

## THE DATE OF JEROME'S BIRTH

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AT *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14 (= CCSL 76A.645.1010 ff.) Jerome states that he was a boy studying *grammaticae* when the death of Julian the Apostate was announced. Since he should have been no older than sixteen at this point in his schooling, F. Cavallera reasoned that he was born at the earliest in 347.<sup>1</sup> But if this is correct, Jerome then dubs himself *senex* when he was no older than forty (*Vita Malchi* 10 = *PL* 23 [1883] col. 62; dated 386/7). Such premature professions of senility have prompted scholars to argue for an earlier birthdate. Thus A. Penna places Jerome's birth in the opening years of the 340's,<sup>2</sup> P. Antin "vers 345;" the latter suggests that the saint's memory may have lapsed at *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14 and points out that the age-limits in education were not in any case inflexible.<sup>3</sup> Recently P. Hamblenne has even championed 330/1, the date given by Prosper Tiro's *Chronicle*, and he is now followed by J. N. D. Kelly.<sup>4</sup> P. Jay, however, has rejected Hamblenne's attempt to discard totally the testimony at *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14. He admits only as an extreme hypothesis that Jerome's recollection might be jumbled, but invokes flexibility in educational progress to place his birth "dans les années 345-347 sans qu'on puisse raisonnablement préciser davantage."<sup>5</sup>

Jerome's birthdate is thus far from fixed. So long as the exactitude either of his memory or his use of *puer* at *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14 is open to any question, the possibility of a birthdate before Jay's limit must be admitted. And it should not escape notice that a birthdate after 345-347 is equally feasible. For once it is accepted that Jerome could call himself *senex* when he was forty or so, it cannot be denied that he could have assumed this designation in his thirties. It will be useful, therefore, to establish at the outset *termini intra quos* for his birth.

In the preface to *Epist.* 120 Jerome states that Patera taught at Rome

<sup>1</sup>*Saint Jérôme; sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris-Louvain 1922) 2.10.

<sup>2</sup>*S. Gerolamo* (Rome 1949) 1. The problem with such a date, apart from prolonging Jerome's study of *grammaticae* (cf., however, *Lib. Or.* 1.8 f.) or impugning his memory, is that it postpones his puberty; cf. P. Jay, "Sur la date de naissance de saint Jérôme," *REL* 51 (1973) 274 f. But some may find a precocious senility more perplexing.

<sup>3</sup>"Jérôme antique et chrétien," *REAug* 16 (1970) 35; *Essai sur saint Jérôme* (Paris 1951) 10.

<sup>4</sup>P. Hamblenne, "La longévité de Jérôme: Prosper avait-il raison?," *Latomus* 28 (1969) 1081-1119; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: his Life, Writings and Controversies* (London 1975) 337-339.

<sup>5</sup>(Above, n. 2) 267 n. 5, 280.

before his birth, and in the *Chronicle* places his *floruit* in 336. Since Ausonius reveals that this rhetor had returned to Bordeaux to teach and had retired by ca 340,<sup>6</sup> his activity at Rome cannot have continued long past 336. So ca 340 appears a reasonable *terminus post quem* for Jerome's birth. *Epist.* 108.25 (A.D. 404) provides a *terminus ante quem*: *aut alius fui, cum decem annorum essem, alius cum triginta, alius cum quinquaginta, alius quia iam toto cano capite sum?* The last clause implies the greatest aging, but, if Jerome were born 345–347, the shortest time-span, seven to nine years. Since a lesser period of three or four years could allow Jerome the hyperbole he favours, a birthdate as late as 351 is at present possible.<sup>7</sup>

As matters stand, Jerome's birth is to be placed ca 340—ca 351. If, however, the stages in his education can be dated, and the ages at which he progressed through them established, his birthdate may be determined with greater precision.

At *In Ruf.* 1.30 (= *PL* 23 [1883] col. 441) Jerome recalls: *memini me puerum cursitasse per cellulas servulorum, diem feriatum duxisse lusibus, et ad Orbilium saevientem de aviae sinu tractum esse captivum. Et quo magis stupeas, nunc cano et recalvo capite saepe mihi videor in somnis comatulus, et sumpta toga, ante rhetorem controversiolam declamare. Sumpta toga* is usually translated “donning my toga.”<sup>8</sup> *Sumere togam* is, however, a standard description of the assumption of the *toga virilis*, at which time the fourth-century student usually progressed to rhetoric (cf. Paul. Pell. *Euchar.* 113–126; Aug. *Conf.* 2.5 f.; Lib. Or. 1.8 f.). Thus Ausonius recalls his duties as a rhetor (*Epist.* 22.73–76; cf. *Prof.* 17.11 [ed. Peiper]): *idem vesticipes motu iam puberis aevi / ad mores artesque bonas fandique vigorem / produxi*. Indeed, since Jerome proceeds to celebrate his escape from rhetoric (*cumque experrectus fuero, gratulor me dicendi periculo liberatum*), his whole account of educational progress finds a notable parallel in Prudentius (*Cathem. Praef.* 7–9): *aetas prima crepantibus / flevit sub ferulis. mox docuit toga / infectum vitiis falsa loqui,*

<sup>6</sup>Cf. A. D. Booth, *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 240, 244. If Jay's repudiation of Prosper's birthdate needs corroboration, it is provided by Jerome's references to Patera. Hamblenne's objection, “Il est peu probable que Patera ait d'emblée enseigné gloriosissime” ([above, n. 4] 1108), lacks cogency. At *Epist.* 120 *praef.* Jerome clearly means that the whole florescence of Patera predated his birth.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. the remarks of P. Antin, “La vieillesse chez S. Jérôme,” *REA* Aug 17 (1971) 43 f. Jerome (*Epist.* 120 *praef.*) dates the literary efflorescence of Delphidius, which occurred before his elevation during a usurpation (Aus. *Prof.* 5.11 ff.), with the phrase *me iam adulescentulo*. This would render a birthdate in the late 340's or early 350's difficult, if, as Hamblenne thinks ([above, n. 4] 1108), he was elevated during the usurpation of Magnentius. But I have argued ([above, n. 6] 236–239) that he was elevated during Procopius' revolt.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Kelly (above, n. 4) 15: “wearing the specially donned toga;” Antin, *Essai* (above, n. 3) 31: “drapé dans sa toge;” Cavallera (above, n. 1) 1.9: “revêtu de la toge.”

*non sine crimine*. In sum, Jerome contrasts his grey-haired decrepitude with his bloom on achieving manhood and signals his transition to rhetoric at the regular age of fifteen or sixteen.

In the prologue to *In Epist. ad Galat.* (= PL 26 [1884] col. 331) Jerome writes: *Non quod ignorem Caium Marium Victorinum, qui Romae, me puero,<sup>9</sup> rhetoricam docuit, edidisse Commentarios in Apostolum*. At *De viris illust.* 101 he records: *Victorinus, natione Afer, Romae sub Constantio principe rhetoricam docuit*. The correspondence between *me puero* and *sub Constantio principe* indicates that Jerome commenced the study of *grammaticae* at Rome in the 350's while Victorinus was flourishing there as a rhetor. Confirmation comes from the *Chronicle* s.a. 354 (cited below) and from the fact that Jerome, not born before ca 340, progressed to rhetoric about the age of fifteen. Victorinus held the principal chair of rhetoric at Rome (presumably through all or a greater part of the 350's) until he relinquished it during Julian's professorial purge (after summer 362).<sup>10</sup> He was advanced in years at this time, and it is a safe inference from Augustine's account (*Conf.* 8.10) that his retirement was complete. Jerome did not study under Victorinus,<sup>11</sup> but, since he was born at the latest ca 351, he cannot have commenced this study long after Vic-

<sup>9</sup>Variant readings are *pueros* and *me puerum*. The latter may be discarded (see below, n. 11). Hamblenne (above, n. 4) 1098 and Kelly (above, n. 4) 15 n. 25 adopt *pueros, me puero* jarring with their aberrant chronology. But *pueros* is redundant, for obviously Victorinus taught students (*adulescentes*, incidentally, rather than *pueros*). As shown in the text, once place is specified, a reference to time is expected. P. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses œuvres* (Paris 1971) 285 f., dates the commentaries on Paul to Victorinus' retirement after summer 362. Jerome's reference to these *Commentarios in Apostolum* continues: *sed quod occupatus ille eruditione saecularium litterarum Scripturas omnino sanctas ignoraverit: et nemo possit, quamvis eloquens, de eo bene disputare, quod nesciat*. Since Victorinus' Christian works began to appear towards the end of the 350's, Jerome may be mistaken about the date of the commentaries. Again, he may deliberately misdate them to denigrate their worth and to enhance his own undertaking. But the veracity of the underlying claim cannot be doubted; namely, that Victorinus was teaching rhetoric during Jerome's boyhood studies at Rome.

<sup>10</sup>On Julian's action see R. Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (Berkeley 1976) 169–173. On the position of Victorinus and the *praefectus orator* mentioned below see F. Schemmel, "Das Athenaeum in Rom," *WKP* 7/8 (1919) 91–95; *PhilWoch* 41 (1921) 982–984. Schemmel thinks that there were two Latin chairs of equal prominence, but there was just one; cf. H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris 1977) 436, 611 n. 9. To the holder of this chair will have gone the title *rhetor/orator urbis Romae*. The chief rhetor at Antioch was likewise called the "sophist of the city;" cf. P. Petit, *Les étudiants de Libanius* (Paris 1956) 92.

<sup>11</sup>*PLRE*, "Victorinus 11" 1.964, states that Victorinus was Jerome's teacher, but *Chron.* s.a. 354 and *In Ruf.* 1.16 (= PL 23 [1883] col. 429) prove that he was not; cf. Cavallera (above, n. 1) 1.9; Kelly (above, n. 4) 15. (Incidentally, Marius Victorinus cannot be identical with the Victorinus of *Lib. Epist.* 1493, as *PLRE* thinks). Vallarsi (PL 26 [1884] col. 331) was doubly right: *Neque vero Victorinum audivit Hieronymus, neque fortasse per infantilem adhuc aetatem potuit*.

torinus' retirement. He recalls attending a *praefectus orator* in the Athenaeum (*Epist.* 66.9). *Praefectus* indicates tenure of the principal chair of rhetoric, which Victorinus had vacated. That Jerome studied under his immediate successor suggests that he would have studied under Victorinus, had this been possible. Indeed this famous convert to Christianity would have been an ideal teacher for a student from a Christian family with an active interest in religion;<sup>12</sup> and, since Donatus taught in the municipal school, Jerome was probably already in line for his instruction.<sup>13</sup> It seems safe to infer, therefore, that Jerome was with the *grammaticus* until at least summer 362. In turn, it would now be unduly skeptical to doubt the accuracy of *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14. Thus 347 is confirmed as a *terminus post quem* for his birth.

Some scholars have thought that Jerome's studies at Rome went beyond *grammaticae* and rhetoric.<sup>14</sup> But his own statements, which appear to have been overlooked, leave no doubt that his student days at Rome terminated on graduation from the rhetor (*Epist.* 125.12; *Praef. in Dan.* = *PL* 28 [1889] col. 1358; cf. *In Ruf.* 1.17 = *PL* 23 [1883] col. 429). In the prologue to *In Abdiam*, composed in 396,<sup>15</sup> where Jerome apolo-

<sup>12</sup>P. Courcelle, "Du nouveau sur la vie et les œuvres de Marius Victorinus," *REA* 64 (1962) 132–134, would place his conversion several years before 354. Hadot ([above, n. 9] 28) argues for 356. For Jerome's interest in Christianity at this stage see Kelly (above, n. 4) 21 ff.

<sup>13</sup>On Donatus' position see Schemmel, *WKP* 7/8 (1919) 93. As principal rhetor at Antioch Libanius had under him a staff of rhetors and *grammatici*; cf. Petit (above, n. 10) 84–94. It seems likely that a similar arrangement obtained at Rome (cf. *schola rhetorum* in the prologue to *In Abdiam*, cited below). Note too how Nicocles, a *grammaticus* at Constantinople, had the power to channel students away from their normal course towards a municipal rhetor; *Lib. Or.* 1.31, 35.

<sup>14</sup>That Jerome studied philosophy at Rome has been widely held, but Kelly (above, n. 4) 17 is correctly skeptical. At *In Ruf.* 3.39 Jerome would certainly have recorded any formal study of philosophy at Rome. He had read some works with philosophic content presumably in connection with his study of rhetoric (cf. *Aug. Conf.* 3.7). G. Gruetzmacher, *Hieronymus: Eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig 1901) 1.118 f., correctly attributes the knowledge of dialectic, which Jerome states he acquired in school (*Epist.* 48 [= 49 Labourt].13; *In Ruf.* 1.30), to rhetorical instruction (in the *inventio* section; cf. M. L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* [London 1971] 39). Note that Ausonius records *dogma Platonicum* as an area of knowledge which brought renown to the rhetors (and possibly *grammatici*) of Bordeaux (*Prof.* 26.5). He praises the rhetor Nepotianus as *disputator ad Cleanthen Stoicum* (*Prof.* 15.11). (*Disputator* is the Latin translation of *διαλεκτικός*; cf. *Aug. contra Cresc.* 1.17 (= *CSEL* 52.340); *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* 4.438.47. There is no substance in Kelly's suggestion (*ibid.* 15 f.) that Jerome studied law. He nowhere boasts proficiency in this subject, which, at this period, was usually studied after rhetoric (cf. *Rut. Nam.* 1.209 f.; *Vita Germani* 1; *Aug. Conf.* 6.11–13).

<sup>15</sup>P. Nautin, "Études de chronologie hiéronymienne," *REA* 20 (1974) 272, dates this work late 396 or early 397. The considerations raised by T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian* (Oxford 1971) 235 f., exclude the later date. As Nautin notes, Jerome was pressed and a

gizes for an earlier commentary on the same prophet, not only does he recall this fact, but he reveals the date (*CSSL* 76.350.35 ff.):

*Et tunc dedimus quod habuimus, et nunc, si tamen aliquid profecimus, Domino suum reddimus. Gratia enim eius sum quod sum. Nec diffiteor per hosce triginta annos in eius opere me ac labore sudasse. Clemens est pater; cito revertentem filium suscipit, nec exspectat donec quis aperiat ostium, ipse egreditur obviam, annulum et stolam parat, licet germanus invideat, et scortatorem ac nepotem vocet, de salute illius symphonia angelicae laetitiae cunctarumque virtutum in caelestibus personat. Hoc est illud tempus, mi Pammachi, hac luce dulcior, quo egressi scholam rhetorum, diverso studio ferebamur, quando ego et Heliodorus carissimus pariter habitare solitudinem Syriae Chalcidis volebamus.*

Cavallera took *hoc est illud tempus* to refer to discussions between Heliodorus and Jerome at Antioch; thus, in keeping with his chronology, he dated the first *In Abdiam* to 374/5.<sup>16</sup> He then argued that *per hosce triginta annos* refers not to the period between the works, but to the period between Jerome's baptism, which he places ca 366, and the composition of the second *In Abdiam*. His view has been influential, but the *tunc/nunc* antithesis at the start of the passage above makes it difficult to reject the obvious sense of the subsequent words; namely, that an interval of thirty years separated the commentaries.<sup>17</sup> Moreover,

commentary on the shortest of prophets was a convenient topic; but he could not let Pammachius feel shortchanged; hence the explanation in the prologue about the need to replace a juvenile effort that had resurfaced. Its reappearance was indeed opportune; perhaps this event, if not the commentary itself, is fiction. Such suspicion, however, does not affect the chronology involved.

<sup>16</sup>(Above, n. 1) 2.17, 154.

<sup>17</sup>Scholars have revealed (unconsciously, it seems) the difficulty of reconciling Cavallera's chronology with Jerome's words. (Emphasis has been added in the following quotations.) H. Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics* (Göteborg 1958), after Cavallera dates the commentaries 374/5 and 396 (119 n. 1; cf. 99), but writes (211): "In the preface to *In Abdiam* Jerome disavows an allegorical commentary on Obadiah which he wrote *more than thirty years before*, during his first stay in the East." Hamblenne, (above, n. 4) 1805 n. 1, states that he follows Cavallera unless he indicates otherwise, but, on quoting *In Abdiam Prol.*, places the first commentary "vers 366" (1102) without further comment. Of Jerome's activities in summer 374, Kelly ([above, n. 4] 45) writes: "We can date this [i.e., the first commentary] relatively exactly, for *more than twenty years later* . . . he was to recall that he had composed the earlier one 'when my dear Heliodorus and I were intent on settling together in the solitude of Syrian Chalcis'." But later he writes: "Now, *early in 396* . . . he prepared commentaries on two more of the Minor Prophets, Jonah and Obadiah (220) . . . . In trying his hand on Obadiah he wished to offer Pammachius something more mature . . . than his extravagantly allegorical effort of *thirty years previously* which caused him such embarrassment now" (221 f.). Cf. too Nautin (above, n. 15) 273. L. N. Hartmann, "St. Jerome as an Exegete," in F. X. Murphy (ed.), *A Monument to St. Jerome* (New York 1952) 38, unconvincingly compresses the chronology: "At any rate, shortly after he finished his course in the profane classics at Rome, he set out to apply his newly acquired literary skill to the composition of an exegesis of Abdias . . . . In fact, it is only from the prologue of this much more mature work, *written about a quarter of a century later*, that we learn of the

*tempus . . . quo egressi scholam rhetorum* must refer to the time of Jerome's graduation from rhetoric and departure from Rome, not to events almost a decade later, as Cavallera would have it. Thus the completion of Jerome's studies and the composition of the first *In Abdiam* are dated to 366.

The expression on which this dating hinges—*per hosce triginta annos*—involves a suspiciously round figure. But in a context where Jerome is emphasizing the immaturity of his first commentary, thirty years is unlikely to represent a much greater period. Jerome was still with the *grammaticus* in summer 363, but he can have begun rhetoric in fall of that year, when term recommenced. Indeed, *dum adhuc essem puer* at *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14 may suggest that his transition to manhood and rhetoric was imminent. Since three years was the normal period to devote to this subject, Jerome can have graduated from the rhetor in summer 366.<sup>18</sup> So thirty years need not represent a much shorter period. If it may be accepted that Jerome has been exact with his chronology in addressing his former *condiscipulus*, then his studies at Rome will have finished in 366. Since he began rhetoric at the age for assuming the *toga virilis*, he will have graduated around the normal age of eighteen. On this reckoning, his birth should be dated ca 348.

At *In Ruf.* 1.30 Jerome recalls two teachers, the *grammaticus* under the title *Orbilius saeviens* (cf. Suet. *Gram.* 9; Horace *Epist.* 2.1.70 f.) and the rhetor. It has been thought that at the outset Jerome describes an attempt to prolong a school holiday.<sup>19</sup> But an elderly female relative, assisted by a nurse, would look after the child in its pre-school years (Aus. *Parent.* 5, 6, 25; Tac. *Dial.* 28.5; cf. Jer. *Epist.* 3.5 cited below). Now Augustine (*Conf.* 1.23) and Ausonius (*Epist.* 22.13 ff.) contrast the carefree joys of infancy with the toils of starting school. Moreover, Jerome's expression recalls the latter's account of his duties as a *grammaticus* (*ibid.* 67–69): *multos lactantibus annis/ipsi alui gremioque fovens et murmura solvens/eripui tenerum blandis nutricibus aevum*. So it seems clear that Jerome signals the start of his education. Such a recollection indeed suits a context where he underlines the unforgettable impact of

opuscule of his early years." The passage from *In Abdiam* quoted above continues in *CSSL*: *volebamus; quod putabam latere, vulgatum est*; in *PL* 25 (1884) col. 1098: *nitebamur* (*Al. volebamus*); *quod . . .* Stronger punctuation is needed; namely, a period after *volebamus*, to clarify that *Quod* refers to the first effort (cf. *et tunc dedimus quod habuimus*).

<sup>18</sup>Augustine began rhetoric before the age of sixteen, missed a year of study, and was himself teaching at the age of nineteen; *Conf.* 2.5 f.; 4.1 f. Petit ([above, n. 10] 64 f.) finds that three years of rhetoric was normal in fourth-century Antioch, although some studied for longer, some for less. Cf. too *Cod. Theod.* 14.9.1; M. L. Clarke, (above, n. 14) 6 f. On the dates of the school year see S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley 1977) 139 f.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Cavallera (above, n. 1) 1.5.

secular study; and the evocation of *plagosus Orbilius* is apt, for he had impressed indelibly upon Horace literary classics (*Epist.* 2.1.69 ff) and Horace himself had found a place in the curriculum of the *grammaticus* (Aus. *Epist.* 22.56). So Jerome reveals here that his education began under the *grammaticus*. And elsewhere he states that his study of *grammaticae* began from infancy (*Epist.* 60.5; cf. *Liber Iob Prol.* = *PL* 28 [1889] col. 1141). Since it was certainly possible to start from scratch in a *schola grammatici*,<sup>20</sup> nothing impedes the literal acceptance of his statements: he went from infancy to the school of a *grammaticus* without passing through the elementary stage which scholars have assumed.<sup>21</sup>

Jerome's account of his friendship with Bonosus sheds light on the start of his education (*Epist.* 3.5): *ut ego et ille a tenera pariter infantia ad florentem usque adoleverimus aetatem, ut idem nos nutricum sinus, idem amplexus foverint baiulorum et, cum post Romana studia ad Rheni semi-barbaras ripas eodem cibo, pari fruermur hospitio, ut ego primus coeperim velle te colere*. While Jerome has delayed his retreat, Bonosus, his *conlusor* at Stridon, his *condiscipulus* at Rome, his *convictor* at Trier, has withdrawn; his weakness, in breaking the yoke, has raised the glory of Bonosus' resolve: *mihi ignoscas quia implere non potui, illi tribuas praemium quod meretur*. The movements recalled in the passage are from Stridon to Rome, from Rome to Trier, from Trier to Antioch (Jerome) and to an insular retreat (Bonosus). *Baiulus* has been interpreted in the sense of *paedagogus*,<sup>22</sup> but in view of the emphasis on unity of movement and experience, the regular meaning "porter" should be recognized too. After sharing the same nursery at Stridon, the pair were transported to Rome by the same bearers, where they attended the same schools (*puer honestis saeculo nobiscum artibus institutus* [4]). As they had arrived in Rome together to begin their studies, so, their education completed, they departed together for Trier, where, now adolescent, they shared the same lodging, as in infancy they had shared the same nursery. It will be remembered too that Horace's father had saved him from a lowly *ludus* at Venusia and transported him to Rome for a more polished formation (*S.* 1.6.72–78). So the Horatian reminiscence at *In Ruf.* 1.30 also points to Jerome's being taken from Stridon to commence his education at Rome.

Paulinus of Pella, who progressed in a pattern of study similar to

<sup>20</sup>Cf. A. D. Booth, "Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire," *Florilegium* 1 (1979) 1–14.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. most recently Kelly (above, n. 4) 7: "It was at Stridon, naturally that he attended his elementary school ('ludus litterarius'), the normal age for which was 6/7 to 11/12 years."

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Cavallera (above, n. 1) 1.5; Kelly, *ibid.* The *paedagogus* could carry his charge; cf. Bonner (above, n. 18) 24 fig. 3; Jerome *Epist.* 107 *ad fin.* The *baiuli* were probably *paedagogi*, but the context and appellation suggest transportation to Rome.

Jerome's, was ready to begin rhetoric after nine years' study of *grammaticae*.<sup>23</sup> If it has been deduced correctly that Jerome was finishing *grammaticae* in summer 363, it may be expected that he entered the school of the *grammaticus* at Rome in 354. Now the *Chronicle* under 354 records: *Victorinus rhetor et Donatus grammaticus, praeceptor meus, Romae insignes habentur. E quibus Victorinus etiam statuam in foro Traiani meruit*. The date of this entry might seem to depend on the date of Victorinus' honour. It may be doubted, however, whether Jerome either knew this date or remembered it during the hasty compilation of the *Chronicle*. But he could readily recall the year in which he entered Donatus' school. So A. Schoene and G. Gruetzmacher reasonably inferred that 354 was that year.<sup>24</sup> The former assumed that Jerome was seven or eight years old at this stage and dated his birth, therefore, to 346/7. The latter rejected this deduction, however, "da die Knaben in verschiedenem Lebensalter in diese [Schule] einzutreten pflegten." But now it seems safe to assume from the description at *In Ruf.* 1.30 that Jerome started school at the normal age. So he will have been seven or almost seven when term commenced in fall 354.<sup>25</sup> In turn he will have been born in the second half of 347 or early in 348.

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<sup>23</sup>*Euchar.* 72, 118–121; Booth (above, n. 20).

<sup>24</sup>A. Schoene, *Die Weltchronik des Eusebius und ihre Bearbeitung durch Hieronymus* (Berlin 1900) 235; Gruetzmacher (above, n. 14) 47. Since the latter accepts the accuracy of *In Abacuc* 2, 3.14, he might have realized that Jerome would be just commencing his schooling in 354. Donatus himself will not have taught the elements, but will have employed senior students and *subdoctores*; cf. *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* 3.121 f., 646; cf. 226; Booth (above, n. 20).

<sup>25</sup>For the age for starting school cf. *Jer. Epist.* 128.4; Booth (above, n. 20). To the modern mind it may seem harsh to separate a child from its home at this tender age. The ancients, however, were relatively immune from child psychology, and Jerome's being sent to Rome indicates care, not callousness. Note that he himself proposes (*Epist.* 107.13) that Paula be sent from Rome and her mother to him and her relatives in the East for instruction, presumably at the age of seven.

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