HUGH OF SAINT VICTOR

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CONTEXT

1. The Early Twelfth Century and Paris

The explosion of cultural creativity in early twelfth-century Europe is well known, indeed a commonplace since Charles Haskins's *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century.*[1] Latin literature flourished especially in Paris, as Haskins and many others have documented. The theological side of that story is not as well known, at least not in English, outside of the famous affair of Abelard and Heloise and perhaps the general career of Bernard of Clairvaux. Equally important, however, to the theological renaissance of the twelfth century is the work of Hugh of St. Victor and the school he represents. This brief book introduces Hugh's major works, voluminous and diverse, drawing on recent editions and studies, especially by French and German scholars. The challenge is not in narrating his life story, of which little is known, but rather in organizing a presentation of his rich corpus. "Learn everything,"[2] he said, and thus he taught not only all of theology in its broad sense (biblical, doctrinal, practical, philosophical) but also history and grammar, geometry and geography. The organization of such learning and teaching was his distinctive contribution to the development of medieval thought. How to hold so much together in one unified and holistic package of learning and life could also be his contribution to our own age of specializations to the point of fragmentation.

In the early twelfth century, Paris reflected the overall surge of creative energies in western Europe. With growing populations and booming economies, various communities shared in the flourishing of art, music, poetry, letters, and learning, but Paris above all. Western Europe seemed to be bulging at the seams, indeed, spilling out beyond old borders to reclaim from Islam parts of northern Spain and Sicily and then Jerusalem, in that spasm of military, economic, religious, and territorial expansion later known as the First Crusade. As the Franks spread outward in that geographical sense, so, too, their churchly ambitions took them upward in the new style of architecture, later called Gothic, at Saint Denis and Notre Dame of Paris and nearby Chartres in this same century. The crusades and Gothic architecture represented enormous expenditures of money, personnel, and initiative, equally indicative of the dynamic societal growth underway. On the larger scale, all of this, including the story of Hugh and his community at St. Victor, reflected "a dramatic growth of population, increased agricultural productivity, the cultivation of new land, the formation of new villages, the development of manufacture, and the growth of trade both within and beyond Europe."[3] Why all of this happened at that time is still debatable—perhaps the weather improved and thus the crops, the diet, and therefore also the health and output of western Europeans—but Hugh's Paris was certainly part of a much larger development.

More specifically, and of little interest to Haskins, the religious culture of the early twelfth century reflected a double reform movement of its own. On the one hand, local parish clergy were increasingly expected to live a disciplined life, often in community, as reflected in the Gregorian Reform of the eleventh century. The established monastic (Benedictine) pattern of life was also poised for its own reform movement of youthful energy and discipline at Citeaux, yielding Cistercian communities such as Bernard's Clairvaux. On the other hand, monks and priests were joined in great numbers by curious students who wanted to study theology, especially in Paris. New currents of philosophical and spiritual inquiry were stirring, and new schools flourished, both schools of thought and many new physical places of teaching. Peter Abelard represents this scholarly ambition to pursue learning at the highest level, also in Paris, and thus also represents the well-worn contrast with Bernard's monastic discipline. Let Haskins overdraw it: "Between a mystic like Bernard and a rationalist like Abaelard there was no common ground."[4] Labels aside (for Bernard was more than a mystic, and Abelard no rationalist in any modern sense), the juxtaposition

of the scholarly pursuit by a "pre-scholastic" author with the religious community of daily prayer is instructive. That there was, in fact, some common ground between the two is the story of the Abbey of St. Victor, and it starts with William of Champeaux.

2. William of Champeaux, St. Victor, and Abbot Gilduin

Born around 1070 in Champeaux near Melun, not far from Paris, William wanted to study theology. He started in Paris under Manegold, an obscure figure who was nevertheless pivotal for his influence on Anselm of Laon. William also studied under Roscelin at Compiegne and eventually under Anselm himself at the great cathedral school of Laon. In the first decade of the twelfth century, William was the archdeacon of Paris, in full support of Bishop Galon's clerical reforms, and the head of the cathedral school there, where he taught dialectic and rhetoric.[5] Suddenly, his academic career changed. In Abelard's narration of William's move, he made himself the pivotal figure. Young Abelard had come to study with William, but when he challenged, refuted, and vanquished his teacher (so he says), the master yielded the field, retired from teaching altogether, and moved.[6] Indeed, William and a few students did leave the cathedral school precincts of Notre Dame in 1108 and set up quarters just outside the city walls on the left bank at a small (cemetery) chapel or hermitage apparently already dedicated to the martyr of Marseilles, St. Victor.[7] It was a religious decision, meaning that William wanted to live a disciplined life of daily prayer and contemplation. The whole Gregorian reform movement of "regular canons," clergy living together according to a rule, is the larger context here, and William's subsequent history suggests that this spiritual ideal was more important to his change of lifestyle than was losing a debate to a student. His daily devotion was no doubt genuine, and he maintained a life of spiritual discipline. Yet this new way of life did not exclude teaching. Other students had their say and indirectly prevented Abelard from having the last word.

William retired to St. Victor not alone but with companions, including some of his students; apparently they, too, adopted the communal life of daily prayer, and yet they wanted to keep studying. They asked William to resume his teaching, but now within the daily schedule of corporate prayer

and life together. This fateful combination of scholarship and communal piety garnered decisive support in a letter William received from Hildebert of Lavardin, the reforming Bishop of Le Mans. Hildebert's exhortation, that William should offer his whole self to God, launches a distinctive Victorine synthesis of mind and heart, of learning and prayer.

> What use after all is hidden wisdom or buried treasure? . . . Is there any difference between common stones and jewels if they are not displayed to the light? It is the same with learning; when one shows it to others it bears increase.[8]

Hildebert here voiced not only a decisive integration of learning and piety, of mind and heart, of scholarship and prayer, but also expressed this evangelical ideal in terms of apostolic service, namely, teaching others. William of Champeaux, in fact, resumed his teaching, but now within the daily communal schedule of prayer as "canons regular." And the apostolic ideal that this ministry of teaching was for others spread to his students, who learned and then taught, by word and example,[9] on through a Victorine succession of teacher training for generations.

William of Champeaux, first master of St. Victor, thus found the common ground that Haskins thought impossible between the monastic Bernard and the scholastic Abelard. There was still a wide gulf, and William and his subsequent Victorines were not the only such bridge builders. As Beryl Smalley says, the whole movement of canons regular should be acknowledged: "A gulf had opened between monks and scholars. Contemporaries constantly stress their difference in function: the scholar learns and teaches; the monk prays and 'mourns.' The canons regular courageously refused to admit the dilemma."[10] This combination of comprehensive scholarship and disciplined prayer is all the more admirable over against recent centuries, when the gulf or "dilemma" became institutionalized. William of Champeaux's personal example and leadership in combining the daily life of communal prayer with advanced intellectual study set the course of St. Victor, both as a specific place and as a broader school of thought. His students were set on their Victorine way, and one of them in particular became the abbot who shaped the particulars for decades to come.

Among those who moved with Master William to form the new community at St. Victor was his student Gilduin. When William resumed teaching within the communal life of prayer, Gilduin and the others continued their study of the liberal arts, theology, and philosophy, yet now amid the

biblical readings and psalmody of their new daily schedule. These first years of the Victorine community have left few details in the historical record, but at William's departure, Gilduin's leadership soon gave specific shape to the original ideal of study and prayer. After five years of initial leadership (1108–1113) in this rather spontaneous community, William was elected bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne. He went on to a substantial career as a church reformer, building on his foundations of study and spirituality, including a close tie to Bernard of Clairvaux. But before leaving St. Victor, he made one more decisive contribution there. William secured the approval of King Louis VI to charter St. Victor as a royal abbey including a school, indicating financial support; the king further entrusted the Victorines with the election of an abbot from within their ranks to be nominated to the bishop of Paris without needing separate royal approval. Thus, as he left, William secured the foundations of the community, now the "abbey" of St. Victor, just as he had originally embodied its spirit. Shortly afterward, on December 1 of 1114, Pope Paschal II confirmed these rights and privileges for the royal Abbey of St. Victor and ratified the election of Gilduin, further strengthening the reform movement of canons regular in Paris.

Upon William's departure, the community's first real election of an abbot fell to Gilduin, who led the community for forty years, from 1114 to 1155, namely, before, during, and after Hugh's career there. In quality and continuity, Gilduin's leadership was remarkable, yet we know very little directly about him. From the indirect evidence of the features of his community at this time—the library and various buildings, the sheer numbers of novices and students, the dozens of daughter houses, and above all, the writings contributed by Victorines, starting with Hugh and then a whole school—Gilduin must have been a remarkable leader. As with the earlier abbots of Cluny, and then the later Gertrude of Hackeborn (Abbess of Helfta), such administrative gifts and personal leadership should be honored and appreciated, especially in light of the famous authors who flourished precisely because of the community context. The Abbot Gilduin may be almost unknown, but his legacy is abundant, specifically in Hugh's career and indeed in the first major collection of Hugh's writings. Gilduin enjoyed the favor of Pope Innocent II and of King Louis VI, even becoming the king's confessor. Amid tumultuous times and conflicts, including the political murder of his prior Thomas in 1133,[11] Gilduin guided the community's steady growth. He applied royal funds to a building campaign and to creating a magnificent library, still evident in its extensive remains

within the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.[12] He also developed the foundational document for St. Victor's communal life, namely, the *Liber ordinis*, or custumal for the community.

As with other communities not adopting all the specifics of Benedict's *Rule*, even if eventually following the general guidance of Augustine's brief and suggestive *Rule*, the particulars of such a custumal were largely local and thus heavily up to the discretion of the abbot at the time. There are general similarities with Cluny, the Premonstratensians, and indeed the Cistercians, such as the principles of poverty and contemplation and the apostolic life of service, but the specifics of the *Liber ordinis* were uniquely Victorine. Although some particulars may have been added later, the Victorine custumal reveals Gilduin's community in Hugh's time.[13] Daily life was spelled out, including the duties of various offices: abbot, prior, subprior, treasurer, librarian, and eventually the master or head of the school (Hugh's position). The daily rhythm of prayer and study was parallel to the canonical hours already standard among the Benedictines: the night office of matins and lauds, prime and daily Mass, work in the garden or library, common meals and chapter meetings, study and a free period for conversation, vespers with readings and Compline, and bed. The church year provided the familiar annual rhythm, but the Victorines had a distinctive weekly highlight: every Saturday evening featured the foot-washing service (*mandatum*) otherwise associated with Maundy Thursday,[14] thus dramatically reinforcing the lesson that all this prayer and study is for serving the neighbor. There is a definite emphasis on relating to others with kindness and humanity.[15] The periods of formal study, including lectures, could have been part of the morning chapter meetings, including guests, and again in the afternoon hour of open conversation. The resident community was of modest size (eighteen in 1134),[16] but students were numerous. As for a "school," the *Liber ordinis* mentions explicitly only the "school of novices," although it is clear that some external students who were not resident members of the community also came to hear William and later Hugh. One Lawrence, later Abbot of Westminster, went to Paris explicitly to study with the saintly scholar Hugh at St. Victor but did not live there; he wrote to a friend about how he was taking notes at lectures (an early *reportatio*) and about Master Hugh's interest in seeing and correcting them![17]

Thus under Abbot Gilduin's leadership, beginning in 1114, the community of St. Victor came to embody William's combination of advanced study and daily devotion within a disciplined community. With the further

support of Stephen of Senlis, Bishop of Paris in the 1120s, St. Victor grew considerably in size, budget, and influence. Hugh came to St. Victor soon after Gilduin's leadership took hold, between 1115 and 1118, but where he came from was hotly debated for a long time.

3. The Life of Hugh

The disputes over Hugh's birthplace and early years started because the sources are few and ambiguous, raged on and off for centuries partially out of modern national and cultural loyalties, and in the end do not matter very much, at least regarding birthplace and thus ethnic or national identity. Whether French or German by birth, specifically Flemish or Saxon, Hugh came to represent St. Victor and Paris in a transnational way, both then and now.

His own writings are not much help regarding his origins or family, but there the inquiring begins. "From boyhood," he once wrote, "I have dwelt on foreign soil."[18] The classical allusions in this text make any further biographical conclusions murky, but at least some form of early dislocation is suggested. Elsewhere, Hugh writes so vividly of boyish observations on a manor befitting the nobility that it might reflect his own experience, although not a specific location.[19] Most concretely, he dedicated one of his most important essays to the Augustinian canons at the community of Saint Pancras (Pancratius) in Hamersleben (Saxony) with wording of personal familiarity and memory.[20] Hugh also mentions an uncle in a missive to one "Th," now taken to indicate Thietmar, the first prior of this Saxon community in the diocese of Halberstadt.[21]

With so little internal evidence to go on, a biographer naturally turns to the texts about Hugh, even if they came significantly later. The Victorines themselves early on embraced a thirteenth-century witness that Hugh was born in Saxony and first went to school among the Augustinians at Hamersleben. Then, with his uncle (an archdeacon, also named Hugh), he came to St. Victor. In 1675, Jean Mabillon interpreted some twelfth-century texts to say that Hugh was Flemish, from Ypres, and claimed that the entire Saxony story was a fiction. Mabillon's overall scholarship was persuasive, for a time. In 1745, Christian Gottfried Derling defended the Saxon claims against Mabillon, including new but controversial manuscript evidence about a noble German family, and he then seemed to prevail. In the

twentieth century, the Flemish tradition was represented by E. Croydon, and the Saxon by Jerome Taylor.[22] Gradually, the old Victorine tradition of Hugh coming to St. Victor from Saxony with his uncle and namesake has come to dominate, albeit with occasional harmonizing of the Flemish claims. Roger Baron, for example, persisted by suggesting that Hugh was born in Ypres, then lived in Hamersleben, then came to Paris.[23] Yet the "uncle" language in Hugh's text, along with later sources identifying the archdeacon as from Halberstadt, makes a Flemish birth unlikely.[24]

All of these biographical arguments have recently been summarized by Dominique Poirel and supplemented with new twelfth-century evidence in favor of the Saxon tradition.[25] A Victorine calendar dating from near Hugh's lifetime carries special annotations identifying several Saxon names and death dates, including the uncle named Hugh and one Reinhard, bishop of Halberstadt. This Reinhard studied in Paris before becoming bishop in 1107, perhaps with William of Champeaux, and founded the Augustinian community of Saint Pancras at the same time that William moved to Saint Victor. More to the current point, he was also, according to the later texts, an uncle to our Hugh by his brother Conrad, Count of Blankenburg. Suddenly, Hugh of St. Victor has a solid Saxon pedigree and perhaps even a named father and a noble family, vindicating Derling and his sources. Saxon troubles with the emperor may have suggested to Bishop Reinhard that he send his young and talented nephew Hugh from the Hamersleben Augustinian community to the one in Paris, accompanied by his brother Hugh, the archdeacon and uncle. Together, by way of a traditional Marseilles pilgrimage to Saint Victor's tomb, they came to Paris and offered themselves (and relics of the patron saint) to Abbot Gilduin on June 17, perhaps in 1115. In all of this, the community of Augustinians at Hamersleben in Saxony is a key context for Hugh's life before Paris, wherever he was born.

The old arguments over Hugh's birthplace mean very little in the end, for two reasons. First, interpretations of Hugh's works have never turned on his origins. Whether Flemish or Saxon by birth, whether noble family or not, his life's work or at least his output starts at St. Victor. Granted, his evident grounding in St. Augustine's thought had an earlier basis among the Augustinians at Hamersleben, as did his identity as a canon. Second, such national concerns—especially the subtext in the older French and German literature—were largely irrelevant to early twelfth-century Europe, especially in the Parisian mixture of students and teachers from many different places, just as they are of minor importance to twenty-first century readers

worldwide. However, Poirel does suggest that Hugh brought to Paris a formation influenced by German imperial factors, such as an interest in the quadrivium, beyond Parisian dialectic, as supported by the Carolingian and Saxon (imperial) authors and "renaissance," but only as a suggestion and not a definitive conclusion.[26]

Whatever his prehistory, Hugh's real career began in Paris, where he started writing and teaching within a few years of his arrival at St. Victor, surely before 1120, the de facto successor to William. By at least 1127, he is designated as a "master," and as head of the school by 1133. Hugh's teaching career includes his voluminous authorship, to be addressed shortly, but not much more can be said of his life. Perhaps he traveled a little, even to Italy sometime in the mid-1130s. His own spiritual life seems summarized in the "Confession" that concludes his *Soliloquy* and our overview of his works. Regarding his death day, however, on February 11, 1141, we have an eyewitness narrative and verbatim from Osbert, the abbey's infirmarian. The devout dialogue, the sacramental piety, the biblical and liturgical quotations, all served to support Osbert's final encomium:

> Then our venerable and most erudite teacher Hugh passed from this life in the confession of the supreme Trinity on [February 11] at 3: good, humble, sweet, and pious.[27]

By tradition, he was only forty-four at his death, putting the conjectured birth year at 1096. His writing career was not long, and the biographical details are sparse, except that he was a teacher above all; yet his works speak volumes and present multiple challenges to the reader: for example, where to start?

4. Approaching Hugh's Works

Hugh of St. Victor may be a familiar name for one or another of his major writings, quite apart from how they fit together as part of his overall work. The *Didascalicon* is famous for the pedagogical issues of the liberal arts, various branches of learning, and comments on the Bible. His *De sacramentis* (*On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*) is a well-known early "summa" of all theology from creation to eschatology, including sacraments in the (later) narrow sense. Recent years have emphasized Hugh's works of spiritual contemplation or mystical theology, such as the major works on Noah's

ark or smaller essays on love and the soul. Yet there are so many large works and hundreds altogether, on so many subjects, that any one choice can be partial and deceptive. Biblical books, chronology, grammar, geometry, the Dionysian *Celestial Hierarchy*, formation for the Victorine novices, sermons, and topics of all kinds interested Hugh, and he wrote about them all. How, then, do we approach his voluminous and diverse corpus? And how do we appreciate that he held together what many contemporaries and most moderns split up into disciplinary specializations?

Despite Hugh's obvious interest in history and chronological order, his own time line of authorship or career is not of decisive help here. His works can be put in chronological order of composition only roughly and very partially. One major effort to place them all in succession is helpful but too speculative.[28] Too many writings cannot be dated at all, and some of them underwent considerable revision and development over time. Furthermore, Hugh's career is not marked by successive external involvements or controversies that could help cluster his works. For all the events, exchanges, and meetings involving others, such as his contemporaries Bernard or Abelard or Peter the Venerable, Hugh barely hints at any external circumstances for his writings. Thus, neither internal nor external history provides a comprehensive order for introducing his works.

Theologians or philosophers may be tempted to launch a presentation of Hugh's work and thought according to a prominent concept or theme that has emerged in retrospect. The *Didascalicon* offers a pedagogical grid for classifying all knowledge; in the *De sacramentis* and elsewhere, Hugh speaks systematically of God's two works, the work of creation and the work of restoration; these and other hermeneutical writings insist that biblical interpretation starts with history, proceeds via allegory to doctrine, and ends with the moral/spiritual meaning; to the mystically minded, such spiritual restoration or ascent has seemed the goal or whole point of Hugh's corpus. These various possible themes testify to Hugh's multifaceted or comprehensive outlook, if only we could see it whole. Such has been the challenge from the beginning. Some Victorines, such as Andrew of St. Victor, continued his exegetical-hermeneutical line; others, like Richard of St. Victor, the spiritual-mystical side; still others, including Peter Lombard, who came to Paris to study with Hugh, the systematic-doctrinal impulse. Perhaps his scope was too wide for any one follower to continue, and thus they needed to specialize. A century later, a well-known sentiment attributed to Bonaventure,

himself both scholastic and spiritual, praised Hugh for this same comprehensive competence, relative to other prominent names:

> Hence all Sacred Scripture teaches these three truths: namely, the eternal generation and the Incarnation of Christ, the pattern of human life, and the union of the soul with God. The first regards *faith*; the second, *morals*; and the third, the *ultimate end of both*. The doctors should labor at the study of the first; the preachers, at the study of the second; the contemplatives, at the study of the third. The first is taught chiefly by Augustine; the second, by Gregory; the third, by Dionysius. Anselm follows Augustine; Bernard follows Gregory; Richard (of Saint Victor) follows Dionysius. For Anselm excels in reasoning; Bernard, in preaching; Richard, in contemplating; but Hugh (of Saint Victor) in all three.[29]

This quotation, with its famous names and triadic patterns, is a way to glimpse Hugh's diverse legacy, but for the moment, the point is simply the diversity itself, and also that Hugh, there praised the most for the breadth of his comprehension, is now the least known. Choosing one of these themes as an organizing principle for introducing Hugh's corpus is tempting, but it could also distort the overall picture.

The challenge of finding an effective order for introducing Hugh's writings is itself a matter of pedagogy and could thus be turned back to the Victorine emphasis on teaching and learning. Hugh was first and last a teacher, and his own concern to present material to his students so that they could effectively learn it (and teach it) marks many of his own works. The famous *Didascalicon* concerns not only what and how to read but also in what order. Hugh consistently organizes his presentations/treatises pedagogically, putting the topic in a teachable form. This concern for ordering the subject matter will help us appreciate many of his writings, specifically in letting their contents unfold in his chosen order, beginning to end. It does not yet provide the overarching order or sequence for introducing those works, but it does give the question a Victorine pedigree. There is, I think, a properly Victorine way to enter Hugh's writings. It is neither chronological nor thematic but rather pedagogical, putting us back into the community of St. Victor, into the capable hands of Abbot Gilduin. After Hugh died in 1141, and his literary legacy stood in need of organization, the abbot who had first welcomed Hugh to St. Victor was still in charge. Gilduin's remarkable career as abbot culminated in the decade after Hugh's

death with a collection of Hugh's known works arranged in four volumes. None of these volumes has survived, and they cannot be completely reconstructed; in any case, they do not provide the last word on all of Hugh's works. But Gilduin also drew up a list of these works, an invaluable aid to appreciating Hugh's corpus within that early context. Gilduin's "Index" (*Indiculum*) contains many specific details justly pursued by specialists,[30] but it also offers a way for general readers to start meeting Hugh's works. The venerable abbot of St. Victor presented certain of Hugh's works first, in a specific order at the beginning of volume 1, and there we, too, should start. Gilduin mostly listed the titles and/or opening words rather than explaining his pedagogical rationale for this order. Nevertheless, in assuming some wisdom in his editorial decisions, some reason for teaching Hugh to the reader in this order, we are at least being Victorine about it, joining the first readers of this corpus. Who better to set up a curriculum for introducing Hugh, at least at the outset, than Abbot Gilduin? Thus, in order we have the *Chronicles* or *De tribus maximis*, then *On the Scriptures* and the famous *Didascalicon*, followed by other works but still in Gilduin's order.[31] With these introductory works, Hugh's corpus and major themes will open up before us, as Gilduin apparently intended.

Furthermore, beyond trusting Gilduin regarding an initial sequence for introducing Hugh's works, the following chapters also trust Hugh when it comes to the order of exposition within each work. Instead of rearranging the material to fit some other definitions or topical headings, Hugh's works are each presented from beginning to end, according to the teacher's lesson plan, that is, Hugh's own orderly sequence of sections. Victorines like Gilduin and especially Hugh gave great thought to the order of learning; modern readers would do well to follow their lead.

PEDAGOGY

1. The *Chronicles*

Gilduin's edition of Hugh's works starts with his "Chronicles," and it is clear that both the author and the editor had a pedagogical starting point in mind. The work is for the true beginner, a "schoolbook of history,"[1] first advising the young novices on how to learn and where to start, and then supplying chronological tables and diagrams as aids to their foundational learning. Most manuscripts do not call it by Gilduin's title "Chronica" but rather "The Three Best . . ." or, precisely, *De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum, id est personis locis temporibus*, which could be loosely rendered, following Mary Carruthers, as "The Three Best Memory Aids for Learning History, Namely, Persons, Places, and Occasions."[2] The heart of it is in the prologue, not in the various detailed tables that follow, although they illustrate Hugh's pedagogical interests in supplying visual aids regarding ancient rulers, Jewish history, and emperors and popes up until 1130.[3]

Editor William Green aptly characterizes the opening lines and overall tone: "The prologue begins in the tone of a master giving his first instruction to a young student."[4]

> Child, knowledge is a treasury and your heart is its strongbox. As you study all of knowledge, you store up for yourselves good treasures,

> immortal treasures, incorruptible treasures, which never decay nor lose the beauty of their brightness.[5]

Storing up such treasures means remembering them, by way of different compartments. "Evidently, at the beginning of their course Hugo's pupils were first taught how to study."[6] The memory is aided by visualizing a place, like a line or a numbered list, for example, or where an item was on the page of the book, or where you were when you learned it. Yes, it sounds childish, says Hugh, but it helps children learn.[7] Starting with the basics like memory means a solid foundation for all learning, as Hugh taps a long tradition of rhetorical training. His next paragraphs, the climax of the prologue, reveal that to Hugh the real foundation for all knowledge is the historical sense of biblical scripture.

> All exposition of divine Scripture is drawn forth according to three senses: history, allegory, and tropology or morality. History is the narrative of what was done, expressed in the first meaning of the letter. Allegory is when by means of this event in history, which is found in the literal meaning, another event is suggested whether past or present or future. Tropology is when in that event which we hear about we recognize what we should be doing.[8]

Here we meet a major theme in all of Hugh's corpus, that sacred scripture should be read according to its historical, allegorical, and tropological or moral sense. The Victorine will expand on these terse definitions often, starting with the next work in Gilduin's order. For the pedagogical moment, says Hugh, the point is to start with history as fundamental.

> But now we have in hand history, as it were the foundation of all teaching [doctrine], the first to be laid out together in memory. But because, as we said, the memory delights in brevity, yet the events of history are nearly infinite, it is necessary for us, from among all of that material, to gather together a kind of brief summary—as it were the foundation of a foundation, that is a first foundation—which the soul can most easily comprehend and the memory retain.[9]

Hugh then pays tribute to the traditional three categories for remembering history, namely, the persons, places, and occasions, as mentioned in the title and as laid out in the tables and diagrams to follow. But before the prologue ends and the tables begin, he provides a much simpler "brief summary" of history, with a built-in memory aid for the beginner who has much yet to

learn. "The creation of nature was completed in six days and the renewal of man will be achieved in six stages."[10]

With deceptive ease, Hugh has linked creation and salvation (*conditio* and *reparatio*) by the simple and memorable number six, for both the biblical days of Genesis and the Augustinian ages of world history. The teacher then breaks down the six days, summarizing Genesis for his pupils. With the mention of the sixth day regarding Adam and Eve, the chronology begins, and the first age (from Adam to the flood) is diagrammed accordingly. With the simple symmetry of the six days of creation and the six ages of restoration (named *restauratio* in the diagram), Hugh has provided an overarching perspective for his pupils, one that will serve them and us well as the larger panorama comes into view. Many tables follow, with too many numbers to remember, but the pair of sixes, the days of creation and the ages of restoration, follow in several of Hugh's major works throughout his corpus. When his masterwork, *De sacramentis*, refers back to a first volume of history (and then goes on to develop doctrinal theology on the basis of God's paired works of creation and restoration), some think that Hugh meant this fundamental *Chronicles*,[11] although there is another and a better candidate, discussed in chapter 3.

Writing clearly for novices, indeed for boys, Hugh has here touched lightly on two enormous and complex themes: the triple understanding of scripture as history and allegory and tropology, and the pairing of God's works of creation and restoration. His students have much more to learn about these themes, including the way they fit together, but with the prologue to the *Chronicles*, Gilduin's edition of Hugh's works has gotten things started, pedagogically.

2. *On the Scriptures*

Next in Gilduin's edition (and first in Migne's *Patrologia* volumes of Hugh) is "On the Sacred Scriptures and Writers," along with specific exegetical materials. *De scripturis* bears a close and complex relationship to the next work in the abbot's order, the *Didascalicon*. The former is more explicitly and thoroughly concerned with biblical interpretation; the latter presents an overall curriculum of study. Many readers have taken the *Didascalicon*'s comments on scripture to represent Hugh's overall viewpoint, in part because some scholars have argued that *De scripturis* was an early work that

was then incorporated or even subsumed into the later and better known work. However, others argue the reverse sequence: that the *Didascalicon* is earlier, "with *De scripturis* representing a much more developed set of ideas."[12] Without needing to argue or assume a chronology of composition, there are several reasons to give *De scripturis* our separate, and indeed prior, attention. First, it discusses certain crucial aspects of biblical interpretation more thoroughly than the *Didascalicon* does, and it includes a sharp distinction between sacred scripture and other worthy writings. Second (and perhaps for that first reason), Abbot Gilduin placed it here in Hugh's collected works, before the *Didascalicon.* Third, as Grover Zinn has shown through examination of various manuscripts, "the treatise on biblical interpretation that is most intimately associated with Hugh's actual exegetical works is not the *Didascalicon* but rather *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris.*"[13] Zinn's analysis is followed here, although his specific argument about the manuscripts and a prior literary model is more specialized than we need for this introduction. The point is that this treatise, along with something by Saint Jerome, of course, was the student's introduction to reading sacred scripture.

That scripture is sacred or even divine is first asserted by virtue of authorship (chapter 1). The poets may delight, and logic or mathematics or physics may teach certain truths, but not the truth unto salvation. The "divine" scriptures are those inspired by the Spirit of God, and the obvious difference from other writings is in the subject matter. Chapter 2 supplies the decisive difference of material and does so in terms that have been sampled already and will turn out to be supremely important for Hugh's overall career. The chapter is worth quoting in full.

> There are two works of God, in which all things which were made are consummated. The first is the work of creation, by which was made that which was not. The second is the work of restoration, by which was repaired that which was lost. The work of creation is the creating of the world with all its elements. The work of restoration is the incarnation of the Word with all his sacraments, whether those from the beginning that preceded the incarnation or those that followed afterwards until the end of the world. Therefore, the first works were made for servanthood, so that they might be subject to humanity, standing through justice. But the second [works] were made for salvation, so that they might raise up humanity, fallen through sin; for that reason these [latter] are the greater. Therefore those [works of creation] as something modest and a small

> indication of the divine power, were completed in a brief time, namely, just six days. But these [works of restoration], as excellent in comparison with the prior and as having a greater effect in power, could not be consummated except in six ages.
>
> Consider the subject matter of the divine scriptures in these [terms], therefore, so that you can distinguish them from other writings both in what they treat and also in the way they treat it. The subject matter of all other writings consists of the works of creation; the subject matter of the divine scriptures consists in the works of restoration. This therefore is the first distinction, concerning that which they treat. Further, even if other writings teach some truth, it is not without the contamination of error; even if they seem to commend some goodness, it is either mixed with evil such that it is not pure, or it is without the knowledge and love of God such that it is not perfect. Therefore, just as the soul of someone reading that which is supposed to be divine in those [writings] will fall to earth through related falsehood, so also [the soul of someone reading] that which seems earthly in the sacred scriptures will rise up through the true knowledge of the creator, which is commended in all these writings, to the divine and celestial things that should be thought and loved.[14]

This chapter propels the reader toward several subjects at once, starting with theology and categories of literature. As to theology, the pairing of creation and restoration aims at the systematic exposition in Hugh's later works, notably *De sacramentis*. Indeed, this very text is reused in that systematic summa, somewhat revised but still evident, as in the understanding of "sacraments" to encompass all of salvation history. (As we will see, Hugh often reappropriated portions of his own writings.) Further, categories of literature are here associated with creation and restoration, namely, the divine scriptures for the latter and all other literature for the former. This distinction can also be applied to Hugh's own writings, in that his scriptural expositions including *De sacramentis* pertain to God's saving work of restoration, whereas some other writings and forms of knowledge fall under works of creation. Besides beginning here to draw a sharp contrast between sacred scripture and other literature, a distinction not as clear in *Didascalicon*, this quotation hints at an interpretive principle for reading scripture itself, the subject of the whole *De scripturis*. Something may seem terrestrial even within a biblical passage, yet that is how the uplifting interpretive process starts, whereas attempting to start with the lofty may lead to a fall. Hugh is drawing his readers into a discussion of the different meanings or senses of scripture, and their relationship.

The triple understanding of scripture as history, allegory, and tropology is now expanded somewhat and deepened in chapter 3 of *De scripturis*, especially when compared with the terse presentation in the *Chronicles*. The deep background to all this is Origen, Jerome, Augustine, and especially Gregory the Great. Hugh here mentions, with development later, the Augustinian notion that it is not only the words that can signify things in scripture but also that the things signified, the events being narrated, can signify other things or events. "Alle"-gory means this "other" or alien meaning.[15] The allegorical sense, for Hugh, is thus also framed historically or typologically, as when one event signifies another, whether past or present or future. He here uncharacteristically subdivides the allegorical sense into simple allegory and anagogy, "that is, upward leading," but never makes anything of it.[16] The biblical Job, to introduce a Gregorian example, can be triply understood: the words indicate a historical man, who signifies Christ allegorically, and models the penitent soul for us. Not all biblical texts have all three meanings, but many do, and it is all grounded in the historical sense.[17]

At this point (chapter 5), Hugh simulates a lively debate with those who would leap over the letter in their eagerness for the allegorical or spiritual meaning. You cannot appreciate how Christ is like a lion, sleeping (humanity) with eyes open (divinity), unless you know something about real lions, not just the word *lion*.[18] "Do not, therefore, wish to make a leap, lest you fall into a ditch!"[19] The only way to the invisible is through the visible, as in Christ himself. "Thus, do not wish to despise the humility in the Word of God, for it is through the humility that you will be illumined to divinity."[20] Did not Christ use the terrestrial mud under our feet to open the eyes of the blind man? "Therefore, read scripture and first learn diligently what it narrates corporally," according to the (historical) sequence of narration.[21] As Grover Zinn has emphasized, regarding this text and many others, for Hugh, history is the foundation.[22] It is on the historical foundation of scripture that he will build the (allegorical) framework of doctrinal theology and then finish or decorate it with a spiritual way of life, as suggested already but not yet developed.

For several chapters (6–12), Hugh's *De scripturis* next lists the books of the Bible, their writers and translators, as taken in large part from Isidore of Seville and also highlighted in book 4 of the *Didascalicon*. He then returns to the double "fruit" of divine reading in chapter 13, namely, first building up knowledge through history and (allegorical) doctrine, and then

adorning it all with the moral, or tropological, as also developed in book 5 of the *Didascalicon.* The seven liberal arts are applied: the trivium (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) to understanding the words, the quadrivium to understanding the things they signify. The ensuing Augustinian discussion of "words" and "things" parallels Hugh's other texts, yet Zinn's analysis highlights a distinctive emphasis at the end of this treatise, one that is not duplicated in the *Didascalicon* but is indicative of Hugh's career as a whole. With the concluding chapter 17, Hugh returns to the subject matter, the *materia* of divine scripture, namely, the salvation history of "the incarnate Word with all his sacraments whether preceding from the beginning of the world or future to the end of the age."[23] This fundamentally historical outlook on scripture has many varieties, all of them involving temporal succession: two states (old and new), three times (natural law, written law, and grace), the six ages (corresponding to the six stages of human growth), all developed elsewhere. Hugh's historical perspective has become evident and provides the distinctive mark to his view of scripture, over against his view of other (nonscriptural) literature. As Zinn concludes,

> Scripture is distinctive and superior to the writings of the philosophers precisely because it deals with deeds done in time, specifically with the deeds known as the works of restoration. Hugh has now discovered the theological key to his distinctive view of the cosmos, history, and salvation. God is revealed in the very material of existence and in the structures and events of history.[24]

Zinn rightly isolates the "theological key" to Hugh's work, namely, salvation history, more evident in this lesser known treatise than in the *Didascalicon,* with its overall discussion of all learning and teaching.

3. *The Didascalicon*

Third in our abbot's order for reading Hugh of St. Victor is the justly famous *Didascalicon de studio legendi*. Of the pedagogical foundations being laid in this presentation of Hugh's corpus, it is by far the largest, most detailed, and most influential. The reader's first and lasting impression is of the amazing breadth of learning involved, the diverse topics and sources, not only within Hugh's work but also prescribed therein for general study in the Victorine school. Every conceivable subject seems part of this curriculum, from the humanities to the sciences, from arts to crafts, with detailed pedagogical

guidance on what to read, how, and why. Hugh's reputation for broad learning is rightly linked to this particular work, which today's readers can easily see for themselves, since translations and analyses abound.[25]

An introduction to the *Didascalicon* can only hint at the curricular details it presents but should suggest the educational and formational principles at work and can ask certain questions about the relationship of this book and these principles to Hugh's overall corpus and career. For example, following Abbot Gilduin's sequence, how does Hugh's historical perspective, specifically the schema of works of creation and works of restoration, relate to this curricular overview? Further, how does he develop his hermeneutical method of the threefold sense of scripture (history, allegory, and tropology) toward his other writings, the rest of his corpus, specifically in theology and spirituality? The *Chronicles* and *De scripturis* lead the reader to the *Didascalicon* with these and other questions, and still more come from Hugh's ambitious overview of reading and learning.

Hugh's own preface to the work supplies the tone and the outline. He wants to inspire students in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, specifically on what to read, in what order, and how. Meditation will come later. As he says,

> [This] book, moreover, instructs the reader as well of secular writing as of the Divine Writings. Therefore, it is divided into two parts, each of which contains three subdivisions. In the first part, it instructs the reader of the arts, in the second, the reader of the Sacred Scripture.[26]

Thus books 1 through 3 concern secular readings in "the arts," their origins and distinctions and authors, guiding the students in what to read, in sequence, and how (their "discipline of life"). Similarly, regarding books 4 through 6:

> In the second part it determines what writings ought to be called divine, and next, the number and order of the Divine Books, and their authors, and the interpretations of the names of these Books. It then treats certain characteristics of Divine Scripture which are very important. Then it shows how Sacred Scripture ought to be read by the man who seeks in it the correction of his morals and a form of living. Finally, it instructs the man who reads in it for love of knowledge, and thus the second part too comes to a close.[27]

As already indicated, some of this material duplicates what is in *De scripturis* and borrows extensively from sources such as Isidore of Seville. Yet

it adds up to its own tour de force regarding an ambitious curriculum of secular and scriptural reading, all for the sake of personal (spiritual) formation in the Victorine sense.

Book 1 immediately shows the sophistication of Hugh's work, both in the concepts (a discussion of philosophy and Wisdom that turns out to be divine, the "living mind" of Christ) and also in sources (naming Apollo's epigram, Plato's *Timaeus,* Pythagoras, and Varro; quoting Chalcidius briefly and Boethius at length).[28] As the "love of wisdom," philosophy is defined as "the discipline which investigates comprehensively the ideas [*rationes*] of all things, human and divine,"[29] indicating the disciplinary breadth of what is to come, and aims especially at the Wisdom that "is the sole primordial Idea or Pattern of things," quoting Boethius regarding an overall theological, indeed Christological, goal.[30]

As chapter 5 turns to the promised discussion of the secular arts, their origins and categories ("Concerning the Rise of the Theoretical, the Practical, and the Mechanical," to be joined by the "logical"), Hugh first provides an overarching theological context regarding human nature: created good, suffering corruption, needing repair or restoration.

> Of all human acts or pursuits, then, governed as these are by Wisdom, the end and the intention ought to regard either the restoring of our nature's integrity, or the relieving of those weaknesses to which our present life lies subject.[31]

As Hugh goes on to explain, humanity is both good by nature and corrupted or lessened, thus needing repair. Evil as a deficiency needs to be tempered or removed. "This is our entire task—the restoration of our nature and the removal of our deficiency."[32] Theologically implicit in this framework is Hugh's familiar sequence of creation and restoration, now separated by the suggestion of the fall and thus a need for repair. Hugh does not here use his explicit language of "the work of creation" and "the work of restoration," but the conceptual framework is identical, and the language is similar. After digressing, he says, for a chapter on humanity's dual affiliations (necessary flux and eternal stability), Hugh returns to this overarching framework for everything human, including the explicit language of restoration.

> From this it can be inferred, as said above, that the intention of all human actions is resolved in a common objective: either to restore in us the likeness of the divine image or to take thought for the necessity of this life.[33]

In Hugh's basic bifurcation, "the necessity of this life" implies both the original creation and also our fall into corruption, whereas the repair of our nature is straightforwardly God's work of restoration, regarding truth and virtue. This framework yields the distinction between understanding and knowledge, and thus Hugh's first division of the arts.

> When, moreover, we strive after the restoration of our nature, [we perform] a divine action, but when we provide the necessaries required by our infirm part, a human action. Every action, thus, is either human or divine. The former type, since it derives from above, we may not unfittingly call "understanding" (*intelligentia*); the latter, since it derives from below and requires, as it were, a certain practical counsel, "knowledge" (*scientia*).[34]

This basic distinction of understanding and knowledge, both stemming from (divine) Wisdom, is further classified into the basic categories familiar in the rest of the book.

> Understanding, again, inasmuch as it works both for the investigation of truth and the delineation of morals, we divide into two kinds—into theoretical, that is to say speculative, and practical, that is to say active. The latter is also called ethical, or moral. Knowledge, however, since it pursues merely human works, is fitly called "mechanical," that is to say adulterate.[35]

With the addition shortly of the "logical," because it was the last to be discovered or invented, we have Hugh's fundamental four branches of knowledge or philosophy: the theoretical, the practical, the mechanical, and the logical, as further subdivided and defined in due course. The deep theological background fades away quickly, but it has launched the basic sequence. Creation/fall and the repair to truth and virtue pertain, respectively, to life's necessities and the restoration of the divine likeness, and thus to (lower) "knowledge" (the mechanical) and to (higher) "understanding." The higher realm of repair or divine restoration is twofold, namely, the contemplation of truth (the "theoretical" or speculative) and the practice of virtue (the "practical," or active, ethical or moral). Although mostly implicit, except for the clear language of restoration, Hugh's familiar theological framework of the work of creation and the work of restoration is also foundational for his classification of knowledge in the *Didascalicon*.

Thinking about such things requires logic, and thus, as Boethius had argued, the "logical" is last to develop. "Linguistic logic" contains grammar,

dialectic, and rhetoric, and the fourfold division of knowledge (theoretical, practical, mechanical, and logical) is set up for further elaboration in book 2. A comprehensive and ambitious curriculum has come into view, and the theological foundation is assumed.

Philosophy as the "love of wisdom," including the divine Wisdom or "living Mind" (requoting Boethius), is again the overarching category for Hugh's further specification and classification of the arts in the *Didascalicon,* book 2. The larger context of creation and restoration is glimpsed only briefly. "This, then, is what the arts are concerned with, this is what they intend, namely to restore within us the divine likeness."[36] The theological language of restoration or repair then disappears as Hugh divides and subdivides philosophy into the various arts or branches of knowledge, but it remains the doctrinal context for all the details of the *Didascalicon.* In that sense, the liberal arts concern not only creation but also the beginnings of restoration. Philosophy, repeats Hugh, is the study of all things, human and divine, as seen in his fourfold scheme.

> Philosophy is divided into theoretical, practical, mechanical, and logical. These four contain all knowledge. The theoretical may also be called speculative; the practical may be called active, likewise ethical, that is, moral, from the fact that morals consist in good action; the mechanical may be called adulterate because it is concerned with the works of human labor; the logical may be called linguistic from its concern with words. The theoretical is divided into theology, mathematics, and physics.[37]

Now begins an itemizing and further subdividing of these various classifications, beginning with theology in the specific (Boethian) sense of the contemplation of God, even though the entire discussion of philosophy has also been framed theologically from the beginning, and the second part of this entire work concerns theological scripture.

The theoretical divides into theology, mathematics, and physics, and then mathematics is further identified, again in Boethian terms, as the quadrivium: "Mathematics, therefore, is divided into arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy."[38] Each of these terms is discussed, and that field of knowledge sometimes subdivided further, as in the varieties of music or geometry. (Hugh's separate treatise *On Geometry*, discussed shortly, illustrates some of his pedagogical patterns.) Physics is also discussed, albeit briefly, and these various categories are compared and contrasted.

Hugh's second major subdivision, the practical, is tersely subdivided into three: the solitary (ethical or moral), the private (economic or managerial), and the public (political or civil), meaning, respectively: individuals, families, and governments.[39] Again quoting Boethius, Hugh adds little of his own. Turning quickly to the third of his four major branches of knowledge, the mechanical, Hugh has already admitted that most previous classifications of philosophy had no such category.[40] Perhaps in conscious compensation, Hugh here innovates with a comprehensive array of examples in chapters 20 through 27. The seven basic subdivisions (grouped as three and four, like the trivium and quadrivium) are fabric making of all kinds, armaments including all construction and crafts, commerce, agriculture, hunting including everything to do with food and drink, medicine, and theatrics. On display here is Hugh's breadth of mind and generosity of judgment. The broad definition of *hunting* to include food and drink generates a dazzling list of breads and meats and beverages. "Hunting, therefore, includes all the duties of bakers, butchers, cooks, and tavern keepers."[41] The Victorine teacher also shows a generous or positive judgment about commerce (*navigatio*) and theatrics (entertainment generally), although both topics were sometimes subject to ecclesial censure. "The pursuit of commerce reconciles nations, calms wars, strengthens peace, and commutes the private good of individuals into the common benefit of all."[42] Overall, these lists of specific subdivisions and lively examples of the mechanical read like a comprehensive affirmation of daily life in the world at large, the world of blankets, saws, trade, meadows, beer, surgery, and amphitheaters. Here and elsewhere, Hugh does not disparage the physical created world but affirms it, as seen more directly in his discussion of creation.

The fourth part of philosophy is the logical, meaning grammar (with all its subdivisions, treated in another work) and argument, including dialectic and rhetoric. "Grammar is the knowledge of how to speak without error; dialectic is clear-sighted argument which separates the true from the false; rhetoric is the discipline of persuading to every suitable thing."[43]

Hugh himself sums up all of this.

> Philosophy is divided into the theoretical, the practical, the mechanical, and the logical. The *theoretical* is divided into theology, physics, and mathematics; mathematics is divided into arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. The *practical* is divided into solitary, private, and public. The *mechanical* is divided into fabric making, armament, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, and theatrics. Logic is divided into

> grammar and argument: argument is divided into demonstration, probable argument, and sophistic: probable argument is divided into dialectic and rhetoric.[44]

This scheme, at the opening of book 3 about the various authors of all these topics, can also be laid out as an outline.

> *Philosophy (love of Wisdom)*
> *encompassing all the arts,*
> *aiming at the repair of the divine image in us.*

- Theoretical
  - theology
  - physics
  - mathematics
    - arithmetic
    - music
    - geometry
    - astronomy
- Practical
  - solitary
  - private
  - public
- Mechanical
  - fabric making
  - armament
  - commerce
  - agriculture
  - hunting
  - medicine
  - theatrics
- Logical
  - grammar
  - dialectic
  - rhetoric

With twenty-some headings, the Victorine curriculum of secular writings was comprehensive and ambitious indeed. Hugh's list of selected authors is equally formidable, such as Varro, John the Scot (Eriugena), Pliny, Pythagoras, Boethius of course, Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Vergil.[45]

Hugh's real concern is not merely to list works or authors but to shape or form the student-readers in the way of wisdom. Even the words "tri*vium*" and "quadri*vium*" concern the ways (*viae*) "into the secret places of wisdom."[46] "We find many who study but few who are wise."[47] Hugh's advice here encompasses not only students (who should privilege the "arts" as named, not the "appendages" such as poetry) but also teachers, because some other lecturers tend to blur the arts or topics together. Hugh seems particularly critical of some other teachers, albeit anonymously: "It is not the teaching of others that they accomplish in this way, but the showing off of their own knowledge."[48] His concern for effective teaching is explicit here, as well as implicit throughout his teaching and writing career, for he embodies this advice.

> When, therefore, we treat of any art—and especially in teaching it, when everything must be reduced to outline (*compendium*) and presented for easy understanding—we should be content to set forth the matter in hand as briefly and as clearly as possible, lest by excessively piling up extraneous considerations we distract the student more than we instruct (*aedificemus*) him.[49]

Hugh's concern is consistently pedagogical, in his own writings elsewhere in practice, and for the rest of this work in theory.

How the student learns depends not only on natural ability and practice but also on an effective order or sequence of readings, as set forth by good teaching. This entire concern, explicitly applicable both to secular writings and to the divine scripture considered later in the *Didascalicon*, is a pedagogical expression of Hugh's overall interest in temporal succession, in a sequential order of events, in historical narration. Whether the macro of cosmic salvation history or the micro of a curricular order, Hugh was consistently historical. Specifically, the order of exposition is clear, for divine scripture as well: "first the letter [*littera*; the words themselves]; then the sense [*sensus*; the plain meaning of the words], and finally the inner meaning [*sententia*; the deeper understanding]."[50] Hugh's own commentaries, whether on scripture or on Dionysius, follow this pattern, especially in the patient analysis of the text as it stands (the "letter," meaning a close look at each word) before moving on to the "sense." Such reading, the subject of this whole work, thus includes exposition by analysis and leads to meditation that ranges more freely without such rules. As the goal of disciplined reading, such meditation (chapter 10) reminds the student of the larger spiritual

goods, for meditating upon the creation can lead one to the Creator. The world of secular reading is God's world after all, as appreciated in "continual meditation upon the wonders of God."[51]

Many pedagogical virtues and capacities are then extolled, including memory of a summa (with the familiar imagery of a treasure chest),[52] discipline, and especially humility. The fervor and specificity of Hugh's praise for humility, the beginning of discipline, and especially his diatribe against those who lack it (swollen namedroppers and peddlers of trifle who wrinkle their noses at lecturers in divinity) have led some to see Peter Abelard between the lines.[53] The positive side of Hugh's advice on humble and patient learning also applies to learning about him and his work: "The man who proceeds stage by stage moves along best. Certain fellows, wishing to make a great leap of progress, sprawl headlong. Do not hurry too much, therefore."[54] Humble willingness to learn everything, but in a good and productive order or succession, marks Hugh's own works of pedagogical foundation and also allows these particular works to lay the foundations for our own encounter with Hugh's life and work. Among the final virtues or conditions for effective learning is the situation of exile invoked earlier for its hints of Hugh's own background. Here, finally, in its original pedagogical context, is the teacher's poetic touch of autobiography.

> The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his. From boyhood I have dwelt on foreign soil, and I know with what grief sometimes the mind takes leave of the narrow hearth of a peasant's hut, and I know, too, how frankly it afterwards disdains marble firesides and paneled halls.[55]

In moving to the second half of the *Didascalicon*, and thus completing one entry into Hugh's world, his life, and his pedagogical foundations, our author works with a symmetry that is both obvious and also implicit. Obviously, as in the preface, the two parts present what to read, in what order, and how, with respect first to the secular writings (books 1 through 3) and then to the divine writings (books 4 through 6). Many aspects of reading and learning apply equally well to both kinds of literature. In moving from the secular to the sacred, the *Didascalicon*'s fourth book does not make much of a theological contrast, just that the philosophers may

look attractive while containing falsehood, whereas the sacred scriptures look simple but contain pure truth and carry the authority of the church. Implicit, or perhaps not yet developed, is the overarching doctrinal framework seen in *De scripturis* regarding creation and salvation.

> The subject matter of all other writings consists of the works of creation; the subject matter of the divine scriptures consists in the works of restoration.[56]

Hugh's views of scriptural interpretation consistently cohere with this correlation of philosophy and the arts with creation and the sacred scriptures with salvation, but he does not make much of it in the *Didascalicon.*

Hugh's introduction of the biblical writings invokes another pattern of explicit symmetry, indeed, like the work as a whole, two symmetrical triads.

> The whole of Sacred Scripture is contained in two Testaments, namely, in the Old and in the New. The books in each Testament are divided into three groups. The Old Testament contains the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographers; the New contains the Gospel, the Apostles and the Fathers.[57]

The list of biblical books and the meanings of their names then draws on Jerome and especially (verbatim) Isidore's *Etymologies*, as does the whole of book 4, but the inclusion of "the Fathers" to complete the triadic symmetry is Hugh's own creative addition. How the New Testament can include these patristic authors outside the canon is never fully explained.[58]

In listing the biblical books and their writers, the translators, and apocryphal books, the canons and synods of the church, Hugh is quoting large passages of Isidore, as also seen in *De scripturis.* When he itemizes the Fathers, he also quotes from the pseudo-Gelasian decretals for most of the names (adding to Isidore's trio of Origen, Jerome, and Augustine a longer list starting with Athanasius, Hilary, and Basil), but on his own he adds Cassiodorus regarding the Psalms and this: "Dionysius the Areopagite, ordained bishop of the Corinthians, has left many volumes as testimony of his mental ability."[59] Hugh will return to Dionysius, at length, in another work, as covered in my appendix. Book 4 closes without further discussion of how the Fathers could be included within the New Testament, merely quoting more Isidorean etymologies on terms like *codex* and *homily* and *gloss*.

With books 5 and 6 of the *Didascalicon*, Hugh comes to the pedagogical foundation of biblical interpretation. Although still at times quoting Isidore

at length and sometimes overlapping verbatim with his own *De scripturis*, Hugh's distinctive method is clear. "First of all, it ought to be known that Sacred Scripture has three ways of conveying meaning—namely, history, allegory, and tropology."[60] Not that every biblical text will necessarily contain all three. "Often, however, in one and the same literal context, all may be found together, as when a truth of history both hints at some mystical meaning by way of allegory, and equally shows by way of tropology how we ought to behave."[61] What Hugh means by "history" or "allegory" or "tropology" is not so immediately plain, and the relationships of these three ways to each other and to Hugh's overall method and, indeed, his entire corpus can be clarified only gradually. "History," for starters, can mean both the events and the narrations thereof, "allegory" relates directly to doctrine, and "tropology" covers much more than ethics or morality in the modern sense. To follow Hugh's own uses of these terms, and thus his hermeneutical method, leads to many other texts beyond the *Didascalicon*, indeed, in due time to an overall perspective on his works as a whole. For now, however, Hugh gives glimpses not only of his goals for all of this but also of his sources. From Augustine, especially *On Christian Doctrine*, comes the familiar claim that not only scriptural words but also scriptural events ("things") signify further meanings.[62] From Tyconius by way of Augustine and Isidore come the "seven rules," although Hugh never develops any of them any further.[63]

For students to progress in reading scripture in the right order and in the right way, they must keep its goals in mind, and here history, allegory, and tropology apply.

> Twofold is the fruit of sacred reading, because it either instructs the mind with knowledge or it equips it with morals. It teaches what it delights us to know and what it behooves us to imitate. Of these, the first, namely knowledge, has more to do with history and allegory, the other, namely instruction in morals, has more to do with tropology. The whole of sacred Scriptures is directed to this end.[64]

Of these two categories, the knowledge or doctrine that comes in the move from history to allegory (the interpretation of history as the work of restoration, namely, as salvation history) receives no further explanation until book 6, and of course, the entire *De sacramentis*. But the realm of tropology, the way of life, is immediately expanded by way of the saints' lives and explicit reference to Gregory the Great, apparently his *Dialogues*. In this context, *morality* does not mean ethics in the narrow modern sense of social justice, but rather the

entire spiritual life of meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Hugh explicitly itemizes the steps of such a life as study, meditation, prayer, performance, and contemplation.[65] Such is the way of life, the mores of tropology, meaning that much of the meditative or contemplative patterns we might call spirituality are implied in this culminating sense of scripture. In particular, contemplation will remain an important category in Hugh's works, correlated to tropology, just as his doctrinal works correlate to allegory. Students should want to gain scriptural knowledge, says Hugh's conclusion, not for its own sake and certainly not for wealth or fame, but rather to teach others and to grow in love, two distinctive Victorine emphases.[66]

The concluding book of Hugh's magisterial *Didascalicon* contains some of his most important methodological and therefore theological statements, yet they must also be considered in light of his overall career and corpus. Even here, he is explicitly teaching and addressing himself "to you, my student,"[67] as to pedagogical foundations, that is, how to study. There is clear curricular order, namely, history, then allegory, then tropology, as discussed here in theory but as carried out elsewhere (in other works) in practice and in detail. Hugh invokes, and later quotes, Gregory the Great's instructive image of constructing a building: first the foundation (history), then the structure (allegory/doctrine), then the decorative finish (the way of life).[68]

First is history, a necessary foundation, even if some want to skip ahead. (Hugh testifies to his own patient learning of basic facts, although his examples are from nature or language rather than history.) As with secular learning, Hugh's advice here is humility, indeed in the same terms of patient steps instead of a precipitate leap.[69] It is in this context of patience with scriptural history that we find Hugh's famous words: "Learn everything; you will see afterwards that nothing is superfluous. A skimpy knowledge is not a pleasing thing."[70] The historical books most suited for this foundational study are Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Kings, and Chronicles, and then the four Gospels and Acts. "The foundation and principle of sacred learning is history."[71]

Before summarizing this history, from creation to the sending of apostles, Hugh reviews the threefold sense of scripture, first by quoting Gregory's analogy of a building, then in his own words.

> You have in history the means through which to admire God's deeds, in allegory the means through which to believe his mysteries [sacraments], in morality the means through which to imitate his perfection.[72]

Biblical history thus leads to the doctrinal structure of belief, including the *sacramenta* or mysteries, eventually elaborated in *De sacramentis*. Elaborating on the construction metaphor, Hugh itemizes ("Pay attention now!") the layers of doctrinal stones or mysteries (*sacramenta*) laid upon the historical foundation. The sequence here is indeed the same one later taken up in *De sacramentis*: the triune God, creation, fall; restoration under the natural law, under the (written) Law, the incarnation, the New Testament's mysteries/sacraments, and the resurrection.[73] This, says Hugh, is the whole of divinity: first the foundations of history, then the superstructure of the faith, as guided by other specific biblical books pertinent to this doctrinal study and developed more fully in *De sacramentis*. Thus Hugh's later and mature doctrinal outline was already in place in his early pedagogical work. The next step, he says (namely, the tropological sense), has already been discussed sufficiently for now.

The *Didascalicon* concludes with a characteristic concern for order, for several specific sequences, but only one of them is historical in the usual sense. There is one order for reading the books of sacred scripture in terms of history but another for the "alien" or other (allegorical) sense that involves doctrine. "History follows the order of time; to allegory belongs more the order of knowledge,"[74] namely, that clear teachings like the New Testament should precede the shrouded figures of the Old Testament. Thus the later New Testament events regarding Christ will help the student understand the earlier Old Testament prophecies.

The order of exposition of such texts is the same as already presented regarding the exposition of secular texts: first is the letter (or literal sense, involving immediate grammar and syntax), then the sense (*sensus*) as when an idiom or symbolic way of speaking needs to be understood, and then the divine deeper meanings (*sententia*), which are "always harmonious, always true"[75] but not fully explained here, as Hugh merely quotes St. Augustine on the general idea. As earlier regarding worldly writings, Hugh closes this sixth book (and the whole treatise) with reference to the method of expounding a text, namely, through analysis or distinguishing the parts, and with mention of the further topic beyond reading, namely, meditation. As Hugh said in the preface, this entire work concerns reading, whether worldly or sacred scripture, but reading is followed by meditation, "the remaining part of learning," another subject altogether: "so great a matter requires a separate treatise."[76] Hugh has already indicated this sequence ("the start of learning, thus, lies in reading, but its consummation lies in

meditation"[77]), and indeed he will lead the student to rich works of meditation in due time.

Although chapter 13 of book 6 thus seems to have been the original conclusion ("those things pertaining to reading have been explained as lucidly and briefly as we know how"[78]) Hugh himself added two more chapters, 14 and 15 in Buttimer's edition and appendices A and B in Taylor's translation. They sum up, respectively, the "Division of the Contents of Philosophy" and an overview of false knowledge ("Magic and Its Parts"), such as sorcery, necromancy, and horoscopes. Since Abbot Gilduin explicitly supplied the last words of his edition,[79] we know that it included this material.

This fuller conclusion, especially the penultimate chapter, shows Hugh's pedagogical principles at work, in two ways. First, he again sketches the larger context for "every art and every discipline." The theoretical, the practical, and the mechanical pertain respectively to wisdom, virtue, and need, which are themselves three "remedies against three evils to which human life is subject: wisdom against ignorance, virtue against vice, and need against life's weaknesses."[80] Here Hugh echoes his initial presentation (book 1) that all human pursuits "ought to regard either the restoring of our nature's integrity, or the relieving of those weaknesses to which our present life lies subject."[81] In other words, in his conclusion, Hugh has restated the theological context for all this "philosophy" or reading in general, namely, the creation-fall-restoration sequence of salvation history. These culminating categories (evils and remedies) were earlier presented in terms of "the restoration of our nature and the removal of our deficiency,"[82] and thus the larger theological framework (the "work of restoration") is here glimpsed again as the *Didascalicon* concludes.

The second pedagogical benefit of this concluding summary is that he helpfully provides the reader with another overview listing of the various parts of philosophy, also as a curriculum of learning: logic first, starting with grammar, ethics or "the practical" next (solitary, private, and public), the theoretical arts next (theology, physics, and mathematics, including geometry), and the mechanical arts fourth and last.[83] Indeed, the abbot's corpus next moves quickly to *On Grammar* and *Practical Geometry*, and so shall we. Although this summary mostly repeats what was presented earlier—for example, at the beginning of book 3—it is helpful here for the reader to have a concluding overview, as the teacher no doubt intended.

4. Summary

The *Didascalicon* is Hugh's most important work of pedagogical foundation, yet it is best appreciated in the context of the several works that Abbot Gilduin placed at the start of his edition of Hugonian works. For a simple example, Gilduin's next work, the early and brief *Epitoma Dindimi in philosophiam* on these same themes, seems appended here as in the shadow of the larger work. The *Didascalicon* covers the same ground and usually in much more detail. Presented in a charming dialogue, the *Epitoma* has the same breakdown of philosophy, its definition, origin, and divisions, as summarized at the beginning of Roger Baron's part 4 and the table sometimes appended.[84] It also mentions, albeit briefly, the theological context of three evils[85] and frames the whole work in terms of the creator: "The goal of all philosophy is knowledge of the highest good, which is situated in the sole maker of all things."[86]

From here, Gilduin's corpus continues with Hugh's pedagogical treatises on specific topics, namely, *On Grammar* and *On Practical Geometry*, as we shall see shortly, but the initial works covered so far are of larger methodological importance regarding pedagogical foundations generally. They have introduced several principles or deep structures in Hugh's thought that can help organize further presentation of his many works.

The Chronicles, *On the Scriptures*, and the *Didascalicon* all show Hugh, first of all, as pedagogue. These and other texts are "teaching tools,"[87] as Grover Zinn calls them, and indicate Hugh's concern throughout for effective teaching. His entire corpus testifies to this concern for pedagogy, specifically for organizing the material into a teachable, learnable order.[88] He explicitly advises his students at length about how to read and to learn. For his part, how to teach seems to mean especially how to order the material in an effective sequence, which is itself a matter of temporal order and often explicitly a historical order. Hugh's ordering of history does not always mean chronological details, although that is the basis. Glimpsed in his early guidance to the boys in his care and placed first by Gilduin, and then developed further in many other works, Hugh's overarching historical order is creation and restoration, God's work of creation in six days and God's work of restoration in six ages. According to *De scripturis*, the work of creation is the subject of all worldly literature, whereas sacred scripture is devoted to the works of restoration. Hugh's own work can also be allocated

accordingly, but unevenly so, for he is mostly concerned for the scriptural story of restoration.

Specifically, sacred scripture should be read according to a triple meaning. The historical comes first, meaning the events narrated by the text itself; then comes the doctrinal interpretation of scripture that he calls the allegory; and then the personal or spiritual appropriation called tropology. The biblical texts themselves, the letter, yield the sense of a basic story. For Hugh, the world's story or history should be interpreted doctrinally or theologically as God's work of restoration. This biblical interpretation he calls allegory, the "other" meaning, but that word for him means doctrine or theology in the modern sense, as we will see when we come to his culminating exposition of it in the *De sacramentis.* Similarly, the tropological or moral sense of scripture that comes next is not a narrow (later) matter of ethics but the whole of life, especially the spiritual life including prayer and contemplation, as in many of Hugh's later works.[89]

Thus building on the foundations of history, in this pedagogical construct, is the framework of doctrine and then the final adornment of spirituality. All of this is within the heading of the divine work of restoration. Many although not all of Hugh's other works and concerns can fall into these two categories of (allegorical) doctrine and (tropological) spirituality and will be taken up in due course. Other works can fall into the prior category of the works of creation, such as the treatise on geometry. Still other writings parallel this initial overarching concern for pedagogy and formation, such as Hugh's guidance for Victorine novices.

Thus, in summary, Hugh's pedagogical foundations can indicate an order for encountering his other works and his overall corpus, but only gradually. After all, three times already he has warned that those who wish to make a great leap will fall into a big ditch![90] Under works of creation come Hugh's introductions to grammar and geometry, the next works in Gilduin's order. Under works of restoration, the realm of sacred scripture, come many of Hugh's writings, here triply divided according to his own hermeneutical method. First, the letter or foundational text of scripture is the starting point for many of Hugh's biblical commentaries, especially the historical sense of the Pentateuch. Of course, there are sermons too numerous to itemize. Second, Hugh's doctrinal (allegorical) interpretations of the biblical story are summed up in his magisterial *De sacramentis*, along with other theological works in this specific sense. Last, and at length, the (tropological) results of all of this for life, for the personal lives of the faithful

especially in prayer and contemplation, are the subject of many of Hugh's works, great and small, whether the full treatise on Noah's ark or the small essays on love and a very personal *Soliloquy.* Thus, a strategic grouping of Hugh's remaining works, mostly according to his own conceptual framework:

Works of creation/worldly literature

On Grammar, Practical Geometry (chapter 3, A)

Works of restoration/sacred scripture

the literal/historical: commentaries (chapter 3, B)

the allegorical/doctrinal: *De sacramentis* (and others) (part II: chapters 4 through 6)

the tropological/spiritual: the ark treatises and meditations, ending with Hugh's most personal spiritual essay (part III: chapters 7 through 9).

Even such a comprehensive framework cannot do justice to the multifaceted nature of Hugh's writings or contain all of his different types of writings. Many of his works cannot be so simply classified, and a few fall outside this schema altogether, such as his extensive commentary on the Dionysian *Celestial Hierarchy*, presented in an appendix. Nevertheless, creation-restoration and historical-allegorical-tropological are Hugh's own pedagogical foundations for his work, especially according to Abbot Gilduin's initial ordering of the Victorine corpus, and thus suggest themselves as the ordering principles of a sequence for gradually encountering Hugh's many other writings.