



Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance

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There is a rich body of encyclopaedic writing which survives from the two millennia before the Enlightenment. This book sheds new light on that material. It traces the development of traditions of knowledge ordering which stretched back to Pliny and Varro and others in the classical world. It works with a broad concept of encyclopaedism, resisting the idea that there was any clear pre-modern genre of the 'encyclopaedia', and showing instead how the rhetoric and techniques of comprehensive compilation left their mark on a surprising range of texts. In the process it draws attention to both remarkable similarities and striking differences between conventions of encyclopaedic compilation in different periods, with a focus primarily on European/Mediterranean culture. The book covers classical, medieval (including Byzantine and Arabic) and Renaissance culture in turn, and combines chapters which survey whole periods with others focused closely on individual texts as case studies.

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