

# QUALELIBET

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Editor: Frances Flynn, Tryon, North Carolina, 28782, USA  
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## International Society of Hildegard von Bingen Studies

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This edition of *Qualelibet* includes an essay by the Spanish scholar Professor Francisco Buide, a papal message about Hildegard from the Vatican Information Service and news about some interesting upcoming Hildegard-related events.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### October 13, 2010

**The film “Vision” from Zeitgeist Films** directed by Margarethe von Trotta, and starring Barbara Sukowa in the role of Hildegard von Bingen, will be released to theaters in America. (Further details under the section HILDEGARD IN THE NEWS.)

For more information about where the film will be showing go to the Zeitgeist Web site at <http://zeitgeistfilms.com/>

#### May 12 – 15, 2011

#### 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies

For more information, contact:

The Medieval Institute

Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5432, USA

Phone: (269) 387-8745, Fax: (269) 387-8750

Email: [medieval-institute@wmich.edu](mailto:medieval-institute@wmich.edu)

Web site: [www.wmich.edu/medieval](http://www.wmich.edu/medieval)

#### June 11, 2011

#### Hildegard and the Arts

A day-long conference about Hildegard with an evening performance of the musical play “A Brightness in Bingen”, is to be held in Tampa Bay, Florida. Everyone is welcome.

For more information about either participating as a presenter or attending, contact Kathy Luethie by email at [katluchi@yahoo.com](mailto:katluchi@yahoo.com) or check our Website.

**NOTE: Please notify us of any events that you would like to have listed in our calendar.**

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

This newsletter is published by ISHBS as a source of information about current research on Hildegard and as a forum for the members of our Society. The only funding for the twice-yearly printing and mailing is from membership dues \$10 annually, \$5 for students. See our back page for more information

### ISHBS NEWS

#### KALAMAZOO CONGRESS

The ISHBS Session at the 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo will have three presenters:

- Prof. Michael Gardiner, University of Pittsburgh, PA

- Prof Kitty Brazelton of Bennington College, VT
- Carson Cooman of Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

The Presider will again be Prof. K. Christian McGuire.

Abstracts of the presentations and additional details will be given in the next issue of Qualelibet.

## MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

**Dr. Werner Lauter**, a very prominent Hildegard scholar who lives in Rudesheim am Rhein in Germany (very close to Bingen) has sent us a number of pictures in connection with the Abbey of St. Hildegard that he found while going over his papers. These will be published on our Website.

Many members will remember Dr. Lauter for his contributions to the 1998 festivities in Germany in celebration of Hildegard's 900<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Composers **Pozzi Escot** and **Robert Cogan** gave a public lecture at Bennington College for a public lecture titled "Ecologies of Music: Sounds, Numbers, Cultures – and Us."

**Escot's** book "The Poetics of Simple Mathematics in Music" just went to its third printing. The book includes a discussion of four of Hildegard's chants. Her work was performed at the Dundalk Institute of Technology in Ireland in February and her "Sonata V" will be performed by pianist David Holzman at Harvard University on April 19.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

DIGITAL RIESENCODEX: The **Wiesbaden Codex** (aka "**Riesencodex**") Hs.2 has been digitized and is available for online viewing at the Hessische Landesbibliothek Wiesbaden website. <http://www.hlb-wiesbaden.de/index.php?p=202>

## COOKING & HEALTH

*From Saint Hildegard's Kitchen: Foods of Health, Foods of Joy* by famed French chef **Jany Fournier-Rosset** is now available from **Liguori**

## Publishing

**Kathy Luethje** is the editor of a recently published book of 40 essays by practitioners of the expressive arts titled "**Healing with Art and Soul: Engaging One's Self Through Art Modalities**"

Ms Luethje tells us that some of the essays are based on Hildegard's ideas and techniques for healing.

The book is available at Amazon.com or, at a discount, directly from Ms. Luethje at: 12501 Ulmerton Road, Number 176 Largo, FL 33774

## TRANSLATIONS

**Priscilla Throop** has published a much anticipated English language version Hildegard's last visionary treatise, *Liber diuinorum operum* (**Book of Divine Works**) This version is based upon the critical edition compiled by **Albert Derolez** and **Peter Dronke** for the Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis CCCM 92 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996). This work and her other translations can be found at her online Lulu storefront: <http://www.lulu.com/pthroop/p>

## SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

There's a new publication available on Hildegard: "Hildegard of Bingen and her Gospel Homilies. Speaking New Mysteries", by **Beverly Mayne Kienzle** xvi + 338 p., 160 x 240 mm, 2009, Hbk, ISBN 978-2-503-51777-3

**Jennifer Bain**, Associate professor of Music Theory at Dalhousie University, has an article "Hildegard, Hermannus, and Late Chant Style" in *Journal of Music Theory*.2008; 52: 123-149

**Christian McGuire**, Music Faculty Augsburg College has made available his 2007 thesis, "Symphonia Caritatis: The Cistercian Chants of Hildegard von Bingen through the ISHBS website

A new CD including **Pozzi Escot's** "**Clarinet Concerto (2004)**", performed by Michael Norsworthy, soloist, and the Callithumpian

Consort was released by Albany Records on April 1st.

**ISHBS President Pozzi Escot and her partner, Robert Cogan** have transcribed **Four Books of the Chants of Hildegard von Bingen**. These painstaking transcriptions by two of America's most admired composers, are not changed to conform to certain modern ideas – they are simply Hildegard's original works without alterations or additions.

They may be purchased from  
Cynthia Crawford, Manager  
Publication Contact International  
24 Avon Hill  
Cambridge, MA 02140

For more information, please send inquiries by email to: [demeslon@verison.net](mailto:demeslon@verison.net)

#### **Note to Authors:**

If you would like to have your latest works listed in this column, please send information about them and where they may be obtained, to [frances@trafford-flynn.com](mailto:frances@trafford-flynn.com).

#### **Treasurer & Webmaster Report**

K. Christian McGuire

Hello all, I hope you have enjoyed your summer. The weather here in St. Paul is gorgeous and our maples and ash are just now turning colors! We had an exciting time at the 45th Annual International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, MI. Not only did we have some great papers and discussions but also had a chance to experience Linn Maxwell's (<http://www.linnmaxwell.com/>) brilliant show, "Hildegard of Bingen and the Living Light." My words cannot do justice to her performance but as both musicologist and performer, I found her accompanied performances of Hildegard's music inspired and delightful. I will once again preside over the ISHBS session at the 46th Medieval Congress in May 2011 (and might be driving a van load of Auggies from our Medieval Studies Dept. too!)

#### **On to Business**

There is REALLY GOOD NEWS and some bad news. The really good news is that our efforts to

create a digital presence for the ISHBS has been going extremely well. Our Hildegard website, <http://www.hildegard-society.org> has been receiving a lot of traffic and I have received numerous comments from academics and enthusiasts alike on how useful they have found our information. Furthermore, our companion page on **Facebook** currently has 243 active members and is fast becoming one of the quickest ways to get the most up-to-date information regarding new performances and Hildegard related items (not to mention all of the really neat photos members have been posting!)

The BAD NEWS. It has been almost 16 months since I was entrusted to serve as treasurer for the ISHBS. In this time, our mailing list for this bi-annual newsletter has grown to nearly 400 members, but the payment of membership dues has dropped significantly. As a result, we have not been taking in enough money to cover the expenses of our print newsletter. Obviously we cannot afford to continue this current trend. Please bear in mind, we are a not-for-profit organization, but we would like to have the means to aid in funding events and gatherings.

As a partial SOLUTION I request that those who are content with receiving Qualelibet online, PLEASE let me know either via email [kmcguire@bitstream.net](mailto:kmcguire@bitstream.net) or [mcguire@augzburg.edu](mailto:mcguire@augzburg.edu) or in writing to my mailing address.

We do realize that many of our members do not engage with the Internet and many also do not have the means to contribute membership dues. As this newsletter still offers valuable information for them, please consider donating membership dues on their behalf.

\*Incidentally we can now take membership dues and donations through PayPal (accessed via the website)\*

Finally, I am looking for some assistance on the website and administering the Facebook page, so I request any tech savvy members to contact me.

## AN ESSAY

### From Pagan Cosmos to Christian Creation. A Historical Path from Late Antique Priscillianus to Medieval Hildegard

Francisco Buide

Why can't we properly speak of Hildegard's visions and science as pagan? Can we consider a pagan reminiscence the astronomy, medicine and science of Christian Late Antiquity and Middle Ages? Why and how do ancient and medieval Christians look so different to the sky, future and world as the pagans did?

One Christian author from Late Antiquity, Priscillianus, can show us some differences that we can follow till Hildegard von Bingen in the Middle Ages.

Christianity has a self and differentiated consciousness and identity from its very origins, at least in relation to other religions. These other religions were paganism and pre-Christian cults mostly. They were present in the areas where Christianity diffused. The relationship between Christianity and Judaism is different and should be studied in a different way.

Christianity was born in a Palestinian and Asian context. But it came in contact with the Greek and Roman world. It includes the societies and traditions, the knowledge and philosophy, beliefs and religion. After three centuries of existence, the emperor Constantine accepted Christianity as a "licit" religion. It was the beginning of the fourth century. It was the end of the persecutions. Christianity became an official religion at the same level as paganism, the traditional, official and public religion. Only half a century later, the emperor Theodose promoted Christianity to the rank of official religion of the Empire, and paganism began its decadence, which led to a difficult and sometimes violent discussion and competition between both religions. In the following centuries, Christian ideas substituted pagan religion and traditions. Part of the pagan philosophy and cosmology was also substituted. It

happened all over the old Roman Empire: in the new western kingdoms and in the eastern empire. During the first centuries of its history, Christianity struggled to distinguish itself from paganism and mark the differences, particularly in the religious and moral ideas and practices. Christian religion is a monotheistic religion incompatible with the Greco-Roman polytheism and mythology. This is certainly the greatest difference. Many Church fathers and writers of the fourth century conceived pagan cult as negative. All pagans and Christians accepted prophecies, oracles, miracles, the supernatural intervention of the divine in our history and nature. This was so for many centuries. But pagans and Christians recognized also the oracles and miracles of others. If pagan oracles speak, and idols heal their believers, and these gods don't exist, who acts there? Sometimes it's just a trick, many times it's another diabolic, devil presence and force in the idol. For many Christians, pagan religion was not just mistaken; it was evil, it was the devil.

This attitude explains the most violent Christian reactions, and the difficulties for more tolerating attitudes. At least this was so for the official and public religion. Pagan idols, rites, priests and temples disappeared in the decades after the Theodosian proscription of paganism. However, many pagan reminiscences and practices still survived for a long time after that. We find them all over the Middle Ages. And not only specific pagan rites and practices. Pagan literature, poetry and history were accepted and studied by Christians, without their religious implications. Pagan knowledge and science was also accepted in this way, but it wasn't easy. It's interesting to note the problems in the fourth century with Priscillianus, and the differences in the twelfth century with Hildegard, even if it was not always easy for her. Of course, the fourth century is the most difficult for any kind of reinterpretation of paganism or pagan cosmology and astrology.

Both religions and mentalities coexist in Late Antiquity, sometimes dialoguing, sometimes just clashing. After that period, paganism became a historical fact, not alive any longer. Christianity

was then ready to accept more elements from the pagan culture.

Gregory the Great, at the beginning of the seventh century, takes care to preserve pagan temples and art. He wants them not to be destroyed, but “Christianized”, and along with them all the pagan culture, superstitions and practices. Late Antiquity was changing into the Middle Ages, and the Church was no longer fighting the old culture, but preserving it in a new religious world. I’ll focus on this transition, in the natural world elements related with cosmology or science, and the theological and specific religious reasoning for this attitude. I’ll take as an example one author of Late Antiquity, Priscillianus, to show up the origins of the problem. The second example, Hildegard, from the Middle Ages, shows us the evolution.

Priscillianus was a Spanish bishop at the end of the fourth century (380 ad). He was a charismatic leader who promoted an ascetic way of living within the population at the center of Spain. At this time Christianity was expanding in the region, but paganism was very common and many new Christians still maintained many of their pagan beliefs or superstitions. We know that Priscillianus and his followers worked with this part of the Spanish population and baptized Christians who, while officially Christians clung to their pagan mentality.

Priscillianus was accused by other Spanish bishops of magic and sorcery, of manichaeism and syncretism. Many scholars considered him as a syncretistic bishop who, as both pagan priest and Christian bishop, was an example of dialogue and toleration between both mentalities and religions. We don’t have any information from Priscillianus on this direction. We know only the accusations of those who opposed him. But we know something interesting about his ideas. We know that Priscillianus’ own defense was delivered to Ambrose of Milan and the pope Damasus. This is the *Apology*, (the Latin *Apologia*). We have 11 Priscillian writings and a collection of theological sentences from the letters of Saint Paul. These 11 documents are theological and biblical essays.

The first one is this defense and the second and third ones repeat some of its main ideas. We are now interested in the astrological concepts and the natural beings, mostly animals but some stones and other natural elements. These were usually employed by pagan priests in divination, astrology and other pagan or superstitious rituals. Although accused of similar activity, Priscillianus denied performing such rituals but also denied that such elements were in themselves negative. (He felt that) they could be used by non-pagan orthodox Christians and were not in themselves pagan religious elements that must be removed from Christianity. They could be used and read in a symbolic context to speak about supernatural and theological beliefs. The most important bishop of the time, Martin of Tours, and Ambrose found him not guilty, or even dangerous for the Christian faith. However, for political reasons, he was condemned by the civil authorities.

When we read Priscillianus’ first writing we find a theological, spiritual and ascetic text. He denies a long list of heresies and of pagan beliefs related mostly to the planets, the stars, the sun and the moon. He also speaks of a “beast” (an unknown animal, maybe a symbolic or mythological one) and the stone used to divine fate or the future. It’s surprising that a theological or religious explanation allowed a secularized, not superstitious, vision of the world. The stars and their movements, the earth and its form, the different parts of the year (seasons and months) with their names; the animals, trees, and even the snake (with its devil symbolism and implications) and reptiles are all parts of God’s creations. As God’s creatures they are good and we can study them in order to know them and know better God’s creation without fear.

The religious attitudes and approaches had changed. The new Christian approach to the natural world and science was closer to the non-religious pagan science than to popular pagan beliefs and practices related to nature. However, it had a strong theological vision, allowed by the hermeneutical developments in Late Antiquity. Priscillianus was also accused for his use and reading of the Apocrypha. His

defense of this accusation is similar to his defense of the accusations of paganism.

All this took place at the end of the age of Antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages. Eight centuries later was the lifetime of Hildegard (she died in 1179). We can trace the evolution of this “Christianization” of ancient cosmology and science that implies both a symbolic and metaphorical language. It was used for theological purposes. It also implies a secularization of all pagan religious connotations from natural science and cosmology.

It is a long way from Priscillianus to Hildegard, but it is a continuous and coherent way. Although it may appear strange to us, Priscillianus and Hildegard are clear examples of the thinking that a religious and even mystical approach could exist alongside a secularized science. When we read the works of Hildegard we also find that to be true. She writes of her theological and mystical visions in her books *Scivias*, *Liber Vitae Meritorum* and *Liber Divinorum Operum*. The interpretation and biblical exegeses, that hermeneutics, follows the vision. The visions were mostly biblical but also from the natural world. This leads us to her natural writings. In both here *Physica* (natural sciences) and *Causae et Curae*, she described the natural world around her. Once again there is here a combination of a theological approach and a naturalistic vision of the world and science.

Priscillianus showed us that the origins of this hermeneutical path, starting not only from pagan religion, but also from Christian, biblical and even apocryphal texts. This path led to a Christian symbolic, and even mystical, reading.

Hildegard showed us also a hermeneutical path through her visions and imagination towards theological work and biblical tradition and images. This path tries to find the truth. The truth is searched by religion, philosophy and science. Every kind of truth is accepted; every kind of useful element in either pagan tradition or in the natural world and science. This path was possible thanks to the hermeneutical approach. This

approach is religious and theological and also naturalistic and scientific. It's a more symbolic than literal approach and it is secularized, meaning that it is not magical or superstitious.

Two excerpts from both authors serve to illustrate this presentation:

In the third Priscillian writing, the *Book of Faith and Apocrypha*, he writes that Christians should be proud, not afraid, of old pagan writings, old pagan prophecies that tell us the truth. Moreover, he affirms to the pope that it must be condemned for only what is not acceptable, not everything as a whole: *Damnanda damnetur, superflua non legantur*. It was the path to the reinterpretation and conservation of pagan culture and pagan knowledge in the new Christian world and culture.

The other text is from one of Hildegard's letters, written to the church authorities. She asked them to search and speak the truth. They should be a light as the sun and stars. Hildegard wrote with great poetry, connecting the mystical and symbolic language of natural science. They were both sides of Hildegard's work.

Maybe they were also both sides of the twelfth century knowledge, just a few decades before the Aristotelian discoveries in the thirteenth century. It was a long path of many centuries of poetic and liturgical works, of symbolic and visionary writing, of a both religious and natural interpretation of classic and pagan traditions.

## HILDEGARD IN THE NEWS

### A Press Release for *Vision*, a new German film

Hildegard von Bingen was truly a woman ahead of her time. A visionary in every sense of the word, this famed 12th-century Benedictine nun was a Christian mystic, composer, philosopher, playwright, poet, naturalist, scientist, physician, herbalist and ecological activist.

In *Vision*, New German Cinema auteur Margarethe von Trotta (*Marianne and Juliane, Rosa Luxemburg, Rosenstrasse*) reunites with recurrent star Barbara Sukowa (*Zentropa, Berlin Alexanderplatz*) to bring the story of this extraordinary woman to life. In a staggering performance, Sukowa portrays von Bingen's fierce determination to expand the responsibilities of women within the order, even as she fends off outrage from some in the Church over the visions she claims to receive from God. Lushly shot in the original medieval cloisters of the fairytale-like German countryside, *Vision* is a profoundly inspirational portrait of a woman who has emerged from the shadows of history as a forward-thinking and iconoclastic pioneer of faith, change and enlightenment.

### **Pope Extols Hildegard of Bingen, Example to Women, all who Exercise True Spiritual Gifts**

9/2/2010, Vatican Information Service

The Holy Father held his general audience Wednesday morning in the square in front of the Apostolic Place of Castelgandolfo where he is spending the summer. His catechesis was dedicated to St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), a great seer known as the "Teutonic prophetess".

Before focusing on the saint, the Pope turned his attention John Paul II's 1988 Apostolic Letter *"Mulieris dignitatem"* (*The Dignity and Vocation of Women*), which examined "the precious role women have played and continue to play in the life of the Church". The Church, that text states, "gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine 'genius' which have appeared in the course of history".

"During the centuries we customarily call the Middle Ages", said Benedict XVI, "certain female figures also stood out for the sanctity of their lives and the richness of their teachings". One of these was Hildegard of Bingen, born to a noble family

who chose to dedicate her to the service of God. Having received an appropriate human and Christian formation at the hands of her teacher Jutta of Spanheim, Hildegard entered the Benedictine convent of St. Disibod where she received the veil from Bishop Otto of Bamberg. In 1136 she was elected as mother superior, a role she carried out using "her gifts as a cultured and spiritually elevated woman, capable of dealing with the organizational aspects of life in the cloister", said the Pope.

Soon afterwards, due to the large number of vocations, Hildegard founded another community, located in Bingen and dedicated to St. Rupert, where she spent the rest of her life. "The manner in which she exercised the ministry of authority remains exemplary for all religious communities", noted the Holy Father. "She aroused saintly emulation in the practice of good works".

While still superior of the convent of St. Disibod the saint began to dictate her mystical visions to her spiritual advisor, the monk Volmar, and to her own secretary, Richardis of Strade. "As is always the case in the lives of true mystics, Hildegard wished to place herself under the authority of the wise, in order to discern the origin of her visions, which she was afraid, could be the fruit of illusions and not from God".

To this end she spoke with St. Bernard of Clairvaux who calmed her fears and encouraged her. In 1147, moreover, she received the crucial approbation of Pope Eugene III who, in the Synod of Trier, read out one of the texts dictated by Hildegard, which had been presented to him by Archbishop Henry of Mainz.

"The Pope authorized the mystic to write her visions and to speak in public. From that moment Hildegard's spiritual prestige grew to the point that her contemporaries gave her the title of the 'Teutonic prophetess'", said Benedict XVI.

"The sign of an authentic experience of the Holy Spirit, the source of all charisms", the Pope concluded, "is that the individual possessing supernatural gifts never boasts of them, never

shows them off and, above all, demonstrates complete obedience to ecclesiastical authority. All gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit are, in fact, intended for the edification of the Church and it is the Church, through her pastors, who recognizes their authenticity".

## LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THE FILM *VISION*

### ARIZONA

Harkins Camelview 5 Scottsdale Arizona  
Starts December 10

### CALIFORNIA

Landmark's Shattuck Theatre Berkeley California  
Starts November 12

Laemmle's Town Center 5 Encino California  
Starts November 12

Laemmle's Pasadena Playhouse Pasadena  
Starts November 12

Landmark Theatre San Diego California  
Starts November 19

Landmark Theatres San Francisco California  
Starts November 12

Rafael Film Center San Rafael California  
Starts November 12

Regency South Coast Village Santa Ana California  
Starts November 5

UC Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures Santa Barbara  
**November 22 - One day only!**

Laemmle's Royal Theatre West Los Angeles  
Starts November 12

### COLORADO

Landmark Theatre Denver Colorado Starts December 3

### GEORGIA

Tara Cinema 4 - Regal Atlanta Starts December 3

### ILLINOIS

Music Box Theatre Chicago Illinois Starts November 5

### MASSACHUSETTS

Landmark's Kendall Square Cambridge Massachusetts  
Starts November 5

### MICHIGAN

Knickerbocker Theatre Holland Michigan

November 8 - 13

### MINNESOTA

Landmark's Theatre Minneapolis Minnesota  
Starts November 5

### MISSOURI

Tivoli at Manor Square Kansas City Missouri  
Starts November 26

Landmark's Theatre St. Louis Missouri  
Starts November 24

### NEW MEXICO

The Screen Santa Fe New Mexico Starts November 26

### NEW YORK

Cinema Arts Centre Huntington New York  
Starts October 22

Film Forum New York New York

**Starts October 13 - TWO WEEKS ONLY!**

George Eastman House Rochester New York  
January 22- 23

### OHIO

Wexner Center for the Arts at the Gateway Columbus  
December 24 - 30

Mariemont Theatre Mariemont Ohio Starts December 3

### OKLAHOMA

Circle Cinema Tulsa Oklahoma Starts November 12

### OREGON

Cinema 21 Portland Oregon October 22 - 28

### PENNSYLVANIA

Ritz at The Bourse Philadelphia Pennsylvania  
Starts October 22

### TEXAS

Arbor Cinemas @ Great Hills 8 Austin Texas  
Starts December 3

### VERMONT

Savoy Theatre Montpelier Vermont November 19 - 21

### WASHINGTON

Olympia Film Society Olympia Washington  
December 10 - 16

Landmark Theatre Seattle Washington  
Starts November 19

### WASHINGTON D.C

Landmark's E street Cinema, Starts November 12

## **REMINDERS**

**Please remember to mail or email news items, comments, calendar entries and letters to the editor to:**

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**The publishing deadline or the next edition of *Qualelibet* is**

**March 15, 2011**

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**Dues and address changes should be sent to our Treasurer and Web Master (see page one for additional details).**

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**This and other editions of *Qualelibet* are now available on our Web site:  
[www.hildegard-society.org](http://www.hildegard-society.org)**