



Shown is a floor mosaic from Jerusalem depicting Christ as "Orpheus among the animals." Such artistic skill proves the tremendous level of advancement Christian art had achieved in Constantinople and shows an obvious continuity with ancient Roman and Greek traditions.

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

... AND THE ANECDOTA OF PROCOPIUS

BY EDWARD T. MAY

When considering vast events such as the fall of the western Roman empire, the linkage of specific events with exact dates is a dicey proposition at best. One cannot say, for example, that the empire began its demise in a certain year, or that its absolute collapse occurred on such-and-such a day. With this caveat in mind, we may tentatively suggest the genesis of the Byzantine empire as having occurred when Zeno, emperor of the eastern portion of the Roman empire, assumed sovereignty over the remains of that empire in the late 5th century A.D. Thus, the section of the Roman empire that managed to survive the "barbarian" invasions, and which, as it happened, was centered in Constantinople, became the Byzantine empire, a realm that survived until Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in A.D. 1453.

Geography dictated the Byzantine (Roman) empire would possess something of a dual nature. Straddling the border between Asia and Europe, the empire experienced a tug of war between the Latin world and the Greek, between the Occident and the Orient, between Christian and non-Christian. The population was composed of "a motley assemblage of peoples."¹ Egyptians, Armenians, Jews, Slavs and Greeks were but some of the ethnic groups in this "chaos of peoples."² Yet the Byzantine empire maintained a cohesion and continuity over the course of its existence that is nothing short of remarkable. That the empire was able to maintain a political unity of sorts for 1,000 years is a testament to the administrative ability of the competent emperors such as Justinian (born 482/3, ruled 527-565) and Heraclius, and the relative efficiency of an extensive bureaucracy that compensated for the weak emperors.

Oswald Spengler penned an apt description of the dichotomous nature of the Byzantine empire in *The Decline of the West*.

In 326 Constantine, rebuilding on the ruins of the great city destroyed by Septimus Severus, created a late classical cosmopolis of the first rank, into which presently streamed hoary Apollinism from the west and youthful Magism from the east. And long afterward again, in 1096, it is a late Magian cosmopolis, confronted in its last autumn days with spring in the shape of Godfrey of Bouillon's crusaders... As the easternmost of the classical west, this city bewitched the Goths; then, a millennium later, as the northernmost of the Arabian world, it enchanted the Russians.³

Some measure of this dual nature between the east and west is exemplified in the person of the Emperor Justinian, arguably the most well known emperor of the Byzantine empire. Justinian made Latin his language of choice, the last of the Byzantine emperors to do so. It was also one of his greatest ambitions, one might even call it an obsession, to wrest control of the Western Roman empire from the barbarians and reunite it with the Eastern Roman empire. Yet, despite his devotion to the old Roman empire, Justinian was not

so thoroughly Latinized that he felt compelled to impose a Roman style of architecture on Constantinople. The church of Hagia Sophia, perhaps Justinian's most famous contribution to the world of art and architecture, did not utilize the plan of the Roman basilica. Among other differences the architects of the church employed a technique known as "pendentive" construction, a method that "apparently was developed after many years of experiment by builders in the Near East and constitutes the contribution of Byzantium to architectural engineering."⁴ The prominent dome of Hagia Sophia is certainly not of the Occident either but rather represents, using Spengler's terminology, the Magian world-feeling or spirit. The church further deviates from the Roman tradition by using brick rather than concrete as a construction material.

Not only did Justinian use non-Roman aspects of architecture in Constantinople he imported those aspects to the reconquered lands of the Western Roman empire as well. In the church of San Vitale in Ravenna "Light filtered through alabaster-

paned windows plays over the glittering mosaics and glowing marbles that cover the building's complex surfaces, producing an effect of sumptuousness that is not Western but Oriental. And, indeed, the inspiration for this design is to be found in Byzantium rather than Rome.⁵

Likewise, the art of the Byzantine empire underwent a noticeable evolution, and it was the Christian religion that played a key role in the transformation. The realism portrayed in art of the Roman empire succumbed to the hieratic⁶ characteristics employed by the Byzantine artists. Paintings and mosaics drastically reduced the emphasis on the physical by negating individuality. Human figures became rigid and stylized while spiritual aspects were enhanced. In the later Byzantine empire, the straight lines and unforgiving angles of the early period eventually gave way to the soft curves and sweeps of classic Hellenistic art, although the religious motifs were faithfully retained. The iconoclasts gained ascendancy for a time and artworks were limited to symbols and decorative scrollwork. In this respect the art was definitely Islamic in flavor. When the iconoclasts were overthrown, the painted icon flourished and became a pedagogical tool, being used to instruct the illiterate in Christian belief.

In a similar fashion, Justinian did not feel his allegiance to the ideals of the Latin world necessitated an adherence to paganism, and he decreed Christianity to be not simply the official religion of the empire but the only lawful religion. Heretics to the Christian religion were dealt with harshly, many finding the Islamic empire more tolerant than the Byzantine. Christianity manifested itself to a great degree in the realms of art and literature. Religious treatises, hymns, and works delineating the lives of the saints proliferated. Although Christianity eventually supplanted paganism in the empire, it found it could not completely divorce itself from its old opponent, particularly in the field of literature. When asked why he used non-Christian references in his writings, St. Jerome admitted that pagan literature had its place in a Christian society:

[W]ho is there who does not know that both in Moses and in the prophets there are passages cited from gentile books and that Solomon proposed questions to the philosophers of Tyre and answered others put to him by them. In the commencement of the book of Proverbs he charges us to understand prudent maxims and shrewd adages, parables and obscure discourse, the words of the wise and their dark say-

ings; all of which belong by right to the sphere of the dialectician and the philosopher. The Apostle Paul also, in writing to Titus, has used a line of the poet Epimenidas. . . .⁷

In one area Justinian did not feel inclined to compromise between the Latin world and the Greek, that area being the law. However, it is interesting to note that legislation published after Justinian's death was not in Latin but in Greek. While Greek became the new language of law in the Byzantine empire, the law itself remained Roman despite the fact some historians feel Justinian's *corpus juris* was inferior to early Roman law. In this regard Houston Stewart Chamberlain has remarked that "the Justinian *corpus juris* with which we are familiar is only the embalmed corpse of Roman law."⁸

One aspect of the Byzantine empire that changed markedly from that of the old Roman empire was the art of warfare. The emperors in the east found that the legion, remarkably adept as it was in dealing with the barbarians of the west, was unable to compete with the mounted archers of the east. Adapting to this exigency the military planners developed the cataphract,⁹ an armored rider equipped with lance, bow, and sword, and mounted on an armored horse. The cataphract became the mainstay of the Byzantine army. With his two competent generals, Belisarius and Narses, wielding his military forces, Justinian was not only able to keep the eastern empire intact but also managed to reconquer north Africa, the southern portion of Spain, Italy, and Dalmatia. Justinian nearly succeeded in turning the Mediterranean once again into a Roman lake. However, the reconquest reached its zenith under Justinian, and thereafter the Byzantine empire was whittled away by its enemies until all that was left was Constantinople itself. Not only did the Byzantine empire modify existing military forces to meet the demands of the moment, it was also capable of devising new devices in the art of warfare. One such innovation enabled the Byzantine empire, under the Emperor Constantine IV, to check the tide of Islam in the 7th century A.D. The invention known as "Greek fire" proved to be a decisive factor in the defense of Constantinople. The Byzantine navy employed "Greek fire" against the Arabs with telling effect.

[A]n incendiary mixture of naphtha, quicklime, sulfur, and pitch; it was thrown against enemy ships or troops on flaming arrows, or blown against them through tubes, or shot on iron

balls bearing flax and tow soaked in oil; or it was loaded and fired on small boats which were set adrift against the foe. The composition of the mixture was a secret successfully guarded for two centuries by the Byzantine government; to reveal any knowledge of it was treason and sacrilege. . . . Until the invention of gunpowder it was the most talked-of weapon in the medieval world.¹⁰

Constantinople was located at the focal point of the trade routes, both land and water, between Europe and Asia. This being the case, it was perhaps inevitable that commerce would become the lifeblood of the Byzantine empire. Just as the American dollar at one time was preferred over local currencies in many part of the world, so the Byzantine "solidus" was used in Asia and Europe until its value was debased in the latter half of the empire's existence. Customs duties proved to be a dependable and vital source of income for the empire. Justinian's greatest coup in the field of commerce came when he managed to break the Far East's monopoly on silk production. A resourceful group of Nestorian monks, after smuggling silkworm eggs out of Asia, bestowed on Justinian the basis of a moneymaking enterprise. As a result money no longer flowed out of Imperial coffers to purchase silk from China and, since the production of silk fabric was a state run monopoly, the local silk industry became another conduit of revenue for the government.

However, Constantinople's commercial prosperity also engendered jealousy on the part of her competitors, particularly Venice. The Venetians took advantage of the fact that the Byzantine empire had abandoned much of its European heritage and had grafted aspects of the Oriental culture into its body politic to incite hostilities between the French knights of the Fourth Crusade and the Greeks of Constantinople.

In general Greeks got on better with infidels than with Latins, perhaps because they shared a common form of government. An infidel sultan, like a Greek emperor, had seized power by his own efforts; he was maintained on his throne by a mercenary army; the sole duty of his subjects was to pay taxes, and in return he owed his subjects no duty at all. Every Greek was shocked by the boisterous conduct of Frankish freemen, who thought nothing of armed resistance to a lord who infringed the rights of his men.¹¹

As a result of this intrigue between the crusaders and the Venetians, Constantinople was sacked in A.D. 1204, and Venice snatched "all the commercially profitable harbors and islands in the empire."¹²

The moral sphere of existence in the Byzantine empire also became a battleground between the conflicting world-views of the east and the west. "The Roman virtues had disappeared even before the Latin tongue; Roman and Greek qualities had been overwhelmed by a flood of uprooted Orientals who had lost their own morality and had taken on no other except in words."¹³ The population, regardless of class, while outwardly professing Christianity, was fond of engaging in decidedly unchristian behavior. "Brutality and piety took turns in the same imperial souls; and among the people intensity of religious need could be adjusted to the corruption or violence of politics and war."¹⁴ Once again, the reign of Justinian serves as a prime representative of this duality of character. In order to delve further into the morality of the Byzantine empire we must make the acquaintance of the historian Procopius.

A large amount of the information we possess concerning the Byzantine empire during the reign of Justinian comes from the historian Procopius. Procopius was born in Caesarea toward the end of the 5th century A.D. in the turbulent region of Palestine.¹⁵ He became a lawyer and in 527 was designated legal adviser as well as secretary to Emperor Justinian's famous general, Belisarius (505-565). Procopius accompanied Belisarius on his campaigns against the Goths in Italy, the Vandals in North Africa and the Persians. Procopius detailed these events, up to the year 554, in his *History of the Wars*, compiled in eight books. Since Procopius was something of a court historian (Harry Elmer Barnes noted: "[H]e was a formal apologist for the aristocracy of wealth and official position"¹⁶), the narratives reflect rather favorably on Belisarius. While the attitude of Procopius toward the Emperor Justinian in his *History of the Wars* is somewhat ambivalent, Justinian was heavily praised by Procopius in a volume titled *The Buildings of Justinian*, a six-book panegyric to the emperor, probably written in 561 (according to *The Medieval Sourcebook on the Internet*).¹⁷

Procopius is generally lauded as one of the better historians in Western civilization (if Byzantium can be considered Western). Will Durant remarked that Procopius was "The one great historian of the period. . . . His industry was courageous, his arrangement of materials is logical, his narrative is absorbing, his Greek is clear and direct, and almost classically pure."¹⁸ Prof. John Barker concedes that



This famous mosaic of Empress Theodora and her retinue of ladies in waiting is now located in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy. Theodora possessed a reputation for skullduggery and was feared as much as Justinian, if not more so, by many people in Constantinople. Plots and intrigues abounded in the court of Justinian and Theodora. Here the empress appears in her ceremonial robes and crown, against an elegant background that probably represents her rooms in the imperial palace.

Procopius "was the last of the great historians in the classical Greek tradition."¹⁹ Arnold Toynbee was of the opinion that Procopius was "the last of the great Hellenic historians."²⁰ J. Bury was equally impressed, stating "His writings attest that Procopius had received an excellent literary education."²¹ Yet in spite of his credentials, Procopius is still able to incite controversy due to his work known as *The Anecdota*. *The Anecdota*, or *Secret History*, or *Unpublished Memoirs*, purports to be a supplement to *History of the Wars*. Probably written around 550, it recounts the salacious and disreputable activities of the players at the court of the Emperor Justinian and his wife the Empress Theodora (d. 547/8). Procopius, knowing full well the consequences of discovery, kept the explosive material under wraps during his lifetime. (He died probably in the 560s or thereabouts.) The following is an example of what Procopius had to say concerning Justinian:

[T]his emperor was insincere, crafty, hypocritical, dissembling his anger, double-dealing, clever. . . . He was a fickle friend, a truceless enemy, an ardent

devotee of assassination and of robbery, quarrelsome and an inveterate innovator, easily led astray into wrong, but influenced by no counsel to adopt the right, keen to conceive and to execute base designs. . . . Nature seemed to have removed all baseness from the rest of mankind and to have concentrated it in the soul of this man.²²

The Empress Theodora is one of the main targets of Procopius. The following is one of the tamer passages concerning Theodora referencing her activities prior to becoming empress.

Later she was following in the train of Hecebolus, a Tyrian, who had taken over the administration of Pentapolis, serving him in the most shameful capacity; but she gave some offense to the man and was driven thence with all speed; consequently it came about that she was at a loss for the necessities of life, which she proceeded to provide in her usual way, putting her body to work at its unlawful traffic. She first went to Alexandria; later, after making the round of the whole east, she made her way back to Byzantium, plying her trade in each city (a trade which a man could not call by name, I think, without forfeiting forever the compassion of

God), as if Heaven could not bear that any spot should be unacquainted with the wantonness of Theodora.²³

Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, fares no better.

Straightway, therefore, she decided upon being an adulteress from the very start, but she was very careful to conceal this business, not because she was ashamed of her own practices, nor because she entertained any fear so far as her husband was concerned (for she never experienced the slightest feeling of shame for any action whatsoever and she had gained complete control of her husband by means of many tricks of magic), but because she dreaded the punishment the empress might inflict.²⁴

Belisarius, praised in *The History of the Wars*, does not go unscathed in *The Anecdota*. At one point in the narrative Belisarius was experiencing the disfavor of Justinian and was relieved of his command. Theodora, returning a favor to Antonina, made it appear that she had interceded with Justinian on behalf of Antonina, restoring Belisarius to a certain degree. When Belisarius heard the news:

[H]e straightway arose and fell on his face before the feet of his wife. And clasping both her knees with either hand and constantly shifting his tongue from one of the woman's ankles to the other, he kept calling her the cause of his life and his salvation, and promising thenceforth to be, not her husband, but her faithful slave.²⁵

Procopius does not spare the justice system from his deftly aimed barbs. During Justinian's reign the contention existing between the factions competing in the hippodrome spilled over into the daily life of Constantinople, and soon became nothing more than unrestrained criminal behavior. The following describes how the judges handled members of the blue faction²⁶ who were arrested and brought before the court.

[A]nd those who sat in judgment, in rendering their decisions on the points in dispute, gave their verdicts, not as seemed to them just and lawful, but according as each of the disputants had hostile or friendly relations with the factions.²⁷

Was the history of Procopius a factual history as well as a secret history? Should *The Anecdota* be completely disregarded as the rantings of a frustrated court historian? *The Anecdota* has proven itself to be something of a thorn in the side for historians who find it necessary to employ a cer-

tain amount of rationalization when dealing with it. Quite often historians, in a futile attempt to have their cake and eat it as well, will contradict themselves concerning *The Anecdota*. The following is an excellent example of the paradoxical approach historians seem to inevitably adopt regarding *The Anecdota*.

Untrustworthy as *The Secret History* may be, it provides a fascinating antidote to the official panegyrics as well as a useful glimpse into the dark corridors of the Great Palace. And even in *The Secret History*, the comments of the man who has seen the ravages of war have the ring of truth.²⁸

In the space of one short paragraph we see *The Anecdota* being described in terms as contradictory as "untrustworthy" and "useful."

Even a scholar of Edward Gibbon's eminence seems to be of two minds concerning this particular work of Procopius. As regards Belisarius and Antonina, Gibbon states the following:

The generous reader may cast away the libel, but the evidence of facts will adhere to his memory; and he will reluctantly confess that the fame and even the virtue of Belisarius were polluted by the lust and cruelty of his wife, and that the hero deserved an appellation which may not drop from the pen of the decent historian.²⁹

Of *The Anecdota* in general, we have this statement of Gibbon's to ponder:

Of these strange anecdotes, a part may be true, because probable; and a part true, because improbable. Procopius must have known the former, and the latter he could scarcely invent.³⁰

Yet, when discussing the reason for the tactics employed by Belisarius in the Persian theater of war, Gibbon seems less sure of the reliability of the information contained in *The Anecdota*. Gibbon says, "with some slight exceptions, we may reasonably shut our ears against the malevolent whisper of the anecdotes."³¹

John Barker describes *The Anecdota* as "probably the most infamous and scurrilous piece of sustained character assassination in all of literature."³² Yet Barker also states that "used with caution and in careful relation to other materials, even *The Secret History* is of considerable value to the historian of Justinian."³³

Will Durant also formed an opinion concerning the reliability of *The Anecdota* and, like Gibbon and Barker, he feels Procopius is to be trusted when writing on some sub-

jects and distrusted when writing about other subjects.

It is a fascinating book, like any denunciation of our neighbors; but there is something unpleasant in literary attacks upon persons who can no longer speak in their own defense. An historian who strains his pen to prove a thesis may be trusted to distort the truth. Procopius was occasionally inaccurate in matters beyond his own experience; he copied at times the manner and philosophy of Herodotus, at times the speeches and sieges of Thucydides; he shared the superstitions of his age, and darkened his pages with portents, oracles, miracles, and dreams. But where he wrote of what he had seen, his account has stood every test.³⁴

J. Bury as well seems to have struggled with the question of whether or not *The Anecdota* could be considered as a valid historical document. Bury states, "the self-defeating maliciousness of the whole performance discredits the work, and has even suggested doubts whether it could have been written at all by the sober and responsible historian of the wars. The authorship, however, is indisputable."³⁵ However, Bury tempers this harsh indictment with the following words.

... [W]e must carefully distinguish between the facts which the author records, and the interpretation which he places upon them. Malice need not resort to invention. It can serve its purpose far more successfully by adhering to facts, misrepresenting motives, and suppressing circumstances which point to a different interpretation. That this was the method followed by Procopius is certain. For we find that in a large number of cases his facts are borne out by other contemporary sources, while in no instance can we convict him of a statement which has no basis in fact.³⁶

Procopius himself seems to have foreseen the scholastic shock waves that *The Anecdota* was sure to generate. He presents an able defense of his work in the opening pages.

[I]t was not possible, as long as the actors were still alive, for these things to be recorded in the way they should have been. For neither was it possible to elude the vigilance of multitudes of spies, nor, if detected, to escape a most cruel death. . . . I find myself stammering and shrinking as far from it as possible, as I weigh the chances that such things are now to be written by me as will seem neither credible nor probable to men of a later generation; and especially when the mighty stream of time renders the story somewhat ancient, I fear lest I shall earn the reputation of being even a narrator of myths and shall be ranked



The church (now a mosque) of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), is undoubtedly the most famous and easily recognizable piece of architecture surviving from the Byzantine empire. The minarets, added after the Turks had taken Constantinople, coupled with the church, exemplify the Asiatic heritage of Turkey. Other than the addition of the minarets, the building is substantially unaltered. Reproduced from an early 19th-century engraving.

among the tragic poets. But I shall not flinch from the immensity of my task, basing my confidence on the fact that my account will not be without the support of witnesses.³⁷

Significantly, a concrete motive linking Procopius to a deliberate fabrication of falsehoods seems to have eluded his critics. Bury posited that Procopius was disillusioned by the failure of the later Roman empire to match the accomplishments of the Roman empire in its prime, and then allowed his attitude to spill over onto the pages of *The Anecdota*. Bury has also conjectured that Procopius was bitter due to a lack of personal recognition.

Any writer who indulges in such an orgy of hatred as that which amazes us in *The Secret History*, exposes himself to the fair suspicion that he has personal reasons for spite. We hardly run the risk of doing an injustice to Procopius if we assume that he was a disappointed man.³⁸

Yet Bury contradicts his own hypothesis with the following.

An amazing change came to pass in the attitude of Procopius between the year in which he composed *The Secret History* and 10 years later when he wrote his work on *The Buildings*, in which he bestows on the policy and acts of the emperor superlative praise which would astonish us as coming from the author of *The History of the Wars*, even if *The Secret History* had been lost or never written. The victories of Narses had probably mitigated the pessimism into which he had fallen through the failure

of Belisarius and the long series of Totila's³⁹ successes; but it is difficult to avoid the conjecture that he had received some preferment or recognition from the emperor.⁴⁰

It seems a reasonable assumption that if Procopius had received "some preferment or recognition from the emperor" the basis for his vituperation would have been dispelled and he would have mollified in some manner his harsh words concerning Justinian in *The Anecdota*, yet we see nothing of the kind taking place.

Logic would seem to dictate that the published works of Procopius would contain more falsehoods and exaggerations than *The Anecdota*. After all, the published works of Procopius were read by people who held the power of life and death over him. Procopius even admits, in *The Anecdota*, to lying in *The History of the Wars*.

Belisarius, coming to Italy for the second time, departed from there most ignominiously. For during a space of five years he did not succeed once in setting foot on any part of the land, as stated by me in the previous narrative. . . .⁴¹

The "previous narrative" to which Procopius refers is Book VII of *The History of the Wars*. Another example of Procopius falsifying official history can be seen in the following excerpt.

And as he was setting out, the emperor gave him such instructions as have been set forth in the appropriate passage, where, however, it was impossible for me, through fear of the empress, to reveal the truth of what took place.⁴²

The "appropriate passage" mentioned is found in Book V of *The History of the Wars*. It should be noted that Procopius, as he himself noted, was not alone in detailing some of the events written of in *The Anecdota*. In the introduction to the Loeb Classical Library version, translated by H.B. Dewing, we find that, "Procopius often has the support of the testimony of other writers of his time. Two writers may be quoted here in support both of Procopius' general thesis and of specific statements made by him."⁴³

Was *The Anecdota* history, libel or a little of both? As with so much of historical writings, the interested party must read the source documents, consider the context of the times, and draw his own conclusions. As Harry Elmer Barnes noted, "[S]uch books as *The Secret History* were a natural product of the times. In an absolutism such as that of Justinian's day, literature of this type tends to flourish, since it is one of the few outlets for suppressed exasperation."⁴⁴

However, is it not fascinating to speculate on the reaction of a historian, centuries hence, should he uncover a copy of *The Secret Life of Bill Clinton*? It is not so difficult to imagine him commenting on the book in some fashion such as this: "It is probably the most infamous and scurrilous piece of sustained character assassination in all of literature."

Despite the moral failings of the population, the Byzantine empire was able to inculcate the moral teachings of Christian-

ity in the Slavic people, not an insignificant accomplishment and unquestionably a blessing to European civilization. The Byzantine empire protected Europe for a millennium against the depredations of the Arab and Turk. The fact they did so out of a motive of self-preservation rather than selfless love for their neighbor is irrelevant, as is the fact the Turks eventually broke through the Byzantine impasse and invaded Europe. It is beyond dispute that the European civilization was able to develop its inestimable treasures of art, music, literature, and science for a thousand years because of the defense provided by the Byzantine empire. Not only did the Byzantine empire permit the development of European culture, it actively contributed to that culture as well. The knowledge of the ancient Greeks was hoarded by a faithful few in the Byzantine empire who transmitted the precious learning they had accumulated to Europe, via Italy, in a movement known as the Renaissance. ♦

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Durant, 114.
- ²Chamberlain, Vol. I, 302.
- ³Spengler, Vol. II, 89.
- ⁴Tansey and Kleiner, Vol. I, 291 (italics in the original).
- ⁵*Ibid.*, Vol. I, 295.
- ⁶(Sacred, priestly, sacerdotal.—Ed.)
- ⁷Tierney, Vol. I, 33.
- ⁸Chamberlain, Vol. I, 150.
- ⁹(Literally, "coat of mail," but usually the word refers to a soldier wearing scale armor of the ancient eastern type.—Ed.)
- ¹⁰Durant, 424, 425.
- ¹¹Duggan, 208.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, 209.
- ¹³Durant, 433.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*
- ¹⁵*The Medieval Sourcebook*, on the Internet, gives his birthdate at one point as "c. 490/507" and at another point as "c. 490/510."
- ¹⁶Barnes, 59.
- ¹⁷(Procopius's later life is little known, although he was given the title of *illustris* in 560 and may have been prefect of Constantinople in 562-3.—Ed.)
- ¹⁸Durant, 125, 26.
- ¹⁹Barker, 76.
- ²⁰Toynbee, Vol. I, 194.
- ²¹Bury, Vol. II, 419.
- ²²Procopius, 99, 101.
- ²³*Ibid.*, 111, 13.
- ²⁴Procopius, 9.
- ²⁵*Ibid.*, 51.

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Although not as well known as the church of Hagia Sophia, vast, covered cisterns like this one were an important and practical part of Justinian's ambitious building program. Procopius, in his book *Buildings*, appropriately credited Justinian: "Thus the Emperor Justinian made provision that the people of Byzantium should not be in want of fresh water." Water was brought into the peninsular city from the small hills to the northwest by underground aqueducts.

²⁶(Emerging under the reign of Justinian, the Blues and the Greens were similar to political parties. Their colors originally were taken from competing chariot teams. Their leaders were chosen by the state. The Blues represented the old Greco-Roman aristocracy, while the Greens represented trade, industry and the civil service.—Ed.)

- ²⁷Procopius, 87.
- ²⁸Willis, 275.
- ²⁹Gibbon, Vol. II, 582.
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, Vol. II, 582 (italics in original).
- ³¹*Ibid.*, Vol. II, 610.
- ³²Barker, 68.
- ³³*Ibid.*, 78.
- ³⁴Durant, 125, 126.
- ³⁵Bury, Vol. II, 424.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, 426, 27.
- ³⁷Procopius, 3, 5.
- ³⁸Bury, Vol. II, 421.
- ³⁹(Totila or Baduila was the last king of the Ostrogoths. He was thoroughly routed by Narses at a battle near Taginae, in the Apennines west of Ancona, and perished in that fight in 552.—Ed.)
- ⁴⁰Bury, Vol. II, 428.
- ⁴¹Procopius, 55.
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, 189.
- ⁴³Procopius, xiii.
- ⁴⁴Barnes, 60.

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