



# **The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity (The Middle Ages Series)**

*E. Ann Matter*

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The Song of Songs, eight chapters of love lyrics found in the collection of wisdom literature attributed to Solomon, is the most enigmatic book of the Bible. For thousands of years Jews and Christians alike have preserved it in the canon of scripture and used it in liturgy. Exegetes saw it as a central text for allegorical interpretations, and so the Song of Songs has exerted an enormous influence on spirituality and mysticism in the Western tradition.

*In the Voice of My Beloved*, E. Ann Matter focuses on the most fertile moment of Song of Songs interpretation: the Middle Ages. At least eighty Latin commentaries on the text survive from the period. In tracing the evolution of these commentaries, Matter reveals them to be a vehicle for expressing changing medieval ideas about the church, the relationship between body and soul, and human and divine love. She shows that the commentaries constitute a well-defined genre of medieval Latin literature. And in discussing the exegesis of the Song of Songs, she takes into account the modern exegesis of the book and feminist critiques of the theology embodied in the text.

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