A New Eusebius

Documents illustrating the history of the Church to AD 337

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Revised with additional documents by W. H. C. Frend

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The Last Days of Constantine, 337: Eusebius

Notes on Sources

Preface to the First Edition

In 1920 and 1923 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge published Volumes I and II of Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church edited by the late B. J. Kidd, and covering the period down to AD 461, the dividing point between the volumes being AD 313. As source books these have served students of Early Church History well. They are now out of print, and the present book aims at being a successor to the earlier part of Kidd’s work. In the process of selection some of the passages used by Kidd have been dropped, and a number of others added. It is hoped that the notes, in which numerous further passages are incorporated, the chronological tables, and the notes on sources will be found useful.


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The debt which the study of Early Church History owes to the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, the earliest church historian, need not be reiterated here, and it may not be inappropriate to commemorate him in the title of a book dealing with the whole period for which he is a chief primary authority.

I wish to thank my friend and colleague, the Reverend Henry Chadwick, Fellow of Queens’ College, for his kindness in helping me at various points in my work, particularly with Celsus and Paul of Samosata, and in reading the proofs of the whole. His suggestions have enabled me to introduce a number of improvements. I wish also to thank the publishers and the printers for their help during the preparation and production of the book.

Downing College
Cambridge
1957

Preface to the Second (Revised) Edition

It is now nearly thirty years since A New Eusebius was first published. Since then, countless theological students and also students of the Greco-Roman world under the Roman empire have profited from it. The Editor was a superb Classical scholar who also possessed a wide knowledge of Patristic texts and a long experience as lecturer and supervisor of studies. These qualities enabled him to select documents which were both significant in themselves and also of most value to students.

After thirty years some revision would have been needed, but during that time important new documents have come to light that required inclusion. Since 1957 the Gnostic library found at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1945, consisting of Coptic documents translated from earlier Greek originals, has become available fully in English. After long and vexatious delays the whole surviving collection has been published by Professor James M. Robinson, Director of the Institute of Christianity and Antiquity, at Claremont Graduate School in California. Almost for the first time the Gnostic movement could be understood in its own right without the intermediacy of its opponents. A selection of extracts from some of these documents has therefore been included in this new edition. The Nag Hammadi library also contained a complete Coptic version of the Gospel of Thomas, fragments of which had been discovered at Oxyrhynchus at the end of the last century, and extracts from this too have now been included. A third gap was the omission of anti-Christian polemic in the years leading up to the Great Persecution, and this has been closed by the inclusion of extracts from Porphyry of Tyre’s writings critical of Christianity. In return some documents of less importance in themselves or which seem over a long period to have formed no part of student syllabuses have been omitted.

A major difficulty in using the New Eusebius was its apparent absence of an immediately recognizable arrangement of the documents. The placing of the Didache as Document 103, i.e. with documents of near the end of the second century, is a case in point. An arrangement has now been adopted that

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groups documents into specific subjects within a chronological framework. After the Decian persecution of 250–51, a fairly strict chronological order has been observed.

Changes in Stevenson’s notes at the end of documents and Notes on Sources have been kept to the minimum necessary to correct the few errors and to update some of the bibliographical references. With the latter end in view a short Bibliography of works useful to students that have appeared since the publication of A New Eusebius has been added.

Barnwell Rectory
Peterborough
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W. H. C. Frend

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Abbreviations and Conventions

ANCL  Ante-Nicene Christian Library
CAH  Cambridge Ancient History
CIL  Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CSEL  Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DCB  Dictionary of Christian Biography
ETr.  English Translation
GCS  Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
Irenaeus, Harvey  Sancti Irenaei libros quinque adversus Haereses, ed. W. W. Harvey
JEH  Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JRS  Journal of Roman Studies
JTS (NS)  Journal of Theological Studies (New Series)
Lawlor and Oulton, Eusebius  Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine, translated with introduction and notes by H. J. Lawlor and J. E. L. Oulton
LF  Library of the Fathers
NHC  Nag Hammadi Codex
NHLE  The Nag Hammadi Library in English by James M. Robinson
NPNF  Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
Opitz  Athanasius Werke, ed. H. G. Opitz (Berlin 1943, etc.)
PG  Migne, Patrologia Graeca
PL  Migne, Patrologia Latina
TU  Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur

Square brackets are used to indicate paraphrased passages in the documents.

Except where otherwise specified, italic type is used to indicate direct quotations from Scripture in the documents.

Each passage is preceded by a separate reference to its original source or sources.

Each passage is immediately followed by a reference to the source or sources of the English version.

Where it is necessary to indicate chapter or section divisions for more than one source, references for the second source are shown in parentheses.