

**HILDEGARD OF BINGEN  
IN THE LOW COUNTRIES  
THE DENDERMONDE CODEX**

LEUVEN, 2018

ma quiet amplexu tum fo  
ag ni in electa amicitia  
dulcis electe  
effulset radii & qui in splendore patris elucet  
intra cubiculum castitatis in aurea  
cum accepit s

**HILDEGARD OF BINGEN  
IN THE LOW COUNTRIES  
THE DENDERMONDE CODEX**

**EXHIBITION**

**MAURITS SABBE LIBRARY  
KU LEUVEN LIBRARIES  
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**30 MAY – 22 AUGUST 2018**

**CATALOGUE**

Texts

Rob Faesen, John Arblaster, Lieve Watteeuw,  
David Burn, Leo Kenis

With contributions by  
Olivia Puzzolante, Roosje Baele, Jeroen Reyniers,  
Katrien Houbey

Leuven, 2018



## INTRODUCTION

The focus exhibition at the Maurits Sabbe Library (KU Leuven Libraries) presents the Dendermonde Codex by the leading 12<sup>th</sup>-century composer, poet, theologian, mystic, and visionary Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). The unique 12<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript is famous for its collection of texts and songs, including the *Symphonia Harmoniae Caelestium Revelationum*.

Hildegard wrote the *Symphonia* in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century at the Abbey of Rupertsberg, in the Rhineland. The manuscript contains a series of monophonic hymns for liturgical use. In addition, the codex contains Hildegard's *Liber vitae meritorum* (The Book of the Merits of Life) and the *Liber viarum Dei* (The Book of the Ways of God) by her friend Elisabeth of Schönau. The manuscript closes with a little-known dialogue between a priest and the devil. In approximately 1174, Hildegard sent this manuscript to a monk at the Cistercian Abbey of Villers in Brabant. It was later moved to the Abbey of Gembloux and then the Abbey of Affligem before finding a home at the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul in Dendermonde in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 2017, this abbey decided to entrust the manuscript to the Maurits Sabbe Library for long-term preservation.

The exhibition of this manuscript and numerous other works and letters by Hildegard of Bingen illustrate the fame of this extraordinary woman. In addition to the Dendermonde Codex, the exhibition features manuscripts and early prints of works by Hildegard and other female mystics, such as the Antiphonary of Beatrice of Nazareth and a manuscript of Hadewijch's works. Early prints from the 16<sup>th</sup> until the 18<sup>th</sup> century illustrate the enduring fame and authority of Hildegard's life and work. The third part of the exhibition sheds light on the various abbeys that were

home to the Dendermonde Codex. The fourth part treats the reception of Hildegard's work in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Beside works from our own collection, we are also showing a number of loaned books from the collections of the Abbey of Dendermonde, Park Abbey, and the Ruusbroec Institute. The Dendermonde Codex will also be available on a digital screen in the new exhibition space in the central hall of the Maurits Sabbe Library.

This focus exhibition is opening on 30 May 2018 as part of the international conference *Medieval Mystical Theology in Dialogue with Contemporary Thought* at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies.

The exhibition is an initiative of the Maurits Sabbe Library, the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, the Book Heritage Lab - KU Leuven, and the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul, Dendermonde.

**HILDEGARD OF BINGEN,  
BEATRICE OF NAZARETH AND HADEWIJCH  
THREE MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS**

Hildegard of Bingen's Dendermonde Codex is an extremely important document for the study of mysticism, music, theology, and the history of ideas in the 12th century. Surviving manuscripts from female monasteries are relatively rare. In addition to the Dendermonde Codex, the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Antiphonary of Beatrice of Nazareth and the 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of texts by the 13<sup>th</sup>-century mystic Hadewijch are also of great cultural and historical significance. These three manuscripts of texts written by or for women have been brought together here for the first time.

## The Dendermonde Codex

**Hildegard of Bingen, ca. 1174,  
Rupertsberg, Bingen-am-Rhein; Ms 9**

Dendermonde, Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul,  
housed at the Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven  
Libraries, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies

The Dendermonde Codex is one of the most important medieval manuscripts in Belgium (it is recognized as a Flemish Masterpiece) and is one of the few extant manuscripts of works by Hildegard of Bingen that were written during her lifetime. The manuscript comprises four works: the *Liber vitae meritorum* by Hildegard, one of her most important treatises; the *Liber viarum Dei*, a book of visions by Elisabeth of Schönau, a contemporary and friend of Hildegard; the *Symphonia harmonie caelestium revelationum*, a series of musical compositions by Hildegard; and finally, the so-called *Teufelsverhör*, a short exorcistic dialogue between a priest and the devil in which Hildegard herself also makes an appearance. The manuscript was completed in approximately 1175 at the Abbey of Rupertsberg, where Hildegard was the abbess. It was made under her supervision to be sent as a gift to the Cistercian monks of the Abbey of Villers in Brabant, which was at that time under the care of Abbot Ulric (abbot from 1158 until 1184, died in 1196). The Dendermonde Codex is therefore of enormous importance in various fields. It was completed under the supervision of Hildegard herself, and is therefore



imbued with her authority. It is one of only two extant manuscripts that contain musical works by Hildegard, it is an exceptional testimony to the thought of female mystics in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it is an important source of information about Hildegard's network and the dissemination of her theological, mystical, and musical insights. The codex moved to the Abbey of Dendermonde in 1828. Accessibility to the manuscript was limited there. Its move to KU Leuven in 2017 is thus the occasion for new impulses, both in terms of a critical re-evaluation of existing research on the manuscript as well as to initiate new, interdisciplinary research from various perspectives.

## The four texts in the Dendermonde Codex

### The *Liber vitae meritorum* by Hildegard of Bingen (fol. 1v-121v)

Hildegard of Bingen wrote three books of visions that she had received from God. The first, *Scivias* (*Sci vias Domini: Know the Ways of the Lord*) was written between 1141 and 1151. The second, *Liber vitae meritorum* (The Book of the Merits of Life), was written between 1158 and 1163. Finally, she wrote a third book of visions entitled *Liber Divinorum operum* (The Book of Divine Works), between 1163 and 1173. We do not know exactly why Hildegard included the second book of visions in the Dendermonde Codex, but it is clear that while *Scivias* focuses more on Christian doctrine and Hildegard's ideas about the cosmos, the Church, the structure of the human person, the nature of the human soul, and the relationship between God and creation, the *Liber vitae meritorum* focuses more on the life of the Christian. The book consists of an introduction in which Hildegard justifies the work as a revelation from God, followed by six parts in which she describes a giant. This man is so tall that his head reaches beyond the clouds and his feet stand on the abyss beneath the earth. In the various parts of the book, Hildegard describes how this man looks towards the different points of the compass and surveys all virtue and vice. The man supports several clouds in which the righteous and holy dwell, but they are surrounded by a darkness inhabited by the devil and all his demons.

The devil spews forth images of sin that lead people away from this giant man. But Hildegard also describes the corresponding and contrasting virtues through which people can resist vice and sin. Examples include the contrast between worldly love and celestial love, hard-heartedness and mercy, conflict and peace, injustice and justice, etc. The giant is God and created reality is the work of God. The third and fourth parts of the work especially treat Hildegard's doctrine of *viriditas*, the green fecundity of nature as the work of God's hand and the contrast with the aridity, darkness, and death of everything opposed to God's creative power.

*From 18 June 2018 until 9 July 2018 the first folio of the Liber vitae meritorum will be exhibited.*

## **The *Liber viarum Dei* by Elisabeth of Schönau (fol. ff. 121v-152v)**

The second book in the Dendermonde Codex is entitled *Liber viarum Dei* (*The Book of God's Ways*) and it is one of the books of visions of Elisabeth of Schönau (c. 1129-1164). Elisabeth was professed as a Benedictine nun of Schönau Abbey in 1147, and five years later, in 1152, she started receiving ecstatic visions of an angel who revealed the mysteries of God to her. Schönau is only about 25 kilometres north of Bingen, and the two visionary sisters thus did not live far apart. We know that they visited each other and corresponded (see below in Hildegard's correspondence). Elisabeth was an exceptionally popular author in the Middle Ages, and her works are preserved in at least 145 manuscripts – far more than the works of Hildegard herself. Her texts were not only read in Germany, but also in the Low Countries, France, and England. It is important to note that Elisabeth did not write her visions herself, but that they are the fruit of a complex relationship between Elisabeth and her brother Ekbert, who was her secretary. Ekbert did not write down everything that happened to Elisabeth, and he even says that he translated some of her visions from German into Latin. In other words, this is not simply a question of dictation and transcription, but rather of joint discernment and interpretation in deciding what should be written down and how. The visions of Elisabeth of Schönau can be divided into two groups: three chronologically arranged, diary-like books of visions and three books of thematic visions. The *Liber viarum Dei* is a thematic book that dates from 1156 to 1157. Elisabeth

describes a mountain with ten paths leading to the summit. In the Bible and thus throughout the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the mountain is a central symbol for the encounter with God. The paths each represent a different group in the Church: contemplatives, actives, martyrs, the married, the chaste, leaders, widows, hermits, adolescents, and small children. Elisabeth offers advice for each of the different groups in the way they should walk their path to God, the obstacles they will encounter along the way, and how they should persevere in order to reach the summit of the mountain, encounter God, and enjoy eternal beatitude. Elisabeth devotes most attention to the path of the contemplatives, since this is the road that Christ himself walked. This path is the only permanent road because all the blessed will contemplate God eternally in paradise. It is sometimes said that Elisabeth's books of visions are merely derivative imitations of Hildegard's visions, but the fact that Hildegard included this book in the Dendermonde Codex as a gift for the monks of Villers demonstrates that she thought highly of Elisabeth and her spiritual authority and that she wanted the text to be circulated and read. It is not clear exactly why Hildegard chose this book specifically for the Dendermonde Codex, but it may be related to the fact that it would be sent to the monks of Villers, and thus to 'contemplative' Cistercians, to encourage them to persevere in their path of life.

*From 9 July 2018 until 30 July 2018 the first folio of the Liber viarum Dei will be exhibited.*

## **The *Symphonia* (fol. 153r-170v)**

Hildegard of Bingen's musical works, collectively known as the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*, are not only an important part of her creative oeuvre, but also more generally significant for the history of early music. The compositions channel Hildegard's visions and theological concerns by translating them as auditory compositions, and they also unite the community in the praise of God. At the same time, these works are among the greatest musical creations produced by a single person in the entire Middle Ages.

In contrast to many of Hildegard's other works, the *Symphonia* survives in only two manuscripts: the so-called Riesencodex, which is currently housed in the Hessische Landesbibliothek in Wiesbaden, and the Dendermonde Codex. The Riesencodex, which was written shortly after Hildegard's death, contains slightly more works than the Dendermonde manuscript. It records Hildegard's 77 compositions (with the exception of two), as well as her *Ordo virtutum*, the oldest extant completely musical morality play. The Dendermonde Codex, which was written circa 1175 under the direct supervision of Hildegard, contains only 56 pieces. This part of the manuscript is incomplete, however, and it is possible that the original text contained approximately the same number of works as the Riesencodex.

All of Hildegard's extant compositions contain sacred texts written by Hildegard herself, and they are monophonic, which means that they consist of only

one melodic line. The compositions are written on a four-line stave in so-called Rhinish neumes. These tell us the pitch, but the interpretation of the rhythm is left to the performer.

Hildegard's compositions are most strongly related to Gregorian chants, and they regularly use forms that are typical of the Gregorian repertory. The Dendermonde Codex contains thirty-three antiphons, thirteen responsories, three hymns, five sequences, and two 'symphoniae'. Just like in Gregorian chants, all these pieces had a liturgical function, such as the veneration of saints that were particularly important to Hildegard. A number of examples include Saint Disibod, the patron saint of the first convent where Hildegard lived, Saint Rupert, on whose burial site she founded her own convent, and Saint Ursula, who according to legend was martyred along with 11,000 other virgins. Hildegard was particularly devoted to Ursula.

Although her compositions are in the tradition of Gregorian chant, Hildegard nevertheless imbues her pieces with their own unique and recognizable character. For example, her rich use of metaphor enhances the musical style in which recurring formulas and her sometimes striking, extended range are combined to create a hypnotizing and ecstatic effect.

*From 30 May until 18 June 2018, the first folio of the Symphonia will be exhibited.*

## **Dialogue between a priest and the devil or the *Teufelsverhör* (fol. 170v-173v)**

The last, short work in the Dendermonde Codex, written on seven folios at the end of the manuscript, is a text about exorcism and heresy. From around 1140, the Cathar heresy had begun to spread rapidly in the region around Cologne. They were considered a threat to the stability of the Church and increasing numbers of sermons (such as those by Ekbert of Schönau), warned against this heretic movement. Hildegard herself preached against the Cathars during her tours of the Rhineland between 1161 and 1163.

The text in the Dendermonde Codex is a dialogue between a priest and the devil and refers to an exorcism in which Hildegard herself took part. The encounter between a priest and a possessed man is presented in the form of a systematic interrogation. It contains more than 120 questions and answers concerning baptism, purgatory, the Jews, marriage, priests, suicide, superstition, the clothing of women and monks, and various kinds of demons. Hildegard does not participate in the dialogue, but her vision and combat with the devil are referred to explicitly, for example in quotations about the exorcism of the young noble Sigiwize by Hildegard, which is described in her *Vita*.



This text in the Dendermonde Codex was presumably written in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century. Laurence Moulinier, a French Hildegard specialist, has argued that the author was probably somebody in Hildegard's inner circle who had also attended the exorcisms in which she participated. The handwriting is clearly different from all the other hands in the manuscript. The text has also been revised and corrected: words have been deleted and notes added in the margins. This is by far the least known and least researched book in the entire codex. Interestingly, a shorter French version of the *Teufelsverhör* survives in a late 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript (Douai, Bibl. Mun. Mss. 869).

*The manuscript will be exhibited on the first folio of the Dialogue between a priest and the devil from 30 July until 22 August.*

## Antiphony of Beatrice of Nazareth

**Cistercian Abbey of Nazareth near Lier, 12th-century, parchment, folio 45v - 46r**

On loan from a private collection

Beatrice of Nazareth (1200-1268) and her two sisters Sybil and Christina entered the Abbey of Maagdendaal in 1221. This convent, which had been founded by their father Bartholomew of Tienen, had a scriptorium where various manuscripts were written by the novices. Beatrice herself learned calligraphy and the art of manuscript illumination at the Cistercian Abbey of Rameia (La Ramée in Jauchelette, Walloon Brabant), which stood under the spiritual guardianship of the great Abbey of Villers. Beatrice lived at this abbey with Ida of Nivelles between 1216 and 1217. When Beatrice moved to the Abbey of Nazareth in 1235, the manuscripts from Maagdendaal went with her. This new Cistercian abbey had likewise been founded by Beatrice's father on lands south of Lier that had been granted by Henry I, Duke of Brabant in 1225. In 1247, the abbey was moved to a new site on the road now known as Nazareth Drive. The abbey was completely destroyed in 1579 during the Wars of Religion. The antiphony you see here is decorated with large polychrome initials at the beginning of each sequence, painted in scarlet and blue. The smaller initials on this folio alternate between orange-red ink and green ink.

On the left folio, we see the initial P of the second response for the second nocturne on the Feast of the Ascension (the beginning of: *Post passionem suam per dies quadraginta apparens eis*), painted in blue and red ink and decorated with fine penwork with blue and orange-red ink. In the left margin, the letter P ends on a finely drawn church tower with a cross. This choir book was clearly used intensively during the liturgy, as is evident from the many thumb and finger marks on the parchment.

## Hadewijch, Poems in Stanzas and Rhymed Letters

### Manuscript 385 II, c. 1500, fol. 112v-113r

On loan from the Ruusbroec Institute, University of Antwerp

This manuscript dates from circa 1500 and it contains works by the 13<sup>th</sup>-century mystical author Hadewijch, including her *Poems in Stanzas* – which were actually songs, but the music to which they were set has only partially been identified – and her *Rhymed Letters*. It also contains a series of mystical poems that were once attributed to Hadewijch, but which were written by a different, unknown author, now known as Pseudo-Hadewijch or Hadewijch II. Remarkably, this manuscript also contains the so-called “List of the Perfect”. This is an appendix to Hadewijch’s *Vision XIII*, which provides a list of 107 people who were perfect in *minne* (mystical love). Hadewijch had seen all these people in her thirteenth vision, but she did not name them all in her description of the vision itself. It is unclear whether this “List of the Perfect” was actually written by Hadewijch or by one of her followers as an appendix to the vision. This list names Hildegard of Bingen explicitly: *Hildegart die al de visioene sach die xxviii<sup>ste</sup>* (“Hildegard who saw all the visions, the 28<sup>th</sup>”). This is particularly remarkable because it is the only explicit reference to Hildegard in the known writings of the movement of the *mulieres religiosae* in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège in the thirteenth century. Hadewijch’s complete works only survive in three

manuscripts that date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Two of them belonged to the Carthusians of Herne. The younger manuscript exhibited here is not a complete *opera omnia* manuscript because it does not include the *Letters* or the *Visions*. Its precise origins are unknown, though it may have been made by the Carthusians of Zelem.

## **‘Family Tree’ of female Cistercian saints, 1635**

### **Painting, Kerniel, Abbey of Mariënlof**

Photographic reproduction © KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

This painting is divided into two parts. At the foot of the tree, we see seven ladies in Cistercian habits, and each one is identified in captions written in gold. Sitting at the tree trunk we see Humbeline, the sister of Bernard of Clairvaux. Kneeling at bottom left, we see Jeanne de Marotte (1600-1663), who commissioned the work. A crosier lies in front of her. The inscription states: *ATA 35 1635*. Jeanne was 35 years old in 1635. From 1631 until her death in 1663, she was abbess of the Abbey of Paix-Dieu in Jehay-Boudegnée, near Huy. In the background on the left, we see her abbey church. Although neither Elisabeth of Schönau (c. 1129-1164) nor Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) were ever members of the Cistercian Order, they were both included in this painting and are both dressed in Cistercian habits. They stand side by side at the bottom right of the painting – first and second from the right, respectively. Hildegard assertively looks out of the canvas at the viewer, making a blessing gesture with her left hand.

The upper part of the painting depicts the crown of the tree, with twenty-five medallions in its branches. Each medallion contains a unique depiction of a Cistercian

nun. Many of these women are shown with a characteristic attribute that is related to an important event in their lives. Their names are mentioned in the golden edges of the medallions. We see famous figures such as Lutgard of Tongeren, Ida of Leuven, Elisabeth of Spalbeek and Juliana van Mont-Cornillon, as well as a number of lesser-known women. All of these women were part of the movement of *mulieres religiosae* of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century in the Low Countries. These women sought to live apostolic lives in a new way, inspired by Christ and his example. Beatrice of Nazareth (1200-1268) was one of the pivotal figures in this movement, and is therefore depicted on the lower right-hand branch, near the trunk. Her arms are wide open. Although most of the women are known thanks to the extant *vitae* that were written after their death by male religious, Beatrice's case is slightly different. The *Vita Beatricis* was based on Beatrice's own writing, much of which is lost. One text, *The Seven Manners of Love*, does survive, and it is the first dateable Middle Dutch mystical text. This text describes seven different kinds of love and the transformative mystical encounter with God. The way she is depicted in this painting thus refers to the mystical experiences that she received during her life.

**THE RECEPTION OF HILDEGARD OF BINGEN  
(UNTIL THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)  
MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY PRINTED WORKS**

Throughout the Middle Ages, Hildegard's visions, treatises, and letters were copied and circulated widely. The 13<sup>th</sup>-century compilation of her work by the Cistercian Ebano of Eberbach played an important role in the transmission history of her work. From the very beginning, the visions of Hildegard were associated with the visions of her friend Elisabeth of Schönau. Works by each of these women were often combined in manuscripts or early prints. After the first publication of Hildegard's visions in Paris in 1513, printers in Cologne and Antwerp reprinted selections of her correspondence and other works several times throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



## **Hildegard of Bingen, Correspondence with Philip, second abbot of Park Abbey**

### **Four Letters, 17th-century copies, manuscript**

On loan from the Archives of Park Abbey

Park Abbey was founded outside Leuven in a period when the town itself was still relatively young. In 1129, Godfrey I “the Bearded” (c. 1063-1139) donated his hunting estate to the Norbertines to found an abbey there. The bishop of Liège confirmed the foundation in 1131. The first abbot, Simon († 1142) was succeeded by Philip, under whose management the abbey flourished. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa took the abbey under his protection and throughout this period, the abbey also received a series of papal statutes and privileges. Abbot Philip commissioned a copy of the works of Hildegard, including her *Scivias*, but he also maintained an active correspondence with her, and even met her personally. The extant letters date from the period between 1170 and 1173. Hildegard sent Philip a first letter, to which he responded. She then sent another and he replied again. It is clear from these letters that the two held one another in very high esteem, and we see remarkable expressions of mutual spiritual support. These letters provide us with insight into the spiritual life of these communities in the twelfth century, and their profound religious ardour. It is apparent from one of the letters from Abbot Philip to Abbess Hildegard that Park Abbey was originally a double monastery, like Hildegard’s first monastery of

Disibodenberg. This means that a community of men and a community of women lived side by side in the same place. Philip writes: *Ora, igitur, mater venerabilis, ora pro me (...) et pro congregatione fratrum et sororum quam habeo regere* ("Pray therefore, reverend mother, pray for me and for the community of brothers and sisters that I must govern").

## 6

### **Gebeno of Eberbach, Visions of St. Hildegard**

***Prophetia sanctae hildegardis de futuris temporibus quae coeperunt anno domini Millesimo centesimo*, manuscript, c. 1500, folio 1r**  
Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, Codex 42

The prophecies of Hildegard of Bingen found an important promoter in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century: around 1220, the Prior Gebeno of the Cistercian Abbey of Eberbach wrote the *Pentachronon sive speculum futurorum temoorum* ("the five ages or mirrors of future times), derived from various texts and prophecies by Hildegard (*Scivias*, *Liber divinorum operum* and her letters). He added his own commentary to these works.

We do not know very much about Gebeno himself, but his *Pentachronon*, which survives in more than fifty

manuscripts, tells us a great deal about Hildegard's reception throughout the centuries. Statements, interpretations and opinions about Hildegard's texts were rarely based on her original texts, but rather on this composite work by Gebeno, which were more widely disseminated and more accessible. According to Gebeno, the primary significance of Hildegard's work was her emphasis on the poor state of the Church and the instructions that she gave the faithful regarding the coming of the Antichrist. Gebeno's aim was to make Hildegard's work accessible to a greater number of readers.

This manuscript from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century is part of the Collection of Cardinal d'Alsace from the Major Seminary in Mechelen, and was previously kept at the Abbey of Bois-Seigneur-Isaac in Braine l'Alleud.

**First printed edition of Hildegard of  
Bingen, Paris, 1513**

**Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, *Liber trium virorum & trium spiritualium virginum Hermae liber unus. Uguetini liber unus. F. Roberti libri duo. Hildegardis Scivias libri tres. Elisabeth virginis libri sex. Mechtildis virgi. libri quinque*, Paris, 1513, Ex officina Henrici Stephani**

Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, P 248.213/Fo

The first printed edition of Hildegard's *Scivias* was either edited by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples or Jacobus Faber Stapulensis (c. 1455-1536). Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples was a French theologian and humanist. He was a professor at the Collège du Cardinal-Lemoine in Paris. After travelling in Italy, he researched the works of Aristotle and published several early medieval mystical texts. He published this anthology of texts by six mystical authors with the renowned French publisher Henri Estienne or Henricus Stephanus in 1513. The frontispiece of this rare edition features woodcuts of the six authors in question. We first see Hermas (*Hermae Liber Unus*) above Uguenius (*Ugetini Liber unus*), Robert (*F. Roberti Libri duo*), Hildegard's *Scivias* (*Hildegardis Scivias Libri Tres*), followed by Elisabeth of Schönau (*Elisabeth virginis Libri sex*). The book ends with the work of Mechtild of Hackeborn (*Mechtildis virgi Libri Quiq*).

## The Correspondence of Hildegard, Cologne, 1566

***Sanctae Hildegardis abbatissae [...] Epistolarvm liber: continens varias epistolas summorum pontificum, imperatorum, patriarcharum [...] & aliorum plurimorum vtriusque secularis & ecclesiastici statûs ad S. Hildegardim, & eiusdem sanctas ad easdem responsiones : item eivsdem S. Hildegardis alia quædam [...]***

**Coloniæ: Iohannis Quentel & Geruuinum Calenium; 1566**

Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries,  
P248.612.1/Q° HILD Epis 1566

Dating from 1566, these four identical volumes, all owned by the Maurits Sabbe Library, contain the oldest printed edition of Hildegard's letters. The books were printed in Cologne and were prepared by the Antwerp-based canon Justus Blankwalt (d. 1600), based on the so-called 'Riesencodex'. Like the Dendermonde Codex, the 'Riesencodex' was also made at Rupertsberg Abbey. Wibert (also: Guibert) of Gembloux (c. 1124-1214) compiled Hildegard's letters at Rupertsberg so that they could be preserved in the 'Riesencodex'. Justus Blankwalt explicitly states that he used this manuscript. He did not include the entire collection of Hildegard's letters, but selected seventy-eight texts that include both letters to and from Hildegard. This earliest printed edition of the selection was the basis for a later printing at Lyon in 1677, in the

series *Bibliotheca Patrum Lugdunensis*, t. XXIII. Some of Hildegard's other letters were later also printed, including by the two erudite Maurists Edmond Martène (1654-1739) and Ursin Durand (1682-1771). These letters were all included in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 197, 145A-382C: a corpus of 145 letters in total. Later research brought a far greater correspondence to light, however, and the current critical edition in the series *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis* (vol. 91A-91B)) totals almost four hundred letters. Hildegard's is thus one of the biggest collections of medieval correspondence known to us, and a very significant part of her oeuvre in its own right. A striking aspect of this first print from 1566 is that the letters are not arranged chronologically, but according to the importance of the addressees: first popes (Eugene, Anastasius, Adrian, Alexander), then archbishops and bishops, emperors, abbots, etc. There is also an important section of longer letters that were addressed to whole groups or communities, such as the letter to the ecclesiastical authorities of Mainz concerning the interdict under which the abbot of Disibodenberg had placed her monastery, or the letter to the monks of Villers who had sent her a series of theological questions.

## 8.1

### **Hildegard – Correspondence with Villers, pp. 206-207**

The monks of the Abbey of Villers sent a letter to Hildegard with a series of thirty-eight theological

questions, to which Hildegard responded. This exchange was mediated by Wibert (also: Guibert) of Gembloux (c. 1124-1214), who had himself had an eventful life: after his monastery in Gembloux was destroyed by fire, he became Hildegard's last secretary at Rupertsberg (1177-1179). He stayed in Bingen for a year after Hildegard's death, then went on pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Martin in Tours, and in 1188 he was elected abbot of the monastery of Florennes. His first contacts with Hildegard occurred in 1175, when he wrote to her after hearing about her and then stayed at Rupertsberg for several days in 1175. Returning to the Low Countries after this first encounter, he told his friends at the Cistercian Abbey of Villers about her and they then gave him a list of questions that they asked him to present to Hildegard. Hildegard did not respond to these questions immediately, saying that she would work on her responses when time allowed. In the meantime, she sent the monks of Villers the manuscript that is now known as the Dendermonde Codex, which is the central focus of this exhibition. Hildegard gradually started replying to the monks' many questions. The surprising thing about these questions – most of which concern difficult passages in the Bible – is that the monks presented them to Hildegard rather than to a well-known master from one of the schools. This attests to Hildegard's theological and spiritual authority. As far as we know, she is the only known 12<sup>th</sup>-century woman to write such a theological response for a male community. Moreover, her exegesis of the relevant biblical passages is surprisingly consistent with her other writings.

## 8.2.

### **Hildegard – Correspondence with Emperor Frederick, pp. 64-65**

Hildegard's complete correspondence attests to the fact that she maintained contacts with all the leading secular and religious figures of her day (popes, bishops, abbots, emperors, counts, etc.). She exchanged letters with two Holy Roman Emperors, Conrad III (1093-1152) and his successor Frederick I (c. 1122-1190), known as 'Barbarossa'. Frederick is often considered to be one the most important medieval emperors of the Holy Roman Empire due to his exceptional talents as a ruler and his political acuity. Frederick's letter refers to a conversation that he had with Hildegard when they had met each other at the imperial palace in Ingelheim, in 1154. He addresses her as "your holiness" (*notum facimus sanctitati tuae...*), which attests to the very high esteem in which he held her. Hildegard's first letter to Frederick (written shortly after the imperial election in 1152), expresses the hope that the emperor will be a peacemaker, and she does not hesitate to emphasize that he will ultimately have to account for his actions to the highest King, namely God. We only have a few extant letters from Hildegard to the emperor, but they show that she became increasingly critical of his policies. She specifically complained that he had deposed the archbishop of Mainz, and she condemns this political meddling in ecclesiastical matters (such interference had become rare since the Concordat of Worms). The emperor, for his part, continued to express great respect for Hildegard and her authority.



### 8.3

#### **Hildegard – Correspondence with Elisabeth of Schönau, pp. 114-115**

For biographical information about Elisabeth and her visions, and her relationship with Hildegard, see above in the text about the *Liber viarum Dei*. This correspondence shows that the two women maintained active contact, and that Elisabeth considered Hildegard to be an authority and a source of spiritual consolation. In this epistolary exchange, Elisabeth asks Hildegard to console her because some people had taken offense at her visions and spread malicious rumours about her. Some even questioned whether the angel that delivered her visions might not be some kind of demon. Hildegard responds by reassuring Elisabeth that she herself has also experienced fear and suffering, and she says that though some people are blessed with the vision of God's mysteries, others will never accept them.

The implicit message is that despite the opposition with which they have both been confronted, the visions of both Elisabeth and Hildegard herself are revealed by God.

### 8.4

#### **Hildegard – Correspondence with Bernard of Clairvaux, pp. 70-71**

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) is one of the most famous mystical writers of the entire Christian

tradition. In 1113, he joined the young abbey of Cîteaux, which sought to apply the principles of the Rule of Saint Benedict more strictly, and he later became the abbot of Clairvaux. Bernard to a large extent defined the spirituality of the Cistercian Order and instigated the foundation of many of its new abbeys, including Villers. The Abbey of Villers was founded in 1146 by twelve monks from Clairvaux. Bernard was not only an active abbot and author, but in his own lifetime he became known as one of the greatest spiritual and theological authorities in Western Christendom, and like Hildegard, he advised popes and emperors. His most famous books are *De diligendo Deo* (On Loving God) and a series of more than eighty *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, texts which were very popular and influential. The oldest extant letter that we have by Hildegard, written c. 1146, was sent to Bernard. Hildegard assumes a very humble stance with respect to Bernard and his great theological authority. She calls him the eagle who can look directly at the sun (an allusion to his reputation as a mystic), and she asks for his permission to write down and circulate her visions. Bernard's reply to Hildegard's letter is relatively short, but he confirms that the visions she receives come from the grace of God dwelling within her. With the approval of one of the most famous theologians in Europe, Hildegard was able to embark on her illustrious writing career and establish her own reputation as the *Prophetessa Teutonica* and 'Sybil of the Rhine'. Both Hildegard and Bernard have now been given the honorific title 'Doctor of the Church'.

## The Visions of Hildegard and Elisabeth, Cologne, 1628

***Revelationes SS. Virginum Hildegardis & Elizabethae Schoenaugiensis Ordinis S. Benedicti in Martyrologium Romanum relatarum: ex antiquis monumentis editae: vnà cum variis elogiis ipsius Ecclesiae & doctorum virorum, Coloniae Agrippinae: ex officina Anthonii Boetzeri hæredum; 1628***

Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, Q° 73 P BIRG 1628

This is a reprint of the first printed edition of Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias* and the vision books of Elisabeth of Schönau. The texts printed here were first edited by Jacob Faber and published in Paris in 1513 (see above). As with Henriquez' book – the following item in the catalogue – this reprint demonstrates that there was an active interest in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in female mystical authors from earlier centuries. We also see clearly that Hildegard and Elisabeth are directly associated with one another. In the painting of the Cistercian family tree (see above), which dates from only a few years later, the two abbesses stand side by side. The first part of this volume contains an edition of the visions of Saint Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373), and the biography of one of her daughters, Saint Catherine. The same publishing house in Cologne printed several other important works on mystical theology in this period. In 1640, they printed the *Theologia mystica clavis* by the Dutch Jesuit

Maximilian Sandaeus (van der Sandt), an explanatory lexicon of terms that were used in specific ways by older mystical authors, but which were often misunderstood in his time.

10

**Henriquez, Five Wise Virgins, Antwerp,  
1630**

**Chrysostomus Henriquez, *Qvinque prvdentes virgines sive B. Beatricis de Nazareth, B. Aleydis de Scharenbecka, B. Idæ de Nivellis, B. Idæ de Lovanio, B. Idæ de Levvis, ordinis Cisterc. præclara gesta, ex antiquis M.S. eruta: Accessit catalogus copiosus sanctarum & beatarum maximè illustrium eiusdem institutiez*, Antwerpen, Cnobaert, 1630**

Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, 235.383  
HENR Quin

This rare book contains the *vitae* of five Cistercian nuns (who are called five “wise virgins”, after the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, cf. Mt. 25, 1-13), namely Beatrice of Nazareth, Aleydis of Schaarbeek, Ida of Nivelles, Ida of Leuven, and Ida of Gorsleeuw. The editor, Chrysostomus Henriquez (1594-1632), was a Cistercian monk at the Abbey of Santa Maria de Huerta (Spain). His parents both worked at the court of Archduke Albert in Brussels, and the archduke summoned him to the Low Countries after he had been ordained. He lived in various abbeys

for many years (including the Abbey of Villers), and collected information about the history of his order from the manuscripts he found there. He died in Leuven in 1632, at Aulne College (on Naamsestraat; currently known as the American College). Chrysostomus Henriquez published approximately forty books about the history of his order. Although the edition of these five *vitae* is by no means faultless from the perspective of current editorial principles – Henriquez occasionally revised the texts according to the tastes and theology of his time – it is nevertheless a striking witness to 17<sup>th</sup>-century interest in the spirituality of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *mulieres religiosae* in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège. There was clearly still active contact with these older sources in the seventeenth century. The 13<sup>th</sup>-century *vitae* sketch a refined image of the mystical spirituality of these women. The authors of the various *vitae* are not mentioned in this edition, and some, like the author of the *Vita Beatricis*, are still unknown. We do know, however, that the *Vita* of Ida of Nivelles was written by Goswin of Bossut, the chanter of the Abbey of Villers, who also wrote *vitae* of two of his mystical brothers at Villers (Arnulf and Abundus). He also composed offices and hymns for the liturgies of Arnulf and Marie d'Oignies.

**Benedictus of Haeften, *S. Benedictus illustratus*, Antwerp, 1644**

**Benedictus of Haeften, *Disquisitiones monasticae Libri XII quibus S.P. Benedicti Regula et Religiosorum Rituum Antiquitates varie dilucidantur Auctore Domno Benedicto Haefteno. Monasterij Affligeniensis, Ordinis S. Benedicti, Præposito. Præmittitur euisdem ad Vitam S.P.B. commentarius*, 1644**

Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries,  
P248.616.1/Fo HAEF Bene

The *S. Benedictus illustratus, Disquisitiones monasticae* by Benedictus of Haeften (1588-1648) is a collection of spiritual collations about the life and teachings of Saint Benedict of Nursia. The prestigious frontispiece was designed by the Antwerp painter and designer Abraham van Diepenbeek (1596-1675) and printed in 1644. We see Saint Benedict standing on a pedestal, surrounded by monks, priests and bishops who were important to the Benedictine Order. Hildegard of Bingen is the only Benedictine nun depicted on this frontispiece, to the right of the pedestal on which Benedict stands. The engraving shows figures who played a role in Benedictine historiography, including Saint Rupert to the left of the pedestal.

Benedictus of Haeften was the provost (deputy abbot) of the Abbey of Affligem from 1619 until 1648. Originally from Utrecht, he studied philosophy and

theology at Leuven University. He interrupted his theological studies to enter the Abbey of Affligem in 1609. After his ordination in 1613, he returned to Leuven to complete his theological formation. *S. Benedictus illustratus*, printed in 1644, is one of his most important works, and it mentions Hildegard several times. Van Haeften dedicated this major work of more than 1190 pages to Archbishop Jacobus Boonen of Mechelen.

## Hildegard's Prophecy against Heresy, 1791

***Extract uyt de prophetie van de H. Hildegardis abdisse, getrokken uyt Bzovius, in den 15 tomus van zyne Kerkelyke historie op't jaer 1415, betrekkelyk tot deze tydsomstandigheden, pp. 2-3***  
Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, 17K18

This little pamphlet of only four pages contains one of Hildegard's prophecies. The title page refers to the publication of the Polish Dominican Abraham Bzovius (1567-1637). Bzovius' most important work was the continuation of Cesar Baronius' (1538-1607) *Historia ecclesiastica*, which was printed in Cologne and Rome between 1616 and 1672.

Hildegard's prophecy refers to a time of profound turmoil and temptation, and she warns her readers against flatterers and sycophants, envy, hypocrisy, and backbiting. She ends the prophecy with the words: *Depart you teachers of sin and destruction, fathers of corruption, children of malice, we will no longer follow your ways nor listen to your teaching.* These passages refer to Hildegard's battle against heresy, and especially against the Cathars.

The year to which Bzovius refers is 1415, the year in which the Council of Constance (1414-1418) brought an end to the Western Schism, but also the year that



Jan Hus was burned at the stake. Hildegard's prophecies thus continued to be used to combat new forms of heresy. It is remarkable that this prophecy was translated into Dutch in 1791. In this period, pamphlets were often written against the dangers of godless revolutionary ideas that were being propagated in France. Hildegard's 12<sup>th</sup>-century prophecy was considered perfect to combat these positions too.

## **THE DENDERMONDE CODEX**

### **FIVE ABBEYS, FIVE HOMES (12<sup>TH</sup> – 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY)**

Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hildegard's manuscript travelled to five important abbey libraries. From the scriptorium at the Benedictine Abbey of Rupertsberg (near Bingen am Rhein), the manuscript was sent to the Abbey of Villers in Brabant. The Abbey of Gembloux, which had been the home of Hildegard's last secretary, also played an important role. During the upheavals of the French Revolution, the manuscript was moved from the beautiful library in Affligem to Dendermonde, where the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul was founded in 1838. Each of these five abbeys played an important role in the cultural history of Western Europe.

## **Benedictine Abbey of Rupertsberg**

**Daniel Meissner, *Thesaurus Philopoliticus*,  
Frankfurt, 1623-1625, reproduction**

The Dendermonde Codex was written at the Benedictine Abbey of Rupertsberg, just outside Bingen-am Rhein. In 1150, Hildegard left Disibodenberg with twenty of her sisters to found the Abbey of Rupertsberg on the site where Saint Rupert (650-718) had been buried. Rupertsberg was located at the strategic position of the confluence of the Nahe and the Rhine. After using an old chapel as an abbey church, a new abbey complex was gradually built. The new abbey church was consecrated by Archbishop Henry of Mainz in 1152. The church was thirty metres long, the nave was 7 metres wide and the aisles were 4.35 metres wide. There was a crypt under the choir with the tombs of Saint Rupert and his mother. Hildegard was later also buried in the crypt. All of her most important works were written in Rupertsberg. They were copied in the scriptorium and then circulated across Europe. Hildegard most probably sent the Dendermonde Codex to Brabant in 1176. The monastery's importance waned after Hildegard's death. It was destroyed by the Swedish army during the Thirty Years' War in 1632, and was never rebuilt.

## Cistercian Abbey of Villers

**Antonius Sanderus, *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae sive celebrium aliquot in ea provincia ecclesiarum et coenobiorum descriptio*, Brussels, 1659 (Engraver J. B. Berterham)**

Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, 241.661 SOTO

The Dendermonde Codex was sent to the Cistercian Abbey of Villers in Brabant in approximately 1176. The ex-libris of Villers can still be seen on the last folio of the manuscript: *Lib. sce Mar[ie de] Villari*. The Dendermonde Codex is sometimes also known as the *Villarensis Codex* in the secondary literature.

The Abbey of Villers was a daughter house of Clairvaux. It flourished in the twelfth century, when the monks contacted Hildegard to ask her a series of theological questions. A monk from Villers spent some time in Rupertsberg to learn from Hildegard. The Abbey of Villers was very affluent. By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it owned 10,000 hectares, spread across the current provinces of Antwerp and Namur. The abbey possessed an exceptionally large and rich library. According to the catalogue dated 1309 – which mentions the Hildegard codex –, the library contained 455 volumes. Villers was destroyed and plundered several times and is now no more than a picturesque ruin.

Sanderus's illustration depicts the abbey in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and from three perspectives.

The largest and central picture shows the entire abbey with its principal buildings in the foreground. The legend at the bottom helps the viewer to identify the various buildings, such as the church (number 1) and the library (number 5). The engraving in the *Chorographia sacra tribus voluminibus distincta* was made by Jan Baptist Berterham, a Brussels-based engraver and illustrator who was active during the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## Benedictine Abbey of Gembloux

**Antonius Sanderus, *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae sive celebrium aliquot in ea provincia ecclesiarum et coenobiorum description*, Brussels, 1659 (Engraver J. Harrewijn), Maurits Sabbe Library, KU Leuven Libraries, 248.694.1 PONT**

Wibert or Guibert of Gembloux (1124-1213) played an important role in Hildegard's life. This monk from the Abbey of Gembloux corresponded with Hildegard, and after the death of her secretary, he travelled to Rupertsberg to assume that role in 1177. He was Hildegard's last secretary and stayed with her until her death in 1179. Guibert stayed in Rupertsberg until 1180 to work on Hildegard's *Vita*. The *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis* was written by four authors: Hildegard herself, Godfrey of Disibodenberg, Theodoric of Echternach, and Guibert of Gembloux. An almost completely scratched out inscription at the top of folio 1 of the Dendermonde Codex leads us to suspect that the manuscript was also housed at the Abbey of Gembloux for some time. In a 17<sup>th</sup>-century (?) hand, the inscription appears to read: *Liber monasterii Gemblacensis*. More detailed research is required to establish this with certainty.

The Abbey of Gembloux was founded in approximately 940 by Guibert or Wicbertus of Gembloux (882-962). One century later, it was completely rebuilt by Abbot Olbert (1018-1048), who reformed the abbey into a spiritual, artistic and intellectual centre.

The abbey was renowned across Europe as a school for copyists and scholars. The abbey suffered from several fires in 1136, 1157 and 1185. Guibert of Gembloux was elected abbot of Gembloux in 1194 and spent ten years reforming his abbey both spiritually and materially, but these efforts were not successful. He was exiled in 1204 and moved to an abbey in Florennes, where he died. After suffering the ravages of time and revolutions, the abbey was completely destroyed by fire on 6 August 1678. It was rebuilt from 1762 to 1779, but was then abandoned for good during the French Revolution (1796).

## Benedictine Abbey of Affligem

**Print from Antonius Sanderus, *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae sive celebrium aliquot in ea provincia ecclesiarum et coenobiorum description*, Brussels, 1659,**

On loan from the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul, Dendermonde.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Dendermonde Codex was housed at the Benedictine Abbey of Affligem, an extremely important abbey with an impressive library. It was in this period that the codex was rebound in dark brown leather with the title embossed on its spine in gold: M.S. OPERA HILDEGARDIS VIRGINIS. The abbey's ex libris is also partially visible on the first folio.

The Abbey of Affligem was founded on 28 June 1062 thanks to Count Palatine Hermann II of Lotharingia (1049-1085). He gave six hermits permission to establish a community on his estate in Affligem. In 1084, he also founded an abbey in Rome. The solemn consecration with an episcopal decree occurred in 1086. The abbey expanded dramatically during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. But it was not spared the ravages of war. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it was destroyed twice in the Brabant War of Succession (1356-1357). In 1580, it was burned down by the troops of William of Orange (1533-1584). After a period of revival under Benedictus of Haeften (1588-1648), the abbey was again destroyed by the armies of Louis XIV in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The abbey was



again rebuilt to a design by the famous architect Laurent-Benoît Dewez (1731-1812). The monks were driven out yet again during the French Revolution, and the abbey buildings were confiscated and sold. Most of the buildings were destroyed. The community initially moved to Dendermonde, taking the Dendermonde Codex with them. The Abbey of Affligem was re-established in 1870, but the manuscript stayed in Dendermonde.

## **The Capuchin church at Dendermonde**

Painting, anonymous, oil on canvas, first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on loan from the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul, Dendermonde

When the monks from Affligem arrived in Dendermonde in 1837, Hildegard's codex was brought to the Capuchin church by the abbey's founder, Dom Veremundus D'haens (1771-1846). The former Capuchin church in Dendermonde was located on the Vlasmarkt (the Koornaard). It stood beside the convent of the 'Cellite' or 'Black' Sisters, who could access the church directly. The site of these buildings had an eventful history dating back to the early Prince's Court. It is thought that the building was once the home of the Lords of Dendermonde. In 1596, Domingo de Idiaquez, the governor of Dendermonde and an ardent supporter of the Capuchins, bought the northern wing and adjacent lands of the Prince's Court and donated them to the Capuchins, who had been living in a former brewery in the town. They soon began work on a new abbey church, which was consecrated three years later. The new abbey buildings and church (dedicated to Saint Francis) were constructed between 1626 and 1629 to a design by Benignus van Amersfoort. The church had only a central nave and no aisles, and had two side chapels and a narrow choir (the width of two bays). The church was built in sandstone and brick. In 1797, the Capuchin monastery (and that of the Cellite Sisters)

was abolished under the French regime. During the Dutch regime, in 1815, permission was granted to use the empty buildings as a public place of worship under the direction of a chaplain. Dom Veremundus D'haens decided to buy the vacant Capuchin monastery in 1837, as a new home for his Benedictine monks, who had been driven out of their monastery by the French. They had lived for some time at the Castle of Overham near Aalst, but had started looking for a new home in 1798. In 1841, the Benedictine community was restored by papal decree and with the permission of the bishop of Ghent as the Abbey of Affligem in Dendermonde. At that time, the community had eight members. At the turn of the twentieth century, in 1901-1902, the monks moved to a new, much larger neo-Gothic church that had been designed by Auguste Van Assche.

## **Two volume 18<sup>th</sup>-century catalogue of the Library of the Abbey of Affligem**

### **18.1**

#### **Library catalogue of the Affligem, Volume 1 Reference to *Sanctae Hildegardis abbatissae, Epistolarvm liber***

**Beda Regaus and Bernardus De Coster,  
manuscript, 2 volumes, paper, 1782**

On loan from the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul,  
Dendermonde

The Abbey of Affligem had already acquired an extensive library by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Under provost Benedictus of Haeften (1588-1648), they acquired a new library comprising approximately 2000 volumes. Two centuries later, one of the first tasks of the new young librarian Beda Regaus (1718-1808), who was appointed in 1846, was to organize the archive and draw up a new library catalogue. The two-volume catalogue dates from 1782, by which time Regaus had himself become provost of the abbey, and it was written by the librarian Bernardus De Coster (*Index Bibliotheca Hallflighemsis*). The hand-written catalogue offers insight into the immensely rich library collection of the Abbey of Affligem in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which contained works by Benedict, the Church

Fathers, Aristotle, as well as medical and botanical works. The monks were encouraged to use the library. The catalogue is organized alphabetically by author, but strangely enough, it does not mention the manuscript of works by Hildegard of Bingen. It does mention the Cologne edition of 1655, *Sanctae Hildegardis abbatissae, Epistolarvm liber*, which is listed under Hildegard (nr. 16.2, at the bottom). Four copies of Hildegard's *Epistolarum* of 1655 are shown in this exhibition (see nr. 8 ). It is clear from Regaus' introduction that some of the abbey's books were not in the library and could not be consulted by the monks. For example, the works of Abelard are marked with an asterisk because they were not to be read. Works that were on the Index of Forbidden Books were kept in a locked chest.

The 12<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript by Hildegard is presumably not mentioned because it was not in the library for consultation. It is possible that the manuscript was kept in the archive, along with other hand-written documents.

## 18.2

### **Library catalogue of Affligem Volume 2: Frontispiece**

**Beda Regaus and Bernardus De Coster,  
manuscript, 2 volumes, 1782**

On loan from the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul,  
Dendermonde

In his introduction, Regaus provides guidelines for the monks on how to use the library. The collection was subdivided into four categories: Theology, Law, Philosophy and History, according to the bibliographical guidelines of Guillaume-François De Bure that were published in Paris from 1762 to 1767. The two-volume 1782 catalogue records approximately 4600 volumes. The title page of the catalogue is recycled from the frontispiece of the edition by Benedictus of Haeften, *S. Benedictus illustratus*, Antwerp, 1644 (see also nr. 10). The label on the pedestal on the frontispiece has been cut out of both volumes of the catalogue and replaced by Regaus' hand-written quotation from the Rule of Saint Benedict: *Accipiant Omnes Singulos Codices Bibliotheca Reg. Cap. 48* (they shall each receive a book from the library). The monks were encouraged to take good care of the books, not to damage them, not to steal them, and not to make any notations in the text or to provide any corrections or commentaries. Regaus writes explicitly that all such additions constitute damaging the books.

## INTEREST IN HILDEGARD OF BINGEN IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the central focus of publications about Hildegard continued to be theological and church-historical. The editions by J.P. Migne (*Sanctae Hildegardis Abbatissae Opera Omnia*, Paris) in 1855 and by J.B. Pitra (*Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis Opera. Analecta Sacra*, Monte Cassino) in 1882 are of exceptionally great value. Interest in Hildegard grew in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a specific focus on her musical compositions. Interest among the general public was particularly drawn to her texts about medicinal therapies. Hildegard came to be considered a *homo universalis avant-la-lettre*. She was celebrated for her extraordinary life, as a woman who propagated her opinions and insights in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and who became influential in a political, religious, and social European network. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she became a champion of emancipation movements and New Age Spirituality.

The final part of this exhibition illustrates the multifaceted nature of her reception in more recent publications. They highlight her significance and the way in which Hildegard is represented and celebrated.

## Hildegard's *Symphonia*

Hildegard's music was rediscovered at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A publication of her *Symphonia* was prepared in Germany on the basis of the Riesencodex, the large 12<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript that is kept in Wiesbaden (Ms. 2, Hessische Landesbibliothek). General studies on Hildegard's musical oeuvre were published in the sixties by Peter Dronke (*The Compositions of Hildegard of Bingen's Symphoniae*, 1967-1970). The Dendermonde Codex was less accessible for researchers. The first facsimile of the Dendermonde *Symphonia* was published in 1991 in Peer, with an introduction by Peter van Poucke (Alamire).

Joseph Gmelch. *Die Kompositionen der heil. Hildegard. Nach den großen Hildegardkodex in Wiesbaden phototypisch veröffentlicht*. Düsseldorf: Druck und Verlag von L. Schwann, 1913

M. David-Windstoßer en Hugo Lang. *Carmina Sanctae Hildegardis. Die Lieder der hl. Hildegard von Bingen*. München: Verlag Carl Aug. Seyfried & Comp, 1928

*Zwölf Ausgewählte Lieder der Hl. Hildegard. Nach den Originalkompositionen und dem lateinischen Urtext übertragen aus dem Wiesbadener Hildegardis-Kodex (12. Jahrhundert)*. Düsseldorf: Druck und Verlag von L. Schwann, 1929

Peter van Poucke. Hildegard van Bingen, *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum*, Dendermonde, Sint-Pieters- en Paulusabdij, Cod. 9, Facsimile Series: I/A.8 Alamire, Peer, 1991



## Hildegard's *Scivias*

*Scivias* was Hildegard's first work and it was written between 1141 and 1151. It describes twenty-six mystical visions and it is decorated with thirty-five miniatures. The title *Scivias* is an abbreviation of *Scire vias Domini*, which means "know the ways of the Lord". Throughout her life, this was Hildegard's most famous work. To some extent, it also inspired Elisabeth of Schönau's *Liber viarum Dei*.

The publications in the display cases show reproductions of the miniatures from Hildegard's *Scivias*. The original illuminated manuscript that was produced at Rupertsberg was lost during the Second World War.

Henri Boelaars. *Commentaar op de miniaturen in Scivias van Hildegardis van Bingen*. Katwijk: Servire, 1986

Christine Büchner. *Hildegard von Bingen: eine Lebensgeschichte*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2009

*Geschaut im Lebendigen Licht. Die Miniaturen des Liber Scivias der Hildegard von Bingen*. Beuron: Beuronischer Kunstverlag, 2011

Henri Étienne. *Scivias ou les trois livres des visions et révélations*. 3 dln. Paris: Chamonal, 1909

## Hildegard as a visionary

The 12<sup>th</sup>-century miniatures that illuminated Hildegard's *Scivias* were painted in vibrant colours and forms. They became iconic images and have frequently been reproduced in publications about theology, mysticism, faith, and spirituality. The miniaturist who worked for Hildegard used gold and bright colours to create these stunning images.

On the frontispiece, Hildegard is depicted as a visionary, illumined by divine light, and receiving insight into the world. Her divine vision is represented by wavy lines that radiate from heaven down to Hildegard. She is accompanied by her first secretary, Volmar.

*Der Heiligen Hildegard von Bingen Wisse die Wege. Scivias. Nach dem Urtext des Wiesbadener kleinen Hildegardiskodex.* Berlin: Sankt Augustinus Verlag, 1928

Heinrich Schipperges. *Hildegard von Bingen. Ein Zeichen für unsere Zeit.* Frankfurt am Main: Knecht, 1981

Johannes Braun. *Die Heilige Hildegard, Äbtissin von Rupertsberg (1098-1179).* Wiesbaden: Rauch, 1929

Charlotte Kerner. *Alle Schönheit des Himmels. Die Lebensgeschichte der Hildegard von Bingen.* Weinheim: Beltz, 1993



## COLOPHON

**Hildegard of Bingen in the Low Countries**  
**The Dendermonde Codex**  
**Maurits Sabbe Library,**  
Charles Debériotstraat 26, 3000 Leuven  
30 May - 22 August 2018

### **Scientific Committee**

Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Faculty of  
Arts, KU Leuven  
Leo Kenis, Rob Faesen, Lieve Watteeuw, David Burn,  
John Arblaster

Illuminare, Centre for the Study of Medieval Art  
Alamire Foundation, International Centre for the Study  
of Music in the Low Countries  
Book Heritage Lab - KU Leuven

### **Texts**

Rob Faesen, John Arblaster, Lieve Watteeuw, David  
Burn, Leo Kenis, Olivia Puzzolante, Roosje Baele,  
Jeroen Reyniers and Katrien Houbey

### **Organization**

Leo Kenis, Veronique Verspeurt, Hans Storme,  
Yannick Van Loon, Michelle Nolf, Evelien Denecker,  
Luc De Saeger and Lieve Watteeuw

### **Presentation**

Michelle Nolf, Yannick Van Loon, Hans Storme,  
Morgane Plateau, Filip Ons and Lieve Watteeuw

## **Communication**

Maurits Sabbe Library: michelle.nolf@kuleuven.be  
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies:  
evelien.denecker@kuleuven.be

## **Online exhibition:**

<https://expo.bib.kuleuven.be/exhibits/show/hildegard-van-bingen/>

## **The Dendermonde Codex online:**

<http://resolver.libis.be/IE9129581/representation>

**Music:** Psallentes, Hendrik Vanden Abeele: Hours of Hildegard : The Dendermonde codex - First hour, Le Bricoleur, 2017.

With profound gratitude to the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul, Dendermonde, Park Abbey, the Ruusbroec Institute and the Abbey of Westmalle for their contributions to this exhibition.

The Dendermonde Codex has been classified as a Flemish Masterpiece.





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Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies  
Faculty of Arts

SINT-PIETERS- & PAULUSABDIJ



VLAAMARKT 23 - 9200 DENDERMONDE

