

## REVIEW

A REVISED EDITION OF DEWING'S *PROKOPIOS*

Henry B. Dewing and Anthony Kaldellis (trans., rev.), *Prokopios: The Wars of Justinian* (revised and modernised, with an introduction and notes by A. Kaldellis). Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2014. Pp. xxxii + 643. Paperback, \$29.00. ISBN 978-1-624-66170-9.

For the past century the majority of Anglophone readers have approached the works of Procopius via Dewing's multi-volume Loeb translation. That it has done its job well is demonstrated by the fact that for the audience in the twenty-first century Anthony Kaldellis has used it for the basis of this new version, which replaces the five Loeb volumes of *Wars* with a single, much larger, volume.

A brief introduction, no more than ten pages, summarises the historical context for the events narrated by Procopius, surveys what little is known about his life and career, touches on sources and the underlying literary traditions, and digests modern scholarship on the state of Justinian's armies. Brevity precludes the airing of particular scholarly debates and Kaldellis has sensibly avoided presenting his distinctive but implausible views on Procopius as a writer. They only intrude in the comment on the *Ecclesiastical History*, that Procopius alluded to but never wrote (x): this work might well have been different from extant ecclesiastical histories, but that does not mean that it would have resembled the *Secret History* in adopting a scandalous approach. The categorization as 'facetious' (xiii) of Procopius' argument in his introduction about the importance of mounted archers is also unfounded: modern historians have certainly been wrong to assume from this passage that these troops were the backbone of the sixth-century Roman army, but Procopius was wanting to make a point about how the balance of warfare had changed over the centuries.

So to the translation. Dewing remains the foundation, but most sentences contain a minor change or two. Many are neutral, a different choice amongst possible alternatives, but there are corrections and improvements; at the same time some errors or infelicities are introduced so that, as ever, *caveat lector*, with the Loeb, the translation can obviously be verified immediately, whereas with this volume one needs to remember to check what the Greek says. However, the fact that Kaldellis includes section numbers within the translation makes this considerably easier to do than with the Loeb. A few examples:

(Kaldellis) ‘He believed that the memory of these events would be a great thing and most helpful to men of the present time and to future generations as well, in case time should ever again place them in a similar predicament.’ (1.1.1)

(Dewing) ‘The memory of these events he deemed would be a great thing and most helpful to men of the present time, and to future generations as well, in case time should ever again place men under similar stress.’

Kaldellis has created a more natural word order, though purists might prefer to retain Dewing’s comma after ‘time’; Dewing’s ‘men’ translates *anthropous* in the Greek, which Kaldellis ignores; ‘predicament’ and ‘stress’ capture slightly different aspects of *anagke*, without either clearly being preferable.

(K) ‘... casting the shadow of his prodigious learning over his addiction to profit.’ (1.25.2)

(D) ‘... by the excellence of his education to throw into the shade his affliction of avarice.’

Here Kaldellis slightly distorts the Greek, which does not allocate a shadow to Tribonian’s *paideia*, and Dewing’s ‘affliction’ is closer to *nosema*.

(K) ‘He remained in office for another ten years, at which point he ...’ (1.25.3)

(D) ‘... in the tenth year of his office he ...’

The literal rendition of the Greek is ‘while holding (*echon*) the office for the tenth year he ...’ Dewing is again closer.

In 3.15 Kaldellis first up-dates Dewing’s slightly archaic ‘bade’ to ‘ordered’, and has the sailors ‘drop’ rather than ‘throw out’ their anchors (15.1). Dewing introduced an unwarranted ‘indeed’, which Kaldellis rightly discards (15.2); with regard to *kat’exousian* (15.2), Dewing’s ‘at his leisure’ conveys the wrong impression, while Kaldellis’ ‘freely’, though preferable, may not be quite right either: the earlier part of the sentence has referred to Belisarius’ authority as general so that ‘in accordance with/as befits his authority’ might capture the sense. Dewing’s ‘as a general thing’ for *hos ta polla* (15.4) is a touch cumbersome and Kaldellis’ ‘usually’ is better. For *prosopon* (15.13), Kaldellis’ ‘standing’ improves on Dewing’s literal ‘character’ and his ‘then’ for *eita* is closer than Dew-

ing's 'secondly'. At 15.18 Kaldellis translates *epignomona* as 'arbiter' which represents the summative role that Belisarius is rejecting better than Dewing's 'of censure'. On the other hand Dewing's 'with you' for *sun humin* (15.19) does not need to be changed to 'jointly', Kaldellis' 'Things now being what they are' is more cumbersome than 'And since this is so' (15.21), in the final clause of 15.25 Kaldellis decides not to translate *pephuke* (same choice at 15.30), Dewing's 'seek' for *zetein* is nearer than 'strive' (15.27), Kaldellis ignores *tenikauta* at 15.28, and his 'In fact' for *entha de* (15.34) needlessly changes Dewing's 'Then indeed'.

In 7.40.7–9 Kaldellis first jettisons Dewing's correct superlative for *axiologotaten*, then omits Dewing's 'thence' (*enthende*) for the journey from Serdica to Italy, but captures *andreios* more accurately with 'brave' than does Dewing's long-winded 'endowed with the finest qualities'. Dewing's 'how to uphold with all firmness both the laws and the institutions of the state' is preferable to Kaldellis' 'how to uphold the laws with firmness and the order of the republic': *bebaiotata* is superlative, so something more than a plain 'firmness' is needed, while the adverb applies to both elements rather than just 'laws' as Kaldellis' version conveys. Continuing with this passage, Kaldellis rightly omits Dewing's 'as they would be obliged', for which there is no hint in the Greek (7.40.11), but then omits 'so-called' for the Greek *kaloumenon* which Dewing includes (7.40.14). On the other hand, at 7.40.17 Kaldellis correctly renders the island of Melita as Malta (though his index entry incorrectly records this reference as 3.40.14), in contrast to Dewing, who identified Melita with an island off the Dalmatian coast: granted that Artabanus' fleet was being driven in a south-easterly direction onto the Calabrian coast, it is unlikely that his own ship was carried back around the heel of Italy to an island near modern Dubrovnik.

Such detailed comparisons could be pursued through every chapter of every book. My intention is not to nit-pick but first to present the overall closeness of Kaldellis' reworking to Dewing's original, second to illustrate the numerous minor improvements and occasional corrections that Kaldellis naturally introduces to what was already a reasonable translation, and, third, to underline that there are also places where Kaldellis is at fault.

The notes are deliberately brief. Many, as in Dewing's Loeb, record the sources of Procopius' classical allusions; these, together with internal cross-references, provide the majority of the notes. With regard to place names, an opportunity to improve on Dewing has been missed: modern equivalents are rarely provided in the notes (though the Nymphis river is twice identified as the Batman, nn. 45, 120), or even in the index. There are times when a touch more information might have been provided, even within the laconic format. For example on Callinicum (1.18) abridgement does not really explain why the thrust of the account in Malalas is different (46, n. 100), and the distinctive

treatments of the Ghassanid Arabs (1.18.36) and of Belisarius' own participation in his disintegrating battle-line (1.18.41) should have been noted. On the Nika Riot, we are first told that the notes will summarise information from the Malalas tradition (61, n. 135), but this is not done: thus n. 146 (63) jumps over the three middle days of the riot, without noting, for example, that Justinian had summoned in troops from the vicinity of the capital to rescue his position; at n. 151 (64), the imprecise 'some sources' could briefly have been made more precise. On the other hand, on the same page n. 149 suggests that Procopius invented the senator Origen, and implies that this may have some connection with Justinian's campaign to have the third-century Church Father declared a heretic: all this is speculation without any evidence to support it. With regard to the Persian invasions of the 540s, the minor differences in Evagrius' presentation of events at Apamea and Edessa are noted (2.11, 27; nn. 207, 209, 263), but there is no reference to his independent account of how Sergiopolis survived Khusro's siege (2.20; Evagrius 4.28).

In terms of other apparatus, there are 15 maps at the start and then plans in the text to illustrate events at Dara, central Constantinople, Antioch, Ravenna, Taginae (Busta Gallorum). The two battle plans (Dara and Taginae) should have been printed on a larger scale since many readers will need a magnifying glass to appreciate the detail. There are also a few other illustrations in the text—coins, mosaics, sculpture—but these are decorative rather than essential. At the end there is a short glossary of titles and units of measurements, notes on some contemporary sources and a guide to useful modern scholarship, lists of rulers and family trees, and finally a comprehensive index of people and places; the last, probably inevitably, closely follows the sub-headings in Dewing's indices, albeit on occasion providing slightly less information on the context of the reference.

Overall any student embarking on serious work on the sixth century or on Byzantine historiography will purchase this volume, which trumps Dewing's Loeb in terms of convenience. Kaldellis has rendered a useful service to scholarship. As with all translations, serious users will equip themselves with the Greek text to ensure precision.

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