# Manuscript genetics and Perl 

or, How I made sense of IOIOII manuscripts

Tara LAndrews<br>Departmental Lecturer<br>Faculty of History, University of Oxford tla@mit.edu



- How do we reconstruct the past?
- How do we reconstruct the past?
- Reading what they wrote is a good start.
- How do we reconstruct the past?
- Reading what they wrote is a good start.
- But their originals don't tend to survive.
- How do we reconstruct the past?
- Reading what they wrote is a good start.
- But their originals don't tend to survive.
- So we have to read what someone else read of what someone else read of what someone else read of what they wrote.
- How do we reconstruct the past?
- Reading what they wrote is a good start.
- But their originals don't tend to survive.
- So we have to read what someone else read of what someone else read of what someone else read of what they wrote.
- So we have to compare the versions.



## Thursday 20 March 14



SCRIPTORIUM MONK AT WORK. (From Lacroix.)


## This is not a talk about Perl.

## This is about a cool use of Perl.

## Collation

"The collation of manuscripts requires the infuriating accuracy of a pedant and the obsessive stamina of an idiot. It is therefore an ideal task for a computer."
—Peter Robinson,"Collation and Textual Criticism", LLC vol. 4 no. 2, I989

## Looking at app App452

 Following context：


Available readings：
1 ：qたヶたヶfis（\＃Jer \＃K \＃B \＃I \＃A \＃D \＃J \＃0 \＃V \＃Y \＃Z ）




## Manuscript details：



－－＞h
Available commands：
accept（\＃）
accept detail（\＃）
subst detail（\＃）（value）
spelling（\＃alternate）（\＃canonical）
orth（\＃alternate）（\＃canonical）
emend（comment text）
note（note text）
next
help
save
quit

## Manuscript genetics

- Not invented here
- But pretty cool anyway
- A way to reconstruct the past, a guide to good editing decisions


## A helpful stemma



## A helpful stemma



## How to make a stemma

## How to make a stemma

- Know the answer in advance


## How to make a stemma

- Know the answer in advance
- Assume a 'right' text that you can compare the existing 'wrong' texts to


## How to make a stemma

- Know the answer in advance
- Assume a 'right' text that you can compare the existing 'wrong' texts to
- Assume that the wrong is the child of the right


## How to make a stemma

- Know the answer in advance
- Assume a 'right' text that you can compare the existing 'wrong' texts to
- Assume that the wrong is the child of the right
- Doesn't really work for texts like mine.


# To get the answer, I have to have the answer. 

# Wasn't this supposed to be labor-saving? 

## How to make a stemma?

- I have way too many manuscripts to go through them by hand
- I don't know in advance what the 'right' text is
- So I can't say what is 'wrong'
- And I don't believe that all change is error


## Pretend the manuscripts are organisms.

| ృயృนน์ <br>  | யృ <br> แน | ןயృนर्น ш 내 | யృ ш程 | யృ <br>  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 比能吅 |  |  |  |
|  q山加に |  q山加に | 」山机に |  |  <br>  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| $f$ |  |  |  |  |
| すuıplıip |  |  | ｜futplitip |  |
| 4 |  | 4 | 4 |  |
|  |  | ¢ |  |  |
| шโ\％ |  | แโ\％ | แโ\％ |  |
| ¢น⿺𠃊น์น |  | qயน์น | qயน์น |  |
| 4 |  | 4， | 4 |  |
| 4 |  | 4 | 4 |  |
| ¢ $4 \%$ |  | ［Lı7 | ¢Lı7 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| प |  | प | 4ty |  |
| แน์ |  | แน์， | шर्L |  |
|  |  | ¢씬․․ |  |  |
|  |  | q山｜大пп |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| un5 | $\sim 451$ | uヶ¢ | LT5\％ | qur $\square_{1}$ |
| ｜иu®保： | fumefip： |  | fumefil： | fumefil： |


|  |
| :---: |
|  |
| $\triangleright \ggg>\infty \ggg \ggg \ggg \gg \infty \ggg \infty>\infty$ |
| - |
| $\bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc$ |

## Choosing your data

## Choosing your data

- Not all variations are equal
- Some variations don't come from copying
- Some variations will get 'corrected by a later scribe
- Some variations are singularities, so not very useful for judging relationships


## Choosing your data

- Not all variations are equal
- Some variations don't come from copying
- Some variations will get 'corrected by a later scribe
- Some variations are singularities, so not very useful for judging relationships
- But how choosy do you need to be?

A little experiment

## A little experiment

- Use all the data, corrected for spelling variation.


## A little experiment

- Use all the data, corrected for spelling variation.
- Get rid of a common scribal variation (- -1 at the end of a word.


## A little experiment

- Use all the data, corrected for spelling variation.
- Get rid of a common scribal variation (- - at the end of a word.
- Only use data where there are at least two witnesses for each variant.


## A little experiment

- Use all the data, corrected for spelling variation.
- Get rid of a common scribal variation (- - at the end of a word.
- Only use data where there are at least two witnesses for each variant.
- See if there is any difference.



## 2. All readings, strict pairs only


3. Selected readings

4. Selected readings, strict pairs only


## Sampling techniques

## Sampling techniques

- Three samples, one from each book of the Chronicle


## Sampling techniques

- Three samples, one from each book of the Chronicle
- 5,000 words in total for an 80,000-word text


## Sampling techniques

- Three samples, one from each book of the Chronicle
- 5,000 words in total for an 80,000-word text
- Needed to give a single answer


## Sampling techniques

- Three samples, one from each book of the Chronicle
- 5,000 words in total for an 80,000-word text
- Needed to give a single answer
- Needed to give consistent answers across samples


Possible trees from the text of Book 2


Possible trees from the text of the prophecy


Possible trees from the text of Book 2


Possible trees from the text of the prophecy


Possible trees from the text of Book 2


Possible trees from the text of the prophecy





$\int^{5} 40$ fun incubitor mununth qun anome Juph Snoun - 4yin fro






"In this year there appeared a hairy star [ie. comet] moving toward the west in the month of Ares and its tail gave off a little of its light; and it was there for 15 days and then
became invisible to viewers. O kind and friendly brothers, pardon the lack of words, because the exemplar ended here because the text was not finished. Remember to Jesus

Christ the sinful and foolish scribe Khachik, and my parents, and you shall also be remembered by the same Lord.


*Based on Jerusalem mss. 1051, 1107

## How academics see their jobs



## How academics see their jobs


*warning: gross oversimplification and/or wishful thinking

## How academics see

## computers in their jobs



Irrelevance and penury

## How academics should

## see computers






 $t^{\text {homen }} t^{\text {minnmin: }}$

## $\because$-yw

 Imy worewy of 4unptrix m n- ह- kitwore quonen wayw











## Thank you Obrigada


[shnorhakalutiun]

