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The Material Gospel

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Resisting the Codex

The Christian Use of the Roll in Late Antiquity

Das Studium der Buchformate aus den ersten Jahrhunderten unserer Zeitrechnung hat sich vor allem auf die Verbreitung des Kodex und dessen Verwendung in christlichen Gemeinden konzentriert. Die Schriftrolle, das vorherrschende Format seit der Antike, wurde in dieser Zeit meist durch den Kodex ersetzt, aber sie behielt eine gewisse Bedeutung und wurde weiterhin für bestimmte Zwecke in christlicher und nichtchristlicher Buch- und Dokumentenherstellung eingesetzt. Dieser Beitrag untersucht den Gebrauch der Schriftrolle nach dem Übergang zum Kodex in der Spätantike und die verschiedenen Formen und Formate, in denen sie vorzufinden war, sowie ihre Bedeutung für verschiedene literarische und dokumentarische Gattungen.

Keywords: papyrology, codicology, codex, *volumen*, *rotulus*, book production

1 Introduction: Transition from Roll to Codex in Late Antiquity and Continued Use of the Roll [1]

Until recently, the main interest in the field of book production in late antiquity has been the spread of the codex,[2] particularly the connection of

1 I want to thank David Lincicum and Jeremiah Coogan for their invitation to the stimulating conference "The Material Gospel," where I first publicly discussed my ideas for this paper. I owe gratitude to my colleagues Korshi Dosoo (University of Würzburg), Raquel Martín Hernández (Complutense University of Madrid), Marco Stroppa (Istituto Papirologico Vitelli, Florence), Nathan Carlig (University of Liège), and Serena Ammirati (Roma Tre University) for contributing their ideas and suggestions to improve this paper. I am also indebted to Cameron Ferguson for carefully reading and editing this paper and providing important insights. Since it is important for the discussion of book formats to see the images of the papyri, I provide information about them occasionally. To avoid the risk of providing links which eventually become obsolete, I give the Trismegistos (TM) numbers of all papyri (https://www.trismegistos.org/index.php). Trismegistos collects links to databases like the Leuven Database of Ancient Books (LDAB), PATHs, the Digital Corpus of Literary Papyri (DCLP), or papyri.info, which provide excellent platforms to access online images.

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the codex to the spread of the Christian Bible, and early Christians' preference for this book format.[3] Yet, much later we find vertical rolls of parchment, or *rotuli*, widely used in Byzantine liturgy,[4] proving that the use of rolls was sustained during this period. My interest in this paper is to shed light on the continued use of rolls in late antiquity, particularly their specialized use in the ancient Christian world. A quick look into the Leuven Database of Ancient Books[5] or the PATHs database[6] proves that the use of the roll did not completely disappear. Beyond the fourth century, one might call its use "residual," but I prefer to call it "specialized." This is a story of scribal practice and readership, of cultural perception and traditional crafts. The roll was not left behind; rather it acquired a different purpose. In this paper I will discuss the most recent progress in the study of the use of the roll, as well as surveying the types of rolls and their uses from the fourth to the eighth century CE, for both Christian and non-Christian texts.

2 H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); L.W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006); R.S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); B. Harnett, "The Diffusion of the Codex," *ClAnt* 36 (2017), 183–235; J. Chapa, "Textual Transmission of 'Canonical' and 'Apocryphal' Writings within the Development of the New Testament Canon: Limits and Possibilities," *EC* 7 (2016), 113–133; J.K. Elliott, "Manuscripts, the Codex and the Canon," *JSNT* 63 (1996), 105–123.

3 For other recent approaches to the use of the roll in late antiquity, particularly for Christian literature, see E. Crisci, "Note sulla più antica produzione di libri cristiani nell'Oriente Greco," *Segno e testo* 3 (2005), 93–145; M. Stroppa, "Early Christian Rolls," in *Scribes and Their Remains*, ed. C.A. Evans and J.J. Johnston, LSTS 94 (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 290–299. Note also the contributions by Jeremiah Coogan, Chris Keith, and Clare Rothschild in this thematic issue.

4 For liturgical rolls, see G. Cavallo, "La genesi dei rotoli liturgici beneventani alla luce del fenomeno storico-librario in Occidente ed Oriente," in *Miscellanea in memoria di Giorgio Cencetti* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1973), 213–229; V. Marinos, "Liturgical Scrolls," in *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, ed. V. Tsamakda, Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 310–318; P. Orsini, *Manoscritti in maiuscola biblica* (Cassino: Edizioni dell'Università degli studi di Cassino, 2005), 139; L.W. Daly, "Rotuli: Liturgy Rolls and Formal Documents," *GRBS* 14.3 (1973), 333–338; C. Grassien, "Un nouveau rotulus liturgicus: Le P. Vindob. G 26064 + 26091 + 35761," in *Proceedings of the 24th International Congress of Papyrology, Helsinki, 1–7 August, 2004*, ed. J. Frösén, T. Purola, and E. Salmenkivi, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 122.1 (Helsinki: Societas Scientarum Fennica, 2007), 395–406. A later (tenth-century) liturgical roll made out of paper is *P. Prag.* 1.3, containing the Psalms. A full study of liturgical papyri is A.T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction*, STAC 114 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019).

5 See https://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/.

6 See https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts. I do not pretend to provide exhaustive lists of all examples including fragments. I have chosen for this paper well preserved rolls or fragments which unequivocally represent specific formats.

2 The Study of Rolls in Late Antiquity

There are very few studies about the survival of the roll, its use in magic, in Christian texts, in apocryphal texts, or its production in general in late antiquity.[7] One of the few early works specifically on late rolls, the 1965 article by Leo Santifaller,[8] lists Greek and Latin rolls, distinguishing papyrus from parchment, but makes no mention of Demotic, Old Coptic, or Coptic rolls. Until recently, the materiality of books and documents as historical artifacts had not caught the attention of scholars beyond the question of the adoption of the codex. Fortunately, in the last few years, new approaches to book production and the circulation of texts have directed attention to the materiality of the book, or the book as an artifact, or even as an archaeological object.[9] As a result of better access to images and originals, as well as a general material turn in many fields of the humanities, there is renewed interest in book production. Though few in number, recent scholarly works have made important advancements, particularly in two areas that I will detail below: (1) the use of rolls and *rotuli* in specific literary or documentary genres; and (2) the material witnesses to specific works, including all formats. Focusing on one specific text provides an overview of the evolution of and scribal choice in textual format for the same text. We may call this a book micro-history.

Those two approaches are complementary and they usefully restructure our perception of late antique book production. The attention paid to all possible details of the materiality, including use and reuse, distribution, and the intermingling of Christian and secular texts on the same artifact, provides a substantial foundation upon which future studies of book production should build. For example, Marco Stroppa has produced in three

7 On ancient rolls, the fundamental work by W.A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), covers all aspects of rolls in the Roman period.

8 L. Santifaller, "Über späte Papyrusrollen und frühe Pergamentrollen," in *Speculum Historiale: Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. C. Bauer, L. Boehm, and M. Müller (Freiburg im Breisgau: Alber, 1965), 117–133.

9 Evans and Johnston, *Scribes and Their Remains* (see n. 3), for example, is the most recent publication. It begins with an essay by S.E. Porter, "The Text as Artifact: An Introduction" (pp. 1–14), reopening a very conceptual question about the meaning of "text," but including in the discussion the concept of text as an object. Essays in this volume mostly refer to Christian scribes, but all of them touch upon materiality, including Marco Stroppa's paper "Early Christian Rolls" (pp. 290–299). See also for example, T.J. Kraus and T. Nicklas, eds., *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*, TENTS 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), a collection of studies focusing on the materiality of the book. See also Crisci, "Note sulla più antica produzione" (see n. 3).

articles very interesting analyses of rolls used for Christian literature.[10] Gabriel Nocchi Macedo, focusing on a more defined corpus, has tackled the topic of the parchment roll, utilizing evidence from Egypt and beyond.[11] In this latter case, the use of the parchment roll adds interesting variables connected to religion, since parchment rolls are often connected to Jewish liturgy.[12] Nathan Carlig analyzes a sample of literary composite rolls from the third and fourth centuries with a similar detailed analysis of their material characteristics[13] and Francesca Maltomini analyzes the reuse of rolls, clarifying some points in Eric Turner's pioneering work, *The Terms Recto and Verso: The Anatomy of the Papyrus Roll*.[14]

For the study of specific texts as book micro-histories, AnneMarie Luijendijk dedicates an interesting article to the Gospel of Thomas in Oxyrhynchus.[15] Although she deals with many different questions, such as the acceptability of apocryphal texts and the connection to reading practices, Luijendijk explains the choices of format in trying to understand the materiality of these books in the context of their readership. The Shepherd of Hermas is also a highly interesting case-study due to its connection to the

10 M. Stroppa, "L'uso di rotuli per testi cristiani di carattere letterario," *APF* 59 (2013), 347–358. More recently, id., "Early Christian Rolls" (see n. 3), and id., "Lettere festali su papiro," in *Comunicazioni dell'Istituto Papirologico G. Vitelli*, vol. 14, ed. F. Maltomini, S. Russo, and M. Stroppa (Florence, forthcoming).

11 G. Nocchi Macedo, "The Parchment Roll: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of the Greek Book," in *Πολυμάθεια: Studi Classici offerti a Mario Capasso*, ed. P. Davoli and N. Pellé (Lecce: Pensa, 2018), 319–342.

12 For Jewish book production, see also most recently J. Leipziger, "Ancient Jewish Greek Practices of Reading and Their Material Aspects," in *Material Aspects of Reading in Ancient and Medieval Cultures: Materiality, Presence and Performance*, ed. A. Krauß, J. Leipziger, and F. Schücking-Jungblut, Materiale Textkulturen 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 149–176.

13 N. Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires grecs composites profanes et chrétiens (début du IIIe – troisième quart du VIe siècle)," in *Proceedings of the 28th International Congress of Papyrology, Barcelona 2016, Universitat Pompeu Fabra*, ed. A. Nodar and S. Torallas Tovar, Scripta Orientalia 3 (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat – Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2019), 366–373.

14 F. Maltomini, "Use and Reuse of Papyrus Rolls and Scraps: Some Bibliological Matters," in *Proceedings of the 27th Congress of Papyrology*, ed. T. Derda et al., JJPSup 28 (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2016), 1097–1112; E.R. Turner, *The Terms Recto and Verso: The Anatomy of the Papyrus Roll* (Bruxelles: Fondation égyptologique Reine Elisabeth, 1978).

15 A. Luijendijk, "Reading the Gospel of Thomas in the Third Century: Three Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Origen's Homilies," in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context*, ed. C. Clivaz and J. Zumstein, BETL 242 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 241–267. In a similar line, see her "The Gospel of Mary at Oxyrhynchus (P. Oxy. L 3525 and P. Ryl. III 463): Rethinking the History of Early Christianity through Literary Papyri from Oxyrhynchus," in *Re-making the World: Christianity and Categories; Essays in Honor of Karen L. King*, ed. T.G. Petrey, WUNT 434 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 391–418.

canon.[16] The fact that so many copies of this text have been preserved offers perfect material for analysis. Malcolm Choat and Rachel Yuen-Collingridge explore the readership of Hermas before Constantine.[17]

Studies on specific contexts – magical, biblical, school, etc. – also provide valuable insights into the choice or capriciousness of scribes. Carlig produced an interesting study on the format, page setup, and other material features of Greek and Latin school papyri.[18] Ágnes Mihálykó has performed a full study of the formats of papyri containing liturgical texts.[19] Edoardo Crisci has approached the topic of book production in early Christianity as a whole, integrating the use of the roll in the progressive transition into the use of the codex, taking into consideration the content (biblical or patristic) and the social use of the book (notebook, private copy, proper edition) to explain choices.[20] The author of this paper, in collaboration with Korshi Dosoo, has studied the different formats in which magical handbooks were produced, including the use of the roll in late antiquity.[21]

The growing recognition of the value of research on the materiality of books has already started to generate important scholarly dynamics. Recent research projects and initiatives increasingly claim the place of this kind of research and its importance in understanding readership and the production of literature through the thorough investigation of its vehicle, the actual books.[22]

16 On this, see the recent survey by D. Batovici, "The Shepherd of Hermas in Recent Scholarship on the Canon: A Review," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 34.1 (2017), 89–105. He has two more pieces on Hermas and the papyri: "A New Hermas Papyrus Fragment in Paris," *APF* 62 (2016), 20–36, and "Two Notes on the Papyri of the Shepherd of Hermas," ibid., 384–395.

17 M. Choat and R. Yuen-Collingridge, "The Egyptian Hermas: The Shepherd in Egypt before Constantine," in Kraus and Nicklas, *Early Christian Manuscripts* (see n. 9), 191–212.

18 N. Carlig, "Recherches sur la forme, la mise en page et le contenu des papyrus scolaires grecs et latins chrètiens d'Égypte," *Studi di Egittologia e di Papirologia* 10 (2013), 55–98.

19 Mihálykó, *Christian Liturgical Papyri* (see n. 4), 153–168.

20 Crisci, "Note sulla più antica produzione" (see n. 3).

21 K. Dosoo and S. Torallas Tovar, "The Roll and the Codex: The Format of the Magical Handbook," in *The Greek and Demotic Magical Handbooks: Libraries, Books and Recipes*, ed. C.A. Faraone and S. Torallas Tovar (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, forthcoming).

22 As an example, the project PATHs (see n. 6). A new series, "Cultures of Reading in the Ancient Mediterranean World Monograph Series," at Oxford University Press, is a perfect platform to continue these conversations.

3 Advantages of a Holistic Vision of Book Production, Regardless of Language or Literary Genre

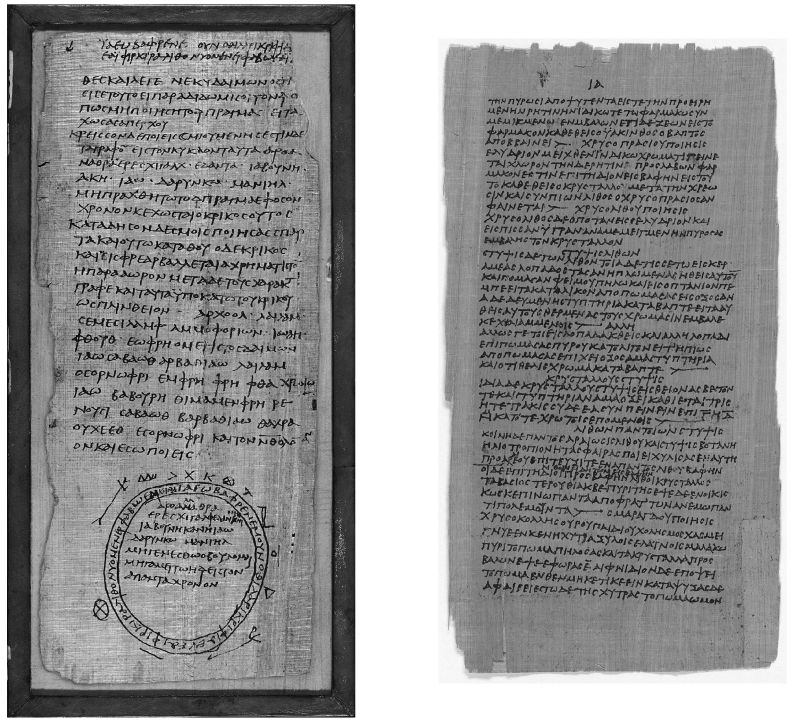
In my judgment, another productive way to approach ancient book production is to explore scribal practice unrelated to the textual and linguistic context. By this I mean trying to understand the use of the formats connected to scribal practices, technologies, and tradition, instead of specific genres. There are some considerations that are important in such a project. First, there exists the possibility of converging scribal traditions and technologies, and simultaneous practices that may or may not be connected to language (Greek and Coptic) and genre (biblical, apocryphal, classical, documentary). There are numerous examples of books with similar material characteristics (in terms of format and paleography) containing texts of very different nature. This can be seen in the comparison between the magical codex known as *PGM* V (London, British Library Pap. 46; TM 64368; ca. H. 28 × W. 12 cm),[23] the alchemical Codex Holmiensis (TM 64429; ca. H. 30 × W. 16.5 cm), and the codex known as Hanna (TM 61743; ca. H. 27.5 × W. 13 cm),[24] containing at least two gospels (Luke and John).[25] The three codices share a format and are written in a similar upright pointed majuscule (see fig. 1). They were produced in a similar book production environment. We could add to the comparison some of the Nag Hammadi codices, a radically different kind of text in Coptic, but presenting similar characteristics.

Second, one has to consider the existence of itinerant and professional scribes who work for pay and produce different kinds of books, regardless

23 E.R. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 20–21 (Group 8, aberrant 1). See also the discussion of this codex in Coogan's contribution to this thematic issue.

24 *P. Bodm.* XIV–XV, now in the Biblioteca Vaticana as Hanna Papyrus 1, Mater Verbi, a tall single quire codex (𝔓[75]). See B. Nongbri, "Reconsidering the Place of Papyrus Bodmer XIV–XV (𝔓75) in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament," *JBL* 135 (2016), 405–437. First dated to the second century, it has recently been re-dated to the fourth century, thanks to comparison with other similar books and a better analysis of the paleographical hand. It is a general problem that biblical papyri tend to be dated earlier than any other literary genre. When compared to two contemporary books, one immediately sees that the production has many things in common: not only the format but also the writing style. On the dating of New Testament manuscripts and papyri, see P. Orsini and W. Clarysse, "Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Palaeography," *ETL* 88 (2012), 443–474.

25 Note also the contribution by Coogan in this thematic issue.



PGM V *P. Holm.*

Fig. 1: *PGM* V (© British Library Board: Papyrus 46) and *P. Holm.* (© Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm)

of the genre.[26] Third, one must keep in mind that there are different levels of expertise and difficulty associated with imitating styles from Alexandria or other cultural centers. Finally, there is the possibility of purposeful efforts to archaize, to hold to traditional models, and to resist new fashions. Here the differentiation between professional or commercial copies and private use plays an important role.[27]

The study of the transition from roll into codex has been biased by subjective considerations of genre and of the religious or cultural affilia-

26 John Cassian, *Institutiones* 5.28. See A. Mugridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts: A Study of Scribal Practice*, WUNT 362 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016) 147–154; S.D. Charlesworth, *Early Christian Gospels: Their Production and Transmission*, Papyrologica Florentina 45 (Florence: Edizioni Gonelli, 2016), 85–91.

27 Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes* (see n. 7), 157–160.

tions of the scribes and readers. This subjectivity is combined with a broader problem relating to the dating of early manuscripts[28] and the use of restricted corpora that do not consider Coptic and Greek scribal production as a whole or that restrict the samples by genre without even comparing documentary and other literary scribal production.

Let me provide an example of the effect of preconceptions or generalizations. Paul Kahle in 1954 said that papyrus or parchment rolls are an extremely rare format in Coptic literature.[29] Years later, in 2015, Paola Buzi and Stephen Emmel, with more evidence at hand, still claimed that they are "oddities."[30] This claim has led scholars to reach excessively influenced scholarly interpretations. Such is the case with the Coptic papyrus of Didache (London, British Library Or. 9271; TM 107982). It is a very interesting piece, since it presents a quite exceptional case of papyrus sheet 44 cm wide and 29 cm tall without any *kolleseis*.[31] It has two columns on the recto, written along the papyrus fibers, one clearly wider than the other, and one on the verso, to the left of the surface, written across the papyrus fibers. It has been edited and studied by different scholars. Stanley Jones and Paul Mirecki are the authors of the most recent study and they collect and discuss previous work on the papyrus.[32] They are reluctant to accept that this piece is a roll, and prefer to see it as a codex bifolio used for a scribal exercise. But they need to explain many aspects to fit their hypothesis: on

28 B. Nongbri, *God's Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 47–82.

29 P. Kahle, *Bala'izah: Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 275.

30 P. Buzi and S. Emmel, "Coptic Codicology," in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*, ed. A. Bausi et al. (Hamburg: Tredition, 2015), 137–153, esp. 140. For rolls in Coptic literature, see N. Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires coptes de papyrus (ca. 300–VIIe siècle)," in *Études Coptes XVI: Dix-huitième journée d'études (Bruxelles, 22–24 juin 2017)*, ed. A. Boud'hors et al. (Paris: de Boccard, 2020), 213–233; Stroppa, "L'uso di rotuli" (see n. 10), 353. Alin Suciu presented a survey at the "Third PATHs International Conference: Coptic Literature in Context; The Contexts of Coptic Literature; Late Antique Egypt in a Dialogue between Literature, Archaeology and Digital Humanities" in Rome, 2019 (http://paths.uniroma1.it/third-paths-international-conference).

31 This means that this sheet of papyrus was produced in one piece, rather than by gluing together smaller sheets as rolls were normally produced. See below the cases of *PGM* I and II, for examples of even wider sheets of papyrus. The *macrocollum*, as described by Pliny, *Nat.* 13.80, is 44.4 cm long. See also Cicero, *Att.* 13.25.3 and 16.3.1. See Turner, *Typology* (see n. 23), 44, and Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes* (see n. 7), 88–89.

32 F. Jones and P.A. Mirecki, "Considerations on the Coptic Papyrus of the Didache (British Library Oriental Manuscript 9271)," in *The Didache in Context: Essays on Its Text, History, and Transmission*, ed. C.N. Jefford, NovTSup 77 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 47–87. For previous editions and discussion on the format, see ibid., 70–83.

the top left-hand corner, at the beginning of the first column, the text starts in the middle of a sentence; the left-hand column is much wider than the right-hand one, the column on the verso is also narrower than the first one, and is not centered in the page. They explain this by saying that it is a scribal exercise. Carlig is not convinced by this interpretation and suggests that this is a *kollema* (one of the segments or sheets of papyrus that were glued together to form a roll) of a longer roll, and suggests that they were written separately and then joined together.[33] Another explanation would be that this is one in a series of sheets containing the text of Didache.[34] If we compare this roll, for example, with *PGM* VIII (London, British Library Pap. 122; TM 59324), a Greek magical handbook on papyrus, featuring three columns of text on a surface of 49 cm width and 28 cm height, we find a clear parallel. It has not been questioned by any scholar that *PGM* VIII is a roll. Maybe the magical content has something to do with this acceptance. The fact that magical texts are written on rolls has been considered as a sign that the scribes were trying to give an arcane aspect to the handbooks. However, the evidence does not prove this point.[35]

This example suggests that a corpus, including examples of contemporary books regardless of the nature of the texts they contain, can be a useful way of approaching book production. The results can help scholars appreciate whether there are differences in the use of one or other format in each of the genres, and the tendencies to conservatism or to innovation in each of the fields.

4 Formats of the Roll: *volumen* and *rotulus*

There are two formats for the roll: the horizontal roll or *volumen*, which is the classical book-format, and the vertical roll or *rotulus*, which appeared later. There is variation in width and height within these two basic groups: both can be short or long, low or tall in the case of the horizontal roll, and

33 Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires coptes" (see n. 30), 221–223. Carlig provides as a comparison P. Vat. gr. 11 (G. Bastianini, "Il papiro di Favorino [Pap. Vaticano Greco 11]," in *Favorino di Arelate e la consolazione Περὶ φυγῆς: Tesi di laurea della Regia Università degli Studi di Pisa, a.a. 1940/1941*, by C. Azeglio Ciampi, ed. F. Montanari [Pisa: Edizione della Normale, 2011], 1–5).

34 On series of sheets and even ostraca, see Dosoo and Torallas Tovar, "The Roll and the Codex" (see n. 21).

35 Against this assumption, see Dosoo and Torallas Tovar, "The Roll and the Codex" (see n. 21). The magical handbooks on papyrus seem to follow in general the evolution of book production in late antiquity.

wide or narrow, in the case of the *rotulus*.[36] Moreover, the material is also in transition in late antiquity. There are both papyrus and parchment examples.

The horizontal roll is a well-known and well-studied format.[37] Its use declined through the centuries in favor of the codex. Originally it was used for both literary and documentary texts, with some stylistic differences. Literary rolls presented narrow columns, except in the case of hexameters. Documentary texts on rolls were often the result of combining a series of documents and gluing them together. This is known as *tomos synkollesimos*.[38]

In some cases, the use of the roll format for Christian and biblical texts has been connected to the secondary use or reuse of a roll, which can be explained as the result of happenstance and the opportune attempt to save money.[39] Existing rolls could continue to be used as rolls, by using the blank verso of a document. The choice in this case would have been a merely practical one, without any special purpose (theological, formal, scribal). An example is P. IFAO gr. inv. 379 + Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, F 1949/78, a Panopolitan roll of Greek accounts dated to 275–299 CE (TM 130205), which bears on the verso the Coptic (Akhmimic) Ascension of Isaiah, dated slightly later than the first text (TM 107888). The reconstruction gives a horizontal roll measuring about 253 by 31 cm, and originally bearing seventeen columns of text.[40]

In the following sections I will describe instead the purposeful use of the roll or *volumen*, and the *rotulus*, or vertical roll, with attention both to their reuse and to the specific texts that were copied on them. While it is often difficult to ascertain the original format of very damaged papyrus fragments, there is enough evidence to see at least some evolution and some scribal preferences. While I will focus mainly on the Christian use of these formats, I present them in the wider context of contemporary book production.

36 By this I mean that they use the full width of standard papyrus sheets (30 cm) or approximately half of it.

37 Turner, *Recto and Verso* (see n. 14), is still a very useful work; cf. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes* (see n. 7).

38 W. Clarysse, "Tomoi Synkollesimoi," in *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World*, ed. M. Brosius (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 344–359.

39 Bagnall, *Early Christian Books* (see n. 2), 74–75 with table 4.3. See also Nongbri, *God's Library* (see n. 28), 216–246

40 For a full description and discussion, see Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires coptes" (see n. 30), 217–218.

4.1 Horizontal Roll or *volumen*

Books in antiquity and until the second or third century CE were produced in horizontal roll format, which was also generally used for documents. In some genres, the use of the roll persists until later periods beyond the transition of the roll to codex for literary texts. For example, in the corpus of magical handbooks on papyrus, we find long and short rolls that can be dated to the third or fourth century.[41] Examples for short rolls are *PGM* VIII (London, British Library Pap. 122; TM 59324), *PGM* I (TM 88396), and *PGM* VI + II (TM 88397).[42] The latter are also interesting cases of sheets of papyrus longer than usual, since they present no *kolleseis*.

For longer rolls, two conspicuous examples in the field of magic are *PGM* VII (London, British Library Pap. 121; TM 60204) and *PGM* XXXVI (*P. Oslo* 1.1; TM 64479),[43] both dated to the fourth century CE, featuring text in columns, written in a professional cursive hand (see fig. 2). *PGM* XXXVI moreover presents an interesting use of the verso. The same scribe turned the roll 90 degrees and proceeded to write in a single column on the surface of the verso, also along the papyrus fibers (see below on this peculiar use of the verso).

In the field of patristic texts, it is important to highlight a third- or fourth-century roll containing Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* (P. Jena inv. 18r + 21r; TM 61318).[44] Although it is fragmentary, it presents a text in wide columns on a horizontal roll.

The horizontal roll also persists in the fourth century and beyond as the format for a liminal genre, that of the epistle. I say liminal because it stands in a space between the documentary and the literary, a circumstance that perhaps explains the choice of format. To explain this liminality, I will start with some examples of informal or private letters written on horizontal rolls and then turn to more official examples.

The longest preserved private letter on papyrus is the Letter of Ammon of Panopolis to his mother (*P. Ammon* 1.3; TM 23631),[45] a horizontal roll in

41 See Dosoo and Torallas Tovar, "The Roll and the Codex" (see n. 21).

42 These three magical handbooks on papyrus are being reedited in C.A. Faraone and S. Torallas Tovar, eds., *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies: Edition, Translation and Commentary*, WGRW (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, forthcoming), as nos. 30 (*PGM* VI + II), 31 (*PGM* I), and 72 (*PGM* VIII).

43 These are nos. 74 and 68 in Faraone and Torallas Tovar, *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies* (see n. 42).

44 Crisci, "Note sulla più antica produzione" (see n. 3), 111–112; Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires grecs composites" (see n. 13), 367.

45 *P. Congr. XV* 22 (P. Duk. inv. G177 + P. Köln inv. 4534, 4538); see P. van Minnen, "The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon: Panopolis in the Fourth Century A.D.," in *Per-*

PGM VII

PGM XXXVI

Fig. 2: *PGM* VII (© British Library Board: Papyrus 121) and *PGM* XXXVI (courtesy of the University of Oslo Library Papyrus Collection)

six columns in a formal, "magnificent hand."[46] The fragments measure (as recombined) 75 by 24 cm. The columns are clearly wide (I cannot confirm the exact width, since the images online do not have a scale). According to Peter van Minnen's description, Ammon went through several drafts in the composition of this letter.[47] It was thus not a casual composition, but rather carefully crafted prose, using a format that is not normally used for private letters.[48]

Another illustrative piece is *P. Ryl.* 3.469 (TM 62826),[49] which has been generally dated to the third or fourth century and is known as the Letter of Theonas against the Manichees. It does not present the formal paleographical characteristics that I will discuss below for festal letters, but it is indeed a professionally copied horizontal roll in wide columns. Roberta Mazza has recently suggested that this should be dated to the fourth century and proposes that the author was Athanasius, the patriarch of Alexandria.[50] This would make this letter more official than private. These two examples

spectives on Panopolis (P. L. Bat. XXXI), ed. A. Egberts, B.P. Muhs, and J. van der Vliet (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 177–199.

46 According to Van Minnen, "The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon" (see n. 45), 188.

47 Van Minnen, "The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon" (see n. 45), 188.

48 Examples of two- and three-column letters are provided by R. Luiselli, "Greek Letters on Papyrus, First to Eighth Centuries: A Survey," in "Documentary Letters from the Middle East: The Evidence in Greek, Coptic, South Arabian, Pehlevi, and Arabic (1st–15th c. CE)," ed. E.M. Grob and A. Kaplony, special issue, *Asiatische Studien* 62 (2008), 677–737, esp. 685: *P. Amh.* 1.3 (*SB* 6.9557; end of the 3rd cent.) and *P. Oxy.* 56.3859 (4th cent.).

49 Stroppa, "Early Christian Rolls" (see n. 3), 292, 295; R. Mazza, "Rethinking Persecutions: *P. Ryl.* III 469 and the Manichaeans in Egypt," in *Egypt and Empire: The Formation of Religious Identity after Rome*, ed. E. O'Connell (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming); Crisci, "Note sulla più antica produzione" (see n. 3), 111. Image available ibid., pl. 5, and Mazza, "Rethinking Persecutions," fig. 1.

50 Mazza, "Rethinking Persecutions" (see n. 49).

Fig. 3: *BKT* 6.5 (© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, photo: Berliner Papyrusdatenbank/Sandra Steiß P 10677)

from the fourth century are exceptional, but prove the use of the horizontal roll with wide columns for letters. One of them is not Christian, the other one is.

Let us now turn to festal letters, which are an example of the official version of this format of epistle.[51] Festal letters were circulars sent by the bishop of Alexandria to Christian communities, both churches and monasteries in Egypt, with the main purpose of announcing the date of Easter. Part of the content, however, was homiletical and was thus probably read aloud in the congregations. They were issued in Alexandria in Greek with a standardized format and handwriting. They were written on horizontal papyrus rolls, along the papyrus fibers, using considerably wide columns. The handwriting is formal, invariably using Alexandrian uncial. The fragments we have of the original festal letters indicate that there was a solid tradition in keeping this format, and it did not change even under Muslim rule.

The extant fragments of the "original" festal letters span from the fifth to the eighth century, and the format remains remarkably stable. The fragments in chronological order are: *PSI* 16.1576 (TM 131510; 420–421 CE);[52] *P. Grenf.* 2.112 (TM 65050; 577 CE); *P. Köln* 5.215 (TM 59359; 663 or 674 CE); *P. Horak* 3 (TM 68980; 711 or 722 CE); *BKT* 6.5 (TM 59099; 713 or 719 CE, see fig. 3) and *P. Heid.* 4.295 (TM 65417; 8th cent.). All of them present a regular-format, horizontal roll, written in wide columns in an Alexandrian uncial, along the papyrus fibers. The one example that stands out,

51 On festal letters on papyrus, see A. Camplani and A. Martin, "Lettres festales et listes épiscopales dans l'Église d'Alexandrie et d'Égypte à propos de la liste épiscopale accompagnant la première lettre festale de Cyrille d'Alexandrie conservée en copte," *JJP* 30 (2000), 7–20; A. Camplani, "Introduzione," in *Atanasio di Alessandria, Lettere Festali: Anonimo, Indice delle Lettere Festali; Introduzione, traduzione e note* (Milan: Paoline, 2003), 25–34; G. Bastianini and G. Cavallo, "Un nuovo frammento di lettera festale (PSI inv. 3779)," in *I Papiri letterari cristiani: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi in memoria di Mario Naldini*, ed. G. Bastianini and A. Casanova, Studi e Testi di Papirologia, n.s. 13 (Florence: Istituto Papirologico Vitelli, 2011), 31–45; Stroppa, "Lettere festali su papiro" (see n. 10); M. Konstantinidou, "Festal Letters: Fragments of a Genre," in Nodar and Torallas Tovar, *Proceedings of the 28th Congress of Papyrology* (see n. 13), 144–152.

52 Bastianini and Cavallo, "Un nuovo frammento" (see n. 51).

as far as format is concerned, is *P. Grenf.* 2.112, of which only one column is preserved, and it is written against the papyrus fibers, that is, either *transversa charta* on a *rotulus* or, though very unlikely, on the verso of a roll. Beyond their first production and circulation on papyrus rolls, the festal letters as texts went through a manuscript tradition. With this I mean that the examples presented above are fragments of copies of the original letters sent by the patriarch of Alexandria to the communities. The texts of these letters were later collected, as was the case with the letters of many important figures in antiquity, and copied in other formats.[53]

The patriarchate of Alexandria was probably imitating the style of imperial correspondence. Unfortunately, we do not have much evidence, beyond fragments produced by lower-rank officials, who were presumably also using the same style.[54] The office of the patriarch probably had well-trained scribes who produced high-quality copies of the festal letters in Greek. We have a few examples of translations into Coptic, needed especially among Christian communities in the south of Egypt, where the Coptic language was widespread.[55] The formalized style of the Greek letters is imitated with variable dexterity by the local scriptoria that produced the translations into Coptic.[56] We have two examples with different results: The Vienna translation of Cyril's festal letter (P. Vindob. K 10157; TM 107972)[57] and the Abbey of Montserrat translation of the letter of Atha-

53 For letter collecting, see the essays in B. Neil and P. Allen, eds., *Collecting Early Christian Letters: From the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). As for the remaining example of a festal letter on papyrus, *P. Oxy*. 76.5074, its sloping pointed majuscule (P. Orsini, "La maiuscola ogivale inclinata: Contributo preliminare," *Scripta* 9 [2016], 89–116, esp. 101), although a formal hand as well, indicates that this is a later copy of the letter or part of it, not an "official copy." See on this case, Stroppa, "L'uso di rotuli" (see n. 10), 351 n. 11.

54 S. Corcoran, "State Correspondence in the Roman Empire: Imperial Communication from Augustus to Justinian," in *State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire*, ed. K. Radner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 172–255. On pp. 197–198, he points at the illustrations in the *Notitia dignitatum* for the *magister scriniorum*. See also D. Feissel, "Pétitions aux empereurs et formes du rescrit dans les sources documentaires du IVe au VIe siècle," in *La pétition à Byzance*, ed. D. Feissel and J. Gascou (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2004), 44–52.

55 See Jean-Luc Fournet's latest work, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

56 For the purpose of these translations, see S. Torallas Tovar, "Athanasius' *Letter to Dracontius:* A Fourth-Century Coptic Translation in a Papyrus Roll (P. Monts. Roca inv. 14)," *Adamantius* 24 (2018), 43–59. The purpose was not purely archival, but rather was meant to be read in public, for the edification of a Christian community.

57 A. Camplani, "La prima lettera festale di Cirillo di Alessandria e la testimonianza di P. Vindob. K 10157," *Aug* (1999), 129–138; Camplani and Martin, "Lettres festales et

nasius to Dracontius (P. Monts. Roca inv. 14; TM 749338, see fig. 4).[58] The former, the translation of Cyril's festal letter of 401 into Akhmimic Coptic, is written on a horizontal roll in columns in a very sloppy hand.[59] In contrast, the latter, a magnificent fourth-century papyrus roll containing a translation of a large part of Athanasius's *Epistle to Dracontius* in Sahidic Coptic was also produced locally but imitating the formality of the documents emanating from the patriarchate. P. Monts. Roca inv. 14 features five columns of text on the recto and one on the verso. It measures 92 cm wide. The preserved height varies from column to column, but averages 12 cm. The reconstructed height would be about 30 cm, a typical size for papyrus sheets.[60] The column width is variable, 14 to 17 cm. While the format of the roll imitates festal letters, the hand in which this document is written is not an Alexandrian majuscule, but rather an upright pointed majuscule. When compared to the other examples of translations of letters from the patriarch, this roll is much more successful, in both the format and the paleographical execution. Together with *P. Oxy.* 76.5074 it is an example of a later copy, featuring a different writing style because it is not an "official copy."[61]

Two more Coptic pieces might also be considered an imitation of this format emanating from the patriarchate of Alexandria. These are Chester Beatty Ac. 1494 and 1495, two papyrus horizontal rolls containing Horsiesios's *Letters* 3 (TM 108131) and 4 (TM 108132).[62] The first (Ac. 1494) is

listes épiscopales" (see n. 51), 11–12. For a description, see Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires coptes" (see n. 30), 223–224.

58 Torallas Tovar, "Athanasius' *Letter to Dracontius*" (see n. 56). A full study will be published as *Athanasius' Epistle to Dracontius: A 4th-Century Coptic Translation in a Papyrus Roll (P. Monts. Roca inv. 14)*, STAC (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming). See also Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires coptes" (see n. 30), 220–221.

59 This roll contains two texts, one on the verso *transversa charta* in one column, one on the recto in four columns. Camplani, "La prima lettera festale" (see n. 57), has labeled them texts A and B. Text B has two columns of the festal letter and a list of bishops. Other festal letters in Coptic translations on papyrus are *P. Ryl. Copt*. 81, 82 and 83, all of them small fragments, with texts written against the papyrus fibers. For this, see Stroppa, "Lettere festali su papiro" (see n. 10).

60 Based on the calculation of the Greek text, the *Vorlage* of the lost Coptic translation.

61 On *P. Oxy.* 76.5074, see n. 53. It is hard to tell whether this phenomenon is due to a ban on using the writing style of the patriarch's official documents. We can compare the ban on the use of *litterae caelestes* to avoid forgery. See *Cod. theod*. 9.19.3; G. Cavallo, *La scrittura greca e latina dei papiri* (Rome: Fabrizio Serra, 2008), 161–162. We do not have enough evidence for our case, but the parallel is useful.

62 Described by T. Orlandi, "Due rotoli copti papiracei da Dublino (Lettere di Horsiesi)," in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology, New York 24–31 July 1980*, ed. R.S. Bagnall et al. (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 499–508. See also Carlig,

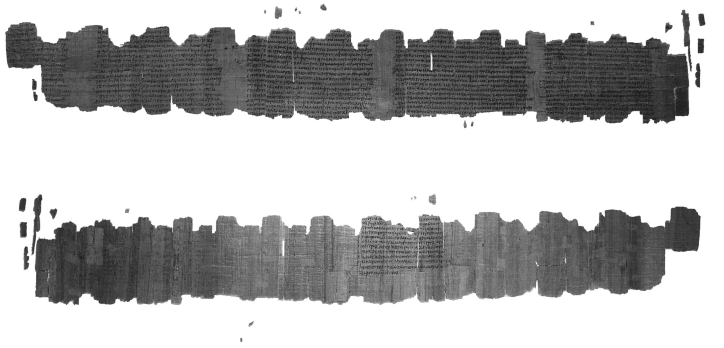


Fig. 4: P. Monts. Roca inv. 14 (© Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona, photo: Sergio Carro)

28 cm tall and 89.5 cm wide and features four columns of irregular width, between 17 and 27 cm. The second (Ac. 1495) measures 29 cm tall and 110 cm wide and features five columns of text. Both are written in formal hands and have been dated to the seventh century. These rolls were produced centuries after the actual letters of Horsiesios were written, but they were kept in the archives of the monasteries and used for edification of the community.[63] For some reason, they were considered similar in status to actual communications from the patriarch of Alexandria, and thus they imitated the formality of its chancery.

4.2 Reuse of Rolls

Horizontal rolls were generally written on the recto, a surface prepared for writing, leaving the verso blank, which would often be reused, as in examples already provided above. There are also cases in which we find the

"Les rouleaux littéraires coptes" (see n. 30), 227. Their adscription to the Bodmer Library is problematic; see A. Boud'hors, "Quelques réflexions sur la cohérence de la composante copte des P. Bodmer," *Adamantius* 21 (2015), 79–85, esp. 79; J.-L. Fournet, "Anatomie d'une bibliothèque de l'antiquité tardive: L'inventaire, le faciès et la provenance de la 'Bibliothèque Bodmer,'" ibid., 8–24; Nongbri, *God's Library* (see n. 28), 184–188.

63 We have some literary evidence on the use of patriarchal or episcopal letters which can be mentioned here: First, the Greek Life of Pachomius 99: "This text we have just written, we have not written for the sake of writing but as a memorial, as is the case with the letters that holy bishops and fathers have written for edification […]." A passage in the Bohairic Life of Pachomius illustrates the precise circumstances of translation and readership related to episcopal letters like the festal letters. Pachomius's successor, Theodorus, explains Athanasius's letter of the year 367 CE to the monks. He then orders the monks to translate it: "once they had translated it into the Egyptian language, he deposited it in the monastery, in order that it would become their rule" (§ 189).

continuation of a text on the verso, but this cannot be strictly defined as reuse. Two terms can be used to describe these two situations: *amphigraphos* is a roll covered on both sides by the same text by the same scribal hand, and *opisthographos* is a roll written on both sides as the result of reuse, extension, or annotation, often by different hands.[64]

There are three ways in which the verso of a roll is used for these two scenarios:

(1) The main text starts on the recto and ends in the center of the verso. An example of this is the Montserrat Athanasius roll, mentioned above.[65] Both outside edges of the verso are left blank. This has a practical explanation. When holding a roll with both hands to read the recto, the text on the verso can be damaged by the wear caused by the hands; by leaving it blank, there is no text under the hands of the reader.

(2) The center of the papyrus is written first, leaving both edges blank, which are used at a later time. Examples are *PGM* VII,[66] mentioned above, and *PGM* III.[67] *PGM* VII was turned over 180 degrees, written in the center of the verso, and then further text was added on the edges. Perhaps another example of this is P. Jena inv. 18 + 21, mentioned above,[68] in which the Irenaeus text was written on the recto and the center of the verso (being thus an example of [1] too), and at a later moment, a mythological text was written on the verso to the left of the Irenaeus text.

(3) The recto of the papyrus is written, as usual, along the papyrus fibers. When the recto is filled with text, the papyrus is turned at 90 degrees, and the verso is written in one single column also along the papyrus fibers. It is not clear why this would be done, as it would not be convenient for reading.[69] An explanation can be that writing on horizontal fibers is easier

64 I would like to thank Raquel Martín Hernández for her assistance on this topic. On the term opisthograph, see M. Manfredi, "Opistografo," *Parola del Passato* 38 (1983), 44–54.

65 There are not many examples for this particular case. P. Berl. inv. 9772 (*BKT* 5/2.XX.A; TM 62570; 2nd cent. BCE), however, has a similar situation, although the text on the verso is not a continuation of the recto, but a different literary text.

66 This manuscript has been deeply studied by Raquel Martín Hernández, who has prepared the re-edition for Faraone and Torallas Tovar, *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies* (see n. 42), as no. 74. See also her article "A Coherent Division of a Magical Handbook: Using Lectional Signs in PGM VII," *Segno e Testo* 13 (2015), 147–164.

67 This papyrus roll presents a complex situation. It was first written in Greek and, later on, it was reused on the back, and the remaining blank spaces were filled in with Old Coptic. It has recently been reinterpreted as two separate rolls; see E. Love, "The PGM III Archive: Two Papyri, Two Scribes, Two Scripts, and Two Languages," *ZPE* 202 (2017), 175–188.

68 See Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires grecs composites" (see n. 13), 368.

69 Turner, *Recto and Verso* (see n. 14), 51, suggests the three examples for documentary papyri.

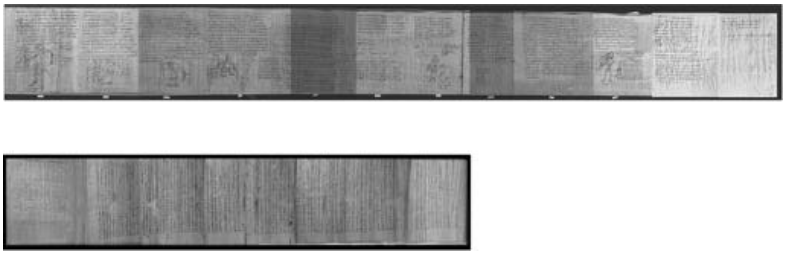


Fig. 5: *PGM* XXXVI recto and verso (courtesy of the University of Oslo Library Papyrus Collection)

than on vertical fibers. Some examples are *P. Flor.* 1.32 (recto) and 33 (verso) from 298 CE. The recto (TM 23551–23552) is a *tomos synkollesimos* containing a series of declarations of property. The verso (TM 23553) has been used in one column at 90 degrees. A similar situation is seen in *P. Oxy.* 54.3766–3767 (TM 15276–15280, 92093; 327, 329, 330 CE), a *tomos synkollesimos* on the recto with declarations of price, and a fragment of proceedings before the λογιστής on the verso, at 90 degrees. Finally, *P. Oxy.* 27.2474 (TM 30460; 3rd cent.) has three fragmentary columns of a land-register on the recto and the draft of a will of a Roman citizen on the verso at 90 degrees. We have two more examples that are not documentary: the first one, *PGM* XXXVI, mentioned above, is dated to the fourth century. It contains twelve columns on the recto and a single column on the verso at 90 degrees (see fig. 5). The second example is the Coptic translation of a festal letter of Cyril (P. Vindob. K 10157), also mentioned above, which contains three different texts by the same hand, with the verso at 90 degrees. On the recto, along the papyrus fibers, is a festal letter, which includes the list of new bishops, together with a text at the end of the roll, which has not been fully identified by the first editor.[70] On the verso, at 90 degrees, is a homily by the same hand that wrote the festal letter.

4.3 Vertical Rolls

The new trend of using vertical rolls or *rotuli* must have arrived in Egypt from Byzantium and may also be connected to documentary use.[71] The

70 W. Till, *Osterbrief und Predigt in achmimischem Dialekt*, Studien zur Epigraphik und Papyruskunde 2.1 (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1931), 30 (text) and 39 (partial translation; see p. 39: "Der zweite, kleingeschriebene Abschnitt dieser Seite [von Zeile 26 an] beginnt: […]. Der Rest bleibt unverständlich").

71 I do not pretend to cover this material exhaustively nor collect all examples. There is no reference in the law about the use of documents, but it seems that official correspondence

earliest examples (not as use of the verso mentioned above, but as documents first used in this manner) appear in the fourth century,[72] but they seem to have spread and mostly replaced horizontal documents in the fifth and sixth centuries.[73] Some examples include the following: *BGU* 1.316 (TM 20204), a 359 CE slave sale on a vertical roll with three *kolleseis* (H. 68 × W. 27 cm).[74] It must be remarked that this document originated from Ascalon, not Egypt. Two documents from the sixth century are drafts of the same imperial rescript dated to 551 CE: *P. Cair. Masp*. 1.67024 (TM 18988; H. 89.8 × W. 32 cm)[75] with just one *kollesis*, being thus a roll made out of two sheets longer than 40 cm.[76] The other document is *P. Cair. Masp.* 1.67025 (TM 18989; H. 93 × W. 32 cm), which seems to have no *kollesis*.[77] The vertical roll also spread to use in private documents, like the seventh-century will of Abraham of Hermonthis (*P. Lond.* 1.77; TM 39851) measuring 111.8 cm tall and 35.5 cm wide,[78] or the record of a lawsuit from the Arsinoite nome (*P. Lond.* 1.113.1; TM 41019), measuring about 197 cm tall and 30 cm wide.

However, this new use did not completely replace the horizontal roll, even in official use, as, for example, *P. Leid.* 2.Z (*SB* 20.14606; TM 23768; H. 30 × W. 75 cm), a petition of the bishop of Syene to the emperor, dated to

might be connected to this use. Justinian, *Nov.* 44 offers some indications about the use of the sheet of papyrus and the *protokollon*, but it is not clear that it is connected to the vertical vs. horizontal use. See J. Diethart, D. Feissel, and J. Gascou, "Les prôtocolla des papyrus byzantins du V^e^ au VII^e^ siècle: Édition, prosopographie, diplomatique," *Tyche* 9 (1994), 9–40, here 19–21.

72 The will of a Roman citizen mentioned above (*P. Oxy*. 27.2474; TM 30460) can be dated to the late third century; cf. Turner, *Recto and Verso* (see n. 14), 44. It is not clear if this is a reuse of the verso of a roll of accounts, or vice versa.

73 J.-L. Fournet, "Esquisse d'une anatomie de la lettre antique tardive d'après les papyrus," in *Correspondances: Documents pour l'histoire de l'Antiquité tardive; Actes du colloque international, université Charles-de-Gaulle-Lille 3, 20–22 novembre 2003*, ed. R. Delmaire, J. Desmulliez, and P.-L. Gatier (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2009), 23–66.

74 Turner, *Recto and Verso* (see n. 14), 41; E. Crisci, *Scrivere greco fuori d'Egitto: Ricerche sui manoscritti greco-orientali di origine non egiziana dal IV secolo a. C. all'VIII d. C.*, Papyrologica Florentina 27 (Florence: Gonnelli, 1996), 61–63 (pl. 39).

75 J.-L. Fournet, "Les Égyptiens à la capital ou quand la papyrologie s'invite à Constantinople: Édition comparée des *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67024–67025," in *Constantinople réelle et imaginaire: Autour de l'œuvre de Gilbert Dagron*, ed. C. Morrisson and J.-P. Sodini (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2018), 595–633.

76 Fournet, "Les Égyptiens" (see n. 75), 599; Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes* (see n. 7), 88–89. On the *macrocollum* described by Pliny, cf. n. 31 above.

77 Fournet, "Les Égyptiens" (see n. 75), 614. For longer rolls than the *macrocollum*, see above *PGM* I and II.

78 Turner, *Recto and Verso* (see n. 14), 47.

the years 425 to 430 CE, written in three columns along the papyrus fibers, like a typical horizontal roll.[79] Another example is *P. Cair. Masp.* 3.67283 (TM 18420; H. 30.5 × W. 190 cm), an early sixth-century (before 547 CE) report to the empress Theodora sent by the inhabitants of Aphrodito. Another peculiar piece is a sixth-century roll, *P. Cair. Masp.* 3.67317 + *BKT* 5/1.XI.3 (TM 59709),[80] containing three columns of a poem by Dioscorus of Aphrodito. It is written in iambic trimeters, and it praises a dux of the Thebaid. The columns are wide, about 20 cm, and they are also disposed parallel to the papyrus fibers. To these, the festal letters and the letters of Horsiesios from the Chester Beatty Library, mentioned above, can also be added.

The vertical scroll was soon used for literary and Christian texts.[81] For example, P. CtYBR inv. 1779 (TM 108426) is a fourth- or fifth-century vertical papyrus roll (H. 67 × W. 26 cm) containing Ps 76–77 in Coptic, perhaps for liturgical use.[82] In some cases, *rotuli* used for administrative purposes were reused on the verso for literary texts. We have an example in *P. Col.* 8.192 (TM 61322), the *Asceticon* of Isaiah of Scetis copied on the verso of a land sale contract (*P. Col.* 8.244 [TM 40982], written on the recto, across the papyrus fibers). The preserved part is 30 by 50 cm. This is an unusual format for Coptic literature, as was pointed out by the editors. One wonders how much influence the reuse of the verso of documents had on the choice of format, as well as how much influence it had on the further development of these formats applied to literary texts.

All the rolls and *rotuli* presented to this point are quite standard, with a width of about 30 cm.[83] There are, however, rolls of approximately half this width. An example of a narrow roll is P. CtYBR inv. 4995 (TM 108323),[84] a fourth- to fifth-century *rotulus* (H. 32 × W. 12 cm) containing (part of) the Book of Jubilees on the verso of a private letter. It is, however, difficult to classify this manuscript as either a roll or *rotulus* due to its small size.

79 D. Feissel and K.A. Worp, "La requête d'Appion, évêque de Syène, à Théodose II: P. Leid. Z révisé," *Oudheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum voor Oudheden te Leiden* 68 (1988), 97–111.

80 Carlig, "Les rouleaux littéraires grecs composites" (see n. 13), 371.

81 See Stroppa, "L'uso di rotoli" (see n. 10), for more examples. Less often than expected for liturgical texts; see Mihálykó, *Christian Liturgical Papyri* (see n. 4), 164–165.

82 Stroppa, "L'uso di rotoli" (see n. 10), 353.

83 See Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes* (see n. 7), on the standard width of papyrus sheets.

84 A. Crislip, "The Book of Jubilees in Coptic: An Early Christian Florilegium on the Family of Noah," *BASP* 40 (2003), 27–44.

Stroppa has discussed similar miniature *rotuli* made of parchment containing Christian texts of difficult identification.[85]

I have so far not mentioned the use of the *rotulus* in magic.[86] This format was widely used up to the Middle Ages, with noteworthy examples of parchment *rotuli* for Coptic magical handbooks. The vertical roll already appears in magic in the fifth century, at approximately the same time as it appears in administrative use. A nice example is a narrow papyrus roll, *Suppl.Mag.* 2.96 (TM 65847; 5th cent.) which measures 86 cm tall and 14 cm wide, containing a magical formulary.[87] Connected thematically to this piece, with a similar or even narrower format and content (though much later, from the ninth century), is a list of medical recipes in Coptic contained in P. Louvre inv. AF 12530 (TM 383715), a 9 cm wide and 90 cm long papyrus *rotulus.*[88] Also worth mentioning is another medical *rotulus*, P. IFAO copte inv. 441–448 (TM 108434).[89] These examples, distant in time, attest the durability of this format for magic and medicine.

Another set of Christian texts on *rotuli* are the so-called "Pachomiana" from the Bodmer Library. They constitute a compact group of documents from the fifth to the seventh century, that were sold in the antiquities market in the 1960s.[90] These rolls have been interpreted as archival copies of official letters of abbots from the Pachomian monastic order, written in Coptic and kept in the archives of the monastery. Two of the Pachomian letters, those of Horsiesios, are made of papyrus and written horizontally in wide columns, mentioned and described above. The other rolls are made of parchment and written *transversa charta* in *rotulus* format. The list of *rotuli* follows:[91]

85 Stroppa, "L'uso di rotoli" (see n. 10), 353

86 On this, see Dosoo and Torallas Tovar, "The Roll and the Codex" (see n. 21).

87 It is being reedited by Maltomini for Faraone and Torallas Tovar, *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies* (see n. 42), as no. 82.

88 S. Richter, "Neue koptische medizinische Rezepte," *Zeitschrift der Ägyptischen Sprache* 141 (2014), 154–194, here 165–183 no. 3, with image.

89 E. Chassinat, *Un papyrus médical copte*, Mémoirs de l'IFAO 32 (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1921).

90 I will not discuss the attribution of these rolls to the Bodmer Library. See J.M. Robinson, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri: From the First Monastery's Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin* (Eugene, Oreg.: Cascade, 2011), 133–134; Boud'hors, "Quelques réflexions" (see n. 62); Fournet, "Anatomie d'une bibliothèque" (see n. 62); Nongbri, *God's Library* (see n. 28), 184–188.

91 Cf. Fournet, "Anatomie d'une bibliothèque" (see n. 62), 23–24.

(1) *P. Bodm.* XXXIX (TM 322184; 5th–6th cent.): Pachomius, *Ep.* 11b (Coptic)
(2) Chester Beatty Ms. W. 145 + *P. Köln* 4.174 (TM 62348; 4th cent.): Pachomius, *Ep.* 1–3, 7, 10, 11a (Greek)[92]
(3) Chester Beatty Ac. 1486 (TM 108130; 6th cent.): Theodore, *Ep.* 2 (Coptic)
(4) Private German collection (TM 107787; 5th cent.): Theodore, *Ep.* 2 (Coptic)
(5) *P. Köln Ägypt.* 1.8 (TM 107777; 5th–6th cent.): Pachomius, *Ep.* 8 (Coptic)
(6) *P. Köln Ägypt.* 1.9 (TM 101251; 5th–6th cent.): Pachomius, *Ep.* 10–11a (Coptic)

Some of these rolls seem to be sewn together purposefully and prepared as *rotuli*, but others seem to be leftovers or irregular pieces cut from the edges of skin, typically found in a scriptorium. The latter group represent the use of a leftover piece of parchment for a scribal exercise rather than a conscious choice of book format.[93] *P. Bodm.* XXXIX is a small fragment of parchment, too small to describe the whole piece and its format fully. The two Köln pieces and Chester Beatty Ac. 1486 seem to be cuttings from the edges of parchment skins. The Greek piece, however, Chester Beatty Ms. W. 145 + *P. Köln* 4.174, is a narrow parchment *rotulus* measuring 15.9 by 91 cm, composed of sewn parchment sheets, and has been dated to the fourth century. In my judgment, however, this seems a bit early for this format, especially if compared to the other examples mentioned above. It is more probably to be dated to the fifth or sixth century.

5 Conclusion

The use of the roll beyond the fourth century is significant. Although Christian books in the first centuries of Christianity were far more likely to be codices than rolls,[94] the specialized use of the latter not only had a home in late antiquity generally, but it also had a home in late antique Christianity. While the gospels, from the earliest copies, hardly present any exceptions to the codex format, other Christian texts continue to use the roll

92 Cf. H. Quecke, *Die Briefe Pachoms: Griechischer Text der Handschrift W. 145 der Chester Beatty Library eingeleitet und herausgegeben*, Textus patristici et liturgici 11 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1975).
93 The fact that they use marginal materials as a medium might support the claim that they represent a stage in the collection of the letters previous to the one represented by letters already collected and copied in codices, and not a performative use. See M. Choat, "Monastic Letter Collections in Late Antique Egypt: Structure, Purpose, and Transmission," in *Cultures in Contact: Transfer of Knowledge in the Mediterranean Context; Selected Papers*, ed. S. Torallas Tovar and J.P. Monferrer-Sala (Cordoba: CNERU; Beirut: CEDRAC – Oriens Academic, 2013), 73–90.
94 For full debates about this, see n. 2 above.

format.[95] The different choices can be generally explained by the type of text contained in each format, and we can assume that they clearly presented differences that were patently visible for scribes and readers, and were part of the materiality of readership in the early Christian communities. The use of the codex, while it has attracted more attention in general in studies on book production in antiquity, is part of a wider landscape that can be partly understood and systematized, and interestingly, paralleled with the developments in book production in other genres, documentary, paraliterary, and literary.

In this paper I have surveyed the use of the roll and its survival after the transition into codex for both Christian and other texts. The horizontal roll written in wide columns was used in the communication of the patriarchate of Alexandria. We have several conspicuous examples of official letters connected to the emerging church, with the most interesting being the festal letters, original documents emanating from the chancery of the patriarch. Further examples, not authoritative in the same way, imitate the formality of the festal letters. These are translations into Coptic of these communications of the patriarch or similar cases, like the letters of Horsiesios, the importance of which perhaps justifies the imitation of that Alexandrian formality. The church of Alexandria was probably imitating the style of official Byzantine correspondence, also produced in horizontal papyrus rolls and wide columns, often in a specific paleographical hand. The horizontal roll was also used in other genres like magic: we have a good number of fourth-century handbooks on papyrus horizontal rolls.

Sometime in the fifth century, there was a shift to the vertical roll or *rotulus*, likely also coming from the official sphere. With the evidence we have, we can presume that the shift from horizontal to vertical happened in the fifth century, though some examples and some special uses of the verso of some rolls might already point to this shift in the fourth century. The use then extended to literary, biblical, and, notably, liturgical texts. This would be the seed for later Byzantine liturgical rolls. Parallel to the use in liturgy is the use of papyrus and parchment *rotuli* for Coptic magical formularies and medical prescriptions.

At this point it is interesting to note that the festal letters, with only one possible exception that is disputed, continue to be produced with impressive regularity in the same format and hand. At the same time, the

95 See Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts* (see n. 2); Bagnall, *Early Christian Books* (see n. 2); Gamble, *Books and Readers* (see n. 2); more recently, Mugridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts* (see n. 26), and Charlesworth, *Early Christian Gospels* (see n. 26).

vertical roll occupied the space of official communication and extended to private documents and liturgy. Why are the festal letters (and other similar documents) still produced in horizontal rolls in the sixth to eighth century? It could be due to an excessive zeal in keeping a tradition, or it could be due to the distancing of the patriarchate of Alexandria from Constantinople after the Council of Chalcedon in 451, precisely at the moment when the technical transition is happening.

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