
In his History of the Church (6.31), Eusebius of Caesarea says that a man whom he calls simply ‘Africanus’ was a well known writer in the time of the emperor Gordian (238–44). Africanus wrote a work entitled Kestoi, a letter to Origen contesting the authenticity of the story of Susannah, a letter addressed to Aristides dealing with the harmony of the Gospels, and five books of Chronographiae. In his Chronicle, at the 250th Olympiad (221/2), Eusebius says that Julius Africanus, the chronographer, was influential in the decision of the emperor to refound the Palestinian town of Emmaus as Nicopolis. Neither the Kestoi nor the Chronographiae has survived. From Georgius Syncellus we learn that Africanus synchronized the year 5723 from Adam with the 250th Olympiad. Photius reports that Africanus covered a total of 5723 years in his work.

The influence of the Chronographiae on late antique and Byzantine chronography was enormous. Among other matters, it was Africanus who popularized the idea that human history would endure for seven millennia, and that Christ had been born in the middle of the sixth millennium, 5500 years from Adam. He also established what became the traditional date for the Resurrection in the Greek church, in the second year of the 202nd Olympiad, AD 30/31.

Martin Wallraff’s edition of the fragments of the Chronographiae of Julius Africanus is a welcome and long overdue addition to the GCS series. As Wallraff explains, the original editors of the series had assigned the task to Heinrich Gelzer, who was well known for what remains the only monographic treatment of the Chronographiae. After Gelzer’s untimely death in 1926, the project was abandoned. The GCS series was itself revived in the 1990’s with a broader scope and a Neue Folge of volumes. Martin Wallraff responded affirmatively in 1999 to an invitation to publish a critical edition of the fragments of Africanus’ Chronographiae. Shortly thereafter, the nearly completed manuscript of Gelzer’s edition was rediscovered in the University library at Jena.

Meanwhile, William Adler of North Carolina State University had himself been contemplating the task of collecting the fragments. The result was a fruitful collaboration by which Wallraff, with the assistance of Umberto Roberto, assumed the main responsibility for the introduction and the critical edition, while Adler undertook the translation. For the Armenian and Syriac witnesses, Wallraff enlisted the assistance of Karl Pinggéra. The entire team participated in the drafting of the explanatory notes.

With introduction, translation, and notes in English, rather than German, the volume represents a new direction for the GCS. Wallraff and Adler are now collaborating on an edition and translation of the fragments of the Kestoi, also for publication in the GCS, to update and supplement the 1970 edition with French translation by Jean René Viellefond.

The 46-page Introduction begins with a concise, but comprehensive summary of what we know about the man and his work. There follows an excellent discus-

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1 Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie (Leipzig, 1880–98).
sion of the literary character of the *Chronographiae* and a brief introduction to the problems involved in trying to reconstruct its chronological system. Wallraff takes what he terms a ‘cautious’ approach. His task as an editor is not to try to resolve all of the chronological difficulties that the fragments present and thus to reconstruct the chronological system, but to make available the evidence upon which any such effort must be based. For the convenience of the reader, he does offer a tentative reconstruction, representing what he calls a ‘broad scholarly consensus’. A table summarizing this consensus appears at the end of the book, and Wallraff draws attention in the introduction to some of the main problems.

Syncellus cites Africanus for a synchronism among the year 5723 from Adam, the 250th Olympiad (221/2), and the consulship of Seleucus and Gratus (221). Syncellus also attests to 5472 as the last year of Cleopatra, and several witnesses attest to the first year of the 55th Olympiad (560/59) as the first year of Cyrus. The synchronisms of 5723 with the 250th Olympiad and of 5472 with the last year of Cleopatra (51/50), together with intervals attested for the length of Persian and Macedonian rule in Alexandria, lead to 4943 and Olympiad 55.1 for the first year of Cyrus. Yet the intervals attested for Biblical history lead to 4942 as the last year of the Babylonian captivity, and our witnesses cite Africanus as stating that this was also the first year of Cyrus and the first year of the 55th Olympiad. Wallraff thus encloses 4942=Ol 55.1 with curly brackets, which the introduction explains as well-attested dates that fail to concur with the overall system. He refers the reader to the scholarly literature in which these problems are debated. Absent from that reference is the brief, but important discussion by V. Grumel.¹

There are two main issues that must be resolved in deciding to what absolute dates the years from Adam correspond.

The first is the question of how Africanus coordinated his two main chronological systems with each other. Denis Petau believed that Africanus must have counted his years from Adam from a date corresponding to the Sunday of Creation in the spring of the year.² Gelzer argued that the years from Adam were synchronized with the Roman year beginning in January and overlapped with Olympiad years beginning in July.³ Wallraff follows Eduard Schwartz, who maintained that Africanus must have used a single chronological system, synchronizing the years from Adam with the Olympiad year and both in turn with the Syro-Macedonian year that began in September or October, a few weeks after the observance of an Olympic festival.⁴ G.F. Unger and, more recently, Richard Burgess have argued that Africanus synchronized his Olympiads with the Syro-Macedonian year that began the previous autumn.⁵ V. Grumel agreed with Petau, and dated the beginning of the year 1 specifically to Sunday, 22 March, 5301 BC. Grumel did not engage the chronological system of Africanus as a whole, but his hypothesis can resolve the problem at the first year of Cyrus. The first year of Cyrus began in Olympiad

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² 'Dissertatio de Graecorum aeris ac computis' (1630), repr. PG 19. 1403–4.
³ Sextus Julius Africanus i. 45, 48–50.
⁴ Die Königslisten des Eratosthenes und Kastor, mit Excursen über die Interpolationen bei Africanus und Eusebius (Göttingen, 1895) 22–38.
⁵ G.F. Unger, Die Seleukidenära der Makkabäerbücher, SBMünch 23 (1895) 310–13; R. Burgess, Africanus’ Chronology for Christ and the Date of the Chronographiae, in: Julius Africanus und die christliche Weltchronistik, ed. Martin Wallraff (Berlin, 2006) 39–42.
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55.1, during the year 4942 from Adam, and the year 4943 began during Olympiad 55.1 and the first year of Cyrus.¹

The second issue is how one should interpret the chronological summaries that the sources quote from Africanus. In the summary of 2262 years from Adam to the Flood, the genealogical intervals from Adam to Noah show that 2262 is the year of the Flood. In the summary of 3277 years from Adam to the entrance of Abraham into the Promised Land, however, the numeral represents an interval, not an inclusive count. If 4942 was the last year of the Captivity, the sum of 1235 years from the Exodus to that point leads to 3708 for the Exodus, and the Biblical interval of 430 years from the promise to Abraham to the Exodus yields 3278 for the entrance of Abraham into the Promised Land. Wallraff lists 3277 for the migration of Abraham in bold type, as a date that is secure, and 3707 for the Exodus in regular type, as a date that can be inferred. Gelzer used 3277 as the epoch of Abraham and 3707 as the epoch of the Exodus, but several times in his footnotes alerted the reader to the fact that the year 1 of the Exodus is actually 3708. The issue is important for the date of the Incarnation. The sources cite Africanus for a summary of 5500 years from Adam to the Epiphany of Christ. Syncellus inferred that Africanus dated the Incarnation to the year 5500. Petau and Grumel argued that Africanus is more likely to have numbered the year of the Incarnation as 5501. Wallraff follows Schwartz in dating the birth of Christ to December/January of the year 5500=3/2 BC, while Grumel argued for March of 5502=1 BC as the date of the Incarnation. With a date for the Nativity therefore in December/January of 1 BC/AD 1, Africanus becomes a possible source for the Christian era of Dionysius Exiguus.²

The remainder of the introduction is devoted to discussion of the authors and texts that preserve the fragments, followed by treatment of earlier collections of the fragments, especially that of Martin Routh (Reliquiae Sacrae Oxford 1846), and an explanation of the principles followed for this new collection.

Wallraff organizes the fragments and testimonia into a collection of 100, compared with Routh’s 56, most of which are attested by more than one text. He divides the witnesses between fragments believed to represent the words of Africanus, whether in Greek or in translation, labeled as F, and testimonia (T) that cite Africanus, but do not quote him. Thus the summary of 3277 years from Adam to the entrance of Abraham into the Promised Land that Syncellus quotes is F 16d, while Syncellus’ statement that Africanus dated that event to 3277 is T 16p.

Wallraff includes among the fragments selections from the Excerpta Barbari, an eighth-century Latin translation of excerpts from an Alexandrine world chronicle first published by Scaliger. Some of the excerpts explicitly cite Africanus, others closely parallel his chronological system as attested elsewhere. Routh had not included most of these excerpts, and Wallraff is certainly right to do so.

Wallraff also includes as F 65 the anonymous list of Olympic victors preserved in the first book of the Chronicle of Eusebius. In the introduction and in a separately published article,³ he defends Scaliger’s attribution of this list to Africanus, against my hypothesis that it derives from the Longinus whom Eusebius lists among his sources for Greek chronology, but to whom he directly attributes

nothing in the material that he gathers. Wallraff is certainly right that Scaliger’s hypothesis ‘still carries a high degree of plausibility’ (p. xxxiii). The fact that the list ends with the name of the victor for Olympiad 249, while Africanus apparently completed his work about the time of the 250th Olympiad, points in that direction. Paul Christesen, in a book published after Wallraff had completed his work, has suggested that it was Africanus who excerpted the list from the chronicle of Cassius Longinus.2

The fragments and testimonia are equipped with three and sometimes four sets of apparatus. When a fourth apparatus is needed, it appears first, showing which of the cited texts attest which portion of the fragment. There follows an apparatus of secondary textual witnesses, which do not explicitly cite Africanus, but contain material useful for the reconstruction or interpretation of the text. An apparatus of similar passages lists sources and parallels for the information contained within the text. The critical apparatus always appears last. The editors supplement variant readings culled from the standard editions of the texts cited with additional readings from their own extensive research in the scholarly literature, as well as parallel texts.

The English translation not only makes the fragments and testimonia accessible to readers who are not trained in the ancient languages, but also (as the Introduction notes) clarifies for the more expert reader how the editors have understood the text and why they have preferred certain solutions over others. The explanatory notes are concise and limited to those issues most germane to an edition, rather than a commentary. An index of passages cited, an index of proper names, and a concordance to the numbering of the fragments in earlier editions complete the volume.

Martin Walraff and his team are to be congratulated for producing an absolutely first-rate edition of the fragments of the *Chronographiae*. It sets a new standard for the ‘state of the art’ in such work.

Prescott

Alden A. Mosshammer


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