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Bound to be Rebound: Fates of Latin Manuscripts in Late Antiquity

Abstract: The reutilisation of books for the production of other books is a phenomenon whose origins certainly go back to those of the book itself, made up of complex and varied dynamics, which, over time, have given rise to different and multiform solutions. This contribution focuses on the reuse of Latin papyrus and parchment manuscripts in codex bindings between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages from the ‘extended’ Mediterranean basin. Their origin, provenance and morphology is very different from case to case, involving sources not necessarily only in the Latin language and script. The phenomenon concerns a wide, multilingual and plurigraphic area that finds some significant points in common in the techniques of codex manufacture and the phenomena of reuse.

1 Introduction: the long history of book reuse

The reuse of books to make other books is an ancient phenomenon, inherent to the history of books themselves, varied and multiform.¹ The ways in which it manifests itself are numerous, long-standing and continuous over time: from papyrus opisthograph (also written on the outer side) *volumina* to the parchment covers of modern printed volumes, palimpsest leaves, bindings and the restoration/recovery of lost textual/bibliological units.² It is rightly part of the mentality of reuse that so much characterises ancient and medieval material and intellectual culture, giving rise to cases of ‘unconscious conservation’ that represent the complement of that conscious reuse better known as *spolium*.³ Regarding the various (and often unfortunate) fates of manuscripts from Antiquity

1 An effective introduction to the topic of the reuse of manuscripts in bindings can be read in Caldelli 2012, 30–88, with bibliography, and Solidoro 2018.

2 On the latter topic in particular, I refer to Bianconi 2018.

3 On the concept of ‘unconscious preservation’ (*conservazione inconsapevole*), see Petrucci Nardelli 2007, 1. Rarely do the two practices converge: this is the case, for instance, of Latin manuscripts with musical notations used in medieval Damascus as book covers, for which see Hirschler 2020, 449–451. On the aesthetic value of the reuse of musical manuscripts in bindings, also see Kügle 2020.

uity to the present,⁴ that of reuse in other books/written objects is certainly the one that has received most attention from scholars. This absorption in reuse, effectively reconstructed by Elisabetta Caldelli (2012), was initially motivated by an interest of a mainly textual nature; later, and progressively, in an attempt to reconstruct the techniques and skills of book manufacturing as examples of the mentality and material culture, in the context of a renewed archaeology of the manuscript book that has animated codicology and bibliography studies in recent decades. Reused books are always fragments of books, of different consistencies and sizes, and often very damaged. Their study is determining, among varying opinions, the birth of a specific path of investigation in these years, known as fragmentology. The impetus certainly also derives from the possibilities offered by technology: text databases make it possible to identify already attested works without any effort, digitised images enable the reuniting of *fragmenta disiecta* dispersed in different manuscript collections, and photographic techniques allow one to read the illegible, even at a distance. This is not the place to express assessments of fragmentology as an autonomous discipline among the historical sciences of manuscript books, nor to linger on further generalisations, with the risk of losing specificity of periods and contexts.⁵

2 Bindings and palimpsests in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: a common history

The focus of this paper is the reuse of Latin papyrus and parchment manuscripts in codex bindings between the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, taking into account manuscript sources from the ‘extended’ Mediterranean basin: sources of ancient and continuous archival-library preservation, archaeological provenance, and those not necessarily only in the Latin language and script. A wide, multilingual and plurigraphic area is, in fact, concerned here,

⁴ For an overview of medieval papyri, see Caldelli 2012, 31, n. 6; a great deal of information on the various uses of papyri (in cartonnages, as stoppers of amphorae and jars, even as toilet paper) can be found in the preface to individual editions and in papyrology manuals; see an overview of the phenomenon in Luijendijk 2010.

⁵ In addition to the numerous initiatives that have sprung up in recent years (one of which is *Fragmentarium.ms*) to define epistemological assumptions, methodologies and future perspectives, a thematic journal, *Fragmentology*, has also been added: see the editorial of the first issue (Duba and Flüeler 2018) for a framing of fragmentology in the context of codicological studies *tout court*.

where the techniques of codex manufacture and reuse show some significant points in common.

The first proof of the importance of the phenomenon in the Western world can be found by examining the number of items from bindings in the *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (CLA):⁶ 262 of the 2,047 items covered in the catalogue⁷ were re-covered in bindings, about one-eighth of the total, a number slightly lower than the number of CLAs recorded as palimpsests (287). The two phenomena must, therefore, be considered equally significant in the period of interest, and together, represent a quarter of the surviving ancient manuscript production in the Latin language and script. The absolute numbers can undergo significant variations (in the order of tens) if we consider the following phenomena. Firstly, there are few but significant cases (eleven in all from the catalogue perusal) for which the same manuscript has been both partly palimpsested and partly re-adapted in a binding. Secondly, a number of Latin fragments of bindings were published after the last addendum to the CLA (which dates back to 1992). Thirdly, some fragments in the CLA had not been recognised by Elias Avery Lowe as fragments of bindings. Finally, the phenomenon, only recently adequately valued, of the circulation of Latin manuscripts in the form of loose (*disligati*) quires must be taken into account:⁸ bibliological and textual units conceived and set up for a book form that was not closed, even if definitive, and written with calligraphic and bookish scripts and careful *mise en page*. In addition to an outdated perspective, the CLAs obviously offer a pool of evidence limited to the Latin world, which is only a part of the broad Mediterranean area that I want to consider here. We do not have any late antique bindings preserved in their original form from the Latin world; most of those currently preserved come from the Egyptian area, from the Greek and Coptic linguistic and cultural environments. The techniques used to set up these bindings have been thoroughly investigated,⁹ and rightly traced back to craft practices of a broader material culture, in which the same techniques of stitching sheets into quires and quires into bindings are otherwise visible in other everyday objects.¹⁰

The binding is perhaps the most provisional and changeable component of the book in codex format, frequently liable to replacement and for practical

6 Lowe 1934–1966, 1971, 1972.

7 Now easily available in an online version thanks to a meritorious initiative of the University of Galway, ‘Earlier Latin Manuscripts’ (ELMSS): <<https://elmss.nuigalway.ie>>. All websites mentioned in this article were accessed on 27 January 2023.

8 On the phenomenon, see Fioretti 2016; Boccuzzi 2019.

9 van Regemorter 1958.

10 Boudalis 2018 is fundamental.

(and other) reasons, which often led to its irreparable loss. The phenomenon of the obliteration of bindings has been perpetrated up to ages very close to our own, causing gaps in knowledge of varying magnitude and proportion. This is especially true, as we shall see shortly, for fragments re-covered in bindings of papyrus codices. Consequently, it can be inferred that those among the surviving parchment fragments, especially ones of archaeological origin, to be identified as reused in papyrus codex bindings are many more than those currently recognised as such.

Palimpsest sheets and binding fragments are comparable in several respects. As I have mentioned above, the same manuscript intended for reuse could be partly palimpsested and partly used to make strips for binding. Most ‘coffin’¹¹ manuscripts were set up with palimpsest sheets of different origin, writing, content, date, layout and original size. Regarding the Latin West, two particularly representative cases are St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 908,¹² the so-called ‘king of palimpsests’, which has as many as ten different manuscripts (CLA 7.954–965), some *ter scripti*, among its *scripturae inferiores*; and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 24 (CLA 1.69–77: <https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.lat.24/0001>), among whose redeployed leaves are hidden some very important late Latin manuscripts of classical literature.¹³ The same is true of the fragments readopted as bindings, which – in cases where it can be determined – come from different manuscripts. As shall become evident, the variety of contents sometimes does not necessarily correspond to randomness: the whole may suggest a homogeneous and coherent context of origin/provenance.

3 Fragments reused in bindings between East and West: a typological survey

The fragments could be used in several places in the binding and for different purposes: the largest fragments come from boards, used as stiffening in soft bindings. This fate is also shared by parchments in the late antique and early medieval

¹¹ ‘Coffin’ manuscript means that the manuscript is set up with the sheets of reuse, within which they were in a sense ‘laid down’, ‘buried’.

¹² See CLA 7.953, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5076/e-codices-csg-0908>>.

¹³ A still valid analytical description can be found in Fohlen 1979; a fine-tuning, also bibliographical, in Ammirati 2015, *passim*.

world, mostly – in this period – coming from books,¹⁴ and by papyrus sheets, with literary and documentary content, both in the East and West; the mass of bindings often includes fragments with different contents in terms of language, writing and format, but not necessarily – as mentioned – inhomogeneous.

The Pommersfelden fragments are certainly a remarkable case as far as the Latin West is concerned: they comprise twenty-one papyri, seven Greek¹⁵ and fourteen Latin, all dating between the fifth and seventh centuries. Their present form and traces of glue have made it possible to ascertain that all of them were reused to form the pasteboards of bindings of later manuscripts (or perhaps of the same manuscript), probably in the Early Middle Ages. The fragments arrived together in Pommersfelden in September 1725 as a gift from the Bamberg cathedral chapter to its *Fürstbischof*, Electoral Prince Lothar Franz Graf von Schönborn, a collector of books and manuscripts. It is not possible to determine exactly how and when the papyri came to Bamberg, but it is reasonable to assume that it was through one of the book donations made to the city's *Domkapitel* by emperors of the Ottonian dynasty, the earliest of which dates from the early eleventh century, with many manuscripts coming from Italy. The texts contained therein could all be found with reasonable certainty in an archive or chancellery. A Ravenna origin or permanence can be assumed for the fragments in Latin language and script: P.Pommersf. L 14r¹⁶ is a document of almost certain origin in Ravenna, whose *terminus post quem*, which can be deduced from its content, is 22 February 433; the verso of the same document P.Pommersf. L 14v (CLA 9.1349) was redeployed to annotate passages of *De vigiliis* of Niceta of Remesia in new cursive script; P.Pommersf. L 7-13 (CLA 9.1350) also consists of seven fragments from a papyrus roll, containing an unidentified text on the recto and the *Altercatio Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani* by Evagrius on the verso, a text that was, according to the sources, well known in Late Antiquity. Given the popularity of the text and the type of writing, it can be assumed that the scroll was a transcription for personal use, a private copy. Accompanying them is P.Pommersf. L 1-6 (CLA 9.1351), a group of papyrus fragments originally belonging to six sheets of a codex containing at least Book 45 of the *Digest*, written in the same legal uncial as the Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florentine Pandects (CLA 3.295).

Things do not change much from Ravenna to Sinai. The same fate was suffered by the sheets of the Bernardakis papyrus, from a bilingual and digraphic papyrus codex containing a Greek commentary on Roman law, dating back to

¹⁴ There will also be many documents in the early medieval period: see Caldelli 2012, 7–27.

¹⁵ Sirks, Sijpesteijn and Worp 1996.

¹⁶ Tjäder 1958.

the sixth century. Some of the sheets were removed from the pasteboards of the binding of the codex Sinai, St Catherine, Ar. 588 and published.¹⁷ Recent investigations at St Catherine's monastery by Michelle Brown and the team from the University of Vienna coordinated by Claudia Rapp have identified other sheets from the same codex still glued to the boards.¹⁸

Parchment fragments generally seem to be reused for binding elements where greater strength is required. This phenomenon is also found in both East and West. The P.Berol. inv. 14079, an unpublished fragment from the Berlin collection containing the *Responsa* of the jurist Papinian¹⁹ (written in 'primitive minuscule', referring to the fifth century CE), must certainly have been used as a central reinforcing strip in the binding, at the spine. The strip is too small to be used for pasteboards and too large to be used as a reinforcement at the point where the threads pass through, but just high enough for a small to medium-sized codex, as is frequently found in late antique Coptic bindings. In addition to its size, the regular cut and traces of glue on the flesh side of the parchment, which blackened the surface and made the text particularly difficult to decipher, indicate this use. A western comparison can be made with the fifth-century parchment fragment, in 'old-style' uncial script, of the *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* of Solinus, recently identified by Isabella Bardini and Laura Pani in the binding of the Tolmezzo, Fondazione Museo Carnico, 585AR D101, an octavo copy of the first volume of the collection of homilies by the German theologian Johann Maier, known as Eck, printed in Paris in 1574 by Jean Ruelle.²⁰ The very late reuse of the Solinus fragment makes one wonder whether these fragments were kept for a long time before being refunctionalised, or whether the final reuse, the one by which they have come down to us, was not the only one. The same fate as the Solinus fragment happened to some leaves of an uncial codex of the *Annales ab urbe condita* of Titus Livius, now preserved in Bamberg. Those found by Hans Fischer and Ludwig Traube²¹ in the bindings of Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Theol. 99 and Bibl. 41, now constitute the Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Class. 35a and, judging by their state of preservation, must

¹⁷ van der Wal 1983.

¹⁸ Brown 2017.

¹⁹ The edition is currently being prepared by Marco Fressura and Luigi Pellicchi as part of the REDHIS ('Rediscovering the Hidden Structure: A New Appreciation of Juristic Texts and Patterns of Thought in Late Antiquity') project <<http://redhis.unipv.it>>.

²⁰ Bardini and Pani 2017.

²¹ Fischer and Traube 1907; Traube 1909; see also Seider 1980, 145–149.

have come from the spine.²² In addition, some of the leaves are still visible *in situ* in Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Bibl. 18, where they were used to reinforce the margins of parchment sheets gnawed by mice,²³ and Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Patr. 4, in the form of offsets.²⁴ The original codex, probably of Italian origin, must have reached Bamberg with the Ottonian donations mentioned above.

The situation of the fragments still visible *in situ*, which we have observed – with a different gradient – for Bamberg and Tolmezzo, is a rare circumstance, even rarer in manuscripts of archaeological provenance. An interesting case is represented by PSI XIII 1348, three large fragments of a bifolium of a papyrus codex, plus a series of smaller fragments containing legal definitions and maxims, dating from the fifth to sixth century.²⁵ The bifolium, which must have been the central element of a quire, has a long and narrow strip of parchment at the fold, in which several holes are visible, which must have been used for the passage of the binding thread. There are no visible traces of writing on the parchment, but this does not preclude the possibility that it could be the reuse of the unwritten margin of a sheet. Some of the numerous strips recovered from the binding of Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 2160 + Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 9916 + St Florian, Stiftsbibliothek, III.15.B, a papyrus codex containing works by Hilary of Poitiers, probably written in southern Italy in the first half of the sixth century,²⁶ are also almost unwritten. In this case, the parchment fragments were found and identified by Stephan Ladislaus Endlicher in 1835 in the inner leaves of the quires (*quaternionum [...] interioribus foliis*), removed (*laciniolis [...] solutis*) from their original location, lest the papyrus suffer any loss (*ne quid*

²² See <<https://zendsbb.digitale-sammlungen.de/db/0000/sbb00000099/images/index.html>>. The fragments have been detached and are now stored in plexiglass cases and have been re-joined to form the pages of the original manuscript: <https://zendsbb.digitale-sammlungen.de/db/ausgaben/thumbnaeilseite.html?id=00000099&seite=4&image=sbb00000099_00004.jpg&bibl=sbb>. The present Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Class. 35 is the medieval copy of the late antique codex now reduced to fragments: a singular case of double reuse here too. On the dating and origin of the Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Class. 35, see Tischler 2000.

²³ See <<https://zendsbb.digitale-sammlungen.de/db/0000/sbb00000147/images/index.html>>.

²⁴ See <<https://zendsbb.digitale-sammlungen.de/db/0000/sbb00000142/images/index.html>>.

²⁵ See <<http://www.psi-online.it/documents/psi;13;1348>>.

²⁶ The manuscript was in Vienna in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when the Jesuit Joseph Benedict Heyrenbach made a careful transcript of most of the text (now Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, L 9799). The main manuscript was presented to Emperor Joseph II by Camillo IV, count of Colloredo, between 1793 and 1797; it was then bound up with Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, L 903 (*Epistulae Pauli*, in Beneventan script, tenth century). See: <https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_6752817&order=1&view=SINGLE>.

papyrus detrimenti pateretur)²⁷ and, once reassembled to form the structure of the original pages, arranged in a separate album (receiving another shelf mark: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Lat. 1a and 1b).²⁸ They come from two fifth-century uncial parchment codices containing the *Institutiones* of the Roman jurist Ulpian and Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*. In the case of Hilary, therefore, we know from which codex it comes, but have no detailed information on the features of the original binding.²⁹ The strips of parchment, cut from the pages both lengthwise and widthwise, are all of similar size and format.³⁰

Sometimes even the dimensions themselves could be misleading in the absence of a known and archaeologically studied context. This is the case of some parchment fragments (P.Mich. inv. 4969, fr. 36) containing the text of Seneca's *Medea*, which are the only evidence of archaeological origin for this author. They all come from a single leaf and are similar in size. They were used to prepare the binding of a Coptic codex, also made of parchment, together with other scraps of different sizes. The three Senecan *lacinae* (which originally must have been four, judging by the reconstructible missing section) all show signs of a central fold and two sets of holes equidistant from it. The distance between the holes and their reciprocal position coincide with the position of the cord still visible on the remaining cover, allowing us to imagine with good plausibility that the entire sheet was reshaped as a reinforcing strip, protecting the leaves of the new codex from being damaged by the binding cord.³¹ It is curious to note that the reconstructible dimensions for the page of the original Seneca manuscript coincide with those of a surviving pasteboard of the binding and other fragments reused as endpapers: P.Mich. inv. 4970. Because of this coincidence, one can perhaps hypothesise that other leaves of the Seneca may have been used either as guard papers, which were subsequently lost, or as the stiffening

²⁷ It is curious to note the radical change in the perception of danger and potential damage: the parchment tears were inserted between the papyrus sheets for exactly the reason that Endlicher felt they should be removed!

²⁸ The account of the discovery, together with a first transcription of the Ulpian fragments, can be found in Endlicher 1835. The evident disappointment with the content of the fragments – *Sed proh dolor! [...] avara spe delusus* (!) – is also noteworthy (Endlicher 1835, 3 and 4).

²⁹ Which has been lost, according to Fackelmann 1974, 193. Curiously, there is no mention of parchment reinforcements in the work.

³⁰ Cf. CLA 10.1470 and 1471.

³¹ Markus and Schwender 1997, 73.

of the pasteboards of the binding, the contents of which seem to be papyrus fragments.³²

In other contexts, however, it is only the shape of the object and the possible presence of holes that determine the context of origin with good approximation. This is certainly the most frequent circumstance, especially among parchment scraps of archaeological provenance, which very often – as mentioned above – appear detached from their original locations, without any trace of the original position remaining in the registers and inventories of the collections. Dismantled and inventoried with inventory numbers that are often very different from those of their coffin manuscript, due to linguistic, graphic and chronological differences, they are destined, in most cases, to remain isolated and deprived of that ‘archaeological’ context that would allow us to know much more about their history *tout court* and reuse.

In the case of the Latin fragments, this situation occurs with varying degrees of a lack of information. The history of the *Fragmenta Londiniensia Antejustiniana* (FLA), for instance, comprising seventeen parchment fragments belonging to the same codex possibly containing a collection of laws (the *Codex Gregorianus?*), dating from the fifth to sixth century CE, provides some still useful contextual elements. The fragments are 40–45 mm long, and 15–16 mm or 28–32 mm high, with the larger pieces worn along the central axis. Several have a distinct ‘butterfly’ shape, typical of having been used in ‘Greek binding’ (widespread across the Near East). All the fragments must have been recovered from bindings. However, some appear to have been painted with reagents (to aid the visibility of the lettering) and others repaired with Japanese rice paper, so that they are likely to have been detached from their source book or books for some considerable time. None of the fragments appears to have been palimpsested, although there are cases of textual transfer, probably from adjacent binding fragments. The clearest case of this is the Syriac transfer on London, University College, *Fragmenta Londiniensia Antejustiniana*, FLA 12B. The latter

³² <<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis/x-14078/4972v.tif>>. An interesting comparison in terms of size and workmanship can be found in the binding pasteboards in Montserrat, which probably belong to the binding of the famous *Codex Miscellaneus Montserratensis* (LDAB 552), which also consists of two papyrus pasteboards, covered with a sheet of parchment, about 13 cm high and 11 cm wide. Among the visible remains are two parchment scraps crossed by strings, one of which also has traces of papyrus. One can perhaps imagine that the two strips were used to reinforce the passage of threads through the body of the manuscript, but the hypothesis deserves further investigation.

suggests that the page was cut up for binding in the Near East (broadly defined) sometime between the ninth and thirteenth centuries.³³

Finally, when the context is completely lost, it is only the shape, the presence of holes and any traces of papyrus still attached that can guide us as to the reuse of the fragments. A fragment of binding, perhaps glued to the spine, might have belonged to PSI XIII 1306, a rectangular fragment (12.8 × 2.6 cm) containing the bilingual Latin-Greek version of the Epistle to the Ephesians by St Paul,³⁴ from Antinooupolis, whose flesh side, barely legible, perhaps shows traces of glue compatible with this reuse.³⁵ The P.Lond.Lit. 42 (CLA 2.175), the only fragment of archaeological provenance testifying to Lucan's *De bello civili*, written in old style uncial and datable to the beginning of the fifth century, is a small strip of parchment (9 cm wide and 1.6 cm high) certainly from a binding. P.Laur. III/504, a rectangular parchment frustule, 11.7 cm wide and 2.7 cm high, has sharp edges and traces of vegetable fibres, suggesting its use as a reinforcement for the binding of a papyrus codex. It bears a text of grammatical content that includes a quotation from Vergilius's *Aeneis* 11.12–13; written in a tiny upright minuscule, it can be dated to the fifth century.³⁶ And the list could become longer ...

4 Fragments reused in bindings between East and West: a fortunate case

There are numerous other cases to be listed, and a lot more can certainly be found by reconsidering the formats and dimensions of numerous parchment frustules, not only in Latin, preserved in the various papyrological and library collections around the world. It will not be superfluous to remark that for some, it was precisely the arrival in these locations that determined, often irreversibly, the loss of the link with the 'sarcophagus' context/manuscript of origin. The

³³ Corcoran and Salway 2010. According to the authors, moreover, Eastern provenance is also suggested by the fact that the Latin fragments were originally offered for sale with seventeen Greek fragments from seven separate manuscripts dating between the fifth and seventh centuries. This should not be pressed too far, however, as the association of the Greek and Latin fragments need be no more than the coincidence of their recent ownership history.

³⁴ Fressura 2016.

³⁵ See <<http://www.psi-online.en/documents/psi;13;1306>>.

³⁶ Pintaudi 1989; Scappaticcio 2013, 147–148; Ammirati 2015, 62.

latter, however, can sometimes be redetermined, and this is the case with which I would like to conclude this overview.³⁷

Starting in spring 2015, as part of the research conducted for the REDHIS project,³⁸ I had the opportunity to examine some unpublished fragments in the Latin language and script kept at the Papyrusammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna; among them, two small scraps of parchment, perfectly rejoinable, written in a very calligraphic rustic capital and kept glass-framed under the inventory number P.Vindob. L 141³⁹ (Figs 1–2). Although it is not possible to find any exact textual match, the content is evidently legal: the mention of *senatusconsulta Apronianum* (hair side, l. 2), *Pegasianum* (flesh side, l. 2), and *Trebellianum* (flesh side, l. 3) reveals that the main topic must have been *hereditas*, and changes that may have occurred in its regulation in relation to *fideicommissa*. The provenance of the Vienna fragment could not be traced in the Papyrussammlung archive because we have very scanty information about provenances of this section of the collection. Nonetheless, P.Vindob. L 141 shows a very strong resemblance to another couple of fragments of legal content written in rustic capital, which were not edited, but recorded in catalogues: P.Louvre inv. E 10295bis, currently kept in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities in the Louvre Museum. The latter consists of two parchment strips taken from the binding of a well-known late antique papyrus codex (thirty-eight leaves, P.Louvre inv. E 10295: see Figs 3–4) that contains the *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* of Cyril of Alexandria and is written in Alexandrian majuscule dating to the middle of the seventh century. Parchment strips had been removed from the original binding sites, but still appear *in situ* in older photos. Leaves and fragments of the same Cyril codex are also preserved in Dublin, London and Vienna: Dublin, Trinity College, Pap. Select Box 99 + Dublin, Trinity College, Pap. Select Box 100 + London, University College, Petrie Museum, number unknown + P.Vindob. G 19899-19908.

³⁷ I reproduce below the conclusions reported in Ammirati 2019, with some minor updates.

³⁸ <<http://redhis.unipv.it/>>.

³⁹ I examined the fragments in Vienna between 2015 and 2021 with the help of a microscope and UV lamp.



Fig. 1: P.Vindob. L 141 hair side; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

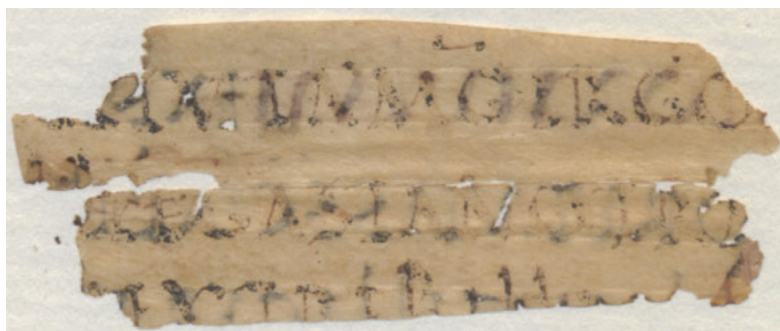


Fig. 2: P.Vindob. L 141 flesh side; © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

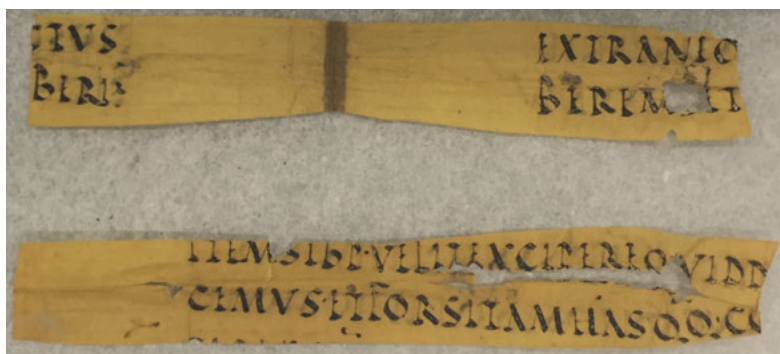


Fig. 3: P.Louvre inv. E 10295bis, frags 1 and 2 hair side; © Musée du Louvre, Département des antiquités égyptiennes.



Fig. 4: P.Louvre inv. E 10295bis, frgs 1 and 2 flesh side; © Musée du Louvre, Département des antiquités égyptiennes.

Having examined both parchments in rustic capital autoptically, I could ascertain that they must have belonged to the same original manuscript; therefore, the Vienna strips were taken from P.Vindob. G 19899-19908 (of which two fragments of bifolia, a suitable site for the parchment strips, survive), possibly soon after the manuscript had entered the Austrian collection; according to old bibliographical references, strips bearing Latin writing were also among the Dublin folia, but they seem to be currently lost; nothing is in London. The visits to Paris in 2016 and 2019 brought some further fortunate surprises: I found other parchment scraps, two already taken away from the Cyril quires, and five still *in situ* (Fig. 5). Having seen them still sewn to the original binding allowed me to ascertain how they were used: they were glued and sewn in the middle of the quire, and prickings for the binding laces occur at a regular distance. A detailed unpublished description of the binding (and binding technique) of the Cyril codex was carried out by Berthe van Regemorter.⁴⁰ Her typescript is still retained with the papyrus leaves in Paris and bears the date ‘April, 27th, 1960’; at that date, four parchment strips were still sewn *in situ*. Therefore, we now have one fragment from Vienna and seven from Paris, but only five out of these seven belonged to the same original parchment codex in rustic capital. The other two (one still sewn, frg. 6, the other kept detached in an envelope and still bearing the binding lace, frg. 7) still display uncial letters, consistent in ductus and size with another Vienna Latin fragment, P.Vindob. L 94. Similar to P.Vindob. L 141, L 94 also has juridical content. Still unedited, it is known thanks to a brief description in CLA 10.1534. The consistency with P.Louvre inv. E 10295bis, frgs 6 and 7 suggests it possibly belonged to the binding of P.Vindob. G 19899-19908.

⁴⁰ van Regemorter 1958.

Moreover, a further examination of frg. 6 and Vienna, P.Vindob. L 94 revealed their nature of palimpsest, the lower script being two different types of Greek majuscule bearing the Greek text only on one side of the parchment. Marco Fressura and I were able to identify the texts contained in the two fragments as belonging to two different books of the Old Testament and we will edit them shortly. Two preliminary conclusions may be relevant for the present paper. Firstly, since the two texts and the two writings are different, it can be stated with reasonable certainty that the two scraps, before constituting the *scripturae inferiores* of the Latin parchment codex with frg. 6 and P.Vindob. L 94, must have belonged to two different manuscripts. Secondly, since both are written on one side of the parchment and bear the text of the Old Testament, it is reasonable to assume that they originally belonged to parchment *volumina* of the Holy Scriptures, perhaps an edition in several rolls, written by several hands, which then fell into disuse.



Fig. 5: P.Louvre inv. E 10295, a fragment still sewn in the binding; © Musée du Louvre, Département des antiquités égyptiennes.

The uncial script of frg. 6 and P.Vindob. L 94 can be dated to the fifth century at the latest; the Greek *volumina* can be dated, at the latest, to the fourth century on palaeographic grounds. The fact that the lower writings of the Latin manuscript are in

Greek constitutes an element in favour of the Egyptian origin of the Latin codex. The parchment of frg. 6 and P.Vindob. L 94, in short, lived at least three lives, before ending up as *membra disiecta* between Vienna and Paris. It is also worth noting the similarity in content between the two reused Greek *volumina* (Old Testament) and the two Latin codices reused as bindings for the Coptic codex (legal texts), one in capital and one in uncial. A further element in favour of the hypothesis that reuse practices not infrequently drew on reused materials perhaps from the same context.⁴¹

5 Bound to be re-bound: Some final remarks

The increasing attention that scholars have devoted in recent years to the archaeology of handwritten books and their manufacturing techniques has made it possible to recover not only important information on the history of ancient handicrafts but also book fragments. Too little has been done so far in this regard for fragments of archaeological provenance, for which it is not always easy to determine phases of reuse, either at the time of excavation or when studied in large collections and repositories. It is important, therefore, that, in time, this material too can be reconsidered systematically in the light of these intents, and tell – as in the fortunate case of the fragments dispersed between Vienna and Paris – interesting new stories about books in the late antique world.

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I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for comments and observations. A full digital reproduction of almost all the manuscripts mentioned is available at the links indicated. Images of the manuscripts also mentioned as CLA items are available here: <<https://elmss.nuigalway.ie>>.

⁴¹ I have also attempted to offer some reflections on the reuse of reuses regarding the fragments in the Latin language and script from the Qubbat al-khazna in Damascus: see Ammirati 2020, and generally the whole volume in which this article is published.

Abbreviations

Shelf-marks and editorial abbreviations of the papyri are provided according to the criteria of the ‘Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets’, <<https://papyri.info/docs/checklist>>.

CLA = Lowe 1934–1966, 1971, 1972, with addenda and supplements; Bischoff, Brown and John, 1985, 1992.

LDAB = Leuven Database of Ancient Books, <<https://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/>>.

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