

**The Medieval Studies Program at UCSB invites you to a seminar.**



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**"Power & Patronage: The Origins of the Pistoia  
Codices"**

**Friday, 17 February 2006  
HSSB 4020, 12:00-1:00 PM**

**Manuscripts C.119, C.120, and C.121 in the chapter archive of the Cathedral of San Zeno in Pistoia are well known to scholars for the beauty of their script and notation, as well as for the rich repertory of plainchant preserved in their folios. The Pistoia codices, however, have received largely oblique treatment in the study of plainchant. They have been cited often in studies of the Gregorian repertory, but have almost never been the primary subject of a work. This paper focuses on the importance of the Pistoia codices themselves. It provides a contextual lens through which to view the sources and advances hypotheses about the creation and dating of the manuscripts, including the people and politics likely involved in their manufacture.**

The codices were copied during a period in which the cathedral chapter gained unprecedented wealth, power, and autonomy following protracted power jockeying among the imperial party, the budding free commune, and the ecclesiastical factions allied to them. Since the choir books were a product of this milieu, a discussion of the cathedral chapter's development and its rise to prominence places the manuscripts in a specific historical context and offers a window into the world of the clerics responsible for their creation. As the canons of San Zeno gained independence over their affairs, wealth, and temporal power, they were in a position to undertake such a project as the manufacture of the graduals and troper I have referred to as the "Pistoia codices."

Within this environment, two clerics stand out as probable catalysts for the choir books. The bishop Hildebrand (r. 1105- c. 1133) had a long history with the choir, serving as the cathedral's *primicerius* for over thirty years, while a notary named Martin exerted a profound influence over the cathedral school and the scriptorium, ending his career as provost of the chapter from 1104 to at least 1116. A discussion of the roles these clerics likely played in the creation of the Pistoia codices contributes to a deeper understanding of operations within a powerful ecclesiastical institution, especially in relation to manuscript production and liturgical administration. The most specific dating available for the Pistoia codices places them in the first quarter of the twelfth century. This frame may be further focused by paleographical and historical evidence. Hildebrand and Martin's influences, a fire at the cathedral, and fragments attached to the main corpus of manuscripts C. 119 and C. 120 support a dating of between 1108 and 1133 with a *terminus post quem non* as early as 1116.

The choir books produced at Pistoia in the early twelfth century are exemplars of the Gregorian repertory, central Italian notation of the period, and Caroline miniscule script. This significance, however, must not eclipse the fact that these manuscripts are just as important for the circumstances under which they were produced. In addition to their musicological and paleographical importance, the Pistoia codices offer valuable information about a unique period in medieval Italy and the politics of patronage in the medieval Church.