

Visions of Power and Influence:

Hildegard of Bingen and the Politics of Mysticism

by Lisa Elena Talley

The twelfth-century abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) is known for her many talents. In her lifetime, she composed music, wrote a treatise on medicine, and became an influential woman within the Church. Hildegard's fame during the twelfth century, as well as now, rests on her visions from God which are expressed mainly in her works, *Scito vias Domini (Scivias)*, *Liber Vitae Meritorum*, and *Liber Divinorum Operum*. Her visions varied widely in content but generally carried within them the theme of both ecclesiastical and secular reform. Hildegard's visions are significant because they are particularly feminine in nature and were generally accepted by the patriarchal church. More importantly, Hildegard used her visionary experiences to enhance and promote her status as a religious leader, and to combat the medieval view of women as simply flawed men, while maintaining a position of respect and admiration throughout her life. Whether or not Hildegard actually had her visions is not relevant; neither a historian nor theologian can actually prove that. Rather, her life and letters reveal an almost coincidental pattern of events which hint that Hildegard gained attention and respect as a result of what her contemporaries believed were Hildegard's divinely inspired visions.

Hildegard's visions commanded admiration and reverence because they were believed to be the product of divine communication; her status as a woman was overlooked. Many of Hildegard's contemporaries, such as King Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, looked to her as a spiritual advisor. Therefore, Hildegard was able to undermine the staunch patriarchy and misogyny of the Church to become a woman of great power and influence by using the *Vox Dei*. Hildegard utilizes the *Vox Dei* or voice of God in her visions to reinforce her own desires and machinations. The illness which accompanied Hildegard's visions, as well as the way she models her revelations on the style of Biblical prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah, aided in her validation as a powerful religious figure.

Little is known about Hildegard's early life. Born at Bickersheim in 1098 to noble parents, Hildegard was placed under the tutelage of the Abbess Jutta at Disibodenberg monastery at age seven. <1> In the twelfth century, the convent was one of the few places where women were given the opportunity to receive an education and a position of leadership. Under the supervision of Abbess Jutta, Hildegard studied and quickly grew into a well-respected member of the convent. Following Jutta's death in 1136, Hildegard was easily elected Abbess of Disibodenberg. Despite being a respected woman of obvious intellect, some scholars question how Hildegard was able to gain the admiration and attention that she did, considering the attitude the Church held towards women in the twelfth century.

During the Middle Ages all religious authority had the scriptures as its source; thus the notion of women as subordinate, and even sinful creatures had a Biblical foundation. <2> The Medieval church embraced the image of women as "Daughters of Eve." All

women traced their origins to the temptress Eve, whom God cursed after her and Adam's indiscretion in the garden:

To the woman he said,
'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.' <3>

Early Church fathers, as well as those in the Middle Ages, concluded that because of Eve's sin and the subsequent curse, women were to be forever subordinate to men; therefore, any doctrine or law limiting the rights of women was in accordance with what was dictated in the Bible. <4> The epistles of Paul were yet another source from which the medieval Church found basis for its discrimination towards women. <5> Although many of Paul's statements concerning women were taken out of context, nevertheless, his epistles validated the medieval silencing of women in the Church. <6> Consequently, it was also this prohibition towards women having a voice in the Church that was challenged by Hildegard and other female mystics in the late Middle Ages. The only way they could be heard was to speak with the *Vox Dei*.

Even when speaking with the authority of God, there was a fine line between what was acceptable and what was heretical for a male or female. It is possible that Hildegard, knowing well what was acceptable to the beliefs of the Church, tailored her revelations to accord with traditional beliefs. Although Hildegard took liberal attitudes towards certain issues such as the treatment of heretics, she remained conservative in her basic body of beliefs. She does not stray far from the ideals of the Benedictine order of which she was a member. Although the visions in *Scivias* challenge the traditional negative view of women by depicting women such as such idealized allegorical extractions as Sapiencia and Ecclesia as the epitomes of holy feminine existence, Hildegard is careful not to overstep her bounds. In fact, Hildegard appears to be in accordance with her male peers regarding women's actual position within the Church.

Hildegard carefully broaches this subject in Book II of *Scivias*:

So too those of female sex should not approach the office of My altar; for they are an infirm and weak habitation, appointed to bear children and diligently nurture them. A woman conceives a child not by herself but through a man, as the ground is plowed not by itself, but by a farmer. Therefore, just as the earth cannot plow itself, a woman must not be a priest and do the work of consecrating the body and blood of My Son; though she can sing the praise of her Creator, as the earth can receive rain to water its fruits. And as the earth brings forth all fruits, so in Woman the fruit of all good works is perfected. How? Because she can receive the High Priest as Bridegroom. How? A virgin betrothed to My Son will receive Him as Bridegroom, for she has shut her body away from a physical husband; and in her Bridegroom she has the priesthood and all the ministry of My altar, and with Him possesses all its riches.... <7>

In keeping with the beliefs of her male peers within the Church, Hildegard upholds the view that women are subservient to men, and should not be ordained as priests because they are of "infirm and weak habitation." After stating this, however, she quickly offers to women the consolation of being a Bride of Christ. In doing so, Hildegard proposes that a woman can enjoy the spiritual wealth akin to being a member of the priesthood. Moreover, Hildegard believed so strongly in this image of nuns as Brides of Christ that she had the nuns of her convent at Rupertsberg wear veils, rings on their fingers, and crowns on their heads in celebration of certain feast days. <8> Although Hildegard was willing to go as far as to allow her nuns to wear such unorthodox dress, she was careful to maintain the basic accepted belief concerning women as priests. *Scivias* was her first major work and that through it she was likely seeking approval from the male hierarchy within the Church, and was thus careful about what assertions were made within it so as not to enflame church leaders. By staying within the acceptable boundaries concerning basic church doctrine, Hildegard was later able to present ideas and concepts which fell slightly outside of the accepted norm with little notice or agitation from the men of the Church.

The concept of women as infirm is significant to the development of Hildegard as a mystic because it is related to the more important notion of women as the "frail vessel" which carries and relays God's message. Hildegard's illness was integral to her development as a visionary because as a woman she was the "frail vessel." Hildegard was aware of this as she repeatedly described herself as "this poor little woman" and "this poor little creature," thus humbling herself before her audience and God. <9>

Although she records her first vision as having occurred at age three, Hildegard does not begin to publicize her visions and seek approval until forty-two years later. <10> At this time the illness which accompanied the visions became so great that Hildegard believed she was forced by God to let those around her know about her long visionary history. <11> Hildegard interpreted this excessive pain as a sign from God to reveal her gift to others. <12> The combination of illness and visionary experience presents another interesting aspect to her status as a female religious leader in the Middle Ages. Christian tradition venerates those who suffer patiently. <13> The connection between illness and feminine piety is quite clear: "if sickness is offered as a gift, then pain can be transmuted into the complex pleasure of generosity ... it not only justifies the fact of physical pain, but transforms it into a blessing." <14> Hildegard seems to be the first of a string of women in the later Middle Ages who experienced visions accompanied by illness. She saw her illness as a privilege or gift because it accompanied her visions. <15>

Despite Hildegard's repeated insistence that she is an uneducated woman, poorly versed in Latin, her work reveals obvious broad knowledge of the scriptures. While her visions reveal many original images, Hildegard's prophetic style is similar to that of the Biblical prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The Bible records the visionary experience of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, thus their experiences are credible. To give authority to her visions, it was necessary for Hildegard to follow certain traditional guidelines for prophecy which had been set forth by her Biblical predecessors. Although she never explicitly calls herself a prophet, Hildegard's biographers, the monks, Gottfried and Theoderic repeatedly

describe her works as prophetic, likening her visions and writings to those of the Israelite prophets who were concerned with not only the immediate future, but the whole fabric of their contemporary culture. <16> The Biblical prophets did not simply predict the future; rather they were concerned with addressing their contemporaries with their understanding of the will and word of God. <17> Hildegard is very similar in that her visions and writing have a strong didactic element. Hildegard, like the Biblical prophets, functions as a mouthpiece through which God's message can be relayed. <18> Her implied lack of education presents her as an empty vessel that is capable of carrying the messages of God. If she does not have an education, then everything she says must be coming from some divine source. Hildegard modeled her visions closely on those of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, especially in presentation. Ezekiel describes his call as such: "In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God." <19> In contrast, Hildegard describes her call in a similar manner:

It happened that, in the eleven hundred and forty-first year of the Incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, when I was forty-two years and seven months old, Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast, not like a burning, but like a warming flame, as the sun warms anything its rays touch. <20>

Although her visions themselves might not resemble those of the Biblical prophets, by presenting them in this manner, Hildegard creates a kinship with them. She subtly relates herself to them so that those who are versed in the scriptures will see the similarities and conclude that Hildegard's visions are as believable as those of Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

Hildegard also presents herself as the unlikely prophet by emphasizing her reluctance to accept the visions presented to her. This is not unlike Jeremiah who was uncertain of his call as prophet:

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appoint you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth." <21>

Hildegard writes in *Scivias*:

And behold! In the forty-third year of my earthly course, as I was gazing with fear and trembling attention at a heavenly vision. I saw a great splendor in which resounded a voice from Heaven, saying to me,

O fragile human, ashes of ashes, filth of filth! Say and write what you see and hear. But since you are timid in speaking, and simple in expounding, and untaught in writing, speak

and write these things not by a human mouth, and not by the understanding of human invention, and not by the requirements of human composition, but as you see and hear them on high in the heavenly places in the wonders of God. Explain these things in such a way that the hearer, receiving words of his instructor, may expound them in those words, according to that will, vision and instruction. Thus, therefore, O human, speak these things that you see and hear. And write them not by yourself or any other human being, but by the will of Him Who knows, sees, and disposes all things in the secrets of His mysteries."

And again I heard the voice from Heaven saying to me, "Speak therefore of these wonders, and being so taught, write them and speak." <22>

By likening herself to these Biblical prophets, Hildegard creates a typology where she herself is the prophetic voice for the twelfth century. Hildegard sees herself as merely carrying on the tradition which began with Moses. <23>

From age forty-two until her death in 1179, Hildegard showed a growing independence from traditional ideas and practices within the Church through her vast correspondence with both ecclesiastical and secular leaders. These letters reveal the influence and power Hildegard gleans as a result of her visionary experience. Her first important correspondence outside of her abbey regarding her visions is with Bernard of Clairvaux in 1146-47, one of the most important religious leaders of the period. She composed the letter several years after beginning work on *Scivias*; thus, it is interesting that Hildegard chooses to reveal her gift at this time and to this particular person.

At this time, not only was she in the process of writing her first major work, but she was also planning to move from Disibodenberg and found her own convent on the Rupertsberg near Bingen. Her decision to move was met with contention from the monks at Disibodenburg. This independence from Disibodenberg was problematic for the monks because they depended on the land that Hildegard's nuns, often from wealthy families, brought with them. <24> By writing to Bernard, Hildegard manipulates the hierarchy of the Cistercians. Through this letter to Bernard, Hildegard sought wider legitimation within the male-dominated establishment via the support of a well-known and respected man such as Bernard. In general, women in the Church depended on the approval of the male clergy for survival, both physically and historically. <25> By seeking support from Bernard concerning her visions, Hildegard is able to gain respect from those monks at Disibodenberg who opposed her move and saw her as little more than a strong-willed woman.

Hildegard actively embodies the medieval belief in women as inferior to men in her letter. She writes: "Father I am much disturbed by a kind of vision that appears to me through the mysteries of the spirit which I never see with the outer eyes of the flesh. I, wretched and more than wretched in the name of woman, have looked since childhood on great wonders which my tongue could not speak about did God's Spirit teach me to believe." <26> Hildegard wields double-edged words. On the first level, her self-abasement accords not only with her gender, but also with the Church in general.

However, her tone is not totally submissive; she speaks with candor and assertion. It would, however, take papal approval of her work at the Synod of Trier in order to finally move from Disibodenberg in 1150.

After writing to Bernard, Hildegard wrote to Pope Eugenius in 1148 in order to gain the pontiff's blessing for her work-in-progress, *Scivias*. She wrote to Bernard first and only then to the pope because Eugenius was Bernard's former novice, and Bernard still maintained much influence over him. The letter has the tone of a prophet, as if the voice of God speaks in the letter itself:

O radiant father, through your representatives you have come to us, just as God foreordained, and you have seen some of the writings of truthful visions, which I received from the Living Light, and you have listened to these visions in the embraces of your heart. A part of this writing has now been completed . . . Prepare this writing for the hearing of those who receive me and make it fruitful with the juice of sweet savor; make it a root of the branches and a leaf flying in the face of the devil, and you will have eternal life. Do not spurn these mysteries of God, because they have the necessity which lies hidden and has not yet been revealed. <27>

It is not surprising that Pope Eugenius approved Hildegard's work. Her letter leaves little room for disagreement. In a very Biblical manner, Hildegard orders Eugenius to "prepare this writing" and "make it fruitful," as if she is asking the pope to be the John the Baptist for her Christ. Furthermore, Hildegard once again imitates the Biblical prophets, this time Isaiah, with the phrase, "root of the branches." <28> With Eugenius' approval of *Scivias*, Hildegard was not only allowed to move with her sisters to Rupertsberg without problems from the monks at Disibodenberg, but she was also able to expand her career as a mystic and prophetic teacher who traveled throughout the continent on four preaching missions to both clergy and laity. <29>

Hildegard's vision and influence are put to their greatest test in her letter to the Prelates of Mainz written in 1178-79, the last year of her life. <30> She wrote in defense of what the Prelates deemed as the disobedient behavior of Hildegard and her sisters. In accordance with custom, a local man was buried at Rupertsberg. After the burial, Hildegard received a notice from her local superiors indicating that the body must be exhumed and moved because the man was excommunicated at the time of his death. Hildegard argued that the man had reconciled himself with the Church before his death, and therefore, the removal of his body would be a violation of the holy sacrament of burial. <31>

The Cathedral Prelates of Mainz, acting in the place of their superior the Archbishop of Mainz, answered her insubordination with the penalty of interdict which forbade the sacrament of the Eucharist as well as the performance of music during worship services. <32> Hildegard at first obeyed the interdict, but upon receiving a vision was told that she must write a letter to the Cathedral at Mainz arguing for a reversal of the interdict. <33>

This particular letter is Hildegard's epistolary *tour de force* in that it combines her cautious but firm voice of negotiation with the *vox Dei*. She begins by explaining her actions, then slowly increases hostility, and finally castigates the Prelates:

Therefore, those who, without just cause, impose silence on a church and prohibit the singing of God's praises and those who have on earth unjustly despoiled God of His honor and glory will lose their place among the chorus of angels, unless they have amended their lives through true penitence and humble restitution. . . And so, O men of faith, let none of you resist Him or oppose Him, lest He fall on you in His might and you have no helper to protect you from His judgment. This time is a womanish time, because the dispensation of God's justice is weak. But the strength of God's justice is exerting itself, a female warrior battling against injustice, so that it might fall defeated. <34>

This particular letter certainly illustrates the degree to which Hildegard's influence had increased from her first letter to Bernard. No longer is she the meek woman seeking sanction from a respected church leader. There is no need for her to hold back if the voice of God dictates to her all that she says. The manner in which Hildegard handles this situation indicates that she considers herself untouchable. Whether she feels invincible from her divine connection, or she simply feels confident enough in her widespread influence, her beliefs surface within this letter. By this point, Hildegard has forgotten her assigned place within the patriarchal hierarchy of the Church, speaking freely and strongly against the Prelates of Mainz. Furthermore, Hildegard, by describing the time as "womanish," both criticizes the behavior of the Prelates as being weak, and supports Hildegard's own status as the "frail vessel." This may have been a time of weakness for the Church and those in it, but a "female warrior," such as Hildegard, will battle such weakness. Despite Hildegard's physical frailty, she embodied the strength of God's judgement, and believed she could overcome any adversity.

Despite her fierce attack, the Prelates maintained the interdict. <35> Although Hildegard had acquired a certain amount of power and influence through her visions, she was still subject to her male superiors within the Church. The Prelates' reaction to her fiery letter prompted Hildegard to write another to Christian, the Archbishop of Mainz. Her tone changes dramatically. Perhaps realizing that she had overstepped her bounds, Hildegard abandons the powerful style of prophetess and mystic in favor of a more humble figure whose verbal supplication is more in line with that of other religious women of her time:

O most gentle father and lord, appointed to be Christ's representative as shepherd of the flock of the Church, we humbly give thanks to almighty God and to your paternal piety that you have received our letter compassionately, poor though we are, and that in your mercy you have deigned to send a letter to our superiors in Mainz on our behalf when we were sorely tried and perplexed. . . Thus although we did cease singing the divine offices for some time (though not without great sorrow), the Mighty Judge, whose commands I have not dared to disobey, sent the true vision into my soul. And forced by this, despite a grievous illness, I went to our superiors in Mainz, where I presented in writing the words I had seen in the True Light, just as God Himself instructed me. Thus might they know the will of God in this matter. There in their presence, I tearfully sought pardon. and with

weeping and humility asked for their compassion. Yet their eyes were so clouded that they could not look at me with any trace of compassion, and so, full of tears, I departed from them. . . Therefore, most gentle father, for the love of the Holy Spirit and the piety owed to the eternal Father, who sent his word into the womb of the Virgin to blossom there for the salvation of mankind, I beseech you not to look down upon the tears of your grieving and wailing daughters who out of fear of God are enduring the trials and perplexities of this unjust injunction. May the Holy Spirit be so poured out on you that you may be moved to compassion for us and so that at the end of your life you may in return receive compassion. <36>

No trace of the powerful *Vox Dei* remains. Hildegard presents her complaint to Christian just as anyone else would. In fact, instead of trying to convince him to remove the interdict by threat, as she did in the first letter, Hildegard emphasizes her position as a weak female, describing her illness and weeping in hopes of gaining compassion from the archbishop. Her humility seems to win the archbishop over, as he soon removes the interdict in March of 1179. This conflict would prove to be the last major event of Hildegard's life. She died only six months after the interdict was lifted.

Through her position in the Church she was able to receive an education. It was through her visions, however, that Hildegard was able to become an influential and powerful leader within the Church. Hildegard was familiar with the image of woman in the twelfth century, and knew that it was next to impossible to gain an audience for her ideas. The *Vox Dei* in her visions gave her the credibility to speak in what was predominately a man's realm.

Notes

1 Hildegard was her parent's tenth child and considered her to be their 'tithe' to God.

2 William R. Cook and Ronald B. Herzman, *The Medieval World View* (Oxford) 3-7

3 Genesis 3:16. All Biblical references are to the New Revised Standard Version.

4 George H. Tavard, *Women in Christian Tradition* (South Bend, Ind., 1973) 27.

5 More information on this topic is found in the chapter "The Clerical Gaze" by Jacques Dalarum in *A History of Women: Silences of the Middle Ages*, Christine Klapisch-Zuber, ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1992) 15-42.

6 Paul's statement that women should be silent in church in I Cor 14:34-35 was probably made in reference to women who were speaking unnecessarily during services, not towards women in general; Tavard, 27-47.

7 Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Mother Columbia Hart and Jane Bishop (New York, 1990) 127.

8 Hildegard of Bingen, *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen, vol 1*, trans. Joseph L. Baird and Radd K. Ehrman (Oxford, 1994) 127. Knowledge of such a practice comes from a letter written by abbess Tenswitch of Andernach who wrote with concern over the alleged practices which she had heard were transpiring at Rupertsberg. Hildegard answers Tenswitch's criticism with examples from the scriptures about how it is acceptable for her virgins to wear such attire. Just in case this was not enough to convince the Abbess, Hildegard closes her letter with, "These words do not come from a human being, but from the Living Light. Let the one who hears see and believe where these words came from."

9 Hildegard, *Letters, vol 1*, 37, 75.

10 Gottfried and Theoderic, *The Life of the Holy Hildegard*, trans. James McGrath (Collegeville, 1995) 50.

11 Gottfried and Theoderic, 37-38.

12 Edward Peter Nolan, *Cry Out and Write: A Feminine Poetics of Revelation* (New York, 1994) 48.

13 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Famine* (Berkeley, 1987) 183.

14 Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ* (Philadelphia, 1995) 122.

15 In recent years, Dr. Oliver Sacks has diagnosed the illness Hildegard described in her works as chronic migraine headaches. In his book, *Migraine: Understanding a Common Disorder* (Berkeley, 1985, 57, 106-108) Sacks suggests that perhaps the visions that Hildegard experienced were as a result of "migraine aura." In this "migraine aura," people often experience hallucinations, but still consider themselves to be well within the realm of consciousness. In other words, it is conceivable that Hildegard herself believed that the visions were divinely bestowed upon her and that she was indeed the vessel for *secreta Dei*. This does not, however, explain the overall substance of Hildegard's visions. It is quite possible that just as in dreams, the visions that result from "migraine auras" are an amalgamation of conscious experience and hallucinatory elements such as bright color and light. This is especially relevant to Hildegard's visions because she often discusses the presence of the "Living light" in them. The element of light is prevalent in the Declaration of *Scivias*: "It happened that, in the eleven hundred and forty-first year of the Incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, when I was forty-two years and seven months old, Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast, not like a burning, but like a warming flame, as the sun warms anything its rays touch." In much the same manner as the light caused by the "migraine aura" played a key role in her visions, Hildegard's preoccupation with certain problems also became merged with the migraine to produce a vision. It is possible that if a migraine occurred during a period that Hildegard was wrestling with a problem, that she might interpret the migraine as being related to the problem. Hallucinatory elements would provide the symbolic and

allegorical nature of the visionary experience. Not fully understanding the nature of her illness, and as a religious woman, Hildegard probably viewed this as most certainly a sign or message of divine nature. More information on this topic can be found in the chapter, "Potent Infirmities" in Sabina Flanagan's book, *Hildegard of Bingen*, (London, 1989) 193-213.

16 John H. Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1971) 158-159.

17 Hayes, 159.

18 McGinn, 334-335.

19 Ezekiel 1:1. For a further discussion of the similarities between Hildegard's visions and those of the Biblical prophets see Barbara Newman's *Sister of Wisdom*, Chapter 1.

20 *Scivias*, 59.

21 Jeremiah 1:5-9.

22 *Scivias*, 59.

23 Exodus 4:10-12.

24 Flanagan, 5-6.

25 Ulrike Wiethaus, ed. *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics* (Syracuse, 1993) 11.

26 Hildegard, *Letters*, 27.

27 Hildegard, *Letters*, 32-33.

28 Isaiah 11:1-2: "A shoot shall come out of the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of its roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

29 Emilie Zum-Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*, trans. sheila Hughes (New York, 1989) 4.

30 Hildegard, *Letters*, 76-79.

31 Hildegard, *Letters*, 76.

32 Christian, the Archbishop of Mainz, was away in Italy serving as mediator between Pope Alexander III and Frederick Barbarossa.

33 Hildegard, *Letters*, 76.

34 Hildegard, *Letters*, 79.

35 We no longer have the letter in which the Prelates respond to Hildegard. Judging from the fact that she writes to their superior, the archbishop, for removal of the interdict, we can assume that their reaction was negative.

36 Hildegard, *Letters*, 80-82.

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