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ELIZABETH A. MEYER

Roman Tabulae, Egyptian Christians, and the Adoption of the Codex*

One of the most important historical changes in the technology of writing is the displacement of the scroll by the codex, the physical forerunner of the modern book. The initial invention, adoption, or adaptation of the papyrus codex in particular poses an intriguing puzzle because it is very strongly located in time (first-second century AD), in place (Roman Egypt), and among a specific group of people (Christians), but no satisfactory explanation for the appearance of this codex has yet been proposed, or at least won wide acceptance. Egyptians in the Roman period wrote on a bewildering variety of materials, from ostraca (pieces of broken pottery) to wooden tablets, parchment (made from the skin of sheep or goats), single sheets of papyrus, and individual papyrus rolls; the development of the codex therefore occurred when many viable options were available, and so must represent a conscious choice. Moreover, it was the clear choice of an identifiable group, Christian scribes,¹ whose dedication to the codex form for scriptural writings was almost, and uniquely, complete,² and whose enthusiasm for the form antedated that of Egyptian society at large by almost two hundred years.³ Many reasons for Egyptian Christians' choice of the papyrus codex have been

* My thanks to audiences in Torún, Oxford, and Heidelberg; HARRY GAMBLE and J. E. LENDON; and the anonymous referees, along with RUDOLF HAENSCH, at Chiron. Final revisions to this paper were made at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik at the Universität Heidelberg, during a year of research made possible by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, and to both institutions I express my thanks.

¹ HAINES-EITZEN 2000, 16f. 35–75. 130f. emphasizes that Christians copied their own texts, thus the codex is a strong preference among those called here 'Christian scribes'.

² ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 38–40 estimated 161 or 168 of 172 biblical mss. or fragments AD 1–400 were in codex form; most of these (158) are from the third and fourth centuries, and more than half (98) are OT texts. ROBERTS – SKEAT arrived at the statistic of 168 of 172 by excluding OT rolls that were «probably of Jewish origin», while noting that «no text of any part of the NT is known [to have been] written on the recto of a roll» (at p. 40; one possible exception, P22 = P.Oxy. 1228 [John, 3rd c.]); new discoveries – twelve more fragments by 1999 – only confirm this pattern of codex-use, STANTON 2004, 169. 82. The earliest fragments are most important for this paper, but the overall trend is also significant.

³ The statistics are collected by ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 37: non-Christian literary texts from Egypt go from being 1.43% codices in the first and second centuries AD to being 89% codices in the fifth, with the greatest change occurring from third (18.5%) to fourth (62.34%) centuries AD.

suggested, and will be surveyed first in what follows. The argument to be made here is, however, not one that relies too much on any of the previous arguments. Instead, it takes a quasi-archaeological approach to demonstrate, first, that early Christian scribes most likely took, as the direct prototype for their papyrus codex, Roman legal documents written on wood *tabulae*; then suggests two reasons why this is not as unlikely a choice of exemplar as it might at first seem. These reasons arise not only from the appearance and nature of these Roman tablets but also from certain specifically Christian attitudes about authoritative texts and traditions, and from the peculiar situation in which Christians as Egyptians must have found themselves in the early second century AD. Religious and historical issues at a particular time in a particular place are therefore, it is argued, most important in driving this technological change, which itself most likely began – on the existing evidence – in Egypt and then spread elsewhere.⁴ It thus was a change that began small, but then had, like the development of Christianity itself, far-reaching and universal consequences beyond Egypt, and beyond Christians themselves.

Scholarship

The scholarship on the Christian choice of the codex is extensive and intertwined, some interpretations relying heavily on earlier ones, some developing what were only modest or passing observations in previous discussions. G. CAVALLO, for example, suggested that Christians belonged to a lower social stratum, and for that reason would be unaccustomed to using bookrolls; they therefore would have looked – had to look? – for a different format.⁵ If Christians' lower social status were particularly marked by straitened financial circumstances, then it would make sense that a cheaper format would appeal to them, and T. C. SKEAT estimated that codices were cheaper to produce than book-rolls by 26%.⁶ E. BICKERMAN had noted that translations from Hebrew to Greek made a text twice as long, since vowels had to be added and Egyp-

⁴ The distribution in time and place of the existing evidence is a consequence of survival, itself closely tied to relatively hospitable Egyptian conditions; I draw conclusions from what we have, as have others before me (e.g., WIEACKER 1960, 100; ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 3f.), but recognize that the argument must ultimately remain speculative because of our lack of evidence from other provinces. Because of its emphasis on explaining such specifics, this argument is also a «big bang» theory of adoption – as GAMBLE 1995, 58 put it, meaning that «there must have been a decisive, precedent-setting development ... that rapidly established the codex in Christian use» – an approach to which STANTON 2004, 167–181 objects, preferring a «gradual evolution» requiring no «major shift in mind-set» (181).

⁵ CAVALLO, in: CAVALLO 1975, 83–85, reprised in CAVALLO 1998, 10; going back to a variety of authors including IBSCHER 1937, 11 and SCHUBART 1921, 120 («das Buch der kleinen Leute»), a view ultimately deriving from BIRT 1882, 115 (codex the form «des kleinen Mannes»); most recently espousing this point of view is HORSLEY 1993, 81.

⁶ SKEAT 1982, 169–175 = SKEAT, in: ELLIOTT 2004, 66–70 (savings on papyrus substantial, but no saving on the cost of the scribe).

tian Christians used the Septuagint (Greek) translation; this might have added a certain urgency to considerations of cost.⁷ And if the earliest Christians (especially «journeymen missionaries»)⁸ were regularly on the move, then the compactness of the codex, which made it easy to carry, would have been particularly well-suited to its earliest adopters, as M. McCORMICK argued.⁹ The codex would thus have been convenient for people who valued convenience, inexpensive for people who were poor, and – or – more familiar for people who were unfamiliar with the accessories of elite, literary society.

Yet if second-century Egyptian Christians were not of uniquely low status, uniquely poor, uniquely text-oriented, or uniquely in need of a small and durable format for their texts, these arguments collapse into being purely functional ones: reasons for invention or adoption that would presumably have applied to other low-status, poor, or migratory non-Christian inhabitants of Egypt as well.¹⁰ Moreover, the codex does not appear to have spread much beyond Christians in the second century AD, which suggests that functional arguments, while no doubt influential in the long-term process of the adoption of the form, are a second-level order of explanation for the second century. Since it was Christians who were most devoted to the codex at that time, was there something about being Christian *per se* – a religious rather than sociological reason – that would help explain the invention or adoption of the codex? Here, too, there have been a number of attractive arguments made. Jews used leather scrolls for their sacred texts, protecting, handling, and preserving them very carefully;¹¹ it seemed quite likely, to P. KATZ and others,¹² that Christians endeavoring to put some visible as well as theological distance between themselves and their Jewish heritage would have ranked the choice of a non-scroll format high on their list of priorities. On the other

⁷ BICKERMAN 1976, 1. 138f.

⁸ The phrase is GAMBLE's 1990, 267.

⁹ McCORMICK 1985, 157f. (the concept of portability as an attractive aspect of the codex form goes back to Mart. Ep. 1.2 and 14.188); noted approvingly also by HORSLEY 1993, 83 and by STANTON 2004, 84. 171. 180; EPP 1997a, 19–21 emphasizes especially that these travellers were teachers, and that this educational setting would have encouraged the adoption of the codex by others.

¹⁰ ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 48f. note that many of the advantages of the codex we see would not have been immediately perceived; RICHARDS 1998, 153 notes that the differing appreciation (by Christians and non-Christians) of the codex's functional qualities has been inadequately explained.

¹¹ For Jewish rules about the preparation and handling of scrolls for the public reading of Torah, see (e.g.) ROBERTS 1970, 49f. or RESNICK 1992, 8–11.

¹² KATZ 1945, 63; RESNICK 1992, 5. 16. That Jews really did avoid non-scroll forms for their sacred texts has been questioned by KRAFT 2003, 68: «Whether there will ever be sufficient evidence to support my suspicion that the codex form came into early Christianity from Judaism remains to be seen»; and (66) «I would expect to find the debt of early Christianity to its Jewish heritage ... even greater in these areas of «textual mechanics» and transmitted scribal craft than our scholarly traditions and approaches have permitted us to recognize».

hand, S. LIEBERMAN argued that Jews used informal parchment and papyrus formats like the codex to record the oral teachings about, and oral interpretations of, the Law.¹³ ROBERTS and SKEAT depended on this observation of LIEBERMAN's to make an argument for the origins of the codex in the Jewish-Christian community of Antioch,¹⁴ and in this view, early Christians would have been adhering to an important distinction in practice made by Jews.¹⁵

If, however, the Jewish use of parchment or papyrus codices for informal writing on the Law turns out to be a chimera, as it appears to,¹⁶ what survives from this group of arguments is only a generalized disinclination to use leather scrolls – quite possible, indeed, but not a specific explanation for the invention or adoption of the specific form that was the papyrus codex. Others have wondered whether certain texts, introduced into Christian communities in the codex form (itself inspired by the anti-Jewish need for a new format, and possibly also propelled by some of the functionalist arguments already given), subsequently became, as revered texts, the physical prototypes for other second-century Christian codices. Thus C. H. ROBERTS proposed in 1949 and 1954 that Mark had recorded Peter's memoirs as memoranda in a parchment codex in Rome, then brought that parchment codex with him to Alexandria;¹⁷ H. Y. GAMBLE proposed in 1990 that collections of the Pauline corpus in particular were made in parchment codices and circulated in that form.¹⁸ Both – or either – would have given their audiences the strong impression that this was the correct form in which Christian texts were to circulate;¹⁹ both – or either – would thus have provided the paradigm for what a Christian text should or must look like. Both argu-

¹³ LIEBERMAN 1962, 203–208.

¹⁴ ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 59f., arguing that *pinkasim* = πίνακες.

¹⁵ GAMBLE 1995, 58. If distance from Jewish practices is achieved by the adoption of the codex but Jewish traditions are simultaneously maintained (as in, e.g., the *nomina sacra*, see below nn. 64. 65. 67), this might suggest some ambivalence about being «anti-Jewish», see JUDGE – PICKERING 1978, 7.

¹⁶ Despite LIEBERMAN's interpretations (see above n. 13), πίνακες were not of papyrus but wood, see VAN HAELST 1989, 31f. (on *pinkasim* and *apiporin*), SIRAT 1989, 120f., and HARAN 1996, 217f.; and πίνακες in the Jewish milieu were generally used for the same everyday functions they fulfilled in the Greek world, SIRAT 1992, 57f. SKEAT 1994, 263 = SKEAT, in: ELLIOTT 2004, 79 has also now acknowledged that this argument has failed.

¹⁷ ROBERTS 1949, 161f.; ROBERTS 1954, 187–191; see also ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 54–56.

¹⁸ Based in particular on the reference in 2Tim. 4:13: «βιβλία, (and or especially) τὰς μεμβράνας (parchments)», and the observation that Cicero kept copies of letters in *codicilli* (ad fam. 9.26.1), so it is presumed that Paul would have kept his in (parchment) *codicilli* – *membranai* – as well (but see below nn. 34. 36). For the Pauline theory, see McCORMICK 1985, 155 (a passing suggestion only); GAMBLE 1990, 265–280. 392–398; GAMBLE 1995, 58–66; RICHARDS 1998, 163f. (the first collection of letters was «unintentionally» in codex form); DONFRIED 2002, 293–304 extends this yet further, by arguing that Paul's craft as a σιηνοποιός (Acts 18:3, a word he thinks best translated as «leatherworker») contributed to the technological breakthrough that a parchment codex represented.

¹⁹ TURNER 1980, 11.

ments situate the introduction of the codex solidly within its specifically Christian context, providing welcome human agency (and, in ROBERTS's case, providing a welcome geographical bridge between Rome and Egypt) to otherwise vague arguments about adoption and dissemination.

Unfortunately, the argument about Mark has been uniformly rejected and, indeed, withdrawn by its author,²⁰ and logical difficulties with the argument about the Pauline corpus threaten to sink it as well.²¹ We are, then, left with no overwhelming consensus that can carry the day, no clearly compelling explanation, but a series of arguments that all have something attractive about them but cannot in themselves entirely convince: functional reasons were undoubtedly important, but perhaps only at a later stage in the dissemination of the codex, once there had been time for its useful characteristics to be developed, observed, and appreciated; visible difference from Jewish practice was no doubt also significant, but can at best suggest why one option, the leather scroll, was *not* taken, not why one option, the papyrus codex, *was*; arguments about specific agents and texts remind that this was a change that must have taken place somewhere and at some time, and with a subsequent dissemination within Christian communities that has to be explained. It seems somehow insufficient to withdraw into the observation that the Christians were «counter-cultural»,²² and leave it at that: why be «counter-cultural» in *this* particular way? This paper will therefore attempt to suggest reasons for the Christian adoption and adaptation of the codex that will respect and incorporate functional and anti-Jewish factors, but will situate the process in a particular place and time and in a particular social milieu – early second-century Egypt, among Christians of middling status with a complicated but not necessarily hostile attitude towards Roman authority and Roman models and a particular need to demonstrate that they were not Jews at precisely that time.

²⁰ Withdrawn, ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 55f.; as LLEWELYN 1994, 252 summarizes: (a) the argument does not explain why the authority of a notebook's contents should affect its format; (b) it rests on the assumption that Mark founded the Alexandrian church, which is «historically tenuous» (but see PEARSON 1986, 137–145, who retains a fondness for the theory despite its unprovability); and (c) supposed respect for the Gospel of Mark is at odds with its apparent neglect by the early church in Egypt.

²¹ As STANTON 2004, 84f. n. 81 notes, «[w]e have far more early codices of individual gospels and codices of the four gospels than we do of collections of Paul's letters; the gospels are quoted much more frequently in the second century than are the Pauline epistles»; he also notes (169) that he is not convinced «that the collection of Paul's letters into a single codex is likely to have persuaded *all* strands of early Christianity to adopt the new codex format not only for Paul's writings, but also for the gospels». EPP 1997a, 22–24 provides statistics on the frequency of Pauline letters in codices. HORSLEY 1993, 80 asks why the order of letters in the Pauline corpus then changed, if the introduction of a codex of letters in their first order had been so significant. GAMBLE himself notes (2002, 286) that «the evidence for the history of the Pauline corpus is so complex and multifaceted that no single theory seems capable of accounting for it all».

²² This stance made them more willing «to break with the almost unanimous preference for the roll and experiment with the unfashionable codex», STANTON 2004, 171f., also 84.

The Codex and its Prototypes: Adoption and Adaptation

Because the papyrus codex does not seem to have existed before the second century AD, some of its earliest students gave to Christians the honor of ‹inventing› the codex, and thus also of being the progenitors of the modern book.²³ But if the defining, and most important, aspects of the codex are the direction of its writing in relation to the page, its binding on one long edge, and its quality of being written on both front and back of its sheets, then the codex itself was almost certainly not invented in Egypt, or by Christians; the Egyptian context contributed the medium of papyrus, but not the form of the codex. For the codex has a pre-Christian, and pre-second-century, history in the Roman (and Latin-speaking) world: it means ‹block of wood›, because in a Roman context the codex was made up of several wooden tablets bound together.²⁴ ‹Codex› is a Latin word used for a Roman form, and when the word is eventually taken over into Greek and into the Greek world, it is transliterated – κῶδιξ – and thus singled out as a borrowing.²⁵ By the first century AD, this codex of several wooden tablets, while continuing to exist as itself, is also thought to have inspired more than one imitation in other media,²⁶ one of which has been deemed a strong contender to be the prototype of the papyrus codex. This derivation will first be laid out and its plausibility examined, especially for Egypt; then a different argument, suggesting a derivation from the wooden codex itself, will instead be made.

By the second century AD the codex, this ‹block of wood›, already existed as ‹tablets of parchment›, first attested for literary texts in the poems of Martial and thus also, to some scholars, the first real ‹book›, not least because it was used for real ‹literature›.²⁷ For although most scholars pay lip-service to the notion that the ulti-

²³ KENYON 1932, 97; EPP 1997a, 16 suggests that he would now be ‹more restrained› than he once was about Christian invention.

²⁴ *quia plurium tabularum contextus caudex apud antiquos vocatur*, Sen. Brev. Vit. 13.4; Varro ap. Non. 535M, *quod antiqui plures tabulas codices dicebant*.

²⁵ ‹... the word codex is Latin and ... there is no doubt that the thing is too›, ROBERTS 1949, 160; ROBERTS 1954, 176; MAZAL 1999, 139.

²⁶ Especially the papyrus double-document (see below n. 109); although some tentative suggestions have been made for the three ‹light› or ‹leaf› tablets from Vindolanda that have been ‹bound› together along their bottom and short edge (orientation given by the direction of the writing) I do not include them here, since I consider these to be in a format derived from a Roman papyrus prototype (see below n. 120), not from the wooden codex.

²⁷ Martial 1.2 (*brevibus membrana tabellis* ‹parchment in little tablets›, collection of his own epigrams), AD 84–86; cf. Juv. 7.23f., *croceae membrana tabellae impletur*; CIL X.6, *pugillares membranacei*, statues, and eighteen *tabellae pictae* given as a gift to the townspeople of Rhegium; and see below n. 31. The concepts of ‹literature› and ‹book› have shaped how scholars have thought about this technical development: for example, a wooden codex ‹... was not recognized ... as a proper book›, GAMBLE 1995, 49. If one relies on the concept of the ‹proper book› (βιβλίον and *liber*), then the development of the codex ‹book› could not commence until the codex ceased to be of wood and was used for ‹literature› (GAMBLE, *ibid.* 52. 65 – ‹a decisive step›; also GASCOU 2000, 289). Hence Martial was, for these scholars, the first ‹real book› in

mate progenitor of the codex was the wooden tablet,²⁸ and one at least thought that wooden tablets inspired Julius Caesar to invent the papyrus codex,²⁹ it is upon this parchment prototype used for Latin literature that many scholars have seized as the likely immediate exemplar for the Christian codex.³⁰ Indeed, because it was assumed that a format used for authors like Homer, Virgil, and Ovid³¹ could not be a low-prestige format, and because it was assumed that Christians saw their own writings as ‹literature›,³² and as significant and therefore high-prestige, the parchment codex seemed like an excellent exemplar to adopt and, in Rome or in Egypt, to transform into a papyrus codex: a high-prestige parchment ‹book› could and thus did serve as the prototype for a high-prestige papyrus ‹book›. There was, furthermore, one early surviving example of a Latin literary parchment codex from Egypt, a fragment of the *De bellis Macedonicis*,³³ as well as a reference to the selling of *μεμβράναι*, ‹parchments› (not ‹parchment notebooks› or ‹codices›),³⁴ among Roman citizens in second-

codex form. But if these are the criteria, Romans might have dated the development even later: jurists do not include codices among *libri* until sometime between Ulpian (D. 32.52.pr. 5) and Paul. Sent. 3.6.87 (with ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 30–34 and MAZAL 1999, 132f.).

²⁸ SANDERS 1938, 109f.; MCCOWN 1943, 23; ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 1; MAZAL 1999, 127; but wood plays little part in what subsequently interests all these authors. As ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 11 say at the head of a four-page chapter, ‹the writing-tablet need not long detain us›.

²⁹ CAVALLO 1992, 100f., arguing from Suet. Div. Iul. 56 (*primum videtur ad paginas et formam memorialis libelli convertisse*); he must assume that a *memorialis libellus* was ἡ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων δέλτος, but this is much debated, and indeed flatly denied by VAN HAELST 1989, 20.

³⁰ Parchment: ROBERTS 1954, 187, ‹the papyrus codex must have been an imitation of the parchment notebook›; VAN HAELST 1989, 18, who argues that the invention of the codex took place in Rome (he is followed in this by MILLARD 2000, 63–69); MAZAL 1999, 127; STANTON 2004, 84. STANTON has changed his mind (180f.) to the broader view that Christians and non-Christians were experimenting with a form that was used for both literary and non-literary texts.

³¹ Martial 14.184 (*in pugillaribus membranis ... multiplici ... pelle*, of Homer), 14.186 (*brevis ... membrana ... prima tabella*, of Virgil) and 14.192 (*in membranis ... multiplici tabella*, of Ovid). He might intend to imply the same in 14.188 (*membrana*, of Cicero) and 14.190 (*in membranis ... pellibus exiguis*, of Livy).

³² MAZAL 1999, 137f. (unliterary texts were developed into ‹literature› with the help of the codex: ‹Die junge Kirche hat ... in der Codexform ihr literarisches Selbstverständnis gefunden›).

³³ P.Oxy. 30 = P.Lit.Lond. 121 (c. AD 100; date, MALLON 1949, 1–8 = 1982, 209–212).

³⁴ ROBERTS 1954, 173–175 argued that *membrana* signified ‹parchment› and *membranae* ‹parchment notebooks›, but *membranae* is merely a plural noun signifying medium (parchment) associated with another noun that signifies the format: in Martial (above n. 31) *membranae* in all but two cases accompanies specific nouns (*tabellae*, *pugillares*), as it also does in 2Tim. 4:13 (βιβλία) and the Digest (D. 32.52.pr. [Ulpian], *volumina ... in membrana*; D. 1.3.21, *liber sextus membranarum* of Neratius); in Quint. Inst. Orat. 10.3.31f. it is justifiable to assume that he is referring to some form of codex from the context (see below n. 46), but not that the plural *membranae* is now understood to be a noun denoting a specific form: *membranarum* is contrasted with *ceris*, ‹waxes›, and the specific form of both is later made clear by *tabellae*. In all of ROBERTS's other examples the meaning ‹parchments› (no form specified) works fine; for dis-

century Egypt.³⁵ There were thus Latin parchment prototypes not only in existence but even to hand in Egypt, a physical link between Martial's references (strictly speaking, relevant to the city of Rome only) and the Christian papyrus-codex tradition.

On the other hand, a potential downside to the derivation of the Christian papyrus codex from this Roman parchment prototype was the apparent simultaneity of both forms in Egypt (rather than a clear pre-existence of the parchment codex there),³⁶ and the worry that the parchment codex was in that province a relatively rare thing – in addition to the above-mentioned fragment, only three other parchment codices (these with Greek text) survive, as well as one small fragment of a parchment codex with accounts written on it.³⁷ But what is most troubling is the fact that the parchment codex does not really seem to have caught on in Egypt, and that in general it was «a still-born experiment».³⁸ So this first potential avenue seems not implausible by its logic, but hanging in actuality by a single thread of possibility, one that seems to fray and break in the second century AD: it requires that one postulate that the parchment codex, having survived just long enough to act as an exemplar, then promptly went out of fashion, to return again in full force only in the fourth century.

cussion of τὰ μεμβράνα, see KOENEN 1974, 351 f. and KLOETERS 1957, 190–192 (*membrana* is a single piece of parchment, *membranae* is a «Menge»). The fact that it is a Latin loan-word into Greek might suggest, in 2Tim. 4:13, not a recognized particularity of form specific to a Roman context (as with *codex*), but a desire merely to say «parchment» *without* specifying a form, as διαφέροι, meaning «leather or parchment rolls», does: see ROBERTS 1954, 190. If βιβλία also already implies rolls and μεμβράνα means only «parchments», then the author of 2Tim. is trying to avoid saying «bring the book-rolls, especially the parchment rolls» and instead saying «bring the book-rolls, especially those of parchment».

³⁵ P.Petaeus 30 is a private letter in Greek in which Julius Placidus tells his father that he was offered six μεμβράνα but did not buy them; and the texts of below n. 37 could all be from Roman contexts, VAN HAELST 1989, 21–26.

³⁶ It is more likely that parchment μεμβράνα and papyrus codices were simultaneous developments, and «we should not suppose that the one developed out of the other», STANTON 2004, 178; «Christian and non-Christian scribes may have begun to experiment with the codex quite independently», 190. TURNER 1977, 32. 36–41. 65 indeed suggests that influence, if there was any, was *from* the papyrus codex *to* the parchment codex. VAN HAELST 1989 extends the logical implications of this argument by placing the earliest Christian papyrus codices late in the second century, and then mainstreaming their development into the overall, gradual adoption of the codex by Christians and non-Christians alike, making the «problem» of Christian adoption disappear.

³⁷ Three of seventeen non-Christian second-century *codices*, all with Greek texts of varying sorts, are on parchment (seventeen = eleven literary texts and six «professional» handbooks – grammatical, lexical, medical: GAMBLE 1995, 65; for the list, see TURNER 1977, 89 f.). Account-book fragment (unpublished): P.Berol. inv. 7458/59 (illustrated in ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, fig. 2), a fragment of a parchment codex for accounts, second- or third-century AD.

³⁸ ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 29; approved by HARRIS 1991, 71 and MAZAL 1999, 132; but disputed by McCORMICK 1985, 151, VAN HAELST 1989, 21, and STANTON 2004, 179, who consider the surviving examples more than adequate proof that the experiment was not still-born. Certainly the *miniature* parchment codices to which Martial specifically attests do not reappear until the (earliest) third and (mostly) fourth century AD, KRUGER 2002, 90.

An alternative derivation is that Christians instead were imitating the Roman form that was itself the parent of the parchment literary codex. These wood or wood-and-wax codices or *tabulae* were – it was thought – used for jottings, schoolwork, and (especially) accounts,³⁹ and would therefore have been common, available, and well-known in both Rome and Egypt.⁴⁰ They would also have been considered, by their contemporaries, of low prestige precisely because of these casual, informal uses. A low-prestige format like this could be chosen as the exemplar because Christians, as simple folk, were simply more familiar with writing in this medium, or because Christians were counter-cultural, deliberately choosing low in preference to high, or because Christian texts were intended to be pragmatic texts, intended to be used, read, and handled, to provide practical advice for daily living, and so on.⁴¹ This argument thus exploits the potentially awkward contradiction that obviously significant texts, obsessively copied and important to their communities, were enshrined and passed on in something thought to be like a spiral notebook, although this is a troubling contradiction. Moreover, the argument is also based on a flawed assumption – because the Roman (specifically Roman, not merely Roman-era) understandings and uses of *tabulae* and codices were not as carriers of informal jottings or as low-prestige items: quite the opposite.⁴² Yet the codex format nonetheless points to a specifically Roman prototype, and therefore to specifically Roman assumptions and preconceptions, rather than to the less marked Greek understandings and uses of wooden tablets.⁴³ The argument for wooden tablets as the prototype has in its favor the fact that

³⁹ E.g., Luke 1:63, Zacharias reaches for a *πινακίδιον*; SCHUBART 1921, 23–28. 121; SANDERS 1938, 98; McCOWN 1943, 23f.; ROBERTS 1954, 170f.; ALEXANDER 1998, 73f.; the generalizations about the uses of *tabulae* and codices are oft-repeated but not to my mind entirely accurate, especially within Roman culture (see below n. 42). Moreover, these generalizations have subsequently been used as markers of class – St. Mark's circle in Rome consisted of «traders, small business men, freedmen, or slaves» who would use «wooden tablets or parchment notebooks», ROBERTS 1954, 187 – as if Cicero did not!

⁴⁰ STANTON 2004, 165. 178–191 even postulated a parchment codex variant of these wooden tablets, despite the observation of ROBERTS 1954, 172f. that «if we can trust our evidence, it did not occur to the Greeks to replace wood with parchment ... in their tablets». Only two possible examples exist, the unpublished P.Berol. inv. 7358/59 (accounts, in Greek), and Galen's reference (12.483 [ΚΥΗΝ]) to ἐν πικτίδι διφθέρῃ: «in a folded parchment roll»? «Parchment folder» (ROBERTS 1954, 176)? «Parchment notebook» (ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 22)? For the actual survival of wooden tablets in Egypt, see below – nothing of the sort he suggests exists, and the Jewish evidence (above n. 13) is third century AD or later.

⁴¹ «... the earliest Christian books were essentially books for use, not, as Jewish Rolls of the Law sometimes were, almost cult objects», ROBERTS 1979, 15; GAMBLE 1995, 65f. 71.

⁴² MEYER 2004, 21–43; the Greek uses of δελτίον and πίναξ may have been broader, but no πίναξ was ever made of parchment or papyrus, see above n. 40 and HARAN 1996, 212–222.

⁴³ Thus κῶδιξ, reflecting its chiefly non-literary origins in Roman culture, remains in Greek a technical word with «governmental or legal connotation», ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 54 n. 1, depending on ATSALOS 1971, 143f., to which can be added John Chrysostom, In Diem Nat.

there were a substantial number of wooden tablets in first- and second-century Egypt, written on in both Greek and Latin: not just a slender thread of transmission with five exemplars, but a robust tradition, with fifty-nine examples falling into three major categories: schooltexts (12), accounts (15), and Roman legal documents (32).⁴⁴

This strength in wooden numbers, and the weakness in parchment numbers, suggests that wood is a provenance worth pursuing, and with it that a return to basics might be productive. The codex format was distinctive but, as P. PARSONS pointed out twenty years ago, on the existing theories, «Western and Eastern tributaries» of the codex, Roman concept and papyrus reality, «have no clear junction».⁴⁵ Yet Roman wood and Greek papyrus artifact can meet and interact – in Egypt. Egyptian Christians could have adapted a prototype existing in substantial numbers right in their own province; indeed, in Egypt there were no fewer than three possible prototypes, three types of existing wooden tablet – one of them clearly Roman. Which might have been the most likely exemplar? In what follows I analyze the three types of wooden tablets (listed in Appendices 1, 2, and 3) of the relevant wooden tablets dated from their earliest appearance to the end of the third century AD, emphasizing what I think are the most salient characteristics – what each type has in common, and what makes each type different from the other as a group. As will become clear, I find schooltablets – which also survive in the smallest number – the least likely potential exemplar, account-books more likely, and Roman legal documents, which survive in the greatest numbers, the most likely of all.

The schooltablets from Egypt (Appendix 1) share a number of important characteristics. They are all written in Greek (one, Greek and Coptic): there are no Latin schooltablets from Egypt, even from the late-antique period.⁴⁶ They are usually written horizontally, that is, the text runs parallel to the long side of the tablet, and the holes for hinging, usually a total of two, are drilled through this long side, not the short side (see figure 1).⁴⁷ Schooltablets are, on average, large (25.1 cm × 14.2 cm),⁴⁸

(PG 49:353), where οἱ κώδικες are what are found in Roman archives. The first specific reference to the format of a Christian book calls it a σωμάτιον (= *corpus*; Eus. VC 4.36f., a reference to gospel-books or Bibles).

⁴⁴ There are also two wooden documents that do not fit into any of these categories, an astrological tablet (NEUGEBAUER 1957 = T.Bodl.ms.Gr. class. f.7[p]), and a tablet apparently (re-?)used as the outside leaf of a letter (DEVIJVER et al. 1984/1985 = Leiden inv. F 1944/9.3). The numerous mummy-tags, although wooden, are very distant in form and not under consideration here.

⁴⁵ PARSONS 1987, 82.

⁴⁶ No Latin schooltablets: BRASHEAR – HOOGENDIJK 1990, 45 n. 1, although they consider this merely a fluke of survival; note that Quint. Inst. Orat. 10.3.31f. refers to «parchments» (*membranae*) to be used by those whose sight is weak, and the proximity of this reference to a discussion of waxed schooltablets suggests that the parchments might be in codex, not roll, form.

⁴⁷ The exceptions to this are the anomalous Homeric scholia (nos. 4–7) and one side of one wooden tablet from Tebtunis (no. 9), which are written parallel to the short sides (*transversa*)

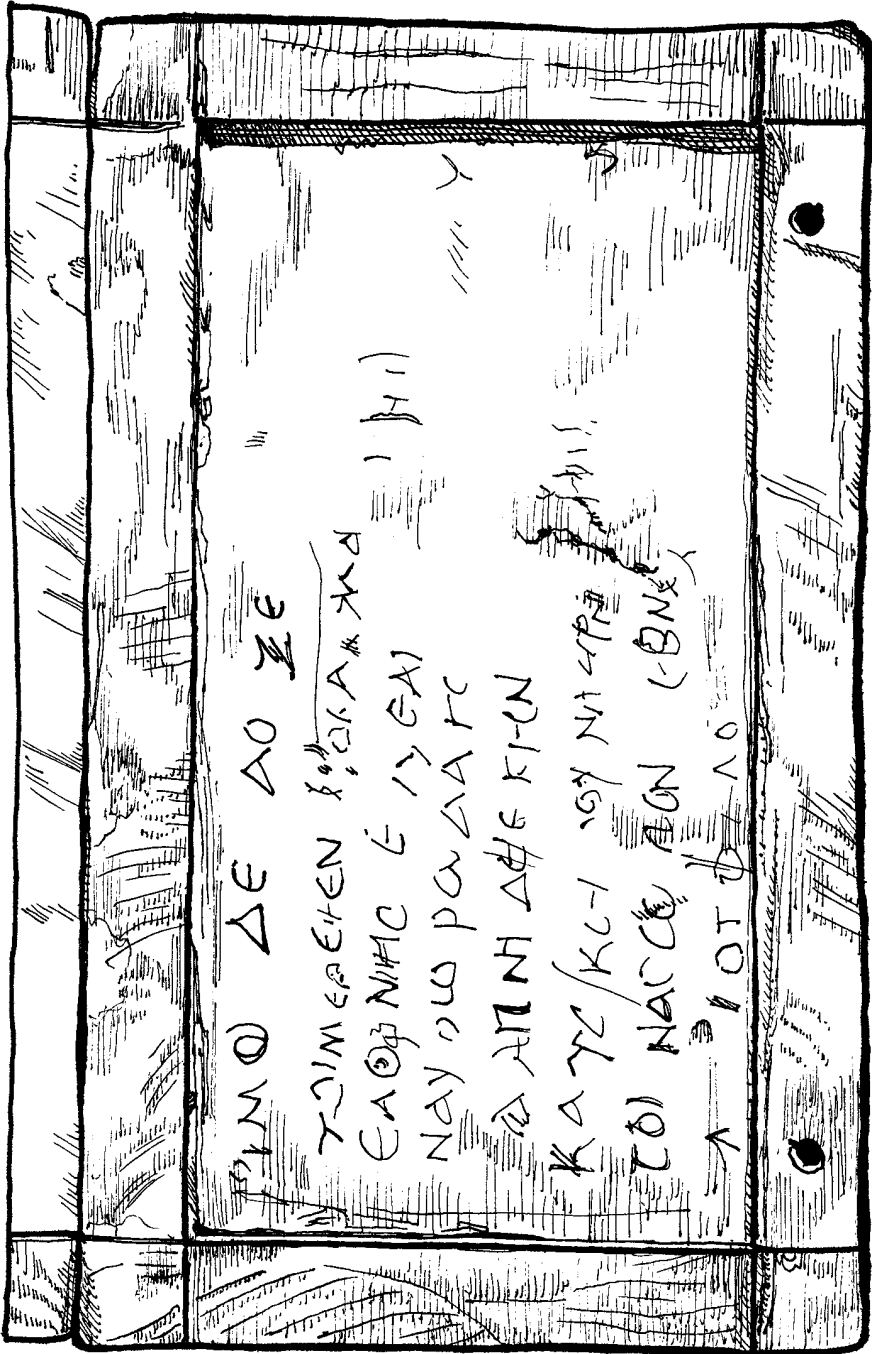


Fig. 1. Schooltablet: BKT 5.2.98 no. 6 (T. Berol. inv. AM 17651); drawn from photograph in Criboire 1996, 216 no. 182, fig. 19. Drawing by Seungjung Kim.

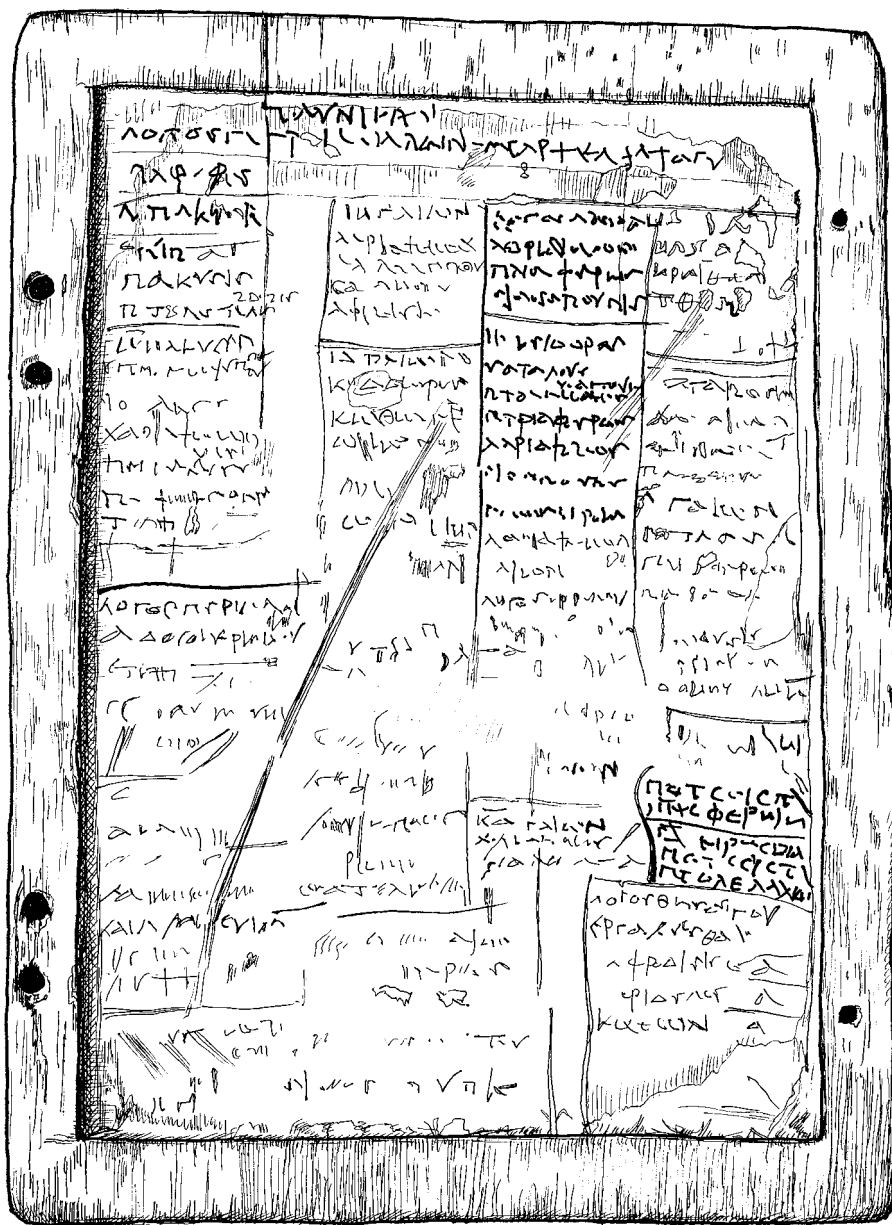


Fig. 2. Account-tablet: SB 7013 (A. E. R. Boak, *An Overseer's Daybook from the Fayoum*, *JHS* 41, 1921, 217–221); drawn from photographs (fig. 10–11) in Boak.

Drawing by Seungjung Kim.

and the proportions of breadth to height range from 1:1.1 to 3.1:1, with a mean of 2.1:1 ($n = 13$). This means that one is almost square, one is three times as wide as it is tall, and, on average, schooltablets from the first three centuries AD are twice as wide as they are tall. These physical characteristics all set schooltablets apart from what can be deduced (as will be seen) about early Christian codices. For this reason, as well as because of their surprisingly infrequent survival, I conclude that these tablets are least likely to have been the prototypes of Christian papyrus codices.⁴⁹ They simply do not physically resemble the papyrus codices thought to be modelled on them.

More likely as potential prototypes, but surrounded by considerably more uncertainty, are wooden tablets used for accounts (Appendix 2). Many of these are merely described rather than fully published, so this summary is subject to revision. The account-books that are published are written in Greek, but with *transversa* rather than horizontal writing: that is, their texts are written parallel to the short side of the tablet, not the long side, as the texts of schooltablets had been. The hinging is along the left edge (not the top/bottom edges), and always appears in the form of two pairs of two holes (see figure 2), as is true also of the one parchment codex of accounts (the unpublished P.Berol. 7358/59).⁵⁰ These tablets start small and become large over time, with a large lacuna of unpublished tablets in the middle of the series. Their proportions, breadth to height, run from 1:1.1 to 1:2.4, averaging 1:1.8 ($n = 7$), thus from almost square to rectangles more than twice as tall as they are wide, with an average of a little less than twice as tall as wide. Their *transversa* orientation and their proportions bring wooden account-books closer to the orientation and proportions of Christian codices, but the fit (of proportions and size) is still not as good as it might be – and as a

and double-hinged; see below n. 50. Appendix 1 no. 8 has two holes in the top edge as well as two holes in the bottom edge: one of the two in the top edge appears to be broken, so it is plausible that when this hole broke, the tablet was rotated 180 degrees, the holes were redrilled in the new bottom edge, and the tablet rewritten. Nos. 9, 11, and 13 have only one or more holes in the center of the long edge, which means that they were not hinged at all, but hung up, as was no. 19 (one hole in a knob at one end of the tablet); no. 18 had no hole at all. The hinging of these earlier schooltablets thus shows already the beginnings of the bifurcation of type that will become more apparent in late antiquity: hinged school books made of wood, and single-wooden-tablet examples (in the fourth century and after often whitened and written on in ink), with one hole for hanging up on a wall or no holes at all.

⁴⁸ See the statistics presented in Appendix 5.

⁴⁹ Contra, HORSLEY 1993, 81, who had suggested that schooltablets (or account-tablets) were the exemplar – «the only serious option» – because of the low level of education Christians would have had: they would have been «comfortable» with the codex form as a consequence.

⁵⁰ Nos. 2 and 4–7 (no. 6 presumably, since no description is given) in Appendix 1 (schooltablets) also have this double hinging; I suspect the re-use of account-tablets for school purposes. No. 2, which has traces of numerals on its exterior, is (therefore) almost certainly re-used; nos. 4–7, whose content is so unusual in wooden tablets and which may belong together, may well have been as well.

look at the next category will show. Account-books remain a possible,⁵¹ but not the best, choice.

The third possibility is Roman legal documents (Appendix 3). These, many of them professions or attestations of birth, are written in Latin, a handful with Greek additions. The texts on the interiors were written parallel to the long side (like most schooltablets), but these interiors were then closed and the closed tablet laced with string, over which the witnesses to the document then sealed. A second copy of the text was written on the exterior of the tablet, this time *transversa*, parallel to the short side of the tablet, and often running all the way out to the edges of the tablet (see figures 3–4). It is this exterior *transversa* presentation that outsiders would have seen – and for the most part Roman citizens as well, for the opening of all of these types of documents (except for wills, which were only opened once) is not attested, and would have been unwise: to do so would involve breaking the seals and so depriving the document of the validity that the sealers gave to it.⁵² Even when handled in court, such documents were not opened.⁵³ To the world, Roman legal documents written on tablets (and Roman military diplomas)⁵⁴ seemed to be written *transversa*. These documents – called diptychs, since in Egypt they never consisted of more than two wooden tablets – were hinged with only two holes. They are all small, almost all about the same size (c. 11 cm by c. 18 cm), and almost all, again, of virtually the same proportions: in breadth to height they run from 1:1.2 to 1:2, but seventeen of twenty are between 1:1.2 and 1:1.4, and as a group they average 1:1.33 (n = 20).⁵⁵ So to one looking they were square-ish diptychs oriented vertically, of small-to-medium size, with writing that ran all the way out to the edges. Moreover, this writing has two other noteworthy characteristics: the exterior texts at times use abbreviations for common words, abbreviations of the suspension (not contraction) variety (the first letter or letters of the word standing in for the word itself), and at times also use interpuncts and accent marks. Whether or not anyone, even its rightful possessor, could read the Latin in which it

⁵¹ And have been suggested, although not on the basis of a physical comparison: «[c]oming as they did from small commercial and industrial folk, they [Christians] would have been fully accustomed to the use of the wooden or parchment codex for business purposes», McCOWN 1941, 234f. But if so, why not create papyrus codices for accounts – which do not exist before the fourth century (ROBERTS 1949, 160)? All papyrus codices for accounts are fourth century and are seen as an aspect of the romanization of Egypt, GASCOU 1989, 71–101.

⁵² MEYER 2004, 162f.

⁵³ Apul. Apol. 89; MEYER 2004, 162 n. 122.

⁵⁴ Military diplomas differ from the wooden legal documents only in having hinging along the long edge that is no longer always present in the second century AD, or exists only as one hole; for good illustrations, see many of the diplomas in ROXAN – HOLDER 2003.

⁵⁵ The largest (no. 2) is also a different kind of legal document from the others (and unique on wood in Egypt): an attested copy of an edict of the emperor Domitian, combined with an attested statement by a veteran about the citizenship of three of his children, and it may be a triptych. For statistics see Appendix 5.

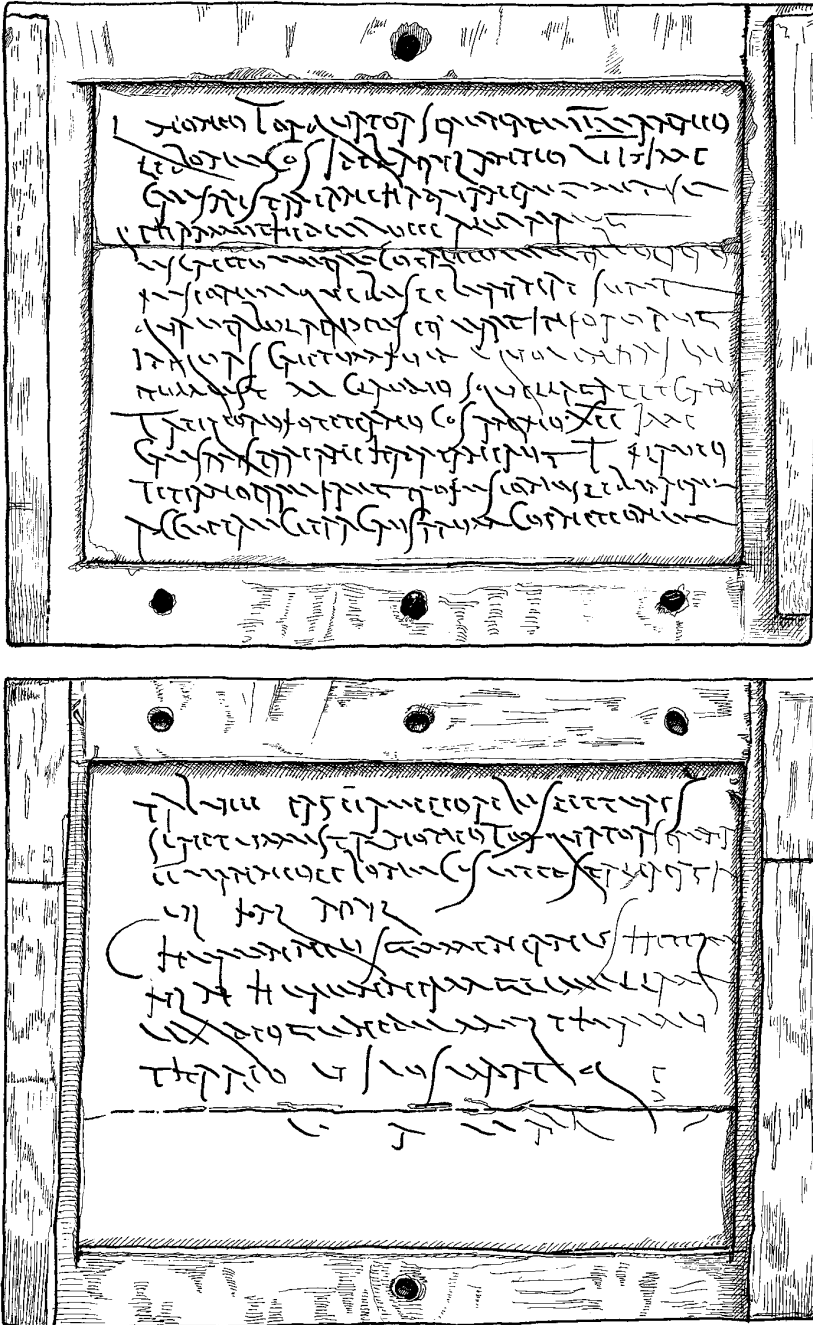


Fig. 3. Legal tablet: P.Mich. 166 (= F. W. Kelsey, *A Waxed Tablet of the Year 128 AD*, *TAPhA* 54 [1923] 187–195); drawn from photos (figs. I–II) of interior faces. Drawings by Seungjung Kim.

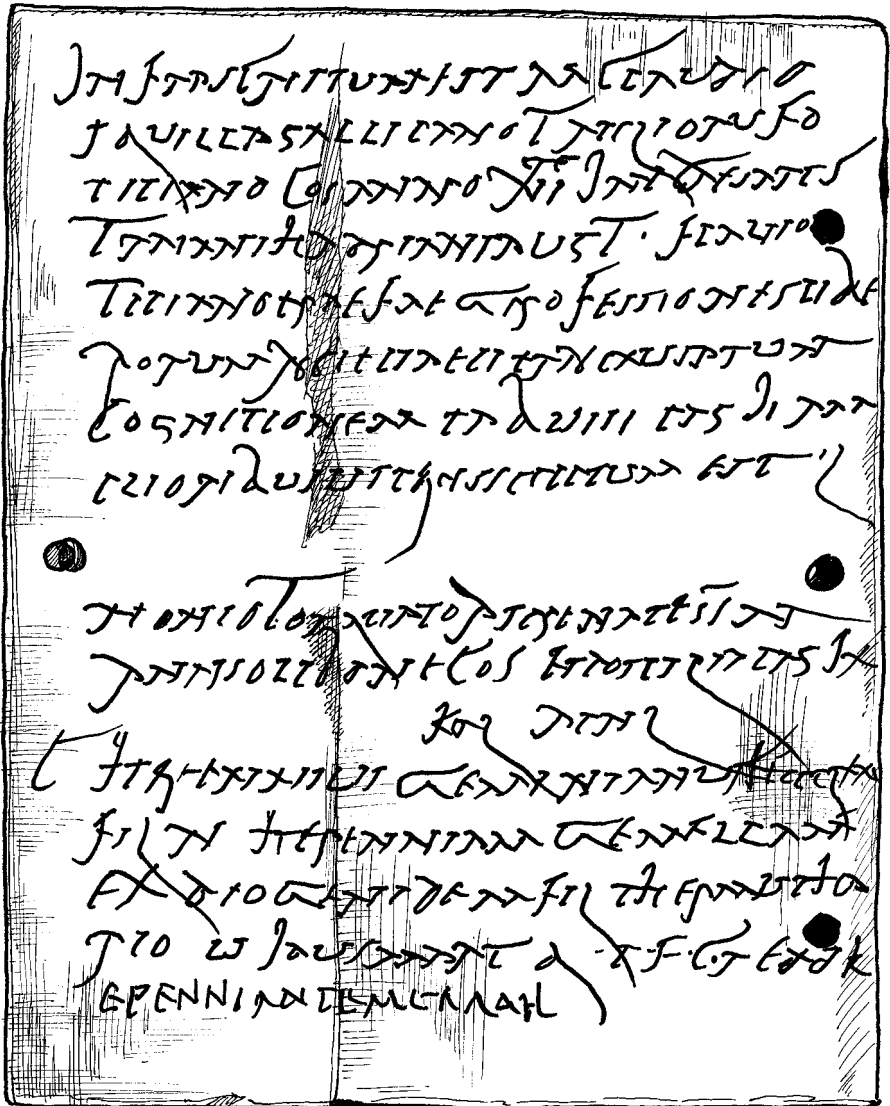


Fig. 4. Legal tablet: P.Mich. 166 (= F. W. Kelsey, *A Waxed Tablet of the Year 128 AD*, TAPhA 54 [1923] 187–195; drawn from photo (fig. IV) of exterior face.

Drawing by Seungjung Kim.

was written, an observer would know that this was a very different kind of document indeed: oddly put together, but also distinctly Roman and pertaining to Roman rights and privileges, and therefore belonging to a different category compared to the other wooden tablets one knew – the wooden schooltablet of the teacher,⁵⁶ or the wooden account-book of the estate owner or overseer. These were, in short, prestigious documents, carefully preserved by their rightful possessors and familiar by sight to others any place that Roman citizens or those granted Roman legal privileges lived.

Direction of the writing, hinging, size, proportions, abbreviations and interpuncts, and (possibly) valuation placed on a wooden tablet: all of these characteristics matter in identifying the closest potential prototype in Egypt for a papyrus codex. For in addition to surviving in the greatest numbers, Roman legal documents on tablets are also, in these physical characteristics, closest to the earliest Christian papyrus codices (Appendix 4a). Many of these papyri are only fragments; they are identified as codices from the fact that text is written on both recto and verso sides of the papyrus, and as Christian from the text involved (i.e., in most cases, New Testament texts).⁵⁷ They are all written in Greek, and more than two-thirds derive from the third century AD. By a necessarily speculative process, E. TURNER estimated the dimensions of twenty-six of these thirty-six codices. They are not very big, although initially somewhat bigger than Roman legal documents on *tabulae*.⁵⁸ From these extrapolated dimensions I derive the approximate proportions of codices: they run, breadth to height, from 1:1 to 1:2.6, with an average of 1:1.56, so from square to tall and narrow – but they become tall and narrow over time, since the second-century examples average 1:1.36, while those dated second/third-century average 1:1.66 and the third-century examples average 1:1.63 (see figure 5).⁵⁹ Moreover, TURNER thought that the earliest Christian papyrus codices were quite thin, because they had been each constructed of a single quire, that is, of (only) one stack of papyrus folded in half,⁶⁰ then hinged by driving a string or

⁵⁶ CRIBIORE 1996, 54f., wooden tablets mostly belonged to teachers, not students.

⁵⁷ In Appendix 4b I have listed OT fragments in codices separately from the «Christian» fragments, and in the text will argue only on the basis of the non-OT fragments.

⁵⁸ For a comparison of the sizes of all the types of wooden *tabulae* and the dimensions of codices, when known, see Appendix 5.

⁵⁹ I have gathered suggestions or extrapolations from editors and from TURNER. Note that these very tentatively proposed statistics modify TURNER's own conclusions: TURNER 1977, 24f. had suggested that the two earliest groups of codices had proportions of 1:2 and 1:1.5, but his method was to group together all codices of the same size, whether Christian or not and no matter their date; he then noted that his groups «eight» and «nine (aberrant)» had most of the earlier codices. For his general comments on proportions, see *ibid.* 5–7 (but his reservations mostly concern the use of proportions for dating, not for the purposes of comparison).

⁶⁰ TURNER 1977, 60f. 98f.; PORTER 2003, 173: of all the NT papyri two-thirds are single-quire (and most of these fragmentary), and only nine have any part of the text of more than one NT book. The only non-fragmentary second-century codex (Appendix 4a no. 6) is made up of multiple quires.

thread directly through the papyrus (with two holes or with two pairs of holes)⁶¹ at some distance from the fold – as tablets were hinged – rather than by being sewn through the folds, as developed later (see figure 6).⁶²

Thus, in size and (particularly) proportions (the raw data laid out for tablets and Christian codices in Appendix 5), these codices start closest to the very regularly sized and shaped legal *tabulae* (see figure 7). In length, they seem to have been closer to pamphlets than to our books, thus possibly closer as a physical object to a not-very-thick diptych than to a multi-leaved school-tablet or account-book. Their hinging was like that of any tablet, but perhaps, if the two-hole form were more prevalent, also more like legal diptychs than like the doubled-holed (i.e., two pairs of holes) hinges of account-books. What else? Christian codices are written *transversa*, that is, parallel to the shorter rather than the longer side; and, as TURNER noted, the «margins are small, the line usually long» – just like the exteriors in legal diptychs.⁶³ And, famously, Christian texts in codices have abbreviations, the so-called *nomina sacra*, which are taken as one of the identifiers that a text is of Christian origin. The origin of these abbreviations is much disputed, although the arguments for *some* Jewish inspiration is strong, for in Jewish texts the name of Yaweh is replaced by the *tetragrammaton*.⁶⁴ There are four basic *nomina sacra* in almost all Christian texts: θεός, κύριος, Χριστός, and Ἰησοῦς, plus a host of others that are abbreviated in an irregular fashion and to an irregular degree.⁶⁵ These are names but they are also titles, like the Roman title of consul

⁶¹ Specifically identified as single-quire are (Appendix 4a) nos. 1 (2nd c. AD), 10(?). 11 (2nd–3rd c.), 23. 24. 25 (3rd c.); as multiple-quire, nos. 6 (2nd c. AD), 9 (2nd–3rd c.). Specifically identified as hinged with two holes, no. 21, cf. VAN REGEMORTER 1955, 3f., commenting on P.Chester Beatty 1: «une page de l’Evangile de saint Luc permet de voir un trou laissé par la couture à 7 mm du pli de la feuille et de l’autre côté du pli on retrouve le même trou à la même place. Un second trou paraît exister 7 cm plus bas à 9 mm du pli». Yet a close look at the plates in KENYON 1933 (e.g., fig. 1) and KENYON 1933/1934 (e.g., fig. f.10.v-f.14.v) suggests that this codex was hinged with two pairs of holes, as KENYON himself noted (1933/1934, 1.vi–vii), although he could not explain it («[t]he object is not clear, unless in this case it was thought necessary to reinforce the binding with a second thread»); no. 6 (2nd c. AD) is also identified as hinged with two pairs of holes.

⁶² Earlier stitched at a distance from the fold, GAMBLE 1995, 66f.; the Nag Hammadi Coptic codices (from the fourth century AD and after) were bound with thongs through the fold, see ROBINSON 1984, 79. These codices combine wooden boards with leather tie-flaps, LAMACRAFT 1939/1940; the bindings are most accurately described by ROBINSON 1975. What the exterior binding of an early codex looked like is unknown. VAN REGEMORTER 1958, 25 thought this binding could be either wood or leather, and «both may be an evolution of the same technique, the diptych sewn with two threads».

⁶³ TURNER 1977, 37.

⁶⁴ GAMBLE 1995, 75–78, summarizing theories of Jewish or practical origins; arguing for a Levantine origin, ROBERTS 1979, 26–48 and MILLARD 1994, 221–226; noted as widespread but not used uniformly or consistently, HAINES-EITZEN 2000, 91–94.

⁶⁵ For the observations that the names are merely nouns and might not be very *sacra*, and that «the list grew over the course of time and did not remain static», see TUCKETT 2003, 453. 441.

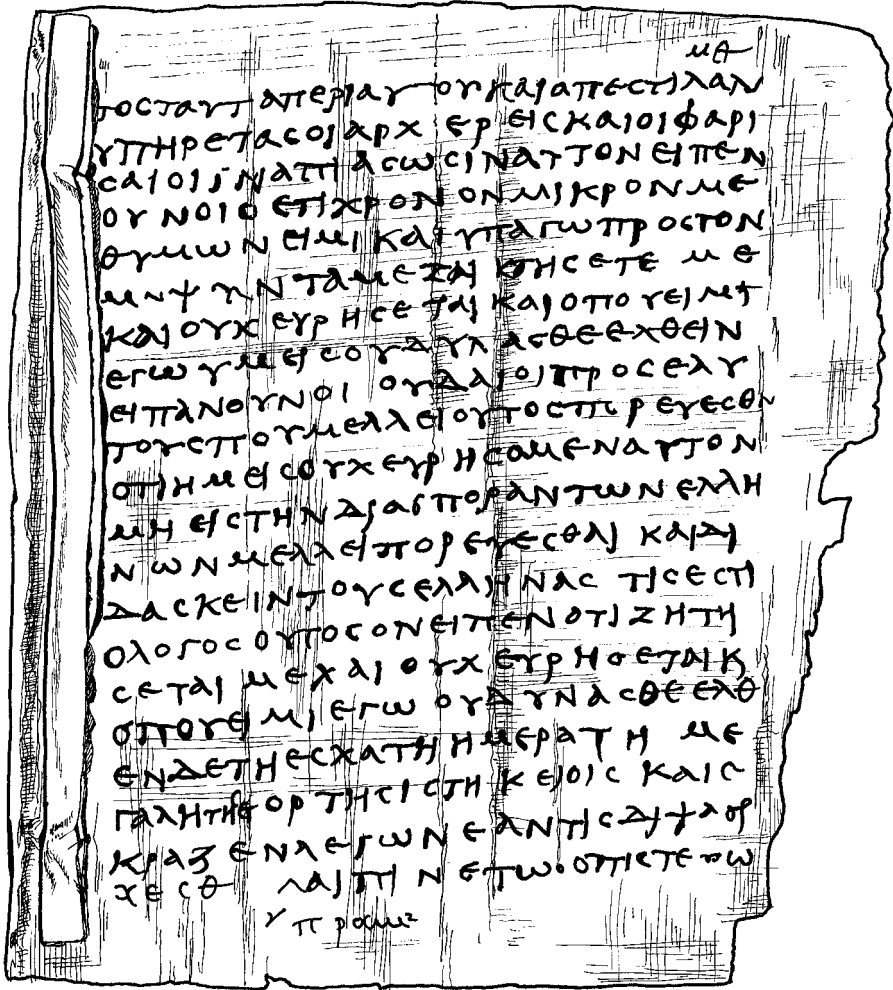


Fig. 5. Second-century Christian codex, showing proportions: P. Bodmer II (Gospel of John), drawn from photo (fig. 45, of VII.32–38), in: V. Martin – J. Barns, Papyrus Bodmer II, 21962. Drawing by SeungJung Kim.

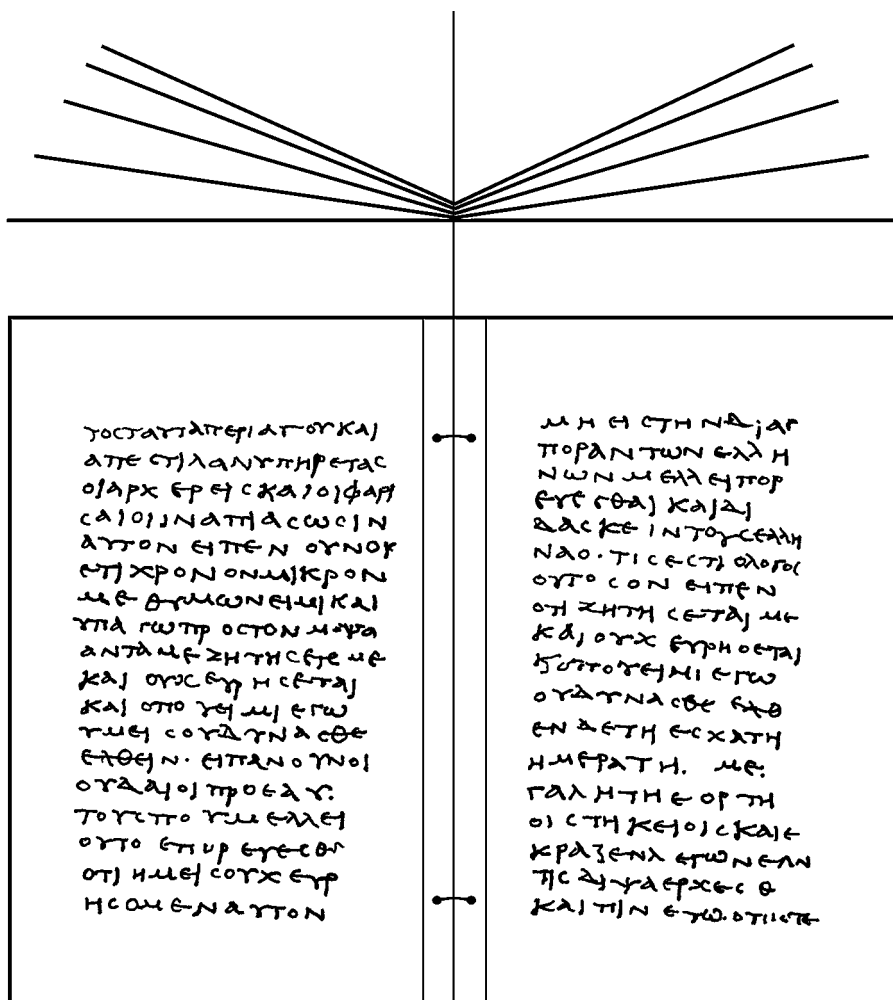


Fig. 6. Two different ways of hinging in papyrus codices. Drawing by SeungJung Kim.

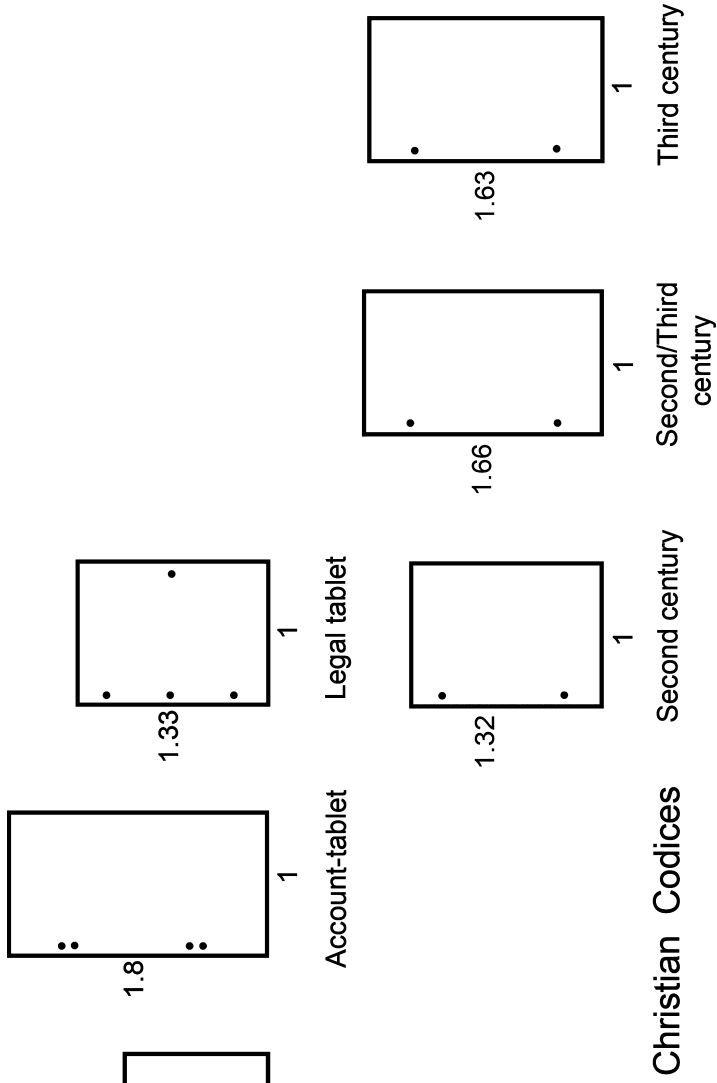


Fig. 7. Comparative proportions of codices. Drawing by SeungJung Kim.

that was always abbreviated in the dating formulae that were always part of a legal document and visible on its exterior.⁶⁶ Moreover, C. TUCKETT has recently noted that the earliest Christian *nomina sacra* were abbreviations made by taking the first two letters of a word – technically called a «suspension», like IE for Jesus – and only later developed into abbreviations made by contraction, that is, using the first and last letters, and sometimes throwing in some but not all intermediate letters for good measure, like IS for Jesus.⁶⁷ Some of the inspiration for the earlier type of abbreviation could well have come from Roman legal documents, with their suspended or even single-letter abbreviations, and their numbers with lines drawn superscript, as Christian *nomina sacra* were also marked off in sacred texts.

Finally, one last aspect: the exterior versions of the legal documents are at times punctuated. Christian texts, too, show a number of different types of punctuation, regularly classified in this context as «lexical aids»: helps for a reader who could then read his text correctly, which was particularly important if a text were being read aloud in a public setting and it was important that no mistakes be made.⁶⁸ I have argued elsewhere that texts on Roman *tabulae* were often read aloud and were to be read aloud correctly, which is why they too had a number of lexical aids:⁶⁹ so legal *tabulae* and Christian codices may share this aspect only because they had a shared function. But it is still an aspect of the treatment of the text that both had in common.

Thus, the earlier Christian codices and Roman legal documents on wooden *tabulae* have many characteristics in common: the direction of the visible writing; size and proportions; thickness; hinging; and (possibly) special features of the writing itself, specifically abbreviations and punctuation or «lexical aids». That characteristics such as these could have been noticed and considered important is suggested by a later writer who in a letter specifically asked for a ten-leaf «well-proportioned little tablet» (πινακίδιον εὖμετρον): so proportions (of a wooden codex) were something to which people paid attention, at least at the beginning of the fourth century AD and therefore possibly earlier.⁷⁰ Of the three potential wooden-tablet prototypes in Egypt, legal *tabulae* therefore seem the most likely model that a Christian codex could be imitat-

⁶⁶ As PARSONS 2007, 200 also noted, abbreviation was characteristic of «pagan documents» but not «pagan books».

⁶⁷ TUCKETT 2003, 445: contractions may have replaced suspensions to make endings clearer.

⁶⁸ Punctuation and reading aids prevalent in Christian texts: Appendix 4a nos. 3 (2nd c.), 8. 9. 10. 11 (2nd–3rd c.), 15–26 (3rd c.); in general, see ROBERTS 1979, 21f.; TUCKETT 2003, 446–449. 455–457 argues that the change in the writing of *nomina sacra* occurred to assist with reading. Double-columniation (Appendix 4a no. 9) is also thought to help in reading, STANTON 2004, 73; on reading in early Christian services, see GAMBLE 1995, 211–231.

⁶⁹ On reading aloud Roman *tabulae*, see MEYER 2004, 73–90; for reading aloud in Christian communities, see GAMBLE 2004, 32f.

⁷⁰ P.Kellis 63.17–21, discussed in WHITEHORNE 1994, 279. The πινακίδιον desired is also described as ἀσπίον, «of city quality», which WHITEHORNE suggests might refer to «a dimension of which modern bibliophiles are not so conscious, i.e. the thickness of the book».

ing. The parchment codex in Rome, used for «literature», and the papyrus codex in Egypt, used for Christian texts, are thus most plausibly seen as parallel derivations from a common prototype known to exist in both places, not as sequential derivations imperfectly motivated and on a very tight schedule. In Egypt's Christian context the model was not imitated with precision forever, for Christian codices could and did change, becoming larger, taller, and more frequently multi-quire; the writing on them also changed its style of abbreviation and became larger, easier to read, and laid out with wider margins.⁷¹ Pagination and tables of contents were added as well,⁷² and eventually, in the fourth century, parchment started to replace papyrus as the medium of choice.⁷³ In short, Christian codices⁷⁴ may have begun as imitations of one particular model, but over time developed in directions that reflected the uses and purposes to which they were put – as could well have been expected.

Egyptian Christians and Authoritative Texts

Yet why would Christians have chosen these particular *tabulae* as prototypes? The argument itself is rather *transversum*, against the grain, but explanations are possible – explanations that draw on and extend what little is known or hypothesized about early Christian attitudes in Egypt towards their own traditions, the role they imagined for texts in those traditions, and their sensitivity towards the implications of medium and format. The argument here is that second-century Egyptian Christians, when they looked to commit their traditions to writing, were actively looking for a prestigious and authoritative form that could preserve and convey authoritative versions of sayings and stories of the authoritative master, Jesus. They found it in the Roman wooden legal diptych, which was neither the papyrus scroll (nor parchment codex) of

⁷¹ TURNER 1977, 84–87, noting fewer lines per page, fewer words per line, especially in (my Appendix 4a) nos. 6 (slightly before AD 200). 10 (c. AD 200).

⁷² See (Appendix 4a) nos. 16. 23. 24 (3rd c.), with TURNER 1977, 75, who also notes the addition of tables of contents.

⁷³ TURNER 1977, 40.

⁷⁴ OT texts in codices (Appendix 4b) have traditionally been included in «rise of the codex» statistics (as above n. 2). This created a logical problem, for it was not clear that some «Christian» codices were not actually of Jewish origin or, for that matter, some «Jewish» rolls actually Christian. Yet if the proportions of OT texts in codices are added to those of the non-OT fragments, there is virtually no change in the resulting numbers (the average is 1:1.6; second-century examples still average 1:1.36, second/third 1:1.52, third 1:1.7). Moreover, these OT texts show many of the same characteristics and trends described for the non-OT fragments: single-quire, (Appendix 4b) nos. 3(?). 4(?). 7. 12. 21. 22; punctuation and reading aids, nos. 1 (2nd c.), 2. 3 (2nd–3rd c.), 9. 12. 13. 14. 16. 17. 21. 22. 24 (3rd c.); double-columniation nos. 1. 4; fewer lines and words per page, no. 12; pagination, nos. 3. 4. 12. 22. Although these OT fragments were necessarily excluded from the analysis given here, these parallels can be seen as helping to reinforce the assumption that these codices were of Christian rather than Jewish origin.

Greek and Roman literature, nor the leather roll of Jewish law,⁷⁵ and made it their own first by using papyrus, then by slowly changing it according to their own needs and desires.

There is no direct evidence that Christians were looking, or acting, in these ways, only indirect suggestions that this may have been the case. Roman legal *tabulae* were openly valued – carefully preserved – by some of the most powerful individuals and families in the towns Egyptian Christians lived in; this would have made these tablets a known type, and prestigious objects. To adapt such *tabulae* into the medium of papyrus, the entire question of cost and the availability of wood aside, was at least a way of imitating without counterfeiting, of borrowing prestige without unjustifiably claiming it. Moreover, there may have been other, more subtle incentives to adopt and adapt these tablets in particular. I have argued elsewhere that one of the uses or associations of Roman *tabulae* in the Roman world was with authoritative acts and texts – acts and texts meant to be seen as final and complete.⁷⁶ They were also signally important in dictation, where an author or a speaker would entrust to a slave using wax tablets words he later wanted to be able to recover exactly.⁷⁷ Roman *tabulae* could convey this kind of message. At very least, however, they were seen as prestigious, different, and valuable; accurate guarantors of privileges and actions; and peculiarly associated with Roman citizens.

What Roman legal *tabulae* conveyed would have been a kind of general authoritativeness for which Egyptian Christians might well have been looking. One way of describing the situation in which Egyptian Christians of the early second century found themselves is that they wanted to preserve the sayings of, and stories about, the Master who defined their beliefs, their ethical system, and their religion, and since that Master's earthly existence was now some generations removed from them, memory and oral tradition alone would no longer do.⁷⁸ This of course is part of the reason for

⁷⁵ PARSONS 2007, 200 suggests that Christians chose the codex because it was neither scroll nor roll; I suggest more positive reasons in addition to this one motivating their choice.

⁷⁶ MEYER 2004, 30–36 for (especially) the transferring from papyrus into *tabulae*, esp. priestly records or account-books, e.g., Cic. Q. Rosc. 6–8; also Cic. ad fam. 9.26.1. Cicero copies a letter into his *codicilli*, *exemplum in codicillis exaravi*; prayers and laws, 74–77. 97–101. WIEACKER 1960, 95f. finds this kind of authoritativeness a motivation for the rewriting of legal texts into codices c. AD 300.

⁷⁷ Use in verbatim recording of accurate utterances or court cases: poet as interviewer, Ovid Fasti (e.g., 1.93 *tabellis*, and exact words are important to him, 6.656); Pliny the Elder, Pliny Ep. 3.5, dictation into *pugillares* of selections he intends to incorporate verbatim into his own work; desire to preserve a *bellam fabellam* with *pugillares et stilum* exactly, Apul. Met. 6.25; see DORANDI 1991, 11–33; for stenographers and wax tablets, see (e.g.) the Collatio Carth. 2.32. 35. 43f. 53 (AD 411).

⁷⁸ That authority came to be located in texts in the second century is argued by (e.g.) McDONALD 1995, 137–169 and HAINES-EITZEN 2000, 124. The interest of Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis at the beginning of the second century AD, in «the living and abiding voice»

written Gospels in the first place. Moreover, early Egyptian Christianity may have been particularly «centered on the life of Jesus», as A. F. J. KLIJN has put it.⁷⁹ These sayings and stories were themselves inspiring, enjoyable, and to varying or competing degrees crucial – authoritative – to what those who called themselves Christians believed. When the need was felt for them to be written down, these Christians may have chosen a form with appropriately serious overtones, but one also well suited to the peculiar contents of the faith and peculiar needs of the moment. The surviving early Christian texts from Egypt themselves seem to reflect this serious interest in preserving authoritative versions of Jesus, since the two Gospels that survive in the greatest number (and are also the source of the greatest numbers of surviving quotations and allusions) are those of John and Matthew – that is, the gospels written by the two men who actually were apostles, not just associates or later followers.⁸⁰ Indeed, Egyptian Christians also recopied Old Testament texts into codices – an aggressive gesture towards their Jewish past, to be sure, but also possibly part of an ongoing debate with Jews about what was an authoritative text in that part of the mental world where Jew and Christian overlapped, since Christians copied the Septuagint text, from which Jews were distancing themselves at this time, and also copied and cited (what Jews decided were) apocryphal books.⁸¹ So Christians in Egypt may well have been sensitive to the concept of more authoritative versions of the life and sayings of the beloved founder, and assertive about claiming parts of the Judaic tradition as authoritative in their own world – and therefore may have been looking for a format that conveyed and embodied authoritativeness, in addition to being prestigious.

That Egyptian Christians were sensitive to issues of authority is easier to postulate in observing the uses to which they might have been putting the codex. It is fairly well established by now that Christian texts in Egypt circulated through private scribal networks – an initial point of entry might have been Alexandria, but from there texts

(Eus. HE 3.39.15–16), once thought to have retarded a move to written materials, is now interpreted as merely a statement that he preferred first-hand information, see GAMBLE 2002, 278f.

⁷⁹ Also, «[t]his holds both for his «words» and his deeds ... It appears that a great number of stories and «words» of Jesus were known in Egypt, both canonical and apocryphal», KLIJN 1986, 167. Other characterizations of early Egyptian Christianity, of which we know very little, range from declaring it Gnostic (see BAUER 1996, 44–60) or noting that it embraced what were later deemed both canonical and non-canonical works and was therefore relatively «undifferentiated», GRIGGS 1990, 32–34. 70.

⁸⁰ LLEWELYN 1994, 246. 257; cf. STANTON 2004, 204: i.e., these are the more authoritative versions and seen as such.

⁸¹ OT texts in codices are assumed to be of Christian origin, see BRUCE 1988, 55–67; RESNICK 1992, 4–7; and perhaps confirmed by above n. 74. A close reading of Luke 4:17 suggests that ἀναπτύξας τὸ βιβλίον ... πτύξας τὸ βιβλίον, which properly translated means «unfolding the book ... folding up the book» (here used of a text of Isaiah), is a «development of a branch in the textual tradition [that was] an early reflection of the adoption of the codex», i.e. the recopying of Jewish scripture into codices was *then* reflected in the textual tradition of Luke, «rewriting history», so to speak: BAGNALL 2000, 588.

were handed on, recopied, and then handed further down the line, with a speed that now seems quite exceptional, and that argues for early Christian readers in Egypt being in surprisingly close touch with each other.⁸² Most non-Christian literature probably circulated the same way, with the additional excitement of occasional bookshops and itinerant booksellers.⁸³ What cannot be seen is any trace of a single person, scriptorium, Church, or the like imposing (or able to impose) any kind of uniformity on the textual traditions:⁸⁴ any discipline or conformity was imposed by the individual scribe upon himself, not by outside agency.⁸⁵ So indeed textual variations are numerous and luxuriant – most major textual variants in the New Testament books entered into the textual tradition before the year 200.⁸⁶ What this must mean is not that Jesus's sayings were subject to amendment at whim, or – conversely – considered <untouchable> or <sacred> in some immovably fixed sense, but rather that these texts were spreading rapidly at a significant time in their history, when they were new enough still to be a little malleable and adjustable, but with a significant enough role among their readers to make reshaping and adjustments worthwhile.⁸⁷ For although some textual variants can be identified as simple copying mistakes, others can be identified as textual improvements – corruptions of Scripture with a purpose in mind, so to speak.⁸⁸ In other words, a Christian would know that these texts were important and carried great weight – and therefore it was also important that they said what they ought to say. And so positions large in their implications within various Christological controversies were staked out with small emendations. Theological arguments at-

⁸² Networks, as in (at Rome) the Shepherd of Hermas (Vis. 2.4.3 [WHITTAKER]), «You shall write then two little books [βιβλίαρίδια] and you shall send one to Clement and one to Grapte. Clement shall then send them to the cities overseas ...», and see also HAINES-EITZEN 2000, 77–104; on the speed of adoption, STANTON 2004, 206.

⁸³ On the circulation of non-Christian books, see GAMBLE 1995, 93–143 and ALEXANDER 1998, 87–105.

⁸⁴ For no one dominating locus requiring or imposing conformity, see HAINES-EITZEN 2000, 91–96, contra HORSLEY 1993, 73–76 and TROBISCH 1996 (with no direct evidence).

⁸⁵ This means also that a variety of hands ranging from the documentary to the near-bookhand should be expected in Christian texts, with no conclusions about the nature of Christian documents to be drawn from the quality of the hand. The bookhand/documentary distinction derives from the training of the Christian scribe, so the disagreements over the quality of the hands (see ROBERTS 1970, 62 and 1979, 14–23; GAMBLE 1995, 71; STANTON 2004, 104, 192–206) is, contrary to what these scholars thought, immaterial to the nature of the document (e.g., <workaday> vs. <literature>).

⁸⁶ GAMBLE 1995, 74, and see also 123–127 for a discussion of how Christians «both invested authority in texts and revised texts with a view to their value in theological argument» (126); there was far greater textual variation in the texts deemed at some point non-canonical like the Acta Pauli or the Shepherd of Hermas, ROBERTS 1970, 64.

⁸⁷ HENGEL 2004, 15, and similarly ALAND 2004.

⁸⁸ For an example of deliberately changing while copying, Eus. HE 5.28 (Asklepiodotus and Theodotus, c. AD 198–217); see EHRMAN 1993, *passim* on intentional <corruptions> and 27 on accidental changes; and HAINES-EITZEN 2000, 105–124.

tempting to be authoritative were made through the competitive emending of texts that travelled in codices – a marked, authoritative form that added its own endorsement to the text it enclosed. Authoritativeness was both intended and assumed, through emendation and codex. The codex form should have ended emendation, but for a time emended texts in codices competed with each other, and this competition virtually guaranteed that the codex form and its implicit assurances would not, indeed could not, be abandoned by any scribe.

Another Christian controversy over authority came virtually simultaneously: the controversy over which books of the New Testament should be considered canonical and, more specifically in the second century, which gospels were to be considered canonical and which were not. There was intense competition, for gospels were «breeding like rabbits»: at least thirteen of them in the second century.⁸⁹ Here too the special qualities of the codex form may have been brought into play. T. C. SKEAT suggested in 1994 that the *original* choice of the codex was *motivated* by the desire to get four gospels (but no more) into one physical object – together, they would have been a collection of texts too long for a scroll.⁹⁰ This cannot be quite right because the timing is off: one of our earliest surviving codices is of an apocryphal gospel (Appendix 4a no. 2), and our earliest four-gospel codex (no. 23) is from the third century. But the debate over how many gospels there should be, which started around the year AD 150, might have helped to create the multi-quire codex,⁹¹ to which page numbers and tables of contents are added so readers can know what there should be, and that there was to be no more. Since the dating of all these phenomena is fairly fluid and the logic – despite a documented attempt to make an unacceptable text into an accepted one by includ-

⁸⁹ PETERSEN 2004, 52.

⁹⁰ SKEAT 1994, 263–268 and 1997, 1–34, both = SKEAT, in: ELLIOTT 2004, 79–87. 158–192. His way of approaching the dating problem is to argue that the document that appears as (my) Appendix 4a no. 10 should be regarded as the second half of a four-gospel codex; that the fragments of Appendix 4a no. 9 do indeed all belong together and derive from a four-gospel codex; and that all of these must also have had second-century predecessors. He is followed by STANTON 2004, 86. 106. 167: «The four-gospel codex strongly encouraged acceptance of the fourfold Gospel, and vice-versa: both are likely to have taken place for the first time shortly before the middle of the second century» since the existing four-gospel codices do not look «experimental» and therefore must have had predecessors; «codex and canon go hand in hand», «are inter-related». A similar view is expressed by ELLIOTT 1966, 107. 111.

⁹¹ See STANTON in the preceding note, although for discussion of this early date, see GAMBLE 2002, 277 f.; as KENYON 1933, 13 summarizes, «[w]hen ... Irenaeus at the end of the second century writes of the four Gospels as the divinely provided evidence of Christianity, and the number four as almost axiomatic [Haer. 3.11.8–9], it is now possible to believe that he may have been accustomed to the sight of volumes in which all four were contained». There were also powerful pragmatic reasons to transform longer single-quire codices into multiple-quire codices, since the single-quire codex would not close easily and the interior quires had to be trimmed substantially if the edges of all the quires were to conform, see IBSCHER 1937, 12 and TURNER 1977, 57 f.

ing it in a codex of Cyprian's letters⁹² – a little dubious, this can only at best be a suggestion for another way in which a Christian argument about authority might have been fought with the help of the codex.

So, three possible ways in which Egyptian Christians might have associated authority and the codex, the first two stronger than the third: through the necessities and inclinations that may have lain behind its adoption, that is, that they were looking for a prestigious and generally authoritative form to begin with; through the ways in which adjustments to the depiction of the authoritative figure of Christ and the transmission of the words of Christ were made in its texts; and through the way it could be imagined, or might have been used, to police the borders of a group of canonical texts. All this argues for, or indeed necessitates, a certain real sensitivity on the part of Egyptian Christians to what a format and a medium might signify. Is there any evidence of such sensitivity? Some, although later in time.⁹³ M. J. KRUGER noticed that there was a correlation between medium and type of text in the tinier Christian documents of the fourth century, and as a consequence he could distinguish between the (mostly papyrus) Christian amulets and the (mostly parchment) miniature codices: both types are small, but the amulets have single, or several, lines of canonical Scripture, while the so-called miniature codices have mostly apocryphal texts – now in the process of being excluded from the canon – and may well have been used in private reading.⁹⁴ An entire world of understanding and practice is implied here, one in which producers and users knew which texts went on what type of medium to be used for what sort of purpose, just the kind of careful observation it has been here suggested earlier Christians were capable of as well. Another example, also from late antiquity, is the phenomenon of the great parchment Bible or gospel-book, which first appears in this epoch. Parchment in these centuries was seen as a worthy and prestigious medium, and – in this new world in which Christianity was an openly tolerated religion honored with imperial patronage – was dignified not least by the emperor Constantine's choice of it for the fifty great volumes (σωμάτια) he commissioned.⁹⁵ The hefty and

⁹² The attempt to make a 'heretical' text accepted (Rufinus PG 17:628C. 692A; discussed ROBERTS 1954, 200) also shows that pagination and a table of contents could help to thwart this. In one case, however, the pagination is in a different hand, which «suggests ... [that it] originated in book consultation rather than in book production», MCCORMICK 1981, 334.

⁹³ The distribution of other Christian 'literature' (homiletic and liturgical texts in particular) into more rolls than codices also suggests some awareness of the implications of form: see the statistics in MAZAL 1999, 136f. («die Rollen fanden sich ... in jenen schriftstellerischen Genera, wo sie in Affinität zur nichtchristlichen Literatur am ehesten zu erwarten waren»).

⁹⁴ See Appendix 4a no. 14, a text of Tobit on parchment, and the only codex that is perfectly square; KRUGER 2002, 81–94 notes observable differences between amulets and miniature codices, and see esp. 91, «... it seems possible that early Christians viewed amulets and miniature codices as distinct literary forms requiring different materials»; and miniatures (mostly parchment, preponderance apocryphal) «were clearly produced for private reading», GAMBLE 1995, 235.

⁹⁵ Parchment editions of scripture were also copiously decorated. Toleration gave Christianity «access to de luxe book production» and extensive illustration, ROBINSON 2004, 87, eventually

sudden employment of parchment after AD 312 and its valorization as a medium of which a text had to be worthy⁹⁶ are both new, and again attest a sensitivity to the implications (already in existence or newly created) of medium, this time for a medium that previously was inappropriate or could not be afforded.⁹⁷

The argument so far has been that Greek-writing Christians adopted and adapted a Roman form that they could see and appreciate, but did not know well. Specifically, they adopted a Roman, Latin, legal-documentary form for their most significant and authoritative religious texts: they crossed a barrier of form and medium to take away something and make it the basis of something new. Were they transgressing the boundaries of genre as well? At one level, of course they were: a legal document is not the same as a collection of sayings and stories (or of letters, exhortations, and apocalypses, for that matter). But the genre of the gospels in particular has always been a little uncertain, and modern scholars' offhand way of referring to Christian texts as Christian literature may have inadvertently classified these texts into a genre, and created expectations of a sort, that their second- and third-century scribes did not fully intend. For example, an all-encompassing narrative that reconciled all the discrepancies of (at least) four different versions of the life of Jesus had been a viable option in the second century, but was rejected, so perhaps a magisterial Thucydides-like history was not how second-century Christians saw the gospels.⁹⁸ Justin Martyr called the gospel stories τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα, «memoirs»;⁹⁹ some modern scholars have argued forcefully that the gospels would be read like an ancient life, of the sort that a

even purple parchment with gold letters, see Jer. Epp. 22.32 and 107.12, Pref. to Job (*PL* 28:1142), and BOOKER 1997, 458–467 (at 467–476 he argues that gospels represented the earthly presence of Christ, and purple and gold emphasized his royalty). Eus. VC 4.36f., Constantine commissions πεντήκοντα σωματία ἐν διφθέραις «fifty volumes in parchment rolls» or «fifty volumes/codices with ornamental leather bindings»; these are often assumed to be complete bibles (e.g., SKEAT 1999, 583–625 = SKEAT, in: ELLIOTT 2004, 193–235), but see now ROBBINS 1989, who argues that they are gospel books.

⁹⁶ For parchment as a higher-prestige material, see TURNER 1980, 16, citing Basil Ep. 231 (vellum – made from calf's skin – superior to a papyrus roll) and the Epigrammata Bobiensia (c. AD 400), fair copies should be *pergamensis digna paginis*, «worthy of pages of parchment». See also John Chrysostom Hom. Ioann. 32.3 (PG 59:187), parchment (οἱ ὑμένοι) can be very fine. ZELZER 1999, 419–423 summarizes what we know of the transition from papyrus to parchment codices, and tentatively suggests (423) the glory of parchment as motivating the transition.

⁹⁷ Although the expense of parchment should not be overestimated: in Martial's epigrams the miniature parchment codices are to be gifts for poor men, see LEARY 1996, 19–21, 247–257.

⁹⁸ The possibility of replacement by a gospel harmony, Tatian's Diatessaron, c. AD 170, existed; GAMBLE 2004, 37 notes that canonicity was decided not least by use: the canon was «the church's retrospective recognition of its own reading habits».

⁹⁹ Justin Apol. 1.66.3 and 67.3; Tertullian De ieiunio 10.3 called the gospels *commentarii*, the Latin equivalent of ὑπομνήματα; this implies that they lacked the final stage of literary reworking, see MEYER 2004, 32f.

Suetonius or a Plutarch might write, with some adjustments.¹⁰⁰ The point is that Christians themselves do not seem to have been entirely sure what the gospels were. And perhaps it is therefore significant that in the second and third centuries some toyed with the idea of gospels as *law*, taking their cue from Paul's statement in Galatians 6:2 of «the law of Christ» and elaborating from this the idea of Jesus as lawgiver or as the law of God, and the idea that the Christian texts they carried around with them were the law of God.¹⁰¹ This is not the strongest strand of self-reflection in the early Christian tradition, but grows stronger over time¹⁰² and is evocative because it may indicate not a motive for why the codex format was adopted in the first place, but a subsequent attempt to reconcile the genre of the format borrowed and the genre of what was written in that format: that Christians were aware of boundaries crossed and adaptations undertaken, and were now experimenting with making the categories conform.

The ideas of fluidity, of varying stances towards the past, and of boundaries established and crossed over time are all signal components of JUDITH LIEU's recent study of Christian identity – a study that attempts to dissolve essentialist notions of Christian identity in the first two centuries, and argues that *Christian identity* is made and remade through texts. This view corresponds well with the world of (varying) *Christian* thought and practice I have just described: one in which every text is important and every text makes claims, in which the words canonical and non-canonical as of yet

¹⁰⁰ BURRIDGE 2004; adapting a well established form, FREYNE 2004, 11; and see the summaries in GAMBLE 1995, 36–39 and ELLIS 1999, 5f. (less convinced that a genre for the gospels has been identified).

¹⁰¹ E.g., The Shepherd of Hermas Sim. 5.6. 8.3 (WHITTAKER); Kerygma Petri (in Clem. Strom. 1.29.182, text in ELLIOTT 1993, 21); Justin Dial. 11.2. 11.4. 12.2. 14.3; Epist. Barn. 2.6. The son of God is *the lawgiver* or is *the law of God*, and that law is his teachings, his sayings, and his life, see STANTON 2004, 110–123; Acta Saturnini 4, «I care for nothing but the law of God, which I have learnt ... There is nothing in life other than this Law», and cf. 18, «to alter one word [of this Law] ... must be accounted the greatest sacrilege». Lucian (de mort. pers. 11) mocked Peregrinus for explicating and composing books for Christians, and for the consequence that «they revered him as a god, [and] made use of him as a law-giver» – again, a perceived connection between Christian books and law-giving. The third-century poet Commodian refers to Scripture as *codex legis*, Carmen Apologeticum 11; for text, date, and origin, see SALVATORE 1977, 44. 5–31.

¹⁰² HUMFRESS 2007, 156f. (with my thanks to the author and the editor for making this paper available to me before publication). The parallels – legal codices – were increasingly around Christians: WIEACKER 1960, 102f.; MIGLIARDI ZINGALE 1994, 53 n. 31; GASCOU 2000, 290f.; WIEACKER 1960, 115 argued a parallel motivation (codification = canonization) for the adoption of the codex form for legal and biblical texts. MCNAMEE 1998, 269–288 argued for tight parallels between law and church in codex development and book format in the fifth century AD and after, which suggests that the similarities were now assumed and could be developed; in late antiquity the parallels drawn between law and Christian scripture can be very explicit, as when Cassiodorus refers to Scripture as «the Divine Pandects» (Inst. Div. lit. 12. 14 = PL 70:1124–1126).

have no meaning, in which there is no stable and demarcated ‹Church›, in which ‹Christian› constantly redefines him- or herself against other ‹Christians›, and one in which ‹Christian› boundaries with ‹Jews› and ‹pagans› are constantly shifting, asserted, and crossed in a variety of different ways. Yet because all these texts «construct a world» and «do this out of multiple worlds, including textual ones, that they and their authors and readers already inhabit and experience as ‹reality›», all these different texts and views do, indeed, compete: this is not just a pleasant hubbub of different voices, but all shouting to be heard above the rest, an assertiveness that a look at the adoption of the codex, with all of its implications, helps to illustrate.¹⁰³

Egyptian Christians as Egyptians

Egyptian Christians had to live in their world, that of second- and third-century Egypt, and in this context may be found one last incentive, one last explanation, for their adoption and adaptation of Roman legal *tabulae* as the prototype of their own Christian codices. It is generally accepted that virtually nothing of early Christianity, and early Christians, in Egypt, is known.¹⁰⁴ Yet if Christians crossed some existing boundaries – of language, of form, and presumably of citizenship for some – in adopting the codex (which they must have seen as prestigious and may indeed have recognized as a Roman vehicle for embodying authoritative texts), this suggests familiarity with, and awareness of, the documentary practices of a high-status group, and therefore that Christians themselves were not immensely distant from that group. Egyptian Christians were part of their provincial society, socially and geographically close enough to Roman citizens and Roman exemplars to borrow a form – but also close enough to Jews, not sufficiently distinguished from them, to be in some danger from that proximity. In other words, a cultural borrowing of the type the adoption of the codex represents was both possible in second-century Egypt and may have been, from the dire perspective of survival, necessary.

The social status of Christians in Egypt cannot be known with any certainty. More recent assessments of the social status of early Christians elsewhere place them neither very high nor very low, but middling – some of them perhaps even a comfortable middling, with possessions, livelihoods, and standing.¹⁰⁵ If this were also true of Egyptian

¹⁰³ LIEU 2004 (quotation 56f.); she has little interest in the adoption of the codex itself, although she mentions (59) the possibility that it might be relevant. YOUNG 1997, 11–16 is considerably more interested, noting that «an author’s control over his text was perceived as a problem» (11), that Jewish books were appropriated, «physically taken over – not just re-read but re-formed» (14): she sees the use of the codex as itself a competitive gesture.

¹⁰⁴ Hence the strongly conditional wording of the preceding section. See, e.g., LLEWELYN 1994, 244f.; or EPP 1989, 77: «[s]tatements about our lack of knowledge are classic».

¹⁰⁵ «... Christianity attracted a socially diverse membership, representing a cross-section of Roman society ... both the highest and the lowest strata of society were absent. The most typical

Christians, they would be positioned to be aware of Roman practices although not necessarily possessors of Roman citizenship themselves. Where within Egypt such people were, and thus where crossings of cultural boundaries may have taken place, cannot be known with any certainty – possibly Alexandria initially – but the meaningfulness of the choice of form would have to have been apparent to the next wave of those who received and copied the earliest Christian codices, for otherwise the form would or could well have been abandoned in transmission as immaterial. So this proximity, and the familiarity and awareness it granted, had to extend down into the Fayum, where so many Christian texts have been found, and indeed into the city of Oxyrhynchus, whence come thirty-one of the fifty-eight earliest New Testament texts alone.¹⁰⁶ Here too familiarity and awareness are quite plausible, since Oxyrhynchus had a Roman garrison and a number of buildings in the second century that are reflections of an adaptation of Roman culture – baths, a temple to Hadrian, a temple to Antinoos, a Capitulum – and Roman legal documents, for Roman wills were opened in the temple of Hadrian, and two of the thirty-seven surviving legal diptychs probably hail from Oxyrhynchus.¹⁰⁷ Connections with Alexandria, often in the form of Alexandrians who owned land in Oxyrhynchus and can be presumed to have travelled back and forth, were also strong.¹⁰⁸ Under such circumstances – at Alexandria, at Oxyrhynchus, at places in Egypt like them – cultural borrowing can take place. A similar adaptation of a Roman legal document into the form of a papyrus legal double-document, used when both parties were not Roman citizens, seems to have taken place both within and outside Egypt, perhaps as early as the first century AD.¹⁰⁹ It is easy to imagine Christians as Alexandrians or Oxyrhynchites, and as alert and creative ones at that.

Moreover, there is good reason to think that it was very important for Christians of second-century Egypt to be aggressively and openly non-Jewish – to draw and assert a boundary between themselves and the Jews. It is in the early second century that the first evidence or trace of Christians using the codex can be found; it is also in the early second century that, scholars suggest, Christians clearly emerge as a group distinct

members of the Christian groups were free craftspeople, artisans, and small traders, some of whom had attained a measure of affluence, owned houses and slaves, had the resources to travel, and were socially mobile», GAMBLE 1995, 5, who at 248 nn. 12–13 offers much further bibliography.

¹⁰⁶ Spread, e.g., GRIGGS 1990, 28; numbers from Oxyrhynchus, EPP 1997a, 35.

¹⁰⁷ KRÜGER 1990, 104. 106–108 and ALSTON 2002, 245; EPP 1997a, 27f., noting a Jewish quarter (attested AD 83 and 291, P.Oxy. 335 and 1205), two churches by AD 295 (P.Oxy. 43), and a Roman garrison (P.Oxy. 1022, AD 103); wills were opened in the temple of Hadrian (P.Oxy. 2154). Roman legal *tabulae* from Oxyrhynchus: Appendix 3 nos. 35. 36.

¹⁰⁸ TURNER 1952, 85f. (also, 91f. for the book trade between Oxyrhynchus and Alexandria); ROBERTS 1979, 4 n. 2.

¹⁰⁹ MEYER 2004, 187–196.

from the Jewish community.¹¹⁰ Christian separation from Judaism was religiously important, but must have taken some time to achieve.¹¹¹ But in Egypt the manifestation of clear distinctions between Christians and Jews also became more and more politically important, since the history of Jews in Alexandria, and possibly in other towns of Egypt, had been a mostly unhappy one after the middle of the first century AD. The subsequent revolt of AD 115–117 killed many Jews of Alexandria.¹¹² If the Christian community, so embedded for so long within Egyptian Judaism, were to survive, it had to disavow any connections with the Jews, both quickly and openly.¹¹³ Moreover, such a fraught situation could well have pushed Christians not only towards a demonstrated separation from the Jews, but also towards apparent integration and even ingratiation with the ruling power. One way in which Christians in Egypt could *show* that they were *not* Jews was, of course, not to use leather scrolls for their sacred texts; but the choice of a Roman form shows that they were making an affirmative gesture of deferential assimilation, not merely a negative statement. The audience for this postulated adoption and adaptation of the codex could well, therefore, have been twofold (Jews and Romans),¹¹⁴ since this most obvious change was a visible one. Moreover, if the artifact – what an outsider could see – did not look Jewish, then a Jewish heritage could still be reflected in the details, like the *nomina sacra* or semiticisms in the

¹¹⁰ Distinct, PEARSON 1986, 145, and at 150 he notes that the «final split between church and synagogue in Alexandria ... was probably not complete until the time of the Jewish Revolt under Trajan (115–117 C.E.), as a result of which the Jewish community, probably even including some Christians, was virtually exterminated» – although this date would place the complete separation strikingly later than in Antioch and Rome. HUMFRESS (2007, 152f.) points out the construction of Christian (and other) identities by «the mere possession of particular books» as early as the second century.

¹¹¹ And if Christianity in Egypt were very «Jewish», disentangling might have been a complicated process: «According to the latest views ... to speak about Jewish Christianity in Egypt is ... to discuss early Christianity in Egypt in general, and even the origins of Egyptian Christianity», KLIJN 1986, 162 (and see 162–165 in general); also ROBERTS 1979, 7 (on burying used manuscripts in jars, a Jewish custom), and 49–73; on the varying importance of drawing types of distinctions between Christians and Jews (and the unclear role of religious distinctions within this), see LIEU 2004, 98–146.

¹¹² Eus. HE 4.2; Cassius Dio 68.32; ALSTON 1995, 75–77.

¹¹³ ROBERTS 1979, 58f., for the initial observation that there were many political reasons to stress a separation from Judaism at this time; LIEU 2004, 107 notes in passing a way in which Roman rule, when it fixed and gave juridical significance to the distinction between Greek and Egyptian, created «new tensions ... and the need to find new modes of maintaining the boundaries became urgent»: clearly the stress of war *against Jews* should have had precisely that kind of result here.

¹¹⁴ Every Jew: «[i]t is ... significant for the history of the early Church that Christian book-production methods should have severed themselves from Jewish so completely and at so early a date: that the Christians transcribed the books of the Septuagint onto codices illustrates how complete the severance was», ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 45; others: a suggestion of MILLARD 2000, 76.

Greek,¹¹⁵ without the adoption of the codex becoming a hopelessly self-contradictory or ambivalent action. An act of cultural borrowing and adaptation was one of the ways in which both separation from the Jews and connectedness with Roman authority was demonstrated – like building a bath, but considerably cheaper.

An adoption and adaptation of one Roman form of writing cannot have been the only act of self-protection taken, of course, and indeed it is hard to imagine such an adaptation being anything more than the least significant action taken in a range of possible responses, including the adoption of an aggressively anti-Jewish stance, for several generations. But it is quite plausibly indicative of a mindset, of a desire to conform and belong, not to be too far apart, not to be too different.¹¹⁶ An Oxyrhynchite petitioner to the emperor in the year AD 199, asking to be granted a privilege, claimed credit for the city of Oxyrhynchus because of its loyalty to Rome and its role in the defeat of the Jewish rebels of AD 117, eighty or so years before.¹¹⁷ Christians of Oxyrhynchus no doubt learned from that defeat, and may well have preferred to present themselves as, and indeed even to consider themselves, staunch Oxyrhynchites and loyal subjects of Rome thereafter, this being prudent, understandable, and comfortable, and incidentally giving them the time to collect, transcribe, and transmit their texts, to gain a following, and to put down the deep roots later so clearly visible in the Oxyrhynchus region.¹¹⁸ Being anti-Roman in a town like Oxyrhynchus, as indeed in a great city like Alexandria, would have merely been an invitation after AD 117 to unwelcome attention of a most unpleasant sort, at the hands of a power whose exterminating capacities had just been decisively, and locally, proven. But the smallest and least significant of choices can have the biggest of impacts, if given time to mature; as with Christianity in Egypt, so too with the codex in Egypt.

¹¹⁵ Semiticisms, see GAMBLE 1995, 33; aggressive (and possibly self-contradictory) anti-Jewishness is posited by ROBERTS 1970, 61.

¹¹⁶ A desire to conform might also explain the lack of clear evidence for the extent and speed-of-growth of Christianity in Egypt, which permits debate over the implications of what evidence there is: see (e.g.) VAN HAELST 1989, 34, who has argued that the spread of Christianity in Egypt's *chora* was neither early nor rapid (most Christian documents date from the second half of the second century and from the third century – in my list, more than 60% in the third century; literary sources are silent about Christian communities before the end of the second century; there were only a few Christians at the time of the persecution of Severus [Orig. Hom. ad Jer. 4.3]); contra, ROBERTS 1979, 4–6 and EPP 1989, 79 arguing for early origin, rapid expansion, and «significant saturation», given the distance of Oxyrhynchus from Alexandria.

¹¹⁷ P.Oxy. 705 (AD 199/200).

¹¹⁸ See GRENFELL 1897, 1 (an evocative account of Christianity in fourth- and fifth-century Oxyrhynchus). This stance may be the key to explaining some relatively harmonious relations too, in Oxyrhynchus and elsewhere: «In the next two hundred years [AD 49–249] ... we hear of no ... locally generated persecutions of Christians in Egypt, and if they did occur they must have been rare indeed ...», LEWIS 1983, 103.

Conclusion

The codex was initially a Roman concept and a Roman reality, constructed of wood and used for specific and important purposes, particularly legal ones. The adaptation of Roman legal tablets into the Christian papyrus codex, here argued from an analysis of the physical characteristics of wooden tablets and papyrus codices, was a consequence of a confluence of factors affecting Christians wherever they lived, but especially likely to be powerful in Roman Egypt: the undoubted existence of Roman legal *tabulae*, to serve as exemplars, and their clear valuation by their Roman-citizen possessors; Christian attitudes towards texts and sensitivities to aspects of format and medium; and circumstances that made the Christians' clear separation from an appearance of being Jewish more than just a theological or 'identity' issue in the second century AD. In Egypt, the adoption and adaptation of the codex can be seen as acts of cultural borrowing explicable on at least two levels, one interior to Egyptian Christianity itself, and one reflecting the insecure and potentially dangerous place of Egyptian Christians in the wider world of their Roman province. The argument is therefore one that has rooted the development of the Christian papyrus codex very strongly in a specific place and a specific time. Could the adoption and adaptation also have taken place elsewhere? What little evidence there is suggests that it did not, and possibly that it could not,¹¹⁹ although some light or leaf tablets from Britain have excited speculations.¹²⁰ Rather, although Roman legal *tabulae* existed in other parts of the imperial

¹¹⁹ «... there is no comparably early evidence for the rest of the world», ROBERTS 1970, 58, and no papyrus fragment of the New Testament has, as of yet, been found outside Egypt, see PORTER 2003, 178. Moreover, Acta Petri 20 (text in ELLIOTT 1993, 413), set in Rome, depicts Peter «rolling up» the Gospel (i.e., it is a scroll), the Scillitan martyrs in North Africa had books in a *capsa*, a «book-box» usually for scrolls, and HARRIS 1991, 73. 77 notes that iconographic evidence from Rome «ought to make us hesitate before supposing that the codex was dominant among Christians of the capital city at an early date», so either we can conclude nothing (the evidence being so exiguous), or we can speculate that the Christian adoption of the codex outside Egypt may well have taken some time. Indeed, the mausoleum of Galla Placidia (first half fifth century AD) depicts individual codices of the Gospels with «quires» so fat and delineated that one suspects that each codex is made of seven wooden tablets bound together. Contra, EPP 1991, 56 has argued implicitly for pan-Mediterranean development: of the textual variations present in the Christian papyrus texts from Egypt, not only is it «possible but quite probable» that they do in fact «represent text-types from the *entire* Mediterranean region» (his italics, and similarly in 1997c, 57–59); and ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 35 too thought it «unlikely» that there were «any great differences in the construction of books between Egypt and the rest of the Empire».

¹²⁰ T.Vind. II.190 and III.581, sets of tablets written *transversa* and each with two binding holes restored on the bottom edge of the first and the top edge of the second tablet in each set («concertina» format), were once proposed as possibly relating to the development of the codex (see BOWMAN 1975; BOWMAN – THOMAS 1996, 308 do not claim III.581 as «any kind of primitive codex» but note that it is in «a period and context which is surely of significance for the early codex»). A third, described by TOMLIN 1998, 39 (Doc. 1A; Carlisle), was folded in the same way, but with one hole driven through it after folding. None of the three has its binding-holes all on one side, and these holes are in a different relationship to the writing than in the codex; one

Roman world, an understanding of their particular significations would probably just have helped to reinforce the acceptance and further transmission of the codex form for Christian texts elsewhere, as would a growing appreciation of those functional characteristics that continue to make the book a useful form today, although next to nothing is known about the dynamic of this later stage of transmission.¹²¹ In the end, however, there seems no better place for initial adoption and adaptation than Egypt itself. Not only does all the surviving evidence derive from that province, but the Roman legal diptychs that served – it has been argued – as prototypes continue to look as they have been here described only in Egypt. In Egypt, they were introduced as diptychs with exterior *transversa* writing, and remained so. Elsewhere, Roman legal diptychs developed into triptychs with no visible exterior writing, but with a horizontally written copy of the text written on the attached but not sealed third tablet (for those who cared to look), by the middle of the first century AD.¹²² Thus no matter how powerful the perceived implications of Roman wooden *tabulae*, their exteriors elsewhere would have shown no *transversa* writing: their appearance would have been very different. Imitation elsewhere seems much less plausible because of that one circumstance. So if the argument is right, it is a necessary corollary that the initial adoption and adaptation could have occurred only in Egypt, although the postulated motivations and circumstances could have characterized the attitudes and lives of Christians anywhere in the Roman empire. Only after this initial borrowing would the

would read these by flipping rather than paging. HARAN 1996, 221 f. has also questioned the reconstruction (especially the binding) of T.Vind. II.190 as «concertina» (rather than individual diptychs), and otherwise notes that the «concertina»-format of the *pinakes* he studies «could never have evolved into the book as we know it» (215). I would instead derive the format of these leaf tablets from the Roman papyrological tradition of military reports (which is what the content of these documents is as well; sometimes they are, or are also called, accounts), *scriptae* which, Suetonius (Div. Iul. 56.6) claimed, *consules* and *duces* had before Caesar's time submitted *transversa charta* (Caesar elevated his own to the status of *epistolae*). If this is correct, these three «concertina»-type light or leaf tablets would be bark imitations of papyri, which is what I have argued (MEYER 2004, 176) the leaf tablets from Vindolanda and elsewhere generally are (BOWMAN – THOMAS 1983, 37. 44 and HARAN 221 n. 22 agree), and unrelated to the «rise» of the codex.

¹²¹ Suggestions: «comprehensiveness, durability, and convenience», KENYON 1932, 114, echoed by ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, 73; its toughness and size particularly well-suited to a troubled age of «contracting culture», ROBERTS 1954, 203, and (at 203f.) its ultimate «sponsors were the Church and the Law», since both were the first to use the codex for the type of authoritative compilation that late antiquity valued. Whether Christians' reading habits, both in their technical aspects like the codex or indeed in their devotion to written texts, had direct consequences for non-Christians is not known, although optimistic views of this (especially of Christians as promoters of literacy) were once taken; see the brief summary by LANE FOX 1994, 142. HARRIS 1991, 79–84, has argued (without any direct evidence, however) that the spread of the codex form beyond Christian texts was a result of the mingling of Christian and Roman culture, as well as of an appreciation of the functional aspects (especially lower cost and the ease of reading and reference) of the codex.

¹²² MEYER 2004, 129–131. 146–147. 179.

form spread anywhere and everywhere else. The nature and circumstances of Egyptian Christianity may remain forever lost to view, its contribution to Christianity as a whole doubtful or controversial; but perhaps in this one thing, the experiment of the papyrus codex, it made a signal and long-lasting gift to Christians and Romans alike.

*Appendix 1. Wooden and Wooden-and-Wax Schooltablets from Egypt*¹²³

1. BKT 5.2.98 no. 6 (T.Berol. inv. AM 17651; CRIBIORE 1996, 216 no. 182 and fig. 19), waxed tablet. Eur. Tr. 876–879, words separated into syllables; word exercises (?) on reverse. Writing parallel to long side; two holes for hinging. Unknown provenance; 1st c. AD. Greek.
2. DIELS (1898) 847–856 (T.Berol. inv. 14283; CRIBIORE 1996, 270f. no. 381), two waxed tablets. Copied-out poetry of Posidippus. Writing parallel to long side, in two columns; two pairs of holes for hinging in long side, one in middle of each lower edge. Exterior has an unknown word or name, and numbers (so reused?). Unknown provenance; 1st c. AD. Greek.
3. FOURNET – GALLAZZI 1996, 171–176 and fig. 1. 2 (T.Tebt. inv. 3033/7601.739), wooden tablet. Mathematical exercises. Writing parallel to long sides; two holes for hinging in middle of top of long side. Tebtunis, end 1st/beginning 2nd c. AD. Greek.
4. CALDERINI 1921, 306f. (T.Berol. inv. 10508; CRIBIORE 1996, 254 no. 326 and figs. 45, 46), waxed tablet. Scholia minora to Iliad. Written *transversa* (parallel to short side) on both sides; two pairs of holes for hinging. Unknown provenance; 2nd c. AD. Greek.
5. CALDERINI 1921, 307f. (T.Berol. inv. 10509; CRIBIORE 1996, 254 no. 327 and fig. 47), waxed tablet. Scholia minora to Iliad. Written *transversa* (parallel to short side) on both sides; two pairs of holes for hinging. Unknown provenance; 2nd c. AD. Greek.
6. BKT 5.1.6, description only (T.Berol. inv. 10510; CRIBIORE 1996, 254 no. 328), fragment of waxed tablet. Scholia minora to Iliad, written *transversa* (parallel to short side) on both sides. Unknown provenance; 2nd c. AD. Greek.
7. CALDERINI 1921, 308f. (T.Berol. inv. 10511+10512; CRIBIORE 1996, 254 no. 329 and fig. 48), waxed tablet. Scholia minora to Iliad. Written *transversa* (parallel to short side); two pairs of holes for hinging. Unknown provenance; 2nd c. AD. Greek.
8. P.Lond.Lit. 253 + BRASHEAR 1991, 231f. (T.Lond. add. ms. 34186; CRIBIORE 1996, 271f. no. 383), two waxed tablets. Two lines of Menander, student copies; multiplication tables and syllable-exercises. Writing parallel to long side; two holes for hinging or hanging on each side, so probably re-used. Unknown provenance; 2nd c. AD. Greek.
9. CRIBIORE 1995, 263–270 and figs. 8, 9 (T.Phoebé Hearst Mus. inv. 6–21416; CRIBIORE 1996, 205f. no. 136), wooden tablet. Maxims; and copies of them. One side written *transversa* (parallel to short side). Two holes close to the center of the long side, for hanging or hinging. Tebtunis (Roman cemetery); 2nd–3rd c. AD. Greek.
10. DIELS 1898, 857f. and fig. 4 (T.Lond. inv. 29527 = 5849a; CRIBIORE 1996, 220 no. 202), waxed tablet. Verse riddles, divided at caesura. Writing parallel to long side; cannot tell about hinging from plate. Unknown provenance; 2nd–3rd c. AD. Greek.

¹²³ In this Appendix (and the three following) I have given the bare minimum of bibliography, usually just the first or best publication, the inventory number, and (for school-tablets) its Cribiore number (= CRIBIORE 1996). The total numbers are greater than those given above p. 304 because these appendices include tablets from the third century AD.

11. HOMBERT – PRÉAUX 1951, 161–168 (T.Bodl.Gk. inscr. inv. 3017; CRIBIORE 1996, 255f. no. 333 and fig. 51), whitened wooden tablet. Paraphrase of Il. 4.349–363; and of 364–373. Writing parallel to long side (second side written in two columns, the right used for scholia); one hole for hinging or hanging. Unknown provenance; 2nd–3rd c. AD. Greek.
12. PLAUMANN 1913, 219 (T.Berol. Blanckertz; CRIBIORE 1996, 272 no. 384), four waxed tablets. Declensions. Unknown provenance; 2nd–3rd c. AD. Greek.
13. ERMAN – KREBS 1899, 233 (T.Berol. inv. 13234; CRIBIORE 1996, 205 no. 134), wooden tablet. Maxim («work hard!»), and four copies of it. Written parallel to long side; two holes near center of long side for hinging or hanging. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD. Greek.
14. P.Ross.Georg. 1.12 (T.Hermitage, no number; CRIBIORE 1996, 205 no. 135), wooden tablet, written on both sides. Maxim, copied three times. Writing parallel to long side; no information on hinging. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD. Greek.
15. P.Ross.Georg. 1.13 (T.Hermitage, no number [not found]; CRIBIORE 1996, 206f. no. 139), three waxed tablets. Maxim. One hole in middle of top edge, two on bottom edge (*tab. 1 pag. 2*, re-used). Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD. Greek.
16. PARSONS 1970, 133–148 and fig. 8 (T.Bodl.Gr.inscr. 3019; CRIBIORE 1996, 273f. no. 388), seven-tablet wooden schoolbook, ink on wood. Declensions, conjugations, Homeric paraphrase, Coptic psalm, division table. Written parallel to long side in two columns; two holes for hinging on long side (writing goes around these); edges notched for ordering the tablets correctly. Re-used. Bought at Luxor; late 3rd c. AD (two of the hands). Greek and Coptic.
17. PAINTER 1967, 109 no. 23 (T.Lond. add. ms. 37533; CRIBIORE 1996, 272 no. 385 and figs. 70–72), eight wooden tablets. Grammatical matters. Writing parallel to long side, in two columns; two holes for hinging (writing goes around these), notch in short side. Late 3rd c. AD. Greek.
18. PAINTER 1967, 110 no. 24 (T.Lond. add. ms. 33293; CRIBIORE 1996, 243 no. 292 and fig. 35), whitened wood tablet inscribed on both sides. Thirteen lines from the Iliad (3.273–277. 278–285). Writing parallel to long side in one column (room for two); no holes for hinging. Unknown provenance; probably 3rd c. AD. Greek.
19. PAINTER 1967, 110 no. 25 (T.Lond. add. ms. 37516; CRIBIORE 1996, 264f. no. 364 and fig. 61), whitened wooden tablet. Grammatical paradigms. Pierced nob on one edge for hanging from wall. Unknown provenance; late 3rd c. AD. Greek.

Cited in this appendix: W. BRASHEAR, A Trifle, ZPE 86, 1991, 231f.; A. CALDERINI, Commenti «minori» al testo di Omero in documenti egiziani, *Aegyptus* 2, 1921, 303–326; R. CRIBIORE, A Schooltablet from the Hearst Museum (Plates VIII and IX), ZPE 107, 1995, 263–270; R. CRIBIORE, Writers, Teachers, and Students in Greco-Roman Egypt, 1996; H. DIELS, Die Elegie des Poseidippos aus Theben, *Sb. d. kgl. Preuss. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Berlin* 1898, 847–858; A. ERMAN – F. KREBS, *Aus den Papyrus der königlichen Museen*, 1899; J.-L. FOURNET – C. GALLAZZI, Une tablette scolaire mathématique de Tebtynis, BIAO 96, 1996, 171–176; M. HOMBERT – C. PRÉAUX, Une tablette homérique de la bibliothèque bodléenne, *Mélanges Henri Grégoire* 3, 1951, 161–168; K. PAINTER, A Roman Writing Tablet from London, *The British Museum Quarterly* 31, 1967, 101–110; P. J. PARSONS, A School-book from the Sayce Collection, ZPE 6, 1970, 133–149; G. PLAUMANN, Antike Schultafeln aus Ägypten, *Amtliche Berichte aus den königlichen Kunstsammlungen* 34/11, 1913, 210–223.

Appendix 2. Wooden and Wooden-and-Wax Account-Tablets from Egypt

1. SB 7451 (T.Flinders Petrie, now T.Lond. inv. 36088 and 36089; BELL 1927; ROBERTS – SKEAT 1983, fig. 1), seven wax tablets (the wax both red and black), with daily accounts in several hands. Written *transversa* (parallel to short side); two pairs of holes for hinging; bound together at later date. Ptolemais Hormu; 210 BC. Greek.¹²⁴
 2. PAINTER 1967, 107 no. 16 (T.Lond. BM add. ms. 34244), «waxed tablet, containing memoranda, probably of expenses». Described but not published. Last leaf of a notebook of waxed tablets. Unknown provenance; 1st c. AD. Greek.
 3. P.Bon. 50a (inv. 11), wax tablet. Accounts. Lefthand side only; no indication of direction of writing. Written on both sides. Unknown provenance; 1st–2nd c. AD. Greek.
 4. SB 10551 (T.Alex. inv. 27809; RIAD – SCHWARTZ 1968, 121–125), wax tablet with names and amounts. Written in two different hands, in two columns; *transversa* (parallel to short side); two pairs of holes for hinging. Re-used. Oasis El Arag; 2nd c. AD. Greek.
 - 5–6. Two unpublished wax tablets: T.Mil.Vogl. inv. 9 and inv. 10 (BRASHEAR – HOOGENDIJK 1990, 39). Tebtunis; 2nd c. AD.
 - 7–15. Nine unpublished wax tablets: T.Cair. inv. JE 29809+51343. 29813. 51302. 51305. 51309. 51312. 51316. 51330. 51338 (BRASHEAR – HOOGENDIJK 1990, 35). Unknown provenance; 2nd c. AD.
 16. WORP 1997 and fig. 26 (T.Kellis inv. 31/420-D.6–1/D/3/8), wooden tablet. Money received. Written *transversa* (parallel to short side); two holes for hinging; written on both sides. Re-used. Kellis; AD 267–274. Greek.
 17. PAINTER 1967, 107 no. 14 (T.Lond. add. ms. 33797), «portion of an account for fodder, grain, etc., ... inscribed ... on the waxed surface of the inner side of one of the covers of a set of small, waxed tablets». Described but not published. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD. Greek.
 18. P.Flor. 18.81 and fig. 94 (P.Princ. Kase inv. AM 15960(4)B), wooden tablet. Names and payments, written *transversa* (parallel to short side); two pairs of holes for hinging. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD. Greek.
 19. SB 7013 (BOAK 1921), two waxed tablets. Written in columns; *transversa* (parallel to short side): differing directions of writing on two tablets suggests that binding took place after the two tablets were inscribed. Two pairs of holes for hinging. Bacchias; 3rd c. AD. Greek.
 - 20–27. Eight unpublished sets of tablets: Bodl.Gr.inscr. 3020 (two waxed tablets). 3021 (two waxed tablets). 3022 (one wooden tablet). 3026 (one wooden tablet). 3027 (one wooden tablet). 3028 (one wooden tablet). 3029 (one wooden tablet). 3030 (one wooden tablet); described only, PARSONS 1970, 149 (BRASHEAR – HOOGENDIJK 1990, 34f.). Unstated provenance; 3rd–4th c. AD. Greek.
- Cited in this appendix: H. I. BELL, *Waxed Tablets of the Third Century B.C., Ancient Egypt*, 1927, 65–74; A. E. R. BOAK, *An Overseer's Daybook from the Fayoum*, JHS 41, 1921, 217–221; W. BRASHEAR – F. A. J. HOOGENDIJK, *Corpus Tabularum Lignearum Ceratumque Aegyptiarum*, *Enchoria* 17, 1990, 21–54; K. PAINTER, *A Roman Writing Tablet from London*, *The British*

¹²⁴ This account-book is the only wooden tablet in all three lists dated to the Ptolemaic period, on the basis of the perceived similarity of its handwriting to that of the Zenon papyri. It is thus an unusual outlier in the body of evidence; even F. PETRIE, who acquired this account-book (see BELL 1927, 65), was otherwise skeptical of such documents – hinged wooden tablets – being Ptolemaic in date, see PETRIE 1927, 66. The account-book has not been looked at (to my knowledge) since 1927, and may now be worth another look.

Museum Quarterly 31, 1967, 101–110; P. J. PARSONS, A School-book from the Sayce Collection, ZPE 6, 1970, 133–149; F. PETRIE, Objects of Daily Use, With Over 1800 Figures from University College, London, 1927; H. RIAD – J. SCHWARTZ, Deux planchettes du Musée d'Alexandrie, CE 43, 1968, 114–125; C. H. ROBERTS – T. C. SKEAT, The Origins of the Codex, 21983; K. A. WORP, A New Wooden Board from the Temple at Kellis, in: B. KRAMER et al. (eds.), Akten des 21. internationalen Papyrologenkongresses: Berlin 13.–19. 8. 1995, 1997, 1014–1020.

Appendix 3. Roman Legal Documents on Wooden and Wooden-and-Wax Tabulae

1. CPL 148 (T.Cair. inv. 29812; 2FIRA 3.5–7 no. 2; GUÉRAUD 1927, 119–121). Copy of *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) begins the act; exterior copy (ink) gives its end. Interpuncts and abbreviations in exterior text. Not *pertusa*, drilled through for special ties that would then be sealed over (CAMODECA 1995, 73). Diptych (*tab.* I only). Alexandria; AD 62 (18 July). Latin.
2. CPL 104 (LEFEBVRE 1910 = AE 1910 no. 75; W.Chr. 463; 2FIRA 1.424–427 no. 76; ILS 9059; CIL XVI p. 146 no. 12), attested copy of one or two edict(s) of Domitian, plus an attested statement of a veteran about the citizenship of his three children. Interior (hollowed for wax, but written in ink) has end of an edict and the *testatio*, exterior copy has the beginning of the attested copy of an edict *transversa*. Abbreviations. Names of nine sealers, all veterans, on *pag.* 4. *Sulcus* (the shallow ‘furrow’ in which seals were placed). One hole for hinging preserved; *pertusa*. Found at Philadelphia. Diptych (*tab.* II only) or triptych (*tab.* II only; argued by WOLFF 1974, 497). Alexandria; AD 94 (2 July). Latin.
3. CPL 105 (+p.438; P.Mich. 7.432 and fig. 1b = inv. 2753; CIL III.2 p. 922). Attested copy of an edict of *honesta missio* or privilege for a legionary, restored as [*testatus est*] *eos qui si [gnatur] essent se descriptum et] recognitum ...* Written *transversa* on the interior (wax) face, but in ink. Only the left edge survives, probably the original top of the *tabula* as first manufactured, since it has one central hole (*pertusa*). Re-used. Diptych (*tab.* I only). Alexandria; AD 95. Latin.
4. CPL 149 (P.Mich. 3.167 and 7.167 = inv. 2737; SANDERS 1931a, 62–70), fragmentary copy of *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) text has last four lines of *professio*, exterior text has names of four (of seven?) sealers (three of them veterans, two possibly related: HAENSCH 1996, 466 n. 84), with interpuncts between parts of names and the *praenomen* of one name corrected, and letter traces of the exterior (ink) copy written *transversa* (starts with date). Abbreviation in interior text. One hole for hinging preserved. Diptych (*tab.* II only). Alexandria; AD 103 (11 Sept.). Latin.
5. CPL 150 (BGU 1691 = P.Berol. 14009A-B). Attested copy of a *professio* of birth. Traces of ink on exterior of *tab.* II, but cannot be read. Interpuncts and abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Found at Philadelphia. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Alexandria; AD 109 (30 June). Latin.
6. CPL 113 (T.Cair. inv. 29811; W.Chr. 457; CIL XVI p. 143 no. 1; DE RICCI 1906, 478f. no. 1), certificate of *honesta missio*. Text written on interior (wax) side; on same side, «on the lower edge of the tablet», [*Pe*]rlegi o(mnia) s(upra) s(crupta) e(t) h(onestam) m(issionem) dedi prid(ie) Non(as) or [*L. Va*]lerio s(upra) s(crupto) e(merito) h(onestam) m(issionem) dedi prid(ie) Non(as) (restorations from ROXAN – HOLDER 2003, 612 IB), in a different hand (by the prefect?), in ink. Nothing on other side. Interpuncts and abbreviations. Found in the Fayum. Diptych (*tab.* I only; CAMODECA 1992, 17 n. 41). Fayum (?); AD 122 (4 Jan.). Latin.
7. CPL 200 (T.Lond. add. ms. 40723; SANDERS 1938; SANDERS 1942), nomination of a tutor. Possibly a copy, depending on the solution of the abbreviation *b.d.e.r.e.e.t.s.s.s.* Interior (wax) text complete; *transversa* exterior text begins on *pag.* 1 rather than *pag.* 4; at least seven sealers (not all complete) also on *pag.* 1 (CAMODECA 1992, 22 n. 51). *Pertusa*, two holes for hinging. Abbreviations. Cancelled with diagonal lines. Provenance unknown. Diptych (*tab.* I only). AD 126–132 or 164–167 (HAENSCH 1996, 466 n. 84). Latin.

8. CPL 159 (T.Lond. add. ms. 46518; BELL 1937), *testatio* of birth for an illegitimate child. Interior writing in ink rather than on wax (although recessed for wax); interior preserves end, exterior beginning (*transversa*). Eight sealer-names in nominative (man making attestation seals last); *adscriptio*nes to seals all in different hands. Abbreviations. *Pertusa*; two holes for hinging. Diptych (*tab. II* only). Contrapolonopolis Magna (in the Thebaid); AD 127 (25 April). Latin.
9. CPL 151 (P.Mich. 3.166 = inv. 766; KELSEY 1923), copy of *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) text complete; exterior (ink) text begins *transversa* on *pag. 4*, finishes *transversa* on *pag. 1*; here too is child's name in Greek (in accusative case). Seven sealers on *pag. 4*. Interior in a scribal hand? Interpuncts marking abbreviations. *Pertusa*, two holes for hinge. Diptych (*tab. I-II*). Alexandria; AD 128 (11 Mar.). Latin.
10. CPL 160 (BGU 1690 = P.Berol. 14008; ²FIRA 3.11 f. no. 5). *Testatio* of birth for an illegitimate child. Interior (wax) text and exterior (ink) copy end with a first-person *subscriptio* of the father in Greek. Interpunct and abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Diptych (*tab. I* only). Philadelphia; AD 131 (26 Dec.). Greek and Latin.
11. CPL 161 (P.Mich. 7.436 and figs. 6a-b = inv. 3994; SANDERS 1937), *testatio* of birth for an illegitimate child. Interior (wax) and exterior (ink) writing, both fragmentary (in the same hand), preserving the end of the act. Exterior copy began on *pag. 1* and finished on *pag. 4*; sealers here would have been on *pag. 1*, not *pag. 4* (CAMODECA 1992, 22 n. 51). Interpuncts marking abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Diptych (*tab. II* only). Pselchis; AD 138. Latin.
12. CPL 221 (Tablettes Keimer, T.Cair. inv. 72033; ²FIRA 3.129–132 no. 47; GUÉRAUD – JOUGUET 1940), will of Antonius Silvanus. Subscribed by *testator* in Greek on interior. Six sealers, and *testator* himself sealed (making the seventh); his *adscriptio*, as well as that of the second sealer, in Greek, and all in their own hands. *Libripens* seals second, *antestatus* seals third; all use *signavi*. Abbreviations. *Pertusa*; two holes for hinging; special sliding cover created for seals on *tab. V*. *Tab. I-V*. Found at Philadelphia. Alexandria; AD 142 (27 Mar.). Latin and Greek.
13. CPL 152 (BGU 1692 and fig. 5 = P.Berol. 14004A-B; ²FIRA 3.7–9 no. 3; SANDERS 1927, 411 f.). Copy of a *professio* of birth. Interpuncts and abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Found at Philadelphia. Diptych (*tab. I-II*). Alexandria; AD 144 (15 Oct.). Latin.
14. CPL 154 (BGU 1693 = P.Berol. 14007; SANDERS 1927, 412 f.; SANDERS 1928b). Copy of a *professio* of birth. Only one side of one tablet legible (inner text?); no sealers reported, no information on the exterior. Abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Found at Philadelphia. Diptych (*tab. I-II*, but only *tab. I pag. 2* was read). Alexandria; AD 145 (17 May). Latin.
15. CPL 153 (P.Mich. 3.168 and 7.168 and fig. 1a = inv. 7252; SANDERS 1931a, 70–80), fragment of a copy of *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) text and exterior (ink) copy, the latter with interpuncts and abbreviations, and ending *transversa* on *pag. 1*. Index (in Greek) of tablet's contents at end of text on wood on *pag. 1*. No edges preserved. Found at Karanis? Diptych (*tab. I* only). Alexandria; AD 145 (21 June). Latin and Greek.
16. CPL 162 (P.Mich. 3.169 = inv. 4529; ²FIRA 3.9–11 no. 4; SANDERS 1928a), woman's *testatio* of birth for illegitimate twins, with help of her tutor (not among the sealers). Interior (wax) text and exterior (ink) copy, running *transversa* from *pag. 4* to *pag. 1*; seven sealers on *pag. 4*. Tutor wrote a first-person subscription-summary of act for Sempronia on *pag. 1* in Greek (after the end of the Latin copy-text), and writes also that he wrote for her since she did not know letters. Scattered interpuncts (certainly for abbreviations); *pertusa*; two holes for hinge. Found at Karanis. Diptych (*tab. I-II*). Alexandria; AD 145 (29 Apr.). Latin and Greek.
17. CPL 155 (Bodl.Ms.Lat. class.e. 16[P]; DE RICCI 1904, 195 f. = AE 1904 no. 218), fragment of a copy of *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) text has only the first two lines of the date with which it begins; exterior (ink) copy has end of act, written *transversa*. Abbreviations. *Pertusa*; one hole for hinge. Diptych (*tab. I* only). Alexandria; AD 147. Latin.

18. CPL 156 (T.Cair. inv. 29807; W.Chr. 212; DE RICCI 1906, 483–486 no. 4), copy of *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) text and exterior (ink) copy, the latter beginning *transversa* on *pag.* 1 and ending on *pag.* 4 (CAMODECA 1992, 22 n. 51). Interpuncts and abbreviations. Seven sealers (man making declaration not among them) on *pag.* 1. Some string survives; one exterior seal, bottom right-hand corner of *pag.* 1. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Alexandria; AD 148 (3 Nov.). Latin.
19. CPL 201 (T.Cair. inv. JE 51324; GUÉRAUD 1932), fragment of nomination of tutor. Interior text on *pag.* 3 cannot be read; *pag.* 4 has remains of four sealer-names (two of these names are also preserved in CPL 156), and some remnants of the exterior text written *transversa*. No edges preserved. *Pertusa*. Found in the Fayum (Philadelphia?). Diptych (*tab.* II only)? c. AD 150. Latin.
20. CPL 213 (PSI 1027; ²FIRA 3.179f. no. 59; SANDERS 1931b), fragmentary *cretio* (acceptance) of an inheritance. Interior (wax) text with exterior (ink) copy *transversa*; the interior has the beginning, the exterior the end, of the act. After the end of the exterior copy, her mother attests that her daughter entered into the inheritance; the tutor wrote (this) for her, since she did not know letters, in Greek. Abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Found at Ptolemais Euergetis. Diptych (*tab.* I only). Metropolis (Arsinoite nome); AD 151 (5 Dec.). Latin and Greek.
21. CPL 223 (BGU 1695 = P.Berol. 14006A-C; described in GUÉRAUD – JOUGUET 1940, 3–4), fragments of sailor's will, including its end; in ink on exterior of *tab.* I, *cl(assis) Alexandr(inae)* and other traces (one Greek name). *Sulcus*. Abbreviations. Two holes for hinging (and remains of leather hinges); *pertusa*; two additional holes to fasten entire document together more securely (for wooden 'pegs'?). Found at Philadelphia. Triptych (*tab.* I–III). Alexandria; AD 157 (7 Oct.). Latin and Greek.
22. CPL 157 (BGU 1694 = P.Berl. 14005A-B; SANDERS 1927, 412), copy of a *professio* of birth. Only interior (wax) text legible; exterior (ink) text written *transversa* but cannot be read. Traces of seven sealers on *pag.* 4. Traces of earlier writing? Abbreviations. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Found at Philadelphia. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Alexandria; AD 163 (22 Nov.). Latin.
23. CPL 214 (T.Cair. inv. 29808; M.Chr. 327; ²FIRA 3.181f. no. 60; DE RICCI 1906, 479–481 no. 2), *cretio* (acceptance) of a mother's inheritance (*testata est*). Interior (wax) text has beginning but not end (does not include imperial date, only consular date); exterior (ink) copy has the entire text, written *transversa*, followed by a subscription or summary by the girl in Greek, written for her by her brother, also her ἐπίτροπος, because she is underage. Exterior text starts on *pag.* 1, ends *pag.* 4 (CAMODECA 1992, 22 n. 51). Traces of seven (?) sealers on *pag.* 1, but illegible. Abbreviations. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Metropolis (Arsinoite nome); AD 170 (29 Sept.). Latin and Greek.
24. CPL 215 (T.Cair. inv. 29810; DE RICCI 1906, 481–483 no. 3), *cretio* (acceptance) of a grandmother's inheritance (*testata est*). Interior (wax) text has beginning but not end (does not include imperial date, only consular date); exterior (ink) copy has the entire text («her brother» added as an afterthought), written *transversa*, followed by a subscription or summary by the girl in Greek, written for her by her brother, also her ἐπίτροπος, because she is underage. Exterior text starts on *pag.* 1, not *pag.* 4 (CAMODECA 1992, 22 n. 51). Seven sealers on *pag.* 1, the last of whom is the ἐπίτροπος-brother. Abbreviations. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Metropolis (Arsinoite nome); AD 170 (29 Sept.). Latin and Greek.
25. CPL 202 (Oxford Bodl. lat. inscrip. 10; ²FIRA 3.68f. no. 25; GRENFELL 1917–1919, 258–262 = SB 6223), nomination of a tutor. Interior (wax) text (*pag.* 2–3) is complete, and ends with a Greek subscription by the woman in question, written for her by a man (also one of the sealers) because she does not know letters. Exterior (ink) copy is written *transversa*, starting on *pag.* 4 and ending on *pag.* 1; it is followed by a copy of the Greek subscription written in the same hand as the copy (different from the hand of the interior), and ends with a summary of the action taken (in Greek). Latin list of seven sealers, in genitive (*pag.* 4) written by yet another hand. Interpuncts for abbreviations, accents used in Latin on exterior. Two holes for hinge; *pertusa*. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Alexandria; AD 198 (23 Sept.). Latin and Greek.

26. BGU VII p. 212.1 (= P.Berol. 14003; BRASHEAR – HOOGENDIJK 1990, 34). List of sealers. Philadelphia. 2nd c. AD.
27. CPL 224 (BGU 1696 = P.Berol. 14010A-B). Will. Writing on interior wax faces, and traces of writing on outside of both *tabulae*. Re-used (traces of earlier writing carelessly removed). Holes for hinges, but no mention of whether or not *pertusa*. Found at Philadelphia. *Tab.* II–III. 2nd c. AD. Latin.
28. CPL 164 (P.Michael. 61), fragmentary *testatio* of birth (*[testa]ta est se* restored). A curious line of Greek in the text (perhaps something that was not formulaic, for which the scribe did not know the Latin?). *Pag.* 3 cannot be read; *pag.* 4 preserves three sealers' names, and seven lines of text. Interpuncts. No edges preserved; *pertusa*. Diptych (*tab.* II only). 2nd c. AD. Latin and Greek.
29. T.Lond. add. ms. 33999 (PAINTER 1967, 107 no. 15), twelve broken wax tablets. One fragment has some testamentary dispositions of Julius Serenus, soldier; others have traces of ink writing on exterior. «Fragmentary and generally indecipherable». 2nd c. AD? Greek.
30. CPL 225 (P.Mich. 7.437 and figs. 6a-b = inv. 2736). Will (two fragments only). Written on wax on both sides, so presumably an interior *tabula*; no edges preserved. Abbreviations. 2nd c. AD. Latin.
31. CPL 211 (P.Mich. 7.444 and fig. 10a = inv. 2751), fragmentary marriage contract. Interior (wax) text has only traces of scattered letters; exterior (ink) copy starts *transversa* on *pag.* 4. The list of sealers was also on *pag.* 4 (three of ?seven names survive, in nominative), writing in different hands in Greek. No edges preserved. Diptych (*tab.* II only). Late 2nd c. AD. Latin and Greek.
32. CPL 226 (P.Mich. 7.446 and fig. 10b = inv. 3219), codicil, or some addition to a will sent *per II nuntios*. Interior (wax) text mentions a man's military affiliation and gives *ad testamentum suum*; exterior writing, not *transversa* and in two non-matching columns (in which the writing runs in opposite directions), seems to give (on the right) the end of a text with a partial date, and (on the left) seven sealer-names. Interpunct and abbreviations. One central hole in surviving bottom edge, so *pertusa*. Diptych (*tab.* II only)? Late 2nd c. AD. Latin.
33. CPL 197 (P.Mich. 7.451 and fig. 12c = inv. 6.237), fragmentary acknowledgment of receipt of money (for a sale of slaves?). Cannot tell whether first or third person (*accep[---]*). Interior (wax) text has left only illegible scratching; exterior (ink) copy written *transversa*. Re-used? No edges preserved. AD 206 (12 Dec.?). Latin.
34. CPL 172 (T.Amh. lat. 1 = DE RICCI 1904, 145–152. 185–194; M.Chr. 362; ²FIRA 3.23–25 no. 11), manumission *inter amicos*. Interior (wax) text and exterior (ink) copy identical (written in same hand), a Latin statement followed by a Greek first-person subscription of manumittor in a second hand, written for him by another because he does not know letters. Traces of seals of manumittor, *redemptor*, and five witnesses on *pag.* 1 (exterior text ends on *pag.* 4). *Pertusa*; two holes for hinging. Diptych (*tab.* I–II). Hermopolis Maior; AD 211 (CPL) or 221 (²FIRA) (July). Latin and Greek.
35. CPL 173 (T.Cair. no inventory number; GUÉRAUD 1940, 22 n. 1), fragmentary manumission by a woman with the *ius trium liberorum*. Text preserves the *actum* formula and date, and Greek subscription-summary in a second hand, written for her by another because she does not know letters. No physical details; text only, reported in a footnote. Oxyrhynchus; AD 241. Latin and Greek.
36. CPL 163 (T.Cair. no inventory number; ²FIRA 3.3–5 no. 1; GUÉRAUD 1940 = SB 9200), fragmentary copy of a *professio* of birth. Interior (wax) writing illegible; exterior *transversa* writing on *pag.* 1 gives the end of the act, then the professing father writes in a second hand a Greek subscription-summary through another, since he does not know letters; then (first hand again) the year is noted (in Greek) and *exemplum subscriptionis* is written; then (third hand) *acceptum* [date] *recognovi*. *Pertusa*. Diptych (*tab.* I only). Oxyrhynchus (?); AD 242 (17 Mar.). Latin and Greek.

37. CPL 168 (P.Ross.Georg. 5.26), fragmentary census declaration. Lists of people with their ages, written *transversa*. One writes ἀπογράφουμαι (ed. princ. thinks both Latin and Greek in different hands). At end in second hand it says, *accepi libellis* ... Side prepared for wax is not written on; declarations on the other side, in ink. 3rd c. AD. Latin and Greek.

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Appendix 4. Christian Papyrus Codices

This list has been subject to substantial variation over the years, and dating has been a particularly vexed issue. I have therefore merely grouped (except for no. 1, which all agree takes pride of place), and within each group (like <2nd c.>, <2nd–3rd c.>) have listed by type of text (apocryphal and New Testament in Appendix 4a, Old Testament in Appendix 4b): Ap, P, and AT are abbreviations for these designations in the numeration system of ALAND 1976, partially updated in ALAND 1994. Dating for papyri found before 1973 is from TURNER 1977, dating which appears to be more conservative than that followed by at least some New Testament scholars. For a full bibliography of the New Testament papyri, given by Aland number, see ELLIOTT 2000, 22–39.

(a) non-OT papyrus codices:

1. P52 = P.Ryl. 3.457 (Gospel of John, fragment). Single-quire; c. 130 pages. From the Fayum or Oxyrhynchus; c. AD 100–125.¹²⁵
2. Ap 14 = P.Egerton 2+P.Köln 255 (codex of an apocryphal Gospel). Abbreviations (some suspended, some not «standard», TUCKETT 2003, 444, 439f.). Unknown provenance; 2nd (or 2nd–3rd) c. AD.
3. P77+P105 = P.Oxy. 2683+4405 (Matthew). Punctuation. Oxyrhynchus; 2nd c. AD.
4. P103 = P.Oxy. 4403 (Matthew). May be from P77+P105 (= P.Oxy. 2683+4405). Oxyrhynchus; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
5. P104 = P.Oxy. 4404 (Matthew). Oxyrhynchus; second half 2nd c. AD?
6. P66 (= P.Bodmer ii)+P90 (= P.Oxy. 3523) (John). Multiple quire; possibly contained two gospels. 156 pages (numbered); two pairs of holes for hinging. Corrections and abbreviations. Unknown provenance; slightly before AD 200.
7. Ap 9 = P.Oxy. 1 (Gospel of Thomas). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
8. P.Oxy. 4009 (Gospel of Peter). Abbreviations, punctuation. Oxyrhynchus; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
9. P4 (= P.Paris inv. BN Gr.1120)+P64 (= P.Oxf.Magd. inv. Gr.18)+P67 (= P.Barco. 1), published separately (MERELL 1938, ROBERTS 1953, ROCA-PUIG 1962) (Matthew and Luke). Multiple quire. Punctuation, abbreviations, double-columned. A deluxe edition «intended for liturgical use» (STANTON 2004, 74)? Koptos; 2nd–3rd c. AD (HEAD 1995, refuting THIEDE 1995).
10. P75 = P.Bodmer xiv-xv (John and Luke). Single quire (or two single quires sewn together, SKEAT 1994, 264 = SKEAT, in: ELLIOTT 2004, 80f.)? 144 pages. Lectional aids, abbreviations. Unknown provenance; c. AD 200.
11. P5 = P.Oxy. 208+1781 (John). Single-quire. 100 pages. Interpuncts; contractions and abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; early 3rd c. AD.
12. P95 = P.Laur. inv. II/31 (John). Early 3rd c. AD.
13. P108 = P.Oxy. 4447 (John). Abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; early 3rd c. AD.
- [14. P.Oxy. 1594 (Tobit). Parchment. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.]
15. Ap 19 = P.Ryl. 3.463 (Gospel of Mary). Punctuation, abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
16. P1 = P.Oxy. 2 (Matthew). Lectional aids, abbreviations, pagination. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
17. P20 = P.Oxy. 1171 (James). Punctuation, lectional aids, abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
18. P23 = P.Oxy. 1229 (James). Punctuation. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
19. P27 = P.Oxy. 1355 (Romans). Punctuation, abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
20. P28 = P.Oxy. 1596 (John). Punctuation, abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
21. P32 = P.Ryl. 1.5 (Titus). Punctuation, abbreviation, hinged with two holes. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
22. P39 = P.Oxy. 1780 (John). Punctuation, abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
23. P45 = P.Chester Beatty I+SKEAT – MCGING 1991 (four gospels and Acts). Made of *uniones* (single-sheet quires)? Punctuation, abbreviation (some suspensions), pagination; hinged with two pairs of unequally sized holes through the quires, not in the folds. Aphroditopolis in the Fayum (?); mid-3rd c. AD.
24. P46 = P.Chester Beatty II+P.Mich. 6238 (Pauline epistles). Single-quire, 208 pages; hinged with two (?) holes. Punctuation, lectional aids, abbreviations, pagination. Fayum (?); 3rd c. AD.
25. P47 = P.Chester Beatty III (Revelation). Single-quire. Lectional aids, abbreviations. Forty-six pages. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
26. P49 = P.Yale 415 (Ephesians). Lectional aids, abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
27. P53 = P.Mich. inv. 6652 (Matthew and Acts). Abbreviations. Fayum; 3rd c. AD.
28. P65 = PSI 1373 (Thess.). Abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.

¹²⁵ ROBERTS 1935, 13–24 = 1936, 46–52 dated this papyrus by looking for the closest parallels to its handwriting, which he found in BGU 19(c) (closing decades of first c. AD), P.Fayum 110 (AD 94), P.Lond. 2078 (Domitianic), P.Oslo 22 (AD 127), SCHUBART, Griechische Papyri, fig. 34 (before AD 117), and P.Egerton 2 (mid-second c. AD).

29. P69 = P.Oxy. 2383 (Luke). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
30. P101 = P.Oxy. 4401 (Matthew). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
31. P106 = P.Oxy. 4445 (John). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
32. P107 = P.Oxy. 4446 (John). Fragment. Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
33. P109 = P.Oxy. 4448 (John). Abbreviation restored. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
34. P111 = P.Oxy. 4495 (Luke). Abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
35. P113 = P.Oxy. 4497 (Romans). Fragment. Abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
36. P114 = P.Oxy. 4498 (Hebrews). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.

(b) *OT papyrus codices:*

1. AT 15+AT 30 = P.Bad. 4.56b (Exodus and Deuteronomy). Abbreviations, lexical aids, double-columned. Qarara; 2nd c. AD.
2. AT 6 = P.Yale 1 (Genesis). c. 188 pages. Punctuation. Unknown provenance; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
3. AT 8 = P.Oxy. 656 (Genesis). Single-quire? Punctuation, contractions, abbreviation, pagination. Oxyrhynchus; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
4. AT 24+AT 25 = P.Chester Beatty VI (Numbers and Deuteronomy). Single-quire? Punctuation, abbreviation, pagination, double-columned. Fayum; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
5. AT 68 = P.Bodl. 5 (Psalms). Unknown provenance; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
6. AT 78 = P.Ant. 7 (Psalms). Antinoopolis; 2nd–3rd c. AD.
7. AT 10 = P.Berlin 17213 (Genesis). Single-quire. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
8. AT 19 = P.Oxy. 1074 (Exodus). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; 3rd c. AD.
9. AT 20 = P.Rein. 59 (Exodus). Abbreviations, punctuation. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
10. P.Oxy. 4442 (Exodus). Abbreviations. Oxyrhynchus; early 3rd c. AD.
11. AT 33 = PSI 127 (Judges). Abbreviations, pagination. Oxyrhynchus; early 3rd c. AD.
12. AT 146+AT 148 = P.Chester Beatty IX–X (Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther). Single-quire, 118 pages. Lectional aids, abbreviations, pagination. Aphroditopolis; 3rd c. AD.
13. AT 38 = P.Egerton 4 (2Par.). Lectional aids, abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
14. AT 39 = P.Barco. inv. 3 (2Par.). Lectional aids, abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
15. AT 43 = P.Lit.Lond. 204 (Psalms). Philadelphia; 3rd c. AD (?). Abbreviation.
16. AT 47 = P.Oxy. 1226 (Psalms). Lectional aids, abbreviation. Oxyrhynchus; early 3rd c. AD.
17. AT 48 = P.Mich. 3.133 (Psalms). Punctuation, abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
18. AT 72 = MPer iv.12 (Psalms). Abbreviation. Provenance unknown; 3rd c. AD.
19. AT 86 = P.Leipzig 170 (Psalms). Dimeh or Soknopaïou Nesos; 3rd c. AD.
20. AT 89 = P.Ant. i.9 (Psalms). Antinoopolis; 3rd c. AD (?).
21. AT 90 = P.Ant. i.8+iii.210 (Psalms). Single-quire. Lectional aids, abbreviations. Antinoopolis; 3rd c. AD (?).
22. AT 129 = P.Chester Beatty VII+P.Mert.1.2+PSI xii.1273 (Isaiah). Single quire. Punctuation, lectional aids, abbreviations, pagination. Aphroditopolis (?); 3rd c. AD.
23. AT 133 = P.Vindob. inv. G2320 = WESSELY 1909, 1 no. 1 (Isaiah). Abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.
24. AT 138 = P.Berol. inv. 17212 (Jer.). Punctuation, lectional aids, abbreviations. Unknown provenance; 3rd c. AD.

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*Appendix 5. Dimensions of Wooden and Waxed Tablets from Egypt,
compared with Christian Papyrus Codices*

Note: the numbers are those given in the various appendices above; dimensions are given in cm, width × height where width is the dimension of the exterior side parallel with the direction of the writing. «No dimensions» signifies that either the tablet has been only quickly described, or that not enough survived for anyone to make an estimate of the size of the codex. (Fr.) signifies that one edge, but only one, is preserved.

<i>1. schooltexts</i>	<i>2. accounts</i>	<i>3. legal</i>	<i>4. Christian codices</i>
	(3 rd c. B.C.)		
	1. 5.7×9.1		
(1 st c. AD)			
1. no dimensions	2. 6.3×12.7	1. 13.3×16.9	
2. 24×10	3. 5.8×12.5	2. 17×20	
3. 12.5×5.8		3. (fr.) 4×17.6	
(2 nd c. AD)			
4. no dimensions	4. 13×31	4. (fr.) 7.2×13.5	1. 18×21.3
5. no dimensions	5. no dimensions	5. 12/14×17/18	2. 17×20
6. no dimensions	6. no dimensions	6. no dimensions	3. no dimensions
7. no dimensions	7. no dimensions	7. (fr.) 8.9×14	4. 11×16
8. 26×17.8	8. no dimensions	8. 9.6×15	5. 14×25
	9. no dimensions	9. 13.4×17	6. 14.2×16.2
	10. no dimensions	10. 12/14×17/18	
	11. no dimensions	11. 8.2×16.6	
	12. no dimensions	12. [13×10.5] ¹²⁶	
	13. no dimensions	13. 12/14×17/18	
	14. no dimensions	14. 12/14×17/18	
	15. no dimensions	15. (fr.) 6×16.7	
		16. 13.5×18	
		17. (fr.) 6.7×19.4	
		18. 12.4×17.5	
		19. (fr.) 3×12.8	
		20. 13.5×18	
		21. 8×11.5?	

¹²⁶ Here the proportions are given width/height for interior writing, since a will has no *trans-versa* exterior writing; when included in the statistics for proportions these are reversed, as a reflection of what people would have seen.

1. schooltexts	2. accounts	3. legal	4. Christian codices
		22. 12/14×17/18	
		23. 11.5×14	
		24. 11.2×14.2	
		25. 12×15	
		26. 12/14×17/18?	
		27. no dimensions	
		28. (fr.) 4.7×14.3	
		29. no dimensions	
		30. no dimensions	
		31. (fr.) 3.5×14	
		32. no dimensions	
(2 nd –3 rd c. AD)			7. no dimensions
9. 14.4×30.7			8. 4.7×8
10. 22.5×10			9. 13/12×18/17
11. 36.5×13.5			10. 13×26
12. 16.5×13			11. 12.5×25
			12. no dimensions
			13. 14.5×18.5
(3 rd c. AD)			
13. no dimensions	16. no dimensions	33. no dimensions	14. 8.5×8.5
14. 31×17.4	17. 9.2×10.8	34. 15×17.8	15. no dimensions
15. 17.7×15	18. 8.2×15.6	35. no dimensions	16. 12×24.7
16. 23.8×11	19. 21×28.6	36. (fr.) 9×18.5	17. ?×16
17. 27×9.5	20–27. no dimensions	37. (fr.) 5.2×19	18. 11.2×?
18. 33×17.7			19. no dimensions
19. 41.5×13.5			20. 12/13×20.5
			21. 15×20
			22. 16×25.6
			23. 20.4×25.4
			24. 13.5/15.2×26.5/27
			25. 14×24.2
			26. no dimensions
			27. no dimensions
			28. no dimensions
			29. 13/12×33
			30. 9×22
			31. 12.5×23.5
			32. no dimensions
			33. 12×24
			34. no dimensions
			35. 14/15×25
			36. 15×25

[For the following OT fragments dimensions are preserved: 2 (14×20). 3 (11+x24.3+). 4 (19/18×33). 5 (11×16). 6 (?×14). 10 (12×?). 11 (11.5×16). 12 (12.4×34.8). 13 (12×16/17). 16 (15+x29.8). 20 (18×35). 21 (12×17). 22 (15.3×26).]

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