The Concealed Truth of the Feminine Persona in the Eleventh-Century Barberini Exultet Roll

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The Barberini Roll (Rome, BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 592) is an eleventh-century Exultet roll commissioned by Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino between 1085 and 1087.[1] Exultet rolls were a Southern Italian tradition from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, when the Exultet hymn was recorded on vertically-oriented rolls rather than in a codex.[2] The rolls were used at the Easter Vigil Mass, and as the deacon sang the hymn, he unrolled the manuscript over the ambo, or pulpit, revealing the images upright to the congregation.[3] Although a standard iconographic program typically accompanied the hymn, comparisons across extant rolls suggests it was common for their word and image format to be individualized.[4] This paper investigates how the structure allowed Abbot Desiderius to imbed socio-political messages into the Barberini Roll amid the tensions during the eleventh-century reform, commonly referred to as the Gregorian Reform.[5]

Scholars have argued that Desiderius' initial involvement in the eleventh-century reform in Italy aimed to re-enliven artistic production in Southern Italy—specifically notable are the famed abbot's artistic endeavors at Montecassino and Sant'Angelo in Formis, the floor plans, façades, and interior decorations of which reference Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.[6] Thus, he has become the poster child for the artistic shifts of the eleventh-century reform that focused on the church's nostalgia for Early Christianity, an interest primarily centered in Rome.[7] This scholarship, to which the research for this paper is indebted, has not addressed Desiderius' involvement with the reform policies that developed in

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1 Dating for the manuscripts is given by Guglielmo Cavallo and Heide Stamm, *Il rotolo dell'exultet: Cod, Barberini Latino, 592* (Zurich: Belser, 2008), 11 and John Lowden, "Illuminated Books and the Liturgy: Some Observations," *Objects, Images, and the Word,* ed. Column Hourihane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 22.

2 For scholarship on Exultet rolls, see Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Exultet in Southern Italy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996); Guglielmo Cavallo, Giulia Orofino, and Oronzo Pecere, eds. *Exultet: Rotoli Liturgici Del Medioevo Meridionale (*Rome: Istituto Poligrafico E Zecca Dello Stato, Libreria Dell Stato, 1994).

3 Nino M. Zchomelidse, *Art, Ritual, and Civic Identity in Medieval Southern Italy* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2014), 35-71, and "Descending Word and Resurrecting Christ: Moving Images in Illuminated Liturgical Scrolls of Southern Italy," in *Meaning in Motion: The Semantics of Movement in Medieval* Art, ed. Nino Zchomelidse and Giovanni Freni (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 3-34, discusses the word and image format, iconography, and reception of diverse Exultet rolls when put into motion.

4 John Lowden, "Illuminated Books," 22-9, understands this process of unregimented compilation of text and imagery to be a byproduct of the method of the Exultet rolls' production. As folios sewn together top to bottom to form a *rotolus* rather than in more substantial gatherings compiled into a codex, Lowden equates the Exultet roll tradition, spanning the tenth through thirteenth centuries exclusively in Southern Italy, out of chronological sequence with the earliest form of a recorded, liturgical manuscript, the *libelli*. Simply put, the *libelli* is a personal collection of prayers unsystematically gathered and organized, and thus it reflects the personality or intentions of its owner rather than an adherence to a codified tradition. Each of the thirty-four extant Exultet rolls, then, evince something unique concerning their purpose, location, and patronage, amongst an innumerable list of personal attributes, distinctions inherent to the method of compilation. According to Lowden's systematic breakdown, then, the two similar rolls from Montecassino, while interrelated, developed out of different liturgical needs. Zchomelidse, "Descending Word," 29, suggests different thematic concepts that characterize three unique Exultet rolls. These themes, she argues, take into consideration each roll's historical and political environment."

5 Desiderius' artistic reform is the primary subject of Dorothy Glass, "Revisiting the Gregorian Reform," in *Romanesque Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century: Essays In Honor of Walter Cahn*, Colum Hourihane, ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 200-218.

6 For studies on Abbot Desiderius' patronizing activities, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); Helene Toubert, "Rome et le Mont-Cassin": Nouvelles remarques sur les fresques de l'église inférieure de Saint-Clement de Rome," *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 30 (1976): 1-33; Herbert Kessler, "An Eleventh-Century Ivory Plaque from Southern Italy and the Cassinese Revival," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 8 (1966): 67-95; Glenn Gunhouse, "The Fresco Decorations of Sant' Angelo in Formis" (PhD. diss., John Hopkins University, 1991); Ernst Kitzinger, "The Gregorian Reform and the Visual Arts: A Problem of Method: The Prothero Lecture," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 22 (1972): 87-102; Francis Newton, "The Desiderian Scriptorium at Monte Cassino: The 'Chronicle' and Some Surviving Manuscripts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976): 35-54; and Joseph Dyer, "The Eleventh-Century Epistolary of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere," *Archiv fur Liturgiewissenschaft* (2004): 311-350.

7 Glass, "Revisiting the 'Gregorian Reform'," 200.

Northern Italy, concerning specifically the controversy of nicolaitism and the role of women and sexuality that appear to have been issues addressed more frequently in the North.[8] In fact, because Desiderius was beholden to the financial and martial support of Countess Matilda of Tuscany and only reigned for three months as Pope Victor III, contemporary scholarship often dismisses him as an irrelevant factor in the reform movements developing during his later years and in the battle between 1085 and 1087 against the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV.[9]

This paper reengages the debates over the Northern and Southern artistic reform goals by challenging the long-held belief that Desiderius was only concerned with patronizing art programs to promote the renaissance of the Early Christian spirit in Southern Italy.[10] Rather, given his affiliation with Matilda, his artistic goals also addressed the issues in the Northern region, promoting a socially sympathetic attitude toward women.[11] Employing Jill Caskey's recent study and nuanced breakdown of a patron's role in the production process, this paper considers Desiderius' role as a *concepteur* of the details within the Barberini Roll by analyzing his proclivity to patronize works in response to controversial, contemporary events.[12] The significance of these alterations becomes more noticeable when the Barberini Roll is compared to the London Roll (London, BL, MS Add. 30337), a near identical manuscript that Desiderius commissioned fourteen years earlier in 1071.[13] Although both are Exultet rolls produced for the Easter Vigil Mass, the Barberini Roll exhibits notable oddities from its predecessor's iconographic motifs. Therefore, the argument of this paper is that the Barberini Roll, through its illustrated cycle and amendable format, documents the political and social issues of the reform that reached a tumultuous climax between 1085 and 1087. Furthermore, this paper suggests that Desiderius formulated this revision by highlighting a feminine persona within the Roll's compilations, acknowledging the pivotal position of Countess Matilda of Tuscany in the fight against Henry IV.

Before explicating the alterations present in the Barberini Roll, this paper begins with a biographical account of Abbot Desiderius, whose activities as patron and reformer propose that he had a tendency to be involved with the details of an artwork's production that affected its format, style, and iconography. The next section takes up the variations within two groups of images present in each roll, *Tellus-Mater Ecclesia* and *Anastasis-Felix Culpa*, and the *Elogio delle Api*, also present in each Roll.[14] Based on their organizational layout, these five illuminations taken together in the Barberini Roll project a feminine persona that is only hinted at in the Lon-

8 James Brundage, "Sexuality, Marriage, and the Reform of Christian Society in the thought of Gregory 7," *Studi Gregoriani* (1991): 69, a subject on which Gregory VII's opinions are paradoxical. Maureen Miller, *Clothing the Clergy, Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe, c. 800-1200* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 184-6, points out the challenges that befell women in eleventh-century Italy, noting particularly how their ability to make and donate vestments was one of the acceptable ways they could interact with clerical affairs.

9 Matilda of Tuscany is also referred to as Matilda of Canossa. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius*, 181-5 and 197-9. Even though Desiderius was not promoting his own election as the next Pro-Gregorian Pope, he was intricately involved in the reform issues. He was heavily involved in securing the election a Pro-Gregorian pope, evinced in his letters to Matilda of Tuscany. Furthermore, he was also caught up in the tensions of Southern Italy and seeing that Gregory VII's final testament, concerning the excommunication of Henry IV was upheld. Even so, Rosalind Jaeger Reynolds, "Nobilissima Dux: Matilda of Tuscany and the Construction of Female Authority" (PhD diss., University of California Berkely, 2005), 26, only mentions Desiderius once, when Matilda went to Italy in 1085 to help elect him as the next Pope.

10 Glass, "Revisiting the 'Gregorian Reform'," 203-4, has recently suggested that the reform had different goals in the South, where Desiderius was commissioning these programs, than it did in Northern Italy. While the goals of the Northern- and Southern-centered reforms both sought purification of the Church, Glass argues that the regions approached this end differently. The South wanted to emulate the ideals of the purer Early Church, while the North confronted issues of clerical celibacy and lay investiture in an attempt to move the Church forward into a new era. Maureen Miller, *Clothing the Clergy,* 177-8, also problematizes more common polarizing conceptions of the Gregorian Reform. Instead, she argues, the seemingly opposed sides of Northern and Southern Italy and the Holy Roman Empire had more end goals in common.

11 I would like to thank Dr. Doron Bauer whose thoughtful consideration of this project has veered me away from suggesting a positive promotion of femininity, proposing that this accolade requires more contextual evidence. Rather, he suggested that Desiderius may have altered the imagery to convey less of a negative association. Any discrepancies or ideological inconsistencies using this terminology are, however, the sole fault of the author.

12 Jill Caskey, "Medieval Patronage and Its Potentialities," in *Patronage, Power and Agency in Medieval Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 14, utilizes the idea of *concepteur* as the individual who engages more intellectually and theologically with the production of a work to investigate programmatic details on Italian bronze doors in the eleventh century. She attributes the origination and definition of the word to Beat Brenk, "Le texte et l'image dans la 'Vie des Saints' au Moyen Age: Rôle du concepteur et rôle du peintre," in *Texte et image,* Actes du Colloque international de Chantilly, 1982 (Paris, 1984): 31-39.

13 Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy*, 125, dedicates a specific section to the similarities of these two rolls. They are among the few rolls that are given their own section in the main body of the book. Glass, "Revisiting the 'Gregorian Reform," 203, calls for more scholarship on the Gregorian Reform.

14 English translations are Earth-Mother Church, The First Sin-Harrowing of Hell, and the Praise of the Bees. Two other illustrations in the Exultet rolls also address feminine subjects: *Noli Me Tangere* and *Virgo Peperit* (the illustration for Barb. Lat. 592 has been lost). Further study of this Exultet roll will integrate these two illustrations into the study of the Roll's feminine persona. At present, more research needs to be conducted to argue for their inclusion in a Desiderian program as a response to contemporary social-political events. Zchomelidse, *Art and Ritual, and Civic Identity*, 42, in the medieval tradition bees (*Api*) are usually associated with femininity and the Virgin Mary. For discussions on the *Noli Me Tangere* and the relationship between Marian Imagery and Eve, see Barbara Baert, *Interspaces between Word, Gaze, and Touch: The Bible and the Visual Medium in the Middle Ages: Collected Essays on 'Noli me tangere' The Woman with the Hemorrhage, the Head of John the Baptist* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011); and Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

don Roll.[15] This section is bolstered by a comparison with a contemporary visual program to propose that during times of political upheaval, especially when the morality of women was involved, the character of Eve was often manipulated as a response. A final point of examination is that Matilda of Tuscany's integral position in the promotion of Abbot Desiderius as Pope Victor III in opposition to Henry IV was the motivation for stylistic references to femininity in the Barberini Roll. This consideration of the Roll's biographical nature, which takes into account the shifting mentalities toward female rule in eleventh-century Italy, considers the final two illustrations, not found in the London Roll, *Le Autorita Temporali* and *Le Autorita Spirituali*, the commemorations of the temporal and spiritual authorities, as symbolic portraits of Desiderius and Matilda.

Abbot Desiderius as Patron[16]

Before addressing the specific illustrations in the Barberini and London Rolls and the former's correlation to Matilda of Tuscany, Desiderius' personal involvement with artistic productions requires thorough analysis. As Caskey notes, medieval patron studies have prioritized the significance of works that can be nominally attributed to a man or woman; knowledge of a patron increases the prestige of a work but does not focus on the patron necessarily. Studies that address Desiderius as an abbot interested in the arts similarly do not argue for more personal impulses that underlie his patronizing actions.[17] Rather, his nominal association paves the way for discussions about Byzantine influence in Southern Italy, the politics of the Gregorian Reform under the jurisdiction of Pope Gregory VII, and tensions between Rome and the Normans without questioning the character, desires, and motives of the person of Abbot Desiderius.[18] Thus, there is a disjunction between the many works associated with him, or with Montecassino, and his personal biography. Because he oversaw the most powerful monastery in the late-eleventh century, Desiderius' name gives agency to Montecassino, but it could be argued that it divests Desiderius of patronal agency.[19]

Desiderius' propensity for engaging with the programmatic details in response to regional concerns can be seen at Sant'Angelo in Formis in Capua where Desiderius altered the chronology of the New Testament fresco narrative in the nave to validate the rededication of the church as a Cassinese dependency that was no longer under episcopal control.[20] Furthermore, as compared to other patron portraits that are contemporary with or predate Desiderius, his image in the apse at Sant'Angelo unveils his inclination to apply greater agency to his patronal, designer role within a program than was previously the norm (Figure 1).[21] This predilection and use of the patron portrait at Sant'Angelo, a pivotal moment in the artistic career of Desiderius, provides the initial insight

[15] This paper does not attempt to suggest that the London Roll is a work that is completely unrelated to Desiderius' extra-liturgical patron activities, but further study needs to be given to this Roll before making any propositions. Note, however, that Agnes of Poitou was a prolific donor of Montecassino and Desiderius and visited often around the time the London Roll was commissioned, Cowdrey, *Abbot Desiderius,* 18.

[16] For issues on the use of the term "Patron," see Jill Caskey, "Medieval Patronage," 4.

[17] Jill Caskey, "Medieval Patronage," 11, 19-22. See note 6 above for studies on Desiderius' patronage.

[18] For discussion on Desiderius' reliance on Byzantine style, see Charles Minott, "The Iconography of the Frescoes of the Life of Christ in the Church of Sant'Angelo in Formis," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1967); Glenn Gunhouse, "The Significance of Peter in the Artistic Patronage of Desiderius, Abbot of Montecassino (1058-1087)" *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne* / Canadian Art Review 22 (1995): 7-18, and Herbert Bloch, "Monte Cassino, Byzantium, and the West in the Earlier Middle Ages," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 3 (1946): 207-212, discusses the Byzantine influences on the Farfa Casket, made at Montecassino. For a discussion on the tensions between Desiderius, Gregory VII and the Normans, addressing issues of Investiture Controversy and its pertinence to church dedications, see Louis Hamilton, *A Sacred City, Consecrating Churches and Reforming Society in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 93-100; Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius,* 134.

[19] Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius,* 46, argues for Montecassino's more independent position than the other powerful monastery of Cluny.

[20] My attention to the letter written between Desiderius and Peter Damian concerning iconography is indebeted to Barbara Baert, "The Image Beyond the Water: Christ and the Samaritan Women at Sant'Angelo in Formis (1072-1087)," *Arte Cristiana* (2004): 242. The alterations to the frescoes in the Northeast corner of Sant'Angelo in Formis and their correspondce to the patron portrait of Desiderius in the lower zone of the apse is the focus of my Master's Thesis at the University of North Texas, Rachel Hiser-Remmes "A New Sensation: Abbot Desiderius' Employment of the Tactile to Reform the Northeast Corner of Sant'Angelo in Formis" (Master's Thesis, University of North Texas, forthcoming, May 2017). This patron portrait of Desiderius, which is a distinct anomaly, is pivotal to an understanding of Desiderius as patron. Depicted as life-size at the left of the lowest register, he is shown as living but unaccompanied by a saint. Furthermore, unlike the only other patron portrait placed in the dado of an apse at San Vincenzo in Galliano, deacon Aribert of Intimiano, Desiderius is placed outside of a narrative context. I suggest that because of disputes with local bishops over the ownership of the space, Desiderius gave his portrait a greater sense of agency by breaking from traditional patron portraits that required a intercessor saint to be present within the sacred apsidial space. For an iconographic discussion of this anomaly, see Elizabeth Lipsmeyer, "The Donor and His Church Model in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Late Romanesque Period" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1981), 69-78.

[21] Erik Thunø, *The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome, Time, Network, and Repetition* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 13-39, argues for the programmatic similarities, one of which is the patron portrait, in apse mosaics between the sixth and ninth centuries. These similarities suggest the continuity of a formula that strives to connect the church across a span of three centuries. Although Thunø's study focuses on similarities in apse decoration and my contextualization of Desiderius in Sant'Angelo's apse argues for a shift away from the standard iconography, Thunø's thesis is still dependent on the significances of subtle alterations within apsidal spaces. I need to conduct more research to situate Desiderius' action at Sant'Angelo as developing a tradition begun in Rome centuries earlier, but for now, I will point out that one of Thunø's case stud-

to consider the alterations to the details and iconography of the entire Barberini Roll as yet another work that Desiderius used to engage with social-historical issues, this time in Northern Italy.

Desiderius' involvement with issues in Capua, an area outside of the territorial jurisdiction of the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* of Montecassino, upends the idea that he systematically created works that only represented Montecassino's interest in the revival of an Early Christian spirit.[22] Thus, Caskey's argument that patrons could engage with ideas, motives, and political endeavors beyond their geographical realm provides a methodological approach to re-interpret Desiderius' activities as a patron in response to concerns in Northern Italy.[23] Furthermore, Caskey's claim that patronal agency reintegrates human actions back into the artistic narratives of iconography and reception, paves the way to consider Desiderius' commissioning of the Barberini Roll as a gracious, yet subtle, response to the assistance of Matilda. That is, Desiderius' actions, considered apart from the aims of Montecassino, parallel the alterations in the Barberini Roll. His alliance with Matilda, their opposition toward Henry IV, and the social pressures of Northern Italy find visual concreteness in the Barberini illustrations. Thus, Desiderius' role as patron of the Barberini Roll extends beyond the static replication of the manuscript as yet another example of formulaic reform propaganda that concerned Southern Italy. This is not to say that Desiderius did not also promote other reform issues, but his actions as patron of reform works, the Barberini Roll in particular, deserve more nuanced attention, revealing Desiderius' extra-liturgical motivations that were not strictly tied to religious aspirations.[24] To claim simply that Desiderius' works were a response to the Southern reform is to miss the significance of his role as patron and the personal investment he had in other social and political developments at the time.

The Iconography of the Barberini and London Rolls

As mentioned above, the Barberini Roll's word and image format and its iconography are remarkably similar to the London Roll. Indeed, they are often referred to as "Sister Rolls," being the most identical of the extant thirty-four rolls. [25] Yet, there are notable differences. The London Roll includes certain images that the Barberini does not, and vice versa, while stylistic alterations also require comparative attention.[26] The first section of the hymn reveals similarities in the figural depictions of the two textual terms, "Tellus" and "Mater Ecclesia." [27] The text that accompanies these images situates the Exultet hymn by praising the Earth and Mother Church, and even though the wording does not signify the need for a figural representation, the iconography of the two illustrations, *Mater Ecclesia* and *Tellus*, are images of women (Figure 2). This female figuration of the text is unique within the Southern Exultet tradition.[28] The promotion of a female figure, especially in the image of *Tellus*, with her bared breasts, reveals a heightened attention to femininity. On account of the close proximity of the two illustrations and the similar style of their outstretched arms and gender, they visually correspond and function together to affirm a

ies is Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, the church over which Desiderius was cardinal-priest. Clark Maines, "Good Works, Social Ties, and the Hope for Salvation: Abbot Suger at Saint-Denis," in *Abbot Suger and Saint Denis, A Symposium,* ed. Paula L. Gerson (New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 76-94, discusses the significance of Suger's alteration to the patron portrait. The integration of Suger's portrait at Saint-Denis is the only contemporary portrait that I have found that integrates the patron image into the monumental church program as succinctly as Desiderius' portrait at Sant'Angelo.

22 Cowdrey, *Abbot Desiderius,* 3.

23 Louis Hamilton, *A Sacred City,* 95.

24 The façade of Sant'Angelo in Formis, reminiscent of Old St. Peter's Basilica illustrates his simultaneous interest in the Early Christian spirit. Cavallo and Stamm, *Il Rotolo Dell'Exultet,* 7-8, 11, suggest that Barb. Lat. 592, the third Exultet roll commissioned by Desiderius, after Citta Del Vaticano, BAV, Vat. Lat. 3784 and London, BL, MS Add. 30337, was more refined textually and visually. They suggest this evolution was a response to the reform and reveals an attempt to promote a unification within the liturgy. This explication suggests that Barb. Lat. 592's reform messages were multivalent, but it does not nullify the more specific female attention for which I am arguing. Rather, the textual alterations that were made in the three Cassinese rolls, using the *Vulgata* text over the *Vetus Italia,* when compared to earlier rolls from the ninth and tenth centuries proves that Desiderius was always interested in the Exultet Hymn's theological significance to the reform. It was the contemporary events with Matilda that occurred after he commissioned the two earlier rolls that were the impetuses for further alterations in the Barberini Roll.

25 Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy*, 124.

26 Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy,* 202, categorizes the illustrations in Exultet rolls into four groups: the ornate letters, representations of the ceremony, elaborations of a single word from the text into a symbolic idea, and authority figures. He draws particular attention to the flexibility of the textual elaborations into symbolic images as potentially open-ended and available to alterations. That is, they need not follow a strict iconographic pattern.

27 Scholars debate the congregation's ability to see the images on the scroll during the performance, citing issues of lighting, distance, and timing. Lowden, "Illuminated Books," 26-7; Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy,* 180; and Zchomelidse, *Art, Ritual, and Civic Identity,* 42.

28 This is an observation I made by reviewing all the extant rolls, which are represented in the catalogue, Cavallo, Orofino, and Pecere, eds., *Exultet: Rotoli Liturgici Del Medioevo Meridionale*. Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination: An Historical Study* (Turnout: Brepols, 1999), discusses the only Exultet roll (Rome, BAV, MS Lat. 9820) with a figural *Mater Ecclesia* that pre-dates the Barberini image, but he contends that the image is reminiscent of the woman in the sky from Apocalyptic manuscripts. Since this connection is raised because the woman in the Exultet is outside of the church building, I argue that she is distinct enough from the *Mater Ecclesia* images in the Cassinese Rolls to negate any influence. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius,*18, cites Agnes' monetary donation to Montecassino in 1071, the year St. Benedict's basilica was built and the London Roll was made. Since the London Roll is the first extant roll to symbolically depict *Tellus* and *Mater Ecclesia* as women, I suggest that when women were involved with Montecassino's productivity, illustrations of women were used to elaborate the textual ideas.

symbolic female persona from the onset of the narrative. In earlier Exultet rolls, the representations of these textual ideas are of non-descript outdoor spaces and church buildings, filled respectively with vegetation or a congregation. These illustrations do not affirm a personal identity like the two images of women. The use of singular female figures allows for an individual attribution, such as a Matilda of Tuscany. Conversely, the differences between the two rolls suggest that the Barberini Roll was refined to convey a more specific message.

First, the order of the images in the Barberini Roll is switched (Figure 3). In the London Roll, the image of *Mater Ecclesia* would have unfurled over the ambo, first, becoming visible immediately before *Tellus*. By switching the order in the Barberini Roll so that *Tellus* appeared first, Desiderius altered the word and image format to adhere more closely to the Exultet text.[29] This reordering was prompted by liturgical concerns of the Reform, issues that were important in both the North and the South. Furthermore, *Fratres Karissimi*, or Dearest Brothers, an image that shows the monks gathered around the ambo, appears after the *Mater Ecclesia-Tellus* pair in the London Roll.[30] This illustration of a male audience is missing in the Barberini Roll, but the addition of the a titulus inscription "Terra," a female noun form of a synonym for "Tellus," accompanies the image. The word "Terra" does not come from the Exultet text but is a synonym of "Tellus" that emphasizes the female nature of the latter.[31] This accentuation of the noun's gender signals attention to a feminine persona, displacing the male presence of the *Fratres Karissimi* from the London Roll.

The next pair of images that conveys attention to a feminine persona are the *Anastasis*, or Harrowing of Hell, and *Felix Culpa*, or the First Sin (Figure 4). These images are paired together because of their proximity in the Roll and their theological association.[32] Adam and Eve's sin necessitated Christ's death and descent into the underworld before his Resurrection. To align with the Exultet text, the format of both rolls reverses the chronological order of the images (Figure 3). The *Anastasis* was made visible first as it descended over the ambo before the causal image, the *Felix Culpa,* was shown. These scenes are arguably the most important in the Exultet hymn.[33] A viewer's attention to these images would have been heightened during the Easter Vigil performance because the Vigil celebrated Christ's Resurrection three days after his death when he was believed to have descended into Hell to retrieve the souls of the Old Testament figures.[34] Because of their liturgical significance, one may argue that any deviations from the standard iconography should be noted. Even though the *Felix Culpa* would have been the second image to appear, this discussion will address it first because the illustrations are more similar. In both images, Adam and Eve appear on the same side of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and Adam's hand touches Eve's elbow. This creates a direct line of connection between the serpent, Eve, and Adam at the moment of the Fall. While this composition is not entirely without precedent, patrons who wanted to highlight Eve's culpability isolated Eve to emphasize her singular role at this damning moment.[35] In both of these rolls, however, neither image isolates Eve.

Unlike the image of the *Felix Culpa*, the illustrations of the *Anastasis* in the Barberini and London Rolls vary. The most significant difference is the absence of Eve alongside Adam in the Barberini Roll. In the London Roll, Eve, who is clearly visible, extends her hands further toward Christ than Adam and is differentiated visually by her blue cloak (Figure 5). The only unique figure in the crowd in the Barberini Roll

[29] Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy,* 226 and 247, argues that in the London Roll the misplacement of *Tellus* within the usual ordering suggests some uncertainty about the ordering. I am grateful to Luciana Speciale's schematic of the ordering of illustrations that allows for easy comparison, Luciana Speciale, *Montecassino e la riforma gregoriana: l'Exultet Vat. Barb. Lat. 592* (Rome: Viella, 1991), 215-6.

[30] Speciale, *Montecassino e la riforma gregoriana,* 43, emphasizes this illustration's connection to the actual events being peformed during the ceremony.

[31] Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy,* 225, suggests that this is a later addition to the manuscript. A comparison between this script and the script of the Exultet text does suggest that these two writings were undertaken at different times, but as Kelly does not offer a date and as they have to come before the thirteenth-century commentary underneath each image, which references the captions, I believe it is plausible that the captions were only added shortly after by or for someone who would have had reason to study the manuscript outside of the Holy Saturday ceremony. Barb. Lat. 592's use outside of the Holy Saturday ceremony is also plausible because Montecassino already had and used MS Add. 30337, which does show more wear and tear, even if sections of the Barberini Roll were repainted after water damage, a claim made by Luciana Speciale, "Rome, BAV, Barb. Lat. 592," Cavallo, Orfino, Pecere, eds., *Exultet: Rotoli Liturgici Del Medioevo Meridonale* (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico E Zecca Dello Stato, Libreria Dello Stato, 1994), 94. For example, the image of *Tellus* is Barb. Lat. 592, which was not repainted, shows less use than *Tellus* from MS Add. 30337. Finally, because of the curious absence of these two MSS in the list of codices in the Chronicle, we cannot be sure of its ownership and provenance. Thus, it is possible that Barb. Lat. 592 was not kept at Montecassino to be used during the Vigil, but rather was potentially gifted to someone, possibly Matilda. Speciale, *Exultet: Rotoli Liturgici*, 235, also addresses the tituli, which she argues are from the thirteenth century, an argument I address earlier in the note. Even if, however, the tituli are later, their identification of the figure with a feminine noun still suggests that the reception of these illustrations identified a feminine quality, a reception that would have been equally as plausible in the eleventh century.

[32] Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy,* 274-289, provides the Latin text for the hymn as it appears in the Barberini Roll.

[33] Stamm, *Il rotolo dell'exultet,* 8; and Anna D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of An Image* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 83-84.

[34] Here again, the text does not mention the represented figures, Adam and Eve, specifically, rather they are illustrated in response to the text's reference to the first sin.

[35] Kessler, "An Eleventh-Century Ivory Plaque," 77 recognizes the change in Genesis programs in Italian art during this time, focusing specifically on the Berlin casket, but he does not offer any social historical impetus for this change.

is Adam, who reaches his hand out. Even the figure to Adam's immediate right, who is normally Eve, is no more distinguishable from the myriad of other heads.[36] A comparison with yet another *Anastasis* that Desiderius commissioned earlier at Sant'Angelo in Formis further situates Eve's absence in the Barberini Roll as an anomaly (Figure 6).[37] In this fresco Eve and Adam are both visually discernible and distinct from the group behind them, supporting the thesis that when Desiderius did not place Eve in the Barberini *Anastasis* scene, it was to offset recognition of her presence. Thus, in the Barberini Roll, Eve is not among those in hell who require Christ's salvation. The Barberini image is immediately followed by a scene that equates Adam and Eve at the Fall, rather than isolating her.[38] The decision to depict the two figures partaking equally in the first sin offsets Eve's blame most successfully without disrupting the narrative significance. Together these images and their divergence from the London Roll's iconography reveal a significant shift between two rolls commissioned by the same patron for a seemingly similar liturgical purpose.

The manipulation of Eve's presence within a program, in response to a socio-political situation, is not without precedent in the eleventh century. The Bronze Doors at Hildesheim Cathedral were commissioned by Abbot Bernward in 1015. Scholars have argued that two bronze images that depict scenes from Genesis, *The Fall* and *The Expulsion from the Garden*, show a sexualized and rebellious Eve, noted by her twisted body and backward glance, as a response to a struggle with the local abbess, Sophia of Gandersheim.[39] In *The Fall,* specifically, Adam and Eve are clearly separated by the Tree. Compared to the *Felix Culpa* illuminations in the Cassinese rolls, this compositional arrangement promotes feminine sexuality as the cause of the Fall.[40] These bronze images demonstrate how Abbot Bernward, as an eleventh-century designer, was aware of the power of Eve's image and the many implications that even the smallest iconographic alteration could provoke. Yet, Desiderius, unlike Bernward, was trying to assuage negative notions. This paper suggests that Desiderius' motivation for this was his debt of gratitude owed to Matilda for her military and financial support. In designing any commemoration, however, Desiderius would need to consider that his audiences in eleventh-century Italy and the Holy Roman Empire, two worlds dominated by male powers, would have perceived a strong female figure as a threat to their machismo.[41] Thus, to her enemies, associates of Henry IV, Matilda was compared to Eve to diffuse her threat.[42] These same opponents had even fostered a sexual scandal, hinting at relations between the countess and Pope Gregory VII and thus, Desiderius would have to exercise subtlety.[43] Desiderius made a concerted effort to disassociate Matilda with Eve so that she could, in turn, be associated positively with female, biblical figures. After affirming a symbolic female presence at the onset of the Roll, he abated Eve's more common, climactic presence in the Barberini *Anastasis* to avoid promoting the association given to her by their shared enemies. Matilda was the most consequential woman in late eleventh-century Italy, and if Henry IV was assigning the status of Eve to her, Desiderius used the Roll to negate this association.

Attention to Women in the North

Henry IV's attention to Matilda and Eve evolved out of the Northern Italian focus on the issues of nicolaitism and the anxieties over women as temptresses. This regional focus can be inferred from a group of manuscripts produced in Northern Italy, called the Giant Italian Bibles (*Bibbie atlantiche)*.[44] Two illustrations depict some of the earliest images of the Old Testament female figures, Judith and Esther.[45] These images glorify the women as rulers and warriors. For

[36] Kartsonis, *Anastasis,* 4-5, makes the argument that the *Anastasis* is more an image of Adam's Resurrection than a descent into hell. Speciale, *Exultet: Rotoli Liturgici,* 203, notes the unique style of the *Anastasis* in 592.

[37] For a full history of the iconography and its development see Kartsonis, *Anastasis*. In every example I have found, save one, the ninth-century fresco in the lower church of San Clemente, Rome, Adam and Eve are always present, what is more, Eve is always clearly distinguished. See Kartonis, *Anastasis,* 11 and 70. Despite the partially intact fresco at San Clemente, a recent visit to this space and close observation of the *Anastasis* leads me to believe that Eve was never in the image originally even though some of the missing part obscures Adam's figure. I posit this because Eve is usually in front of, if not directly next to, Adam. In the San Clemente fresco, there is a space to Adam's right (the viewer's left) that is intact and void of any figure. Aside from the eleventh-century space's focus on the positive, active roll of women in two frescoes connected with the Montecassino school of painters under Desiderius, this essay is unable to address the connection to Barb. Lat. 592 any further, but a social-historical analysis of the space in future scholarship would be beneficial. For discussion on the relationship between San Clemente and Montecassino see, Helene Tourbert, "Rome et le Mont-Cassin," mentioned in note 6.

[38] Kartsonis, *Anastasis,* 70, argues that Eve's role is always secondary in a position of subjection and dependence on Adam. I am suggesting that her secondary position in this case, displaces the guilt normally associated with her.

[39] Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *Gesta* 40 (2001): 20, 24-26 and 29-31.

[40] I am not suggesting that there is any direct correlation between Abbot Bernward's program and the art produced by Desiderius at Montecassino.

[41] Reynolds, "Nobilissima Dux," 131.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 143.

[44] Larry Ayres, "An Italian Romanesque Manuscript of Hrabanus Maurus De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis and the Gregorian Reform," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1987): 13, situates the Giant Italian Bibles within the reform movement by arguing that they exhibit a renewed concern with correct liturgical observance.

[45] Lila Yawn, "The Italian Giant Bibles, Lay Patronage, and Professional Workmanship (11th-12th centuries)," *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity,* ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York, NY: Columbia

example, Judith is shown as a warrior, holding the head of Holofernes, and Esther is rendered as a queen. As such, these images suggest that the notion of a woman as an active leader was an acceptable attribution for certain reformers in Northern Italy and a notion with which Desiderius was likely familiar. Additionally, the use of these images suggests that positive references toward women in the North were achieved symbolically through the promotion of Old Testament female figures.[46]

Interestingly, Matilda herself was compared by her contemporary supporters to Deborah, who is the only female Judge in the Old Testament and who lead a successful military campaign against the king of Canaan.[47] As Matilda's controversial role in the political atmosphere of the reform earned her the accolades of ruler and militant by her close allies and seductress by her enemies, Desiderius' conception of the Barberini Roll's illuminations both symbolically address and subtly rectify the notions of femininity amid the reform tension. As a reformer from Southern Italy, where there is no evidence to suggest that pro-feminine notions were a primary concern, Desiderius cleverly adapted well-known iconography and the Exultet roll's proclivity for alterations to engage in this same debate—subtle alterations were his most effective, and possibly his only, counterargument.

The Praise of the Bees

To commemorate Matilda's invaluable role in the two-year war and victory against Henry IV, Desiderius found a covert way to honor the power of a woman. Thus, he altered not just the images and their orderings, as discussed above, but also their style. Desiderius' stylistic alteration of the *Api* image, or *Praise of the Bees*, reveals his commemoration of Matilda's effective abilities (Figure 7). The *Api* iconography is one of the oldest image-types used to illustrate the Exultet hymn.[48] The text has generally been understood as praising the bees for their production of wax for the Paschal candle lit during the liturgy. The Barberini Roll's treatment of this image, however, differs stylistically from every earlier roll, and most importantly, its twin, the London Roll.

In illustrations of earlier rolls, as represented by the London Roll, there are far fewer bees set within a rather calm landscape, in which one man leisurely sits and works.[49] Conversely, large swarms of bees dominate the Barberini image; a similar stylistic shift that can be seen in the *Anastasis*, in which a treacherous cave-like environment surrounds the scene of Christ entering into Hell.[50] It is the contention of this paper that Matilda's comparison to Deborah in Pro-Gregorian works, praising her for her militaristic aptitude, is the key to interpreting the stylistic importance of this image in the Barberini Roll.[51] To begin with, Deborah's name means bee. One can deduce that Desiderius exaggerated the normal stylization of this scene to convey a more frenzied, or perhaps even martial, persona, not only because the previous two years had been fraught with the war against Henry IV but also because that war had been championed by Matilda, a Deborah-type figure.[52] Thus, the Barberini Roll embedded a more overt significance to the *Api* than was common. This cryptic significance—its praise of Matilda—foreshadows the Roll's inclusion of its final two illustrations of the two *Autoritas*, or authorities.

The final images that demonstrate Desiderius' distinct, patronal alterations are *Le Autorita Temporali* and *Le Autorita Spirituali*, the portraits of the authorities (Figure 8). These illustrations conclude the Barberini Roll. Scholars have argued that their presence in the Exultet Roll is only a generic commemoration rather than a specific portrait, not even addressing the illustrations from the Barberini Roll.[53] This argument relies on the text's use of nominal labels rather than specific names since the hymn was meant to refer to the notable authorities at the time of any roll's production. The earlier ninth- and tenth-century rolls from Capua illustrated these authorities, but the specific identification of these illustrations has not been a point of intense scholarly interest. Perhaps this is because the tradition to illustrate this portion of the text had ceased by the eleventh century. For example, the London Roll does not illustrate these figures. The Barberini Roll re-adopts this tradition, however. The inscriptions accompanying these two images, seen above their

University Press, 2011), 25. According to the Index of Christian Art, these are the first extant figural representations of these two women, but the author acknowledges that this does not mean others are not extant. Images of both heroines are found in Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Bible MS clm. 13001. Edith is depicted in her regal splendor (fol. 95v), and Judith holds a sword and Holofernes' head (fol. 88r).

46 Reynolds, "Nobilissima Dux," 95-6, quotes an eleventh-century bishop's praise of Matilda through his comparison of her to Judith, who aids in war both through militaristic power, but more importantly her feminine wiles.

47 Ibid., 65, 70, 97 and 99. Matilda is compared to Deborah by her contemporaries, Pseudo-Bardo, Donizo, and Bishop Ranger. Reynolds, 104, also connects Matilda's comparisons to Old Testament female figures to the Pro-Gregorian fight.

48 Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy*, 41.

49 In at least two rolls that predate the Barberini roll—Pisa, Museo Dell'Opera del Duomo, Exultet 2 and Rome, BAV, Vat. Lat. 9820—a few bees and bee hives are shown.

50 See note 37.

51 Reynolds, "Nobilissima Dux," 179, Peter Damian, a contemporary, Pro-Gregorian figure, refers to Deborah's name as meaning "bee."

52 Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius,* 181-296, recounts the prolonged tumultuous events of Desiderius' struggle to become elected. Notably, many important dates during the war occur around Easter season.

53 Gerard B. Ladner, "The 'Portraits' of Emperors in Southern Italian Exultet Rolls and the Liturgical Commemoration of the Emperor," *Speculum* 17:2 (1942): 186-7, does not discuss the possibility of Desiderius specifically, but argues that the group of *Autoritas* illustrations are generic rather than portraits. Speciale, *Exultet: Rotoli Liturgici*, 94, argues for Ottonian influences.

heads, label the first, "Papa" and the second "Imperator."

Even though Desiderius had just become Pope Victor III, scholars do not accord much attention to whether the "Papa" figure was meant to refer to him specifically.[54] This lacuna does not convey any significance to the compositional details amid the historical events. For example, at the left of this illustration, the pope is shown receiving a white pallium. This action has historical relevance to Desiderius, who had been elected pope in 1086. On account of his failing health, however, he had been hesitant to take the white pallium, which symbolized his official appointment. Correspondences between Desiderius and Pro-Gregorian officials suggest that he hoped to find another Pro-Gregorian clergy member to take the position instead of himself, but the war and the political tensions in Italy prolonged this process. Committed to the succession of a Pro-Gregorian Pope, Desiderius finally took the white pallium in 1087.[55] Desiderius' acceptance of the symbolic garment marked a victorious moment for his party. This image, then, was relevant to the historical situation surrounding its commission, and one may argue that the spiritual authority is an image of Pope Victor III. This image, however, is paired with the "Temporal Authority," which is an image of a male authority. The identity of this figure is, at first, unclear. While the battle for the papacy had been won, the war against Henry IV was not over.[56] Since the Roll commemorates the papal victory, it does not follow that Desiderius would have included Henry IV in its illustrations. The only other notable temporal ruler connected with this struggle is Matilda. As discussed previously, Desiderius had to have at least some awareness of the textual references associated with Matilda. This is significant because other contemporary Northern sources had compared Matilda to her masculine relatives, specifically her grandfather, suggesting that she could be referenced through the image of a man.[57] Her harsher, less subtle features, which this paper argues nullify a strong female portrait, can be observed in an image of the *Vita Mathildis* (Rome, BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4922) (Figure 9).[58] She is also compared to Old Testament male figures without pause for her gender, suggesting that to her allies, she was considered apart from her gender.[59] When Matilda's own temporal authority is the subject of discussion, then, her textual and visual associations with male figures is common.[60] These images suggest that Matilda's visual associations, all buttressed by contemporary textual references, were flexible. Thus, Desiderius, aware of Matilda's masculine associations, portrayed Matilda as a male temporal authority in an Exultet roll to praise her capability and leadership.

Conclusion

Abbot Desiderius was a prolific artistic patron during a tumultuous period. Among the many items and church programs he commissioned, the Barberini Roll stands as a unique manuscript that responded directly to the tensions over the battle for the papacy. Desiderius altered the position of the pair of women who personified *Tellus* and *Mater Ecclesia* so that the image order aligned correctly with the liturgical hymn. Furthermore, the label "Terra" and the absence of the *Fratres Karissimi* focuses on a feminine presence. Next, the pair of the *Anastasis-Felix Culpa* manipulates the image of Eve to offset the negative attention given to her. The *Api* image symbolically commemorates Matilda with Deborah, a virtuous, militaristic woman. Finally, the Temporal Authority commemorates Matilda as a ruler aligned with Pope Victor III.

Each of the alterations subtly reinforces Matilda's importance because Desiderius became increasingly dependent on her during the years leading up to his commissioning of the Roll. As a ruler and the head of the military that defended the papacy against Henry IV, she was invaluable to Desiderius. As a woman, though, she provoked controversy, especially because of the contemporary concerns for clerical celibacy. Desiderius used the format of the Exultet roll to commemorate Matilda's positive contribution to the Reform.

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54 Speciale, *Montecassino e la riforma gregoriana*, 87-89, is the only scholar who argues for a connection to Desiderius, but she still appears hesitant to claim that the image is a portrait.

55 Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius,* 195 and 205. Desiderius refused the white mantle in 1086 when he was first elected, only taking the red. He then accepted the office and the white mantle in 1087. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy,* 192, comments on this image of the Spiritual Authority from the Barberini Roll, focusing on his canonical hat and its papal signification.

56 Ibid., 217-8.

57 Patricia Skinner, *Women in Medieval Italian Society 500-1200* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), 139. Reynolds, "Nobilissima Dux," 188, also claims that Matilda was compared to Old Testament male figures.

58 The larger research project, from which this conference presentation and paper developed, also includes a more extensive comparison with the *Vita Mathildis*.

59 Reynolds, "Nobilissima Dux," 188.

60 Ibid.,189, notes that this is not negative but proves the power of God through workings of women.

Figure 1. Desiderius presenting a model of the church of Sant'Angelo in Formis, 1072-85, fresco, Sant'Angelo in Formis, Capua, Italy. Photo credit: Rachel Hiser-Remmes.

Figure 2. Montecassino, Rome, BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 592, 1r, *Mater Ecclesia* (top) and *Tellus* (middle), 1085-87, ink on parchment © 2017 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

Figure 3. Layout of London and Barberini Exultet Rolls, Presented in Reverse Order. Author's illustration.

Figure 4. Montecassino, Rome, BAV, Vat. Lat. 592, 2r, *Felix Culpa* (top) and *Anastasis* (bottom), ink on parchment, © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

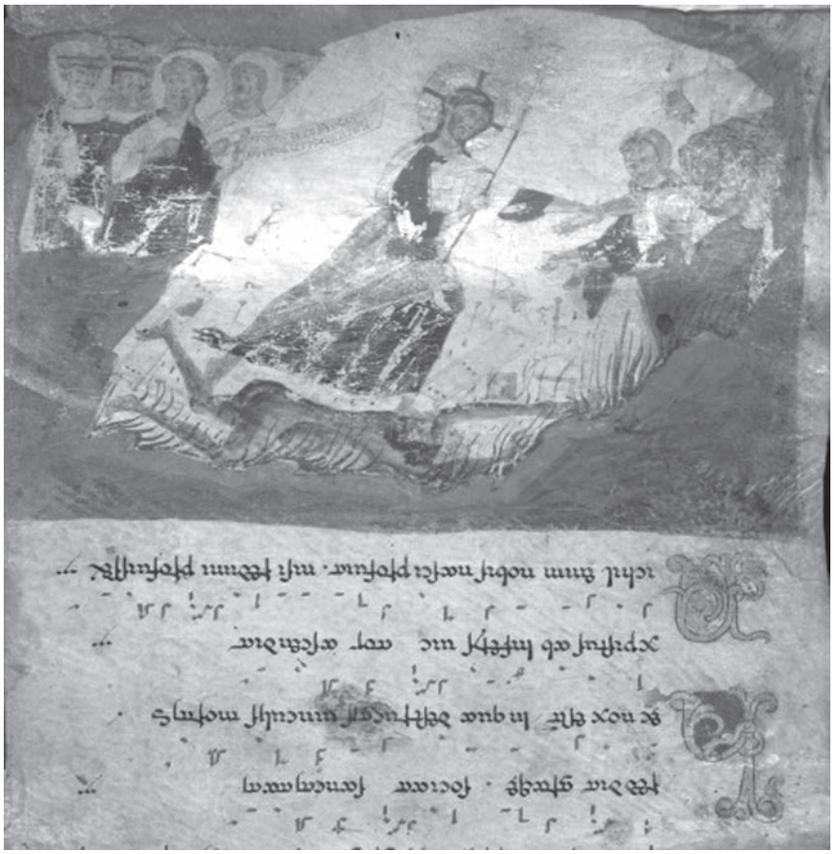

Figure 5. Montecassino, British Library, London, © British Library Board, BL, MS Add. 30337, 7r, *Anastasis*, 1071, ink on parchment.

Figure 6. [*below*] *Anastasis*, 1072-1085, fresco, Sant'Angelo in Formis, Capua, Italy, Photo credit: Rachel Hiser-Remmes.

Figure 7. Montecassino, Rome, BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 592, 7r, *Api*, 1085-87, ink on parchment, © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

Figure 9. Rome, BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4922, 7v, Matilda of Tuscany Sitting on Throne, 1099, ink on parchment, © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

Figure 8. Montecassino, Rome, BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 592, 9r, *Le Autorita Temporali* (top) and *Le Autorita Spirituali* (bottom), 1085-87, ink on parchment, © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.