

**GERMAN-LANGUAGE
SCHOLARSHIP ON PROCOPIUS
(1865–2023)**

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**Felix Dahn and Jacob Haury: The Foundations
of Procopius Research in the German Language**

Research on Procopius in the German language¹ begins with a survey by the classical philologist Wilhelm Siegmund Teuffel (1820–78)² and the groundbreaking monograph based on it by Felix Dahn (1834–1912), who considered Teuffel’s work ‘without equal the most ingenious and best thing that has been written about

¹ It has not been easy to narrow the scope of ‘German-language’ scholarship on Procopius, because the latter is itself not easy to define. I have tried to be as pragmatic as possible in selecting literature. Hence, I have included studies in German irrespective of the nationality of their authors, but I have also included 19th/20th-century *gymnasium* programs written in Latin, because these were registered almost exclusively within the German-speaking scholarly debate, on which they exerted a sometimes significant influence. In more recent times, German-speaking scholars of Antiquity have increasingly transitioned to publishing in English; a portion of these works has been included in this bibliographical survey.

² Teuffel (1847; ²1889). Cf. also Brodka (2022) 179: ‘Mit Teuffel beginnt die moderne Beschäftigung mit Prokop’, echoing the statement of Croke (2019) 134–6, esp. 135f.: ‘With Teuffel, the modern study of Procopius had begun.’

Procopius'.³ A legal historian and author subsequently well-known for his novels about the Age of Migrations (especially *Ein Kampf um Rom* (*A Struggle for Rome*, 1876), Dahn interpreted the period from the mid-fourth to the mid-ninth century (anticipating the concept of a 'Long Late Antiquity') as a 'pre-Middle Ages, in which the outlines of our entire culture were drawn, insofar as it is founded on the connection between Antiquity and the new peoples; during this period, it was largely decided which creations of the Ancient World would perish, which would be changed, which would be preserved, and which would reemerge from this mixture in new forms'.⁴ In his view, this period was characterised by the conflict-ridden collision of the 'sinking Roman world' and the 'young world of the barbarians'.⁵ This theoretical antithesis lay at the heart of his twelve-volume opus *Die Könige der Germanen* (*The Kings of the Germans*, 1861–1909), which remains a rich repository of information today on account of its thorough integration of the ancient sources. Dahn traced this antithesis to the disintegration and contradictoriness of Late Antiquity, which he felt Procopius embodied in particular: 'Just as I had to cite the times to explain the man [i.e., Procopius], so

³ On Felix Dahn, see most recently Wood (2013) 191–8. Dahn's complete statement reads: 'Ohne allen Vergleich das Geistvollste und Beste, was über Prokop geschrieben worden, ist die Abhandlung von Teuffel [...]. Sie enthält auf vierzig Seiten mehr Wahres über unsern Autor, dringt tiefer in sein Wesen ein und erklärt ihn besser, als die gesamte Prokop-Literatur zusammengenommen. In vielen Fällen haben wir seine Worte einfach abgedruckt, weil es verkehrt wäre, wo ein richtiges Resultat von einem solchen Vorgänger in richtiger Form angesprochen ist, um einer scheinbaren Originalität willen, andre, eigne Worte zu wählen' ('Without equal, the most ingenious and best thing that has been written about Procopius is the study by Teuffel [...] In forty pages, it contains more that is true about our author, penetrates his essence more deeply, and explains him better than all the rest of the literature on Procopius together. In many cases, we have simply copied his words, because it would be perverse for the sake of some specious originality to choose one's own words to discuss the correct conclusion of such a predecessor in a correct form': Dahn (1865) 492).

⁴ Dahn (1865) 2.

⁵ Dahn (1865) 1.

likewise the man explains the times'.⁶ It was above all the contradictions of Procopius' *Buildings* and *Anecdota* (*Secret History*) that led Dahn to engage with the historian's works more intensely. 'A satisfactory answer to these questions cannot be found without the most penetrating dissection of the entire man', he argued, 'and this dissection [...] uncovers a series of psychological problems, puzzles, and contradictions'.⁷ Dahn thus adopted a psychologising approach. 'Blind hatred' of Justinian in particular supposedly shaped Procopius' outlook: 'Because when it [i.e., the *Secret History*] mentions the emperor, [Procopius] pulls out all the stops of his thunderous rage'.⁸ In this way, Procopius' 'excessive hatred'⁹ becomes a key analytical category for pursuing questions related to the 'credibility' of the historian and in particular the problem of the authorship of the *Anecdota*. Ultimately, Dahn paints a picture of a generally serious chronicler who was nonetheless a 'suffering spirit'¹⁰ who 'never escapes the orbit of agonising doubts'.¹¹ The result was a 'self-contradiction'¹² that explains how the same author might produce both a panegyric like the *Buildings* and a bitter polemic like the *Anecdota*. Dahn based his thesis empirically on a detailed analysis of the style and contents of the *Anecdota*, which showed that despite its unique nature, it must have been composed by Procopius. Thus, despite his psychologising approach and the obvious contemporary context of his general assessments of Justinian and Late Antiquity, Dahn's conclusion laid the foundation on which subsequent research of Procopius could build: since Felix Dahn, it has been certain that Procopius composed the *Anecdota*.¹³ Even

⁶ Dahn (1865) 5.

⁷ Dahn (1865) 4–5.

⁸ Dahn (1865) 369.

⁹ Dahn (1865) 370.

¹⁰ Dahn (1865) 9.

¹¹ Dahn (1865) 10.

¹² Dahn (1865) 10.

¹³ Later studies of Procopius' language confirmed this finding. Cf., e.g., de Groot (1918); Kumaniecki (1927). The *Anecdota* nonetheless con-

isolated voices of doubt, including that of the great Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), have not been able to undermine this certainty.¹⁴

Dahn's monograph also made it possible to conduct sound textual-critical studies of the transmission of Procopius' texts. This culminated in the edition by the *gymnasium* teacher Jacob Haury (1862–1942), which remains the standard text today.¹⁵ Haury's Teubner edition was the first to provide a text that satisfied modern scholarly standards,¹⁶ supplanting the inadequate edition of Ludwig

tinued to stoke debate in the following decades. Cf., e.g., Ranke (1883) 300–12; Rühl (1914); Sykoutres (1927); Haury (1934); (1935); (1936); (1937); Grecu (1947); Rubin (1951); Veh (1952) 31–4.

¹⁴ Ranke (1883) 300–12. In a letter to Dahn, however, Ranke moved closer to the latter's position: cf. Dahn (1892) 154.

¹⁵ Cf. Croke (2022) 41: 'From Dahn's day too, more attention was invested in producing a modern critical text of all Procopius' works (culminating in that of Haury, 1905–13) and using Procopius' texts as empirical sources for their times and immediate past'; Croke (2019) 136–7; Brodka (2022) 179: 'immer noch maßgeblich' ('still essential').—J. Haury, ed., *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia, Vol. I: De Bellis Libri I–IV* (Leipzig, 1905); *Vol. II: De Bellis Libri V–VIII* (Leipzig, 1905); *Vol. III.1: Historia quae dicitur Arcana* (Leipzig, 1906); *Vol. II.2: VI Libri ΠΕΡΙ ΚΤΙΣΜΑΤΩΝ sive De aedificiis cum duobus Indicibus et Appendice* (Leipzig, 1913). Revised by G. Wirth: J. Haury, ed., *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia. Editio Stereotypa Correctior. Addenda et Corrigenda Adiecit G. Wirth, Vol. I: De Bellis Libri I–IV* (Leipzig, 1962; repr. Munich, 2001); *Vol. II: De Bellis Libri V–VIII* (Leipzig, 1963; repr. Munich, 2001); *Vol. III: Historia quae dicitur Arcana* (Leipzig, 1963; repr. Munich, 2001); *Vol. IV: ΠΕΡΙ ΚΤΙΣΜΑΤΩΝ Libri VI sive De Aedificiis cum duobus Indicibus Praefatione Excerptisque Photii Adiectis* (Leipzig 1964; repr. Munich, 2001).—Cf. also the review of Haury's edition of *Bella* by Dräseke (1905).—Little literature was published on Procopius between Dahn and Haury; there were the lexicon article by Krumbacher (1897 [1958]) 230–7, some interesting *gymnasium* programs (see below), a study of Procopius' geographic and ethnographic information (Jung (1883)), and a handful of dissertations and miscellaneous notes: Eckardt (1861); (1864); Gundlach (1861); Auler (1876); Litzica (1898); Fink (1907); Körbs (1912); de Groot (1918).

¹⁶ Cf. Croke (2019) 138.

Dindorf.¹⁷ Haury's edition also served as the basis for the popular bilingual edition prepared by Otto Veh, which (despite criticism of the translation) has been republished several times.¹⁸ Every volume in this series is provided with brief explanations; the volume on *Buildings* includes an archaeological commentary (pp. 381–474) by Wolfgang Pülhorn, which remains useful today. In 2005, a completely new commentary was composed for the volume dedicated to the *Anedota* by Hartmut Leppin and Mischa Meier.¹⁹ The translation of the *Vandalic* and *Gothic Wars* by David Coste (published in 1885 for the series *Die Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit* (*Historians of German Prehistory*)), however, could not supplant Veh's complete translation of Procopius' works.²⁰

Haury himself pushed the envelope of Procopius research at the turn of the twentieth century in several studies that are seldom cited today. His *Über Prokophandschriften* (*On Procopius Manuscripts*, 1896), published in the proceedings of the

¹⁷ *Procopius. Ex recensione Guilielmi Dindorfii*, Vol. I (*Bellum Persicum–Bellum Vandalicum*) (Bonn, 1833); Vol. II (*Bellum Gothicum*) (Bonn, 1831); Vol. III (*Historia Arcana–De aedificiis*) (Bonn, 1838).

¹⁸ O. Veh, *Prokop. Anekdoten. Griechisch-Deutsch* (= Prokop: Werke I) (Munich, 1961, ³1981); O. Veh, *Prokop. Gotenkriege. Griechisch-Deutsch* (= Prokop: Werke II) (Munich 1966, ²1978); O. Veh, *Prokop. Perserkriege. Griechisch-Deutsch* (= Prokop: Werke III) (Munich 1970, ²1978); O. Veh, *Prokop. Vandalenkriege. Griechisch-Deutsch* (= Prokop: Werke IV) (Munich, 1971); O. Veh, *Prokop. Bauten. Paulus Silentarios. Beschreibung der Hagia Sophia. Griechisch-Deutsch. Archäologischer Kommentar von W. Pülhorn* (= Prokop: Werke V) (Munich, 1977).

¹⁹ O. Veh, *Prokop. Anekdoten. Geheimgeschichte des Kaiserhofs von Byzanz. Griechisch-Deutsch*, mit Erläuterungen, einer Einführung und Literaturhinweisen von M. Meier und H. Leppin (Dusseldorf and Zurich, 2005).

²⁰ D. Coste, *Prokop. Vandalenkrieg* (Leipzig, 1885, ³1970) (only a partial translation); D. Coste, *Prokop. Gothenkrieg. Nebst Auszügen aus Agathias, sowie Fragmenten des Anonymus Valesianus und des Johannes von Antiochia* (Leipzig, 1885, ²1903, ³1922, repr. Essen, 1981).—H. Schaal, *Prokops Gotenkrieg in Auswahl* (Bielefeld, 1936) is a small selection of texts from the *Gothic War* (in Greek) chosen in conformity with Nazi ideology. K. Reich, *Prokop. Goten und Vandalen im Kampfe gegen die Römer. Nordische Länder und Völker* (Bamberg, 1933) was also conceived as a collection of texts for *gymnasium* instruction.

Bavarian Academy of the Sciences, his *gymnasium* program papers *Procopiana I* and *II* (1891/1893), and his *Zur Beurteilung des Geschichtsschreibers Procopius von Cäsarea* (*Assessing the Historian Procopius of Caesarea*, 1896)—a significant amount of Procopius literature in the years 1880–1950 was published in *gymnasium* programs²¹—cover not only the state of the text and textual criticism, but also anticipate subjects that subsequently dominated the scholarly discussion in the German-speaking world until the beginning of the 21st century: Procopius’ ‘credibility’; his religious outlook; his relationship with Justinian and Belisarius (as well as Theodora and Antonina); the date of his works (especially the *Anecdota* and *Buildings*); and stylistic, textual, and ideological ties to his models Herodotus and Thucydides.²² All these questions, which Haury explored in several papers in the 1930s,²³ had pre-occupied Dahn and would be supplanted or transferred to new scholarly contexts by Averil Cameron’s monograph, which was also received as a milestone for scholarly literature in German.²⁴

The detailed survey by Brian Croke in this volume (above, Ch. 1) covers, among other things, philological studies during the period 1590–1650 in Paris and Lyons which obviates the

²¹ These include important works of scholarship, some of which were composed in Latin but had a significant impact on German-language Procopius scholarship, although they were almost entirely unknown outside of the German-language zone. In addition to Haury (1891), (1893), and (1896a), important works include Braun (1885), Brückner (1896), Veh (1951), (1952), and (1953). Cf. further Schulz (1871), Hofmann (1877), Duwe (1885), (1898), Reiprich (1885), Kirchner (1887), Schefflein (1893), Lieberich (1900) 1–8, and Hartmann (1903).

²² Haury (1889); (1891) (questions of date; cf. the generally positive but not entirely convinced review of Dahn (1892)); (1893) (problems of textual criticism); (1896b) (manuscripts); (1896a), which shows, among other things, that stylistic imitation of models did not inevitably result in ‘untruths’ (‘Unwahrheiten’: cf. Haury (1896a) 9; similarly, Soyter (1939); (1951); the opposite position is taken by Brückner (1896)). On the question of *imitatio* of Herodotus and Thucydides, see also Braun (1884), (1894), Duwe (1885), and most recently Meister (2013) 94–8.

²³ Cf. Haury (1934) (the date of the *Anecdota*); (1935) (dispute with Comparetti (1928)); (1936); (1937).

²⁴ Cameron (1985).

need to cover the same ground here. Brian Croke reminds us of how long scholars waited for the first complete *opera omnia* of Procopius (1662/1663), two volumes published in Paris, with a Greek text and a Latin translation. This ample enterprise coincided with the efforts of scholars at the court of Louis XIV and the Jesuits of Clermont College to produce a whole series of works delving into Byzantine civilisation. Scattered studies had appeared before then, including a version of the *Secret History* (*Anecdota*) in Lyons edited in 1623 by Niccolo Alemanni (1588–1626) with a Latin translation. Meanwhile another group of humanists, including Jean Bodin and Guillaume Paradin (1510–90), began looking at Procopius as a significant and useful historian. Paradin's translation of *The Gothic Wars* appeared in Lyons (1578). Notable as well was the translation by Martin Fumée, lord of Genillé (1540–90), which appeared with a royal privilege in 1587 (*Guerre contre les Vandales et les Goths*), and the work of Pierre Pithou (1539–96). Nor should we overlook François de la Mothe le Vayer (1588–1672), who scrutinised Procopius and Agathias in his *Jugements sur les anciens et principaux historiens grecs et latins dont il nous reste quelques ouvrages* (Paris, 1646). More essential, however, were the studies by the Jesuits of Clermont College, the future lycée *Louis-le-Grand*. They ambitiously proposed a new Greek text, a new translation, and a new commentary. One of them, Claude Maltret (1621–74), a Jesuit scholar from Toulouse and rector of the College of Montauban, edited a new Greek text accompanied by a Latin translation which paved the way for Louis Cousin (1627–1707) to publish a French translation in 1670–1, based upon Maltret and Alemanni. Before him, Léonor de Mauger had published a French translation in 1667 of the *Guerre contre les Goths*, followed by the *Guerre contre les Perses* in 1669 and the *Guerre contre les Vandales* in 1670, relying no doubt on Maltret's text as well. For the rest, we refer the reader to Brian Croke and simply note that for far too long Louis Cousin's translation remained the reference French-language text, proof indeed that Procopius was not an author in high demand, even though historians needed to use him. The monumental work of Charles Lebeau (1701–78) for instance,

the *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, led M. Dureau de la Malle to publish *L'Algérie: Histoire des guerres des Romains, des Byzantins et des Vandales* which included large sections in French from *La Guerre des Vandales*. No doubt the French interest in Algeria encouraged this kind of publication. In any event it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Byzantine studies emerged as an autonomous discipline in Munich with Karl Krumbacher (1856–1909), who founded *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (1892) and *Byzantisches Archiv* (1898), while also publishing his *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches, 527–1453* (1891). This was the context in which Jacob Haury worked on his *opera omnia* of Procopius, published in four volumes between 1905 and 1913. The result of these twenty years of effort was a product which at long last did justice to his author. (The text was revised by G. Wirth, 1962–4.)

Between Jacob Haury and Berthold Rubin: Initial Orientations

Several detailed studies appeared in the first half of the twentieth century that gave greater insight into textual criticism and Procopius' use of language,²⁵ and which utilised the abundance of information that Procopius provides as the starting point of further studies of various subjects and aspects.²⁶ These studies ultimately broached the same questions that Dahn and Haury had formulated to approach the author and his works. The search also continued for explanations for the (supposed) contradictions of Procopius' works, as seemed to emerge most obviously from comparisons of his *Buildings* and the *Anecdota*. Hence, scholarly inquiry was dominated by topics that revolved around the historian's

²⁵ Bücheler (1908); Kallenberg (1916a); (1916b); (1925).

²⁶ Cf., e.g., Maas (1912) (prose rhythm); Müller (1912) (Justinian's army); Schwyzer (1914) (linguistic knowledge); Hennig (1933) (introduction of the breeding of silkworms); von Wesendonk (1933) (the Hephthalites); Schwartz (1939) (correction of the representation of the prehistory of the Roman-Ostrogothic war in light of Cassiodorus and other sources); Fuchs (1943) (battle reports); Moreau (1957) (placenames).

‘credibility’,²⁷ his relationship with the emperor (and/or empress) and high officials in their orbit,²⁸ and the problem of Procopius’ ‘worldview’.²⁹ Otto Veh’s studies represent an important step forward in these subjects.

The Studies of Berthold Rubin and their Influence on Subsequent Procopius Research

In several studies beginning in the 1950s, Berthold Rubin (1911–90) took up the problem of Procopius’ ‘worldview’.³⁰ Rubin not only relied on Procopius as the chief source for his account (planned in four volumes, but unfinished³¹) of *Das Zeitalter Justinians* (*The Age of Justinian*, 1960)³²—which contributed significantly to the long unquestioned view that the history of Eastern Rome in the sixth century could be gleaned almost exclusively from Procopius³³—but also highlighted anew the relationship between the emperor and the historian and Procopius’ assessment of Belisarius.

Rubin delivered an initial summary of his Procopius research in an extensive article for *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, which also appeared as a monograph (regrettably with different pagination).³⁴ This

²⁷ Cf. Soyter (1939); (1951), who *contra* Brückner (1896) attempts to prove Procopius’ ‘credibility’ with reference to several examples; also, Grecu (1947).

²⁸ Cf. Veh (1952).

²⁹ Cf. Veh (1951); (1952); (1953).

³⁰ Cf. Rubin (1951); (1953); (1954) = (1957); (1955); (1960); (1961).

³¹ Cf. Rubin (1960) X.

³² Only the first volume (Rubin (1960)) appeared, which was intended to elucidate the ‘political ideology’ of the period (cf. VIII); it contains a detailed general discussion of historical developments and background information, including both Justinian and Theodora; it then addresses contemporary voices (at the center of whom stands Procopius), before it gives a detailed account of the Roman-Persian wars under Justin I and Justinian. Rubin’s student C. Capizzi published a second volume, on the Vandalic and Gothic wars, from Rubin’s papers (Rubin–Capizzi (1995)).

³³ Cf. Rubin (1951) 469: ‘star witness of the sixth century’.

³⁴ Rubin (1954) = (1957). Rubin (1955) contains a brief summary of the most important theories.

study not only gave a complete and systematic review of scholarship on Procopius down to the first half of the 1950s,³⁵ but it also provided a (now obsolete³⁶) commentary on the complete works of the historian.³⁷ Rubin's characterisation of Procopius exerted an especially great influence on subsequent research: he described the author as a personality with marked 'Standesbewußtsein' ('class consciousness').³⁸ 'His attitude is profoundly conservative, feudal—exclusively senatorial—oppositional'.³⁹ The historian had a high degree of education⁴⁰ and—contrary to Dahn's speculation⁴¹—was a Christian.⁴² Like Dahn, Rubin sees the historian as driven by his overwhelming hatred of Justinian; he spoke 'from the depths of his hatred';⁴³ 'his power to hate' recalled Tacitus.⁴⁴ That was not the only reason why Procopius' work was 'psychologically not unfruitful'.⁴⁵ Rubin thus could not free himself from Dahn's psychologising approach;⁴⁶ he elevates the 'scepticism' that Dahn had found in Procopius⁴⁷ to outright 'fatalism' (the seeds of which had been planted in

³⁵ Cf. Rubin (1954) 2-11 = (1957) 274-84. Moravcsik (1983) 489-500 also contains an overview of older Procopius scholarship.

³⁶ Cf. now Greatrex (2022a) (on the *Persian Wars*). A commentary on the *Anecdota* is currently being composed in Würzburg: <https://www.geschichte.uni-wuerzburg.de/institut/alte-geschichte/dfg-projekt-kommentar-zu-prokops-geheimgeschichte/> (03.05.2023); and a commentary on the *Buildings*, in Mainz: <https://www.instag.geschichte.uni-mainz.de/procopius-and-the-language-of-buildings/> (03.05.2023).

³⁷ Rubin (1954) 87-311 = (1957) 361-587.

³⁸ Rubin (1954) 28-31 = (1957) 301-4.

³⁹ Rubin (1954) 28 = (1957) 301.

⁴⁰ Cf. Rubin (1954) 31-7 = (1957) 304-10.

⁴¹ Cf. Dahn (1865) 9, 180.

⁴² Rubin (1954) 56 = (1957) 329.

⁴³ Rubin (1954) 30 = (1957) 303.

⁴⁴ Rubin (1954) 75 = (1957) 349.

⁴⁵ Rubin (1954) 70 = (1957) 344.

⁴⁶ Cf. the separate section on Procopius' psychology: Rubin (1954) 70-5 = (1957) 344-9.

⁴⁷ Cf. Dahn (1865) 10 ('a restless sceptic'); 159-60, 174, 177.

Dahn's work).⁴⁸ Justinian and Theodora had supposedly ignited the historian's 'conservative passions'—and here Rubin is more specific: evoking the scene in Proc. *HA* 12.26 in which Justinian is linked to the 'prince of demons' (τῶν δαιμόνων τὸν ἄρχοντα), he paints a picture of a man driven by apocalyptic premonitions and belief in the presence of the Antichrist,⁴⁹ a man who had hidden his 'infernal hatred'⁵⁰ of the emperor and empress in the *Wars* only at last to articulate it in the *Anecdota*. The result was a specific form of *Kaiserkritik*, 'criticism of the emperor', that Rubin had studied more closely in the first volume of his unfinished opus.⁵¹ His approach took shape within an ideological framework that was informed by belief in the efficacy of universal-metaphysical, history-shaping forces of Spenglerian inspiration,⁵² by East-West clichés that had evidently intensified

⁴⁸ Rubin (1954) 62 = (1957) 336.

⁴⁹ Cf. Rubin (1951); (1954) 59–60, 80 = (1957) 333, 354; Rubin (1960) 100, 105, 107, 186, 200, 203–4, 206–7, 209, 212–13, 214, 240, 441–54, n. 546; Rubin (1961).

⁵⁰ Rubin (1960) 203.

⁵¹ Cf. Rubin (1960) 173–226; see further Rubin (1953).

⁵² Cf., e.g., Rubin (1960) 2: 'Es muß auffallen, daß geschichtliche Leitformen und Entwicklungsgesetze, die nicht im Zeitalter Iustinians entstanden und sich weder auf seine Zeit noch erst recht auf den damaligen Machtraum beschränken, überhaupt zur Erklärung und Bestimmung des Zeitcharakters herangezogen werden' ('It is striking that historical models and laws of evolution that were not created in the age of Justinian and are not limited to his time or indeed to the contemporary political landscape at all are used to explain and define the character of the times'); 246: 'Die Gesetze des Ablaufs politischer Dinge sind jedoch auch in Zeiten, die zum rationalen Denken kein wissenschaftliches, sondern das naturgegebene naive Verhältnis haben, dieselben wie in den Stadien, die Spengler als 'modern' anerkennt' ('the laws that govern the course of political things are the same in times that have the natural naïve relationship with rational thought, rather than a scientific one, as they are in the stages that Spengler recognises as "modern"').

in the aftermath of WW II,⁵³ by obvious Germanophilia⁵⁴— a peculiar amalgamation that served as the background for Rubin’s interpretation of the Eastern Roman monarchy of the sixth century as the expression of a specific autocratic ideology. This ideology, he argued, had assumed its sharpest contours in the person of Justinian, thereby attracting the criticism of Procopius, who took offence not at the order of the commonwealth as a whole, but rather at its embodiment by Justinian (and Theodora). The fact that Rubin worked with the vague, ideologically fraught concept of ‘worldview’

⁵³ Cf., e.g., Rubin (1960) 3: ‘Ebenso hat ihr kirchenpolitisches Doppelspiel im Osten seinen zentralistischen Ursprung und damit seine geheime oder eingestandene Unehrllichkeit nicht verleugnen können’ (‘Its ecclesiastical-political duplicity likewise has its centralistic origin in the East and thus cannot deny its secret or admitted dishonesty’); 4: ‘unverfälschter Geist des Ostens’ (‘unadulterated spirit of the East’); 5: ‘Das Sektenwesen des Ostens’ (‘the sectarian nature of the East’); 11: ‘Während Europas bestes Blut in hoffnungsloser Verdünnung nach Osten ausströmte, zeichnete sich schon der nächste Schritt der Weltgeschichte ab’ (‘While Europe’s best blood streamed out eastward in hopeless dilution, the next stage of world history took shape’); XII: ‘Weniger Dank schuldet der Verfasser jenen alliierten Bomberpiloten und russischen Eroberern Berlins, die es 1943 und 1945 versäumten, die Urfassung Iustinians in Asche zu verwandeln.’ (‘The author owes less gratitude to the Allied bomber pilots and Russian conquerors who, in 1943 and 1945, neglected to reduce the original version of Justinian to ashes.’)

⁵⁴ Cf. already Rubin (1954) 65–6 = (1957) 339–40; see further, e.g., Rubin (1960) 8: ‘Das Feuer Agamemnons und Achills brannte in den Adern jüngerer Völker. Es gibt kein Zeugnis dafür, daß ein Mensch der Spätantike die innere Verwandtschaft der Germanen seiner Zeit mit den homerischen Helden klar ausgesprochen hätte. Wenn aber der Historiker Prokop von Kaisareia Männer wie Totila und Teja so darstellt als ginge es nicht um verhaßte Feinde, sondern einfach um die Schilderung des höchsten Opfermuts und jugendlicher Heldenschönheit, dann scheinen doch Funken vom Bildungserlebnis zur Wirklichkeit überzuspringen’ (‘The fire of Agamemnon and Achilles burned in the veins of younger peoples. There is no evidence that a person of Late Antiquity explicitly articulated the inner kindred of the Germani of his time with the Homeric heroes. When the historian Procopius of Caesarea, however, depicts men like Totila and Teia, not as if they were detested enemies, but rather simply as illustrations of the most sublime self-sacrifice and youthful heroic beauty, then flickers of his educational experience seem to leap over to reality’).

in both his monograph on Procopius and in *Das Zeitalter Iustinians*⁵⁵ increasingly caused his work—his magnum opus in particular—to reflect the crude ideas and views of its author, who made no secret of his nationalist sympathies even after 1945 and ultimately veered into right-wing extremism. Anyone who continues to reference Procopius’ ‘worldview’ in his or her arguments, citing Rubin, should be aware of this fact.

German-Language Research on Procopius in the Latter Half of the Twentieth century

As repugnant as the ideological framework of Rubin’s work must be today from a modern perspective, its influence on German-language literature on Justinian and Procopius (in East and West!) remained considerable until the early 2000s. This was not least a consequence of the fact that Rubin indeed made important, philologically sound contributions to our understanding of the historian’s works. His detailed analyses of Procopius, which he undertook for Pauly-Wissowa in 1954/1957, present numerous departure points for further research even today. Among them, the term *Kaiserkritik*, which Rubin used in a fairly imprecise sense, has become a key analytical category for interpreting Procopius’ work. The question of open and hidden criticism of Justinian’s reign in Procopius’ works continues to generate discussion today—albeit no longer with the same intensity as at the turn of the millennium.

One example of the direct reception of Rubin’s *Kaiserkritik* paradigm by modern scholars appears in the work of Kajetan Gantar from the years 1961–3. In a series of short miscellanea, Gantar attempted to prove the existence of sporadic criticism of the emperor in the panegyric *Buildings* by searching for examples of ambivalence and hidden meaning in various expressions of Procopius.⁵⁶ His

⁵⁵ Cf. Rubin (1954) 56–70 = (1957) 329–44; see further id. (1960) 187, 192, 204, 206, 224–5, 237, 239, 389 n. 131, 471 n. 621, 1153 n. 519.

⁵⁶ Cf. Gantar (1962a); (1962b); (1963a). Gantar explains individual passages of Procopius in other studies: cf. Gantar (1961); (1963b).

observations are limited to astute analysis of individual passages without abstracting from them or generalising to reach systematic conclusions. This latter task, however, was undertaken a decade later by Franz Tinnefeld, who tried to situate Procopius' *Kaiserkritik* within Byzantine historiography. Tinnefeld also built on Rubin's work, seeking to identify overarching 'categories' to which recurring elements of criticism could be assigned that reflected an author's given purpose. His textual analyses are almost completely detached from the historical context. In contrast to Gantar, Tinnefeld concentrated especially on the *Anecdota*.⁵⁷

The *Anecdota* was also the subject of a short monograph on Procopius' relationship with Justinian and Theodora, published by the Byzantinist Hans-Georg Beck in 1986. Whereas Rubin and others had pursued this question primarily with respect to the phenomenon of *Kaiserkritik*, Beck developed a new approach in response to the methodological problem caused by the fact that our knowledge of Theodora as a person derives almost exclusively from Procopius' polemic. Beck takes the close connection between the historian and his 'victim' seriously and writes a double biography that both helps elucidate the bitterness of Procopius' attacks and enables us to draw a more precise picture of the empress.⁵⁸ Of course, Beck himself ultimately remains dependent on the information provided by Procopius and thus cannot formulate any fundamentally new conclusions. The problem of the historian's relationship with the emperor and empress and others in their circle (Belisarius and other officials), as well as the interrelated questions of Procopius' criticism of the emperor and his credibility, thus continue to be discussed in recent scholarship.⁵⁹ Scholarly attention has traditionally (and more so since Rubin) been drawn to biographical aspects and Procopius' social context (a favourite topic among researchers in the socialist states of

⁵⁷ Tinnefeld (1971), esp. 11–16, 17–36.

⁵⁸ Beck (1986). Cf. also Pratsch (2011).

⁵⁹ E.g., Signes Codoñer (2003a); (2003b); Gutsfeld (2006); Wieling (2013) (from a legal-historical perspective); Börm (2015) (with further literature).

Eastern Europe), usually in an effort to explain his writings and views from the perspective of his status as a member of the class of landowning senatorial elites or persons close to them.⁶⁰

Diversification and the Emergence of New Perspectives: Procopius Research Since 2000

At the latest since the publication of Cameron's monograph on Procopius in 1985,⁶¹ the much maligned question of the historian's religious conviction⁶² has played only a small part in German-language research. Inferring Procopius' faith from his works had proven to be a dead end,⁶³ and since the years around 2000, there has been a growing tendency among scholars not to view Procopius as an exceptional figure who commands respect, but rather to situate him in the long-term development of late antique historiography. In 2004, Mischa Meier thus traced a growing Christian-providential reshaping of historiography between Procopius and Theophylact Simocatta that is predicated on liturgification;⁶⁴ and Bruno Bleckmann has recently emphasised lines of continuity within (Eastern) Roman and Early Byzantine historiography.⁶⁵

In this context, the paradigm of so-called classicising secular historiography, which has influenced German-language research for decades,⁶⁶ has come under criticism.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Cf., e.g., Winkler (1961); Kapitánffy (1976); Fatouros (1980); Börm (2015) 323–6.

⁶¹ Cameron (1985).

⁶² Cf., e.g., Veh (1981), who attempts to show that Procopius was a tolerant Christian.

⁶³ Even the more recent studies by Kaldellis, who interprets Procopius as a member of an opposition made up of pagan intellectuals (cf., e.g., Kaldellis (2004a), (2004b), and (2004/5)), have not resulted in the reappearance of a corresponding discussion in German-language scholarship.

⁶⁴ Meier (2004c).

⁶⁵ Bleckmann (2021).

⁶⁶ Hunger (1978) 291–300 was influential for a long time.

⁶⁷ Cf., most recently, the reflections in Bleckmann (2021) 27–38.

It now appears increasingly clear that Procopius' work overlaps far more with contemporary historiography—not least the *Chronicle* of John Malalas or the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius—than was often conjectured.⁶⁸

It is not only in connection with this question that German(-speaking) scholars have increasingly participated in an international debate conducted in English. German-speaking scholars now not only participate more prominently in international volumes of collected essays,⁶⁹ but also tend to present their own conclusions in the English language. This has, on the one hand, raised their profile on the international stage; on the other hand, however, the question arises as to how much longer we may be able to speak of German-language scholarship on Procopius at all. It is conceivable that in the near future it will be completely subsumed in the ongoing international discussion in English. Traditional approaches and categories of German-language scholarship on Procopius (which have recently, and with good reason, been problematised)—concepts such as 'worldview', 'religion', and '*Kaiserkritik*'—have been put on the defensive or forced yield to new viewpoints.⁷⁰ Other classical themes of German-language research on Procopius, in contrast, have already been integrated into the international discussion. Among these are the discussion of problems of transmission and textual criticism,⁷¹ the question of sources,⁷² and the question of the date of Procopius' works. Concerning the latter, although Geoffrey Greatrex seemingly laid the debate

⁶⁸ Cf. Greatrex (2016); Meier (2017).

⁶⁹ Cf. Greatrex and Janniard (2018); Lillington-Martin and Turquois (2018); Meier and Montinaro (2022).

⁷⁰ Leppin (2007) 662–9 discusses scholarly trends and perspectives on the literary products of the sixth century; on Procopius, see *ibid.* 662–5. On the problems of the concept of *Kaiserkritik*, see Greatrex (2000).

⁷¹ Cf. Wirth (1965); Begass (2017).

⁷² Cf. Stickler (2017) on the possibility that Procopius made use of the historical work of Olympiodorus.

to rest in 2014,⁷³ it reopened in 2019 when Florian Battistella presented new arguments for dating the *Anecdota* to 553/4.⁷⁴

Independent of this fundamental reorientation of Procopius scholarship within an international context, German-speaking scholars in particular have studied the historian for decades as a source for various aspects of the history of the sixth century, which—on the basis of individual passages of Procopius—have been researched independently of one another. I will cite only a few examples here: the *Buildings* has been utilised to glean information about the late antique topography of the Balkan Peninsula and thus also, at least in the explicit purpose of Veselin Beševliev, contributed to the study of ‘ethnic conditions ... in the fifth century’.⁷⁵ Klaus Belke has drawn attention to the fact that Procopius credits Justinian with the initiative for various building projects in Asia Minor that had probably been set in motion by his predecessors.⁷⁶ Procopius’ *Buildings* serves as a source in other studies for analysis of Justinian’s building policy⁷⁷ and other aspects related to building projects.⁷⁸ Several studies explore the historian’s depiction and conception of barbarians⁷⁹ and the image of Trajan in late antique literature.⁸⁰ And despite growing scepticism of the category of ‘classicising secular historiography’ (see above), the

⁷³ Greatrex (2014) 97–104; cf. also Greatrex (2022b) 66–9.

⁷⁴ Battistella (2019). Cf. also Signes Codoñer (2003a).

⁷⁵ Beševliev (1970) V (quotation). Cf. also Beševliev (1967); (1969a); (1969b); Moreau (1957); Russu (1963).

⁷⁶ Belke (2000). The entire volume of the journal *Antiquité Tardive* in which Belke’s paper appears is dedicated to Procopius’ *Buildings*. The fact that Procopius repeatedly attributes to Justinian building projects that were initiated by his predecessors has also been demonstrated elsewhere: cf. Haarer (2006) 109; Meier (2010) 147.

⁷⁷ Cf. Kreikenbom (2010) (Leptis Magna).

⁷⁸ Cf., e.g., Effenberger (2021) on Proc. *Aed.* 1.4.9–24 (discovery of the relics of the Apostles).

⁷⁹ Cf. Ditten (1975); Brodka (2013b). With special focus on the Slavs: Benedicty (1962); (1965).

⁸⁰ Sauciuc-Săveanu (1964).

question of Procopius' reception of Thucydides continues to be a factor in scholarly research.⁸¹

In more recent times, individual episodes and aspects of Procopius' works have been subjected to detailed analysis, especially the account of the plague in the *Wars* (the assessment of which plays an important part in a recent, international debate over the consequences of the 'Justinianic Plague'),⁸² as well as his concept of history⁸³ and concept of the Roman past,⁸⁴ questions of gender,⁸⁵ the depiction of the Nika Revolt of 532,⁸⁶ the triumph over the Vandals in 534,⁸⁷ court ceremonial,⁸⁸ operations during the collapse of the Western Roman Empire,⁸⁹ events in the South Caucasus,⁹⁰ and various other aspects in the *Wars* and other works,⁹¹ or individual personalities.⁹² While in 2003 Signes Codoñer subtly situated the *Anecdota* and *Buildings* in the historical context of 550 (the death of Germanos),⁹³ Henning Börm addressed problems connected to the *Anecdota* yet again in 2015 (see below).⁹⁴

⁸¹ Diesner (1971); Meier (1999); Brodka (2004); Meister (2013) 94–8.

⁸² Proc. *BP* 2.22–3. Cf. Kislinger and Stathakopoulos (1999); Meier (1999); (2004a); (2005). For discussion of the evidentiary value of Procopius' account of the plague, cf. Mordechai and Eisenberg (2019); Mordechai, Eisenberg, et al. (2019); Eisenberg and Mordechai (2019); (2020); Meier (2020); Sarris (2022).

⁸³ Brodka (2003); (2004); (2007a); Andres (2017).

⁸⁴ Stickler (2018).

⁸⁵ Schäfer (2006).

⁸⁶ Cf. Meier (2003); (2004b); Pfeilschifter (2013) 178–210.

⁸⁷ Börm (2013); Meier (2019); Edelmann-Singer (2021).

⁸⁸ Pfeilschifter (2013) 104–22.

⁸⁹ Engels (2009); Meier (2016). Cf. also Stickler (2018).

⁹⁰ Stickler (2019).

⁹¹ Cf., e.g., Wada (1970) (silkworms); Brandes (2002) (financial administration under Justinian); Brodka (2013a) (legend of Abgar); (2013b); Vössing (2016); Koehn (2018) (Justinian's army).

⁹² Goltz (2008) 210–67 (Theoderic); Goltz (2011); (2018) (rulers, male and female); Brodka (2018a) (Narses); Rollé Ditzler (2021) (Belisarius).

⁹³ Signes Codoñer (2003a).

⁹⁴ Börm (2015).

In this context, Börm's monograph *Prokop und die Perser* (*Procopius and the Persians*, 2007) warrants special attention. Börm tackles the question of what the historian knew about the Persians and how he presents them in his works.⁹⁵ By expanding on this subject and introducing fundamental reflections about possible knowledge of the Persians in sixth century and Roman-Persian relations under Justinian in particular, Börm draws a panorama that enables him to identify Procopius' special characteristics more precisely. In conclusion, the historian appears to be representative of an intellectual milieu that expressed sympathy for a basic harmony with the Sasanians, and this side carried the day in the context of the treaty of 532. This confidence in peaceful coexistence, however, was shaken to its core by the Persian invasion of 540. In the aftermath, the invasion led to an abiding mistrust that is still reflected in the treaty of 562, which Procopius probably did not live to see.⁹⁶ Börm's book, undoubtedly one of the most important studies of Procopius since the turn of the millennium, identifies new perspectives beyond traditional categories like 'worldview' from which to approach this difficult author. Börm has pursued his Procopius studies even further in several more papers,⁹⁷ once again discussing the vexed problem of the categorisation of the *Anecdota*. According to this thesis, it is a polemical text that was composed during a crisis when one could have anticipated a violent end for Justinian; Procopius thus supposedly attempted to position himself with respect to a successor.⁹⁸

The studies with which Dariusz Brodka has enriched Procopius research in recent years are also of major significance. In his important monograph *Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie* (*Historical Philosophy in Late Antique Historiography*, 2004), the largest part of which is dedicated to Procopius' works, Brodka explores the 'driving

⁹⁵ On the same subject from a linguistic perspective, see Schmitt (2004).

⁹⁶ Börm (2007).

⁹⁷ Cf. Börm (2006); (2008); (2013); (2000/2013); (2019).

⁹⁸ Börm (2015).

forces' behind historical events and especially the possibilities open to actors in the historian's works. In Brodka's analysis, Procopius appears to be a devout Christian who has nonetheless made the historiographical concepts of Thucydides his own. That in turn leads to conceptual and narratological difficulties, as apparent for instance in the use of the traditional concept of *tychē*. In Procopius, *tychē* appears on the one hand as a factor subject to the intervention of God; on the other, however, it is the manifestation of divine will in the world and ultimately a pure cipher that circumscribes everything that is inconceivable to man. In addition to thoroughgoing analyses of the *Wars* and *Anecdota* in particular, this approach demonstrates very persuasively an existential tension in Procopius' works between the use of Thucydidean historical concepts, on the one hand, and the Christian faith on the other.⁹⁹ Brodka has also pursued his Procopius studies further in subsequent papers, combining philological textual analyses with discussion of Procopius' sources, transmission, and historical context.¹⁰⁰ These studies ultimately culminated in a profound introduction to Procopius' life and work, which gives a concise overview of important research questions and the state of the discussion; it can be recommended unreservedly not only to students but also to specialists.¹⁰¹

I would be remiss if I neglected to mention the fact that important reflections on Procopius and on aspects of Justinian's reign can also be found in general literature on the sixth century. In this context, I shall mention only the monographs by Mischa Meier, Hartmut Leppin, and Dariusz Brodka.¹⁰² Procopius also has come to occupy a more

⁹⁹ Brodka (2004d). On this problem, cf. also Andres (2017). Brodka is also the author of a translation of the *Wars* into Polish and of the chapter in this volume on work on Procopius in Polish

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Brodka (1998); (1999); (2003); (2007a); (2007b); (2011); (2012); (2013a); (2013b); (2016); (2018a); (2018b).

¹⁰¹ Brodka (2022).

¹⁰² Meier (2004); Leppin (2011); Brodka (2018a).

prominent place in German-language lexis¹⁰³, handbooks, and literary histories¹⁰⁴—in the latter category usually as the last ‘ancient’ or the first ‘Byzantine’ historian.

¹⁰³ Cf. Spoerri (1965); Krautschik (1997); Trampedach (1997); Tinnefeld (2001); Rebenich (2003); Leven (2005).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Hunger (1978) 291–300; Dihle (1989) 49ff.; Mehl (2001) 198–201; Rosenqvist (2007) 13–15; Scardino (2022) 645–8.

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