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See also →Betray, Betrayal; →Peter

Cock, Crowing of the
→Cock; →Peter

Code
→Law

Codex

The codex (literally: "wood," "trunk of a tree") was originally a sort of "notebook," consisting of two or more wooden tablets, bound together with a hinge. In the ancient Near East as well as in the Roman world, such devices were used for shorter documents of everyday use, while longer literary texts were normally written on papyrus scrolls. It was only with the development of codices made of parchment or papyrus in the 1st/2nd centuries CE that this medium became gradually more attractive. By the 5th century CE, it had largely supplanted the scroll as a standard medium for book production. It has often been observed that the rise of the codex, by and large, coincided with the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Although Christians preferred codices for their writings right from the beginning, it cannot be asserted that Christians were vital for the implementation of the new medium.

Martial (1.2) described the advantages of the codex in the 1st century CE: it is small, suitable for travel, and it can be read with one hand. It was cheaper as well, because the papyrus was used on both sides (unlike the scroll). There is no reason to think that the Christians opted for the codex for reasons other than these – and certainly not for religious or spiritual reasons. The first surviving Christian codices are small booklets made of papyrus, containing, for example, the text of one or more gospels (like P. Bodmer II and P. *ex* Bodmer XIV–XV, now in the Vatican, both 3rd cent. CE). In the 4th century CE, a new type of religious book appeared: much larger, sumptuous, and written on parchment. These codices contained the Holy Scriptures of Judaism along with a new corpus of Christian writings, which thereby visibly moved up to the rank of "Holy" Scripture as well. The most important preserved copies are the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus.

Christian scholars recognized early the possibilities linked with the new medium. Origen's Hexapla juxtaposed several versions of the Old Testament: this enormous work was made for consulta-tion and scholarly use rather than continuous reading for edificatory or liturgical purposes. In a scroll it would have been impossible to handle this material. The same use applies to Eusebius' canon tables, a precursor of modern synopses of the Gospels. They allowed for immediate access to various parallel passages. Perhaps also due to their beauty, and often sumptuous decoration, they became a standard feature of medieval Bibles.

The ability to consult (rather than read) texts turned out to be particularly useful in the field of law. Some important late antique law collections therefore carry the name of the medium on which they were written (Codex Theodosianus, Codex Justinianus), hence the modern use of "codex" for a corpus of written rules (religious or not).

In the Middle Ages, parchment codices were the standard medium for all longer texts, while the scroll survived only for the Torah in Judaism and for certain liturgical usages (mainly for the "Exsultet," the praise of the paschal candle) in Christianity. In the later Middle Ages, paper replaced parchment: it was thinner and cheaper. In this form the codex continued to be used as a medium also for printed books.

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See also →Aleppo; →Alexandrinus, Codex; →Bezae Cantabrigiensis, Codex; →Bible Illustration; →Book; →Leningrad Codex; →Materiality of Scripture; →Parchment; →Scroll, Scrolls; →Sinaiticus, Codex; →Vaticanus, Codex

Codex Alexandrinus
→Alexandrinus, Codex

Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis
→Bezae Cantabrigiensis, Codex

Codex Leningradensis
→Leningrad Codex

Codex Sinaiticus
→Sinaiticus, Codex