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# WHY CAN'T SAINT VICTORINUS OF POETOVIO BE THE AUTHOR OF THE HOMILY «ON THE TEN VIRGINS»?

*Dedicated to the 1720th anniversary of the blessed death  
of Saint Victorinus of Poetovio (about 230 - 303/304)*

## INTRODUCTION

In the ante-Nicene period (1st – early 4th century) among the works of the holy fathers and church writers, a special type of writing appeared – the homilies, or the festive exegetical conversations<sup>2</sup>. As rightly written by A. von Harnack, «[at this time] the homily preached about the One God, Jesus Christ, the Son and the Lord, the future judgment and the resurrection of the dead» (Harnack, 2007, s. 261). However some of these early Christian homilies were not known to the general public for a long time, for example the homily «On the Ten Virgins» (De decem virginibus, hereafter – DV), first discovered by L. Delisle in 1878 in a manuscript dated 744, and first published by A. Wilmart in no 1 of the «Bulletin d'ancienne

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2 The first in this genre is considered to be the homily «On Easter» by Saint Melito of Sardis (beginning of the 2nd century - c. 190), dated 160-170 (regarding this homily see: Panagopoulos, 2013, s. 209; Sidorov, 2011, s. 323).

littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes» for 1911 (Pseudo-Victorinus, 1911, s. 35-38). Since then it has been published several times (Dulaey, 1993b, s. 39; Dulaey, 1993c, s. 20), but the question of authorship, time and place of writing of this homily was never resolved.

The early Christian homily DV under consideration has a number of features: an archaic source is quoted – «The Revelation of Peter» (first half of the 2nd century) ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 356); the archaic text of the parable «On the Ten Virgins» is given (Matthew 25:1-13) ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352); Latin pre-Nicene terminology is used<sup>3</sup>; there are parallels with the interpretation of «On the Revelation» (about 300) by Saint Victorinus of Poetovio (about 230 – 303/304)<sup>4</sup> and the treatise «The Feast» (about 300) by Saint Methodius of Olympus (about 250 – 311/312)<sup>5</sup>; echoes of the recent persecution of Christians are heard ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354, 356); there are elements of a conversational style ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352, 356). Based on this, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn: the time where DV was written is from the second half of the 3rd century to the beginning of the 4th century; the place where DV was written is one of the Latin-speaking provinces of the Roman Empire. As for the DV author, there is only one option to choose: Victorinus of Poetovio, or Pseudo-Victorinus of Poetovio.

3 As an example, we will give some phrases, which we will divide into two groups.

The first group represents a complete match with one of Victorinus Poetovio's original works. For example, «regnum caelorum» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 120), «vita aeterna» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 126, 170, 262), «lex Dei» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354; Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299), «populus christianus» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 170), «duos populos» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 164), «Gabriel angelus» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 356; Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299) and «Ioannes Baptista» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 356; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 124).

The second group represents a partial match with one of Victorinus Poetovio's original works. For example, «regnum Christi» or «regnum Dei» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354-356) and «regnum sanctorum» or «regnum sancti summi Dei» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 194, 260) or «regnum Antichristi» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 190, 228, 246), «adventus Dei» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 356) and «adventus Domini» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 160, 246, 252, 260-262) or «adventus Domini nostri Iesu Christi» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 222) or «adventus Antichristi» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 226), «domus Dei» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352) and «domus Salamonis» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299), «corona ecclesiae» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354) and «corona immortalitatis» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 162), «in die iudicii» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354-356) and «in die octavo» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297) or «in novissima die» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 120), «opera bona» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354) and «opera amoris» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 132), «oratio et misericordia Dei» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354) and «misericordia et amor» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 130).

In addition, in the ante-Nicene period, it was customary to write «legimus» before beginning a quotation from the Holy Scriptures ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 356; Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 112, 126, 166, 178, 188-190, 220).

4 In these works have the same identical list of good deeds for good Christians ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 130-144). Most probably, in two works the list of good deeds from the «Shepherd» of Hermas (140-150) was taken as a basis (Hermas, 1958, s. 176-181).

5 In these works have the same symbolism of the numbers five and ten ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354; Méthode, 1963, s. 166-172).

## 1. A PROBLEM STATEMENT: VICTORINUS OF POETOVIO AND DE DECEM VIRGINIBUS

At the end of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century, in connection with the approaching celebrations in honor of the 1700th anniversary of the blessed death of Victorinus of Poetovio<sup>6</sup> – the first Latin interpreter of the Holy Scriptures (since most of his writings are dedicated to the exegesis of biblical books) (Budzanowska-Weglenda, 2021, s. 41-44; Khandoga, 2021b, s. 259-260), the first Christian writer of the Pannonian province of the Roman Empire (Bratož, 2014, . 151-152; Bratož, 2012, s. 36) and, possibly, the first martyr of the Petavian Church (Hieronymus, 2009, s. 348; Martyrologium, 2005, s. 370)<sup>7</sup> – the interest of researchers was renewed to his exegetical and theological heritage. As a result, the DV came into their field of view, which, undoubtedly, is an exegetical-theological work consisting of an introduction (the first sentence), a main part (the text of the parable «On the Ten Virgins» (Matthew 25:1-13)<sup>8</sup>, which «has always attracted attention of biblical exegetes» (Marin, 2002, s. 243), and interpretation to it<sup>9</sup>), as well as conclusion (the last sentence).

Based on a number of assumptions, M. Špelič and M. Veronese – publishers of the works of Victorinus of Poetovio – published DV as his original work<sup>10</sup>. According to these scholars, there were three reasons for the publication of DV (Špelič, 2003, s. 257, 261; Veronese, 2002, s. 249-250, 351; Špelič, 1999, s. 16 ). Firstly, the mention by Blessed Jerome of Stridon (about 347-419/420) – the first biographer of the Petavian saint – of an incomplete list of his works: «Including interpretations on Genesis, on Exodus, on Leviticus, on Isaiah, on Ezekiel, on Habakkuk , on Eccle-

6 In the city of Ptuj, Republic of Slovenia, on October 25-26, 2003, an International Scientific Symposium dedicated to this date was held (Emeršič, 2003, s. 271-272; Cedilnik, 2004, s. 531). The previous anniversary – the 1600th anniversary of the repose of Victorinus of Poetovio – was celebrated in the same city from 2 to 8 November 1903 (Kovačič, 1904, s. 55), or from November 2, 1903 to November 3, 1904 (Horvat, 1904, s. 7). Accordingly, the question of the day and month of the blessed death of the Petavian saint remains open. As for the year, there are also no compelling arguments that this happened in 303 and not in 304.

7 It should be borne in mind that «in the period of the 2nd and 3rd centuries it was not at all the custom for a bishop to move from one see to another: the bishop looked at himself as having entered into a spiritual, inextricable union with his flock» (Lebedev, 2006, s. 149).

8 It is important to keep in mind that this Gospel text «does not correspond to any known one, but is certainly «European» (Špelič, 2003, s. 261).

9 Although this work does not directly indicate its author, it is indisputable that «any interpreter interprets for the sake of benefit: his own and other people; this interpretation requires, in addition to firm faith and a wealth of knowledge, also the greatest skill» (Makovetskii, 2010, s. 11).

10 To date, this work has been published five times ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2003, s. 258-260; [Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352-357; [Pseudo-Victorinus], 1999, s. 168-175; [Pseudo-Victorinus], 1958, s. 172-174; [Pseudo-Victorinus], 1911, s. 35-38). In our study we focus on the penultimate edition: [Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352-357.

siastes, on the Song of Songs, on the Revelation of John [the Theologian], Against all heresies and much more (et multa alia)» (Hieronymus, 2009, s. 348; Martyrologium, 2005, s. 370), as well as an interpretation of «On the Gospel of Matthew», which, probably by mistake, was not included in this list (Hieronymus, 1845, s. 220). Secondly, the presentation by A. Wilmart – the first publisher DV – some dubious arguments (for example, quoting one of the Latin translations of the Gospel, using an allegorical method of interpreting Holy Scripture, etc.) (Wilmart, 1911, s. 88, 101). Thirdly, the division by M. Dulaey – the main researcher of the life and work of Victorinus of Poetovio – of all his works into four groups, that is genuine (interpretation of «On Revelation» and treatise «On the Creation of the World»), dubious («Chronological Fragment» and homily «On the Ten Virgins»)<sup>11</sup>, inauthentic<sup>12</sup> and lost (interpretations of «On Genesis», «On Isaiah», «On Ezekiel», «On Ecclesiastes», «On the Gospel of Matthew» and «other works») (Dulaey, 1993b, s. 19-67; Dulaey, 1993c, s. 15-36; Haussleiter, 1916, s. XIV-XXXV). Based on this, publishers put forward two hypotheses: DV was a fragment of the interpretation of «On the Gospel of Matthew» or an anonymous sermon written on the basis of this interpretation.

Perhaps the main argument for them was that this work contains an ecclesiological component, very rare in the pre-Nicene era<sup>13</sup>, since «these ten virgins personify the Church – the entire Christian people, in which there is both a wise and a foolish part» (Sidorov, Dobrotsvetov, Fokin, 2019, s. 213). In addition, «they constitute this Church – the One and Only Bride of Christ» (Dobrotsvetov, 2019, s. 143). In turn, this is confirmed in Orthodox hymnography, which «compares us to ten virgins awaiting the coming of the groom» (Gecha, 2007, s. 406). In other words, in the Church of Christ «until the last time» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 132), that is, until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the prototype of all the clergy (bishops, presbyters and deacons), the churchmen (subdeacons, readers, singers, sextons and

11 However, in subsequent publications by M. Dulaey, the «Chronological Fragment» acquired the status of an authentic work (Dulaey, 1993a, p. 138-144; Dulaey, 1997, s. 20-23; Dulaey, 2003, s. 97), and the early Christian homily DV – an inauthentic work (Dulaey, 1993b, s. 42; Dulaey, 1993c, s. 21; Dulaey, 2004, s. 298).

12 More recently, this list was replenished with another work – a fragment of the «Canon Muratori» (Anonymus, 2008, s. 32-34), as one of the researchers attempted to prove that its author was Victorinus of Poetovio (Armstrong, 2008, s. 3). Nevertheless, it is reliably known that this work was written anonymously at the end of the 2nd century, or around 200 (Tkachenko, 2017, s. 676-678; Metsger, 2011, s. 190-191; Naumowicz, 2011, s. 11-12).

13 This is first mentioned (although not literally) in the «Shepherd» of Hermas, when the third vision describes the construction of a square tower depicting the Church of God (Hermas, 1958, s. 98-133). However, in the pre-Nicene period, similar allegorical interpretations of the parable «On the Ten Virgins» were presented only twice, in which the historical existence of the Church of Christ is inextricably linked with the five wise and five foolish virgins (Méthode, 1963, s. 166-172; [Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354).

bell ringers), as well as the laity there are ten virgins, who in reality are saved or unsaved Christians (Luke 13:23-24) (Khandoga, 2018, s. 168).

Nevertheless, all these arguments are not enough to classify DV as the genuine works of Victorinus of Poetovio – the treatise «On the Creation of the World», the fragment «On the Life of Christ» and the interpretation of «On Revelation»<sup>14</sup>, since they indicate only «external similarities». Naturally, to confirm authorship there must also be «internal similarities», that is, agreement on the main theological issues and basic theological terminology. Therefore, by subjecting some quotes from four works to theological and philological analysis, we will try to answer the questions: who is the author, time and place of writing the DV?

## 2. CHRISTOLOGY: THE TWO NATURES OF THE SAVIOR

Victorinus of Poetovio, as a deeply religious man, who for many years was a bishop-confessor, and in old age became a bishop-martyr (Hieronymus, 2009, s. 348; Martyrologium, 2005, s. 370), not only openly professed faith in the one true God<sup>15</sup>, but also tirelessly taught that the incarnate Son of God has two natures (John 1:14), that is, He is true God and true man (Khandoga, 2021a, s. 154-155; Adinolfi, 2003, s. 181-184; Adinolfi, 1992, s. 44-46). Therefore, for him it was especially important the name and earthly life of the Savior, whom he called «Lord Jesus Christ» or «Lord our Jesus Christ», were of particular importance (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 296, 299; Victorinus, 2017b, s. 303; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 154, 204, 222).

According to the teachings of Victorinus of Poetovio, in the earthly life of the Savior there were important or main days – conception, birth, death and resurrection, corresponding to the days of creation: «The Holy Spirit filled the Virgin Mary on the same day on which [Christ] created the light... Christ was born in the same day on which man was formed; He suffered on the same day that Adam fell; He rose from the dead on the same day that He created light» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299).

From this it follows that the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by the Most Holy Theotokos from the Holy Spirit on the first day when God created light, twelve angels of the day and twelve angels of the night; born on the sixth day when God created the first man; died on the seventh day, when God stopped creating and

14 Currently, there are three critical editions of the works of the Petavian saint (CSEL. T. 49. Vindobonae, Lipsiae, 1916; SC. T. 423. Paris, 1997; CCSL. T. 5. Turnhout, 2017), which provide an identical list of his works. In our study we focus on the latest critical edition: Victorinus, 2017a, s. 295-300; Victorinus, 2017b, s. 303; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 110-265.

15 At the same time, Victorinus was a supporter of binitarianism, since, mixing the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity, he wrote about the Divine Two - God the Father and God the Son (Khandoga, 2022, s. 85-86; Fokin, 2014, s. 129, 234).

when Adam broke the only commandment of God; rose from the dead on the same day on which he was conceived, that is, on the first or eighth day.

Thus, if we understand the above fragment historically, then the Savior lived on earth for one day, if allegorically – one thousand years. Naturally, both the first and the second are impossible. Consequently, here Victorinus, using the typological method of interpreting Holy Scripture, symbolically connects the saving deeds of the Son of God with the creation of the world and the fall of the first people.

Nevertheless, Victorinus of Poetovio in the fragment «On the Life of Christ» reveals in more detail the teaching about important, or main days in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ: «On the eighth calendar of January Lord our Jesus Christ (dominus noster Iesus Christus) was born under the consuls Sulpicia and Camerina and He was baptized on the eighth On the id of January under the consuls Valerian and Asiaticus, He suffered on the tenth calends of April under the consuls Nero III and Valerius Messala, He rose again on the eighth calends of April under the above consuls. From which it follows that the Lord was conceived on the same day on which he was resurrected» (Victorinus, 2017b, s. 303).

Thus, another important day is mentioned here – the baptism of the Savior. However, for us, the other two days are of particular importance – the birthday and the day of death of the Lord Jesus Christ, since based on them he lived on earth from 9 AD (the time of the administration of Judea by ordinary consuls Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus and Gaius Poppius Sabinus) to 58 AD (the time of the administration of Judea by ordinary consuls Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus and Marcus Valerius Messalus Corvinus), that is, 49 years (Khandoga, 2021a, s. 152-153; Marin, 2004, s. 203; Veronese, 2004, s. 194).

What did Victorinus want to convey by this? As R. Bratož rightly believes, «the «perfect» number seven governs not only the life of humanity through the example of Christ, but also the life of every person, for it, in essence, was divided by both ancient representatives (Hippocrates) and Christian thinkers (Irenaeus) into seven periods» (Bratož, 1999, s. 309; Bratož, 1986, s. 302-303). In other words, the Savior «sanctified in Himself all aspects of humanity, having received them; He was fully human in order to fully save man» (Danielu, 2013, s. 51).

It is also important to note that Victorinus of Poetovio connects the periods of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ (its key stages) with the septenary number<sup>16</sup>: «He also fulfills His human nature with the number seven: birth, infan-

16 It should be borne in mind that «based on the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, he convincingly proved that the number «seven» has a heavenly and earthly origin and is the number of completeness» (Khandoga, 2023, 79).

cy, adolescence, adolescence, youth, maturity, death» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299). In identifying these seven periods, Victorinus relies on the ancient tradition, according to which human life is divided into seven stages (Philonus, 1896, s. 37), that is, «in accordance with the scheme: seven periods of seven years» (Marin, 2004, s. 203; Veronese, 2004, s. 194). In addition, the word «occasus» (death) indicates that the Savior lived until «old age», that is, more than 46 years (Dulaey, 1997, s. 21). In fact, he names five stages and adds two important days – «birth» and «death» – to arrive at the number seven.

To a large extent, Victorinus of Poetovio continues the line of Saint Irenaeus of Lyons (about 130 – 202/203). But there is a certain discrepancy between them, since Irenaeus counts five stages in a person's life (Irenee, 1982, s. 244). However, for Victorinus, seven periods are needed, since he links each of them with the corresponding day of creation: from the first day – creation of light by God, twelve angels of the day and twelve angels of the night (the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ) to the seventh day – the rest of God, that is, His cessation of creating anything (death and abiding in the tomb of the Savior) (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 295-296; 300).

In a mysterious way, Victorinus, in his interpretation of «On Revelation», also speaks about the main days, supplementing them with another important day – the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ: «Consequently, they begin by saying this: John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1) – this is the image of a lion; Matthew: The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1) is an image of man; Luke is like this: There was a priest from the Avian order, named Zechariah, [and] his wife from the family of Aaron (Luke 1:5) – this is the image of a calf; Mark begins like this: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as written in Isaiah (Mark 1:1-2), began with the flying Spirit, and therefore has the image of a flying eagle» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 154).

This does not mean the order in which animals are listed either in the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:5,10) or in the apostle and evangelist John the Theologian (Revelation 4:7), but a logical sequence is implied, according to which Victorinus sees in the four animals symbols of the «four appearances» of the Son of God to people: birth, or incarnation, death, or suffering, resurrection and ascension<sup>17</sup>.

Based on this, Victorinus of Poetovio clearly and clearly distinguishes between the Divine and human nature of the Savior and at the same time unites them within a single Person (vital teaching in the ante-Nicene period). On the one hand,

17 The same sequence of evangelists, their images and, accordingly, meanings can be found in Irenaeus of Lyons (Irenee, 1974, s. 160-170).



the Lord Jesus Christ has Divine properties: «When, during a storm at sea, he walks on foot [on water] (John 6:18-19; Matthew 14:22-25), he commands the winds (Luke 8:25) , heals the sick (Matthew 12:15) and restores the lame (Matthew 15:31), makes the blind [seeing (Matthew 15:31), the deaf hearing and the dumb] eloquent (Mark 7:37), then understand that He proclaims Himself to them as Lord» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299). On the other hand, He is a perfect man: «He also shows the Jews His human nature in the following ways: when he is hungry (Matthew 4:2), when he is thirsty (John 4:7), when he eats and drinks (Luke 7:34), when he walks (Matthew 4:18) and when he walks away (John 6:15; Matthew 4:12), when at the head of [the boat] (Mark 4:38)» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 299). Consequently, for the Petavian saint, the Lord Jesus Christ is not just God and not just a man, but God and man at the same time, or God-man.

Later, such evidence was repeatedly used by the holy fathers and church writers in the fight against the Monophysites, including against the Archimandrite Eutyches of Constantinople (about 378 – 454). Therefore, perhaps, it would not be an exaggeration to say that this fragment of the treatise «On the Creation of the World» by Victorinus of Poetovio lies at the origins of the tradition that led to the appearance of the dogmatic message – «Tomos to Flavian», or « Epistle to Flavian» of Saint Leo I the Great (between 380 and 390 – 461) (Fokin, 2009 s. 115-116; Green, 2008, s. 188-247), in which «the doctrine of the fullness of two natures in Christ was highlighted with particular expressiveness» (Lebedev, 2007, s. 232).

However, in DV this Christological teaching is absent, since for the author of this work the full name of the Savior, the fact that He has a dual nature and, accordingly, that there were important days in His earthly life had no meaning. Therefore, the author of DV limited himself to mentioning the word «Christus» (Christ) ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352, 356) and the derivative phrase «regnum Christi» (Kingdom of Christ) ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 354) several times. Here indicates the moral ideal to which all Orthodox Christians should strive: «After all, the virgins of the house of God are calm in appearance, with a bashful face, with a shy look, with humble eyes, with pleasant expressions, with sweet speeches, with a gentle character. As Christ is, such is the image» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2002, s. 352).

### 3. ESCHATOLOGY: THE THOUSAND-YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST

Naturally, being a man of his time, Victorinus of Poetovio (following Tertulian and Commodian) adhered to the eschatological tradition of the Church, that is, he sincerely believed that in the near future the Lord Jesus Christ (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 154) should come to earth for the second time in order to «reign with His

chosen ones (Revelation 20:6)» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 252), after which the long-awaited peace should come, or reward for the righteous and punishment for sinners (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 256). The uniqueness of his worldview is determined by the doctrine of the thousand-year kingdom of Christ (the so-called chiliasm, or millenarianism), which the modern Orthodox specialist in patrology A. I. Sidorov called a very curious worldview phenomenon (Sidorov, 2011, s. 441).

In addition, Victorinus was a supporter of the concept of the «Great week», according to which «the history of mankind should reflect and reproduce the history of creation» (Akimov, 2021, s. 184). In other words, Victorinus of Poetovio, using the allegorical method of interpreting Holy Scripture, resorted to an elegant exegetical move. On the one hand, he quotes the words from the prayer of the prophet and lawgiver Moses: «In Your eyes, the Lord, a thousand years are like one day» (Psalm 89:5; cf. 2 Peter 3:8). On the other hand, he «remembers» the prophecy of Zechariah, according to which the Lord has «seven eyes» (Zechariah 4:10) (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297). Synthesizing the psalm and prophecy, Victorinus receives the so-called concept of the «Great week»: in each eye of God there are a thousand years, and since there are seven of them, the Lord determined seven thousand years for the existence of the world. Through the teaching of cosmic week, this concept dates back to the Hellenistic, Jewish and Christian traditions (Khandoga, 2019, s. 196). Consequently, here «we are faced with a typology of the week, where the six days of creation represent the time of this world, and the seventh day the time of the future world» (Daniélou, 1991, s. 399). The eighth day is «the beginning of another world» (Anonymus, 1971, s. 186), therefore «it is taken outside the order of the week» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297).

Nevertheless, Victorinus of Poetovio attaches special significance to the sixth day of creation, or the sixth thousand years, since on this day God created the first man (Genesis 1:26-27) and on the same day the Lord Jesus Christ was born (Khandoga, 2021a, s. 150-153; Fokin, 2005, s. 268; Fokin, 2004, s. 461). In addition, on the sixth day, or in the sixth millennium, the Petavian saint, his flock and contemporaries (for example, Commodian and Lactantius) lived, in connection with which this day, or this millennium, is called the preparatory period: «This sixth day is called Friday, that is, the preparation of the kingdom» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 296).

It is likely that what is meant here is that the earth, during the five days preceding the creation of man, was prepared for him by God as a royal palace, since man, being created «in the image and likeness» of God (Genesis 1:26) (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 296), was to become its king and master (Grégoire, 1944, s. 90). Perhaps Victorinus, in the light of his millenarianism, understood this kingdom and as the future thousand-year kingdom of Christ with the righteous, which was to come

after the sixth («preparatory») millennium (Khandoga, 2019, s. 197-199; Daniélou, 1978, 114-115).

What is the essence of this preparation? In the interpretation of «On Revelation», Victorinus of Poetovio gives the answer: sincere repentance is a necessary condition in order to adequately prepare and become heirs of the kingdom of Christ. Therefore, the last years or last decades before the second coming of Christ, when the Antichrist should reign on earth for three and a half years (Pani, 2005, s. 695-696; Pani, 2003, s. 232-235), are called time of repentance: «But since [now is] the time of repentance, He says: I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire (Revelation 3:18), that is, if you can in any way endure something in the name of the Lord...» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 150). Consequently, for the Petavian saint, the sixth day of creation, or the sixth thousand years, has a penitential meaning.

Also, Victorinus of Poetovio attaches special significance to the seventh day of rest, or the seventh thousand years, since on this day the first people violated the only commandment of God (Genesis 3:1-7) and the Lord Jesus Christ suffered (Khandoga, 2019, s. 199-201; Fokin, 2005, s. 268; Fokin, 2004, s. 461). In addition, the beginning of the seventh day, or the seventh millennium, was eagerly awaited by Petavia saint and his flock and contemporaries (for example, Commodian and Lactantius), in connection with which this day, or this millennium, is called the true Sabbath, or the true and righteous Sabbath: «Also Isaiah and some of his companions broke the Sabbath (Isaiah 1:13; Hosea 2:13), so that that true and righteous Sabbath of the seventh millennium may be observed. <...> For this reason, as I have mentioned, that true Sabbath is the seventh millennium in which Christ will reign with His elect (Revelation 20:6)» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297; Victorinus, 2017c, s. 252-254).

Unfortunately, in the treatise «On the Creation of the World» nothing is mentioned about what benefits await the righteous who inherit the thousand-year kingdom of Christ. However, in the interpretation of «On Revelation» there are many fragments in which Victorinus of Poetovio describes these benefits in detail. For example, in one of them he writes: «The Lord remembered this kingdom before he suffered, saying to the apostles: From now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until I drink new [wine] with you in the future kingdom (Matthew 26:29), which means a hundred times (Matthew 19:29), that is, ten thousand times greater and better» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 262; Irene, 1969, 414-416). However, in another fragment he gives a diametrically opposite opinion: «In this Kingdom, those who lost property for the sake of the name of the Lord, as well as many who were killed in various crimes and were in prison – for before the coming of the Lord the holy prophets were stoned, killed and sawn in pieces (Hebrews 11:36-37), – they will

receive their consolation, that is, crowns and heavenly riches» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 262). Thus, in his writings, Victorinus combines historical interpretation with allegorical interpretation, which, in turn, is borrowed from Jewish-rabbinic exegesis.

In addition, in the interpretation of «On Revelation» there are many Victorinus of Poetovio times calls this period the last time (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 172, 222, 254). Let us cite just one very important fragment in which he reveals the secret of the thousand-year reign of Christ, talking about the fate in this kingdom of the righteous, or saints, and the wicked, or sinners: «But since in the last time there will come both eternal reward for the saints and punishment for the wicked, then they were told to wait...» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 182, 250). Consequently, for the Petavian saint, the seventh day of rest, or the seventh thousand years, has a promised meaning.

Victorinus also mentions the eighth day of eternal rest, or the eighth thousand years, since on this day God created light (Genesis 1:3-5) and the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected (Khandoga, 2019, s. 201-202; Fokin, 2005, s. 268; Fokin, 2004, s. 461). In addition, on the eighth day, or in the eighth millennium, the Last Judgment, or General Judgment, must occur, at the end of which the eternal bliss of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the sinners will begin: «And therefore David in the sixth psalm asks the Lord before the eighth day, so that He will not anger and not in His wrath He rebuked or judged him (Psalm 6:1-2). This is truly the eighth day of that future judgment, which will be taken outside the order of the week» (Victorinus, 2017a, s. 297; [Pseudo-Victorinus], 2003, s. 354-356).

Perhaps in connection with this, Victorinus calls the eighth day, or the eighth millennium, the last day, or eternal rest: «Finally, since the Judge Himself was appointed by the Father (Acts 10:42), wanting to indicate this by a word of prediction that people will be judged, He says: Do you think that I will judge you at the last day (John 5:45)? The word that I have spoken to you, it will judge at the last day (John 12:48)» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 120). Elsewhere we read: «When the seventh seal was opened, there was silence in heaven for half an hour (Revelation 8:1) – this is the beginning of eternal rest. <...> For if the silence were continuous, then the end of the story would come» (Victorinus, 2017c, s. 188). Consequently, for the Petavian saint, the eighth day of eternal rest, or the eighth thousand years, has an enduring significance.

However, in DV this eschatological teaching is absent, since the author of this work was not a chiliast or millenarian (that is, he did not believe in the thousand-year reign of Christ), did not adhere to the concept of the «Great week» (more precisely, the eight-day, or eight-thousand-year concept) and, accordingly, he did not use millenarian terminology. Therefore, he limited himself to only mentioning the second coming of Christ, the general resurrection and the day of judgment:

«Consequently, on the day of judgment, as I said, when the trumpet sounds and the cry goes up, all the righteous will rise again and enter with Christ into His kingdom (Revelation 20:4,6). That unreasonable part will also resurrect and find the door closed, just opposite the river of fire (Daniel 7:10), and will ask that door to be opened for her. He will answer her: Truly I tell you, I do not know you (Matthew 25:12)» ([Pseudo-Victorinus], 2003, s. 356).

## CONCLUSION

For Victorinus of Poetovio, who was not only the first Latin interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, but also one of the ante-Nicene Latin theologians, three topics are of particular importance: christology, eschatology and symbolic arrhythmology. As a millenarian, he believed that in the near future the Lord Jesus Christ should come to earth for the second time in order to reign with the elect, or righteous for a thousand years. Based on this, Victorinus divided the history of the latter millennia of humanity for three periods: the sixth millennium is the time of preparation of the chosen ones for the meeting with the Lord; the seventh millennium is the time of the reign of the righteous with Christ; the eighth millennium is the time of the eternal reign of the elect with the Lord. Moreover, he taught that the Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man who became incarnate to save mankind from sin, death and the devil.

For the author of DV, who was one of the ante-Nicene Latin interpreters of the Holy Scriptures, only eschatology has special significance. He, as a non-millennialist, believed that at an indefinite period of time the Lord Jesus Christ should come to earth for the second time to reign forever with the wise virgins, or righteous Christians. Based on this, the author of DV divided the history of the last millennia of mankind into two periods: the first period – the daily preparation of true Christians for the meeting with the Lord; the second period is the eternal reign of righteous Christians with Christ. In addition, he rightly believed that in order to always be with the Lord Jesus Christ, it is necessary to constantly pray and do good deeds (in the DV a list of good deeds is attached), which are a manifestation of all kinds of mercy towards others.

Thus, comparing, on the basis of theological and philological analysis, some quotes from the early Christian homily DV with the original writings of Victorinus of Poetovio (the treatise «On the creation world», a fragment of «On the life of Christ» and an interpretation of «On Revelation»), we came to the conclusion that the author of this homily is an unknown Latin exegete of the Gospel of Matthew (Gryson, 2007a, 155). It is important to note that he was most likely a younger com-

patriot of Victorinus of Poetovio and accordingly lived in the Pannonian province in the early 4th century. Accordingly, the DV was written in the same period, that is, at the beginning of the 4th century. However, due to the fact that he was not only a great admirer of the work of the Petavian saint, but also tried to imitate him in the presentation of exegetical and theological material (except for the colloquial style, which is not found in any of Victorinus's original writings), we conventionally call him Pseudo-Victorinus of Poetovio (Gryson, 2007b, 813).

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# WHY CAN'T SAINT VICTORINUS OF POETOVIO BE THE AUTHOR OF THE HOMILY «ON THE TEN VIRGINS»?

## SUMMARY

The early Christian homily «On the ten virgins» for over 100 years has been a controversial work, since no strong argument has been presented by any scholar in favor of who is its author. The first group of researchers (for example, A. Wilmart, M. Špelič, M. Veronese and P. K. Dobrotsvetov) believes that its author is St. Victorinus of Poetovio, the first Latin interpreter of Holy Scripture. The second group of researchers (for example, A. Wlosok, M. Dulaey, R. Gryson and N. A. Khandoga) ascribes it to Pseudo-Victorinus of Poetovio, an unknown Latin exegete of the Gospel of Matthew. Proceeding from this, the article makes an attempt at a theological and philological analysis of several quotes from the homily «On the ten virgins» and the original works of St. Victorinus of Poetovio – the treatise «On the creation of the world», the fragment «On the life of Christ» and the interpretation of «On Revelation» – in order to identify the author of the homily. Important points in the answer to the question in the title in the article, becomes christology, eschatology and symbolic arrhythmology, since there is not a single one of the original works of Victorinus of Poetovio in which they are not given appropriate attention. However, in the homily «On the ten virgins» these theological themes are not adequately addressed.

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