CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

History of the Wars, Books I-II (The Persian War)

Procopius of Caesarea · *c. 545–553 · H. B. Dewing (Loeb Classical Library, 1914; Project Gutenberg #16764)*

Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one, so that time may not overwhelm deeds of singular importance. The hosted file is Books I and II only, the Persian War, in H. B. Dewing's 1914 English. For grades 10–12. Quote the history, not a later secret chronicle.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Procopius's official history of Justinian's Persian war, in Dewing's English, as Books I–II only, without treating The Secret History as if it were in this file, and without making the wars a spectacle?

"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"

Book I, the opening

Procopius, in H. B. Dewing's Loeb English (1914, PG #16764), opens by naming himself and his purpose: to record Justinian's wars against the barbarians of East and West, separately, so that time will not obliterate them, and so that men under a later stress may take benefit. This hosted file is Books I and II only—the Persian War. It is not The Secret History, and it is not the Vandal or Gothic wars. Say so. Teach the diplomacies and the campaigns, for grades 10–12, with gravity. No spectacle of the battles. Quote Dewing.

KEY CHARACTERS

Procopius of Caesarea
The historian, who names himself at once and writes so that time will not obliterate Justinian's wars

Justinian
Emperor of the Romans, whose wars, here the Persian ones, are the subject of these two books

The Persians, and the Roman commanders
As Books I–II give them; teach the campaigns with gravity, not as a spectacle

Later readers, under a similar stress
The audience he says he also has in mind

A RECORD, SO THAT TIME WILL NOT OVERWHELM THE DEEDS

> *"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"*
>
> Book I, the opening

Grades 10–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Books I–II, the Persian War

THE FILE AS A WHOLE

The catalogue title is exact: History of the Wars, Books I–II (The Persian War). Do not teach the later books, or The Secret History, from this slug.

- Translator: H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library, 1914, PG #16764.
- For grades 10–12. Gravity.
- The opening already says he will relate the wars separately; this file is the Eastern one.
- Quote the history, not only a Loeb preface if one is present.

> *"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"*
>
> Book I, the opening

02

That Time May Not Overwhelm the Deeds

THE OPENING

He writes so that the long course of time may not overwhelm deeds of singular importance through lack of a record, and so abandon them to oblivion. He also thinks the memory will help men who later enter a similar struggle.

- The first sentence is exact, including "barbarians of the East and of the West." Keep Dewing's wording.
- The motive is both memory and use. Teach both.
- 10–12.
- This is the official history's door, not the later anecdote-book.

> *"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"*
>
> Book I, the opening

03

Justinian, and the East

THE PERSIAN WAR

The two books treat the wars with Persia in Justinian's time, and the causes as Procopius sets them out. Teach the peoples and the campaigns as he writes them, with gravity, not as a romance of empire.

- No gore on the map.
- Do not flatten Justinian, or his generals, into later mascots.
- Name this file as the Persian War only.
- Finish the two books if you assign them.

> *"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"*
>
> Book I, the opening

04

Not The Secret History

A DIFFERENT WORK

Procopius also wrote a secret history of the court, which is a different book, not hosted in this slug. Do not import its accusations into a lesson on this file as if they were on these pages.

- Honesty about the file comes first.
- If a class later reads that other work, it should be as another work.
- This opening is the public historian's claim.
- 10–12.

> *"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"*
>
> Book I, the opening

05

Dewing, 1914

THE EDITION

The Loeb English is the hosted text. Keep it, including "Caesarea" and "Justinian, Emperor of the Romans."

- The first sentence is the right first quotation.
- Not a later popular retelling.
- Complete as to Books I–II.
- Gravity throughout.

> *"Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West, relating separately the events of each one"*
>
> Book I, the opening

Memory Against Time | A Persian War | Two Books Only | An Emperor's Wars | Gravity

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. This file is Books I–II only, the Persian War, in H. B. Dewing's 1914 Loeb English (PG #16764). It is not The Secret History, and not the Vandal or Gothic wars. For grades 10–12.
2. The work opens: "Procopius of Caesarea has written the history of the wars which Justinian, Emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West." He writes so that time may not overwhelm the deeds, and so that later men under a similar stress may take benefit.
3. Teach the campaigns with gravity, not as a spectacle or a romance of empire. Do not flatten Justinian into a later mascot.
4. Do not import The Secret History into a lesson on this file as if it were on these pages.
5. Quote Dewing, not another English silently substituted.

Quotations are verbatim from the H. B. Dewing (Loeb Classical Library, 1914; Project Gutenberg #16764), Project Gutenberg #16764 (History of the Wars, Books I and II, trans. H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library, 1914), the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/procopius-history-of-the-wars-persian-war/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.