

### Fieldwork 3

Historic Question: How can historians access rare books from ancient periods?

Ways to determine where to find resources: The Georgetown University Archive was the most applicable archive given its proximity and making their resources available to university students.

Visit Plan: When you can visit? Who you will call/email if you have questions? What materials you would like to look at (identify one item/box/etc to have pulled)?

Creating a visit plan was by far the most difficult part of this fieldwork. I had always heard how difficult it is for historians to access archives and that there is special permissions and processes for making an archival visit; yet, I did not really comprehend it until I tried to visit the archives myself.

The GU library was very helpful in putting me in touch with the Georgetown University Archivist whom I reached out to for the visit plan. At first, she clarified that only two students can enter the archival reading room due to covid and there was a vacancy the next day that she offered to me. I needed to find an item from either the rare book collections, manuscript collections, the Georgetown University Archives or the University Art Collection. As an alternative to the archives, she suggested I visit the exhibition that the library put on display from archival material. The exhibition was put up exactly on the same day as I went and a talk will be held to complement the exhibition topic of Women's Rights are Human Rights: The United States and the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women.<sup>1</sup>

#### Reflection

The librarian gave me a thorough overview of how the archives at Georgetown are organized and patiently answered all my questions. I learned that the archives store three types of material: rare books, art, objects. He then created a special account for me that would allow me to request archival material.

For some time now, I have been wanting to read Xenophone's Cyropedia and the librarian helped me locate that in the new archive account that I had set up. I was asked to place all my items (except for electronics) into a locker. Then, I entered a reading room where a glass case was set up. Inside of it, was a foam box and the book that I asked for. They even brought special led-bookmarks to keep between pages of the book that I wanted to return to. A sign reminded me that I am under camera surveillance, but the seven cameras in one room were not something I could overlook.

The experience of witnessing such a historic book was fascinating and one of the most memorable experiences I have had. I had never seen a book that was this ancient with the cover completely faded and even tangible ink. The text was in Latin and having studied Latin for many years, helped in comprehending the text. I spent about an hour exploring the book

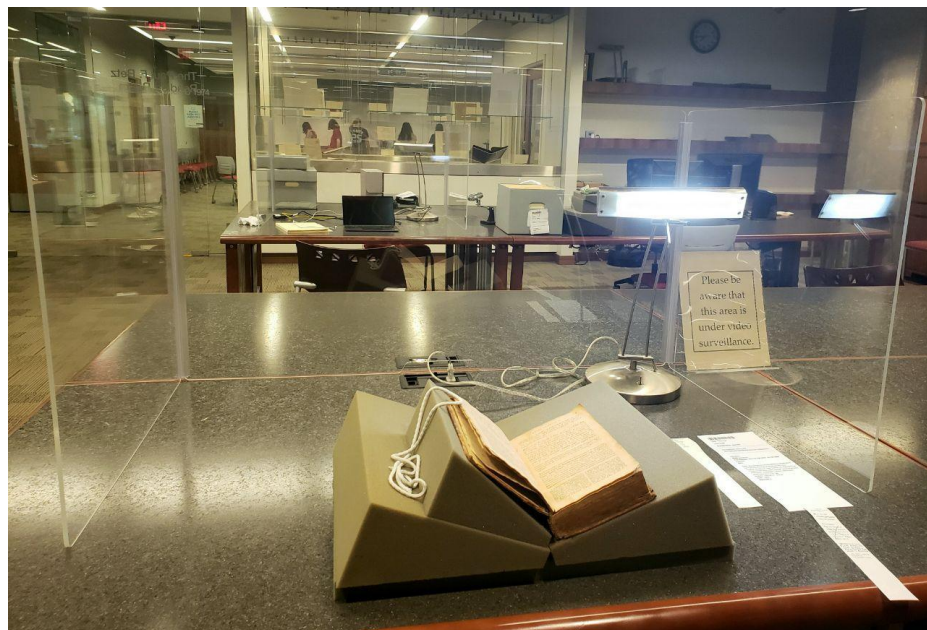
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<sup>1</sup> Georgetown University Library. Info on the Exhibition: Upcoming Exhibitions: Women's Rights are Human Rights: The United States and the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women. October 12, 2021-February 13, 2022. <https://www.library.georgetown.edu/exhibitions/upcoming>

and cherishing the experience of being in front of one of first copies of the Cyropedia that made it to the US.

I realized that having a specific item in mind is more effective since exploring the entire collections with more than 100,000 items is not possible. I learned that Georgetown University manages its own archives which is a great asset to scholars and future generations. I was also surprised to find out that the library itself has around 1 million items according to the Librarian. Lauinger library at Georgetown did not first create the impression of having such vast collections, but I considered that the university is making a long-term investment in becoming one of the most resourceful collections for future generations to rely on.

# Appendix





## Fieldwork 4

### PART I:

Choose a map that interests you. Then, work together to answer the following questions.



- What contextual information is given about this map? (Title/Creator/Date/Location/Etc)

The map is from the National Geographic Atlas of World History from 1997. The map is part of the Georgetown University map collection.

- Do you think this map is "accurate"?

While I do not consider the map accurate, I also do not consider it inaccurate; however, the map is clearly a generalization.

- Is anything not on the map that you expected to be there?

The map has limited representation of the Middle East by mapping the Ottoman Empire only. The time period studied on the map created the opportunity to map the Persian Empire which the map does not depict.

- Is anything on the map that surprises you?

The map has more references to India than any other geographical region which stood out to me. The connection between Goa and the Portuguese is an interaction I had never heard about before, but can explain the more western tendencies of Goa as compared to other Indian regions.

- Could you use this map to navigate? Why or why not?

I definitely could not use this map to navigate. In that way, this map challenges the notion of what maps can look like. A conventional map labels countries and oceanic spaces, but this map does not even reference names of continents. This map complements geographic maps but does not try to be helpful for navigation purposes, but provides a holistic overview of themes and events.

For each of the following questions, be sure to explain *how* you know and to state *how sure* you are of your answer:

- How does the map depict space?

The map depicts space very vaguely. The only helpful differentiation of space that is made is a light topographical mapping of the mountain regions. The map does not depict aquatic spaces either. The spaces that are indicated are the cities that the caption refers to.

- What non-spatial features or markings appear on the map?

A significant element of the map are the pictures that are pinned to the specific cities. The images provide a different perspective and make this map different from other maps I have seen. The pictures bring the pinned city and caption to life by having primary source pictures or graphics that depict the region. This poses a limitation of having one picture generalize the rest of the region.

- What cultural and political assumptions can you see in the map?

The map presents a pattern of themes that relate to colonialism, exploration and formations of ideological spheres of influence (e.g. 1644 - Beijing's Forbidden City is completed during the Ming dynasty).

- What do you need to know in order for the map to be usable?

A solid familiarity with the conventional map of the world is necessary prior to understanding this map. The map certainly assumes the reader already knows what the oceans and continents are; therefore, focuses on presenting very specific cities and events instead.

- Who is the audience of the map?

The audience that can best benefit from this are global historians since the map presumes the audience has familiarity with the world map and presents themes that are often studied in global history such as migration or exploration. Furthermore,

various regions are presented together which further reflects a global history methodology. This map is like a graphical visualization of many global history books that I read since both present a holistic perspective and numerous global events.

Another audience that can benefit from this map are future generations that want to have a sense for the dynamics or most significant historical events between the 15th and 17th century across the globe.

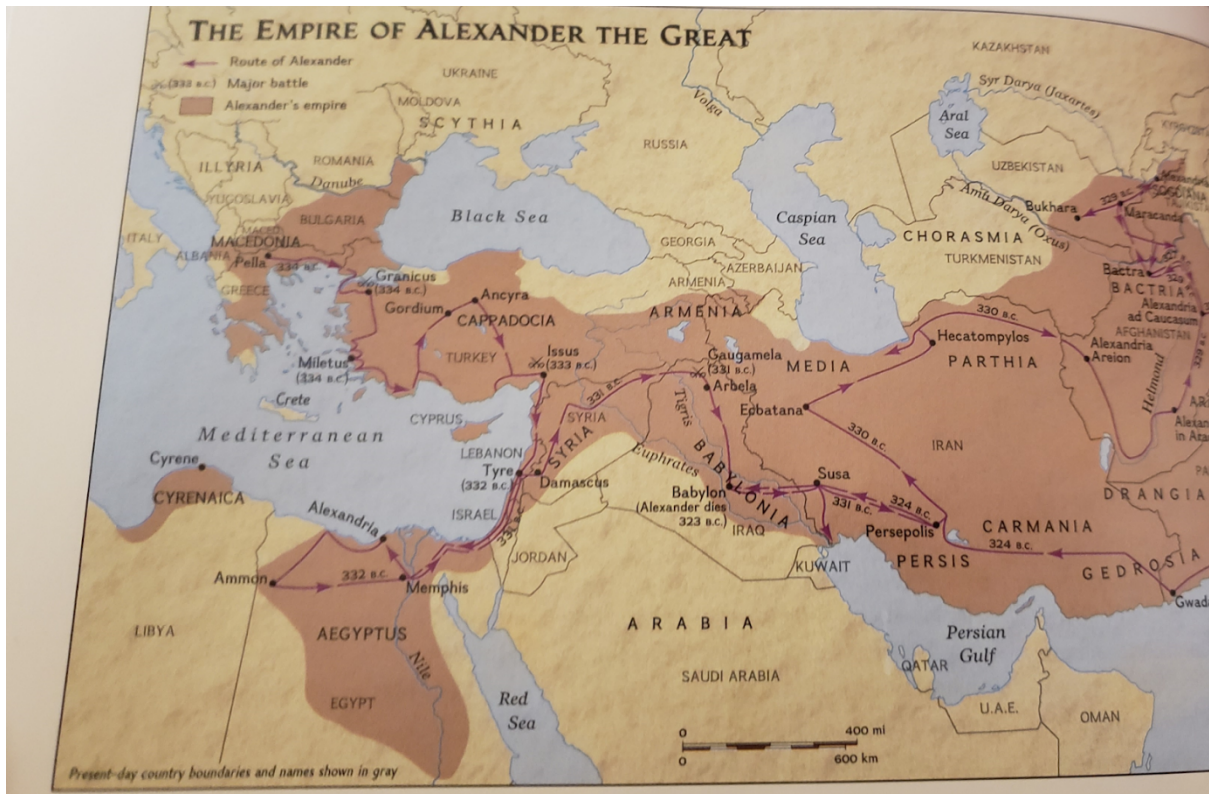
- Why was the map made?

The map was made to present a graphical representation of important events across the globe between the mid fifteenth and seventeenth century.

- Can the map be used for reasons other than why it was made?

The map presents a very niche theme which makes it have limited applications; therefore, the map can not be used for other reasons.

## PART 2:



Now pick a second map that shows a roughly comparable section of the world but was created *either* 1) in a different place or 2) a different time. Compare the two maps. Answer the following questions:

- What similarities and differences exist between the two maps?

Similarities: Both of them are not conventional maps but are designed for audiences that have a familiarity with geography. Another similarity is that both maps present topography by differentiating mountain regions with a different dimension.

Differences: The first map presents a parallel view of specific events. Another difference is that the first map complements events with pictures. The second map includes specific mention of cities and aquatic regions as well as military routes. A significant difference between the two maps is that the first map is a world map while the second one is a specific region, namely the Middle East.

- Are these differences expected or strange? Explain your answer.

The difference between the two maps is expected since they have different geographic frameworks. Consequently, the emphasis of the maps is shaped by the scope of the geography presented. An element that I found strange in the map collection is that some maps, like in Map 2, refer to a region under the rule of a specific ruler. Titles such as “The Empire of Alexander the Great” or on a different map “Napoleon’s Europe” give a lot of credit to one ruler and the entire region as subordinates.

I consider that a great limitation since both the Middle Eastern region and Europe are not defined by the rule of a specific individual. In fact, Alexander the Great is very infamous in the region marked in Map 2. The region was the Persian Empire before his ruthless destruction and burning of historic artifacts. Therefore, affiliating the region with one person creates the impression that only that person was in charge and overshadowed the previous influences, the same way titling a map of Europe as “Napoleon’s Europe” can create a distorted understanding by over-emphasizing the role of a specific individual.

- Which map looks more "normal" to you? What features give it this appearance?

The second map appears more conventional simply because it has the usual elements of a map, or at least what I considered a map to be, which entails names of cities and rivers. Additionally, the second map provides a sense of direction which is another expected criteria of a map.

- Now that you've looked at both maps, would you change your assessment of the first map's accuracy?

My assessment of the first map’s accuracy has remained consistent; however, I developed a higher appreciation for the first map which dared to experiment with combining a map with world events and pictures. This challenged my understanding of what can be considered as a map.

### PART 3:

Now, work to historicize your maps.

- How does comparing the maps help emphasize their historical production?

Comparing the maps is a helpful methodology to identify the overlaps or different approaches applied in each map. Through comparison, I realized that the maps relied on different sources of information ranging from different time periods, regions,



topics and information presented. The first map emphasized a more graphical production by presenting pictures within the map. The other map; however, had a different emphasis and presented routes that the military took during their conquest.

- Do you think this map is historically significant?

The maps are historically significant for an audience that has a strong understanding of the mapped events. Otherwise, the map can be out of context since both present a niche and narrow framework of information.

- What might this map be evidence of?

The first map is evidence of a parallel view of historic events throughout two centuries. Furthermore, this map is evidence of a map that incorporates graphical representations of marked events and cities.

The second map is evidence of a history document that glorifies Conquerors. Without the title, the map can be evidence of the geography of the Middle East.

## Fieldwork 5



### 1. Identification

#### 1. What is it?

The object is a typewriter.

#### 2. Where is it from?

The typewriter is American made by the company 'Corona' and sold by the Georgetown University bookstore many decades ago.

#### 3. What is it made of?

The typewriter consists of ink and the usual components necessary for building a typewriter which mostly is made out of steel.

#### 4. Who made it?

According to the Archival Expert, the object is made by a typewriter company specifically for Georgetown University. The company, Corona, made industrial products and was the main manufacturer of typewriters in the US.

#### 5. What kind of labor did it require to make it?

Specific labor skills that are unique to making a typewriter were applied, given that making typewriters is a niche occupation and a particular company produced much of the typewriters in the US.

### 1. Digging Deeper

#### 1. Why do you think the object was made?

The object was made for the following reasons: document texts by producing written texts and allowing Georgetown to have newest model equipment necessary for advancing academia through writing.

2. Why do you think the object looks the way it does?

The design is specifically customized for Georgetown University. According to the Archival Expert in the library, the company most likely made typewriters for other universities as well and Georgetown placed an order that complements school spirit.

3. What makes this object valuable? Is its value functional or symbolic?

For its time, the object served a functional purpose. In the current context, the object is very symbolic. In fact, the typewriter which once was only for writing purposes, is now considered a commodity, and potentially even artistic. The prices of the typewriter, ranging from few hundred to around \$18000 USD, further solidifies that the object is now an asset.

4. How might this object embody the cultural values and assumptions of the people who made and used it?

The value of this object can be contextualized by identifying whether many other universities in the US or world also had typewriters at the time. For the people at the time, this was a very advanced technology. The people who utilized it were students at the university.

## 2. Perspective

1. How has the museum provided perspective on this object?

The representatives at the archives were foundational to gaining context and a better understanding of the objects. They provided me with the context that a widow, whose husband was an alumni, donated this typewriter to Georgetown. This background made me realize that the object was privately owned and purchased from Georgetown. Lanter, it was returned as a potentially valuable item that the university could benefit from possessing.

2. How does that perspective shape the way you perceive the object in the room?

Such a perspective humanized the object. I could imagine someone actually using it for typing papers for classes which I compared to my own experience with typing on a laptop which fulfills the same purpose.

3. Are you allowed to touch the object? Can you interact with it in any other way?

I was allowed to touch the object. I could not utilize the object for what it is intended to do since the specific ink necessary was not there. Returning to typewriters could theoretically be a possibility, but laptops have taken over the typing industry which is now entirely digitized. Since typewriters do not create digital content, the application of typewriters is very limited.

4. How might your own experiences and background shape the way you look at this object? (If the object is "easy" or "familiar" to look at, what previous knowledge or understandings are you drawing on? If the object is "difficult" or "unfamiliar" to look at, how might your perspective and position differ from the people who made and used this item?)

Seeing the item felt like a once in a lifetime opportunity. While I knew what typewriters are, I was in awe when I saw them. Such sentiments indicate that the item was unfamiliar to me. I was intrigued by the typewriters since my parents had told me stories about how they used to type their work on them when they were in school. This idea gave me a more humanized perspective towards the object.

Now look at the items around the room. Take at least 10 minutes to familiarize yourself with them.



This object is a portable pocket reader from 1926. Texts in small font size can be placed in this device and can be read through the magnifying lens. Readers can read many pages of texts on the way with this technology. The device is a predecessor of the Kindle we know today.



The "Easy Sign" Maker is what the title suggests: keys can be stamped on ink and used to print words on paper. Each letter will be stamped individually to compose words and make a sign or poster.

### 3. Connections and Contextualization

1. What do you think is the relationship between these objects?

All three objects have one thing in common: they directly relate to working with texts. They want to make work more efficient and easier to utilize by moving away from manual tasks and replacing them with industrial technologies. These objects aim to do the work for the people more efficiently.

2. What story do the objects tell collectively?

The objects indicate that advancements in texts and documentation were made and of necessary interest by the university to maintain them in archives. These items can be of value to Georgetown University since it is an academic institution and can be interested in collecting technology related to academia and working with texts, such as the three objects above.

3. How do the objects in the room reshape your reading of the first object you chose?

The objects made me realize that many of the inventions we use now followed earlier inventions. While premature, the objects fulfilled the idea that many modern technologies offer: typewriter to laptop and the reading lens to Kindle reader.

### 4. Historicizing

1. What historical themes does this source speak to? Can it give you insight into the lives of particular people (or groups of people)?

The library archives presented me with an article from Georgetown newspaper, *The Hoya*, that provides a very helpful background on the typewriter.<sup>2</sup> The article presents insights from the Dean in 1928 that contextualizes how the Georgetown typewriters came to be and why the university invested in more than 140 typewriters at the time. Such helpful context allowed me to contextualize the object and differentiate my assumptions from what actually happened.

2. What kinds of historical questions might this source help you answer?

The source raises the following questions: Who used typewriters? Why does the archive maintain it? Did every student have one or is it for

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<sup>2</sup> Georgetown University Library, Digital and Special Collections, University Publications, *The Hoya Archives*, *Hoya*, vol. 10, no. 5 (October 18, 1928).

administration/faculty only? Why is it customized with Georgetown colors and initials?

3. What would be the challenges of using this source for historical research?

Using the typewriter alone can pose limitations to studying it for historical research, but the article contextualizes the item and presents many insights that can retroactively be helpful in understanding the conditions and reasons for the existence of the typewriter. The typewriter itself gives helpful information as a primary source such as the manufacturer, Georgetown customized and the model. Yet, for historical research, the article presented many answers that the typewriter itself did not provide.

The article explains that the Dean ordered 140 typewriters because they advanced student performance as well as presented benefits for faculty. Reasons presented are that faculty do not have to try to decode the poor handwriting of students, reasonable price of the typewriters as well as benefits for students to reduce misspelled words and encouraging more sophisticated writing style and word choice. While the Dean also hoped to reduce the strain on the faculty eyes by reading typed text, I find it interesting that the newer technology like laptops actually add strain to the eyes, so that many faculty actually still prefer the print over the digital.