The Dates of Procopius' Works: A Recapitulation of the Evidence

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A QUARTER CENTURY AGO, the dates when Procopius of Caesarea published his works in the reign of Justinian were considered more or less settled.[1] They were all thought to have appeared in the first five years or so of the 550s. The first seven books of the *History of the Wars of Justinian* (hereafter *Wars*) were published in 550/551. The first two books of this work, which treat the wars on the eastern frontier, bring the narrative up to 549. The third and fourth books, on the African war, end for practical purposes in 545, but a brief addendum brings the story up more or less to mid-century. Books five to seven, on the war in Italy against the Ostrogoths, end with a Slavic inroad into the Balkans made in the winter of 550–551, penetrating as far as the Long Wall or "Anastasian Wall," which extended from the Sea of Marmora to the Black Sea west of Constantinople. Book eight of the *Wars*, which was added later, begins with a preface that implies that the first seven books were published together more or less at the same time. So if the inference is to be taken literally, then the *terminus post quem* for *Wars* 1–7 is 551.

Thus the conclusion seemed firm that Procopius was revising his notes in the 540s and published in 550–551. In fact, much of his *Wars* must have reached the state in which we have it by 545. There is internal evidence that Procopius' account of the great siege of Rome by the Ostrogoths, which lasted from February 537 to mid-March 538, reached its present form by

[1] The following abbreviations will be used: CAMERON (1967)=A. Cameron, *Procopius: History of the Wars, Secret History and Buildings* (New York 1967); CAMERON (1985)=A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley 1985); EVANS (1972)=J. A. S. Evans, *Procopius* (New York 1972); EVANS (1996)=J. A. S. Evans, *The Age of Justinian: The Circumstances of Imperial Power* (London 1996); STEIN=E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* II, ed. J.-R. Palanque (Amsterdam 1949).

545, perhaps even a year earlier.[2] Possibly he intended publication in 545: his old commander Belisarius was sent back to Italy in 544 to deal with the deteriorating situation there, and Procopius may have believed that a general of Belisarius' calibre would quickly set things right and the time would soon be ripe for publication. But Belisarius failed; the war dragged on, and Procopius was left without a natural conclusion for his history. Even at mid-century he lacked a good stopping-point. Nonetheless he did stop there, and we must settle on 551 as the earliest date by which the first seven books of the *Wars* were made available to the small reading public in Constantinople. That much is generally agreed, though there is one small *caveat.* The proem of the *Anekdota* implies that it was begun after the complete *Wars* 1–7 had been made public in 551, and the date of the *Anekdota* still accepted by most scholars is 549–550.[3]

In dispute are the dates of Procopius' other works: the *Buildings,* the *Anekdota,* and the eighth book of the *Wars,* which serves as a sequel to the seven books already published and brings the narrative down to the victory over the Ostrogoths, won not by Belisarius but by his rival Narses. I had a part in reopening this dispute, which has now taken on a life of its own. Twenty-five years ago, the scenario went like this. About 554 Procopius added an eighth book to his *Wars.* The *Anekdota* was not published in the sense that it was made available to a reading public, but internal evidence points to the date of composition: four times[4] Procopius states that Justinian's administration of the empire had lasted 32 years, and this is taken to mean 32 years *at the time of writing.* Now it is clear that both in the *Buildings* and the *Anekdota,* Procopius considered Justinian the real ruler during the reign of his uncle Justin, and put the start of Justinian's regime not at 527, when Justinian himself became emperor, but at 518, when Justin ascended the throne. So a century ago, Jacob Haury, the editor of the

[2] *Wars* 6.5.24–27. J. Haury (*Procopiana* [Augsburg 1890–91] 5f), and before him, W. Teuffel (*Studien und Charakteristiken zur griechischen und römischen sowie zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte* [Leipzig 1871]) both date this passage to 545. But see Evans (1972) 138 n.57.

[3] Stein II 720; J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Emprie* (London 1923) II 422; B. Rubin, "Prokopios von Kaisareia," *RE* 23.1 (1957) 354f; Cameron (1985) 9.

[4] *Anec.* 18.33; 23.1; 24.29, 33. At *Anec.* 18.45 Procopius distinguishes between the reign of Justin I and that of Justinian, making it clear that he considered Justinian responsible for both periods.

Teubner *Procopius*,[5] argued that the 32 years of Justinian's rule in the *Anekdota* should be counted from 518, not 527, and consequently the *Anekdota* was composed in 549–550, rather than 559, as such earlier scholars as Felix Dahn and Wilhelm Teuffel had believed and some, among them Comparetti, continued to believe.[6] What happened to the *Anekdota* after its completion we do not know. Unknown both to Photius and to Constantine VII Porpyrogenitus, it is first mentioned in the *Suda*,; and in the early seventeenth century, it turned up in the Vatican Library and was published by the Vatican librarian, Nicolas Alemmani (see Comparetti xlvii–xlix). Such was the accepted view twenty-five years ago, and it is still accepted by many scholars—notably Averil Cameron, whose book on Procopius (1985) is the best in the field—and has recently been ably defended by Geoffrey Greatrex.[7] I shall not attempt to disprove the consensus here. But the difficulties it presents should not be underestimated, and it is time to look again at the evidence.

First, the *Buildings*. It is a remarkable compendium of information that must depend on archives, and there are grounds for placing it later than *Wars* 8.[8] Two items appear to date it securely (Evans [1972] 43, 139 n.70). One is Procopius' description of Justinian's repairs to portions of the Anastasian Wall, or Long Wall, in Thrace, "which had suffered" (presumably from enemy attacks to which Procopius had just alluded), and the rebuilding of the walls of Selymbria where the Anastasian Wall met the Sea of Marmora (4.9.9–13). This Anastasian Wall was

[5] Haury (*supra* n.2) 9–16, and "Zu Prokops Geheimgeschichte," *BZ* 34 (1934) 10–14.

[6] F. Dahn, *Prokopius von Cäsarea. Ein Beitrag zur Historiographie der Volkerwanderung und des linkenden Römerthums* (Berlin 1865) 53; Teuffel (*supra* n.2) 217, who places the *Anekdota* in 558/559 just before Belisarius' victory over the Kutrigur Huns in 559; D. Comparetti, ed., *Le inedite libro none delle Istorie di Procopio di Cesarea* (Rome 1928): hereafter 'Comparetti') xxxii–xxxiii.

[7] Cameron (1967) xxxiii, (1985) 8; G. Greatrex, "The Dates of Procopius' Works," *BMGS* 18 (1994) 101–14.

[8] The evidence rests on two passages: (1) *Bldgs.* 6.1.8 makes a cross-reference to *Wars* 8.6; (2) *Wars* 8.7.8f professes ignorance about the course of the river that flows through Dara, whereas by the time Procopius wrote *Bldgs.* 2.2.15f, he was aware that it flowed to Theodosiopolis. *Cf.* Greatrex (*supra* n.4) 105f. Cross-references in Procopius are insecure evidence, but nonetheless the conclusion that *Wars* 8 antedates the *Buildings* is generally accepted.

pierced by a Bulgar raid in 539 or 540, and in late 550, an incursion of Slavs reached the wall but may not have crossed it before they were turned back.[9] It is not impossible that Procopius is referring to one or other of these attacks. But the incident that best fits Procopius' testimony occurred in 559, when the Kutrigur Huns did overrun the wall, which they found in disrepair. After they were repulsed, Justinian in person went out to Selymbria; making it his base, he supervised the rebuilding of the wall, and presumably the reconstruction of Selymbria's circuit as well. For this we have dated evidence in Theophanes (*A.M.* 6051). Second, Procopius mentions the start of construction of a bridge over the Sangarios River: "Having already begun the task, he is now much occupied with it, and I know he will complete it not long hence" (5.3.10, tr. Downey, LCL). Theophanes (*A.M.* 6052) dates the start of construction to A.M. 6052 (559– 560). So a *terminus post quem* of 560 seems in order.

Ernst Stein (720) was the first to dissent. He set aside Theophanes as unreliable and, in any case, referring to the completion of the bridge, not the start of construction (this involves a misreading of Theophanes' text). He swept aside the evidence of the repairs to the Long Wall, connecting them instead with the Bulgar raid of 540. Then he put forward three arguments from silence to support a date of no later than 555. The *Buildings* failed to mention the Samaritan revolt of midsummer 556 or the rebellion of the Tzani near Trebizond in 557, as well as the partial collapse of the dome of Hagia Sophia on 7 May 558. The omission of the Tzani and the Samaritans need not surprise us. Both were examples of failed policy, and mention of these incidents would have been both unwelcome and undiplomatic in a panegyric delivered in the 550s. Arguments from silence are particularly weak in panegyrics, for the encomiast's choice of what events to include or exclude is never based on a resolve to tell the whole truth. But Stein's third point—Procopius overlooks the fall of Hagia Sophia's dome—does have real weight, for in the first book of the *Buildings* Procopius told how this dome was raised and used it as a special example of Justinian's divine inspiration. Twice, when the master builders were at a loss and the unfinished

[9] Evans (1996) 79, 150, 223; V. Popovič, "La descente des Kutrigurs, des Slaves et des Avars vers la mer Egée: le témoinage de l'archéologie," *CRAI* (1978) 607f.

structure threatened to collapse, Justinian, despite his lack of experience in engineering, gave them the technical advice that was needed. The dome was presented as evidence of Justinian's special relationship with God: a concrete illustration of the emperor's rôle as God's vicegerent. If the first book of the *Buildings* was published in Constantinople after the dome collapsed—a matter of common knowledge in the city—there would have been a distinct flavor of irony to these passages that exalt Justinian's divine inspiration. Irony is unsuitable for a panegyric, especially one intended for an emperor who took his special relationship with God very seriously.

So Stein put the whole work before 555, and his redating has been generally accepted. One notable dissenter was Glanville Downey, who continued to prefer 559/560. His argument was a variant of one proposed by Haury:[10] the first book of the *Buildings* was composed initially as an encomium to be read before the imperial court, and Procopius passed over the collapse of the dome because it detracted from the emperor's glory as a builder. Later Procopius padded the work with five more books dealing with the imperial building program throughout the empire, with the exception of Italy. Their literary quality compares poorly with that of the first book, which seems to indicate that the *Buildings* was left unfinished. Michael Whitby,[11] who has reviewed the question recently, prefers the hypothesis that the work belongs to 560–561, after the structural damage to the dome had been repaired, and that Procopius omitted all reference to the collapse in order to avoid giving offense. An omission so obvious, however, would have been itself intrinsically offensive. My own suggestion, which I put forward a quarter century ago and still prefer, developed Downey's theory further: the first book, which was delivered before an invited audience as a panegyric, dates to before the collapse of the dome, and the following books were added at a later date, probably with the emperor's encouragement. Nothing in the first book can be dated certainly after 557, whereas the references to the repair of the Long Wall in Thrace and the bridge on the Sangarios are found in books four and

[10] G. Downey, "The Composition of Procopius' *De Aedificiis*," *TAPA* 78 (1947) 171–83; "Notes on Procopius, *De Aedificiis* Bk. 1," in G. Mylonas, ed., *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson* (St Louis 1953) II 719–25; *Constantinople in the Age of Justinian* (Norman [Ok.] 1960) 95; Haury (*supra* n.2) 27f.

[11] "Justinian's Bridge over the Sangarius and the Date of Procopius' *De Aedificiis*," *JHS* 105 (1985) 143.

five respectively. The unevenness of the work argues for incompleteness, though the omission of Italy does not, for Justinian built nothing there to attract the attention of a panegyrist.[12] But why should the *Buildings* be left incomplete, if it was? The best solution is to suppose that Procopius was interrupted by death. For that, there is no proof, but it adds some weight to the hypothesis that the *Buildings* is a late work.

Next, the eighth book of the *Wars*. Again there is internal evidence. In 545, Justinian made a five-year treaty with Persia whereby he agreed to pay 2,000 pounds of gold over the term of the treaty. It expired in 550 and eighteen months later was renewed for a five-year term for another 2,000 pounds, plus 600 pounds to make up for the 18 months when there was no treaty. This aroused Procopius' indignation; at *Wars* 8.15.17 he exclaims that at the present time—that is, presumably, the time of writing—the Persian king had collected 4,600 pounds of gold over a space of eleven years and six months. The "present time" must be 11 years and 6 months after 545. So the eighth book can hardly have been completed earlier than 557 (Evans [1972] 43, 138 n.68).

But that is not the generally accepted date. Yet the only scholar who has attemped to mount a reasoned argument against the evidence of *Wars* 8.15.17 is Greatrex (*supra* n.4), whose view is that the "eleven years and six months" is a round number and should not be taken as an exact statistic. He finds a

[12] Evans (1996) 224f; the church of San Vitale at Ravenna, which might appear an exception, was not financed by the imperial treasury but by a local banker, Julius Argentarius. G. Greatrex, "Procopius and Agathias on the Defenses of the Thracian Chersonese," in C. Mango and G. Dagron, edd., *Constantinople and its Hinterland: Papers from the Twenty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Aldershot 1995) 125–29, has put forward two other arguments from silence in support of Stein's date for the composition of the *Buildings*: first, at *Bldgs.* 4.10.9 Procopius refers to the Hun attack of 540 on the Thracian Chersonese as "recent"; second, he fails in the same passage to mention the successful defense of the Chersonese wall by Germanus, son of Dorotheus against the Kutrigurs in 559 (126f). Greatrex also points to another "major difficulty" for those who date the first book before the collapse of Hagia Sophia's dome in 558: the allusion at *Bldgs.* 1.1.16 to the conspiracy against Justinian of 548–549, where Procopius states that the officers convicted of conspiracy were pardoned and still held their offices and rank. This claim, Greatrex argues, would have been inaccurate and inappropriate twelve years after the conspiracy. This was, however, a passage intended to celebrate Justinian's clemency and may, in fact, have become more appropriate for mention in a panegyric once the actual memory of the conspiracy had faded.

parallel at *Wars* 1.27.40, where Procopius writes that the Lakhmid Sheikh al-Mundhir terrorized the eastern frontier for fifty years. Al-Mundhir died in June, 554, and Greatrex dates his accession to *ca* 505.[13] So his terrorism had not lasted for exactly fifty years when this passage was written, no later than 551.[14] Greatrex suggests that the "eleven years and six months" is a similar example of numerical inexactitude. But that will not do. Classicists may be forgiven for calling the space between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War in the fifth-century B.C. the *Pentekontaetia*, the 'fifty-year period', even though 431 subtracted from 478 does not yield 50; but if one were to say that 50 years, 3 months, and 2 weeks elapsed between the two wars, the mistake would not be overlooked. Round numbers may be used in a generalized sense, but precise numbers convey precision, and Procopius was aware of the difference. Both his "eleven years and six months" and the 4,600 pounds of gold that were paid out over that period are precise numbers.

If one is determined to find a way around this morsel of evidence, there is a better method for doing so, which I pointed out in my book on Procopius (Evans [1972] 138 n.68). In 545 Justinian preferred to make his payment to Persia in a lump sum to avoid the appearance of paying annual tribute. Thus Procopius' meaning may only be that 4,600 gold pounds had been paid to Persia in return for eleven years and six months of peace, and hence no date for the composition of this passage is implied. Procopius's text, however, reads: "up to a period of eleven years and six months at the present time, six and forty *centenaria* have been paid;" and as Procopius regarded the payment as a shameful annual subsidy, regardless of Justinian's maneuvre to disguise the fact, no one who reads this passage without an ulterior motive would think that "the present time" was anything other than eleven years and six months after 454. There is, however, an ulterior motive, for the *Buildings* post-

[13] I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* I (Washington 1995) 13ff, 306, dates the death of Mundhir's father Nu'man to August-September 503 and Mundhir's own death to June 554. There is some evidence for a brief interregnum between Nu'man's death and the start of Mundhir's reign, and hence Mundhir may have ruled almost exactly fifty years: a striking coincidence if so.

[14] Or possibly before 545, though it might have been inserted in the text just before the final publication date of 550–551. Shahîd (*supra* n.13: 306) argues that this passage must have been written after Mundhir's death, which would make it the latest passage in *Wars* 1–7, with implications for the final publication date of *Wars* 1–7.

dates the eighth book of the *Wars* (see *supra* n.8), and if the "eleven years and six months" points to a date of 557, then Stein's early dating for the *Buildings* cannot stand.

Now the *Anekdota.* Haury's date of 550 is generally accepted. The preface of the *Anekdota* sets out its purpose. Procopius claims that he has already narrated the wars according to time and place: that is, he has divided them into three sections according to geographical area. But only the first seven books of the *Wars* use this plan; the eighth book does not. Moreover, the *Anekdota* has twenty references to *Wars* 1–7, but none to *Wars* 8.[15] It follows, therefore, that the proem of the *Anekdota* refers only to the first seven books of the *Wars* and not to their sequel. Thus there can be no doubt about what the *Anekdota* purports to be. It claims to be a malevolent commentary on *Wars* 1–7, which Procopius composed *after* the *Wars* was published. It is an early experiment in the technique that Laurence Durrell used brilliantly in his *Alexandria Quartet,* except that the two personae who serve as authors of the *Anekdota* and the *Wars* respectively are both Procopius himself. Procopius asserted that he had long wanted to write this work, but was deterred at first by the fear that when his readers learned of the sins of Justinian and Theodora, they might want to imitate them. But eventually he changed his mind as he recollected that potentates of later generations would realize from the examples of Justinian and Theodora that punishments follow misdeeds and that their evil actions will be matters of record. All this is a rhetorical *topos,* but it shows that Procopius wrote with an educated reading public in mind. The *Anekdota* is an artful essay: the *Suda* categorized it as invective and comedy (*cf.* Cameron [1967] xxix). Are we to take what it implies about its date of composition at face value? Or should the repeated references to thirty-two years of Justinian's rule be taken as examples of Procopius' art rather than his accuracy?

I am not convinced that anything reported in the *Anekdota* can be securely dated later than 550, except for the important *caveat* that its preface implies that it was begun after *Wars* 1–7 was published, and *Wars* 1–7 could not have been published *in toto* before 551. The stated aim of the *Anekdota*, however, was to amplify *Wars* 1–7, and consequently we should not expect to find references beyond the time limits of that work. Roger

[15] *Cf.* H. Dewing, "The *Secret History* of Procopius of Caesarea," *TAPA* 62 (1931) xl–xli; Haury (*supra* n.6) 10–14.

Scott,[16] however, has attempted to date two items later than 550. The first is Procopius' charge that Justinian reduced the value of the *solidus* by making it worth 180 bronze *folles* rather than 210 (*Anec.* 25.12). Scott connects this with an entry in John Malalas' *Chronicle* for 553 (18.117, p.486), which records a riot of the poor in Antioch caused by a debasement of the coinage. There may be a connection between the two reports, but it does not serve to date the *Anekdota* before 550. I have dealt with this numismatic problem elsewhere (Evans [1996] 236f) and will summarize here. Before the empress Theodora's death in 548, Peter Barsymes introduced a lightweight *solidus,* and this, I suspect, is what aroused Procopius' complaint, for its most likely use was to pay the stipends of the militia, civil and military. Thus Procopius' own income could have been affected. What Malalas describes may have been a second stage in this numismatic maneuver: an abortive attempt to tariff the new lightweight *solidus* in Antioch at its old rate of 210 *folles.* The result would be a devaluation of the bronze *follis,* which the poor used for everyday purchases, and hence their rioting. But whatever the truth of the matter, this report does not serve as an indication of a post-500 date for the *Anekdota.*

Scott's second piece of evidence is the charge that Justinian insisted that the Jews postpone Passover if it fell before Easter (*Anec.* 28.16–19). There is no other evidence to support this charge. Comparetti (185) attempted to connect it with an entry for 545 in Theophanes, which records that Justinian attempted to delay the Lenten fast by a week. How the Passover was affected by this is not clear, but Comparetti, who imagined that Procopius wrote the *Anekdota* after he had retired to Caesarea, thought that he heard some garbled oral traditions there about what happened in 545, and added them to his list of Justinian's crimes. Scott's solution is to connect this passage with the evidence from an Armenian source, Ananias of Shirak,[17] who describes with some venom the intervention of an imperial official named Iron in a conference held at Alexandria to determine the date of Easter for the churches that did not use the table of Theophilus of Antioch, that is, the churches in Persia. There are two difficulties with this solution. First, Iron's inter-

[16] "Justinian's Coinage and Easter Reforms, and the Date of the *Secret History,*" *BMGS* 11 (1987) 215–21.

[17] For a translation see F. C. Conybeare, "Ananias of Shirak (A.D. 600–650c.)," *BZ* 6 (1897) 572–84.

vention affected Christians living beyond the imperial boundaries, and it is not easy to understand how it would affect the Jewish Passover within the empire. Second, the conference at Alexandria to which Ananias refers dates to 562, too late for the *Anekdota,* and hence Scott must postulate an earlier conference, presumably at Constantinople, held before 558–559, which is his preferred date for the *Anekdota,* but after 550, Haury's date for the *Anekdota.* Both Scott and Comparetti may be right to this extent, that the *Anekdota*'s charge is based on a specific incident otherwise unrecorded, but it could also be true that Procopius refers in this passage only to sporadic local harassment of the Jews, which Justinian left unpunished. This passage is insecure evidence for dating the *Anekdota.*

Two other points, however, require discussion. One concerns the relation between the *Anekdota* and the *Buildings.* The portrayal of Justinian and Theodora in the one is the reverse of the other, but that in itself proves nothing about the dates of composition. But there is a troublesome cross-reference. Among the natural calamities that Procopius cites in the *Anekdota* (18.38) to demonstrate God's rejection of Justinian was a flood on the river Daisan (Greek "Skirtos") that inundated Edessa, and he promises to describe it in *logoi* that he plans to write. Dewing's translation is "as will be written by me in a following book." This appears to be a reference to work that was in the planning stage. We might reasonably expect this work to be *Wars* 8, but nothing about the Skirtos flood occurs there. Alternatively, we could suppose an unfulfilled intention, but that is a desperate argument, for Procopius did write a description of the flood on the Skirtos at *Buildings* 2.7.2–5.

Is this the cross-reference we are seeking? Cameron ([1985] 106f) accepts the possiblity: "Thus again, we can see how closely the three works are linked, and how the *Buildings* slots into Procopius' writing as a whole." So even while Procopius was writing his secret diatribe against the Justinianic regime, he intended a panegyric in support of that same regime. The linkage that Cameron perceives is remarkable enough if we accept her preferred date for the *Buildings,* for there would be a gap of only four or at most five years between its publication and the composition of the *Anekdota*; but if almost a decade elapsed between the two works, we must believe that Procopius planned his writing schedule ahead to a remarkable degree if we are to accept the linkage.

There is a second difficulty as well. The passage that Dewing translates "as will be written by me in a following book" has been emended. The manuscript reading should be translated "as will have been written by me in earlier *logoi*." Haury, the editor of the Teubner *Anekdota*, was unhappy with this reading, and changed an *emprosthen* to *opisthen*, although, as Comparetti (257) was to point out, the logical meaning of Haury's emended text is to refer not to the *Buildings* but to a later section of the *Anekdota* itself. But before Haury edited the Teubner text with this emendation, he had attempted another solution. He suggested that the reference was to a lacuna at *Wars* 2.12.29, where nine lines are missing from the manuscript at a point where the subject is Edessa's famous relic: a letter from Christ to the king of Edessa, Abgar. This is a solution that still attracts Michael Whitby,[18] but it is based upon speculation, and rather nebulous speculation at that. Haury himself abandoned it. Another suggestion would be to accept *emprosthen* as the correct reading but the verb form as a mistake for a perfect tense, which was the solution of the *Anekdota*'s first editor, Alemanni. In that case the *Anekdota* would refer to the *Buildings* as an *earlier* work, and we have come full circle to the conclusion that the *Anekdota* was Procopius' last work: a *jeu d'ésprit* of his old age that purported to be a commentary on the work that brought him fame, the seven books on the wars of Justinian. This conclusion must be ruled out if we accept *ca* 550 as the date of the *Anekdota*'s composition. The most likely solution is that the promise made in *Anekdota* 18.38 is fulfilled in the *Buildings*, however much that may affect our assumptions about when and how these two works were composed.

The second problem concerns the connection between the *Anekdota* and *Wars* 8. Their proems are sufficiently similar to suggest a connection. Haury's dating of the former to 550 requires us to believe that the proem of *Wars* 8 borrows from the *Anekdota*; whatever the truth of that, the similar proems are circumstantial evidence for a linkage between the two works. But Teuffel (*supra* n.2: 217f) also pointed out a possible cross-reference, and his argument is worth recapitulating. At *Wars* 8.25, Procopius refers to a composition on contemporary ecclesiastical disputes that he will write. The subject was

[18] Haury (*supra* n.2) 17f; Whitby (*supra* n.11) 144. Rubin (*supra* n.3: 573) suggests two other cross-references between the *Anekdota* and the *Buildings*, but these are rightly rejected by Whitby.

probably to be the "Three Chapters" controversy, but Procopius is imprecise. In the *Anekdota* there are several references to these later theological *logoi,* which Procopius would write. At 10.15 he tells how Justinian and Theodora promoted ecclesiastical strife by pretending to disagree on theological questions "as will shortly be related by me" (tr. Dewing, LCL). At 11.33 there is another reference to this future composition, and at 26.19 we learn that it will describe Justinian's treatment of the clergy. A projected work describing the deposition of Pope Silverius, which Procopius promised earlier (*Anek.* 1.14), clearly points in the same direction. No trace of it has survived, nor is there any evidence that he ever wrote it. It is not easy to believe that Procopius planned an ecclesiastical history as a separate composition, for the ecclesiastical historian followed conventions far different from those of the secular historian. Thus there is merit to Teuffel's suggestion that these promised *logoi* were to be a later section of the *Anekdota,* which, if it was actually completed, has fallen out of the manuscript tradition, excised by monkish copyists or perhaps by Procopius' literary executor. If so, *Wars* 8 refers to the *Anekdota* as a later work, or preferably, perhaps, as a work still in progress while the eighth book was being written. That is pushing the evidence hard. But at least it is clear that before Procopius completed the *Anekdota* and *Wars* 8, he had formed the intention of writing a composition on the "Three Chapters" dispute, whereas there is an argument from silence to suggest that he had not yet formed any such intention before he completed *Wars* 1–7.

My conclusion is a modification of what I once proposed, but the passage of time has bred caution: any conclusion must be to some extent conjectural. Yet one can be attempted. The *terminus post quem* is 551 for *Wars* 1–7 and 557 for *Wars* 8. As for the *Anekdota,* what it claims in its proem should be taken seriously: it was begun after *Wars* 1–7 was published. Thus it cannot have been composed as early as 550. Yet its subject was the evils of the first thirty-two years of the Justinian regime, beginning when Justin succeeded the good old emperor Anastasius. The four references to a thirty-two year rule found in the *Anekdota* indicate the span of time that Procopius marked out as the scope of his essay; they do not attest a date of composition. The work was intended as a sequel to *Wars* 1–7 and hence may have been composed at about the time Procopius undertook *Wars* 8, which was also a sequel to *Wars*

1–7, and reuses the proem of the *Anekdota*. *Buildings* began as a panegyric on Justinian's building program in Constantinople, which was presented before the collapse of the dome of Hagia Sophia, and this panegyric survives in the first book. The following books were added at a later date. The unevenness of the work suggests incompleteness; but incomplete or not, Procopius left off writing it in the early 560s, for he knew that construction had begun on the bridge over the river Sangarios, but he did not know of its completion in 562.[19]

We are left with conjectures and suppositions. They are sufficient to cast doubt on the dates for Procopius' works that are still generally accepted.

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[19] Whitby (*supra* n.11) 136–41.