

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

By 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.

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Editorial Review

Review

This is an excellent book quite suited to a serious reader and devotee of the subject. It is refreshing to see such a seminal book published in a market where the breezy and superficial so often garners attention. The author has worked with the leading authorities and resources on the subject, and articulated them in a very comprehensible and coherent manner. Nothing less than a must read for serious students of lectio divina.
Karl A. Schultz, Author of How to Pray with the Bible

Duncan Robertson makes a compelling argument for the re-examination of early monastic reading practices and medieval theory, engaging with modern research on literacy, memory, reception, and cognition. With impressive erudition and remarkable lucidity, he challenges modern literary theorists to explore the implications of spiritual reading for the interpretive process. This study will be welcomed not only by specialists of medieval spirituality and medieval literature, but also by scholars investigating the history of reading in the West.
Catherine M. Jones, Professor of French and Provençal, Graduate Coordinator, Romance Languages, University of Georgia

About the Author

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 Médiévale, and other journals in the United States and abroad.

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