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**Jeanne de Jussie**, *The Short Chronicle: A Poor Clare's Account of the Reformation of Geneva*. Edited and translated by Carrie F. Klaus. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006. xxix + 214 pp. Engraving, notes, and index. \$21.00 (pb), ISBN 0-226-41706-9.

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Jeanne de Jussie was a nun in the Genevan Convent of Saint Clare in the sixteenth century. Like every member of her convent save one, she came from a noble family and retained many of her social prejudices in her life as a nun. From within the convent walls, she witnessed some of the most turbulent years in the political and religious history of Geneva: The 1520s and 1530s saw Geneva's successful rebellion against the Duke of Savoy; its alliance with a powerful Protestant ally, Bern; its rejection of its Catholic bishop; and, then, its formal adoption of the Reformation. One result of the city's acceptance of the Reformation was the closing of the Convent of Saint Clare and the exodus of all but one of its sisters to a monastery in nearby Annecy, France. Jussie, the secretary (*écrivaine*) for the convent and later its abbess (1548–1561), recorded the events of the fall of Geneva to the "Lutherans" and the exile of her order from their home so that they would be remembered by future Poor Clares (p. 90). The result is one of the few extant contemporary chronicles of these events, and the only one known for certain to have a female author.<sup>[1]</sup> It is now, for the first time, available in English, thanks to the excellent translation of Carrie Klaus.

As Klaus explains in her introduction, the complete French text of Jussie's *Petite chronique* has been available in published form only since 1996, thanks to Helmut Feld.<sup>[2]</sup> Feld's critical edition of Jussie's text, including footnotes clarifying dates, identifying people and providing references to Scripture and canon law, serves as the basis for Klaus's translation. That such a valuable and engaging source on the Genevan Reformation was not available in full published form for so long is appalling. Both Feld and Klaus are to be thanked and commended for rectifying that situation.

Klaus's translation is part of the University of Chicago's Other Voice in Early Modern Europe Series. One of the goals of the series, as articulated by the series editors, is to make available texts that demonstrate the early modern challenge to "reigning assumptions" about women's nature and the place of women in society (p. ix). Specifically, they assert that "those writing in the tradition of the other voice" issued a "call to justice" that "must be recognized as the source and origin of the mature feminist tradition" (p. xxvii). Jussie's writing is certainly valuable as part of that tradition, and it is equally revealing as a source on the religious and political turmoil surrounding the Reformation in Geneva. As Klaus makes clear in her introduction, Jussie intended her chronicle not as a public contribution to the *querelle des femmes* but as an account to be kept, read, and retold by future Poor Clares, so that the painful experiences of her convent would not be forgotten. Jussie passionately defends the virtue of her sister nuns and their right to continue their convent life despite the developments just outside their walls. While she expresses gratitude to the various men who assist her order, she makes it clear that she views women as stronger than men in a variety of ways. She is just as ardent in her defense of the social and political status quo in Geneva—for example, she remains loyal throughout to the Duke of Savoy and repeatedly suggests the connection between beauty, nobility, and religious piety in her descriptions of individuals who interact with the convent.

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For courses on early modern Europe, and on the Reformation specifically, Klaus's translation of Jussie's *Chronicle* is a unique pedagogical tool. It is the only book-length manuscript I know of, translated into English that describes the establishment of the Protestant Reformation in an urban setting, as interpreted by a female, Catholic author. Undergraduate courses on the Reformation generally mention the establishment of the Reformation in Geneva only briefly, tying it to the struggle for Genevan independence (when time permits). Discussions on Geneva almost always focus on John Calvin's work there; if the struggle over the Reformation is addressed, it is usually painted more in terms of political opposition to Calvin and his supporters than resistance deeply rooted in the Catholic faith. Jussie's *Chronicle* complicates this picture considerably and adds interest to the story of the Genevan Reformation. While contemporary Protestant accounts and modern histories of Geneva sometimes make it sound as if all Genevans welcomed the Reformation and independence from the Catholic Church, even if they did not all welcome Calvin himself, Jussie's account presents the Reformation as a devastating, horrific development. Here the reformers and their supporters are not heroes defending "True Christianity"; they are heretics, dogs, scoundrels, and "miscreant infidels" (p. 91). Jussie describes the "Lutherans," as she calls them, as variously wretched, wicked, villainous, and satanic. More than once she asserts that they are more despicable than the Ottoman Turks, the great threat to Europe in the sixteenth century, as when she relates that "the people" of Geneva agreed that they would "not allow this infection [of reformers] in town anymore, for they are worse than Turks" (p. 76).

In Jussie's description, one of the greatest and most terrible threats posed by the Reformation was the marriage of formerly celibate male clergy and nuns. When recounting the Protestant conversion of individual priests and monks, she almost always mentions their immediate marriage, usually to an "unworthy" woman. For example, in discussing the religious struggles of the summer of 1534, Jussie describes the public conversion of a Dominican monk. After removing his habit and renouncing Catholicism at the top of his lungs, the former monk "began to insult the holy church and the life of devotion and celibacy with words that are not fit to be written down. Then he delivered a heretical sermon. Then after his sermon he married a woman whom everyone said had a very bad reputation" (p. 106). When she describes the efforts of the Genevan reformers to convert the Poor Clare sisters, Jussie makes it clear that she and her sisters found the thought of marriage itself, much less marriage to a heretic, so dreadful that they were willing to die rather than leave their convent.

Interestingly, while Jussie shows nothing but contempt for the women who married former Catholic clergy, in general she depicts women on both sides of the religious divide as more strong and brave than men. Even the faithful Catholic men who assist the Poor Clares in surviving the Protestant onslaught, eventually helping them to leave Geneva altogether, ultimately are weaker than the nuns themselves. An outstanding example of this is Jussie's description of the near-abandonment of the convent by the father confessor, Jean Gacy. She describes the man's agonized decision and the calm response of the nuns: "For the love of God, dear father, save yourself" (p. 126). The situation is resolved only with God's intervention, a consistent theme in Jussie's chronicle. As the confessor was debating with himself, she tells us, "as it was God's will, two good peasant men from the village arrived" and convinced him that "it would be a great shame in the eyes of God and the people" for him to leave the nuns on their own (p. 126). The confessor stayed, despite being forced to attend the great disputation of 1535, one of the final steps in Geneva's conversion to a Reformed city. But Jussie goes on to recount that when the reformers forced their way into the convent in an attempt to preach to and convert the sisters, the same confessor was "more frightened than [the nuns] were" (p. 130). The fearful clergyman serves as the perfect counterpart to the convent's vicaress, one of the clear heroines of the chronicle, who resisted the infiltrators by shouting and pounding on the wall. Jussie remarks that the vicaress "was steadfast in her strong will and not afraid to die for the honor of God" (p. 131).

The beginning of Jussie's text is a brief account of the political events of the later 1520s, starting with Geneva's alliance, in 1526, with two Swiss cantons, Bern and Fribourg. Although Bern would convert to

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Reformed Protestantism in 1528 and Fribourg would remain Catholic, the alliance held in the interest in defending the members of the Swiss Confederation (which Geneva had not yet joined) from the encroaching powers of both the French king and the Duke of Savoy. In 1528, Geneva's prince-bishop, Pierre de la Baume, fled the city, to make only a brief reappearance in 1533. With the bishop's final departure, Geneva gained its independence from the church, but its survival depended upon the military support of Bern, now a firmly Reformed city. While Geneva's initial break with the Catholic bishop in the 1520s was not motivated by Reformation impulses, in 1536 the city government officially established the Reformed church and abolished Catholicism in Geneva. Jussie's chronicle focuses mainly on the height of this religious struggle, 1533–1535. Not surprisingly, politics and religious concerns were tightly intertwined in this period, dividing the Genevan population into a number of factions. The most extreme of these were the Mammelus and the Enfants (also known as the Eidguenots). The Mammelus (who called themselves the Monseigneuristes) were loyalists to the Catholic Duke of Savoy; they were determined to keep Geneva under the Duke's rule. Their clearest opponents, who called themselves "Les Enfants de Genève," supported Geneva's alliance with the Swiss cities in order to free themselves from Savoy. Initially the Enfants wanted to break from Savoy's influence but maintain Geneva's relationship with the prince-bishop. Ultimately, they turned to the Swiss alliance to support their break from both Savoyard and ecclesiastical power.[3] Although Jussie does not use the term "Monseigneuriste," she makes clear throughout her chronicle her unwavering support for the Duke of Savoy; her disgust for the reformers is based not only on their religious beliefs but also on their disrespect for the Duke and his historical relationship with Geneva.

These are just a few examples of the wealth of information provided by Jussie's *Short Chronicle*, which to this point has been little used by researchers, much less students.[4] Scholars of the period will still want to rely on the Feld transcription, for the original French text as well as for the contextual historical information provided in his footnotes. From the historian's point of view, it is unfortunate that those notes could not be included in this translation. Klaus acknowledges that fact in her introduction; briefer editorial footnotes are in keeping with the style of this series. Nevertheless, Klaus's translation is useful for researchers as an easily accessible opening into the *Short Chronicle*. The effective discussion of historical context she provides in her introduction will be useful for both students and more advanced scholars unfamiliar with the period or the specific context of Geneva in the 1520s and 1530s. Additionally helpful for students is Klaus's clear and concise discussion of the key historical and literary themes that make Jussie's *Chronicle* important and worth reading. For example, in addition to the topics mentioned in this review, Klaus addresses issues such as the history of the Poor Clares, the involvement of women in the Genevan Reformation, Jussie's emphasis on miracles and divine intervention, the written style of the text, and the history of the reception of the *Chronicle*.

Carrie Klaus's translation of Jussie's *Short Chronicle* is, above all, an invaluable teaching tool. Her translations are clear, and she has maintained the conversational style of Jussie's text; both of these characteristics make this source easily accessible by undergraduate students. Well-placed notes on questions of language remind the reader of important differences between French and English expression without making the text itself confusing. This is a relevant primary source for undergraduate courses on a variety of early modern topics, including the Reformation and the roles of women in early modern Europe. It will give students a sense of what life was like in a sixteenth-century convent, such as the daily rituals, hierarchy of the order, and commitment of the nuns to their way of life; a specific understanding of how the Protestant Reformation offended faithful Catholics; and a vivid picture of the kind of struggle that could occur when cities chose to become officially Protestant.

Even in a review of substantial length, it is difficult to do full justice to the richness of the *Short Chronicle* as a primary source for early modern Europe. Klaus's translation will immeasurably enliven and enrich any course on sixteenth-century Europe or early modern women. It will help bring the divisiveness of

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the Reformation and the experiences of early modern women to life not only for undergraduates, but for all readers.

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## NOTES

[1] As Klaus notes, one surviving account of the Genevan Reformation, *Guerre et délivrance de la ville de Genève*, may have been written by Marie Dentière, a former Augustinian nun who became a proponent of the Reformation in Geneva (pp. 20–21). Dentière’s known works have been published in the Other Voice series: Marie Dentière, *Epistle to Marguerite de Navarre and Preface to a Sermon by John Calvin*, ed. and trans. Mary B. McKinley (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[2] Jeanne de Jussie, *Petite chronique*, ed. Helmut Feld (Mainz: Von Zabern, 1996).

[3] For more explanation and sources on these divisions, see William G. Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 14–21.

[4] Even relatively recent works on Geneva and Calvinism, while otherwise thorough in their research, do not cite Jussie’s *Chronicle* as a source on the Genevan struggle over independence or establishment of the Reformation. See, for example, Naphy’s *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (above) and Philip Benedict’s *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 78–82.

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