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978-1-107-02622-3 - Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium

Stratis Papaioannou

Excerpt

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## Introduction

“The greatest figure of letters in the eleventh century and, perhaps, in the entire Byzantine history”; “the most witty, playful, and original of Byzantine authors . . . one of the best kept secrets in European history”; “an interesting mixture of *érudit*, exhibitionist, and spokesman for the politically and theologically orthodox order”; “an exemplary Byzantine soul in which the highest spiritual gifts and the most absolute mediocrity of character coexist in such a disconcerting mixture”; “philosopher . . . one against all . . . poet”; “incomparable in speech”; “an unpleasant and arrogant man”; “one originating in many; yet also . . . many from one.”

These sentences by modern and Byzantine writers are just a sample of the numerous, superlative, and contradictory characterizations of Michael Psellos, the eleventh-century Constantinopolitan rhetor, teacher, and courtier.<sup>1</sup> The last phrase, from Psellos himself, rightly suggests that there are many “Pselloi.” For some readers, he is an egotistical rhetor and a typical Byzantine courtier; for them, Psellos’ name is identical to servile “rhetoric,” the verbosity with neither meaning nor sincerity, that supposedly prevailed in the Constantinopolitan court. For others, Psellos is a protagonist in Byzantine cultural history, a kind of secular saint in a medieval world otherwise bound by a (supposed) theocentric conservatism. Psellos’ writings offer them proofs of an appealing non-religious Byzantine “literature.” His thought signals some form of Byzantine “humanism,” “renaissance,” and “enlightenment.”<sup>2</sup>

Psellos is indeed a well-known figure among students of Byzantine culture. In a recent survey of his corpus, manuscript transmission, and modern

<sup>1</sup> In order of appearance: Lounghis 1998: 273–275; Kaldellis 2006b: 217 and 233; Conley 2005: 680; Charles Diehl, “Préface” in Renaud 1926: ii–iii; Panou 1998: 119 and 171; Theophylaktos Hephaistos, *Letter* 27; Michael Attaleiates, *History* 296; Psellos, *On the Styles of Certain Writings* 52.4–9.

<sup>2</sup> For overviews of the modern literature on Psellos: Ljubarskij 2001: 187–212 = 2004: 11–22; Kaldellis 2006b; Karpozilos 2009: 25–185 (with a focus and detailed discussion of the *Chronographia*). The most comprehensive study on Psellos remains that of Ljubarskij 2001 = 2004, originally published in 1978.

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bibliography, Paul Moore recorded 1,176 texts, among them 163 spurious titles (a sure sign of the aura of authority that accompanied Psellos' name), approximately 1,790 medieval and early modern manuscripts with one or more of these texts, and *c.* 1,300 bibliographical items dating from 1497 to the year 2000.<sup>3</sup> From these, one should highlight the thirteen translations into modern European languages of Psellos' *Chronographia*, a historical work first printed in 1874; this is the sole Byzantine text dating after the year 600 to have attracted such international interest.<sup>4</sup> Psellos also figures in modern non-academic writing: in Renaissance novels, in Coleridge, Seferis, Auden, and others.<sup>5</sup>

By any estimate, Psellos is thus one of the most prolific as well as popular medieval Greek authors. The appeal is no accident. Psellos wrote about nearly every subject and in just about every Byzantine genre. His philosophical texts are invaluable sources of Byzantine knowledge: from Neoplatonism and Christian theology to medicine and the occult sciences. His *Chronographia* is an indispensable source for the history of eleventh-century Byzantium. The rhetorical writings, such as letters and speeches, offer us glimpses into the lives of well-known but also everyday Byzantines, while his many lectures provide unique insights into Constantinopolitan education and much more.

Psellos' appeal was partly self made. No reader of his works has failed to notice the determined presence of this Byzantine author within his writings. He rarely avoids opportunities to write about himself, introduce his life-story, emotions, and virtues, and fashion a self-portrait that capitalizes on paradox. Either loudly or tacitly, yet with sure persistence, he draws the reader's attention away from the *what*, toward the *who* of discourse. Just the pronoun "I," while it may not always be used in a self-referential fashion, appears approximately 1,500 times in his works. This is an extraordinary insistence, if compared to, for

<sup>3</sup> See Moore 2005; see also my <http://proteus.brown.edu/psellos/home> for more recent bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Latin (seventeenth century); by the French patrologist François Combéfis; French (1926–8); Czech (1940); English (1953); Russian (1978); Italian (1984); Swedish (1984); Polish (1985); Turkish (1992); Modern Greek (two translations: 1992–3 and 1993); Bulgarian (1999); Spanish (2005). A new edition of the Greek text is under way by Roderich Reinsch along with a German translation by Roderich and Ljuba Reinsch; cf. Reinsch 2007 and 2011.

<sup>5</sup> For Renaissance novelistic literature, cf. John Lyly (England; 1553/1554–1606), *Euphues and His England* (1580) on which see Mentz 2004; cf. also Francisco de Quevedo (Spain: 1580–1645), *Los sueños*, ed. I. Arelanno (Madrid 1991) 134–7 (first edition: 1627 and English translation in Francisco de Quevedo, *Dreams and Discourses*, transl. R. K. Britton (Warminster 1989) 62–63). For Samuel Taylor Coleridge see the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1797–8) in Fry 1999. For Seferis see Ἰγνώτης Τρελλός, *Οἱ ὥρες τῆς "κυρίας" Ἐρσης*, Athens 1973: 49–52. For Auden, see his *Marginalia* in Auden 1976: 790–1.

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instance, the approximately 500 times in Ailios Aristeides and Gregory of Nazianzos, admittedly two of the most self-referential authors of the post-classical Greek tradition. Rather unsurprisingly, Psellos' writing practice merited him several pages in Georg Misch's monumental *Geschichte der Autobiographie* – however unsympathetic this work ultimately is toward Psellos.<sup>6</sup>

The present study explores precisely this notorious self-centeredness. It examines Psellos' theory and practice of authorship, his place in the history of Greek rhetoric and self-representation, and his impact on the development of literary writing in Byzantium. The goal is to avoid the modern dilemma that vacillates between Psellos the pompous rhetorician and Psellos the ingenious thinker and to understand him on his own terms and the terms of his society and discursive tradition. What is his own conception of rhetorical authorship? How does he treat the relationship between text and authorial self? In what ways does he construct his own self-portrait? What does he choose to bring to the foreground and what to silence? More generally, what is the social function and status of a Byzantine rhetor like Psellos? Who is his primary audience and what are its expectations? What is indeed Byzantine rhetoric? What were the possibilities that it opened up to an author for self-expression? Ultimately, what were the Byzantine parameters of what we might call textual subjectivity?<sup>7</sup> That is, what were those varied elements, concepts and narratives, discursive practices, and social relations, that defined an author like Psellos in his communication and construction of himself?

As the above questions suggest, this is no examination of Psellos' psyche. As in every society, so also in Byzantium, self-representation carried the unmistakable traces of a person's predilections, fears, and desires. Simultaneously, self-representation was conditioned by audience, occasion, and traditional discursive habits such as registers of style and genre. It is this encounter of self, social context, and cultural tradition that is examined here. Through a close reading of Psellos' letters, speeches, lectures, and historiographical narratives, I investigate the dominant features of the rhetor's ever-present "I," the social predicament to which these features correspond,

<sup>6</sup> Misch 1962: 760–830 with Papaioannou 2013c; cf. also Angold 1998: 225–8 (Misch and Byzantium) and Reynolds 2001: 20–5 (Misch and Eurocentrism). See further Ljubarskij 1992 and 1993 and Macrides 1996 on Psellos' intrusion in the text of his *Chronographia*; cf. also Kazhdan 1983 on Psellos' self-referential fashioning of a hagiographical *Life* (see, especially, *Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Auxentios on the Mountain = Or. hag.* 1C.167–78).

<sup>7</sup> For authorship and subjectivity, see Schrag 1997: 11–41 with Benveniste 1966–74: 258–66, Ricoeur 1992, and Bynum 2001 – the latter two studies with an emphasis on premodern narrative. Useful also is Spearing 2005 (esp. pp. 1–36).

and the horizons of Byzantine literature within which his self-portrait was expressed and which it refashioned.

The portrait that will emerge is, admittedly, only one version of this Protean author.<sup>8</sup> It is Psellos the rhetor, fashioned for the interests of students, learned friends, and powerful (and sometimes not so learned) patrons, that will come to light. Though only one, this version of Psellos carries, nevertheless, much significance as it was deeply embedded in the social fabric and ideology of elite Constantinopolitan culture and possessed immense potential for the history of Byzantine discourse. Psellos' theoretical conception of the author as well as his rhetorical self-representation set the stage for a transformation of Byzantine rhetoric into literature, a discourse defined by authorial creativity and originality, the autonomy of representation, and the reader's aesthetic gratification.

#### A BIOGRAPHY

Psellos was born in 1018 to a middle-class family in a Constantinopolitan suburb near the monastery of *Ta Narsou*, located in the area south of the Forum of Theodosius toward the Sea of Marmara, the area of Beyazit in modern Istanbul.<sup>9</sup> His surname denotes someone who "lisps as a child or a drunkard" and seems to be a personal rather than a family designation.<sup>10</sup> When Psellos was about only eleven, his parents assumed the monastic habit, after the death of his eldest sister in 1029. The young Psellos had already obtained initial training in grammar, orthography and Homeric poetry, that began at the age of five, likely at *Ta Narsou* (S 135 to the metropolitan of Amaseia and *Encomium for His Mother* 276–363). Despite some opposition from relatives, Psellos continued his studies

<sup>8</sup> On the futility, but also productive inability, to identify a unified Psellos, cf. the remarks of Panagiotis Agapitos in a pioneering study of Psellian rhetoric: "Psellos (as he himself pointed out . . . ) continuously shifted perspectives, adjusted himself, and rearranged his material and data according to a given situation and his textual manipulation of it. It is, therefore, a highly difficult, if not to say futile, enterprise to attempt to reconstruct 'Psellos' as a unified whole of consistent utterances" (Agapitos 2008a: 584 note 121). Similar cautious statements also in Ljubarskij 2001 = 2004 and Kaldellis 2007a: 191–2.

<sup>9</sup> Adducing evidence from the most relevant Psellian texts, this biography is based on a consensus of earlier studies with some occasional modification. For detailed accounts of Psellos' biography with references and further bibliography, see Volk 1990: 1–48; Ljubarskij 2001 = 2004; Karpozilos 2009: 59–75; cf. also Weiss 1973; Kaldellis 2006a: 1–28; and the work of Michael Jeffreys in PBW (available at: <http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/>; for Psellos see Michael 61). For the location of *Ta Narsou*, see Berger 1988: 593–595; also Gautier 1976b. For Psellos' 'middle' class, see *Encomium for His Mother* 213–218 with *Letter to Michael Keroularios* 74–9; Psellos was proud of his birth in Constantinople (cf. S 95).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Cheynet 2006b: III 16.

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with “rhetorical discourse,” when he was eleven (*Encomium for His Mother* 842), and then “philosophy” (*Chron.* 6.36 and *Funeral Oration in Honor of Niketas, Maistôr at the School of St. Peter* = Sathas v 88.26–7). Some of these higher studies were pursued together with some future friends under several teachers, among whom was Ioannes Mauropous (c. 990–1092?).<sup>11</sup>

This was an education that provided entry to the imperial bureaucracy. At the age of twenty-three, Psellos is found as secretary in the court of Michael V Kalaphates (1041–2), a position he attained in the years of the previous emperor, Michael IV, the Paphlagonian (1034–41) – an untitled poem in which the author requests from an unnamed emperor to enter the ranks of imperial notaries can be set in this context and would thus be Psellos’ earliest surviving work (if indeed written by him: *Poem* 16; Bernard 2010: 133–5). Previously, he had served in the provincial administration (S 180 to the *kritês* of Philadelphia, and *Encomium for His Mother* 834–7; Weiss 1973). Around the year 1043, Psellos’ abilities in discourse brought him to the attention of the emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos (1042–55). Another early text that may date to this period is an encomium for Monomachos, occasioned by the failed revolt of Georgios Maniakes (1043); this speech of 843 lines bears similarities with the later *Chronographia* in the historical outline it provides of the years from Basil II to Monomachos’ rise to the throne (Karpozilos 2009: 104–6).

Under Monomachos’ patronage, Psellos’ career blossomed. He was offered, but declined, the position of *prôtasêkrêtis*, chief of the imperial chancery.<sup>12</sup> He was also granted the honorary title of *bestarchês*, seventh

<sup>11</sup> Cf. K-D 45 *To the Bishop of Euchaita, Kyr Ioannes <Mauropous>*, and S 183 to Mauropous. In his *Funeral Oration* in honor of Niketas, an old school friend and fellow teacher at the school of St. Peter, dated to c. 1075, Psellos mentions “teachers” yet with no deep respect for them and thus without providing their names (Sathas v 88.18–20 and 88.28–29). Another teacher, however, for whom Psellos shows admiration, is the addressee of three letters: K-D 13, 14, and 15 – Mauropous has been suggested by Ljubarskij 2001: 240 = 2004: 74, and Volk 1990: 424–7, but this identification is far from certain. For fellow students of Psellos (apart from Niketas), see K-D 16 and 17 (addressed to a certain Romanos), 25 and 26 (Georgios); also 11 (an anonymous “spiritual brother”). Cf. also Ljubarskij 2001: 237–48 = 2004: 70–83 on Psellos’ relation to Mauropous and fellow students.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Or. min.* 8 with Riedinger 2010: 47–59. Though not officially a member of the imperial chancery, Psellos drafted documents for emperors (including Monomachos, as well as Konstantinos X and Michael VII Doukas); cf. *Or. for.* 5, 7, and 8. See also S 155, a letter written on behalf of Monomachos, addressed to a learned catechumen before his baptism, likely a foreigner and student of Psellos. For Psellos as unofficial court “secretary,” see Weiss 1973 (esp. 91–110).

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in a ranking of twenty-two courtly titles.<sup>13</sup> During this time, Psellos functioned primarily as an acclaimed court rhetor and teacher and assumed what he calls “the position/status of teaching = τὸ τῆς διδασκαλίας σχῆμα” (*Chron.* 6a.11). Many public rhetorical pieces, especially speeches and texts for the emperor as well as lectures to students date to this period. These include encomia for Monomachos (*Or. pan.* 1–7; also S 115, *To the Emperor Monomachos*), a public defense of a bishop where Monomachos is praised repeatedly (*Or. for.* 2), and a *selention*, which is a speech to be given by the emperor himself (*Or. min.* 4). From this period comes also one of Psellos’ earliest texts, the *Iambic Verses on the Death of Skleraina*, a funeral poem for Monomachos’ mistress Maria Skleraina (Oikonomidès 1980/1: 239–43), dating to c. 1045 when Psellos was twenty-seven years old (*Poem* 17; Agapitos 2008a).

For Monomachos, Psellos composed also poems in fifteen-syllable *politikos* verse for the purpose primarily of religious instruction: on the inscriptions of the Psalms (*Poem* 1), the Song of Songs (*Poem* 2), Christian dogma (*Poem* 3), the Seven Councils (*Poem* 4), and also grammar (*Poem* 6). Likely to this period date several Psellian lectures and essays pertaining to a wide set of topics, addressing groups or individual students.<sup>14</sup> Some of these texts describe Constantinopolitan school life in vivid detail. Psellos mediates between two competing students (*Or. min.* 20), complains about students who were late (*Or. min.* 22), who did not attend class due to rain (*Or. min.* 21), skipped the class on Aristotle’s *On Interpretation* (*Or. min.* 23), or were just neglectful (*Or. min.* 24).

Because of his teaching, Psellos was given a new title created especially for him, likely around 1045: *hypatos tôn philosophôn*; the term translates literally as the “consul of philosophers” and indicates something like “the chief of teachers.”<sup>15</sup> The honor was most likely accompanied by a salary and highlighted Psellos’ prominence among Constantinopolitan teachers

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *The Court Memorandum Regarding the Engagement of His Daughter* = *Or. for.* 4.18–19 with Oikonomidès 1972: 281–329 (dignities and offices related to the Byzantine state), 299–300 (*bestarchês*) and 310–11 (*prôtasêkrêtis*) as well as the relevant *ODB* entries (“vestarches” and “protasekretis”).

<sup>14</sup> Most of them are gathered in *Theol.* 1 and 11, *Phil. min.* 1 and 11, and *Or. min.* See further several letters that address scientific topics: S 187 and 188 (both likely addressed to Konstantinos, the nephew of Keroularios), and K-D 187 to the *kritês* of Opsikion, 189, 197, and 203, the last three untitled. Kaldellis (2005) suggests as a likely date of the delivery and publication of Psellos’ lectures the period “between 1047 and 1054, possibly in one or two years within that range.”

<sup>15</sup> Rather than “president of the school of philosophy” as stated in the *ODB* entry on the “*Hypatos ton Philosophon*.” The presence in Constantinople of any university-type “school” that specialized in “philosophy” in this period is unlikely; cf. Katsaros 2003: 448–451. For Psellos as “consul of philosophers,” cf. Lemerle 1977: 193–248 (esp. 207–15) with Psellos, *The Court Memorandum Regarding the Engagement of His Daughter* = *Or. for.* 4.18–20 (written after the death of Monomachos) where

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in the eyes of the emperor. They, like Psellos, taught in essentially private schools which were supported partly by the emperor and located either inside urban monasteries and churches or in the neighborhoods near them; we know of five such schools in eleventh-century Constantinople.<sup>16</sup> Psellos prided himself on his title as well as on his international fame as a teacher. In his own words, he attracted students from both the West and the Arab East: “Celts . . . Arabs . . . Egyptians . . . a man from Babylon,” he wrote some time in the 1050s (*Letter to Michael Keroularios* 96–101).<sup>17</sup> Psellos taught everything from basic grammar, Homeric poetry, and Aristotelian logic to rhetoric and philosophy. As we shall see below, he also aggressively expanded the curriculum, in terms of both method and the authoritative texts that were to be studied, commented upon, and revised.

Following this success, Psellos began to create a network of acquaintances, potential patrons, associates, and clients as well as some competitors and enemies. This is the period when he established friendships with learned men and aspiring aristocrats, the primary addressees and audience of the texts discussed in this book. Psellos also faced competitors, primarily other teachers, rhetors, and monks, against whom he felt he must defend himself. Self-defense defines several writings written before 1056: speeches and letters (*Or. min.* 6–8), an invective poem against a monk Iakobos in the form of a hymnographical *kanôn* (*Poem* 22: the acrostic reads: “I, Konstas, sing in rhythm about the drunkard Iakobos”<sup>18</sup>), a written confession of faith (*Theol.* 11 35), based largely on John of Damascus’ *Precise Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, and an “apology” addressed as a *Letter to Ioannes Xiphilinos*.

Two of Psellos’ friends and associates, both older than he was, rose to considerable power and became part of the ruling elite. One was a close associate of Monomachos, Michael Keroularios (1005/1010–59) who became patriarch in 1043. Despite their clearly turbulent relationship, Keroularios was close to Psellos in his intellectual and social predilections – this is apparent in the encomiastic biography that Psellos wrote in the early 1060s

Psellos attributes his title not simply to the emperor’s benevolence but also to his own abilities. When exactly this title was conferred on Psellos is uncertain. Attaleiates’ narrative (*History* 21) mentions Psellos’ appointment in the immediate aftermath of Ioannes Xiphilinos’ own appointment as *nomophylax* that dates to around 1045; perhaps Psellos’ title is to be dated also to that same period. For the fate of the title in later centuries, see Constantinides 1982: 113–32.

<sup>16</sup> Lemerle 1977: 227–35, Katsaros 2003: 452–5, Bernard 2010: 159–62.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Volk 1990: 15–20. For two likely students of Psellos from Georgia (Giorgi/George, d. 1065; and Ioane Petric’i/John of Petritzos, d. after 1125), see Martin-Hisard 2011: 288–9; for the latter, see further Gigineishvili and Van Riel 2000 and Alexidze 2002 with bibliography.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Conca 2001; Maltese 2004; Bernard 2010: 225–32.



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as well as in the eleven letters addressed to Keroularios.<sup>19</sup> The second and most important friend was Ioannes Doukas (?–c. 1088). Ioannes became *kaisar*, second in command, under the rule of his brother-emperor Konstantinos X Doukas (1059–67) and remained an important political figure well into the 1080s (Plate 1).<sup>20</sup> Though a military man, Ioannes too must have been of considerable learning – if one judges from his presentation in Psellos' *Chronographia* (7c.16–17) as well as the sophisticated letters, thirty-eight in total, that he received from Psellos who was always careful to fashion his style according to his addressee.<sup>21</sup>

Other friends were fellow teachers such as Niketas or Psellos' own teachers such as Mauropous, with whom Psellos exchanged approximately twenty letters throughout his life. Among his teachers one might also count the eunuch Konstantinos Leichoudes, an accomplished rhetor who became a close advisor of Monomachos, *protovestiarios* in the court of Isaakios Komnenos, and then patriarch (1059–63).<sup>22</sup> Among his fellow-teachers and close friends one should include Ioannes Xiphilinos, who specialized in law. Around 1045, Monomachos conferred on Xiphilinos a new office, *nomophylax*, in an act drafted by Mauropous (*Novella*). Later, he too became patriarch (1064–75), following the death of Leichoudes.<sup>23</sup>

Future associates were also among Psellos' numerous students during Monomachos' reign, often children or nephews entrusted to Psellos by

<sup>19</sup> From the *Encomiastic Speech in Honor of the Most-Blessed Patriarch Kyr Keroularios*, see especially Sathas IV 309.21–312.26. The letters: K-D 208, S 57–59, 139 (?), 159, 160, 162 (?), 164, *Maltese* 16, and *Letter to Michael Keroularios*. For Psellos and Keroularios, see Ljubarskij 2001: 286–99 = 2004: 125–40.

<sup>20</sup> Ioannes' granddaughter Eirene was married to the emperor Alexios Komnenos who assumed power in 1081; the Doukas family may have played an important role in the transmission of some of Psellos' texts as we shall see below (p. 256). On the Doukas family, see Polemis 1968 (pp. 34–41 on Ioannes Doukas); on Ioannes' relationship with Psellos, see Ljubarskij 2001: 273–279 = 2004: 111–19.

<sup>21</sup> The *Chronographia* in its present form ends with the description of Doukas (7c.16–17) who was clearly an (if not *the*) addressee of the work in its last form. Psellos also gave a funeral speech for Ioannes Doukas' wife, the *kaisarissa* Eirene in the mid 1060s (before 1067); K-D 1 21. Doukas was the owner of the earliest and most important copy of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogenetos' *De Administrando Imperio*, the *Paris gr.* 2009, a parchment codex copied by Michael Roizaites, a servant in the household of Doukas; cf. Moravcsik in Moravcsik and Jenkins 1967: 15–21; Mondrain 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Encomium in Honor of the Most-Blessed Kyr Konstantinos Leichoudes, Patriarch of Constantinople*, Sathas IV 392.12–27 (rhetoric), 402.8–15 (Monomachos' advisor), and 420.20–3 (teacher of Psellos); cf. *Chron.* 7.65–66. S 28 is addressed "to the *protovestiarios* Leichoudes." The encomium was written and proclaimed long after Leichoudes' death, in the presence of Mauropous and after the death of Xiphilinos in August 1075; cf. Sathas IV 393.12–394.9. On Leichoudes, see Weiss 1973: 91–2 and Oikonomides 1980/1981: 243–6.

<sup>23</sup> Among Psellos' letters we find eight addressed to Xiphilinos (S 37 and 44, K-D 191 and 273, G 17, 29, and 30, and *Letter to Xiphilinos*) as well as a speech in which Psellos defended Xiphilinos from false accusations in the late 1040s: *In Support of the Nomophylax <=Ioannes Xiphilinos> against Ophrydas = Or. for.* 3.



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Plate 1 Seal of Ioannes Doukas, a rare case of a Byzantine seal in which the owner is also depicted. Obverse: bust of the Mother of God, nimbate, holding Christ before her; inscription: +θ(εοτό)κε βοή[θ(ε)ι) τ]ῷ σῶ δ[ού(λ)ω]. Reverse: bust of Doukas wearing a jeweled crown, surmounted by a cross, division and *chlamys* fastened with a fibula, while his right hand holds a cross; inscription: Ἰω(άννη) τῷ εὐτυχεστάτ(ω) καίσαρ(ι).  
Dumbarton Oaks BZS 1955.1.4366, © Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington, DC.

close friends. Three deserve to be mentioned here, since they enjoyed significant careers and were prominent addressees of Psellian texts. Pothos was the son of a *megas droungarios* (a military office). He later served as a tax-collector and provincial judge (*To the Bestarchês Pothos Who Asked*

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*Who Is Beyond Encomia* = *Or. min.* 15, *Discourse... on the Style of the Theologian*; and fifteen letters).<sup>24</sup> Ioannes Italos, a Greek from southern Italy, came to Constantinople around 1049, attended Psellos' lectures (*Or. min.* 18 and 19), and eventually succeeded Psellos as "consul of philosophers" in the 1070s.<sup>25</sup> The most important was Keroularios' nephew, Konstantinos, who was sent by his uncle to study with Psellos. Konstantinos and Psellos became close friends during the latter's career in the imperial administration in the 1060s and 1070s (eighteen letters, some of them quite lengthy and personal, along with *On Friendship to the Nephews of the Patriarch Kyr Michael* <Keroularios> = *Or. min.* 31, and *Or. for.* 5, a *chrysoboullon* pertaining to Konstantinos and written by Psellos for Michael VII Doukas).<sup>26</sup>

In this period, Psellos also began to acquire significant property. This included several monasteries, most on the Bithynian Olympus, given to him by Monomachos through the novel institution of *charistikê*.<sup>27</sup> He also earned a house in the City, a dwelling previously owned by the Doukas family, Psellos' future patrons (*Chron.* 7a.7). Further signs of Psellos' new wealth and entry to a higher social status are evident in the letters. His luxurious bathing is narrated in a beautiful letter to the patriarch Keroularios (K-D 208; Magdalino 1988: 111–12). In another letter, Psellos expresses his hope for a private burial site in a monastic community under his patronage (K-D 177, untitled). We also read of slaves (*Funeral Oration For His Daughter Styliane, Who Died Before the Age of Marriage*; Sathas v 79.27) and servants – some of whom Psellos suspected of stealing from him (G 13 to Ioannes Doukas) – land (S 198 to Psephas), icons (S 184 to Konstantinos, nephew of the patriarch Keroularios), statues (S 141, likely to the

<sup>24</sup> This person was perhaps related to the *patrikios* Pothos, commissioner of a ten-volume copy of the *Menologion* of Metaphrastes, of which one volume, the *Patm.* 245 dated to 1057 and covering the month of January, survives today; Komines 1968: 5–6. On Pothos: Levy 1912: 29f.

<sup>25</sup> On Italos, see Rigo 2001 (with further bibliography).

<sup>26</sup> On Konstantinos, see Oikonomidès 1963: 119–20; Gautier 1970: 212–6; Ljubarskij 2001: 265–73 = 2004: 102–11; Snipes 1981: 102–3; Volk 1990: 223–7; on the *chrysoboullon*, see Hunger 1978: 156. For further students/associates of Psellos, see Ljubarskij 2001: 260–5 = 2004: 97–102 and Bernard 2010: 100–2 and 164–7.

<sup>27</sup> See S 165 to the *magistros* and *stratêgos* of Madyta, K-D 1 to the bishop of Madyta, and 64 to the *kritês* of Macedonia and Thrace: on the *basilikaton* Madytou, in the theme of Thrace and Macedonia; S 29 to Zomas, *kritês* of Opsikion, and 77, untitled, K-D 125 to the *kritês* of the Aegean, 140 and 200 to the *kritês* of Opsikion, 202 to the emperor (Doukas?): on Medikion, theme of Opsikion, on Olympus; S 77 and K-D 108 and 200 to the *kritês* of Opsikion, and 273 to Ioannes Xiphilinos: on the *Lavra* of Kellia, on Olympus; S 77 and K-D 200 to the *kritês* of Opsikion: on Kathara, on Olympus; K-D 13, untitled to a fellow teacher: Agros. Cf. also Psellos' four brief encomia of Mt. Olympus (*Or. min.* 36). On *charistikê*, see Ahrweiler 1967; Kaplan 1984; Varnalides 1985; Thomas 1987: 167–213 and 435–6. For Psellos' property in general, see Weiss 1973: 129f.