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## **Rafał Kosiński, *Wiktor z Tonnony i jego dzieło, Historia Iagiellonica, Kraków 2023***

At the end of 2023, the Historia Iagellonica publishing house published a book by Rafał Kosiński entitled *Victor of Tonnona and his work*.<sup>1</sup> This is the first complementary (bilingual) edition in Polish, accompanied by an extensive historical and philological commentary. It follows the *Church Histories of John Diakrinomenos and Theodore Lector*<sup>2</sup> in the oeuvre of this distinguished scholar, a book devoted to a source and author from late antiquity. If the translation and commentary of the works of John Diakrinomenos and Theodore Lector were the work of several people, the book under review (research studies and translation) is the work of a single Author. Moreover, alongside the works of Procopius of Caesarea,<sup>3</sup>

1 R. Kosiński, *Wiktor z Tonnony i jego dzieło*, Kraków 2023.

2 *Historie Kościoła Jana Diakrinomenosa i Teodora Lektora*, translation, introduction and commentary R. Kosiński, A. Szopa, K. Twardowska, Kraków 2019. The English-language version of the book was published by Peter Lang as the 11<sup>th</sup> volume of the series *Studies in Classical Literature and Culture, The Church Histories of Theodore Lector and John Diakrinomenos*, Berlin 2021.

3 Prokopiusz z Cezarei, *Historia wojen*, t. 1–2, translation, introduction and commentary D. Brodka, Kraków 2013.

Jordanes,<sup>4</sup> and the historical epics of Flavius Crescendo Corippus,<sup>5</sup> makes an excellent addition to the list of sources on the history<sup>6</sup> of late antiquity translated into Polish and published by the Historia Jagellonica publishing house in recent years.

*The chronicle* of Victor of Tonna, covers the years 444–565 and is a continuation of the chronicle of Prospero of Aquitaine,<sup>7</sup> and was itself a source for many later authors such as Isidore of Seville.<sup>8</sup>

We can distinguish three parts of the work: the introduction, the text with its translation and the historical commentary. The first is a philological-historical study, comprising eleven chapters, which illuminates the problems associated with theological disputes from the fourth to the sixth century and a detailed analysis of the life and work of Victor of Tonna. Rafał Kosiński, in an exhaustive study of all the research questions in chapter I entitled: *The Disputes Around the So-called Three Chapters*, has shown his immense knowledge and scholarly acumen. We have before us an excellent lecture on the theological disputes starting from Apollonius of Laodicea,<sup>9</sup> by Nestorius and two Councils of Ephesus,<sup>10</sup> and the Council of Chalcedon,<sup>11</sup> anti-Chalcedonian opposition right up to the pivotal theme of the *Chronicle*, the Three Chapters Dispute.

- 4 Jordanes, *O całości dziejów albo o pochodzeniu i czynach narodu rzymskiego. O pochodzeniu i czynach Gotów*, translation, introduction and commentary B. J. Kołoczek, Kraków 2022.
- 5 Flawiusz Kreskoniusz Koryppus, *Joannida. Pochwała Justyna*, translation, introduction and commentary B. J. Kołoczek, Kraków 2022.
- 6 It should also be added *Wybór mniejszych źródeł historycznych z okresu późnego antyku*, translation, introduction and commentary B. J. Kołoczek, Kraków 2023.
- 7 Prosper Tiro, *Chronik. Laterculus regum Vandalorum et Alanorum*, ed. M. Becker, J.-M. Kötter, Paderborn 2016.
- 8 *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, ed. M. J. Carlos, Turnhout 2003 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, 112).
- 9 A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2/1: *From Chalcedon to Justinian I*, Atlanta 1987, pp. 329–343; J. N. D. Kelly, *Początki doktryny chrześcijańskiej*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 217–221.
- 10 R. Kosiński, *Dzieje Nestoriusza, biskupa Konstantynopola w latach 428–431*, „U Schyłku Starożytności. Studia Źródłoznawcze” 7 (2008), pp. 30–63.
- 11 *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, eds. A. Grillmeier, H. Bacht, vol. 1–3, Würzburg 1951–1954.

The second chapter is dedicated to Victor of Tonna. Almost everything we know about him comes exclusively from his work. Some information can be found in the work of Isidore of Seville *De viris illustribus*, who dedicated a chapter to Victor.<sup>12</sup> So we don't know when he was born or when he became bishop of one of the African towns<sup>13</sup> of unknown location, but we can assume that this occurred after 5 February 525. Also the name of his bishop's seat raises many doubts, as it appears in manuscripts in many variations, but even in this case Kosiński tries to reconstruct the history and location of the town. In solving his research problems, he discusses the literature on the subject, convincingly argues with the theories seemingly already accepted by science, and puts forward his own research hypotheses. Particularly noteworthy here are Kosiński's findings on the author's biography (such as the reasons for and date of his exile to the Balearic Islands), or the problem of establishing his date of death, suggesting that at least some of the last eight entries in the *Chronicle* are not by Victor, but by an anonymous author close to him.

Finally, chapters III to XI are devoted to Wiktor's work, the purpose behind it, the sources he used, the chronology, the geographical horizon, the political history, the reception of the *Chronicle*, the manuscripts, the editions, and the principles Kosiński followed in his editorial work. It is clear that, at the outset of consideration, there was the problem of whether Victor had written a universal history of the world,<sup>14</sup> whether he was attempting, as one might guess from the introduction, to continue Prosper's *Chronicle*. Most modern scholars and publishers of Victor's *Chronicle*, assume that his work is only the last part of a larger work, the *Universal Chronicle*, which has survived only in part, and which was

12 C. Cardelle de Hartmann, *Introduction*, in: *Victoris Tunnunensis Chronicon cum reliquiis ex Consularibus Caesaraugustanis et Iohannis Biclarenis Chronicon*, ed. C. Cardelle de Hartmann, *commentaria historica ad Consularia Caesaraugustana ad Iohannis Biclarenis Chronicon* edidit R. Collins, Turnhout 2001, p. 101; S. Adamiak, *African Authors in the East in the Times of Justinian: Their Works and Sources*, „Res Gestae” 5 (2017), pp. 35–45.

13 C. Cardelle de Hartmann, *Introduction*, p. 101.

14 Isidore of Seville in *De viris illustribus* XXV, 2–4 (ed. Codoñer Merino) wrote that Victor produced an annalistic work from the Creation of the World to the first year of the reign of Emperor Justin II (and thus to 565). It follows that the *Chronicle* that Isidore knew did not start from 444 (as the *Chronicle* preserved in the available manuscripts), but covered history from Adam onwards.

intended as a kind of epitome from similar works by Jerome and Prospero, describing history from the creation of the world, which has not survived to our time, and Victor's own *Chronicle*, was intended as a continuation.<sup>15</sup> Kosiński, convincingly argues against this theory with his own hypothesis that Victor had a definitive version of Prospero's *Chronicle* brought to 455, which was added to the text of Jerome's *Chronicle* and which he supplemented with events from the following century. In this way, a universal chronicle was created, encompassing the three Latin chronicles: Jerome's, Prospero's and Victor's, or in Isidore's words, a complete *Chronicle* that maintained chronological continuity from the creation of the world to the beginning of the reign of emperor Justin II. Thus, according to Kosiński, Victor thus began his own work by combining Prosper's message with information taken from Theodore Lector's *History of the Church* concerning the episcopal succession in Antioch.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, Kosiński is unequivocal about Theodore's aim — to give a concise account of the dispute surrounding the Council of Chalcedon and Antiochian theology, taking into account the political events that accompanied it. A particularly valuable contribution of the Polish scholar is to explain the reasons for Victor's errors in dating events, to show the geographical horizon of Victor's work, its reception in the Middle Ages, and its state of preservation. Kosiński reveals the secrets of the craftsmanship of the source publisher, even teaches how to work on a text from the very basics — comparative studies of manuscript tradition and old prints, through determining the correct transcription of the text, establishing the origin of every detail, the reasons for every error in the text. Such a meticulous laying out of the details of his own analyses adds an extra dimension to the edition: it introduces the reader to the ins and outs of working on a source, a way of arriving at what publishers usually give as ready-made findings. The researcher has adopted this approach as standard, for he followed the same procedure in the critical edition of the *Church Histories of John Diakrinomenos and Theodore Lector*.

The last part is already a *Chronicle* with a translation and historical commentary. A very good solution has been adopted, i.e. the Latin text and the translation and underneath it, in the form of footnotes, there

15 A. Placanica, *Introduzione*, in: Vittore da Tunnuna, *Chronica. Chiesa e impero nell'età di Giustiniano*, ed. A. Placanica, Firenze 1997, xiii–xiv; C. Cardelle de Hartman, *Introduction*, pp. 102–106; S. Adamiak, *African Authors...*, p. 41.

16 Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 6 [341].

is a commentary on philological issues. The translation is written in modern Polish; in this part, too, the edition of the *Chronicle* prepared by Kosiński is innovative, as he proposed a different lesson than earlier editors. The historical commentary, on the other hand, is a separate part. The historical study is extremely meticulous, importantly correcting Wiktor's numerous mistakes or manipulations as to dates or facts described. Each footnote is even a separate study of a character and event, Kosiński makes use of all available scientific literature, pointing out issues already established as well as those still under scientific debate. The work concludes with a diligently assembled Bibliography and a Personal Index and, importantly, also a Geographical Index.

In summary: *Victor of Tonna and his work* is not only a critical edition of the source, but an excellent monograph on a particularly religious history. The first chapter alone: *The dispute over the so-called Three Chapters*, in which Kosinski describes the history of theological disputes in the period described by Victor of Tonna, both theologically and politically. This is an extremely difficult subject, even for scholars of the period, and this chapter, is an extremely competent explanation of the problems, which in itself could constitute a 'textbook'. There is no work without errors, although the Author has done his best to ensure that there are very few in the reviewed item. So: the explanation of the Latin technical terms is missing, which would have made it easier to work with the source. The fact that the commentary is not directly below the translation makes it somewhat difficult to use the book. There are repetitions and typos in the commentary.

Rafał Kosiński's book *Victor of Tonna and his work* represents a significant achievement in ancient history and classical philology, setting the bar extremely high for subsequent publishers of sources not only of late antiquity.