In the context of the early twelfth-century urbanization of Paris, Hugh of St. Victor developed a pioneering program of intellectual and moral practices focused on reforming the soul. Boyd Taylor Coolman identifies the signature theme of spiritual re-formation as the unifying motif to Hugh’s theology, and analyzes the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of re-formation conceived as “soul-construction,” in the manner of gothic cathedrals being built at the time.

This study places Hugh of St. Victor within the context of the profound religious, economic, and political changes occurring in the early twelfth century. Drawing on the majority of Hugh’s writings, it reveals links between various aspects of his theology – exegesis and spirituality, theology and cultivation of virtue – and highlights the practical nature of his reforming program, aimed at both restoring the beauty of the soul and re-forming the human person into a dwelling place for the presence of God.

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## Introduction: A theology of re-formation

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Acknowledgments

As a rule, academic book writing is a solitary business, even as an author shares the company of a host of textual voices, in this case both medieval and modern. Happily, however, this present book is something of an exception to that rule. Over the past decade or so, I have had the pleasure of participating in what might be called, fittingly enough, a Victorine *collatio*, a gathering of Victorine scholars who coalesced around the corpus of Hugh of St. Victor, much as their twelfth-century counterparts encircled Hugh himself at the Abbey of St.-Victor in Paris. The on-going collaboration and extended conversation on matters Victorine with Grover Zinn, Michael Signer (of blessed memory), Hugh Feiss, Dale Coulter, Deborah Goodwin, Franklin Harkins, Paul Rorem, and others, has been for me an immensely fertile and sustaining community of scholarship and – dare I say it – of faith. It is a pleasure here to acknowledge the vital role of these contemporary “Victorini” as a group in the production of this book, but also profusely to thank several of them individually for their labors: Dale Coulter, Hugh Feiss, and Paul Rorem each read and commented at length upon the entire manuscript, providing both insightful criticism and reassuring encouragement. The cliché notwithstanding, the flaws and deficiencies that remain in the book are due to incorrigible stubbornness.

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Abbreviations

Adnot. in reg. Adnotationes elucidatoriae in libros regum

Archa Noe De archa Noe
Arrha De arrha anime
Assumpt. Pro assumptione Virginis
BM Virg. De beatae Mariae virginitate
Cant. BM Super canticum Mariae
CCCM Corpus Christianorum, continuatio medievalis. Turnhout, 1964
Chronicon Chronicon vel De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum

Didasc. Didascalicon
Eulogium De amore sponsi ad sponsam/Leulogium sponsi ad sponsam
Grammatica De grammatica
In Eccl. In salomonis Ecclesiastes
In hierarchiam Commentaria in hierarchiam coelestem s. dionysii areopagitae
In Pent. Anotationes elucidatoriae in Pentateuchon
Inst. De institutione novitiorum
Lament. Anotationiunculae elucidatoriae in threnos Jeremiae
Lauda De laude caritatis
Libellus Libellus de formatione arche
Meditatione De meditatione
List of abbreviations

Misc. Miscellanea


Quid vere Quid vere diligendum sit

Quinque sept. De quinque septenis


Practica Practica geometriae

RTAM Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale

Sacr. De sacramentis christianae fidei

Sapientia De sapientia Christi


Script. De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris

Sententiaeae Sententiae de divinitate

Septem donis De septem donis Spiritus Sancti

Tribus diebus De tribus diebus

Vanitate De vanitate mundi

Verbo De Verbo Dei

Virtute orandi De virtute orandi