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REVIEW–DISCUSSION
PROCOPIUS IN CONTEXT

Geoffrey Greatrex and Sylvain Janniard, edd., *Le Monde de Procope/The World of Procopius*. Orient et Mediterranée 28. Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 2018. Pp. 424. Hardback, €59.00. ISBN 978-2-7018-0549-8.

Note: The Table of Contents for this volume appears at the end of the review.

The recent florescence of scholarship on Procopius continues to bear fruit in this collection of twenty papers edited by Geoffrey Greatrex and Sylvain Janniard. A core half-dozen were originally delivered at the conference 'The Late Mediterranean Society according to Procopius of Caesarea', held in Mainz in December 2014, whose expansive thematic vision provides a point of departure. Two others had been presented at different colloquia in 2016, while the editors solicited the remaining contributions from some of the many scholars engaged in this field, with particular emphasis on younger researchers.[1] Despite—or because of—its rather mixed pedigree, this assemblage combines wide coverage with a reasonable level of cohesion, within and between sections, in large part owing to the editors' planning and efforts to encourage circulation of draft-papers. Its publication follows close on the heels of another such collection, edited by Christopher Lillington-Martin and Elodie Turquois (2017), which drew two papers from the same gathering in Mainz, and with which it shares four contributors.[2] The two volumes are in certain respects complementary; while both encompass literary, historiographical, and historical approaches, the latest contains fewer exclusively literary—and no literary-theoretical—contributions and has a higher proportion of primarily or purely historical studies. A short editorial introduction explains the background to the project and briefly summarises the contents. Of the twenty contributions, fourteen are in English, three in German, and three in French, a conscious endeavour to sustain multilingual research in the Humanities against the Anglophone tide.[3] Four, more or less equal sections

[1] The present reviewer acknowledges that he was invited to submit a paper to this collection, but withdrew at an early stage owing to the weight of other commitments.

[2] Lillington-Martin and Turquois (2017), previously discussed by this reviewer: Rance (2020).

[3] See also Greatrex (2017) for an ongoing project to provide critical summaries of Procopius-related scholarship in languages other than English.

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address themes that have long been central to the study of Procopius' works and world: society, historiography, war, and ethnography. An *index locorum* greatly enhances the research value of the volume.

Geoffrey Greatrex appropriately opens the first section, 'Procopius and Roman Society', with a study of the author's native city of Caesarea, provincial metropolis of Palaestina Prima, taking into account archaeological excavations, the epigraphic record, and recent research into the literary-rhetorical output of the school of Gaza, in order to sketch a municipal portrait around the time of Procopius' birth in *c.* 500. This tour of Caesarea and its hinterland embraces the urban fabric and environment, its ethnically and religiously diverse populace, the structures and personnel of Roman administration, and civic cultural life, drawing supplementary details from better-documented Gaza. Even if a pervasive literary-theoretical trend in classical scholarship succeeds in subordinating the author's actual biography to his constructed authorial persona,[4] Greatrex has usefully situated a real-world Procopius in his earliest socio-cultural milieu within Palestinian coastal contexts.

There follow three contributions concerning Procopius' attitudes to Justinian's regime and his portrayal of imperial (mal)administration. Marion Kruse's re-reading of Procopius' *Kaiserkritik* detects previously unrecognised economic thinking underpinning much of his indictment of Justinian's fiscal policies.[5] More specifically, in apparently conventional allegations of the emperor's greed, profligacy, and financial mismanagement, Kruse discerns sophisticated and coherent economic rationality, which conceptualises Justinian as the initiator and chief agent of a sequence of self-reinforcing cycles of incentive-driven economic behaviour (principally paying subsidies to barbarians and selling public offices) that are destroying the Roman state. He further credits Procopius with devising a unique model of behavioural economics, almost unmatched in antiquity for its theoretical refinement (primacy may be accorded to Xenophon's *Poroi*) and an essential component of his understanding of history and historical causation. Although the argumentation is often lucid and thoughtful, this exegesis of a handful of passages in *Wars* and the *Secret History* requires some imagination.

Mark-Anthony Karantabias reviews long-acknowledged interpretative challenges posed by Procopius' rhetorical construction of tyranny in the *Secret History*, exposing distortion in allegations of Justinian's exceptionally cruel, arbitrary, and unrestrained exercise of imperial power, with respect to law, persons, property, institutions, and customs. In light of recurring comparisons to archetypal modern tyrants (usually Stalin) in recent scholarship, Karantabias affirms that Justinian, like his late antique predecessors, was a far

[4] Ross (2018).

[5] The study of Procopius' economic thought is not quite as devoid of 'coherent scholarly attention' as Kruse avers (39 n. 1); see, e.g., Ziche (2006).

from absolute ruler, whose agency in legislative projects, administrative reforms, and even punitive action was variously constrained by existing laws, bureaucratic vested interests, and elite socio-political opinion (though, in some respects, the same could be said even of certain superlatively 'tyrannical' regimes of twentieth-century history).

Johann Martin Thesz examines how Procopius constructs social transformations under Justinian and Theodora in terms of perversion of societal norms and progressive moral degeneration. Against a backdrop of competitive social mobility in the army and bureaucracy of a starkly hierarchical society, Thesz assesses Procopius' depiction of permeative social changes as one dimension of Justinian's pathological 'innovation', whereby the established order and moral fabric of society, hitherto based on pedigree, *paideia*, and character, are deliberately turned upside down by a parvenu imperial couple, bent on elevating low-born and morally depraved men and promoting reversal of gender roles, from female sexual promiscuity to imperial gynecocracy. In this picture of an inverted society, Procopius seemingly expresses the indignation of traditional elites, now marginalised and humiliated, but in Procopius' sociological critique Thesz sees actual developments grotesquely distorted and deprived of historical perspective, with the aim of making Justinian's reign an era of unprecedented baseness.

In the sole contribution relating to religion, Maria Conterno considers what Procopius' silence on non-Chalcedonian Christians might imply about his society and readers. Leaving aside his own much-debated religious-philosophical outlook, Conterno observes that the minimal attention he accords to Christological controversies and Justinian's religious policies is variously explained in terms of personal distaste, indifference, or discretion, literary generic constraints, and/or his stated intention to write a separate work on this topic. Nevertheless, in Procopius' occasional remarks on theological questions Conterno discerns an authorial awareness of degrees of unorthodoxy, ranging from outlawed heresies, which he specifies, to shades of internal dissidence, which he feels no need to distinguish. She tests this impression by surveying the treatment of doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences in some other sixth-century historical sources, both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian, and finds nuanced and evolving mutual perceptions of and interrelationships between Chalcedonian, Miaphysite, and East Syrian ('Nestorian') communities. She concludes that Procopius' stance is neither out of place in this complex confessional landscape nor a distorted or partial image of doctrinal divergence, whose polarising sectarian impact on society modern scholarship may overstate.

The papers of the second section variously cohere around the theme of 'Past and Present in Procopius' Works'. Most directly, two intersecting studies by Jessica Moore and Timo Stickler examine Procopius' construction of the past, especially in *Gothic Wars*, where the Roman ancestral landscape becomes

an arena for competing claims to that heritage. Well versed in extensive scholarship on cultural memory and identity, Moore's enquiry into some historical dimensions of sixth-century 'Roman-ness' undertakes a comparative review of the labelling and perception of the Roman past in selected texts: Justinian's *novellae*, John Lydus' 'antiquarian' writings, Cassiodorus' *Variae*, and Procopius' *Wars*, with a view to determining how, in each case, consciousness of the past differently informs construction of a present Roman identity and, conversely, how present concerns about Roman identity may have inspired or shaped remembrance of the past. In particular, Moore elaborates older studies in exploring two vying conceptions of 'Roman-ness' in *Gothic Wars*, hinging on history, geography, language, and behaviour, which recurrently frame interactions between resident Italian/Roman-Romans and intrusive (partly 'non-Roman') East Roman forces.[6] By extending discussion to include 'official history' and other historically minded literati, Moore elucidates Procopius' construction of 'Roman-ness', past and present, within a broader intellectual environment.[7]

With differing emphases, Stickler seeks to define those aspects of the past that attracted Procopius' interest and their function across his oeuvre, notably Procopius' treatment of fifth-century western and eastern Roman history in the three 'Vorgeschichten' in *Wars* and his intellectual, rhetorical, and emotional engagement with the history, traditions, and monuments of *urbs Roma* in *Gothic Wars*. Acknowledging the different format, texture, and quality of Procopius' historical episodes compared to his contemporary narratives, Stickler draws out a variously employed motif of 'change' as a multifaceted and unending historical dynamic,[8] whereby Procopius' treatment of the past is not merely testimony to historical or antiquarian concerns, but evinces his central objective to place past and present in dialogue, either through explicit past–present comparisons or by more obliquely positioning the past as a foil to issues of his own era. Appreciation of the complexity of Procopius' attitude towards the past nuances assumptions about his 'conservative' mindset, insofar as he does not regard ancient theories and practices as intrinsically superior,

[6] Some of these identifiers of 'Roman-ness', at least in Procopius' 'real world', are perhaps less clear-cut than they may appear; see below for remarks on Latin as the institutional and operational language of East Roman armies. Even Procopius' citations of Latin—or 'Roman' labelling—can harbour complexity: e.g., Procop. *Vand.* 2.2.1: *τὸ σημεῖον ὃ δὴ βάνδον καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι*, 'the standard that the Romans call …', where Late Latin *bandum* (a loan from Gothic *bandwō*), transliterated as *βάνδον*, is a *terminus technicus* probably first coined in Vulgar Latin of the Balkans, i.e., East Roman. See Rance (2015) 63–4 with bibliography.

[7] Kruse (2019) has since addressed some of the same questions of identity and memory during Justinian's reign.

[8] On this theme in Procopius' *Wars*, at a lexical level, see Van Nuffelen (2017).

and clarifies Procopius' aims in confronting Justinian's 'innovations' with their—for Procopius—lamentable consequences for that ancient Roman world.

Alanna Nobbs examines Procopius' 'digressions', broadly construed as any narrational interlude or diversion. She categorises various formal and syntactical techniques that Procopius uses to depart from/return to a narrative and asks what digressions might reveal about his thematic priorities, interests and opinions, and conception of historical writing. Although it ultimately remains difficult to distinguish an author's personal predilections from his adherence to literary convention and/or anticipation of audience expectations, Nobbs rightly emphasises the significance of digressions—and literary-rhetorical elements generally—in any sixth-century reading of the text, compared to a modern readership's primary concern for military-political narrative.

In a short but erudite contribution, Giusto Traina explores the possibility of a source relationship between Procopius' works and the so-called Armenian *Primary History*, a concise, disparate assemblage of legendary, genealogical, and chronographical materials, possibly compiled in the fifth century, with a complex textual and editorial history and uncertain manuscript transmission. Building on previous studies, including his own, concerning possible connections between 'the history (ἱστορία/συγγραφή) of the Armenians' thrice cited by Procopius (*Pers.* 1.5.9, 40; *Aed.* 3.1.6) and the fifth-century *Epic Histories* attributed to P'awstos Buzand (*Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk*), Traina traces additional or alternative affinities between Procopius' presentation of ancient Armenia and the *Primary History* and considers potential modes of indirect knowledge-transfer, within contemporary contexts of Armenian historical-dynastic claims and Roman-Armenian relations.

The third section treats 'Procopius and Military History'. Conor Whately offers preliminary observations on selected aspects of 'combat motivation and cohesion' in sixth-century East Roman armies, or what older scholarship more simply termed 'morale', conceived with both horizontal (peer-influenced) and vertical (hierarchical) dimensions. Whately surveys some universal behavioural criteria, as commonly employed in 'Face of Battle' approaches (without actually using this label), to account for combat performance, though alert to some of the hazards of relying on modern comparanda: 'ratio of fire', bellicosity vs fear, small-group dynamics, regimental pride, standards, training, and command and control.[9] While these generic categories—applicable to most armies of most eras—may be useful in identifying and organising scattered incidental data, it seems to me a more challenging task to map this

[9] For important critiques of key aspects of this approach see, e.g., Lendon (2004) 443–7; Wheeler (2011) 64–75, with extensive bibliography. Specifically on 'ratio of fire' in antiquity: Wheeler (2001).

largely battles-orientated conceptual template on to the particularities of Justinianic warfare, especially in Africa (post-534) and Italy (post-540), characterised by protracted overseas service, heterogeneous imperial expeditionary forces, smaller-scale, low-intensity combat, and deficiencies in reinforcements, supply, and pay, which, to judge by the incidence of desertion, betrayal, and mutiny, must have contributed to demotivation and incohesion, on and off the battlefield.

In a short but typically meticulous contribution, Sylvain Janniard examines the presence of warriors from 'Hunnic'/Oghuric population-groups of the Pontic-Caspian steppe, notably Kutrighurs and Utrighurs, in Justinianic armies, primarily as specialist horse-archers, and the high profile these '*Ounnoi*' or '*Messagetai*' enjoy in Procopius' military narratives. Janniard discusses their varying terms of service as or alongside imperial troops (*bucellarii*, *foederati*, regulars, allies), especially in expeditionary forces, and their operational and tactical roles, in light of longer-term Hunnic influences on the evolution of Roman cavalry since the late 370s/80s. In particular, he plausibly accentuates the significance of well-integrated Hunnic officers in the transfer and assimilation of combat techniques.

Clemens Koehn re-examines Justinian's career during the reign of his uncle Justin I (518–27), partly in response to Brian Croke's deconstruction of the long-established and largely Procopius-inspired view that Justin's regime was no more than a preliminary stage of the 'long reign' of Justinian.[10] In particular, scrutinising Procopius' works and other sources, including tenth-century *De thematibus*, Koehn challenges the near-universal image of a fundamentally civilian Justinian, whose tenure of high command (*magister militum praesentalis*, ca. 520–7) entailed little or no military competence or experience. He argues instead for Justinian's central role in the empire's military affairs, including a reform of palatine units, beyond money-making sinecural schemes alleged by Procopius, and involvement in the planning and conduct of renewed Roman–Persian hostilities in Armenia in 526. This operational background, Koehn infers, informed Justinian's future military policies as emperor, notably the creation of the new command of *magister militum per Armeniam* in 528, but also, Koehn believes, a broader programme of army reforms. Although individual interpretations and points of argumentation are contestable, Koehn's alternative picture of Justinian's contribution and significance during the last years of Justin's reign is at least internally coherent and tests some long unchallenged assumptions.[11]

[10] Croke (2007).

[11] Beyond dispute, however, is that the forty *candidati* who formed an emperor's personal bodyguard were not (as Koehn, p. 216, states) 'selected from the corps of the *excubitores*', whose creation the *candidati* long predate, but rather from the *scholae palatinae* (in this period see esp. *CJ* 12.33.5§4 [524] for duality of *candidatus*/*scholaris*; with generally, e.g., Jones (1964)

Shih-Cong Fan Chiang devotes a chapter to wartime experiences of women as reported in Procopius' *Wars*. Assembling episodes of slaughter, captivity, and displacement, he distinguishes socio-cultural assumptions and literary agendas in Procopius' presentation of this theme, compared to accounts by some other late antique historians. He further investigates attitudes to and treatment of female victims of war in Procopius' contrastive portrayals of protagonists—Belisarius, Totila, and Khusro—and in his construction of elite male discourse. Fan Chiang's observation that Procopius' *urbs capta* motifs (or sometimes, in fact, *castra capta*) are indebted to classical predecessors (233) may pique interest in his specific exemplars.[12]

David Parnell examines Procopius' presentation of combat casualties—deaths, wounds, and injuries—sustained by Roman forces, with the specific aim of elucidating the author's attitudes towards non-Roman soldiers in imperial service. Parnell discerns subtle differences of tone and diction depending on the circumstances, whether valorous deeds or reckless action—the latter more typical of barbarians. He infers Procopius' intentional linkage of cultural identity, martial behaviour, and fate in battle, but without intrinsic or uniform prejudice towards non-Romans. A brief review of some casualties portrayed in Corippus, Agathias, and Theophylact Simocatta precedes remarks on Procopius' peculiarities in depicting this aspect of combat. Recognition of identifiable literary mimesis might have deepened analysis of selected passages.[13]

613 and n. 11; Frank (1969) 127–39). There is thus no reason to suppose that Justinian, as a *candidatus*, was ever an *excubitor* or served under his uncle Justin when he was *comes excubitorum*, nor to entertain the possibility that 'Justinian might have been himself promoted to that post'. The cited opinion of Croke (2007) 25, that the title of *comes* borne by Justinian in his letter of April 519 (*Coll. Avell.* 162) 'can only be the *comes excubitorum*' (Koehn, 216 n. 4), somewhat misrepresents Croke's conclusion that here *comes* signifies an honorary *comitiva* and not the title of an office (thus also *PLRE* II.646). In this regard, given that *comes* (*primi ordinis*) was commonly an attendant honour of magistral rank, one might also wish to bear in mind that, whereas we rely on Victor of Tunnuna in dating Justinian's appointment as *magister militum praesentalis* to 520 (*Chron.* s.a. 520; cf. *Coll. Avell.* 230), Victor's demonstrable misdating of several (even major) events in the early sixth century means that his testimony does not securely preclude an earlier date of this promotion in 518/19 (see *fasti* at *PLRE* II.1290, with potential complications at 948, Romanus 8).

[12] With regard to *urbs capta* motifs, older scholarship detected only limited influence of Procopius' principal models, e.g., for Thucydides see Braun (1885) 54.

[13] One cannot sensibly analyse battle descriptions in Corippus' *Iohannis* without reference to Vergilian influence on phrasing, metre, structure, and characterisation; on the cited passage at 8.474–509 see the outstanding commentary by Riedelberger (2010) 385–99. The influence of Lucan's *Pharsalia* on Corippus' distinctively grisly aesthetic may also reward investigation: e.g., Moreschini (2001) 270–3, with bibliography. Similarly, the melodramatic conclusion to Theophylact's baroque vignette of a much-wounded soldier (2.6.1–9) is clearly modelled on a well-known story of the death of Epaminondas in Diodorus (15.87.5–6). As

Guillaume Sartor presents a wide-ranging re-evaluation of interactions between the Roman empire and Lazica during the reigns of Justin I and Justinian, including the status and terminology of Roman–Lazi relations, Roman strategy in Transcaucasia, diplomacy, military operations, and imperial ideology.[14] Prominent in Sartor's analysis is his classification of the Lazi as a *gens foederata* (*extra fines imperii*), and their contingents in imperial forces as '*foederati* extérieurs', whereas previous studies have been content with less categorical or narrowly defined notions of alliance, cliency, or protectorate. Whether or not readers find this categorisation persuasive or helpful, Sartor's contribution offers insights into regional warfare, strategic contexts, and ideological discourse, relative to tendencies observable in other frontier zones.

The final section concerns 'Procopius and Foreign Peoples'. Two papers address Procopius' presentation of elites in Ostrogothic Italy. Closely engaging with prior scholarship, Andreas Goltz examines Procopius' portrayals of Ostrogothic rulers, underlining apparent inconsistencies and ambivalence that vitiate any single-template analysis of his depictions of people and events across his oeuvre. A close re-examination of Procopius' portrait of Theodoric, finding a long-perceived positive 'Anti-Justinian' who is nonetheless far from an ideal philosopher-prince, prompts consideration of alternative interpretative approaches to Procopius' representational techniques, based on differentiated analyses of individual passages and recognition of his propensity to offer multiple and diverse perspectives, variously depending on narrative objectives, available information, literary traditions, and personal experiences, and in particular reflecting the historian-narrator's long-term 'embedment' in a military environment.

Dariusz Brodka considers Procopius' representation of the senatorial aristocracy in Italy, and particularly the collective and individual attitudes, behaviour, and fate of senators and their families, caught between Ostrogothic and imperial forces in prolonged and fluctuating warfare that ultimately destroyed their world. Brodka examines Procopius' perceptions of the war's impact on the senate as a civil-political institution, interpreting the absence of any senatorial voice(s) in *Wars* as an expression of corporate powerlessness. For all Procopius' fascination and familiarity with Roman aristocrats, Brodka discerns authorial criticism and ironic distancing in the historian's overarching depiction of this class as irresolute, passive, and self-interested. He further infers that Procopius recognised and sought to convey, even if without profound

for Procopius himself, while his anatomical precision in describing battle-wounds may self-consciously evoke Homer's *Iliad* (thus recently Whately (2016) 161–8), the absence of obvious Homeric parallels, in language or substance, would make this an oblique form of Homerising.

[14] Regrettably, throughout this chapter, the accentuation of Greek text is frequently and consistently defective, suggestive of production difficulties.

analytical insight, how Justinian's efforts to recover Italy brought about the economic ruin and extinction of the Roman aristocracy, symbolic of the wider paradox of an imperial recovery that caused or accelerated the disintegration of the ancient institutions and fabric of Roman civilisation.

Geoffrey Greatrex's second paper evaluates Procopius' representation of barbarians, both generally and specific peoples and individuals. Following a concise but bibliographically rich review of scholarly approaches—ethno-historical, literary-rhetorical, ideological—to Procopius' ethnographical content, Greatrex observes a relative absence of fixity or chauvinism—or at least a willingness to make exceptions—in Procopius' attitudes towards or categorisation of barbarians, even if in each case he variously frames contemporary information in typically negative stereotypes. This conceptual flexibility permits both differing opinions about distinct population-groups and potential evolution in Procopius' attitudes to a particular group, manifest in apparent inconsistency of expressed views. Definitional ambiguity and conceptual elasticity with regard to who/what should be classified as 'barbarian' leaves room for differentiation within groups and, Greatrex infers, permits a graduated scale of peoples according to 'barbarian-ness'.

Alexander Sarantis elaborates his previous studies of Procopius' depictions of Germanic, Slavic, and Hunnic (Oghuric) population-groups in and beyond the Danubian basin, and the nature and consequences of their military-diplomatic interactions with imperial authority, by challenging some assumptions in extensive recent scholarship, notably those inherent in a fashionable 'literary turn'. Sarantis traces an attractive middle way between extremes of positivist historicism and literary-rhetorical deconstruction, stressing differentiation and flexibility in Procopius' application of Greco-Roman ethnographic topoi, on the basis of real-world ethno-cultural diversity and varying imperial–barbarian relationships, and acknowledging that these contrasting portrayals primarily reflect information available to the historian and his (and/or his audience's) worldview. Accordingly, differing typologies of 'barbarism' could be acquired, transferred, or lost depending on shifting geopolitical, environmental, and cultural circumstances. Sarantis also infers contemporary Roman perceptions of Germanic groups as posing greater military-political threats than (pre-Avar) Hunnic or Slavic groups.

Finally, Miranda Williams re-evaluates Procopius' accounts of Roman–Berber conflicts in post-Reconquest Africa, and specifically Solomon's campaigns in 534–5 and 540, for which *Wars* IV is the sole source. Her critical re-reading of Procopius' internal narrative explains its shifting content, interpretations, and texture in relation to the author's presence in or absence from Africa, personal interest and connections to protagonists, varying access to and sources of information, and ethno-cultural preconceptions and literary agendas. Williams' reassessment reiterates questions about Procopius' understanding of imperial aims and methods, of diverse Berber population-groups

and their motivations for hostilities, and of the course and outcome of specific military operations.[15] Following Procopius' departure from Carthage at Easter 536, a realignment of his presentation of African events with the 'official view' articulated in Justinianic legislation reflects his now attenuated knowledge and perspective of regional developments.[16]

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Whether one shares the editors' view (7) that in-depth engagement with Procopius' works is only just beginning or one can already perceive in operation the law of diminishing returns, heightened interest and profuse publication over the past two decades have transformed the study of Procopius' writings into a distinct and self-conscious subfield. This volume serves to showcase a sample of that extensive and diverse international research and, despite some unevenness in the contributions, judicious selection of thematic strands has enhanced their collective potential for stimulating and widening discussion. *Wars* attracts roughly twice as much attention as the *Secret History*; *Buildings* remains marginal. Overall, the volume follows a long-prevailing trend in accentuating Procopius' erudition, method, and purpose (where some earlier readers saw affectation, muddle, and whimsy), though a fashionable interest in intertextuality and allusivity is much less evident. As Procopius has acquired almost Thucydidean status, Justinian's reputation has correspondingly plummeted: while Dante placed the emperor in *Paradiso*, as the embodiment of *giustizia* (Canto VI), today he is routinely consigned to *Inferno*, eyebrow-deep in boiling blood alongside the worst *tiranni* (Canto XII). That a formal defence of Justinian's rule should be deemed necessary (here by Karantabias) is symptomatic of this reputational inversion, sometimes to the point of Procopian caricature, though there are signs the pendulum may be

[15] Procopius' somewhat unsatisfactory account of Solomon's campaign against the Aurès massif in 535 (Williams, p. 388) may in fact record long-term logistical procedures. He reports that, taking 'no food, except a little, for themselves and their horses', Roman forces marched for seven days, encamped for three, and returned to base, thus seventeen days in the field (*Vand.* 2.13.30–8). It may be mere coincidence, but late fourth-century sources record that 'field rations' (*expeditionalis annona*), to be carried in soldiers' packs and/or on mules, were conventionally issued for seventeen days (e.g., Amm. Marc. 17.9.2; SHA *Alex. Sev.* 47.1; though elsewhere twenty days: e.g., *CTh* 7.4.5 [360]; Amm. Marc. 17.8.2).

[16] In support of Williams' inference that imperial authorities saw 'propaganda value to be attached to Berber subjugation' (p. 390), one could also cite Justinian's assumption of the triumphal epithet 'Africanus', which, as all such epithets are ethnic rather than toponymic, must refer to Berbers; *Africanus* was presumably preferred to *Mauricus* owing to its antique onomastic associations, even if it transgressed terminological distinctions between (Romano-African) *Afri* and (barbarian) *Mauri*.

swinging back.[17] The literary-historiographical studies in this collection, to varying degrees, pursue existing lines of enquiry, especially some well-trodden highways of *Kaiserkritik*, while somewhat newer scholarly concerns, such as 'identity' and 'memory', offer greater scope to break fresh ground (see especially Moore). Some of the literary-cultural contributions will prove more broadly instructive for the study of late antique historiography (Moore, Stickler, Goltz). The strictly historical studies are generally self-contained, even where excerpted from a larger thesis, and less easily quantified in terms of broader objectives and progress (in this category only Whately's paper seeks to engage with approaches developed in other historical fields).

Looking to future research on Procopius, several contributions on different topics (most explicitly Goltz, but variously exemplified by Greatrex in his second contribution, Sarantis, Conterno) point in a similar methodological direction, where recognition of diversity and flexibility in Procopius' views, perceptions, and portrayals may move discussion on from monocausal exegesis and attempts to refute or excuse apparent 'inconsistency', and, instead, encourage researchers to embrace this complexity as an aspect of Procopius' compositional process and a subject of intrinsic interest. From these discussions also emerge more nuanced dynamics between literary convention, classical models, and contemporary realities. Refreshingly, a couple of papers (specifically Williams, also Goltz), in differing contexts, observe that *Wars*, despite linguistic-stylistic consistency, is a more uneven work than is often acknowledged, in terms of historical content, texture, and interest, partly owing to Procopius' fluctuating involvement in events or access to information, but also the evolving character of conflict, especially in western theatres: the shift of reportorial tone from the thrilling 'shock-and-awe' triumph of rapid 'regime change' to ensuing decades of dreary grinding counterinsurgency will be all too familiar to many twenty-first-century readers. By extension, questions linger over contemporary perceptions of these events and, specifically, the audience and early reception of *Wars*, relative to other forms of historical production, and to what extent Procopius' narrow convention-mandated focus on distant military adventurism really reflects the interests, tastes, and mentalities of East Roman society. Finally, remarks on both Procopius as an 'embedded author' (Goltz) and East-West 'Roman' linguistic differences (Moore) might prompt further consideration of Procopius' professional environment, particularly during the eight best-documented years (533–40) of his life (and 'world') at the heart of East Roman expeditionary

[17] From the modern indictments of Justinian's tyranny, some carefully reasoned, that Karantabias assembles (56 n. 6), it is a short step to tabloid obloquy: e.g., Heather (2013) 203, 'By Roman or indeed any standards, Justinian was an autocratic bastard of the worst kind' (falling short of Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot only in scale and means). See now Parnell (2020) for another attempt to formulate a more balanced view.

armies in Africa and Italy. Leaving aside increasing regional divergence in Late/Vulgar Latin, Procopius' classicising Greek easily obscures the persistence of Latin as the *Heeressprache*—the language of command, bureaucracy, discipline, exhortation, and jargon—of those East Roman forces,[18] which were recruited disproportionately in the Latin-speaking Balkans and its barbarian hinterlands, and often commanded by senior officers who, like Belisarius (and Justin I and Justinian), originated in Latinophone Balkan rural society. Procopius' idiom becomes a distorting ('Byzantinising') lens of military institutional procedures, documentation, and culture not only because it is classicising but also, and more simply, because it is Greek.

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[18] Rance (2010), with bibliography.

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