Gregory, did not force Matilda to surrender but merely prompted her to new military and diplomatic endeavours. She saw to it that another papal election was held at Terracina in Campania, where Otto of Ostia156 was consecrated as Urban II on March 12 1088.157 He appears to have been in close contact with the countess, and Donizo tells us that messengers frequently passed between them.158 Urban remained in Southern Italy under Norman protection until he was able to come to Rome. With the assistance of Peter Leo of the Pierleone, Urban took up residence on the island of St. Bartholomew (Bernold, 448, 1089). Like the Pierleone, others in the city proved sympathetic to the reforming cause159, and as a result Urban was able to drive Wibert from Rome at the end of June, 1089.160 As these events were unfolding, Matilda entered into a political marriage with Welf, son of Duke Welf IV of Bavaria. Welf the Elder was an extremely powerful and important lord: formerly an ally of the emperor in the Saxon campaigns, he was also Duke of Carinthia and Marquis of Verona (Duff 192-3) and so controlled several of the Alpine passes into Italy. Urban shrewdly urged Matilda to acquiesce to the marriage with his son, which took place in 1088.161
Such an alliance between a major German prince and the foremost defender of the reform movement could hardly go unnoticed, and Welf was soon under attack from the Lombard Wibertines. Bernold states, strangely enough, that a truce between Welf and his enemies was brought about by Matilda’s intercession. If there was some sort of agreement, however, it certainly was a temporary one. Henry, understandably alarmed by the marriage, responded by seizing all of Matilda's lands north of the Alps, with the exception of a certain castle named "Brigeriinum" which he was unable to take by force (Donizo II.4, I. 439-47). Then, descending into Italy in the spring of 1090, Henry pressed into Lombardy, devastating Welf and Matilda’s lands as he went. By April he had reached the city of Mantua.

Henry’s siege of Mantua lasted almost a year and involved a great deal of fighting. The city was well fortified and difficult to take. Henry attempted a blockade while the newlyweds sought to hold the city against him. Both Matilda and Welf were present in Mantua at a date well into the siege, although Donizo (who provides the most detailed account of the conflict) has been charged with attempting to obscure this fact. As we have noted above, Donizo does tend to omit from his poem anything that may show Matilda in an unfavourable light, including her opportunistic (and ultimately unsuccessful) marriage to Welf. In describing the siege of Mantua, Donizo writes that “Ipsa [Matilda] tenens montes inimicos despicit omnes” (II.4, I. 460), which has been read as conveying the impression that Matilda remained near Canossa throughout the siege. If this were what Donizo intended, it is certainly inaccurate. We know that Matilda and her soldiers were present in Mantua on June 27, 1090—well over a month after Henry’s arrival—because on that date Matilda and Welf issued a diploma protecting the citizens’ rights and possessions. We can perhaps also discern in the text of the privilege the pressure of the blockade manifesting itself in tension between Matilda and the citizens over the requisitioning of goods and the billeting of soldiers (problems especially common in lengthy sieges). While the grant stresses the faithfulness and service which the Mantuans had already provided, it also relieves them from certain feudal burdens. The immediate cause of Welf and Matilda’s concession to refrain from forcibly requisitioning the citizens’ goods or billeting soldiers was Henry's capture of Matilda's castle of Rivalta on the Mincio, which occurred just prior to the issuing of the document. The fall of Rivalta, combined with the emperor’s seizure of Governolo, tightened the blockade around Mantua, cutting off traffic on the Mincio and threatening the approaches to the city. By issuing this diploma, Matilda, apparently now
intending to fall back from the city for fear of being caught inside, sought to ensure the Mantuans' loyalty after her departure by addressing some of their grievances.

Obviously, then, Matilda did not leave Mantua until after the fall of Rivalta. It is, however, rather unfair to accuse Donizo of subterfuge, as Overmann does (Reg. Mat. 45g). Granted, at the time Donizo was writing (1114-5), Mantua had recently rebelled against the countess (see below), and he certainly did not want to supply the Mantuans with ammunition for their rebellion by publicizing the fact that she had deserted them in their time of need. 174 Even so, Donizo does acknowledge that Matilda reinforced the city after the siege had begun:

Rex cupiens ipsam [Mantua], fixit tentoria circa;
Quam mox athletis de sumptibus atque replevit,
Nobilis et fortis Mathildis, maxime doctrix;" (ll. 457-9)

By mentioning Matilda's reinforcement of the city before describing the capture of Rivalta, Donizo does suggest, whether intentionally or unintentionally, that it fell after the countess' departure. We must not, however, deduce from this fact that Donizo is not a generally trustworthy authority-- as several historians have noted, his error, if we may call it such, is that of a vague or distorted chronology rather than outright falsification. 175 One could read suspicious motives into his carelessness, but it would be a rather speculative enterprise. Other contemporary sources176, moreover, confirm Donizo's general outline of events, and the poet remains the most detailed and informative source for most of Matilda's campaigns.

All the sources agree that there was much fighting between Henry and Matilda's forces. Donizo writes that:

Regis bella phalanx dabat urbi saepius atra;
Exiliunt cives, simul athletae comitissae,
Occidunt, frangunt, coetum pellunt Alemannum. (ll. 461-3).

Despite the fall of Governolo and Rivalta, the city was able to hold out until April 10 of 1091177, when it finally surrendered to the emperor. This suggests either that Henry's blockade was not complete or that Matilda and Welf's forces were partially successful in running it. 178 According to Donizo, some of Matilda's soldiers remained behind until the very end of the siege and managed a daring escape in their ships when the city fell. 179 At some point, Mantua's reformist bishop, Ubald, was also forced to flee and seek Matilda's refuge. 180
The fall of Mantua, where Matilda had most likely been born\(^\text{13}\) and had frequently held court\(^\text{14}\), was undoubtedly a major defeat for the countess. In the wake of his victory Henry was soon able to take Ferrara, Manerba\(^\text{15}\) and a number of smaller towns and castles (Donizo ll. 554 ff.). In a replay of the contest of 1081-4, Matilda's forces dug in, refused battle and watched Henry closely, waiting for him to make a mistake. Piadena in the county of Cremona\(^\text{16}\) and Nogara in the Veronese successfully resisted Henry's onslaught, while Matilda personally toured and fortified her strongholds in the districts of Modena and Reggio (Donizo, 563-8). With Matilda closely monitoring Henry's movements\(^\text{17}\), an opportunity to counterattack soon presented itself. During the winter of 1091-2, Matilda learned that Henry had crossed the Adige river with only a few troops. Donizo's account (ll. 570-99) is the only source for the battle that followed. According to him, when Matilda learned of the situation, she immediately ordered more than a thousand "brave men" to set out to attack the enemy. She gave the order to attack herself:

\[
\text{Hoc didicit nempe prudens Comitissa, repente}
\]  
\[
\text{Mille viros fortes numero plus iussit ad hostem}
\]  
\[
\text{Pergere bellandum, campi certamine tantum. (ll. 572-4)}
\]

Here we have yet more proof that Matilda issued commands—Donizo specifically states that Matilda ordered her troops to attack the enemy in the open field.\(^\text{18}\) This further suggests that she had prudently prevented her troops from making any such attacks earlier and was awaiting the opportunity to catch Henry by surprise.

Unfortunately for Matilda, the operation did not go as planned. Donizo places the blame solely on the shoulders of one of Matilda's commanders, who allegedly informed the emperor of the impending attack.\(^\text{19}\) Whatever the reason, Henry was able to inflict a severe defeat on Matilda's forces at Tricontai in the county of Padua. The countess' army retreated in disorder\(^\text{20}\), and several of her soldiers were captured (the most notable being Manfred, son of Viscount Albert of Mantua).\(^\text{21}\)

Except for the end result, the Tricontai expedition is the mirror-image of that of Sorbara: a timely intelligence report reached Matilda as she was engaging in strategic defensive; she quickly organized a task force and ordered it to surprise the enemy by maneuvering swiftly and stealthily against their positions. At Tricontai we have even more evidence, in the form of
Donizo's explicit description, that Matilda issued orders to the troops. In his account she not only told them when but how to attack. Donizo even describes how Matilda sought to comfort the remnants of her army with a speech as they filtered back to her in defeat (ll. 596-9), further emphasizing the fact that these forces answered directly to the countess (even if they may have been led into this particular battle by her subordinates). Moreover, if Matilda was capable of this at Sorbara and Tricontai, it is reasonable to assume that she had acted likewise in the many other more poorly documented battles and sieges which occurred during this period.

The defeats at Mantua and Tricontai were heavy blows to the reformers. The emperor's invasion had greatly strengthened the antipapal party and threatened Urban's position in Rome, while the situation in Lombardy was deteriorating rapidly. Instead of heading for Rome as he had done in 1081, Henry now assaulted Matilda directly, attempting to drive a wedge between her and Welf through a combination of force and diplomacy. In conjunction with his Lombard allies, Henry pushed towards Matilda's Apennine fortresses in June of 1092, devastating the land and seizing towns and fortifications in the districts of Modena, Reggio and Bologna as he went.

The emperor soon took Matilda's castles of Monte Morello (probably on the modern Monte Sant' Antonio) and Monte Alfredo (probably on modern Monte San Gemignano) near Modena. After capturing Matilda's standard-bearer Gerard at Monte Alfredo (Donizo, ll. 608-11), Henry next laid siege to Montebello (or Monteveglio), one of Matilda's strongest castles (situated to the south and slightly east of Modena). This fortress commanded the region around Vignola, a few kilometres to the west, and its fall would have gravely undermined Matilda's defensive strategy. Donizo tells us that Henry was prepared to take it by storm or blockade but that neither strategy proved successful. The natural strength of the castle helped to rebuff any assaults, while Matilda's forces put up an active and stubborn defense by running the blockade and harassing the besiegers with repeated attacks. Matilda was certainly nearby and most likely ordered the attacks herself. With the countess' firm support, Monteveglio was able to hold out for several months.

Shortly before August 9, Wibert arrived from Rome with reinforcements for Henry, who offered to restore Matilda's lands and raise the siege if she would acknowledge Wibert's papacy. Around the beginning of October, Matilda held a council at Carpineta, at which many of her supporters (including the bishop of Reggio) advocated acceptance of Henry's terms. Despite this advice, Matilda decided to keep fighting, and her forces continued to resist
stubbornly. At Monteveglio they succeeded in burning one of Henry's siege engines and killing one of his illegitimate sons.

By the fall, Henry realized the siege was fruitless. He broke camp and retreated to Reggio; but then, feinting towards Parma, he abruptly turned south towards Cavilianum, just to the north of Canossa, trying to catch Matilda off-guard. As usual, however, the countess's intelligence network reacted quickly to Henry's unexpected movements. Having arrived at Canossa, Matilda soon learned that Henry was nearby. Dividing her forces, she left one group to garrison Canossa, while the remainder of her army accompanied her about 10 kilometres north to the castle of Bianello (one of the four smaller castles which guarded the northern end of the Enza valley). As they issued from Canossa, Matilda's troops passed so close to Henry's, writes Donizo, that each army could hear the noise made by the other (Donizo, 686-91). Upon reaching Bianello, some of Matilda's captains returned to Canossa, entering the fortress without engaging Henry's forces. Some sort of engagement did subsequently take place, with Henry's troops attempting to storm the castle but being easily repulsed. When Henry's standard bearer—the son of Marquis Obertus who had been defeated by Matilda's forces at Sorbara—was unhorsed and the standard captured, the emperor gave up and retired hastily towards Padua.

Several details about these operations remain unclear. Matilda certainly led part of her army to Bianello, but Donizo does not tell us who commanded the garrison of Canossa. Matilda may have left it to Welf (if he had not yet departed for his own lands by then), but there is no firm proof of this. Ghirardini's assertion (Storia Critica, 316-8), that the command of the army at Canossa in 1092 was probably in the hands of Arduino, is very unconvincing. The argument is based almost exclusively on a priori deduction and modern or early modern sources, as no primary documents mention Arduino (or Welf for that matter) being in command. Ghirardini's reasoning, that since Arduino was with Matilda at the siege of Prato in 1107 he must have been her right hand man (Storia Critica, 320), is obviously flawed; the mere appearance of Arduino (amongst others) in a diploma from 1107 hardly proves he had effective command her force of cavalry at Prato, much less of her armies in 1084 and 1092. Considering recent developments in the history of women's participating in warfare, we no longer need to perform scholarly acrobatics in order to find a man behind the woman. Even if Matilda did leave command of the garrison of Canossa to Welf, she was positioned nearby and could have issued orders either personally (before she left the fortress) or through her proceres (who returned to it). Given her
role in earlier expeditions such as the proposed crusades of 1074, the invasion of 1080 and the Battle of Tricontai, there is no good reason to doubt that she was deeply involved in the planning and direction of these operations as well.

Ghirardini hazards some estimates of the numbers involved, but these are again far too high, especially for Matilda’s forces (Madonna, 45-7). He vaguely states that in terms of the campaign as a whole, Henry had less than 40,000 soldiers, while Matilda’s troops did not surpass half of his. He is more specific regarding the forces that met at Canossa, arguing that Henry’s army numbered a minimum of 10,000 and a maximum of 15,000, with Matilda’s army (including the garrisons of Canossa and Bianello) being roughly comparable. For an Imperial exercitus, drained by the yearlong siege of Mantua and the difficult and unsuccessful siege of Monteveglio, these figures are merely extravagant; for Matilda’s defensive forces they are simply ridiculous. Firstly, Matilda’s forces at Canossa must have been significantly smaller than Henry’s and indeed than those of her own earlier army at Volta in 1080. I find it hard to understand why Ghirardini gives relatively the same numbers for Matilda’s forces at Volta as he does for Canossa. In 1090, Henry had raised a large imperial army in Germany and had driven Matilda to the foothills of the Appennines; in addition to Mantua, the countess had lost control of most of Tuscany and could really only draw money, troops and supplies from her vassals in Emilia and Lombardy. Secondly, while both Matilda’s and Henry’s armies had been worn out by the conflicts of the previous year and a half, the imperial army had recently been reinforced by Wibert’s, and its lines of communication ran across a broad and fertile plain with numerous rivers and relatively good roads. Matilda’s army, on the other hand, had been forced to retreat to the mountains, where it would have had considerable difficulty in finding adequate supplies of food and fodder.11 Certainly, Matilda cannot have fed and paid an army of fifteen or even ten thousand in the Reggian and Modenese Appenines for an entire summer! A far better estimate is provided by Valestri, who suggests—based on what evidence we do not know—that the countess had the services of 3,000 infantry and 800 cavalry.12 If we take this to include her field army and the garrisons of both Canossa and Bianello, it is a relatively reasonable figure, if still perhaps a bit high; if comparisons are of any value, we may note that Mathew Strickland has recently shown that Anglo-Norman castles at this time rarely had more than a hundred men as the permanent garrison, and even the largest royal fortifications seldom maintained more than a few dozen knights or a few hundred sergeants.13 The imperial army which assaulted Canossa must
have been considerably larger; but considering the losses it had already sustained, I doubt that it could have exceeded seven or eight thousand, inclusive of the less mobile troops left in Reggio.\textsuperscript{214} Ghirardini is, however, accurate in saying that the casualties numbered in the hundreds rather than thousands\textsuperscript{215}; this would still have constituted rather heavy casualties, which an unsuccessful frontal assault on a powerful fortress like Canossa was likely to produce.

The matter of Henry and Matilda's respective strategies is also somewhat controversial. What, we might ask, motivated Henry to swing south so suddenly? Donizo again provides the only description of the battle, but his account can be considered generally accurate. Other sources confirm his outline of Henry's campaign of 1092\textsuperscript{216}, and the fact that Donizo was a monk at Canossa at the time meant that he probably witnessed many of these events himself.\textsuperscript{217} Donizo clearly states that the emperor was driven to Canossa by the memory of his humiliation there 15 years before, and implies that Henry believed Matilda was in Canossa and separated from the bulk of her army (Donizo, 675-81). Simeoni questions the vengeance motive but agrees that Henry must have learned that Matilda was at Canossa and reckoned that the countess would have left much of her army behind her on the difficult and mountainous path from Monteveglio.\textsuperscript{218} Henry's about-face must have been designed, argues Simeoni, to capitalize upon this information by taking the fortress by surprise and perhaps capturing Matilda herself. This would also help to explain the perfunctory nature of Henry's assault on Canossa. Although Donizo seems to attribute Henry's lack of resolution in assaulting the fortress primarily to the dense fog and the capture of the imperial standard\textsuperscript{219}, the emperor's realization that he had failed to surprise the countess and could not support a large besieging army in the mountains in the fall must have been equally if not more important considerations.

Whether motivated by vengeance or opportunism, Henry clearly had been outmaneuvered by Matilda. What was her strategy? The question that has most troubled scholars is why she left her foremost castle immediately upon learning that Henry was nearby. Several historians have argued that Matilda left in order to gain reinforcements and attack from the rear, and that Matilda returned from Bianello just in time to catch Henry's forces in a pincer between her army and the advancing garrison of Canossa.\textsuperscript{220} Thus Eads reads Donizo's phrase "Cumque tubae magnae reboant" (I. 697) as indicating that a signal to issue forth and attack was passed between the garrisons of Canossa and Bianello: "The moment Henry's army was in the valley a trumpet signaled the sortie and both garrisons attacked. Matilda's pincer was aided by a thick fog that
sprang up suddenly, something that is not unusual in the Apennines" (Eads, p. 178). Historians such as Simeoni, on the other hand, have argued that the troops in Canossa performed no action beyond a static defense of the fortress; these historians maintain that no coordinated pincer movement was executed, and that Matilda had left the castle out of fear of being pinned inside by the enemy army.

The question of whether there was some sort of sortie from Canossa and Bianello is indeed a very difficult one to answer, but it seems to me that Simeoni comes closest to the truth. Indeed, the evidence upon which the theory of the pincer-movement has been based is very tenuous, consisting of some of Donizo's characteristically ambiguous verses, a small monument called the "Madonna della battaglia" (constructed in 1124 and located just outside of Bianello), the unsubstantiated claims of a seventeenth-century historian and a local legend. If Matilda had from the start intended to make a sortie, why would she have sent her proceres (the ideal strike force), back from Bianello to the much stronger castle of Canossa? In support of Simeoni's interpretation, we may note that since Henry's forces almost certainly heavily outnumbered Matilda's, it would have been risky indeed for the garrison to have left the fortress at any time. Moreover, we know from both Sorbara and Tricontai that Matilda usually forbade her troops to attack unless surprise was assured. Although Donizo mentions a miraculous fog which could have provided cover for such an attack, the fog's main function in his account is to make engaging the enemy more difficult—that is, it obscures the citadel and prevents Henry from launching a second assault (l. 712-4). Furthermore, Donizo never states that Matilda's troops made a sortie from Canossa, much less from Bianello. His line about the echoing "tubae", which Eads and others have taken as comprising a signal for a two-pronged counterattack, is a rather conventional phrase in Latin epic poetry and more likely represents merely the reinforced garrison's renewed defiance of Henry and the beginning of Obertus' son's assault on the outer wall. Finally, even if a combined sortie and surprise attack did occur, one cannot be sure that Matilda took part in it; Donizo, having described Matilda's departure from Canossa for Bianello, does not mention her again until well after his description of Henry's retreat and withdrawal from the region.

Although Matilda's flight from the fortress did not in all likelihood constitute the execution of the first stage of a preconceived pincer movement, her actions were by no means haphazard or purely reactionary. Simeoni maintains that Matilda's decision to leave Canossa was
motivated primarily by political considerations: as the debate at Carpineta had indicated, the support of her vassals for the war was wavering, and she could not depend on them to continue the struggle if she were blockaded inside the castle for an extended period. Simeoni is certainly correct in arguing that Matilda wanted to avoid being blockaded in Canossa. In addition to the council of Carpineta, which he cites, there is the testimony of Matilda's earlier behaviour at the siege of Mantua: when Henry made advances in areas around that city, Matilda decided to withdraw in order to avoid becoming trapped inside. While Matilda's movements may in part have been politically motivated, however, tactical and strategic considerations most likely also entered her deliberations. Matilda must have believed either that there was a real danger that Canossa would fall to the emperor's assault or that the threat of a mobile force to the emperor's rear would prevent him from following her—these appear to be the only reasonable explanations for sending her proceres back to the fortress. By leaving Canossa, Matilda not only avoided being pinned down but forced Henry to choose between two dangerous options should he wish to continue his attacks: prepare for a long and logistically difficult siege of a freshly-reinforced Canossa (with his opponent still at large and capable of harassing his army as she had done with notable success at Monteveglio) or chase the countess from fortress to fortress with a mobile enemy strike-force to his rear. Henry was prepared for neither, and understandably chose to withdraw.

We must acknowledge that highly competent generalship was displayed on both sides, as the conflict shifted suddenly from the long and sophisticated siege of Monteveglio-- complete with siege engines and sorties against the besiegers-- to a war of deception, reconnaissance and maneuver. Matilda's overall strategy during these operations (to say nothing of her intelligence network) was, however, the more effective. Henry lost a number of troops, an imperial banner and considerable prestige at Canossa, and Matilda capitalized on the victory by forcibly retaking her possessions in the wake of Henry's apparently disordered retreat. Following the maneuvers of October 1092, Matilda's forces pushed back onto the Lombard plain and won back most of the territories lost in the last two and a half years (Donizo, ll. 727-31). According to Donizo, the countess was so successful that she herself even crossed the Po. The recapture of Governolo yielded considerable booty, and Ripalta fell shortly afterwards (Donizo, ll. 732-5). Although Mantua appears to have remained closed to her, Matilda now clearly had the initiative.
Indeed, Henry had little more than defeat, a lost banner and a dead son to show for an entire summer of hard fighting.

The resurrection of Matilda and Welf's military and political fortunes in Lombardy was disastrous for the emperor. With Henry's power fading, Milan, Cremona, Lodi and Piacenza entered into an alliance with Welf against him. This secured Matilda's northwestern flank and increased the threat to imperial lines of communication running between Rome and Germany. With the alpine passes now in the hands of his enemies, the emperor was in fact confined to the vicinity of Verona for much of the next five years, to his own shame and the delight of his adversaries. Unable to acquire reinforcements from Germany, he and Wibert could not mount any major expeditions, nor could they even travel to Rome or Germany without considerable difficulties (Bernold, 457, 1094). Ranger succinctly summarizes the situation: "Italien claudit femina bellipotens".

More diplomatic victories for Matilda were soon to follow, as the emperor's son Conrad and his wife Praxedis of Kiev converted to Matilda's camp in the next two years. Henry had crowned Conrad as his successor in Germany in 1088, and the young prince had travelled to Piedmont and Savoy early in 1092 to put forth his claim to the lands of his recently deceased grandmother Adelaide, countess of Turin (Bernold 454, a. 1092). In 1093, however, Conrad did an about face and allied himself with the reformers, for reasons that are not entirely clear. Some sources claim that the emperor's loose morals and poor treatment of his wife (who was allegedly subjected to various sexual "depravities") forced Conrad into the reforming camp. Others, including both pro-imperialist works like the Vita Henrici and sources sympathetic to Matilda like Donizo's Vita Mathildis, lay most of the praise or blame upon Matilda's shoulders.

Certainly, Matilda's victories in Lombardy made rebellion more feasible and attractive, and Matilda did play a prominent role in Conrad's subsequent coronation in Milan, which she helped to arrange and personally attended with her husband Welf. Conrad's defection brought a large number of fresh troops into the reforming ranks (even if it is doubtful that Matilda's control over Conrad's army was as absolute as Donizo would lead us to believe) and added the authority of the designated heir to the imperial throne to the reform cause. Another indicator of the depths to which imperial fortunes had sunk was the fact that Welf's father, Welf IV of Bavaria, who in the previous two years had attempted a reconciliation with Henry, also promised fidelity to Conrad at this time (Bernold, 456, 1093).
Shortly after this, in 1094, Matilda received into her protection Henry’s second wife Adelaide (also known as Praxedis), who escaped to Canossa from prison at Verona. Donizo states that Matilda herself sent the squadron that freed her.\(^{24}\) Although Donizo relates events in an order that is not chronological\(^{25} \), other sources confirm Matilda’s involvement.\(^{24}\) The Annales Stadenses, for example, maintain that because of Henry’s poor treatment “Regina tandem a custodia elapsa, venit in Ytaliam ad prepotentem illam Mechtildam et eius conductu ad papam Urbanum, cui suam calamitatatem lamentabiliter exPosuit”.\(^{24}\)

Matilda once again reaped the benefits of her well-maintained intelligence network by responding quickly to new information and ordering her troops to escort the queen into her protection.

The emperor did, however, make at least one attempt to gain vengeance on the countess for her role in sheltering Conrad and Praxedis and to salvage the situation by military means. In late 1094 or 1095\(^{26}\), he laid siege to Matilda’s castle of Nogara, an expedition for which Donizo, as usual, is the only primary source. According to his account, Henry roused his lay and episcopal allies, who included the German bishop of Verona (Simeoni, note to l. 779), and invested Matilda’s only base in the Veronese. From Donizo’s account, it appears that the emperor’s strategy was to blockade the castle and starve out its inhabitants rather than to take it by storm.\(^{27}\) Once again, however, “the ears of Matilda” quickly learned of Henry’s movements.\(^{25}\)

As soon as the countess was informed of the situation, she summoned her vassals from the county\(^{27}\) of Modena and raised an exercitus to relieve the city. Crossing the Po, she approached Nogara by night; the emperor, discouraged by her arrival with fresh troops, broke camp and withdrew. Donizo puts considerable emphasis on the hastiness of the emperor’s retreat, stating that he left much baggage and equipment behind him. In the morning, Matilda was jubilantly received in the castle and thanked by the garrison. Donizo concludes his account by comparing Matilda to Judith: although Matilda did not kill Henry, as Judith did Holofernes, she nevertheless routed him repeatedly and set traps for him, into which he fell even when he thought he was being cautious (ll. 799-801).

With the siege of Nogara we see Matilda becoming bolder and more self-assured in her generalship.\(^{28}\) Donizo’s description of the siege indicates that the countess did not attempt to hide the presence of her army from the enemy as she had during her earlier campaigns (e.g. Sorbara, Tricontai, Canossa). She did approach Nogara under cover of darkness, but, if we are to believe Donizo, Henry was immediately made aware of her presence and fled the very same
night (Donizo, ll. 785-92). Perhaps Matilda reckoned that the castle was running short on supplies and meant to let it know as soon as possible that relief was on the way; she may even have intended to awe Henry into retreat. Certainly, her power and prestige had risen tremendously, and her army, buoyed by recent victories and perhaps supplemented by reinforcements from her new allies, may now have been a match for the emperor’s isolated forces. One of the Annals thus portrays her (with some justification) as the “most powerful woman of the time”.

Henry was soon to leave Italy and never mounted another major campaign against Matilda. In most respects, their military struggle was over and Matilda had won. As to the strictly military significance of the war, it serves to dispel some of the myths associated with medieval warfare. Although the contemporary narratives do not provide much detail about tactics of set-piece battles (which, in keeping with the high-medieval pattern, were in any event quite rare), they do indicate the tremendous importance of intelligence, surprise, mobility and interior lines of communication. Sieges such as Mantua and Monteveglio were strategically important, but the deciding factors in the war were movement and reconnaissance—Sorbara and Canossa, the pivotal conflicts, both hinged upon maneuver and surprise. Matilda’s generalship, which can only be commended as excellent, rested primarily upon these principles.

What the historiography of these campaigns reveals is the necessity of understanding them within a comparative and logistical context. Donizo, we may note, is quite reserved in providing numbers for the forces involved; when he does give actual figures—the 100 knights captured at Sorbara, for example—they are modest, especially for a medieval author. It is unfortunate that not all historians have been so level headed. The idea that feudal armies of over ten thousand were maintained for months and years at a time as they maneuvered in and around the Apennines simply will not withstand serious scrutiny.

We are now also able to comment on Matilda’s involvement in the struggle. Although we must reject the claim that she led a surprise attack from the rear at Bianello, her presence at and command of other operations has been firmly established. We know with certainty that she was present at the sieges of Mantua in 1090, Nogara c. 1094-5 and of another castle (unfortunately not identified by Pseudo-Bardo) sometime between Sorbara in 1084 and the end of 1086. Her presence at Monteveglio (and, if a siege did occur at Nonantula, at that engagement as well) is likely. Furthermore, we know that she led an expedition to Rome in 1087 and that she issued
orders to her troops before Tricontai. If she did not lead her armies at Volta or Sorbara, she was certainly positioned nearby and most likely gave commands through her subordinates. This is the absolute minimum of her involvement, and ignores the general statements—that she attacked her vassals’ castles, that she led her forces to war, that she laid traps for Henry, etc.—which cannot be tied to specific operations but which are common in sources both hostile and friendly to the countess. This also does not take into account the numerous lesser engagements that must have occurred (especially when the fighting was most intense in 1081-4 and 90-2) but which have not left any trace in the historical record.

It is no exaggeration to say that during the war with Henry tactical and strategical choices had to be made on a daily basis. There is no reason to suppose that Matilda was incapable of making such decisions. I do not find at all convincing the arguments of Ghirardini which allege that even if Matilda had formal command of the army, the effective command was probably in Arduino’s hands. As Simeoni notes, Arduino’s career has been the object of almost as much mythologizing as Matilda’s. Certainly, Matilda, like any good commander and feudal lord, would have listened to the counsel of her subordinates; but Ghirardini himself admits that there is no evidence that Arduino assumed effective command of Matilda’s armies, and he does not even appear in her documents until 1100 (Ghirardini, 58). Moreover, we have observed Matilda repeatedly acting contrary to social and canonical taboos, such as taking part in Lateran Synods and military assemblies. Although the criticism she received may have affected her public relationship with Gregory, she nevertheless attended the councils of subsequent popes and even held at least one assembly of her own at Carpineta. Several popes, to say nothing of numerous bishops, owed their positions to her diplomacy and protection. Why should Matilda, capable of asserting herself politically even in the face of harshly misogynistic criticism, and immersed in war from her childhood, have needed someone else to tell her what to do?
The Struggle against Henry IV

1 Letter to Erlembald, Reg. Greg. I.26 (October 9 1073). Cf. Reg. Greg. II 30 (Dec. 7, 1074) p. 142 (which mentions that Beatrice and Matilda wrote to Gregory about the friendship and sincere affection of king, by whose council [concilio] Gregory was induced to write Henry regarding the church of Milan and his counsellors); Reg. Greg. I. 85 (June 15, 1074) p. 106 (in which Gregory congratulated Empress Agnes for promoting peace between empire and papacy and mentioned that Beatrice and Matilda were following her example); and Donizo I 19 p. 376, II. 1224-9 (which notes how Beatrice attempted to promote peace between pope and emperor). See also Cowdrey, G VII, 96-7.

2 Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 604-5) describes the circumstances of Erlembald’s death and calls him a martyr. Cf. Arnulf. p. 27; Cowdrey, G VII, 130; Overmann 22a and c.

3 According to Bonizo, Henry simply ignored his earlier appointment of Godfrey. On the complex situation involving three rival candidates for the archbishopric see Cowdrey, “Papacy, Patarenes and Milan”, p. 39-41 and n. 1; idem, G VII, 284 and n. 57.

4 Henry’s appointment of a bishop of Ravenna (Milan’s old archiepiscopal rival) as his antipope further alienated the Milanese—Cowdrey, “Papacy, Patarenes and Milan”, p. 40.

5 Cowdrey, G VII, 130-1.

6 a.k.a. Crescentius, Cintius, Quintius—Mann VII 86. Cencius had given Cadalus asylum in St. Angelo in 1063.

7 See Cowdrey, G VII 327-8 and n. 292 for a list of sources on these events. Cowdrey notes that no one is exactly sure what Cencius had hoped to accomplish, whether assassination, coup, or simple intimidation.

8 Cencius forcibly kidnapped Gregory as he was celebrating mass in Santa Maria Maggiore on Christmas eve of 1075 and took him to his tower near the Pantheon. Gregory, however, was freed by a group of Romans—Arnulf Gesta Archiepp. Mediol, MGH SS VIII, p. 30; Berthold, Chronicon, 1076; Lambert, 1076 p. 253.

9 Liber ad amicum, 605. Overmann (Overmann, Reg. Mat. 20k) surmises that she interceded around the time she attended the Lenten Synod of February 24-8 1075, but it appears from the accounts that the kidnapping occurred in December of 1075, not 1074.

10 For the chroniclers’ reports see Berthold, 1076; Lambert, 1076; Bruno c. 65. Ranger (II. 2277 ff) describes how Henry accused Gregory of waging wars and committing adultery with Matilda at Worms. Cowdrey (G VII, 135) notes that Henry convened the assembly at Worms and publically communicated with his excommunicate counsellors. Godfrey was also present.

11 “Ad hoc quasi fetore gravissimi scandali totam ecclesiam replesti de convictu et cohabitatione alienae mulieris familiariori quam necessa est. In qua re verecundia nostra magis quam causa laborat, quamvis haec generalis querela ubique personerit, omnia iudicia, omnia decreta in apostolica sede actuari, denique per feminarum novum senatum totum orbe ecclesiae administrari.” –Episcoporum epistola Gregorio VII missa, MGH Constitutiones et Acta Publica, I. no. 58, p. 108

12 On accusations of improper relationship see Ghirardini, Capitolo VI, Quale Amore fre la Grande Contessa e il Papa Gregorio VII? from his Storia Critica. He notes (note to p. 178) that the first accusation of this sort was at Worms, Jan 24 1076, which apparently had the support of Godfrey.

13 Cowdrey, G VII, 167-8. On p. 301 Cowdrey also suggests that in the 1080’s Gregory preferred to work through his vicar for Northern Italy, Anselm II of Lucca, because of the widespread criticism of his relationship with Matilda.

14 Cowdrey, G VII, 135-6.

15 Henry’s letter to Gregory, “false monk and priest”, ordering him to vacate the papacy is in Codex Udalrici 47 (Jan. 24, 1076)—ed. Jaffe, Monumenta Bambergensis Vol. 5. Cowdrey (G VII, 138-9) notes as well that at the subsequent assembly at Piacenza the Lombard bishops confirmed the decrees of Worms and renounced their obedience to Gregory.

16 The council lasted from Feb. 14-20, 1076.

17 In September Welf, Rudolf and Berthold had held an assembly at Ulm, attended by Gregory’s legate Bishop Altmann of Passau (Cowdrey, G VII, 144-5), which arranged for the meeting near Tribur on October 16. For the meetings at Tribur-Opfenheim Oct. 16 to Nov. 1 1076, see Lampert, 1076; Berthold, 1076; Cowdrey, G VII, 150.


19 Overmann, Reg. Mat. 27d and pp. 193 ff.; Duff, 143 and n.1

20 Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 244
The Struggle against Henry IV

See Overmann, Reg. Mat. 23a and Jaffe’s note to Reg. Greg. IV.2 p. 244-5. Mann (VII 103) observes that Godfrey’s death provided Henry with a duchy but deprived him of his ablest general.

Landulf, 98.

According to Cowdrey (Gregory VII 142), however, the assassination was “prompted by local Lotharingian hatreds.”

In a later letter (Reg. Greg. Ep. Coll. 18, Nov.-Dec. 1076, pp. 543-4), the pope again referred to the resistance of his counsellors. Cowdrey’s argument (G VII, 154 n. 345), that the pope’s Roman advisors “objected to the fact, not merely to the haste, of his German journey”, is supported not only by Gregory’s letters but by the narrative sources as well.


Lambert’s editors gloss it as “conducum militarem, itineris praesidium”.

Vita Ans. SS XII c.8 p. 15; Jaffe (p. 423) suggests that, after Gregory left Florence (where he had issued a bull—Quellen und Forschungen zum Urkunden-und Kanzleiweisen Papst Gregors VII., Santifaller, L., ed., Studi e testi, 190 (Vatican City, 1957), no. 122), he travelled to Lucca, since in a letter from August 11, 1077 (Reg. Greg. V.1), Gregory referred to his stay amongst the the canons of S. Martin of Lucca and appears to have attempted to help Anselm enforce the communal life. Cushing, however, notes that it remains unclear whether he travelled to Lucca before or after his meeting with the emperor (Cushing, 56).

For the Canossa affair in general see especially the lengthy version of Lampert, 255 ff. and Donizo, II.1.

Lambert, 1077, p. 258; Donizo, II.1.

“Quorum etiam confirmationem per manus abbatis Cluniacensis et filiarum nostrarum Mathildis et comitissae Adelaeiae... recipimus.” --Reg. Greg IV.12, p. 258.

Cf. 74T, p. 207, no. 49 “That priests ought not to take an oath”.

See below, chapter 4.

Donizo (II.1. II. 130-1) uses the term "commune colloquium", which Simeoni interprets as "un convegno di vescovi e principi italiani”.

Duff, 164, interprets this as a scout despatched ahead.

“Rex ex quidem frustra transivit primitus undas/ Eridani, tractans cum paucis tradere papam./ Nec non si quiret Comissionam tradet idem/ Hoc scelus infandum compleve putat placando./ Cuncta videns Christus fieri vetuit scelus istud/ Eridanum Presul, Mathildis et optima secum/ Transivit, sperans pacem componere venam/ Ad domum clarum multos oculis oculatam/ Nuncius advenit, qui secretum pateficit/ Regis Henrici qui papam tradere dicit./ Hoc ubi cognovit prudens hera, mox citó movit/ Sequere suos, fortes pecit cum presule montes/ Insidiae fractae regis sunt et patefactae/ Papam, Mathildim, rex ulterior neque vidit.” --Donizo 61, II.134-147.

Overmann, Reg. Mat. 27k.


Lampert, a. 1077, pp. 260-1. For the hastily revived hostility between Gregory and Henry in general see Lambert 260 ff. I. S. Robinson ["Pope Gregory VII, the princes and the Pactum 1077-1080", English Historical Review 373 (October, 1979), 724 ff.] observes that Bruno of Merseburg simply ignored the events at Canossa because “the spirit [of the king] remained unchanged”; Robinson also notes that other pro-reform chroniclers, like Berthold and Paul of Bernried, agreed with Bruno’s characterization of the king. In addition to Lampert and the sources discussed below, one may also note that Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 611) alleges that Henry was greatly moved by the election of Rudolf and therefore asked Gregory to excommunicate him.

Cf. Gregory’s letter (IV.23, May 31 1077) ordering his legates to call for a safe conduct to Germany from both kings, and threatening any who disobey with severe penalties, and the letter (IV.24 pp. 277-9) of same day to the German clergy and princes stating that both kings were calling for his support and that he intended to decide the case, again accompanied by the severe warning that it is idolatry to oppose Apostolic See.

Pseudo-Bardo, XII c.17 p. 18; Reg. Greg. Ep. Sel. V.7, pp. 356-8. Gerard remained a prisoner for some time, although Anselm, possibly because of his family ties in the area, was either left alone or, more probably, soon released from captivity. Pseudo-Bardo writes that Anselm unsuccessfully requested to be captured so that he might give his life for his friend, but that the soldiers did not dare to touch Anselm as he was of noble birth (Anselm was from a Milanese Capitanei family). Berthold (a. 1077, 290) has the “episcopos, Ostiensem et Praenestinum” captured at Piacenza, although he does not mention Anselm. Bernold (a. 1077, p. 433) writes that Henry imprisoned
the bishops of Ostia and Lucca and uses this (and the emperor’s return to communication with simoniacs and excommunicates) to justify the election of Rudolph at Forcheim. Cf. Arnulf, p. 31.

The soldiers may have been attempting to break the despised peace accord—see the account of Ranger (II. 3221-3228) and the editor’s note 3 (p. 1158). Cowdrey (“Papacy, Patarienes and Milan”, p. 41) notes that Arnulf had accompanied a delegation of the upper clergy and laity of Milan to Gregory at Canossa in 1077. They had sought absolution for their resistance to Rome. According to Cowdrey, Gregory was attempting to build on this by sending Anselm and Gerald of Ostia to Milan; Cowdrey also states that they preached to the citizens and absolved them. Cushing, on the other hand, sees the legation as an attempt to settle the question of Milan and an outgrowth of the reconciliation between Henry and Gregory at Canossa (Cushing, 56-7).


43 Consider: Reg. Greg. ep. col. 20, Feb-March 1077 (where Gregory revealed his desire to meet with the princes for the common good, whether Henry wished it or not); Reg. Greg. IV.12 (Jan 28 1077) p. 258 (which relates the events of Canossa to the German princes, stating that the whole case is suspended and that his advent and their “unanimous consent are seen to be necessary in the highest degree”); Reg. Greg. IV.23; and Reg. Greg. IV.24.

44 Some of the German princes, assembling at Ulm in Swabia in Mid-February, had arranged the larger meeting at Forcheim and requested that Gregory come to it. For sources on Forcheim see I. S. Robinson, “Pope Gregory VII, the princes and the Pactum 1077-1080”, English Historical Review 373 (October, 1979) p. 721 n. 1. Consultations lasted from March 13 to the 15th. Attendees included Berthold of Carinthia, Welf of Bavaria and Otto of Northeim, and perhaps also Duke Magnus of Saxony and the Bishop of Passau. On the justifications made by contemporaries for the deposition and the new election, see Robinson pp. 721-56.

45 Consider: Reg. Greg. ep. col. 20, Feb-March 1077 (where Gregory revealed his desire to meet with the princes for the common good, whether Henry wished it or not); Reg. Greg. IV.12 (Jan 28 1077) p. 258 (which relates the events of Canossa to the German princes, stating that the whole case is suspended and that his advent and their “unanimous consent are seen to be necessary in the highest degree”); Reg. Greg. IV.23; and Reg. Greg. IV.24.

46 Some of the German princes, assembling at Ulm in Swabia in Mid-February, had arranged the larger meeting at Forcheim and requested that Gregory come to it. For sources on Forcheim see I. S. Robinson, “Pope Gregory VII, the princes and the Pactum 1077-1080”, English Historical Review 373 (October, 1979) p. 721 n. 1. Consultations lasted from March 13 to the 15th. Attendees included Berthold of Carinthia, Welf of Bavaria and Otto of Northeim, and perhaps also Duke Magnus of Saxony and the Bishop of Passau. On the justifications made by contemporaries for the deposition and the new election, see Robinson pp. 721-56.

47 Robinson (Gregory VII, p. 733) notes that Rudolf was eventually crowned at Mainz on March 26, 1077, with Gregory’s legates present.

anathematizing anyone who sought to prevent the meeting to decide the kingship. Gregory’s justification of the subsequent excommunication of Henry rested heavily on this basis—Reg. Greg. VII.14a (excommunication of Henry from Mar 7 1080) p. 403: “...excommunicavi et anathemate alligavi omnes personas sive regis sive ducis aut episcopi seu aliiuis hominis, qui colloquium aliquo ingenio impedire... Praedictus autem Heinricus...colloquium impediendo excommunicationem incurrit...”.

I. S. Robinson (“Pope Gregory VII, the Princes and the Pactum”, 754-5) argues that the reason for Gregory’s reluctance to acknowledge Rudolf was that the antiking had been elected on the basis of the rebels’ concept of a pactum between king and people, which presented a challenge to Gregory’s conception of the king as a minister of the Church. While this may have provided an underlying motive, many contemporary authors claimed that the immediate reason for the hesitation was the fact that Henry could not be deposed in absentia without having a chance to answer the charges against him. The principle that the absent cannot be judged had long been established in canon law (e.g. Pseudo-Isidore, Decreta Isidorianae et Capitula Angilrammi, ed. P. Hinschius (Leipzig, 1863): Ps. Eleutherus c. 4, p. 126) and carried weight with German rebels, Reformers and Imperialists alike. The pro-rebellion Lampert, for example, wrote (Lampert pp. 258 and 260) that when Gregory was at Canossa he had stated that it was against ecclesiastical law for a case to be heard when the accusators were absent, and Lampert later described how at that same time Henry had successfully argued that he could not be convicted or deposed without having been given an opportunity to defend himself (although it should be noted that Gregory later claimed not to have restored Henry to the kingship at Canossa). As Robinson notes, Bruno complained that Gregory refused to support Rudolf immediately and instead insisted that a council be held “and each king summoned and heard” (Robinson, 735). The earliest reform collection followed Ps.Isidore in asserting “Ut nemo absens iudicetur”, and Bishop Anselm of Lucca also generally agreed that judgement must not be made against the absent. It is, moreover, well known that during this period Gregory himself made repeated attempts to arrange a meeting in Germany and refrained from deposing Henry until a synod could be held. In the subsequent deposition of Henry (Reg. Greg. VII 14a, Acts of Roman council of Mar 7 1080, pp. 401-4), the claim was also made that one of the terms of the agreement at Canossa had been that the pope would decide between the rival kings. Later imperialists would argue that Gregory’s excommunication and deposition of Henry was illegitimate because of the principle of not judging prelates in absentia: e.g. Decretum Wiberti vel Clementis papae, ed. Ernestus Dümmler, Libelli de Litt 1, 621-6: 622.

At times, some Reformers did appear to claim that under certain circumstances judgement could occur in absentia. Anselm of Lucca, for example, while generally upholding the idea that the absent could not be deposed (Cushing, 108-9), did cite the legitimate deposition of Bishop Dioscorus by the Council of Chalcedon, a sentence which occurred after Dioscorus, having been repeatedly disobedient, had refused to attend the council (Collectio Canorum, III.91-3) [although the rubric for c. 93 explains “Quod Dioscorus non est damnatus propter fidem, sed quia in dominum papam Leonem fecit excommunicationem.”; cf. Cushing, 156]. The Dictatus Papae [Reg. Greg. Ep. Sel., t.2, I-II (Berlin, 1920-3) II 55a, no. 5] was more blunt—“That the pope may depose the absent.” Laying aside the issue of the relation of the Dictatus to the pope himself, however, it appears that Gregory was willing to consider exercising judgement in absentia only in cases of extreme contumacy (Cushing, p. 38), and Henry was careful to maintain at least the appearance of cooperation with papal decrees in the first few years after Canossa. In light of the combined testimony of Anselm’s collection, Gregory’s letters and the narrative sources, we can be reasonably certain that Gregory would have had difficulty in justifying (even to his own supporters) a deposition of the emperor which occurred without him having been provided with an opportunity to defend himself. Gregory’s first excommunication of the emperor in 1076 had occurred after repeated calls for obedience went unanswered, and when, in 1080, Gregory finally agreed to hear the dispute between the emperor and rebels in Rome, Henry did actually send legates who argued his case before the Lateran Synod.

* e.g. Reg. Greg. VII.3 (Oct 1 1079) pp. 383-4.

† For a discussion of relations between Gregory and Henry during these years see Cowdrey, G VII, 167-98.

‡ There was of course fighting in Germany between Rudolf and Henry.

§ Reg. Greg. V.14a, Feb 27-Mar 3 1078. In another letter from this period (V.15 Mar 9 1078) Gregory anathematized anyone, “he king, archbishop, duke...”, preventing a meeting to decide the kingship.

See the letter of Huzman, bishop of Spires, announcing the decrees of Mainz to the bishops of Lombardy—Huzmanni episcopi Spirensis epistola ad Lombardos, MGH Constitutiones, I, no. 69 p. 117-8.
The Struggle against Henry IV

For this synod and Gregory’s response to it see: Decretum Synodi (Brixinensis) MGH Constitutiones, I, no. 70, pp. 118-20; Cowdrey, G VII, 201-6.

Cowdrey (G VII, 202-3) discusses Wibert’s background. He was a native of Parma, a member of the Giberti family (the counts of Parma) and a friend of Cadalus. Wibert had been made Imperial chancellor in Italy during Agnes’ regency.

Although, until Gregory had been formally deposed, Wibert remained only “electus”. Here again we have another example of an assembly hesitating to depose someone in absentia.


That the castle was Matilda’s is indicated by a document from July 8, 1079 (reprinted in Fiorentini, II. 222-6), in which Matilda made a donation of a number of her serfs from the castle to the cathedral chapter at Mantua. On the identification of Volta and the dating of the battle see L. L. Ghirardini “La Battaglia di Volta Mantovana”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi, Mantova maggio, 1980 (Bologna, 1987), pp. 230-2.

Cf. Ghirardini, 233; Overmann, Reg. Mat. 45g. To be sure, Donizo does mention both the debacle at Tricontai and the fall of Mantua, but in both of these instances there were scapegoats readily at hand to shoulder the blame for the defeat— Ugo (one of Matilda’s captains) for the former and the citizens of Mantua for the latter.

Ghirardini (Volta, 234 n. 24) interestingly surmises that this may be the same son who was killed at the emperor’s siege of Montevièllo in 1092.

Ghirardini (Volta, 232) bases this on the fact that Bernold states that the soldiers of Matilda were “put to flight”:


But to my mind given far too much importance as her “Grand Captain” by Ghirardini and others—see below and Ghirardini’s chapter on Arduino in his Storia Critica.

See his “Madonna della battaglia”, 45-7 and my discussion below.


Steven G. Lane, Rural Populations and the Experience of Warfare in Medieval Lombardy: The Case of Pavia, in Halsall, pp. 127-34: 131-2. Ferdinand Güterbock, Das Geschichtswerk des Otto Morena und seiner Fortsetzer über die Taten Friedrichs I. In der Lombardie, MGH SRG ns. no. 7 (Berlin, 1930): 153.] notes that an eyewitness chronicle from Lodö estimated gives the figure of 300 cavalry and 1000 infantry for the communal army of Milan at the time of the city’s surrender to Barbarossa in 1162.


Verbruggen, 242-7. Verbruggen actually gives figures below 10,000 for each of the armies involved, although his estimate seems to me to be rather conservative, especially regarding the infantry.


They only began to defect after the battle, with more defecting after the emperor’s arrival the following year.

Ghirardini argues that infantry did not become effective until after the Battle of Legnano in 1176; and yet we find infantry at Hastings and many Anglo-Norman battles, in the Crusades, in the Byzantine army, in the communal and
peace militias, etc. The effectiveness of the infantry is obscured by contemporary sources' fixation on the acts of the nobility, but we may note that there is documentary evidence for the "exercitus plebis" (a kind of parish militia) in Matilda's domains as far back as Boniface's time (Giovanni Santini, "L'amministrazione della Giustizia: I Giudice e I Funzionari", in Golinelli, //Poteri, pp. 44-5). For just a few examples of the use of lower classes and infantry in Italy see Cowdrey, "Archbishop Aribert II of Milan", in //Papes, //Monks and Crusaders, (no. IV), 12-3; Cowdrey, "Papacy, Patarenes and Milan". 35. On the use of infantry in general see Karl Leyser, Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Gregorian Revolution and Beyond, ed. Timothy Reuter (London, 1994), 14 ff. On the conception of the Middle Ages as an "Age of Cavalry" see Stephen Morillo, "The "Age of Cavalry" Revisited", in The Circle of War in the Middle Ages, 45-58.


For a recent and interesting attempt to illustrate an awareness of grand strategy on the part of medieval commanders, see Theresa M. Vann, "Twelfth-Century Castile and its Frontier Strategies", in The Circle of War in the Middle Ages, pp. 21-31.

1) In nearly every respect Ghirardini interprets the battle in a light favourable to Matilda—her army was not surprised or outnumbered but lost because it was outnumbered; many of her men managed to escape; the battle was not militarily decisive and was soon avenged at Sorbara, etc.

2) Volta, 240: "un capolavoro di audacia e di abilità tattica". Note as well that in an earlier article he argued that the countess' victory before Canossa in 1092, against heavily superior numbers, was due in part to the superior strategy of the Matildine command—Ghirardini, "Madonna", 49.

3) Perhaps even on the very same day—see Ghirardini, Volta, pp. 230-2.

4) See above quote from Bernold. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 42a) lists the schismatic bishops as Arezzo, Volterra, Parma, Piacenza, Verona, Modena and Reggio: Ghirardini (Storia Critica 251), adds Pistoia.

5) Hartwig, Otto, Quellen und Forschungen zur Altesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz (Marburg: N. G. Elwertsche, 1875), 92-3, notes that only Florence firmly adhered to Matilda and barred its gates to the emperor.

6) Lucca was the most troublesome of Matilda's cities during this period. Giampaolo Ropa ("La Liturgia nei Testi Matildici", in SM I, p. 202) notes that Bishop Anselm I of Lucca (later pope Alexander II) had attempted to regulate the canonical life and liturgy in the cathedral of S. Martin. His successor Bishop Anselm II of Lucca—who we will discuss in more detail in the last two chapters of this dissertation—had sought to enforce communal life in Lucca, but there was tremendous resistance amongst the canons, especially since many in city were hostile to Matilda's allegedly draconian rule. In an attempt to support Anselm's reforms, Gregory had recently censured (Reg. Greg. VI.11 Nov. 28 1078, pp. 340-1) and excommunicated (Reg. Greg. VII.2 Oct 1079, pp. 381-2) the Luccan clergy for their irregular lives. Matilda had even proposed having them degraded to the status of serfs— a penalty often proposed for clerics' wives at this time (e.g. Manegold of Lautenbach, Ad Gebehardum liber, ed. Kuno Francke, LdL I, 308- 430: c. 23, De dammatione infelicium muliercularum sacris ministris prostituturam, pp. 353-5). After Volta, the unrest became open rebellion. Anselm was chased out of the city and an imperialist bishop named Peter was elected. When Henry and Wibert arrived in the city in the summer of 1081 (see below), they recognised Peter and granted liberties to the commune. For a clear and concise account of these events see Pseudo-Bardo, pp. 15-6. Ranger's account (ill. 1705, ff.), while extensive, is somewhat confusing (see the editor's note 2 on p. 1189), but notably has one of the rebels remark (ll. 1896-7) that Matilda "...pro Romana dimitat ecclesia./ Set regem insequitur...". For secondary sources see Overmann, Reg. Mat. 37a and 40b and Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 250-1.


8) Reg. Greg. VIII.26 (March, 1081), p. 473-6. The letter goes on to discuss the possibility of drawing Welf IV of Bavaria firmly into their camp if Henry should enter Lombardy. Cowdrey (G VII, 210-1) discusses the letter and argues that Gregory's main concern was the "morale" of Matilda's knights, but given the context of numerous defections from Matilda's army it would perhaps be more accurate to translate "cuius militia animos ipsi perpenditis" as "whose soldiers loyalty you must consider", as Emerton [The correspondence of Pope Gregory VII: Selected Letters from the Registrum, trans. Ephraim Emerton (New York, 1966), p. 474] does.
"Anna Comnena [Alexiad, trans. Sewter, E. R. A. (Penguin, 1969), iii.10] writes that Alexius sent 150,000 solidi to Henry (and promised even more) in order to cement an alliance against the Normans; this happened sometime around the summer of 1081. Bernold (1084, p. 440) notes that a few years later the Eastern emperor sent "maximam pecuniam" to Henry for vengeance on Guiscard. As is well known, Henry refused to face Guiscard—but apparently kept the money.

Ghirardini (Storia Critica 52) points out that her defensive strategy rested principally upon the her Appennine fortress of Canossa (in valley of the Enza), Carpineta (in the valley of the Secchia) and Montebello (in that of Sammoggia).

"His temporibus Henricus totam Italian adoe conturbavit, ut nullus secure ad limina apostolorum posset ire. qui non prius abiararet, quod ad papam Gregorium diversurus non esset." --Bernold SS V (a. 1080) p. 437; Ranger ll. 2931-46; 3545-54; 6443-50.

Benzo, 658. Benzo also adds that many of these soldiers wanted to return northwards. Later in his work (p. 663) benzo records that: "The king pervaded her lands, she stayed at Canossa,... but still harsher difficulties awaited her. The king won over to himself "castella, cortes [?cohortes?] et cenobia". A little bit later in passage author decries how "Etiam adversus eum [?Henry?] feminellas suscitant.", and says it is the hidden judgements of the king of kings that he [king of kings] should punish those whom "humana iustitia" defends, and not condemn those whom obvious vices accuse.

*Two later sources also testify to the intensity of the fighting and the extent of the devastation: Chronicon Mutinense, Auctore Johanne de Bazzano, Muratori RIS Old seris, XV.555: "MLXXXIII Henricus obsedit castrum Carpi. MLXXXIV Castrum Nonantulae obsessum fuit a comitissa Mathelida. MLXXXV Puit fames magna.". Sicardi Episcopi Cremonensis Chronicon, Muratori RIS (old series) VII 586: Anno Domini MLXXXIII Nonantulam obsedit comitissa Mathilids. Anno Domini MLXXXIV valida fames Italian occupavit." On Matilda's siege of Nonantula see below. Ranger (ll. 4885 ff.) also records an incident in which Anselm requested military aid from Matilda which I discuss more fully in chapter 6.

The depiction of Matilda's military activities as unwomanly is a theme common to both her supports and her detractors; depending upon the author's perspective, her masculine actions could be cause for either praise or condemnation, as we shall see.

See also Donizo II.1 ll. 200-8.

Hugh of Flavigny, MGH SS 8, p. 462 (I also quote this text in chapter 6).

Reg. Greg. VIII.34 (IX.11), 1081 pp. 485-6, is addressed to Desiderius, informing him that Henry was near Ravenna and planned to come to Rome around Pentecost (May 23). Bernold (a. 1081) records that Henry spent easter in Verona and from there marched on Rome with Wibert, "...sete reversus est."

The papal letter, we may note, also states that Matilda sent a letter to Gregory warning him of a rumor of a possible alliance between Guiscard and Henry.

Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 613) states Henry retreated into "Lombardy", but Henry's documents show him in Siena, Lucca, etc. Perhaps Bonizo simply meant the North. Tracking Henry by his diplomas [as listed in Karl Friedrich Stumpf-Brentano, Die Reichskanzler vornehmlich des 10., 11., Und 12. Jahrhunderts, (Innsbruck, 1865-83, Reprint 1964)], we can then place him in Rome on June 4 and 23 (St. 2832, 2833), at Siena on July 10 (St. 2835), Lucca on July 19 (St. 2837) and Parma on Dec. 3 and 14 (St. 2840, 2841).

The privileges are reproduced in Die Urkunden der Deutschen Konige und Kaiser, MGH Diplomatum Regnum et Imperatorum Germaniae, (Weimar: 1959) Vol. VI, no. 334 (a.k.a. St. 2833) and 336 (a.k.a. St. 2836). Ranger (ll. 4245 ff.) discusses Henry's reception in Lucca in July of 1081, with the imperialist Bishop Peter giving arms to the people; later (ll. 4789 ff.) Ranger writes that Henry gave Peter the regalia of Lucca and ordered him to lead the army, that the counts of Tuscany pledged faith to Henry and promised to aid him in taking Rome, and that Henry then deprived Matilda of her old office. This general outline of events is confirmed by the aforementioned documents. Note that Eads (p. 173) gives the erroneous impression that Henry stopped at Lucca before he came to Rome.

See Ghirardini, Storia Critica, Capitolo IX, Il Bando Imperiale di Lucca (1081), for a discussion of the emperor's judgement against her and its consequences. One may also note that in June of 1085 or 6 one finds Henry giving away her lands in Lorraine on account of her being found guilty of treason "maiestatis imperialis" (St. 2883; Sismondi, History of the Italian republics, 1906, p. 68; and for sources relevant to the dispute over the dating of the document see Overmann, Reg. Mat. 44f.).
The editor of Bonizo notes (p. 613) that he entered "Romania" in December.

Bernold (a. 1082) writes that Henry, with Wibert, again invaded Rome, but being delayed by the summer heat he laboured in vain, except for placing his soldiers in certain fortresses from which they made war on the Romans. Bonizo of Sutri and other Gregorians were captured before Henry returned to "Lombardy".

Ekkehard, 1083; Ann. Augustani, 1083; Landulf iv.2; Ann. Benevent. 1083; Bernald, 1083. Henry had once more arrived at Rome in April of the same year. Bernold (a. 1083) writes that Henry set out to attack Rome before Pentecost, and, building a "monticulum, nomine Palatenum" [a motte-and-bailey-like structure?] near S. Peter’s, he prevented Gregory from crossing the Tiber. Bernold also records that many Romans, some fatigued by the three-year siege and others receiving bribes from Henry, were then won over to the emperor’s cause before Henry retreated to spend the summer in Lombardy.

The exact contents of the treasury are recorded in a document reprinted in Muratori under the title De Thesaurio Canusinae ecclesiae Romam transmesso, et de compensatione ecclesiae Canusinae facta, in Donizo, SRI 109-10. It claims that with the consent of the papal vicar Anselm and abbot Gerard the money was sent to the pope "pro defensione Romanae ecclesiae".

The document is reprinted in Ughelli (It. Sac. II.170) and Fiorentini (II.177-8).

The quote is from the Conventus Romanus, an account of the council, whose date has been disputed. Z. Zafarana (‘Sul "convento" de clero romano nel maggio 1082’, Studi Medievi. 3rd ser., 7 (1966) 399-403), Watterich (I.452), and more recently Cushing (138) place it in May of 1082, but Struve (in Golinelli, I Poteri 436) places it in 1083.

Cushing, 103.

See, for example, the criticism of Gregory’s use of money in the work of Wido of Ferrara, who appears to have left the Gregorian party at about this time, perhaps because of this very issue: Wido of Ferrara, De scismate Hildebrandi, ed. Ernst Dümmler (following the edition of Roger Wilmans), LdL I, 529-67: 554-6; Robinson, Authority and Resistance, 46-7.

Anselm, Collectio Canonum, V.43; see also IV.28. Deusdedit deals with the res ecclesiae in some detail in book III of his Collectio Canonum III. XXXVIII and XLIII, but unlike Anselm he does not include rubrics for each canon, but rather provides a list of topics and references to the relevant canons at the beginning of his work. Several of the topics given for Deusdedit’s canons in the list of capitula at the beginning of his collection echo the rubrics of Anselm’s IV.28: e.g. Quod R. pontifici non liceat perpetualler alienare preedium R. ecclesiae; Quod rem non licet illi perpetualler commutare (Deusdedit, p. 20), and in fact Deusdedit uses the same canons as Anselm [Anselm IV.28 = Deusdedit III.41 (Symachus), Anselm V.43 = Deusdedit III.46 (Symachus again)]. For Anselm’s views on the alienation of ecclesiastical property cf. Cushing, 139 and nn. 62 and 63, and M. C. De Matteis, “Tematica della povertà e problema della res ecclesiae: notazione ed esemplificazione campione su alcuni collezioni canoniche del periodo della riforma ecclesiastica del sec. XI”, Bull. Ist. Stor. Ital. 90 (1982-3): 177- 226. Deusdedit of course found nothing wrong with giving church lands in usufruct—Deusdedit, p. 10.

If, as seems likely, the rubrics were those of Anselm himself—see chapter 5.

E.g. Deusdedit, p. 10: In the list of the capitula libri primi there are titles like: Quod ratione exigenz eipsa [the Apostolic See] suum retractare [possit] iudicium; Quod necessitate cogentc novas institut leges; Quod cause exigenz sanctorum potrnum temperet instituta. The Dictatus Papae also claimed the right of the popes to make new law according to the needs of the times.

Benzo of Alba, Ad Heinricium IV. imperatorum libri VIII, MGH SS XI, 663; cf. Cushing 138 and n. 61, who notes that this charge may also have been directed at Matilda’s famous donation to the papacy.

Codex A, 340; Bernald, 1083; Lupus, 1083.
Ranger, 916 f.; Pseudo-Bardo p. 20 c. 22. Bernold, (a. 1084 p. 441) states that Guiscard forced Henry to flee and took back "plurima castella et civitates". He was probably referring to Sutri and Nepi—see my discussion of Matilda's letter below.

And even managed to install his nephew as count of Sutri—Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, Leben und Werke, 10 n. 32.

Landulf, iv. 3. Even Bonizo (Liber ad amicum, 615) condemned Guiscard's sack of Rome.


The letter is included in the chronicle of Hugh of Flavigny: Chronicon Hugonis Abbatis Flaviacensis, ed. Migne, PL 154, 335. Sutri and Nepi had been retaken by Guiscard (See Bernald, 1084, 441) in June, but the duke, anxious to get back to the East, did not remit from Tivoli: = Wido episcopus Ferrarisiensis de Schismate Hildebrandi, ed. R. Wilmans, 2nd. ed. E. Dummler I.20, MGH Libelli I, pp. 549.

Donizo, II. 3, 11. 337-65. Like Ranger, Donizo confuses the dating of events, as he seems to have the battle coming after Gregory's death—see Simeoni's note to II. 337-65 in Donizo and the editors' note 4, p. 1290 in Ranger.

On Obertus, who apparently held lands near Piacenza, see Lodovico Antonio Muratori, Delle Antichita' Estensi ed Italiane (Modena: 1717), vol. I, pp. 242-8.

Pseudo-Bardo, p. 20 c. 23. Ranger's account (II. 6459 ff.), which generally follows that of the anonymous (see editor's note 1, p. 1292), is somewhat confusing in that it gives one the impression that Gregory died before the battle (see editor's note 4, p. 1290).

Ranger, II. 6459-64; Pseudo-Bardo, p. 20.

Ranger states that they set out to conquer Matilda and crush her fortresses to ash (6497-8). cf. Donizo, I. 241-3 (and see note to these lines). Donizo adds that the army was ultimately aiming for Rome.

Eads, 173. Eads is, however, mistaken in claiming that the battle took place "while Henry was at Rome dealing with malaria and Robert Guiscard".

Pseudo-Bardo, p. 20 c. 23: "Tunc ergo congregati sunt et nostri, siquidem pauci, quoniam una vix die praescii facti sunt..."; Ranger, II. 6503-6: "Cum subito didicit, vix fama preveniente/Undique collectis viribus irruere./ Quid faciat? Quos commoneat? Sic omnia turbat/ Tempus, ut una dies non bene restet ei."

Donizo, I. 350: "Iulius assumpta iam vero luce secunda".

Bernold, 1084, p. 441: "Eodem tempore (when Henry retreated from Robert) milites prudentissimae ducis Mathildae in Longobardia contra fautores Henrici et inimicos sancti Petri virilliter pugnaverunt, ex quibus episcopum Parmensem et sex capitanos cum aliis fere centum bonis militibus ceperunt. Equos etiam plus quam quingenros, et loricas plurimas, et omnia tentoria inimico rum, pleniter potiti victoria, habuerunt." cf. Ranger 6563-4: "De fidei numero tria sunt data corpora etc./ Cetera turba deo praeside laeta reedit."

Eads (p. 174) mistakenly claims that Gandulf of Reggio was also taken prisoner. Donizo (II. 361-2) says only that "The bushes hid the naked/unarmed Gandulf, bishop of Reggio, hard of heart, for three days", while the Epitome Polironese (p. 122), Bernold (441) Ranger (II. 6557-8) and Pseudo-Bardo (p. 20 c. 24) mention only Eberhard of Parma being captured.

I. 357; Simeoni glosses "nonnae" as "old woman" (vecchia), rather than "nun".

As Simeoni (note to line 347) observes. See for example Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 316), who even argues that Arduino must have been present as well.

Even Ghirardini (Storia Critica, p. 30), who lists it as probable that she was at Sorbara, acknowledges the ambiguity of Donizo's statement.

Eads (173-4) notes that Anselm's biographers used the battle as proof of Anselm's spiritual and supernatural powers.

Ranger, II. 6551-6: "Haec ubi sunt illis perlata et dicta, sub ipso Articulopugnae clamor ad astra subit.

Haste franguntur, solvuntur scuta, venitur
Ad gladios, pugnans fortiter; at miseri
Quos Sathanas dicit, subito terrore soluti
Turbantur, caecos efficit ipseo timor.

Donizo (II. 383-4) also notes that the countess felt she was aided by Anselm's prayers: "Inde triumphando gaudet comitissa precando/ Huius enim partis precibus putat auxiliari." This assistance is not given the same prominence in Donizo's account, however, as it is in Ranger's.
The Struggle against Henry IV

Cf. Pseudo-Bardo p. 20 c.23 ("...quoniam una vix die praescii facti sunt...") and Donizo, I. 346 ("...credentes ipsum vastare repente.")

According to Ranger, Anselm reassured them that their cause was just and that victory did not lie in numbers alone, thus suggesting that Matilda’s forces were outnumbered. Ranger’s editors (note 1 to these lines) argue that the contents of the speech are pure fiction. While the poet may have embellished his subjects’ words— as medieval authors were wont to do— there is no good reason to doubt that Anselm passed on some sort of exhortation to the troops. Pseudo-Bardo, who appears to have been present in the Matildine army, gives a general summary of the contents of Anselm’s speech and may even have delivered it himself: "...verutamnem nimir condortati sunt, quia dominus nostri sanctus Anselmus episcopus suam eas benedictionem per nostram direxit parvitate, hoc in mandatis praepere commendans nobis, ut si qui cum excommunicatis communicasset, primitus illos absolveremus, et tunc pariter omnes auctoritate apostolica et sua benediceremus, instruentes eos, quo pacto quave intentione deberent pugnare, sicque in remissionem omnium peccatorum eorum constanti belii comitteremus periculum." (Pseudo-Bard, p. 20). Both Ranger and Pseudo-Bardo’s speeches correspond quite closely to the attitude towards warfare which Anselm expressed in his Collectio Canonum (see below).

Although, as Overmann (Reg. Mat. 42d) states, Tuscany was all but lost to her and she does not appear to have been able to move about in that region.

Fiorentini II, 134, dated May 10, 1084. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 42d) tracks her movements between 1081 and 4, inasmuch as the sources allow it.

Just before the Battle of Triconata, it was reported that Henry’s second invasion of her lands had failed.


Pseudo-Bardo, p. 27, c. 51. For the dating of the siege see Overmann (Reg. Mat. 44k), who dates the siege as after April 4, 1086, and Struve ("Matilde di Toscana-Canossa ed Enrico IV", in Golinelli, I Poteri, 441), who places it at the end of 1086 and notes that Matilda was occupied by the siege for some time—perhaps until the end of 1086. Matilda’s attack on Nonantula may also have taken place shortly after Sorbara, as noted above.

Benzo of Alba, p. 90: "Monachi et mulierulae cogunt in fugam praesules".

See Donizo, II.3, II. 333-7 and Simeoni’s note to II. 332 and 335.

In April of 1085 pro-reformers in Germany had held a synod at Quedlinberg, defending Gregory and his claims of Roman primacy (Bernold, p. 442, 1085). Imperialists had convened their own council at Mainz in May, at which it was decided that the reformers were to be treated like heretics—see Waltram, De Unitate, ii.18 ff.; Ebehard, 1085; Ann. S. Disibodi 1085, MGH SS XVII 9; Sigebert of Gembloux, Chron. 1085; Bernold, p. 443, 1085. For a recent discussion of the rival assemblies of Quedlinberg and Mainz see Cowdrey, G VII, 238-41.

Bernold, 1086, p.444, indicates that there was a great deal of fighting: "Hoc tempore multae cedes, praecae et incendia facta sunt inter fature Henrici et fideles sancti Petri. Propter eandem etiam discordiam nondum sedes apostolica legitimum pastorem habere putuit."


See for example Hugh of Lyon’s letter to Matilda which is preserved in Hugh of Flavigny, Chronicone, MGH SS VIII, 466-8. Hugh was himself censured by the council of Piacenza in 1095 (Bernold, 1095, 462), perhaps for such outspoken criticism.


The attack is described in detail by the Chronicle of Monte Cassino (p. 750 c. 69), and this account is confirmed by Bernold (a. 1087, p. 446): "Guibertus vero heresiarcha non magis ab incepta perversitate caessavit, immo se apud Sanctam Mariam ad Martires, quam Rotundam dicunt, incastellavit.". On events in Rome and environs see Cowdrey, The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Monte Cassino, the Papacy and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early

Bernold, 1088, 44: “Guibertus autem heresiacum nondum ab invasione sedis apostolicae...”

Bernold 447.


Although, as Duff (189) points out, Victor and Matilda probably also had the aid of the Pierleoni.

Donizo does not mention the expedition, but then again he ignores almost all of Matilda’s journeys to Rome, for reasons which have long puzzled historians.

Otto had been a monk at Cluny (c. 1070) and had acted as a travelling Gregorian legate in France and Germany from 1082-5. Henry had seized him when he had attempted to attend the November synod in Rome in 1083, but he had been released (Codex Vat. A, in Watterich, I p. 340). Otto had also presided over the synod at Quedlinburg in April, 1085 (on this synod and the conference of Gerstungen see Walram, de Unitate, MGH Libelli ii 239 c. 22; Bernold, 442-3, 1085)


Donizo I.3 p. 386 l. 330: Curoresse currunt ad eamdem crebrisius huius... See also Simeoni’s note to ll 324-32.

Thus one finds Wibert, while holding a synod in St. Peter’s in 1089, bowing to popular pressure and passing a decree against clerical incontinence: “Quia murmur populi adversus incontinentiam clericorum passim crescit ac dilatatut, utile visum fuit, ut ea, quae debetis, diligentia ministros altaris secundum statuta canonum vivere.” (Decretum Wiberti, MGH Libelli de Lite I, p. 626).

Bernold, 450, a.1089.

Documents have come to light which call for a revision of Overmann’s dating, pushing back the marriage to 1088 -- see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, Capitolo IV, esp. pp. 146 ff.

“Qui [the excommunicates] statim maritum eius impetere voluerunt; set cum ei resistiere non possent, treuvas ab eo usque in pascha per interventum coniugis eius impetraverunt.” --Bernold, 449, a. 1089. Cf. the Historia Welforum Weingartenis, in Monumenta Welforum antiqui, MGH SRG 43 (1869), pp. 23 (which notes that Welf V “Accipit autem Mathildam, nobilissimi ac ditissimi Italici marchionis Bonefacii filiam, in uxorem, feminam virilis animi, que ad instar fortissimi principis totam terram illum suo dominio subiuagavit. Quam tamen postea, nescio quo interveniente divorcio, repudiavit.”) and Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 150).

“Henricus rex dictus multum de praedicto coniugio tristatur; qui iterum in saxoniam cum expeditione profectus, sine honore reverti compleruit.” --Bernold, 449, a. 1089.

“Welfo dux italiae multa incendia et depraedationes a heinrico rege hoc in anno Longobardium ingresso patitur; sed adhortatu dominae Mathildis suae karissimae coniugis eiidem Henricro resistere, et in fidelitate sancti petri persistere viriliter contendit.” --Bernold, 450, a. 1090. Bernold also states that a great hunger afflicted “many areas”, “although no great sterility of the earth preceeded it”, which may indicate that Henry’s pillaging had had a considerable effect.

On Mantua’s defences and layout see the article by Vito Fumagalli, “Mantova al tempo di Matilde di Canossa”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e le lotta.

Donizo’s lengthy account of Henry’s invasion of Italy and the siege is contained in book II, chapter 4.

Overmann, 45g.


Although it should be noted, on the other hand, that grievances over rights and property between the counts of Tuscany and the citizens of Mantua were longstanding—see A. Castagnetti, “I cittadini-arimanni di Mantova (1014-1159), in Sant’Anselmo, 169-93 (and esp. 176).”

Simeoni, note to l. 458, states that Ripalta is to the West of Mantua on the Mincio; but Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 311) places Ripalta “a few kilometres south of Reggio”, and also makes reference to Fernando Fabbri, “Il Possesso di Ripalta nel Meioevo e la Vendetta dei Palude contro la Chiessa”, in Pecatore Reggiano 1933. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 45g) places it “on the Po”. Giuseppe Sissa (“L’azione della contessa matilde in mantova e nel suo contato
The Struggle against Henry IV


172 “Tunc Ripalta quidem, menses hos traditur inter” —Donizo, I. 466. In a document (St. 2904) issued there on June 26, Henry took the see and city of Padua into his protection

173 “Traditut et turnis Gundernula, regis alcumus” —Donizo, I. 467. A note (p. 389) attributed to Muratori in the MGH’s version of the Vita identifies “Gubemula” as “Governulo”, located where the Mincius river joins the Po.

174 Simeoni, note to chapter 5 on p. 72. The rebellion also helps to explain Donizo’s preoccupation with the “treachery” of Mantua, to which he devotes an entire chapter (II.5).

On Donizo’s tendency to confuse the timing of events see Overmann (Reg. Mat. 45f and 48e) and Simeoni’s note to c. 9 (p. 81).

175 Bernold, 450, a. 1090 (quoted above); Sigebert, Chronica, MGH SS VI, p. 366, a. 1090: “Henricus imperator ad debellandos adversantes sibi Italiam repetit.”; a. 1091: “Henricus imperator in Italia castella et mitiones adversantium sibi expugnatur, Mantua quoque obsidet et capit.”; Annales Augustani, MGH SS III, p. 133, a. 1090: “Pace nondum effecta, adversariis ecclesiasticis civilibusque rapinis incumbentibus, imperator in Itali cum exercitu proficiscitur, a terrae debellandos adversantium expugnat, Mantua quoque obsidet et capit.”; Annales Augustani, MGH SS III, p. 133, a. 1091: “Mantuan, longa obsidione coacti, emisso ducis Welfili urbem tradunt obсидem.” The Annales go on to say that the emperor had a colloquium with the optimates of the realm regarding a peace settlement, but that it had no effect and thus the killing, burning and raping continued.

176 In lamenting the “treachery” of the city Donizo alleges that Matilda would have been able to provide it with aid had it prolonged its resistance: “Si servare fidem voluisse tu Comitissae Mantua, iam dicta tibi supra dante Mathilda Auxilium, denis non solum, sed duodenis Annis te posses retinere, timens nichil hostes;” (Donizo, II. 508-11)

177 “Sed dum rex inrat crudelis in urbem./ Evaser quidem proceres dominae Comitissae,/ Navibus extracti propriis cum rebus et armis.” —Donizo, II. 480-2. Simeoni (note to l. 481) suggests Welf himself may also have remained until the end of the siege.

178 Donizo, II. 552-3. One also finds Ubald listed in a document issued by Matilda at Carpintera on September 5 — Overmann, Reg. Mat. 48.


180 Ghirardini, Storia Critica, p. 263 even goes so far as to call it capital of her State— “in the medieval sense”.

181 On the disputed identification and location of Manerva, see Simeoni’s note to l. 559. It appears to be Manerva on Lake Garda in the county of Brescia. Manerva was defended by the count of the contado of Parma, a certain Ubert, who had taken part in the defense of Mantua and had fled to the castle of Manerva when the city fell. There, according to Fabbri (“Le famiglie Reggiane e Parmensi che hanno in comune l’origine con la Contessa Matilda”, in SM I, p. 43), he was besieged by the king and forced to surrender; leaving with honour, in thanks he donated rights of pasture and other rights in his corte to the monks of S. Benedetto (who had served in the church of S. Vito di Medola), as recorded in a document of May 30, 1094 (Torelli, Regesto Mant. 108, 112, 113, 120). Matilda’s victory at MonteBello in 1092, combined with her and Welf’s subsequent alliance with the Lombard cities, allowed Ubert to return to Parma, where in a document from June 29, 1093 he resumed his title of count of the county of Parma (comitis istius parmensis comitatus” — Drei, 156).

182 For the identification of Donizo’s “Plathaena” see the note to l. 555 in Simeoni’s edition.

183 “Mores atque vias illius sepius ipsa/ Reperiebat ita; quod semper quo malus ibat/ Noverat, athletas et quantos ipse tenebat.” —Donizo, II. 566-9:

184 Alternately, the line could be translated as Matilda ordering her troops to attack Henry only if they suprised him in his camp; either way, it was the countess who issued the order.

185 “Proditor e Manso fuit Hugo nobilis alvo, Hanc contra morem sed fecit priditionem; Nam proba nobilitas non turpe scelus patrat unquam.” —Donizo, II. 586-8. Muratori and Simeoni (note to l. 586) identify him as Hugh of Maine, son of Albert Azzo II of Este.
"Plures evadunt, fugiunt per devia saltus" – Donizo, 584.

Donizo, 583: "A turba regis miles capitur, sed in hermis" (see also Simeoni’s note to this line); II. 589-90: "Tandem collecti, remeaventur retro, mesti/ De sociis captis parvis pariter quoque magnis". Simeoni (note to line 591) observes that in January of 1115 Manfred’s son, Hugo, was given a castle and other holdings by Matilda for his faithful service in war and peace. I discuss the document briefly in chapter 4.

Bernold (450-1, a. 1090) notes that in this year the pope lost control of the Turris Crescentii, adding with strained confidence that Urban could easily have quelled the rebellion with an army if it had not been against his nature to use violence. On pp. 453 (a. 1092) and 455 (a. 1093) he records that the Pope celebrated the Christmases of 1091 and 1092 outside the walls of Rome because Wibert had fortified himself in the city, and Urban would not have been able to enter the city without fighting (abque armata manu).

Bernold, pp. 452 and 453, notes that in 1091 and 1092 Welf’s father, Welf IV, the Duke of Bavaria, had sought reconciliation with Henry (probably because of the devastation his lands were suffering). Welf, however, refused Henry’s offer to restore his holdings in return for recognition of Wibert as pope, although other German princes were reconciled to Henry at this time. Bernold had also earlier noted (p. 450) that in 1090 it was Matilda herself who convinced Welf the younger to continue resisting despite the emperor’s campaign of devastation against him. As we shall see below, Henry’s efforts were eventually to be successful in ending the Matilda-Welf alliance.

Donizo. 600 ff. Bernold (453, a.1092) writes that Henry, now delaying in Lombardy for two years, did not cease to devastate Welf’s lands or to compel him and Matilda to depart from fidelity to Peter and adhere to him; but this was in vain, since the duke manfully resisted.

For the various attempts to locate these places see: Simeoni (note to II. 607); Overmann (Reg. Mat. 47f and sources cited therein); Lino Lionello Ghirardini, "Il convegno di Carpineti (1092) e la sua decisiva importanza nella lotta per le investiture", in SM II, pp. 102 nn. 13-15. For the palaeographical problems regarding the passage about the capture of Monte Alfredo, see Simeoni (note to I. 607) and the MGH version of the Vita Mathildis [ed. L. Bethmann, MGH SS 12 (1856): 348-409, note to line 607]. Despite these difficulties of palaeography and geography, it is nevertheless clear from this passage and Donizo’s subsequent description of the siege of Montevigo that Henry was attacking Matilda’s territories and that she was urging her troops to resist.

The siege apparently began in August.

L. L. Ghirardini ("Il Convegno", in SM II, p. 102 n. 15) places it near Vignola on the right bank of the Panaro river.

Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 264-5.

"aut telis aut obсидione" – Donizo, I. 618.

"Ingressum sed ei, nec egressum tollere quivit; Presidium monte confert huic contio fortis, Cuspide quae regem stimulare solebat inhertem." – Donizo, I. 619-21. See also Simeoni’s notes to these lines.

On September 5 one finds her at Carpinita, where she made a donation to the abbot of Polirone; the document is reprinted in Fiorentini, II. 141-2.

Donizo. II. 622-4. On August 9 he issued a bull at "Mons bello" – Jaffe, R. P. R. 4009.

Carpineta was an imposing fortress about 20 kilometres south-east of Canossa in the valley of the Secchia. It commanded the road leading from Modena and Reggio to Lucca. For Donizo’s account of Henry’s offer and Matilda’s deliberations see Donizo, II. 625 ff. For a full discussion of the council see L. L. Ghirardini, "Il Convegno di Carpineti e sua Decisiva Importanza nella Lotta per le Investiture", in Studi Matildici II (Modena, 1970)

Donizo. II. 643-5 (and see Simeoni’s note to I. 643). Note that Bishop Erbert of Reggio appears, like so many others, to have taken refuge in Matilda’s Appennine fortresses at this time. He is present in a document issued at Carpinita on September 5 which mentions other refugees like Ubald of Mantua (Fiorentini, II. 141-2).

Donizo (I. 664) calls it a “machina”, which Simeoni (note to I. 664) reads as a wooden siege-tower; given the natural defenses of the castle it may be preferable to read it as a catapult, ballista or even an early trebuchet.

Donizo, II. 665-7.

Here I follow the interpretation of Muratori that Donizo’s “Emilium” indicates Reggio Emilia, not the Via Aemilia—see the note to I. 672 in Simeoni’s edition of the Vita.

..."retro reditii Cavilianum..." – Donizo, I. 675. Ghirardini (“Il convegno di Carpineti (1092) e la sua decisiva importanza nella lotta per le investiture”, p. 129 n. 57) notes that Cavilianum is either modern S. Polo d’Enza, on
the right bank of the river Enza, in Caviano, or Ciano d’Enza, also on the right bank of the river, 4 km from S. Polo and a bit closer to Canossa.

207 On the castle’s formidable defenses see Tonino Aceto, “L’Apparato difensivo di canossa”, in SM III.

208 These comprised the famous “Quattro Castelli”, discussed by Ghirardini (Madonna, note 21) and Fabbi [Le Quattro Castelli (Reggio, 1960)].

209 On their movements see Donizo, 692-6 and Simeoni’s note to ll. 680 ff.

210 Ghirardini (Storia Critica, p. 152 n. 8) discusses the possibility that Welf was in charge of Canossa garrison.

211 Water probably would not have been a major problem, given the relatively numerous rivers in the area.

212 Cited in Ghirardini, Madonna, p. 46 and note 42.

213 Strickland, 208, 224.

214 On this point I am in agreement with Ghirardini’s supposition that Henry left many troops behind in order to reach Canossa quickly.

215 Ghirardini, Madonna, 47-8.

216 “Rex henricus fecit festum Paschae in Castro Nonantulae, et obsedit Montebellium.” --Chron. Mutinense in Muratori RIS (old series, XV.555. a. MXCIII); “Henricus quoque, imperator ipsius in Longobardia iam biennio morabatur, ibique circumquaque terram Welfonis Italici ducis praedo ferro et incendio devastare non cessavit, ut eundem ducem et prudentissimam eius uxorem a fidelitate sancti petri discedere, sibique adherere compelleret; set frustra. Nam dux in sua sententia persistit, ipsique satis viriliter resistit.” --Bernold, 453, a.1092; “Ipse vero Guibertus eo tempore cum imperatore suo Henrico Longobardiae morabatur, et quaecid potuit cum ipso contra ducem Welfonom et eius uxorem Mathildam, sancti petri filiam, machinabatur.” --Bernold, 455, 1093:

217 Ghirardini, Madonna, 38; On Donizo in general see Ghirardini’s La Voce Immortale di Canossa: Studio Critico sul Cellebre Monaco Poeta Donizone (Modena: Aeds Muratoriana, 1987).

218 Simeoni, note to ll. 680 ff. We may also note that it would have been much easier for Henry, controlling the Via Emilia, to move west to Canossa than Matilda, who would have had to cross the Modenesian mountains and the River Secchia.

219 Donizo, ll. 703-17, esp. l. 7713: “Ob nebulam grandem cum nullus videret arcem...”.

220 Duff, 210-2; Ghirardini, Madonna della battaglia; Eads (178) also speaks of a “pincer”, and although never explicitly stating that Matilda led one arm of it she strongly implies this.

221 See Simeoni, note to ll. 680 ff.

222 This monument, Ghirardini alleges (Madonna della battaglia), was constructed on the site where Matilda’s forces issued out to attack Henry’s army from the rear and seize the imperial standard; but he acknowledges (p. 48) that this his argument relies on a “historical” leap of faith.

223 Ghirardini, Madonna della battaglia, pp. 37 and 41.

224 Ghirardini (Madonna 43-4) discusses various historians’ positions on this issue and argues that a sortie was made, but even he admits that Donizo never explicitly says this. Ghirardini’s argument rests heavily on his assertion that the imperial banner must have been captured in an open battle. It seems to me, however, that Donizo’s statement (ll. 708-9) that when the imperial standard-bearer fell, "...currit quidamve pedester/ Accipiens hastam, vexillum tollit ad astra.", is more congruent with the idea that the banner was captured in the course of the assault on Canossa—-with a lone footman or a small sortie rushing out through the fog to seize the standard and bear it back to the fortress— than in a counterattack in the open field, where an infantryman would likely be easily ridden down and caught by imperialist cavalry.

225 Professor David Townsend, personal discussion, September 8, 2000.

226 This seems to be how Ghirardini (Madonna, pp. 40 and 43-4), for example, reads the line about the tubae.

227 Even Ghirardini (Madonna, 45) admits that Donizo’s account seems to indicate that Matilda’s pursuit of the Henrician army did not begin until the day after the battle.

228 Simeoni, note to ll. 680 ff. In “Il convegno di Carpineti (1092) e la sua decisiva importanza nella lotta per le investiture” (SM II p. 130), Ghirardini also concedes that political motives (her vassals’ waning support for war) may have led Matilda to attempt to avoid being besieged in Canossa, and that military motives (the desire to leave room for maneuver on the plain of the Padano) may also have played a role. He still, however, seems to stand by the theory of the pincer which he defended in the earlier article Madonna della battaglia.

229 Donizo later writes (ll. 800-1) that Matilda frequently set traps for Henry, into which he fell even when he thought he was being cautious.
On 1. 723 Donizō states that the siege of Canossa occurred in October.

Simeoni (note to l. 1260 and to 1. 1269) argues that Mantua remained in rebellion from 1091 until 1114.

Thus one finds, for example, count Ubert of the county of Parma returning to this area and resuming the title of count of the contado—see note above.

Bernold, 456, a. 1093. Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 267) feels that the alliance was probably Urban’s doing, although he acknowledges Matilda probably had a hand in it. We may note that Cremona, Piacenza and Milan had all been centres of Patarene activity, which must also have facilitated the alliance.

"Transitus etiam Alpium in Longobardiam quidam obtinuerunt, ut fautores Heinrici ad ipsum non possent proficisci.

Pervenire..."Goslar on 12 Feb. 1074. Also his chapter 12, on "Arduino Da Palude, capitano moratus "Guibertus Matilda" noted, the evidence that Arduino...

1 solidiQing Contessa Maltide's "grand...solidiQing Matilda's extensive holdings, which included the duchy of Turin, the Matildine camp.

Abstulit argenta;...Pavia.

W Matilda’s Henry ‘largis...documents from June 9, 1109, at S. Caesarii (Muratori, III.735).

"Se [Conrad] Dominae largis Mathildis subidit alis"—Donizō, l. 848. Cf. Bernold’s statement (461, a. 1095) that Henry was deprived of nearly all royal dignity, and that Conrad had the power over his father’s army in Lombardy.

In addition to the troops of Conrad’s own household, some of the lords of Northern Italy now swung over to the Matildine camp. Thus, for example, Fabbi ("Le famiglie Reggiane e Parmensi che hanno in comune l’origine con la Contessa Matilde", in SM I, p. 42) notes that Hugo, who had assisted at the placitum of Henry IV in Parma in December of 1081, is found in one of Conrad’s diplomas from 1097 (Muratori, L. 275; Drei 137) and in one of Matilda’s documents from June 9, 1109, at S. Caesarii (Muratori, III.735).

"Se [Conrad] Dominae largis Mathildis subidit alis"—Donizō, l. 848. Cf. Bernold’s statement (461, a. 1095) that Henry was deprived of nearly all royal dignity, and that Conrad had the power over his father’s army in Lombardy.
Donizo, II.8, ll. 743-50. According to him, Adelaide was freed without violence. This passage is also notable for its depiction of Matilda as a new Deborah and as Jael—comparisons I will discuss more fully in chapters 5 and 6.

Overmann, Reg. Mat. 48g and e; Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 199 ff.

For a list of the sources on this see Overmann, Reg. Mat. 48g.

Annales Stadenses, MGH XVI a. 1093 pp. 316-7. On the various reasons given in the sources for Praxedis' flight, see Simeoni (note to c. 8, pp. 79-80) and Bernold (pp. 457-458, a. 1094 and p. 462 a. 1095), who alleges that she publicly discussed Henry's perversions at the Councils of Constance and Piacenza.

For secondary works see Overmann (Reg. Mat. 49a). For the debate about the dating of the siege see Simeoni (note to c. 9, p. 81).

Donizo uses the term 'vallavit' (l. 780), makes a reference to the Assyrians who "Samariam circundederant" (l. 788), and notes that the defenders were anxious about being resupplied (l. 796-7: Castrum Nogarae comitissam gliscit amare, Mane recepit eam, vehementer, ut esuriebat").

"Hoc discunt aures Mathildis"—Donizo, 781.

If not the city as well—see Simeoni, note to l. 782. Simeoni later argues (note to ll. 779) that, when Donizo uses the terms "Veronenses" and "Motinenses", he undoubtedly means to indicate the feudal exercitus of Henry and Matilda, respectively.

Duff strangely ignores Matilda's personal involvement on this campaign when she states (p. 219) that Matilda "despatched" a force of Modenese who forced Henry to retreat.

I have already noted how the castle was blockaded, and Donizo's line 797, that Nogara received her "vehementer, ut esuriebat", may indicate that the castle was running short of supplies, although it may just be Donizo's typically enigmatic way of saying that the garrison was welcome to see her.


Storia Critica, 315, referring to the period after Volta.
Matilda’s later campaigns have not garnered as much attention as have her operations against Henry. This is truly unfortunate, since the records of her later campaigns are often substantially more informative than those of her war against Henry. The later records reveal to us a countess who was no longer on the defensive, who was more confident and experienced, who was much more willing to lead her troops personally on offensive expeditions. The neglect that historians have shown for these campaigns is partly the result of their interest in the two major conflicts of this period, the First Crusade and the continuation of the Investiture Controversy, in which Matilda played relatively minor roles. Although she escorted the First Crusaders to Rome in 1096, she did not follow them to the East (for reasons that I discuss below). In the years following Henry IV’s retreat in 1097, Matilda gradually became less and less vital to the reforming cause, and she was progressively less active in its defense after the death of Henry IV in 1106 and her rapprochement with the new emperor Henry V in 1110/1. The countess did make some attempts to protect reforming popes and bishops in the last fifteen years of her life, but her military endeavours were concentrated on establishing or enforcing her authority over the turbulent cities of the North (which were then straining at the yoke of ducal rule). Operations of this sort required the threat and the organization of military force, although Matilda’s reputation for generalship was now so firmly established that her opponents sometimes capitulated before she had to resort to its application as well (as was the case with other successful male commanders of the time). In these latter years, Matilda appears to have been better prepared than ever before to meet her enemies in the field, especially since she no longer opposed large imperial armies. She also asserted her power and independence in other ways, such as attending councils, influencing episcopal elections and rejecting a husband who had outlived his usefulness. While her actions did draw some criticism, Matilda was by now far too powerful to be much affected by it, especially when she could support a circle of propagandists to defend her activities and sing her praises.

Until at least Henry’s final departure from Italy in 1097, however, Matilda remained the cornerstone of the reformers’ defenses and worked closely with Pope Urban to ensure that Henry
would not rebound from his humiliating defeats. Possibly at Matilda’s request\(^3\), Pope Urban, in the course of his slow journey towards France in 1095, stopped at Piacenza for a council. The council, which began on March 1st, 1095\(^4\), reiterated the decrees against simony, lay investiture and nicolaism and discussed the matter of Praxedis’ separation from the emperor. It also functioned as a council of war for the leaders of reform. Urban intervened to have Arnulf III established in the Archbishopric of Milan (Cowdrey, “Papacy, Patarenes and Milan”, 46) and stayed in the vicinity well after the formal council was over in order to confer with Matilda on other matters of strategical concern (such as the maintenance of Conrad’s rebellion). Although somewhat vague as to specific chronology, several sources tell us that it was around this time that Matilda and Urban urged Conrad to marry the daughter of Roger of Sicily\(^5\) in order to cement a powerful alliance between reform’s lay allies in the North and South.

Another reforming enterprise that received both Urban and Matilda’s attentions at this time was the First Crusade. In November of 1096, with Urban having proclaimed the Crusade in France and returned to Italy, the pope and Matilda met the North French crusaders at Lucca and accompanied them on to Rome. With Matilda’s strength growing in the North, the situation in Rome had gradually improved for the Reformers. Wibert, temporarily expelled from the city in 1089, had returned with the help of his Roman allies in 1091 (Bernold, 450-1). Wibert’s forces had prevented Urban from establishing himself there and forced him to celebrate the Christmases of 1091 and 1092 outside the walls (as noted in chapter 2). Wibert had left Rome in 1092, however, to take part in Henry’s disastrous offensive against Matilda, and, in the years following the aforesaid reversal of imperial fortunes in Lombardy, Wibert’s hold on Rome had gradually loosened. While the statements by Bernold— to the effect that Urban would easily have been able to defeat his enemies in the city had he not wanted to make his case through mildness\(^6\)— may be exaggerated, the fact that the pope had been able to enter Rome peacefully in November 1093 clearly indicates the growing strength of his position there.\(^7\) The Wibertines continued to hold St. Angelo and to deny passage over the Tiber bridge to their enemies (Bernold 458, 1094); but Urban, protected by Pierleone and by the *Turris Cartularia* of the Frangipani (Bernold, 458, 1094), had been able to celebrate Christmas within the walls and even to buy back the Lateran from Wibert’s governor in 1094.\(^8\) With Matilda and the Crusaders’ help, Urban once more entered the city in 1096 and strengthened his hold over most of it.\(^9\) It seems unlikely, however,
that Matilda was involved in any fighting at this time, as the Wibertines do not appear to have been strong enough to mount any major opposition.

Although Matilda appears to have attended the pope’s Lateran synod in January of 1097 (Reg. Mat. 50c), she did not accompany the Northern French army any further than Rome, which raises the question of why she did not take part in the Crusade. Her lack of participation may seem rather odd, given her involvement in Gregory’s preparations for a similar enterprise two decades earlier. Granted, Matilda was now some 50 years of age, but as we shall see she was still quite fit and certainly capable of leading an offensive expedition. Some historians have argued that she felt some animosity towards Godfrey of Bouillon, who is alleged to have been given some of the possessions in Lorraine which she had forfeited in rebellion against the emperor, but the best explanation seems to be that, as with the Crusade in 1074, it was the situation in Italy which prevented her from going to the East. Henry, although much diminished, was still in Italy at this time, and Wibert was still contesting Urban’s papacy. More importantly, Matilda’s alliance with the Welfs, which had bottled Henry up in Verona and prevented him from mounting major expeditions, was collapsing just as the First Crusade was getting underway.

Matilda and Welf’s marriage of convenience had been plagued by serious problems almost from its inception. The two finally separated sometime between the Council of Piacenza in 1095 and Henry’s departure from Italy in 1097. Duff suggests (pp. 216-7) that the reason for the breakup was that “Guelf arrogated to himself the supreme place in the government”, citing in support of her theory the document (discussed in chapter 2) that the couple issued at Mantua on June 27 1090. This document begins "In nomine sancte et individue Trinitatis. Guelfo Dei gracia Dux, et Marchio, Matilda Dei gratia si quid est". To be sure, Matilda, who was in her mid-forties and had exercised sole rulership of her dominions for over ten years by the time she married Welf, never seems to have had much enthusiasm for sharing her power with a 16 year-old-boy; but the evidence Duff relies upon in this case is spurious. “Dei Gratia si quid est” does not indicate that she was being shut out of power by Welf; on the contrary, the phrase was Matilda’s standard epithet for herself-- adopted systematically after 1080—that in fact constituted an assertion of her own autonomy vis-à-vis imperial authority and that was used by several of her successors.

If it cannot be proven that Welf sought to dominate his relationship with Matilda, evidence of tension between the spouses is not hard to find. For one, there were rampant rumours
of sexual dysfunction, although the political agendas of the various authors make it difficult to separate fact from fiction on this issue.\textsuperscript{16} Their marriage was certainly in trouble by 1095, when Welf's father, Welf IV of Bavaria, made an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the two (Bernold, 461, 1095). Angered by Matilda's repudiation of Welf the Younger and her denial of his claim to her vast inheritance, Welf the Elder turned to the emperor for aid (Bernold 1095, 461). The negotiations eventually accomplished through diplomacy what Henry's armies had failed to achieve through force. The Welfs were ultimately welcomed back into the imperialist camp\textsuperscript{17}, and, with the mountain passes reopened, Henry was at last able to leave Italy safely in 1097.

Although Henry's expedition to Italy could in some sense be seen as successful—Matilda and Welf had, after all, eventually been separated—it was Matilda who clearly emerged the stronger. In the pro-reforming sources Matilda is rightly given much of the credit for forcing the emperor to retreat:

\begin{quote}
Nam ipsa pene sola cum suis contra Heinricum et heiresiam Wibertum complicesque eorum iam septennio prudentissime pugnavit, tandemque Henricum de Longobardia satis viriliter fugavit; et ipsa recuperatis suis bonis Deo et sancto Petro gratias defere non destitit.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Indeed, Matilda had vigorously defended her lands, won several victories, captured an imperial banner, killed one of Henry's sons and helped (if not induced) his wife and legitimate heir to defect. Perhaps most significantly of all, Henry was never able to challenge her in Italy again.

This is not to say that Matilda's career subsequent to Henry's departure was uneventful. Having separated herself from Welf and gained a great deal of prestige and military experience, Matilda confidently exercised her ducal power and intervened forcefully in a number of later conflicts. In the fall of 1097 she played a role in yet another violent dispute over the archbishopric of Milan (Overmann, Reg. Mat. 50d and e). The death of the previous Archbishop Arnulf III on September 24 1097 had exacerbated a schism in the ranks of those with reforming sympathies. The more radical group, alarmed at the concessions which Urban had made in order to bring former imperialists like Archbishop Anselm III (r. 1086-93) into the reforming camp, was headed by Liutprand, a former ecclesiastical aide of the Patarene leader Erlembald. When Arnulf III died, Liutprand's party chose Landulf of Baggio; but their election was contested by the bishop-elect of Brescia, Armanus, an agent of Countess Matilda. According to the account of the historian Landulf of St. Paul (the nephew and apologist of the radical reformer Liutprand, not
to be confused with Landulf of Baggio), a violent altercation ensued. Armanus then engineered another election, at which Anselm de Buis was chosen as Anselm IV. Landulf of St. Paul records that the new archbishop received his pallium from Urban's legate and his crosier from Matilda herself: "Virge quoque pastorali per munus comitissae Mathildis adhesit; stollam autem per legatum domini Urbani pape sibi delatam, induit". The extent of Matilda's involvement in whatever fighting may have occurred, however, remains uncertain, and Landulf's account in particular has been called into question.

With Matilda watching Wibert in Lombardy, Urban was free to turn his attentions to Rome. He gained ground in areas outside the city and bought control of S. Angelo on August 23, 1098 (Bernold, a. 1098–9). The pope's death on July 29, 1099 (Bernald, 1099)--two weeks after the Crusaders had taken Jerusalem—put a temporary halt to the Reformers' advances. Cardinal Rainerius of San Clemente was soon elected as Paschal II, however, and Donizo (II. 878–81) tells us that letters frequently passed between the new pope and Matilda. Sometime before May of 1101, Matilda received from Paschal as her new advisor Cardinal Bernard, abbot of Vallombrosa, papal legate and vicar in Lombardy (Donizo, II.14; Overmann, Reg. Mat. 67a). Bernard helped to coordinate the reform movement and put down disturbances in Lombardy (Simeoni, note to l. 948). After the election of Pascal, Wibert, with his influence in Rome evaporating, came to Sutri (then controlled by his nephew Otto) and stirred up Roman opposition to the reforming pope. But without an imperial army, and with a strong pope firmly entrenched in the city, Wibert could make little headway; he soon fled to Civita Castellana, where he passed away on September 8 of 1100. Although two antipopes were elected in succession, they posed no real challenge to Pascal's rule.

With the situation in Rome and Lombardy stabilizing, Matilda could turn her attention to internal affairs. Although Matilda had granted some sort of rights and powers over her lands to the Roman church in 1077, the dissolution of her marriage with Welf nevertheless left her searching for an heir. Before 12 November 1099, she adopted a noble Florentine named Guido Guerra, but he seems to have fallen out of favour and never inherited her lands. Matilda's quarrel with Conrad, and the latter's death in Florence on July 27, 1101, eliminated yet another potential candidate. Rumors circulated that Matilda had had him poisoned, although historians sympathetic to Matilda have generally discounted them. In 1102, perhaps despairing
for an heir, she renewed her donation to the Church. Despite such measures, her vast inheritance would remain a bone of contention for decades after her death.

With the war against Henry all but over and Wibert dead, Matilda sought to strengthen her hold over her vast dominions. In 1101, Ferrara, for some time restless under the weight of her lordship, rebelled, and Matilda conducted a campaign to force its submission. Donizo (Il. 929 ff.) is again the only source to give details about the expedition, although it is briefly mentioned in a number of later chronicles that may have relied on Donizo’s account. Donizo states that Ferrara rebelled and was besieged in the autumn of 1101. Matilda, he continues, led an army comprised of contingents from throughout the northern half of Italy, including Rome, Tuscany, Lombardy, Venice and even Ravenna. With the city invested and river traffic cut off by the ships of Matilda’s allies, the citizens decided to sue for peace.

This is an excellent example of Matilda’s exercise of military command. Donizo clearly states that Matilda led the expedition:

Contra quam [Ferrara] gentes numero sine duxit et enses,  
Tuscos, Romanos, Longobardos galeatos,  
Et Ravennates quorum sunt maxime naves. (Il. 933-5)

There is no sound reason for doubting Donizo’s account. Although Venice was certainly on the rise in this period, Matilda was the most powerful and respected leader in the army and would have been the natural choice to lead the expedition. We may also note that it would have involved considerable skill to coordinate the movements of a diverse array of troops on a combined-arms assault of a strongly-defended city.

In these years Matilda also continued to defend her reforming allies in Italy. In 1104, the papal legate Bernard attempted to preach reforming ideals in the city of Parma, long a stronghold of the antipapacy and of Lombard opposition to reform. Not surprisingly, Bernard’s words soon provoked a violent reaction. Matilda, who was then in the county of Modena, learned of the danger to Bernard and the damage done to the chapel which she herself had provided for him. She quickly collected a body of troops and made for the city (Donizo, Il.14, 957 ff.). Donizo, who is again the only major source for these events, explicitly states that Matilda issued orders to her troops and led them towards the city:

Nuncius e multo vicino, mane secundo,
He goes on to relate that when the Parmesans heard that Matilda was nearby, they quickly capitulated out of fear of the countess. At Bernard's urging, she decided not to punish the guilty citizens (Donizo, ll. 1013-22). A few chapters later in the Vita (ll. 1111-9), Donizo records that Bernard was accepted as bishop of the city and that Matilda was present when the pope consecrated him there.

For Donizo simply to have falsified such a story would have been rather difficult, given that he was writing only about a decade after these events. Most historians have accepted Donizo's general outline, albeit with some reservations. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 84a), for example, argues that Bernard's appeal for leniency is a device used by Donizo to hide the fact that Parma's gates remained barred to the countess. One must not forget, however, that Matilda probably had no real claim to lordship over the city.36 Moreover, even if Donizo did exaggerate the totality of the capitulation, other sources attest to the fact that Bernard, with Matilda's help, became the bishop of the city in 1106.37 Given the corroboration of elements of the story by other sources38, it is possible that the expedition did occur, although we cannot be absolutely certain of this.

On August 7, 1106, Henry IV died at Liège (Simeoni, note to l. 1039), having already lost the crown to his son Henry V.39 Henry V was initially conciliatory towards the papacy, and at the Council of Guastalla on the 21st and 22nd of October the pope warmly received his ambassadors. Matilda was present and firmly supported reconciliation between papacy and empire (Donizo 1089 ff.). Strategic decisions, such as one to put Bernard in seat of Parma and to remove the dioceses of Parma, Piacenza, Reggio, Modena and Bologna from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Ravenna, were also made at this time (Simeoni, note to ll. 1118-9).

The truce between pope and emperor did not mean an end to war in Matilda's domains, however. If anything, internal squabbling and city-state rivalries increased in Tuscany, where Lucca and Pisa went to war in 1105. The Pisans had an ally in Matilda's vassal Count Albert of Prato, but were opposed by the bishop of Pistoia (who claimed jurisdiction over Prato) and by the Florentines. In June of 1107, Matilda intervened against Albert, and, with the aid of the bishop and Florentine troops, she laid siege to and took the castle of Prato.40 Although Donizo
ignores these events, the siege and the war between Pisa and Lucca are briefly mentioned in later annals, and we have direct evidence of Matilda's involvement from two documents that she issued from her besieging encampment. One of these, a grant to the church of Pistoia, begins "Matilda Dei gratia si quid est. Dum essemus olim in Dei nomine in partibus Tusciae videlicet apud Pratum, atque cum nostris fidelibus in obsidione dicti castri moraremur..." while the other reads "Dum in Dei nomine, D. inclyta comitissa Mathilda ducatrix stante ea in obsidione Prati...". Interestingly, one of the witnesses of the second document was a knight named Ugo de Manfredis, whom Matilda later endowed for his faithful service in war and peace (See chapter 4). These documents are significant for at least two reasons. Firstly, they constitute Matilda's own testimony that she commanded troops in offensive expeditions. Secondly, the fact that her presence at minor sieges such as this is ignored by Donizo and other contemporary sources suggests that Matilda's participation in the many smaller engagements and skirmishes, which must have occurred but which have left no trace in the records, is similarly underreported.

The truce between the pope and the new emperor did not last long. In 1110, Henry V entered Italy with a large army. Although he had arranged to be crowned in Rome by Pascal, he aggressively reasserted royal power as he made his way southwards by seizing castles (including Nogara) and punishing those rebellious to imperial authority (Donizo, 1138-46). Donizo states (ll. 1147-8) that Milan alone resisted. Having received the emperor's messengers (both before and during Henry's passage through Lombardy), the countess initially remained near her mountain fortresses but eventually emerged to make some sort of agreement with him in November. The exact reasons for and terms of this agreement have been the object of much debate. Certainly, Matilda received imperial recognition of her lordship (which had been revoked by Henry IV in 1081) and in return allowed Henry to pass through Tuscany on his way to Rome. Donizo maintains that she stipulated that she would not side with the emperor in the event of a quarrel with the pope, but this seems to be an attempt to insulate her from later criticism. In any event, Matilda remained conspicuously neutral when relations between Henry and Pascal degenerated in Rome in February of 1111. Not even the emperor's capture of Matilda's advisor Bernard (now bishop of Parma) and her vassal Bishop Bonussenior of Reggio (Donizo, 1224-7) could provoke Matilda to action on the part of the papacy—perhaps because another of her vassals, Arduino della Palude, was soon able to get them released. Matilda personally received Henry at Bianello on May 6 1111, as the emperor, having won from Pascal...
the privilege of investing with ring and staff, was returning to Germany (Donizo, 1250 ff.). Henry remained there for three days and may even have nominated Matilda as his vicar in "Liguria".  

Matilda's neutrality in this new phase of the papal-imperial struggle has long puzzled historians. Since my focus is on Matilda's actual campaigns, I will not presume to attempt to provide any definitive answer to this much-debated problem. A few observations, however, may help to provide some context for her behaviour. Firstly, it should be noted that in the beginning Henry's voyage was by no means a hostile invasion: several messengers had passed between Henry and Pascal prior to the emperor's arrival in Italy, and negotiations continued as he entered Rome. Many believed that some sort of peace agreement was imminent. Secondly, Henry's reduction of Nogara need not be seen primarily as a declaration of war against Matilda; it was technically in the county of Verona and, as the last fortress which Henry's father had besieged before permanently departing Italy, its capture constituted a symbolic step in restoring imperial authority in the area— one of Henry's avowed aims for the campaign. As in the early days of Gregory's struggle with Henry IV, Matilda appears to have worked hard to bridge the gap between papacy and empire (e.g. Donizo, 1154 ff.); she may have hoped that by allowing Henry to restore imperial authority and to pass relatively peacefully through Tuscany, she would expedite the peace process. It is of course possible that Matilda was intimidated by the emperor's formidable army (although this does not seem to fit with what we know of Matilda's character) or simply too old (being now some 65 years of age) to countenance resistance. Alternately, she may have valued imperial recognition of her lordship or an emperor as her heir more highly than some historians sympathetic to both the countess and the reform movement would prefer to believe.

Whatever the explanation, Matilda's agreement with Henry allowed her to live out her last few years in relative harmony with the emperor. While her health was indeed failing, she did have the strength for one last campaign, which Donizo describes in some detail in chapter XVIII of his *Vita Mathildis*. He begins the chapter by praising Christ, through whose power Matilda conquered her enemies, overcame lords and counts and cities, beat back the attacks of the king and subjected the March of Tuscany to her whether it wished it or not (Donizo, ll. 1260-4). Mantua, however, had remained closed to her since its surrender to Henry IV in 1091, and even the restoration of her lordship by the new emperor Henry V had not been enough to restore its
When, in the summer of 1114, a rumour began to circulate that the ill countess had passed away, the Mantuans seized and destroyed Matilda's fortress of Rivalta (which had long been a thorn in their side because of its position upstream on the Mincio). But the rumour was false, and when Matilda, the "sustentatrix viduarum", recovered and was informed of the situation, she decided "Adest certum pereat quo Mantua tempus; Offensas diras urbs emendabit iniqua." (Donizo, ll. 1322-3). Gathering together ships and soldiers, she prepared to lay siege to the city. When the Mantuans learned of this, they decided to send ambassadors to Matilda, who was then positioned at her fortress at Bondeno di Roncore (about 20 kilometres south of Mantua, near the border of the counties of Mantua and Reggio) to sue for peace. Matilda accepted their plea with reluctance. A peace treaty was enacted at Bondeno, while Mantua opened its gates and returned to fidelity to the countess (Donizo, 1349-57).

One must, of course, be careful in accepting the uncorroborated testimony of Donizo. Given that he was recording events that happened in the previous year, however, it seems highly unlikely that he would have fabricated the entire incident. He may have put words in Matilda's mouth or exaggerated the Mantuans' fear of the countess, but there is every reason to believe that his account is accurate in its general outlines. Matilda appears to have led her troops personally, or at the very least to have coordinated movements from her nearby base of Bondeno di Roncore. Thus, even in the final year of her life (she passed away peacefully at Bondeno on July 24, 1115), Matilda exercised military command by personally coordinating a combined-arms assault on one of the foremost cities in Northern Italy.

The study of Matilda's later campaigns provides us with some of the best evidence for her participation in warfare. Although she played only a minor role in high-profile expeditions like the Crusade or Henry V's expedition to Italy, she did play a major role in a number of violent disputes in the period and she was frequently engaged in enforcing her lordship over her wide domains. We know that she mounted successful campaigns against Ferrara, Prato, Mantua and perhaps Parma as well. All of these operations were sieges, in which the use of surprise and swift movement were not quite as important as they had been against Imperialist and Wibertine field armies. As a result, we find Matilda responding to this new strategic and tactical environment by utilizing careful planning and combined-arms approaches. We should also note that in these later campaigns Matilda was now the besieger rather than the besieged. Unlike so many other female commanders, Matilda actually led offensive military expeditions.
Matilda's Later Campaigns

1 Eads, for example, ends her account of "The Campaigns of Matilda of Tuscany" after the emperor's defeat at Canossa in 1092.

2 See for example Morillo, Warfare under the Anglo-Norman Kings, 104-5 (discussing Henry I of England).

3 Overmann (Reg. Mat. 48h) bases this on Donizo’s II. 759-60: “Pericipiis, Romam dimittens, venit ad horas/ Longobardiae cum consilio Comitissae...”

4 Jaffe, R.P.R., 5531 (1417); Donizo, II.8, 757 ff.; Bernold, 461-2, a. 1095. Bernold also notes (461, a. 1095) that Urban celebrated Christmas of 1094 in Tuscany, and that it was at this time that Urban gave Daimbert of Pisa the archiepiscopal Pallium and power, which the seat of Pisa had not had before. This will be discussed more in chapter 5.

5 Simeoni (note to I. 838) notes that before Conrad’s defection Henry himself had earlier attempted to arrange the same union, although of course he was later to be considerably dismayed when a formal betrothal took place in Pisa in 1095. The actual ceremony did not occur until 1099. See Geoffrey Malaterra, De Rebus Gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratis eius, in Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, New Series, (Bologna: 1724), Vol. V, Pt. I, I, Book IV c. 23. Donizo (II. 855-9) stresses Matilda’s role in Conrad’s marriage, although Bernold’s account (463, a. 1095) does not mention Matilda at all. Cf. Ghirardini, Storia Critica, p. 205.

6 Bernold, 450-1, discussing a. 1091, 455, a. 1093, discussing Christmas of 1092; 457, a. 1094.

7 See the letter of Ivo – Ep. Iovonis, 27, in PL 162: “De ipso papa hoc tibi quia mense Novembri cum eo Romam pacifice intravi”.


9 “Urbanus autem eo anno, qui Franci primitus Iherusalem euntes per Romam transierunt, totam omnino postestatem apostolicam adeptus est, auxilio cuiusdam nobilissimae matronae, Mathildis nomine, quae in Romana patria postestate multa tunc vigebat.”—Fulcher, Historia Hierosolymitana, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913), Book I, c. V, pp. 148-9. Donizo avoids mentioning Matilda’s travels (See Simeoni, note to I. 818-9, for possible explanations for this habitual silence regarding her journeys to Rome), but a papal letter (Jaffe, 3678) explicitly states that Matilda accompanied him all the way to Rome. In a letter (Jaffe, 5678, a.k.a. Migne, PL col. 151, letter # 216) to Hugh of Lyons in 1097, Urban asks Hugh to give thanks to God that along with Matilda he (Urban) was able to come peacefully to the city and enter it most honourably. He goes on to say that "we now have the greater part of the city", and that he is now able to celebrate mass in the Lateran. Cf. Bernold (465, a. 1097) and Overmann (Reg. Mat. 50b).

10 Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 241. For relations between Matilda and Godfrey see Francesco Milani, “Note Matildiche”, in SM II: 399-408

11 As noted above, Bernold (449, a. 1089) states that she married Welf "... non tam pro incontinentia quam pro Romani pontificis obedientia, videlicet ut tanto viribus sanctae Romanae ecclesiae contra excommunicatos posset subvenir." See Overmann (Reg. Mat. 48i, 49, 49b, and his chapter on Matilda’s two marriages) and Ghirardini’s chapter “Il secondo matrimonio, ovvero la storia come romanzo” in his Storia Critica.


14 See Fiorentini, 465-6 (Mansi’s note to p. 340).

15 Our best source for much of Matilda’s life is not helpful on this issue, since Donizo, attempting to portray Matilda as an uncompromising virginal heroine, all but ignores both of her marriages. For a introduction to the various sources and their positions see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, p. 153 ff.

16 “Welefo, dux antea Noricus, qui ab imperatore iam dudum abituraverat et ob id ducatum perderat, in Gratiam eius redit ducatumque recepit” –Ekkehardi Chronicon Universale, MGH SS VI p. 208, a. 1096.

17 Bernold 465, a. 1097. We may also note the Chronicon Estense (in Muratori old series VI 93): “Haec [Matilda] a juventute sua quotidie militiam deduxit. Pro Romana pugnavit Ecclesia contra henricum regem, quem papa Gregorius, qui vulgo Eldeburcius dictur, excommuniciavit. Tamdem supradicturn Regem de Italia militando expulsit, ablata sibi coniuge Regina, cum Corrado filio Regis.”, although admittedly this chronicle was written much later.

18 Although there are some lacunae in the text, it is clear that some fighting did occur: “...et clerici et sacerdotes puginis er fugubus vehementer lacerare, virum quoque de... civibus Paganum nomine et in porta Horientali... in ipsa ecclesia, que dicitur Yemalis, presumpset occidere.” –Landulph, MGH XX, 21.

19 On the whole complicated affair see Cowdrey, “The Succession of the Archbishops of Milan in the Time of Pope Urban II”, in Popes, Monks and Crusaders. The Patarene survivors had been disturbed by Urban’s overtures of
reconciliation to Archbishops Anselm III (July 1, 1086-Dec. 4, 1093), who had been an imperialist in the early part of his reign and had been accused of Simony, and Arnulf III (Dec. 5, 1093-September 24, 1097), whose election certain Patarenes also appear to have viewed as Simoniacaal (Cowdrey, Succession, 288-91). The schism in the Patarenes had emerged in 1096, when Urban, returning from Clermont, had preached in Milan and won some support for his conciliatory policies amongst them. Luitprand's faction remained hostile to Matilda, Bishop Armanus and Archbishop Anselm IV for years to come and opposed archbishop Anselm's departure on the Crusade of 1101.

21 Note the editor has changed this from abatissae.

22 Landulf goes on to say that Anselm then ordained Armanus in Brescia, ignoring the imperial Bishop Obertus--Landulf, MGH XX p. 21; cf. Giesebrich III 694.

23 Giovanni Santini, "La contessa Matilde, lo 'studium' e Bologna 'citta aperta' dell' XI sec.", in SM II, 423. Cowdrey, on the other hand, seems to accept Landulf's version of events-- see Cowdrey, "The Succession of the Archbishops of Milan", in Popes, Monks and Crusaders, p. 288.

24 Bernold (465, a. 1098) states that Wibert remained near Ravenna and destroyed a castle near the Po during this year.


26 Donizo (ll. 886-9) writes that he "seduced" some Roman citizens and ordered them to rob the "peregrinos"--meaning either pilgrims travelling to Rome or Crusaders passing through Rome to the East. Earlier in 1099 (April 24-30), Urban had held a council at Rome and urged people to take part in the Crusade-- Bernold, a. 1099.

27 Donizo, 885-916; Simeoni, note to l. 890.

28 On the adoption see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, Capitolo VIII Il Figlio Adottivo di Matilde. In this chapter Ghirardini also suggests a connection between Matilda's adoption of Wido and her falling out with Conrad (discussed below).

29 See Ghirardini, 206 ff. Donizo (922-4) writes that the two were, however, reconciled before Conrad's death.

30 Donizo, 919-28; Overmann, 69 a; Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 207; see also Simeoni, notes to ll. 925-7 for a discussion of Donizo's confused chronology.

31 On this matter see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 207 ff.; Overmann, 69 a; and Simeoni, note to l. 925.

32 Gina Fasoli, "La realtà cittadina nei territori Canossiani", in SM III, 60-1.

33 Andreae Danduli Chronic per Extensum Descripta, in Muratori, New Series, XII 1.1, p. 224: "Ultimo ducis anno comitissa Matildis cum navigio Venetorum et ravenancium Ferrarium obscidet, et denique superatur." Chronicon Parmense, ed. Giuliano Bonazzi, in Muratori, RJS, New Series, IX p. 4: "In millesimo cij, tempore Inrici imperatoris, fuit obsessa Ferraria."; Chronicon Estense, in Muratori RJS new series XV pt. 3, p 4 : "MCJ. Tempore Henrici imperatoris tertii, civitas Ferrarie obsessa fuit a comitissa Matelda."; see Overman (Reg. Mat., 69 b) for other later sources.

34 Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 271, points out that this reveals Matilda's newfound influence in Ravenna after Wibert's death.

35 Parma had been the birthplace of Wibert and the seat of Cadalus.

36 Simeoni, note to l. 1021, and Emilio Nasalli Rocca, "Parma e la contessa Matilde" in SM I. Rocca notes that Matilda may have had some allodial goods in the county but that the counts of the late eleventh century came from a collateral branch of the Attoni, from which family Matilda was descended. It has been surmised that after SORbara Matilda nominated a rival count for the contado, named Ubert, who in 1090-1 took part in the defense of Mantua. After Matilda's victories at Monteviaggio and Canossa in 1092, he returned to the county and took up the title of count of the contado. Others, such as Affo, have argued that Matilda had no official claim over the county until her agreement with Henry V in 1110—see Rocca in SM I. Rocca, p. 61-2.


38 Cf. Overmann, Reg. Mat. 98f.

39 See the letter he wrote just before his death to Philip of France in Villemain, Histoire de Gregoire VII (Paris, 1874) v. ii p. 390 ff.

40 Overmann, Reg. Mat.103a, 104, 105.

41 On the struggles between these powers and the sources for them see Otto Hartwig, Quellen und Forschungen zur Altesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz (Marburg: N. G. Elwertsche, 1875) L93, II-6-7, 40 and 46-52 and Ughelli, It. Sac. III 317-8. For a brief introduction see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, p. 320, where he claims that Arduino "naturally" commanded Matilda's force of Lombard and Emilian cavalry.

42 Fioravanti, Mem. ist. della citta di Pistoia, doc. p. 28.

4 Ekkehard (Chronicon, MGH VI 243) records that Henry initially proposed the journey to Italy to his princes on the epiphany of the Lord (Jan. 6) of 1110 at Ratisbon. Simeoni (note to l. 1139) writes that Henry left Germany and crossed the Alps around the middle of August of the same year.

4 Ekkehard, 244. He also records that Henry crossed the Po, received the fealty of the citizens of Piacenza and granted Matilda her property, as the countess had shown her obedience to him by messengers.

4 Donizo, ll. 1135-7; 1158 ff. For other sources which confirm Donizo’s account see Overmann, Reg. Mat. 122a and 125a.

4 Simeoni, note to ll. 1163-4; Giesebrecht III 509.

4 “Sed contra petrum non promisit fore secum.” --Donizo, l. 1164.

4 Donizo (ll. 1228-32) states that Arduino got them released by reminding the emperor of his agreement with the countess. Simeoni (note to ll. 1229-30) helps to dispel the mythology (elaborated by vedriani et al.) surrounding Arduino and points out that he was not sent by Matilda to Henry after the capture of these bishops, but was on the scene already and simply managed to intervene on their behalf.

4 Donizo’s account is supported by the Chronicon Estense (Muratori, RIS old series VI 91-4), which records that in 1110 Henry entered Italy and destroyed the city of Nogara, received the fidelity of the Lombards and “cum Mathilda Comitissa Nobilissima Mutinensi pacem habuit, quae patrem ejus Henricum devicerat et firmata dicta pace; deinde transitiv Alpes. Intravit Tusciam: Ivit Lucam, et Florentiam.” By January 1111 Henry had destroyed “Aretiam” [Arezzo], then entered Rome and captured the pope. After being crowned in St. Peter’s, he returned to Lombardy, and “venit ad supradictam Comitissam mathildam apud Bibianellum. Ibi osculo pace firmata, laetatus, et locutus cum ea plurimum, die Ascensionis Domini transpadavit, atque ultra montes remeavit.” Donizo’s statement (ll. 1255): “Cui Liguris regni regimen dedit in vice regis;”, has been interpreted in different ways. Some scholars assert that this line proves that Henry made Matilda his vicar for all Italy, while others argue it simply indicates the revoking of the imperial ban on Matilda (issued at Lucca in 1081, as noted above). On Matilda’s vicerency see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, pp. 284 ff., and “Il famoso incontro di Bianello fra Matilde ed Enrico V”, in Quattro Castella nella Storia di Canossa, Atti del Convegno di Studi Matildici di Quattro Castella (Rome, 1978); Carlo Guido Mor, “IL Vicariato Italico di Matilde” in Studi Matildici II: Golinelli in I Poteri, 469-71 (who is especially useful on the difficult question of what exactly Donizo meant by “Liguria”); Mario Nobili, “L’Ideologica politica in Donizone”, in Studi matildici III, pp. 275-9 (who provides a brief, clear summary and some interesting philological arguments); Giovanni Santini, “La contessa Matilde, lo ‘studium’ e Bologna ‘citta aperta’ dell’ XI sec”, in Studi matildici II, pp. 424-7 (where he defends the thesis of Matilda’s vicariate on the basis of her actions in defense of the Church and Godfrey’s title of Patricius of Rome); Overmann, pp. 44 ff.; and Simeoni, note to ll. 1255-7.

5 Simeoni, note to l. 1173.

5 In one of Matilda’s documents (Fiorentini, II.209) we find the phrase “Dum olim in Comitatu Veronensi apud Nogariam... “. Other documents of Matilda’s suggest that she remained in control of the area until Henry V’s arrival: on December 30 1105 she issued a document at Nogara (Fiorentini, II. 214-6) and in 1108 she made a grant involving lands in the area (Fiorentini, 221-3).

5 Simeoni, note to l. 1140.

5 There appears to have been some violence done to Arezzo— Donizo, l. 1172.

5 Simeoni (note to l. 1260) notes that Donizo—in a section most likely written while Matilda was still alive—portrayed the events of this time as a victory in that Matilda was restored to royal favour and her power strengthened. Matilda seems to have valued quite highly the restoration to royal favour.

5 Golinelli, “Matilde ed Enrico V”, in I Poteri, 461-9, argues rather convincingly that the “firmum feodus” of Donizo indicates that Matilda did actually accept Henry as her heir at this time.

7 Ghirardini (Storia Critica, p. 276) lists as possible reasons for her conduct: old age or sickness; lack of faith in Pascal; lack of a spiritual director of the quality of Gregory, Anselm, or Bernard (who had taken over the see of Parma); and the lack, finally, of a true religious opposition to the Church and of an antipope of the stature of Clement III. All but the last of these have some merit to them.

7 Simeoni, note to l. 1264.

7 Here I follow Simeoni (note l. 1292), who argues that Mantua had remained in rebellion since 1091. although, as Simeoni notes, some historians (Meyer, Overmann) have asserted that it rebelled anew in 1114.

7 Donizo, 1265-73. Giuseppe Sissa, (“L’azione della contessa matilde in mantova e nel suo contado (l’Abbazia di San Benedetto Pollirone)”; in SM I, p. 151) notes, however, that after Henry V’s rapprochement with Matilda the countess at least had an ally in the city in the form of bishop Manfred.

7 Simeoni, notes to ll. 458 and 1292.

7 In using this phrase, Donizo (l. 1314) casts Matilda in the mold of the righteous warrior; this will be discussed more in chapter 6.
Donizo, ll. 1324-5: Scutatas gentes disponit et arcitenentes [archers],
Celsas ac puppes armatas, hanc super urbem.

For the identification of Bondeno see Aldo Zagni, "Bondeno di Roncore non è più un giallo". in Bollettino Storico Reggiano 52 (1982); Ghirardini, Storia Critica (n. 1 to p. 28), following Zagni, places it in the county of Mantua, near the border of Reggio. Bondeno di Roncore is not to be confused with Bondeno in the Ferrarese—Ghirardini, Storia Critica, note to p. 46.

On the signing of the treaty see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, n. 10 to p. 46. Ghirardini (n. 9 to p. 46) also argues that it is difficult to doubt that Matilda came to Mantua at this time, citing Donizo's statement that "Mathildis sacramentum minimus populusque superbus fecit in urbe sibi". Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 326) also says that Matilda's expedition against Mantua was "naturally" organized and commanded by Arduino.

Cf. Ghirardini (Storia Critica 287 n. 44), who calls Donizo's l. 1264 ("Marchia nolendo sibi paruit atque volendo") one of the most significant lines of the entire poem, as it shows that Matilda had to use force to maintain her power, especially in the cities.
CHAPTER 4
THE DIPLOMATIC SOURCES AS EVIDENCE OF MATILDA’S EXERCISE OF COMMAND

In the following section we will take a close look at the diplomatic evidence for Matilda’s involvement in warfare, although letters, narrative sources and imperial documents will also be examined where relevant. Generally speaking, it can be said that the diplomatic sources provide corroboration and a logistical context for the accounts of the poets and chroniclers. They prove that Matilda’s gender and the prohibitions of canon law did not prevent her from maintaining the feudal infrastructure of her army by receiving oaths, enfeoffing vassals, holding assemblies, etc. They also contain numerous references to Matilda providing sanctuary and military escorts (usually to reformist clergy), maintaining (and obstructing) lines of communication, settling disputes and keeping the peace, protecting monasteries and churches (usually from the lay nobility), building and garrisoning castles and making provisions for the support and strategic positioning of her forces. Although some of these tasks may appear to modern eyes to straddle the border between military and civilian functions, all of them involved either the threat or the application of armed force, as the sources themselves will confirm.

To begin with, we find several documents that indicate that Matilda often used her military resources to arrange for the protection of travellers, refugees and soldiers as they moved through or fled to the safety of her domains. Matilda provided sanctuary not only for Bonizo, Anselm of Lucca, Conrad and Praxedis but also for the abbot of S. Benedetto Polirone and the bishops of Salzburg, Mantua and Metz.¹ Thus a document issued around the time of the council of Carpineta describes how Matilda sheltered the abbot of S. Benedetto after he fled his monastery “propter persecutionem Enrici Tiranni”.²

In addition to providing refuge, Matilda guarded the paths to Rome and ensured that a steady stream of money, messengers and soldiers would reach the pope. We have already discussed above how she liquidated the treasuries of Nonantula and Canossa and managed to get the proceeds through to Gregory—no mean feat in the dark days of 1083, when hostile forces surrounded both Matilda and the pope. She also protected St. Anselm of Canterbury as he journeyed to and from Rome in 1103. In a letter addressed to Matilda, the archbishop personally thanked her for delivering him from the power of his enemies and for instructing her people to
lead him through her territory safely. He then added "...I pray God that He may reward you, protect you from all the enemies of body and soul and lead you to a blessed and eternal place of safety." That Matilda provided guidance and protection for Anselm's party is confirmed by one of Matilda's own letters and by the account of an eyewitness: "Nos ductu gloriosae Mathildis comitissae per Alpes euntes...ac... Placentinos fines deserentes, protecti gratia Dei, sani et incolumes Lugdunum usque pervenimus...". Another example of Matilda providing escorts is found in Ekkehard, who states that in 1106, when legates could not travel to Italy out of fear of emperor Henry IV, "Gebehardus tantum Constantiensis episcopus cum suis per occultiores Alpium semitas ingressus, Mathildis comitissae, alterius nimirum Deborae, presidiis, apostolcis presentatur vestigiis." Military units could also be convoyed through Matilda's domains. In a letter from Gregory to Henry, bishop of Trent, in 1076 the pope writes:


On at least one occasion it seems that Matilda and her mother played the opposite role. In April of 1074, Gregory wrote to request from Beatrice and Matilda a safe conduct for Werner of Strasbourg as he travelled to meet Erlembald and rebuked mother and daughter for some unspecified wrong they had done to Werner. The pope then added, rather diplomatically, that hidden perils should not lurk in these regions for pilgrims. In another letter to mother and daughter, Gregory again requested a safe conduct, this time for Marquis Azzo "...ne occasione vestri timoris in hac parte iustitia christianae legis detrimentum sentiat" (Reg. Greg. II.9, October 16 1074, p. 123). Clearly, the countesses controlled the roads through their lands, and after Beatrice’s death it was Matilda who was primarily responsible for protecting the crucially important lines of communication which connected Reformers in Rome to their allies in Northern Italy, Germany and beyond.

Matilda also frequently attended public assemblies, settled disputes and judged secular and ecclesiastical cases before her court. On at least one occasion, Gregory VII himself is known to have asked Beatrice and Matilda to decide a case which had come before him; the pope expressed, in one of his letters, his total confidence in their ability to bring the matter to a just conclusion. Indeed, Beatrice’s biographer Goez argues that, although other women of the age
may have held significant offices, Beatrice and Matilda were virtually the first women to hold their own regular *placita*. Other historians have argued, with some justification, that the countesses provided the judicial model for Empress Matilda, wife of Henry V and later contestant for the English throne. From the period in which Beatrice began to groom her daughter for rulership even unto the last few years of Matilda's life, the countess continued to attend councils, preside over courts and settle disputes. We have noted in the previous chapter how she was present at several Lenten synods and the Council of Piacenza, and how she herself convened at least one military assembly (that of Carpineta in 1092). Matilda's extant legal verdicts are far too numerous to detail here, but we may note that the language used in Matilda's charters displays a clear continuity with that found in her parents' diplomas. With the possible exception of the phrase "dei gratia si quid est" (which, as noted above, appears to be a sign of increased independence), the documents give no indication that Matilda's power or abilities (or Beatrice's, for that matter) were any less than that of her male ancestors and counterparts. The same words and expressions occur with regularity in documents of father, mother and daughter alike: the "dux et marchio" held court and decided on the cases, rendering judgement and imposing the *bannum* "per fustem quam in suis detinebat manibus".

Certainly, Matilda did not always render judgement by herself. She often sought the opinion of legal scholars, especially in cases of canon law. Thus Ranger (II. 1727-8) has Matilda say "Non sum docta satis, non novi iura sacrasve/ Leges, sed teneo iustitiam fidei...". As we noted above, however, this does not appear to have prevented Matilda from actually deciding ecclesiastical cases from time to time. With regard to disputes before Matilda's own court, one repeatedly finds in Matilda's documents phrases like "His auditis per consilia Judicum investivit Comitissa Matilda Abatem... de pred. possessione, et bandum posuit super eum..." (Fiorentini, II.71). This is in agreement with Pseudo-Bardo's and Ranger's statements about Anselm's guidance:

Nam cum multa haberet secularia iudicia suprascripta domina Mathilda, devota domini Petri ancilla, ipse [Anselmus] suis eam consiliis ita peragere fecit omnia, ut et evangelica praecepta et canonum instituta lemurque iura servaret, quod in humanis mentibus et ingenis raro vel nunquam invenitur. Verum ipse suo a magistro beatissimo papa Gregorio sic didicerat, Spiritus vero sanctus utrumque repleverat."
It was, of course, normal for the rulers of the day (including Boniface, Beatrice and both Godfreys) to rely on the counsel of judges and doctors of law.\textsuperscript{16} It is true that Beatrice and Matilda had a stable corps of trained, competent officials\textsuperscript{17} (in addition to maintaining the old network of minor rural judges and local functionaries\textsuperscript{18}), but ultimately it was the countesses who were responsible for rendering the judgement, imposing the "bannum" and exacting the fines.

With the exercise of judicial authority came the duty of enforcing it militarily. When Matilda was still a child, Peter Damian had urged her stepfather Godfrey to use his sword to punish the wicked and stated that the office of judge involved buckling on the sword and punishing evil-doers.\textsuperscript{19} In another letter, Damian had posed the rhetorical question of whether there could be a sweeter sacrifice than to release orphans from the violent, protect widows and restore stolen property; citing Exodus 22.18 ("You shall not allow criminals to live."), he had then gone on to praise one Marquis Hugh for laying siege to and killing some murderers.\textsuperscript{20} As we shall see in chapter 5, Bonizo of Sutri made a similar connection between rendering judgement and military obligations. Dukes and counts were widely recognised as having the duty to perform what we might somewhat anachronistically term "police" functions: punishing criminals, settling disputes, putting down civil disturbances, preventing brigandage, keeping the peace, etc. Gregory VII once even censured Abbot Hugh of Cluny for allowing Duke Hugh I of Burgundy to retire to a monastery, thereby depriving thousands of Christians of their protector.\textsuperscript{21} Granted, Matilda's lands were not a State and they did not have a regular "police" force in the modern sense of the word; nevertheless, Matilda appears have taken the obligation to keep and enforce the peace quite seriously. Consider, for example, her role in the dispute (an "altercatio", described as "non modica") which arose between certain bishops and citizens over the translation of the relics of S. Geminianus in Modena in April of 1106. Matilda was able to prevent further violence by rendering the judgement ("with God's inspiration") that both parties should await the arrival of the pope, while her "great army" ensured adherence to the verdict.\textsuperscript{22} When the pope arrived in October, oaths were exacted to prevent the violation of the body, and the translation took place with Matilda "cum magno exercitu" once again in attendance.\textsuperscript{23} This episode illustrates how closely connected the duties of meting out justice and enforcing the peace were during this period.\textsuperscript{24}
Putting an end to the more violent disputes and private wars required even harsher measures. The cautionary phrases, such as "sciat se nostram iram incurrere", which Matilda included in her documents as warnings to transgressors, were not idle threats.\textsuperscript{25} When Matilda took steps to end the fighting between the canons of S. Martin of Lucca and the house of Count Guido, she not only exacted oaths and sureties from the disputants but also ordered that the castle around which the fighting had centred be destroyed.\textsuperscript{26} Given the violence associated with cases such as that of Lucca, it is not unreasonable to assume that behind the more laconic records of Matilda’s judgements lie additional instances in which armed force enabled her to put an end to disputes and to limit the damage caused by the private warfare endemic to many areas of Europe at this time.\textsuperscript{27}

Like her parents and predecessors before her\textsuperscript{28}, Matilda also endowed and protected numerous churches and hospices for the poor and pilgrims and was advocatrix of several monasteries.\textsuperscript{29} Matilda’s patronage was usually formalized in the final clause of charters granting lands or privileges to these institutions. Thus in a donation to the hospital of St. Michael\textsuperscript{30} Matilda vows

\begin{quote}
Et insuper spondeo, atque promitto ego predicta Matilda vobis nominato Donato praebiter, et Girardo Monacho a parte ospitale suprascriptis rebus omni tempore ab omni homine defensare juxta legem dampna litis omnia substinere; quod si ad defensandum minime fuero, aut contra hanc offitionem per quodcumque vis ingenium agere, aut causare presumpsero, vel si Agentibus consentientes fuero, tunc promitto componere libras quinquaginta denariomm Lucensium, et post paenam solutam hanc paginam offersionis meae omni tempore in sua maneat firmitatem.\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

Matilda made frequent donations such as this to churches and monasteries, and extended the protection of her \textit{bannum} over their rights and property.\textsuperscript{32}

It is true that the primary goal of most of the diplomas was to protect the legal rights of the donees. The term "\textit{patrocinium}", which is sometimes used in the documents, carries the connotation of legal advocacy, and the fact that Matilda herself usually promised to pay the fine (should she break the terms of her own donation) tends to support the interpretation that the "protection" they offered was primarily of a legal character. The donations, however, were not without military implications. As we have seen, it was widely believed at the time, especially in reforming circles, that it was the duty, if not the \textit{raison d’être}, of the secular sword to protect the church from violence. We also know that Gregory VII enlisted other female secular rulers, like
Countess Adelaide of Turin, to defend monasteries from their assailants\textsuperscript{33}, and Matilda spent much of her life defending the Roman Church (or at least the reforming papacy) from Henry IV and individual churches from the local nobility. Donizo attests to the fact that Matilda restrained the aggressive acquisitiveness of the feudal magnates when he laments that when Matilda passes away the rich and powerful will despoil churches and the poor.\textsuperscript{34}

What Donizo leaves out, of course, is that Matilda herself was guilty of despoiling church property on at least one occasion--namely, the seizure of the treasury of the monastery of Nonantula.\textsuperscript{35} An imperial diploma reveals that on another occasion a certain Teuzo claimed that Matilda had "violenter et sine aliquo iure abstulisset sibi et fratribus suis quandam terram cum aliquanta silva que Castagnolum nominantur, quas sui iuris fuisset dicebat." Neither of these examples, however, does much to discredit Donizo's statement. Firstly, Teuzo's allegation was later proven false\textsuperscript{36}, although it remains significant in that it rested upon the underlying assumption that Matilda possessed the ability to seize the goods of others through force. Secondly, the seizure of Nonantula's treasury was not the result of indiscipline on the part of Matilda's soldiers or ministeriales but was rather a conscious choice on the part of Matilda to raise funds for the beleaguered pope in a moment of dire necessity. The outrage these actions provoked, even in reforming circles, appears to have convinced Matilda to refrain from making similar requisitions in the future. As noted above (chapter 2), she eventually made restitution to Nonantula\textsuperscript{37} and Canossa, and claimed that she had only acted on the order of the pope for his defense.\textsuperscript{38} Other documents show Matilda repeatedly taking action to ensure that her agents and vassals would not unjustly impose burdens on the churches and monasteries of her realm. There are a number of extant diplomas in which Matilda responded to complaints about her men\textsuperscript{39} and several in which she explicitly forbids them to exact compulsory services and the Albergaria (the burden of providing lodging for the countess and her agents and soldiers).\textsuperscript{40} These reveal that, in Tuscany as in many other areas of Europe, preventing the plundering and seizure of Church property presented rulers with a difficult test of their authority. In one document, for example, we find that two men admitted to encroaching on the property of Abbot Hugh of Serena\textsuperscript{41}, while in another Matilda's own vilicus was seen to have assaulted the possessions of the monastery of S. Benedetto Polirone.\textsuperscript{42}

In support of Donizo's lamentation, we thus have diplomatic evidence which reveals that although Matilda's vassals and ministeriales frequently sought to requisition property and
services from the inhabitants of her own and the church's domains, the countess, like some of the better rulers and commanders of the day, repeatedly took steps to prevent excessive exactions. Indeed, it can be said that Mathildine armies were, relatively speaking, quite well-disciplined. In contrast to the destruction that accompanied Guiscard's sojourn in Rome in 1084, we do not find any instances in which Matilda's forces engaged in major acts of looting or burning. Although Matilda's disciplinary measures may in part have been motivated by the fact that most of her campaigns took place within her own regions of Tuscany and Emilia, the difficulties which medieval commanders experienced in preventing looting and pillaging even when in friendly territory were considerable. If the ability to prevent such lapses is reckoned as one of the criteria by which one judges the competence of military leadership, then we must give Matilda due credit in this regard.

Many of Matilda's charters involve the transfer of castles and other fortified places, and from these it can be proven that she built at least one castle while controlling and garrisoning dozens more. On September 16, 1108, for example, she arranged for the upkeep and defence of the castle [rocca] of Gisadello by granting fields in the area to the men charged with maintaining and guarding the fortress. Control of other rural fortresses allowed Matilda to enforce a traditional seigniorial lordship over the precocious communes of Northern Italy. Matilda's diplomas also indicate that she retained the services of several of these communes, a host of major and minor vassals and numerous officials. Although some of these provided primarily administrative and financial servitium, the grants make it clear that many others provided military services. Thus, in a somewhat curiously-worded grant to Cremona in 1098, the commune promised to provide her with the services of a number of soldiers (Fiorentini, II.145-6), while in a charter from 1112 Matilda mentions the "Capitaneos, Vavasores, et alias, qui in Feudum a me habent" and notes how her noble men "mihi multum servierunt in discordia Imperatoris enrici quarti" (Fiorentini II.239-42). Still other grants discuss her castellans and sub-vassals and her ministri and gastaldiones. Moreover, there is every indication that Matilda maintained a domus or military household like those of other contemporary lords, and she probably also paid a number of mercenaries. The sources also show that Matilda arranged for the payment and logistical support of her vassals in the standard feudal manner— that is, by granting them fiefs in return for their services. On January 26, 1115, for example, she transferred the curitis of Quarantola, along with the
"castello Mirandula, et Arce a nobis inibi constructa", to her captain Ugo de Manfredis as a reward for outstanding service in war and peace. In another document, we find Bishop Landulf of Ferrara enfeoffing one of Matilda’s vassals, a certain Nordilus "de castello Veteri", in order that he may serve the countess all the days of his life:

In eorum presentia investit Domnus Landulfus Episcopus Sancti Georgii de Ferrara Nordilum de Castello veteri, et ejus filios, qui de eo extiterint, de omnes res illas juris Sancti Georgii, sicuti Conon de Calaone dedit infra Plebibus Sancti Martini, et Plebe Sancti Donati, et Plebe Sancti Georgii ad Ecclesiam Sancti Georgii de Ferrara, ut prefatum Nordilum, et ejus filius habeant et teneant ex parte memorate Ecclesie nomine Feodi sine omni contradictione suprascripti Episcopi, et ejus successoribus. Ita tamen ut serviat Domne Matilde diebus vite sue, et post ejus dececssum serviant Episcopo et sui successores... If, as Overmann argues, this diploma dates from early 1107, it probably represents one of the measures by which Matilda mobilized an army for her siege of Prato (which was underway by June of that same year). The bishop of Ferrara agreed to help her by endowing her man, with Matilda promising in return to transfer the services of those holding that land to the bishop after her death; in the end she did actually make a corresponding grant to the bishop in 1109, six years before she died. There is, furthermore, a definite urgency to Matilda’s movements in the early part of 1107 (the countess twice crossing the Apennines in the dead of winter) which reveals the importance of making arrangements for the siege of Prato. On March 1 1107 we also find Matilda "cum suis Nobilibus Militibus" freeing the people of Massa, at their own request, from the Albergaria, that detested burden of billeting her troops and ministeriales, which naturally would have become a point of contention at a time when armies were being mustered.

Grants of immunity from feudal burdens were one of the ways by which rulers raised money and troops for their campaigns. Henry IV, for example, used much the same strategy against Matilda when he sought to ensure the support of Pisa and Lucca in 1081. In the privilege to Lucca Henry revoked the "Consuetudines perversas" of Boniface, freed the Lucchese from labour on the royal palace and "hospitia" and forbade anyone from building a castle within six "millaria" of the city. In the privilege to Pisa he again protected the integrity of the city walls and promised
A document issued at Gonzaga in 1109 reveals Matilda assuming the defence of a castle and commanding the services of its milites. This diploma formalized Matilda’s re-assumption of the lordship (temporarily held by the abbot of S. Benedetto Polirone) over the strategically significant fortress of Governolo and the knights and villeins of the area. In return, the countess promised to render to the abbot military service commensurate with the knights’ beneficia and to pay him the sum of 100 Lucchese solidi annually. On the death of Matilda, the services of the knights and villeins were to revert to the monastery, while the castle would pass to Matilda’s successors (unless, at some point, she or her heirs were to destroy it, at which time the land would revert to the monastery). Governolo’s military significance lay in the fact that it controlled passage along the Mincius river, which connected Mantua—at that time still in rebellion against the countess—to the Po. Just as Henry IV’s capture of Governolo and Rivalta in 1090 had forced Matilda to retreat from Mantua for fear of being trapped inside, so Matilda’s assumption of the defense of the fortress tightened the noose around the city and ensured that Mantua’s communications could now be directly threatened by Matilda’s own vassals. That Matilda’s soldiers were active in the area is further suggested by a document issued at St. Caesarii in the same year (1109), in which Wibert of Gonzaga complained—truthfully, as it turned out—that Matilda had unjustly billeted her men in the area of Correggio, which lay about 20 kilometres south of Gonzaga. In fact, the majority of Matilda’s documents from this period deal with the area just south of Mantua, in which she spent much of her remaining years. Granted, her health was failing, but the continuing rebellion of her erstwhile “capital” must have played some role in her choice of residence; she certainly bolstered her forces in the area, even while concurrently abrogating her claims to the possessions which her father Boniface had acquired (by a mixture of force and intimidation) in the city’s hinterland. The hostility which Matilda’s continued military presence in the fortresses surrounding Mantua engendered helps to account for the violent destruction of Rivalta by the Mantuans in 1114—according to Donizo, when they believed Matilda had passed away—, while the strong and threatening position of Governolo must also help to account for the haste with which they surrendered to the countess upon learning that she was in fact alive. Moreover, the month after Matilda defeated the
Mantuans and there was no longer a need to squeeze the city, we find her making major donations to the monastery of Polirone, which severely restricted her lordship in the area.\footnote{71}

The diplomatic evidence, although underused by the few scholars who have looked at the issue of women’s military power, is thus a useful counterpoise to the verses of the poets. Donizo and Ranger’s works are full of descriptions of Matilda issuing orders and commanding troops, but the indirect, metaphorical nature of their poetry often makes them difficult to understand and calls into question their value as historical sources. Supported by the testimony of the documents, however, the poets’ words take on a renewed credibility. Donizo’s statement (put in the mouth of the fortress of Canossa) that Matilda “Me [i.e. Canossa] renovat semper, turres fabricando recentes” (Donizo II.56), is thus supported by the documents which record Matilda building and fortifying other castles. Thomas the Tuscan’s description of how Matilda made many nobles her vassals by giving them fiefs is shown to be literally accurate.\footnote{72} Once it has been proven that Matilda did indeed lead her army on expeditions such as the siege of Prato, is there any good reason to doubt Donizo when he writes that Matilda was

\begin{verbatim}
Pervigil et fortis, perversos saepe remordit:
Fervida bella nimis cum rege potenter inivit;
Nam per triginta duravit tempora firma,
Nocte die bellans regni calcando procellas.” (Donizo, ll. 1068-71)
\end{verbatim}

Allowing, of course, sufficient leeway for poetic license, we can now fully accept Ranger’s statements that Matilda seized plunder and rewarded her men with it (ll. 3739-48), that she forced Henry’s knights to defect and submit (3789-3818), and that

\begin{verbatim}
Qualis Amazonio de genere Penthesilea
Belligeris acies ordinat atque regit,
Non illam noctes, non illam frigora frangunt,
Non intemperies cogit abesse suis.
\end{verbatim}

We must not let the biases of medieval chroniclers nor of modern military history prejudice our reading of the sources. It is true that some of the narrative sources are critical of Matilda’s involvement in the war, and (as we shall see in chapter 6) the same sources did tend to portray the battlefield as no place for a woman. Nevertheless, we need not accept the biases of Matilda’s critics as facts, as modern military historians have tended to do. We should certainly not assume, \textit{a priori}, that a woman could not have functioned as a commander. As other studies
have shown, diplomatic sources often indicate that women saw themselves as true rulers—giving and taking feudal oaths, building and garrisoning castles, etc.—even while the narrative sources express disbelief or astonishment that women should engage in such activity. Indeed, in one fascinating document, we even find Matilda enfeoffing another woman.

In Matilda’s case, we have both narrative and diplomatic evidence for her exercise of command. The evidence of Matilda’s diplomas is thus particularly valuable in that it supports and confirms the statements of Donizo, Ranger and the others and shows Matilda engaging in a wide range of activities that entailed the organization or direction of armed force. The logistical perspective that the diplomatic sources provide also affords us further insight into the characteristics of Matilda’s generalship, revealing her to be a conscientious and resourceful tactician and organizer. Shifting from her earlier defensive campaigns, which involved counterattacking with mobility and surprise, she conducted several offensives which necessitated careful planning and coordination, attention to logistical concerns, and a combined arms approach. On the basis of both the range and the effectiveness of her military endeavours we are now able to draw one further conclusion: that Matilda was not only a commander, she was one of the best commanders of her time.
1 On Ubald of Manuta, Conrad, and Praxedis see above chapter 2; on Bonizo and Anselm see below chapter 5; On the Herman of Metz see Overmann, Reg. Mat. 446; On Conrad of Salzburg see the Vita Churudi (Arciehiepiscopi Salisburgensis, MGH SS XI, 69-70: "Audiri itaque sicut supra per anticipationem breviter perstrinxis, de nobilitissima, opulentissima quoque et potentissima muliere Matilda, cuius ditioni tota Tuscia serviebat, ad eam se contulit, et apud eam quinque ferme annis commoratus est." Although it should be noted that "quinque ferme annis is an exaggeration-- see editor's note 25. Cf. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 129a) who places these events "after June, 1112").
2 Fiorentini, II, 141-2. Ubald of Mantua, another reforming refugee, is also listed in the document.
5 Henry V had just imprisoned his father, and Gebehard was Henry V's envoy to Rome—Ghirardini, Storia Critica, 272; Golinielli, "Matilde ed Enrico V", in Golinielli, I Potori, p. 458. Overmann (Reg. Mat. 96a) points out that Gebehard witnessed a donation of Matilda's on March 10 at Guastalla.
6 Ekkehard, 234. The passage is interesting not only in revealing Matilda's ability to protect lines of communication but as yet another example of an author praising Matilda by comparing her to Debora.
7 Reg. Greg. I, 77 (April 15 1074) pp. 96-7. Werner, being the sole German bishop to throw himself on the mercy of the pope at this time, had won Gregory's sympathy and support.
9 Reg. Greg. I, 50, p. 70-1. In justifying his reliance on the countesses he quoted the passage from Isaiah (I. 17-8) which commands "Judicate pupillo et defendite viduas".
10 See Goez' chapter on "Rechtsprechung", pp. 89-99.
12 Fiorentini's collection and Overmann's Regesta are of course invaluable in this regard. To list only some of the documents in which Matilda is recorded holding court or imposing her bannum (from Fiorentini): pp. 64-6; 70-1; 107-9 (1073, imposes bannum); 119 (Papiana 5 Kal. Jul. 1078; imposes bannum and fine); 120-1 (Casa 3 Ides Feb. 1078; ban and fine); 126 (decides case between Bishop Gratian of Ferrara and Abbot Jerome of Pompea); 150-1 (6 Non. Mar. 1099; ban and fine); 168-9 (Celagito, 4 Cal. May, 1100; ban and fine); 202-3 (June, 1105; "...residet Comitissa ad causas audiendi, ac deliberandare"); 204-5 (Ides of July, 1106; Matilda "resideret in judicio" imposes bannum); 206-7 (Non. October 1105; "ob causas audiendi ac deliberandare"); 209-11 (Custellum, 6 Ides Jan. 1106); 217 (1107; "resedis Doman Matilda Ducatrix, ac Placitum tenendum ac deliberandum"). On the different types of documents issued by her court see Roberto Ferrara, "Gli anni di Matilde (1072-1115). Observazione sulla 'cancellaria' Canossiana", in I Potori.
13 See the charter issued by Boniface (Fiorentini, II, 19-21): "Dum in Dei nomine Civitate Luca in Palatio Domini Imperatoris in judicio resedisset Donnis Bonifatius Marchio, et Dux ad causas audiendas ac deliberandar... per fustum quam in suis detinebat manibus". Similar language is found in a charter of Beatrix's from 1068 (Fiorentini, pp. 42-3). On the formulae used in Matilda's documents see Roberto Ferrara "Gli anni di Matilde (1072-1115). Observazione sulla 'cancellaria' Canossiana", in Golinielli, I Potori.
14 Note that Ranger has Henry IV say much the same thing before the council or Worms: "Non mihi divinae legis sollevia cessit/ Non decreta patron, non canones didici."— Ranger, II. 2355-6. Whether these statements are mere rhetorical devices or not, the fact remains that ignorance of the law did not prevent either Henry or Matilda from interfering in ecclesiastical disputes.
15 Pseudo-Bardo, p. 17; Ranger, II. 3565-82.
16 Judges are present, for example, in a charter of Boniface (Fiorentini, II, 19-21) and one issued by Beatrix and Godfrey in 1073 (Fiorentini, II. 54-7). There is also mention of the "Judices predicti Bonfacii" in a document printed in Muratori, Ant. It. I. 589-90.
The Diplomatic Sources

18 Giovanni Santini, “Contributi per la storia dell’ordinamento giudiziario locale nei territori rurali Matildici (Frignano, Garfagnana, Versilia)”, in SM I, pp. 134-46
20 Damian, letter 68, p. 80- 83.
21 Cowdrey, G VII 413-8. Cf. Reg. Greg. I.37 (Dec. 7 1073) pp. 55-6, a letter to Adelaide of Turin, telling her to take up defence of monasteries. Gregory’s vocabulary in this letter, as in others, is full of words like servitio, defensioni, praesidi, protegendae, etc.
22 “Adest etiam ad hoc spectaculum princeps Mathildis cum suo exercitu” -- Translatio Corporis Sancti Geminiani, in Chronicen Estense. Muratori, Ris, old series, VI, col. 90. Giuseppe Pistoni (“Matilde di Canossa ed il duomo di Modena”, in SM I, p. 107) notes that the Relatio indicates that the garrison of the city was maintained by and under the control of the bishop, but that Matilda brought her own force with her when she came there for the consecration of the cathedral.
23 Overmann, Reg. Mat. 97a.
24 Pericle de Pietro (“Aspetti socio-economici e culturali della vita Modenese in età Matildica”, in Studi matildici III, p. 162-4) discusses these events and notes that the Relatio de innovatione ecclesie sancti Geminiani Mutinensis presulis survives in a late Twelfth-Century edition, but is certainly a copy of the original by one who was present at the events. Giuseppe Russo (“Modena nel 1106 (organizzazione religiosa e civica)”, in SM I, p. 130) suggests that the Relatio, conserved in the Archivio Capitolare of Modena, may have been written by the contemporary canon Aimone, magister scholae of the Cathedral.

Russo also points out that although the episcopal authority was recognised as primary in the city— notwithstanding the presence of a vice comes, Matilda’s representative—, the episcopal seat had lain vacant after the death of Bishop Eribert. Thus, the cathedral was rebuilt and expanded by an assembly of citizen clergy, the soldiers of the church and the prelates of the pievi. We may also note that Matilda endowed Bishop Dodo of Modena and the church of S. Geminiani in 1108 (Ughelli, It. Sac., II. 116). Strangely, Donizo does not mention any of this—see Simeoni, note to l. 1083.
25 e.g. Fiorentini, 175-6; 210.
26 Fiorentini II 64-6 and 152-6. Raffaele Savigni (“La diocesi Lucchese I Canossa tra XI e XII secolo”, in Golfinelli, I noti, p. 170) discusses the document and the dispute. He states that Matilda intervened at the request of men of Montemagno, legates of her vassals Guido and his son Hildebrand, against the canons of S. Martin who had begun to build a “castrum in loco Risciuolo”. She persuaded them to destroy the castle, had the men promise not to harass the canons and exacted a surety.
27 One might also cite the document printed in Muratori, Ant. It. V, 934, dated by Overmann between Nov. 4, 1106 and Jan 8, 1107. The MS has many lacunae, but it is clear that Matilda was conducting various business with her fideles when a violent dispute which had arisen over a certain church came to her attention. Matilda lent her authority to the judgement of the papal vicar Bernard and warned that anyone who would break the agreement “nostram malam voluntatem incurrat” and would be forced to pay a fine of 100 Lucchese pounds. Muratori adds that it was not uncommon for even pious rulers to intervene in ecclesiastical matters.

Although the characterization of the violence of Western society at this time as “feud” has recently been challenged [see Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West, ed. Guy Halsall (Boydell: Woodbridge, 1998)], there is no doubt that numerous violent conflicts did occur.
28 See, for example, the grants in Fioravanti [J. M., Memorie Storiche della città di Pistoia (Lucca, 1758), Documents p. 20-1, 23-4] and the grant of Beatrice and Matilda in Muratori (Ant. It. I, pp. 591-2).
30 For the dispute over the location see Overmann, Reg. Mat. 52.
The only possible exception could be Prato, which appears to have been destroyed; but we do not overlook the circumstances of its destruction.

E.g. Orderic Vitalis, VI, 245-7. Cf. Morillo, 63; Matthew Strickland, War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217 (Cambridge, 1996), 260 ff. William of Malmesbury (II, 379) tells us that by the time he died in 1100, King William Rufus was a man "beloved by the mercenaries for his numerous gifts but unlamented by the people because he brought about the plundering of their property."


One of the 'more colourful ones involves the illegal grazing of pigs on monastery land-- Fiorentini, 209-10.

E.g. Muratori, Ant. It. II 59-60.

Fiorentini 168-9.

Fiorentini 172-4.

On Matilda's castles in general see Aldo A. Settia, "Castelli e villaggi nelle terre Canossiane fra X e XIII secolo", in Studi matildici III, esp. pp. 283 and 286.

In return the men were to pay a modest annual fee (one denarius per jugerum) to the abbey-- Fiorentini, II.223-4 (from the original of Nonantola).

Vito Fumagalli, "I Canossa tra realta' regionale e ambizione Europee", in SM III: 27-38, 27.

On her vassals and castles in general see 'Emilio Nasalli Rocca, "Note sulla feudalita' Canossana" in Studi matildici II; the article by G. Fasoli in Studi matildici I (same title); and Giuseppe Sergi, "I poteri dei Canossi: poteri delegati, poteri feudali, poteri signorili", in Golinelli, I Poteri, pp. 29-39.

See, for example, the grant from 1115 (Fior. Mem. II 254=Overmann, Reg. Mat. 141) which involves Matilda's "Vassallos" of all sorts of services ("Fabros, Canavarios, Brennarios") and her "Capitaneos et Vivavasores". Fabbri (Studi Matildici I, pp. 50-1) discusses the castellan of Correggio, Gerard of the Frogeri family, who was a vassal of Matilda's vassal Wibert of Gonzaga.


Gina Fasoli, "Note sulla feudalita' Canossiana", in SM I, 75-6.

"volumus remunerare de servititis nostrae Clementiae factis in guerra, et in pace"-- Fiorentini, II 262 (incomplete, without witnesses) = Overmann, Reg. Mat. 138. The full text is in Contelorius, Math. geneal. 131. On the authenticity of this document see: C. Frison, "Quarantoli, Nonantola, la contessa Matilda e I 'figlio di Manfredo', protagonisti di un falso?", in ed. S. Felice, Quarantoli e la sua pieve nel Medioevo (Modena, 1992), p. 73; Werner Goez, "La nuova edizione dei documenti Matildici", in Golinelli, I Poteri, 22; Arnaldo Tincani, "Le corti dei Canossa", in Golinelli, I Poteri, p. 262 and n. 27.
For another document recording Matilda enfeoffing her vassals, see Muratori I.313 (= Overman Reg. Mat. 127, from 1112), in which Matilda pardoned Gualando of Pisa for some unspecified offense and re-invested him with the lands his family had previously held.

44 Muratori, Ant. It., I. 593.

45 On the dating see Overmann (Reg. Mat. 122). It must have been written between Nov 4, 1106 and 1109, and Overmann suggests the most likely date is early 1107, when Bishop Ugo of Mantua (who is listed in the document) is known to have been at Matilda's court. Nordilus witnessed several of Matilda's documents from 1105-1115— see Ghirardini, Storia Critica, p. 70.

46 Muratori Ant. It. III.735=Overmann, Reg. Mat. 116. It should be noted, however, that Nordilus does not appear in the donation Matilda issued at Prato. The extant copy of Matilda's second donation from Prato (Fiorentini, II.299 = Overmann, 103) does not list witnesses.

47 Ghirardini (Storia Critica p. 41 note 4) observes that Matilda was in Reggio-Mantua on Dec. 30, 1106, at Volterra on the 23rd of January, and at Toricella near the Po on February 2nd. She probably travelled through the Pradarena pass. Ghirardini argues that the documents from Volterra and Toricella do not by themselves justify such urgency.

48 Also present were Bishop Ugo of Mantua (who had witnessed Nordilus' charter) and Bishop Hildebrand of Pistoia.

49 For location of Massa see Ghirardini, Storia Critica p. 44 n. 7. It could be one of a number of places, but the most likely is Massa Finalese, 25 km south of the Po in the Modenese. If we accept Ghirardini's location for Massa, it can be seen to lie near the path Matilda would probably have taken from Polirone to Prato.

50 Bishop Dodo of Modena and the old men of Massa had come to her wishing not to have to make the Albergaria ("ut in Curte Massae Albergaria non faceret"). Claiming that this was not the custom in their time or in the time of their ancestors, they wished to make an oath to this effect. Matilda refused, on account of Lent, but said that when Lent was over she would take their oath. But out of love and fear of God and S. Geminianus, she dismissed the oath and gave a charter to Bishop Dodo that neither she not her missi would exact [inferret] the Albergaria.-- Muratori, Ant. It. II.59-60 = Fiorentini II.218 = Overmann, Reg. Mat. 103.


52 Die Urkunden der Deutschen Konige und Kaiser, MGH Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae, (Weimar: 1959) Vol. VI, no. 334 (a.k.a. St. 2833, the grant to Lucca) and 336 (a.k.a. St. 2836, to Pisa). The injunction against building castles near the city may have had some relation to the dispute between the canons of Lucca and Count Guido's men discussed above.

53 Fiorentini II. 226-8 = Overmann, Reg. Mat. 114 (March 18, 1109). Ghirardini (Storia Critica, 321) states that Matilda took over castle of Governolo in June, but the document itself is dated 15 Kal. Aprilis.

54 Matilda had sold Governolo to Ubaldo of Mantua in 1088 (Ghirardini, 373) with the stipulation that she retained the right of buying it back at some point in the future. As noted in chapter 2, Henry had taken Governolo in his invasion of 1090, but Matilda had recaptured it in 1092, as Donizo (II. 734) relates. S. Benedetto, however, obviously retained certain rights of lordship over it until the present charter.

55 See the discussion of this in Odoardo Rombaldi "L'agricoltura nell'area Matildica: L'Emilia" in SM III, 354-5.

56 Vito Fumagali ("Mantova al tempo di Matilde di Canossa," in Sant'Angelo, p. 161) notes that although Mantua was surrounded by a ring of fortresses, the most important were Volta Mantovana and Rivalta, to the north of the city, and Governolo, at the confluence of the Mincio and the Po. Governolo thus blocked the vital river route from Mantua to the Po.

57 "...conquestus est Vvibertus de Gunzaca, quod ipsa ospitaret suos homines, scilicet Viencium et confratres eius de Canussia, commorantes in Corrigio." Matilda sent to the area her judge Odaldus, who convened a meeting at which witnesses (including Wibert's vassal Gerard of Correggio) testified that Wibert's claim was genuine. The countess promised never to billet those men again. The document is in Muratori, Ant. It. II.61 = Fiorentini Mem. II 231 = Overmann, Reg. Mat. 120.

58 See: the document from 1110 (Fiorentini, II. 234-5) in which Matilda displays a concern for the services of her vassals in the nearby area (see also Rombaldi, "L'Agricoltura", p. 354); the grant to Polirone of possessions in Quistello, Aug. 29 1110 (Reg. Mat. 123 = Fiorentini II.232); the grant of a Manse on the island of Revere, (bounced to the east by the property of the Mantuan church and to the west by that of the countess) to Polirone Jan 1- sept 24 1113 (Reg. Mat. 131 = Fiorentini II.242); other donations to Polirone (Reg. Mat. 132, 135). In fact, Matilda made so many grants to Polirone at this time that she had to issue another document (Reg. Mat. 141 = Fiorentini II.254-8) summarizing them all. These grants include the Isle of S. Benedict and many villae and curtes in the area. In this same document, she frees the lands of the grant from burdens such as "albergaria, arimaria, angaria, et perangaria, et ab omnibus alis conditionibus" (p. 257).
On the strategic position of Mantua, the defences of the area and Matilda's grants see Fumagali, "Mantova al tempo Matilde di Canossa", in Sant'Anselmo, 159-67.

Giuseppe Sissa, "L'azione della contessa matilde in mantova e nel suo contado (l'Abbazia di San Benedetto Pollirone)", in SM I, p. 153, notes that Rivalta had long made the Mantuans uneasy, and that after their capitulation Matilda transferred her rights in the area to the monastery of S. Benedetto. The rebuilding of the castle of Rivalta, destroyed by the Mantuans in their revolt against Matilda, remained one of the citizens' primary concerns in their later negotiations with Henry V (in 1116) and Lothar III (in 1133) (A. Castagnetti, "I cittadini-arimanni di Mantova (1014-1159)", in Sant'Anselmo, p. 177).

Vito Fumagalli, "Mantova al tempo di Matilde di Canossa", in Sant'Anselmo, p. 165

Thomae tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum, ed. E. Feuchter, MGH SS 22 p. 500.

In the same vein one may cite Donizo's address to Matilda (II. 1426), in the voice of Canossa, that "Vicisti reges, tibi cunctos atque rebelles". Simeoni (note to c. 16, p. 90) suggests that the first passage (II. 1068-71) is part of a veiled criticism of Pascal's capitulation to the emperor in 1114.

Ranger, II. 3679-3684. This passage seems to echo the inscription on Matilda's tomb, in which she is also compared to Penthesilea. Perhaps the inscription was based on Ranger's words. Cf. Paolo Piva, "La Tomba della contessa Matilde" in Studi matildici, II, Duff, 275.

As I noted in chapter 1, Simeoni (Vita Mathildis, note to I. 1373) argues that the monumental epitaph has been the source of the unfounded elaboration that Matilda personally bore arms. Note, however, that Ranger's claim here is considerably more humble than those made by Vedriani and other modern historians: Ranger states only that she deployed and commanded the armies, not that she personally wielded weapons.


CHAPTER 5

CANONICAL APPROACHES TO WOMEN’S MILITARY AUTHORITY TO THE TIME OF GRATIAN

Having demonstrated that Matilda did in fact plan operations and command her own troops, I will now consider how her actions were perceived. During what periods, and under what circumstances, were female warriors and commanders deemed acceptable to the male-dominated societies of Latin Christendom? When did militant women begin to be seen as unnatural and illicit novelties? In the following two chapters we will examine this issue in two different but closely related fora: early and high medieval legal texts (especially canonical compilations), on the one hand, and the polemical literature of the Investiture Controversy, on the other. The emphasis in these final two chapters will be less on what Matilda accomplished—although, as we shall see, the legal compilations and polemical tracts do in general corroborate the accounts of the narrative and diplomatic sources—but on how the military activities of women like Matilda were viewed in their own times.

In the present chapter, I will survey and attempt to provide some historical context for the canons relevant to women’s participation in warfare up to about 1140, the time of Gratian’s authoritative Decretum (which became the standard work on the ancient law). My survey is certainly not intended as a comprehensive history of canon law as it relates to women (a subject far too vast even to be accurately summarized here). What I will be concentrating on is how certain canons dealt with the issue of female military and political authority and what they can tell us about the extent of women’s participation in warfare prior to the middle of the twelfth century.

Analysis of the canonical sources reveals that, by Matilda’s time, the prevalence of both the view that female combatants were unnatural and of legislation aimed at repressing women’s military and political authority were already centuries-old. Consequently, the compilers of her age did not need to create wholly new canons in order to condemn women like Matilda, but merely to rework and expand upon ancient texts. This fact has been obscured by the work of McLaughlin and Bandel and by the numerous works which have accepted their arguments. Expanding upon the thesis first put forth by Betty Bandel, McLaughlin maintains that
chroniclers only “began expressing astonishment at anomalous gender behavior from the late eleventh century on” (McLaughlin, 200), and that the attitude of writers towards female “warriors” therefore grew sharply more negative in the high medieval period. Only from this time forward did such women begin to seem unnatural and immoral and did confrontation with behavior considered unusual for women begin “to elicit strong reactions, in which assumptions about gender were fully expressed” (McLaughlin, 195). Henceforth, “a variety of sanctions were directed at women who participated in warfare, sanctions ranging from restrictive legislation to ridicule to charges of sexual misconduct or even witchcraft” (McLaughlin 200). As an example of such new, restrictive legislation, McLaughlin cites capitulum 29 of Book VII of Bonizo de Sutri's late eleventh-century collection of canon law, the Liber de Vita Christiana. 4

Since one of the primary foundations of McLaughlin's assertion appears to be the canonical work of Bonizo of Sutri, we must examine his collection in some detail. What we find is that his canon was neither original nor particularly influential. Although Bonizo's chapter may have been more explicit than earlier canons, it was in fact based upon a late ninth-century conciliar text, which itself had incorporated a Pauline letter and a Late Antique secular law. His attack on women's military authority was merely an extension of debates about women's political authority that had been occurring for centuries. Moreover, if one examines his chapter within the context of the history of canonical compilations, we find that Bonizo's canon was all but forgotten by later canonists. While there is indeed evidence that the canons regarding the issue of female commanders were modified to a certain extent during the struggles of the late eleventh century, my research will show that the main direction of the change was initially not away from but rather towards a more liberal stance. To be more specific, reforming canonists such as Anselm of Lucca and Cardinal Deusdedit actually accepted and defended a woman's right to exercise military command. These Gregorians, like the polemicists that we shall examine in the next chapter, actively sought precedents for women's military authority because they recognized the crucial role played by Countess Matilda in the defense of the reforming papacy. In doing so, these authors were reacting not against new forms of repression but against attitudes that had been standard in canon laws since the Late Antique period and in secular society since Plato.
The fact that the Gregorians actually attempted a canonical defense of women’s military authority argues strongly against McLaughlin’s characterization of the eleventh century as a turning point towards repressive attitudes and legislation. On the contrary, their attempt reveals to us how the early medieval divergence between canonical theory (which had long sought to restrict women’s access to most forms of political authority) and actual military practices (in which women sometimes did participate) spread during the Investiture Controversy even into the realm of canon law itself. This was due primarily to Matilda’s activities and her importance to the reform war effort. The period stretching from Late Antiquity to the middle of the twelfth century, therefore, did not witness a general movement from tolerance to repression, but rather an ongoing struggle between ancient laws and military practices, into which conflict Matilda injected an element of novelty by provoking a rather original attempt to provide a canonical justification of her military activities.

In order to understand the eleventh- and twelfth-century legal material, we must first recognize that repressive attitudes towards female commanders were not created ex nihilo by medieval societies, but were inherited from earlier cultures. We therefore need briefly to survey the classical and early medieval foundations of subsequent repressive legislation.

One of the first and most extended discussions of the issue of women’s involvement in warfare appears in Plato’s Republic. In this work, Plato urges that women be allowed to become soldiers and commanders— a fact that suggests that it was a social rather than any physical inferiority that prevented women from participating more frequently in ancient warfare.\(^5\) Plato’s opinion, however, clearly lay outside the male-dominated mainstream of public discourse, as Plato has Socrates admit:

Now we gave men artistic and physical culture... So we must give both also to the women, as well as training in war, and use them for the same tasks...now that we have started on this argument, we must not be afraid of all the jokes of the kind that the wits will make about such a change in physical and artistic culture, and not least about the women carrying arms and riding horses... We are not legislating against nature or indulging in mere wishful thinking since the law we established is in accord with nature. It is rather the contrary present practice which is against nature as it seems.\(^6\)
In this passage, we can clearly see that Plato expected his suggestion to be received with astonishment and ridicule. However much Plato may have disagreed with them, most of the men of his day felt that allowing women to serve as combatants went against nature.⁷

Although there is some truth to the famous claim that the entire history of Western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato, his opinion on this issue remained firmly in the minority for centuries (if not millennia). There were, of course, differences in attitudes in different periods and cultures, and in practice many individual women were able to exercise military and political power despite the strength of patriarchal ideologies.⁸ Generally speaking, however, women were denied military authority (the public recognition of the legitimacy of power), and the prevailing male attitude towards women in the ancient world remained a rather repressive one. Thus Plato’s student Aristotle wrote of women as imperfect men and argued that it was natural for the more perfect to rule over the less perfect. His idea was passed on to following generations and became particularly important in the high Middle Ages.⁹ In the latter years of the Roman Empire, one finds the Christian author Lactantius (c. 240-320 CE) arguing (much like the “wits” Plato had warned against) that Plato’s proposal went “against human custom and against nature”. Lactantius wrote with obvious disdain about how the ancient philosopher,

...against the custom of men and against nature, chose for himself more foolish things to imitate, and because he saw that in other animals the functions and duties of males and females were not different, he thought it was necessary also for women to engage in military service, to take part in public businesses, to hold magistracies, and to undertake commands. So he assigned to them arms and horses. The consequences is that spinning and weaving and the feeding of infants would belong to men. Nor did he see that the things he said were impossible, and for this reason, that up to now upon the earth no race so foolish or so wise ever existed which lived in this manner.¹⁰

For most men of Lactantius’s time, as for the men of classical Greece, both nature and human custom demanded that men’s and women’s work remain separate. For Vegetius, whose Epitoma rei militaris (⁴th or ⁵th century CE) remained easily the most popular treatise on warfare throughout the entire Middle Ages¹¹, the Empire’s very survival depended upon it. In order to halt a perceived decline in discipline and drill in the Roman armies, Vegetius warned against recruiting even men who had been engaged in women’s work, since these recruits would be unfit to serve as soldiers: “...linteones, omnesque, qui aliquid tractasse videbuntur ad gynaece
pertinens, longe arbitror pellendos a castris”. The secular laws of the period mirrored these general attitudes and severely restricted women’s access to positions of public authority “in consideration of the frailty of their sex”.

With most Christians of the first few centuries CE more concerned with avoiding imperial military offices (and the sacrifices to the emperor which came with them) than being appointed to them, there really was little need for internal Church legislation to prohibit Christian women from acting contrary to prevailing mores by seeking military offices. Some of the earliest Christian texts were concerned, however, with preventing women from dominating the one public forum over which Christians did exercise some control—that is to say, church. The letters of Peter and Paul, for example, contain many statements such as “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence”, and

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

In the Late Antique period, we find numerous demands for restrictions on women’s authority in the works of the Church Fathers. Ambrose, for example, cited the story of Adam and Ever as a cautionary tale: “Adam per Evam deceptum est, non Eva per Adam. Quem vocavit ad culpam mulier, justum est ut eum gubernatorem assumat, ne iterum ferninea facilitate labatur”. Augustine stated that the natural order of things is for women to serve men, and that there was no justice in men serving women: “Est etiam ordo naturalis in hominibus, ut serviant feminae viris et filii parentibus, quia et illic haec iustitia est, ut infirmior ratio serviat fortiori”. Patriarchal attitudes were enshrined in canonical legislation, such as Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua 37 (c. 475 C. E.), which reads “Mulier, quamvis docta et sancta, viros in conventu docere non præsumat”. The idea of a woman holding any position of authority over men, much less a position which involved the use of violence, was certainly not seen as natural by Christians like Augustine and his contemporaries.

The mere fact that male lawyers, philosophers and theologians harboured such attitudes should not lead us to conclude that this was the only contemporary conception of women-- we really don’t know what most women themselves thought-- or that individual women never
resisted their prohibitions. Although I am unaware of any theoretical assaults on the prevailing mentality (apart from Plato's) in classical times\(^\text{19}\), the actions of individual female soldiers and commanders clearly did contradict patriarchal assumptions. Extended scrutiny of the careers of ancient female military leaders obviously lies beyond the scope of my study, but we could cite in passing the careers of Cleopatra, Boudicca, Zenobia and several others.\(^\text{20}\) The activities of lower class women are more difficult to track, but we do find some evidence that female soldiers fought on behalf of Rome's barbarian neighbours, if not of Rome itself. Thus Dio Cassius, in his *Roman History*, states that in the third century CE, after a battle in which the Romans had defeated an army of Marcomanni and Quadi, "Among the corpses of the barbarians there were found even women's bodies in armour"\(^\text{21}\) — a statement which seems oddly reminiscent of the Arab chroniclers later accounts of female "Frankish" warriors on the Crusades.\(^\text{22}\) Similarly, Flavius Vopiscus, describing a triumphal procession of Emperor Aurelian in the latter half of the third century, writes that amongst the captives paraded through the streets

> There were led along also ten women, who, fighting in male attire, had been captured among the Goths after many others had fallen; these a placard declared to be of the race of the Amazons— for placards were borne before all, displaying the names of their nations.\(^\text{23}\)

The fact that Vopiscus describes them as "fighting in male attire" ("virili habitu pugnantes")—an accusation for which Joan of Arc was later to be burned alive—underscores both the fact that most men of the time viewed warfare as a male enterprise and that some women were contradicting this perception.\(^\text{24}\)

When we turn towards the early Middle Ages our sources become admittedly less numerous and more difficult to interpret. What we do find, however, are strong indications both that individual women continued to perform military functions after the collapse of the Roman Empire and that they frequently drew criticism for their behaviour. Again, the actions of noble ladies have left the best records. Procopius, for example, recounts for us the story of a sixth-century Anglian princess who led a campaign against her betrothed in order to force him to fulfill his promise of marriage. Procopius writes "since she was unable to accomplish anything [by sending embassies]... she took up the duties of a man and proceeded to deeds of war."\(^\text{25}\) He also disparagingly depicts Theodora's influence over the Byzantine court as founded upon her sexual
prowess and feminine wiles. In the late sixth and early seventh centuries, the Frankish Queen Brunhild also directed a number of campaigns and apparently attended synods and arranged assassinations as well. Pope Gregory the Great wrote to encourage her in her struggles, arguing that she had an obligation to use force against her enemies:

Si quos igitur violentos, si quos adulteros, si quos fures vel aliis pravis actibus studere cognoscitis, Deum de eorum correctione placare festinate, ut per vos flagellum perfidarum gentium, quod, quantum vidermus, ad multarum nationum vindictam excitatum est, non inducat, ne, si, quod credimus, divinae ulctionis iracundia sceleratorum fuerit actione commota, belli pestis interimat, quos delinquentes ad rectitudinis viam Dei praecpta non revocant.

Given the circumstances and Gregory's own views on violence, it seems that the pope probably was bucking the prevailing trend and sanctioning Brunhild's use of organized force. Brunhild's gender, nevertheless, exposed her to criticism from chroniclers strongly opposed to a woman's rule, who depicted her as a new Jezebel. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 722 Queen Æthelburh "destroyed Taunton, which Ine had built". In the late eighth century, the Byzantine Empress Irene ruled for years in Constantinople as basileus and directed military operations. The Lorsch Annals later justified the coronation of Charlemagne by pointing to the fact that the East was governed at the time by a woman's rulership [femineum imperium]; for the chronicler, this was a contradiction in terms which invalidated Irene's authority. Surveying reactions to powerful women like these, Pauline Stafford writes that

The reality of the power of many of these queens is demonstrated in the witness lists of charters and in the objective pages of wills, accounts of legal cases and other record materials. But the colourful picture and the details of their actions derives from these chronicle sources. In almost all cases, the information has been refracted through the peculiar gaze of an ecclesiastic. It must become obvious that the female members of the royal family, if they were at all forceful or played any role in political life, get a uniformly bad press. They are at best schemers and interferers, at worst, she-devils securing their ends through the practice of magic arts. The ecclesiastical writer had biblical models into which to fit his female types—Jezebel and Delilah are frequent comparisons—and he drew on ideas of witchcraft which were already part of European culture.

Stafford goes on to suggest that the hostility these women faced "may be explicable in terms of the dominant biblical ethos and the low opinion of women which many of these societies shared."
Regarding female soldiers, Scandinavian women appear to have been particularly prominent. Although both the archaeological and literary evidence for their activities remains rather controversial, scientific analysis has shown that women were sometimes buried with weapons.\(^{34}\) More reliable testimony is provided by the early medieval secular laws, in which we find repressive legislation arising as a response to militant women. One of Rothair’s edicts (the earliest Lombard Law) describes women who took part in brawls as having acted “in a manner dishonourable for women”.\(^{35}\) As Balzaretti has noted, “the use of arms was carefully regulated in later Langobard society, with women explicitly barred from carrying weapons.”\(^{36}\) Why would such legislation be necessary? We begin to understand why when we read the edict of the Lombard King Liutprand from 734, which attempted to put an end to the practice whereby women went about in packs and used weapons against men.\(^{37}\) Such female violence clearly puzzled and surprised the lawmakers, who could not really conceive of such violence as warfare or sedition because of the gender of the protagonists: “…we cannot equate the collecting together of women with a breach of the peace with an armed band nor with the sedition of rustics, because these are the things that men do, not women”.\(^{38}\) Such attitudes are also evident in Rothair’s Edict, which had stipulated that women could not commit \textit{hoberos} (breach-of-courtyard) because “it is foolish to think that a woman, free or slave, could commit a forceful act with arms as though she were a man”.\(^{39}\) Although such patriarchal assumptions had proven incorrect, Liutprand attempted to legislate them into reality by imposing harsh penalties on women who acted like men. These women were condemned as evil, violent and cruel; they were to pay compensation to their victims but were not able to claim compensation themselves; they were to be seized, shaven and driven through the neighbouring villages in shame “in order that other women shall not presume to commit such evil deeds”.\(^{40}\)

If the attitudes towards aggressive women that were expressed in early medieval narratives and secular laws did not differ substantially from those of the classical and late Antique sources, much the same can be said regarding early medieval canon laws. This is not surprising, given that early medieval compilers often incorporated secular laws into their canons and combined them with patriarchal or misogynistic scriptural, patristic and conciliar material. A woman’s assumption of nearly any form of political power was likely to expose her to severe and gender-based criticism, at least from her political opponents. Thus the Byzantine Empress’s
Irene's actions provoked a heated and extended debate when the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council were read aloud at the Carolingian court. Carolingian scholars, working at the behest of the emperor himself, devised a bitter response (fortunately preserved in the Libri Carolini) to Irene's perceived arrogance and presumption. Chapter 13 of book 3 of the Libri Carolini begins with the title: "Quia mulier in synodo docere non debet, sicut Herena in eorum synodo fecisse legitur". In this rather lengthy chapter, Irene is depicted as the wicked biblical Queen Athaliah, "who 'destroyed nearly all the seed royal' because with unfitting desire she had an appetite for command over men", and whose death by beheading was a worthy punishment for her crimes. Pope Hadrian, anxious to preserve relations with Irene, had sought to mollify the Carolingian court by countering with the examples of good biblical women (such as Martha and Mary) and with a rather vague quote from Augustine which argued that women were also capable of good. Charlemagne and his court, however, responded with a lengthy exegesis on the works of Peter, Paul and the Church Fathers. In a scathing assault on the empress, the Frankish scholars cited Paul's injunction from 1 Corinthians 14, 34 ("Let your women keep silent in the churches..."), Paul's first letter to Timothy ("Let a woman learn in silence with all submission..."), the story of Adam and Eve and other misogynistic biblical and patristic sources. Moreover, as Freeman has shown, the original version of this chapter in all likelihood contained an even more bitter attack on the empress that was later erased in the interests of diplomacy. Even the extant version, however, clearly proves that Charlemagne and his court remained adamantly opposed to women's authority:

Frailty of sex and changeableness of heart do not allow a woman to put herself in supreme authority over men in matters of doctrine or command. She must submit to a man's authority... It is one thing to sit at the feet of the Lord, quite another to organise synods, teach men in councils, hand down perverse decrees...

The Libri Carolini, preserved in at least two later manuscripts, serves to reveal the continuity of repressive legislation and to show how ancient, patriarchal texts were used to create general prohibitions on several forms of women's authority.

After the death of Charlemagne and the collapse of the Carolingian empire, bishops and councils continued to reiterate the ancient laws. Thus canon 19 from the Council of Nantes (held
c. 896) begins by summarizing the aforementioned passage from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians and reads:

Although the apostle says: “Women should be silent in church, for they are not permitted to speak; for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church”; it is astonishing to see that certain little hussies [muliercæ] impudently act, with little shame [atria fronte], against divine and human laws, indecently attend courts and public assemblies and disturb rather than arrange the business of the realm and the republic; although it is indecent, and reprehensible even amongst barbarians, that women disrupt legal proceedings; and that those who ought to debate about weaving and the making of fabric and women’s affairs as they sit in their women’s-workshops [genitariæ] publicly usurp the senatorial authority as if they were sitting in the senate. This presumption seems to be considered more disgraceful for their patrons than for the women themselves. Wherefore, since divine laws forbid this (as demonstrated above), and human laws also prohibit that women attend cases other than their own (for the Theodosian Law says that ‘On no account should women have the power to prosecute cases other than their own, nor should the case of another be prosecuted by them’), for this reason we order by canonical authority that no chaste young lady [sanctimonialis virgo] or widow should risk attendance at court, unless summoned by the prince or by her bishop, or on account of some necessity (and this with a license from the bishop).48

The attendees of the council hereby combined sources both sacred (a Pauline letter) and secular (a chapter from the Late-Antique Theodosian Code) in their attempt to prohibit women from holding public offices, which naturally included military ones. In itself, this prohibition is good evidence that women’s involvement in war and politics was not being accepted without further comment in the early medieval period, but rather remained highly controversial. As the canon indicates, women were not just forbidden to speak in church, but to attend courts and assemblies and even to concern themselves with the business of the realm. If successfully enforced, such a law would have made exercise of military command all but impossible for women. How could they direct operations if they were forbidden to give orders to bishops or to concern themselves with public affairs? How could they lead armies if they could not even appear at public councils? Indeed, in this age of increasingly private warfare and the collapse of Carolingian authority, it was the very publicity of violence that gave warfare its legitimacy.49 Public military counsels and assemblies were the very places where campaigns were legally proclaimed (and distinguished from illicit forms of war), where strategy was formulated and where discipline was enforced. Had Matilda been constrained by restrictions on attending assemblies, she could not have attended the
important papal synods of Gregory's day or intervened to make peace at Canossa in 1077, much less have held military councils like the crucial one she presided over at Carpineta in 1092.

Just as the Lombard Laws indicate that certain women took up arms, however, so Nantes 19 indicates that some women were assuming positions of power, if not authority, and that attempts to curtail their behaviour had not been wholly successful. Thus, a few decades after the council of Nantes, one finds Aethelfled, the "First Lady of the Mercians" and "famossisima regina Saxonum", arranging treaties and alliances, building, seizing and destroying fortresses, and directing armies against her Norse and Welsh neighbours. A little later, the charters of Italian, French and Catalonian women record how they received the homage of castellans, destroyed castles, and acquired villas through conquest. In the tenth century, Liutprand of Cremona described a campaign waged by Ermengarde of Tuscany and disparagingly explained that she had immodestly used her sexuality to acquire "the chief authority in all Italy," while the eleventh century Countess Ermessendie of Barcelona ruled as regent, directed armies and even had a female castellan as her vassal.

Despite the apparent difficulties in enforcing them, canons such as Nantes 19 were neither novel nor obscure in the early Middle Ages. Several collections cited the Pauline letters restricting women's authority or included canons in which women were disparagingly portrayed as the weaker sex. The Collectio Hibermensis, for example, states "Vir de virtute nomen acceptit, hoc est belli, laboris, defensionis, primatus, praelocutionis, mulier vero a mollitia, hoc est a fragilitate, infirmitate, humilitate, subjectione." Moreover, both Nantes 19 and Statuta Ecclesia Antiqua 37 found their way into two of the major collections of the pre-Reform era, Regino of Prüm's Libri duo de synodalibus causis et disciplinis ecclesiasticis (c. 906) and Burchard of Worms' Decretum (compiled between 1008 and 1012). In the Collection in 183 Titles (composed in Tuscany just before or during Gregory's pontificate), these two canons were actually combined to form their own chapter—a combination which underscores how both were viewed, almost interchangeably, as prohibiting female authority.

By the age of Matilda and the Gregorian Reform, then, general prohibitions of women's political authority—prohibitions which implicitly included military authority as well—were already ancient. The Imperialist bishops who attended the synod of Worms in 1076 and condemned Matilda's influence at the papal court by writing to Gregory that "all judgements, all
decrees are enacted in the apostolic seat by women, in short the whole Church is governed by this new senate of women" was merely reiterating complaints that had been heard for centuries. As we shall see in the next chapter, similar objections to female authority recur in the imperialist polemical literature of the investiture controversy.

In the early years of the papal reform movement, however, it was often the most radical reformers who had the harshest words to say about women. The reformers' attacks on concubinage and clerical marriage often strayed from the clergy themselves to the women who were seen as having corrupted them; women were equated with irrationality and insatiable sexuality. Thus Humbert of Silva Candida, in his Libri adversus Simoniacos, criticized not only men but also women as well for investing with ring and staff by alluding to both 1 Cor. 14, 34 and 1 Tim. 2, 12:

Verum cur haec tantum de viris laicis conquerimur, cum ipsae quoque laicae feminae, quibus nec loqui in ecclesia permititur nec dominari in virum, sed solum laicis res ecclesiasticas dispensandas committunt, sed insuper pastoralibus baculis et anulis de episcopatibus et abbatiiis clericos investiant, quos eis aut favor aut obsequium saeculare seu pretium temporale concilitiat et commendat.60

The next few lines Humbert wrote remind us of both Nantes 19 and the complaint of the assembly at Worms:

Principantur et ipsae nichilominus omni ecclesiasticorum concilio et iudicio, dum ad nutum illarum etiam absentium alii praetoruntur, alii deponuntur, alii quamvis culpabiles aut praeterrimitur aut defenduntur. Sic hac perversissima abusione, iuxta quod impius Porfiris calumniatur, senatus noster sunt feminae, a quibus insuper dantur sacerdotalia insignia; nec licet ecclesiasticos nisi earum dono sua sibi assumere, quae nec dicam feminae, sed nec masculorum quispam nisi clericus debet constringere aut ferre, beato Stephano papa et martire sic denuntiante...61

A little later, Imperialist and Wibertine authors adopted a similar approach when dealing with reform-minded women. Thus, a few years after Humbert's diatribe, the pro-imperial Petrus Crassus censured Albitia, a woman who preached to both sexes in the church of Cremona, by calling her a muliercula and noting that her actions were "in contempt of the apostle who ordered women to be silent in church".62 Women such as these clearly presented something of a problem to writers like Humbert and Peter, just as, centuries earlier, the Lombard ruffians, Empress Irene and Gallic mulierculae had proven problematic to King Liutprand, the Carolingian
court and the Council of Nantes, respectively. The behaviour of these women had not only long been prohibited in law, it had long been condemned as astonishing, wicked, sacrilegious, dishonourable, unbecoming of a woman and deserving of corporal punishment.

By the 1080s and 90s, however, we do find evidence of a rather unconventional attempt to justify one woman’s military authority. As we have seen, Plato had produced a general justification of women’s public power, and Popes Gregory the Great and Hadrian had attempted to defend the actions of their respective female allies Brunhild and Irene. All of their endeavours, however, clearly ran against the grain of ancient and medieval male attitudes. Plato’s opinion, as he himself admits, was wholly unconventional and was specifically denounced by later Christian writers; Hadrian’s was violently and persistently rebutted by contemporaries. Before the late eleventh century, Gregory’s letter to Brunichild was all but completely ignored by later canonists, regardless of their political orientation. In contrast, prohibitive canons such as SEA 37 and Nantes 19 (which themselves were based on patriarchal classical and late antique sources) found their way into many early medieval collections and tended to dominate canonical discourse on these issues.

In the course of the investiture wars, however, Gregory’s letter to Brunhild took on a new relevance. The two most important “Gregorian” canonists—Anselm of Lucca and Cardinal Deusdedit—were eager to prove that force could be used against schismatics and heretics. Both of these men were firmly within the Gregorian camp and, as we shall see in the next chapter, both defended the legitimacy of Matilda’s military campaigns in their polemical works. In their canonical collections, therefore, they adopted a rather novel approach to the topic of women’s authority. Neither included the traditional sources, such as Nantes 19, nor any of the other repressive canons, despite the fact that both appear to have relied on a common intermediate collection that most likely contained a number of prohibitive canons (including Statuta Ecclesia Antiqua 37). On the other hand, both Anselm of Lucca’s Collectio canonum (completed c. 1081–6) and Deusdedit’s Collectio canonum (completed 1087) do contain the passage from Gregory the Great’s letters to the Frankish Queen Brunhild that seemed to sanction the use of force against the violent and the wicked. Although the extant sources do not provide much information regarding the life and career of Deusdedit, our more precise knowledge of Anselm’s life and the historical context of his collection supports the idea that Anselm interpreted the letter
to Brunhild as a justification of Matilda's military activities. Anselm had in fact been protected by the countess after being violently expelled from his seat in late 1080 or early 1081, and until he died in 1086 Anselm served not only as Matilda's military and political ally but as her spiritual counsellor. His collection was actually written during a period in which he personally appears in her entourage. Moreover, he quite clearly spent a good deal of time gathering together canons that could be used to justify Gregorian campaigns. In fact, book XIII of his Collectio canonum was the first major systematic canonical justification of warfare in the Christian tradition, and as such was fundamentally important for later Christian approaches to organized violence. As Carl Erdmann has argued, Anselm "was the first canonist to give extensive consideration to the problem of ecclesiastical coercion and war". It is therefore significant not only that Anselm made use of such an obscure canon but also that, in the A recension of his collection, Gregory the Great's letter appears under the rubric "That the power to correct evildoers is granted to the queen".

The attempt to provide a canonical justification of a woman's military authority through the use of an ancient and rather ambiguous papal letter appears to have been a Gregorian innovation. Before the eleventh century, papal letters to secular princes like those of Gregory and Hadrian had seldom been considered authoritative sources for canon law. As Cushing has recently noted, Anselm and other canonists of this period were making important advances not only in the rediscovery and use of old sources but in the organization and handling of canons:

One finds greater precision and care both in textual identification with the inscriptio, and in authorial direction or interpretation with the rubric titles. Developments with the rubric were of particular significance. The rubric offered the compiler (or his recensor) an important opportunity to put forward his own opinion or interpretation of the canonical text in question, techniques that later would triumph with Gratian.

Cushing also observes that many of the rubrics in Anselm's work seem to be original and are an almost intrinsic element of the texts themselves. Although we cannot be absolutely sure that all of them are Anselm's own creations (at least until the thorny problem of the relationship between the different recensions of his collection is definitively settled), it seems reasonable to assume that he sought to use this rubric to lend universality to this canon and to adapt it to his own and Matilda's agenda (as he did with other texts). In any event, the rubric also clearly indicates that either he or several of his recensors read the canon, not just as a general justification of the use of
force (as it was later to be interpreted by Gratian), but as an explicit justification of women's military authority.

The attempt by the compilers and recensors of these collections to provide canonical support for the military activities of a woman sympathetic to reform clearly strove against the well-established traditions of the Church. Even some reformers had difficulties accepting women in positions of power, a fact which is evident when one examines the work of the third major Gregorian canonist to wrestle with the issue of women's military authority, Bonizo of Sutri (c. 1045- c. 1094).

Bonizo completed his canonical collection, the *Liber de Vita Christiana*, in late 1089 or shortly thereafter (a few years after Anselm and Deusdedit had completed theirs). Although it is certainly the work of a radical reformer, Bonizo's collection is more concerned with regulating the lives of the laity than either Anselm's or Deusdedit's collection. Bonizo takes the time to spell out in detail what he feels to be the divinely-appointed roles for all members of Christian society. He devotes book VII to the upper ranks of the laity, while in the penultimate chapter (28) he provides an outline of a code of conduct for those who would enter the military profession. In the final chapter he looks specifically at women holding positions of military and judicial authority. Here Bonizo adopts an approach altogether different from that of Anselm and Deusdedit: he argues that although women do have a legitimate role to play in Christian society, access to military and political authority must be restricted to men alone. Although the Roman Empire was begun by pagans, he states, its laws nevertheless agree with those of the Lord in this respect: both command that women be subject to men. Bonizo then discusses the lives of virgins and widows (whom Bonizo, in keeping with the prevailing views of the time, views as coming under church law), and concludes the chapter by spelling out what he feels to be proper and improper conduct for the married woman: she should love her husband, tremble under his power, raise his children and tend his household; she should dread wars and fear soldiers; her concern should be with the loom and the spindle, not with the leading of military expeditions.

Bonizo's stance on this issue may at first glance seem rather puzzling. About five years earlier, he had composed a polemical tract, the *Liber ad amicum*, in which he had showered Matilda with praise for her prominent role in the war against Henry. Although I will look at this polemical work in more detail in the next chapter, we may note here that in it Bonizo had
portrayed Matilda as a soldier of God and compared her favourably to Jael, the biblical heroine who had killed the Canaanite general Sisara. The Liber de vita Christiana thus marks a considerable change of heart on Bonizo’s part.83 What apparently changed his attitude towards Matilda was the countess’s alliance with schismatic or imperially invested bishops and her facilitation of reconciliation between them and the newly consecrated Pope Urban II.84 In order to convert these prelates to the Reform party, Matilda and Urban showed them tremendous leniency. Thus the pope recalled and sent a pallium to Anselm III of Milan85 and not only reordained Daimbert of Pisa but even elevated his bishopric to an archbishopric.86 To Bonizo and the radical Patarenes87—indeed, even to some more moderate reformers—Matilda's intercession on behalf of men who had attained their positions through lay investiture or “simony” represented precisely the type of secular interference in the affairs of the Church against which they had fought so tenaciously.88 To make matters worse, Bonizo appears to have received only lukewarm support from Matilda and Urban for his episcopacy in Piacenza; Bonizo’s questionable election and the radical agenda of his Patarene allies apparently conflicted with their attempts at reconciliation with former opponents. As a result, Bonizo was in effect abandoned to his enemies89, and, unable to maintain his position in Piacenza, he was brutally maimed and expelled from the city in 1089.90

When writing his Liber de vita Christiana, Bonizo therefore assumed a position much closer to the ancient prohibitions of women’s public authority than to the Matildine circle’s attempts to justify the countess’s conduct. He appears to have used Nantes 19 as his material source.91 Both Bonizo and Nantes state that divine and human law agree that women should not hold public power92: regarding the “divine law”, both include the now-standard passage from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 14, 34-5); as to the human law, the Council of Nantes quotes the Lex Theodosiana93, and it is this legislation which Bonizo is apparently referring to as the "Roman Laws" he mentions in the first sentence of his capitulum. Both Bonizo’s chapter and Nantes c.19 attempt to define the limits of feminine propriety by restricting women to the gendered roles of spinning and weaving, and by denying them access to public authority. Finally, both mention the shamelessness of women who refuse to abide by such restrictions: in the canon from Nantes they are described as acting attrita fronte, and in Bonizo feminea licentia, feminea audatia.
In order to construct a more damning indictment of Matilda, Bonizo went a step further and made explicit what Nantes 19 and the other canons had left implicit. He did this primarily by adding his own interpretations or dicta. Thus Bonizo spells out the things which women must not do (concluding with leading military expeditions), and, in specifying the public offices from which women must be barred (ducatus, iudicatus), he uses terms which correspond to positions which Matilda held. Like Nantes 19, Bonizo cites the passage from Paul, I Cor. 14, 34-5 (that women should be silent in Church and that it is shameful for a woman to speak), but Bonizo then adds what is apparently his own opinion that it must therefore be all the more shameful for women to rule the people.

Perhaps the most interesting and original aspect of this canon is that it not only reiterated and expanded the traditional bases of repression but also confronted directly the problematic issue of the women of biblical and secular history (Martha, Mary, Jael, Deborah, etc.) who (as we shall see even more clearly in the next chapter) were being cited by Reformers as precedents for Matilda’s military and political activities. The canonical works of Anselm and Deusdedit, the polemical works of Anselm and other Reformers, and even Bonizo’s own earlier comparison of the countess to Jael in his Liber ad amicum demanded some sort of reply or reinterpretation. If women’s tenure in positions of military and political authority runs contrary to divine and human law, how could it be that certain women held such positions, a fact to which even Bonizo had to admit both sacred and secular history attested? Bonizo’s response to this problem was to accept the women’s stories as true but to contend that they never ruled over men without causing extraordinary harm to their subjects. To bolster his argument, Bonizo provided a number of biblical and historical exempla (Cleopatra, the Frankish queen Fredegunda, the Lombard queen Rosalend, etc.) who brought shame, hardship, or even divine destruction down upon themselves and their subjects by daring to contradict the law and to seek military or political offices. Thus Bonizo asserts that the leprosy suffered by Moses’ sister Mary, in her own right judge and leader of the people of Israel, was punishment for her pride and feminine unruliness. Moreover, conscious of the way in which he and other reformers had earlier praised Matilda by comparing her to Jael, Bonizo now creates conceptual distance between the two women by pointing out that Jael was a foreigner with a living husband (Matilda being an Italian whose first husband had died in 1076). In this new interpretation, Matilda now appears more as the type of
the widow Deborah, to whom the countess had also been frequently compared in contemporary polemics. Bonizo undermines Deborah's authority by suggesting a causal relationship between the facts that Deborah led the Israelites and that she did so during a period in which they were not autonomous but under the hand of King Iabin of Canaan. Unlike other reforming polemicists, moreover, Bonizo portrays Deborah as hubristic. In fact, he reinterprets the entire Jael-Deborah-Sisara narrative as a warning to widows against seeking out positions of authority. Although Iabin's lieutenant Sisara was indeed delivered by God unto the hand of a woman, explains Bonizo, the enemy was not given to Deborah (who engineered the campaign) but to the dutiful and politically powerless wife Jael, lest Deborah's success encourage other widows to seek offices of military leadership [ducatus]. Although Bonizo did not specifically mention either Matilda or Brunhild, he did attempt to subvert the exempla that had most frequently been used in Reforming polemics to justify Matilda's military activities.

The Gregorian age can thus be described as one of controversy regarding not only papal authority but also the licit range of women's authority. Matilda's military career engendered a disagreement over the legitimacy of female commanders which even spilled over into the ranks of the reformers, who were never wholly unified and whose internal disagreements were sometimes as vehement as their opposition to the emperor and antipope. If any canon broke with the tradition of the previous few centuries, however, it was clearly not Bonizo's, which was based on a long tradition of repressive legislation, but Anselm's, which was based on a single, hitherto obscure papal letter to a secular ruler.

If we are fully to understand the high medieval canons regarding female commanders, we must now consider the question of which of these approaches had the greater impact on the development of ecclesiastical law. Did Bonizo's injunction usher in a new age of restrictive legislation that explicitly forbade women's participation in warfare, or did the Gregorians' justification of female military authority have the greater influence? If we trace the development of canon law up to about 1140, when Gratian completed his Decretum (which became the authoritative and universally accepted collection), we find that in fact neither Bonizo's nor Anselm's canon had a major impact on later collections; subsequent canonists instead returned to the earlier, more general prohibitions of women's public authority or to the still more ancient patriarchy of the Church Fathers.
Let us begin by briefly examining the work of Ivo of Chartres (c. 1040-1115), arguably the most important canonist in the period between the Gregorians and Gratian. Ivo did not include Anselm’s Collectio canonum XIII 23 in any of his three collections (completed c.1093-6) and either ignored or was unaware of Bonizo’s Liber de vita Christiana VII.29. Instead, Ivo returned to more general prohibitions of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In his Decretum, Ivo included not only Nantes 19 (Decretum VII.103) but also a host of other canons which echoed Nantes c.19 but which were derived from different material sources—namely, patristic authors—whose importance as authorities for canon law was increasing at this time.

The chapters (Decretum VIII.85 and 91-8) were used to construct a general argument that women must be subject to men. They include the aforementioned passages from Ambrose (“Adam per Evarn deceptum est”) and Augustine (“Est etiam ordo naturalis in hominibus, ut serviant feminae viris”), and one from Jerome’s commentary on Paul’s letter to Titus which bears a strong resemblance to the argument of the authors of the Libri Carolini:

Cum caput mulieris vir sit, caput autem viri Christus est, quaecunque uxor non subjicitur viro, id est capiti suo, ejusdem criminis rea est cujus et vir si non subjiciatur capiti suo Christo; verbum autem Domini blasphematur vel dum contemnitur Dei prima sententia et pro nihilo ducitur, vel cum Christi infamitur Evangelium dum contra legem fidelium naturae ea, quae Christiana est et lege Dei subjecta est viro, imperare desiderat, cum etiam gentiles feminae viris suis serviant communi lege naturali.

Although patristic passages had been used to prohibit and condemn women’s authority in some earlier collections, Ivo shifted the basis of repression much more heavily onto the Church fathers and rejected the other prohibitive conciliar and secular material. When writing his Panormia a year or two after his Decretum, Ivo appears to have felt that the patristic material alone was sufficient and had rendered canons such as Nantes 19 redundant. Thus he included the patristic material in his Panormia but left out Nantes 19. We can therefore conclude that, taken as a whole, Ivo’s collections marked a return not to Bonizo’s specific prohibition of women’s military authority but to more general repressive pronouncements of the Church Fathers.

The collections compiled after Ivo’s works, up to and including Gratian’s Decretum, document how subsequent canonists adopted the ancient texts and doctrine sanctioned by Ivo. To begin with, there was the enormous popularity of the Panormia itself, which was one of the most frequently used collections of canon law in the entire medieval period. After its publication,
many lesser-known canonists also used its capitula in their own works. Finally, we find Gratian, in his Decretum or Concord of Discordant Canons (published c. 1140), following the approach taken by the later Ivo, excluding Nantes c. 19 and instead incorporating all of his Panormia VII.43-51 into Causa 33 Quaestio 5 chapters 11-19 of the Concord. The correspondence is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ivo's Panormia</th>
<th>Ivo's Decretum</th>
<th>Gratian's Decretum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VII.43</td>
<td>VIII.94</td>
<td>C.33 Q.5 c.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .44</td>
<td>&quot; .95</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .45</td>
<td>&quot; .96</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .46</td>
<td>&quot; .97</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .47</td>
<td>&quot; .98</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .48</td>
<td>&quot; .98</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .49</td>
<td>&quot; .85</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .50</td>
<td>&quot; .91</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; .51</td>
<td>&quot; .92</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; c.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neither Bonizo's explicit prohibition of women's military authority nor Anselm's justification of it was incorporated into Gratian. The Bologna master, like Ivo and most other canonists of the time, ignored or was simply unaware of Bonizo's Liber de vita Christiiane. Anselm's work, as a material source for twelfth-century canonists interested in the legitimacy of organized violence, proved far more influential than that of Bonizo, and we do find that Gratian himself did make use of the letter from Gregory to Brunhild (Causa XXIII, Quaestio IV, c. 47). Nevertheless, the presentation of this letter in the Concord was such as to redirect it away from justifying women's military authority. Although the incipit does state that the text is excerpted from Gregory's letter to Brunhild, in the Concord of Discordant Canons the passage appears, not under the title "That the power of correcting evildoers is granted to the Queen", but following the rubric "That omnipotent God is appeased by the correction of the evil". With the fact that the power to correct malefactors had been granted to a queen no longer stressed, the canon's ability to legitimate women's military authority was substantially weakened. It was then
counterbalanced by Ivo’s repressive patristic texts, which, as noted above, Gratian reproduced in full. Some ambiguity may have remained in the fact that Gratian did not place these texts alongside the letter to Brunichild in causa 23 (which dealt with the legitimacy of forms of warfare) but in causa 33 (which discussed rights within marriage and the conjugal debt); whereas Bonizo had stipulated that widows should not seek military authority, the collections of Ivo and Gratian were not so specific. On the whole it can be said, therefore, that Gratian’s thought on these issues, like that of Ivo, constituted a reiteration of the more general repressive legislation of the early medieval period, albeit a reiteration which rejected earlier secular and conciliar material in favour of more fashionable patristic sources.

Obviously, the situation regarding the status of female commanders in eleventh-century canonical texts is somewhat more complex than the straightforward hardening of attitudes suggested by Bandel and McLaughlin. Women’s tenure in positions of power remained a controversial topic for canonists throughout the early Middle Ages. While it is true that, prior to the developments in jurisprudence and the great synthesizing projects of the high Middle Ages, canon law tended to be lacking in uniformity, nevertheless we do find a number of canons which prohibited women from exercising public power. The canons incorporated, complemented and cited repressive secular legislation in order to expand earlier biblical, patristic and canonical prohibitions (which had tended to focus on limiting women’s authority in churches) into general bans on most forms of female authority. Although these canons represent the views of only a small segment of the medieval population (and should not therefore be seen as representative of a monolithic “medieval attitude toward women”114), we are nevertheless justified in characterizing the general attitude of legal and theoretical discourse as repressive and patriarchal.

Hence we must take issue with McLaughlin and Bandel’s argument that the eleventh century historical sources indicate that a transformation was underway at this time towards more negative attitudes regarding women “warriors”. To begin with, Bonizo’s work, which McLaughlin cites as indicative of this “new” attitude, was not really concerned with female soldiers at all; in fact, Bonizo commended Jael’s use of a weapon (driving a spike through Sisara’s temple) as an honour conferred upon her by God. Female commanders—Matilda in particular—were the real objects of his enmity. More importantly, Bonizo’s capitulum may have constituted a more explicit prohibition of women’s military authority than had hitherto been
produced, but it nevertheless was firmly in line with the dominant earlier legislation and with the prevailing view that war was not something with which women should concern themselves. McLaughlin acknowledges that the perception of warfare as male territory was a constant in the period but rejects the full implications of this mentality:

But if medieval writers consistently associated the warrior role with masculinity, their attitude towards women who assumed that role changed over the course of the period. Before the end of the eleventh century, chroniclers generally noted the activities of women warriors with little comment... In the later middle ages, however, chroniclers and other writers began to express astonishment at women's military activities... deviance from "normal" gender behavior was becoming more visible, and hence more surprising, in the later middle ages. From the late eleventh century on, confrontation with behavior considered unusual for women began to elicit strong reactions, in which assumptions about gender were fully expressed... women's participation in warfare... could no longer be accepted without further comment, for it seemed somehow contrary to nature. (McLaughlin, 194-5)

On the contrary, I argue, the continuous perception of combat as a man's role was not somehow disassociated from prevailing patriarchal (one might even say misogynistic) attitudes, nor was it without consequences and ramifications-- it was complementary to the notion that women should be legally prohibited from engaging in war. If one relies primarily on comparisons between the laconic annals of the early Middle Ages and the more descriptive histories of the high Middle Ages (as McLaughlin and Bandel do115), one may initially get the impression that female combatants were more harshly criticized in the latter period. Of course, one would have to overlook Fredegar's description of Brunhild as a Jezebel and Liutprand of Cremona's attack on Ermengarde; although these women had had their supporters, their opponents had subjected them to harsh and misogynistic criticism which made use of pejorative gender stereotypes. Furthermore, we must pose the important question of whether the relative abundance of high medieval criticism indicates a real change in attitudes or simply the proliferation of historical writing. 116 This is a question that the study of early medieval secular and canon laws enables us to answer. As I have demonstrated, the legal collections clearly reveal a continuity in perceptions of female combatants as "unnatural" and in attempts to prevent them participating in warfare. Lombard women's armed aggression and Empress Irene's femineum imperium had certainly not been "accepted without further comment" by kings like Liutprand and Charlemagne. The legal material strongly suggests that continuity in misogynistic attitudes stretches from Antiquity
through the early medieval period and into the high Middle Ages. There really is no firm foundation for the assertion that female military and political authority was more shocking in the eleventh century than it had been in early medieval or Classical times. Plato had lamented the fact that the men of his age felt it unnatural for women to bear arms, Augustine had described God’s natural order as one of female submission to men, the Lombard laws had condemned women who used weapons as wicked and dishonourable and the attendees of the Council of Nantes thought it astonishing that women should seek public power. The condemnations of Matilda must be seen within this broader context of the history of secular and canonical legislation.

At the same time, the long history of repression reveals that despite an increased vulnerability to criticism, many women were able to assert their own military power. Deviance not only frequently accompanied repression but was in many instances its cause as well. With a few notable exceptions, it seems that military historians have accepted and perpetuated the misogynistic assumptions of the Middle Ages without appreciating the reactionary nature of repressive legislation. Reactionary laws suggest considerable participation on the part of medieval women. Indeed, Bonizo’s work shows us how repression fed off deviance, and this will become even more apparent when we examine the polemical literature in the next chapter. By the eleventh century, then, a divergence had long existed between repressive legislation and the practices of a number of militant women. The dire necessities and divided loyalties of the Investiture Controversy manifested the divergence within the realm of canon law itself, as certain Gregorian compilers attempted to provide a widely applicable and specifically worded justification of Matilda’s military authority. In the canonical sources, the discord between such canons and the established traditions was subsequently harmonized by the work of later compilers like Ivo and Gratian, in whose collections Anselm and Deusdedit’s canon was shorn of its specific rubric and by whom the traditional repressive legislation was rejuvenated and provided with what was viewed as a firmer foundation in the writings of the Church Fathers.

It is true that we rarely find specific condemnations of women’s military authority before Bonizo’s canon; but we rarely find them after him either. What we do repeatedly find in both periods are more general prohibitions on most if not all forms of female authority. Bonizo’s canon merely made explicit what had been implicit in the earlier secular and canonical
legislation, which he used as his model and which he in fact cited at the very outset of his chapter. Moreover, the most influential later canonists did not look back to Bonizo but to the more general and ancient patriarchy of antiquity and the early Middle Ages when creating the great collections of their time. The most novel aspect of the collections of the eleventh century was not Bonizo’s attempt to repress women’s military authority but other Gregorians’ efforts, in light of Matilda’s importance to the reform papacy, to provide it with a canonical basis. As was the case with earlier women, Matilda’s exercise of military power had provoked a storm of controversy. With canonists and polemicists of the stature of Anslem of Lucca in her camp, however, Matilda was able to provide a vigorous response to the traditional criticisms.
1 On the close relations between canonical and polemical works in the late eleventh century—passages from the collections were frequently used in the polemical literature, for example—see Cushing, 110-11.


4 Bonizo of Sutri, Liber de Vita Christiana, ed. Ernst Perels, forward by Walter Berschin (Hildesheim, 1998).

5 We may also note that troops who formed the backbone of Greek armies in Plato’s time, the hoplites, were heavy infantry who wore weighty and cumbersome armour and who used their own strength to drive their opponents back in a kind of armed scrum. Indeed, their method of fighting was one of the most physically demanding the world has ever known, and their battles were therefore usually over in less than an hour. The fact that Plato recommended that women be given such duties is thus highly significant. For an excellent recreation of the mechanics of Greek phalanx warfare see Victor Davis Hanson’s The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece (Random House: New York, 1989). There is also a new edition published by the University of California Press, 2000, which I unfortunately have not yet been able to examine.


8 For some examples see Arthur, “From Medusa to Cleopatra” and McNamara, “Matres Ecclesiae”, in Becoming Visible.

9 Murray, "Thinking about Gender", 4.


12 Vegetius, Epitoma rei militaris, ed. Leo F. Stelten (Peter Lang: New York, 1990), p. 18. Vegetius later urged commanders to exclude from cities about to be besieged those whose age or sex made them unsuitable for war (Vegetius, IV.7, p. 241). Interestingly, we find the weavers of Ghent being prohibited from performing military service in Ghent in 1325—see J. F. Verbruggen, The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, from the Eighth Century to 1340, trans. Willard Sumner and S. M. C. Southern (New York, 1977), p. 144.


“Mulier in silentioc disctum cum omni subiectione. Docere autem mulierii non permitto neque dominari in virum sed esse in silenti” — 1 Timothy 2, 11-12

It is true that women in early Christian communities did sometimes exercise leadership and authority, and it seems that in many ways this was what Paul was reacting against—see Murray, “Thinking about Gender, pp. 4-5 and nn. 23 and 25


Augustine, Quaestionum in Heptateuchum, in CCSL XXXIII (Brepols, 1958), Genesis CLIII, p. 59.


Although I should confess that I am not a classicist and that perhaps someone with a greater knowledge of the classical sources will be able to uncover such material. It would indeed be very interesting.


Nicholson, in her article “Women on the Third Crusade”, is very skeptical of these later accounts, but the earlier precedents would seem to argue in their favour.

Flavius Vopiscus, Divus Aurelianus, ed. and trans. David Magie, in Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Vol. III, (London, 1954), p. 261. It should be noted that the appellation ”Amazons” is not as fanciful as it might seem; there was a legend which held that the Goths were the husbands of the Amazons, and this appears to have been why the captive Gothic women were viewed as such.


Procopius, Opera, trans. H.B. Dewing, vol. 5, History of the Wars, books VII and VIII (London, 1962), 259-65. Despite some fanciful details (e.g. the inflated statistics for the number of troops involved), the story itself is in all probability an authentic one—see Munro Chadwick, The Heroic Age (Cambridge, 1912; rpt. 1967), 97-9.

McNamara, “Matres Ecclesiae”, in Becoming Visible, 125.

Gregory the Great, Registrum, in Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 140a (Turnholt, 1982), VIII, p. 521.

As F. H. Russell notes [The Just War in the Middle Ages (London, 1977), p. 28], Gregory’s writings were less refined than those of Augustine. They did not draw a firm distinction between coercion of heretics and wars proper or between ecclesiastical and secular authority. Gregory’s letter to Brunichild is thus very interesting but is also somewhat difficult to interpret—did he intend it as a general justification of women’s military authority?


Scandinavian mythology and mytho-history provide a number of examples of powerful women warriors. In Saxo Grammaticus’ History of the Danes, one finds the stories of Alvild, who led a band of female pirates, and of Stikla,
Canonical Approaches to Women in War

Lathgertha, and others who fought as warriors in order to preserve their chastity [Saxo Grammaticus, History of the Danes, ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson, trans. Peter Fisher (Cambridge, 1979): vol. I, pp. 150, 211-2 and 280]. We must be cautious, however, when using such sources. Saxo's work was a mixture of mythology and history, and many of his stories are purely legendary. Moreover, Saxo was writing c. 1200, was describing people and events already centuries old, and appears highly conscious of the fact that his readers may not believe his stories of female warriors.

Hilda Davidson, the editor and translator of Saxo's History, records that "The idea of women disguised as warriors fighting in battle is found in both Byzantine and Norse sources" (Saxo II, 40), and Mary Beard writes that "among the Varangians, who attacked the Byzantines, women were found wielding arms side by side with their men" [Mary Beard, Women as Force in History, (New York, 1946), p. 289]. Regrettably, neither author cites any sources, nor have I been unable to verify them.


It seems to me, however, that McLaughlin goes a bit too far in asserting that "Most scholars have accepted these finds as evidence for female participation in warfare during the Viking Age" (McLaughlin 197-8). McLaughlin never actually names these scholars, and her sole source for this assertion seems to be Women in Anglo-Saxon England, in which the author Christine Fell is far more reserved than McLaughlin. Fell merely suggests that the two finds of women's skeletons with weapons could be interpreted as the graves of female warriors, but that because male skeletons were found a short distance away the evidence need not necessarily be interpreted in this way. Fell herself admits that the evidence is by no means conclusive (Fell, 130-2).


Ross Balzaretti, "'These are things that men do, not women': the social regulation of female violence in Lombard Italy", in Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West, ed. Guy Halsall (Boydeil: Woodbridge, 1998), 175-192: 182.


38 Balzaretti, 186; cf. Rothair's Edict 278, in Lombard Laws. 108.

40 "Seizing these men the women rain blows upon them and commit other evil deeds in a violent manner more cruelly than men might do... the public agent who is established in that place shall seize those women and shave them and drive them through the neighbouring villages of that region in order that other women shall not presume to commit such evil deeds."—Liutprand 141.III, Lombard Laws, 208-9. Cf. the restrictions on women in the Irish Cain Adamnan: an old-Irish treatise on the law of Adamnan, ed. Kuno Meyer, Anecdota oxoniensia, Mediaeval and modern series; v. 4, pt. 12 (Oxford, 1905)


42 Libri Carolini, in MGH Legum Sectio IV: Concilia, Tomi II, supplementum (Hannover and Leipzig, 1924), Book III, c. 13, p. 127-9

43 "Ille etenim typum sanctae ecclesiae gestantes Domino ministravere et sacratissimis eius alloquis inhaesere, istae vero, si quae sunt, Aethalae nimium exempla sequuntur, quae duri viris praesse incompentent desiderio appetit, pene omne semen regium extincti et sui nefandissimi capita interit ad ultimam indignum vitam digne morte finivit."—Libri Carolini, III.III, p. 129.


45 Freeman (1965), 217-8.
Canonical Approaches to Women in War

46 Libri Carolini, pp. 127 and 129. By detailed study of the manuscript Freeman was able to show that "Papal caution, if indeed we may detect it here, seems only to have strengthened the Frankish stand"—Freeman (1940), 218. Moreover, the manuscript shows that "The production f the LC seems to have been accompanied by almost continuous discussion and revision" which represents the heated interplay of opinions—Freeman (1965), 221.
47 Freeman (1965), 218-9.
48 "Cum apostolus dicat: Mulieres in ecclesia taceant, non enim permittatur eis loqui: turpe est enim mulieri loqui in ecclesia; Mirum videtur, quod quaedam mulierculae, contra divinas humanasque leges attira fronte impudenter agentes, placita generalia et publicos conventus indesinenter adeant, et negotia regni, utilitatemque reipublicae magis perturbent, quam disponant: cum indecens sit, et etiam inter barbaras gentes reprehensibile, mulieres virorum causas discutere; et quae de lanificiis suis, et operibus textilibus, et muliebris, inter gentiam suas residentes, debuerant disputare, in conventu publico, ac si in curia residentes, senatoriam sibi usurpant auctoritatem. Quae ignominiosa praesumptio fautoribus magis imputanda videtur, quam foeminis. Unde, quia divinae leges. ut supra monstratum est, hac contradicunt, et humanae nihilominus id ipsum prohibent, ut foeminae nihil alium prosequantur in publico, quam suam causam: (aet enim lex Theodosiana: Nulla ratione foeminae amplius quam suas suas agenti habeant potestatum, nec aliaus causam se noverint prosequendum:) idcirco ex auctoritate canonica interdicens, ut nulla sanctimonialis virgo, vel vidua, conventus generales audeat, nisi a principe fuerit evocata, aut ab episco suo: nisi forte propriae necessitatis ratio impulerit, et hoc ipsum cum licentia episcopi sui". Concilia Namnetensis, c. 19, in Sacrorum conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio, ed. J. D. Mansi (Florence, 1759-98), Vol. 18, coll. 171-2. Note also that in the list of chapters this one is given the heading "Ne foemine publicis conventibus ac placitis se immiscat." I have translated sanctimonialis virgo as "chaste young lady", although it could perhaps also be translated as "nun".

The material source for the Lex Theodosiana is the interpretatio of the Theodosian Code, the formal source probably being the Lex Romana Visigothorum, a.k.a. the Breviary of Alaric—see note below.
49 Halsall, 15-6
52 ...Hermengarda... totius Italie principatum obtinebat." —Lituprand of Cremona, Antapodosis, in Liturtand, Opera, ed. Joseph Becker, MGH SS in usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historiciis separatim editi (Hannover and Leipzig, 1915), Book III, c. 7, p. 77. In c. 11, Lituprand even depicts her enemy King Rodulf as Olofernus—although he refrains from specifically extending the metaphor to include Ermengarde as Judith (probably because this would have put her in a favourable light).
53 Patricia Humphrey, "Ermessende of Barcelona. The Status of Her Authority", in Queens, Regents and Potentates, ed. Teresa M. Van (Dallas, TX, 1993), pp. 15-35.
54 E.g. Collectio canum Hibernensis, Die rische Kanonensammlung, ed. Hermann Wasserschleben (Leipzig, 1885; npt. 1966), XLVI.18-19, XLVI.24; Collectio IX Partium (Vat. BAV. Lat. 1349, VII.132).
55 Collectio Hibernensis, XLVI.25, pp. 191-2. This canon is attributed to Augustine, but I have not found it in any of Augustine's genuine works.
57 SEA 37: Regino, I.19; Burchard, VIII.83.
58 Liber canonum diversorum sanctorum patrum sive collectio in CLXXXIII titulos digesta, ed. Joseph Motta (Citta del Vaticano, 1988) 144.1, p. 228.


61 Humbert, p. 212.


63 It is not to be found in the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, ed. Paul Hinschius (Leipzig, 1863); the Capitularis Benedicti Levitae (Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina 97); the Anselmo Dedicata (PL 56), the Dacheriana, Spicilegium sive collectio veterum aliquot scriptorum qui in Gallica bibliothecis delituerant 1, edd. Luc d’Achery and L.F.J. de la Barre (Paris, 1723; repr. Farnborough, 1967); Regino of Prum (op. cit.); Burchard of Worms (op. cit.); the Collectio Duodecem Partium (Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 246); or the Collectio in CLXXXIII Titulos (op. cit.). The only collection in which I have been able to find it is the relatively minor Collectio Herovalliana, dating roughly from the seventh century, which was based mostly on the Vetus Gallica. Migne has provided a list of chapter titles of the Herovalliana in PL 56, col. 307, and the incipit of c. LXXV reads “Item ejusdem [s. Gregori] epistola ad Brunichildam reginam pro haeresi simionicae destruenda.”

64 In addition to Anselm and Deusdedit, Ranger had stated that kings may use force against schismatics to prevent greater evils: “Hoc pieta antiqua videns ad religiosos/ Confrigut reges vel magis arma dedit/ Ut tales premerent et vel residere iuberent/ Atque vacare sibi, vel bona subipirent.” —Ranger, ii. 3645-8. Gregory repeatedly expressed the same idea, as for example in his letter of 22 January 1075, when he wrote that he ought to use either hand as the right hand “to subdue the violence of wicked men” — Greg. Reg. II.49 p. 190; cf. Cowdrey, G VII 651. See also the statements of Damian discussed in my previous chapter.

65 Several contemporaries believed that Anselm’s collection had been undertaken at Gregory’s request, although modern historians have had reservations about this perception. On the issue of the extent to which Anselm’s collection can be seen as a defense of Gregory’s policies, see Giorgio Picasso, “La ‘Collectio canonum’ di Anselmo nella storia delle collezioni canoniche”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture op. cit., pp. 314-5 and Kathleen Cushing, Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: The Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca (Oxford, 1998), pp. 104ff. Deusdedit was also seen as a disciple of Gregory, although there were important differences between them in certain matters of doctrine and in their approach to reform (Cushing, 99). Politically, however, both Anselm and Deusdedit were clearly within the camp of Gregory and Matilda, as both their own polemics and the criticism levelled at them reveal; Anselm of Lucca, Liber contra Wibertum, ed. E. Bernheim, MGH LdL I, pp. 517-28: 527; Deusdedit, Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquis schismaticos, ed. E Sackur, MGH LdL II, pp. 292-365: 330 (and note also Deusdedit’s more general justification of the use of force by secular powers in his Libellus contra invasores, LdL II, p. 300); Benonis aliorumque cardinalium schismaticorum contra Gregorium VII et Urbanum II, scripta, Libelli de Lute II, 366-422, p. 399, 416

66 The collection in question was the ancestor of the Collectio Britannica, which does contain SEA 37 and a number of other prohibitive canons (Cushing, 66 n. 5).

67 Unfortunately, no reliable critical edition of Anselm’s texts exits. We do know that the collections of Anselm, Bonizo and Deusdedit are closely connected, but the precise relationship between them probably will not be solved until a better edition of Anselm appears— Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, Leben und Werk, 67. Cf. S. Kuttner, “Some Roman Manuscripts of Canonical Collections", Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law, new series, 1 (1971), 7-29. The only attempt at an edition of Anselm’s collection was made by Thaner [Anselm of Lucca, Collectio canonum una cum collectione minore, ed. Friedrich Thaner, II (Innsbruck, 1906-11)]. Unfortunately, Thaner did not edit the final two books (XII and XIII) of the collection. In lieu of a critical edition of these books, I have followed Kathleen Cushing’s working edition from her Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: The Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998), pp. 179-200, which is preferable to the edition which Edith Pásztor added to her article “Lotta per le investiture e ‘ius belli’: la posizione di Anselmo di Luca”, in Sant’Anselmo, Manova e la lotta per le investiture, pp. 405-21. The letter from Gregory the Great to Brunhild is contained in book XIII, c. 23 of the collection.
Anselm’s collection was not written before March 15, 1081, since Anselm inserts the famous letter from Gregory VII to bishop Hermann of Metz into canon 80 of book I (under the rubric “Quod Apostolico licet impemtore ac deponere, quod etiam alqui fecerunt episcopi”). Anselm, who died in 1086, has been justifiably described by I.S. Robinson as “the most influential Gregorian canonist”; Robinson, Papacy, 317-8.


Anselm and Deusdedit appear to have been working independently, although they may have relied on one or more of the same minor or “intermediate” collections, which remain almost completely unedited, but which contain many papal decrets (Cushing, 65-7). Both Anselm and Deusdedit relied, to a much greater extent than had earlier compilers, on papal letters to secular princes (Cushing, 97-9). Anselm may have found the letter in one of the manuscripts at S. Benedetto Polirone just south of Mantua (one of which is known to contain Gregory’s letter to Brunhild—see Giuseppe Motta, “I codici canonistici di Polirone”, in Sant’Anselmo e la Lotta per le Investiture, op. cit. p. 360 n. 35), while Deusdedit had access to the papal archives and to Gregory’s register.


Although Anselm did agree with Gregory (or at least with the Dictatus Papae) on a couple of issues (see Cushing, pp. 216-22, esp. #2 and #24), on the whole, and especially on the issue of the right of Christians to use force against heretics and schismatics, they were certainly in agreement.

As Kathleen Cushing has recently noted, “Anselm employed texts written to combat fifth-century heresies to support his condemnation of eleventh-century schismatics whom he identified as heretics. Here, Anselm can be seen almost groping for categories to describe these ‘new’ heresies which were effectively the product of the need to vilify the opponents of reform. With such modifications, he created universal, and relevant canons, from what were specific and perhaps out-dated injunctions.” In doing so, Anselm extended the role of defender of the Church to an ever wider circle; Cushing, 76-7, 124-6 and 133. On Anselm and the use of force in general see also A. M. Stickler, “Il potere coattivo materiale della Chiesa nella riforma gregoriana secondo Anselmo da Lucca”, in Studi Gregoriani II (Rome, 1947): 235-85; Edith Pásztor, “Lotta per le investiture e ‘ius belli’: la posizione di Anselmo di Luca”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture, op. cit., pp. 375- 404; and Carl Erdmann, Origin of the Idea of the Crusade, trans. Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1977), pp. 241 ff.

72 Erdmann, Origin, 243.

73 “Quod Reginae Corrigendi Malefactores Potestas Datur”— Anselm, Collectio canonum, XIII,23, in Cushing, p. 198. This is the rubric in two A mss. (Cambridge, Corpus Christi Collège 269; Paris, BN, Lat. 12519), while in the third A ms. (BAV, Vat. Lat. 1363) the rubrics break off at exactly this point, with a space being left for them to the end of the book. On the mss. of Anselm’s collection see P. Landau, “Erweiterte Fassungen der Kanonessammlung des Anselm von Lucca aus dem 12. Jahrhundert”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture, op. cit., and P. Fournier, Mélanges de droit canonique, II (Aalen, 1983): 658- 662.

75 Cushing, 67-8.

76 “...because of textual and thematic similarity to other of his works, it is not wholly unreasonable to see Anselm using the rubric as a means of underscoring essential reform objectives, of sharpening generalities, of lending universality to localized issues and sanctions, and, especially, of updating ancient texts to current ecclesiastical and reform concerns.”— Cushing, 68. Anselm’s authorship of books 8-13 has been called into question (see Pásztor in Sant’Anselmo, p. 376, note 5), but most scholars see the rubrics as indicative of Anselm’s own views.

77 Adelaide of Turin, another powerfull cuntress with reforming sympathies, may also have benefitted from the new use of these canons.


79 Liber de vita Christiana VII,28, pp. 248-9. Many at the time remained unsure as to whether a Christian could legitimately take up arms, and Bonizo’s earlier work, the Liber ad amicum, was in part a response (in the affirmative) to this question. On this work see below.

80 Liber de vita Christiana VII,29, pp. 249-51.

“Maritata est, diligat virum, sub eius tremescat imperio, filios nutrit, sue domus curam gerat, bella horrescat. armatos formidet, pacem diligat, pensa et cotoru et fusos et stamina, linum lanamque et sericum gestet in manibus; de expeditionibus vero ordinandis non magnopere curat.”— Bonizo, Liber de Vita Christiana, VII.29, pp. 251.

83 Which was in fact but one aspect of a noticeable transformation of Bonizo’s mentality—see Walter Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, 15-7; H. Saur, Studien über Bonizo, Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte 8 (1868), p. 432; and Jacques Fournier, “Bonizo de Sutri, Urbain II et la Comtesse Mathilde d’après le Liber de Vita Christiana de Bonizo”, Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartres 76 (1915): 265-98.


86 Bernold, a. 1095, p. 461 “Dominus papa Urbanus... nativitatem Domini in Tuscia gloriosissime celebravit; in qua provincia Pisanus episcopus, nomine Dagobertus, ei studiosisse servivit, quem ipse iam dum archiepipiscopali pallio et potestate sublimavit, quod eaturus Pisanorum sedis episcopus habere non consuevit”. Urban’s letter of April 21 1092 clearly shows that he was acting in response to Matilda’s request: “carissimae quoque beati Petri filiae Mathildis comitissae, quae se extremis quibusque pro causa apostolicae sedis exposita, obnixis postulationibus inclinati”—J.L. 5464; J. P. Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina, Vol. 151, coll. 344-6. Urban also gave jurisdiction over Corsica to Daimbert, as we know from the same letter. The Daimbert in question was the same who later became patriarch of Jerusalem.

On the Pataria see C. Violante, La Pataria Milanese e la riforma ecclesiastica, I: Le premesse (Rome, 1955); P. Golinelli, La Pataria. Lotte religiose e sociali nella Milano dell’XI secolo (Milan, 1984); Cowdrey, “The Papacy, the Patarines and the Church of Milan”.

88 Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, p. 17 n. 63; Cowdrey, “Papacy, Patarines and the Church of Milan”. On reactions to the reordination of Daimbert see Fournier, p. 288. It was a similar split in the reform ranks in Milan which precipitated the violence there in the latter part of the 1090s, as I discussed in chapter 3.

The question of reordinations had been controversial one for some time; see Humbert’s Libri III. Adversus Simoniaicos, ed. F. Thamer, Libelli de Lite I, pp. 102-253, esp. book I c.7, pp. 110-1.

89 Fournier, “Bonizo de Sutri”, 273-4; Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, pp. 11-12.

90 “Bonizo piae memoriae Sutriensis episcopus, set inde pro fidelitate sancti Petri iam dudum expulsus, tandem post multas captiones, tribulationes et exilia, a Plancentinis catholicis pro episco pro recipitur; set a scismaticis eiusdem loci effossis oculi, truncatis omnibus pene membris martirio coronatur.”—Bernold, Chronicon, (a. 1089) p. 449. On interpreting this passage and the other sources for these events, see Fournier, 272 ff.

91 It is somewhat more difficult to trace Bonizo’s formal source for this canon, because it is contained in a number of collections to which Bonizo could have had access, such as the collections of Regino and Burchard and the Collection in 183 Titles. I would think the most likely of these would be that of Burchard, although I would stress that at this point my choice is merely an educated guess.

92 Although it is noted that phrases such as “divina et humana leges” recur in the sources of this period: e.g. Petrus Crassus, Defensio Heinrici IV. Regis, ed. L. de Heinemann, MGH Libelli de Lite I, p. 444; Decretum Wiberti vel Clementis papae, ed. Ernestus Dümmler, MGH Libelli de Lite I, p. 626; Anonymous, Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda, ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, Libelli de Lite II, p. 234, 237, etc.


94 Berschin discusses how Bonizo resorted to providing his own rubrics and personal opinions (dicta) when he could not find satisfactory canonical material—see his paper “Bonizone di Sutri e lo stato di vita laicale. Il codice Mantova 439”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la Lotta per le Investiture, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Mantova, 23-24-25 maggio 1986), (Patron Editore: Bologna, 1987): 281-90, p. 285. In this instance, however, I would note that the material is not all Bonizo’s—Bonizo does refer to Roman and ecclesiastical law and does appear to have had Nantes 19 as his model.
“ut non ducatus teneant nec iudicatus regant.”—Bonizo, Liber de Vita Christiana, VII.29, p. 249. Fournier first noted that the term ducatus corresponds to Matilda’s military and political jurisdiction as countess of Tuscany (Fournier, 295). I would add that Bonizo’s use of the term iudicatus is just as obviously directed at Matilda, since we know that Matilda frequently presided over courts—for instances of this see Francesco Maria Fiorentini, Memorie della gran contessa Matilda, 2nd ed., with additions by Gian-Domenico Mansi (Lucca: 1756). pp. 64-6; 70-1; 107-9; 119; 120-1; 126; 150-1; 168-9; 202-3; 204-5; 206-7; 209-11; 217. Cf. Elke Goez, Beatrix von Canossa und Tuszien: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts, Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband 41 (Sigmaringen, 1995), pp. 91-2, who argues that Beatrice and Matilda were virtually “the first women who regularly held their own placita”.


We should note in passing the slight differences in form between the versions of Bonizo and Nantes. The vulgate reads “Mulieres in ecclesiis taceant, non enim permittitur eis loqui, sed subditas esse, sicut et lex dicit. Si quid autem volunt discere, domi viros suos interrogent. Turpe est enim mulieri loqui in ecclesia”. Nantes 19 reads “Mulieres in ecclesiis taceant, non enim permittitur eis loqui; turpe est enim mulieri loqui in ecclesia”. In Bonizo’s version, the scriptural passage is even more truncated and the “loqui” has been changed to “docere”, thus: “Mulieres in ecclesiis taceant. Turpe est enim mulieri docere.”


99 “Si quis vero mihi obiecerit sororem Moysi Mariam ducem fuisse populi Israel et iudicem, non abnou; set audio eam feminea licentia in superbiam eam. Si enim dux non esset, nec superbiret nec extra castra manusisset ad brevem leprosa.” Bonizo, Liber de vita Christiana, VII.29, p. 250. Leprosy was commonly seen as God’s punishment for those who assumed a role greater than that ordained for them. For other examples of Leprosy as divine punishment see the letter of Damian reproduced by Deusdedit in his Collectio Canonum: Die Kanonessammlung des Kardinals Deusdedit, ed. Wulf von Glanvell, I (Paderborn, 1905), c. 246, p. 534 (“Azarias rex quia sacerdotale usurpat officium, lepra perfunditur.”) and Deusdedit’s next chapter as well: c. 247 p. 536 (“...et Ozias rex lepra percussus est, quia officium turrisficiandi assumpsit.”)

100 On the perception of Deborah as a widow, see Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, 16 n. 59. We should note that at the time Bonizo was writing Matilda had recently remarried—on the date of her marriage to Welf see L. L. Ghirardini, Storia Critica di Matilde di Canossa (Modena, 1989) chapter 4, esp. pp. 146 ff. She continued to be portrayed as a widow, however, in many polemical sources (Ranger, p. 1292, for example, has Matilda’s enemies calling her a widow), while her biographer Bonizo simply avoided mentioning her purely political and ultimately unsuccessful marriage to Welf of Bavaria in 1088. Bonizo responds to Matilda’s conduct as both widow and married woman at the end of his chapter. First he states that widows must not associate with “calamistratos vel barbatulos pueros” (Welf was 16, Matilda 42 at the time of their marriage); then he warns that if widows remarry they must refrain from leading military expeditions.

101 “Quodsi dixerit mihi Deborra, quae epis interpretatur, relicta Lapidot, quae iudicabat Israel, forsan quia muliebri regebantur arbitrio, ideo serviebat eam.”—Bonizo, VII.29, p. 250.

102 “Et licet prophetasset, quod in manu mulieris tradendus esset Sisara, in manu sua tamen non legitur facta fuisset victoria, set in manu mulieris licet aliengene, habentis tamen virum, ne exemplum dare post teris viduiius ambien di ducatum.”—Bonizo, VII.29, p. 250. Berschin adds that if one considers what Deborah and Jael mean in the polemical literature, this chapter must be read as a hidden criticism of Matilda—Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, p. 17 n. 62.

103 Ivo of Chartres’ Decretum and Panormia are edited in Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina, vol. 161. For his Tripartita I have used Paris, BN 3858B.

104 Ironically, the rising importance of patristics appears to have been partly due to Anselm’s influence—see Cushing, 91 ff.
105 We also find one attributed to Ambrose but apparently from Augustine—VIII.85: “Mulierem constat subjectam sub domino viri, et nullam auctorisatem habere, nec docere enim potest nec testis esse, nec fidem dare, nec judicare”. See Friedberg’s note to this chapter in his edition of Gratian, col. 1256.

I have been unable to find any of these patristic texts in any of the major collections compiled in the few centuries leading up to Ivo’s Decretum. I have examined the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, the D’Acheriesana, the Anselmo Dedicata, Regino of Prüm, Burchard of Worms, the Collection in 12 Parts, the 183 Titles, the Collectio Britannica (London, British Library, Ms. Add. 8873), the Collection in 74 Titles: Diversorum patrum sententiae sive collectio in LXXIV titulos digesta, ed. J. Gilchrist, Monumenta iuris canonici series B: Corpus collectionum, Vol. I (Citta del Vaticano, 1973), the collections of Anselm of Lucca and Deudsedit and Bonizo’s Liber de Vita Christiana. Perhaps Ivo, like Anselm and other compilers of this period, was relying on intermediate collections for his versions of these patristic canons.


For the slight variations between Ivo’s version and Jerome, see either Jerome’s Comentarii in IV epistolas Paulinas, Ad Titum, in PL 26 (Paris, 1884): 589-634, col. 617 or Friedburg’s notes to Gratian, 33.5.15.

107 The Collectio Hibernensis, cites, in addition to the Pauline Letters, Isidore and Augustine: XLV. 20 De mulieribus vel feminis non accipientibus usum virile vel sacerdotale officium: Feminis in ecclesia loqui vel docere non permititur; sed nec contingere vel conferre ulius virilis muneris aut sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi vindicare.”; XLVI.25 De nominibus coniugum: Vir de virtute nomen accepit, hoc est belli, laboris, defensionis, primatus, praedicationis, mulier vero a mollitia, hoc est a fragilitate, humilitate, subjectione.”

108 The Collection in Three Parts used Panormia VII.48 (3P III.15, 53), the CaesarAugustana used 45 and 49-51 (Caesar. V.95, X.46-8), and the Collection in Ten Parts (Cambridge, Corpus Christi Col. 94, VIII.10) included all of Panormia VIII.43-51 in the original order. See Friedburg’s notes in his edition of Gratian, coll. 1253-6.

109 Gratian, Decretum, ed. A. Friedberg, in Corpus Iuris Canonici I (Leipzig, 1879), coll. 1253-6. The order of the canons in Gratian’s Decretum also follows the order of Ivo’s Panormia more closely than that of Ivo’s Decretum, as we can see from the chart.

110 Note that Ivo’s Decretum VIII.98 combines chapters 47 and 48 from book VII of his own Panormia into a single chapter.

111 See the note above.

112 On the reception of Bonizo’s work in the Middle Ages see Berschin, Leben, 95 ff. Judging from the number of extant copies, it was almost completely unknown to later canonists, and does not have a place in the mainstream of canon law which leads to Gratian.

113 “In Correctione Malorum Deus Omnipotens Placatur” Gratian, C. XXIII, Q. IV c. 47. This rubric follows most closely that found in a “B” recension of Anselm’s collectio canonum (Vat. Lat. 6381), which reads “Quod Dominus pacatur de vindicta malorum”—Cushing, 198. On Gratian’s use of a recension of Anselm’s collection see G. Picasso, “La ‘Collectio canonum’ di Anselmo...”, in Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture, op. cit., p. 320.


115 See for examples the comparisons between Richilde of Hainaut in the Annales Blandiniensis and the women in Saxo Grammaticus History of the Danes (McLaughlin, 194-5 and 200 n. 33), or the contrast between the portrayal of Athelfled in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle versus in Henry of Huntingdon (Bandel, 116).

116 Pauline Stafford, “The Portrayal of Royal Women in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Centuries”, in John C. Parsons, Medieval Queenship, (New York, 1993) pp. 156-7. McLaughlin does note that high medieval writers often alluded to biblical or classical models when describing “warrior” women (McLaughlin 195), but does not note the continuing popularity of patriarchal, even misogynistic classical texts in the early Middle Ages.
CHAPTER 6
PERCEPTIONS OF MATILDA IN THE POLEMICAL LITERATURE OF THE INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY

The polarity in responses to Matilda’s military authority is nowhere more evident than in the polemical literature of the investiture controversy, which modern historians have labelled the *Libelli de lite*. Many of the Libelli, it is true, were of extremely limited circulation—several survive in only one manuscript, and the survival of others in more than one manuscript can usually be attributed less to wide circulation than to their use as models of grammar and rhetoric in twelfth-century German cathedral schools. Nevertheless, these polemics were at least intended to sway public opinion and to reach a wider audience. Consequently, even those libelli which are inaccurate or far removed from the events of Matilda’s life serve to reveal contemporary attitudes towards the countess (who figures prominently in several of them) and towards female commanders in general.

Since we have already examined some of the more important polemics in earlier chapters, the following is not intended as an exhaustive study of all the passages that mention Matilda. Here we will be concerned primarily with works not yet discussed or with those that have a particular relevance for attitudes towards the countess. Specific attention will be paid not only to what she is said to have done, but also to whether her actions are portrayed in a positive or negative light, and upon what grounds they are either accepted as justifiable or condemned as illegitimate.

What we find is that Matildine polemicists praised the countess for assuming an active role in the war, although they did so in a rather patriarchal fashion. Because the discourse of historical writing was anti-feminine and war considered a male role, Matilda usually had to be given masculine virtue. Thus, Matilda’s supporters wholeheartedly praised her for “overcoming her sex and not fearing the brave deeds of men”. Nevertheless, these writers did defend Matilda’s exercise of military command. In order to bolster their arguments, they often sought biblical precedents in Old-Testament figures such as Sarah, Jael, Judith and Deborah, who served as examples of women whose acts of violence had been divinely sanctioned. That they were willing to write copiously in defence of a woman’s involvement in war is a testament to the countess’s patronage and her tremendous importance to the reform cause.
Patriarchal and even misogynistic assumptions were not so problematic for the Imperialist and Wibertine polemicists, who used them in a more direct fashion. These authors argued that Matilda's conduct was presumptuous and unbecoming of a proper lady. Like the repressive legislation examined in the previous chapter, the works of Matilda's opponents sometimes cited the conservative commands of the New Testament letters (in which the subordination of women to men and a rather rigid division of the sexes were advocated) or made reference to infamous female biblical figures (such as Jezebel). In general, however, the polemics of Matilda's military and political opponents tended to rely less on specific biblical references and to speak more directly to the materialistic concerns and general patriarchal assumptions of their audiences. Thus they described Matilda displaying stereotypical feminine vices (irrationality, quarrelsomeness, etc.) and employing her feminine wiles and vast wealth in a vain effort to prolong the war. The direction and bitterness of such criticism serves to indicate not only that the prevailing discourse was misogynistic, but also that the Gregorian forces were heavily dependent on Matilda's military and financial resources for a period of at least two decades.

Let us first examine the works favourable to Matilda. John of Mantua's commentary on the Song of Songs, written at Matilda's request between the spring of 1081 and the fall of 1083, was intended to reassure the countess that her warfare on Gregory's behalf was legitimate and to dissuade her from forsaking the struggle. Although not intended to circulate as a pamphlet, John's sermon exhibits many of the themes and exempla that were later to be used in Matildine polemics. Thus John portrays Matilda as a "virago catholica" and "prudentissima" who wields the secular sword delegated to her by papal authority (38, 51-2). Matilda's campaigns are presented as wholly legitimate, and John exhorts her not to fear either that conducting them is a sin or that Christians are forbidden to bear arms against heretics. John cites the example of David, whose wars were divinely sanctioned, and urges her always to be prepared to serve God in the way that David did (51-2). John's intent is clearly to convince Matilda that she has an obligation to wage war against the emperor:

Therefore, servant and bride of truth, when you see dissension arise, will you hesitate to prevent it with counsel and arms? For you know that the Lombard bishops and all their followers... prepare the way for the heretical antichrist... And if God had not set you and other holy powers in opposition to their wickedness, you would still have seen this dissension between the holy Pope Gregory and the Roman emperor... Now, Catholic
miles, pursue and hinder this dissension, while the limbs which suffer the onslaught of the Antichrist remain the stronger... You will be blessed... if you persevere as manfully against this heresy which serves the Antichrist as you have begun to do.⁶

That Matilda held some reservations about the justice of the war is indicated by John’s reassurance that it is the schismatics, not the legitimate secular powers like Matilda, who are the cause of the violence and that the dissension is as inevitable as the coming of the Antichrist. As we shall see, John’s desire to legitimize warfare, his use of Old Testament figures as precedents, and the portrayal of Matilda as a virago or miles catholica are all elements commonly found in the Matildine rhetoric of the period.

One of the first true polemics to defend the countess was the Liber contra Wibertum, written between June 1085 and March 1086 by Matilda’s ally and spiritual counsellor Bishop Anselm of Lucca (author of the canonical collection which we examined in the previous chapter).⁷ In the last few years of his life, Anselm had initiated a war of letters with the Antipope Wibert by writing him a letter critical of his conduct. Wibert had composed a vigorous rebuttal⁸, and Anselm in turn responded to Wibert’s reply by composing the Liber contra Wibertum, which contained a more detailed exposition of Anselm’s thought on the controversies of the time. In order to counter Wibert’s criticism that Gregory and his supporters were all-too-eager to wage war, Anselm produced a number of texts that he believed legitimized the use of violence against schismatics. Following Augustine, Anselm cited Sarah’s chastisement of a slave as an example of legitimate coercion.⁹ Near the end of the work, Anselm responded directly to Wibert’s allegation that Anselm had deluded Matilda and tricked her into dispersing her goods in a vain effort to support Gregory. On the contrary, Anselm argued, by using her resources to protect the true pope the countess stored up treasures in heaven. Anselm then praised Matilda for being:

...prepared not only to give all her worldly goods for the defence of justice, but to fight with her blood [usque ad sanguinem] for your confusion and out of reverence for the praise and glory of Holy Church, until God delivers his enemy into the hands of a woman.¹⁰

As I noted in the previous chapter, Bonizo of Sutri expressed a similar admiration for the countess in a work known as the Liber ad amicum. Having been expelled from his bishopric of Sutri and captured by Emperor Henry IV in 1082¹¹, Bonizo, like Anselm before him, had found refuge with Matilda, under whose protection, in 1085 or 1086¹², he composed this polemical
Bonizo's primary goal was to assure the followers of Gregory that their warfare was licit and to encourage them to fight against the Antipope Clement III and his adherents. In contrast to what he would later write in his Liber de vita Christiana, in the Liber ad amicum Bonizo describes the gran contessa in only the most flattering of terms: "excellentissima", "nobilissima", "gloriosissima". In the concluding exhortation, he praises her for being a soldier of God and a true daughter of St. Peter, for being prepared to die to defend the divine law and "to fight by every means, as long as her resources last, against the heresy which now rages in the Church". Interestingly, in addition to citing examples of divinely-sanctioned female violence (he makes an important allusion to the biblical heroine Jael, who killed Sisara, general of the Canaanites), Bonizo also feels the need to describe Matilda's virtues as masculine. Thus he praises her for having "a virile mind".

Like John, Anselm and Bonizo, subsequent polemicists made extensive use of biblical figures and narratives in their justifications of Matilda's campaigns. They alluded especially to the story of Jael and Deborah from Judges 4 in order to show that acts of violence, even those of a woman like Matilda, could be sanctioned by God. Thus the prose vita of Anselm, which appeared shortly after his death in 1086 (and served as the basis for several later works), portrays Matilda as a new Deborah, granted remission of her sins for leading her army against the schismatics: "Accipiens [M] ab eo [Gregory] in remissionem peccatorum hoc praecepti, ut quasi altera Debbora populum iudicet, militiam peragat, haereticis et scismaticis resistat".

Roughly a decade later, Cardinal Deusdedit, who as we have seen had earlier written a collection of canon law, portrayed Matilda's victory over the emperor as not only praiseworthy but indicative of divine Grace. In about 1097, Deusdedit composed his Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquos scismaticos, in which he gave thanks for the grace of God, through which the emperor was defeated not by any king or duke or marquis but by one woman: the glorious and blessed Countess Matilda. By the just judgement of God, wrote the cardinal, the vendor of churches Henry was overcome by a feminine triumph. Unlike Bonizo, who in his latter life harshly criticized Matilda's involvement in the war, Deusdedit consistently defended the legitimacy of her military authority.

Hugh of Flavigny extolled Matilda's man-like virtues in the chronicle he composed sometime between c. 1090 and 1102. Describing Matilda as possessing masculine strength of
will in her war with the king, he then went on to argue that Matilda's fortitude was comparable to that of the Amazon Penthesilea, who had the spirit of a man encased in female body:

At vero Matildis comitissa, Romanae aecclesiae filia, virilis animi constantiam tenens, tanto ei [Henrico] fortius resistebat, quanto magis huius astutias et papae innocentiam noverat. Sola enim tunc temporis inventa est inter feminas, quae regis potentiam asperrnata sit, quae calliditatibus eius et potentiaet etiam bellico certamine obviaverit, ut merito nominetur virago, quae virtute animi etiam viros praeiebat... Hec est mulier illa, de qua ab otrectatoribus fidei et conculcatoribus veritaris crimen incestus sancto pontifici obiciebatur. Cui si deessent meritorum laudes, hoc solum satis commendabilem redderet, quod cum tali viro, dum exprobaratur, dum convitia suscipit, dum inproperia audit, approbatur, honoratur, laudatur. Quae enim ut haec pro Romana decertavit aecclesia? Quot et quanta passa est, ut illa debita libertate frueretur?

At the end of the last chapter and throughout the first three, I noted some of the passages from Ranger's Vita Anselmi and Donizo's Vita Mathildis that attest to Matilda's personal involvement in the campaigns against the emperor. To these may be added the long series of verses in which Ranger describes Matilda planning operations, seizing spoils, paying and rewarding her men, etc. Besides the obvious statements, several other passages indicate more indirectly that Matilda exercised command. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Ranger at one point praises the countess for overcoming her sex and for not fearing the brave deeds of men (ll. 3705-6). In a later passage reminiscent of Anselm's Collectio Canonum XIII.23, Ranger invokes the image of the flagellum or scourge of God-- an image that had long been used to justify warfare and that in the Gregorian age was being employed by many Gregorians to portray their military allies as ministers of the Lord. Thus Ranger writes that the vassals who had rebelled against the countess and defected to Henry had fled "the just scourges [iusta flagella] of their lady". Elsewhere, Ranger describes how, when the Imperialist Bishop Peter of Lucca was attacking a castle loyal to the countess, Anselm sent word to Matilda and beseeched her "hurry now with all your men and send protection to us swiftly!". Although it was a miracle rather than Matilda which eventually saved the fortress (according to Ranger, at least), the implication of the passage is that Matilda was not only capable of giving commands and making strategic decisions, but also of leading her troops personally.

Matilda was frequently compared to the Amazon Penthesilea or to a female Mars, but the comparisons to biblical figures like Martha and Mary, Judith, Jael and above all Deborah are the most prominent in the works of her supporters. As Popes Hadrian and Gregory VII,
Anselm, Bonizo and Deusdedit before them, Ranger and Donizo invoked these biblical women as *exempla* to praise and justify a woman’s military activities. Thus Ranger at one point compares Matilda to Martha and Mary (ll. 3157 ff. and 3683-4), at another he calls her a second Judith and writes that although Henry had laid waste to Italy he was conquered by a woman. He then points out, even more humiliatingly (for Henry), that this woman was one that had been weakened by earlier battles and stripped of brave men and fortified places. Later on in his poem, Ranger cites the example of Deborah as a woman who waged war both legitimately and effectively:

   Ad sexum fragilem redeamus: Debbora quondam
   Ante viros fortes forci or arma tuit.
   Non illi preceptor erat, non signifer ante,
   Et fecit strages atque trophae tuit. 29

   In a similar fashion, Donizo favourably likens Matilda first to Martha (II.1, II. 169-70) and then to both Deborah and Jael (*Vita Mathildis*, 743-50). A little later on, Donizo compares Matilda favourably to Judith: although Matilda did not kill Henry, as Judith did Holofernes, she nevertheless routed him repeatedly and set traps for him, into which he fell even when he thought he was being cautious. 30

   Matilda’s defenders clearly did not feel that her sex should prevent her from mobilizing and commanding troops in war. 31 Before we examine the attitudes of her critics, however, we should stress that patriarchal and even misogynistic undertones are by no means absent from the writings of the reformers, nor even from works produced within Matilda’s own literary circle. As I noted in the previous chapter, some of the earliest reformers, such as Humbert, had complained about the women who were taking active roles in Church affairs. As we have seen, Bonizo himself, after eloquently praising the countess in his *Liber ad amicum*, subsequently composed a scathing criticism of women who engaged in war and politics in his canonical collection, the *Liber de vita Christiana*. We may also note here that traces of his later attitude can be uncovered even in his earlier *Liber ad amicum*. Bonizo’s account of the coup at Kaiserswerth in 1062 (*Liber ad Amicum*, 595-6), while inaccurate 32, includes an interesting description of how the German clergy and princes deposed Agnes and elected Anno because they deemed it unworthy that the realm be ruled by the will of a woman, “as much since she was a nun and it did not befit her to serve in secular courts as that their lord seemed to have achieved the age of adulthood...” 33
While the misogyny here may perhaps be attributed not to the author but to the princes of the realm, other passages reveal that Bonizo cannot be so easily exonerated. Earlier in the same work, Bonizo had denounced the Empress Agnes’s “feminine unruliness”, describing how she “regni tenebat gubernacula. Que multa contra ius feminea faciebat audacia”. He had also argued that the Lombards had been able to hoodwink her into supporting the Antipope Cadalus because she had a gullible, female mind. Moreover, the fact that Bonizo uses the very same terms—*feminea audatia, feminea licentia*—to condemn Agnes in the Liber ad amicum that he was later to use against Matilda in his Liber de vita Christiana indicates that Bonizo’s misogyny was not wholly a reaction to Matilda’s involvement in the Daimbert affair; rather, it was a long-standing opinion that appears to have been put aside momentarily out of gratitude for Matilda’s generosity in granting him refuge. The exigencies of the Investiture Conflict seem here to have temporarily overridden the prevailing misogyny, but they could not completely erase centuries of patriarchy and prejudice. Thus we find Bonizo praising Matilda by describing how she had a “virile mind”, Pseudo-Bardo notes how she acted “nobiliter et magnifice, insolito mulierum more”. We even sometimes see a full inversion of genders—Donizo, for example, stresses the shameful femininity of Matilda’s opponent Obertus at the battle of Sorbara: “And murmuring like a nun [*nonnae*], he fled without honour”.

Less frequently, patriarchal assumptions could be turned to Matilda’s advantage. Deusdedit, in the passage noted above, clearly emphasized the fact that Henry was defeated by a woman in order to stress the emperor’s inadequacy and the justice of the reforming cause. Given the general perception of women as the weaker sex, the fact that Henry was overcome not by any king or duke but by a “feminine triumph” served to illustrate which side had the favour of God—namely, the physically inferior but morally superior one. For similar reasons, Ranger sometimes depicted Matilda as a single, weak woman (although at other times, as I have noted, he did praise Matilda for her strength of character). Patriarchal attitudes are more explicitly revealed in Ranger’s version of a letter supposedly written to Henry by Anselm, in which Anselm declares that it is shameful for a brave man to conquer a woman, but still more shameful to be conquered by her. There are numerous other statements of this sort scattered throughout Ranger’s *vita*. In attempting to find models of legitimate female violence, Matilda’s defenders were indeed fighting against a common assumption that strength of character is masculine and weakness
feminine. In order to defend the countess in such an environment, her supporters were forced to portray her either as a weak woman with divine grace or as an honorary man.

The misogyny of the period is revealed more clearly in the Imperialist and Wibertine polemics, especially those that attacked the countess for her political maneuvering. The pro-imperial *Vita Henrici IV imperatoris* (composed 1106-7), for example, alleges that Conrad's defection in 1093 was all due to Matilda's machinations. The misogyny here lies not in the allegation itself—as we saw in chapter 2, there seems to be some truth to the claim that Matilda played an instrumental role in these events—but in the depiction of her actions as typically feminine. Clarifying the reason why Henry's son would have deserted him, the author explains: "for whom can feminine cunning not overthrow or deceive?"

Despite their misogynistic overtones, however, the Imperialist and Wibertine polemics do provide some good evidence of Matilda's involvement in the war. Actually, it would be more precise to say that their misogyny is something of an asset to the historian, since the direction of their criticism serves to reveal Matilda's tremendous importance to the reform party. A poem commemorating the emperor's victory in Rome in 1084 and attributed to Peter Crassus (an apologist for Henry IV), for example, attacks Gregory for seizing and holding the apostolic seat through the liberal use of money, of which Matilda was a major provider:

\[
\begin{align*}
Iam \ rex \ nunc \ tenet \ atria, \\
Quae \ cepit \ cum \ audatia, \\
Et \ sedem \ apostolicam, \\
Quam \ tenebas \ pecunia. \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
Non \ erubescis \ putride \\
Machtildae \ malae \ sociae? \\
Tentasti \ mundum \ cogere \\
Cum \ pondere \ pecuniae. \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
Sopitae \ sunt \ insidiae, \\
Quas \ posuisti \ undique; \\
Vires \ Machtildae \ non \ valent \\
Et \ nequeunt \ succurrere. \ \text{44}
\end{align*}
\]

A more extended criticism of the countess appears in the anonymous *Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda*, a pro-Henrician polemic written in the early 1090s. After recounting the deaths of many of Henry's enemies, the author of this tract notes that
Fuit enim imperator tunc in Italia, quando haec circa adversarios suos sunt gesta; quam scilicet tertiam illuc profectionem fecerat praecipue contra Mathildam, fautoram Hildebrandi papae; cuius scilicet secretis sermonibus assuefacta, ne adhuc quidem potest compesci, muliebribus furiis instincta, ut pacem quam bellum malit et ut rebus suis iam usque ad ultimum pene exterminium dissipatis consulere velit, cum hactenus ipsa fuerit praepotens divitiis, utpote filia Bonifacii marchionis. (Liber de Unitate, 263)

The author argues that Matilda's behaviour runs counter to the teachings of Peter and Paul, who taught women, the weaker vessels, to be chaste, modest and submissive (Liber de Unitate, 263). Regarding the teachings of Paul, the anonymous refers to 1 Timothy 2, 9-10, which commands women to adorn themselves not with expensive clothing or jewelry but with good works. Interestingly, Augustine's commentary on the lines immediately following these (1 Timothy 2 11-12) was one of the patristic texts used to limit women's authority in the canonical collections of Ivo (Panormia VII. 49) and Gratian (C. 33, Q. 5, C. 17). The author of the Liber de unitate then goes on to condemn Matilda for her frequent discussions with Hildebrand, which he depicts as scandalous and suspicious-- a reference, no doubt, to the charges raised at the synod of Worms and the common rumours of an inappropriate relationship between the two. The author also relates that Hildebrand placed his party in the care of this quarrelsome woman in order that through her sex both the church and the republic might be assailed. He then complains that, even eight years after the death of Hildebrand, Matilda continues to defend the Gregorian party against the apostolic seat (i.e. Wibert) and the imperial party.46

The passage serves as a catalogue of the charges brought against Matilda by her critics. The author accuses Matilda of: ignoring feminine propriety and usurping male authority; following and herself being a disturber of the peace; and giving up all her possessions in the effort to defend Gregory. In addition to the patriarchal, even misogynistic assumptions underlying the passage, we may note the scriptural bases of the criticism. The charges that Matilda acted in a manner contrary to that laid down for her gender and that she disturbed the peace are supported by explicit references to scripture; the allegation that she dispersed all her wealth in vain is not. The last charge is thus not so much a moral as a material warning to the followers of Gregory-- support him and you will lose everything you have. Although devoid of any explicit scriptural foundation, the warning, first made by Wibert and rebutted by Anselm in his Liber contra Wibertum, nevertheless had to be repeated by the author of the Liber de unitate because Matilda's resistance and resources remained as great an obstacle to an imperialist
victory in 1093 as they had been when Wibert first made the allegation in the mid-1080's. The nature of the criticism of the countess thus underscores the tremendous importance of Matilda's military activities to the Gregorian cause.

Shorter letters were also exchanged in the course of the war of polemics, and these provide further evidence of Matilda's role in defending the reformers. Wibert's supporters made at least one direct attempt to convert the countess to their party. This letter, written c. 1098 by Cardinal-Deacon Hugh, has fortunately been preserved. It begins by praising Matilda for fighting zealously for the unity of the Church: "Quanto zelo pro unitate aecclesiae decertaveris, testantur mille pericula, quibus animam vestram exposuitis". The thrust of Hugh's argument, however, is that while Matilda's zeal, good intentions and perseverance are unimpeachable, her lack of knowledge about the truth of the struggle has led her to choose the wrong side.

Although Hugh commends her for refusing riches and worldly glory for the sake of justice, and although he proclaims that her fame is known to all, he argues that she nevertheless has been led astray by the errors and perverse teachings of "Turbanus" (Urban). Hugh then prays that she will withdraw her support from the enemies of God and return to the path of Jesus in order that all her many labours might not be in vain.

Without a doubt, Hugh meant to flatter the countess by recalling her fame and fortitude. Given the context, however, the praise is surely not empty rhetoric. Hugh was, after all, writing only a few years after Matilda's great victory over the emperor at Canossa and just after the defeated emperor had left Italy for the last time. I would urge caution, however, in using such sources as evidence for Matilda's direct involvement in hand-to-hand fighting. Granted, Hugh commended Matilda for "fighting" for the unity of the Church, but whether he meant *decetare* to be taken literally or figuratively is not altogether clear. Chroniclers of the time frequently used the names of commanders to indicate their armies—when they state that William fought against Harold what they mean is that their forces engaged, not necessarily that the duke of Normandy fought a personal duel with the king of England. What Hugh's letter clearly does show, however, is that Matilda remained vitally important to the reform war-effort until at least the end of the eleventh century. The fact that he commended Matilda for forsaking earthly wealth was probably a concession necessitated by Wibert's earlier criticism of Matilda's use of her military and financial resources in "vain" defense of Gregory. Moreover, the fact that someone like Hugh, who for many years had vigorously opposed the Gregorians, would have written such a letter
(which he must have realized had very little chance of success) reveals the desperation into which the antipope and his supporters had been cast by Matilda’s victories. The letter suggests a realization on the part of the Wibertines that, with Henry gone, they had very little hope of reversing their fortunes in Northern Italy unless Matilda was converted or neutralized (which in the end turned out to be the case).

When Cardinal Hugh’s letter proved unsuccessful in converting the countess, Wibert wrote a letter to Hugh—fortunately also preserved—consoling the cardinal-deacon for his failure and condemning Countess Matilda. In Wibert’s letter, Matilda appears not as Jael or Deborah but as a scheming Jezabel, whose threats Hugh is advised to ignore “viriliter”. Matilda is portrayed as a rabid dog possessed by a “woman’s insanity” \textit{[muliebrem insaniam]}. The criticism here is predicated upon an underlying misogyny—a perceived connection between femininity and animalistic irrationality—and is a reaction against her prominent role in the military and political maneuvering of the late 1090s.

Perhaps the most interesting and revealing of all the polemical assaults on Matilda and the Gregorians is that of Sigebert of Gembloux (c. 1030-1112). Like many other imperialists, Sigebert was not wholly unsympathetic to the goals of reform, but objected primarily to the violent means with which the reformers sought to achieve them. In 1103 Sigebert wrote his \textit{Epistola adversus Paschalem papam}, a response to a letter of Paschal II, in which the pope had ordered Count Robert II of Flanders to attack the imperialist cities of Liège and Cambrai. Sigebert denounced Paschal for promising his soldiers remission of their sins as a reward for waging war. He argued that such a concession, granted without the traditional obligation to make confession and receive absolution, not only ran contrary to ecclesiastical law but lay beyond the scope of papal authority. The letter also indicates Sigebert believed, not only that Gregory had been the first to make such a novel promise, but also that Gregory had personally done so to Matilda herself: “Solus Hildebrandus papa ultimam manum sacris canonibus inposuit, quem legimus precepisse Mathildi marchisae in remissionem peccatorum suorum, ut debellaret H[einricum] imperatorem.”

Cowdrey has recently characterized Sigebert’s accusation as an oversimplification; in fact, he argues, Gregory consistently provided for clergy who would administer absolution to those fighting on his behalf. Whether or not Gregory promised Matilda remission of her sins for her military activities alone, however, Sigebert’s criticism of the pope is really only
comprehensible if Matilda did indeed fight in some capacity against the emperor. Sigebert, who lived through the struggles of the 1080s and 90s and who died only 3 years before Matilda herself, obviously believed that the countess had personally performed some military duties. The verb *debellare*, which he uses to describe her activity, is unfortunately not specific enough to allow us to answer the question of whether Matilda personally fought in the ranks, but the context in which he uses it—Matilda being promised remission of her sins for taking up arms—compels us to interpret the passage, at the very least, as indicating that Matilda did indeed exercise command. Indeed, both papal and anti-papal sources record that Gregory made some sort of promise of remission of sins to Matilda for her role in the war, and we can only conclude that Matilda would have had to have done something—most likely perform the military role incumbent upon her class—in order to gain such a reward.

We have seen how the same activity could provoke opposite responses, and how Matilda could be both attacked and defended for her military activities. Indeed, the writers of both camps sometimes employed the very same literary models (albeit in completely different moods) to express their opinions about the countess. Thus, both Imperialists and Gregorians compared her to the Amazon Penthesilea—the Gregorians to praise her, the imperialists, sarcastically, to vilify her. The authors’ approaches tended to differ, however, in their use of scripture. The main problem for Matilda’s supporters was how to reconcile their own patriarchal assumptions with their reforming political agenda and their obvious admiration for the countess. This was to be a recurring problem for male authors allied to female rulers and commanders in the Middle Ages. If courage and resolution are masculine virtues and war a male role, how could Matilda’s exercise of military authority be justified? We saw in the previous chapter how the canonical compilers responded by citing Gregory the Great’s letter to Brunhild, which was used to argue that women who hold the secular sword possess not only the right but the obligation to use it in order to prevent greater sins. Generally speaking, the polemicists found a similar answer in the Old Testament women (Deborah, Jael, Judith) whose use of force was licit because it was directed against the enemies of God. In the service of the Lord, a woman’s display of “masculine” courage and decisiveness was wholly praiseworthy. Unlike other contemporary female leaders, who tended to rely on the ideology of motherhood and regency, Matilda, who was never a mother or regent, apparently benefitted most from the emerging ideology of religious warfare; certainly, her supporters commonly used this ideology as the basis for their
rebuttals of criticism of the countess. At other times, some Matildine polemicists sought to use patriarchal assumptions to Matilda’s advantage by suggesting that although she engaged in war she retained her feminine weakness. The advantage of this approach was that it highlighted Henry’s inadequacies and the justice of the reforming cause— the defeat of the mighty Roman emperor by a single weak woman was seen by many to render the judgement of God manifest. Hence we have a number of statements that were intended to be insulting to Henry, like Deusdedit’s that Henry was overcome by a “feminine triumph”. Sometimes we find both approaches in the same work. Citing biblical *exempla* and indications of divine approbation were thus popular methods whereby the polemicists reconciled their own patriarchal assumptions with their political agenda.

Matilda’s critics did not rely so heavily upon scriptural *exempla*. When they did use scripture, the imperialists, like the attendees of the Council of Nantes and other early medieval canonists, tended to refer not to specific women but to the more general patriarchal and even misogynistic statements of the New Testament letters. Thus Petrus Crassus, writing somewhat before Bonizo, cited Paul’s command that women be silent in church in order to censure Albitia, who had preached in the church of Cremona. Even when they did cite specific women, the Imperialists understandably avoided mentioning Deborah or Jael and instead referred to disreputable figures like Eve or Jezebel, much as chroniclers had done to women like Brunhild, Ermengarde and the Byzantine Empress Irene for centuries. The Imperialist sources do not appear to have followed Bonizo in his negative reinterpretation of hitherto positively-viewed biblical figures like Mary and Deborah. The polemical assaults on Matilda did not cite such women nor did they attempt to support Bonizo’s characterization of Mary and Deborah as hubristic. Whether because of Bonizo’s earlier association with the Gregorian party, the obscurity of his collection or the difficulties involved in explaining why the interpretations of these women must be changed, the most original aspect of Bonizo’s canon was not particularly influential to either canonical or polemical treatises. Far more common was the charge that Matilda was profligate in dispersing her ancestral goods for Gregory’s vanity— a criticism whose foundation was more financial than religious and which illustrates the importance of Matilda’s efforts to the maintenance of the Gregorian cause. Perhaps realizing that some of their readers would not appreciate all the nuances of their scriptural allusions, the imperialist polemicists instead relied more heavily upon general patriarchal and misogynistic assumptions than did the
Gregorians. Hence their sweeping generalizations such as "for whom can feminine cunning not overthrow or deceive?". Hence also the portrayal of Matilda as a quarrelsome beast rabid with "a women's insanity", and the shame inherent in Benzo's statement describing the aftermath of Matilda's victory at Canossa: "Monachi et mulierculae cogunt in fugam praesules" (Benzo, 90).

In this respect, the anti-Matildine polemicists followed a path beaten by numerous earlier writers, such as the Lorsch Annalist who had disparagingly described Empress Irene's rule as a "femineum imperium". The need for specific scriptural references was not so pressing when the whole tenor of historical and polemical discourse was patriarchal-- simply pointing out that Matilda was a woman was criticism enough.

Whether they were forced to reconcile their political agenda with the attitudes of the age, or whether they simply directed these patriarchal attitudes against the countess, all the polemicists agreed that Matilda played a very prominent and active role in the war. Although the vocabulary used by the sources is too vague for us to specify whether her activities included personally assuming a position amongst the ranks of her troops, the polemics confirm the conclusion reached from our analysis of the other sources: that Matilda did control significant military resources and that she did exercise command over her own soldiers. Matilda's gender meant that she had to face an additional barrage of criticism, but her considerable wealth, noteworthy military abilities and the eloquence and erudition of her allies allowed her to meet each salvo with a powerful volley of her own.
femmes dans la société

(Reichardt)

discension, ut
canonum. On Anselm's
hanc
membra quae Antichristi
contra Wibertum,

R.

7 (Dominus autem omnipotens
read the passage
9-10.

mulieris
Bonito
the sources
introduction to the Liber ad amicum see L. Gatto,


fs


On the identity of the


Anselmi

Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, pp. 22-3 and n. 78.

On the identity of the "amicus"—once thought to be Matilda herself—see Berschin, p. 10 and note 35. For an introduction to the Liber ad amicum see L. Gatto, Bonizone da Sutri e il suo Liber ad Amicum (Pescara, 1968). On the sources relating to Bonizo during this period see Berschin, Bonizo von Sutri, pp. 10 ff.

"Sed cum superius a me quassisset, amice dulestimine, si licet christiano armis pro veritate certare, hystoriam petebas."; Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Libelli deLite I (Hanover, 1891), VIII p. 618.

Ibid., pp. 599, 602, 605, 606, 609, 610, 612, 613.

"igitur pungent gloriosissimi Dei milites pro veritate, certent pro iustitia, pungent vero animo adversus heresim, extollemente se adversus omne, quod dicitur vel quod colitur deus. Emulentur in bonum excellentissimam comitissam Matildam, filiam beati Petri, qui virili animo, omnibus mundanis rebus posthabitis, mori parata est potius quam legem Dei infringere et contra heresim, quae nunc sevit in ecclesia, prout vires suppetunt, omnibus modis impugnare; in manu cuius credimus quia tradetur Sisara, et sicut labin in torrente Cison disperiet..." Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 620. See also Ludovico Gatto, "Matilde di Canossa nel Liber ad Amicum di Bonizone da Sutri", 166
Matilda in the _Libelli de Lice_ 167

18 Robinson, _Authority and Resistance_, 28. There appear to have been two versions of Deusdedit's _Liber contra Invasores et symoniaicos_, the second being and amplification of the first—see Somerville. Anselm of Lucca and Wibert of Ravenna, (ditto), p. 5 n. 23.
19 "Sed gratias Deo, qui, ut ait apostolus, _semper triumphant nos in Christo Iesu..._ nam tandem non cuiuslibet regis et ducis sive marchionis, sed unius feminae, scilicet gloriosae et Deo dilectae committitae Mathildis, congressione adeo debilitatus est, ut quinquagenarius magnus Romanorum abiturum feminoe superetur triumpho..."—Deusdedit presbyteri cardinalis libellus contra invasores et symoniaicos et reliquis scismaticos, ed. Ernestus Sackur, LdL II, 292-365: 330. The "feminine triumph" no doubt refers to Matilda's victory outside Canossa and the ensuing reversal of her fortunes in Lombardy. The passage also seems to me to echo Judith 16.8: "non enim cecidit potens eorum a iuvenibus nec filii Titan percuserunt eum nec excelsi gigantes inposuerunt se illi sed Iudit filia Merari in specie faciei sua dissolvit eum".
20 Hugh of Flavigny, _Chronicon_, SS VIII (1848): 288-502
22 Ranger, 3677 ff.
23 "Adsunt vicini captantes praemia Tusci/ Et fugiunt dominae iusta flagella suae"—Rangerius of Lucca, _Vita metrica s. Anselmi Lucensis episcopi_, ed. E. Sackur et al., MGH SS 30/2 (1926-34), pp. 1278, ll. 5865-6. Ranger was discussing Henry's assaults on Lombardy in the early 1080's.

For other references to the scourgis of God see Humbert, _Tres Libri adversus simoniaicos_, LdL I, 216-7; Liber de Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda, ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, LdL II, 173-291: 199 (citing a letter of Gregory I). We may also note that the term fures, used by Gregory in his letter to Brunchild, had recently been applied by Humbert to simoniaic: Humbert, _Libri III_, III.40, pp. 247-8 (the chapter is entitled "De furibus simoniais, et qualler ovile intrent"). Indeed, words like fures, infideles and haereticos became all but interchangeable with simoniaicos and Nicholaites in the bitterness of the disputes of the late eleventh century: see for example Manegold of Lautenbach's _Liber ad Gebehardum_, ed. Kuno Francke, LdL I, pp. 308-430: cc. 76-7, pp. 428-30, or the anonymous _Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda_, ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, LdL II, pp. 173-184: 268, where the Wibertine author recods how the Gregorians "blasphemant [antipope] Wigbertum eundemque Clementem episcopum Romanae ecclesiae, scribentes eum furem et hereticum atque mendacem esse...". Cf. Deusdedit, _Libellus contra invasores_, 332 ff.
24 "Nunc itigur totis occurrere viribus atque/ Nobis festinum mittite presidium."—Ranger, ll. 4885 ff.
25 For Matilda as Penthesilea see the quote from Ranger at the end of my chapter 4; for Matilda as a female Mars see Ranger, 5404.
26 In addition to the passages discussed here, we have also noted earlier how Paul of Bernried and Ekkehard had compared Matilda to Deborah: _Vita Gregorii Pauli Bernriedensis_, in Watterich I. 506; Ekkehard, p. 234. Another comparison to Deborah appears in _The life of S. Hugh Gratianopolitanus_ c. 1053-1132, in _Acta sanctorum_, A Godefirdo Henschenio et Danielei Papaebrochro et Societe Iesu (Paris and Rome: 1865), Vol. I. p. 39: "Sed et comitissa Mathildis, habitus quidem feminei sed animi per cincta virillis, quae rerum humanarum tumultus atque pericula instar prophetissae Deborae prudenter sedare et fortiter noterat tolerare; in suo Deum venerans famulo, Dei consecrationis eius necessaria cuncta subministravit; pastoralem, quo diu usus est, baculum dedit; additis psalmarum secundum B. Augustinum explanationibus, cum B. Ambrosii volumine, cujus est titulus, de officiis: totoque deinceps tempore xixit, tamquam verum dei famulum sincera devotione specialiter honoravit et coluit, sitiens ejus instanter et consiliis instrui et oratione defendi."  
27 In a letter to Agnes Gregory compared her, Beatrice and Matilda to the women who sought Christ in his tomb (Reg. Greg. I.85, June 15 1074, p. 107).
28 Ranger, ll. 2931-46. Later Ranger has Henry fearing "to entrust himself to Mars while the woman whom he fears thunders from behind"—an obvious, if somewhat hyperbolic, reference to Matilda (Ranger, 3545-3554).
29 Ranger, 3589-92. A few lines later (3615-20) Ranger cites the example of Moses, who was ordered by God to command others to kill. Still later (5963-4) he once more invokes the examples of Judith, Deborah and Samson as admonitions to the wicked that divine justice cannot be avoided.
30 Donizo, 799-801. Allitle later (ll. 851-2) he compares Matilda to Ester.
31 I use the term "sex" here because it for many of Matilda's supporters her gender or spirit was male.
32 Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, note 1, p. 596.
33 "...deliberaverunt dehinc privato scemate vivere, indignum iudicantes regnum muliebri regi arbitrio, tum quia monacha erit et curis eam non decebat servire secularibus, tum quia eorum dominus altum eam videbatur ascendisse etatem..."—Bonizo, Liber ad Amicum, 595-6.
34 Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 593.
35 "Dehinc ultra montes pergunt animumque imperatricis utpote femineum alliciunt, figmenta quaedam componentes quasi veri similis... His et talibus machinationibus decepta imperatrix feminea licentia assensum dedit operi nefario..."—Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 594-5. Bonizo’s description of these events echoes that of the Annales Althienses, which states that the investiture of Cadalus was the “Inicia dolorum” and lays the blame for the investiture of the antipope on the emperor’s youth and the empress’ feminine inconstancy. The Annales also state that Henry’s mother, “inasmuch as she was a woman”, was easily swayed by her counsellors: “Inicia Dolorum haec. Rex enim puer erat, mater vero utpote femina his et illis consiliabantibus facile cedeabant..."—Ann. Alt. 56.
36 Pertz notes the correspondence of these two works in his edition of Bonizo’s Liber de vita Christiana, p. 250 nn. 2-3. On the relationship between the Liber ad amicum and the Liber de vita Christiana in general see Berschin, Leben und Werk, 70-1.
37 Bonizo, Liber ad amicum, 620.
38 Pseudo-Bardo, 19.
39 "Et quasi voce loquens nonnae, sine fugit honore"—Bonizo, Vita Mathildis, l. 357.
40 "Turpe viro fortii mulierem vincere, vinc/ Turpius... si victus eris, quod ego reor esse futurum./ Regibus et populis ludus et omen eris."—Ranger, 4051-2 and 4055-6.
41 See for examples: the speech Ranger puts in the mouths of the schismatic counts and prelates of Italy before the Sorbara campaign: "Offendit regem mulier nec nostra veretur/ Agmina, maiores se facit Italia;/ Maiorem ducibus et culmine pontificali./ Maiorem magnis regibus et populis./ Turpe quidem tantis tantillam vincere, turpe/ Magnanimis ducibus cum muliere manum/ Et vidua conferre; tamen, quia nos quoque spernit/ Et, quod eam patimur, imputat ipsa sibi/ Et iam magnificat sese, vincatur, et arcis/ Omnes in cinerem comminuantur ei." (6489-98); the speech of Cencius, that Henry is "...nec Sanoniae praelia ferre valens/ Nec de faemineo congressu laeta reportans,/ Quae docuit regem non satis esse virum." (5868-70); and Anselm’s rhetorical question "Who would think that the female mind, affected by such concern and such great labour, would be able to be free for God, or to recollect itself after the heat and sudden attacks which surround and pursue it? ["Quis putet in tali cura tantoque labore/ Femineam mentem posse vacare Deo/ Seque recolligere post aestus sive procellae;/ Qui circumvieniunt atque secuntur eam?"]" (3695). Note also the obviously pejorative use of feminine as an adjective in phrases such as “femineum iugum” (1191-2) and “faemineo naufragio” (3470).
42 Vita Heinnerici IV. imperatoris, MGH SS XII 276
43 "quem enim astutia feminea non subvertat, aut decipiat?"—Ibid.
44 For the poem see the edition of Dümmler in L. de Heinemann’s introduction to Petrus Crassus’ Defensio Heinnerici IV. regis, LdL I, 433-4. Robinson argues in support of Dümmler’s attribution of the poem to Peter—Robinson, Authority and Resistance, 75-6. On the identity of Petrus see also Cowdrey, G VII, 312-3 and n. 212.
"Although vires (in the verses of Peter) could be translated as military forces, I believe from the sense and context of the passage that it more likely refers to financial resources.
45 Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda, ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, LdII, 173-291
47 I. S. Robinson, Authority and Resistance, 100.
49 To illustrate his point Hugh refers to Romans 10,2: “they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”
51 Leodicensium epistola adversus Paschalem papam, ed. Ernestus Sackur, LdII, 449-64: 463-4. For an introduction to Sigebert and his works see Robinson, Authority and Resistance, 175-9. The criticism here seems to me similar to some of the criticism of the crusades.
52 Sigebert, Epistola adversus Paschalem, 464.
53 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, 656-7.
54 "...cui et contrario in remissionem datur, ut quasi altera Delbora populum iudicet, militiam peragat, haereticis et schismaticis resistat"—Pseudo Bardo, p. 16, c. 11. Cf. Overmann, Reg. Mat., 42d; Robinson, Authority and Resistance, 100.
57 Cf. Giampaolo Ropa, “Studio e Utilizzazione ideologica della bibbia nell’ambiente Matildico (sec. XI-XII)”, in Studi Matildici III. On p. 305 he notes that Matilda was also compared to Ester and Saba, Solomon’s queen.
CONCLUSIONS
THE CAMPAIGNS OF MATILDA AND THE STUDY OF WOMEN'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP

Having established a more accurate record of Matilda's campaigns, and having examined contemporary responses to her career, we are now in a much better position to draw conclusions regarding the precise nature of her military accomplishments and the broader historical significance of her career. Certain answers still elude us—a fact we must acknowledge—but at the same time we are able to build upon a substantial body of solid evidence and to provide answers to a number of other important questions.

The first issue we must address is the extent of Matilda's involvement in her own campaigns. The question is one which historians have not dealt with particularly well. As is the case with other militant women, those historians seeking to glorify Matilda's accomplishments have often elaborated on very meagre evidence, while other historians, if not dismissing her involvement altogether, have assumed that she must have had a man behind the scenes telling her what to do. Before we can accurately evaluate the significance of Matilda's career, then, we need first to delineate exactly which military functions Matilda can be proven to have performed.

Regarding Matilda's alleged career as a soldier, we can only conclude that the sources unfortunately do not provide enough evidence for us to determine with certainty whether she herself ever used weapons or even wore armour in combat. Early modern authors portrayed Matilda wielding a lance and wading into the fray with her sword, but the medieval sources were never so explicit. No reliable source from the Middle Ages specifically states that she ever used an actual weapon (as opposed to the symbolic "secular sword", which represented the authority to direct legitimate violence), and there is no solid evidence that she ever gave or received wounds on the battlefield. The accounts of the chroniclers, poets and polemicists, and their comparisons of Matilda to famous Amazons or biblical figures, are indeed suggestive but far from conclusive. For too long the study of women in warfare has been captive to either complete ignorance or unfounded exaggeration, and more of either will only further confuse the situation.

If they cannot provide us with a definitive answer to this question, records of Matilda's campaigns at least enable us to refine our methodology and to be more precise in our terminology. If we distinguish between soldiers and commanders, between classes and their
corresponding military functions, we are able to prove that Matilda was a commander even while leaving open the question of whether or not she was a soldier. We can do this because in both ancient and medieval societies class was as much or more a determinant of military rank as personal prowess. Thus, as Jean Truax has recently observed of noble Anglo-Norman women, although the chroniclers rarely if ever portray them wielding weapons in open battles,

...there is no doubt that the chroniclers considered them capable of commanding the defense of besieged castles and directing the movements of armies in the field. In their minds, a woman did not need actual combat experience in order to be qualified to make strategic decisions.¹

Unlike present-day generals, but much like Roman emperors or early modern monarchs, medieval commanders often did not have to fight their way up the ranks before being given a position of command; such positions could be associated with inherited property or could be inherited themselves, as was the case with Matilda and Henry IV.² Although personal prowess was of course a valuable asset to any medieval commander, it was not an absolute necessity, as William of Malmesbury’s description of Henry I of England (quoted in my introduction) quite clearly indicates.

Given that Matilda did inherit the status of military leader, there remains the question of whether she was only a figurehead— useful for morale and as a charismatic focus for the troops, but not allowed to make decisions or issue orders herself— or whether she actually performed the functions of a real commander. Employing Truax’s terminology, we might ask whether Matilda was a “charismatic leader” or a “prudent strategist”. Fortunately, we can now provide a definite answer: Matilda was both. Certainly, she had an important effect on the morale of her troops. Matilda could not have held out against the emperor for years at a time without having some sort of hold over her subordinates. A number of her vassals were forced, by continual violence and devastation, to come to terms with Henry, but others stuck by Matilda even when she was formally deprived of her holdings, their oaths of allegiance to her were loosed, the emperor had entered Rome and Gregory had died in exile. Moreover, we have seen that the narrative sources repeatedly show her displaying a concern for morale— she incited her followers to battle and comforted them in defeat, as Donizo tells us she did after the battle of Tricontai (Donizo, ll. 596-9). Finally, as I noted in chapter 2, one of her few extant letters records how, after the expulsion
of Gregory from Rome in 1084, Matilda encouraged her German allies to take heart and informed them of the recapture of Sutri and Nepi.

The sources also clearly indicate, however, that Matilda was not just a figurehead but in fact a true commander, one actually involved in the processes of planning operations, issuing commands and enforcing discipline. Numerous and quite different sources—from papal letters asking for her council before the proto-crusade of 1074 and arranging the attack on Wibert in 1080, to accounts of the military assembly at Carpineta, to the privileges she granted to ensure the cooperation of her allies and vassals—all indicate that Matilda was involved in the planning of her own campaigns. Indeed, she had been surrounded from her childhood by people who made tactical and strategic decisions on a near-daily basis, and she clearly learned her lessons well. We also have specific evidence that she issued tactical commands (e.g. before Tricontai) and that she was present with or led her forces on several occasions (e.g. her assault on Rome in 1087, her defense of Mantua in 1091, and her offensives against Ferrara in 1101, Prato in 1107 and Mantua in 1114), although unfortunately we do not have both types of evidence for any one campaign. Less direct sources, moreover, corroborate the testimony of the more obvious ones: hence we find Matilda maintaining the infrastructure of her armies by seizing plunder and distributing it to her men, receiving homage and oaths of fealty, building, maintaining and garrisoning castles, settling disputes, providing escorts and refuge to allies, etc. Given the wide range of sources and of duties ascribed to Matilda, we can be certain that she was a true commander, that is to say, one who made decisions, issued orders and took steps to ensure that they were carried out.

Careful assessment of Matilda’s military performance also offers us some insight into the nature of the countess’s character—a fortunate circumstance, given that few of her letters survive and we rarely hear her speaking with her own voice. The works written to encourage Matilda, in addition to the countess’s own deeds, reveal to us a lady of conscience, one highly concerned with the moral consequences of her actions. Although the claims that recur in her donations (to the effect that she made them for the remission of her sins) may be formulaic, the very fact that she so richly endowed the Church suggests that some truth may lie behind the formulae. Moreover, sources such as Pope Gregory’s letter of assurance and John of Mantua’s Commentary on the Song of Songs indicate that in the early days of her reign Matilda had serious reservations about asserting her independence by deserting her husband and taking part
in the war against the emperor. Indeed, the sheer number of authors who sought to convince the countess herself of the legitimacy of conducting military operations against Christians reveals that Matilda's moral angst was one of the driving forces behind the historical, canonical and polemical treatises of the age.

Ultimately, however, Matilda overcame her own misgivings, and neither the acrimonious debates about the legitimacy of wars against Christians nor even the bitter criticism which was leveled at her prevented her from engaging in warfare, power politics or international diplomacy. This fact reveals the countess's courage, perseverance and independence. Matilda certainly suffered her fair share of defeats, but she always seemed to rebound from them quickly. Especially in the dark days following Gregory's death in exile, she breathed new life into the faltering Gregorian party and ensured its survival. Even in her later days, when the struggle against Henry IV had been won, Matilda continued to attend councils and synods, to support the work of the reforming bishops, to facilitate military and political alliances and to enforce her lordship in Tuscany and Emilia. In a life that spanned some of the most turbulent years of the high Middle Ages, she was able to repudiate two husbands (in Welf's case, she also resisted the coercion of his powerful father) and even to defeat the Holy Roman Emperor himself. Throughout her endeavours she displayed an independent spirit, albeit one devoted to the reforming papacy (at least until the time of Pascal), and once having carefully deliberated upon the proper course of action, she exhibited a determination—one may perhaps call it stubbornness—which inspired her friends and exasperated her enemies.

Matilda's generalship bears the stamp of her personality. To face the brunt of two imperial invasions, each several years long, certainly required a high degree of resolution. But if we are broadly to characterize her generalship, we have to admit that her intelligence and flexibility were just as prominent as her determination. Intelligence, certainly, in both the general and the specific military sense: Matilda not only made timely alliances and astute strategical decisions (given her overall objectives); especially in her war against Henry, she also maintained an efficient system of reconnaissance which allowed her to maximize the virtues of her circumstance (that of fighting a strategic defensive on interior lines of communication). She displayed considerable flexibility and adaptiveness by quickly recovering from crushing defeats and by conducting a wide range of campaigns during her long career—from defensive, holding actions in mountainous terrain against numerically superior enemies to offensive, combined-
arms expeditions on the rivers and plains of Lombardy against the fortifications of precocious
communes. She was also capable of adapting to changing circumstances within individual
campaigns themselves, as she did before Canossa in 1092, when the war shifted suddenly from
an elaborate and extended siege to a war of deception and maneuver.

If awareness of the military context of Matilda's activities helps us to illuminate her
character and the nature of her accomplishments, the other side of the coin is that the study of her
campaigns enables us to achieve a more accurate understanding of the characteristics of
medieval warfare. Analysis of Matilda's generalship serves to dispel many of the most inveterate
myths about medieval warfare, such as that strategic planning and the use of surprise were
foreign to the period and that numerical and qualitative differences in the troops were the sole
determinants of battle. Matilda relied heavily upon surprise and intelligence in the war against
Henry and the Wibertines, most notably in the days leading up to the Battle of Sorbara and the
emperor's assault on Canossa, and exploitation of these principles enabled her repeatedly to
emerge victorious over numerically superior opponents. She also displayed a keen awareness of
the strategical situation by avoiding battle and adhering to a Fabian strategy, by granting
important privileges and by conducting timely alliances.

Analysis of Matilda's accomplishments also enables us to test McLaughlin's thesis. What
we find is that the history of the countess's campaigns supports certain elements of the thesis
while undermining others. McLaughlin's most basic assertion, that women's military
participation is a significant and hitherto overlooked aspect of medieval warfare, is proven
fundamentally sound. What is more, Matilda's numerous victories over male adversaries and the
fact that she was able to protect Gregory in her own lands when the German princes were not
able to protect him in theirs indicate not only that women could and did serve as generals, but
that they could do so just as effectively as their male counterparts.

In light of our knowledge of medieval reactions to Matilda's accomplishments, however,
McLaughlin's assertion that there was an increase in women's participation in war in the Central
Middle Ages is a bit more problematic. McLaughlin acknowledges the difficulty in drawing
conclusions on the basis of our lack of sources:

Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, especially for the earlier part of this
period,... it is important to treat this conclusion with caution. It may be that women did
participate in warfare before the tenth century, but the records of their activity have disappeared.\(^5\)

As we have seen, however, many of the records of earlier women have not disappeared (although one has to look at the legal sources in order to appreciate this fully). Moreover, as I noted in my introduction, there are many examples of later medieval women engaging in war that McLaughlin neglects to mention. Their experiences can be most productively approached through the more refined methodology that the study of Matilda’s campaigns compel us to adopt. Although it is quite difficult to uncover sources for middle-and lower-class female soldiers\(^6\), what we do know of upper class women indicates that many of them continued to take active roles in war well into the later medieval period. We also know of a number of Renaissance and early modern women who inherited positions of military leadership; medievalists could certainly benefit from opening a dialogue with historians more familiar with the contemporary sources, who could help us to determine whether rulers like Elizabeth I and Margarite de Navarre were true commanders or mere figureheads. Finally, the numerous examples of women who disguised themselves as men in order to join modern armies further suggests that the numbers of female warriors and commanders may be even greater than the sources would indicate.\(^7\)

I do not want to suggest that there can be no truth to McLaughlin’s assertion that legislation and the decline of the “feudal system” of military organization made participating in war more difficult for women in the later Middle Ages; what I argue is that, with the history of women in war currently under revision, we must be cautious about relying on the earlier scholarship, which tended to dismiss or neglect women’s roles. As has been the case before in women’s history, the absence of specific studies has allowed inaccurate generalizations to be given wide currency.\(^8\) What we need are more studies of women like Matilda. Divergence between laws and actual behavior may have been exacerbated in the central Middle Ages, as changing inheritance practices gave some women tremendous power by making them the sole heirs of vast, undivided lordships (as was the case with Matilda). One interesting tendency which I have observed, and which may lend support to this part of McLaughlin’s thesis, is that in the high Middle Ages we find a number of women conducting offensive operations (as Matilda did against the Wibertines in Rome and against towns like Prato and Mantua), while in contrast all the late medieval female commanders which I have examined (with the exception of Joan of Arc) were engaged in defensive operations.\(^9\) Nearly all of the later women were fighting to
defend castles or towns, often ones entrusted to them by their husbands. Other than Joan, the last cases I know of in which women personally directed offensive armies (what would be known as an exerciti by contemporaries) date from the thirteenth century 10 (although admittedly this may merely be the result of the fact that I am most familiar with high medieval sources). A commentary on English secular law from the twelfth century, which bars women from serving in the royal army but seems to leave open the question of women’s defense of private estates, may indicate one of the means by which women’s participation in offensive expeditions was curtailed. 11 After this, the erosion of the feudal rights to maintain private armies and defend privately-held fortifications may have affected women more than men, since much of women’s participation in later medieval warfare appears to have centred upon defensive operations. 12 Of course, the question would then become: why were the laws effective in the later Middle Ages and not in the earlier period?

More research into these areas will undoubtedly produce further examples of women’s participation, which hopefully will provide us with enough quantitative data to draw firmer conclusions. 13 Much work remains to be done, however, if we are to trace the course of the canons beyond Gratian and to understand them within the context of other social and military developments. It may be that after Gratian new, more specific restrictive canons appeared, or that individuals and institutions grew more capable of enforcing the traditional general prohibitions, although I have not as yet found much evidence for this. Some women were forbidden to go on later crusades 14, and the English secular law I mentioned above is certainly noteworthy. On the other hand, some women actually won the right to go on crusade in the early thirteenth century 15, and the charges against Joan of Arc were directed more against her practice of wearing men’s clothing (which, in a progression of logic that may seem odd to modern readers, thereby constituted idolatry), than her leading armies per se. 16 If the laws against female combatants had become so much harsher and more effective, why, we may ask, was there a need for legalistic acrobatics in the case of Joan? Why not simply cite Bonizo? One reason would be that his specific canon had been forgotten and had had little influence on later canon law. As we have seen, subsequent canonists like Ivo and Gratian had returned to the less specific, more general statements of the church fathers. A certain degree of generality in the laws may actually have been desirable, since it allowed room for interpretation and selective enforcement. Certainly, in
Joan's case, the laws did not prevent either the Armagnacs from accepting her leadership or the English from executing her for it.

Even at this early stage in the history of female combatants, however, we can reject Bandel and McLaughlin's assertion that only in the eleventh century did female combatants begin to attract criticism and that only from this period on were they viewed as unnatural and controversial. Despite the abruptness of many of the earlier chronicles, the legal documents indicate that there was a continual cycle of repression and deviance throughout antiquity and the early Middle Ages. We have observed the Carolingian court in the late eighth century specifically denouncing the "femineum imperium" of Empress Irene and the Council of Nantes at the end of the ninth century stating how "astonishing" it was to see indecent and shameless mulierculae usurp male authority. Brunhild had been denounced as a Jezebel long before Matilda was.

To be sure, the sources I have examined were written by male elites and of course do not necessarily represent the views of all members of medieval society. There really was no single medieval "attitude" towards women, and their status was often very different in theory than it was in practice. Moreover, reactions to Matilda's activities were polarized by the emerging struggle between regnum and sacerdotium, and some of the bitleness of the assaults on Matilda may be attributable to contemporary circumstances. Nevertheless, criticism of women's military participation as unnatural and sacrilegious was neither obscure nor novel nor solely a product of the Investiture Controversy. On the contrary, it was at least as old as Plato. Furthermore, alongside the criticism existed a corresponding and demonstrable continuity in attempts to prohibit women from serving as soldiers and commanders stretching from the Classical and Late Antique periods into the early and high Middle Ages. Bonizo initiated neither the criticism nor the reactionary legislation: the chauvinism of the Pauline letters, the patriarchal and even misogynistic aphorisms of the Church Fathers and the early Church statutes, the restrictive secular laws, the controversy over Irene, the conciliar legislation—all are indicative of the prevalence of patriarchal attitudes in the classical and Late Antique periods. No major break with these traditions appears to have occurred before the eleventh century—or indeed after it.

It may come as a surprise to some that the continuity of the criticism and prohibitive legislation was matched by a continuity in women's participation in warfare. The surprise, however, is unwarranted—without women's participation, the prohibitive legislation would
hardly have been necessary. Maintenance of patriarchal stereotypes and a sexual division of labour was a difficult and at times contradictory affair which often had to be accompanied by repressive action. As the laws themselves often acknowledge, the repeated promulgation of traditional legislation was a response to the challenge presented by the activities of classical and early medieval women. Interestingly, in the late eleventh century (when the debate about the authenticity of ecclesiastical traditions reached a crescendo), a woman’s military authority was defended by the polemical pamphlets and canonical treatises of certain Gregorians in a more vigorous, creative and voluminous manner than apparently ever before. The earlier, more general debates about the legitimacy of women’s public authority thereby expanded to include a battle between canons relating specifically to women’s military authority. Something of the divergence that had long existed in medieval society between theoretically-defined roles and actual behaviour thereby manifested itself in legal and political theory in a more visible manner.¹⁹ The question, very much alive in this period, was which to follow: the traditional, theoretical prohibitions (established by Roman law, the gospels, the Church Fathers and the early medieval canons); or the more unconventional approach (based upon the precedents set by women of sacred and secular history and the ostensible sanction of Gregory the Great’s letter to Brunhild) that allowed women a much greater role in war.

What accounts for the liveliness of the debate in this period? The answer must be, to a large extent, the importance of Matilda to the reform cause. We have demonstrated how the earlier debates about women’s authority had been provoked by the actions of women like Brunhild and Empress Irene, whose exercise of authority angered many of the men of their times. Sporadic attempts had been made by men like Gregory the Great or Hadrian to encourage individual women or to deflect criticism away from female allies, but the general tenor of historical and canonical discourse in Western Europe had remained repressive and patriarchal throughout the early Middle Ages. What was different in the eleventh century was the vigour and industriousness of the Gregorians’ defence of a female commander, a defence made necessary by the novel exigencies and happenstances of the Investiture Controversy. By the 1080s, the papacy was at war with the German emperor and had become heavily dependent upon the woman whose lands straddled the paths to Rome. The popes and many of the most prominent canonists and polemicists of the Investiture period owed their positions (and sometimes even their lives) to Matilda’s patronage. They were engaged in a struggle which, whether we view it as
revolutionary or not, certainly called for a radical reinterpretation of many of the established traditions of the Catholic Church. The countess was thus able to maintain a large circle that included scholars both willing and able to adapt the old sources to contemporary agendas and to attempt a justification of her authority within the context of their new interpretation of the Latin theological and canonical tradition. The ideology of mother and regent was not one available to Matilda, but the increasingly formidable apparatus of reforming propaganda could be directed, as part of the larger goal of sanctifying papally-authorized warfare, to justifying a woman’s military authority. Although this had to be done in opposition to established sacred and secular laws, it was at least portrayed as a return to authentic traditions, a reform of society according to biblical models and as a necessary response to a heretical threat to the very existence of the Church.

The Gregorians’ search for precedents for Matilda’s behaviour in biblical, historical and canonical sources was quite creative and produced perhaps the most extended justification of women’s military authority hitherto devised. At the same time, of course, Matilda’s actions also provoked further criticisms—again often based upon biblical and historical precedents—of women’s military authority. McLaughlin sees the search for these precedents, both positive and negative, as a response to increasingly harsh legislation and an indication that the eleventh century began to experience a new sense that female militancy was somehow unnatural (McLaughlin, 194-5). As we have seen, however, the perception of women combatants as unnatural long predates the eleventh century, and the use of biblical and historical referents to criticize women’s public authority was a long-established tradition. Assaults upon Matilda’s authority in her own time were thus launched from the traditional bases and ancient models. Advancements in literacy and the growing historical consciousness of the eleventh century may have allowed for a more voluminous and erudite patriarchy than that of earlier centuries, but the anti-feminine tenor of the criticism was the same. The most novel aspect of the canonical debates of the eleventh century was not the search for precedents, but the Gregorians’ use of a papal letter to a secular prince as a true auctoritas for ecclesiastical law.

Although we cannot accept McLaughlin’s theory about the origins of prohibitive legislation and derogatory criticism, her argument that study of interaction between gender roles and behaviour is a necessary precondition for understanding the relationship between gender and experience is certainly valid (McLaughlin, 193). The debates about Matilda’s military authority thus offer historians a tremendous opportunity. They allow us to study not only the divergence
between gender roles and actual behaviour—a hallmark of the Middle Ages—but also the interaction between the two. If we look at Matilda’s career, we find that her behaviour affected broader conceptions of the normative by inspiring both a reiteration and expansion of traditionally-defined roles and an attempt to construct an alternative to them. Although none of the Gregorians’ approaches to the specific issue of women’s involvement in warfare appear to have had a major influence beyond the age of Matilda, the countess’s involvement with these authors did have a significant impact on the development of Christian attitudes towards warfare in her own time. Moreover, Anselm’s important compilation, which was itself made possible by Matilda’s patronage and protection, addressed the wider issue of the legitimacy of organized violence in a more systematic and extended fashion than any previous collection of canon law and thus had a lasting impact well beyond his and Matilda’s lifetimes. Gregory’s actions, including the aborted Crusade of 1074, may also have had an effect on later theories of Crusade. Finally, even though Ivo and Gratian later rebuilt the earlier canonical repression on the basis of the misogyny of the Church Fathers, the fact remains that in her own day Matilda did have a number of prominent and influential supporters, who were able to construct a vigorous (if rather patriarchal) defence of the countess’s actions in their polemical, historical and canonical writings.

Many contemporary authors were willing to defend the actions of other militant women. Orderic Vitalis, for example, extols the virtues of Countess Sibyl and describes how she wore a hauberk and patrolled the walls in order to defend them against pagans. At another point in his Ecclesiastical History, Orderic compares two noble women—one good, one bad—who both dominated their husbands and all their vassals. Orderic praises the good lady (who is also the more militarily active one) by noting how she rode armed as a knight amongst other knights and by comparing her to legendary heroines like the Aeneid’s Camilla. Other documents attest to the fact that other women of the time were giving and receiving feudal oaths and acting as advocates of monasteries, just as Matilda did. Surveyed as a whole, the canon laws of the Reform period did not so much inhibit Matilda’s ability to command her forces as justify it. At the very least, restrictive canons like Bonizo’s appear to have been no more effective than the Gregorian’s canons that justified her actions. Although Pope Gregory VII does appear to have publicly distanced himself from Matilda in order to avoid any hint of impropriety in their relationship, he clearly approved of Matilda’s military campaigns on his behalf. The countess
continued to lead armies and take an active role in politics, and the authors who praised Matilda for this continued to be at least as numerous and as influential as those who condemned her. Numerous other women also continued to participate in war throughout the period.27

Comparison of Matilda to other female commanders thus suggests that military leadership was indeed a viable avenue of women’s power in the Middle Ages. The continual (if apparently rather ineffectual) prohibitive legislation, the controversies over women like Irene and the undercurrents of misogyny which are discernible even in sympathetic sources, however, ensured that command would by no means be an easy or a common path. Women who inherited important lordships could attempt to assert military power, and (as writers like Orderic and Bonizo show) could perhaps find men willing to support them, but such women were especially open to criticism and usually faced additional obstacles due to the long history of patriarchal attitudes and legislation.28 The opponents of women who asserted military power had centuries’ worth of ammunition to draw upon. Thus, as Chibnall notes regarding the Empress Matilda, “what might in a man have passed for dignity, resolution, and firm control were condemned in her as arrogance, obstinacy, and anger”.29 A common method of attacking female commanders was to play upon traditional gender roles and to portray the women as arrogant or presumptuous. Thus, just as the Libri Carolini had attacked Irene for seeking authority over men, Nantes 19 had censured women for acting attrita fronte and Bonizo had condemned Matilda for her feminea audacia, so Orderic criticized a noblewoman who took over her incapacitated husband’s duties for her "woman's presumption", for being rash and relying on her own judgement.30 It seems, however, that a wide range of circumstances—personal, political, military, economic, etc.—were capable of overriding (if not wholly surpassing) the misogyny of canonical theory and historical discourse.31 Hence women were often praised for acting “like men”.32 Less commonly, the theoretical definitions of women as noncombatants could sometimes be turned to a woman’s advantage. The fact that a “weak woman” like Matilda of Tuscany had defeated Emperor Henry IV was used by her supporters as proof of the justice of her cause; similarly, in the twelfth century, England’s King Stephen refused to imprison the Empress because she was a woman.33

Hopefully, future research will help us to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between roles and behaviour in the lives of individual medieval women. Studies of violence on a smaller scale (e.g. crime, feud, etc.)34 and in other periods and civilizations can also provide some interesting comparisons and should continue to enrich our
understanding of medieval women. Anthropological evidence, for example, shows us that although uncommon, women’s participation in warfare in other societies has been frequent enough to warrant further study.35

The records of Matilda’s campaigns complement these conclusions and prove that the military activities of medieval women had significant legal, military and political consequences. These women cannot be summarily dismissed as abberations and insignificant exceptions. When all the various sources for Matilda’s activities are examined in combination, and within the contexts of the medieval struggle between regnum and sacerdotium, of the history of attitudes towards female combatants and of the experiences of women of other societies, the evidence for Matilda’s exercise of command becomes absolutely compelling. Matilda’s campaigns thus enable us to refute John Keegan’s assertion-- an assumption hitherto all-too-common amongst military historians-- that warfare is the one human activity from which women “have always and everywhere stood apart”.

Matilda and Women's Military Leadership

3 She may also have wanted to atone for the sins of her ancestors; her father Boniface had frequently encroached upon Church property and Matilda appears to have been well aware of this fact.
5 “References to women’s participation in warfare are most numerous in sources dating from between the tenth and thirteenth century, which would seem to suggest that the woman warrior was a phenomenon of the central middle ages... Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, especially for the earlier part of this period, however, it is important to treat this conclusion with caution. It may be that women did participate in warfare before the tenth century, but the records of their activities have disappeared.”—McLaughlin, 199.
6 For some examples see John M. Klassen, Warring Maidens, Captive Wives, and Hussite Queens: Women and Men at War and at Peace in Fifteenth Century Bohemia (Boulder, 1999). On the controversial evidence for the female archers of Paris see Karl Michaelsson, Le Livre de la Taille de Paris, L’an de Grâce 1313, Göteborg, 1951. p. 252, and for 1298 pg. 84 and 88, and the discussion of this evidence in Herlihy 142-4. One of the few medieval military historians to note women’s participation is Philippe Contamine, who mentions a number of women who participated in war as both soldiers and commanders in the later Middle Ages: Philippe Contamine, War in the Middle Ages, Trans. Michael Jones, (Basil Blackwell: New York, 1984), pp. 241-1.
7 E.g. Elizabeth Ewing, Women in Uniform (London, 1975) pp. 28-35. We may also note that some women may have disguised themselves in order to participate in the Crusades—see: Beha-ed-Din, Life of Saladin, Trans. C. W. Wilson (New York, 1971) pp. 195-211, and the sources translated in Francesco Gabrielli, Arab Historians of the Crusades (University of California Press, 1969) pp. 189 and 206-7. See also the discussion of these passages in Nicholson.
10 Albrici Monachi Triumfantium Chronicron, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst, MGH SS 23 (1874): 631-950, p. 878 (for Blanche’s activity in 1201); Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisennium, ed. I Heller, MGH SS 24 (1879): 540-642, p. 641 (the countess of Portugal’s campaign in the same year). I have also found one ambiguous reference to conflict between a widowed countess and her son in 1220, but whether the widow actually fought or commanded troops herself is impossible to tell—see Achille Luchaire, Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus, Trans. Edward Kreibiel (London, 1912), p. 265. See also the recent studies in Theodore Evergates, ed., Aristocratic Women in Medieval France (Philadelphia, 1999), which discuss a number of noble women in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
11 In a version of the treatise attributed to Glanvill (MS. Camb. Univ. Mm. I.27, f. 31b) we find the following statement regarding women: “Quia non possent nec debent nec solent esse in servitio domini regis in exercitu nec in aliis servituis regalius”—F. Pollock and F. Maitland, The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1968), p. 485 n. 5.
12 We may also note that the one military task which Vegetius seems to accept women performing is throwing rocks and using weapons from towers and walls in defence of cities—Vegetius, Epitoma Rei Militaris, IV.25, p. 263.
13 The publication of Military Women Worldwide: A Biographical Dictionary of Military Women, ed. Reina Pennington (Greenwood Publishing Group, forthcoming), will hopefully be of help to research in this area.
16 Susan Schibanoff, “True Lies: Transvestitism and Idolatry in the Trial of Joan of Arc”, in Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc, edd. Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (Garland Publishing Co.: New York, 1996). In a similar fashion, we find that the opponents to Empress Matilda’s claim to the English throne in the twelfth century did not argue that
she was a woman, but that the marriage of her parents had been unlawful—Honeycutt, “Female succession”, in Medieval Queenship, 195.

17 Honeycutt, “Female Succession”, in Medieval Queenship, 201.

18 Here I am in concord with Jean Chélini, who notes how the antifeminism of Matilda’s time echoed the views of the Church Fathers and the authors of the Carolingian age, and Berschin, who acknowledges that in the chapter on women in war Bonizo follows the misogyny of Late Antique authors like Jerome—Jean Chélini, “Les femmes dans la société médiévale au temps de la comtesse Mathilde a travers l’oeuvre de Pierre Damien”, in Studi Matildici II, 295-6; Berschin, “Bonione di Surri e lo stato di vita laicale”, op. cit., p. 287.


26 See Herlihy, Opera Mulebria, 115-6.

27 See the women discussed by McLaughlin, 198-9; Fraser, 158-9; Truax, passim; Nicholson, passim; Theodore Evergates, ed., Aristocratic Women in Medieval France (Philadelphia, 1999). We even have some artistic evidence of women operating siege machinery—see Randall Rogers, Latin Siege Warfare, 268. This evidence takes on added significance when one considers that Simon de Montfort was said to have been killed by a trebuchet operated by women—Nicholson, 344.

28 Honeycutt, “Female Succession”, in Medieval Queenship, 194-5.

29 Chibnall, Empress Matilda, 96-7

30 Orderic Vitalis, Ecclesiastical History, VI 149.


32 Honeycutt, “Female Succession”, in Medieval Queenship, 200.


34 E.g. Ross Balzaretti, “‘These are things that men do, not women’; the social regulation of female violence in Langobard Italy”, in Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West, ed. Guy Halsall (Boydell: Woodbridge, 1998), 175-192.

35 See, for example, the Dahomean women mentioned by Peggy Reeves Sanday in Female Power and Male Dominance (Cambridge, 1987), 77 ff. Interestingly, these women appear to have considered themselves the possessors of masculine virtues; they apparently stated “We are men, not women”.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Albrici Monachi Triumfontium Chronicon, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst, MGH SS 23 (1874): 631-950

Amatus: Storia de'Normanni di Amato di Montecassino, ed. V. de Bartholomeis, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 76 (Rome, 1935)

Andreae Danduli Chronica per Extensum Descripta, ed. Ester Pastorello, in Muratori, RIS, new series, XII part 1 (1938)


Annales Admuntes, MGH SS 9 (Leipzig, 1851): 569-600

Annales Altahenses maiiores, edd. W. von Giesebricht and E.L.B. von Oefele, MGH SRG (Hannover, 1891)

Annales Augustani, ed. G. H. Pertz, MGH SS 3 (1839): 124-36


Ann. S. Disibodi, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS 17 (1861): 4-30

Annales Stadenses, ed. I.M. Lappenberg MGH 16 (1859): 271-379


Anselm of Lucca, Collectio canonum una cum collectione minore, ed. Friedrich Thaner, I (Innsbruck, 1906-11)

------, Liber contra Wibertum, ed. E. Bernheim, MGH LdL I: 517-28

Arab Historians of the Crusades, ed. and trans. Francesco Gabrieli; ed. and trans. from Italian by E. J. Costello (Berkeley, 1969)


Arnulf of Milan, Liber gestorum recentium, ed. C. Zey, MGH SRG 67 (Hanover, 1994)


Beno: Benonis aliorumque cardinalium schismaticorum contra Gregorium VII et Urbanum II. scripta, ed. Kuno Francke, MGH Libelli de Lite II: 366- 422

Benzo of Alba, Ad Henricum IV imperatorem libri VII, ed. K. Pertz, MGH SS 11 (1854): 597-681

Bernold of St. Blasien, Chronicon, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS 5 (1844): 385-467
Bibliography


Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad Amicum*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Libelli de Lite I (Hanover, 1891): 568-620

-----, *Liber de Vita Christiana*, ed. Ernst Perels, forward by Walter Berschin (Hildesheim, 1998)


*Catalogi abbatum Nonantulani*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum, saec. VI-IX (Hannover, 1878): 570-3


-----, *Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of Three Virtues*, trans. Sarah Lawson (New York, 1985)

*Chronicon Estense*, edd. Giulio Bertoni and Emilio Paolo Vicini, in *Muratori*, RIS XV part 3


*Chronicon Parmense*, ed. Giuliano Bonazzi, in *Muratori*, RIS, new series, IX (1902)


*Collectio IX Partium* (Vat. BAV. Lat. 1349, VII.132)

*Collection in Ten Parts* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi Col. 94, VIII.10)

*Collectio Duodecem Partium* (Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 246)


*Liber canonum diversorum sanctorum patrum sive collectio in CLXXXIII titulos digesta*, ed. Joseph Motta (Vatican City, 1988)

*Collectio Britannica*, London, British Library, Ms. Add. 8873

*Collectio canonum Hibernensis, Die Irische Kanonensammlung*, ed. Hermann Wasserschleben (Leipzig, 1885; reprints 1966)
Concilia Namnetensis, c. 19, in Sacrorum conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio, Vol. 18, ed. J. D. Mansi (Florence, 1759-98)

Cosmo of Prague, Chronica Bohemorum, ed. D. Rudolfo Köpke, MGH 9 (1851): 1-209


Deusdedit, Collectio canonum: Die Kanonessammlung des Cardinals Deusdedit, ed. V. Wulf von Glanvell, I (Paderborn, 1905)

-----, Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquis schismaticos, ed. E Sackur, MGH LdL II (1892): 292-365

Donizo, Vita Mathildis celeberrimae princeps Italiæ, ed. Luigi Simeoni, in RIS, new series, ed., Tomus V, Part II (Bologna, 1940).

Eadmer: Ex Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia, ed. R. Pauli, MGH SS 13 (1881): 139-47

Ekkehardi Auraugiensis Chronica, ed. D. G. Waitz, MGH SS 6 (1844): 1-26 (Chronicon Wirzburgerense) and 33-231 (Chronicon universale).


Fulcher of Chartres, Historia Hierosolymitana, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913)

Geoffrey Malaterra: Gaufredi Malaternae, De Rebus Gestis Rogerii Calabræœ et Siciliae Comitis et Roberto Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius, ed. R. Pontieri, RIS, New Series, (1925-8), 5/1

Gratian, Decretum, ed. Ae. Friedberg, Corpus Iuris Canonici I (Leipzig, 1879)

Gregory VII, Registrum, in Monumenta Gregoriana, Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum vol. II, ed. Jaffé, Philippus (Berlin, 1865)

-----, Registrum, Das Register Gregorii VII, ed. E. Caspar, MGH Epp. Sel. 2 (1920-3)


Gregory the Great, Registrum, ed. D. Norberg, 2 voll., in Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 140, 140a (Turnholt, 1982)

Historia Welforum Weingartensis, in Monumenta Welforum antiqui, MGH SRG 43 (1869)

Hugh of Flavigny: Chronicæ, ed. G. Pertz, MGH SS 8 (1848): 288-502

Humbert of Silva Candida, Libri III adversus simoniacos, ed. F. Thaner, MGH LdL I: 95-253


-----, Epistolæ, in PL 162 (1889): 11-504

-----, Tripartita, Paris, BN 3858B

John of Mantua: Johannes Mantuani in Cantica Cantorum et De Sancta Maria Tractatus ad Comitissam Matildam, edd. Bernhard Bischoff and Burkhard Taeger (Freiburg, 1973)

Johanne de Bazanno, Chronicum Mutinense, ed. Tommaso Casini, in Muratori, RIS, 15 Part 4
Bibliography

Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium, ed. I. Heller, MGH SS 24 (1879): 550-642


Landulf (Senior): Landulfi Historia Mediolanensis usque a. 1085, edd. L. C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, MGH SS 8 (Hanover: 1848)


Lex Romana Visigothorum, ed. Gustavus Haenel (Berlin, 1849)

Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda, ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, LdL II, 173-291

Libri Carolini, in MGH Legum Sectio IV: Concilia, Tomi II, supplementum (Hannover and Leipzig, 1924)

Liutprand of Cremona, Antapodosis, in Liutprand, Opera, ed. Joseph Becker, MGH SS in usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae histoicis seperatim editi (Hannover and Leipzig, 1915)


Manegold of Lautenbach, Ad Gebehardum liber, ed. Kuno Francke, LdL I: 300-430

Monumenta Bambergensia, Bibliotheca rerum Germanarum Vol. 5, ed. Jaffe (Berlin, 1869)

MGH: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum, ed. Societas aperiendis fontibus rerum germanarum medii aevi (Hannover, 1826-)

Muratori, Ant. It.: Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi, ed. L. A. Muratori (Milan, 1739)

-----, Delle Antichita' Estensi ed Italiane (Modena, 1717)


Petrus Crassus: Defensio Heinrici IV, Regis, ed. L. de Heinemann, MGH Libelli de Lite I: 432-53


Psuedo-Isidore, Decretales Pseudo Isidorianae et CAPita Angilrammi, ed. P. Hinschius (Leipzig, 1863)

Quellen und Forschungen zum Urkunden-und Kanzleiwesen Papst Gregors VII., ed. L. Santifaller, Studi e Testi 190 (Vatican City, 1957)
Quellen zur Geschichte Kaiser Heinrichs IV., ed. F.J. Schmale and I. Scmale-Ott (Darmstadt, 1963)


Regino of Prum, Libri duo de synodalibus causis et disciplinis ecclesiasticis, ed. F.G.A. Wasserschleben (Leipzig, 1840)


Ruperti Chronic a s. Laurentij Leodensis a. 959-1091, ed. W. Wattenbach, MGH SS 8 (1848): 261-79


Tiraboschi, Girolamo, Memorie storiche Modenesi, 2 voll. (Modena, 1794)

Tacitus, Complete Works, trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb (New York, 1942)

The Theodosian Code, the Novels and the Sirmondian Constitution, trans. Clyde Pharr (Princeton, 1952)


Wido of Ferrara, De scismate Hildebrandi, ed. Ernst Dümmler (following the edition of Roger Wilmans), LdL I: 529-67

Secondary sources

Aceto, Tonino, "L'apparato difensivo di Canossa", in SM III: 369-94


Affò, P Ireneo, Storia della Città di Parma (Parma, 1957)


Archer, R., "'How Ladies... who live on their manors ought to manage their households and estates': Women as Landholders and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages", in Woman is a Worthy Wight: Women in English Society, c. 1200-1500, ed. P.J.P. Goldberg (Wolfeboro Falls, NH, 1992): 149-81

Arthur, Marylin, "From Medusa to Cleopatra: Women in the Ancient World", in Becoming Visible: 79-106

Balzaretti, Ross, "'These are things that men do, not women': the Social Regulation of Female Violence in Langobard Italy", in Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West, ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge, 1998):175-92


Beard, Mary, Women as Force in History (New York, 1946)

Bellocci, U., and Ghirardini, L. L., S. Gregorio VII nel Reggiano (Modena-Reggio Emilia, 1985)


Brooke, Christopher, Europe in the Central Middle Ages, 962-1154 (New York, 1987).


Castagnetti, A., "I cittadini-arimanni di Mantova (1014-1159), in Sant'Anselmo: 169-93

Chadwick, Munro, The Heroic Age (Cambridge, 1912; rpt. 1967)
Bibliography

Jean Chélini, “Les femmes dans la société médiévale au temps de la comtesse Mathilde à travers l’oeuvre de Pierre Damien”, in SM II: 295-306

   ------, The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English (Oxford, 1991)


   ------, Pope Gregory VII’s ‘Crusading Plans’ of 1074”, in Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom Presented to Joshua Prawer (Jerusalem, 1982) (also Popes, Monks and Crusaders, no. 10)


Dieckmann, Friedrich, Gottfried III. der Bucklige, Herzog von Niederlothringen und Gemahl Mathildens von Canossa (Diss.: Erlangen, 1885)


Drei, Giovanni, Le carte degli archivi parmensi del secolo XII (Parma, 1950)

Nora Duff, Matilda of Tuscany, La Gran Donna D’Italia (London, 1909)


Ewing, Elizabeth, Women in Uniform (London, 1975)

Fabbi, Fernando, Le Quattro Castella (Reggio, 1960)
   ------, “Le famiglie Reggiane e Parmensi che hanno in comune l’origine con la Contessa Matilde”, in SM I: 19-52

Falce, Antonio, Bonifacio di Canossa, Padre di Matilda 2 Voll. (Reggio Emilia, 1926)

Fasoli, Gina, “Note sulla feudalità Canossiana”, in SM I: 69-81
   ------, “Rileggendo la ‘Vita Mathildis’ di Donizone”, in SM II: 15-41
   ------, “La realtà cittadina nei territori Canossiani”, in SM III: 55-78


Ficker, Julius, Forschungen zur Reichs- und Rechtsgeschichte Italiens 4 voll. (Innsbruck 1848-74)

Fioravanti, J. M., Memorie Storiche della città di Pistoia (Lucca, 1758)

Fiorentini, F. M., Memorie della gran contessa Matilda, 2nd ed., with additions by Mansi, G. D. (Lucca, 1756)


Fraser, Antonia, The Warrior Queens (New York, 1989)


Fuhrmann, Horst, Germany in the High Middle Ages, c. 1050-1200, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge, 1986)

Fumagalli, Vito, “1 Canossa tra realtà regionale e ambizione Europee”, in SM III: 27-38

—-----, “Mantova al tempo di Matilde di Canossa”, in Sant’Anselmo. Mantova e la lotta per le Investiture, ed. Paolo Golinelli (Bologna, 1987): 159-68

Gatto, Ludovico, Bonizone da Sutri e il suo Liber ad Amicum (Pescara, 1968)

—-----, “Matilde di Canossa nel Liber ad Amicum di Bonizone da Sutri”, in Studi Matildici II: 307-26

Ghirardini, L. L., “Il convegno di Carpineti (1092) e la sua decisiva importanza nella lotta per le investiture”, in SM II: 97-136

—-----, “Madonna della Battaglia”: lo scontro decisivo della lotta per le investiture (ottobre 1092)”, in Bollettino storico Reggiano 11 (April, 1971): 36-56

—-----, La Patria della Grande Contessa Matilde di Canossa (Reggio Emilia: 1976)

—-----, “La Battaglia di Volta Mantovana”, in Sant’Anselmo:229-40

—-----, La Voce Immortale di Canossa (Modena, 1988)

—-----, Storia Critica di Matilde di Canossa (Reggio Emilia, 1989)

—-----, “La battaglia di Coviolo”, in Canossa prima di Matilde (Milan 1990)

Giesebrecht, W. V., Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit (Leipzig, 1885)


Goetz, Elke, Beatrix von Canossa und Tuszien: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des XI. Jahrhunderts (Sigmaringen, 1995)

Golinelli, Paolo, ed., La Pataria: Lotte religiose e sociali nella Milano dell’XI secolo (Milan, 1984)

—-----, ed., Sant’Anselmo, Mantova e la lotta per le investiture : atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Mantova, 23, 24, 25 maggio 1986) (Bologna, 1987)

—-----, Matilde e i Canossa nel cuore del medioevo (Milan, 1991)


—-----, “Matilde ed Enrico V”, in Golinelli, I Poteri: 455-72

Gross, Thomas, "Le relazione di Matilde di Canossa con la Lorena", in Golinelli, *Poteri*: 335-44


Hartwig, Otto, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Altesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz* (Marburg, 1875)


Honeycutt, Lois L., "Female Succession and the Language of Power in the Writings of Twelfth-Century Churchmen", in Parsons, *Medieval Queenship*: 189-201 (notes pp. 220-21)


Kaufman, Michael, "The Conception of Woman in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance", *Soundings* LVI.2 (summer, 1973)


Bibliography


McNamara, Jo Ann, “Matres Patriceae/Matres Ecclesiae: women of the Roman Empire”, in edd. Bridenthal, Renate et al., *Becoming Visible* 107-129

Mercatì, Angelo, *L’Evangelìario donata della Contessa Matilde al Monastero di Polirone* (Modena, 1925)

Mesini, Candido L, “La dottrina teologico-giuridica di placido di Nonantola e l’idea ispiratrice della politica di Matilde di Canossa”, in SM II: 281-294

Michaelsson, Karl, *Le Livre de la Taille de Paris, L’an de Grace* 1313 (Goteborg, 1951)

Milani, Francesco, “Note Matildiche”, in SM II: 399-408

Mor, Carlo Guido “Il Vicariato Italico di Matilde” in SM II: 67-80

Motta, Giuseppe “I codici canonistici di Polirone”, in *Sant’Anselmo* 349-74


Pásztor, Edith, “Lotta per le investiture e ‘ius belli’: la posizione di Anselmo di Luca”, in *Sant’Anselmo* 375-404

Bibliography

Picasso, Giorgio, "La ‘Collectio canonum’ di Anselmo nella storia delle collezioni canoniche", in Sant’Anselmo: 313-22

Pistoni, Giuseppe, "Matilde di Canossa ed il duomo di Modena", in SM I:104-109

Piva, Paolo, "La Tomba della contessa Matilde" in SM III:243-54

del Rio, Maria Bertolani, "Matilde di Canossa e l’assistenza ai pellegrini e agli infermi", in atti I congresso Italiano Storia Ospitaliera (1957)

-----, "Dove nacque la Contessa Matilde? (Le divergenze degli storici)", in SM I: 10-18

Robinson, I. S., Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Controversy: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century (Manchester, 1978)

-----, "Pope Gregory VII, the Princes and the Pactum 1077-1080", English Historical Review 104 (October, 1979): 721- 56.

Rocca, Emilio Nasalli, "Parma e la contessa Matilde", in SM I: 53-68

-----, "Note sulla feudalita’ Canossana" in SM II: 81-96


Rombaldi, Odoardo, "L’agricoltura nell’area Matildica: L’Emilia" in SM III: 331-58

Ropa, Giampaolo, "La Liturgia nei Testi Matildici", in SM I: 170-209

-----, "Testimonianze di vita culturale nei monasteri matildici nei secoli XI- XII" in SM II: 231-80

-----, "Studio e Utilizzazione ideologica della bibbia nell’ambiente Matildico (sec. XI-XII)", in SM III: 395-426


Russell, Frederick H., The Just War in the Middle Ages (London, 1977)

Sanday, Peggy Reeves, Female Power and Male Dominance (Cambridge, 1987)

Santini, Giovanni, "Contributi per la storia dell’ordinamento giudiziario locale nei territori rurali Matildici (Frignano, Garfagnana, Versilia)", in SM I: 134-46

-----, "La contessa Matilde, lo ‘studium’ e Bologna ‘citta aperta’ dell’ XI sec.", in SM II: 409-28

-----, "L’amministrazione della Giustizia: I Giudice e I Funzionari", in Golinelli, I Poteri: 41-60

Saur, H., Studien über Bonizo. Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte 8 (1868)

Savigni, Raffaele, "La diocesi Lucchese I Canossa tra XI e XII secolo", in Golinelli, I poteri: 163-88


Sissa, Giuseppe, "L’azione della contessa matilde in mantova e nel suo contado (l’Abbazia di San Benedetto Pollirone)", in SM I: 147-55


Stafford, Pauline, "Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages", in Baker, Derek, ed. *Medieval Women*: 79-100


Vedriani, Lodovico, *Historia dell’antichissima città di Modena* (Modena, 1666)


Wicker, Nancy L., "Selective female infanticide as partial explanation for the dearth of women in Viking Age Scandinavia", in Halsal, *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*

Wilmart, A., "Cinque Textes de Prières composés par Anselme de Lucques pour la comtesse Mathilde", *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 19 (1938)

Zimmermann, Harald, "I signori di Canossa e L'impero (da Ottone I a Enrico III)", in I Poteri: 413-20
Zafarana, Z., "Sul 'conventu' de clero romano nel maggio 1082", Studi Medievali, 3rd ser., 7 (1966): 399-403