

Introduction

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Psellos was born just over one thousand years ago (1018) in Constantinople. Before 1054 his first name was Constantine, then he took the monastic name of Michael which he retained until his death sometime around 1081. He was a prolific writer and over one thousand of his texts have reached us. His collection of over five hundred letters is essential reading for most aspects of Byzantine culture. Psellos was part of the laity and represented civilian byzantine culture. He was also part of the Imperial court for most of his life and was never condemned by the church.

He is a unique author since he pursued personal interests and yet found public endorsement of his ideas, explanations, and interpretations. Much was due to his connection with the 'mesazon' (prime minister) Constantine Leichoudes, his friends John Xiphilinos and John Mauropous. He was appointed 'consul of the philosophers' in 1047 because of his interest and study of Plato and Proclus and yet his theological treatises, some of which written in his monastic retreat of Mt Olympos in Bithynia, were copied and kept in the monasteries of Mt. Athos. Such circumstances allowed him to pursue his philosophical and theological interests and the present volume is dedicated to these concerns, and includes the papers presented at the Round Table dedicated to him at the XXIII International Byzantine Congress held at Belgrade, in Serbia.

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List of *abbreviations* for Psellos' works employed in this issue:

Michael Psellus	[Psell.]
Chron. =	Chronographia
Ep. =	Epistulae
Hist. =	Historia syntomos
Omn. =	Omnifaria doctrina
Or. Forens. =	Orationes forenses
Or. Paneg. =	Orationes panegyricae
Phil. Min. =	Philosophica Minora
Poem. =	Poemata
Theol. =	Theologica