Spiritual Formation and Mystical Symbolism

A Selection of Works of Hugh and Richard of St Victor, and of Thomas Gallus

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DESCRIPTION:

Biblical interpretation, writings on the contemplative/mystical life and a continuing deep reflection on the nature and meaning of symbols come together in powerful ways in Victorine writers, particularly Hugh and Richard, as well as the lesser-known writer, Thomas Gallus (Thomas of Vercelli), a Victorine canon who became the abbot of a house of regular canons in Vercelli, Italy. This volume contains: (1) Hugh's On the Ark of Noah and A Short Treatise on the Form of the Ark, treatises that unfold Hugh's teaching on stages and fruition of the mystical quest in relation to a complex drawing that incorporates a figure of Christ seated in majesty, embracing a map of the world on which is superimposed a diagram of Noah's Ark, representing the 12 stages of the contemplative quest; (2) Richard's On the Ark of Moses, a work that uses the symbolic (allegorical and tropological) interpretation of the Ark of the Covenant and the figures of the Cherubim that accompany the Ark in the Jerusalem Temple to convey Richard's vivid and compelling teaching on the varieties of contemplative experience as he understood them in twelfth-century Paris; and (3) Thomas Gallus' Commentary on the Song of Songs, which offers a window into a formative period of transition in the western Christian spiritual tradition, with Gallus's commentary on the Song of Songs giving voice to a more affective (versus speculative) understanding of the mystical quest and experience, drawing upon and extending earlier Victorine explorations of the interrelationship of love and knowing in the experience of contemplation.

For those interested in the dynamics of the spiritual quest and symbolic understanding in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, as well as insights that can inform the modern quest for knowledge and love of God, these are essential works for any library.