ALAN MUGRIDGE

# Copying Early Christian Texts

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*
*362*

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## A study of scribal practice

Mohr Siebeck

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For Wendy

# Preface

At the beginning of my doctoral research, Greg Horsley suggested that I test his suggestion that the way in which early Christians produced copies of their texts took place in three stages. In this field of study, it is often assumed that most Christian texts were produced 'in house' by Christian copyists who were mostly unskilled. As I pondered this suggestion it became clear that, not only is this assumption widespread, it is the basis on which some writers maintain that Christian copyists changed the texts to conform to their own views. So the task was to examine the extant papyri to see if they support the common view. That task has indeed been a voyage of discovery.

The main assignment was to find which were the relevant papyri and submit them to examination, and to see if it can be ascertained that those who actually wrote them were generally unskilled writers and not trained scribes, and whether they were Christian by conviction or copyists without any religious commitment which might have had an effect on their copying. So, my doctoral dissertation began as an examination of 'Christian papyri' with the express aim of finding out what can be known about those who actually penned them – a slippery assignment for a number of reasons.

This research has taken a number of years and has involved several kinds of investigation. After having isolated which papyri would form the subject of this study, in 2004 I undertook a research trip to institutions that held some of them in Europe and the United Kingdom. I am grateful to all those in charge of collections who kindly granted me access to papyri at that time: G. Poethke (Berlin), D. Hagedorn, J. Cowey and T. Kruse (Heidelberg), R. Daniel (Cologne), A. Hurst and P. Schubert (Geneva), E. Macheret (Cologny), D. Weston (Glasgow), A. Young (Manchester), C. Penney (Birmingham), G. Waller (Cambridge), J. Maldonado (London), N. Gonis (Oxford), H. Whitehouse (Oxford), B. Barker-Benfield (Oxford), C. Ferdinand (Oxford), and C. Horton and B. McGing (Dublin). Although I was not able to view all the papyri by autopsy, I did manage to see quite a number of them, get a taste for what they actually looked like, and thus envisage what others were like when I could only view them in the form of photographs, published plates or internet images.

In the years since that trip, much more has become available on the internet, and this has made my task much easier. The generosity of those institutions which make their collections available via *APIS* in the United States, *CSAD* in

Oxford, the Schøyen Collection in Oslo-London, the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin, the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, *PSI Online*, the Bibliotheca Laurenziana in Florence and elsewhere, is acknowledged. Various other individuals provided photographs and permission to use them for my research, particularly G. Bastianini (Florence), R. Pintaudi (Florence), M. Hejnová (Prague), K.-T. Zauzich (Würzburg), H. Harrauer and H. Froschauer (Vienna), K. A. Worp and J. A. A. M. Biemans (Amsterdam), A. Bülow-Jacobsen (Copenhagen), M. De Reu (Ghent), E. Horvath (Hamburg), B. Gullath (Munich), R. Scholland (Leipzig) and S. Daris (Trieste).

Thanks should also go to the staff at the following institutions for their assistance: the British Library, the Louvre, Cambridge University Library, the Library of Congress, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Yael Barschak Photographic Archives, the Andover Newton Theological Seminary, the University of Basel Library, the Badè Museum, the Library of the University of Birmingham, the Fondation Bodmer, the Royal Museums of Art and History (Brussels), the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo), the Library of the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church of the USA, the Spurlock Museum (Illinois), the University of Liverpool, the University of Louvain, the Catholic University of Milan, the Morgan Library (New York), Muhlenberg College (Pennsylvania), the National University Library (Strasbourg), and the Egyptian Museum (Turin). Other libraries more at hand have also been generous and efficient in their assistance, including the Dixson Library at the University of New England, Fisher Library at the University of Sydney, the Macquarie University Library and the Kerr Library at Sydney Missionary and Bible College.

My research was generously assisted by financial assistance given by the University of New England Maiben Davies Postgraduate Scholarship in Greek and the J. H. Bishop Postgraduate Scholarship in Classics and Ancient History; a Faculty Doctoral Research Grant and travel assistance from the Australian College of Theology; and the Ingram-Moore Fund of the Australian Institute of Archaeology. I am also especially grateful to the Principal and Board of Sydney Missionary and Bible College, where I am on the Faculty, for granting me several periods of study leave during my part-time candidature, and for providing assistance to travel to Helsinki, Ann Arbor and Warsaw for Conferences of the *Association Internationale de Papyrologues* and my research trip to Europe and the United Kingdom. They have also generously provided me with a period of study leave to work on this book.

Thanks are due, then, to a large number of people who have assisted with this study in various ways, but especially to my supervisor, Prof. Greg Horsley, who has been a constant guide and source of encouragement, especially when progress was slow. Without his help I would never have been able to continue with the research and bring it to a conclusion. Papers given at a number of Australian and international conferences with his support have proved invaluable in hon-

ing my ideas on a number of foundational issues. Prof. G. Stanton, my second supervisor, has also taken time to give encouragement, guidance and feedback along the way. Finally, I would like to thank some people closer to home, including some of my students who have helped in various ways, and particularly my wife Wendy and our family, who have given encouragement over the years, and without whom this project would not have been possible.

# Contents

# List of Figures and Graphs

The Figures and Graphs listed here appear in numerical order throughout this volume. The 'Groups' mentioned (Groups A–L) refer to papyri grouped by content, both Christian and comparative papyri, as listed below and explained in Chapter 1 (§ 2).

# Abbreviations & Sigla

Unless otherwise indicated the following works are used as sources of abbreviations. Ancient literary authors follow those in *LSJ* [9]. Biblical Studies primary sources and journals, including OT, NT and early Christian works, follow those in B. J. Collins et al., 2014[2], *SBL Handbook of Style* (Atlanta: SBL) or G. W. H. Lampe, 1961, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon). Papyrus volumes follow those in J. F. Oates, W. H. Willis et al., *Checklist of editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic papyri, ostraca and tablets* (web edition at Papyri.info). Classical journals follow those in *L'Année Phililogique*. Epigraphic volumes follow those in G. H. R. Horsley, J. A. L. Lee, 1994, 'A preliminary Checklist of abbreviations of Greek epigraphic volumes,' *Epigraphica* 56, 129–69.

Other abbreviations:

| | |
|---|---|
| *ABD* | D. N. Freedman (ed.), 1992, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday) |
| *ANRW* | H. Temporini et al. (eds), 1972–1998, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (Berlin: de Gruyter) 1.1.1–2.37.3 |
| *BNP* | H. Cancik, H. Schneider et al. (eds), 2002–2010, *Brill's New Pauly* (ET of *NP*; 21 vols; Leiden: Brill) |
| *DACL* | F. Cabrol et al. (eds), 1903–1953, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne, et de liturgie* (Paris: n.p.) |
| ECL | Early Christian literature |
| ET | English translation |
| *LSJ* [9] | H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, 1940, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed. by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon; with Revised Supplement edited by P. G. W. Glare, A. A. Thompson, 1996) |
| *LDAB* | Leuven Database of Ancient Books, available at: http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/ |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| MS, MSS | Manuscript, manuscripts |
| *NewDocs* | G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 1981–1989 (vols 1–5; Sydney: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University); S. R. Llewelyn et al., 1992–2012 (vols 6–10; vols. 9–10: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) |
| *New Finds* | P. G. Nicolopoulos et al. (eds), 1999, *The New Finds* (ET; Athens: Ministry of Culture – Mount Sinai Foundation) |
| *NP* | H. Cancik, H. Schneider et al. (eds), 1996–2003, *Der neue Pauly* (16 vols; Stuttgart: Metzler) |
| NT | New Testament |
| *NTTRU* | S. Pickering (ed.), 1993–2000, *New Testament Textual Research Update* (vols 1–8) |
| *OCD* [3] | S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, 1996 [3], *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon) |
| OT | Old Testament |
| *Papiri letterari cristiani* | G. Bastianini, A. Casanova (eds), 2011, *I papiri letterari cristiani* (Florence: Istituto Papirologico 'G. Vitelli') |

| | |
|---|---|
| *RAC* | T. Klauser, et al. (eds), 1950–2007, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann) |
| *RE* | G. Wissowa (ed.), 1894–1963, *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (24 vols; Stuttgart: Metzler) |
| *Repertorium* I, II | K. Aland, 1976, *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri*, I. *Biblische Papyri* (Berlin: De Gruyter); id., H.-U. Rosenbaum, 1995, II. *Kirchenväter-Papyri*, 1. *Beschreibungen* (Berlin: De Gruyter) |
| TM | Trismegistos, available at: http://www.trismegistos.org/index.html |
| Treu/Römer | K. Treu, 'Referat. Christliche Papyri,' I–XVI, *APF* 19 (1969) – 37 (1991); C. Römer, 'Christliche Texte,' I–IX, *APF* 43 (1997) – 48 (2002), 50 (2004) – 51 (2005), 53 (2007) |
| Turner, *Typology* | E. G. Turner, 1977, *Typology of the Early Codex* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania) |
| Van Haelst | J. van Haelst, 1976, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Sorbonne) |
| *Verzeichnis*$^2$ | A. Rahlfs, 2004, *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Supplementum. Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments* (orig. 1914; rev. ed. by D. Fraenkel; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) |

Textual sigla used are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| A̱Ḇ | letters not completely legible |
| [AB] | letters lost from a papyrus but restored by editor |
| {AB} | letters wrongly inserted by copyist but cancelled by editor |
| ⟨AB⟩ | letters omitted by copyist but restored by editor |
| (AB) | abbreviation in the text resolved by editor |
| *m.*1, *m.*2 | first hand (manus), second hand |

Other sigla are:

| | |
|---|---|
| $P^{46}$ | New Testament papyri according to the Gregory-Aland system |
| [ ] | Reconstructed data about a papyrus |
| *1, 2, 3* | Code numbers of papyri |
| *1 + 236* | Code numbers of papyri in or on the one papyrus codex, roll or sheet |
| pl. 1 | plate 1 in a work cited |

Groups of papyri are generally based on the content of papyri, as outlined in Ch. 1 (§ 2), so papyri are given code numbers from *1* to *548*. The cross-reference indices in the Concordance at the end of this volume allow the reader to locate the code numbers of a papyrus in this study, as long as its number is known on one of these catalogues: *LDAB*, van Haelst-Treu-Römer, Turner's *Typology of the Codex*, *Repertorium* I or II, Rahlfs' *Verzeichnis*$^2$ for the LXX or the Gregory-Aland list of NT manuscripts. The Groups used throughout this study are as follows, the Christian papyri comprising those in Groups A–F and Groups I–J.

| *Group* | *Content* | *Code Nos (range)* |
|---|---|---|
| A | Old Testament texts | *1–149* |
| B | New Testament texts | *150–263* |
| C | 'Apocryphal' texts | *264–299* |
| D | Patristic texts | *300–354* |
| E | Hagiographic texts | *355–358* |
| F | Liturgical prayers, hymns etc. | *359–391* |
| G | Amulets | *392–446* |
| H | Magical texts | *447–464* |

| *Group* | *Content* | *Code Nos (range)* |
|---|---|---|
| I | Gnostic & Manichaean texts | *465–478* |
| J | Unidentified texts | *479–520* |
| K1 | Jewish texts (OT) | *521–536* |
| K2 | Jewish texts (other) | *537–545* |
| L | School texts | *546–548* |

The following abbreviations are used for composite codices in this volume:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BCV | *Bodmer Codex of Visions* | (*310 + 312 + 490*) |
| BCC | *Bodmer Composite Codex* | (*78 + 248 + 254 + 265 + 287 + 299 + 334 + 336 + 356*) |
| CBCC | *Chester Beatty Composite Codex* | (*270 + 271 + 333*) |
| MCC | *Montserrat Composite Codex* | (*364*) |

# Glossary

A number of terms are included in a glossary here, and are used throughout this volume. Many of these have been modelled on those provided in W. A. Johnson, 2004, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto) 341–43.

| | |
|---|---|
| Apostrophe | Small rounded shape, usually open to the left and placed high and after a letter (e. g., δ’) |
| Book hand | A variety of styles of handwriting, mainly bilinear and with separate letters, *usually* employed for the writing of literary texts; also known as ‘literary hand’ |
| *Colon* | A single point placed after a letter as a form of punctuation, placed in high ( ˙ ), middle (·) or low (.) position |
| *Coronis* | Design placed in the (left and/or right) margin, sometimes quite ornate, indicating the end of a work |
| Copyist | Anyone engaging in writing, used in this volume in a neutral sense (like ‘writer’), as opposed to ‘(professional) scribe’ |
| Cursive | A variety of styles of handwriting often with letters tending to be joined, *usually* employed for the writing of documentary texts; also known as ‘documentary hand’ |
| *Diaeresis* | Two points placed horizontally and above a letter (e. g., ϊ), mostly ι and υ; also known as *trêma* |
| *Dicolon* | Two points placed vertically (:) after a letter as a form of punctuation |
| *Diplê* | A wedge-shaped symbol (>), normally open to the left, with a small number of different uses |
| *Diplê obelismenê* | A *paragraphos* (see below) with *diplê* joined to it at the left end (>—), and having various functions; also known as *forked paragraphos* |
| Documentary hand | See ‘Cursive’ |
| *Ekthesis* | The projection of the first letter of a line out into the left margin past the beginning of the other lines |
| Inter-columnar space | The horizontal blank area between columns in a roll or codex |
| Interlinear space | The vertical blank area between two horizontal lines of writing |
| *και compendium* | Abbreviation for και, occurring in a variety of forms, usually κ with an appendage (e. g., ϗ) |
| Leading | The vertical distance from the top of one line of writing to the top of the next; in this volume average leading for each papyrus is calculated over as many lines as possible |
| Literary hand | See ‘Book hand’ |
| *Makron* | Horizontal line, often ‘superior’ (i. e., above a letter) |
| *μου / σου compendium* | Abbreviation for μου or σου used in papyri, occurring in a variety of forms |
| *Opisthograph* | Papyrus with writing on *recto* and *verso* |
| *Paragraphos* | Horizontal line (——), usually placed between two lines of writing to mark a division of some kind in the text |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Recto* | Side of a papyrus manuscript with writing along the fibres (this definition needs qualification in some cases, including with parchment manuscripts where 'flesh' side might be used first) |
| *Scriptio continua* | Writing with no spaces between words |
| Scribe | Trained scribe; also 'professional scribe' |
| Shading | The use of thick and thin strokes in writing letters |
| Start-date | The date at the beginning of the time period during which a papyrus is estimated to have been written |
| Stichometric count | A tally of the number of 'lines' of writing, added usually at the end of the text of the papyrus |
| *Trêma* | See '*Diaeresis*' |
| *Verso* | Side of a papyrus with writing across the fibres (this definition needs qualification in some cases, including with parchment manuscripts where 'hair' side might be used second) |
| Writer | Anyone engaging in writing, used in this volume in a neutral sense (like 'copyist'), as opposed to '(professional) scribe' |

*Chapter 1*

# The papyri and their handwriting

## 1. Purpose and argument of this book

### *a. Purpose*

It is commonly stated, or at least assumed, that the early Christians had their texts reproduced 'in-house,' making little or no use of 'secular' or 'professional' scribes – that is, they had their works copied using whatever pool of writing ability lay within their own ranks, mostly of a non-professional nature. In relation to the NT Metzger wrote, 'In the earlier ages of the Church, Biblical manuscripts were produced by individual Christians'.[1] Aland and Aland maintained that the copying of manuscripts of Christian works must have been done 'privately by individuals in the early period,' although they allowed for the possibility that some professional scribes may have become Christians and then copied scriptures 'at home'.[2] Alexander describes early Christian codices as 'in-house productions, showing few signs of the professional book trade'.[3]

Yet, while this view is widely held, the relevant literary evidence is minimal. Hermas found copying out his 'little book' quite difficult – μετεγραψάμην πάντα πρὸς γράμμα οὐχ ηὕρισκον γὰρ τὰς συλλαβάς, 'I copied everything letter by letter, for I could not differentiate the syllables'.[4] Ambrose provided Origen with at least seven shorthand-writers, and as many copyists, as well as girls trained in calligraphy,[5] but this was almost certainly unusual. From the fourth century onwards, references to Christian texts being reproduced increases a little, especially in the writings of the desert Fathers,[6] for reading, learning and copying religious texts apparently became a highly honoured aspect of ascetic practice.[7] Further, some early church leaders were calligraphers,[8] and may have copied a wide range

[1] Metzger 2005, 24.
[2] Aland, Aland 1987, 70.
[3] Alexander 1998, 85.
[4] Herm., *vis.* 2.1.4.
[5] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23.2. Cf. Haines-Eitzen 2000, 41–52. Since female scribes were apparently quite rare, in this book I have used masculine pronouns for scribes in general, unless it is clearly indicated otherwise.
[6] Robinson 1990, 2–3; Rapp 1991. Cf. Robinson 2013.
[7] Pall., *h. Laus.* 32.12, 45.3, 71.5; Jerome, *Epist.* 22.17, 25, 31, 35; 107.4, 12; 130.11, 15.
[8] *Vita Porph.* 5.

of texts. On the whole, however, there is not enough data from contemporary sources to supply a detailed picture of how the early Christians had their texts copied, particularly before the second half of the fourth century. For this reason, only a study of the surviving papyri – the actual copies of Christian texts – can tell us who copied them. The purpose of this book, then, is to examine the extant Christian papyri, along with a number of allied papyri as a control set, in order to ascertain what kinds of writers actually copied or wrote them.

### *b. Argument*

In this first chapter, we define the papyri included in the study, and then briefly review what kinds of people would have had the ability and opportunity to make copies of Christian texts in the early Roman Imperial period, and in what contexts they might have done so, whether 'private' or otherwise. We then note several features of the handwriting of the papyri which can be used to distinguish between the hands of occasional writers and trained scribes, as well as between levels of skill within these two groups. Finally, on the basis of these features the papyri are classified according to their handwriting skill, with a description of the hand of each papyrus provided in the *Catalogue of Papyri* on pp. 155–410. In the following chapters we examine other aspects of the papyri to see if they offer any confirmation of this classification and, while certain aspects of the papyri do provide some corroboration, other aspects can offer little relevant data due to their fragmentary nature, and still others are so varied that they can neither support nor correct the original classification. Finally, I argue that the copyists of the majority of Christian texts were trained scribes, probably working in a variety of settings, and that there is no firm evidence that the copyists were generally Christians.

## 2. The papyri in this study – Christian papyri and the comparison set

### *a. 'Christian' papyri*

The papyri at the heart of this study are those bearing Christian texts, not including documents and letters written by Christians.[9] Certain papyri are not included for a variety of reasons, such as *BKT* IX 22 (II/III AD), to which the editor gave the title 'Prose (Christian text?),' although it is difficult to see any real evidence that it is in fact a Christian text. Some, like a Septuagint lectionary with seventy-

[9] See Bagnall 2009, 70, on 'Christian' books. Luijendijk 2008, 125–55, also discusses 'markers of Christian identity.' Cf. Horsley, *NewDocs* 4, 58–63, on criteria for identifying letters as 'Christian'; Judge 1984; Choat 2006, 101–18.

four folios, held in Westminster College, Cambridge,[10] are known to exist, but very little information about them is available. Other papyri have been lost, without an edition being prepared, as in the case of the oracle text given at *PSI* I, p. vi,[11] and some were published too late to be included.[12] Apart from the latter, the inventory of *Excluded Papyri* on pp. 411–413 lists those which have not been included together with a brief explanation of the reasons.

I have given each papyrus in this study a code number in italics, and they are divided into Groups based on content, as in van Haelst's *Catalogue*. This grouping is an important aspect of the study, because it is appropriate to compare scribal expertise in papyri with similar content, rather than comparing papyri which contain texts of different genres. The Groups of Christian papyri are as follows, with Groups G, H, K1, K2 and L comprising the comparative set (see p. 5):

| *Group* | *Textual content* | *Code Nos* |
|---|---|---|
| A | Old Testament texts | *1–149* |
| B | New Testament texts | *150–263* |
| C | 'Apocryphal' texts | *264–299* |
| D | Patristic texts | *300–354* |
| E | Hagiographic texts | *355–358* |
| F | Liturgical prayers, hymns etc. | *359–391* |
| I | Gnostic & Manichaean texts | *465–478* |
| J | Unidentified texts | *479–520* |

In view of the importance of this grouping, a few comments are necessary. The papyri bear texts of various kinds: Old Testament texts (Group A) include both Greek translations of the books of the Hebrew Bible, as well as those that were accepted into the early Christian canon but were never part of the Hebrew Bible, that is, those sometimes called 'the (Old Testament) Apocrypha'; New Testament texts (Group B) are those NT works later accepted widely in the 'orthodox' churches; 'Apocryphal' texts (Group C) derive from the late first century AD onwards, whether known works or those resembling them; Patristic texts (Group D) were written by early Christians from the late first century onwards, but were not thought of as 'canonical' books; in hagiographic texts (Group E) the lives of some early Christians were put before readers as models of piety; liturgical prayers, hymns and the like (Group F) are self-explanatory, but they do not include amulets. Groups G and H comprise amulets and magical papyri respectively, and are placed next in order because of their close ties with the prayers and hymns in Group F, even though they are in the comparison set (see p. 5);

[10] This papyrus is no. 3228 on *LDAB* and no. 1 in van Haelst 1976, and is noted in *Verzeichnis*[2], 54–55.

[11] The entry at TM 63047 for this papyrus notes that R. Pintaudi reports it now lost. Another papyrus that appears to have been lost is van Haelst no. 1191 (*SB* 5.7872), which proved impossible to locate.

[12] For example, two papyri were published in *P.Oxy.* LXXVIII (2012): 5128 (Christian Text with Biblical Excerpts) and 5129 (Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 50.12, 51.4–5).

Gnostic and Manichaean texts (Group I) are also included among the Christian papyri, albeit in a separate Group, because both Gnostics and Manichaeans saw themselves as heirs of Christian thought and practice in certain respects, and often referred to Christian personages or elements of thought that derived from Jesus and the 'standard' NT texts, although 'mainstream' churches rejected this claim;[13] and, finally, unidentified literary texts (Group J) are certainly Christian texts but cannot be identified with any known works.

A few papyri containing works by the Jewish writer Philo appear among the patristic texts (Group D), because they appear to have been reproduced by Christians, since they make use of *nomina sacra*. I discuss *nomina sacra* in Ch. 5, but it is widely accepted that these abbreviations of a small number of important religious terms (θεος, χριστος, etc.) were, at least in the early centuries, used only by Christians and not by Jews. Although this question is a complex one, the presence of *nomina sacra* will be taken here as a sign that a Christian was responsible for the text being copied, so they are included in this study as 'Christian' papyri.[14]

This raises a related issue. How can we decide whether an OT text in Greek was Jewish or Christian in origin, because both groups esteemed the OT as sacred and had copies of its 'books'? The presence of *nomina sacra* can normally be taken as evidence that a papyrus was Christian in origin, but what if there are no words that might be written as *nomina sacra*? This issue is further complicated by the question as to which Jewish groups identified with Christianity during the early years of the church, and whether certain extant papyri belonged to them.[15] The only other way to decide that a papyrus is Christian rather than Jewish, especially for OT books but probably more widely as well, is the use of the codex format, rather than the roll, in view of the almost universal Jewish predilection for the roll as the format for their sacred books.

With respect to scribal habits, since Christianity arose within Judaism we might expect that scribal habits in Christian texts would reflect those in Jewish texts.[16] But in fact there are few distinctive elements in the production of Jewish literary papyri in Greek in comparison with others from the wider Roman world, aside from the care which copyists exercised when they reproduced OT books. Nevertheless, the Greek papyri that are clearly Jewish are compared with the Christian ones, and this includes Jewish papyri from Judea and other sites outside Egypt.[17] Finally, it seemed useful to treat Jewish papyri separately in two sub-Groups – OT texts (K1) and 'others' (K2) – because OT texts hold such a

[13] Cf. Römer 2009, 623–43; Brakke 2010; Luijendijk 2008, 17–18; Choat 2006, 138–39.

[14] For discussion which does not make this assumption see Horsley, *NewDocs* 3, 96 at no. 4. Cf. Mugridge 2012, 24–25; Luijendijk 2008, 16–17, 20.

[15] On Jewish Christian groups in the early centuries see Hurtado 2006a, 56, n. 47; Choat 2006, 45–51; Becker, Reed 2007; Jackson-McCabe (ed.) 2007; Skarsaune, Hvalvik (eds) 2007; Paget 2010. On Jews in Egypt see Harker 2012, 277–87.

[16] Cf. Kraft 2004.

[17] Cf. Tov 2004, 299–315, esp. Apps 4 and 5.

distinct position in Jewish tradition, and thus may well have been reproduced differently from other Jewish texts.

### *b. The comparison set*

Along with Jewish papyri, the comparative papyri are of several different kinds, and are also grouped according to content, with the following code numbers:

| *Group* | *Textual content* | *Code Nos* |
|---|---|---|
| G | Amulets | *392–446* |
| H | Magical texts | *447–464* |
| K1 | Jewish texts (OT) | *521–536* |
| K2 | Jewish texts (other) | *537–545* |
| L | School texts | *546–548* |

The papyri in these Groups are included because they are similar to the Christian papyri in certain respects, and Groups G and H are placed after Group F (hymns and prayers) because they also address the deity or deities, seeking assistance in life. The amulets in Group G were chosen because they contain references to Christian texts or themes, although they have quite different purposes and settings than the liturgical hymns and prayers etc. with Christian content.[18] They were much more private and personal than the Christian texts reproduced for use in public gatherings, so they were usually produced in a more *ad hoc* fashion. Hence, they have quite a different status from the 'Christian' papyri in Groups A–F, and for this reason I have placed them in the comparative set.

Whereas amulets are usually particular instances of magical formulae (spells, actions etc.), most of the magical papyri in Group H are collections of these.[19] In Graeco-Roman Egypt, 'magical' texts were an expression of 'magic' that had been a part of Egyptian culture and religion for a long time,[20] although it was an admixture of numerous strands of religious thought, appealing to a range of divine beings of various kinds, sometimes including the Jewish God and angels, as well as the name of Jesus and Christian themes. As with amulets, the magical papyri studied here are only those that include Jewish and Christian elements, but I have treated them as one Group because they contain such an assortment of religious elements that there is a certain uniformity in their diversity, especially in the case of longer texts which gather together a whole range of different formulae.[21] These

[18] On amulets at Oxyrhynchus see Parsons 2007, 180.

[19] For the Greek Magical Papyri see Brashear, 1995; Betz 1992. Cf. Parsons 2007, 207–10.

[20] Cf. Pinch 2006; Clarysse 2009, 561–89. On religion in Egypt see Riggs (ed.) 2012, Part IV, esp. Frankfurter 2012.

[21] On magic in the Roman world and in relation to early Christianity, see Aune 1980; Klauck 2000, 153–249; Dickie 2001; Ogden 2002; Riemer 2007; Parsons 2007, 190–92, on magicians in Oxyrhynchus; Rives 2011; Bendlin 2011; Dieleman 2012; Choat 2012a.

papyri also are not 'Christian papyri',[22] but they are included in the comparison set because of their content which reflects certain Christian elements.

Finally, although three school codices of wooden tablets (Group L) clearly derive from a very different setting than the other papyri, I have included them because they contain Christian texts. I should state that I have not listed some papyri in this study as 'school texts,' even though other authors do, since, either they do not belong to the context of a 'school' in any identifiable sense, or they cannot meaningfully be called 'Christian'.[23]

*c. Dates*

The Christian papyri in this study, as well as the majority of the comparative papyri, were copied or written some time during the first to the fourth centuries AD. The fourth century was chosen as the end point, in order to cover 'early Christian' practices, rather than Byzantine ones, since the situation of Christians in society began to change markedly during the fourth century. At present there are no confirmed Christian papyri from the first century,[24] which effectively limits the range of dates to the second, third and fourth centuries. Of course, the assigned date of some papyri extends beyond the fourth century, because it is impossible to be more precise. Since those who date papyri sometimes disagree, I have assigned a date to each papyrus based on dates given by editors and other writers, normally only differing by extending the limits given by individual authors to include dates suggested by others.

Finally, although the amulets and magical papyri have been chosen to conform with the date-range in view (II–IV AD), in order to include a number of Jewish papyri, especially those with Old Testament texts, I have included all Jewish texts (in Greek) that are dated earlier than II AD, some going back to II BC. While this might seem to be a large time difference, these papyri provide sound comparative data about manuscript production, albeit from an earlier period, and are especially relevant because the Christian faith was Jewish in origin and the early Christians prized OT texts highly, as Jews did.[25]

[22] Bagnall 2009, 86.

[23] On this issue see Mugridge 2012.

[24] Although Thiede 1995 dated *155* ($P^{64}$) to late I AD, most, e. g., Wachtel 1995 and Skeat 1997, date it late in II AD or even II–III. On the claim by O'Callaghan 1974 and others that 7Q5 (part of *539*) is a part of Mark's Gospel see Kraus 1999c (ET in id. 2007, 231–59). Bagnall 2009, 25–40, rightly rejects these attempts at early dating, as well as the suggested identification of 7Q5.

[25] This wide range of dates for comparative papyri is not dissimilar to those in Johnson 2004, whose comparative papyri come from III BC to III AD, even though the primary set come from I BC to III AD.

In order to show when the Christian papyri were written, the table below lists the numbers of papyri in their Groups and 'century start-dates'.[26] This provides an approximate picture of their chronological spread, with the Groups of comparative papyri separated in order to distinguish them clearly from the Christian papyri. As expected, the greatest numbers of Christian papyri come from IV AD, less from III AD and very few from II AD.

*Figure 1.* Numbers of papyri (by Groups and century start-dates)

| *Group* | *A* | *B* | *C* | *D* | *E* | *F* | *G* | *H* | *I* | *J* | *K1* | *K2* | *L* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| II AD | 16 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 47 |
| III AD | 50 | 53 | 12 | 23 | 0 | 6 | 15 | 5 | 4 | 20 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 190 |
| IV AD | 83 | 52 | 19 | 26 | 4 | 27 | 36 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 291 |
| *Total* | 149 | 114 | 36 | 55 | 4 | 33 | 55 | 18 | 14 | 42 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 528 |

The twenty remaining Jewish papyri in Groups K1 and K2 have start-dates in II BC (*K1* 3, *K2* 1), I BC (*K1* 8, *K2* 4) and I AD (*K1* 3, *K2* 1).

### *d. Language*

The papyri in this study contain Christian texts in Greek, and in many cases a papyrus contains only one text and that text is in Greek. However, some papyri include material in other languages as well. For example, some texts in Greek occur with an accompanying translation into Coptic.[27] *386* has a different text in Coptic, and *466* includes material in Syriac. The *Montserrat Composite Codex* (*364*) includes Latin texts – a Psalm, a passage from Cicero, and Euripides' *Alcestis*. Magical texts, especially collections of magical formulae, sometimes include Coptic sections (*450*, *452*). A papyrus roll with a Latin epitome of Livy has been reused for a Greek NT text (*239*), and a documentary roll has been reused to make a codex, which not only includes what seems to be a work by Origen (*346*), but other Greek and Coptic texts as well. Several papyri contain glosses in various dialects of Coptic.[28] Finally, two papyri contain selections of Greek words from Christian texts along with glossaries into Coptic (*125*) or Latin (*226*). Despite the presence of material or sections in other languages on some papyri, however, this study focuses on the Greek Christian texts.

### *e. 'Papyri'*

In contrast to van Haelst's *Catalogue*, which does not include papyri preserved in monastic or church libraries, the present study includes three such papyri,

[26] The term 'start-date' refers to the lower limit of the assigned date for a papyrus, and 'century start-dates' collect these in whole centuries.

[27] See *159*, *164* and *390*.

[28] See *124*, *128*, *160*, *248* and *440*.

namely *Codex Sinaiticus* (*12 + 150 + 302*), *Codex Vaticanus* (*23 + 151*) and *Codex Sarravianus-Colbertinus* (*16*), in order for these large codices to provide some comparison with more recently discovered papyri.

Further, some studies of Christian 'papyri' are limited to those specifically written on papyrus, to the exclusion of all other writing materials.[29] In this study, we include texts written on papyrus, parchment and wooden tablets, but not on 'hard' surfaces such as ostraka, lead tablets or stone, because of the quite different mode of writing on these surfaces. The strokes are formed differently and different writing implements are used (for lead tablets and stone); and the writing area was not formed in the same way, especially in the case of ostraka.[30]

The figure below shows the numbers of writing surfaces in the various Groups used in this study, the overwhelming majority being on papyrus, with about a quarter of that number on parchment and a small number on wood.

*Figure 2.* Numbers of papyri (by Groups and writing materials)

| *Group* | *A* | *B* | *C* | *D* | *E* | *F* | *G* | *H* | *I* | *J* | *K1* | *K2* | *L* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Papyrus | 101 | 85 | 31 | 45 | 4 | 29 | 50 | 16 | 11 | 41 | 10 | 8 | 0 | *431* |
| Parchment | 48 | 29 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 0 | *109* |
| Wood | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | *8* |
| *Totals* | *149* | *114* | *36* | *55* | *4* | *33* | *55* | *18* | *14* | *42* | *16* | *9* | *3* | *548* |

### *f. Papyri including other Greek texts*

Some papyri include texts that are not relevant for this study, where a copyist has made use of a previous documentary sheet or literary roll, or has constructed pages of a codex out of sheets cut from a roll and pasted together (*68*, *346*). Or a papyrus with a Christian text has been re-used later for a non-Christian text. Magical papyri often contain only limited sections that are specifically Christian or Jewish as part of longer texts. Private learning exercises (*76*, *226*) and one school text (*547*) also include other texts that are not relevant to this study. Finally, the *Montserrat Composite Codex* (*364*) noted above, also contains Greek material that is certainly not Christian – a drawing of Heracles or Perseus, a story about the emperor Hadrian, and a list of words for tachygraphy. In this study we review only those sections bearing Christian texts.

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[29] For example, Aland, *Repertorium* I, 3–4, reported that he included only papyrus (and not parchment) manuscripts.

[30] As a result of this, some very interesting manuscripts, such as a gold leaf and a silver tablet containing Christian texts, are omitted from consideration, since the difference in their material is too great to form a valid comparison. For the gold leaf see *P.Paris Cab.Med*. 2693 (a single gold leaf rolled up inside a golden box as an amulet; van Haelst 1976, no. 850); for the silver tablet see *P.Köln* VIII 338 (inv.T3).

*g. Provenance*

By 'provenance' I refer to the place where papyri were found, although the provenance of some, such as many of the Bodmer and Chester Beatty papyri, is disputed.[31] Indeed, the provenance of some papyri is sometimes known no more exactly than 'Egypt.' The numbers of papyri found outside Egypt are: Palestine (17), Mount Sinai (12), Europe? (2), Damascus (1) and Dura Europos (1). In *Figure 3* below I list briefly the find-spots of the papyri, including in the tallies those whose provenance is suggested but not certain. For this reason, the tallies are a little inflated, because alternative possibilities have been counted. Further, as explained below, the code numbers include some papyri more than once in different Groups.

*Figure 3.* Numbers of papyri (by provenance in Egypt)

| *Provenance* | *No.* | *Provenance* | *No.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Egypt | 221 | Apa Apollo Monastery | 2 |
| Oxyrhynchus | 145 | Koptos | 2 |
| The Fayum | 43 | Tebtynis | 2 |
| Hermopolis | 17 | Aphroditopolis (Kom Ishqau) | 1 |
| Panopolis | 16 | Apotheke | 1 |
| Aphroditopolis (Atfh) | 13 | Babylon | 1 |
| Antinoopolis | 12 | El-Mudil | 1 |
| Kellis | 9 | Hawara | 1 |
| Thebes | 6 | Hibeh | 1 |
| Upper Egypt | 6 | Krokodilopolis | 1 |
| Herakleopolites | 3 | Middle Egypt | 1 |
| Hipponon | 3 | Narmouthis | 1 |
| Karanis | 3 | Philadelpheia | 1 |
| Memphis | 3 | Syene | 1 |
| Theadelphia | 3 | Tura | 1 |
| White Monastery | 3 | | |

The reader will observe that, even amongst those papyri whose find-spot is known, some areas of Egypt are represented more than others, especially Oxyrhynchus and towns in the Fayum,[32] but this is due to the random nature of the preservation and discovery of papyri. Hence the data is heavily weighted toward these areas of Egypt. We know, however, that manuscripts were passed around from one individual or group to another within Egypt itself,[33] or even brought

[31] On the Bodmer and Chester Beatty papyri see Robinson 1990 and Royse 2008, 17–31.

[32] On Oxyrhynchus see esp. Parsons 2007 and Bowman et al. (eds) 2007. There is also material available on the *CSAD* website (http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/), both about Oxyrhynchus itself and the papyri discovered there. On Christian texts from Oxyrhynchus see Blumell, Wayment (eds) 2015.

[33] One papyrus in the Zenon archive, *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59027 (258 BC), actually derives from Alexandria, even though it was found in Philadelphia. A letter found at Oxyrhynchus (*P.Oxy.* XVIII 2192, late II AD) provides evidence of private circulation of texts, and another letter (*P.Oxy.* LXIII 4365, IV AD) shows this happening in a Christian context. Cf. Luijendijk 2008, 70–74.