

Ancient chapter divisions, chapter headings, and tables of contents: a preliminary survey of the question

By Roger Pearse

Did ancient authors divide their texts into chapters, or provide them with tables of contents and other finding aids? The question has attracted attention, but with no clear results.¹

For instance today we find chapter divisions and chapter numbers in our bibles. But these originate, not in antiquity, but with Stephen Langton and the nascent university of Paris between 1204-1206.² Likewise late medieval Latin manuscripts often have standard organisational features: alternating red and blue initials of various sizes, paragraph sign, red chapter headings, and numbered divisions. But these too spread from Paris after 1200.³ Late Greek manuscripts occasionally display similar features, but appear to be divided much less often.⁴ (Possibly Greek readers, being native Greek speakers, felt less need for headings and finding aids than the readers of Latin texts). Earlier manuscripts are sometimes divided, sometimes not.

It is quite difficult to gain an overview of the raw data on tables of contents, chapter divisions, headings and numbers. Thus Petitmengin suggested the creation of a *Clavis Capitulorum*, a database which can tell us which texts have tables of contents in the manuscripts.⁵ Critical editions are often defective for this purpose: they should report whatever tables of contents, headings, divisions or numeration are found in the manuscript tradition, with some evaluation of their origins. Older editions often do not: e.g. the latest (1888) edition of Valerius Maximus mentions the 'indices' in the preface, on p.2, at the start of book 1, and on p.57, for book 2.⁶ Then silence until p.473, the epitome of Julius Paris. The reader is left to wonder whether that silence means absence. Yet in fact tables of contents appear in at least one manuscript for all 9 books.⁷

¹ The first collection of data was made by R. Friderici, *De librorum antiquorum capitum divisione atque summaris. Accedit de Catonis de agricultura libro disputatio* (1911). The other key studies are: T. Mutschmann, 'Inhaltsangabe und Kapitelüberschrift im Antiken Buch', *Hermes* 46 (1911): 93-107; D. Albino, 'La divisione in capitoli nelle opera degli Antichi', *Università di Napoli. Annali della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia* 10 (1962-3): 219-34; several papers in: *Titres et articulations du texte dans les œuvres antiques. Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly 13-15 décembre 1994* (Paris, 1997); B.-J. Schröder, *Titel und Text: Zur Entwicklung lateinischer Gedichtüberschriften. Mit Untersuchungen zu lateinischen Buchtiteln, Inhaltsverzeichnissen und anderen Gliederungsmitteln* (Berlin, 1999). I acknowledge gratefully the debt that this paper owes to all of these and especially to Schröder. Inevitably some of the examples will be overfamiliar, but I have tried to include others.

² O. Schmid, *Ueber verschieden Einteilungen der heiligen Schrift, insbesondere über die Capitel-Einteilung Stephan Langtone im XIII Jahrhundert* (Graz, 1892): 56-106.

³ M. Rouse and R. Rouse, 'Statim invenire: Schools, Preachers, and New Attitudes to the Page', *Authentic Witnesses, Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts* (Notre Dame: Indiana, 1991), 198.

⁴ I consulted 42 Greek manuscripts online at the website of the BNF, Paris.

⁵ Petitmengin, *Titres*, 492.

⁶ C. Kempf, *Valerii Maximi* (1888).

⁷ Dorothy M. Schullian, 'A Neglected Manuscript of Valerius Maximus', *Classical Philology* 32 (1937): 349-59, 350; collected tables appear on f.1v-2r in red ink in Brussels 5336 (G).

Comment [R1]: This paper is still in draft. There are marginal comments, which give the exact text of quotes referred to. These are here, because the paper was specified at 7,000 words, so there was no room for them; but the process of revision for publication would probably involve using some of them. Since this did not happen, they remain; and I have left them here in case they are useful for readers.

In the absence of reliable editions, or a systematic survey, the following notes on organisational elements in prose texts can only be provisional.⁸ The presence of headings and numerals in papyri is discussed; but I have only noted tables of contents where we have specific evidence of authorial involvement. Nor have I attempted to address the problem of terminology in antiquity for any of these items.⁹

In the Hellenistic period authors first divided their works into books, each book fitting into a standard roll size, and the number of books was a multiple of five or ten. Existing texts are also divided;¹⁰ the Πίνακες or book-catalogue of Callimachus (d. after 245 BC), is composed;¹¹ and catalogues and lists of items of all kinds appear in the papyri.¹²

The Greek papyri are not written as continuous text, but contain divisions. The *paragraphos* – a horizontal line under the first few letters of a line, and projecting into the margin – is often used as a form of sub-division.¹³

Headings also appear in the papyri. P.Hibeh 17, ca. 280-240 BC, containing the sayings of Simonides of Ceos, has a heading ἀντηλωμάτων ('Expenses') at the top of the column, then a sub-heading, Σιμωνιδου, left aligned and offset into the margin.¹⁴ A list of people and facts from the second century BC is grouped under centred headings.¹⁵ A medical fragment has a blank line followed by a heading¹⁶; while another collection of medical recipes has divisions and sub-titles πρὸς λευκ[ώματα] and πρὸς οὐλάς.¹⁷ In addition I find headings in the following: P.Cair. inv. 60565, a list of Homeric similes, broken up by indented headings like "Ἐκτωρ"; P.Mil.Vogl. 01, 20 (3rd c.), a mythological text; P.Oxy. 33, 2659 consists of a list of plays by comic poets, arranged by author, and it has headings for each section; P.Oxy. 17, 2086r, a fragment of the Old Comedy, has a heading 'Act IV'; P.Oxy. 30, 2517, a lexicographical fragment; P.Oxy. 47, 3360, a catalogue of titles and incipits; P.Oxy. 01, 35 verso, a list of emperors; P.Oxy. 2, 222 and P.Oxy. 23, 2381, a list of Olympic victors; P.Oxy. 17, 2086v, a rhetorical treatise, with heading [πε]ρι

Comment [R2]: <http://archive.org/stream/oxyrhynchuspappt02genuoft#page/134/mode/2up>

Comment [R3]: Albino also refers to a "Halberlin, Excerpta ex Tryphonis, Lipsiae 1897" but I can't find any trace of this publication. Albino does not seem to have actually looked at the publication of many of her references, relying on secondary sources.

⁸ For poetry see Schröder, 305, who shows that Vergil's *Bucolica* and Martial books 13-14 had authorial headings, and headings appear over epigrams in papyri of the 3rd c. BC; but generally these only appear in later texts. On epistolary collections, we can see from the 5th c. Morgan manuscript fragment (M.462) of Pliny the Younger's letters has an unnumbered table of contents to book three, which must be authorial since it alone preserves the full name of some of the correspondents. For dramatic texts see J.Andrieu, *Le dialogue antique* (Paris, 1954); Schröder, 155. Schröder adds (p.306) that over time, 'Immer mehr Gattungen werden durch immer mehr Gliederungsmittel organisiert und übersichtlicher, zugänglicher gemacht.'

⁹ For Latin texts see Petitmengin, *Titres*, and Schröder, appendix. I am not aware of any study covering Greek terminology in the same way.

¹⁰ Irigoin, *Titres*, 128.

¹¹ L.Holtz, *Titres*, 470.

¹² M. Van Rossum-Steenbeek, *Greek readers' digests? Studies on a selection of sub-literary papyri* (Brill, 1998): 119-20.

¹³ E.g. P.Hibeh 5 in: B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *Hibeh Papyri* (1906) 26, 30 and 31.

¹⁴ *Hibeh Papyri*, 64-6.

¹⁵ H. Diels, 'Laterculi Alexandrini', *Abhandlungen der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 2 (1904), Philosophisch-historisch Classe, Abh.II. p.1-16.

¹⁶ P.Oxy. II 234, p.134-6; 135 l.23-4.

¹⁷ C. Kalbfleisch, *Papyri Argentaratenses Graecae* (1901); *ŠI* C, II.10, 14.

κεφαλαίων; and P.Amst. 1, 6, scholia, with a numeral heading representing the book being commented on.¹⁸ More examples could probably be found.

Comment [R4]: <http://cpp.arts.kuleuven.be/index.php>

A link with the literary tradition is found in P.Oxy. 31, 2551, from a codex of the 3rd century AD. This is a list of rulers of Egypt, with a heading – Persians, Macedonians, etc – indented whenever the dynasty changes. Headings of a similar kind, and for an exactly similar purpose, appear in book 1 of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius of Caesarea, first composed before 303 and revised 325-6, and must be authorial because they preserve the sources used for each section; Alexander Polyhistor, Berossus, etc.¹⁹

Some of the papyri of the 3rd century also exhibit the use of marginal numerals. In Bodl. Ms. Gr. Class. f. 48 (P), a third century AD fragment of Pherecydes of Syros' lost Πεντέμυχος, there is a numeral in the left margin of column 2 against the start of line 4, which is also given a *paragraphos*. Clement of Alexandria writing around the same time, quotes part of this same text in the *Stromateis* 6, so this is very likely the kind of book that Clement had before him.²⁰ The *editio princeps* calls this a chapter number, perhaps reading it as 6; but West reads the numeral as 600, in which case it is more likely a stichometric number.²¹ More certainly, P.Oxy. 459, the fragments of a 3rd century papyrus codex containing the oration of Demosthenes against Aristocrates, has a number 16 in the margin.²²

The autographs of a score of ancient literary texts are preserved in the papyri.²³ It would be very interesting to know what organizational features, if any, these display; or whether such items, if used, were only added later. It may be possible to detect those added later: Schröder points out that texts originally composed without organizational aids relied instead on formulae in the preface, announcing what was to follow, and further transitional formulae and recapitulations in the text; which could be abandoned once tables of contents, and heading were adopted. The presence of the former, she suggests, is an indicator that the latter are later additions.²⁴

The ancient equivalent of a 'table of contents' is known to us mainly from literary sources transmitted by copying. Medieval copies of historical texts like Diodorus Siculus, or Josephus, frequently contain tables of contents at the start of each book, which are often numbered and may correspond to chapter divisions and headings. Only two classical Latin manuscripts from antiquity contain a list of contents: the Aulus Gellius palimpsest and the 5th c. Moné palimpsest of Pliny the Elder.²⁵

The *Conica* of Apollonius of Perge (fl. ca. 200 BC) does not contain a table of contents, but the end of the preface to book 1 consists of a description of each book of the work in turn: περιέχει δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον

¹⁸ M. Huys (ed.), *Catalogue of paraliterary papyri* (database), K.U.Leuven.

¹⁹ Huys, *Catalogue*; J. Karst, *GCS* 20 (1911).

²⁰ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *New Classical Fragments and other Greek and Latin papyri* (Oxford, 1897): 21-3 and plate IV, item XI.

²¹ M.L. West, 'Three Presocratic Cosmologies', *Classical Quarterly* N.S. 13 (1963): 165, where he also states that the numeral is against the third line, not the fourth because of a misleading twist in the papyrus sheet.

²² B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 3 (1903), 112-6, 113 line 25.

²³ For a list see T. Dorandi, *Le stilet et la tablette* (Budé, 2000), 53 f.; also for details of how ancient authors composed their works. Unfortunately I have not been able to examine them for organisational items.

²⁴ Schröder, 107, 109.

²⁵ Petitmengin, *Titres*, 498.

τὰς γενέσεις τῶν τριῶν τομῶν ... τὸ δὲ δεύτερον τὰ περὶ τὰς διαμέτρους ... τὸ δὲ τρίτον πολλὰ καὶ παράδοξα θεωρήματα ... τὸ δὲ τέταρτον, (etc.)²⁶

Cato (d. 149 BC), *De agri cultura*, may have been equipped with a table of contents and headings; so Friderici and Albino believed. The headings are written in archaic Latin, they argued, and the opening words of the text, at the end of the preface, 'and now to come back to my subject', seem to imply that something else had been present; perhaps a table of contents. But Dalby, the most recent translator, states baldly that the headings are really simple extracts from the text, some positioned so badly that they break up sentences. Schröder agrees that they are not original.²⁷

Polybius (d. ca. 118 BC) tells us that he placed προγραφαὶ at the head of each of books 1-6, and προέκθεσις at the start of each Olympiad (roughly every other book) thereafter. Unfortunately the meaning of these terms is obscure. Some see προγραφή as meaning a table of contents, perhaps glued to the outside of the roll, like the slip on which an author's name and the title of the work would appear; because Polybius refers to the ease of scribal damage to such items. But all these suggestions are speculative.²⁸

From the late second century BC, legal authors sometimes divided their texts into sections, with section headings, as we can see from extant bronze tablets. From the first century AD, numerals appear as well.

Thus in the *Lex repetundarum* (123-2 BC) we find sections preceded by vertical space and titles (*rubric*); titles (and sometimes spacing) are absent from the *Lex agraria* of 111BC on the reverse, however. In the Cnidos copy of the *Lex de provinciis praetoriis* of 101 BC, the first line of each paragraph / section is protruded to the left by a number of characters; the same appears in a bronze inscription in Spain in 87 BC; and in the *Lex Cornelia de XX quaestoribus* from Rome in 81 BC. The *Lex Antonia de Termes sensibus* of 68 BC refers *ea quae in hoc capite scripta sunt*; where the term *caput* means a legal section or title. The same kind of division appears in sub-literary and documentary Latin papyri of the 1-2nd c. AD, and in the Vindolanda tablets.²⁹ In the bronze legal tablets of the 1st c. BC and AD, such as the *Lex Salpensia* and *Lex Malacitana* (81-83 AD) we find numbered headings.³⁰

Butler has asserted that the orations of Cicero were divided by the author into short paragraph-like sections, distinguished by projecting the first line of each section into the margin. These he refers to as *capiti*, following the legal usage. He adduces in support the Giessen papyrus, P.land.V.90 (1st c. AD), a school exercise containing a few lines of Cicero *In Verrem*, which marks a paragraph with *K* (= *kaput*), although it does not project the first line. The works of Cicero preserved in the remains of eight 4-5th c. codices are all divided into paragraphs in this way. The evidence seems insufficient, however.

²⁶ J.L. Heiberg, *Apollonii Pergaei quae Graece exstant* (Leipzig, 1891).

²⁷ Albino, *divisione*, 222f.; A. Dalby, *Cato on farming: De agri cultura* (Prospect, 1998), 28; Schröder, 128.

²⁸ T. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* (1872), 132; likewise Mutschmann, 'Inhaltsangabe', 100, who made the suggestion that such an *argumentum* might appear on the σίττυβος, which would then have to be rather larger than normally supposed.

²⁹ S. Butler, 'Cicero's *Capita*', *Litterae Caelestes* 3 (2009): 9-48.

³⁰ *CIL* II, 1964; Friderici, 20; Schröder, 104, 328.

Comment [R5]: "The first book contains the generation of the three sections ... The second book contains the properties having to do with the diameters... The third book contains many unexpected theorems ... The fourth book ..." Tr. Boris Rosenfeld.

Comment [R6]: Mutschmann, p.100: "Das wurde vermieden, wenn das Argumentum auf dem σίττυβος stand, der dann allerdings einen ziemlichen Umfang gehabt hätte."

The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (after 14 AD) is a literary text transmitted inscribed on stone, and there divided into sections with numbered headings.³¹ The headings do not fit the subject very well.³²

In the *De compositione verborum* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. early 1st c. AD) the preface concludes with a prose list of subjects to be discussed, in the same manner as Apollonius of Perge. Friderici prints this as a table of contents, and it is plainly authorial.

The medical writer Celsus (d. ca. 50 AD) makes cross-references to previous passages using *caput*: VI.2:12: *prima parte superioris capitis exposita sunt*; VIII.9:2. There is no mention of *numbered* sections.³³

Scribonius Largus (d. ca. 50 AD), *De compositione medicamentorum*, consists of a preface, followed by a series of chapters, each devoted to a single medical recipe. Scribonius states that he has given a list of medical recipes at the end, with numbers, for ease of reference: (praef.15), *compositiones ... subiceimus et numeris notavimus, quo facilius quod quaeretur inveniatur*. The text was only known from the 1528 Ruellius edition until recently, and such a list appears in it (and was promptly omitted by the 1547 Aldine reprint). The recently discovered Toledo manuscript contains the list, but without numbers.³⁴

Pliny the Elder (d. 79 AD) begins his encyclopedic *Naturalis Historia* with the dedicatory letter, followed by book 1, which is a table of contents for all the other books. He likewise states that he gives a list of what is contained in individual books at the end of the letter, to save the trouble of reading the whole vast work through (praef. 33): *quid singulis contineretur libris huic epistulae subiunxi, summaque cura ne legendos eos haberes operam dedi. tu per hoc et aliis praestabis ne perlegant, sed ut quisque desiderabit aliquid id tantum quaerat, et sciat quo loco inveniatur*. He adds that Valerius Soranus (d. 82 BC?) had done the same *in litteris nostris*. At the end of the list for each book there is also a list of authors used.

There seems to be no evidence to tell us whether Pliny numbered the entries in his table of contents; nor whether the table of contents for each book was duplicated at the start of each roll. However Moné palimpsest (5th-6th c.) shows a table has appeared at the start of individual books. The tables also suffer damage in transmission; Detlefsen has shown that in one family of manuscripts the original tables have been replaced by others of late medieval composition.³⁵ In the Moné ms., the chapters are divided by spaces, the insertion of a capital letter, or a coronis.³⁶

Columella's *De re rustica*, appeared, book by book, around the same time. When book 11 appeared, Columella appended to it a table of contents for books 1-11 for ease of finding things: *omnium librorum meorum argumenta subieci ... facile reperiri possit, quid in quoque quaerendum*. Schröder makes the convincing suggestion that the unusual position of the table shows that Columella was borrowing the

Comment [R7]: I don't quite know how to find an up-to-date edition of this. Must be one. And haven't seen Diehl, but online photos show the headings.

Comment [R8]: VI, 2.12: "Ulcerations of the tongue need no other treatment than that noted in the first part of the previous chapter [*prima parte superioris capitis exposita sunt*]". VIII, 9:2: "... set forth in the first part of the present chapter. [*prima parte huius capitis exposita sunt*]".

Comment [R9]: primum ergo ad quae vitiae compositiones exquisitae et aptae sint, subiceimus et numeris notavimus, quo facilius quod quaeretur inveniatur; deinde medicamentorum, quibus compositiones constant, nomina et pondera vitii subiunximus. First therefore, I have placed below and noted with numbers the drugs which are suited and appropriate for certain illnesses, so that what is sought may be more easily found; then I have subjoined the names and weights of drugs used for the illnesses. Text Sconocchia p.5, rough translation mine.

³¹ E. Diehl, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (Bonn³, 1918).

³² T. Birt, *Abriss des antiken Buchwesens*, (1923), 12.

³³ W.G. Spencer, *Celsus: De Medicina* (LCL, 1961).

³⁴ S. Sconocchia, *Scribonii Largi Compositiones* (Teubner, 1983), 6.

³⁵ D. Detlefsen, 'Die Indices der *Naturalis Historia* des Plinius', *Philologus* 28 (1869): 701-16.

³⁶ Cfr. K. Dziatzko, *Untersuchungen über ausgewählte Kapitel des antiken Buchwesens* (Leipzig, 1900), 53, 113-4; J. Sillig, *Plinii Naturalis Historia* 6 (Gothae, 1855) *Proleg.*, 18, 20, 26.

idea from Pliny. A difficulty with this is that Pliny quotes Columella as a source; but Schröder is probably right to suggest that Columella had issued a 10 book version before Pliny wrote, and then added book 11 later. Clearly the later distribution of tables before individual books cannot be authorial; for if Columella had so revised his work, he would also have moved his comment about them to the start of the whole work, rather than leaving it at the end of book 11.³⁷

Several other authors then adopt the same structure. Schröder has suggested, probably rightly, that all of them are copying the idea from Pliny the Elder. It is certainly correct that at this time, among the surviving texts of antiquity, we have a cluster of works which state at the end of the preface that a table of contents follows. It seems reasonable to suppose that *post hoc, proper hoc*. But because 99% of ancient literature is lost, it is always possible that the cluster of evidence is merely caused by the accidents of preservation.

However it is also interesting that none of the early authors who say that they use a table of contents have a consistent terminology to describe it. This may indicate that the concept was new, or was thought to be new.³⁸

The next author to use a table of contents is Frontinus, in his Latin *Strategemata* (d. 103-4 AD). Each book consists of a dedicatory letter, a list of topics, and then the topics themselves (III praef.).

Aelian Tacticus (fl. 100 AD) visited Frontinus and produced a set of Greek strategems, dedicated to Trajan. He too states (praef. 7) that he has prefixed his work with a table of contents, τὰ κεφάλαια τῶν ἀποδεικνυμένων, for ease of reference.³⁹

Aelian's work has several interesting features which were explored by Alphonse Dain.⁴⁰ The table of contents appears in the oldest manuscript. But it does not list the chapters, or the chapter headings. Instead it contains a numbered list of 113 entries. These correspond to the paragraphs which appear, with numerals, in some of the younger medieval manuscripts. Dain suggested that the statement at the end of the preface was so similar in concept to that of Pliny the Elder, that it too must be derived from it. The text of Aelian's work is largely epitomised from a similar manual by Asclepiodotus (1st century BC), himself based on Posidonius (d. 51BC), and Aelian is in turn used in the same way by Arrian. Dain believed that the chapter headings were original, because the two works both contained the same number of chapters, and the structure of the works was the same, and the headings were the same in the manuscripts. If the divisions and headings are copied from Asclepiodotus, then indeed they cannot be a later addition but must be authorial. However, at the end of each chapter is a linking passage, to alert the listener to the change in subject; but if Schröder is right, the presence of such transitional formulae should raise a question as to the authenticity of the heading.

Comment [R10]: Devine, p.44: 7. "On account of the pressure of your business, I have prefaced the work with subject-headings, so that you can, without reading the book as a whole, determine its contents from a few words and without spending much time easily find the places you want to look up." A.M. Devine, 'Aelian's Manual of Hellenistic Military Tactics: a new translation from the Greek with an Introduction', *The Ancient World* 19, 1989, 31-9. πρόεγραψα τὰ κεφάλαια τῶν ἀποδεικνυμένων

³⁷ Schröder, 132.

³⁸ A. Riggsby, 'Guide to the wor(l)d', in: König and Whitmarsh (eds.) *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, (Cambridge, 2007): 88-107.

³⁹ H. Köchly-W. Rüstow, *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller* 2.1 (Leipzig, 1855), 238; still the latest edition.

⁴⁰ A. Dain, *Histoire du texte d'Élien le tacticien* (Budé, 1946), 45-8, 52-4.

Aelian's testimony may be important, because it shows that the transmitted headings, if original, are not related to the table of contents which instead gives a list of paragraphs. This would give us two different systems of reference, both original. In view of the age of the critical edition (1855) and indeed of Dain's study, however, it would be wise to verify all these supposed facts against the manuscript tradition.

Two papyrus examples exist of tables of contents from the second century. POxy. 665, a regular literary roll written in uncial, contains what may be the table of contents to a work on Sicilian history, entries separated by the *paragraphos* and the first line of each projecting left into the margin. PRyland I, 19 contains a portion of book 47 of Theopompus' *Philippica*, which appears to be either a table of contents or an epitome.⁴¹ However the *Anonymus Argentinensis* papyrus (ca. 100 AD) once supposed to contain a table of contents, is now thought more likely to be a portion of a commentary.⁴²

We have independently circulating documents containing what look like tables of contents. One example is the 'prologi' of the lost history of Pompeius Trogus, which are attached to some manuscripts of Justinus' (2nd, 3rd or even 4th c. AD) *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*. However an examination of the style of these items indicates that they certainly were not composed by Trogus himself, but by a Greek, and one probably living in the 2nd century AD, and so belong to the ancient tradition of epitomisation.⁴³

The *Periochae* of Livy,⁴⁴ on the other hand, are not transmitted with any portion of Livy's text.⁴⁵ Although they look somewhat like a set of tables of contents, they cannot be seen as such, therefore. Instead they should perhaps be seen as an epitome. But like Pliny's and Aelian's tables of contents, they were probably a way for a reader to avoid the labour of reading the whole work in order to find a particular passage. In the same period, and for the same purpose, appear the narrative *hypotheses* to *Euripides*⁴⁶ which seem to have been composed during the 1-2nd century AD.⁴⁷

There are also examples of headers on papyrus texts. A substantial papyrus roll recovered from Hermoupolis, P. Berol.inv.9780 (Pack² 339), of the early 2nd century AD, contains on the recto Didymus' commentaries on Demosthenes, and on the verso an introduction to Stoic ethics by Hierocles. The columns have headings on them. But Mutschmann has suggested that these are really chapter titles,

⁴¹ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (1909), xlvi (fr. 211), for book 47; dated to 2nd c. AD.

⁴² *PStrassb. inv.* 84, ca. 100 AD So H. T. Wade-Gery and Benjamin D. Meritt, 'Athenian Resources in 449 and 431 BC', *Hesperia* 26 (1957): 168, with transcription and photograph; likewise G. Arrighetti, *Poeti, eruditi e biografii. Momenti della riflessione dei Greci sulla letteratura* (Pisa, 1987), 191-2, 203-4; T. Dorandi, 'Le commentaire dans le tradition papyrologique', in: M. Goulet-Cazé and T. Dorandi, *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation* (Vrin, 2000) 24.

⁴³ Albino, 227 f.

⁴⁴ ἡ περίοχη means 'summary', see LSJ I2c, ps.Ausonius, *Periochae Homeri Iliadis et Odysseyiae*, the metrical summaries of the comedies of Terence, so labelled in cod. Bembinus. See Van Rossum-Steenbeek, 40 and n.94.

⁴⁵ M.D. Reeve, 'The transmission of Florus' Epitoma De Tito Livio and the Periochae', *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988): 477.

⁴⁶ Van Rossum-Steenbeek, xvi, chapter 1.

⁴⁷ Sometimes known as *Tales from Euripides*. See G. Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (1955), 135: 'Their sole purpose is to summarise the action of the play. ... These arguments are not designed to introduce the reader to the plays. They are meant as a substitute for the plays.' But cf. Van Rossum-Steenbeek, 52 who considers only that we 'cannot exclude the possibility.'

and copied from an exemplar.⁴⁸ Gibson has doubts about the latter, however.⁴⁹ Headings also appear, badly damaged, in P.Herc. 558.⁵⁰

Our next main witness is Aulus Gellius. His *Noctes Atticae* (ca. 177 AD) come with a preface, at the end of which the author states that he has placed summaries (*capita rerum*) of all the subjects in all the books; i.e. a table of contents at the end of the preface. As with Pliny, a list of authors used appears at the end of the table of contents for each book. Interestingly in all the medieval manuscripts the tables of contents have been moved before individual books.⁵¹ The formulations of the elements can be rather inaccurate; but the final editing of the *Noctes* was itself rather inaccurate, and this does not disprove their authenticity.⁵²

The earliest substantial Greek witnesses to the text of the Gospels, Chester Beatty I (= P⁴⁵), Bodmer II (= P⁶⁶), and Bodmer XIV-XV (= P⁷⁵) date to the end of the 2nd century AD or the beginning of the 3rd, and are written without divisions.⁵³ However Christians were unconventional in book formats – they used the codex rather than the roll – so their usage may not be a guide to standard contemporary practice.

Two mythographical compendia, Parthenius (1st c. BC) and Antoninus Liberalis (2 c. AD?) at first sight are relevant to our enquiry. They survive in a unique manuscript, Vat.Palat.Heidelberg.gr. 398. Each text consists of a series of stories, culled from prior sources, each with a heading-note or ‘manchette’ indicating the source(s), such as, for Antoninus (ch. 1): ‘From Nicander, book III of his *Metamorphoses*’. At first sight these must be authorial, because who but the author would know what sources he used? But in the manuscript these manchettes are actually written in the bottom margin. The format is identical for both works. It seems very unlikely that the two works were originally identical in having this unusual format, which means that the current arrangement is the work of a scribe. It also means we can learn nothing about the original structure from them. The consensus of scholars is that the manchettes are instead scholia. The tables of contents found in both works are not original.⁵⁴

The oldest literary manuscript with a numbered table of contents is Vat.gr.1288 (s.V²-VI), the remains of the end of book 78 and start of book 79 of Cassius Dio’s *Roman History* (d. after 229 AD). At the end of the table is a note, on the number of years covered by the book and a list of the consuls for those years. The numbers have no corresponding presence in the text, however.⁵⁵

Cyprian (d. 258 AD) has left us two compilations of biblical passages, the *Ad Quirinium* and *Ad Fortunatum*, both transmitted with headings over the sections, and tables of contents. In preface of the latter he states (praef.3), *compendium feci, ut, propositis titulis ... capitula dominica subnecterem*, which

Comment [R11]: ANF: “I would collect from the sacred Scriptures some exhortations for preparing and strengthening the minds of the brethren... I have made a compendium; so that the titles being placed first, which every one ought both to know and to have in mind, I might subjoin sections of the Lord’s word” The sections are called capitula in *Ad Quirinium* also, I praef and 3 praef. Deleani p.417.

⁴⁸ H.Mutschmann, ‘Inhaltsangabe und Kapitelüberschriften’, *Hermes* 46 (1911): 93-107.

⁴⁹ Craig A. Gibson, *Interpreting a classic: Demosthenes and his ancient commentators* (2002), 77.

⁵⁰ J. Sievers, ‘The ancient lists of contents of Josephus’ *Antiquities*’, *Studies in Josephus* (Brill, 2007): 276.

⁵¹ Petitmengin, 497.

⁵² L. Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius: an Antonine scholar and his achievement* (Oxford, 2003), 31.

⁵³ C.-B.Amphoux, ‘La division du texte grec des Évangiles’, *Titres*, 309.

⁵⁴ J. Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea*, 1999, p.248-9 and n.124; M. Papatthomopoulos, *Antoninus Liberalis: Les Métamorphoses* (Budé, 1968), x-xi.

⁵⁵ Sievers, 274.

likewise gives us a table of contents (*titulos*) at the end of the preface. The elements (*titulos*) of the table are fuller than the headings above the sections (*capitula*) of text; there seems no reason to doubt that both are authorial.⁵⁶ Indeed the text makes no sense without them.⁵⁷

In the *Kestoi* of Julius Africanus (fl. ca. 220 AD) there are substantial quotations from Aeneas Tacticus, (fl. ca. 367 BC) including chapter headings. The same headings are also present in the single 10th c. ms. Laur. Gr. LV, 4, which suggests that Aeneas' work was equipped with chapter headings at least by the time of Africanus.⁵⁸

Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 339 AD) began his career by compiling sub-literary texts such as the *Onomasticon* and the *Chronicon* book 1. The latter is only extant in a very late Armenian translation, but is a compilation of extracts from earlier writers. The latter are identified by a heading, which must therefore be authorial.

Eusebius then compiled and composed his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, (325 AD) a literary text containing extensive extracts. Schwartz demonstrated, in a few brilliant pages, that the tables of contents are authorial, while the numbering of the elements of the table, and the positioning of extracts from them as 'chapter headings' is not.⁵⁹ In all of the manuscripts, and in the Syriac version (462 AD), the tables of contents stand, not together, but at the front of each book in turn. At the foot of the table of contents for book 2, there is a Pliny-like list of authors that 'we', i.e. Eusebius, used. The elements in the table use pronouns, e.g. 'he', referring back to the person named in the preceding entry. This means that they have to be read as a collection, and make no sense as individual entries. They also use 'we' for the author, likewise indicating that they are authorial. Furthermore, while they reflect the content, in a few places the table gathers together material collected to Rome, while the text follows chronological order. The headings embedded in chapters in the manuscripts bear the marks of surgery by editors, attempting to insert them. Likewise the elements in the tables are numbered in most Greek manuscripts, which are not earlier than the 9th c., and numerals appear in the margins; but since the elements are actually not in the same order as the text, this likewise must be a later feature. There seems to be no indication that the tables of contents ever appeared gathered together at the front of the book.

Schwartz also argued less convincingly that the tables of contents to the *Vita Constantini* were authorial, on the basis that the elements name people not named in the text, and Pasquali agreed; but Winkelmann has reiterated the earlier view of Valesius and Heikel that the tables refer to Eusebius in the third person, and use words not found anywhere in Eusebius' works, and so cannot be authorial. However theological references in the tables also mean that they cannot date much later than Eusebius; and he suggested that Eusebius left the work unfinished, and the tables of contents were added by

⁵⁶ S. Deleani, *Titres*, 400 ; *CSEL* 3.1, 318.

⁵⁷ Schröder, 125.

⁵⁸ W. Oldfather, *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander* (1923), 19.

⁵⁹ E. Schwartz, *GCS* 9.3 (1909) cxlvii-cliii.

Eusebius' successor, Acacius. Like those in the *HE*, the elements in the tables were made to be read as a table, so cannot have been composed first as headings and then collected into a table.⁶⁰

The *HE* is extant in a Syriac version dated to 462 AD which, if we may believe the edition, is equipped with tables of contents before each book, chapter divisions, and chapter headings. The elements of the table are separated by a paragraphos.⁶¹ Since Schwartz demonstrated that the headings cannot be authorial, because they are made to be read as a table, this is evidence that the format of books changed between 325 and 460 AD.

In the 4th c. *Collatio legum Romanarum et Mosaicarum*, we find explicit references to earlier Roman legal texts, and sub-divisions in them; e.g. 'Ulpianus libro VII. De officiis proconsularis sub titulo de sicariis et ueneficiis. Capite primo legis Corneliae de sicariis cauetur'.⁶²

In the Nag Hammadi codices, only two treatises are divided, with headings.⁶³

Nearly all the 4-5th century New Testament manuscripts have some system of sub-division, usually different from one manuscript to the next. The most widespread presence in this later period is the Eusebian sections.⁶⁴ In the 5th century Codex Alexandrinus at the start of each gospel is a numbered table of titles (τίτλοι) or summaries (κεφάλαια) of the sections, the number appearing in the margin below the Eusebian sections. In the Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, these tables still appear, but unnumbered, and the only numerals in the margins are those of the Eusebian sections.⁶⁵

Basil of Caesarea (d. 379) refers to numbered passages of the New Testament in prologue 8 (*De fide*) to the *Moralia*,⁶⁶ which Gribomont has pronounced authentic.⁶⁷ The *Moralia* consists of a series of precepts; Basil states that he will place against each precept the numeral of the parts of the scriptural text (γραφικῶν κεφαλαίων) that it refers to, so that readers can find the precept in the text using the number.⁶⁸

We may infer from all this that during the 4th century older works started to be fitted with new reader aids. The large parchment codex, capable of holding many times more text than the earlier rolls or small codices, appears at the same time. It is likely that the new format of book caused the introduction of new formats of book organisation.

Comment [R12]: Two treatises are divided into three parts with headings, e.g. "The discourse of the manifestation".

Comment [R13]: "We will transpose to each precept [extracted from the NT] the numeral of the parts of the scriptural text (γραφικῶν κεφαλαίων) that it refers to, whether from the gospel, the apostle or the acts ... so that the reader of each precept, seeing the first or second number against it, can then pick up the scripture itself, search for the part of the text indicated by the numeral, and so find the passage from which the precept was given." Translation amended from Sr. M. Monica Wagner (tr.), "Saint Basil: Ascetical Works", *Fathers of the Church 9*, Catholic University of America, 1962, p.68. That one is confused by the Migne text, where the relevant portions of scripture have already been located and copied into the body of the text underneath each precept. Basil's words make clear that this is not how the work originally appeared.

⁶⁰ F. Winkelmann, *GCS* 7.1 (1975), xliv-xlix.

⁶¹ W. Wright, N. McLean, *The ecclesiastical history of Eusebius in Syriac* (Cambridge, 1898); e.g. xi, 3-4, 6.

⁶² M. Hyamson (ed.), (1913), 56.

⁶³ P.-H. Poirier, *Titres*, 343-4, 364, 378.

⁶⁴ Amphoux, 301-312, esp. 302, 309.

⁶⁵ Amphoux, 311.

⁶⁶ PG 31, col. 692 A, 4-15.

⁶⁷ J. Gribomont, 'Les Règles morales de S. Basile et le Nouveau Testament', *Studia Patristica* 2 (1954): 416-26.

⁶⁸ Amphoux. Note that the translator in *Fathers of the Church 9* was misled here by the layout of the Migne text.

An example of the opposite tendency is found in Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* has a numbered table of chapters for book 1 and marginal numerals in the body of the text, which the most recent editor considers original. But these items are progressively omitted in the later manuscripts.⁶⁹

The *Gesta collationis cum Donatistas* (411 AD) is a summary of the events at a meeting. The preface states that the author added a table of contents and numbered the sections of the text, so that readers can go straight to the relevant section (*numeris ducibus directa perveniat*). This implies numerals in the text also. He is aware that some will think this labour a waste of time, *abusi uideamur fortassis otio*, but only, he says, to those willing to read the whole work through.⁷⁰

British Library Add.12150 (411 AD, Syriac), written by a single scribe, contains Eusebius' *Theophania*, and discourses 1, 3, 4 and 14 of the ps.Clementine Recognitions. All are divided into chapters of unequal length; except discourses 3 and 14 which are undivided. Book 4 of the *Theophania* has red chapter headings from about half way through; book 5 has a few; no other item has any. There are no tables of contents. The differences between items may be explained most simply if the scribe copied each item from a roll, some from different sources. Most had chapters; two did not. Two had chapter headings; most did not.⁷¹

Jerome (d. 420 AD) states (Comm.in.Ezech.IV, praef.), *ut quasi titulis et indicibus, et, ut proprius loquar, argumentis ostenderem, quid libri singuli containerent*, that he can show with titles and indexes (i.e. 'argumenta') what individual books contain. He also comments (Comm.in.Isaiah.I, 1) on the commentaries of Apollinaris which are so brief that '...we think we are reading, not commentaries, but *indices capitulorum*', and advises (Ep.57.2) students to write brief summaries of chapters in the margin; a practice that may have produced many a medieval 'chapter heading'.

However, in the early 5th century serious literary works were still being written without either divisions or tables of contents. Neither of the two oldest manuscripts of Augustine (d. 430 AD), St Petersburg ms. Q.v.I.3 (before 426 AD, in the author's own scriptorium, containing four works), and Verona XXVIII (26) (s.V¹, North Africa, containing books 11-16 of *De civitate dei*) has any division into paragraphs or chapters, nor chapter headings. Neither has a table of contents, or even punctuation into sentences.⁷² Marrou has demonstrated that the medieval divisions are not authorial on internal grounds.⁷³ But at the same time Augustine sends a letter to Firmus, saying that he attaches a *breviculus* of *De civitate dei*, so that his correspondent may see the range of material included in the work.⁷⁴

Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 AD) tells us, at the end of the preface to his *Commentary on John* (ca. 420), that a list of topics is subjoined to the preface (ἡ δὲ ὑποτεταγμένη τῶν κεφαλαίων ὑποσημείωσις), to which he has added numbers (ἀριθμούς παρεπήξαμεν) in order that material may be readily found.

⁶⁹ M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique à la fin du IV^e siècle : Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome III*, Thesis (2009), 133.

⁷⁰ Petitmengin, 494-5, 504-5; *Sources Chrétiennes* 195, 416-9.

⁷¹ I examined the manuscript myself.

⁷² M. Gorman, *The manuscript traditions of the works of St Augustine* (Firenze, 2001) 316-9.

⁷³ H.-I. Marrou, 'La division en chapitres des livres de *La cité de Dieu*', *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck* (1951) 235-49.

⁷⁴ C. Lambot, 'Lettre inédit de S. Augustin relative au De Civitate Dei', *Revue Bénédictine* 51 (1939) : 109-21.

Comment [R14]: "Quicquid igitur laxius a partibus peroratum est, et quicquid interfatibus iudicantis utrobique signatum est, sedula breviatione succinxit, consequenter affigens etiam per ordinem, notas calculantibus familiares, ut inquireris intentio indicem secuta brevitatem, ad id quod deprehendere velit in paginis actionis, non absque commoditate compendii, numeris ducibus directa perveniat."
PL43:
http://www.augustinus.it/latino/gesta_collationis/index2.htm

Comment [R15]: "The subjoined subscription of the chapters (ἡ δὲ ὑποτεταγμένη τῶν κεφαλαίων ὑποσημείωσις), will show the subjects over which our discourse extends, to which we have also annexed numbers, that what is sought may be readily found by the readers." Pusey p.5.

ἡ δὲ ὑποτεταγμένη τῶν κεφαλαίων ὑποσημείωσις, τὰ ἐφ' οἷς ἡμῖν ἐκτέταται πῶς ὁ λόγος καταστήσει φανερά, οἷς καὶ ἀριθμούς παρεπήξαμεν, πρὸς τὸ καὶ λίαν ἐτοίμως ἀνευρίσκεσθαι τοῖς ἐντευρομένοις τὸ ζητούμενον.

English or original language? Probably best in original, put translation in comments for ease of review, and paraphrase/abbreviate it in text.

Palladius' (mid. 5th c.?) *De veterinaria medicina* (2.1), abbreviating Columella, includes the now familiar concept, *titulis designantibus*, a table of contents, so that material may be found easily, *facile*.⁷⁵

Comment [R16]: Latin text from Schroder.

A late 5th century set of notes on a legal lecture reveals references to legal texts by book, chapter and even the page number of what must have been, therefore, uniform copies.⁷⁶

Eugippus (511 AD) tells us (ep.ad.Paschasium 11) that he prefixed the *Vita* of St. Severinus with a table of contents (*praelatis capitulis*). He did the same (ep.ad.Proba) with his *Excerpta* from Augustine, to make it easier to find his *quaestiones* or *sententiae*, and Cassiodorus, who knew Eugippius personally, tells us that he divided the text in 338 chapters (*Inst.*1.23.1). Gorman has shown that Eugippius also composed the medieval chapter divisions and headings of Augustine's *De genesim ad litteram*. He argues that the chapter divisions are of unequal length, many begin in the middle of a sentence, one calls attention to a scripture passage, thereby disrupting Augustine's argument. The headings match the divisions, and are referenced in the *Excerpta*; but there is also a reference to process of compiling the *Excerpta*, then in progress, in the heading for book 7, chapter 11.⁷⁷

Comment [R17]: (Eugipp.Sev.epist.ad Pasch. 11) Indicia vero mirabilis vitae eius huic epistolae coniuncto praelatis capitulis commemoratorio recensita fient ut rogavi libri vestri magisterio clariora; (*The testimonies concerning his marvellous life accompany this letter, arranged as a memoir, with a table of chapters prefixed. Grant my request, and let them gain greater fame through your editorial care.* [link](#))

Priscian (5th-6th c. AD), *Institutiones grammaticae*, states (praef.): *Titulos etiam universi operis per singulos supposui libros quo facilius, quicquid ex his quaeratur, discretis possit locis inveniri*, followed by the tables of contents for all 18 books.⁷⁸

Proba: "... A singulis sane capitulis diversae res vel etiam quaestiones atque sententiae de quo opere vel libro sint indicatur ut, si quis ignorat, ubi eas plane possit invenire cognoscat..."

Likewise Cassiodorus (6th c. AD) makes references (*Inst.* 1.1.10, 1.5.7) to creating tables of contents at the start of books, to titles and to chapters. But more interesting is his statement (*Inst.* 1.1.10) that he divided up an existing free-standing list of subjects (*titulos*) for the whole bible, and placed the relevant section in the text at the start of each **book**. This may indicate the period at which tables of contents in pre-existing multi-book works were generally repositioned from the start of the work to the start of the book.

Comment [R18]: "10. To make the text of the Octateuch available to us in a summarized version, I thought that the chapter-headings taken from the entire sequence of readings should be set down at the beginning of each book, chapter-headings that had been written by our ancestors in the course of the text. The reader might thus be usefully guided and made profitably attentive, for he will easily find everything he is looking for, seeing it briefly marked out for him."

By the time of Leontius of Byzantium (early 6th c.), the first book of the heretic Apollinaris of Laodicea against Diodorus was already divided into numbered *kephalaia*. In the section-headings of *Adversus fraudes Apollinistarum*, Leontius refers to book 1, chapters 14, 27 and 61; book 2, chapters 22 and 36.⁷⁹

No work has been done on tables of contents in Syriac texts, to my knowledge, although some are certainly equipped with them, e.g. Thomas of Edessa, *De Epiphania* (6th c.)⁸⁰

We may draw a few conclusions from this collection of data about chapter divisions and related metatextual elements.

⁷⁵ Schröder, 145.

⁷⁶ A. Grafton, *The footnote* (1997), 30.

⁷⁷ Gorman, 44-60.

⁷⁸ Prisciani Grammatici Caesarensis: *Institutionum Grammaticarum* libri XVIII, ex recensione M. Hertzii (Lipsiae, 1855), 3.

⁷⁹ PG 86, 1965, 1968.

⁸⁰ The text is unpublished; private email from Grigory Kessel, who examined the St Petersburg Ms.

Firstly, we may note how certain genres appear in it, consistently: technical manuals, and compilations of extracts. We may also notice genres that do not appear: literature designed for oral delivery, such as orations, is nowhere to be found.⁸¹

The table of contents is sometimes authorial. From the time of Pliny the Elder, we have a steady stream of technical manuals and compendia which have a table of contents drawn up by the author, always at the end of the preface. Several state that the table of contents is provided to make access to sections of the text easier. It is not yet clear at what point this feature is adopted by historical texts, but Eusebius is using it before 325 AD, and its use becomes general as the codex replaces the roll. By the time of Cassiodorus, existing lists of topics are being retrofitted to the beginnings of texts that lack such elements.

Chapter divisions were in general use by 411 in at least some kinds of literature. Numbered chapters do not appear; legal titles however show that the concept did exist.

Ancient texts attracted headings in the body of the text, for sub-literary texts, starting in the 2nd century BC. However even by 411 they were a rarity as chapter headings in literary texts.

Comment [R19]: Schröder p.153.: "Es ist wichtig zu wissen, wie antike Leser einen Text 'benutzen' sollten und wie Spätere aufgrund anderer Ansprüche in die Organisationsform eingegriffen haben."

⁸¹ Schröder p.153.

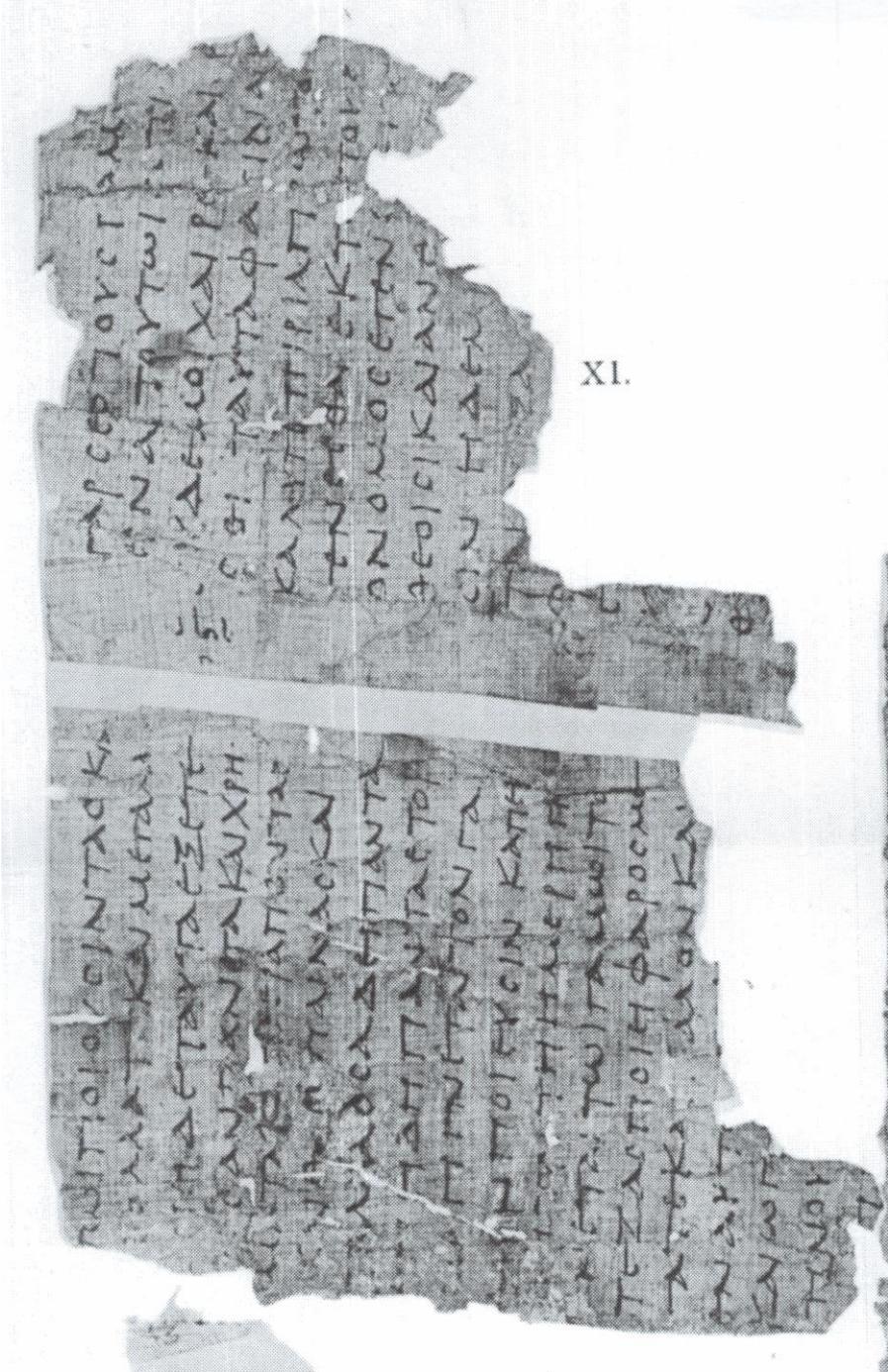


Fig. 2 - Bodl. Ms. Gr. class. f. 48 (P)

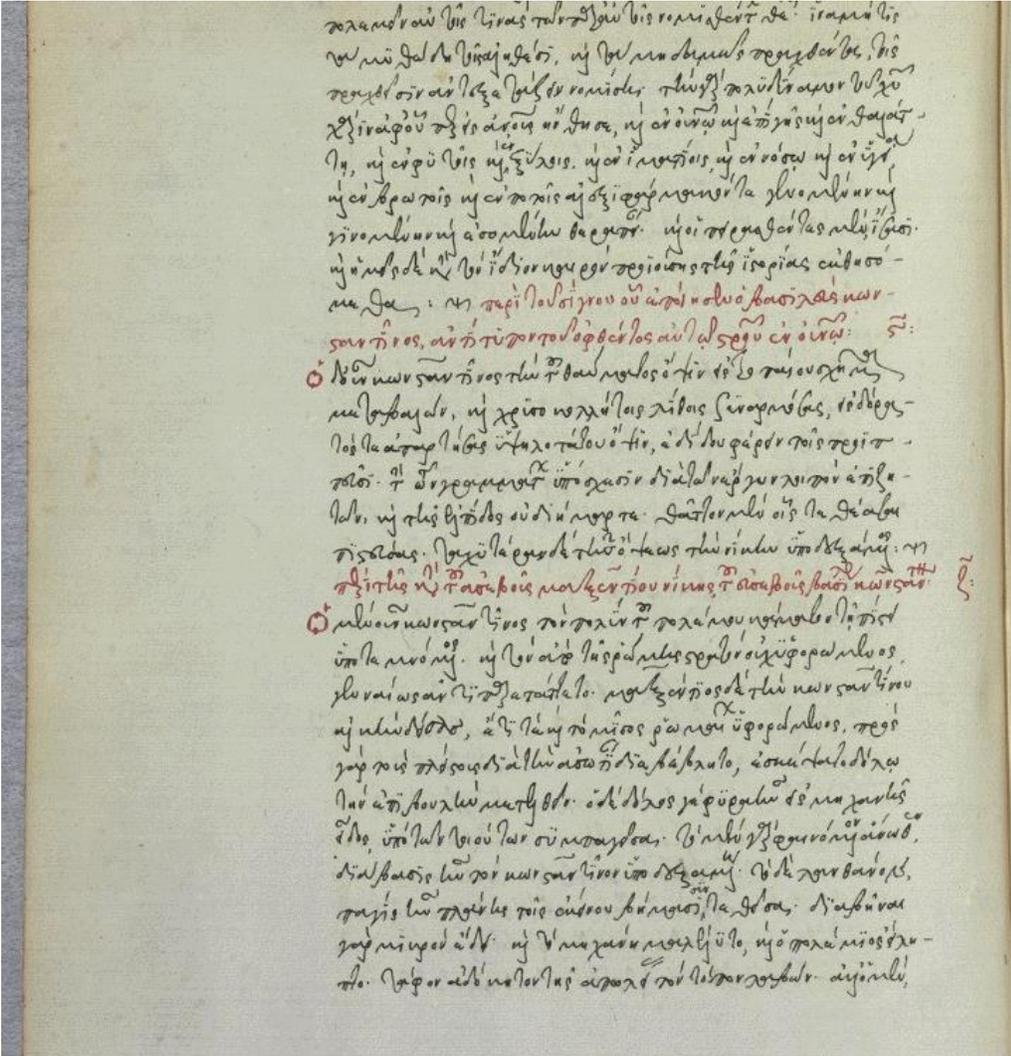


Fig. 4 – Gelasius of Cyzicus. BNF gr.414, f. 1v (16th c.). Western-style chapter divisions and numbers.

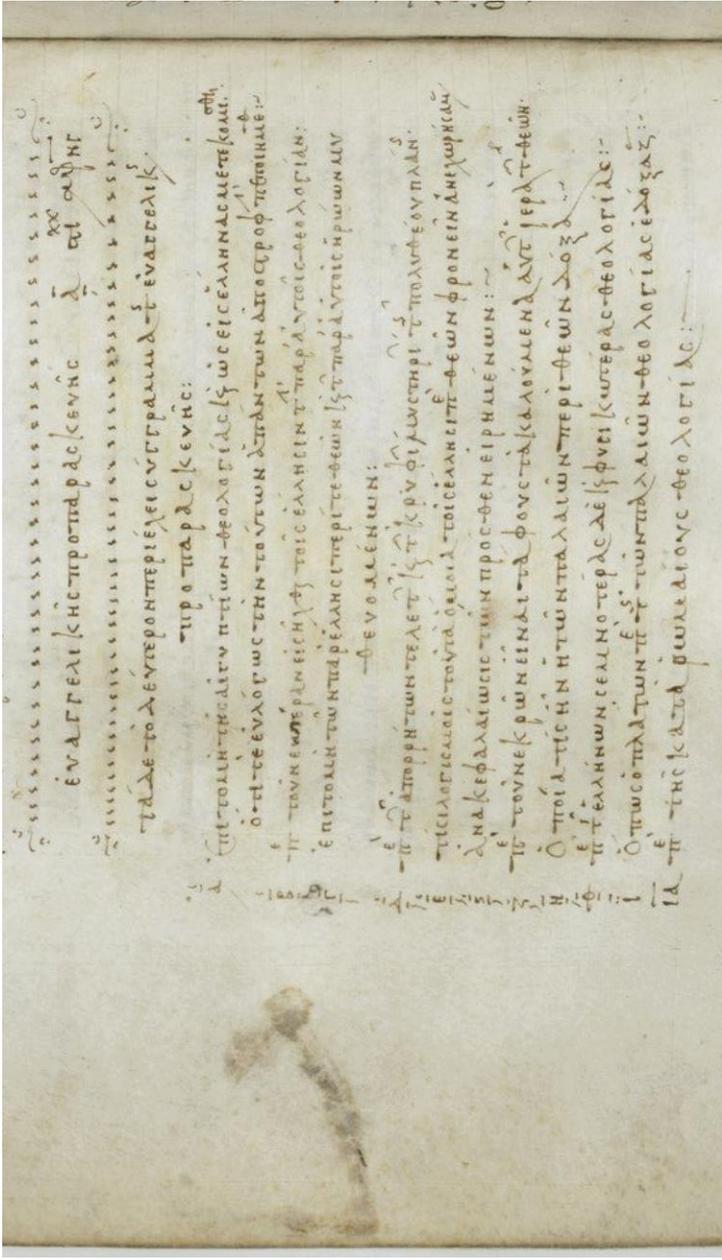


Fig. 5 – Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica II. BNF gr. 451, f.213v (914 AD). Numbered table of contents

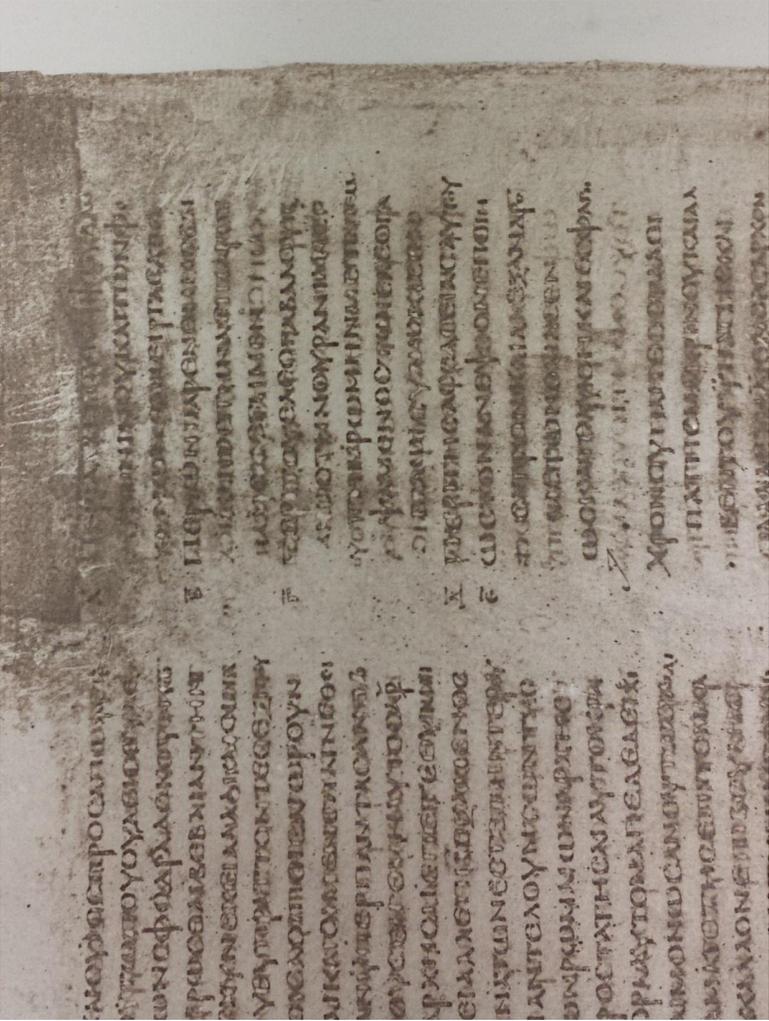


Fig. 6 - Cassius Dio, book 79, Vat. gr. 1288 (5th c.) Numbered table of contents. From 1908 facsimile, sharpened.