



The Book of Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change)

K van Berkel, Arjo Vanderjagt

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From 22-25 May, 1999, the University of Groningen hosted an international conference on 'The Book of Nature. Continuity and change in European and American attitudes towards the natural world'. From Antiquity down to our own time, theologians, philosophers and scientists have often compared nature to a book, which might, under the right circumstances, be read and interpreted in order to come closer to the 'Author' of nature, God. The 'reading' of this book was not regarded as mere idle curiosity, but it was seen as leading to a deeper understanding of God's wisdom and power, and it culturally legitimated and promoted a positive attitude towards nature and its study. A selection of the papers which were delivered at the conference has been edited in two volumes. The first deals with the perception of the Book of Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages; the second volume is devoted to the history of the concept in early modern and modern history.



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