



# Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading (Cistercian Studies)

*Duncan Robertson*

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During the Middle Ages the act of reading was experienced intensively in the monastic exercise of *lectio divina* 'the prayerful scrutiny of passages of Scripture, savored in meditation, memorized, recited, and rediscovered in the reader's own religious life. The rich literary tradition that arose from this culture includes theoretical writings from the *Conferences* of John Cassian (fifth century) through the twelfth-century treatises of Hugh of St. Victor and the Carthusian Guigo II; it also includes compilations, literary meditations, and scriptural commentary, notably on the Song of Songs. This study brings medievalist research together with modern theoretical reflections on the act of reading in a consolidation of historical scholarship, spirituality, and literary criticism.

*Duncan Robertson has taught French and Latin, language and literature, at Augusta State University since 1990. Previous publications include The Medieval Saints' Lives: Spiritual Renewal and Old French Literature (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1995), and The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval Religious Literature, with Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Nancy Warren (New York: Palgrave, 2002). His articles have appeared in Romance Philology, French Forum, Cahiers de Civilisation Madiavale, and other journals in the United States and abroad.*

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