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Visualizing the Reform: Examining Modena Cathedral's *Porta dei Principi* for Traces of the Gregorian Reform

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Abstract:

In the vein of Ernst Kitzinger, Kirstin Noreen, and Anat Tcherikover's work on art of the Gregorian Reform, as well as H.E.J. Cowdrey's work on the networks of the Gregorian Reform, this paper will explore the aesthetic manifestations the eleventh-century papal reform by examining the iconographic content of relief sculptures on the *Porta dei Principi* of the cathedral of Modena for pro-papal imagery. On the lintel of the entranceway is the life of the city's patron saint and fourth-century bishop, Geminianus, which regales viewers of the bishop-saint's heroism while exorcising evil from within the royal court. By examining the imagery upon the doorway in conjunction with contemporary descriptions such as the *Relatio de Innovatione Ecclesie Sancti Geminiani*, this paper will investigate potential visual links between the iconography of the cathedral and the Gregorian Reform.

Keywords: Modena; Porta dei Principi; Matilde of Canossa; Gregorian Reform

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Introduction

The long eleventh century was a tumultuous period throughout the Italian peninsula; disputes between the papacy and the *regnum* under Henry IV had begun to fracture local politics, and clashes over investitures boiled over into intra-city conflict. The two power structures often played tug-of-war over one municipality over the course of years and decades, leading to a confusing string of contradictory leaderships. Near the turn of the twelfth century in Modena, the very same struggle was playing out as the pro-papalists struggled to maintain power in a city with an imperially appointed bishop. Despite having bowed to imperial advances and benefits, when the bishop died, a surge of papal favour swept the city back into graces of the Church. This period saw the appointment of a papally endorsed bishop and the construction of a new cathedral. This construction, and subsequent relic translation, was facilitated by members of a papally-aligned network, most prominently Matilda of Canossa (1046-1115). A critical examination of the translation account, alongside the cathedral's iconography, may shed some light on how and why the city shifted away from imperial favour and into that of the papacy.

One of the most meaningful ways to discuss the eleventh-century papal reform and its adherents would be via its efficacy and reach as a network. First described by I.S. Robinson, the "Gregorian Friendship Network" refers to Pope Gregory VII's use of "friendship letters" to cultivate alliances with potentially reform-minded people.[1] Among others, the group included Hugh of Flavigny, Bonizo of Sutri, Anselm of Lucca, William of Hirsau, Hugh of Die, John of Mantua, and Rangerius of Lucca, as well as the eponymous Gregory VII.[2] Matilda of Canossa—of special interest for her role at Modena—was also a member of said network, and was a life-long ally of the papacy throughout the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Robinson characterizes this network as an important vector through which notions of the reform could be exchanged, asserting that Gregory's "principal instrument for the enforcement of the reform was the political pressure which he could exert through his friendship network and which he could direct by means of letters".[3] Present in some form throughout the majority of Western Christendom, the network created enclaves of papal support throughout Europe. Despite the death of the network's namesake, the coalition remained strong in the decades following Gregory's death in 1085, as the members continued to share common reform-oriented goals and loyalty to the pontificate. One of the byproducts of this network was the creation and dissemination of artworks whose primary interpretive mode highlighted and reinforced the dogma of the

[1] Robinson, "The Friendship Network of Gregory VII", 1–22.
[2] Healy, *The Chronicle of Hugh of Flavigny*. For more on the "Gregorian friendship network" see: Robinson, "The Friendship Network of Gregory VII".
[3] Robinson, 9.

reform, including notions of papal supremacy. Much as polemicists transformed biblical passages and patristic writings to suit their message of papal supremacy and imperial heresy, reform-minded patrons of material culture sought out scenes which could do the same.

Modena

A curious case thus presents itself at Modena at the turn of the twelfth century when the city organized to erect a new cathedral during a period of shifting allegiances. From 1056 to his death in 1094, Modena was under the purview of an imperially aligned bishop, Eribert, and the city proved resistant to pro-papal overtures, even after Gregory VII excommunicated the bishop for his ties to the *regnum*.[4] It wasn't until 1094 when Eribert died that a papally-endorsed bishop named Benedict came to the city, though his influence was limited as he died shortly thereafter in 1097. The seat remained unfilled for several years—Luigi Simeoni has suggested this was due to the apprehension of the Modenese people to accept a staunch papalist, in marked contrast to the preceding years of imperial dominance within the city.[5] It was also during this upheaval that the citizenry began construction on the new church, which in 1106, resulted in a reburial of the city's patron bishop-saint, Geminianus. During this process, a pro-papal bishop named Dodone was installed, an action which might suggest the city was becoming more receptive to the reformer's platform.

However, such changes don't often occur spontaneously—what, or who, was responsible for injecting pro-papal sentiments into an imperially-aligned city and how? This paper proposes that a catalyst may be found in the 1106 translation of Geminianus' remains, an event overseen by Matilda of Canossa and one which effectively claimed the saint for the reform. The subsequent decoration of the saint's life on the *Porta dei Principi* on the new cathedral may then reflect a city-wide embrace of the reform. The translation would have been the perfect event to sway the citizenry on a large scale. Reformers across northern Italy attempted more forceful conversions to mixed success. During this same period, Matilda of Canossa, staunch ally to the papacy, was also embroiled in an on-going insurrection in Parma following her direct intervention to appoint a pro-papal bishop, Bernard of Vallombrosa.[6] Thus, perhaps Modena presented an opportunity for a different strategy.

Matilda's relation to the rise of individual cities in the pre-communal era has been of interest, including Emilio Nasalli Rocca with Parma,[7] and Vito Fumagalli with Mantua and Modena.[8] Arturo Carlo Quintavalle has recently written about Matilda's complex political role in relation to the cities of her domain, particularly as an intermediary force for the Gregorian reform.[9] Eugenio Riversi recently put forward a "figurational" approach to Matilda's involvement in the

[4] Miller. "From Episcopal to Communal Palaces", 184, n. 24; Glass, *The Sculpture of Reform in North Italy*, 167.
[5] Simeoni, "I vescovi Eriberto e Dodone e le origini del Comune di Modena", 77–96; Frison, "Dodone".
[6] Nash, *Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda*, 59.
[7] Rocca, "Parma e la Contessa Matilde", 53–68.
[8] Fumagalli, "Mantova al tempo di Matilde di Canossa", 159–167; Fumagalli, "Economia, società e istituzioni nei secoli XI-XII nel territorio modenese", 37–116.
[9] Quintavalle, "Matilda and the Cities of the Gregorian Reform", 79–106.

cities within her domain which eschews the "Matilda versus the Cities/Pre-Communes" model popular in modern studies of the countess.[10] In a discussion more broadly focused on the construction of cathedrals in bishop-less cities of Northern Italy, Bruno Klein suggests that Matilda acted as a stabilizing political force.[11] This stabilization, he writes, was necessary to mediate between the waning power of the bishopric and rising power of the fledgling city. It is through this lens this paper will examine Matilda's presence in the reconstruction process: while not an overt act on behalf of the reform, it is one which reintroduced papal influence in a city whose imperial ties had begun to weaken. This moment, this paper suggests, came at an integral point in the reconstruction effort and had subsequent influence over the cathedral's decoration, further perpetuating a pro-papal bias.

Relatio de innovatione ecclesiae Sancti Geminiani

We can glean more information about the event from an account recorded in the thirteenth-century manuscript *Historia Fundationis Cathedralis Mutinensis,* in a section entitled *Relatio de Innovatione Ecclesie Sancti Geminiani ac de Translatione Eius Beatissimi Corporis* (Archivio Storico Dicesano di Modena-Nonantola, MS.O.II.11, Fols. 0dv-9v). This illustrated narrative—which serves as a frontispiece to the rest of the manuscript—conveys the twelfth-century reconstruction of San Geminiano Cathedral in Modena. It is followed by a leaf containing dates in several hands (fol. 10r); the 1302 record of benefices given to San Severo (fols. 11r-13v); the table of contents (fols. 14r-21r); a record of privileges granted to the cathedral, copies of notarial deeds and contracts, and other documents relating to the construction process (fols. 22r-306r). The narrative of the *Relatio* itself thought to be Aimone di Modena's – also the author of the epigraph on the exterior of the main apse of the cathedral – first-hand account of the events in 1106.[12] Subsequent copies were made of the *Relatio*, but there are no known contemporary versions of the original text.[13]

Clues within the *Relatio* suggest the text was copied from a now-lost original: the presence of struck-through words, caret additions, and irregular kerning (particularly at the end of a line) all imply corrections to errors made while copying. Additionally, blank leaves between the end of the text and the last illumination may indicate that the copyist prepared an inexact number of pages and had to leave them in to preserve the pairing of follicular and non-follicular sides.

The text is accompanied by two full-page illustrations which are divided into two registers and accompanied by inscriptions. The miniatures show ground-breaking and early construction of Modena

[10] Riversi, "Matilda and the Cities".
[11] Klein, "Romanesque Cathedral in Northern Italy", 107-117.
[12] Rossi, "Modena", 1-4.
[13] The text of the *Relatio* was copied in the sixteenth century by Alessandro Tassoni for the Estense family as part of a larger Modenese history (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS. Lat. 388). Tassoni ordered and compiled copies of various historical documents dating until the late fifteenth century; he then added his own history of Modena for the sixteenth century up till the mid-sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century, Lodovico Antonio Muratori used this manuscript for the publication of the *Annales Veteres Mutinenses* in Volume XI of the *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*. Tassoni's copy in the Biblioteca Estense manuscript is shorter and recapitulatory in nature and does not contain any illuminations. Additionally, there are occasionally differences in the grammar and spelling. It is important to note that Arthur K. Porter seems to use cite both the thirteenth-century text as well as the *Relatio* text transcribed by Tassoni.

Cathedral (fol. 0dv) as well as the decision to transfer Geminianus's remains and their reburial (fol. 9r). Paolo Golinelli suggests that the scenes reflect those which may have appeared within the now-lost twelfth-century original but were copied in the style of the thirteenth century.[14] Regardless, though we cannot ascertain the level of potential change between the illuminations and a lost exemplar, the images correspond to the *Relatio's* account of Matilda's role within the event. While it is also possible that the *Relatio* exaggerated Matilda's role within the dispute in order to associate the cathedral's construction with a well-known figure, the countess's extant charters show that such a task would have been well within her purview. Matilda was frequently called upon to solve disputes both secular and religious in nature and was often referred to as a judge.[15] Furthermore, Matilda's charters provide evidence that from December 1105 to January 1107 she remained within the region and travelled no further than Parma in that period.[16] In conjunction, these factors suggest that it is plausible that Matilda was the logical choice to arbitrate such a decision and that the images reflect the nature of her duties as they were perceived by the author of the text.

Nonetheless, the *Relatio* informs us that the decision to build a new cathedral was a practical one as the previous church was damaged and in danger of total collapse: "Crebris scissuris multisque rimis a fundamentis quodammodo videbatur, non solum insistentibus verum etiam intrantibus seu exeuntibus, inferre ruinam."[17] According to the account, the construction faced numerous challenges. Most notably, the remains of the patron saint needed to be relocated during the construction, a decision which proved to be contentious.[18] During construction in April 1106 the architect Lanfranco ordered that Geminianus's remains be translated so that the existing cathedral could be wholly demolished as its continued presence inhibited the construction of the new building. The proposed process was intensely debated within the city; those affiliated with the church were interested in seeing the remains in order to witness the supposed incorruptibility of the saint's body, while the citizens were against potentially tainting the remains by exposing them.

The text of the *Relatio* indicates the event could not be settled, and Matilda was called upon to fulfil her duties as an overseer and judge at a council composed of both clergy and the lay. She is characterized as an impartial arbitrator respected by both parties (*consilium ubi ad aurea Mathildis*), the sensible choice to settle such a fraught debate within the populace.

This meeting between Matilda and the Modenese council is depicted in the upper register of the *Relatio*'s second miniature on folio 9r (Figure 1). The inscription which accompanies the upper scene,

[14] Golinelli, "Cultura e religiosità a Modena e Nonantola nell'alto e pieno Medioevo", 121-140.

[15] *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien*, no. 25: 95-97; no. 30: 112-113; no. 32: 114-116; no. 75: 220-221; no. 93: 258-260; no. 117: 309-310; no. 130: 335-336.

[16] *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien*, nos. 93-99: 256-274.

[17] "Many holes had developed, and there was leaking from the foundation which appeared to threaten the collapse of the entire building" *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 4; Modena, Archivio Capitolare di Modena, ms O.II.11, fol. 3r.

[18] "Ecce ubi nunquam visum, nunquam cogitatum, nunquam ab aliquo auditum fuerat, mentes hominum persuadens, terram facis effodere, miras lapidum marmorumque congeries ex multitudine misericordiarum tuarum dignaris ostendere, que quidem ad perfitiendum ceptum opus videantur satis posse sufficere" *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 6:5; Modena, Archivio Capitolare Di Modena, ms. O.II.11, fol. 3r.

"Anno Dominicae Incarnationis millesimo c. vj pridie Kalendae Maij facta est traslatio patroni nostri beatissimi Geminiani",[19] appears above the miniature. This inscription refers to the last week of April 1106 when construction was halted in order to discuss the translation of the saint's remains.

The image depicts Matilda accompanied by two women and interacting with two groups. On the left side are three bishops who are identified by their vestments, mitres, and croziers. Two bishops face towards Matilda, one of them gesturing towards the countess. The other bishop faces a group of four tonsured monks in blue robes and one bearded abbot in black. On the right side of the frame appears a group of five citizens. Among them is the architect Lanfranco who has a Phrygian-like cap and beard, identifiable by his earlier appearance in an illumination on folio 0dv of the same manuscript. To the right and facing the group of citizens is one of the bewimpled women who accompany Matilda; the other looks on from behind the countess herself. Matilda, in green and red robes, holds a blue staff and gestures with her right hand toward the two bishops who face her. She is the only figure within the frame to have a label: "Matildis comitissa".

Matilda appears engaged in the discussion – the implication is that she does not merely oversee the event but participates in it, enmeshed in the activity. In each grouping of figures, there is an exchange of gazes and gestures which help the viewer understand how the scene unfolds: on the left the clergy talk amongst themselves, on the right Matilda's companions interact with the citizens, and finally, in the middle Matilda herself who interacts with two bishops. This grouping literally and figuratively positions her as an intermediary. However, she does not appear equidistant from both parties: nearest to the group of citizens on the right, her position relative to the group perhaps suggests she acted as advocate for the citizens with whom her associates confer. The scene is a powerful one: it presents her as someone who was well-respected within her domain and her opinion important to all citizens, both clergy and laity. She was not just a figure who ruled remotely, but one who actively engaged in local politics.

After hearing the concerns of both parties at a council, Matilda called upon Pope Paschal II to settle the disagreement.[20] As established above, the countess's extant charters suggest she was frequently called upon to act as a judge without external council. Perhaps, this deviance from the norm suggests her decision to call upon the pope as strategic.[21] Additionally, the pope had already planned to be in the area for a council at Guastalla during which he intended to free Parma, Modena, Reggio, and Bologna from the see of Ravenna as it had stood against the papacy on several occasions in investiture-related issues.[22] Subsequent to Matilda's decision, the *Relatio* indicates that a notice

[19] "On day before the first day of May of the 1106th year of the incarnation of the Lord, our most blessed patron Geminianus was transferred".

[20] "De altaris quoque prelibati santissimi corporis consecratione, inter episcopos siquidem et Mutinensium cives non modica fit altercatio; quia presules eius relliquias revelare cupiunt, cives autem et omnis populus hoc ex toto renuunt. Queritur ergo principis Mathildis sententias que quidem, sicut decuit, et ut predestinatum fuerat, ipso quoque, ut credimus iam disponente, sedem prenotavit expectandum apostolicam: denuntians hoc in anno venturam esse in Italiam" Porter, Lombard Architecture, vol. 3, 11.

[21] *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien*, no. 25: 95-97; no. 30: 112-113; no. 32: 114-116; no. 75: 220-221; no. 93: 258-260; no. 117: 309-310; no. 130: 335-336.

[22] *The Early Councils of Pope Paschal II*, no. 37, 51–54; *Paschalis II, Concilium Guastallense (1106 Oct. 22)*, 564–566.

was sent around to the entire Modenese province as well as adjoining provinces notifying them that the Pope himself would be present to consecrate the church and oversee the reburial.

Accordingly, on the seventh of October, Paschal formally recognized the remains of Geminianus and declared the remains should be displayed until the next day when the altar was consecrated. The *Relatio* describes the event in October 1106 as so heavily attended that the whole city was filled with people: "Fit et conventus Populorum utriusque sexus, qualis nec nostris temporibus antea visus est, nec alicujus memorise prius habetur insertum. Nullus enim locus, nulla platea, nulla domus, nulla porticus, nullum atrium saltern vel modicum a conventu Populorum poterat inveniri vacuum".[23] Although likely exaggerated to some degree, the description vividly conveys the local importance of the bishop-saint's relics across social classes. The multitude of attendees can be seen on the lower scene on folio 9r. According to the text, the crowd in attendance consisted of members of the clergy (*ordo clericorum*), all the people of the church (*universus eiusdem ecclesie populus*), citizens of Modena (*mutinenses cives*), and soldiers of the church (*ecclesiae milites*).[24] The tomb of the patron-saint is accordingly surrounded by various guardians.

During the clergy-citizen council it was decided that the tomb was to be guarded until the remains could be properly reinterred in the new cathedral. Twelve citizens and six soldiers swore an oath of protection.[25] Though uniformly labelled *custodes monumenti*, the figures of this lower portion of the scene can, by their appearance, be divided into two groups: the *cives* and *milites* which number twelve and six, respectively. These groups seem to reference the council's decision, as described in the text of the *Relatio*, to protect the relics with twelve Modenese citizens and six soldiers. Where the *cives* are shown in modest armour and only a few of them hold weapons, the *milites* are uniformly dressed in more sophisticated armour while all bear arms. The *milites* were likely Matilda's as she is the only figure described in the text with a military attaché.[26]

The larger illumination on folio 9r is captioned with the inscription: "Eodem anno. vij. idus. Octubris dedicator et consecrator corpus et altare ipsius Confessoris".[27] In the upper section of the scene are supervisors to the saint's translation; their elevated status ensures a rarefied view of the saint's remains. At either end of the scene are a pair of unnamed figures, perhaps representing the citizens of Modena. From left to right, the named characters, are Matilda (*Matildis*), Lanfranco (*Lanfrancus*), Bonsignore (*Episcopus reginus*), and Dodone (*Dodo episcopus mutinensis*). Lanfranco lifts the lid of the tomb (*Lapis monumentj*) with assistance from Bonsignore to expose the wrapped body of Geminianus. Given the pope's absence from the illumination,

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[23] *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 6; Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, vol. 3, 13. Porter translates this as "A great assembly of bishops, clerks, abbots and monks came together, as well as a great number of soldiers and a multitude of men and women such as in our times had never been seen, nor is there record that so great a number had ever before come together. No place, no piazza, no house, no portico, no vestibule, however small, could be found that was not crowded with the populace".

[24] *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 4-5.

[25] "Iurant ergo de ordine militum sex viri, iurant et de civibus bis seni" *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 7.

[26] "Princeps cum suo exercitu and magno exercitu adest et princeps Mathìldis" *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 7.

[27] "On the 9th of October in the same year, the body of the confessor and altar was consecrated and dedicated".

this scene may depict the presentation period during which the onlookers could witness the bishop-saint's remains while the saint's body was prepared for the pope's consecration.

According to the text, both Matilda and Bishop Dodone presented the saint's remains with gifts. To the right, Dodone presents the bishop-saint with a paten and chalice; described in the text as a "fine silver chalice and paten, marvellously decorated within and without with gold inlay".[28] Matilda gave "wonderful gifts of gold and silver, and remarkable *pallia insignia*".[29] In the illumination, we can see Matilda grasping a piece of fabric patterned with crosses – presumably the *pallia insignia* – while one of the unlabelled figures behind her gestures to the countess and her gift.

Evidence of Matilda's gift may exist: during the 1955 unsealing of the sarcophagus, strands of gold thread and silver crosses were found in the saint's tomb.[30] Lucia Travaini suggests that the small crosses may have adorned the *pallia*, as was sometimes customary for liturgical garments of the period, and would have been made contemporaneously to the reburial, based on similarly styled moulds and crosses.[31] Matteo Al Kalak notes the tomb was only recorded to have been opened in 1184 and then in 1955 which significantly narrows the potential times in which this object from which the gold threads derive could have been placed.[32] This evidence suggests that the text and images were correct in their depiction of Matilda's gift; however, what type of cloth gift did Matilda actually make?

Kingsley Arthur Porter translates *pallia insignia* as a vague "altar clothes", lending little insight into the nature of the gift.[33] A secular definition of *pallia* might potentially refer to a generic coverlet or cloak. Or, perhaps a liturgical garment such as the chasuble or cope being described with a non-specific descriptor. It is also possible that the text intends to describe the liturgical garment specifically worn by bishops called the *pallium*. If, as suggested above, the author of the account was in fact Aimone, a canon of the cathedral, it is within reason that he would have been familiar enough with liturgical garments to use the appropriate term to describe it. Roberta Gilchrest has noted that there have been examples of burials of bishops with vestments, indicating it would not have been unusual to associate the garment with burials of bishops, though it can be an archaeological challenge to distinguish said garments from other grave objects such as burial shrouds.[34]

As such, the surviving physical evidence is scant, making a total physical assessment impossible. Though it is possible that Matilda's gift was simply decorative cloth, an altar cloth could have been referred to as *palla dominica* or *palla altaris* in order to distinguish it from liturgical garments.[35] However, from the fifth century, women

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[28] "Sed et domnus Dodo venerabilis pontifex calicem argenteum cum pathena ei obtulit optimum, aureis signis intus forisque mirabiliter decoratum" *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 8.

[29] "Princeps Mathildis dona ferens ingentia: aurum, argentum, pallia insignia" *Relatio transationis corporis sancti Geminiani*, 8.

[30] Al Kalak, *Relatio de innovatione ecclesie Sancti Geminiani*, 10–12; Travaini, "Saints, Sinners and...a Cow", 212-213.

[31] Paravicini Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, 138; Travaini, "Saints, Sinners and...a Cow", 213.

[32] Al Kalak, *Relatio de innovatione ecclesie Sancti Geminiani*, 17–18; Al Kalak, *Il sepolcro del Santo*; Armandi Barbolini, *Lanfranco e Wiligelmo*, 121-128.

[33] Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, vol. 3, 12-14. Porter specifically uses the term "clothes", which suggests garments, rather than "cloths", which would suggest the type of fabric laid over an altar.

[34] Gilchrist, "Clothing the Body", 70–71.

[35] Izbicki, "Linteamenta Altaria", 41-43.

were forbidden to touch or handle the altar cloth which suggests Matilda would have been unable to lay the gift herself as is depicted in the illumination and described in the text.[36] If the cloth was meant to be laid over the body like a shroud, it would have likely been referred to as a *brandeum*, as *brandea* which itself served a specific role as a prestigious relic.[37] However, Steven Schoenig has helpfully pointed out that there is no evidence of postmortem investments of the *pallium*, which altogether complicates such an interpretation.[38] Thus, while it is possible the saint's remains were gifted with the garment, barring the collection of further evidence, it is impossible to fully assess.

Nonetheless, the opulent gifts of the Countess and Dodone would have likely made a powerful statement on behalf of the reformers wishing to ingratiate themselves into the city by playing on the love of the local citizenry for their patron saint. This act of persuasion in a city whose allegiance was anything but solid may have had a marked effect on the decoration of the cathedral still under construction. It's possible that this persuasion did not end at the reburial but continued to manifest in the continued construction and decoration of the new cathedral.

Porta dei Principi

The decoration of the *Porta dei Principi* (Figure 2), dated around 1106-1120, contains scenes from the life of Geminianus, the patron saint of the city and the namesake to the cathedral.[39] The exterior of the jambs and the archivolt are decorated with intertwined rinceaux interlaced with humans, animals, and hybrid beasts. On the inner sides of both jambs appear prophets and other biblical figures, plus two unidentified members of the clergy, one of whom we may assume is a bishop. On the centre of the underside of the lintel appears two angels who hold an orb containing the lamb of Christ. On the left appears John the Baptist[40] while Paul appears on the right.[41]

Across the lintel are scenes from the life of the city and cathedral's dedicatory saint, Geminianus (Figure 3). The scenes unfold in six panels leading left to right and are accompanied by a running inscription along the top, drawn from the *vitae* of the bishop-saint.[42] I have translated it with some minor liberties for clarity:

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[36] Coon, "The Rhetorical Uses of Clothing in the Lives of Sacred Males", 65.

[37] Harrsen, "Pope Gregory the Great as Guardian of the Apostolic Relics", 307; McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and Dialogues of Pope Gregory the Great", 165–167.

[38] I would like to thank Steven Schoenig for his insight into investiture procedures relating to the garment.

[39] Glass, *The Sculpture of Reform in North Italy*; Glass, "Prophecy and Priesthood at Modena", 326–338; Ayres, "An Italianate Episode in Romanesque Bible Illumination at Weingarten Abbey", 121-128; Glass, *Italian Romanesque Sculpture*; Castelnuovo, "Flores cum beluis comixtos"; Reiche, "Die Älteste Skulptur am Modeneser Dom und die Herkunft Wiligelmos", 259-310.

[40] "ECCE AGN(US) DEI ECCE QVI TOLLIT PECCATA MVNDI". References the text of John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!".

[41] *QVICV(M) Q(VE) BABTITATI SVMVS IN XPO IHV I,* which references Romans 6:3 "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death".

[42] For a discussion of the two different versions of the saint's life, see: Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, vol. 3, 39-43.

> *The bishop mounted his horse, insisting he set out· The very distinguished shepherd Geminianus crossed the sea· Here, after the demon was banished and sent to die by Geminianus and the princess once again became sane· Geminianus was granted by the king a chalice with a book of laws· Behold, as he returned with haste to the assembly of all the people· After his return, he died and the courageous Geminianus was given a worthy burial.*[43]

The first panel shows Geminianus departing on horseback accompanied by an assistant who carries both a scroll and the bishop-saint's crozier; he is readying himself to depart across the sea to lend assistance to Emperor Jovianus (Figure 4).[44] The *vitae* of Geminianus records that this scene occurs after the failed temptation of the bishop by the devil.[45] After the saint rejected the demon, the demon fled to the east and possessed the daughter of Emperor Jovianus. The next scene shows a condensed version of the saint's journey to Constantinople – during the voyage, the bishop fell asleep, was attacked by a hoard of demons during a storm but managed to summon the power of Christ to dispel both.[46]

The third panel depicts Geminianus at the court of Emperor Jovianus. The emperor's daughter grips the hand of both her father and the bishop while Geminianus expels the demon (Figure 5). The empress watches on, hand raised in prayer as the winged beast escapes the young girl, rising out of frame. Following the successful exorcism, the emperor and empress shower the saint with lavish gifts, including a chalice and paten, an altar cloth, and a book.[47] That we see a scene depicting a bishop exorcising a literal demon from the court of the emperor is telling. The frame of the story can easily be transposed over the apparent goals of papal reform: exorcise the deleterious members of the imperial court to restore the appropriate hierarchy. Where Geminianus sought to expel a literal demon, the reformers expelled the wicked Henry IV and his associates from the church in order to restore the appropriate socio-political and religious hierarchy. However, here we see an ideal yet alternative reality of sorts, one where the emperor follows the will of the church rather than subvert it.

On the last two panels, we see the bishop-saint's return to, and burial in, Modena (Figure 6). Both events are shown to be widely attended, featuring unidentifiable characters who presumably represent the citizens of Modena who turned up to see their beloved bishop. In his *vitae,* Geminianus implored the emperor that he may return to Modena and build a basilica. Though only his return into the city is depicted, his motivations to do so would have likely been known to the citizens of Modena as part of the foundational lore of the original basilica.[48] Though likely part of the local knowledge of the

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[43] "SCANDIT EQVV(N) LET(VS) DV(M) TENDIT AD EQVORA PRESVL · PASTOR P(RE) CL(A)RV(S) MARE TRANSIT GEMINIANVS · PRINCIPIS HIC NATA(M) DAT PVLSO DEMONE SANAM · DONA CAPIT REGIS CALICE(M) CV(M) CODICE LEGIS · DV(M) REDIT E(N) C(ON) TRA SIBI CVRRIT C(ON) TIO CVNCTA · POST REDITV(M) FORTIS P(ER) SOLVIT DEBITA MORTIS".

[44] *Vita di san Geminiano*, 33–34.

[45] Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, vol. 3, 39-43.

[46] *Vita di san Geminiano*, 35–37.

[47] Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, vol. 3, 41.

[48] "Post accepta munera beatus Geminianus ab imperatore, gratias agens omnipotenti Domino qui eum exaudire et custodire dignatus est, de omnibus ab eo postulatis, petiit

building, it does seem unusual to omit this particular scene in the context of Geminianus' life as it would have seamlessly connected the foundation of the Roman basilica to the newly constructed basilica on which this scene appears.

The burial scene perhaps clarifies this omission. Out of all six scenes on the lintel, this panel has the most characters. As most of these are unidentified and otherwise unmarked, we might read them again as the Modenese citizens who have come to publicly mourn. Though these sculptures are characteristically and uniformly devoid of facial emotion, one character in the upper right portion casts an open hand to his brow as he looks upon the entombment below. As gestures, rather than facial expression, seem to be the expressive currency of the lintel, we may interpret this as a sign of grief or sadness. This connection between the citizenry and the saint during a burial may also invoke the reburial of the saint's remains during the 1106 translation. If so, this may be an effort to create a parallel between the events of 1106 and the original "worthy burial" of Geminianus as described in the *vitae* and lintel scenes.[49]

Following the above analysis of the 1106 burial from the *Relatio,* a deeper inspection of this final scene should also be undertaken. Following Geminianus' death, the *vitae* relate a miraculous appearance of the soul of the Archbishop of Ravenna, Severus, to the funeral. According to the text, the archbishop fell asleep in his church at Ravenna and upon waking, told his assistants he had visited Modena and blessed the body of Geminianus.[50] Indicated by his vestments in the lintel scene, Severus is shown here holding a censer in one hand and making the sign of the blessing with the other above the deceased saint being lowered into a sarcophagus.

As the attendance of Matilda to the 1106 reburial was notable in the manuscript scene, the appearance of Severus here may be revealing. Ravenna was, particularly during the preceding decades of the late eleventh century, dominated by imperially-appointed bishops, most notably the antipope Clement III. By the time of the translation event in 1106, Clement had recently died and been the subject of a wide-spread *damnatio memoriae* where, on Paschal's orders, the antipope's body was disinterred and tossed into the Tiber after reports of miracles at his tomb.[51] Furthermore, it's evident the see was poorly regarded by the pope, as attested by the recent Council at Guastalla, which both reaffirmed crucial tenets of the Papal Reform as well freed the surrounding areas (including Modena) from the city's control. If Ravenna was *urbs non grata*, why then would Severus appear within the scene?

Perhaps the lintel scene meant to serve as an exemplum of the "correct" hierarchy between Church and its subordinates. The scene evokes a time in Early Christianity when the see of Ravenna acted in concordance with the larger church. As the expulsion of the demon from Jovianus' court makes clear the emperor ought to defer to members of the Church who alone can channel the spiritual authority of Christ, perhaps Severus appears to show how the bishop of Ravenna (and perhaps, the city at large) ought to behave.

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imperatori licentiam ut ad ecclesiam sibi a Deo commissam et ad sedem pri stinam reuerteretur; quatinus plebem Dei in fide Christi praedicando confirmaret, et basilicam in sancto nomine eius aedificaret" *Antiche vite di S. Geminiano,* 70.

[49] *Vita di san Geminiano,* 37–38.

[50] *Vita di san Geminiano,* 61–65.

[51] Sprenger, "The Tiara in the Tiber", 3-4.

This appears to be the larger theme of the *Porta dei Principi* – an exemplum of the "correct" order of ecclesiastic and secular authority, the very issue which presently unsteadied Christendom. We might otherwise look to the depiction of the heretofore unnamed bishop on the inner jamb (Figure 7). One potential option might render him the newly appointed and papally approved Dodone, the presiding bishop who oversaw the translation of the remains and the continuing construction on the cathedral. Though without an inscribed name certainty is impossible, even a generic depiction of a bishop is of interest given the prominence of his ecclesiastic garments, most notably the *pallium.*

By the eleventh century, the *pallium* had become symbolic of allegiance to the Pope. Steven Schoenig posits that kings did not attempt to invest bishops with the pallium 'probably because of its long association with the papacy and firm connection to Peter's tomb in Rome.'[52] As part of the its's conferral, the garment was laid above Saint Peter's tomb overnight so that it could be imbued with the saint's attributes.[53] This close association with Rome began as early as the eighth century, before it had even become a standard garment for bishops and archbishops, and was always considered a privilege bestowed by the papacy upon certain localities rather than a universally given vestment.[54] In the eighth century, Bede described the garment as a method which popes used to build the fabric of their power.[55] In the early eleventh century, Pope Alexander II wrote that the pallium should always be collected in person and was the "greatest award" of faithfulness.[56] The practice of these in-person collections was a way to protect against the improper seizure and use of the vestments, reflective of the rising tensions over the garment and its meaning during Alexander's lifetime.[57] His successor Gregory VII continued to restrict the garment. In 1073 Gregory referred to the pallium as the "proper right" of the church, and wrote that it could not be granted without a physical presence in Rome.[58] In 1081, Gregory emphasized the importance of the *pallium* to the function of a bishop's office, and that a bishop could not perform ordinations and consecrations until the garment was collected.[59] Receiving the garment thus facilitated an alliance between the pope and the clergy member; inversely, it's revocation was used as punishment as its withdrawal came the annulment of clerical powers, rights, and authority. It's appearance not only here upon the bishop figure but also upon the Archbishop of Ravenna, Severus suggests a pointed message. Much as the garment could only come from the pope, so too could come true authority.

Finally, we must also – if briefly – consider the type and position of the *Porta dei Principi* in relation to the city for further insight into the iconographic intentions of the lintel. It's worth considering the entire doorway, both in context and design, to understand the potential pro-

[52] Schoenig, *Bonds of Wool*, pt. 3, chs. 7–9, 275-396. Schoenig offers an excellent and thorough look at the use of the *pallium* as a religious and political tool during this period.
[53] Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, 404-410.
[54] Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient*, 627–28; Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome*, 38, 80; Tinti, "The Pallium Privilege of Pope Nicholas II for Archbishop Ealdred of York", 710-712.
[55] Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum,* 50.
[56] *Epistolae pontificum Romanorum ineditae*, nos. 76, 81, 41-3.
[57] Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient*, 630.
[58] *The Register of Pope Gregory VII,* 1.24, 29-30.
[59] *The Register of Pope Gregory VII,* 9.1, 398.

papal associations. The *Porta dei Principi* is an example of *protiri*, a type of doorway which was utilized in ecclesiastic architecture throughout Northern Italy during the twelfth-century.[60] The *protiri* was typically where bishops stood when enacting their civic duties as judge, which symbolically transformed the *Porta dei Principi* and the piazza upon which it stood into a legislative court.[61] Upon Dodone's arrival in the city, the administrative powers of the city reverted to the appropriate papally-appointed clergy, reaffirming the powers of the Church over both the secular and sacred realms. Furthermore, Christine Verzár Bornstein has noted that the canopy supports of the *Porta* (columns atop lions) may passively reference those found at the Cathedral of Salerno, the sanctuary and burial location of the reforming icon Gregory VII.[62] Finally, the *Porta dei Principi* would have been diagonal to the original bishop's palace within the city and likely served as the bishops' entrance to the cathedral.[63] The *palatio* was one of the most visible signs of the bishopric's turmoil in Modena. Prior to the death of Eribert, papally invested bishops were forced to reside outside the city at Savignano, as a guest of Matilda, while the imperial bishop resided in and eventually enlarged against the will of the papacy, the bishop's palace.[64] That we see the confluence of several interconnected symbols of reform-oriented ecclesiastic authority in proximity suggests a wider iconographic program at play. Though individually these interpretations may be inconsequential, collectively they seem to point towards a conscious implementation of ideals through imagery.

Through these interconnected symbols, the *Porta dei Principi* appears to fit into the larger pattern of reform-oriented decoration on the cathedral, a trend previously observed by Anat Tcherikover and Dorothy Glass. It seems that the 1106 reburial, choreographed and executed by noted papalists, played a crucial role in introducing pro-papal sentiments to an imperial-aligned city and promoting the reform's ideals. By casting the bishop-saint as one of their own, reformers were able to overlay a new, pro-reform meaning to scenes from the saint's life while additional symbols of papal allegiance may have helped obviate these messages to all. Activated by the *Porta dei Principi*'s now-obscured relationship to the bishop's palace, the decoration would have proved a powerful reminder to any entrant – reform conscious or not – of the correct hierarchy of power between the Church and the state.

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[60] Bornstein, "Matilda of Canossa, Papal Rome, and the Earliest Italian Porch Portals", 143–158; Bornstein, *Portals and Politics in the Early Italian City-State*; Glass, *Portals, Pilgrimage, and Crusade in Western Tuscany*.

[61] Bornstein, "Matilda of Canossa, Papal Rome, and the Earliest Italian Porch Portals", 145-146.

[62] Bornstein, "Matilda of Canossa, Papal Rome, and the Earliest Italian Porch Portals", 148.

[63] Glass, *The Sculpture of Reform in North Italy*, 184-188; Miller, "From Episcopal to Communal Palaces", 175-185, Miller, "The Episcopal Residence in the Central Middle Ages", 86–122.

[64] Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy*, 189-190; Simeoni, "I vescovi Eriberto e Dodone e le origini del comune di Modena", 77–87.

Figures

Figure 1. Matilda meeting with Modenese citizens (top); Translation and consecration of Geminianus's body (bottom). Modena, Archivio Storico Diocesano di Modena-Nonantola, MS. O.II.11 (Relatio de innovatione ecclesie Sancti Geminiani), fol. 9r. Photograph courtesy of Il Bulino, Art Editions.

Figure 2. Porta dei Principi. Modena, Cattedrale Metropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta e San Geminiano, c. 1106-1120. Photograph by author, 2017.

Figure 3. Lintel, Porta dei Principi. Modena, Cattedrale Metropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta e San Geminiano, c. 1106-1120. Photograph by author, 2017.

Figure 4. Left: Geminianus departing on horseback, Right: Geminianus sailing to Constantinople. Porta dei Principi. Modena, Cattedrale Metropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta e San Geminiano, c. 1106-1120. Photograph by author, 2017.

Figure 5. Left: Geminianus expelling the demon, Right: Geminianus receives gifts from the Emperor and Empress. Porta dei Principi. Modena, Cattedrale Metropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta e San Geminiano, c. 1106-1120. Photograph by author, 2017.

Figure 6. Left: Geminianus returning to Modena on horseback, Right: Geminianus' burial. Porta dei Principi. Modena, Cattedrale Metropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta e San Geminiano, c. 1106-1120. Photograph by author, 2017.

Figure 7. Unnamed bishop, left interior jamb. Porta dei Principi. Modena, Cattedrale Metropolitana di Santa Maria Assunta e San Geminiano, c. 1106-1120. Photograph by author, 2017.

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