



History of the Wars by Procopius - The Vandalic Wars

Procopius of Caesarea

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Procopius of Caesarea was born in approximately 500. He is generally considered to be the last major historian of the ancient world. His works have given us a unique and intimate account both of the Roman Military and its Emperor Justinian. A native of Caesarea in Palaestina Prima little else is known of his early life, and apart from assuming that he would have received a classical Greek Education the rest is deduction rather than based on known facts. In 527, the first year of Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I's reign, he became the adessor (legal adviser) for Belisarius, Justinian's chief military commander who was then starting out on what would become a brilliant military career, initially in the East of the Empire. After early successes Belisarius was defeated in 531 at the Battle of Callinicum and recalled to the Empire's heart in Constantinople. Justinian was without doubt clever but cruel. When part of Constantinople rose against him in the Nika riots of January, 532, he sent Belisarius and his fellow general Mundo to repress them in a savage massacre in the Hippodrome – witnessed by Procopius. The following year Procopius accompanied Belisarius on his victorious expedition against the Vandal kingdom in North Africa and took part in the capture of Carthage. Procopius remained in Northern Africa with Belisarius' successor, Solomon the Eunuch, when Belisarius returned to Constantinople. Procopius rejoined Belisarius for his campaign against the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy and was there for the Gothic siege of Rome that lasted a year and nine days and ended in March, 538. He witnessed Belisarius' entry into the Gothic capital, Ravenna, in 540. However at some point in the next few years Procopius seems to have been moved away from working with Belisarius. When the latter was sent back to Italy in 544 to cope with a further outbreak of the war with the Goths, Procopius appears to have no longer been with Belisarius' staff. Procopius continued to record history and his works are both insightful and clear headed, distilling the complexities of the times into several classic books. His death is thought to have been around 560.

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