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HOMO DYNAMICUS: A SKETCH FROM VICTORINE ANTHROPOLOGY

Abstract. In this article, I set out to answer the question of how the Victorines—the Canons Regular who lived at the Abbey of St. Victor founded by William of Champeaux near Paris—perceived man. The golden age of their formation came in the twelfth century. The text is based on the works of Hugh of St. Victor, the originator of the Victorine program, whose ideas were later developed by the Victorines of subsequent generations. The main point of this article is that for the Victorines, man was a dynamic being, hence the expression *homo dynamicus* as used in the title. The study is divided into nine parts. In each of them, I briefly discuss one of the dimensions of the dynamism that the Victorine authors believed was inherent in man: (1) *ad Deum*; (2) *ad intra*; (3) *ad renovationem*; (4) *ad beatitudinem*; (5) *ad virtutem*; (6) *ad sapientiam*; (7) *ad amorem*; (8) *ad proximum atque societatem*; and (9) *ad unitatem sive harmoniam sive pulchritudinem*.

Keywords: Victorines, Hugh of St. Victor, anthropology, man, dynamism.

Streszczenie. *Homo dynamicus*. **Szkic z antropologii wiktoryńskiej.** W artykule odpowiadam na pytanie o to, jak postrzegali człowieka wiktoryni, czyli kanonicy regularni, którzy żyli w podparyskim opactwie św. Wiktora założonym przez Wilhelma z Champeaux. Złoty okres rozwoju formacji, jaką tworzyli, przypada na wiek XII. W tekście opieram się na dziełach Hugona ze św. Wiktora, początkodawcy programu wiktoryńskiego, którego idee rozwijali potem wiktoryni kolejnych generacji. Zasadnicza teza przedkładanego opracowania brzmi następująco: człowiek jest dla wiktorynów bytem dynamicznym – stąd tytułowe wyrażenie *homo dynamicus*. Studium rozpada się na dziewięć

części. W każdej z nich omawiam zwięźle jeden z wymiarów dynamizmu, jaki właściwy jest w przekonaniu autorów wiktoryńskich człowiekowi: (1) *ad Deum*; (2) *ad intra*; (3) *ad renovationem*; (4) *ad beatitudinem*; (5) *ad virtutem*; (6) *ad sapientiam*; (7) *ad amorem*; (8) *ad proximum atque societatem*; (9) *ad unitatem sive harmoniam sive pulchritudinem*.

Słowa kluczowe: wiktoryni, Hugon ze św. Wiktora, antropologia, człowiek, dynamizm.

In this article, I set out to answer the question of how the Victorines perceived man.[1]

The Victorines were Canons Regular who lived according to the Augustinian Rule at the Abbey of St. Victor, which was founded in 1108 by William of Champeaux (d. 1121) on a site near Paris that would later become part of the city.[2] The golden age of their formation came in the twelfth century. The Victorine program directly followed from the canons' outlook on the world, on man, and on God. Therefore, in order to find out who the Victorines were and what their anthropological proposition for twelfth-century Europe was, it is important to explore the vast legacy of texts in which they expressed their philosophical and theological views.

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[1] This article is an English version of a broad excerpt from the paper that I delivered at the *Iuvenes Quaerentes* International Academic Conference on "The Identity of a Man in the Church," which was held on April 25, 2023 at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. I would like to thank Marcin J. Janecki for his consultations on both the conference paper and the article.

[2] For more on the Victorines, see for example Jean Longère, ed., *L'abbaye parisienne de Saint-Victor au Moyen Âge. Communications présentées au XIIIe colloque d'humanisme médiéval de Paris (1986–1988)*, Bibliotheca Victorina 1 (Paris: Brepols, 1991); Dominique Poirel, ed., *L'école de Saint-Victor de Paris. Influence et rayonnement du Moyen Âge à l'époque moderne*, Bibliotheca Victorina 22 (Paris: Brepols, 2010); Hugh Feiss and Juliet Mousseau, eds., *A Companion to the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 79 (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Dominique Poirel, Marcin J. Janecki, Wanda Bajor, and Michał Buraczewski, eds., *Omnium expetendorum prima est sapientia: Studies on Victorine Thought and Influence*, Bibliotheca Victorina 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021); Dominique Poirel, "Przechadzając się po krużgankach u św. Wiktora… Prolog," trans. Marcin J. Janecki, in *Mądrość wiktorynów. Z kultury intelektualnej szkoły św. Wiktora* (hereafter cited as *MW*), ed. Wanda Bajor, Marcin J. Janecki, Łukasz Libowski, and Dominique Poirel (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki, forthcoming); Dominique Poirel, "Wprowadzenie do filozofii wiktoryńskiej," trans. Marcin J. Janecki, in *MW*.

Due to the sheer volume of those texts, one is bound by necessity to limit the scope of the study—preferably by focusing on the works of Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141),[3] the originator of the Victorine program, whose ideas were later developed by the Victorines of subsequent generations.[4]

Who is man? What is his current condition? And finally, what is his purpose? How would the Victorines answer these and similar questions? In my most far-reaching interpretation of the Victorine legacy, the answer to the first and most important of these questions would be as follows: Man is a dynamic being—hence the expression *homo dynamicus* as used in the title—whose destiny is to remain in constant motion and who is called to always be *in via*, to permanently become and self-create. It is my belief that this brief statement correctly encapsulates the entire Victorine concept of man.

Going further, it should be noted that the process in which man is to participate according to the Victorines encompasses many dimensions. Here, it is important to emphasize two things. First, man advances on all these levels in parallel, and second, his advancements on each level are not independent; they interpenetrate and interweave, conditioning one another. In other words, advancement on one level entails advancements on other levels as well. What I would also like to add is that as we consider each of the dimensions of the dynamism to which man should subject himself, we discover a certain point of departure and a certain point of arrival. Naturally, what we are dealing with is one and the same point of departure and one and the same point of arrival that, when looked at from different perspectives, merely reveal their different aspects.

At this point, I would like to examine the different levels of the dynamism in question. While it is not my intention to provide an exhaustive list, I will offer a brief overview of each of these levels for greater clarity.

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[3] For more on Hugh of St. Victor, see for example Patrice Sicard, *Hugues de Saint-Victor et son école*, Témoins de Notre Histoire 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991); Dominique Poirel, *Hugues de Saint-Victor*, Initiations au Moyen-Age (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998); Paul Rorem, *Hugh of Saint Victor*, Great Medieval Thinkers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Marcin J. Janecki, "Hugon ze św. Wiktora. Magister victorinum," in *MW*.

[4] Poirel, "Wprowadzenie do filozofii wiktoryńskiej," sec. 3 ("Czy szkoła św. Wiktora posiada jedność?").

1.   *AD DEUM*

Perhaps the most important movement that man needs to make, according to the Victorines, is the movement *ad Deum*. Thus, man should transition from a state of being far away from God to a state of being close to God, that is, from a state in which he lives without God to a state in which he lives with God.

This is man's purpose: to leave behind the world with its depravities and to reach God, finding in Him the true peace: "In quo caritas Dei est, semper cogitat quando ad Deum perueniat, quando mundum relinquat, quando scandala euadat, quando ueram pacem inueniat."[5] In other words, man's purpose is to turn his heart to God, to flee—as Hugh interestingly puts it—from Himself to Himself, that is, from His divine anger to His divine propitiousness or kindness: "Convertit igitur cor ad Deum, ut quodammodo de ipso fugiat ad ipsum; hoc est, dum cavet habere iratum, studeat habere propitium."[6] This is the task that is set upon man: to love God, to choose God, and to run to God so as to reach Him and possess Him: "O bona caritas per quam Deum diligimus, Deum eligimus, ad Deum currimus, ad Deum peruenimus, Deum possidemus."[7] This is because God is man's land and country—a country to which man is sent and in which he is planted when he cleaves to God and gives himself to Him: "Humus namque et patria nostra Deus est in quo plantamur, quando ei per deuotionem mentis adheremus dicentes cum Psalmista: 'Michi autem adherere Deo bonum est, ponere in Domino Deo spem meam.'"[8]

The inspirator and originator of all this movement of man toward God is God Himself. Out of His love for man, God searches for him and,

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[5]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De laude caritatis*, ed. Hugh B. Feiss and Patrice Sicard, SRSA 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 198. The Latin quotations retain the spelling and punctuation proposed by the editors of Hugh's respective works.

[6]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, PL 176 (Paris: Jacques-Paul Migne, 1854), 528.

[7]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De laude caritatis*, 192.

[8]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De archa Noe*, ed. Patrice Sicard, CCCM 176 = HSVO 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 61. An almost identical sentence can be found in Hugh of Saint Victor, *Super Canticum Mariae*, ed. Bernadette Jollès, SRSA 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 76.

by doing so, wishes to inspire man to search for Him, too. In his commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, Hugh writes intently:

> Behold, your God seeks you and cries: "Where are you?" And you turn away to hide yourself, and you close your eyes so that you cannot see. But He, seeing the one who did not see—and he did not see because he wanted not to be seen—cries out of His love for you and not out of his lack of power: "Adam, where are you?" So, He seeks you so that you may find Him. He seeks you so that you, too, may seek Him and say: "Lord, where are you?"[9]

2. AD INTRA

The journey to the land that is God—a journey which, in the Victorines' view, is in fact man's sole purpose—is a journey into oneself. For the Victorines, to descend into and penetrate one's depths, and thus to transcend oneself, is to ascend to God: "Ascendere ergo ad Deum, hoc est intrare ad semetipsum et non solum ad se intrare, sed ineffabili quodam modo in intimis etiam seipsum transire. Qui ergo seipsum, ut ita dicam, interius intrans et intrinsecus penetrans transcendit, ille ueraciter ad Deum ascendit."[10] This is precisely why Hugh encourages the reader to strive for wisdom and gain self-awareness at the beginning of his *Didascalicon*, which is a treatise that acts as a *ratio studiorum*, that is, a guide for those who wish to expand and deepen their knowledge[11]: "Wisdom illuminates man so that he may recognize himself; for man was like all the other animals when he did not understand that he had been created of a higher order than they. But his immortal mind, illuminated by Wisdom,

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[9] Hugh of Saint Victor, *In Salomonis Ecclesiasten homiliae XIX*, PL 175 (Paris: Jacques-Paul Migne, 1854), 166. See also Marcin J. Janecki, "'Adamie, gdzie jesteś?' Dialogiczna egzegeza Hugona ze św. Wiktora we fragmencie jego *Super Ecclesiasten*," *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* 15, no. 2 (2022): 28.

[10] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De vanitate rerum mundanarum*, ed. Cédric Giraud, CCCM 269 = HSVO 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 158.

[11] Cf. Marcin J. Janecki, "*Omnia disce*. Mistrza Hugona ze św. Wiktora rady dla studentów," *Studia Antyczne i Mediewistyczne* 15, no. 50 (2017): 160–161.

beholds its own principle and recognizes how unfitting it is for it to seek anything outside itself when what it is in itself can be enough for it."[12]

A person who chooses to follow the Victorine path should, therefore, shun the external and strive *ad intra*, that is, toward the internal: "There is one thing that pertains to love of the world, to run from (*de*) it, not with it or unto it."[13] After all, the external, and thus the world with its worldly affairs, is destructive; it distracts or dissuades one from what is most important. In fact, it is a flood in which one may drown: "Mundus diluuium est; cor autem hominis, si per amorem mundanorum se deorsum inclinat, naufragatur inter fluctus seculi et mutabilibus admixtum inter labentia fluit gemino que salutis periculo et per affectum infimorum profunde mergitur et per occupationem plurimorum late dissipatur."[14] When one stays in the inner chamber of one's own self, however, the situation is entirely different. Here, one remains safe. What is more, one is nourished and satiated *singularibus epulis*.[15] What are they? The answer is: those "with which the mothering grace feeds and refreshes us every day."[16]

3.   *AD RENOVATIONEM*

For a person who embarks on the Victorine journey, the destination is *novitas* or *renovatio*: to put off the old self and put on the new self, to abandon the old and embrace the new[17]: "Consequently, if we truly want to imitate good people, it is necessary that we first temper our heart

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[12] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalicon de studio legendi*, ed. Charles H. Buttimer, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Latin 10 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1939), 4. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 46.

[13] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De substantia dilectionis*, ed. Roger Baron, SCh 155 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 92. English translation: Hugh of St. Victor, "On the Substance of Love," trans. Vanessa Butterfield, in *On Love: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Adam, Achard, Richard, and Godfrey of St Victor*, ed. Hugh Feiss, Victorine Texts in Translation 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 146.

[14] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De vanitate*, 159.

[15] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De vanitate*, 167.

[16] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De vanitate*, 167.

[17] See Colossians 3:1–15; Ephesians 4:24.

to obedience through genuine humility. Our life returns more swiftly to renewal the more promptly it inclines itself in voluntary obedience to everyone in whom it sees the appearance of virtue."[18]

The new comes in the form of spiritual regeneration. By reference to the sequence of *Mundi renovatio* by Adam of St. Victor (d. 1150), a student of Hugh's in all likelihood,[19] one could say "spiritual spring."[20] As a result of this regeneration, whatever carnal generation brought with death can no longer do any harm to man: "Sufficit enim sola spiritualis regeneratio, ne post mortem obsit quod carnalis generatio traxit cum morte."[21]

What makes this spiritual regeneration possible is the fact that ever since Christ came into this world and ordered it anew, the world has remained in a state of newness: "Illud autem tempus quod a Christo est usque ad finem mundi nouitas dicitur."[22] Therefore, a man who lives in the world today can be a *homo novus*, that is, a man of renewal, or, in other words, a man who is being regenerated. What is more, the regeneration is twofold as it concerns both the body and the soul. Man's soul puts off the oldness of corruption and puts on the newness of righteousness, whereas his body transforms itself from being mortal to being immortal: "Quilibet huius temporis nouus homo [dicitur], quia tunc et anima exuit uetustatem iniquitatis et induit nouitatem iustitie, et corpus liberatum

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[18] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, ed. Hugh B. Feiss, Patrice Sicard, SRSA 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 42. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, "On the Formation of Novices," trans. Frans van Liere and Dale Coulter, in *Life at Saint Victor: The Liber Ordinis, the Life of William of Æbelholt, and a selection of works of Hugh, Richard, and Odo of Saint Victor, and other authors*, ed. Frans van Liere and Juliet Mousseau, Victorine Texts in Translation 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 226.

[19] For more on Adam, see for example Łukasz Libowski, "Adam ze św. Wiktora. Egregius versificator," in *MW*. Agnieszka Strycharczuk, "Adam ze Świętego Wiktora i jego dorobek poetycki," in Adam ze św. Wiktora, *Sekwencje*, trans. Tadeusz Gacia, Łukasz Libowski, Marta H. Nowak, Agnieszka Strycharczuk, Adam Wilczyński, and Piotr Wilk, introd. Patrice Sicard and Agnieszka Strycharczuk, ed. Łukasz Libowski and Agnieszka Strycharczuk (Lublin: Academicon, 2023), 19–34.

[20] See Łukasz Libowski, "'Ze zmartwychwstającym Panem wszystko wespół zmartwychwstaje.' Kąpiel paschalna," *Nowiny Raciborskie* 14 (2023): 10–11.

[21] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis*, 591.

[22] Hugh of Saint Victor, "Sententiae de divinitate," ed. Ambrogio M. Piazzoni, in Ambrogio M. Piazzoni, "Ugo di San Vittore 'auctor' della *Sententiae de divinitate*," *Studi Medievali* 23 (1982): 926.

postmodum a mortalitate innouabitur in immortalitatem, et ita utriusque hominis uetustate deposita et interior homo et exterior innouatur."[23]

4.   AD BEATITUDINEM

The quest for spiritual regeneration is also a quest for happiness. In the Victorine anthropological vision, *beatum esse*, that is, to be saved in the language of modern theology, is man's final and ultimate end: "Habemus principium nostrum unde accepimus ut simus; habemus et finem nostrum sine quo beati esse non possumus."[24] This end is truly magnificent and, unlike other human aspirations, worthy of love on all accounts. As Hugh writes, "Minus igitur est et minus diligendum est ab illo esse, multum autem amplius est et amplius diligendum est in illo beatum esse; utrumque tamen magnum et dilectione dignum est, et ab illo esse et in illo beatum esse."[25]

Both happiness and existence are always God's gifts, the difference being that while existence is a gift from the Creator, happy existence is a gift from the Redeemer: "Qui creauit te, dedit tibi esse; qui redemit te, dedit tibi beatum esse."[26] Thus, happiness is attained by grace: "Per electionem gratie beati esse accipimus"[27]. Still, one may also contribute to one's happiness, and the grace of happiness can be sought by undertaking specific efforts. How can this be accomplished? Hugh offers an explanation in his prologue to *De institutione novitiorum*. There are three major steps on the path to happiness: knowledge (that is, the instruction of right and honest living), discipline, and goodness: "Via ad ipsum sunt scientia, disciplina, bonitas; per scientiam itur ad disciplinam, per disciplinam itur ad bonitatem, per bonitatem itur ad beatitudinem."[28] From goodness, then, one may come to happiness: "Considerauit namque quod per bonitatem uenitur ad beatitudinem, atque ideo bonitatem doceri se petiit, quia per

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[23]   Hugh of Saint Victor, "Sententiae de divinitate," 926.
[24]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De beatae Mariae virginitate*, ed. Patrice Sicard and Bernadette Jollès, SRSA 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 204.
[25]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De beatae Mariae virginitate*, 206.
[26]   Hugh of Saint Victor. *De sacramentis*, 341.
[27]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De beatae Mariae virginitate*, 206.
[28]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 20.

hanc ad illam pertingere concupiuit."²⁹ Finally, as regards the discipline that leads to goodness, Hugh equates it with virtue, arguing that the practice of the former directs the mind to the latter: "Vsus enim discipline ad uirtutem animum dirigit, uirtus autem ad beatitudinem perducit."³⁰

In view of the above, discipline as the outcome of a specific kind of knowledge is the beginning of happiness, for it is from discipline that virtue is born. This virtue, in turn, transforms man, as it were, making him good, and it is the good man who is ultimately rewarded with eternal happiness: "Ad beatitudinem autem nemo uenire potest, nisi per uirtutem, et uirtus non alio modo ueraciter apprehenditur, nisi disciplina uirtutis non negligenter custodiatur.. .. Disciplina namque Dei in finem corrigit, quia, plene et perfecte hominem reformans per uirtutem, ad beatitudinem perducit."³¹

5. AD VIRTUTEM

Virtue, as we have just discovered, is another important term in the Victorine vocabulary and, at the same time, in the Victorine proposition for man; it is a term that reveals the next dimension of the dynamism discussed in this article: the movement from wickedness to virtue.³² One could say that to live the Victorine way is to live virtuously, that is, to live a life directed toward the development and practice of virtue.

What is virtue, then? Hugh provides two complementary definitions. The first one, which describes virtue as a static and rational phenomenon, can be found in the sixth book of the *Didascalicon*: "Virtue is a habit of the mind—a habit adapted to the reason like a nature."³³ Another definition of virtue, which describes it first as a dynamic phenomenon and second as a product of the interaction of reason and will, was formulated by Hugh in the sixth part of book one of *De sacramentis christianae fidei*: "Virtue

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²⁹ Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 18.
³⁰ Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 18.
³¹ Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 18.
³² I would like to thank Rev. Damian Wierdak for his consultation on this point.
³³ Hugh of Saint Victor. *Didascalicon*, 130. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor*, 152

is nothing else than an affection of the mind ordered according to reason, and such affections are said to be very numerous according to the various inclinations of the same mind yet having one root and origin, the will."[34] Importantly, Hugh distinguishes two kinds of virtues: *secundum naturam*, that is, natural virtues, and *secundum gratiam*, that is, supernatural virtues: "Nos quidem virtutes dupliciter haberi respondemus, secundum naturam et secundum gratiam."[35]

It should be noted that Hugh also thinks of virtue in terms of a golden mean. This can be seen in the second part (comprising chapters ten to twenty-one) of *De institutione novitiorum*, where Hugh speaks of discipline, which in his mind—as discussed above—is equal to virtue.[36] There, Hugh offers a precise explanation of what discipline means in such areas of a canon's life as *habitus*, *gestus*, *locutio*, and *mensa*. Being convinced that "in contrary vices, the median line is virtue,"[37] he points with a generous amount of humor to the extremes that should be avoided in each of these domains. In this view, virtue is, in a sense, about ordering oneself, or establishing order within oneself.

To sum up, the Victorines believe that through virtue, man regains the integrity that he had enjoyed *in principio* and then lost as a result of sin. After all, throughout his life, man continues to grow *usque ad integritatem novae vitae*.[38]

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[34] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis*, 273. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the sacraments of the Christian faith (De sacramentis)*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), 105.

[35] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis*, 273.

[36] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 48–99. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, "On the Formation of Novices," 229–249. See Łukasz Libowski, "Kajdany, więzienie, uzda, jarzmo, pęta. Hugona ze Świętego Wiktora rozumienie karności, czyli wykład zawartości drugiej części jego traktatu *De institutione novitiorum* (rozdziały X-XXI)," in *Wybrane aspekty formacji chrześcijańskiej*, ed. Dominik Kiełb and Michał Powęska (Rzeszów: Bonus Liber, 2022), 127–150.

[37] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 74. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, "On the Formation of Novices," 239.

[38] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, 456.

6. *AD SAPIENTIAM*

Wisdom is by far the most important term used in the texts composed by the Victorines.[39] After all, wisdom was the central theme of their lives: "Of all things to be sought, the first is. .. Wisdom."[40] Arguably, the notion of wisdom binds together the whole Victorine program: everything that a canon of St. Victor undertook or embarked upon was meant to guide him and lead him closer to wisdom. In that sense, the Victorines were in fact philosophers—lovers of wisdom. In his *Epitome Dindimi in philosophiam*, Hugh puts the question *Quid est philosophia?* in the mouth of Sosthenes and has Dindimus respond that it is the effort of seeking wisdom: "Studium querende sapientie, et diligens inuestigatio ueri."[41]

But what is that wisdom? Ultimately, one has to describe it as the *magnum mysterium*,[42] the mystery of participation in the *summa sapientia*[43] that is God. After all, "the Father is wisdom, and the Son is wisdom, and the Holy Ghost is wisdom, and one wisdom because one essence."[44] Through this union with God, man begins to see all things in the proper perspective, that is, *in veritate*—as they truly are. This is why in the *Didascalicon*, Hugh states that "wisdom is the understanding of things as they are."[45]

In that same *Didascalicon*, a handbook for study, Hugh offers the following advice: "Learn everything; you will see afterwards that nothing is superfluous. A skimpy knowledge is not a pleasing thing."[46] One could add: learn everything and read everything, for in all knowledge—

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[39] Cf. Dominique Poirel, "Przechadzając się po krużgankach," especially sec. 3.2 (Mądrość refleksyjna).

[40] Hugh of Saint Victor. *Didascalicon*, 4. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor*, 46

[41] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Epitome Dindimi in philosophiam*, ed. Roger Baron, Publications in Mediaeval Studies 20 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1966), 189.

[42] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De archa Noe*, 83.

[43] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, 378.

[44] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, 230. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the sacraments*, 56.

[45] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalicon*, 130. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor*, 152.

[46] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalicon*, 115. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor*, 137.

be it theoretical, practical, or mechanical—and in every book, you will find wisdom. This is because every kind of knowledge and every book is a stream that carries the fresh water of wisdom, and it is that water that refreshes one and makes one capable of a contemplative gaze.[47]

7.   *AD AMOREM*

Another level of movement that should be distinguished within the dynamism explored in this article is the movement from unlove to love.[48] The reason is clear: the Victorines considered love to be a truly great and powerful *realitas*. Like wisdom, they saw it as a reality that mysteriously and remarkably encompasses and permeates all things.

As is obvious for any author who thinks in biblical terms, this love is, first and foremost, God[49]:

> For "God is humility" or "God is patience" is not said in the same way that "God is charity" is said. This is so because, although every virtue is the gift of God, only charity can be called not only the gift of God, but also God.[50]

Secondly, as Hugh says, inasmuch as man joins together and unites with God, he also becomes that love:

> I will gladly and boldly declare concerning you: "God is charity, and whoever abides in charity abides in God and God in him." Listen, O human, lest you still imagine that possessing charity is a very small thing: listen, because "God is charity." Can it be a small thing to have God abiding within you? It is such a great thing to possess charity, for God is charity.[51]

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[47]   Janecki, "Adamie, gdzie jesteś?," 22–23.

[48]   See Michał Zembrzuski, "'O miłości! Cóż mogę o tobie powiedzieć?' Hugona ze św. Wiktora pochwała miłości," *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia* 1 (2017): 159–180.

[49]   Cf. 1 John 4:8,16.

[50]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De laude caritatis*, 196. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, "On the Praise of Charity," trans. Franklin T. Harkins, in *On Love: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Adam, Achard, Richard, and Godfrey of St Victor*, ed. Hugh Feiss, Victorine Texts in Translation 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 165.

[51]   Hugh of Saint Victor, *De laude caritatis*, 196. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, "On the Praise of Charity," 165.

Nonetheless, in Hugh's opinion, not all love is love that binds man to God, since he defines this *mentis affectus*[52] rather broadly: "Love [is] the delight of somebody's heart toward something on account of something."[53] In consequence, he offers the following caution:

> Therefore, there are two streams that emanate from the fountain of love: cupidity and charity; the root of everything bad is cupidity, and the root of everything good is charity. Accordingly, from this fountain is everything that is good; from it also is everything bad. Therefore, whatever it is, it is a great thing that is in us, and from it is everything that is from us: this, then, is love.[54]

In light of the above, Hugh appeals to his readers: "Therefore, order love."[55] In his view, ordered love (*ordinata caritas*)[56] refers emphatically and ardently to two objects, that is, to God and to one's neighbor: "Pius amor ad Deum et proximum ferventer et ordinate porrectus."[57]

8.   *AD PROXIMUM ATQUE SOCIETATEM*

In the writings and the lives of the Victorines, one may also observe a type of dynamism that concerns an orientation toward the other person. For the canons of St. Victor, this orientation comes, so to say, in two varieties.

Firstly, there is an orientation toward the person who lives and works in one's proximity. A canon held the following conviction: I must speak and act—which is what makes the famous formula *verbo et exem-*

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[52] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, PL 176 (Paris: Jacques-Paul Migne, 1854), 1004.

[53] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De substantia dilectionis*, 86. English translation: Hugh of St. Victor, "On the Substance of Love," 144.

[54] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De substantia dilectionis*, 82. English translation: Hugh of St. Victor, "On the Substance of Love," 143.

[55] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De substantia dilectionis*, 90. English translation: Hugh of St. Victor, "On the Substance of Love," 145.

[56] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De substantia dilectionis*, 92. English translation: Hugh of St. Victor, "On the Substance of Love," 147.

[57] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, 1004.

plo particularly applicable to the Victorine phenomenon—so as to uplift my neighbor and make him better, so that he may progress in his personal growth thanks to me: "Arbores fructiferae sunt homines iusti. . ., quasi horti et prata uernantes messe laboris sui alios reficientes et gregem fidelium uerbo et exemplo, alios ad fidem trahendo et quasi pariendo, multiplicantes."[58] This conviction is reflected in one of the definitions of discipline provided by Hugh in *De institutione novitiorum*: "Discipline is good and honest conduct, which is the same as not doing evil, but it also takes care to be completely irreprehensible in all things one does well."[59] Thus, it becomes apparent that one should not only do good but also strive to be considered good in all that one does, and through that, to have a positive impact on those in one's community.[60] This kind of concern for the fellow brother or sister, a concern which is *par excellence* pastoral in nature, was the difference between the canon, who appeared in Europe in the twelfth century with the development of cities and the emergence of new needs in terms of *cura animarum*, and the monk, who had been long present on the continent by that time. In simple terms, while the monk concerned himself with his own perfection, the canon only strove for such perfection to the extent that it would enable him to assist others in their pursuit of perfection.

Secondly, the orientation toward others has a community-building aspect and therefore involves the movement *ad societatem filiorum Dei*.[61] Hugh asks the reader to work toward a society where everything is good (*ad societatem ubi bona sunt omnia*[62]) and offers the following words of

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[58] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De vanitate*, 166. The phrase *verbo et exemplo* also occurs in Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, 442. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *DOCERE VERBO ET EXEMPLO: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality*, Harvard Theological Studies 31 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

[59] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De institutione novitiorum*, 48. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, "On the Formation of Novices," 229.

[60] See Dominique Poirel, "Introduction," in *L'œuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, vol. 1, SRSA 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 12; Libowski, "Kajdany, więzienie," 132–133.

[61] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, 550.

[62] This quotation comes from a passage from Hugh's *In Salomonis Ecclesiasten homiliae XIX* that has recently been discovered by Marcin J. Janecki and has not yet been published. I would like to sincerely thank Marcin (who is working on a critical edition of *In Salomonis Ecclesiasten homiliae XIX*) for providing me with this passage and for permitting me to publish it.

encouragement: "So ponder upon it now and see what benefits fellowship brings."[63] In his commentary on Ecclesiastes 4:9–10, he writes:

> It is better to live as two than to live alone.. .. Why is it better? Hear this: [Two] reap benefit from each other's company. So, the former is better than the latter because in the case of the former, there is fruit, and in the case of the latter, there is not. What kind of fruit? See this: If one falls, the other will lift him up. This is the fruit of fellowship. If one falls, the other will lift him up. What he has less of in himself, he finds in the other. When he himself falters, the other will take over—either by sustaining him so that he does not falter, or, if he does falter, by taking his place.[64]

9.   AD UNITATEM SIVE HARMONIAM SIVE PULCHRITUDINEM

The final aspect is the movement toward unity, which in the case of the spiritual successors of William of Champeaux is, at the same time, a movement toward harmony and beauty. The Victorines' outlook on God and His creation, and thus on the world and all that it contains—including first and foremost man and his affairs—is a unifying one.[65] It is an outlook that seeks to discover that all things come together to form a well-orchestrated whole, an outlook that desires to see the beauty of the whole: *pulchritudo totius*.[66]

The above, however, would be an understatement, since the Victorine mission has a much broader scope. The Victorines are not merely concerned with a specific manner of perceiving reality, or a particular attitude toward it. Rather, their ambition is to lead such an existence "that unity be established everywhere,"[67] to turn disorder into order, chaos into cosmos, to bring together rather than set apart. As humble servants of

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[63] As above.

[64] As above.

[65] See Dominique Poirel, "Przechadzając się po krużgankach," sec. 3.3 (Uniwersalność i unifikacja).

[66] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Epitome Dindimi*, 440.

[67] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De archa Noe*, 100.

harmony,[68] they tirelessly work toward a state of, as Patrice Sicard evocatively phrases it, all-encompassing harmony: harmony within oneself between one's body and soul, harmony in communal life, harmony between man and the world, and harmony between man and God. In short, harmony *de tout et tous*.[69]

By attaining such harmony, creation can become fulfilled—this harmony is the beauty to which every being, especially man, is called and must conform. After all, for the Victorines, beauty is a sanctuary in which the miracle of miracles takes place: salvation.[70] In *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, Hugh writes the following:

> For even the rational creature itself was first made unformed in a certain mode of its own, afterwards to be formed through conversion to its Creator; and therefore matter unformed but afterwards formed was shown to it, that it might discern how great was the difference between being and beautiful being. And by this it was warned not to be content with having received being from the Creator through creation, until it should obtain both beautiful being and happy being, which it was destined to receive from the Creator through the conversion of love.[71]

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[68] See Łukasz Libowski, "Słudzy harmonii. Sekwencja *Ex radice caritatis* Adama ze św. Wiktora jako wiktoryński program życia," in *MW*.

[69] Patrice Sicard, "Harmonia między wszystkim i wszystkimi. Ewokacje," trans. Marcin J. Janecki, in Adam ze św. Wiktora, *Sekwencje*, 40 and 46.

[70] In this context, see for example Lenka Karfíková, *"De esse ad pulchrum esse": Schönheit in der Theologie Hugos von St. Viktor*, Bibliotheca Victorina 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); Wanda Bajor, "'Zbawcze piękno' w teorii estetycznej wiktorynów," *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze* 3 (2012): 67–81; Dominique Poirel, "The Spirituality and Theology of Beauty in Hugh of St. Victor," in *From Knowledge to Beatitude: St. Victor, Twelfth-Century Scholars, and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Grover A. Zinn, Jr.*, ed. E. Ann Matter and Lesley Smith (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 247–280; Dominique Poirel, "Dieu, la nature et l'homme. La place de la beauté dans l'œuvre d'Hugues de Saint-Victor," in *Le beau et la beauté au moyen âge*, ed. Olivier Boulnois and Isabelle Moulin (Paris: Vrin, 2018), 93–122; Boyd Taylor Coolman, "Beauty in Hugh of St. Victor. The First Christian Theological Aesthetics?," in *Beauty and the Good. Recovering the Classical Tradition from Plato to Duns Scotus*, ed. Alice M. Ramos, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 62 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 206–235; Wanda Bajor, "*Pulchrum esse*: The Role of Beauty in the Educational Programme of the Parisian St. Victor School," *Argument* 12, no. 2 (2022): 293–309.

[71] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, 189. English translation: Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the sacraments*, 9.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the Victorine anthropology offers a dynamic account of man. This is worth emphasizing because such an understanding of man, if one were to remain at a certain level of generalization, is consistent with the contemporary, postmodern view of humanity, thus revealing the extraordinary relevance of centuries-old ideas.

Do I see any issues with today's understanding of man? The answer is: yes. My concern is the fact that, to generalize once again, the modern-day man's freedom of self-creation seems unlimited. This perspective, even if one finds it encouraging at the first glance, may be overwhelming in the end. Still, the canons of St. Victor offer an antidote to this unpleasant experience: by inviting a person to engage in the extraordinarily creative process of personal advancement, of forming and sculpting oneself, their anthropology provides a clear view of both the starting point and the destination that one should steer towards. This perspective is by no means overwhelming; quite the contrary, it inspires and propels one in the movement *de esse ad salvatum esse*.

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