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The Origins of the Book

Metamorphoses of an Object from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

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A critical inquiry – part "book science," part social science – into the history of the Greco-Latin "book" from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

A highly original historical survey of the Western handwritten book, produced in the hundreds between the 5th century BCE and the 13th century CE: from the earliest Etruscan linen examples to Greco-Roman wooden polyptychs, Egyptian papyrus scrolls to early Medieval parchment codices. Addresses: Analysis of literary and documentary sources in Greek, Latin, and Arabic. Persistencies and discontinuities in the production, circulation, use, and disappearance (from decay, accident, or biblioclasm) of books. Technical innovations, cultural requirements, and tastes, in an approach that combines "scholarly" disciplines such as biblio/codicology, palaeography, material philology, and social sciences.