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Tracing the Scribal Tradition with Diplomatic Editions of Manu
scripts of Jerome’s *Chronicle*¹

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The *Chronicle* of St. Jerome is a universal history of the world from the time of Abraham up to the death of the Emperor Valens in A.D. 378. Jerome used Eusebius’s work of the same name as his major source, but modified and continued it to produce an original work. Adhering to this editorial precedent, a number of scribes copying the work recorded historical events beyond the original scope of Jerome’s work. Created by one individual but shaped and molded by successive generations, the *Chronicle* has been a living document from its beginning. Efforts to excise parts of the text not composed by Jerome ignore the nature of both the work and its genre as a whole. Our research has convinced us that the scribes did not merely transmit the *Chronicle* throughout the centuries; they helped create it. By working to create digital, diplomatic editions of three manuscripts of the text, we have sought to preserve the *Chronicle* as successive scribes conceived it. Thus far in our research, this approach has brought to light significant variations between texts. Among¹

¹ We would like to thank Professors Neel Smith and Mary Ebbott, Department of Classics, College of the Holy Cross; Nicholas Jalbert, Charlie Schufreider, and all the members of the Jerome Project, past and present; the Holy Cross Summer Research Program in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Fine Arts; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; and donations from Timothy W. and Deborah Coleman Diggins to the Alumni/Parent Summer Research Scholarship Fund for their contributions to our research thus far.
these variations, too clearly intentional to be errors, there are many instances which
demonstrate that medieval scholars worked from multiple sources, sought to present
information in different ways, and reckoned with the problems of chronology.

We have carried out our research as members of the Holy Cross Manuscripts,
Inscriptions, and Documents Club. This club provides a way for students from dif-
ferent disciplines, though predominantly Classics majors, to conduct research on
primary sources. Every Friday afternoon during the school year, students voluntarily
meet up to work on their respective projects, and several students have obtained
grants to conduct in-depth research on their projects from the Holy Cross Summer
Research Program. Much of our current work is based on the precedent set by the
editors of the Homer Multitext project, which includes both professors and under-
graduates, who similarly edit manuscripts of the Iliad. It is only through cooperation
with the students in the Manuscripts Club and our faculty advisors that we have
been able to reach our present degree of progress.

A diplomatic edition presents the text of a manuscript as it appears on each
page. When making a diplomatic edition, we record every piece of text on each folio
of the manuscript. This method allows users of our editions to study everything the
manuscript contains and so to draw their own conclusions. The editorial process has
also allowed us to examine closely the Chronicle’s scribal tradition. In our opinion, the
entire tradition of scribal contribution deserves to be studied and preserved as it is.
Indeed, the textual differences between the manuscripts show that the scribes were
more than simple copyists. They were chroniclers in their own right who practiced
their craft in these compositions. A conventional critical edition of the text, which
aims to omit anything not originally written by St. Jerome, cannot accurately rep-
resent this scribal tradition. Rather, the variations unique to each scribe are better
captured in diplomatic editions that reflect the malleable genre of the chronicle as
evidenced by Jerome’s own expansion of Eusebius and to which Jerome acknowled-
ges in his preface to the work.

The two manuscripts of the Chronicle which we have edited extend the history
of the copies of the text from which they were working in order to continue the
history of the world as time progressed. For example, the Geneva 49 includes an
extension of Jerome by Prosperus, an earlier scribe, labelled “PROSPERI. ADDI-
TIO[.]”2 This notation echoes the phrase “HIERONYMI. ADDITIO” which identi-
fies Jerome’s own additions in Eusebius’s work.3 The additions of Prosperus cover a

2 Geneva Library, Ms. lat. 49, 122v.
3 Geneva Library, Ms. lat. 49, 122v.
period of sixty-six years.

The Chronicle is written in a tabular format. Most commonly in our manuscripts, for the earlier years of history, tables representing the progression of history take up an entire two-page spread. A list of major kingdoms runs across the top row of the table and the reigns of different kings are recorded in each corresponding kingdom’s column. Historical events are listed beside the year of the reign of the king in whose kingdom they occurred. Most events, however, are listed in historical columns. The authors of the Chronicle condensed the events of their universal history into one or two columns, as opposed to scattering them through all the columns. For instance, during the ninety-fifth Olympiad, both the Geneva 49 and St. Gallen manuscripts record, “Socrates venenu(m) bibit.” The scribes list the death of the Greek philosopher, in the Greek city of Athens, under the column of the Roman Consuls (the only column with any historical events listed within it on the folio). The purpose of this placement was likely to assist with the organization of the text and to account for the absence of the Athenian column at this point in the record. Gradually, as the different kingdoms fall, their columns are eliminated from the manuscript until only the Romans remain.

We are currently studying three manuscripts of the Chronicle. The images of these manuscripts are all available under a creative commons license through the e-codices project. The first is the Geneva Library, Ms. lat. 49 (hereafter Geneva 49), which was written in the late fifteenth century. While all the manuscripts with which we are working cover a similar duration of time, the scribe’s illustrations, use of various colors, and ornamentation make the Geneva 49 the longest of the three by number of folios. It has approximately ninety folios more than each of the other two. These ornamentations consist of emphatic decorations and internal commentaries that highlight certain events, like a note about the fall of some of the major kingdoms (discussed below). The second manuscript is the St. Gallen 298 Kantonsbibliothek, Vadianische Sammlung, Ms. 298 (St. Gallen 298), from the early fifteenth century. The St. Gallen 298 manuscript is decorated much less than Geneva 49, lacking both illustrations and any color other than red, blue, or black. The manuscript with which we have most recently begun working is the Bern, Burger-
bibliothek, Cod. 219 (Bern 219). Composed during the seventh century, this version of the Chronicle is one of the oldest extant versions of the work. This manuscript is the least decorated of the three, and the text is written only in red and black ink. The columns are also less carefully structured. The text within the columns sometimes does not fit in the space under the corresponding kingdom, which then disrupts the structure of the adjacent columns. During the fifteenth Olympiad, for example, the text announcing the Lydian ruler Candaules runs into the neighboring Egyptian column. Consequently, the number denoting the sixth year of the Egyptian ruler is written below the extraneous text in this column.

We are currently editing each manuscript’s text, beginning from the first Olympiad. The first Olympiad is an excellent starting point from a chronological standpoint, for in each manuscript the scribes attempt to synchronize the regnal years with the first Olympiad. Even a cursory glance at each manuscript’s record of the first Olympiad reveals increased attention to detail as well as various attempts to make the dates match, indicating its importance as a locus for organizing the Chronicle’s record (one example of this tendency, in the St. Gallen 298, will be discussed in detail below). In addition, this point in all of our manuscripts begins the standardized, Olympiad-based dating system. The manuscripts of Jerome’s work largely follow this example, although they stop dating by Olympiads toward the end of the text. So far, we have stopped editing once we reach A.D. 378, since the text following this year was not included by Jerome, and thus does not stem from a common source.

Before we even began editing, however, we needed to create bifolio images from which we could work. Because bound manuscripts are photographed one page at a time, each image of the manuscript consists of a single folio, either the verso or recto side of the page. As part of the design of the Chronicle, the earlier portion of the manuscript spans across both pages when there are multiple extant kingdoms. In order to better understand the original document, we digitally edited the images to place the facing verso and recto pages side by side. The resulting image was like that of an open book, with both pages clearly visible. These bifolios have allowed us to view the manuscript as the scribe intended when he was writing it.

From there we have begun editing the text within the manuscripts. We transcribe the text exactly as it appears in each page of the manuscripts into an XML

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8 Jerome (2005).
9 Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 219, 40r.
10 For a good introduction to how Jerome worked with linchpin moments, see Burgess (2002, pp. 22-23).
The organization of our text follows the manuscripts’ tabular layout of the regnal columns, with the appropriate text placed under the corresponding heading. As we transcribe, we add semantic markup such as expansions of abbreviations and identification of portions of the text that are faded, areas where the scribe has corrected himself, and areas where there are corrections within the manuscript. We also tag the names of important historical figures, numbers, place names, ethnic groups, and the titles of literary works.

In addition to editing the main text of the manuscripts, we record any secondary text that the scribe wrote on the page (such as marginal notes). These notes are especially helpful because they give us a clearer idea of the scribe’s process in creating his edition of the Chronicle. We cite the visual evidence from the photograph of the manuscript as well. For each section of the manuscript that we transcribe, we attach a Uniform Resource Name (URN) that links it to an area of the image we used when editing the text. This link allows anyone looking at the XML edition to check swiftly and directly the transcribed text against the photograph of the original.

Since the start of this project less than three years ago, we have made substantial progress in creating our diplomatic editions. We have created bifolio spreads for the entirety of the Geneva 49 manuscript and have edited approximately one thousand years of history, from the first Olympiad through the end of Jerome’s record. In addition, we have edited the portion of the preface which was written by Jerome. We have created images for a majority of the bifolios of the St. Gallen 298 manuscript, including all of the spreads from the time of the first Olympiad through the end of Jerome’s history. To date, we have edited about six hundred years of history in the St. Gallen 298. We have not yet begun editing the Bern manuscript, but we have created bifolio images for much of the text.

There are many indications of conscious editorial choices made by the scribes throughout the manuscripts we are studying. At the top of each page of the manuscript, for example, the scribes list the extant civilizations and assign each a column which they will use to illustrate that people’s history. Copying the names of civilizations in a systematic order is a simple enough task, but we found that in some places the scribes of the Geneva 49 and St. Gallen 298 manuscripts organized their columns in entirely different orders. This structural difference cannot be explained as an error the scribe made while attempting to duplicate the formatting of the columns, especially since these conflicting orderings remain consistent throughout portions of

11 See www.tei-c.org/Guidelines.
the manuscripts. These varied arrangements show that the scribes, whether it be the scribes of these manuscripts or the scribes from whose prior manuscripts they were working, decided to organize their histories in their own way.

In creating diplomatic editions we honor the choices in presentation elected by the scribes. The St. Gallen 298 manuscript indicates that Romulus ruled for thirty-eight years before his death (Figure 1), whereas the Geneva 49 lists him as having ruled for thirty-seven years (Figure 2). While the St. Gallen 298 (Figure 3) and the Geneva 49 indicate that he died five days before the end of his thirty-eighth full year in power, the Geneva 49 identifies one year immediately after his death as a year without a ruler because Romulus failed to live out that last year (Figure 4). Again, these cannot be explained as scribal errors. These different methods of dating Romulus’s reign reflect conscious choices in the representation of the event. In our diplomatic editions, we do not have to choose between them, but present both options in the manuscripts to our audience.

The scribes also differ in their choices about visual design, the elements of which we try to capture in our diplomatic editions. Our efforts to record these visual elements would be absent in a traditional edition, which focuses solely on textual variations. In the Geneva 49 manuscript, for instance, the scribe emphasizes major events in history, such as the birth of Christ. He uses capital letters and includes an elaborate, colorful painting (Figure 5). This representation contrasts sharply with the simple announcement in the St. Gallen 298 in which this event is listed in the same manner and written in the same hand as every other event we have edited thus far (Figure 6). Although the text for this event is written in red ink, as opposed to the more common black, many other events in St. Gallen 298 are written in red as well. As such, the red ink used to record the birth of Christ is not atypical and certainly does not call attention to the event in the same way as the Geneva 49 manuscript. Similarly, when a major kingdom, such as that of the Lydians, falls, the Geneva 49 highlights its fall with the phrase “LYDORUM. REGNUM. DEFECIT.” The scribe records this event in a bolder hand and circles it for emphasis (Figure 7). The St. Gallen 298, by contrast, records the event but does not draw attention to it like the Geneva 49 does. The column then ends without any further annotation or ornament.

12 St. Gallen 298, 45r; Bern 219, 39r; Geneva 49, 71r.
13 Geneva 49, 74r; St. Gallen 298, 47r.
14 Geneva 49, 105v; St. Gallen 298, 65r.
15 Geneva 49, 83v.
The corresponding header simply disappears on the subsequent page (Figure 8). In a purely textual edition we would not be able to fully see the different treatment of particular events. Our digital edition allows us to contrast one scribe’s more elaborate storytelling to another’s simple listing of historical events.

When we compared the manuscripts for our diplomatic editions, we saw the importance of the first Olympiad as a reference point for chronological synchronization, as mentioned above. In both the Geneva 49 and the St. Gallen 298, all regnal years for each civilization at this point begin with the same year, with the exception of the Egyptian column. In the St. Gallen 298, in the year immediately prior to the first Olympiad, the Egyptian ruler Bocchoris is listed as holding power for his fourth year. Yet, after the first Olympiad, he is once again listed as being in the fourth year of his kingship (Figure 9). In the Geneva 49, the column begins with the sixth year of the reign of Bocchoris at this time instead of the fourth year. While we are not certain of the cause of this discrepancy, we believe that the example of the repetition of the fourth year of his reign in the St. Gallen 298 demonstrates that the scribe is actively attempting to reconcile his difference in the dates for this ruler with another potential source.

Marginal notes clarify certain aspects of the scribal process. For instance, both the Geneva 49 and the St. Gallen 298 manuscripts use the word *aliter* (“otherwise”) to denote variations in the scribes’ sources (such as alternate spellings or dates). At the beginning of the first Olympiad, the Bern 219 simply states that 406 years have passed since the fall of Troy (Figure 10). Yet earlier in the manuscript, immediately following the fall of Troy, the text states that 405 years fall between this event and the first Olympiad (Figure 11). The scribe does not provide an alternate date in either instance. The Geneva 49 also uses the notation *aliter* to represent this problem of chronology. The manuscript states at the first Olympiad that 405 years have passed since the fall of Troy and uses the word *aliter* to show that other sources have indicated 406 years have passed (Figure 12). When looking back to the fall of Troy, the

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16 St. Gallen 298, 53r.
18 St. Gallen 298, 44r.
19 Geneva 49, 70r.
20 Bern 219, 38r.
21 Bern 219, 26v.
22 Geneva 49, 68v.
text conversely demonstrates that 406 years pass between the events and includes an *aliter* script to indicate 405 years as an alternate duration (Figure 13). In contrast, at the first Olympiad, the St. Gallen 298 states that 406 years have elapsed since Troy’s fall but uses *aliter* to show that a duration of 405 years is given elsewhere (Figure 14). At the fall of Troy, the text maintains this same notation that 406 years will pass before the first Olympiad, with the notation *aliter* for 405 years (Figure 15).

These dates and variations seem inconclusive at first. Since the alternate duration in one part of the Geneva corresponds with the primary date in another part of the same manuscript (and vice-versa), it might seem like the *aliter* merely references a variant elsewhere in the document. In the St. Gallen 298, however, the main text in both places lists 406 years as the duration between the fall of Troy and the first Olympiad. Logically, *aliter* cannot reference another portion of the main text in the St. Gallen, because the main text gives the same durations. A variation is only introduced by marginal notes. We therefore conclude that *aliter* must refer to a source external to the St. Gallen 298 manuscript. *Aliter* is a critical term with a standard meaning; it is used throughout both the Geneva and St. Gallen texts to note alternate spellings, dates, et cetera. Therefore, the scribes almost certainly use *aliter* in the same way in both the Geneva 49 and the St. Gallen 298. Citations of external material indicate that the scribes worked with their sources to address problems of chronology. They made their own decisions about dating the fall of Troy and the first Olympiad, while also listing the alternative which they did not include as part of the main line text. In relegating one variant to the fifteenth-century equivalent of a footnote, the scribe made a quintessentially editorial, historiographical decision—a decision that a copyist would not, and perhaps could not, have made.

We have found one instance in which the scribe directly refers to the source from which he was working. On the folio in which the scribe of the Geneva 49 announces the reign of Alexander the Great, there is a (very unusual) shift in the location of the column representing the Macedonian kingdom in the middle of the page. The scribe draws attention to this irregularity by writing: *superfluum*. *si ita erat i(n) exe(m)plari*, or, “superfluous, if it is so in my copy” (Figure 16). This note indicates that the scribe did in fact have a manuscript directly in front of him upon which he based his edition. It also suggests that he sought to remain true to this same formatting in his copy, at least in this example, even in an area where the

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23 St. Gallen 298, 43v.
24 St. Gallen 298, 30v.
25 Geneva 49, 92v.
formatting was not integrated fluidly into his own version. We are still unaware, however, of his reasoning for not reformatting his own copy in this part of the text.

Throughout the Geneva 49, St. Gallen 298, and Bern 219 editions of the *Chronicle*, we can identify sections of the manuscripts in which the scribes had access to different sources from one another. There are parts where the information is identical, as well as areas which represent the information differently or even offer variations to the facts. Such evidence confirms the need for us to continue to develop our diplomatic editions of these manuscripts. Diplomatic editions of our manuscripts have assisted us in piecing together the work so as not to privilege a single perspective or to provide only one scribe’s interpretation, but to relate different manners of expression. Not only do our editions help us see a more comprehensive view of the history of the world, but they provide us with a more comprehensive view of the history of the preservation of the work. Our progress thus far in creating these digital editions has already assisted us in tracing the scribal tradition of these texts and offers many more opportunities for us to create a resource for other scholars that will preserve the manuscripts for years to come.
Figure 7
Cresus acyro captus e civitate Trojan.

dox regni destru-1.

etiam quod situr. in

annis sexxx. =tt

Theonius poeta claus
rus habetur.

Crisistratus statuice in

athenis regnat. vi.

Heracleides hystori-vu

cus clarus habetur.
Primam olympiadem aethiopam, quocì supputato hunc tempora ad hunc modum: Et patum annis xxii. qua est
Porro et nos in primam olympiam Egyprac
Columpias. Prima.
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http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_chronicle_oo_eintro.htm

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