The Hexaemeron in Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*

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ABSTRACT
As a part of the larger Historia Scholastica Project, we are transcribing and translating text from the “Genesis” chapter of the Historia Scholastica found in the Albertsons Library. Our work began in fall of 2018. Our goal is to locate source material that informed Comestor’s understanding of the content of “Genesis” to better understand and thereby improve upon the text. Our secondary objective is to make the Historia Scholastica available to more researchers in other portions of the HSP. Our goal is to produce 100 lines of quality Latin by the end of the semester; to date we have completed approximately 40%. This project will provide groundwork for future researchers in other portions of the Historia Scholastica.

INTRODUCTION
As a part of the Historia Scholastica Project (HSP), we are transcribing, translating, and researching the “Genesis” chapter of Peter Comestor’s Historia Scholastica. Our goal is to produce an annotated, contextually informed translation of Boise State’s incunabulum copy of the Historia Scholastica. Due to the textural differences between the Boise State copy and other catalogues around the world, we think this is a vital task for identifying the deviances between the schools of thought in the Middle Ages concerning the Historia, and for determining which traditions informed the Boise State copy, as well as whether some of these major influencing texts are more or less apparent in the Boise State copy. The Boise State copy is one of five extant printed editions of Comestor’s Historia. This copy has not been translated outside of this research project, although the book of Genesis has been translated into multiple languages from other source copies.

We are focused on the biblical creation account at the beginning of Comestor’s “Genesis” and especially on Comestor’s account of the Hexameron. “Hexameron” is a Greek word referring to the six days of creation in Jewish and Christian tradition. This sequence of time, the six days, were considered highly important in Medieval cosmology because it laid the foundations of the scientific worldview of Comestor’s 12th century world. As Comestor’s text was one of three univarsity texts, and therefore influenced intellectual thought for some centuries after its writing, understanding the interpretative relationship between extant copies will allow students of history, philosophy, and science today insight into how Medieval thinkers perceived spiritual and physical reality.

In order to meet our goal of creating a translation informed by the text’s historical context, our approach to research has been twofold: first, we have employed textual criticism to compare the Boise State copy to the Patrologia Latniae 198, the Lugudensis 1543 copy on Wikimedia, and the online Internet Archive of the Historia Scholastica located in Strasbourg, France. This process allows us to create a comparative transcription of the text and note where our copy differs from other copies. Second, we have begun a survey and synthesis of academic literature that discusses Comestor’s “Genesis” in order to locate source material that may have influenced Comestor’s work. This survey work lays the groundwork for future participants in the HSP to create an informed translation of a portion of Boise State’s Historia Scholastica.

METHODOLGY

STEP ONE: Prepare individual transcriptions and translations from photos of Boise State Copy of Historia.

Note the damage to this section – the page is torn and has a repair. It is clear the repair has compromised readability.

DRAFT

Here you can see, magnified, the faint outline of a -t- to possibly contributed to Comestor’s understanding of the copy in the Albertsons Library Special Collections.

STEP TWO: Discussion of potential transcription and grammatical structure led to an in-depth examination of the copy in the Albertsons Library Special Collections.

Here you can see, magnified, the faint outline of a -t- to possibly contributed to Comestor’s understanding of the copy in the Albertsons Library Special Collections.

DRAFT

In this step, participants compare the Boise State Copy to the Patrologia Latniae 198 and Lugudensis 1543 copies.

Observe the contradictions existing between the draft transcriptions. This particular section had damage to one transcription and two possible interpretations: 1 currant metent; 2 continentem.

GROUP TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION

Transcription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fecit ergo ea deus fermanentum in medio aquarum et al quod exest super ipsum sunt firmamentum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP THREE: Completion of collaborative transcription and translation, with addition of footnotes indicating deviation from PL198 context.

Comparative process begins again with next section.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Kim Galey, Jasper Varley, Matthew Hindman, Tonya Leavell, Abby Neidholdt, and Joe Greenlee for their various contributions to earlier sections of HSP: Genesis.

REFERENCES

At the time of this presentation, we have doubled our completed work, from forty lines to eighty. We are on schedule to complete the final twenty by the end of April. These one hundred lines will serve as groundwork for future participants in the Historia Scholastica Project.

Currently, our academic investigations of secondary sources relevant to “Genesis” identified the following possible sources that influenced Comestor: Peter Lombard’s Sentences, Augustine’s De Genesi ad Litteram, Bede’s Hexameron and commentary on the Pentateuch, Josephus’ Antiquities of the Jews, Andrew of St. Victor’s commentary on the Octateuch, and Comestor’s firsthand discussions with medieval Jews. We will continue to research the secondary sources relevant to “Genesis” to better understand the understand the interesting contentions of the age. One area which appears to future research was the understanding of the Hexameron. We would like to continue to search for digitized versions of Comestor’s possible sources in order to better understand the context of the Historia Scholastica’s account of creation. We will continue to translate, annotate our translation, and use the research we have performed this semester as background knowledge.

CITATIONS
4. De Genesi ad Litteram, Bede’s Hexameron and commentary on the Pentateuch. Josephus’ Antiquities of the Jews, Andrew of St. Victor’s commentary on the Octateuch, and Comestor’s firsthand discussions with medieval Jews. We will continue to research the secondary sources relevant to “Genesis” to better understand the interesting contentions of the age. One area which appears to future research was the understanding of the Hexameron.

CONCLUSION

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Translating the Historia Scholastica; Historia Scholastica: Ruth Librarian’s Perspective.” Boise State University, Albertsons Library Special Collections. 2017.