Title: The Artistic Contributions of Women in Antiquity: Sappho and Hildegard of Bingen

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Abstract: Sappho and Hildegard of Bingen were two extraordinary women who managed to hold a prominent place among the most important personalities of the artistic, philosophical, and literary worlds of their time. They overcame obstacles associated with the stereotypical position of being female within a patriarchal regime to acquire a unique and admirable place in their respective societies, and by extension in human history. Although they lived in different societies and eras, Sappho (7th century B. C. E.) and Hildegard of Bingen (12th century C. E.) were both motivated by divine belief and will, and devoted their lives to religious expression through the arts of poetry and music. This paper focuses on aspects of the life and work of Sappho and Hildegard of Bingen, both of whom contributed to the development of the spiritual and cultural expression of their societies through lyrical compositions and musical innovations. A comparison of Sappho's poem “Ode to Aphrodite” and Hildegard's sequence “Columba Aspexit” reveals the similarities and differences between these composers. Through the study and understanding of Sappho's and Hildegard's lives and work, this essay endeavors to remind us that artistic women who are characterized by persistence, hard work, and will may become a source of inspiration, and promote cultural elevation of human societies across our global village.