

NEW CONSIDERATIONS ON THE *HISTORIA SYNTOMOS* OF MICHAEL PSELLOS*

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ABSTRACT. Chapter 1 of this paper investigates the main themes in the research of Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*. Chapter 2 puts forward the question of possible interrelations between the *Historia Syntomos* and one type of the short imperial chronicles, the so-called Kaiserlisten. Chapter 3 reexamines the possible relation between the *Historia Syntomos* and a short Psellos' work entitled Περὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν γενεαλογίας.

Keywords: Michael Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, Byzantine chronography, Kaiserlisten, chronology, treatise Περὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν γενεαλογίας.

1. At the beginning of the chapter about Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*, Warren Treadgold, in his book *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, wrote: "The *Concise History* is such a problematic work that its attribution to Psellos has been challenged, but ascribing it to someone else would create even more problems than accepting Psellos as its author."² The question of authorship of the *Concise History* is indeed difficult to avoid, since it emerged even before the work itself was published in 1990, and has continued throughout subsequent scholarship on the text.³ There is no need here to reiterate the entire history of this question in detail, so we shall therefore limit ourselves to a few salient points. The editor of the text himself W. J. Aerts was first to express the opinion

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² Warren Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, (Hampshire – New York 2013), 282–289.

³ Michel Pselli *Historia Syntomos*, recensuit, anglisce vertit et commentario instruxit W.J. Aerts, Berolini 1990 (CFHB 30). Aerts questioned Psellos' authorship already in: W. J. Aerts, Un témoin inconnu de la Chronographie de Psellos, *Byzantinoslavica* 61 (1980) : 1–16, 2. For the opposite opinion see Kenneth Snipes, A Newly Discovered History of the Roman Emperors by Michael Psellos, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3 (1982): 53–61.

that Psellos was not the real author of this work and in spite of Jakov Ljubarskij's persuasive arguments in favour of Psellos' authorship, Aerts' position was adopted by many scholars. Thus, in some general reference works we read that Psellos is not the real author of the *Historia Syntomos*, while in the others, such as the influential *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι* by A. Karpozilos serious reservations are expressed. However, its attribution to Psellos has gradually been gaining ground since the article by J. Duffy and S. Papaioannou, completely devoted to the question of authorship of the *Historia Syntomos*, was published in 2003. It seems that the profound analysis of the vocabulary given in this article has left little room for doubt.⁴

A significant contribution to the question of the sources Psellos used for the *Historia Syntomos* was made by Aerts. He identified three main sources (but some others have been considered as well): Dionysius of Halicarnassus for the periods of the Old Roman Kingdom and the Roman Republic, one of the versions of the Symeon Logothetes (the work Aerts refers to as *Eclogē Historiarum*, following the edition of J. A. Cramer), that covers the period from Julius Caesar to Michael I, and Theophanes Continuatus for the period from Leo V the Armenian to Romanos II.⁵ Other scholars were more concerned with the question of *how* Psellos used his sources than *which* they were.⁶ It has turned out that Psellos approached and made use of his sources in several different ways. In a number of cases he more or less reworked the style and the language

⁴ Jakov Ljubarskij, Some Notes on Newly Discovered Historical Work by Psellos, Τὸ Ἑλληνικόν. Studies in Honour of Speros Vryonis, Jr., Vol. I, eds. John S. Langdon et al., (New York 1993), 213–228, 225; John Duffy – Eustratios Papaioannou, Michael Psellos and the Authorship of the *Historia Syntomos*: Final Considerations, Byzantium: State and Society. In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides, eds. Anna Avramea – Angeliki Laiou – E. Chrysos, (Athens 2003), 219–229; Απόστολος Καρπόζηλος, Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί καὶ χρονογράφοι, Τόμος Γ' (11^{ος} -12^{ος} αἰ.), (Athens 2009), 155 sq. Lexikon der Mittelalters, Band VII, Stuttgart – Weimar 1999, 304–305. In some recent studies it is out of question if the *Historia Syntomos* is genuine Psellos' work: Leonora Neville, Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing, (Cambridge 2018), 144–146 (including basic information on the work and literature); Frederick Lauritzen, The Depiction of Character in the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos, (Turnhout 2013), 145–146. Finally, see also Dejan Dželebdžić, Ἱστορία Σύντομος τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ, unpublished MA Dissertation, (Athens 2003), 5–19.

⁵ For more details see Psell. Hist. XXIII–XXV Aerts. According to Aerts the most problematic are the sources for the period from Julius Caesar to Constantine the Great. It is worth mentioning that Aerts remains silent as to Psellos' sources for Nikephoros II Phokas. Instead, he often compares the *Historia Syntomos* with the chronicles of John Zonaras and John Skylitzes. For the sources of the *Historia Syntomos* see also: Jakov N. Ljubarskij, Προσωπικότητα καὶ τὸ ἔργο του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ, (Athens 2004), 259–261.

⁶ Ljubarskij, Some Notes, 213–228; Raimondo Tocci, Questions of Authorship and Genre in Chronicles of the Middle Byzantine Period: The Case of Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*, The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature. Modes, Functions and Identities, ed. Aglae Pizzone, (Boston – Berlin 2014), 61–75, 70–75; Dejan Dželebdžić, Τα αποφθέγματα των βασιλέων στην Ἱστορία Σύντομο του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ, Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta 44 (2007): 155–172, 161–165.

of his source without changing the facts.⁷ In other cases it was clearly his intention to make use of only those data from the sources that provided good material for the composition of a concise and coherent narrative, while other data were left aside. In my opinion, the most interesting cases are those chapters for which a source could not be traced.⁸ One such example is the account on the emperor Alexander, the son of Mamaea. While other relevant sources are above all concerned with the piety of Alexander's mother Mamaea, the *Historia Syntomos* is the only source that underlines Alexander's excessive affection and obedience to her (φιλομήτωρ πλέον τοῦ δέοντος).⁹ J. Ljubarskij convincingly argued that this passage is related to the passage of the *Chronographia* in which, however, a similar attitude on the part of Michael VII towards his mother is praised (perhaps not without some irony). Consequently, the most reasonable conclusion that could be drawn is that the passage in question was "inserted" by Psellos, obviously in order to present a historical example that would be instructive for the young emperor Michael, the supposed addressee of the work.¹⁰ Ljubarskij went further by drawing a more general conclusion that "if passages with more or less actual meaning in the *Historia Syntomos* have no counterparts in the parallel sources ... they can be regarded as inserted by the author himself".¹¹

All scholars agree that the sayings (ἀποφθέγματα) ascribed to the emperors from Claudius II (268–270) to Philippikos (711–713) are probably the most original and the most interesting aspect of the *Historia Syntomos*. Opinions about their origin, however, are sharply opposed to each other. While Aerts asserted that Psellos probably had a collection of sayings of the emperors at his disposal which has since been lost, it has been argued that most *apophthegmata* were invented by Psellos himself.¹² A more neutral position towards the existence of a collection of emperors' sayings was taken by R. Tocci, who, however, added that he "definitely asserts that the content of most of the emperors' sayings,

⁷ For example see the passage about the emperor Severus: Psell. Hist. 24.2-12 Aerts.

⁸ For example see Psell. Hist. 122, 123 (commentaries for chapters 31 and 35), and the next note.

⁹ Psell. Hist. 26.46-56 and 125 (commentary).

¹⁰ Ljubarskij, *Some Notes*, 215–217; Michaelis Pselli *Chronographia*, ed. Diether R. Reinsch, Band 1, Berlin – (Boston 2014), 263 (VII, 123, b 2).

¹¹ Ljubarskij, *Some Notes*, 214 cf., where other similar examples supporting this conclusion are also given.

¹² For Aerts' hypothesis about the existence of a collection of sayings see: Psell. Hist. XXIV Aerts. For the opposite opinion see Dželebdžić, Τα αποφθέγματα. Aerts' hypothesis is only recently supported with valid arguments by Theofili Kampianaki, *Sayings Attributed to Emperors of Old and New Rome in Michael Psellos' Historia Syntomos*, in: *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, eds. N. Matheou,, T. Kampianaki and L. Bondioli, (Leiden 2016), 311–325.

directly or indirectly, derives from earlier chronicles”, and supported this with three examples.¹³

Although the *Historia Syntomos* covers a long historical period as traditional Byzantine chronicles also do, it is unusual in the sense that it deals exclusively with Roman and Byzantine history, from the legendary foundation of Rome by Romulus and Remus to the reign of the emperor Basil II.

Nevertheless, in regard to its interest for Roman history, the *Historia Syntomos* is not an isolated piece of Byzantine historiography. In the sixth century, Peter Patrikios wrote a historiographical work that has been transmitted to us only in fragmentary form, mostly through Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos’ *De Sententiis* and *De legationibus*. It covered the period from Julius Caesar to Constantius II, who died in 361. Peter Patrikios’ main goal was to collect and present material for ancient Roman history, while less space by far was devoted to the history of New Rome. The reason for this should probably be sought in the fact that little, at least in Greek, had been written about Roman history since the third century author Dion Cassius, who was Peter’s main source, while histories of the period from Julian the Apostate to Justinian already existed (e.g. Eunapios of Sardis, Priskos, Zosimos, etc.).¹⁴

In this context, one should also consider the work *Περὶ ἀρχῶν τῆς Ῥωμαίων πολιτείας* by John Lydos, a contemporary of Peter Patrikios. This work is not a history, but still it shows some historiographical features and very much deals with the Roman past. As Michael Maas pointed out, this work of Lydos is organized around the idea of a continuity of Roman state institutions, sometimes from Romulus up to the age of Justinian.¹⁵ Did Psellos also have in mind the idea of continuity between Old and New Rome while he was writing the *Historia Syntomos*? The answer cannot be simple, because on the one hand it is not clearly stated anywhere, but on the other hand there are some points that indicate such an intention. First of all, it could be seen through the idea of writing a history that deals exclusively with the Roman and Byzantine past, but

¹³ Tocci, *Questions of Authorship*, 70 cf.

¹⁴ On Peter Patrikios see Thomas M. Banchich, *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician: An Account of Rome’s Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*, London – New York: Routledge 2015; Παναγιώτης Αντωνόπουλος, Πέτρος Πατρίκιος: Ο βυζαντινός διπλωμάτης, αξιωματούχος και συγγραφέας, Athens 1990; Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, (Hampshire – New York 2007), 264–270; Απόστολος Καρπόζηλος, Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι, Τόμος Α’ (4^{ος}–7^{ος} αἰ.), (Athens 1997), 420–431. On Greek historians of 4th–7th centuries in general see *ibidem*, 259 sq., but now particularly one can consult the following website: <https://www.late-antique-historiography.ugent.be/> (last seen on 28 January, 2021).

¹⁵ Michael Maas, *John Lydos and the Roman Past. Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian*, (London – New York 1992), 84. Especially see Antony Kaldellis, *Republican Theory and Political Dissidence in Ioannes Lydos*, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 29 (2005): 1–16. On John Lydos in general see Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, 258–264.

also in some concrete details. We are told, for example, that the emperor Constans II (641–668), who wanted to return the capital from Constantinople back to Rome, used to say that “one should rather honour mothers than their daughters”.¹⁶

Interest in the Roman past reappeared in the middle Byzantine period, particularly in the tenth century in various writings of Constantine Porphyrogenetos (*De Sententiis, De Legationibus, Excerpta*). In the eleventh century, apart from the *Historia Syntomos*, a work entitled *Roman History*, compiled by nomophylax John Xiphilinos, was also concerned with the Roman past. The interest of the middle-Byzantine historians in the Roman past, that reached its peak in the Ἐπιτομή ἱστοριῶν of John Zonaras, was thoroughly analysed by A. Markopoulos, and it is not necessary to develop it here further.¹⁷

2. If one, however, wishes to understand the literary and intellectual context in which the *Historia Syntomos* was written one should also take into consideration the so-called short chronicles, namely the short imperial chronicles. The aim of this kind of historiographical writing was rather limited. Actually, they originally aimed only at establishing the fundamental chronological information, such as the chronological order of the emperors, the date of accession to, and descent from the throne of each emperor and / or the duration of each emperor’s reign. Peter Schreiner has justifiably categorized these compendiums into two types according to their attitude towards chronology: the short imperial chronicles (*Kaiserchroniken*) and the lists of the emperors (*Kaiserlisten*). Whereas in the former type the events are normally accompanied by the exact date (the year from the Creation, and sometimes the indiction, the month and the day), the writings of the latter type establish a list of the emperors in chronological order with an indication of the duration of each emperor’s reign,

¹⁶ Psell. Hist. 68.16-19, 36-37 Aerts.

¹⁷ Athanasios Markopoulos, *Roman Antiquarianism: Aspects of the Roman Past in the Middle Byzantine Period (9th–11th centuries)*, Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Volume I, Plenary Papers, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, 277–297. For the Zonaras’ interest in the Roman past see now especially Theofili Kampianaki, *John Zonaras’ Epitome of Histories (12th Cent.): A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History and Its Readers*, (University of Oxford 2017) (unpublished PhD dissertation), 123–158. On the same subject see also: P. Magdalino, *Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik*, *Speculum* 58 (1983): 326–346, particularly 343 sq.; Ruth Macrides, *Paul Magdalino, The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism, The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino, (London 1992), 117–156, particularly 126–131. See also: Nicholas Matheou, *City and Sovereignty in East Roman Thought, c. 1000-1200: Ioannes Zonaras’ Historical Vision of the Roman State*, in: *From the Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, eds. N. Matheou, Th. Kampianaki and L. Bondioli, (Leiden 2016), 41-63.

but dates are always absent. In accordance with this distinction, Schreiner included only nine imperial chronicles in his critical edition of short chronicles, while omitting a vast number of *Kaiserlisten* scattered through the manuscript sources.¹⁸

A significant contribution to the study of the Byzantine short chronicles was made by Z. G. Samodurova, who attempted their complete classification.¹⁹ According to Samodurova, the short chronicles can be distinguished by their content into three main categories and several subcategories, but it is not necessary here to present the entire classification. Rather, it will suffice to draw attention to one small sub-subcategory composed of thirteen compendiums that list exclusively the Roman and Byzantine emperors. Their authors are always unknown, but it is very likely that they lived in Constantinople. One compendium is entitled σύνοψις χρονική, the other βιβλίον χρονικόν, but more usual titles in the manuscripts are: ὄσοι ἐβασίλευσαν / οἱ βασιλεύσαντες ἐν Ῥώμῃ / Κωνσταντινουπόλει or ὄσοι ἐβασίλευσαν τῶν Ῥωμαίων.

The majority of the compendiums begin from Julius Caesar or Octavian Augustus, while the dates they end at vary from the middle to the late Byzantine period. It is particularly important for the purpose of this paper that there are two that begin from Romulus, but they are unfortunately still unpublished.²⁰

¹⁸ Peter Schreiner (ed.), *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, 1. Teil, Einleitung und Text, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, vol. 12/1, (Wien 1975), 119–188, Nos. 14–22. Moreover, some of the chronicles in question are not published entirely, but only those sections that contain historical information and dates: see *ibidem*, pp. 23–24, where the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of one imperial chronicle from the edition are explained.

¹⁹ Z. G. Samodurova, *Malye vizantijskie hroniki i ih istočniki* (З. Г. Самодурова, *Малые византийские хроники и их источники*), *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 27 (1967): 153–161. These writings were also examined by Απόστολος Καρπόζηλος, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι*, Τόμος Β' (8^{ος}–10^{ος}), (Athens 2002), 529–611. Recently, P. Varona, in the paper that illuminates the origins of the this kind of writings in Byzantium, suggested that the classifications established by both Samodurova and Karpozilos, as well as the terminology they used, should be revised in the light of the most recent research on the chronicle genre and tradition: see Patricia Varona, *Chronology and History in Byzantium*, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 58 (2018): 389–422, particularly see 2 and 418–419.

²⁰ It is worth mentioning that what is above said recalls the following words from Psellos' *Chronographia*, by which he compares those historians who wrote about the ancient Roman history in too much concise form (τὸ συντετμημένον) with those who wrote too extensive chronographical works (τὸ περιρέον), choosing the way between them (μέσῃν ὁδὸν βαδίζειν προήρημαι): Ἄλλ' ὅπερ εἴρηκα, τὸ μὲν πᾶσαν πράξιν λεπτολογεῖν ἀφήμι νῦν, μέσῃν δὲ ὁδὸν βαδίζειν προήρημαι τῶν τε ἀρχαιολογησάντων τὰς τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης ἡγεμονίας τε καὶ πράξεις καὶ τῶν εἰωθῶτων ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνοις χρονογραφίας συντίθεσθαι, οὔτε τὸ περιρέον ἐκείνων ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ζηλώσας, οὔτε τὸ συντετμημένον τῶν λοιπῶν μιμησάμενος, ἵνα μήτε κόρον ἔχοι τὸ σύγγραμμα μήτε παραλίποι τὰ καίρια. See: Michaelis Pselli *Chronographia*, ed. Reinsch, 136 (VI, 73.11-17).

I think that it would be profitable to prepare a critical edition of all these texts,²¹ establish when they were written, and investigate any possible interrelations between them. This might also help identify whether these texts are related to Psellos' *Historia Syntomos* and if so how. It seems, however, that on the basis of the data presented by Samodurova and the texts already published it is already now possible to approach this question.

At the outset it should be noted that at least three out of these thirteen compendiums of the Roman and Byzantine emperors were probably written in the age of Psellos. Although we do not know the exact dates of their compilation, it seems safe to assume that they came into being shortly after the date at which they end.²² Among the thirteen chronicles in question, at least three close with the eleventh century emperors: the first one closes with the reign of Basil II and Constantine VIII (as does Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*), the second one with Romanos III and the third with Constantine IX Monomachos.²³

The second point is that the *Historia Syntomos* shares with the *Kaiserlisten* a similar attitude towards chronology. Psellos' interest in chronology is rather limited, which was not typical for the earlier Byzantine chronicles.²⁴ The entire sum of chronological data from the *Historia Syntomos* can easily be listed. One event from the religious history of the Roman republic is ascribed to the "seventy first Olympiad", which was probably taken from Dionysios of Halikarnassos, Psellos' main source for that period.²⁵ The *Historia Syntomos* only twice gives the year from the Creation, namely the years of the Birth (5500) and the Passion of Christ (5533).²⁶ There are virtually no other data that

²¹ Only two compendiums have been published so far: *Chronicon Paschale ad Exemplar Vaticanum*, ed. Ludovicus Dindorfius, vol. II, (Bonn 1832), 90–95; *Anecdota Bruxellensia I*, *Chroniques byzantines du manuscrit 11376*, ed. Franz Cumont, (Gand 1894), 13–34. One fragment has also been published: Karl Praechter, *Ein Chronikfragment aus Cod. Bern. 450*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 6 (1906): 112–113.

²² Samodurova, *Malye vizantijkie hroniki* (Самодурова, *Малые византийские хроники*), 159. See also *Anecdota Bruxellensia I*, 14.

²³ The first mentioned is a still unpublished chronicle from Paris. Coisl. gr. 224 f. 378. It is important that this manuscript has been ascribed to the eleventh century. Besides the standard catalogue by Robert Devreesse, *Bibliothèque nationale. Département des mss. Catalogue des mss grecs. II Le fonds Coislin*, Paris 1945, for the description of this manuscript one can also consult the following address: <http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc25300j>, seen on 23 January 2021). For two other chronicles that are published see above, n. 21.

²⁴ Namely, one of the primary goals of the world chronicles from their early stages was to establish an accurate chronology of the history of humankind, and only in the chronicles of the twelfth century did chronological data become less important. See Tocci, *Questions of Authorship*, 62.

²⁵ Psell. *Hist.* 10.53–56 Aerts.

²⁶ Psell. *Hist.* 10.79–81, 12.92–94 Aerts.

could help the reader to establish a solid chronological orientation.²⁷ The reader of the *Historia Syntomos* who tried to establish the exact chronology would face insurmountable difficulties. In the title of the work it is clearly stated that the author “will leave aside the emperors who brought about nothing remarkable”,²⁸ but the text itself is silent on who these emperors were. Additionally, Psellos sometimes fails to mention for how long an emperor ruled, and sometimes the information he gives is wrong.²⁹

All the above information on the attitude taken in the *Historia Syntomos* towards chronological questions distinguishes it from the earlier Byzantine chronicles and at the same time brings it close to the *Kaiserlisten*, which regularly give the duration of the reign of each emperor, but in accord with the *Historia Syntomos* only exceptionally provide the dates of the events they describe.³⁰

The two *Kaiserlisten* of the Roman and Byzantine emperors that have been published show that texts of this kind can differ considerably from one another. Some of them almost give only the names of the emperors and duration of their reigns, with only rare additions.³¹ Other *Kaiserlisten*, however, can contain short descriptions of various events, as well as other pieces of information the readers of the Byzantine chronicles were familiar with. They sometimes show particular interest in certain subjects and periods, to which they consequently devote much more attention than usual. Thus, the published *Brussels chronicle* is much more extensive for the period from Constantine the Great to Basil I than for the Roman emperors and the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty. Some entries of the mentioned period are indeed very extensive, especially the one

²⁷ As the only exception one could mention the information that from the foundation of Rome up to the end of the old Roman Kingdom passed exactly two hundred and forty four years: see *ibidem*, 6.77-78. Such pieces of information were characteristic for the sets of chronological tables (see Samodurova, *Malye vizantijskie hroniki*, 161), but they also occasionally appear in other types of short chronicles.

²⁸ Psell. Hist. 2.2-3 Aerts.

²⁹ For the following rulers it is not stated how long they ruled: S. Tullius (4.57-67), Lucius Tarquinius (4.58-6.76), Julius Caesar (10.64-73), Nero (14.25.37), Diocletian (34.13-28), Valentinian (42.39-66), Valens (42.67 - 44.93) and others. For some mistakes Psellos made see Psell. Hist. XV Aerts.

³⁰ In the *Brussels chronicle* published by Cumont the exact date is exceptionally given for the Russian attack on Constantinople in 860. See Cumont, *Anecdota Bruxellensia I*, 33.16-21. The list of the Roman and Byzantine emperors published by L. Dindorfius does not give any date. Instead, before the entry about Constantine the Great it is stated that from the time Augustus ascended the throne passed three hundred fifty-nine years and six months, i.e. from Christ's Birth, three hundred seventy years and six months. See Dindorfius, *Chronicon Paschale II*, 92. This kind of information is scarce in the *Kaiserlisten*, but it is characteristic for another type of the short chronicle: see above, n. 27.

³¹ For example see Dindorfius, *Chronicon Paschale II*, 90-95. The author of this work sometimes mentions the way some emperors died (e.g. καὶ ἐσφάγη ἐν παλατίῳ).

devoted to Justinian I, but in it, somewhat surprisingly, almost nothing is said about important historical events, and the author is instead very much interested in events related to Constantinople, church building activity and numerous liturgical innovations. As has been pointed out by F. Cumont, he is particularly concerned with the events related to the Studios Monastery, which suggests that he was probably living in it.³² This shows that in this kind of text “the presence of the author” can be obvious at least as much as in the extensive Byzantine chronicles.³³ There is no need to repeat here that Psellos’ personal stamp in the *Historia Syntomos* is obvious, since it has been convincingly shown in some of the studies that have already been cited in this paper.³⁴

3. It would be also useful to make some further observations on one short work by Psellos entitled *Περὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν γενεαλογίας* and its possible connection to the *Historia Syntomos*.³⁵ The introduction of this work, which is addressed to Psellos’ pupils, consists of two approximately equal sections. In the first section (ll. 2-9), the author emphasizes, among other things, the necessity of studying history (καὶ ἱστορίαν συλλέγειν) if one wishes to become a complete/real philosopher (παντοδαπὸς φιλόσοφος), while in the second section (ll. 9-20) the content of the work is described. Psellos declares that he is about to write a very short history from the beginning of humankind, but following only Christ’s genealogical line. He added that it was not his intention to divide up all of world history either according to years or to the rulers, since that would be highly demanding. Rather, his main purpose was to determine the exact year of Christ’s Birth as well as when he “was shown forth”, while the secondary one was to deal with several empires, concluding with the Roman Empire and “some of those who shone through in it”.³⁶ Two points of the above cited passage deserve further explanation.

³² See Cumont, *Anecdota Bruxellensia* I, 14–16, 24–28 (the entry on Justinian I).

³³ On the presence of the author in the Byzantine chronicles see Tocci, *Questions of Authorship*, 61–65; Ljubarskij, *Some Notes*, 214 sq.

³⁴ See above, n. 6.

³⁵ Michaelis Pselli *Theologica*, vol. 1, ed. Paul Gautier, Leipzig 1989, 445–447 (No. 114). Duffy – Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos*, 229, have already drawn our attention to this possibility.

³⁶ The end of the introduction is worth citing in full. Psellus, *Theologica* I, p. 446, 114.15-20: ἀλλὰ μοι ὁ λόγος ἐστὶ κεφαλαιωδῶς παραδοῦναι τὸ μετὰ τὸν Ἀδὰμ γένος, ὅθεν ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν γενεαλογεῖται κατὰ τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπου γένεσιν, κατὰ βραχὺ τε τὸν χρόνον διακριβώσασθαι καθ’ ὃν ἐγεγέννητό τε καὶ ἀναδέδεικται, ἐπιμνησθῆναί τε κατὰ τὸ πάρεργον καὶ βασιλείων τινῶν ὅσαι τῷ ὑπομνήματι προσαρμόσουσι καὶ καταπαῦσαι τὸν λόγον ἄχρι τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς βασιλείας, ἀναμνησθέντα καὶ τῶν ἐν ταύτῃ διαλαμψάντων τινῶν.

The interpretation according to which the cited words mean that this short work will conclude with the early Roman kings, i.e. at the point where the *Historia Syntomos* ends, has been justifiably criticized as not convincing.³⁷ In my opinion, here the Ῥωμαϊκὴ βασιλεία undoubtedly means the Roman Empire, not the early Roman Kingdom, while the expression ἐπιμνησθῆναι ... καὶ βασιλειῶν τινῶν refers to the Four Kingdoms described in the Book of Prophet Daniel, with which the readers of the Byzantine chronicles were familiar.³⁸ The last preserved sentence of the work suggests that at least some kings were indeed listed.

The second point which requires further explanation is that Psellos declared that he would be concerned exclusively with the exact chronology of the two aforementioned dates, while general chronological matters would otherwise be left aside. The first mentioned date is that of Christ's Birth, while the second one can only be the day when he was baptized and started preaching. Namely, the verb ἀναδέδεικται must hint at Christ's Baptism, as in the Gospel of Luke, where the expression ἡμέρα ἀναδείξεως αὐτοῦ [i.e. of Christ] πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ means "the day of Christ's Baptism".³⁹ This is important because of the fact that in the *Historia Syntomos* a very similar attitude towards chronological matters is apparent. As I have already mentioned in this paper only the years of Christ's Birth and Passion are precisely dated by the year of the Creation.⁴⁰ Psellos provides two additional chronological pieces of information: first, that Christ's Passion occurred in the eighteenth year of Emperor Tiberius's reign, and second, that Christ's Baptism took place during the fifteenth year of the same emperor's reign. Hence, the exact year of the Baptism is indirectly given as well. It seems to me that the resemblance concerning the attitude towards chronological matters in these two works can hardly be a mere fortuitous coincidence.

If the above said is true, the following question emerges: if Psellos originally intended to include in his historical overview only the Roman Empire and not the earlier period of Roman history, why would he extend it to the Roman Kingdom and Republic afterwards? This is particularly strange if one has in mind that some scholars have characterized this section of the *Historia Syntomos* as the weakest of the whole work.⁴¹ I think that the main reason behind

³⁷ Duffy – Papaioannou, 229, n. 23. Dželebdžić, Ἱστορία Σύντομος τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ, 22. This position was criticized by Markopoulos, *Roman Antiquarianism*, 295, n. 106.

³⁸ Ruth Macrides, Paul Magdalino, *The Fourth Kingdom 117–156*; Tocci, *Questions of Authorship*, 62–63, and n. 8.

³⁹ See Lk 1.80.

⁴⁰ See above n. 26.

⁴¹ On the subject see Ljubarskij, *Προσωπικότητα και το ἔργο*, 256; but see also Dejan Dželebdžić, *Η Δημοκρατική Ρώμη στην πολιτική σκέψη του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ*, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 42 (2005) 23–34, 27 sq.

this shift could be Psellos' intention to present different forms of government, which is supported by the fact that in this part of the work he makes frequent mention of changes in the forms of government (ἀρχαί). In chapters 7, 8, 15 and 16 Psellos refers to βασιλεία (or μοναρχία or βασιλική Ῥωμαίων πολιτεία), τυραννίς, ἀριστοκρατία (or ἀριστοκρατική ὑπατεία or ὑπατική ἀρχή).⁴² Psellos is aware that the period in which the state was governed by two consuls is followed by the period of the rule of the tribunes (ἐπικληθέντες δήμαρχοι), but he apparently showed no special interest in this form of government. For each form of government Psellos expressed his position, the most remarkable of which is his favorable position towards the Roman republican constitution.⁴³

4. Conclusion

In the chapter 1 of this paper the main themes in the research of Psellos' *Historia Syntomos* are presented, such as the questions of authorship, the sources and the ways they were used by the author, the origin of the sayings of the emperors, as well as the author's interest in the Roman past. In the chapter 3 I reexamined the question of possible relation between the *Historia Syntomos* and a short work entitled Περὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν γενεαλογίας. The introductory portion of the latter, that is only preserved, reveals that there was remarkable resemblance between the two works, at least in regard of their attitudes towards chronology (both are interested exclusively for the exact dates of Christ's Birth and Baptism).

The most important contribution, however, of this paper is, in my opinion, the chapter 2, where for the first time has been put forward the question of possible interrelations between the *Historia Syntomos* and one type of the short imperial chronicles, the so-called *Kaiserlisten*. On the basis of the valuable data presented by the Russian scholar Z. G. Samodurova, as well as two *Kaiserlisten* that have been published to date, the three following facts are highlighted: even thirteen *Kaiserlisten* cover exclusively the Roman and Byzantine periods; two among them begin from Romulus, while the others from Caesar or Augustus; at

⁴² In the chapter devoted to Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, Psellos again speaks about μοναρχία, ἀριστοκρατία and πολυαρχία: Psell. Hist. 92 Aerts. See also Dželebdžić, Δημοκρατική Ῥώμη, 31–32.

⁴³ Dželebdžić, Δημοκρατική Ῥώμη, 28 sq. In the past such position would be interpreted as a borrowing from an ancient source: see e.g.: Καρπόζηλος, Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι, Τόμος Γ', 167. But now Anthony Kaldellis stated: "Byzantium must first be understood as a republic in the Roman tradition." See: Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome*, (Cambridge Massachusetts – London 2015), IX. See also: Kaldellis, *Republican Theory*.

least three were apparently written in the age of Psellos, given that they end with the emperors of the first half or mid-eleventh century. In view of the above mentioned, the hypothesis about possible interrelation between these short texts and the *Historia Syntomos* is strongly supported, but only after a critical edition of the former once is prepared, it will be possible to confirm or reject it.

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