

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Elisabeth of Schönau: Visions and Female Intellectual Culture of the High Middle Ages

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Department of History

School of Arts and Sciences

Of The Catholic University of America

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

©

Copyright

All Rights Reserved

By

Sarah M. Spalding

Washington, D.C.

2013

# Elisabeth of Schönau: Visions and Female Intellectual Culture of the High Middle Ages

Sarah M. Spalding

Director: Katherine L. Jansen, D.Phil.

Elisabeth of Schönau (1128/29-1164/65) was a Rhineland Benedictine who wrote numerous visionary texts. These works addressed local problems in the cloister and community, reform within the Church, and theological questions. Elisabeth's writings were extremely popular among her contemporaries, circulating throughout Western Europe in the twelfth century.

While scholars have studied Elisabeth, it has usually been within the context of her spirituality and how it reflected distinct feminine interests. This thesis, however, provides an analysis of Elisabeth's works in the context of the proliferation of school culture and reform movements in the twelfth century. Through a close analysis of her entire corpus of works, I demonstrate how Elisabeth's texts promote a clear reform program, engaging with literary formats popular among the intellectual elite. Elisabeth's works pursued a reform agenda through their emphasis on formation within the cloister and pastoral leadership, promoting these concerns as part of her answers to theological and spiritual questions that she received from members of religious communities. In this way, Elisabeth's texts also provided a response to those critical of her engagement with theological and spiritual issues in the public sphere.

Entering into dialogues with her angelic guide and other heavenly interlocutors, Elisabeth provided an oral and aural visionary experience to her audience. This format represents a break with the previous conventions associated with the visionary genre. Elisabeth's reconceptualization of her visions as conversations addressed an audience that was becoming more

accustomed to public disputation within intellectual culture. In this way, Elisabeth's texts help us to understand better the interaction between the worlds of the schools and the cloister in the twelfth century, as both engaged with oral discourse as a means to solve theological and spiritual questions.

This dissertation by Sarah M. Spalding fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in History approved by Katherine L. Jansen, D.Phil., as Director, and by Jennifer Davis, D.Phil., Stephen Wright, D.Phil., and Claudia Bornholdt, D.Phil., as Readers.

---

Katherin L. Jansen, D.Phil., Director

---

Jennifer Davis, D.Phil., Reader

---

Stephen Wright, D.Phil., Reader

---

Claudia Bornholdt, D.Phil., Reader

## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Chapter	
<b>1. Elisabeth's <i>Liber visionum primus</i>: Visionary Experience, Reform Literature and Memorial Culture.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Elisabeth's Introduction: Explaining the Visionary Process.....	26
Reform Literature and Elisabeth's <i>Liber visionum primus</i> .....	40
Memorializing Elisabeth: Vision in the Cloister.....	57
Conclusion.....	68
<b>2. Disputing Authority: Discipline, Dialogue and Visions in the Twelfth Century.....</b>	<b>70</b>
Masters, Students and Angels: Real and Ideal Relationships.....	75
Visionary Dialogues, Public Disputes.....	89
Conclusion.....	110
<b>3. Errant Heretics and Negligent Clerics: Visionary Polemics and a Call for Learning.....</b>	<b>112</b>
Reform Background: Education and Heresy.....	116
Reform Critiques: Elisabeth and Hildegard.....	123
Enacting Reform: Elisabeth, Ekbert and Clerical Education.....	143
Conclusion.....	156
<b>4. Elisabeth's Audience: Negotiating Novelty in Reform Communities.....</b>	<b>158</b>
New Converts, New Texts.....	162

The Marian Group: Elisabeth's Texts and Twelfth-Century Theology.....	172
Clear Answers and Clerical Nuns.....	193
Conclusion.....	201
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	203
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	206

## Introduction

When Ekbert of Schönau collected all of the writings of his sister, Elisabeth, sometime before his death in 1184, he added his own introduction to the complete corpus of her works. Elisabeth (1128/29-1164/65) had died at the age of thirty-six after a notable career as a visionary, author and promoter of religious reform. Ekbert had played an important role in the publication and dissemination of Elisabeth's texts. To describe the process by which he recorded Elisabeth's visions, he outlined the undertaking in the introduction, stating

I put into writing all these [conversations with the angel] and the other things that are written about her revelations in such a way that where the words of the angel were in Latin, I left them unchanged. Where they were in German, I translated them into Latin as clearly as I could, adding nothing from my own presumption, seeking nothing of human favor nor worldly advantage, with God as my witness, to whom all things are naked and open.<sup>1</sup>

Ekbert's introduction demonstrates the important characteristics of Elisabeth's visions for his audience. First, he framed Elisabeth's visions with the dialogue that she and her angelic guide exchanged. This is not surprising given that most of Elisabeth's visions were focused on oral conversations rather than visual images. Second, Ekbert noted that Elisabeth's written texts, even if some discussion took place in German, were Latin works. As educated members of a religious order, both Ekbert and Elisabeth were part of a Latinate culture. And, finally, he swore

---

<sup>1</sup> "sermones angeli...conscripsi omnia hec, et alia, que de revelationibus eius leguntur, ita quidem, ut ubi erant latina verba angeli immutata relinquerem, ubi vero teutonica erant, in latinum transferrem, prout expressus potui, nihil mea presumptione adiungens, nihil favoris humani, nihil terreni commode querens, testis mihi est deus, cui nuda et aperta sunt omnia." F.W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönau* (Brünn: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercieuser-Orden 1884), 1.

that he did not change any of the content, a common scribal trope.<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth was the undisputed author of these texts.

The way in which Ekbert framed Elisabeth's visions encapsulates the main themes that this study will investigate. I will argue that the characteristics that Ekbert described above—dialogue, Latinity and authorial presence—were main components of twelfth-century intellectual culture. This argument by itself is nothing new. However, this study will offer a new assessment of the role of female visionaries in this culture. Twelfth-century intellectual culture has usually been associated with scholastic culture. This culture is “scholastic” because it has been studied as a product of the Northern French schools. These schools were considered reflective of a clerical, or male, intellectual outlook. After all, only men were able to complete their studies there. Very often, these men went on to posts in episcopal or secular courts. On the other hand, visionary writings have been increasingly associated with women, the vernacular and affective emotion. Thus, visionary writings and scholastic culture have not been considered as compatible in modern scholarship. As Ekbert's introduction notes, however, Elisabeth's visions included some of the very characteristics that have been deemed part of a scholastic, rather than a monastic, world.

In order to reassess how women who wrote in the visionary genre were part of what has been considered a clerical, male intellectual culture, I will need to consider the historiographical legacy of scholarship on twelfth-century intellectual culture. I will consider the points Ekbert's introduction raised, namely the role of dialogue, the use of Latin and the authority of an author.

---

<sup>2</sup> Kimberley Benedict, *Empowering Collaborations: Writing Partnerships between Religious Women and Scribes in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

To understand why Elisabeth's works previously have not been studied as part of this intellectual milieu, in what follows I will examine the current historiography on scholastic culture, its relation to the monastery, the role of visionary literature and the role of monastic reform.

Scholastic culture used Latin to express its ideas. Importantly, the monastery did the same. Although the ideal monastic existence was one of contemplation, the twelfth century witnessed numerous debates over the active and contemplative lives.<sup>3</sup> Neither, however, was entirely pure. Monks, especially abbots, were called upon to conduct many duties, including absences from the cloister to conduct business and worldly affairs. And when monks wrote polemical tracts characterizing schoolmen, they often remarked on their propensity for useless talk rather than divine contemplation.<sup>4</sup> In the end, however, both groups became involved with affairs of the world in order to answer the theological and spiritual questions of their day.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the similarities between monastic and scholastic cultures, the scholarship has emphasized the tensions between the two groups. In particular, the twelfth century has been seen as a watershed in the division. The appearance of schools centered on individual masters in Northern France in the twelfth century has been the key development in the story of the divide between the methods of learning in the monastery and outside it. Thus, learning, once divorced

---

<sup>3</sup> Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-141; and John Cotts, "Monks and Clerks in Search of the *Beata Schola*: Peter of Celle's Warning to John of Salisbury Reconsidered," in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*, eds. Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 255-78; and Jay T. Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg: Deeds into Words in the Twelfth Century* (Brill: Leiden, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> See Albert Derolez, ed., *Guiberti Gemblacensis Epistolae*, CCCM, vol. 66, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988-89), 229.

<sup>5</sup> Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001).

from the institution of the monastery, became something very different than when it was conducted within the cloister's walls.

The story of the schools and the changes to medieval intellectual culture that they brought has often been characterized as one of enmity between the monastery and these new scholars. Jean Leclercq has argued that the tensions between the monastery and the schools in fact stemmed from the different approaches that each took towards theological inquiry. Leclercq has asserted that there was a “monastic” and a “scholastic” method of theology.<sup>6</sup> The monastic method focused on experiential modes of knowing whereas the scholastic method used an analytic approach.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, these schools distanced themselves even further from the monasteries, coalescing into the University of Paris.<sup>8</sup>

The problem with this narrative of increasing separation between the monasteries and the schools is that it is based mainly on French evidence, focusing on polemical works. This bifurcated approach has been popular among scholars since Leclercq first proposed the division. In part, the division arose out of the attempt of twentieth-century scholars to accord monastic theological inquiry its proper place in the history of intellectual culture. However, it has created a stark divide that did not really exist.

---

<sup>6</sup> Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961).

<sup>7</sup> Jean Leclercq, “The Renewal of Theology,” in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 68-87.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and Their Critics, 1100-1215* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985).

Recently, a number of scholars have challenged Leclercq's assertions. Brian Noell has reassessed the French evidence. He has noted that the Cistercians in fact embraced scholastic methods for their own purposes. The fact that so many of their converts had once studied in the schools also affected the outlook of the Order.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Constant Mews has argued that the polemical debates between French monks and French scholars—the most famous being between Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard—was not representative of Western Europe. As Mews and others have shown, numerous monastic libraries in Germany contained scholastic texts.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the nature of the foundation of the University of Paris has also been questioned. Ian Wei has argued that the foundation documents demonstrate strong links to ideas in monastic exegetical works and the ideal of obedience, a major component of the Benedictine Rule.<sup>11</sup>

The evidence for intellectual exchange between the monastery and the schools does not simply rest on interest in similar texts. Recent work by Alex Novikoff has focused on the diffusion of scholastic culture, a major component of which was its use of disputation to solve problems. Novikoff has challenged the assumption that disputation was an exercise that was confined to school rooms. Instead, he has argued that the rise of the dialogue in the twelfth

---

<sup>9</sup> Brian Robert Noell, "Applied Science: Academic Learning and the Cistercian Enterprise in the Central Middle Ages" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006), 17-48

<sup>10</sup>Constant Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zweifalten and the Hirsau Reform," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 182-97, at 182-83; and Christina Lutter, "Christ's Educated Brides: Literacy, Spirituality, and Gender in Twelfth-Century Admont," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, ed. Alison I. Beach (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 204-205; and Julie Hotchin, "Women's Reading and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Library of the Nuns of Lippoldsberg," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture*, 139-190.

<sup>11</sup> Ian P. Wei, "From Twelfth-Century Schools to Thirteenth-Century Universities: The Disappearance of Biographical and Autobiographical Representations of Scholars," *Speculum* 86.1 (2011): 42-78.

century,<sup>12</sup> a literary convention that was also part of pedagogical practices within the monastery,<sup>13</sup> must be considered as part of a larger culture of disputation.<sup>14</sup> Disputation, broadly conceived, affected many facets of twelfth-century society, such as law and literature.<sup>15</sup> Thus, an element of scholastic culture that modern scholars have considered as a unique marker of the schools was in fact prevalent throughout twelfth-century society. Therefore, the question and answer format often associated with scholastic culture in fact was part of a larger cultural trend, one that originated in a monastic setting.

To return to Ekbert's introduction, we see that he emphasized the conversations that Elisabeth's visions produced. Here, Ekbert noted the dialogue into which Elisabeth entered, albeit within a visionary paradigm. This component was clearly an important aspect of her visionary writings, especially as Ekbert reflected upon the works when he gathered all of her texts together after her death into a complete collection.<sup>16</sup> The dialogic element of Elisabeth's texts has been noted by Anne Clark, but she did not characterize them as being akin to scholastic

---

<sup>12</sup> Sabina Flanagan, "The *Speculum virginum* and Traditions of Medieval Dialogue," in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001); and Peter von Moos, "Le dialogue latin au Moyen Âge: l'exemple d'Evrard d'Ypres," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 44.4 (1989): 993-1028.

<sup>13</sup> Alex Novikoff, "Anselm, Dialogue, and the Rise of Scholastic Disputation," *Speculum* 86.2 (2011): 387-418.

<sup>14</sup> Alex J. Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," *AHR* 117.2 (2012): 331-64.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Mary Campbell, "Sanctity and Identity: The Authentication of the Ursuline Relics and Legal Discourse in Elisabeth von Schönau's *Liber Revelationum*," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 38.2 (2012): 159-92.

<sup>16</sup> Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 138-9.

*quaestiones*.<sup>17</sup> I would argue, however, that Elisabeth's works are part of the same intellectual culture that produced this scholastic convention. Moreover, in light of recent studies that suggest the connection between monastic pedagogy, pedagogical trends in the schools, and the dialogue, we must see her works as intervening in this cultural moment.

The reason that Elisabeth's place in the Latin clerical culture of the twelfth century has not been recognized is in part due to the genre in which she wrote. Thus, Clark's biographical work on Elisabeth emphasized her role as a visionary.<sup>18</sup> This term is problematic because it often becomes conflated with mysticism. It also has become synonymous with femaleness. Because the intellectual milieu in the twelfth century was based on clerical culture, which has been characterized as Latinate and male, women who had visions have often been seen as creating a space outside this realm. Although scholars have noted that the women who produced these visionary writings were literate in Latin, the genre of their writings has been analyzed as a mode of critique against the dominant male intellectual culture, of which they were not a part.<sup>19</sup> This line of thinking affirms the monastic and scholastic divide, at least for women, that recent scholarship has begun to question.

---

<sup>17</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 68-100.

<sup>19</sup> Anne Clark-Bartlett, "Miraculous Literacy and Textual Communities in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*," *Mystics Quarterly* 18.2 (1992): 43-55; and Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching Against the Cathars," in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 163-81, at 177-78; and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, "Prophet and Reformer: 'Smoke in the Vineyard'," in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 70-90; and Elizabeth Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1986). Petroff claims that "In distinguishing their voices from those of educated men, the women writers assert that they have not studied how to express themselves; they are ignorant of rhetoric; they have not read any of their ideas in books." *Ibid.*, 27.

I would argue, however, that visionary literature is in fact part of this Latinate clerical culture, which it has often been seen to challenge. Ekbert's introduction to Elisabeth's texts emphasized their place in Latin textual culture. Scholars have often framed visionary texts within the paradigm of challenge in two ways. The first is the association of visionary activity with mysticism because of the emphasis on the individual cultivating a relationship with God rather than relying on intermediaries. Thus, according to this paradigm, visionary activity represented an implicit challenge to male Church officials as intermediaries of God. Yet, not all visionaries were mystics. Mysticism is classically defined as a union of the soul with God. Moreover, there were often ascetic and contemplative disciplines that aided the facilitation of this experience.<sup>20</sup> Not all visions were a direct experience of God. Moreover, modern scholarship has often focused on the erotic terminology used to describe this experience.<sup>21</sup> This type of language also offers a new conception of the relationship between the visionary and the divine. However, the association of visionary experience with personal, erotic encounters with the divine did not begin to characterize women's visions until the thirteenth century.<sup>22</sup> For Elisabeth, and others in the twelfth century, this paradigm does not hold true.

The second reason that scholars have not considered visionary literature as a part of clerical, Latinate culture is the association of women writers with the vernacular. Although the

---

<sup>20</sup> Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, trans. *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 17.

<sup>21</sup> Fiona Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Barbara Newman addressed how these motifs affected how Hildegard's male hagiographers characterized her. See, "Hildegard and her Hagiographers: The Remaking of Female Sainthood," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, ed. Catherine M. Mooney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): 16-34.

beginning of the thirteenth century did mark a shift in the use of the vernacular by women,<sup>23</sup> women in the twelfth century tended to use Latin. Moreover, the affective piety so often connected with holy women was not a characteristic of twelfth-century visionaries, Elisabeth included.<sup>24</sup> In the twelfth century, women in monasteries who were very much accustomed to Latin texts took part in traditional liturgical celebrations.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, the association of visionaries with vernacular texts, affective relationships with the divine, and a spirituality that took place outside religious orders has shaped the perception of visionary women as outsiders to traditional clerical culture.

The qualities that Ekbert's introduction to Elisabeth's works emphasized, however, were qualities that were associated with scholastic culture. Nonetheless, it is clear that the visionary genre that Elisabeth used was not popular within the schools. This does not mean that visionary literature was not influenced by the larger societal trends. Although visionary literature was a staple medieval genre, its content and characteristics did not remain stable. In particular, Peter Dinzelbacher has noted that during the High Middle Ages, the genre began to experience marked

---

<sup>23</sup> See Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steve Rowan (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995), 187-202; and Sara Poor, *Mechthild of Magdeburg and Her Book* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> See generally, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); and Mary Suydam, "Visionaries in the Public Eye: Beguine Literature as Performance," in *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries*, eds. Ellen Kittell and Mary Suydam (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Hart and Bishop, *Scivias*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Jan Gerchow, Katrinette Bodarwé, Susan Marti and Hedwig Röckelein, "Early Monasteries and Foundations (500-1200): An Introduction," in *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, eds. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Mart, trans. Dietlinde Hamburger (NY: Columbia University Press, 2006).

change from its earlier forms.<sup>26</sup> Two significant changes took place. First, visionaries began to tell their readers that they sought out their visions through meditation.<sup>27</sup> Thus, visions were no longer necessarily epiphanic events or dream occurrences. This change signaled a shift in the way that contemporaries thought about visions. Cultivation meant that visions were becoming a form of theological thinking.<sup>28</sup>

Another change in the representation of visionary experience is the shift to a reliance on dialogic elements rather than visual ones.<sup>29</sup> Dinzelbacher noted that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, numerous social and cultural changes likely prompted this shift. Although he mentioned the increasing importance of rational, or scholastic, thought, he emphasized the role of the individual and the emergence of love poetry in particular.<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Petroff has also focused on these two cultural aspects in her study of medieval visionary women. Petroff has argued that the dialogue format that became popular in visions was part of a method for developing a colloquial exchange between a human and a divine voice. But, she contextualizes this exchange as part of a mystic union.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, much of her evidence was from the later

---

<sup>26</sup> Peter Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981), 233-259. For a study on visionary use in the Early Middle Ages, see Isabel Moreira, *Dreams Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Peter Dinzelbacher, "La littérature des révélations au Moyen Âge: un document historique," *Revue Historique* 275.2 (1986): 289-305, at 296.

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 291-304.

<sup>29</sup> Dinzelbacher, *Vision*, 163; and Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, 23-5.

<sup>30</sup> Dinzelbacher, *Vision*, 243-50. For an assessment of twelfth-century ideas of the individual, see John F. Benton, "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 263-98.

Middle Ages. Thus, Petroff emphasizes the role of divine love in dialogue as a crucial component of autobiographical writing for women visionaries.<sup>32</sup>

However, I will argue that in Elisabeth's writings, the emphasis is not on divine union. Instead, she presents her dialogues as engaged with diverse characters. Hers was not an effort to cultivate a personal relationship with God. Rather, Elisabeth's dialogues often took place outside her visions, but were vitally important to resolve theological or spiritual problems considered in her visions. Elisabeth sought to use dialogue much in the manner that schoolmen did—to resolve questions. Thus, in this study, I argue that this dialogic shift within visionary literature was in fact connected to the popularity of the literary dialogue within scholastic culture and the proliferation of disputation as a method to resolve debates. Elisabeth's visionary literature must not be evaluated for the ways in which it operated as a sub-set of male intellectual culture, but as a participant in this very milieu.

Elisabeth's participation in contemporary intellectual culture was also premised on her role as the author of her works. In his introduction, Ekbert used a common scribal trope swearing that he did not alter the author's message in any way. The validity of Ekbert's statement has been a subject of debate among contemporary scholars. F.W.E. Roth edited Elisabeth's works in 1884. Although Roth brought Elisabeth's texts to a wider modern audience, he also noted his skepticism about her ability to compose all of these works. Kurt Köster, who did much work to trace the medieval diffusion of Elisabeth's manuscripts, also argued much the

---

<sup>31</sup> Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, 23-34.

<sup>32</sup> Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, 25.

same as Roth. In both of their views, any of Elisabeth's texts that seemed too learned must have been written by Ekbert, her brother, scribe and Paris-educated cleric.<sup>33</sup>

In Clark's more recent assessments of Elisabeth, she has suggested a collaborative approach between Ekbert and Elisabeth. She has argued that Ekbert likely did influence some of Elisabeth's texts, but that this influence simply allowed Elisabeth the opportunity to take up a range of subjects that she may not have initially considered.<sup>34</sup> Recently scholars have also argued that Ekbert himself benefitted from this relationship in part because of Elisabeth's caché as a spiritual woman.<sup>35</sup>

However, two factors that have been less studied by scholars must also be taken into account if we are to assess the validity of Ekbert's claim. First, the circulation of Elisabeth's works demonstrates her popularity. Elisabeth, although less studied and acclaimed by modern scholars than her contemporary friend and visionary Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), was no marginal figure. At least 145 manuscripts are extant from the twelfth through fifteenth centuries that contain her works. Moreover, as this manuscript evidence demonstrates, various religious orders, both sexes and many different geographic regions read Elisabeth's works and attributed

---

<sup>33</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, cix-xc; and Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönau: Leben, Persönlichkeit und visionäres Werk," in *Schönauer Elisabeth Jubiläum 1965: Festschrift anlässlich des achthundertjährigen Todestages der heiligen Elisabeth von Schönau* (Limburg: Pallottiner Druckerei, 1965), 17-46.

<sup>34</sup> See Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); "Holy Woman or Unworthy Vessel? The Representations of Elisabeth of Schönau," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, ed. Catherine M. Mooney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 35-51; and "Repression or Collaboration? The Case of Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schönau," in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 151-67.

<sup>35</sup> John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 25-44. See also, Kimberley Benedict, *Empowering Collaborations*.

these works to her specifically. Moreover, Elisabeth's works enjoyed more popularity than Hildegard's among her contemporaries.<sup>36</sup> This is an important fact. As Sara Poor has demonstrated, not all texts that were authored by women circulated with their names attached to them. In particular, Poor notes the confusion over a thirteenth-century German author, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and her texts.<sup>37</sup> That Elisabeth's readers' knew these texts to be hers support Ekbert's introductory claims. The question becomes not whether or not Elisabeth's works were received and read, that answer is abundantly clear, but rather why her works circulated across such a vast swath of Western Europe.

Scholars have noted Elisabeth's popularity, and the circulation of her texts to diverse areas, but have usually associated it with her involvement in the discovery of new relics associated with St. Ursula.<sup>38</sup> They have also argued that she reflected new trends in feminine spirituality.<sup>39</sup> However, I will argue that the vast dispersal of her works was also due to her participation in the Hirsau reform movement. This is the second point that must be taken into account as to why Ekbert's claims about Elisabeth's authorship must be taken seriously. This particular reform group emphasized education for both its men and women religious, affording nuns like Elisabeth a chance to intervene in learned theological and spiritual debates.

---

<sup>36</sup> See Barbara Newman, "Preface," in *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works*, trans. Anne L. Clark (NY: Paulist Press, 2000), xi. Here, Newman notes that Elisabeth's works survive in more copies than the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg and Julian of Norwich combined. See also Newman, "Introduction," in *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (NY: Paulist Press, 1990), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Sara S. Poor, *Mechthild of Magdeburg and Her Book: Gender and the Making of Textual Authority* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>38</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 48-9.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 133-5.

Religious reform played an important social and cultural role in twelfth-century Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Not all areas of Europe were influenced by the same reform groups. Moreover, reform was not a monolithic concept. In Germany there were multiple reform movements, but the one that gained the most traction in the latter part of the eleventh century and into the twelfth was the one led by Abbot William of Hirsau (1026-1091),<sup>41</sup> who was influenced by the Cluniac model of reform. Although Hirsau reform had some Cluniac characteristics, it was the product of its German environment.<sup>42</sup>

The Hirsau monasteries remained independent and were merely associated in a loose network of cloisters with similar concerns. Indeed, the local needs of the monastery were not infringed upon. Initially, members of Hirsau reform were interested in Gregorian reform, focusing on institutional renewal.<sup>43</sup> There was an emphasis for the monks to elect their own abbot rather than accept the installation of one by a noble patron.<sup>44</sup> However, the monasteries were also bound by the constitutions put forth by William, which created a connection between each individual cloister to a larger monastic network. Through their personal charisma as leaders

---

<sup>40</sup> See Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>41</sup> The Gorze Reform Movement held sway in the same region during the late tenth through the mid-eleventh centuries, but for the purpose of this study, the influence of the Hirsau movement is most relevant. See T.J.H. McCarthy, *Music, Scholasticism and Reform: Salian Germany, 1024-1125* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 11-15.

<sup>42</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 196.

<sup>43</sup> Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs*, 191-213; McCarthy, *Music*, 11-54; Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture," 183-84; and Ellen Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters: Visions and the Rhetoric of Reform in the *Liber visionum* of Otloh of St. Emmeram," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture*, 82-3.

<sup>44</sup> Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs*, 197. However, the power of local dynastic families was never completely eschewed, and in the latter eleventh century (post 1085) they were able to provide protection for reformed monasteries while still exercising a modicum of control. *Ibid.*, 210-213.

William, as well as other influential abbots of the late eleventh century, ensured the success of the individual cloisters and their association with the larger reform group.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Hirsau monastic reform did not look to homogenize the cloisters that organized under its framework, but rather, sought to cultivate a network of monasteries that was connected through and interested in larger reform practices. Although they shared common interests, the communities remained autonomous institutions supported by local families with local concerns.

The leaders of Hirsau reform were educated. They received a classical education based on ancient pedagogical techniques.<sup>46</sup> Whether the education took place within a cathedral or monastic school did not matter, as both classrooms would have prepared their pupils for secular as well as monastic duties.<sup>47</sup> Stephen Jaeger has characterized this type of education as a practical, humanistic learning that prepared its students for active service in the courts, both secular and episcopal.<sup>48</sup> He argues that monastic schools taught letters, but that the cathedral schools also emphasized “mores,” an important component for students engaged in the affairs of the Empire.<sup>49</sup> In this model, education emphasized the development of the individual for active

---

<sup>45</sup> Urban Küsters, *Der Verschlössene Garten: Volkssprachliche Hohelied-Auslegung und monastische Lebensform im 12. Jahrhundert* (Dusseldorf: Droste, 1985), 75.

<sup>46</sup> See Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 36.

<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of the South German network, see McCarthy, *Music*, 11-52; and Joyce, “Speaking of Spiritual Matters,” 77-83.

<sup>48</sup> C. Stephen Jaeger, “Cathedral Schools and Humanist Learning, 950-1150” in *Scholars and Courtiers: Intellectuals and Society in the Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), I, 575 and generally, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

<sup>49</sup> Jaeger, “Cathedral Schools,” I, 580.

service in public life.<sup>50</sup> In part, Jaeger's work provides a response to the criticism that Germany in some ways lagged behind the educational developments of France at the same time.<sup>51</sup> Although most scholarship has focused on the scholastic nature of education in twelfth-century France, the German-speaking areas had a vibrant school culture a century earlier.<sup>52</sup>

It is also clear that the monasteries were part of the German vanguard in educational practices. Monks who were educated in monastic schools and operated within the reform networks were also focused on a sort of public service, albeit in the name of reform. Moreover, these reform cloisters not only followed their charismatic reform leaders but also maintained impressive libraries that contained texts focused on classical learning as well as newer scholastic works from France.<sup>53</sup>

In short, these eleventh-century monastic reformers were participants in the Latin clerical culture that characterized the intellectual milieu in Germany as well as in France. Moreover, many of the reform concerns put forth by the Hirsau group were crafted into literary texts and circulated within the network of reform-minded monasteries.<sup>54</sup> Thus, these reform centers and

---

<sup>50</sup> Jaeger, "Cathedral Schools," I, 591.

<sup>51</sup> See also Rodney Thomson, "The Place of Germany in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture*, 19-42.

<sup>52</sup> Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*. The Regensburg codex is an example of a more scholastic interest at this time. See also the Regensburg letters, which demonstrates the scholastic nature of education in this period. Regensburg Brief, in *Briefsammlungen zur Zeit Heinrichs IV*, ed. Norbert Fickermann, MGH Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit 5 (Weimar, 1950), 274-368.

<sup>53</sup> For the library holdings of these monasteries, see McCarthy, *Music*, 110-113; Constant Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture Revisited," 186-91; Julie Hotchin, "Women's Reading and Monastic Reform," 139-190.

<sup>54</sup> For his study on texts and their use by specific communities, see Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

their leaders not only advocated for reform through their connections—both lay and ecclesiastical—but also through their written works. As Ellen Joyce has demonstrated, Hirsau reform culture harnessed the stories, gossip and news that circulated throughout the monastic networks of Germany in order to advocate for a reform agenda. Included in this oral culture were stories of visionary experiences. However, once these visionary stories were textualized, they became important tools for critiquing various church authorities and praising reform actions.<sup>55</sup>

Elisabeth's formation at Schönaue, a Hirsau-reformed cloister, inculcated her participation in such educated monastic networks. Thus, Ekbert's assertion that the ideas in Elisabeth's texts represented her own view seems valid in this reform context. Moreover, in her recent work on Herrad of Hohenbourg, Fiona Griffiths has argued how the German reform movement, with its emphasis on education for women, encouraged female cloisters to participate in scholastic culture. Herrad herself integrated scholastic texts into a monastic environment with her work, the *Hortus deliciarum*.<sup>56</sup> Griffiths's study, then, demonstrates how involvement in reform movements aided women's access to and interest in scholastic works. In addition, it offers a glimpse into the ways in which female cloisters synthesized scholastic learning rather than eschewing it.

In her study, Griffiths aims to correct what she sees as an oversight in scholarship on literate women in the twelfth century. She has argued that the focus among historians has been

---

<sup>55</sup> Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters," 73.

<sup>56</sup> Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights*.

on visionary women and their spirituality.<sup>57</sup> Although I agree with Griffiths to some extent, visionary women still require more scholarship. As I will argue in this dissertation, scholars need to reorient their work and focus on visionary women as participants in twelfth-century intellectual culture that produced scholastic works. Griffiths's study demonstrated that literate women who were part of the reform movement used scholastic works to further their reform goals. In much the same way, Elisabeth's visionary works tackled reform concerns. And education, as we have seen, was an important component of reform.

In order to assess how Elisabeth's visionary literature demonstrates her participation in and contribution to twelfth-century intellectual culture, I will consider the entire corpus of her works throughout this study. She composed six texts. They are her *Liber visionum primus*, *secundus* and *tercius*; her *Liber viarum Dei*; her *Revelatio de sacro exercitu virginum Coloniensium*; and her *Visio de resurrectione beatae virginis Marie*. In addition to these six works, Elisabeth also entered into twenty-two epistolary correspondences with other reform communities.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights*, 223. See also, Jeffrey Hamburger, "Introduction: Histories of Female Monasticism," in *Crown and Veil*, 8-9.

<sup>58</sup> F.W.E. Roth edited all of Elisabeth's works. See Roth, *Visionen*. See also his "Aus einer Handschrift der Schriften der heil. Elisabeth von Schönau," in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 36 (1911): 219-25. For analyses of the manuscript transmissions of Elisabeth's writings, see Ruth Dean, "Elisabeth, Abbess of Schönau, and Roger of Ford," *Modern Philology* 41 (1944): 209-20; Dean, "Manuscripts of St. Elizabeth of Schönau in England," in *Modern Language Review* 32 (1937): 62-71; Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönau: Werk und Wirkung im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen handschriftlichen Überlieferung," in *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951): 243-315; and Clark, "Appendix," in *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 137-45. For an English translation of Elisabeth's complete corpus of works, see Clark, *The Complete Works*. Clark's text provides alternate readings of Elisabeth's texts based on manuscripts that were not available to Roth when he first edited her works.

Elisabeth's visionary books (*Liber visionum primus*, *secundus* and *tercius*) follow similar formats, albeit with some slight differences. Each of them treats various spiritual or theological problems. In many cases, members of the religious community provided Elisabeth with questions to take into her visions. However, Elisabeth also described some visual images in these works. She mentioned the specific places that her angelic guide, her main spiritual figure, took her when in this state. In these books, Elisabeth also entered into conversations with other celestial figures, such as John the Baptist, Gregory the Great and Mary. Although these texts do not have a single theme which they examine, the theological and spiritual messages within them comport with Elisabeth's thematic works. They also tackle theological issues that other contemporary theologians deemed important.

Elisabeth's *Liber viarum dei* depicted conversations between Elisabeth and her angelic guide. The angel gave Elisabeth sermons about the various paths to God. These sermons considered religious orders, clerics, married people and even children. Elisabeth and her angel entered into a series of conversations about how members of each group should best reach God. The paths for the various groups differed. Elisabeth described them in detail, including the difficult terrain that covered some of the trails, but which all led to the peak of a mountain. Notably, Elisabeth mentioned that she became inspired to compose this text after a visit to Hildegard of Bingen in 1156. Thus, this work has often been considered in some ways similar to Hildegard's *Scivias*.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 34.

The *Revelatio* was one of Elisabeth's most famous works. In this text, Elisabeth investigated a discovery of ancient bones outside of Cologne. Inscribed on the bones were markings that seemed to indicate that these were not ordinary human remains, but the martyrs associated with St. Ursula and her troupe of 10,000 virgins. Elisabeth's role in this discovery was to confirm the validity of these relics. There were some doubts about whether these bones really were associated with St. Ursula because remains of both men and women were found at the grave site. In the widely known legend, St. Ursula only traveled with other women. Elisabeth's visionary text depicts the conversations that she had with members of the virginal troupe, as well as her angelic guide, as she compared what the written tradition stated about the martyrdom and what the discovery of the bones suggested.

Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* also circulated widely. This text is very short, but in it, Elisabeth attempted to clear up the doubt surrounding the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven. Through conversations with both her angelic guide and Mary, Elisabeth discovered that Mary was resurrected forty days after her death and then bodily assumed into heaven. This work also put forth a new date for the Feast of the Assumption. Although Elisabeth expressed the most hesitancy about publishing this work, it soon became one of her most popular texts.

Because visionary literature has been considered as a sub-category of intellectual culture in the twelfth century, I will begin my study focusing on Elisabeth's visionary method. Chapter One examines Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* not as a piece of autobiographical spirituality, but as part of a concerted effort to train religious in the rigors of reform life. I will assess Elisabeth's description of her visionary experiences in light of new conceptions of the role of

visions in the twelfth century as cultivated rather than epiphanic events. To do this, I consider how the memorial arts influenced the composition of Elisabeth's work, offering comparisons to twelfth-century works composed by men. Thus, Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* did not capture her unique feminine spirituality, but rather her participation in the composition and publication of a work of monastic formation.

I argue in Chapter Two that Elisabeth's use of dialogic conventions demonstrated her participation in the proliferation of school culture in the twelfth century. Moreover, I show that Elisabeth employed the dialogue within her texts to critique and dispute those critical of her and the publication of her works. I consider how the literary convention of the dialogue used conversations between masters and teachers to make its arguments. In particular, I examine how Elisabeth portrayed herself and her angelic guide in these roles, comparing her depiction to those of contemporary school masters. In this way, Elisabeth asserted her authority to enter public debates as one based on her role as a teacher rather than simply on her role as a visionary.

In Chapter Three, I argue that Elisabeth's texts engaged in polemical writing that criticized negligent clerics and heretics in order to promote reform. Here, I compare her polemics to those of her contemporary reformers, especially Hildegard of Bingen and Ekbert of Schönau. Through this comparison, I demonstrate how Elisabeth advocated for an education premised on contemporary scholastic practices in order to ameliorate the problems caused by unreformed clerics and heretics. Moreover, I assess how Elisabeth embraced components of the active and the contemplative life in order to promote reform among members who adhered to both types of religious practice. Elisabeth's call to the clergy to become educated participants in

reform asked them to join her on the path that she had chosen, one that merged reform and learning.

Finally, in Chapter Four I study the paradox of novelty and tradition in Elisabeth's texts. Here, I assess how her novel ideas about Mary's Assumption allowed contemporary readers to codify apocryphal traditions about Mary into accepted devotional practice. Moreover, in all of Elisabeth's texts, she sought to provide clear answers to spiritual and theological questions. Elisabeth's writings helped her readers clarify and resolve the relationship between ideas of novelty, monastic reform and twelfth-century intellectual culture. I argue that it is for this reason that her works achieved circulation across most of Western Europe.

The relationship between traditional modes of thinking and living the religious life and the new forms emerging in the twelfth century was not straight-forward. Elisabeth's works demonstrate how difficult it is to categorize the men and women who participated in this dynamic culture. Yet, her texts also show that they are more than just visionary literature. A close reading reveals that they bear all the hallmarks of the reform groups, the schools, and the twelfth-century society of which they were part.

## Chapter One

### Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*: Visionary Experience, Reform Literature and Memorial Culture

The first text Elisabeth produced was her *Liber visionum primus*. This piece, like all of her subsequent writings, was in the visionary genre. In it, Elisabeth detailed her earliest visionary experiences from 1152-54, highlighting her personal encounters with both demonic and divine beings. This emphasis on otherworldly figures has led modern scholars to study how Elisabeth's personal visionary experiences demonstrated female participation in the spiritual and devotional culture of the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, scholars have usually assessed the *Liber visionum primus* as capturing Elisabeth's most authentic voice because it represented experiences before Ekbert, her brother, scribe and publisher, arrived permanently at Schönaue in 1155.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, however, I will argue that Elisabeth's first visionary work neither represented her personal voice nor a distinctly feminine outlook. Rather, I will analyze how Elisabeth crafted this work in order to address the process of monastic formation in a reform cloister.

In order to consider how Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* operated within a genre of reform works, I will consider three cultural and social factors that influenced Elisabeth's composition. First, I will assess Elisabeth's description of her visionary experiences in light of new conceptions of the role of visions in the twelfth century. As Peter Dinzelbacher has

---

<sup>1</sup> Anne Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönaue: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönaue*, 55.

demonstrated, the visionary genre was a highly flexible one.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed new trends in the ways in which authors communicated visions in texts from those found in the early Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup> In particular, Dinzelbacher notes that visionary authors now made it clear that they sought their visions. Earlier forms of this genre had presented visions as sudden events. Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* demonstrates this new trend of cultivation. As I will argue, this is significant because Elisabeth was able to engage in memory-work. The memorial arts was a learned practice that allowed authors to recollect other texts that they had heard or read in order to craft new books. This practice involved cultivating visual images through deep concentration, involving both mental and physical engagement to work through a specific thought.<sup>5</sup> I will assess how Elisabeth used this specific rhetorical tool in order to craft carefully conceived messages that she cultivated through visionary activity.

Second, I will analyze the importance of the growing reform movements during the twelfth century. The popularity of the religious life among all levels of society led to the increase in new converts and in the proliferation of new (often more strict) monastic rules.<sup>6</sup> Due to the increase in adult converts, the process of monastic formation was an important topic for

---

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dinzelbacher often uses Elisabeth as his example to demonstrate the various ways in which visions could be formulated and experienced. *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981), 37, 85, 163, 238, 241.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Dinzelbacher, "La littérature des révélations au Moyen Âge: un document historique," *Revue Historique* 275, no. 2 (1986): 289-305, at 294. See also Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 136-68.

<sup>5</sup> See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 75-6.

<sup>6</sup> See generally Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

twelfth-century writers. Adults had to learn how to be monks and nuns because they were not raised as them. Hirsau reform, which Elisabeth's cloister, Schönau, participated in, promoted texts that discussed monastic formation and reform goals. Moreover, Hirsau reformers emphasized education in order to achieve correct religious practice, thus linking reform ideals to contemporary intellectual culture. Other works coming from this reform milieu in the mid-twelfth century, such as the *Speculum virginum*, also demonstrate an affinity to contemporary scholarly practices,<sup>7</sup> such as the use of the dialogue.<sup>8</sup> In addition, members involved with Hirsau reform also wrote in the visionary genre to promote reform culture. Thus, Elisabeth's own visionary texts operated in an environment that embraced both twelfth-century intellectual culture and visions for communicating ideas of reform life.

And, finally, I will explore how Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* acted to strengthen education and reform within Schönau, providing the community with a strong reform identity. Literature on monastic formation stressed how to learn to focus the mind for spiritual work. This was a component of monastic education, but it was not an easy task. Elisabeth's struggle to form her mind to the rigors of monastic thought served as a model for other monks and nuns seeking to mold their lives to the reform cloister's demands. Thus, Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* served to textualize the inner process of personal reform while her visionary activity served outwardly to memorialize it for the institutional life of the community.

---

<sup>7</sup> See Sabina Flanagan, "The *Speculum virginum* and Traditions of Medieval Dialogue," in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant Mews (NY: Palgrave, 2001), 181-200.

<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth's use of the dialogue will be considered more fully in Chapter Two.

### *Elisabeth's Introduction: Explaining the Visionary Process*

Elisabeth explained her writing technique in the introduction that served both the *Liber visionum primus* as well as the complete corpus of her works. What is noteworthy about Elisabeth's descriptions is that the first two chapters of her text emphasized incidents that occurred in a non-visionary state. Thus, Elisabeth signaled to her audience that for the most part her visions, even if sometimes presented as epiphanic experiences, were in fact cultivated events.<sup>9</sup> In this section, I will consider how Elisabeth's cultivation of her visions demonstrated her participation in the memorial arts. Moreover, I will also assess how Elisabeth's use of memory-work was linked to the act of reading, by her and by others, which served as the basis for producing new works.

In her introduction, Elisabeth told her readers that she “was often overwhelmed by such great sickness that I could not control any of my limbs except my tongue, and I say this without arrogance, I continued no less attentive in ruminating on the psalms. But when paralysis subdued even my tongue, I supplied the duty of my tongue with my mind.”<sup>10</sup> Although Elisabeth's explanation appears to be full of contradictions, it sets out two important elements for assessing how her visions operated. First, Elisabeth endured sickness when she had visions.

---

<sup>9</sup> See Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 300.

<sup>10</sup> “Cumque sepe tanto languor obruerer, ut nullius membri, excepta lingua, compos essem, sine arrogantia dixerim, non minus in psalmis ruminandis sedula permanebam. Sed cum et linguam paralis michi subduceret, lingue officium mente supplevi.” F.W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönbach* (Brünn: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercienser-Orden 1884), 3.

Moreover, this sickness manifested itself in very physical ways, such as paralysis. Secondly, Elisabeth emphasized her rumination. This activity was an integral component to monastic reading practices. Moreover, rumination linked the physical activity of reading aloud to mental exertion.<sup>11</sup> These seemingly contradictory statements demonstrate that Elisabeth conceived her mental activity to be the same as physical activity. She linked the outward signs of physical struggle to the activity that occurred within her mind. In addition, Elisabeth compared the movement of her tongue, which was indicative of speech, to the processes that were occurring within her mind, thus likening her thought process to dialogue.<sup>12</sup>

Elisabeth's self-dialogue is important in the context of how she used the memorial arts for composing her texts, specifically how physical ailments were linked to this act. Notably, her self-dialogue, marked by her statements indicating her thought process,<sup>13</sup> functioned as a way to express her anxiety over doubts that she had about her religion and her vocation. Thus, Elisabeth noted that she

pondered our Redeemer with doubt, saying to myself, 'Who was He that so humbled Himself for humankind? Is it possible that everything that was written about Him is true?' Then I turned around and said, 'Nevertheless He was good—whoever He was—

---

<sup>11</sup> See Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catherine Misrashi (NY: Fordham University Press, 1982), 16, 72-3.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Petroff notes that many female visionary writers engaged in a self-dialogue; however, Elisabeth eventually used these dialogic elements not only to engage in self-dialogue but also in conversations with others. Petroff conceives of these conversations as part of mystical union, something which Elisabeth's works do not describe. The specific ways in which she uses this convention will be considered in chapter two. See Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), 23-4.

<sup>13</sup> "Iterum recogitans ac mecum ammirans..." Roth, *Visionen*, 4.

about whom so many good things are preached.’ Similarly, I was thinking skeptically about our blessed advocate Mary when the sisters were celebrating her memory.<sup>14</sup>

Elisabeth’s anxious condition led to her inability to eat or drink.<sup>15</sup> These physical ailments were not unique to Elisabeth. Visionaries commonly linked their state of sickness to their visionary production.<sup>16</sup> And, for many of them, the act of writing about or otherwise publicizing their messages alleviated these problems.<sup>17</sup> Elisabeth was no different in that sense, noting that when she “had decided to hide in my heart these things, which were shown to me by the Lord, such a great torment seized my chest that I thought myself close to death. But whenever I revealed what I had seen to those around me, I was immediately relieved.”<sup>18</sup>

However, these physical characteristics were not simply part of a visionary experience. Rather, they were part of tradition of crafting compositions. Mary Carruthers has noted the importance of the memorial arts for the intellectual culture of the Middle Ages in both the monastery and in the school room. In the Middle Ages, memory did not signify rote memorization. Rather, it was a skill that allowed authors to read and remember the content of

---

<sup>14</sup> “...ita ut de redemptore nostro dubie cogitarem. Dicens intra me: Quisnam ille fuit, qui tantum se humiliavit propter homines? Nunquid vera esse potuerunt omnia, que scripta sunt de illo? Verti me alio et dixi: Bonus tamen erat ille, quisquis fuit, de quo tot bona predicantur. De beata advocata nostra similiter dubie cogitabam, cum eius memoriam agerent sorores.” Roth, *Visionen*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> “Cibum et potum pre tedio sumere non potui nisi tenuissime, et ibam deficiens et tabescens toto corpora.” Roth, *Visionen*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Petroff, *Medieval Women’s*, 37-44.

<sup>17</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (NY: Paulist Press, 1990), 60; and Petroff, *Medieval Women’s*, 42-44.

<sup>18</sup> “Accidit aliquociens, cum in corde me posuissem celare ea, que ostensa mihi erant a domino, tanta precordiorum tortura me arripi, ut morti proximam me existimarem. At ubi his, qui erant circa me, quid vidissem, aperui, continuo alleviata sum.” Roth, *Visionen*, 3.

the texts. In addition, the memory operated as the storehouse for this information from which to draw on to create new texts.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, in order to produce a new work, an author had to have read many other texts. Elisabeth's description of her anxiety and physical ailments that surrounded her visions was in fact part of her process of composition, which involved the meditative practice of remembering. This is clear from her assertions that publication, written or oral, alleviated these symptoms.

Carruthers's work on the use of the memory arts in medieval culture has demonstrated how memory was considered the tool *par excellence* for medieval compositions. Importantly, the practices used to prepare the memory for working out compositions have been characterized as affective. As Carruthers has noted, these affective aspects have often been considered the hallmarks of more spiritual, rather than intellectual, pursuits.<sup>20</sup> She argues, however, that affective behavior was not simply a sign of spirituality but was linked to the physical nature of memory-work. These physical, affective components were simply manifestations of that mental exertion.<sup>21</sup> Carruthers has focused on the way in which male thinkers utilized these techniques, such as the late-eleventh and twelfth-century authors Anselm of Canterbury and Hugh of St. Victor.<sup>22</sup> As we have seen above, Elisabeth described her process as including both mental and

---

<sup>19</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 8-19.

<sup>20</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 5-6; and Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 68.

<sup>22</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 199-200, 233.

physical exertion. I will now consider how Anselm described how he arrived at his ideas for his works in order to provide a comparison to Elisabeth's experience.

Anselm did not provide his own description of his composition process. But, his fellow monk, Eadmer, did when he composed the *Vita Anselmi*. Eadmer's account of how Anselm worked through a thought before he composed his texts provides a unique glimpse at this process. Because this process was a routine part of writing habits, it was not often recorded.<sup>23</sup> According to Eadmer's account, the composition of Anselm's scholastic work the *Proslogion* was physically taxing. This process "took away his desire for food, drink and sleep" and

it disturbed the attention which he ought to have paid to matins and to Divine service at other times. When he was aware of this, and still could not entirely lay hold on what he sought, he supposed that this line of thought was a temptation of the devil and he tried to banish it from his mind. But the more vehemently he tried to do this, the more this thought pursued him. Then suddenly one night during matins the grace of God illuminated his heart, the whole matter became clear to his mind, and a great joy and exultation filled his inmost being. Thinking therefore that others also would be glad to know what he had found, immediately and ungrudgingly he wrote it on writing-tablets and gave it to one of the brethren of the monastery for safe-keeping.<sup>24</sup>

Eadmer clearly linked Anselm's discomfort with his composition process. Thinking of the idea caused these physical symptoms, but communicating that idea to others alleviated these problems.

---

<sup>23</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 246.

<sup>24</sup> Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm: Archbishop of Canterbury*, trans. and ed. Richard Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 29-30.

Elisabeth's description of her sufferings was no different than Anselm's. Elisabeth did not write down her own visions but employed her sisters or her brother Ekbert as scribes, a common practice. Thus, telling others about what she saw in her visions allowed her to compose her works and put her thoughts down on the page. Like Anselm, the process was debilitating and she "could only take but the slightest food and drink" and "became weak and [her] whole body wasted away."<sup>25</sup> And, as we will see in the next section, the devil and his temptations also played a key role in the construction of Elisabeth's text.

Afflictions, of the body and of the mind, beset male and female thinkers alike. Anneke Mulder-Baker has noted the parallels between the way in which Anselm composed his learned treatises and the way in which women mystics wrote their works.<sup>26</sup> That Elisabeth mentioned her bodily sickness was not simply a peculiarity to her visionary process. The similarities between the methods of what Mulder-Baker terms "women mystics" and Anselm lie in the affective nature of the writing process that were described in both types of texts. Men who did not write in the visionary genre described visionary experiences as part of the process of composing their works. That is, memory-work when used for composing a piece of writing contained a physical component, one that Carruthers has described as "affective."<sup>27</sup> When this affective process is part of a woman's method of composition, modern scholars tend to conflate

---

<sup>25</sup>Roth, *Visionen*, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Anneke Mulder-Bakker, "The Metamorphosis of Woman: Transmission of Knowledge and the Problems of Gender," in *Gendering the Middle Ages*, eds. Pauline Stafford and Anneke Mulder-Bakker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 119.

<sup>27</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 75.

the definitions of mystic and visionary.<sup>28</sup> Whereas mysticism implies a union with God, often couched in erotic terms, visionary experience does not. Both types of experience, however, may include affective elements. In fact, the language of visionaries often indicates an effort at understanding a problem in some way,<sup>29</sup> rather than becoming linked with God, much like Anselm's impetus for working through his thoughts.

Thus, scholars have not categorized Anselm as a mystic due to the affective characteristics of his compositional methods. On the other hand, medieval women who described similar experiences have not received the same treatment.<sup>30</sup> Whereas men who participated in theological inquiry in the twelfth century have been defined based on the reception and content of their works, women have been judged based on their process of composition. As we have seen above with the comparison of Elisabeth and Anselm's affective writing processes, perhaps the distinction is invalid.

At the heart of the difference that seems to exist between what Anselm produced as his texts and what Elisabeth published as hers is the format of the message. Authors who employed the visionary genre emphasized the act of composing as part of the act of receiving a vision. Thus, the compositional process became conflated with and linked to the content of the work. Although Carruthers's has noted that descriptions of composition are rare, that may be because she did not evaluate the visionary genre as a format that integrated process with content. This

---

<sup>28</sup> See Hart, "Introduction," in *Scivias*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Barbara Newman, "What does it mean to say 'I saw?': The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture," *Speculum* 80, 1 (2005): 1-43, at 14.

<sup>30</sup> Mulder-Bakker, "The Metamorphosis of Woman," 123. "It is modern scholarship that rationalized scholastic thought of men and mysticised feminine thinking." Ibid.

elaboration of the compositional process had not always been part of the visionary genre, but began to mark the literature in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The integration of a learned technique with a genre that had both a theological and spiritual message may reflect the burgeoning reform and intellectual activity that peaked at this same time.

Barbara Newman recently has described visionary cultivation as a category of theological thought called “imaginative theology.”<sup>31</sup> She notes that epiphanic visions can be described as being mysterious and unexpected, but their meaning can be discovered through meditation, theological reflection or exegetical practices.<sup>32</sup> Newman notes that these epiphanic visions represent a creative process because a “great deal of thought, prayer, conversation, reading, and revision most likely intervened.”<sup>33</sup> A vision that once was an epiphany becomes an image which can be cultivated and explored in different ways.

Newman’s imaginative theology links the cultivation of visionary images to theological thought, which was an inward mental activity. However, Newman’s analysis does not account for the physical experience associated with the thought process. Anselm described visionary experience without claiming to have had visions. He described affective aspects that aided in the production of scholastic works exploring theological concepts. Similarly, Elisabeth’s *Liber visionum primus* described affective experiences that resulted in the production of the text. Thus,

---

<sup>31</sup> Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 299.

<sup>32</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 300.

<sup>33</sup> Newman, *God and the Goddesses*, 302-303

visionary and non-visionary authors employed the affective element of memory-work in order to produce texts.

Even though Elisabeth's text clearly indicates that it was the product of cultivated visions and described affective experience, it has not been considered as part of the rhetorical tradition of crafting texts through the exploration of memory.<sup>34</sup> Rather, her *Liber visionum primus* has traditionally been considered as providing insight into feminine spiritual experience because Elisabeth composed it before Ekbert's move to Schönaue in 1155. However, this feminine spiritual experience was also very similar to the compositional process that Eadmer described for Anselm. In general, Elisabeth's visionary books (unlike her thematic pieces) have been regarded as less "scholarly" and therefore more in line with feminine spirituality.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Elisabeth's visionary books have been labeled as "diaries" by modern scholars to emphasize their personal nature.<sup>36</sup> Considering Elisabeth's first three visionary books as "diaries" trivializes them, suggesting that they were the girlish thoughts of a nun.<sup>37</sup> Neither Guibert of Nogent's *Autobiography* nor Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* has been characterized in such a manner in

---

<sup>34</sup> See Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönaue*, 55.

<sup>35</sup> Anne Clark, trans. *Elisabeth of Schönaue: The Complete Works* (NY: Paulist Press, 2000), 29.

<sup>36</sup> Anne Clark utilizes this term for her descriptions of Elisabeth's visionary accounts, which she attributes to Kurt Köster. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönaue*, 31. Köster, however, argued that Elisabeth could not have written all of her works on her own. He characterized her three visionary books as her own works whereas the thematic books, *Liber viarum dei* and the *Revelatio*, were attributed to her brother, Ekbert, because he argued that they demonstrated a more worldly mind. "Elisabeth of Schönaue: Leben, Persönlichkeit und visionäres Werk," in *Schönaue Elisabeth Jubiläum 1965: Festschrift anlässlich des achthundertjährigen Todestages der heiligen Elisabeth von Schönaue* (Limburg an der Lahn: Prämonstratenser-Chorherrenstift in Kloster Schönaue, 1965), 17–43, at 28.

<sup>37</sup> See Caroline Walker Bynum, "Foreword," in *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, eds. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti, trans. Dietlinde Hamburger (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), xv–xvi.

modern scholarship. Both works are also personal accounts. Although Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* indicated her personal experience, it demonstrates her participation in learned methods of composition that was specific to her environment.<sup>38</sup>

To this point, I have considered the physical manifestations of Elisabeth's composition process. I have noted the similarities between her descriptions of thinking through a problem and those of her male contemporaries. However, to compose a work also required interaction with other texts. How the process of composition, with all of its affective aspects, integrated the exchange and production of new texts is exemplified by Hugh of Rouen's twelfth-century piece, the *Tractatus de memoria*. Hugh's piece will serve as a way to understand how twelfth-century intellectual inquiry, even if initiated as private contemplation, was premised on the idea of textual exchange. I will compare Hugh's discussion of this type of exchange with Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*.

Despite its title, and as Carruthers's has noted,<sup>39</sup> Hugh's *Tractatus* is not a work that guides others on how to use memory. Rather, Hugh's work addressed his meditations on the Trinity, the Church and sin. Yet, Hugh clearly believed that this meditative work was a product of his memory. In the piece, Hugh addressed his friend and the recipient of his text, Philip. Hugh told Philip in the introduction, "All that understanding finds, that study reaches for, that pious love craves, a wise memory gathers all at once, prudently attends to it, providentially stores

---

<sup>38</sup> Claire Barbetti, "Secret Designs/Public Shapes: Ekphrastic Tensions in Hildegard's Scivias," in *Reading Memory and Identity in the Texts of Medieval European Holy Women*, eds. Margaret Cotter-Lynch and Brad Herzog (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 81-104, at 82-3.

<sup>39</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 62.

it.”<sup>40</sup> Here, it is clear that the *Tractatus* was a result of the memorial arts. Its production was the result of study and piety, which memory holds for the author to use when necessary. In addition, Hugh described the affective nature of the composition of this work. He remarked that this composition caused him anxiety, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, he was able to complete his work.

For Hugh, the intervention of the Holy Spirit was a component of the textual exchange that memory-work encouraged. According to Hugh, memory was given by God, but it was for men to use to create texts.<sup>41</sup> Notably, employing memory is a process whereby the author actively seeks information. In addition, the author must also possess good character.<sup>42</sup> If the author’s character is sound and he practices his memory craft, then the author can be blessed with divine grace from the Holy Spirit. Thus, the storehouse of memory, what Hugh called “the vessel of your memory,” is able to “accept the wisdom of God.”<sup>43</sup> The wisdom of God was textual material that could be accessed through memory-work. It was the material that authors used to formulate their writings.

When Hugh addressed Philip in his *Tractatus*, it is clear that he conceived of Philip’s path to understanding as using the memorial arts. In fact, Hugh encouraged Philip to read, remember and expand on this *Tractatus* in a new piece of writing. Hugh’s text made for an

---

<sup>40</sup> “Omne quod intellectus invenit, quod studium attingit, quod pius amor appetit, totum simul sapiens memoria colligit, prudenter attendit, provide custodit.” Hugh of Rouen, *Tractatus de memoria*, PL 192: col. 1299B.

<sup>41</sup> Hugh, *Tractatus*, PL 192: col. 1300A.

<sup>42</sup> Hugh, *Tractatus*, PL 192: col. 1299B.

<sup>43</sup> “...et tuae vasa memoriae ad suscipiendam Dei sapientiam pie praesenta.” Hugh, *Tractatus*, PL 192: col. 1299B.

excellent piece of memory-work for Philip to consider himself.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the *Tractatus* became part of the exchange of texts necessary for all authors who desired to compose new works. That exchange, as Hugh demonstrated, included the reception of textual material from the Holy Spirit, or, working through an idea. This idea became transmitted on to the parchment to become a book. Thus, the invisible idea became exchanged for the visible words on a page. Once this idea made its way from the mind of an author to the page of a reader, another exchange occurred. The reader was then able to take the book, read it, store it in his memory and re-use the material for yet another creation that combined internal thought and the external page.

What Hugh's *Tractatus* demonstrates, then, is how textual exchange was important in the relationship between memory-work, composition and the acceptance of new texts into a program of study.<sup>45</sup> It is also important to point out that a text does not just indicate a physical book,<sup>46</sup> but the ideas that exist in the memory. These ideas are potential written works. Hugh's *Tractatus*, before he wrote it down, were thoughts that he designated as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* highlights this same type of textual exchange that was integral to the composition of her work. In her attempts to cultivate a vision, she described how she recited fifty psalms. After the recitation of this text, she then received a vision of the saint she desired.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the input of one text, the psalms, resulted in the output of a different work,

---

<sup>44</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 62.

<sup>45</sup> Hugh, *Tractatus*, PL 192: col. 1299A; and Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 62-3.

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of textuality and literacy, see Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 31.

<sup>47</sup> Clark, *The Complete Works*, 50-1, 62.

the vision that Elisabeth described in her *Liber visionum primus*. The psalms in fact served as the foundation for memory work for monastic authors because they were the first writings that were committed to memory by monks and nuns.<sup>48</sup>

Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* also demonstrates the flexibility between the text on the page, a text heard from others (or from oneself through rumination) and creating a new text through visionary experience. When Elisabeth described a vision she had of Mary, she noted that she saw both the figure of Mary as well as words inscribed on Mary's crown. The inscription bore the salutation, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you."<sup>49</sup> In this instance, Elisabeth previously may have read the similarly worded biblical passage, recited this salutation with her sisters or ruminated on the words alone. The way in which Elisabeth heard or read the salutation before she engaged in her memory-work, which resulted in this vision, does not matter. What is notable, however, is that Elisabeth transferred the text of the salutation into a visual inscription within her visions. She exchanged one form of this text for another, and in the process, became the author of her own work.

It is clear that Elisabeth considered her visions to be ideas that were equated to the production of written works. In her *Liber visionum primus*, Elisabeth included a chapter discussing the consecration of Ekbert's church while he was still a secular cleric at Bonn. Ekbert had written to Elisabeth asking her to seek a vision to ensure that the consecration of the Church had been successful. In her account, Elisabeth reported that she saw "a multitude of angels

---

<sup>48</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 113.

<sup>49</sup> "Ave Maria gratia plena dominus tecum." Roth, *Visionen*, 6.

descending” that helped the “ministers of the church for the whole time of the dedication.”<sup>50</sup> Here, Elisabeth offered images that conveyed the success of the dedication ceremony. But, the chapter discussing the consecration shifted focus in its concluding lines. Elisabeth inserted Ekbert’s actions into the scene. She reported that she saw Ekbert, “standing in the pulpit at Matins and reading one of the lessons.”<sup>51</sup> The act of reading was an important component for the composition of new texts. In this account, reading connected the supernatural action that Elisabeth reported in the vision, the descent of the angels, with the material that Ekbert read. Thus, like Hugh’s description of his inspiration via the Holy Spirit, the image of reading in this chapter was linked to other heavenly agents. Moreover, Elisabeth’s description of the event provided a comparison with the material from her vision to the material that Ekbert read on the pulpit. The two types of reading—Ekbert’s externalized reading and Elisabeth’s internalized ruminating—with two different types of texts—the physical book from which Ekbert read and the visionary images Elisabeth used—were in fact analogous.

Elisabeth’s *Liber visionum primus*, then, recorded Elisabeth’s memory-work. Her affective composition process, her cultivation of visions and her use and re-use of various texts comprise part of the narrative that Elisabeth’s work tells. The genre of visionary literature began to include these descriptions at the same time that Elisabeth composed her works. As I suggested above, the surge in reform groups and a vibrant intellectual culture may have influenced the changes in the genre. As I will explore in the next section, Elisabeth’s *Liber*

---

<sup>50</sup> “Nec non et angelorum multitudinem in eodem radio descendente vidi, ac toto tempore dedicationis inter ministros ecclesie conversantem.” Roth, *Visionen*, 28.

<sup>51</sup> “...pulpito in matutinis astantem, et unam ex lectionibus legentem.” Roth, *Visionen*, 28.

*visionum primus* was part of this reform environment and the production of texts that discussed the milieu. Formational literature was now in need due to the influx of new converts entering the cloister. Members of the reform orders were called to provide it.

### ***Reform Literature and Elisabeth's Liber visionum primus***

With the influx of new converts, both men and women, to the monastery, works of monastic formation helped develop these new members into monks and nuns.<sup>52</sup> In this section, I will argue that Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* also belonged to this literary genre. To do this, I will explore how Elisabeth's text emphasized the trials and triumphs of the monastic vocation. Thus, I will consider the personal struggles that she related in this text as a way to help members of monastic communities shape their lives in this new vocation. In addition, I will discuss other pieces of formational literature during the twelfth century in order to place Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* in context. Finally, I will consider how women in particular navigated entrance into monastic communities during this reform period in light of the texts that were there to guide them.

Hugh's *Tractatus de memoria* explained that the monastic program prized meditation for the purposes of understanding and cultivating texts. Elisabeth detailed the trials and triumphs of mastering this skill in her *Liber visionum primus* through her descriptions of demonic and angelic figures. The devilish beings represented the attacks on her progress to understanding

---

<sup>52</sup> See Constant Mews, "Introduction," in *Listen, Daughter*.

whereas the heavenly apparitions provided markers for her success. Below, I will consider how these two different types of supernatural figures interacted in Elisabeth's work in order to craft a message that emphasized understanding monastic life in much the way Hugh's *Tractatus* did, through correct living and accepting the Holy Spirit as inspiration.

Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* was initially published as the *Liber eiusdem de temptationibus inimici, quas primo sustinit et de revelationibus divinis quas post modum vidit*.<sup>53</sup> The change in the title reflected the growth of Elisabeth's visionary corpus. When she first published the work under the original title, it contained chapters one through twenty-five, which depicted her experiences from May 18 through August 29, 1152. It was later expanded to include events up until August 15, 1154.<sup>54</sup> Although the expansion of the work likely reflected Ekbert's influence and desire to circulate more of Elisabeth's writings, as Clark notes, most of the changes Ekbert facilitated were minor and did not affect Elisabeth's message.<sup>55</sup> I would argue that the change in title is significant along with the expansion of the text to include seventy-eight chapters because those additional chapters fully fleshed out Elisabeth's portrayal of monastic formation through the use of the memorial arts. These additions do not reflect a change in the type of content from the first twenty-five chapters. Moreover, the new title reflected the fact that Elisabeth continued to write works about reform concerns, theological

---

<sup>53</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 31.

<sup>54</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 31.

<sup>55</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 47-48. Elisabeth's earliest versions of this text included a prophetic message that Ekbert later removed; however, this chapter circulated widely despite Ekbert's editorial hand.

problems and spiritual issues after she concluded this piece. Now, this text represented the first work among many rather than Elisabeth's only publication.

Thus, Elisabeth's first work set the stage for the rigors of monastic life for her readers. The text still reflected the concerns of the initial title, which still circulated widely among her readers.<sup>56</sup> In the introduction to the *Liber visionum primus*, Elisabeth set up the battle between the devil and the Lord for control of her mind. This battle would span the entire length of the text. Elisabeth first noted the torments that she faced, stating "In the end, moreover, that false one inspired me to put an end to my life, and thus end my distress, which I had endured for so long."<sup>57</sup> Elisabeth attributed her hardships with living a full monastic life to the devil. On the other hand, the Lord helped her "to understand the malice of my deceiver and quickly turned me away from that thought."<sup>58</sup>

The appearances of devilish figures plagued Elisabeth throughout the early chapters of her work. Elisabeth described a demonic monk who tormented her with his riotous ways. He stopped his actions once the Schönaus sisters read the gospels. In another incident, a bull, which Elisabeth described as having talons like a bird of prey, pestered Elisabeth. She received a visionary assurance from Mary that despite their menacing qualities, these figures would not harm her. The next time the bull-like creature appeared Elisabeth felt bold enough to confront the beast because of Mary's comforting words. After this confrontation, Elisabeth noted that she

---

<sup>56</sup> Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönaus, Werk und Wirkung im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen handschriftlichen Überlieferung," in *Annalen für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951): 243-315, at 256-64.

<sup>57</sup> "Novissime autem id michi inspiravit ille perfidus, ut vite mee ipsa finem imponerem, atque ita erumnas meas, quas diu sustinueram, terminarem." Roth, *Visionen*, 4.

<sup>58</sup> "...sed dedit michi intelligere maliciam insidiatoris mei, et subito me avertit a cogitatione hac." Roth, *Visionen*, 4.

saw a dove appear near the cross. This was as a marker of her success against the devilish figure. When a demonic cleric pursued her, Elisabeth lamented that she could not “turn the eye of my mind” from him until she invoked the members of the trinity.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the dove that had appeared to her after her confrontation with the bull began to appear more frequently. In one instance, the brothers and the sisters of Schönaue realized Elisabeth’s troubles and prayed for her and offered mass for her sake. After this, the dove reappeared and circled over her, signaling that her demonic temptations were nearing a close. From this point on, she began to see visions of saints rather than demons.

Notably, even when Elisabeth experienced tormenting thoughts from demonic figures, she was able to overcome them with actions that were part of daily monastic life. Thus, reading the gospels, invoking Mary, trusting in the Trinity and participating in communal prayer alleviated these temptations. Through its representation of devilish assaults, the *Liber visionum primus* served to highlight the efficacy in participation in monastic life.

The first half of the *Liber visionum primus* focused on assaults of the mind from the devil. But, the second part of the work emphasized Elisabeth’s most ubiquitous spiritual figure, her angelic guide. The angelic guide first appeared in chapter fifty-four. It is clear that he served the purpose of providing comfort and guidance to Elisabeth. A few chapters after his first appearance, Elisabeth informed her angel that she was “weary of enduring.”<sup>60</sup> This weariness likely referred to many things, such as her writing of the visions that caused her discomfort, any

---

<sup>59</sup> “...nec potui avertere ab eo mentis oculum...” Roth, *Visionen*, 7.

<sup>60</sup> “Domine mi, lassus sum ad sustinendum.” Roth, *Visionen*, 28.

detractors that did not find profit in her words and perhaps the burden of being an example for her community. Yet, the angel advised her to “take comfort, be consoled, do not fail on your path.”<sup>61</sup> In the very next chapter, Elisabeth seemed to adhere to this advice by noting that she prayed for “the communal correction of the church.”<sup>62</sup> It is here that her role is clearly laid out as a reformer in a reform community. Her individual action served for the benefit of the entire institution. Moreover, the angel had visited her to indicate her spiritual progress. That is, she combatted her devilish thoughts appropriately through participation in religious life. The angel’s message also emphasized that Elisabeth must not give up her vocation even when it is most difficult. In fact, it is through this vocation, and the production of her texts, that she would be able to aid not only her community but the larger community of religious with her reform-centric works.

The conclusion of Elisabeth’s *Liber visionum primus* resolved her struggles with the devil. Here, the demonic figures and heavenly beings, who had each been confined to their separate parts of the work, confronted each other in the final chapters. Each of the supernatural figures argued over who had claim to Elisabeth based on her transgressions and her virtues. Elisabeth’s negative and positive actions were recorded in separate books. Elisabeth feared that her judgment was at hand. Just as in her opening chapter of the *Liber visionum primus*, she entered into a self-dialogue, saying “Have I not always had great faith in the body of my Lord,

---

<sup>61</sup> “Confortare, consolare, noli deficere in via.” Roth, *Visionen*, 28.

<sup>62</sup> “...pro communi correctione ecclesie...” Roth, *Visionen*, 29.

Jesus Christ? Is this not the forgiveness of all sins? Without doubt let me take refuge there.”<sup>63</sup>

These words contrast to her initial self-doubt in the opening chapter of the work and depict a nun who firmly embraced her vocation.

Indeed, Elisabeth presented the angel telling her that she had been granted a reprieve from damnation after this incident. In the last chapter of the *Liber visionum primus*, Elisabeth presented the devil for the final time. He troubled her dreams, but she confronted the demonic figure by arguing for her belief in the Lord, stating that while the devil “shows no reverence” for the Lord’s name, Elisabeth always invoked it.<sup>64</sup> After she had made this prayer to the Lord, she saw the devil “in the appearance of a goat” escape the cloister.<sup>65</sup> Elisabeth told her readers that “from that time on, therefore, through the grace of the Lord, who knows how to deliver His people from temptation, I did not feel [the devil’s] malice.”<sup>66</sup>

Elisabeth’s *Liber visionum primus* thus emphasized her spiritual progress. In the early chapters of the text, the devilish figures were combated through participation in monastic life, such as reading the gospels or performing the mass, in order to shift the focus to spiritual words rather than temptations. When Elisabeth presented herself as confronting her demonic figures, she signaled that she was taking an active role in safeguarding her mind and focusing her

---

<sup>63</sup> “Nonne fiduciam multam semper habui in corpore domini mei Jesu Christi? Nonne hoc est omnium peccatorum remissio? Illuc certe confugiam.” Roth, *Visionen*, 36.

<sup>64</sup> “...nullam exhibet reverentiam...” Roth, *Visionen*, 39.

<sup>65</sup> “...in specie capre...” Roth, *Visionen*, 39.

<sup>66</sup> “Ab illo ergo tempore maliciam eius non sensi per gratiam domini, qui novit suos de temptatione eripere.” Roth, *Visionen*, 39.

thoughts, which was itself a trope in visionary literature.<sup>67</sup> In addition, this text demonstrated Elisabeth's ability to focus her mind on ideas that would aid her monastic life and the production of her texts. As Hugh noted in his *Tractatus*, ideas arose from correct living and accepting the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. From the first chapter to the last, Elisabeth highlighted how she participated fully in monastic life, both as an individual and as a member of the community. This participation led to her ability to focus her mind on holy figures rather than demonic ones, which resulted in her ability to compose texts for others' benefit. Importantly, the expansion of Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* allowed this complete progression to unfold. Her acceptance of the Holy Spirit, manifested through various spiritual figures, led her to compose her subsequent texts.

Elisabeth's struggle with assaults from the devil was a common trope in monastic literature. In most cases, the battle between the devil and the Lord over a person's soul comprised the heart of the conversion narrative. Conversion narratives related the tensions that people felt between living in the secular world and professing the monastic vocation. They were also often composed in the visionary genre.<sup>68</sup> In Elisabeth's case, however, she portrayed these tribulations as occurring ten years after she had entered the cloister. Thus, for her, there was no tension between the secular and the religious life. Rather, she depicted the hardships that members of a religious community would endure after professing their vocations. Her audience,

---

<sup>67</sup> Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 44.

<sup>68</sup> For example, Otloh of St. Emmeram, *Liber visionum*, ed. Paul Gerhard Schmidt, MGH, *Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte*, 13 (1989), 45-6; and Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 79.

then, was not one that felt undecided about the religious life, but were members of that life already.

The role of the devil as a figure that corrupted faithful minds commonly appeared in works addressed to monastic audiences. Gregory the Great's work, the *Dialogues*, well known to medieval readers, stated that the devil was intent on leading faithful minds astray.<sup>69</sup> Ekbert echoed Gregory's opinion in his own work, the *Meditationes*, noting that demonic wiles were a threat to the religious because they obscured the illuminating thoughts from God.<sup>70</sup> Elisabeth's friend and visionary author, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), characterized the struggle for the soul of a nun as an allegorical battle between the devil and the virtues in her *Ordo virtutum*.<sup>71</sup> All of these texts speak to the concerns about remaining steadfast in the practice of monasticism.

Elisabeth's work demonstrates this concern to remain strong in the face of temptation. However, her text also must be considered in the context of formational literature for the way in which it outlined how to combat this temptation through engagement with the Holy Spirit through communal and personal acts. Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* does not simply speak to a personal struggle but to the struggle that all religious face once they embark on their vocations. Although visionary works are not usually considered as formational works, the Hirsau environment promoted visionary activity for reform concerns. Below, I will outline how

---

<sup>69</sup> Saint Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, trans. Odo John Zimmerman, O.S.B., The Fathers of the Church, 39 (NY: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 151.

<sup>70</sup> "...illumina interiorem oculum meum, ut non prevalente diabolo penitus obscuretur quia tu domine cognoscis figmentum nostrum." Ekbert of Schönau, *Meditationes*, in Roth, *Visionen*, 288.

<sup>71</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, *Ordo virtutum*, ed. Peter Dronke, CCCM 226 (2007), 503-521.

this reform group, and Elisabeth's formation within it, influenced the genre and subject matter of her own text.

The first visionary work that can be associated with the environment that fostered the Hirsau reform movement is Otloh of St. Emmeram's (c.1010- c.1070) *Liber visionum*. Otloh entered the monastic school at Tegernsee in 1016/1017 where he received the typical eleventh-century education based on the *artes*.<sup>72</sup> Otloh also operated within the networks of the well-connected noble families, cultivating friendships and maintaining advantageous connections.<sup>73</sup> However, Otloh eventually gave up his life as a secular cleric and professed his monastic vows at St. Emmeram in Regensburg in 1032. Otloh then began to collect stories of visions in order to transform pieces of monastic gossip into texts that advocated for monastic reform.<sup>74</sup>

Otloh understood the visionary stories as a powerful literary tool, which he harnessed to serve a specific goal—to advocate for institutional and individual reform.<sup>75</sup> Although Otloh's reform concerns were focused on St. Emmeram's own local needs, the way in which he utilized vision and text to advocate for his monastery and to critique its enemies shared characteristics of

---

<sup>72</sup> Helga Schauwecker, *Otloh von St. Emmeram: Ein Beitrag zur Bildungs- und Frömmigkeitsgeschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Verlag der Bayer. Benediktiner-Akademie München, Abtei St. Bonifaz, 1964), 165-172. Schauwecker also notes that women's institutions also partook of this same education, and she gives the example of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (d. circa 1000). Ibid., 167. Katharina Wilson notes that Gandersheim had close connections with Emmeram and Tegernsee and had a very active intellectual and spiritual life in the Ottonian renaissance. *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: A Florilegium of Her Works*, trans. and ed. Katharina Wilson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 6-9.

<sup>73</sup> Schauwecker, *Otloh*, 7-8.

<sup>74</sup> Ellen Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters: Visions and the Rhetoric of Reform in the *Liber visionum* of Otloh of St. Emmeram," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, ed. Alison I. Beach, *Medieval Church Studies*, 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 69-98, at 73.

<sup>75</sup> Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters," 73, 77. See, *Liber visionum*, 33. "...cupio ad aedificationem fidelium proferre visiones quasdam..." Ibid.

the texts in both the later Gregorian and Hirsau reform movements.<sup>76</sup> Otloh used visions to communicate ideas about reform. Indeed, the use of visions for political motives or as a way to critique authority was nothing new. It had a long tradition within Carolingian culture.<sup>77</sup> However, the use of visions within the Hirsau reform movement would come to provide a valuable strategy for publishing reform goals and critiques. Visions were not simply a way to communicate didactic stories to lay listeners; but rather, they became a way to communicate reform ideals and were aimed at an educated and influential audience, an audience that circulated texts.<sup>78</sup>

Otloh advocated for these reforms through visionary stories that critiqued the practices of monks or church leaders. In chapter five of his *Liber visionum*, Otloh related a story of a monk who was visited by an angry angel. The angel beat the monk in order to provide a sign to the bishop that his canons should stop wearing excessively ornate clothing. It is clear that the visionary hear-say that Otloh's text reported was meant to be a critique of contemporary bishops.<sup>79</sup> By recording this piece of visionary gossip, Otloh composed a text that castigated

---

<sup>76</sup> Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters," 83, 94. Joyce posits a connection between the materials of the Hirsau reform circle, and especially Otloh, and the work of the later twelfth-century reformers. She notes that the relationship between reform motives and the visions Otloh records, which are essentially pieces of monastic gossip, is in some ways a difficult relationship to prove, but that it is "tempting to see Otloh as a kind of spiritual godfather to the next generation of German reformers, and to see his use of visions in this text as a model for their use in the hagiography and polemic of the Investiture Conflict." Ibid., 83. Moreover, Joyce highlights that there are shared concerns between Otloh's work, Gregorian and Hirsau reform, which demonstrates "the existence of a shared rhetorical culture rather than a story of direct textual transmission." Ibid., 94.

<sup>77</sup> See Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*.

<sup>78</sup> Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters," 85-86.

<sup>79</sup> Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters," 78.

those who were supposed to be the leaders of the Church and provide a good example for their flocks to follow. This critique would become a common reform cry in the twelfth century.

As noted above, Elisabeth stated her intention to follow this reform path after her angelic guide first visited her in the *Liber visionum primus*. In fact, Otloh's stories from the monks he spoke with were similar to many of the visionary incidents in Elisabeth's own *Liber visionum primus*. While a story-by-story comparison between Otloh's work and Elisabeth's early visions is not the purpose of this study,<sup>80</sup> it is significant because it suggests that Ellen Joyce's argument that Otloh's work circulated in a larger reform network that influenced later reform-centric texts has merit.

Otloh's student and friend, William of Hirsau (c.1030-1091), led the German Benedictine reform movement that shaped the monastic outlook from the late eleventh through the mid-twelfth century in the Rhineland, of which Elisabeth's own cloister took part. Whereas Otloh's involvement in monastic reform focused on more local concerns, William not only spread Benedictine reform throughout Germany, but he was also intimately involved in the goals professed by Gregory VII.<sup>81</sup> Otloh's *Liber visionum* demonstrates that an educated monk used visions in order to discuss reform issues. William's texts also depict a monk who was aware of the impact of visions on reformed monastic life. The *Hirsau Constitutions* discuss how monks

---

<sup>80</sup> Many similarities exist between Otloh's and Elisabeth's concerns for their individual institutions and the way in which they use visions to elucidate lapses in good monastic practice. Otloh's monastery was also involved in a document forgery regarding the relics of Dionysius the Areopagite, which also suggests concerns similar to those of Elisabeth in her *Revelatio* connected to the purported discovery of the bones of St. Ursula and her virginal companions. Some of Elisabeth's contemporaries had doubt about the validity of this discovery. Ellen Joyce, "Speaking of Spiritual Matters," 81; Clark, *The Complete Works*, 213-34.

<sup>81</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 196-210.

should handle visionary encounters, noting that those who received them should alert their communities.<sup>82</sup> Both William and Otloh received a liberal arts education, so their interest in visionary literature and visions was not simply due to their lack of educational opportunity. Rather, this phenomenon and its literary genre became a method of communicating certain ideas within a reform context.

Thus, Elisabeth's visions occurred in an environment that expected visions and turned visionary experience into texts. Hirsau-reformed communities also emphasized education and religious instruction for women, which was achieved through building updated library collections. These collections included patristic texts as well as contemporary literature from both within and outside of German speaking areas.<sup>83</sup> In fact, Elisabeth's conception of her visions, as operating as texts to shape in her mind and on the page, likely reflected her interaction with other works available to her within her cloister.

That this education and religious instruction provided the foundation for the formation of both men and women was not unusual given the fact that the Benedictine Rule made no distinction between the two in the context of religious life. But, the larger influx of women into monastic orders did elicit concern from contemporaries.<sup>84</sup> Thus, I will now consider how

---

<sup>82</sup> *Constitutiones Hirsaugenensis*, PL 150: col. 986.

<sup>83</sup> Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 30-31; Constant Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zwiefalten and the Hirsau Reform," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester Press, 2000): 182-197; Julie Hotchin, "Women's Reading and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Library of the Nuns of Lippoldsberg," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, ed. Alison I. Beach, *Medieval Church Studies* 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007): 139-190.

<sup>84</sup> Mews, "Introduction," in *Listen, Daughter*, 2.

contemporaries addressed the surge in women converts through formational texts and critiques of the Benedictine Rule. Moreover, I will address how these works demonstrated concerns similar to Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*.

With the influx of women into the religious profession, the role of virginity became a key theme in twelfth-century formational texts addressed to nuns. Conrad of Hirsau (c. 1070-1150) authored the *Speculum virginum*, which focused on spiritual formation for religious women who participated in the same reform group as Elisabeth. In this text, Conrad explored themes concerning monastic life by presenting his work as a dialogue between a monk, Peregrinus, and a nun, Theodora. Because men and women in Hirsau houses often lived in close proximity, many cloisters were double-houses with both men and women, the text included cautionary tales about women and men interacting. These stories were not necessarily meant to prohibit the interactions between the sexes completely. For example, the *Speculum virginum* related a story about a cleric who followed the devil's suggestions to enter a women's cloister in order to satisfy his lust; however, he was justly punished by death before he could lead any virgins astray.<sup>85</sup>

The focus in this example is on the maintenance of virginity. It works as a cautionary tale for both the men and women who would read the *Speculum virginum*. Although the text's audience was ostensibly cloistered women, based on the manuscript evidence, the work found many readers among male religious. This may be in part due to the role that men played in the *cura monialium*, the pastoral care of women.<sup>86</sup> In this example, the devil's suggestions led a

---

<sup>85</sup> Barbara Newman, trans. "*Speculum virginum*: Selected Excerpts," in *Listen, Daughter*, 276-278.

<sup>86</sup> Julie Hotchin, "Female Religious Life and the *Cura Monialium* in Hirsau Monasticism, 1080 to 1150," in *Listen, Daughter*, 59-61.

cleric astray. Thus, it was not a monk, who also professed the religious vocation, who attempted to violate a tenet of this profession for another member of the cloister; rather, it was an outsider. In addition, a demonic figure instigated the assault on the monastery. Thus, as Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* demonstrated, only those who were steadfast in their commitment to the religious life could suppress these thoughts. The cautionary tale, then, operated on two fronts. One, that maintaining virginity was at times a decision fraught with possible danger. And, two, it was imperative that religious men and women fend off devilish thoughts.

In Conrad's introductory letter to the work, he addressed the importance of a strong monastic mind. He wrote that he prepared this "little book" for his readers in order that they may "exercise" their minds.<sup>87</sup> Thus, Conrad conceived of his work as a way for women to strengthen their vocation. Virginity was a correct form of living the monastic vocation, but so was a trained mind. As we have seen, this message was also clear in Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*. Conrad's text aided in women's education about their life in the cloister through the dialogue between Peregrinus and Theodora. Thus, like Elisabeth's internal self-dialogue that initiated the questions she posed about her vocation, Conrad employed an external manifestation of this dialogue to flesh out the same themes.

Through her conversations with Peregrinus, Theodora highlighted that the discussion of scriptural meaning was important for women who sought to embrace the monastic life. After she posed a question to Peregrinus about scripture, Theodora noted, "The explanation of mysteries,

---

<sup>87</sup> Newman, "Appendix," in *Listen, Daughter*, 270.

of course, is progress in understanding.”<sup>88</sup> Even though the *Speculum virginum* was written for men to consider ways to teach women how to conceive of their vocation, it presented the women as engaged in religious texts and capable of holding religious discussion.<sup>89</sup> Theodora characterized herself as someone who was “studious” and who was learning a specific discipline.<sup>90</sup> This discipline was monastic life, but it was also a discipline that required study of key texts. Not only was knowledge of these texts important, but an understanding of the many ways in which to read the sacred works was also necessary. After Peregrinus explained the scriptural passage, Theodora asked him to then provide an allegorical rendering of the same concepts.<sup>91</sup> That Conrad wrote his work portraying Theodora asking these exegetically motivated questions hints that her education and formation within the cloister was similar to his own, or at least conceived to be.<sup>92</sup>

Conrad’s *Speculum virginum* addressed the necessity of a strong mind with knowledge of textual material for the formation of women within the cloister. The themes that Conrad explored were similar to the problems that Elisabeth addressed in her work. Another formational text for men and women professing the monastic vocation was the Benedictine Rule. Elisabeth’s older French contemporary, Heloise, wrote to Abelard in the 1130s requesting a separate rule for

---

<sup>88</sup> Newman, “Appendix,” 272.

<sup>89</sup> Sabina Flanagan, “The *Speculum virginum* and Traditions of Medieval Dialogue,” 190.

<sup>90</sup> Newman, “Appendix,” 276.

<sup>91</sup> Newman, “Appendix,” 291.

<sup>92</sup> Conrad also wrote another dialogue between a Teacher and a Pupil, the *Dialogue on the Authors*. In it, the male Pupil asked for a discussion of the modes of allegory, tropology and anagogy for fashioning a commentary. *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-c.1375: The Commentary-Tradition*, eds. A.J. Minnis and A.B. Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 41.

women. Heloise's request will be considered for the ways it demonstrates these issues of increased monastic participation by women in a profession that only specifically addressed itself to men.

When Heloise wrote to Abelard to request a rule for nuns, she was abbess of the Paraclete, the abbey that Abelard had founded. Her concerns were that the Benedictine Rule was not meant to help women live a monastic life. I would argue, however, that this request should not necessarily be taken at face value. In fact, it operated to serve as a reminder that although women were often called the weaker sex, they handled the same monastic requirements and regimen as their male counterparts did.<sup>93</sup> Heloise noted that care must be taken not to "impose on a woman a burden under which we see nearly all men stagger and even fall."<sup>94</sup> Due to the nature of men in the world during this time, it would even be best to "change or modify those Rules which were written for men in accordance with men's present nature."<sup>95</sup> It would seem from these comments that Heloise doubted the ability of the men around her to live up to their own standards. Heloise did have concerns about the correct way to live the monastic life. She sought Abelard's advice for ways in which the nuns at the Paraclete perhaps fell short of St. Benedict's Rule. But, as part of her argument for needing Abelard's help, she presented the men who professed the same Rule as negligent, which were the same men who were proclaimed as the stronger sex.

---

<sup>93</sup> Heloise, *Letter 6. Heloise to Abelard*, in *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Betty Radice (London: Penguin Books, rev. 2003), 94.

<sup>94</sup> Heloise, *Letter 6*, 100.

<sup>95</sup> Heloise, *Letter 6*, 101.

Heloise's question to Abelard, then, addressed reform concerns in relation to the Benedictine Rule. For Heloise, the institutional Rule was not aiding personal development for either men or women. Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* sought to address both issues. Moreover, her work was not addressed to either monks or nuns, but to both. This is clear by her description of both the brothers and the sisters in her community working together to participate in monastic life. Heloise's discussion of a separate rule for women, then, operated as a reminder that contemporaries considered, in theory, the men and women who professed vows to be equals under the Rule of Benedict. When Abelard answered Heloise's letter, he confirmed this.<sup>96</sup>

Thus, Elisabeth, Conrad and Heloise all addressed the importance of the development of men and women in the cloister. Although Conrad's and Heloise's works suggest that they spoke about the concerns of women, in fact, they addressed larger issues of reform. Men in the monastery read the *Speculum virginum*. Although they may have held a copy for their spiritual direction of women, the text also addressed proper action for men within reform cloisters. The example of the tempted cleric provided a foil to the steadfast minds that the *Speculum virginum* hoped to develop in women and already expected in men. Moreover, Heloise's work critiqued the development of men and women through her protestation that the Benedictine Rule was too strict. In doing this, she highlighted the need for more guidance for both men and women in order to adhere to the monastic ideal. Elisabeth's work spoke to both men and women, demonstrating how as an individual she experienced tribulations and triumphs with her struggles against temptation and her acceptance of the Holy Spirit. In addition, she highlighted these themes through personal and institutional actions. The *Liber visionum primus*, then, was a work

---

<sup>96</sup> Abelard, *Letter 7. Abelard to Heloise*, 112.

that spoke to the same concerns that Elisabeth's contemporaries raised about how men and women should live the monastic life.

Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* did not only address concerns about how men and women should progress along their path to a reformed life, but it also provided guidance for doing so. As Peregrinus told Theodora in the *Speculum virginum*, "Christ seeks ears to hear, he seeks eyes to see, so that what the outward voice commends may dwell within, and what is perceived through physical sight may bear fruit in the mind's eye."<sup>97</sup> In Elisabeth's introduction to her work, she made these same comparisons between inward and outward manifestations of the Lord's inspiration. Through her composition process, she exchanged inner inspiration for the physical texts for her audience. Next, I will consider how the formational goals that Elisabeth outlined in her *Liber visionum primus* became practice within her own reform cloister.

### ***Memorializing Elisabeth: Vision in the Cloister***

Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* demonstrated how her engagement with the memorial arts allowed her to advance her ideas through her acceptance of divine inspiration rather than demonic temptation. Moreover, her visionary work operated within the context of the concerns in formational literature. In this section, I will consider how Elisabeth's visionary experiences and texts served to help the progress of her religious brethren in Schönau. The process by which Elisabeth composed her work allowed for others within the community to interact with both her

---

<sup>97</sup> Newman, "Appendix," 281.

and the text that resulted from her memory-work. To consider how Elisabeth's work affected her community, I will examine how Ekbert's involvement with Elisabeth's writings served as way for him to consider his own formational progress. In addition, I will demonstrate how Elisabeth's sisters also engaged in the same type of memory-work that Elisabeth practiced.

In order to understand how Ekbert used Elisabeth's text to progress his own monastic formation, I will examine chapter forty from Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*. This chapter is important because Elisabeth requested Ekbert's help for expanding her initial interpretation of her vision. He agreed to assume this task, which he completed in Elisabeth's *Liber visionum tercius*. First, I will describe the chapter in detail. Next, I will compare her incomplete understanding of her vision explained in this chapter to her ability to analyze her visions in her *Liber visionum tercius*. Finally, I will assess Ekbert's involvement in facilitating the completion of Elisabeth's initial interpretation of the vision she first received in chapter forty of her *Liber visionum primus*. Through this examination, I will demonstrate how Ekbert benefitted from the guidance given in Elisabeth's formational text.

The vision that Elisabeth described in chapter forty occurred in two parts. In the first part, Elisabeth told her readers that her usual physical anxiety afflicted her. Next, she saw a bright wheel spinning in the sky with a small white bird trying to hold on to the wheel. The bird kept slipping down from its perch at the top, struggling to maintain its original position. In addition, Elisabeth noted the presence of a lofty mountain in the background. All of these symbols were common tropes used in the composition process that acted as aids for memory.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 116-18.

Elisabeth's chapter, then, laid out her usual composition process. She felt physical anxiety, focused on events or images in her mind and then attempted to turn this thought into understanding. To gain her understanding, Elisabeth turned her thoughts to the Lord. After she had "received a little understanding"<sup>99</sup> she realized that the vision pertained to the hardships of journeying along the path that led to God. Thus, she linked her visual images to the text of Matthew 7:14 stating, "'Narrow and difficult is the way that leads to life.'"<sup>100</sup> Then, Elisabeth wanted to know what she should do, as a professed religious, to navigate this path. She learned that she must follow the Lord and "consider closely" His footsteps and not "turn away to the right or to the left, but follow" Him to arrive at the heavenly life.<sup>101</sup>

In this section of chapter forty, Elisabeth described her memory-work. By doing this, she demonstrated for her readers how she developed mental images into textual interpretations. Her message comported with goals of the monastic life. Elisabeth, however, only partially worked through her thoughts. In the second part of the chapter, Elisabeth noted that she saw the initial images she had already described, but with some new additions. When she saw the images again, they now included a ladder that extended from the top of the wheel into the heavens. Each rung of the ladder was adorned with different colors. In addition, an image of a man appeared standing next to the wheel. His head was gold with white hair. The rest of his body was also composed of various metals: his stomach was bronze, his thighs steel, and his legs iron. But, his

---

<sup>99</sup> "...accepto aliquantulo intellectu..." Roth, *Visionen*, 20.

<sup>100</sup> "Arta et angusta est via, que ducit ad vitam." Roth, *Visionen*, 20.

<sup>101</sup> "Si vis ambulare, sicut ego ambulavi, considera vestigia mea, et noli avertere ad dexteram neque ad sinistram, sed sequere me..." Roth, *Visionen*, 20.

feet were made of earth. His arms, which held a multi-colored wheel, were outstretched to form a cross and were made of silver. What Elisabeth saw in this visions were images associated with the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Like the previous version of the vision she saw, Elisabeth wanted to understand what all of the images meant. In this instance, Elisabeth called upon Gregory the Great to assist her with the interpretation of this material. Elisabeth noted that she asked “that blessed man of God to obtain for me from the Lord an understanding of the vision which I desired.”<sup>102</sup> Elisabeth’s demand for understanding from the Lord with Gregory as an intermediary should be understood within the context of her memory-work. I would argue that within Elisabeth’s vision, Gregory was a visual representation of his textual works. Elisabeth was aware of his status as a “famous doctor” of the Church.<sup>103</sup> Thus, her visionary plea for his assistance must be read as her attempt to recall his textual works. By doing this, Elisabeth hoped to remember a passage that would hasten the ultimate inspiration of any composition, the Holy Spirit. However, Elisabeth’s memory-work did not serve her well here. Elisabeth reported that Gregory told her to “talk to the learned ones who read the scriptures; they know.”<sup>104</sup> Elisabeth interpreted this command to signify her brother, Ekbart. She ordered him to “examine the divine scriptures and try to find a suitable interpretation of this vision.”<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> “...a beato illo viro dei devotissime, ut impetraret mihi a domino intelligentiam visionis, quam desiderabam...” Roth, *Visionen*, 21.

<sup>103</sup> , “...egregium illum doctorem...” Roth, *Visionen*, 21.

<sup>104</sup> “...dic doctoribus, qui legunt scripturas; ipsi sciunt.” Roth, *Visionen*, 21.

<sup>105</sup> “...ut scripturas divinas scruteris, et congruam ex eis interpretationem visionis huius coneris invenire.” Roth, *Visionen*, 21.

This vision, as recounted in chapter forty, is important for two reasons. One, it demonstrates that Elisabeth relied on textual materials to encourage and interpret her visions. Elisabeth's call to Gregory as a visual image that recalled a textual idea was no different than her reliance on psalms, salutations or scripture. Two, Elisabeth integrated Ekbert, who did not have this vision, into her composition process. Although Ekbert's role in the publication of Elisabeth's texts has been characterized as one that required Elisabeth to negotiate her spiritual authority with Ekbert's clerical authority,<sup>106</sup> I would argue that this collaborative venture was akin to the process which Hugh described in his *Tractatus*. That is, Hugh felt his own work was incomplete in some ways; therefore, he encouraged Philip to complete or expand on the ideas in the text. Thus, Elisabeth sought to include Ekbert in the memory-work that she began. Below, I will consider why Ekbert's insertion into Elisabeth's vision signified his participation in his own monastic formation rather than his intrusion into her text.

The result of Ekbert's interpretation of Elisabeth's vision was not included in the *Liber visionum primus*. Rather, it was inserted as the final chapter of Elisabeth's last visionary book, the *Liber visionum tercius*. Unlike Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*, this work considered numerous theological questions rather than problems associated with monastic life. In order to consider why Ekbert's additions to Elisabeth's vision were placed in this work, it will be necessary to assess the content of the *Liber visionum tercius* for the way in which it portrays

---

<sup>106</sup> See, for example, Anne L. Clark, "Repression or Collaboration? The Case of Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schönau," in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 151-67; and John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 25-44

Elisabeth's interpretive abilities. I will argue that this work demonstrates that Elisabeth was very capable of analyzing her own visions.

In the *Liber visionum tercius*, Elisabeth consistently used her memory-work to recall texts for the purpose of interpreting her visions. For example, in chapter ten, Elisabeth cited St. Paul's work, Romans 1:17, as her starting point for her consideration of ideas of righteousness and faith. As Elisabeth thought about this passage, she described that sections from Genesis came into her mind.<sup>107</sup> In this instance, Elisabeth evaluated Paul's statements in Romans in light of the scriptural evidence in Genesis. This allowed her to interpret the meaning of the concepts of righteousness and faith through her recollection of both texts. Like her vision involving Gregory the Great in the *Liber visionum primus*, Elisabeth wanted to ensure that her understanding of this material was correct. Moreover, when Elisabeth expressed doubt about her interpretation, she recalled Paul's image in order to certify her understanding. She told Paul that she "did not fully trust my own understanding."<sup>108</sup> In response to her hesitation, Paul stated, "'What you seek from me, you do understand.'"<sup>109</sup>

Seeking visionary aid from Paul to confirm her thoughts was nothing new to Elisabeth. In fact, earlier in the *Liber visionum tercius* she had been narrating her interpretation about the three heavens referenced in 2 Corinthians 12:2 to one of her sisters when she stumbled over her thoughts. Elisabeth stated, "And when I was doubtful about certain words, he again came, and

---

<sup>107</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 65-6.

<sup>108</sup> "...quia non satis credebam intellectu meo..." Roth, *Visionen*, 66.

<sup>109</sup> "Quod queris a me, intelligis." Roth, *Visionen*, 66.

standing in the same place, he called everything back into my memory.”<sup>110</sup> That she needed to recall Paul on these occasions did not demonstrate that Elisabeth was unsure of herself or sought to insert a vision of a saint as a signifier of spiritual authority of her interpretation. Instead, it simply demonstrated the way in which she arrived at these conclusions through her thought process, which was very similar to the descriptions of other medieval thinkers.<sup>111</sup> By having a visionary conversation with Paul, Elisabeth was recalling the necessary texts that supported her claims. Thus, Paul’s visual presence was a marker of the authority of his text, of which he was the author, and which Elisabeth needed to remember in order to compose her own work. It was the image of Paul that helped her call his writings to mind and complete her own.

When Elisabeth wanted to understand a topic, she recollected authoritative texts. In both the *Liber visionum primus* and *tercius*, Elisabeth called on authors, Gregory and Paul, to conduct her memory-work. If Elisabeth was able to work through interpretations using memory cues provided by these visual images, why did she ask Ekbert to provide his own interpretation to her work? The answer to this question neither lies in Elisabeth’s inability to perform this task nor Ekbert’s superiority in doing so. Rather, this incident demonstrates Ekbert’s need to practice his new monastic vocation.

Ekbert did not undertake this interpretation as a secular cleric who was educated at Paris. Rather, his interpretation appeared as the last chapter of the *Liber visionum tercius*, which was composed at some point after his entrance into Schönau in 1155. Thus, Ekbert was a relatively

---

<sup>110</sup> “Et cum de quibusdam verbis dubia essem, iterum venit et stans ibidem omnia in memoriam michi revocavit.” Roth, *Visionen*, 65.

<sup>111</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 5-6. See also, Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 53.

new convert when he attempted to expand on Elisabeth's vision. As Ekbert's biographer, Emecho, relates, Elisabeth encouraged Ekbert to enter the monastery despite his fears that he would not be able to withstand the rigors.<sup>112</sup> Ekbert's expansion of Elisabeth's vision was part of his formation as a new monk, an adult convert who had not been raised in the monastery as Elisabeth had.

Ekbert's interpretation of Elisabeth's vision from the *Liber visionum primus* speaks to his new conversion. In fact, when he began his own analysis of the vision, he did not discount any of Elisabeth's previous statements about its material. Rather, he noted that she had "understood correctly."<sup>113</sup> In his explanation of the vision, Ekbert emphasized the struggles that a new adult convert would be experiencing. Ekbert likened the white bird hovering above the wheel to virtuous people who are innocent and "winged with various virtues."<sup>114</sup> He used this phrase again when he described the bird fighting with the spinning wheel, which he likened to the temptations of the world. Ekbert stated that those who possessed "the wings of virtue" must continuously exercise them in order to fight off these temptations.<sup>115</sup> This explanation compares Elisabeth's state as a seasoned member of a religious order, who still needed to work hard to maintain the virtues of this life, to the struggles of the bird. But, the bird also represented anyone who was attempting to fight these temptations, such as those who were deciding to enter the monastic life, like Ekbert.

---

<sup>112</sup> Emecho of Schönau, *Vita Ekberti*, in Roth, *Visionen*, 348-49.

<sup>113</sup> "Recte sentire te arbitror in eo..." Roth, *Visionen*, 79.

<sup>114</sup> "...qui et candidi sunt per innocentiam, et variis pennati virtutibus." Roth, *Visionen*, 80.

<sup>115</sup> "...alas virtutum in continuo motu..." Roth, *Visionen*, 80.

Ekbart continued with his interpretations of all the images in Elisabeth's vision.<sup>116</sup> I would argue that Ekbart's analysis of this vision was not to aid Elisabeth's understanding, but rather, to help him with his own understanding of his new role as a monk. Ekbart argued that he was not an "attendant of the mysteries of God" but a person who lacked "understanding" about these matters.<sup>117</sup> Elisabeth would need to assist him through prayer in order for his successful completion of this task. Moreover, this would not be the first time that Elisabeth called on Ekbart to expand on her interpretations of material. As we will see in chapter three, it was an integral component of the reform concerns that both Elisabeth and Ekbart shared.

Thus, Ekbart's insertion into Elisabeth's visionary works must be viewed in the context of his status of a new monk attempting to undertake the same practices as Elisabeth. In fact, Ekbart continued to praise Elisabeth's mastery over her monastic profession in his *De obitu*, a letter that he composed to their kinswomen about Elisabeth's death. Ekbart's descriptions of Elisabeth here depicted her advanced progress in the monastic life in comparison to his. Moreover, it demonstrates how other members of the community used Elisabeth's visions as images to meditate, expand and interpret.

In this letter, Ekbart emphasized the functions of Elisabeth's mind. This echoed her emphasis on the duty of the mind in the opening lines of her *Liber visionum primus*. During her final days, Ekbart presented Elisabeth as giving many sermons to the sisters and the brothers of the community. For all of these, Ekbart characterized Elisabeth as "unshakable mentally" or

---

<sup>116</sup> See Clark, *The Complete Works*, 149-60.

<sup>117</sup> "non sum dispensator misteriorum dei...et minor ad intellegentiam..." Roth, *Visionen*, 79.

“mentally stable.” In one particular instance, Elisabeth gave a long “rational” sermon when Ekbert was present. He stated that although he was there, “only a few words of it lingered in my memory.”<sup>118</sup> In contrast to Elisabeth’s ability to focus her mind and meditate on works, Ekbert lamented in his *Meditatio cuiusdam hominis de Jhesu* that his own mind was “feeble.”<sup>119</sup> By presenting Elisabeth as having a sound mind, Ekbert followed hagiographic tropes. But, at the same time, this presentation was also consistent with her ability to complete memory-work and compose texts in her visionary books. Elisabeth’s mental fortitude was a key component of her successful monastic formation.

Moreover, Elisabeth’s works helped others in their progression of the religious life. According to Ekbert, Elisabeth aided the entire community because she “made known to us the glory of the heavenly citizens and placed it as if before our mental eyes.”<sup>120</sup> When Ekbert stated that Elisabeth’s visions were placed before the community’s mental eyes, he was using vocabulary consistent with how the thought process was described in the Middle Ages.<sup>121</sup> He also indicated that they learned her images in order to meditate on their meaning. Thus, as we saw in Hugh’s *Tractatus*, one author’s memory-work served as a catalyst for others to participate in the same process.

---

<sup>118</sup> “...sedens cum magna fortitudine spiritus allocuta est eas longo et rationabili sermone, de quo etsi presens essem, pauca verba hec in memoria mea permanserunt.” Roth, *Visionen*, 267.

<sup>119</sup> “...infirmus mens mea.” Roth, *Visionen*, 288.

<sup>120</sup> “Gloriam civium celi notam nobis faciebas, et quasi ante oculos mentis nostre ponebas...” Roth, *Visionen*, 264.

<sup>121</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 19. Ekbert also used this phrasing in his own works. See for example Roth, *Visionen*, 288.

Elisabeth articulated this point to the sisters as well. She told them, “May these things be always before your eyes and may you be more fully corrected than others through them, lest the Lord by chance charges you to a greater extent than others who have not learned such things as truly.”<sup>122</sup> Here, Elisabeth referred to both the internal and external components necessary to cultivate visions and compose texts. Thus, the community had Elisabeth’s texts, either as verbal descriptions or written works, before their eyes. In addition, they had seen Elisabeth’s external signs of her visionary experience. The external signs of Elisabeth’s internal thought process also acted as a memory cue for the community. They were able to place the image of Elisabeth’s suffering in their mind in order to recall the vision she narrated to them. It was one more way to involve the community in her works. And, the community learned well. When Elisabeth voiced concerns over receiving the eucharist before her death, one of her sisters reminded her of a vision that she had previously. The sister said, “Remember, lady, that in a certain vision the divine voice said to you, ‘I have begun and I will finish.’ From this, I have faith that the Lord will not allow you to die unexpectedly.”<sup>123</sup> Not only did the sister remember the vision, but she was able to interpret the meaning and apply it to this particular moment.

Thus, within Schönaue, Elisabeth’s texts served as an opportunity for new converts and veterans of the monastic life to engage with their vocation. For Ekbert, his participation in Elisabeth’s memory-work allowed him to interpret the meaning of his new role. In addition,

---

<sup>122</sup> “Sint vobis ista pre oculis semper et estote emendate per hec amplius, quam ceteri hominum, ne forte imputet vobis dominus magis, quam aliis, qui non iam veraciter ista perceperunt.” Roth, *Visionen*, 267.

<sup>123</sup> “Et dixit una sororum vigilantium cum ea: Memento domina, quod in quadam visione tua dixit ad te vox divina: Cepi et perficiam. Hinc ego confide, quod non sinet te dominus sic ex improviso transire.” Roth, *Visionen*, 268.

Elisabeth's sisters were able to recollect all of Elisabeth's texts, either her oral communications or her writings, to progress in their spiritual lives.

### ***Conclusion***

The visionary genre has too often been seen as a way in which women were able to express themselves in a society and culture that did not afford them traditional modes of authority such as education or priestly ordination.<sup>124</sup> Yet, Elisabeth's texts demonstrate her participation and training in her society's culture, which focused heavily on using images and visions as the impetus for composing written works via the memory arts. In fact, Elisabeth often used visual images of authoritative authors to aide in her recollection of material. Moreover, the visionary genre was a dynamic one. Elisabeth employed it as a way to respond to the demands of a new group of monastic converts who entered into monasteries that promoted reform. Thus, the visionary genre served to emphasize spiritual fortitude through various supernatural figures, but operated within an educated environment of reform. Her *Liber visionum primus* answered the growing need for formational texts to assist new converts, including her learned brother, Ekbert, in progressing in the monastic life.

Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* highlighted her use of dialogue. In this chapter, I focused on Elisabeth's self-dialogue for the way in which it engaged with concerns in formational literature in a reform environment. Thus, this dialogue did not indicate that

---

<sup>124</sup> Clark, *The Complete Works*, 28.

Elisabeth was a harbinger of the increased mystical visionary activity by women in the thirteenth century.<sup>125</sup> Rather, the dialogue was a key component to intellectual culture in the twelfth century. In the following chapter, I will consider how Elisabeth's use of dialogue within and outside her visions marked her participation in the theological and spiritual debates in which members of the twelfth-century intellectual elite engaged.

---

<sup>125</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 3-4.

## Chapter Two

### Disputing Authority: Discipline, Dialogue and Visions in the Twelfth Century

Although Elisabeth framed her works in the visionary genre, she relied heavily on the literary convention of the dialogue. This literary format underwent a surge in popularity in the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> The dialogue has also been linked to the rise of school culture at this time.<sup>2</sup> Anne Clark has noted the dialogic elements captured in Elisabeth's works, arguing that they did not represent a systematic presentation of the question and answer format associated with school culture because they were portrayed as uninterrupted narration.<sup>3</sup> But, Elisabeth's visions demonstrate numerous examples of this type of interrupted narration. She engaged in dialogues with heavenly figures within her visionary realm, repeatedly asking them questions as they came to her mind. Likewise, Elisabeth often discussed her visions with members of her community. They then requested Elisabeth to inquire about theological or spiritual matters within her visions. Moreover, as words of Elisabeth's visionary experiences spread, she engaged in more conversations. Eventually, the dialogic format became the dominant convention in her texts.

The dialogue format enjoyed such popularity in the twelfth century because it reflected twelfth-century pedagogical trends both within and outside the monastery. These pedagogical

---

<sup>1</sup> See Peter von Moos, "Le dialogue latin au Moyen Âge: l'exemple d'Evrard d'Ypres," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 44. 4 (1989): 993-1028; and Sabina Flanagan, "The *Speculum virginum* and Traditions of Medieval Dialogue," in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001), 181-200.

<sup>2</sup> Alex J. Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," *AHR* 117. 2 (2012): 331-64; and Alex Novikoff, "Anselm, Dialogue, and the Rise of Scholastic Disputation," *Speculum* 86. 2 (2011): 387-418.

<sup>3</sup> Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 51.

roots are clear from the fact that so many works composed in this manner framed the conversations as occurring between a master and a student. In this chapter, I will argue that because the dialogue format emphasized a pedagogical relationship to its readers, Elisabeth employed it to emphasize her authority to enter into public debates as a teacher.

This chapter will assess two components of the dialogue convention that aided Elisabeth's presentation of herself as possessing this type of magisterial authority. First, I will consider how the conversation that she entered with her angelic guide presented her as an ideal master. I will argue that the motif of discipline, one which twelfth-century contemporaries associated with the classroom and the cloister, played an important role in Elisabeth's construction of herself as possessing authority to teach both in the cloister and the public sphere. Many of the critiques that teachers received centered on the motif of discipline. In his *Monodies*, Guibert of Nogent noted how his master assaulted him with both beatings and harsh words.<sup>4</sup> Eadmer's biography of St. Anselm recounted Anselm's horror at the pedagogical techniques another master used, which included frequent beatings.<sup>5</sup> Both Guibert's and Eadmer's examples highlight how physical punishment directed at others betrayed a lack of self-discipline in the teacher.

On the other hand, Elisabeth's texts presented her as exercising complete self-discipline. Recently, Ian Wei has argued that monastic ideal of discipline affected the institutionalization of

---

<sup>4</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *Monodies and On the Relics of Saints: The Autobiography and a Manifesto of a French Monk from the Time of the Crusades*, trans. Joseph McAlhany and Jay Rubenstein (New York: Penguin, 2011), 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. R.W. Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 37. Eadmer devoted chapter twenty-two to this problem. "De discretione quam docuit quendam abbatem exercere erga pueros in scola nutritos." Ibid.

master and student behavior. Moreover, this monastic ideal became codified in the early thirteenth-century foundation documents at the University of Paris.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the tensions between the idealized role of the master and his actual actions formulated a motif in twelfth-century debates about the validity of a master's teaching and his ability to guide students properly. Although self-discipline was a trait prized in the cloister, it was also important for the master's public persona. How Elisabeth deployed this motif was important not only for the way in which it presented her as possessing magisterial authority, but also for how she criticized her detractors.

Secondly, I will highlight how Elisabeth used the dialogic convention to answer specific questions in a way that mimicked oral discourse and the actions of a teacher engaged in disputations. As Alex Novikoff recently has argued, disputation was not a sterile classroom exercise but part of a larger cultural phenomenon in the twelfth century.<sup>7</sup> Novikoff has argued that the literary convention of the dialogue set the stage for the proliferation of disputative actions in society, not just in the formalized university setting.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as Novikoff has shown, the meaning of the term *disputatio* transformed throughout the twelfth century. What started as a spiritual conversation among monastic brethren in the cloister evolved into a way to formulate public debates about new questions, old questions and the usefulness of the act of disputation itself.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ian P. Wei, "From Twelfth-Century Schools to Thirteenth-Century Universities: The Disappearance of Biographical and Autobiographical Representations of Scholars," *Speculum* 86. 1 (2011): 42-78.

<sup>7</sup> See Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History."

<sup>8</sup> Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History," 340-49.

<sup>9</sup> Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History," 349.

In Elisabeth's works, she engaged in dialogues that sought to resolve theological questions and discrepancies within the textual tradition. The inquiries Elisabeth posed herself or received from others about conflicting information or texts also exemplified the tensions between written and spoken authority in the twelfth century. As Constant Mews has noted, the way in which theology was taught in the mid-twelfth century in Paris was in flux, largely due to the dynamic between spoken and written authority. Abelard, for example, emphasized giving lectures, which his students would then copy down. In his mind, he derived his authority from his oral interactions with his students and not through his careful promotion and publication of any particular text.<sup>10</sup> Robert of Melun, who taught in Paris from the 1130s to 1160,<sup>11</sup> also praised the spoken rather than the written word in order to deliver information. He argued that the written word was an "obscure figure of the will of the writer" and that authors "expounding their own opinion in person are more to be believed" than any of their commentators.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, texts represented conflict because they did not always agree. They also offered the possibility of misrepresentation. Elisabeth's use of the dialogic convention, however, filtered those texts through her discussions, presenting them as both being challenged and resolved by oral communication. Thus, Elisabeth's oral and aural transactions framed her visions, not visual images. She was not providing a sort of commentary of a visual image, something her contemporary Hildegard of Bingen emphasized. Rather, she emphasized the oral interruptions

---

<sup>10</sup> Constant Mews, "Orality, Literacy, and Authority in the Twelfth-Century Schools," in *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), I, 475-500, at 483.

<sup>11</sup> Mews, "Orality, Literacy, and Authority," I, 486.

<sup>12</sup> Mews, "Orality, Literacy, and Authority," I, 488, quoting Robert Melun, *Sententiae*, in *Oeuvres de Robert de Melun*, ed. by R.M. Martin, 4 vols. (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1932-52), 1:47-48.

within her works to demonstrate clearly those included in the conversation. Elisabeth used her texts to engage in a conversation with her readers as an authoritative teacher.

To assess how Elisabeth harnessed scholastic motifs and conventions to publish her messages, I will first consider how Elisabeth presented her relationship with her angelic guide in order to demonstrate how she exhibited the traits of the ideal master. Second, I will consider how Elisabeth's use of the dialogue to enter into theological and spiritual debates emphasized her role as a master through her public voice. I assess her conversations about angelology to show how Elisabeth examined textual tradition and rational discussion to dispute one of her detractors. Finally, I will analyze Elisabeth's role in the discovery of relics in Cologne, purportedly from St. Ursula and her followers, to highlight how Elisabeth used the dialogue convention to use oral and textual communication to support her authority to publish her reform messages.

Reform was the driving force behind Elisabeth's entrance into the public sphere. As Fiona Griffith's recent work on Herrad of Hohenbourg has demonstrated, women in reform environments interacted with scholastic culture in order to produce texts for their intellectual and reform concerns.<sup>13</sup> However, Griffith's has emphasized the non-visionary nature of Herrad's works, implying that visions were not part of mainstream intellectual culture.<sup>14</sup> Although modern scholars have studied visionary women for their spirituality,<sup>15</sup> they have not been

---

<sup>13</sup> Fiona Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 4, 160.

<sup>14</sup> For a notable exception to this is Mary Campbell's recent work on the Ursuline relics and Elisabeth's *Revelatio*. See, "Sanctity and Identity: The Authentication of the Ursuline Relics and Legal Discourse in Elisabeth von Schönau's *Liber Revelationum*," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 38. 2 (2012): 159-92.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); and Barbara Newman, "The Visionary Texts and

considered for the ways in which they participated in mainstream intellectual culture of the twelfth century.<sup>16</sup> This bifurcated model of how visions functioned in twelfth-century culture is not tenable.<sup>17</sup> As I argue in this chapter, Elisabeth's use of the visionary genre did not seek to present her authority as an alternative option to the dynamic school culture.<sup>18</sup> Rather, she modeled herself as a master by highlighting her dialogic interactions, thus seeking to cement her authority to publish her messages like other members of the intellectual elite.

### ***Masters, Students and Angels: Real and Ideal Relationships***

The dialogue convention most often identified the interlocutors in the text as a teacher and a student. Even when the discussants were not called "teacher" and "student," the two parties entered into a dialogic relationship that presented one person as imparting information, the other learning it. Although initially the interactions between Elisabeth and her angelic guide placed her within the role of a student learning information from her visionary teacher, her angel's conversations eventually promoted Elisabeth as the ideal master. In fact, Elisabeth presented the angel as the figure who compelled her to distribute her messages to a broad

---

Visual Worlds of Religious Women," in *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. Dietlinde Hamburger and ed. Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 151-71.

<sup>16</sup> Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights*, 223.

<sup>17</sup> For medieval visionary culture, see Barbara Newman, "What does it mean to say 'I saw?': The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture," *Speculum* 80.1 (2005): 1-43.

<sup>18</sup> See Anne Clark Bartlett, "Miraculous Literacy and Textual Communities in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*," *Mystics Quarterly* 18.2 (1992): 43-55, at 43-44.

audience outside the cloister. Elisabeth argued for her fitness to be a teacher in her texts by employing common motifs associated with scholastic images of the master, especially those of submission and discipline. I will demonstrate how these motifs operated within the cloister and outside it to show how both monks and scholars conceptualized teaching in a similar fashion.

Elisabeth's first conversation with her angelic guide occurred on Christmas Eve 1153, about a year and half after she first began to have visions. This exchange between Elisabeth and her angel provides the context for the subsequent publication of her works outside the cloister. Here, Elisabeth spoke of her struggles to live according to her monastic profession, stating that she was "weary of enduring."<sup>19</sup> In response, the angelic guide encouraged her to "take comfort, be consoled" and not to "fail on her path."<sup>20</sup> Thus, in the first dialogue between Elisabeth and her angel, the angel's words reminded Elisabeth that living the monastic life was difficult but worthwhile.

Through this encouragement, the angel acted as sort of a teacher for Elisabeth in matters relating to the difficulty of life in the cloister. Other monastic thinkers, such as Hugh of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux, believed that angels were ideal teachers because they guided humans towards more perfect knowledge.<sup>21</sup> In this case, the angel's words reminded Elisabeth that attaining this type of knowledge was important even if it was difficult.

---

<sup>19</sup> "...lassa sum ad sustinendum." F.W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbart und Emecho von Schönaue* (Brünn: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercienser-Orden 1884), 28.

<sup>20</sup> "Confortare, consolare, noli deficere in via." Roth, *Visionen*, 28.

<sup>21</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on Psalm 90*, in *Angelic Spirituality: Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels*, trans. Steven Chase (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002), 113. See also, S. Bernardi Opera, Vol. IV, *Sermons*

Elisabeth embraced the angel's lesson, but she did not consider it one that was for her alone. On Christmas Day 1153, Elisabeth prayed for the "communal correction of the church."<sup>22</sup> She wanted to understand what needed to be done about all of the clergy and nuns who were not "walking along the good path."<sup>23</sup> When Elisabeth asked the angel what she should do to help these clerics and nuns, the angel encouraged Elisabeth to publicize her message about the need for reform within the Church.<sup>24</sup> Taken together, Elisabeth's discussions on December 24 and December 25, 1153 demonstrate that the angelic guide acted to encourage monastic reform, whether it was for Elisabeth's individual practice or for all members of the Church. According to the angel, however, it was Elisabeth's job to teach others how to walk on this correct path.

It is clear that Elisabeth did assume this role within her own cloister. Elisabeth held the position of *magistra* within her community. Within Hirsau-reformed houses, the title *magistra* connoted a learned individual charged with the education of her nuns.<sup>25</sup> Although Elisabeth did not explicitly discuss her role as the *magistra* in any detail, it seems evident she provided education for her sisters. In fact, Ekbert's *De obitu*, the letter he wrote to family members

---

in *Psalmum 'Qui habitat'*, eds. Jean Leclercq and Henri-Marie Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1966). See Hugh of St. Victor, "Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, Book I.i," in *Angelic Spirituality*, 187-96; and "On the Six Wings of the Cherubim," in *Angelic Spirituality*, 121-46.

<sup>22</sup> "...pro communi correctione ecclesie..." Roth, *Visionen*, 29.

<sup>23</sup> "...clero et monialibus non bona gradientibus via." Roth, *Visionen*, 29.

<sup>24</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 29. The angel told her to shout her message to those in sin. "Clama et dic genti peccatrici, populo pleno peccato..." Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27.

detailing Elisabeth's death, described the sermons she gave to the Schönaun nuns.<sup>26</sup> Elisabeth's words to her sisters encouraged them in their vocation and provided them additional education about the spiritual and theological matters necessary to remain dedicated to their profession.

Whether or not women should teach was a matter addressed by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12. Here, Paul seems to argue that women should not hold any authority over men or to act as teachers. However, Paul's words were subject to much interpretation by exegetes. Between 1139 and 1141, Peter Lombard composed his *Collectanea*, which provided an exegesis of Paul's epistles. In his work, Peter noted that women served as deaconesses when Paul wrote his epistles and that Paul offered no criticism of this role. Thus, women did in fact have some sort of authority within the Church. Moreover, the twelfth-century "Cambridge commentator" provided an addendum to Peter's work, noting that abbesses in his own day provided such a function in the Church.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, Elisabeth's texts also interacted with the work of St. Paul. Although Elisabeth did not compose an exegesis of Paul's letters, it seems as though she understood his texts as authorizing her to promote her understanding of theological and spiritual matters to others. In her *Liber visionum tercius*, Elisabeth considered a passage from Paul's Letter to the Romans. Elisabeth explained how Paul's conception of righteousness and faith was linked to other scriptural passages; however, Elisabeth expressed doubt about her interpretation of Paul's words.

---

<sup>26</sup> See Roth, *Visionen*, 263-278.

<sup>27</sup> Marcia Colish, "Peter Lombard as an Exegete of St. Paul," in *Studies in Scholasticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), IX, 78-79.

To assuage her concerns, Elisabeth related that she called the image of Paul to mind,<sup>28</sup> where he confirmed to her that she did understand his works correctly.<sup>29</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, this passage operated as a memory cue to help Elisabeth develop her text. But, it is also significant that when she recalled his image, she also noted that in her conversation with him, Paul approved of her thought. These same thoughts became the material for her various texts, which circulated among other monastic communities.

For twelfth-century schoolmen such as Peter and the Cambridge Commentator as well as religious like Elisabeth, her role as a teacher had precedent within scriptural tradition. To this point, however, Elisabeth's call to teach others has been considered within the context of the cloister. Peter and the Cambridge Commentator, although conceding that women taught, did not speak to whether they should teach outside their communities. Elisabeth's use of the visionary genre to publicize messages has usually been assessed within the context of gender. That is, women needed to claim divine intervention in order to navigate the misogynistic perceptions of their intellectual abilities among their contemporaries.<sup>30</sup> Yet, in the twelfth century, there were many debates among contemporaries about how authors must act in the public sphere in order to be considered authoritative voices.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, with the proliferation of masters who held court over their own schools, their authority to teach became contested through the critiques of their

---

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>29</sup> "...et interrogavi eum de scriptura sua, que predicta est, quia non satis credebam intellectu meo, et respondit michi dicens: Quod querebas a me, intelligis." Roth, *Visionen*, 66.

<sup>30</sup> Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> See Wei, "Representations of Scholars"; John Cotts, "Monks and Clerks in Search of the *Beata Schola*: Peter of Celle's Warning to John of Salisbury Reconsidered," in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe 1000-1200*, eds. Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 255-277.

thoughts and methods. Thus, I want to consider how Elisabeth's texts also entered into the debate about how masters needed to display their authority to communicate their works in public. To do this, I will consider the motifs of submission and discipline in her texts.

Before I consider how and why Elisabeth depicted the motifs of submission and discipline within her works, it is important to assess their context within debates about how masters should act. Central to this debate was the function of discipline in the scholarly life. Iconography of masters often depicted the rod as their instrument of discipline.<sup>32</sup> Despite this iconography, however, twelfth-century authors often criticized masters who employed too much discipline on their students. According to authors such as Guibert of Nogent and Eadmer of Canterbury, a master who punished others too harshly exposed his own failings.<sup>33</sup> This failing was the master's lack of self-discipline, without which, he could never be a true authority.

Self-discipline was a trait often associated with monastic circles. The Rule of St. Benedict encouraged self-discipline in the form of submission to the abbot as the spiritual teacher within the monastery. But, as Ian Wei recently has argued, school masters in the twelfth century grappled with how to promote themselves as teachers. Moreover, their works also had to answer their critics, of which there were many in the dynamic school environment that existed before the institutionalization of the University of Paris. As Wei has noted, many of the

---

<sup>32</sup> Mia Münster-Swendsen, "The Model of Scholastic Mastery in Northern Europe c. 970-1200," in *Teaching and Learning*, 307-342, at 307.

<sup>33</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *Monodies*, 14-15; and Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm*, 37.

schoolmen's critics came from monastic circles, thus the critique that these scholars did not employ enough self-discipline is not surprising.<sup>34</sup>

Yet, these monastic critiques about self-discipline did not target all scholars negatively. For example, when Otto of Freising described Peter Abelard as "conceited" and having "such confidence in his own intellectual power that he would scarcely so demean himself as to descend from the heights of his own mind to listen to his teachers," it was a critique of Abelard's self-discipline.<sup>35</sup> Abelard's teaching was wrong because he did not submit himself to others, which was a component of self-discipline. On the other hand, Otto presented another contemporary scholar, Gilbert of Poitiers, who was put on trial at the Council of Rheims in 1148 for his teaching, as someone who "subjected himself to the instruction of great men and put more confidence in the weight of their authority than in his own intellect."<sup>36</sup> Both Abelard and Gilbert used dialectical methods of inquiry, which is not a feature most often associated with monastic life. However, Otto did not criticize Abelard's use of logic, but his lack of discipline. Thus, the method of conducting theological inquiry was not under attack, but how the master who advanced his ideas acted.

---

<sup>34</sup> Wei, "Representations of Scholars," 71.

<sup>35</sup> Otto of Freising, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (NY: Columbia Press, 1953), 83.

<sup>36</sup> Brian Robert Noell, "Applied Science: Academic Learning and the Cistercian Enterprise in the Central Middle Ages" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006), 43, quoting, Otto of Freising, *Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa* 1.52, 88.

Although the idea of discipline held different nuances within the cloister and within the schools,<sup>37</sup> members of both groups interacted with each other and helped to shape and define intellectual practices in the twelfth century. As Wei and other scholars have recently noted, the discussion among both groups about the purpose and value of education blurred the distinction between actions of monks and school masters.<sup>38</sup> It is in this context, then, that Elisabeth's use of the motif of discipline within her writings must be evaluated. As I will demonstrate in what follows, Elisabeth employed this motif in order to show that her texts belonged in the public sphere.

Although Elisabeth's angelic guide encouraged her to publish her reform message in December 1153, Elisabeth did not immediately do so. Rather, it was not until August 1154 that Elisabeth showed her visionary text to her abbot, Hildelin, which he used to preach her messages across the Rhineland. Moreover, Elisabeth did not simply hand over her work to her abbot. In her *Liber visionum primus*, she depicted her angel disciplining her through a beating to compel her to publicize her works. This angelic beating was in fact the culmination of a series of visionary discussions about Elisabeth's self-discipline.<sup>39</sup> I will argue that Elisabeth presented her audience with a clear sign of her self-discipline through a discussion of her practice of flagellation, which ended with her angel wielding the whip.

---

<sup>37</sup> See Cotts, "Monks and Clerks," 273-276. For a discussion of the idea of comportment within the German cathedral schools, see generally C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

<sup>38</sup> See Wei, "Representations of Scholars"; and Novikoff, "Rise of Scholastic Disputation." In addition, Cotts has noted that the idea of a "school" for both monks and clerics meant a way of living. "Monks and Clerks," 273-5.

<sup>39</sup> This discussion took place in chapters seventy-six through seventy-eight of Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*. See Roth, *Visionen*, 35-8.

Elisabeth linked the production of her texts to her practice of flagellation. The angelic guide first mentioned Elisabeth's practice of self-discipline in a vision where her soul was called to judgment. Elisabeth recounted that she saw a scale before her, one side of which the devil manned, the other, her angel. The devil placed her book of transgressions on the scale. Her angel added her book of righteousness. Initially, it seemed as though her transgressions outweighed her righteous acts. But, her angelic guide called out, "It shall not be because she has endured many and great pains on account of her transgressions and has often undertaken harsh flagellations."<sup>40</sup> Elisabeth called upon her angelic guide to "Instruct me, my lord"<sup>41</sup> about what she needed to do to avert a poor judgment. Her angel responded that she should be "completely obedient, humble, patient and loving."<sup>42</sup>

This visionary account laid out the components necessary for Elisabeth to publish her works. In order for her texts to be considered valid and authoritative, she had to prove her ability to submit to discipline. According to the angelic guide, who was clearly placed in the role of Elisabeth's teacher in this vision, self-discipline included Elisabeth's flagellations as well as her submission to others through her obedience.

Elisabeth first demonstrated her obedience through the celebration of Mass while she awaited the decision for her soul. Thus, she submitted herself to the belief in the redeeming qualities of Christ's body. Elisabeth immediately received a reward for her act. When the devil

---

<sup>40</sup> "Non ita erit, quoniam dolores plurimos et magnos pro delictis suis sustinuit, ac duras flagellationes sepe suscepit." Roth, *Visionen*, 36.

<sup>41</sup> "Instrue me, domine mi." Roth, *Visionen*, 36.

<sup>42</sup> "Esto obediens valde, humilis, patiens, et amabilis." Roth, *Visionen*, 36.

and angel next called her to the scales of judgment, her angelic guide placed the eucharistic wafer on top of her book of righteousness, tipping the scales in Elisabeth's favor. Elisabeth viewed a similar scene of judgment shortly after this initial one. In this case, the only difference was that Elisabeth invoked the Virgin and the apostles as her act of obedience to holy figures, which once again demonstrated the weight of her book of righteousness was greater. Moreover, her angelic guide reminded Elisabeth to continue to practice self-flagellation.<sup>43</sup> Elisabeth's acts of self-discipline, her flagellation and her submission to Christ's body and the saints, all authorized her book of righteousness. As we will see, this book of righteousness was in fact Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*, the text that her angelic guide urged her to publish.

When Elisabeth presented her next vision, she reported that her angelic guide questioned her, stating ““Why do you hide gold in the mud? This is the word of God, which is sent to earth through your mouth, not so that it would be hidden, but so that it would be made manifest for the praise and glory of our Lord and for the salvation of His people.””<sup>44</sup> Immediately after this accusation, Elisabeth described how the angel lifted a whip above her and hit her five times. The angel's act struck Elisabeth dumb. Realizing that she must publish her works, but unable to make any sound, she motioned for her sisters to alert the abbot. In addition, she indicated to her sisters that she needed her book, the *Liber visionum primus*, which she had secretly hidden to this point. When Hildelin arrived, Elisabeth gave him the book. At this point, Elisabeth found her voice and was able to speak again.

---

<sup>43</sup> “...ad quondam carnis afflictionem me exhortatus est.” Roth, *Visionen*, 37.

<sup>44</sup> “Quare abscondis aurum in luto? Hoc est verbum dei, quod missum est per os tuum in terram, non ut abscondatur, sed ut manifestetur ad laudem et gloriam domini nostra, et ad salvationem populi sunt.” Roth, *Visionen*, 38.

Elisabeth's angel beat her as a final act of discipline. In this case, Elisabeth demonstrated that her act of publishing came from her submission to the angel's order. The angel had accused her of remaining silent when she should speak, which is exactly the predicament that Elisabeth portrayed when she was struck mute. Giving her book to her abbot for him to see and show others demonstrated that she would remain silent no longer. Her words would enter into the public realm. Moreover, Elisabeth's actions of self-discipline had alerted her audience that she did not enter this realm rashly or out of pride for her intellect. Thus, Elisabeth's own path of self-correction led her to the production of a correct text for others to view.

The angelic guide operated as one figure to prove Elisabeth's texts as worthy of publication. However, like other twelfth-century authors, Elisabeth endured criticisms from detractors. In fact, some of these detractors questioned the authority of the angelic guide. Thus, when Elisabeth wrote to her friend, visionary and fellow reformer, Hildegard of Bingen, to describe the circumstances surrounding the publication of her works, she emphasized her obedience to her abbot. When Hildelin took Elisabeth's message to the magistrates of the church, the reaction among them was not universally enthusiastic, as "some of them heard the words with reverence but some did not, instead speaking perversely about the angel who is close to me, saying that he is a mocking spirit and has been transformed into an angel of light."<sup>45</sup> In reaction to the magistrates' response, Elisabeth stated that Hildelin, acting as her "teacher bound [her] through obedience" to question the angelic guide's instruction.<sup>46</sup> Although the challenge

---

<sup>45</sup> "Quorum quidam cum reverentia verbum exceperunt, quidam vero non sic, sed sinistre de angelo qui familiaris mihi est, locuti sunt dicentes, cum esse illusorem spiritum, et in angelum lucis transfiguratum." Roth, *Visionen*, 72.

<sup>46</sup> "Unde et per obedientiam me constrinxit precipiens..." Roth, *Visionen*, 72.

to the angel's instruction initially perturbed her guide, he admitted to Elisabeth that she had acted properly, that is, out of her "obedience" to her abbot.<sup>47</sup>

Elisabeth's chief concern in writing to Hildegard was to explain that the publication of her works was a valid act. But, it was also important for her to emphasize that her acts of self-discipline occurred both within and outside her visionary experience. The first step in doing this was to present her decision to publish as acting out of obedience to others rather than to her own will. In this case, Elisabeth depicted herself as obedient to both her angel and her abbot. Moreover, in the letter she sent to Hildegard, Elisabeth submitted herself to Hildegard's discretion, stating that her friend needed to "judge whether I said or did anything presumptuous in this matter."<sup>48</sup> In her response, Hildegard reminded Elisabeth that those who submitted themselves to the Lord were often afflicted by the undisciplined words of those who did not.<sup>49</sup>

Ultimately, this motif of discipline framed the introduction to Elisabeth's works. Here, her brother, Ekbert, noted that Elisabeth "was compelled by familial love and by order of the abbot" to submit her writings to him. He then "diligently" investigated her messages.<sup>50</sup> Hildelin and Ekbert were both teachers, like her angelic guide and Hildegard, in their own right. According to Elisabeth, she desired the advice of these two teachers. She lamented that she had

---

<sup>47</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 72.

<sup>48</sup> "Sed huius fame occasionem vobis aperiam, ut iudicetis, utrum presumptuose quicquam in hac re fecerim, aut dixerim." Roth, *Visionen*, 71.

<sup>49</sup> See Joseph Baird and Radd Ehrman, trans. *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen, Vol. II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 180-181.

<sup>50</sup> "Cum enim ab inquireribus multa occultaret, eo quod esset timorata valde et humillima spiritu, huic diligenter omnia investiganti et memorie ea trader cupienti germanitatis et delectionis gratia, et abbatis iussione cuncta familiariter enarrare coacta est." Roth, *Visionen*, 2.

“less discretion” than she needed to understand which of her texts should be published or not.<sup>51</sup>

But, with the help of the abbot and Ekbert, she need not be in “danger of doing wrong” with her publications.<sup>52</sup>

Elisabeth’s role as a self-disciplined teacher was also validated by members outside her own community. In the complete collection of Elisabeth’s epistolary works, there is an introduction that served to contextualize Elisabeth’s correspondence. The introduction described a monk’s visit from the abbey of Busendorf to Schönau. He was “most learned in sacred letters”<sup>53</sup> and once convinced of Elisabeth’s holiness, “faithfully instructed her with good advice.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, the introduction set up the monk as a teacher. But, the Busendorf monk also requested that Elisabeth send him instruction by a letter. In fact, the monk stated that Elisabeth’s message would serve to advise the abbot and correct the brothers.<sup>55</sup> In this instance, the abbot at Busendorf was not put in the position of providing instruction to his brethren, but Elisabeth assumed this role through the publication of her reform works. Thus, Elisabeth did not act in the role of the master outside her own cloister based on her judgments but because others recognized her ability to do so.

---

<sup>51</sup> “Minus enim discretionis me...” Roth, *Visionen*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> “...in periculo delinquendi posita sum.” Roth, *Visionen*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> “...quidam in sacris litteris copiose eruditus...” Roth, *Visionen*, 139.

<sup>54</sup> “Cumque ei vehementer congratulatus fuisset, et bonis consiliis eam fideliter instruxisset.” Roth, *Visionen*, 139.

<sup>55</sup> “Simul etiam petivit ab ea mitti spistolam abbati suo et fratribus de correctione eos admonentem.” Roth, *Visionen*, 139.

Although the relationship between Ekbert and Elisabeth, and the publications of her messages, has usually been considered within the framework of a female visionary submitting to male clerical approval,<sup>56</sup> I would argue that the relationships that Elisabeth described with her angelic guide, her abbot, Hildegard, Ekbert and the Busendorf monk operated within twelfth-century conceptions of how teachers should act when seeking to publish their works. That is, Elisabeth did not need discernment from these different teachers because she was a female visionary. Rather, this activity was part of the scholarly motif of a self-disciplined master.

Elisabeth was not the only Rhenish Benedictine to employ the motif of scholarly discipline to authorize her texts. Rupert of Deutz (1075-1129) was a prolific writer and often entered into disputes with schoolmasters.<sup>57</sup> Writing around 1127, he described his literary output as deriving from the “cane” of the Spirit, thus comparing spiritual prodding to the rod of the classroom master. John Van Engen has argued that Rupert’s allusion to the scholarly motif of discipline was a way to mock the schoolmen. That is, his method of discipline, the monastery, was better than what they had in the classroom.<sup>58</sup> Even if Rupert used the motif as a polemical response,<sup>59</sup> he still portrayed himself as part of a school culture that demanded rigorous training

---

<sup>56</sup> See John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 25-44.

<sup>57</sup> John Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 191-214.

<sup>58</sup> John Van Engen, “Letters, Schools and Written Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in *Dialektik und Rhetorik im früheren und hohen Mittelalter: Rezeption, Überlieferung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung antiker Gelehrsamkeit vornehmlich im 9. und 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Johannes Fried (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997), 97-132, at 102, n. 21.

<sup>59</sup> See Van Engen, “Letters, Schools and Written Culture,” 123. Here, Van Engen argues that Rupert conceived of his work as authorized because it was not part of school culture.

in order to engage in public debate. Likewise, Elisabeth employed the same motif of discipline to demonstrate that her works with her messages were fit to circulate publicly.

Thus, I have argued that the first conversation that Elisabeth and her angelic guide engaged in set the stage for the publication of her works because these dialogic interactions initially emphasized Elisabeth's discipline, a necessary component of her entry into the public sphere. Elisabeth's texts first engaged the public through her abbot, Hildelin. He preached her messages, but they became distorted through the circulation of unauthorized letters in Elisabeth's name.<sup>60</sup> Elisabeth, in a way, still remained mute despite the publication of her works because she did not deliver the message. Now, we must turn to how Elisabeth's employment of dialogic conventions within her texts to resolve debates was based on her attempt to control her messages through the presentation of her oral communication. Elisabeth's subsequent ideas would be clearly labeled as her own in her own voice.

### ***Visionary Dialogues, Public Disputes***

Elisabeth's visions began to use the dialogic convention more frequently after the initial publication of her messages through abbot Hildelin. Increasingly, the discussions within Elisabeth's visions were not confined to her spiritual interlocutors, such as her angelic guide and various saints. Instead, Elisabeth documented various interruptions from various monastic

---

<sup>60</sup> See Roth, *Visionen*, 71.

inquirers. When she entered into these extra-visionary dialogues,<sup>61</sup> she noted them in her texts by stating that she had been “advised” (*premonita fueram*) about a particular topic. These outside interruptions clearly indicated that Elisabeth discussed her visionary experiences with others. But, these conversations were more than Elisabeth simply receiving questions from other interested parties to bring into her visionary experience. Rather, Elisabeth used the questions that she received to provide answers that supported her reform message of correction within the Church. Moreover, she also answered the charges of her detractors who disputed her claim to enter into these theological and spiritual debates by emphasizing the authority of her speech.

The conversations within Elisabeth’s works were part of a monastic tradition. In the fourth-century work, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, these types of discussions were prominently featured. And, of course, the monastic *collatio* was an important component of the religious life because it brought monks together for the purpose of listening to edifying works and discussing them.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the stylization of internal thoughts as a self-dialogue was popularized by St. Augustine.<sup>63</sup> These types of conversations, however, are usually examined for what they can tell us about the spiritual formation of those committed to the religious life. Although these

---

<sup>61</sup> I have coined the term “extra-visionary” to refer to conversations that Elisabeth took part in in a non-visionary state, but that were later influential in the way in which she presented her visionary experience in her written works.

<sup>62</sup> For early examples of the importance of conversation among monks, see Mirko Breitenstein “‘Ins Gespräch gebracht’: Der Dialog als Prinzip monastischer Unterweisung,” in *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication (Western Europe, Tenth-Thirteenth Centuries)*, ed. Steven Vanderputten (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 205-30, at 209-15.

<sup>63</sup> Novikoff, “The Rise of Scholastic Disputation,” 396-97.

dialogues have been viewed as representing a form of education, they have been presented as relating only to the life in the monastery.<sup>64</sup>

It is clear that Elisabeth's reform environment promoted the use of the literary format of the dialogue. William of Hirsau (c. 1030-1091), the Hirsau reform movement's leader and namesake wrote numerous dialogues. In fact, Conrad of Hirsau (fl. 1140s), who was a prolific author, also composed the *Speculum virginum*. This text presented the key components of spiritual formation for nuns in the form of a dialogue between a master, Peregrinus, and a nun, Theodora.<sup>65</sup> This conversation, although it depicted both parties as learned, has been studied as a way to educate reform cloisters about their difficult vocation. Although it considered theological and spiritual topics, this work was aimed at fostering engagement within the monastery, not outside it.

Recently, Novikoff has offered a different view of conversations within the monastic environment. In fact, he has argued that the cultural roots of scholastic disputation, which became systematized within the University in the thirteenth century, lay within the cloister. Novikoff has argued that Anselm of Bec (c.1033-1109) was influential in popularizing the dialogue through his texts and his role as a teacher at Bec.<sup>66</sup> Although literary dialogues and

---

<sup>64</sup> See especially Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982). See also, Breitenstein, "'Ins Gespräch gebracht,'" 214, 216-19.

<sup>65</sup> Sabina Flanagan, "The *Speculum virginum* and Traditions of Medieval Dialogue," in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001), 181; and Constant Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zweifalten and the Hirsau Reform," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. by George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 182-97, at 193.

<sup>66</sup> Novikoff, "Rise of Scholastic Disputation," 389.

public disputations are two different forms of discourse, Novikoff notes that the type of questioning that the dialogic convention encouraged was foundational for later formalized University disputations.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, when Elisabeth wrote her works in the mid-twelfth century, there were no set rules about how to engage in the question and answer exercise.<sup>68</sup> In this dynamic environment, there were various attempts to systematize knowledge, such as through the various sentence collections. Although Peter Lombard's would later be adopted within the University, neither his text nor its heir, the *summa*, was the clear-cut winner in this dynamic environment.<sup>69</sup> Thus, I will argue in what follows that Elisabeth's use of the dialogic convention in her visionary writings represents yet another manifestation of the cultural diffusion of disputation in an environment that experimented with different formats for the sake of learning. For Elisabeth, this disputation was not a formalized exercise, but rather, her attempt to answer in her own voice the charges that her critics leveled against her.

I will consider two different instances in Elisabeth's texts where she disputed her detractors. The first is a series of chapters in Elisabeth's *Liber visionum tercius*, which explore matters of angelology. Next, I will analyze how Elisabeth resolved conflicting accounts of the legend of St. Ursula and her martyrdom in her *Revelatio*. In both cases, Elisabeth noted the discussions that she had entered with members of the religious community, thus signaling that her text acted as a response to specific inquiries. Moreover, Elisabeth engaged in conversation

---

<sup>67</sup> Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History," 351-52.

<sup>68</sup> For a discussion on the various type of sentence collections that circulated in the mid-twelfth century, see Marcia Colish, "From the Sentence Collection to the *Sentence* Commentary and the *summa*: Parisian Scholastic Theology, 1130-1215," in *Studies in Scholasticism*, XII.

<sup>69</sup> See Colish, "From the Sentence Collection."

with her angelic guide or other heavenly figures to consider the questions and claims made by those outside her vision. The answers that her heavenly interlocutors helped guide Elisabeth to do not simply place Elisabeth as a mediator for her earthly inquisitors to the divine. Rather, Elisabeth's answers indicated that she used the pretense of these questions in order to explore her own concerns.

Elisabeth tackled questions of angelology in her *Liber visionum tercius*. In particular, she considered matters related to the angelic hierarchy and the fall of the angels. Both of these topics received attention in theological circles in the mid-twelfth century.<sup>70</sup> The organization of the hierarchy of angels was not a contested issue at this time, with most theologians accepting Gregory the Great and Dionysius the Areopagite's explanation despite some minor differences between the two.<sup>71</sup> Elisabeth engaged with Dionysius's work, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, in order to solve a problem that a "certain brother" who "proposed a question" to her discovered between Dionysius's work and scripture.<sup>72</sup> As I will show, Elisabeth's interest in answering this question from the monastic inquirer was not simply to resolve inconsistencies, but to reach a conclusion that also supported her reform interests.

Dionysius's texts were regarded as almost canonical because he was mistaken for an apostle of St. Paul by the same name. In all likelihood, a late fifth- early sixth-century author

---

<sup>70</sup> Marcia Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," in *Studies in Scholasticism*, XIV, 85-89.

<sup>71</sup> Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," 86.

<sup>72</sup> "Questionem michi proposuit frater quidam habentem formam huiusmodi." Roth, *Visionen*, 67. Clark asserts that this brother is most likely Ekbert. Although Ekbert had frequent direct access to Elisabeth, she did interact with other members of the wider religious community. Moreover, she often specifically alluded to her brother. While Ekbert is a likely candidate for asking this question, he was not the only possibility. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 60.

composed the *Celestial Hierarchy*.<sup>73</sup> And, he likely chose his pseudonym to encourage the connection to this apostolic authority. But, in the twelfth century, Dionysius's writings held much authority because contemporaries believed that the works they read were written by an apostle of Paul. The brother who asked this question noted that Dionysius's claim seemed to contradict what the scriptures reported. Dionysius had grouped the angelic hierarchies into three groups of three to account for all nine orders of angels. The brother's question pertained to the highest order of the angels, the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. In Dionysius's work, he presented this highest order of angels as learning about the act of redemption through Jesus. According to this brother, the problem was as follows:

‘If, as the theologian [Dionysius] asserts, those high orders were asking such things as if eager for knowledge and desiring to be instructed by the Savior about the act of human redemption, it follows that they were at first ignorant of what they desired to learn. But how could it be that, with the work of redemption already completed, they would not yet have had knowledge of it, they who were especially close to the divine majesty and drank from it the full plenitude of knowledge, and poured out their knowledge to the lower orders?’<sup>74</sup>

The problem here was one of time. If these angels existed before Jesus, they were the highest order, thus closest to God. Therefore, these angels would not have needed to ask Jesus about redemption because they had already learned about it from God previously. According to the brother, the highest order of angels had to have known about redemption because the

---

<sup>73</sup> Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem, trans., *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>74</sup> “Si ista querebant summi illi ordines, velut appetentes scientiam et cupientes instrui a salvatore de actione redemptionis humane, ut affirmat theologus, consequens est, ut prius ignorarent, quod discere cupiebant. Quomodo autem fieri potuit, ut iam peracto opera redemptionis adhuc eius scientiam non haberent hi, qui divine maiestati maxime appropriquant et ex ea omnem scientie plenitudinem hauriunt, et ad inferiores ordines cuncta, que sciuntur ab eis, transfundunt?” Roth, *Visionen*, 67.

scriptures stated “that many spirits of the lower orders knew about the Son of God in flesh and long learned beforehand the grace of redemption.”<sup>75</sup> And, not only did the lowest order of angels know about this act, but even the “prophets, who were human”<sup>76</sup> were also informed of this. Thus, if the lower angels and human beings knew about the redemption before it happened, the higher orders of angels would have as well.

The inquiry that Elisabeth received presents us with two issues. One, the texts, Dionysius and scripture, seemed to contradict each other. Elisabeth needed to consider how to resolve this potential issue through a discussion with her angelic guide. And second, this textual contradiction highlighted that there seemed to be a problem with the way in which the celestial hierarchy functioned. That is, the lower orders of angels and the human prophets could not have knowledge that their superiors did not.

When Elisabeth posed this question to her angelic guide, his answer emphasized the different ways in which the Divinity and the Humanity, that is God and Jesus, acted as teachers. Elisabeth and her angelic guide, in her earlier visionary book, had used their dialogue to highlight how Elisabeth acted as a teacher through her self-discipline. Now this question, posed by a member of the community, also offered the opportunity to emphasize Elisabeth’s role in the answer that Elisabeth and her angel discussed.

According to the angelic guide, the highest order of angels sought the most knowledge they could attain. They “first knew by instruction of the Divinity” about the redemption;

---

<sup>75</sup>“...quod multi inferiorum ordinum spiritus filium dei in carne agnoverint et gratiam redemptionis longe ante prescierint?” Roth, *Visionen*, 67.

<sup>76</sup> “...quod etiam prophetis, qui homines fuerunt...” Roth, *Visionen*, 67.

however, they were “pleased to ask about and learn from that sacred Humanity” and “have that Humanity as teacher of religious truth.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, the angel told Elisabeth that “what they had learned in mysteries, they also wished to have expressed in words.”<sup>78</sup> Based on this explanation there was no contradiction between the texts because both interpretations of how the highest order of angels learned about redemption is correct.

In fact, the angelic guide’s answer underscored the importance of expressing spiritual knowledge in human words. This was in fact what Elisabeth did as a teacher who published her visionary texts. Furthermore, her angel linked Elisabeth’s act of publication to the two forms of learning that both Dionysius and scripture discussed. Additionally, Elisabeth participated in part of the larger hierarchy that Dionysius’s work discussed because of her interaction with her angel. Her angelic guide was not a member of the highest order of the celestial hierarchy, but he still attained knowledge through his relationship with the higher orders. They taught him. Elisabeth, through her discussions with the angelic guide, was another link in this heavenly hierarchy. Just as the angelic guide’s role was to help Elisabeth understand theological and spiritual problems through their dialogue, she was to do the same with her contemporaries on earth.

Elisabeth resolved the textual conflict by posing the brother’s question to her angelic guide. But, the angelic guide’s answer emphasized Elisabeth’s role as a teacher. Moreover, the explanation of how the highest order of angels learned served as a reminder to her critics who

---

<sup>77</sup> “...que docente divinitate prius cognoverant, etiam ab illa sacra humanitate salvatoris in celo recepta interrogare et percipere et ipsam illuminationis sue magistram habere delectati sunt...” Roth, *Visionen*, 67.

<sup>78</sup> “...et quod sciebant in secretis, volebant etiam exprimi verbis.” Roth, *Visionen*, 67.

deplored her publications as “womanish fictions.”<sup>79</sup> If those spiritual beings who were closest to God could benefit from learning about redemption through mere human words, then other humans could equally benefit from Elisabeth’s writings, even if she were simply a woman. Elisabeth’s visionary discussion with her angelic guide resolved the textual problems noted by the concerned brother. But, it also used the opportunity to answer that question as a way to dispute her detractors about why she published her words in the first place.

When Elisabeth discussed her detractors, they were often referred to abstractly. Usually she did not provide specific problems that her critics found with her works, stating in her texts only that they generally did not think she should publish because her works were “womanish fictions.” However, Elisabeth did explicitly confront a brother who challenged her interpretation of the fall of the angels. First, I will examine Elisabeth’s interpretation of the fall of angels, so that I can demonstrate how Elisabeth disputed a brother’s challenge to her teaching.

Elisabeth asked her angelic guide whether Lucifer fell immediately at his creation, or if he existed in heaven in his glory as an angel. Like her previous question about the angelic hierarchy, Elisabeth posed this question because of a request from a member of the community. The angelic guide explained that Lucifer did enjoy the highest dignity of God, but that he began to take pride in this fact. This pride caused his immediate fall from heaven. As a corollary to her first question, Elisabeth asked her guide whether or not the rest of the fallen angels that joined Lucifer in Hell came from one entire order or if some from each of the nine orders fell with him.

---

<sup>79</sup> “...muliebria figmenta...” Roth, *Visionen*, 2.

In his answer, the angelic guide explained that one entire order of angels fell. This order was most devoted to Lucifer, so they exhibited the same deleterious pride.

Elisabeth's vision about the fall of angels did not explicitly introduce any textual authorities into the conversation. Here, Elisabeth simply received a question outside her visions from a brother and then posed it to her angelic guide. From this point on, Elisabeth and her angel engage in a discussion about the fall of angels that centers on their dialogue. Elisabeth asked additional questions about the event; her angel answered them. The extra-visionary question prompted this discussion, but Elisabeth used it as a way to develop this specific topic.

Elisabeth's interpretation about the nature of the fall of angels received a challenge. This challenge came from a "certain brother" who opposed the result of the conversation between Elisabeth and her angelic guide.<sup>80</sup> In her account of the dispute, Elisabeth stated that the brother based his challenge on Paul's Letter to the Colossians. The brother cited the following passage: "Despoiling the Principalities and Powers, He confidently led them out of hiding, triumphing in himself."<sup>81</sup> According to the monk, this provided evidence that some of the fallen angels had come from these two different orders, thus proving Elisabeth's assertion that one entire order of angels fell wrong. Perhaps this brother felt that Elisabeth's lack of any written authorities in her explanation made her interpretation of the fall weak in some way. With Paul on his side, he was able to prove his point.

---

<sup>80</sup> "Narratum est nobis, quod quidam frater obviare volens sermoni angeli nostri dicentis." Roth, *Visionen*, 70.

<sup>81</sup> "Expolians principatus et potestates traduxit confidenter palam, triumphans in semetipso." Roth, *Visionen*, 70.

After Elisabeth stated the monk's contention, she told her readers that she discussed the matter with her angelic guide. At first, the angel told her that there are many different types of evil spirits, with some being more powerful than others. This initial response seems to side-step the question about why the evil spirits referred to in Paul's letter had the same name as two orders of angels. However, the angel then discussed the logic of the brother's challenge. He told Elisabeth

‘Let no one for any reason convince you and make you believe that some angels fell from each order. If indeed that were the case, then, when the fall of the lapsed angels is finally restored by the elect human beings, humans would have to be intermingled among the individual order of angels. But this will not be, because the order of elect human beings will reside separately in its own place in heaven’.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, the monk's assertion was not logical because he did not take into consideration the hierarchical placement of the groups in heaven. His argument created a disordered grouping by intermixing different stations in heaven; therefore, it could not be correct. Although Elisabeth and her angelic guide did not introduce Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy* into this discussion explicitly, it would seem as though the principles of this text informed the interpretation.

Thus, Elisabeth used her previous discussion of angelology to inform her interpretations of subsequent material. Her reliance on the dialogue between her and her angelic guide rather than the introduction of other textual materials indicates that Elisabeth saw her answers as authoritative in themselves. Moreover, the way in which Elisabeth presented this debate

---

<sup>82</sup> “Nemo aliqua ratione te superet, ut credas, ex singulis ordinibus angelorum aliquos corruiſſe. Si enim ita eſſet, oporteret, cum ex electis hominibus casus lapſorum angelorum reſtituendus eſſet, ut ſingulis ordinibus angelorum homines inmiſcerentur. Quod non ita erit, quia electorum hominum ordo diſtincte locum ſuum in cello habiturus eſt.” Roth, *Visionen*, 70.

provides evidence that her status as an authority in the public arena was taken seriously. In this case, the indication that a “certain brother” opposed Elisabeth’s interpretation demonstrates that either other monks at Schönau or from the wider religious community were interested in debating Elisabeth on theological issues. Even though Elisabeth had often noted in her texts that her detractors criticized her because she created “womanly fictions,” or they doubted her angelic guide was in fact real, that does not seem to be the case in this dispute. Instead, the monk focused on Elisabeth’s specific assertion about the fall of the angels rather than engaging in a personal criticism of Elisabeth’s authority to publish her messages. Thus, the content of the message received the challenge, not Elisabeth herself.

The challenge that Elisabeth presented in her text points to the fact that she did engage in disputations, a feature of scholastic culture. They were not set classroom exercises, but rather responded to criticisms about the content of her texts from others interested in theological questions. Thus, Elisabeth was like many twelfth-century writers who were forced to write in order to address the concerns of their critics.<sup>83</sup> That these challenges were not simply premised on the fact that she was a woman who was publishing her message tells us that some of those critical of her writings were critical based on what they believed the textual evidence suggested. They engaged Elisabeth as an author and teacher in the public arena, which was the very image she had promoted.

---

<sup>83</sup> For example, Abelard had to change his writing style to address concerns raised by his detractors. Mews, “Orality, Literacy, and Authority,” I, 479-80. Rupert of Deutz composed some of his works to defend his ability to produce texts. Van Engen, *Rupert*, 342-52. Anselm of Bec wrote in defense of his argument in the *Proslogion* against Gaunilo’s critiques. Novikoff, “Rise of Scholastic Disputation,” 403-04.

Elisabeth's engagement with questions of angelology demonstrated that her dialogues within her visions acted to dispute her critics in regards to either abstract or specific problems with her publications. I will now consider Elisabeth's most famous public debate. In her *Revelatio*, Elisabeth engaged in dialogues with heavenly figures in order to assess whether or not bones found near Cologne were the relics of St. Ursula and her virginal troupe. Elisabeth noted her hesitation to enter this debate because "those people who oppose the grace of God" in her will "take this occasion to scourge me with their tongues."<sup>84</sup> However, Elisabeth's consideration of the merits of these relics in her *Revelatio* also offered her the occasion to dispute her critics through the information that she received in conversation with her spiritual interlocutors.

Elisabeth's involvement in the St. Ursula legend marked the latest intervention by a contemporary in its long and convoluted history. A fourth-century inscription that was placed in the church of St. Ursula in Cologne was the first written record of the martyrdom, which also noted that visions provided the impetus for building the church.<sup>85</sup> This inscription provided the basis for the subsequent legends of the St. Ursula martyrdom and was the only written source of the legend until the tenth century. The *Sermo in Natali SS. Virginum XI Millium*, given to a community of women who moved their house to Cologne in 922,<sup>86</sup> expanded the legend from the

---

<sup>84</sup> "...sumpturi sunt occasionem flagellandi me linguis suis hi qui adversantur gratie dei in me." Roth, *Visionen*, 123.

<sup>85</sup> Pamela Sheingorn and Marcelle Thiébaux. trans. *The Passion of Saint Ursula [Regnante domino]*. (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing Co., 1996), 43. For the inscription, see *Sermo in Natali SS. Virginum XI Millium*, AASS, Vol. 9, October 21 (1869), 154. "Divinis flammeis visionibus frequenter admonitus (ut virtutis magnae majestatis martyrii caelestium virginium imminetium) ex partibus orientis exhibitus pro voto clematius vir consularis de proprio in loco suo hanc basilicam voto, quo debebat, a fundamentis restituit."

<sup>86</sup> Sheingorn, *The Passion of St. Ursula*, 42.

fourth-century inscription. This sermon was the first to emphasize the importance of the place of martyrdom when it linked it to past barbarian incursions in the Cologne area.<sup>87</sup>

The *Passio I* text, written by Heric of St. Bertin and dedicated to Archbishop Gero of Cologne, was the first to name Ursula as the chief saint of the expedition.<sup>88</sup> Pamela Sheingorn and Marcelle Thibéaux note that this work reflected the cultural milieu of the Ottonian Renaissance for the ways in which it mirrored the hagiographical writings of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, a learned nun steeped in a classical education.<sup>89</sup> In Hrotsvit's works, she emphasized the struggle of the female protagonists against their male tormenters.<sup>90</sup> The St. Ursula legend certainly continued this theme. Another tenth-century female author, Helmdrude of Neuenheerse, further expanded the legend by adding the saint Cordula to the martyred troupe of virgins. Helmdrude learned Cordula's name when Cordula commanded her to "look at her forehead, so that [Helmdrude] might know for herself, without any doubt, the name" she would find inscribed there.<sup>91</sup> When Helmdrude followed these orders, she "saw and read the separate syllables and discovered "Cordula" distinctly written."<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Sheingorn, *The Passion of St. Ursula*, 49; See *Acta sanctorum*, 154 "...cum causam hujus negligentiae, communis pene omnium populorum afflictiones per barbaros his maxime regionibus debacchantes inflicta perdoceat..."

<sup>88</sup> Sheingorn, *The Passion of St. Ursula*, 7.

<sup>89</sup> For Hrotsvit's milieu and works, see Katharina Wilson, trans., *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: A Florilegium of Her Works* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998).

<sup>90</sup> Sheingorn, *The Passion of St. Ursula*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> AASS, 162, "...jussa est a virgine frontem ejus intueri, ut hoc sibi nomen fuisse indubitanter sciret..."

<sup>92</sup> AASS, 162, "...vidit, et legit, discretisque syllabis *Cordula*, distincte scriptum invenit."

In the twelfth century, the Ursula legend was known through two *passiones*—the *Regnante domino* and the *Fuit tempore per vetusto*.<sup>93</sup> Of the two, the *Regnante domino*, written around 1100, was more widely circulated, but both *passiones* had the same narrative thrust.<sup>94</sup> Ursula, along with her female companions, had been swept out to sea by themselves and eventually had met their end at the hands of heathen barbarians in order to preserve their virginity. The twelfth-century discovery of bones near Cologne bearing inscriptions which indicated that they belonged to the martyrs was problematic because both men and women were found at this site, which clearly contradicted the known legend. Thus, there were some who believed that these bones were not really saintly relics, but a hoax in order to receive profit from these bodies by those who had discovered them.<sup>95</sup>

At the request of abbot Gerlach of Deutz, Elisabeth entered into the debate about the merit of this discovery. Like some of the previous iterations of the legend, inscription and vision played a key role in the investigation of the circumstances of the martyrdom. It seems likely that Gerlach had requested Elisabeth's expertise in this matter because of her visionary fame. Thus, her ability to communicate with heavenly interlocutors was desirable for solving this problem.

---

<sup>93</sup> Guy de Tervarent, *La Légende de Sainte Ursule dans la Littérature et l'art du Moyen Âge*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Les Éditions G. Van Oest, 1931), 1.

<sup>94</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 37.

<sup>95</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 124-25.

And perhaps he even sought to manipulate her visionary gift for his own purposes.<sup>96</sup> As I will argue, however, Elisabeth was the one to manipulate the circumstances for her own concerns.

Elisabeth engaged in dialogues in her *Revelatio* that sought to resolve the conflict between the textual tradition of the legend and the new evidence offered by the inscriptions. Thus, the structure of this work is similar to the way she investigated questions of angelology. There are two notable differences. First, the angelic guide was not the main interlocutor in this text. Rather, Elisabeth conversed with St. Verena, one of the virgin martyrs. Second, Elisabeth did not seek to resolve two ancient textual authorities through her visionary dialogues. Instead, she had to consider how the new discovery of these relics did or did not fit within the textual tradition.

The discovery of both male and female bones did not comport with the information from the *Regnante domino* legend. When Verena told Elisabeth that men had accompanied the female martyrs, Elisabeth noted that she “was brought into great doubt by this conversation. Indeed, just as others who read the history of the British virgins believed, I thought that the blessed group made their pilgrimage without the company of any men. But later I learned something else that greatly weakened this opinion.”<sup>97</sup> The “something else” that Elisabeth referenced was the inscriptions on the bones. Although these had been called into doubt, Elisabeth was able to

---

<sup>96</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau*, 39. See also Anne Clark Bartlett’s discussion of how Hildegard’s visionary gifts were manipulated by others for their own polemical purposes. “Commentary, Polemic and Prophecy in Hildegard of Bingen’s *Solutiones Triginta Octo Quaestionum*,” *Viator* 23 (1992): 153-65, at 156-57.

<sup>97</sup> “Hoc igitur sermone in magnam dubitationem adducta sum. Existimabam enim, quemadmodum opinantur cuncti, qui legunt historiam Brittannicarum virginum, quod absque virorum comitatu peregrinata fuerit illa beata sodalitas. Preterea et aliud quiddam comperi, quod nichilominus hanc opinionem vehementer infirmabat.” Roth, *Visionen*, 124.

consider them in more detail because of the dialogues with St. Verena. Thus, Elisabeth's works provided the full texts of which the inscriptions were simply shorthand. Elisabeth told her audience that she had "taken care to place before the eyes of the readers" the full account of the events from the "present discussion."<sup>98</sup>

In addition, many of her readers compared Elisabeth's *Revelatio* to the *Regnante domino*. The two works were often paired together in manuscripts.<sup>99</sup> Although the two texts presented radically different versions of the martyrdom, these differences did not detract from the popularity or acceptance of Elisabeth's version. In fact, Elisabeth's *Revelatio* sought to operate as a transcript of a conversation rather than a text.<sup>100</sup> Its oral components allowed her audience to follow dialogue rather than to trust in a potentially corruptible text.<sup>101</sup> The inscriptions found on the bones demonstrated this corruption because the short epithets did not clarify how men and women became members of the virginal troupe. It was only through Elisabeth's dialogues that her readers were able to interact with the evidence. Although Elisabeth's audience relied on the transmission of her writings in order to learn about the circumstances of the martyrdom, she asked them to trust not in her text, but in her spoken words.

---

<sup>98</sup> "...in presenti sermone per diversa loca oculis legentium anteponere curavi..." Roth, *Visionen*, 125.

<sup>99</sup> Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönau: Werk und Wirkung im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen handschriftlichen Überlieferung," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951): 243-315, at 251-53, 262, 293-97, 299, 305, 307-08.

<sup>100</sup> Campbell, "Sanctity and Identity." Campbell notes the way in which Elisabeth structured this text and how it demonstrates her use of twelfth-century legal concepts of proof.

<sup>101</sup> See Mews, "Orality, Literacy, and Authority," I, 486-89.

In addition, Elisabeth treated the reconstruction of the events that led to the martyrdom at Cologne with her detractors in mind. She presented herself as playing the role of skeptic throughout her account. Thus, Elisabeth produced another text that seemed to offer contradictory accounts of what Verena related to her, the *Regnante domino*. Much like the monk who opposed her message about the fall of the angels, she acted as the one who challenged the information in a visionary conversation. When Verena told Elisabeth that men had accompanied the virginal women on their journey, she anticipated her skeptical reader's questions. Elisabeth did not indicate that anyone had asked her to compare the *Regnante domino* to the inscriptions, but Elisabeth knew from her experiences that texts sparked questions and challenges for her visionary dialogues.

The piece of information that created the biggest challenge to those who supported the validity of the relics was the identification of a Pope Cyriacus. When Elisabeth examined the *Liber pontificalis*, she did not find “the name of Saint Cyriacus here.”<sup>102</sup> Elisabeth, however, had proven that she was able to resolve the discrepancies between authoritative texts and the new information presented by the inscriptions. In a conversation with St. Verena, Elisabeth learned that Cyriacus had left the apostolic see because a visionary revelation had urged him to do so. Many of his cardinals protested his decision. They “decided it was nonsense for him to turn aside [his office] as if following the foolishness of little women.”<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, to explain the absence of the pope from the written record, Verena stated that he was removed from the

---

<sup>102</sup> “...neque usquam nomen sancti Ciriaci illic reperissem.” Roth, *Visionen*, 127.

<sup>103</sup> “...atque in conspectus totius ecclesie resignavit officium dignitatis sue, reclamantibus cunctis, precipue cardinalibus, qui velut deliramentum arbitrabantur, quod quasi post fatuitatem muliercularum declinaret, nescientes ammonitionem divinam, que eum urgebat.” Roth, *Visionen*, 126.

catalogue “because of the clergy’s anger for him since he had refused to remain in his high office until death.”<sup>104</sup>

The information that Elisabeth learned through her conversation with St. Verena here demonstrated two issues that Elisabeth’s use of the dialogic format had intended to resolve. First, Elisabeth disputed her detractors’ claims about her authority to enter into public debates. Elisabeth demonstrated that the harsh words of her critics simply reflected their own failings. In fact, Elisabeth compared their tongues to the whips, invoking the image of the rod that masters used to beat their students. Thus, they wanted to inflict Elisabeth with a tongue-lashing (*flagellandi*). Elisabeth, however, did not need to receive punishment from others; she had proven herself self-disciplined through her own flagellations. Once again, Elisabeth signaled that a beating compelled her to publish her works, even if she presented these criticisms as yet another suffering to endure. In this case, her text provided an answer to the debate about whether or not the relics in Cologne were valid as well as an answer to her critics about the validity of her own works. The mocking words of the churchmen aimed at Pope Cyriacus in her *Revelatio* resulted in his exalted status as a martyr. Thus, the harmful words aimed at both Elisabeth and Cyriacus only served to demonstrate the failings of their critics and the authoritative status of their recipients.

Second, Elisabeth argued that the textual record was not always trustworthy. Cyriacus’s critics tried to punish him for his papal abdication by removing him from the *Liber pontificalis*. But, although they were able to corrupt a text, the cardinals were unable to censor Verena’s

---

<sup>104</sup> “Et dixit, hoc ex indignatione cleri accidisse, pro eo, quod in ordine dignitatis sue usque ad finem permanere noluisset.” Roth, *Visionen*, 127.

conversations with Elisabeth. Through these discussions, Elisabeth discovered this clerical corruption. Elisabeth's discovery was simply part of her reason for publishing her works. After all, her angelic guide had initially called her to circulate her works because of the need to correct the clergy and nuns who were not on the reform path. Moreover, the dialogue Elisabeth presented between her and Verena called into question the reliability of texts. The angry clerics had erased a pope from the record, so it was possible that other information was missing from other works.

Elisabeth's anxiety about textual instability was likely rooted in her past experiences. Works had been circulated in her name that she did not compose. In part, this was due to her abbot delivering the message rather than herself. The potential for miscommunication was a problem in a twelfth-century intellectual environment that began to operate using both oral communication and texts. As Mews has noted, many twelfth-century masters considered their spoken words to represent their authority. He has argued that when Abelard described himself, it was not as a *scriptor* or *auctor* but as a *magister*.<sup>105</sup> Thus, Abelard thought of his ideas not as written texts, but as components of his public teaching. This tendency has sometimes caused problems for masters who were accused of heresy. If the master's words were called into question by critics, it was advantageous to have a textual authority that could quell the detractors.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Mews, "Orality, Literacy, and Authority," I, 479.

<sup>106</sup> Mews, "Orality, Literacy, and Authority," I, 480.

The works that Elisabeth composed were a product of the tensions inherent in this intellectual climate. Thus, as a teacher, she prized her oral communications. As St. Verena's dialogues with Elisabeth demonstrated, the written word did not always solve problems, but could create them. When Verena's name had been inscribed on her tomb, "It was almost written otherwise by mistake." Thankfully, Verena had "prevented the scribe" from committing this error.<sup>107</sup> Elisabeth, like Verena, also attempted to prevent scribal mistakes. In all versions of Elisabeth's *Liber viarum dei*, her reform work that taught all members of Christian society how to walk on the correct path to God, her warning to scribes was copied down and taken seriously.<sup>108</sup> It stated: "This is an appeal to the scribes of these sermons. I entreat, by God and his angel, all who copy this book to correct it carefully and append this adjuration to his codex."<sup>109</sup> Texts did not always communicate the ideas the way in which the authors had intended them, a lesson Elisabeth had learned when she had first published her own.

The ways that Elisabeth's texts framed her conversations, then, did so to invest her with the public authority of a teacher. Elisabeth also responded to the criticisms of her detractors about the abstract or specific problems within her works. The dialogue became a literary convention that allowed Elisabeth to show her audience the interruptions in her texts by questions that concerned the community, so that she could demonstrate her ability to resolve the

---

<sup>107</sup> "Pene tamen per errorem aliter scribi debuerat, sed ipsa ego scribentem prohibui." Roth, *Visionen*, 124.

<sup>108</sup> This warning is found in all redactions except the final one, which was Ekbert's final redaction of Elisabeth's complete corpus of works. See Anne L. Clark, trans. *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works* (NY: Paulist Press, 2000), 206, n. 263.

<sup>109</sup> "Hec est adiuratio conscriptoris sermonum istorum. Adiuro per dominum et per angelum eius omnen, qui transscripserit librum istum, ut diligenter eum emendet et adiurationem hanc codici suo ascribat." F.W.E. Roth, "Aus einer Handschrift der Schriften der heil. Elisabeth von Schönau," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 36 (1911): 219-25, at 221.

inquiry and expound on her reform concerns. Elisabeth presented these questions as representing others' concerns, thus highlighting her humility. But, she was able to use these dialogues to engage in her own reform program, disputing her critics along the way.

### ***Conclusion***

Elisabeth shaped the presentations of her dialogues and interactions with her supernatural and temporal interlocutors in terms of conventional descriptions of masters, students and public disputes. This points to the flexibility of the intellectual culture of which she was part of in the mid-twelfth-century. Although it is clear that by the end of the century the institutionalization of a more variegated school culture into a coherent university system was underway,<sup>110</sup> Elisabeth's experiences highlight the public space that was still available to her as a Benedictine nun and as a teacher engaged with contemporary theological issues. She harnessed the methods associated with dialogue and disputation both to answer her critics and to engage in real theological inquiry. Although Elisabeth was physically absent from the schools, her depictions of twelfth-century intellectual culture demonstrated a familiarity with the clerical world that defined the parameters of school learning and highlighted her presence in it.

Elisabeth's use of these contemporary scholastic methods to consider reform issues was a strategy that she sought to encourage others to undertake. Although she was initially called to publish her message to correct clerics and nuns, she wanted to do so in order to enlist them as

---

<sup>110</sup> For the institutionalization of the schools, see Wei, "Representations of Scholars,"; and Stephen C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and Their Critics, 1100-1215* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985).

part of the reform cause. Thus, in the next chapter, we will consider Elisabeth's presentation of the clergy in light of the reform needs of a Rhineland that experienced infiltration by heretical groups.

### Chapter 3

#### Errant Heretics and Negligent Clerics: Visionary Polemics and a Call for Learning

When Elisabeth received her angelic summons to address the “communal correction of the church,”<sup>1</sup> she clearly signified that the impetus for her texts and their publication was reform. For her part, Elisabeth took advantage of her role as a teacher to entertain theological and spiritual questions by providing answers that emphasized the role of reform in all matters. To urge those who were perhaps hesitant to embrace reform, Elisabeth employed polemical language to address their sluggishness. Polemical language was a staple of twelfth-century writing, but it was not used simply for reform matters. In fact, schoolmen and monks also painted each other, and their methods of learning, in colorful terms. Elisabeth, in her own texts, addressed both education and reform, harnessing polemical language to encourage both.

The controversies between schoolmen and monks have received a lot of scholarly attention. In fact, the polemical exchanges between the two groups have provided the key evidence for modern studies that portray a divide between the cloister and the classroom.<sup>2</sup> However, I will argue in this chapter that Elisabeth’s polemics, which were aimed at negligent clerics and heretical groups, asserted that scholastic education was the key to enacting reform and ameliorating the Church’s problems.

---

<sup>1</sup> “...pro communi correctione ecclesie...” F.W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönau* (Brünn: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercieuser-Orden 1884), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Constant Mews, “Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zweifalten and the Hirsau Reform,” in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 182-97, at 182-83.

In order to understand how Elisabeth's polemics operated as a call for reform and learning, it will be necessary to assess how she constructed her rhetoric. As John Cotts recently has cautioned, we cannot take the language of polemics too much at face value because it relied so heavily on rhetorical constructions.<sup>3</sup> He has noted that John of Salisbury, a Paris-educated scholar, and Peter of Celle, a monk, exchanged letters in 1164 that on the surface seemed to speak to the tensions between the monastic and scholastic viewpoints. The communications have been interpreted by many modern scholars as a contrast between the disputatious nature of the schools and the *beata schola*, which many scholars have taken to mean the cloister. However, according to Cotts, the use of the term *beata schola* did not represent the polar opposite of the French schools, the cloister, but referenced the idea that the way of good living is a school in itself.<sup>4</sup> In much the same way, Elisabeth's polemics constructed reform life as one that embraced correct living and education.

In order to assess how Elisabeth promoted reform and education, I will first analyze her use of an important motif in monastic literature: the vineyard. Elisabeth's sermons against the Cathars emphasized this motif, which was not unusual. In fact, it placed her as one reformer among many who employed this language, including Bernard of Clairvaux and her friend and fellow visionary, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). Both women were active participants in reform and worked together to publish their criticisms of groups they both thought needed reforming, the clerics and the heretics.

---

<sup>3</sup> John Cotts, "Monks and Clerks in Search of the *Beata Schola*: Peter of Celle's Warning to John of Salisbury Reconsidered," in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*, eds. Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 255-78.

<sup>4</sup> Cotts, "Monks and Clerks," 267.

Although both women engaged in reform activity, they differed in the methods they used to encourage its completion. Scholarship usually has associated Hildegard with traditional expressions of monastic life. That is, Hildegard used her prophetic voice and visionary genre to promote a type of monastic education, which firmly linked her to the milieu of the cloister.<sup>5</sup> In this way, she represents an alternative to scholastic learning and the clerical world. Because Elisabeth worked with Hildegard, she, too, has often been cast in the role of Hildegard's protégé, adhering to the same traditional monastic program. I will argue, however, that Elisabeth and Hildegard differed in their approaches to the problems posed by clerics and heretics. In fact, as a close reading of Elisabeth's sermons will demonstrate, she embraced the new forms of scholastic learning in order to aid reform.

Second, I will consider how the ideals of the active and the contemplative life informed Elisabeth's conception of how reform and education operated in tandem. In the twelfth century, these two ways of living were increasingly seen as mutually exclusive.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, members of religious groups, such as canons and monks, often engaged in debates about whose

---

<sup>5</sup> Anne Clark-Bartlett, "Miraculous Literacy and Textual Communities in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*," *Mystics Quarterly* 18.2 (1992): 43-55; Barbara Newman, "Introduction," in *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (NY: Paulist Press, 1990), 9-54, at 17-18; and Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching Against the Cathars," in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 163-81, at 177-78. Constant Mews, however, places Hildegard more broadly within twelfth-century intellectual culture. See "Hildegard and the Schools," in *Hildegard of Bingen: The Context of her Thought and Art* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1998), 89-110, at 110.

<sup>6</sup> Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought: The Interpretation of Mary and Martha, The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ, The Orders of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32.

vocation was most advantageous for Christian society.<sup>7</sup> Elisabeth asked a similar question. In her texts, she argued for the value of the active and contemplative life for promoting reform.

One reason for her attitude was likely her brother Ekbert. His involvement in both the secular and monastic life demonstrated the potential for monastic and clerical collaboration. He began his career in the Church as a Paris-educated cleric, first serving as a cathedral canon in Bonn, but later entering Schönau as a monk who became the cloister's abbot. Ekbert also wrote a polemical tract against the Cathars, his *Sermones contra Kataros*, based on his experience disputing them in public. Ekbert's role in the attack against the Cathars usually has been viewed as representing a male, scholastic voice in these reform debates,<sup>8</sup> but as we have seen, Elisabeth similarly employed these techniques. Additionally, even monks who have been considered staunch opponents of scholastic debate, namely Bernard of Clairvaux, advocated for its use in certain circumstances.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Elisabeth's evaluation of clerics in her works was likely based on first-hand experience of how scholastic education could come to the aid of reform goals.

Thus, this chapter will investigate how Elisabeth argued for the integration of monastic reform and scholastic learning through a careful analysis of her polemical language. To do this, I

---

<sup>7</sup> See Jay T. Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg: Deeds into Words in the Twelfth Century* (Brill: Leiden, 1998), 129-63; and Giles Constable, ed. and trans. *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 179; John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), 26; and Anne L. Clark, "Repression or Collaboration? The Case of Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schönau," in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*, eds. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 151-67.

<sup>9</sup> Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 85-6; and Brian Robert Noell, "Applied Science: Academic Learning and the Cistercian Enterprise in the Central Middle Ages" (Ph.D diss., Yale University, 2006), 17-48.

will first consider the context of heresy and reform in the Rhineland. Next, I will assess Elisabeth's use of the vineyard motif in comparison to other Rhineland reformers, namely, Hildegard of Bingen and Bernard of Clairvaux. Finally, I will demonstrate that despite her polemics aimed at negligent clerics, Elisabeth valued the contributions this group could make to reform, especially through their education. Thus, Elisabeth's rhetoric did not simply advocate for a spiritual renewal that utilized images of women's piety as the counterexample to worldly clerics, but it placed her as an advocate for scholastic education.<sup>10</sup> This education was a tool that would lead not only to personal reform but also to the revival of the Church.

### ***Reform Background: Education and Heresy***

At some point between 1157-1164 Elisabeth sent Hildegard a letter that praised her reform work in the Church.<sup>11</sup> From this potential date range, it is clear that Elisabeth's praise fell in midst of Hildegard's public preaching tours against clerical negligence and the reemergence of Cathar heretics in the Rhineland. The letter makes use of the vineyard motif that

---

<sup>10</sup> See Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönau: Leben, Persönlichkeit und visionäres Werk," in *Schönauer Elisabeth Jubiläum 1965: Festschrift anlässlich des achthundertjährigen Todestages der heiligen Elisabeth von Schönau*, Herausgegeben vom Prämonstratenser-Chorherrenstift Tepl (Kloster Schönau: 1965), 22. Köster argues that Elisabeth and other cloistered women of her time not only did not have access to an education but also actively eschewed it; however, Elisabeth's use of dialogic elements, polemics and call for others to use education for reform offers a different picture of her view on learning.

<sup>11</sup> In Baird and Ehrman's translation of Hildegard's correspondence, they proposed the date range of 1157-64 for Elisabeth and Hildegard's communications about the Cathars. Joseph Baird and Radd K. Ehrman, trans. *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), II, 181. Anne Clark, who translated and reviewed Elisabeth's manuscripts, does not provide a date for Elisabeth's letter, but the date range put forth by Baird and Ehrman seems likely as this is when Hildegard was conducting her three preaching tours against the heretics.

was so popular among monastic writers and integral to the communications between Elisabeth and Hildegard. In the letter, Elisabeth exclaimed

O lady Hildegard, accomplish the work of the Lord, just as you have done up to now, because the Lord has placed you as a worker in his vineyard. Indeed, the Lord sought workers in His vineyard and He found them all idle because no one leads them. The vineyard of the Lord does not have a cultivator; the vineyard of the Lords perishes; the head of the church languishes and its members are dead.<sup>12</sup>

Elisabeth, then, commended Hildegard for taking up a leadership role. The vineyard here clearly referred to the congregation of Christians who lacked any direction from clerics and other church leaders. Without these “cultivators,” the vineyard was unable to produce good fruit, that is, Christians. The idle workers, who Elisabeth contrasted to Hildegard’s work in the vineyard, were members of the clergy. Their idleness allowed heretics to infiltrate the Church. In the twelfth-century Rhineland, these heretics were the Cathars, who Elisabeth compared to “secretly desiring to destroy God’s church.”<sup>13</sup> For this reason, these heretics must be expelled.

Elisabeth’s letter to Hildegard spoke to their mutual reform concerns through her implementation of the vineyard motif. Negligent clerics harmed the Church because they allowed heresy to take root. In order to understand why Elisabeth used this particular language to discuss her reform concerns with Hildegard, I will examine the context of Rhineland reform and the struggle of those reformers to eradicate heretical thought.

---

<sup>12</sup> “O domina Hildegardis perforce opus domini, sicut usque nunc fecisti, quia posuit te dominus operatricem in vinea sua. Quesivit enim dominus operarios in vineam suam, et invenit eos omnes ociosos, quia nemo eos conduxit. Vineam domini non habet cultorem, vinea domini periit, caput ecclesie languit, et membra eius mortua sunt.” Roth, *Visionen*, 74.

<sup>13</sup> “...secreto ecclesiam dei lacerare cupientes.” Roth, *Visionen*, 74.

Elisabeth and Hildegard received their religious formation in monasteries that subscribed to a specific brand of reform, the Hirsau movement. Although this type of reform was not the only one in Germany, it had gained the most traction in the latter part of the eleventh century and into the first half of the twelfth, especially in the Rhineland. Abbot William of Hirsau (1026-1091) founded the reform campaign in the eleventh century.<sup>14</sup> Initially, members of the Hirsau movement were interested in Gregorian reform, focusing on institutional renewal.<sup>15</sup> In the twelfth-century, however, institutional concerns gave way to a reform that focused on the individual.<sup>16</sup>

The role of education, however, was important to both phases of the reform movement. Scholars have long noted how reform groups have promoted education as a way to meet their goals.<sup>17</sup> Haimo of Hirsau, who wrote William's *vita* in the 1090s, highlighted the need for instruction to enact reform. In the *vita*, Haimo described how William spread education to

---

<sup>14</sup> The Gorze Reform Movement held sway in the same region during the late tenth through the mid-eleventh centuries, but for the purpose of this study, the influence of the Hirsau movement is most relevant. See McCarthy, *Music*, 11-15.

<sup>15</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 191-213; T.J.H. McCarthy, *Music, Scholasticism and Reform: Salian Germany, 1024-1125* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 11-54; Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture," 183-84. Ellen Joyce in particular notes how Otloh of St. Emmeram's eleventh-century presentations of reform concerns in his visionary writings likely influenced later reformers. "Speaking of Spiritual Matters: Visions and the Rhetoric of Reform in the *Liber visionum* of Otloh of St. Emmeram," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, ed. Alison I. Beach (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 69-98, at 82-3.

<sup>16</sup> Fiona Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 58-9. For an assessment of twelfth-century ideas of the individual, see John F. Benton, "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 263-98.

<sup>17</sup> Reform in the Carolingian era was also premised on better education for clergy. See, for example, Michael E. Moore, "Prologue: Teaching and Learning History in the School of Reims, c. 800-950," in *Teaching and Learning*, 19-50, at 26.

various orders in society. He wrote that the “ecclesiastical orders were taught by his examples” (*ecclesiastici ordinis illius exemplis erudiebantur*) and that William instructed (*instruebat*) monks. William not only “advanced bishops, priests or any lay priests in doctrine and authority” (*episcopos, presbyteros, seu quoslibet clericos doctrina et auctoritate promovebat*), but also “taught laymen about conversion and submission” (*laicos conversione et subiectione docebat*).<sup>18</sup> Haimo juxtaposed the language of instruction with the language of reform.<sup>19</sup> Immediately following the description of how William taught, Haimo highlighted that the fruits of this labor led to the foundation of new monasteries and the renewal of old ones.<sup>20</sup> William’s role as a teacher acted as a catalyst for reform within the monasteries. Moreover, William did not simply teach other monks. Ecclesiastical officials and laymen also profited from William’s instruction.

Reform necessitated education so that all had the access and the ability to learn about the correct practice of Christianity. Haimo’s description of the orders of Christian society omitted any mention of secular leaders, perhaps highlighting the tensions between political and ecclesiastical groups, emphasizing that everyone except the secular magistrates was indoctrinated with the knowledge of how to be a good Christian.<sup>21</sup> Or, perhaps, these secular

---

<sup>18</sup> Haimo of Hirsau, *Vita Willelmi Hirsaugiensis*, 21, in *MGH SS XII*, 218. Giles Constable notes the use of instructional language in this description of William of Hirsau. *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 44.

<sup>19</sup> Both Gerhart Ladner and Giles Constable explore the varied terminology and metaphors used during the twelfth century to denote ideas of reform and renovation in their contributions in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>20</sup> “Erat enim studiosissimus cenobiorum novorum fundator, ac veterum instaurator.” Haimo, *Vita Willelmi*, 22, in *MGH SS XII*, 218.

<sup>21</sup> For a consideration of various schemes of grouping social orders, see Constable, *Three Studies*, 249-341.

leaders were supposed to be the laymen to whom William taught submission (*laicos conversione et subiectione*) in this presentation of the idealized reform hierarchy.

William was more than qualified to be a good teacher to his fellow Christians. Haimo made this clear through his praise of William's liberal arts education. In a hymn written at the conclusion of the *vita*, Haimo poetically described William's intellectual feats, comparing his skills in the *quadrivium* with the ancient teachers.<sup>22</sup> According to Haimo, William surpassed them all. William also authored numerous works that highlighted his intellectual prowess. His interest in the liberal arts, and his production of works that addressed them, perhaps underscored how these *artes* served a practical function within the monastery. In fact, this link can be seen in his works on music theory for monastic chant.<sup>23</sup> Thus, William's education was broad and deep, but he also harnessed it for practical monastic matters and for the good of the Church. Although the eleventh-century reformers, such as William, were well-educated, they did not employ or promote school dialectics within their reform polemic.<sup>24</sup> But, by the twelfth century, reformers used both dialogue and dialectic to further their goals, especially in the matters of abolishing heretical beliefs.

---

<sup>22</sup> "Struxit et instruxit, quia recto tramite duxit, Collapsam dudum vitam reparans monachorum. Quadrivii priscos transcendit et ipse magistros, Cantibus errorem varium correxit ad artem. Terrarum metas scrutans et temporis horas, Ac numeros abaci vidit tam mente sagaci, Artibus his illi queat ut vix quis similari." Haimo, *Vita Willihelmi*, *MG SS XII*, 225.

<sup>23</sup> McCarthy, *Music*, 33.

<sup>24</sup> Wilfried Hartmann, "Rhetorik und Dialektik in der Streitschriftenliteratur des 11./12. Jahrhunderts," in *Dialektik und Rhetorik im früheren und hohen Mittelalter: Rezeption, Überlieferung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung antiker Gelehrsamkeit vornehmlich im 9. und 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. Johannes Fried (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997), 73-96, at 89, 93-4.

Although Bernard of Clairvaux may seem like an unlikely candidate for the promotion of scholastic learning for matters of reform, his exchange with the Rhenish Premonstratensian, Eberwin of Steinfeld, proves otherwise. In 1143 or 1144 Bernard drafted a response to Eberwin's concerns about two heretical groups in Cologne. Eberwin's letter listed the vices of the heretics, where he urged Bernard to "Catch for us the little foxes that destroy the vines" (Cant. 2:15).<sup>25</sup> The use of this biblical verse would have resonated with Bernard because it was the verse his own sixty-fourth sermon on the Song of Songs addressed. Here, Bernard had equated the foxes to the heretics and the vines to the Christian congregations they distressed. Eberwin's letter demonstrates that Bernard's ideas about heresy had been well-received at Steinfeld. In fact, Eberwin considered Bernard's writing as a tool with which to combat heretical groups. And, important for our consideration of the vineyard motif for Elisabeth's sermons, Bernard's works utilized this monastic *lingua franca* to describe and decry the problems both within the Church as well as those that assaulted it from outside.

Eberwin, however, did not simply ask Bernard to provide another sermon to rouse religious fervor among its audience. Rather, he sought a new sermon from Bernard that addressed the growing problem of heretical activities in Cologne in a way that "set against them [the Cathars] the arguments and authoritative texts of our faith."<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, Eberwin called for a disputation from Bernard. He assumed that this type of rational, argumentative response

---

<sup>25</sup> Walter Wakefield and Austin Evans, eds. *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 128; and Eberwin of Steinfeld, *Ep. 472, PL 182: col. 677A*.

<sup>26</sup> Eberwin, *Ep. 472, PL 182: col. 677B*. "ut omnes partes haeresis illorum...distinguas, et contraposis rationibus et auctoritatibus nostrae fidei, illas destruas." Wakefield, *Heresies*, 128.

would be most efficacious in defeating the Cathars.<sup>27</sup> Not only did Bernard heed Eberwin's call and compose the requested sermon, but he did so in the manner that Eberwin had suggested.<sup>28</sup> For Bernard, the foxes that were set loose in the vineyard were at the heart of the problem. There were three sorts of foxes that confounded the church: flatterers, slanderers and seductive spirits.<sup>29</sup> The reason these foxes assaulted the "vine of the Lord" was the "fewness of its defenders."<sup>30</sup> In fact, Bernard argued that "the false Catholics who lay hidden have been unmasked as the real plunderers of the vine of the earth."<sup>31</sup> Thus, those who appeared to be practicing the faith were in fact its greatest enemies.

Bernard's sermon in response to the Cologne heretics, then, demonstrated his opinion that the Lord's vineyard had been damaged by the lack of care by those who were in charge of it. His answer also made it clear that an argumentative and rational response was necessary in order to combat heresy. Moreover, Bernard's text demonstrates that a man known for his reputation as a spiritual leader could also endorse the types of disputational techniques found in the twelfth-century schools.<sup>32</sup> In his work, Bernard emphasized that the brazen heretics that disputed openly were not the real problem for the church. Moreover, their arguments were weak because they did not offer any new debates but instead expounded "that which is worn by use and long

---

<sup>27</sup> Kienzle points out that Eberwin basically asked Bernard to respond to the heretics in the form of a disputation, which was a characteristic of the French schools methods. *Cistercians*, 83.

<sup>28</sup> Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 83.

<sup>29</sup> Wakefield, *Heresies*, 132.

<sup>30</sup> Wakefield, *Heresies*, 132.

<sup>31</sup> Wakefield, *Heresies*, 137.

<sup>32</sup> For a study of Cistercian involvement in scholastic and disputational learning, see Noell, *Applied Science*.

agitated by heretics of old, and which has been well threshed and winnowed by our theologians.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, Bernard characterized these heretics as obdurate and unlearned, but not a real threat to the church. He believed, moreover, that the church’s theologians were far more experienced at disputation than these heretics. However, those who pretended to be Catholics in their appearance yet undermined the Church through their secret actions and beliefs caused the most harm to the vineyard. They were the real enemies.

Elisabeth would pick up both of these themes in her own works. She considered the problem caused by the false Catholics and the ability of the catholic clergy to dispute the Cathars. As we will see, Elisabeth did not always express the same confidence in the clergy about these matters as did Bernard.

### ***Reform Critiques: Elisabeth and Hildegard***

As we saw, Elisabeth used the motif of the vineyard in her praise of Hildegard’s reform activity. Bernard and Eberwin used this same language when confronted with reform issues in the Rhineland twenty years prior to Hildegard and Elisabeth’s own involvement in matters of heresy. Although the vineyard motif provided a common metaphor for monastic writers, these writers employed it in numerous ways to fit the specific circumstances.<sup>34</sup> In her assessment of these different uses of the motif, Beverly Mayne Kienzle has argued that Hildegard relied on her prophetic voice to elicit reform among her audiences unlike Bernard’s logical presentation of his

---

<sup>33</sup> Wakefield, *Heresies*, 138.

<sup>34</sup> Kienzle, “Defending the Lord’s Vineyard,” 163.

arguments. Kienzle has noted that this difference represented gendered modes of expression. That is, Hildegard drew her authority from her role as a prophet whereas Bernard's authority came from his role as an influential churchmen and teacher.<sup>35</sup> In addition, although she does not discuss Elisabeth's works in detail, Kienzle locates Elisabeth's authority as deriving from the same source as Hildegard's, noting that her brother Ekbert acted like Bernard, presenting logical rather than prophetic pronouncements against heretics and general clerical negligence.<sup>36</sup>

In this section, I will challenge Kienzle's comparison of Elisabeth and Hildegard's modes of expression when employing the vineyard motif. It is perhaps tempting to lump Hildegard and Elisabeth together in an analysis of visionary writers in the twelfth century; however, although they shared common concerns, they expressed them differently. In particular, I will assess the dichotomy Kienzle presents in her work—that men and women used different modes of discourse in order to speak about reform issues—to demonstrate that it does not hold true for Elisabeth when scrutinized. In fact, Elisabeth used dialogic conventions as part of her strategy for disputing her own detractors. Thus, Elisabeth employed modes of expression associated with the school milieu to highlight her status as a public figure who utilized magisterial authority. As I will demonstrate below, Elisabeth's own implementation of these techniques must be taken into consideration when addressing her sermons on clerical negligence and heretical practice.

According to F.W.E. Roth, Elisabeth inspired Hildegard's visionary work denouncing heretics that both Elisabeth and the monks at Mainz subsequently received. Thus, the letter

---

<sup>35</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 178.

<sup>36</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 179.

Elisabeth sent to Hildegard, praising her as a worker in the vineyard was in response to the visionary text Hildegard wrote and circulated at Elisabeth's behest.<sup>37</sup> This exchange between Hildegard and Elisabeth points to their equal status in the production of reform works. Elisabeth was not simply subject to influences by Hildegard, but also influenced the trajectory of Hildegard's writings.<sup>38</sup> This is a key point when considering the differences in their works, which have usually been assessed by scholars as demonstrating Hildegard's complexity and Elisabeth's lack of imagination.<sup>39</sup> Rather, their mutual admiration and support for each other's reform efforts demonstrates that differences between their texts should not be considered as a result of Elisabeth's poor reproductions of Hildegard's works. They each spoke of reform in their own words.

---

<sup>37</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 166. In Roth's works, he discusses the "*Visio sororis Hildegardis contra Kataros*," which was addressed to Elisabeth. Roth states Elisabeth first wrote to Hildegard regarding the Cathars, and Hildegard responded with her visionary text. Then, Elisabeth answered Hildegard with the letter that praised Hildegard's work in the Lord's vineyard. For Roth's discussion of the exchange, see, *Visionen*, xxxviii. For the Mainz version of Hildegard's "*Visio sororis Hildegardis contra Kataras*," see Baird and Ehrman, *Letters*, Vol. II, 122-125 and Lieven Van Acker, ed. *Hildegardis Bingensis Epistolarium, CCCM* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), vol. 91A, 376-382. For Elisabeth's response to Hildegard's *visio*, see Anne L. Clark, trans. *Elisabeth of Schönaue: The Complete Works* (NY: Paulist Press, 2000), 142-43 and Roth, *Visionen*, 74-75.

<sup>38</sup> Elisabeth mentioned how her visit to Hildegard influenced the composition of her *Liber viarum dei*. "Hic est liber viarum dei, qui per revelandus est, quando visitaveris sororem Hildigardim, et audieris eam." Roth, *Visionen*, 91. The fact that Elisabeth mentioned this in her works has led many modern-day scholars to note how Hildegard influenced Elisabeth. However, it should also be noted that Hildegard was also influenced by Elisabeth's text on the St. Ursula martyrdom, thus indicating a collaborative relationship. In Elisabeth's *Revelationes*, she changed the traditional legend of the martyrdom to include men in the virginal company whereas originally it had been an entirely female troop. Hildegard accepted these changes, and included this information in her work, *Symphonia*. "From England and every land/monks joined their band/with learned men who served them/and preserved their virginity." Barbara Newman, trans. *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 1998), 237. "De patria etiam earum/et de aliis regionibus/viri religiosi/et sapientes/ipsis adiuncti sunt/qui eas in virginea custodia servabant/et qui eis in omnibus ministrabant." Newman, *Symphonia*, 236. Although the dating of this song cannot be firmly noted, Newman had argued that the collection of songs addressing St. Ursula most likely was produced in the last decade of Hildegard's life. *Ibid.*, 9-12.

<sup>39</sup> Barbara Newman, "Preface," in *Elisabeth of Schönaue: The Complete Works*, trans. Anne L. Clark (NY: Paulist Press, 2000), xi-xii.

I will now consider how Hildegard's and Elisabeth's texts discussed reform. Although they both used the motif of the vineyard as a starting point for their sermons, the end result was different. In fact, I will discuss that for Hildegard, visual imagery was the most important factor in her messages. On the other hand, even though Elisabeth also used the prophetic voice at points in her sermons, she emphasized oral qualities in her works. As I will argue, in her polemics against the heretics, she breaks from her use of the prophetic voice to indicate that these sermons are a product of her thought and her speech.

The monks at Mainz wrote to Hildegard in 1163, stating "It was related to us by truthful persons that you wrote about the error of the Cathars in the manner that you saw in a vision of the secrets of God."<sup>40</sup> Here the Mainz monks referred to the text Hildegard wrote and Elisabeth's letter had inspired. Notably, when the monks at Mainz stated that Hildegard "saw" information about the Cathars, they implied that she had learned something about them from seeing a vision.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the Mainz monks noted their expectation that Hildegard framed her texts as interpretations of her visual images in order to describe the doctrinal problems with the Cathar heresy.

---

<sup>40</sup> "A veridicis siquidem personis relatum est nobis quod quedam de errore Catharorum scripseritis, quemadmodum illa in visione secretorum Dei vidistis." Van Acker, *Epistolae, CCCM*, vol. 91A, 377.

<sup>41</sup> In their translation of this passage, Baird and Ehrman use "learned" instead of "saw." *Letters*, Vol. II, 122. Barbara Newman emphasizes Hildegard's reliance on the visual in "Sibyl of the Rhine: Hildegard's Life and Times," in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 1-29 at 9

Hildegard's interpretation of her visions urged her listeners to "move the burning sparks of injustice of those who say that they govern the people, but do not really govern them..."<sup>42</sup> This was clearly a remark aimed at the current leaders of the Church. To emphasize that her audience must take action against clerical laxity, Hildegard employed strong apocalyptic imagery to describe the damage that the heretics would wreak on the Church due to the errors of the leaders. She presented the Cathars as false prophets who followed the devil rather than the Lord.<sup>43</sup> "And just as the prophets preceded the Lord and prophesied the way of salvation, demonstrating that He was filled with all the virtues of justice, so too do these [Cathars] precede the beast, embracing the filth and wickedness of all evils, going the way of the errant."<sup>44</sup> Thus, Hildegard linked the negligence of the clergy to govern their people with the appearance of the Cathars.

Scholars have linked Hildegard's apocalyptic imagery to a symbolist language steeped in traditional Benedictine reformist language.<sup>45</sup> In other words, her readers expected Hildegard to "read" her visual images to them. In turn, the audience would continue this type of reading

---

<sup>42</sup> "...et moveamus scintillas ardentis iniustitie illorum qui dicunt se populum regere et non regunt..." Van Acker, *Epistolae, CCCM*, vol. 91A, 378.

<sup>43</sup> For an analysis of Hildegard's use of apocalyptic imagery, see Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 167-170; 174-180.

<sup>44</sup> Van Acker, *Epistolae, CCCM*, vol. 91A, 381. "...et precedent eam, amplectendo spurcitiam ac nequitiam omnium malorum, per viam errantium, sicut prophete Dominum prophetaverunt in via salutis, eum ostendentes cum omnibus virtutibus iustite. Baird and Ehrman, *Letters*, vol. II, 125.

<sup>45</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, "Prophet and Reformer: 'Smoke in the Vineyard'," in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 70-90, at 74-77.

through a meditative textual community.<sup>46</sup> As we have seen, the Mainz monks interpreted Hildegard's messages as visual ones.

As Hildegard made clear in another sermon against the Cathars, the clergy needed better instruction in order to govern the people. Hildegard delivered this sermon on the Cathars in 1163 to the cathedral chapter at Cologne. Philip, dean of the chapter, thanked Hildegard for her visit and requested that she send the chapter a written version of her sermon.<sup>47</sup> In this sermon, Hildegard told the cathedral chapter that "because of the loathsomeness brought on by your riches, avarice, and other vain pursuits, you do not properly teach your subordinates, nor indeed do you even allow them to seek instruction from you."<sup>48</sup> This lack of proper instruction led to the moral torpor of the entire clergy, thus allowing the heretics to "appear in public as if they were filled with sanctity."<sup>49</sup> The clergy, then, "are a bad example to others, since no rivulet of good reputation flows from you, so that, with respect to the soul, you have neither food to eat nor clothes to wear, but only unjust deeds without the good of knowledge."<sup>50</sup> Hildegard's language

---

<sup>46</sup> Clark-Bartlett, "Miraculous Literacy," 43.

<sup>47</sup> "Rogamus etiam, ut ea que viva voce nobis prius dixistis, litteris quoque commendetis et nobis transmittatis..." Van Acker, *Epistolae*, CCCM, vol. 91, 33.

<sup>48</sup> "...sed in cavernam voluptatis vestre fugitis, ac propter tedium divitiarum et avaritie et ceterarum vanitatum subditos vestros non imbusitis, nec eos doctrinam a vobis querere permittitis..." Van Acker, *Epistolae*, CCCM, vol. 91, Using Baird and Ehrman, *Letters*, vol. I, 57.

<sup>49</sup> Van Acker, *Epistolae*, CCCM, vol. 91, 41. "Et ita quasi in omni sanctitate hominibus se ostendent..." Baird and Ehrman, *Letters*, vol. I, 59.

<sup>50</sup> "Sed malum exemplum in mentibus hominum estis, cum nullus rivulus bone fame de vobis fluit, ita quod nec cibum ad vescendum nec vestimentum ad operiendum in respectione anime habetis, sed iniusta opera absque bono scientie." Van Acker, *Epistolae*, CCCM, vol. 91, 42. Baird and Ehrman, *Letters*, vol. I, 59.

here compares the heretics to the clergy, and while neither is living the correct life, the heretics appear to be holier than the clerics.

This language also echoes the reform ideals about teaching and hierarchy that Haimo's *vita* of William explored. Moreover, this comparison between the heretics and the clerics highlights the problem of education. The clerics, however, did not demonstrate the type of discipline needed in order to be a good teacher for others. Instead, they were models of errant ways. When Hildegard referred to the knowledge they should have, it was likely in reference to divine justice, which should be taught by the clergy to others in order to perpetuate discipline and good works.<sup>51</sup>

As Kienzle and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton have argued, Hildegard's language was one that invoked allegorical images in order to emphasize her points.<sup>52</sup> The use of visual images in order to make her arguments was consistent throughout her works. Her *Scivias* included images alongside her text, thus allowing her audience to read these pictures. Constant Mews has noted that Hildegard was part of the scholastic world, but she expressed her thoughts in visual images rather than abstract concepts.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Hildegard's critiques about the education of the clerics and their ability to teach others about Christian doctrine and practice was delivered in her usual manner, invoking visual representations of doom and judgment should her clerical audiences not mend their ways.

---

<sup>51</sup> John Van Engen, "Abbess: 'Mother and Teacher,'" in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 30-52, at 43-4.

<sup>52</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 177 and Kerby-Fulton, "Prophet and Reformer," 73-80.

<sup>53</sup> Mews, "Hildegard and the Schools," 110.

Hildegard's prophecies to the clergy were part of her Rhineland public preaching tour. Elisabeth's works concerning the Cathars also circulated together in the Rhineland in various manuscripts in the twelfth century.<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, Premonstratensian and Cistercian houses had the most interest in Elisabeth's sermons on the Cathars, which were treated as a separate group of works.<sup>55</sup> As we have seen, Bernard and Eberwin were Cistercian and Premonstratensian reformers who had earlier voiced their concerns about the Cathars in this region. Hildegard's preaching tour demonstrates that in the 1160s, the heretical groups were still a problem.<sup>56</sup> Elisabeth's sermons, then, must be viewed in light of the interest they held for the Cisterican and Premonstratensian groups. It would seem as though these houses viewed Elisabeth's sermons on the Cathars and the role of the clergy in eradicating them as necessary and practical advice, perhaps building on the exchange about these same matters first addressed by Bernard and Eberwin in the 1140s.

It is not inconceivable that Elisabeth learned of Bernard's and Eberwin's correspondence through her own involvement with Steinfeld.<sup>57</sup> Elisabeth investigated the life and martyrdom of

---

<sup>54</sup> Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönau, Werk und Wirkung im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen handschriftlichen Überlieferung," in *Annalen für mittelhheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951): 243-315, at 266-67. These sermons ultimately circulated as chapters 20-28 in her *Liber visionum tercium* in the final redaction of Elisabeth's works. I will refer to them by these chapter numbers because Köster, Roth and Clark all use the same numbering in their works discussing Elisabeth's texts.

<sup>55</sup> Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 266-67. The Premonstratensian house of Windberg and the Cistercian abbey of Heilsbronn held twelfth-century copies of these sermons. The Cistercian abbey at Stams also held these sermons, but their copy dates from the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

<sup>56</sup> A contemporary chronicler also discussed the problems with the Cathars. For a description of their punishment, see *Chronica Regia Colonicensis*, *MGH SS rer Germ* 18: 114.

<sup>57</sup> Kurt Köster has noted that Bernard influenced the Rhineland convents through his mysticism, so it seems likely that his other texts and any local involvement that he had in the area would also be influential. "Elisabeth von Schönau," 17.

St. Potentinus for Ulrich, who was prior of Steinfeld from 1152-1170. Ekbert was also involved with anti-Cathar activities at this monastery.<sup>58</sup> Ulrich and Ekbert both studied in Paris at the same time, which perhaps aided the links between Steinfeld and Schönaue.<sup>59</sup> In general, Ekbert and Elisabeth had strong ties to the Premonstratensians. Their brother, Rother, was a Premonstratensian provost at Pöhlde. Moreover, Elisabeth's texts on the St. Ursula legend enjoyed a wide distribution throughout the Order.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, I will analyze Elisabeth's sermons on the Cathars in light of the interest that the Premonstratensians and Cistercians had in them. Moreover, I will demonstrate how Elisabeth's sermons echoed the concerns and solutions proposed by Bernard and Eberwin in their correspondence. Elisabeth addressed the problems of heresy, negligent clerics and education much as these two male reformers did. She called for a better educated clergy, one that utilized scholastic learning. Elisabeth did so in a visionary genre using what seems to be a prophetic voice. Yet, this prophetic voice deserves more attention because according to Kienzle, this is what gendered Elisabeth and Hildegard's mode of expression. However, Elisabeth's own voice interrupts this prophetic stance, suggesting that her support of learned inquiry to engage in reform was her own.

---

<sup>58</sup> Clark, *Complete Works*, 229, n. 290.

<sup>59</sup> Theodor Paas, "Ein Steinfelder Altarbild als Zeuge der Potentinus-Legende," in *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 102 (1918), 133, n. 1

<sup>60</sup> Paas, "Ein Steinfelder Altarbild," 133, n. 1. Anne Clark disputes Kurt Köster's assertion that the distribution of Elisabeth's manuscripts was linked to various religious houses' desire to authenticate relics that they acquired from the grave site at Cologne that was linked to the St. Ursula legend. Clark notes that six manuscripts seem to have been produced or obtained by a house to validate relics, but that is a small number considering that 145 manuscripts exist that are known to transmit Elisabeth's works. Anne Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönaue: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 144-145.

Elisabeth's Cathar sermons were in fact a lengthy letter to Hildegard, which opened with her praise of Hildegard's work. Here, Elisabeth stressed that God "writes" his words in Hildegard, which she proclaims for all to hear. In fact, Hildegard's stance on the Cathars inspired Elisabeth to share her own words.<sup>61</sup> Notably, Elisabeth emphasized how words acted. They were used to compose texts and to engage in speech. Moreover, Hildegard's example, that is, her mission of reform on behalf of the Church, inspired Elisabeth to pour forth her own words. Thus, Elisabeth's prophetic sermons began by emphasizing her opinion of Hildegard in her own speech.

Elisabeth continued to provide her own thoughts on the heretics. Following Elisabeth's announcement of her intention to also compose sermons against the Cathars, she praised Hildegard's work in the vineyard. Elisabeth provided numerous scriptural passages, which she indicated that she had interpreted herself. After her discussion about the idle members of the Church, Elisabeth referenced an earlier vision that she had about a group that hoped to destroy the Church, which she identified as the Cathars. In these sentences, it is clear that it is Elisabeth who is recalling these facts and providing her own understanding of them through her use of the first person.<sup>62</sup>

It is at this point that Elisabeth began to employ the prophetic voice rather than her own. Elisabeth directed her attention to those who were not promoting reform, but rather encouraging

---

<sup>61</sup> "...quoniam digitus dei scribit in te, ut verbum vite pronunties. Beata es et bene tibi erit semper, et organum spiritus sancti tu es, quia verba tua accenderunt me quasi flamma tetigisset cor meum et prorupi in hec verba." Roth, *Visionen*, 74.

<sup>62</sup> "Sed et ego mecum recolo..." and "Et hoc intelligo pertinere ad kataros istos..." Roth, *Visionen*, 74.

heresy. She accused the “kings and princes, bishops and abbots, and priests and everyone who is in power”<sup>63</sup> of failing to ameliorate adequately the problems within the church. Thus, she ordered the leaders “to use all fortitude and the catholic faith to expel and destroy all the heresies that create schisms” in the church.<sup>64</sup> She then described the heretics that had caused so much trouble. They were “most miserable and wretched hypocrites” who “[i]n the presence of the people...appear to be pious and innocent” but are “full of evil inclination.”<sup>65</sup> Elisabeth then listed all the doctrines of Catholic faith that the heretics did not believe in, such as the virginal birth of Christ; the creation of humans by God rather than the devil; that Adam and Eve’s sin was the temptation by the serpent; and the divine nature of Christ. These were the same false doctrines for which the Cathars were accused of professing.

In the next paragraph, Elisabeth sets up a contrast to these wretched heretics by arguing that those “who are learned” should “study the books of the New Testament and remember their words” because they “will find great profit” in them.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, this type of study would help the clergy “revive the Holy Spirit” and “revive your souls in the structure of the church, which has been sanctified in Christ Jesus and illuminated by the holy gospel and purified from its

---

<sup>63</sup> “...regibus et principibus, episcopis et abbatibus, presbiteris, et omnibus, qui in sublimitate estis...” Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

<sup>64</sup> “...omnes hereses, que scismata faciunt in ecclesia mea, quam genui in amaritudine anime mee, omni fortitudine expellere et destruere fide catholica.” Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

<sup>65</sup> “...miserrimi et infelicissimi hypochrite, qui apparetis coram hominibus quasi religiosi et innocentes, intrinsecus autem pleni estis ingenio malo.” Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

<sup>66</sup> “ qui litterati estis...scrutamini libros de novo testamento, et recordamini verborum eius, qualem fructum inveneritis.” Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

ancient rust.”<sup>67</sup> Elisabeth likely was also playing on the word *aedificatio* in her description here. This passage could mean that the clergy would revive their souls in the institution of the church by being faithful catholics, but *aedificatio* also connotes the idea of edification,<sup>68</sup> explanation or building up through argument, which would imply that these clerics should renew their souls not only by embracing the institution, *ecclesia*, but also by putting their knowledge to use in order to strengthen the structure through the application of their learning. With these arguments, Elisabeth picked up on themes from earlier reformers such as Haimo and William, as well as Hildegard’s pleas for a clergy who taught those submitted to them. This type of learned study was necessary for reform because the leaders have been “walking not along the straight path, but after your own transgressions[.]”<sup>69</sup> Education led to correction and to the proliferation of the true doctrine.

It would seem, then, that the heretics here, who were “wretched hypocrites” and who “appear pious and innocent in the presence of men”<sup>70</sup> were the Cathars, who had infiltrated the vineyard due to the ineptitude of church leaders. However, Elisabeth’s seemingly straightforward attack on the Cathars and plea to the church leaders to employ their education for the protection of the Church should also be read as a reform era critique of that very same church leadership. In fact, the charges that Elisabeth leveled against the heretics could also be read as

---

<sup>67</sup> “Renovamini spiritu sancto et refocillate animas vestras in edificationem ecclesie, que est sanctificata in Christo Iesu, et illuminata per sancta evangelia, et dealbata de antique rubigine.” Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

<sup>68</sup> Joyce notes the importance of edification to Otloh’s *Liber visionum* in the eleventh century, which also spoke to reform ideas. “Speaking of Spiritual Matters,” 77-83.

<sup>69</sup> “...ambulans viam non rectam, sed post peccata tua...” Roth, *Visionen*, 77.

<sup>70</sup> “infelicissimi hypochrite”... “apparetis coram hominibus quasi religiosi et innocentes...” Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

applying to the church leaders. The church leaders were all those who held important secular and ecclesiastical offices. Elisabeth opened the chapter imploring them to “use all fortitude and the catholic faith to expel and destroy all the heresies that make schisms” and to eradicate the heretics who are “most miserable and wretched hypocrites.”<sup>71</sup> Yet, Elisabeth’s text seemed to indicate that these men needed to reform themselves too, suggesting that they were the duplicitous heretics and that their poor behavior had led to a situation where the Cathars could espouse such false beliefs.

Unlike her previous chapter in the *Liber visionum tercium*, Elisabeth never mentioned the Cathars by name in chapter twenty-five. Whereas in chapter twenty-four she used the term Cathars (*katari*), in this chapter she simply employed the general term heresy (*hereses*). This distinction is important because Elisabeth’s sermon did not set up a contrast between the church leaders who were learned and read Scriptures and the Cathars who were hypocrites. Rather, her sermon set up the contrast between those who appeared pious but were hypocrites and those who were learned and could read biblical texts properly. It seems that the prelates to whom she addressed this sermon were in fact not in that second group. Indeed, Elisabeth concluded her chapter using the vineyard motif to insinuate that the church leaders were in fact the ones who spread heresies, thus she wrote: “My chosen vineyard, I have planted you and made known to you every way of truth. How could you have turned back, walking not along the straight path,

---

<sup>71</sup> “...que scismata faciunt in ecclesia mea, quam genui in amaritudine anime mee, omni fortitudine expellere et destruere fide catholica.” Roth, *Visionen*, 76. Moreover, the schisms in the church could also be referring to battle between Emperor Frederick Barbarossa’s candidates for pope and Alexander III, which created a schism from 1159 to 1177. Kienzle, “Defending the Vineyard,” 165.

but after your own transgressions?”<sup>72</sup> The answer to this question was simple. Indeed, the Cathars did not believe true doctrines and followed their own sinful ways because those who were supposed to teach them were incapable of doing so.

This comparison between heretics and clerics echoes some of Bernard's and Hildegard's concerns with both groups. Elisabeth, however, employed the vineyard trope in a slightly different way. In her sermon she did not include the fox to represent the heretics as did Bernard. Rather, in Elisabeth's texts, the presence of the fox, or the heretics themselves, did not cause as many problems as did the absence of the workers within the vineyard. The vineyard found itself in this deplorable state due to a lack of leadership. When Elisabeth praised Hildegard for her work in the vineyard and lamented that “the Lord sought workers in His vineyard, and He found them all idle because no one leads them,”<sup>73</sup> she was stating that the church leaders were negligent. Elisabeth used the imagery of the vineyard in her critique of church leaders in order not only to demonstrate the connection of lax administration to heresy, but also to emphasize the point that those in charge were not leading in the manner of reformers like William. This echoed Bernard's statement that “the false Catholics,” or those who appeared to be pious and moral, were the “real plunderers of the vine of the earth.”<sup>74</sup>

Elisabeth's sermons ended just as they started, with her own voice. In general, Elisabeth's various texts promote the conversations that she had with her angelic guide or other

---

<sup>72</sup> “Vinea mea electa, ego te plantavi et cognitam tibi feci omnem viam veritatis, quomodo conversas es retrorsum, ambulans viam non rectam, sed post peccata tua.” Roth, *Visionen*, 77.

<sup>73</sup> “Quesivit enim dominus operarios in vineam suam, et invenit eos, omnes ociosos, quia nemo eos conduxit.” Roth, *Visionen*, 74.

<sup>74</sup> Wakefield, *Heresies*, 138.

heavenly interlocutors, where it is clear that she is speaking about various theological or spiritual topics in her own voice. When prophetic utterances occurred in them, they were usually spoken by her angelic guide. Thus, for the most part, Elisabeth did not speak in scripture, but considered it as part of larger debates. To conclude her prophetic sermons, Elisabeth inserted her own thoughts about the Cathars. At one point, she had compared the Cathar's speech to sulfur, which was an unusual phrase. Hildegard's works were full of odd image combinations like this, which she left up to her audience to decipher or to fear. Elisabeth, however, told her readers that "While I was thinking about the meaning of this phrase I had spoken...the Lord placed these words in my mouth."<sup>75</sup> Although Elisabeth attributed the answer to her thought to God, this should be compared to how she indicated that Hildegard inspired her to write the sermons in the first place. Moreover, thoughts, even when they were self-initiated, were often discussed as being guided by the Holy Spirit in some way.<sup>76</sup> I would argue that it is significant, however, that Elisabeth indicated that she herself actively thought about these reform concerns, which ultimately led to the construction of her sermons.

Elisabeth, then, like Bernard and Eberwin, emphasized the problems in the Church and with its leaders. Moreover, her sermons also indicated the need for learned study in order to provide clear and rational explanations of the catholic faith. Much along those lines, she began her sermons with an analysis of scripture and concluded them with her own recognition that a clarification about the meaning of her inspired words was needed. Thus, for Elisabeth, the

---

<sup>75</sup> "Cogitante me, que esset significatio verbi, quod dixeram...posuit dominus verba hec ore meo." Roth, *Visionen*, 78.

<sup>76</sup> Hugh of Rouen, *Tractatus de memoria*, PL 192: col. 1299-1324B.

Cathar's errors were the result of their inability to provide this type of rational interpretation. When she implored them to "Cease this insanity!,"<sup>77</sup> she presented the Cathars as mentally unstable, and as such, they could not interpret either Catholic doctrine or the Scriptures correctly. The Christian flock needed religious figures who could provide this proper interpretation to save the Cathars from the errors and to save other Christians from following them.

Yet the insanity committed by the Cathars was only possible and able to spread because there were no workers in the vineyard. The negligence and laxness of the leaders, which Elisabeth equated to a form of heresy, was exemplified in her *Liber viarum dei*. She devoted an entire chapter to the errors of the prelates whom she had also addressed in her *Liber visionum tercius*. An emphasis on education appeared in Elisabeth's critiques here, too, and she made it clear what type of education was necessary in order for the prelates to fulfill their duties.

Elisabeth chided the church leaders for negligence, emphasizing that like the heretics they were mentally challenged. Thus, the prelates were accused of ignoring their pastoral duties and allowing their flocks to wander because the "pastors have neither the voice nor the mind (*sensus*) to gather and rebuke those who are scattered. They have become mute, 'says the Lord.' They have become stupid (*insipientes*), but to themselves they are wise (*sapientes*) and eloquent."<sup>78</sup> In this critique, as in her use of the vineyard motif, Elisabeth presented the leaders as poor workers. Whereas the vineyard in the first example grew wayward due to a lack of care, the sheep here wander away from the fold because their caretakers were inactive and watched

---

<sup>77</sup> "...cessate ab insania ista." Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

<sup>78</sup> "...et non est vox neque sensus pastoribus meis ad increpandum et colligendum dissipatos. Mihi obmutuerunt, dicit dominus, mihi insipientes facti sunt, sibi autem sapientes sunt et disertis." Roth, *Visionen*, 112.

idly as Christians went astray. In addition, Elisabeth emphasized the connection between rational thought and speech, which formed the basis for disputing those who were erring and aided the goal of strengthening the Church. Here, however, the church leaders had the ability to harness neither, which was problematic for fighting heresy.

The prelates were not the only leaders in need of reform and education. In fact, chapter fifteen of the *Liber viarum dei* addressed both church and secular leaders together. This sermon addressed “words of warning to spiritual leaders” and “admonitions to those who pass secular judgments, so that they may be reformed (*corrigi*) by the Lord.”<sup>79</sup> Elisabeth’s angel cried out to these wayward figures: “Wretched and irrational ones (*insensati*), open your eyes and read the scriptures and recall the religion in which your predecessors walked before you.”<sup>80</sup> Although Elisabeth’s sermon pointed out the problem, the inability to understand scriptures, the ability for these leaders to rectify the issue seemed unlikely, especially since Elisabeth stated that the “princes and judges” were “like the horse and mule who have no understanding.”<sup>81</sup> Elisabeth’s critique echoed the medieval literary commonplace that those who were not learned, and therefore could not enrich their souls through their education, were living like beasts.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> “...spiritualibus rectoribus verba admonitionis”...”qui secularia iudicia habent, aliquas admonitiones, ex quibus et ipsi corrigi possunt a domino...” Roth, *Visionen*, 115.

<sup>80</sup> “Infelices et insensate aperite oculos vestros, et legite scripturas, et recordamini, qua religione precesserunt vos antecessores vestri.” Roth, *Visionen*, 113.

<sup>81</sup> “principes et iudices...quasi equus et mulus, quibus non est intellectus...” Roth, *Visionen*, 115.

<sup>82</sup> John Van Engen, “Letters, Schools, and Written Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in *Dialektik und Rhetorik im früheren und hohen Mittelalter: Rezeption, Überlieferung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung antiker Gelehrsamkeit vornehmlich im 9. und 12. Jahrhundert*, ed. Johannes Fried (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997), 119. Van Engen quotes the “rhetorical letters of Regensburg,” which were composed in the late eleventh century at the collegiate church in Regensburg. See, Regensburg Brief no. 5, in *Briefsammlungen zur Zeit Heinrichs IV*, ed.

Elisabeth's polemical address to both the secular and church leaders deploring their education suggests that she assumed both groups were in some way familiar with the type of learning of which she spoke. Although Germany still relied on its own cathedral school system instead of simply sending all students to Paris, it is also clear that members of the nobility, at least those who wanted a career in the secular or episcopal courts, desired the modern education available in the new French school system where disputation was part of the pedagogy. For example, Rainald of Dassel was both archbishop of Cologne and chancellor to Frederick Barbarossa, thus holding religious and secular power. He had studied with Ekbert in the Paris schools and was a very learned individual, although, perhaps Elisabeth and her co-reformers thought he could do more to address reform concerns.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Ekbert most likely studied in Paris himself as a way to prepare for an eventual elevation to a bishopric, which he eschewed by professing his vows as a monk in 1155. Other influential members of Barbarossa's court had studied in Paris as well. Hugh of Honau had studied with Gilbert of Poitiers,<sup>84</sup> and Otto of Freising, Barbarossa's uncle, had studied under Abelard. Hugh of Honau's *Liber de ignorantia* even addressed the need for this type of education when he wrote his own polemical work in

---

Norbert Fickermann, MGH *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit* 5 (Weimar, 1950), 282. These letters contain many "scholastic" elements.

<sup>83</sup> Ekbert addressed his *Sermones contra Kataros* to Rainald.

<sup>84</sup> Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages: 1000-1200*, trans. Denise A. Kaiser (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 231.

1180 against the ignorance of clerics who refused to participate in the modern educational system, thus echoing Elisabeth's earlier concerns.<sup>85</sup>

Elisabeth urged those "who are learned" to "study the books of the New Testament"<sup>86</sup> in order to ameliorate the troubles in the church because she imagined these clerics putting the words of scripture into action for the sake of reform. When Elisabeth characterized the church leaders in her texts as mute and lacking any sense, she presented an image of the prelates as unable to form arguments to fight heresies actively. This image must be linked to the ability to enter into disputations given its importance in Bernard and Eberwin's discussions and the importance of this technique in learned settings and texts.<sup>87</sup> If the prelates were unable to defend themselves and the doctrines of the Church against these errors with their words, how could they exert any authority? After all, Elisabeth engaged in this activity through her use of dialogue and her consideration of contemporary debates.

Elisabeth's portrayal of the church leaders suggested that they lacked the type of education and skills necessary to strengthen and defend the church. Their appearance as good Christians would not be enough.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the learned people that Elisabeth referred to in her work

---

<sup>85</sup> Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars*, 230. See, Hugh of Honau, *Liber de ignorantia*, ed. Nikolaus M. Häring, in "Hugh of Honau and the *Liber de ignorantia*," in *Medieval Studies*, vol. 25 (1963): 209-30. Hugh's work only excuses ignorance associated with physical or mental disabilities. *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>86</sup> "Vos, autem, qui litterati estis, scrutamini libros de novo testamento, et recordamini verborum eius..." Roth, *Visionen*, 76.

<sup>87</sup> See for example, Alex J. Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," *AHR* 117, no. 2 (2012):331-64 and Mary Campbell, "Sanctity and Identity: The Authentication of the Ursuline Relics and Legal Discourse in Elisabeth von Schönaue's *Liber Revelationum*," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 38, no. 2 (2012):159-92

<sup>88</sup> In Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus*, she had a vision about those in religious orders who thought simply being a member of them would reward them. Elisabeth's instruction from the angelic guide emphasized that she must be

were people like her brother, Ekbert, not the current church leaders. In fact, Elisabeth often referred to her brother as “learned” throughout her texts.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, Ekbert presented himself as engaging in disputations with the Cathars in his *Sermones contra Kataros*, which will be outlined below. Thus, Ekbert employed methods to fight against heresy and for reform in the church that both Bernard and Elisabeth had endorsed. Indeed, echoing his sister Elisabeth’s critique of the church leaders, Ekbert argued in his *Sermones* that church clerics did not want to be caught “struck mute and speechless” in the face of the Cathar’s arguments,<sup>90</sup> so they needed to become educated in the ways in which to combat them.

In both of their critiques against the clerics, Hildegard and Elisabeth focused on the heretics and the problems that an uneducated clergy caused for the Church. The two women, however, engaged their audiences in different ways. Hildegard’s sermons provided an exhortation to her audiences based on the implementation of allegorical and apocalyptic imagery. On the other hand, Elisabeth’s visionary writings employed language that asked questions about the ability of those leading the church to use rational thought and speech to form the proper disputations against the Cathars. Moreover, even when using the prophetic voice, Elisabeth was aware of the need to provide a clear reform agenda for her audiences and not rely on their own

---

active in her practice of Christianity. It was not enough to simply be a professed nun living in a religious order. This was made abundantly clear when Elisabeth saw a vision of judgment, with the saved to the right of the Lord and the damned to the left. Of those on the left, Elisabeth discerned “many from the clergy” and “many men and women from our order” who were commanded to go “into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels.” “Heu! quanto ex clero, quantos etiam nostri ordinis viros et mulieres plenos confusione illic dinoscebam. Ad eos vero, qui errant a sinistris: Ite maledicti in ignem eternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius.” Roth, *Visionen*, 22. According to her vision, their passive embrace of Christianity damned them.

<sup>89</sup> See Clark, *The Complete Works*, 69.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Joyce Harrison, ed. *Sermones contra Kataros*, 2 vols. Ph.D. Dissertation, (The Ohio State University, 1990), vol. 1, 4.

interpretations about the correct course of action. In this way, Elisabeth's call for the clergy to employ scholastic knowledge to reform reflected a pragmatic approach on her part. If she sought to address this larger group, she should encourage them to participate in reform in ways that were familiar. Thus, Elisabeth called for the clergy to learn the Scriptures, and as we will see below, use this knowledge to dispute the Church's detractors, the Cathar heretics.

### ***Enacting Reform: Elisabeth, Ekbert and Clerical Education***

Although Ekbert answered Elisabeth's call to those "who are learned," she did not consider him the only candidate to spread reform through education.<sup>91</sup> Rather, her call was plural (*vos*), thus addressing all those who were educated like her brother, those who could also read her works and engage in the necessary disputes.<sup>92</sup> In much of the scholarship on the relationship between monks and members of the clergy, the emphasis has been on the tension

---

<sup>91</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 177.

<sup>92</sup> In her *Liber visionum primus*, Elisabeth desired a more in-depth interpretation of her vision and had been instructed by Gregory the Great to "talk to the learned ones who read the scriptures; they know." "...dic doctoribus, qui legunt scripturas; ipsi sciunt." Roth, *Visionen*, 21. Elisabeth then addressed Ekbert and said, "Now therefore, most beloved brother, I beg you to take up this task. Examine the divine scriptures and try to find an agreeable interpretation of this vision." "Nunc igitur, amantissime frater, hunc tibi queso laborem assumere, ut scripturas divinas scruteris, et congruam ex eis interpretationem visionis huius coneris invenire." Roth, *Visionen*, 21. Notably, Gregory the Great had suggested that Elisabeth ask the learned ones, which was pluralized, but Elisabeth decided that the best person to ask was her brother. When she wanted to address just Ekbert, she used the second personal singular. When Elisabeth put the call out to all who were learned to aid in the reformation of the Church she used the plural. That Ekbert was one of the learned ones who answered is not surprising given their relationship, but this message was not meant simply for him because Elisabeth did not use the familiar second person singular address that she was accustomed to using for her dialogues with Ekbert. See also, Roth, *Visionen*, 2. "Petis a me frater, et ad hoc venisti, ut enarrem tibi misericordias dominis..." Here, Elisabeth directly addresses her brother to recount how her visions occurred, and she uses the second person singular, which is her common mode of addressing Ekbert directly.

between the two groups, especially in relation to their views on education.<sup>93</sup> Elisabeth's works, however, portrayed the two groups working in concert towards common reform goals. First, I will consider Ekbert's answer to Elisabeth's call to other clerics to use their education to fight heresy. Then, I will demonstrate how Elisabeth depicted monks and clerics benefitting from their relationships. Elisabeth's vocation placed her within the milieu of the cloister, but she envisioned reform as encompassing all members of Christian society. The common thread that bound both monks and clerics together was the need to use their education to promote reform.

Ekbert's sermons against the Cathars demonstrated how he used his Paris education to combat heretics because they provided a model for disputing these recalcitrant groups for other clerics. Thus, Ekbert was likely influenced by Elisabeth's concerns over the Cathar heresy, her critiques of the church leaders, as well as the earlier works of Eberwin and Bernard, when he composed his *Sermones contra Kataros* in 1163/64.<sup>94</sup> Ekbert, however, had some personal experience on which to draw when dealing with the Cathars. Indeed, he wrote in his *Sermones* that he had encountered members of this heretical group some twenty years earlier.<sup>95</sup> Ekbert described a public disputation with a group of Cathars, stating, "When I was a canon at the church in Bonn, Bertolph and I often together disputed with that kind [the Cathars], and we paid

---

<sup>93</sup> See, Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg*, 129-63; and Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961).

<sup>94</sup> Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard," 167 and Paas, "Ein Steinfelder Altarbild," 132, fn. 4.

<sup>95</sup> Ekbert was at Bonn until 1155 when he entered Schönau to assume scribal duties for Elisabeth, and he arrived at Bonn after studying in Paris. Thus, Ekbert's disputations with the Cathars likely took place at some point between 1147 and 1155 because Ekbert was likely studying at Paris between 1140-1146. Harrison, *Sermones*, vol II, 387.

close attention to their errors and arguments.”<sup>96</sup> What is important about Ekbert’s description of his interaction with the heretics is that he portrayed it in terms of an active disputation, exactly the type of argumentation that Elisabeth, Eberwin and Bernard had encouraged in their writings.

The language that Ekbert used to describe his interaction with the Cathars has led some scholars to argue that the Cathars were in fact an educated group that had a firm understanding of written texts with which to dispute Catholic teachings.<sup>97</sup> After all, Ekbert felt it necessary to pay close attention not only to their errors, but also the way in which they argued for them. In fact, Ekbert mentioned that the Cathars used works written by the ancient fathers to bolster their arguments.<sup>98</sup> It seems likely that the Cathars even integrated some of Augustine’s information on the Manicheans into their own beliefs due to their exposure to the texts through disputations with Catholic theologians, indicating that they were fine-tuning their arguments against the church and for their own doctrines.<sup>99</sup> In some cases, Ekbert even addressed the Cathars with whom he disputed as *doctores* and *perfecti*, perhaps indicating that he engaged with the most learned members of the sect.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, Ekbert stated in his work that the most educated members of the Cathars kept some of the blatantly dualist doctrines hidden from other members of the group.<sup>101</sup> This fact demonstrated that the Cathars had an inner elite circle, and that if the

---

<sup>96</sup> “Cum essem canonicus in ecclesia bunnensi, sepe ego et unanimes meus Bertolfus, cum talibus altercati sumus, et diligenter attendi errores eorum ac defensiones.” Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. I, 4-5.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Biller, “Northern Cathars and Higher Learning,” in *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy, and the Religious Life*, eds. Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999): 25-54.

<sup>98</sup> “...qui antiquorum Patrum scripta hoc attestari aestimatis.” Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. I, 197.

<sup>99</sup> Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. II, 594-95.

<sup>100</sup> Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. II, 594-95.

catholic theologians were going to infiltrate it, they had to be well-educated themselves in order to understand fully their opposition's doctrines and dismantle them.

To do this, Ekbert considered it necessary to educate his audience about the origins of the heresy, which he did through his inclusion of Augustine's tracts on heresies. The first sermon discussed the *De haerisibus* in length. Ekbert appended two other Augustinian works that outlined heretical beliefs to the end of his text, the *Contra epistolam quam vocant fundamenti* and the *De moribus Manichaeorum*.<sup>102</sup> Thus, Ekbert's polemical treatise was not simply a diatribe against the Cathar heresy, but it also acted to educate his fellow theologians in discerning the similarities and differences between the Manicheans and the present day Cathars.<sup>103</sup> It is also significant that Ekbert's *Sermones* presented the confrontation between him and the Cathar *doctores* as a learned disputation because it provided a model for future heretical confrontations.

Ekbert's work was also polemical in nature. He employed the same rhetoric of reform that both Elisabeth and Hildegard had used in their works. Thus, he also presented the objects of his criticisms, in this case the Cathars, as unlearned.<sup>104</sup> Although Ekbert disputed with the most learned members of the Cathar group, he characterized them and their knowledge as potentially false or ill-informed. In fact, Ekbert noted that the Cathar *doctores* utilized this

---

<sup>101</sup> Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. II, 583.

<sup>102</sup> Ekbert called the *Contra epistolam quam vocant fundamenti* the *Contra manicheos*. Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. II, 398.

<sup>103</sup> Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. II, 585.

<sup>104</sup> Kienzle, *Cistercians*, 13.

rhetorical tool themselves in their argument with him, for they questioned how Catholic priests who lived “irrationally” (*irracionabiliter*) could distribute the body of the Lord.<sup>105</sup> Here we see how fine the line was between calls for reform and heretical teachings, as Elisabeth had also utilized this rhetorical trope to describe the church leaders.

Ekbert also called into question the rationality of the Cathar *doctores* in his sermons because he sought to qualify their ability to read and understand Scripture. Thus, Ekbert challenged their ability to delve deeper into scriptural meaning. He was skeptical of their ability to interpret, so he questioned the truthfulness of their claims about reading the bible, stating, “you read and know the Gospels, so you say.”<sup>106</sup> Moreover, he posed questions to them such as, “If, as it seems to you, and you are accustomed to mention, that you are like the learned ones in Holy Scripture, tell me what the Lord wanted to signify with these words, and what his disciples had ordered to be done in his memory.”<sup>107</sup> In both of these instances, Ekbert called the Cathars’ presentation of themselves as educated into doubt by the conditional statements he used to describe them (*sicut dicitis, Si...vobis videtur*). Moreover, Ekbert challenged the Cathars to teach him something about correct doctrine, but he cast doubt on their ability to do so. Thus,

---

<sup>105</sup> Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. II, 580-81. Harrison notes here that *irracionabiliter* also can mean “immoral” but that it was most likely used in this instance to denote both immorality and irrationality, which, I believe, makes sense in light of the nature of disputational polemics. Ekbert provided the Cathar’s argument, “...et dicebat ita de eis, ‘Quomodo potest fieri ut qui tam irracionabiliter vivunt distribuunt in ecclesia corpus domini?’” *Sermones*, Vol. I, 312.

<sup>106</sup> “Evangelia legatis et sciatis, sicut dicitis.” Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. I, 338.

<sup>107</sup> “Si estis erudite de scripturis sanctis, ut vobis videtur, et vos jactitare soletis, dicite quidnam verbis istis dominus significare voluerit, et quid discipulos suos jussent facere in suam memoriam dicendo.” Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. I, 305-06.

Ekbart accused the Cathars: “You speak this in hypocrisy because in person you wish to appear in this chaste and holy to men, but your doctrine is false.”<sup>108</sup>

In order to demonstrate his own learned nature, Ekbart presented numerous scriptural quotations and an explanation of them throughout all of his sermons in order to challenge the Cathars’s interpretations. Kienzle has argued that Ekbart’s use of numerous scriptural authorities was influenced by Elisabeth’s call to those “who are learned” to combat heresy.<sup>109</sup> Ekbart outlined his learned method of disputing the Cathars in the preface

And so I thought that the reward of my labor described their errors, and attached the authorities of Scripture from which they defended themselves, and demonstrated in what way they rightly should be understood; at the same time, laid out the parts of our faith, from which they placed opposite themselves; and from which scriptural authorities and for what reasons they ought to be defended, and with the above support demonstrated that they, who took care to read this work and hold it in memory, are considerably more prepared to dispute with the Cathars, if when, as it is usual, they have been detected among the people. Indeed, they are very talkative, and it is always in readiness that they are prepared to speak against us. And it is no small shame to us, who understand the texts, to be mute and speechless in front of them.<sup>110</sup>

It is clear that Ekbart considered it necessary not only to use but also to understand texts and authorities when combating heresy. Although the Cathars were not truly learned in the correct manner, they appeared so when Catholic clerics had no ready response. Thus, Ekbart

<sup>108</sup> “Hoc in ypocrisi loquimini, quia in hoc casti et sancti coram hominibus vultis apparere sed est mendax hec vestra doctrina.” Harrison, *Sermones*, vol. I, 102.

<sup>109</sup> Mayne Kienzle, “Defending the Lord’s Vineyard,” 167.

<sup>110</sup> Ego itaque operae pretium duxi errores eorum describere, et adnotare auctoritates Scripturarum, ex quibus se defendunt, ac demonstrare quomodo sane intelligi debeant: simulque eas partes fidei nostrae, quibus se opponunt, proponere; et quibus Scripturae auctoritatibus, quibusque rationibus defendi possint, cum superno adiutorio demonstrare, ut qui ista legere et in memoria habere curaverint, aliquanto promptiores sint ad disceptandum cum illis, si quando, ut assolet, in populo fuerint deprehensi. Et est non parva verecundia nostris, qui litteras sciunt, ut sint muti et elingues in conspectus illorum. Harrison, *Sermones*, Vol. I, 3-4.

emphasized the need for rational voices, like his, to enter into debate against the irrational speech of the heretics.

Ekbart's polemics, then, utilized staple rhetorical constructions to call into question the validity of the Cathar's learning. In his text, Ekbart used the argumentative skills that he learned while a student in Paris. His disputations with the Cathars displayed his efforts to employ authoritative texts and logical arguments to dismantle their heretical beliefs. Ekbart's use of polemics, like Elisabeth and Hildegard, focused on how education was necessary for reform. Moreover, all three reformers emphasized in some way what the lack of education within the church leadership meant for the health of the congregation. Indeed, it led to the spread of heresy. All three reformers addressed their concerns to the very administration against which they spoke. Elisabeth circulated a copy of her texts to the bishops of Cologne, Trier and Mainz; Hildegard preached her message across the Rhineland; and Ekbart offered his *Sermones*, which he addressed to the Archbishop of Cologne, his school-friend Rainald, as a tool for other clerics to use in their fight to protect the church.

Despite Elisabeth's critiques of clerics, like Ekbart, she recognized their potential for spreading reform ideals. Elisabeth also provided commentary on educated clerics within her visionary texts. She did not simply believe that these educated men needed to convert to monasticism to aid the reform cause. Although much scholarship, both medieval and modern, has been devoted to the medieval debate about the merits of the active and the contemplative life,<sup>111</sup> it is clear that Elisabeth and her contemporaries considered there to be a strong link

---

<sup>111</sup> Constable, *Three Studies*, 1-141; and Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg*, 129-63.

between them.<sup>112</sup> Within the Hirsau tradition, William participated in reform concerns outside the cloister when he took up the Gregorian cause in the eleventh century. In the twelfth, Elisabeth, Hildegard and Ekbert were also all involved in events outside the cloister's walls. Thus, in Elisabeth's assessments of the role that the clergy played in the church and for reform, she blurred the distinctions between the active and contemplative life, emphasizing instead the shared roles the groups played in supporting the church.

In Elisabeth's *Liber visionum secundus*, she described a vision that featured Ekbert's friend from his days at Bonn, a canon named Gerard, who had recently died.<sup>113</sup> Elisabeth then presented the dialogue she had with her angelic guide about Gerard's fate. The angelic guide told Elisabeth that Gerard had "been liberated,"<sup>114</sup> showing her the "blessed mansion of holy souls" where Gerard now comfortably rested.<sup>115</sup> That Elisabeth presented a vision in her works about a cleric and his soul's fate was not unusual; in fact, visions addressing the deceased and the fate of their souls were a common concern in Hirsau monasteries, so much so that William's monastic constitutions addressed this phenomenon.<sup>116</sup> Of course, this type of vision also spoke

---

<sup>112</sup> Steven Chase, *Angelic Spirituality*, 64. Chase discusses Alan of Lille's use of angels to describe the link between active ministry and contemplative life.

<sup>113</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 50. "Domine placeat tibi, ut indices mihi quodam adolescente clerico Gerardo, qui fuerat collega fratris mei in Bunna, ubi sit et quid agitur de eo."

<sup>114</sup> "Liberatus est." Roth, *Visionen*, 50.

<sup>115</sup> "...beatas mansiones sanctarum animarum..." Roth, *Visionen*, 50.

<sup>116</sup> Chapter 56 of the Hirsau Constitutions is devoted to this subject. See, *Constitutiones Hirsaugenensis*, PL 150: col. 986. "Est etiam consuetude, ut si defunctum aliquem fratrem in poenis esse per visum fuerit revelatum abbati vel priori secreto innotescat; et si iussus fuerit, misericordiam pro eo cum venia in capitulo petat, referens quid de eo per somnum viderit; prioris quoque pedibus post absolutionem defuncto fratri optatam, se provolvat. Deinde prior quid pro defuncto fratre communiter aut singulariter etiam faciant, fratribus injungit. Sciendum autem est quod misericordiam petens sine licentia ad praesens poterit inclamari."

to the penitential concerns of the reform movement and the practices necessary to help the souls of those who had died.<sup>117</sup> This vision spoke to the religious practices that the reform movement sought to institute and praise. It also offered a commentary on the fate of secular clerics. Elisabeth reported that she saw “that famous master Adam among the blessed souls, full of glory and joy.”<sup>118</sup> Her angelic guide noted that he had been released to this heavenly glory from purgatory when “one of his friends was promoted to the order of the priesthood.”<sup>119</sup>

This vision clearly operated on multiple levels. One, it promoted the idea that what those who were living did to memorialize the dead clearly affected the deceased souls. In fact, Elisabeth had multiple visions that promoted the efficacy of monastic prayers and penitential practice in aiding both the release of fellow monastic brethren and Schönau’s secular patrons from purgatory.<sup>120</sup> The concern for the souls of the dead and the way in which the practices of the religious could aid them clearly spoke to concerns that permeated the reform agenda about the ideals of monastic life. That is, reform and the religious vocation both helped those in the catholic faith. However, her visions also spoke to the value of Ekbert’s mission within the monastery and how Adam benefitted from it. Thus, Adam, a secular school master in Paris, was released to heaven because his former pupil, Ekbert, was now using his education within a

---

<sup>117</sup> Joyce, “Speaking of Spiritual Matters,” 78.

<sup>118</sup> “...famosum illum magistrum Adam inter animas beatorum...” Roth, *Visionen*, 50. Although there is no scholarly consensus regarding the identity of master Adam, the two most debated choices are Adam of Balsham (also known as Adam of Petit-Pont) and Adam of St. Victor. Harrison argues that Adam of Balsham makes the most sense, and for his assessment, see his *Sermones*, vol. II, 387-397.

<sup>119</sup> “Ab eo tempore liberates est, quo ad ordinem sacerdotii promotes est unus ex familiaribus eius.” Roth, *Visionen*, 50.

<sup>120</sup> See Clark, *The Complete Works*, 64, 79, 83-4, 100-02, 109-12.

monastic environment and for the good of the Church. Although Adam himself may not have put his education to use for the good of the faith, the fact that his student did reflected well on him. Moreover, his teachings provided Ekbert with a solid background to engage in disputations on behalf of the reform cause.

This vision also tells us why Elisabeth considered Ekbert to be such a learned man. It was not only the fact that he could provide exegetical readings of Scripture and studied in Paris, but that he was able to implement the education he had received outside the cloister within it for the greater good of the church. Elisabeth also saw traditional monastic practices as being useful for clerics as well, whether or not they were in the monastery. In her *Liber viarum dei* Elisabeth devoted chapter ten to the “way of the contemplatives.” However, her definition of contemplative did not create a dichotomy between the active life and the contemplative one, or the clerical and monastic way of life,<sup>121</sup> but assumed that contemplatives hailed from both. When Elisabeth wrote, “This is the word of God to you who have chosen to do battle for God among the clergy or in the monastic profession. You have chosen the best part—take care lest it be taken away from you,”<sup>122</sup> she cited the oft-quoted biblical passage Luke 10:42. However, Elisabeth did not use this biblical passage in her discussion of the contemplative life to exclude those who were in active vocations, but rather to include them. In this passage, she once again

---

<sup>121</sup> What the exact definition of a cleric was in the twelfth century is not necessarily clear. Caroline Walker Bynum explains that in a survey of ten canonical treatises from the twelfth century, nine of the ten authors identify canons as clerics, but that in all of the texts, the idea of what it means to be a cleric is inconsistent. *Docere verbo et exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 19. In Elisabeth’s case, we should remember that Ekbert was a canon at Bonn, and that he studied in the Paris schools. This path most likely was grooming him for a life as a secular cleric, so Elisabeth had exposure to various types of ideas of what a cleric was.

<sup>122</sup> “Sermo dei ad vos, qui in clero sive in monastica professione deo militare decrevistis. Optimam partem elegistis, attendite, ne auferatur a vobis.” Roth, *Visionen*, 92.

employed the plural “you” (*vos, vobis*) in her address, so it included both clerics and monks, indicating that both groups could take part in the contemplative life despite their different vocations. In fact, Elisabeth depicted her angel confirming this, stating, ““The path of contemplation is shared by you and the clergy...”<sup>123</sup>

It is also important that this characterization of the shared religious goals of the active and contemplative members of the faith came in Elisabeth’s most thematic work, which also addressed the prelates and secular leaders about their errant ways, lack of education and negative impact on the faith. In this chapter on the merits of the contemplative life, Elisabeth even warns the good clerics and religious to “keep yourselves from the ways of those who outwardly bear the appearance of your piety but negate its virtue by their deeds.”<sup>124</sup> This group has harmed the Church because “they cast off the teachings of the fathers, immerse themselves into secular business, and fill the church with scandals. On account of this, behold, piety suffers contempt and faith suffers schism.”<sup>125</sup> In this book, then, Elisabeth provided both the critique and the solution to the problems that she saw plaguing the church. She set up another rhetorical contrast depicting those who aided the church and those who harmed it. The solution included members of the faith who were learned, who would actively pursue reform agenda, and who would participate in the tenets of a religious ideal, that of monastic contemplation, even if they were not monks.

---

<sup>123</sup> “Communis est vobis via contemplationis cum clericis...” Roth, *Visionen*, 94.

<sup>124</sup> “Abstinete vos cum omni diligentia a viis eorum, qui speciem religionis vestre foris portant, virtutem autem eius factis negant.” Roth, *Visionen*, 93.

<sup>125</sup> “Patrum instituta abicunt, negociis seculi se ingerunt, et scandalis ecclesiam replent. Propter hoc ecce contemptum patitur religio, et fides scissuram.” Roth, *Visionen*, 93.

Elisabeth's presentation of how clerics and monks shared the same educational and religious ideals seems to stand in stark contrast to much modern scholarship about the medieval tensions between the active and contemplative lives. However, as Cotts has demonstrated, monks did not eschew the new pedagogy associated with the Paris schools, they critiqued how those who engaged in it put it to use.<sup>126</sup> Thus, good living equated to good learning. We have seen this mentality from Haimo in his *vita* of William as well as in Elisabeth's works. Moreover, these reformers depicted education in the service of the Church through its promotion of reform. Any type of learning methodology that renewed the Church and its individual members was praised.

Elisabeth's texts demonstrate flexibility with their acceptance of both the prophetic voice and scholastic techniques. Likewise, her assessment of the potential of both clerics and monks to partake in learned engagement for the sake of reform suggests a pragmatic approach to solving the problems in the Church. Elisabeth's ability to adopt views from the active and the contemplative life was not unusual in the twelfth century. For example, some of Hildegard's admirers praised her monastic wisdom at the expense of secular schoolmasters. On the other hand, some compared her to those very same masters in Paris.

When Guibert of Gembloux (1124/25-1213), Hildegard's admirer and eventual scribe, responded to the monks at the Cistercian monastery of Villers, who had sent Hildegard thirty-four questions seeking "knowledge of the truth" on various subjects,<sup>127</sup> he told them that she

---

<sup>126</sup> Cotts, "Monks and Clerks," 267.

<sup>127</sup> Albert Derolez, ed., *Guiberti Gemblacensis Epistolae*, *CCCM*, vol. 66, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988-89), 246.

was too busy to write them. However, he suggested that they send these questions to a Paris master instead.<sup>128</sup> Anne Clark Bartlett has argued that this comment was facetious because the monks at Villers were anti-scholastic, thus they intended to seek out information via Hildegard as a way to demonstrate their hostility to the clerics in the schools. Their questions to her, then, functioned in a polemical context, one that pitted the monasteries and the schools against each other.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, Guibert's comment that compared Hildegard to the Paris masters may have some merit to it even if the monks at Villers would not find the comparison a positive one. When Guibert praised Hildegard's learning, he stated that she possessed such "great understanding of the Scriptures" that she was ready to answer any question "on the spot."<sup>130</sup> Guibert's description of Hildegard's method of answering questions suggests that she sometimes engaged in question and answer sessions that were characteristic of scholastic pedagogical methods.

On the other hand, some considered Hildegard's learning to be vastly superior to any that could be found in a school setting. Guibert wrote to Hildegard about the reaction of Lord Robert, a "man of great reputation and learning,"<sup>131</sup> to a piece of correspondence that he received

---

<sup>128</sup> "...videlicet ut, si tanti vobis sunt earundem questionum solutionis, ipsi aut per vos diligenti investigatione e libris doctorum sensus earum elicitos, data studii opera, in unum compingatis; aut, si hoc non sedet, alicui magistrorum Franci peritissimo ad dissovendum eas per quemlibet monachum ordinis vestris, quorum plurimi sepius Cistercium tendunt, denuo mittatis." Derolez, *Guiberti*, CCCM, vol. 66, 294.

<sup>129</sup> Anne Clark Bartlett, "Commentary, Polemic, and Prophecy in Hildegard of Bingen's *Solutiones Triginta Octo Quaestionum*," *Viator* 23 (1992): 153-66, at 155.

<sup>130</sup> "...tanto doctrine fulget privilegio tantamque scripturarum possidet intelligentiam, ut, sicut de beatissimo legitur Martino, in solvendis earum questionibus prompta et facilis, et in communi confabulatione efficax at alacris inquisita fuerit." Derolez., *Guiberti*, CCCM, vol. 66, 231

<sup>131</sup> Derolez, *Guiberti*, CCCM, vol. 66, 229; "vir magni nominis et multe scientie."

from her. Lord Robert declared that “not even the greatest theologians in France today, however great their intelligence, could completely comprehend the power and depth of some of the words” in her letter.<sup>132</sup>

These different comparisons of Hildegard’s education both demonstrate that her education was praise-worthy. But, her own contemporaries were unsure of how to best express that. Elisabeth’s polemical works indicated this same type of blending, the monastic with the scholastic. She used prophetic voice, clarified her arguments and encouraged others to engage in scholastic learning for reform. Thus, Elisabeth’s works demonstrate the dynamic world of reform and education in the twelfth century, where both monks and clerics could heed her call.

### *Conclusion*

Elisabeth’s involvement in twelfth-century reform debates and polemics did not place her in a contest that either championed a monastic or a scholastic method of learning. In fact, her visionary writings advocated for a learned clergy to use rational thought and disseminate their knowledge to their congregations through their speech. But, when they needed to defend the faith against heretics, that speech should be set in the form of a disputation. And, just as the type of learning that Elisabeth called for was not the strict purview of one group in the twelfth

---

<sup>132</sup> Derolez, *Guiberti, CCCM*, vol. 66, 229; “Nec opinor, inquit, vim et altitudinem quorundam verborum, in hac epistola positorum, summos huius temporis Francie magistros, quantovis polleant acumine ingenii, ex integro posse consequi, nisi eo spiritu quo dicta sunt revelante. Illi quidem arenti corde et crepantibus buccis perstrepunt, languentes circa questiones et pugnas, de quibus oriuntur rixe non intelligentes de quibus loquuntur vel de quibus affirmant; et laciniosis contentionum funibus et se et alios inexplicabiliter irretiunt.” Baird and Ehrman, *Letters*, Vol. II, 29.

century, neither was the language of disputation. Elisabeth may have framed her ideas within the visionary genre, but as we have seen, this genre was flexible. Hildegard was able to emphasize her prophetic stance and her dazzling visual imagery to preach an apocalyptic message of reform to negligent clerics. And, Elisabeth was able to echo some of Hildegard's themes, which compared clerics to heretics, although she presented them differently than her fellow Rhineland reformer. In fact, Elisabeth's use of the vineyard motif corresponded more with Bernard and Eberwin's development of it than Hildegard's. Elisabeth's visions not only allowed her to dispute her detractors, but they also permitted her to communicate to others how they should enter into disputes with the detractors who harmed the Church.

In the next chapter, I will consider the popularity of Elisabeth's reform works. Her reform polemics suggest her desire to apply the new methods of learning to the old problems of Church. As we shall see, her readers did in fact desire new ideas in order to enrich their lives and Church doctrine in the twelfth century.

## Chapter Four

### Elisabeth's Audience: Negotiating Novelty in Reform Communities

Elisabeth explicitly expressed her concerns about the reception of her works, stating that she did not want to be “judged an inventor of novelties.”<sup>1</sup> In other instances, Elisabeth discussed her trepidation about telling members of her community about her visions. Whether her audience included the monks and nuns at Schönaue or people who lived outside her own cloister, she did not want her texts to be considered “womanly fictions.”<sup>2</sup> In response to both Elisabeth's concerns and any potential critics, Ekbert, Elisabeth's brother and scribe, put forth his own apology for Elisabeth's new writings. He situated her prophetic gift in a line descending from the female prophets described in the Hebrew bible.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Ekbert's definition of novelty was not one that implied Elisabeth acted in a new way or that she conveyed innovative messages. On the contrary, in his view Elisabeth's visions represented a restoration of a female prophetic tradition.

This argument that Elisabeth's actions were not new per se, but renewed or revived an ancient custom fit squarely within the mindset of the reform culture of which both Elisabeth and Ekbert took part. The tension between novelty and tradition is clear in both Elisabeth's anxiety and Ekbert's definition of her practices. To relieve this tension, novelty was defined as a

---

<sup>1</sup> “...ne forte iudicaretur quasi inventrix novitatum.” F.W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Äbte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönaue* (Brünn: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercienser-Orden 1884), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Roth, *Visionen*, 40.

forgotten component of tradition, but part of a recognizable tradition nonetheless. In this chapter, I will argue that the paradoxical designation of Elisabeth's ideas as novel, yet also working within tradition, accounted for their successful circulation. Elisabeth's writings helped her readers clarify and resolve the relationship between ideas of novelty, monastic reform and twelfth-century intellectual culture.

This chapter will consider novelty from two vantage points. First, the idea of novelty will be assessed within its reform context. Elisabeth's readers accepted ideas of novelty because reform communities themselves sought to create new orders and institute new rules; however, these "novelties" were all placed within the context of ancient traditions in the Church. Thus, much like Ekbert's argument about Elisabeth's own ideas, the reformers did not imagine themselves as professing new ideas, but they were reviving lapsed traditions and entering into old debates. Reform culture emphasized how novelty was in fact rooted in traditional practices and was a necessary component for the implementation of monastic reform. Although not explicitly stressed, inherent in this conception was the idea that reform represented progress, which fostered change and novelty alongside it.<sup>4</sup>

With the proliferation of new religious Orders in the twelfth century, the term novelty also assumed negative connotations in polemical contexts. When Elisabeth wrote her works, there was a surge in new religious foundations, characterized by groups such as the Cistercians, Augustinian canons and Premonstratensians, as well as a spike in polemical works that

---

<sup>4</sup> Giles Constable, "Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 37-67, at 38-9.

denigrated the novelty of these new Orders.<sup>5</sup> Yet, many writers also saw the value in these diverse reform groups and their practices. At some point between 1121-61 an anonymous canon near Liège wrote a piece entitled *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia*.<sup>6</sup> This work spoke positively of the new Orders and their missions to provide reform. And, just as Elisabeth's own texts made a case for the value of both those who participated in the active and the contemplative life, Anselm of Havelberg also considered the mixed life of the canons to be of immense value.<sup>7</sup> When William of St. Thierry praised the novelty of the Carthusians, he argued that new discoveries could be exploited by both good and bad men alike. For him, the value of new ideas depended on how they were put to use.<sup>8</sup> As we have seen, Elisabeth's argument was much the same. New ideas should be put to use for reforming old traditions.

Secondly, this chapter will consider how novelty operated within twelfth-century intellectual culture. Contemporaries considered both the schools and their methods to be new and different. Polemical tracts often denigrated these innovations, focusing on how schoolmen did not behave with discretion.<sup>9</sup> Too often, polemicists claimed, schoolmen considered novel ideas about theology. These critics argued that clerics purported to have clear solutions to

---

<sup>5</sup> Beryl Smalley, "Ecclesiastical Attitudes to Novelty c. 1100-c.1250," in *Travellers, Intellectuals, and the World Beyond Medieval Europe*, ed. James Muldoon (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 11-30, at 17. See Giles Constable, ed. and trans. *Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xx.

<sup>6</sup> Smalley, "Attitudes to Novelty," 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Smalley, "Attitudes to Novelty," 22. For Elisabeth's similar views, see Chapter Three.

<sup>8</sup> Smalley, "Attitudes to Novelty," 21.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Constant Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141): Abelard, Bernard, and the Fear of Social Upheaval," *Speculum* 77.2 (2002): 342-82.

theological problems that were in fact mysteries. According to this opinion, theology was the purview of the monasteries, where only experiential contact with God could aid understanding, not the schools.<sup>10</sup> Yet, the schools employed educational methods that were rooted in monastic tradition. As Alex Novikoff has argued, dialogue was a key component of intellectual culture at this time, both inside and outside the monastery.<sup>11</sup> Thus, like the novelty present in reform groups, the novelty of the schools had precedents in traditional practices.

Fiona Griffiths has recently raised the question about the interaction between twelfth-century reform groups and twelfth-century intellectual culture. Griffiths's study of Herrad of Hohenbourg's *Hortus deliciarum*, a late twelfth-century work, raises an important question about the relationship between monastic reform, intellectual culture and the expectations of audiences in the twelfth century. According to Griffiths, Herrad's community of women read the same scholastic texts that male clerics did. The women then integrated them into the community's own education program.<sup>12</sup> It seems that these women believed that there was a use for works in the cloister that sought to provide a clear interpretation and resolution of complex and contested theological problems.

How Elisabeth's contemporaries received and used her ideas can aid our understanding of the value of her texts for negotiating the traditions of the cloister and the dynamism of twelfth-

---

<sup>10</sup> Jean Leclercq, "The Renewal of Theology," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, 68-87, at 77-9.

<sup>11</sup> See Alex J. Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation," *AHR* 117. 2 (2012): 331-64 and Novikoff, "Anselm, Dialogue, and the Rise of Scholastic Disputation," *Speculum* 86. 2 (2011): 387-418. See also Chapter Two.

<sup>12</sup> Fiona Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 4.

century intellectual culture. Thirty-four twelfth-century manuscripts survive that contain Elisabeth's works.<sup>13</sup> These manuscripts circulated across most of Western Europe unlike Herrad's work, of which there was only one copy for Hohenbourg's internal use. In this chapter, I will consider how Elisabeth's works demonstrate the interaction between reform culture and intellectual culture by evaluating how twelfth-century ideas of novelty functioned among her different audiences. First, I will analyze how Elisabeth's texts operated as educational tools for new converts, new foundations or for monks attempting to live by stricter rules. Second, I will argue that the circulation of Elisabeth's Marian works provides evidence of how spiritual practice and theological doctrine interacted in reform environments. Finally, I will demonstrate how Elisabeth's audiences in the monastery had similar expectations for her works as those commonly associated with an audience of schoolmen. Thus, by analyzing how Elisabeth's readers understood her texts, we can understand how the intellectual efflorescence known as the twelfth-century renaissance was in fact a European-wide phenomenon that served monastic reform as well as the Northern French schools.

### *New Converts, New Texts*

The circulation of Elisabeth's texts among Orders that promoted reform—the Benedictines, Cistercians and Premonstratensians—suggests that her writings served an important purpose for these groups. In particular, these reform Orders sought to establish their

---

<sup>13</sup> See Kurt Köster, "Elisabeth von Schönau: Werk und Wirkung im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen handschriftlichen Überlieferung," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951): 243-315; and Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 137-45.

authority by claiming that their new practices were in fact part of the Church's traditions. Reformed Benedictine houses experienced tensions between demonstrating their ancient authority and embracing new practices. Moreover, these reform cloisters also had to inculcate adult converts and situate them within a monastic tradition in which they were not raised. I will argue in this section that Elisabeth's texts served to ease concerns about new practices in the monastery by offering her audiences ways to invoke tradition. In particular, the manuscript of Elisabeth's works at the monastery of St. Martin in Tournai exemplifies the ways that a new, or re-founded, institution sought to create an identity that was premised on ancient roots, but welcomed and trained new converts.<sup>14</sup>

Flanders experienced sweeping religious reform beginning in the eleventh century.<sup>15</sup> In fact, numerous twelfth-century authors attest to the flourishing religious life in this region that was a product of those earlier reforms. Herman, a monk and one-time abbot of St. Martin in Tournai, was one such author. Although the manuscript of Elisabeth's texts held at St. Martin did not include any of Herman's works, his history of St. Martin emphasized how the institution was a venerable antique foundation and a product of new reforms. Two neighboring monasteries that Herman praised in his *Herimanni liber de restauratione monasterii Sancti Martini Tornacensis*, Anchin and St. Vaast, embraced Flemish reform culture. But, both Anchin and St. Martin had been founded in the later quarter of the eleventh century, unlike St. Vaast, which boasted Carolingian ancestry. A digression that Herman made in his work about the ancient

---

<sup>14</sup> Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 18421-29. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 252.

<sup>15</sup> Diane Reilly, *The Art of Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders: Gerard of Cambrai, Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Saint-Vaast Bible* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 2, 300.

foundations of the monastery in Tournai is also instructive in assessing how exactly tradition and authority coexisted and informed Tournai's existence as an institution.

Herman's family had been integral in the foundation of St. Martin. Or, as Herman related in his *de Restauratione*, which was likely written while he was in Rome in 1142, Tournai was actually revitalized in the late eleventh and twelfth century, largely thanks to his family's patronage.<sup>16</sup> Herman set out to explain how the monastery had initially been founded during the reign of Charlemagne.<sup>17</sup> Apparently, an ancient charter issued by Charlemagne granting St. Martin the use of water mills in a village called Souppes was in the possession of the abbot at Ferrières. Unfortunately, when Herman went to visit this abbot, the abbot was too afraid to show him the charters on account that it might offend the knight who currently held the village.<sup>18</sup> When Herman investigated the village grounds, he entered into the old, crumbling church where he saw a decrepit book, which, almost miraculously, bore the title *The Book of the Monastery of St. Martin's of Tournai*.<sup>19</sup>

What this book said Hermann did not tell his readers, but he did not need to as he was writing *The Book on the Restoration of St. Martin's of Tournai*. In effect, the new work that he composed would tell the story of the monastery and its foundation. He was merely a continuator

---

<sup>16</sup> Lynn H. Nelson, trans. *Hermann of Tournai: The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 86-88, 91-94.

<sup>17</sup> St. Martin's interest in Charlemagne is evident from its library holdings, which contained works that were associated with this ruler. Léopold Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale (nationale)*, II (Paris, 1868), 492.

<sup>18</sup> Nelson, *Restoration*, 62-3.

<sup>19</sup> Nelson, *Restoration*, 63.

of the older book that had been started, and now was crumbling, in the church at Souppes. In fact, this book was much like the condition of the abbey of Tournai before Herman's family had assisted in its restoration.

To further cement St. Martin's history in the distant past, Herman's narrative stated that the local patron saint, St. Eligius, played a role in the foundation.<sup>20</sup> Thus, St. Martin possessed a link to a Carolingian saint whose *vita* was another piece of documentation for the ancestry of the abbey. Notably, Herman valued the role of the written word in providing the proof needed to place the abbey firmly in the distant past and, ostensibly, lend credence to the authority of the location. Herman's narrative about the events surrounding the foundation and reform of St. Martin, which accepted the Cluniac custom from its neighboring monastery Anchin, is important for providing context for the circulation of Elisabeth's works there and in the surrounding areas.

At Tournai, the manuscript of Elisabeth's works seems to reflect the concerns that Herman's *de Restauratione* explored. The manuscript contained other contemporary texts besides Elisabeth's *Liber viarum dei*, *Resurrectione* and *Revelatio*.<sup>21</sup> Notably, it also included a version of a work by Hugh of Folieto (also known as Hugh of Fouilloy), his *Aviary*.<sup>22</sup> It also contained the lives of locally venerated saints, Livinus and Eligius. St. Eligius had received much attention from Herman in his *de Restauratione*<sup>23</sup> because the saint's involvement with the

---

<sup>20</sup> Nelson, *Restoration*, 64-67.

<sup>21</sup> Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 18421-29. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 252.

<sup>22</sup> J. van den Gheyn, ed. *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, 5 (Brussels, 1903), 248. See also Hugh of Folieto, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, PL 177: col. 13-23.

<sup>23</sup> Nelson, *Restoration*, 64-67.

old foundation of St. Martin demonstrated its ancient roots. This combination of new works by contemporary authors, such as Elisabeth and Hugh, and the lives of ancient saints, addressed the matter of novelty and reform much in the way that Herman's own text did. The lives of the saints provided the veneer of ancient tradition to the manuscript. But, the contemporary works by Elisabeth addressed the program of restoration; itself a term that suggested that St. Martin had clear traditions but needed to be reminded of them in some way. In fact, Elisabeth's *Revelatio* spoke to the ways in which ancient saints had value for contemporary religious life. In this work, she integrated the discovery of newly found relics within the traditional story of St. Ursula's martyrdom. In fact, this manuscript even included the older *Passio* version of the St. Ursula legend, perhaps signaling that although the older work was still valued, Elisabeth's new version provided the necessary update that served contemporary needs. Similarly in Herman's *de Restauratione*, he integrated the ancient book about St. Martin, associated with traditional Benedictine reform from the Carolingian era, with his contemporary text about the revival of the monastery. In both cases, these ancient artifacts, whether they were relics or texts, were authenticated by contemporary authors writing new works.

Integrating new converts into monastic life was also important within the Flemish reform milieu. Herman's work discussed how religious fervor encouraged men and women in Tournai to devote their lives to God. The manuscript with Elisabeth's texts also situates her works within this context, especially considering the fact that her *Liber viarum dei* addressed Christians from various backgrounds. Addressing the new religious who hailed from diverse backgrounds offers an explanation for pairing Elisabeth's works with Hugh of Fouilloy's *Aviary* (in this manuscript it is known as the *De bestiis et aliis rebus*). This particular version of Hugh's text combined his

*Aviary*, which featured allegorical and moralizing stories about birds, with an excerpt from a bestiary.<sup>24</sup>

Bestiary works were immensely popular in the Middle Ages. The peak circulations of these works occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,<sup>25</sup> mirroring the surge in religious converts and the introduction of new religious Orders. The Tournai manuscript featured one of the illuminated copies of Hugh's work.<sup>26</sup> How bestiaries were viewed by medieval readers, and how the images and texts operated alongside each other, has been contested. Whereas Debra Hassig has argued that medieval bestiaries were books about nature that were intended to edify human readers, Ron Baxter has argued that the images of the animals, and their meanings, were completely dependent on the texts that accompanied them.<sup>27</sup> Baxter traced the textual changes in bestiary manuscripts, which began as moralizing fables when paired with the text of the *Physiologus*, but later became linked with Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*. The shift from the reliance of one text to another in turn changed the interpretation of the pictorial program from one where the animals were providing additional textual readings of Christian moral edification

---

<sup>24</sup> Willene Clark, ed. and trans., *The Medieval Book of Birds: Hugh of Fouilloy's Aviarum* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies SUNY Binghamton, 1992), 13, 71-3. Clark notes that in what she terms the "St. Martin Group" that the St. Martin copy of Hugh's work was the only to contain also a bestiary excerpt.

<sup>25</sup> Clark, *The Medieval Book of Birds*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Clark, *The Medieval Book of Birds*, 72.

<sup>27</sup> Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xv. See also Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998), 211.

to one where it provided an exegesis of Creation.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, there was no one single “reader group” for bestiaries because similar images were interpreted differently.<sup>29</sup>

Bestiaries were likely helpful for defining theological concepts to new converts and lay brothers,<sup>30</sup> and in fact, the set-up of the Tournai manuscript suggests this use. Baxter has noted that one of the ways in which the bestiaries functioned was likely as material for sermons,<sup>31</sup> suggesting that the information delivered orally was used also for educating an audience. The illuminations that accompanied the texts of the bestiaries and Hugh’s *Aviary* were not meant to be only pictorial narratives for illiterate converts. The use of images alongside texts has been noted by scholars studying other twelfth-century works, such as the Herrad’s *Hortus* and Conrad of Hirsau’s *Speculum virginum*, both of which were produced in a reform environment that promoted education for its members.<sup>32</sup> Griffiths has argued that the way in which contemporary sermons emphasized “seeing” may have influenced Herrad’s decisions to pair theological material with illuminations.<sup>33</sup> Morgan Powell has also suggested that the visual images contained in the *Speculum* indicate a program for teaching, which paired audio and visual

---

<sup>28</sup> Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users*, 184.

<sup>29</sup> Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries*, xvi.

<sup>30</sup> Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries*, 170-71.

<sup>31</sup> Baxter, *Bestiaries and Their Users*, 194.

<sup>32</sup> Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 14-15; and Morgan Powell, “The *Speculum virginum* and the Audio-Visual Poetics of Women’s Religious Instruction,” in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant Mews (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 111-136.

<sup>33</sup> Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 67.

material for its students.<sup>34</sup> Pictures, then, were part of a program for education that allowed for additional meanings to be underscored by the accompanying texts.

All of these works were likely used by teachers charged with instructing the new monks. Hugh's *Aviary* was addressed to a layman, Rainier, who had converted to the religious life.<sup>35</sup> In his work, Hugh used the different species of birds to describe the characteristics of different people and the religious life. Similarly, Elisabeth's *Liber viarum dei* contained various sermons about the correct ways of living for Christians who were monks, clerics, hermits, women and children. The sermons in Elisabeth's work also could have been utilized for discussing the new religious life in which converts took part, helping them to understand where they belonged in the Christian hierarchy. In the Tournai manuscript, Elisabeth's works directly precede Hugh's,<sup>36</sup> perhaps suggesting that these two works represented a practical didactic pairing. Both works addressed diverse groups of Christians. In fact, Hugh's prologue notes that his work was useful for multiple audiences, so that "by picture" those whose intellect "could scarcely comprehend with the mind's eye...might discern with the physical eye."<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, those for "whom the simplicity of the picture would not please, at least the moral teaching of the text might do so."<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Powell, "The Audio-Visual," 113.

<sup>35</sup> Clark, *The Medieval Book of Birds*, 117.

<sup>36</sup> J. van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliotheque Royale de Belgique* 5 (Brussels: 1903), 248.

<sup>37</sup> Clark, *The Medieval Book of Birds*, 117.

<sup>38</sup> Clark, *The Medieval Book of Birds*, 117.

Whereas the manuscript at St. Martin suggests an influx of new converts who had to learn quickly the meaning of monastic life, the manuscript of Elisabeth's works that monks at Maria Laach held suggests a slightly different audience. Yet, it still served the purpose of addressing practical reform concerns within the monastery.<sup>39</sup> In this case, the monks at Maria Laach used Elisabeth's texts in order to persevere along the religious path that they had chosen.

Maria Laach, a Rhineland abbey that also had ties to the Flemish reform environment, began as a priory of Affligem in Brabant, but became an independent institution in 1127. This house was known for its impressive library collection.<sup>40</sup> The monks at Maria Laach added Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* to their shelves. It was bound with Ekbert's *De obitu*. Although this manuscript does not provide the range of works the St. Martin codex does, as I have argued elsewhere, Elisabeth's *Liber visionum primus* was a work that sought to aid reform houses in the practice of the religious life. It did so by depicting the tribulations and triumphs of mastering monastic practices.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that Elisabeth wrote about her personal struggles with living this life more than ten years after she had entered the monastery perhaps speaks to its readership and purpose at Maria Laach. Rather than encouraging new converts and providing them with a basic guide of monastic practice in comparison to secular paths, it assumed some knowledge of monastic life through its emphasis on the memorial arts. Memory-work comprised part of a traditional

---

<sup>39</sup> Trier, Dombibliothek MS 10. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 269.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Richter, "Die Schriftsteller der Benediktinerabtei Maria-Laach: Studien zur rheinischen Kloster- und Literaturgeschichte, mit Textbeilagen," in *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst*, eds. F. Hettner and J. Hansen (Trier: Jacob Lintz Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1898), 51.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter One.

program within the monastery that led to more advanced modes of thinking and complemented the monastic *lectio*. Moreover, Fulbert, the abbot at Maria Laach from 1152-1177, wrote to Elisabeth to seek advice for his community.<sup>42</sup> It is no surprise that Fulbert contacted Elisabeth based on the way that Ekbert portrayed her in his *De obitu*. In this work, Ekbert highlighted her role as a teacher who successfully transmitted her spiritual program to other members of the cloister.<sup>43</sup>

Within such reformed communities, Elisabeth's works proved valuable for situating these institutions and their members within the traditions of religious life, even if those traditions were new. In the case of St. Martin, her writings proved valuable for addressing newer converts. For Maria Laach, her text encouraged the monks to achieve perfection in their practice of the religious life. Yet, for both of these audiences, mastering the monastic life in this age of new traditions and practices seemed to be the primary function of Elisabeth's works. Other reform readers, however, highlighted some of the novel content that Elisabeth's texts promulgated. In particular, Elisabeth's work on Mary's Assumption, the *de Resurrectione*, demonstrates how the tensions between novelty and tradition within reform culture interacted with new conceptions of Mary's role in theological thought.

---

<sup>42</sup> Anne L. Clark, trans., *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 253-54.

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter One, 38-41.

***The Marian Group: Elisabeth's Texts and Twelfth-Century Theology***

Elisabeth's short text on the Assumption of Mary was extremely popular in the twelfth century among her readers in the Latin West. Given the developments in Marian theology in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, which gave Mary an exalted status, this is not a surprise.<sup>44</sup> Here, I will consider how Elisabeth's assertion that her Marian tract represented a novelty operates within both the context of reform culture and the theological innovations new Marian ideas represented. To do this, I will consider three ways in which Elisabeth's Marian texts were circulated: in Northern France and Flanders, in England, and finally among continental Cistercians, with a focus on the Empire. Reform culture adopted the veneration of Mary wholeheartedly. In addition, the theological debates about Mary's role in heaven and on earth represented the dynamic intellectual culture that is not normally associated with reform Orders or monks. However, the readers of Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* demonstrate that there was a space for novelty within the cloister, for both spiritual practice and theological thought.

Before I address how specific audiences read Elisabeth's work, it is necessary to consider how Marian piety and doctrine developed in the twelfth century. How Elisabeth's own Marian treatise integrated contemporary trends is integral to its dissemination. Anselm of Bec's contributions to Marian theology set the stage for the increased production of written works focused on the Virgin. When Anselm considered God's creation of the world, he reasoned that God performed this task on his own. However, when God re-created the world through the birth

---

<sup>44</sup> For example, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Luigi Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2005); and Brian Noell, "Marian Lyric in the Cistercian Monastery during the High Middle Ages," *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 30.1 (1999): 37-62.

of Jesus, he employed Mary as the perfect vessel. According to Anselm's logic, Mary's role in this process of re-creation was defined as Mother. Thus, God's role was the Father and Mary's role the Mother. With Mary occupying a parallel position to God, she was now accorded a position in heaven second only to Him.

Thus, if God came to man through Mary, Mary could now bring man back to God. With this scholastic logic, Anselm either articulated contemporary popular thought about Mary's role in his writings or presented a new Marian theology. In either case, Mary's role as Mother was also complemented by her role as an intercessor between man and God,<sup>45</sup> opening the door for the increased veneration of Mary in the twelfth century.

Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* intervened in the debate about the nature of Mary's Assumption into heaven. She also considered aspects of Mary's death and her dormition that were popular in apocryphal works. In the *de Resurrectione*, Elisabeth set out the nature of the problem of whether or not Mary "was assumed into heaven in spirit alone or in the flesh as well."<sup>46</sup> A firm conclusion was necessary because Elisabeth noted that what "is written about this in the books of the fathers is found to be uncertain."<sup>47</sup>

Elisabeth was not the first person to comment about the lack of information about Mary in the fathers' writings. Around 830, Paschasius Radbertus wrote to the nuns at Soissons about appropriate Marian piety. He reminded them to avoid any of the apocryphal texts that spoke

---

<sup>45</sup> Noell, "Marian Lyric," 37.

<sup>46</sup> "...utrum solo spiritu assumpta sis in celum, an etiam carne." Roth, *Visionen*, 53.

<sup>47</sup> "...de hoc dubie in libris patrum scriptum invenitur." Roth, *Visionen*, 53.

about her bodily assumption or death. Instead, they should focus on her role as the bearer of Christ's body, which the eucharist memorialized.<sup>48</sup> The English homilist Aelfric (fl. 987-1010) picked up this theme in the tenth century when he warned against writing more than what is known about Mary, "lest we fall into error."<sup>49</sup>

Despite these warnings, authors did utilize apocryphal works that detailed Mary's death and entrance into heaven. One such text was falsely attributed to Augustine. This work taught that Mary's Assumption into heaven was both in body and soul. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, this work began to receive much attention in theological circles.<sup>50</sup> The reception of Elisabeth's works must be considered as part of the growing trend to accept and codify apocryphal accounts into doctrine. Thus, I will consider the circulation of manuscripts with Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* for how they fulfilled these new needs while also lending authority to older apocryphal accounts. To do this, I will consider what uncertainties Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* hoped to resolve and how this resolution was received by her audience.

In her work, Elisabeth claimed that Mary had been assumed bodily into heaven. Through a conversation with her angelic guide, Elisabeth learned that Mary "'was taken up into heaven in flesh as well as spirit.'" <sup>51</sup> Elisabeth's articulation of this event as a fact confirmed the apocryphal accounts of Mary's entrance into heaven. The real novelty of her claim was that she

---

<sup>48</sup> Rubin, *Mother of God*, 103-4.

<sup>49</sup> Rubin, *Mother of God*, 112.

<sup>50</sup> Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 107.

<sup>51</sup> "...tam carne, quam spiritu domina nostra in celum assumpta est." Roth, *Visionen*, 54.

challenged the date of the feast of her Assumption. According to the dialogue with her angel, Mary died on the date that the Church celebrated her Assumption, August 15; however, Mary did not immediately enter Heaven. Like Jesus, she was resurrected after her death, in this case, forty days later on September 23.

Elisabeth did not want to challenge Church tradition, but she did want to clarify it. Because the “holy fathers who established the celebration of her assumption in the church according to custom had no certainty of her bodily assumption,” they “made solemn the day of her death.”<sup>52</sup> According to Elisabeth, the fathers “believed without doubt that [Mary] had indeed been taken up in the flesh,”<sup>53</sup> but they did not realize that her resurrection occurred forty days later. Elisabeth’s resolution to the debate surrounding the Assumption of Mary was to emphasize that she was in accordance with the beliefs of the fathers and to authorize apocryphal beliefs about Mary. Given the trends in twelfth century Marian thought, that Mary represented a parallel to God the Father, Elisabeth’s answer is not surprising. Her *de Resurrectione* offered an additional comparison to Mary and the Lord. Thus, Mary’s experience between death and entry into heaven was similar with that of Jesus, thus emphasizing her experiences as both human and divine.

Elisabeth had concerns that her answer to the theological debate would label her as “an inventor of novelties.”<sup>54</sup> Yet, the importance of this information was too great, even if some

---

<sup>52</sup> “Sancti patres, qui sollempnitatem assumptionis eius celebrari in ecclesia statuerunt, nullam certitudinem corporalis assumptionis eius habebant, ideoque diem dormitionis eius sollempnem fecerunt...” Roth, *Visionen*, 54.

<sup>53</sup> “...etiam carne assumptam indubitanter credebant.” Roth, *Visionen*, 54.

<sup>54</sup> “...inventrix novitatum.” Roth, *Visionen*, 54.

people would disagree. Thus, Elisabeth decided to publish her text, noting that Mary told her that:

These things have not been revealed to you so that they may be destroyed and cast into oblivion. Rather, they have been given to you so that my praise may be amplified among those who especially love me. You must make them known to my intimate servants. These things will be manifested to those who manifest their hearts to me. They can then offer me special praise and receive special rewards from me. There are many who will receive this message with great exultation and veneration.<sup>55</sup>

Mary's message to Elisabeth proved to be true. The *de Resurrectione* was eagerly received by religious houses across Western Europe. Below, I will consider the different ways in which Elisabeth's audiences used her text.

In the twelfth century, the Carmelite convent in Paris held a manuscript with Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione*, a sermon of Anselm of Bec's, Hugh of Fosse's *Liber de miraculis B. Marie* and Herman of Tournai's *Tractatus laudibus beatae Mariae virginus*.<sup>56</sup> We have already encountered Herman of Tournai and the ways in which his *de Restauratione* of St. Martin demonstrated the reform context of the reception of Elisabeth's texts in the Flemish milieu. But Herman also elucidates how Marian ideas in the Rhineland, Flanders and Northern France came together to support a Marian doctrine of bodily assumption through the integration of new twelfth-century works, apocryphal accounts and traditional theological texts.

---

<sup>55</sup> "Non sunt tibi hec revelata, ut deleantur et in oblivionem mittantur, sed ut amplificetur laus mea apud eos, qui singulariter diligunt me. Debent enim innotescere per te familiaribus meis, et erunt manifesta his, qui mihi manifestant cor suum, ut ex hoc specialem mihi laudem exhibeant, et specialem retributionem recipient a me. Multi enim sunt, qui cum exultatione magna et veneratione verbum hoc recepturi sunt." Roth, *Visionen*, 54.

<sup>56</sup> Paris, BN MS lat. 2873. See *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae*, III (Paris, 1744), 345; and Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 257.

Herman had a hand in transmitting Ildephonsus of Toledo's (c. 617-667) Marian works to Northern France. Ildephonsus was a Spanish monk and bishop of Toledo. He composed a work about Mary that refuted Jewish doubt about her perpetual virginity, his *Libellus de virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae contra tres infideles*.<sup>57</sup> Ildephonsus's writings on Mary demonstrated his view that her heavenly status was similar to that of her son. When Herman went to Spain at the behest of Bishop Bartholomew of Laon to acquire relics of St. Vincent of Zaragossa, he instead returned with the Marian works of Ildephonsus.<sup>58</sup> Herman also composed his own work, the *De miraculis Beatae Mariae Laudunensis*, to commemorate the religious revival in Laon. This work described the relic tour undertaken by the canons of Laon, who traveled to England with the relics of the Virgin. Simon Yarrow has noted that the significance of this relic tour was the fact that Mary, a universal rather than a local saint, was the object of veneration.<sup>59</sup> Herman's compilation of Marian works also reflected this universal rather than local devotion by integrating Spanish Marian tracts with those describing the events at Laon.

Herman's gift of Marian works to Bartholomew demonstrates the significance of Mary to this region in the first half of the twelfth century. In addition, the compilation of Ildephonsus's Marian writings and Herman's own emphasized the link between traditional Marian texts and the contemporary account of Mary's role in the community. Thus, this manuscript held at the Carmelite convent in Paris that included a compilation of Marian works by contemporary writers

---

<sup>57</sup> Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 28.

<sup>58</sup> Simon Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 75-6.

<sup>59</sup> Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, 78.

attests to the popularity of the subject in Northern France.<sup>60</sup> The inclusion of Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* with works like Herman's also indicates the desire to codify devotion and doctrine surrounding Mary.

In another twelfth-century manuscript of unknown provenance,<sup>61</sup> the tenets of Marian doctrine and devotion were worked out through a compilation of works that included Paschasius Radbertus's *De partu Virginis*, Ildephonsus of Toledo's Marian writings and the apocryphal text of Pseudo-Melito, the *Transitus beatae Mariae*.<sup>62</sup> Pseudo-Melito's *Transitus*, likely a fifth-century work from the East, claimed that Mary had been bodily assumed into heaven. The grouping of these works demonstrated the twelfth-century interest in apocryphal texts as well as traditional Marian works, such as those of Paschasius and Ildephonsus. Clearly, the compiler of this manuscript did not heed Paschasius's warning about reading apocryphal texts. In fact, a thirteenth-century hand inserted Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* in the margin of the manuscript next to Pseudo-Melito's text. This decision seems to suggest that Elisabeth's work operated to support the claims made in the *Transitus*. Thus, her twelfth-century work was able to authorize the apocryphal text, making an argument for its place among traditional authors on Mary, such as Ildephonsus and Paschasius Radbertus.

If the thirteenth-century scribe felt it necessary to correct the omission of Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* from the Marian texts in that twelfth-century manuscript of unknown

---

<sup>60</sup> Paris, BN, MS lat. 2873. See also Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 257.

<sup>61</sup> Paris, BN, MS lat. 2332. Although the origin of this manuscript is unknown, its contents suggest that it originated in the Northern French or Flemish milieu.

<sup>62</sup> Philippe Lauer, ed. *Bibliothèque Nationale Catalogue général des manuscrits latin*, II (Paris, 1940), 409.

provenance,<sup>63</sup> the Carthusians at Bourg-Fontaine did not make the same oversight. In a manuscript from this house from circa 1300,<sup>64</sup> Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* was included in a compilation of theological tracts. Notably, her *de Resurrectione* appeared immediately following Pseudo-Melito's *Transitus*. The pseudo-Augustinian apocryphal tract, *De assumptione b. Mariae*, also appeared in this manuscript.<sup>65</sup> This codex did not have a specifically Marian focus like the one of unknown provenance from the twelfth century,<sup>66</sup> but it is clear that by this time Elisabeth's Marian treatise, along with other apocryphal Marian works, found a place alongside University-trained theological heavyweights such as Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>67</sup> From the textual record, it seems that Elisabeth's readers considered her work as a necessary component for bridging the gap between uncertain apocrypha and venerable tradition. By the fourteenth century, the process of codification of once miscellaneous and untrustworthy Marian sources seems complete.

Thus far, I have considered how Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* interacted with other texts in the milieu of Northern France and Flanders. Here, Elisabeth's works seem to have authorized apocryphal writings. The novelty that she was so concerned about was treated as a way to address growing demand for the integration of popular devotion into an authoritative Marian doctrine. This was true in Britain as well from the remarks made by an English Cistercian monk

---

<sup>63</sup> Paris, BN, MS lat. 2332.

<sup>64</sup> Paris, BN, MS lat. 2042. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 285.

<sup>65</sup> Lauer, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, II, 229.

<sup>66</sup> Paris, BN, MS lat. 2332.

<sup>67</sup> Lauer, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, II, 229

who spent some time on the Continent in the 1170s, most likely in Savigny. Roger of Ford copied Elisabeth's texts to send to his abbot Baldwin back in England. In particular, Roger emphasized Elisabeth's contribution to Marian thought. I want to consider how Roger's praise of Elisabeth demonstrated the acceptance of novelty, particularly in the context of the increased interest in Marian works. In addition, Roger's Cistercian Order will provide additional background from which to consider the circulation of Elisabeth's texts both within England and on the Continent.

Roger's interest in copying down Elisabeth's texts must also be considered from the vantage point of a post conquest England interested in maintaining continental links. John Gillingham notes that there was an active process of library building undertaken after the Norman Conquest. The leaders of the English Church brought in scribes and exemplars from France, the Low Countries and Lorraine.<sup>68</sup> In addition, connections with landed estates in Normandy, and the nature of the porous Norman border itself, made access to areas such as Paris, the Loire valley, the Rhineland and Flanders easy.<sup>69</sup>

Roger clearly took advantage of these porous borders and continental connections. Roger's time on the Continent resulted in works for English readers that he sent back as well as his own writings that survive in manuscripts from Tournai.<sup>70</sup> He was part of an active Cistercian

---

<sup>68</sup> John Gillingham, "A Historian of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance and the Transformation of English Society, 1066-ca. 1200," in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, eds. Thomas F.X. Noble and John Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012): 45-74, at 48.

<sup>69</sup> Gillingham, "A Historian of the Twelfth Century," 60.

<sup>70</sup> C.J. Holdsworth, "John of Ford and English Cistercian Writing 1167-1214," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (1961): 117-36, at 125.

literary circle that composed and copied Latin texts. In the latter half of the twelfth century, this literary group comprised men like Baldwin of Ford, John of Ford and Alexander of Meaux.

It is clear that on an individual level, Roger was an active scribe and author. But, his home institution, Ford, was also a hub of intellectual and scribal activity in England.<sup>71</sup> Libraries like Ford sought glossed bibles as well as works by the contemporary greats such as Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, Peter Comestor and Peter the Chanter.<sup>72</sup> Thus, Roger's literary interests, along with those of his Cistercian coterie of authors, suggest that the library at Ford was substantial. Unfortunately, no catalogue of works survives.<sup>73</sup> But, library creation at institutions such as Ford was important because it helped a cloister to establish an identity. It also was an activity that served to link individual monasteries to a larger institutional network of religious houses, including continental ones. Roger's stay at a continental house, perhaps Savigny, exemplified these types of ties and the literary exchange that strengthened them.

Roger's thirst for new information and his praise of Elisabeth's works for providing it places him squarely within a twelfth-century culture that was embracing new ideas and practices.<sup>74</sup> England, still dealing with the aftermath of the Norman invasion, sought new narratives that would integrate its culture into a larger European one.<sup>75</sup> The historical works

---

<sup>71</sup> Holdsworth, "John of Ford," 132.

<sup>72</sup> Gillingham, "A Historian of the Twelfth Century," 49.

<sup>73</sup> Holdsworth, "John of Ford," 126-27.

<sup>74</sup> John Van Engen, "The Twelfth Century: Reading, Reason and Revolt in a World of Custom," in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, 17-44, at 29.

<sup>75</sup> See Gillingham, "A Historian of the Twelfth-Century."

produced in the early twelfth century attest to this mindset. William of Malmesbury's writings demonstrated his fascination with new things and the progress of reform and learning that was apparent in the twelfth century.<sup>76</sup> His positive view of post-conquest England was one that scholars have characterized as progressive, one that saw the changes brought by the Norman conquest as positive and creating a "Europeanizing" effect on English culture.<sup>77</sup>

The circulation of Elisabeth's works in England, which all stemmed from Roger's copy, must be viewed as part of this broader assimilation of regional cultures to a universal European one. Thus, the increased interest in Mary on the Continent, and her role as a universal saint, must be viewed as part of the progressive reform and learning that characterized the twelfth century. When Roger of Ford stated that he "seized the pen to record the revelations of the holy woman Elisabeth,"<sup>78</sup> he was engaging with new continental material for the benefit of his homeland. Roger appended a letter to his copies of Elisabeth's works, which addressed the reasons why Baldwin and the brothers at Ford should read Elisabeth's texts. Elisabeth's writings uncovered new information about Mary. According to Roger, anything new that can be learned about how to honor and praise Mary should be heard. In addition, according to Roger, new information was always eagerly sought after because it would help Baldwin and the brothers

---

<sup>76</sup> Gillingham, "A Historian of the Twelfth Century," 46-7.

<sup>77</sup> Gillingham, "A Historian of the Twelfth Century," 46.

<sup>78</sup> "...calamum ad notandas revelationes Elisabeth sancte mulieris arripui, quas vobis et venerande congregationi vestre tribus de causis legendas conscripsi." Ruth Dean, "Elizabeth, Abbess of Schönau, and Roger of Ford," *Modern Philology* 41 (1944): 209-20, at 213.

commit Elisabeth's texts to memory.<sup>79</sup> Roger's enthusiasm for Elisabeth's Marian works was perhaps related to the ways in which continental houses grouped Elisabeth's works. As we have seen, Elisabeth's works formed part of a "Marian group" in Flanders and Northeastern France. Moreover, Roger noted that Elisabeth's works were held in high regard in the surrounding areas, stating, "I know that in our parts this work is eagerly written, read and heard not only by the unlearned by also by our bishops and abbots."<sup>80</sup>

Whereas the manuscripts circulating in Northern France and the Flemish regions demonstrated a negotiation between traditional texts and new ones in a process that enhanced and codified conventional Marian devotion and doctrine, Roger, on the other hand, did not bother with tradition at all. Elisabeth's works, especially her *de Resurrectione*, were necessary reading because they were novel. Although Roger was likely in the same region where Elisabeth's texts were circulating as part of a Marian group of writings, he did not copy any other Marian works when he sent the manuscript to Baldwin in England. This does not mean that Roger did not also consider Elisabeth's texts as a way to mediate between certain tradition and uncertain apocryphal interpretations. But, he was clear that Elisabeth's texts, as stand-alone works, were part of the vibrant continental intellectual and reform culture. Moreover, Roger's assertion that Elisabeth's writings did not need any additional explanation or apology

---

<sup>79</sup> "Primo, quia preclara quedam de beatissima Dei genitrice Maria ibidem exarata leguntur; secundo, quia novi quam libenter que ad honorem vel laudem eiusdem pertinent solebatur audire; tertio, quia nova semper et avidius audiuntur et tenacius memorie commendantur." Dean, "Elizabeth, Abbess of Schönau," 213.

<sup>80</sup> "Et quidem nescio quid de hoc opera in vestra regione censebitur; hoc autem scio quod in his nostris partibus non solum ab indoctis, sed ab ipsis episcopis et abbatibus nostris, certatim et scribitur et legitur et auditur." Dean, "Elizabeth, Abbess of Schönau," 213.

corresponds with the use of her *de Resurrectione* as a text that acted as the authority for the apocryphal Marian works.

Roger's vocation in the Cistercian Order perhaps influenced his enthusiasm for continental European culture. Martha Newman has noted the importance of the Cistercians for creating links with the Continent. She argues that William of Malmesbury's emphasis on the role that Stephen Harding had in the formation of the Cistercian order was a way in which to praise an Englishman for his participation in the continental European intellectual and religious endeavors that William found so enthralling.<sup>81</sup> Elisabeth's works also circulated among Cistercians on the Continent. Thus, her works were linked to this new and respected reform Order. In particular, her texts circulated in Cistercian communities within the Empire.

The Cistercians began to make headway into regions of the Empire in the 1130s.<sup>82</sup> Himmerod, the only Rhineland Cistercian community with a manuscript of Elisabeth's works, was founded in 1134 by Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>83</sup> For these communities, Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* and a particular chapter of her *Liber visionum tercius* were popular works. Heilsbronn, Himmerod, Heiligenkreuz and Zwettl all held copies of Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione*. Interestingly both Heiligenkreuz and Heilsbronn also possessed chapter four of Elisabeth's *Liber visionum tercius*. This chapter was a vision Elisabeth had of a virgin in the

---

<sup>81</sup> Martha Newman, "Stephen Harding and the Creation of the Cistercian Community," *Revue Bénédictine* 107 (1997): 307-39, at 324.

<sup>82</sup> Alfred Haverkamp, *Medieval Germany: 1056-1273*, trans. Helga Braun and Richard Mortimer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 189.

<sup>83</sup> Augustinus Thiele O.S.B., *Echternach und Himmerod: Beispiele benediktinischer und zisterziensischer Wirtschaftsführung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1964), 29-32.

sun. Although many scholars have seen this vision as Elisabeth's negotiation of Ekbert's involvement in the production of her works,<sup>84</sup> it in fact must be assessed as part of her Marian views. Here, I will consider the circulation of Elisabeth's Marian texts among these Cistercian abbeys in order to demonstrate how these new houses negotiated traditional Cistercian rules with new Marian practices.

The Cistercian Order sought to root its practices in the ancient and authoritative traditions of the Church. Liturgical observance underwent changes in Cistercian communities to strip it of the accretions that had been added over the years. However, traditional observance could not reflect contemporary spiritual practices. The Cistercians had a strong connection to Mary, dedicating many of their houses to her. Yet, the official observances of these communities could not reflect the growing interest of its monks in the Virgin. As Brian Noell has argued, Cistercian houses sought to augment their monastic libraries with religious poetry and sequences that addressed Marian devotion, but at the same time did not change the authoritative customs set down by the Order.<sup>85</sup> The circulation of Elisabeth's Marian texts to Cistercian communities in the Empire in some ways represents this type of additional literature that would not circumvent ancient tradition, but could satiate devotional appetites. Noell has asserted that the new Marian lyrics in Cistercian abbeys nodded to tradition because they were grounded in typological associations to Mary found in the Bible.<sup>86</sup> The use of Elisabeth's Marian works in Cistercian

---

<sup>84</sup> Clark, *The Complete Works*, 12; and John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 25-44.

<sup>85</sup> Noell, "Marian Lyric," 38.

<sup>86</sup> Noell, "Marian Lyric," 48.

houses was also an attempt to negotiate what was defined as traditional custom. Elisabeth's works were not composed using Biblical typology, but rather, by asserting the new Marian theological trends. I will argue that Elisabeth's works operated to prove that what many in the twelfth century considered new Marian theology was in fact part of an authoritative tradition. Based on the ways in which these Cistercian houses circulated Elisabeth's texts, I will show that Cistercian houses sought to prove that Marian devotion was not new at all and could operate within authoritative Cistercian practice.

It is significant that both Heilsbronn and Heiligenkreuz circulated Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* and her vision of the virgin in the sun together. In these two houses, Elisabeth's texts take up most of the manuscript space, although a few other contemporary theological thinkers, such as Hugh of St. Victor, were included.<sup>87</sup> In the context of Cistercian interest in Elisabeth's works and Marian texts, the way in which Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* and vision of the virgin operated together will be assessed.

Elisabeth's vision of the virgin in the sun is reminiscent of Revelation 12:1. She described how she saw a virgin sitting in a sun with a gold crown on her head and a gold cup in her right hand. At times, a cloud blocked the splendor of the sun. When the cloud caused darkness to fall over the earth, the virgin wept. In a conversation with her angelic guide, Elisabeth discovered the meaning of the vision. The virgin was the sacred humanity of Christ. This was a new interpretation of this image. In antiquity, the virgin was most often interpreted

---

<sup>87</sup> Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 266 and 290.

as *Ecclesia*. The medieval assessment of the image in Revelation linked the virgin to Mary, which is unsurprising given the surge in Marian devotion.

Elisabeth's interpretation of the virgin in the sun as the sacred humanity of Christ is important for our discussion of her Marian theology. The fact that this interpretation of the vision was called into question at Schönaue, perhaps by Ekbert, points to the novelty of suggesting that Jesus was in some way female. Elisabeth attempted to assuage her community's concerns when she posed a question about this vision to John the Baptist in subsequent discussion. She asked, "Why, my lord, was the humanity of the Lord Savior shown to me in the appearance of a virgin and not in a masculine form?"<sup>88</sup> The response that she received, that "the vision could so much more easily be adapted to also signify His blessed mother,"<sup>89</sup> was a more typical medieval interpretation.

Elisabeth's vision of the virgin in the sun has not gone unnoticed by modern scholars. Barbara Newman has interpreted this vision as a way for Elisabeth to validate her authority. In this argument, Elisabeth's vision demonstrated her idea that if God was both divine and human, then he was also male and female. This authorized Elisabeth's public role as a visionary because her gender was perhaps equally as flexible.<sup>90</sup> Anne Clark has also noted that Ekbert did not strike this "controversial" interpretation from the textual record, but rather prompted Elisabeth to

---

<sup>88</sup> "Quare mi domine in specie virginis et non in forma virili demonstrata est michi domini salvatoris humanitas?" Roth, *Visionen*, 61-2.

<sup>89</sup> "...ut tanto congruentius etiam ad significandam beatam matrem eius visio posset aptari." Roth, *Visionen*, 62.

<sup>90</sup> Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997 repr.), 40.

add the more conventional addendum to the vision.<sup>91</sup> For Clark, this moment represented a negotiation between Elisabeth and Ekbert. Each tested each other's role in the production of the texts and the authority to do so. In Clark's assessment, the fact that Elisabeth's first interpretation remained represented a victory for Elisabeth's thought over Ekbert's.

I would argue, however, that Elisabeth's addendum to her vision was actually consistent with the themes in her *de Resurrectione*. This work also contained controversial interpretations of Marian doctrine, but Ekbert did not suppress it. In Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione*, she presented a symmetrical relationship between the resurrection and assumption experiences of both Jesus and Mary. This work continues that same theme. The addendum provides this symmetry by stating that the Savior and the Mother of God were in some way interchangeable. Thus, Elisabeth's reconsideration of the vision may not have as much to do with Ekbert exerting control over Elisabeth's messages as scholars have suggested. Rather, the interruption in the visionary text by a prompting question from a monastic inquirer was a common structure of Elisabeth's works.<sup>92</sup> In this instance, then, Elisabeth utilized the dialogic convention to flesh out the theme completely and explain why this novel interpretation worked. Without Ekbert's leading question about why the figure should be interpreted as Jesus, Elisabeth's audience may not have understood the significance of the vision in the larger context of her Marian thought. The question provided a bridge between an uncommon interpretation to one more routine. Both interpretations were right, and read side-by-side, they provided a complete account of the ways in which Jesus and Mary operated as a complementary unit rather than individuals.

---

<sup>91</sup> Clark, *The Complete Works*, 12.

<sup>92</sup> See Chapter Two.

Elisabeth's interpretation of how Jesus and Mary worked for salvation in tandem supported Cistercian ideas and devotional practices. Caroline Bynum has noted that the Cistercians in particular used a language ripe with female metaphors to describe pastoral care. She links this interest in feminine language with the surge in Marian devotion and the interest in the human element of Christ.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the circulation of Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* along with the vision of the virgin in the sun among Cistercian houses seems to support both of these interests. Moreover, it seems to accord with the need that Noell has noted for additional material on Mary in Cistercian houses. The trend to reform the liturgy to address Marian devotion began in 1147, but it did not satisfy many members of the Order because the reforms did not include the newer and more popular Marian themes.<sup>94</sup>

On the other hand, in the Cistercian abbeys of Himmerod and Zwettl, Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* circulated with texts of ancient authorities. In particular, I will examine how Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* was used by the Zwettl monks. Notably, it is the only one of Elisabeth's writings to be included in the manuscript.<sup>95</sup> Zwettl was a daughter house of Heiligenkreuz,<sup>96</sup> which held additional works by Elisabeth, so the fact that this manuscript paired Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* with the complete works of Dionysius the Areopagite is, I

---

<sup>93</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing," *The Harvard Theological Review* 70, 3/4 (1977): 257-84, at 257-58.

<sup>94</sup> Noell, "Marian Lyric," 43.

<sup>95</sup> Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 236. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 292.

<sup>96</sup> Stephan Rössler, "Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Bibliothek des Stiftes Zwettl," in *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse I, Xenia Bernardina II, I* (Vienna, 1891), 293-479, at 290.

will argue, significant.<sup>97</sup> It suggests that Elisabeth's Marian work and the Areopagite's texts were in some way related. Moreover, it links newer theological explanations with ancient authorities. This demonstrates how some Cistercian communities sought to reevaluate the customary definitions of ancient practice against the new.

For medieval audiences, Dionysius the Areopagite was the Athenian that St. Paul converted to Christianity in Acts 17:34.<sup>98</sup> However, the works attributed to this Dionysius were actually written in the sixth century by an unknown author.<sup>99</sup> Whoever the author was, the pseudonym was a successful one. Immediately, this nom de plume conjured apostolic authority for readers.<sup>100</sup> It was not until the twelfth century that Dionysius's works began to appear more consistently among Western scholars. In the early part of the twelfth century, Dionysius's texts were introduced into the *Sentences* and the *Gloss* at Laon.<sup>101</sup> Jean Leclercq has argued that Dionysius's corpus was not as important to monastic audiences as it was to scholastic ones. In fact, he asserts that the school at St. Victor broke with its monastic past and "blazed a path" for this use in the schools.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Rössler, "Verzeichneiss der Handschriften," 381. Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy*, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, *Book of Divine Names*, *Mystical Theology* and various letters were all included.

<sup>98</sup> Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30.

<sup>99</sup> Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Odyssey of Dionysian Spirituality," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (NY: Paulist Press, 1987), 11-24, at 23.

<sup>101</sup> Jean Leclercq, "Influence and Noninfluence of Dionysius in the Western Middle Ages," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 27.

<sup>102</sup> Leclercq, "Influence and Noninfluence," 31.

Hugh of St. Victor's interpretation of Dionysius's works was influential in integrating it with other twelfth-century theological trends. Hugh interpreted Dionysius's works as representing love as the highest form of intelligence, something which Dionysius himself did not intend to emphasize.<sup>103</sup> In fact, this analysis of the Dionysian texts worked well with ideas espoused by Bernard of Clairvaux and his interpretation of the *Song of Songs*.<sup>104</sup> The analysis that Dionysian works were primarily used in a scholastic context seems contrary to the evidence from the manuscript at Zwettl, which included his complete works and Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione*. Paul Rorem has noted the potential links between Victorine interpretation of Dionysian material and Cistercian thought.<sup>105</sup> Thus, the monks at Zwettl were perhaps interested in holding these works because they reflected trends that were also embraced by Bernard, who clearly was the imposing intellectual figure for twelfth-century Cistercians. However, the fact that this manuscript also included Elisabeth's Marian text suggests another potential reason for the Zwettl monks' interest in the corpus. Indeed, it hints at the link between Elisabeth's *de Resurrectione* and Dionysius's the *Divine Names* in the on-going Cistercian negotiation over practicing what they considered traditional monasticism without accretions with the desire to include more Marian devotion into that practice.

Dionysius's *Divine Names*, a treatise that explored the interpretations of biblical names ascribed to God, purportedly provided evidence of the apostles gathering at Mary's death. Because medieval readers of Dionysius's works believed him to be a student of Paul, the events

---

<sup>103</sup> Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 217.

<sup>104</sup> Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 216.

<sup>105</sup> Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 216-17.

he wrote about that discussed the apostles were considered to be first-hand accounts.<sup>106</sup> In this particular text, there is a passage that states, “As you know, we and he and many of our holy brothers met together for a vision of that mortal body, that source of life, which bore God.”<sup>107</sup> In the Eastern tradition, this passage described the dormition. For the Western tradition, it referred to the Assumption. In either case, the passage demonstrated tangible evidence about what happened to Mary.

The Zwettl Cistercians, then, were likely interested in this passage because it offered evidence for an ancient account of Mary’s theological importance from an apostolic authority. Thus, the twelfth-century desire to add more Marian-focused material to official Cistercian practice was in fact justified on account of these traditional texts. That Elisabeth’s *de Resurrectione* was included in this manuscript suggests that the monks were making the argument that what this new, or novel, work explicitly laid out was in fact already part of venerable tradition. Elisabeth’s Marian work was simply a new expression of this event, but not an invention, and Marian devotion and doctrine was not an accretion to ancient custom, but part of it.

I have examined the ways in which Elisabeth’s *de Resurrectione* circulated among her readers. The text formed part of a Marian group in Flanders and Northern France and operated as a way to integrate and authorize apocryphal works into accepted doctrine and practice. For Roger of Ford and the circulation in England of Elisabeth’s texts, the work operated as a way to

---

<sup>106</sup> Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 168.

<sup>107</sup> Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysus: The Complete Works*, 70.

praise Mary and to demonstrate participation in the continental reform and intellectual cultures. The Cistercians utilized Elisabeth's Marian texts because they provided the additional material with which to devote themselves to her and the argument that this was in fact venerable custom. Thus, Elisabeth's readers did not necessarily read her *de Resurrectione* in the same manner; however, they all viewed Elisabeth's work as a way to authorize, enter or validate individual or institutional Marian practices. Elisabeth's works provided definitive interpretations and clear answers to readers who entered into the new and diverse religious practices in the twelfth century, a fact which I would suggest contributed to their circulation.

### ***Clear Answers and Clerical Nuns***

Elisabeth's readers expected her to provide clear answers. As we saw above, Elisabeth's Marian works helped to resolve conflicts surrounding what Marian doctrine was, whether or not it was new or ancient, and what texts were a part of this discussion. The ways in which Elisabeth's readers used her *de Resurrectione* in various manuscripts suggest that it was viewed as a way to clarify debates. In this section, I will argue that this expectation was not confined to her involvement in Marian devotion, but was an integral part of how her audiences received her texts. In what follows, I will consider how Elisabeth's female audience held the same expectations as the male audiences that I examined above.

The audience for Elisabeth's twenty-two known letters included both men and women in monastic communities. Nine of Elisabeth's letters are clearly addressed to women.<sup>108</sup> Most of the letters to women's communities take a similar format. Elisabeth reminds nuns to follow their religious lives. If the women seem to be lacking this commitment, she admonishes them more harshly, as in the case of the holy virgins at Cologne. In the end, her letters reconfirm the reform outlook that her other works espoused. There are two letters to the abbess of Dietkirchen, however, that provide some additional insight into how the readers of her letters might have viewed her words. In the first letter, Elisabeth greeted the abbess as if they were close personal friends. Elisabeth urged her to tend to her flock with strong pastoral care. Echoing the theme of her *Liber viarum dei*, Elisabeth reminded the abbess to stay on the path that leads to the Lord. She should not "turn aside to the right or the left"<sup>109</sup> but continue ahead, and if she did this, she would be led to heaven where there will be "cinnamon and balsam and the sweetest aroma."<sup>110</sup>

Elisabeth's words of advice and comfort seem to have been a cause of confusion. In a subsequent letter to the abbess of Dietkirchen, Elisabeth stated that Ekbert had questioned what the cinnamon and balsam signified and requested more information about these items. The need for clarification in this letter to another abbess suggests that Elisabeth's readers expected definitive answers from her. Elisabeth's audience did not interpret her meaning; rather,

---

<sup>108</sup> These letters are to the sisters at Andernach; the sisters at Bonn; the sisters of the Holy Virgins in Cologne; the sisters in Dirstein; the abbess of Dietkirchen (2 letters); Mistress G (potentially a relative at Andernach); and Hildegard of Bingen (2 letters). See Anne L. Clark, trans. *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works* (Mahweh, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 241-50. See also Joan Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 19-21.

<sup>109</sup> "Noli declinare ad dexteram neque ad sinistram." Roth, *Visionen*, 146.

<sup>110</sup> "...ibi cynamomum et balsamum, odor suavissimus..." Roth, *Visionen*, 146.

Elisabeth provided the meaning for her readers. The role of sole interpreter contrasted to the role that her friend and contemporary, Hildegard, played when she corresponded with others. Hildegard wrote many more letters than Elisabeth, and at times, these letters were incredibly vague. Ann Clark Bartlett has argued that Hildegard was part of a “monastic textual community” where her works were read by like-minded individuals who would understand her communications.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton has argued that Hildegard spoke in a Benedictine symbolist language. The seemingly vague and unclear messages were actually charged with meaning to those who read them.<sup>112</sup> As Elisabeth’s letter demonstrates, she too engaged in symbolic language, introducing cinnamon and balsam to elicit a certain mood for her reader. But, Ekbert criticized this language as being unclear. From the way in which Elisabeth addressed the letter to “the most beloved abbess of Dietkirchen,”<sup>113</sup> it seems that both she and the abbess had some sort of relationship that preceded the letter. Yet, Ekbert feared that the abbess would not be able to interpret the message correctly even if she were close to Elisabeth and perhaps formed a “monastic textual community” with her.

Elisabeth provided a complete interpretation of how the abbess of Dietkirchen should understand cinnamon and balsam in her next letter. According to Elisabeth, the cinnamon signified aspects of the Lord because it possessed qualities that rendered it both sweet and strong.

---

<sup>111</sup> Ann Clark Bartlett, “Miraculous Literacy and Textual Communities in Hildegard of Bingen’s *Scivias*,” *Mystics Quarterly* 18, 2 (June 1992): 43-55, at 43.

<sup>112</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, “Prophet and Reformer: ‘Smoke in the Vineyard’,” in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 70-90, at 74-77.

<sup>113</sup> “...dilectissime abbatisse de Dietkirchen...” Roth, *Visionen*, 146.

The balsam was an appropriate image for heaven because of the soothing nature of the Lord, who seeks to assuage the problems of his faithful.<sup>114</sup> That Ekbert asked Elisabeth to “explain to us” what these images meant demonstrates that her readers considered her teaching to be definitive. They expected to receive the correct interpretation of the material from the authority herself, hence the request for a letter. In addition, if Elisabeth was going to introduce novel imagery in her works, in this case cinnamon and balsam, she needed to clearly define it. Ekbert’s problem with the phrase was not that it was unknown or new, but that it was unclear. According to Ekbert, the abbess of Dietkirchen expected a reply from Elisabeth that could be directly applied to a reform community.

The expectation for clarity in Elisabeth’s works, which hailed from an environment that also produced the more symbolic thought of Hildegard, demonstrates the potential for multiple types of readings in a monastic community. Not all religious sought to communicate in the way that Hildegard’s obtuse language suggested, even if it was a form encouraged by the monastic *lectio*.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the direct explanation that Elisabeth’s second letter provided was in line with most of her other texts, which answered specific questions as completely as possible. That is not to say that all of her works were beyond question and completely accepted—they were clearly challenged—but that her method of communicating her messages to her audiences was one that was predicated on resolving any problems of meaning, not creating them. Ekbert’s request for an explanation suggests, then, that he believed that her readers, even those who had a

---

<sup>114</sup> Clark, *The Complete Works*, 246.

<sup>115</sup> Bartlett, “Miraculous Literacy,” 44-5.

close relationship with Elisabeth, sought the same types of answers that he also desired—ones that were definitive.

Although it is likely that the female houses with which Elisabeth corresponded also had some of her texts, no extant manuscripts exist.<sup>116</sup> However, the nearby Marienberg women's cloister in Boppard, also a Benedictine community, copied Elisabeth's works. Like Schönau, which was founded in 1114, Marienberg was a relatively new foundation, which first appeared as a formal institution in 1120 with the support of Henry V. Its foundation documents placed it under the Abbot of St. Eucharius in Trier,<sup>117</sup> and like other Rhineland communities, used its aristocratic ties to well-placed Rhenish families to secure privileges from both Emperors and popes.<sup>118</sup>

The Marienberg nuns possessed three of Elisabeth's works: her *Liber viarum dei*, *Revelatio* and *de Resurrectione* bound with several other new works, including the *Parabolarium Fratris H. ad Bernardum Clar.*, several holy lives, including that of St. Martin of Tours, and the *Disciplina clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsi.<sup>119</sup> Although these seem like a wide collection of texts that were haphazardly copied together, they do share some thematic, structural and authorial similarities. Thematically, the works all have aspects of exempla texts. The pieces provided stories for their readers about proper behavior. Many of these writings also employ the dialogue

---

<sup>116</sup> There are extant manuscripts from the Schönau women, but the manuscript contains Elisabeth's works only. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 274.

<sup>117</sup> C.E. Hoestermann, *Marienberg einst und jetzt* (Boppard am Rhein: Otto Maisel, 1903), 8-9.

<sup>118</sup> Hoestermann, *Marienberg*, 10.

<sup>119</sup> Berlin, Öffentl. Wissensch. Bibl. MS Lat. 815. See Köster, "Werk und Wirkung," 251.

format to convey their material. And, finally, the authors of these works were twelfth-century contemporaries of their readers. I will argue that the Marienberg community's interest in these new works was linked to the style of these works. In particular, I will examine how Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, a work that likely considered its audience to be other clerics,<sup>120</sup> demonstrates how trends in twelfth-century intellectual culture influenced monastic audience's expectations about how information should be communicated.

There are seventy-six surviving manuscripts of Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, but only three from the twelfth century.<sup>121</sup> Yet, Alfonsi (fl. 1106-1116) was very much the product of the twelfth century. As a Jew who converted to Christianity, he emblemized the idea of the new man.<sup>122</sup> Although he was critiqued by some of his Jewish contemporaries for converting for worldly gain, his conversion could be read as an affirmation of the Christian viewpoint. Moreover, he adopted a new homeland in that he moved from Spain, with its diverse culture that boasted Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities, to a more firmly Christian region of Europe. Alfonsi was only a moderately educated Jew from the standpoint of medieval Iberia, but his knowledge of scientific works yet un-translated in the Latin West made him a superior scholar in these lands. He likely spent time in England as a tutor, possibly in Henry I's court, and taught in the Paris schools.<sup>123</sup> Alfonsi's own life, then, acted as an example to his peers with both his

---

<sup>120</sup> John Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), 80.

<sup>121</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, xv.

<sup>122</sup> See Constable, "Renewal and Reform," 47.

<sup>123</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 11.

embrace of Christianity and the transmission of new knowledge that was able to be integrated into a philosophy of Christian life.

Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis* was enormously popular, as the manuscript evidence demonstrates. The work was cast as a dialogue between a philosopher and his son, or a teacher and a student. In this dialogue, the philosopher, or teacher, recounted memorable stories in order to highlight the path toward moral living.<sup>124</sup> Alfonsi presented his work as a philosophy, a holy discipline. His goal was to educate his reader in the correct paths of learning, which would eventually lead to heaven.<sup>125</sup> As John Tolan notes, the short, colorful stories served as mnemonic devices, so that readers would more easily be able to remember the story and the moral lesson which it promoted.<sup>126</sup> In Tolan's analysis, however, the work addressed an educated clerical audience who needed to be reminded about the role of discipline in their lives.<sup>127</sup>

The designation of an educated clerical audience may fit the Marienberg nuns, even if that is not what Tolan had in mind. As Giles Constable has noted, the vocabulary used in the twelfth century to designate different groups of people, such as monks, clerics and lay-converts, as well as the associated level of learning that was supposed to designate each group, was by no means clear cut.<sup>128</sup> Philip of Harvengt, a Flemish Premonstratensian (d. 1183), discussed the term "cleric" in his *De institutione clericorum*, clearly demonstrating the difficulties with that

---

<sup>124</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 76.

<sup>125</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 76.

<sup>126</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 76.

<sup>127</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 80.

<sup>128</sup> Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 9-10.

term. He considered the grammar of the language used to describe a learned woman, stating, “I wonder, when clerical learning is declared in a woman, why she is called not *bona clerica* but *bonus clericus*, when it would seem more fitting that *clerica* should be named from *clericus* just as a *monacha* from *monachus*.”<sup>129</sup> Although Philip noted that, according to his memory, he never came upon this word, *clerica*, in any Latin writing, the sense behind the grammatically male word can still be applied to women. He concluded that a “good learned woman, while not a *clericus*, nevertheless is judged to be a good *clericus*.”<sup>130</sup> Philip’s point in his discussion was that some men were called clerics, but they only held the name and not the learning that came with that designation. But, he indicated that there were such learned women even if they did not have a specific name.

Thus, Tolan’s analysis that Alfonsi’s work was directed at educated clerics is likely correct, but those learned clerics were, in this case, the women at Marienberg. Alfonsi’s work, other than offering engaging stories about ethical and moral Christian living, also encouraged “correction” (*corrigere*)<sup>131</sup> for his readers, which was also part of the reform culture in the Rhineland. In fact, Elisabeth’s *Liber viarum dei* must be considered similar to Alfonsi’s *Disciplina clericalis* in its intent. Both works introduced their audiences to the ways in which all members of society could attain entry into heaven through moral living. Moreover, both authors

---

<sup>129</sup> “Et miror cum in muliere clericalis scientia praedicetur, cur non bona clerica, sed bonus clericus nominetur, cum satis convenientius videtur, ut sicut a monacho monacha, sic a clerico clerica diceretur.” Phillip of Harvengt, *De institutione clericorum*, PL 203: cols. 817A-817B.

<sup>130</sup> “...et mulier bene litterata, cum clericus non sit, bonus tamen esse clericus iudicatur.” Phillip of Harvengt, *De institutione*, PL 203: col. 817B.

<sup>131</sup> Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 90.

also exposed the nuns to contemporary trends in intellectual culture. Finally, Elisabeth and Petrus Alfonsi structured their works using the dialogue in order to communicate the material clearly.

The women who received works or communication from Elisabeth, such as the abbess of Dietkirchen and the Marienberg nuns, read her works similarly. In both cases, Elisabeth's writings sought to categorize information and present it in a clear way in order to aid in the education of its readers. From the reaction of Ekbert to Elisabeth's "incomplete" interpretation in the first letter, we know that women were expected to be cogent teachers (Elisabeth) and receptive students (abbess of Dietkirchen). The Marienberg women, likewise, were "clerical" in their educational outlook. Elisabeth's works were aimed at an educated audience that also sought to follow a moral reformed life. At the same time, her audience was also interested in new works. As Elisabeth's writings demonstrate, her new texts promoted reform ideals presented in literary formats that enjoyed popularity among the intellectual elite.

## ***Conclusion***

Daniel Hobbins has argued that the noted Paris master of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Jean Gerson, enjoyed immense popularity because he wrote what his audiences wanted to read.<sup>132</sup> The same can be said of Elisabeth. Her texts intervened in a number of important contemporary reform concerns and intellectual debates that were universal rather than local in

---

<sup>132</sup> Daniel Hobbins, *Authority and Publicity Before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 27.

context. She was able to address the increasing number of new monastic Orders and their converts. With members of these Orders clamoring for more information about Mary, and increased interest in setting down Marian doctrine, Elisabeth's works circulated as a way to negotiate between the desire to practice traditional monasticism and contemporary devotion. In addition, the clarity that her male audiences wanted for settling Marian issues was also a concern for the women who circulated her works. These cloistered men and women were much like their clerical peers. Although modern scholars have often considered Elisabeth as neither learned nor original,<sup>133</sup> her contemporaries, based on the ways in which they read and circulated Elisabeth's works, would not have agreed.

---

<sup>133</sup> See Barbara Newman, "Liminalities: Literate Women in the Long Twelfth Century," in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, 354-401, at 387. See also Newman, "Preface," in *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works*, xi. Here, Newman states that "Elisabeth does not offer us the daunting intellectual gifts of Hildegard, the dazzling lyrical talent of Mechthild, or the theological depth of Hadewijch or Julian."

## Conclusion

This study has analyzed how Elisabeth of Schönau's visionary writings were not simply manifestations of personal devotion. Rather, they served as her platform to address reform concerns, both at the individual and institutional levels. Moreover, Elisabeth presented her visions and visionary experiences in ways that demonstrated that she was aware of and was interested in new forms of scholastic education that were based on the literary convention of the dialogue. It was through this dialogic convention that Elisabeth sought to provide her readers with clear answers to the contemporary theological and spiritual debates. Her formation in a Hirsau-reformed cloister paved the way for her exposure to education. It also encouraged her to channel her intellectual efforts towards promoting reform.

Elisabeth, through her interest in reform and her adoption of new pedagogical models such as dialogue and disputation, participated in larger clerical culture. I am not arguing that Elisabeth's education and outlook was the same as a cleric in the Northern French schools. Nonetheless, she was clearly aware of the types of questions that these clerics asked and debated and the ways they did so. Her awareness of these activities outside cloister walls was not unusual. Elisabeth entered into conversations with other monasteries through her letters and works. Moreover, her correspondents often included those who had studied outside the Empire and the monastic enclosure.

Religious communities entered into networks that exchanged information. They formed diverse communities of learning, a designation that modern scholars have begun employing to

explain the various ways in which education took place.<sup>1</sup> Before the institutionalization of the schools into the University of Paris, there were no formal rules about how to receive and use this new education.

Elisabeth's reform networks also demonstrate that her messages, and her methods to communicate them, were appreciated by others across Western Europe. That her texts circulated among many different reform groups, such as Benedictines, Premonstratensians and Cistercians, suggests that her writings addressed both a wide geographic audience as well as one with diverse reform interests. Moreover, these reform Orders also showed interest in new forms of scholarship. In particular, the Cistercians integrated academic learning into the cloister to meet their needs.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, modern arguments that suggest a divide between the monasteries and the schools are no longer tenable. Many members of monastic institutions were once clerics at the schools. Scholastic texts circulated within monasteries. The University of Paris integrated monastic language into its foundation documents.<sup>3</sup> What Charles Homer Haskins termed the renaissance of the twelfth century also informed what Giles Constable has labeled the reformation of the twelfth century. Monks and scholars may have approached the problems from different starting points, but both used the ideas and methods that circulated freely in this dynamic society.

---

<sup>1</sup> Constant Mews and John Crossley, "Introduction," in *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100-1500*, eds. Constant Mews and John Crossley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Brian Robert Noell, "Applied Science: Academic Learning and the Cistercian Enterprise in the Central Middle Ages" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Ian P. Wei, "From Twelfth-Century Schools to Thirteenth-Century Universities: The Disappearance of Biographical and Autobiographical Representations of Scholars," *Speculum* 86.1 (2011): 42-78.

As this study has demonstrated, it is also time to reassess the divide between female and male modes of expression. Elisabeth was a female visionary, a female reformer and a female author. Yet, the reception of her texts indicates that her audiences did not read her works through the lens of gender. Rather, they integrated her writings with those of other visionaries, reformers and authors who entered into conversations about reform issues and theological debates that concerned twelfth-century society as a whole.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Abelard, Peter and Heloise. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. Translated by Betty Radice. London: Penguin Books, rev. 2003.
- Aelred of Rievaulx. *The Life of Saint Edward, King and Confessor*. Translated by Fr. Jerome Bertram, FSA. Southampton: Saint Austin Press, 1997.
- Angelic Spirituality: Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels*. Translated by Steven Chase. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002.
- Briefsammlungen zur Zeit Heinrichs IV*. In MGH, *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, Vol 5. Edited by Norbert Fickermann. Weimar, 1950.
- Chronica Regia Colonicensis*, Edited by G.H. Waitz. MGH, SS rer Germ, 18, 1-299. 1880.
- Conrad of Hirsau. *Speculum virginum*. In *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Constant Mews and Translated by Barbara Newman. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Dionysius the Areopagite. *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*. Translated by Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987.
- Eadmer of Canterbury. *The Life of St. Anselm: Archbishop of Canterbury*. Edited and Translated by Richard Southern. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Eberwin of Steinfeld. *Epistola ad Bernardum*. PL 182: col. 676A-680A.
- Ekbart of Schönau. *Sermones contra Kataros*. Edited by Robert Joyce Harrison. 2 vols. Ph.D. Dissertation. The Ohio State University, 1990.
- Elisabeth of Schönau. *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works*. Translated by Anne L. Clark. New York: Paulist Press, 2000.
- Guibert of Gembloux. *Guiberti Gemblacensis Epistolae*. Edited by Albert Derolez. CCCM, 66-66A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1988-89.
- Guibert of Nogent. *Monodies and On the Relics of Saints: The Autobiography and a Manifesto of a French Monk from the Time of the Crusades*. Translated by Joseph McAlhany and Jay Rubenstein. New York: Penguin, 2011.

- Gregory the Great. *Dialogues*. Translated by Odo John Zimmerman, O.S.B. New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959.
- Haimo of Hirsau, *Vita Willelmi Hirsaugiensis*. Edited by G.H. Pertz. MGH, SS, 12, 209-225. 1856.
- Herman of Tournai. *Hermann of Tournai: The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai*. Translated by Lynn H. Nelson. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996.
- Hildegard of Bingen. *Hildegardis Bingensis Epistolarium*. Edited by Lieven van Acker. CCCM, Vols. 91-91A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivas*. Translated by Jane Bishop and Mother Columba Hart. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ordo virtutum*. Edited by Peter Dronke. CCCM 226. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Scivias*. Eds. Adelgundis Fuhrkötter and Angela Carlevaris. CCCM, Vols. 43-43A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*. Edited and Translated by Barbara Newman. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen, Vol. I & II*. Translated by Joseph Baird and Radd Ehrman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 1998.
- Hrotsvit of Gandersheim. *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: A Florilegium of Her Works*. Translated by Katharina Wilson. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998.
- Hugh of Folieto. *De bestiis et aliis rebus*. PL 177, col. 9-164D.
- Hugh of Fouillooy. *The Medieval Book of Birds: Hugh of Fouillooy's Aviarum*. Edited and Translated by Willene Clark. Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies SUNY Binghamton, 1992.
- Hugh of Honau. *Liber de ignorantia*. In "Hugh of Honau and the *Liber de ignorantia*," edited by Nikolaus M. Häring. *Medieval Studies* 25 (1963): 209-30.
- Hugh of Rouen. *Tractatus de memoria*. PL 192, col. 1299B-1324B.
- Libellus de diversis ordinibus et professionibus qui sunt in aecclesia*. Edited and Translated by Giles Constable. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

- Otloh of St. Emmeram. *Liber visionum*. Edited by Paul Gerhard Schmidt. MGH, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte, 13. 1989.
- Otto of Freising. *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*. Translated by Charles Christopher Mierow. Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies, no. 49. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.
- Petrus Alfonsi. *The Disciplina clericalis of Petrus Alfonsi*. Translated and Edited by Eberhard Hermes. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Phillip of Harvengt. *De institutione clericorum*. PL 203, col. 665-1206A.
- Roth, F.W.E. "Aus einer Handschrift der Schriften der heil. Elisabeth von Schönaue." *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 36 (1911): 219-25.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Ed. *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönaue*. Brünn: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner und Cistercienser-Orden, 1884.
- Sermo in Natali SS. Virginum XI Millium*. AASS, Vol. 9, October 21. 1869.
- The Passion of Saint Ursula [Regnante domino]*. Translated by Pamela Sheingorn and Marcelle Thiébaux. Toronto: Peregrina Publishing Co., 1996.
- Wakefield, Walter and Austin Evans. Eds. *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.
- William of Hirsau. *Constitutiones Hirsaugenensis*. PL 150, col. 923-1146D.

## Secondary Sources

- Auerbach, Erich. *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965.
- Backmund, Norbert P. O. Praem. *Die Chorherrenorden und ihre Stifte in Bayern*. Passau: Neue-Presse-Verlags-GMBH, 1966.
- Baldwin, John W. *Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

- Barbetti, Claire. "Secret Designs/Public Shapes: Ekphrastic Tensions in Hildegard's *Scivias*." In *Reading Memory and Identity in the Texts of Medieval European Holy Women*, edited by Margaret Cotter-Lynch and Brad Herzog, 81-104. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Bartlett, Anne Clark. *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Commentary, Polemic, and Prophecy in Hildegard of Bingen's *Solutiones Triginta Octo Quaestionum*." *Viator* 23 (1992): 153-66.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Miraculous Literacy and Textual Communities in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*," *Mystics Quarterly* 18, No. 2 (1992): 43-55.
- Baxter, Ron. *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages*. Thrupp: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998.
- Beach, Alison I. Ed. *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Bell, David N. Ed. *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines and Premonstratensians*. London: The British Library, 1992.
- Benedict, Kimberly. *Empowering Collaboration: Writing Partnerships between Religious Women and Scribes in the Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Benson, Robert and Giles Constable. Eds. *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Benton, John F. "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality." In *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, 263-98. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Berman, Constance Hoffman. *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.
- Biller, Peter. "Northern Cathars and Higher Learning." In *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy, and the Religious Life*, edited by Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson, 25-54. Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999.

- Black, Robert. *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in the Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Breitenstein, Mirko. “‘Ins Gespräch gebracht’: Der Dialog als Prinzip monastischer Unterweisung.” In *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication (Western Europe, Tenth-Thirteenth Centuries)*, edited by Steven Vanderputten, 205-30. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.
- Burnett, Charles and Peter Dronke. Eds. *Hildegard of Bingen: The Context of her Thought and Art*. Dorchester: The Dorset Press, 1998.
- Burton, Janet and Julie Kerr. *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Docere verbo et exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 70, No. 3/4 (1977): 257-84.
- Campbell, Mary. “Sanctity and Identity: The Authentication of the Ursuline Relics and Legal Discourse in Elisabeth von Schönau’s *Liber Revelationum*.” *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 38, No. 2 (2012): 159-92.
- Canning, Joseph and Edmund King and Martial Staub. Eds. *Knowledge, Discipline and Power in the Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Carruthers, Mary. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae*. Vol. III. Paris, 1744.

- Chance, Jane. Ed. *Gender and the Text in the Later Middle Ages*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1996.
- Clark, Anne L. "Repression or Collaboration? The Case of Elisabeth and Ekbert of Schönau." In *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*, edited by Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl, 151-67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth Century Visionary*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.
- Coakley, John. *Women, Men, And Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Colish, Marcia. *Studies in Scholasticism*. Variorum Collected Series. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
- Constable, Giles. *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities." In *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, 37-67. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Cotter-Lynch, Margaret and Brad Herzog. Eds. *Reading Memory and Identity in the Texts of Medieval European Holy Women*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Cotts, John. *The Clerical Dilemma: Peter of Blois and the Literate Culture in the Twelfth Century*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Monks and Clerks in Search of the *Beata Schola*: Peter of Celle's Warning to John of Salisbury Reconsidered." In *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*, edited by Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein, 255-78. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Cowdrey, H.E.J. *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Cyrus, Cynthia. *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Dean, Elizabeth. "Elizabeth, Abbess of Schönau and Roger of Ford." *Modern Philology* 41, No. 4 (May, 1944): 209-20.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Manuscripts of St. Elizabeth of Schönau in England." *Modern Language Review* 32 (1937): 62-71.
- Delisle, Léopold. *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale (nationale)*. Vol. II. Paris, 1868.
- Dinzelsbacher, Peter. "La littérature des révélations au Moyen Âge: un document historique." *Revue Historique* 275, No. 2 (1986): 289-305.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981.
- Dronke, Peter. *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (203) to Marguerite Porete (1310)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Emery, Kent, Jr. and Russell L. Friedman and Andreas Speer. *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Farmer, Sharon and Barbara H. Rosenwein. Eds. *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Ferguson, Christopher. "Autobiography as Therapy: Guibert de Nogent, Peter Abelard, and the Making of Medieval Autobiography," in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 13 (1983): 187-212.
- Ferrante, Joan. *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Ferzoco, George and Carolyn Muessig. Eds. *Medieval Monastic Education*. London: Leicester University Press, 2000.
- Fichtenau, Heinrich. *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages: 1000-1200*. Translated by Denise A. Kaiser. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.
- Flanagan, Sabina. "The *Speculum virginum* and Traditions of Medieval Dialogue." In *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, edited by Constant J. Mews, 181-200. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001.
- Flint, Valerie I.J. *Ideas in the Medieval West: Texts and their Contexts*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1988.
- Frassetto, Michael. Ed. *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

- Freeman, Elizabeth. *Narratives of New Order: Cistercian Historical Writing in England, 1150-1220*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2002.
- Gambero, Luigi. *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians*. Translated by Thomas Buffer. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2005.
- Garber, Rebecca L. *Feminine Figurae: Representations of Gender in Religious Texts by Medieval German Women Writers 1100-1375*. New York & London: Routledge, 2003.
- Gardiner, Eileen. *Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993.
- Gillingham, John. "A Historian of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance and the Transformation of English Society, 1066-ca. 1200." In *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, edited by Thomas F.X. Noble and John Van Engen, 45-74. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.
- Green, D.H. *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Grendler, Paul. *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning 1300-1600*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Griffiths, Fiona. *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- Grundmann, Herbert. *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Steve Rowan. South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995.
- Hamburger, Jeffrey F. and Susan Marti. Eds. *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Hartmann, Wilfried. "Rhetorik und Dialektik in der Streitschriftenliteratur des 11./12. Jahrhunderts." In *Dialektik und Rhetorik im früheren und hohen Mittelalter: Rezeption, Überlieferung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung antiker Gelehrsamkeit vornehmlich im 9. und 12. Jahrhundert*, edited by Johannes Fried, 73-96. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997.
- Haskins, Charles Homer. *The Rise of the Universities*. New York: H. Holt & Company, 1923.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.

- Hassig, Debra. *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Haverkamp, Alfred. *Medieval Germany: 1056-1273*. Translated by Helga Braun and Richard Mortimer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Hobbins, Daniel. *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
- Hoestermann, C.E. *Marienberg einst und jetzt*. Boppard am Rhein: Otto Maisel, 1903.
- Holdsworth, C.J. "John of Ford and English Cistercian Writing 1167-1214." In *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (1961): 117-36.
- Hotchin, Julie. "Women's Reading and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Library of the Nuns of Lippoldsberg." In *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, edited by Alison I. Beach, 139-90. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- Jaeger, C. Stephen. *Scholars and Courtiers: Intellectuals and Society in the Medieval West*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Envy of Angels. Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.
- Jamroziak, Emilia. *Rievaulx Abbey and its Social Context, 1132-1300: Memory, Locality, and Networks*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.
- Johnson, Penelope. *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Jordan, Mark D. and Kent Emery, Jr. Eds. *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.
- Joyce, Ellen. "Speaking of Spiritual Matters: Visions and the Rhetoric of Reform in the *Liber visionum* of Otloh of St. Emmeram." In *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, edited by Alison I. Beach, 69-98. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- Justice, Steven and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton. Eds. *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Keck, David. *Angels & Angelology in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Kemper, Joachim. "Das benediktinische Doppelkloster Schöna u und die Visionen Elisabeths von Schöna u," in *Annalen für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 54 (2002): 55-102.
- Kerby-Fulton, Kathryn. "Prophet and Reformer: 'Smoke in the Vineyard.'" In *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, edited by Barbara Newman, 70-90. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Kienzle, Beverly Mayne. *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade in Occitania, 1145-1229: Preaching in the Lord's Vineyard*. York: York Medieval Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching Against the Cathars." In *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, edited by Carolyn Muessig, 163-81. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- Köster, Kurt. "Elisabeth von Schöna u: Leben, Persönlichkeit und visionäres Werk." In *Schöna uer Elisabeth Jubiläum 1965: Festschrift anlässlich des achthundertjährigen Todestages der heiligen Elisabeth von Schöna u*, Herausgegeben vom Prämonstratenser-Chorherrenstift Tepl. Kloster Schöna u: 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Elisabeth von Schöna u, Werk und Wirkung im Spiegel der mittelalterlichen handschriftlichen Überlieferung," in *Annalen für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951): 243-315.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Das visionäre Werk Elisabeths von Schöna u. Studien zur Entstehung, Überlieferung und Wirkung in der Welt," in *Annalen für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 4 (1952): 243-315.
- Kruger, Steven F. *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Küst ers, Urban. *Der Verschlussene Garten: Volkssprachliche Hohelied-Auslegung und monastische Lebensform im 12.Jahrhundert*. Dusseldorf: Droste, 1985.
- Lauer, Philippe.,ed. *Bibliothèque Nationale Catalogue général des manuscrits latin*. Vol. II. Paris, 1940.
- Leclercq, Jean. "Influence and Noninfluence of Dionysius in the Western Middle Ages." In *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid, 25-32. NY: Paulist Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Renewal of Theology." In *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, 68-87. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*. Translated by Catharine Misrahi. New York: Fordham University Press, 1982.
- Lees, Clare A. and Gillian R. Overing. *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Lees, Jay T. *Anselm of Havelberg: Deeds into Words in the Twelfth Century*. Brill: Leiden, 1998.
- Leinsle, Ulrich G. *Introduction to Scholastic Theology*. Translated by Michael J. Miller. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010.
- Lewis, Gertrud Jaron. *By Women, For Women, About Women: The Sister-Books of Fourteenth-Century Germany*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996.
- Lutter, Maria-Christina. *Geschlecht und Wissen, Norm und Praxis, Lesen und Schreiben. Monastische Reformgemeinschaften im 12. Jahrhundert*. Vienna: Oldenbourg, 2005.
- McCarthy, T.J.H. *Music, Scholasticism and Reform: Salian Germany, 1024-1125*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
- McGinn, Bernard and John Meyendorff with Jean Leclercq. Eds. *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*. New York: Crossroad, 1985.
- McGinn, Bernard and Patricia Ferris McGinn. *Early Christian Mystics: The Divine Vision of the Spiritual Masters*. New York: Crossroad, 2003.
- McGuire, Brian Patrick. *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and their Stories, 1100-1250*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- McInerney, Maud B. *Eloquent Virgins From Thecla To Joan Of Arc*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- McNamara, Jo Ann and John E. Halborg. Eds. and Trans. *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Mews, Constant and John Crossley. "Introduction." In *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100-1500*, edited by Constant Mews and John Crossley. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.
- Mews, Constant. "The Council of Sens (1141): Abelard, Bernard, and the Fear of Social Upheaval." *Speculum* 77.2 (2002): 342-82.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Ed. *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zweifalten and the Hirsau Reform." In *Medieval Monastic Education*, edited by George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig, 182-97. London: Leicester University Press, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hildegard and the Schools." In *Hildegard of Bingen: The Context of her Thought and Art*, edited by Charles Burnett and Peter Dronke, 89-110. London: The Warburg Institute, 1998.
- Minnis, A.J. and A.B. Scott, eds. *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-c.1375: The Commentary-Tradition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Mooney, Catherine. Ed. *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Moore, Michael E. "Prologue: Teaching and Learning History in the School of Reims, c. 800-950." In *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe 1000-1200*, edited by Sally Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein, 19-50. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Moreira, Isabel. *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Morton, Vera and Jocelyn Wogan Brown. Eds. *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003.
- Mulder-Bakker, Anneke and Pauline Stafford. *Gendering the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
- Mulder-Bakker, Anneke. *Lives of the Anchoresses: The Rise of the Urban Recluse in Medieval Europe*. Trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- Muldoon, James. Ed. *Travellers, Intellectuals, and the World Beyond Medieval Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010.
- Münster-Swenden, Mia. "The Model of Scholastic Mastery in Northern Europe c. 970-1200," in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*, eds. Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006): 307-42.

- Newman, Barbara. "Liminalities: Literate Women in the Long Twelfth Century." In *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, edited by F.X. Noble and John Van Engen, 354-401. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Visionary Texts and Visual Worlds of Religious Women." In *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, translated by Dietlinde Hamburger and edited by Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, 151-71. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What does it mean to say 'I saw?': The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture." *Speculum* 80, No. 1 (2005): 1-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *God and Goddesses: Vision, Poetry and Belief in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sibyl of the Rhine: Hildegard's Life and Times," in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and her World*, edited by Barbara Newman, 1-29. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997 repr.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Introduction." in *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, translated by Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, 9-54. NY: Paulist Press, 1990.
- Newman, Martha. "Stephen Harding and the Creation of the Cistercian Community." *Revue Bénédictine* 107 (1997): 307-39.
- Noell, Brian Robert. "Applied Science: Academic Learning and the Cistercian Enterprise in the Central Middle Ages" Ph.D diss., Yale University, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Marian Lyric in the Cistercian Monastery during the High Middle Ages." *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 30, No. 1 (1999): 37-62.
- Novikoff, Alex J. "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation." *AHR* 117, No. 2 (2012): 331-64.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Anselm, Dialogue, and the Rise of Scholastic Disputation." *Speculum* 86, No. 2 (2011): 387-418.
- Olson, Linda and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton. Eds. *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy*. London: Routledge, repr. 2000.

- Paas, Theodor. "Ein Steinfelder Altarbild als Zeuge der Potentinus-Legende." *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 102 (1918): 129-39.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. "The Odyssey of Dionysian Spirituality." In *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid, 11-24. NY: Paulist Press, 1987.
- Perler, Dominik. Ed. *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Petroff, Elizabeth. *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Poor, Sara S. *Mechthild of Magdeburg and Her Book: Gender and the Making of Textual Authority*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Powell, Morgan. "The *Speculum virginum* and the Audio-Visual Poetics of Women's Religious Instruction." In *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, edited by Constant Mews, 111-136. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Reilly, Diane. *The Art of Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders: Gerard of Cambrai, Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Saint-Vaast Bible*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Richter, Paul. "Die Schriftsteller der Benediktinerabtei Maria-Laach: Studien zur rheinischen Kloster- und Litteraturgeschichte, mit Textbeilagen." In *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst*, edited by F. Hettner and J. Hansen. Trier: Jacob Lintz Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1898.
- Rollanson, David and Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich. Eds. *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1103*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994.
- Rorem, Paul. *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Rössler, Stephan. "Verzeichneiss der Handschriften der Bibliothek des Stiftes Zwettl." In *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse*. Vol. I. *Xenia Bernardina* Vol. II, I. Vienna, 1891.
- Rouse, Richard H. and Mary Rouse. Eds. *Registrum anglie de libris doctorum et auctorum veterum*. London: The British Library, 1991.
- Rubin, Miri. *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984.

- Schauwecker, Helga. *Otloh von St. Emmeram: Ein Beitrag zur Bildungs- und Frömmigkeitsgeschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: Verlag der Bayer. Benediktiner-Akademien München, Abtei St. Bonifaz, 1964.
- Schwinges, Rainier Christoph. *Students and Scholars: A Social and Cultural History of Medieval German Universities*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Smalley, Beryl. "Ecclesiastical Attitudes to Novelty c. 1100-c.1250," in *Travellers, Intellectuals, and the World Beyond Medieval Europe*. Ed. James Muldoon. Burlington: Ashgate, 2010.
- Smith, Katherine Allen and Scott Wells. Eds. *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe: Gender, Power, Patronage and the Authority of Religion in Latin Christendom*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Smith, Lesley and Jane Taylor. *Women, the Book and the Godly*. 2 Vols. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995.
- Smith, Lesley and Benedicta Ward. Eds. *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages*. London: The Hambledon Press, 1992.
- Southern, R.W. *Medieval Humanism*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Stock, Brian. *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Suydam, Mary. "Visionaries in the Public Eye: Beguine Literature as Performance." In *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries*, edited by Ellen Kittell and Mary Suydam. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Swanson, R.N. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- de Tervarent, Guy. *La Légende De Sainte Ursule dans La Littérature Et L'art du Moyen Âge*. Vol. 1. Paris: Les Éditions G. Van Oest, 1931.
- Thiele, Augustinus O.S.B. *Echternach und Himmerod: Beispiele benediktinischer und zisterziensischer Wirtschaftsführung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1964.
- Thomson, Rodney. "The Place of Germany in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance." In *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture*, edited by Alison I. Beach, 19-42. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.

- Tolan, John. *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993.
- van den Gheyn, J. Ed. *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique*. Vol. 5. Brussels, 1903.
- Vanderputten, Steven. Ed. *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.
- van Dijk, Mathilde and Renée Nip. Eds. *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.
- Van Engen, John. "The Twelfth Century: Reading, Reason and Revolt in a World of Custom." In *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, edited by Thomas F.X. Noble and John Van Engen, 17-44. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Abbess: 'Mother and Teacher.'" In *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, edited by Barbara Newman, 30-52. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Letters, Schools, and Written Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries." In *Dialektik und Rhetorik im früheren und hohen Mittelalter: Rezeption, Überlieferung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung antiker Gelehrsamkeit vornehmlich im 9. und 12. Jahrhundert*, edited by Johannes Fried, 97-132. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rupert of Deutz*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983.
- van Houts, Elisabeth. Ed. *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700-1300*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- van 't Spijker, Ineke. *Fictions of the Inner Life: Religious Literature and Formation of Self in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
- Vaughn, Sally N. and Jay Rubenstein. Eds. *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Vaughn, Sally N. *St. Anselm and the Handmaidens of God: A Study of Anselm's Correspondence with Women*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2002.
- von Moos, Peter. "Le dialogue latin au Moyen Âge: l'exemple d'Evrard d'Ypres." *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 44, No. 4 (1989): 993-1028.

- Waugh, Scott L. and Peter D. Diehl. Eds. *Christendom and its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Wei, Ian P. "From Twelfth-Century Schools to Thirteenth-Century Universities: The Disappearance of Biographical and Autobiographical Representations of Scholars." *Speculum* 86, No. 1 (2011): 42-78.
- Winston-Allen, Anne. *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing about Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005.
- White, Hayden V. "The Gregorian Ideal and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux." *Journal of History of Ideas* 21, No. 3, (Jul.-Sep., 1960): 321-348.
- Yarrow, Simon. *Saints and their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth Century England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006.