

## THE THEOLOGY OF HUGH OF ST. VICTOR

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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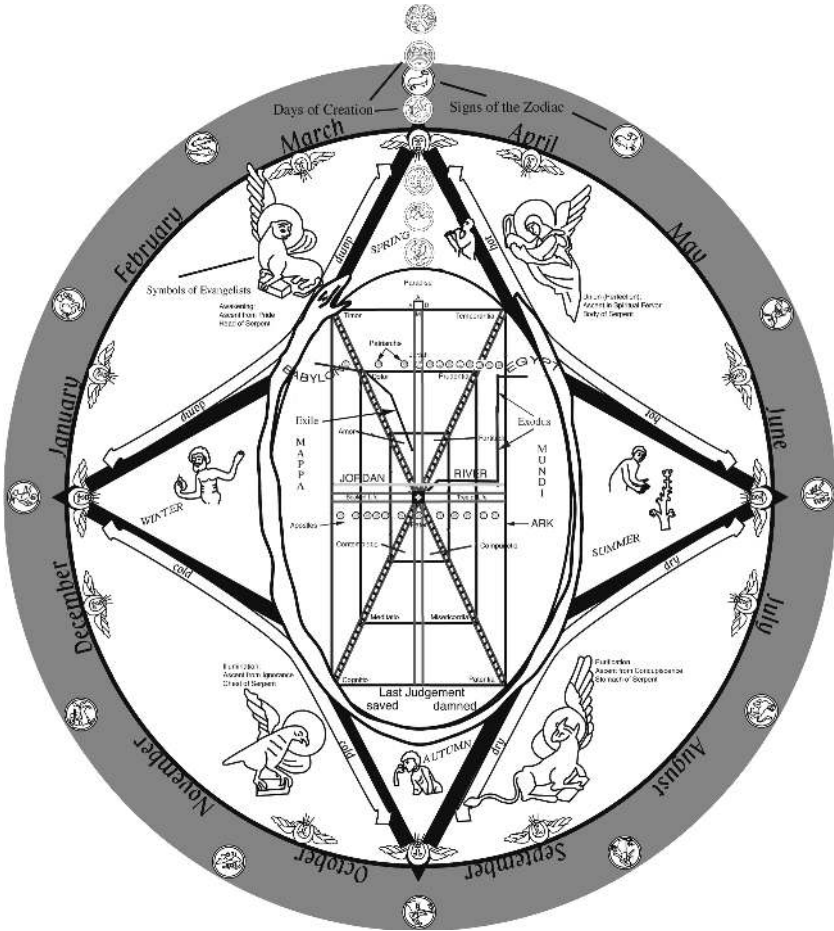


Illustration 1: A modern rendering of Hugh of St. Victor's symbolic representation of Noah's Ark. Design by Grover A. Zinn. Graphics by Sarah Nelson, Grover A. Zinn and Andrew Zinn. © Grover A. Zinn.

THE THEOLOGY OF HUGH  
OF ST. VICTOR

*An Interpretation*

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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

<i>Adnot. in reg.</i>	Adnotationes elucidatoriae in libros regum
<i>APS-V</i>	<i>L'Abbaye parisienne de Saint-Victor au moyen-âge. Communications présentées au XIIIe colloque d'humanisme médiévale de Paris (1986–88)</i> . Ed. Jean Longère. Bibliotheca Victorina 1. Turnhout, 1991.
<i>Archa Noe</i>	<i>De archa Noe</i>
<i>Arrha</i>	<i>De arrha anime</i>
<i>Assumpt.</i>	<i>Pro assumptione Virginis</i>
<i>BM Virg.</i>	<i>De beatae Mariae virginitate</i>
<i>Cant. BM</i>	<i>Super canticum Mariae</i>
<i>CCCM</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, continuatio medievalis</i> . Turnhout, 1964
<i>Chronicon</i>	<i>Chronicon vel De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum</i>
<i>CSMV</i>	<i>Hugh of St. Victor: Selected Spiritual Writings</i> , trans. by a Religious of The Community of St. Mary the Virgin, intr. by Aelred Squire. Classics of the Contemplative Life. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.
<i>Didasc.</i>	<i>Didascalicon</i>
<i>Eulogium</i>	<i>De amore sponsi ad sponsam</i>   <i>Eulogium sponsi ad sponsam</i>
<i>Grammatica</i>	<i>De grammatica</i>
<i>In Eccl.</i>	<i>In salomonis Ecclesiastes</i>
<i>In hierarchiam</i>	<i>Commentaria in hierarchiam coelestem s. dionysii areopagitae</i>
<i>In Pent.</i>	<i>Adnotationes elucidatoriae in Pentateuchon</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>De institutione novitiorum</i>
<i>Lament.</i>	<i>Adnotatiunculae elucidatoriae in threnos Jeremiae</i>
<i>Laude</i>	<i>De laude caritatis</i>
<i>Libellus</i>	<i>Libellus de formatione arche</i>
<i>Meditatione</i>	<i>De meditatione</i>

<i>Misc.</i>	<i>Miscellanea</i>
<i>OHSV I</i>	<i>L'Oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor I: De institutione novitiorum; De virtute orandi; De laude caritatis; De arrha animae.</i> Vol. I. Latin text by H. B. Feiss and P. Sicard. Translation (French) by D. Poirel, H. Rochais, and P. Sicard. Introductions, notes, and appendices by D. Poirel. Sous la règle de Saint Augustin. Turnhout, 1997.
<i>OHSV II</i>	<i>L'Oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor, II: Super Canticum Mariae; Pro Assumptione Virginis; De beate Mariae virginitate; Egredietur virga-Maria porta.</i> Vol. II. Latin text, introductions, notes, and appendices by Bernadette Jollès. Sous la règle de Saint Augustin. Turnhout, 2000.
<i>Quid vere</i>	<i>Quid vere diligendum sit</i>
<i>Quinque sept.</i>	<i>De quinque septenis</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus sive bibliotheca universalis, integra, uniformis, commode oeconomica omnium ss. Partum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum qui ab aevo apostolico ad innocentii III tempora floruerunt ... series [Latina].</i> Ed. J.-P. Migne. 221 vols. Paris, 1844–64.
<i>Practica</i>	<i>Practica geometriae</i>
<i>RTAM</i>	<i>Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De sacramentis christianae fidei</i>
<i>Sapientia</i>	<i>De sapientia Christi</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources Chrétiennes.</i> Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1949
<i>Script.</i>	<i>De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris</i>
<i>Sententiae</i>	<i>Sententiae de divinitate</i>
<i>Septem donis</i>	<i>De septem donis Spiritus Sancti</i>
<i>Tribus diebus</i>	<i>De tribus diebus</i>
<i>Vanitate</i>	<i>De vanitate mundi</i>
<i>Verbo</i>	<i>De Verbo Dei</i>
<i>Virtute orandi</i>	<i>De virtute orandi</i>