NOTES AND STUDIES

JESUS READS A BOOK[1]

EARLY in the narrative of Jesus' Galilean activity, the synoptic gospels recount an episode in which Jesus teaches in the synagogue of Nazareth, greatly offending those who hear him. Luke's account (4:16–30) is much fuller than those of Mark (6:1–6) and Matthew (13:54–8), incorporating a passage from Isaiah which Jesus reads. It is this richness of circumstantial detail that produces an interesting problem in Luke 4:17. The attempt to resolve it begins as a terminological investigation—on the meaning of the verb ἀναπτύσσω—and ends as a textual one, questioning the text usually printed for this passage.

Omitting the quotation from Isaiah, the account reads in standard texts as follows: καὶ ἐπεδόθη αὐτῷ βιβλίον τοῦ προφήτου 'Ησαΐου, καὶ ἀναπτύξας τὸ βιβλίον εὗρεν [τὸν] τόπον οὗ ἦν γεγραμμένον· ... καὶ πτύξας τὸ βιβλίον ἀποδοὺς τῷ ὑπηρέτῃ ἐκάθισεν.

This is rendered in the Revised Standard Version, quoted here because it is neutral on the issue that will concern us, as follows: 'and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written .... And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.'

If one reads the commentaries and biblical lexica, however, a different and less neutral view of this passage presents itself. Here are some samples, in chronological order:

> ... but 'rolled up' would be a better rendering of πτύξας. The long strip of parchment, or less probably papyrus (2 Jn. 12), would be wound upon a roller, or possibly upon two rollers, one at each end of the strip.[2]

> πτύξας The book was in the form of a scroll.[3]

Since the synagogue copies of Old Testament books were in scroll form, the use of the verb 'to unroll' is highly appropriate. Although copyists may have introduced ἀναπτύξας as a pedantic correlative to πτύξας in ver. 20, it is more probable that, being accustomed to books in codex

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[1] I am indebted to T. C. Skeat for a stimulating discussion by correspondence of several of the issues raised in this paper, and to a number of colleagues, particularly Carmela Franklin, Greg Horsley, Robert Kraft, Dirk Obbink and Seth Schwartz, for useful points and bibliographical direction.

[2] A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke* (International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh, 1922⁵), p. 122.

[3] J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London, 1930), p. 67.

(or leaf) form, they introduced the frequently used verb ἀνοίγειν, 'to open,' as an explanatory substitution for ἀναπτύσσειν.[4]

kai anaptuxas to biblion 'and having unrolled the scroll', cp. A–G s.v. *anaptussō* (βιβλίον is ' "scroll", ... as shown by *anaptuxas*, see below').[5]

[βιβλίον] means a 'scroll', similar to those found at Qumran ... ἀναπτύσσω** , 'to unroll', is the appropriate verb to use (cf. πτύσσω, (4:20**), 'to fold up, roll up') ... The v.l. ἀνοίξας, though well-attested ... may be due to scribes more familiar with codices than scrolls.[6]

The ptc. *anoixas*, 'having opened,' is the reading preferred by Nestle and Merk, but *anaptyxas,* 'having unrolled,' has the strong support of mss. X, D, Θ, and the Koine text-tradition .... Though it is the more proper word, the sense is not really affected.[7]

ἀναπτύξας ('unrolled'; cf. v 20: πτύξας, 'rolled up') is the appropriate expression for handling a parchment scroll.[8]

Before the development of the codex (forerunner of the book), scriptures were written on parchment or vellum, rolled on two spindles.[9]

Amid this sea of unanimity, there seem to be three main points: (1) βιβλίον refers to a roll (of parchment, most think); (2) ἀναπτύσσω and πτύσσω refer respectively to unrolling and rolling up a roll and thus are the correct verbs to use with βιβλίον (meaning a roll); and (3) Luke's usage reflects the situation in Galilean synagogues in the early first century, at the time of Jesus' preaching ministry. The grip of this interpretation of Luke has been very firm.[10]

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[4] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London and New York, 1971), p. 137. This argument was already made by Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Lucas* (Leipzig, 1920; repr. Wuppertal, 1988), p. 235 n. 22: 'Jenes [ἀναπτύξας] scheint ursprünglicher, weil es das Entrollen der zusammengerollten Lederrolle Vergegenwärtigt, dieses [ἀνοίξας] dagegen mindestens ebenso passend für das Aufschlagen eines Codex ist. Ein solcher ist auch Ap 5, 1 ff. gemeint.'

[5] J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (Leiden, 1971), p. 199.

[6] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (New International Greek Testament Commentary; Exeter, 1978/Grand Rapids, 1983), p. 182.

[7] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, *The Gospel According so Luke (I–IX)* (Anchor Bible 28; Garden City, 1981), pp. 531–2.

[8] John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20* (Word Biblical Commentary 35A; Dallas, 1989), p. 196.

[9] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina Series 3; Collegeville, Minn., 1991), p. 79, glossing 'unrolled the scroll.'

[10] Colin Roberts subscribed to it in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1 (1970), pp. 51–2, but his work with Skeat (cited below) undermined one of the foundations. Even Carsten Thiede, although a staunch partisan of the earliness of the codex, says that 'Jesus himself read from a scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue of

An only slightly more nuanced view is found in the Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker *Lexicon* (BAGD), where we find ἀναπτύσσω defined as '*unroll* of a book in scroll form' followed by references; under πτύσσω, however, we find '*fold up* .... Of the folding of a document ... πτύξας τὸ βιβλίον *after he had rolled up the scroll* Lk 4:20.' At least the reference to documents in this latter entry points the way to a less self-enclosed world of biblical interpretation, in which other contemporary Greek texts are taken into account. After all, any major Greek lexicon will tell the user that πτύσσω refers primarily to the act of folding, not to that of rolling. But, as with BAGD, the fixed notion that Jesus is thought to be rolling up a book in 4:20 has overwhelmed this knowledge. Moulton and Milligan, for instance, under πτύσσω (p. 558) say, 'With this verb used of "rolling up" a scroll in Lk 4:20, its only occurrence in the NT, cf. πτυκτός, "a folding writing-tablet", as in P. Strass I.39[12] (iii/A.D.).' The situation with ἀναπτύσσω, as we shall see, at first glance gives more comfort to the notion of unrolling, but on closer examination this comfort dissipates. Far from being the 'appropriate' words, as our commentators rather unoriginally keep telling us, these are at best stretches from the meanings of the words.[11]

With βιβλίον, matters are still more complicated. It is certainly the standard word used by the Greeks for a book-roll (or 'scroll'), but the roll does not exhaust the possible meanings of βιβλίον. As Roberts and Skeat point out, 'it is remarkable that the Greek language never developed a specific word to designate the codex form'.[12] By later antiquity, in fact, βιβλίον generally referred to a codex. Indeed, as Skeat showed, the term βιβλίον encompassed, as early as the end of the first century, even the parchment notebooks referred to as μεμβράναι (from the Latin *membranae*), as the phrase καὶ τὰ βιβλία, μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας

Nazareth': C. P. Thiede and M. Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus* (New York, 1996), p. 27, cf. also p. 130. I have found no commentary on Luke which comments on this subject and disagrees; the chorus of assent includes also the commentaries of W. F. Arndt (St. Louis, 1956), G. Gander (Lausanne, 1986), F. Bovon (Zürich, 1989), and C. F. Evans (London, 1990). Many commentators, of course, are not interested in such matters.

[11] A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (London, 1958), p. 118, although believing that the book was a roll, had a glimpse of the actual state of things: 'Since the "book" was a roll a strict translation would be "he unrolled", but this is not specially implied by the Greek.' What 'strict translation' means, I cannot tell.

[12] C. H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London, 1983), p. 54, n. 1.

in 2 Tim. 4:13 shows.[13] βιβλίον could be used, already in classical times, to refer to a document or letter rather than a book.[14] There is thus no justification for any assertion that the use of βιβλίον in Luke guarantees that he is writing about a book-roll.

The third assumption, that Luke's information may be taken as a direct representation of the real situation in Jesus' lifetime, appears to be unstated, but it is pervasive. Given the obsessive zeal of biblical scholarship of the last two centuries to distinguish the nuggets of information of the time of Jesus from the authorial and redactional contributions of the various supposed intervening documents and of the evangelists themselves, the fact that this assumption is left unexamined is rather surprising. It is unlikely to be justified. Anachronism did not disturb the ancients in the way it sometimes does us, and there is no reason *a priori* to think that Luke would have been concerned with the difference between book practices of his own time and place and those of Nazareth in the lifetime of Jesus. For example, it has been noted by commentators that Luke has Jesus read from the Septuagint, which is unlikely to have been the text in use in synagogues in Nazareth or elsewhere in Palestine.[15] Even the plausibility of the very existence of a village synagogue in Galilee in the time of Jesus has been a matter of controversy.[16]

All of the underlying assumptions of the prevailing consensus therefore appear shaky or downright wrong. The central question, which deserves to be examined afresh, is what Luke is likely to have meant in using the verbs ἀναπτύσσω and πτύσσω, for the meaning of βιβλίον can be established only from (1) the probable sense of the verbs governing it or (2) other circumstantial information. We will find that serious problems emerge from

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[13] See Roberts and Skeat, *Birth*, p. 22 with n. 3 citing Skeat's article in *JTS*, NS 30 (1979), pp. 173–7. BAGD s.v. βιβλίον cite the passage from 2 Timothy.

[14] This is well-recognized in BAGD; see below for further discussion.

[15] E.g., François Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, vol. 1 (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament III.1; Zürich, 1989), p. 211. This view, however, may itself be too optimistic about our knowledge of the milieu. Greek was certainly spoken in some circles in Sepphoris, and it cannot be excluded that there were hellenophone worship services in Galilee.

[16] See generally L. Grabbe, 'Synagogues in Pre-70 Palestine: A Reassessment,' *JTS*, NS 39 (1988), pp. 401–10, who is moderately positive on the existence of synagogues but does not offer any substantial evidence for non-urban synagogues at this date; H. C. Kee, 'Early Christianity in the Galilee: Reassessing the Evidence from the Gospels,' in Lee I. Levine (ed.), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (New York, 1992), pp. 3–22, esp. pp. 9–14, who is hyper-sceptical of the existence of any pre-70 synagogues and sees Luke's entire picture as anachronistic.

this examination, which lead to a reconsideration of the reading ἀνοίξας, given by some manuscripts instead of ἀναπτύξας.

In the entry in LSJ for ἀναπτύσσω we do indeed find as a first definition, 'unfold the rolls on which books were written, open for readings'. It is buttressed by citation of Herodotus, Histories 1.125, with a cross-reference to chapter 48. In 1.125, Herodotus is recounting the story of how Cyrus the Great came to organize the Persian revolt from the Medes which led to the foundation of the Persian empire: γράψας ἐς βυβλίον τὰ ἐβούλετο, ἁλίην τῶν Περσέων ἐποιήσατο, μετὰ δὲ ἀναπτύξας τὸ βυβλίον καὶ ἐπιλεγόμενος ἔφη Ἀστυάγεά μιν στρατηγὸν Περσέων ἀποδεικνύναι. Rawlinson translates this, 'He wrote what he thought proper upon a roll, and then calling an assembly of the Persians, he unfolded the roll, and read out of it that Astyages appointed him their general.' The tension in the translation is noticeable. But what does Herodotus mean by βυβλίον in this passage?

The appearance of βυβλίον in this episode begins in chapter 123 with Harpagos, who sends Cyrus a letter secretly sewn up in a hare, instructing the messenger to tell Cyrus to look inside for the message: οὕτω εἰσέθηκε βυβλίον, γράψας τά οἱ ἐδόκεε, Herodotus says. The letter is quoted in chapter 124. It is 133 words long, hardly requiring a roll. We are not given the full text of Cyrus' faked letter, but it seems to have been shorter still. Nor is chapter 48 impressive evidence. Croesus is receiving back the responses of the various oracles which he has put to the test: ὡς δὲ καὶ ὧλλοι οἱ περιπεμφθέντες παρῆσαν φέροντες τοὺς χρησμούς, ἐνθαῦτα ὁ Κροῖσος ἕκαστα ἀναπτύσσων ἐπώρα τῶν συγγραμμάτων.[17] Only one of the oracles is quoted by Herodotus; it is five lines long. Why it should be supposed that a roll was required for 36 words is not evident. Even with all allowances for omission of epistolary opening and closing, and for authorial abridgement, the length of the letters is unlikely to have required much space.

Nothing in these passages of Herodotus, then, necessitates supposing that he was thinking of a roll; a single sheet of papyrus, folded, would be sufficient, and so would a tablet or a diptych of tablets. Papyrus is probably easier to stuff inside a hare, but it might be less durable in such an environment. In any event, one may render ἀναπτύσσω in Herodotus as 'unfold' with no violence to the evidence.[18] A Greek reading or hearing the passage would

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[17] Rawlinson: 'When all the messengers had come back with the answers which they had received, Croesus undid the rolls, and read what was written in each.'

[18] The Diccionario Griego-Español (2.262), indeed, lists both Herodotean passages under its definition 2, 'abrir en dos, desdoblar de hojas o tabillas, escritos,

certainly think first of the archetypal reference to a 'letter' in Homer, the folded πίναξ given by Proitos to Bellerophontes (*Iliad* 6.169: γράψας ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῷ). Letters were mainly written on tablets, and opening meant unfolding.

Other passages are claimed in BAGD for the meaning 'unroll a book in scroll form'. One is from 4 Kingdoms (2 Kings) in the Septuagint. In 19:14 Hezekiah receives messengers with a letter from the Assyrian king Sennacherib, threatening him with extinction if he rebelled: καὶ ἔλαβεν Εζεκιας τὰ βιβλία ἐκ χειρὸς τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ ἀνέγνω αὐτά· καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς οἰκον κυρίου καὶ ἀνέπτυξεν αὐτὰ Εζεκιας ἐναντίον κυρίου.[19] The letter in Greek amounts to 80 words. Once again, then, the βιβλία are not books in scroll form, but a letter quite capable of having been written (again, even with a bit of verbiage at start and finish for the epistolary niceties) on a single pair of tablets, and it seems most likely that the translator is thinking along such lines.[20]

Similar is the citation of Josephus, *Vita* 223: τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἀναπτύξας μηδενὸς ἐμβλέποντος κἀξ αὐτῆς ταχὺ συνεὶς τὴν τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐπίνοιαν, πάλιν αὐτὴν ἐσημηνάμην: 'Opening the letter with no one looking on, and understanding at once from it the sense of what was written, he sealed it up again.'[21] Folded letters were regularly sealed in this fashion, and nothing in the passage distinctively suggests a roll.[22]

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etc.,' along with other classical parallels. It does not give 'unroll' as a meaning for ἀναπτύσσω.

[19] The Hebrew is translated in the Revised English Bible as follows: 'Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and, having read it, he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.'

[20] In the LXX Isaiah 37:14, where the same incident is described, we find more simply καὶ ἔλαβεν Εζεκιας τὸ βιβλίον παρὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ ἤνοιξεν αὐτὸ ἐναντίον κυρίου The verb in both passages (I am indebted to Seth Schwartz for this information) is the same, *pāraś*. The only other occurrence of the verb in the Old Testament is in Ezekiel 2:10, where it is rendered in the LXX with ἀνελίσσω and certainly refers to a roll. It is interesting that ἀνοίγω is used here where ἀναπτύσσω appears in the passage in 2 Kings. Cf. further below on ἀνοίγω and on this passage. It is curious that Hezekiah is said in 2 Kings to read the letter *before* taking it to the Temple and opening it before the Lord, and one might argue (despite the fact that αὐτά certainly refers to the βιβλία) that we should take ἀναπτύσσω here in the sense of explaining or setting forth a matter rather than with reference to the physical letter. The simpler formulation in Isaiah, however, suggests that this would be an excessively literal approach.

[21] This passage is included in the list of passages for silent reading in antiquity given by A. K. Gavrilov, *CQ* 47 (1997), pp. 56–76 at p. 70.

[22] I pass over their citation of Epictetus, *Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae* 1.17.21.1: ἐπίσκεψαί μοι τὰ σπλάγχνα, τί μοι σημαίνεται; λαβὼν καὶ ἀναπτύξας, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγεῖται ὅτι κτλ. For the folds of entrails, see LSJ, s.v. πτύξ, 2 (citing Eur. *Supp.* 212, σπλάγχνων πτυχάς).

The fourth citation in BAGD is from Clement of Alexandria's citation of the *Kerygma Petri* (Πέτρος ἐν τῷ κηρύγματι περὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων):[23] ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀναπτύξαντες τὰς βίβλους ἃς εἴχομεν τῶν προφητῶν. Nothing in the passage indicates what kind of books are at stake. We may suppose that Clement composed the passage in the early third century, but the date of composition of the apocryphal work he is citing is harder to establish, and the extent to which Clement may have edited its wording is unknown.[24]

Some further passages are cited in the last German edition of Bauer's lexicon in support of the meaning 'to unroll'.[25] But these are no more supportive. One is Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.10.3, καὶ περὶ τοῦ τέλους καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ὅσα τε κεῖται ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ἀναπτύσσειν; but this is an example of the metaphorical use of ἀναπτύσσειν to mean 'explain'; cf. the translation of A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut, 'unfold what is contained in the Scriptures'.[26] Another is the *Testament of Abraham*, Recension B (ed. M. R. James, *Texts and Studies* II, p. 115, line 1): καὶ ἀναπτύξας ὁ ἀνὴρ ἐκεῖνος μίαν τῶν βιβλίων τῶν ὄντων ἐκ τῶν χερουβὶμ ἀνεζήτησεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς γυναικός, καὶ εὗρεν. There is no indication of the form in which these βιβλία from the cherubim were written. Still less supportive is the *Testament of Solomon* (C. C. McCown (ed.), (Leipzig,1922), 22,6), where πτύξας is used with reference to a letter (ἐπιστολή) of 16 printed lines; ἀναπτύξας there is a variant reading rejected by the editor.

If these references are unimpressive, more damaging still is the citation of Aesop, *Fab.* 295:[27] A donkey and a dog are walking together on the road. εὑρόντες δὲ ἐπὶ γῆς ἐσφραγισμένον

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[23] In E. Klostermann, ed., *Apocrypha* I. *Reste des Petrusevangeliums, der Petrus-Apokalypse und des Kerygma Petri* (Kleine Texte für theologische Vorlesungen und Übungen 3; Bonn, 1903). The passage is a fragment quoted in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 6.15.128.1.

[24] Mr Skeat points out to me Eusebius' usage in *ad Carpianum* 29, explaining his canon table system, εἰ οὖν ἀναπτύξας ἕν τι τῶν τεσσάρων εὐαγγελίων .... There is no external physical detail to show that a codex is at stake, but there can be no doubt that the Gospels that Eusebius is referring to here in the fourth century were in codex form. With the *Kerygma Petri*, however, given a date any time in the second century, a determination of the type of book referred to can depend only on one's sense of the likelihood that the codex was firmly established in church use at that date; the text is thus not independent evidence on either side of our issue.

[25] W. Bauer and K. Aland, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch* (Berlin, 1988⁶).

[26] Irenaeus I, p. 44, in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh, 1874). Irenaeus was in any case familiar with the codex, see T. C. Skeat, *ZPE* 102 (1994), p. 264 and *Novum Testamentum* 34 (1992), pp. 194-9.

[27] In A. Hausrath, *Corpus Fabularum Aesopicarum* I.2 (Leipzig, 1956, 1959²); Ben E. Perry, *Aesopica* (Urbana, 1952), p. 423, no. 264; variously cited also as Halm 332 and Chambry 277.

γραμμάτιον ὁ ὄνος λαβὼν καὶ ἀναρρήξας τὴν σφραγίδα καὶ ἀναπτύξας
διεξῇει εἰς ἐπήκοον τοῦ κυνός. περὶ βοσκημάτων δὲ ἐτύγχανε τὰ γράμματα,
χόρτου τε, φημί, καὶ κριθῆς καὶ ἀχύρου. ('When they found a sealed
contract on the ground, the donkey took it, broke the seal,
unfolded it and read through it within the dog's hearing. The con-
tract happened to be about fodder crops, I mean hay and barley
and chaff.') The dog, disgusted at the absence of any mention of
meat and bones, tells the donkey the document is of no use.
The physical reality described here will be familiar to every
editor of papyrus documents, a contract (perhaps a lease, perhaps
a loan repayable in crops) folded up several times and sealed. No
roll, let alone a book-roll, is involved.[28]

Another passage, not cited by these lexica, is only a bit less clear
about the nature of the object at stake, namely the story of Poly-
krite narrated in Polyaenus' *Strategemata* (8.36.1.13). Polykrite
writes and sends a letter to her brothers, telling them that they
should attack that night. The letter (μολιβοῦν γραμματεῖον) is con-
cealed in a πλακοῦς, a flat cake. When the brothers receive the
cake, οἱ δὲ εὑρόντες τὸν μόλιβον καὶ ἀναπτύξαντες ἀναγινώσκουσι:
'they, finding the sheet of lead and unfolding it, read it'. Now
the insertion of the detail of unfolding is Polyaenus' contribution
to the story; his source, Plutarch, is silent about this aspect in his
longer narration of the tale in *Mulierum virtutes* 254D6 (οἱ δ' ἐντυχ-
όντες τῷ μολίβδῳ καὶ τὰ γράμματα τῆς Πολυκρίτης ἀναγνόντες...).
(Earlier he calls the letter a μολίβδινον γραμματίδιον.) It is certainly
true that lead curse tablets were commonly rolled up before being
deposited,[29] but lead tablets could also be folded. Since the πλα-
κοῦς was a flat cake, it seems at least as likely that a flat-folded
tablet would be readily concealed as a rolled one.[30]

Even though ἀναπτύσσω does not *mean* to unroll, it would be
unreasonable to claim that it could never *refer* to unrolling a roll.
I have not found a case in which 'unroll' must be the meaning,
but in the passage from the *Kerygma Petri* quoted above, it can-

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[28] It is true that some six-witness contracts were written in the form of a double
document, with one copy (or a shorter version) rolled up and sealed (a drawing of
the process can be found in H.-A. Rupprecht, *Kleine Einführung in die
Papyruskunde* (Darmstadt, 1994), p. 136. But this is a feature of the early
hellenistic period rather than the Roman, and belongs to documents more
important than the modest private agreement at stake here, such as marriage
agreements (although not wills, cf. W. Clarysse, *P.Petr.*² I, p. 16).

[29] For an example, see *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* II.3, 2436.5. I am indebted
to Roger Tomlin for advice on this subject.

[30] An unfolded sheet would be easier still, and Plutarch may well have envisaged
the letter in this form.

not be shown that this is not the meaning. The verb was used for a variety of actions of opening, including a common figurative use to mean 'explain' which was exemplified in the passage from Irenaeus cited above. Nonetheless, it should now be clear that the known instances of ἀναπτύσσω with an object bearing writing are otherwise all more straightforwardly explained as referring to a folded object; in no case is a rolled object likely to be meant.[31] It is therefore more plausible to interpret the word in the text of Luke as referring to unfolding a book rather than to unrolling it. At the least, the tradition of insisting that ἀναπτύσσω is the perfect verb to express the act of unrolling should be abandoned. There is such a standard verb, and that is ἀνελίσσω (see LSJ s.v.).

The situation is different with the act of closing a roll. The simplex verb ἑλίσσω appears not to be used with the meaning of rolling up a book. Perhaps more importantly, the act of shutting a book was not one that authors found it necessary to mention very often, either in Greek or in Latin. Luke is the only citation in LSJ for πτύσσω in reference to closing a book of any description. The OLD cites only two passages for the Latin equivalent, *plico*, which is used in Jerome's translation of Luke, meaning to close a book, both evidently referring to rolls.[32] In sum, there is insufficient evidence to say as strongly about πτύσσω that it must point to a particular form of the book as one can with ἀναπτύσσω.

If the interpretation of ἀναπτύσσω offered here is correct, then, Luke would in using this verb envisage a scene in which Jesus opens and closes a codex-form book of Isaiah. No one, I believe, would suppose that the synagogue at Nazareth during Jesus' lifetime contained a codex. But is it plausible to suppose that Luke imagined the book in codex form? The answer depends on two controverted questions, the date at which Luke wrote and the date at which the codex came to be used for holding Christian scriptures. On the latter point, there seems to be agreement that the date falls in the first century: not later than c.100, Roberts and Skeat argued.[33] Others have tried to push the date back still

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[31] I have found no case—apart from Luke 4—in which the verb is used with reference to any longer document or literary work.

[32] Seneca, *Ep.* 95.2: *historian ingentem ... artissime plicatam,* to be taken as 'un rouleau très serré' (Budé) rather than 'very closely folded' (Loeb); Martial 4.82.7, *si nimis est legisse duos (sc. libellos), tibi charta plicetur altera*: 'If it is too much to read two, let one book be rolled up; divided the work will thus become brief' (Loeb).

[33] *The Birth of the Codex*, p. 63, cf. pp. 28–9, partly on the basis of Martial. For recent discussion of the dates of early Christian codices. see P. M. Head, *Tyndale*

earlier, but there is not much evidence.[34] Luke's date remains a matter of disagreement, but it is fair to say that almost all opinion would put it too in the last third of the first century. In other words, Luke and the generalized Christian use of the codex are approximately contemporary.

An interesting dilemma is thus posed. Skeat argued that the codex came into Christian use in order to hold the four gospels. If that view is accepted, then the writing of Luke must precede the introduction of the codex by at least some time. Luke would then be early in the period in question, the codex late. But if we find Luke describing the use of a codex as normal practice, then the introduction of the codex must precede Luke by at least some time. Even if one does not accept Skeat's view, however,[35] and thinks that the use of the codex may have preceded Luke, there could not be much space between the two events, and Luke could hardly have been unaware that the introduction of the codex was very recent.

We have thus arrived at an uncomfortable point. There are no passages in which ἀναπτύσσω refers clearly to unrolling a book-roll or any other rolled object; indeed, the evidence points strongly to the use of ἀναπτύσσω to refer to unfolding hinged or codex-style objects. It is not, however, likely that when Luke wrote, such objects were used to contain scriptures in Christian churches; at best they were a very new innovation, and they may post-date Luke.[36] It therefore seems worth while revisiting the possibility

Bulletin 46 (1995), pp. 251–85; T. C. Skeat, *ZPE* 102 (1994), pp. 263–8 and *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997), pp. 1–34.

[34] Thiede and Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus* (above, n. 10), cite I. Gallo, *Greek and Latin Papyrology* (London, 1986), p. 14, who puts the date 'not later than 70 A.D'. The statement is not footnoted, but for the codex he cites Roberts and Skeat.

[35] See the review of literature in G. H. R. Horsley, *Antichthon* 27 (1993 [1995]), pp. 76–83.

[36] It is worth while sketching briefly another possibility two colleagues have suggested, namely that what Jesus was handed was a roll of Isaiah which had been unrolled (by the attendant) to the point at which Jesus started to read, or about 90 per cent of the way toward the end. Opening the roll at this point might have seemed like unfolding, and closing it again like folding. A major difficulty with the notion of the roll's having been rolled to the proper passage is that what Luke quotes is not in fact all from Isaiah 61:1–2; rather, it includes a transposed phrase from 58:6 and an alteration of 61:2. Jesus would therefore not have found what Luke quotes at any τόπος in a roll. The suggestion also presupposes that the practice of having preselected passages (even if not a fully-developed lectionary) for the prophets was in use in Jesus' time, something for which there is hardly more evidence than for other aspects of synagogue practice in Galilean villages (see Zahn (above, n. 4), p. 234 and Fitzmyer (above, n. 7), pp. 531–2, for literature on the inconclusive debate about this matter). The suggestion therefore strikes me as more

of accepting ἀνοίξας, which occurs in some manuscripts and
modern editions, as the original reading. In this case, ἀναπτύξας
would be a later (but perhaps not much later) alteration of the
text, occurring in a Christian community and deriving from the
Christian use of the codex. Uses of ἀνοίγω in reference to unrolling
a book-roll are unfortunately not much commoner than those of
ἀναπτύσσω; indeed, the only passages of the Christian period
known to me where this verb is used with reference to opening
a book are in Revelation (5:1–5, cf. 20:12). It has been disputed
what sort of book is meant there, and the codex has had its parti-
sans.[37] Certainly the verb is also used of opening Roman wills,
which were normally written on tablets.[38] Nonetheless, the pre-
vailing opinion is that the passages in Revelation refer to rolls,
principally on the grounds of the dependence of Revelation here
on LXX Ezekiel 2:9–3:3, where the use of the roll is unmistakable,
not only because Ezekiel will not have known the codex but
because the writer uses the very specific κεφαλὶς βιβλίου for the
book and ἀνελίσσω (to unroll) for his action in opening it.[39]

The evidence for ἀνοίξας in Luke 4:17 is substantial, including
most importantly two critical early witnesses, the Codex
Alexandrinus (fifth century) and Codex Vaticanus (fourth
century);[40] ἀναπτύξας, by contrast, can claim Codex Sinaiticus
(fourth century) and Codex Bezae (fifth century). Both readings
are thus well-established in the ancient tradition.[41] Since the
arguments for ἀναπτύξας have been based on faulty argumentation

ingenious than probable so far as concerns ἀναπτύξας. With πτύξας, however, the
situation is different; see below, n. 42.

[37] E.g., Zahn (loc. cit.) describes it as 'wie ein kaufmännisches Rechenbuch'.
Other instances of ἀνοίγω with βιβλίον are from later commentators citing the
biblical passage.

[38] Diccionario Griego-Español 2.315 s.v. ἀνοίγω I.1, citing Plutarch, Caesar 68.1:
τῶν διαθηκῶν τῶν Καίσαρος ἀνοιχθεισῶν; Preisigke, Wörterbuch I, p. 127 s.v. ἀνοίγνυμι.
For the use of tablets for Roman wills see, e.g., Adolf Berger, Encyclopedic
Dictionary of Roman Law (Trans.Amer.Philos.Soc. 43.2; Philadelphia, 1953),
p. 728 s.v. tabula; E. J. Champlin, Final Judgments (Berkeley, 1991), p. 77;
P. W. Pestman, The New Papyrological Primer (Leiden, 1990) pp. 204–5, with a
photograph.

[39] See R. H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of
St. John (International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh, 1920), pp. 136–7; more
briefly but with later bibliography, J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation (Anchor
Bible; Garden City, 1975) ad Rev. 5:1.

[40] There is no papyrus evidence for the passage.

[41] Cf. Michael D. Goulder, Luke: A New Paradigm (JSNT Suppl. 20; Sheffield,
1989), p. 308: 'But ἀνοίξας is read by ABLW Ξ 33, etc. ἀνοίγειν is congenial to
Luke (11/1/7 + 16), and ἀναπτύξας may have been substituted to correspond with
πτύξας.' R. H. Charles (above, n. 39) also prefers ἀνοίξας.

about meaning, rather than about the manuscript evidence, they deserve no privileging. It remains true that even if we accept ἀνοίξας as the correct reading, we must allow πτύξας to have a more extended meaning of 'close' in Luke 4:20, where no alternative readings are available. Such a meaning, however, is perfectly reasonable given the setting.[42] It thus seems most likely that the development of a branch in the textual tradition giving ἀναπτύξας in 4:17 is an early reflection of the adoption of the codex as the standard form for Christian scriptures,[43] whether that first meant (as Skeat argued) the four gospels or (as Gamble has suggested) the Pauline corpus.[44]

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[42] As Mr Skeat and Dr Obbink have pointed out to me, Luke presumably envisages Jesus as closing the roll where it was, rather than rerolling it back some sixty chapters. The action of closing it would seem much like folding it shut, and πτύσσω is a perfectly appropriate verb for that action.

[43] It is interesting that in Jerome's version the two verses do not use verbs derived from the same stem. Luke 4:17 reads *et traditus est illi liber Isaiae prophetae. Et ut reuoluit librum, inuenit locum, ubi scriptum erat*, while 4:20 reads *et cum plicuisset librum, reddidit ministro, et sedit*. As noted above, *plico* is the equivalent of πτύσσω, although slightly better attested with the meaning of closing a book. But Jerome does not use *replico* or *explico*, both attested as meaning to unroll a book, to render 4:17, even though either would be a close calque of ἀναπτύσσω (*replico* the closer equivalent). Instead he uses *reuoluo*, with the same meaning. When he cites the same passage in his commentary to Isaiah (17.61.1, PL 24, 599C), he instead gives it as *quo aperto invenit scriptum .... Quando convolutum librum reddidit et sedit*. Jerome will not have imagined the codex to be the book in use here, although he was very familiar with biblical codices; he routinely thought of the Old Testament as in roll form, and Isaiah as a *grande volumen*, in contrast to Christian scriptures (E. Arns, *La technique du livre d'après Saint Jérôme* (Paris, 1953), pp. 118–26. It is possible that the use of *reuoluo* and *aperto* points to a reading ἀνοίξας in the Greek manuscripts available to Jerome, because he might otherwise have used a *-plico* compound. The use of *convolutum* for the force of πτύξας in the commentary on Isaiah, however, shows that this cannot be taken for granted. Jerome's manuscripts cannot be identified; see H. F. D. Sparks in *Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1 (1970), pp. 529–30. Their affiliations have been a matter of controversy; see B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York, 1992³), p. 76 with n. on p. 252 for bibliography, concluding that Jerome's affinities for the tradition represented by Alexandrinus (A) and Vaticanus (B) are the most pronounced. As both of these have ἀνοίξας, Jerome's choice of words may support this view. But it must be said that Jerome's affinity for A and B is not necessarily in opposition to Sinaiticus or Bezae, both of which have ἀναπτύξας, as these are not otherwise consistent groupings. See also A. Vööbus, *Early Versions of the New Testament* (Stockholm, 1954), pp. 61–2.

[44] See H. Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 58–63.