



Fetzer, room 2016. Our speakers are Profs. Richard Detsch (University of Nebraska), Lorenzo Buonanno (Billerica High School, Massachusetts) and Meg van Baalen-Wood and Margaret Ann Wilson (University of Wyoming). Their abstracts follow.

Karan Schneider from Ohio will be bringing some of her baked goods to Kalamazoo. These breads and sweets are based on Hildegard's recommendations for the correct ingredients. In her recent article, published in *Glamour Magazine*, February, 2007, she wrote about grief counseling representing the American Institute of Health Care Professionals.

### **KALAMAZOO ABSTRACTS**

#### ***Hildegard von Bingen and Goethe's Makarie: Two Cosmic Personalities***

Prof. Richard Detsch University of Nebraska at Kearney, Dept. of Modern Languages

Goethe viewed the illustrated Latin manuscript of Hildegard's *Scivias* during a stay in Wiesbaden in 1814. In 1828 he added the materials dealing with the Makarie figure to the second edition of his novel *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years*. One recent Goethe scholar referred to the Makarie figure as "Goethe's highest glorification of intuition, of visionary powers, of mysticism".

I hope to demonstrate that Hildegard has very possibly served as Goethe's model for his Makarie figure, based on the following similarities between the two women: 1) Both are capable of rising above the earth in their visions; 2) both have visions involving astronomy; 3) both feel filled with a luminous essence; 4) both have experienced their visions since childhood; 5) both had, for a long time, not revealed their visions, thus seeming to be afflicted with physical ailments; 6) both are later attended by two close associates, male and female, who share their secrets and help in expressing them; 7) both unify the contemplative and the active in their lives; 8) both have healing powers; 9) a flame image is associated with both.

#### ***Vitruvius, Hildegard, and the Liber divinatorum operum***

Prof. Lorenzo Buonanno, Middlebury College, Medieval Art

Over the last decades, art-historical scholarship has disproved the once-held belief that the writings of the Roman architect Vitruvius, so influential upon the art and architecture of the Renaissance, had been unfamiliar to medieval builders. At the same time, the inspiration for the mystical visions of Hildegard of Bingen has been traced to a vast array of sources which range from texts of the classical world to those of the Middle Ages. The so-called Ten Books on Architecture of Vitruvius, however, does not figure prominently--if at all--among the established sources for Hildegard's thought and artistic production. This paper will focus upon the likelihood of Hildegard's contact with that ancient architectural treatise, as well as explore its possible influence on her conception and depiction of the macrocosm and microcosm in her last great work, the *Liber divinatorum operum*.

#### ***The Body Through Which the Dream Flows***

Profs. Meg Van Baalen-Wood, University of Wyoming at Laramie, English Dept. and Margaret Ann Wilson (University of Wyoming at Laramie, Art/Theater Dept.

What does Hildegard von Bingen share with Martha Graham? Frida Kahlo with Ayn Rand? Marie Curie with Georgia O'Keeffe? What themes have persisted in these, indeed all, women's lives, from medieval German mystic to contemporary Chilean author?

Positioning polymath Hildegard von Bingen as nexus, the presenters set out to identify some of the threads that tie the lives and works of these (and many other) women together through time, place, and/or circumstance. How do/did these women, spanning centuries of western history and culture, balance family with spirituality, creativity with scholarly inquiry, for example? How do (or did) they function within the spaces, both physical and metaphorical, that society created for them?

This session will explore one result of this inquiry: a multi-disciplinary narrative entitled, "The Body Through Which the Dream Flows." The presenters will discuss their methods and experiences as they drew these many threads – both theoretical and practical – together into a multi-media theatre and dance production.

## MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

Singer **Norma Gentile**, known for her wonderful renditions of Hildegard's compositions (many available on CDs) was recently in charge of the New York Seminar, *Sound Shamanism for Healers and Performers*, November 3-4.

Last summer, **Margaret Waddell** sang a selections of Hildegard's works at a concert at the St. Francis Xavier College Church of St. Louis University.

We recently received from a member a short essay relating the celebration of Guru Nanak (2469-1539), the founder of Sikhism. His philosophy centered on the belief in one god for all of creation, attainable through humility, service, virtuous living, and denouncing discrimination of all kinds. The essay was published by SCORE of Silver Springs, Maryland.

Another member recently sent us some information concerning the four gracious plants of Korea, *Sakunja*. During the middle ages, intellectuals enjoyed expressing their philosophy in pictures of the plum, the orchid, the chrysanthemum and bamboo, symbolizing unbending spirit, clear and clean character, resignation, and integrity. We thought you might be interested in this since Hildegard was herself profoundly involved with plants and herbs.

**Pozzi Escot** was honored by the State of Massachusetts and Harvard University. Her mathematical models are being exhibited at the Lamont Library at Harvard University until the end of this year. Her contributions to this aspect of mathematics include a number of mathematical models of musical compositions by Hildegard.

Works by American composer **Robert Cogan** were performed to celebrate the opening of a new building at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Several of Prof. Cogan's compositions are based on works by Hildegard.

## WOMEN IN EARLY PAINTINGS AND ILLUMINATIONS

By **Pozzi Escot**

Prof. Manuel Moliero from Barcelona, Spain, mailed us a recent copy of an early painting of Ana de Bretana, *Grandes Horas de Ana de Bretana*, Folio

51v, *La Natividad*; pointing out how vivid the research and writing is during these times concerning in the middle ages.

*The Book of Simple medicines*, now in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, is another vivid example. It is considered the most famous medieval treatise on medicine. The illuminations of this book have been attributed to Robinet Testard, the miniaturist of Count Charles d'Amgouleme and Louise of Savoy. Again, the figures show women involved in preparations of medicines.

It is quite remarkable for it is happening more and more – the realization of how much women were simply part of the science/art development of medieval times throughout the world. (So often it is a question of serious research which is the fault of many books.) Throughout last fall, until December 31, the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, celebrated an exhibit *Cosmophilia* (Islamic Art from the David Collection, Copenhagen) which included fascinating figural representations of medieval women.

## AN ESSAY

*Rupertsberg and Eibingen: Two monasteries of Hildegard von Bingen*

Dr. Werner Lauter

After the death of Jutta von Sponheim in 1138, Hildegard succeeded her as the superior of the women's hermitage on the Disibodenberg. From her childhood onward, Hildegard was endowed with the gift of vision. In 1140, at the age of 42, she began to write her first work, *Scivias*, completing it a decade later. Pope Eugene III publicly confirmed her visions during the synod at Treves, which met from November 30, 1147 to February 1148. He had sent a delegation to the Disibodenberg who were deeply impressed by Hildegard. The delegation returned to Treves with the as yet unfinished manuscript of *Scivias*. The pope read some chapters aloud to the assembly, and, on the advice of Bernard of Clairvaux, acknowledged her visions, a turning point in Hildegard's life. Suddenly she became known; previously she had lived in seclusion, now she gradually entered into correspondence with many personages including four popes, two emperors, and King Henry II of England.

## The Rupertsberg

Because the convent was increasing in size, Hildegard decided, despite many obstacles, to found a monastery of her own. In a vision, she had been shown the site for the foundation at Rupertsberg, on the left bank of the river Nahe close to the spot where the Nahe joins the Rhine. The monks at Disibodenberg refused to join her in her move. The monastery of Rupertsberg was located opposite the town of Bingen, the building situated towards the east in the direction of the rising sun. Well-trodden paths led to neighboring villages, and also to a water mill, which was driven by the current of the Rhine. Near Bingen, a dangerous area in the Rhine known as the Binger Loch was almost an insuperable obstacle for boats and rafts. In the far distance on the horizon, one discerns a large mountain named the Donnersberg. The Disibodenberg, where her original hermitage was located, is half way between the Donnersberg and Bingen as is Hildegard's birthplace of Bermersheim. The Rupertsberg monastery was an imposing building.

Hildegard settled on the Rupertsberg by 1150 with about 20 nuns. In the first few years, the nuns lived in utter poverty. Some of them left the monastery and returned to their families. The relationship between the Bingen town and Rupertsberg was on the whole a good one. Owing to her correspondence, Hildegard gained an insight into the conditions of many monasteries. She discovered that things were not going well everywhere. A year after she finished *Scivias* she began writing her *Physica* and the *Causae et curae* as well as some compositions and mystical works. On May 1, 1152, Archbishop Henry of Mainz consecrated the great Church, which had been erected over the tomb of Saint Rupert.

In spite of frequent weakness, Hildegard left the Rupertsberg to go on preaching tours. She saw the task as unavoidable because she was acting on behalf of God. Her *Vita* enumerates the places she visited. Before reaching her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, she set out on her first long journey. Between 1158 and 1163 she undertook three major journeys. Her last journey was in 1170. At the age of 67 she bought a deserted Augustinian monastery at Eibingen. After restoring it for 30 Benedictine sisters, Hildegard visited the monastery twice a week. To do this she had to cross two rivers, the Nahe and the Rhine. The opposite bank of the Nahe could easily be reached even in foggy weather since it was within calling distance; on

the other hand, the Rhine between Bingen and Rudesheim is wide. Her *Vita* tells us that "a woman approached her boat with a blind boy in her arms and amid tears requested her to lay her holy hands on the boy. She scooped up some water from the river with her left hand and blessed it with her right hand. Then she poured it over the eyes of the boy and with the help of God he got back his sight." Before setting out on a journey all the travel companions said a prayer for a safe journey and homecoming. At that time, journeys needed careful preparation and planning. Unforeseen problems could occur, such as the breaking of an axle, illness, or bad weather including cloudbursts and hailstorms.

In 1250, nearly 100 years after Hildegard's death, the northern tower of the church was badly damaged by the inhabitants of Bingen because of a dispute over a garden. The tower was never repaired. According to a register dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Rupertsberg possessed many plots of land and vineyards in the area of Bingen and Kreuznach. Bingen was damaged during a feud between King Albrecht I and Archbishop Gerhard II of Eppstein. When the troops were leaving town on September 6, 1301, a plundering soldier used his dagger to break a precious stone from the statue of the Virgin Mary. According to the historian immediately after this desecration, milk and blood came out of the statue. Later, in remembrance of this occurrence, a chapel was erected. Rupertsberg suffered greatly during the Thirty Years War from 1618-48. Indeed, in 1632, the monastery was destroyed by fire. The resulting Romantic ruin of Rupertsberg attracted numerous painters. Several pictorial representations show the Rupertsberg at night in the pale moonlight. The oldest picture showing the monastery before 1632 can be seen in the Eisenheimer Altar, painted by Mathias Grunewald between 1512 and 1516, more than a century before the monastery's destruction.

In 1886 the railway line between Bingerbrück, where Rupertsberg is located, and Kreuznach was under construction. At this time part of the monastery was removed. A vault was uncovered in which a broken rectangular sheet of glass was found with the following inscription: "Sancta Maria ora pro nobis. Rupertsberg 1563. Sororo Ursula." At this time a little rotten wooden box came to light containing four iron keys and a parchment with traces of faded writing.

## The Eibingen

After the Rupertsberg monastery was destroyed by fire in 1632 the nuns found refuge in the monastery of Eibingen. In 1636 all the rights of the Rupertsberg came into the hands of the Eibingen convent. The seal of Rupertsberg was not used at Hildegard's Eibingen. Anna Lerch of Dirnstein (1611-1642) was the abbess at Eibingen for only a short time. In February 1642, she was obliged to resign from her office. She was succeeded by Magdalena Ursula of Sickingen, who was aged 28 years. The monastic life flourished until Magdalena died of the plague in 1666. Even today her coat of arms can be seen on the upper part of a door frame. In all probability, the original monastery was constructed in the shape of a square. The monastery gradually had fallen into disrepair. The reconstruction of the church began with the west wing in 1683. Not until half a century later did financial circumstances allow the work to continue. The abbess at the time was Maria Antonetta Muhl zu Ullmen (1711-1740). The old walls of the west and south wings, where the rooms of the abbess and the dormitory for the sisters were located dated back to the time of Hildegard. The east wing was in such bad condition that no one was willing to go into the cellar and the roofer refused to do his work on the roof. To raise the necessary money for repairs, the abbess turned to ecclesiastical dignitaries, and to members of the higher nobility as well as to relatives of the nuns.

On March 15, 1737, the walls of the west wing were pulled down and excavation of the foundation began. The cornerstone ceremony was held March 21, the feast of St. Benedict. By August of the same year, the first storey was completed. According to the notes of Father Edmund Watzelhahn, the work was completed before the beginning of the winter of 1738. In 1751, Master Carpenter Jacob Schlotter was entrusted with the construction of the south wing. In autumn of the next year the work was completed. The monastery once again had four wings in the form of a square as in the original structure. But the new structure remained in place for only 65 years before it was pulled down in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Probably when Baroness Maria Benedicta de Dumont was abbess from 1768-80, two oil paintings were made of Saint Rupert and Saint Hildegard. The picture shows Hildegard handing over a letter to a messenger. In art, this is one of her typical attributes.

The next oil painting is much older and slightly damaged, but it has not lost any of its original fascination. In 1814, during the time of secularization, the nuns were forced to leave their home. A document signed by Friedrich August, Duke of Nassau, officially dissolved the monastery. In 1817 the south and west wings were pulled down. In 1831, the local community bought the property and used the former convent church as the parish church to replace the dilapidated building in the village. Some years later, Ludwig Schneider succeeded in proving the authenticity of Hildegard's relics.

A few words about this scholar. He was born in Rudesheim in 1806, at the age of 12 he went to live with his godfather, the priest of a community near Frankfurt. In the following three years, he followed theological studies at Mainz University. His retentive memory was legendary. It is reported that in one hour he could learn a hundred stanzas from Virgil's Aeneid. He was multitalented as a scholar in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. He was ordained as priest in 1828. In his outward appearance Schneider was rather thin and small and suffered from severe short sightedness. He was well aware of the difficulties of working scientifically due to the great distance between Eibingen and the next nearest libraries at Wiesbaden and Mainz.

Peter Joseph Blum, the third bishop of Limburg, was very interested in having Hildegard's relics authenticated. In 1851 he entrusted Schneider to proceed with the necessary inquiry into the relics. Schneider spent six years writing an outstanding, painstakingly detailed manuscript including information not only about Hildegard but also about Saint Rupert of Bingen and the history of the monasteries at Rupertsberg and Eibingen. On August 27, 1857, Schneider finished the manuscript. The handwritten document filled more than 400 pages in folio. The completion of the manuscript was celebrated on September 17, 1857 as bishops, hundreds of prelates, and several thousand pilgrims came to Eibingen. Since that day, Hildegard has been the patron saint of Eibingen.

A marginal note of the manuscript is of special importance. It states that a plant had been named after Hildegard, thus honoring her knowledge of trees, plants, and herbs. The Hildegardia is a tree which grows in the tropics, reaching a height of over

90 feet. The tree blooms in December. Specimens of these trees ornament the avenue leading to the buildings of the University of Ghana.

In 1929, the famous Hildegardis Reliquary was manufactured for the parish church of Eibingen. At that time, Ildefons Herwegen, one of the founders of the liturgical movement in Germany was the abbot of the monastery Maria Laach. At his instigation, the reliquary was made in the workshops of the Maria Laach and Cologne. It was completed according to a design made by the Benedictine monk Radbod Commandeur. The gilded reliquary resembles a building. On the wings of the doors can be seen allegories of the cardinal virtues: justice, courage, prudence, and moderation. All around the reliquary is an inscription in Latin: *Induit me dominus vestimento salutis et indumento laetitiae circumdedit me. Tamquam sponsam decoravit me corona et quasi sponsam ornatam monilibus suis.* This Latin inscription is a paraphrase of Isaiah 61, verse 10: "The Lord has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of happiness. Like a spouse he has honored me with a crown and ornamented me with his jewels."

The roof of the reliquary shows two peacocks approaching the fountain of life. The shrine is richly ornamented. Among other figures are eight saints, four on the front and four on the back: Peter, Benedict, John the Baptist and Rupert are on the front; Jutta of Sponheim, Isibod, Martin, and Hiltrud of Sponheim are on the back. Both John the Baptist and Hildegard are the patron saints of the Eibingen parish church.

During the night of September 3-4, 1932, three centuries after the 1632 destruction of the Rupertsberg monastery by fire, a fire of unknown origins broke out in the parish church of Eibingen. At the last minute, despite the smoke and heat, the Hildegard reliquary was saved. The church, however, was burned to the ground. At that time I was four years old but still remember well when our neighbor knocked at the shutters of our house shouting "the church is in flames!". Our house was only a stone's throw from the church. Soon the whole roof framework of our house was in flames. Instantly, the air was terribly hot and flowing red hot pieces of wood were flying through the air. Holding onto my grandmother's hand, I could see that two or three firemen were cooling the roof of our house.

The night was light as day. The old convent of Saint Hildegard was in ruins.

Rupertsberg was never rebuilt, but the new parish church of Eibingen was consecrated only three years after the fire. The architect of the new parish church must have been well acquainted with Hildegard's *Vita* because in the gable of the church a cross inside a circle can be seen. In the words of Hildegard's *Vita*, "At early twilight on the Sunday of Hildegard's death, two very bright arcs of various colors appeared in the heavens over the chamber in which the holy virgin returned her happy soul to God. These rainbows extended over a wide stretch of sky out to the four corners of the earth, one from north to south, the other from east to west. In the vertex, where the two arcs crossed, a bright moon-shaped light radiated. It spread its light near and far and seemed to expel the nightly darkness from the death chamber. In this light a glittering red cross could be seen that at first was small but then grew to a huge size. This cross was surrounded by innumerable varicolored circles in which individual crosses were formed, each with its own circle . . . and they enveloped the entire mount in brilliant light."

Hildegard died on September 27, 1179 in her monastery Rupertsberg at the age of 82. The abbey of St. Hildegard, founded by Prince Karl zu Lowenstein was built between 1900 and 1904 on the hillside above Eibingen surrounded by vineyards and meadows.

On September 17, 1904, 12 Benedictine nuns from the abbey of St. Gabriel in Prague moved into the new building. The first abbess was Regintrudis Sauter, followed by Fortunate Fischer and Edeltraud Forster. The present abbess is Clementia Killewald, who is the 39<sup>th</sup> abbess of Rupertsberg and Eibingen.

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