

# Ancient Latin Poetry Books

Materiality and Context

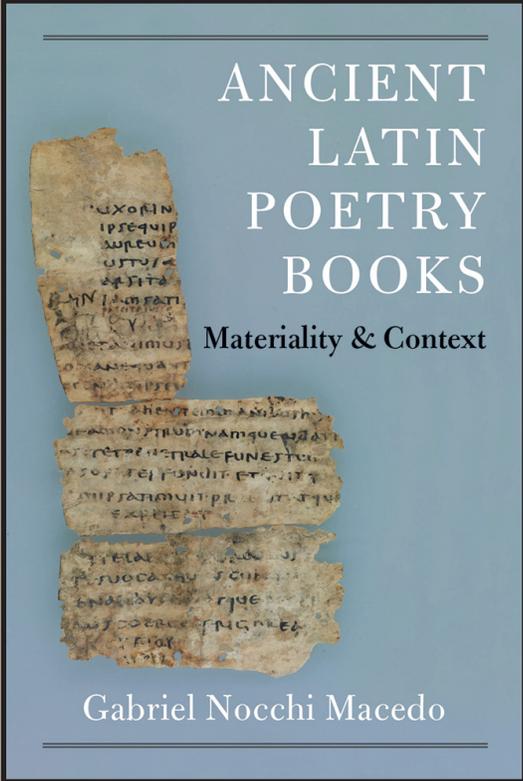
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Before the invention of printing, all forms of writing were done by hand. For a literary text to circulate among readers, and to be transmitted from one period in time to another, it had to be copied by scribes. As a result, two copies of an ancient book were different from one another, and each individual book or manuscript has its own history. The oldest of these books, those that are the closest to the time in which the texts were composed, are few, usually damaged, and have been often neglected in the scholarship. *Ancient Latin Poetry Books* presents a detailed study of the oldest manuscripts still extant that contain texts by Latin poets, such as Virgil, Terence, and Ovid. Analyzing their physical characteristics, their script, and the historical contexts in which they were produced and used, this volume shows how manuscripts can help us gain a better understanding of the history of texts, as well as of reading habits over the centuries. Since the manuscripts originated in various places of the Latin-speaking world, *Ancient Latin Poetry Books* investigates the readership and reception of Latin poetry in many different contexts, such as schools in the Egyptian desert, aristocratic circles in southern Italy, and the Christian elite in late antique Rome. The research also contributes to our knowledge about the use of writing and the importance of the written text in antiquity. This is an innovative approach to the study of ancient literature, one that takes the materiality of texts into consideration.

**Gabriel Nocchi Macedo** is Postdoctoral Fellow at Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique, Belgium.

“This book will be of interest to university students following courses in Latin literature and Latin philology. Scholars will profit as well from having all this material collected, judiciously arranged, and wisely digested, with all the relevant and most up-to-date bibliography carefully scrutinized and assessed.”

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Materiality & Context

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