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the shape of the book
FROM ROLL TO CODEX
(3rd century BC–19th century AD)

Mandragora

Shape of the Book: from Roll to Codex (3rd Century Bc-19th Century Ad)

Franca Arduini

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- Charts the evolution of the book through the ages, from ostraca and papyrus rolls to medieval, Renaissance and modern parchment and paper manuscripts

Part of the *Library on Display* series devoted to exhibitions held at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, this book is divided into two sections: the Papyrus Collection and the Manuscript collection. Between two intentionally striking extremes – a potsherd on which a pupil from the 2nd century BC wrote the ancient verses of one of Sappho's odes and a 19th century Japanese erotic-grotesque scroll – the entries illustrate the relationship between book form and function, describing manuscripts of different formats and periods, from wax tablets and literary and documentary papyrus rolls to medieval and Renaissance parchment (and subsequently paper) codices from production centres ranging from the imperial scriptorium in Constantinople to high-quality workshops in Italy (particularly 15th century Florence), Europe and Asia, including examples of pocket and giant Bibles. The introductory essay by Guglielmo Cavallo offers a brief overview of the history of the book, a field in which his expertise is virtually unparalleled.

Franca Arduini is Director of the Biblioteca Medicea Laureziana, Florence. Guglielmo Cavallo is Professor of Greek Palaeography at the Universita di Roma. He is one of the world's leading experts on palaeography and the history of writing.

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