



QUEENSHIP AND POWER

EMPRESS ADELHEID AND COUNTESS MATILDA

*Medieval Female Rulership
and the Foundations
of European Society*

Penelope Nash



Queenship and Power

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Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda

Medieval Female Rulership and the Foundations of
European Society

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Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda, Sant'Agostino, Modena, Italy (La chiesa di S. Agostino Modena. Archivio fotografico del Museo Civico d'Arte di Modena [photography Penelope Nash])

*To Rob, Danielle, Tabitha and Lyn—without whom none of this would have
been possible*

FOREWORD

Adelheid of Bourgogne (Adelaide di Borgogna) and Matilda of Tuscany (Matilde di Canossa) have been each in turn the subject of several studies in recent decades on the anniversaries of their deaths: 999/1999 for Adelheid; 1115/2015 for Matilda. No one, however, has compared their lives, their politics and their role in history. A comparison was made between Adelheid and another Mathilda, the saint, mother of Otto I (*Queenship and Sanctity. The Lives of Mathilda and the Epitaph of Adelheid*, ed. by S. GILSDORF, Washington, D.C., 2004), but they lived in the same century and in very proximate locations. In contrast Adelheid and Matilda lived in different centuries and differed in social standing (*status*). One is an empress, the other a countess; the first a wife, widow, mother and grandmother, while the second one was substantially a lonely woman; and, above all, they pertained to different historical contexts: the foundation and establishment of the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic people for the age of Adelheid, the period of the struggles over investiture, with all the conflicts that ensued, for the age of Matilda.

Nevertheless the comparison is clearly stated, and it is focused in the three parts of the book: *Kin and Kith, Land, Rule*. Yet this is not a book that deals totally with gender studies, even though the feminine aspect is, of course, constantly present. This is a historical study that is broadened from a comparison between the two women to a detailed examination within a wider analysis of the whole Medieval society of the tenth and eleventh centuries. It debates crucial themes dealt with by contemporary historiography, such as imperial power and its underlying ideology, as well as the patrimonial system always linked to the exercise of public power, the

role of the powerful woman in time of conflicts or war, the importance of parental bonds and of spirituality as seen in the author's choice of life models (even Biblical ones) and reflected in the acquaintances they established during their daily lives and also in their actions.

Greatly relevant is the attention that the author dedicates to the Latin terminology used by the sources, always subtly analyzed in order to seek in the connotations of the documentary and literary sources, often written according to the patterns of formulaic language, the legal differences in the established roles, or to detect even a hint of the slightest differences between relatives. And of note is also the attention dedicated throughout to iconographic display and to the locations where the historical events took place, with maps. The sources are carefully put to good use and the author is perceptive and full of observations, which demonstrates her vast knowledge of the bibliographical material, especially in English. So the author can discuss themes that go far beyond the simple comparison between the two historical figures and examine many different facets of her topic.

The relationships of Adelheid and Matilda with relatives and friends (*Kin and Kith*) are carefully described, but more interesting is the anthropological contrast between introductions by people nowadays ('What do you do for a living?') compared with those in traditional societies like the Arrernte people ('To whom are you related?') to underline the importance of belonging to a certain family or clan. The comparison becomes even more persuasive about the spirituality of the two women, both vowed to the cloister, compelled to live politically active lives and devoted to military action (Matilda).

As regards the part concerning the *Land*, the three case studies (Melara, Hochfelden, Canossa) are persuasive about three different attitudes in the course of time. The in-depth research on 'the Choice of Law' is highly significant, even though, at the end, historical reasons (that is, the wielding of power) prevail over the legal or juridical ones. As far as the existing difference between the greater freedom of noblewomen in Italy in questions of heredity compared with the ones in 'Germany' is concerned, the reason might be found, perhaps, in the more highly structured organization of the Germanic power system.

In the third part (*Rule*), the differences in status between the two women are well developed, one an empress, the other a countess, but while the second (Matilda) could act directly, even by leading an army (as DAVID J. HAY, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa 1046–1115*,

Manchester and New York, 2008, argued convincingly), the former (Adelheid) relied mostly on the men who were close to her for direct military action, but participated actively in matters of policy and planning.

The conclusions are broadly shared with the observation that probably Matilda was not the one who chose ‘a *masculine* model’ for herself, but this is precisely the notion of a male Middle Ages (as Georges Duby wrote), as well as a long-lasting historiography, that is attributed to her. In another perspective while Adelheid chose the monastery at the end of her life, Matilda preferred to follow her religious ideal, supporting Pope Gregory VII, rather than her political interests (as vassal of the emperor). This choice, and the consistency she showed, although against her own interests, is, from my point of view, an intrinsic characteristic of her gender. The problem is more extensive, and it concerns the loss of freedom that the Church Reform of the eleventh century brought to women, as Jo Ann MacNamara stated (Jo Ann MacNamara, *Canossa and the Ungendering of the Public Man*, in *Medieval Religion. New Approaches*, ed. by C. HOFFMAN BERMAN, New York—London, 2005, pp. 102–122).

In any case the actions of Adelheid, fully described in the poem by Donizone so that she becomes a model for Matilda, are the most important connection between the two women, who both distinguished themselves among their contemporaries, and are worthy of study, as well as celebration, as this intriguing book shows.

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Finally I could not have done anything without Rob and Danielle, who carried the bags and the baggage literally and figuratively throughout.

NOTE ON NAMES

The following table lists those people whose names are apt to be confused:

<i>Preferred usage</i>	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Empress Adelheid or Queen Adelheid	Wife of King Lothar I of Italy and then of Emperor Otto I. Originally Adelheid of Burgundy; one of the two main subjects of this book	d. 999
Abbess Adelheid of Quedlinburg	Granddaughter of Empress Adelheid and daughter of Otto II and Empress Theophanu	d. 1043
Queen Adelaide of Aquitaine	Queen of the Franks; wife of King Hugh Capet	d. 1004
Countess Adelaide of Turin	Mother of Empress Bertha; Adelaide is sometimes referred to as Adelaide of Susa to distinguish her from her daughter Adelaide of Savoy (d. 1081)	d. 1091
Bishop Anselm (I, the Elder) of Lucca	Uncle of Bishop Anselm the Younger of Lucca; became Pope Alexander II; his successor was Pope Gregory VII	d. 1073
Bishop Anselm (II, the Younger) of Lucca	Countess Matilda's confessor; supporter of Gregorian reforms	d. 1086
Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury	Supporter of Gregorian reforms; a spiritual advisor to Countess Matilda	d. 1109
Countess Beatrice of Tuscany	Mother of Matilda of Tuscany; Countess, <i>dux</i> , Marchioness; also known as Beatrice of Lotharingia, Beatrice of Bar (and Beatrice of Canossa)	d. 1076
Queen Bertha of Italy	Married King Rudolf II of Italy; Mother of Empress Adelheid; later wife of King Hugh of Italy	d. 966

(continued)

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<i>Preferred usage</i>	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Empress Bertha	Daughter of Adelaide of Turin; first wife of Emperor Henry IV	d. 1087
King Conrad I of Burgundy	Brother of Empress Adelheid	d. 993
Emperor Conrad II	First of the Salian dynasty; married Gisela of Swabia, granddaughter of King Conrad I of Burgundy	d. 1039
Duke Conrad of Lower Lotharingia	Eldest surviving legitimate son of Emperor Henry IV and Empress Bertha; initially the heir	d. 1101
King Henry I of East Francia (Henry the Fowler)	First of the Ottonian dynasty	d. 936
Duke Henry I of Bavaria	Second surviving son of King Henry I of East Francia	d. 955
Duke Henry II of Bavaria (Henry the Wrangler)	Son of Duke Henry I of Bavaria	d. 995
Emperor Henry II (Duke Henry III of Bavaria)	Son of Duke Henry II of Bavaria; last of the Ottonian dynasty	d. 1024
Emperor Henry III	Son of Emperor Henry II	d. 1056
Emperor Henry IV	Son of Emperor Henry III and Empress Agnes	d. 1106
Emperor Henry V	Second surviving legitimate son of Emperor Henry IV and Empress Bertha; last of the Salian Dynasty	d. 1125
Abbot Hugh of Cluny	Expanded the power of Cluny; supporter of Pope Gregory VII and Gregorian reforms; godfather of Emperor Henry IV	d. 1109
Bishop Hugh of Die, then Archbishop of Lyons	Papal legate in France; supporter of Gregorian reforms	d. 1106
Abbot Hugh of Flavigny	Abbot of Flavigny; possibly abbot of Saint-Vanne later; initial supporter of Gregorian reforms	d. betw. 1114 and late 1140s
Queen Mathilda	Wife of King Henry I of East Francia; mother-in-law of Empress Adelheid	d. 968
Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinburg	Daughter of Empress Adelheid	d. 999
Mathilda of West Francia	Second wife of King Conrad I of Burgundy; daughter of Louis IV of West Francia (d'Outremer) and Gerberga, daughter of King Henry I of East Francia	d. 981–990/ 992
Countess Matilda of Tuscany	<i>marchionissa, comitissa, dux, ducatrix</i> ; sometimes known as Matilda of Canossa; one of the two main subjects of this book	d. 1115

CHRONOLOGY

Empress Adelheid

912		Otto I born
919		Otto's father, Henry of Saxony, elected king of the East Franks at Fritzlar (King Henry I)
926		Hugh of Arles, count of Provence, becomes king of Italy, ousting King Rudolf II
c. 930		Otto I marries Edith, daughter of King Edward and granddaughter of Alfred the Great
c. 931		Adelheid born to Bertha, daughter of Duke Burchard I of Swabia, and King Rudolf II of Burgundy
933	Mar 14	Henry I defeats Magyars at Riade
936		Otto I is acknowledged successor at Erfurt
	July 7	King Henry I dies
	Aug 8	Otto I crowned king at Aachen
937		Adelheid's father, King Rudolf II, dies
		Hugh marries Rudolf's widow, Bertha
	Dec 12	Adelheid and Hugh's son, Lothar, are betrothed; Adelheid receives extensive estates from Hugh and Lothar
		Adelheid and her mother brought up in the Italian court at Pavia
946		Edith dies
947		Lothar, son of Hugh, becomes co-ruler of Italy with his father; Adelheid marries Lothar who grants her more estates
c. 948		Hugh dies and Adelheid and Lothar become queen and king of Italy

(continued)

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950	Nov	Lothar dies; Adelheid inherits more estates on his death
951	Apr 20	Adelheid is captured by Berengar II and imprisoned
	Aug 20	Adelheid escapes and Adalbert Atto shelters her at his castle of Canossa
		King Otto I's brother Henry of Bavaria escorts Adelheid to Otto at Pavia
	Oct 9	Adelheid and Otto marry at Pavia and are crowned queen and king; Adelheid brings the kingdom of Italy to Otto
952 / 953?		Adelheid gives birth to two sons, Henry and Brun, who die in childbirth or very young
954 / early 955		Adelheid gives birth to Mathilda, the future abbess of Quedlinburg
955 and later		Otto rewards Adalbert Atto with the counties of Reggio, Modena and later Mantua
955		Henry I, duke of Bavaria, dies
	Aug 10	Otto I defeats Magyars at Lechfeld
	Late	Adelheid gives birth to first surviving son, the future Otto II
961	May	Otto II elected co-ruler with Otto I at Worms and crowned at Aachen
962	Feb 2	Adelheid and Otto I crowned and anointed as empress and emperor by Pope John XII
966		Adelheid's mother, Bertha, dies leaving extensive properties to her daughter. Adelheid's daughter Mathilda becomes abbess of Quedlinburg
967	Dec	Otto II crowned co-emperor with his father
968	Mar 14	Death of the dowager queen mother, Mathilda
968–971		Adelheid and Otto I in Italy; Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinburg acts as regent in Germany
972	early	Bishop Dietrich of Metz escorts Theophanu from Benevento to Rome
	Apr 14	Otto II marries Theophanu
973	Mar	Assembly at Quedlinburg
	May 7	Otto I dies
973–974	From May 7—Jun 974	Adelheid acts as regent for Otto II and Theophanu
974		First revolt of Henry the Wrangler
975		The first daughter, the future Abbess Sophie of Gandersheim, was born to Theophanu and Otto II
977		Second revolt of Henry the Wrangler
	July	The second daughter, the future Abbess Adelheid of Quedlinburg and Gandersheim, was born to Theophanu and Otto II
978		Adelheid and Otto II quarrel and Adelheid goes to Lombardy

(continued)

980	July	Birth of Otto III to Theophanu and Otto II
981		Bishopric of Merseburg merged with Magdeburg Otto II campaigns in Southern Italy
982	Jul 13	Otto II's army defeated by the Emir of Sicily and his men near Crotona
983	May	Assembly at Verona elects the young Otto III joint king with his father
	Dec 7	Otto II dies
	Dec 25	Otto III crowned king at Aachen; after the ceremony news of Otto II's death reaches Aachen
984	early	Henry the Wrangler abducts Otto III
	Easter	Henry the Wrangler claims kingship
	Jun 5	Duke Charles of Lower Lotharingia accuses Bishop Dietrich of Metz of disloyalty to Otto III
	Jun 9	Gerbert of Aurillac urges Bishop Dietrich of Metz to support Otto III
	Jun 29	Henry the Wrangler hands over Otto III to Theophanu, Adelheid and Mathilda Abbess of Quedlinburg, at Rohr; the three <i>dominae imperiales</i> act as regents
985	July	Adelheid moves to Pavia; steadies political matters in northern Italy
986	Easter	General recognition of Otto III as king at Quedlinburg
987	May	Louis V of West Francia dies; Hugh Capet succeeds
988 or after		Death of Emma, daughter of Adelheid and Lothar
990	After May	Adelheid leaves Italy to stay in Burgundy with her brother King Conrad I of Burgundy
991	Jun 15	Theophanu dies; Adelheid becomes sole regent for young Otto III Adelheid founds a monastery at Selz on lands Otto I had given her in 968
993		Death of Adelheid's brother King Conrad I of Burgundy
994		Otto III comes of age
995		Henry the Wrangler dies
996	May 21	Adelheid's grandson Otto III is crowned emperor at Rome
999	c. Feb 6 Apr 9	Death of Adelheid's daughter Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinburg Gerbert of Aurillac becomes Pope Sylvester II
		Adelheid travels to Burgundy to negotiate with the unruly magnates on behalf of her nephew, the newly acclaimed King Rudolf III
	Dec 16/17	Adelheid dies

Countess Matilda

1037		Beatrice of Bar and Lotharingia marries Boniface of Canossa, grandson of Adalbert Atto
1046		Matilda of Tuscany/Canossa born to Beatrice of Lotharingia and Margrave Boniface of Tuscany/Canossa
1050		Birth of Henry IV to Empress Agnes and Emperor Henry III
1052		Boniface is assassinated
1054		Beatrice marries her second husband, Duke Godfrey ‘The Bearded’ of Lotharingia, who is her cousin
c. 1054 /		Matilda’s older siblings Frederick and Beatrice die
1055		
1055		Henry III takes Beatrice and Matilda prisoner in Italy and brings them to Germany
1056		Henry III releases Beatrice and Matilda, who return to Italy; Henry III dies; Empress Agnes assumes the regency for her son the young King Henry IV
1069 / 1070		Matilda’s stepfather Godfrey the Bearded dies; Matilda marries her stepbrother Godfrey III, ‘the Hunchback’, of Lower Lotharingia
1070 / 1071		Matilda gives birth to a daughter Beatrice
1071	Jan 29	Matilda’s little daughter dies
1072	Jan 19	Matilda begins the government and administration of possessions in Middle and Upper Italy. She issues her first diploma with Beatrice
1073	Apr 22	Hildebrand becomes Pope Gregory VII
1074		Beatrice and Matilda attend the Roman Lenten Synod
	By 2 Feb	Matilda is estranged from her husband Godfrey the Hunchback
1076	Feb 22	Pope Gregory excommunicates King Henry IV at a Lenten Synod
	Feb 26	Godfrey the Hunchback is murdered
	Apr 18	Matilda’s mother, Beatrice, dies
	Dec	Henry IV, his mother-in-law Countess Adelaide of Turin, her son Armadeus, Queen Bertha and others cross the Alps into Italy
1077	Jan 24–28	Henry IV, Gregory VII, Matilda, Abbot Hugh of Cluny and Countess Adelaide of Turin at Canossa. Henry begs the pope to absolve his sins and remove the excommunication. Matilda negotiates between Henry and the pope
1079		Matilda may have given all her property to Pope Gregory VII and his successors
1080	Mar 7	Matilda attends the Lenten Synod where Gregory VII excommunicates Henry IV for the second time
1080 / 1081		Matilda and her army defeated by Henry IV’s Lombard allies at Volta near Mantua

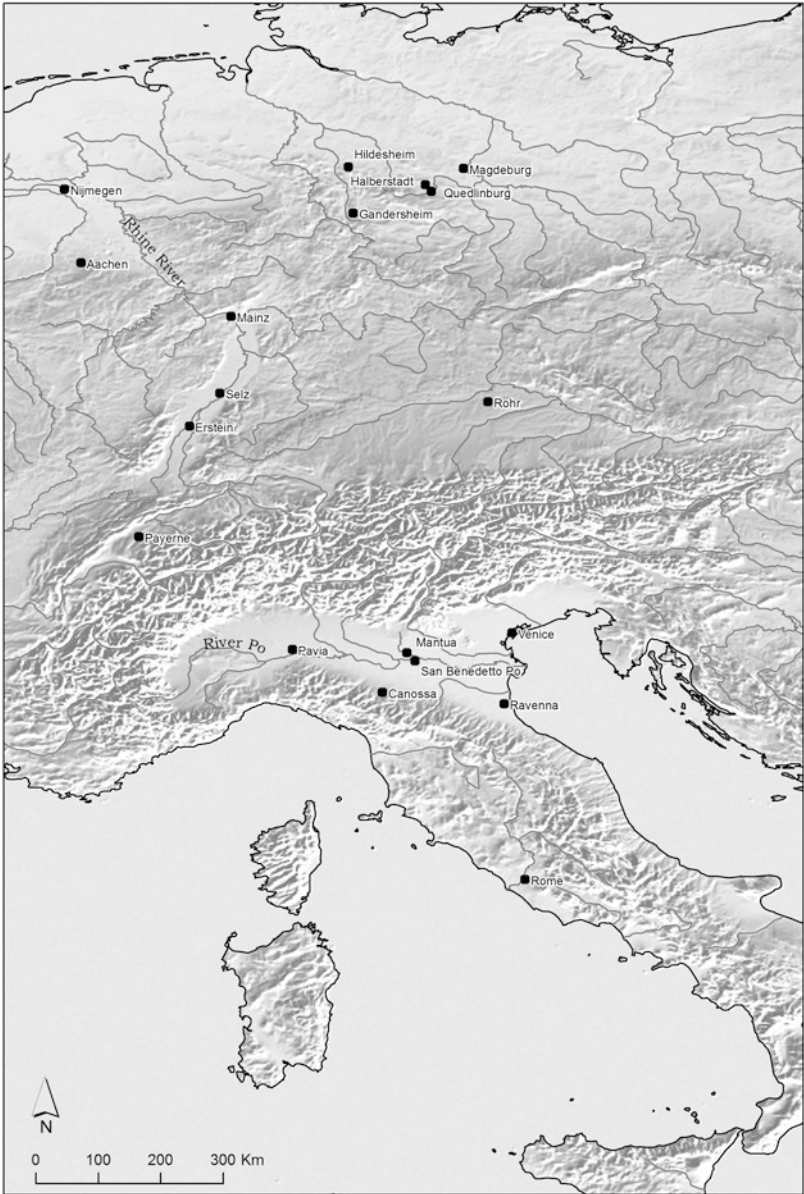
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1081	Mar	Henry IV enters Italy. Bishop Anselm (II) of Lucca vows loyalty to Pope Gregory VII and takes refuge with Matilda at Canossa
From 1082		Under an imperial ban by Henry IV Matilda loses much of her lands
1084	Mar 21	Rome surrenders to Henry IV
	Mar 24	Antipope Clement III (Wibert) crowns Henry IV emperor at Rome
	Jun 17	Henry IV leaves Italy, but his eldest son and heir, Conrad, stays behind
	Jul 2	Matilda's army defeats Henry's Lombard allies at Sorbara
1085	May 25	Pope Gregory VII dies in Salerno
	Jun 1	Henry IV confiscates Matilda's estates in Lotharingia
1086	Mar 18	Bishop Anselm (II) of Lucca dies at Mantua. Matilda is present At Canossa Matilda possibly receives and rejects a proposal of marriage from Robert Curthose, the eldest son of William the Conqueror
1089		Following the advice of Pope Urban II Matilda marries again, this time to Welf V of Bavaria
1090	March	Henry IV returns to Italy
	May	Welf V defends Mantua against the siege of Henry IV
1091	Apr 10	Mantua falls to Henry IV
	Winter	At Tricontai Matilda's troops are betrayed and overwhelmingly defeated by Henry IV and his allies
	End of the Year	Henry holds the region north of the Po, except for Nogara and Piacenza
1092	Summer	Henry IV's siege of Monteveglio
	Sep–early Oct	Matilda convenes a council of her supporters at Carpineti to discuss terms of surrender to Henry IV but decides to fight on
	Oct	Matilda's troops defeat Henry IV's at Canossa
	End of Year	Matilda regains Gubernola and Ripalta
1093	Mid-March to late July	Henry IV's son Conrad defects with his troops to Matilda's side
1094	Early	Henry IV's second wife, Praxedis, separates from him; Matilda rescues her from Verona
1095	Mar 1–7	Matilda at the Council at Piacenza presided over by Pope Urban II
		Matilda and Welf V separate
1096–1097		Henry IV reconciles with Welf IV, Matilda's father-in-law and, by doing so, gains access to the Brenner Pass. Henry restores Matilda's lands to her and returns to Germany after being stranded for seven years in Italy

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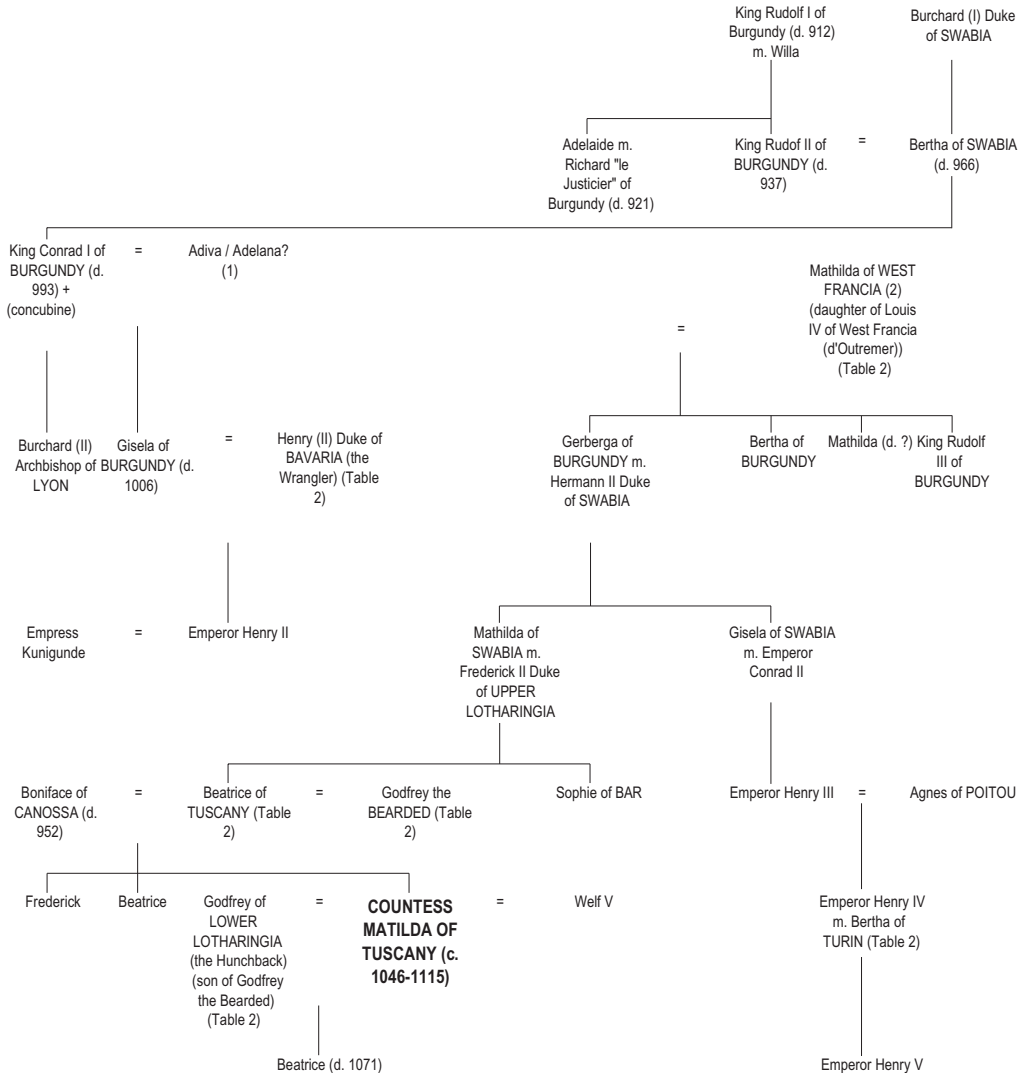
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1097		Matilda attends the Roman Synod of 1097. Empress Adelheid canonized by Pope Urban II at a Roman Synod in either 1097 or 1099
1099		Guido Guerra is noted as the adopted son of Matilda between 1099 and 1108
1100–1115	Jun 7	Matilda holds court numerous times and issues diplomata, judging cases and donating land
1102	Nov 17	At Canossa Matilda reputedly renews her donation of her property to the papacy
1103	Nov–Dec	Matilda in Tuscany where she makes donations and escorts Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury on the road to Rome
1105	Dec 23–31	Henry IV is imprisoned by his son Henry V and abdicates
1106	April	Matilda at Modena cathedral for the translation of the bones of St Geminianus to the new cathedral
	Aug 17	Death of Henry IV, who is buried at Speyer
	Oct	Matilda in Modena for the dedication of the cathedral with Pope Paschal II
	Oct 20–27	Matilda at the Council of Guastalla presided over by Pope Paschal II
1111	May 6–8	At Bianello, Matilda receives Henry V as her guest Matilda may have made Henry V her heir
1111–1115		Matilda continues to hold court and make donations to monasteries especially to San Benedetto Po
1114	Oct	Matilda pardons the Mantuans who, believing her dead, had burned down her castle
1115	July 24	Matilda dies and is buried in the monastery of San Benedetto Po
1116		Henry V descends into Italy to take possession of Matilda's inheritance



Map 1 'Adelheid's and Matilda's World' (Map specified by Penelope Nash. Map prepared by Koolena Mapping)

Table 1 Adelheid's and Matilda's Family Connections and the Burgundian Rudolfs



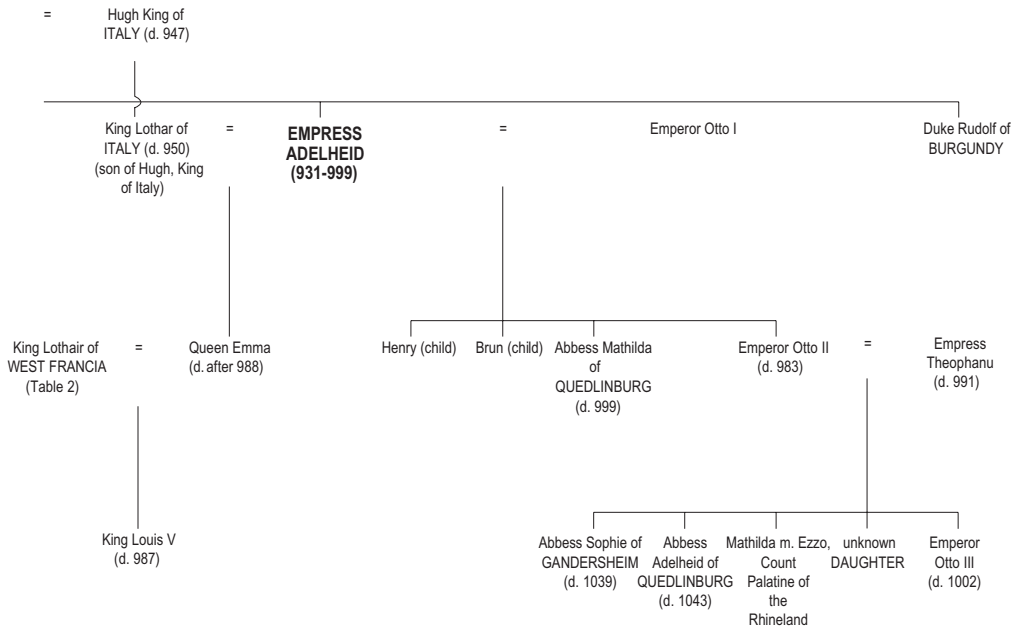
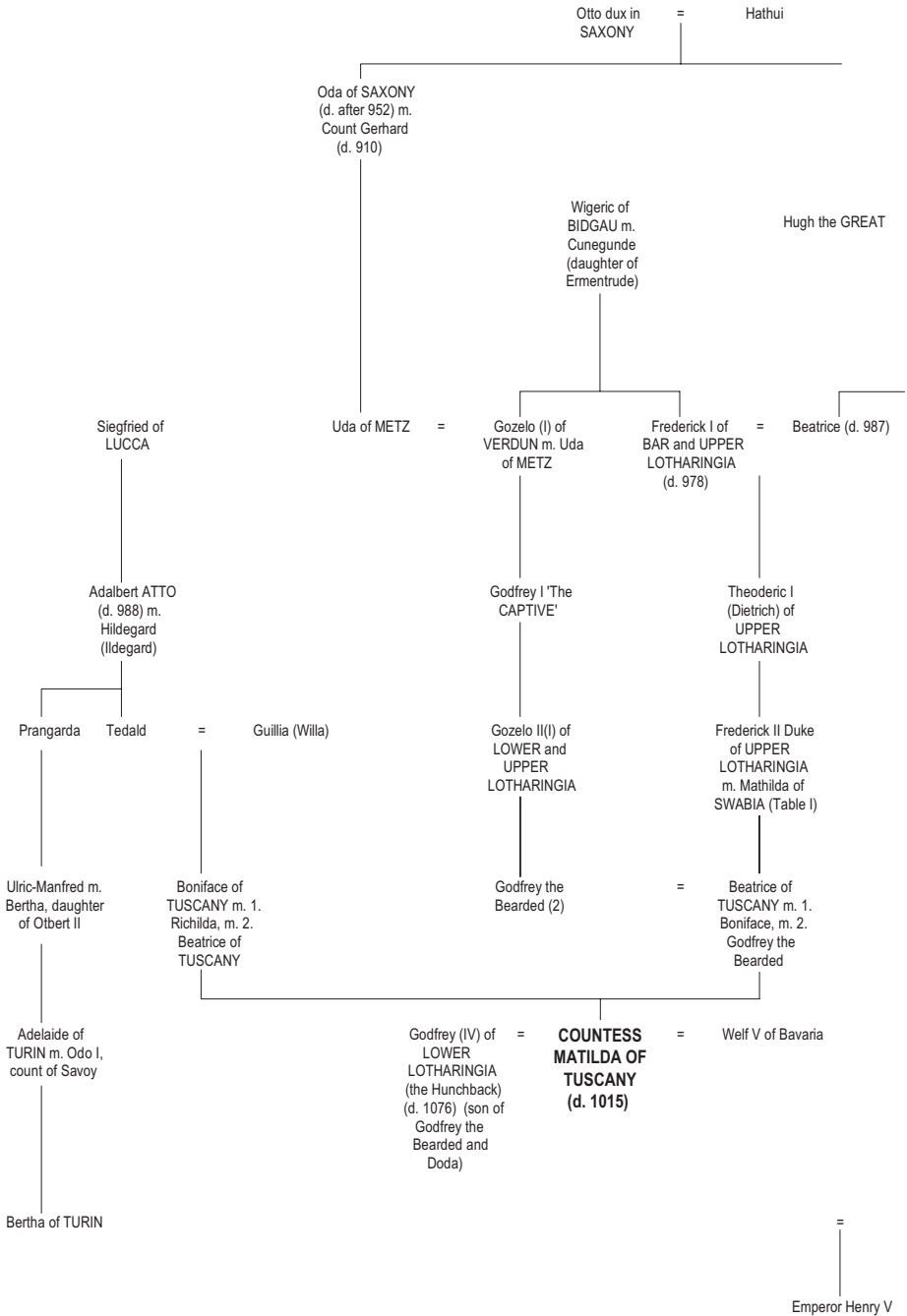
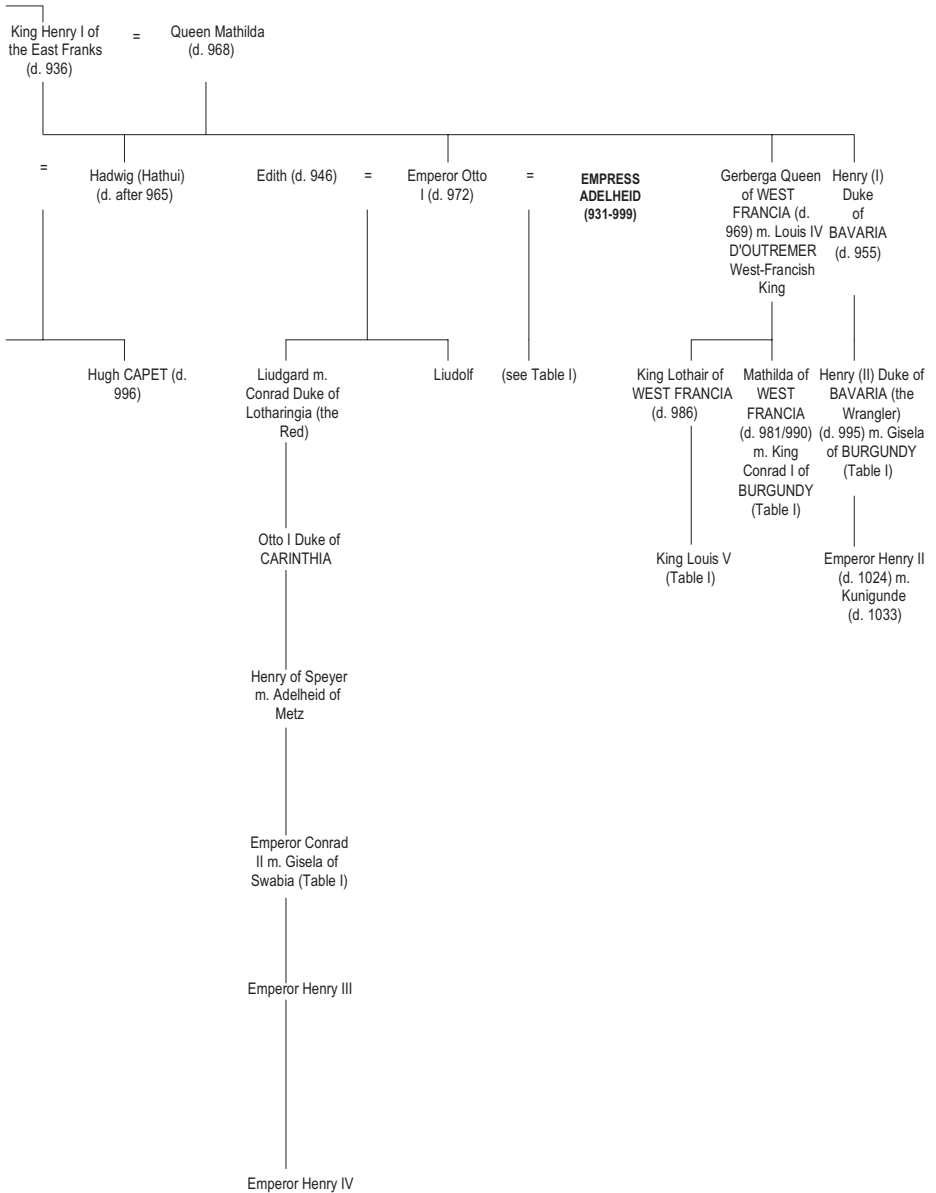


Table 2 Adelheid's and Matilda's Family Connections and the Liudolfings





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Introduction: Masterful and Formidable Ladies

In the spring of 951 Berengar II, margrave of Ivrea, who claimed the kingship of Italy, imprisoned the nobly born Queen Adelheid in the castle of Garda on the shore of the lake of the same name in the province of Verona. Since Adelheid was the recent widow of King Lothar of Italy (d. 950), Berengar wished to compel her to marry his son, thus consolidating for himself the kingship of Italy. After several months in captivity, Adelheid with her maidservant and the help of a priest dug a tunnel beneath the earth and escaped the guards under cover of night. The chroniclers report that as day broke Adelheid hid in caverns and in the furrows of grain-fields to avoid the pursuers. Berengar followed her, passed through the field in which she was concealed under the blades of the tall grain and tried to part the surrounding stalks with his spear, but he did not find her. Bishop Adelhard of Reggio accompanied Adelheid with her maidservant and priest to the castle of Canossa in northern Italy where his vassal, the rising castellan Adalbert Atto, took her in and defended her against Berengar's troops. Adelheid's position as bearer of the kingdom under ancient Lombard custom meant that those within her inner circle had access to her riches and influence: if Atto gained her favor, he could benefit greatly from the wealth and power of the widowed queen.

At about nineteen years of age Adelheid was young, beautiful and a wealthy widow, even more desirable for her ability to enhance a new husband's claim to the kingship of Italy. At Adelheid's invitation the East

Frankish king, Otto I, descended from Germany into Italy. Berengar fled without a fight, and Otto seized and occupied Pavia, the capital of the Italian kingdom. Otto sent his brother Henry, duke of Bavaria, to cross the River Po and to escort Adelheid to him in the captured city. After testing her faithfulness with gold—how Otto did this we are not told—Otto married her. They were crowned at Pavia before Christmas 951, Otto with the ancient iron crown of the Lombards, while the northern Italian magnates hailed them as king and queen of the Franks and the Lombards. Adalbert Atto was richly rewarded for his service—Otto gave him the lands of Reggio, Modena and Mantua—and thus the upstart Canossan family solidified their holdings around the Apennine Mountains. Atto's great-granddaughter Matilda would bring his actions to fruition.

One hundred and twenty years later, during the especially cold January (1077), Canossa was the scene of another momentous event. Pope Gregory VII had disagreed with King Henry IV of Germany about who should appoint the new archbishop to the see of Milan. The dispute escalated into a battle over rival claims of authority. At Worms on 24 January 1076 Henry IV had Pope Gregory VII declared powerless, and the pope retaliated by excommunicating the king at the Lenten Synod the same year. Gregory released everyone from his fealty to the king and consequently few of Henry's vassals chose to obey him. Henry and the royal party crossed the winter Alpine Passes from Germany to Italy, the men creeping on hands and knees or clinging to the shoulders of guides while the queen and her ladies were drawn on sledges of ox skin. They arrived at fortress Canossa, over which Countess Matilda presided, one of many properties that she inherited from her great-grandfather Adalbert Atto. The chroniclers report that Abbot Hugh of Cluny, Henry's godfather, urged Henry to seek Matilda's help as negotiator. As chief power broker in northern Italy and Henry's cousin, Matilda succeeded in obtaining Pope Gregory's clemency for Henry, provided that Henry promised to be faithful to the see of the Romans. Every day for three days Henry, clothed in the woolen garment of a penitent with frost and snow burning his bare feet, climbed the cliff of Canossa, prostrated himself in the form of a cross in front of the pope and swore fidelity to him. When Gregory accepted the king back into the Christian fold, three days after Henry's initial request for forgiveness, Henry had saved his crown but had acknowledged the superiority of the pope over the bishops and their flocks in his realm. Though illustrious in this world, the king was now merely one of the many owing obedience to the pope. Together Countess Matilda, Abbot Hugh of Cluny, Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV met at a great feast at castle Canossa in

celebration of the reconciliation, but Henry sat with a grim demeanor, not eating and drumming his fingernails on the wooden table. And so began in earnest the great conflict between the papacy and the empire that changed their relationship and the governance of Europe forever.

LIVES OF TWO WOMEN

Since the activities of its two main subjects, Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda of Tuscany, are presented thematically rather than chronologically in this book, it is useful to give here an overview of their lives. In brief the first woman under consideration, Adelheid, was born in about 931 in Burgundy. Her parents were Rudolf II, king of Burgundy (912–937) and king of Italy (922–926), and Queen Bertha, originally from Swabia. After Rudolf's death, Bertha married King Hugh of Italy and at the age of sixteen Adelheid married her stepbrother, Lothar. When Hugh died in 948, Lothar and Adelheid became king and queen of Italy. Their daughter, Emma, was born in 949. After Lothar's death in November of the following year, Berengar, margrave (marquis) of Ivrea, who wished to strengthen his claim to the kingship of Italy, imprisoned Adelheid at Garda in northern Italy. She escaped and in September 951 married Otto I, the leading man in Saxony at that time (The details of her capture, escape and flight to Otto at the royal city of Pavia opened this chapter).

During the first four years of their marriage, the rebellions against Otto I by close relatives threatened his authority, but after the deaths of most of his troublesome protagonists and his victory over the Magyars at Lech near Augsburg in 955, Otto asserted his primacy in Germany. Between 951 and 956 Adelheid bore four children, two of whom survived until adulthood: Mathilda, who became abbess of the monastery at Quedlinburg, and the heir, Otto II. The royal couple ruled by traveling around the kingdom and administering justice from their peripatetic court, as was then customary. On 2 February 962 Pope John XII anointed and crowned Adelheid and Otto I empress and emperor at Rome. The extant diplomata or charters (records of the declarations and orders of the king/emperor) for that year were all issued from northern Italy, mainly from Pavia, the traditional capital of Italy. Adelheid ruled with Otto I for twenty-two years.

On 14 April 972 Otto II married the Byzantine princess, Theophanu, at Rome, and a year later Otto I died at Memleben, leaving the empire to his son. Adelheid was now the dowager empress, but she acted as regent