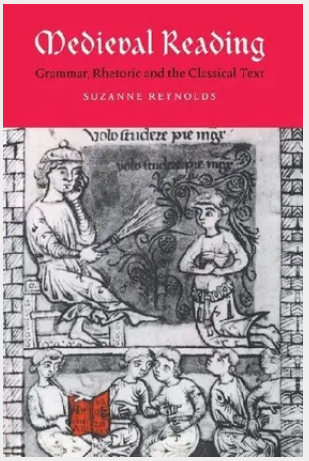
Reynolds

Medieval Reading

Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text



This book argues for a radically new approach to the history of reading and literacy in the Middle Ages. It investigates the use of complex literary texts as the basis of elementary instruction in the Latin language and, using medieval teachers' notes (glosses) on a classical text (Horace's Satires) and a selection of other unpublished manuscript materials, it demonstrates that the reading of classical literature was profoundly shaped by the demands of acquiring Latin literacy through the arts of grammar and rhetoric. The resolutely literal readings of Latin texts found in these educational and institutional contexts call for a reassessment of the relationship of Latin and vernacular discourses in medieval culture, and of some central notions in medieval hermeneutics, notably allegory and authorial intention.

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