

supervised the clearing and draining of the land gifted to them, turning it into productive farmland, tilled by a dependent peasantry.

The partnership between the bishop and the marquis of Turin exemplified the kind of alliance between secular and religious authorities that formed the basis of the imperial system of governance. But this harmonious relationship was destined not to last, for by the early eleventh century a movement was gaining ground to reform the Church and free the clergy from their entangling relationship with the emperor and the feudal nobility. The reformers viewed the clergy's ties to the feudal order as a corrupting influence that made them too attentive to the affairs of this world, and distracted them from their spiritual mission. In the middle of the eleventh century the rising tension between the emperor and the popes who espoused reform would erupt into open conflict, and would be replicated lower down the imperial hierarchy in struggles between reforming bishops and the great territorial magnates.

Meanwhile tension of another kind was rising between the great lords of the Italian kingdom, both lay and clerical, and the knights who formed their armed retinues. These minor vassals demanded hereditary rights over the lands they held from their lords in return for service, a concession the lords were unwilling to make, for it would fragment their patrimonial estates. This issue came to a head at Milan, where the lesser vassals rebelled against their lord the archbishop. In solidarity with his fellow-magnate the archbishop, Ulderico Manfred intervened in the dispute and was killed fighting against the rebels in 1034. He left behind his widow, Countess Bertha, and three young daughters. Bertha assumed control of the March of Turin as regent for her eldest daughter Adelaide, who inherited her father's lands and titles. Bertha sought the protection of the Emperor Conrad II, who used this opportunity to arrange marriages for her two elder daughters, to ensure that the March of Turin would remain in safe hands. Adelaide was married to the emperor's stepson and trusted vassal, Duke Herman of Swabia. Her younger sister Ermengarde was married to another of the emperor's loyal followers, Duke Otto of Schweinfurt. Following the usual family practice of building alliances with local magnate lineages, the youngest sister, Bertha, married a scion of the House of the Obertenghi. Under Countess Adelaide, who became the real ruler of the March of Turin for much of the next half-century, the fortunes of the Arduinid lineage would reach their apogee.