

WORK ON PROCOPIUS IN ROMANIAN

Dana Iuliana Viezure

The earliest retrievable studies on Procopius in the Romanian language stand witness to a paradigm shift in the valuation of Byzantium in Romanian scholarship. Overshadowed during the process of national identity formation by an exclusive focus on Romanians' Latin roots, Byzantium emerged as an area worthy of study only at the beginning of the twentieth century. The impetus for this change came from scholars educated in Western Europe, like Constantin Litzica, Demostene Russo and Nicolae Iorga. Of the three, Litzica and Russo became the first two chairs of Byzantine Studies at the University of Bucharest.¹

Litzica and Iorga both wrote on Procopius, and their respective interests in Procopius reflect two main approaches to Byzantine Studies in early-twentieth-century Romania, as well as a shared commitment to exploring aspects of Byzantine literature that could shed light on the history of the Romanians and on the nature of the continuities between the Byzantine Empire and medieval and modern Romanians. Litzica, who completed a doctoral thesis on Meyer's law of Byzantine prose rhythm in 1898 in Munich under the supervision of Karl Krumbacher (an appendix in

¹ The Chair of Byzantine Philology was founded in 1907 and was renamed the Chair of History of Byzantine-Romanian Civilization in 1913 (Mishkova (2015) 213).

his thesis was dedicated to Procopius),² produced a detailed philological study of toponyms in Book IV of Procopius' *De Aedificiis*.³ The main interest of this study lies in several proposed corrections (on palaeographical, philological and comparative grounds) to Haury's edition in the reading of place names. Of all the Balkan toponyms listed by Procopius in Book IV, Litzica is most interested in those pertaining to the geography of Dobruja (southeast Romania between the lower Danube and the Black Sea coast and the Black Sea coast in Northern Bulgaria). Litzica's work on Procopius and the geography of Dobruja, and specifically his efforts to identify the location of places mentioned by Procopius, were continued by Andrei Aricescu in an article published in 1972.

Iorga's brief assessment of Procopius in an article overviewing the Byzantine historians⁴ mirrors his broader understanding of the Byzantine Empire as being in fundamental continuity with the Roman world and of only accidental Greekness. Thus Iorga compares works like Procopius' *Wars* and *Buildings* to Caesar's *Commentaries*, and Procopius, whose Greek education is not denied, is said to have certainly known Latin. An avowed admirer of Justinian, Iorga dismisses out of hand the Procopian authorship of the *Secret History*.

The first of Procopius' works to be translated into Romanian was *De Aedificiis*, published with facing Greek text and notes in 1939 by Gheorghe Popa-Lisseanu as volume 15 in a series entitled 'Sources for the History of Romania' (*Fontes Historiae Dacoromanae*). Procopius' *Wars* was translated into Romanian by Haralambie Mihăescu in 1963 (translation with introduction). A critical edition of the *Secret History*, accompanied by Romanian translation, introduction, notes, and critical apparatus, was published by

² The title of the dissertation is 'Das Meyersche Satzschlussgesetz in der byzantinischen Prosa mit einem Anhang über Prokop von Käsarea'; a review of Litzica's thesis appeared in *BZ* 8 (Havet (1899)).

³ Litzica (1926).

⁴ Iorga (1925) 237–41. The article is written in French.

Mihăescu in 1972. Mihăescu's guiding principle in preparing this edition was faithfulness to the manuscripts. In following this, he proposed a number of minor corrections (primarily accents), but also rejected many of Haury's conjectural readings.⁵

There has been very little interest in Procopius among Romanian scholars since the publication of Mihăescu's translations in the 1960s and 1970s. Mihăescu's edition and translation of the *Secret History* were republished in Bucharest in 2006. In 2002 Dorinel Dani of the Universitatea de Nord Baia Mare published an article in English on the dating of Procopius' *Secret History*. Dani argues that the *Secret History* was written after Justinian's death in 565, in a discussion that leaves out entirely the most recent scholarly debates over the dating of this work (M. Whitby; R. Scott; G. Greatrex).

Seton Hall University

dana.viezure@shu.edu

⁵ Mihăescu (1972b).

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