Chronicon

Isidore of Seville (c. AD 560–636)

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English translation

[Translated by Kenneth B. Wolf] PREFACE Julius Africanus, under the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius, was the first among us to compose, using a simple style of history, a brief chronology organized according to generations and reigns. From there, Bishop Eusebius of Caesaria and the priest Jerome of holy memory edited a multipart history of the canons of chronicles organized according to reigns and times. After these came others, in particular, Bishop Victor of Tunnunna who, having reviewed the histories of the previous times, filled out the deeds of succeeding ages up to the consolate of Justin the Younger. We have recorded here, as briefly as we were able, a summary of the times from the beginning of the world up to the principates of the emperor Heraclius and of King Sisebut of the Goths, laying down, bit by bit, the descending order of times, so that, by means of the information provided, the whole of the past ages might be known.

FIRST AGE OF THE WORLD 1. God created everything in six days. On the first day he fashioned light; on the second, the firmament of heaven; on the third, the land and the sea; on the fourth, the stars; on the fifth, the fish and the birds; on the sixth, the animals and the beasts of burden and finally the first man, Adam, in his image. 2. Adam, at age 230, bore Seth, who was born in the place of Abel. Seth means ”resurrection” because in him was resuscitated the first seed, that is, the seed of the sons of God. Seth, at age 205, bore Enosh, who was the first to begin invoking the name of God. Enosh, at age 190, bore Kenan, whose name means ”the nature of God.” At the same time, Cain became the first, before the flood, to build a city, which he filled solely with the multitude of his own descendents.

3. Kenan, at age 170, bore Mahalalel, whose name means ”plantation of God.” Mahalalel, at age 165, bore Jared, which means ”descending” or ”beseeching.” Jared, at age 162, bore Enoch, who was lifted up by God, and who is reported to have written quite a few things, but which, on account of their antiquity, are refuted by the fathers as of suspect faith. 4. Enoch, at age 165, bore Methuselah, who, according to his lifespan, is discovered to have lived fourteen years after the flood, yet he is not found to have been on the ark. On account of this, some conjecture, with false opinion, that he might have lived after the flood, having spent some time with his father Enoch, who was lifted up. In this generation, the sons of God lusted after the daughters of men. Methuselah, at age 167, bore Lamech. In this

generation, giants were born. In this age also, Jubal, from the line of Cain, discovered the art of music and his brother Tubal Cain was the inventor of the arts of copper and iron.

5. Lamech, at age 190, bore Noah who, by divine oracle, was ordered to build the arc in the five-hundredth year of his life. In these times, as Josephus reports, some men, who knew that they were about to die by either fire or water, inscribed their discoveries on two columns made of brick and stone, so that the memory of those things which they had discovered in their wisdom might not be erased. Their stone columns are reported to have withstood the flood and remain in Syria to this very day. 6. In Noah's six-hundredth year, the flood is recorded to have occurred. Josephus reports that his ark came to rest among the mountains of Armenia, which are called Ararat. There were three sons of Noah, out of which seventy-two nations were born, that is, fifteen from Japheth, thirty from Ham, and twenty-seven from Shem. The first age came to an end in the year 2,242.

THE SECOND AGE OF THE WORLD 7. Shem, in the second year after the flood, when he was 100 years old, bore Arpachshad, from whom the people of the Chaldeans arose. This Shem is reported to have been Melchisedech, who was the first after the flood to build the city of Salem, which now is called Jerusalem. 8. Arphaxad, at age 135, bore Shelah, from whom came the ancient Salamites or Medians. Shelah, at age 130, bore Eber, after whom the Hebrews were named. 9. Eber, at age 134, bore Peleg, in whose time the Tower of Babel was built, and the division of languages was effected. The height of this tower is said to have stretched four miles, starting out wide and becoming narrower so that the immense weight might be more easily sustained. They describe the marble temples there as being unmatched in precious stones and gold and many other things that seem unbelievable. The giant Nimrod constructed this tower. After the confusion of tongues, he departed from there for Persia and taught them to worship fire.

10. Peleg, at age 130, bore Reu. In these times, temples were first constructed. And certain princes of the peoples began to be adored as gods. Reu, at age 132, bore Serug, under whom the kingdom of the Scythians arose, where Tanaus first ruled. Serug, at age 130, bore Nachor. The kingdom of the Egyptians arose for the first time, with Zoes ruling there first. 11. Nachor, at age 79, bore Terah, at the time when the kingdom of the Assyrians and the Sicyonans rose up. The first who ruled in Assyria was Belus, though some consider it to have been Saturnus. And the first in Sicyon was Aegialeus, after whom Aegialea, which today is called the Peloponnesus, is named. 12. Terah, at age 70, bore Abraham. At the same time Ninus ruled as king of the Assyrians. He was the first to institute wars and invented the instruments of weaponry. In this age the art of magic was discovered in Persia by Zoroaster, the king of the Bactrians. He was killed by King Ninus. Also the walls of Babylon were built by Samiramis, queen of the Assyrians. From the flood to the birth of Abraham: 942 years. The second age came to an end in the year 3,184.

THE THIRD AGE OF THE WORLD 13. Abraham, at age 100, bore Isaac from the "liberated" Sarah. But previously he had born, from his handmaiden Hagar, Ishmael, from whom came the people of the Ishmaelites, who later were called "Agarenes" and finally,

"Saracens." 14. Isaac, at age 60, bore twins, of whom the first was Esau, from whom came the Edomites, and the second, Jacob, who bore the cognomen "Israel," after whom the Israelites were named. In this time, the kingdom of the Greeks began, where Inachus was the first to rule. 15. Jacob, at age 91, bore Joseph. In these times, Serapis, son of Jove, king of the Egyptians, upon dying, was lifted up among the gods and the city of Memphis was founded in Egypt. In that time, at Lake Triton, Minerva appeared in the form of a virgin. She is said to have excelled with many inventions. She is said to have been the inventor of craftsmanship. She invented the shield and the bow and she taught how to make spears and dye wool. In this age also King Phoroneus, son of Inachus, excelled. He was the first to institute laws and trials in Greece.

16. Joseph lived 110 years. From this time, Greece, with Argos ruling, began to have crops, with seeds imported from elsewhere. One hundred forty four years after the death of Joseph, the Jews found themselves in servitude in Egypt. Prometheus, whom fables imagine to have formed men out of mud, is recorded to have lived in these times. At this time also, his brother Atlas discovered astrology and was the first to consider the movement and order of the sky. Also, Mercury, grandson of Atlas, was expert in many arts. On account of this, upon his death, he was lifted up among the gods. In that age also, Proclytus was the first to harness a team of horses. At the same time Cecrops founded Athens and called the people of Attica "Athenians" after the other name of Minerva. He also was the first to order Jove to be adored with a gentile rite, immolating a bull in sacrifice. At this time Corinth was founded in Greece and there the art of painting was discovered by Cleanthes. At that time the Curetes and Corybantes were the first to invent harmonious and modulated formations of soldiers. At that time also a flood in Thessaly under Deucalion and a fabulous fire with Phaethon are recorded to have happened.

17. Moses, at age 40, guided the people, liberated from servitude in Egypt, into the wilderness. At this time the Jews began to have, through Moses, both letters and law. At that time the Temple of Delphi was built. Viticulture was invented in Greece. 18. Joshua, the successor of Moses, led the people for twenty-seven years. In these times, Erichthonius, the prince of the Athenians, was the first to harness a team of horses in Greece. 19. Othniel led for forty years. Cadmus, the first to invent Greek letters, ruled in Thebes. At the same time Linus and Amphion were the first among the Greeks to excell in the art of music. The Idaean Dactylites, at the same time, discovered the use of iron in Greece. 20. Ehud led for eighty years. In these times fables were devised: about Triptolemus who, born aloft with the wings of dragons, distributed food to the poor as he flew at the command of Ceres; about the Hippocentaurs, in which were combined the characteristics of man and horse; about Phrixus and his sister Helle who crossed the sea conveyed by rams; about the harlot Gorgon who had serpents for hair and anyone looking at whom was turned into stone; about Bellerophon who fought (on the back of) a horse that flew with wings; about Amphion who, with the music of the zither, moved rocks and stones.

21. Deborah led for forty years. In this same time Apollo discovered the zither and invented the art of medicine. Then, also, fables were devised about Daedalus and his son Icarus who flew with wings they fashioned themselves. In this age, Latinus Picus, thought to be the son of Saturn, first ruled. 22. Gideon led for forty years. In the age the city of Tyre was constructed. Also the other Mercury discovered the lyre and gave it to Orpheus. In this time Philemon was the first to institute the chorus in Pythium. At that time also Linus of Thrace, the [music] teacher of Hercules, was said to have been illustrious in the art of music. In addition the navigation of the Argonauts is recorded. 23. Abimelech led for three years. He killed his 70 brothers. Hercules devastated Ilium and in Libya killed Antaeus, the inventor of the art of gymnastics.

24. Tola led for twenty-three years. In his times Priam ruled Troy, after Laomedon. A fable is told at that time about the beast of the Minotaur enclosed in the labyrinth. 25. Jair led for twenty-two years. At the same time Hercules instituted the Olympic competition. The nymph Carmentis invented Latin letters. 26. Jephthah led for six years. In his time, Hercules, living in his fifty-second year, injected himself with flames on account of the pain of his disease. At the same time Alexander raped Helen and the Trojan war surged for ten years. Ibzan led for seven years. The Amazons took up arms for the first time. Abdon led for eight years. In his third year, Troy was captured and Aeneas came to Italy. 27. Sampson led for twenty years. Ascanius, son of Aeneas, founded Alba. Also fables were devised about Ulysses and of the Sirens at the same time.

28. The priest Heli led for forty years. The Ark of the Covenant was captured by foreigners. The kingdom of the Sicyonans came to an end. Samuel and Saul led for forty years. The kingdom of the Lacedaemonians arose. And Homer is reputed to have been the first poet in Greece. From the promise of Abraham until David: 940 years. The third age came to an end in the year 4,125. THE FOURTH AGE OF THE WORLD 29. David ruled for forty years. Codrus, king of the Athenians, was killed as he voluntarily offered himself to the enemy for the well-being of the country. And Carthage was built by Dido, with Gath, Nathan, and Asapaht prophesying in Judea. 30. Solomon ruled for forty years. He (began) building the Temple of Jerusalem in the fourth year of his reign and finished it in the eigth year. 31. Rehoboam ruled for seventeen years. The kingdom of Israel was separated from Judah, the ten tribes being separated from the two, and they began to have kings in Samaria. In this age, Samos was founded and the sibyl Erythraea was regarded as illustrious.

32. Abijam ruled for three years. Under him Abimelech, high priest of the Jews, was regarded as illustrious. Asa ruled for forty-one years. Achias, Amos, Jehu, Joel, and Azaria prophesied in Judea. Josaphat ruled for twenty-five years. Elijah, Elisha, Abdias, Azarias, and Micaeas prophesied. Jehoram ruled for eight years. Elijah, Elisha, and Abdias prophesied. Ahaziah ruled for one year. Elijah, whose worthy miracles numbered seven, was taken up (by God). 33. Athalia ruled for seven years. The priest Jonadab, son of Rechab, was regarded as brilliant, etc. Joida the priest was the only one after Moses who was said to have lived 130 years. Joash ruled for forty years. Zacarias the prophet was killed. Elisha,

whose miracles (virtutes) were said to number fourteen, died. Lycurgus was regarded as a distinguished lawmaker in Greece. Amaziah ruled for twenty-nine years. Some assert that Carthage was founded at this time, but others say earlier.

34. Azariah ruled for fifty-two years. The Olympic (games) were established for the first time by the Greeks. A sheep spoke in Greece. King Sardanapalus was burned willingly in a fire. The kingdom of the Assyrians was removed to Media. At that time, Hesiod the poet excelled. And Phidon Argivus discovered weights and measures, with Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Jonah prophesying in this age in Judea. 35. Jotham ruled for sixteen years. Remus and Romulus were born, with Hosea, Joel, Isaiah, and Micah prophesying in Judea. Ahaz ruled for sixteen years. In his times Romulus founded Rome. And Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, moved the ten tribes of Israel from Samaria to Media, and sent the neighboring Samarites to Judea. 36. Hezekiah ruled for twenty-nine years. Under him Isaiah and Hosea prophesied. At this time Romulus first chose soldiers from among the people. He also chose one hundred most noble men from among the people, who, because of their age, were called ”senators” and because of their care and solicitude were called ”fathers of the republic.”

37. Manasseh ruled for fifty-five years. At the same time Numa Pompilius was placed over the Romans. He was the first to institute vestal virgins and priests among the Romans and he filled the city with a great number of false gods. He added two months to the ten months of the Roman year: he dedicated January to the heavenly gods and February to the gods of the underworld. At that time also, the sibyl Samia excelled. 38. Ammon ruled for twelve years. In his time Tullus Hostilius, king of the Romans, (74) took a census of the republic for the first time, because the population of the whole world was still unknown. He was also the first to use the color purple as a sign of honor. (4,556) 39. Josiah ruled for thirty-two years. Thales of Miletus (Milesius) excelled as a philosopher of physics. Having come to understand the defects of the sun with the most acute scrutiny, he was the first to investigate the number of astrology, with Jeremiah, Olda, and Sophonia prophesying in Judea.

40. Jehoiakim ruled for eleven years. In his third year Nebachodnezzar made captive Judea a tributary. At that time Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael excelled in Babylonia. Zedekiah ruled for eleven years. The king of Babylon, coming to Jerusalem a second time, led him away captive along with his people, the Temple having been burned down in the 454 year after its construction. At the same time, the woman Sappho excelled in Greece with various poems. Solon gave laws to the Athenians. 41. From David to the migration to Babylon: 485 years. The fourth age came to an end in the year 4,610. THE FIFTH AGE OF THE WORLD 42. The captivity of the Hebrews lasted for seventy years, during which time the fire was removed from the altar of God and deposited in filth. It is claimed that it was still burning after the seventieth year, the year of the return (of the Jews). During the same period of captivity, the story of Judith was written. Also Pythagoras, the philosopher and

inventor of the art of arithmetic; Pherecydes, the first writer of histories; and Xenophanes, the inventor of tragedies, were regarded as distinguished.

43. Darius ruled for thirty-four years. In his second year, the captivity of the Jews ended, from which time in Jerusalem there were princes, not kings, up until Aristobulus. At that time the Romans, having expelled their kings, began to have consuls. 44. Xerxes ruled for twenty years. Aeschylus, Pindar, Sophocles, and Euripides, were celebrated as distinguished authors of tragedies. Herodotus, the author of histories, and Zeuxis, the painter, were also acknowledged. 45. Artaxerxes, also known as Longimanus, ruled for forty years. With him ruling, Ezra the priest renovated the law that had been burned by the invading peoples and Nehemiah restored the walls of Jerusalem. Aristarchus, Aristophanes, and Sophocles were regarded as distinguished authors of tragedy. Also Hippocrates the doctor, Socrates the philosopher, and Democritus excelled. 46. Darius, also known as Nothus, ruled for nineteen years. This age saw the philosopher, Plato, and Gorgias, the first rhetor. 47. Artaxerxes ruled for forty years. In his time the story of Esther, it is taught, was completed. Also Plato and Xenophon were regarded as distinguished Socratics. (4,834)

48. Artaxerxes, also known as Ochus, ruled for twenty-six years. Demosthenes was acknowledged to be the first orator and Aristotle was reported to be the first dialectician. Plato died. 49. Arses, son of Ochus, ruled for four years. Xenocrates was regarded as an illustrious philosopher. 50. Darius ruled for six years. Alexander, conquering Illyricum and Thrace, from there took Jerusalem and, entering the Temple, burned sacrifices to God. The kingdom of the Persians still remained standing. From this point began the kings of the Greeks. 51. Alexander the Macedonian ruled for fifteen years. In his last five years, in the order of years by which they are numbered, he obtained the monarchy of Asia, having destroyed the kingdom of the Persians. His first seven years are thought to have been spent among the kings of the Persians. From this point begin the kings of Alexandria. 52. Ptolemy, son of Lagus, ruled for forty years. Having seized Judea, he moved many of the Hebrews into Egypt. In this time Zeno the Stoic, Menander the comic, and Theophrastus the philosopher excelled. At the same time the first book of the Maccabees was begun.

53. Ptolemy Philadelphus ruled for thirty-eight years. He released the Jews that were in Egypt and, restoring the holy vase to Eleazar the priest, he sought out seventy translators and translated the divine scriptures into Greek. At the same time Aratus was acknowledged as an astrologer and the silver coins of the Romans were minted for the first time. 54. Ptolemy Evergetes ruled for twenty-six years. Under him Jesus, the son of Sirach, composed the Book of Wisdom. (4,978) 55. Ptolemy Philopator ruled for twenty-seven years. The Jews were defeated by him in battle, 60,000 soldiers falling. At the same time the consul Marcellus conquered Sicily. 56. Ptolemy Epiphanes ruled for twenty-four years. In his time the events occurred which are contained in the story of the second book of the Maccabees. In this age the Romans ordered the vanquished Greeks to be freed, saying: ”It is impious to enslave people from the place where philosophy, the master of morals and the

inventor of liberal disciplines, first arose." At the same time Ennius was celebrated as the first distinguished Latin poet of Rome.

57. Ptolemy Philomater ruled for thirty-five years. Antiochus overcame him in battle and oppressed the Jews with various calamities. At the same time Scipio conquered Africa. Terence the comic excelled. 58. Ptolemy Evergetes ruled for twenty-nine years. At this time Spain was conquered by the Romans under the consul Brutus. 59. Ptolemy Soter ruled for seventeen years. Varro and Cicero were born. Thrace was subjected to the Romans. 60. Ptolemy Alexander ruled for ten years. Syria passed under the dominion of the Romans under the general Gabinus. Also the poet Lucretius was born, who later killed himself as a result of a lover's madness. 61. Ptolemy, son of Cleopatra, ruled for eight years. At the same time Plotius Gallus was the first to teach Latin rhetoric in Rome. At that time also Sallust the historian was born. 62. Ptolemy Dionysius ruled for thirty years. Pompey, having captured Jerusalem, made the Jews tributaries to the Romans. At the same time the philosopher Cato excelled. Virgil was born in Mantua, Horace in Venusia. At that time also Apollodorus, preceptor of the emperor, was regarded as illustrious and Cicero was celebrated with praise for his oratory.

63. Cleopatra ruled for two years. She was the daughter of Ptolemy (XI), king of the Egyptians, and sister and wife of her brother Ptolemy (XIII). Desiring to defraud him of the kingdom, in a time of civil war in Alexandria, she went to Caesar, who was besieging the city, and, using pretense and debasing herself, she begged, in the presence of Julius, for the death of Ptolemy and to have the kingdom for herself. The kingdom of Alexandria, in the third year of the reign of Cleopatra, passed under the dominion of the Romans under Julius Caesar. 64. Gaius Julius Caesar ruled for five years. Before he was made consul, he conquered Gaul and triumphed in Britain. And after having waged a war against Pompey, he obtained the monarchy of the entire empire. The succeeding emperors were called "Caesars" after his name. 65. From the migration to Babylonia up to the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ: 587 years. The fifth age came to an end in the year 5,155.

THE SIXTH AGE OF THE WORLD 66. Octavian Augustus ruled for fifty-six years. He, in his imperium, after the Sicilian war, had three triumphs: Dalmatia, Asia, and later Alexandria against Anthony. From there, Spain. At that point, having brought peace on land and sea to the entire world, he closed the gates of Janus. Under his imperium, the writings of Daniel were completed in seventy weeks and, as the kingdom and priesthood of the Jews was coming to an end, the Lord Jesus Christ was born from a virgin in Bethlehem of Judah in the forty-second year of Octavian's rule. 67. Tiberus, the son of the Augustus, ruled for twenty-two years. He, out of cupidity, did not let the kings coming to him return, and many peoples receded from the Roman empire. The Lord was crucified in the eighteenth year of his reign, 5,229 years having elapsed since the beginning of the world.

68. Caius Caligula ruled for four years. He was fierce with avarice, cruelty, and lust and, elevating himself to the level of the gods, he ordered a statue of Olympian Jove to be placed under his name in the Temple of Jerusalem. At the same time, in Judea, the apostle Matthew

was the first to write a gospel. 69. Claudius ruled for fourteen years. With him ruling, the apostle Peter went to Rome against Simon Magus. Also Mark the Evangelist, preaching Christ in Alexandria, wrote his gospel. 70. Nero ruled for fourteen years. Given to injury, cruelty, and lust, he even fished with nets of gold. He prostituted and killed his mother and sister, wiped out much of the senate, lost many cities and provinces of the republic, and also burned down the city of Rome so that he might witness an image of the destruction of Troy. In his times, Simon Magus was reported to have had an altercation with the apostles Peter and Paul. Claiming that a certain great power that he had came from God, he proposed at midday to fly to the Father in heaven with the help of demons, by whom he was to be born aloft. But, with Peter swearing at the demons and Paul praying, Simon was cast down and he crashed. Because of Simon's death, Peter was crucified by Nero and Paul was killed with a sword. In this same storm, a Persian poet died. In addition, Lucan and Seneca were killed by order of Nero.

71. Vespasian ruled for ten years. Vigorous in military discipline, through his fighting he restored to the republic many provinces which Nero had lost. He was unmindful of offenses and he bore lightly the insults said against him. In his second year Titus took and overthrew Jerusalem, where 1,100,000 Jews perished by famine and the sword. Beyond these, another 100,000 were publicly sold into slavery. 72. Titus ruled for eleven years. He was so eloquent in both languages that he could prepare legal cases in Latin and compose poems and tragedies in Greek. He was, however, so bellicose that in the assault on Jerusalem, fighting under his father, he pierced twelve soldiers with twelve arrows. But he was of such magnanimity in the exercise of his imperial rule, that he punished no one at all, but dismissed those convicted of conspiring against him and maintained the same familiarity with them which he had had before. Among all of his sayings, the most famous was: "The day is lost in which nothing good is accomplished."

73. Domitian, brother of Titus, ruled for sixteen years. He was the second after Nero who, cursed with pride, commanded that he be considered a god and ordered the Christians to be persecuted by the pagans. Under him, the apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse. (Domitian) killed and sent many of the senators into exile, and he ordered everyone from the line of David to be killed so that none of the Jews from the royal line would survive. 74. Nerva ruled for one year. A moderate man in his imperium, he presented himself as equal to, and approachable by, everyone. In his time, John the Apostle returned from exile to Ephesus and, entreated by the bishops of Asia, became the most recent to edit a new gospel. 75. Trajan ruled for nineteen years. He extended the empire of the Romans with wondrous power far and wide to the east. Tranquil and liberal in all things, he took Babylonia and Arabia and reached all the way to the territory of India, like Alexander. Among all of the things he said, the most extraordinary is reported to have been his response when asked why he was so approachable by everyone around him: (to wit), that he would rather deprive himself of being emperor than be a private emperor. Simon Cleophas, bishop of Jerusalem, was crucified at this time and John the Apostle passed away.

76. Hadrian ruled for twenty-one years. Envying the glory of Trajan, he surrendered the provinces of the east to the Persians and established the boundary of the Roman empire at the river Euphrates. He also subjugated the Jews who, for a second time, had become rebels, and he restored the city of Jerusalem and called it by his own name, Aelia. At the same time, Aquila Ponticus, the second translator after the Septuagint, arose. And Basilides was acknowledged to be a heresiarch. 77. Antoninus Pius ruled for twenty-two years. He received this cognomen on account of his clemency, because throughout the entire Roman kingdom he relaxed the debts of everyone, burning the notes. For which reason he is also called the ”Father of the Country.” He was the first to divide the imperium of the Roman world, which he did with Antoninus the Younger, making him equal in power. With Antoninus Pius ruling, Valentius and Marcion were shown to be heresiarchs and the doctor Galen, born in Pergamum, was regarded as illustrious in Rome.

78. Antoninus Minor ruled for eighteen years. Having advanced to Parthia, he took Seleucia, the city of Assyria, with 400,000 men. He triumphed over the Parthians and the Persians. With him ruling, Montanus, the author of the Cataphrygites and Tatian, from whom came the heresy of the Encratitarites, appeared. 79. Commodus ruled for thirteen years. He was a man of great lust. Under his imperial rule, Theodotian of Ephesus, the third translator, appeared. And Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, was regarded as illustrious in his teaching. 80. Aelius Pertinax ruled for one year. With the senate entreating him to make his wife ”Augustus” and his son ”Caesar,” he refused, saying that he ought to be replaced because he ruled unwillingly. 81. Severus Pertinax ruled for eighteen years. He successfully waged many wars. He conquered Parthia, acquired Arabia, and took Britain by force. He had a knowledge of literature and philosophy. In his time Symmachus, the fourth translator, was acknowledged. Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, was celebrated with many virtues. Tertullian of Africa was regarded as illustrious in the church. Origen of Alexandria was erudite in his studies.

82. Antoninus Caracalla, the son of Severus, ruled for seven years. He was impatient in his desires. He took his stepmother as his wife. He did nothing memorable. In his time, in Jericho, a fifth edition of the holy scriptures was found, the author of which was not known. 83. Macrinus ruled for one year. Ruling with his own son, he undertook nothing memorable during his brief time as emperor. For after only one year, both were killed as a result of a military uprising. 84. Aurelius Antoninus ruled for four years. He lived most obscenely and was himself killed by a military revolt. In his time, a sixth edition was found in Nicopolis. The heresiarch Sabellius appeared. 85. Alexander ruled for thirteen years. He most gloriously conquered the Persians. He was favorable to the citizens. In his time, Origen of Alexandria excelled and in Rome, the legal expert Ulpian was illustrious.

86. Maximinus ruled for three years. He was the first to be made emperor by the body of the military without a senate decree. He persecuted Christians. 87. Gordian ruled for six years. He afflicted the rebelling Parthians and Persians. Returning victorious from Persia, he died as a result of the treachery of his own men. In his time, Zephyrinus, with the witness of the

holy spirit descending in the form of a dove over his head, was ordained bishop of Rome. 88. Philip ruled for seven years. He was the first among the emperors to believe in Christ. In his first year, the one thousandth year of the city of Rome was reported to have passed. 89. Decius ruled for one year. In his time, St. Anthony the monk, by whom monasteries were first founded, is reported to have appeared. 90. Gallus and his son Volusianus ruled for two years. Novatus, a priest under bishop Cyprian, came to Rome and founded the Novatian hersesy.

91. Valerian, with Gallienus, ruled for fifteen years. Cyprian, first rhetor and them bishop, was crowned with martyrdom. Also the Goths depopulated Greece, Macedonia, and Pontus in Asia. Valerian, orchestrating a persecution of the Christians, was captured by Sapor, king of the Persians, and there he grew old with the disgrace of his life. 92. Claudius ruled for two years. He conquered and devastated the Goths (in) Illyricum and Macedonia. Paul of Samostenus was acknowledged to be a heresiarch. 93. Aurelian ruled for six years. He extended the empire of the Romans by force almost to its previous boundaries. Carrying out the persecution against the Christians, he was seized with a sudden calamity and died without delay. 94. Tacitus ruled for one year. His brief life left no deed worthy of record. 95. Probus ruled for six years. Vigorous in war and illustrious in civilian life, he restored to the Romans, by force, Gaul, which had been occupied by the barbarians. In his time the heresy of the Manicheans arose. (5,481)

96. Carus ruled with his sons Carinus and Numerianus for two years. (134) Carus, after he triumphed over the Persians and, victorious, placed fortifications along the Tigris, was killed by a stroke of misfortune. 97. Diocletian and Maximian ruled for twenty years. Diocletian, having burned holy books, persecuted Christians throughout the world. He was the first to order gems put on clothes and shoes. At that time princes were to wear only purple on their backs. These emperors waged various wars and, having conquered Persia, took Mesopotamia. After awhile, when both had left the rank of emperor, they lived as private citizens. 98. Galerius ruled for two years. His brief imperium saw nothing worthy of historical record. 99. Constantine ruled for thirty years. He prepared for war with the Persians and they feared his arrival, so that supplicants came forth promising to carry out his orders. He also became a Christian, giving permission to Christians to congregate freely, and built basilicas in honor of Christ. In these times, the Arian heresy appeared. Also the Nicene Council was convoked by Constantine for the condemnation of Arius. Also at that time the schism of the Donatists arose. At the same time the cross of Christ was discovered in Jerusalem by Helen, the mother of Constantine. But Constantine, baptised by Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia at the very end of his life, was converted to the Arian dogma. O the pain! Such a good beginning, such a bad end.

100. Constantius and Constans ruled for twenty-four years. Constantius, terrible in the cruelty of his ways, endured many things from the Persians. From that time on he became an Arian and persecuted Catholics all over the world. Relying on his favor, Arius proceeded to the church in Constantinople, about to fight against those of our faith. Diverted through

the forum of Constantine for the sake of some necessity, suddenly his viscera and his life simultaneously poured out. At the same time, Athanasius and Hilary were celebrated for their doctrine and confession of the faith. The heresy of the Anthropomorphites arose in Syria, Macedonia, and Constantinople. Donatus, an author of the art of grammar and instructor of Jerome, was regarded as illustrious in Rome. Anthony the monk died. The bones of the apostles Andrew and Luke were translated to Constantinople. 101. Julian ruled for two years. He went from being a cleric to being an emperor and a pagan. He was converted to the cult of the idols and instituted martyrdom for the Christians. He forbade Christians to teach or learn the liberal arts. At that time he also, out of his hatred for Christ, permitted the Jews to repair the Temple of Jerusalem. Jews gathered from all the provinces and laid new foundations for the Temple. Suddenly at night an earthquake struck and the stones from the deepest parts of the foundation were shaken and scattered far and wide. In addition a fiery ball came out from the interior of the building of the Temple and prostrated many with its fire. Those remaining were frightened by this terror and involuntarily confessed Christ. And lest they thought it was over with this destruction, the sign of the cross appeared the following night on everyone's clothing. Julian, proceeding against the Persians, died, having been hit with a javelin as the attack was being launched.

102. Jovian ruled for one year. When he realized that he was being chosen emperor by the army, he confirmed that he was a Christian and decided that it was no longer permissable for pagans to hold office. "And we," he said to all of the army, "who through Julianus rejected the name of Christ, wish to be Christians again." He then received the sceptre of the imperium from those who had heard him and returned after having made peace with the Persians. He gave the priveleges back to the Christians with a law granted in perpetuity and ordered the temples of the idols closed. 103. Valentinian and his brother Valens ruled for fourteen years. The Goths, in Istrus, were divided into two kingdoms under kings Fridigern and Athalaric. But Fridigern overcame Athalaric with the help of Valens, the Arian emperor, having been persuaded, in exchange for the aid, to convert form being a catholic to being an Arian along with all of the people of the Goths, thus following Valens' error. Also at that time Ulfilas, bishop of the Goths, invented letters for the Goths like the letters of the Greeks and then translated both (the New and Old) Testaments into their own tongue. Also Photinus, Eunomius, and Apollonaris were acknowledged to be heresiarchs at this same time.

104. Gratian with his brother Valentinian ruled for six years. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, excelled in the dogma of the Catholics. Priscillian introduced into Spain the evil heresy bearing his name. Martin, bishop of Tours, the city of Gaul, was resplendent with the signs of many miracles. 105. Valentinian ruled with Theodosius for eight years. The Synod of Constantinople, with one hundred fifty holy fathers, at which all heresies were condemned, was convoked by Theodosius. The priest Jerome in Bethlehem was regarded as illustrious throughout the world. Priscillian, being accused by Itacius, was killed with the sword by the tyrant Maximus. At the same time the head of John the Baptist was taken to Constantinople and buried at the seventh milestone (septimo milliario) of the city. And in the same

time the temples of the gentiles all over the world were torn down by order of Theodosius, for until then they had remained untouched.

106. Theodosius, with Arcadius and Honorius, ruled for three years. At the same time, John the Anchorite was regarded as noteworthy in the miracles of his virtues. Also, when consulted by Theodosius, he foretold his victory over the tyrant Eugenius. 107. Arcadius and his brother Honorius ruled for thirteen years. In his time, bishop Augustine was regarded as noteworthy in the knowledge of his teaching. Also John of Constantinople and Theophilus of Alexandria were proclaimed to be illustrious bishops. At the same time, Donatus, bishop of Epirus, was regarded as noteworthy in his miracles (virtutes). He killed, by spitting in its eye, an immense dragon, which even with eight yoke of oxen was scarcely able to be dragged to the place where it was to be burned so that it would not corrupt the air as it decomposed. At the same time, the bodies of the holy prophets Habucuc and Micah were found by divine revelation. The Goths plundered Italy. And the Vandals and Alans invaded Gaul.

108. Honorius, with Theodosius the Younger, the son of his brother, ruled for fifteen years. With these two governing, the Goths took Rome and the Vandals, Alans and Suevi seized Spain. In this time Pelagius preached the dogma of his error against the grace of Christ. A council of 214 of bishops was convoked in Carthage for his condemnation. In this time Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, was regarded as noteworthy. 109. Theodosius the younger, son of Arcadius, ruled for twenty-seven years. The Vandals crossed over from Spain into Africa. There they subverted the Catholic faith with Arian impiety. At the same time Nestor, bishop of Constantinople, stirred up the error of his perfidy. The synod of Ephesus, convoked against him, condemned his impious dogma. In this same time, the devil in the guise of Moses appeared to the Jews in Crete and promised to lead them to the promised land over the sea without even getting their feet wet. After many had been killed, those remaining, who survived, were converted immediately to the grace of Christ.

110. Marcian ruled for six years. The beginning of his imperial reign, the Council of Chalcedon was held, where Eutyches along with Dioscorus, the Alexandrian bishop, were condemned. In the sixth year of his imperium, Theodoric, king of the Goths, invaded Spain with a huge army. 111. Leo the older ruled with Leo the younger for sixteen years. Alexandria and Egypt, despising the Synod of Chalcedon and languishing in the error of the heretic Dioscorus, barked with canine madness, filled with an unclean spirit. At the same time appeared the heresy of the Acephali, attacking the Council of Chalcedon. They are called Acephali, that is, "without a head," because the one who first introduced this heresy is not known. Many to the east languish with the disease of this heresy. 112. Zeno ruled for seventeen years. The heresy of the Acephali was defended by him and the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon were abandoned. Zeno sought to kill his son Leo Augustus. But his mother handed over to Zeno someone similar to Leo in appearance and secretly made Leo a cleric. He lived among the clergy until the time of Justinian. At the same time the body

of Barnabas the apostle and the gospel of Matthew, written with his own stylus, having revealed themselves, were found.

113. Anastasius ruled for twenty-seven years. Appropriating the error of the Acephali, he condemned to exile the bishops who were defenders of the Synod of Chalcedon and also found fault with, and corrected, the gospels as if they had been composed by idiot evangelists. In his time, Bishop Fulgentius excelled in his knowledge and confession of God. Trasemundus, king of the Vandals, closed Catholic churches in Africa, sent 120 bishops to Sardinia, and raged against Catholics. At the same time in Carthage, Olympus, a certain Arian who blasphemed the holy Trinity in the balineum, was ignited in public by three fiery javelins thrown by angels. Also a certain Arian bishop by the name of Barbas is reported to have spoken against a rule of the faith while baptising (”Barbas baptises you in the name of the Father, through the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit”) and immediately the water in the font which had been brought for baptism disappeared. Seeing this, the one who was to be baptised immediately rushed away to the Catholic faith and received the baptism of Christ according to the custom of the evangelic faith.

114. Justin the older ruled for nine years. A love of the Synod of Chalcedon, he abandoned the heresy of the Acephali. In his time, after Trasemundus, Childeric, born of the captive daughter of the emperor Valentinian, received the kingdom among the Vandals. Though bound by an oath to Trasemundus that he would not show favor to the Catholics in the kingdom, before assuming power he ordered the bishops to be returned from exile and commanded that their own churches be restored to them. 115. Justinian ruled for thirty-nine years. Receiving the heresy of the Acephali, he compelled every bishop in his kingdom to condemn the three chapters of the Council of Chalcedon. In Alexandria, the Theodosian and Gaianan heresies appeared. In Spain the Roman ”miles” was invaded by the tyrant Athanagild. The patricius Belisarius triumphed wonderfully over the Persians. From there he was sent by Justinian to Africa and destroyed the people of the Vandals. Also in Italy, Totila, king of the Ostrogoths, was overcome by Narses, the Roman patricius. At the same time, the body of St. Anthony the monk, discovered by divine revelation, was taken to Alexandria and buried in the church of St. John the Baptist.

116. Justin the younger ruled for eleven years. He destroyed those who had spoken out against the Synod of Chalcedon and ordered the effigy of the 150 fathers to be burned by the people in the time of sacrifice. The Armenians first received the faith of Christ at that time. The Gepids were extinguished by the Lombards. At the same time Martin, bishop of Braga in Galicia, was regarded as illustrious in prudence and the teaching of the Catholic faith. The patricius Narses, after he had overcome King Totila of the Goths in Italy in the time of the Augustus Justinian, was frightened by the threats of the empress Sophia, wife of Justin, and so invited the Lombards from Pannonia and introduced them into Italy. At that time Leovigild, king of the Goths, brought back, under the power of his kingdom, certain regions of Spain that were rebelling against him.

117. Tiberius ruled for seven years. The Lombards, expelled by the Romans, entered Italy. The Goths were divided into two by Hermenegild, son of King Leovigild, and they were devastated with mutual slaughter. 118. Maurice ruled for twenty-one years. The Suevi, held by King Leovigild, were subjected by the Goths. The Goths were also converted to the Catholic faith, having been summoned by that most religious prince, Reccared. The Avars, fighting against the Romans, were defeated more by gold than by iron. Thrace was seized by the Huns. At this time, Leander excelled in the teaching of the faith and the sciences for the conversion of the Gothic people in Spain. 119. Phocas ruled for eight years. Made emperor as the result of a military revolt, he killed the emperor Maurice and many of the nobles. In his time the Prasini and the Veneti waged civil war throughout the east and Egypt and prostrated themselves with mutual slaughter. In addition, very grave battles were fought against the republic of the Persians, in which the Romans were forcefully beaten and lost many provinces up to the Euphrates River as well as, they say, Jerusalem.

120. Heraclius has completed five years of his imperial rule. At the beginning, the Slavs took Greece from the Romans; the Persians took Syria, Egypt, and many provinces. Also in Spain, Sisebut, king of the Goths, took certain cities from the same Roman ”militia” and converted the Jews subject to his kingdom to the faith of Christ. 121. 5,814 years have passed from the beginning of the world to the present era 654 [616 AD], that is, to the fifth year of the imperium of Heraclius and the fourth of the most glorious prince Sisebut. 122. The time remaining for the world cannot be ascertained by human investigation. Our Lord Jesus Christ forestalled every question about this matter when he said: ”It is not for you to know times or the moment which the Father has fixed by his own authority.” And elsewhere: ”But of that day,” he said, ”and that hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father only.” Each one, then, should think about his own passing, as holy scripture says: ”In all works, be mindful of the most recent.” When, therefore, any one passes away that moment is the end of his world.

Source: Patrologia Latina 83: 1017-1058

Introduction

With St. Isidore of Seville (Isidorus Hispalensis, born ca. 560, d. 636 AD), the patristic age in the West comes to an end. He became Archbishop of Seville in 600-601. He was a very industrious author, and exercised an immense influence on medieval Europe. His works are mainly compilations from earlier authors, but of great value because he was the last author still in touch with antiquity. Many of his works, especially the exegetical ones, have never been printed. More details of his works with a limited bibliography can be found in B. Altaner, Patrology, tr. H. Graef, Freiburg:Herder (1960) pp. 594-8. In the same way, Isidore is the last Latin historian of the patristic period, producing two historical works. His brief Chronicon or Chronicle of the World extends to 615 AD, and is given here. The work appears in the Patrologia Latina 83: cols. 1017-1058. There is also a critical text in Mommsen, Chronica Minora saec. IV-VII, 2 vols (Monumenta Germania Historia vols. 9 and 11) vol. 2 pp.391-488, and the text will be reedited in the near future for the Corpus Christianorum series. His other work, the Historia Gothorum, a chronicle of the Visigoths to 625 with two short appendices on the Vandals and Suevians, can be found in the same sources.

This text is something of a departure for this series, in that it was translated recently from the PL text by Dr. Kenneth B. WOLF as a teaching aid for his students. I came across it on-line one day, and felt it deserved to be more generally known. To the best of my knowledge it is the only English translation. Dr. Wolf has very kindly released this version into the public domain, so that it can appear here, but warns that this is only a first draft. The master copy can be found at his site, at ”http://www.history.pomona.edu/kbw/h100y/chronicon.htm”, with revisions as they are made. Roger PEARSE 6th February, 2004

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator’s own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.