Matilda/Matelda:
Filling in the Map of Fourteenth-century
Historical Writing about Matilda,
Countess of Canossa (1046-1115)

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Who is the 'bella donna' that Dante, Virgil and Statius meet when they enter
the Earthly Paradise? Why does Dante wait to reveal her name and not
provide details of her identity? Matelda appears to Dante and his companions in
Purgatorio XXVIII, 40 but her name is mentioned only in Canto XXXIII, 118-119:
'Prega / Matelda che 'l ti dica'. To date no convincing solution to the mystery of
the true identity of Matelda has been proposed, although several hypotheses have
been put forward. The most widely supported view is that Matelda should be
identified with Matilda Countess of Tuscany (1046-1115), who played a very
important role in the course of the investiture struggle by siding with Pope
Gregory VII against Henry IV, culminating in the highly symbolic (but politically
ineffective) meeting between the Pope, the Emperor and Hugo Abbot of Cluny at
Canossa on 18 January 1077, which epitomises her role.

The identification of the Matelda portrayed by Dante in Purgatorio XXVIII-
XXIX and XXXIII is centred on the acceptance of this figure as either a symbol or
as an historical persona. However, the apparent homonymy between Matelda and
Matilda Countess of Canossa (whose name is varying spelt in historical
documents as 'Matelda', 'Matilde', 'Matilde', etc.) suggests that even if Dante intended
to make a symbol of this figure, his knowledge of the historical Matilda must still
be the starting point of any research into this matter.

The question of Matelda's identity has been addressed by Ovidio Capitani as a
problem of the history of historiography: before her identity can be established,
one needs to ascertain the extent to which the historical character was actually
known to Dante. According to Capitani, until more is known about the availa-

ability of sources and other factors, no theories against
the Purgatorio can be considered. The early commentators,
Countess, Dante 'must have

John Scott reinforced his argument out fifty years ago,
when most powerful women
exercised absolute power.
extent of Cino da Pistoia,...fuit filia regis italiae.
Scott's words: 'If this

Countess, how legitimate
her historical identity.

The aim of this paper is to provide a
representation of the historical
works of two of the most
important
(c. 1245-1318). Their
works of Riccobaldo. They
historians had access to the
documentedly the most detailed
publication called Librum de Principe,
1115, just after Matilda's
death. In the assertion, Dante could
Pistoia and the early count. In
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Matilda's deeds. Unfortunately,
the history between the year
of what this portion could be
use of it.

The second aim here is to
discussed by establishing
fourteenth-century anecdotes
based on Donizzo's poem
other than Donizzo's to
Countess, including stories
her of a child. As with
Riccobaldo's major work, the
question of Matelda's identity
Dante himself was at

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bility of sources and data on the Countess Matilda to Dante and writers of his time, no theories against or in favour of the identification of the 'bella donna' in the Purgatorio can be considered valid. Capitani goes on to suggest that, given that the early commentators of the Commedia appear to have known little about the Countess, Dante 'must have known even less about her'.

John Scott reinforces this suggestion, reminding us that 'Bruno Nardi pointed out over fifty years ago [that] Countess Matilda was by far the best-known and the most powerful woman in the whole of Christendom, one, moreover, who exercised absolute power in Italy', and that in relation to this Nardi quoted the extent of Cino da Pistoia's annotation to the Justian Codex ('Comitissa Matilda ... fuit filia regis Italicae et successit in regno et gessit omnia tamquam rex'). In Scott's words: 'If this was all that Dante's great jurist friend knew about the Countess, how legitimate is it to suppose that Dante knew a great deal more about her historical identity and role?'

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I explore the historical perception and representation of the life of Matilda during Dante's time. In particular, I will discuss the works of two early fourteenth-century historians, Riccobaldo of Ferrara (c. 1245-1318) and the Dominican friar Pipino of Bologna (c. 1270-c. 1328). The works of Riccobaldo and Pipino show that early fourteenth-century historians had access to a number of sources on the life of Matilda, including arguably the most detailed, albeit propagandistic, narrative on her life, the poem called Librum de Principibus Canusinius (also known as Vita Mathildis, completed in 1115, just after Matilda's death) by Donizo, who was Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of St Apollino in Canossa (1070-circa 1136). Contrary to Capitani's assertion, Dante could have known more about Matilda than Villani, Cino da Pistoia and the early commentators of the Commedia knew, for there is evidence that Riccobaldo's Historie contained an extensive account of the Countess Matilda's deeds. Unfortunately, the section of Riccobaldo's Historie covering world history between the years 375-1308 is lost. Any present knowledge we might have of what this portion contained is based upon Pipino's and Matteo Maria Boiardo's use of it.

The second aim here is to demonstrate how at least one of the many rewritings of Donizo's poem was available within Dante's cultural environment. This will be established by establishing a link between Riccobaldo, Pipino and an early fourteenth-century adaptation of the Vita Mathildis. This adaptation, although based on Donizo's poem, is a narrative that relies also to some extent upon sources other than Donizo's to dispel the mystery surrounding the more private life of the Countess, including speculation about her marriages and concerning the birth to her of a child. As we shall see, evidence shows that the now lost portion of Riccobaldo's major work, the Historie, could in fact contain much of what Pipino discussed concerning Matilda in his Chronicon, which leads to the possibility that Dante himself was at least aware of such accounts of the life of the Countess.
Perceptions and representations of the life of Matilda

Early commentators of the *Divina Commedia* support the view that Matilda is indeed Matilda Countess of Tuscany. For Jacopo della Lana, Matilda is the symbol of the perfect active life, a stereotype of the virtuous woman: "Matelda, la quale fue una donna savia e possente e polita in virtuosi costumi, ed ebbe secondo fama quelle proprietadi, che si convenegono secondo perfezione di vita attiva". Along the same lines are the works by Pietro Alighieri and Benvenuto da Imola. Pietro confirms that Matelda is indeed 'Matilde paladina della Chiesa', and Benvenuto does the same by identifying Matelda as 'la Contessa Matilde'.

Francesco da Buti affirms that Matelda was the daughter of Beatrice 'filliuola de l'imperadore che stava in Constantinopoli' and 'uno conte italiano che era ne la corte de l'imperadore'. According to Buti, she later married Guelf, whose impotence was due to a spell cast on him by a close relative, Gebel (who went on to kill him with poison). Buti adds that as soon as the nobles of Germany and Italy learned about the killing they all rushed either to avenge or to defend Guelf's party, thus marking the beginning of the conflict between Guelfs and Ghibellines.

In his *Nuova Cronica* (early fourteenth century), Giovanni Villani confirms Buti's improbable account of the rise of Matilda's dynasty, saying that her mother left the court of her father, the Emperor of Constantinople, to marry a young Italian nobleman.

La madre della contessa Matelda è detto che fu figliuola d'uno che regnò in Costantinopoli imperatore, nella cui corte fu uno Italiano di nobili costumi e di grande lignaggio e liberale, e amaestrauto nell'armi, destro e dotato di tutti doni, se come quegli in cui il legnaggio chiamamente suole militare. Per tutte queste cose era a tutti amabile, e grazioso in costumi. Cominciando a guardare la figliuola dello 'imperatore, occulutamente di matrimonio si congiuse, e prese i gioielli e la pecunia che potero avere, e co-liti in Italia si fugge, e prima pervennero nel vescovado di Reggio in Lombardia, e di questa donna e del marito nacque la valente contessa Matelda; ma il padre della detta donna, cioè lo 'imperatore di Costantinopoli, che non avea altra figliuola, assai fece cercare come la potesse trovare, e trovata fu da coloro che lla cercavano nel detto luogo; e richiesta da loro che tornasse al padre che lla rimanterebe a qualunque principe volesse, risposse costui sopra tutti avere eletto, e che impossibile sarebbe che abandonato costui, mai con altro uomo si congiunjesse. E nunziate queste cose allo 'imperatore, mando incontutamente lettere e conferamento del matrimonio, e pecunia senza novero, e comando che ssi commettesse castella e ville per cheunque pregio si potessono trovare, e nuove edificazioni fare.

Riccobaldo's account of Matilda's rise to power was the subject of constant revision resulting in different versions of the same text: there are three versions of his first chronicle, the *Pomerium Ravennatis Ecclesiae* (modelled on the Eusebius/Jerome chronicle, covering world history from the creation to the year 1300); there are also five minor chronicles, which are all very close to the
Pomerium. Unfortunately, only two portions of Riccobaldo’s major work, the Historie, survived: the first runs from the creation of the world to the first consulate of Caesar, and the second covers the period from the end of the Gallic wars to the first years of Valentinian I. The section covering the history of the Western world from the end of Valentinian’s rule to 1308 is now lost. In order to establish what the full text of the Historie might recount on the life of Matilda, we can therefore rely only on the earlier work by Riccobaldo, the Pomerium, on an abridged version of the Historie, the Compendium Romanae Historiae (whose narrative covers world history up to the year 1318) and a fifteenth-century translation of the Historie by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1471-1473).18

Aldo Francesco Massèra demonstrated that Dante used Riccobaldo for details about Obizzo II d’Este and his illegitimate son (Inferno XII, 112) and for the ‘consiglio fraudolento’ given by Guido da Montefeltro to Boniface VIII (Inferno XXVII, 67-111).19 Ann Teresa Hankey asserted that Riccobaldo and Dante shared similar political views on ‘papal greed and pretensions to political power, particularly in regard to the emperor’ and that many passages in both the Inferno and the Purgatorio show the use of Riccobaldo’s major work, the Historie, which was written before his return to Ferrara from exile in 1308. Hankey also suggested that Riccobaldo furnished Dante with several other anecdotes, which were used in the Commedia: Semiramis (Inferno V, 58), Phalaris of Agrigento (Inferno XXVII, 7-12), Buoso da Dova (Inferno XXXII, 116-117), the nobility of Cato of Utica’s suicide (Purgatorio I, passim), Manfred and his two wounds (Purgatorio III, 111-120), Crassus stilled by gold (Purgatorio XX, 116-117), the Hebrew Maria eating her own child (Purgatorio XXIII, 28-30) and the praise of Justinian (Paradiso VI, passim). Hankey concludes that ‘whether we are dealing with verbal communication, or with the extensive use by the younger of the elder’s major work, or just the odd anecdote in common, a link is evident and since Dante’s historical library is unlikely to have been extensive, it seems reasonable to suggest that Riccobaldo furnished Dante with much material for his historical exempla’.20 The extent to which Riccobaldo knew the historical identity and role of the Countess Matilda, therefore, becomes crucial in establishing how much Dante himself knew. However, Riccobaldo’s references to the life of Matilda have so far been ignored by both Dante scholars and historians, including Massèra and Hankey. In the Pomerium and Compendium Riccobaldo reveals that Beatriz is not the daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople, as suggested by Villani, but of the Emperor Henry III, and furthermore, that the young Italian count is in fact from Lucca. He writes in the Pomerium:

Hic Henricus creditur fuisse genitor matris comitissae Mathilde, que virgo aequitatem cum iuvens, ex quo, qui nominatus est Bonifatius Marchio, ipsam conceptit Mathildam. Imperator vero filiam suam marito permitit et illi magna in Italia contalti, quibus mox Mathilda successit. [...] Anno Christi MCI comitissa Mathilda obsedit Ferraram, que mox post annum XIII migravit a seculo. 21
(It is believed that Henry was the father of Matilda's mother. When she was a young girl, she fled with a young Marquis called Boniface, who fathered Matilda. The Emperor allowed his daughter to marry him and bestowed many possessions in Italy, which Matilda herself inherited. In the year 1101 the Countess Matilda besieged Ferrara and 13 years later passed away.)

The following further details appear in the Compendium:

Henricus Henrici superiors filius successit, qui dicitur imperasse per annos XXXIX. Opinio est aliquorum hunc genitorem suus matris comitissae Matyldae, hoc modo. Ait matrem Matyldae suus imperatoris filiam, que virgo exarit in iuvemen nobilium genere Luxensi qui in aula imperatoris ministrabant. Hoc ergo cognita imperatoris filiae abhit cum ea et lattando cum ea inopem vitam agebat. Cum tamen imperator venisset in civitatem in cuius dycesi lattabanet, rem episcopo aperuit, illa imperatoria, qui promissa venia utrunque receptit. Huiu nomen fuit Bonificius qui ex imperatoris filia Matyldam genitum ut dicitur. Imperator opibus et honore auxit eos, multa concedens ex iuribus imperii, sicut comitissae Matyldae possedit, que patri marchionis Bonificio successisse compertur. [...] Anno .MCXV. comitissa Matyldae obserit Ferrariam; que mox post annum .XIII. migravit e seculo, Romana Ecclesia sibi instituta herede. [...] Anno Christi .MCXV. moruitur comitissa Matyldae. 22

(Henry succeeded his father Henry [II or III, Riccobaldo is not clear about this detail]. It is said that he ruled for 39 years. Some believe that he was the father of the mother of Countess Matilda. This is how the story goes. They say that Matilda's mother was the daughter of an Emperor. She fell in love with a young and noble man from Lucca who worked at her father's court. Having begun a relationship with her, he fled with her. While they were in hiding they led a humble life. When the Emperor went to the village of the diocese in which they were hiding, he explained the situation to the bishop and the bishop to him. The Emperor promised he would forgive them. The name of the man [married to Matilda's mother] was Boniface and he fathered Matilda, daughter of the Emperor's daughter, as we have already said. The Emperor bestowed upon them riches and possessions, for them they gave many imperial privileges. It is well known that Matilda, who ruled after her father Boniface, inherited such possessions. [...] In 1101 Countess Matilda besieged Ferrara; fourteen years later she died and nominated the Holy See as her heir. [...] In 1115 the Countess Matilda passed away.)

Which source did Riccobaldo use for his succinct accounts of the Countess? Did he actually use only one source or did he collate a number of texts, as the insertion 'Some believe' seems to suggest?

A similar and earlier version is in Thomas of Tuscany's (d. c. 1282) Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificiorum.23 Here we also read that Matilda's mother was the daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople. However, in that work the man she fell in love with was not a man from Lucca but more generically a quidam Yalus, nobilis moribus magis quam genere, liberalis, industrius... (a certain Italian man, noble more for his deeds than for his blood, generous, diligent). Amongst other

opinions Riccobaldo may have been relying on or a highly abridged version of information about the Countess. His poem is clearly not a comprehensive account of Donizzo's work is clearly not a comprehensive account of Matilda herself (Book 2, Chapter 1). There may be omissions of less praise, more detail, or a more comprehensive account of her. However, from his Poema, it is clear that evidence can be gained from the poem that the legendary inception of the Order of the Knights Templar in 1115. The only clue then is an echo of the poem by Donizzo.

Riccobaldo and Pipino of information about Matilda. There is no evidence that he either wrote his Chronicon of Lucca or made extensive use of Ricco's Historia. He was therefore clearly not relying on that text.

The Chronicon covers the reigns of its Kings and Emperors up to 1322. With the exception of a few sections, it is devoted to one Emperor. The narrative is not lengthy and, in a lengthy excerpt from the work, it is unlikely that numerous references to the life and times of Matilda by historians, such as passages taken from Riccobaldo's Historia. The poem of this work is the early 19th century, when the Biblioteca Estense, Modena, was being worked on and compiled. The information is not comparative and not distinct.
opinions Riccobaldo might have gathered there could have been a compendium or a highly abridged version of Donizo's poem, the *Vita Matildis*. This poem was to be offered to the Countess, but she died just before its completion. The intent of Donizo's work is clearly to praise the deeds of her family (Book 1) and of Matilda herself (Book 2). Despite the inevitable mystification of facts and omissions of less praiseworthy moments of her life, the poem is undoubtedly a most comprehensive and compelling source on the Countess's deeds.

The poem mentions Sigifredo as one of the first two ancestors of the Canossa family: ‘Sigifredo / Principè preclaro Lucensi de comitato’ (Sigifred, illustrious prince from Lucca).24 Evidently Riccobaldo mistook Sigifredo for Matilda's father or was relying on details in a compendium of Donizo's work. As already mentioned, the section of Riccobaldo's major work covering the history of the Western world between the third and early fourteenth centuries is now lost, which leaves the possibility that more was said by Riccobaldo about the Countess. However, from his *Pomerium* (his first work) and the *Compendium* (his last), no evidence can be gained about whether Riccobaldo knew the life of Matilda beyond the legendary inception of her family, the siege of Ferrara in 1101 and her death in 1115. The only clue we possess is his reference to Lucca, which could be an echo of the poem by Donizo.

Riccobaldo and Pipino: historical accuracy and availability of information about Matilda during Dante's time

There is evidence that the Dominican friar Francesco Pipino of Bologna, who wrote his *Chronicon* only a few years after Riccobaldo's *Historie* and who made extensive use of Riccobaldo's works, certainly knew and used Donizo's poem and was therefore clearly aware of the role and identity of Matilda.

The *Chronicon* concerns French, German, English and Italian history and the reigns of its Kings and Emperors from the year 754 to 1314, with some additions up to 1322. With the exception of Books I and XXV, each section of the *Chronicon* is devoted to one Emperor and contains material drawn from disparate sources. The narrative is not focused only on secular power, but also on Popes, legends and, in a lengthy excursus in Book XXV, on the Crusades. Given the date of its completion, it is unlikely that Dante would have used this *Chronicon*. However, its numerous references to the Countess of Canossa not only reveal what was known about Matilda by historians living at the time of Dante but also, given the extent of passages taken from Riccobaldo, cast light on what the now lost section of Riccobaldo's *Historie* might have recounted concerning Matilda. The sole copy of this work is the early fourteenth-century manuscript α.X.1.5 held in the Biblioteca Estense, Modena.25 Massèra believes this copy to be the one Pipino worked on and considers it to be an incomplete text, mainly due to the comparative shortness of the last book of the chronicle.26

Massèra also demonstrated unequivocally that Pipino used Riccobaldo's *Historie*
for his Chronicon. Pipino did not complete his writing of Books XXVIII-XXXI before the year 1321, at least 13 years after Riccobaldo’s Historie, and three years after the abridged version of it (the Compendium). It is relevant to this paper to note that Pipino’s version in his Chronicon of the origin of the Canossa family is almost identical to Riccobaldo’s in the Pomerium and Compendium. The fact that we find in the Chronicon, as in Riccobaldo, that Matilda’s father is said to come from Lucca suggests that the source used by Pipino for this passage is the same as the one used by Riccobaldo – if the source was not Riccobaldo himself.

In an examination of the unpublished section of Pipino’s Chronicon, the present writer has found a much longer excursus (ff. 60r-63v) on the origin of the Canossa dynasty and on Matilda than the one provided by Pipino in his Chronicon (f. 61r), and the one given by Riccobaldo in the Pomerium and Compendium. This excursus is the earliest version that we have of a prose rendering of Donizo’s Vita Matildis, the so-called Epitome Polinorese, of which only two fifteenth-century copies are known. In fact, Pipino’s text is the original of the Polinorese, which can be evinced from the fact that the sources (other than Donizo) used in the excursus on the subject of the Countess’s less public life (e.g. the identity of her two husbands and her loss of an infant son) occur extensively in Pipino’s Chronicon. The works of Martinus Oppaviensius († 1278) and Jacopo da Varazze (c. 1229-1298) are used by Pipino throughout the Chronicon for the period up to the thirteenth century. Copies of both sources are registered in the pre-1382 inventory of the Dominican Library in Bologna, which Pipino must have used, for he was archivist and superior of the Dominican convent in that city. Moreover, Books XII-XX of the Chronicon show Pipino’s use of the works of Landolph the Elder (eleventh century) and Arnulph of Milan († c. 1077) for details on the life of Matilda and on the history of Italy during the eleventh century.

The intention of providing a collation of all the different facts and legends surrounding the historical persona of Matilda emerges from the very first lines of Pipino’s rewriting of Donizo’s poem. Pipino gathered information on Matilda ‘ex diversis collecta cronicis’ (‘gathered from various sources’, f. 60r), which became necessary when the ‘compilator enim supradictae historie, a quo hec sumpta sunt in carmine’ (‘compiler of the abovementioned historical poem, on which this account is based’, f. 63r) gave insufficient details.

In his poem, Donizo, whose name is never mentioned by Pipino, does not refer to any husband of Matilda’s, nor does he mention sons or daughters. Pipino actively seeks clarification on this more intimate data on the Countess by referring to a ‘book called the chapter of Landulph from Saint Paul’, where we read that a duke called Godfridus was stabbed to death while in the latrine. He is referring to the Historia Mediolanensis of Landulph the Senior. Pipino is puzzled by the name Godfridus and adds that it is someone’s opinion that this Godfridus was the Duke of Spoleto, despite there being no mention in the abovementioned chapter of a specific Duchy. Pipino then calls upon Martinus Oppaviensius and Jacopo da
Varazze to provide insight into the matter: Martinus recounts that Godfrid sided with Matilda against the Normans, whereas Jacopo reveals that she was indeed married (but to whom?). According to Jacopo she also gave birth to a son who died shortly afterwards. In his account of the life of Matilda, Jacopo relates that before her son passed away Matilda assassinated her husband to make him pay for the pains of her labour. Pipino is thus compelled to return to Landulph for clarification: ‘Quae cum antea virgo, Gigonem virum prudentissimum Northmandiae ducem maritum duxisset per annos paucos secum morata […] ipsum ad cloacam super lacum sedentem per secessum immisso ense fecit interim’ (‘When she was still young she married Gigone, a very discreet nobleman from Normandy. She lived with him only for a few years until she arranged for him to be stabbed to death while he was sitting in the latrine’, f. 61v). Clearly Pipino tried to clarify the information on the Countess and test all the sources available to him on more controversial aspects of her private life (such as her marriages), which are instead carefully avoided by Donizo.

The last paragraph of Pipino’s rewriting of the life of Mathilda concerns her will:

Hec etiam comitissa, ut scribatur in Chronicis, cum amplissimis habundaret possessiornibus, Ecclesiis sanctaque Petri sibi fecit heredem. Quod patrimonium hodie dicitur Patrimonium S. Petri, quod est a Radicofano usque Ceperano. (The Countess, as the Chronicles tell, chose the Church of St Peter as her heir. Her land is today called the Patrimony of St Peter and it stretches between Radicofani and Ceperano, f. 63v)

This passage does not appear in Donizo’s poem or in any of the other epitomes; it is most probably derived from Martinus Oppaviensis. However, it also appears in Matteo Maria Boiardo’s fifteenth-century translation of Riccobaldo:

Et ottenne da esso Pontefice in vita sua, per ragione di proprietate, da Radicofano a Ceperano, tutte le terre che da molti Pontifici a’ soi progenitori erano concesse. E questo nomò lei suo patrimonio e pocho tempo dopoi offersse la cessione di tutto quel Stato insieme cum il ducale de Spolii sopra a lo altare di Sancto Pietro.

This suggests that, if Boiardo was indeed translating from Riccobaldo, the latter might have written more on Matilda in the now lost portion of his Historie than we read in its abbreviated version (the Compendium). The passage on Lucca as the home city of Matilda’s father suggests that Pipino, who certainly knew and used Riccobaldo, might have used the Historie as one of the reputable sources on the life of the Countess.

The works of Riccobaldo and Pipino indicate that during the first two decades of the fourteenth century historians were actively investigating the information available on Matilda. Having translated Donizo’s poem into a prose compendium, Pipino also shows an interest in filling the silences left by the Vita Mathildis. His excursus on the Countess follows the celebration of Matilda and her perfect
embodiment of the active life, as depicted by Donizzi in his poem. However, Pipino (and Riccobaldo) tried to investigate the recesses of her private life and present her as a condottiere rather than as a mythicised figure.

**Conclusion**

This research on Pipino’s *Chronicon* suggests that both Riccobaldo and Pipino knew a great deal more about Matilda than Villani and commentators of the *Commedia* have indicated. Pipino (most likely through his own research and through Riccobaldo’s work) had all the elements to characterise the complexity of Matilda’s personality. She was a true defender of the Church but also a shrewd and ruthless ruler, ready to kill a husband to keep hold of power. Pipino’s *Chronicon* indeed shows that during the first part of the fourteenth century there were historians less inclined to idealise Matilda’s role. Recent research into the work of Riccobaldo and Pipino reveals that more data on Matilda was circulating amongst late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century historians (Martins Oppaviensis, Jacopo da Varazze, Thomas of Tuscany) than previously suspected. These historians refer to earlier writers close to Matilda’s time (Donizo, Landulp, Arnulph) in order to relate and assess the role and power of the Countess.

In the absence of a portion of his *Historie*, it is impossible to establish with absolute certainty the extent of the information on Matilda provided by Riccobaldo in this work. Nevertheless, as the above discussion shows, Riccobaldo could have known much more about Matilda than Villani, Cino da Pistoia and other writers of Dante’s time knew. Moreover, Pipino’s knowledge of Donizzi’s poem (possibly even through Riccobaldo) indicates that the poem was indeed available, whether directly or through compendia, within Dante’s cultural environment.

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**Notes**


2. For a list of some of the proposed identifications see D. Glenn, *Matilda in the Terrestrial Paradise*, Fulgor, vol. 1, 1, March 2002 (accessed 19 October 2004). These include anagrams of her name (*Matilda = ad laetam* meaning ‘toward joy’), her identification as the nuns Mechtilis of Hackenborn (d. 1298), Mathilda of Magdeburg (1207-1282), Saint Matilda (c. 895-968), mother of the Emperor Otto I, or even Gemma Donati (wife of Dante), Dante’s mother or Beatrice’s sister.

3. Among the many scholars concerned with the life of Matilda, Rome: Edizioni di Sito, 1992, the Divine Comedy, Pisa.


11. As I will mention later, it is more convincingly that Dante’s account in the Inferno


6. In his annotations to the Justinian Codex, Cino provides only one brief notion of Matilda: the erroneous belief that she was the daughter of the King of Italy, succeeded her father ‘et sessit omnia tamquam rex’ (and governed as king). See John A. Scott, *Dante’s Political Purgatory*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, p. 183.


12. As I will mention later in the discussion, Aldo Francesco Massera demonstrated convincingly that Dante was indeed using Riccobaldo’s *Historie* for at least two accounts in the *Inferno*. See also Aldo Francesco Massera, *Dante e Riccobaldo da


18. Riccobaldo also wrote a *Chronica Parva Ferrariensis* (a brief and unfinished chronicle of Ferrara probably written around 1313) and a description of the world: *De locis orbis et insularum et marium* (1310?). For more details on Riccobaldo and his works cf. Hankey, *Riccobaldo of Ferrara*. On Boiardo’s translation see Rizzi, ‘Riccobaldo da Ferrara e Matteo Maria Boiardo: note preliminari’, pp. 140-55.


21. Riccobaldo of Ferrara, *Pomerium Ravennatis Ecclesiae*, ms. a. J. 4, 8, Biblioteca Estense, Modena, f. 71r. These and all the other translations from Latin into English in this paper are my own.


25. We are indebted to Muratori for the publication of this text. However, his edition contains a plethora of arbitrary omisions and changes, and in it the original narrative of the *Chronicon* is distorted. Muratori left out Books XXI, and the structure of the last portion of the *Chronicon* is much altered: Book XXV was published by Maratari in the *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (RIS1), VIII, pp. 664-848, whereas RIS1, IX contains the following sections of Pipino’s *Chronicon* that have been assembled in an arbitrary fashion: Book XXII in the manuscript (with the omission of 82 chapters) forms Book I in RIS2; Books XXIII (less the seventh chapter), XXIV (less 77 chapters) and XXVI (less 37 chapters) form Book II in RIS2; Book XXVII and the first section of Book XXVIII with Book III in RIS2; Books XXVIII (the final 18 chapters), XXIX, XXX, XXXI form Book IV in RIS1.


27. *Ibid.* 177-84. Pipino’s text suggests that he made a point in the defense of the matrilineage of Mathilda, whose house he defended, and according to him the termination of the first marriage of the old Empress Ida was a major moment in the life of the lady. The support of the mother of the mother of the posthumous heir to the throne is significant, and it is the point that Pipino makes in his text. Ida is the daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople, and she is the result of a marriage that is not recognized by the Pope. The Pope’s support of the marriage is a good example of the political struggle between the Papacy and the Empire.

28. The proofs given are from *Ibid.* 177-84.


30. Pipino, *Chronicum*, I. 61r: ‘Est enim imperatorem fuisse gratiam matrem Mathildis, dum ad aula imperatoris ait, de commissa, cum ea a familia de Calabria venisset in civitatem suam, juvenis ipsius, cuius secretae non sunt, nuntius: Bonifacius, qui ex honore eius ex imperatoress fuit, filius matris, cum ex honore eius era, fuit filius matris eius, Matilda’s mother, young, Matilda’s mother worked at her father’s court, and the consequences of this marriage were that he would forgive the daughter of the Emperor for the possession of his properties, for he gave her those properties.


33. Landulph’s *Historia* and *Chronicon*, the borrowings being better illustrated in the section preceding XIV cf. f. 39v; Book VII, *Arnulfii Liber Gesta*, accounts from these regions.


35. Pipino, *Chronicon*, I. 61r: ‘Est enim imperatorem fuisse gratiam matrem Mathildis, dum ad aula imperatoris ait, de commissa, cum ea a familia de Calabria venisset in civitatem suam, juvenis ipsius, cuius secretae non sunt, nuntius: Bonifacius, qui ex honore eius ex imperatoress fuit, filius matris, cum ex honore eius era, fuit filius matris eius, Matilda’s mother, young, Matilda’s mother worked at her father’s court, and the consequences of this marriage were that he would forgive the daughter of the Emperor for the possession of his properties, for he gave her those properties.

27. *Ibid.*, 177-84. Pipino's tendency to insert lengthy quotations from Riccobaldo's *Historie* suggests that he made a much more extensive use of the latter historian than indicated by Massera, who studied only the published section of the *Chronicon*.


30. Pipino, f. 61r: 'Est tamen aliquorum opinio Henricum huius nominis quartum imperatorem suisse genitorem matris huius comitisse Mathildis, hoc modo: dicunt matrem Mathildis, dum virgo esset, in juvenem nobilem exarisset, genere Lucensem in imperatorem aula ministrantium, qui tandem hac imperatoris filia cognita timens commissa, cum ca abiit, et diu latitas inopem vitam duxit. Tandem cum imperator venisset in civitatem quandam, in cuius episcopatu iuvenis ille cum imperatoris filia latisabat, iuvenis ipse rem aperuit episcopo civitatis. Ille autem imperatori narravit: cuius precibus venia promissa, utrumque recepit ad gratiam. Huic iuveni nomen erat Bonificacios, qui ex imperatoris filia hanc gubernavit comitissam, quos imperator auxit honore eis ex imperii viribus multa concedens' ('Some believe that Henry IV was the father of the mother of Countess Matilda. This is how. They say that, when she was young, Matilda's mother fell in love with a young and noble man from Lucca who worked at her father's court. Having begun a relationship with her and fearing the consequences of this, he fled with her. While they were in hiding they led a humble life. When the Emperor went to the village in which diocese they were hiding, he explained the situation to the bishop and the bishop to him. The Emperor promised he would forgive them. The name of the man was Boniface and he fathered Matilda, daughter of the Emperor's daughter. The Emperor bestowed upon them riches and possessions, for he gave them many imperial privileges.')


33. Landulph's *Historia Mediolanensis* is one of the main sources for Pipino, the following borrowings being but a few examples to show the extent to which he utilised this work in the section preceding the epitome on Matilda: for Book XII cf. ff. 33r-v; 37r-v; Book XIV cf. f. 39v; Book XVI cf. ff. 46v; Book XVIII cf. ff. 51v; 56r; 61v. Pipino also drew on Arnulf's *Liber Gestorum Recensentum* to the same extent, and then intermingled the accounts from these sources (e.g. ff. 37r; 37v; 38r; 39v, etc.).

34. Pipino refers to Donizo at the beginning of his excursus addressing him as ‘huius historie scriptor’ (writer of this history', f. 61v).

35. Pipino, *Chronicon*, f. 61v: 'libro qui dictur cappia Landalpi de Sancto Paulo quod ad secessum residens dux quidam nomine Gottfridus, Gottfridi filli gladio confossus interit' ('in the book called *Chapter of St Paul* it is said that a certain Duke named Gottfrid was stabbed to death, while he was in the latrine, by one of his servants').

36. *Ibid.*, 'est et aliquorum opinio, quod iste Gottfridus dux fuerit Spoleatensis, quamquam in eadem Cappia eius non nominetur ducatus' ('it is the opinion of others that the aforementioned Gottfrid was from Spoleto, although in the *Chapter* there is no mention of the Duchy').


Works Cited


