

# **Victorine Christology**

# VICTORINE TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

Exegesis, Theology, and Spirituality from the Abbey of St Victor

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In the twelfth century the Augustinian canons of the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris occupied a critical position between traditional, meditative theology and emerging scholasticism. In a series of thematic volumes, this collaborative effort will make available in new, annotated English translations many of their most important and influential works, as well as other Victorine works that deserve to be better known.

# Victorine Christology

*A Selection of Works of Hugh and Achard of St Victor, and  
of Robert of Melun, and excerpts taken from  
the Summa Sententiarum*

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For Elizabeth, Lauren, Andrew, Matthew, and James Evans

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## PREFACE

In Christology as in much else, Hugh of St Victor laid the foundations for several generations of creative theological thinkers at St Victor in Paris. In this volume, the editor, Christopher Evans, and his collaborators offer selections from works that formulate and defend that thinking and situate it in the context of other contemporary attempts to understand how Christ could be both God and man. Evans' introduction is a masterful summary of the place of the Victorines in the development of Christology during the twelfth century. In this volume, Hugh's thinking is represented by the Christological part of his *On the Sacraments* and his treatise on the *Wisdom of Christ's Soul*, where he argues that Christ's human soul had by grace what his divinity had by nature. This is a theme that reappears in Achard's Easter sermon. The other texts translated here, the Christological section of the *Summa sententiarum* and of Robert of Melun's *Sentences*, are deeply influenced by Hugh's Christology. Robert's text, hitherto unedited as well as untranslated, is a presentation and defense of Victorine Christology by someone deeply involved in the Parisian theological scene in the generation after Hugh. Robert's treatment was the high point of Victorine Christology. Richard of St Victor, who was acquainted with Robert and was Hugh's equal in many ways, wrote insightfully about soteriology, but he did not write a treatise on Christology.

With the publication of this volume of Victorine Texts in Translation, six of the ten volumes are completed. Although it is somewhat anachronistic, it is convenient to place them in categories. Here is an overview of the current status of the series:

Doctrine: 1. *Trinity and Creation* (2010); 7. *Christology* (2018); 10. *Sacraments* (almost complete).

Biblical Interpretation: 3. *Theory* (2012); 6. *Practice* (2015)

The Christian Life: 2. *Love* (2011); 4. *Writings on the Spiritual Life* (2013); 5. *Spiritual Formation and Mystical Symbolism* (almost complete).

Life at St Victor: 8. *Sermons on the Liturgical Year* (ready for submission); 9. *Daily Life* (underway).

Each volume has a number of contributors, and the editorial board vets each contribution, so the logistics of the series are complicated. For the most part, we have been able to keep to the schedule. I am very grateful to the editorial board and the translators for their fine work and heroic effort to meet deadlines.

The series includes translations of writings by almost every notable Victorine of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries: Hugh, Adam, Andrew, Achard, Richard, Godfrey, Walter, Absalom of Springiersbach, and Thomas Gallus. As the series has progressed we have expanded its scope to include authors associated with St Victor, though not members of the Abbey: Robert of Melun, the *Summa sententiarum*, Maurice of Sully, Peter Comestor, and Leonius of Paris. At the same time the list of contributors has expanded beyond the editorial board, an indication of the continued vitality of Victorine studies.

Christopher Evans deserves special thanks for completing this volume during a time when he has taken on heavy administrative responsibilities at his university. All of us on the board are grateful to him and to our publishers at Brepols and New City Press, who have encouraged and supported our undertaking. The end is in sight!

Hugh Feiss, OSB  
Monastery of the Ascension  
Managing Editor, Victorine Texts in Translation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present volume marks another milestone of a project that was envisioned over ten years ago. The goal was to make available to a broad audience the depth and breadth of Victorine theology in a ten-volume series of English translations. This volume completes six of those ten volumes. I am grateful to Fr. Hugh Feiss, Joshua Benson, and John Froula for producing English translations and to Frans van Liere and Nancy Van Baak for the painstaking task of vetting the English translations. The editorial board and I are also grateful to Brepols and New City Press for their continued support of this series.

The job of an academic dean is not always conducive to research, so I am fortunate to be a member of the University of St Thomas (Houston, TX) where excellent teaching and research are promoted and valued. And the Faculty Development Committee at UST was gracious enough to grant me funds to hire a copyeditor, Clint Brand. His careful attention to detail was invaluable.

Finally, I am most grateful to my wife and children for their constant support and encouragement of my research.

Christopher P. Evans  
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences  
University of St Thomas (Houston, TX)

*Feast of St Ambrose 2017*

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Christopher P. EVANS

*et Verbum caro factum est*  
John 1:14

The twelfth century was a great age of a burgeoning intellectual fervor and acute sense of systematization.<sup>1</sup> The theological activity in the schools was especially important for providing solutions to Christological questions that theologians continued to develop throughout the Middle Ages. A principal question for them was the union of God and man in Christ, and three competing theories emerged. Today we call them the *homo assumptus* theory, the subsistence theory, and the *habitus* theory and regard them as stemming from the Christologies of Hugh of St Victor, Gilbert of Poitiers, and Peter Lombard respectively.

The importance of Victorine Christology in the development of this doctrine is unquestionable, and the writings selected for this volume provide important witnesses to it. Many of these writings are translated into English here for the first time. The short introductions accompanying the English translations provide overviews of the writings in question. This general introduction provides three summaries. The first contextualizes the Victorine Christological writings within the Christological controversies of the twelfth century. The second overview describes and compares the three competing theories of the union of God and man in Christ: the *homo assumptus* theory, the *habitus* theory, and the subsistence theory. Also covered here is the *partes* theory. The third overview provides an assessment of Victorine Christology by late twelfth-century theologians who supported the subsistence theory, the only position that survived the twelfth century.

<sup>1</sup> English translations are mine except for the writings contained in this volume. Transcriptions from the unedited Latin writings are my own and derive from digital or microfilmed copies of the manuscript(s) at my disposal. Whenever possible, the transcriptions are based on multiple manuscripts with only significant variants indicated. Parenthetical references to the manuscript contain the sigla, which are listed in the general bibliography with the writing in question, and the folios.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF VICTORINE CHRISTOLOGICAL WRITINGS<sup>2</sup>

The twelfth-century writings developing Victorine Christology can be divided into four proximate periods, and the writings translated in this volume are situated in the first two. The first was the foundational period during the 1130s when Hugh of St Victor championed the paradigm of the “assumed man” (*homo assumptus*) and developed it in his polemics against the *partes* theory inspired by Peter Abelard. A succinct summary of Hugh’s Christology was published in the influential *Summa Sententiarum* around 1140. The second period during the 1150s was the peak of Victorine Christology. Victorine theologians like Achard of St Victor and Robert of Melun perceived a different threat in the *habitus* theory which they regarded as heretical; and, to combat this threat, they advanced Hugh’s Christology to address new questions and objections. During the third period of the 1160s, proponents of the *homo assumptus* theory continued their attacks on the competing theories without advancing the positive contributions of Victorine Christology. Drawing from Robert of Melun’s *Sentences*, the anonymous *Apologia de Verbo Incarnato* was an important polemical treatise that circulated among subsequent proponents of the *homo assumptus* theory. The fourth period witnessed the condemnation of the *habitus* theory in 1170 and again in 1177 thanks in part to those faithful to Victorine Christology. The condemnation was a tremendous blow to the popularity of the *habitus* theory, but theologians did not find a satisfactory replacement in *homo assumptus* theory. Proponents of the subsistence theory gained the momentum and had amassed arguments against the other theories that continued to grow in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. By this time, the subsistence theory became the only theory supported in the schools.

*The First Period: 1130–1150*

The first period covered Hugh of St Victor’s *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* II.1.1–13 (1130s)<sup>3</sup> and the *Summa Sententiarum* I.15–19

<sup>2</sup> I provide another treatment of this in “Victorine Christology: A Theology of the *Homo Assumptus*,” in *A Companion to the Abbey of Saint Victor*, ed. Hugh Feiss and Juliet Mousseau (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 299–303. This introduction follows the same general outline but fuller descriptions are provided here.

<sup>3</sup> For studies on Hugh’s Christology, see P. Everhard Poppenberg, *Die Christologie des Hugo von St. Victor* (Westphalia: Herz Jesu-missionhaus Hilstrup, 1937); Lauge Olaf Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Gilbert Porreta’s Thinking and the Theologi-*

(c. 1140),<sup>4</sup> both of which are translated in this volume. Another key text of Hugh was the *Collatio II de Verbo Incarnato*.<sup>5</sup> Hugh's writings were especially important, because he formulated the first extensive Christology based on the paradigm of the *homo assumptus*. The key threat at the time was the *partes* theory inspired by Peter Abelard. To make intelligible the union of God and man in Christ, proponents of the *partes* theory spoke of a conjunction of two parts that constituted some whole. Hugh, followed by the *Summa Sententiarum*, preferred to speak instead of the assumed man united to the Word in a personal union (both of these theories will be described in detail below). After Abelard's Christology was condemned at the Council of Sens in 1140,<sup>6</sup> theologians became cautious of any explanation of the union of God and man in Christ that suggested the constitution of some new person.

Another key text translated in this volume is Hugh's *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul* (before 1130) where he offered a much-discussed solution to the problem of Christ's human knowledge. Hugh's teaching was reiterated in the *Summa Sententiarum* I.16. The consensus of the twelfth century was that Christ as God had uncreated knowledge but that as man he had created knowledge. Theologians generally conceded that he had as man the plenitude of grace and knowledge such that he could not increase in his knowledge and grace. Walter of Mortagne, however, taught that Christ's soul had less wisdom than God just as any creature was inferior to the Creator; consequently, Walter's teaching precluded that Christ's soul knew all things. Hugh's position and response can be summarized as follows:

There is one wisdom of God whereby Christ's soul is wise not by participation so that it understands this or that in it and through it, but by having the fullness so that it possesses the whole. Therefore, let us

*cal Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130–1180* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 193–213; Franklin T. Harkins, "Homo Assumptus at St. Victor: Reconsidering the Relationship Between Victorine Christology and Peter Lombard's First Opinion," *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 600–8; Richard Cross, "Homo Assumptus in the Christology of Hugh of St Victor: Some Historical and Theological Revisions," *Journal of Theological Studies* 65.1 (2014): 64–69.

<sup>4</sup> For studies, see David Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard: The Influence of Abelard's Thought in the Early Scholastic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 198–213; Ferruccio Gastaldelli, "La 'Summa Sententiarum' di Ottone da Lucca: Conclusione di un dibattito secolare," *Salesianum* 42 (1989): 537–46; Richard Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 2.138–44.

<sup>5</sup> PL 177:318D–320B. See Damien van den Eynde, *Essai sur la succession et la date des de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1960), 192–93.

<sup>6</sup> See Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard*, 103–42 (esp. 136–39); Nielson, *Theology and Philosophy*, 228–31.

not say “so much” or “how much,” but let us say that the whole wisdom of God is in Christ’s soul and that Christ’s soul is wise from the whole wisdom of God, yet not that Christ’s soul is equal to God because it is not the wisdom of God.<sup>7</sup>

His basic point was that Christ’s wisdom was not simply extensive with divine wisdom, but that the whole wisdom was in Christ’s soul. This was, Hugh added, unlike how other souls were wise. Regarding the question about equality, Hugh had a solution for that as well. By virtue of the fact that Christ’s soul had the fullness of wisdom without being the wisdom of God by nature, Hugh concluded that Christ’s soul was not equal to God. What was key here was the modal distinction between sapiential aseity that was by nature (i.e., being wisdom) and receiving that wisdom that Christ’s soul has by grace (i.e., having wisdom).

### *The Second Period: 1150–1163*

The second notable period of Victorine Christological development occurred between 1150 and the Council of Tours in 1163. Hugh’s Christology was reiterated by Achard of St Victor in his *Sermon IV: On the Resurrection* and advanced by Robert of Melun in his *Sentences* II.2.33–204.<sup>8</sup> By 1158 Peter Lombard published the landmark work, the *Sentences*, and catalogued the three theories that became the point of de-

<sup>7</sup> Hugh of St Victor, *Sapientia* (PL 176:853A; tr. Benson, VTT 7:103).

<sup>8</sup> Achard of St Victor, *Sermo IV* (ed. Châtillon, 54–65; tr. Feiss, VTT 7:209–25); see also Achard, *Unitate* (ed. Martineau, 86–88). For studies on his Christology, see Jean Châtillon, *Théologie, spiritualité et métaphysique dans l’œuvre oratoire d’Achard de Saint-Victor*, Études de philosophie médiévale 58 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1969), 186–216; Harkins, “*Homo Assumptus* at St. Victor,” 608–19. For Robert of Melun, *Sent.* II.2.33–204, see my short introduction of the English translation contained in this volume; see also Robert, *QDP* 59, 63 (ed. Martin, *Œuvres*, I.30–31, 33–34); *QEP* on Rom. 1:3–4 (ed. Martin, *Œuvres*, II.10–15). For studies on his Christology, see Bernhard Barth, “Ein neues Dokument zur Geschichte der fröhscholastischen Christologie,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 101 (1920): 237–40; Ludwig Ott, *Untersuchungen zur theologischen Briefliteratur der Fröhscholastik* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1937), 184–86; Fritz Anders, *Die Christologie des Robert von Melun: aus den Handschriften zum ersten Male herausgegeben und literar- und dogmengeschichtlich untersucht* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1927), lii–lix; A. L. Lilly, “A Christological Controversy of the Twelfth Century,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1938): 225–35; Robert Studeny, *John of Cornwall an Opponent of Nihilianism: A Study in the Christological Controversies of the Twelfth Century* (Vienna: St. Gabriel’s Mission Press 1938), 123–29; Artur M. Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte der Fröhscholastik* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1953), 2/1:77–81; Ludwig Ott, “Chalkedon in der Fröhscholastik,” in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), 2.890–92; Evans, “Victorine Christology,” 308–19.

parture for all subsequent treatments: namely, the *homo assumptus* theory, the subsistence theory, and the *habitus* theory. The first theory is commonly identified with Victorine Christology, the second with Porretan Christology inspired by Gilbert of Poitiers, and the third with the Christology of Peter Lombard and his school.<sup>9</sup> In addition to these three theories, Robert of Melun listed the Abelardian *partes* theory as a distinct theory probably because he was a pupil of Peter Abelard and because of his attempt to be thorough. However, the *partes* theory had no support in the schools by the 1150s.

The Christological controversies in this period are of particular interest, because the three theories were still viable options. Proponents of each were thus forced to articulate their positions while making clear the deficiencies of the other. As judged from the writings of Achard of St Victor and Robert of Melun, the Porretan subsistence theory received little or no attention relative to the other theories. Achard did not discuss it, and Robert devoted the least attention to it.<sup>10</sup> Their scrutiny was fixed firmly on the *habitus* theory and especially the *non-aliquid* teaching associated with it (a detailed description is provided below).<sup>11</sup> Thus the Christological disputes seemed to involve primarily two schools: the school of St Victor and the school of Peter Lombard.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Peter Lombard, *Sent.* III.6–7 (SB 5:49–66). The three views as described by Peter Lombard have been examined by Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 246–64; *Ibid.*, “Logic and the Hypostatic Union: Two Late Twelfth-Century Responses to the Papal Condemnation of 1177,” in *Medieval Analyses in Language and Cognition*, ed. S. Ebbensen and R. Friedman (Copenhagen: Reitzels Forlag, 1999), 259–66; Nicholas Häring, “The Case of Gilbert de la Porrée Bishop of Poitiers,” *Mediaeval Studies* 13 (1951), 26–39; Walter Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 64–70; Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1.399–438.

<sup>10</sup> Robert discussed and refuted the *partes* theory in four chapters (*Sent.* II.2.103–6), and the subsistence theory in two chapters (*Sent.* II.2.107–8), but he addressed the *non-aliquid* “error,” which he explicitly associates with the *habitus* theory, in eighteen chapters (*Sent.* II.2.109–26) and kept referring to their error throughout the rest of the work (*Sent.* II.2.127–204).

<sup>11</sup> The debate, as discussed below, was whether Christ as man was something (*aliquid*) or not something (*non aliquid*); hence, what I am calling the *aliquid* teaching and the *non-aliquid* teaching; here I am following Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology*, 201n50. Note that the “*non-aliquid* teaching” is more often called today “Christological Nihilism.”

<sup>12</sup> As is well known today, Pope Alexander III associated Peter Lombard with the *non-aliquid* “heresy” in his condemnation of it on May 28, 1170 (see n. 33). Though scholastic theologians rarely mentioned names in their writings, the attributions occasionally circulated in the marginal notes of the manuscripts. For example, the marginal note “*contraria opinioni Petri Lombardi*” is attested in a copy of Peter of Poitiers’s *Sent.* where he treated the contrary arguments against the *habitus* theory (Troyes, BM 1371, fol. 68va). The identification was more repetitious after 1200, e.g., *Summa “Ne transgrediariis”* III (V 21vb): “Master Peter Lombard replies with his followers that Christ is one alone and only simple, not composed, and that something or some man is not composed from Christ’s soul and flesh, nor is Christ as man

A telling encounter was recorded in the *Speculum fidei* of Robert of Cricklade, an Augustinian canon from Oxford. He recounted an incident in Paris in the 1150s where he, along with Robert of Melun and Achard of St Victor, disputed with two pupils of the “heretic” Peter Lombard regarding the *non-aliquid* teaching (i.e., the teaching that “Christ as man is not something [*non aliquid*]”). In his *Speculum fidei* III.4, he attacked Peter’s teaching in the following derisive tone:

I am speaking to you, Archheretic Peter [Lombard]. Whence did this venom spring from you that you have dripped into the ears of those like you? For you say, “Christ as man is not something.” O intractable neck! O hardened heart! Do you not understand what you are saying? I do not believe so at all, because if you did understand, you would not have said this. If you had read the above-mentioned teachings of the saints, you would not have said this.<sup>13</sup>

something, nor is this species ‘man’ predicated of Christ but a habit is predicated of him” (“Respondet Magister Petrus Lombardus cum suis sequacibus quod Christus est unum solum et tantum simplex et non compositum, nec ex anima et carne Christi componatur aliquid uel aliquid homo, nec Christus est aliquid in eo quod homo, nec predicatur hec species ‘homo’ de Christo sed habitus”). In an interesting list of errors on the flyleaf of a copy of Lombard’s *Sent.* (Sankt Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek 44/3, fol. 81v), the author states: “Note that these are the opinions of the Master of the *Sentences* that modern teachers do not hold. The opinions of book three: likewise distinction five in book three where he says that the soul outside the body is a person; likewise distinction six where he says that the Son of God assumed human nature like a habit; likewise, distinction seven where he says that Christ as man is not something; likewise distinction twenty-two where he says that Christ was a man during the three days of death” (“Nota iste sunt opinioniones Magistri Sentenciarum in quibus non tenetur a modernis doctoribus. ...Opinioniones iii libri. Item tercio libro distinctio quinta ubi dicit quod anima exuta corpore est persona. Item distinctio vi ubi dicit quod Filius Dei assumpsit humanam naturam ut habitum. Item distinctio vii ubi dicit quod Christus non est aliquid secundum quod homo. Item distinctio xxii ubi dicit quod Christus in triduo mortis fuit homo”). Such descriptions and disclaimers summarized well the basic teachings of the *habitus* theory. For the Christology of Peter Lombard and his school, see Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 243–61. That Peter Lombard supported the *habitus* theory was challenged by Marcia Colish, “Christological Nihilianism in the Second Half of the Twelfth Century,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 63 (1996): 147–55. See Nielsen’s response in “Logic and the Hypostatic Union,” 252n3.

<sup>13</sup> Robert of Cricklade, *Speculum fidei* III.4 (C 60v–62r): “Contra Petrum Parisiacensem episcopum quid dicebat ‘secundum quod quam Christus est homo non est aliquid, et de dictiuncula ista, scilicet ‘secundum’ [*in rub.*]. Te alloquor, heresiarcha Petre. Vnde tibi manauit hoc uenenum quod in auribus tibi similibus instillasti? Dicis enim ‘Christus secundum quod est homo non est aliquid.’ O ceruix dura! O cor incrassatum! Intelligisne quid dicis? Nequaquam credo. Quia si intelligeres, non diceres. Si supradictas sanctorum sententias legisses, non diceres. Ergo respondeas, queso. Alloquor enim discipulos tuos, uice tua. Iam enim in examine districti iudicis, credo te esse pro hac et aliis heresibus tuis...” Robert recorded that exchange with Peter’s disciples, who were speaking for their master, in *Speculum fidei* III.5 (C 62v–63r); see transcription in R. W. Hunt, “English Learning in the late twelfth century,” *Transactions*

HUGH OF ST VICTOR

*ON THE WISDOM OF CHRIST'S SOUL*

INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION  
BY JOSHUA BENSON

## INTRODUCTION

*On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul* represents Hugh of St Victor's most focused contribution to the problem of the knowledge of Christ's human soul.<sup>1</sup> His approach becomes a chief point of reference for later medieval theologians and continues to play a role in any description of Hugh's thought and any historical survey of this theological problem.<sup>2</sup>

Hugh's authorship of this text is assured by its presence in the *indiculum* or list of Hugh's writings made by Abbot Gilduin. Regardless of how scholars reconstruct the *indiculum*, *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul* falls within the second volume and is surrounded by what we would regard as other Christological or Mariological texts.<sup>3</sup> Notably, the works surrounding *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul*, like the text itself, are also exegetical in nature—confirming that we should not strictly separate theology and scriptural interpretation when we consider medieval theologians and their thought.

Further confirmation of Hugh's authorship and a further window on how he understood the text can be obtained from his own remarks about it in his synthesis of theology, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*. Hugh relates in *On the Sacraments* II.1.6:

Now many questions are asked about the <Christ's> rational soul, of which one is whether it had knowledge equal with divinity; regarding

<sup>1</sup> Hugh also discusses this question in *Sacr.* II.1.6 (ed. Berndt, 297–98; tr. Froula, VTT 7:138–39).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., J. Ernst, *Die Lehre der hochmittelalterlichen Theologen von der vollkommenen Erkenntnis Christi* (Freiburg: Herder, 1971). Ernst's text is a comprehensive survey of the issue of Christ's knowledge ranging from Ambrose to writers of the early fourteenth-century. See also Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte* 2/2:44–131.

<sup>3</sup> J. de Ghellinck reconstructed the *indiculum* on the basis of an Oxford manuscript: "La table des matières de la première édition des œuvres de Hugues de Saint-Victor," *Recherches de sciences religieuses* 1 (1910): 270–89, 385–96. *Sapientia* appears on page 279 as number 10 of the second volume in Ghellinck's reconstruction. D. Poirel, on the basis of further manuscript work, has presented a different reconstruction: *Livre de la nature et débat Trinitaire au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 61–75. In both presentations, *Sapientia* falls in the second volume and is immediately preceded by *De cibo Emanuelis*, a Christological and exegetical discussion of Isa. 7:15 (printed as *Misc.* I.2 [PL 177:477–81]) and *De beatae Mariae virginitate*, a letter dedicated to the problem in the title which also has a bearing on Christology (as most medieval Mariology does). *De beatae Mariae virginitate* can be found in PL 176:857–76.

these questions I have given a fuller discussion in another work (*alio opusculo*) that is entitled *On the Soul of Christ*.<sup>4</sup>

Because Hugh completed *On the Sacraments* by the mid 1130s, *On the Wisdom of Christ’s Soul* must have come earlier.<sup>5</sup> This *opusculum*, as Hugh refers to it, exists in at least sixty manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly, a fresh examination of those manuscripts would provide us with a better text than the one currently in the PL and would shed further light on the work’s context and content. In the absence of that examination, we can still be sure that the work originated as a letter written in response to the pointed challenges of Walter of Mortagne (d. 1174) regarding Hugh’s understanding of the wisdom of Christ’s soul. Walter himself was an accomplished theologian and eventually a bishop. He taught at the important school of Laon sometime after Anselm of Laon’s death (d. 1117) and became bishop of the same city in 1155.<sup>7</sup> As the opening of Walter’s letter to Hugh reveals, he was moved to write Hugh thanks to a conversation with Arnolph of Sééz, then an archdeacon and later bishop of Lisieux (1141–1181).<sup>8</sup> Arnolph told Walter that he was present when Hugh dealt with the following question regarding the wisdom of Christ’s soul: “Whether the soul which divinity assumed in Christ’s person, has completely as much knowledge and wisdom as the divinity has.” According to Walter, Arnolph then reported that Hugh’s answer essentially equated the wisdom of God and the wisdom of Christ’s human soul.<sup>9</sup> This leads Walter to pose a series of questions to Hugh

<sup>4</sup> Hugh of St Victor, *Sacr.* II.1.6 (ed. Berndt, 297–98; tr. Froula, VTT 7:138). From this citation, we can also observe that Hugh referred to the text simply as “on Christ’s soul,” but the conventional name for the text, which I have retained is “on the Wisdom of Christ’s Soul.”

<sup>5</sup> Following the earlier work of D. van den Eynde, *Essai sur la succession et la date des écrits de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1960), J. Ernst suggests after the middle of 1134 as a more specific time frame (see Ernst, *Die Lehre*, 80). Further precision regarding the date of *On the Wisdom of Christ’s Soul* is not possible at this time. Notably, in the letter which occasioned Hugh’s text, Walter of Mortagne refers to Hugh as “prior of St Victor.” Unfortunately, this does not help us date the text since Hugh was never Prior and Walter’s address must be mistaken. See Dominique Poirel, *Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998), 31.

<sup>6</sup> See Rudolf Goy, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Hugos von St. Viktor* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1976), 124–33.

<sup>7</sup> A thorough review of Walter’s life and work may be found in Ott, *Untersuchungen*, 126–347.

<sup>8</sup> For the dates of Arnolph’s tenure as bishop, see Ott, *Untersuchungen*, 112. For William’s initial letter, see PL 186:1052–1054. Important variant readings are noted by Ott, *Untersuchungen*, 34n5 and by H. Santiago-Otero, “Gualterio de Mortagne (†1274) y las controversias cristológicas del siglo XII,” *Revista española de teología* 27 (1967): 274–75.

<sup>9</sup> The problem is essentially that Christ’s human soul, precisely as a finite creature, cannot have the same wisdom as God (whether in quantity of things known, or in modality, or both)

regarding his reported position. Hugh would eventually respond in two moments: a dedication letter and his letter-treatise, *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul*. Only two of these pieces have been widely available through the PL: Walter's initial letter and Hugh's *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul*. Fortunately, Ludwig Ott edited Hugh's *rescriptum* (*Widmungsbrief* as Ott refers to it, or a dedication letter) as part of his study of Walter's correspondence.<sup>10</sup> Certain medieval manuscripts copied all three letters in their chronological order: Walter's letter, Hugh's dedication letter, and *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul*.<sup>11</sup> Since Walter's letter is critical to understanding Hugh's text, and Hugh's *rescriptum* gives us a further window on his own view, I have adopted the practice of those medieval manuscripts and offered all three pieces in translation here.

Detailed studies on Hugh's understanding of Christ's wisdom and detailed historical-theological studies of the problem of Christ's knowledge already exist,<sup>12</sup> but here I want to offer a few observations that may help the interested reader engage the texts translated below.

because then a finite creature or created power would seem to be equated to God, thereby (at least) blurring the distinction between the Creator and his creatures. As the reader can see from Walter's letter, he will point out this problem and various other related problems that would arise from equating the wisdom and knowledge of a creature with God's wisdom and knowledge.

<sup>10</sup> Ott, *Untersuchungen*, 353–54.

<sup>11</sup> At one time, a collection of Hugh's works existed in the library of Christ Church in Canterbury which contained all three texts in order. See the transcription of the medieval catalogue in Montague Rhodes James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 35. Many manuscripts carry the *rescriptum* with *Sapientia*. See Goy, *Die Überlieferung*, 124–31.

<sup>12</sup> For a broad survey of this question, see n. 2 above. For more focused studies on Walter and Hugh, see the studies of Ott and Santiago-Otero referenced above. Santiago-Otero also produced a book length study of the knowledge of Christ in the first half of the twelfth century: *El Conocimiento de Cristo en Cuanto Hombre en la Teología de la Primera Mitad del Siglo XII* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1970), especially 57–99. A brief summary of the problem in the twelfth-century can also be found in Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 1:438–42. For older studies in English, see L. Vaughan, *The Acquired Knowledge of Christ according to the Theologians of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Internationale "Angelicum," 1957); W. Forster, *The Beatific Knowledge of Christ in the Theology of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Internationale "Angelicum," 1958); J. Murray, *The Infused Knowledge of Christ in the Theology of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Internationale "Angelicum," 1963). An even older study that pertains directly to Hugh is the Licentiate of L. Riley, *The Teaching of Hugh of St. Victor on the Knowledge of Christ* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1941). These studies may be complemented by the following studies of Hugh's Christology, Poppenberg, *Die Christologie des Hugo von St. Victor* (Westphalia: Herz Jesu-missionhaus Hilstrup, 1937); Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 193–213, where particular attention is given to Christ's wisdom at 209–13; Harkins, "Homo Assumptus at St. Victor," 595–624; and in response to Harkin's interpretation, see Cross, "Homo Assumptus in the Christology of Hugh of St. Victor," 62–77.

First, I wish to make an observation about the genre of the text. *On the Wisdom of Christ’s Soul* originated as a letter. We are quite fortunate to have Walter’s original letter since his questions and the authorities he uses set some of Hugh’s agenda. We do well, then, to begin interpretively with Walter’s letter and bear in mind that Hugh spends what seems a fair amount of time indirectly attacking Arnolph (in his *rescriptum* and “preface” to *On the Wisdom of Christ’s Soul*). On the other hand, as we saw from the *De sacramentis*, Hugh regarded *On the Wisdom of Christ’s Soul* as an *opusculum*—a word that can surely mean a small work that could be intelligible on its own. In the *indiculum* of Hugh’s works there is no sign of either the *rescriptum* or Walter’s letter, suggesting perhaps that *opusculum* became its genre and that Hugh thought it was a sufficient answer to a particular problem.

Second, we should bear in mind two things about the content of the text. Hugh’s position can be summarized, I think, in a rather simple way: we must assent that Christ’s soul has the total wisdom of God united to him (for it is the Word who is incarnated) but Christ’s soul has this wisdom by the grace of union. This means, as Hugh repeatedly stresses, that whereas God is his own wisdom, Christ’s soul has God’s own wisdom but in a different way—by grace, not by nature. This difference for Christ’s soul—having God’s wisdom by grace, not being it by nature—is critical to Hugh and accounts for why he is so disgusted with Arnolph’s report of his position omitting this critical detail. The mode of Christ’s having wisdom is thus one detail we must always keep in mind regarding Hugh’s position. A second thing we must bear in mind about the content of Hugh’s text is that we should have in view his own theory of the union of natures in the Incarnation. Regarding this very feature of Hugh’s thought there has been recent debate.<sup>13</sup> I think it is true that Hugh maintains a strict identity between the person of the Word and *homo assumptus*. As Hugh states: “The person is one; and since the person of God and man is one, God and man are one. Therefore, what God does man does, and what man does, God does, since they are not two but one, God and man.”<sup>14</sup> This seems to allow (or perhaps even constrain) Hugh to hold the position he does on Christ’s wisdom. I leave it to others to determine the ultimate soundness of

<sup>13</sup> See the studies of Harkins and Cross noted above and the older study of Nielsen, also noted above (n. 12).

<sup>14</sup> *Sacr.* II.1.9 (ed. Berndt, 311), the translation is Cross’s “*Homo Assumptus* in the Christology of Hugh of St. Victor,” 64.

his view. For my part, I am somewhat sympathetic to his position, or at least, do not wish to see it simply dismissed as the kind of thing a medieval theologian, with a Christology too high for his own good, would say.

Finally, we should bear in mind that a discussion of Christ's wisdom forces the theologian to treat a plethora of issues, or at least, we can see many issues operating in the background of any theologian's discussion of this problem. As I hope I have indicated, Hugh's position on Christ's wisdom already entails how he understands the union of natures in Christ. At issue for Hugh is also the interpretation of Scripture, both passages that immediately touch on Christ's knowledge and those many passages that address the Wisdom of God and participation in it. But larger questions are also at work, and we see them occasionally alluded to in Hugh's text, questions like what human nature is, what the Fall did to human nature and its knowing powers, what God's knowledge is and how God enjoys it, and even more to the point: how a theologian's vision of Christ is integrated into a larger theological synthesis. In this regard, the reader might profitably consider *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul* in relationship to a recent interpretation of Hugh's theological vision that centers on wisdom.<sup>15</sup>

Walter's letter was translated from the Latin text in PL 186:1052–1054, with emendations from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 289, pp. 450–54 (sec. xii),<sup>16</sup> and from Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek 995, fol. 90r–v as transcribed by Ott.<sup>17</sup> I have translated the opening of the PL text in a footnote. The translation of Hugh's *rescriptum* has been made from Ott's edition.<sup>18</sup> The English translation of *On the Wisdom of Christ's Soul* has been made from the Latin text in PL 176:845–56, with emendations that the editor, Christopher Evans, provided from the following manuscripts:

- Bruges, Bibliothèque de la ville 153 B, fols 105vb–113vb (xii sec.)
- Douai, BM 361, fols 170vb–174rb (xii sec.).
- New Haven (CT), Library T. E. Marston (Yale University) 248, fols 344r–347v (France, xiii sec.).
- Paris, BnF lat. 2566, fols 137vb–143v (xii sec.).

<sup>15</sup> B. Coolman, *The Theology of Hugh of St. Victor: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> I am indebted to Christopher Evans for the emendations from this manuscript.

<sup>17</sup> Ott, *Untersuchungen*, 342n5.

<sup>18</sup> Ott, *Untersuchungen*, 353–54.

- Paris, BnF lat. 14303, fols 117rb-122rb (Abbey of St Victor, xiii sec.).
- Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine 717, fols 165ra-168vb (Abbey of St Victor, xii sec.).
- Troyes, BM 301, fols 66v-73v (Cistercian Abbey in Clairvaux, xii sec.).

## WALTER OF MORTAGNE, LETTER TO HUGH OF ST VICTOR

Walter to Hugh the prior<sup>1</sup> of St Victor, greetings.

Lord Arnolph, archdeacon of Séez, our dearest friend and companion, recently came from Paris and told us that he discussed with you a certain question previously aired before us. The question is of this sort: whether the soul, which the divinity assumed in Christ's person, has completely as much knowledge and wisdom as the divinity has. He said you responded that Christ's soul has as much knowledge as the divinity has about all things in their entirety. He added that you confirmed your response quite ingeniously with authorities and subtle arguments. However, I would rather take a contrary position, if it were right to disagree with such a wise man in something. For although I regard that soul as the worthiest of all creatures, I still do not think that it could in any way arrive at equality with divine wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

This seems to be supported with the following reasons. Christ says to the Father: *Eternal life is to know you, the one God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*<sup>3</sup> Obviously, then, eternal life (that is, supreme beatitude) consists above all in knowledge of the Trinity. Now if Christ's soul had equal knowledge about the holy Trinity, it also appears that Christ's soul has a beatitude equal with divinity. For if Christ's soul had equal knowledge, there would be no reason why he would not have equal charity and everything else equally in which beatitude consists. Maybe you also concede this. But who dares to say that that soul, once it existed, has a beatitude equal with God, since in God there can be no misery at all, whereas that soul was involved in many great miseries. Regarding the miseries of human nature that the divinity assumed the Prophet says: *I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.*<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere the Prophet also says: *tribulation is near and there is no one to help.*<sup>5</sup> Likewise he says: *the insults of those who insult you fell on me.*<sup>6</sup> Christ also says about himself as a man:<sup>7</sup> *My soul is troubled and what shall I say?*<sup>8</sup> Likewise he says: *my soul is sorrowful unto death.*<sup>9</sup> Therefore, since it is agreed Christ's soul expe-

rienced misery before the passion, it was impossible that Christ's soul could have a beatitude equal with God. For it would not be possible for there to be both misery and the supreme beatitude of God (which cannot increase or diminish) in the same soul at the time. Therefore, it is not true that Christ's soul has knowledge of the holy Trinity equal with God and everything else in which beatitude consists.

It is clear that Christ's soul has a lesser wisdom than the divinity by another argument. Wisdom is a great and spiritual good. If a soul has an equal knowledge with God, then it will be false that God has a greater sufficiency of every good than his creature. But this goes against reason. For just as the creature cannot be equated to the Creator, so neither can the good of the one be equated to the good of the other, nor the sufficiency of the one to the sufficiency of the other.

Now this is confirmed not only by arguments but also by the authority of the Apostle who says: *What man knows what belongs to a man but the spirit of a man who is in him? So also no one knows what belongs to God except the Spirit of God.*<sup>10</sup> And no one should be disturbed by the words of Ambrose who says: "Christ's soul has by grace everything that God has by nature."<sup>11</sup> This must not be explained so broadly that they say absolutely every equal good that is proper to God by nature is in Christ's soul by grace. Everyone knows this is false, since God is eternal, lacking beginning and end, but the soul has an origin in time. Therefore, Ambrose's statement must not be explained in that aforementioned way, but by these words he intended to affirm that<sup>12</sup> just as in God there is a sufficiency of all goods, so nearly all the same goods are in Christ's soul and flourish in his soul in a way that surpasses all other creatures. However, those goods do not flourish equally in Christ's soul and in God. A similar kind of statement, wherever it is found throughout the books of divine Scripture, must be explained just as we said, such statements like:<sup>13</sup> *Who illuminates every man coming into this world,*<sup>14</sup> and that of the Apostle: *Everything is lawful for me, but not everything is good for me.*<sup>15</sup>

If someone opposes my assertion that Christ's soul has less wisdom and God has more, because they say this results in Christ's person having two kinds of knowledge, I answer that not only does Christ have two kinds of knowledge, but every kind of knowledge, as the Apostle testifies: *In him, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.*<sup>16</sup>

To disclose briefly my understanding to you about all these things discussed above, I affirm that just as Christ is equal to the Father according to the divine nature, so he has everything whatsoever the Fa-