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Gospel as Recipe Book

Nonlinear Reading and Practical Texts in Late Antiquity

Der Artikel widmet sich der Frage, wie Christen und Nichtchristen in der Spätantike mit dem „Evangelium" als Textartefakt umgegangen sind. Zunächst werden spätantike Praxistexte wie rituelle Formelsammlungen, medizinische Handbücher, landwirtschaftliche Leitfäden und astronomische Tabellen betrachtet, die in einer Vielzahl von Situationen abschnittsweise verwendet wurden, etwa beim lauten Lesen, beim Befolgen der Anweisungen für die Ausführung eines Rituals, die Zubereitung eines Medikaments oder den Entwurf eines Horoskops. Um dies zu erleichtern, waren solche Praxistexte für den nichtlinearen Zugriff angelegt. In spätantiken Evangelienkodizes spiegeln sich offenbar ähnliche Organisationsstrategien und Gebrauchsweisen wider. Mit verschiedenen Gliederungs- und Verweissystemen wurde die Möglichkeit (*affordance*) des nichtlinearen Gebrauchs in die Evangelienhandschriften integriert. Die Art der materiellen Beschaffenheit und Textualität spätantiker Evangelienkodizes überschneidet sich mit der der genannten Praxistexte, indem sie zu bestimmten Handlungsweisen anleitet und Anreiz zum nichtlinearen Gebrauch gibt. Der Blick auf diese verschiedenen Gebrauchstechniken – und die zugehörigen Gebrauchskontexte – macht Wissens- und Handlungsmuster erkennbar, die das „Evangelium" als Textartefakt in der Spätantike konturieren.

Keywords: Gospels, material texts, late antiquity, practical literature, textual navigation, finding aids, segmentation, codex

1 Introduction[1]

From the later first century onward, many early Christians encountered "the gospel" in and as material texts.[2] These artifacts offer clues about the

1 I am grateful to Warren Campbell, Robert Edwards, Samuel Johnson, Blake Leyerle, David Lincicum, Chris Keith, Candida Moss, Paul Wheatley, and the participants in the "Material Gospel" conference for their generous feedback on earlier forms of this article.

2 Other recent projects that bring together the textuality and materiality of early gospels include M.D.C. Larsen and M.D. Letteney, "Christians and the Codex: Generic Materiality and Early Gospel Traditions," *JECS* 27.3 (2019), 383–415; C. Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript: An Early History of the Jesus Tradition as Material Artifact* (Oxford: Oxford

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practices of reading and the reading events in which Christians and others encountered "the gospel."[3] Material configuration, layout, and paratexts afford particular practices of reading.[4] To illustrate this relationship between material texts and reading practices, we might take a present-day example. Novels are often directed toward linear, continuous reading. It is assumed that a reader will go straight through from beginning to end. The physical features of novels correspond to this expectation. As physical objects, they are often inhospitable to looking up particular *loci*. This is true to such an extent that e-readers often dispense with pagination or other finding mechanisms altogether. But novels are not the only kind of text. Other books are designed to be read out of order. Readers use a phonebook differently than a novel – so differently that it is hard to talk about "reading" a phonebook at all. Users "consult" phonebooks or "look up" a number. The phonebook's alphabetical organizational strategy is functional, but to read the entries in sequence is meaningless and rather boring. (Reading a phonebook aloud is the quintessentially futile activity of a Congressional filibuster, a reading event designed only to fill time – and to call attention to its own futility.) The phonebook is designed for nonlinear access – for finding information – and not for reading as a whole. The phonebook's physical characteristics confirm this expectation; its typically tiny print makes extensive reading a punishing activity. These two examples, the novel and the phonebook, represent oppositional poles in a taxonomy of bibliographic access.

These extremes are not the only options. On a continuum of access, many books occupy an intermediate position, somewhere between linear reading and nonlinear reference. Less aggressively limiting than the

University Press, 2020). See also the essays by Matthew Larsen and Chris Keith in this thematic issue of *Early Christianity*.

3 I focus on practices and artifacts embedded in Christian reading communities, but not all who encountered Christian books identified themselves as "Christians." Famous examples include Celsus and Porphyry. On non-Christian encounters with Christian scriptures, see I.N. Mills, "Pagan Readers of Christian Scripture: The Role of Books in Early Autobiographical Conversion Narratives," *VC* 73 (2019), 481–506.

4 I adopt the language of "affordances" from C. Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 6–7. On paratexts, see G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. J.E. Lewin, Literature, Culture, Theory 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); cf. L. Jansen, ed., *The Roman Paratext: Frame, Texts, Readers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); P. Andrist, "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. L.I. Lied and M. Maniaci, Manuscripta Biblica 3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018), 130–150.

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phonebook, but still oriented toward nonlinear access, one might think of cookbooks, user manuals, encyclopedias, or liturgical texts like the *Book of Common Prayer*. In these examples, readers are expected to access a particular textual unit rather than read from cover to cover. Even texts that could be read linearly often are not. Many academic readers have flipped through monographs to find a relevant section rather than slogging through the whole. Novels can be read straight through on an airplane or at the beach, or they can be the subject of scholarly analysis involving repeated reference to key passages. The mode of reading depends on both text and reader.

Differences in access are not only about linguistic content, but about the material forms in which texts are instantiated. While an e-reader implies one set of reading practices for a novel, a critical edition might be supplied with standardized line numbers to facilitate shared scholarly access.[5] A tourist's pocket dictionary differs from a multivolume reference work. Even when the two contain overlapping bodies of information, they afford different uses by means of their material form. Both linguistic and material elements shape the possibilities of reading and the activities of readers. Textual objects shape the act of reading not only by what they make strictly possible, but by the actions that they render obvious, natural, or convenient.

Upon observing differing physical books, readers assume varied contexts and uses. Readers are unlikely to confuse an academic monograph with a glossy airport thriller or a pocket dictionary with a scholarly reference work.[6] Divergent sociocultural valuations are encoded into textual objects. Not only are genres, uses, and reading experiences valuated dif-

5 For example, the standard scholarly edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, edited by H.W. Gabler and a number of collaborators (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), supplies line numbers. This apparatus transforms *Ulysses* into a "classic" like Homer or Vergil. J.W. Knust and T. 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 Christianity*, ed. M. Tellbe, T. Wasserman, and L. Nyman, WUNT 2/511 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 160–191, similarly argue that standard sections and headings were part of a late ancient process of transforming gospels and other scriptural texts into "classics." Knust and Wasserman build on C.M. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World*, Divinations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 11–38.

6 "Book" and "novel" often function interchangeably for modern readers, shaping how scholars imagine earlier textuality. When people talk about "reading a book," they frequently imagine the immersive, linear experience associated with novels. On the reasons for this confluence of categories, see J.A. Stein, *When Novels Were Books* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020), ch. 2.

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ferently, but the "bibliographic code" of a material text, as Jerome McGann has termed it, serves as a proxy for these cultural norms.[7] The physical features of textual objects, not only facilitate particular possibilities of use but also reflect the social locations and cultural categories in which both texts and material artifacts are implicated.[8]

A single reader may nonetheless use many kinds of texts. In different contexts, a person might read a mystery thriller, a dense monograph, a lectionary, and an automotive repair manual. As a result, the varying social valuations of particular acts of reading and of specific material texts are not transparent indications of the social locations of the *users* of these objects. One need not be a mechanic to use an automotive manual or a clergyperson to read a lectionary.[9]

While neither novels (in our modern sense) nor phonebooks existed in the late ancient Mediterranean, early Christian books invite similar questions about format, use, and cultural valuation. In this article, I investigate how Christians and others in late antiquity encountered and touched "the gospel."[10] I begin with materials that are too seldom incorporated into

7 J.J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 77, identifies a "double helix of perceptual codes," the "linguistic" and the "bibliographic."

8 For discussion of the relationship between format, use, and cultural norms, see M.N. Levy and T. Mole, *The Broadview Introduction to Book History* (Edinburgh: Broadview, 2017), 3–9. For similar observations about the expectations evoked by bibliographic format ("generic materiality"), primarily with reference to the codex and early Christianity, see Larsen and Letteney, "Christians and the Codex" (see n. 2), 386. Larsen and Letteney expand observations about the social expectations surrounding codex format made by H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 49–50.

9 For material evidence of similar diversity in antiquity, see A. Luijendijk, "The Gospel of Mary at Oxyrhynchus (P. Oxy. L 3525 and P. Ryl. III 463): Rethinking the History of Early Christianity through Literary Papyri from Oxyrhynchus," in *Re-making the World: Christianity and Categories*, ed. T.G. Petrey, WUNT 434 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 391–418. Luijendijk describes the diverse holdings of an ancient Oxyrhynchite book collection that included Homer, Plato, magical recipes, and a number of Christian texts (389).

10 The paratextual phenomena that I discuss are primarily attested for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; we do not find similar devices in late ancient noncanonical gospel manuscripts from Nag Hammadi, Oxyrhynchus, or other sites, with the exception of a παράγραφος in *P. Oxy.* 4.654 (Gospel of Thomas). This reflects both the limitations of our evidence and the modes of reception that the four canonical gospels enjoyed. Liturgical use may be a significant differentiating factor. It has been argued by A. Luijendijk, "Reading the Gospel of Thomas in the Third Century: Three Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Origen's Homilies," in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context*, ed. C. Clivaz and J. Zumstein, BETL 242 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 241–267, that paratextual features in the Oxyrhynchus fragments of the Gospel of Thomas indicate a transition from public (liturgical) reading to private study.

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discussions of early Christian literature: ritual formularies, medical handbooks, agricultural guides, and astronomical tables. These are all what one might describe as "practical" texts, a category which I will define and nuance below. People performed portions of these texts in a range of situations – whether by reading them aloud or by following the instructions of the text to perform a ritual, prepare a medicine, or cast a horoscope. In order to facilitate use, many late ancient practical texts were organized in ways that invited nonlinear access.

Late ancient gospel codices were textual objects, and thus belong in a broader landscape of late ancient textuality. Like all material texts, they invited users to manipulate them in order to access their content. Technological innovations in late ancient textuality go far beyond the rise of the codex. While scholarship on early Christianity has emphasized codex format, I seek to advance the conversation beyond this well-worn question.[11] The codex should not obscure other aspects of how early Christian readers developed novel strategies to facilitate knowledge, navigation, and use of gospel literature. As I demonstrate here, practices of nonlinear access shape the physical and paratextual structure of gospel codices in late antiquity and vice versa. Material texts and reading practices correspond. Many gospel codices resembled referential texts that assumed nonlinear access: cookbooks, medical recipes, agricultural handbooks, and so forth. Gospel codices incorporated systems that segmented the text and enabled readers to identify particular sections. These phenomena tell us how the producers of gospel codices expected them to work. I argue that the materiality and textuality of the late ancient gospel codex intersected with the features of practical texts insofar as both were organized to facilitate nonlinear access. By contrast, while it was – and is – possible to read a gospel *in extenso*, late ancient gospel codices guided the reader toward other uses.[12]

11 On Christians and the codex, see C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 38–66; Gamble, *Books and Readers* (see n. 8), 49–66; L.W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 43–98; R.S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 70–90; M. Wallraff, *Kodex und Kanon: Das Buch im frühen Christentum*, Hans-Lietzmann-Vorlesungen 12 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 8–25; B. Nongbri, *God's Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 23–24; Larsen and Letteney, "Christians and the Codex" (see n. 2). See also the articles by Clare Rothschild and Sofía Torallas Tovar in this thematic issue of *Early Christianity*.

12 These other uses, however, do not exclude linear reading. In his discussion of Gellius, S. DiGiulio, "Gellius' Strategies of Reading (Gellius): Miscellany and the Active Reader in *Noctes Atticae* Book 2," *CP* 115 (2020), 242–264, at 243, observes that the intersection of

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2 Nonlinear Access

Late antiquity witnessed a number of new, and newly widespread, approaches to textual access.[13] This transformation in textuality was marked not only by novel technologies but by the rapidly expanding use of existing but rare ones. Here I discuss a number of phenomena using the interlocking categories of segmentation and reference.[14]

Segmentation involves dividing a text into distinct units. In late ancient texts, techniques such as ἔκθεσις (text extended into the left margin), rubrication, marginal marks (such as διπλαῖ or παράγραφαι), and blank space facilitated use.[15] One might think of ritual (or "magical") formularies. These formularies collect a number of discrete units – incantations, instructions, formulae for amulets, and so forth – and facilitate locating and performing them separately. For example, in a fourth-century codex catalogued as Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, manuscrit supplémentaire grec 574, we find numerous distinct units.[16] These are titled, for

literary features and paratextual interventions can facilitate multiple different modes of reading that need not be exclusive of one another.

13 A. Riggsby, *Mosaics of Knowledge: Representing Information in the Roman World*, Classical Culture and Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 216–222, calls this transformation a "revolution in information technology," and suggests that it began around 300 CE. On transformations in late ancient textuality and knowledge, see A. Grafton and M.H. Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); C.M. Chin and M. Vidas, eds., *Late Ancient Knowing: Explorations in Intellectual History* (Berkeley: University of California, 2015).

14 I adopt the categories of "segmentation" and "reference" from A. Riggsby, "Guides to the Wor(l)d," in *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, ed. J. König and T. Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 88–107, at 89, who applies them specifically to tables of contents.

15 For further description and discussion, see E.G. Turner, "Introduction," in *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, ed. P.J. Parsons, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 1–23; K. McNamee, "Sigla in Late Greek Literary Papyri," in *Signes dans les textes, textes sur les signes: Érudition, lecture et écriture dans le monde gréco-romain; Actes du colloque international (Liège, 6–7 septembre 2013)*, ed. G. Nocchi Macedo and M.C. Scappaticcio (Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2017), 127–142. On visual distinctions between textual units (e.g., glossary entries or other listed items) using techniques like line breaks, ἔκθεσις, and παράγραφαι, see further B.-J. Schröder, *Titel und Text: Zur Entwicklung lateinischer Gedichtüberschriften, mit Untersuchungen zu lateinischen Buchtiteln, Inhaltsverzeichnissen und anderen Gliederungsmitteln*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 54 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 102–104.

16 The text, also known as *PGM* IV (LDAB 5564) or the Great Magical Papyrus of Paris, is edited in K. Preisendanz, ed., *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Teubner, 1928), 1.64–180; ET in H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 36–101. Paratextual divisions

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example, "marvelous love charm" or "for [winning] friends."[17] A διπλῆ in the left margin distinguishes units. While this codex is not supplied with a table of contents, the διπλῆ allows the reader to skim from one recipe or incantation to the next until she locates the desired material for a given occasion. In another fourth-century codex, *P. Lond*. 1.46, section titles (roughly centered on the written column and surrounded by blank space) perform a similar function.[18] Both of these examples are relatively polished manuscripts (and thus conveniently legible), but similar features appear in less expensive collections as well.[19] Titles and section marks made the texts accessible as units.[20]

Strategies of segmentation were applied to texts in other fields, including astronomy, architecture, law, and medicine. One might think of Dioscorides of Anazarbus's *De materia medica*, a medicinal collection of entries about plants, animals, and minerals, dating from the first century CE. The text incorporated diagrams and botanical illustrations.[21] These illustrations

are visible in images of the manuscript (Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed May 30, 2019, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525030475.image), but obscure in the edition and translation.

17 Love charm: ll. 296–466; popularity charm: ll. 833–834.

18 *PGM* V (LDAB 5590); images are available online (Digitised Manuscripts, British Library, accessed May 30, 2019, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Papyrus_46).

19 On formularies and handbooks from late ancient Egypt, see W.M. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)," *ANRW* 2.18.5 (1995), 3380–3684; T.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets," *BASP* 48 (2011), 163–216. The most comprehensive list is provided by the "TM-Magic" database (https://www.trismegistos.org/magic/). Formularies and handbooks appear in both bookrolls (e. g., *PGM* I [Berlin, Staatliche Museen P. 5025; LDAB 10636, 4th cent.]; *PGM* II + VI [Berlin, Staatliche Museen P. 5026 + London, British Library Pap. 47; LDAB 1798]) and codices (including *PGM* IV and V). For discussion of segmentation in another ritual handbook, see R. Martín Hernández, "A Coherent Division of a Magical Handbook: Using Lectional Signs in PGM VII," *Segno e Testo* 13 (2015), 147–164.

20 *Sortes* collections used for book divination involve similar modes of segmentation and navigation. See R. Wísniewski, "Pagans, Jews, Christians, and a Type of Book Divination in Late Antiquity," *JECS* 24.4 (2016), 553–568; J. Childers, "'You Have Found What You Seek': The Form and Function of a Sixth-Century Divinatory Bible in Syriac," in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, ed. H. Lundhaug and L.I. Lied, TU 175 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 242–271; A. Luijendijk and W.E. Klingshirn, eds., *My Lots Are in Thy Hands: Sortilege and Its Practitioners in Late Antiquity*, RGRW 188 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

21 See J.M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine*, History of Science Series 3 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 176–217; J.J. Thomas, "The Illustrated Dioskourides Codices and the Transmission of Images During Antiquity," *JRS* 109 (2019), 241–273.

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perform a navigational function as well as an illustrative one, assisting the reader in locating the relevant entry. In late antiquity, Dioscorides's work was reorganized into alphabetized sections, further facilitating referential use.[22] Galen of Pergamum organized his *Vocum Hippocratis glossarium* (*Glossary of Hippocratic Terms*) alphabetically to facilitate quick reference.[23] While one could study the work as a whole, this was not necessary. Segmentation was built in, inviting the user to locate the relevant portion of the text for a given occasion. In each of these examples, texts were organized into discrete units – whether recipes, formulas, or lists of technical terms. Since these handbooks and reference tools assemble discrete units of information, it makes sense that they were compiled in ways that facilitated use as individual units. Even if they could be used in context, they do not have to be. Subdividing a text into units, especially titled ones, facilitates nonlinear reading.

22 Dioscorides himself explicitly rejected an alphabetical arrangement because it separated related material (praef. 3). Manuscripts of Dioscorides's *De materia medica* survive in various versions. See Riddle, *Dioscorides* (see n. 21), esp. 20–22, 176–180. Similar handbooks (not alphabetized) include the Michigan (L.C. Youtie, *P. Michigan*, vol. 17: *The Michigan Medical Codex [P. Mich. 758 = P. Mich. Inv. 21]* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1996]; LDAB 430; 4th cent.), Leiden (*P. Leid. Gr.* 2.X; LDAB 2442; 3rd cent.), and Stockholm (*PGM* Va; LDAB 5653; 3rd or 4th cent.) codices; cf. R. Halleux, ed., *Papyrus de Leyden, papyrus de Stockholm, fragments de recettes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981). These manuscripts collect numerous recipes, bridging medical, magical, and alchemical practices. On intersections between medicine and magic, see M. de Haro Sanchez, "Between Magic and Medicine: The Iatromagical Formularies and Medical Receptaries on Papyri Compared," *ZPE* 195 (2015), 179–189. In these manuscripts, sections are marked by spacing, παράγραφαι, and titles.

23 Galen's *De simplicium medicamentorum* [*temperamentis ac*] *facultatibus* (*The Capacities* [*and Mixtures*] *of Simple Drugs*) was also, in part, alphabetized. Galen employed other strategies as well. Among his works are both *De compositione medicamentorum per genera* (*The Composition of Drugs according to Kind*) and *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos* (*The Composition of Drugs according to Places*), the former arranged by ailment and the latter by part of the body. See A. Touwaide, "Collecting Books, Acquiring Medicines: Knowledge Acquisition in Galen's Therapeutics," in *Galen's* De indolentia: *Essays on a Newly Discovered Letter*, ed. C.K. Rothschild and T.W. Thompson, STAC 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 79–90, and Clare Rothschild in this volume. In another work, Galen instructs someone on how to use a roll for public disputation, with ostentatious scrolling back and forth between material marked under different headings (*De differentiis pulsuum* 2.6 [Kühn 8.591–592]). Galen mentions other agonistic reading events involving rapid nonlinear access, possibly using similar strategies (*De libris propriis* 1, 2 [Kühn 19.13–15, 21–22]). Even if technologies of segmentation and reference intersect with the codex-format book to afford nonlinear reading, the codex is not the sine qua non of such nonlinear reading practices. For other examples of sigla used to segment medical texts, see McNamee, "Sigla" (see n. 15), 131 n. 21.

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The late ancient revolution in information technology also involved developments in textual reference, visible in technologies like alphabetization and tables of contents. Both imply nonlinear access to the texts which they organize. Alphabetization is a familiar technology today. Yet, as Lloyd Daly and Andrew Riggsby show, alphanumeric organizational strategies were rare in Mediterranean antiquity, emerging with greater frequency in late antiquity.[24] While alphabetization is not conceptually hard, it implies practices of nonlinear access which increased dramatically in late antiquity. Alphabetization organizes a text to facilitate the reader's access. Nonlinear access is built into an alphabetized text. Alphabetization works for dictionaries, glossaries, or collections of recipes – and it was used for all of these in late antiquity.[25] But it is effective only for texts with units that can be structured around an alphabetic framework. It is less useful for narratives like the gospels, which have their own internal structure. Nonetheless, alphabetization offers further evidence for a late ancient shift toward nonlinear textual access.

The table of contents is another major referential practice, a natural extension of the section titling discussed above.[26] One example is the

24 L.W. Daly, *Contributions to a History of Alphabetization in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1967); cf. Riggsby, *Mosaics* (see n. 13), 11–22, on "ordered lists." Early alphabetized lists were used for limited scholarly contexts; Riggsby describes a contrast between "high accessibility and low actual use" (12).

25 Not all glossaries and dictionaries were alphabetized. Some word lists were organized by the sequence of another text (e.g., Homer, Paul). On dictionaries and glossaries, see W.E.H. Cockle, "A New Greek Glossary on Papyrus from Oxyrhynchus," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 28 (1981), 123–141; E. Dickey, "The Creation of Latin Teaching Materials in Antiquity: A Re-interpretation of P. Sorb. Inv. 2069," *ZPE* 175 (2010), 188–208; D. Jongkind, "Some Observations on the Relevance of the 'Early Byzantine Glossary' of Paul for the Textual Criticism of the Corpus Paulinum," *NovT* 53.4 (2011), 358–375; A. Benaissa, "The Provenance of the Greek-Coptic Glossary to Hosea and Amos," *CdE* 41 (2016), 175–179; J.E.G. Zetzel, *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators: An Introduction to Roman Philology, 200 BCE–800 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ch. 6; E. Dickey, "A Re-examination of New Testament Papyrus P99 (Vetus Latina AN glo Paul)," *NTS* 65 (2019), 103–121. Note also the alphabetized lists of fish (bk. 7) or kinds of cups (bk. 11) embedded in Athenaeus's third-century *Deipnosophistae*, which may allude to broader scholarly and pedagogical uses of alphabetization.

26 Riggsby, "Guides to the Wor(l)d" (see n. 14); id., *Mosaics* (see n. 13), ch. 1 (emphasizing Latin). The earlier essay includes discussion not superseded by the later monograph. As Riggsby argues, the table of contents was sufficiently unfamiliar in Roman antiquity to require introduction; extant tables of contents come with instructions telling the reader how to use the presented text. See further J. Bodel, "The Publication of Pliny's Letters," in *Pliny the Book-Maker: Betting on Posterity in the Epistles*, ed. I. Marchesi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13–108, at 23–42. Bodel points, in particular, to a connection between "technical handbooks" and tables of contents (30).

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Prescriptions of Scribonius Largus, from the mid-first century (ca. 44–48 CE). After a prefatory letter, the *Prescriptions* contains a table of contents, followed by the bulk of the work, a collection of some 271 different medical recipes. As Riggsby notes, "the most novel feature of this [table of contents] is that each of these entries is then followed by an index number, keyed to the individual paragraphs of the main text."[27] The brief entries in the table of contents are organized by ailment (and not, say, by ingredient), so that one can quickly find a remedy for the relevant condition. This is the earliest known example of the table of contents, but many others follow. Early texts with tables of contents include Columella's *On Country Matters*, an agricultural manual; Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, an omnibus collection of geographical, scientific, and ethnographic knowledge;[28] and Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights*, a commonplace book that includes poetry, astronomy, agriculture, and medicine.[29] A late ancient explosion of the technology supplied tables of contents for both new and existing texts.[30]

These varied phenomena – section markers, headings, alphabetization, tables of contents, and so forth – are now so familiar that they are easy to overlook. Modern books are equipped with a surfeit of reference technologies and structuring features, but this familiarity might lead us to ignore their novelty in the Mediterranean world of the early centuries CE.[31] Nonetheless, these technologies warrant attention as indications of particular kinds and contexts of use. While the technologies vary, each invites textual access in ways other than from start to finish. They invite flipping or

27 Riggsby, "Guides to the Wor(l)d" (see n. 14), 92; cf. id., *Mosaics* (see n. 13), 20–29.

28 A. Doody, *Pliny's Encyclopedia: The Reception of the* Natural History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 92–131.

29 E. Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae: Aulus Gellius and the Fantasy of the Roman Library*, Wisconsin Studies in Classics (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 47–51; J.A. Howley, *Aulus Gellius and Roman Reading Culture: Text, Presence, and Imperial Knowledge in the Noctes Atticae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 52–64.

30 Notable late ancient tables of contents include Oribasius's influential collection of medical recipes (4th cent.), Charisius's *Ars grammatica* (4th cent.), and Porphyry's *Vita Plotini* (including a table of contents for the *Enneads*, ca. 300 CE). Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260–339 CE) supplied many of his works with κεφάλαια lists for each book. A sixth-century manuscript of Pliny the Younger's *Epistulae* includes a table of contents. It has been argued by R. Gibson, "Starting with the Index in Pliny," in *The Roman Paratext: Frame, Texts, Readers*, ed. L. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 33–55, and Bodel, "Pliny's Letters" (see n. 26), 23–42, that this was devised by Pliny, while Riggsby, *Mosaics* (see n. 13), 26–27, thinks it emerged later. On late ancient tables of contents, see J. Coogan, "Transforming Textuality: Porphyry, Eusebius, and Late Ancient Tables of Contents," *Studies in Late Antiquity* 5.1 (2021), 6–27.

31 For a similar argument about the elusive nature of paratextual innovation, see A. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

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scrolling between different sites, as well as identifying and referring to units of material. The reader is intended to find and to use particular textual *loci*. Technologies of segmentation and reference invite and imply particular textual practices. As a result, their prevalence in late ancient gospel codices offers a significant window into early Christian textual practices and their social contexts.

3 Practical Texts as a Category

In the Roman Mediterranean, emerging technologies of access correlated strongly with particular sorts of texts. For greater precision, I here propose a heuristic category of "practical texts." By practical texts, I mean textual artifacts constructed as *instrumenta* for reference or as scripts for performance. This category maps ancient textual practices in productive ways.[32] While it primarily includes texts that one might characterize as scientific or technical, I specifically use it to describe textual artifacts that were constructed as tools, scripts, or aids to performance.[33] One *could*, in principle, read any of these texts from cover to cover (like a phonebook in a filibuster), but they are tools or scripts for *doing things*. Practical texts include recipes, instructions, and manuals. Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*, for example, are a tool for casting horoscopes or creating ephemerides. Magical formularies are recipe books; relevant sections of text provide scripts for rituals or instructions for performing procedures. Medical handbooks, ritual formularies, agricultural guides, and astronomical tables provide

32 The distinction I propose corresponds in part to the distinction between "discrete" and "continuous" texts advanced by M. Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte: Formen, Funktionen, Differenzierungsgeschichten*, Philosophie der Antike 25 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007), although some texts that Asper considers "continuous" could be and were organized for nonlinear access. This distinction also resembles the category of ὑπομνήματα constructed by Larsen and Letteney, "Christians and the Codex" (see n. 2), which they characterize as "unfinished" and "unauthored" texts "meant to be consulted, used, and revisited" (395). While I question the stability of ὑπομνήματα as a singular textual modality, a number of the examples that Larsen and Letteney discuss fall into my category of practical texts; cf. M.D.C. Larsen, *Gospels before the Book* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

33 Ancient Mediterranean scientific and technical texts have enjoyed a resurgence of interest. Central is Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte* (see n. 32). Cf. id., ed., *Writing Science: Medical and Mathematical Authorship in Ancient Greece*, Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013); J. König and G. Woolf, eds., *Authority and Expertise in Ancient Scientific Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); P.J. van der Eijk and M. Formisano, eds., *Knowledge, Text and Practice in Ancient Technical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

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scripts for performance. Of course, not all medical treatises or architectural works, for example, are devised for practical or banausic use in this sense. Individual portions of these practical texts were performed in varied situations.

This category of practical texts is characterized by paratextual technologies. Because these practical texts functioned instrumentally, people often equipped them with devices for segmentation and reference. Reference technologies facilitated access for particular situations. They facilitate nonlinear access and discontinuous reading because this corresponds to how the texts are often used. Reference is a characteristic feature of "practical" texts even when it is adopted as a feature of literary projects that do not exclusively envision nonlinear use. The best-preserved examples of tables of contents are in texts with elite literary pretensions like Pliny's *Natural History* and Gellius's *Attic Nights*. In both cases, the authors elevate the features of practical texts to an elite register. Nonlinear access and practical texts are not exclusively associated with the codex, even though gospels in particular appear overwhelmingly in codex format. The technologies of segmentation and reference that I have described – alphabetization, tables of contents, and so forth – occur in rolls as well.

Attending to practical texts as a category of use illuminates parallels between gospels and other ancient texts. Segmentation and reference are associated with a range of τεχναί, including grammar, astronomy, architecture, law, medicine, agriculture, magic, and theurgy.[34] Segmentation and reference are not the only technologies associated with technical texts; diagrams, illustrations, and tables also characterize these texts.[35] Nonetheless, two clarifications are helpful here. First, while the category of

34 A close examination of the examples collected by McNamee, "Sigla" (see n. 15), demonstrates that the vast majority of sigla used for segmentation or reference in late ancient Greek papyri appear in practical texts (or Christian ones), although there are occasional exceptions. As Schröder, *Titel und Text* (see n. 15), 103–104, notes, paratextual interventions like sections and tables of contents were also relatively more common in pedagogical texts. Of course, the practical and the pedagogical often overlap. Note moreover that, according to its preface, Gellius's *Attic Nights* is itself a *handbook* for Gellius's children's education. As I have argued elsewhere, the table of contents that Porphyry designed for his *Enneads* is likewise part of a pedagogical project; see Coogan, "Transforming Textuality" (see n. 30).

35 Riggsby, *Mosaics* (see n. 13), 28–29, argues that Latin authors hesitated to employ diagrams, illustrations, or complex page layout, in part because of worries that these were not reliably transmitted. Greek authors had fewer worries; numerous texts (in astronomy, medicine, and mechanics, among other fields) circulated with diagrams, illustrations, and tables. See C. Roby, *Technical Ekphrasis in Greek and Roman Science and Literature: The Written Machine between Alexandria and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 152–191; Riggsby, *Mosaics*, 154–202.

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technical texts was operative for thinkers in antiquity, it is permeable and diverse. Recent scholarship has problematized identifying scientific or technical literature as a single discrete genre, rather than as a constellation of texts that cluster around a range of topics and uses.[36] Practical texts, too, are not identifiable with a single genre.[37] Second, not all ancient technical or scientific texts are best understood as scripts or reference tools for particular practices, nor did all technical texts have devices like tables of contents or alphabetization. While not all technical or scientific texts facilitated nonlinear practices of "reference and retrieval," technologies of access nonetheless characterize texts that were designed as scripts or *instrumenta* for particular performances – that is, as practical texts.[38]

Ancient bibliographic distinctions correlate with technologies of access. Segmentation and reference were applied in only limited ways to poetry or to prose genres such as history, biography, or dialogue. For Homer and Sophocles, Herodotus and Thucydides, Plutarch and Plato, the material evidence from classical and late antiquity reflects limited paratextual intervention.[39] We find a hesitation to structure literary works paratextually. Titling and punctuation are limited. There are not efficient ways to identify or locate particular passages except by rote knowledge. While a number of works had been divided into "books" and while the metrical line offers a natural unit for poetry, neither serves as an effective device for referential access (especially without line numbering).[40] In keeping with a broader trend in late ancient textuality, these technologies of knowledge emerge first in the western Mediterranean, in both Greek and Latin.

The bibliographic imagination in the Roman Mediterranean distinguished between these categories of textuality. Not only modern reception,

36 On the category and genre(s) of technical literature, see Asper, *Griechische Wissenschaftstexte* (see n. 32), 11–56; Roby, *Technical Ekphrasis* (see n. 35), 26–42.

37 In the terms explored by Larsen and Letteney, "Christians and the Codex" (see n. 2), 394, with respect to ὑπομνήματα, one might describe practical texts as a "textual genre" rather than a "literary one."

38 For the quoted phrase, see P.J. van der Eijk and M. Formisano, "Introduction: From Words to Acts?," in id., *Knowledge, Text and Practice* (see n. 33), 1–26, at 4.

39 On segmentation (not always paratextual) in drama, poetry, and narrative, see W.A. Johnson, "The Function of the *Paragraphus* in Greek Literary Prose Texts," *ZPE* 100 (1994), 65–68; C. Higbie, "Divide and Edit: A Brief History of Book Divisions," *HSCP* 105 (2010), 1–31; cf. T. Whitmarsh, "Divide and Rule: Segmenting *Callirhoe* and Related Works," in *Readers and Writers in the Ancient Novel*, ed. M. Paschalis, S. Panayotakis, and G.L. Schmeling (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2009), 36–50.

40 Compare the description of the austere layout of elite literary texts in the first and second centuries CE in W.A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17–22.

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but ancient discourses of knowledge valuated technical textuality (and the practical texts associated with it) in distinct ways. This ancient distinction, embedded in distinct reading practices, results in practical differences on the page. The elite impenetrability of the page was a feature of particular sorts of texts; a variety of interventions to facilitate nonlinear use characterized others. To acknowledge this reality does not require a reified distinction between literary and non-literary texts or the privileging of one category at the expense of the other, nor does it require mapping the users of these texts onto tidy social hierarchies. Rather, it acknowledges distinctions of use and categorization in ancient bibliographical practice. Technologies of segmentation and reference correspond to a widespread – although permeable – division among textual artifacts in the bibliographic world of antiquity. The two categories imply different primary uses. There are texts for linear reading and practical texts for reference.

4 Gospels as Practical Texts

Nonlinear access, reference technologies, and practical texts illuminate the early reception of gospel literature in late antiquity. No secure evidence suggests that first- or second-century gospels were equipped with tables of contents, κεφάλαια, or extensive paratextual apparatus. Christian manuscripts from the second century onward sometimes included textual divisions marked by punctuation, παράγραφαι, ἔκθεσις, spacing, or other devices.[41] A number of these resembled the features of the magical codices discussed above. More sophisticated systems for gospel segmentation and reference emerged in the third and fourth centuries and continued to develop throughout late antiquity. Multiple systems emerged in parallel, suggesting that the phenomena reflect a widespread development in early Christian book culture rather than a single context like that of Caesarea. Although numerous studies have described patterns of segmentation in early Christian manuscripts, they have seldom been placed in a late ancient context of textual reference and nonlinear use.[42]

41 Cf. Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts* (see n. 11), 177–185; D. Batovici, "Reading Aids in Early Christian Papyri," in *From Scrolls to Scrolling: Sacred Texts, Materiality, and Dynamic Media Cultures*, ed. B.A. Anderson (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 35–50.

42 An extensive survey of segmentation in gospel papyri appears in S.D. Charlesworth, *Early Christian Gospels: Their Production and Transmission*, Papyrologica Florentina 45 (Florence: Edizioni Gonelli, 2016), esp. 32–40; other studies of gospel segmentation include H.K. McArthur, "The Earliest Divisions of the Gospels," in *Studia Evangelica*,

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Standardized systems of gospel sections and headings emerged no later than the third century.[43] The oldest preserved Greek example of systematic divisions for the gospels appears in the fourth-century Codex Vaticanus (GA 03). While the Vaticanus system appears in a handful of later manuscripts as well, it is not widespread. Although the chapters of Vaticanus (and, as we will see, the sections of Eusebius) were simply numbered, chapter titles emerged early on. In Greek, chapter titles are preserved in two fifth-century codices, Codex Alexandrinus (02) and Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (04). A formal table of contents for gospel codices develops no later than the early fifth century, again attested first in Codex Alexandrinus.[44] In Latin, *capitula* for the gospels may have developed by the end of

vol. 3: *Papers Presented to the Second International Congress on New Testament Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford 1961*, pt. 2: *The New Testament Message*, ed. F.L. Cross, TU 88 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 266–272; C.-B. Amphoux, "La division du texte grec des évangiles dans l'antiquité," in *Titres et articulations du texte dans les œuvres antiques*, ed. J.-C. Fredouille et al. (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1997), 301–312; S.E. Porter, "The Influence of Unit Delimitation on Reading and Use of Greek Manuscripts," in *Method in Unit Delimitation*, ed. M.C.A. Korpel, J.M. Oesch, and S.E. Porter, Pericope 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 44–60; P.J. Williams, "Not the Prologue of John," *JSNT* 33 (2011), 375–386; S.A. Adams, "Mark, Manuscripts, and Paragraphs: Sense-Unit Divisions in Mark 14–16," in *Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry Hurtado*, ed. C. Keith and D.T. Roth, LNTS 528 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 61–78; C.E. Hill, "Rightly Dividing the Word: Uncovering an Early Template for Textual Division in John's Gospel," in *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Michael W. Holmes on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. D.M. Gurtner, J. Hernández Jr., and P. Foster, NTTSD 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 217–238. Systems of segmentation were not limited to the gospels. The paratextual assemblage known as the Euthalian apparatus segmented the Pauline corpus, Acts, and the Catholic Epistles. See L.C. Willard, *A Critical Study of the Euthalian Apparatus*, ANTF 41 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009); V. Blomkvist, *Euthalian Traditions: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, TU 170 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); E.W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the* Corpus Paulinum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Cf. S. Crisp, "Scribal Marks and Logical Paragraphs: Discourse Segmentation Criteria in Manuscripts of the Pauline Corpus," in *Current Trends in Scripture Translation*, ed. P.A. Noss (Ann Arbor, Mich.: United Bible Societies, 2005), 77–87.

43 See McArthur, "Earliest Divisions" (see n. 42); Amphoux, "La division" (see n. 42); J.R. Grenz, "Textual Divisions in Codex Vaticanus: A Layered Approach to the Delimiters in B (03)," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 23 (2018), 1–22. While consensus identifies this system of numbered sections as original to the manuscript, Grenz argues that it was added in the fifth century or later.

44 On gospel κεφάλαια and τίτλοι, see C.R. Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1900), 859–861; H. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, pt. 1 (Berlin: Glaue, 1902), 402–432; A. Hebbelynck, "Les κεφάλαια et les τίτλοι des évangiles," *Mus* 41 (1928), 81–120; McArthur, "Earliest Divisions" (see n. 42); G. Goswell, "Early Readers of the Gospels: The *Kephalaia* and *Titloi* of Codex Alexandrinus," *JGRChJ* 6 (2009), 134–174, at 140–142; J.R. Edwards, "The Hermeneutical Significance of Chapter

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the third century.[45] Like the section titles in the ritual collections or the table of contents in Scribonius's medical text, gospel κεφάλαια aid the reader in accessing relevant sections of text for particular situations – for study, for liturgical reading, and so forth. While the hermeneutical implications of titles have been noted by Greg Goswell and by Jennifer Knust and Tommy Wasserman, their practical possibilities invite further investigation.[46]

The fourth-century Eusebian apparatus, a system of cross-references devised by Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260–339/340 CE), segmented the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John into 1,162 small units and coordinated these sections with a set of reference tables.[47] This apparatus facilitated a number of nonlinear reading practices. Eusebius divided the gospels into units based on parallels in other gospels; parallel sections in different gospels are coordinated by means of reference tables. This enables the reader to turn, for example, from Mark's baptism account to Matthew's, rather than reading continuously through any one gospel narrative. The

Divisions in Ancient Gospel Manuscripts," *NTS* 56.3 (2010), 413–426; J.W. Knust and T. Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone: The Transmission of a Gospel Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); id., "Wondrous Gospel of John" (see n. 5).

45 On Latin *capitula*, see H.A.G. Houghton, "Chapter Divisions, Capitula Lists, and the Old Latin Versions of John," *RBén* 121.2 (2011), 316–356; D. de Bruyne, P.-M. Bogaert, and T. O'Loughlin, eds., *Sommaires, divisions et rubriques de la Bible latine* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); H.A.G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 56. The earliest *capitula* reflect a Latin Gospel text attested in writers from third-century North Africa. This suggests that the system of *capitula* may also date as early as the third century (and thus perhaps earlier than the Greek examples), but absent direct evidence, this remains tentative. Houghton suggests that other systems of Latin *capitula* were devised in the fourth century (ibid.).

46 Goswell, "Early Readers" (see n. 44), 140–142; Knust and Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone* (see n. 44). One way of thinking about how these navigational possibilities might be realized is afforded by the Latin recension of Acts of Euplus 1 (H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs: Introduction, Texts and Translations*, OECT [Oxford: Clarendon, 1972], 314–315), where the martyr is described as fluidly navigating between passages in a gospel codex. I am grateful to Candida Moss for pointing out the significance of this example.

47 C. Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln: Kunstgeschichtliche Studien über die eusebianische Evangelien-Konkordanz in den vier ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Geschichte*, 2 vols. (Gothenburg: Isacson, 1938); T. O'Loughlin, "Harmonizing the Truth: Eusebius and the Problem of the Four Gospels," *Traditio* 65.1 (2010), 1–29; M.R. Crawford, "Ammonius of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea and the Origins of Gospels Scholarship," *NTS* 61.1 (2015), 1–29; J. Coogan, "Mapping the Fourfold Gospel: Textual Geography in the Eusebian Apparatus," *JECS* 25.3 (2017), 337–357; M.R. Crawford, *The Eusebian Canon Tables: Ordering Textual Knowledge in Late Antiquity*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); J. Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist: Rewriting the Fourfold Gospel in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2021).

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Eusebian system facilitates back-and-forth navigation and comparative reading of the gospels.[48]

While the Eusebian apparatus was designed for one mode of nonlinear access – comparison of gospel parallels – this structure of segmentation and reference was adapted to other modes of nonlinear access. In many cases, Eusebius's sections are written as separate paragraphs, often with rubrication, ἔκθεσις, and enlarged initials. The section numbers also functioned as standard reference indicators for lectionary systems, as in the Byzantine *Typikon*.[49] Occasionally, the Eusebian apparatus was expanded into a complete table of contents, with titles (*incipits*) for each section. One of the earliest manuscripts containing Eusebius's system is a fifth- or sixth-century set of canons from the Epiphanius monastery at Thebes. In addition to the framework of columns and rows, there are a number of annotations. Most of the headings are about content. Some indicate occasions for reading. These tell us, for example, that gospel sections are "concerning the end and signs" (περι του τελους και σημειων) or "for the great Sunday of Easter" (εις την μεγαλην κυριακην του πα⟨c⟩χα) or "for loving the enemy" (εις το αγαπαν τον εχθρον).[50] These indications suggest a mode of gospel reading that resembles Scribonius's *Prescriptions.* Just as, for Scribonius, one might turn to a specific numbered section for a remedy for a headache or for gout, this set of canons indicates when to read, what the content of a section is, or perhaps why one might benefit from reading a particular section.[51] Like Scribonius, whoever annotated this set of canons sought to

48 Eusebius's use of column-and-row tables likewise finds analogues in a range of practical texts, like the *Geography* and *Handy Tables* of Ptolemy the Astronomer (2nd cent. CE). On the *Geography* as a practical text, see A. Jones and J.L. Berggren, *Ptolemy's Geography: An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3–4; K. Geus, "The Problem of Practical Applicability in Ptolemy's *Geography*," in Van der Eijk and Formisano, *Knowledge, Text and Practice* (see n. 33), 186–199.

49 The Eusebian apparatus is visible in J. Mateos, ed., *Le Typicon de la grande église*, vol. 1: *Le cycle des douze mois*; vol. 2: *Le cycle des fêtes mobiles*, OrChrAn 165–166 (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1962). In his translation (the right-hand side of the facing-page edition), Mateos converts the Eusebian sections to modern verse notation. This is convenient for contemporary readers, but obscures the technologies employed in manuscripts.

50 *Editio princeps: P. Mon. Epiph.* 584. This manuscript is held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, with the inventory number (Egyptian) X.455 (LDAB 1062). I am grateful to Andrea Achi and Niv Allon of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the opportunity to consult this manuscript in December 2018. Since it contains the Eusebian canons, the manuscript was presumably once a four-gospel codex, but only part of the canons and part of the *Epistle to Carpianus* are preserved. Compare C. Nordenfalk, "Canon Tables on Papyrus," *DOP* 36 (1982), 29–38.

51 Scribonius, *Compositiones* 5 (headache), 158–162 (gout).

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render the text usable for particular situations. The Eusebian sections provide a referential framework for practical use of the gospels.

The ritual texts known as magical papyri, discussed above, are a diverse group. Some were designed for theurgic encounter with the divine, with particular texts appropriate for particular contexts.[52] In this sense, they intersect closely with gospel codices. After all, gospel codices are often used in the ritual setting of liturgy, where particular texts are read at particular times (often by ritual specialists) as part of events of divine encounter.[53] This invites us to think of Christian ritual practitioners in parallel to other specialists in theurgy, medicine, or astronomy. The development of formal liturgical sequences was accompanied by the emergence of textual features that facilitated using manuscripts for these practices.[54] Not only were the Eusebian sections used to mark liturgical reading, but something similar appears in the annotations to the fifth-century Codex Bezae (05). Readers as early as the sixth century annotated Bezae with liturgical lections.[55] Insofar as liturgical paratexts organized the gospel text for nonlinear access in performative contexts of divine encounter, they resemble the ritual formularies discussed above.

Liturgy is not the only way that late antiquity witnessed powerful textual encounters. Gospel codices were configured for book divination (*sortilege*) in various ways. A number of scholars have studied manuscripts of John which include *hermeneiai* ("interpretations").[56] A questioner (perhaps

52 On sacred texts and divine encounter in the Mediterranean of the early centuries CE, see D. MacRae, *Legible Religion: Books, Gods, and Rituals in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); H. Marx, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century CE* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

53 Gospels also circulated in formats other than books. Gospel *incipits* and excerpts appear on amulets; see de Bruyn and Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies" (see n. 19); J. Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt: Text, Typology, and Theory*, WUNT 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); T.S. de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). This is not limited to canonical material. The Abgar-Jesus correspondence appears in formularies and amulets; see J.G. Given, "Utility and Variance in Late Antique Witnesses to the Abgar-Jesus Correspondence," *JEH* 17 (2016), 187–222.

54 Compare Larsen in this issue of *Early Christianity*, who argues that "in terms of implied reading practices" the fifth-century Latin Codex Bobiensis (VL 1) "creates a gospel that was not designed to be read 'from front to back,' but was designed to have all the 'basics' of the story likely for public reading purposes such as preaching or teaching."

55 D.C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35–49; Knust and Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone* (see n. 44), 272–278.

56 W.V. Cirafesi, "The Bilingual Character and Liturgical Function of 'Hermeneia' in Johannine Papyrus Manuscripts: A New Proposal," *NovT* 56 (2014), 45–67; B.C. Jones, "A

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with the help of a specialist) would open the text to a random page and employ the interpretation from that page as the answer to their query. A further example is provided by the sixth-century Sahidic Gospel of the Lots of Mary, published by AnneMarie Luijendijk. This artifact mirrors the potential of random access to other gospel texts but consists *only* of divinatory material without continuous readable content.[57] This manuscript represents the maximum logical extension of "gospel" as a nonlinear text.

In each of the ways I have surveyed, late ancient gospel codices invite comparison with practical texts like ritual collections, medical recipes, or agricultural manuals.[58] Paratextual interventions in gospel codices facilitated nonlinear access and practical use, including for ritual and divinatory purposes. The granularity of this segmentation and the sophistication of these reference technologies are unusual for narrative texts of the period, although they are common in architectural manuals, agricultural handbooks, and ritual formularies. Gospel codices were configured to function like these other practical texts.

5 Conclusion

As I noted at the beginning of this article, different material texts afford varied modes of reading. If this is true, what sort of books were late ancient gospel codices and what practices of reading did they afford? I argue that gospel codices invited nonlinear access and performative use in ways that paralleled other late ancient practical texts, such as ritual formularies, medical recipes, and agricultural manuals. The novel strategies which early Christian readers developed to facilitate knowledge, navigation, and use of gospel literature invite fresh comparisons and new perspectives.

Since the late nineteenth century, an influential strand of scholarship has identified early Christian texts, including gospels, as cultural products

Coptic Fragment of the Gospel of John with Hermeneiai (P.CTYBR Inv. 4641)," *NTS* 60.2 (2014), 202–214; K.W. Wilkinson, "*Hermēneiai* in Manuscripts of John's Gospel: An Aid to Bibliomancy," in Luijendijk and Klingshirn, *My Lots Are in Thy Hands* (see n. 20), 101–123.

57 Cambridge, Mass., Sackler Museum, inv. 1984.669. *Editio princeps:* A. Luijendijk, *Forbidden Oracles? The Gospel of the Lots of Mary*, STAC 89 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

58 Compare Loveday Alexander's observations about similarities in genre between Luke and Greco-Roman technical texts in *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

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of secondary value or lower status, as *Kleinliteratur* in contrast to *Hochliteratur*.[59] These long-entrenched narratives imagine gospels as "subliterary" texts, the traces of oral transmission, rather than literature proper. Until recently, technical texts (*Fachliteratur* or *Fachprosa*) have likewise been disparaged as banausic, intellectually insignificant, not real literature. Yet, while I have here argued that the material and paratextual features of many late ancient gospel codices parallel those of other late ancient practical texts, my argument does not reinforce the hierarchies of social class and intellectual merit which undergird the distinction between *Kleinliteratur* and *Hochliteratur*. The division is neither helpful nor pertinent. To observe similarities in practical use is not to reinscribe the tendency – both ancient and modern – to privilege Homer or Plato as more substantial or significant than magical papyri or gospel literature. Moreover, as we noted above, the divergent sociocultural valuations of these texts do not justify differentiating users into distinct groups, since practical texts were used across the literate spectrum. Instead, this comparison invites fresh analysis of *how* readers encountered and used gospel texts.

My conclusions in this article contribute to ongoing conversation in two major ways. First, late ancient gospel codices resembled other late ancient practical texts. The affordances of nonlinear access were integrated into the thick fabric of the late ancient gospel manuscript. Modern discussions of early Christian textuality frequently impose present-day cultural valuations of reading practices onto the Roman Mediterranean. In particular, immersive linear reading (as of a novel) functions as the "ideal form" of reading in popular imagination. Many scholars impose this sociocultural preference on early Christian reading as well. I contend, however, that from the perspective of access and use, the late ancient gospel codex appears less

59 This perspective goes back at least as far as Franz Overbeck's 1882 lecture "Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur," reprinted in *Werke und Nachlaß*, vol. 3, ed. H. Cancik and H. Cancik-Lindemaier (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010), 19–101, and is particularly associated with the form criticism of K.L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu: Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919) (cf. id., "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte," in *Eucharistērion: Festschrift für Hermann Gunkel*, ed. H. Schmidt, FRLANT 19 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923], 51–134); M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1919); and R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, FRLANT 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921), but the idea that Christian texts (and Christian communities) were of low intellectual and social status exerts a broader and enduring influence. For critiques, see Gamble, *Books and Readers* (see n. 8), 17–20; Keith, *Gospel as Manuscript* (see n. 2), 78–82; R.F. Walsh, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

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like a novel and more like a recipe book. It's designed for the user to look things up and to use material "out of order." While I am not proposing rigid categorization of gospel literature, this observation invites new frames of comparison and unexplored sociocultural contexts for early Christian textuality. Furthermore, it historicizes modern interest in narrative readings of the gospels, revealing that such readerly projects are themselves culturally contingent.

Second, the modes of textual access I have explored here offer new ways of thinking about the ways of reading that late ancient gospel codices – as material objects – made possible. These overlooked affordances of nonlinear reading opened up possibilities for performance for individual needs under variegated circumstances. Some late ancient readers – perhaps even many – read gospels *in extenso.* But this ought not be the dominant model for understanding gospel codices as readable material objects. Like other practical texts, they offered scripts for use. The varied modes of sectioning and reference discussed here facilitated liturgical, scholarly, and divinatory practices. Gospel codices were employed in new sequences and temporal rhythms. As artifacts, they functioned in diverse economies and practices of performance, offering textual recipes against anger, for healing, for knowledge. By attending to varied technologies of access and to the diverse performative contexts that they underwrite, we discover patterns of knowledge that enrich our understanding of gospels as material texts, in late antiquity and beyond.

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