

## The Roll in Western Europe in the Late Middle Ages

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Rolls played a significant part in medieval writing culture. They were used in almost all aspects of medieval literacy and historians have explored their content in various contexts. In comparison to the codex, however, the form of the roll has been studied comparatively little. The international conference „The Roll in Western Europe in the Late Middle Ages“ focussed on the materiality and the praxeology of late medieval rolls.

As JÖRG PELTZER (Heidelberg) outlined in his introduction, scholars – with some notable exceptions – began to consider the form of the roll and thus potential interdependencies between form and content from the late 1970s onwards. Yet, the significance of the rolls' materiality (material, format, layout etc.) and praxeology (the contexts in which the rolls were produced and used) have remained largely marginal in many investigations. It is only in the most recent years that scholars have started to address these issues in greater depth. The aim of the conference was to contribute to these ongoing discussions and thus to provide a better understanding of the interdependence of the user-artefact-relationship. The three main questions of the conference were: First, why was the roll chosen over the codex? Secondly, in which contexts was the roll used? And finally, what were the differences in producing and using rolls in contrast to the codex?

Fourteen papers provided rich and varied answers to these questions. The challenges posed by identifying a roll in the first place were amply demonstrated by THOMAS ROCHE (Évreux), who examined the holdings of the „Archives départementales de l'Eure“ (12th–16th century). He showed that the diversity of formats and conditions

of preservation (continuous, folded, layered, bound, single sheets) make it hard to define a 'roll'. The 'classic' roll format (membranes glued or sewn together head to tail) was often used for historiographical rolls. This format of a continuous, unbroken roll was particularly apt to demonstrate historical continuity. As MARIGOLD ANNE NORBYE (London) demonstrated, such rolls symbolised the 'uninterrupted' genealogy of dynasties. Yet, looking at the 15th-century French genealogical chronicle „A tous noble“, she also showed that the genre of genealogy was not bound to the form of the roll. The chronicle was also transmitted in codices. Analysing Anglo-Norman historiographical rolls ISMÉRIE TRIQUET (Rennes) highlighted that scribes and illustrators had to find visual means to represent English kingship after the Norman Conquest as an 'unbroken' line of succession. By the mid-15th century, the trend towards private collections and a growing book trade meant that owners of manuscripts may have preferred the codex over the roll, in particular for historiographical works. MAREE SHIROTA (Heidelberg) introduced 'accordion' manuscripts, which were a solution that maintained the symbolism of the roll, but had the practicality of a codex.

Rolls were also widely used in administrative contexts. The most prominent case was the English royal administration. As NICHOLAS VINCENT (Norwich) showed, it produced rolls at quantities unheard of elsewhere in Europe. Pointing to their existence until the early 19th century, he emphasised the significance of routine and tradition for the workings of administrations. Once the rolls had been introduced, they became part of the standard procedure. The driving machine behind the roll's spread in the English administration was the royal Exchequer. For the 13th century, RICHARD CASSIDY (London) stressed the Exchequer's overall resilience to meaningful innovations of its bureaucratic practices. The production process of the Pipe Rolls was a significant factor for the continued use of the roll in England. However, the tradition of using rolls in England was not limited to the royal sphere. ELODIE PAPIN (Angers) offered possible explanations of how cartulary rolls of

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the 13th-century southern Welsh monastery of Margam could have been influenced by both Cistercian and royal English traditions of record keeping. Rolls were not only used for cartularies in Cistercian abbeys, but also for property surveys. MARLÈNE HELIAS-BARON (Paris) presented a 14th-century survey of the Val Notre-Dame abbey's properties. Her presentation focused on a detailed codicological, palaeographic and textual analysis of this document.

As part of varied administrative contexts, rolls are strongly associated with 'internal' or 'preliminary' documentation. In France, JEAN-BAPTISTE RENAULT (Nancy) traced the tradition of using roll cartularies, for not only the Cistercian, but also the Benedictine Order. He explored the use of such cartularies as mainly preliminary and working documents. The same holds true for some papal documents in roll form. ARMAND JAMME (Lyon) focused on the administrative practices of the pontifical Curia during the 13th and 14th centuries. In papal administration, rolls were 'drafts' used to produce codex-registers. Following comparable copying processes in England, STEFAN HOLZ (Heidelberg) used the *Onus Scaccarii* rolls to highlight that rolls were easier to produce than codices. As with many other types of rolls in English financial administration, the *Onus Scaccarii* rolls were used solely to transmit information between the Exchequer and the royal Wardrobe, unlike accounting books, which were produced for multiple consultations. Institutionally established procedures were common not only in financial administration, but also in court proceedings. LUCY TRYOEN (Paris) presented rolls in the legal context of the chapter of Notre-Dame de Paris in the 13th century. Tryoen outlined how each stage of a court case could leave traces of documentary evidence on rolls that reflect the internal procedural workings of the chapter court before the final ruling.

All except the paper of KATHERINE HINDLEY (Singapore) focussed on either historiographical or administrative rolls. Hindley reminded us of the multiple contexts in which rolls were used. Looking at amulet rolls used in late medieval England, she observed that the extremely long and thin for-

mat of some childbirth amulet rolls were combined with difficult-to-read inscriptions, suggesting that the 'illegibility' of the text and roll format contributed to the amulet's function as a protective artefact. JEAN-MARIE MOEGLIN (Paris) emphasised in his concluding remarks that the roll was omnipresent in medieval life. He stressed the importance of a dialogue between the different fields of scholarship, including art history, political and administrative history, the auxiliary sciences and archival studies. The conference showed, following Moeglin, that there are no monocausal answers to the three key questions initially proposed. The range of presentations, however, highlighted explanatory patterns, such as symbolism, tradition, and functionality, as thematic ways of exploring the materiality and praxeology of the roll form. The conference showed the potential of case studies focussing on late medieval rolls. Such research helps further our understanding of the roll in medieval writing culture. The conference proceedings will be published within the Material Text Cultures series (MTK).

### Conference Overview:

#### *Welcome and Introduction*

JÖRG PELTZER (Heidelberg)

#### *Section 1*

Moderation: ANUSCHKA HOLSTE (Heidelberg)

ISMÉRIE TRIQUET (Rennes): Entre rupture et continuité: la problématique des représentations de la lignée Anglo-normande du XIIIe au XVe siècle

MARIGOLD ANNE NORBYE (London): A tous nobles in roll or codex: the physical expressions of a French genealogical chronicle

MAREE SHIROTA (Heidelberg): Neither roll nor codex: genealogical accordions in fifteenth-century England

#### *Section 2*

Moderation: KLAUS OSCHMA (Bochum)

NICHOLAS VINCENT (Norwich): English Rolls versus French and Papal Registers: The Significance of Form?

#### *Section 3*

Moderation: BERND SCHNEIDMÜLLER Heidelberg, in: H-Soz-Kult 27.11.2017.  
(Heidelberg)

THOMAS ROCHE (Évreux): Scribes, Archivists and (Uncatalogued) Rolls: An Overview of Late Medieval Rolls kept at the Archives départementales de l'Eure

ARMAND JAMME (Lyon): Les usages du rotulus en curie. Formes, raisons et développements aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles

#### Section 4

Moderation: ANNETTE KEHNEL  
(Mannheim)

RICHARD CASSIDY (London): The Rolls behind the Rolls: The English Pipe Rolls and their Preliminary Documents

ELODIE PAPIN (Angers): Rouleaux cisterciens et transferts culturels au pays de Galles au XIIIe siècle

STEFAN HOLZ (Heidelberg): Copying Rolls: The Onus Scaccarii Rolls under Edward I (1272-1307)

#### Section 5

Moderation: NORBERT KÖSSINGER (Konstanz)

KATHERINE HINDLEY (Singapore): The Power of Not Reading: Amulet Rolls in Medieval England

JEAN-BAPTISTE RENAULT (Nancy): Copier les chartes en rouleau: les objectifs d'une compilation singulière (Midi de la France, XIe – XVe siècles)

#### Section 6

Moderation: JEAN-MARIE MOEGLIN (Paris)

LUCIE TRYOEN (Paris): Le rouleau dans les procédures judiciaires au chapitre de Notre-Dame de Paris au XIIIe siècle

MARLÈNE HELIAS-BARON (Paris): Le format du rouleau dans un monastère du diocèse de Paris au XIVe siècle: le cas de la déclaration des biens de l'abbaye cistercienne du Val Notre-Dame (1362)

Concluding remarks

JEAN-MARIE MOEGLIN (Paris)

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