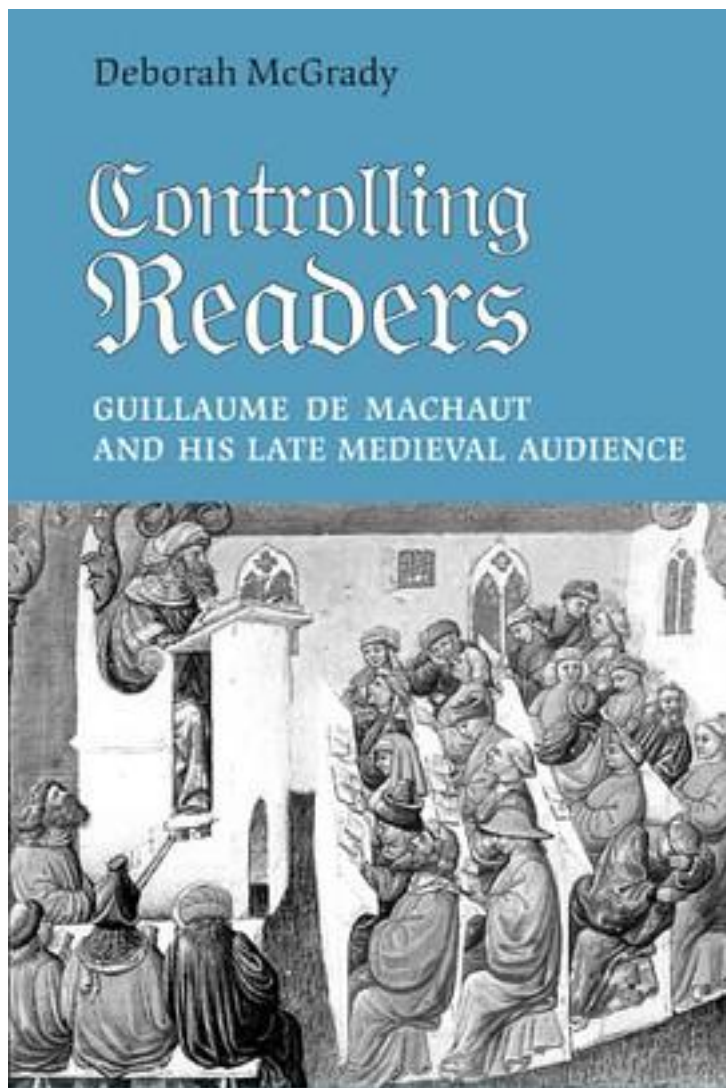


Controlling Readers



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著者:Deborah L. McGrady

出版者:University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division

出版时间:2006-12-16

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780802090201

Guillaume de Machaut (1300-1377) was the master poet of fourteenth-century France. He established models for much of the vernacular poetry written by subsequent generations, and he was instrumental in institutionalizing the lay reader. In particular, his longest and most important work, the *Voir dit*, calls attention to the coexistence of public and private reading practices through its intensely hybrid form: sixty-three poems and ten songs invite an oral performance, while forty-six private prose letters as well as elaborate illustration and references to its own materiality promote a physical encounter with the book. In *Controlling Readers*, Deborah McGrady uses Machaut's corpus as a case study to explore the impact of lay literacy on the culture of late-medieval Europe. Arguing that Machaut and his bookmakers were responding to contemporary debates surrounding literacy, McGrady first accounts for the formal invention of the lay reader in medieval art and literature, then analyses Machaut and his bookmakers' innovative use of both narrative and bibliographical devices to try to control the responses of his readers and promote intimate and sensual reading practices in place of the more common public performances of court culture. McGrady's erudite and exhaustive study is key to understanding Machaut, his works, and his influence on the history of reading in the fourteenth-century and beyond.

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