

## PROCOPIUS IN POLISH

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In Poland, scholars have paid only a little attention to Procopius. The most important studies of Polish scholars on Procopius have been published in German. Especially worth noting is the contribution of K. Kumaniecki, who demonstrated through a detailed analysis of the style of Procopius that the *Anecdota* should be regarded as a genuine work of Procopius.<sup>1</sup> The following survey will focus only on major contributions in Polish, omitting short, basic, popular, or encyclopaedic presentations.

### Translations

All works of Procopius are available in Polish. The *Secret History* was translated by Andrzej Konarek in 1997 (*Historia sekretna*, 1997), the *Buildings* by Piotr Ł. Grotowski in 2006 (*O budowlach*, 2006) and *History of the Wars* by Dariusz Brodka in 2013–15 (*Historia wojen*, 2013–15). While the *Secret History* is merely a bare translation of the Greek text without any noteworthy introduction or notes, the *Buildings* and *History of the Wars* provide detailed introductions as well as basic historical and archaeological commentary on the respective texts. The Polish editions of the *Buildings* and *History of the Wars* aim to make these two important works available to all those who want not only to read them without any knowledge of Greek, but also to set them within their wider historical or literary context.

<sup>1</sup> Kumaniecki (1827).

It should be stressed that the *Buildings* by P. Grotowski represent a very ambitious project. The introduction summarizes the main issues concerning the *Buildings*, such as their aim, intended public, date, style and language, whereas the detailed commentary on the text focuses mainly on archaeological questions. The same can be said about *The History of the Wars*. The introduction is a form of monograph that deals with the *History of the Wars*. The author, based on his previous works published mainly in German, discusses such problems as literary genre, aim, composition, sources, intended audience, historical value, style and language. In this case as well, the translation is provided with a short historical and philological commentary.

### Studies

Particularly noteworthy contributions include the historical and archaeological commentary by Brzóstkowska and Swoboda on all Procopian passages that deal with the Slavs. This commentary was published in a series *Testimonia najdawniejszych dziejów Słowian* in the second volume of the Greek series, pp. 54–89.<sup>2</sup> The edition contains the Greek text, a Polish translation and a detailed analysis of all relevant passages from *The History of the Wars* and *Buildings*. The commentary is focused on historical and archeological data, and only to a lesser extent provides an analysis of philological problems.

Some articles also deserve mention. M. Kokoszko ('The ancient knowledge and literary portraits in the works of Procopius of Caesarea') tries to provide some additions to the milieu-theory of R. Benedicty<sup>3</sup> and criticises him for not taking into account the proper cultural context of the milieu-theory.<sup>4</sup> The paper focuses on the role of the ancient science of physiognomy which created a comprehensive

<sup>2</sup> Brzóstkowska Swoboda (1989).

<sup>3</sup> Benedicty (1962)..

<sup>4</sup> Kokoszko (2000).

system that explained essential links between human character and the environment that has shaped it. The author acknowledges that there is no mention of physiognomy in Procopius' works. However, some evidence can be found to argue for Procopius' acquaintance with this type of knowledge. Through a detailed analysis of the portrait of Justinian and Theodora in the *Secret History*, Kokoszko points to a number of references to physiognomic patterns.

Two contributions by S. Turlej deal with the attitude of Procopius to the Balkan politics of Justinian. The first one, *Balkany w cieniu wojen Justyniana? Znaczenie relacji Prokopiusza*<sup>5</sup> ('The Balkans in the Shadow of Justinian's Wars: The Importance of Procopius'), highlights the importance of Procopius' account for the reconstruction of the political scene in the Balkans during the reign of Justinian. Turlej contests the opinions of F. Curta and argues that the Balkans were at the centre of Justinian's attention and their defence was his priority, which is indicated by the scale of construction activities during his reign.<sup>6</sup> While discussing the building activity of Justinian, Turlej considers the date of composition of *De aedificiis*; he puts forward arguments for dating the work (except Book I) to A.D. 559–62.<sup>7</sup>

In his subsequent article, 'Justynian i początki Słowian. Uwagi na temat teorii Florina Curty' ('Justinian and the Early Days of the Slavs: Remarks on Florin Curta's Theory'), Turlej discusses the origins of the Slavs as well as the significance of Procopius' account for research on their early history.<sup>8</sup> He carries out a detailed analysis of the story of Chilbudius told in *Wars* 7.14.

Procopius' credibility is the focus of A. Izdebski in his study of the description of the siege of Naples in 536 ('The Community of Naples and the Army of Belisarius in 536: Classical Municipal Politics or Procopius' Literary Stylisa-

<sup>5</sup> Turlej (2010a).

<sup>6</sup> For the problem cf. now Sarantis (2016).

<sup>7</sup> Turlej (2010a), 717 n. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Turlej (2010b).

tion).<sup>9</sup> The aim of Izdebski is to establish the extent to which Procopius imitated Thucydides and therefore, how reliable the information conveyed in his account is. Izdebski investigates Procopius' intentions in recounting the siege of Naples, and concludes that the historian served Belisarius' interests in propagating a positive image of these events. Izdebski compares the Procopian account to Thucydides' narrative of the siege of Plataea, showing rightly that for Procopius imitating Thucydides meant copying his manner of thinking rather than his text.

A. Brzóstkowska discusses a completely different subject, attempting to explain the meaning of the term *anaxarides* in the digression on the Slavs in Proc., *Wars* 7.14.26.<sup>10</sup>

Recently, T. Wolińska has joined the discussion on the religion of Procopius in her paper 'A Proponent of Pagans and Heretics? Procopius of Caesarea on the Religious Policy of Justinian'.<sup>11</sup> Wolińska looks into the attitude of Procopius towards the policy of religious persecution and shows that he disapproved of Justinian's religious policy. She argues that Procopius was not an atheist, but believed in a supernatural being that governs the world. In her opinion, Procopius was not a religious fanatic. She claims rather that he was deeply tolerant. It should be noted, therefore, that the opinions of Wolińska have much in common with the arguments of A. Kaldellis. She concludes that Procopius would probably share the opinion of Theodoric, which can be found in Cassiodorus' *Variae* 2.27.2: *religionem imperare non possumus, quia nemo cogitur ut credat invictus*.

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<sup>9</sup> Izdebski (2009).

<sup>10</sup> Brzóstkowska (1980).

<sup>11</sup> Wolińska (2014).

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