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## Transforming Textuality: Porphyry, Eusebius, and Late Ancient Tables of Contents

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## Transforming Textuality: Porphyry, Eusebius, and Late Ancient Tables of Contents<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT** Late Antiquity witnessed a revolution in textuality. Numerous new technologies transformed the practices through which readers accessed written knowledge. Editors reconfigured existing works in order to facilitate new modes of access and new possibilities of knowledge. Despite recent investigations of late ancient knowing, tables of contents have been neglected. Addressing this lacuna, I analyze two examples from the early fourth century: Porphyry of Tyre's outline of the *Enneads* in his *Life of Plotinus* and Eusebius of Caesarea's Gospel canons. Using tables of contents, Porphyry and Eusebius reconfigured inherited corpora; their creative interventions generate and constrain possibilities of reading—sometimes in ways which run against the grain of the assembled material. I thus argue that Porphyry and Eusebius employed tables of contents to structure textual knowledge—and readers' access to it—by embracing the dual possibilities of order and creativity in order to offer new texts to their readers. This dual function—of affording structure and inviting creative use—was significant in the construction of composite works which characterized much late ancient intellectual production. The examples of Porphyry and Eusebius illuminate broader late ancient practices of collecting and cataloguing textual knowledge.

**KEYWORDS** Porphyry of Tyre, Eusebius of Caesarea, *Enneads*, Gospels, Tables of Contents

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Late Antiquity witnessed a revolution in textuality.<sup>2</sup> The emerging prominence of the codex format is but the most famous of the bibliographic

1. I am grateful to Matthew Crawford, Joseph Howley, Jennifer Knust, Mark Letteney, Blake Leyerle, David Lincicum, Candida Moss, Andrew Riggsby, and an anonymous reviewer for their generous feedback. Previous forms of this argument were presented at the XVIII. International Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford and at the Notre Dame Workshop on Book History and Early Christianity. The article is much improved by the insights of both audiences.

2. On a “late ancient revolution” in information technology, see Andrew M. Riggsby, *Mosaics of Knowledge: Representing Information in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 216–22.

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transformations that occurred in the third and fourth centuries CE. Editors reconfigured existing works using numerous new technologies that transformed the practices by which readers accessed written knowledge. These editorial labors are the focus of the present contribution. Among the emerging technologies of the period was one that present-day readers often take for granted: the table of contents. Modern familiarity with the table of contents has obscured awareness of its power to transform reading. In this article, I focus on two fourth-century projects that used tables of contents to reconfigure existing texts. These editorial interventions exerted a dramatic effect, still underestimated, on the reception of two influential textual corpora: the *Enneads* attributed to the Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus and the four Gospels of the New Testament.

In recent years, several scholars have highlighted the ancient table of contents as a powerful literary device. The few Latin tables of contents from the first and second centuries CE, especially those in Pliny's *Natural History* and Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, have enjoyed well-deserved attention.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, tables of contents have not been incorporated into conversations about late ancient knowing.<sup>4</sup> This pattern of neglect continues a longstanding

3. See Bianca-Jeanette Schröder, *Titel und Text: Zur Entwicklung lateinischer Gedichtüberschriften, mit Untersuchungen zu lateinischen Buchtiteln, Inhaltsverzeichnissen und anderen Gliederungsmitteln* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 99–122; Andrew M. Riggsby, “Guides to the Wor(l)d,” in *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, ed. Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 88–107; Erik Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae: Aulus Gellius and the Fantasy of the Roman Library* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 47–51; Aude Doody, *Pliny's Encyclopedia: The Reception of the Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 92–131; Roy Gibson, “Starting with the Index in Pliny,” in *The Roman Paratext: Frame, Texts, Readers*, ed. Laura Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 33–55; John Bodel, “The Publication of Pliny's Letters,” in *Pliny the Book-Maker: Betting on Posterity in the Epistles*, ed. Ilaria Marchesi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13–108 at 23–42; Joseph A. Howley, *Aulus Gellius and Roman Reading Culture: Text, Presence, and Imperial Knowledge in the Noctes Atticae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 52–64; Howley, “Tables of Contents,” in *Book Parts*, ed. Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 65–80; Riggsby, *Mosaics*, 22–29. As an exception to the focus on Latin evidence, note Howley's discussion of the table of contents in Arrian's *Discourses* (*Gellius and Roman Reading Culture*, 56–57).

4. Tables of contents do not appear in James Zetzel's extensive survey of Latin scholarship (*Critics, Compilers, and Commentators: An Introduction to Roman Philology, 200 BCE–800 CE* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018]). Late ancient tables of contents also do not appear in Howley's essay, which moves from the first- and second-century Roman Mediterranean to the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Latin Europe (“Tables of Contents,” 71). For a brief discussion of late ancient tables of contents, see Bodel, “Pliny's Letters,” 28–42.

emphasis on authors.<sup>5</sup> Scholars focus on authorial tables of contents—like those of Pliny or Gellius—while later editorial interventions are overlooked or dismissed as derivative. Ignoring such tables of contents is part of a larger tendency to devalue textual curation, late ancient and otherwise. This neglect is peculiar because, as a number of scholars have emphasized, distinctive developments in the organization of knowledge characterized Late Antiquity.<sup>6</sup>

In this article, I argue that tables of contents illuminate broader late ancient practices of collecting and cataloguing textual knowledge. The table of contents provides a category by which to analyze the construction of two composite works from the early fourth century: Porphyry of Tyre's *Enneads* and Eusebius of Caesarea's fourfold Gospel. As a number of scholars have recently emphasized, late ancient thinkers of varied philosophical and theological commitments occupied overlapping social and intellectual milieux.<sup>7</sup> Here I extend these illuminating comparisons by demonstrating how both Porphyry and Eusebius used tables of contents to generate new networks of meaning within inherited texts.<sup>8</sup> In what follows, I analyze both the editors' stated rationales for their interventions

5. Riggsby and Howley both focus on authorial tables of contents in the first and second centuries CE. Genette similarly focuses on features that he attributes to an "author" or their agents (*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997]).

6. On transformations in late ancient textuality and knowledge, see Anthony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); C. M. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); C. M. Chin and Moulic Vidas, eds., *Late Ancient Knowing: Explorations in Intellectual History* (Berkeley: University of California, 2015); Blossom Stefaniew, *Christian Reading: Language, Ethics, and the Order of Things* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

7. Such conversations frequently center on Porphyry and Eusebius. Major contributions include Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*; Jeremy M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Schott, "Living Like a Christian, But Playing the Greek": Accounts of Apostasy and Conversion in Porphyry and Eusebius," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008): 258–77; Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Aaron P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Schott, "Plotinus's Portrait and Pamphilus's Prison Notebook: Neoplatonic and Early Christian Textualities at the Turn of the Fourth Century C.E.," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21 (2013): 329–62; Johnson, *Eusebius* (London: Tauris, 2014), esp. 11–16.

8. In their monograph, Grafton and Williams focus on similarities between Porphyry as editor of Plotinus' corpus and Pamphilus and Eusebius as editors of Origen's corpus, but do not employ the table of contents as a framework for comparison. Schott's discussion of how Porphyry and Eusebius

and how these tables of contents facilitated readers' use of the assembled texts. Both figures transformed existing corpora (Plotinus' *Nachlass*, the four Gospels). Using tables of contents, they embraced the dual possibilities of order and creativity in order to offer new texts and new modes of reading. While the significance of these late ancient editorial interventions remains underestimated, both projects had an enduring impact on reading and knowledge.

## 2. TABLES OF CONTENTS, ANCIENT AND MODERN

The familiar devices known as tables of contents possess a peculiar power to afford and to constrain possibilities of reading, a capacity rendered all the more potent by readers' tendency to overlook them.<sup>9</sup> Before turning to ancient texts, then, I discuss modern tables of contents. This, in turn, requires a few words about the heuristic categories that I employ. Categories are analogies; they draw attention to certain similarities at the expense of other features. To assign something to a category is thus to make an argument that item X is relevantly similar (i.e., adjudicated with respect to some context-specific set of criteria) to other items (say, Y and Z) that have been grouped together in that same category. Hence, category claims are a species of analogy. Categorization makes shared features and patterns of use visible, despite differences between ancient and modern phenomena. Ancient editorial interventions differed from their modern corollaries, and the table of contents is no exception.<sup>10</sup> Approaching late ancient paratexts as tables of contents is

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curated inherited texts is significant, although he does not address tables of contents or the Eusebian apparatus ("Plotinus's Portrait").

9. Although particular technologies afford some possibilities and constrain others, users can decline available technologies, use them "incorrectly," or adapt them for new ends. I adopt the language of "affordance" from Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

10. Ancient bibliographic phenomena such as *πίνακες* and *κεφάλαια* intersect with the category of "table of contents" that I employ here. *Πίνακες* describe a bibliography or a catalogue rather than a table of contents; the use of the term to describe a prefatory paratext emerges only later. While *πίνακες* participate in the organization of knowledge, they do not imply a unified work or an internal structure. As strange as it might seem to present-day readers, *κεφάλαια*, or chapter titles, did not require a prefatory *list* of such *κεφάλαια* (cf. Schröder, *Titel und Text*, 99–105)—and thus did not always entail a "table of contents" as such. For the absence of the "table of contents" as a distinct named phenomenon in Latin, see Riggsby, "Guides to the Wor(l)d." Doody argues at length that modern tables of contents and ancient phenomena differ substantially. For this reason, Doody is skeptical that one should refer to an ancient "table of contents" at all. She instead describes Pliny's guide to his *Natural History* with his own terminology as a *summarium* (cf. *Nat. Hist.* praef. 33; Doody, *Pliny's Encyclopedia*, 92–131).

thus a heuristic anachronism.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the category of the table of contents emphasizes formal and functional similarities that illuminate the influential late ancient projects of Porphyry and Eusebius.

The table of contents is an example of what Gérard Genette has called the “paratext.” Like prefaces, section headings, epigraphs, and indices, a table of contents functions as a “threshold of interpretation.” It mediates between text and reader.<sup>12</sup> Even if a paratext is formally peripheral, it guides the reader’s experience of the text. Genette’s image of the “threshold” (*seuil*) is fitting: tables of contents facilitate a reader’s entry into a text, enabling them to encounter that text in new ways.<sup>13</sup>

Modern tables of contents adopt various forms. In romance languages, for example, a table of contents typically appears at the end of a printed volume; in English or German, it acts as a prefatory map to orient the reader to the text ahead. Some tables of contents are extensive, even painfully so. They elaborate subheadings and even sub-subheadings or—in a manner often associated with older print—include extensive descriptions.

Regardless of its location or extent, a table of contents maps a text. It depicts a system of textual segmentation, combining and separating blocks of material into distinct units.<sup>14</sup> A table of contents also indicates a structure for (reading) the assembled material. Joseph Howley and Andrew Riggsby both make intrinsic to their definitions the idea that contents are listed “in the order of their appearance in the book,” but I suggest that it is more helpful to

11. On the value of anachronism for historiography, see Nick Jardine, “Uses and Abuses of Anachronism in the History of the Sciences,” *History of Science* 38 (2000): 251–70.

12. On the language of the “paratext,” see Genette, *Paratexts*; on paratexts in general, see Genette’s introduction (1–15) and on the table of contents, see 316–18. Patrick Andrist offers a typology that applies Genette’s concept of the paratext to Greek manuscripts: “Toward a Definition of Paratexts and Paratextuality: The Case of Ancient Greek Manuscripts,” in *Bible as Notepad: Tracing Annotations and Annotation Practices in Late Antique and Medieval Biblical Manuscripts*, ed. Liv Ingeborg Lied and Marilena Maniaci (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018), 130–50. Working from the perspective of manuscript codicology rather than that of printed books, Andrist avoids Genette’s focus on the author. Andrist defines the paratext as a “piece of content which distinguishes itself from other pieces of content on the basis of its subordinate position in the greater scheme of the overarching book project” (137).

13. In addition to Genette’s foundational discussion, see Howley, “Tables of Contents,” and Georges Mathieu and Jean-Claude Arnould, eds., *La table des matières: Son histoire, ses règles, ses fonctions, son esthétique* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017); cf. Dennis Duncan, “Indexes,” in *Book Parts*, ed. Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 263–74.

14. Genette treats tables of contents in conjunction with “intertitles” (*Paratexts*, 316–18); cf. Nicholas Dames, “Chapter Heads,” in *Book Parts*, ed. Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 151–64.

say that a table of contents maps the *structure* of a text (not necessarily its *sequence*).<sup>15</sup> Most importantly, a table of contents constitutes the disparate components of the text as a coherent whole by mapping their place in a larger framework.

Readers matter, too. A table of contents, as Genette observed, is “a zone of transaction.”<sup>16</sup> It works insofar as it invites use.<sup>17</sup> A table of contents affords particular practices. For example, I often do not read books straight through. Instead, I employ tables of contents to identify relevant material. Even when approaching a book that I intend to read in full, I begin by skimming the table of contents and index, followed by reading the introduction and conclusion (found with the table of contents) and then the individual chapters (not always in order). Numerous scholars have focused on how tables of contents facilitate such nonlinear reading.<sup>18</sup> Other readers might approach tables of contents and academic monographs differently, but this anecdotally introduces the options that a table of contents affords to readers.<sup>19</sup> Even so, the table of contents requires readers’ cooperation. A reader can ignore a table of contents—flip past it and begin reading at chapter one. A table of contents can even be removed in subsequent manuscripts or printed editions.<sup>20</sup>

15. Citing Howley, “Tables of Contents,” 67; cf. Riggsby, “Guides to the Wor(l)d,” 89–90.

16. Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

17. For present-day readers, the table of contents requires no introduction; as Riggsby argues, however, tables of contents were sufficiently unfamiliar in Roman antiquity as to require introduction (“Guides to the Wor(l)d”). This essay is more extensive than the parallel discussion in his subsequent monograph (*Mosaics*, 22–29). Howley suggests instead that instructions were a characteristic component of the table of contents as a genre, but this still reflects readers’ need for orientation (*Gellius and Roman Reading Culture*, 54–55).

18. Both nonlinear reading and the table of contents are often associated with codex format. See Guglielmo Cavallo, “Between *Volumen* and Codex: Reading in the Roman World,” in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 64–89; Christian Vandendorpe, *From Papyrus to Hypertext: Toward the Universal Digital Library*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 112–15. Howley, “Tables of Contents,” also exemplifies this trend. Nonetheless, as T. C. Skeat has demonstrated, nonlinear reading was practical in a *volumen* (“Two Notes on Papyrus,” in *Scritti in onore di Orsolina Montevecchi*, ed. Edda Bresciani [Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1981], 373–78). Descriptions of ancient reading events sometimes involve virtuosic nonlinear reading with a bookroll (e.g., Galen, *De libris propriis* 19.13–15, 21–22 Kühn; *De differentiis pulsuum* 8.591–592 Kühn). cf. Jeremiah Coogan, “Gospel as Recipe Book: Nonlinear Reading and Practical Texts in Late Antiquity,” *Early Christianity* 12 (2021): 40–60.

19. For similar reflection on how readers interact with tables of contents, see Howley, “Tables of Contents,” 67.

20. Joseph Howley notes that Aulus Gellius’ table of contents for his *Attic Nights* was omitted in a 1550 edition printed at Lyon and was replaced with a “ransom note,” explaining that the table of

Use and features intersect. A more granular table of contents affords greater possibilities for selective navigation. If, on the other hand, a book's table of contents includes only titles for, say, five chapters, this nudges the reader toward approaching its text in larger units. Many readers, moreover, have experienced the annoyance of chapter titles that exist primarily as a concession to convention, but which do not communicate the content of the chapter. These frustrate nonlinear reading altogether. To find what you want, you must read the whole book.

As historically and culturally contingent artifacts, tables of contents guide readers in varied ways. In what follows, I examine the textual structures and the practices of reading that emerge from Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* and Eusebius' Gospel canons in order to demonstrate how tables of contents were used to reshape knowledge in Late Antiquity.

### 3. PORPHYRY OF TYRE AND HIS *ENNEADS*

Around the year 300 CE, Porphyry of Tyre (*ca.* 232 – *ca.* 304) began to edit the diffuse writings of his teacher Plotinus (*ca.* 204/5 – 270).<sup>21</sup> Porphyry prefaced the resulting collection, known as the *Enneads*, with his *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books* (Περὶ τοῦ Πλωτίνου βίου καὶ τῆς τάξεως τῶν βιβλίων αὐτοῦ = *Plot.*).<sup>22</sup>

Porphyry's *Plot.* is a biography (βίος). It is also a bibliography, describing Plotinus' works and their place in his corpus. While the list of books was prepared by a later editor—Porphyry—rather than by Plotinus himself, this combination of bibliography and biography parallels the autobibliography practiced by Galen in his *My Own Books* (Περὶ τῶν ἰδίων βιβλίων, *De libris propriis*) and *The Order of My Own Books* (Περὶ τῆς τάξεως τῶν ἰδίων βιβλίων, *De ordine librorum suorum*)<sup>23</sup> and, later, by Augustine in his

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contents had been left out (“Tables of Contents,” 74). Editors have sometimes treated Pliny's *Natural History* similarly; cf. Doody, *Pliny's Encyclopedia*, 92–131.

21. These dates follow Paulos Kalligas, “Porphyry: *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*,” in *The Enneads of Plotinus: A Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 2–97 at 3–4.

22. The *editio maior* is Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolph Schwyzer, eds., *Plotini Opera* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951–73). I have cited the text from the later *editio minor*, Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolph Schwyzer, eds., *Plotini Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964–82). Except where modifications are noted, I have cited the translation of Lloyd P. Gerson et al., *Plotinus: The Enneads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 17–37.

23. For both, see the Budé edition and notes of Véronique Boudon-Millot, ed., *Galien, t. I: Introduction générale, Sur l'ordre de ses propres livres, Sur ses propres livres, Que l'excellent médecin est*



*Retractationes*. Even closer parallels to this combination of βίος and bibliography appear in the Euthalian prologue to the Pauline letters, which likely derives from fourth-century Caesarea Maritima,<sup>24</sup> and in Possidius of Calama's *Vita Augustini*.<sup>25</sup> Eusebius speaks of bibliographic lists (πίνακες) accompanying his (now lost) *Vita Pamphili*—a tribute to Pamphilus' enormous bibliographic labors, although these πίνακες listed the contents of Pamphilus' library ("the library of Origen and the other ecclesiastical writers," τῆς [...] τῶν τε Ωριγένους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν συγγραφέων βιβλιοθήκης, *Hist. eccl.* 6.32.3; cf. Jerome, *Ruf.* 2.22) rather than listing Pamphilus' own *oeuvre*.<sup>26</sup>

As Richard Valantasis memorably describes the work, *Plot.* was designed as a "marketing device" for Porphyry's edition of Plotinus' works.<sup>27</sup> In it, Porphyry claimed that Plotinus had appointed him as his literary executor (§§7, 24).<sup>28</sup> In addition to offering a biography of Plotinus, Porphyry described his

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*aussi philosophe, texte établi, traduit et annoté* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 2007). Galen states that he wrote a treatise on his own books in order to protect both their transmission and their interpretation, warding against the dual hazards of misreading and miscopying (*De libris propriis* 19.8–11 Kühn).

24. See Louis Charles Willard, *A Critical Study of the Euthalian Apparatus* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009); Vermund Blomkvist, *Euthalian Traditions: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); Gregory Peter Fewster, "Finding Your Place: Developing Cross-Reference Systems in Late Antique Biblical Codices," in *The Future of New Testament Textual Scholarship: From H. C. Hoskier to the Editio Critica Maior and Beyond*, ed. Garrick V. Allen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 153–77.

25. Possidius' *Indiculus* (*Clavis patrum latinorum* 359) is attached to the *Vita Augustini* (*Clavis patrum latinorum* 358). The preserved form of the *Indiculus* lists and classifies 1030 works. On Augustine's *oeuvre* and Possidius' *Indiculus*, see Goulven Madec, "Possidius de Calama et les listes des oeuvres d'Augustin," in *Titres et articulations du texte dans les oeuvres antiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Fredouille (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1997), 427–45; Gillian Clark, "City of Books: Augustine and the World as Text," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 117–39 at 120.

26. Trans. Jeremy M. Schott, *The History of the Church: A New Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 315. For the Greek text, see Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, eds., *Eusebius Werke II.1–3: Die Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–09), 2.586–88. Using πίνακες to list authors' works has, of course, a longer history, going back to Hellenistic Alexandria and associated particularly with Callimachus.

27. Richard Valantasis, "Porphyry, *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*," in *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*, ed. Richard Valantasis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 50–64 at 50. Compare Schott: "Indeed, the *Life* as a whole can be read as a long apology and advertisement for Porphyry's edition of Plotinus" ("Living Like a Christian," 268).

28. The opening story of Plotinus' portrait is used to justify this project; cf. Schott, "Plotinus' Portrait." In addition to the biography proper, Porphyry offers a history of scholarship, situating Plotinus' work in its broader philosophical context.

own editorial process and the materials with which he began. As Porphyry recounts,

Ἐπεὶ δὲ αὐτὸς τὴν διάταξιν καὶ τὴν διόρθωσιν τῶν βιβλίων ποιῆσθαι ἡμῖν ἐπέτρεψεν, ἐγὼ δὲ κακείνῳ ζῶντι ὑπεσχόμην καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐταίροις ἐπηγγεῖλάμην ποιῆσαι τοῦτο, πρῶτον μὲν τὰ βιβλία οὐ κατὰ χρόνους ἕασαι φύρδην ἐκδεδομένα ἐδικαίωσα, μιμησάμενος δ' Ἀπολλόδορον τὸν Ἀθηναῖον καὶ Ἀνδρόνικον τὸν Περιπατητικόν, ὧν ὁ μὲν Επίχαρμον τὸν κωμωδιογράφον εἰς δέκα τόμους φέρων συνήγαγεν, ὁ δὲ τὰ Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ Θεοφράστου εἰς πραγματείας διεῖλε τὰς οἰκείας ὑποθέσεις εἰς ταῦτόν συναγαγών· οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν ὄντα ἔχων τὰ τοῦ Πλωτίνου βιβλία διεῖλον μὲν εἰς ἕξ ἐννεάδας τῆ τελειότητι τοῦ ἕξ ἀριθμοῦ καὶ ταῖς ἐννεάσιν ἀσμένως ἐπιτυχῶν, ἐκάστη δὲ ἐννεάδι τὰ οἰκεία φέρων συνεφόρησα δούς καὶ τάξιν πρῶτην τοῖς ἐλαφροτέροις προβλήμασιν. [...] Τὰ μὲν οὖν βιβλία εἰς ἕξ ἐννεάδας τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον κατετάξαμεν τέσσαρα καὶ πενήκοντα ὄντα.

[Plotinus] turned over to us [i.e., Porphyry] the task of arranging and correcting his books, and I promised him while he was alive that I would do this, and gave assignments to his other associates too. So I decided first of all not to leave his books confusedly [φύρδην] in the chronological order of their publication. In this I followed the example of Apollodorus of Athens and Andronicus the Peripatetic: the former collected the works of Epicharmus the comic poet in ten volumes; the latter divided the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus into treatises, bringing related themes together. For my part, I hit on the pleasing idea of dividing the fifty-four books of Plotinus into six ‘enneads’—groups of nine multiplied by the perfect number six. I collected related topics together in each ennead, putting the less weighty questions first in the final order. [...] This, then, is how we arranged Plotinus’ fifty-four books in six enneads. (*Plot.* §24, §26 [Gerson, modified])

Porphyry’s multifaceted editorial intervention included several practices that were common when preparing material for publication. He supplied titles (ἐπιγραφαί, §§4 and 16),<sup>29</sup> punctuation (στιγμάς, §26), headings (κεφάλαια, §26; cf. §§4 and 20), *argumenta* (ἐπιχειρήματα, §26),<sup>30</sup> and commentary

29. Cf. Kalligas, “Life of Plotinus,” 39. As Paul Henry noted, the titles preserved in Eusebius’ *Praep. ev.* diverge from those in Porphyry’s edition (*Recherches sur la Préparation évangélique d’Eusèbe et l’édition perdue des oeuvres de Plotin publiée par Eustochius* [Paris: Leroux, 1935]).

30. Porphyry notes that he had designed the *argumenta* (ἐπιχειρήματα)—or at least some of them—earlier in his career when still using an edition of Plotinus’ works arranged in chronological order, while he devised the headings (κεφάλαια) for the *Enneads* edition (*Plot.* §26; cf. Kalligas, “Life

(ὑπομνήματα, §26)<sup>31</sup> to guide readers of Plotinus' texts.<sup>32</sup> Porphyry's titles sometimes replaced existing ones that Plotinus used for the treatises. The titles of *Enn.* 1.1; 1.7–8; 2.2; 2.6; 2.8; 3.8; 4.1; 4.3–5; 5.5; and 6.8 as listed in *Plot.* §§4–6 seem to reflect the titles of the earlier edition; they differ from Porphyry's *Enneads* edition, as reflected in the table of contents at *Plot.* §§24–26 and in the titles that circulate with the treatises themselves.<sup>33</sup> Porphyry corrected (διόρθωσις, §24; διορθοῦν, §26) the text; perhaps as a justification for his changes, Porphyry describes the poor style, illegibility, and fragmentation of Plotinus' treatises (cf. §§8, 13, 17, and 20).<sup>34</sup> Finally—and more unusually—Porphyry rearranged the treatises into a newly ordered whole (διάταξις, §24; κατάτασσειν, §26; in contrast with the prior φύρδην, §24), mapped with a table of contents. This final contribution will be the focus of our discussion here.

Porphyry engaged the question of order in a complex way. *Plot.* offers not one but two lists of Plotinus' works. Both reflect Porphyry's decisions to combine or segment individual treatises. First, Porphyry narrated the order in which the treatises were written (or, at least, roughly their sequence of composition), divided into three periods (§§4–6). He ascribed different

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of Plotinus," 92). This passage suggests that the *Enneads* are the result of a long process of editorial engagement with the Plotinian corpus.

31. On the commentaries, see Kalligas, "Life of Plotinus," 91–92.

32. Remnants of the headings and *argumenta* for *Enn.* 4.4 remain at the conclusion of the medieval introduction to the Arabic *Theology of Aristotle* (Kalligas, "Life of Plotinus," 92). (Note that, despite its title, the *Theology of Aristotle* is actually an Arabic version corresponding to parts of *Enneads* 4–6.) Dawn LaValle Norman, *The Aesthetics of Hope in Late Greek Imperial Literature: Methodius of Olympus' Symposium and the Crisis of the Third Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 30–31, notes that Porphyry created reading aids for other texts as well. Porphyry's varied interventions in the Plotinian corpus are consistent with the creation of an ἐκδόσις, an edition—even though, as Porphyry himself acknowledged, Plotinus' treatises had already been published (ἐκδεδομένα, §24). While copious scholarship focuses on ἐκδόσεις in Hellenistic Alexandrian scholarship (most recently Francesca Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians: Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Iliad* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018]), scholarship on Late Antiquity is more limited. The best discussion of these practices in Late Antiquity is that of Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*.

33. On differences between the titles listed chronologically in §§4–6 and those in the treatises and their table of contents (§§24–26), see Kalligas, "Life of Plotinus," 38–39, and Paul Henry, *Études Plotiniennes, I: Les états du texte de Plotin* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1938), 2–28.

34. Valantasis asserts that Porphyry was editing "notes," but this does not have any basis in Porphyry's presentation of the matter or in the state of the text ("Life of Plotinus," 50). Porphyry refers to the prior "publication" (ἐκδεδομένα) of Plotinus' βιβλία in *Plot.* §24 (cf. §4). Kalligas ("Life of Plotinus," 6) sees Porphyry's description of Plotinus' writing habits as a "digression," overlooking its rhetorical significance in justifying Porphyry's editorial project. Traces of Porphyry's διόρθωσις are visible through comparison of the *Enneads* with the Plotinian fragments preserved by Eusebius.

degrees of intellectual vigor to these different stages of Plotinus' intellectual career. (Naturally, Plotinus was at the height of his powers when Porphyry was with him [§6].) Second, Porphyry surveyed the arrangement of the *Enneads*, the sequence that results from his editorial project (§§24–26). The order of composition appears in the body of the βίος (“On the Life of Plotinus”), while the table of contents for the *Ennead*-arrangement comes at the end of the biography in a section which corresponds to the second half of the work's title, “On the Order of His Books.”<sup>35</sup>

While the material in the *Enneads* derives substantially from Plotinus, the *Enneads* as a work was Porphyry's invention. This is not to diminish Plotinus' philosophical legacy, but rather to emphasize that, from the fourth century onward, Plotinus' writings were encountered in a form fundamentally reconfigured by Porphyry's editorial activity. Historians of philosophy seldom attend to how Porphyry's editorial activity shaped Plotinus' treatises.<sup>36</sup> Yet it was Porphyry who arranged Plotinus' treatises into six groups of nine, six “enneads.”<sup>37</sup> To accomplish this, Porphyry employed creative measures. He did not begin with exactly fifty-four treatises, and reached this number by combining and dividing the material at his disposal.<sup>38</sup> Porphyry obliquely acknowledged this in §24, when he informed the reader that he had

35. The transition between biography and bibliography, reflected in the title *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*, occurs with the phrase τοιοῦτος μὲν οὖν ὁ Πλωτίνου ἡμῖν ἰστόρηται βίος (“Such is our account of the life of Plotinus”) at the beginning of §24.

36. Scholars have, in general, treated Porphyry (and his chronological list of treatises in *Plot.* §§4–6) as a transparent window to Plotinus; they ignore how he changes the texts that reach him. Comparative tables of sequence are a commonplace in scholarship on the *Enneads*. Pierre Hadot recommended the chronological order of *Plot.* §§4–6 as the appropriate sequence for reading Plotinus (*Plotinus, or, the Simplicity of Vision*, trans. Michael Chase [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 [1963]], 121–27). The editions of Kirchhoff and Harder dispensed with the *Ennead* arrangement altogether, as did the recent Flammarion edition of Plotinus (not an “*Enneads*”), edited by J.-F. Pradeau and Luc Brisson (2002–2019), which published annotated translations of 54 treatises in (Porphyry's) chronological order. The recent English translation of Gerson et al., *Enneads*, 8–9, includes a comparative table of sequences. These attempts to recreate the “original” sequence of treatises nonetheless retain Porphyry's combination and division of treatises, as well as his interventions into the texts themselves.

37. Porphyry describes his six-by-nine arrangement as a “pleasing” (ἀσμένως, §24) idea; he created it apparently from a love of symmetry and numerological elegance (in keeping with the Neopythagorean numerological proclivities of Neoplatonism, cf. *Plot.* §24). George Boys-Stones (Gerson et al., *Enneads*, 1) calls this six-by-nine arrangement “idiosyncratic.” Compare Eusebius' choice of ten as a structuring number for his canons (below).

38. That Porphyry did not have access to the whole of Plotinus' corpus or chose not to include all of Plotinus' treatises is suggested by the fact that the Plotinian passage included by Eusebius at *Praep. ev.* 11.17.1–10 does not appear in the *Enneads* at all.

followed the example of “Andronicus the Peripatetic [who] later divided the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus into treatises, bringing related topics (ὑποθέσεις) together.” Porphyry divided several treatises in order to reach the desired number.<sup>39</sup> A single treatise, “On the Kinds of Being,” became three parts (*Enn.* 6.1–3). Likewise *Enn.* 3.2–3; 4.3–5; 6.1–3; and 6.4–5 were each once one treatise, now broken into two or three parts, and named separately. In other cases, Porphyry scattered part-treatises around the collection. For example, the material that present-day scholars know as *Enn.* 3.8; 5.8; 5.5; and 2.9 was once a single treatise in the order that I have listed. Porphyry also did the opposite. To create *Enn.* 3.9, he combined several shorter treatises, based on only a broad thematic unity.<sup>40</sup> Porphyry is the one who created the work that he named the *Enneads*. Until it was organized into a collection of six “nines,” Plotinus’ *Nachlass* was not the *Enneads* at all.

Porphyry’s editorial project was forged in the fires of debate. He was not the first to publish Plotinus’ works. Porphyry’s fellow student Eustochius, the physician who attended Plotinus in his final illness, may have published an edition of Plotinus’ works.<sup>41</sup> A number of Plotinus’ treatises also circulated in forms mediated by another student, Amelius.<sup>42</sup> The force of the argument in

39. Cf. Kalligas, “Life of Plotinus,” 89–90.

40. As another example, the treatise known as *Enn.* 4.7 was available to Eusebius in at least two books (*Praep. ev.* 15.10.1–9; 15.22.1–67); cf. Paul Kalligas, “Traces of Longinus’ Library in Eusebius’ *Praeparatio Evangelica*,” *Classical Quarterly* 51 (2001): 584–98 at 587–88.

41. Evidence for Eustochius’ alternate edition of some of Plotinus’ treatises is preserved in a scholion that circulates at *Enn.* 4.4.29.55. Excerpts from an alternate edition of Plotinus’ works are preserved by Eusebius in *Praep. ev.* 11.17.1–10; 15.10.1–9; 15.22.1–67. The identification of these passages with Eustochius’ edition was argued by Henry, *Recherches*, 59–133, although others have identified them with copies possessed by Longinus (cf. *Plot.* §19 and Kalligas, “Longinus’ Library,” 586). While Porphyry mentions Eustochius at §2 and §7, he avoids mentioning Eustochius’ alternate edition (cf. Kalligas, “Life of Plotinus,” 43). In favor of a Eustochian edition, see Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, “L’édition porphyrienne des ‘Ennéades,’” in *Porphyre: La Vie de Plotin. I. Études d’introduction, texte grec et traduction française, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, ed. Luc Brisson et al. (Paris: Vrin, 1982), 280–94. Kalligas argues against the theory of a Eustochian edition for any text other than *Enn.* 4.3–5 (“Longinus’ Library,” 586 n. 15; “Life of Plotinus,” 92), as does Brisson (“Une édition d’Eustochius,” in *Porphyre: La Vie de Plotin. II. Études d’introduction, texte grec et traduction française, notes complémentaires, bibliographie*, ed. Luc Brisson et al. [Paris: Vrin, 1992], 477–501).

42. Luc Brisson, “Amélius: sa vie, son oeuvre, sa doctrine, son style,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.36.2 (1987): 806–9 (following Henry, *Études Plotiniennes, I: Les états du texte de Plotin*, 30), argued that it was Plotinus’ student Amelius, and not Eustochius, who organized this chronological collection of Plotinian treatises. Porphyry’s account in *Plot.* suggests that Amelius had been responsible for the copying and distribution of Plotinus’ works prior to Porphyry’s arrival in Rome and continued to do so afterward. Perhaps in a sharp-elbowed attempt to make room for his own competing edition, Porphyry repeatedly denigrated Amelius’ intellect (cf. *Plot.* §§19–20). Cf.

this article does not depend on either Eustochius or Amelius as the one who prepared the edition against which Porphyry set his own; the vital point is that Porphyry contends that his order is preferable to at least one existing arrangement of Plotinus' corpus.<sup>43</sup> Porphyry's project has effaced the work of his predecessor or predecessors, but traces of an alternate edition are preserved in Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica*, exhibiting differences in contents, text, book divisions, and titles. Porphyry himself contrasts his *Enneads* with an existing edition arranged in chronological order. As he states in §24, he "decided not to leave [Plotinus'] books confusedly in the chronological order of their publication" (πρώτον μὲν τὰ βιβλία οὐ κατὰ χρόνους ἔασαι φύρδην ἐκδεδομένα ἐδικαίωσα, Gerson trans. modified).<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, by including a chronological list of treatises, Porphyry implicitly conceded an alternate sequence.

Porphyry's own order, reinforced by the way he divided the material and structured the table of contents, constituted a philosophical curriculum.<sup>45</sup> Porphyry's three-part scheme—moving from ethics to physics to theology—fits into broader late ancient debates about the best way to organize Platonic philosophy and pedagogy, with a particularly Plotinian twist (cf. Porphyry's discussion of each ennead in §§24–26).<sup>46</sup> The initial three enneads were about ethics and physics. The final three enneads were about theology, and

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Porphyry's report that Amelius had previously been involved in curating the corpus of Numenius (*Plot.* §3). Cf. Brisson, "Une édition d'Eustochius?"

43. Schott adopts the maximalist position that both Amelius and Eustochius published editions ("Living Like a Christian," 268).

44. The term φύρδην ("confusedly," "in utter confusion") is not reflected in the Gerson translation. The evidence does not permit confidence that the contents of the two editions (Porphyry's and the one he sought to replace) were altogether the same, and indeed the evidence from Eusebius' *Praep. ev.* suggests otherwise.

45. As Schott writes, Porphyry "edited Plotinus' lectures into a Platonic course of study" ("Living Like a Christian," 268; cf. Kalligas, "Life of Plotinus," 5).

46. Note that Porphyry describes the structure as a philosophical progression, with the "less weighty questions first" (τάξις πρώτην τοῖς ελαφροτέροις προβλήμασιν, §26). For various ancient schemata of philosophical knowledge, see Pierre Hadot, "Die Einteilung der Philosophie im Altertum," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 36 (1982): 422–44; Marguerite Harl, "Les trois livres de Salomon et les trois parties de la philosophie dans les Prologues des Commentaires sur le *Cantique des Cantiques* (d'Origène aux chaînes exégétiques grecques)," in *Texte und Textkritik: Eine Aufsatzsammlung*, ed. Jürgen Dummer et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987), 249–69; Kalligas, "Life of Plotinus," 90–91; Riccardo Chiaradonna, "Théologie et époptique aristotéliciennes dans le médioplatonisme: La réception de *Métaphysique Λ*," in *Réceptions de la théologie aristotélicienne d'Aristote à Michel d'Éphèse*, ed. Fabienne Baghdassarian and Gweltaz Guyomarc'h (Louvain: Peeters, 2017), 143–57; Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *Calcidius on Plato's Timaeus: Greek Philosophy, Latin Reception, and Christian Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 25–27.

addressed the three Plotinian divine hypostases in rising order. The fourth and fifth enneads were about the Soul and the Intellect, respectively, and the sixth and final ennead was about the Good. These three groups (*Enn.* 1–3, 4–5, 6) correspond to Porphyry’s division of the material into three codices (*σωμάτια*, §§25–26).<sup>47</sup> In this sense, Porphyry both contrasts his approach to the Plotinian corpus with Eustochius’ or Amelius’ chronological order, and makes an argument for the best way to study (Plotinian) philosophy that maps onto broader debates about the division of philosophical knowledge.

In *Plot.*, Porphyry presented his own approach as the best way to read Plotinus. In §§24–26, he described the logic of the *Ennead*-structure and sometimes even explained why particular treatises belonged where he had placed them.<sup>48</sup> For example, Porphyry described why he had placed (*ἐτάξαμεν*) the treatise *On Our Allotted Daemon* (*Enn.* 3.4) in the third ennead. It belongs here “because it deals with matters concerning [daemon] in general, and the question is related to those he addresses concerning the birth of human beings” (ὅτι καθόλου θεωρεῖται τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔστι τὸ πρόβλημα καὶ παρὰ τοῖς τὰ κατὰ τὰς γενέσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων σκεπτομένοις, §25; cf. §10). This ennead as a whole is devoted to physics, including matters of embryology and daemonology. Organizing daemonology as part of physics rather than theology was a matter of some dispute among third-century Platonists.<sup>49</sup>

By addressing the alternate (chronological) sequence, however, Porphyry preserved it for the reader. One thus finds two tables of contents, reflecting different organizational schemes and in undeniable conflict with one

47. Porphyry’s decision to arrange the material in codices is striking. While Christians had adopted the codex for many uses by this time, scrolls were still the format of choice for elite textuality and were how Plotinus had apparently composed his works (*Plot.* §4). Before Porphyry, Iamblichus had arranged Pythagorean texts into an encyclopedia in two codices, with four and five books respectively (Clark, “City of Books,” 136, citing Dominic O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 31). This apparently included a table of contents, although it is no longer preserved. Compare also Augustine’s instructions about how to bind *Civ.* in order to maintain its sense and structure (Ep. 1A [Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 47: iii–iv] to Firmus; cf. Clark, “City of Books,” 121). Augustine did not, however, create a table of contents for *Civ.*, despite his attention to the material and conceptual structure of the whole.

48. Arthur H. Armstrong concludes that “one of [Porphyry’s] main purposes in writing [*Plot.*] was to explain, and perhaps to justify against actual or possible criticism, the principles which governed his edition” (*Plotinus* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989], 1:ix).

49. Heidi Marx, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century CE* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

another: one for the present collection and one for an alternate approach. Porphyry's table of contents for the *Enneads*, moreover, enables other kinds of nonlinear access, unconstrained by either of these two sequences. One can look up a particular treatise by title. In a philosophical curriculum, of course, this makes sense. A student might not always be starting from the beginning.<sup>50</sup>

*Plot.* presents Plotinus' body of occasional treatises as "the *Enneads*," a unified work with a title and a coherent structure.<sup>51</sup> It defines what is "in" and what is "out" of the Plotinian corpus, effectively stabilizing that corpus for subsequent manuscript transmission.<sup>52</sup> As part of the composite work known as the *Enneads*, Porphyry offers a bibliography that introduces the collected texts and maps their physical disposition into three codices. In this way, *Plot.* offers a table of contents that shows the *Enneads* are, in fact, "nines" as their name indicates. Porphyry's table of contents and arrangement were durable, shaping how people encountered Plotinus' philosophical legacy in manuscript and print.<sup>53</sup>

My analysis of Porphyry's *Plot.* illustrates three things. First, Porphyry's table of contents is not neutral (as if that were possible).<sup>54</sup> Rather, it is part of an inventive pedagogical reconfiguration of Plotinus' philosophical corpus. Second, this table of contents contests alternate arrangements of the same material (such as Eustochius' or Amelius') and yet also facilitates multiple routes of reading. Third, and most importantly, this table of contents is far more than a finding aid. Using a table of contents, Porphyry constructs a diffuse collection into a coherent whole. The table of contents is an integral component of Porphyry's pedagogical project, introducing Plotinus' life and philosophy in order to guide a particular reading of the *Enneads* as a whole.

50. This final affordance may seem mundane, but it should not be overlooked, since it makes it possible to enter the *Ennead*-structure at any point.

51. On the power of a table of contents to articulate a work as a single whole, see Riggsby, "Guides to the Wor(l)d"; Bodel, "Pliny's Letters," 33.

52. The six-by-nine arrangement functions as a checksum in manuscript transmission. Cf. Kalligas, "Life of Plotinus," 89.

53. This is true even though Porphyry's table of contents is often occluded by modern maps of the Plotinian corpus. Editors of *Plot.* replace incipits with the numbers (*ennead* and *tract*) of the treatise. The Gerson translation simply omits the list of treatises from *Plot.* §§24–26.

54. For the observation that a table of contents can *create* order, I am indebted to Andrew Riggsby ("Guides to the Wor[l]d"); for the broader argument that Romans frequently used information technology to constitute new arrangements of material rather than to represent existing phenomena, see Riggsby, *Mosaics*, esp. 121–22 and 212–13.



#### 4. EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA AND HIS GOSPELS

A second project from the early fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea's (*ca.* 260 – 339/40 CE) fourfold Gospel, similarly employed a table of contents to facilitate complex possibilities of reading.<sup>55</sup> Eusebius divided the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John into numbered sections, coordinated with a set of ten reference tables (“canons,” *κανόνες*) placed at the beginning of a Gospel codex. Eusebius described his system in a prefatory letter to an otherwise unknown Carpianus:

Αμμώνιος μὲν ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς πολλὴν ὡς εἰκὸς φιλοπονίαν καὶ σπουδὴν εἰσαγωγῶς τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων ἡμῖν καταλελοιπεν εὐαγγέλιον, τῷ κατὰ Ματθαῖον τὰς ὁμοφώνους τῶν λοιπῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν περικοπὰς παραθείς, ὡς ἐξ ἀνάγκης συμβῆναι τὸν τῆς ἀκολουθίας εἰρμόν τῶν τριῶν διαφθαρῆναι ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ ὕφει τῆς ἀναγνώσεως· ἵνα δὲ σωζόμενου καὶ τοῦ τῶν λοιπῶν δι’ ὅλου σώματός τε καὶ εἰρμού εἰδέναι ἔχοις τοὺς οἰκείους ἐκάστου εὐαγγελιστοῦ τόπους, ἐν οἷς κατὰ τῶν αὐτῶν ἠνέχθησαν φιλαλήθως εἰπεῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πονήματος τοῦ προειρημένου ἀνδρὸς εἰληφῶς ἀφορμὰς καθ’ ἑτέραν μέθοδον κανόνας δέκα τὸν ἀριθμὸν διεχάραξά σοι τοὺς ὑποτεταγμένους.

Ammonius the Alexandrian, exerting great industry and zeal—as is fitting—has left us the “Gospel through four.” He juxtaposed the corresponding sections of the other evangelists alongside Matthew’s Gospel, with the unavoidable result that the coherent sequence of the other three was destroyed insofar as concerns the web of reading. But in order that, by the content and sequence of the remaining Gospels being preserved throughout, you would still be able to know the proper places of each evangelist, in which they were compelled by love of truth to say similar things, I have adopted the raw material from the work of the aforementioned man, but have inscribed the ten canons that are attached for you below by a different method.<sup>56</sup>

55. On the Eusebian apparatus, see Carl Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln: Kunstgeschichtliche Studien über die eusebianische Evangelien-Konkordanz in den vier ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Geschichte* (Göteborg: Isacson, 1938); Matthew R. Crawford, “Ammonius of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Origins of Gospels Scholarship,” *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 1–29; Jeremiah Coogan, “Mapping the Fourfold Gospel: Textual Geography in the Eusebian Apparatus,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 25 (2017): 337–57; Matthew R. Crawford, *The Eusebian Canon Tables: Ordering Textual Knowledge in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Jeremiah Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist: Rewriting the Fourfold Gospel in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

56. *Epistle to Carpianus*, ll. 3–14.

Eusebius contrasted his project with the work of a certain Ammonius who had arranged other Gospels alongside Matthew.<sup>57</sup> As Eusebius objected in his *Letter to Carpianus*, Ammonius had destroyed “the coherent sequence” (τὸν τῆς ἀκολουθίας εἰρμόν) of the other Gospels. While Matthew remained intact, what should a reader do if they instead wished to read Mark or Luke or John with *its* parallels? While Porphyry had divided and rearranged Plotinian material to produce the *Enneads*—in order to facilitate the right reading, as he saw it, of Plotinus’ corpus—Eusebius resisted such invasive measures.<sup>58</sup> Eusebius divided the Gospels into numbered sections, but he used the canons to juxtapose Gospel material while leaving Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in their original sequences. One can still read each individual Gospel in order if one so desires. The difference between Eusebius and Porphyry here is of degree rather than kind; Porphyry, after all, preserved in a different way the existing sequence that he encountered.

Eusebius coordinated the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as one fourfold Gospel. Like the list of treatises in Porphyry’s *Plot.*, the Eusebian canons are not simply a finding aid or a list of chapters.<sup>59</sup> The

57. I take this figure to be Ammonius Saccas (d. ca. 242), teacher of both Origen (Porphyry *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.6–7) and Plotinus, which points to a shared intellectual milieu. For a recent articulation of this position, see Digeser, *Threat*, 23–71. Arguing for two Origenes and two Ammonii, see Mark J. Edwards, “One Origen or Two? The *Status Questionis*,” *Symbolae Osloenses* (2015): 1–23. On Ammonius’ Gospel, see Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 55.2; cf. William L. Petersen, *Tatian’s Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 32–33; Crawford, *Eusebian Canon Tables*, ch. 2; Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist*, ch. 3.

58. Eusebius differs from Porphyry in another important way: We lack evidence that Eusebius engaged in διόρθωσις to correct errors or produce a new and improved Gospel text. Eusebius undertook such labors for other texts (especially in conjunction with Pamphilus) but not for the Gospels. On Eusebius as a corrector, see Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, 184–85; Jennifer Knust and Tommy Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone: The Transmission of a Gospel Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 182–83 and 122–34. Compare Origen’s stated reluctance to undertake a tabular comparison of the Gospels (*Comm. Matt.* 15.14).

59. The Gospels often circulated with lists of chapters, which in Greek emerged somewhat later than Eusebius’ apparatus. These κεφάλαια work differently. The Eusebian apparatus unites a fourfold Gospel, while these chapter lists each applies to one Gospel only. On Gospel κεφάλαια, see Hermann von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte. I. Teil* (Berlin: n.p., 1902–1910), 1:422; Harvey K. McArthur, “The Earliest Divisions of the Gospels,” in *Studia Evangelica*, vol. 3: *Papers Presented to the Second International Congress on New Testament Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford 1961. Part II: The New Testament Message*, ed. Frank L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), 266–72 at 271; Greg Goswell, “Early Readers of the Gospels: The *Kephalaia* and *Titloi* of Codex Alexandrinus,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 6 (2009): 134–74; James R. Edwards, “The Hermeneutical Significance of Chapter Divisions in Ancient Gospel Manuscripts,” *New Testament Studies* 56

canons offer their own argument about the order and unity of the Gospels. The section numbers represent Gospel passages; thus, the canons represent the entire fourfold Gospel—and not only selected themes or features—on just a couple of pages.<sup>60</sup> Every section of the text, as represented by its number, appears in the canons. The canons express the completeness of the fourfold Gospel. Later in the fourth century, for example, Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403) used the Gospel sections to represent the total content of the fourfold Gospel:

τέσσαρα εἰσὶν εὐαγγέλια κεφαλαίων χιλίων ἑκατὸν ἐξήκοντα δύο καὶ ἅπ' ἀρχῆς ἕως τέλους ἐλάλησεν ὁ υἱὸς καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ πατήρ καὶ οὐδαμοῦ εἶπεν· ἔκτισέ με ὁ πατήρ μου, οὐδὲ ὁ πατήρ· ἔκτισά μοι υἱὸν ἢ ἔκτισα τὸν υἱόν μου.<sup>61</sup>

There are four Gospels, of 1162 chapters [that is, Eusebian sections], and from beginning to end, the Son speaks, and the Father to him, and nowhere did he say, “My Father created me,” nor did the Father say: “I created for myself a Son” or “I created my Son.”

Epiphanius’ christological argument is not central here. More significant is his use of the Eusebian system to symbolize a fourfold Gospel whole.

Eusebius facilitated multiple routes of reading through the Gospels. Using the section numbers and reference tables, one can move back and forth between Gospels, following the different narratives through their various intersections with one another. This explicit cross-referentiality means that Eusebius’ project is even more generative than Porphyry’s. By mapping an enormous number of potential routes between Gospels, Eusebius contests what he sees as Ammonius’ reductively linear approach. Many readers over time have employed the sections and canons to read Eusebius’ fourfold

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(2010): 413–26; Jennifer Knust and Tommy Wasserman, “The Wondrous Gospel of John: Jesus’s Miraculous Deeds in Late Ancient Editorial and Scholarly Practice,” in *Healing and Exorcism in Second Temple Judaism and Early Judaism*, ed. Mikael Tellbe, Tommy Wasserman, and Ludvig Nyman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 160–91. Latin Gospel *capitula* may date to the third century CE (Hugh A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016], 56).

60. Just as Porphyry structured the *Enneads* numerically, Eusebius’ ten canons may reflect a Pythagorean appreciation for ten’s perfection (cf. Eusebius, *Laud. Const.* 6.5). This was first suggested by Nordenfalk, *Kanontafeln*, 29.

61. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 50.6 (Karl Holl, ed., *Epiphanius: Ancoratus und Panarion* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915–2006], 1:60). Cf. Caspar René Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1900), 2:681.

Gospel as a single elaborate web.<sup>62</sup> The Eusebian apparatus was durable, transmitted in thousands of manuscripts and more than a dozen languages from the fourth century to the present.

Eusebius divided and aligned material in innovative ways, highlighting the literary and theological potential of echo, pattern, and figure. Rather than prioritizing historical synchrony, Eusebius juxtaposed temporally disparate accounts like those of miraculous catches of fish (Luke §30 = 5.4–7 // John §219 + §222 = 21.1–6, 11) and of Jesus' dramatic action in the Jerusalem Temple (Matthew §211 = 21.12–13 // Mark §121 = 11.15b–17 // Luke §238 = 19.45–46 // John §21 = 2.14–16). By aligning John's Bread of Life discourse with the Last Supper narratives from the Synoptic Gospels, Eusebius guided the reader to connect the bread from the Last Supper with Jesus himself as the bread of life (Matthew §284 = 26.26 // Mark §165 = 14.22 // Luke §266 = 22:19 // John §55 + §63 + §65 + §67 = 6.35a, 48, 51, 55). Juxtaposing the genealogies of Matthew and Luke with John's prologue insinuated a two-natures christology (Matthew §1 = 1.1–16 // Luke §14 = 3.23–38 // John §1 + §3 + §5 = 1.1–5, 9–10, 14). These creative juxtapositions generated new intertexts, enabling readers to access similar material across multiple Gospels. Eusebius' rearrangement of material parallels Porphyry's decision to divide, resequence, and combine treatises. Just as Porphyry divided individual treatises and scattered their component sections into multiple enneads, Eusebius segmented and linked Gospel material in order to encourage nonlinear reading. Both approaches, mapped in tables of contents, instructed the reader to read in particular ways.

As a table of contents, the Eusebian canons resemble Porphyry's *Plot.* in significant ways. First, Eusebius, like Porphyry, mapped a composite work. Second, both figures contested prior attempts to structure their material. Porphyry challenged Eustochius' or Amelius' treatment of Plotinus and offered his own arrangement; Eusebius objected to Ammonius' configuration of the Gospels and created his own system. In terms of reception, the editorial projects of Porphyry and Eusebius were wildly more successful than those of the predecessors whom they contest. (As a result, evidence for reconstructing the work of those predecessors remains limited.) Third, Eusebius' canons—his table of contents—were central to his intervention.

62. For discussion of such use, see Crawford, *Eusebian Canon Tables*, chs. 4–7; Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist*, ch. 5.

Through the canons, Eusebius mapped the fourfold Gospel: he structured the text, connected passages, and invited nonlinear reading.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this article, I have argued that the late ancient thinkers Porphyry and Eusebius employed tables of contents in novel ways to reconfigure inherited texts and to create new possibilities for readers. Both figures used tables of contents to facilitate nonlinear access and to articulate the textual unity of new composite works. The comparison demonstrates how the dominant form in which both the *Enneads* and the fourfold Gospel circulated was the result of fourth-century interventions.<sup>63</sup> My analysis of Porphyry and Eusebius, moreover, invites further investigation of the late ancient transformation of textuality in which both participated.

Contrasts between these projects reflect both the differences between the two corpora and the divergent objectives of Porphyry and Eusebius. Eusebius traced intertextual connections between four Gospels, while Porphyry designed a program of philosophical instruction.<sup>64</sup> While both projects are pedagogical, only Porphyry's is explicitly curricular. Porphyry's table of contents was more elegant, a six-by-nine grid. Eusebius' 1162 sections provided exceptional granularity and a correspondingly greater opportunity for error in copying.<sup>65</sup> While both facilitated alternate modes of reading, Eusebius offered far more possibilities (as a result of the greater number of sections) and generated more diverse routes of reading. Yet, despite their differences, Porphyry and Eusebius employed the technology of the table of contents in

63. Porphyry and Eusebius were not the only fourth-century figures to employ tables of contents. Oribasius' influential collection of medical recipes and Charisius' *Ars grammatica* also employed tables of contents. Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 97) describes "ordered headings" in Fortunatianus of Aquileia's Gospel commentary (cf. Lukas J. Dorfbauer, ed., *Fortunatianus Aquileiensis: Commentarii in Evangelia*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 103 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017]). Eusebius supplied tables of contents (*κεφάλαια* lists) for many of his own works, although their manuscript transmission makes it difficult to discern if they were placed at the beginning of each book or all together at the beginning of a work. Such tables of contents are preserved for *Praep. ev.*, *Hist. eccl.*, *Dem. ev.*, *Marc.*, *Eccl. theol.*, *Mens.*, and others.

64. Aaron Johnson (*Eusebius*, 80) suggests that the Eusebian apparatus originated in a pedagogical context at late ancient Caesarea; cf. Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist*, ch. 1.

65. Jeremiah Coogan, "Transmission and Transformation of the Eusebian Gospel Apparatus in Medieval Greek Manuscripts," in *Canones: The Art of Harmony: The Canon Tables of the Four Gospels*, ed. Alessandro Bausi, Bruno Reudenbach, and Hanna Wimmer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 29–46.

similar ways to construct their respective assemblages, thereby shaping particular practices of reading and particular kinds of readers.

In reading Porphyry's and Eusebius' projects, I have focused on three interlocking phenomena. In line with my focus on affordances and use, this argument is not only about what an editor intends or what a table of contents contains, but also about what these tables of contents enable *readers* to do.

First, both tables of contents generated new possibilities for reading—sometimes in ways which run against the grain of the assembled material. Porphyry and Eusebius mapped their respective works in order to produce particular structures of knowledge. The table of contents was (and is) an argument that the edited text possesses a particular, unified structure, in contrast to other approaches to the same material (Eustochius or Amelius, Ammonius). The ways of reading embedded into Porphyry's and Eusebius' tables of contents were both innovative and durable. In both cases, they created new possibilities of reading, encoded in paratextual and bibliographic reconfigurations that persist until the present. While often overlooked or dismissed, such creative and contestational phenomena are a significant feature of the organization of knowledge in Late Antiquity.

Second, these tables of contents invited nonlinear reading by how they mapped a text and the reader's journey through it. These two tables of contents contested other approaches to reading. Yet while both presented an edited text in a particular sequence, they afforded multiple ways of navigating that structure rather than reducing reading to a single linear progression. In other words, they created ordered possibilities for nonlinear access. Although each table of contents offered a particular structure, each invited readers to use this arrangement in productive new ways—always within the constraints of the guiding logic of sections. Dividing texts into mappable units facilitated a “choose your own adventure” approach to reading.<sup>66</sup> Eusebius' and Porphyry's contestational articulations of textual order generated multiple ways of reading and knowing their respective texts.<sup>67</sup> The two facets, structure and creative navigation, are reflexes of one another. Even while a table of contents offers a structure that relates the parts to a unified whole,

66. On the “choose your own adventure” genre of (primarily children's) literature and similar “ergodic” texts, in which “nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text,” see Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), quoting p. 1.

67. On textual division (“fragmentation”) as part of the transformation of texts into “classics” in Late Antiquity, see Chin, *Grammar and Christianity*, 11–38.

it identifies constituent parts that could be read differently. A table of contents might frustrate particular forms of nonlinear access, but as a structuring system it holds out the possibility of reading otherwise. Even as the table of contents structures the assembled material, it subverts itself and that structure.

Finally, both of the figures whom I discuss in this article incorporated the interplay between ordered text and nonlinear reading into their projects. Segmentation and nonlinear access are fundamental, not accidental. At the same time, order and linear structure are essential. The intrinsic give-and-take of the table of contents becomes part of the editorial project. Both Porphyry and Eusebius engaged the complex possibilities of the table of contents. By inviting creative nonlinear reading, they harnessed the counter-possibilities of the table of contents for their own projects. Eusebius preserved four Gospels as distinct narratives and yet encouraged creative access to and between the four as a single network (ὑφορῶς). Porphyry afforded multiple routes of reading, offering two sequences: a chronological one (*Plot.* §§4–6) and one for the *Enneads* (*Plot.* §§24–26). By mapping their respective works, Porphyry and Eusebius segmented these texts into constituent elements and enabled readers to combine them in new ways. For both texts, moreover, a complex and capacious history of subsequent reception demonstrates how readers utilized these tables of contents in ongoing practices of reading.

Porphyry and Eusebius reconfigured their respective assemblages using tables of contents. Both restructured received texts, disrupting their textual fabrics in order to facilitate new possibilities of reading. As part of a fourth-century transformation in textuality, Porphyry and Eusebius exploited this power of the table of contents, employing this technology *both* to structure *and* to disrupt—and, indeed, they incorporated disruption as an integral element of their projects, facilitating creative use by subsequent readers. ■