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Intellectual community in Saint Victor: 1108–*c.*1200*

Joseph Hopper

University College London, United Kingdom

joseph.hopper.21@ucl.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article examines the community of Saint Victor in the twelfth century and argues the dangers of considering intellectual life and communal life as two distinct things. It responds critically to the tendency to separate the two by canalizing intellectual activities into the model of a 'school'. This article suggests instead the importance of thinking of Saint Victor as an 'intellectual community'. The immediate significance for Victorine studies lies in thinking more imaginatively about the relationship between the 'ideas' which are rightly famous and the community which remains strangely anonymous. Beyond Saint Victor, this approach disrupts a much broader historiographical landscape of 'cathedral schools', 'the university' and twelfth-and-thirteenth-century Paris. What emerges is a city that played host to experimentation, both in ideas and the ways that communal life could be organized to facilitate their exchange and development.

In a Lenten sermon delivered to the canons of Saint Victor during the 1160s, the then prior, Richard of Saint Victor, urged his brothers to 'come together and to hold an assembly: in the refectory, in our work, in the cloister, in the choir, in the dormitory, and in chapter'.[1] He was addressing his community at a time of unrest. The election of Ernis as abbot in 1162 had ushered in a decade of internal disputes, papal intervention and the writing of condemnatory letters.[2] Roughly halfway through the sermon, Richard lingers on the question of discipline, before concluding:

> Let the one resisting and contrary be handed over in the flesh to his very harsh sentence, so that with distress alone giving understanding to his hearing, *his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.* Clearly, if he has refused to accept his sentence, even if he has not left the community, let him be

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[1] *Sermones centum*, 'Sermon XLIV', in *medio Quadragesimae, de Jerusalem pro sancta Ecclesia per allegoriam sumpta, Patrologia Latina* (hereafter *P.L.*), ed. J. P. Migne (221 vols., Paris, 1844–1903), clxxvii, cols. 1015–19; translated in, *Sermons for the Liturgical Year: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Achard, Richard, Maurice, Walter, and Godfrey of St. Victor, Absalom of Springiersbach, and of Maurice de Sully*, ed. H. Feiss (Turnhout, 2018), pp. 276–81 as part of the *Victorine Texts in Translation* series. The dating is proposed and outlined by Ronald E. Pepin in his translation of this sermon for the *Victorine Texts in Translation Series*, and I find his suggestion and evidence convincing.

[2] R. H. Bautier, 'Les origines et les premiers developpements de l'abbaye Saint-Victor de Paris', in *L'Abbaye parisienne de Saint-Victor au moyen age*, ed. J. Longere (Paris-Turnhout, 1991), pp. 23–52. On this, see A. J. Duggan, 'The deposition of Abbot Ernis of Saint-Victor: a new letter?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xlv (1994), 642–60.

> cast out. Let this not happen in a cruel way, but compassionately, lest he harm many more through noxious contact.[3]

We do not know precisely who Richard was referring to in this sermon – if indeed anyone in particular – but it is notable that Ernis was cast out only a few years later, in 1172. Regardless of his intended subject, it is clear that his Victorine brothers were his audience. It is more than merely speculative to suggest that his audience's minds might easily have fallen on their abbot as the kind of 'untamed horse' that Richard referred to earlier in this sermon.[4]

This article is concerned with the concept of community that Ernis was thought to be disrupting. Why did those seen to be disruptive need to be removed in the final instance? Why did Richard emphasize these six spaces, and what was their significance? In answering these questions, this article will argue that the ideas in Richard's sermon were rearticulations of concepts of communal life, which had been outlined fifty years earlier in Saint Victor's customary, the *Liber ordinis* (*c.*1116).[5] The endurance of these ideas points to aspects of Victorine life, which have been obscured by a canalizing of Saint Victor into two streams; one, which is concerned with the mundanities of daily life, and another, which addresses the intellectual culture of the community. In general, this latter dimension has been approached purely through the framework of a 'school' and through the works of canonical authors at Saint Victor's like Hugh and Richard.

The major contention of this article, however, is that the separation of communal and intellectual life in Saint Victor is fundamentally misconceived.[6] Daily communal life was deliberately structured to facilitate intellectual exchange through both formal and informal social exchanges and practices. The article will begin by outlining Saint Victor's position in the historiographical landscape of intellectual culture and education in the twelfth century, before scrutinizing the idea of a 'school' and demonstrating the distortions this category has introduced to our accounts of Saint Victor. It will then explore in detail two of these spaces set out by Richard – the refectory and the cloister – to ask how we might frame our study in a way, which reunites these two dimensions of Saint Victor while doing justice to each. A threefold conclusion will then be offered, which first explores the importance of this reassessment to our understanding of intellectual life in Saint Victor, before outlining the conceptual contributions of this article to recent studies in 'horizontal communities' and then finally considering how this discussion leads to a reassessment of the relationship between monasticism and scholasticism, and the origins of the thirteenth-century university.

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William of Champeaux founded Saint Victor after his departure from the cathedral school of Notre Dame, following a now infamous dispute with Peter Abelard.[7] He went to the Left Bank, just outside

[3] *Sermones centum*, col. 1018: 'Superborum etenim contumacia et gravi sententia ferienda est, ne si misereamur impio, *non discat facere justitiam, et in terra sanctorum inique gerens non videat gloriam Domini* (Isai. xxvi), si non magis *tradatur Satanae in interitum carnis* (I Cor. V), id est asperrimae sententiae ejus carnaliter adversanti et contrariae, *ut* vel sola vexatione intellectum dante auditui, *spiritus salvus fiat in die Domini* (ibid.). Quam videlicet sententiam si ferre recusaverit, etiamsi non abscesserit, de societate projiciatur. Nec hoc fit crudeliter, sed misericorditer, ne contagione pestifera plurimos perdat' (translation from *Sermons for the Liturgical Year,* p. 280).

[4] *Sermones centum*, col. 1018, 'Sunt autem equi tantae feritatis quidam et impatientiae, ut dum ferrantur vel curantur, camo vel freno nequaquam possint teneri.'

[5] *Liber ordinis Sancti Victoris Parisiensis*, ed. L. Jocqué and L. Milis (Turnhout, 1984); The major studies of the *Liber ordinis* are C. S. Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), which attempted to excavate the social dimensions and humanistic ideals which Jaeger felt *Liber ordinis* and *De institutione* lent to later courtiers; and L. Jocqué, 'Les structures de la population claustrale dans l'ordre de Saint-Victor au xiie siècle. Un essai d'analyse du "Liber ordinis"', in *L'Abbaye Parisienne de Saint-Victor au moyen age: Communications présentées au xiiie Colloque d' Humanisme médiéval de Paris (1986–1988),* ed. J. Longère (Turnhout, 1991), pp. 53–93.

[6] The historiography around schools in the twelfth century is extensive. For a good recent overview, see *A Companion to Twelfth-Century Schools*, ed. C. Giraud (Leiden, 2020). A now classic work which addresses many of the debates around 'schools' in this period – especially Chartres and Laon – is *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R. L. Benson and G. Constable (Oxford, 1982), and for reflections on the more specific difficulties of language and definition, see J. Verger, '*Nova* et *vetera* dans le vocabulaire des premiers statuts et privilèges uni- versitaires français', in *Vocabulaire des écoles et des méthodes d'enseignement au Moyen Âge*, ed. O. Weijers (Turnhout, 1992), pp. 191–205; and R. Quinto, 'Le *scholae* del medioevo come comunità di sapienti', *Studi Medievali*, xlii (2001), 739–63. Concerning Saint Victor specifically, the latest work to explore 'daily life' in Saint Victor is Juliet Mousseau's chapter, 'Daily life at the Abbey of Saint Victor', in *A Companion to the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris*, ed. H. Feiss and J. Mousseau (Boston, 2017), pp. 55–78.

[7] On this, see C. J. Mews, 'William of Champeaux, the foundation of Saint-Victor (Easter, 1111), and the evolution of Abelard's Early Career', in *Arts du langage et théologie aux confins des XI^e^ et XII^e^ siècles: Textes, maîtres, débat*, ed. I. Rosier-Catach (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 83–104; for Abelard's account, see 'A Letter of Consolation from Abelard to a Friend' (*Historia calamitatum*), in *The Letter Collection of Peter Abelard and Heloise*, ed. D. Luscombe (Oxford, 2013), p. 61.

the city walls, and founded a community of regular canons who followed, broadly, the Rule of St. Augustine.[8] Regular canons differed from monks in that they were typically clerics who gathered together to live a common life, 'established among the people', carrying out their apostolic mission in the form of pastoral care.[9] That is to say, while Benedictine monks were expected to live a coenobitic life in seclusion, Augustinian canons saw pastoral work in the external world as a key part of their religious vocation.

Today, the site where Saint Victor stood hosts a street of travel agents and small boutiques. It was dismembered during the French revolution, with only a fleeting presence on the modern Parisian topography; a small oblong plaque and the seemingly inevitable 'café St Victor', the lonely markers of a community that stood for almost seven centuries. To experience Saint Victor today, you must take the Metro twenty minutes north to the Bibliothèque nationale, where the majority of Victorine manuscripts are stored. Saint Victor's survival is therefore almost entirely textual.[10] This is perhaps unremarkable for any medieval community, especially an urban one, but the endurance of a textual and not an architectural legacy has resulted in a steady focus on a few individual 'authors' rather than the community as a whole.[11] We have a memory of Richard, the man who delivered the above sermon, but only the slightest sense of the spaces that he urged his brothers to congregate in. We only vaguely know about the appearance of the choir, the cloister, the chapter, the refectory and the dormitory.[12] And yet, as Richard's sermon indicates, the Victorines were acutely concerned with 'space', and with the physical dimensions of their communal life.

This article attempts to outline the integration of learning into these spaces through everyday and informal interaction. This will move us beyond a narrower focus on canonical authors like Hugh, Richard, Andrew, Achard, Godfrey and Adam – all 'of' Saint Victor. Indeed, a cursory glance at the index of many books demonstrates how commonly Saint Victor appears as a suffix to one of the above names, rather than as a community in its own right. The final part of this article will explore how the spaces set aside for daily interaction and worship could also be the spaces where complex theological works began.[13] The relationship between the community and the ideas we now associate with it was materially strong, and yet the model of a 'school' has nurtured the idea that intellectual life was an appendage to Saint Victor, which was attached by William of Champeaux, and then withered away after the death of Hugh in 1141. This article suggests that it was instead something far more integral, which was extensively integrated into mundane and quotidian activities as well as more recognizable intellectual exchange.

This approach rejects directly the abstraction of Saint Victor into a sort of 'community of ideas'. This focus on the intellectual and the theoretical, to the neglect of the communal, has allowed Saint Victor

[8] On communities adopting the rule of Augustine, see J. C. Dickinson's, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (London, 1950); and on the interpretation of Augustine's rule which has typically been attributed to Hugh, see J. Châtillon, 'Un commentaire anonyme de la Règle de saint Augustin (f. 110r–134r)', in *Le Codex de GutaSintram, manuscript 37 de la Bibliothèque de la Grand Seminaire de Strasbourg*, ed. B. Weis (Lucerne-Strasbourg, 1983), pp. 180–91.

[9] The Augustinian rule was not very precise in outlining the structure of daily life, so it was open to greater interpretation than Benedict's *Rule*, but for a good overview of the history of Auguestine's rule, see G. Melville, *The Worlds of Medieval Monasticism: its History and Forms of Life* (Collegeville, 2016).

[10] On the manuscript survival of Saint Victor, see R. Goy, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der Werke Richards von St. Viktor im Mittelalter* (Turnhout, 2005); and R. Goy, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Hugos von St. Viktor: Ein Beitrag zur Kommunikationsgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart, 1976); G. Cédric and P. Stirnemann, 'Le rayonnement de l'école de Saint-Victor. Manuscrits de la bibliothèque Mazarine', in *L' école de Saint-Victor de Paris. Influence et rayonnement du Moyen Âge à l' époque moderne. Actes du Colloque international du c.n.r.s. pour le neuvième centenaire de la fondation (1108–2008)*, ed. D. Poirel (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 653–66; O. Gilbert, *Les manuscrits de l' abbaye de Saint-Victor. Catalogue établi sur la base du répertoire de Claude de Grandrue (1514)* (2 vols., Turnhout, 1999), i. 60–3; P. Sicard, *Iter Victorinum: La tradition manuscrite des oeuvres de Hugues et de Richard de Saint-Victor. Répertoire complémentaire et études, avec un index cumulatif des manuscrits des oeuvres de Hugues et de Richard* (Turnhout, 2015); See also D. Léopold, *Inventaire des manuscrits latins conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale sous les numéros 8823–18613* (Paris, 1863–71, repr., 1974).

[11] For scholarship on medieval authorship, see, for example, A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1988); J. L. Ziolkowski, 'Cultures of authority in the long twelfth century', *Journal of English and Germanic Theology*, cviii (2009), 421–48.

[12] Margot Fassler offers a fascinating insight into the probable organization of altars in the twelfth-century church of Saint Victor. She suggests that there was a parallel development between altars and sequences in the twelfth-century church and in the Victorine liturgy of the same period. See G. Song, *Victorine Sequences and Augustinian Reform in Twelfth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 243–5, inc. Table 11.1, pp. 244–5.

[13] On this equal, peer-to-peer exchange, see M. Long, 'Condiscipuli sumus: the roots of horizontal learning in monastic culture', in *Horizontal Learning in the Middle Ages: Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Transfer in Religious Communities*, ed. M. Long and others (Amsterdam, 2019), pp. 47–64.

to be unproblematically included in a well-trodden story of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Paris as a landscape of 'schools', which lay the institutional and intellectual groundwork for the university of the thirteenth century.[14] Again, the third aim of this article is to problematize our understanding of these grand educational narratives, which have persisted with surprising stubbornness across much of the discipline. This linear picture of monastic schools, itinerant masters, cathedral schools and the university is subtly homogenizing. In fact, Saint Victor points to a differentiated educational landscape in twelfth-century Paris, where different communities competed by developing idiosyncratic structures of communal life.

Within this landscape, the Victorines have typically been positioned as caught between the two vast edifices of 'monasticism' and 'scholasticism'. For the educational theorist, Ivan Illich, Saint Victor 'institutionalised the precarious moment where the page was flipped between a monastic and a scholastic' mode.[15] More recently, Dominique Poirel has painted a picture of the Victorines – by which he was referring to Hugh, Achard and Richard – as the intermediaries between a monastic world of William of Saint Thierry, Bernard of Clairvaux and Joachim of Fiore, and a scholastic world of Abelard, Gilbert of Poitiers and Peter Lombard.[16]

These accounts nonetheless foreground the 'ideas' of these individuals, with such characterizations leading to an abstraction away from the communal life that produced them. These intellectual histories are often convincing, but Saint Victor itself is left somewhat ineffable; obscured by its own significance. This has created a distorted impression of the abbey's position on the intellectual landscape, as well as a mistaken outline of their ideas. The difficulty in untangling this account is that, in a way, Saint Victor has done rather well out of it. The urge to include it in these larger streams has been done with a certain generosity of spirit. Through this, they have been variously located as influential in biblical exegesis, in science and technology, in the reception of Pseudo-Dionysius, in theology and pedagogy, in the discipline of gesture and speech, in the histories of spirituality, pastoralism, libraries and the production and decoration of manuscripts, as well as in poetry and liturgical music.[17] In his work on the influence that Hugh's thought might have had on the architectural programme at Saint Denis, Dominique Poirel was moved to pause after outlining this long list of influence, asking: 'by adding a new medal to this already impressive list of achievements, are we giving in to fashion and ease by lending only to the rich, or are we completing the portrait of a singularly gifted intellectual and religious centre?'[18] Notwithstanding the strength of that particular article, I would suggest that we are perhaps adding a further level of gilding to the edifice while moving further away from what lay beneath.

The key to untangling this picture lies in a reassessment of the categories which are typically used to frame Saint Victor. In particular, this article will scrutinize the idea of a 'school' and suggest instead the idea of an 'intellectual community'. By way of definition, this term is intended to refer to: a community of shared intellectual practices and educational disciplines, which can exist across generations, while

[14] There is a vast historiography around this topic, but some of the works I have found useful and stimulating on this topic include, recently, N. Gorochov's, *Naissance de l'université: Les écoles de Paris d'Innnocent III à Thomas d'Aquin (v.1200–v.1245)* (Paris, 2016), and S. Young's, *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris: Theologians, Education and Society, 1215–1258* (Cambridge, 2014). A good overview of the origins of the university can be found in S. Ferruolo's, *The Origins of the University: the Schools of Paris and their Critics 1100–1215* (Stanford, Calif., 1985). For more specific commentary, see P. Michaud-Quantin, *Universitas: expressions du mouvement Communautaire dans le moyen-âge latin* (Paris, 1970); G. Post,'Parisian masters as a corporation 1200–1246', *Speculum*, ix (1934), 423–50; J. Verger, *Les universités au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1973); the classic work which is much critiqued, but still useful is: H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (3 vols., Oxford, 1936); Other excellent contemporary work includes I. Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c.1100–1330* (Cambridge, 2012); 'From twelfth-century schools to thirteenth-century universities: the disappearance of biographical and autobiographical representations of scholars', *Speculum*, lxxxvi (2011), 42–78; C. Mews, 'The schools and intellectual renewal in the twelfth century: a social approach', in *A Companion to Twelfth-Century Schools*, ed. C. Giraud (Leiden, 2020), pp. 10–29; C. Mews, 'Rethinking scholastic communities in Latin Europe: competition and theological method in the twelfth century', *Medieval Worlds: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Studies*, xii (2020), 12–32. Of course, many of these works are operating within a framework which was most extensively constructed by Richard Southern in his *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* (2 vols., Oxford, 1995–2001).

[15] I. Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary to Hugh's Didascalicon* (Chicago, 1993), esp. pp. 74–92.

[16] D. Poirel, 'Scholastic reasons, monastic meditations and Victorine conciliations: the question of the unity and plurality of God in the twelfth century', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. G. Emery and M. Levering (Oxford, 2011), p. 168.

[17] This list is taken from D. Poirel, 'Symbolice et anagogice: l'école de Saint Victor et la naissance du style gothique', in *L'Abbé Suger, le manifeste Gothique de Saint Denis et la pensée Victorine: Colloque organisé à la Fondation Singer – Polignac de mardi 21 novembre, 2001*, ed. D. Poirel and others (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 141–70, at p. 141.

[18] D. Poirel, 'Symbolice et anagogice', p. 144.

interacting with other parts of daily communal life, both intellectually and spatially. As a concept, it is deeply indebted to recent work by Constant Mews and John Crossley on 'communities of learning', as well as Micol Long and Steven Vanderputten on 'communities of practice' and 'horizontal learning'. This study shares the ambition behind each of these works to identify the variety and complexity of the situations in which new ideas were developed and in which learning was shared.[19] These approaches suggest that the 'shared processing of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, shapes the social and intellectual identity of the actors involved as well as the community itself, via a continuous and potentially endless process of personal improvement which took place through practice and through social exchanges between the different members of a heterogenous community'.[20] It is notable that in his *Didascalicon*, Hugh suggested that Saint Victor should be a 'foreign soil' to everyone who arrived – in other words, you did not arrive as a Victorine but became one.[21] Indeed, this 'foreignness' was positioned as crucial to the kind of exchange that Hugh envisaged. This fits precisely with the understanding of community that Long and Vanderputten have outlined, based on the theories of Jean Lave and Étienne Wegner around 'situated learning', whereby a member moves from the peripheries to a full integration with the community through a programme of practice and social exchange.[22]

This article takes as its focus the question of a 'school' – as a place of public instruction – because this category has been central to the story of Saint Victor in the twelfth century and of its legacies in the following centuries, in particular, on the thirteenth-century university of Paris. The broad account has it that Saint Victor influenced the university intellectually, but not institutionally. Fairly consistently since the late nineteenth century, the conventional story of Saint Victor suggests that any school which did exist 'disappeared in the thirteenth century without leaving a trace'.[23] Under such a model, the 'school' of Saint Victor as an institution cannot have been influential in the founding of the universities of the thirteenth century as it had already disappeared. Hastings Rashdall stated this definitively: 'the school [at Saint Victor] played no part in the development of the university, it had ceased to exist, or ceased to attract secular students, before the first traces of a university organisation began to appear'.[24] This has been reiterated in contemporary scholarship, following Stephen Ferruolo who concluded that it is 'difficult to prove a direct connection between Saint Victor and the university, as public teaching at Saint Victor had 'ceased well before the university formed'.[25]

To have influenced the early university would have required a school, the Victorines had no school by the end of the twelfth century, therefore the Victorines could not have influenced the early university. Saint Victor stands or falls on the quality of its 'school', in other words. This relay race model of history is clearly dissatisfactory, but it is striking that, despite this, the idea of a 'school' of

[19] *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100–1500*, ed. C. Mews and J. Crossley (Turnhout, 2011); M. Long, 'High medieval monasteries as communities of practice: approaching monastic learning through letters', *Journal of Religious History*, xil (2017), 42–59; *Horizontal Learning in the High Middle Ages: Peer to Peer Knowledge Transfer in Religious Communities*, ed. M. Long and others (Amsterdam, 2019); M. Long, *Learning as Shared Practice in Monastic Communities, 1070–1180* (Leiden, 2021). Spencer Young's work on the *Parens scientiarum* generation of scholars in the university of Paris has also been helpful in expanding on this concept; S. Young and S. E. Young, *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris: Theologians, Education and Society, 1215–1248* (Cambridge and New York, 2014); as well as B. Rosenwein's, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (New York, 2006).

[20] M. Long, *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100–1500* (Turnhout, 2011).

[21] *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: a Medieval Guide to the Arts*, ed. and trans. J. Taylor (New York, 1991), p. 101. Intriguingly, this quotation from *Didascalicon* has received very little attention within medieval scholarship but has travelled across several centuries and disciplinary boundaries on more than one occasion, most notably, appearing in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York, 1979), p. 259 as a sensitive account of the idea that relocation was essential for a reorientation of self. For Said, Hugh captured the idea that 'the more one is able to leave one's cultural home the more easily one is able to judge it ... as well as oneself and alien cultures, with the same combination of intimacy and distance'. *Orientalism*, p. 259. Said himself came across Hugh's account in the work of Erich Auerbach who was using it to articulate a similar point (E. Auerbach, 'Philology and Wertliteratur', trans, M. Said and E. W. Said, *Centennial Review*, xiii (1969), 1–17, at p. 17). Again, it lies beyond the boundaries of this article, but it is interesting to consider the idea that Hugh was articulating a model of education and communal life that was re-formative. Not only does this tie very closely with the core idea of '*reformatio in melius*' that Boyd Taylor Coolman has identified across his theology, it also points to an intriguing contrast to the thirteenth century and the model of the 'Nation' in the university. On Hugh's theology, see B. T. Coolman, *The Theology of Hugh of Saint Victor: an Interpretation* (Cambridge, 2010), esp. pp. 14–15.

[22] J. Lave and E. Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge, 1991).

[23] Thurot's De Vorganisation de I'enseignement dans I'Universite de Paris au moyen-dge (Paris, 1850), pp. 5–6; this argument was refined by H. Denifle, *Die Entstehung der Universitdten des Mittelalters bis 1400* (Berlin, 1885, repr., 1958), pp. 655–82; S. Ferruolo then uncritically repeated this account in *The Origins of the University: the Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1100–1215* (Stanford, Calif.,1985), p. 27.

[24] H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (2nd edn., 3 vols., Oxford, 1895, repr.1936), pp. 276–7.

[25] Ferruolo, *Origins of the University*, p. 27. This account is also included in H. Reinhard's summary of 'Pedagogy in Saint Victor' in the recent *Companion to the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris* (Boston, 2017), p. 139.

Saint Victor has survived with surprising stubbornness. Such a framing does a disservice to both Saint Victor and to twelfth-century Paris, overlooking the rich variety of educational forms that existed there, which created the vibrant intellectual environment necessary for a university to emerge.[26] As Nicholas Vincent observed recently, 'Paris has always been an assembly of villages', a city of multiple hearts, rather than the monolithic whole that accounts like Richard Southern's might suggest.[27] This also chimes with Constant Mews' work on thirteenth-century intellectual culture in Paris, where he suggested that the intellectual life of the university was 'characterised by "the competition between different communities of learning"'.[28]

Unpicking this idea of a 'school' and re-examining the lines of inquiry that such a categorization encourages – and forecloses – is the major ambition of this article. The next section will proceed along the same lines that Richard Southern proposed almost thirty years ago in his – now notorious – treatment of Chartres. In that assessment, Southern argued that the importance of the school of Chartres had been overstated; that there was no continuation of the intellectual tradition established under Bernard of Chartres after his departure in 1124; and that the identification of a unique strand of Platonism within Chartres had been erroneous.[29] So, in line with Southern's structure, it is worth asking, what do we know about the supposed 'school of Saint Victor'? The answer is remarkably little and is based on surprisingly limited evidence.[30] Indeed, it is worth tracing how this idea has crept into the historiography while plotting the sources being used as evidence. Almost without fail, every single historian using the idea of a 'school of Saint Victor' is relying, eventually, on an essay written by Bernard Bischoff in the 1930s.[31] To take a recent example: in an – excellent – 2017 chapter on 'Daily life in the abbey of Saint Victor', Juliet Mousseau wrote that 'for at least part of the history of Saint Victor, there were boys coming from outside the abbey to be educated by the canons'.[32] She then notes that this school closed by the end of the twelfth century and had probably been winding down since the middle of it. In support, Mousseau cites C. Stephen Jaeger, who suggested that students stopped coming when Hugh died in 1141; Stephen Ferruolo who suggested that Richard's death in 1173 was the real death knell to the school; and Beryl Smalley who also suggested a cut-off date of around 1140.[33] If one then goes to Jaeger, Ferruolo and Smalley, it is striking that the major source cited by each for the evidence of a school is Bernard Bischoff's 1935 essay, which he provided alongside his edition of a letter by Laurence of Westminster. Jaeger, it must be said, does also cite the primary materials, which are explored immediately below, but the framework of a 'school' in most contemporary Victorine scholarship nonetheless derives from Bischoff's essay.

[26] On this, see Mews, 'Rethinking scholastic communities in Latin Europe'.

[27] N. Vincent, 'English kingship: the view from Paris, 1066–1204', in *Anglo Norman Studies,* XL, *Proceedings of the Battle Conference* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 1–24, at p. 6.

[28] C. Mews, *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1110–1500* (Brepols, 2011), p. 135.

[29] For a summary of his arguments, see R. W. Southern, 'The schools of Paris and the school of Chartres', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century,* ed. R. L. Benson and G. Constable (Oxford, 1982), pp. 113–37. This account gave rise to a great flurry of responses, and this article does not intend to weigh in on any of the specific points. In particular, critical responses came from P. Dronke, 'New approaches to the school of Chartres', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales,* vi (1971), 117–40; N. Haring, 'Chartres and Paris revisited', in *Essays in Honour of Anton Charles Pegis*, ed. J. R. O'Donnell (Toronto, 1974), pp. 268–329; J. Marenbon, 'Humanism, scholasticism, and the school of Chartres', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, vi (2000), 569–77.

[30] R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, i (Blackwell, 1995), p. 67. This is a re-wording of the question asked by Southern; 'In other words, what do we know about the school of Chartres? The answer to this is remarkably little: much less that is generally supposed. Let us ask first about the organisation of the school, then about the monks who taught there, and finally about the pupils who studied there'. For other discussions of this theme in Southern's work see R. Southern, 'Humanism and the school of Chartres', reprinted in R. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 61–85; also by Southern, *Platonism, Scholastic Method, and the School of Chartres* (Reading, 1979); 'The schools of Paris and the school of Chartres', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R. L. Benson and G. Constable (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 113–37. A similar scrutiny of the 'School of Laon' was undertaken by V. Flint, 'The "*School of Laon*": a reconsideration', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale,* xliii (1976), 89–110. On critical considerations of the 'school of Saint Victor', see M. Schniertshauer, '*Consummatio caritatis: Eine Untersuchung zu Richard von St. Viktors De Trinitate* (Mainz, 1996); and more recently D. Poirel, 'Existe-t-il une école de Saint-Victor?', in *La scuola di San Vittore e la letteratura medievale, a cura e con introduzione di Corrado Bologna*, ed. C. Zacchetti (Bologna, 2022), pp. 1–21. Poirel's article, however, is asking a quite different question to this article, in that he chooses to focus on the idea of a 'school' in the sense of doctrinal and intellectual unity. The conclusions he offers around six key doctrinal themes being coherent across Victorine thought, and so evidence of a 'school' in this sense is broadly convincing but is distinct from this article.

[31] B. Bischoff, 'Aus der Schule Hugos von St. Viktor', in *Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters*, ed. A. Lang, J. Lechner and M. Schmaus (Munster, 1935), pp. 246–9.

[32] Mousseau, 'Daily life at the abbey of Saint Victor', p. 60.

[33] Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, p. 246; Ferruolo, *Origins of the University*, p. 32; B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Indiana, 1964), pp. 83–4.

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So, what do we know about the supposed 'school of Saint Victor'? From the early years (*c*.1111), we have a letter from the theologian Hildebert of Lavardin to William of Champeaux imploring him to resume public teaching.[34] This letter was written just after William left the cathedral chapter and makes it clear that initially, and much to Hildebert's disappointment, William was not offering public teaching. Hildebert argued that a gem is worth no more dull rocks unless shown to another.[35] He urged William not to 'close the streams' of his learning, but, quoting Proverbs, to 'distribute his waters in the streets'.[36] This would seem to suggest that in the early years of Saint Victor, there was no public teaching, or at least none that Hildebert considered satisfactory.

However, it seems that William eventually took Hildebert's advice. A later letter from a Bamberger student praises the public teaching of William.[37] He energetically lauded the school of William (*sclois magistri Gwillelmi*), writing: 'William oversaw such a great school, as much in divine as in human disciplines, in such a way that I have not seen nor have heard in any place'.[38] It is worth remembering, however, that he was writing to his provost, seemingly with the aim of extracting money, so it is perhaps unsurprising if he resorted to hyperbole.[39] Praising the modesty of the school he had attached himself to would have been a poor strategy. We should also note that William only remained in Saint Victor for around five years before leaving to take up a bishopric in Chalons-sur-Marne in 1113.[40] What happened to these students once he left is a matter of speculation. If there was a school for public instruction under William, there is no definitive evidence that it survived beyond his departure. It is also notable that the *Liber ordinis*, which will be outlined in more detail shortly, was written by Saint Victor's first abbot, Gilduin, after William's departure and made no mention of a public school and allowed no time in the daily routine of the canons for the teaching of external students in any routine way.[41]

After William's departure, we have no direct references to a school. The evidence enlisted becomes more elliptical for this period, offering proof of a school only if read in a certain way. From roughly 1127, we have Laurence of Westminster's letter to a friend, Maurice.[42] This is the letter that was edited by Bernard Bischoff in 1935, alongside his essay on the 'school' of Saint Victor.[43] In the letter, Laurence recounts his experience of learning from Hugh, and of Hugh scrupulously checking his notes at the end of each session to ensure their accuracy.[44] The letter suggests that everybody else receiving Hugh's

[34] Hildebert, 'Epistola Prima ad Magistrum Willelmum de Campellis', in *Epistolae, P.L.*, clxxi, col 141. On this letter, see also, J. Châtillon, *Theologie, Spiritualite, et metaphysique dans l'oeuvre oratoire d'Achard de Saint Victor* (Paris, 1969), pp. 56–7.

[35] *Epistolae*, col. 143; Aurum melius rutilat dispersum, quam signatum. Nihil a vilibus tophis gemmae differunt, nisi in medium deducantur. Scientia quoque distributa suscipit incrementum, et avarum dedignata possessorem, nisi publicetur, elabitur. Noli ergo claudere rivos doctrinae tuae, sed juxta Salomonem: *Deriventur fontes tui foras, et aquas tuas in plateis divide* (Prov. V, 16).

[36] *Epistolae*, col. 143.

[37] *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*, ed. P. Jaffé (6 vols., Berlin, 1819–70), v. 286 'I am now back in Paris in the school of master William, who, though he was archdeacon and one of the chief advisers of the king, gave up all he possessed to retire last easter to serve God in a poor little church. There, like master Manegold of blessed memory, he offers his teaching to all comers free of charge, and he now directs a school of secular and sacred learning larger than any I have ever heard of or seen in my time anywhere in the world' (Parisius sum modo, in scolis magistri Gwillelmi, summi viri omnium huius temporis, quos ego noverim in omni genere doctrinae. Cuius vocem cum audimus, non hominem sed quasi angelum de caelo loqui putamus; nam et dulcedo verborum eius et profunditas sententiarum quasi humanum modum transcendit. Qui cum esset archidiaconus fereque apud regem primus, omnibus quae possidebat dimissis, in praeterito pascha ad quandam pauperrimam ecclesiolam, soli Deo serviturus, se contulit; ibique postea omnibus undique ad eum venientibus gratis et causa Dei solummodo, more magistri Manegaldi beatae memoriae, devotum ac benignum se pravebit. Iamque tantum studium regit tam in divinis quam in humanis scientiis, quantum nec vidi nec meo tempore usquam terrarum esse audivi) (translation in Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*), p. 202.

[38] 'Iamque tantum stadium regit tam in divinis quam in humanis scientiis, quantum nec vidi nec meo tempore usquam terrarium esse audivi' (trans. R. Ziomkowski, *Manegold of Lautenbach. Liber contra Wolfelmum, Translated With an Introduction and Notes* (Leuven, 2002), pp. 122).

[39] On this topic of the unreliability of student letters to patrons see C. H. Haskins, 'The life of mediaeval students as illustrated by their letters', *American Historical Review*, iii (1898), 203–29, reprinted with revisions in C. H. Haskins, *Studies in Mediaeval Culture* (Oxford, 1929), pp. 1–35. On an interpretation of this letter, see also Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 244–5.

[40] On this, see Mews, 'William of Champeaux, the foundation of Saint-Victor', pp. 84, n. 6. Mews notes that William must have left by 1113 as the royal charter which was issued for Saint Victor in June/July 1113 does not mention William as a signatory.

[41] The *Liber ordinis* is strikingly detailed in outlining the daily lives of the canons, down to how minute movements ought to be executed, and when canons should bow and in which direction. The omission of any mention of public teaching is therefore noteworthy.

[42] Laurence, *Epistolae*, in A. M. Piazzoni, 'Ugo di San Vittore "auctor"; delle "Sententiae de divinitate"', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser. xxiii (1982), 862–955, at pp. 912–13.

[43] Bischoff, 'Aus der Schule Hugos von St. Viktor', pp. 246–9.

[44] 'Der Widmungsbrief des Laurentius an Mauritius', ed. B. Bischoff, in *Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters*, p. 250, 'Et ne quis vel iuste reprehendencium vel invide mordencium calumpnie pateret introitus, semel in septimana ad magistrum Hugonem tabellas reportabam ut eius arbitrio, si quid viciose positum, mutaretur, si quid vero quandoque forte fortuitu bene dictum, tanti viri auctoritate comprobaretur'.

instruction was a Victorine canon, rather than a guest like Laurence. Despite the burden placed on this letter in recent historiography, the letter itself is short – less than a page in Bischoff's edition – and fairly perfunctory. In it, Laurence thanks Maurice for suggesting Hugh, before mentioning that the Victorine canons who sat with him had asked him to record what Hugh was saying. It was only when Hugh added his voice to the request that Laurence agreed. The letter does clearly demonstrate that some forms of teaching were open to external students – although it is worth noting that Laurence was there under the recommendation of someone who knew Hugh – but the framework of a 'school' is entirely imposed. At no point does anyone in the letter use the term school (*scola*).

Outside of these accounts, which explicitly mention teaching, we have those that discuss people visiting Saint Victor, some of which have been read as evidence of a school. A contemporary, Robert of Torigny, noted that under Gilduin – the abbot of Saint Victor for much of the twelfth century – 'many noble clerics, learned in secular and divine letters came to live' in Saint Victor.[45] It is worth briefly emphasizing the specific wording used here: 'came to live in that place' (*ad illum locum habitaturi convenerunt*).[46] The text does not say study. Among these notable people, Peter Lombard, who arrived in 1134[47]; Robert of Melun, before he left to become bishop of Hereford in 1160[48]; and Peter Comestor, who spent the early part of his education in Saint Victor and retired there in 1173.[49] This is clearly an impressive list of people. It is notable, however, that in the letter of introduction that Bernard of Clairvaux wrote to abbot Gilduin on behalf of Peter Lombard, he made clear that Peter sought hospitality – 'the necessities of life' including food.[50] He made no mention of study in Saint Victor. Indeed, he enlisted Saint Victor as a place for Peter to stay specifically while he was studying *elsewhere* in Paris. This is not to say that Peter would not have been involved with the intellectual life of Saint Victor – indeed, although it lies beyond the boundaries of this article, I would suggest that we can identify Hugh's influence on Peter's work[51] – but it does again encourage scrutiny of what form this took, and of what this might tell us about how intellectual life was carried out in Saint Victor. By saying that these people went there to pursue a particular form of life, this article is not arguing that they did not receive teaching, or that they did not explicitly go with the intention of learning. Rather, I want to suggest that they went in the expectation that they would learn through living a certain kind of life. The idea that there was a public school which external people routinely attended increasingly seems chimerical.

Some insight into the kind of life that they had in mind can be found in the six spaces that were outlined by Richard in his Lenten sermon. They were picked deliberately, but reflected the persistence of certain ideas about how communal life should be organized, and how specific spaces were set aside for both formal and informal learning. To briefly repeat, the six spaces that Richard urged his brothers to congregate in were: the refectory; the cloister; the choir; the dormitory; the chapter; and in their work. In some ways, this is an unremarkable list for a medieval religious community, but it is striking that Richard saw the convocation of his brothers within these spaces as somehow remedial to the

[45] Sub cuius regimine multi clerici nobiles, secularibus et diuinis litteris instructi, ad illum locum habitaturi conuenerunt (On Change in the Usage of Monks, *The Chronography of Robert of Torigny*, ed. and trans. T. N. Bisson (2 vols., Oxford, 2020), ii. 256–7).

[46] Bisson translates this line as 'convened to reside in that place' (*Chronography of Robert of Torigny*, ii. 257).

[47] As demonstrated by a letter of introduction from Bernard of Clairvaux, Epistle 410 (*P.L.* clxxxii, col. 619). See also M. Colish, *Peter Lombard* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 19–20.

[48] *Oeuvres de Robert de Melun*, ed. R. M. Martin (4 vols., Louvain, 1932), i. p. ix.

[49] B. Smalley, *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 1964), pp. 178–80; and I. Bradey, 'Peter Manductor and the oral traditions of Peter Lombard', *Antonianum*, xli (1966), 483–90.

[50] Epistle 410 (*P.L.*, clxxxii, col. 619): 'Dominus Lucensis episcopus, pater et amicus noster, commendavit mihi virum venerabilem P. Lombardum, rogans ut ei parvo tempore, quo moraretur in Francia causa studii, per amicos nostros victui necessaria providerem: quod effeci, quandiu Remis moratus est. Nunc commorantem Parisius vestrae dilectioni commendo, quia de vobis amplius praesumo: rogans ut placeat vobis providere ei in cibo per breve tempus, quod facturus est hic usque ad Nativitatem beatae virginis Mariae'.

[51] Some works which consider the relationship between Peter Lombard and his time in Saint Victor are: F. T. Harkins, '"Homo assumptus" at St. Victor: reconsidering the relationship between Victorine Christology and Peter Lombard's first opinion', *The Thomist*, lxxii (2008), 595–624; M. Guareschi, 'Le vœu de Hugues de Saint-vicor à Pierre Lombard', *Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques*, xxi (1998), 1–11; H. Zeimentz, *Ege nach der Lehre der Frühscholastik: eine moralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Anthropologie und Theologie der Ehe in der Schule Anselms von Laon und Wilhelms von Champeaux, bei Hugo von St.Viktor, Walter von Mortagne und Petrus Lombardus* (Dusseldorf, 1973). It lies well beyond the boundaries of this article, but I would also tentatively suggest that the account of baptism in Peter's work, which Marcia Colish identifies as an example of a nascent Aristotelianism demonstrates a clear debt to the work of Hugh of St. Victor in *De sacramentis Christianiae fidei*, esp. II. vi. vii. This is in M. C. Colish, '"Habitus" revisited: a reply to Cary Nederman', in *Traditio*, xlviii (1993), pp. 77–92.

crisis that Ernis' abbacy had created. They were not passive spaces within which brothers congregated, but positively inflected so as to facilitate communal stability.

A discussion of each of the six spaces is not possible within this article, so I will instead focus on the refectory and the cloister. The choir, and the significance of liturgy, has best been handled by Margot Fassler in her *Gothic Song*, where she suggested that the liturgical sequences produced at Saint Victor were a 'complex amalgam of symbolically charged acts and images, which each assisted in the move from the external to the internal, and ultimately on to contemplation'. Under her analysis, the church building became a 'teaching machine', which was carefully organized according to symbolic and material significance.[52] For now, it suffices to say that the programme that Fassler so brilliantly excavated chimes closely with the idea of 'intellectual community' that is outlined in this article, in particular her observation that these sequences would only have been comprehensible to those who were trained to understand their symbolic significance through regular communal practice. Moreover, these sequence repertories included no soloists, and so could only be sung in community.[53] These practices and repertories were never transferred to another institution. They were specific in content to Saint Victor and were tied to the community through both practice and architectural contingency.

The refectory is an important place in any religious community, with the sharing of food being imbued with deep symbolic and biblical significance, in imitation of the last supper where Christ ate in communion with his apostles.[54] Indeed, Peter the Venerable suggested that one could tell whether a community was eremitic or coenobitic, as hermits ate in isolation and monks ate together in the refectory.[55] This was as true of Saint Victor as it was of any medieval religious community. The *Liber ordinis* makes it clear that when entering the refectory, all brothers were to assume the same positions as they held in Chapter – which is to say, juniors at the front, with seniors following – and then proceed into the washroom. From there, they were to proceed into the refectory and arrange themselves in the same way that they would in choir, facing each other from each side of the room, leaving a central channel which the abbot would then walk up, ready to take his place at the high table. As the abbot passed through this central section, each of the brothers would bow as he passed in front of them.[56] The *Liber ordinis* details many moments and movements, which exhibit this focus on minutiae and precision, giving us a sense of how heavily ritualized daily life was, while also indicating the level of knowledge and experience that would have been required to take part in a mealtime in Saint Victor. Again, the precision and accuracy with which movements and timings are outlined makes it all the harder to believe that a school existed during this period and yet received no mention.

One curious aspect of the Victorine refectory, however, lay in what was read. Like most religious communities, mealtimes were accompanied by readings – chapter 38 of the Rule of Benedict mandated it, even.[57] In Saint Victor, much of what was read was fairly typical – extracts from scripture, as well as patristic works. However, an important aspect of the Victorine refectory lay in the relationship between the readings at the table and the liturgical texts read in the choir and chapel. Crucially, the *Liber ordinis* is the earliest extant record to include a full annual cycle of refectory reading.[58]

The liturgical texts which were to be read out ranged from Scripture to patristic works and sermons, mostly by Origen and Augustine, but also Gregory's *Moralia*.[59] As Teresa Webber has demonstrated,

[52] M. Fassler, *Gothic Song: Victorine Sequences and Augustinian Reform in Twelfth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 235.

[53] On this, see Fassler's discussion of the cantor's tablet on fols. 333v–334r, Paris BnF, Lat. MS. 14506, in *Gothic Song* (1993), p. 79; and also by Fassler, 'The office of the cantor in early western monastic rules and customaries: a preliminary investigation', *Early Music History*, v (1985), 29–51.

[54] For a recent study on the significance of the refectory, see G. Signori, 'The refectory, memoria, and community', *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies*, xi (2022), 131–77.

[55] Peter the Venerable, *De miraculis libri duo*, ed. D. Bouthillier (Turnhout, 1989), *De institutis Cartusiensium monachorum*, bk. II, chap. 27 (p. 152): 'Hoc vero tunc, quando non communiter in refectorio, set quando eos in cellis suis solos comendere, heremitica institution precipit'. This is taken from the beginning of Signori, 'Refectory, memoria, and community' pp. 131–2, n. 1.

[56] The procedures followed in the refectory are detailed in ch. 35 of *Liber ordinis*, pp. 166–75.

[57] T. Webber, *Reading in the Refectory: Monastic Practice in England From the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century* (London, 2013); and T. Webber, 'Reading in the refectory at Reading Abbey', *Reading Medieval Studies*, lxii (2016), 63–83. The list is provided in ch. 48 of the *Liber ordinis* (see *The Book of the Order of Saint Victor in Paris,* trans. J. Mousseau, in *Life at Saint Victor: The Liber Ordinis, the Life of William of Æbelholt, and a selection of works of Hugh, Richard, and Odo of Saint Victor, and other authors*, ed. F. van Liere and J. Mousseau (Turnhout, 2021), pp. 37–208, at pp. 155–6.

[58] Webber also notes this point, 'Reading in the refectory', p. 63, n. 5.

[59] For the full list, see *Liber ordinis*, ch. 48, pp. 212–14.

by the end of the twelfth century, a full outline of liturgical reading in the refectory was increasingly common, but it is nonetheless noteworthy than the Victorine customary offers the earliest extant evidence of such a systematized programme being recorded. Moreover, the refectorian was invited to choose sermons which were in keeping with the liturgical season or feast of the day to be read at table.[60] That is to say, the *Liber ordinis* outlined two distinct modes of reading at table. The first was the highly structured and predetermined cycle of liturgical reading, which repeated year on year, but the second was more fluid and allowed the refectorian, in dialogue with the armarius, to select sermons which fitted the moment and which emerged directly out of a specifically Victorine intellectual sensibility. The large number of institutional sermonaries, which follow the liturgical calendar that are present in the library of Saint Victor, would suggest that this was diligently followed.[61] These sermons are often densely theological, building directly on the works by Hugh, Richard and Godfrey.[62]

The deliberate recasting of the refectory as a space of liturgy is not to say that the choir and chapel diminished in significance. On the contrary, as Margot Fassler's work demonstrated, these spaces retained a unique and symbolically charged significance throughout the twelfth century. Rather, it invites consideration of the spillover that was created between these spaces. The *Liber ordinis* instructed the community: 'on the days in which there is an explanation of the gospel which is read at Mass, if the whole explanation was not done or almost done at Matins, it is read in the refectory'.[63] Similarly, of the 'histories' and other texts read in the church, the *Liber ordinis* instructs that they should not be read in the refectory before they are read in the chapel. This again demonstrates the complementary – if subsidiary – role that the refectory played to the choir and chapel. The function of the choir extended beyond its formal walls, reappearing in the refectory, and in readings at table. Richard reflected on this in his sermon where he noted: 'when we come together in the refectory, we acquire a double benefit because there the body and spirit are refreshed: the body by food, the spirit by divine words'.[64] Such was the importance of the work being read out in the refectory, the prior was expected to listen attentively and to correct immediately any mistakes made by the person reading. After intervening, the reader was expected to repeat the text as many times as it took for them to get it right, and until they understood the reading.[65] Ensuring the accuracy of the reading is an indication of how seriously the Victorines took its pedagogical and intellectual function.

The result of these provisions was that the refectory became, to a degree, an extension of the choir, with expositions on, and practices of, the liturgy spilling across the spaces we would typically expect. But more importantly, the works which were read out existed within a specifically Victorine scheme, thus making the refectory a potentially important space of 'communal learning', which was unique to Saint Victor. It was, however, only a space which could be effective when integrated with the rest of communal life. It was not simply being in a shared space that was significant, but the series of actions and practices carried out there in relation to other aspects of daily life. It was in this context that daily activities could shape the intellectual formation of a Victorine canon. This meant that the call to come together in the refectory could only make sense when considered as part of this broader life. Odo of Saint Victor was conscious of this when he wrote in a letter to a fellow canon:

[60] *Liber ordinis*, ch. 48, p. 214: 'Si ea quae per singular tempora distinximus, singulis temporibus non sufficiant ad legendum, armarius provideat, quid de tractatibus Patrum secundum temporis congruentiam in refectorio legi debeat'. This is only one of the many times in the *Liber ordinis* where the armarius is called upon to select a specific reading which is appropriate for the moment. Again, it is increasingly clear that the armarius was of huge significance to the intellectual direction of Saint Victor, and this is an area that could be usefully studied.

[61] On this point, see J. Châtillon, 'La culture de l'Ecole de Saint Victor au XIIe siècle', in *Entretiens sur la Renaissance du XIIe siècle*, ed. M. P. Gandillac and E. Jeauneau (Paris, 1968), pp. 147–78, at p. 153.

[62] There has not been a huge amount of research on sermons in Saint Victor, but see A. Sordillo, '"Speculator castrorum Dei": philosophy and theology in Godfrey of St Victor's Sermons', in *Omnium expetendorum prima est sapiential: Studies on Victorine Thought and Influence*, ed. D. Poirel and M. J. Janecki (Turnhout, 2021), pp. 215–26; and Sara Lipton's recent article which offers fascinating insights into the institutional and architectural aspects of Victorine sermons: S. Lipton, 'Ut Artifex: art, artifice, and instruction in high medieval Sermons', *The Haskins Society Journal*, xxxiii (2021), 163–83.

[63] *Liber ordinis*, ch. 48, pp. 211–12: 'In illis diebus, quibus ad missam euangelium legitur de quo expositio habetur, si expositio illa ad matutinas tota lecta non fuerit aut fere tota, legatur in refectorio'.

[64] Richard of St Victor, *Answers to Questions regarding the Rule of St Augustine*, trans. H. Feiss, in *Life at St Victor*, pp. 257–305, at p. 278.

[65] *Liber ordinis*, ch. 48, p. 214: 'Mensae lector aperte et distincte et tractim legat, et, dum legit, aurem accommodet priori, ut si quando emendauerit, intelligere possit. Si intelligit, quid emendet, humiliter dicat. Si non intelligit, uersum reincipiat et hoc tociens faciat, quotiens priorem propter hoc esgrunire cognouerit'.

> Unity of heart is worth more among many than a common cellar, and one soul more than a common table. What use is it to be joined to others in food and drink and separated from them through one's own will?... Therefore, let no one think that he has fulfilled the profession of community by lodging in one house or sharing one table or even by common reception of body and blood of the Lord, if he either retains independence of will or divides brotherly unity through bad behaviours.[66]

This idea that living in community was about more than simply going through the motions is a key part of the Victorine identity. This relationship between the external and the internal is a major field of Victorine studies, which lies largely beyond the boundaries of this article, but in brief, this letter from Odo is a reference to the idea that there had to be a unity between the internal will and the external practice; between the inner desire and the outer action.[67] Richard was also conscious of this in his sermon, where he notes that all Christians come together to 'live side by side in faith, in one love, in one practice of virtues, and in one performance of good works', noting marriage as one such example, which was open to all. He notes, therefore, that the Victorine canons must come together 'more diligently, and more specifically, so that by doing this we might surpass their merit, as is just, and receive from the Lord a loftier reward'.[68] That is to say, throughout these texts, the Victorines were conscious that their community was a deliberate attempt – among many other such attempts – at constructing life in a way that assisted in the struggle towards salvation, and it is in this sense that each of the spaces was charged with a spiritual and symbolic significance. Odo's letter and Richard's sermon also capture, however, the slightly competitive edge to these discussions. In a world where one could find Christian community in marriage, or just down the road in Saint Genevieve, why choose to look for it in Saint Victor?

While the refectory was an important space for the structured reading of liturgical texts, and the hearing of sermons, the cloister was a similarly important space for ideas to be exchanged and discussed, often freely and without hierarchy. At the most basic level, Jean Leclerq's statement that 'in the cloister, there were "conversations", not debates', is a provocative and intriguing place to begin.[69] Broadly speaking, this framing can be useful. However, where this article diverges from Leclercq is in the kinds of implications that are bundled up in the idea that the classroom is the place for disputation, while the cloister is the space for conversation. The implication is that the cloister is somehow distinct from the rough and tumble of rigorous intellectual exchange and reinforces the narrowing of intellectual culture in the twelfth century into the model of cathedral schools, which tended, gradually but assuredly towards the university. This obscures the sophistication of the conversations which took place in these spaces while overlooking their significance for the intellectual formation of monks and canons. As Marc Saurette has demonstrated of Cluny, the unstructured conversations that could take place in the cloister were 'a key part of a monk's development and learning'.[70]

Much of a Victorine canon's time was probably spent in the cloister, with much of it being given over to reading, or to practicing singing. The *Liber ordinis* suggests that those who read should sit near the entrance of the abbey, and those who sang should sit elsewhere, nearer to the entrance of the

[66] 'Plus valet inter multos cor unum, quam commune cellarium: plus anima una, quam communis mensa. Quid vero prodest in cibo et potu aliis esse conjunctum. et per propriam voluntatem ab aliis esse disjunctum?... Non ergo propter unius domus habitationem, vel unius mensae participationem, vel, quod majus est, propter unam Dominici corporis et sanguinis perceptionem, putet se implere aliquis communionis professionem, qui sibi aut propriam retinet voluntatem, aut per malos mores fraternam dividit unitatem. Haec de communione' (Odo, *Epistolae*, *P.L.*, cxcvi, col. 1402, translated by F. van Liere in *Life at Saint Victor: The Liber Ordinis, the Life of William of Æbelholt, and a Selection of Works of Hugh, Richard, and Odo of Saint Victor, and Other Authors* (Turnhout, 2021), p. 323.

[67] The best studies on this are I. V. Spijker, *Homo Interior and Vita Socialis: Patristic Patterns and Twelfth-Century Reflections* (Turnhout, 2022); 'Conflict and correspondence: inner and outer in Abelard and Hugh of Saint Victor', in *Rethinking Abelard: a Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. B. Hellemans (Leiden, 2014), pp. 84–102; *Fictions of the Inner Life: Religious Literature and Formation of the Self in the Self in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Turnhout, 2004).

[68] *Sermones centum*, *P.L.* clxxvii, col. 1017: 'Sed quoniam hujusmodi conventus ab omnibus Christianis etiam laicis et conjugatis, generaliter exiguntur aliquo modo, nos qui in congregatione consistimus, conventum diligentius et specialius faciamus, unde eorum meritum (ut justum est) transcendamus et excellentius a Domino praemium percipiamus' (translation from *Sermons for the Liturgical Year*, p. 278).

[69] J. Leclercq, 'The renewal of theology', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R. L. Benson and others (Oxford, 1982), pp. 68–87, at p. 83.

[70] M. Saurette, 'Making space for learning in the miracle stories of Peter the Venerable', in *Horizontal Learning in the High Middle Ages: Peer to Peer Knowledge Transfer in Religious Communities*, ed. M. Long, T. Snijders and S. Vanderputten (Amsterdam, 2019), pp. 111–40, at p. 113.

exterior parlour, so that they did not hinder one another.[71] There was a keen awareness in this text of the community as an aural space, as well as a sensitivity to brothers disturbing one another. There are several intriguing parts of this section which deserve comment. The first is the provision for 'common books', which were readily available for the brothers in the cloister and cared for by the *armarius*. These were explicitly distinct from the library and could be accessed freely by any member of the community.[72] Sadly, we do not know precisely what these common books were, but we are told that the 'armarius ought to set out one or two antiphonaries and other chant books, psalters, and hymnals' as well as sermon collections, so that the brothers could look ahead to what was coming in choir and refectory.[73] That is to say, a certain amount of this time was to be spent preparing for whatever was due to be sung in church and expanded on at mealtimes. We are also told in the *Liber ordinis,* however, that the *armarius* ought to be somewhat proactive in the books that he left out for common usage. He was expected to 'place in common books which he observed to be more suitable and necessary for the instruction and edification of the brothers'.[74] The sense throughout the *Liber ordinis* is that the *armarius* was crucial to the running of the community; it seems that at every point of potential failure, the *armarius* was expected to be on hand to make it right again. We do not have any clear sense of who held this position, but it is clear that to have dispensed these duties effectively would have required a hugely impressive figure.

This idea of common books is something that became fairly routine in other communities at a later date. It is possible that other communities had similar practices at the same time, or even before Saint Victor, but the *Liber ordinis* is the earliest known record of such a practice.[75] This begins to give us a sense of where the innovation of the Victorines lay. The importance of these books to the intellectual formation of the Victorine canons would have been significant. Not only did they provide a specific body of works that all brothers could access in common, they also represented a curated selection based on the areas of intellectual life that the *armarius* saw as requiring development.

The cloister was also the main space where provision was made for small interlocutory spaces. For those brothers who were partially sighted, it was permitted that another brother might sit with him and read the text aloud, for example. There was also the provision for brothers to sit together in small groups and discuss matters, so long as they were 'decorous' – it was only if their discussions were 'indecorous' that the prior should intervene.[76] One aspect it is very clear on is that everyone was expected to engage. In the sermon from above, Richard reflected on the significance of the cloister, as a space where:

> We have the benefit of reading and meditation, the benefit of devotion and prayer, the benefit of contemplation and compunction. There we are instructed by the precepts of our elders, we are informed by their examples, and we are incited by their warnings.[77]

The cloister and the refectory were, then, important spaces in the educational and intellectual life of Saint Victor, not only as spaces for reading but also as spaces for exchange, through word and example.[78] It is these aspects of the intellectual life at Saint Victor which have been overlooked, and

[71] *Liber ordinis*, p. 145.
[72] On these books, see *Liber ordinis*, ch. 31 (pp. 145–6), and ch. 19 (pp. 81–2).
[73] *Liber ordinis*, ch. 31 (p. 146): 'Debet autem armarius unum antiphonarium uel duos et alios libros de cantu et psalteria et hymnarios in communi proponere, in quibus ceteri fratres possint, quod prouidendum est, prouidere'.
[74] *Liber ordinis*, ch. 19 (p. 82): 'Debet etiam armarius inter hos libros, qui ad cotidianum officium ecclesiae necessarii sunt, etiam de aliis aliquot quos ad instructionem uel ad aedificationem fratrum magis commodos et necessaries esse perspexerit, in commune proponere, quales sunt bibliotecae et maiores expositors et passionarii et uitae partum et omeliarii'.
[75] This was observed by Webber 'Reading in the refectory', p. 67, which also references the most detailed study of such collections in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: D. Nebbiai-falla Guarda, 'La bibliothèque commune des institutions religieuses', *Scriptorium*, l (1996), 254–68.
[76] This mirrors Saurette's findings in Cluny where he explored the cloister and chapter as spaces where monks could freely pursue 'inventive' speech, i.e. not recollective speech such as song, chant, or prayer. Using Peter the Venerable's concept of 'usefulness', Saurette explored the existence of free speech in these spaces, so long as it was 'useful'. These kinds of spaces and conversations were interpreted as crucial in the intellectual formation of monks (Saurette, 'Making space for learning', pp. 112–13.
[77] *Sermones centum*, *P.L.*, clxxvii, col. 1017: 'Habemus quoque in claustro fructum lectionis et meditationis, fructum devotionis et orationis, fructum contemplationis et compunctionis. Ibi praeceptis majorum instruimur, exemplis informamur, incitamur monitis'.
[78] C. W. Bynum, *Docere verbo et exemplo: an Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, 1979).

which have been excluded by accounts which prioritize the idea of a 'school' in order to fit Saint Victor into more familiar, developmental, narratives of medieval education.

Before considering the significance of this discussion for our understanding of the intellectual community in Saint Victor, and how it might contribute to broader concepts of 'horizontal community', it is important to note that these were all spaces that guests to the community could enter in a regulated and structured way, based on specific permissions. Guests were permitted to enter the speaking periods, for example, either to listen or to offer a specific 'word of edification'.[79] The significance of guests to Saint Victor is not trivial. Indeed, Karl Bosl argued that Augustinian houses were often located on roads into the city so that they might catch more people.[80] This is corroborated by the account of Oliver de Merlimont, a monk from Wigmore, who found himself in Saint Victor after meeting a Victorine canon at the city gates.[81] He writes of the beautiful and courteous manner with which he was received, especially in the cloister and the choir. Some years later, Andrew of Saint Victor would twice serve as abbot of Wigmore, which perhaps demonstrates the impression that Victorine hospitality must have made. The quality of Oliver's reception is perhaps unsurprising. As well as outlining the pedagogic significance of communal spaces, the *Liber* ordinis goes into great detail on how guests ought to be treated well and welcomed into the community. Fully ten percent of the chapters deal with guests. The fact that Bernard's letter to Gilduin on behalf of Peter Lombard specifically mentions hospitality, and the opportunity of 'living' at Saint Victor therefore seems less surprising. A body of six letters, which were sent between Saint Albans and Richard of Saint Victor in the 1160s and 70s, likewise mention the quality of hospitality that guests received at Saint Victor, with a series of monks from Saint Albans travelling back and forth to engage with this life.[82] This exchange also involved a series of requests for works by Hugh and Richard to be transcribed and sent back so that England might 'shine with the jewels of their works'.[83] Finally, and briefly, when Arnulf of Lisieux embarked on his reform programmes at Sées and Lisieux (the former via his uncle), he attempted to impose Victorine canons specifically because of their 'instruction concerning hospitality, order, and discipline'.[84] What this seems to suggest is that those who went to Saint Victor were not seeking instruction *per se*, at least not as traditionally defined, but instead were seeking access to a form of living that was deliberately constructed to include learning at multiple stages of daily life.

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The final part of this article proposes that the informal discussions that these spaces facilitated actively led into the sophisticated theological works that we now take as typically Victorine. This is one area where Saint Victor contributes uniquely to our understanding of 'horizontal communities' as outlined in the work of Long and Vanderputten. Often, the kind of learning that took place in these informal settings might have been quite prosaic, but the Victorine model also makes it clear that these spaces were important for the development of sophisticated theological ideas also. The starkest example of this comes at the beginning of Hugh's *De archa Noe*. This is a complicated theological work that uses the imagery of Noah's ark to explore, among other things, Hugh's understanding of salvation history. In many ways, it operated using similar ideas as found in Hugh's most advanced theological work,

[79] *Liber ordinis*, p. 61: 'Ad capitulum et ad locutionem hospites non admittuntur, nisi forte pro dispensation, id est verbum aedificationis uel facturi uel audituri, exceptis his, qui de nostra sunt societate et nostrum ordinem tenant'.

[80] K. Bosl, *Regularkanoniker (Augustinerchorherren) und Seelsorge in Kirche und Gesellschaft des europdischen 12. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1979), esp. pp. 17–8, 55–9 and 94–7; See also M. D. Chenu, 'Civilisation urbaine et théologie: L'École de Saint-Victor au XIIe siècle', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, xxix (1974), 1253–63.

[81] The Anglo Norman Chronicle of Wigmore Abbey, ed. J. C. Dickinson and P. T. Ricketts, *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, xxxix (1969), 413–46, at p. 422.

[82] *P.L.*, cxcvi, cols. 1227–30.

[83] *P.L.*, cxcvi, cols. 1227–30; On this epistolary exchange, see R. M. Thomson, 'Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey, 1066–1235 (Woodbridge, 1982), esp. pp. 44–7; and *Codices reginenses latini*, ed. A. Wilmart (2 vols, Rome, 1937–45), i. 419–30, 609.

[84] The best recent work on the relationship between this dispute and Saint Victor is G. Zamore's article, 'Arnulf of Lisieux and the crisis at Grestain 1164–6: brother bishops, inherited policies and failed leadership', *Journal of Medieval History*, xlvi (2020), 419–48. The other classic work is L. Grant, 'Arnulf's mentor, Geoffrey of Lèves, Bishop of Chartres', in *Writing Medieval Biography, 750–1250, Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates and others (Boydell, 2006), pp. 173–84; see also R. Allen, 'The reform of the chapter of Sées (1131) reconsidered: the evidence of the episcopal acta', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, lxvii (2016), 23–52; and, for Arnulf's own (often amusing) contributions, *The Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, ed. F. Barlow (London, 1939).

De sacramentis christianae fidei. It is, in other words, a highly sophisticated theological work from a significant figure in twelfth-century intellectual culture. At the opening of this work, Hugh outlines the circumstances of its inception:

> One day, when I was sitting in discussion with the brethren, with them asking questions and me responding, many things were brought up for consideration. After a while, the conversation came around to a point that, all together, we began to express a kind of astonishment at the inconstancy and restlessness of the human heart, and to sigh over it. And then, with great desire indeed, they asked that they be shown what it was that brought about such wild fluctuations of thought in the human heart, and repeatedly and urgently demanded that they be taught, if it were possible, to counter such a great evil as this through some skill or by the practice of some discipline. Wishing to satisfy the charity of the brethren on both accounts, under God's inspiration we untied the knot of each question as much as we were able by offering arguments based on authority as well as on reason. Now, because I know that, in this discussion, certain points in particular pleased the brethren, I especially wanted to commit them to writing – not so much because I thought they were worth recording but because I knew that some of them were previously unheard of in this context and were, so to speak, all the better received because of it.[85]

As well as being a touching insight into the intellectual life of this community, this extract also demonstrates precisely why we should take customaries like the *Liber ordinis* seriously for their insights into intellectual life. This was a small group of brothers, united by a common life, which they had arrived to as strangers, discussing the trials of the human condition. It was not disputational and nor was it structured. It was, on the surface of it, one of Leclercq's 'conversations', but it was also a meandering and non-hierarchical exploration of an idea which resulted in a work we now recognize as brilliant and typical of Hugh's theology. These initial discussions are, however, overshadowed when we use the framework of a 'school', with the hierarchical, formal and structured forms that such a term implies. Reassessing the importance of spaces like the cloister and moving beyond the classroom and the school in our discussions of intellectual culture allows us to spot small moments like this where sophisticated ideas emerge quite organically out of fairly relaxed settings. The doctrinal coherence that Poirel identified in Victorine thought is quite unsurprising under this model; the canons were probably chatting these ideas over most days.[86] The mistake, I suggest, is to settle for the model of a 'school' to make sense of these idiosyncratic intellectual identities.

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This article stated at the beginning its ambition to move beyond the school model in our accounts of Saint Victor. The model of an 'intellectual community' allows us to draw out the close relationship between intellectual and educational activities, and the rhythms of daily life in Saint Victor. The immediate significance for Victorine studies lies in thinking more imaginatively about the relationship between the 'ideas' which are rightly famous and the community which remains strangely anonymous. Beyond Saint Victor, this approach disrupts a much broader historiographical landscape of 'cathedral schools', 'the university' and twelfth-and-thirteenth-century Paris, which was outlined in the first part of this article. Paris did not only play host to experimentation in ideas but also to the ways that communal life

[85] *De archa Noe, Libellus de formatione arche*, ed. P. Sicard (Turnhout 2001), pp. 1–162: 'Cum sederem aliquando in conuentu fratrum et, illis interrogantibus me que respondente, multa in medium prolata fuissent, ad hoc tandem deducta sunt uerba ut de humani potissimum cordis instabilitate et inquietudine ammirari omnes simul et suspirare inciperemus. Cum que magno quidam desiderio exposcerent demonstrari sibi, que causa in corde hominis tantas cogitationum fluctuationes ageret, ac deinde si qua arte siue laboris cuiuslibet exercitatione huic tanto malo obuiari posset summopere doceri flagitarent, nos, quantum Deo aspirante ualuimus, in utroque caritati fratrum satisfacere uolentes, utriusque questionis nodum ductis tam ex auctoritate quam ex ratione firmamentis soluimus. In qua collatione, quia quedam specialiter placuisse fratribus scio, ea potissimum stilo commendare uolui, non tantum ideo quod ea digna scribi existimem, quam iccirco quod quibusdam prius inaudita et ob hoc quodammodo magis grata esse cognoui' (translation, C. Rudolph, *The Mystic Ark: Hugh of Saint Victor, Art, and Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 1–2.

[86] See especially, D. Poirel, 'Existe-t-il une école de Saint-Victor?', in *La scuola di San Vittore e la letteratura medievale, a cura e con introduzione di Corrado Bologna*, ed. C. Zacchetti (Bologna, 2022), pp. 1–21, esp. pp. 1–3.

could be organized to facilitate their exchange and development. Saint Victor may not have endured at the centre of intellectual life, but the fact that there was a Saint Victor at all is worthy of note and points to the vibrancy and variety of educational life around the banks of the Seine. William made the decision to start Saint Victor. Hugh, Richard, Andrew, Achard, Peters Lombard and Comestor lived and learned there, sometimes briefly, but always deliberately. While Saint Victor may have receded somewhat on the Parisian landscape in the thirteenth century, eventually becoming – quite literally – overshadowed by the university, it nonetheless offered a sophisticated and deliberate way of living a spiritual and intellectual life. Removing Saint Victor from the teleologies of 'cathedral schools' and 'the university' allows us to rediscover the experimental energy that Saint Victor possessed and which, I suggest, typified the Parisian landscape in the twelfth century. This is, then, not a history of origins, but of dead ends, of roads not taken and of chattering canons who left us both towering and mundane works as the legacy of their intellectual community.