



STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS
BABEȘ-BOLYAI



THEOLOGIA ORTHODOXA

Vol. 66, No. 1, June 2021

**STUDIA
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI
THEOLOGIA ORTHODOXA**

**Vol. 66, No. 1
(June 2021)**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

TEOFIL TIA, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

EXECUTIVE EDITORS:

CRISTIAN SONEA, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

GABRIEL GÂRDAN, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

EDITORIAL BOARD:

IOAN CHIRILĂ, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

ȘTEFAN ILOAIE, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

PHILIP LEMASTERS, McMurry University, United States

THEODOR NIKOLAOU, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

KONSTANTINOS NIKOLAKOPOULOS, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

EUGEN PENTIUC, Holly Cross, Brooklin, United States

Acad. IOAN-AUREL POP, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

ADOLF MARTIN RITTER, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany

HANS SCHWARZ, Universität Regensburg, Germany

MARIAN SIMION, Harvard University, United States

LUCIAN TURCESCU, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS:

PAUL SILADI, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

RĂZVAN PERȘA, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

ADVISORY BOARD:

Metropolitan ANDREI ANDREICUȚ, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

VALER BEL, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

DANIEL BUDA, Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania

ALISON RUTH KOLOSOVA, University of Tartu, Estonia

IOAN-VASILE LEB, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

ALEXANDRU MORARU, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

RADU PREDA, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

NICOLAE TURCAN, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

VASILE STANCIU, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

STELIAN TOFANĂ, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

PROOFREADERS:

MARK MADELEY, Bruxelles

ANIELA SILADI, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

IOANA SONEA, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

<http://studia.orth.ro>

http://www.studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/th_orth/

EDITORIAL OFFICE: *Episcop Nicolae Ivan Str., f.n., Cluj-Napoca, Romania,*
Email: subbto@gmail.com (Principal Contact)

© Photo on the front cover: Florin Florea

YEAR
MONTH
ISSUE

Volume 66 (LXVI) 2021
JUNE
1

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2021-06-30
PUBLISHED PRINT: 2021-06-30
ISSUE DOI: 10.24193/subbto.2021.1

Thematic Issue:
Michael Psellos (1018-1081)

Guest Editor: Frederick LAURITZEN

CONTENTS

Frederick LAURITZEN, *Introduction*..... 5

I. Psellos' Philosophy and Theology

Lela ALEXIDZE, Michael Psellos and Ioane Petritsi on Intellect 7

Georgios DIAMANTOPOULOS, Remarks on Psellos' Attitude Towards the
Patristic Exegetical Tradition in His *Theologica*.....39

Mark EDWARDS, Michael Psellos on Philosophy and Theology.....81

Georgi KAPRIEV, The Teaching of the Energies in *De omnifaria doctrina* of
Michael Psellos..... 101

Frederick LAURITZEN, Psellos' Commentary on the Jesus Prayer 117

Dominic J. O'MEARA, Aristotelian and Neoplatonic Ethics in Michael Psellos and John Italos	135
Oleg RODIONOV, Michael Psellos' <i>Theologica</i> I.30 and the Byzantine Interpretations of <i>Scala paradisi</i> XXVII/2.13	147
Denis WALTER, Incorporeals in the Ontology of Created Beings in the Byzantine Philosophy of Michael Psellos.....	165

**II. Papers from the Psellos Round Table presented at the
XXIII International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Belgrade 2016**

Jean-Claude CHEYNET, Michel Psellos, administrateur public et gestionnaire de ses biens.....	179
Dejan DŽELEBDŽIĆ, New Considerations on the <i>Historia Syntomos</i> of Michael Psellos.....	193
Elizabeth A. FISHER, Psellos' Hagiographical Writings: Resources and New Directions	207
Corinne JOUANNO, Michael Psellos on Rhetoric	217
Diether Roderich REINSCH, Die <i>Chronographia</i> des Michael Psellos als Werk mündlicher Prosa	239
Bibliography – Michael Psellos, 2000-2020.....	249

Introduction

FREDERICK LAURITZEN¹

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.

I would like to thank Professor Adrian Podaru for the invitation to be guest editor of this issue in *Theologia Orthodoxa*, as well as the authors of the papers presented here, and the anonymous reviewers who added their helpful insights.

¹ *Historian, Scuola Grande di San Marco, Venice, Italy.*
Email: frederick.lauritzen@scuolagrandesanmarco.it.

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

I. PSELLOS' PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

MICHAEL PSELLOS AND IOANE PETRITSI ON INTELLECT

LELA ALEXIDZE¹

ABSTRACT. Michael Psellos exposed his theory on intellect in two major texts: *De omnifaria doctrina* and *Philosophica minora*. Psellos' theory is based on different philosophical sources, including, first and foremost, Proclus' texts. The younger contemporary of Psellos, Georgian philosopher Ioane Petritsi, who was trained in Byzantine philosophical school and was well acquainted with ancient Greek philosophical tradition, also commented on Proclus and his theory of intellect. For Proclus, Psellos and Petritsi intellect is an important entity because it embraces Forms and is, therefore, a basis for all kinds of beings. The aim of this paper is to analyze Psellos' and Petritsi's theories of intellect and their interrelationship taking into consideration their dependence on the common philosophical sources, mainly Proclus' *Elements of theology*.

Keywords: intellect, soul, one, participation, being.

Introduction

Michael Psellos, as a Byzantine erudite, philosopher and specialist of Platonic tradition, had students and followers not only among Greeks or those intellectuals who wrote in Greek but there was at least one Georgian scholar who shared his interest in ancient Greek philosophy. This was Ioane Petritsi who lived either in the eleventh-twelfth centuries and was a student of John Italos, or one generation later, in the twelfth century, being in such a case an indirect follower of Psellos' philosophical tradition.² We do not know exactly

¹ *Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University, Georgia. Email: lelaalexidze@hotmail.com.*

² For a summary of different points of view on the period of Petritsi's life see L. Giginishvili, *The Platonic Theology of Ioane Petritsi*. (Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ, 2007), 12-19, and Ioane Petritsi, *Kommentar zur Elementatio theologica des Proklos*. Übersetzung aus dem Altgeorgischen, Anmerkungen, Indices und Einleitung von L. Alexidze, L. Bergemann. B. R. Grüner, (Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2009), 1-7.

when Petritsi lived though we are well aware that he knew Greek fluently and admired especially Greek philosophical language.³ According to Petritsi's own testimony in his so-called epilogue of the commentary on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*,⁴ he lived and worked among Greeks (evidently, in Constantinople) and then among Georgians.

As Petritsi says, he aimed to make adequate translations of philosophical texts from Greek into Georgian and elaborate Georgian philosophical terminology corresponding to Greek original. However, Petritsi claims that neither Greeks nor Georgians appreciated his work. Nevertheless, Petritsi, as he says, did his best, translating Greek philosophical texts as exactly as possible, introducing, as we guess from his translations, some innovative Georgian concepts in order to express adequately the sense of Greek philosophical terminology. He also wished to reflect the meaning of Greek philosophical concepts more adequately than – as he thought – had previously been done by any other Georgian translator.⁵ Obviously, Petritsi shared Psellos' interest in ancient Greek philosophy, i.e. first and foremost, in Proclus and along with Proclus, in Platonic tradition generally, including those texts which were acknowledged by Platonists as Platonic philosophy before and after Plato.⁶

According to later tradition (18th century), Petritsi translated a number of philosophical and theological texts.⁷ However, nowadays we can only be sure that he translated two texts and wrote an extant commentary on one of them. Other translations either did not survive or we cannot be certain that Petritsi was really their author. The remaining works, without any doubt, translated and commented by Petritsi, are: 1. Nemesios Emesa's *On the Nature of Man*,

³ Petritsi frequently uses Greek words and phrases. He respects Greek philosophical language and Greek terminology which is able to express adequately the sense of philosophical ideas. See in Ioane Petrizi, *Kommentar zur Elementatio theologica*, 3-5.

⁴ For Petritsi's text I use the following edition: იოანე პეტრიწის *შრომები*. ტომი II. *განმარტებაჲ პროკლეს დიადოხოსისა და პლატონურისა ფილოსოფიისათჳს*. ტექსტი გამოსცეს და გამოკვლევა დაურთეს შ. ნუცუბიძემ და ს. ყაუხჩიშვილმა. ტფილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის გამომცემლობა, ტფილისი 1937. This edition has also the title in Latin: Ioannis Petrizii *Opera*. Tomus II: *Commentaria in Procli Diadochi ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΣΙΝ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΝ*. Textum Hibericum ediderunt commentariisque instruxerunt S. Nutsubidse et S. Kauchtschischvili. Sumpibus Universitatis Tbilisiensis. (Tbilisi 1937) (*in Georgian*). Henceforth referred to as "Petritsi, II"+chapter (or: prologue, or: epilogue), page.

⁵ Petritsi, II, prologue, 6; ch. 50, 107; ch. 140, 171; epilogue, 220 – 223. See also L. Alexidze, "Ioane Petritsi", - in: *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Edited by S. Gersh. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014), 229.

⁶ See L. Gigineishvili, *The Platonic Theology*, 5-12. On Petritsi's ancient Greek philosophical sources see L. Alexidze, "Griechische Philosophie in den Kommentaren des Ioane Petrizi", - in: *Oriens Christianus* 81 (1997): 148-168.

⁷ L. Gigineishvili, *The Platonic Theology*, 20-23.

translated by Petritsi and supplied by some short scholia;⁸ 2. Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, translated by Petritsi;⁹ 3. Petritsi's commentary on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, supplied by Petritsi's prologue and epilogue. Thus, Petritsi's original (not translated) work is his commentary on all propositions of Proclus' *Elements*, together with his prologue and epilogue. As Proclus was the common source of interest and inspiration for both Psellos and Petritsi,¹⁰ it is interesting to know whether Petritsi's interpretation of philosophical issues depends on Psellos' works or directly on Proclus. The aim of this paper is to answer this question by analyzing one particular aspect of Neoplatonic philosophy: theory of intellect. We shall try to find out, whether Petritsi's understanding of intellect is a direct commentary on Proclus' treatise or his interpretation was mediated by Psellos' works on the same issue.¹¹ For this purpose, we analyze Psellos' texts concerning intellect from *De omnifaria doctrina*¹² and take into consideration also certain fragments from the small philosophical treatises (*Philosophica*

⁸ ნემესიოს ემესელი, *ბუნებისათვის კაცისა* ბერძნულიდან გადმოღებული იოვანე პეტრიწის მიერ. ქართული ტექსტი შეისწავლა, გამოსაცემად დაამზადა და ლექსიკონ-სადიეზლები დაურთო ს. რ. გორგაძემ. გამოცემა საეკლესიო მუზეუმისა 17. ტფილისი 1914 [Nemesios of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*. Translated from Greek into Georgian by Ioane Petritsi. Edited with indices by S. R. Gorgadze. Published by Ecclesiastical Museum. Tbilisi 1914 (in Georgian)]. Henceforth referred to as Nemesios, *On the Nature of Man*, geo+page.

⁹ იოანე პეტრიწის შრომები, ტომი I. *პროკლუ დიადოხოსისა პლატონურისა ფილოსოფიისა კავშირნი* ქართული ტექსტი გამოსცა და გამოკვლევა და ლექსიკონი დაურთო სიმ. ყაუხჩიშვილმა. შესავალი სტატია მ. გოგიბერიძისა. თსუ გამომცემლობა, თბილისი 1940. The book has the title also in Latin: Ioannis Petritzii *Opera*. Tomus I: *Proclis Diadochi* ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ. Versio Hiberica. Textum Hibericum edidit commentariisque instruxit S. Kauchtschischvili. (Tbilisiis 1940) (in Georgian). Henceforth referred to as: Petritsi, I, prop.+page.

¹⁰ On Proclus' works in Psellos see D. J. O'Meara, "Michael Psellos", - in: *Interpreting Proclus*, 165-181; F. Lauritzen, "The Renaissance of Proclus in Eleventh Century", - in: *Proclus and his Legacy*. Edited by D. Butorac, D. Layne. (De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, 2016), 233-239; F. Lauritzen, "A Lifetime with Proclus: Psellos as reader", - in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 113/1, 2020: 1. Abteilung. (De Gruyter, 2020), 69-80; F. Lauritzen, "An Orthodox and Byzantine Reception of the *Elements of Theology*", - in: *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes. Volume 2. Translations and Acculturations*. Edited by D. Calma. (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2021), 19-31; J. Robinson, "A Mixing Cup of Piety and Learnedness': Michael Psellos and Nicholas of Methone as Readers of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*", - in: *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes. Volume 2*, 56-93. On Proclus' works as sources of Petritsi's commentary see the bibliography in Ioane Petritsi, *Kommentar zur Elementatio theologica*, 411-418.

¹¹ On Petritsi's theory of intellect see T. Iremadze, *Konzeptionen des Denkens im Neuplatonismus. Zur Rezeption der Proklischen Philosophie im deutschen und georgischen Mittelalter*. Dietrich von Freiberg – Berthold von Moosburg – Joane Petritsi. B. R. Grüner, (Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2004), 220-241, and L. Gigineishvili, *The Platonic Theology*, 145-175.

¹² Michael Psellos, *De omnifaria Doctrina*. Critical text and introduction by L. G. Westerink. J. L. Beijers N.V., (Utrecht, 1948).

minora II),¹³ which concern intellect. For Petritsi, we shall concentrate on some fragments from his commentary on Proclus' *Elements*. We also pay attention to the relationship between Psellos' *Omnifaria doctrina* and *Philosophica minora*, Proclus' *Elements of Theology*,¹⁴ and Petritsi's commentary.

We shall start with *De Omnifaria doctrina* and analyze chapters 21-30 which directly concern intellect. We shall briefly expose Psellos' text chapter after chapter comparing them with corresponding propositions from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, and see whether Petritsi's interpretation of the same ideas is different or not. Thus, we shall try to find out how much the texts of Proclus, Psellos and Petritsi correspond to each other. Generally, the characteristic of intellect is quite an eclectic one in Psellos, it is a mixture of definitions from Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Porphyry, Nemesios, and Proclus, that's why it is difficult to resume his own point of view.

1. Chapters on intellect from Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina* compared with Petritsi's commentaries on Proclus' *Elements*

In *De omnifaria doctrina*, chapters 21-30, which are mostly based on Proclus' *Elements of theology*, Psellos defines intellect as immortal, indivisible, and incorporeal substance. He analyzes intellect's types, claims that the first unparticipated intellect is superior to any being, and calls it 'demiurge of everything'. Psellos also discusses the relationship between intellect and soul; he characterizes intellect's mode of thinking demonstrating its difference from soul's method of cognition. Further Psellos speaks about the relationship between substance, activity, and potency in intellect comparing it with that which characterizes soul.

Now we shall discuss more in detail, chapter after chapter, Psellos' point of view on intellect, comparing it with Proclus' *Elements*, and Petritsi's commentaries on Proclus' propositions.¹⁵

Chapter 21

In this chapter, Psellos claims that not all intellects are participated by all souls. The first intellect transcends all beings, and it is the demiurge of

¹³ Michael Psellos, *Philosophica minora*, vol. II. Edited D. J. O'Meara. (B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig, 1989).

¹⁴ Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*. A revised text with translation, introduction and commentary by E. R. Dodds. 2nd ed. (At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963).

¹⁵ In Westerink's edition of *De omnifaria doctrina* the editor indicated in notes Psellos' possible sources, among them numbers of propositions from Proclus' *Elements of theology*. This is a great help for me and anyone in the process of working on these issues.

everything, that is why it cannot be participated by any soul.¹⁶ Thus, it is the unparticipated intellect. It is followed by the participated intellect, though the latter is not the cosmic intellect but the hypercosmic one, followed on its own turn, by the cosmic intellect. As Psellos says, according to Greek theories, the cosmos is ensouled and provided by intellect.¹⁷ Correspondingly, the cosmic soul participates in the hypercosmic intellect not immediately but by means of the cosmic intellect. Then Psellos sums up the hierarchy of intellects and souls as follows: the unparticipated intellect, the participated one, the cosmic one, the hypercosmic soul, and the cosmic one.¹⁸

Comparing Psellos' theory with Petritsi's model of the hierarchy of various kinds of intellects and souls, we can see a slight difference. According to Petritsi, first (1) is the unparticipated intellect and it is the true Being.¹⁹ As for Psellos, as far as I see, he does not call the first, unparticipated intellect 'the true Being'; correspondingly, he says that the first intellect transcends all beings.²⁰ After the unparticipated intellect, according to Petritsi, (2) there is the participated one that is twofold: (a) the intellect participated by the universal soul which is incorporeal; (b) the intellect participated by embodied souls.²¹ In the last fragment a little difference from Psellos' text is again evident: while Psellos mentions the cosmic soul, Petritsi speaks of any kind of embodied souls, meaning among

¹⁶ Psellos puts it in a form of a question: ὁ γὰρ ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ὄντα νοῦς καὶ πάντων δημιουργὸς πῶς ἂν ὑπὸ ψυχῆς μετασχεθεῖ τινός; Psell. omn. 21, 26, 2-3 Westerink.

¹⁷ ἐπεὶ κατὰ τοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων λόγους καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ κόσμος ἔμφυχος ἅμα καὶ ἔννοος ἐστὶ. Psell. omn. 21, 26, 8-10 Westerink.

¹⁸ Psell. omn. 21, 26, 1-13 Westerink. Corresponds to Procl. ET, prop. 166, 144.9-21 Dodds. Westerink pointed to the similarity of Psellos' text to prop. 166 of Proclus' *Elements*. (Psellos, *Omn.*, 26 Westerink). However, this chapter of Psellos' *Omnifaria* is not as similar to fragments from Proclus' *Elements* as some other chapters of Psellos' same treatise.

¹⁹ Petritsi, II, ch. 166, 185, 1-2: "ესე ხედვად ესთა მეტყვს ჩუენ, ვითარმედ სამ სახედ გაყოფვის გონება: უზიარებელად, ვითარ იგი არს ნამდვლ მყოფი, რამეთუ უზიარებელ არს ვითარ პირველი გონებად და პირველი მყოფი." ("This thesis tells us that intellect is divided in three kinds: unparticipated one, such as the true Being, because it is unparticipated as the first intellect and the first being"). On the true Being as the first intellect in Petritsi see L. Alexidze, *The Demiurge in Ioane Petritsi's Commentary on Proclus' Elements of Theology*, - in: *Revista Latinoamericana de Filosofia*. Centro de Investigaciones Filosóficas. (Buenos Aires. Argentina. Vol. 47, N1. Otoño 2021), 149-165. See also ლ. ალექსიძე, "მიქაელ ფსელოსი, მრავალფეროვანი მეცნიერება: ფრაგმენტები გონების შესახებ. ბერძნულიდან თარგმანი, შენიშვნები და ბოლოსიტყვა. რელიგია, 1-2-3, თბილისი, 2004, გვ. 33 [L. Alexidze, "Michael Psellos, De omnifaria doctrina: Die Fragmente über den Geist. Georgische Übersetzung mit Anmerkungen und Nachwort", - in: *Religia*, 1-2-3, (Tbilisi, 2004), 33 (in Georgian, title and summary in German)].

²⁰ ὁ γὰρ ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ὄντα νοῦς. (Psell. omn. 21, 26, 2 Westerink).

²¹ Petritsi, II, ch. 166, 185, 1-6. Petritsi mentions the threefold classification of the intellects again in chapter 184. As he says, intellect can be either divine, or just a pure intellect, or an intellectual being. Petritsi, II, ch. 184, 193, 24-26.

them, as we can suppose, the whole cosmic soul, too. Petritsi mentions the threefold classification of intellects again in chapter 184. As he says, intellect can be either divine, or a pure intellect, or an intellectual being.²² We know that the true Being is the divine intellect for Petritsi. The problem for the reader of Petritsi's commentary is what kind of intellect the demiurge is. In what follows, we shall try to answer this question.

Now, as we have seen a difference between Psellos' and Petritsi's interpretations of the first intellect regarding the question whether the first unparticipated intellect is being or not, we can make a conclusion, whether Petritsi with his definition of the first unparticipated intellect followed directly Proclus or rather Psellos' opinion. The answer is in favour of direct dependence on Proclus, because, according to Proclus, the true Being "is a divine Intelligible, and unparticipated".²³ Moreover, "it fills by itself the Intellect, and the Intellect too is a being, as far as it is filled with the being."²⁴ As for Petritsi, he claims that the true Being precedes all other subsequent intellects.²⁵ Unlike Proclus and Petritsi, Psellos places the realm of being not above intellect or in intellect, but after it. As he claims, while the first intellect is "above all beings and is the demiurge of everything, how can it be participated by any soul?"²⁶ Thus, Psellos identifies the first unparticipated intellect with the demiurge of everything.²⁷ This can mean that in Psellos' interpretation 'the demiurge' has a function of the supreme God – the creator of all, and that it/he transcends any kind of being.

Therefore, we can conclude that commenting on prop. 161 and 166 of Proclus' *Elements* and generally, on his theory of intellect-being relationship, Petritsi follows directly Proclus and not Psellos' interpretation. Both in Proclus and Petritsi, Being precedes intellect and 'fills' it with itself, being an object of intellection for the intellect,²⁸ while in Psellos it is the first unparticipated intellect that is prior to any being. Nevertheless, the relationship between Psellos' and Petritsi's interpretations is not as easy as it seems from the first sight, because both of them share one common tendency: Petritsi too identifies (though not always and not very clearly) the demiurge with the supreme One or with the creator of everything, including the incorporeal world, thus, elevating

²² Petritsi, II, ch. 184, 193.

²³ Procl. ET 161, 140, 14-15 Dodds. Transl. by Dodds, 141. In some cases, using Dodds' translation of Proclus' *Elements*, I make a slight modification, mainly for one reason: for Greek νοῦς I use consequently 'intellect', and for οὐσία 'substance'.

²⁴ Procl. ET 161, 140, 17-18. Transl. by Dodds, 141, slightly modified.

²⁵ Petritsi, II, ch. 161, 182, 1-2.

²⁶ Psell. omn. 21, 26, 3-4 Westerink, quoted above in Greek.

²⁷ On Plato's theory of demiurge and ideas see Psell. Phil. Min. 2.33, 34, 111-117 O'Meara. We shall not analyze these texts in this paper.

²⁸ See also Petritsi's translation of prop. 161 and 166 in Petritsi, I, 96-97 and 99-100.

him, like Psellos, above the realm of beings. The demiurge in Petritsi's commentary is a craftsman, god, who forms the visible world, although in some cases he is almost (i.e. quite vaguely and not clearly) identified with the supreme One.²⁹ Or, to put it more precisely, it is the supreme One which becomes in rare cases the features of a personal god and demiurge. However, on the other hand, in the ontological hierarchy exposed by Petritsi, the true Being (i.e. the first being, the father of intellects, the totality of intellects) plays a crucial role as the prime principle of all kinds of beings and forms, i.e. of everything except formless matter. Obviously, the true Being is much more important to Petritsi than the demiurge, as he mentions the former regularly. The true Being is for Petritsi the '*paradeigma*' of Plato's *Timaeus*, i.e. it is the supreme intelligible intellect, while the demiurge, as we guess, plays a role of an intellectual intellect. Thus, in Petritsi's commentary, on the one hand, the features of the supreme One and the demiurge as producers of the whole universe are in certain cases virtually identical,³⁰ though on the other hand, the demiurge represents a lower level of intellect than the true Being and in many cases, he is absent where a reader of Petritsi's commentary, following the context, expects his presence. Anyway, whatever might be the role and character of Plato's demiurge in Petritsi's philosophy, it cannot be compared with the immense importance and much more definite characteristic that the true Being (i.e. the paradigm of cosmos in *Timaeus*) has in Petritsi's ontological system.

As an illustration of Petritsi's point of view on the true Being and intellect, we point to certain passages from his commentary on Proclus' *Elements*. The true Being is, according to Petritsi, the summit of intellects. As Petritsi says, the first intellect, which is the first cosmos and the first composed thing, is the true Being. It is a kind of a monad of all intellects and all those entities which possess form and figure. Each realm of intellects is a part of this first intellect.

²⁹ See L. Alexidze, "The Supreme One: Its Transcendence and Its 'Kataphatic' Characteristics in Ioane Petritsi's Philosophy", - in: *Bochumer philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*. Band 20, 2017. Herausgegeben von M. Baumbach, O. Pluta. (John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia), 83-84.

³⁰ In the so-called epilogue Petritsi says that God the begetter made harmony and order on all levels of begotten beings through the mediation of the primordial images which he holds in his intellect, and brought the forms down to matter, searching for production of diversity from one and the same (i.e. not differentiated) matter. (Petritsi, II, epilogue, 217). In this fragment Petritsi speaks about the supreme One – the principle of everything, God - and his characteristics are similar to that of the demiurge. As for the true Being, we can suppose that the totality of 'primordial images' can be identified with it. Thus, these images, in a way, are God's thoughts. Here we have a quite Christianized version of (neo)platonian theory of creation of the universe which is typical of Petritsi's so-called epilogue, where he tries to demonstrate the compatibility of (neo)platonian One with Christian Trinity, though atypical of his prologue and commentary. (L. Alexidze, "Ioane Petritsi", - in: *Interpreting Proclus*, 235)

The first intellect is like a god and seer of everything that it has produced. The first pure intellect is the image of the One and, at the same time, is the monad of intellects. As an entity which contains parts, the first intellect is not one, though as the monad of intellects it is one and the image of the One.³¹ Petritsi characterizes the first true Being as the universal intellect, and says that it is produced by the divine henads, and “the great Greek theologians called it the ‘sky of the intellects’ and ‘intelligible altar’”.³² Again, the true Being is called by Petritsi “the sky of intellects and souls”.³³ Moreover, Petritsi claims that the true Being is the principle of everything (here, taking into consideration other parts of Petritsi’s commentary, we can add that by ‘everything’ he does not mean prime matter, but everything that has form),³⁴ including the physical cosmos – ‘sky’.³⁵ Thus, Petritsi characterizes the true Being as the principle of all intellects, as an unparticipated intellect and the ‘sky of intellects’. He claims that the true Being is produced by henads and is divine. All other intermediate intellects produced by the true Being are also called ‘intellects’ up to the intellectual intellect. Therefore, according to Petritsi, the intelligible intellect is the true Being, and all other subsequent intellects are intellectuals. The last ones are filled with the light of the true Being.³⁶ In some cases, Petritsi even claims that the true Being is superior to intellect.³⁷ He probably means that it is superior to other kinds of intellects, not the first, i.e. unparticipated one. Hence, in chapter 101 Petritsi distinguishes the first Being from intellect. As he says, the first Being is the true Being, it is the image of the supreme One, thereafter comes life and then intellect.³⁸

Chapter 22

In this chapter, Psellos discusses the activity of intellect i.e. the act of intellection. The chapter repeats almost exactly but fragmentarily prop. 167 of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*. In chapter 22 of *De omnifaria doctrina* Psellos claims that every intellect thinks itself. However, the first and unparticipated intellect thinks only itself, because there is nothing before it that it could think, nor does it think anything that which is consequent upon it because it possesses

³¹ Petritsi, II, ch. 2, 21.

³² და ცად გონებათად და გონებითად საკურთხეველადცა უწოდეს დიდთა და ღმრთისმეტყუელთა ბრძენთა. Petritsi II, ch. 130, 166, 22-23. The true Being is called by Petritsi “the sky of the intellects” also in chapter 24, Petritsi, II, ch. 24, 67, 23-24.

³³ დადვეს იგი ვითარმედ ცად გონებათა და სულთად. Petritsi, II, ch. 136, 169, 20.

³⁴ Petritsi, II, ch. 11, 42-43.

³⁵ Petritsi, II, ch. 140, 171, 17.

³⁶ Petritsi, II, ch. 181, 192.

³⁷ Petritsi, II, ch. 128, 165, 1.

³⁸ Petritsi, II, ch. 101, 148, 1-14.

the knowledge of the lower entities as a kind of a non-intellection that is better than intellection. Thus, in such a case, this kind of intellect is simultaneously intellect and the intelligible: it is intellect because it thinks itself, and it is the intelligible because it is thought by itself.³⁹

Further, Psellos explains that the participated intellect, which follows the unparticipated intellect, knows itself and at the same time it knows the prior intellect.⁴⁰ As Psellos claims, every intellect knows either itself or that which is above or that which is consequent upon it.⁴¹ If it knows that which is consequent upon it, it will turn down toward the inferior;⁴² if it knows that which is above it, then, if it knows it through knowing itself, it will have simultaneous knowledge of itself and that what is superior; if it knows only the higher, then it will be an intellect ignorant of itself;⁴³ but if it knows its prior, it will know itself also.⁴⁴ Then Psellos sums up:

³⁹ Πᾶς νοῦς ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ. ἀλλ'ὃ μὲν πρῶτος νοῦς καὶ ἀμέθεκτος ἑαυτὸν μόνον· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔχει τι πρὸ ἑαυτοῦ, ἵνα ἐκεῖνο νοήσῃ, τὰ δὲ μετ'αὐτὸν οὐκ ἂν νοήσειεν, ἀλλ'ἔχει τούτων τὴν νόησιν ἀνοησίᾳ κρείττονι νοήσεως. καὶ ἔστιν ὁ τοιοῦτος νοῦς νοῦς ἅμα καὶ νοητὸν· νοῦς μὲν ὡς νοῶν ἑαυτὸν, νοητὸν δὲ ὡς νοοῦμενον ὑφ'ἑαυτοῦ. Psell. omn. 22, 26, 1-6 Westerink. The first phrase exactly repeats the very beginning of Proclus' prop. 167: Πᾶς νοῦς ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ, (Procl. ET 167, 144, 22 Dodds). The second phrase of Psellos' text corresponds almost exactly to Proclus' same proposition: ἀλλ'ὃ μὲν πρῶτος ἑαυτὸν μόνον. Procl. ET 167, 144, 22-23 Dodds. The phrase ἀνοησίᾳ κρείττονι νοήσεως in Psell. omn. 22, 26, 4 is the same as in Porph. sent. 25, 15, 2 Lambergz (see note by Westerink in Psellos, *Omn.*, 26).

⁴⁰ ὃ δὲ μετὰ τὸν ἀμέθεκτον μεθεκτός νοῦς ἑαυτὸν τε ἅμα νοεῖ καὶ τὸν πρὸ αὐτοῦ νοῦν. Psell. omn. 22, 26, 6 – 27, 1 Westerink. This phrase repeats almost exactly Proclus' thesis from the *Elements of Theology*, prop. 167, 144, 23-24 Dodds: ἕκαστος δὲ τῶν ἐφεξῆς ἑαυτὸν ἅμα καὶ τὰ πρὸ αὐτοῦ. (“whereas each subsequent intellect [i.e. each intellect which follows the primal intellect – L.A.] knows simultaneously itself and its priors”, transl. by Dodds, 145, modified).

⁴¹ πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς ἢ ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ ἢ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑαυτὸν ἢ τὸ μεθ'ἑαυτὸν. Psell. omn. 22, 27, 2. It is almost the same as in Proclus: ἢ γὰρ ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ πᾶς νοῦς ἢ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑαυτὸν ἢ τὸ μεθ'ἑαυτὸν. (Procl. ET 167, 144, 26-27 Dodds). “For any intellect must know either itself or that which is above it or that which is consequent upon it”, transl. by Dodds (p. 145), slightly modified.

⁴² ἀλλ'εἰ μὲν τὸ μεθ'ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ, κατὰ τὸ χεῖρον ἐπιστρέφει. Psell. omn. 22, 27, 8-9 Westerink. Again, Psellos repeats almost exactly Proclus' thesis from prop. 167: ἀλλ'εἰ μὲν τὸ μεθ'ἑαυτὸν, πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον ἐπιστρέφει. (Procl. ET 167, 144, 28 Dodds).

⁴³ εἰ δὲ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ, εἰ μὲν διὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γνώσεως, ἑαυτὸν ἅμα κάκεινο γνώσεται· εἰ δὲ ἐκεῖνο μόνον, ἑαυτὸν ἀγνοήσει νοῦς ὢν. (Psell. omn. 22, 27, 9-11 Westerink). After having quoted from *Elements* (prop. 167, 144, 28 Dodds), Psellos omitted some passages from Proclus' text (the fragment which is not reproduced in Psellos' treatise corresponds to Procl. ET 167, 144, 28-32 Dodds) and then repeated almost exactly, as we can see, the following text by Proclus: εἰ δὲ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτὸν, εἰ μὲν διὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γνώσεως, ἑαυτὸν ἅμα κάκεινο γνώσεται· εἰ δὲ ἐκεῖνο μόνον, ἑαυτὸν ἀγνοήσει νοῦς ὢν. (Procl. ET 167, 146, 1-3 Dodds).

⁴⁴ ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸ ἑαυτοῦ γινώσκων γνώσεται καὶ ἑαυτὸν. Psell. omn. 22, 27, 11-12 Westerink. Here Psellos skipped over Procl. ET 167, 146, 3-7 Dodds, and repeated almost exactly the following passage from the same proposition of Proclus' *Elements*: πάντως ἄρα τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ γινώσκων γνώσεται καὶ ἑαυτὸν. (Procl. ET 167, 146, 7-8 Dodds).

“There is thus an intelligible in the intellect and an intellect in the intelligible, and one is more universal and another is more partial.”⁴⁵

Thus, in chapter 22 of *De omnifaria doctrina* Psellos repeats almost exactly some fragments from prop. 167 of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*. As for Petritsi, the accents he makes in his commentary on the same proposition, seem to be slightly different from those of Psellos. Petritsi analyzes the kinds of intellect in the context of *ousia-dynamis-energeia* dialectic. He claims that every intellect acts in a threefold manner: (1) it can be equal to itself, i.e. it is a pure intellect, because its activity is identical with its substance; (2) it knows also that which is consequent upon it, and has, therefore, an activity which is weaker than its own substance; and,

(3) “it thinks its own causes, and it possesses the intellection that is better than itself, because it becomes a member of its own *noetoi*⁴⁶, i.e. of the intelligibles, and thinks, therefore, also its own self better, and it is the intellect and the intelligible, because all intelligibles are better than intellectual[s]”.⁴⁷

Further, Petritsi explains again that every intelligible is better than the intellectual, and knowledge of principles and causes is, at the same time, a better knowledge of self and of that which is consequent upon it. Thus, knowledge of causes is a better knowledge of self. Hence, knowledge is twofold: (a) knowledge of the cause as of that which is better than self, and (b) knowledge of self in the cause (i.e. by means of the knowledge of the cause) as its producer.⁴⁸ Generally, Petritsi frequently discusses the activity of intellects. As he claims, all intellects act in a twofold manner: on the one hand, they see those entities which precede

⁴⁵ ἔστιν ἄρα καὶ ἐν τῷ νῷ νοητὸν καὶ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ νοῦς, καὶ ὁ μὲν ὀλικώτερος, ὁ δὲ μερικώτερος. (Psell. omn. 22, 27, 12-13 Westerink). After the last quotation from Procl. ET 167, 7-8 Dodds, Psellos omitted few lines (p. 146, 9-11 Dodds), and then repeated exactly the following thesis from Proclus: ἔστιν ἄρα καὶ ἐν τῷ νῷ νοητὸν καὶ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ νοῦς (Procl. ET 167, 146, 11-12 Dodds). As for the last additional text in Psellos (καὶ ὁ μὲν ὀλικώτερος, ὁ δὲ μερικώτερος, Psell. omn. 22, 27, 13 Westerink), it is a brief resumé of Procl. ET 167, 146, 9-11, and 12-15 Dodds: “If, then, there is an intelligible Intellect, in knowing itself, being intelligible, it knows the intelligible which is its own being; whilst each subsequent intellect knows simultaneously the intelligible which is its own content and the prior intelligible. [...] but the higher Intellect is identical with its object, whereas the lower is identical with its own content but not with the prior Intelligible – for the unconditioned Intelligible (τὸ ἀπλῶς νοητὸν) is distinct from the intelligible in the knower.” Transl. By Dodds, 147, slightly modified. Psellos, apparently, means with ὁ μὲν ὀλικώτερος the intelligible intellect, and with ὁ δὲ μερικώτερος the intelligible in that intellect which is intellectual/knower. This distinction of ὁ μὲν ὀλικώτερος, ὁ δὲ μερικώτερος can correspond also to the previous division of kinds of intellect, described by Psellos in the same chapter: an unparticipated intellect and participated one.

⁴⁶ Petritsi uses here the Greek word in Georgian transliteration. Petritsi, II, ch. 167, 185, 22.

⁴⁷ Petritsi, II, ch. 167, 185, 20-24.

⁴⁸ Petritsi, II, ch. 167, 185, 24-31.

them and, on the other, take care (i.e. exercise their providential activity) on those that are inferior.⁴⁹

To my mind, both Psellos and Petritsi follow Proclus, though the accents are slightly different, and obviously Petritsi's commentary on prop. 167 is not based on chapter 22 of Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina*.

Chapter 23

In this chapter Psellos analyzes substance, activity and potency of intellect: they are eternal.⁵⁰ The substance of intellect is a simultaneous whole,⁵¹ it does not grow up or change in time.⁵² The intellection of intellect is similar to its substance, it is absolutely complete and whole. Intellect thinks everything at once, its mode of thinking is neither in past, nor in future, but in the eternal present. Intellect does not change or move, nor does it require premises and conclusions, unlike soul, because it knows everything at once.⁵³ Further, Psellos characterizes intellect making a paraphrase from the last part of Proclus' prop. 169 and concludes that intellect is unmoved so that it cannot be measured by time in respect either of its substance or its activity. And if its substance and activity are both eternal, then also potency which is between them, has an eternal existence.⁵⁴

Interestingly, in prop. 169 Proclus does not discuss the differences between intellect's and soul's mode of cognition. For Petritsi, the difference between intellect's and soul's mode of cognition is a major issue of Proclus' philosophy, though in

⁴⁹ Petritsi, II, ch. 135, 169, 3-7.

⁵⁰ πᾶς νοῦς καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αἰώνια ἔχει. Psell. omn. 23, 27, 2-3 Westerink. This is an almost exact quotation from Proclus: πᾶς νοῦς ἐν αἰῶνι τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχει καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν. (Procl. ET 169, 146, 24-25 Dodds) "Every intellect has its substance, potency and activity in eternity", transl. by Dodds, 147, modified.

⁵¹ ὅλη γὰρ ἅμα ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία τοῦ νοῦ. Psell. omn. 23, 27, 3 Westerink. Psellos paraphrases here the passage from the middle part of Proclus' prop. 169: ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅτι ἡ οὐσία τοῦ νοῦ αἰώνιος, <δῆλον> ὅλη γὰρ ἅμα ἐστὶ. (Procl. ET 169, 146, 29-30 Dodds) "Now it is plain that the substance of intellect is eternal, since it is a simultaneous whole." Transl. by Dodds, 147, modified. Cf. Πᾶν τὸ αἰώνιον ὅλον ἅμα ἐστὶν. (Procl. ET 52, 50, 7) "All that is eternal is a simultaneous whole", transl. by Dodds, 51.

⁵² Psell. omn. 23, 27, 3-4 Westerink.

⁵³ Psell. omn. 23, 27, 4-9 Westerink. Cf. Porph. sent. 44, 57-59 Lamberg; Petritsi, II, prologue, 6-9. See also L. Alexidze, "Dianoia in Ioane Petritsi's commentary on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*", - in: *Chôra. Revue d'études anciennes et médiévales. Philosophie, théologie, sciences.* 14/2016, (Polirom 2016), 177-194.

⁵⁴ ἀκίνητος γὰρ ὧν οὐκ ἂν ὑπὸ χρόνου μετροῖτο, οὔτε κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν οὔτε κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν. εἰ οὖν καὶ ἡ οὐσία τούτου αἰώνιος καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια, καὶ ἡ μέση τούτων οὔσα δύναμις αἰώνιαν τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἐκληρώσατο. (Psell. omn. 23, 27, 9-12 Westerink). Cf. εἰ γὰρ ἀκίνητος ὁ νοῦς, οὐκ ἂν ὑπὸ χρόνου μετροῖτο οὔτε κατὰ τὸ εἶναι οὔτε κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν. τούτων δὲ ὡσαύτως ἐχόντων, καὶ ἡ δύναμις αἰώνιος. (Procl. ET 169, 148, 1-3 Dodds) "for if intellect is unmoved, it cannot be measured by time in respect either of its being or of its activity. And if the substance and the activity of intellect are invariable, so likewise is its potency". Transl. by Dodds, 149, slightly modified.

the commentary on prop. 169 he discusses this theme quite briefly, unlike other parts of his work, as, for example, in chapter 170 of the commentary, in which he again analyzes this issue.⁵⁵ In the commentary on prop. 169 Petritsi concentrates mainly on the art of intellect's thinking. Like Proclus and Psellos, he claims that intellect's substance, potency, and activity are fixed in an unmoved condition in eternity, since everything that is as a whole in eternity, is unmoved. Neither intellect's potency nor its activity grows up or becomes less, but is stable in its identity. Intellect acts toward itself and looks toward itself because it possesses the object of intellection in itself. Thus, thinking its own self, intellect thinks everything, and that is the object of its intellection – the intelligible. Therefore, in case of intellect the intelligible and the intellectual, i.e. the knower are the same: the intelligible is the intellectual and, vice versa, the intellectual is the intelligible, while the activity of intellect is intermediate between them.⁵⁶ In the last part of the commentary on prop. 169, Petritsi briefly characterizes the mode of soul's thinking too. As he claims, when Proclus mentions three aspects of intellection: the intellectual, the intelligible, and intellect⁵⁷ between them, we should mean the mode of soul's thinking, which is three partial, while intellect is simultaneously the intellectual and the intelligible, and it does not multiply, unlike soul's mode of cognition, which consists of three parts.⁵⁸

Petritsi's commentary on prop. 169 of Proclus' *Elements of theology* does not contradict to Psellos' interpretation of the same proposition as it is exposed in chapter 23 of *De omnifaria doctrina*, though the accents in these two interpretations are different. In this case, too, Petritsi's commentary could be directly influenced by Proclus' works.

Chapter 24

This chapter is, as Westerink's notes testify, a combination of paraphrases from Proclus' *Elements of theology*, prop. 171 and 172.⁵⁹ According to Psellos, every intellect is an indivisible substance. It has no magnitude, is not a body, does not move at all and is therefore indivisible. For whatever is divisible is divided either as a manifold or as a magnitude.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Petritsi, II, ch. 170, 187, 4-10, 13-15.

⁵⁶ Petritsi, II, ch. 169, 186, 13-24.

⁵⁷ I suppose, Petritsi means here rather the act of intellection. Sometimes 'intellect' (νοῦς) corresponds to νοῦς) and 'act of intellection' (νοεῖν) corresponds to νοεῖν) are used synonymously by Petritsi.

⁵⁸ Petritsi, II, ch. 169, 186, 25-30.

⁵⁹ Westerink in Psellos, *Omn.*, 27.

⁶⁰ Πᾶς νοῦς οὐσία ἐστὶν ἀμέριστος. τὸ γὰρ μὴ ἔχον μέγεθος, τὸ μὴ ὄν σῶμα, τὸ μὴ κινούμενον πάντως καὶ ἀμέριστον· πᾶν γὰρ τὸ μέριζομενον ἢ κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος μερίζεται ἢ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος. (Psell. omn.)

Proclus' and Psellus' theses correspond to Petritsi's commentary on the same proposition 171 of Proclus' *Elements*:

"That what is absolutely without magnitude and movement, is indivisible, because everything divisible is such as a manifold, like number, or as a magnitude".⁶¹

Further, Psellos explains, why intellect is indivisible and incorporeal. He paraphrases the next part of Proclus' *Elements*, prop. 171. As Psellos claims, if intellect is in all respects eternal and if it transcends bodies, then it is certainly indivisible. But why is intellect incorporeal? Because it thinks itself⁶² and reverts upon itself, while the body does not think itself.⁶³ But what makes it evident that intellect is eternal? Psellos asserts that intellect's mode of thinking is not divisible, but it remains in the sameness, like its substance.⁶⁴

This part of Psellos' text corresponds to chapters 169 and 170 of Petritsi's commentary on Proclus' *Elements of theology*.⁶⁵ Then Psellos analyzes the constitutive power of intellect. This part of chapter 24 seems to be more 'independent' from Proclus' text than the chapters we discussed above. Psellos asserts that not

24, 27, 2-4 Westerink). This is a paraphrase of the first part of prop. 171: Πᾶς νοῦς ἀμέριστός ἐστιν οὐσία. εἰ γὰρ ἀμεγέθης καὶ ἀσώματος καὶ ἀκίνητος, ἀμέριστός ἐστιν. πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ὅπως οὐ μεριστὸν ἢ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἢ κατὰ μέγεθος ἢ κατὰ τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐστὶ μεριστὸν ἐν χρόνῳ φερομένης. (Procl. ET 171, 150, 1-4 Dodds). "every intellect is an indivisible substance. For if it be without magnitude, body or movement, it is indivisible. For whatever is in any sense divisible is so either as a manifold or as a magnitude or else in respect of the temporal course of its activities". Transl. by Dodds, 151, slightly modified.

⁶¹ ხოლო ყოვლითურთ უდიდოდ და მიუდრეკელი განუწვალებელ. რამეთუ ყოველი განწვალებადი ანუ სიმრავლითა არს ვითარ რიცხვ, ანუ სიდიდითა. Petritsi, II, 187, 25-27, ch. 171.

⁶² Cf. Πᾶς νοῦς ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ (Procl. ET 167, 144, 22), repeated by Psellos in *Omn.*, ch. 22, 26, 2 Westerink (quoted above).

⁶³ Cf. Procl. ET 169, 146, 26; prop. 186, 162, 17 Dodds, and Petritsi: "But what is the reversion upon itself? It means knowledge of one's own substance and self." (ხოლო თუ რა არს უკუნეცევათ თვსდადვე? ესე იგი არს ცნობად თვთ თვსისა არსებისა და თვთებისა). Petritsi II, ch. 186, 194, 21-22. Cf. Procl. in Tim. 2.286, 287 Diehl.

⁶⁴ εἰ δὲ ὁ νοῦς κατὰ πάντα αἰώνιος καὶ ἐπέκεινα σωμάτων, ἀμέριστος ἄρα ἐστὶ πόθεν δέ, ὅτι ἀσώματος ὁ νοῦς; ὅτι ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστρέφει, σῶμα γὰρ ἑαυτὸ οὐδὲν νοεῖ. πόθεν δὲ δῆλον, ὅτι αἰώνιος; ὅτι οὐ μερίζεται ἢ νόησις αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐν ταυτότητι ἐστὶ διηκεῖ, ὡσπερ ἡ οὐσία. (Psell. omn. 24, 27, 4-8 Westerink). This fragment corresponds to Procl. ET 171, 150, 5-9 Dodds: ὁ δὲ νοῦς κατὰ πάντα αἰώνιος, καὶ ἐπέκεινα σωμάτων, καὶ ἦνται τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ πλῆθος. ἀμέριστος ἄρα ἐστίν. ὅτι δὲ ἀσώματος ὁ νοῦς, ἢ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστροφῆ διηλοῖ τῶν γὰρ σωμάτων οὐδὲν πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἐπιστρέφεται. ὅτι δὲ αἰώνιος, ἢ τῆς ἐνεργείας πρὸς τὴν οὐσίαν ταυτότης. ("but intellect is in all respects eternal, it transcends bodies, and its manifold content is unified: therefore intellect is indivisible. That intellect is incorporeal is shown by its reversion upon itself; for bodies are incapable of such reversion. That it is eternal is shown by the identity of its activity with its substance." Transl. by Dodds, 151, slightly modified).

⁶⁵ Petritsi, II, ch. 169-170, 186-187.

every intellect is constitutive (ὑποστάτης) of everything but only the unparticipated and demiurgic one.⁶⁶ It produces directly eternal and unchangeable beings, and then those that are changeable and exist in time.⁶⁷ But it is not so, as Psellos explains, that it produces primarily the first ones and thereafter the others, but it does everything at once⁶⁸. As for produced beings, they come forth according to their own order and character: some of them according to the intellectual character, some according to the psychical intermediate position, while others according to the physical movement.⁶⁹

Thus, Psellos' chapter 24 of *De omnifaria doctrina* is mainly based on Proclus' *Elements of theology*, prop. 171 and 172, including also a passage which might be Psellos' own text, independent from Proclus' *Elements*. As for Petritsi, chapters 169-171 of his commentary correspond to Psellos' theses concerning the reversion of intellect upon itself, the identity of intellect's substance, potency, and activity, and their eternal character. As for chapter 172 of Petritsi's commentary on Proclus' *Elements*, here Petritsi claims that intellect, being unmoved and eternal in respect of its substance and activity, produces those beings which are unperishable and immortal in respect of their substances, while moved causes produce that which is moved.⁷⁰

Chapter 25

As Psellos claims, the participated intellect which follows the unparticipated one contains intellectually the prior (i.e. the unparticipated) intellect and also possesses the intellectual image of all its consequents. Thus, it possesses the priors and the consequents according to the measure of its own substance. Therefore, it thinks the unparticipated intellect intellectually,⁷¹ and it knows soul and physical forms also intellectually. Hence, it does not think the objects of its thought as they are by themselves, but it knows both the superiors and inferiors intellectually. Therefore, it does not change together with the objects

⁶⁶ I cannot say, whether Psellos sees a difference between paternal and demiurgic (i.e. formal) cause as Proclus does in prop. 157, where he defines the function of the paternal cause as that to bestow being as existence, while the function of the demiurgic cause is to create forms. It is possible that Psellos identified in some cases the demiurgic cause even with the supreme principle of everything, like as Petritsi did it, though quite vaguely and not very explicitly. And is the 'unparticipated intellect' the 'demiurgic' one?

⁶⁷ Thus, this intellect produces not only incorporeals but corporeal beings too.

⁶⁸ ἐν μιᾷ ῥοπῇ σύμπαντα (Psell. omn. 24, 27, 12 Westerink) "everything by a single inclination".

⁶⁹ The second part of this chapter only partially corresponds to prop. 172 of Proclus' *Elements*.

⁷⁰ Petritsi, II, ch. 172, 188, 11-16.

⁷¹ Here Psellos explains interestingly the 'kataphatic' aspect of unparticipated intellect: εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀμέθεκτος, ἀλλ' ἐμφράσεις τινὰς δίδωσι τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν τῆς ἰδίας ὑπάρξεως (Psell. omn. 25, 28, 6-7 Westerink) "then though it is unparticipated, it transmits certain images of its own being to its consequents".

of its thought, because it cannot change toward the better one, and it does not want to change toward the worse. Thus, it thinks according to its own nature the priors as well as the consequents. Then it does not possess themselves but their causes.⁷² And it has intellectually those which are intelligible and intellectually those which are sensible.^{73,74}

In general, chapter 25 does not reproduce Proclus' text from his *Elements of theology* as exactly as for example chapter 22 of Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina* corresponds to prop. 167 of Proclus' *Elements*.

What about Petritsi? I suppose he would agree with Psellos though he would avoid using words like "does not want" (i.e. the participated intellect "cannot change toward that which is better, and does not want [to change] toward that which is worse")⁷⁵: for Petritsi, it is rather an ontological necessity than the wish, not to change toward the lower entities.⁷⁶

Chapter 26

Psellos calls "intellectual forms" souls, intellects, angels, archangels, powers and others. As Psellos claims, they are both implicit each in other and severally existent.⁷⁷ They all interpenetrate all and at the same time each one exists in itself. Unlike them, all bodies exist separately by themselves and they cannot penetrate each other. As for the intellectual forms, they exist in one another and also each apart in its distinctness,⁷⁸ like theorems which are contained in a single

⁷² οὐ μὴν ἐκεῖνα ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ἀλλὰ τὰς αἰτίας ἐκείνων. (Psell. omn. 25, 28, 12-13 Westerink). This corresponds almost exactly to Proclus' phrase from prop. 172: οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνα ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ἀλλὰ τὰς αἰτίας τὰς ἐκείνων. (Procl. ET 172, 152, 2-3 Dodds) "what it contains is not that [which are resultants] but their causes". Transl. by Dodds, 153, slightly modified.

⁷³ καὶ ὡς τὰ νοητὰ νοερώς ἔχει, οὕτω καὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ νοερώς. (Psell. omn. 25, 28, 13-14 Westerink). Psellos repeats almost exactly Proclus' thesis: ὡς οὖν τὰ νοητὰ νοερώς ἔχει πᾶς, οὕτω καὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ νοερώς. (Procl. ET 173, 152, 6-7 Dodds) "as it contains the intelligible world intellectually, so also it contains the sensible world in the same mode", transl. by Dodds, 153.

⁷⁴ Psell. omn. 25, 28, 2-14 Westerink.

⁷⁵ πρὸς μὲν γὰρ τὸ κρεῖττον οὐ δύναται, πρὸς δὲ τὸ χεῖρον οὐ βούλεται. (Psell. omn. 25, 28, 10-11 Westerink).

⁷⁶ Petritsi, II, ch. 31, 82; epilogue, 212. See L. Alexidze, "Ioane Petritsi", - in: *Interpreting Proclus*, 232-234.

⁷⁷ Πάντα τὰ νοερά εἶδη, οἷον ψυχαί, νόες, ἄγγελοι, δυνάμεις, καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, καὶ ἐν ἀλλήλοις εἰσι καὶ καθ'ἑαυτὸ ἕκαστον. (Psell. omn. 26, 28, 2-3 Westerink). Here Psellos repeats exactly the first thesis of Proclus' prop. 176, adding to Proclus' text specification of intellectual forms, "such as souls, angels, archangels, powers, and others like that". Cf. Proclus: Πάντα τὰ νοερά εἶδη καὶ ἐν ἀλλήλοις εἰσι καὶ καθ'αὐτὸ ἕκαστον. (Procl. ET 176, 154, 3-4 Dodds) "All the intellectual Forms are both implicit each in other and severally existent." Transl. by Dodds, 155.

⁷⁸ ἐν ἀλλήλοις γοῦν εἰσι πάντα τὰ νοερά εἶδη ἠνωμένως καὶ χωρὶς ἕκαστον διακεκριμένος. Psell. omn. 26, 28, 9-10. Psellos repeats almost exactly Proclus' thesis: πάντα ἄρα τὰ νοερά εἶδη καὶ ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἐστὶν ἠνωμένως καὶ χωρὶς ἕκαστον διακεκριμένος. (Procl. ET 176, 154, 26-27) "Thus all the intellectual Forms exist both in one another as a unity and also each apart in its distinctness." Transl. by Dodds, 155.

soul.⁷⁹⁸⁰ Unlike Psellos, Petritsi does not mention in the commentary to prop. 176 of Proclus' *Elements* 'archangels' or 'powers', though 'angels', and also 'daemonic' (in a (neo)platononic sense of this word) soul are present in other parts of his commentary.⁸¹

Chapter 27

According to Psellos, every intellect is full of divine forms⁸² such as for example goodness, piety,⁸³ justice, sameness, identity, and others. The more divine intellect embraces more universal forms, while the lower intellect embraces more specific ones.⁸⁴ The higher intellects

“exercise greater powers, whereas the lower, being more advanced in plurality, thereby restrict the powers which they possess.”⁸⁵

⁷⁹ ὡσπερ δὴ καὶ τὰ θεωρήματα τὰ ἐν μιᾷ ψυχῇ. (Psell. omn. 26, 28, 10-11 Westerink). Psellos makes a short resumé of a longer phrase from Proclus' *Elements*: εἰ δέ τις ἐπὶ ταῖσδε ταῖς ἀποδείξεσι καὶ παραδειγμάτων δέοιτο, τὰ θεωρήματα νοεῖτω τὰ ἐν μιᾷ ψυχῇ. (Procl. ET 176, 154, 27-29 Dodds) “If in addition to the above proofs anyone should feel the need of examples, let him consider the theorems which are contained in a single soul”. Transl. by Dodds, 155.

⁸⁰ Psell. omn. 26, 28, 2-11 Westerink.

⁸¹ For 'angels' see Petritsi, II, ch. 29, 78, 29; ch. 75, 136, 13; epilogue, 216, 10. For 'daimons' see Petritsi, I, ch. 129 (this is a proposition from the *Elements* which exists only in the Georgian version), 79, 10-26, and Petritsi's commentary on this problematic proposition in Petritsi, II, ch. 129, 165, 5-31. See also L. Alexidze, “*Dianoia* in Ioane Petritsi's Commentary”, - in: *Chôra*, p.187-191.

⁸² Πᾶς νοῦς πλήρης ἐστὶ τῶν θείων εἰδῶν. (Psell. omn. 27, 2 Westerink). Psellos makes a paraphrase of Proclus' thesis: Πᾶς νοῦς πλήρωμα ὧν εἰδῶν. (Procl. ET 177, 156, 1 Dodds).

⁸³ To my mind “piety” (ὁσιότητος) is quite a non-Proclean word in this context but it has more Christian connotation. I think, Petritsi, unlike Psellos would not use it in this context. Moreover, in Proclus' text (prop. 177) there is no concrete list of Forms at all. Nor it is in Petritsi's commentary on this proposition.

⁸⁴ ἀλλ'ὁ μὲν θεϊότερος νοῦς ὀλικωτέρων ἐστὶ περιεκτικὸς εἰδῶν, ὁ δὲ ταπεινότερος μερικωτέρων. (Psell. omn. 27, 28, 3-5 Westerink). Psellos makes a periphrase of Proclus' thesis: ὁ μὲν ὀλικωτέρων, ὁ δὲ μερικωτέρων ἐστὶ περιεκτικὸς εἰδῶν. (Procl. ET 177, 1-2 Dodds) “but certain of them [i.e. intellects, - L.A.] embrace more universal and others more specific Forms.” (transl. by Dodds, 157).

⁸⁵ οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀνωτέρω νόες δυνάμεσι χρῶνται μείζουσιν, οἱ δὲ κατωτέρω πληθυνόμενοι μᾶλλον ἐλαττοῦσι τὰς δυνάμεις ἅς ἔχουσι. (Psell. Omn. 27, 28, 5-7 Westerink). I applied Dodds' translation of Proclus' *Elements* to this part of Psellos text. Psellos' text corresponds to Procl. ET 177, 156, 5-7: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀνωτέρω δυνάμεσι χρῶνται μείζουσιν, ἐνοειδέστεροι τῶν δευτέρων ὄντες: οἱ δὲ κατωτέρω, πληθυνόμενοι μᾶλλον, ἐλαττοῦσι τὰς δυνάμεις ἅς ἔχουσι. “For the higher intellects, being more unitary than the derivative, exercise greater powers, whereas the lower, being more advanced in plurality, thereby restrict the powers which they possess.” Transl. by Dodds, slightly modified, 157. Psellos omitted few words from this text of Proclus: ἐνοειδέστεροι τῶν δευτέρων ὄντες (“being more unitary than the derivative”).

Correspondingly, those that are closer to the One, are less multiple but more powerful compared with their consequents. Thus, the more an entity is one, the more power it has, and vice versa.⁸⁶ Therefore, as Psellos claims, the unity is more powerful, while the division is advanced in plurality.⁸⁷

In the commentary on prop. 177 Petritsi concentrates on the same issue:

“The lower [intellec]ts are more in number, though they possess less power, while the higher ones, though less in number, are more powerful”.⁸⁸

Then Petritsi explains, why it is so and how we should understand it:

“because they imitate better the highest supreme transcendence. But when you hear ‘high’ or ‘low’, don’t imagine it in a local sense, i.e. don’t think about incorporeal and non-dimensional [entities] [by means of concepts of] *ogkoi* [i.e. material substrates] and dimension, but take into consideration rather the capacities of substances, [their] powers, and [their] actuality”.⁸⁹

Interestingly, neither Psellos nor Petritsi reproduce in their texts the second part of Proclus’ prop. 177 (p. 156, 16-24 Dodds). However, Petritsi, like Proclus, speaks also about the intellects as producers and causes of the effects (the higher intellects produce more effects by means of fewer forms, while the lower ones produce fewer effects by more forms),⁹⁰ whereas Psellos concentrates only on the fact of embracing forms by intellects.

Chapter 28

Psellos first discusses the intellectual forms, numbers, and intellects:

⁸⁶ τὰ γὰρ τῶ ἐνὶ συγγενέστερα ἐλαττότερα μὲν εἰσι τῶ πλήθει τῶν ὑπ’αὐτῶ, τῆ δυνάμει δὲ ὑπεραίρει· τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἐνὸς πορρωτέρω ἔμπασι. (Psell. omn. 27, 28, 7-9 Westerink). This corresponds to Proclus’ text: τὰ γὰρ τῶ ἐνὶ συγγενέστερα, τῶ ποσῶ συσσεταλμένα, τῆ δυνάμει τὰ μετ’αὐτὰ ὑπεραίρει· καὶ τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἐνὸς πορρωτέρω ἔμπασι. (Procl. ET 177, 156, 7-9 Dodds) “For those principles which are more akin to the One, while their number is relatively contracted, excel their consequents in power; and of those more remote the opposite is true.” Transl. by Dodds, 157.

⁸⁷ Psell. omn. 27, 28, 8 – 29, 14 Westerink.

⁸⁸ Petritsi, II, ch. 177, 190, 21-25: “რამეთუ უქუენახენი სიმრავლითა უკუე უფრო, ხოლო ძალთა უკნინეს; ხოლო უზენახენი რაძომობითა სიმრავლისა უმცრო, ხოლო დაზესთაეობითა ძალადთ უფრო”.

⁸⁹ Petritsi, II, ch. 177, 190, 25-29: “რამეთუ უმეტეს ჰბაძვენ მას ზესა ზესთაობასაცა. ხოლო შენ ოდეს ზეობა გესმას ანუ ქუეობა, ნუ ადგილთა წარმოიკერებ და ჰაზროდ უსხეულოთათს და განუზიდველთა ონკოთა და განსაზიდთა, არამედ სიმარჯუენი არსებათა და ძალნი და უფრო მოქმედიერობად გაიგონე”.

⁹⁰ Procl. ET 177, 156, 10-13 Dodds. Cf. Petritsi, II, ch. 177, 190, 19-23.

“Every intellectual form is producer of perpetual [beings].⁹¹ And every intellectual number is finite.”⁹²

Then Psellos writes on intellects generally, and on participated ones in particular:

“every intellect is a whole as that which is a composite of parts: each of them is united with others and distinct from them.⁹³ And every participated intellect is either divine, as linked to gods, or only intellectual.⁹⁴ And every participated divine intellect is participated by divine souls.⁹⁵ And every intellect which is participated but remains intellectual, is participated by souls which are neither divine nor are subject to change between intellect and non-intellectuality,⁹⁶ but by those which are eternally intellectual according to [both their] substance and [their] activity.”⁹⁷

⁹¹ Πᾶν νοερὸν εἶδος αἰδίων ἐστὶν ὑποστατικόν. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 2 Westerink). This is exactly the same as the first phrase of Proclus’ prop. 178. (Dodds’ translation: “Every intellectual Form is constitutive of things perpetual”, Procl. ET 178, 157).

⁹² καὶ πᾶς νοερὸς ἀριθμὸς πεπεράσται. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 2-3 Westerink). Psellos repeats almost exactly the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 179: πᾶς ὁ νοερὸς ἀριθμὸς πεπεράσται. (Procl. ET 179.3 Dodds) “The entire intellectual series is finite.” Transl. by Dodds, 159.

⁹³ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς ὅλος ἐστὶν ὡς ἐκ μερῶν ὑποστάς, καὶ ἕκαστος καὶ ἡνωται τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ διακέκριται ἀπ’αὐτῶν. (Psell. omn. 28, 3-4 Westerink). Here Psellos repeats almost exactly Proclus’ thesis, Procl. ET 179, 158, 11-12 Dodds: πᾶς νοῦς ὅλος ἐστὶν, <οὐχ> [οὐχ was inserted by Dodds, also in his translation, 156 - L. A.] ὡς ἐκ μερῶν ὑποστάς [καὶ ἕκαστος καὶ ἡνωται τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ διακέκριται ἀπ’αὐτῶν] [καὶ ἕκαστος ... ἀπ’αὐτῶν was eliminated by Dodds in his translation, - L. A.]. As a result, the whole passage was translated by Dodds (p. 159) as follows: “Every intelligence is a whole, though not one composite of parts (prop. 171).” See also notes by Dodds, 293-294. Thus, Psellos’ reading of the first phrase of prop. 179 does not correspond to Dodds’ interpretation of the same thesis.

⁹⁴ καὶ πᾶς ὁ μετεχόμενος νοῦς ἢ θεῖος ἐστὶ ὡς θεῶν ἐξημμένος ἢ νοερὸς μόνον. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 4-5 Westerink). Psellos repeats the first phrase of Proclus’ prop. 181: Πᾶς ὁ μετεχόμενος νοῦς ἢ θεῖος ἐστὶν, ὡς θεῶν ἐξημμένος, ἢ νοερὸς μόνον. Procl. ET 181, 158, 19-20 Dodds.

⁹⁵ καὶ πᾶς θεῖος νοῦς μετεχόμενος ὑπὸ ψυχῶν μετέχεται θεῖων. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 6 Westerink). This is an exact reproduction of the first thesis of prop. 182 of Proclus’ *Elements of theology*, 160, 5-6 Dodds.

⁹⁶ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς μετεχόμενος μὲν, νοερῶς δὲ μόνων, μετέχεται ὑπὸ ψυχῶν οὔτε θεῖων οὔτε νοῦ καὶ ἀνοίας ἐν μεταβολῇ γινομένων. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 6-8 Westerink). Psellos repeats almost exactly the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 183: Πᾶς νοῦς μετεχόμενος μὲν, νοερὸς δὲ μόνων ὢν, μετέχεται ὑπὸ ψυχῶν οὔτε θεῖων οὔτε νοῦ καὶ ἀνοίας ἐν μεταβολῇ γινομένων. (Procl. ET 183, 160, 13-15 Dodds) “Every intellect which is participated but purely intellectual is participated by souls which are neither divine nor yet subject to the alternation of intellect with unintelligence.” Transl. by Dodds, 161, slightly modified.

⁹⁷ ἀλλ’ὑπὸ τῶν κατ’οὐσίαν αἰεὶ καὶ κατ’ἐνέργειαν νοερῶν. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 8-9 Westerink). Psellos repeated almost exactly Proclus’ prop. 183: πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς ὑπὸ τῶν κατ’οὐσίαν αἰεὶ καὶ κατ’ἐνέργειαν νοερῶν μετέχεται. (Procl. ET 183, 160, 18-19 Dodds) “for every intellect is participated by principles perpetually intellectual both in their substance and in their activity.” Transl. by Dodds, 161, slightly modified.

In the following part of chapter 28 Psellos discusses the identity of intellect's thinking and creating:

“and every intellect produces its consequents by thinking, and its creative activity is in thinking, and its thought in act of creation.”⁹⁸

Here Psellos repeats the first thesis of prop. 174 of Proclus' *Elements of theology*. The similar idea about intellect's mode of thinking is expressed by Petritsi as follows:

“and what it [i.e. intellect] thought, that it had also created; and what it created, that it thought. Neither the thought is uncreative, nor the product of creation is thoughtless”.⁹⁹

Further, Psellos claims that every intellect is intellectually that which is superior to it and that which is consequent upon it.¹⁰⁰ The very last phrase of chapter 28 of Psellos' work is a common idea about the differences between intellect's and soul's mode of thinking:

“and other is thought in the intellect, and another is that of the soul.”¹⁰¹

The differences between soul's and intellect's art of thinking, as we already said, are very frequently discussed by Petritsi too.

Thus, chapter 28 of Psellos' work is a compilation of fragments from prop. 173-174, and 178-183 of Proclus' *Elements*, as it was indicated by Westerink.¹⁰² The main idea of this chapter (identity of creation and intellection in *nous*) was shared and expressed by Petritsi too.

Chapter 29

Psellos claims that soul is intellectual, and intellect is also intellectual, though intellect is intellectual by its substance, while soul is intellectual through participation. Intellect has its intellectuality by itself; to be intellect and intellectual is the same, while soul acquires its intellectuality by means of looking at intellect;

⁹⁸ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς τῷ νοεῖν ὑφίστησι τὰ μετ'αὐτόν, καὶ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ποίησις ἐν τῷ νοεῖν καὶ ἡ νόησις ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 9-11 Westerink). Psellos repeats almost exactly the first thesis of Proclus' prop. 174: Πᾶς νοῦς τῷ νοεῖν ὑφίστησι τὰ μετ'αὐτόν, καὶ ἡ ποίησις ἐν τῷ νοεῖν, καὶ ἡ νόησις ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν. (Procl. ET 174, 152, 8-9 Dodds).

⁹⁹ ესე არს ესე, რამეთუ, რადგა გაიგონა, და ქმნადგა; და რადგა ქმნა, გაიგონადგა. და არა არს გაგონებდა უქმ და არცა ნაქმი გაუგონებელ. Petritsi, II, ch. 174, 188, 30 - 189, 1.

¹⁰⁰ καὶ πᾶς νοῦς νοερός ἐστι καὶ τὰ πρὸ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ μετ'αὐτόν. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 11-12 Westerink). Psellos reproduced the first phrase of prop. 173 of Proclus' *Elements*, 150, 22-23 Dodds.

¹⁰¹ καὶ ἄλλη μὲν ἡ ἐν τῷ νῷ νόησις, ἄλλη δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς. (Psell. omn. 28, 29, 12 Westerink).

¹⁰² Psellos, *Omn.*, 29, notes by Westerink to ch. 28.

therefore, it has the act of thinking secondarily, while intellect has it primarily.¹⁰³ Our return to the universal intellect occurs by means of a partial intellect.¹⁰⁴

The idea that return to the universal intellect occurs by means of a partial intellect, expressed by Psellos in the last sentence of this chapter, corresponds to Petritsi's commentary on prop. 166 of Proclus' *Elements*: the cosmos and all the stars and spheres are endowed by soul and intellect,

“and when cosmos participates in the first intellect, it does it by means of the partial intellect.”¹⁰⁵

Moreover, in chapter 175 of the commentary Petritsi claims that a soul which is sometimes intellectual is unable to participate neither in the universal soul nor in a partial intellect without intermediation.¹⁰⁶

Chapter 30

This chapter is mainly about soul, though it concerns intellect too. It is a compilation from Proclus' propositions. Psellos starts with a general definition of souls considered in their relation to intellect:

“Every soul is either divine, or it changes from intellect to unintelligence, or is intermediate between [these two states, i.e.], thinking permanently although being inferior to the divine souls.”¹⁰⁷

Interestingly, unlike Proclus and Psellos, Petritsi makes a precision about the last two kinds of souls:

“and it is said that there is a changeable soul, i.e. ours, that which changes from intellect to unintelligence, dismissing intellect. And there is [also] another soul, intermediate between these two ones [i.e. between the divine souls and the changeable ones], which is permanently connected with intellectual [beings], and is unchangeable; such is [the soul] of sun and of other similar [beings]”.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Psell. omn. 29, 29, 1-5 Westerink.

¹⁰⁴ Psell. omn. 29, 29, 11-12 Westerink.

¹⁰⁵ და კუალად ოდეს პირველსა გონებასა ეზიარებოდის აღმკული, ნაწილებითისა გონების მიერ ეზიარების. Petritsi, II, ch. 166, 185, 7-9.

¹⁰⁶ Petritsi, II, ch. 175, 189, 21-23.

¹⁰⁷ Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἢ θεία ἐστὶν ἢ μεταβάλλουσα ἀπὸ νοῦ εἰς ἄνοϊαν ἢ μεταξὺ τούτων, αἰεὶ μὲν νοοῦσα, καταδεεστέρᾳ δὲ τῶν θείων ψυχῶν. (Psell. omn. 30, 29, 2-3 Westerink). Psellos repeats exactly the first thesis of Proclus' prop. 184, 160, 21-23 Dodds. Psellos repeats this thesis also in his treatise “*On Soul*”, criticizing this opinion. Psell. Phil. Min. 2.11, 22, 4-7 O'Meara. Petritsi's commentary corresponds to Proclus' texts. With ‘intermediate souls’ Proclus as well as Petritsi meant probably the demonic souls, as also in prop. 183 and Petritsi's commentary.

¹⁰⁸ და კუალად არსო სული ეცევადი, ესე იგი არს ჩუენი, ოდესმე გონებისადა შეყოფილი და ოდესმე უგუნურებისადა, ვითარ გამგდე გონებისადა. და ამათ საშუვალ არსო სხუად სული, სამარადისოდ გონიერთადა შეყოფილი და უქცევი, ვითარ მზისადა და სხუათა ესვითათადა. Petritsi, II, ch. 184, 193, 29-33.

Psellos also characterizes soul in its relation to the divine nature:

“every divine soul is god psychically, while the soul which participates in the intellectual intellect is permanently god’s satellite, and every [soul] which admits change, is sometimes god’s satellite”.¹⁰⁹

Further, Psellos characterizes soul from the point of view of its independence from a corporeal entity. As he claims,

“every soul is an incorporeal substance and separable from body”.¹¹⁰

Further, Psellos proceeds with characteristics of soul, which, as he says, is

“indestructible and imperishable,¹¹¹ is life and a living being,¹¹² intermediate between indivisibles and those that are divided in association with bodies”.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ καὶ πᾶσα μὲν θεία ψυχὴ θεός ἐστι ψυχικῶς, πᾶσα δὲ νοεροῦ μετέχουσα νοῦ θεοῦ ὁπαδὸς αἰεί, πᾶσα δὲ μεταβολῆς δεκτικὴ θεοῦ ὁπαδὸς ποτέ. (Psell. omn. 30, 29, 3-4 Westerink). This is almost the same as the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 185 The only difference is that Proclus puts ‘souls’ and ‘gods’ in plural, while Psellos in singular: πᾶσαι μὲν θεῖαι ψυχαὶ θεοὶ ἐστι ψυχικῶς, πᾶσαι δὲ αἰ τοῦ νοεροῦ μετέχουσαι νοῦ θεῶν ὁπαδοὶ αἰεί, πᾶσαι δὲ αἰ μεταβολῆς δεκτικαὶ θεῶν ὁπαδοὶ ποτέ. (Procl. ET 185, 162, 1-3 Dodds). “All divine souls are gods upon psychic level; all those which participate the intellectual intellect are perpetually attendant upon gods; all those which admit of change are at certain times attendant upon gods.” Transl. by Dodds, 163, slightly modified.

¹¹⁰ καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἀσώματός ἐστιν οὐσία καὶ χωριστὴ σώματος. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 1 Westerink). Here Psellos repeats exactly the very beginning of Proclus’ *Elements of theology*, prop. 186, 162, 13-14 Dodds. Petritsi in the commentary on prop. 186 concentrates on incorporeal substance of soul and its reversion upon itself. He opposes this thesis to Aristotelian theory and claims that soul “is not inseparable from bodies, unlike *entelecheia* of Stagirites.” Petritsi, II, ch. 186, 194, 29-31. (Petritsi uses the Greek word *entelecheia* in Georgian transliteration). On soul’s reversion upon itself, its ability to think its own nature, ascending to intellect and even transcending intellect wrote Psellos in his first small treatise “*On Soul*”, Psell. Phil. Min. 2.1, 1, 1-16 O’Meara.

¹¹¹ ἀνώλεθρός τε καὶ ἄφθαρτος. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 1-2 Westerink). Psellos repeats the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 187, 162, 24 Dodds. (And Proclus himself also repeats this thesis in the same prop., 162, 31 Dodds). Psellos repeats this characteristic of soul also in his treatise “*On Soul*”, Psell. Phil. Min. 2.11, 22, 12-13 O’Meara. As for Petritsi, in the commentary on prop. 187 he discusses soul’s incorporeal substance. Petritsi claims that soul is free from corporeal affects, and unlike Aristotelian *entelecheias*, does not require a substrate (i.e. a body). Petritsi, II, ch. 187, 195, 4-16.

¹¹² καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ζῶν. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 7 Westerink). Psellos repeats here the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 188, Procl. ET 188, 164, 1 Dodds. This thesis is repeated also by Proclus himself as a conclusion at the end of the same proposition, 164, 18-19 Dodds, and by Psellos in his treatise “*On Soul*”, Psell. Phil. Min. 2.11, 22, 15. Also Petritsi claims in the commentary on prop. 188 that soul is a principle of life, and by its presence it transforms a thing into a living being. Further, Petritsi distinguishes life from a living being: the latter is brought alive “only through participation in life, and it is neither reversible upon itself, nor does it search its own self and substance, while life is reversible and searcher of its own substance, which is soul”. Petritsi, II, ch. 188, 195, 26-29.

¹¹³ μέση τὲ τῶν ἀμερίστων καὶ τῶν περὶ τοῖς σώμασι μεριστῶν. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 7-8 Westerink). Here Psellos reproduces exactly the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 190: Πᾶσα ψυχὴ μέση τῶν ἀμερίστων ἐστὶ καὶ τῶν περὶ τοῖς σώμασι μεριστῶν. Procl. ET 190, 166, 1-2 Dodds (“Every soul is

Then Psellos starts a new phrase, again with another characteristic of soul, regarding its substance and activity:

“Every participated soul has an eternal substance but a temporal activity.”¹¹⁴

Further, Psellos explains the origin of soul and its relation to intellect: soul

“takes its proximate origin from an intellect,¹¹⁵ and possesses all the Forms secondarily which intellect possesses primarily.¹¹⁶ And it is all things, those

intermediate between the indivisible principles and those which are divided in association with bodies.” Transl. by Dodds, 167). Psellos repeats this phrase in his treatise “*On Soul*”, Psellos, *Phil.*, II, ch. 11, 22, 16-17 O’Meara. As for Petritsi, in the commentary on prop. 190 he explains in detail that soul’s substance is intermediate between the domain of intellect, which is indivisible, because intellect’s substance and activity are identical, and it is the first image of the One, on the one hand, and corporeal world, on the other, which is absolutely dissoluble and changeable. Soul is an intermediate between these two opposites: in regard to its substance, it participates in those beings which are absolutely indivisible, because its life is eternally immortal, while its activity is divided. Petritsi, II, ch. 190, 196, 15-32.

¹¹⁴ καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ μεθεκτὴ τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν αἰώνιον ἔχει, τὴν δὲ ἐνέργειαν κατὰ χρόνον. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 8-9 Westerink). Psellos repeats here exactly the first thesis of Proclus’ prop. 191 (Procl. ET 191, 166, 26-27 Dodds). Psellos repeats this thesis also in his treatise “*On Soul*”, but applies it to all kinds of souls, not only the participated ones. Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.11, 22, 17 O’Meara. Also Petritsi frequently discusses in his commentary Proclus’ thesis that substance of a participated soul is eternal, while its activity is temporal. Cf. Petritsi, II, ch. 190, 196, 29 – 197, 1; ch. 191, 197, 14-15; ch. 192, 197, 21-33.

¹¹⁵ καὶ προσεχῶς ἀπὸ νοῦ ὑφέστηκε. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 9-10 Westerink). Psellos reproduces exactly the first sentence of Proclus’ prop. 193 (Procl. ET. 193, 168, 20 Dodds). In the commentary on prop. 193 Petritsi claims that soul proceeds from an unmoved and eternal cause, i.e. from intellect. And everything which proceeds from unmoved causes, is immortal. Reverting upon itself, it reverts first upon its own substance. “Therefore, a soul which is reverted upon itself, makes by its presence beings intellectual.” Petritsi II, ch. 193, 198, 4-10. Thus, soul’s reversion upon its own substance is reversion upon its cause: the intellect. That’s why a soul which is reverted upon itself, according to Petritsi, makes a being, provided with such a soul, intellectual.

¹¹⁶ καὶ πάντα ἔχει δευτέρως τὰ εἶδη ὁ νοῦς πρώτως ἔχει. (Psell. omn., prop. 30, 30, 10 Westerink). Psellos reproduces here almost exactly (just in a little bit shorter form) the first sentence of Proclus’ prop. 194: Πᾶσα ψυχὴ πάντα ἔχει τὰ εἶδη, ὁ νοῦς πρώτως ἔχει. (Procl. ET. 194, 168, 30 Dodds) “Every soul possesses all the Forms which intellect possesses primitively”. Transl. by Dodds, 169, slightly modified. In the commentary on prop. 194 Petritsi calls intellect ‘father of soul’. He explains that intellect possesses the Forms of beings, and gives them to soul, like a natural father does the same for his natural descendants. Intellect possesses Forms purely and in a superior manner, while soul contains them in a psychological and inferior manner. Further Petritsi explains that not all souls possess Forms in a same manner: there is a difference between, for example, Sun and Kronos etc., according to the differences between their substances. Petritsi, II, ch. 194, 198, 13-21.

which are sensible paradigmatically, while those which are intelligible after the manner of an image.¹¹⁷ It is a vital substance and substantial life.¹¹⁸

Thus chapter 30 of Psellos *De omnifaria doctrina* is a result of a compilation of first sentences from prop. 184-188, 190, 191, 193-195, and 197. Interestingly, Psellos omitted prop. 189, where Proclus discusses the self-animated and self-constituted character of soul,¹¹⁹ and also prop. 196, where Proclus speaks about the perpetual character of the first body which has no temporal origin and is imperishable.¹²⁰

2. Psellos' *Philosophica minora II*: fragments on intellect, based on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, and compared with Petritsi's commentary on Proclus

Now we shall discuss some fragments from Psellos' treatises, collected in the second volume of *Philosophica minora*, focusing our attention on his understanding of intellect. In many cases, Psellos' statements are a result of compilation from

¹¹⁷ καὶ πάντα ἐστὶ τὰ πράγματα, παραδειγματικῶς μὲν τὰ αἰσθητά, εἰκονικῶς δὲ τὰ νοητά. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 11-12 Westerink). Psellos reproduces the first sentence of Proclus' prop. 195 (Procl. ET. 195, 170, 4-5 Dodds). This phrase is repeated by Psellos in his treatise "*On Soul*", Psell. Phil. Min. 2.ch. 11, 22, 19-20 O'Meara. As for Petritsi, in the commentary on prop. 195 he again discusses the intermediate character of soul's substance which is between intellectual and sensible beings. Petritsi mentions "the good craftsman and producer", who created soul as a mediator between absolutely indivisible and absolutely divisible beings connecting them with each other. Petritsi, II, ch. 195, 189, 29-32.

¹¹⁸ οὐσία τέ ἐστι ζωτική καὶ ζωὴ οὐσιώδης. (Psell. omn. 30, 30, 12 Westerink). Here Psellos reproduces in a shorter form the first sentence of Proclus' prop. 197: Πᾶσα ψυχὴ οὐσία ἐστὶ ζωτικὴ καὶ γνωστικὴ, καὶ ζωὴ οὐσιώδης καὶ γνωστικὴ. Procl. ET. 197, 172, 1-2 Dodds ("Every soul is a vital and cognitive substance, a substantial and cognitive principle of life". Transl. by Dodds, 173). Obviously, in this chapter Psellos did not want to concentrate on a cognitive aspect of soul and omitted its definition γνωστικὴ. As for Petritsi, he finishes the commentary on prop. 197 with a statement that "an intellectual soul is a knower of its self" (ἐγγενεῖ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῆς γινώσκουσα). Petritsi, II, ch. 197, 200, 12-13.

¹¹⁹ Procl. ET 189, 164, 20-32 Dodds. In the commentary on this proposition, Petritsi like Proclus claims that soul animates living beings not by choice or decision, but it endows with life those bodies which are fitted for it. Moreover, Petritsi explains that their fitness (i.e. the ability to be endowed either with a vital power or a reasonable human soul) is caused by the stars. Petritsi, II, ch. 189, 196, 2-10.

¹²⁰ Procl. ET 196, 170, 18-30 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 196 Petritsi distinguishes two kinds of soul: (1) the soul which is absolutely unparticipated and independent from bodies; it is the mostly divine soul and is mostly close to the true Being; (2) the soul primarily participated by those bodies which are perpetual and imperishable, i.e. cosmic ones. Further Petritsi says that soul's substance is eternal and, being unchangeable and imperishable, it makes by its co-existence and presence the whole celestial structure also perpetual. Petritsi, II, ch. 196, 199, 15-25.

various ancient Greek texts. Here we aim to discuss mainly those fragments which are based on Proclus' *Elements*. Thus, we shall only briefly mention treatises 2, 9, 12, 21, and not analyze 33-36 at all, which have as a background several philosophical sources, including Plotinus; they are particularly interesting for Psellos' theory of intellect, and deserve a special study.

Op. 2

In the 2nd treatise Psellos characterizes intellect as "soul's most sublime state",¹²¹ and claims that "intellect and soul are not [absolutely] different. Soul has rational and irrational potencies",¹²² and intellect is a measure of the rational and cognitive potencies.¹²³

Op. 9

Treatise 9 is based on Proclus' interpretation of Chaldean oracles. Here we find an interesting parallel with Petritsi's text. Like Petritsi, Psellos uses 'eye' as a metaphor for knowledge.¹²⁴ Again, like Petritsi, Psellos claims that intellect is indivisible and has an eternal substance and activity, unlike soul which has indivisible nature but its activity is moved in time.¹²⁵ Further, Psellos speaks about soul's reversion upon itself, its act of self-cognition, its concentration on intellect, then elevation toward the One, transcending the level of intellection.¹²⁶ Further Psellos says that certain intelligible objects must be thought by "intellect's

¹²¹ Νοῦς ἐστὶν ἕξις ψυχῆς ἢ τελειοτάτη. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.2, 2, 3 O'Meara).

¹²² οὐχ ἕτερον δὲ τι νοῦς ἐστὶν, ἕτερον δὲ ψυχῆ. τῆς γὰρ ψυχῆς ἐχούσης δυνάμεις τὰς μὲν λογικὰς τὰς δὲ ἀλόγους. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.2, 2, 4-6 O'Meara).

¹²³ ὁ τοῖσιν νοῦς μέρος τῶν λογικῶν καὶ γνωστικῶν δυνάμεων. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.2, 2, 11-12 O'Meara).

¹²⁴ τὸ γὰρ ὄμμα γνώσεως σύμβολον. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9, 18, 6 O'Meara). However, otherwise in Psell. Phil. Min. 2.21, 95-96, see below. On 'eye' in Petritsi see See L. Alexidze, *Ioane Petritsi und die antike Philosophie*, (Tbilisi, 2008) (in Georgian, title and summary in German), 96-97, with references to Psellos' commentaries on the Chaldean Oracles, and L. Alexide, "The Chaldean Oracles in Ioane Petritsi's Commentary on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*", - in: *Mélanges Jean-Pierre Mahé*, édités par A. Mardirossian, A. Ouzounian, C. Zuckerman. (Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Paris, 2014), 14-15.

¹²⁵ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9, 19, 15-18 O'Meara. This issue is very frequently discussed by Petritsi too. Petritsi, II, prologue, 8, 31 - 9, 8; ch.78, 13, 5-12 etc.

¹²⁶ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9, 19, 26-28 O'Meara. For soul's elevation toward the One and its self-concentration see Petritsi, II, ch. 8, 33; ch. 13, 45; ch. 14, 48; ch. 15, 49; ch. 186, 194. See L. Alexidze, "One in the Beings' and 'One within Us': The Basis of the Union with the One in Ioane Petritsi's Interpretation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*", - in: *Georgian Christian Thought and Its Cultural Context. Memorial Volume for the 125th Anniversary of Shalva Nutsubidze*. Edited by T. Nutsubidze, C. B. Horn, B. Lourié. (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2014), 175-193.

flower”.¹²⁷ Petritsi too uses this expression.¹²⁸ Then Psellos mentions a very important concept for Neoplatonism generally and for Petritsi in particular: “the one in us”.¹²⁹

Op. 10

Treatise 10 is specially dedicated to intellect and is based on Proclus’ *Elements of theology*.¹³⁰ Naturally, we find here the same ideas which were discussed by Psellos in *De omnifaria doctrina*, chapters 21-30, and they too correspond to Petritsi’s interpretation. Psellos says that he exposes “Greek theories”,¹³¹ and at the end of the chapter he makes a precision that his exposition is based on Proclus’ *Elements of theology*,¹³² but does not assert that he shares these ideas. As in chapter 21 of *De omnifaria doctrina*, here too Psellos claims that intellect can be (according to Greek theories) either unparticipated or participated. The unparticipated intellect is the head of all plurality of intellects, while some of the participated intellects irradiate the hypercosmic and unparticipated soul, and others – the intra-cosmic soul.¹³³ The first intellect knows only itself, and each consequent one knows itself and its priors.¹³⁴ Intellect, knowing itself in activity, is not distinguished from the object of knowledge.¹³⁵ The unparticipated intellect knows everything plainly, while each consequent intellect knows each object according to one special character, and every intellect has its substance, potency and activity established in eternity.¹³⁶ Intellect is an indivisible substance,

¹²⁷ νόου ἄνθει. Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9, 20, 3 O’Meara.

¹²⁸ On ‘flower’ in Petritsi see L. Alexidze, “The Chaldean Oracles in Ioane Petritsi’s Commentary”, 11-13.

¹²⁹ τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐν. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9, 20, 3-4 O’Meara). On this concept in Petritsi’s commentary see L. Alexidze, “One in the Beings’ and ‘One within Us’”, 175-193.

¹³⁰ All references to Proclus’ *Elements* are indicated by D. O’Meara, Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21.

¹³¹ κατὰ τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς δόξας. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 3 O’Meara).

¹³² Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 31-32 O’Meara.

¹³³ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 4-6 O’Meara. (Cf. Psell. omn. 21, 26, 2-13 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 166, 144, 9-14 Dodds. Cf. Petritsi, ch. 166, 185, 1-10.

¹³⁴ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 6-7 O’Meara. (Cf. Psell. omn. 22, 26, 2-3 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 167, 144, 22-24 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 167 Petritsi analyzes three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of self, of its subsequents, and of its priors. In the first case intellect’s activity is identical with its substance, in the second case activity is weaker than the substance, and the last case represents the best kind of knowledge, because intellect thinks its causes and therefore thinks its own self better than when it knows just its own self. Petritsi, II, ch. 167, 185, 16-32.

¹³⁵ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 7-8 O’Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 168, 146, 18-19 Dodds. Cf. Petritsi’s commentary on prop. 168: in intellect the act of cognition and the object of cognition are the same. Petritsi, II, ch. 168, 186, 8-9.

¹³⁶ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 8-9 O’Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 170, 4-7 Dodds but Proclus does not mention ‘potency’ here, though he speaks about eternal character of intellects’ potency in prop. 169, 148, 3 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 170 Petritsi discusses the differences between intellect’s simultaneous knowledge and soul’s discursive reasoning. Petritsi, II, ch. 170, 187, 4-9 Dodds.

without magnitude, incorporeal and unmoved.¹³⁷ It is identical with its consequents as their cause, and by participation with its priors. It has an intellectual substance by its own being, and it defines everything both what it is as cause and what it is by participation.¹³⁸ Intellect is directly constitutive of those beings which are perpetual and invariable.¹³⁹ It produces its consequents by the act of intellection, and its creative activity is thinking, and its thinking is creation.¹⁴⁰ Intellect is primarily participated by those which are intellectual both according to their substance and their activity.¹⁴¹ Then Psellos writes about intellectual Forms: all the intellectual Forms are both in each other and separately existent.¹⁴² Each intellect

¹³⁷ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 11 O'Meara. (Cf. Psell. omn. 24, 27, 2-4 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 171, 1-3. In the commentary on prop. 171 Petritsi explains that each being which is able to revert completely upon itself, is incorporeal. Though the sky is able to revert, imitating soul and intellect, but it cannot do it completely, including all its parts. Then Petritsi compares intellect with sun: in intellect substance and activity are inseparable, like sun and its rays are. Petritsi, II, ch. 171, 187, 32 – 188, 7.

¹³⁸ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 11-14 O'Meara. (Cf. Psell. omn. 25, 28, 13-14 Westerink). Corresponds almost exactly to Procl. ET 173, 150, 23 – 26 Dodds. Petritsi in his rather short commentary on prop. 173 distinguishes three kinds of intellect: that which is by participation in regard to its priors and principles; that which is equal to its own substance and its own self; that which is a cause in regard to its consequents and effects. Petritsi, II, ch. 173, 188, 21-25.

¹³⁹ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 14-15 O'Meara. (Cf. Psell. omn. 24, 27, 10 Westerink). Psellos repeats a fragment from Procl. ET 172, 150, 15-16. In the commentary on prop. 172 Petritsi claims that intellect is invariable and eternal according to its substance and also activity, and that what it produces, is perpetual. Petritsi, II, ch. 172, 188, 11-16.

¹⁴⁰ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 15-16 O'Meara. (Cf. Psell. omn. 28, 29, 9-11 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 174, 152, 8-9 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 174 Petritsi explains that intellect is identical with the objects of intellection, and the act of intellection is creation. Intellect creates beings, and it is father and creator of everything that has a form. Thus, intellect's power reaches those beings which have a form but it cannot reach those entities which are formless, either superiors or inferiors in regard to the intellect. Petritsi, II, ch. 174, 188, 30 – 189, 8.

¹⁴¹ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 16-17 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 175, 152, 19-20 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 175 Petritsi draws a scale of participation descending from intellect: first is the universal soul, which exercises its activity in time, but is perpetually attached to the intellectual forms, and enjoys their contemplation, though in a psychical and temporal mode that lasts perpetually. Further, the celestial soul contemplates the true Being by mediation of a partial intellect and the universal soul. As for those souls which are sometimes intellectual, they cannot participate neither in the universal soul nor in a partial intellect without mediation. Petritsi, II, ch. 175, 189, 14-23.

¹⁴² Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 17-18 O'Meara. (The same thesis in a little bit different form was exposed by Psell. omn. 26, 28, 2-3 Westerink, see above). Corresponds to Procl. ET 176, 154, 3-4 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 175 Petritsi compares the unity of Forms in the intellectual 'womb' (საშობო) with the unity of seeds in the womb until their separation by the "creative reason" (სიტყვას მიერ შემოქმედებითს. This also can be translated as "creative word"; Georgian სიტყვა corresponds to Greek λόγος). Petritsi, II, ch. 176, 189, 31 – 190, 3.

is a fullness of Forms, some of them embrace more universal ones, while others more partial ones.¹⁴³

Every intellectual Form produces that which is perpetual.¹⁴⁴ And every intellect is a whole as that which is a composite of parts.¹⁴⁵ Every participated intellect is either divine as being linked to gods, or only intellectual.¹⁴⁶ The divine intellect is participated by divine souls.¹⁴⁷ The participated intellect is not participated either by the divine souls or by those which change from intellect to unintelligence¹⁴⁸ but by those which are eternally intellectual according to their substance and activity.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 18-19 O'Meara. (The same thesis but in detail is discussed by Psellos in *Omn.*, ch. 27, 28, 2-5 Westerink, see above). Corresponds to Procl. ET 177, 156, 1-2 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 177 Petritsi explains that some intellects are more universal and superior, others more partial and inferior. The first ones spread their power further than the latter ones, embracing more forms and substances; numerically they are less but their power is greater. Petritsi, II, ch. 177, 190, 17-25.

¹⁴⁴ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 19-20 O'Meara. (The same is in Psell. *omn.* 28, 29, 2 Westerink, see above). Corresponds to Procl. ET 178, 156, 25 Dodds. In the commentary on prop. 178 Petritsi says that every intellectual Form produces those which are perpetual, such as souls and substances of immortal bodies, like that of Apollo, Hermes and others. Petritsi, II, ch. 178, 190, 33 – 191, 2.

¹⁴⁵ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 20-21 O'Meara. (cf. Psell. *omn.* 28, 29, 3 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 180, 158, 11 Dodds, though Psellos' manner of reading Proclus' text here as well as in ch. 28 of *Omn.* is different from that of Dodds, see our note above, to ch. 28 of Psellos' *Omn.* Petritsi in the commentary on prop. 180 distinguishes three kinds of wholeness: 1. Before parts, as the wholeness in henads and gods; 2. wholeness composed of parts, like the wholeness of the true Being; 3. wholeness in parts. Petritsi, II, ch. 180, 191, 19-27.

¹⁴⁶ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 21-22 O'Meara. (Cf. Psell. *omn.* 28, 29, 4-5 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 181, 158, 19-20 Dodds. Commenting on prop. 181 Petritsi claims that the first and unparticipated intellect is the true Being, which is intelligible intellect, then follow intermediate intellects, and so on up to the intellectual intellect. Petritsi, II, ch. 181, 192, 8-20.

¹⁴⁷ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 22 O'Meara. (Cf. Psell. *omn.* 28, 29, 6 Westerink). Corresponds to Procl. ET 182, 160, 5-6 Dodds but with a small difference, because in Proclus we have as follows: "every participated divine intellect is participated by divine souls." (Transl. by Dodds, 161, slightly modified). In the commentary on prop. 182 Petritsi claims that the first soul is similar to the divine intellect, because soul participates in henads by means of intellect. Petritsi, II, ch. 182, 193, 2-6.

¹⁴⁸ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 23-24 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 183, 160, 13-15 Dodds with a small difference: "Every intellect which is participated but is purely intellectual", Procl. ET 183, 160, 13 Dodds (transl. by Dodds, 161, slightly modified). Psellos reproduced the same text in *Omn.*, ch. 28, 29, 6-8 Westerink, in a little bit different form.

¹⁴⁹ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 24-25 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 183, 160, 18-19 Dodds, and Psell. *omn.* 28, 8-9 Westerink. In the commentary on prop. 183 Petritsi distinguishes three kinds of intellect: the divine ones, attached to intellects and henads, then souls which change so that sometimes they have cognitive ability and sometimes not, and the third kind is intermediate between these two ones; the souls of this kind are whether variable nor divine, and they do not participate in intellects but in those entities which are intellectual. Petritsi, II, ch. 183, 193, 12-19.

Further, Psellos goes back to prop. 179 of Proclus' *Elements*. He says that every intellectual number is finite.¹⁵⁰ Then Psellos repeats the phrase that every intellect is a whole as that which is a composite of parts,¹⁵¹ and continues quoting from prop. 180:

“each of them [i.e. intellect] is united with others and distinct from them.¹⁵² But the unparticipated intellect is plainly a whole, as having all its parts in itself as a whole, while each of the partial intellects contains the whole as parts, and is thus everything partially. For each thing is everything according to one [aspect], and according to one [aspect] means nothing other than partially.”¹⁵³

Psellos finishes his small treatise '*On Intellect*' saying that this was Proclus' philosophical theory on intellect, exposed in his *Elements of theology*.¹⁵⁴

Op. 12

The first part of this treatise is interesting for us for two reasons: it concerns intellect, and it is based on Nemesios Emesa's *Peri physeos anthropou*, the text translated by Petritsi into Georgian before he translated Proclus' *Elements*. At the very beginning, Psellos says that according to Plotinus' teaching, intellect and soul are not the same, and this was the opinion of Apolinarios too, while others thought that the intellect is the leading part of the soul.¹⁵⁵

Op. 21

This is one of the most interesting parts of Psellos' text. Psellos claims that intellect is not an eye of the soul, though many philosophers thought so.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 25 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 179, 158, 3 Dodds, and Psell. omn. 28, 29, 2-3 Westerink. In the commentary on prop. 179 Petritsi explains why the number of intellectuals is not infinite: because that which is closer to the One is more similar to one/unity. Petritsi, II, ch. 179, 191, 8-13.

¹⁵¹ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 25-26 O'Meara. Psellos said the same before, see above, Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 20-21 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 180, 12, and Psell. omn. 28, 29, 3 Westerink.

¹⁵² Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 26-27 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 180, 12. Psellos quoted this also in *Omn.*, ch. 28, 3-4 Westerink (Psellos' reading of Proclus' text is different from Dodds' interpretation, see our notes to Psellos' *Omn.*, ch. 28 Westerink).

¹⁵³ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 27-30 O'Meara. Corresponds to Procl. ET 180, 13-15.

¹⁵⁴ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.10, 21, 31-32 O'Meara.

¹⁵⁵ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.12, 23, 17-18 O'Meara. Corresponds to Nemesios, *De Natura Hominis*. Edidit M. Morani. (Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig, 1987), 1, and Petritsi's translation: Nemesios, *On the Nature of Man*, geo, 3.

¹⁵⁶ For Psellos' sources see notes by O'Meara in Psell. Phil. Min. 2. 95. Psellos by himself claimed in op. 9 that 'eye' is a metaphor for knowledge (τὸ γὰρ ὄμμα γνώσεως σύμβολον. Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9, 18, 6 O'Meara), see above, and our notes to Psell. Phil. Min. 2.9.

Why? Because an eye is an organ moved by another thing and directed toward senses, while intellect is soul's guide and its elevator toward more divine illuminations, filling it with the divine light from above and making it full with immaterial forms.¹⁵⁷ As we already mentioned in notes to *op.* 9, Petritsi uses the expression "eyes of the soul" too,¹⁵⁸ meaning the highest aspect of the soul.

Conclusion

In both Psellos' and Petritsi's philosophies, Proclus' theory of intellect with all its aspects (unparticipated intellect, participated one, modes of cognition, the relation of intellect to being, Forms, soul, the One etc) was an important theme. Psellos discussed it in *Omnifaria doctrina*, ch. 21-30, and *Philosophica minora II*, *op.* 2, 9, 10, 12, 21, while Petritsi did it in the commentaries on Proclus' *Elements of theology*, including his prologue and epilogue. Psellos' texts on intellect are mainly compilations or paraphrases from Proclus' *Elements of theology* and, in case of *Phil. II*, *op.* 2, 9, 12, 21, 33-36 from other texts of Proclus as well as various ancient Greek philosophical and patristic sources, expanded in some cases with Psellos' own short additions or comments. Petritsi's commentaries are also based on Proclus' *Elements*, though he took into consideration Proclus' other texts as well as various (neo)platonistic sources, explicitly mentioned in his work, too. Petritsi's commentary on intellect has much in common with Psellos' texts, though the accents made by these two philosophers interpreting the same propositions from Proclus' *Elements* are frequently quite different. Certainly Petritsi was aware of Psellos' works though there is no evidence that in his commentary he used them. The similarity between Psellos' and Petritsi's interpretations can be explained by the fact that both of them had as a background the same philosophical sources (first and foremost, Proclus' *Elements*). Proclus' philosophy, and the Platonic tradition generally, seems to be completely acceptable for Petritsi, and nowhere in his commentary did he criticize them.

¹⁵⁷ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.21, 95, 7-16 O'Meara. Cf. Plotinus: "In the intelligible world seeing is not through another [medium], but through itself, because it is not [directed] outside." *Plot.* V 3 [49], 8, 21-22, transl. by A. H. Armstrong. Cf. *Plot.* III 8 8 [30], 11, 1-2; IV 5 [29], 1; VI 7 [38], 41, 4-5; VI, 8 [39], 7; On seeing with and without eye in Plotinus see L. Alexidze, "Eros as Soul's 'Eye' in Plotinus: What does it see and not see?", - in: *Platonism and its Legacy. Selected papers from the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the International Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies*. Edited by J. Finamore, T. Nejeschleba. (The Prometheus Trust, Gloucestershire, UK, 2019), 41-58.

¹⁵⁸ Petritsi, II, ch. 40, 94, 7-8. See also Ioane Petritzi, *Kommentar zur Elementatio theologica*, p.196.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources (texts and translations)

[Ioane Petritsi]

Ioannis Petritzii, *Opera*. Tomus I: *Proclis Diadochi ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ*. Versio Hiberica. Textum Hibericum edidit commentariisque instruxit S. Kauchtschischvili. Tbilisiis 1940 (*in Georgian, title in Georgian and Latin*). [იოანე პეტრიჭის შრომები, ტომი I. *პროკლე დიადოხოსისა პლატონურისა ფილოსოფოსისა კავშირნი*, ქართული ტექსტი გამოსცა და გამოკვლევა და ლექსიკონი დაურთო სიმ. ყაუხჩიშვილმა. შესავალი სტატია მ. გოგიბერიძისა. თსუ გამომცემლობა, თბილისი 1940].

Ioannis Petrizii, *Opera*. Tomus II: *Commentaria in Procli Diadochi ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΣΙΝ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΝ*. Textum Hibericum ediderunt commentariisque instruxerunt S. Nutsubidse et S. Kauchtschischvili. Sumptibus Universitatis Tbilisiensis. Tbilisiis 1937 (*in Georgian, title in Georgian and Latin*). [იოანე პეტრიჭის შრომები. ტომი II. განმარტებაჲ პროკლე დიადოხოსისა და პლატონურისა ფილოსოფოსისათჳს. ტექსტი გამოსცეს და გამოკვლევა დაურთეს შ. ნუცუბიძემ და ს. ყაუხჩიშვილმა. ტფილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის გამომცემლობა, ტფილისი 1937].

Ioane Petrizi, *Kommentar zur Elementatio theologica des Proklos*. Übersetzung aus dem Altgeorgischen, Anmerkungen, Indices und Einleitung von L. Alexidze, L. Bergemann. B. R. Grüner, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2009.

[Michael Psellos]

Michael Psellos, *De omnifaria Doctrina*. Critical text and introduction by L. G. Westerink. J. L. Beijers N.V., Utrecht, 1948.

Michael Psellus, *Philosophica minora*, vol. II. Edidit D. J. O'Meara. B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig, 1989.

[Nemesios of Emesa]

Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis*. Edidit M. Morani. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig, 1987.

Nemesios of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*. Translated from Greek into Georgian by Ioane Petritsi. Edited with indices by S. R. Gorgadze. Published by Ecclesiastical Museum. Tbilisi 1914 (*in Georgian*) [ნემესიოს ემესელი, *ბუნებისათჳს კაცისა*. ბერძნულიდან გადმოღებული იოვანე პეტრიჭის მიერ. ქართული ტექსტი შეისწავლა, გამოსაცემად დაამზადა და ლექსიკონ-საძიებლები დაურთო ს. რ. გორგაძემ. გამოცემა საეკლესიო მუზეუმისა 17. ტფილისი 1914].

[Plotinus]

Plotini *Opera*. Ediderunt P. Henry et H.-R. Schwyzer. 3 vols. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1964-1982.

Plotinus, *Enneads I-VI*, Greek text with English translation by A. H. Armstrong. 7 vols. Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 1966-1988.

[Porphyry]

Porphyrii *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, edidit E. Lamberz. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Leipzig, 1975.

Porphyre, *Sentences*. T. I, II. Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française, commentaire, avec une traduction anglaise de J. Dillon. Travaux édités sous la responsabilité de L. Brisson. Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 2005.

[Proclus]

Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*. A revised text with translation, introduction and commentary by E. R. Dodds. 2nd ed. At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963.

Procli Diadochi *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*. Edidit E. Diehl, 3 vols. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Leipzig, 1903-1906.

Secondary literature

L. Alexidze, "Griechische Philosophie in den Kommentaren des Ioane Petrizi", in *Oriens Christianus* 81, 1997, p. 148-168.

L. Alexidze, "Michael Psellos, De omnifaria doctrina: Die Fragmente über den Geist. Georgische Übersetzung mit Anmerkungen und Nachwort", - in: *Religia*, 1-2-3, Tbilisi, 2004, p. 31-36 (*in Georgian*, title and summary in German) [ლ. ალექსიძე, "მიქაელ ფსელოსი, მრავალფეროვანი მეცნიერება: ფრაგმენტები გონების შესახებ. ბერძნულიდან თარგმანი, შენიშვნები და ბოლოსიტყვა. რელიგია, 1-2-3, თბილისი, 2004, გვ. 31-36].

L. Alexidze, *Ioane Petrizi und die antike Philosophie*, Ivane Javakhishvili Universität Tbilissi, Universitätsverlag, Tbilissi, 2008 (*in Georgian*, title and summary in German). [ლ. ალექსიძე, *იოანე პეტრიჭი და ანტიკური ფილოსოფია*. თსუ გამომცემლობა, თბილისი, 2008].

L. Alexidze, "The Chaldean Oracles in Ioane Petritsi's Commentary on Proclus' *Elements of Theology*", - in: *Mélanges Jean-Pierre Mahé*, édités par A. Mardirossian, A. Ouzounian, C. Zuckerman. Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Paris, 2014, p. 9-16.

L. Alexidze, "Ioane Petritsi", - in: *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Edited by S. Gersh. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 229-244.

- L. Alexidze, “‘One in the Beings’ and ‘One within Us’: The Basis of the Union with the One in Ioane Petritsi’s Interpretation of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*”, - in: *Georgian Christian Thought and Its Cultural Context. Memorial Volume for the 125th Anniversary of Shalva Nutsubidze*. Edited by T. Nutsubidze, C. B. Horn, B. Lourié. Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2014, p. 175-193.
- L. Alexidze, “*Dianoia* in Ioane Petritsi’s commentary on Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*”, - in: *Chôra. Revue d’études anciennes et médiévales. Philosophie, théologie, sciences*. 14/2016, Polirom 2016, p. 177-194.
- L. Alexidze, “The Supreme One: Its Transcendence and Its ‘Kataphatic’ Characteristics in Ioane Petritsi’s Philosophy”, - in: *Bochumer philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*. Band 20, 2017. Herausgegeben von M. Baumbach, O. Pluta. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia, p. 63-86.
- L. Alexidze, “Eros as Soul’s ‘Eye’ in Plotinus: What does it see and not see?”, - in: *Platonism and its Legacy. Selected papers from the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies*. Edited by J. Finamore, T. Nejeschleba. The Prometheus Trust, Gloucestershire, UK, 2019, p. 41-58.
- L. Alexidze, The Demiurge in Ioane Petritsi’s Commentary on Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*, - in: *Revista Latinoamericana de Filosofía*. Centro de Investigaciones Filosóficas. Buenos Aires. Argentina. Vol. 47, N1. Otoño 2021, p. 149-165.
- L. Gigineishvili, *The Platonic Theology of Ioane Petritsi*. Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ, 2007.
- T. Iremadze, *Konzeptionen des Denkens im Neuplatonismus. Zur Rezeption der Proklischen Philosophie im deutschen und georgischen Mittelalter*. Dietrich von Freiberg – Berthold von Moosburg – Joane Petrizi. B. R. Grüner, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2004.
- F. Lauritzen, “The Renaissance of Proclus in Eleventh Century”, - in: *Proclus and his Legacy*. Edited by D. Butorac, D. Layne. De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, 2016, p. 233-239.
- F. Lauritzen, “A Lifetime with Proclus: Psellos as reader”, - in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 113/1, 2020: 1. Abteilung. De Gruyter, 2020, p. 69-80.
- F. Lauritzen, “An Orthodox and Byzantine Reception of the *Elements of Theology*”, - in: *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes. Volume 2. Translations and Acculturations*. Edited by D. Calma. Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2021, p. 19-31.
- D. J. O’Meara, “Michael Psellos”, - in: *Interpreting Proclus, From Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Edited by S. Gersh. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 165-181.
- J. Robinson, “‘A Mixing Cup of Piety and Learnedness’: Michael Psellos and Nicholas of Methone as Readers of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*”, - in: *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes. Volume 2, Translations and Acculturations*. Edited by D. Calma. Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2021, p. 56-93.

REMARKS ON PSELLOS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PATRISTIC EXEGETICAL TRADITION IN HIS *THEOLOGICA*

GEORGIOS DIAMANTOPOULOS¹

ABSTRACT. In this paper I explore Psellos' attitude towards the Church Fathers' exegesis with the focus on *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier. Relative *Theologica* are also examined. His critical arguments and his enthusiasm for Proclus' hermeneutics are analyzed systematic comparative and are contextualized through historical-comparative methods in the eleventh century's conflict between philosophers and mystics.

Keywords: Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, Hermeneutics, Proclus, Nicetas Stethatos.

Introduction

Psellos' critical attitude towards the patristic tradition has already been pointed out.² The issue, however, has not been thoroughly enlightened so far. In fact, I consider it particularly critical that not only the position of Psellos towards the exegetical patristic tradition has been examined with reference to the *Theologica*,³ but also Psellos' hermeneutics too in general in his *Theologica* has been studied truly little.⁴ This is a series of exegetical lectures, where Psellos interprets mainly biblical and patristic passages, with special emphasis on Gregorius Nazianzenus.

¹ Faculty of Theology, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Email: vgeorgios_diamantopoulos@yahoo.gr.

² Cf. Walter (2017, 20) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 565–67) for further literature, also for discussion of Psellos. *Theol.* 1. 78 and 1. 5 Gautier.

³ Edited by Gautier (1989); Westerink and Duffy (2002).

⁴ The author is working on a postdoctoral research on Psellos' hermeneutics in his *Theologica* and *Allegorica* at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and will publish the findings in an extensive study. For the hermeneutics in Psellos' *Theologica* see for example Lauritzen (2012) (on *Theol.* 1. 11 Gautier); further literature in Diamantopoulos (2019, 25n31). No monograph is published on this subject. The few studies on *Theologica* published so far focused barely on Psellos' hermeneutics in his *Theologica*.

Examining Psellos' attitude towards this tradition in this interpretive context is essential, because *Theologica* are one of the key points of reference for establishing Psellos' true philosophical beliefs, as recently assumed.⁵ Moreover, as I have argued,⁶ the hermeneutics in the 11th century became the most essential issue in theological thought. Furthermore, the patristic foundation in interpretation is considered a basic principle of ecclesiastical exegesis, therefore Psellos' attitude towards it must be explored in deep. Above all, this examination will contribute to the comprehension of Psellos' hermeneutics, which I hypothesize to be his main philosophical proposal.

In the present study, I would like to refer to some important cases where a critical attitude of Psellos can be distinguished, sometimes acutely, towards this tradition. *Theol. 1. 1* Gautier will be the main reference point, as there Psellos seems to lay the programmatic basis for his interpretive theory and practice, which concerns *Theologica* on the whole. These issues will be explored in comparison with other related passages in the *Theologica*.

In the first chapter, consisting of two parts, I use a systematic-comparative method to present the main arguments of Psellos against the Church Fathers' hermeneutics and his enthusiasm for Proclus. In the first part I expound Psellos' main arguments, his criticism for failure and divination. The relative exegetic patristic tradition is compared with what Psellos presents as the patristic interpretations. An important point of reference in this examination is that Psellos refers to the Church Fathers anonymously. In the second part Psellos' references in *Theol. 1. 1* Gautier and other *Theologica* to Proclus' *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* is presented as his hermeneutical paradigm against the Church Fathers' and his contemporaries' exegetical praxis. In this context, a further main point that is expounded, is the accusation that both the previous and contemporary exegetes' interpretations resulted in monstrous ceremonies. In both parts I raise the question that Psellos seems to contradict himself, as he uses in his hermeneutics the same concepts that he criticizes, especially if we consider his systematic use of the *Oracula Chaldaica* in the *Theologica* and his employment of a sacramental language in *Theol. 1. 1* Gautier.

In the second chapter I try to approach the reasons for this attitude, where a historical-comparative method dominates. The examination takes place under the fundamental hypothesis that Psellos instrumentalizes his criticism against the Church Fathers to use it against his contemporary interpreters.

This chapter is also divided in two parts. In the first part I discuss Psellos' anonymous use of Maximus Confessor's interpretations. This is explored under the assumption that in *Theol. 1. 1* Gautier and in other *Theologica* Psellos aims at Maximus' hermeneutics' rejection and Proclus' enthronement. In this context

⁵ Walter (2017, 16–17).

⁶ Diamantopoulos (2019).

I take into consideration that the former was considered from the eleventh century mystics as their paradigm. In the second part I explore a similar important issue, that is to find out exactly who Psellos' contemporary exegetical opponents are. I propose the theologian Nicetas Stethatos and his supporters, Patriarch Michael Kerullarios and Nicetas synkellos. The main reference point in the mystics' thought was that the interpretation is a mystical revelation as a result of man's purification. In this examination I hypothesize that Psellos through his criticism and his claim to reveal deeper meanings attempts to upgrade the laymen philosophers' status at the highest hermeneutical authority and to overthrow Stethatos' mystical hierarchy, where the laymen come symbolically at the third place. The hypothesis of a conflict with the mystics is employed also to explain the apparent contradiction, that Psellos uses for his hermeneutics the concepts that he criticizes. No study so far, except for my monograph on Stethatos' hermeneutics, assumed a hermeneutical conflict between Psellos and Stethatos.

In the third chapter I summarize the conclusions of this paper.

1. What? The Arguments of *Theol. 1. 1* Gautier

In *Theol. 1. 1* Gautier⁷ Psellos interprets the biblical passages which refer to people and places involved in the preparation of the Last Supper. He focuses on the man carrying a jar of water, the master of the house,⁸ where the Last Supper would take place and on the village on the other side.⁹ In this *Theologicum* one can see that Psellos has if not a negative, at least a critical attitude towards the previous interpretive tradition of the examined passages.

⁷ There is no study on this *Theologicum*, except for a reference of Kampianaki (2016, 318–19), who shortly discussed on just one word in *Theol. 1. 1* as an example for her analysis.

⁸ *Ev. Matt.* 26: 17–19; *Marc.* 14: 12–15; *Luc.* 22, 7–12 Aland et al.

⁹ In the biblical narratives *Ev. Matt.* 26: 18; *Marc.* 14: 13, 16; *Luc.* 22, 10 Aland et al, concerning the preparation of the Last Supper, the word πόλις is used, while in the others, *Ev. Matt.* 21: 2; *Marc.* 11: 2; *Luc.* 19: 30 Aland et al., concerning the event before the triumphal entry, the word κώμην is used. Therefore, the phrase used by Psellos (ἀπέναντι κώμῃ) refers to the incidents before the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem and not before the Last Supper. Psellos himself, however, is clearly referring to the Last Supper with that phrase, as one can conclude from the context. There is, however, in the patristic writings a connection of the phrase εἰς τὴν ἀπέναντι κώμην with the events before the Last Supper, see Ath. *Dicta et interp.* 712A, 712C Migne. In these passages, the author uses both terms πόλις and κώμη for the preparation of the Last Supper. In 712B, however, concerning Christ's triumphal entry in Jerusalem, he uses only the word κώμη. This could be an indication that Psellos is inspired by him, because, as I wrote, he uses the word κώμη instead of πόλις to speak about the incidents before the Last Supper. Another possible hypothesis could be that Psellos makes a memory mistake: He himself in *Theologica* sometimes mentions that he speaks from memory and improvises, cf. e.g., Psell. *Theol.* 1. 58, 109–13 Gautier.

He presents an introduction¹⁰ consisting of two parts, where important elements are found. The epilogue¹¹ contains equally essential theoretical positions of Psellos on interpretation, as well.

1. 1 Criticism for Failure and μαντεία

In the **first part** of this introduction,¹² according to Psellos, many people have tried to find out who the master of the house was. Most of them, in fact, reached an old age looking for an answer as to who is the one who holds the jar and which is the village, where he would do the service. Psellos refers to the previous interpreters with descriptions that show a negative or even an ironic attitude. By referring to the deep old age, he wants to emphasize on the failure of the interpreters so far as it is a long process, where one reaches the end of his life without result. Eventually, since their efforts failed, according to Psellos, they speculated. To describe this, he says that they made a rough guess¹³ to find the meaning of the names. At this point, Psellos mentions their interpretations, which I will discuss below. He also criticizes these interpreters for arguing with each other by challenging each other. That is why he will not refer to them much.

1. 1. 1 The Patristic Exegesis on the Last Supper

As a matter of fact, I have not been able to find the interpretations mentioned and criticized by Psellos in the patristic exegesis. For the host¹⁴ he mentions Nathanael or Zacchaeus.¹⁵ Nevertheless, I found that all the exegetes up to Psellos interpret this person allegorically, that is symbolical or anagogical¹⁶ without mentioning anything about Nathanael and Zacchaeus.¹⁷ For the bearer

¹⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 3–45 Gautier.

¹¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–128 Gautier.

¹² Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 3–15 Gautier.

¹³ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 8 Gautier: καταμαντεύομενοι.

¹⁴ *Ev. Marc.* 14: 14; *Luc.* 22: 11 Aland et al.

¹⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 13–15 Gautier.

¹⁶ Anagogical interpretation refers to the seek of a mystic, hidden, spiritual meaning beyond the letter of the text, see Lampe (1961, 100, 101), entries ἀναγωγή and ἀναγωγικός. This must be distinguished from the concept of the anagoge in Latin sources, where it refers to the spiritual interpretation that seeks only eschatological meanings, see on that Kannengiesser (2006, 257); for Psellos' allegoresis see Roilos (2005, 121–124) and the literature mentioned in Diamantopoulos (2019, 490).

¹⁷ See *Or. comm. ser. 1–145 in Mt.* 79, 199, 26; 200, 11 Benz and Klostermann (the mind, nous); *Ath. Dicta et interp.* 712C Migne (Adam).

of the jar Psellos mentions¹⁸ Simon the Leper.¹⁹ The patristic interpretations in this case are also anagogical²⁰ apart from the case of Alexander Salaminus.²¹ As for the village, he mentions²² Nazareth, Galilee, or Bethlehem. Nevertheless, I have never found such an interpretation. What is important, on the contrary, is that the exegetical tradition seeks in the word κώμην, in the events before the entry into Jerusalem,²³ only anagogical interpretations²⁴ and not ἱστορία,²⁵ that has to do with geographical location. The same conclusions are drawn, if we accept²⁶ that Psellos' phrase εἰς τὴν ἀπέναντι κώμην refers to the word "city" (πόλιν) in the narrations about the preparation of the Last Supper:²⁷ here²⁸ too there is no geographical location but only an anagogical interpretation.

In any case, it is significant to mention that Psellos criticizes this tradition for unsuccessful long-term efforts as he considers the interpretations

¹⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 10–13 Gautier.

¹⁹ Psellos cross-refers to an unwritten tradition of Jesus' miracles, Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 12–13 Gautier. The critical apparatus refers to Chrys. *Hom. in Mt.* 80 1, 723 Migne; however, this passage does not refer to Simon, as the person to whom the upper room belongs, but to his cure from Jesus; apparently here Gautier refers to the miracle of healing to which also Psellos refers, see Psell. *Theol.* 1. 11, 11–12 Gautier.

²⁰ See, e. g., Ath. *Dicta et interp.* 712A Migne (Joannes Forerunner); Caes. Naz. *Dial.* IV 1176 Migne (the same); Chrys. *Hom. in Lc.* 8: 5 773 Migne (the same; the author teaches that it is necessary to know who he is, as well as the city, ἀναγκαῖον ζητήσαντας ἡμᾶς καταμαθεῖν); Cyr. *Hom. Pasch.* 17 772B Migne (soul's purification); Andr. Cr. *Or.* 9 1012B Migne (the soul).

²¹ Alex. Sal. *Barn.* 221–28 van Deun. He considers him the Evangelist Marcus. However, Alexander teaches that Marcus is not named in the biblical narration, because behind him we should see everyone who prepares himself for hosting the Lord. He too, thus, accepts an anagogical interpretation. See for Alexander Salaminus Kazhdan (1991, 60).

²² Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 7–10, 38–39 Gautier.

²³ See footnote 8.

²⁴ Or. *Jo.* 10. 189 Blanc (the whole earth when compared to heaven; there is also a reference to the importance of the village's anonymity); Ath. *Hom. in Mt.* 21: 2 173C–176A Migne (the earth); Ath. *Dicta et interp.* 712B Migne (the world); Tit. Bost. *Palm.* 1272B Migne (the nations); Epiph. *Hom.* 6 504C Migne (the opposite to the world's opinion); Cyr. *Hom. div.* 13 1053D–1056A Migne (the present life); Eulog. *Palm.* 2917C–2920C Migne (the opposite village a symbol of this life, which is located opposed to God).

²⁵ Lampe (1961, 678): "literal sense of scripture (v. ἀναγωγή, θεωρία); [...]".

²⁶ See footnote 8.

²⁷ Ev. *Matt.* 26: 18 Aland et al: ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν πόλιν πρὸς τὸν δεῖνα καὶ εἶπατε αὐτῷ: ὁ διδάσκαλος λέγει: ὁ καιρὸς μου ἐγγύς ἐστιν, πρὸς σὲ ποιῶ τὸ πάσχα μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν μου; *Marc.* 14: 13, 16 Aland et al: καὶ ἀποστέλλει δύο τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς: ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν πόλιν, καὶ ἀπαντήσῃ ὑμῖν ἄνθρωπος κεράμιον ὕδατος βαστάζων ἀκολουθήσατε αὐτῷ [...] καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ καὶ ἦλθον εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ εὔρον καθὼς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἠτοίμασαν τὸ πάσχα; *Luc.* 22, 10 Aland et al: ἰδοὺ εἰσελθόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν πόλιν συναντήσῃ ὑμῖν ἄνθρωπος κεράμιον ὕδατος βαστάζων ἀκολουθήσατε αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἰς ἣν εἰσπορεύεται.

²⁸ Or. *comm. ser. 1–145 in Mt.* 79, p. 199, 12–13 Benz and Klostermann (the Church); Ath. *Dicta et interp.* 712A (the same); 712C Migne (the underworld); Caes. Naz. *Dial.* IV 1176 Migne (new Jerusalem); Chrys. *Hom. in Lc.* 8: 5 773 Migne (the same).

so far as a product of divination. If this concerns the Fathers of the Church, then especially the last case is a serious accusation, especially if Psellos speaks literally here. One could assume that he speaks metaphorically, but even in this case I will show that this is not just an irony without deeper allusions and symbolism. At this point, however, I have to point out in advance, that the verb *καταμαντεύομαι* can mean either “I guess”, or “I prophesy” even in the context of interpretation.²⁹ Therefore, in his thought the meaning of divination concerns interpretation and is not a simple rebuke.

1. 1. 2 Psellos’ Exegesis and *μαντεία*

However, Psellos himself likens in some passages of his *Theologica* his own interpretation to the divination of Delphi,³⁰ while he characterizes the texts from the Bible or Gregorius Nazianzenus that he interprets as oracles.³¹ In this case the interpretation refers to a process like that of divination. This means not only that the texts are treated as oracles and riddles that require their proper interpreter, but also that the interpretation itself is presented as a mysterious irrational and ecstatic experience, reminiscent of what Pythia did.

This is also evident from the fact that in the *Theologica* there is extensive use of the *Oracula Chaldaica*³² and the *Commentaria in Oraculis Chaldaicis* of Proclus (or related works of Psellos³³). Although Psellos to some extent seems

²⁹ Liddell, Scott and Jones (1996, 900).

³⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 19, 70–80 Gautier (Psellos likens himself to the ecstatic experiences of Pythia in his interpretation and rhetorical evaluation of Gregorius Nazianzenus. In verses 74–75 and 76–77 he uses phraseology from Procl. *In Or. Chald.* See Gautier’s critical apparatus and 2. 3 my discussion on Kerullarios. That is, he appears to follow at least metaphorically what is provided there for divination, he even says that he himself gives oracles). See on this *Theologicum* Barber and Papaioannou (2017, 153, 155–59n1–21); see also Psell. *Theol.* 1. 64, 173–174 Gautier; Psellos uses there the same verb for himself (*καταμαντεύόμενος*), however, with irony.

³¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 38, 2, 23 Gautier (Isaiah’s passage for interpretation is described as an oracle); 1. 39, 3 Gautier (Isaiah’s passage for interpretation is like an oracle); 1. 55, 2–10 Gautier (Gregorius Nazianzenus’ passage for interpretation looks like an oracle given by Apollo to Pythia).

³² Edited by des Places and Segonds (1996). See also Majercik (1989).

³³ The surviving excerpts of Proclus’ *Commentaria* were edited by des Places and Segonds (1996, 206–12). Their editing probably is a work of Psellos. Psellos also wrote a *Commentary* on the *Oracula Chaldaica*, *Phil. Min.* 2. 38 Duffy and O’ Meara; see also Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2. 9; 39; 40; 41; 42 Duffy and O’ Meara. See on Procl. *In Or. Chald.*, its use by Psellos, also on Psellos’ *Commentary* and the other above-mentioned works concerning the *Oracula Chaldaica* in O’Meara (2013); (2014, 169–170, 175–77). For Psellos and the *Oracula Chaldaica* see among others also Lauritzen (2019).

derogatory towards them,³⁴ elsewhere their teaching is used in interpretation as an integral part of it. At this point Psellos tries to legitimize their use in the name of the confutation of heresies.³⁵ Elsewhere he adopts their terminology and teaching,³⁶ in fact he is obviously positive towards them,³⁷ with references to the neoplatonic theurgy.³⁸ In any case, the *Oracula Chaldaica*, and the related references to theurgy constitute an essential element of interpretation. This contradiction can only be explained in the context of the developments of the time, as I will show in the second chapter.

1. 1. 3 Who are the Anonymous καταμαντευόμενοι?

Psellos does not specify who he means when he talks about interpreters who have been guessing their interpretations for years and were led to the

-
- ³⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 9, 6–8 Gautier (*Oracula Chaldaica* are chatter); 1. 26, 105–12 Gautier (the Chaldeans suffered what Moses did not suffer, they tried to see God without a veil; but they are not completely rejected; based on *Phil. Min.* 2. 41 Duffy and O' Meara; see the critical apparatus); 1. 51, 33–37 Gautier (neoplatonic angelology based on writings about their hierourgy is criticized, but Psellos apologizes for using them in his writings; Gautier quotes Procl. *In Or. Chald.* with question mark), 84–98 (critique of neoplatonic angelology based on *Phil. Min.* 2. 40; 2. 41 Duffy and O' Meara); Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 83–87 Gautier (however, see 2. 3).
- ³⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 4, 43–44 Gautier (*Or. Chald.* 57 des Places); 44–50 Gautier (Psellos read the *Oracula Chaldaica* about Valentinus' dyarchy); 1. 23, 35–52 Gautier (use of Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2. 39; 2. 40; 2. 41 Duffy and O' Meara; Procl. *In Or. Chald.*; see for the last quotation the critical apparatus and my discussion on Kerullarios in 2. 3); 1. 23a Gautier (extensive report of Chaldean dogmas, *Phil. Min.* 2. 39 Duffy and O' Meara); 1. 51, 43–47 Gautier.
- ³⁶ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 32, 86–87 Gautier (Psellos interprets in this *Theologicum Job*, 1: 6 Rahlfs and Hanhart, with angelology and mystical teachings about the angels, where elements of the *Oracula Chaldaica* appear, see the critical apparatus; cf. *Phil. Min.* 2. 40, p. 150, 23–26; p. 151, 12–13 Duffy and O' Meara); 1. 34, 56–57 Gautier (the soul acts ἐνθεαστικῶς, where the knowledge is a symbol and a riddle of an advanced knowledge; the terminus ἐνθεαστικός comes from Procl. *In Or. Chald.* IV, p. 209, 11–12 des Places and Segonds, see the critical apparatus; see also Liddell, Scott and Jones (1996, 566), where the term appears in other works of Proclus).
- ³⁷ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 11, 24–28 Gautier (use of Procl. *In Or. Chald.* for interpretation; Gautier notes that this passage does not exist elsewhere, see however, Robinson (2021, 75–76); it is important that Psellos in the verses 12–14 names Proclus' teaching a rule of interpretation, which applies it to the interpretation of the troparion; see on this *Theologicum* Lauritzen (2012) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 553–54); for a more detailed analysis see also Robinson (2021, 73–80)); 1. 23, 40–41, 53–54 Gautier (prompt for the study of the *Oracula Chaldaica*; Psellos read them more thoroughly than anyone else).
- ³⁸ See e.g. Psell. *Theol.* 1. 27, 188–95 Gautier (neoplatonic mystic/theurgical terminology in interpretation; see the critical apparatus for neoplatonic sources, mainly Iamblichus); 1. 30, 152–58 Gautier (neoplatonic theurgical terminology in interpretation; see sources as in *Theol.* 1. 27 Gautier). The connection between the neoplatonic theurgy and the *Oracula Chaldaica* is discussed by Lewy (2011); Tanaseanu-Döbler (2012, 202–205).

above-mentioned errors. However, it is obvious that he is referring to the Church Fathers. It is no coincidence that he does not mention the names of the Fathers, at least in this section, but refers to them anonymously: It is a tactic that he often applies when referring in his *Theologica* to the patristic interpretive tradition, where he uses the indefinite pronoun τινές (in the plural), also the term ὁ ἐξηγητής.³⁹ The fact that Psellos refers elsewhere anonymously to the Fathers, shows that here, too, behind anonymity, he implies the Fathers of the Church. At this point, it is essential to emphasize that in the *Theologica* there are no frequent nominal references: Psellos seldom mentions by name the Fathers and the ecclesiastical writers in the interpretation, with an obvious preference for Maximus the Confessor, to whom he refers only a few times positively.⁴⁰ I will show in paragraph 1. 2. 2 how Psellos refers to the names of some Church Fathers with extremely negative characterizations in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier, where he compares them with his contemporary exegetes. This shows if not a devaluation, at least an attempt to distance himself from this tradition by putting it on the sidelines of anonymity.

One might assume that he is criticizing contemporaries on the question of the interpretation of the host, the village and the man holding the jar. However, the fact that according to Psellos many dealt with this issue, makes it difficult to assume that they are contemporaries. Additionally, we will see that in the second part of his prologue he speaks clearly about his contemporaries, which leads us to the conclusion that in the first part through anonymity he refers to the past and the Church Fathers.

1. 2 Proclus' Criticism and the Church Fathers

1. 2. 1 Proclus and the Church Fathers

In the beginning of the **second part** of his introduction⁴¹ Psellos makes a remarkable comparison: He considers that the interpreters who were engaged in the search for historical truth of people's and places' names suffered

³⁹ See for example: Psell. *Theol.* 1. 5, 19–21, 64, 66, 74–76; 1. 10, 3–4; 1. 11, 140; 1. 13, 2; 1. 15, 13; 1. 16, 119–21, 125; 1. 20, 46; 1. 27, 119–20, 124; 1. 39, 7–8, 13, 68; 1. 43, 96, 100; 1. 58, 65; 1. 70, 193; 1. 79, 18; 1. 82, 100, 116; 1. 90, 58; 1. 97, 4; 1. 113, 51 Gautier; *Theol.* 2. 1, 94; 2. 7, 122; 2. 10, 10; 2. 31, 16 Westerink and Duffy.

⁴⁰ See, e. g., Psell. *Theol.* 1. 10, 86 Gautier (Basileius Caesariensis); 1. 30, 29 Gautier (Theodoretus Cyrrensis); 1. 38, 130 Gautier (Maximus Confessor), 159, 165 Gautier (Basileius Caesariensis); 1. 43, 3 Gautier (Gregorius Nazianzenus), 41 Gautier (Maximus Confessor); 1. 59, 168 Gautier (Maximus Confessor), 187–189 Gautier (Gregorius Nyssenus), 189–191 Gautier (Andreas Cretensis); 1. 78, 113 Gautier (Maximus Confessor); 1. 79, 73 Gautier (Maximus Confessor); 1. 87, 91, 99 Gautier (Basileius Caesariensis); 1. 107, 15 Gautier (Maximus Confessor).

⁴¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 16–45 Gautier.

something similar to the Greek philosophers who tried to interpret a passage in Plato's *Timaeus* on the people of the dialogue,⁴² especially the name of the fourth absent.⁴³ Psellos refers to some of the names that have been proposed⁴⁴ and promotes Proclus as a model, who in his *Commentaria* to Plato's *Timaeus* criticized all these interpretations.⁴⁵ Psellos refers also elsewhere in the *Theologica* to Proclus and to his *Commentaria* as a model of hermeneutic theory and practice.⁴⁶ According to Psellos, who adopts the interpretation of Proclus,⁴⁷

⁴² Pl. *Ti.* 17a 1–5 Burnet.

⁴³ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 16–19 Gautier.

⁴⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 19–21 Gautier: Critias, Cebes Tebanus, Apollodorus Phalereus, hospes Eleaticus.

⁴⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 21–23 Gautier. See Pr. *In Ti.* I p. 19, 29–p. 20, 21 Diehl with Gautier's critical apparatus. Basically, Proclus' commentary on Pl. *Ti.* 17a 1–2 Burnet (the question about the fourth absent), starts from Pr. *In Ti.* I p. 14, 4 Diehl. On p. 19 that Gautier refers to in his critical apparatus, Proclus has already begun the interpretation of Pl. *Ti.* 17a 4–5 Burnet (about the absent's illness). Proclus, therefore, does not mention the question of who is the fourth absent interpreting the passage 17a 1–2, but 17a 4–5 concerning *Timaeus'* reference to the disease; there he also criticizes the suggested solutions. In Psell. *Theol.* 1. 75, 117–26 Gautier Psellos also quotes Pr. *In Ti.* I p. 14, 7–20 Diehl, where Proclus refers to Longinus' rhetorical evaluation of Plato's above-mentioned passage. See also Pr. *In Ti.* I p. 1, 11–13 (for the infinitive *τμαιογοραφεῖν*); p. 9, 11–24 Diehl.

⁴⁶ See e. g.: Psell. *Theol.* 1. 7, 38–47 Gautier (the three kinds of allegory of Procl. *In Ti.*, physical, moral, theological, apply to the interpretation of the biblical passage; Psellos quotes here Pr. *El. theol.* 103, 195 Dodds; see for Psellos' passage Robinson (2021, 72); for the fact that Psellos draws in his *Theologica* the three kinds of allegory from Proclus see Barber and Papaioannou (2017, 150n4)); 1. 11, 20–31 Gautier (Procl. *El. theol.* 103 Dodds –or 71 Dodds, according to Lauritzen (2012, 169), see also Robinson (2021, 73n49)– and *In Or. Chald.* –see Gautier' critical apparatus– become the hermeneutical rule); 1. 50, 42–44; 1. 54, 107–23 Gautier (Psellos refers here to Procl. *In Ti.* I p. 19, 9–12, 24–29 Diehl; see the critical apparatus; these verses are found exactly before Proclus' above-mentioned passage, which Psellos quotes in *Theol.* 1. 1, 21–23 Gautier; this shows the importance of Proclus' hermeneutical theory, found in these verses concerning the fourth absent, in Psellos' thought; Psellos thinks that Proclus uses the tripartite hermeneutical method *passim* in his *Commentaria in Timaeum*; however, Proclus seems to reject the moral allegory in the previously mentioned passage); see also 1. 56, 8–9; 1. 98, 36–40, 116–117 Gautier. Delli (2016, 43) referring to two of these passages (*Theol.* 1. 54 and 1. 50), accepts that Psellos considers Proclus, among other neoplatonists, as « l'exégète par excellence ». On Psellos and Proclus see also Chrestou (2005); O' Meara (2014); Lauritzen (2017); (2021); see also Robinson (2021, especially 59, 71–88 for Pr. *El. theol.* in the *Theologica*); he researches *Theol.* 1. 7; 1. 11; 1. 62 and 1. 105 Gautier.

⁴⁷ But this does not correspond to the text of Proclus: He does not refer to Apollodorus, nor to Critias, nor to Cebes Tebanus, instead he mentions other cases that Psellos does not mention (Theaetetus, Clitophon, Plato). Additionally, Proclus mentions hospes Eleaticus not as the fourth missing person of *Timaeus*, but as the participant in Plato's other dialogues. Perhaps Psellos is based on his *Or. Min.* 24, 33–35 Littlewood, where in the context of the discussion of the passage of Plat. *Phd.* 59b 6–c 2 Burnet concerning Plato's absence from the dialogue due to illness, some of these names are mentioned (Cebes, Apollodorus). Would it be bold to assume that Psellos, with a supposedly erroneous memory, essentially uses a coded language

the error of these interpreters (and therefore of the Fathers) lies not simply in the fact that they were involved in controversies with each other, but in “leaving” the higher contemplations (τῶν κρειττόνων θεωρημάτων).⁴⁸

In addition, I must point out that Psellos essentially equates the patristic exegetical tradition with the pagan ancient Greek one, mainly in terms of methodology and theological experience, a tactic that we find elsewhere in the *Theologica*.⁴⁹ Above all, however, it is noteworthy that he indirectly criticizes the Fathers that they could not deal with the essentials, but were trapped in the superficial, indirectly implying that they stuck to the letter. This explains why he says that they sought a *sensible* village (κώμην αἰσθητήν).

In fact, they did this according to Psellos in the same way that the pagan philosophers suffered. As a commitment to the letter, of course, he means the search for historical and geographical data in the Bible. Thus, according to Psellos, the historical and geographical truth of the Bible belongs to the useless and one must look deeper for higher meanings. We will see in the second chapter what exactly Psellos means by this.

to parallel Socrates of *Phaedo* shortly before his death sentence, in which the people mentioned take part, with Jesus and the preparation of the Last Supper shortly before His death sentence? Psellos, in addition, uses in *Or. Min.* 24, 31–32 Littlewood a passage from Synes. *Ep.* 154, 39–42 Garzya, which can be considered as an additional indication for the connection of the texts (*Theol.* 1. 1 and *Or. Min.* 24). Synesius’ passage is found immediately after the passage of his same letter that Psellos uses in the present *Theologicum*, cf. below.

⁴⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 22–23 Gautier.

⁴⁹ See, e. g., Psell. *Theol.* 1. 21, 2–8, 99–102 Gautier (Plato and Gregorius are compared unconditionally as theologians and philosophers to define who is better); 1. 22, 38–39 Gautier (Proclus as the most theological of the Greeks); 1. 27, 88–89 Gautier (the Greeks are called theologians); 1. 30, 7–9 Gautier (the secular literature too has scriptures, that are based on mystical illumination), 152–59 Gautier (the listing of topics here, which are assumed as referring to the interpretation of the biblical passage, are related to the neoplatonic mysticism or the Eleusinian Mysteries, and relate this *Theologicum* to *Theol.* 1. 27 Gautier; see critical apparatus, where Gautier refers to *Theol.* 1. 27; see also 1. 26 Gautier; it is no coincidence that Psellos uses the term θεολογικωτέρως διδασκαλίας for these themes, that is, not merely theological teachings, but higher theological teachings); 1. 49, 154–59; 1. 50, 2–10 Gautier. Psellos’ obsession with characterizing Greek philosophers as theologians is not accidental, nor is it based only on the fact that Proclus gave the title *Elementatio theologica* or *Theologia Platonica* in two of his major books: I believe it is related to the problematic of the time and the disputes around Symeon the New Theologian with the main point of confrontation the concept of theology and the theologian, that is, with Psellos’ confrontation with the mystics. See Diamantopoulos (2019, 505–11).

1. 2. 2 Proclus and Psellos' Contemporary Exegetes

In the following section⁵⁰ Psellos makes an interesting return to the present: He teaches us that there are similar exegetes in his time, whom he has met personally, who produce such speeches. Psellos criticizes them with the same sharpness using, firstly, the verb φοιτῶσι, which means not only “frequent” but also “spring up”⁵¹ and, secondly, a passage from Synesius,⁵² which he uses with irony.⁵³ He also accuses them of boasting for having done too much about one of those things for which there is silence in the Bible.

He then⁵⁴ cites specific examples of his contemporaries' interpretations that seek historical data in the biblical passages, namely the origin of Moses' staff,⁵⁵ the material of Aaron's rod⁵⁶ and the species of Eden's tree of the knowledge of good and evil.⁵⁷ Psellos mocks the exegetes in this case as well, stating that they chatter with myriads of speeches.⁵⁸ He stresses that his criticism is valid, even if such interpretations were given by Fathers such as Oecumenius, Gennadius I Constantinopolitanus and Hesychius Hierosolymitanus.⁵⁹ In fact, he states that he feels great shame for these interpretations.⁶⁰ Although Psellos characterizes the Fathers as superior to him,⁶¹ the very fact that he refers to them with such emotions and in the plural⁶² shows a rather derogatory attitude towards them. It also shows us that he treats them as groups, to which the whole relevant patristic tradition can belong. Here, too, it is obvious that there is a strongly critical attitude of Psellos towards the patristic hermeneutics and interpretations as a whole, at least as far as literal, or “historical” interpretation is concerned. In this case, Psellos refers to them by name.

⁵⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–26 Gautier.

⁵¹ See, e. g., Lampe (1961, 1487).

⁵² Synes. *Ep.* 154, 38–39 Garzya. See the whole passage 31–39.

⁵³ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–24 Gautier.

⁵⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 25–31 Gautier.

⁵⁵ *Ex.* 4: 2; 7: 9 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

⁵⁶ *Nu.* 17: 16–26 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

⁵⁷ *Gen.* 2: 9; 3: 3 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

⁵⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 29 Gautier.

⁵⁹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 31–32 Gautier.

⁶⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 30–31 Gautier.

⁶¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 31 Gautier: τῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς.

⁶² Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 32 Gautier: Οἰκουμένιοι καὶ Γεννάδιοι καὶ Ἡσύχιοι.

1. 2. 2. 1 Church Fathers and Psellos' Contemporary Exegetes

His reference to the contemporary interpreters shows that Psellos indeed until now has been referring to the exegetical past, in other words, the Fathers. The turn to the present, however, should not deceive us: If we pay attention to the reasoning of Psellos we will discover that his contemporaries are also connected in his mind with the interpretive tradition of the past. Firstly, he compares them with the ancient philosopher-interpreters; but he had already compared the latter to the Fathers, therefore his contemporaries belong to the category of interpreters based on the ancient tradition.⁶³ Also, the examples of the contemporaries' bad hermeneutical search that he mentions (e. g. maple or walnut tree for Aaron's rod), can be found in the patristic exegesis⁶⁴ which proves that Psellos identifies the contemporaries with the patristic interpretation. The identification with the Fathers is seen even more clearly in the continuation of the passage, where Psellos parallels his contemporaries and groups them together with Fathers. Although I was not able to find any of the interpretations, which Psellos mentions, in these Fathers (Oecumenius, Gennadius, Hesychius), in my opinion it is safe to assume that he mentions these names because he wants to show that his opponents support the context of the patristic tradition. This conclusion is essential for the contextualization of Psellos' criticism, as I will present in the second chapter.

1. 2. 2. 2 The *τερατώδεις τελεται* of Psellos' Contemporary Exegetes

Later on, Psellos criticizes further his contemporaries, who seek answers to the question why the Bible silenced such matters. According to Psellos, the result was that they presented some monstrous ceremonies, raising an intelligible curtain.⁶⁵ It is important that Psellos talks about monstrous ceremonies to characterize the methods of his opponents. The word *τερατώδεις*⁶⁶ that he uses is a clearly negative description, it is not ironic in the sense of a miracle (*τέρας*), by this he means distorted teachings that look like monsters, or else, distortions of the truth.

⁶³ The unit concerning the contemporaries (Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–31 Gautier) is related to the analysis of the previous unit concerning the hermeneutical method of the ancients (16–23) with the phrase *τοιούτοι καὶ νῦν φοιτῶσι*: the reference to the ancients is an example for the contemporaries.

⁶⁴ Gautier refers in his critical apparatus to Gr. Nyss. *Bapt. Chr.* 584A Migne for Ex. 4: 2; 7: 9 and for Nu. 17: 16–26 to Gr. Nyss. *V. Mos.* 1. 70, 9 Danielou. See also Chrys. *Pasch.* 6 35. 1, 4–5 Nautin; Cyr. *Is.* 312B–C Migne. I did not find any patristic testimony about the species of the tree of paradise. I will return to this topic in the second chapter.

⁶⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 32–34 Gautier.

⁶⁶ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 34 Gautier.

He also implies aesthetically negative categories. Psellos considers the attempt to search for the historical truth to be meaningless, especially when it is projected as a revelation of a mystery and for this, he declares that he will not follow such a course.⁶⁷ In addition, his note that his opponents present these ceremonies to uninitiated⁶⁸ is important. In other words, he criticizes them for not properly preparing their listeners, which implies that he does. Therefore, according to him the interpretation presupposes a kind of initiation and at the same time has a private character.⁶⁹

1. 2. 3 Does Psellos reject the Hermeneutical *τελευταί*?

At this point Psellos introduces a language of ceremony through which he criticizes his opponents. But here too⁷⁰ and in other works he uses for himself a sacramental language for interpretation, with its central axis being the concept of the hierophant of the Eleusinian Mysteries,⁷¹ which shows that he wants to suggest something more groundbreaking. He considers the interpretation as a ceremony based on his own perception: Psellos presents himself as the one who can reveal hidden mysteries, a perception that we also find in his *Allegorica*.⁷² His formulation is somehow enigmatic: He declares that he will not publish what has been covered, in contrast to his opponents, but he will reveal the spirit hidden in the letter.⁷³ He obviously means that he will not deal with the historicity of the text, especially regarding its silence about people and things, as his opponents do, but with its spiritual meanings.

He therefore does not deny the revelation of the mysteries per se, but has another view of it, which encourages the search and revelation of spiritual meanings. It is important that here Psellos emphasizes the fact that he has always followed this method,⁷⁴ which may also reveal an apologetic tone about accusations that he insists on the letter, on which I will make a reference later on. As the passage continues, when talking about a ceremony during the interpretation,

⁶⁷ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 35 Gautier.

⁶⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 34 Gautier.

⁶⁹ However, see Lauritzen (2013) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 810).

⁷⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 35–37, 44–45 Gautier.

⁷¹ About the hierophant-concept in the hermeneutics and not only of Psellos cf. Diamantopoulos (2019, 801–817).

⁷² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1. 42–48 Duffy and O'Meara. This is the second part of my postdoctoral research. For the discovery of hidden meanings in Psellos' hermeneutics, based mainly on his *Allegorica*, see Diamantopoulos (2019, 533–42), where I discuss the relevant arguments in the works of Cesaretti (1991), Kaldellis (1999); (2007); see there for further bibliography.

⁷³ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 35–37 Gautier.

⁷⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 36 Gautier: ὡς ἀεὶ ποιεῖν εἴωθα.

he uses the adverb *πάλιν*,⁷⁵ which states that he systematically uses this method of interpretation. The same concept of interpretation as a ceremony that reveals mysteries, following the model of the Eleusinian mysteries, is seen in the epilogue of the text.⁷⁶ It is important that it contrasts with the patristic interpretation when it seeks truth in history.

In the continuation of the text⁷⁷ he appears more compromising, stating that he accepts some of the geographical designations for the village or some of the names for the master of the house or the carrier of the jar, which are accepted by his opponents. He thinks that maybe one failed, while another one found the name. He states that he cannot blame everyone in the same way and that he can accept the historical interpretation (*ιστορούμενα*) of some of them.

At a first glance, Psellos seems to contradict his initial harsh criticism. However, I believe that he wants to show something else by this: Here it may seem that he is not actually interested in the historical truth of the interpretation,⁷⁸ although in other *Theologica* he seems to accept the historical interpretation as necessary. However, in those cases, there is not a silence about the names.⁷⁹

In each case he separates his position from the contemporary interpreters and through them from the patristic interpretation stating that his main task is to fasten his students to the ceremonies,⁸⁰ through which he will begin to reveal the mysteries of the spirit considering it useless to deal with what the others did⁸¹.

2. Why? Contextualization

How Psellos' critical attitude towards the patristic exegetical tradition can be explained? How can we understand the ceremonial/mystical method that seeks deeper meanings as his own proposal against the patristic failure? Does Psellos aim only at presenting himself as an authority? To answer this,

⁷⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 44 Gautier.

⁷⁶ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–128 Gautier.

⁷⁷ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 38–45 Gautier.

⁷⁸ This principle, which essentially reduces the meaning of interpretation to a rhetorical game, has already been identified in the *Allegorica*, cf. Roilos (2005, 122) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 524–33, 586).

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Psell. *Theol.* 1. 38, 23–28 Gautier, where he criticizes the fact that the earlier interpretive tradition makes mainly allegorical and less historical interpretation in the passage under interpretation (*Is.* 7: 1–9 Rahlfs and Hanhart), while he himself will start from the historical and move on to the anagogical; in this reference one can assume that he is again criticizing the earlier, obviously patristic, interpretive tradition.

⁸⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 44–45 Gautier: ὑμᾶς ἐξάψω τῶν τελετῶν.

⁸¹ Proclus states the same, obviously Psellos derives his reasoning from him, but for other purposes.

firstly, I will explore the anonymous use of passages of Maximus Confessor in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier parallel with other *Theologica*. Secondly, I will attempt to find out who are his contemporary opponents. In this way I will purpose a solution for the contradiction that Psellos, while criticizing divination and mystical ceremonies in the patristic interpretation, he in his own interpretations is an advocate of them.

2. 1 Psellos' Silence about Maximus Confessor

What exactly does Psellos mean by spiritual meanings is shown in the continuation of the text,⁸² where he makes an allegorical interpretation based on Maximus the Confessor⁸³ whom he does not name.⁸⁴ I would like to examine this silence. Firstly, it should be noted that when Psellos mentions Maximus by name in the *Theologica* on issues of interpretive theory and practice, he usually criticizes him,⁸⁵ as I have already mentioned. One could assume that he does not want to support Maximus as an exegete, so he presents as his own interpretation the one based on Maximus. However, I believe that there is a deeper background in this silence, which does not only have to do with his critical attitude that we find in the other cases of his anonymous reference to the Fathers.

2. 1. 1 Maximus Confessor's Protection

I have already assumed a controversy about Maximus in the 11th century based on other studies.⁸⁶ Various intellectuals and mystics used Maximus to defend ideas, presenting him either as a philosopher or as a mystical theologian. I argue that this controversy is lurking here and beyond in the *Theologica*.⁸⁷ I believe that behind the use of Maximus Psellos has three goals. His first goal is

⁸² Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 46–116 Gautier.

⁸³ Max. *Qu. Thal.* 3, 49–70 Laga and Steel. See Gautier's critical apparatus. Psellos interprets allegorical the city and the man carrying a jar of water based again on Max. *Qu. Thal.* 3 Laga and Steel also in his *Theol.* 2. 44 Westerink and Duffy. He uses there the terminus πόλις instead of κώμη.

⁸⁴ Psellos does the same in *Theol.* 1. 41 Gautier, where the whole interpretation is based on Max. *Qu. Thal.* 62 Laga and Steel.

⁸⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 38, 130–34 Gautier; in the same *Theologicum* he prefers Basileius Caesariensis; 159, 165; 1. 59, 168–70; 1. 78, 113–15; 1. 79, 73–77 Gautier. In *Theol.* 1. 43, 41; 1. 107, 14–17 Gautier Psellos uses his interpretations characterizing him as the philosopher, something he does, however, also in the passages, where he criticizes him. For some of these passages see Diamantopoulos (2019, 566n333); see there also a discussion of the relevant positions of Lourié (2008, 207–8); Simonopetrites (2013, 40) and other authors.

⁸⁶ See Diamantopoulos (2019, 775–77), including the position of Simonopetrites (2013).

⁸⁷ Shchykin (2017) considers that Psellos in his *Theologica* is opposed to Maximus, due to the revival of Maximus through the mystics in the 11th century. See also Lourié (2008).

to use Maximus as a shield not to appear openly as an opponent of the mystical mainstream, which relied on Maximus,⁸⁸ but without directly promoting him. This hypothesis could be supported by the apologetic character that I mentioned that Psellos shows, according to which he always sought for the hidden spirit in the letter,⁸⁹ if this could be related to the concerns of his time.

As I have already shown, Nicetas Stethatos, the leader of the mystics in those days, when criticizing the literal interpretation in his first letter to Gregorios,⁹⁰ whom I consider a student of Psellos,⁹¹ as γράμμα means the strict adherence to the rational interpretation of the texts based on grammar, rhetoric and logic. Stethatos also criticizes the use of philosophical teachings to interpret the Bible.⁹² The whole discussion and criticism of those who seek historical figures and places and his apology that he always sought the spirit would not be so much an attempt to promote the ἀνάγωγή of Maximus,⁹³ as to prove that he does not fall into the categories of Stethatos. Psellos defends his past and uses the anagoge in practice to abstain from this category.

Moreover, his second goal is to show that he reads and interprets Maximus better in relation to the mystics, as can be seen from the elaboration made by Psellos in the text of Maximus.⁹⁴ I have already assumed that the controversy over Maximus included the claim of who reads and interprets him best.⁹⁵

His third goal in his other works⁹⁶ is to invoke him for his involvement with philosophy wanting to show that the Fathers also accept the philosophical research.⁹⁷ In other words, he tries to reconcile the philosophical method with the method of the mystics. Psellos, one might assume, if this is true here as well, is trying to show Maximus' agreement with Proclus, to whom he refers by name in the second part of his prologue.

⁸⁸ See recently Krausmüller (2020) and Diamantopoulos (2019). There I also discuss the θεωρία and ἀνάγωγή as a basic method of interpretation of the mystics of the 11th century with Stethatos as its leader.

⁸⁹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 36 Gautier.

⁹⁰ Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. I*, paragraphs 2–5, 13 Darrouzès.

⁹¹ Diamantopoulos (2019, 600–87, 725).

⁹² Diamantopoulos (2019, 94–127, 596–97).

⁹³ About Maximus' hermeneutics see Berthold (2006); Blowers (2015).

⁹⁴ Psellos is not only inspired by the second part of Maximus' allegoresis, but also from the first. He therefore creates his own composition by evaluating his material with emphasis on the two stages of virtues and the variety of spiritual elements.

⁹⁵ See my forthcoming article on Stethatos' teaching about the cardinal virtues in the first volume of the Theandrites series, which will be edited by F. Lauritzen and S. K. Wear (to be published in 2021).

⁹⁶ Psell. *Ep.* 202 67–72 Papaioannou.

⁹⁷ Diamantopoulos (2019, 770); see there for further literature; see also Lauritzen (2021, 22–23).

2. 1. 2 *Maximus Confessor's Rejection and Proclus' Enthronement*

In the *Theologica*, however, Psellos goes one step further, by finally trying to reject him as an interpreter and to promote his own method of interpretation. We reach this conclusion exactly through the anonymous use of Maximus when we compare it with the sources he explicitly mentions. It is important to mention at this point that Maximus also refers to the Bible's silence about people and places:⁹⁸ He too, like Psellos, does not make a historical discussion about what the names are, on the contrary he interprets anagogically.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Psellos explicitly invokes Proclus as an example of avoiding historical interpretation. Speaking of an interpretation that seeks the spirit, he ultimately implies something different in relation to Maximus. Psellos presents Proclus to be an advocate of the higher contemplations in interpretation,¹⁰⁰ that is, he promotes him as a theorist of anagoge instead of Maximus. One could assume that Psellos considers Proclus as the theoretical teacher of Maximus. But in hermeneutic practice as well, that is in the anagogical interpretation, he ultimately follows Proclus, as it is clear from *Theol.* 1. 78 Gautier.¹⁰¹ There Psellos interprets a passage of Gregorius Nazianzenus¹⁰² using passages from the *Commentaria in Platonis Timaeum* of Proclus, which concern the search for the fourth absent, quoted in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier.¹⁰³

It is important that he uses the neoplatonic henology¹⁰⁴ to interpret the numbers from Gregorius' passage which is under interpretation. Maximus has now been completely eradicated from the interpretive praxis. What matters here is not just that he uses Proclus in the interpretation, but the specific text, which he invoked in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier as a theoretical model of anagogical interpretation.

⁹⁸ Max. *Qu. Thal.* 3, 5–6, 9–12 Laga and Steel.

⁹⁹ Max. *Qu. Thal.* 3, 2–70 Laga and Steel.

¹⁰⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 21–23 Gautier: οἷς καλῶς Πρόκλος ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐπετίμησεν, ἀφεμένοις μὲν τῶν κρειττόνων θεωρημάτων, περὶ δὲ τὰ μηδὲν ὀνήσοντα καταναλίσκουσι τὴν σπουδὴν.

¹⁰¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 100–107 Gautier. See the discussion about this *Theol.* in Diamantopoulos (2019, 167–68, 560–66, 573–74, 587–90). See also Lourié (2008, 207–8n17), also on Psell. *Theol.* 1. 79 Gautier.

¹⁰² Gr. Naz. *Or.* 41 4, 433C Migne.

¹⁰³ Procl. *In Ti.* I p. 1, 11–13 Diehl; Gautier cites also Procl. *In Ti.* I p. 8, 30–p. 9, 24 Diehl; however, I do not find any direct connection with Psellos' argument. Perhaps one should mention together with this passage also Procl. *In Ti.* I p. 23, 31–p. 24, 11 Diehl where Proclus' henology and triadical ontology is attested. Psellos interprets the Gregorius Nazianzenus' passage with neoplatonic henology, see below. See Tarrant (2007, 103n46) for the connection of the two passages.

¹⁰⁴ See for the neoplatonic henology Halfwassen (2006); Cürsger (2007).

After his analysis, Psellos enthusiastically notes that Plato is remarkably close to the truth.¹⁰⁵ He then argues that the principle of interpretation is not the indiscriminate acceptance of such teachings, but their transmutation into the Christian teaching,¹⁰⁶ also citing Gregorius.¹⁰⁷ However, he does not apply this principle, as the neoplatonic henology without elaboration, as presented here, is not in line with the Christian ontology. Even more interesting is the fact that in the same *Theol.* 1. 78 Gautier and at the end of the interpretation, after quoting Proclus' teaching, Psellos criticizes the interpretation of Maximus in the same passage of Gregorius.¹⁰⁸

This also expresses his real attitude in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier, which is that Psellos rejects the ἀναγωγή of the Fathers, with Maximus as the main source, as he rejected the literal interpretation of the Fathers in the first and second parts of his introduction, as well as his contemporaries who follow them. Therefore, the anonymous use of Maximus' ἀναγωγή in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier is explained by the fact that it is only one of the stages of a program, which at the beginning does not provide a direct confrontation but at the end it is dominated by the theory and practice of neoplatonic interpretation. As I have already shown, Psellos teaches that he consistently and consciously applies Proclus' method, therefore it is, if not the essence, certainly the basis of his hermeneutics.

But why does Psellos finally refer to Gregorius? It could be an indication that Psellos is in favor of Gregorius and against Maximus, only because the former was a highly erudite man, that is, a kind of philosopher in the opinion of Psellos, like Proclus.¹⁰⁹ Psellos favors the learned Father over Maximus, which was assumed as the leader of the mystics. He therefore does not support the patristic teachings for themselves but the philosophical approach to interpretation, where Gregorius' erudite personality serves as the best example. This does not mean that Psellos considered Maximus as uneducated: The fact that he was the mystic's paradigm, whom they understood as a mystical theologian, functioned as an obstacle to approve him.

¹⁰⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 107–9 Gautier.

¹⁰⁶ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 112 Gautier. Psellos quotes here *2 Cor.* 10: 5 Aland et al. See Diamantopoulos (2019, 282, 318, 573, 574) on the differences regarding the use of the Pauline passage between Stethatos and Psellos.

¹⁰⁷ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 110–111 Gautier. Gautier refers with "cf." to Gr. *Naz. Or.* 41 1 429A–B Migne; but I did not find there any direct connection with the teaching of Psellos.

¹⁰⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 113–117 Gautier.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. the above-mentioned (footnote 48) problematic in Diamantopoulos (2019, 505–11) where the case is about a confrontation between Gregorius Nazianzenus and Symeon the New Theologian, for which I find analogies here. For the treatment of Gregorius as a philosopher in the *Theologica* see also Maltese (1994, 309); (1996, 567–69). I could relate to this hypothesis the previously mentioned case of Psell. *Theol.* 1. 38 Gautier, where Psellos favors the interpretation of Basileius Caesariensis over Maximus.

Therefore, Psellos does not essentially defend the *ἀναγωγή*, in the sense promoted by Maximus and his followers, but his rational method, as he is an advocate of a philosophical *ἀναγωγή* of a neoplatonic character. In other words, he proposes a philosophical method of interpretation with philosophical purposes.¹¹⁰ His main goal is to find the rules of philosophy or neoplatonic teachings through the revelation of meanings and their correlation with Christian teaching.¹¹¹ This has already been seen elsewhere, but so far little has been assumed about the *Theologica*.¹¹² This could explain the fact that Psellos characterizes as obsession with the letter the above-mentioned anagogical interpretations of the other Fathers about the names related to the events before the Last Supper. He considers them as literal interpretations without deeper meaning because they are not philosophical, as they do not follow Proclus' teachings. As I mentioned, Stethatos does the same against the philosophical interpretation. This criticism would then lead to the conclusion, that Psellos in fact sees Maximus' *ἀναγωγή* as such a meaningless obsession with the letter, because it too is not philosophical. This would mean, that both Church Fathers *and* Maximus are *καταμαντεύομενοι*.

However, one could object that Psellos referring to the previous interpretations quotes explicitly historical names (e. g. Nathanael or Zacchaeus) that one, according to Psellos, can find in them, which would then constitute a literal interpretation. Therefore, Psellos would really criticize the *γράμμα*, without implying a spiritual interpretation to be rejected. This is in my opinion only a maneuver to mislead his readers and so to avoid an accusation that he rejects the Church Fathers' anagogical interpretations. But those who were aware of the exegetical tradition could understand that he implied the patristic *ἀναγωγή*. It is extremely difficult to assume that Psellos is ignoring this anagogical tradition and is making a mistake of the way the Church Fathers interpreted the

¹¹⁰ Delli (2016, 52–53) displays the passages in both *Theol.* 1. 1, as in *Theol.* 1. 78 Gautier, as examples of Psellos following the Platonic tradition of symbolic interpretation in the *Theologica* under the influence of Proclus. She therefore considers that he is under philosophical influences in the "spiritual" interpretation, that is neoplatonic: « Le message évangélique, les textes sacrés, les données spirituelles de la Patristique et l'ensemble de la symbolique de la foi orthodoxe sont réinterprétés, enrichis et approfondis pour l'essentiel au moyen de la philosophie néoplatonicienne. » Delli (2016, 42). However, she did not discuss the context of the confrontation about Maximus. Lauritzen (2012, 168–69) found in Psell. *Theol.* 1. 11 Gautier that Psellos interprets this passage philosophically and not theologically. Walter (2017, 15, 17, 49), too, considered that Psellos argues not based on the Bible, but with logical arguments, that is, by making philosophy, in his *Theologica*; however, Walter did not consider his argumentation as a hermeneutic one, but as a philosophy on ontology, theology and ethics. The issue is under further investigation in my postdoctoral research.

¹¹¹ See also Kaldellis (2007, 201–2) which raises the issue that Psellos presents Christian and Platonic texts as interdependent.

¹¹² See the above problematic in Diamantopoulos (2019, 533–42) for preliminary discussion.

Bible's silence on names. This is further supported by the fact that, as I showed, no literal interpretations exist in the patristic exegesis about the names under question.

2. 2 *Who are Psellos' Contemporary λογοποιοί?*

The above-mentioned attempt to overthrow,¹¹³ does not only have to do with Maximus himself as an authority of theoretical hermeneutics and interpretation. I argue that the main target of his criticism is not the Church Fathers. As I have already shown, Psellos tells us explicitly that he has met in his times failed interpreters, like the ancient ones, which present the same features. It is therefore essential to focus on his contemporary thinkers. For a better understanding we should answer the question: Who exactly could be the contemporary opponents to whom Psellos refers?

It has already been stated, based on the critical attitude of Psellos towards Maximus, that he refers to the theorists of the mystical current of interpretation. In order to further support this assumption, I consider that a strong indication of this is the use by Psellos of the above-mentioned passage from Synesius' *Ep.* 154 Garzya,¹¹⁴ where the latter seems to criticize monks.¹¹⁵ Psellos, by choosing this verse to criticize his opponents contemporary interpreters, is very likely to oppose the monks of his time and their interpretations.

¹¹³ See on the concept of subversion in the relations between Christianity and paganism Kaldellis (2007, 198–202).

¹¹⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–24 Gautier.

¹¹⁵ Synes. *Ep.* 154, 38–39 Garzya: οὐς φθάσειεν ἂν ἢ σκιὰ φθελξαμένη τι τῶν δεόντων. Translation by Op de Coul (2012, 117n27): “a shadow would surpass these men in uttering anything to the point”. Psellos uses the same words changing their place, Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–24 Gautier: οὐς φθάσειεν ἂν ἢ σκιὰ τῶν δεόντων τι φθελξαμένη. For the fact that Synesius' passage and letter are turned against the monks, see Op de Coul (2012, 117). According to the researcher (2012, 116–17), this phrase means that they speak very rarely, “only to break their silence occasionally with commonplaces” (2012, 117n27). Pizzone (2012, 250–57) considers that it concerns Origenists monks, cf. there for further bibliography. For Psellos and Synesius see Roques (2012, 287–91). This passage is not discussed there, nor is it found in Gautier's critical apparatus. Synes. *Ep.* 154, however, was not read before the lexicon *Suid.* Adler and Psellos, see Roques (2012, especially 287). Therefore, Psellos brings it back to the forefront. He generally uses this letter often, as well as other works of Synesius. Roques (2012, 291) characterizes Psellos as an intensive reader of Synesius, especially of his letters. He claims that he uses Synes. *Ep.* 154 twice, therefore based on my own contribution thrice.

2. 2. 1 *Nicetas Stethatos*

This would certainly concern Stethatos, who dealt systematically with hermeneutics and interpretation.¹¹⁶ The fact that Psellos turns against Stethatos can also be assumed from the fact that the latter is the only one in his time to systematically deal with the forbidden tree of paradise, regardless of its genre¹¹⁷ to which Psellos refers as an example of the search for the historical truth. Obviously, Psellos' reference to the extensive research on this tree, which comes to point of defining its species, is an ironic allusion to Stethatos, as in his treatise *De paradiso* he examines thoroughly, albeit allegorically, the facts about this tree. Psellos' use of the term speechmakers (λογοποιοί) to describe his contemporary opponents, whom he met,¹¹⁸ confirms this hypothesis, as Stethatos presents his work on paradise as an oration.¹¹⁹ Psellos is likely to turn against Stethatos the accusations made by the latter against him for obsession with the letter, to which I referred above. At the same time, with the use of Maximus, he does not appear as his direct opponent.

2. 2. 2 *Patriarch Michael Kerullarios*

But is Psellos only opposed to monks and their leader Stethatos? Here I would like to return to the above-mentioned issue of the oracles that Psellos ostensibly rejects. It is no coincidence that in his *Oratio forensis 1* (his accusation against the Patriarch Kerullarios), Psellos accuses him of divination,¹²⁰ which shows that his accusations of divination in the *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier concern the Fathers, but also indirectly his contemporaries, who invoke the Fathers.

However, more important is that Kerullarios and his court relate directly to Stethatos. How could this relation be realized? As I have shown in my dissertation, at that time Kerullarios supported the mystics.¹²¹ Therefore,

¹¹⁶ Diamantopoulos (2019).

¹¹⁷ Nic. Steth. *Parad.* Darrouzès.

¹¹⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23 Gautier.

¹¹⁹ See Nic. Steth. *Parad.* 1, 1–3 Darrouzès. Elsewhere, of course, Stethatos presents himself as ignorant of rhetoric, but he is not, cf. Diamantopoulos (2019, 695–703, 724) and Papaioannou (2013, 32n12). Here is clearly seen the connection between rhetoric and hermeneutics in Psellos' thought, which has already been assumed in the *Allegorica*, see Diamantopoulos (2019, 524–35), where studies as the above-mentioned of Cesaretti (1991) are discussed; I will examine extensively a connection between the rhetoric and the hermeneutics focusing on the *Theologica* in my postdoctoral research.

¹²⁰ Psell. *Or. for.* 1 73–1293 Dennis. Psellos clearly relates the accusation of divination to the belief in the doctrines of the *Oracula Chaldaica* assuming both as paganism; this confirms that in his hermeneutics divination and the *Oracula* are closely related to each other.

¹²¹ Diamantopoulos (2019, 411–41).

we can assume that the reference to divination as a method of interpretation is not a simple irony, concerning only Kerullarios and the authority of the Patriarchate for interpretation, but an attack against the mystical method in general, which was supported by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and furthermore claimed the ability to solve exegetical oracles.¹²² As I will show, however, Psellos ultimately does not reject the very notion of the oracle as a hermeneutical concept.

2. 2. 2. 1 *Nicetas synkellos' Mystical Interpretation of the Last Supper*

Psellos' opposition against the clergy, more specifically the Patriarch and his court and through them against the mystics, can be assumed also from the fact that at about the same time, maybe a few years later, Nicetas synkellos,¹²³ a close associate of the Patriarch and supporter of the ideas of Stethatos, with whom he corresponded supporting the mystical ideals, in relation to interpretive issues,¹²⁴ wrote an anti-Latin treatise,¹²⁵ where to support the use of leavened bread he invokes one of the issues raised by Psellos, the issue of the anonymity of the host who hosted Jesus and his Disciples. He even asks whether there is another alternative and answers negatively. Nicetas synkellos considers that the anonymity of the host relates to the fact that Jesus delivered two Suppers: The first was the Jewish Passover with unleavened bread and the second one with leavened bread. The latter, however, had to remain hidden and secret, hence its host anonymous.¹²⁶

Nicetas therefore discusses the issue of anonymity here, as Psellos too does, although he does not give any specific names. However, he shows his respect to the historicity of the text, in fact he emphasizes the need for the host to remain anonymous due to the historical circumstances. Therefore, the fact that Nicetas synkellos refers to the negative atmosphere towards Jesus, also to the fact that Jesus delivered two Suppers, as an explanation of anonymity, that is, to the historical data of the time, would be unacceptable for Psellos.

At this point, it becomes obvious that Psellos assimilates his contemporaries with the patristic tradition, as, according to his beliefs, everyone is looking in vain for names of people and things. This may explain the phenomenon that while, as I mentioned, the patristic exegesis of the passages in question in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier does not verify any searches of this kind, on the contrary only anagogical interpretations, Psellos criticizes it for its obsession with the letter.

¹²² For this issue see Lauritzen (2019) and my thoughts in 2. 3.

¹²³ See on him Diamantopoulos (2019, 411–26, 619–28).

¹²⁴ Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. I* Darrouzès, *Ad Steth. II* Darrouzès.

¹²⁵ Nic. syn. *De Az.* Pavlov.

¹²⁶ Nic. syn. *De Az.* 3, 95–152 Pavlov.

Therefore, the above-mentioned explanation for the patristic anagoge's rejection through the hypothesis that Psellos is an advocate of a philosophical allegory is not the only one. He obviously aims through his criticism of the patristic interpretation against his contemporaries. Moreover, it is possible that Psellos ironically criticizes Nicetas synkellos' elaboration as an obsession with the letter for the above-mentioned reasons he did this in the case of Eden's tree of knowledge. However, in synkellos' work the historical assumptions are clearly attested, while in the case of Stethatos (Eden's tree) we find allegories.

2. 2. 2. 2 *Stethatos' and Nicetas synkellos' Mystical/Sacramental Language*

But why does this criticism against synkellos would concern Stethatos? The fact that Psellos, through his attack against synkellos, is opposed to Stethatos as well, is proved not only by the fact that he criticizes one of his main supporters and by the fact that Nicetas synkellos was very close to the Patriarch: It is important also that Nicetas synkellos in the same work uses the term *μυστήριον* to talk about the hidden character of the Last Supper.¹²⁷ He does the same elsewhere, in a letter to Stethatos that supports the latter's teaching on the prohibition of the view of the Liturgy for the laity.¹²⁸ In fact, Stethatos himself in a letter to the philosopher Gregorios, refers to the Last Supper as a secret event to justify the prohibition of the view.¹²⁹ In his letter, synkellos agrees with this view. I have emphasized that the view of the Liturgy as a *μυστήριον*, which is not allowed to be seen by lay people, is absolutely linked to Stethatos' meaning of the interpretation as something occult for the uninitiated.¹³⁰ The importance of this view will be discussed in more detail below.

Here I would like to point out that Nicetas synkellos in his treatise seems to be a follower of mystic theology and interpretation using it against the Latins. He has adopted the teaching of Stethatos, who then emphasized the secret, occult character of worship against scholars. Psellos, by criticizing those who seek to explain the anonymity of the historical figures, objects to those who support Stethatos, as they themselves are presented in their works as followers of the mystical theology and hermeneutics.

¹²⁷ Nic. syn. *De Az.* 3, 97, 115, 145, 150 Pavlov.

¹²⁸ Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. II*, p. 232, 12–15 Darrouzès.

¹²⁹ Nic. *Steth. Ad Greg. IV 2*, 1–6 Darrouzès.

¹³⁰ See the last quotation and Nic. *Steth. Ad Greg. I 2*, 10–14 Darrouzès, also Diamantopoulos (2019, 304, 802–4).

2. 2. 3 *The Church's ἄδυτον and Psellos' Exegetical Ceremony*

2. 2. 3. 1 *Psellos' Piety?*

One can more clearly see the confrontation with the clergy of the Patriarchate and the mystics in the **epilogue** of the text.¹³¹ This epilogue is a key to understand what Psellos exactly means in his prologue with his concept of the deeper meanings that he seeks and who are his contemporary opponents (λογοποιοί). Psellos announces there the end of the progress of the “ceremony”, (i.e., his interpretation with higher meanings) and expresses his hesitation to enter the sanctuary of interpretation, meaning the deepening. He holds for himself a third altar, and he expresses his fear that God could close this third altar too.

Psellos now speaks clearly in ritual terms in relation not only to the priesthood but also to the sacred places associated with it and who is allowed to enter them. He refers to Nadab and Abihu who were set on fire when they offered profane fire,¹³² and to Uzzah, who died when he touched the Ark of the Covenant¹³³ to liken his fears of what might happen to him if he proceeded to interpret. The reference to the fire that burns the unworthy refers to a fire, which burned the brothers, because they used profane and not God's fire to offer incense.¹³⁴ This reference of Psellos may be a hint of his use of profane philosophy in the interpretation of the Bible and the patristic texts, for which he ironically expresses his fears towards the administration of the Church and the mystics that led the interpretation at that time. This is a further indication that Psellos accepts a philosophical and not mystical method when he speaks about deeper or higher meanings. As I have already mentioned, Stethatos strongly rejected this method.¹³⁵

However, the most basic indication of the confrontation with the Patriarch and the mystics has to do with the fact that Psellos gives the entrance to the sanctuary of interpretation to Aaron, Samuel and Zacharias, while he reserves for himself a noetic third altar, in which the entry to the laity is allowed.¹³⁶ Psellos therefore raises the issue of competence for interpretation, especially when it concerns the deeper meanings. He apparently alludes through Aaron, Samuel, and Zacharias the clergy of the Church, more specifically the

¹³¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–28 Gautier.

¹³² *Lev.* 10: 1–2; *Nu.* 3: 4; 26: 61 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

¹³³ *2. Sam.* 6: 6–8; *1 Chr.* 13: 7–11 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

¹³⁴ See Unger (1967, 114). See also *Ex.* 30: 7–10; *Lev.* 9: 24; *1. Kings* 18: 38 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

¹³⁵ Diamantopoulos (2019, 238–62, 596–97).

¹³⁶ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 123–28 Gautier.

higher clergy.¹³⁷ This, however, concerns the mystics too, who at that time, led by Stethatos, claimed the depth of interpretation by supporting a kind of secret ritual in interpretation. The clergy and its hierarchy functioned as an important symbol in this context.

2. 2. 3. 2 *Psellos' κοσμικόν Altar*

Furthermore, Psellos characterizes his third altar as κοσμικόν. His invocation of a "worldly" altar according to the terminology of Apostle Paulus,¹³⁸ in which –according to Psellos– the entry is allowed to those who come from the world,¹³⁹ refers directly to the distinction of laymen and clergy. Through this reference Psellos simply makes fun of the power of the clergy and the mystics by giving them the responsibility of interpreting the deeper meanings, while he himself as a layman¹⁴⁰ expresses a restraint and a recognition of the status, the order and their authority, an attitude of Psellos that is also found elsewhere.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, I would accept a second reading of the psellian passage: Paulus with the phrase "worldly" may refer to the first altar or in general to the two holy places of the Tabernacle, which were entered only by the priests or the High Priest. He characterizes it as κοσμικόν, meaning earthly, in comparison with the heavenly altar that Christ set up.

However, this is a priestly altar in the context of the Old Testament Law.¹⁴² Psellos, on the other hand, gives a different meaning to the concept of κοσμικόν, by claiming that it concerns the laity,¹⁴³ while at the same time he

¹³⁷ Psellos says, *Theol.* 1. 1, 121–23 Gautier, that he will not be able to look at the Cherubim of the Tabernacle, which refer to the Holy of Holies, into which only the High Priest entered, cf. *Hab.* 3: 2 Rahlfs and Hanhart and O'Brien (2010, 310).

¹³⁸ *Heb.* 9: 1 Aland et al.

¹³⁹ *Psell. Theol.* 1. 1, 124–27 Gautier.

¹⁴⁰ With this analysis we can date this *Theologicum* to the period before Psellos' tonsure, i.e., before 1054. This chronology agrees with the opinions of Kaldellis (2005) and Cesaretti (1991); however, if Psellos attacks the treatise of Nicetas synkellos one could assume a somewhat later date than 1047, perhaps only a short time before the Great Schism (e.g., 1053) when synkellos obviously wrote his study. I would assume 1050 as a *terminus post quem*, a date I suggest for the *Trilogy* of Stethatos (*De anima, De paradiso, De hierarchia*), after which synkellos corresponds with Stethatos about it; see for the *Trilogy's* chronology in Diamantopoulos (2019, 602–54). The synkellos' anti-Latin treatise is under the influence of the *Trilogy's* mystical theology and of the correspondence (between Stethatos and synkellos) concerning the *Trilogy* and, therefore, I believe that it follows them.

¹⁴¹ See a passage for the power of monks in the interpretation in *Psell. Ep.* 134, 77–80 Papaioannou with Diamantopoulos (2019, 812).

¹⁴² *Heb.* 9: 2–9 Aland et al.; O'Brien (2010, 304–10). For the Tabernacle see also Utzschneider (2014).

¹⁴³ The adjective κοσμικός in the Byzantine literature also concerns the laity, in contrast to the clergy, see Liddell, Scott and Jones (1996, 984); it is also opposed to the monks, see Lampe (1961, 769). In *Lexikon zur Byzantinischen Gräzität* there is no reference about κοσμικός.

keeps the hieratic meaning of the altar, which includes the High Priest and the priests. Psellos now reserves it directly to the laity. In an indirect way and playing with words, Psellos secures his position as a layman in the priesthood, while allegedly declaring his piety. Paulus is not talking about a third place, but only two,¹⁴⁴ therefore Psellos compresses the meaning of the third altar in Paulus' distinctions, as he wants to include a third in the two priestly spaces.

I will show below the importance of the obsession with a strictly three-level positioning in Psellos' thought and I will explain why he insists on this structure. I will refer here to the nature of this altar. Perhaps it symbolically means the place of the Tabernacle, on the atrium, before the Holy and Holy of Holies, where there was an altar (of the holocausts) officiated by the priests, but access to the laity was allowed, when, for example, they touched the victim.¹⁴⁵ However, Psellos makes an effort to establish a new symbolic altar, different from the Holy and the Holy of Holies, without any direct dependence on the atrium of the Tabernacle, wanting to claim the authority and exaltation of the laymen scholars, of the philosophers¹⁴⁶ where interpretation finds its essence.

In this passage Psellos states that he will not be in this sanctuary temporarily but will systematically spend time there in the future in it.¹⁴⁷ This shows that he speaks programmatically based on a systematic plan that has long-term goals. It is obvious here that Psellos contrasts himself and his long-term plan, which is very promising, with the many years of failed efforts of others, to which he referred earlier, that have aged without being able to interpret correctly.

In any case, as we saw in the previous passages, Psellos, despite his reservations here, clearly states responsibility to discover the depth of the spiritual meanings and proceeds to spiritual interpretation. In this context he refers to a *ceremony*. Therefore, I believe that Psellos ultimately aims (behind these words) at the excellence of a sacerdotal altar, that of the Holy of Holies. He is not satisfied with his distanced place among the laymen, and he ironizes the Church's authority on interpretation.

¹⁴⁴ Holy and Holy of Holies, cf. O'Brien (2010, 307-8).

¹⁴⁵ Ex. 27: 1-8; 38: 1-7 Rahlfs and Hanhart. This is the altar of the Holocausts, which was located before the Holy, see Oikonomou (1992, 199, 371-73); Kearney (2003, 319-20); Utzschneider (2014, 277-79) (for the courtyard where the altar of the Holocaust).

¹⁴⁶ See also Psell. *Ep. 111*, 131-37 Papaioannou, where Psellos writes at Kerullarios and talks about his own throne, next to the Patriarchal, equal to it. This is the eruditions' throne. Psellos chooses here, as with the sanctuary, a liturgical concept including a prohibition to symbolize his hermeneutics: the bishop's throne, where only a bishop is allowed to seat.

¹⁴⁷ Psell. *Theol. 1. 1*, 125 Gautier: ἐμφιλοχωρήσω.

2. 2. 3. 3 *Why third?*

Psellos speaks, of course, symbolically, claiming a place in the priesthood as a layman, starting from a third altar. The kind of symbolism he expresses through the third place can be better understood in the context of the controversies of the time. This way we will understand his persistence in a structure with three positions. This is not just a question of the authority of the clergy and the Patriarch in the matter of interpretation. The above-mentioned confrontation between mystics and scholars, who were laymen, revolved also around a mystical teaching about the three stages of spiritual progress (πρακτική φιλοσοφία, φυσική θεωρία, μυστική θεολογία), which originates from Euagrius Ponticus and was elaborated by Maximus the Confessor.¹⁴⁸

The positioning of the faithful in the temple in three categories was of great importance, as it symbolized this three-stage concept. Stethatos claimed an upgraded second position in the temple area for the monks, near the sanctuary, as symbols of contemplation of nature and the third position¹⁴⁹ for the laity, as symbols of practical philosophy. Only the monks, having passed the stage of πρακτική, can secure the contemplation without falling into arrogance,¹⁵⁰ therefore only they were entitled to see the Liturgy, even from the soleas,¹⁵¹ but together with the lower clergy.¹⁵² The right to the view of the Liturgy symbolized the right to the secret contemplation and interpretation. The laymen intellectuals, considering that πρακτική φιλοσοφία was not required, demanded the occupation of the position of the monks.

This controversy concerned, in the final analysis, the right of laymen philosophers to approach and enter the sanctuary, a fact that would symbolize the exaltation of philosophy as a method of contemplating, interpreting, and researching of the Being without requiring the ascesis of the first stage (πρακτική φιλοσοφία). They essentially demanded the overthrow of a secret

¹⁴⁸ See Diamantopoulos (2019, 101–9, 362–67, 740–81) and Krausmüller (2020).

¹⁴⁹ Although in the gradation of the spiritual progress practical philosophy is the first stage, in the spiritual geography of the temple it is the third, the most remote. Louth (2001, 54) characterized a similar classification of the laymen, monks and clergy in the church in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite as “geographical”.

¹⁵⁰ In this context, the interpretation of the tree of paradise occupies an essential place, as Stethatos identifies Eden's forbidden tree, of which Psellos speaks, with the φυσική θεωρία as the interpretation of the Scriptures. For the contemplation of this tree, according to Stethatos, πρακτική φιλοσοφία is required, otherwise there is a risk of arrogance and heresy; see Nic. Steth. *Parad.* 35; 47, 1–9, 14–17 Darrouzès with Diamantopoulos (2019, 101–9).

¹⁵¹ See Taft (1975, 412); (2006, 40, 46) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 396–99) about the ability to see the sanctuary.

¹⁵² Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. IV 3* Darrouzès with Diamantopoulos (2019, 740–81).

hierarchy. However, it is important to emphasize that the laity, despite the symbolisms, at least in the person of Gregorios, hoped for a real entrance to the sanctuary. The positioning and through this the view of the Liturgy functioned as a symbol of the authority of interpretation for both factions.¹⁵³

It is therefore no coincidence that Psellos also refers here in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier to the sanctuary (ἐγὼ πῶς αὐτὸ εἰσέλθω τὸ ἄδυτον¹⁵⁴), to certain issues such as architecture, the sacred places of the temple, who is allowed to enter them, and the question of the position of the laity. It is also no coincidence that he uses the infinitive προσεγγίσειν, meaning to approach, to declare his supposed piety in view of the curtain of the sanctuary.¹⁵⁵

The term is also found in the controversy I mentioned between Stethatos and Gregorios, as Gregorios originally claimed the *approach* of the sanctuary (πλησιάζειν), which was also rejected by Stethatos, but essentially his entrance to the sanctuary and its view.¹⁵⁶ This is therefore the same problematic here. Psellos includes himself here too, as in the confrontation between Stethatos and Gregorios, in the symbolic discussion which has already been opened by him,¹⁵⁷ about who is entitled to which position in the temple, in order that the “correct” hierarchy could be symbolized, based on rationality.

The fact that he accepts for himself a third altar as the place of the laity, is in my opinion an ironic allusion to the above teaching of Stethatos, who considered the laymen symbols of the third stage and attributed to them the most remote space in the temple, while at the same time his playing with words signals his upgrade. It is not clear whether he demanded a real, spatial upgrade in the temple, but it is certain that he hoped for this at least metaphorically.

Psellos, therefore, ostensibly leaves the responsibility of interpretation to the clergy and the mystics, as in fact he has already entered the sanctuary, so he has “upgraded” the laymen intellectuals. A more careful study reveals that Psellos claims for him as a layman philosopher not only the third, but the second or even the first place in the temple, causing an overturning of the hierarchy. This is evident not only in the way he plays with words as I have already mentioned: It also happens through his questioning of the patristic exegesis and through this of the authority of the Church and the mystics, who claimed to be

¹⁵³ Diamantopoulos (2019, 749–67).

¹⁵⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 121–22 Gautier.

¹⁵⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–18 Gautier: δέδοικα προσεγγίσει τῷ παραπετάσματι.

¹⁵⁶ Diamantopoulos (2019, 389–91, 399–410, 779–81).

¹⁵⁷ As I said, I consider Gregorios a student and a follower of Psellos. Therefore, in the claims of Gregorios I assume Psellos as a promoter; cf. also my discussion about the sanctuary in Psellos’ thought in relation to the meaning of the hierophant, Diamantopoulos (2019, 801–17).

based on the patristic exegetical tradition¹⁵⁸ and followed the Church Fathers' anagoge. This of course includes Maximus the Confessor.

The analysis about Psellos' hesitation to enter the sanctuary and about his κοσμικόν altar at a third place in his epilogue helps us understand what he means in his prologue when he speaks about his seek for deeper meanings within a hermeneutical ceremony. We must see this concept in the context of his confrontation with the Church's and the mystics' authority on interpretation.

2. 3 Psellos' μαντεία and Mysticism differ

However, one could raise the above-mentioned question: If Psellos indeed rejects the Church Fathers' and his contemporaries' divination, ἀναγωγή and τερατώδεις τελεταί, why does he use the same terminology and concepts for his hermeneutics? The controversy with the Patriarch and the mystics explains not only the anonymous use of Maximus and the patristic criticism, but also the ambiguity in Psellos' attitude towards oracles: Psellos does not completely reject them as an interpretive concept, he simply claims that he only knows and teaches the correct meaning of the mystical experience in interpretation, which is like the divination in the oracle of Delphi. It is important to note at this point that Psellos in his *Theologica*, to establish the interpretation, not only uses passages from the *Oracula Chaldaica*, endorsing them, but he also uses the same passages with which he accuses Kerullarios of divination, etc., even if he sometimes rejects it.¹⁵⁹ He tries to connect the oracles' meaning with the neoplatonic

¹⁵⁸ See, e.g., the invocation of the 19th Canon of the second Council in Trullo by Stethatos for the interpretation in Nic. Steth. *Limit. Vit.* 32 Darrouzès; Stethatos argues in this treatise against a layman philosopher; according to the 19th Canon the interpretation should be based on the patristic exegetic tradition; see *C. in Tr.* 19 Ohme.

¹⁵⁹ Psell. *Theol.* 1. 19, 74–77 Gautier. Cf. *Or. for.* 1 320–21 Dennis. Gautier considers in his critical apparatus that the passages, that Psellos uses in the above-mentioned works *Theol.* and *Or. for.* 1 originate from Procl. *In Or. Chald.* Psellos himself says, *Or. for.* 1 290–302 Dennis, that he presents material from Proclus under the influence of Procopius Gazaëus. Dennis writes in his critical apparatus that the text cited by Psellos in *Or. for.* 1 311–341 Dennis is not found in Proclus' surviving works. See also O' Meara; (2014, 176n36). It is particularly important, that Psellos in the passage *Theol.* 1. 19, 74–77 Gautier uses Proclus' passage concerning the *Or. Chald.* to describe *his own* hermeneutical experience and method, endorsing Proclus' teaching (at least metaphorically). See also Psell. *Theol.* 1. 23, 46–52 Gautier with *Or. for.* 1 290–302 Dennis; here Psellos cites Proclus against the Chaldean's polyarchy; however, Psellos emphasizes on the fact that even the real divine Proclus (ὁ θεῖος τῶ ὄντι Πρόκλος) followed the *Or. Chald.* abandoning the Greek philosophy, which would attest a positive appraisal of Psellos about them; see Gautier's critical apparatus for further Psellos' passages concerning the *Or. Chald.*; see also O' Meara (2013, 56). See also Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 83–87 Gautier with *Or. for.* 1 316–18, 323–4 Dennis; it seems that Psellos is not completely rejecting the prophets and their method of the *Or. Chald.* when he compares it with the Apostles. See also Psell. *Theol.* 1. 47, 43–46 Gautier with Gautier' critical apparatus and O' Meara (2014, 176n36).

mysticism and its theurgy, opposing it to that of the mystics.¹⁶⁰ Against the “misprint” of the mystics’ oracles and their method he invokes and proposes neoplatonic theurgy.

Useful thoughts on the subject can also be found in a recent study by Frederick Lauritzen.¹⁶¹ The study does not deal with the *Theologica*, it talks about *Phil. Min. 2. 38 O’Meara*, but gives important points of reference for the issues here. Lauritzen considers that Psellos’ preoccupation with the *Oracula Chaldaica* reflects the interests of the time. He does not seem to accept any kind of rivalry between the Church and the mystics, instead he claims that Psellos used the Oracles to present issues of his time and his own views in an original way. In fact, he considers that this is a regular tactic of Psellos.

He refers¹⁶² to the discussion about the divine light, treated by Symeon the New Theologian and Nicetas Stethatos, as parallel to references in *Phil. Min. 2. 38*. It is important that Lauritzen too accepts a connection with Stethatos and the mystics as a reason for the use and preoccupation of Psellos with the *Oracula Chaldaica*, although he does not imply any rivalry. Lauritzen also refers to Psellos’ *Oratio forensis 1*,¹⁶³ where references to the *Oracula Chaldaica* abound, considering that they reflect the interest of the time for them. He accepts that Psellos identifies in the *Oratio forensis 1* the monastic practice of some monks from Chios as paganism. Psellos attacks them by comparing their methods with the pagans of the *Oracula*.¹⁶⁴

In addition, Lauritzen thinks¹⁶⁵ that Psellos presented the *Oracula Chaldaica* without any syllogisms, as self-evident truths, something that does not fit the

¹⁶⁰ See, e.g. a Stethatos’ passage for solving riddles from the mystic when he interprets as a special charisma in *Nic. Steth. Cap. 3. 44 973C–D Migne*. On the ἀνύγμα-concept in Stethatos’ and Psellos’ hermeneutics see Diamantopoulos (2019, 174–82, 511–14).

¹⁶¹ There is also a reference to a relevant study by Athanassiadi (2002) and the controversy of positions: Psellos deals with the Oracles to transform them into Christian (Athanassiadi) or to hide paganism through them, Kaldellis (1999).

¹⁶² Lauritzen (2019, 553–54).

¹⁶³ Lauritzen (2019, 554).

¹⁶⁴ *Psell. Or. for. 1* 106–1293 Dennis. I believe Psellos makes this maneuver to avoid accusations that would apply to him, not to Kerullarios, that is, he turns them against the mystics. From the beginning of the accusation of heresy, he makes accusations against Kerullarios that could have been launched against him (namely Hellenism, faith in the *Oracula Chaldaica*, etc). In fact, he emphasizes that it is not enough for one not to accept the heresy of Arius or Sabellius, but he must also not believe in Greek idolatry and the *Oracula Chaldaica*. He also accuses the Patriarch of introducing a woman, Dosithea, as a prophetess to the sanctuary; that is, he raises the issue of the violation of the abbot of the sanctuary, something that would concern himself as an accusation. See *Theol. 1. 23, 40–41 Gautier*: Psellos claims that he alone was the one who read the Oracles so much. Let us not forget that the *Or. for. 1* is dated shortly before 1059, that is, after Psellos delivered the *Theologica*-lectures.

¹⁶⁵ Lauritzen (2019, 555–56).

interests of, for example, Ioannes Italos, who focused on logic. For this reason, he finds the interest of Psellos in the Oracles only during the reign of the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–59), while in the following years logical-philosophical discussions have prevailed. But these views, in my opinion, equally reinforce the hypothesis that Psellos with these texts competes with the mystics, who were not interested in reasoning in the proof and promoted their teachings as self-evident authorities.

The same hypothesis of a confrontation with the mystics based on common concepts of mysticism can be supported by the phenomenon the Psellos criticizes the Church Fathers for monstrous ceremonies, while he parallel refers to his own ability to reveal in a ceremonial way. I have already suggested Stethatos' mystical hierarchy as Psellos' main point of reference when he speeches about a third altar within a ceremony. In addition, the ceremony-concept reminds of the exegetical method of the mystics, which projected the secret (as a kind of a μυστήριον) character of interpretation, where the concept not only of concealment to the uninitiated, but also of revealing mysteries, hidden to many, prevails. This method is theoretically set out by Stethatos,¹⁶⁶ and, as I have mentioned before, relates to the view of the Liturgy and the teaching of Nicetas synkellos.

In essence, Psellos does not reject the mystical-ritual language and method but claims that it concerns only his method and not the patristic-mystical method. The dominance of the mystical current does not allow Psellos a direct confrontation with it, but the proposal of an alternative mystical interpretation, which has the elements and the terminology of a ritual,¹⁶⁷ but another method.¹⁶⁸ This is also evident from the fact that he does not claim authority just for the interpretation, but for the depth of the hidden meanings, which the mystics also claimed. On the whole, he claims for himself and the philosophers the supreme authority in interpretation.¹⁶⁹ As I have shown, Proclus' hermeneutics dominate in his proposal.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Diamantopoulos (2019, 202–27).

¹⁶⁷ He uses many common (identical or similar) terms in both groups, both in the one he rejects and in his own: Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 33–37 Gautier: [the Church Fathers and his contemporaries] τὸ ἐπικαλύπτρον ἀναπεταννύοντες ὕφασμα, τερατώδεις τινὰς τελετὰς τοῖς ἀμύητοις παραδεικνύουσιν· ἀλλ' ἔγωγε τὰ μὲν ἐπικεκαλυμμένα οὐκ ἂν ποτε δημοσιεύσαιμι, τὸ δὲ κρυπτόμενον πνεῦμα τῷ γράμματι, ὡς αἰεὶ ποιεῖν εἴωθα, ἀνακαλύψομαι, τὸ ἐπικάλυμμα ἀφελών, my emphasis. See also Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 44–45 Gautier. See also Lauritzen (2013, 35) on *Phil. Min.* 1. 36 Duffy and O'Meara; Lauritzen does not state a confrontation; however, he too sees a connection between the neoplatonic mystical language in *Phil. Min.* 1. 36 and Stethatos' mysticism.

¹⁶⁸ One could assume here that the principle of "dissimulation" is found in the thought of Psellos, about which Kaldellis spoke (2012, 142), but he did not refer to Maximus or Stethatos.

¹⁶⁹ See for the controversy over authority in Constantinople Krausmüller (2014) and my comments in Diamantopoulos (2019, 781–97), also Angold (1994); (1997); (1998); (2000); (2004); (2008). However, Krausmüller's and Angold's studies did not discuss the hermeneutics.

2. 4 Psellos' Authority and Church Father's Criticism

Psellos, by criticizing Maximus and promoting Proclus, promotes his own interpretation and himself in general as a philosopher and orator. Self-promotion is a feature of Psellos' interpretations that we find also in other *Theologica*.¹⁷⁰ He is the one who gives a solution to the inadequacy of the previous ones. This concerns not only their interpretive praxis, that is, the meanings with which they interpreted the passages in question, but mainly their interpretive theory. This is also seen in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier from the emphasis on the first person singular, especially when he criticizes others, Fathers and contemporaries, and in the self-promotion of the method as his own. Also, in *Theol.* 1. 78 Gautier he adds his own elements, which do not even exist in Proclus as I have shown.¹⁷¹ Even if he does not succeed, he certainly seeks that this would be promoted as his own method, distinguished by the tradition.¹⁷² The negative characterizations of the first part of the introduction are of particular importance, if we consider that Psellos in the second part of the introduction, but also in the epilogue presents himself as an authority. He does not distance himself from the patristic exegesis in the name of another patristic tendency in the interpretation (e.g., preference of the ἀναγωγή over the literal interpretation), but in the name of his own hermeneutics, which he clearly projects as a safe route.

3. Conclusions

I believe that Psellos' introduction and the epilogue of *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier are a manifesto of his hermeneutics. The fact that this is the first lecture in a series is not accidental. As I have already mentioned, not only the question of

¹⁷⁰ See for Psellos' self-promotion, e. g., Psell. *Theol.* 1. 10, 3–10, 52–64, 79–92, 165–69; 1. 11, 127–41; 1. 15, 93, 96–97, 111–13; 1. 16, 39–40; 1. 17, 2–15; 1. 19, 20–27, 70–80 Gautier; the list may include more passages; I am preparing a systematic examination in my postdoctoral monograph. It should be noted here that Psellos' apparent humiliation, found in some of these passages, is always accompanied by an indirect questioning of the absolute authority of patristic interpretation. This is explained by the fact that Psellos, by humiliating himself, essentially mocks the claim for something better and ultimately always leaves the students to compare without taking the Fathers' authority as a fact.

¹⁷¹ Diamantopoulos (2019, 560–61).

¹⁷² There are references to the self-promotion of Psellos through his creativity in the *Allegorica*, cf. Miles (2014, 19–22) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 524–33) for further literature and discussion.

the critical attitude towards the Fathers, but also other elements of theoretical hermeneutics that appear here, can be found in other *Theologica*¹⁷³.

Psellos' main argument in *Theol. 1. 1 Gautier* is the criticism that the previous exegetes in their attempt to interpret some of the Last Supper's events and names failed and then divined. He also accuses them of challenging each other. I found that he means with that the Church Fathers' exegesis. According to Psellos, their main mistake was to seek historical truth where the Bible silences, that is to employ literal exegesis, despite that the Church Fathers interpreted these events anagogical, as I discovered. Furthermore, Psellos' basic tool of his criticism is that he refers to them anonymously.

Psellos presents in *Theol. 1. 1 Gautier* and in other *Theologica* Proclus as his paradigm of hermeneutical theory and praxis. He equates the failed patristic exegesis with the failed method of the ancient philosophers that Proclus rejects. The same criticism is turned against to his contemporary interpreters. I found out that Psellos considers that they belong to the same group with the Church Fathers. Psellos accuses further his contemporaries of producing monstrous ceremonies when they interpret.

In addition, I concluded that the only method to understand Psellos' criticism is its contextualization. The study of Maximus Confessor's use in *Theol. 1. 1 Gautier* and other *Theologica* is an essential stage of this process, if we consider that he was one of the mystics' paradigm. In this context, Psellos emphasizes Proclus' hermeneutical theory and praxis as unique. Therefore, he is not presenting Proclus as a paradigm *in abstracto*. Furthermore, through Maximus' rejection Psellos criticizes his contemporaries. He denies the Church Fathers' and Maximus' ἀναγωγή as a preoccupation with the γράμμα, because it is not philosophical, i. e. not Proclian. His main target is the theologian Nicetas Stethatos. The latter claimed mystical hermeneutics, where ἀναγωγή as a revelation dominates.

¹⁷³ In addition to the issues I have already mentioned in other *Theologica*, I would like to remark here regarding the criticism of the Fathers that similar cases are found, for example, in Psellos. *Theol. 1. 5*, 63–66 Gautier (Psellos perfects the imperfect interpretations of his predecessors); 66–73 Gautier (complete rejection of the patristic tradition and Stethatos' interpretations based on it, see Diamantopoulos (2019, 524–33, 567)); 1. 10, 3–6 Gautier (patristic interpretive tradition opposes itself); 1. 11, 139–41 Gautier (rejection of interpretive tradition's theological term); 1. 27, 118–30 Gautier (disagrees with the interpretive tradition of the verse under interpretation, he does not find sufficient explanations; cf. for this *Theologicum* Diamantopoulos (2019, 657–87)); 1. 38, 23–28 Gautier (critique of the patristic tradition's obsession with allegory); 1. 39, 5–21 Gautier; 1. 79, 15–41 Gautier (see for this *Theologicum* Diamantopoulos (2019, 551, 565, 574)); 1. 59, 189–91 Gautier (Andreas Cretensis stole ideas from Gregorius Nyssenus and presented them as his); 1. 65, 70–73 Gautier (Joannes Damascenus stole from Gregorius Nazianzenus); 1. 79, 1, 15 - 41 Gautier (see for ... 574); 1. 97, 2–5 Gautier (the previous exegetes failed). See also Walter (2017, 20). The results of the systematic research of all the passages will be published at the end of my postdoctoral research.

Furthermore, Psellos is against the Patriarch Michael Kerullarios, Stethatos' main supporter. I also discovered that Psellos turns against Nicetas synkellos, because the latter in his treatise *Contra Latinos de Azymis* interprets the problem of the names' silence in the events before the Last Supper using the same ceremonial language that Stethatos does and parallel explores the historical events.

However, Psellos' conflict with the Patriarch and Stethatos is deduced mainly through the epilogue of *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier. Psellos states there ironically that he hesitates to enter the hermeneutical sanctuary to seek for deeper meanings and he leaves this responsibility to the clergy. He will stay at a third altar reserved for the laymen. However, this concerns not only the Patriarch and his court. I concluded that through the reference to the third altar and by giving an ambiguous meaning to this altar through the adjective *κοσμικός* Psellos doubts both the Patriarchs' and Stethatos' authority. His main goal is to deconstruct¹⁷⁴ the latter's mystical hierarchy. In this hierarchy the laymen take a third, remote place as symbols of those who still need purification, the second is occupied by the monks as symbols of those who contemplate the creation and the first belongs to the clergy, who symbolize the mystical theologian. Stethatos claimed with this concept, that only the mystical theologian standing at the first or even at the second place receives revelations of meanings in the interpretation after his purification through asceticism and being's contemplation. These three places are related to the church buildings' architecture which explains Psellos' use of architectural terminology (*ἄδυτον*). Psellos seeks through his concept of a third altar to the promotion of the laymen philosophers and their rational hermeneutics as the absolute authority. Therefore, the criticism of the Church Father's anagoge as obsession with the letter aims at Stethatos and his supporters. Psellos also presents himself as a hermeneutical authority.

In addition, the hermeneutical dispute with Stethatos explains why Psellos employs the same elements which he criticizes, that is a ceremonial language and the concept of divination. This has to do with the fact that he does not want to collide directly with the contemporary dominating mystical mainstream. However, he suggests his own "mystical" method, as the original and superior, a Proclian one, where he too divines and discovers deeper meanings within a hermeneutical ceremony. Psellos claims that he used this method constantly for years and will use it in the future, which proves that by referring to the revelation of meanings he is expressing the essence of his hermeneutics.

¹⁷⁴ See this concept more broadly in Psellos' relationship with the Church: Kaldellis (2007, 209–19), and the literature on this subject in Diamantopoulos (2019, 15–16n6); as I said, Kaldellis does not identify the mystics either Stethatos or Maximus in this controversy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Alexander Salaminus. *Laudatio in apostolum Barnabam*. [Alex. Sal. Barn.] Edited by P. van Deun. *Hagiographica Cypria. Sancti Barnabae Laudatio auctore Alexandro monacho*. Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 26, 83–122. Turnhout: Brepols 1993.
- Andreas Cretensis. *Oratio IX*. [Andr. Cr. Or. 9] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 97, 986–1018. Paris: Migne, 1865.
- Athanasius Alexandrinus. *Dicta et Interpretationes paraboliarum Evangelii* [spurium]. [Ath. *Dicta et interp.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 28, 711–74. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Athanasius Alexandrinus. *Homilia in illud: Profecti in pagum est e regione, invenientis pullum alligatum* [dubium]. [Ath. *Hom. in Mt. 21: 2*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 28, 169–86. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Caesarius Nazianzenus. *Dialogi*. [Caes. Naz. *Dial.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 38, 852–1190. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Canones Concilii in Trullo*. [C. in Tr.] *Concilium Constantinopolitanum A. 691/2 in Trullo habitum (Concilium quinisexum)*. Edited by H. Ohme. *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* 2. 4. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.
- Cyrillus Alexandrinus. *Commentarius in Is*. [Cyr. Is.] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 77, 9–1450. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Cyrillus Alexandrinus. *Homilia paschalis XVII*. [Cyr. *Hom. pasch. 17*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 77, 767–90. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Cyrillus Alexandrinus. *In ramos palmarum* [spurium]. [Cyr. *Hom. div. 13*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 77, 1049–72. Paris: Migne, 1859. [= Eulog. palm. q. v.]
- Epiphanius Constantiensis. *Homilia 6* [spurium]. [Epiph. *Hom. 6*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 43, 501–506. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Eulogius Alexandrinus. *Sermo in ramos palmarum*. [Eulog. *Palm.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 86b, 2913–38. Paris: Migne, 1865.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus. *Orationes 32–45*. [Gr. Naz. *Or.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 36, 173–664. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. *De vita Mosis*. [Gr. Nyss. *V. Mos.*] Edited by J. Danielou. *Grégoire de Nyse. La vie de Moïse*. Sources chrétiennes 1 ter. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968³.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. *In baptismum Christi*. [Gr. Nyss. *Bapt. Chr.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 46, 577–600. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Joannes Chrysostomus. *Homilia in illud: Exiit qui seminat* [spurium]. [Chrys. *Hom. in Lc. 8: 5*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 61, 771–76. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Joannes Chrysostomus. *Homilia in Matthaëum LXXX*. [Chrys. *Hom. in Mt. 80*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 58, 723–30. Paris: Migne, 1862.

- Joannes Chrysostomus. *In sanctum pascha (sermo 6) [spurium]*. [Chrys. *Pasch.* 6] Edited by P. Nautin. *Homélie pascales*. Vol. 1. Sources chrétiennes 27, 117–91. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1950.
- Maximus Confessor. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*. [Max. *Qu. Thal.*] Edited by C. Laga and C. Steel. *Maximi Confessoris opera, quaestiones ad Thalassium*. Vols. 1–2. Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 7, 22. Turnhout: Brepols, 1980, 1990.
- Michael Psellos. *Epistulae*. [Psell. *Ep.*] Edited by St. Papaioannou. *Michael Psellus: Epistulae*. Vols. 1–2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana 2030. Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2019.
- Michael Psellos. *Oratio forensis 1*. [Psell. *Or. for.* 1] Edited by G. T. Dennis. *Michaelis Pselli orationes forenses et acta*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 2–103. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Michael Psellos. *Oratoria minora*. [Psell. *Or. Min.*] Edited by A. R. Littlewood. *Michaelis Pselli Oratoria Minora*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1985.
- Michael Psellos. *Philosophica minora*. [Psell. *Phil. Min.*] Edited by J. M. Duffy and D. J. O’Meara. *Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora*. Vols. 1–2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1989, 1992.
- Michael Psellos. *Theologica*. [Psell. *Theol.*] Edited by P. Gautier, L. G. Westerink, and J. M. Duffy. *Michaelis Pselli Theologica*. Vols. 1–2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. München-Leipzig: Teubner, 1989, 2002.
- New Testament: *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini and B. M. Metzger. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012²⁸.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *Centuriae*. [Nic. Steth. *Cap.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 120, 851–1010. Paris: Migne, 1864.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *De paradiso*. [Nic. Steth. *Parad.*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 154–227. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *De vitae limite*. [Nic. Steth. *Limit. Vit.*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 366–411. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *Epistula ad Gregorium I*. [Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. I*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 246–60. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *Epistula ad Gregorium IV*. [Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. IV*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 280–91. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas synkellos. *Contra Latinos de Azymis*. [Nic. syn. *De Az.*] Edited by A. Pavlov. *Критические опыты по истории древнейшей греко-русской полемики против латинян*, 135–45. Sankt Petersburg 1878.
- Nicetas synkellos. *Epistula ad Nicetam Stethatum I*. [Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. I*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 230–31. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.

- Nicetas synkellos: *Epistula ad Nicetam Stethatum II*. [Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. II*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 232–34. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Old Testament: *Septuaginta*. Edited by A. Rahlfs and R. Hanhart. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006².
- Oracula Chaldaica*. [Or. *Chald.*] Edited by É. des Places and A.-P. Segonds. *Oracles Chaldaïques avec un choix de commentaires anciens*. Collection des Universités de France. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996³.
- Edited and translated by R. Majercik. *The Chaldean Oracles: text, translation, and commentary*. Studies in Greek and Roman religion 5. Leiden-New York: Brill, 1989.
- Origenes. *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*. [Or. *Jo.*] Edited by C. Blanc. Origène : Commentaire sur Saint Jean. 5 vols. Sources Chrétiennes 120, 157, 222, 290, 385. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1966, 1970, 1975, 1982, 1992.
- Origenes. *Commentarium series in Mt. (Lat.)*. [Or. *comm. ser. 1–145 in Mt.*] Edited by E. Benz and E. Klostermann. *Origenes Werke. Elfter Band: Origenes Matthäuserklärung II: Die lateinische Übersetzung der commentariorum series*. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 38. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933.
- Plato. *Phaedo*. [Pl. *Phd.*] Edited by J. Burnet. *Platonis opera*. Vol. 1. Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900 (repr. 1967).
- Plato. *Timaeus*. [Pl. *Ti.*] Edited by J. Burnet. *Platonis opera*. Vol. 4. Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902 (repr. 1968).
- Proclus. *Commentaria in Oraculis Chaldaicis*. [Procl. *In Or. Chald.*] Edited by É. des Places and A.-P. Segonds. *Oracles Chaldaïques avec un choix de commentaires anciens*. Collection des Universités de France, 206–12. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996³.
- Proclus. *Elementatio theologica*. [Procl. *El. theol.*] Edited by E. R. Dodds. *The Elements of Theology, A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963².
- Proclus. *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*. [Procl. *In Ti.*] Edited by E. Diehl. 3 vols. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1906.
- Suidae Lexicon*. [Suid.] Edited by A. Adler. Lexikographi Graeci. Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare. Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1938.
- Synesius Cyrenensis. *Epistulae*. [Synes. *Ep.*] Edited by A. Garzya. *Synésios de Cyrène, Correspondance: Lettres I–CLVI*. Vols. 2–3. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000.
- Titus Bostrensis. *In ramos palmarum* [spurium]. [Tit. Bost. *Palm.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 18, 1263–78. Paris: Migne, 1857.

Secondary Sources

- Angold M. "Imperial renewal and orthodox reaction: Byzantium in the eleventh century." In *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries: Papers from the Twentieth-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St. Andrews, March 1992*, 231–46. Edited by P. Magdalino. Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publications 2. Aldershot-Hampshire: Variorum, 1994.
- Angold M. *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995 (repr. 2000).
- Angold M. *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A political history*. London-New York: Longman, 1997².
- Angold M. "The Autobiographical Impulse in Byzantium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 225–57.
- Angold M. "The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1118" In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Vol. 4. 2, c. 1024–c. 1198, 217–53. Edited by D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Angold M. "Belle Époque or Crisis? (1025–1118)." In *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, 583–626. Edited by J. Shepard. Cambridge-New York-Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Athanassiadi P. "Byzantine Commentators on the Chaldaean Oracles: Psellos and Plethon." In *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, 237–52. Edited by K. Ierodiakonou. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.
- Barber Ch. and Papaioannou S. (trans.) *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics*. Michael Psellos in translation. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.
- Berthold G. C. "Maximus Confessor: Theologian of the Word." In *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity. With Special Contributions by Various Scholars*, 942–71. Edited by Ch. Kannengiesser. Vol. 2. The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1. 2. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Blowers P. M. "Exegesis of Scripture." In *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*. 253–73. Edited by P. Allen and B. Neil. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Cesaretti P. *Allegoristi di Omero a Bisanzio: ricerche ermeneutiche (XI–XII secolo)*. Ricerche. Milano: Guerini, 1991.
- Chrestou K. P. «Η επίδραση τοῦ Πρόκλου Διαδόχου στὸ φιλοσοφικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ.» *Βυζαντινά* 25 (2005): 117–75.
- Cürsgen D. *Henologie und Ontologie: Die metaphysische Prinzipienlehre des späten Neuplatonismus*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007.
- Delli E., « Le *Timée* chez Michel Psellos. Pluralité d'approches, influence de Proclus et problématique de l'âme. » In *Lectures médiévales et renaissantes du Timée de Platon*, 27–63. Edited by B. Bakhouché and A. Gallonier. Les philosophes médiévaux 62. Leuven-Paris-Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2016.
- Diamantopoulos G. *Die Hermeneutik des Niketas Stethatos*. Münchner Arbeiten zur Byzantinistik 3. 1–2. Neuried: Ars-Una [now Utzverlag], 2019.

- Halfwassen J. *Der Aufstieg zum Einen: Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin*. München-Leipzig: Saur, 2006².
- Kaldellis A. *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 68. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 1999.
- Kaldellis A. "The Date of Psellos' Theological Lectures and Higher Religious Education in Constantinople." *Byzantinoslavica* 63 (2005): 143–51.
- Kaldellis A. *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kaldellis A. "Byzantine philosophy inside and out: Orthodoxy and dissidence in counterpoint." In *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*, 129–51. Edited by K. Ierodiakonou and B. Bydén. Papers and monographs from the Norwegian Institute at Athens 4. 1. Bergen: The Norwegian Institute at Athens, 2012.
- Kampianaki Th. "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*, 311–25. Edited by N. S. M. Matheou, Th. Kampianaki and L. M. Bondioli. *The Medieval Mediterranean Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1500* 106. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016.
- Kannengiesser Ch. *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity. With Special Contributions by Various Scholars*. Vols. 1–2. *The Bible in Ancient Christianity* 1. 1–2. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Kazhdan A. "Alexander the Monk." *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 1 (1991): 60.
- Kearney P. J. "Altar in the Liturgy. 2. In The Bible." *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 1 (2003²): 319–20.
- Krausmüller D. "Establishing Authority in Eleventh-Century Constantinople: Inspiration and Learning in the Writings of Niketas Stethatos." In *Networks of Learning: Perspectives on Scholars in Byzantine East and Latin West, c. 1000–1200*, 107–24. Edited by S. Steckel, N. Gaul and M. Grünbart. *Byzantinische Studien und Texte* 6. Wien-Berlin-Münster: LIT, 2014.
- Krausmüller D. "An embattled charismatic: assertiveness and invective in Niketas Stethatos' *Spiritual Centuries*." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 44. no 1 (2020): 106–23.
- Lampe G. W. H. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
- Lauritzen F. "Psellos the Hesychast. A Neoplatonic reading of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (Theologica I.11 Gautier)." *Byzantinoslavica* 70. no 1–2 (2012): 167–79.
- Lauritzen F. "Psellos and neo-Platonic mysticism. The secret meaning of the Greek Alphabet (Opus. phil. I 36, 335–642)." In *Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, 29–43. Edited by H. Seng. *Bibliotheca Chaldaica* 3. Heidelberg: Winter, 2013.
- Lauritzen F. "The Renaissance of Proclus in the Eleventh Century." In *Proclus and his Legacy*. Edited by D. A. Layne and D. D. Butorac. *Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.* 65, 233–39. Berlin-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017.

- Lauritzen F. «Psello e gli oracoli caldaici.» In *Dialoghi con Bisanzio: spazi di discussione, percorsi di ricerca: atti dell'VIII Congresso dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini (Ravenna, 22–25 settembre 2015)*, 549–56. Edited by S. Consentino, M. E. Pomeroy and G. Vespignani. Vol. 2. Quaderni della Rivista di Bizantinistica 20. 2. Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2019.
- Lauritzen F. “An Orthodox and Byzantine Reception of the *Elements of Theology*.” In *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, 19–31. Edited by D. Calma. Vol. 2: Translations and Acculturations. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021.
- Lewy H. *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*. Collection des Études Augustiniennes 77. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2011³.
- Liddell H. G., Scott R. and Jones H. S. *A Greek-English Lexicon [...] with a revised supplement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996⁹.
- Lourié B. « Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur: L'origine de l'Hérésie des Physéthésites. » *Scrinium* 4 (2008): 201–27.
- Louth A. *Denys the Areopagite*. Outstanding Christian thinkers. London-New York: Continuum, 1989 (repr. 2001).
- Maltese E. V. «Michele Psello, commentatore di Gregorio di Nazianzo: note per una lettura dei *Theologica*.» In *Σύνδεσμος: Studi in onore di Rosario Anastasi*, 289–309. Vol. 2. Catania: Fac. di Lettere e Filosofia, Univ. di Catania, 1994 [= *Gregorio Nazianzeno teologo e scrittore*, 227–48. Edited by C. Moreschini and G. Menestrina. Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di Scienze Religiose in Trento 17. Trento: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1992].
- Maltese E. V. «La teologia bizantina nell'undicesimo secolo fra spiritualità monastica e filosofia ellenica.» In *Storia della Teologia nel Medioevo*, 555–87. Edited by G. D'Onofrio. Vol. 1, Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1996.
- Miles G. “Living as a Sphinx: Composite Being and Monstrous Interpreter in the ‘Middle Life’ of Michael Psellos.” In *Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment*, 11–24. Edited by D. Kambaskovic. Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind, 15. Heidelberg-New York-London: Springer, 2014.
- O' Brien P. T. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. The Pillar New Testament commentary. Michigan-Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010.
- O' Meara D. J. “Psellos' *Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles* and Proclus' lost Commentary.” In *Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, 45–58. Edited by H. Seng. Bibliotheca Chaldaica 3. Heidelberg: Winter, 2013.
- O' Meara D. J. “Michael Psellos.” In *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 165–81. Edited by S. Gersh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Oikonomou I. B. *Παραδόσεις αρχαιολογίας της Παλαιστίνης και Βιβλικής θεσμολογίας*. Athen, 1992.
- Op de Coul M. “Aspects of Paideia in Synesius' *Dion*”. In *Synesios von Kyrene: Politik-Literatur-Philosophie*, 110–24. Edited by H. Seng and L. M. Hoffmann. Byzάντιος: Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.

- Papaioannou S. *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Pizzone A. „Christliche und heidnische Träume: Versteckte Polemik in Synesios, *De insomniis*.“ In *Synesios von Kyrene: Politik-Literatur-Philosophie*, 247–75. Edited by H. Seng and L. M. Hoffmann. Βυζάντιος. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Robinson J. M. “‘A Mixing Cup of Piety and Learnedness’: Michael Psellos and Nicholas of Methone as Readers of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*.” In *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, 56–93. Edited by D. Calma. Vol. 2: Translations and Acculturations. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021.
- Roilos P. *Amphoteroglossia: a poetics of the twelfth-century Medieval Greek novel*. Hellenic studies 10. Washington, D. C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2005.
- Roques D. « Lecteurs de Synésios, de Byzance à nos jours (VIe-XXIe s.) » In *Synesios von Kyrene: Politik-Literatur-Philosophie*, 276–387. Edited by H. Seng and L. M. Hoffmann. Βυζάντιος. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Shchykin T. A. “О возрождении интереса к учению Максима Исповедника в Византии [On the revival of interest in the teachings of Maxim the Confessor in Byzantium].” In *Научная Сессия ГУАП, сборник докладов: в 3 ч. Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет аэрокосмического приборостроения*, 93–96. Том. Часть III. Гуманитарные науки, Санкт-Петербург, 10–14 апреля 2017 г. Edited by Антохина Ю. А. St. Petersburg: Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет аэрокосмического приборостроения, 2017.
- Simonopetrites Maximos (Nicholas Constatas). “St Maximos the Confessor: The Reception of His Thought in East and West.” In *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection: Proceedings of the Symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, Belgrade, October 18–21, 2012*, 25–53. Edited by M. Vasiljević. Contemporary Christian Thought Series 20. California: Sebastian Press & The Faculty of Orthodox Theology, 2013.
- Taft R. F. *The Great Entrance. A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 200. Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1975.
- Taft R. F. “The Decline of Communion in Byzantium and the Distancing of the Congregation from the Liturgical Action: Cause, Effect, or Neither?” In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, 27–50. Edited by Sh. E. J. Gerstel. Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2006.
- Tanaseanu-Döbler I. „Synesios und die Theurgie.“ In *Synesios von Kyrene: Politik-Literatur-Philosophie*, 201–30. Edited by H. Seng and L. M. Hoffmann. Βυζάντιος. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Tarrant H. (trans.) *Proclus: Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

- Unger M. F. *Unger's Bible Handbook: An Essential Guide to Understanding the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1967.
- Utzschneider H. "Tabernacle" In *The Book of Exodus. Composition, Reception and Interpretation*, 267–301. Edited by Th. B. Dozeman, C. A. Evans and J. N. Lohr. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 164. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014.
- Walter D. *Michael Psellos: Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz; Mittelalterliche Philosophie im Verhältnis zu Antike und Spätantike*. Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie 132. Berlin-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017.

MICHAEL PSELLUS ON PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

MARK EDWARDS¹

ABSTRACT. This paper explores the use of the terms *theologia* and *philosophia* in the philosophic opuscula of Michael Psellus, especially those which are dedicated to the Chaldaean Oracles. It begins with a review of previous pagan and Christian usage, the conclusion of which is that Christians rejected the pagan distinction between *theologoi*, as inspired conduits of divine truth, from philosophers who interpreted such revelations under the rubric of *theologia*. For Christians Greek *theologoi* were mere purveyors of myth; *theologia* was not a branch of philosophy but the exposition of truths revealed in scripture. Since the revealers were already theologians, and the interpreters were *theologoi* in their own right, the terms became synonymous when applied to Christian practice. Psellus is on the whole faithful to this tradition, reserving the term *theologia* for Christian teaching in contrast to philosophy, except in one passage that speaks of the "philosophy and theology" of the Chaldaeans. The purpose of this phrase, in which the latter term seems to be epeexegetic to the former, is to intimate that even the best theology of the pagans, being ignorant of the biblical revelation, can rise no higher than philosophy.

Keywords: Chaldaean Oracles, Opuscula, philosophy, theology, revelation.

Introduction: a context for our question

What is the relation of Christianity to philosophy? And what, in Christian thought, is the relation between philosophy and theology? There are scholars for whom these are open questions, others for whom they are closed or incoherent, and no consensus, least of all among students of and period of Greek Christian thought, as to whether they are the same question. Historians of mediaeval thought are often vociferous in saying that they work only on philosophy or only on theology. Hard though it might be, on any definition, to winnow one from the other in the first chapters of the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas himself

¹ *Associate Professor in Patristics, Faculty of Theology and Religion, Oxford, United Kingdom.*
Email: mark.edwards@chch.ox.ac.uk.

distinguishes truths accessible to reason from those that reason learns from faith. Among both his precursors and his successors were some who held that faith may teach one thing and reason another, in which case reason yields to faith.

Is this what we mean by the difference between theology and philosophy? And if that is so, it is only his method of reasoning that defines the theologian, or the attitude of belief that accompanies this? And should we assume that reasoning with this method or this attitude will always be exchangeable for philosophical reasoning, or are there topics on which the theologian is equipped to speak and philosophy is silent? Certainly one might come to this conclusion after examining the syllabuses in Theology (or as we now say, Theology and Religion) at many British universities, encompassing as they do historical studies (in which providence is fettered by the principles of causality, correlation and analogy), philological studies (in which the Holy Spirit disappears behind a cloud of pseudepigraphy and redaction), studies in the development of doctrine (in which only the worldliest processes of thought can be ascribed to the principal actors) and studies in the nature of religion, for which the tools belong to the secular disciplines of anthropology, sociology and psychology. Oddly enough, it is the handful of scholars who are pursuing the philosophy of religion who are most likely to be men or women of faith, whether we understand by faith a method of reasoning or an attitude of belief.

Our lexical difficulties are illustrated by two contributions to a recent volume on *Eastern Christianity and Late Antique Philosophy*. Resisting this implied dichotomy between Christianity and philosophy, Johannes Zachhuber argues, in both a book and a recent article,² that Christian philosophy in this epoch should be seen as a distinct philosophical school, which stood to the pagan schools, as they stood to each other, in mixed relations of indebtedness, dialogue, enmity and convergence.³ He does not endorse Pierre's Hadot's assertion that for Christians the term 'philosophy' always denoted a way of living rather than a system of thought. This is a claim that Hadot extends (with qualifications) to all philosophical schools of late antiquity,⁴ and it is one that Stoics and

² J. Zachhuber, "Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity: Some reflections on Concepts and Terminologies", in E. Anagnostou-Laoutides and K. Parry (eds.), *Eastern Christianity and Late Antique Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill 2020), 52-77; *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysics: Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020).

³ Zachhuber, *Rise of Christian Theology*, 2; "Philosophy and Theology", 61, quoting P. Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2004), 240.

⁴ See especially P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell 1995).

Epicureans made of themselves (in striking contradiction, I would say, to the Peripatetics⁵). While Zachhuber has a strong case against Hadot, he also notes, against his own thesis, that Origen on one occasion seems to differentiate Christianity from philosophy by drawing an analogy between them.⁶ Origen does not equate Christianity with theology in this passage, but Zachhuber himself contrasts theology with philosophy when he says of the latter that it did not ascribe infallibility, as the former did, to the texts that it took as matter for commentary.⁷ He adds that the church as an institution differed from a school in that it made provision for those whose faith was unrefined by knowledge, but this is an observation on the milieu of theology rather than on its character or content as a practice.

Perhaps we could say that for Zachhuber theology (by which he always means in this paper Christian theology) is a species of philosophy which owes its peculiar mental attitudes and demonstrative principles to the extraordinary status of its founder and of the book which recorded his ministry. There is not so much interrogation of the received terminology of scholarship in Dirk Krausmüller's "Theology and Philosophy in the Late Patristic Discourse".⁸ Here the Christian authors who provide his subject-matter are engaged in the distinctively Christian study of Christology, which is clearly a branch of theology whether that term signifies a mental attitude, a demonstrative method or a field of inquiry. The philosophy to which Krausmüller's title alludes is Porphyry's codification of Aristotelian logic, and the object of the paper is to ascertain the 'role' that it 'played' in the exposition of an obscure but mandatory article of belief. Both Zachhuber and Krausmüller have given the foreground to writings and dogmas which are undeniably theological, the only question being whether theology is a rival to philosophy, a branch or mode of philosophy or an enterprise of a different kind altogether. By contrast the protagonist of the present study is a Byzantine author of no repute among historians of theology, who nevertheless has some claim on the interest of historians of philosophy, if only as a witness to the content of ancient philosophical texts which would otherwise be all but lost.

Michael Psellus, born in 1017 or 1018 and probably in Constantinople, combined his monastic orders with both political and academic careers, lecturing with distinction in Greek philosophy while he served his imperial masters as a

⁵ See Philop. in Cat. 5.18-33 Busse, on differing Peripatetic views of the origin of philosophy, and note that the majority of commentaries are on the logical works of Aristotle, while no full commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* survives.

⁶ Zachhuber, "Philosophy and Theology", 69-70, quoting Or. Cels. 3.12.

⁷ Zachhuber, "Philosophy and Theology", 71.

⁸ D. Krausmüller, "Philosophy and Theology in the Late Patristic Discourse: Pure Existence, Qualified Existence and the Arbor Porphyriana", in Anagnostou-Laoutides and Parry, 150-173.

provincial judge, as secretary to the Chancellory and counsellor on political affairs. The most famous of his works is the *Chronographia*, a history spanning the reigns of fourteen Emperors from 976 to the reign of Michael Dukas (1071-1078). It was not this, however, that earned him the title “Chief of the Philosophers”, but the treatises which Duffy and O’Meara have now edited under the title *Philosophica Minora*.⁹ The natural inclination of modern readers is to say that, for all his protestations of orthodoxy, the author of these treatises was not a theologian but a Christian philosopher or a Christian of philosophical sympathies. The fact that this was not his own opinion, that the works of Proclus and the *Chaldaean Oracles* were for him the vehicles of a *theologia* which could be tested against the authoritative teachings of the church, is sufficient warrant for further investigation of his nomenclature, for which I do not pretend to have either the time or the expertise to offer more than a preliminary draft.

***Theologos* and *theologia* in classical Greek**

In classical Greek the term *theologos* is not applied to the majority of those who are called philosophers. It is typically used of those whose utterances about the gods were couched in a vatic or bardic idiom which offered no proofs and made no use of rational inquiry.¹⁰ Philosophers might be willing to grant the authority of direct inspiration to a prophet, but that does not make the prophet one of their company, as Diogenes Laertius protests when reviewing the claims of Orpheus in the preface to his *Lives of the Philosophers*.¹¹ Parmenides and Empedocles, who argue in verse for convictions which they profess to have imbibed under inspiration, are more often styled philosophers than *theologoi*. Theirs was the last philosophy to be written in verse, except for the *Chaldaean Oracles*, the putative work of two second-century sages, in which the emergence of finite entities from their ineffable Source was represented as a succession of a triads, each recapitulating – first in the order of being, then in the order of life and then in the order of intellect – the emanation of *dunamis* or power from being to take the determinate form of intellect. This was a more schematic system than that of any *theologos*, yet the *Oracles* had in common with the *theologoi* an obscurity of diction which entails that they could lend

⁹ Michael Psellus, *Philosophica Minora*, vol. 1, ed. M. Duffy and D. J. O’Meara (Leipzig: Teubner 1992); vol. 2, ed. D. J. O’Meara (Leipzig: Teubner 1989).

¹⁰ Arist. *Metaph.* 1000a9 of Hesiod; see further nn. 12 and 16. *Theologos* is used also in inscriptions of those who presided in the mysteries: C. Marksches, *Christian Theology and its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire* (Waco: Baylor University Press 2015), 8-9.

¹¹ He does not style Orpheus a *theologos* at prologue 5, but says that he does not know whether his tales about the gods entitle him to be called a philosopher.

their authority only to those who had the authority to elucidate them. On the other hand, once Plato had added the noun *theologia* to the vocabulary of philosophers, it was apt to denote a “science” rather than a mere “speaking” of gods¹² – that is, it was used not so often of writings that were attributed to *theologoi* as of the application of philosophical tools such as allegory to their ebullitions.¹³

It is not his subject-matter but his mode of communication that distinguishes the *theologos* from the philosopher. Iamblichus undertakes near the beginning of his treatise *On the Mysteries* to address theological matters theologically, theurgic matters theurgically and philosophical matters philosophically.¹⁴ In his *Commentary on the Parmenides*, the Neoplatonist Proclus sometimes reinforces a “philosophical” argument by a “theological one”,¹⁵ which appears to serve as an instrument of persuasion for those who were either less deft in reasoning or less willing to believe without confirmation from above. The *Chaldaean Oracles* and the *Timaeus* of Plato contained, in his view, all that was required for the understanding of the material and the intelligible cosmos (Marinus, *Life of Proclus*). The dialogues of Plato, however, were texts to be

¹² See Pl. R. 597a-b Slijngs, with W. Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1947), 4-13, upheld with modifications by G. Naddaf, “Plato’s *Theologia* Revisited”, *Methexis* 9 (1996), 5-18 in response to V. Goldschmidt, *Questions Platoniciennes* (Paris: Vrin 1970), 141-172. Against Jaeger’s conjecture that Plato invented the noun *theologia* see G. Vlastos, “Philosophy and Theology in early Greek Thought”, *Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1952), 97-123 at 102, n. 22.

¹³ Jaeger, *Theology*, 194 n. 17 cites Arist., *Metaph.* 1009a9, 1071b27, and 1091a34 as instances of his willingness to ascribe *theologia* to poets and mythographers; in all these cases, however, the word that Aristotle employs is *theologos*. At 983b28 Homer and Hesiod are subjects of the verb *theologeîn*. Only at Arist. *Mete.* 353a35 does he speak of person other than philosophers who “have been occupied with theology”. While Jaeger declares (p. 5) that Eudemus of Rhodes would not have included his master Aristotle in his *History of Theology*, the true title of this work would seem to have been τῶν περὶ τὸ θεῖον ἱστορία: see G. Betegh, “On Eudemus Fr. 150 (Wehrli)”, in M. I. Bodnár and W. Fortenbaugh (eds), *Eudemus of Rhodes* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers (2002), 337-357.

¹⁴ Iamb., *Myst.* 1.2 des Places in E. des Places (ed.), Jamblique, *Sur les mystères* (Paris: Belles Lettres 1966), 7.2-6. The adverb *theologikôs* does not stand in contrast to any other term at Iamb. *Comm. Math.* 7.4.4, but at 55.7-8 *Festa theologia* appears to be a preparatory study to *philosophia*.

¹⁵ See Procl. In Parm.184.2-3 Stallbaum at in G. Stallbaum (ed.), *Platonis Parmenides cum quattuor libris prolegomenorum et commentario perpetuo; accedit Procli in Parmenidem Commentarii nunc emendatius editi* (Leipzig: Lehnhold 1839), 722. Cf. Procl. In R. 2.61.2105 Kroll, where *theologikôs* is contrasted with *physikôs*. Eus. PE 1.57.2 Mras in ed. K. Mras, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs 1902), 57.2, uses the term *theologia* of a compendious recitation in prose of Phoenician myths attributed to a multitude of *theologoi* whose medium was verse; at 57.13 he contrasts the “physical allegorizing (*tropologiai*)” of this with the literal reading which he understand to be the intended one. Sallust. 4, states that theological myths are distinguished from physical myths in that they represent the gods as they are, i.e. without bodies.

examined, harmonised and rescued from ignorance and detraction; only once the meaning of these had been ascertained and verified could the *Oracles* bestow divine sanction on philosophical texts by which their own theology was elucidated. His commentary on the *Oracles* is the subject of a recent monograph by Nicola Spanu¹⁶, but if Psellus made any use of it he chose not to avow his debt.

It is not an invariable rule for Proclus that theology is a less rigorous or perspicuous mode of inquiry than philosophy. His own introduction to Platonism, the *Elements of Theology* (which might be more closely rendered *Theological Foundations*), has a title that looks back to the *Theology of Arithmetic* by Nicomachus, and also to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In the sixth book of this compilation, theology is the most profound of the speculative sciences, whose subject-matter is neither that which is separable but mutable, as in physics, nor that which is immutable but inseparable, as in mathematics, but that which is both inseparable and immutable (*Metaphysics* 1026a5-22). The treatise known as *Metaphysics Lambda*, or Book 12, posits God as the perfect actuality and final cause of all that inhabits the realm of generation and corruption. Even in this text, which many regard as a product of his apprenticeship to Plato, Aristotle shows none of his master's reverence for hereditary wisdom,¹⁷ his terminal echo of Homer (*Metaphysics* 1076a) being as decorative as the comment on the economy of myth which precedes it at 1074b. Homer and Orpheus had no conception of movement, genesis, change and increase as transitions from the potential to the actual, they had not been taught by Plato that it is only a final cause that can explain the action of an efficient cause, and they were consequently unable to see that the order of generation and corruption presupposes a pure actuality, moving all things as the beloved moves the lover. Their writings are at best the raw stuff of philosophy, whereas theology, in the Aristotelian sense, is its coping-stone.

Theologos and theologia in Christianity

Both the inspired *theologos* and the intellectual discipline of *theologia* find a place in early Christian parlance. The ascription of the Book of Revelation to *Iôannês ho theologos*, 'John the Divine', puts the biblical seer on all fours with the poets who received their song from the muses as he received his vision in the Spirit. On the other hand, when the nominal adjective *theologikê* is applied by Evagrius Ponticus to the third and crowning stage of monastic holiness, it does not denote some momentary insufflation of divine knowledge but the

¹⁶ Nicola Spanu, *Proclus on the Chaldaean Oracles* (London: Routledge 2020).

¹⁷ He applies the word *theologos* to Orpheus at Arist. *Metaph* 1071b.

permanent result of a protracted war with the flesh, the first stage of which is *praktikê*, the extinction of selfish appetites and the second *phusikê*, the holistic understanding of the natural order. The science named *theologikê* is not doctrinal erudition but direct and abiding knowledge of God as an object of love,¹⁸ corresponding to *theôrikê* in Origen's division of philosophy into the ethical, the physical and the theoretic, also styled in certain manuscripts the epoptic or enoptic.¹⁹ Origen hints that this is a Greek taxonomy, pre-empted by and perhaps derived from Solomon; but in fact there is no obvious precedent, whether or not we add logic as a fourth branch, and it may be that he has conflated the Stoic division of philosophy into ethics, physics and logic with Aristotle's triad of mathematics, physics and theology.²⁰ Although it is only Gregory of Nyssa who expressly derives the word *theos* by metonymy from *theatês*, "observer", Origen's younger contemporary Plotinus had already juxtaposed these words in a passage that suggests the same etymology.²¹ It may be that Evagrius, rather than superimposing Gregory on Origen by substituting theology for theoretics, is drawing out explicitly what Origen chose, in a manner not wholly strange to Aristotle, to encode in the language of the mysteries.²²

It is after all in the mysteries, or at least in the philosophic appropriations which are almost all that we know of them, that the inspired *theologos* and the rational theologian become one. Moses, according to Philo, is accredited as a *theologos* by a series of visions, commencing with the burning Bush and culminating in the occluded spectacle of divine glory on Mount Sinai (Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.115). At the same time, Moses is the author of the clearest and most perfect code of laws that has been vouchsafed to any nation, in which any apparent blemishes or obscurities are ciphers of higher truths which are intelligible only to philosophers like himself. It is those who keep this law with the utmost rigour

¹⁸ See *Praktikos* 1 and 84, with the prologue to this work (8), in the online text of ldysinger.com/Evagrius/01_Prak/00a_start.htm. For the three *logoi* (physical, ethical, theological) see also Iamb. Iamblichus, in Nic. 125.20-22 Klein in ed. U. Klein (Leipzig: Teubner 1894).

¹⁹ *Enoptikê* is the Greek term which is translated by Rufinus as inspective in the proem to the *Commentary on the Songs of Songs* as edited by W. P. Baehrens, *Origenes: Werke Band VIII: Homilien zu Samuel 1, zum Hohelied und zur Propheten, Kommentar zum Hohelied in Rufins und Hieronymus' Übersetzung* (Leipzig: Hinrichs 1925), 75.8. Both *epoptikê* and *theorikê*, however, appear in the apparatus criticus, and these have the advantage of being known Greek words.

²⁰ Cf Origen, *loc. cit.*, 75.10. On the divisions of philosophy in Greek thought see P. Hadot, "La division des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité", *Museum Helveticum* 36 (1979), 201-223; M. J. Edwards, "Precursors of Origen's Hermeneutic Theory", *Studia Patristica* 29 (1993), 232-237.

²¹ F. Müller (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* 3.1 (Leiden: Brill 1958), 44; Plot. 5.1.6 Henry Schwyzer.

²² See M. J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2002), 140. On Aristotle see Synes., *Dion.* 8.

who are best fitted to enter the presence of God in corybantic ecstasy.²³ As Philo clothes his own piety in the imagery of Greek initiation, assuming Moses to have been conversant with the Stoic and Platonic doctrines that inform his own exegesis, so the Neoplatonists strive to bring the rhapsodic and mythological elements of Plato into a system more comprehensive and no less rational than that of Aristotle. In Porphyry the *theologos* is one whose teaching takes the form of discursive exposition yet flows from direct commerce with the ineffable.²⁴ Among Christians it was this fusion of the intuitive and the discursive that caused Gregory Nazianzen to be known habitually as the *theologos*, a higher accolade than the epithet *theios*, which was given to the most illustrious doctors of both the church and the Academy. No doubt the designation of the apostle as a *theologos* has the same force in Origen's *Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*, whether or not he believed that this work and the Book of Revelation had been written by the same John.

So far I have dwelt on the analogies between Christian and pagan uses of the terms *theologos* and *theologia*. Christians, however, were set apart from pagans (in their own minds at least) by a stringent monotheism, and it is not surprising that in certain contexts *theologia* came to signify 'true theology, our theology' in contrast to the more generic practice of philosophy. Talk of God was not merely a variety but the antithesis, of the impious 'talk of gods' which derived its charter from the *theologoï* of classical antiquity; even the *theologia* which purported to be the summit of philosophy was not the Christian discipline, so long as its foundation was, as Origen put it, the practice of analysis, analogy and synthesis, as if God could be discovered without his own consent by perseverance in ratiocination. As the study of the one God in accordance with his own self-disclosure, *theologia* comes to mean the doctrine of the Trinity, of the divine as known by scriptural revelation, in contrast to the economy, the manifestation of God in history and the natural realm. In this acceptance *theologia* is not so much the highest exercise of, but a higher exercise than, philosophy; reason cannot complement revelation as a source of knowledge about the nature of God, and when the question is simply 'what is to be believed' there is no philosophical alternative to the theological method of inquiry.

Philosophy, in its quotidian sense, was of service in the elucidation, not in the proof of dogma. It was not this legitimate use of it that Tertullian meant to exclude when he exclaimed "what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?";²⁵ what he does mean to exclude we can ascertain by contrasting his treatises on the

²³ For passages on ecstasy see H. Lewy, *Sobria Ebrietas* (Giessen: Töpelmann 1929).

²⁴ Porph. abst. 4.16.5 (possibly alluding to Orpheus; Porph. *Antr.* 15 (followed by quotation of Orpheus), 22 and 29. At Porph. *Marc.* 15 *theologia* is once again the highest discipline of philosophy.

²⁵ *Indictment of Heretics* 7.

divinity of Christ with his apologetic defence of monotheism or his treatise in the corporeality of the human soul.²⁶ In the latter work, which fell under the category of physics in ancient divisions of philosophy, he appeals to the Stoics and the medical writers as readily as to scripture, just as he assumes that he can enlist the support of every honest pagan in his satires on idolatry. By contrast, the study of God is its own domain with its own laws of accreditation: we are bound on divine authority to believe what we would not believe without it, even if it teaches us that the God who is one is also three or that the Word can become a human being and yet remain the incorporeal Word.

Psellus on *theologia* and the Neoplatonists²⁷

It would seldom, if ever be safe to infer from his use of *theologia* and its cognates that Psellus allotted different domains to theology and philosophy or that he held theology to be a Christian preserve. He never implies that the true *theologos* owes his knowledge to revelation rather than to his ratiocinative faculties: when expounding the myth of the *Phaedrus*, he assumes that even when he descends to particulars he is speaking for other *theologoi* beside Plato, by whom he appears to mean other interpreters of classic tales about the gods.²⁸ Here Psellus makes it clear that he is reporting, not espousing, a pagan conceit; elsewhere he commends Gregory Nazianzen as “our *theologos*”, who unites reason with *theôria*,²⁹ with no implication either that *theôria* is theology in contradistinction to reason, or that the *Chaldaean Oracles* bear comparison with Gregory when they supplement reason with *hulikai teletai*, ‘material rites’.³⁰ Another passage characterizes the task of the *theologos* as the exposition of God’s providential governance,³¹ and once again Psellus plainly has in mind

²⁶ See J. H. Waszink (ed.), *Tertullian’s De Anima* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff 1947). The dictum *credibile est, quia ineptum est, certum est, quia impossibile* (*De Carne Christi* 5.4) is the conclusion of a rational argument based on God’s ability to transcend contradiction, not a despairing ejaculation of the “will to believe”.

²⁷ Throughout this discussion, pagination will be from *Philosophica Minora*, vol. 2, where the most precise mode of reference is by page and line. Where the footnotes provide ancillary information from vol. 1, reference is by Opusculum and line, as in the index to that volume.

²⁸ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.7.12.22 O’Meara: “Explanation of the Charioteering of Souls and the Army of the Gods in Plato’s *Phaedrus*”.

²⁹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.132.7 O’Meara “Exegesis of the Chaldaean Sayings” on which see further below. Cf Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.6.65 Duffy for Gregory as *theologos*, with Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.6.21 and 6.66-67 Duffy on his proficiency in *theologia*.

³⁰ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.132.12 O’Meara.

³¹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.44.156.6-7 O’Meara. “That Events are not changed by God’s Foreknowledge of them”.

such men as himself, not the ancient rhapsodes. The adjective *theologikê* occurs in the title of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (*Stoicheiosis Theologikê*) at the end of a short dissertation on the nature of mind, which Psellus professes to draw from this source without any warning that the doctrine is not his own.³² In a preface to another short treatise the scope of *theologia* is coterminous with the doctrine of the Trinity,³³ yet the title is 'On Theology and the Judgment of the Greeks', and the two exponents of this are Proclus and Porphyry, neither of whom is found to be free from error. Less homologous with Christianity as a system, however neatly the two may coincide in certain particulars, is the "theology and philosophy of the Chaldaeans",³⁴ yet the all-but-synonymous usage of these terms suggests that neither is in itself pejorative.

The treatise *On Theology* commences with a disclaimer of any intent to prove what needs no proof, "our theological dogma of the consubstantiality of the Trinity".³⁵ There is none the less, Psellus continues, 'a discourse of the wise among the Greeks which is profitable to the demonstration of theology concurring in no small degree with our discourse on the Son's unity with and distinction from the Father, a unity which does not efface the distinction and a distinction which does not undo the unity'.³⁶ The first specimen of this is the dictum of Proclus that "everything which is caused remains in its cause, proceeding from it and reverting to it."³⁷ Psellus goes on to paraphrase the arguments by which the Athenian Platonist establishes this thesis.³⁸

If the effect remained in the cause without proceeding from it, the difference between the cause and its effect which the very notion of causality implies would not obtain. If it proceeded and did not remain, the two would be utterly severed, and the mutual implication, which is equally intrinsic to the notion of causality, would be lost. If it remained and proceeded but did not return, how are we to account for the thirst of every individuated thing for the One and the Good? If it proceeded and returned but did not remain, we should have to explain why after its procession it should manifest a desire to be one with its cause which had not been present from the beginning. If it remained and returned but did not proceed, the very notion of a return would be nonsensical,

³² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.10.21.22 O'Meara: "On Intellect".

³³ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.117.23 O'Meara.

³⁴ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.40.151.14 O'Meara. "Outline Recapitulation of the Ancient Doctrines of the Chaldaeans".

³⁵ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.117.24 O'Meara.

³⁶ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.117.26-118.4 O'Meara.

³⁷ Procl. ET 35, p. 38.9-10 Dodds, cited at 118.4-5. E. R. Dodds, *Proclus: The Elements of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1963), 221 comments: "The triad immanence-procession-reversion had a considerable history. Ps-Dionysius applies it to the Divine Love (Dion. Ar. DN 4.14), Psellus to the Christian Trinity".

³⁸ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.118.5-23 O'Meara.

as there would have been no antecedent differentiation. Thus the conclusion must be that the effect remains in the cause while proceeding from and reverting to it - a teaching strikingly congruent with the church's belief that the 'only-begotten Word proceeds from the Father timelessly and incorporeally, remaining in the Father and reverting to its progenitor, no division of the Godhead being entailed when he proceeds, no separation when he returns, and no confusion of hypostatic determination when he remains'.³⁹

The language, in all its turgidity, is that of Dionysius the Areopagite, whom Psellus has already echoed in his proviso that the distinction of persons is not effaced by their unity nor their unity undone by their distinctness.⁴⁰ He now appeals openly to the Areopagite⁴¹ in support of another cardinal proposition from the *Elements of Theology*, that "whatever exists undergoes reversion either ontically only, or vitally, or gnostically".⁴² He explains that the existent has as its cause "either being alone, or life with being or also a gnostic power from that source",⁴³ and that its ontic, vital or gnostic mode of procession is reflected in its ontic, vital or gnostic mode of reversion.⁴⁴ He does not explain how this proposition elucidates the doctrine of the Trinity, for he does not follow Porphyry's Latin disciple Marius Victorinus in his correlation of being with the Father, life with the Son and intellect with the Spirit.⁴⁵ Nor does he remark that in Proclus the three terms form a descending hierarchy, the scope of intellect being inferior to that of life and the scope of life inferior to that of being.⁴⁶

In Dionysius, the three are neither ranked nor correlated with the Trinity. As in the first citation from Proclus, Psellus also maintains a politic silence with regard to his maxim that in a procession that which is always more perfect

³⁹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.118.19-23 O'Meara.

⁴⁰ Dion. Ar. CH 120b-121b. At Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.118.2-4 O'Meara cites Dion Ar. DN 3.4., pp. 126.3-127.12 in the B.R. Suchla (ed.), *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De Divinis Nominibus* (Berlin: De Gruyter 1990).

⁴¹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.119.1 O'Meara cite Dion. Ar. DN 1.5, pp. 117-15-118.1 and 4.4, p. 148.15-17 Suchla.

⁴² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35, 118.24-25 O'Meara, citing Procl. ET 39, p. 40.27-28 Dodds. Compare Nic. Methon. *In Procl.* 64 Voemel, in J. Th. Voemel (Frankfurt: Brünner 1825), 64, who's pronounces the implied equation of being, life and intellect with the first principle to be in accord with Christian teaching, and thus in contradiction to those who subordinate intellect to life, life to being and being to the One.

⁴³ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.118.26-27 O'Meara

⁴⁴ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.118.28-29 O'Meara

⁴⁵ See P. Henry, "The *Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus, The First Systematic Exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity", *Journal of Theological Studies* 1 (1950), 42-55.

⁴⁶ Procl. ET 101, p. 90.17-19 Dodds. For a possible correlation with Origen's doctrine of the Trinity see J. M. Dillon, "Logos and Trinity: Patters of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity", in G. Vesey (ed.), *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), 1-14.

than that which is second.⁴⁷ Had he taken note of this, he would have been bound to confess that in Proclus the aspiration of the effect to union with the cause is always rooted in its need to supply its deficiency, and that *erôs* or love is understood by Platonists as desire arising from lack, with the corollary that the object of love will always be superior to its subject and that love expires when its object is attained. It need hardly be said that no orthodox theology of the Trinity can be based on such assumptions, which, however they may be qualified in other works by Proclus, are ubiquitous in the *Elements of Theology*. For all his legerdemain, it is not the intention of Psellus to demonstrate a perfect congruence between the system of Proclus and that of the church. Commenting on the assertion that whatever participates separably in its cause is united to it by an inseparable *dunamis* or power, he declares that this agrees only in part with “our doctrinal precepts”.⁴⁸

On the one hand, we may agree that the soul is prepared by an eternal illumination for its participation in reason; on the other hand, Christians know nothing of intermediaries between body and soul, of inseparable entelechies, of a plurality of natural hypostases in the body, of opinionative or appetitive lives, or of a discrete hypostases for the irrational soul.⁴⁹ The aim of Psellus is evidently to defend the Christian doctrine of resurrection, with the associated postulate of a temporary divorce of soul and body in the intermediate state. He does not say in detail where he has found the tenets that he rejects, or why he thinks each of them irreconcilable with the truth that the Church proclaims.

Equally inconsistent with the faith, and therefore false, is the Neoplatonic postulation of two antecedent principles, limit and limitlessness or finitude and infinitude, as objects of participation for that which is finite or infinite.⁵⁰ The finite and the infinite we know, retorts Psellus, but not these two abstractions:⁵¹ by this his Byzantine readers would understand that God alone is the infinite being, to whom nothing is anterior, and whose will alone is the cause of all finite being, including its material substrate.

The next comment by Psellus is of particular interest, since it affirms that certain positions that can be taken by philosophers which are not so much

⁴⁷ Procl. ET 36, p. 38.30-32 Dodds.

⁴⁸ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35, 119.4-7 O’Meara, citing Procl. ET 81, p. 76.12-13 Dodds. Nic. Methon., p. 108 Voemel argues that, rather than fall into the absurdity of saying that the imparticipable is participated in its *dunamis*, we should say that the *dunamis* is participated while the imparticipable remains aloof.

⁴⁹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.119.9-12 O’Meara

⁵⁰ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35, 119.15-16 O’Meara, citing Procl. ET 90, p. 82.7-8 Dodds: “Prior to all that is constituted by limit and limitlessness are the self-existent primary Limit and primary Limitlessness (*apeiria*).

⁵¹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.119.16-20 O’Meara.

true or false as incommensurable with the deliverances of faith. The aphorism of Proclus⁵² that “all things are in all, but in each in the way proper to it, so that being is present in life and intellect, life in intellect and being, and intellect in being and life” falls into this category of teachings which received as philosophical concepts.⁵³ We are not told whether this description excludes it from the domain of pagan theology, and we therefore cannot be certain whether Psellus is drawing a contrast between philosophy and theology in general, or rather between philosophy and the theology of the Church. The latter is more probable, for we have already seen (and will have occasion to notice again) that philosophy and theology are coterminous in the *Chaldaean Oracles*. A third interpretation, that Psellus is comparing pagan philosophy to its disadvantage with Christian philosophy, would seem to be untenable for at least three reasons: firstly because it was in his power to say so if that was his meaning, secondly because he never attaches the word “philosophy” or its cognates to Christian authors or their opinions, and thirdly because if there were a Christian philosophy, that of the pagans would not be incommensurable but a mixture of true and false.

Hellenism and Heresy

Error in Psellus is not the result of thinking philosophically but of thinking “Hellenically”.⁵⁴ In Jewish and primitive Christian usage the Greek was an idolaters and a polytheists, but from the third century pagans and Christians alike had agreed to use the term to represent those forms of thought and life that were native to the Greek tradition, in contradistinction to those which boasted of their barbarian ancestry. The Greek thought that Psellus repudiates as a Christian in this treatise is the positing of a universal soul and a universal intellect, of which particular souls and intellects are parts or instantiations.⁵⁵

This is a Neoplatonic position, and it no doubt with design that Psellus proceeds to quote a series of aphorisms derived not from the *Elements of Theology* but from the *Sentences* (or more accurately, *Launching-Points*) of Porphyry, a notorious enemy of the Christian faith who had declared it to be less consonant with the law than the way of the Greeks. The first, which alleges that every effect is inferior to that which generates it,⁵⁶ is pronounced to be at the root of the Arian heresy, according to which the Son is both subordinate and

⁵² Procl. ET p. 92, 13-16 Dodds.

⁵³ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.119.23 O’Meara.

⁵⁴ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.120.1 O’Meara.

⁵⁵ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.119.26-30 O’Meara, citing Procl. ET 108, p. 96.23-28 Dodds.

⁵⁶ Porph, *Sent.* 13, p. 5.10 Lamberz in Lamberz (Leipzig: Teubner 1975), cited at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35, 3-4 O’Meara. As I noted, Psellus could have denounced the same error in Proclus.

posterior to the Father. The association is warranted both by Constantine's denunciation of Arius as a Porphyrian and by Porphyry's animadversions on the doctrine of the Logos which are cited by a number of Byzantine authors.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Psellus applauds the saying that that which is higher than *nous* or intellect cannot be apprehended by *noesis* (intellection), but only in a mode that negates and surpasses intellection, to which Porphyry had given the name *anoësia*.⁵⁸ Origen had pre-empted Plotinus and Porphyry in declaring the One whom Plato had set above being to be also above the intellect,⁵⁹ but it was Dionysius who had canonised agnosia, the negation and transcendence of thought and knowledge, as the closest approximation to God of which we are capable of revelation.

Finally Psellus endorses the more abstruse proposition that that which is partless and free of multiplicity cannot be participated in its essence, but only in a multiplied and partible aspect, and that when this occurs it communicates to the participant its own partlessness and freedom from multiplicity.⁶⁰ The last citation from Porphyry is his dictum that souls are neither confounded with one another nor set apart by clear boundaries.⁶¹ The first claim is true, comments Psellus, the second false:⁶² his final verdict, therefore, is that while there is a little that may edify a Christian "in the Hellenes", there is much more that is liable to corrupt.⁶³ He asserts in another treatise that they possessed a certain theology, which was frequently unintelligible because it gave a verbal dress to ineffable conceptions⁶⁴. The truths that they conveyed at times in riddles and at times under feigned personae included the unity of the first principle and the history of Adam, Eve and their progeny as far as God's election of the Hebrews⁶⁵; loftier matters, however, they communicated in symbols and obscurely, and they did not comprehend the theology of the trinity or the true destiny of the soul⁶⁶.

⁵⁷ See further M.J. Edwards, "Why did Constantine Label Arius a Porphyrian?", *L'Antiquité Classique* 82 (2013), 239-247.

⁵⁸ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.120.5-7 O'Meara, citing Porphyry, *Sententiae* 25, p. 15.1-2 Lamberz.

⁵⁹ Or. Cels. 7.38; see further J. Whittaker, "Epekeina nou kai ousias", *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969), 91-104.

⁶⁰ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.120.8-14 O'Meara, with reference to Porph. *Sent.* 33, 34 and 36, pp. 36-41 Lamberz.

⁶¹ Porph., *Sent.* 37, p. 43.4-5 Lamberz, cited at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.35.120.15-16 O'Meara.

⁶² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.120.17-19 O'Meara.

⁶³ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.120.19-21 O'Meara Cf. Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.3.130 Duffy, where the Chaldaeans are said to "assert many theological absurdities", or literally to "theologize many absurdities".

⁶⁴ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.3.127-129 Duffy.

⁶⁵ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.3.171-179 Duffy.

⁶⁶ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.3.179-181; 168; 183-185 Duffy. At Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.3.228 Duffy, *theologia* and *oikonomia* are complementary. Whereas he writes "theology in the Trinity" at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.3.168 Duffy, we find "our Trinitarian theology" at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 1.36.64 Duffy.

The Theology and Philosophy of the Chaldaeans⁶⁷

Psellus is a reporter, not an inventor, and we may be glad that the longest of his philosophic is built around excerpts from an ancient text which is known to us otherwise only through sparse and desultory citations. According to the *Suda*, the Chaldaean *Oracles* were the work of a father and son, Julian the Theurgist and Julian the Chaldaean, who induced some of their contemporaries in the reign of Marcus Aurelius to see them as instruments of the gods.⁶⁸ In fact the earliest datable allusion to the *Oracles* (and one that is still disputed) occurs in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, and it was Porphyry, his pupil, who was the first to base a systematic regimen for the purgation of the soul on their injunctions. In the writings of Iamblichus and Proclus, as in the anonymous *Commentary* on the *Parmenides*, the analysis of the noetic realm as a triad of being, mind and life, is grounded in a pattern of emanation and reversion, constituting a triad of triads, which had been elaborated in the *Oracles* by a fusion of mythological symbolism with the vocabulary of Plato.⁶⁹

Outside the Neoplatonic tradition, antiquity seems to know nothing of the *Oracles*, though Augustine avers in his criticism of Porphyry's treatise *On the Return of the Soul*, that the Chaldaean triad admits of a Christian exegesis which Porphyry had studiously concealed.⁷⁰ The appearance of the triad in Gnostic texts that were known to Porphyry, and again in Marius Victorinus (a Catholic plagiarist from both the Platonists and the Gnostics) suggests that Augustine may not have been wholly wrong.⁷¹ For Psellus, however, the *Oracles* are not a surreptitious revelation of Christian doctrine but a specimen of pagan *theologia* to be sifted for truth by the simple method of testing their doctrines against those of the church. This commentary, like his treatise *On Theology and*

⁶⁷ For a survey of Psellus' writings on the *Oracles* (which does not raise the question addressed in the present paper) see E. Des Places, "Le renouveau platonicien du XI^e siècle: Michel Psellus et les *Oracles Chaldaïques*", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 110.2 (1966), 313-324.

⁶⁸ See the editions of E. Des Places, *Oracles Chaldaïques* (Paris: Belles Lettres 1971); R. Majercik, *The Chaldaean Oracles: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill 1989). On Julian the Theurgist see further G. Fowden, "Pagan Versions of the Rain-Miracle of A.D. 172", *Historia* 36 (1987), 83-95.

⁶⁹ See further R. Majercik, "The Existence-Life-Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism", *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992), 475-488; T. Rasimus, "Porphyry and the Gnostics: Reassessing Pierre Hadot's Thesis in Light of the Second- and Third-Century Sethian Treatises", in J.D. Turner and K. Corrigan (eds), *Plato's Parmenides and its Heritage: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts* (2 vols, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2010), vol. 1, 81-110.

⁷⁰ See especially City of God 10.23. On the identity of the work cited by Augustine here see J. J. O'Meara, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1959).

⁷¹ See V. H. Drecoll, "Is Porphyry the Source used by Marius Victorinus?", in Turner and Corrigan, vol. 1, 65-80.

the Judgment of the Greeks, is a catena of annotations to his own excerpts from the pagan text, and this anecdotal structure will be followed here so long as it serves the purpose of our discussion,

O'Meara, p. 126.15: Oracles Fr. 158.2 Des Places. There is also a portion for the shade (eidôlon) in a place surrounded by light. Against the teaching of certain Greeks who assign a sublunar seat to the irrational soul after death, and against that of *Oracles* which grants to this remnant of us a place beyond the moon, Psellus asserts that Gregory of Nyssa speaks for the church when he denies immortality to the irascible and appetitive elements in our nature, which are all that we mean by the term "irrational soul".⁷²

*O'Meara, p. 127. 19: Oracles Fr. 158.1 Des Places. And do not leave the dregs of the soul on the precipice.*⁷³ The Chaldaean exhortation to release the body from its material envelope, in order that it may ascend to an incorporeal, aethereal or celestial sphere is pronounced to be wondrous, sublime and consonant with the biblical accounts of Elijah and Enoch;⁷⁴ Christians understand, however, that this is not a translation to be achieved by willing on our part, but by the divine cremation of our mortal sediment in ineffable fire.

*O'Meara p. 128.18. Drive it not out, lest it take something as it goes out.*⁷⁵ This precept is open to two constructions: either "do not dwell on means of leaving the body, but surrender yourself to divine and angelic powers", or more simply "do not inflict physical death on yourself." This blunt prohibition of suicide, Psellus opines, is more consistent both with the faith and with the teaching of Plato, for even a philosopher belies his vocation when he quits the post assigned to him by providence.⁷⁶ In this unusual case - all the more unusual if O'Meara is right to suggest that Psellus' only source for the oracle is Plotinus⁷⁷ - faith does not so much preclude the acceptance as determine the proper acceptance of this pagan text.

O'Meara, p. 129.17-28: Fr. 107 Des Places. A series of hexameters urging the soul to cultivate piety as the key to paradise, renouncing astronomy and material hecatombs, is carefully expounded but with the caveat that the paradise of the Chaldaeans is not that of Moses, in which the trees stand for virtues, the tree of knowledge for practical discernment of good and evil, and the four rivers for the "generative principles" of the cardinal virtues. This allegory is foreshadowed in an exegesis of Genesis 2 against the Manichaeans by Augustine, who seems

⁷² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.127.19-23 O' Meara, who cites Greg. Nyss, de An. 49b-56a.

⁷³ Psellus appears to have inverted the order of sentences in this excerpt.

⁷⁴ Majercik, *Chaldaean Oracles*, 199-200 notes this as an error by Psellus.

⁷⁵ This appears in Plot. 1.9.1-2 Henry Schwyzer, but not in the edition of *Des Places*.

⁷⁶ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.129.11-16 O'Meara.

⁷⁷ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.128 O'Meara footnote.

no more inclined than Psellus to grant his opponents the right to apply the same trope to their topographic imagery.

O'Meara, p. 131.15-17: Fr. 110 Des Places. Search out the vehicle of the soul ... uniting work with the sacred word. With the coda that this passage contains many precepts that are compatible with the faith and some that that must be anathematized, Psellus turns his attention to a text which enjoins the initiate to "unite work with the sacred word". It is in his comment on this that, as we noted above, he cites Gregory Nazianzen as a *theologos*, drawing a comparison with both Plato and the Chaldaeans which suggests that not every exponent of *theologia* is entitled to this designation:⁷⁸

Our own theologian (*theologos*) Gregory leads the soul to more divine things by speech (*logos*) and contemplation (*theōria*), the speech being of the kind that is most intellectual and powerful on our own plane, while contemplation is an illumination on a plane superior to us. Plato, for his part, holds that the unbegotten essence is apprehensible to us by speech and intellection, while the Chaldaean declares it impossible for us to be led to God unless we fortify the vehicle of the soul with material rites.⁷⁹

Other texts

In most of his subsequent expositions Psellus is content to get at the meaning of the text without passing judgment, though he warns his addressee not to take his decipherment as evidence of assent,⁸⁰ and cannot refrain, after elucidating the attributes of Hecate,⁸¹ from exclaiming that "all this is nonsense".⁸² In the saying that nothing imperfect proceeds from the Father⁸³ he finds a parallel to James 1.17, a text well known in the Byzantine liturgy, which proclaims that every good gift issues from the Father of Lights.⁸⁴

He does not appear to be questioning the theology of the *Oracles* when he writes that "just as the Book of Moses fashions humanity in the image of God, so too the Chaldaean says that the maker and father of the cosmos" - the

⁷⁸ On a possible, and pejorative, allusion to the *Oracles* in Nazianzen see R. Makercik, "A Reminiscence of the 'Chaldaean Oracles' at Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 2: OION ΚΡΑΤΗΡ ΤΙΣ ΥΠΕΠΕΡΡΥΗ", *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998) O'Meara, 286-292.

⁷⁹ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.132.12 O'Meara. On the significance of this testimony from Psellus see C. van Liefferinge, *La théurgie des Oracles Chaldaïques à Proclus* (Liège: Kernos supplement, Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique 1999), 171.

⁸⁰ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.133.4-6 O'Meara.

⁸¹ Oracle 206 (on the *strophalos*, sacred symbol of Hecate) at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.133.16 O'Meara.

⁸² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.134.2 O'Meara.

⁸³ Oracle 13 at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.144.3 O'Meara.

⁸⁴ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.144.8-10 O'Meara.

locution in fact is Platonic, not Chaldaean⁸⁵ - "has sown symbolic impressions of his own character in souls".⁸⁶ On the other hand, he reaffirms his conviction that every soul is distinct in form from every other,⁸⁷ and has no tolerance, here or elsewhere, for the notion of a good daemon.⁸⁸ Testing the proclamation that the Father has created the world and entrusted it to the Son against the testimony of Moses,⁸⁹ he retorts that, in the contrary, it was the Son who executed the creation after the idea of it had been imparted to him by the Father.⁹⁰ The biblical authority for this notion would seem 1.3, "Let there be light", which Tatian had construed in the second century as a petition from the First to the Second Person (Origen, *On Prayer* 14). Tatian inferred heretically that the Son is a greater being than the Father, but Psellus invokes (as always) the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity when he urges, against the dictum that the Father has snatched himself away from his creatures,⁹¹ that the Father has been made known to us through his Son, who is rightly characterized in the *Oracles* as his *dunamis* or power.⁹²

Conclusion

We have seen that in classical usage the *theologos* was seldom a theologian, the task of the latter being to give a lucid and philosophical dress to the truths which the former disclosed in a more rugged and cryptic idiom, and generally in verse. It is not surprising to find that this distinction all but vanishes when theology is conceived as the elucidation and application of truths revealed through Moses or the evangelists, for while they, as direct vessels of inspiration they were thought to excel all pagan *theologoï* in truth and eloquence, their medium was not verse but prose,⁹³ and their teachings were more perspicuous than those of the philosophers: it was therefore to be assumed, and indeed became a presupposition of exegesis, that the true (that is, the Christian) interpretation of their own utterances was the one that they had intended and foreseen.

⁸⁵ Pl., *Tim.* 28c Burnet. On Christian knowledge of this text see J. Daniélou, *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique* (Paris: Desclée et Cie 1961), 80-123.

⁸⁶ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.140.11-13 O'Meara.

⁸⁷ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.144.25 O'Meara, commenting on Oracle 109 at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.144.14-16 O'Meara.

⁸⁸ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.145.9-10 O'Meara, commenting on Oracle 149 at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.144.28-29. Cf. Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.45, On Daemons, Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.45.158-159 O'Meara.

⁸⁹ Oracle 7 at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.139.9-10 O'Meara.

⁹⁰ Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.139.11-17 O'Meara.

⁹¹ Oracle 3 at Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.38.141.13-14 O'Meara.

⁹² Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.141.20-22 O'Meara.

⁹³ So far as I am aware, there was no tendency to grant the word *theologos* to a Christian thinker simply because he wrote verse. Those who use this appellation of Gregory Nazianzen very seldom take one of his poetic lucubrations as a subject for exposition.

Having become coterminous with *theologia*, the appellation *theologos* could be extended to Gregory Nazianzen, as the subtlest and most authoritative of Christian theologians; at the same time, because in the eyes of the church there was only one book with a claim to divine inspiration, *theologia* came for many Christians to signify only that corpus of beliefs about God which God himself had authorised, and in particular the doctrine of the Trinity.⁹⁴ Michael Psellus, a Christian by policy if not by conviction, is willing to employ it in this sense, but also understands by *theologia* that branch of philosophy which had led the best of pagan thinkers to insights not far short of truth, and thereby furnished Christians with tools for the defence and elucidation of the tenets that they already held by faith.

The test of pagan theology was consilience with the teaching of the church, and by this criterion even Proclus and the Chaldaean oracles were found wanting, though it was equally true that Porphyry was found to be not in all respects an enemy of light. The conjunction of the words *theologia* and *philosophia* in a treatise on the *Chaldaean Oracles* may be a hint that they fall short of the scriptures because of their human origin; Psellus was in no sense a despiser of philosophy, but he does not regard the theology of the church as a branch of that discipline and insists that the God whom the church proclaims is superior to intellection. For the Greeks, by contrast *theologia* was a branch of philosophy and hence (in Christian eyes) incapable of grasping the plenitude of that which had been revealed. A corollary of its dependence on philosophy is that questions will sometimes enter such a work as Proclus' *Elements of Theology* which are of no concern to expositors of Christian *theologia*; in such a case, according to Psellus, the church will leave the philosopher to his own judgment, not because it is bound to be false or in its own domain, inconsequential, but because "our theology" offers no criterion by which it can be deemed either false or true.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Scholarly Literature

- Anagnostou-Laoutides, E. and K. Parry (eds), *Eastern Christianity and Late Antique Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill 2020).
- Betegh, G. "On Eudemus Fr. 150 (Wehrli)", in M. I. Bodnár and W. Fortenbaugh (eds), *Eudemus of Rhodes* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers (2002), 337-357
- Daniélou, J. *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique* (Paris: Desclée et Cie 1961).
- Des Places, E. "Le renouveau platonicien du XIe siècle: Michel Psellus et les Oracles Chaldaïques", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 110.2 (1966), 313-324.
- Dillon, J. M. "Logos and Trinity: Patters of Platonist Influence on Early Christianity", in G. Vesey (ed.), *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), 1-13.

⁹⁴ Markschies, *Christian Theology*, 14-17.

- Drecoll, V. H. "Is Porphyry the Source used by Marius Victorinus?", in Turner and Corrigan, vol. 1, 65-80.
- Edwards, M. J. "Precursors of Origen's Hermeneutic Theory", *Studia Patristica* 29 (1993), 232-237.
- Edwards, M. J. *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2002).
- Edwards, M. J. "Why did Constantine Label Arius a Porphyrian?", *L'Antiquité Classique* 82 (2013), 239-247.
- Fowden, G. "Pagan Versions of the Rain-Miracle of A.D. 172", *Historia* 36 (1987), 83-95.
- Goldschmidt, V. *Questions Platoniciennes* (Paris: Vrin 1970).
- Hadot, P. "La division des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité", *Museum Helveticum* 36 (1979), 201-223.
- Hadot, P. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2004).
- Hadot, P. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell 1995).
- Henry, P. "The *Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus, The First Systematic Exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity", *Journal of Theological Studies* 1 (1950), 42-55.
- Jaeger, W. *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1947)
- Krausmüller, D. "Philosophy and Theology in the Late Patristic Discourse: Pure Existence, Qualified Existence and the Arbor Porphyriana", in Anagnostou-Laoutides and Parry, 150-173.
- Lewy, H. *Sobria Ebrietas* (Giessen: Töpelmann 1929).
- Majercik, R. "The Existence-Life-Intellect Triad in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism", *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1992), 475-488.
- Majercik, R. "A Reminiscence of the 'Chaldaean Oracles' at Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. 2: ΟΙΟΝ ΚΡΑΤΗΡ ΤΙΣ ΥΠΕΠΕΡΡΥΗ", *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998), 286-292.
- Markschies, C. *Christian Theology and its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire* (Waco: Baylor University Press 2015).
- Naddaf, G. "Plato's *Theologia* Revisited", *Methexis* 9 (1996), 5-18.
- O'Meara, J. J. *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1959).
- Rasimus, T. "Porphyry and the Gnostics: Reassessing Pierre Hadot's Thesis in Light of the Second- and Third-Century Sethian Treatises", in Turner and Corrigan, vol. 1, 81-110.
- Spanu, N. *Proclus on the Chaldaean Oracles* (London: Routledge 2020).
- Turner, J. D. and K. Corrigan (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its Heritage: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts* (2 vols, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010).
- Vlastos, G. "Philosophy and Theology in Early Greek Thought", *Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1952), 97-123
- Van Liefferinge, C. *La théurgie des Oracles Chaldaïques à Proclus* (Liège: Kernos supplement, Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique 1999).
- Waszink J. H. (ed.), *Tertullian's De Anima* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff 1947).
- Zachhuber, J. "Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity: Some reflections on Concepts and Terminologies", in Anagnostou-Laoutides and Parry, 50-77.
- Zachhuber, J. *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysics: Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020).

THE TEACHING OF THE ENERGIES IN *DE OMNIFARIA* *DOCTRINA* OF MICHAEL PSELLOS

GEORGI KAPRIEV¹

ABSTRACT. The paper gives an answer to the question if and in what way the doctrine of energies is present in *De omnifaria doctrina* of Michael Psellos, and compared to the background of self-evidence and even simplification of the doctrine in the twelfth century (using the example of Nicetas from Maroneia). It is mainly represented in the form of a valid element of conventional philosophy and theology. It is pointed out that the only model of this doctrine usually considered is the version promoted by Gregorius Palamas in a systematic form, forming the basic axis of his system of thought, which is to serve as the basis for the explanation of all phenomena that can be an object of philosophical and theological reflection. Psellos' version shows some differences in comparison with this model. It is proven (using the example of Prochorus Kydones) that even in the course of the Hesychast controversy most of Palamas' opponents do not question the doctrine. The theory of energy proves to be a philosophical instrument that is valid for all philosophers in Byzantium, regardless of the line of thought they represent. It is a specific feature of philosophy in Byzantium, which characterizes its peculiarity in a comparison with the western medieval philosophical paradigms. It is decidedly emphasized that the theory of energy does not have a clearly defined, "essential" constitution, but rather demonstrates a variety of forms of appropriation and use, so that each philosopher applies it according to the peculiarity of his own philosophy program.

Keywords: teaching of energies, essence, power, activity/energy, perichoresis, participation, causality, Michael Psellos, Nicetas from Maroneia, Gregorius Palamas, Prochorus Kydones.

Since the 30s of the 20th century, some have claimed that the teaching of energies was invented *ad hoc* in the 14th century by Gregorius Palamas and his followers. Since then, others have shown that this doctrine was rather a self-evident interpretative tool for several philosophers in Byzantium, even in earlier centuries. However, one should not conclude that it was always used in

¹ Professor of Ancient and Medieval - Latin and Byzantine - Philosophy, St. Climent Ochridski University, Sofia, Bulgaria. Email: g.kapriev@gmail.com.

the form presented by Palamas and his followers. The promoters of such a conclusion refer to authors belonging to what I call the "theocentric line of thought", such as Maximus Confessor or Johannes Damascenus.

In this paper I explore the presence of the doctrine of energies in the "encyclopedic" work of Michael Psellus, usually considered as the emblematic figure of the "anthropocentric line of thought".

As a point of comparison, I will begin by commenting on the use of the doctrine in two authors who represent quite different philosophical models and indeed in different centuries: Nicetas from Maroneia and Prochorus Kydones, who - for admittedly different reasons - should not be counted among the Palamite authors. This step has the purpose to mark the diversity of types of theory of energies in the framework of the philosophical programs presented in Byzantium, without claiming to be comprehensive.

1. Nicetas from Maroneia and the banality of the teaching of energies

In the book about the debate between Latin and Byzantine thinkers in Constantinople in the twelfth century² and even more extensively in the lecture before the S.I.E.P.M. Colloquium in Varna 2019³, I drew attention to the six fictitious dialogues about the procession of the Holy Spirit (Περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος), the only documented writing of Nicetas from Maroneia, who died around 1145 as Archbishop of Thessaloniki⁴. Nicetas

² G. Kapriev, *Lateinische Rivalen in Konstantinopel: Anselm von Havelberg und Hugo Eterianus* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 248-251.

³ G. Kapriev, "Gibt es eine richtige Dionysius-Interpretation?," in *The Dionysian Traditions*, ed. G. Kapriev (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021) (im Druck).

⁴ To this day, the work has no uniform edition. Joseph Hergenröther published the general prologue, the first Λόγος and excerpts from the other dialogues in *Patrologia Graeca* – PG 139, 169-222. Nicola Festa published three further dialogues between 1912 and 1915: the second, the third and the fourth – N. Festa (ed., in collaborazione con A. Palmieri), "Nicéas de Maronée (ou de Thessalonique): Λόγοι διάφοροι πρὸς διάλογον ἐσχηματισμένοι περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (β'-δ')," in *Bessarione. Rivista di studi orientali*, 28 (1912), 93-107; 29 (1913), 104-13 et 295-315; 30 (1914), 55-75 et 243-259; 31 (1915), 239-246. Martin Jugie concludes extracts from all dialogues in his book on Eastern Christians – M. Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab ecclesia dissidentium II* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1933), 313-326. A dissertation is mentioned, which is supposed to contain the fifth and sixth dialogues, but it remains inaccessible to me – C. Giorgetti, *Niceta di Maronea e i suoi dialoghi sulla processione dello Spirito Santo anche dal Figlio* (Roma: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1965). The secondary literature on Nicetas is also not abundant. The information rarely goes beyond the first presentation in the book of Andronikos K. Demetrakopoulos (Α. Δημητρακοπούλος, Ορθόδοξος Ελλάς: ἦτοι περὶ των Ἑλλήνων των γραψάντων κατὰ Λατίνων και περὶ των συγγραμμάτων αυτών (Leipzig: Metzger und Wittig, 1872), 36-37)). A solid exception is the

lets the Γραικός and the Λατῖνος present and discuss their respective positions. He seeks mutual agreement and strives to achieve “without insults and mockery” the “noblest and necessary truth”⁵. A central element of the “Latin” argumentation certainly surprises the connoisseur of the culture of this time.

During the first dialogue the “Greek” questions the “Latin” model of the emergence of the spirit, because it relativizes according to him the simplicity of the Trinity. The answer of the “Latin” is a remarkable one: Not everywhere, where one perceives diversity (ποικιλία) and difference (διάκρισις), a composition (σύνθεσις) is present. Each essence has nevertheless both power (δύναμις), and activity (ἐνέργεια). For this reason, however, the simple should by no means be called “composite”. Neither does activity exist without power from which it is derived, nor is power without essence, nor is there an essence without power of action (τοῦ ἐνεργεῖν δύναμις). That is why even the simplest of essences has power and energy. However, it is not right to attribute composition to it because around it (περι αὐτήν) are power and energy.

There is one and the same thing (πρᾶγμα) there, which consists of essence, power and energy - if one may say so - which is why reason distinguishes essence from power and power from energy⁶. Again with respect to non-composition, by drawing an analogy with creation, the “Latin” insists that the relation between the essence and its energy does not introduce composition, because the energy emerges from the essence and its power, in that the energy is also not composed once it emerges from the essence and the power. There is no essence without power. No being is without power (ἄδύναμον), as the wise Dionysius says, the “Latin” dialog partner remarks. Even in beings, which are after God (ἐπὶ τῶν μετὰ Θεόν), both the going away from two things (ἢ ἐκ δυοῖν πρόοδος) and the coming out of it (τὸ προερχόμενον) are not composed. Moreover, it applies to God⁷.

Shortly thereafter he continues: If one wants to draw a conclusion from those considered around the essence (ἐκ τῶν περι τὴν οὐσίαν θεωρουμένων) for a composition, then also the simple essence, because of its energy and the force existing in it (ἐνυπαρχούση), would seem composite. The power and energy dwelling around the essence, although they are mostly in unity, do not

essay by Alexei Barmine (A. Barmine, “Une source méconnue des Dialogues de Nicetas de Maronée,” in *Revue des études byzantines*, 58 (2000), 231-43), in which the theoretical sources of Nicetas are discussed in detail. The analysis of his positions by Alexandra Riebe should also be mentioned (A. Riebe, *Rom in Gemeinschaft mit Konstantinopel. Patriarch Johannes XI. Bekkos als Verteidiger der Kirchenunion in Lyon (1274)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005, 235-243)).

⁵ Nicet. Maron. *Process. Spir.* proemium, PG 139, 169A.

⁶ Nicet. Maron. *Process. Spir.* Λόγος α', PG 139, 188C-189B.

⁷ Nicet. Maron. *Process. Spir.* 193B.

give up any composition of the essence⁸. By a similar argument, which is based on the triad “essence – essential power – essential energy”, the “Latin scholar” justifies his position also in the fourth dialogue: By the process also from the Son no two principles or causes of the Holy Spirit are introduced, but the monarchy in the Trinity is preserved⁹.

The arguments, which Nicetas from Maroneia puts into the mouth of his Latin partner, are mainly not Latin. The whole “Latin” argumentation has a purely Byzantine flavour. It should be noted that the doctrine of energies is present with all its key positions in Nicetas, as formulated by Maximus Confessor, John Damascene or Photius of Constantinople. The ontologically arranged existence of essence, essential power and energy is an evidence for him. Every essence - both the divine and the essence of every contingent being - has power and energy so that it exists in fact. They, power and energy, linger around the essence (περὶ αὐτήν), they do not coincide with the essence. These διάκρισις and the appropriate ποικιλία create thereby no real composition of the actually existing thing (πρᾶγμα). The dynamic presence of οὐσία, δύναμις and ἐνέργεια also constitutes the nature and effect of the principles and causes. Thanks to the present διάκρισις reason distinguishes the essence from the power and the power from the energy. Not only does Nicetas present the teaching systematically, he also values it as an evident and even banal teaching platform. His understanding of it as an unquestionable *locus communis* for anyone who is philosophically trained makes its ascription possible to the “Latin”, who uses it as a prerequisite for his core reflections.

Was this kind of appropriation a new phenomenon of the twelfth century? Or can we talk about a continuity since the time of the Cappadocians through the thinkers of the 7th-8th century and the Byzantine classicism of the 9th-10th century? If so, then one should assume an “essential”, uniform form or a variety of forms of appropriation and use? What was the situation in the 11th century? An answer can be sought in the writing of Michael Psellos *De omnifaria doctrina*, which was written almost eighty years before Nicetas’ dialogues.

2. The application of the teaching of the energies in *De omnifaria doctrina*

The terms “power” and “energy” have no specific place among the dozens of philosophical and theological terms discussed in the work. However, there is no doubt that Psellos - as he shows by the example of the soul - believes that every essence has its powers and energies and it is recognized by its powers

⁸ Nicet. Maron. *Process. Spir.* 193D-196A.

⁹ Nicet. Maron. *Process. Spir.* Λόγος δ', PG 139, 212D-213B.

and energies¹⁰. Psellos emphasizes elsewhere that the essence, the power and the energy of the soul are different: they are three facets of ψυχογονία. Something different is the essence of the one being, something different is the existence, the harmony, the idea, the power and the energy, as well as the *eidōs* that results from them. The same, he adds, applies for example to fire with its essence, power and energy¹¹. The example shows, that this definition is valid for all beings. In this sense, the essential power of salt is also discussed¹². Psellos also distinguishes the use of the terms δύναμις and ἐνέργεια in this context from their modal-categorially use in the sense of “possibility” (δυνάμει) and “actuality” (ἐνεργεία)¹³.

For Psellos, differently from almost all the Byzantine tradition, essence (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις) are not identical terms. Nature is a force-δύναμις, which can only be grasped by noetic theory and which is implanted (ἐγκατεσπαρμένη) by God into the bodies, i.e. in the elements and the things they bring together. It is ἀρχή of movement and standstill¹⁴. The φύσις is not an independent principle, but a tool of divine omnipotence, an ὄργανον τοῦ θεοῦ. In this sense φύσις is for him an “intermediary” between God and the world. It is thus the constituent form through which the natural thing gets its shape and actually becomes a φυσικόν¹⁵. The essence is the specific determination of the being. An emphasis is therefore placed on the composition of the elements¹⁶.

At the end of the first chapter¹⁷ it is noted that God is one principle, one nature, one deity, one form (μορφή), as well as one essence and power (οὐσία καὶ δύναμις). Furthermore¹⁸, Providence is defined as the first and highest among all types of knowledge and as the energy of God. At the end of the thirteenth chapter, it is said that the whole nature of God and not only a part of it co-operate (συνενεργεῖται) in the hypostasis of Christ¹⁹.

Symptomatically, the terms appear without any specialized definition for the first time in the fourteenth chapter²⁰ in connection with the two natural wills of Christ, as a means of explanation. According to Maximus Confessor and the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the two natural forces of will and the corresponding two energies of will are discussed. The contribution of Maximus to the Byzantine

¹⁰ Psell. Omn. 66 Westerink p. 44, 8-9.

¹¹ Psell. Omn. 52 Westerink p. 38, 2-6.

¹² Psell. Omn. 180 Westerink p. 90, 11-12.

¹³ Psell. Omn. 174 Westerink, p. 87, 2-5.

¹⁴ Psell. Omn. 57 Westerink, p. 40, 2-11.

¹⁵ Cf. L. Benakis, *Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy* (Athens: Parousia, 2002), 342, 364 and 396.

¹⁶ Psell. Omn. 121 and 131 Westerink, p. 65, 1-6 et 69, 2-3.

¹⁷ Psell. Omn. 1, Westerink, p. 17, 11-12.

¹⁸ Psell. Omn. 94, Westerink, p. 54, 2-3.

¹⁹ Psell. Omn. 13, Westerink, p. 23, 12-13.

²⁰ Psell. Omn 14, Westerink, p. 23, 10-13.

tradition to this topic consists precisely in the fact that the will, in contrast to all forms of earlier philosophical ontology, is regarded as an element of nature and interpreted accordingly ontologically²¹. The one energy of God is explained by Psellos through the consubstantiality of the divine persons. The same applies to the human energy of Christ, which comes from his human nature and his consubstantiality with us.

In his answer to the question *Τίς ὁ Θεός*, Who is God, Psellos explains²²: The φύσις of God and his δύναμις are comparable with the nature and power of no other being. They are unlimited (ἄπειροι) in their principle and their goal and in all respects. The power of God is without origin, endless and eternal (ἀναρχος τε καὶ ἀτελεῦτητος καὶ αἰώνιος). At this point Psellos refers to Gregorius the Theologian. In the next chapter the question is to be answered whether and how the divine (τὸ θεῖον) is infinite (ἄπειρον)²³. The whole true being (πᾶν τὸ ὄντως ὄν), the first premise here is, is neither its quantity (πλήθος) nor its size (μέγεθος) infinite, but only its power (δύναμις). However, God is not a quantity, but the One par excellence (κυρίως ἓν). It has no size and it is bodiless. His activity ἐνέργεια is not limited by any border, but all his energies and powers are infinite and non-exhaustive. He is still infinite according to his principle and his goal. He is not principled and not limited (ἀτελεῦτητον) and he is the universe of eons (σύμπαν αἰώνιον).

God has a twofold ἐνέργεια through which he stands in a theoretical position to the whole (ἐν θεωρίᾳ τῶν ὄλων ἐστί) by knowing the principle (λόγος) of all creatures and actualizes providence (πρόνοια) in what is subject to him. Man, who imitates the divine (ὁ ἄνθρωπος μιμούμενος τὸ θεῖον), recognizes, ascending in theory, the principles of everything, physical, spiritual, noetic and supernatural²⁴. After a brief intermezzo²⁵ which ends with the remark that man's εἶδος has its origin in ἄπειρον but begins to be there in the completion of time-καιρός²⁶, thus introducing the fundamental dimension of time in view of mankind and its way of knowing, Psellos begins his detailed interpretation of the intellect-νοῦς.

Every intellect has perpetual (αἰωνία) essence, power and activity-ἐνέργεια. The intellect understands (νοεῖ) everything at once and not the past as past and the future as future, but everything as present. It does not move, it does not collect piece by piece, it does not build syllogisms. He does not, as the soul does,

²¹ Cf. N. Loudovikos, *Analogical Identities: The Creation of the Christian Self. Beyond Spirituality and Mysticism in the Patristic Era* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 69-70.

²² Psell. Omn. 15, Westerink, p. 23, 2-24, 13.

²³ Psell. Omn. 16, Westerink, p. 24, 2-10.

²⁴ Psell. Omn. 72, Westerink, p. 46, 2-12.

²⁵ It explains that the number of angels is greater than the number of people.

²⁶ Psell. Omn. 20, Westerink, p. 26, 11-13.

set conditions to draw conclusions, but recognizes everything in one. Because it is immovable, it is neither its essence nor its power and activity below the measure of time²⁷.

At this point Psellos draws a distinction. He explains that there are two types of participatory human intellect. One kind is divine, as if attached to God, the other is only noetic (νοερός μόνον). The God-participating intellect allows the soul to participate in the divine. The simple noetic intellect does not give the soul the divine. He can become a fool (ἀνοία) through transformation, although he is eternal in his essence and his noetic ἐνέργεια²⁸.

Thanks to the participation of the soul in the intellect, the soul is also noetic, Psellos continues his reflection. But the intellect is according to its essence νοερός and the soul is νοερά according to its participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν) in the intellect. The soul understands because the intellect acts in us. While the intellect has the εἶδη primary, the soul has them secondary. The νόησις of the intellect is different from the νόησις of the soul²⁹. The soul is *per se* a bodiless essence, which is indivisible (ἀμέριστον), but divided by the body (χωριστή)³⁰. The essence of the soul is perpetual, its activity-ἐνέργεια is however in accordance with the time (κατὰ χρόνον) and with that of the time following (τὰ τούτοις ἀκόλουθα)³¹.

The δύναμις of the soul is distinguished from the πάθος and the ἔξις³². Among the powers of the soul, with regard to its cognitive faculties, Psellos mentions ἀντιληπτική, παθητική and πρακτική, to which the φανταστική and the νοερά δύναμις are added. Some of these powers belong only to the soul, others to the soul and the body, others are related to the material spirit (πνεύματι ἐνύλω)³³. Among the powers of the irrational soul, thereby the soul is able to steer the body, the ὀρεκτική, the δοξαστική, which mediates between the rational and the sensitive, the αἰσθητική and the φυσική, which is more near determined as generative cause, are called³⁴. The energies of the soul are of different kinds. Some are stronger and more prominent (κρείττους καὶ προέχουσαι), others are excited by the body, as far as the soul allows itself to be affected by the body, but others are common to the soul and the body, such as changing

²⁷ Psell. Omn. 23, Westerink, p. 27, 2-12.

²⁸ Psell. Omn. 28, Westerink, p. 28, 4-9. Here Psellos applies one of the criteria that distinguishes between theocentric and anthropocentric tendencies in Byzantine philosophical culture. The curiosity from today's point of view is that all researchers accept Psellos as the emblem of the latter line.

²⁹ Psell. Omn. 28-30, Westerink, p. 29-30.

³⁰ The body, which is inseparable from the soul, ἀχώριστος, and indispensable to it, is nevertheless used by the soul as ὄργανον – Psell. Omn. 35, Westerink, p. 31, 1.

³¹ Psell. Omn. 52, Westerink, p. 38, 2-7.

³² Psell. Omn. 77, Westerink, p. 48, 2-6.

³³ Psell. Omn. 56, Westerink, p. 40, 2-13.

³⁴ Psell. Omn. 65, Westerink, p. 43, 2-12.

place: changing place is a matter of the body, but the transferring movement is an energy of the soul³⁵.

In the reflection on eternity and time (περὶ αἰῶνος καὶ χρόνου) Psellos remarks: The bodiless being has an perpetual essence and energy, like the intellect. Its essence is immovable and its energy is unchangeable. Heaven is perpetual according to its essence, but is subject (κείμενος) to its movement according to time. The body has both the essence and the energy in time, ἕγχρονος. This also concerns our body. The soul is perpetual in essence, Psellos emphasizes repeatedly, but participates in time (μετέχει) in energy. It does not have all νοήματα in itself at the same time, but it goes (μεταβαίνει) from one thought to another³⁶.

Psellos distinguishes between energy and movement. He defines movement (κίνησις) as εἶδος and ἐνέργεια of the πράγμα moving in time³⁷. Apart from the fact that he denied some pages earlier that the γένεσις, the μεταβολή from non-being to being, through which the cosmos is created, can be defined as “movement”, in contrast to which he conceives the change, the start-up and the change of place as movements³⁸, in this chapter dedicated to movement he counts the γένεσις among the phenomena that are generally described as movement. As set in motion he mentions the πράγματα, which grow, change, are driven and born. Movements are accordingly the αὔξεις, the φορά, the γένεσις. In principle, following Aristotle in Book IX of *Metaphysics*³⁹, to which he explicitly refers here, he largely does not identify κίνησις and ἐνέργεια par excellence, although the two do so in a first step. The movement is a ἐνέργεια of the time-related πράγμα. It can be neither ἀρχή nor τέλος, but it is a middle thing between them. The principle of οἰκοδομήσεις is neither movement nor is it moved. That concerns also the goal. The movement has its place of being between them⁴⁰. That the movement cannot be ἀρχή and τέλος, but has a barrier in time, which limits both its beginning and its end, already distinguishes it from energy.

The οὐσία-δύναμις-ἐνέργεια-relationship is also used as an explanatory tool in the interpretation of the problem of will. “What is the will (βούλησις) and what is the practical reasoning (πρακτικὸς λογισμὸς)”, the first question in this context, is clearly answered. The will belongs to the reasonable part of the soul (λογιστικὸν μορίον). It moves the striving (ὄρεξις) for that which is not desired without reason. From it the ἐνεργεία βουλευτική ὁρμή, the activity of the will desire originates. As πρακτικὸς λογισμὸς the practice and the activity (πρᾶξις καὶ ἐνέργεια) are determined, which are directed by the reason

³⁵ Psell. Omn. 58, Westerink, p. 40, 2-11.

³⁶ Psell. Omn. 107, Westerink, p. 59, 2-12.

³⁷ Psell. Omn. 103, Westerink, p. 58, 2-3.

³⁸ Psell. Omn. 91, Westerink, p. 53, 2-11.

³⁹ Arist. *Metaph.* IX, 3, 1046b29–1047b2; IX, 8, 1049b8–10 Ross.

⁴⁰ Psell. Omn. 107, Westerink, p. 59, 3-12.

consideration on striving for the desired⁴¹. Strictly connected with it, choice (προαίρεσις) and the attention (προσοχή) are discussed⁴². The directly one on the other referred προαίρεσις and προσοχή are mediating powers, which have their place between the νοερός λόγος and the δοξατικός λόγος⁴³.

In the last chapters, Psellos discusses the soul and the Nous again. Here he talks about the essential movements of the soul, its powers and energies. On the one hand, the interaction of the soul with the body is discussed once again, in that under the title “Περὶ ὁμοῦποστάτου” the being of man in a hypostasis is treated. On the other hand, he emphasizes the superiority of recognizing the human soul. He repeats that the intellect moves the human being, but he does it in cooperation with the soul, whereby the reasonable part of the soul is emphasized, which regulates the unreasonable parts⁴⁴.

3. Περιχώρησις and μέθεξις in the *Omnifaria doctrina*

Both the relation of the intellect to the soul and the human intellect to the divine νοῦς are interpreted as participation, but how does he consider participation-μέθεξις? Does it exist through a relation or through energetic penetration or through another reason? The mutual περιχώρησις of the natures (approximately in the hypostasis of Christ) runs, according to Psellos, without having said it explicitly, by the essential powers and energies, therein the τρόπος τῆς ἀντιδόσεως ἑκατέρας φύσεως consists⁴⁵. The same model can be found in the transition of the bodily πάθη into the soul. They do not arrive in the essence of the incorporeal soul, but they are applied to its powers and energies⁴⁶. For this reason they, soul and body, remain differentiated according to their essences, but their common activity-ἐνέργεια is a mixed one. Therefore, the psychosomatic reference is about the effective acquisition of essential qualities and not about a transformation of the essences⁴⁷. What about participation, however? The doctrine of the noetic soul shows that participation in νοῦς does not have energies at its root, but neither does the essence. The subject of an essence can imitate the energies of any essence inherent in hypostasis, but

⁴¹ Psell. Omn. 62, Westerink, p. 42, 2-6.

⁴² The προαίρεσις precedes the practice. It makes use of reason to decide what is good (τὰ καλά) and to direct the striving for the peculiarly good and the everlasting fulfilment of the lacking. The decision of the will arises from both reason and striving. Through προσοχή, we pay attention to our deeds that we do and to our words that we say.

⁴³ Psell. Omn. 63, Westerink, p. 42, 3-12.

⁴⁴ Psell. Omn. 194-201, Westerink, p. 96-99.

⁴⁵ Psell. Omn. 12, Westerink, p. 22, 31-37.

⁴⁶ Psell. Omn. 33, Westerink, p. 31, 10-14.

⁴⁷ Psell. Omn. 34, Westerink, p. 2-13.

cannot essentially appropriate them, as the example with the human soul in relation to the angels and archangels shows⁴⁸. The relation does play a role, but rather an instrumental one. It is to be concluded that the μέθεξις is to be realized in the horizon of the specific being and the corresponding order⁴⁹ and measure of the essence and its existence⁵⁰, laid by the πάντων ὑποστάτης, the non-participating supercosmic and demiurgic νοῦς. Psellos elaborates the theme in more detail in relation to νόες.

Every intellect has permanent (αἰωνία) essence, power and activity-ἐνέργεια. Because it is immovable, it is not subject to the measure of time, neither to its essence, nor to its power and activity⁵¹. The intellect is an essence that has no parts because it has neither size nor body. It is immovable and permanent (αἰώνιος): its understanding (νόησις) is not divisible (οὐ μερίζεται), but continuous, like the essence itself⁵². All noetic species (πάντα τὰ νοερά εἶδη), i.e. souls, intellects, angels, archangels, powers and those similar to them do not participate in the supercosmic and demiurgic νοῦς, but they all participate in the inner-worldly intellect (ἐγκόσμιος νοῦς)⁵³. The participatory intellect, which stands after the non-participatory intellect (ὁ μεθεκτός νοῦς), has both the first intellect and the insight (εἴδησις) of all.

However, the non-participating intellect gives the νόες standing under it an appearance (ἔμφασις) of its own existence⁵⁴. All intellects are both interdependent as well as existing in themselves. Their intermingling does not bring about any mixing and their being in themselves does not bring about any distribution. These incorporeal noetic species are, like the θεωρήματα in a soul, united in each other, but they are no less separate and different⁵⁵. Every intellect is filled with the divine εἶδη (like those of goodness, beatitude, justice, identity, similarity and those similar to them). But the highest intellect contains entirely the high species. The lower intellects contain them only partially. The higher intellects make use of several divine powers; the lower ones have poorer powers⁵⁶.

Participation is thus brought about by the specific nature and thanks to the existence of the Supreme, through which his powers are accordingly bestowed. The mutual interpenetration of different natures takes place through the essential energies. But the participation is rather possible due to the same εἶδος and/or

⁴⁸ Psell. Omn. 48, Westerink, p. 36, 2-37, 7.

⁴⁹ Psell. Omn. 24, Westerink, p. 27, 9-14.

⁵⁰ Psell. Omn. 25, Westerink, p. 28, 4-7.

⁵¹ Psell. Omn. 23, Westerink, p. 27, 2-12.

⁵² Psell. Omn. 24, Westerink, p. 27, 2-8.

⁵³ Psell. Omn. 21, Westerink, p. 26, 2-8.

⁵⁴ Psell. Omn. 25, Westerink, p. 28, 2-7.

⁵⁵ Psell. Omn. 26, Westerink, p. 28, 2-11.

⁵⁶ Psell. Omn. 27, Westerink, p. 28, 11-29.

corresponding essential qualities. Another kind of participation takes place on the level of energies. Through them essential qualities are not exchanged, such as the energy of the everlasting soul participates with the temporal. Psellos also mentions another kind of participation: in relation to the unification of soul and body, he speaks of a μετοχή, which is inherent in the merging components of the becoming thing and ἀχρόνως⁵⁷. In another place, Psellos allows himself to note that the ἔνωσις of God πρὸς ἡμᾶς is both a μῖξις, because it is issued without unification, and a κρᾶσις because of the τρόπος τῆς ἀντιδόσεως, where, with respect to the πρόσλημμα, it is a καινὴ μῖξις and a παράδοξος κρᾶσις⁵⁸.

Psellos explicitly asks the question why we do not always participate in God when he is always active, ἀεὶ ἐνεργοῦντος. The answer is: because of our incapability (ἀνεπιτηδειότης) for participation. As the sun in the middle of the day illuminates all with its rays, but not all are able (δύνανται) to see it, but only those who have sharp eyes, so not all are able, although God constantly stretches out the noetic light, to participate in God, but only those who carry the purified noetic vision in their souls. Even the pure intellect, however, does not constantly manage to grasp the splendour of the divine, because it is not free and not immaterial, but in matter and connected with the body (ἔνυλος καὶ σωματικός). Only when it detaches itself from the body and achieves the hoped-for restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) does it constantly manage to look at God⁵⁹. Through this kind of participation, the human intellect, which in principle participates in the noetic, can become not only noetic but also divine⁶⁰. One may speculate about the philosophical basis of this consideration. However, one must immediately admit that it is not a question of an agreement based on the definitive penetration of essential energies. The περιχώρησις and the μέθεξις do not coincide in their procedures.

4. The positioning of the theory of the energies at Psellos

It is symptomatic that in the quasi propaedeutic *De omnifaria doctrina* the terms οὐσία, δύναμις and ἐνέργεια are not specifically defined and problematized. In their relationship, they are for Psellos a self-evident technical means of explanation. He lays down the principles and causes at the basis of his system. True knowledge is a knowledge of principles. It is a knowledge about the reasons for a being, no matter if it belongs to the area of νοητά or αἰσθητά⁶¹. It should be noted, however, that he too ultimately understands causality as being derived from the activity of the essential power and energy of God.

⁵⁷ Psell. Omn. 60, Westerink, p. 41, 8-12.

⁵⁸ Psell. Omn. 90, Westerink, p. 53, 8-10.

⁵⁹ Psell. Omn. 95, Westerink, p. 54, 2-55, 12.

⁶⁰ Cf. Psell. Omn. 28, Westerink, p. 28, 4-9.

⁶¹ Cf. D. Walter, *Michael Psellos: Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz* (Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 143-144.

The universal key in this context is the axiom that the εἶδος of all creatures has its origin-γένεσις in ἄπειρον, but begins to be there in the completion of time-καιρός, as Psellos emphatically notes about the existence of man⁶². Herein lies the reference to the priority of the eternal essential power and energy over the economic causality effect of God, which forms the basis of all further causality. For this reason, man, who ascends in theory and thereby imitates God, can ultimately recognize the principles and the causes of everything due to the action of the twofold divine energy through which God is in a theoretical position with respect to the whole (έν θεωρίᾳ τῶν ὄλων ἐστί) by knowing the principle of all creatures and realizing providence in that which is subject to him⁶³.

Thus Psellos stands in the tradition, which in this thematic area is based on the Byzantine interpretation of the work of Dionysius Pseudo-Areopagites. Dionysius, if he means God, is quite prepared to insist that God is the first principle and the first cause of everything. The Dionysian κυριαρχία is interpreted by his first Greek commentators precisely in this sense⁶⁴. They again distinguish between the names of the divine superiority and the αἰτιολογικά, which are related to creation and its causation⁶⁵. The inner activity-ένέργεια of the divine essence precedes the external creative action-ένέργεια of God and the divine οἰκονομία⁶⁶. Causality is therefore a function of the Οὐσία-δύναμις-ένέργεια relationship. This is considered as a core element of the Dionysian teaching and the adoption of his ideas in the Byzantine tradition. It was, as seen, a position also held by Nicetas from Maroneia.

However, Psellos' work testifies that according to him causality is not a linear function of the οὐσία-δύναμις-ένέργεια relationship. The identification of the principles and the causes including the corresponding correlations shows a high degree of autonomy. Moreover, the majority of the topics in *De omnifaria doctrina* concern exclusively the interpretation of οἰκονομία and its phenomena. It goes without saying that the problem of causality comes first and is discussed independently.

5. The general validity and the various uses of energy theory

Psellos, as the account of his procedure has shown, makes no exception to the positions of the Byzantine tradition as he knew it. This tradition regards

⁶² Psell. Omn. 20, Westerink, p. 26, 11-13.

⁶³ Psell. Omn. 72, Westerink, p. 46, 5-12.

⁶⁴ Dion. Ar. CH 8.1 Heil Ritter p. 33.4; PG 3, 237C. See also the gloss on this point in PG 4, 177D.

⁶⁵ PG 4, 216A.

⁶⁶ Cf. И. Христов, "Прόνοια и Σοφία в дискурса на енергиите според гръцките схолии към Ареопагитския корпус," in *Sine arte scientia nihil est. Изследвания в чест на проф. дфн Олег Георгиев*, съст. Г. Каприев (София: Университетско издателство, 2019), 179-182.

the doctrine of the Οὐσία-δύναμις-ἐνέργεια relationship as a universally valid element of the conventional philosophical and speculative-theological apparatus, which has its undoubted place alongside the other technical means of the explanatory and argumentative procedure. The peculiarity of Gregorius Palamas' teaching is that this element is the sole centre of his system of thought. As the main axis of this system, it should serve as the basis for the explanation of all phenomena that can be an object of philosophical and theological reflection.

In the course of the Hesychast controversy his teaching of the essential energies in relation to God is being problematized from various directions. One asks to what extent and how especially the divine essential energies work *ad extra*. In this perspective still the question is asked whether the διάκρισις between the essence of God and its essential energies is πραγματική or only κατ'ἐπίνοιαν⁶⁷. Even if this effect is assumed, it is questioned whether man is able to clearly distinguish these energies from the creative economic energies of God. The doctrine in its reason is nevertheless not questioned even by the most opponents of Palamism. For the sake of brevity I will only recall the position of Prochorus Kydones.

The most prominent Byzantine Thomist dedicates a special text to this problem: Περὶ οὐσίας καὶ ἐνεργείας. Already in the first sentence, he formulates the decisive approach: Those who speak about the essence and energy of God, when it comes to whether they (essence and energy) are different or identical κατὰ τὸ πρᾶγμα, first ask how many species of energy there are⁶⁸. Prochorus explains programmatically that any natural energy comes from any power by dividing the forces into two large groups, namely δύναμις παθητική and δύναμις ποιητική (or δραστική), also called δύναμις ἐνέργητική, which is the ἀρχή of active energy (ἐνέργεια δραστική)⁶⁹. Then he discusses different kinds of the ἐνέργεια δραστική. There is no δύναμις παθητική (passive power, *potentia passiva*) in God, emphasizes Prochorus, which dwells as matter in which the energy would be form. Every matter is δύναμις παθητική and every passive *potentia* is matter.

The energy of God is therefore, in a difference to all other beings, His essence. Even the immaterial creatures have δύναμις παθητική, through which they can receive the Being. Every energy that is separated from its potency, as the energy of the formal-material creatures dwells, is imperfect (ἀτελής)⁷⁰. It is

⁶⁷ Cf. J. A. Demetracopoulos, "Palamas Transformed. Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God's 'Essence' and 'Energies' in Late Byzantium," in *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History 1204-1500*, eds. M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel (Leuven – Paris – Walpole: Peeters, MA, 2011), 263-372; Cf. from a different point of view G. Kapriev, "Gregory Palamas and George Scholarios: John Duns Scotus' Differentiation between Substance and Energy and the Sources of the Palamite Tradition," in *Analogia: The Pemptousia Journal for Theological Studies*, 5 (2018), 35-56.

⁶⁸ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.1, PG 151, 1192B.

⁶⁹ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.2 PG 151, 1193C; cf. 2.5 PG 151, 1236C.

⁷⁰ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.2, PG 151, 1196CD ; 2.5 PG 151, 1233C.

particularly important in this context for Prochorus to prove that in God there is no δύναμις, because the ἐνέργεια τοῦ Θεοῦ, which is his essence, has no ἀρχή, insofar as it is neither born nor proceed⁷¹. The essence of God coincides with his being⁷². God is εἶδος καθ' αὐτὸ ὑφεστῶς⁷³. He is αὐτοενέργεια, παντὸς ἐνέργεια⁷⁴. While the distinction between the divine persons is ἀναφορὰ πραγματική, one can distinguish between the essence and energy of God μόνῳ λόγῳ, or κατὰ τὸν λόγον only⁷⁵. The whole book clearly demonstrates that both in respect to God and the creature the relevance of the οὐσία-δύναμις-ἐνέργεια perspective remains an evidence for Prochorus, but by insisting that the corresponding terms and what is meant by them ἀναλογικῶς about God and the creatures are predicated⁷⁶.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be expressly repeated that the οὐσία-δύναμις-ἐνέργεια doctrine is a philosophical instrument valid for all philosophers in Byzantium, regardless of the line of thought they represent. It is a specific feature of philosophy in Byzantium, which characterizes its peculiarity in a comparison with western medieval philosophical paradigms. The doctrine is also used intensively as a means of explanation in byzantine speculative theology⁷⁷. One should point out that the theory of energy does not have a clearly defined, "essential" constitution, but shows a variety of forms of appropriation and use, so that each thinker applies it according to the specificity of his own philosophical program⁷⁸.

⁷¹ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.5 PG 151, 1233B.

⁷² Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.2 PG 151, 1197A.

⁷³ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.7 PG 151, 1217B.

⁷⁴ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 1.8 PG 151, 1217C.

⁷⁵ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 2.5 PG 151, 1236B.

⁷⁶ Prochor. Cydon. *Essent. Oper.* 2.1 PG 151, 1220B.

⁷⁷ This is self-evident for the tradition, which regards speculative theology as a - sublime - part of first philosophy, as this view found a definitive formulation in Photius of Constantinople - cf. Phot. *Amphil.* 27 et 182, PG 101, 200B, 896C et 897D. Psellos himself emphasizes this fact. For him it is in principle a part of philosophy, because also both philosophy and speculative theology deal with analyses - F. Lauritzen, "Psello discepolo di Stetato," in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 101/2 (2008): 715-725, here 715. He seeks to rationally establish theological themes and even the Trinity without relying only on authority - cf. Walter, *Michael Psellos: Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz*, 15 and 141-143.

⁷⁸ I am grateful to Frederick Lauritzen for the motivation to write this paper, as well as for the linguistic correction of the text.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

- Aristotle [Arist.] *Metaphysica* [Metaph] W.D. Ross, Aristotle's metaphysics, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.
- Michael Psellos [Psell.] *De Omnifaria Doctrina* [Omn.] *Michael Psellus. De omnifaria doctrina*, ed. L. G. Westerink (Utrecht: Beijers, 1948).
- Dionysius Areopagites [Dion. Ar.] *Celestis Hierarchia* [CH] G. Heil and A.M. Ritter, *Corpus Dionysiacum ii: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae* [Patristische Texte und Studien 36. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991].
- Nicetas of Maroneia [Nicet. Maron.] *De processione Spiritus Sancti* [Process. Spir.] J. Hergenröther, first Λόγος and excerpts from the other dialogues in *Patrologia Graeca* – PG 139, 169-222; N. Festa (ed., in collaborazione con A. Palmieri), “Nicétas de Maronée (ou de Thessalonique): Λόγοι διάφοροι πρὸς διάλογον ἐσχηματισμένοι περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος (β'-δ'),” in *Bessarione. Rivista di studi orientali*, 28 (1912), 93-107; 29 (1913), 104-13 et 295-315; 30 (1914), 55-75 et 243-259; 31 (1915), 239-246; C. Giorgetti, *Niceta di Maronea e i suoi dialoghi sulla processione dello Spirito Santo anche dal Figlio* (Roma: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1965).
- Photius [Phot.] *Amphilochia* [Amphil.] *Patrologia Graeca* 101.
- Prochoros Cydones [Prochor. Cydon.] *De essentia ed Operatione* [Essent. Oper.] *Patrologia Graeca* 151.1191-1242.

Secondary Literature

- A. K. Demetrakopoulos (A. Δημητρακοπούλος, Ορθόδοξος Ελλάς: ήτοι περί των Ελλήνων των γραψάντων κατά Λατίνων και περί των συγγραμμάτων αυτών (Leipzig: Metzger und Wittig, 1872), 36-37)).
- A. Barmin, “Une source méconnue des Dialogues de Nicétas de Maronée,” in *Revue des études byzantines*, 58 (2000), 231-43).
- L. Benakis, *Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy* (Athens: Parousia, 2002).
- D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West. Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- J. A. Demetracopoulos, “Palamas Transformed. Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God’s ‘Essence’ and ‘Energies’ in Late Byzantium,” in *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History 1204-1500*, eds. M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel (Leuven – Paris – Walpole: Peeters, MA, 2011), 263-372.
- G. Kapriev, *Philosophie in Byzanz* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).
- G. Kapriev, *Lateinische Rivalen in Konstantinopel: Anselm von Havelberg und Hugo Eterianus* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018).
- G. Kapriev, “Gibt es eine richtige Dionysius-Interpretation?,” in *The Dionysian Traditions*, ed. G. Kapriev (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021).

- G. Kapriev, "Gregory Palamas and George Scholarios: John Duns Scotus' Differentiation between Substance and Energy and the Sources of the Palamite Tradition," in *Analogia: The Pemptousia Journal for Theological Studies*, 5 (2018), 35-56.
- J.-C. Larchet, *La théologie des énergies divines: des origines à saint Jean Damascène* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2010).
- F. Lauritzen, "Psello discepolo di Stetato," in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 101/2 (2008): 715-725.
- N. Loudovikos, *Analogical Identities: The Creation of the Christian Self. Beyond Spirituality and Mysticism in the Patreistik Era* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019).
- A. Riebe, Rom in Gemeinschaft mit Konstantinopel. Patriarch Johannes XI. Bekkos als Verteidiger der Kirchenunion in Lyon (1274) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005, 235-243).
- D. Walter, *Michael Psellos: Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz* (Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter, 2018).
- И. Христов, "Πρόνοια и Σοφία в дискурса на енергиите според гръцките схолии към Ареопагитския корпус," in *Sine arte scientia nihil est. Изследвания в чест на проф. дфн Олег Георгиев*, съст. Г. Каприев (София: Университетско издателство, 2019).

PSELLOS' COMMENTARY ON THE JESUS PRAYER

FREDERICK LAURITZEN¹

ABSTRACT. The commentary on the Jesus Prayer published by Sinkiewicz in 1987 is a genuine work by Psellos. It is ascribed to him in a number of manuscripts and is not eccentric in relation to his interests. Indeed, he wrote a commentary on the 'Kyrie Eleison'. Moreover, the theological points in the commentary echo those he described in Poem 4 Westerkink. The commentary contains a previously unidentified verse which contains eleventh century expressions. Psellos' commentary was used by Markos Eugenikos when he wrote his own commentary on the same prayer which was published in the *Philocalia*. Psellos' commentary was transmitted in a number of manuscripts preserved today on Mt. Athos also under his name.

Keywords: hesychasm, Jesus Prayer, Michael Psellos, Markos Eugenikos, Athos.

When the Russian Navy landed on Athos in 1913, their aim was to evict those monks from Panteleimos Monastery, who were accused of interpreting the Jesus Prayer incorrectly. Indeed they thought that the prayer's reference to the name of Jesus was actually a statement of his presence in the name itself.² Such military action demonstrates how important the interpretation of this prayer is for the Orthodox tradition. The Constantinopolitan Platonist Michael Psellos (1018-1081?) was the first person to write a commentary on this prayer as will be argued in this paper. Sinkiewicz, the editor of the three versions of the Commentary to the Jesus Prayer (CJP),³ denied the authorship, and more recently Dunaev⁴ thought it was older than the eleventh century. The burden of proof lies on those who deny Psellos' authorship, since a number of manuscripts attribute the work to Psellos (and no one else).

¹ *Historian, Scuola Grande di San Marco, Venice, Italy.*
Email: frederick.lauritzen@scuolagrandesanmarco.it

² H. Alfeyev *La gloria del Nome. L'opera dello schimonaco Ilarion e la controversia athonita sul Nome di Dio all'inizio del XX secolo.* (Bose: Qiqajon, 2002); The Germanos V ecumenical patriarch wrote a letter and condemned the theory as 'pantheism' on the 5th April 1913.

³ R. Sinkiewicz, *An early byzantine commentary on the Jesus Prayer: introduction and edition,* *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987): 208-220.

⁴ A. G. Dunaev, *Византийские догматические толкования на Иисусову молитву, богословские труды* 41 (2007): 8–19.

There are numerous manuscripts which transmit the three versions of the CJP.⁵

CJP 1

- CJP1.1 A Paris BNF Grecs 1302 fols 211v-212r (xiii saec) [no Psellos] [diktyon 50911]
 CJP1.2 B Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Gt. 384 fol. 52r (xiv-xv saec) [no Psellos] [Diktyon 44832]
 CJP1.3 C Patmos Μονή τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου 378, fols. 111v-112v (xvi saec) [diktyon 54622]
 CJP1.4 D Vat. Gr. 1744, fols. Iiir-v (xv saec) [diktyon 68373]
 CJP1.5 E Cambridge, Trinity College 1408 (O.8.33) fols. 250r-251r (xvi saec) [Psellos] [diktyon 12022]
 CJP1.6 Ankara Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος 77, fols. 239r-240r (xviii saec) [no Psellos] [diktyon 753]

CJP 2

- CJP2.1 G Oxford Bodleianus Baroccianus Graecus 15, fols. 391v-392v (1105 AD) [no Psellos] [diktyon 47301]
 CJP2.2 H Oxford Bodleianus Baroccianus Graecus 146, fols 406v (1451 AD) [no psellos] [diktyon 47433]
 CJP2.3 I El Ecorial Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo gr Ψ.II.20 (De Andrés 455) fol. 85v (xiii saec) [diktyon 15226]
 CJP2.4 J Vatican City BAV Reginensis Gr. 57, pp. 51-52 (AD 1358/9) [diktyon 66227]
 CJP2.5 K Vatican City BAV Palatinus Gr. 361, fols. 204v-206r (xv saec) [no psellos] [diktyon 66093]
 CJP2.6 L Venice, Marciana, gr. Z. 26 (coll 340) fol 302v (xiii saec) [diktyon 69497]
 CJP2.7 M Berlin Deutsche Staatbibliothek Philipps 1503 (gr. 99) fol. 52r-v (xv saec) [diktyon 9404]
 CJP2.8 N Milan, Ambrosiana M 15 sup. (gr.506) fols 103v-104r (xiv saec) [diktyon 42980]
 CJP2.9 O Florence, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurentiana Plut. 55.10, fols. 100v-101r (xv saec) [no Psellos] [diktyon 16331]

⁵ The references here will indicate if Psellos is mentioned or not. Moreover the [diktyon] number is added in order to consult the online database pinakes.

- CJP2.10 P Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Vossianus gr. Q.54 fols 462r-463r (xv-xvi saec) [diktyon 38161]
 CJP2.11 Berlin Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Philipps 1491 (gr. 87) fols 40v-41r (xiii saec) [diktyon 9392]
 CJP2.12 Meteora Μονή Μεταμορφώσεως 577, fols 113v-114r (xiv saec) [diktyon 41987]

CJP 3

- CJP3.1 Q Vatican City, BAV Palatinus gr. 328, fols 157r-158v (xiv-xv saec) [diktyon 66060]
 CJP3.2 R Vatican City BAV Barberinianus gr. 291, fol 151r-v (xiv saec) [no Psellos] [diktyon 64837]
 CJP3.3 S Vatican city BAV Vat. gr. 1119 fol 161r-v (xv saec) [Psellos] [diktyon 67750]
 CJP3.4 T Vatican City BAV Vat. Gr. 1150 fols 129v-130v (saec xvi) [Psellos] [diktyon 67781]
 CJP3.5 U Venice Marciana gr. VII.39 (coll. 1385) fol. 189r (xvi saec) [diktyon 70556]
 CJP3.6 V Athens Βιβλιοθηκη τῆς βουλῆς 83, fols 184v-185r (xvi saec) [Psellos] [diktyon 1179]
 CJP3.7 W Athens Μορφωτικὸ Ἴδρυμα Ἐθνικῆς Τραπεζῆς sine numero fol 42v (xv saec) [Psellos]
 CJP3.8 Athos Ἰβήρων 382 (Lambros 4502) fol. 691r (xv saec) [Psellos] [diktyon 23979]
 CJP3.9 Lesbos Πρῶτον Γυμνάσιον Μυτιλήνης Selymbria 4, fol. 29v (xiv saec) [Psellos?] [diktyon 45141]
 CJP3.10 Athos Μεγίστης Λαύρας K41 (1328) fol 199r (xviii saec) [Psellos] [diktyon 28349]
 CJP3.11 Athos Μεγίστης Λαύρας K128 (1415) fol. 163r-192r(?) (xviii saec) [diktyon 28437]
 CJP3.12 Athos Μεγίστης Λαύρας K3 (1290) fol. 22r-v (xv Saec.) [diktyon 28311]
 CJP3.13 Athos Μεγίστης Λαύρας Λ135 (1626) fol. 451r-452r (xv saec.) [diktyon 28647]
 CJP3.14 Rome Biblioteca Casanatense 1908 (olim G.II.1) (xiii-xiv saec) [diktyon 56099]

Eight manuscripts attribute this work to Psellos⁶, while the others do not assign any author. It is striking that all the manuscripts which transmit the Commentary of the Jesus Prayer also transmit other works by Psellos.⁷ For the sake of argument, one may leave aside the manuscript attribution (since they are generally rather unstable and even unreliable) and focus on the content to see if the commentaries could have been written by Psellos.

The earliest manuscript containing the text is dated to 1105 (CJP2.1).⁸ Therefore the ante quem date is 1105. The latest chronological indication within the text is the sixth ecumenical council and its final condemnations, giving us the terminus post quem of 681. Therefore, the date of composition of the CJP is between 681 and 1105. The editor of the texts, Sinkiewicz believed that the author could not be Psellos and claimed the authorship was either of the seventh or of the eleventh century.⁹ Dunaev proposes seventh or eighth centuries.¹⁰

The content and aims of the commentaries suit the eleventh century. The text reveals the desire to connect the practice of personal monastic prayer with the decisions established by the church during the councils, an attitude similar to that held by Niketas Stethatos who in 1035 edited his master's monastic texts, those of Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), and proposed that they fitted within ecclesiastical tradition.¹¹ Psellos' interest in monasticism is not limited to his becoming a monk in 1054¹², as one may see in his use of neoplatonic thought to understand the nature of the uncreated light of Mt Tabor.¹³ Moreover, the first important surviving corpus of synod decrees since the end of iconoclasm are those composed by patriarch Alexios Studites (1025-1043).¹⁴ Thus the interest in prayer and synods points to an eleventh century composition.

⁶ CJP1.5; CJP1.6; CJP3.3, CJP3.4, CJP3.6, CJP3.7, CJP3.8, CJP3.10

⁷ Insight based on the list of manuscripts in the *Iter Psellianum* by Paul Moore.

⁸ Based on the Paschal tables. CJP2.1 G Oxford Bodleianus Baroccianus Graecus 15, fols. 391v-392v (1105 AD) [no Psellos] [diktyon 47301] K. Lake, S. Lake, *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, vol. 2 Boston 1934, N. 61 p. 12. Plate 111.

⁹ Sinkiewicz 209

¹⁰ Dunaev 8

¹¹ F. Lauritzen *Areopagitica in Stethatos: a chronology of an interest*, *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 72 (2013): 162-177

¹² M. Jeffreys, Michael Psellos and the monastery, in M. Jeffreys, M. Lauxtermann, *The Letters of Psellos*, (Oxford 2017), 42-59.

¹³ F. Lauritzen, Psellos the Hesychast: A Neoplatonic Reading of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor, *BSI* 70 (2012): 167-180.

¹⁴ F. Lauritzen, Synod decrees of the Eleventh Century in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 105.1 (2012): 101-116.

The Commentary on the Jesus Prayer is also remarkable since it focuses mainly on Christology. This also confirms an eleventh century composition since the topic had not been discussed directly at a council since 681. One should remember the effort of patriarch Alexios Studites (1025-1043) in persecuting the Christology of the Syro Jacobites on numerous occasions.¹⁵ Even Patriarch John Xiphilinos (1064-1075) called a synod against the Syro Jacobites. These attacks were based on the Syro Jacobite refusal to accept the decisions of the council of Chalcedon (451) one of the synods referred to in the commentary to the Jesus Prayer. Moreover, the separation of the Catholic and Orthodox churches in 1054 was also on a Christological question (filioque).¹⁶ This was a dispute over the wording of the creed agreed at the council of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381). These synods also referred to in the Commentary to the Jesus prayer. Psellos also wrote poem 4 Westerink summarizing the decisions of the ecumenical councils including those mentioned in the CJP. The poem was dedicated to Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055). It is striking that the focus of the CJP should be on identifying the correct Christology in connection with the councils. Psellos had already spent much time identifying the correct Chalcedonian Christology in his paraphrase of the Canon of Cosmas the Melodist as well as in an essay on the same subject.¹⁷ The eleventh century poet Christopher Mitylenaios describes the Transfiguration in Christological terms.¹⁸ Therefore there is no reason to exclude an eleventh century date, since the concerns expressed in the commentary are present in the eleventh century and specifically in Psellos' writings.

If one focuses on the text itself, one sees concrete and direct evidence for an attribution to Psellos. In the introduction to the CJP one sees that the author believes that there are forms of knowledge which are not rational and which need to be addressed without mediation of reason. The CJP claims that the constant repetition of such a prayer was not simply irrational:

Τὸ Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Ἀμήν, οὐχ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν ἀσυλλογίστως καὶ ἀνεξετάστως παρεδόθη ἡμῖν καθ' ἑκάστην ὥραν λέγεσθαι. (Psell. Praec. Ad Jesum. 1.1-3 Lauritzen)

The "Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen" has not just been traditionally recited every hour, without reason or examination.

¹⁵ F. Lauritzen, The synods of Alexios Studites (1025-1043). In: Christian Gastgeber [u. a.]: The Patriarchate of Constantinople in Context and Comparison (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 41, VÖAW, Wien 2017), 17–24.

¹⁶ There are essays by Psellos condemning the filioque in Psell. Theol. 1.20-22 Gautier.

¹⁷ F. Lauritzen Paraphrasis as interpretation Psellos and a canon of Cosmas the melodist (poem 24 westerink) in Byzantina 33 (2014): 61-74.

¹⁸ Christopher Mitylainaios Poem 25 De Groote.

The term used is *ἀσυλλογίστως*. What it means is that even without reason it is possible to reach the divine with such a prayer. Psellos writes to his friend patriarch John Xiphilinos (1064-1075) “having first rid yourself of syllogisms, climb up to immediate knowledge (*ἀσυλλογίστους γνώσεις*)”.¹⁹ The same concept is expressed more clearly in the funerary speech dedicated to the same person:

Ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ ἔρωτι τοῦ ἀπράγμονος βίου τρωθεὶς καὶ ἤδη τῇ ἡσυχῶ ζωῇ καθοσιωθεὶς, αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο καὶ δρόμον περὶ τὰ καλὰ καὶ πέρασ ἐτίθετο· τί γὰρ ἂν ἐρασμιώτερον γένοιτο, εἴ τις ψυχὴ φύσεως ἀποστᾶσα καὶ σώματος ὅσον ἕξεστιν, καὶ τῶν ἐνοχλοῦντων παθῶν κατισχύσασα, εἶτα δὴ στραφεῖσα πρὸς ἑαυτήν, ὄλον τὸν ψυχικὸν καθορῶν διάκοσμον, πάλιν τε πρὸς τὸ θεϊότερον ἀνανεύσασα τὴν νοερὰν θεωροίῃ ζωὴν καὶ ἀσυλλογίστως ἔχει τὰ κρείττονα, εἴτ' ἐκεῖθεν πᾶσαν ὑπερβᾶσα δύναμιν καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀκροτάτου σταίῃ τῆς οἰκείας ζωῆς, καὶ τὸ ἐνοειδὲς προβαλλομένη τῆς φύσεως, αὐτῶ δὴ τῶ ἐνὶ συναφθείῃ, πνεῦμα καὶ νοῦς γενομένη καὶ θεὸς ἀντικρυς; (Psell. Or. Fun. 3.21-31 Polemis)

For wounded by the desire of a calm life and elevated to a quiet life, he considered it both the path and aim for what is beautiful. What could be sweeter than a soul which is separated from nature and body as much as possible, which controls the troubling passions, and which heads once more towards what is more divine in order to contemplate the intellectual life and which holds what is better without thinking, which then surpasses every power and energy in order to stay on the highest plane of its own life, and which projects the one-ness of nature, in order to connect to the one, and which becomes spirit and intellect even before God.

Here one sees Psellos using the term *ἀσυλλογίστως* to refer precisely to the approach to what is superior to rational knowledge. Since Xiphilinos became a monk ca 1054 and then patriarch (1064-1075), such a topic would interest him specifically. Moreover, Psellos concludes his famous essay on the Chaldean Oracles²⁰ stating that the neoplatonists admired these oracular utterings since they provided unreasoned statements:

¹⁹ καὶ τοῖς συλλογισμοῖς γυμνασθεὶς τὰ πρῶτα, οὕτως ἐπὶ τὰς ἀσυλλογίστους γνώσεις ἀνάβηθι· (Psell. Ep. 202.85-87 [Ad Xiphilinum] Papiouannou). See also Ὁ δὲ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν ὑποκειμένων μὴ προσιέμενος ἐν μὲν συλλογισμοῖς ἀναρεῖ τὸ συμπέρασμα, ἐν δὲ τοῖς φυσικοῖς λόγοις ἀθετεῖ τὴν ὀλόγητα· τούτων δὲ τῶν δυοῖν ἀνηρημένων, οὔτε τὸ πᾶν ὄλον, καὶ τέλος ἡμῖν οὐδαμοῦ ὀδοιποροῦσιν οὐδὲ συμπέρασμα· ὁρᾷς οἷον τὸ ἄγαν καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ τὸν λόγον καὶ τὸ μὴ ἑαυτοῦς εἰδέναί, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ μὴ ἐπεστράφθαι καὶ μὴ συλλογίζεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἀσυλλογίστως καὶ χωρὶς λεπτόνσεως τεχνικῆς τοὺς ὄχθους καταπίνειν τῶν ὑποθέσεων; (Psell. Ep. 202.72-79 [ad Xiphilinum] Papiouannou).

²⁰ Psell. Phil. Min. 2.38 O'Meara.

Τούτων δὲ τῶν δογμάτων τὰ πλείω καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ Πλάτων ἐδέξαντο, οἱ δὲ περὶ Πλωτῖνον καὶ Ἰάμβλιχον Πορφύριον τε καὶ Πρόκλον πᾶσι κατηκολούθησαν καὶ ὡς θείας φωνᾶς ἀσυλλογίστως ταῦτα ἐδέξαντο. (Psell. Phil. Min. 2.38.148.17-19 O'Meara)

Aristotle and Plato accepted most of these beliefs, the disciples of Plotinus and Iamblichus, Porphyry and Proclus followed them all and accepted them irrationally as divine voices.

This realm of irrational knowledge, or knowledge above argument is also discussed in Psellos' allegorical reading of the Greek alphabet.²¹ Each letter represents a different stage. Once he reaches the letter M he points out that logic is irrelevant.²² The question of what is not investigated (ἀνεξετάστως) also seems to concern him. Indeed CJP1 wishes to justify the validity of a prayer which does not seem researched. It is rather a striking coincidence that the only text in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* which combines the terms ἀσυλλόγιστος and ἀνεξετάστος concerns a synod decree of patriarch John Xiphilinos (1064-1075) mentioned by Nikephoros Botaniates.²³ Moreover, CJP indicates the prayer was recited repeatedly²⁴, as Psellos also says in his theological essay dedicated to the continuous (ἀυτόματως) repetition of the "Kyrie Eleison".²⁵ Thus Psellos indicates that a short prayer repeated continuously would somehow give direct access to the divine.

Sinkiewicz claims that this sort of text would not fit with Psellos' intellectual interests.²⁶ Leaving aside the fact Psellos also wrote an essay on the continuous repetition of the Kyrie Eleison, one may object the following text by Psellos' favourite neoplatonic philosopher:

πάντα γὰρ εὔχεται πλὴν τοῦ πρώτου, φησὶν ὁ μέγας Θεόδωρος. τελειότης δὲ ἀρχομένη μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν κοινοτέρων ἀγαθῶν, λήγουσα δὲ εἰς τὴν θεϊαν ἔνωσιν καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν συνεθίζουσα τὴν ψυχὴν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον φῶς. (Procl. in Timaeum 1.213.2-6 Diehl in E. Diehl, Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum commentaria, Leipzig 1903-1906.

²¹ Psell. Phil. Min. 1.36 Duffy

²² Psell. Phil. Min. 1.36.335-361 Duffy

²³ Synod decree of Xiphilinos (1063-1075) confirmed by Nicephoros III Botaniates (1079-1081): Prochiron Auctum 2.20.16-17 Zepos in P. Zepos, Prochiron Auctum (Athens 1931); Novella Alexios I Comnenos (1084) 24.11-14 Zepos in J. Zepos and P. Zepos, Νεαραι καὶ Χρυσόβουλλα τῶν μετὰ τὸν Ἰουστινιανὸν Βυζαντινῶν Αυτοκρατόρων (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1962).

²⁴ Καθ'ἐκάστην ὥραν λέγεσθαι (Psell, Prec. Jesus. 1.3-4 Lauritzen)

²⁵ Psell. Theol. 1.13.17 Gautier.

²⁶ Sinkiewicz 211.

*Everything prays except the First (principle) says the great Theodore [of Asine].
Initiation begins from the most common goods ending with divine union. It slowly
makes the soul used to divine light.*

Indeed, Psellos employs Proclus to define contemplation of the divine energies on Mt Tabor.²⁷ The essay deals with the contemplation of divine energies of Jesus during the Transfiguration. Psellos explains this event by using Proclus' philosophy. Prayer and contemplation are fundamental parts of neoplatonic thought.²⁸ Sinkiewicz not only thought that the ideas did not suit Psellos, but also that the language was too humble to be by Psellos. He pointed out that only the word *πέλει* revealed something intellectual.²⁹ Apparently Sinkiewicz did not notice the word was part of an iambic trimetre:

Τῶν δογμάτων ἄμοιρος οὐδαμῶς πέλει
(Psell. Praec. Ad Jesum 1.4-5 Lauritzen)
He is not entirely ignorant of dogmas

This is an unattested verse, and may have been composed for the treatise. Such an interest in theology and correct verse composition is already quite striking. Psellos wrote several poems on religious topics. Moreover, the form *ἄμοιρος* is only attested once in the in the Database of Byzantine Book epigrams and specifically Vat. Gr. 676 fol. 1v which is the dedicatory poem of the manuscript collection of the writings of Mauropous, friend and correspondent of Psellos.³⁰ This was poem was written after he was appointed metropolitan of Euchaita. It appears also in Mauropous' writings³¹ as well as Christophoros Mitylenaios.³² The word *ἄμοιρος* appears only twice in the entire Palatine Anthology,³³ but rather often in Psellos.³⁴

Psellos also studied poems to explain their theological meaning. He was familiar with poetry and interested in its intellectual content. Thus, the quotation would seem suitable for Psellos and it is not merely an attempt to elevate a text

²⁷ Psell. Theol. 1.11 Gautier.

²⁸ J. M. Dillon, A. Timotin, Platonic Theories of Prayer, (Leiden 2015).

²⁹ A surprising claim given that *πέλω* is used in Greek verse composition. It is recommended in the general introduction of A. Sidgwick, F.D. Morice, An introduction to Greek Verse Composition, (London 1893) 38.

³⁰ M. Lauxtermann, the intertwined lives of Mauropous and Psellos in M. Jeffreys and M. Lauxtermann, the letters of Psellos, (Oxford 2017), 89-127.

³¹ Maurop. Ep. 17.41, Poem. 47.14; 90.6; Can. 2.5.100.

³² Christ. Mytil. Poem 35.1 De Groote.

³³ AP 7.383.5; 13.23.6

³⁴ Here are some examples of the use of the word *ἄμοιρος* Psell. Chron. 4.7.6 Reinsch; Or. Pan. 2.200, 287 Dennis Or. Hagiogr. 3a137, 3b343, 7.140, Phil. Min 1.36.126, Theol. 1.7.54, 72.61, 75.118, 107.64, 107.106, Poem 9.848, 1314, 21.160, 62.36, 67.141, De Eur. Pisd. 80, Omn. Doct. 97.20, 135.9, 197.4, 197.6, Laud. Crusutu. 451, Ep. 323a7.

by using an unusual word in prose, but familiar from iambic trimeter. Moreover, Psellos' poetry is one of the very first attestations of the purely accentual versification in Greek. Psellos wrote a comparison of the metre of Euripides and George of Pisidia. Thus, Sinkiewicz's objection about level of language is rather surprising. The background of religious learning is signalled by the phrase which ends the introduction. The expression 'fulfilment of the commandments' is a favourite of Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022).³⁵ Therefore in the introduction one notices the use of poetry, irrational learning, and references to Symeon the New Theologian. In the case of an irrational approach to what is superior one sees a clear echo of Psellos' texts written to and about Xiphilinos. These elements point to an eleventh century composition.

The notion that words reveal concepts is an old debate. However, in late Neoplatonism the idea that words could yield information which was not argued but gave access to a superior reality was important in such texts as Proclus' commentary on the Cratylus of Plato, quoted by Psellos. Thus the idea that each word represents a concept fits in the atmosphere of the eleventh century.

At the centre of the treatise is the idea that the words of Jesus prayer deny certain heresies and therefore are a statement of Orthodoxy. The text distinguishes different types of heretics: 1) those who believe Jesus was a simple man and not son of God 2) those who believe that he was only divine and not complete man 3) those who think that he has one nature, 4) those who confuse the natures. The text reflects generally accepted opinions about the nature of Christ. In the actual body of the text there are seven parts present in the three versions of CJP. Each part discusses one word of the prayer "Κύριε, Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς", "Lord, Jesus, Christ, our God, have mercy on us". Each word is connected with a decision of a synod.

Κύριε Synod of 325
 Ἰησοῦ Synod of 451
 Χριστέ Synod of 431
 ὁ θεὸς Synod of 681

The introduction had indicated the four different heresies attacked in the text and associates names to them: 1) Eutyches and Dioscoros, 2) Nestorius, 3) Theodore of Pharan, Honorius of Rome, Sergios and Pyrrhos, Peter the Coward. This group of three heretics is striking. Eutyches and Dioskoros were condemned at Chalcedon (451). Nestorius was condemned at Ephesus (431) and the group of four were condemned at Constantinople III (681). The choice of grouping heretics according to the condemnation at a synod confirms the hypothesis that

³⁵ ἐκπλήρωσις ἐντολῶν (TLG search 8 may 2021. Lemma search 5 words of separation) Symeon N. Theolog. H. 33.78, 33.125, Cap. Theol. 1.90.7, Catech. 9.49, 14.70, 24.57, 25.28. Cap. Alph. 10.1.65, 10.1.67, Or. Ethic. 1.12.34, .1.12.161, 1.12.162, 1.12.494, 9.1.122, 9.1.463, 15.1.155,

Peter the Terrible is Peter the Patriarch of Constantinople (654-666).³⁶ While Arius is left out in this section of the introduction, he is present in the discussion of the meaning of each word of the prayer. What is left out is also important: The council of Constantinople I (381) Constantinople II (553) and Nicaea II (787). In other words, the discussion of the Holy Ghost, Origenism and Icons are left out and confirms an exclusive interest in Christology. The list of heretics mentioned in the CJP conforms closely with that present in the Constantinople III (681).

*Νεστορίῳ καὶ Εὐτύχεϊ καὶ Διοσκόρῳ ἀνάθεμα
 Ἀπολιναρίῳ καὶ Σεβήρῳ ἀνάθεμα τοῖς ὁμόφροσιν αὐτῶν ἀνάθεμα
 Θεοδώρῳ τῷ τῆς Φαράν ἀνάθεμα Σεργίῳ καὶ Ὀνωρίῳ ἀνάθεμα
 Πύρρῳ καὶ Παύλῳ ἀνάθεμα Κύρῳ καὶ Πέτρῳ ἀνάθεμα
 Μακαρίῳ καὶ Στεφάνῳ καὶ Πολυχρονίῳ ἀνάθεμα
 ὅλοις τοῖς αἰρετικοῖς ἀνάθεμα τοῖς κηρύξασι καὶ κηρύττουσι καὶ μέλλουσι
 διδάσκειν ἐν θέλημα καὶ μίαν ἐνέργειαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας Χριστοῦ
 τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἀνάθεμα. (Const III. 18.798. 17-22)*
 Anathema to Nestorius and Eutyches
 Anathema to Apolinarius and Severus. Anathema to those who agree with them
 Anathema to Theodore of Pharan. Anathema to Sergius and Honorius.
 Anathema to Pyrrhus and Paul. Anathema to Cyrus and Petros.
 Anathema to Makarios and Sephanos and Polychronius

The CJP is using the strategy of Constantinople III in combining the condemnations council of Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451) and Constantinople III (681) as if they represented different aspects of the same heresy. This is not an obvious choice since the mention of some of the heretics is quite rare between 681 and 1105. One notable exception is the poem by Psellos on the synods which is the only text which mentions all the persons condemned in CJP1:

	Psellos	CJP1
Arios	4.9	1.19
Nestorios	4.28	1.24
Eutyches	4.39	1.21
Dioskoros	4.39	1.22
Theodore Pharan	4.70	1.29
Honorios of Rome	4.70	1.29
Sergios	4.71	1.30
Pyrrhos	4.71	1.30
Petros the deilos	4.72	1.30

³⁶ Sinkiewicz 209 thinks it is Peter the Fuller.

If one compares the list of heretics with the anathemas quoted above from 681, it is striking Apolinarios and Severos are missing from CJP1. They are also missing from poem 4 of Psellos. The list present in the Commentary to the Jesus prayer corresponds to that of Poem 4 of Psellos. The shared selection may point to common authorship, but the question is the aim for such a list of heretics. Somehow both Psellos and CJP seem to think they have something in common. The anathemas of 681 are grouped together since it appears these heretics lead to the notion of a single energy of Christ (which is what is being discussed at this council). One may infer that the theology present in the CJP is aimed at showing that not only are the two natures present but mainly the two energies. The Christological question of the natures and their respective energies relates to the matter of contemplation. Such a development was rather usual and well known in Constantinople especially after the publication of the hymns of Symeon the New Theologian in 1035. His monastery in Constantinople of Saint Mamas was acquired by Maria Skleraina, who Psellos knew well and whose funerary commemoration he wrote (poem 17 westerink).

One should point out that Psellos' paraphrase of the canon of Cosmas the Melodist makes the same points concerning Christology. The original text of Cosmas was very brief and Psellos goes out of his way to introduce numerous elements non present in the original text in order to guarantee the orthodoxy of the text and specifically the chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures.

Based on these arguments, the proofs presented here that the CJP is by Psellos are the following

- 1) it is ascribed to Psellos in eight manuscripts
- 2) all the manuscripts which transmit the CJP also contain works by Psellos
- 3) Psellos wrote about the Kyrie Eleison
- 4) Psellos wrote a poem about Synods
- 5) the verses present in CJP 1 contain verbal forms present in Mauropous
- 6) The Christological concern of CJP fits with Psellos' interests in Christology
- 7) the heretics mentioned in CJP also appear in Psell. Poem. 4 Westerink

One should also point out another feature. Markos Eugenikos wrote a commentary on the Jesus Prayer³⁷ and it is based on the text written by Psellos. His commentary was also included in the Philocalia.³⁸ Markos Eugenikos' rival at the council of Florence was Bessarion, who later became cardinal of the Catholic Church. Bessarion left his collection of Greek manuscripts to Venice in

³⁷ I. Bulovic, ἡ ἐρμηνεία τῆς εὐχῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγίου Μάρκου Ἐφέσου, *Kleronomia* 7 (1975): 345-352.

³⁸ *Philocalia*, Venice 1782, 1163-1167.

1468. None of his books contain theological works by Psellos and do not contain the Commentary on the Jesus Prayer while at least five manuscripts containing the CJP are present on Mt. Athos. Among these some attribute the work to Psellos. Among athonite hesychasts, the CJP was considered a genuine work of the eleventh century Platonic Constantinopolitan Psellos.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bulovic I., ἡ ἐρμηνεία τῆς εὐχῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Μάρκου Ἐφέσου, *Kleronomia* 7 (1975): 345-352
- Dillon J. M., Timotin A., *Platonic Theories of Prayer*, (Leiden 2015)
- Dunaev A.G., Византийские догматические толкования на Иисусову молитву, богословские труды 41 (2007): 8–19
- Jeffreys M., Michael Psellos and the monastery, in M. Jeffreys, M. Lauxtermann, the Letters of Psellos, (Oxford 2017), 42-59
- Lake K., Lake S., *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, vol. 2, Boston 1934
- Lauritzen F., Areopagitica in Stethatos: a chronology of an interest, *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 72 (2013): 162-177
- Lauritzen F., Paraphrasis as interpretation Psellos and a canon of Cosmas the melodist (poem 24 westerink) in *Byzantina* 33 (2014): 61-74
- Lauritzen F., Psellos the Hesychast: A Neoplatonic Reading of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor, *BSI* 70 (2012): 167–180
- Lauritzen F., Synod decrees of the Eleventh Century in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 105.1 (2012): 101-116
- Lauritzen F., The synods of Alexios Studites (1025-1043). In: Christian Gastgeber [u. a.]: *The Patriarchate of Constantinople in Context and Comparison (Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 41, VÖAW, Wien 2017)*, 17–24
- Lauxtermann M., the intertwined lives of Mauropous and Psellos in M. Jeffreys and M. Lauxtermann, the letters of Psellos, (Oxford 2017), 89-127
- Sidgwick A., Morice F.D., *An introduction to Greek Verse Composition*, (London 1893) 38
- Sinkiewicz R., An early byzantine commentary on the Jesus Prayer: introduction and edition, *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987): 208-220
- Zepos J. and P. Zepos P., *Νεαράι καὶ Χρυσόβουλλα τῶν μετὰ τὸν Ἰουστινιανὸν Βυζαντινῶν Ἀυτοκρατόρων* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1962)
- Zepos P., *Prochiron Auctum* (Athens 1931)

Edition

The present edition is based on that published by Sinkiewicz. The collations are his as is the apparatus with the variants. The apparatus with references to the iambic verse and synods is my own as is the apparatus of testimonia. For Marcus Eugenicus the text is that edited by Bolovic in *Kleronomia* 1975. There were some problems with the line numbers of the original edition of CJP and the references in the apparatus. (notably at CJP1.3-13 Sinkiewicz). A new edition will be needed since Sinkiewicz collated 23 out of the 33 manuscripts he found (70%). The present edition is aimed at inspiring others to collate the remaining ten manuscripts and to look for new witnesses to this commentary.

1 Τὸ Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἐλέησον
 ἡμᾶς. Ἀμήν, οὐχ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν ἀσυλλογίστως καὶ
 ἀνεξετάστως παρεδόθη ἡμῖν καθ' ἐκάστην ὥραν
 λέγεσθαι. Εἰ γὰρ βραχὺς πέφυκεν οὗτος ὁ στίχος, τῶν
 δογμάτων ἄμοιρος οὐδαμῶς πέλει, ἀλλὰ μετὰ σκέψεως 5
 καὶ μελέτης πολλῆς τῇ συνεργείᾳ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος
 συνετέθη παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων εἰς ἀναίρεσιν
 πασῶν τῶν αἰρέσεων καὶ ἐκπλήρωσιν τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ
 κυρίου.
 Ἐκάστη γὰρ λέξις δογμάτων καὶ ἐνταλμάτων 10
 κυριακῶν καὶ θεοσεβείας πεπληρωμένη ἐστίν. Οἱ μὲν
 γὰρ τῶν αἰρετικῶν ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι
 ἔλεγον, καὶ οὐχὶ καὶ υἱὸν θεοῦ. Οἱ δὲ θεὸν μόνον, καὶ
 οὐχὶ καὶ ἄνθρωπον τέλειον, κατὰ φαντασίαν 15
 ὑποδύμενον, τὸ ἀνθρώπινον. Οἱ δὲ καὶ θεὸν
 ὁμολογοῦντες καὶ ἄνθρωπον, οὐ τὰς δύο φύσεις
 συνιέντες εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ φύσεις δύο,
 οὕτω καὶ δύο ὑποστάσεις καὶ δύο υἱοὺς ἔλεγον. Οἱ δὲ
 συνδραμεῖν εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν τὰς δύο δοξάζοντες καὶ 20
 αὐτὰς τὰς φύσεις φρυθῆναι καὶ συγχυθῆναι εἰς ἓν
 δογματίζοντες, καὶ μίαν φύσιν ἐξηλλαγμένην
 δι' ἀμφοτέρων ἀποτελεσθῆναι τῶν φύσεων ἀπεδείκνυον.
 Τὰς φύσεις φρυθῆναι καὶ συγχυθῆναι εἰς ἓν
 δογματίζοντες, καὶ μίαν φύσιν ἐξηλλαγμένην 25
 δι' ἀμφοτέρων ἀποτελεσθῆναι τῶν φύσεων ἀπεδείκνυον.
 Ἀλλ' ὁ στίχος οὗτος διὰ μὲν τοῦ Κύριε, ὁ τῆς θείας
 δηλωτικόν ἐστι φύσεως, τὸν Ἄρειον καὶ τοὺς ὁμόφρονας
 αὐτοῦ, ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον λέγοντας αὐτὸν, καὶ οὐχὶ καὶ
 υἱὸν θεοῦ, ἀποκηρύττει.
 Διὰ δὲ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὁ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην οὐσίαν δηλοῖ, 30
 τὸν Εὐτυχέα καὶ Διόσκορον καὶ τοὺς συμμύστας αὐτῶν

1,3 ὥραν] ABD deest C 5 ἄμοιρος] οὐκ ἄμοιρος B 8 ἐκπλήρωσιν] ἐκπλήρωσιν πασῶν E 16 οὐ] deest CDE 17 συνιέντες] ABD συνάγοντες C 24 δογματίζοντες] AB ἐδογματίζον CDE

1,26 διὰ... 29 ἀποκηρύττει] Marc. Eugen. Prec ad Jesum 349.12-14 Bulovic 30 Διὰ... 33 προσαρμόζοντας] Marc. Eugen. Prec ad Jesum 349.14-17 Bulovic

1,4 τῶν... 5 πέλει] versus iambici 11 Οἱ... 13 θεοῦ] Arius cfr. C Nic (325) 13 Οἱ... 15 ἀνθρώπινον] Eutyches et Dioscorus cfr. C Chalch. 15 Οἱ... 18 ἔλεγον] Nestorius cfr. C Eph (431) 18 Οἱ... 25 ἀπεδείκνυον] Monoergitae et Monothelitae cfr. CCP (681) 26 Ἀλλό... 29 ἀποκηρύττει] C Nic (325) | διὰ... 29 ἀποκηρύττει] 30 Διὰ... 33 προσαρμόζοντας] C Chalch.

ἐπιστομίζει, τοὺς θεὸν μόνον οἰομένους τοῦτον καὶ τῇ
θεότητι τὰ πάθη προσαρμόζοντας.

Διὰ δὲ τοῦ Χριστέ, ὃ ἔστι, θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος, τὸν
35 Νεστόριον καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ ἀποπαύει, τοὺς διηρημένας
ἀλλήλων τὰς ὑποστάσεις εἶναι δοξάζοντας, καὶ δύο υἱοὺς
ἐπὶ τοῦ ἑνὸς Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ μυθολογοῦντας καὶ δύο
ὑποστάσεις, καὶ μὴ εἶναι Θεοτόκον τὴν ἁγίαν Θεοτόκον
ἀλλὰ Χριστοτόκον λέγοντας.

40 Διὰ δὲ τοῦ ὁ θεός, Θεόδωρον τὸν τῆς Φαράν
ἐπίσκοπον, Ὀνώριον Ῥώμης, Σέργιον τε καὶ Πύρρον,
Πέτρον τὸν δειλὸν καὶ πάντας τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς
ἀποτρέπει. Καὶ ληρωδοῦντας ἀποδεικνύει τοὺς σύγχυσι
τολμῶντας λέγειν καὶ μίαν φύσιν ἐξηλλαγμένην καὶ ἐν
45 θέλημα καὶ μίαν ἐνέργειαν, ἀσύγχυτον τὴν θείαν φύσιν
δηλῶν κἀντεῦθεν καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ δύο οὐσίας
ἐν μιᾷ ὑποστάσει συνηρωμένας παρίστησι.

Καὶ οὕτως τὸ περὶ τὸν Χριστὸν τῶν ὀρθοδόξων
δόγμα, ἐπάγει τὸ ἡμῶν, ἀδελφικῶς ἀλλήλους τοὺς
50 πιστοὺς συνάπτει καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης συνδέει, ἐν ᾗ, τῇ
ἀγάπῃ φημί, τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν ἅπαν ὑπάρχει
τὸ πλήρωμα.

Ὅτω γοῦν τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν
περιλαβὼν τὴν συμπλήρωσιν προστίθησιν τὸ ἐλέησον.
55 Διὰ γὰρ τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῆς
συμπληρώσεως τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐλευσόμεθα.

Ἔττα ἐπάγει τὸ ἡμᾶς, τῆς ἀγάπης ἐχόμενον, καὶ
τελευταῖον ἐπιφέρει τὸ ἀμήν, ὃ ἔστι, γένοιτο, εὐκτικῶς
ἐπικυρῶν τὰ εἰρημένα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ βεβαιότητι.

60

1,38 ἁγίαν] ἁγίαν ABD κυρίως C κυρίως καὶ ἀληθῶς E 42 δειλὸν] ABD
δειλὸν CE 48 οὕτως] CDE οὕτω B οὕτ' A οὕτως ἀπαρτίζων Sinkiewicz
51 τοῦ... 53 δογμάτων] deest E | τῶν... 52 πλήρωμα] ἐν αὐτῇ ἅπαν τὸ
πλήρωμα ὑπάρχει C 55 Διὰ... 59 βεβαιότητι] desunt E 57 τῆς...
ἐχόμενον] deest B ἐχόμενον BC ἐχόμενος AE

1,50 ἐν... 52 πλήρωμα] cf: Rom 13:10

34 Διὰ... 38 ὑποστάσεις] Marc. Eugen. Prec. ad Jesum 349.17-19 Bulovic

40 Διὰ... 47 παρίστησι] Marc. Eugen. Prec. ad Jesum 349.19-350.1
Bulovic

34 Διὰ... 39 λέγοντας] C Eph (431) 40 Διὰ... 47 παρίστησι] CCP (681)
Θεόδωρον... Φαράν] Theodorus Pharan (570-638) 41 Ὀνώριον Ῥώμης]
Honorius Romae (625-638) | Σέργιον] Sergius Constantinopolis (610-
638) | Πύρρον] Pyrrhus Constantinopolis (638-641) 42 Πέτρον] Petrus
Constantinopolis (654-666)

2 ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὸ Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν,
ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Ἀμήν.

Ἐκάστη λέξις πεπληρωμένη δογματῶν καὶ
θεοσοφίας ἐστίν. ἐπεὶ γὰρ οἱ μὲν τῶν αἰρετικῶν ψιλὸν
ἄνθρωπον τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι ἔλεγον· οἱ δὲ θεὸν μόνον
κατὰ φαντασίαν ὑποδύμενον τὸ ἀνθρώπινον· οἱ δὲ καὶ
θεὸν ὁμολογοῦντες καὶ ἄνθρωπον, τὰς δύο φύσεις οὐ
συνῆγον εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ δύο φύσεις,
οὕτω καὶ δύο ὑποστάσεις καὶ υἱοὺς δύο ἔλεγον· οἱ δὲ
συνδραμεῖν εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν τὰς δύο φύσεις
δοξάζοντες, καὶ αὐτὰς τὰς φύσεις φρυθῆναι καὶ
συνγυθῆναι εἰς ἑαυτὰς ἐδογματίζον, καὶ μίαν φύσιν
ἐξηλλαγμένην δι' ἀμφοτέρων ἀποτελεσθῆναι τῶν
φύσεων ἀπεφαίνοντο.

Διὰ μὲν τοῦ Κύριε, ὃ τῆς θείας δηλωτικόν ἐστι
φύσεως, τοὺς ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον λέγοντας αὐτὸν ὁ λόγος
ἀποκηρύττει.

Διὰ δὲ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὃ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην οὐσίαν δηλοῖ,
τοὺς θεὸν πάλιν μόνον οἰομένους τοῦτον ἐπιστομίζει.

Διὰ δὲ τοῦ Χριστέ, τοὺς διηρημένας ἀλλήλων τὰς
ὑποστάσεις εἶναι δοξάζοντας ἀποπαύει.

Διὰ δὲ τοῦ ὁ θεός, τοὺς τὴν σύγχυσιν τολμῶντας
λέγειν ἀποτρέπει καὶ ληρωδοῦντας ἀποδεικνύει.
ἀσύγχυτον τὴν θείαν φύσιν δηλῶν κἀντεῦθεν δηλαδὴ

2,1 εἰς τὸ] GLOP τοῦ H τοῦ στίχου τῷ I τοῦ στίχου τοῦ JN τοῦ στίχου τὸ
K τοῦ στίχου M 2 Ἀμήν] deest GM 5 θεοσοφίας] θεοσεβείας IM
φιλοσοφίας LP τε καὶ σοφίας O 12 φρυθῆναι] φυραθῆναι JKM
15 ἀπεφαίνοντο] ἀποφαίνονται G φίνωτὸ H ἀπέφανον I ἀπεφῆναντο J
ἀπεφένοντο K ἀπεφαίνοντο O 20 πάλιν] deest M | πάλιν μόνον] μόνον
πάλιν LP | μόνον] deest GHN | οἰομένους] ἰωμένους HK ὄρωμένους N
| τοῦτον] GM τούτους HIJKLNOP | ἐπιστομίζει] ἀποστομίζει JLP
22 δοξάζοντας] νομίζοντας JKN 23 τὴν] deest HIJKLMNPO
24 ἀποτρέπει] ἀποτέρπεται H ἀποτρέπεται IJM | ληρωδοῦντας]
λοιδοροῦντας HK ληροῦντας M

2,16 Διὰ... 18 ἀποκηρύττει] Marc. Eugen. Prec ad Jesum 349.12-14
Bulovic 19 Διὰ... 20 ἐπιστομίζει] Marc. Eugen. Prec ad Jesum 349.14-
17 Bulovic 21 Διὰ... 22 ἀποπαύει] Marc. Eugen. Prec. ad Jesum 349.17-
19 Bulovic 23 Διὰ... 27 παρίστησιν] Marc. Eugen. Prec. ad Jesum
349.19-350.1 Bulovic

2,5 οἱ... 6 ἔλεγον] Arius cfr. C Nic (325) 6 οἱ... 7 ἀνθρώπινον·]
Eutyches et Dioscorus cfr. C Chal. 7 οἱ... 10 ἔλεγον·] Nestorius cfr C
Eph (431) 10 οἱ... 15 ἀπεφαίνοντο] Monoergitae et Monothelitae cfr.
CCP (681)

καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ δύο οὐσίας ἐν μιᾷ ὑποστάσει
 συνηνωμένας παρίστησιν.

30 Καὶ οὕτως ἀπαρτίζων τὸ περὶ τὸν Χριστὸν τῶν
 ὀρθοδόξων δόγμα, ἐπάγει τὸ ἡμῶν, ἀδελφικῶς ἀλλήλοις
 τοὺς πιστοὺς συνάπτων καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης συνδέων, ἐν
 ἧ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν πῶν τὸ πλήρωμα.

35 Οὕτω δὲ καὶ τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν
 περιλαβὼν τὴν συμπλήρωσιν προστίθησι τὸ ἐλέησον, διὰ
 γὰρ τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῆς
 35 συμπληρώσεως τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐλεούμεθα.

Εἶτα πάλιν ἐπήγαγε τὸ ἡμᾶς, τῆς ἀγάπης ἐχόμενος,
 καὶ τελευταῖον ἐπήγαγε τὸ ἀμὴν, ὃ ἔστι, γένοιτο,
 εὐκτικῶς ἐπικυρῶν τὰ εἰρημένα καὶ ἐπιβεβαιῶν.

40 Οὕτω παντὸς δογματικοῦ τε καὶ ἐνταλματικοῦ
 πεπληρωμένος ἀγαθοῦ, ὁ βραχὺς οὗτος στίχος ὑπὸ τῶν
 θείων πατέρων ἡμῖν παραδέδοται.

2, 28 τὸν] deest JK | τὸν Χριστὸν] Χριστοῦ KN | τῶν... 29 ὀρθοδόξων]
 τὸ ὀρθόδοξον H ὀρθόδοξον IJKMN **29** ἀλλήλοις] ἀλλήλους G
30 συνδέων] συνδέον HK **33** περιλαβὼν] παραλαβὼν H
35 συμπληρώσεως] πληρώσεως LP **39** Οὕτω... 41 παραδέδοται] deest
 G

2, 30 διὰ... 31 πλήρωμα] cfr. Rom. 13:10

3 ἔρμηνεία εἰς τὸ Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν,
ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. Ἀμήν.

Παντὸς δογματικοῦ τε καὶ ἐνταλματικοῦ ἀγαθοῦ
πεπληρωμένος ὑπάρχων ὁ βραχὺς οὗτος στίχος ὑπὸ τῶν 5
θειῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν παραδέδοται. ἐκάστη γὰρ λέξις
πεπληρωμένη δογμάτων καὶ θεοσοφίας ἐστί. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ
τῶν αἰρετικῶν ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι
ἔλεγον· οἱ δὲ θεὸν μόνον κατὰ φαντασίαν ὑποδύμενον
τὸ ἀνθρώπινον· οἱ δὲ καὶ θεὸν ὁμολογοῦντες καὶ 10
ἄνθρωπον, τὰς δύο φύσεις οὐ συνῆγον εἰς μίαν
ὑπόστασιν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ φύσεις δύο, οὕτω καὶ δύο
ὑποστάσεις καὶ δύο υἱοὺς ἔλεγον· οἱ δὲ συνδραμεῖν εἰς
μίαν ὑπόστασιν τὰς δύο φύσεις δοξάζοντες, καὶ αὐτὰς 15
τὰς φύσεις φυρθῆναι καὶ συγχυθῆναι εἰς ἑαυτὰς
ἐδογματίζον, καὶ μίαν φύσιν ἐξηλλαγμένην καὶ
δι' ἀμφοτέρων ἀποτελεσθῆναι τῶν φύσεων ἀπεφῆναντο.

Διὰ μὲν τοῦ Κύριε, ὃ τῆς θείας δηλωτικῶν φύσεώς
ἐστί, τοὺς ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον λέγοντας αὐτὸν ὁ λόγος
ἀποκηρύττει. 20

Διὰ δὲ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὃ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην οὐσίαν δηλοῖ,
τοὺς θεὸν πάλιν μόνον οἰομένους τούτον ἐπιστομίζει.

Διὰ δὲ τοῦ Χριστέ, τοὺς διηρημένας ἀλλήλων τὰς
ὑποστάσεις εἶναι δοξάζοντας ἀποπαύει.

3,1 ἔρμηνεία] deest V | εἰς τὸ] QSTV τοῦ RU 2 Ἀμήν] deest U
4 ἀγαθοῦ] ἀγαθῶν ST 6 ἡμῶν] QSTV ἡμῶν RU 7 θεοσοφίας]
θεοσεβείας ST σοφίας W 13 δύο υἱοὺς] υἱοὺς δύο Q 15 φύσεις] δύο
φύσεις QR | φυρθῆναι] φυραθῆναι QRV 17 ἀπεφῆναντο] ἀπεφαίνοντο
QST 18 Διὰ] καὶ διὰ R | δηλωτικῶν... 19 ἐστί] φύσεώς ἐστί δηλωτικῶν
R φύσεώς δηλωτικὸν ἐστί ST φύσεώς ἐστί δηλωτικὸν U
22 οἰομένους] ἰομένους Q ἰομένους S οἰομένους T οἰομένους T
τούτον] deest RU τούτους V 24 ὑποστάσεις] φύσεις RU

3,18 Διὰ... 20 ἀποκηρύττει] Marc. Eugen. Prec ad Jesum 349.12-14
Bulovic 21 Διὰ... 22 ἐπιστομίζει] Marc. Eugen. Prec ad Jesum 349.14-
17 Bulovic 23 Διὰ... 24 ἀποπαύει] Marc. Eugen. Prec. ad Jesum 349.17-
19 Bulovic

3,7 Οἱ... 9 ἔλεγον.] Arius cfr. C Nic (325) 9 οἱ... 10 ἀνθρώπινον.]
Eutyches et Dioscurus cfr C Chalc. 10 οἱ... 13 ἔλεγον.] Nestorius cfr. C
Eph (431) 13 οἱ... 17 ἀπεφῆναντο] Monoergitae et Monothelitae cfr.
CCP (681) 18 Διὰ... 20 ἀποκηρύττει] C Nic. (325) 21 Διὰ... 22
ἐπιστομίζει] C Chalc. 23 Διὰ... 24 ἀποπαύει] C Eph (431)

- 25 *Διὰ δὲ τοῦ ὁ θεὸς, τοὺς σύγχυσιν τολμῶντας λέγειν
ἀποτρέπει καὶ ληρωδοῦντας ἀποδεικνύει ἀσύγχυτον τὴν
θεϊαν φύσιν δηλῶν κἀντεῦθεν καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ
δύο οὐσίας ἐν μιᾷ ὑποστάσει συνηνωμένας παρίστησι.*
- 30 *Καὶ οὕτως ἀπαρτίζων τὸ περὶ τὸν Χριστὸν τῶν
ὀρθοδόξων δόγμα, ἐπάγει τὸ ἡμῶν, ἀδελφικῶς ἀλλήλοις
τοὺς πιστοὺς συνάπτων καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης συνδέων, ἐν
ἧ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν ἅπαν ὑπάρχει τὸ πλήρωμα.*
- 35 *Οὕτω γοῦν καὶ τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν
περιλαβῶν τὴν συμπλήρωσιν, προστίθησι τὸ ἐλέησον.
Διὰ γὰρ τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως τῶν δογμάτων καὶ τῆς
συμπληρώσεως τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐλεούμεθα.*
- 40 *Εἶτα πάλιν ἐπήγαγε τὸ ἡμᾶς, τῆς ἀγάπης ἐχόμενος,
καὶ τελευταῖον ἐπήγαγε τὸ ἀμῆν, ὃ ἔστι, γένοιτο,
εὐκτικῶς ἐπικυρῶν τὰ εἰρημένα ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ
βεβαιότητι.*

3,25 ὁ] deest RUV 26 ληρωδοῦντας] λοιρωδοῦντας R λοιρωδοῦντας S
29 τὸ] deest Q | τῶν] deest RU 30 ὀρθοδόξων] ὀρθόδοξον U
ἀλλήλοις] ἀλλήλους STV 31 τοὺς πιστοὺς] τοῖς πιστοῖς QRST
συνδέων] συνδέον U 32 ὑπάρχει] ὑπάρχων Q 34 περιλαβῶν]
παραλαβῶν RU 37 ἐπήγαγε] ἐπάγει RU 38 ἐπήγαγε] ἐπήνεγκε QST

3,31 διὰ... 32 πλήρωμα] cfr. Rom. 13:10

25 Διὰ... 28 παρίστησι] Marc. Eugen. Prec. ad Jesum 349.19-350.1
Bulovic

25 Διὰ... 28 παρίστησι] CCP (681)

ARISTOTELIAN AND NEOPLATONIC ETHICS IN MICHAEL PSELLOS AND JOHN ITALOS

DOMINIC J. O'MEARA¹

ABSTRACT. This paper examines the use made by Michael Psellos and John Italos of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* together with Neoplatonic sources (in particular Porphyry's *Sentences*) on the subject of virtue. Examining chapters 66-81 of Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina* and Essays 81 and 63 of Italos' *Problems and Solutions*, I argue that both philosophers have a coherent theory of virtue which integrates Aristotelian ethical virtue in the Neoplatonic hierarchy of the virtues.

Keywords: Psellos, Italos, Aristotle, ethics.

In this paper² I would like to consider the way in which Michael Psellos and his pupil John Italos appropriated ancient Greek philosophical ethics by examining in particular the use they made of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (a treatise to which I will refer henceforth as "*NE*") in conjunction with other, Neoplatonic texts, in particular Porphyry's *Sentences*. Some work has been done by modern scholars on the Byzantine reception of Aristotle's *NE*,³ but more remains to be explored in a field to which the present paper wishes to make a contribution. In particular, I propose to examine in detail the way in which two Byzantine philosophers excerpted and modified Aristotle's *NE* and combined it with Neoplatonic materials. I will attempt to see if Psellos and Italos, in excerpting and combining Aristotelian and Neoplatonic sources, do this in the framework of a coherent ethical view, or if they excerpt in the absence of such a view. My analysis will be restricted to the use made of ancient philosophical ethics: I will not attempt to include Christian theological ethics in my approach.⁴

¹ Professor, Université de Fribourg, Suisse. Email: dominic.omeara@unifr.ch.

² A revised and (I trust) improved version of a paper originally published under the title 'Greek Philosophical Ethics in Byzantium: Michael Psellos and John Italos', in: H.-C. Günther (ed.), *Menschenbilder Ost und West*, (Nordhausen 2018), 423-447.

³ See more recently, for example, Ierodiakonou 2005, Barber and Jenkins 2009.

⁴ For a more extensive treatment of ethics in Psellos see Walter 2017, 91-177.

1. Michael Psellos

Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina*, which he dedicated to his pupil, the emperor Michael Ducas (1071-1078),⁵ is a little encyclopaedia or manual of philosophical knowledge relating probably to his activity as a teacher of philosophy. The work covers, in a series of short chapters, a wide range of subjects - God, the Trinity, intellect, soul, natural science, astronomy, and much more -, including materials taken from ancient sources as well as paragraphs composed by Psellos himself. Having discussed a number of questions concerning the soul, Psellos moves in chapters 66-81 to the domain of ethics, dealing in particular with the subject of the virtues. This part of the manual falls into two sections. In a first section, chapters 66-74 present a theory of the hierarchy of virtues inspired by Neoplatonic sources, making use of Plotinus, *Ennead* I, 2, of Porphyry, *Sentences* chapter 32, and of other later, unidentified Neoplatonic authors (probably Iamblichus and Proclus).⁶ These chapters are then followed by a second section, chapters 75-80, which consists of passages excerpted from Aristotle's *NE*, Book II, on the subject of the ethical virtues. Chapter 81 concludes the series of chapters on the virtues. I would like first (i) to examine the way in which Psellos excerpts *NE* Book II in chapters 75-80 and then (ii) to discuss the relationship these excerpts might have with the Neoplatonic theory of a hierarchy of virtues presented in chapters 66-74, concluding with some consideration of chapter 81.

(i) Psellos, *De omnifaria doctrina*, chapters 75-80

In chapter 75, Psellos reproduces the text of the opening of *NE* II, 1 (1103a14-26) in which Aristotle makes a fundamental distinction between intellectual virtues, which are acquired by teaching and experience, and ethical virtues, which are acquired by habituation. Aristotle's text is reproduced word-for-word, with some slight omissions and with the exception of Psellos' insertion of some words which I highlight in italics:

Virtue being of two sorts, intellectual virtue *by which we think of higher beings*, and ethical virtue, *by which we accustom ourselves to fine things by means of imitation*, intellectual virtue is acquired and increased mostly by teaching, which is why experience and time are required, whereas ethical virtue derives from habituation.⁷

⁵ The Greek text is edited by Westerink. There is an Italian translation by Mussini 1990.

⁶ See Papamanolakis 2007: 231-240; O'Meara 2013-2014: 78.

⁷ Διττῆς οὐσης τῆς ἀρετῆς, τῆς μὲν διανοητικῆς, καθ' ἣν τὰ κρείττω διανοούμεθα, τῆς δὲ ἠθικῆς, καθ' ἣν πρὸς τὰ καλὰ διὰ μιμήσεως ἐθιζόμεθα, ἡ μὲν διανοητικὴ τὸ πλεῖον ἐκ διδασκαλίας ἔχει καὶ τὴν γένεσιν καὶ τὴν αὐξησιν, διόπερ ἐμπειρίας δεῖται καὶ χρόνου· ἡ δὲ ἠθικὴ ἐξ ἔθους παραγίνεται. (Psell. Omn. 75.1-6 Westerink) In this article I will provide the Greek text of passages which I quote from Psellos and from Italos, since the editions might not always be easily accessible to the reader.

I will return below to the possible significance of the words Psellos inserts in Aristotle's text.

Chapter 76 makes use of *NE* II, 2-3, where Aristotle describes ethical virtue as a mean state (of the soul) between extremes of excess and deficiency. Psellos selects phrases in Aristotle which illustrate this theory of ethical virtue by reference to the examples of courage (a mean state of the soul, between foolhardiness and cowardice) and of moderation, adding phrases taken from Aristotle which show how pleasure and pain are associated with the virtues, and how it is that by acting virtuously we become virtuous. Here again Psellos adds a phrase of his own (which I put in Italics):

It is in doing just things that we become just, moderate things that we become moderate, courageous things that we become courageous, *wise things that we become wise*, and thus it is for all virtue.⁸

However, the wisdom in question here, *phronêsis*,⁹ is, for Aristotle, an *intellectual virtue*: can it really be acquired by habituation, by repeatedly doing wise things, in the way that the ethical virtues are? Is Psellos simply embroidering on Aristotle's text in treating wisdom as if it were the same as the other (ethical) virtues? Or does Psellos have deeper reasons for adding wisdom to the text here, in particular a theory of different levels of wisdom, both as an ethical and as an intellectual virtue, a theory which we will meet later in our investigation? For the moment it is difficult to assess the significance of Psellos' insertion. In this chapter, Psellos puts together snippets taken from a wide range of text in Aristotle, rather than excerpting a longer section, as he did in chapter 75.¹⁰

In chapter 77, Psellos returns to providing a longer, continuous excerpt (with some omissions) from Aristotle, *NE* II, 5, showing that ethical virtue is neither an affect (*pathos*), nor a capacity (*dunamis*), but a state (*hexis*), which involves choice (*proairesis*).¹¹ A long continuous excerpt is also provided in chapter 78, taken now (with omissions) from *NE* II, 6, where Aristotle returns to the description of ethical virtue as a state of the soul which is a mean between extremes, adding that there are actions to which this description does not

⁸ καὶ τὰ μὲν δίκαια πράττοντες δίκαιοι γινόμεθα, τὰ δὲ σώφρονα σώφρονες, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀνδρεία ἀνδρεῖοι, τὰ δὲ φρόνιμα φρόνιμοι, καὶ οὕτως ἐπὶ πάσης ἀρετῆς. (Psell. Omn. 76.10-13 Westerink).

⁹ I translate *phronêsis*, here and in what follows, as 'wisdom' since the usual translation of the term (as 'practical wisdom') is sometimes too restrictive, creating difficulties when *phronêsis* reappears, in Neoplatonic theory, as a higher, theoretical virtue. 'Wisdom' can be either practical or theoretical, or both. When the Aristotelian distinction between *phronêsis* as practical wisdom and *sophia* as theoretical wisdom is in question, I will use the expressions '(practical) wisdom' and '(theoretical) wisdom'.

¹⁰ The snippets correspond to *NE* 1104a12-13, 1104a19-27, 1104b13-16, 1103a34-b2. Westerink's edition provides indications of Psellos' sources, in particular Aristotle and Neoplatonist philosophers.

¹¹ *NE* 1105b19-1106a6.

apply, actions which are immoral and where there can be no question of a mean between excess and deficiency.¹² In chapter 79, Psellos returns to compiling snippets, which are taken this time from *NE* II, 7, showing how a number of virtues and vices correspond to mean states of the soul and to excess and deficiency in these states.¹³ The compilation of snippets taken from *NE* II, 7, on the same subject, continues in chapter 80, but here we can observe that Psellos has rearranged his excerpts in a different order from that in which the passages appear in Aristotle's text.¹⁴

It would seem then that Psellos' excerpting practice varies in chapters 75-80. He can provide fairly continuous passages taken from Aristotle's *NE*, Book II, or he can compile a series of short snippets deriving from a wider range of Aristotle's text, snippets which he can also rearrange on occasion in a different order. This "cut and paste" procedure sometimes involves some rewording of some phrases and the insertion of phrases composed by Psellos himself, insertions to which I will come back in the following section. The series of chapters gives an overview of Aristotle's distinction between intellectual and ethical virtue, his conception of ethical virtue as a state of the soul acquired by habituation, by repeated practice of virtuous actions, a state which represents a mean between extremes of excess and deficiency, this conception of ethical virtue being illustrated by many examples of particular virtues (as mean states) and vices (as extremes).¹⁵

(ii) Psellos, *De omnifaria doctrina*, chapters 66-74

What then might be the relation between the series of chapters providing excerpts from Aristotle's *NE*, Book II, and the preceding series of chapters which present a Neoplatonic theory of a hierarchy of the virtues? At first glance, one might think that Aristotle's doctrine of ethical virtue has little to do with the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues. The Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues describes an ascending scale of types of virtue, going up from natural and ethical¹⁶ virtues, through political and purificatory virtues, to theoretical,

¹² *NE* 1106b36-1107a17. In Westerink's edition, Aristotle's τὸ εὖ ἀκρότης (*NE* 1107a8) appears as τὸ ἐν ἀκρότης; it is difficult to be sure if this change is due to a scribal slip, or if it has more significance.

¹³ *NE* 1107a33-b10, 1107b16-23, 1107b27-30.

¹⁴ *NE* 1108a5-8, 1108a19-23, 1108a13-14, 1108a27-30, 1108a23-26, 1108a33-34.

¹⁵ The theme of virtue as a mean state between extremes, illustrated with examples of specific virtues and vices, is exploited by Psellos in his rhetorical and theological works; see, for example, Psell. Or. Paneg. 4.515-526 Dennis; Psell. Or. Min. 30.82-83 Littlewood; Psell. Theol. 1.8A, 5. Gautier.

¹⁶ 'Ethical' virtue refers here to habits acquired without rationality (as in trained animals and children), as distinguished from 'political' virtue which does involve rationality and which is taken by our Byzantine philosophers, as we will see, to correspond to Aristotelian ethical virtue.

paradigmatic and theurgic virtues, a scale matching the Neoplatonic hierarchy of reality and representing stages in the increasing assimilation of the soul to transcendent divinities.¹⁷ If Aristotle's theory of ethical virtue has little to do with this Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues, then we may think that Psellos has compiled materials which do not belong together in his *De omnifaria doctrina*, thus arousing the suspicion that he might be unreflectively pillaging his ancient sources.¹⁸ However, I think that for Psellos, as we will see, Aristotle's conception of ethical virtue is compatible with the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues and, indeed, that it fits into this hierarchy.

An indication of this can be found in chapter 75 in the words Psellos inserts, as noted above, in Aristotle's text. In this insertion, Psellos describes Aristotle's intellectual virtues as those whereby we think of "higher beings", whereas ethical virtues are that whereby "we accustom ourselves to fine things by means of imitation". The reference to "higher beings" uses terminology common in Neoplatonic philosophy for referring to transcendent, divine beings, demons, gods, various levels of intellectual and intelligible divinities. Psellos thus links Aristotelian intellectual virtue to the level of what is described as 'theoretical' virtue in Neoplatonic philosophy, whereas intellectual virtue, in Aristotle, is broader in range, since it includes (practical) wisdom. As for ethical virtue being acquired "by means of imitation", we could read this insertion made by Psellos in an Aristotelian way, as meaning that morally virtuous people can act as standards.¹⁹ But in the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues, what is called 'political virtue' is considered to be an imitation of higher, transcendent activities: (practical) wisdom derives its principles from (theoretical) wisdom and what it does can become an image of a higher, divine life.²⁰

In the series of chapters presenting the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues, Psellos already introduces elements of the Aristotelian conception of ethical virtue. For example, in chapter 68, having described wisdom as a theoretical virtue, which produces within ourselves an intellectual life, Psellos then adds

¹⁷ On the hierarchy of virtues in Neoplatonism, see Saffrey and Segonds 2001: LXIX-XCVIII, who refer to some of Psellos' works (LXXI, LXXXIX) where the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues is used, not only in the chapters of the *De omnifaria doctrina*, but also in Psell. Phil. Min. 2.32 O'Meara and in Theol.1.30.54-59 (see also 30, 64-68) Gautier, to which texts one might add *Chronographia* 6.44.6-8 Reinsch. See also Papamanolakis 2007. Walter 2017, 108 attempts to exclude the hierarchy of virtues from Psellos' 'argumentative' writings (on this see the next footnote). If, as Walter sees, Psellos distinguishes between two lives, the practical and the theoretical, these two lives span and do not exclude the hierarchy of virtues.

¹⁸ See Walter 2017, 177, who unfortunately does not analyze carefully texts such as the *De omnifaria doctrina*, a text which he dismisses as 'descriptive' (as opposed to 'argumentative'). Walter's distinction between descriptive and argumentative texts in Psellos seems to me to be artificial, anachronistic and potentially misleading.

¹⁹ *NE* 1113a31-33.

²⁰ See Plotinus, *Ennead* 1.2.1. 24-25; 7.24-29 Henry Schwyzer; Psell., *Omn.* 71.2-3; 72.1-3 Westerink.

that we have an “ineffable knowledge” thanks to this virtue. We seem here to be in the realm of Neoplatonic theoretical virtue, far from Aristotelian (practical) wisdom. But then Psellos writes:

However, ethical virtue comes from wisdom, but does not act with this wisdom, but is acquired through practice in time. The divinity of virtue traverses all beings. For there is supracelestial and celestial virtue, hypercosmic and encosmic, intellectual and psychic, angelic and human.²¹

Thus wisdom is to be found on different levels of the hierarchy of virtues. It is found as a theoretical virtue, and also produces virtue on a level corresponding to Aristotelian ethical virtue, whose acquisition requires practice.

It would thus appear that Psellos understands Aristotelian ethical virtue as fitting into the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues, as corresponding to the level which Neoplatonists beginning with Plotinus would call ‘political virtue’. We can therefore argue that in adding a series of chapters excerpting Aristotle’s treatment of ethical virtue in *NE* Book II to the chapters where he presents the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues, Psellos is not indiscriminately assembling heterogeneous materials, but presenting what he considers to be a coherent theory of virtue. This conclusion can be confirmed, I believe, if we consider the last chapter (81) of Psellos’ series of chapters on the virtues in *De omnifaria doctrina*.

Ethical character is a quality of the irrational part of the soul, when this part is ordered by reason and, as it were, takes on the quality of character (*êthos*),²² in relation to which ethical virtues are indeed constituted and are named.²³ For soul, being fitted together from rational principles and numbers which are substantial, has one part, the intellectual and reasoning part, whose nature it is to dominate and rule the irrational, the passible and irrational being another part. Of this passible part, some of it is more bodily, such as desire, some of it provides strength and power to reason, what is called the spirited part. (Practical) wisdom differs from (theoretical) wisdom in that (practical) wisdom requires chance, whereas (theoretical) wisdom does not even require deliberation in relation to its proper goal. Virtue is a mean, like a harmony and fit modulation, which shuns the excess and deficiency of the vices.²⁴

²¹ ἡ μέντοι ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ ἀπὸ φρονήσεως μὲν πρόεισιν, οὐ μέντοι μετὰ φρονήσεως ἐνεργεῖ, ἀλλὰ τριβῆ χρονίῳ ἐγγίνεται. διήκει δὲ ἡ τῆς ἀρετῆς θειότης διὰ πάντων τῶν ὄντων· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ ὑπερουράνιος ἀρετὴ καὶ οὐράνιος, καὶ ὑπερκόσμιος καὶ ἐγκόσμιος, καὶ νοερά καὶ ψυχικὴ, καὶ ἀγγελικὴ καὶ ἀνθρωπικὴ. (Psell. Omn. 68.8-12 Westerink).

²² See Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* II, 1, 1220b5-6 (indicated by Westerink).

²³ See *NE* 1103a17-18.

²⁴ ἦθος ἐστὶ ποιότης τοῦ ἀλόγου μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅταν ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου κοσμηταὶ καὶ οἷον ποιότητα ἦθους λαμβάνη, περὶ ὃ καὶ ἠθικαὶ ἀρεταὶ συνίστανται τε καὶ ὀνομάζονται. ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ συνηρμοσμένη κατὰ λόγους καὶ ἀριθμοὺς οὐσιώδεις ἕτερον μὲν ἔχει τὸ νοερὸν καὶ λογιστικόν, ὃ κρατεῖν καὶ ἄρχειν τοῦ ἀλόγου πέφυκεν, ἕτερον δὲ τὸ παθητικόν καὶ ἄλογον.

In this chapter, Psellos presents, once again, the Aristotelian conception of ethical virtue as a mean state of the soul, in relation to the extreme states of excess and deficiency that are the vices. But the soul which Psellos describes is that of Plato's *Timaeus*, as read by Plato's Neoplatonic interpreters, a soul which is put together from "substantial numbers".²⁵ It is also the soul described in Plato's *Republic*, which has a rational part and two irrational parts, desire and spirit.²⁶ It is in terms of these three parts that Plato defines the virtues which the Neoplatonic philosophers described as 'political' and which they fitted into a hierarchy of types of virtue.²⁷ In Psellos' chapter this virtue is identified with the ethical virtue of Aristotle's *NE*. The chapter shows, in a nutshell, how Aristotelian and Neoplatonic ethics are fused together in Psellos' manual.²⁸

2 John Italos

Psellos' enthusiasm for late antique pagan philosophers such as Proclus was potentially dangerous and, while giving him the claim to an exotic and high-level intellectual culture, left him open to attack from the wardens of Christian orthodoxy. At one point he was under sufficient menace as to oblige him to retire from the imperial court and take refuge in a monastery, only to return later to the court. However his pupil and successor as professor of philosophy, John Italos, did not escape condemnation by Church authorities in 1082.²⁹ Some of Italos' teaching is probably reflected in a collection of essays, going under the title "Problems and Solutions", which deal with questions concerning logic, physics, psychology, theology.³⁰ Two essays on the virtues (essays 63 and 81) are of most interest to our present purposes: one of them (81) summarizes the Neoplatonic theory of a hierarchy of virtues, whereas the other contains larger excerpts taken from Aristotle's *NE*. As these essays are rarely read, I would like to present them briefly, before discussing what Italos might suggest there as regards the relation between Aristotelian and Neoplatonic ethics.

καὶ τούτου τοῦ παθητικοῦ τὸ μὲν σωματικώτερον ἐστίν, οἷον τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, τὸ δὲ ἐστὶν ὅπου τῷ λογισμῷ παρέχον ἰσχὺν καὶ δύναμιν, ὃ καὶ θυμοειδὲς ὀνομάζεται. διαφέρει δὲ φρόνησις σοφίας, ὅτι ἡ μὲν φρόνησις τύχης δεῖται, ἡ δὲ σοφία οὐδὲ βουλῆς πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον τέλος. μεσότης δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετὴ οἷον ἁρμονία τις καὶ ἐμμέλεια, τὸ ὑπερβάλλον καὶ ἐλλείπον τῶν κακιῶν φεύγουσα. (Psell. Omn. 81.2-12 Westerink).

²⁵ See, for example, Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, ed. Diehl, II, 193, 25-27; 239, 5-15.

²⁶ *Republic* 435e-441a.

²⁷ See Plotinus, *Ennead* 1.2.1. 16-21.

²⁸ In 2013-2014, I argue that this fusion can be traced back to ancient Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic sources.

²⁹ See most recently Trizio 2014: 182-4 (with references to earlier literature); Trizio also discusses Italos' attitude to and use of Proclus (184-190).

³⁰ I use the edition published by Joannou and have also been able to consult the edition published by Ceretelli, thanks to photocopies kindly sent to me by Katerina Ierodiakonou.

Essay 81 (“On the Virtues”), a short text, begins as follows:

It has been said earlier³¹ what moderation is, what virtues there are which are mutually entailing, that they are means, or rather that they aim at means. But since virtue has many forms, one form being the political, another the purificatory, another the theoretical, another being said to be the paradigmatic, let us find out what wisdom is said to be in these forms, and what moderation is. For not every form of virtue is a means, as was said³² concerning political virtue, but, in purificatory virtue, let wisdom be the fact of not sharing the same opinions with the body...³³

What follows in the essay is taken from Porphyry’s *Sentences*, chapter 32,³⁴ where (paraphrasing and reworking Plotinus, *Ennead* I, 2) Porphyry lists the four levels (or forms) of virtue distinguished and described by Italos. We notice that Italos considers that the (Aristotelian) definition of (ethical) virtue as a mean between extremes applies in the case of the ‘political’ virtues, but not in the case of the higher levels of the hierarchy of virtues. Italos’ position on (Aristotelian) ethical virtue as corresponding to (Neoplatonic) ‘political’ virtue thus fits with what we have found to be the case above in Psellos’ *De omnifaria doctrina*.

In essay 63 (“On Ethical Virtue and the Rest”), Italos writes as if addressing someone (a pupil?) who is impatient with regard to a discourse which takes away from continuous study of divine things. Italos himself does not want to go through what the ancients said about ethical virtue, but he nevertheless

³¹ This may refer to essay 63.

³² Italos is probably referring to essay 63, 90, 1-25 (quoted in part below n. 41).

³³ I quote here Italos’ Greek text at greater length, so as to facilitate comparison with his ancient sources (see next note): Τί μὲν ἔστι σωφροσύνη, καὶ τίνες αἱ ἀντακολουθοῦσαι [corrected from ἀντιακολουθοῦσαι in the edition] ἀρεταί, καὶ ὅτι μεσότητες ἢ μᾶλλον στοχαστικά μεσοτήτων, εἴρηται πρότερον· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀρετῆς πλείονα τυγχάνει τὰ εἶδη, καὶ τὸ μὲν πολιτικόν, τὸ δὲ καθαρτικόν, τὸ δὲ θεωρητικόν, τὸ δὲ παραδειγματικόν ἔστι λεγόμενον, ζητητέον ποία τις ἐν τούτοις φρόνησις λέγεται καὶ ποία σωφροσύνη· οὐ γὰρ πᾶν εἶδος ἀρετῆς μεσότης ὑπάρχει, ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς ἐλέγετο· ἀλλ’ ἐν μὲν τῇ καθαρτικῇ τὸ μὴ συνδοξάζειν τῷ σώματι φρόνησις ἔστω, τὸ δὲ μὴ συμπάσχειν αὐτῷ σωφροσύνη, καὶ τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι θάνατον, ὡς εἰς κενόν τι καὶ μὴ ὄν διαλυθησομένης τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀνδρεία ἔστω, νοῦ δὲ καὶ φρονήσεως αἰεὶ ἀκολουθοῦντος [there is a problem in the Greek text here; Italos’ source, Porphyry, has ἡγουμένου δὲ λόγου καὶ νοῦ] καὶ μὴ ἐνίστασθαι τι καὶ κωλύειν ἑᾶντος, δικαιοσύνη συνίσταται. οὕτω μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς καθαρτικῆς ἀρετῆς διαιρετέον τὰ εἶδη, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θεωρητικῆς τρόπον ἕτερον· καὶ ἔστω δικαιοσύνη ἢ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν δικαιοπραγία, καὶ φρόνησις ἢ τῶν ὄντων ὄντων θεωρία, καὶ σωφροσύνη ἢ πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν νοῦν ἐπιστροφή, καὶ ἀνδρεία ἢ κατὰ μίμησιν αὐτοῦ ἀπάθεια. (Ital. 132.6-19 Ioannou).

³⁴ Greek text edited by Lamberz; compare Porphyry’s chapter 32, 24, 9-31, 8 with Italos’ essay 81.6-23 (here and in what follows I add line numbers to Joannou’s edition). Neither Lamberz nor Brisson 2005 examine Italos’ use of this chapter of Porphyry’s *Sentences*. Porphyry’s chapter had already been excerpted by Psell. *Omn.* 66, 70 and 74 and in Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.110.5-111, 13 O’Meara.

will say now only so much about it as will be of benefit to his addressee in his striving towards the divine, reminding him that ‘virtue’ is said in different ways. Italos in fact distinguishes, in the essay, as we will see, between ‘natural’, ‘ethical’, ‘purificatory’, ‘theoretical’ and ‘noetic’ kinds of virtue, i.e. he follows a somewhat longer list of the levels of the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues³⁵ than that which he gives in its Porphyrian version in essay 81.

First discussing briefly the concept of ‘natural virtue’, Italos then defines ‘ethical’ virtue³⁶ as the mean between extremes, succinctly summarizing Aristotle’s doctrine in *EN* II, 1-2.³⁷ Having discussed the relations between the four cardinal virtues in what appears to be his own contribution to the subject, Italos then moves to a treatment of the powers of the soul, of which the virtues are said to be mean states. He recalls Plato’s distinction of the soul into three parts in the *Republic*, while indicating that only the rational part is proper to the soul taken in itself. Both the rational part and the other two parts, spirit and desire, he argues, are good and can serve in the ascent to God: here again, Italos seems to be developing his own discourse on the subject.³⁸ However, our nature, he adds, is such as to incline in two directions, to the good, but also to evil, hence the need in the soul for virtue. Italos then makes use of the image of the soul as a chariot in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, mixing into the image the concept of virtue as a mean between extremes.³⁹ Paraphrasing *NE* II, 8, Italos discusses in more detail some technicalities of the Aristotelian theory of a mean between extremes.⁴⁰ Moving from the level of ethical virtue to a higher level of virtue, Italos notes, as in essay 81, that the latter kind of virtue is not a mean between extremes, but a turning away of soul from the body, a return to itself and to God.⁴¹

³⁵ Psellos gives in *De omnifaria doctrina* both Porphyry’s four levels of virtue (chs. 71, 74) and the longer list (ch. 67) to be found in later Neoplatonists such as Marinus, Damascius and Olympiodorus (see the reference to Saffrey and Segonds given above in n. 17).

³⁶ Which he calls ‘political’ virtue in essay 81.

³⁷ Αὕτη τοιγαροῦν ἡ ἠθικὴ καλουμένη ἀρετὴ τὸ μὲν ὄνομα ἐκ τοῦ ἔθους παρείληφε παρεγκεκλιμένου εἰς τὸ ἡ τοῦ ε· τὸ δὲ πρᾶγμα μεσότης τίς ἐστι διὰ τὴν ἐξ ἀκροτήτων συμβαίνουσαν ἀεὶ φθορὰν τοῖς πολιτευομένοις κατ’ αὐτάς· αἱ γὰρ ἐλλείψεις φαρμακικαὶ ὁμοίως ταῖς ὑπερβολαῖς· ὅθεν οὐκ ἀρεταί, ἀλλὰ κακίαι τοῖς παλαιοῖς ὠνομάδαται [keeping the reading of the mss.]. (Ital. 87.19-23 Ioannou).

³⁸ Ital. 88.3 – 89.2 Ioannou.

³⁹ Ital. 89.3-25 Ioannou.

⁴⁰ Ital. 89.26-39 Ioannou; see *NE* 1108b13-1109a19.

⁴¹ Περί μὲν οὖν τῆς ἠθικῆς ἀρετῆς ἱκανὰ τὰ εἰρημένα· περί δὲ τῆς ἀνωτέρας καὶ κρείττονος λέγωμεν ὧδε, ἥτις οὐκ ἐν μεσότητι καθάπερ αἱ ἄλλαι δύο τινῶν ἀκροτήτων γνωρίζεται, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἐπιστροφῇ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν ἀθανάτου πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ ῥύπων παντοίων καθαρισμῶ καὶ ἀποστροφῇ τῶν τῆδε χαρακτηρισίσεων· οὐ γὰρ οὕτως ἡμᾶς ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ διετίθει τελέως, ὥστε μηδενὸς ἄψασθαι σωματικοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἔχεσθαι μὲν καὶ τούτων παρεκελεύετο, συμμέτρως δὲ καὶ προσηκόντως· ἡ δὲ τῶν αἰσθητῶν πάντη καθαρπάζειν βούλεται τὸν ἑαυτῆ προστετηκότα, κρειττόνως τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς γνωρίσασα μέγεθος καὶ ὅθεν ἐλίλυθε καὶ πρὸς ὃ τὴν τοιαύτην σπεύδειν εἰκὸς ὑποδεικνύουσα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. (Ital. 90.1-9 Ioannou).

Using the Neoplatonic definitions of the purificatory virtues, Italos shows this in relation to each of the four cardinal virtues as taken on higher levels of the hierarchy of virtues. Thus wisdom, on the higher level, is knowledge of the summit of being and moderation is the complete purification of the soul, love of and assimilation to the One.⁴² After a digression in which he shows the many meanings of the expression 'one', identifying the supreme, ineffable One, source of all unity and being, with the Christian Trinity, Italos then shows that 'purificatory' virtue brings us nearer to union with the One than does ethical virtue.⁴³ He then mentions yet higher levels of virtue, the 'theoretical' and 'intelligible', but says that it is inopportune to treat of them here, since they would require a more extensive explanation.⁴⁴

Italos then takes up a question which is recalled in essay 81, that of the mutual implication of the virtues, arguing at length that virtues involving rationality imply each other.⁴⁵

The essay ends with paraphrases of and excerpts taken from *NE* II 5, where Aristotle relates virtue to a state of soul, rather than to a capacity or affect of soul,⁴⁶ and from *NE*, II, 7, where Aristotle sets out a series of virtues and vices as corresponding to means and extremes.⁴⁷ These passages in Aristotle

⁴² Ital. 90.12-25 Ioannou; for Italos' source, see above, n. 34 (the use of Porphyry in essay 81).

⁴³ Ital. 91, 12-28 Ioannou.

⁴⁴ Τοιούτους ἡμᾶς αἶ τε ἠθικαὶ καὶ αἱ καθαρτικαὶ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων γενέσθαι διδάσκουσιν ἀρετῶν· ποίων δὴ τούτων; τῶν θεωρητικῶν λέγω καὶ νοητῶν περὶ ὧν οὐκ εὐκαρὸν ἐστὶ διαλαβεῖν ὡς μείζονος δεομένης τῆς αὐτῶν θεωρίας ἐξετάσεως. (Ital. 91.28-31 Ioannou)

⁴⁵ Ital. 91, 29ff. Ioannou. This question had been discussed by Plotinus, *Ennead* I, 2, 7 and by later Neoplatonists such as Damascius, *Commentaria in Platonis Phaedonem*, ed. Westerink, I, 138-140.

⁴⁶ Ital. 94.6-16 Ioannou; see *NE* 1105b20-1106a12.

⁴⁷ Ital. 94.17-32 Ioannou; see *EN* 1107a34ff. I give here a longer sample of these excerpts, so that the reader might more easily compare them with Aristotle's text. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως· διευκρινητέον δὲ πάλιν ἡμῖν τὰς μεσότητος βέλτιον· ὅτι περὶ μὲν φόβους καὶ θάρρη μεσότης ἢ ἀνδρεία, ὑπερβολὴ δὲ τοῦ μὲν φοβεῖσθαι ἀνώνυμος, θρασυτής δὲ τοῦ θαρρεῖν· καὶ τούτων πάλιν ἢ ἔλλειψις, τοῦ μὲν θαρρεῖν δειλία, τοῦ δὲ φοβεῖσθαι οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἄλλ' ἢ εἰρημένη· σωφροσύνη δὲ τίνων ἂν λεχθῆι μεσότης; ἢ δῆλον ὡς λύπης τε καὶ ἡδονῆς· καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτων ἢ μὲν ὑπερβολὴ ἀκολασία ὀνομάζεται, ἢ δὲ ἔλλειψις ἀκατανόμαστος· σπάνιοι γὰρ οἱ ἐλλείποντες κατὰ τὰς ἡδονάς· λεγέσθω δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀναισθησία ἢ καὶ ἡλιθιότης ὡς ἔνιοι· ὁ αὐτὸς δὲ λόγος καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν. εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλαι περὶ ταύτας μεσότητες, τρόπον μὲν τινα ὑπὸ ταύτας ἀναγόμεναι, τρόπον δὲ τινα καὶ ἄλλο τι παρ' αὐτάς εἶναι δοκοῦσαι, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῆς λεγομένης ἐλευθεριότητος ἔστιν εὐρεῖν· μεσότης γὰρ αὕτη περὶ δόσιν χρημάτων καὶ λῆψιν, ὧν ὑπερβολὴ μὲν ἄσωτία, ἔλλειψις δὲ ἀνελευθερία, ἐναντίως ἔχουσαι περὶ τὰ ἀντικείμενα· καὶ γὰρ ἢ ἄσωτία τῇ μὲν δόσει ὑπερβάλλει, ἐλλείπει δὲ τῷ ἐναντίῳ, ὁ δὲ γε ἀνελεύθερος ἐναντία τούτων διαπράζεται. ἢ δὲ μεγαλοπρέπεια καὶ αὕτη μεσότης οὕσα, δύο ἔξει ταύτας ἀκρότητας, ὑπερβολὴν ὁμοίως καὶ ἔλλειψιν, ὧν τὴν μὲν ἀπειροκαλίαν ὀνομάζουσι, τὴν ὑπερβολὴν, τὴν δὲ μικροψυχίαν, τὴν ἔλλειψιν (Ital. 94.17-32 Ioannou).

had also been exploited by Psellos in *De omnifaria doctrina* (chapters 77 and 79), but Italos provides fuller excerpts from them and he seems to be using Aristotle's text directly.

3 Conclusion

Italos' essays show more explicitly what we have found suggested already in Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina*. In excerpting passages from Aristotle's treatment of ethical virtue in *NE*, which they combine with accounts of a hierarchy of virtues taken from Neoplatonic sources, both philosophers have a coherent view which integrates Aristotelian ethical virtue in the Neoplatonic hierarchy in the sense that Aristotelian ethical virtue corresponds to what Plotinus had called 'political' virtue in the hierarchy. The Aristotelian concept of ethical virtue as a mean between extremes is accepted as applying to the level of 'political' virtue, but rejected when it comes to defining the higher levels of virtue, where Plotinus and Porphyry are followed.

Psellos and Italos use a variety of techniques in excerpting their ancient sources – extracts of continuous passages, snippets taken from various places and combined in varying orders, paraphrases or rewriting -, but they are not mindlessly compiling materials with no thought of achieving philosophical coherence in what they do. Italos, in his essays, seems freer in the way he writes than is Psellos in his little manual, showing that he can philosophize with the same mastery of his subject as that of his ancient sources, bringing philosophical ideas into relation with Christian theology. However, in other writings, Psellos can show the same freedom and creativity.⁴⁸ For both philosophers, the adoption of Aristotle's theory of ethical virtue in *NE II* as part of a wider context provided by the Neoplatonic theory of a hierarchy of virtues implies a Neoplatonic view of human nature: humans are essentially rational souls which find themselves in bodies, obliged to administer bodily affairs and called to cultivate virtue in this context (this is the role of Aristotelian ethical virtue), but whose destiny lies in a transcendent life of the soul assimilating itself and uniting itself to God (this is the role of the higher virtues of the Neoplatonists).

⁴⁸ See O'Meara 1998.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Texts

Damascius

Commentaria in Platonis Phaedonem, ed. L. G. Westerink, Amsterdam 1977.

Italos

Ioannes Italos Quaestiones quodlibetales, ed. P. Joannou, Ettal 1956.

Ioannis Itali opera, ed. G. Ceretelli, Tbilisi 1966.

Porphyry

Porphyrius Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes, ed. E. Lamberz, Leipzig 1975.

Proclus

In Platonis Timaeum commentaria, ed. E. Diehl, Leipzig 1903.

Psellos

Michael Psellus, De omnifaria doctrina, ed. L. G. Westerink, Nijmegen 1948.

Michaelis Pselli oratoria minora, ed. A. Littlewood, Leipzig 1985.

Michaelis Pselli orationes panegyricae, ed. G. Dennis, Leipzig 1994.

Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora, vol. II, ed. D. J. O'Meara, Leipzig 1989.

Michaelis Pselli theologica, vol. I, ed. P. Gautier, Leipzig 1989.

Studies

Barber, C. and Jenkins, D., (edd.), *Medieval Greek Commentators on the Nicomachean Ethics*, Leiden 2009.

Brisson, L., (ed.), *Porphyre Sentences*, Paris 2005.

Ierodiakonou, K., 'Byzantine Commentators on the Epistemological Status of Ethics', in: P. Adamson/H. Balthussen/ M. Stone (edd.), *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentators*, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Suppl. vol., 2005, 221-238.

Mussini, A., *Michele Psello Varia dottrina*, Florence 2005.

O'Meara, D., 'Aspects du travail philosophique de Michel Psellus (*Philosophica minora*, vol. II)', in: C. Collarz/C. Dummer (edd.), *Dissertatiunculae criticae* (Festschrift G. C. Hansen), Würzburg 1998, 431-439.

'Moral Virtue in Late Antique Platonism. Some Elements of a Background to Ethics in Early Arabic Philosophy', *Mélanges de l'Université de Saint-Joseph* (Beirut) 65 (2013-2014), 47-61.

Papamanolakis, A., 'L'Échelle néoplatonicienne des vertus chez Psellus et chez Eustrate de Nicée', in: C. D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*, Leiden 2007, 231-242.

Saffrey, H. D. and Segonds, A., *Marinus, Proclus ou sur le Bonheur*, Paris 2001.

Trizio, M., 'Eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantium', in: S. Gersh (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Cambridge 2014, 182-215.

Walter, D., *Michael Psellos: christliche Philosophie in Byzanz*, Berlin 2017.

MICHAEL PSELLOS' *THEOLOGICA* I.30 AND THE BYZANTINE INTERPRETATIONS OF *SCALA PARADISI* XXVII/2.13

OLEG RODIONOV¹

ABSTRACT. The article² examines the exegesis of Michael Psellos on the most mysterious of the “difficult places” of the *Ladder* by John of Sinai — Step XXVII/2.13. This interpretation is one of the so-called *Theologica* treatises (Theol. I.30). It differs significantly from the rest of the Byzantine explanations of this “difficult place”. Michael Psellos decisively rejects the Christological interpretation of the “vision” and the questions of St. John. He also develops the doctrine of the accessibility to a human in present life of the vision of God in “symbols” and “forms” only. Higher contemplations are linked to the degree of detachment of the soul from the body. Unlike Michael Psellos, other interpreters, firstly, pay more attention to the context in which the chapter of the *Ladder* in question is located, secondly, they mostly prefer a Christological interpretation of St. John’s questions to the unknown interlocutor, thirdly, they ask themselves who this interlocutor was, an angel or Christ Himself. One of the anonymous Byzantine commentaries convincingly defends the point of view according to which John Climacus talked with Christ. This paper analyses all the extensive interpretations of the difficult passage, and on the basis of the handwritten tradition, draws the conclusion that the exegesis of Michael Psellos had much circulation in Byzantium along with other conceptions of the mysterious chapter. In addition, there has been noted the reception of Psellos’s interpretation in the first Slavic edition of the *Ladder* in 1647. Appendices I and II contain the edition of the Greek text of an anonymous Scholium and a fragment from the commentary by Elias of Crete respectively.

Keywords: Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Photius of Constantinople, Elias of Crete, byzantine commentaries, Church Slavonic translation.

¹ Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of World History of Russian Academy of Sciences; Senior Lecturer of Patrology in the Saint Tikhon’s Orthodox University; Ph.D. in History. Email: orodionov@mail.ru.

² I would like to thank my colleague Ricardo Iglesias for his help in translating this article into English.

The writings of Michael Psellos, known as *Theologica*, are often viewed as a kind of analogue to the famous *Ambigua* of St. Maximus Confessor: they often deal with the same authors, and sometimes with the same texts by these authors, as in *Ambigua*. At the same time, Michael Psellos is sometimes inclined to give an interpretation of the respective sayings opposite to that which can be found in Maximus the Confessor. Therefore, *Theologica* at times turns into *Anti-Ambigua*.³ The tendency to give an interpretation that is fundamentally different from the traditional can be seen elsewhere in *Theologica*, where there are considered texts not analysed by St. Maximus.⁴

One such example is the exegesis of one of the chapters of the *Ladder of the Divine Ascent* by St. John of Sinai⁵ (XXVII/2.13) adduced in *Theologica* I.30 Gautier.⁶ Michael Psellos chooses perhaps the most difficult place in the whole *Ladder*, the real *crux desperationis* of translators and commentators, according to Fr. Luigi d'Ayala Valva.⁷ Other Byzantine interpretations of this small chapter have also survived, including those very widespread in the manuscript tradition and reflected in printed publications, which will be discussed further in this article.⁸ What distinguishes almost all of these interpretations, except that suggested by Michael Psellos, is that they unanimously understand the questions asked by the author to an unknown interlocutor as having Christological significance, and only hesitate in identifying this interlocutor (as an angel or as Christ Himself). Michael Psellos follows a completely different path, so it is of interest to consider the place of his interpretation in the Byzantine (and post-Byzantine) tradition of scholia to the *Ladder*. This will be done after a comparatively brief survey of the text by Michael Psellos.

³ Basile Lourié, "Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur: l'origine de l'« hérésie des physéthésites »", *Scrinium* 4 (2008): 206-207, cf. 207-208, n. 17.

⁴ cf. Frederick Lauritzen, "Psellos the Hesychast. A Neoplatonic reading of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (*Theologica* I.11 Gautier)", *Byzantinoslavica* LXX, no. 1-2 (2012): 175-176; Oleg Rodionov, "Historical and Literary Context of Michael Psellos' *Theologica* 59", *Scrinium* 4 (2008): 228-234.

⁵ CPG 7852; John Chryssavgis, *John Climacus: from the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* (London-New York: Routledge, 2019).

⁶ Michaelis Pselli *Theologica* I, ed. P. Gautier (Leipzig: Teubner, 1989): 122-126; CPG 7852, Scholia, (c); cf. Frederick Lauritzen, "Psellos the Hesychast. A Neoplatonic reading of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (*Theologica* I.11 Gautier)", 173; Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 16, 17.

⁷ Giovanni Climaco, *La Scala*, traduzione e noti di Luigi d'Ayala Valva, Introduzione di John Chryssavgis (Magnano: Edizioni Qiqajon, 2005), 423, n. 16; cf. Jean Gouillard, "Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?", in *Byzantium. Tribute to Andreas N. Stratos*, vol. II: Theology and Philology (Athens, 1986), 445.

⁸ The unique article discussing in detail the different ways of interpretation of this chapter in the Byzantine commentary tradition is: Jean Gouillard, "Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?", 445-459.

Before proceeding to the peculiarities of the exegesis of Michael Psellos, we present the text of the chapter the interpretation of which will be discussed below. Michael Psellos himself cites the chapter under interpretation in its whole, and the text given by him has a number of minor differences from the one widespread in the Byzantine manuscript tradition, as well as from the text of printed editions (the discrepancies with Rader's edition are given in the critical apparatus by the editor of *Theologica*, Paul Gautier; below we shall indicate the variant readings with another authoritative edition, as well as with the Byzantine manuscripts of the commented *Ladder* available to us and used later in the scholia analysis).⁹

Psell. *Theol.* I.30.35–43 Gautier

Sigla

R — Rader, p. 414–415

S — Sophronios, p. 154

B — BSB 297 (XIII–XIV s.), f. 247v–248r

C — Coisl. 87 (XIV s.), f. 272v

‘Μετερχόμενος’ φησὶ ‘τὸ μέσον ἐν τοῖς* μέσοις γέγονα, καὶ ἐφώτιζε* διψῶντα· καὶ ἰδοὺ πάλιν ἦν ἐν ἐκείνοις· τί μὲν ἦν πρὸ τῆς ὀρατῆς αὐτῶ* μορφῆς διδάσκειν οὐκ ἠδύνατο· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἠφίετο ὁ ἄρχων*. πῶς δὲ νῦν πέλει* ἠρώτων λέγειν*· ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις μὲν, ἔλεγεν, ἀλλ’* οὐκ ἐν τούτοις. ἐγὼ δέ· τίς ἢ δεξιὰ στάσις καὶ καθέδρα ἐπὶ τοῦ αἰτίου; ἀδύνατον ἔφη ἀκοῆ μυσταγωγείσθαι ταῦτα*. πρὸς δὲ μοι* ὁ πόθος εἴλκε προσαγαγεῖν* τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ ἠρώτων*· οὐπω ἔφραζεν ἦκειν τὴν ὥραν* δι’ ἔλλειψιν πυρὸς ἀφθαρσίας. ταῦτα εἶτε σὺν τῷ χοῖ οὐκ οἶδα, εἶδε τούτου χωρὶς λέγειν εἰσάπαν οὐκ ἔχω’.¹⁰

⁹ See a similar collation: Jean Gouillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 446.

¹⁰ Cf. authoritative English and French translations respectively:

a) John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, transl. by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell (London: Paulist Press, 1982), 268: “I myself was occupied with the second of these tasks and entered the intermediate stage. A light came to me as I was thirsting and I ask there what the Lord was before He took visible form. The angel could not tell me because he was not permitted to do so. So, I asked him: ‘In what state is He now?’ and the answer was that He was in the state appropriate to Him, though not to us. ‘What is the nature of the standing and sitting at the right hand of the Father?’ I asked. ‘Such mysteries cannot be taken in by the human ear’, he replied. Then I pleaded with him right then to bring me where my heart was longing to go, but he said that the time was not yet ripe, since the fire of incorruption was not yet mighty enough with me. And whether, during all this, I was in the body or out of it, I cannot rightly say (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2).”

τοῖς] om. **R S** || ἐφώτιζε] ἐφώτιζέ με **S C** || αὐτῶ] ἐν ante αὐτῶ add. **R** ὁ ἄρχων **S C** om. **B** || ὁ ἄρχων] om. **S C** || πέλει] ὑπάρχει **S C** || ἠρώτων λέγειν] λέγειν ἐδεόμην **S C** || ἔλεγεν ἀλλ' ἔλεγε καὶ **S** || ταῦτα] ante μυσταγωγείσθαι trsp. **S C** || μοι] με **R S C** || προσαγαγείν] προσάγαγε **S** (cf. Ἐν ἄλλ(οις) προσαγαγείν in marg. **S**) πρόσαγε εἶπον **C** || ἠρώτων] εἶπον **S** μαθεῖν add. **B** om. **C** || ὦραν] ἐκείνην add. **C**

Michael Psellos, as one can see, set down his commentary in response to the requests of his disciples (which is generally typical for the texts included in the *Theologica*), but he points out that it would be easier for him to teach something that requires apodictic or dialectical research. Resorting to the division of “all scripture, both divinely inspired and the rest of the external”, into “didactic” (διδασκτικόν) and “leading to perfection” (τελεστικόν), Psellos points out that only the former is perceived “by the ear”, while the latter requires illumination (ἐλλαμψις) experienced by the mind.¹¹ This latter kind of texts Michael Psellos (with reference to Aristotle, frg. 15 Ross) calls μυστηριῶδες, comparable to what used to occur in the Eleusinian Mysteries. It is about “imprinting” the mind with contemplation, which does not require “learning”, but is perceived immediately.¹² Michael Psellos makes it clear that the text he is going to interpret belongs precisely to the second type. Thus, what is meant is an “ineffable vision” (ἄρρητος ἢ θέα), when the senses are insensible,¹³ and this vision is likened to those awarded to the Apostle Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 12, 2-4), Moses, the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah.¹⁴

Michael Psellos also includes John Climacus among such contemplators.¹⁵ Psellos makes it clear that the place he is about to interpret is difficult for many and has not yet been successfully resolved (ὁποῖον δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τυγχάνει τὸ

b) Jean Gouillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 458-459: “Je m’adonnais à ce-qui-est-au-milieu quand je me trouvai au-milieu-de-ces-choses-du-milieu, et il répandait la lumière sur celui qui était altéré (d’elle). Et voici qu’à nouveau j’étais parmi ces-choses-là.

Ce qu’il était antérieurement à sa forme visible, de me l’apprendre il n’avait pas pouvoir, aussi bien le Maître ne le permettait pas.

Dans quel état se trouve-t-il à présent ? je le priai de me le dire. Dans les modalités qui sont siennes, et non point dans celles-ci, fut sa réponse.

Moi, alors: Que signifient la station et la session à droite par rapport au Principe ? Impossible, dit-il, d’être initié à ces choses-là par l’ouïe.

Je lui demandai alors de me porter à ce vers quoi me tirait mon amour. Il me répondit que l’heure n’était pas encore venue, parce qu’il me manquait encore du feu de l’incorruption.

Cela, fut-ce uni à cette poussière ? je ne sais. Fut-ce délivrer d’elle ? Je ne saurais du tout le dire.”

¹¹ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.6-11 Gautier.

¹² Psell. *Theol.* I.30.11-13 Gautier.

¹³ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.19-20 Gautier.

¹⁴ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.20-22 Gautier.

¹⁵ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.22-27 Gautier.

παρὰ πολλῶν μὲν ἀπορούμενον, μηδέπω δὲ τυχὸν ἐπικρίσεως).¹⁶ It should be noted that Michael Psellos makes a mysterious inaccuracy here: he says that Theodoret of Cyrus “did not pay attention to this saying”, which, according to the editor’s correct remark, is an obvious error.¹⁷ But what is the origin of this error? It is possible that among the scholia to the *Ladder* available to Psellos, there were also fragments of works by more ancient authors illustrating certain thoughts of John of Sinai. There are indeed quite a few of such, e. g. by St. Basil of Caesarea, Mark the Hermit and others; fragments of the works of Theodoret could also be found among this kind of scholia.¹⁸ It is also possible however that the mistake of Michael Psellos who attributed the interpretation of the respective place of the *Ladder* to Theodoret of Cyrus, may be due to the perception of Photios’s text¹⁹ as belonging to Theodoret: after all, in *Amphilochia* it is framed by the solutions of difficult passages retrieved from Theodoret!²⁰

Let us now consider the actual interpretation of the chapter of the *Ladder*. Michael Psellos pays no attention to the context in which the first words of this chapter are said: “Passing the middle I ended up in the middle” (μετερχόμενος τὸ μέσον ἐν τοῖς μέσοις γέγονα).²¹ This is quite typical for this author and distinguishes him from Patriarch Photios who in his exegesis of the same place of the *Ladder* (as elsewhere in his *Amphilochia*), on the contrary, is sensitive to the context and correctly indicates that the “middle” in this chapter means the third of the “deeds of *hesychia*” mentioned in the previous chapter, namely “urgent prayer” (προσευχὴ ἄοκνος).²² This feature is also noted by other interpreters.²³ Psellos, though, endeavours to connect this “middle” with the “average and moderate” virtues (μέσα καὶ μέτρια).²⁴ He cites the division of virtues, originating in Porphyry,²⁵ into practical (or “civil”), contemplative, mental and exemplary (πρακτικά καὶ θεωρητικά καὶ νοερά καὶ παραδειγματικά).²⁶

Thus, according to Michael Psellos, John Climacus surpassed the practical virtue and “purifying himself and moving away from the body” (ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος καθαιρόμενος καὶ πόρρω γινόμενος), found himself at the middle level corresponding

¹⁶ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.27-29 Gautier.

¹⁷ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.29-30 Gautier.

¹⁸ E.g., Sancti patris nostri Ioannis Scholastici..., *Opera omnia*, ed. Matthaëus Rader (Paris, 1633), 428 (scholium 41).

¹⁹ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273 Westerink; cf. Jean Gouillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 454: Psellos “a certainement lu la dissertation photienne”.

²⁰ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 249-272 and 274-281 Westerink.

²¹ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.46 Gautier.

²² Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.16-23 Westerink; cf. Κλίμαξ τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου, καθηγουμένου τοῦ Συναίου Ὁρους, ed. Sophronios [Rhaidestinos] (Constantinople, 1883), 154 (Chapter 12).

²³ Cf., e.g.: BSB 297, f. 246v; Coisl. 87, f. 273r (see Appendices I and II below).

²⁴ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.46-49 Gautier.

²⁵ Cf. Porph. *Sent.* 32.

²⁶ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.60-61 Gautier.

to the contemplative and mental virtues. Therefore, the “average contemplations” became available to him.²⁷

Michael Psellos does not dwell in any detail on the question that worried other commentators (albeit to varying degrees): who is that mysterious interlocutor with whom St. John Climacus has his unusual dialogue?²⁸ However, understanding the “style” of the chapter’s narration as undoubtedly “dialogical” (ὡσπερ ἐν ἀντωμοσίοις ἢ τοῦ χωρίου ὑφῆ), Psellos cannot say anything about the second “person” of the dialogue.²⁹ Since the contemplator is usually instructed in the sacraments (μυσταγωγῶσαι) by “powers” (δυνάμεις) — apparently angelic beings —, in this case as well, according to Psellos, such a “power” is at work, to which the questions are addressed.³⁰

Addressing himself to the interpretation of the questions and especially the answers to them of the mysterious power, Michael Psellos completely abandons the Christological understanding thereof, so characteristic, as we shall see, for other Byzantine commentators of the *Ladder*. As to the question what He was like “before the visible form” (πρὸ τῆς ὀρατῆς αὐτῷ μορφῆς), Psellos understands it as referring to the possibility of seeing God without symbols and appearances,³¹ seeing Him as He is.³² The “average visions” are treated by him precisely as visions “in symbols and appearances” (ἐν συμβόλοις τισὶ καὶ ἰνδάλμασι),³³ similar to those contemplated by Ezekiel, for example. The numerous symbols proper to the visions of this prophet (the “appearance of bezek,” chariot, wheels...)³⁴ are directly listed by Michael Psellos as referring to the “average contemplations” with symbols and images.³⁵ Like the other interpreters of the *Ladder*, Psellos takes the story about John’s interlocutor being “unable” to explain to him what he wanted to know, not as evidence of the former’s lack of knowledge, but of the impossibility for the questioner to perceive the “intelligible” without symbols — for lack of relevant capacities.³⁶

In the same vein interprets Michael Psellos the subsequent questions of John and the answers of the mysterious interlocutor. Everything the interpretation said about before is not the “proper” appearance of God. For God does not dwell in temples made with hands (cf. Act 7, 48) or “in impressions and shapes” (ἐν

²⁷ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.65-68 Gautier.

²⁸ Cf. Jean Gouillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 455.

²⁹ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.44-45, 69-72 Gautier.

³⁰ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.72-75 Gautier.

³¹ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.95 Gautier.

³² Psell. *Theol.* I.30.88-89 Gautier.

³³ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.84 Gautier.

³⁴ Cf. Ez. 1:4.14.16.

³⁵ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.84-88 Gautier.

³⁶ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.94-95 Gautier.

διατυπώσεσίν τισι καὶ πλάσμασι).³⁷ Accordingly, at the “middle level” He is contemplated in “corporeal symbols” (σύμβολα ... σωματικά),³⁸ which make the comprehension of God easier to those who are not able to gaze at the truth directly and therefore need a “mirror” and “riddle” (cf. 1 Cor. 13, 12).³⁹ John asks to explain to him what “standing and sitting at the right hand of the Cause” (ἐπὶ τοῦ αἰτίου), i.e. God, means, but Psellos thinks it to be inaccessible to the “hearing” of the questioner, because he has not yet grasped the mysterious meaning of “standing” and “sitting” and their differences which are unattainable “even to the naked mind” (τὰ μηδὲ γυμνῷ τῷ νῷ χωρητά).⁴⁰

Since the mysterious interlocutor, despite John's persistence, refused to explain the above-mentioned mystery to him saying that “the time has not yet come (to comprehend it) — due to the lack of incorruption fire (with the questioner)”, Michael Psellos devotes the last part of his exegesis to the explanation what the incorruption of the soul is — based on Plato.⁴¹ Quite predictably, he explains that the depth of knowledge of God directly depends on how much the soul has freed itself from “mixing” with the body, how far it has “moved away” from it. Only with the utmost “liberation” of the soul from the bonds of the body, when its subtle and “ethereal” nature is revealed, one becomes able to transcend the “figures” and see God irrespective of shapes and impressions.⁴²

Concluding his interpretation of the chapter from the *Ladder*, Psellos states that the solution of all the difficulties that it conceals requires a deeper theological “learning”, but prefers to finish the word by indicating that the reason for both the visions and their explanations are εἰκόσματα — ‘conjectures’.⁴³

Thus, Michael Psellos gives an emphatically non-Christological interpretation of Chapter 13 of the second part of Word 27 of the *Ladder*. The problem of the “personality” of John Climacus's interlocutor — is it an angel or Christ Himself? — is not something Psellos is particularly concerned with, either. Both things distinguish the interpretation of Psellos from most of the Byzantine interpretations of the mentioned text known today.⁴⁴ Now is the time to consider other Byzantine commentaries on this difficult passage.

³⁷ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.104-105 Gautier.

³⁸ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.101-103 Gautier.

³⁹ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.107-108 Gautier.

⁴⁰ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.109-119 Gautier.

⁴¹ Plat. *Phaed.* 66 b 5, 67 a 5, 83 a 7-8.

⁴² Psell. *Theol.* I.30.120-146 Gautier.

⁴³ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.152-158 Gautier.

⁴⁴ Cf. Jean Gouillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 449-450.

The *Ladder* of St. John of Sinai is one of the few works of Byzantine ecclesiastical literature, on which lengthy commentaries were composed.⁴⁵ There are two such commentaries which represent a consistent interpretation of most of the chapters of the *Ladder*: one by Elias of Crete (12th century),⁴⁶ the other by the famous Byzantine writer Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (14th century).⁴⁷ Both use the commentaries of a fairly large number of authors of previous centuries, but extremely rarely indicate where this or that interpretation was taken from, and avoid mentioning names.⁴⁸ The numerous scholia⁴⁹ usually located on the margins of Byzantine manuscripts, on the contrary, often bear the inscription of names. Before analysing the complex of texts that make up the exegesis to the chapter under consideration in the commentary of Elias of Crete (the corresponding explanations in that by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos are not of particular interest),⁵⁰ let us turn to the scholia tradition. Firstly, among the scholia to the *Ladder*, there are a number of interpretations by Patriarch Photios,⁵¹ including a relatively detailed explanation of Chapter 13 of Step XXVII/2. This commentary was published as early as 1892 by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus as composed by Photios.⁵²

The latest edition of Photios' *Amphilochia* has confirmed at least the attribution of the interpretation of Chapter 13:⁵³ it corresponds to the main body of Treatise 273 from *Amphilochia*.⁵⁴ This important text will be discussed below. Secondly, it is apparently the anonymous scholium, later abbreviated in the authoritative Greek edition of the *Ladder* by monk Sophronios, which became the most widespread.⁵⁵ (In Appendix I to this article, I present the edition of the

⁴⁵ Fr. Maximos Constat, "Introduction", in St. Maximos the Confessor, *On Difficulties in Sacred Scripture: The Responses to Thalassios*, transl. by Fr. Maximos Constat (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 53-54, n. 169.

⁴⁶ CPG 7852, Scholia, (a).

⁴⁷ CPG 7852, Scholia, (d); PLP no. 20826.

⁴⁸ Theodora Antonopoulou, "The 'Brief Exegesis of John Climacus' *Heavenly Ladder*" by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. Remarks on its Nature and Sources", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 57 (2007): 152-153, 155-156.

⁴⁹ Cf. CPG 7852, Scholia, (e), (f).

⁵⁰ Theodora Antonopoulou, "The 'Brief Exegesis of John Climacus' *Heavenly Ladder*" by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. Remarks on its Nature and Sources", 161-166.

⁵¹ Cf. CPG 7852, Scholia, (b).

⁵² Φωτίου πατριάρχου Σχόλια εἰς τὰς πνευματικὰς πλάκας Ἰωάννου τοῦ τῆς Κλίμακος, συλλεγέντα ἐκ τοῦ 93 κώδικος τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις χειρογράφων τῆς μονῆς τοῦ τιμίου Σταυροῦ τῶν Ἰβήρων, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik* 31, t. XI, issue 1 (1892): 21-24; cf. G. Hofman, "Der hg. Johannes Klimax bei Photios," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 7 (1941): 461-479.

⁵³ Φωτίου πατριάρχου Σχόλια εἰς τὰς πνευματικὰς πλάκας Ἰωάννου τοῦ τῆς Κλίμακος, 23.13-24.32.

⁵⁴ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.17-55 Westerink.

⁵⁵ Κλίμαξ τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου, καθηγουμένου τοῦ Σιναίου Ὄρους, ed. Sophronios [Rhaidestinos], 154-155, n. 2.

Greek text based on the manuscript BSB 297 and reproduce in parallel the text of Sophronios's note.) This interpretation became popular most likely because it demonstrates (in contrast to the explanation of Michael Psellos) attention to the context, contains a direct identification of the mysterious interlocutor of the author of the *Ladder* with an angel (later this interpretation would be reflected in many interpretative translations into new languages including English and Russian),⁵⁶ as well as a strictly Christological interpretation of the questions John asks in this chapter. E.g., the first question is interpreted quite unambiguously: "What form did Christ have before *oikonomia* (i.e. before the Incarnation)?" (ποιίας πρὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας μορφῆς ἣν ὁ Χριστός).⁵⁷ The angel's refusal to give an answer is explained not by the inaccessibility of the mystery for the questioner, but by the fact that the former does not know the answer (τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἠγνόει), since "the Deity is by essence unknown even to the angels themselves" (Ἡ γὰρ θεότης οὐσίᾳ φησὶν, καὶ αὐτοῖς ἀγγέλοις ἄγνωστος ἐστίν).⁵⁸ However, there is also an interpretation of the "prince" (ἄρχων) as a mind (νοῦς)⁵⁹ that, until it has renounced the body, cannot look at the "naked visions" (γυμνοῖς προσβάλλειν τοῖς θεωρήμασιν), which partly resembles the reasoning of Psellos,⁶⁰ however, the scholiast does not develop this matter further.

The second question is also presented in an unambiguous form: "How does Christ exist now?" (πῶς νῦν ὁ Χριστὸς ὑπάρχει). The answer in the commentator's interpretation is also unambiguous: he interprets the words "in what is His" (or "proper [to Him]", ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις) as "in deity and humanity" (ἐν θεότητι καὶ ἀνθρωπότητι), but devoid of the fluidity and corruptibility characteristic of man now.⁶¹ And finally, the third question about "sitting and standing at the right hand" is also understood as referring to specific New Testament expressions,⁶² and it is again about Christ. The lack of "incorruption fire" is interpreted as the non-involvement (non-implication) of the questioner in "future incorruptibility" (τῆς μελλούσης ἀφθαρσίας): those who still wear flesh cannot see otherwise than "by sight" (δι' εἶδους) (2 Cor. 5:7) and "in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor. 13:12).⁶³

Obviously, this scholium is one of the simplest and relatively consistent explanations for a difficult passage. Let it be added that the scholium got much circulation in the Slavic manuscript tradition and was transferred from there to

⁵⁶ Cf. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 54 (Introduction by Kallistos Ware) and 268.

⁵⁷ BSB 297, f. 246v.

⁵⁸ BSB 297, f. 246v - 247r.

⁵⁹ Cf. Jean Gouillard, "Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?", 451-452.

⁶⁰ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.118-119, 133-144 Gautier.

⁶¹ BSB 297, f. 247v.

⁶² Lc. 22:69; Act. 7:56.

⁶³ BSB 297, f. 248r - 248v.

the first edition of the *Ladder* in Church Slavonic (Moscow, 1647).⁶⁴ The translation of the scholium in this edition is broadly consistent with the Greek text published below in Appendix I. The most complete collection of the Byzantine exegesis of the *Ladder* XXVII/2.13 is contained in the commentary by Elias of Crete, unfortunately not yet published.⁶⁵ I have used the codex Coisl. 87 (14th century), one of the most authoritative manuscripts containing this commentary.⁶⁶ The composition of the commentary on Chapter 13 is remarkable: it opens with the scholium of Photios, the author of which is not named, though (all the texts in this interpretation are anonymous). It is quoted almost in full, with the exception of the beginning of the respective treatise from *Amphilochia*.⁶⁷ As noted above, Photios is attentive to the context (as well as, indeed, the scholiast whose interpretation has just been analysed), he rightly points out that the “middle” that the narrator “went through” is undoubtedly the “urgent prayer” (from Chapter 12).⁶⁸ However, the explanation proper is essentially an expanded retelling of the chapter with explanations that are quite difficult to understand and allow, in turn, various interpretations.

St. John is enlightened here by the very “fulfilment of the luminous vision, and the enjoyment of it, and its contemplation” (ἡ τοῦ σελασφόρου θεάματος πλήρωσις καὶ τρυφή καὶ θέα),⁶⁹ while the interlocutor is called “the architect of our unspeakable pleasure and contemplation” (ὁ ταύτης ἡμῖν τῆς ἀπορρήτου τρυφῆς καὶ θεωρίας ἀρχιτέκτων).⁷⁰ Nothing in Photios’s interpretation indicates that he perceives the questions of St. John as referring to the state of Christ before the Incarnation and after the Ascension. Rather, it is about a certain vision, possibly symbolic,⁷¹ the “Christological content” of which can only be assumed.⁷² The refusal of the interlocutor to answer the questions is explained by the inability of the questioner to perceive what is done by grace which made it possible to contemplate, but the contemplation itself was above understanding;⁷³ the lack of “incorruption fire” is only stated but not explained.⁷⁴

⁶⁴ Lestvica (Moscow, 1647), f. 249r - 250r.

⁶⁵ Theodora Antonopoulou, “The “*Brief Exegesis* of John Climacus’ *Heavenly Ladder*” by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. Remarks on its Nature and Sources”, 155-156.

⁶⁶ Theodora Antonopoulou, “The “*Brief Exegesis* of John Climacus’ *Heavenly Ladder*” by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. Remarks on its Nature and Sources”, 157.

⁶⁷ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.16-55 Westerink.

⁶⁸ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.16-23 Westerink.

⁶⁹ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.24-25 Westerink.

⁷⁰ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.31-32 Westerink; cf. Jean Guillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 45o.

⁷¹ Cf. Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.35-36 Westerink.

⁷² Cf., however, Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.33-34 Westerink.

⁷³ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.29-31 Westerink.

⁷⁴ Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.48-49 Westerink.

The text which follows the interpretation of Photios in the commentary of Elias of Crete (Coisl. 87, f. 273r - 274r; see the edition based on this manuscript in Appendix II), unfortunately could not be attributed. In general, this interpretation goes in line with what was considered above as the most common (see also Appendix I), however, it also has a number of significant differences. The most important thing is that the unknown scholiast flatly refuses to consider the mysterious interlocutor of St. John in Chapter 13 as an angel.⁷⁵ In his opinion (reinforced with a reference to John Chrysostom),⁷⁶ what the dialogue is about in this chapter concerns the uncreated divine nature, and seeing and knowing something is possible only when being of the same nature.⁷⁷ From this it is concluded that St. John of the Ladder was enlightened by the Only Begotten Logos (f. 273v).⁷⁸ His refusal to answer the first question of John is explained, as in Psellos, by the feebleness of the questioner and not by the lack of divine power in the instructor.⁷⁹ The questions themselves are unambiguously interpreted as relating to the state of Christ before the Incarnation (“What was God-Man Logos before the human form?” — Τί ἦν πρὸ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μορφῆς ὁ Θεάνθρωπος Λόγος)⁸⁰ and after the Ascension (“How does He now abide after the Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven?” — πῶς νῦν ὑπάρχει μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν καὶ τὴν εἰς οὐρανοῖς ἀνάληψιν).⁸¹

The answer of the mysterious interlocutor to the second question (“in what is His”) is unambiguously interpreted, as in the anonymous scholium discussed above, as indicating that after the Ascension, the Son of God abides in His two natures, but not in fluidity and corruptibility characteristic of human nature in this life (cf. the anonymous scholium),⁸² rather in an imperishable body which has become, according to Gregory the Theologian, “one with God” (ὁμόθεον⁸³ — in the manuscript, evidently erroneously, ὁμόθρονον⁸⁴ — ‘sitting on the same throne’). The answer itself is described as refuting the delusions of the Manichaeans. “Sitting and standing at the right hand” is also associated by the exegete with the New Testament visions.⁸⁵ The interpretation ends with a

⁷⁵ Cf. Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2, part 3: The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 124, n. 346.

⁷⁶ Cf. Jo. Chrys. *De incompr.*, Hom. 5.248-249 Malingrey (cf. Hom. 3.194-196 Malingrey).

⁷⁷ Coisl. 87, f. 273r.

⁷⁸ Coisl. 87, f. 273v; cf. Jean Gouillard, “Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?”, 456-457.

⁷⁹ Coisl. 87, f. 273v.

⁸⁰ Coisl. 87, f. 273v.

⁸¹ Coisl. 87, f. 273v.

⁸² BSB 297, f. 247v.

⁸³ Greg. Naz. *In Sanctum Pascha, Or.* 45, 13, PG 36, 641A.

⁸⁴ Coisl. 87, f. 274r.

⁸⁵ Lc. 22:69; Act. 7:56; cf. BSB 297, f. 247v.

repetition of the last lines of Photios's commentary.⁸⁶ As one can see, the examined interpretation has features in common with the anonymous scholium, but the latter can hardly be considered an abridged presentation of the former.

The most interesting from the angle of the topic of this article is, of course, the continuation of the commentary on the *Ladder*, XXVII/2.13 in cod. Coisl. 87: on f. 274r – 275r, the analysed interpretation is immediately followed by that of Michael Psellos. It is introduced by the words: “Or like this (it may as well be interpreted)” (ἢ καὶ οὕτως).⁸⁷ The interpretation begins with the words *χρὴ τοίνυν εἰδέναι ἡμᾶς...*,⁸⁸ that is, the preamble and the text of Chapter 13 quoted by Psellos are omitted, while the interpretation proper is given almost in full.⁸⁹ Thus, the commentary of Elias of Crete on the *Ladder* by John of Sinai also included, as an alternative, secondary it seems, the interpretation of Michael Psellos, which granted that work a long life outside the rare *Theologica*. Moreover, the interpretation of Psellos was included in the above-mentioned Moscow edition of the *Ladder* in Church Slavonic, here, on the contrary, coming first and being entitled “*Tolkovanie premudrago Psela*” — “The Interpretation of the Sage Psel(I)os”.⁹⁰

Thus, the above makes it possible to conclude that Michael Psellos's interpretation of the *Ladder* XXVII/2.13, despite all its unusualness and an obvious departure from the seemingly “literal”, “Christological” explanation, was adopted by the Byzantine tradition of commentaries on this monastic handbook — perhaps precisely because of its unusualness. In the commentary of Elias of Crete, it supplements the “Christological” interpretation and, one might say, coexists with the explanation of the same difficult passage given by another Byzantine encyclopedist, Patriarch Photios. From the Byzantine exegetic tradition, it passed over to Slavic manuscripts whence it was retrieved by the publishers of the Moscow *Ladder*, in which Psellos's explanation appears as the main or anyhow the first one. In that manner, one of the most unusual texts of Psellos also got to be used by Slavic monasticism and was read at least in Russia within the commentary on the *Ladder* well after the 17th century.

⁸⁶ Coisl. 87, f. 274r; cf. Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.46-55 Westerink.

⁸⁷ Coisl. 87, f. 274r.

⁸⁸ Psell. *Theol.* I.30.46-47 Gautier.

⁸⁹ Cf. Psell. *Theol.* I.30.46-158 Gautier.

⁹⁰ Lestvica (Moscow, 1647), f. 246r - 249r.

Appendix I

An Anonymous Scholium

Sigla

B — BSB 297 (XIII–XIV s.), f. 246v–248v

S — *Κλίμαξ* τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου, καθηγουμένου τοῦ Συναίου Ὁρους. Ed. Sophronios [Rhaidestinos]. Constantinople, 1883: 154–155, n. 2

B	S
<p>{Ερμηνεία:} Αίνιττεται ὁ πατήρ, ἃ ἐν ἐκστάσει τεθέαται προσευχόμενος. μέσον γὰρ ἀμεριμνίας καὶ ἐργασίας καρδιακῆς, τὴν προσευχὴν εἶναι ἀπηριθμήσατο· ἦν μετερχόμενος, ἐν μέσοις λέγει γεγονέναι· ἦγουν ἀγγέλοις, τοῖς μέσοις οὖσι Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώποις. οἱ καὶ τοὺς τὴν θείαν χάριν διψῶντας, διὰ τοῦ φωτισμοῦ κορεννύουσι· καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄκροις περιφυλάττουσι, τῇ ἀμεριμνίᾳ φημι καὶ τῇ ἐργασίᾳ. ὑφ' ὧν ἐν τῇ θεωρίᾳ ἠρώτων φησί, ποίας πρὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας μορφῆς ἦν ὁ Χριστός. καὶ ἐφεστῶς φησὶν ὁ ἄγγελος, διψῶντα με μανθάνειν ἐφώτιζε. τῆς δὲ ἀπορίας, πάντῃ οὐκ ἀπήλαττεν, ἀλλὰ πάλιν ἤμην ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις ἀπορήμασιν. ἐρωτῶντος γὰρ μου φησὶν ἐν τῇ θεωρίᾳ, τί ἦν πρὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας ὁ Χριστός, καὶ τίς ἡ τούτου μορφή, τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἠγνῶει. ἡ γὰρ θεότης [f. 247v] οὐσία φησὶν, καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἀγγέλοις, ἀγνωστός ἐστιν. [...]⁹¹</p> <p>{Ἀπὸ τῆς ἐρμηνείας:} Ἄλλως τε, οὐδὲ ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἄρχων νοῦς, ἠφίετο, διὰ τὸ ἔτι συνδεδέσθαι τῷ σώματι, γυμνοῖς προσβάλλειν τοῖς θεωρήμασιν. εἶτα τοῦ προτέρου ἀστοχῆσας, καὶ πῶς νῦν ὁ Χριστὸς ὑπάρχει ἠρώτων. ὁ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις μὲν ἔλεγεν· ἦγουν ἐν θεότητι καὶ</p>	<p>Μετερχόμενος τὸ μέσον, ἦτοι τὴν ἄοκνον προσευχὴν, ἥτις ἐστὶ μέσον τῆς ἀμεριμνίας, καὶ καρδιακῆς ἐργασίας, ἐν μέσοις γέγονα, φησὶν· ἦτοι ἐν τοῖς Ἀγγέλοις, ἀρπαγείς τῇ θεωρίᾳ· οἵτινες Ἄγγελοι μέσον Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων εἰσὶ, καὶ τοὺς τὴν θείαν χάριν διψῶντας διὰ φωτισμοῦ κορεννύουσι· καὶ ἐφεστῶς, φησὶν, Ἄγγελος, διψῶντά με μανθάνειν, ἐφώτιζε, τῆς δὲ ἀπορίας πάντῃ οὐκ ἀπήλαττε· ἐρωτῶντός μου γὰρ, φησὶν, ἐν τῇ θεωρίᾳ· τί ἦν πρὸ τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας ὁ Χριστός; καὶ τίς ἡ τούτου θεία μορφή; ἀπεκρίνατο, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἠγνῶει τοῦτο· ἡ γὰρ τῆς θεότητος οὐσία, φησὶ, καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς Ἀγγέλοις ἀγνωστός ὑπάρχει· ἄλλως τε δέ, καὶ ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ νοῦς, διὰ τὸ ἔτι συνδεδέσθαι τῷ σώματι οὐκ ἠδύνατο γυμνοῖς προσβάλλειν τοῖς θεωρήμασιν· εἶτα τοῦ προτέρου ἀστοχῆσας, ἠρώτων· καὶ πῶς νῦν ὑπάρχει ὁ Χριστός; ὁ δέ, ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις μὲν ἔλεγεν, ἦγουν ἐν θεότητι καὶ ἀνθρωπότητι, πλὴν οὐκ ἐν ῥεύσει καὶ φθορᾷ, καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς. Καὶ αὐτοῖς δὲ ἐπηρώτων· πῶς ὁ μὲν τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν καθῆσθαι τοῦτόν φησι, Στέφανος δέ, ἐκ δεξιῶν ἵστασθαι τῆς δυνάμεως; ὁ δὲ μυσταγωγὸς καὶ ταύτης με τῆς ζητήσεως ἀπολύων, οὐ δυνατόν, ἔφη, σωματικῇ ἀκοῇ ταῦτα χωρηθῆναι. Πάλιν δὲ</p>

⁹¹ Thus, I am marking the omitted fragments of the text of the *Ladder* itself.

ἀνθρωπότητι· πλὴν οὐκ ἐν ῥεύσει καὶ φθορᾷ καθὼς καὶ ὑμεῖς. καὶ αὐθις δὲ ἐπειρώτων· πῶς ὁ μὲν, τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν, καθῆσθαι τοῦτον φησί,⁹² Στέφανος δέ, ἐκδεξιῶν ἴστασθαι τῆς δυνάμεως;⁹³ ὁ δὲ μυσταγωγὸς ἄγγελος, καὶ ταύτης με τῆς ζητήσεως [f. 248r] ἀπολύων, οὐ δυνατὸν ἔφη, σωματικῇ ἀκοῇ ταῦτα χωρηθῆναι. πάλιν δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πόθου μοι νυττομένω, καὶ καταλαβέσθαι τι τῆς ὑπερουσίου μεγαλειότητος ἐπιζητοῦντι, ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγεν. [...] {Ἀπὸ τῆς ἐξηγήσεως;} Οὐπὼ τῆς φθορᾶς ἀπολυθέντα σε, οὐδὲ τῆς μελλούσης ἀφθαρσίας ἀξιωθέντα, ἀλλ' ἔτι τὴν σάρκα φοροῦντα, ἀδύνατον τὰ τοιαῦτα γνῶναι. βλέπομεν γάρ φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολος νῦν, διὰ εἶδους, καὶ [f. 248v] ὡς ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ καὶ ἐν αἰνίγματι· τότε δέ, πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον. ταῦτα φησὶν εἶδον καὶ ἤκουσα· εἴτε ἐν σώματι ὦν, εἴτε τοῦ σώματος ἐκστὰς ἀκριβῶς οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι.

ὑπὸ πόθου μοι νυττομένω, καὶ καταλαβέσθαι τι τῆς ὑπερουσίου μεγαλειότητος ἐπιζητοῦντι, ἐκεῖνος, οὐπὼ, ἔφραζεν, ἤκειν τὴν ὥραν, διὰ τὸ μήπω τῆς μετουσίας τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἀξιωθῆναι. Ταῦτα, εἴτε σὺν τῷ χοῦ, ἤγουν σὺν τῷ σώματι, εἴτε τούτου χωρὶς, λέγειν εἰσάπαν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι.

⁹² Cf. Lc. 22:69.

⁹³ Cf. Act. 7:56.

Appendix II

An Anonymous Fragment from the Commentary by Elias of Crete

C — Coisl. 87 (XIV s.), f. 273r–274r

Ὅτι μὲν οὖν προσευχὴ τὸ μέσον ἐκατέρων τούτων τῶν ἄκρων ἐστὶ φανερόν. ταύτην οὖν τὴν προσευχὴν μετὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ πάντων τούτων ἀπόθεσιν, καὶ τὴν ἀμεριμνίαν αὐτῶν, μετερχόμενος οὗτος ὁ ἅγιος, ἐν μέσοις τισὶ γίνεται τοῖς ἀγγέλοις· καὶ ἀγγελικῆς ὄπτασίας ἀξιούται. μέσοι γὰρ οἱ ἄγγελοι, ὡς μέσοι ὄντες Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, τὰ πρὸς σωτηρίαν αὐτοῖς διακονοῦμενοι. ὅθεν καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις εἶρηκε· Μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἐνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων· οἱ γὰρ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν διὰ παντὸς ὁρῶσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.⁹⁴ μέσοι οὖν διὰ τοῦτο οἱ ἄγγελοι. ἢ ὅτι καὶ οὗτοι κατὰ τινὰς εἶπεῖν τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν θεολόγων, ἐν σώματι πως εἰσὶ καὶ ἀσώματοι·⁹⁵ τὸ μὲν, πρὸς τὴν θείαν ἐκείνην καὶ ἄκτιστον φύσιν· τὸ δέ, ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ἢ οὖν διὰ ταῦτα ἐν μέσοις γεγενῆσθαι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις λέγεται, καὶ ἀγγελικῆς ἀξιοθῆναι θεωρίας τινός, ἢ καὶ διὰ τὸ εἰς ἀσωματότητα οἶον καὶ αὐλίαν ἀναδραμεῖν, ἣν ἴσασι οἱ πεπονθότες. Ὅτι δὲ οὐ καταμαντευόμενοι ταῦτα φαμέν, παρέστησεν οὗτος ὁ ἅγιος ἐν τῷ τέλει τῆς θεωρίας ἐπαγαγών· Ταῦτα, εἴτε σὺν τῷ χοῦ οὐκ οἶδα, εἴτε ἐκτὸς τούτου, λέγειν οὐκ ἔχω· τὰ ἀποστολικά ἐκεῖνα ῥήματα παραφράζων, τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀρρήτου ἐκείνης ἀποκαλύψεως.⁹⁶ τὴν προσευχὴν οὖν μετερχόμενος, ἐν μέσοις γέγονα τούτοις· καὶ ἐφώτιζέ με διψῶντα. καὶ ἰδοὺ πάλιν ἦν ἐν ἐκείνοις ἐν οἷς καὶ πρώην· τῆ τε ἀμεριμνία καὶ τῆ ἀσύλῳ τῆς καρδίας ἐργασία. ἀλλὰ τίς ὁ φωτίζων τοῦτον τὸν ἅγιον, εἰ μὲν ἄγγελον εἶναι τοῦτον ἐροῦμεν κατὰ τὴν ἐν ταῖς σχολικαῖς παρασημειώσειςιν εὕρισκομένην ἐξήγησιν, ἀνάγκη πάντως καὶ γινώσκειν τοῦτον τὴν ἄκτιστον φύσιν, καὶ διδάσκειν αὐτὴν ἐτέρους· ὅπερ ἀδύνατον. οὐσία γὰρ οὐσίαν ὡς τῷ⁹⁷ χρυσορρήμονι⁹⁸ καὶ τῆ ἀληθείᾳ δοκεῖ, οὔτε ἰδεῖν οὔτε γνῶναι δύναται ποτέ, ἐὰν μὴ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως ἦ. διὸ καλῶς εἶρηται· Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἐώρακε πώποτε·⁹⁹ ἀντὶ τοῦ Οὐκ ἔγνωκε, τί τὴν φύσιν ἐστίν. εἰ οὖν ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, πῶς ἐρωτήσαντι τῷ ἁγίῳ τί πρὸ τῆς ὁρατῆς φύσεως ὁ δεσπότης Χριστὸς ἦν, διδάσκειν ὁ ἄγγελος οὐκ ἠδύνατο; οὐ παρὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀδυναμίαν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τοῦ ἄρχοντος νοῦ ἀσθένειαν. οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς εἶρηται ὅτι οὐκ ἠδύνατο διδάσκειν [f. 273v] ὁ ἄγγελος· ἢ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς εἶχεν· ἀλλ' ὅτι οὐ συνεχωρεῖτο ὁ ἄρχων νοῦς. εἰ γὰρ οὗτος συνεχωρεῖτο, ἐδίδαξεν ἂν πάντως ὁ ἄγγελος. εἰ δὲ ἐδίδαξε, καὶ κατέλαβε πάντως, τὴν ἀκατάληπτον φύσιν. καὶ πῶς ἄρα ἀληθεύσει ὁ λόγος διαρρήδην ἀποφαινόμενος· Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἐώρακε πώποτε; ὁ μονογενὴς γὰρ Υἱὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἐκεῖνος ἡμῶν ἐξηγήσατο.¹⁰⁰ οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν

⁹⁴ Mt. 18:10.

⁹⁵ Cf. Jo. Damasc. *Or. de imag.*, 3.25.11-12 Kotter.

⁹⁶ Cf. 2 Cor. 12:2.

⁹⁷ τῷ] τὸ C

⁹⁸ Cf. Jo. Chrys. *De incompr.* Hom. 5.248-249 Malingrey.

⁹⁹ Jo. 1:18.

¹⁰⁰ Jo. 1:18.

Πατέρα, εἰ μὴ ὁ Υἱός· οὐδὲ τὸν Υἱόν, εἰ μὴ ὁ Πατήρ.¹⁰¹ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα δὲ τὸ ἅγιον, οὕτως οἶδε τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οἶδε τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ.¹⁰² μετὰ δὲ τὴν πρώτην καὶ μακαρίαν φύσιν, οὐδεὶς ἔγνω ποτὲ τὸν Θεόν, εἰ μὴ ὡς αὐτὸς ἀπεκάλυψεν· οὐκ ἀνθρώπων μόνον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τῶν ὑπερκοσμίων δυνάμεων καὶ αὐτῶν φημί τῶν χερουβὶμ καὶ σεραφίμ. οὐκ ἀφήκε μέντοι ἡμᾶς ἐν παντελεῖ ἀγνωσίᾳ· πᾶσι γὰρ ἡ γνῶσις τοῦ εἶναι Θεὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ φυσικῶς ἐγκατέσπαρται. οὐκουν ἄγγελος Θεοῦ φύσιν διδάσκειν ἠδύνατο. λείπεται ἄρα αὐτὸν τὸν μονογενῆ Λόγον εἶναι τὸν καὶ φωτίζοντα τοῦτον τὸν ἅγιον, περὶ οὗ εἴρηται, ὅτι Φωτίζεις σὺ ἀπὸ ὁρέων αἰωνίων,¹⁰³ καὶ ἐρωτώμενον τί πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι ἄνθρωπος ἦν; καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον καὶ λέγοντα ὅτι διδάσκειν οὐ δύναται διὰ τὸ μὴ συγχωρεῖσθαι τὸν νοῦν τοῦ ἐρωτῶντος· Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἠφίετο φησὶν ὁ ἄρχων νοῦς. ἄρχων δὲ οὗτος λέγεται, ἄρχις ἂν τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἔχων ἐστίν. ὁ γὰρ τοι τῶν ἀκρατῶν καὶ ἀκολάστων ἐξέρχεται τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἐξέστραπται, καὶ τὴν ἀρχικὴν ἀρχὴν ἀποβέβληκε, δοῦλος παθῶν γεγονώς. ἔστι καὶ οὕτως εἰπεῖν· οὐ τῶν καθ' ἓνα τρόπον λεγομένων εὐρίσκεται τὸ δύνασθαι, καὶ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι. τὸ μὲν γὰρ τι λέγεται, κατὰ δυνάμεως ἔλλειψιν, καὶ ποτὲ καὶ πρὸς τι· ὡς τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι τὸ παιδίον ἀθλεῖν, καὶ τὸ σκυλάκιον βλέπειν, ἢ πρὸς τόνδε διαγωνίζεσθαι. ἀθλήσει γὰρ ἴσως ποτέ, καὶ ὄψεται, καὶ διαγωνιῆται πρὸς τόνδε, κἂν πρὸς ἕτερον ἀδυνάτως ἔχη. τὸ δέ, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον, ὡς οὐ δύναται πόλις ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη κρυβῆναι,¹⁰⁴ ἐπιπροσθοῦντος τινὸς μείζονος. τὸ δέ, ὡς οὐκ εὐλογον· ὡς τὸ Οὐ δύναται νηστεύειν υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος ἐφ' ὅσον ἔνδημος ὁ νυμφίος.¹⁰⁵ τί γὰρ δεῖ νηστεύειν τοὺς Λόγῳ καθαιρομένους; τὸ δέ, ὡς ἀβούλητον· ὡς τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι ἐκεῖ σημεῖα ποιεῖν διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν τῶν δεχομένων.¹⁰⁶ κατὰ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ σημαινόμενον· τὰ γὰρ λοιπὰ τέως, παρήμι· οὐκ ἠδύνατο διδάσκειν ὁ ἐρωτώμενος Χριστός· τουτέστιν οὐκ ἠβούλετο τὸν ἐρωτῶντα αὐτὸν διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν αὐτοῦ. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τοῦ συναμφοτέρου χρεῖα πρὸς τὴν διδασκαλίαν καὶ τῆς τοῦ διδάσκοντος καὶ τῆς τοῦ διδασκομένου δυνάμεως, οὐκ ἠβούλετο διδάσκειν. οὐ παρὰ τὴν ἔλλειψιν τῆς θεϊκῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τοῦ διδασκομένου ἀδυναμίαν. ἀποπεσῶν οὖν ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ ποθουμένου, καὶ τὸ τί ἦν πρὸ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μορφῆς ὁ θεάνθρωπος Λόγος μὴ δυνηθεὶς καταλαβεῖν· οὐδὲ γὰρ φθάνει οὐδὲ ὁ θεωρητικώτατος νοῦς καὶ πολυπράγμων ἐπὶ τὴν μακαρίαν ἐκείνην καὶ ἄκτιστον φύσιν ἀναδραμεῖν· ἐπὶ τὰ δευτέρα τρέπεται, ἔργους παιδευθεὶς, τοῦτο δὴ τὸ σολομώντειον· τὸ Ἰσχυρότερα σου μὴ ζῆτει, καὶ ὑψηλότερά σου μὴ πολυπραγμόνει.¹⁰⁷ διὸ καὶ πῶς νῦν ὑπάρχει μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν καὶ τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάληψιν, ἐδεῖτο μαθεῖν. τί οὖν ὁ φωτίζων; ἐν τοῖς ἰδίους μὲν ἀπεκρίνατο, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τούτοις. τί δὲ ταῦτα βούλεται, ὧδε ἂν μάθοιμεν. ἐτόλμησαν οἱ τὰ Μανιχαίων φρονοῦντες, ἀδικίαν λαλῆσαι κατὰ τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ σώματος, φάμενοι, ὡς ἀναληφθεὶς ὁ δεσπότης Χριστός, ἀπέθετο τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ, καὶ γυμνῇ τῇ θεότητι ἀνήλθε πρὸς οὐρανοὺς. [f. 274r] οἱ καὶ ῥῆμα τοῦ Δαυὶδ κακῶς παραδινήσαντες, εἰς μαρτυρίαν παρήγον τοῦ δόγματος αὐτῶν, τὸ λέγον· Ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ ἔθετο τὸ σκῆνωμα αὐτοῦ.¹⁰⁸ τοῦτο οὖν ἀπορραπίζων καὶ τὸν

¹⁰¹ Mt. 1:27.

¹⁰² Cf. 1 Cor. 2:11.

¹⁰³ Ps. 75:5.

¹⁰⁴ Mt. 5:14.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Mc. 2:19.

¹⁰⁶ τὸ μὲν γὰρ τι λέγεται – τῶν δεχομένων] Greg. Naz. *De filio, Or.* 30, 10.4–18 Galloway.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Sir. 3:21.

¹⁰⁸ Ps. 18:5.

νοῦν φωτίζων τοῦ διψῶντος φωτίζεσθαι, ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀπεκρίνατο· τουτέστιν ἐν ταῖς δυσὶ φύσεσι· καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάληψιν καὶ τὴν εἰς οὐρανούς ἄνοδον διατελῶ. οὐ γὰρ ἀποτέθειται τὸ πρόσλημμα κατὰ τὴν τῶν Μανιχαίων ἐρεσχηλίαν. πλὴν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τούτοις, ἦγουν ἐν ῥεύσει καὶ φθορᾷ· ὅπερ δηλῶν καὶ ὁ μέγας ἀπόστολος φησὶν· Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστὸν ἐσθίοντα καὶ πίνοντα, καὶ τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐπιτελοῦντα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τούτοις ἐπιγινώσκομεν νῦν.¹⁰⁹ ἄφθαρτον γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἐκεῖνο μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, καὶ θαρρῶν λέγω φησὶ που ὁ μέγας ἐν θεολογίᾳ Γρηγόριος, ὁμόθεον^{110,111} εἶτα πάλιν ἐπηρώτων· πῶς ὁ μὲν, τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν φησὶ καθῆσθαι τοῦτον ἐκδεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς·¹¹² αἴτιος γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἄνω γεννήσεως λόγον· Στέφανος δὲ ἐκδεξιῶν εἶδεν ἐστῶτα,¹¹³ ὁ δὲ τῶν ἀποριῶν τούτων ἀκροατῆς, καὶ ταύτης τῆς ζητήσεως ἀπολύων, κρείττω ἀκοῆς εἶπεν εἶναι τὴν ἐρώτησιν, καὶ οἰκτεῖον καιρὸν ἔχειν τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως. ἐγὼ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου πόθου ἐλκόμενος, προσάγαγε εἶπον τῷ τοιοῦτῳ καιρῷ τάχιον ἐν θερμῇ τῇ καρδίᾳ δεόμενος, καὶ μὴ¹¹⁴ τῆς καλῆς στερήσεως ἐφέσεως. ἐκεῖνος δὲ τοῦ λυποῦντος με ἀπαλλάττων, οὕτω τὸν καιρὸν ἔλεγε παρεῖναι· οὕτω γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν ἀνάπτων πῦρ ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀναφλέγεται. ταύτην οὖν τὴν ὀπτασίαν ἀπαγγελίας, οὐ μεγαλαυχεῖ, ἀλλ' ἄνοιαν ἐαυτῷ προσάπτει· οὐκ οἶδα λέγων εἶτε ἐν τῷ χοῦ ταῦτα τεθέαμαι, εἶτε καθ' ἑαυτόν, τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνιπατέμενης πρὸς τὸ κρείττον, καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐπὶ βραχὺ καταλιπούσης, τοῦ πρὸς αὐτὴν συνδέσμου κεχωρισμένον καὶ τῆς ἀνακράσεως.¹¹⁵

REFERENCES

Sources

- Gregorius Nazianzenus. *De filio*, Or. 30: Grégoire de Nazianze. *Discours 27-31 (Discours théologiques)*. Ed. Paul Gallay. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970 (Sources Chrétiennes 250).
- Gregorius Nazianzenus. *In sanctum Pascha*, Or. 45, PG 36, 623-664.
- Jean Chrysostome. *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu*. Ed. A.-M. Malingrey. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970 (Sources Chrétiennes 28bis).
- Joannes Scholasticus (Sinaita, Climacus). *Scala paradisi*: Sancti patris nostri Ioannis Scholastici Abbatis Montis Sina qui vulgo Climacus appellatur. *Opera omnia*. Ed. Matthaeus Rader. Paris, 1633; *Κλίμαξ* τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου, καθηγουμένου τοῦ Σιναίου Ὁρους. Ed. Sophronios [Rhaidestinos]. Constantinople, 1883; Translated from Greek into English: John Climacus. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Translation by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell; Notes on Translation by Norman Russell; Introduction by Kallistos Ware; Preface by Colm Luibheid. London: Paulist Press, 1982; Translated from Greek to Italian: Giovanni Climaco.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. 2 Cor. 5:16.

¹¹⁰ ὁμόθεον] ὁμόθρονον C

¹¹¹ Greg. Naz. *In Sanctum Pascha*, Or. 45, 13, PG 36, 641A.

¹¹² Cf. Lc. 22:69.

¹¹³ Cf. Act. 7:56.

¹¹⁴ μὴ] s.l. C

¹¹⁵ καὶ μὴ ... ἀνακράσεως] Phot. *Amphil.* Qu. 273.46-55 Westerink.

- La Scala*. Traduzione e noti di Luigi d' Ayala Valva, Introduzione di John Chryssavgis. Magnano: Edizioni Qiqajon, 2005; Translated in Church Slavonic: Lestvica. Moscow, 1647.
- Michaelis Pselli *Theologica* I. Ed. P. Gautier. Leipzig, 1989.
- Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, vol. VI, fasc. 1: Amphilochiorum pars tertia. Rec. L.G. Westerink. Leipzig: Teubner, 1987: 64-66.
- Φωτίου πατριάρχου *Σχόλια εἰς τὰς πνευματικὰς πλάκας Ἰωάννου τοῦ τῆς Κλίμακος, συλλεγένητα ἐκ τοῦ 93 κώδικος τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις χειρογράφων τῆς μονῆς τοῦ τιμίου Σταυροῦ τῶν Ἰβήρων*. Ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus. In *Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik* 31, t. XI, issue 1 (1892): 21-24 [23.13-24.32]
- Plato. *Phaedo*. In Burnet J. *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900 (repr. 1967): 57a-118a.
- Porphyrus. *Sententiae ad intellegibilia ducentes*. Ed. E. Lamberz. Leipzig: Teubner, 1975.

Secondary Bibliography

- Antonopoulou, Theodora. "The "Brief Exegesis of John Climacus' Heavenly Ladder" by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos. Remarks on its Nature and Sources". *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 57 (2007): 149-168.
- Chryssavgis, John. *John Climacus: from the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain*. London-New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Fr. Maximos Constat. "Introduction". In St. Maximos the Confessor. *On Difficulties in Sacred Scripture: The Responses to Thalassios*. Transl. by Fr. Maximos Constat. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018 (The Fathers of the Church. A New Translation. Vol. 136): 2-60.
- Gouillard, Jean. "Un ravissement de Jean Climaque: extase ou artifice didactique?" In *Byzantium. Tribute to Andreas N. Stratos*, vol. II: Theology and Philology. Athens, 1986: 445-459.
- Hainthaler, Theresia. *Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2, part 3: The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Hofman, G. "Der hg. Johannes Klimax bei Photios." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 7 (1941): 461-479.
- Lauritzen, Frederick. "Psellos the Hesychast. A Neoplatonic reading of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (*Theologica* I.11 Gautier). *Byzantinoslavica* LXX, no. 1-2 (2012): 167-179.
- Lourié, Basile. "Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur: l'origine de l' « hérésie des physéthésites »". *Scrinium* 4 (2008): 201-227.
- Papaioannou, Stratis. *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Rodionov, Oleg. "Historical and Literary Context of Michael Psellos' *Theologica* 59". *Scrinium* 4 (2008): 228-234.

INCORPOREALS IN THE ONTOLOGY OF CREATED BEINGS IN THE BYZANTINE PHILOSOPHY OF MICHAEL PSELLOS

DENIS WALTER¹

ABSTRACT. In this contribution I tried to show that Psellos has a complex understanding of the ontology of the being of incorporeal entities that is shaped mainly from a Christian position but also supplemented by the methodological use of positions from ancient philosophy. There is surely a lot more to say about this problem, but I think the classical notions of soul or forms cannot be very easily included into Psellos philosophical framework. His discussion with the pagan philosophy is not only complex but depends also on the circumstance and context of the problems he is discussing in specific texts. Regarding incorporeal beings, he seems to advocate the existence of angels and souls while forms do not seem to have an own ontological realm between God and sensible cosmos. The question of Platonic forms as the thoughts of gods is tricky. On the one side Psellos points to God as direct cause of creation, on the other side he holds back on characterizing God's thoughts.

Keywords: forms, incorporeals, creation, ontology, Platonism.

I. Introduction

Several interpreters of Psellos pointed out that the relationship between pagan Platonism and Christianity cannot always be clearly determined in his works. Sometimes he seems to identify the two with each other, sometimes he seems to assert the superiority of the Christian position.² This lead at times to a divided reading of Psellos, separating the Christian Psellos from the Neoplatonic Psellos.³ I would like to take this problem as a general basis for my argument, in which I want to look at an aspect of the ontology of

¹ *Post-Doc, Institut für Philosophie, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Deutschland.*
Email: dwalter@uni-bonn.de.

² cf. O'Meara 1998, 438-439; Lauritzen 2010, 288

³ e.g. Miles 2017, 84

created being as he presents it in different writings⁴ – more precisely I want to investigate what position he has regarding incorporeal objects. This question is crucial for the evaluation of Psellos' philosophical position and his relation to pagan writers, since it comprises the key problem of how he understands and uses Platonic forms in his thought. We will see that he takes up the question in different argumentative contexts that recommend a synoptic reading of different passages. I will thus collect relevant texts and try to extract a coherent position from them as far as it is possible.

II. The creation as *συναμώτερον*?

From the many statements Psellos uses to describe creation, one of the most explicit can be found in Psell. *Theol.* 1.6, 57-64 Gautier. Psellos says regarding the status of the cosmos:

ἔμοι δὲ κόσμος οὔτε ἡ ὕλη δοκεῖ, τὸ ἄμορφον εἶδος, τὸ ἀδιατύπωτον αἴσχος, οὔτε τὸ εἶδος (οὐ γὰρ πεποίκιλται τοῦτο οὐδὲ κεκόσμηται), ἀλλὰ τὸ συναμώτερον ἦτοι τὸ ἐξ ὕλης καὶ εἶδους συνεσθηκός. τὸ γὰρ τοῦ κόσμου ὄνομα ἀποτέλεσμα οἷόν ἐστι δυεῖν, κοσμοῦντος καὶ κοσμουμένου· κοσμεῖ μὲν γὰρ τὸ εἶδος, κοσμεῖται δὲ ἡ ὕλη· κόσμος δὲ οὐδέτερον, ἀλλὰ τὸ συναμώτερον. κατ' ἀμώτερα οὖν ὁ φιλόσοφος κατορθοῖ, καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν κόσμον λέγων καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων σύγκριμα· ἄμφω γὰρ ἐξ ὑποκειμένου καὶ εἶδους συνεστήκατον. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.6.57-64 Gautier)

But it seems to me that the cosmos is neither matter, the formless form, the unformed ugliness, nor the form (for this is neither ornamented nor ordered), but the *συναμώτερον*, which is unified from matter and form. For the name cosmos is a result, as it were, of two, the ordering and that which is ordered: For the form orders, but matter is ordered. Cosmos, however, is neither of the two, but the *συναμώτερον*. According to both, therefore, the philosopher proceeds correctly by calling also heaven cosmos and the composite whole of the elements. For it is composed of both the underlying and the form.

This clearly formulated passage with reference to Aristotle immediately raises several questions: Does Psellos really mean here by cosmos the entire creation or only the *κόσμος αἰσθητός*? And are there no other ontological levels

⁴ Psell. *Theol.* I 6; *Theol.* I 10; *Theol.* I 11; *Theol.* I 20; *Theol.* I 32; *Theol.* I 49; *Theol.* I 51; *Theol.* I 52; *Theol.* I 53; *Theol.* I 56; *Theol.* I 75; *Theol.* I 76; *Theol.* I 79; *Theol.* I 90; *Theol.* I 107 Gautier *Phil. Min.* I 7 Duffy; Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.4; *Phil. Min.* II 5, *Phil. Min.* II 35 O'Meara; *De omnifaria doctrina* chapters 21-29, 84 Westerink.

between *κόσμος αἰσθητός* and God, which he indicates here by the term εἶδος?⁵ Psell. *Theol.* 1.6 Gautier does not give us any satisfactory answer to this problem. But a look at e.g. Psell. *Phil. Min.* 2.4, 2.5 and 2.35 Duffy immediately allows the assumption that Psellos could have regarded at least the *νοῦς* and the world-soul as independent levels of being that stand between *κόσμος* and God. And since Psellos in Psell. *Theol.* 1.49, 26-27 Gautier, for instance divides being into the corporeal and incorporeal we can safely ask the rhetorical question: What else could incorporeal mean besides the classical concept of *κόσμος νοητός*? It thus seems that the passage from Psell. *Theol.* 1.6 Gautier mentioned above takes into account only a part of creation, namely the sensible world, leaving out the higher realm of being. Such an interpretation could emphasise the Neoplatonic continuity in Byzantine – or for that matter Psellian – thought by further reference to *De omnifaria doctrina* chapters 21-29 Περὶ νοῦ Westerink, where Psellos frequently makes use of Proclus' ET or for that matter to chapter 84, where he talks about Platonic forms. His reassurance, recurring in different occasions, that in general some of the Hellenic theology is useful for the Christian faith⁶, may consolidate the assumption that he was not averse to the Neoplatonic ontology and, overtly or covertly, integrated it into his so called Christian-Neoplatonic philosophy. However, there is also another side of the problem: a clear statement about what incorporeal beings could exactly be has not been formulated by him in the passages mentioned. The references to the *νοῦς* and the world-soul are always portrayed as Greek or Platonic beliefs, but never praised by statements of approval. Let us thus take a look at other passages in order to formulate a more comprehensive view of his position regarding incorporeal entities.

III. Incorporeal entities

a. Angles as incorporeal entities

I want to start with a remark we find in Psell. *Theol.* 1.52, 16-20 Gautier. In addressing the question of whether God is corporeal or incorporeal, Psellos makes a distinction that informs us also about creation. Psellos writes:

Ἐπεὶ γὰρ, φησὶν, 'οὐ σῶμα ὁ θεός, λείπεται δὴ ἀσώματον ὑπολαμβάνειν', ἀντιφάσει γὰρ ἔοικε ταῦτα, τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ ἀσώματον, ὧν μέσον οὐδέν, ὥστε εἴ τι μὴ σῶμα, τοῦτο ἀσώματον ὑπολαμβάνειν χρεῶν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν γεννητῶν ἔχει χώραν ὁ δεύτερος λόγος, ἐπὶ δὲ θεοῦ κενοφωνία τίς ἐστὶν ἢ ἀντίφρασις. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.52, 16-20 Gautier).

⁵ A first approach to the passage in Walter (2017, 54ff.)

⁶ e.g. *Phil. Min.* II 35, pp. 118,17-19 Duffy

He [Gregory of Nazianzus, DW] says “God is not body, and it consequently remains to assume that he is incorporeal” and this seems to resemble a contradiction: the body and the incorporeal have no middle, so that it follows that if something is not a body, it is necessary to assume it as incorporeal. But this second thought has place with things that have come into being, but with God the logical contradiction is a kind of empty talk.”

Although Psellos here criticises the attempt to apply logical methodology to God, his statement contains an important piece of information about creation: both, he writes, belong to the things that have become, the corporeal and the incorporeal. The fact that the incorporeal is counted among the γεννητά does not necessarily have any further implications, about its perishability or the like. But this statement calls again into question the assumption about our opening passage from Psell. *Theol.* 1.6, 57-64 Gautier, that the cosmos as *συναμφότερον* could mean the whole of creation, in that the incorporeal is also explicitly singled out as an independent realm of creation. Just a little later in Psell. *Theol.* 1.52 Gautier, we find a second remark that helps us narrow down Psellos’ position, i.e. a reference to the taxonomy of creation where he writes that God is above the incorporeal⁷, emphasizing thereby also the higher status of the incorporeal compared to the corporeal.

While in Psell. *Theol.* 1.52 Gautier he does not explain in more detail what the incorporeal could exactly be, we can find in Psell. *Theol.* 1.51 Gautier a reference to the ontological status of angels. He writes that they neither consist of ether⁸, nor do they have shapes⁹ or soul chariots¹⁰, but are simply incorporeal. The reason he gives is not immediately clear since his position seems to be formed only by rhetorical questions (18-20, 27-29, 51-52) and assertions (67-70). However, in the following lines¹¹ he gives us a clue in his argument against Proclus and Porphyry: Angels, he writes in his critique of the pagan philosophers, are without matter; but what exists without matter is by definition also without body, for matter always (παντῶς) occurs as formed (εἰδοποιηθεῖσα): *ergo* as body. Those who want to attribute bodies to angels must therefore also claim that they have matter in the sense of πρώτη ὕλη, which Psellos in turn positions ontologically at the lower end of creation, most distant from God.¹² Since angels are positioned immediately (ἀμέσως) around the divine¹³ they cannot have a share in matter and must thus be incorporeal. So not only do we have a first

⁷ οὕτω δὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀσώματον ὄν, Psell. *Theol.* 1.52. 26-27 Gautier

⁸ Psell. *Theol.* 1.51, 12 Gautier

⁹ *morphas*, Psell. *Theol.* 1.51, 17 Gautier, *tropos ... schématōn*, Psell. *Theol.* 1.51, 19 Gautier

¹⁰ *ochēmata*, Psell. *Theol.* 1.51, 22 Gautier

¹¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1.51, 22-27 Gautier

¹² cf. Psell. *Theol.* 1.56, 26-33 Gautier

¹³ cf. Psell. *Theol.* 1.51, 62-64 Gautier

category of entities that are incorporeal, we find also an explanation for their incorporeality – however unsatisfactory it may be for the moment – namely their proximity to God.

This quite short argument finds a complement in a difficult passage of Psell. *Theol.* 1.10, 30-40 Gautier, where Psellos goes on to explain the hierarchies in creation and where he states better what it means to be close to or distant from God – both in the incorporeal and in the corporeal realm:

Διὰ σοφίας τοίνυν τὰ μὲν νοητὰ πρῶτα, τὰ δὲ αἰσθητὰ δεύτερα πεποίηκεν ὁ θεός, ὅτι τὰ μὲν σύνθετα, τὰ δὲ ἀπλᾶ· δευτέρα δὲ ἡ σύνθεσις τῆς ἀπλότητος. διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν τὰ ἀπλούστερα τῶν συνθετωτέρων προῆλθε. πολὺ δὲ βάθος κἀν ταῖς ἀπλότησι κἀν ταῖς συνθέσεσιν· ὅθεν οὔτε τὰ ἀπλᾶ πάντα ὁμότιμα οὔτε τὰ σύνθετα, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἐγγίζει θεῶ τῶν ἀπλῶν, ἐκεῖνα τῶν ἀπωτέρω οὐσιωδέστερα καὶ κρείττονα· ὅσα δ' αὖθις τῶν αἰσθητῶν πλησιάζει τοῖς νοητοῖς, ἐκεῖνα τῶν κατωτέρω λεπτομερέστατά τε καὶ καθαρώτερα, ὡσπερ δὴ οὐρανὸς μὲν τοῦ ὑπὸ σελήνην πυρός, ἐκεῖνο δὲ τοῦ μετ' αὐτὸ ἀέρος καὶ ἀήρ ὕδατος καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς γῆς· αὕτη γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων παχυτέρα καὶ δυσμετάβλητος καὶ μᾶλλον ἀναπεπλησμένη τῆς ὕλης. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.10, 30-40 Gautier)

Out of wisdom God made the intelligible things first, but the perceivable things second, because the ones are composite, the others simple: but composite is subordinate to simple. Therefore, the simpler preceded the more composite. But there is much depth both among the simple and the compound: Since neither the simple are all equally venerable, nor the composite, all those of the simple who come close to God are in a stronger sense being and more powerful than the more remote: all those again of the perceptible who approach the intelligible are made up of very small parts, and are very clean in comparison with those further down, as certainly the sky in comparison with the sublunary fire, and that with the air which comes after it, and the air with the water, and the water with the earth. For the latter is thicker than the other elements and difficult to change and filled with matter.

What is important for our investigation of incorporeal objects here is how he expands on the reason for the hierarchies: It does not result from an increasing simplicity or unity of the incorporeal entities - for everything incorporeal is simple *per se*. Proximity and distance from God must, of course, not be understood in spatial terms, as he says on another occasion¹⁴, but finds its explanation with reference to virtue. The notion Psellos uses here in Psell. *Theol.* 1.10 is “ἐγγίζει θεῶ” and it goes back to Gen. 18, 23. It is understood in older interpretations as effect of virtue: Gregory of Nazianzus and also by Basil

¹⁴ ...αἱ δὲ ἐγγύτητες αὐταὶ οὐ κατὰ τοπικὴν συνέλευσιν γίνονται..., Psell. *Theol.* 1.32, 109-110 Gautier

the Great refer to Moses stating in resembling wording that one approaches God by good deeds (*di'... praxeis agathas eggus ginetai tou Theou*¹⁵). Psellos now takes up exactly this train of thought in Psell. *Theol.* 1.11, 36-41 Gautier where he describes “ἐγγίζει θεῶ” as follows:

ἀλλ’ ὅσα μὲν ἐγγίζει τῷ θεῶ, ταῦτα δὴ καὶ καθαρωτέρας τοῦ θείου τὰς ἐμφάσεις ἐμφαίνει, ὥσπερ δὴ τὰ καθ’ ἡμᾶς χερουβιμ καὶ ἡ σύμπασα τῶν ἀγγέλων τάξις, ὅσα δὲ ἀπώκισται, ἐν τούτοις ἀμυδροτέροις εἶδεσι τὸ θεῖον ἐξεικονίζεται. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.11, 36-41 Gautier)

All those things which are come close to God, these of course also show the purer reflections of God, as Our cherubim and the whole order of angels; but all those which are remotely situated: The divine is delineated in these weaker forms.

With the contrast between reflections (ἐμφάσεις) and things delineated (ἐξεικονίζεται) – a possible reference to the Platonic allegory of the cave from the Republic book 7 – Psellos means that the different intensity of God's reflection in incorporeal things finds its explanation in a kind of strength and permanence in them. It is given in a stronger degree to angels and in a lesser degree to human beings¹⁶:

καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ δυνάμει καλοῦ εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖα προχωροῦμεν· κἂν ἀποπέσωμεν τοῦ κατ’ ἐνεργεῖαν ἀγαθοῦ, πάλιν εἰς τὴν δύναμιν ἀντιπεριαγόμεθα, ἀφ’ ἧς αὖθις ἡ ἐπάνοδος γίνεται· ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ὁδὸς ἐστὶ πρὸς ἐνεργεῖαν. ἄγγελος δέ, εἶδος ὦν τὸ καθαρῶτατον καὶ αὐτοδύναμος ἐνεργεῖα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐνεργεῖα ἄχραντος...

And we do progress from the potentially good to the actively; but if we fall away from the good in activity, we are, on the other hand, brought back into potentiality, from which the ascent begins again. The potentiality is a road to the activity. But the form of an angel is a very clean and self-empowering activity, even more an immaculate activity...

I take the οὐσιωδέστερα καὶ κρείττονα in Psell. *Theol.* 1.10, 33-35 Gauthier thus not to refer to Platonic forms, but to the hierarchy of angels. And it seems, then, that Psellos truly distinguishes a corporeal part of creation from an incorporeal part and that the first entities that belong to the incorporeal part are the angels. The taxonomy of their ranks is described according to the traditional interpretation of “ἐγγίζει θεῶ” by the virtue and constancy of their activity.

¹⁵ Basilios the Great *Homiliae super Psalmos* 29, p. 380, 14 Migne

¹⁶ Psell. *Theol.* 1.29, 113-117 Gautier

b. The incorporeality of the soul

Having found that for Psellos angels have a prominent position in the category of the incorporeal part of creation and having found a preliminary answer to our question whether by cosmos in Psell. *Theol.* 1.6, 57-64 Gautier Psellos means the whole of creation or also assumes a κόσμος νοητός we now also have to pursue the question whether he does integrate also other presumably incorporeal entities into his understanding of creation.

The soul has an interesting double mode of being, at times incorporeal at times corporeal, a difference that gives the explanation to why it is not always called *psychê* but is also at times called *πνεῦμα*.¹⁷ In Psell. *Theol.* 1.34, 6-10 Gautier Psellos explains:

ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβῆ λόγον ἀδιάστατός ἐστι τὴν φύσιν καὶ ἀμερής, ἐν ἡμῖν δὲ γενομένη μεμέρισται, οὐκ αὐτὴ διαστάσα καὶ μερισθεῖσα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ὑποδεξαμένου αὐτὴν σώματος κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν μεριστῶς ἐκείνην λαβόντος, διὰ ταῦτά φησιν ὁ προφήτης ‘ὅτι πνεῦμα διήλθεν ἐν αὐτῷ’. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.34, 6-10 Gautier)

For since the soul, according to the precise concept, is nature without extension and undivided, but divided when it came into being in us, without being extended and divided, but because the body receiving it, according to its proper nature, received it divided, therefore the Prophet said that “the soul extended in it”.¹⁸

This position reminds us of different other passages where Psellos distinguishes the conditions of the soul, living by itself and living with the body.¹⁹ However, the well-known passage from the *Chronographia*²⁰ does, to

¹⁷ Cf. Psell. *Theol.* 1.76, 26-27 Gautier; cf. Walter (2017, 70-74).

¹⁸ Cf. Psell. *Theol.* 1.34, 19-20 Gautier

¹⁹ Cf. O’Meara 2012, 155

²⁰ Psell. *Chron.* 6a8 Reinsch in Sewter’s Translation: “According to my observations, I distinguish three kinds of soul, each having a character of its own. The first type is that which lives in isolation, by itself, freed from the body, unbending and altogether incapable of compromise; the other two I have examined in the light of their co-existence with the body. For instance, if the soul, despite the deep and numerous emotions to which it is subject, chooses to live the life of moderation, as though it were the exact centre of a circle, then it brings into being the man who plays his part in public affairs. Such a soul is neither really divine nor entirely concerned with the apprehension of spiritual things, nor yet overprone to indulge the body, nor subject to passion. On the other hand, if the soul turns aside from this middle course and marches on the path that leads to low, base passions, then it produces the voluptuous and the sensual man. Suppose then that someone were able to step outside the bounds of all things pertaining to the body, and take up his position at the height of spiritual perfection, what would he have in common with the world around him? ‘I have put off my tunic,’ says the Scripture, ‘and how shall I put it on again?’ By all means let him go up his high and lofty mountain: let him stand with the angels, so that unearthly light may be shed upon him: let him

my mind, not contain a Neoplatonic position even if the wording might suggest so. It is true that Psellos distinguishes there the different ways of existence of the soul, but he does not evaluate them according to the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues; the details point to a different direction: As F. Lauritzen (2013) rightly shows, the passage is a long critique of the *ἀπάθεια* as a way of life. And it is also true that Psellos discusses the political man here living a life between the two extremes. However, I don't think the passage advocates the Damascian position of a "mixed life". Damascius explains that intellectual activity is not without pleasure. Speaking about the mixture of intellect and pleasure, he points at the pleasure of cognition, not at bodily pleasure.²¹ Psellos instead clearly speaks about a political activity that is firmly rooted in the sensible world, requiring and believing it possible for this sensible world. It is a mildness that Leo Paraspondylos does not provide. His argument is in my view thus basically an ontological one, not an ethical one. The life separated from the body is neither desirable, nor possible:²²

εἰ δ' οὐδεις τῶν πάντων τῆς φύσεως τοσοῦτον κατεκαυχῆσατο,
No one on earth has ever triumphed over the force of nature to such an extent
[...]. (Sewter)

Rather Psellos understands the life separated from the body in the light of Psell. *Theol.* 1.34 Gautier as the time after bodily death, as he says only shortly before in the passage from *Chronographia* 6a7.9-12 Reinsch:

"Ἐγὼ γ' οὖν τὴν στάθμην τῆς τοιαύτης γνώμης θαυμάζω μὲν, αἰῶσι μὲν ἀλλ' οὐ
χρόνοις πρόσφορον ἡγήμαι, καὶ βίῳ τῷ μέλλοντι ἀλλ' οὐ τῷ ἐφειρηκότι.
(*Chronographia* 6a7.9-12 Reinsch)

I myself admire the inflexibility of such a mind, but its proper place, in my opinion, lies not in time, but in eternity: not in this present life, but in the existence hereafter. (Sewter)

In research literature the position is found that Psellos here integrates the Neoplatonic doctrine of the levels of virtue with the Aristotelian position about the ethical virtues as middles. In the Neoplatonic theory the different

separate himself from men and avoid their society. No one on earth has ever triumphed over the force of nature to such an extent, but if this imaginary person were by chance entrusted with the direction of state affairs, I would counsel him to take matters in hand like a man dealing with his fellow-men, not to pretend that he was endowed with the unerring straightness of a ruler, for not all have been made equally perfect. If he renounces all deviation from the path of moral rectitude, it naturally follows that he at once rejects also those who traverse the crooked path."

²¹ cf. van Riel 2000, 149-155; and 165 about mild and violent pleasure.

²² Cf. also Reinsch (2015, book VI FN 256)

levels can be reached by virtuousness. But Psellos here denies the possibility to achieve the highest step, detaching the soul from the body. Thus, I understand it as disconnected from the classical ethical discussion in Neoplatonism about virtue, because it refers only to the time after death where soul and body are separated until resurrection. Thus, in my opinion the passage cannot be supported by further references to e.g. Psell. *De omnifaria doctrina* 66-81 Westerink that reproduce more clearly Neoplatonic positions.

c. Platonic Forms

In Psell. *Theol.* 1.79 Gautier, Psellos comments on Maximus Confessor's *λόγοι* theory and criticises it²³ as follows:

ἔστι δὲ ὃ φησι τοιοῦτον. πρὸ τῶν ἀτόμων εἶδη τινὰ τίθησιν, οὐ πάντι ἐνταῦθα τοῖς ἔξω φιλοσόφοις ἀντικείμενος· ἕκαστον δὲ τῶν εἰδῶν ἀπλοῦν τε δίδωσι καὶ ἑαυτῷ ὁμοιον, ὁποῖόν ἐστι καὶ τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, πρὸ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀνθρώπων νοούμενον καὶ ἐν ἀπλότητι γνωριζόμενον· (Psell. *Theol.* 1.79 Gautier)

But such is what he says: Before the individuals he placed some forms, not entirely opposed to those of the pagan philosophers. But he gave each form as simple and similar to itself, in which way also the human form is intelligible before the individual human beings and is recognised in simplicity.

Only a little later, however, he distances himself from this position; in Psell. *Theol.* 1.79, 115-124 Gautier writes:

ἃ δὲ πρὸ τῆς τοῦ παντός ὑπάρξεως ἐθεώρησεν, αὐτῷ ἂν ἢ διῆλα τῷ μόνῳ θεῷ. ἐνάγει δὲ με πρὸς τὸν λόγον καὶ ὁ μέγας Βασίλειος, ‘πρεσβυτέραν τινὰ κατάστασιν’ τοῦ παρόντος κόσμου ἀποφαινόμενος, ἐν ἧ δεδημιουργῆσθαι τὰς ὑπερκειμένας τάξεις θεολογεῖ. κἂν τοῦτον δὲ τις ἀναιροίη τὸν λόγον, ἀλλὰ τό γε τοὺς λόγους ἔχειν τῶν μελλόντων συστήναι ‘τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν’ οὐκ ἂν τις ἀντίποι νοῦν ἔχων, τοῦτο δ’ ἀντικρὺς ἐστὶ τὸ θεωρεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ὡσπερ ἡ φύσις τοὺς λόγους ἔχει τῶν γινομένων ἀνεπαισθήτως, οὕτω δὴ καὶ θεὸς ἀνενόητος τῶν ἐσομένων ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ προθεωρῶν πάντα ἀρρήτως καὶ ὑπερουσίως, οἶδεν ἐν τίνι μέρει χρόνου τάδε ἢ τάδε γενήσεται. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.79, 115-124 Gautier)

What he thought before the existence of the universe is clear only to God himself. But the great Basilios convinced me of this thought when he set forth that before the present cosmos there was “an older institution” in which he says that the higher orders were created. And even if someone were to do away

²³ ἔστι δὲ ὁ λόγος ἀσαφής μὲν καὶ δυσεἰκαστος...; 75

with the thought, no one in his right mind could contradict that “God who is above all” made that the things to come have reasons; but this is contrary to thought. For he does not have the reasons like the nature of things coming to be in an unnoticed way - God, therefore, is not ignorant of things to come, but knows them all in advance in an ineffable and in a supernatural way; he knows at what time this and that will happen.

With Basil the Great, Psellos here hints at an “older institution” known only to God. The difference to the Middle-Platonic position is that Psellos does not speak of ideas “in” God, nor does he separate the *νοῦς* in a Neoplatonic manner, putting it at a lower level between God (the One) and sensible being, but he remains quite vague about the content of this “older institution” and God’s knowledge. The only thing we can learn from this passage is that God is the cause of creation and providence; the ultimate determinable cause of creation is however the divine will *βούλησις*.²⁴

While these two passages speak against a *κόσμος νοητός* of the Middle- or Neoplatonic kind in Psellos writings, the third text that I want to present seems to assert the opposite and opens up another possibility of interpretation: in Psell. *Theol.* 1.90, 29-31 Gautier for example, Psellos declares that everything, both thinkable and perceptible, was present “in” God, but neither separate, nor mixed - a reminiscence of the Calcedonian formula; Psellos further writes affirmatively that God is full of true wisdom, philanthropy and goodness and is himself paradigm for the world. So we might suppose that at least here references to Platonic forms might be meant by these attributes of God; A closer look however shows that none of these expressions are about Platonic forms, but discuss the way we can talk about God. In Psell. *Theol.* 1.76, 80-83 Gautier Psellos retreats to the position that all such designations are ultimately due only to the defectiveness of our language and do not set forth the “content” of God’s thoughts. To a similar enumeration that has its roots in Plato’s *Sophist*, he writes thus:

κοινῶς τε νοῦν μὲν τὴν τριάδα προσαγορεύομεν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ ὄν, οὐχ ὅτι νοῦς ἐστίν, οὐδ’ ὅτι κυρίως ὄν, ἀλλ’ ὅτι μηδὲν ἔχομεν τούτων παρ’ ἡμῶν τιμιώτερον, ἢν’ ἐκεῖνο τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν κατονομάσωμεν.

Together we call the Trinity intellect and life and essence and being, neither because it is intellect nor because it is being in the proper sense, but because we have nothing more valuable than this with us to call its nature with.

²⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1.53, 82-85 Gautier

There are, however, also passages that seem much more Platonic in character. In Psell. *Theol.* 1.107, 100-104 Gautier, for example, Psellos explicitly speaks of separate forms above or beside the individuals.

φησὶ γὰρ ὡς ἔστι τις καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν οὐσία εἶδος ὀνομαζομένη, ἀνθρώπειον δὲ τοῦτο ἢ ἵππειον ἢ βόειον, ἢ ἄλλο τι τοιουτότροπον ὑπὲρ ταῦτα ἢ παρὰ ταῦτα· ὑφ' ἕκαστον δὲ τῶν εἰδῶν ἄτομα πολλὰ διηρίθμηνται, ἀνθρώποι, ἵπποι, βόες, κατὰ τὰ παραδείγματα τῶν εἰδῶν, ὀρισμὸς δὲ πᾶσι τοῖς ὑπὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀτόμοις εἷς. (Psell. *Theol.* 1.107, 100-104 Gautier)

For he says that there is also among us a being called form; but this is a human, equine, bovine, or some other such thing above or beside them. Under each form are divided many things according to the models of the forms, men, horses, cattle, but the definition is one for all individuals under the form.

This particularly dense passage is, according to Psellos, based on the statement of Gregory of Nyssa. A close reading reveals its rich and presuppositional content; for Psellos here distinguishes not only individuals (ἄτομα) from forms (εἶδη), but also forms from definitions (ὀρισμοί) and λόγοι - forms and beings (οὐσία) he in turn identifies with each other. A look at the description of the term logos (111) further shows that it is dependent on the *eidōs* together with the shape (μορφή) and the definition (ὀρισμός, 116-117). The form (μορφή) depends on the εἶδος either κυρίως or ὁμωνυμῶς (115-116). The second type, i.e. ὁμωνυμῶς, occurs, for example, in the case of images, where shape and definition differ: The drawn human being, for example, is modelled on the sensual human being in terms of form, while the definition “rational”, “mortal” etc. does not apply to him (116-117).

In addition to this complex ontological and epistemological dependencies, it is also striking that Psellos at one point describes forms by adjectives as if they were qualities (100-101) and refers to individual human beings as human beings in the proper sense (κυρίως ἀνθρώποι, 110-111). It seems as if Psellos in this passage first processes all three main positions regarding forms (*ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*) in order to then take a position himself and return to the real question of the text, that of the nature of God:

Ὡσπερ οὖν ἡμῖν τοῖς κατὰ μέρος ἀνθρώποις καὶ αὐθις τοῖς κατὰ μέρος ἀγγέλοις μία τις εἰδικὴ οὐσία συμπέφυκεν, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τριῶν ὑποστάσεων, πατρός φημι καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἀγίου πνεύματος, μία τις οὐσία καὶ φύσις ἐστὶ θεότητος καὶ κλήσις. (118-121)

Just as we, the individual human beings, and in turn also the individual angels, are endowed with a form-like being, so also with the three hypostases; I mean of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is a being of some kind, a nature and name of the deity.

ἡμῖν γὰρ μία θεότης τὸ σεβόμενον, ἦν δὴ καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ φύσιν καὶ μορφήν οἱ θεοὶ πατέρες κατωνόμασαν, ἄτμητον, ἀμέριστον, ἀδιάστατον, κἄν ἐπινοίαις τισὶ διαιρουμέναις συνδιαίρηται καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα. (136-138)

For us, the worshipped is a deity that truly the divine fathers called being and nature and form, indivisible, undivided, unexpanded, yet through divided considerations the names were also divided in the process.

Despite the modes of *εἶδη* enumerated before, it can be seen that Psellos here also describes an Aristotelian-like position of universalia *in re*, as we saw in the lines 110-111. The main message of this extremely complicated text, however, is that Psellos, rejects a “form” of God separated and above the trinity (118-121).

IV. Proclus' role in Psellos' ontology

Already Zervos (1919, 153) drew on the text, now edited as *Phil. Min. II* 5 Duffy, to explain Psellos' ontological position. What is presented there is a collage of Proclus' interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus*, explaining the world-soul through the circles of the same and the different and their movements. Only a little before²⁵, Psellos also offers the mathematical interpretation of the Platonic passage, incorporating the Proclean *Commentary on the Timaeus*. For Zervos, Psellos thus presents a position strongly influenced by Proclean neoplatonism, although sometimes supplemented by references to Jamblich or other pagan thinkers. Robinson has shown, however, that many of Psellos' uses of Proclus are merely methodological and should not be overstated.²⁶

There is a lot to say about the connection between Proclus and Psellos as is also reflected in the growing contributions in research literature to this problem. But if we return to the initial text Psell. *Theol.* 1.10 Gautier, for which we noted that Psellos could refer to angels as incorporeal entities, we will see that he surprisingly draws on Neoplatonic material not for the incorporeals but for the description of the corporeal world.²⁷ The physical world seems to be structured by the following principles: On the one hand, by the existence of the

²⁵ *Phil. Min.* 2.4 Duffy

²⁶ Robinson 2020, 59

²⁷ See the passage again in its entirety: Διὰ σοφίας τοῖνον τὰ μὲν νοητὰ πρῶτα, τὰ δὲ αἰσθητὰ δεύτερα πεποίηκεν ὁ θεός, ὅτι τὰ μὲν σύνθετα, τὰ δὲ ἀπλᾶ· δεύτερα δὲ ἡ σύνθεσις τῆς ἀπλότητος. διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν τὰ ἀπλούστερα τῶν συνθετωτέρων προῆλθε. πολὺ δὲ βάθος κἂν ταῖς ἀπλότησι κἂν ταῖς συνθέσεσιν· ὅθεν οὔτε τὰ ἀπλᾶ πάντα ὁμότιμα οὔτε τὰ σύνθετα, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἐγγίζει θεῶ τῶν ἀπλῶν, ἐκεῖνα τῶν ἀπωτέρω οὐσιωδέστερα καὶ κρείττονα· ὅσα δ' αὐθις τῶν αἰσθητῶν πλησιάζει τοῖς νοητοῖς, ἐκεῖνα τῶν κατωτέρω λεπτομερέστατά τε καὶ καθαρώτερα, ὥσπερ δὴ οὐρανὸς μὲν τοῦ ὑπὸ σελήνην πυρός, ἐκεῖνο δὲ τοῦ μετ' αὐτὸ ἀέρος καὶ ἀήρ ὕδατος καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς γῆς· αὕτη γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων παχυτέρα καὶ δυσμετάβλητος καὶ μᾶλλον ἀναπεπλησμένη τῆς ὕλης.

elements, which in a certain sense can be called simple, and on the other hand, by the additional features of the decreasing size of these elements and their purity when they are particularly “close” to incorporeal things. Now the arguments for the corporeal world are taken from Proclus' *Commentary on Timaeus*, which in 2.40, 3-10 asserts the proximity of fire to heaven as well as the low position of the element earth; on the other hand, it refers to the passage 2.51, 20-28 of the *Commentary on Timaeus* which asserts a mixture and thus impurity of low-level elements. In the direct confrontation between Proclus and Dionysius Areopagites in Psell. *Theol.* 1.10 Gautier the latter seems to have the authority regarding incorporeal beings. I want to suggest that this arrangement is to a certain extent also reflected in the *Chronographia* 6.38 and 42, where Psellos says:

Ἐντεῦθεν οὖν ὀρμηθεὶς αὔθις ὥσπερ περὶ ὁδὸν ἐκπληρῶν ἐς Πλωτίνους καὶ Πορφυρίου καὶ Ἰαμβλίχου κατήειν, μεθ' οὓς ὁδῶν προβαίνων εἰς τὸν θαυμασιώτατον Πρόκλον ὡς ἐπὶ λιμένα μέγιστον κατασχών, πᾶσαν ἐκεῖθεν ἐπιστήμην τε καὶ νοήσεων ἀκρίβειαν ἔσπασα· μέλλων δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην ἀναβαίνειν φιλοσοφίαν καὶ τὴν καθαρὰν ἐπιστήμην μυεῖσθαι, τὴν περὶ τῶν ἀσωμάτων θεωρίαν προύλαβον ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις μαθήμασιν, ἃ δὴ μέσην τινὰ τάξιν τετάχεται, τῆς τε περὶ τὰ σώματα φύσεως καὶ τῆς ἀσχέτου πρὸς ταῦτα νοήσεως,

Starting from here, I went in circles, as it were, to thinkers like Plotinus, Porphyrios and Jamblich. After these, proceeding methodically, I anchored with the admirable Proclus as in a vast harbour and from there absorbed every kind of knowledge and accuracy of thought. But since I then wanted to ascend to the first philosophy and be initiated into pure knowledge, I first acquainted myself with the doctrine of immaterial things in the so-called sciences (which occupy an intermediate position between the nature of the bodies and the knowledge independent of them, of the entities themselves, to which pure thinking corresponds) [...] (transl. on the basis of Reinsch 2015).

Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐστὶ τις καὶ ὑπὲρ ταύτην ἐτέρα φιλοσοφία, ἣν τὸ τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς λόγου μυστήριον συμπληροῖ, (καὶ τοῦτο δὲ διπλοῦν καὶ φύσει καὶ χρόνῳ μεμερισμένον [...])

But since there is another philosophy that stands above this one, which has as its content the mystery of our [i.e. Christian] Logos [...] (transl. on the basis of Reinsch 2015).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Psellos, M. *Theologica* I. Ed. 1989 P. Gautier. Leipzig.
- Psellos, M. *Philosophica Minora* II. *Opuscula Psychologica, Theologica, Daemonologica*. Ed. 1989 D. J. O'Meara. Leipzig
- Psellos, M. *Philosophica Minora* I. *Opuscula Logica, Physica, Allegorica, Alia*. Ed. 1992 J. Duffy. Leipzig.
- Psellos, M. *Das Leben der byzantinischen Kaiser (976-1075)*. *Chronographia* übers. D. R. Reinsch in Zusammenarbeit mit L. H. Reinsch-Werner. 2015. Berlin, Boston.
- Lauritzen, F. 2010, *L'Ortodossia Neoplatonica di Psello*, in: *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* (47), 285-291
- O'Meara, D. J. 2012. „Political Philosophy in Michael Psellos: The Chronographie Read in Relation to his Philosophical Work”. In *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*. Hg. K. Ieradiakonou und B. Byden, Athens, 153–170.
- Lauritzen, F. 2013 „The Mixed Life of Plato's Philebus in Psellos' Chronographie (6a.8)”, *Zbornik radova Vizantologog instituta*, 399–409.
- Miles, G. 2017, *Psellos and His Traditions*, in Mariev, S. (ed.), *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism*, Berlin, Boston, 79-102.
- Robinson, J., 'A Mixing Cup of Piety and Learnedness': Michael Psellos and Nicholas of Methone as Readers of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, in Calma, D. (ed.), *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, vol. 2, Leiden, 56-93.
- Proclus' *Elements of Theology* Van Riel, G. 2000, *Pleasure and the Good Life. Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists*. Leiden.
- Walter, D. 2017, *Michael Psellos – Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz. Mittelalterliche Philosophie im Verhältnis zu Antike und Spätantike*. Berlin, Boston.
- Zervos, C., 1919, *Un philosophe neoplatonicien du XIe siecle: Michel Psellos, sa vie, son oeuvre, ses luttes philosophiques, son influence*. Paris.

**II. PAPERS FROM THE PSELLOS ROUND TABLE,
PRESENTED AT THE XXIIIrd INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF BYZANTINE STUDIES IN BELGRADE (2016)**

**MICHEL PSELLOS, ADMINISTRATEUR PUBLIC
ET GESTIONNAIRE DE SES BIENS**

JEAN-CLAUDE CHEYNET¹

ABSTRACT. Michel Psellos, Public Administrator and Manager of His Own Fortune. Michael Psellos had a brilliant career as a bureaucrat and advisor for numerous emperors. Thanks to the positions he occupied, he established a network. His activities increased considerably, but it seems that he was not satisfied with the administration of his personal fortune and that he did not leave a considerable inheritance. He lost a considerable sum because of a court case and because of a theft due to his negligence. His fortune consisted mainly of lifetime possessions and depended on imperial fortune which he did not retain until the end of his life. This weakness explains why he did not manage to establish an enduring fortune and why his successors were impoverished.

Keywords: property, administration, patronage.

Michel Psellos, le grand intellectuel du XI^e siècle, fut aussi un homme d'action. Il accomplit une magnifique carrière politique, certes en connaissant des moments de disgrâce. Les activités de Psellos peuvent être considérées sous deux points de vue : le serviteur de l'Etat et le gestionnaire de ses propres biens. Sur le premier point, je serai beaucoup plus bref, l'ayant par ailleurs traité récemment². Pour en juger, nous ne disposons que de textes provenant de la main de Psellos et chacun sait que ce dernier avait une tendance marquée à l'autosatisfaction.

¹ *Professeur émérite, Département d'Histoire, Sorbonne Université, France.*
Email: jean-claude.cheynet@wanadoo.fr.

² J.-Cl. Cheynet, *L'administration provinciale dans la correspondance de Michel Psellos*, dans *Byzantium in the Eleventh Century*, éd. M. Lauxtermann et M. Whittow (Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies 19, Oxford 2017), 45-59.

Le serviteur de l'Etat

Psellos commença sa carrière publique comme *grammatikos* de l'empereur Constantin Monomaque. Ses qualités le firent remarquer et progresser au sein de l'administration, au gré de l'appréciation des empereurs à son égard. Un moine nommé Phérébios avait, dans une lettre, critiqué Psellos, qui avait lui-même à ce moment embrassé la carrière monastique, estimant qu'il pourrait prendre la place de ce dernier. Il lui fut opposé avec ironie et un peu d'arrogance les qualités nécessaires à cet emploi de conseiller du prince, dont Phérébos était dépourvu : il fallait travailler durement, avoir une connaissance quasi divine des hommes et des affaires de ce monde, deviner l'avenir et savoir rédiger...³ Lorsque l'impératrice Théodora parvint au pouvoir, Léon Paraspondylos, son principal ministre, offrit à Psellos un poste que l'intéressé jugea médiocre et indigne de lui. Psellos tenta de faire intervenir auprès de Léon un juge, le magistrat Psèphas, pour obtenir meilleur traitement⁴. Il avait été très tôt initié au métier de fonctionnaire thématique, en entrant dans la suite d'un juge, un Kataphlôros lui-même issu d'une illustre famille de dignitaires civils. Psellos fut juge du thème des Bucellaires, qui n'était pas le plus prestigieux de l'Empire, mais n'était pas trop éloigné de la capitale. On ignore à quel moment de sa vie se situe cet épisode et plusieurs hypothèses sont possibles⁵. Il fut sans doute aussi juge des Thracésiens, poste plus glorieux, si la Philadelphie, qualifiée de simple *chôrion*, est bien celle de ce thème⁶. De ses activités de juge, Psellos retient que Môrocharzanès, l'un de ses successeurs comme juge des Bucellaires, ne put dénoncer un jugement qu'il avait lui-même rendu après enquête, soulignant que Môrocharzanès n'avait pas sa compétence. Il se montre également très sensible à l'excellent accueil que lui aurait fait la population de Philadelphie, lorsqu'il était revenu dans ce thème après y avoir un temps exercé la fonction de juge. Certains habitants se souvenaient de lui et l'entourèrent en l'embrassant, avant de lui présenter une demande d'intercession pour un allègement fiscal.

Rien ou presque dans l'œuvre de Psellos, notamment dans ses lettres, ne nous informe ni sur son activité de juge ni sur ses décisions. Ce qui ressort de sa correspondance avec d'autres juges, c'est la bonne connaissance de la fiscalité qu'avait Psellos. Cependant, il fait plus souvent appel à l'amitié du juge qu'à des arguments juridiques pour faire aboutir ses demandes. En fait, Psellos exerça peu de temps en province. La majeure partie de sa vie, à l'exception de

³ Psell. ep. 275, 665-671 Papaioannou; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 392.

⁴ Psell. ep. 284, 689-692 Papaioannou; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 400-401.

⁵ Voir la note 2.

⁶ Psell. ep. 306, 716-718 Papaioannou; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 349-350.

son retrait temporaire dans le monastère bithynien de la Belle-Source, il vécut à la cour de Constantinople, où il se transforma en « lobbyiste », principalement sous Constantin Doukas dont il fut un conseiller apprécié, à un moment où ses anciens élèves occupaient des postes importants dans l'administration civile. En cette qualité, il rédigeait des documents à présenter à un juge pour que celui-ci dispose d'arguments en faveur du protégé de Psellos⁷. C'est la facette du personnage que nous connaissons le mieux, car la majeure partie de ses lettres concerne ses interventions en faveur de ses amis auprès de juges qu'il connaît, et en faveur des fonctionnaires envoyés en province qui, craignant les calomnies de cour, redoutaient de perdre la faveur impériale, source d'avancement et de richesses. Psellos agit comme une véritable agence de placement pour ses anciens élèves, qui n'étaient pas tous issus de la très haute aristocratie, et aussi pour des parents sur lesquels il ne donne guère d'information.

Dans ce type d'activité, le rôle du porteur des lettres doit être souligné. Il se confond souvent avec le bénéficiaire d'une recommandation de Psellos. Lorsqu'un de ses protégés se rendait dans un poste provincial, il emmenait avec lui des instructions pour son employeur, le plus souvent le juge du thème. Psellos montre de la compassion, intercédant auprès du juge de Macédoine Chasanès, pour qu'un notaire, Michel, dont l'épouse était extrêmement malade, puisse quitter son poste, contrairement au règlement, pour les quelques jours qui lui permettraient soit de consoler l'épouse, soit d'assister à ses funérailles⁸. Nombre de ceux qui sollicitent son aide sont des hommes d'Eglise, le métropolitain de Cyzique⁹, celui de Sozôpolis¹⁰, de Panion¹¹... Est-ce que Psellos avait éduqué aussi une partie du futur haut clergé qui se recrutait dans le même milieu que celui des administrateurs civils et, dans ce cas, on comprendrait bien l'inquiétude du patriarche Michel Cérulaire à propos des idées philosophiques que répandait Psellos ?

⁷ Psell. ep. 361, 765 Papaioannou : une lettre pour l'évêque de Noumérika ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 320.

⁸ Psell. ep. 278, 673-674 et n° 178, 472-473 Papaioannou, à propos d'une intervention de même type en faveur d'un notaire et sa mère ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 328-329 et 357-358.

⁹ Psell. ep. 265, 643 Papaioannou, Psellos intercède en sa faveur auprès du juge de l'Egée pour qu'il aide à la restauration de l'église métropolitaine ébranlée par le terrible séisme de 1063 ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 348.

¹⁰ Psell. ep. 298, 707-709 Papaioannou. Psellos demande à un juge des Anatoliques d'accueillir l'évêque dans son cercle d'amis, c'est-à-dire de protégés, et de traiter ses affaires en toute justice ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 329-330.

¹¹ Psell. ep. 337, 744-745 Papaioannou. Il s'agit à nouveau d'introduire un évêque parmi les familiers du juge de thème, dans ce cas, celui des Thracésiens ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 329-330.

Ces interventions comportaient des avantages matériels, car les solliciteurs accompagnaient souvent leur demande de cadeaux parfois non négligeables¹². Toutefois Psellos devait lui-même entretenir par l'envoi de dons l'amitié qui le liait à des personnages très influents comme le César Jean Doukas. Mais globalement la balance penchait sûrement en faveur de Psellos, d'autant qu'il omet de mentionner les épices que lui valurent ses activités de juge et de rédacteur de documents officiels.

Psellos fut aussi appelé à rédiger des chrysobulles diplomatiques qui exigeaient, outre la connaissance du protocole, le sens de la mesure et de la précision à propos des clauses concrètes. Nous n'avons pas conservé les chrysobulles que Psellos écrivit pour le calife fatimide pour le compte de Constantin Monomaque, mais, avec sa modestie habituelle, le rédacteur se targue, dans la *Chronographie*, d'avoir corrigé les formules trop humbles que l'empereur adressait au calife. En revanche, nous pouvons encore apprécier le talent de Psellos lorsqu'il rédigea le chrysobulle en faveur de Robert Guiscard, au nom de Michel VII Doukas¹³.

Les sources de richesse de Psellos¹⁴

La gestion par Psellos de ses biens personnels ne fut pas toujours, semble-t-il, une réussite. Il n'a pas hérité d'une fortune familiale substantielle et même s'il a fait un beau mariage avec une épouse de souche impériale¹⁵, qui a pu lui apporter un dot, sa richesse lui fut principalement octroyée par les empereurs dont il fut l'ami, situation qui n'avait rien d'original. Encore fallait-

¹² Sur le rôle des cadeaux, voir en dernier lieu, F. Bernard, Exchanging Logoi for Aloga: Cultural Capital and Material Capital in a Letter of Michael Psellos, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 35.2 (2011) : 134-148 ; Idem, Greet me with words. Gifts and intellectual friendships in eleventh-century Byzantium, in *Geschenke erhalten die Freundschaft. Gabentausch und Netzwerkpflege im europäischen Mittelalter: Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums Münster, 19.-20. November 2009*, M. Grünbart (éd.) (Byzantinistische Studien und Texte 1, Munster 2011), 1-11.

¹³ H. Bibicou, Une page de l'histoire diplomatique de Byzance au XI^e siècle : Michel VII Doukas, Robert Guiscard et la pension des dignitaires, *Byzantion* 29/30 (1959-1960) : 43-75.

¹⁴ La formation du patrimoine des juges, dont celui de Psellos, a été décrite par G. Weiss, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, Munich 1973), 126-154.

¹⁵ Psellos est fort discret sur son épouse. Il n'y fait allusion que comme la mère de sa fille Styliane qui avait dans son ascendance des gouttes de sang impérial. Compte tenu du prénom de la fille, l'hypothèse la plus vraisemblable serait de voir en elle une descendante de Stylianos Zaoutzès, père de l'une des épouses de Léon VI (*Michel Psellos, portraits de familles*. Textes traduits et commentés par J.-Cl. Riedinger et C. Jouanno, avec le concours de V. Déroche (Monographies 48, Paris 2015, 227) ; Anthony Kaldellis (trad.), *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters. The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*. With contributions by David Jenkins and Stratis Papaioannou, (Notre-Dame Indiana 2006).

il bien jouer sa partie lors des troubles qui affectèrent la vie politique byzantine après le règne de Monomaque. Son coup de maître fut de se faire nommer membre de l'ambassade de Michel VI auprès d'Isaac Comnène en 1057. Il aurait lui-même choisi ses compagnons, Constantin Leichoudès et Théodore Alôpos¹⁶. Le premier devint protovestiaire avant d'être ensuite promu au patriarcat, le second obtint sans doute la charge de logothète du drome¹⁷. En apparence Psellos, déjà moine, fut moins bien servi, sinon qu'il obtint un accès très aisé aux empereurs Isaac Comnène et Constantin Doukas.

En tant que l'un des très proches familiers de plusieurs *basileis*, Psellos obtint un palais en viager¹⁸ et une grande abondance de *nomismata*, notamment par les *rogai* de plus en plus élevées dont il bénéficia au fur et à mesure des promotions obtenues au cours de sa carrière. Vestarque dès 1054, il aurait reçu quatorze livres de *roga* et, un plus tard, promu à la dignité alors exceptionnelle de proèdre¹⁹ pour qui n'appartenait pas à la famille impériale, il bénéficiait peut-être annuellement de vingt-huit livres d'or²⁰. Il gronde Constantin, neveu de Cérulaire, de jalouser sa promotion qui le plaçait au-dessus de ce dernier, alors protoproèdre et *épi tôn kriséôn*²¹. Psellos fut sans doute alors promu curopalate. Un point reste incertain. Dans quelle mesure un moine touchait-il une *roga* ? Katakalon Kékauménos, entré au monastère, se plaignait de ne pas avoir reçu la sienne. Était-ce un retard de paiement, ou l'empereur Constantin X Doukas considérait-il qu'un moine n'était plus en position de recevoir une *roga* ?

Le cas de Psellos est encore plus complexe, puisque, devenu moine, il poursuivit son *cursus honorum*, promu à des dignités supérieures, bénéficiant

¹⁶ *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, Herausgegeben von D. R. Reinsch (Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. = Millennium Studies in the culture and history of the first millennium C.E., 51, Berlin - New York 2014), 214 et *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, H. Thurn (éd.) (CFHB V, Series Berolinensis, Berlin - New York 1973), 496. *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811-1057*, translated by J. Wortley with Introduction by J.-Cl. Cheynet and B. Flusin and Notes by J.-Cl. Cheynet, (Cambridge 2010), 461.

¹⁷ Il est probable que l'Alôpos sans prénom, proèdre et logothète du drome, auquel Psellos adresse une curieuse lettre, est Théodore (Psell. ep. 17, 43-44 ; Jeffreys - Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 352.

¹⁸ Psellos, *Chronographie*, 253-254. Sur le caractère viager des donations impériales de palais, cf. Magdalino, *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople*, (Aldershot 2007), 48.

¹⁹ Sur les dignités de Psellos au cours de sa carrière, cf. Jeffreys - Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 426.

²⁰ J.-Cl. Cheynet, Dévaluation des dignités et dévaluation monétaire dans la seconde moitié du XI^e siècle, *Byzantion* 53 (1983), 470-471, repris dans Id., *The Byzantine Aristocracy and its Military Function*, (Aldershot - Burlington, 2006), n. VI. L'auteur s'appuie sur les estimations antérieures d'Hélène Ahrweiler (Lemerle, *Roga*, 94), mais cela reste des estimations, comportant donc une part d'hypothèse, à l'exception de quelques dignités comme celle de protospathaire, qui a, tout au long du XI^e siècle, donné droit à une livre d'or.

²¹ Psell. ep. 129, 337-340 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys - Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 163-164.

même de celle d'hypertime, créée pour lui par Constantin X. Tout semble indiquer que la tonsure n'a pas affecté ses revenus, du moins tant qu'il bénéficia de la faveur impériale. Il reste, à mes yeux, un sujet d'étonnement : comment un fonctionnaire si bien rémunéré pouvait-il chercher à augmenter ses revenus par des investissements dont il déclare lui-même qu'ils étaient de rentabilité médiocre ? La sincérité des informations de Psellos est souvent mise en doute, mais Michel Attaleiatès offre dans la partie autobiographique de sa *Diataxis* le même genre de propos sur la difficulté de se constituer un patrimoine foncier²². Il reste encore à comprendre comment fonctionnait le circuit économique de la *roga*. Même si le nombre de fonctionnaires et de dignitaires était réduit pour administrer un si vaste empire, le paiement de leur *rogai* pesait lourdement sur les revenus fiscaux. Il faut supposer que le fonctionnaire bénéficiaire d'une *roga* devait payer non seulement sa domesticité, mais aussi les fonctionnaires subalternes qu'il employait dans ses missions, comme, par exemple, les notaires d'un juge²³. La part de la *roga* du bénéficiaire en était diminuée d'autant et les surplus limités.

L'amitié des empereurs valut à Psellos de recevoir le *basilikaton* de Madyton, en Thrace. Il confia cette charge qui comprenait des droits fiscaux à un homme qui, après une compétition redoutable, gagnait le droit de l'exercer. La compétition portait sans doute sur la somme que Psellos touchait pour lui avoir concédé le *basilikaton*²⁴. Il reçut aussi des dignités qu'il distribuait à sa guise, comme celle de protospathaire qu'il remit à son futur gendre, Elpidios Kengkrès, et qui valait vingt livres d'or. Ce dernier reçut dans les mêmes conditions la dignité de patrice, qui lui fut enlevée, et dont nous ignorons donc à quel prix elle était comptée²⁵. Curieusement, les charges de « petit » notaire, mystographe et juge du Velum, elles aussi conférées au jeune homme, ne semblent pas avoir eu de valeur marchande. Il faut y ajouter tous les cadeaux reçus en remerciements de ses interventions auprès des *basileis*. Il s'enrichit sans doute aussi en tant qu'enseignant, car il choisissait ses élèves parmi les meilleures familles de Constantinople, mais ce n'est pas l'argent qu'il obtenait qui importait le plus. De même, consul des philosophes, il avait sans doute, avec Jean Xiphilin, une sorte de monopole de formation aux fonctions d'Etat, ce qui lui permit de

²² Gautier, *Diataxis*, 27, 53.

²³ Les fonctionnaires vénitiens étaient traités de cette façon, peut-être en raison d'un ancien modèle byzantin. Les délibérations des assemblées vénitiennes précisent le salaire des fonctionnaires envoyés dans les territoires dépendant de Venise, en Crète, à Négrepont, Modon... Elles précisent aussi le nombre de serviteurs à payer sur ce salaire et le nombre de chevaux qu'ils devaient avoir à leur disposition et même parfois leur prix minimum (à titre d'exemple, F. Thiriet, *Délibérations des assemblées vénitiennes concernant la Romanie: 1160-1463*, (Paris, 1966), 35 (29 avril 1272), 74 (10 décembre 1297).

²⁴ Psell. ep. 228, 593-594 et n° 36, 772-774 Papaioannou; Jeffreys - Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 200-201.

²⁵ Lemerle, *Roga*, 87-88.

bénéficiaire de ce réseau exceptionnel d'amis haut placés. Mais cette activité ne fut pas à l'origine directe de sa fortune, sinon par les liens sociaux qu'il a tissés à cette occasion, car nous ignorons la *roga* d'un *hypatos* des philosophes, mais elle était sans doute comparable à celle du *nomophylax*, fixée à quatre livres d'or²⁶. Comme tout Byzantin soucieux d'assurer la pérennité de sa famille au sein de l'aristocratie, Psellos s'est constitué un patrimoine foncier. Il ne fait jamais allusion à un héritage, ce qui conforte l'idée qu'il n'était pas issu d'une riche famille²⁷. Psellos se montre, il est vrai, avare de renseignements concernant ses parents, excepté sa mère. Un seul petit bien, appelé Agros, était peut-être d'origine patrimoniale, car il est mentionné dans une lettre à Jean Mauropous, vraisemblablement écrite entre 1034 et 1038²⁸.

Mais, comme la mésaventure du vol qu'il subit nous le révèle, Psellos avait les moyens d'acheter des biens fonciers avec ses surplus en numéraire. Si l'on considère la fortune de Michel Attaleiatès, celle-ci s'est bâtie sur des achats en toute propriété, notamment à de proches parents. Au contraire, il est clair que la plus grande partie du patrimoine foncier du consul des philosophes fut acquise grâce à l'institution du charisticariat, qui est peu présente dans le patrimoine d'Attaleiatès²⁹. Est-ce que Psellos a également acquis des biens propres qui n'auraient pas nécessité une protection fiscale spécifique et n'auraient donc pas eu de raison d'être mentionnés dans la correspondance de l'intéressé ? Rappelons qu'un charisticaire pouvait recevoir un monastère en bonne condition et en toucher les revenus, une fois l'entretien des moines assuré³⁰.

²⁶ Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 209. La somme peut paraître assez faible, mais la charge d'enseignant ne supposait pas de disposer d'un important personnel subalterne.

²⁷ Les deux personnages dont nous pouvons connaître l'historique de leurs fortunes, Michel Attaleiatès et Grégoire Pakourianos, sont également partis de rien, car les deux ont laissé leur part d'héritage à leurs sœurs restées sur place, le premier de son plein gré, le second, à contrecœur (Gautier, Attaleiate, 19 et Gautier, Pakourianos, 93).

²⁸ Psell. ep. 243, 610-612 Papaioannou; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos* 175. Bien que Agros soit situé près de Médikion, comme le monastère de Mégas Agros, l'identification du premier avec le second est peu vraisemblable.

²⁹ Gautier, Attaleiate, 47. Il s'agit d'un monastère près de Rhaidestos, certainement très modeste, car il bénéficiait d'une allocation de trois *nomismata*.

³⁰ Sur le charisticariat, voir entre autres, H. Ahrweiler, *Charisticariat et autres formes d'attribution de fondations pieuses aux X^e-XI^e siècles*, ZRVI 10 (1967), repris dans *Études sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance*, (Variorum Reprints, Londres, 1971), n° VII, 1-27 ; Lemerle, Charisticariat ; J. Darrouzès, Dossier sur le charisticariat, *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dölger*, (Heidelberg 1966), 150-165 ; M. Kaplan, Les monastères et le siècle à Byzance au XI^e siècle, *Cahiers de Civilisation médiévale* 27, 1984, 71-83 (80 concernant Psellos) repris dans Id., *Byzance. Villes et campagnes* (Les médiévistes français 7, Paris 2006), 123-137 ; M. Bartousis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium : The Institution of Pronoia*, (Cambridge 2012), 153-160.

Le charisticaire

Psellos obtint en charisticariat une série de monastères dont la liste est difficile à dresser. Les références se trouvent, en effet, dans son abondante correspondance. Comme Psellos n'emploie pas systématiquement un vocabulaire technique, il est possible qu'on ait vu en lui non pas un charisticaire, mais un éphore chargé de veiller aux intérêts d'un couvent, qui, en principe, ne bénéficiait pas de ses revenus, ou même un simple protecteur³¹. Ainsi, les rapports entre Psellos et le couvent constantinopolitain de Ta Narsou ne sont pas très clairs, il pourrait en être le charisticaire, tant il veille à la défense des biens du couvent, et c'est ainsi que l'a compris Michael Jeffreys³². Hélène Ahrweiler a donné une liste très complète des monastères dont Psellos a pu être le charisticaire³³. Michael Jeffreys donne une liste plus restrictive, mais, en analysant les informations sur ces établissements contenues dans la correspondance, il a tenté d'évaluer à quel moment ils sont entrés dans son patrimoine³⁴.

Tous les charisticariats détenus par Psellos ne provenaient pas de donations impériales. Certains furent obtenus en association avec d'autres charisticaires. Les lettres de Psellos révèlent une partie des tractations engagées. Il a enquêté avant de placer ses économies et s'est parfois associé à d'autres investisseurs, par exemple lors de l'acquisition de Trapéza³⁵. Dobrosôn lui avait été donné par un certain Théotistos³⁶. Il s'en remet à l'entremise du métropolitain de Cyzique pour obtenir le monastère d'Artigénès, ou à défaut celui de Moundania, sans qu'on sache à quel titre ce métropolitain pouvait intercéder. S'agissait-il de monastères métropolitains, ou le prélat cumulait-il une charge patriarcale, comme l'économat, et avait alors à ce titre autorité sur les monastères patriarcaux ? Il est difficile d'établir la chronologie de ses acquisitions. Il commença dès l'époque de Constantin Monomaque, puisque dans une lettre

³¹ Cf. les remarques prudentes de Lemerle (Charisticariat, 22). Sur le rapport entre un couvent et son éphoros, cf. H. Ahrweiler, Charisticariat, 11-13. K. Smyrlis estime toutefois que la différence était en réalité assez minime (*La fortune des grands monastères byzantins, fin du x^e - milieu du xiv^e siècle* (Monographie des Travaux et mémoires 21, Paris 2006), 179 et n. 503).

³² Dans le résumé de la lettre, Psell. ep. 267, 646, M. Jeffreys traduit οἰκίτωρ par *charistikarios* (Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 375), là où Gautier choisit « habitant », faisant allusion au séjour de Psellos dans l'établissement (Ta Narsou, *REB* 34 (1976) : 107).

³³ Ahrweiler, Charisticariat, 24-27 : La Théotokos Acheiropoiètos, Artigénès, Dobrosôn, Kathara, Médikion, Mégala Kellia, Môsès (monastère de), Moundania, Ta Narsou, Pègè (La Belle Source), Sakellinè (?), Smilakai, Thaumaturgos, Théotokos (en Thrace), Trapéza.

³⁴ Jeffreys et Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 51-56 : La Théotokos Acheiropoiètos, Agros, Artigénès, Dobrosôn, Kathara, Médikion, Mégala Kellia, Moundania, Ta Narsou, Trapéza.

³⁵ Psell. ep. 215, 577-578 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 185.

³⁶ Psell. ep. 299, 708-709 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 213.

où il fait allusion à sa tonsure prochaine, donc au plus tard de 1054, il demande à Zômas, juge de l'Opsikion, de renoncer à son droit d'hospitalité à Médikion³⁷. En s'appuyant sur le classement chronologique des lettres de Psellos, M. Jeffreys considère qu'il possédait plusieurs monastères avant le règne d'Isaac Comnène³⁸.

La plupart de ces couvents se trouvaient en Bithynie, dans le thème de l'Opsikion : Médikion, Kathara, Mégala Kellia, Moundania. Un autre était situé dans le thème du Boléron, pas très loin de Thessalonique, Dobroson. Le sixième, Trapéza, d'emplacement incertain, était sis dans l'un ou l'autre thème puisque Psellos adresse sa demande au « fils de la drongaire », qui a été juge dans l'Opsikion et en Thrace-Macédoine³⁹. Quant au monastère de Ta Narsou, établi à Constantinople, ses biens étaient, au moins en partie, dans le thème de l'Egée⁴⁰.

La situation de ces établissements, à proximité de la capitale, rendait leur gestion plus facile à contrôler. La richesse de ces couvents nous est inconnue, mais elle n'était sans doute pas aussi modeste que le prétend Psellos, puisque plusieurs d'entre eux avaient traversé les siècles. Or une longue durée d'existence suppose un adossement à un patrimoine foncier considérable. Ceux de Kathara, de Médikion et des Kellia, connus de longue date, semblent à leur apogée au IX^e siècle et abritent un nombre considérable de moines, ce qui ne signifie pas que c'était toujours le cas au XI^e siècle⁴¹. Kathara est attesté dès le VI^e siècle, et les deux autres depuis le VIII^e siècle. Selon Psellos, Médikion était hypothéqué, ce qui, toutefois, n'empêcha pas ce couvent de survivre jusqu'à l'époque ottomane. Ajoutons que le couvent de Kathara détenait une icône de la Vierge que Psellos jugeait en tout point admirable⁴², et qui faisait peut-être l'objet d'un pèlerinage. Le couvent constantinopolitain de la Vierge Acheiropoiètos, dit aussi des Abramites, n'était pas médiocre. Remontant au moins au VI^e siècle, situé près de la Porte Dorée, apprécié de Nicéphore Phocas, le monastère abritait une icône précieuse⁴³.

³⁷ Psell. ep. 91, 197 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 325.

³⁸ Jeffreys – Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 49-50.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 423.

⁴⁰ Gautier, Ta Narsou, 106-107. Psellos est considéré par les moines comme le *ktètôr* du monastère. C'est un titre qui est donné au bienfaiteur d'un établissement qu'il a restauré et sauvé de la ruine. Psellos a sans doute agi à titre de charistacaire, même si le terme technique n'est pas employé, mais il peut aussi en être devenu le propriétaire.

⁴¹ Sur le sort des monastères bithyniens de Psellos, cf. R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*. 1, 2, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galésios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique)*, Paris 1975 : Kathara, 158-160, Kellia, 160-161, Médikion, 165-168.

⁴² Psell. ep. 484, 903-904 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 259.

⁴³ R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*. 1, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique*. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, Paris 1969². 4-6.

Ta Narsou possédait des biens misérables et même déficitaires, dans le thème de la Mer Egée, mais Psellos ajoute qu'ils étaient nombreux⁴⁴. Ce dernier point est sans doute plus juste que le premier, car le monastère survécut durablement⁴⁵.

La richesse de ces couvents avait sans doute subi des aléas depuis leur grandeur sous l'iconoclasme, mais globalement la condition économique de l'Empire était bien meilleure au temps de Psellos qu'au temps des Isauriens ou des Amoriens. L'impression donnée par les lettres de Psellos que ces couvents étaient au bord de l'extinction et de peu de rapport est donc trompeuse.

Les plus éclatantes réussites, quoique toujours temporaires, en matière de revenus provenant d'une fondation pieuse, sont à mettre au compte de Constantin Leichoudès, qui avait obtenu la « *pronoia* » des Manges, ou de Nicéphoritzès, administrateur à son profit de l'*oikos* de l'Hebdomon⁴⁶. Ces fondations impériales ne pouvaient être accordées que par les empereurs envers ceux de leurs ministres qu'ils rendaient ainsi immensément riches. Si Psellos se comparait à son ami Constantin Leichoudès, alors ses revenus lui apparaissaient bien médiocres.

D'après sa correspondance, Psellos s'est soucié d'investir intelligemment pour procurer des revenus à ses établissements. Il a aussi œuvré pour obtenir le plus d'exemptions fiscales possibles et n'a jamais hésité à rédiger des demandes au plus haut niveau, hors l'empereur, soit celui du juge de thème : par exemple, il écrivit au juge de l'Opsikion pour que son monastère de Médikion soit dispensé du droit de *kaniskion* du juge, ou pour que celui-ci tranche en sa faveur un conflit sur le partage de l'eau avec un voisin – sans doute pour l'irrigation ou l'usage pour un moulin⁴⁷ – ou éviter que les Kellia soient injustement taxés⁴⁸. Les percepteurs étaient la véritable hantise de ce propriétaire, soucieux d'augmenter ses profits récurrents.

Psellos n'a pas systématiquement accepté tous les charisticariats qui lui ont été proposés. La charge de charisticaire comportait en effet des obligations qui excédaient sans doute ses capacités d'investissement. D'autre part soutenir un monastère pouvait conduire à un engagement politique. Si Psellos a été sollicité, c'est aussi parce qu'il disposait d'une influence à la cour dont un higoumène attendait qu'il la mît au service de son établissement. Sa correspondance révèle qu'il a été à plusieurs reprises approché par des moines et qu'il a décliné leur offre. Des moines, qui étaient au nombre de quatre-vingts, venant sans doute

⁴⁴ Gautier, Ta Narsou, 106. Psell. ep. 261, 639 ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 229-230.

⁴⁵ Gautier, Ta Narsou, 105 (une mention en 1190).

⁴⁶ *Michaelis Attaliatae Historia*, rec. E. Th. Tsolakis (CFHB. Series Atheniensis 50), Athènes 2011, 155.

⁴⁷ Kurtz – Drexel, n° 140. Psell. ep. 350, 753-754 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 236.

⁴⁸ Kurtz – Drexel, n° 200.

du Ganos, se sont vu répondre qu'il n'avait plus, auprès des empereurs, l'influence qu'ils lui prêtaient⁴⁹.

Toutes les possessions de Psellos pouvaient asseoir l'influence de leur propriétaire, car il pouvait demander leur transfert à une personne de son choix, si le charisticariat était transmissible à deux personnes ou plus. Psellos agit ainsi en faveur d'Anastase Lizix, à qui il voulut confier Médikion⁵⁰. Psellos fut aussi chargé de la gestion des biens d'autrui, comme épitrope de Théodore Alôpos, un proche collègue, sans doute le membre homonyme de l'ambassade de 1057. Ce dernier était originaire de Rhodes et Psellos, après sa mort, écrivit au juge des Cibyrrhéotes pour que les enfants du défunt, sans doute mineurs, se voient restituer les terres et les animaux dont les voisins s'étaient illégalement emparés⁵¹.

Les infortunes de Psellos

Psellos subit aussi au cours de sa vie des pertes financières considérables. Un voleur lui déroba une importante somme en liquide, trois cents *nomismata*, conservée dans une bourse que l'intéressé avait laissé traîner dans sa demeure et dont il soupçonne qu'un serviteur l'aura dérobée, puisqu'il n'y a pas eu effraction, le laissant, dit-il ironiquement, dans une « pauvreté philosophique ». Car Psellos avoue aussi, dans la même lettre, qu'il préfère être esclave de l'or plutôt que d'être dépossédé⁵². La lettre peut être datée du règne de Constantin Doukas et M. Jeffreys réduit la fourchette aux années 1060-1061⁵³. Un tel magot semble supposer que l'intéressé recevait encore sa *roga* et que sa tonsure n'avait pas provoqué l'arrêt de la perception. Les achats fonciers auraient dû mettre Psellos à l'abri des revers de fortune, puisque les biens lui appartenaient en propre.

Il fut également dépossédé d'une partie de sa fortune à la suite d'un procès perdu, lorsqu'il dut offrir une compensation financière à Elpidios Kenchrès, fiancé de sa fille adoptive Euphèmia, lorsque les fiançailles furent ensuite rompues sous le prétexte de l'inconduite du jeune homme⁵⁴. Cette affaire, en dépit du long

⁴⁹ Psell. ep. 383, 798-799 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 382-383. Psellos était lui-même devenu moine et se trouvait éloigné des affaires publiques. Les moines lui proposèrent peut-être de prendre la tête d'un monastère ou de devenir *prôtos*.

⁵⁰ Psell. ep. 85, 180-181 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 263.

⁵¹ Psell. ep. 235, 601-602 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 192.

⁵² Gautier, *Lettres inédites* n° 13. Psell. ep. 66, 146-150 ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 160-161.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Assez curieusement, Psellos affirme que les sources d'or sont bouchées pour lui, ce qui suggère qu'il n'a plus accès aux libéralités impériales alors que règne Constantin X.

⁵⁴ R. Guiland, Un compte rendu de procès par Psellos, *Byzantinoslavica* 20 (1959) : 205-230, repris dans *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines* I, Amsterdam 1967, 84-143. Le texte est commenté dans Lemerle, *Roga*, 84-88.

hypomnèma qui en détaille le déroulement, reste obscure. Sans doute Psellos accuse-t-il le fiancé d'Euphèmia, Elpidios, de graves turpitudes, mais on peut se demander si la famille du jeune homme, de bonne condition⁵⁵, n'a pas jugé opportun de rompre le contrat alors que Psellos, sur lequel elle comptait pour assurer la carrière d'Elpidios, connaissait une disgrâce manifeste et s'éloignait de Constantinople pour l'Olympe de Bithynie. Psellos y perdit une partie des cinquante livres, somme considérable donnée en dot à sa fille adoptive, puisque *in fine* Elpidios conserva la dignité de protospathaire sans avoir à rembourser le capital. Ce dernier obtint en effet l'indemnité due en raison de la rupture jugée abusive de son contrat de mariage.

Il est difficile d'estimer la fortune que Psellos avait accumulée à la fin de sa vie. Nous n'avons pas conservé le *typikon* d'une fondation qu'il aurait créée, comme Michel Attaleiatès, qui semble avoir acquis près de cent livres d'or après une carrière moins brillante que celle de son illustre contemporain, mais aussi sans doute moins mouvementée⁵⁶. Psellos n'a pas suivi le modèle d'Attaleiatès pour assurer la pérennité de son patrimoine, à moins que Ta Narsou, où il était considéré par les moines comme un second *ktètôr*, n'ait joué pour lui le rôle du Christ Miséricordieux pour Attaleiatès. Au temps de l'impératrice Eudocie, il connut un recul de sa fortune, car il demanda un versement en numéraire, preuve que les revenus de son patrimoine étaient insuffisants pour son train de vie, alors qu'il était moine. Il essuya un refus, puisqu'il se plaint auprès de l'impératrice de l'injustice qu'il ressent⁵⁷.

Ses placements avaient l'inconvénient de se porter largement sur des propriétés possédées à titre viager, donc non transmissibles sans l'accord de celui qui a conféré les droits et cela explique peut-être qu'un petit-fils de Psellos, sous Alexis Comnène, en fut réduit à faire appel à la charité d'un très puissant personnage, Grégoire Kamatèros, par l'intermédiaire de Théophylacte d'Achrida⁵⁸. Cependant, à aucun moment Psellos ne fait allusion à une confiscation générale

⁵⁵ Jean Kenchrès, protospathaire, *épi tou Chrysotriklinou*, notaire impérial du *phylax* et *chrysotélès* des Anatoliques (second tiers du XI^e siècle) (*Sceaux de la collection George Zacos au musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève*, éd. M. Campagnolo-Poithou et J.-Cl. Cheynet, Genève 2016, n° 105). Deux autres membres de la famille sont connus : le moine Syméon (Psellos, *MB V*, n° 54), et Romain, attesté par un unique sceau, sans mention de dignité, ni de fonction (J.-Cl. Cheynet, C. Morisson, W. Seibt, *Les sceaux byzantins de la collection Henri Seyrig*, Paris 1991, n° 305).

⁵⁶ Lemerle, La diataxis de Michel Attaleiatès, dans *Cinq études*, 101-112. Attaleiatès finit proèdre après avril 1079 (Gautier, *Attaliate*, 16), alors que Psellos avait déjà atteint ce niveau en 1057.

⁵⁷ E. Limousin, La rhétorique au secours du patrimoine : Psellos, les impératrices et les monastères, in L. Theis, M. Mullett, M. Grünbart, G. Fingarova, M. Savage, *Female founders in Byzantium and beyond*, (Vienne 2014) 173-174 ; Gautier, *Lettres inédites*, no 35, 192-194 ; Psell. Ep. 157, 417-422 Papaioannou ; Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, 308-309.

⁵⁸ Théophylacte d'Achrida, *Lettres*, introduction, texte, traduction et notes par Gautier (CFHB 16/2, Thessalonique 1986), Lettre n° 27.

de ses biens et on ne voit pas pourquoi il aurait encouru une telle sanction. Il avait jusqu'à la fin de sa vie gardé des relations cordiales avec de puissants personnages comme Constantin, le neveu de Cérulaire. Il était tombé en disgrâce sous Michel VII, mais il n'était pas un adversaire de l'empereur dont il avait été le précepteur. Le père de son petit-fils était le second époux d'Euphèmia et, si l'hypothèse d'Era Van de Vries est exacte, il s'agirait de Basile Malésès⁵⁹, qui se rallia à une rébellion sans issue et y perdit tous ses biens, confisqués, malheur qui justifierait aussi la ruine de son fils, même si en principe les biens dotaux devraient être épargnés par une confiscation frappant l'époux.

Psellos fut assurément un meilleur spécialiste de la gestion des affaires publiques que de ses biens personnels, malgré toute l'attention qu'il y porta, mais son véritable héritage se trouve dans ses œuvres qui lui valurent une gloire immédiate et durable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahrweiler, Helene, "Charisticariat et autres formes d'attribution de fondations pieuses aux x^e-xi^e siècles". *ZRVI* 10 (1967), repris dans *Études sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance*, n° VII, (1971): 1-27.
- Gautier, Paul, "La diataxis de Michel Attaliate". *Revue des Études Byzantines* 39 (1981) : 5-143.
- Gautier, Paul, "Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées". *Revue des Études Byzantines* 44 (1986) : 111-197.
- Gautier, Paul, "Précisions historiques sur le monastère de Ta Narsou", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 34 (1976) : 101-110.
- Jeffreys, Michael, and Marc D. Lauxterman (eds.), *The Letters of Psellos. Cultural Networks and Historical Realities*. Ed. by M. Jeffreys and M. D. Lauxtermann, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Lemerle, Paul: "Un aspect du rôle des monastères à Byzance : les monastères donnés à des laïcs, les charisticaires". *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, no. 1 (1967) : 9-28, repris dans Id., *Le monde de Byzance: Histoire et Institutions*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1978.

⁵⁹ E. Van der Vries, Psellos et son gendre, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 23 (1999) : 109-149. M. Jeffreys accepte l'identification, quoiqu'elle soit dure à prouver (Jeffreys – Lauxterman, *Letters of Psellos*, excursus 3 421). Il subsiste un doute, car les lettres de Psellos à Malésès semblent toutes dater du lancement de la carrière de ce jeune juge, au début du règne de Constantin X. Pourquoi Psellos ne correspond plus avec son gendre après cette date puisque Basile n'est en disgrâce qu'au début du règne de Michel VII ?

Lemerle, Paul, *Cinq études : Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle*, Paris 1977.

Lemerle, Paul, "Roga et rente d'Etat aux X^e-XI^e siècles". *Revue des Études Byzantines* 25 (1967) : 77-100, repris dans Id., *Le monde de Byzance : Histoire et Institutions*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1978.

Papaioannou, Stratis (ed.), Michael Psellos, *Epistulae*, I-II (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana), Berlin and Boston, 2019.

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

DEJAN DŽELEBDŽIĆ¹

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

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Classics, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Email: dejan011@hotmail.com.

* I would like to warmly thank my former Professor Athanasios Markopoulos for the careful reading of an earlier version of this paper and the valuable suggestions he made, as well as the unknown reviewer.

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 Keneth 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 και 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: ὅσοι ἐβασίλευσαν / οἱ βασιλεύσαντες ἐν Ῥώμῃ / Κωνσταντινουπόλει or ὅσοι 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 vizantijskie 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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aerts W. J. (ed.), Michel Pselli *Historia Syntomos*, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 30, (Berolini 1990)
- Aerts W. J., Un témoin inconnu de la Chronographie de Psellos, *Byzantinoslavica* 61 (1980) : 1-16
- Αντωνόπουλος Παναγιώτης, Πέτρος Πατρίκιος: Ο βυζαντινός διπλωμάτης, αξιωματούχος και συγγραφέας, (Athens 1990)
- Banchich Thomas M., *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician: An Account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*, London – New York: Routledge 2015
- Cumont Franz (ed.), *Anecdota Bruxellensia I, Chroniques byzantines du manuscrit 11376*, (Gand 1894)
- Devreesse Robert, *Bibliothèque Nationale. Département des mss. Catalogue des mss grecs. II Le fonds Coislin*, (Paris 1945)
- Dželebdžić Dejan, Η Δημοκρατική Ρώμη στην πολιτική σκέψη του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 42 (2005) 23-34
- Dželebdžić Dejan, Ιστορία Σύντομος του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, unpublished MA Dissertation, (Athens 2003)
- Dželebdžić Dejan, Τα αποφθέγματα των βασιλέων στην Ιστορία Σύντομο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 44 (2007): 155-172
- Dindorfius Ludovicus (ed.), *Chronicon Paschale ad Exemplar Vaticanum*, vol. II, (Bonn 1832)
- Duffy John – Papaioannou Eustratios, 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
- Gautier Paul (ed.), *Michaelis Pselli Theologica*, vol. 1, (Leipzig 1989)
- Kaldellis Antony, Republican Theory and Political Dissidence in Ioannes Lydos, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 29 (2005): 1-16
- Kaldellis Anthony, *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome*, (Cambridge Massachusetts – London 2015)
- Kampianaki Theofili, John Zonaras' *Epitome of Histories (12th Cent.): A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History and Its Readers*, (University of Oxford 2017) (unpublished PhD dissertation)
- Kampianaki Theofili, 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

- Καρπόζηλος Απόστολος, Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι, Τόμος Α' (4ος-7ος αί.), (Athens 1997)
- Καρπόζηλος Απόστολος, Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι, Τόμος Β' (8ος-10ος), (Athens 2002)
- Καρπόζηλος Απόστολος, Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι, Τόμος Γ' (11ος -12ος αί.), (Athens 2009)
- Lauritzen Frederick, *The Depiction of Character in the Chronographia of Michael Psellos*, (Turnhout 2013)
- Lexikon der Mittelalters, Band VII, (Stuttgart – Weimar 1999)
- Ljubarskij Jakov, *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
- Ljubarskij Jakov N., *Προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, (Athens 2004)
- Maas Michael, *John Lydus and the Roman Past. Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian*, (London – New York 1992)
- Macrides Ruth, Magdalino Paul, *The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism*, in: *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino, (London 1992), 117–156
- Magdalino Paul, *Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik*, *Speculum* 58 (1983): 326–346
- Markopoulos Athanasios, *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
- Matheou Nicholas, *City and Sovereignty in the East Roman Thought, c. 1000-1200: Ioannes Zonaras' Historical Vision of the Roman State*, in: *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, eds. N. Matheou, T. Kampianaki and L. Bondioli, (Leiden 2016), 41-63.
- Neville Leonora, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*, (Cambridge 2018)
- Praechter Karl, *Ein Chronikfragment aus Cod. Bern. 450*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 6 (1906): 112–113
- Reinsch Diether R. (ed.), *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia, Band 1*, (Berlin – Boston 2014)
- Samodurova Z. G., *Malye vizantijskie hroniki i ih istočniki* (З. Г. Самодурова, *Малые византийские хроники и их источники*), *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 27 (1967): 153–161
- Schreiner Peter (ed.), *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken, 1. Teil, Einleitung und Text*, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, vol. 12/1, (Wien 1975)
- Snipes Keneth, *A Newly Discovered History of the Roman Emperors by Michael Psellos*, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3 (1982): 53–61
- Tocci Raimondo, *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)

Treadgold Warren, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, (Hampshire – New York 2007)

Treadgold Warren, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, (Hampshire – New York 2013)

Varona Patricia, *Chronology and History in Byzantium, Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 58 (2018): 389–422

<https://www.late-antique-historiography.ugent.be/> (last seen on 28 January, 2021)

<http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc25300j> , seen on 23 January 2021

PSELLOS' HAGIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS: RESOURCES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

ELIZABETH A. FISHER¹

ABSTRACT. Resources available for Byzantine scholarship in general and for studying Psellos in particular have improved greatly in recent years. Electronic databases assist editors of texts in isolating an author's stylistic habits and in identifying parallel and source texts, while increasingly sensitive search engines provide wide access to scholarly articles, online manuscript catalogues, online publications of texts and translations and great potential for further expansion. Teubner has published Psellos' extensive writings in genre-defined volumes such as poetry, philosophy, forensic orations and hagiographic orations that represent modern categories of literature but do not capture Byzantine conceptualizations. Two examples illustrate this observation. (1) Although the oration on the Miracle at Blachernae is among Psellos' hagiographic writings, it contains a brief ecphrasis of a "living icon" prominent in art-historical discussions; however, the oration chiefly focuses upon the Byzantine court system and Psellos' suggestion for designating a miracle to resolve a vexed legal case. (2) Psellos' Encomion on Symeon Metaphrastes resembles a saint's vita and his hymn/canon for Metaphrastes represents a step towards honoring a "new" Byzantine saint. This process continued for 400 years. The 14th-century Hesychast movement used Metaphrastes' writings to validate their own views and expedited his inclusion in the Synaxarion of Constantinople in the 15th Century.

Keywords: Blachernae Oration, Byzantine courts, Hesychasm, hagiographical resources, "new" Byzantine Saints, Mark Eugenikos, Psellos' hagiography, Symeon Metaphrastes, Synaxarion of Constantinople, Teubner Psellos.

To begin², I note with appreciation that Frederick Lauritzen has compiled and circulated over the years an electronic list of publications on Psellos,

¹ Professor emerita, George Washington University, Washington DC, eaf@gwu.edu

² This essay is in response to Frederick Lauritzen's clarification to me about his intentions for the Round Table. In an email of February 25, 2015, he wrote, "The aim of the RT is not only to produce a volume on different aspects of Psellos' writings and interests but to discuss a status quo of interpretations and editions." I welcome this opportunity to expand or update references now where necessary.

including critical editions and interpretations of Psellos' hagiographical writings. I do not therefore intend to attempt a bibliographical survey of that topic. Instead, I will examine the scholarly resources and directions for new research that have emerged and developed since I produced my own Teubner edition of Psellos' hagiographical essays, *Michaelis Pselli Orationes hagiographicae*. What I have to say reflects my own experience but will also apply to others' editions not only of Psellos' hagiographical texts but also of other categories of Psellos' immense literary output.

The Teubner series aimed to provide a comprehensive publication of Psellos' virtually innumerable works in distinct categories like hagiography, philosophy, poetry, funerary orations, forensic compositions, etc. The collection of Psellos' hagiographical orations as conceptualized by L. G. Westerink includes eight *logoi* on various holy subjects.³ Only the *vita* of Auxentios⁴ and the encomion of Symeon Metaphrastes⁵ represent traditional hagiographical compositions, i.e. biographies of men and women who lived extraordinarily holy lives, although additional *vitae* and encomia may await identification and publication. For example, G. Makris recently edited an encomion of St. Panteleemon preserved in two 11th-century manuscripts and argued that Psellos authored that encomion as well as unpublished *vitae* of Sts. Kallinikos, Laurentios, and Prokopios.⁶ Thus Psellos' traditional hagiographical compositions represent two separate genres (the *vita* and the encomion) and also present the challenge of attributing anonymous works that resemble Psellos' compositions to Psellos himself. Makris used now classic studies of Psellos' literary style by Renauld,⁷ Böhlig,⁸ Ševčenko,⁹ and Ljubarskij¹⁰ as well as Kaldellis' recent stylistic assessment¹¹ in order to provide parallels for passages from the unattributed encomion of Panteleemon. It is difficult to provide definitive proof by means of such a stylistic attribution; Paschalidis considers the encomion of Pantaleemon

³ *Michaelis Pselli - orationes hagiographicae*, ed. E.A. Fisher, (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1994).

⁴ Βίος και πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Αὐξεντίου τοῦ ἐν τῷ Βουνοῦ, *ibid.*, 6-94.

⁵ Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸν Μεταφραστὴν κῦρ Συμεῶν, *ibid.*, 269-288.

⁶ "Τὸ ἐγκώμιον πρὸς τιμὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Παντελεήμονος BHG 1418c καὶ ὁ συντάκτης του," in S. Kotzabassi and G. Mavromatis (eds.), *Realia Byzantina*, (Berlin, 2009), 103-135.

⁷ É. Renauld, *Étude de la langue et du style de Michel Psellos*, (Paris, 1920).

⁸ G. Böhlig, *Untersuchungen zum rhetorischen Sprachgebrauch der Byzantiner mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schriften des Michael Psellos*, (Berlin, 1956).

⁹ I. Ševčenko, "Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose," in *JÖB* 31 (1981): 289-312.

¹⁰ J. Ljubarskij, *Michail Psell. Lichnost' i tvorchestvo. K istorii vizantiiskogo predgumanizma*, (Moscow, 1978).

¹¹ A. Kaldellis, *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters. The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*, (South Bend IN, 2006), 41-45.

“securely” Psellos¹², while Kaltsogianni¹³ is less certain. Because the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* has expanded to include medieval texts, the prospect of assessing an anonymous work in terms of an author’s unconscious stylistic habits has become more possible, based on solid philological evidence. Patterns of favored word usage and habitual word collocations can be examined and tested with the aid of the *TLG*. However, formulating productive searches for this rich resource is a significant challenge.

The remaining six hagiographical *logoi* in the Teubner hagiography collection illustrate Westerink’s recognition that the category “holy subjects” extends beyond saints’ lives and into broader areas of Psellos’ thinking, such as reflections upon events celebrated in feasts of the Church. Four orations commemorate scriptural and liturgical events, i.e. the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple,¹⁴ the Annunciation,¹⁵ the Beheading of John the Baptist,¹⁶ and the Crucifixion,¹⁷ while an unusual historical oration describes the miraculous intervention of the Archangel Michael during Heraclius’ Persian campaign.¹⁸ This oration testifies to the power of holy individuals to affect historical events and to leave physical evidence (the immovable military cross in the Archangel’s church) as evidence of their supernatural activity. The Blachernae Oration is also an unusual item among hagiographical *logoi*.¹⁹ In it Psellos turns his attention to the functioning of the Byzantine court system and proposes a new method to decide vexed legal cases using a miracle in place of the normal and corruptible system of Byzantine courts and judges with special jurisdictions. The oration becomes in effect a detailed discussion of contemporary Byzantine legal practice and theory, which Psellos accomplishes by quoting and explicating fifteen separate *Basilics* related to legal procedure and jurisdiction of courts at lines 498-603. Twice Psellos interrupts his catalogue of relevant laws to quote his own legal writings verbatim—*On Divination by Shoulder Bones and Bird Flight*²⁰ at lines 522-524 and *On the Division of Legal Actions*²¹ at lines 579-583. The oration demonstrates either that Psellos had near total recall for

¹² S. Paschalidis, “The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in S. Efthymiades (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, I, (Farnham, Surrey-Burlington VT, 2011), 148.

¹³ E. Kaltsogianni, *BMCR* 2010.06.07 (online, consulted March 13, 2017).

¹⁴ Λόγος, ὅτε προσηνέχθη ἡ ὑπεραγία θεοτόκος εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων, ed. E. Fisher, *Orationes*, 258-266.

¹⁵ Λόγος εἰς τὸν Χαριτισμὸν, ed. E. Fisher, *Orationes*, 96-113.

¹⁶ Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὴν ἀποτομὴν τοῦ πανευφήμου προφήτου προδρόμου καὶ βαπτιστοῦ Ἰωάννου, ed. E. Fisher, *Orationes*, 290-323.

¹⁷ Λόγος εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ed. E. Fisher, *Orationes*, 116-198.

¹⁸ Λόγος εἰς τὰ θαύματα τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου Μιχαήλ, ed. E. Fisher, *Orationes*, 231-256.

¹⁹ Λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ ἐν Βλαχέρναις γεγονότι θαύματι, ed. E. Fisher, *Orationes*, 200-229.

²⁰ “Michaelis Pselli, Περὶ ὠμοπλατοσκοπίας καὶ οἰωνοσκοπίας, ex codice Vindobonensi,” ed. R. Hercher, in *Philol.* 8 (1853): 166-168.

²¹ G. Weiss, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos*, (Munich, 1973), 288-291.

laws and his own legal writings or that these texts stood near his writing table as he worked. Psellos' famous description in this oration of the miraculous lifting of the Virgin's veil at the Blachernae Church, so well known to art historians, is incidental to Psellos' primary purpose.²²

In short, Westerink's rather elastic category "Orations on Holy Subjects" reflects his recognition that the Byzantines admitted spiritual reasoning into areas we consider secular, i.e. military history and legal theory. Teubner's division of Psellos' writings into volumes classified by generic subject matter is a useful organizational method, but it does not represent Byzantine categories of thought. For example, Hinterberger recognizes hagiographical elements in Psellos' funeral oration for the abbot Nicholas and notes strong affinities between Psellos' biography of his mother and a traditional hagiographical *vita*.²³ Kaldellis moreover sees an ironic comment on the genre of hagiography in Psellos' *Chronographia*. Although the rather eccentric *Chronographia* belongs to the genre of history, in it Psellos praises the notoriously self-indulgent Constantine IX Monomachos as holy or "divine" (*theios*); in Kaldellis' view, Psellos may be subtly questioning the concept of a saint and warning his Byzantine audience to read with a skeptical eye his own heavily rhetorical hagiographical essays.²⁴ Similarly, in a much admired analysis of Psellos' *Vita Auxentii*, Kazhdan noted the striking and even amusing parallels Psellos inserted to make the saint resemble the hagiographer himself (e.g., both loved to sing, and both had three close friends in Constantinople).²⁵

Despite Teubner's rather procrustean classification system, critical editions of Psellos' works are essential to our field, and Teubner makes editions available not only in individual volumes but also in a complete online set that may be purchased at awe-inspiring cost. For libraries reluctant to sacrifice shelf space and for readers without ready access to a scholarly library, the online collection is a great step forward. Time will tell where it leads us. An emerging online venue for Byzantine texts and translations is the stable URL, where length is not a consideration and additions and corrections are easy for an author to make once a text is uploaded. Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies has given an electronic home to a few Byzantine texts, such as my own heavily

²² E. Fisher, "Michael Psellos on the 'Usual' Miracle at Blachernae, the Law, and Neoplatonism," in D. Sullivan, E. Fisher, and S. Papaioannou (eds.), *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, (Leiden-Boston, 2012), 187-204.

²³ M. Hinterberger, "Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations," in S. Efthymiades (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, II, (Farnham, Surrey-Burlington VT, 2014), 39.

²⁴ A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*, (Leiden-Boston, 1999), 135-136.

²⁵ A. Kazhdan, "Hagiographical Notes, 3. An Attempt at Hagio-autobiography: The Pseudo-Life of 'Saint' Psellos?," in *Byzantion* 53 (1983): 546-556.

annotated translations of Psellos' encomion for Symeon Metaphrastes and of his oration on the Blachernae miracle.²⁶ A Google search yields the site readily, where the translation is available in full at no cost to readers and without restriction on the author regarding subsequent print publication. In fact, in addition to publication on the Center's site, these two orations are included in a volume of translations from Notre Dame University Press dedicated to Psellos' writings on literature and art.²⁷ Due to the constraints of publishing hard copy, readers of the Notre Dame translations are referred to the notes in the online publication for the Greek text of passages that are discussed in detail in the print publication.

I have also found that online publication offers an editor or translator useful opportunities unavailable once a text is published in hard copy. The Center for Hellenic Studies allowed me to make a few changes to my translation and to include as a frontispiece on the site a high quality digital image of Psellos accompanied by his eye-rolling student Michael VII Doukas who requested the oration.²⁸ The image cost nothing either to me or to the online publisher but adds a visually arresting imperial context for Psellos' work.

Online publication also provides resources that assist scholars greatly in producing a critical edition. Online manuscript catalogues are searchable, and manuscripts themselves are gradually coming online. Thus the tasks of locating and collating manuscripts is becoming easier, more efficient, and available to more scholars. Also, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* has expedited immeasurably the task of compiling a *corpus fontium*, as I have experienced in the course of editing, annotating, and translating Psellos' texts on the Blachernae miracle and on Symeon the Metaphrast. When I began editing these texts for Teubner, the *TLG* was available only in its very early stages, and a search of the full corpus could take hours. Nevertheless, pure gold was to be found. One of my fellow Teubner editors, for instance, was astonished to learn that the *TLG* had enabled me to identify the phrase "nets of <rhetoical> delights" (τοῖς τῶν χαρίτων θηράτροις) as a reference to Longinus' fragmentary *Ars rhetorica* in the encomion to Symeon Metaphrastes (lines 262-263). Without the *TLG*, an editor relied upon verbal memory to identify references like this. However excellent, human memory is not a resource able to match the limitless potential of the *TLG*. As classical works first entered the *TLG* canon, we recognized the broad range of authors read and quoted by learned Byzantine authors like Psellos; with the addition of medieval texts, we continue to learn what Byzantine authors were familiar to Psellos and

²⁶ <http://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5584>

²⁷ *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics*, ed. C. Barber and S. Papaioannou, (Notre Dame IN, 2017).

²⁸ Wikimedia Commons under Public Domain Mark 1.0

his contemporaries. For example, in the encomion to Symeon Metaphrastes (line 64) Psellos displays his own wide reading and vast command of obscure vocabulary by using the previously hapax προσεμβιβάζειν, a rare word evidently coined by the patriarch Nicolaus I Mysticus in his correspondence with Pope Anastasius III (Ep. 32 line 307).²⁹ The future promises further revelations, as editions of Byzantine theological writings become available and enter the *TLG* database.

Although Google Scholar enables scholars to locate editions and translations rapidly and Google Books makes sections of valuable texts available online, we have not solved the problem of simultaneous labor on the same text by two scholars unknown to one another. The online registry of editions and translations in progress maintained by Alexandra Bucossi is an attempt to address this frustrating and wasteful situation, provided that individual scholars make use of it (greek.editions.translations@gmail.com). A stable URL as home for Bucossi's valuable initiative is highly desirable.

Finally, I would like to outline the direction of my own current research in the hagiographical writings of Psellos. As an extraordinary intellectual and accomplished rhetorician, Psellos is not a typical hagiographer, although Paschalidis notes that he shares interests and qualities with other 11th-century scholars like Xiphilinos, Theophylact of Ohrid, and Mauropous, and further that both Psellos and Mauropous entered the lively controversy that denied the possibility of recognizing new, i.e. contemporary, saints.³⁰ Psellos contested this view by composing not only an encomion of Symeon the Metaphrast but also a canon for the Metaphrast, thus creating a sort of festal resource for celebrating a new saint. Was this aspect of Psellos' hagiographical activity an initiative to gain sainthood for Symeon Metaphrastes, a scholar like Psellos himself? Since there was no formal route of canonization in Byzantium, this question has brought me to examine what process enabled the Byzantine Church to recognize a new saint. In the case of St. Symeon the Metaphrast, the process begun by Psellos took several centuries and very nearly foundered.

Michel Kaplan has sketched the qualities that characterize a saint by analyzing some ten saints of the Middle Byzantine period.³¹ His work suggests the template for sanctity that existed in the consciousness of Psellos and his contemporaries.

²⁹ *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters*, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins and L. G. Westerink, CFHB 6, (Washington DC, 1973).

³⁰ S. Paschalidis, "Hagiography," 153-154.

³¹ M. Kaplan, "Les normes de la sainteté à byzance (VI^e-XI^e siècle)," in *Mentalités: histoire des cultures et des sociétés* 4 (1990) : 15-34, esp. 29-31.

First, a saint was a man or woman considered to be the recipient of extraordinary gifts from God and therefore the object of attention from followers; among these followers was an associate who recorded the events and miracles occurring during the saint's virtuous life and even after his or her blessed death. Second, a public tradition honored and venerated the saintly person persistently through time by such means as the formation of a cult, pilgrimage to the holy gravesite, or commemoration during the celebration of the liturgy. Third and finally, the status of a saint merited the establishment of a special day of commemoration recognized in the liturgy of the Church and recorded in one of three forms of chronological records that contained material associated with the saints—the *menologion*, or collection of saints' lives; the *menaion* or collection of liturgical texts used in celebrating individual saints' feast days; and finally, the Synaxarion of Constantinople that consisted of a series of short notices describing the subject of each feast celebrated in the Great Church of St. Sophia. It must be noted that some figures achieved extraordinary status near to sainthood but never received that final recognition in the Synaxarion of Constantinople. The martyred 10th-century emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969) is such a figure. Although the day of his death was commemorated for a time with a special office or *akolouthia*,³² his cult gained no official recognition in the Orthodox Church and soon disappeared.³³

The compilation of the Synaxarion of Constantinople in the mid-10th century effectively closed the roster of saints accepted as genuine by Orthodoxy.³⁴ Within a generation, the ecclesiastical hierarchy firmly and definitively rebuffed a local attempt to establish Eleutherios of Paphlagonia as a saint; during the same period the Patriarch and Synod of Constantinople examined and condemned Symeon the New Theologian for treating his master Symeon the Studite as a "new" saint.³⁵ Although Psellos' encomion and canon provided the faithful with a liturgical means to honor Symeon Metaphrastes, neither did the two works survive together in the manuscript tradition nor were they sufficient to gain Symeon Metaphrastes recognition as a saint of Orthodoxy.

The encomion apparently achieved some limited popularity, for it survived in two manuscripts of the 13th century, one of the 14th and one of the 15th.

³² Anonymous, "Office inédit en l'honneur de Nicéphore Phocas," ed. L. Petit, *BZ* 13 (1904): 328-420.

³³ G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, (Cambridge UK-New York, 2003), 149-154 and most recently V. Deroche, "L'âge d'or de l'hagiographie: nouvelles formes et nouvelles tendances," in *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, (Belgrade, 2016), 35-39, esp. 39 n. 17.

³⁴ N. Oikonomides, "How To Become a Saint in Eleventh Century Byzantium," in E. Kountoura-Galake (ed.), *Hoi heroes tes Orthodoxes Ekklesias*, (Athens, 2004), 473-491.

³⁵ A. Rigo, "Le cas de deux nouveaux saints aux X^e-XI^e siècle: contrôle et repression de la hiérarchie," in *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, (Belgrade, 2016), 41-58.

However, Psellos' canon for the Metaphrast barely survived at all, preserved only in a single manuscript of the late 13th or early 14th century as a part of an *akolouthia* for the Metaphrast.³⁶ My current project seeks to determine whether the *akolouthia* incorporating Psellos' canon might be a composition of the Palaeologan period and in effect augmented Psellos' compositions in order to provide a more robust resource for celebrating a feast in honor of Symeon the Metaphrast. The process of gaining holy status for the secular scholar Symeon Metaphrastes extended into the mid-15th century, when Mark Eugenikos composed the entry for St. Symeon Metaphrastes (November 28) in the Synaxarion of Constantinople³⁷ and established in the calendar of the Great Church a feast honoring the "new" saint presented by Psellos some four centuries earlier.

Bibliography

- Barber, Charles and Stratis Papaioannou, eds. *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics*. Notre Dame IN: Notre Dame Press, 2017.
- Dagron, Gilbert. *Emperor and Priest*. Cambridge UK-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Deroche, Vincent. "L'âge d'or de l'hagiographie: nouvelles forms et nouvelles tendances." In *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Plenary Papers*, edited by Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, 35-39. Belgrade: The Serbian National Committee of AIEB, 2016.
- Eugenikos, Mark. "Μάρκου Εύγενικοῦ, συναξάριον Συμεῶν Μεταφραστοῦ." In *Μαυρογορδάτειος Βιβλιοθήκη. Ἀνέκδοτα ἑλληνικά*, edited by Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 100-101. Constantinople: 1884.
- Fisher, Elizabeth. "Michael Psellos on the 'Usual' Miracle at Blachernae, the Law, and Neoplatonism." In *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, edited by Denis Sullivan, Elizabeth Fisher, and Stratis Papaioannou, 187-204. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012.
- Hinterberger, Martin. "Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, edited by Stephanos Efthymiades II, 25-60. Farnham, Surrey-Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014.

³⁶ *Michael Psellus*, "Poem 23. Officium Methaphrastae", *Poemata* ed. L. G. Westerink, (Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1992), 277-285.

³⁷ Μάρκου Εύγενικοῦ, συναξάριον Συμεῶν Μεταφραστοῦ, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, in *Μαυρογορδάτειος Βιβλιοθήκη. Ἀνέκδοτα ἑλληνικά*, (Constantinople, 1884), 100-101. The Hathi Trust has posted this entire book online for subscribers. Evelina Mineva has edited Eugenikos' Synaxarion entry in Evelina Mineva, *To hymnographiko ergo tou Markou Eugenikou*, (Athens, 2004), 407-409.

- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters. The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*. South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 1999.
- Kaltsogianni, Eleni. Review of George Makris' contribution in *Realia Byzantina*, BMCR, June 7, 2010. Online, consulted July 21, 2021. BMCR 2010.06.07.
- Kaplan, Michel. "Les normes de la sainteté à byzance (VIe-XIe siècle)." *Mentalités: histoire des cultures et des sociétés* 4 (1990) : 15-34.
- Kazhdan, Alexander. "Hagiographical Notes, 3. An Attempt at Hagio-autobiography: The Pseudo-Life of 'Saint' Psellus?" *Byzantion* 53 (1983): 546-556.
- Ljubarskij, Jakob. *Michail Psell. Lichnost' i tvorcestvo. K istorii vizantiiskogo predgumanizma*. Moscow: Nauka, 1978.
- Makris, George. "Das Enkomion auf den Hl. Panteleemon." In *Realia Byzantina*, edited by Sophia Kotzabassi and Giannis Mavromatis, 103-135. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.
- Mineva, Evelina. *To hymnographiko ergo tou Markou Eugenikou*. Athens: Kanaki, 2004.
- Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople. *Letters*, edited by Romilly James Heald Jenkins and Leendert G. Westerink, CFHB 6. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1973.
- Oikonomides, Nicolas. "How To Become a Saint in Eleventh Century Byzantium." In *Hoi heroes tes Orthodoxes Ekklesias*, edited by Eleonora Kountoura-Galake, 473-491. Athens: Institutouto Byzantinon Ereunon, 2004.
- Paschalidis, Symeon. "The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, edited by S. Efthymiades I, 143-171. Farnham, Surrey-Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2011.
- Psellus, Michael. *Orationes hagiographicae*, edited by Elizabeth A. Fisher. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Psellus, Michael. Βίος και πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Αὐξεντίου τοῦ ἐν τῷ Βουνῷ. In *Orationes hagiographicae*, edited by Elizabeth A. Fisher, 6-94. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Psellus, Michael. Λόγος εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In *Orationes hagiographicae*, edited by Elizabeth A. Fisher, 116-198. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Psellus, Michael. Λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ ἐν Βλαχέρναις γεγονότι θαύματι. In *Orationes hagiographicae*, edited by Elizabeth A. Fisher, 200-229. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Psellus, Michael. Λόγος, ὅτε προσηνέχθη ἡ ὑπεραγία θεοτόκος εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων. In *Orationes hagiographicae*, edited by Elizabeth A. Fisher, 258-266. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Psellus, Michael. Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὴν ἀποτομὴν τοῦ πανευφήμου προφήτου προδρόμου καὶ βαπτιστοῦ Ἰωάννου. In *Orationes hagiographicae*, edited by Elizabeth A. Fisher, 290-323. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Psellus, Michael. "Michaelis Pselli, Περὶ ὠμοπλατοσκοπίας καὶ οἰωνοσκοπίας, ex codice Vindobonensi," edited by Rudolf Hercher. *Philol.* 8 (1853): 166-168.

- Psellus, Michael. "Poem 23. Officium Metaphrastae." In *Poemata*, edited by Leendert G. Westerink, 277-285. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1992.
- (Anonymous). "Office inédit en l'honneur de Nicéphore Phocas," edited by Louis Petit, *BZ* 13(2) (1904): 328-420.
- Renauld, Émile. *Étude de la langue et du style de Michel Psellos*. Paris: Picard, 1920.
- Rigo, Antonio. "Le cas de deux nouveaux saints aux Xe-XIe siècle: contrôle et repression de la hiérarchie." In *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Plenary Papers*, edited by Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, 41-58. Belgrade: The Serbian National Committee of AIEB, 2016.
- Ševčenko, Ihor. "Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose." *JÖB* 31 (1981): 289-312.
- Weiss, Günter. *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos*. Munich: Institut für Byzantinistik und Neugriechische Philologie der Universität in München, 1973.

MICHAEL PSELLOS ON RHETORIC

CORINNE JOUANNO¹

ABSTRACT. The present paper is focused on Psellos' letters, which contain a number of remarks on his role as a teacher of rhetoric and as a rhetor active at the imperial court, as well as many comments on his correspondents' and his own style – including considerations on kinds and levels of style, Atticism and sophistry, and judgements on the great rhetorical models of the past. The examination of all these passages makes it possible to highlight the way Psellos constructs his own image as an expert in rhetoric, familiar with Hermogenean theories, but also heavily influenced by Dionysios of Halikarnassos' aesthetic conceptions. The great diversity of models with whom he identifies testifies to his stylistic versatility and his frequent adoption of a polemical stance can be read as a claim to independence of mind and originality.

Keywords: rhetoric, epistolary genre, levels of style, aesthetic, Atticism.

The following investigation is focused on Psellos' letters, in link with some of his discourses or opuscula directly relevant to rhetorical matters (such as his technical treatises, stylistic commentaries², or encomia of people endowed with special proficiency in rhetoric). The large corpus of Psellos' correspondence offers indeed valuable material for the study of his views on rhetoric and the way he constructs his own image as an expert on the subject.

Quite a number of Psellos' letters picture him as a rhetor active at the imperial court. In letters sent to various emperors, he presents himself as a *demegoros*, ready to compose *encomia* celebrating the virtues and high deeds of the emperor.³ He also repeatedly describes himself in the role of a lobbyist who makes use of his rhetorical skills to praise his addressees or support their cause in front of the emperor or other powerful personalities⁴, sometimes

¹ University of Caen – Normandy, CRAHAM, France. Email: corinne.jouanno@unicaen.fr.

² On these works of literary criticism, see Kriaras 1968, col. 1134-1138; Ljubarskij 2004, 379-382; Papaioannou 2013, ch. 2 (“The rhetor as creator: Psellos on Gregory of Nazianzos”).

³ Psell. ep. 37 and 38 Papaioannou to Romanos Diogenes; Psell. ep. 86 Papaioannou to Konstantinos Doukas.

⁴ Such letters rank among “patronage” letters (cf. Angold 1997), 3.

successfully (he then congratulates himself on the efficiency of his eloquence)⁵, sometimes vainly (he then complains about the inadequacy of circumstances and/or the deafness of the recipient of his discourses).⁶

Psellos also appears as a teacher of rhetoric in some letters thus offering additional information to the autobiographical statements one can find in the *Encomium for his mother* (ch. 82-83 Riedinger), in the *Letter to Michael Keroularios*, in *epitaphioi* for former pupils (Anastasios Lizix, or the *referendarius* Romanos⁷), and in a series of *oratoria minora* addressed *ad discipulos*⁸. Psellos sometimes alludes to his work as a teacher, for instance in a letter to his fellow-student Romanos, where he speaks of two well-gifted (φύσει δεξιόί) students with a passion for σχέδη: they have got through all the exercises Psellos had prepared for them and are asking for new ones, so that Psellos calls Romanos for help as a ταμειῶν σχεδῶν καὶ σίμβλον⁹. On the contrary, in a letter addressed to Aristenos, whose son was one of his students, he complains about the latter's excessive fondness for Hermogenes, and pictures himself as a determined supporter of "ancient rhetoric", that is a kind of rhetoric which Plato would not have dismissed, for it is "political, genuine, and little concerned with artificial beauty".¹⁰ We also possess some letters addressed by Psellos to present or former students, notably those written to a certain Kyritzes¹¹, characterized by

⁵ Psell. ep. 76 and 99; 210.117-126 Papaioannou.

⁶ Psell. ep. 30 and 268 Papaioannou.

⁷ Cf. Gautier 1978, 105-112 (l. 38-53: "L'élève de Psellos") and 126-132 (l. 36-74: "L'élève doué de Psellos", "Ses études préférées").

⁸ See Psell. *Or. min.* 18-25 Littlewood. To this corpus one can also add various didactic poems, many of which were addressed by Psellos to Michael VII as a teacher, and passages featuring in the *Theologica*, the most part of which were intended for Psellos' students and shed light on his educational methods (cf. Maltese 1992, 236). On Psellos as a teacher, see also Kriaras 1968, col. 1169-1171; Lemerle 1977, 215-221; Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein 1990, 123-125.

⁹ Psell. ep. 247 Papaioannou. Such references to "schede" show that Psellos was teaching not only at the highest level of the Byzantine educational system, but also at the second level (the encyclopaedic *paideia*): cf. Cavallo 2004, 571. On schedographia, a new kind of language training in use since the early 11th century, cf. Lemerle 1977, 235-241; Vassis 1993/1994; Chondridou 2002 (on the appearance of schedographia as an aftermath of 10th-century encyclopaedism); Efthymiadès 2005, 266-271; Agapitos 2014 (on the development of 12th-century schedography into a literary art).

¹⁰ Psell. ep. 18.16-18 Papaioannou.

¹¹ Psell. ep. 145 and 146 Papaioannou; Psell. ep. 146 = KD 27 and 28, considered by Papaioannou (p. XLII, XLIX-L, CXLVII) as one and the same item, perhaps not a letter, but an essay on how to compose a "rational response", parallel to Psell. ep. 145, written by Psellos in response to Psell. ep. 144, a letter with a rather provocative tonality where Kyritzes, while acknowledging Psellos' superiority as far as rhetoric is concerned, puts forward the little importance of this discipline in the juridical sphere.

their rather aggressive, polemical tone¹²: Psellos is indeed discontent with Kyritzes' attacks against philosophy and rhetoric and his preference for law studies¹³, so that his letters offer a mix of reproaches, advice, and passionate advocacy of true rhetoric¹⁴.

Psellos' letters also include a rich amount of comments about his correspondents' and his own style. The abundance of such descriptive material is partly due to the self-referential character typical of the epistolary genre, but it is a result as well of Psellos' special concern with *logoi* – a concern testified by the place imparted in the *Chronographia* to remarks on the rhetorical capacities of all the actors of history¹⁵. Consequently, it is no surprise that Psellos, when complimenting his correspondents, regularly underlines the sweetness (γλυκύτης) of their style, its grace (χάρις), and enchanting power (θελεκτήριον, θέλγητρον), in line with the theory of the epistolary genre, which valued the very same features¹⁶. More interestingly, in his stylistic comments, Psellos often makes use of technical terms, thus parading his expertise in rhetorical matters, for instance in Psell. *Epist.* 449.18-21 Papaioannou, where he enumerates enthusiastically the various qualities of a friend's letter¹⁷; similarly, in a letter to John Doukas¹⁸, Psellos, evoking the latter's praise of his

¹² The same is true for most of the *oratoria minora* addressed *ad discipulos*: see for instance Psell. *Or. min.* 21 Littlewood (ὅταν ἔβρεξε καὶ οὐκ ἀνῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν σχολήν); Psell. *Or. min.* 22 Littlewood (ἐμβραδυνάντων τῶν μαθητῶν τῆ τῆς σχολῆς ξυνελεύσει); Psell. *Or. min.* 23 Littlewood (πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς ἀπολειφθέντας τῆς ἐρμηνείας τοῦ *Περὶ ἐρμηνείας*); Psell. *Or. min.* 24 Littlewood (ὄνειδίξει τοὺς μαθητὰς ἀμελοῦντας). Conversely, in the *Theologica* Psellos adopts a rather different tone: he appears as a thoughtful and understanding teacher, anxious not to overstrain the attention of his students (see the concluding lines of Psell. *Theol.* 1.78; 91; 95; 99; 103; 105 Gautier) and, more surprisingly, he is prone to profess humility in front of his students, as noted by Maltese 1992, 231 (see the concluding lines of Psell. *Theol.* 1.15; 22; 23; 51 Gautier). The discrepancy between both series of texts could be explained by the different level of the two groups of students (the second ones, studying philosophy, being more advanced and mature as the former). The main reason of dissension between Psellos and his first group of students seems to lay in Psellos' desire to promote a "philosophical rhetoric", while his students probably had more practical preoccupations and felt little concerned with philosophy (cf. Anastasi 1979, 370, n. 39).

¹³ Φεύγεις μὲν γὰρ τὸ κάλλος τοῦ λόγου ὡς προσανέχων τῆ νομικῆ, ἀκαλλεῖ μαθήματι καὶ ξηρῶ (Psell. ep. 145.32-33 Papaioannou).

¹⁴ On Psellos' hostility to the "Italian" science, cf. Anastasi 1974, 367 *sq.*, with reference to the opening of the essay *On philosophy* (Psell. *Phil. min.* 2 Duffy). In his *Encomium for his mother*, Psellos clearly suggests that he taught law rather reluctantly (ch. 83 Riedinger: πολλοὶ δέ με... πρὸς τῆς Ἰταλικῆς σοφίαν κατήγαγον).

¹⁵ Cf. Gadolin 1970, 126-128; Reinsch 2006.

¹⁶ Grünbart 2015, 297.

¹⁷ τὸν νοῦν, τὸ κάλλος, τὴν συνθήκην τῶν λέξεων, τὸν τῶν νοημάτων ῥυθμόν, τὴν τῶν γραμμάτων ὠραιότητα, τὴν τῶν στίχων ἰσότητα, τὴν ἀσειότητα τῶν συλλαβῶν, τὴν γλυκύτητα. Papaioannou 2019 (ed.), LXXIV, CXLVII, CLI considers the authenticity of this letter very dubious.

¹⁸ On Psellos' relation with John Doukas, see Ljubarskij 2004, 111-119.

style, underlines the careful attention he paid to every stylistic element, ἔννοια, λέξεις, σχῆμα, μέθοδος, ἄρμονία, ρυθμός, ἀνάπαισις.¹⁹ Some letters even contain elaborate discussions on rhetorical questions, for instance Psell. *Epist.* 256 Papaioannou (to the *krites* of Aigaion), where Psellos, exploring the links between *παρρησία* and *τέχνη*, speaks highly of oblique, indirect (*πλάγιος*) *logos*, maintaining that, as far as discourse is concerned, straight blows are less efficient than oblique ones, inflicted with art (*τέχνη*). In Psell. *Epist.* 134.19-37 Papaioannou, in response to Nikephoros, nephew of the patriarch Keroularios, who had complained of the difficulty of his philosophical writings, Psellos vaunts the merits of *ἀσάφεια*, quoting as an example Aristotle and the Christian “philosophy”. In Psell. *Epist.* 163 Papaioannou (to John Mauropous) and Psell. *Epist.* 454 Papaioannou (to Leon Paraspondylos?), he develops considerations about the rules of the epistolary genre²⁰ and the specificity of exchange through letters, whose aim (reflect the inner disposition of the writers) requires a minimum amount of art (the souls’ union, he says to Mauropous, is *κατάτεχνος*). Discussions of the kind are prominent in letters addressed to recipients with a professional interest in rhetoric: Mauropous, who had been Psellos’ teacher and is repeatedly called the father of his eloquence²¹, is a special partner for in depth exchanges about *ῥητορικὴ τέχνη*²², and the three letters to a *maistor* of the rhetors published by Gautier²³ offer another striking example of rhetorical display, through which Psellos voices his intellectual complicity with the addressee.

Hermogenes was a cornerstone for the teaching of rhetoric in Byzantine education system²⁴, and Psellos was undeniably familiar with his theories²⁵. He epitomized Hermogenes’ treatise *On forms of style*, and composed a didactic

¹⁹ G 5 = Psell. ep. 59.25-26 Papaioannou.

²⁰ τὸν τῶν ἐπιστολῶν νόμον (Psell. ep. 163.1-2 Papaioannou); οἱ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τύποι (Psell. ep. 454.48 Papaioannou); Καὶ τὰ πλείω σιγῶ, ἵνα μὴ τισι δόξω φορτικὸν ποιεῖν καὶ παρὰ τὸν τῶν ἐπιστολῶν νόμον. (Psell. ep. 88.61-62 Papaioannou, with reference to the rule of brevity). These epistolary “rules” (conciseness, clarity of expression, elegance) are described in Gregory of Nazianzus’ *Ep.* 51, 52 and 54 (cf. Dennis 1986).

²¹ Psell. ep. 175.46 Papaioannou: τῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ λόγων πατήρ καὶ παιδαγωγός; Psell. ep. 163.26-29 Papaioannou: ὁ τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς λόγων πατήρ, ὁ καὶ διομαλίσας μοι τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ ἐμφυτεύσας τὰς πρώτας τῶν λόγων ρίζας, ἢ συνεγκεντρίσας ἡμῖν τὰς σὰς ἀποσπάδας, καὶ τοῖς φυσικοῖς ἡμῶν βλαστήμασι τὰ σὰ συνουσίωσας καλά. On Psellos and Mauropous, cf. Kazhdan 1993; Ljubarskij 2004, 70-83; Lauxtermann 2017 (p. 105-106 on Psell. ep. 175 Papaioannou).

²² Besides Psell. ep. 163 Papaioannou, quoted above, see Psell. ep. 162 Papaioannou (reflection on the capacity of rhetoric to change the meaning of things); Psell. ep. 167 Papaioannou (considerations on the beauty of *logos*). On these letters, Lauxtermann 2017, 108-111 and 123-125 (English translation of Psell. ep. 162).

²³ n° 18, 19, and 20 = Psell. ep. 376-378 Papaioannou.

²⁴ Valiavitcharska 2013b.

²⁵ In Psell. ep. 117.22 Papaioannou he presents the “rhetorical method”, *ῥητορικὴν μέθοδον*, as his “hobbies”, τὰ ἐμὰ παιδικὰ. The expression is borrowed from Plato’s *Gorgias*, 482a (where Socrates speaks of τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, τὰ ἐμὰ παιδικὰ). It was much imitated in Late antique epistolography (cf. Libanios, *Ep.* 251.1; 405, 13; Synesios, *Ep.* 91; Aeneas of Gaza, *Ep.* 1 Positano).

poem long of ca. 500 lines, synthesizing four major works of the Hermogenean corpus, *On issues* (*De statibus*), *On invention*, *On forms*, and the Pseudo-Hermogenean treatise *On the method of force* (*De methodo*)²⁶. But he also wrote epitomes of other ancient technical works (τέχνη), by Dionysios of Halikarnassos and Longinos²⁷. He makes several explicit references to these three theoreticians of rhetoric: Hermogenes is mentioned at least eight times in his whole work²⁸, Longinos seven times²⁹, Dionysios five times³⁰. Isolated references to other more or less famous τεχνικοί include Thrasymachos and Hegesias³¹, Nikagoras and Priskos³², Hadrianos of Tyre and Sopatros³³, and also Aelius Aristides as the presumed author of a rhetorical treatise³⁴. As for Byzantine theoreticians, Psellos never mentions either John of Sardis (mid 9th c.) or John Doxapatres³⁵ (mid 11th c.) – though they might well be the source of some of his allusions to ancient *tekhnikoi*'s works probably no longer available³⁶ –, and his two references to his contemporary John Sikeliotēs³⁷ are of a disparaging kind.

²⁶ Σύνοψις τῶν ῥητορικῶν ιδεῶν, éd. Walz, V, 601-605; *Poema* 7 Westerink (Τοῦ αὐτοῦ σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς διὰ στίχων ὁμοίων πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν βασιλέα), addressed to Michael Doukas.

²⁷ *Περὶ συνθήκης τῶν τοῦ λόγου μερῶν* (Aujac 1975, 261-267); *On Rhetoric* (Gautier 1977, 196-199) = Longinos, F 49 (Patillon Brisson).

²⁸ Psell. *Chron.* 6.197bis Renauld; Psell. *Or. forens.* 3.279-282 Dennis; Psell. *Or. min.* 8.196-199 Littlewood; Psell. *Theol.* 1.19.82-84 Gautier; Psell. *Theol.* 1.27.146-147 Gautier (reference to Hermogenes' book on σεμνότης, that is chapter I, 6 of the treatise *On Forms*); Psell. *Poem.* 7.88 Westerink; Psell. ep. 18.20; 134.37; and 181 Papaioannou (about a commentary on Hermogenes' *Staseis* sent to the addressee: the author of the letter offers his help for interpreting the difficulties of the work, but his identification with Psellos is somewhat uncertain). There is one more reference to Hermogenes in Psell. *Poem.* 68.36 Westerink, but it belongs to the *spuria*.

²⁹ Psell. *Or. min.* 8.194 Littlewood; Psell. *Theol.* 1.56.6-8; 1.75.117-121; 1.98.30-33 Gautier; *On the Style of the Theologian*, l. 110 Mayer; *On Rhetoric*, l. 3-5 Patillon Brisson; Psell. ep. 146.37 Papaioannou.

³⁰ Psell. *Theol.* 1.98.26 and 41-42 Gautier; Psell. *Theol.* 2.16.8 Duffy Westerink; *On the style of the Theologian*, l. 107-108 and l. 132-133 Mayer.

³¹ Psell. *Theol.* 1.25.42-44 Gautier. On Thrasymachos, a sophist roughly contemporaneous with Gorgias, see Kennedy 1963, 68-70. He is mentioned several times by Dionysios of Halikarnassos, but always as an orator, not as a theoretician: cf. 2 (*Lys.*), 6, 1; 4 (*Isaeus*), 20, 2-3; 5 (*Demosth.*), 3 (where a long passage from his work is quoted as an example of "mixed style"). On Hegesias, see Grube 1965, 122-123.

³² Psell. ep. 146.37 Papaioannou.

³³ Psell. *Or. min.* 8.194-196 Littlewood. There are also two references to Aphthonios in Psell. *Poem.* 67.230-231 and 68.33 Westerink (both belonging to *spuria*).

³⁴ Psell. *Theol.* 1.98.41 sq. Gautier. This false attribution was commonplace in Byzantium: quotations from "Aristides" (that is Ps.-Aristides' *Rhetorical Arts*) are found in John Sikeliotēs, Gregory of Corinth, or Planudes, according to Patillon 2002 (ed.), Ps.-Aristide, *Arts rhétoriques*, I, IX-X.

³⁵ Papaioannou 2013, 71, n. 66 speculates whether the commentary on Hermogenes mentioned in Psell. ep. 181 Papaioannou could be that written by John Doxapatres. If it is, the omission of the name of its author is symptomatic of the Byzantine *literati*'s widespread tendency not to mention their most immediate sources.

³⁶ John of Sardis, in his *Commentary on the Progymnasmata of Aphthonios*, names Sopatros on eight occasions (cf. Kennedy 2003, 173-175).

³⁷ Psell. *Theol.* 1.47.70 sq.; 1.102.18-23 Gautier.

Psellos' explicit allusions to Hermogenes testify his familiarity with both the latter's presumed biography³⁸ and his rhetorical theories: he twice underlines the centrality of Demosthenes to the Hermogenean doctrine³⁹ and also rightly alludes to Hermogenes' high esteem of clarity⁴⁰. In the above mentioned letters to a *maistor* of the rhetors, he makes repeated use of technical terms borrowed from Hermogenes' *On issues* and *On invention*, speaking of *κατάστασις* (exposition) and *προκατάστασις* (pre-exposition), *άνθορισμός* (counter-definition) and *συλλογισμός* (assimilation)⁴¹, he quotes the Hermogenean definitions of *έπιφώνημα* (epiphonema), *περίοδος* (period) and *έπιχειρήματα* (dialectical syllogism)⁴², and successively paraphrases the *incipit* of the treatises *On issues*, *On invention* and *On forms*⁴³, by way of playful connivance with his correspondent. Most conspicuous is the influence of Hermogenes' theory of forms (*ιδεαί*) on Psellos' stylistic judgments⁴⁴, heavily indebted to the Hermogenean terminology⁴⁵.

³⁸ Psell. *Chron.* 6.197bis Renauld.

³⁹ Psell. *Or. forens.* 3.279 Dennis; Psell. *Theol.* 1.19.82-84 Gautier. In the introduction to his treatise *On forms*, Hermogenes explains that Demosthenes can serve as a model for every type of style, for he has used the characteristics of all *ideai* in combination with one another (1, 1, 12). On the prominence of Demosthenes in Hermogenes' treatises, cf. Rutherford 1998, 18-21 ("Hermogenes on Demosthenes") and 80-95 ("The Demosthenic Canon").

⁴⁰ Psell. ep. 134.36-37 Papaioannou. Clarity (*σαφήνεια*) is the first of the forms studied by Hermogenes, who considers it as a product of purity (*καθαρότης*) and distinctness (*εύκρίνεια*): cf. *On forms*, 1, 2-4.

⁴¹ G 18 = Psell. ep. 376.47-48 Papaioannou: cf. *On invention*, 2.1-2 (*κατάστασις*, *προκατάστασις*); 4 (*άνθορισμός*) and 11 (*συλλογισμός*).

⁴² G 20 = Psell. ep. 378.3-9 Papaioannou: cf. *On invention*, 4, 9 (*έπιφώνημα*); 4, 3 (*περίοδος*); 3, 5 (*έπιχειρήματα*).

⁴³ G 19.1, 9-10 and 18-19 = Psell. ep. 377.1, 10, 18-19 Papaioannou. These borrowings are signalled by Gautier in his footnotes to the quoted passages; see also Papaioannou's *apparatus criticus* for additional references. Similar play in G 15 = Psell. ep. 15.33 Papaioannou (to the patriarch of Antioch), with references to *έπιχειρήμα* and *κατασκευαί* (dialectical syllogism and confirmation: cf. *On invention*, 3, 2) and to *ένθυμήματα* (enthymemes: cf. *On invention*, 3, 8). Further references to *enthymémata* in Psell. ep. 134.70; 163, 10; 507.23 Papaioannou.

⁴⁴ Psellos often alludes to *idea(i)*, "forms" or "types" of style (Psell. ep. 134.52; 146.135; 173.16; 210.75; 407.10 Papaioannou), to *ennoiai* (Psell. ep. 407.9 Papaioannou) or *noéma(ta)*, "thoughts" (Psell. ep. 124, 107; 161, 16; 185, 2; 449, 19 Papaioannou), *schéma(ta)*, "figures" (Psell. ep. 123.27; 124.108; 134.25; 163.9; 173.65; 185.3; 202.208 Papaioannou), or *lexis*, "style" (Psell. ep. 95.28; 117.21; 123.25 and 40; 124.114; 134.51; 275.93; 375.10; 445.3 and 15; 449.21 Papaioannou). Cf. Patillon 1997 (transl.), Hermogène, *L'Art rhétorique*, "Index des mots grecs", 589-622. Hermogenes is not the inventor of the idea-theory, which is already attested before his time, but he gave it the perfect form under which it was transmitted to the Byzantines (cf. Rutherford 1998, 6-21; Patillon 2002 (ed.), Pseudo-Aristide, *Arts rhétoriques*, I, 1-15 and 60-83, on the origins of the doctrine).

⁴⁵ References to *δγκος* ("majesty") in Psell. ep. 280.53 Papaioannou, *άξιωμα* ("dignity") in Psell. ep. 118.45 Papaioannou, *ώρα* ("grace") in Psell. ep. 280.16 Papaioannou, *ήθος* ("ethos") in Psell. ep. 305.9 Papaioannou and Psell. ep. 191.22 Papaioannou, *δεινότης* ("force") in Psell. ep. 33.2 Papaioannou; frequent allusions to *γλυκύτης* ("sweetness"), *κάλλος* ("beauty"), *άφέλεια*

But the part played by Dionysios of Halikarnassos on Psellos' aesthetic conceptions seems considerable too⁴⁶. His frequent use of musical images to describe rhetorical performances⁴⁷, his many references to harmony⁴⁸ may be a result of his close reading of Dionysios' treatises, for Dionysios' aesthetics is characterized by the importance given to the sonority of words: auditory impression is central in his appreciation of literary works⁴⁹, and he even defines the "science of political oratory" as "a sort of music"⁵⁰. Dionysios' contrasting description of an "austere harmony" (ἀύστηρά) and a "smooth one" (γλαφυρά)⁵¹

("simplicity") or ἀλήθεια ("sincerity") – but Psellos sometimes uses the correlative adjective or adverb, and not the name proper. See the corresponding chapters in Hermogenes, *On forms*, I, 5 (ὄγκος, ἀξίωμα); I, 12 (γλυκύτης); II, 2 (ἦθος); II, 3 (ἀφέλεια); II, 4 (γλυκύτης); II, 5 (ὥρα); II, 7 (ἀλήθεια); II, 9 (δεινότης). The three works of Psellos mostly indebted to the Hermogenean theory of forms are Psell. *Or. paneg.* 8 Dennis (To Constantine X), Psell. *Or. min.* 19 Littlewood (*Encomium of Italos*) and Psell. *Theol.* 1.25 Gautier (on Gregory of Nazianzus' *Or.* 40, 2). Hermogenes' theories exerted an outstanding influence on Byzantine literary criticism on the whole: on Photios, see Conley 2005, 674; on Eustathios of Thessalonike, Lindberg 1977, tempered by Conley 2005, 683-684: "It is true that <Eustathios'> scholia on Homer are full of Hermogenean terminology, but the role that the terminology plays in his critical observations is almost incidental"; Conley underlines Eustathios' special interest in points of argument, his sensitivity to speakers' intentions and awareness of audience reaction, and the importance he allows to the criterion of utility.

⁴⁶ Hörandner 1996; Papaioannou 2013, 64, 66-69, 84, 111-113; Arco Magri 1994 (on the opusculum *On the Style of the Theologian*). Conley 2005, 677, suspects the mediation of a Byzantine theoretician, who would have merged the Dionysian and the Hermogenean traditions, and he suggests the name of John Sikeliotēs, who "attempts to assimilate to Hermogenean doctrine the lessons of the treatise on the composition of words by Dionysios of Halikarnassos". References to Dionysios are found in several passages of John's commentary on Hermogenes' treatise *On forms*: see for instance *RG*, VI, 226 and 242 (ed. Walz).

⁴⁷ e.g. Psell. ep. 23.70-78; 76.45-50; 325.7-19 Papaioannou; G 10 = Psell. ep. 63 Papaioannou, *passim*.

⁴⁸ Cf. Psell. ep. 28.31; 64.30 and 39; 95.78; 280.33 and 36; 496.3 Papaioannou. In Psell. ep. 455.31-32 Papaioannou Psellos professes to teach the way of arranging discourses rhythmically (τὴν γλωτταν ὅπως δεῖ τοὺς λόγους ῥυθμίζειν διδάξω).

⁴⁹ Cf. Aujac and Lebel's introduction to *Denys d'Halicarnasse, Opuscules rhétoriques. Tome III: La composition stylistique*, 17 and 20.

⁵⁰ DH, 6 (*Comp.*), 11, 13. See also DH, 6 (*Comp.*), 12, 8 (on the importance of harmony, melody and rhythm). This very passage features in Psellos' paraphrase of the treatise *On composition* (ch. 4-5: ed. Aujac 1975). Psellos was well aware of the prominence of musicality in Dionysios' theory, as testified by his comment on the "harmony" of Gregory of Nazianzus' style: φημι δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων ἁρμονίαν, περὶ ἣν καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ πᾶν ἐσπούδακεν (*On the style of the Theologian*, l. 131-133 Mayer). While the word ἁρμονία is extremely frequent in Dionysios' writings, it occurs only once in the Hermogenean corpus (*On invention*, 3, 15). On Psellos' sensitivity to the musicality of words, cf. Kriaras 1968, col. 1166. On his interest in music, Di Rella 1996. On the importance he attached to the power of rhythm, Valiavitcharska 2013a.

⁵¹ DH, 6 (*Comp.*), 21.3; the following chapter 22 offers a description of the austere harmony, and chapter 23 a description of the smooth one. See also DH, 5 (*Demosth.*), 38-39 (austere harmony) and 40 (smooth harmony). The word γλαφυρός was already used in Demetrios' *On*

is recognizable in Psell. *Epist.* 163 Papaioannou, where Psellos says to Mauroπους that “the pursuit of smooth words” (l. 13: ἡ θήρα τῶν γλαφυρῶν λέξεων) is undesirable in epistolary exchange, or in Psell. *Epist.* 98 Papaioannou, where he apologizes for the plain style of his letter (l. 7: ἀφελῆ τὰ ἡμέτερα), on the pretext that, living in a rustic environment, he has lost any talent for “smoothing” (γλαφυρόν)⁵². Another image frequently used in Psellos’ letters and other texts dealing with rhetoric may have been inspired by his reading of Dionysios: that of a “theatrical” eloquence⁵³, exuberant and vulgar; Psellos opposes to more decent and philosophical modes of expression⁵⁴. Similarly, Psellos’ frequent use of the adjective φυσικός to characterize simple style⁵⁵ is probably reminiscent of Dionysios, where it appears quite often with the same meaning⁵⁶. The interest Psellos expresses in Lysias, who comes second after Demosthenes for the number of references⁵⁷, may also be explained by the

style (it is one of the four styles defined by Demetrios, beside ἰσχνός, “plain”, μεγαλοπρεπής, “grand” and δεινός, “forceful”: cf. § 36). It is not attested in the Hermogenean corpus.

- ⁵² Psell. ep. 163.12-14 Papaioannou: ἡ ἐξεπίτηδες ἀρμονία τῶν τοῦ λόγου μοριῶν, καὶ ἡ θήρα τῶν γλαφυρῶν λέξεων εὐρήματα κατὰ τῆς ἀπλάστου φιλίας ἐστίν; Psell. ep. 98.3-5 Papaioannou: εἴ που γὰρ ἐνῆν τι γλαφυρόν καὶ περινενομημένον ἡμῖν, ἀφείλατο τοῦτο ἢ μετὰ τῶν ἀμούσων καὶ θηριοτρόφων ἀναστροφή.
- ⁵³ In Dionysios’ treatises the adjective θεατρικός is often applied to polished harmony: cf. 5 (*Demosth.*), 39.4; 40.1; 43.12; 6 (*Comp.*), 22, 5; 23, 7: in the smooth harmony one appreciates the figures which are “dainty” (τρυφεροῖς) and “alluring” (κολακικοῖς) and contain much that is “seductive” (ἀπατηλόν) and “theatrical” (θεατρικόν). Psellos’ opposition between a philosophical and a theatrical oratory seems to be borrowed from the prologue of the essay on *Ancient orators*, where Dionysios opposes one kind of oratory, ἀρχαία καὶ φιλόσοφος ῥητορική, to another, ἀφόρητος ἀναιδεῖα θεατρικῆ..., φορτικὴ τις πάνυ (1, 2-4); he also calls the philosophical oratory “ancient and modest” (2, 7: ἀρχαία καὶ σώφρων). Once again, the word θεατρικός and the image of a “theatrical rhetoric” are lacking in the Hermogenean corpus; they are absent in Demetrios as well.
- ⁵⁴ See Psell. ep. 28.32-34 Papaioannou, to Basileios, *krites* of Cappadocia, where τῆς δημῶδους ταύτης ῥητορικῆς... τῆς πολυτελοῦς τε καὶ θεατρικῆς is contrasted with τῆς ἀφελοῦς καὶ λιτῆς καὶ τῆς σεμνοτάτης φιλοσοφίας; Psell. ep. 134.47-50 Papaioannou to Nikephoros, nephew of Keroularios, where Psellos professes to practise οὐ τὴν πάνδημον ῥητορικὴν, οὐδὲ τὴν θεατρικὴν καὶ ἀκόλαστον, ἀλλὰ τὴν οἰκουρόν τε καὶ σώφρονα). In his *Encomium for Symeon Metaphrastes*, Psellos presents the saint as practising exactly the same kind of “wise” and useful rhetoric: by adorning the old, artless hagiographical narratives, he was able to make people appreciate the high deeds of saints and ascetes at their true worth (Psell. *Or. paneg.* 7.156-206 Dennis).
- ⁵⁵ Psell. ep. 5.79; 163.28; 407.3 Papaioannou; Psell. *Chron.* 6a.45 Renault; Psell. *Or. min.* 19.63 Littlewood.
- ⁵⁶ Cf. DH, 2 (*Lys.*), 10, 1; 3 (*Isocr.*), 2, 4; 4 (*Is.*), 7, 1; 5 (*Demosth.*), 13, 7. The adjective occurs only twice in Demetrios (*On Style*, 199, 200), once in Hermogenes (*On forms*, 1, 3).
- ⁵⁷ Demosthenes: 64 occ.; Lysias: 31 occ.; Isocrates: 22 occ.; Aeschines: 6 occ.; Isaeus: 2 occ. (results of an investigation on the TLG corpus, enlarged with Psellos’ Letters, his *Encomium for Symeon Metaphrastes*, and his four treatises *On the Style of the Theologian*, *On the Style of Gregory the Theologian*, *Basil the Great*, *Chrysostom*, and *Gregory of Nyssa*, *On the Style of certain Writings*, and *On John Chrysostom*). According to Sosower 1987, 1-3, Psellos is first to indicate

influence of Dionysios who, as a champion of Atticism, highly valued the simple and elegant style of this orator⁵⁸.

The examination of the various images used by Psellos to characterize rhetorical performances may reveal the influence of further ancient models. As a matter of fact, a striking feature of his stylistic appreciations is their highly metaphorical character, far away from the more abstract and technical style of the ancient treatises to which he is so much indebted in other respects, first and foremost Hermogenes, where metaphorical expressions are scarce⁵⁹. Psellos resorts to a wide range of images to distinguish various forms of eloquence, speaking of bolts of lightning and thunder⁶⁰, of fire⁶¹, of sources, streams and rivers⁶², of honey⁶³, meadows and flowers⁶⁴, and comparing discourses with birds, musical instruments⁶⁵, or even weapons⁶⁶ or paintings...⁶⁷ Some of these images are very ancient, and originate in the oldest Greek literary tradition (the honey metaphor is evidently inherited from Homer⁶⁸, and liquid imagery is already present in archaic poetry⁶⁹), but one wonders if Psellos' very concrete way of describing types of style was not influenced as well by a reading of Ps.-Longinos' essay *On Sublimity*, which develops interesting considerations on the power of *phantasia*⁷⁰, makes frequent use of images to characterize the style of the great authors of classical Greece, and repeatedly compares Demosthenes'

a familiarity with several orations of Lysias, an author rarely read before the 11th century: Psellos' liking for Lysias probably stimulated the next generation of scholars to take a renewed interest in this author and may even have contributed to the decision by a scholarly patron to produce *Heidelb. Pal. gr.* 88, a copy of the Lysianic corpus achieved at the beginning of the 12th c.

⁵⁸ The same is true for Dionysios' friend Caecilius of Calacte, an Atticist as well, who put Lysias at the top of all orators of classical Greece (cf. T 45, ed. Woerther: he declared Lysias superior to Plato in everything). The special place assigned to Lysias in ancient rhetorical treatises may be partly due to his mention in Plato's *Phaedrus*, where a speech on Love, supposedly composed by him, is read by Phaedrus and criticized by Socrates (*Phaedr.* 234e and 264b). In his treatise *On forms*, Hermogenes alludes to Socrates criticizing the "Erotic Speech" of Lysias (I, 12).

⁵⁹ Images are also very few in Demetrios' *On style*; Dionysios of Halikarnassos' language is a bit more colourful and includes some metaphors (stream and river: 5, 4, 5 and 5, 2; sea breeze: 5, 13, 8; architecture: 6, 6, 23; music: 6, 11, 6-25; painting: 6, 21, 1-2).

⁶⁰ Psell. ep. 5.24-25; 223.2; 305.20; 376.5-6 Papaioannou.

⁶¹ Psell. ep. 263.2-3 Papaioannou.

⁶² Psell. ep. 161.6-7; 250.8-9; 276.2; 408.14-16; 442.18 Papaioannou.

⁶³ Psell. ep. 63.52-53; 384.1-2.

⁶⁴ Psell. ep. 22.38-47; 167.51 Papaioannou.

⁶⁵ Psell. ep. 30.9-20; 63 passim; 76.45-52; 167.52-54; 268, passim; 325.7-19 Papaioannou.

⁶⁶ Psell. ep. 34.15-28; 256.8-16; 376.7-10 Papaioannou.

⁶⁷ Psell. ep. 116, passim; 146.1-10 Papaioannou; Psell. *Or. funebr.* 4.6 Polemis.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Il.* 4, 256; 6, 214, 343; 9, 113; etc.

⁶⁹ See for instance Pindar, *Pyth.* 4, 532; *Nem.* 4, 4-5; 7, 12; *Isth.* 6, 109; *Olymp.* 6, 85.

⁷⁰ Cf. *On Sublimity*, 15, 1 and 9.

rhetorical forcefulness with thunderbolt, a favourite among Psellos' images⁷¹. To be sure, the reception of Ps.-Longinos' treatise in Byzantium is somewhat shadowy⁷²: its manuscript tradition is poor (a sole ancient codex, the 10th-century *Parisinus graecus* 2036 has been preserved), but the presence of a few quotations from this work in the commentary of Hermogenes by John Sikeliotēs⁷³, contemporaneous with Psellos, suggests it could have been available to the latter as well, and Ps.-Longinos' remarks on *phantasia* were very likely to arouse the interest of an author with such a vivid imagination as Psellos. Another image recurrent in his work, that of the "Olympic trumpet"⁷⁴, may have been borrowed from Philostratos' *Lives of the Sophists*, where it is used to characterize the sophist Polemo's style (I, 542). Philostratos was indeed among Psellos' favourite authors, and the latter's references to various orators representative of the Second Sophistic show he was familiar with Philostratos' history of this literary movement⁷⁵.

Considerations about kinds of style often interfere in Psellos' letters with remarks about levels of style⁷⁶. In quite a number of passages, Psellos incites his correspondents, supposedly impressed and reduced to silence by his high rhetorical skills⁷⁷, to write him in the simplest style: the motif occurs prominently in letters addressed to ecclesiastics⁷⁸, but also in letters to supplicants⁷⁹, or friends⁸⁰. In these letters Psellos urges his correspondents to

⁷¹ *On Sublimity*, 12, 4; 34, 4; Psell. ep. 5.24-25; 123, 10-11; 161.9-10; 176.25; 305.20 Papaioannou.

⁷² Cf. Kennedy 1989, 311: "Not much read, it seems, in ancient and Byzantine times, *On sublimity* had its great period in the Renaissance...". Fryde 2000, 162-163 says there is no certain evidence that Ps.-Longinos' work was known to the Palaeologan scholars.

⁷³ John Sikeliotēs makes several allusions to "Longinos" (*RG*, VI, 93, 95, 120, 211, 225: cf. Poynton 1933, 1-2 and 13, n. 5); some of these passages are in fact fragments from the genuine, 3rd-century Longinos, author of a *Rhetorical Art* (F 53, F 56, F 59 Patillon Brisson), but at least one or two come from the treatise *On Sublimity* (*RG*, VI, 120 and 211, with a reference to the famous Biblical quotation featuring in *On Sublimity*, 9, 9).

⁷⁴ Cf. Psell. *Or. paneg.* 4.233 Dennis; Psell. *Theol.* 1.68.131 Gautier; *Monody in honour of the metropolitan of Melitene*, l. 50 and *Monody in honour of the referendarios Romanos*, l. 49 (ed. Gautier 1978).

⁷⁵ Cf. Jouanno 2009. See also *infra*, n. 101.

⁷⁶ Sevcenko 1981.

⁷⁷ In Psell. ep. 151.16-18 Papaioannou, he says that many of his correspondents experience such a feeling: Ἀλλὰ μοι πρὸς τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους πεπόνθατε, οἷόν τι πρὸς τὰς ἐπιστημονικὰς φωνὰς οἱ νεώτεροι ἰφρίττουσι γὰρ ἀτεχνῶς τὰ ξένα τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀκούοντες, τὸν "τόμον", τὰ "περίσωπα"...; *ibid.*, 26: δεδοίκατε τὰς ἐμὰς φωνὰς ὡς βροντὰς.

⁷⁸ Psell. ep. 3 and 5 Papaioannou, to the patriarch of Antioch; Psell. ep. 387 and 507 Papaioannou, to monks. On Psellos and "monastic circles", see Ljubarskij 2004, 149-154.

⁷⁹ Psell. ep. 405 Papaioannou.

⁸⁰ Psell. ep. 375 Papaioannou to the metropolitan of Amaseia, l. 6-10: ἐν δέ γε τοῖς φιλικῶς καθήκουσι, καὶ ταῖς πρὸς τοὺς φίλους ἐνδιαθέτοις ἐπιστολαῖς, οὐδὲ σοφίζεσθαι βούλομαι, οὐδὲ περιττὸς εἶναι, οὔτε τὴν συνθήκην, οὔτε τὴν μέθοδον ἄρκέσει δέ μοι ἡ ἰδιωτεία τῆς λέξεως, καὶ τὸ ἀφελὲς κάλλος καὶ ἄτεχνον; Psell. ep. 281 Papaioannou to Chorocephaktes, l. 6-8:

write as plainly as they speak.⁸¹ He often associates plain language with high spirituality⁸², but also links disregard for the beauty of words with philosophical *ethos*⁸³ or with old age's disinterest in stylistic embellishments.⁸⁴ Other letters present a reversed picture, with Psellos apologizing for his use of low style in letters to correspondents some of whose are described as prominent intellectuals⁸⁵: to explain his choice of a low register, Psellos puts to the fore his closeness to the addressee,⁸⁶ special *kairos* making rhetoric undeserved or impossible⁸⁷ or, with typical Constantinopolitan snobbery, the deleterious influence of a rustic/barbarian environment.⁸⁸ In letters exploiting the topos of self-deprecating⁸⁹, Psellos sometimes recurs to a typically self-referential play of words⁹⁰ by introducing the verb ψελλίζειν or its compounds (ὑποψελλίζειν, παραψελλίζειν) as a pretence of simplicity or modesty, such as in Psell. *Epist.* 167.52, Papaioannou to Mauropous⁹¹, in Psell. *Epist.* 38.53, Papaioannou to the

Γράφε θαρρούντως ἀφελῶς καὶ ἰδιωτικῶς, πρὸς φίλον ἀληθινόν, καὶ τῆς μὲν ἐν γλώττῃ σοφίας καταφρονοῦντα, ἐραστὴν δὲ ὄντα τῆς ἀπλοῖκωτέρας καὶ ἀληθοῦς; Psell. ep. 35 Papaioannou, to Dalassenos (who had put forward his ἀμαθίαν... καὶ ἰδιωτεῖαν), l. 14-16: Θαρρούντως οὖν ὁμίλει καὶ γράφε ἰδιωτικῶς καὶ ἀφελῶς καὶ (τὸ ὄλον εἰπεῖν) στρατιωτικῶς ἡ μάλιστα γὰρ τοῖς ἀπλοῖς τῶν φίλων γράμμασιν ἐφηδόμεθα, ἢ τοῖς δεινοῖς καὶ σοφιστικοῖς. On this letter, see Jeffreys 2017a, 48.

- ⁸¹ Cf. Psell. ep. 3.30-31 Papaioannou: Ὡσπερ οὖν ἀφελῶς ὠμίλεις καὶ τὸ ὄλον πνευματικῶς, οὕτω δὴ καὶ καθαρῶς γράφοις, καὶ τὸ σύμπαν ἱερατικῶς.
- ⁸² Psell. ep. 3.30; 387.5-7 and 9-10; 507, passim Papaioannou.
- ⁸³ Psell. ep. 405.39-40 Papaioannou: φιλόσοφοι δὲ ὄντες, τὸ ἐν ταῖς λέξεσι κάλλος οὐκ ἠγαπήκαμεν.
- ⁸⁴ Psell. ep. 3.31-34 Papaioannou, to the patriarch of Antioch: Τῶν δὲ μουσικῶν ὀνομάτων ἄλλοις παραχωρήσομεν τὴν γὰρ ἀκμὴν τῆς ἡλικίας καταλελυκῶς, καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τούτοις φιλοτιμίαν συγκατατέλλωκα.
- ⁸⁵ Psell. ep. 33.30-31 Papaioannou: Psellos calls George πάντων... σοφώτατον καὶ ῥητορικώτατον; Psell. ep. 98.8 Papaioannou: he addresses the *vestiarios* George as τῷ λογιωτάτῳ.
- ⁸⁶ Psell. ep. 33.22-23 Papaioannou, to his fellow-student George: πρὸς σὲ ἀφελῶς πως καὶ ἀμαθῶς, οἷς ἔχω ἀντεπιστέλλω.
- ⁸⁷ Psell. ep. 358 Papaioannou: illness of his correspondent; Psell. ep. 263 Papaioannou: Psellos' sadness after the death of Lizix; Psell. ep. 118 Papaioannou: letter written during Romanos Diogenes' second Anatolian campaign (cf. Jeffreys 2017b, 76). See also the remarks in Psell. ep. 497, 9-11 Papaioannou about πραγμάτων φροντίς as an obstacle to the liking for beautiful words, for it focuses one's attention to itself, and does not let it enjoy "the graces of language" (ταῖς τῶν λέξεων χάρισιν).
- ⁸⁸ Psell. ep. 98 Papaioannou to John ostiarios; G 11 = Psell. ep. 65 Papaioannou to John Doukas.
- ⁸⁹ On the tension in Byzantine literature between a "discourse of display" and a "discourse of modesty", see Bernard 2014.
- ⁹⁰ On the "author-centered tradition" of Byzantine rhetoric, see Papaioannou 2014.
- ⁹¹ According to Karpozilos' edition of John Mauropous' letters (1990, 199-200), Psell. ep. 167 Papaioannou answers *Ep.* 1 by Mauropous, complimenting Psellos on the style of a letter he had addressed him. However, Kazhdan 1993, 97, considers such a hypothesis very dubious, for Mauropous' first letter is devoid of *lemma*, he argues, so that "we cannot be sure that its addressee was Psellos".

emperor Romanos Diogenes, or in Psell. *Epist.* 53.36 Papaioannou, to John Doukas⁹².

In the various letters dealing with levels of style, the contrast between highbrow and lowbrow expression is often expressed through references to “Atticism”, meant to designate learned Greek, that is a language understandable only to the small part of educated Byzantines⁹³. Psellos contrasts ἀττικίζειν with ἀπλῶς λέγειν⁹⁴ and with κοινολεκτεῖν⁹⁵, he opposes “Attic language” (Ἀττικῆ τῆ γλώσση) to “sincere and unelaborate” diction (ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀκατασκευῶς), “simple expression” (ἀφελῆ) to “honey of the Hymettos” (Ἵμηττίου μέλιτος).⁹⁶ He regularly parades his ability to practise Atticism (see for instance, Psell. *Epist.* 42.35 Papaioannou, where he boasts of twisting a crown ἐξ Ἀττικῶν συνηρμοσμένον λειμώνων for Andronikos Doukas⁹⁷). In G 15 (Psell. *Epist.*

⁹² In Psell. ep. 53.36-37 Papaioannou, Psellos describes himself ψελλίζων καὶ στωμυλλόμενος; in Psell. ep. 38.13-16 Papaioannou, he contrasts his ψελλίζουσα φωνή with the voice of Homer and Aristotle, presented as ἄνδρας δεινούς τὴν γλώτταν καὶ μέγαρα τὰ μικρὰ δυναμένους ποιεῖν, that is as sorts of sophists. On the reverse, in Psell. ep. 48.12 Papaioannou, Aristotle, who often appears as an *alter ego* of Psellos because of his role as a king’s counsellor, is described as ὑπόψελλος τὴν γλώτταν!

⁹³ Ronconi 2012. Dyck 1986, 114, observes that in Byzantium “Atticism had come to mean archaic language of almost any kind insofar as it was deemed worthy of imitation”. On the encompassing nature of Byzantine “Atticism”, see also Rollo 2008, 437-438: “ ‘Attiche’ erano tutte le forme ormai obsolete, scomparse o in via di estinzione nell’ambito della *Volksprache*” – hence the frequent opposition ἀττικῶς / κοινῶς, and the equivalence ἀττικοί / παλαιοί. Aelius Aristides opened the way in regarding Homer as an Attic author: cf. *Panath.* (Or. 13), 328 (quoted by Wilson 1983, 98). Though Psellos usually employs “Attic” and “Atticism” in a stylistic sense, he knew very well that “Attic” was originally a Greek dialect: cf. his *Poema 6* (*Grammatica*), l. 5 and 18 Westerink. However the authorship of this treatise is questioned by Guglielmino 1974, 432-442, who remarks it is lacking in Psellos’ most important manuscripts, and suggests it could have been composed by the *grammatikos* Niketas, fellow-student and friend of Psellos, for Niketas’ works are sometimes joined (and confused) with Psellos’ ones.

⁹⁴ Psell. ep. 454.13 Papaioannou.

⁹⁵ Psell. ep. 305.15-17 Papaioannou.

⁹⁶ Psell. ep. 98.1-2 and 7-8 Papaioannou.

⁹⁷ In Psell. ep. 176.48-50 Papaioannou, he describes himself as Ἕλληνη τὴν γλώσσαν, and therefore delighted by the beautiful letters of Mauroπους, a Ἕλληνη ὄντως ἀνὴρ (Kazhdan 1993, 91-92, doubts the identity of the addressee, pretending that “the vocabulary of this letter is not typical of the Psellian correspondence with Mauroπους”, for the “crucial word *philia*, friendship” is lacking, but Ljubarskij 2004, 72, does not express any reservation; neither does Lauxtermann 2017, 103-104). In Psell. ep. 146.26-29 Papaioannou, Psellos offers his help to Kyritzes as an exegete of Demosthenes, presented as an extremely difficult, “hyperatticist” author: Ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐ πάνυ τῆς φωνῆς ἐκείνης ἤσθησαι (ὑπεραττικίζει γὰρ τὴν γλώτταν, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῆς συνήθους ἀποβέβηκε διαλέξεως), αὐτὸς ἐγὼ σοι διερμηνεύσω, ἅπερ ἐκείνη δυσήχως σοι μάλα καὶ δυσηκόως προσεπιφθέγγεται. In the treatise *De Heliodoro*, l. 14-15 Dyck, Psellos associates “Attic” (Ἀττικόν) with “high-brow” (ὑπερήφανον) in opposition to “adorned” (κομωωτικόν) and “theatrical” (θεατρικόν). In Psell. *Theol.* 2.6.29-31 Westerink Duffy, describing the style of Gregory of Nazianzus, he says it was not distinguished by simplicity (ξὺν ἀφελείᾳ), but “sublime and hyperatticist... and close to Thucydidean harshness” (ὑψηγορῶν καὶ ὑπεραττικίζων καὶ πρὸς τὸν Θουκυδίδειον ἑαυτὸν παρελαύνων στρυφνότητι).

15.40-52 Papaioannou), alluding to his international reputation as a teacher, he ironizes with feigned modesty upon the exaggerations of his correspondent (Aemilianos, patriarch of Antioch), according to whom he teaches the “Attic language” even to the Arabs⁹⁸!

In a letter to a (perhaps different) patriarch of Antioch, Psellos equates his own Atticism with “Platonic” style, he opposes to the “evangelic sincerity” of his addressee.⁹⁹ In Psell. *Epist.* 146 Papaioannou it is no longer Plato, but Demosthenes who is quoted as an example of Atticism¹⁰⁰, and contrasted with three sophists of the classical times, Gorgias, Hippias and Polos¹⁰¹. Gorgias and Polos are similarly associated in Psell. *Theol.* 1.98 Gautier, where Psellos explains to students admiring philosophy alone why he is interested in rhetoric too, and in which sort of rhetoric: he does not intend to imitate Gorgias, Polos and their kind¹⁰², but authors practising philosophical rhetoric, like for instance Dio of Prusa. Another reference to a similar sophistic triad should perhaps be assumed in Psell. *Epist.* 134 Papaioannou, where Psellos opposes a vulgar, theatrical form of rhetoric to a modest one, and curses Λυσίαι καὶ Πῶλοι καὶ Καλλικλῆϊς (l. 43), quoted as representatives of the first style. The combination, in the present form of the text, of Lysias’ name with Polos’ and Callicles’ seems indeed quite surprising, all the more so since Psellos regularly cites the Athenian *logographos* as an example of a simple, natural mode of expression¹⁰³, in line with the rhetorical tradition, that considered Lysias as a model of *apheleia*, *katharotês* or *saphêneia*¹⁰⁴: one can perhaps suppose that, at some stage in the

⁹⁸ On the importance of *asteiotes* in Byzantine epistolography, see Bernard 2015, with references to several letters of Psellos.

⁹⁹ Psell. ep. 5.46-47 Papaioannou.

¹⁰⁰ Text quoted in n. 97.

¹⁰¹ Psell. ep. 146.22-26 Papaioannou: Καὶ δὴ πάρεστιν αὕτη (i-e rhetoric) οὐ Γοργιάζουσα οὔτε μὴν Ἰππιάζουσα, οὔτε τὰ τοῦ Πῶλου φρουαττομένη, ἀλλὰ Δημοσθενικῶς σεμνυνομένη, καὶ τὸ ὅλον πολιτικῶς. The joined mention of Hippias, Polos, and Gorgias is obviously reminiscent of Platonic dialogues, where the three sophists feature as opponents of Socrates, but it may also reflect the influence of Philostratos’ *Lives of the sophists*, where a few pages are devoted to each of them (I, 9: Gorgias; I, 11: Hippias; I, 13: Polos).

¹⁰² Psell. *Theol.* 1.98. 15-16 Gautier: οὐ γὰρ τοὺς περὶ Γοργίαν καὶ Πῶλον ἐζήλωκα.

¹⁰³ Psell. *Chron.* 7a.26 Renauld (simplicity) and 48 Renauld (restraint); Psell. *Or. min.* 19.64 Littlewood (natural beauty); Psell. *Theol.* 1.2.63-65 Gautier (restraint); Psell. *Theol.* 1.32.36-37 Gautier (clarity); *On the style of the Theologian*, l. 198-203 Mayer (plain style, ψιλός); *On the style of Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nyssa*, 127.3-4 Boissonade (εὐστομία) and 130.18-21 (simplicity); *On John Chrysostom*, § 5 Lévy (natural style, κατὰ φύσιν; ἀφελῆς ἰδέα καὶ ἠθικῆ); M 17 = Psell. ep. 135.49-53 Papaioannou (simplicity).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. DH, 4 (*Isaeus*), 3, 2. In his essay on Lysias’ style, Dionysios insists on his qualities of purity (καθαρότης) and clarity (σαφήνεια). In Hermogenes’ *On forms*, Lysias is quoted as an example in the chapters on simplicity, ἀφέλεια (II, 3) and modesty, ἐπιεικεία (II, 6); Hermogenes contrasts his style “that does not seem to be forceful but that is so in fact” with the style of the sophists, that “appears to be forceful but is not really so” (II, 9, on δεινότης); he quotes Polos, Gorgias and Meno.

transmission of the text, the name of Lysias inadvertently substituted for that of Gorgias, better fitted in the context¹⁰⁵.

Nevertheless, one must remark that Psellos' view of "sophistic" is somewhat fluctuating, for in Psell. *Theol.* 2.6.27-28 Westerink Duffy he quotes Gorgias' name in a positive way, when, presenting Gregory of Nazianzus as both a rhetor and a philosopher, he describes him ἐν πολλοῖς Γοργιάζων καὶ τρυφῶν τῷ πλούτῳ καὶ τῷ κάλλει τῶν λέξεων. Besides, his use of terms such as σοφίζεσθαι, σόφισμα, σοφιστικός is characterised by its ambivalence. To be sure, we can find quite a number of passages where he employs these words in a critical way, to describe stylistic affectation, often in contrast with plain, unpretentious style¹⁰⁶, and he occasionally associates sophistic with a liking for dissimulation¹⁰⁷. But he also quite often uses the term "sophistic" to mean what we would call "science of language", when he wants to insist on the technical aspect of rhetoric (see in Psell. *Epist.* 2 Papaioannou the equation between

¹⁰⁵ Unless Psellos was influenced by his reading of Lysias in a manuscript where the latter's discourses were associated with sophists' works: that is the case in our earliest witness to Lysias, *Parisinus Coisl.* 249 (2nd half of the 10th c.), which includes both Lysias and Gorgias (cf. Sosower 1987, 3). Psellos may have read Lysias in a Constantinopolitan manuscript used as model by the copyist of *Palatinus gr.* 88, which also contains sophistic works by Alcidas and Antisthenes (*ibid.*, 11).

¹⁰⁶ In Psell. ep. 375.8-10 Papaioannou σοφίζεσθαι is opposed to ἡ ιδιωτεία τῆς λέξεως, καὶ τὸ ἀφελὲς κάλλος καὶ ἄτεχνον; in Psell. ep. 35.7 and 14-16 Papaioannou we find on the one hand ἀμαθίαν, ιδιωτείαν, ιδιωτικῶς, ἀφελῶς, ἀπλοῖς, on the other hand δεινοῖς, σοφιστικοῖς. Further examples of pejorative use in the essay *On the Style of the Theologian*, l. 53-55 Mayer (οὐχ οἷον οἱ παχύτεροι τῶν σοφιστευσάντων ἠσκήσαντο, ἐπιδεικτικόν τε καὶ θεατρικόν), in the *Encomium for Symeon Metaphrastes* (*Or. hag.* 7 Fisher, l. 113-114: juxtaposition of πλάσας, μεταπλάσας and τηνάλλως σοφιστευσάμενος; l. 248-249: association σοφιστεία / ἀγοραία κομψότης, in contrast with ἀληθεία / ἀψευδῆς διήγησις) or in the *Encomium for John [Mauropous], Metropolitan of Euchaita* (*Or. paneg.* 17 Dennis, l. 310-312: John knew τὴν σοφιστείαν τὴν τε ἐν ὀνόμασι καὶ ἐν διανοίαις, but he drove it out of the city of his soul). As a matter of fact, Mauropous seems to have been rather hostile to sophistic, if he was the redactor of the 1047 novella about the foundation of the law school at Constantinople, as is usually maintained (cf. Karpozilos 1990 [ed.], *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous*, 13): for sophistic in the novella is opposed to true rhetoric (in chapter 18, it is said that laws must use the *logoi* "as magnificent protectors", οἰονεῖ τισι λαμπροῖς δορυφόροις, against those who do not hesitate to denigrate them ἐκ τῆς θραυστάτης σοφιστικῆς: οὐ γὰρ δὴ ῥητορικὴν φαίην ἂν τὴν τὸ πιθανὸν ἀπιθάνως ἦ καὶ πιθανῶς τὸ ἀπιθάνον κατασκευάζουσιν τέχνην). Passage reproduced in Wilson, 1971, 65-66.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Psell. ep. 205.19-21 Papaioannou, where he puts τῶν σοφισμάτων on a par with τῷ παραλογισμῷ and τῶν ἐν λόγοις μεταμορφώσεων. See also the *Monody in honour of an anonymous patrikios*, where Psellos professes to say true things rather than εἰκότα καὶ πιθανὰ καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς τέχνης κεκοσμημένα σοφίσμασι, thus opposing sophistic to veracity (ed. Gautier 1978, l. 73-76). Nonetheless in Psell. ep. 214.14-18 Papaioannou, he finds the flexibility of sophistic appropriate to worldly life: τῷ δέ γε καθ' ἡμᾶς βίῳ ἡ τῆς σοφιστικῆς ἀπόχρη δύναμις ἐπ' ἄμφω βάλλουσα καὶ διπάλτῳ χειρὶ, τῇ μὲν ὠθοῦσα, τῇ δὲ προσιεμένη τὰ προσαγόμενα, ἴν' οὕτως μὲν τὸν τοῦ δικαίου τις λόγον πληροῖ, ἐκείνῳ δὲ ... πληροῖ τὸ βαλάντιον ἡμῶν.

σοφιστική and τέχνη on the one hand, φιλοσοφία and ἐπιστήμη on the other hand¹⁰⁸, or in Psell. *Epist.* 378.18-20 Παραιοαννου the use of περι τοὺς λόγους σοφίζεσθαι as an equivalent of τεχνίτην τοῦ λόγου [εἶναι]). Consequently, Psellos does not hesitate to mention his “sophistic” formation, when he sums up his intellectual career in his famous letter to Michael Keroularios (l. 52-53 Criscuolo: τὴν γλῶτταν ταῖς σοφιστικαῖς τέχναις ἐκάθηρα); he calls his chair of rhetoric in Constantinople a “*sophistikos thronos*”¹⁰⁹, and prides himself on his ability to combine philosophy and “sophistic”¹¹⁰.

If Psellos once compares himself to the sophist Gorgias, he also identifies with other orators of the classical times, Lysias¹¹¹, Aeschines¹¹², and of course Demosthenes, praised by all the ancient theoreticians for his unsurpassable δεινότης¹¹³: Psellos even appropriates several of the latter’s sayings, drawn from his speech *Against Midias*¹¹⁴ and from his celebrated self-referential discourse *On the crown*¹¹⁵. Such a role play reflects Psellos’ well known versatility, for he successively endorses the *persona* of authors endowed with rather different rhetorical profiles, thus claiming his ability to succeed in

¹⁰⁸ Psell. ep. 2.8-10 Παραιοαννου: τὴν σοφιστικὴν ἐν τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ συμμίξαντες, ἡγεμόνες καὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῆς τέχνης πᾶσιν οἰόμεθα. One can find another example of positive use of the term in the *Funeral oration in honour of Niketas, maistor of the school of St. Peter* (*Or. funebr.* 4 Polemis), where Psellos evokes his own rhetorical formation and mentions successively his mastery of τοὺς σοφιστικούς τῶν λόγων and his experience of τῆς ῥητορικῆς παιδεύσεως (§ 4).

¹⁰⁹ Psell. ep. 280.20 Παραιοαννου to Chasanos.

¹¹⁰ Psell. ep. 2.8-9 Παραιοαννου. See also Psell. *Chron.* 7a.15 Renauld, where he boasts of his εὐγλωττία and σοφιστικὴ δύναμις. Psellos’ pretence to being an expert in philosophy and rhetoric as well is present in many of his letters (see for instance Psell. ep. 28; 134; 150; 280 Παραιοαννου). On the much discussed question of Psellos’ attitude towards both disciplines, see (among many others) Criscuolo 1981; Criscuolo 1990, introduction to the *Ep. ad Xiphilinum*, 36-38; Παραιοαννου 2013, ch. 1: “The philosophers’ rhetoric” (esp. 29-39: “Philosopher-rhetor”).

¹¹¹ Psell. *Chron.* 7a.26 Renauld: ζηλώσας τὴν Λυσιακὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων κοινότητα, τὴν συνήθη λέξιν καὶ ἀφελῆ τεχνικωτάτοις νοήμασιν κατεκόσμησα.

¹¹² Psell. ep. 146, 12-18 Παραιοαννου: protesting against Kyritzes, who dared attack his two favourite disciplines, philosophy and rhetoric, Psellos promises him the fate of Timarchos, defeated by a long discourse of Aeschines (*Against Timarchos*).

¹¹³ Dionysios of Halikarnassos says he assigns the palm for oratorical mastery (τῆς ἐν λόγοις δεινότητος) to Demosthenes, who “most certainly forms a sort of standard alike for choice of words and for beauty in their arrangement” (6 [*Comp.*], 18.15: ὄρος γὰρ δὴ τίς ἐστὶν ἐκλογῆς τε ὀνομάτων καὶ κάλλους συνθέσεως ὁ Δημοσθένης). According to Hermogenes, Demosthenes “is forceful (δεινός) in every passage that he wrote...” (*On forms*, 2, 9, 14).

¹¹⁴ Or. 21, 72, quoted in Psell. ep. 397.26-30 Παραιοαννου.

¹¹⁵ Or. 18, 10, quoted in Psell. *Or. min.* 8.120 Littlewood; *ibid.* 179, quoted in Psell. *Or. min.* 9.50 Littlewood. The second of these two quotations from Or. 18 (οὐδ’ ἔγραψα μὲν, οὐκ ἐπρέσβευσα δέ) features in Hermogenes’ treatise *On forms* as an example of *klímax*, in chapter 1, 12 on “elegance” (ἐπιμέλεια) and “beauty” (κάλλος).

every kind of eloquence¹¹⁶. He often parades his stylistic flexibility, and describes himself ready to fit the capacities and expectations of any of his correspondents, in exploiting the whole range of the literary spectrum, from the most sophisticated style to the most humble, from the most purist Greek to the most colloquial, even Barbarian language¹¹⁷! Prone to identify with Proteus¹¹⁸, he also compares himself to the titmouse (αίγιθαλος), which imitates the voice of every bird it encounters¹¹⁹.

Psellos' adoption of a multiplicity of rhetorical models may be explained by his proclaimed dissatisfaction with any of them. Indeed, none of the orators of the classical Greece escapes Psellos' criticism. In Psell. *Epist.* 358 Papaioannou, he blames Isocrates for resorting to stylistic embellishments right in the middle of difficult circumstances, regardless of the constraints of *kairos*¹²⁰. In his *Encomium for John Mauropous*, he finds fault with Lysias' meanness, he scornfully contrasts with the grandeur of Mauropous' style¹²¹. In Psell. *Theol.* 1.98 Gautier, Demosthenes in his turn is criticized for his unevenness¹²², and proclaimed inferior to Gregory of Nazianzus, who outshines the ancient orator, as an eagle outshines a jay.

¹¹⁶ Hunger 1978, 142. See for instance Psell. ep. 5.47-65; 62, *passim*; 123.29-37; 124.118-120; 146.134-138; 280.53-65; 305.14-22 Papaioannou.

¹¹⁷ In Psell. ep. 5.57-59 Papaioannou (to the patriarch of Antioch), after protesting that he does not practise atticism (ἀττικίζειν) with anybody, but can also draw his *logoi* from the same craters as his correspondents, Psellos playfully adds he is even ready to speak Skythian or Barbarian, if necessary (Ἄλλ' ἐγὼ σε μεταχειριῶμαι τρόπον ἕτερον. Καὶ τοὺς τῆς ἐμῆς γλώττης ἀποσβέσας πυρσούς, σκυθιστὶ ἢ τὸ ὅλον [εἰπεῖν] ἐπιστελῶ σοι βαρβαριστὶ).

¹¹⁸ See for instance G 7 = Psell. ep. 62 Papaioannou and its comment by Papaioannou 2011.

¹¹⁹ Psell. ep. 5.63-65 Papaioannou (continuation of the passage quoted n. 117): Ἀξιολογώτερος γοῦν ἐγὼ σοι τοῦ αἰγιθάλου φανήσομαι· καὶ σου τὴν φώνην παντοδαπῶς ἐπισπάσσομαι. In his commentaries on the Homeric poems Eustathios of Thessalonike alludes to the *polytropia* of the nightingale (*Comm. in Il.* van der Valk, 1, 623, 21-23; *Comm. in Od.* Stallbaum, 1, 4, 34 - 5, 1) – according to *Od.* 19, 521, where the poet speaks of the nightingale's πολυχηέα φώνην. I was unable to find other references to the changing voice of *aigithalos*.

¹²⁰ Psell. ep. 358.5-7 Papaioannou: ἐν οὐ καιρῷ ἐπιέντες τῇ γλώσσει καὶ ἀβρυνόμενοι οὐδὲν δέον, ὡσπερ ὁ Ἰσοκράτης ἐν δυσχερείαις πραγμάτων τῇ περὶ τὸν λόγον ἀγλαΐα χρώμενος. Criticism perhaps influenced by Dionysios of Halikarnassos, who maintains that Isocrates is sometimes lacking propriety (5 [*Demosth.*], 18, 7-9).

¹²¹ Psell. *Or. paneg.* 17.283-287 Dennis: Λυσίαν δ' εἴ τις ἐπαινεῖν βούλοιο, προσεμαί τε καὶ ἀποδέχομαι, ἀλλ' οὐ μοι λόγος τὰ ῥητορικὰ ἐν πᾶσιν ἐπαινεῖν κλέμματα οὐδὲ τὰς ὑποκαθημένας φωνάς· τὸ δέ μοι μεγαλοπρεπὲς μᾶλλον ἀρέσκει τοῦ μικρολόγου καὶ κατατέχνου.

¹²² Psell. *Theol.* 1.98.124-130 Gautier: ὁ δὲ Δημοσθένης Παράσιος μὲν περὶ τὸν Ἑρμῆν, Μύρων δὲ περὶ τὴν τοκάδα· πρὸς γὰρ πᾶσαν τέχνην ἕξιν τε τῶν ἀκούοντων καὶ δύναμιν ἑαυτὸν συναρμόσας, νῦν μὲν καλλιειπής ἐστι καὶ ἡχῶν ἄγαν τῶ κρότῳ τῶν λέξεων, νῦν δὲ συνεσπακῶς τὰς τῶν λόγων ὀφρῦς καὶ σκυθρωπάζων τὰ πολλὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἡράκλειτον, καὶ νῦν μὲν ἄγονος καὶ στρυφνός, νῦν δὲ πότιμος καὶ τρυφῶν, καὶ νῦν μὲν λελυμένος τὴν φράσιν, νῦν δὲ συνεστοιβασμένος τῷ ποικίλῳ τῆς ἐκφωνήσεως.

In adopting a polemical stance, Psellos aims at putting forward his independence of mind and advertising his own originality. Such a pretence appears clearly in the various passages where he disparages the ancient theoreticians of rhetoric, and boasts he will be able to complete, correct, or improve their doctrines¹²³. It shows as well through the reluctance he sometimes expresses in following intellectual fashions¹²⁴ and conforming to norms, especially in the encomium for Constantine Monomachos he composed between 1048 and 1050¹²⁵, where he proclaims he does not want to imitate the orators who praise the emperor according to the rules of rhetoric (τεχνικῶς), for the observance of usual standards is in that case ἄτεχνον, inasmuch as the virtues of the *laudandus* are far above any standard¹²⁶: Psellos therefore professes to prove τεχνικώτερος by transgressing the rules of art (τοὺς τῆς τέχνης κανόνας)¹²⁷.

¹²³ Psell. *Or. forens.* 3.278-288 Dennis (Psellos wants to compete with Hermogenes, τῷ τεχνικῷ ἀντεπιδεικνύμενος); Psell. *Or. min.* 8.194-199 Littlewood (he has made additions to Longinos' doctrine, corrected many points in Hadrianos' theories, criticized quite everything in Sopatros; he also blames Hermogenes for his lack of inventivity); Psell. *Theol.* 1.98.30-33 Gautier (Psellos ironizes about Longinos preferring Lysias' discourse on love to Plato's [F 41, Patillon Brisson]).

¹²⁴ In Psell. ep. 18 Papaioannou Psellos protests against his students' infatuation with Hermogenes' theories. Psellos' expressed reservation towards Hermogenes may be due to the fact that he was a mere technician, little concerned with the philosophical side of rhetoric (Anastasi 1979, 370, n. 39). Cf. Hadas 1963, 32-33: Hermogenes "is negligible as a thinker".

¹²⁵ Psell. *Or. paneg.* 5 Dennis.

¹²⁶ Psellos is thus suggesting that the emperor is the sole law-giver and himself his sole worthy spokesman. On this text, see Chamberlain 1986, 20-21. On Psellos' desire to follow his own way even in ethical matters, see the testimony of Psell. ep. 120 Papaioannou, addressed to Constantine, nephew of Keroularios, who had invited him to attend the ceremony of his second wedding; as his monastic condition would normally prevent him to take part in festivities of the kind, Psellos expresses the wish he could be his own master and judge, before confessing his fear of *baskania*: "To be sure, I should live without caring the opinions of others and not be measured by alien hands, but become my own measure and norm, but..." (l. 20-22: Ἐχρῆν μὲν οὖν μὴ πρὸς τὰς ἐτέρων ζῆν ὑπολήψεις, μηδὲ ζυγοστατεῖσθαι με ἄλλοτριᾶς χερσίν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ κανόνα καὶ στάθμην καθίστασθαι). Passage quoted by Angold 1998, 233, with a translation that somewhat stretches the meaning of the original text ("It is not necessary for me to be measured by the hands of others: I am for myself both the measure and the norm").

¹²⁷ See also, in the *Monody in honour of Michael Radenos*, Psellos' remarks about his incapacity to respect τοὺς ὄρους τῆς τέχνης because of the violence of his sorrow (ed. Gautier 1978, l. 170-174). One can put Psellos' pretence to originality in relation with his proclaimed intention of making his students "outstanding people" (ἀπότροφοι τῶν κοινῶν ἔθῶν), as remarked by Lemerle 1977, 246. In his funeral oration for Constantine Leichoudes (*Or. funebr.* 2 Polemis), he praises his friend for having dealt more freely than Pericles with the rules of rhetoric (ch. 4, l. 7-10: οὐ παρ' ἐκείνης <τῆς τέχνης> τὰ πλείω ἔκεκανόνιστο, ἀλλὰ καλλίους ἐκείνης κανόνας τοῖς μανθάνουσιν εἰσηγήσατο – commented by its translator Criscuolo 1983, 129, n. 47: "L'apporto l'ichudiano alla retorica fu a livello di progresso della τέχνη, non meccanica riproduzione dei canoni, ma loro critica interpretazione ed elaborazione"). On the frequency of a polemic stance towards the laws of rhetoric in 12th century rhetorical texts, see Garzya 1973, 7: even the basic rules (*Grundgesetze*) of rhetoric are sometimes questioned by Byzantine writers (he quotes as an example Michael Italikos' *Panegyric of John II Komnenos*, § 2: ἔτερον

Bibliography

Texts

Michael Psellos

— Collections of letters

E. Kurtz et F. Drexel [KD], *Michaelis Pselli Scripta Minora*, II, Milan, Vita e pensiero, 1941.

K. N. Sathas [S], *Mesaiônîkê Bibliothêkê*, V, Paris, Maisonneuve, 1876, p. 219-523.

P. Gautier [G], “Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées”, *REB* 44, 1986, p. 111-197.

E. V. Maltese [M], “Epistole inedite di Michele Psello I-III”, *Studi Italiani di filologia classica* (3^e série) 5, 1987, p. 83-98 and 210-223; 6, 1988, p. 110-134.

S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellus. Epistulae*, I-II, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2019.

— Other works

- *Chron.*: ed. É. Renaud, *Michel Psellos. Chronographie*, I-II, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1926-1928.

Michele Psello, Imperatori di Bisanzio (Cronografia), testo critico a cura di S. Impellizzeri, commento di U. Criscuolo, traduzione di S. Ronchey, I-II, Milan, Fondazione L. Valla: Mondadori, 1984.

- *De Heliodoro et Achille Tatio iudicium*: ed. A. R. Dyck, *Michael Psellus* (see *infra*), p. 90-98.

- *Encomium for his mother*: ed. U. Criscuolo, *Michele Psello Autobiografia. Encomio per la madre*, Naples, M. D'Auria editore, 1989; English transl.: A. Kaldellis, *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters*, Notre-Dame (Indiana), Ind. University of Notre Dame Press, 2006, p. 51-109; French transl.: *Michel Psellos. Portraits de famille*. Textes traduits et commentés par Jean-Claude Riedinger et Corinne Jouanno, avec le concours de Vincent Déroche, Paris, ACHByz, 2015.

- *Ep. ad Cerul.*: ed. U. Criscuolo, *Michele Psello: Epistola a Michele Cerulario*, 2nd ed., Naples, Bibliopolis, 1990.

- *Ep. ad Xiph.*: ed. U. Criscuolo, *Michele Psello: Epistola a Giovanni Xifilino*, 2nd ed., Naples, Bibliopolis, 1991.

- *Funeral oration for Constantine Leichoudes*: transl. U. Criscuolo, *Michele Psello. Orazione in memoria di Costantino Lichudi*, Messina, A. Sfameni, 1983.

- *On Rhetoric (De Rhetorica)*: ed. M. Patillon and L. Brisson, Longin, *Fragments, Art rhétorique - Rufus, Art rhétorique*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2001 (CUF).

- *On saint John Chrysostom (Ψελλοῦ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον Ἰωάννην Χρυσόστομον)*: ed. P. Lévy, *Michaelis Pselli de Gregorii Theologi caractere iudicium*, Leipzig, Typis Roberti Noske Bornensis, 1912, p. 92-98.

- *On the Style of certain Writings (Περὶ χαρακτήρων συγγραμμάτων τινῶν)*: ed. J.-F. Boissonade, *Michael Psellus, de operatione daemonum*, Nuremberg, Fr. Nap. Campe, 1838, p. 48-52.

γὰρ ἐγκωμίου εἶδος ὁ λόγος ἐνταῦθα προβάλλεται καὶ ἀφ' ἐτέρων ἀξόνων νομοθετούμενον; § 12: καινοτομῶν... καὶ παραδοξότερόν τι ποιῶν ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς τῶν ρητόρων). Further examples in Loukaki 1996, 99-100; Loukaki 2005, 183, 197, 205.

- *On the Style of Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nyssa* (Χαρακτήρες Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου, τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλείου, τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου, καὶ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Νύσσης): ed. J.-F. Boissonade, *Michaelis Pselli de operatione daemonum*, Nuremberg, Fr. Nap. Campe, 1838, p. 124-131.
- *On the Style of the Theologian* (Τοῦ ὑπερτίμου Ψελλοῦ λόγος σχεδιασθεὶς πρὸς Πόθον βεστάρχην ἀξιώσαντα αὐτὸν γράψαι περὶ τοῦ Θεολόγου χαρακτήρος): ed. A. Mayer, "Psellos Rede über den rhetorischen Character des Gregorios von Nazianz", *BZ* 20, 1911, p. 27-100.
- *Or. forens.*: ed. G. Dennis, *Michaelis Pselli Orationes, Forenses et Acta*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1994.
- *Or. funebr.*: ed. I. Polemis, *Michael Psellus. Orationes funebres*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014.
- *Or. hag.*: ed. E. A. Fisher, *Michaelis Pselli Orationes hagiographicae*, Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1994.
- *Or. min.*: ed. A. R. Littlewood, *Michaelis Pselli Oratoria minora*, Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1985.
- *Or. paneg.*: ed. G. T. Dennis, *Michaelis Pselli Orationes panegyricae*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1994.
- *Phil. min.* I-II: ed. J. M. Duffy, *Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1989-1992.
- *Poemata*: ed. L. G. Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1992.
- *Theol.* I: ed. P. Gautier, *Michaelis Pselli Theologica*, I, Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1989.
- *Theol.* II: ed. L. G. Westerink and J. M. Duffy, *Michaelis Pselli Theologica*, II, Munich-Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 2002.

— Other authors

- Aeneas of Gaza, *Letters*: ed. L. M. Positano, *Enea di Gaza, Epistole*, Naples, Libreria scientifica, 1962.
- Ps.-Aristides: ed. M. Patillon, Pseudo-Aelius Aristide, *Arts rhétoriques*, 2 vol., Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2002 (CUF).
- Caecilius of Calacte: ed. F. Woerther, Caecilius de Calè-Actè, *Fragments et témoignages*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2015 (CUF).
- Dionysios of Halikarnassos: ed. G. Aujac and M. Lebel, Denys d'Halicarnasse, *Opuscles rhétoriques. Tome III: La composition stylistique*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1981 (CUF).
- Eustathios of Thessalonike
- *Comm. ad Il.*: ed. M. van der Valk, *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, 4 vol., Leiden, Brill, 1971-1987.
 - *Comm. ad Od.*: ed. J. G. Stallbaum, *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam ad fidem exempli Romani editi*, 2 vol., Leipzig, Weigel, 1825-1826.
- Hermogenes: transl. M. Patillon, Hermogène, *L'Art rhétorique. Première traduction française intégrale*, Lausanne, L'Âge d'homme, 1997.
- (Michael) Italikos: ed. P. Gautier, *Michel Italikos. Lettres et discours*, Paris, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1972.
- Longinos: ed. M. Patillon and L. Brisson, Longin, *Fragments, Art rhétorique - Rufus, Art rhétorique*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2001 (CUF).

(John) Mauropous, Letters: ed.-transl. A. Karpozilos, *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous, Metropolitan of Euchaita*, Thessalonike, Association for Byzantine Research, 1990 (CFHB, 34).

Rhetores graeci [GR], ed. C. Walz, 8 vol., Stuttgart-Tübingen, J.G. Cotta, 1832-1836.

Secondary literature

- P. A. Agapitos, "Grammar, genre and patronage in the twelfth century: redefining a scientific paradigm in the history of Byzantine Literature", *JÖB* 64, 2014, p. 1-22.
- R. Anastasi, "Filosofia e tecne a Bisanzio nell' XI secolo", *SicGymn* 27, 1974, p. 352-386.
- R. Anastasi, "L'università a Bisanzio nell' XI secolo", *SicGymn* 32, 1979, p. 351-379.
- M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: A Political History*, 2nd ed., London - New York, Longman, 1997.
- M. Angold, "The Autobiographical Impulse in Byzantium", *DOP* 52, 1998, p. 225-257.
- M. Arco Magri, "La δεινότης, Teodoro Metochite et Michele Psello", *Helikon* 31-42, 1991-1992, p. 415-426, reprinted in *Σύνδεσμος. Studi in onore di Rosario Anastasi*, 2 vol., Catania, Università di Catania, Facoltà di lettere e filosofia, 1994, II, p. 263-274.
- G. Aujac, "Michel Psellos et Denys d'Halicarnasse: Le traité sur la composition des éléments du langage", *REB* 33, 1975, p. 257-275.
- F. Bernard, "The Ethics of Authorship: Some Tensions in the 11th c.", in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities*, Boston-Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, p. 41-60.
- F. Bernard, "Humor in Byzantine Letters of the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries", *DOP* 69, 2015, p. 179-195.
- G. Cavallo, "Le pratiche di lettura", in G. Cavallo (ed.), *Lo Spazio letterario del Medioevo*, 3. *Le culture circostanti*, I. *La cultura Bizantina*, Rome, Salerno, 2004, p. 569-603.
- C. Chamberlain, "The Theory and Practice of the Imperial Panegyric in Michael Psellus. The Tension between History and Rhetorics", *Byzantion* 56, 1986, p. 16-27.
- S. Chondridou, "Συμβολή στη μελέτη της σχεδoγραφίας των ενδέκατον αιώνα", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 15, 2002, p. 149-159.
- T. M. Conley, "Byzantine criticism and the uses of literature", in A. Minnis and I. Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 2: The Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 669-692.
- U. Criscuolo, "Tardoantico e umanesimo bizantino: Michele Psello", *Koinonia* 5, 1981, p. 7-23.
- G. T. Dennis, "Gregory of Nazianzus and the Byzantine Letter", in T. Halton and J. Williman (eds.), *Diakonia: Studies in Honor of Robert T. Meyer*, Washington (DC), Catholic University of America Press, 1986, p. 3-13.
- F. Di Rella, "Michele Psello e la musica bizantina", *Annali della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia* (Università degli studi di Bari) 39, 1996, p. 89-105.
- A. R. Dyck, *Michael Psellus. The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986.
- S. Efthymiadis, "L'enseignement secondaire à Constantinople pendant les XI^e et XII^e siècles: modèle éducatif pour la Terre d'Otrante au XIII^e siècle", *Nea Rhome* 2, 2005, p. 259-276.

- E. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261-ca. 1360)*, Leiden, Brill, 2000.
- A. Gadolin, *A Theory of History and Society with Special Reference to the 'Chronographia' of Michael Psellos; 11th Century Byzantium*, Stockholm-Göteborg-Uppsala, Almqvist och Wiksell, 1970.
- A. Garzya, "Literarische und rhetorische Polemiken der Komnenenzeit", *Bsl* 34, 1973, p. 1-14.
- P. Gautier, "Michel Psellos et la rhétorique de Longin", *Prometheus* 3, 1977, p. 193-203.
- P. Gautier, "Monodies inédites de Michel Psellos", *REB* 36, 1978, p. 83-151.
- P. Gautier, "Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées", *REB* 44, 1986, p. 111-197.
- G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics*, London, Methuen, 1965.
- M. Grünbart, "From Letter to Literature: A Byzantine Story of Transformation", in E. Bartoli and C. Hoegel (eds.), *Medieval letters: between Fiction and Document*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, p. 291-306.
- A. M. Guglielmino, "Un maestro di grammatica a Bisanzio nell' XI secolo e l'epitafio per Niceta di Michele Psello", *SicGymn* 27, 1974, p. 421-463.
- M. Hadas, "Hellenistic Literature", *DOP* 17, 1963, p. 21-35.
- W. Hörandner, "Literary criticism in 11th-century Byzantium: Views of Michael Psellos on John Chrysostom's style", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2.3, 1996, p. 336-344.
- H. Hunger, "Stilstufen in der byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung des 12. Jahrhunderts: Anna Komnene und Michael Glykas", *Byzantine Studies* 5, 1978, p. 139-170.
- M. Jeffreys, "Michael Psellos and the Monastery", in M. Jeffreys and M. D. Lauxtermann (eds.), *The Letters of Psellos*, p. 42-58. [2017a]
- M. Jeffreys, "Constantine, Nephew of the Patriarch Keroularios, and his Good Friend Michael Psellos", in M. Jeffreys and M. D. Lauxtermann (eds.), *The Letters of Psellos*, p. 59-88. [2017b]
- M. Jeffreys and M. D. Lauxtermann (eds.), *The Letters of Psellos. Cultural Networks and Historical Realities*, Oxford, University Press, 2017.
- C. Jouanno, "Les Byzantins et la Seconde Sophistique: étude sur Michel Psellos", *REG* 122, 2009, p. 113-144.
- A. Kazhdan, "Some Problems in the Biography of John Mauropous", *JÖB* 43, 1993, p. 87-111.
- A. P. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, Berkeley - Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990.
- G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, Princeton, University Press, 1963.
- G. A. Kennedy (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, I, Classical criticism*, Cambridge, University Press, 1989, p. 306-311 ("Longinus on Sublimity").
- G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek textbooks of prose composition and rhetoric*, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- E. Kriaras, "Psellos", *RE*, Suppl. bd. XI, Stuttgart, J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, 1968, col. 1124-1182.
- M. D. Lauxtermann, "The Intertwined Lives of Michael Psellos and John Mauropous", in M. Jeffreys and M. D. Lauxtermann (eds.), *The Letters of Psellos*, p. 89-127
- P. Lemerle, "Le gouvernement des philosophes: notes et remarques sur l'enseignement, les écoles, la culture", in *Id.*, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin*, Paris, Éd. du CNRS, 1977, p. 193-248.
- G. Lindberg, *Studies in Hermogenes and Eustathios. The Theory of Ideas and its Application in the Commentaries of Eustathios on the Epics of Homer*, Lund, University Press, 1977.

- J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού. Συνεισφορά στην ιστορία του Βυζαντινού πολιτισμού* [Russian version, 1978], transl. A. Tzelesi, Athens, Ekdoseis Kanaki, 2004.
- M. Loukaki, *Grégoire Antiochos. Éloge du patriarche Basile Kamatèros*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996.
- M. Loukaki, *Discours annuels en l'honneur du patriarche Georges Xiphilin*, Textes édités et commentés par Marina Loukaki, traduits par Corinne Jouanno, Paris, Association des amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2005.
- E. V. Maltese, "Michele Psello commentatore di Gregorio di Nazianzo: note per una lettura dei Teologica", in C. Moreschini (ed.), *Gregorio Nazianzeno teologo e scrittore*, Bologna, EDB, 1992, p. 227-248.
- S. Papaioannou, "Michael Psellos on Friendship and Love: Erotic Discourse in Eleventh-Century Constantinople", *Early Medieval Europe* 19.1, 2011, p. 43-61.
- S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*, Cambridge, University Press, 2013.
- S. Papaioannou, "Voice, Signature, Mask: The Byzantine Author", in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, p. 21-40.
- A. B. Poynton, *Gregory of Nazianzus and the Greek Rhetoricians. A supplement to the index of Walz, RG, Vol. 9*, Oxford, s.e., 1933.
- D. R. Reinsch, "Die Macht der Rede in der *Chronographia* des Michael Psellos", in P. Odorico, P. A. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire: La littérature de l'historiographie. Actes du colloque international sur la Littérature Byzantine, Nicosie 6-8 mai 2004*, Paris, Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2006, p. 253-266.
- A. Rollo, "'Greco medievale' e 'greco bizantino'", *Aiôn* 30/2, 2008, p. 429-473.
- F. Ronconi, "Quelle grammaire à Byzance? La circulation des textes grammaticaux et son reflet dans les manuscrits", in G. de Gregorio and M. Galante (eds.), *La produzione scritta tecnica e scientifica nel medioevo*, Spoleto, Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2012, p. 63-110.
- I. Rutherford, *Canons of Style in the Antonine Age*, Oxford - New York, Clarendon Press - Oxford University Press, 1998.
- I. Sevcenko, "Levels of Style in Byzantine Literature", *JÖB* 31/1, 1981, p. 289-312.
- M. L. Sosower, *Palatinus Graecus 88 and the manuscript tradition of Lysias*, Amsterdam, Hakkert, 1987.
- V. Valiavitcharska, *Rhetoric and rhythm in Byzantium: the sound of persuasion*, Cambridge - New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013. [2013a]
- V. Valiavitcharska, "Rhetoric in the hands of the Byzantine grammarian", *Rhetorica* 31, 2013, p. 237-260. [2013b]
- I. Vassis, "*Graeca sunt, non leguntur*. Zu den schedographischen Spielereien des Theodoros Prodromos", *BZ* 86/87, 1993/1994, p. 1-19.
- N. G. Wilson, *An Anthology of Byzantine Prose*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1971.
- N. G. Wilson, "Scolia e commentatori", *Studi Classici e Orientali* 33, 1983, p. 83-112.

DIE *CHRONOGRAPHIA* DES MICHAEL PSELLOS ALS WERK MÜNDLICHER PROSA

DIETHER RODERICH REINSCH¹

ABSTRACT. *Michael Psellos' Chronographia as Oral Prose.* Until now only Herbert Hunger and Warren Treadgold had pointed out that Michael Psellos has his *Chronographia* not written by his own hand but dictated to a professional scribe. Therefore also the structure of this work clearly has an oral character: many references back and forward, transition formulas, dialogues instead of orations. All this corresponds to its almost entirely oral sources and its aural reception. Psellos thinks of the recipients of the *Chronographia* not als readers but as listeners, may it be in a public θέατρον or privately, of course always read out loudly.

Keywords: Michael Psellos, *Chronographia* – historiography – orality/aurality.

Es war wohl Herbert Hunger, der nach meiner Kenntnis als erster, wenn auch nur beiläufig, darauf hingewiesen hat, dass Psellos seine *Chronographia* wie auch andere seiner Werke nicht eigenhändig geschrieben, sondern diktiert hat. Er schreibt, dass Psellos „beim Diktieren seiner Werke die Umgangssprache mit einbezog“², und zitiert auch die entscheidende Stelle, an welcher Psellos *expressis verbis* sagt, er habe bei seiner Darstellung vieles weggelassen, was die Verfasser von Geschichtswerken üblicherweise mitzuteilen pflegen, vor allem Einzelheiten militärischer Ereignisse, er habe seine ιστορία auch nicht nach Olympiaden oder Jahreszeiten wie Thukydides organisiert, sondern sich auf das beschränkt, was er für das Wesentliche hielt, indem er dieses diktierte: ἀπλῶς οὐτωςὶ τὰ ἐπικαιρότατα ταύτης (sc. τῆς ιστορίας) ὑπαγορεύσας.³

ὑπαγορεύω bedeutet hier und an den anderen Stellen, an denen Psellos das Wort gebraucht, ohne Zweifel „diktieren“. Mehrere dieser Diktat-Situationen werden in der *Chronographia* unter Gebrauch des Wortes ὑπαγορεύω be-

¹ Professor, Freie Universität Berlin, Deutschland. Email: psellos40@gmail.com.

² H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I, (München 1978), 381.

³ Psell. *Chron.* 6.73.10-11 Reinsch.

schrieben: Basileios II. diktierte (ὑπηγόρευε) den Schreibern kaiserlicher Urkunden, was ihm gerade auf die Zunge kam.⁴ Konstantin VIII. diktierte (ὑπηγόρευεν) die kaiserlichen Schreiben mit einer solchen Geschwindigkeit des Diktierten (τῶν ὑπηγορευμένων), dass seine ὀξυγράφοι zu stenographischen Zeichen Zuflucht nehmen mussten⁵. Der Volksaufstand gegen Michael V. traf Psellos selbst an, wie er gerade als Hypogrammateus kaiserliche Schreiben diktierte (ὑπαγορεύοντα).⁶ Konstantin IX. diktierte (ὑπηγόρευεν) aus Misstrauen gegen seinen Sekretär Psellos seine Briefe an den Kalifen selbst.⁷ Die Gesandten, die Michael VI. zum Usurpator Isaak Komnenos geschickt hatte, trafen diesen an, wie er gerade ein Schreiben an den Kaiser diktierte (ὑπαγορεύοντα).⁸

Im Umkreis der Regierungsspitze in Konstantinopel ist das Vorhandensein von Schreibern, denen man diktiert, eine Selbstverständlichkeit,⁹ und Psellos hatte wohl immer, seit seiner Stellung als ὑπογραμματεὺς, Schreiber zur Verfügung, denen er diktierte und von denen er sich vorlesen ließ, so auch, nachdem Michael VII. ein literarisches Selbstportrait verfasst hatte, welches er Psellos zur Verwendung in dessen Darstellung zusandte. Da las der ὑπογραφεὺς Psellos das Elaborat vor, und Psellos hörte dem ἀνάγνωσμα zu.¹⁰

Herbert Hunger ist bis in neueste Zeit der einzige geblieben, der auf den Umstand hingewiesen hat, dass die *Chronographia* von ihrem Autor diktiert worden ist. Ljubarskij, der den oben zitierten Passus der *Chronographia* ausführlich zitiert und kommentiert,¹¹ äußert sich nicht zu diesem ὑπαγορεύσας, ebensowenig wie es andere getan haben (z.B. Krumbacher¹², Karpozelos¹³, Pietsch¹⁴, Kaldellis¹⁵). Allein Warren Treadgold ist, soweit ich sehe, bisher näher auf die *Chronographia* als Resultat eines Diktats eingegangen und hat damit vor allem auch strukturelle Eigentümlichkeiten des Textes in Verbindung gebracht.¹⁶

⁴ Psell. *Chron.* 1.30.12-13 Reinsch.

⁵ Psell. *Chron.* 2.6.12-18 Reinsch.

⁶ Psell. *Chron.* 5.27.5-8 Reinsch.

⁷ Psell. *Chron.* 6.190.11-12 Reinsch.

⁸ Psell. *Chron.* 7.37.3-4 Reinsch.

⁹ Elizabeth A. Fisher (Washington D.C.) hat mich brieflich auf die schöne Stelle in Psellos' Encomium auf Symeon Metaphrastes aufmerksam gemacht, an welcher Psellos die opulenten Umstände beschreibt, unter welchen Symeon seine Werke nicht nur Schreibern diktieren, sondern von weiteren Helfern sogar redigieren lassen konnte: Michael Psellus, *Orationes hagiographicae*, ed. E.A. Fisher, (Stuttgart / Leipzig 1994), 285, 333-341.

¹⁰ Psell. *Chron.* 7.175 (c 11). 4-5 Reinsch.

¹¹ J.N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*. Έκδοση δεύτερη, διορθωμένη και συμπληρωμένη, (Athen 2004), 269-270.

¹² K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, (München 21897), 437.

¹³ A. Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι, τόμος γ'*, (Athen 2009), 75-91.

¹⁴ E. Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos. Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie*, Wiesbaden 2005.

¹⁵ A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*, (Leiden / Boston / Köln 1999).

¹⁶ W. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, (New York / Basingstoke 2013), 289-308: 297-300.

Die Unstimmigkeiten und „Fehler“, die Treadgold mit der spontanen Diktiersituation erklärt, sind allerdings nicht unbedingt einleuchtend, z.B. was die Abstammung von Basileios Parakoimomenos betrifft, die Psellos wohl eher absichtlich hinaufstilisiert hat, indem er behauptet, der Parakoimomenos stamme vom selben Großvater ab wie Basileios II. und Konstantin VIII.¹⁷ Die vielen Text-Irrtümer im *codex unicus* gehen eher nicht auf das Konto des diktierenden Autors oder seines Schreibers, sondern auf das Konto der nachfolgenden Überlieferung und des inneren Diktats der Kopisten. Zweifellos richtig aber ist, dass „the organization of the *Chronography* is loose and episodic ... like a series of stories told from memory“. So erklärt sich auch, wie Treadgold in diesem Zusammenhang anführt, die doppelte Erzählung von der Thronbesteigung Konstantins X. Dukas¹⁸, deren zweite Fassung einerseits ein etwas anderes Bild von der Rolle vermittelt, die Psellos dabei gespielt hat, aber in deren Umfeld ein Vergleich Konstantins mit Achilleus bis in Einzelheiten des Satzaufbaus hinein wiederholt wird,¹⁹ was bei einer Revision des Diktierten so kaum stehengeblieben wäre.

Schon Walter Ong hat in seinem Klassiker *Orality and Literacy* von 1892 allgemein darauf hingewiesen, dass die Diktat-Situation auch orale Strukturen eines Textes begünstigt.²⁰ Auf die Seite der oralen Strukturen gehören in der *Chronographia* die außerordentlich zahlreichen Rückverweise innerhalb des Textes. Ein typisches Beispiel liegt in VI 151 vor: Dort spricht Psellos von der Alanischen Prinzessin, die sich Konstantin IX. nach dem Tod der Maria Skleraina

¹⁷ φὺς δὲ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πατρὸς τῷ τοῦ Βασιλείου καὶ Κωνσταντίνου πατρὶ (Psell. *Chron.* 1.3.8-9 Reinsch). In Wirklichkeit war der Parakoimomenos Basileios nicht der illegitime Sohn Konstantins VII., des Vaters Romanos' II. und Großvaters Basileios' II. und Konstantins VIII., sondern derjenige Romanos' I. Lakapenos. Psellos hat diesen „careless error“ wohl mit voller Absicht begangen, um die schmähliche Entmachtung des Parakoimomenos Basileios durch seinen angeblichen Neffen in einem umso negativeren Licht erscheinen zu lassen. Vgl. T. Papatstorakis: Tampering with History: From Michael III to Michael VIII, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96 (2003): 193-209: 202-204.

¹⁸ Psell. *Chron.* 7.89-91 und 100 (a 8).10-104 (a 12).6 Reinsch.

¹⁹ ὡσπερ γὰρ τῷ ἡρωϊ τούτῳ μεγάλη μὲν ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ γένους (Αἰακὸς γὰρ ὁ πάππος ... καὶ Πηλεὺς δὲ ὁ πατὴρ ...) ὑπὲρ τὰς τῶν πατέρων δόξας ἀποχρῶντα τὰ οἰκεῖα πεφύκασιν ἔργα· καὶ οὐ μᾶλλον ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς παρὰ τῶν γεννησαμένων τετίμηται, ἀλλ' ἐκείνοι παρὰ τοῦ παιδὸς τὸ σεμνὸν ἀποφέρονται, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῷ Δουκί Κωνσταντίνῳ ... λαμπρὰ μὲν καὶ τὰ παρὰ τοῦ ἄνω γένους, λαμπρότερα δὲ καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῆς ἰδίας φύσεώς τε καὶ προαιρέσεως (Psell. *Chron.* 7.84.3-12 Reinsch) – ὡσπερ Αἰακοῦ καὶ Πηλέως ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐξ ἐκείνων γενόμενος μᾶλλον ἐκείνων ἐξέλαμψεν, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ οὗτος, τοιαῦτα ἔχων τοῦ γένους τὰ παραδείγματα, οὐκ ἐμμήσατο μόνον, ἀλλ' ὡσπερ ἀμιλλησάμενος μακρῶ τοὺς προγόνους ὑπερεβάλετο διαπρεπῆς ἀπάσαις γενόμενος ἀρεταῖς (Psell. *Chron.* 7.98.5-9 Reinsch).

²⁰ W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the World*. 30th Anniversary Edition. With additional chapters by J. Hartley, (London / New York 2012) (London 1892. 2002), 94.

als Konkubine genommen hatte, mit dem Rückverweis ὡς μοι καὶ ἄνω που τοῦ λόγου λέλεκται. Dieses ἄνω που liegt gerade einmal 6 Kapitel zurück, wo Psellos mit identischen oder ganz ähnlichen Wendungen dieselbe Person und ihr Verhältnis zum Kaiser beschrieben hatte.²¹ Dort, an der ersten Stelle, lesen wir auch einen entsprechenden Vorverweis. Andere Vorverweise sind blind, so in IV 8,5, wo von der natürlichen Begabung Michaels IV. die Rede ist, in Rechtsfällen die richtige Entscheidung zu treffen, das ἀλλ' οὐπω περὶ τούτων aber nicht eingelöst wird, oder in VI 43,11-12, wo Psellos mit ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ὕστερον ankündigt, von seiner unentgeltlichen Lehrtätigkeit zu sprechen, was er dann ebenfalls nicht tut. Typisch ist für die Vorverweise die ἀναμεινάτω-Formel, die Psellos auch in anderen seiner Werke und in der *Chronographia* mehrmals gebraucht: Ein bestimmtes Teilthema soll noch etwas warten.²² In dieselbe Kategorie gehören auch andere Überleitungen, die wie die folgende typisch für mündliche Genera wie z.B. das Märchen sind: In VI 65 sagt Psellos, er wolle noch etwas über die Kaiserin Zoe sprechen, solange (in seiner Erzählung) der Kaiser bei seiner Mätresse Skleraina ruhe;²³ das nimmt er VI 68 wieder auf: „Nachdem wir nun unsere Erzählung bis hierhin haben gelangen lassen, wollen wir sie wieder zur Sebaste und zum Autokrator zurückrufen und die beiden, wenn es denn gefällt, aufwecken und voneinander trennen.“ Das ist der leichte Ton des souveränen Märchenerzählers, der sich auch in überleitenden Wendungen wie εἶτα τί γίνεται²⁴ oder εἶτα γίνεται τι τοιοῦτον²⁵ niederschlägt.

Spontan unterbricht sich der Erzähler an einigen Stellen mit der Bemerkung, er habe etwas vergessen: In den Ausführungen über Konstantin IX. möchte er über die Krankheit des Kaisers sprechen und schickt dem die Bemerkung voraus: „Was ich aber vor allem anderen vergessen habe zu schildern“. In Bezug auf Konstantin X. Dukas sagt er: „Was ich jedoch oben vergessen habe zu berichten, das will ich jetzt, da ich mich daran erinnere, erzählen.“²⁶ Im Bericht

²¹ ἐπαλλακευέτο τις μείραξ τῶ αὐτοκράτορι ἐξ ἔθνους οὐ μεγίστου ὀμηρεύουσα παρ' ἡμῖν γενναῖον μὲν οὐδὲν ἔχουσα ... ἐκ βασιλικῆς αἵματος (Psell. Chron. 6.145.6-8 Reinsch) – ἐρᾷ τινος μείρακος ... ἐξ Ἀλανίας, ὀμηρευούσης ἡμῖν. βασιλεία δὲ αὐτῆ οὐ πάνυ σεμνὴ οὐδὲ ἀξιωμα ἔχουσα ... θυγάτριον τοῦ ἐκεῖσε βασιλεύοντος ἦν οὔτε τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοθέατον οὔτε τὴν θεραπείαν εὐδαμον (Psell. Chron. 6.151.6-11 Reinsch).

²² ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν χαρακτήρ ἐκείνου μικρόν τι τὸν λόγον ἀναμεινάτω. (Psell. Chron. 7.5.5-6 Reinsch). ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τρίτος ἡμᾶς ἀναμεινάτω καιρός. (Psell. Chron. 7.58.17 Reinsch). ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν περὶ τῆς βασιλείας λόγος ἀναμεινάτω. (Psell. Chron. 7.85.1). ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ αἰχμαλωσίᾳ τοῦ βασιλέως χρόνος ἀναμεινάτω (Psell. Chron. 7.144 (b 23).1-2 Reinsch).

²³ ἕως ἂν τῇ σεβαστῇ αὐτοκράτωρ συναναπαύηται (Psell. Chron. 6.65.2 Reinsch).

²⁴ Psell. Chron. 3.24.1; 7.114 (a 22).1 Reinsch.

²⁵ Psell. Chron. 1.11.1 Reinsch.

²⁶ ὁ δὲ με ἄνω διέλαθεν, τοῦτο νῦν ἀναμνησθεὶς διηγῆσομαι (Psell. Chron. 7.110 (a 18).14-15).

über die Schlacht von Mantzikert hat die Formel „was ich vergessen habe zu sagen“, da sie nicht als solche erkannt und falsch interpretiert wurde, zum Missverständnis geführt, Psellos habe an diesem Feldzug persönlich teilgenommen. Dort heißt es²⁷ ὁ δέ με διέλαθεν: ἔλαθε τοῦτον αὐτὸς δὴ ὁ σουλτάν ... συνὼν τῷ στρατεύματι („Was ich vergessen habe [zu sagen]: Ihm [sc. Romanos Diogenes] war verborgen geblieben, dass der Sultan in eigener Person ... bei seinem Heer war.“). Da die Herausgeber des Textes nicht verstanden haben, dass es sich bei ὁ δέ με διέλαθεν um die Ebene des Erzählers und nicht des Erzählten handelt, hat Renauld²⁸ (gefolgt von Impellizzeri²⁹) vor διέλαθεν ein <ού> konjiziert, und alle Übersetzer (mit der einzigen Ausnahme von Ljubarskij³⁰, richtig verstanden hatte die Stelle auch Sykutris³¹) haben übersetzt im Sinne von „was mir nicht, wohl aber ihm entgangen war“,³² und Eva de Vries-van der Velden hat dann ausführlich über Psellos' angebliche Teilnahme am Desaster von Mantzikert gehandelt.³³

Die orale Produktion des Textes durch den Autor Psellos korrespondiert mit den weitgehend mündlichen Quellen, auf welche Psellos dort zurückgreift, wo er nicht ohnehin selbst als Augen- und Ohrenzeuge seine eigene Quelle ist. Psellos ist wie in der Antike Herodot, Thukydides, Xenophon, Polybios und andere sowie in Frühbyzanz Prokop ein Historiker, der sich fast ausschließlich auf sein eigenes Erleben und auf mündliche Quellen stützt. Er ist damit der erste byzantinische Historiker, der dies nach Prokop getan hat; nach Psellos selbst ist es wieder fast die Regel, von Nikephoros Bryennios bis hin zu Dukas und Kritobulos von Imbros.

²⁷ Psell. *Chron.* 7.141 (b 20).1-3 Reinsch.

²⁸ Michel Psellos, *Chronographie ou Histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976-1077)*. Texte établi et traduit par É. Renauld, I-II, (Paris 1926-1928): II 161.

²⁹ Michele Psellos, *Imperatori di Bisanzio (Cronografia)*. Introduzione di Dario del Corno. Testo critico a cura di Salvatore Impellizzeri. Commento di Ugo Criscuolo. Traduzione di Silvia Ronchey, I-II (Milano, 1984²1993): II 338.

³⁰ J.N. Ljubarskij, *Михаил Пселл, Хронография. Перевод, статья и примечания*, (Moskau 1978), 182: Забыл упомянуть: от Романа укрылось.

³¹ J. Sykutris, rez. Michel Psellos, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 29 (1929/30), 40-48: 47 „Psellos sagt: 'Was ich beinahe vergessen habe zu erwähnen, es ist ihm entgangen, daß der Sultan persönlich an der Spitze seiner Armee stand.' Diesen schönen Gedanken verdirbt R. durch seinen unglücklichen Einschub von οὐ vor διέλαθεν.“

³² Renauld: „Ce qui n'échappa à ma sagacité échappa à la sienne“. Ronchey bei Impellizzeri: „Ciò a me non sfuggì, ma sfuggì a lui“.

³³ E. de Vries-van der Velden, Psellos, Romain IV Diogénès et Mantzikert, in: *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997): 274-310, insbes. 301 mit Anm. 78 (301-302). Die Kenntnis von Sykutris (wie Anm. 31) und Ljubarskij (wie Anm. 30) hat de Vries-van der Velden nicht von ihrer Überzeugung abbringen können, Psellos sei Teilnehmer der Kampagne von 1071 gewesen, im Gegenteil, sie schlägt vor, die Sache noch zuzuspitzen und zu schreiben ὁ δ' ἐμὲ οὐ διέλαθεν, ἔλαθε τοῦτον.

Psellos selbst wird nicht müde, auf seine mündlichen Gewährsleute hinzuweisen. Meistens geschieht das durch generelle Angaben wie *ὡς ὁ λόγος ἔχει* (über den Charakter Basileios' II.)³⁴, *λόγος ἐστὶν* (über die Gründe für den vorzeitigen Tod Romanos' III.)³⁵, *ὡς ὁ τῶν πολλῶν λόγος* (über die Liebschaften Romanos' III.)³⁶, *φασὶ γοῦν οἱ καὶ τᾶλλα πρὸς τοῦτο συνείροντες* (über die Ermordung Romanos' III.)³⁷, *φασὶ γοῦν τινὲς τῶν μὴ πάνυ πρὸς τὸ ἐκείνου γένος εὐμενῶς ἐχόντων* (über Michael IV., er sei den Einflüsterungen von Zauberern gefolgt)³⁸, *φασὶ γοῦν* (über die jugendlichen Kräfte des Monomachos)³⁹, *ἀκούομεν* (über die Schönheit des jugendlichen Monomachos)⁴⁰, *ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ πολλῶν ἤκουσα* (über die tapfere Taten des Romanos Diogenes bei Mantzikert)⁴¹ und Ähnliches. An nicht wenigen Stellen benennt Psellos seine Gewährsleute aber auch konkret: So habe ihm, dem *πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου*, der bulgarische Prinz Alusianos selbst später erzählt,⁴² dass Psellos ihm in Konstantinopel mehrfach begegnet sei, ihn aber in seiner Verkleidung nicht erkannt habe. Von der pathetischen Klagerede der von Michael V. verbannten Zoe hätten ihm später die Leute berichtet, die damit beauftragt waren, sie auf die Insel Prinkipos zu bringen.⁴³ Für die Liebesaffäre zwischen Zoe und dem späteren Kaiser Michael IV. konnte sich Psellos, wie er sagt, auf die Informationen eines im Palast ein- und ausgehenden Mannes stützen, der die ganze Geschichte kannte und ihm, Psellos, den Stoff für seine Darstellung geliefert habe.⁴⁴

Nur an einer einzigen Stelle erwähnt Psellos schriftliche Quellen, dort nämlich, wo es um die Jugendzeit Basileios' II. geht: *ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ τῶν ἀρχαιολογούντων περὶ αὐτὸν ξυγγραφέων ἤκουσα*.⁴⁵ Für den späteren Basileios konnte er dann bereits wieder auf die mündlichen Einschätzungen seines Charakters derjenigen zurückgreifen, *οἱ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς τεθέανται τὸν βασιλέα Βασιλείον*.⁴⁶ Zu Beginn des dritten Buches, wo mit der Herrschaft Romanos' III. Psellos' persönliche

³⁴ Psell. *Chron.* 1.7.2 Reinsch.

³⁵ Psell. *Chron.* 3.17.1-2 Reinsch.

³⁶ Psell. *Chron.* 3.17.5 Reinsch.

³⁷ Psell. *Chron.* 3.26.20 Reinsch.

³⁸ Psell. *Chron.* 4.33.1-2 Reinsch.

³⁹ Psell. *Chron.* 6.125.13 Reinsch.

⁴⁰ Psell. *Chron.* 6.126.2 Reinsch.

⁴¹ Psell. *Chron.* 7.143 (b 22). 2 Reinsch.

⁴² *ὡς ὑστερόν μοι εἰρήκει* (Psell. *Chron.* 4.47.1 Reinsch).

⁴³ *ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ τισιν ὑστερον τῶν ἀπαγαγόντων αὐτὴν συνωμίλησα, φασὶν, ὡς ...* (Psell. *Chron.* 5.22.1-2 Reinsch).

⁴⁴ *ὡς δ' ἐγὼ τινος ἤκουσα τῶν τότε περὶ τὰς βασιλείους ἀναστρεφομένων αὐλάς ἀνδρῶς, ἅπασαν τῆς βασιλίδος τὴν ἐρωτικὴν εἰδότης ὑπόθεσιν κάμοι τὰς ἀφορμὰς τῆς ἱστορίας διδόντος* (Psell. *Chron.* 3.23.3-5 Reinsch).

⁴⁵ Psell. *Chron.* 1.4.4-5 Reinsch.

⁴⁶ Psell. *Chron.* 1.4.1-2 Reinsch.

Kenntnis einsetzt, spricht er rückblickend auf Basileios II. und Konstantin VIII. nicht speziell von schriftlichen Quellen, sondern nur davon, dass er Romanos skizziert, ohne sich auf Dritte zu stützen, während er sich für seine Ausführungen über dessen beide Vorgänger auf fremde Quellen stützen musste.⁴⁷

Falls es ein vom Redaktor später entferntes Anfangskapitel mit dem Tod des Ioannes Tzimiskes gegeben hat, wofür vieles spricht,⁴⁸ kommen auch dafür schriftliche Quellen in Frage, natürlich in erster Linie Leon Diakonos, möglicherweise (aber nicht zwingend) gab es auch eine schriftliche Quelle für den Feldzug Romanos' III. gegen Aleppo.

Wohl überhaupt nicht auf irgendwelche Quellen, weder mündlicher noch schriftlicher Art (obwohl alle Übersetzer es so verstanden haben), bezieht sich Psellos' Bemerkung zu Beginn von II 2: τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρα (sc. Konstantin VIII.) ὑπογράφων ὁ λόγος τοιοῦτον δηλοῖ. Vielmehr bezeichnet hier ὁ λόγος, wie an vielen anderen Stellen der *Chronographia* ebenfalls, den Logos (die Rede, das Werk) des Autors Psellos, welcher ein Bild des Kaisers skizziert. ὑπογράφων ist natürlich auf λόγος bezogenes Partizip, nicht etwa⁴⁹ ein *genetivus pluralis*, der dann die „writers“ meinen könnte, die hier als Quellen für Konstantins Charakter genannt würden.

Eine mündliche Quelle, die bis in die Lebenszeit Basileios' II. zurückreicht, ist auch Isaak Komnenos. Am Abend vor der krisenhaften Zuspitzung seiner Krankheit, so berichtet Psellos⁵⁰, schien es Isaak besser zu gehen, er war in euphorischer Stimmung, erzählte viel und unterhielt diejenigen, die bei ihm waren, mit Bonmots, die er sicherlich nicht selbst (geboren ca. 1007) aus dem Mund von Basileios gehört hatte, sondern seinerseits aus mündlicher Tradition kannte. Zu diesen ἀποφθέγματα des Basileios, die von Isaak erzählt wurden, gehörte eventuell auch das, was er, wie auch von Skylitzes bestätigt, gesagt haben soll, als man den Rebellen Bardas Skleros nach dessen Kapitulation, vom Alter gebeugt und auf beiden Seiten gestützt, vor ihn führte: „Sieh da, den ich gefürchtet hatte, der kommt auf fremde Hände gestützt schutzflehend zu mir.“⁵¹

Andere solcher Apophthegmata hat Psellos selbst gesammelt; von Konstantin X. Dukas hat er einen ganzen Cluster überliefert.⁵²

⁴⁷ περι ἐκείνων μὲν ἕξ ἑτέρων τὰς ἀφορμὰς εἰληφῶς εἴρηκα· τοῦτον δὲ αὐτὸς ὑπογράφω, οὐ παρ' ἑτέρων μεμαθηκῶς (Psell. *Chron.* 3.1.14-16 Reinsch).

⁴⁸ Vgl. dazu D.R. Reinsch, Wie und wann ist der uns überlieferte Text der *Chronographia* des Michael Psellos entstanden?, in: *Medioevo greco* 13 (2013): 209-222: 221-222.

⁴⁹ So Treadgold (wie oben Anm. 16), 291 n. 97.

⁵⁰ Psell. *Chron.* 7.76 Reinsch.

⁵¹ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ δημῶδες καὶ κοινὸν ἀνεφθέγγατο· ἰδοὺ ὃν ἐδεδοίκειν, οὗτος χειραγωγούμενος ἰκέτης μου πρόσεισιν (Psell. *Chron.* 1.27.8-9 Reinsch).

⁵² Psell. *Chron.* 7.121 (a 29) Reinsch.

Mündlichkeit, die sich in der *Chronographia* als Dialog präsentiert, hat Psellos hingegen, sofern er nicht selbst als Dialogpartner oder Ohrenzeuge beteiligt war, aus der geschilderten Situation heraus erfunden. Ein Charakteristikum dieses historischen Werkes besteht ja darin, dass in ihm die großen Reden, besonders die Feldherrnreden in der Tradition des Thukydides, fehlen. Farbe und Unmittelbarkeit gewinnt die Darstellung wie die seines literarischen Vorbildes Plutarch durch die Apophthegmata und eben die Dialoge, die Psellos auch dort einfügt, wo sie ihm keine fremde Quelle übermitteln konnte, wie z.B. die lange und lebhaft geheimer Unterredung zwischen dem Orphanotrophos Ioannes und seinem Bruder, Kaiser Michael IV.⁵³ Hier konnte es schlechterdings keinen Ohrenzeugen geben, und doch gibt Psellos das Gespräch so lebendig wieder, als sei er selbst dabeigewesen.

Eine einzige große Rede ist Gegenstand der Erzählung in der *Chronographia*, die Gesandtschaftsrede, die Psellos selbst als Abgesandter Kaiser Michaels VI. Stratotikos vor dem Usurpator Isaak Komnenos und dessen Garden im Feldherrnzelt Isaaks in Kleinasien gehalten hat.⁵⁴ Diese Rede aber gibt Psellos nicht als zusammenhängenden Wortlaut wieder; er gibt vor, wegen des tumultartigen Lärms, der sich an vielen Stellen seiner Ausführungen erhoben hatte, sich nicht mehr genau an die Sätze und Formulierungen erinnern zu können. Daher referiert er einzelne Stellen, teils in indirekter, teils in direkter Rede, kommentiert diese in einem Ego-Kommentar mit dem technischen Vokabular der Rhetoriklehre, berichtet über die Reaktionen der Umstehenden und führt die lebhaften Dialogpartien zwischen ihnen und ihm sowie zwischen dem Kaiser und ihm in wörtlicher Rede an. Die ganze Rede ist auf diese Weise in viele kürzere Einzelpartien aufgespalten und somit dem allgemeinen Duktus der Erzähleinheiten innerhalb der *Chronographia* angepasst.

In allen solchen Erzähleinheiten, die Psellos selbst an vielen Stellen διήγησις bzw. διήγημα nennt (ebenso gebraucht er oft das Verbum διηγοῦμαι) dominiert die mündliche Situation, und das wird auch dadurch deutlich, dass er seine Rezipienten niemals als Leser (ἀναγνώσται), sondern als Hörer apostrophiert. So leitet er etwa die Erzählung vom Prozess gegen einen Beamten wegen Unterschlagung von öffentlichen Geldern, die einen lebhaften Dialog zwischen dem Angeklagten und Kaiser Konstantin IX. enthält, mit folgender Bemerkung ein: „Doch will ich als Beleg für diese seine (sc. des Kaisers) schöne Eigenschaft (sc. die Milde und Großzügigkeit) den geeigneten Hörern auch eine kleine Geschichte erzählen.“⁵⁵ Auch an anderen Stellen spricht Psellos in der *Chronographia* von der

⁵³ Psell. *Chron.* 4.20-22 Reinsch.

⁵⁴ Psell. *Chron.* 7.26-31 Reinsch.

⁵⁵ ἀμέλει καὶ βραχεῖαν τῆς τοιαύτης αὐτῷ ἀρετῆς τοῖς φιληκόοις ὑπόθεσιν διηγῆσομαι (Psell. *Chron.* 6.170.1-2 Reinsch).

φιλήκοος ἀκοή seiner Rezipienten⁵⁶, von den τῶν πολλῶν ἀκοαί, denen er seine Erzählung anvertraut⁵⁷, und das oft gebrauchte Verbum ἀναγινώσκω bedeutet in der Vorstellung des Autors, dass der Leser durch lautes Lesen die akustische Gestalt des Textes wiederherstellt. Dass Psellos, als er sein Werk diktierte, sich vorgestellt hat, dass seine zukünftigen Leser dem von seinem Schreiber fixierten Text wieder mündliches Leben geben würde, ist selbstverständlich.

Für uns ist diese mündliche Praxis weitgehend verloren, aber nicht ganz, wissen wir doch ziemlich genau, wie die griechischen Schriftzeichen der byzantinischen Zeit in Laute umzusetzen sind, und für den Satzrhythmus haben wir zumindest für die Zeit ab dem 9. Jahrhundert die Vorgaben der Akzentuierung und der Interpunktion, vorausgesetzt sie finden so, wie sie überliefert sind, auch Eingang in unsere modernen Editionen.

Die *Chronographia* des Michael Psellos dient in besonderem Maße der zeitgeschichtlichen Vermittlung zwischen der Oralität der Quellen einerseits und der Auralität des rezipierenden Publikums andererseits. Die fast ausschließlich mündlichen Quellen sind durch das Diktat des Autors zu einem λόγος verarbeitet, der durch den oder die Schreiber mit Hilfe von Buchstaben, Akzenten und Interpunktionszeichen festgehalten wurde, damit er als akustischer Akt wiederbelebt und wahrgenommen werden kann, gleichgültig ob sich das im sozialen Kontext eines θεάτρον abspielt, oder ob die Stimme des Lesers nur an die eigenen Ohren dringt.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Psellos [Psell.] *Chronographia* [Chron.] Diether Roderich Reinsch, Michaelis Pselli *Chronographia*, Series: Millennium-Studien / Millennium Studies, 51, De Gruyter Berlin 2014; Michel Psellos, *Chronographie ou Histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976-1077)*. Texte établi et traduit par É. Renauld, I-II, Paris 1926-1928; Michele Psellos, *Imperatori di Bisanzio (Cronografia)*. Introduzione di Dario del Corno. Testo critico a cura di Salvatore Impellizzeri. Commento di Ugo Criscuolo. Traduzione di Silvia Ronchey, I-II [Milano] 1984.

[Or. Hagiogr.] Michael Psellus, *Orationes hagiographicae*, ed. E.A. Fisher, Stuttgart / Leipzig 1994.

⁵⁶ Psell. *Chron.* 6.21.6 Reinsch.

⁵⁷ Psell. *Chron.* 6.23.11 Reinsch.

Secondary literature

- H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I, München 1978
- A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*, Leiden / Boston / Köln 1999
- A. Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι, τόμος γ'*, Athen 2009
- K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, München 1897
- J.N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού. Έκδοση δεύτερη, διορθωμένη και συμπληρωμένη*, Athen 2004
- J.N. Ljubarskij, *Михаил Пселл, Хронография. Перевод, статья и примечания*, Moskau 1978
- W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the World. 30th Anniversary Edition. With additional chapters by J. Hartley*, London / New York 2012
- T. Papamastorakis: *Tampering with History: From Michael III to Michael VIII*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96 (2003) 193-209
- E. Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos. Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie*, Wiesbaden 2005
- D.R. Reinsch, *Wie und wann ist der uns überlieferte Text der Chronographia des Michael Psellos entstanden?*, in: *Medioevo greco* 13 (2013), 209-222
- J. Sykutris, *rez. Michel Psellos (wie Anm. 31)*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 29 (1929/30), 40-48
- W. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York / Basingstoke 2013
- E. de Vries-van der Velden, *Psellos, Romain IV Diogénès et Mantzikert*, in: *Byzantino-slavica* 58 (1997), 274-310

MICHAEL PSELLOS

BIBLIOGRAPHY 2000-2020

2020

- R. Betancourt, Representation as indwelling: Contextualizing Michael Psellos' empsychos graphe across artistic, liturgical, and literary theory, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 44.1 (2020) 62-85
- N. Drocourt, « Φωνή, γλῶττα, φθέγμα... Entre parole et éloquence : la voix des basileis dans la Chronographie de Michel Psellos », dans *La voix au Moyen Âge, Actes du 50e Congrès de la SHMESP (Francfort, mai 2019)*, Paris, Editions de la Sorbonne, 2020, p. 185-199
- A. Kurbanov, L. Spyridonova, Письмо №33 Михаила Пселла: философское объяснение благоухания умерших тел (Michael Psellos' Letter no. 33: Philosophical Explanation for the Odor of Sanctity), *Schole* 14.2 (2020) 826-839
- F. Lauritzen, A lifetime with Proclus: Psellos as reader in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 103.1 (2020) 69-80
- E. Limousin, « La constitution d'une communauté étudiante au sein de la bureaucratie byzantine : les juges de l'Hippodrome (Xe-XIIe siècle) », P. VICTORIN, I. DURAND, *Figures de l'étudiant, du Moyen Age au XXIe siècle, Motifs* 3, 2020, p. 9-17.

2019

- S. Costanza, Il trattato sul sacrificio di Psello: ieroscopia e influssi astrologici, *MHNH* 19 (2019) 167-192
- G. Diamantopoulos, Die Hermeneutik des Niketas Stethatos, *Münchener Arbeiten zur Byzantinistik*, 3, Neuried 2019, 981 Seiten (in zwei Teilbänden).
- M. Kruse, The Epitomator Ioannes Xiphilinos and the Eleventh-Century Xiphilinoi, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 69 (2019) 257-274
- F. Lauritzen, Psello e gli oracoli caldaici in *Dialoghi con Bisanzio. Spazi di discussione, percorsi di ricerca. Atti dell'VIII Congresso dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini (Ravenna, 22-25 settembre 2015)*, a cura di S. Cosentino, M. E. Pomero e G. Vespignani, Spoleto 2019, 549-556

- A. Papadopoulos, Ένα αιγιματικό χωρίο στην Oratio funebris in Stylianam filiam του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta 56 (2019) 95-107

2018

- F. Lauritzen, Il mecenate Costantino Licudi e la monodia di Michele Psello in memoria di Maria Sclerena (poem 17 Westerink) in Parekbolai 8 (2018) 23-35
- G. Lozza, Michele Psello interprete di Omero, Koinonia 42 (2018) 443-454
- I. Perez-Martin, Miguel Pselo, Sobre el mapa: Un Estrabón oculto. In: E. Castro ed., De nuevo sobre Estrabón. Geografía, cartografía, historiografía y tradición (Monografías de GAHIA 3), Sevilla, Universidad 2018, 111-135.
- G. Rota, Michele Psello e un esempio di “risemantizzazione cristiana”: De omnifaria doctrina 164, Paideia 73.1 (2018) 651-663
- T. Shchukin (sic in the publication), Гармония и спасение. Толкование Михаила Пселла на Песн. 2:6 в контексте греческой экзегетической традиции, ESSE: Философские и теологические исследования, Т. 3, N 1 (2018) 252-286.
- L. Silvano, Il monaco Elia tra cielo e inferno: nota a Psello, epist. 98 Kurtz-Drexl, Res Publica Litterarum 41 (2018) 200-214

2017

- C. Barber, S. Papaioannou, Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics, Notre Dame, 2017
- F. Bernard, Authorial practices and competitive performance in the works of Michael Psellos, in M. D. Lauxtermann and M. Whittow, *Byzantium in the eleventh century: being in between : papers from the 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, Oxford, 24-6 March 2012*, Routledge 2017, 45-63
- F. Bernard, Educational Networks in the Letters of Michael Psellos, in: M. Jeffreys and M.D. Lauxtermann (eds), *The Letters of Psellos. Cultural Networks and Historical Realities* (Oxford 2017), 13-41.
- J.C. Cheynet, L’administration provinciale dans la correspondance de Michel Psellos, in M. D. Lauxtermann and M. Whittow, *Byzantium in the eleventh century : being in between : papers from the 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, Oxford, 24-6 March 2012*, Routledge 2017, 63-77

- M. Jeffreys, M. D. Lauxtermann, *The letters of Psellos: cultural networks and historical realities: [papers presented at a workshop held in Oxford on 6-7 November 2010]*, Oxford 2017
- M. Jeffreys, Michael Psellos and the eleventh century: a double helix of reception, in M. D. Lauxtermann and Mark Whittow, *Byzantium in the eleventh century : being in between : papers from the 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, Oxford, 24-6 March 2012*, Routledge 2017, 32-45
- M. Jeffreys, Michael Psellos and the Monastery, in Lauxtermann Jeffreys (2017) 42-58
- F. Lauritzen, Psellos' Imperial Poetry in *Parekbolai* 7 (2017) 151-158
- M. D. Lauxtermann, "The Intertwined Lives of Michael Psellos and John Mauropous," M.J. Jeffreys, M.D. Lauxtermann, eds. *The Letters of Psellos: Cultural Networks and Historical Realities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017, 89-127
- F. Lopez-Santos Kornberger, Reconciliando al genio crítico y al adulador cortesano: una revisión a la aproximación bipartita de la Cronografía de Miguel Pselo y la Historia de Miguel Atalates, *Estudios Byzantinos* 7 (2019) 55-84.
- N. Manousakis, Michael Psellos on "Prometheus Bound": Reinstating a Judgment, *Logeion* 7 (2017) 1-13
- S. Mariev, *The Divine Body of the Heavens: The Debates about the Body of the Heavens during Late Antiquity and their echoes in the works of Michael Psellos and John Italos*, Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism, Munich, 2017
- A. Panagoroulou, Αυτοκρατορική προαίρεση και παρακμή στη Χρονογραφία του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, Δωδώνη, τόμος ΜΓ'-ΜΔ' (2017), σσ. 141-184 (in Greek)
- T. Shchukin, Мыслитель, который оживил философию: значение Михаила Пселла для византийской интеллектуальной традиции, *ESSE: Философские и теологические исследования*, Т. 2, N 1-2 (2017) 353-372
- D. Walter, *Michael Psellos: Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz. Mittelalterliche Philosophie im Verhältnis zu Antike und Spätantike*, Berlin 2017

2016

- S. Antonov, Политическите идеи на Михаил Псел според неговата Хронография. - В: Мартенски студентски четения. Сборник с материали от Пета студентска научна конференция във ВТУ "Св. св. Кирил и Методий, том 2. Велико Търново, 2016, 92-100
- S. Antonov, Образът на детето и императора Михаил VII Дука в Хронография на Михаил Псел. - *Balkanistic Forum* XXV (2016, 1-2), 101-109

- F. Bernard, Educational Networks in the Letters of Michael Psellos in Lauxtermann Jeffreys (2016) 13-41
- G. Cattaneo, Michele Psello, Teodoreto di Cirro, Anastasio del Sinai: nota a Psell. Theol. II 42 Westerink-Duffy, *Medioevo Greco* 16 (2016) 73-80
- I. Guryanov, Reception of Michael Psellos in the Context of Physical and Medical Discourses of Marsilio Ficino (paper in Russian; original version) *Vestnik LGU* 3 (2016) 28-37
- I. Ivanov, priest, О современном издании богословских сочинений византийского монаха Михаила Пселла — «Theologica», *Христианское чтение* 5 (2016) 70-86
- M. Jeffreys, Michael Psellos and the Monastery, in Lauxtermann Jeffreys (2016) 42-58
- T. Kampianaki, "Sayings Attributed to Emperors of Old and New Rome in Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*," in N. Matheou, Th. Kampianaki and Lorenzo Bondioli (eds.), *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the cities* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 311-25
- M. Lauxtermann, The Intertwined lives of Michael Psellos and John Mauropous, in Lauxtermann Jeffreys (2016) 89-127
- M. Lauxtermann, M. Jeffreys, *The Letters of Psellos*, Oxford 2016
- D. R. Reinsch, Venomous Praise: Some Remarks on Michael Psellos' Letters to Leon Paraspondylos in Lauxtermann Jeffreys (2016) 128-142
- M. Repajic, The Political Thought of Psellos in the Chronographia: The Wise Advisor, the Clever General, and the City (*Limes Plus* 13/2 2016)
- M. Repajic, Михаило Псел и његови јунаци. Студија личности "Хронографије" Михаила Псела, докторска теза/ Michael Psellos and his Heroes. Study of Personalities of Michael Psellos' "Chronographia", PhD Thesis, Belgrade 2016
- R. Van Rooy, Teaching Greek grammar in 11th-century Constantinople. Michael Psellus on the Greek 'dialects', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 109.1 (2016) 207-222

2015

- P. Bouras Vallianatos, A new witness to Michael Psellos' poem "On Medicine" ("De medicina"), *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 65 (2015) 9-12
- L. Calvié, Les extraits pselliens des 'Éléments rythmiques' d'Aristoxène de Tarente, *Revue des Études Byzantines* 72 (2014) 139-191
- C. Garbieri, *Lettura della Cronografia di Michele Psello: Imperatori bizantini del XI secolo* [Formato Kindle], ASIN: B0158WN7K4

- A. Kaldellis, I. Polemis, *Psellos and the Patriarchs, Letters and Funeral Orations for Keroullarios, Leichoudes, and Xiphilinos*, South Bend, Indiana 2015
- E. Limousin, « Constantin IX Monomaque : un empereur byzantin ou un homme de réseau ? », in H. Bresc, Réseaux politiques et économiques, Actes du 140e Congrès des Sociétés Historiques et Scientifiques de Reims (avril 2015), p. 26-37
- A. Mussini, *La rosa d'inverno, Al sultano (opuscula theologica I, 32; II, 3)*, Alessandria 2015
- I. Polemis, Michael Psellos the Novelist: Some Notes on the Story of the Empress Zoe, in T. Antonopoulou, S. K. and M. Loukaki, *Myriobiblos: essays on Byzantine literature and culture*, Boston 2015, 285-293
- M. Repajić, Жанр у функцији ироније: литерарна освета Михаила Псела, ЗРВИ 52 (2015) 57-89/ Genre in the function of irony: Literary revenge of Michael Psellos, ZRVI 52 (2015) 57-89
- D. R. Reinsch, *Leben der byzantinischen Kaiser (978-1075): Chronographia: griechisch-deutsch*, Berlin 2015
- J.C. Riedinger, C. Jouanno, V. Deroche, Michel Psellos, Portraits de famille, textes traduits et commentés, Paris, 2015

2014

- F. Bernard, Questions of Authorship and Genre in Chronicles of the Middle Byzantine Period: The Case of Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*, in A. Pizzone, *The author in Middle Byzantine literature: modes, functions, and identities*, Boston 2014, 61-75
- L. Carbó, La Cronografía de Miguel Psellos. La recepción de la tradición clásica y la síntesis con la visión cristiana de la Historia, *De Medio Aevo* 5.1 (2014) 67-94
- B. Crostini, Paul Moore and more Psellos : still 'Wanted' in Byzantium in I. Nilsson and P. Stephenson *Wanted, Byzantium: the desire for a lost empire*, Uppsala 2014, 185-199
- I. Ivanov, priest, Михаил Пселл — философ, царедворец, монах — к проблеме самоидентификации, in: Линтула. Сборник научных статей. Вып. 6. Материалы научной конференции VI Линтуловских чтений 2012 г., S. Petersburg 2013, 48-54
- F. Lauritzen, Psellos and Plotinus, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107.2 (2014) 711-724
- F. Lauritzen, Paraphrasis as interpretation Psellos and a canon of Cosmas the melodist (poem 24 westerink) in *Byzantina* 33 (2014) 61-74
- F. Lauritzen, Achilles at the Battle of Ostrovo: George Maniakes and the reception of the Iliad in *Byzantinoslavica* 72 (2014) 171-187

- E. Limousin, La rhétorique au secours du patrimoine: Psellos, les impératrices et les monastères, in L. Theis, M. Mullett, M. Grünbart, G. Fingarova, M. Savage, *Female founders in Byzantium and beyond*, Vienna 2014, 177-194
- C. Macé, T. Wauters, T. Fernández, L. Cuppi: The Teubner Edition of Psellos in the Light of a New Find in MS Trinity College Dublin 373, in J. Signes Codoñer, I. Pérez Martín, *Textual transmission in Byzantium: between textual criticism and Quellenforschung*, Turnhout 2014, 263-289
- D. O' Meara, Michael Psellos, in S. Gersh, *Interpreting Proclus From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Cambridge 2014, 165-181
- G. Miles, Living as a Sphinx: Composite Being and Monstrous Interpreter in the "Middle Life" of Michael Psellos, in Danijela Kambaskovic (ed.), *Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment*, Springer 2014, pp. 11-24
- S. P. Panagopoulos, The philosophical contribution of a homo byzantinus: The De omnifaria doctrina of Michael Psellus (1017/1018-1078 AD)", *De Medio Aevo* 5.1 (2014), 169-178
- I. Polemis, *Psellus, Orationes Funebres*, Leipzig 2014
- S. A. Protogirou, Rhetorical Theatricality in Michael Psellos' Works (PhD Thesis, 2014)
- D. R. Reinsch, *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, Berlin 2014 [Band 1: Einleitung und Text; Band 2: textkritischer Kommentar und Indices]
- B. Tambrun, « Are Psellos's and Plethon's Chaldaean Oracles genuine ? », dans Jozef Matula et Paul-Richard Blum (éd.), *Georgios Gemistos Plethon : The Byzantine and the Latin Renaissance*, Olomouc, Palacký University Press, 2014, p. 381-395
- P. Varalda, *Vita di s. Ausenzio di Bitinia*, Alessandria 2014

2013

- N. Agiotis, Tzetzes on Psellos revisited, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 106 (2013) 1-8
- J.C. Cheynet, Psellos et Antioche, *Зборник Радова Византинолошког Института* 50 (2013) 411-422
- L. Kondova, The Rhetoric in the Works of Hermogenes of Tarsus and Michael Psellos //Реториката в съчиненията на Хермоген от Тарс и Михаил Псел, *Nota Bene* 2013.2
- F. Lauritzen, Psellos and Neoplatonic Mysticism: The Secret Meaning of the Greek Alphabet in H. Seng, *Bibliotheca Chaldaica / Band 3: Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, Heidelberg 2013, 29-45
- F. Lauritzen, The mixed life of Plato's Philebus in Psellos' Chronographia (6a.8), *Zbornik Radova Vizantinološkog Instituta* 50.1 (2013) 399-409

- F. Lauritzen, *The depiction of Character in Psellos' Chronographia*, Brepols 2013. [Reviewed Christian Høgel, Jonas J. H. Christensen Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2014.10.11]
- D. O'Meara, Psellos' Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles and Proclus' lost commentary in H. Seng (ed.), *Bibliotheca Chaldaica / Band 3: Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, Heidelberg 2013, 45-58
- S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*, Cambridge 2013
- I. Pérez Martín, The philosophical teaching of Michael Psellos in the Palaeologan Renaissance, in A. Rigo P. Ermilov M. Trizio, *Theologica minora: The Minor Genres of Byzantine Theological Literature*, Turnhout 2013, 159-174, 180-185
- D. R. Reinsch, Der Dual als Mittel literarischer Gestaltung in Michael Psellos' Chronographia, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 106 (2013) 133-142
- D. R. Reinsch, Wie und wann ist der uns überlieferte Text der 'Chronographia' des Michael Psellos entstanden?, *Medioevo Greco* 13 (2013) 209-222
- M. Рерајић, Константин Велики у историјским делима Михаила Псела / Constantine the Great in the historical works of Michael Psellos in D. Bojović, *Свети Цар Константин и хришћанство/Saint Emperor Constantine and Christianity*, Niš 2013, 459-471
- H. Seng, Der Kommentar des Psellos zu den Chaldaeischen Orakeln in lateinischer Übersetzung (Vat. Lat. 3122 f. 44r-57r) in H. Seng (ed.), *Bibliotheca Chaldaica / Band 3: Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, Heidelberg 2013, 59-74
- S. Vlavianos, *La figure du mage à Byzance de Jean Damascène à Michel Psellos (VIIIe-fin XIe siècles)*, Paris 2013

2012

- A. Varmin, Сочинение «О Тайной вечере» Михаила Пселла (collection on the last supper by Michael Psellos), *Византийский Временник* 71 (2012) 230-239
- G. Cavallo, Alla ricerca del doppio pubblico di Michele Psello in P. Odorico (ed.), *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte entant que message immédiat*, Paris 2012, 237-245
- A. del Campo Echevaria, Miguel Pselo, la enseñanza y el rechazo de la teoría platónica de las Ideas in A. del Campo Echevaria, *La teoría platónica de las Ideas en Bizancio (siglos IX-XI)*, Madrid 2012

- E. Fisher, Michael Psellos on the 'Usual' Miracle at Blachernae, the Law, and Neoplatonism, Byzantine religious culture, in D. Sullivan, E. Fisher, S. Papaioannou, *Studies in honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, Leiden 2012, 187-204
- F. Kolovou, "ΤΡΥΦΑΝ ΕΝ ΛΟΓΟΙΣ": Michael Psellos' und Machelarios' Enkomien auf den im Baroccianus gr. 135," *Byzantina* 32 (2012) 9-24
- D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the politics of imperial decline in eleventh-century Byzantium*, Tempe 2012
- F. Lauritzen, Psellos the hesychast: a neoplatonic reading of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor, *Byzantinoslavica* 70 (2012) 167-180
- F. Lauritzen, Autocrate negli encomi imperiali di Psello (1018-1081) in *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института* 49 (2012) 113-125
- D. R. Reinsch, Andronikos Dukas ohne Schatten : zu Psellos, *Chronographia* VIIIc 14, 6-7, *Medioevo Greco* 12 (2012) 307-311
- M. Repajić, Болести царева у Хронографији Михаила Псела, in B. Krsmanović, L. Maksimović, R. Radić, *Византијски свет на Балкану* 2, Belgrade 2012, 333-348
- J. Šaranac-Stamenković, Constantine X Doukas in an Enkomion by Michael Psellos, *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института* 49 (2012) 127-143
- T. A. Šukin, «Православный» богослов Михаил Пселл и его учение о Троице, *EINAI: Проблемы философии и теологии* 2 (2012)
(<http://einai.ru/2012-02-Shchukin.html>)
- A. Vratimos, In the Chronographia, is Michael Psellos' concern for the army entirely disinterested?, *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института* 49 (2012) 145-158

2011

- F. Bernard, Exchanging logoi for aloga: Cultural Capital and Material Capital in a Letter of Michael Psellos, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 35 (2011) 134-148
- R. Dostalova, Rhetorik, Allegorie in der Ekphrasis antiker Denkmäler: Die Ekphrasis antiker Kunstdenkmäler als Weg zur griechischen Philosophie in Byzanz (am Beispiel von Michael Psellos), *Byzantinoslavica* 69.3 (2011) 137-145
- W. Hörandner, Zu Ps.-Psellos, Gedichte 67 (Ad monachum superbum) und 68 (Ad eundem), *Medioevo Greco* 11 (2011) 107-137
- A. Kaldellis, The date of Psellos' death, once again: Psellos was not the Michael of Nikomedeia mentioned by Attaleiates, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 104 (2011) 651-664

- N. Koutrakou, Psellus, Romanus III and an Arab Victory "Beyond any Reasonable Expectation": Some Remarks on Psellus's Perception of Foreign Relations," in E. Chatzaki, *Graeco-Arabica: ad Cretam Dedicata*, Heraklion 2011, 319-345
- A.V. Larionov, Демонология Михаила Пселла и диалог "О действиях демонов" (атрибуция и сравнительный анализ) in: *Мир Византии. Проблемы истории Церкви, армии и общества*, Volgograd 2011, 5-27
- F. Lauritzen, Stethatos' Paradise in Psellos' ekphrasis on Mt Olympos in *Византийский Временник* 70 (2011) 139-151
- S. Papaioannou, Michael Psellos on Friendship and Love: Erotic Discourse in Eleventh-Century Constantinople, *Early Medieval Europe* 19.1 (2011) 43-61
- I. Polemis, Μικρές σημειώσεις στην Χρονογραφία τοῦ ΜιχαήλΨελλοῦ in: Th. K. Korres, P. Katsoni, I. Leontiades, and A.Goutzioukostas (eds.), *Φιλοτιμία: Τιμητικός τόμος για την ομότιμη καθηγήτρια ΑλκμήνηΣταυρίδου-Ζαφράκα*, Thessalonike 2011, 519-523
- D. R. Reinsch, Weitere Vorschläge zur Korrektur des Textes von Michael Psellos, *Chronographia, Medioevo Greco* 11 (2011) 203-224
- T. A. Šukin, Триадология Иоанна Дамаскина в интерпретации Михаила Пселла (на примере 1-й главы трактата «О всеобщем учении»), *Вестник русской христианской гуманитарной академии* 12.4 (2011)

2010

- F. Bernard, *The Beats of the Pen: Social Contexts of Reading and Writing Poetry in 11th-Century Constantinople* (Ghent University PhD thesis, 2010). Also available at: <http://biblio.ugent.be/record/915696>
- K. Bezarachvili, Michael Psellos: the interpreter of the style of Gregory the theologian and the new aspects of the concepts of rhetorical theories, in *Studia patristica* 48(2010) 233-240
- J. Boranek, Alania i Bizancjum w Kronice Michała Pselloso, *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne* 11 (2010) 9-19
- Z. Farkas, Epigrammata Pselli, *Acta Antiqua* 50 (2010) 97-102
- A. Guida, Proposte di correzioni al testo dei nuovi morceaux choisis di Michele Psello, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 103 (2010) 43-48
- M. Jeffreys, Psellos and his Emperors: Facts, Fiction and Genre, in R. Macrides (ed.), *Byzantine History as Literature: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, The Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Birmingham April 2007*, Aldershot 2010, 73-91

- F. Kolovou, Der Mythos im imitatio-Konzept des Michael Psellos, in A. Rhoby and E. Schiffer, *Imitatio - aemulatio - variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur (Wien, 22.-25. Oktober 2008)* Vienna 2010, 165-173
- F. Lauritzen, Students of Pindar and Readers of Mitylenaios, *Byzantion* (2010) 188-196.
- F. Lauritzen, L'ortodossia neoplatonica di Psello, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 47 (2010) 285-291
- M. Mtchlidze, La traduction géorgienne du commentaire de Michel Psellos sur le Discours 40 de Grégoire de Nazianze, in A. B. Schmidt (ed.) *Studia Nazianzenica II* (2010) (Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 73. Corpus Nazianzenum 24), Turnhout-Leuven, Brepols Publishers 2010, 521-539
- S. Papaioannou, The Aesthetics of History: From Theophanes to Eustathios, in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, The Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Birmingham April 2007*, Aldershot 2010, 3-21
- S. Papaioannou, Byzantine Mirrors: Self-Reflection in Medieval Greek Writing, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 64 (2010) 1-21
- J. C. Riedinger, Quatre étapes de la vie de Michel Psellos, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 68 (2010) 5-60
- J. C. Riedinger, Remarques sur le texte de la Chronographie de Michel Psellos (3): addenda, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 68 (2010) 179-189

2009

- D. Bloch, Review of: Benakis, L. G. Michael Psellos. Kommentar zur Physik des Aristoteles, Athens 2008, *Aestimatio* 6 (2009) 180-187
- P. Hatlie, Images of Motherhood and Self in Byzantine Literature, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 63 (2009)
- C. Joanno, Les Byzantins et la seconde sophistique : étude sur Michel Psellos, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 122 (2009) 113-144
- A. Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι. Τόμος Γ' (11ος-12ος αἰ.)*, Athens 2009, 59-185
- F. Kolovou, Der Traum des Sokrates, die Musik und Michael Psellos in S. Kotzabassi G. Mavromatis, *Realia Byzantina*, Berlin-New York 2009, 67-73
- F. Lauritzen, Psellos' early career at court, *Византийский Временник* 68 (2009) 135-143

- F. Lauritzen, The Miliaresion Poet: the Dactylic Inscription of a Coin of Romanos III Argyros, *Byzantion* 79 (2009) 231-240
- D. R. Reinsch, *Ἡ δύναμη τοῦ λόγου στὴ "Χρονογραφία" τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ*, Athens 2009
- D. R. Reinsch, Wer gebiert hier wen? Transsexuelle Phantasie in Byzanz (Zu Psellos, *Chronographia* VI 144), *Medioevo Greco* 9 (2009) 241-247
- V. Ruggeri, Michele Psello e la presenza della Theotokos nel mondo liturgico bizantino, *Theotokos* 17 (2009) 139-157
- J. Signes Codoner, Retórica, biografía y autobiografía en la historia: algunas consideraciones sobre géneros literarios en la Cronografía de Miguel Pselo, Vitalino Valcárcel (ed.), *La Biografías griega y latina como género literario. De la Antigüedad al Renacimiento (Anejos de Veleia 26)*, Vitoria 2009, pp. 175-206
- T. A. Šukin Михаил Пселл, *Антология восточно-христианской богословской мысли. Ортодоксия и гетеродоксия в 2-х томах 2*, Moscow St Petersburg 2009, 300-320
- K. Viglas, , Οι απόκρυφες γνώσεις του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, *ΤΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΑ, Περιοδική Έκδοση Ιστορικών Σπουδών* 26.50 (2009) 157-184

2008

- P. A. Agapitos, Public and Private Death in Psellos: Maria Skleraina and Styliane Psellaina, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 101 (2008) 555-607
- L. G. Benakis, Michael Psellos. *Kommentar zur Physik des Aristoteles*, Athens 2008
- G. Karachalios, Ἡ ἀνθρωπολογία τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ. Σύλλογος πρὸς Διάδοσιν Ὀφελίμων Βιβλίων, 115. Athena, 2008
- G. Katsiampoura, Transmutation of Matter In Byzantium: The Case of Michael Psellos, the Alchemist, *Sci & Educ* 17 (2008) 663-668
- F. Lauritzen, Psello discepolo di Stetato, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 101 (2008) 715-725
- E. Limousin, L'entrée dans la carrière à Byzance au XIe siècle: Michel Psellos et Jean Skylitzès, in J.-C. Cassard, Y. Coativy, A. Gallice, D. Lepage (eds.), *Le prince, l'argent, les hommes au Moyen Age* Rennes 2008, 67-76
- B. Lourié, Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur: l'origine de l' «hérésie des physéthésites», *Scrinium* 4 (2008) 201-227
- D. Papdopoulos, Michael Psellos und Theodoros II. Laskaris, ein Treffen an den Quellen griechischer Philosophie, *Junge Römer - Neue Griechen : eine byzantinische Melange aus Wien : Beiträge von Absolventinnen und Absolventen des Instituts für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der*

- Universität Wien: in Dankbarkeit gewidmet ihren Lehrern Wolfram Hörandner, Johannes Koder, Otto Kresten und Werner Seibt als Festgabe zum 65. Geburtstag, Vienna 2008, 141-165
- D. R. Reinsch, Der Name der Adoptivtochter des Michael Psellos, *Medioevo Greco* 8 (2008) 271–274
- O. Rodionov, Historical and Literary Context of Michael Psellos' *Theologica* 59, *Scrinium* 4 (2008) 228-234
- T.A. Shchukin, Некоторые замечания о начале «ренессанса Максима» в XI веке, in: Истина и диалог. Труды международной научной конференции, Санкт-Петербург, 29–31 мая 2008 года, S. Petersburg 2008, 183-189

2007

- Ch. Barber, Contesting the Logic of Painting. Art and Understanding in Eleventh-Century Byzantium, Leiden-Boston 2007 (ch. 3: Michael Psellos: Seeing Through Painting, p. 61-98)
- E. Delli, Entre compilation et originalité. Le corps pneumatique dans l'oeuvre de Michel Psellos, in C. D'Ancona (ed.), *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists* Leiden and Boston 2007, 211-229
- F. Lauritzen, Il nesso tra stile e contenuto negli encomi di Psello, *Medioevo Greco* 7 (2007) 1-10
- F. Lauritzen, A Courtier in the Women's Quarters: The Rise and Fall of Psellos, *Byzantion* 77 (2007) 251-266
- F. Lauritzen, Psellos and the Nazireans, *Revue des Études Byzantines* 65 (2007) 359-364
- F. Lauritzen, The Debate on Faith and Reason, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 57 (2007) 75-82
- F. Lauritzen, Christopher of Mytilene's Parody of the haughty Mauropos, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100 (2007) 125-132
- R.-J. Lilie, Fiktive Realität: Basileios II. und Konstantinos VIII. in der «Chronographia» des Michael Psellos, in M. Grünbart (ed.), *Theatron. Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter* Berlin and New York 2007, 211–222
- D. R. Reinsch, Emendationsvorschläge zur Chronographia des Michael Psellos, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100 (2007) 739-777
- A. M. Taragna, Sulla fortuna di Giorgio di Pisidia in Michele Psello: Il caso del carne In Christi resurrectionem, in M. Hinterberger and E. Schiffer (eds.), *Byzantinische Sprachkunst: Studien zur byzantinischen Literatur gewidmet Wolfram Hörandner zum 65. Geburtstag*, Berlin 2007, 308-339

2006

- C. Angelidi, The writing of dreams: A note on Psellos' Funeral Oration for his mother», in C. Barber & D. Jenkins (eds), *Reading Psellos* (Leiden & Boston, 2006)
- C. Barber, and D. Jenkins (eds.), *Reading Michael Psellos*, Leiden 2006
- O. Biancotto, Psello (?), *Historia syntomos* 79, *Medioevo Greco* 6 (2006) 93-95
- D. Burns, The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster, Hekate's Couch, and Platonic Orientalism in Psellos and Plethon, *Aries* 6 (2006) 158-179
- K. P. Chrestou, Ἡ ἐπίδραση τοῦ Πρόκλου Διαδόχου στὸ φιλοσοφικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ. Ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ὁ νοητὸς κόσμος, *Βυζαντινά* 25 (2005) 117-175
- K. P. Chrestou, Ἡ ἐπίδραση τοῦ Πρόκλου Διαδόχου στὸ φιλοσοφικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ. Ὁ κόσμος τῆς γενέσεως καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς, *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρίδα Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς. Τμῆμα Ποιμαντικῆς καὶ Κοινωνικῆς Θεολογίας* 10 (2005) 13-74
- S. Efthymiadis, Review of: P. Moore, *Iter Psellianum: A Detailed Listing of Manuscript Sources for All Works Attributed to Michael Psellos, Including a Comprehensive Bibliography*, *Speculum* 81 (2006) 1230-1231
- P. Gounaridis, Le procès de Jean dit Italos révisé, *Historiein* 6 (2006) 35-47. (<http://www.nnet.gr/historein.htm>)
- K. Ierodiakonou, The Greek Concept of Sympatheia and its Byzantine Appropriation in Michael Psellos, in P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi (eds.), *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, Geneva 2006, 97-117
- A. Jacob, La reception de le literature byzantine dans l'Italie méridionale après la conquête normande. Les exemples de Théophylacte de Bulgarie et de Michel Psellos, A. Jacob and J.-M. Martin, and G. Noyé (eds.), *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine: acquis et nouvelles recherches*, Rome 2006, 21-67
- A. Kaldellis, with contributions by D. Jenkins and S. Papaioannou, *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*, Notre Dame, Ind. 2006
- A. Kaldellis, Thoughts on the Future of Psellos-Studies, with Attention to his Mother's Encomium, in C. Barber and D. Jenkins (eds.), *Reading Michael Psellos*, Leiden 2006, 217-233
- A. Kambylis, Michael Psellos' Schrift Τίς ἐστίχιζε κρεῖττον δ'εὐρύτιδης ἢ ὁ Πισίδης: Textkritische Bemerkungen, *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 56 (2006) 135-149
- V. Katsaros, Τὸ δραματικὸ στοιχεῖο στὰ ἱστοριογραφικὰ ἔργα τοῦ 11ου καὶ 12ου αἰῶνα (Μιχαὴλ Ἀτταλειάτης, Μιχαὴλ Ψελλός, Εὐστάθιος Θεσσαλονίκης, Νικήτας Χωνιάτης), in P. Odorico, P. A. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire: La littérature de l'historiographie. Actes du colloque international sur la Littérature Byzantine, Nicosie 6-8 mai 2004*, Paris 2006, 281-316

- D. Krallis, Michael Attaleiates as Reader of Psellos, in Barber (2006)
- A.V. Larionov, Михаил Пселл как богослов и историк Церкви, in *Мир Православия* 6, Volgograd 2006, 91-110
- E. McCartney, The Use of Metaphor in Michael Psellos' Chronographia, in J. Burke, *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*, Melbourne 2006, 84-91
- S. Papaioannou, Review of: P. Moore, *Iter Psellianum: A Detailed Listing of Manuscript Sources for All Works Attributed to Michael Psellos, Including a Comprehensive Bibliography*, in *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 56 (2006) 340-342
- E. Pietsch, 'Αὐτοβιογραφικά καὶ ἀπολογητικά στοιχεῖα στὴν ἱστοριογραφία: Ἡ Χρονογραφία τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ, in P. Odorico, P. A. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire: La littérature de l'historiographie. Actes du colloque international sur la Littérature Byzantine, Nicosie 6-8 mai 2004*, Paris 2006, 267-280
- D. R. Reinsch, Die Macht der Rede in der Chronographia des Michael Psellos, in P. Odorico, P. A. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire: La littérature de l'historiographie. Actes du colloque international sur la Littérature Byzantine, Nicosie 6-8 mai 2004*, Paris 2006, 253-266
- L. Sarriu, Metrica e stile nei dodecasillabi di Michele Psello, *Medioevo Greco* 6 (2006) 171-197

2005

- Angelidi, C. Observing, Describing and Interpreting: Michael Psellos on Works of Ancient Art, in *Νέα Ρώμη: Rivista di ricerche bizantinistiche* 2 = *Ἀμπελοκήπιον: Studi di amici e colleghi in onore di Vera von Falkenhausen*, Rome 2005, 227-242
- D. Dželebdžić, Η δημοκρατική Ρώμη στην πολιτική σκέψη του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института* 42 (2005) 23-33
- S. Efthymiadis, Michael Psellos and the Death of Romanos III (Chronographia III.26): a Failed Bath of Regeneration and a Non-Ascent from Hades, in Lars Hoffmann (ed.), *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur, Festschrift für Günther Prinzing (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen für Byzantinistik, Wiesbaden 2005, 255-265*
- J. Signes Codoñer, (trans.) *Miguel Pselo: Vidas de los emperadores de Bizancio*, Madrid 2005
- A. Kaldellis, The Date of Psellos' Theological Lectures and Higher Religious Education in Constantinople, *Byzantinoslavica* 68 (2005) 143-151

- F. Lauritzen, Psellos' *Depiction of Character in the Chronographia* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis; Columbia University: 2005). [See 2013]
- P. Moore, *Iter Psellianum: A Detailed Listing of Manuscript Sources for All Works Attributed to Michael Psellos, Including a Comprehensive Bibliography*, Toronto 2005
- I. Pérez Martín, Miguel Pselo y el neoplatonismo en el siglo XI, *Debats* 90 (2005) 94-101
- E. Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos: Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie* Weisbaden 2005
- J.C. Riedinger, Remarques sur le texte de la Chronographie de Michel Psellos, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 63 (2005) 97-126

2004

- L. Bossina, F. Fatti, Gregorio a due voci, *Medioevo Greco* 4 (2004) 65-93
- K.P. Chrestou, Φιλοσοφικές απόψεις στις άλληγορίες του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, *Βυζαντικά* 24 (2004) 391-400
- C. Høgel, Psellos Hagiographicus: Contradictio in Adjecto? in P. Odorico and P. A. Agapitos (eds.), *Les Vies des saints à Byzance: genre littéraire oubiographie historique?: actes du IIe colloque international Herm'ē'neia, Paris, 6-7-8 juin 2002*, Paris 2004, 191-200
- J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού: Συνεισφορά στην ιστορία του βυζαντινού ουμανισμού*, Athens 2004
- E. Maltese, Osservazioni sul carne Contra il Sabbaita di Michele Psello, in A. M. Taragna, *La poesia tardoantica e medievale: atti del II Convegno internazionale di studi, Perugia, 15-16 novembre 2001*, Alessandria 2004, 207-214
- S. Papaioannou, Der Glasort des Textes: Selbstheit und Ontotypologie im byzantinischen Briefschreiben (10. und 11. Jh.), in W. Hörandner, J. Koder, and M. Stassinopoulou, *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposion Vierzig Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien. Im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger*, (Wien, 4.-7. Dezember 2002), Vienna 2004, 324-336
- S. Papaioannou, Η μίμηση στη ρητορική θεωρία του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού, in C. Angelidi, *Byzantium Matures: Choices, Sensitivities, and Modes of Expression (Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries)*, Athens 2004, 87-98
- L. Sarriu, Le infrazioni prosodiche nei dodecasillabi di Michele Psello, *Quaderni del dipartimento di filologia linguistica e tradizione classica "Augusto Rostagni"* 3 (2004) 183-198
- J. Walker, These Things I Have Not Betrayed: Michael Psellos' Encomium of His Mother as a Defense of Rhetoric, *Rhetorica* 22 (2004) 49-101

2003

- C. Bevegni, Un nuovo « frammento » di Dionisio di Alicarnasso e un singolare « hapax » semantico (saturismos), *Maia* 55 (2003) 509-510
- C. Bevegni, C. Review of: Westerink, L. G. and J. M. Duffy (eds.), Michael Psellus. *Theologica II* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2002) in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96 (2003) 800-801
- G.T. Dennis, Elias the Monk, Friend of Psellos, in J. Nesbitt (ed.), *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides*, Leiden and Boston 2003, 43-62
- D. Dželebdzić, *Ιστορία Σύντομος του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού* (MA dissertation; University of Athens, 2003)
- J. Duffy, and S. Papaioannou, Michael Psellos and the Authorship of the *Historia Syntomos*: Final Considerations, in A. Abramea, A. Laiou, and E. Chrysos (eds.), *Byzantium, State and Society: In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides*, Athens 2003, 219-229
- A. Karpozilos, When did Michael Psellus die? The Evidence of the Dioptra, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96 (2003) 671-677
- C. Jouanno, Le corps du prince dans la Chronographie de Michel Psellos, *Kentron* 19 (2003) 205-221
- S. Papaioannou, S. Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and the Self in Byzantine Epistolography, in W. Hörandner and M. Grünbart (eds.), *L'épistolographie et la poésie épigrammatique: Projets actuels et questions de méthodologie. Actes de la 16e Table ronde du XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines*, Paris 2003, 75-83
- S. Papaioannou, Από τη ρητορική στη λογοτεχνία: η έννοια της μεταβολής στον Μιχαήλ Ψελλό και η αναβίωση της μυθοπλασίας, in E. Chrysos (ed.), *The Empire in Crisis? Byzantium in the Eleventh Century (1025-1081)*, Athens 2003, 473-482
- T. Papamastorakis, Tampering with History: From Michael III to Michael VIII, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96 (2003) 193-209
- L. Sarriu, Metrica e stile nei dodecasillabi di Michele Psello, *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Filologia, Linguistica e Tradizione classica "A. Rostagni" 2* (2003) 293-306
- V. A. Smetanin, О критериях и уровне научности энхиридия Михаила Пселла «Синописис законов», A.V. Levitskii, *Свидетель Истины: памяти протопресвитера Иоанна Мейендорфа*, Ekaterinburg 2003, 380-411

- E. de Vries-van der Velden, E. The Letters of Michael Psellos, Historical Knowledge and the Writing of History, in W. Hörandner and Michael Grünbart (eds.), *L'epistolographie et la poésie épigrammatique: Projets actuels et questions de méthodologie Actes de la 16e Table ronde du XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines*, Paris 2003, 121-35
- S. Vryonis, S. Michael Psellus, Michael Attaleiates: The Blinding of Romanus IV at Kotyaion (29 June 1072) and His Death on Proti (4 August 1072), in C. Dendrinos, J. Harris, E. Harvalia-Crook, and J. Herrin (eds.), *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides*, Aldershot, 2003) 3-14

2002

- P.A. Agapitos, and I. D. Polemis, Προς μια κριτική έκδοση των επιταφίων λόγων του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού: Η μονωδία «Εἰς τὸν τοῦ ἀκτουαρίου Ἰωάννου ἀδελφόν» (OrFun. 16), in *Λόγια και δημόδης γραμματεία του Ελληνικού μεσαίωνα. Αφιέρωμα στον Εὐδοξο Θ. Τσολάκη, Πρακτικά Θ ' επιστημονικής συνάντησης (11-13 Μαΐου 2000)* Thessaloniki 2002, 139-160
- P. Athanassiadi, Byzantine Commentators on the Chaldaean Oracles: Psellos and Plethon, in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, Oxford New York 2002, 237-252
- G.T. Dennis, An Anti-Latin Essay of Psellos Revisited, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 68 (2002) 467-474
- J. Duffy, Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos, in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, Oxford New York 2002, 139-156
- J. Duffy, Byzantium in Buffalo: From the Life and Works of L.G. Westerink, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 27 (2002) 285-296
- K. Ierodiakonou, Psellos' Paraphrasis on Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, Oxford New York 2002, 157-181
- T. Kolbaba, Review of: A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' 'Chronographia'* in *Speculum* 77.3 (2002) 940
- A. E. Laiou, The Emperor's Word: Chrysobulls, Oaths and Synallagmatic Relations in Byzantium (11th-12th c.), *Mélanges Gilbert Dagron. Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002) 347-62
- A. Sideras, Der unedierte Schlussteil der Grabrede des Michael Psellos auf den Patriarchen Johannes Xiphilinos, *Göttinger Beiträge zur Byzantinischen und Neugriechischen Philologie* 2 (2002) 113-132

R. Volk, Eine seltsame Metaphrase von Psellos-Briefen, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 52 (2002) 185-89

L.G. Westerink, and J. M. Duffy (eds.), *Michael Psellus. Theologica II* Munich and Leipzig 2002

2001

F. Conca, La lingua e lo stile dei carmi satirici di Psello, *Eikasmos* 12 (2001) 187-196

J. Duffy, Bitter Brine and Sweet Fresh Water: The Anatomy of a Metaphor in Psellos, in C. Sode and S. Takács (eds.), *Novum millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck, 19 December 1999*, Aldershot 2001, 89-96

S. Lanzi, *Michele Psello, Oracoli Caldaici, con appendici su Proclo e Michele Italo*, Milano 2001

J. N. Ljubarskij, *Михаил Пселл. Личност и творчество*, St. Petersburg 2001, 183-542 (updated version of the 1978 book)

I.P. Medvedev, Малоизвестный проект первого издания *Хронографии* Михаила Пселла, *Византийский Временник* 60 (2001) 183-191

S. Papaioannou, The 'Usual Miracle' and an Unusual Image: Psellos and the Icons of Blachernai, *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 51 (2001) 187-198

A. Rhoby, A. Untersuchungen zu Psellos' περι τῶν ἀθηναϊκῶν τόπων καὶ ὀνομάτων, *Göttinger Beiträge zur Byzantinischen und Neugriechischen Philologie* 1 (2001) 74-91

A. G. Savvidis, *Βυζαντινό ιστοριογραφικό πεντάπτυχο: Προκόπιος, Μιχαήλ Ψελλός, Άννα Κομνηνή, Ιωάννης Κίνναμος, Γεώργιος Σφραντζής. Συμβολή για τους ιστοριογράφους και την εποχή τους*, Athens 2001

A. Sideras, A. Textkritische Bemerkungen zu vier Grabreden des Michael Psellos, *Göttinger Beiträge zur Byzantinischen und Neugriechischen Philologie* 1 (2001) 93-114

A. Schminck, Zum Todesjahr des Michael Psellos, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 94 (2001) 190-196

S. Vryonis, The Greek and Arabic sources on the Eight Day Captivity of the Emperor Romanos IV in the camp of the Sultan Alp Arslan after the Battle of Mantzikert, in Claudia Sode and Sarolta Takacs (eds.), *Novum Millennium. Studies in Byzantine history and culture dedicated to Paul Speck, 19 December 1999*, Aldershot 2001, 439-50

- J. Walker, Michael Psellos on Rhetoric: A Translation and Commentary on Psellos' Synopsis of Hermogenes, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31 (2001) 5-40

2000

- C. Amande, Παρρησία e θωπεία nella 'Chronographia' di Psello, in U. Criscuolo and R. Maisano, *Categorie linguistiche e concettuali della storiografia bizantina: atti della quinta Giornata di studi bizantini, Napoli, 23-24 aprile 1998*, Naples 2000, 159-165
- G. Arampatzis, Qu'entend Michel Psellos par katamanteuomenos? *Philosophia* 30 (2000) 114-17
- P. Graffigna, Riprese lessicali del 'De Regno' di Sinesio nella 'Chronographia' di Psello: φροντίδες, σκηνή βασιλική, σισυροφόρος, in U. Criscuolo and R. Maisano (eds.), *Categorie linguistiche e concettuali della storiografia bizantina: atti della quinta Giornata di studi bizantini, Napoli, 23-24 aprile 1998*, Naples 2000, 99-104
- G.M. Greco, Esempî di moduli narrativi epico-tragici nella 'Chronographia' di Michele Psello, in U. Criscuolo and R. Maisano (eds.), *Categorie linguistiche e concettuali della storiografia bizantina: atti della quinta Giornata di studi bizantini, Napoli, 23-24 aprile 1998*, Naples 2000, 167-176
- M. Grünbart, Athanasios Chatzikes und Michael Psellos, *Byzantion* 70 (2000) 307-8
- A. Karpozilos, The Narrative Function of Theatrical Imagery in Michael Psellos, in S. Kaklamanis, A. Markopoulos, and G. Mauromatis (eds.), Ένθύμησις Νικολάου Μ. Παναγιωτάκη (Heraklion: Πανεπιστημιακές εκδόσεις Κρήτης - Βικελαία δημοτική βιβλιοθήκη Ηρακλείου, 2000) 303-310
- A. R. Littlewood, Psellos, Michael, In *Encyclopedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition*, London 2000, Vol. 2, 1413-1415
- E. Nardi, Bella come luna, frigida come il sole: un appunto sulla donna nei testi bizantini dell' XI e XII secolo, *Medioevo greco* 1 (2000) 135-141
- Psellus, Michael, In M. Vinzenz, U. Volp, and U. Lange (eds.) *Metzler Lexikon christlicher Denker: 700 Autorinnen und Autoren von den Anfaengen des Christentums bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart 2000
- E. N. Papaioannou, Michael Psellos's Rhetorical Gender, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 24 (2000) 133-146
- E. N. Papaioannou, *Writing the Ego: Michael Psellos's Rhetorical Autography*. Unpublished PhD. Dissertation (Vienna, 2000) [see 2013]

- B.V. Penčeva, Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: the Icon of the Usual Miracle at the Blachernai, *Res* 38 (Autumn 2000) 34-56
- K. P. Todt, Die Frau als Sebtherrscher Kaiserin Theodora, die letzte Angehörige des Makedonische Dynastie, *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 50 (2000) 139-171