At once a royal secretary, a poet, and a composer, Guillaume de Machaut was one of the most protean and creative figures of the late Middle Ages. Rather than focus on a single strand of his remarkable career, the book encompasses all aspects of his work, illuminating it in a distinctively interdisciplinary light. It provides a comprehensive picture of Machaut's artistry; reviews the documentary evidence about his life; charts the different agendas pursued by modern scholarly disciplines in their rediscovery and use of specific parts of his output; and delineates Machaut's own poetic and material presentation of his authorial persona. The book details Machaut's central poetic themes of hope, fortune, and death, integrating the aspect of Machaut's multimedia art that differentiates him from his contemporaries' treatment of similar thematic issues: music. In restoring the centrality of music in Machaut's poetics, arguing that his words cannot be truly understood or appreciated without the additional layers of meaning created in their musicalization, the book makes a compelling argument that musico-literary performance occupied a special place in the courts of fourteenth-century France.