

**Koncepcja człowieka w poetyckiej wizji Bernarda Silvestris**

**The concept of man in the poetic vision of Bernard Silvestris**

SUMMARY

The aim of the article is to present the concept of man in the philosophical poem by the 12th century poet Bernard Silvestris, entitled *Cosmographia*. The poem, written ca. 1146, is an allegorical tale of the creation of the world and a kind of poetic commentary on the Book of Genesis, on the hand, and on Plato's *Timaios*, on the other. The poem is composed of two books: the first book describes how the world was put in order and embellished, while the second – analyzed in the present paper – deals with the creation of man. The topic that seems to be of key interest to Bernard Silvestris is not so much the very creation of man, but rather the relation of man to God and the world, as well as man's attitude to himself. The key figures in the second book, who join in the creation of man, are the three sister-goddesses: Urania, who symbolizes the heavens and endows man with a soul, Physis, who oversees the physical world and creates man's body, and Nature, who ensures a balance between heaven and earth, and who unites man's body and soul, thanks to which he may become a complete being. According to Bernard the figure of Nature is the most significant one – both with regard to the whole world and with regard to man. Nature is the symbol of everything that man should be and should strive for. Just as Nature is responsible for the equilibrium of the world, so man, as the only being that belongs simultaneously to the world of matter and the world of spirit, finds himself at the very centre of the Universe and in a way also contributes to its equilibrium. Thus man necessarily complements the universe. Just as the task of Nature is to know the rules that govern the world and to make sure that there is order that stems from observance of those rules, so man's primary task to gain knowledge that can enable him to be aware of the reality in which lives and of the principles of the order by which he should abide. Only knowledge can make man nobler and enable him to become one with divinity and heaven. But gaining knowledge, and striving upwards cannot imply a passive attitude – it should be a toil, a quest or even a struggle. Man can fulfil his destiny only by struggling against himself, overcoming his bad inclinations and searching for truth.