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

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 in Purgatorio XXVIII, 40 but her name is mentioned only in canto XXXIII, 118-119: ‘Priega / Matelda che ‘l ti dica’.¹ To date no convincing solution to the mystery of the true identity of Matelda has been proposed, although several hypotheses have been put forward.² The most widely supported view is that Matelda should be identified with Matilda Countess of Tuscany (1046-1115),³ 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 the 18th of January 1077, which epitomises her role.⁴

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 However, the apparent homonymy between Matelda and Matilda Countess of Canossa (whose name is in historical documents variedly spelled as ‘Matelda’, ‘Matilde’, ‘Metilde’, etc.) suggests that even if Dante were to make of this figure a symbol 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 availability 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 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 by referring to Bruno Nardi’s opinion
that Matilda was ‘the best-known and most powerful woman in the whole of
Christendom’, which is based on a short annotation by Cino Da Pistoia to the
Justinian Codex. Scott points out that if Dante’s jurist friend, Cino, knew very little
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 the life of Matilda, the poem called Librum de
Principibus Canusinis (also known as Vita Mathildis, completed in 1115, just after
Matilda’s death) by Donizo, who was abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of
Sant’Apollonio 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.\(^{10}\)

The second aim 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 discussed by establishing a link between Riccobaldo, Pipino and an early fourteenth century adaptation of the \textit{Vita Mathildis}.\(^{11}\) 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 of a child to her. As we shall see, evidence shows that the now lost portion of Riccobaldo’s major work, the \textit{Historie}, could in fact contain much of what Pipino discussed on Matilda in his \textit{Chronicon}, which leads to the possibility that Dante himself was at least aware of such assessments of the life of the Countess.\(^{12}\)

\textit{Perceptions and representations of the life of Matilda}

Early commentators of the \textit{Divina Commedia} support the view that Matelda is indeed Matilda Countess of Tuscany. For Jacopo della Lana, Matelda 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 virtudiosi costumi, ed ebbe secondo fama quelle proprietadi, che si convengono secondo perfezione di vita attiva’.\(^{13}\) Along the same lines are the works by Pietro Alighieri and Benvenuto da Imola.\(^{14}\) 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 Constantinopuli’ 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.15

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:16

La madre della contessa Mattelda è detto che fu figliuola d'uno che regnò in Costantinopoli imperadore, nella cui corte fu uno Italiano di nobili costumi e di grande lignaggio e liberale, e amaestrato nell'armi, destro e dotato di tutti doni, si come quegli in cui i legnaggio chiaramente suole militare. Per tutte queste cose era a tutti amabile, e grazioso in costumi. Cominciando a guardare la figliuola dello 'mperadore, occultamente di matrimonio si congiunse, e prese i gioelli e la pecunia che poterono avere, e co-llui in Italia si fuggì, e prima pervennero nel vescovado di Reggio in Lombardia, e di questa donna e del marito nacque la valente contessa Mattelda; ma il padre della detta donna, cioè lo 'mperadore 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-lloro che tornasse al padre che lla rimariterebbe a qualunque principe volesse, rispuose costui sopra tutti avere eletto, e che impossibile sarebbe che abandonato costui, mai con altro uomo si congiugnesse. E nunziate queste cose allo 'mperadore, mandò incontanente lettere e confermamento del matrimonio, e pecunia sanza novero, e comandò che ssi comprasse castella e ville per cheunque pregio si potessono trovare, e nuove edificazioni fare.

Before recounting Riccobaldo’s account of Matilda’s rise to power, more details need to be given on Riccobaldo. The Ferrarese historian constantly revised and improved his works, thus producing more 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_.17 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 only rely 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 share similar political views on ‘papal greed and pretensions to political power, particularly in regard to the emperor’ and many passages in both Inferno and 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 Dovera (Inferno XXXII, 116-17), the nobility of Cato of Utica’s suicide (Purgatorio I, passim), Manfred and his two wounds (Purgatorio III, 111-120), Crassus stifled by gold (Purgatorio XX, 116-17), 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 example.\(^{20}\) 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 Beatrix 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 comitisse Mathilde, que virgo aufugit a patre cum iuvene, ex quo, qui nominatus est Bonifatius Marchio, ipsam concepit Mathildam. Imperator vero filiam suam marito permisit et illi magna in Italia contulit, quibus mox Mathilda successit. [...] Anno Christi MCI comitissa Mathilda obsedit Ferrariam, que mox post annum XIIIII migravit a secolo\(^{21}\)

(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 fuisse matris comitisse Matylde, hoc modo. Aiunt matrem Matylde fuisse imperatoris filiam, que virgo exarisit in iuvenem nobilem genere Luxensem qui in aula imperatoris ministrabat. Hic ergo cognita imperatoris filia abiit cum ea et latitando cum ea inopem vitam agebat. Cum tandem imperator venisset in civitatem in cuius dyocesi latitabant, rem episcopo aperuit, ille imperatori, qui promissa venia utrumque recepit. Huic nomen fuit Bonifacius qui ex imperatoris filia Matyldam genuit ut dicitur. Imperator opibus et honore auxit eos, multa concedens ex iuribus imperii, sicut comitissa Matylde possedit, que patri marchioni Bonifacio successisse comperitur. [...] Anno .MCI. comitissa Matylde obsedit Ferrariam; que mox post annum .XIIIII. migravit e seculo, Romana Ecclesia sibi instituta herede. [...] Anno Christi .MCXV. moritur comitissa Matylde\(^{22}\)

(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
met her, 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 (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 he gave them 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 interjection ‘Some believe’ seems to suggest?

A similar and earlier version is in Thomas of Tuscany’s (d. c. 1282) Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificorum. 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 ‘lucchese’ but more generically a ‘quidam Ytalus, 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 might have gathered there could have been a compendium or a highly conflated version of Donizo’s Vita Mathildis. This poem was to be offered to the Countess but she died just before its completion. The intent of the monk’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 / Principe preclaro Lucensi de comitato’ (Sigifred, illustrious prince from Lucca). Evidently, Riccobaldo mistook Sigifredo for Matilda’s father or relied on a highly conflated 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 the Ferrarese historian 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 the Ferrarese works, certainly knew and used Donizo’s poem and was therefore clearly aware of the role and identity of Matilda.

The *Chronicon* concerns French, Germanic, 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 materials drawn from disparate sources. The narrative is not focused only on secular power, but also on Popes, legends and, in Book XXV, on a lengthy *excursus* 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, casts 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. 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.

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, as in Riccobaldo, we find that Matilda’s father is said to come from Lucca suggests that the source used by Pipino for this passage is the same one used by Riccobaldo - if the source was not the Ferrarese historian 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 Matilda than the one provided by Pipino himself in the *Chronicon* (f. 61r) and the one given by Riccobaldo in the *Pomerium* and *Compendium*. This *excursus* covers of the *Chronicon* and is the earliest version that we have of a prose rendering of Donizo’s *Vita Mathildis*, the so-called *Epitome Polinorese*, of which only two fifteenth-century copies were known. In fact, Pipino’s text is the original of the *Polinorese* and this 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 (eg. the identity of her two husbands and her loss of an infant son) occur extensively in Pipino’s *Chronicon*. The works of Martinus Oppaviensis († 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 subprior of the San Domenico convent in Bologna.\(^{32}\) Moreover, Books XII-XX of the *Chronicon* show the use by Pipino of the works by Landulph 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.\(^{33}\)

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), and this became necessary when the ‘compilator enim supradiictae 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 explicitly mentioned by Pipino,\(^{34}\) does not refer to any husband of Matilda’s, nor does he mention sons or daughters. Pipino actively seeks clarifications 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 Gotfridus was stabbed to death while he was in the latrine.\(^{35}\) He is referring to the *Historia Mediolanensis* of Landulph the Senior. Pipino is puzzled about the name Gotfridus and adds ‘it is someone’s opinion that this Gotfridus was the Duke of Spoleto, although in the abovementioned chapter there is no mention of a specific Duchy’.\(^{36}\) Pipino then calls upon Martinus Oppaviensis and Jacopo da Varazze to provide insight into the matter: Martinus\(^{37}\) recounts that Gotfrid 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 continues by saying that before her son passed away Matilda went on to assassinate her husband to make him
pay for the pains of her labour before her child died. Pipino is thus compelled to return to Landulph for clarifications: ‘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 interimi’ (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 scribitur in Chronicis, cum amplissimis habundaret possessionibus, Ecclesiam sanctumque Petrum sibi fecit heredem. Quod patrimonium hodie dicitur Patrimonium S. Petri, quod est a Radicofano usque Ceperanum’ (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 Ceprano, f. 63v). This passage does not appear in Donizo’s poem nor 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 Radiccofano a Ceperano, tutte le terre che da molti Pontifici a’ soi progenitori erano concesse. E questo nomò lei suo patrimonio e pocho tempo dapoi offresse la cessione di tuto quel Stato insieme cum il ducato de Spoliti sopra a lo altare di Sancto Pietro’. This suggests that, if Boiardo were indeed translating from Riccobaldo, the Ferrarese historian 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 Donizo 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 circulated amongst late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century historians (Martinus Oppaviensis, Jacopo da Varazze, Thomas of Tuscany) than previously suspected. These historians refer to earlier writers close to Matilda’s time (Donizo, Landulph, Armulph) 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 his *Historie*. Nevertheless, as the above discussion shows, Riccobaldo could have known about Matilda much more than Villani, Cino da Pistoia and other writers of Dante’s time knew. Moreover, Pipino’s knowledge of Donizo’s poem (possibly even through Riccobaldo) indicates that Donizo’s was indeed available, whether directly or through compendia, within Dante’s cultural environment.

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2 For a list of some of the proposed identifications see Glenn, D., *Matelda in the Terrestrial Paradise*, Fulgor, vol. 1, issue 1, March 2002 (accessed 19 October 2004). These include anagrams of her name (Matelda = *ad laetam* meaning “toward joy”), her identification as the nuns Mechtildis 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.
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 gessit omnia tamquam rex’ (and governed as king). See John A. Scott, *Dante’s Political Purgatory*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, p. 183.


10 As we have already mentioned, Pipino used Riccobaldo’s *Historie* extensively in his *Chronicon*. Boiardo translated a Latin text attributed to Riccobaldo which Boiardo himself called *Historia Imperiale* (1471-73). In fact, the translation is a very close version of the *Historie*. Cf. Andrea Rizzi, ‘Riccobaldo da Ferrara e Matteo Maria Boiardo: note preliminari’, *Gli amorum libri e la lirica del Quattrocento con altri studi boiardeschi*, ed. A. T. Benvenuti, Novara: Interlinea, 2003, 137-55 and below for more details.


12 As I will mention below, Aldo Francesco Massèra demonstrated convincingly that Dante was indeed using Riccobaldo’s *Historie* for at least two accounts in *Inferno*. See Aldo Francesco Massèra, ‘Dante e Riccobaldo da Ferrara’, *Bullettino della Società Dantesca* 22, 1915, 168-200. See also Hankey, *Riccobaldo di Ferrara*, pp. 174-76.


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’, 140-55.


Hankey, *Riccobaldo of Ferrara*, pp. 175-76.

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


Donizo, *Vita Mathildis*, p. 10.

We are indebted to Muratori for having published a text otherwise unknown. However, his edition contains a plethora of arbitrary omissions and changes. The original narrative of the *Chronicon* is distorted in Muratori’s edition. Muratori left out Books I-XXI, and the structure of the last portion of the *Chronicon* is much altered: Book XXV was published by Muratori in the *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (hereof abbreviated as RIS¹), VIII, pp. 664-848, whereas in 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 RIS¹; Books XXIII (less the seventh chapter), XXIV (less 77 chapters) and XXVI (less 37 chapters) form Book II in RIS¹; Book XXVII and the first section of Book XXVIII form Book III in RIS¹; Books XXVIII (the final 18 chapters), XXIX, XXX, XXXI form Book IV in RIS¹.


Ibid., 177-184. Pipino’s tendency to insert lengthy quotations from Riccobaldo’s *Historie* suggests that he made a much more extensive use of the Ferrarese historian than indicated by Massèra who studied only the published section of the *Chronicon*.

The proofs given are exhaustive: Ibid., 195.


Pipino, f. 61r: ‘Est tamen aliquorum opinio Henricum huius nominis quartum imperatorem fuisse genitorem matris huius comitisse Mathildis, hoc modo: dicunt matrem Mathildis, dum virgo esset, in iuvenem nobilis exarsisse, genere Lucensem in imperatoris aula ministrantem, qui tandem hac imperatoris filia cognita timens comissam, cum ea abit, et diu latitans inopem vitam duxit. Tandem cum imperator venisset in civitate quandam, in cuius episcopatu iuvenis ille cum imperatoris filia latitabat, iuvenis ipse rem aperuit episcopo civitatis. Ille autem imperator narravit: cuius precibus venia promissa, utrumque recepit ad gratiam. Huic iuveni nomen erat Bonifacius, qui ex imperatoris filia hanc genuit 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 met her and fearing the consequences of such an act, 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 simply 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 Arnulph’s Liber Gestiorum Recentium to the same extent, and then intermingled the accounts from both 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 dicitur cappia Landulfi de Sancto Paulo quod ad secessum residens quidam nomine Gotfridus, Gotfridi filii gladio confossus interiit’ (in the book called Chapter of St Paul it is said that a certain Duke named Gotfrid was stubbed to death, while he was in the latrine, by one of his servants).

36 Ibid. ‘est et aliquorum opinio, quod iste Gothfridus dux fuerit Spoletanus, quamquam in eadem Cappia eius non nominetur ducatus’ (it is the opinion of others that the aforementioned Gotfrid was from Spoleto, although in the Chapter there is no mention of the Duchy).


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