CHAPTER 1

The philosopher's rhetoric

Throughout his career as a teacher and public speaker, Psellos was what we might call a professional intellectual. In eleventh-century Constantinople, this social profile was identified primarily by the terms "philosopher" and "rhetor."[1] The two terms had a long history and evoked two distinct disciplines. As practices, both could support and enhance public careers in Byzantium. As professions, however, they had a significantly different social cachet. Philosophy was clearly superior. As knowledge and guardianship of truth, *philosophia* with its various meanings carried a value that remained more or less unquestioned, even if people identified as philosophers were occasionally suspected of heresy. By contrast, rhetoric had almost consistently an ambiguous moral status. Capacity with words could suggest improper preoccupation with deception and appearances and thus evoke suspicion of hypocrisy.

In texts of different genres and for different audiences, Psellos identified himself as a philosopher, but also as a rhetor. Most commonly and insistently, he presented himself as someone who combined the two disciplines in a perfect fashion, an insistence that was not easy to pull off. What was the history and immediate context of this idiosyncratic professional persona?

PHILOSOPHER-RHETOR

It is appropriate to begin with one of the more well-known self-representational moments in Psellos' writings, his intellectual

[1] Such terms as *didaskalos* (*Chron*. 6a.11) or *maïstôr*, carried less social significance, referring more strictly to teaching as a profession. Psellos focused on neither for self-designation. For *maïstôr*, cf. S 44 to Ioannes Xiphilinos, the *maïstôr*; S 162 = *Letter Given by the then Maïstôr of Ta Diakonissês to the Patriarch, when the Former Was Requesting the School of St. Peter*; S 168 = *To the Maïstôr of Chalkoprateia, when the Silver Coins Were Sent to Him from the Klêtôrion, but He Did Not Accept them as He Requested More*; and G 18 = *To the Metropolitan of Thessalonike Who Had Become Maïstôr of the Rhetors*.

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autobiography in the *Chronographia* (6.36–46). This autobiography is inserted as a lengthy digression early into the sixth book of the *Chronographia*, the one devoted to the reign of Psellos' most important patron, Konstantinos IX Monomachos. As we have it, this text was likely written in the early 1060s, addressing the court and households of the Doukas family.[2]

Psellos narrates his gradual rise at Monomachos' court in 1043, when he was twenty-five years old. He begins by presenting the two fundamental areas of his studies: "rhetorical discourse, in order to be able to fashion language," and "philosophy, in order to purify the mind" (36). His contact with rhetoric, he declares, was such that he could possess its powers of argumentation (*dynasthai* is the verb used) without "following" rhetoric "in every aspect." He graduated to philosophy, starting with knowledge of "nature" and reaching the "first philosophy," i.e., theology, by way of the "middle knowledge," namely mathematics (as may be inferred from chapter 38).[3]

The paragraphs that follow (chapters 37 through 40) tell of his philosophical achievements: his single-handed resuscitation of wisdom (a commonplace in self-serving rhetoric[4]) and his intellectual journey from the philosophical commentary tradition to Aristotle and Plato and then back to the philosopher/commentators Plotinos, Porphyrios, Iamblichos, and the

[2] For different readings of this passage, see Kaldellis 1999: 127–41 and Pietsch 2005: 68–75. For the date of the *Chronographia*, see Karpozilos 2009: 72, 75–6, 79–85, and 107. Karpozilos argues convincingly that the *Chronographia* was written in stages (and, we might add, was never fully finished for publication; cf. Reinsch 2009a: 26). We possess evidence that it was already being written at the time of Isaakios Komnenos in 1057 (cf. S 108 to Machetarios). The first part of the *Chronographia* as we have it (Books 1–7) was completed during the first years of Konstantinos X Doukas' reign (1059–63), specifically during the patriarchate of Psellos' friend Konstantinos Leichoudes. The second part (Books 7a–7c) was written during the reign of Konstantinos's son Michael VII Doukas and completed sometime around 1075. At one point in his narrative about Monomachos, Psellos addresses a single reader (his patron?) as "φίλτατε πάντων ἀνδρῶν" (*Chron.* 6.73), a form of address that Psellos seems to reserve for close friends (cf. *Encomium for Ioannes, Metropolitan of Euchaita* = *Or. pan.* 17.30 and 851 for Mauropous; *Phil. min.* II 5 for Konstantinos [later Ioannes] Xiphilinos; and, with a slight variation, K-D 31 for Konstantinos, the nephew of patriarch Keroularios). Earlier in the text (6.22), Psellos mentions several people, both secular and ecclesiastic, who "forced" him to write his history, while in the middle of the autobiographical digression (6.37), Psellos inserts the following address: "you who today read my account." All these people remain anonymous, though it is safe to assume (a) that the group of addressees was relatively small and (b) that this group changed over time and included members of the Doukas family (especially Ioannes Doukas, whose unambiguous praise, as noted earlier, concludes the *Chronographia*: 7c.16–17; cf. p. 8 above).

[3] Psellos' terms in this chapter derive from Neoplatonism. See Psellos, *Various Collected Passages* = *Phil. min.* II 13 (37.32–38.13) with Steel 2005 on theology as the "first philosophy"; *Various Collected Passages* = *Phil. min.* II 13 (37.31–2) with Mueller 1990 on mathematics.

[4] Cf. Christophoros Mytilenaios (*c.* 1000–died after 1050), *Poem* 27.1–6. On Psellos' claim, see Duffy 2002.

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"great harbor" of Proklos. The presentation culminates with Psellos' declaration that he explored all knowledge, even extra-discursive theological knowledge, through his "single science of everything = μίαν τῶν πασῶν ἐπιστήμην."

With respect to its length, detail, and self-confidence, this intellectual autobiography is a new departure for the middle Byzantine tradition.[5] Though novel, the narrative is also marked by typical Byzantine features, such as its presumption of a hierarchy of knowledge. Leaving aside his early studies in grammar and poetry as too elementary to deserve mention, Psellos outlines a curriculum characterized by gradual ascent, starting with rhetoric and culminating in philosophy. It is only with the latter that he identifies himself, at least at this stage of the narrative.

This primacy accorded to philosophy is no accident for philosophy provided the immediate and most compelling justification for self-representation in Greek writing. The stance dated back to Plato. Provoked by a desire to carve a distinct and privileged space in Athenian society, Plato insisted on Socrates' and, by implication, his own "philosophical" identity as opposed to other practitioners of discourse, including rhetors.[6] He set the tone for presenting oneself as a "philosopher" (even if he was often read as a master rhetor, as we shall see below). Even such rhetoricians as Dionysios of Halikarnassos (first century BCE/CE), Dio Chrysostom (*c.* 40–120), Ailios Aristeides (117–181), and Philostratos (first half of third century), who would later become models of rhetoric in Byzantium, insisted on fashioning rhetoric as a philosophical practice.[7] By the end of the fourth century, with the increasing Christianization of the aristocratic, imperial, and intellectual elite of the Roman world and the Christian appropriation of the term *philosophia* as indicative of the ascetic way of life, the primacy of philosophy was asserted in even stronger terms.[8] After the fourth century, calling oneself a "philosopher" (regardless of the disparate meanings of the term) would remain one of the most prominent self-representational authorial personas. Philosophers were a "sacred thing,"

[5] It is paralleled only by another such Psellian digression that concludes his *Encomium for His Mother* (1685–1931), on which see pp. 162–5 below. For comparable intellectual autobiographies in the Arabic tradition, see Reynolds 2001.

[6] Nightingale 1995; Too 1995; Schiappa 1999; McCoy 2007; Timmerman and Schiappa 2010.

[7] Dionysios of Halikarnassos, *On Ancient Rhetors* 1; Philostratos, *Lives of the Sophists* (e.g., 1.480.1–11 and 481.12–26) and *Life of Apollonios* 5.40; and, especially, Ailios Aristeides, *To Plato, on Rhetoric* (e.g., 74.1–2: "φιλοσοφία τις οὖσα ἡ ῥητορικὴ φαίνεται"). For self-representation during the Second Sophistic: Hahn 1989; Whitmarsh 2001; Schmidt and Fleury 2011.

[8] For the social and cultural value of philosophy in late antiquity, see various essays in Smith 2005. For the Christian ascetic definition of *philosophia*: Dölger 1953; Malingrey 1961.

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as a Justinianic law would put it (cited in a middle Byzantine collection known as the *Basilika* 54.14).

Similar trends are evident in Psellos' immediate background. With the transformation and, in large parts of former Byzantine territory, the gradual disappearance of the Greek-speaking urban elite (a process that lasted from the seventh well into the eleventh century), the importance of rhetoric receded.[9] In this respect, rhetoric followed the fate of other facets of Greco-Roman elite urban culture, such as the theater and sculptural portraiture.[10] It is safe to assume that training in and practice of rhetoric did not disappear, yet, as far as our sources tell us, those who had access to books, writing, and public speaking did not place significant value upon the profession of rhetoric – Prokopios of Caesarea (active in the 550s) and Agathias (*c.* 530–579/582) are among the last Byzantine writers before the tenth century to be designated as "rhetors."[11] Hagiography, church homiletics, ecclesiastical poetry, and biblical exegesis took the place of rhetoric, which, along with classicizing poetry, was occasionally relegated to obsolete types of discourse preoccupied with "lying."[12]

Philosophia, by contrast, remained more or less intact as a claim to authority – despite the feeling of despair that can be felt in some early Byzantine pagan philosophical historiography (as in *Philosophical History* 150, by Damaskios, early 460s–after 538). The title of "philosopher" retains its aura whether we look to the redefinition of *philosophia* as the ascetic

[9] For overviews of the fate of the Byzantine urban world in this period: Haldon 1997; Wickham 2005.

[10] For theater, see Webb 2008; for sculpture: pp. 179–82 below.

[11] See the manuscript titles of Prokopios' works as well as references to Prokopios in Agathias, *Histories* 7.22 and 9.13–14, Euagrios Scholastikos, *Ecclesiastical History* 169.1, and Photios, *Bibliothêkê* 63 (21b) and to Agathias in Euagrios Scholastikos, *Ecclesiastical History* 171.21 and 219.19. Relevant may be also the designation "the sophist" held a century later by Sophronios (*c.* 560–638), patriarch of Jerusalem (see Duffy 2011 with the earlier bibliography); notably, Sophronios also authored an *Enkomion* of Gregory of Nazianzos (*Clavis Patrum Graecorum* 7659: Greek fragment; full text in an unedited Georgian translation by Ephraim Mtsire [end of eleventh c.]; Lequeux 2001: 14; Efthymiadis 2006: 242). For a review of learning between the sixth and ninth century, see Moffatt 1977; mention of study of rhetoric in the hagiographical sources studied by Moffatt is rather rare and often the result of a post-iconoclastic, ninth- or, usually, tenth-century view-point.

[12] Typical is the phrase by Basil of Caesarea anthologized in the eighth-century compilation *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John of Damascus (*PG* 96 341.19–23): "Ῥητορικὴ καὶ ποιητικὴ, καὶ ἡ τῶν σοφισμάτων εὕρεσις . . . , *ὧν ὕλη τὸ ψεῦδός ἐστιν*. Οὔτε γὰρ ποιητικὴ συστῆναι δύναται ἄνευ τοῦ μύθου, οὔτε ῥητορικὴ ἄνευ τῆς ἐν τῷ λέγειν τέχνης, οὔτε σοφιστικὴ ἄνευ τῶν παραλογισμῶν." This conception of rhetoric is a Byzantine commonplace, especially in monastic literature; cf. Theodoros the Studite (759–826), *Epitaphios on Plato, His Spiritual Father*, proem (*PG* 99 804a); Symeon the New Theologian (949?–1022), *Ethical Discourses* 9.58 ff.; Niketas Stethatos (1005?–*c.* 1090), *Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Symeon the New Theologian* 2 and 20 (though Niketas was clearly familiar with the basics of Hermogenian rhetoric; see section 78, where several rhetorical concepts are employed to describe Symeon's style).

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way of life in patristic and hagiographical writings; to the association of philosophy with divination and occult practices; John of Damascus' fundamentally Neoplatonic definition of philosophy; or the continued reading in Byzantium of Plato, Aristotelian logic, and Neoplatonic thought.[13]

In the writings of the educated elite, the philosopher is presented as playing a socially beneficial role. This is the sentiment behind the mid-tenth-century scholiastic activity on Gregory of Nazianzos' homilies[14] or in the entries *philosophos* and *politikos* in the late tenth-century *Suda* (phi.419 and pi.1917, citing Synesios of Kyrene); in this latter work, biographies of "philosophers" are noticeably more numerous than those of "rhetors." Furthermore, revered writers of the early Byzantine past were designated as practitioners of philosophy – for instance, Synesios as well as Themistios (*c*. 317–*c*. 388) are remembered as "philosophers" in Photios' *Bibliothêkê* (cod. 26 and 74) and, again, the *Suda* (sigma.1511 and theta.122). Photios (*c*. 810–after 893), one should note, spent considerable space in his *Bibliothêkê* excerpting Ailios Aristeides' philosophical defense of rhetoric against Plato's criticisms, but highlighted, against the grain of Aristeides' text, the superiority of philosophy (*Bibliothêkê* 247, especially 415b–416a).[15]

Of course, throughout this period, rhetoric remained part of the learned man's education and reading. Intellectuals such as Photios possessed extensive knowledge of the rhetorical tradition.[16] During the tenth century, several manuscripts devoted almost exclusively to pre-Byzantine rhetoric were copied.[17] Yet neither Photios nor others adopted a social profile of themselves as rhetors. Middle Byzantine writers before Psellos showed clearly their immersion in rhetoric in practice, but do not profess it assertively in the first person singular.[18]

[13] See Duffy 2002 (esp. pp. 141–3) for a review of middle Byzantine definitions of *philosophia*; Bydén 2003 for a recent account on philosophy and philosophers in Byzantium; Trizio 2007 on the historiography of Byzantine philosophy. On the profession of *philosophia* appropriated by ascetics in particular see, e.g., Niketas Stethatos' *Orations* (ed. Darrouzès 1961: index s.v. *φιλοσοφία*). On the ninth-century revival: Lemerle 1971. On logic: Bydén 2003: 217, note 6. On *philosophia* and the occult: e.g., Michael Attaleiates, *History* 280–1 (where the title of philosopher is also associated with the logician or *dialektikos*); cf. Magdalino and Mavroudi 2006 (esp. p. 13).

[14] Basileios the Lesser, *Scholia* 2, a note on Gregory's *Apologêtikos* = *Or*. 2.

[15] For Aristeides' rewriting of Plato: Flinterman 2000–1; Milazzo 2002.

[16] Photios devoted reviews to a total of twenty-two non-Christian rhetors (see especially the positive reviews of Dio Chrysostom [209] and Lucian [128]); Hägg 1975; Hunger 1978: 93–4. On Photios' *Bibliothêkê*: Markopoulos 2004a; Kazhdan 2006: 10–25, where also the earlier bibliography.

[17] E.g., *Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Plut*. 60.3 and *Paris, BNF, gr*. 2951 (Ailios Aristeides, with scholia), copied by Ioannes the calligrapher for Arethas in 906/7; the mid-tenth-century *Venice, Bibl. Naz. Marc., gr*. 416 (Demosthenes, with scholia, introduced by the *Life of Demosthenes* attributed to Libanios); the tenth-century *Vatican, BAV, Urb. gr*. 111 (Isocrates).

[18] In the following self-representational moments, e.g., "knowledge" rather than rhetoric is projected: *Anthologia Palatina* XV.39a (Ignatios the Deacon); *Anthologia Planoudea* (= XVI) 281 (Alexandros of

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Even teachers of rhetoric presented their rhetorical models as "philosophers" and styled themselves accordingly. Ioannes Sikeliotes, for instance, a teacher active around the year 1000, is titled *philosophos* in the manuscripts of his commentary on Hermogenes.[19] In the commentary itself, Ioannes insisted on differentiating between ancient Greek "rhetors" and Byzantine Church Fathers, such as Gregory of Nazianzos, whom he preferred to call "political" or "civic" (*politikoi*) "philosophers." By the latter term, Ioannes indicated authors who cultivated rhetoric only for the purposes of improving communal and personal morality – the term *politikos* evokes this double meaning of both serving the *polis* and guiding the personal *politeia* of each Christian. The civic philosopher, we read (*Comm.* 375.20–377.12), is

> a rhetor who is not simply rhetor, but one who orders and adorns human *êthê* and leads them toward what is more rational and indeed truly human by turning licentiousness to self-mastery [*sôphrosynê*], anger to meekness, folly to reasonableness, and simply all irrationality to its opposite and to symmetry – it is in this manner that 'ethical' is the name given to the discourse of holy men who raise one from the earthly mud and turn one to the heavenly life and angelic conduct.[20]

Psellos was thus in good company when he highlighted his deep knowledge of philosophy and distanced himself from rhetoric.[21] The digression in the *Chronographia*, however, along with many other such instances of self-representation, contains significant departures from the earlier tradition. Psellos seems anxious to include in his public image everything that can count as discursive knowledge. For Psellos, philosophy is a "single science of everything," evoking the entire spectrum of "philosophy" as this was

Nikaia); Ioannes Geometres, *Poem* 333; Ioannes Mauropous, *Poem* 92.44–6. For a few exceptional cases, see pp. 49–50 below.

[19] See, e.g., *Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Plut.* 57.5, f. 262r with Walz 1834: viii–ix (for the manuscript titles). Sikeliotes' work is dated during the reign of Basil II. The details of his biography are unknown, except from what one might glean from an autobiographical note he inserted in his commentary to Hermogenes; see *Comm.* 446.24–448.15 where he refers to speeches that he composed (none survives), one of them delivered in the Constantinopolitan suburb of Pikridion at the order (?) of Basil II. On Sikeliotes: Kustas 1973: 21 and *passim*; Mazzucchi 1990.

[20] See further *Comm.* 466.1–470.7 with 217.7–8 and 375.20–377.12 and *Prolegomena* 394.28–395.16 ("civic" philosophers) – some of Sikeliotes' terms may partly originate in Hermeias, *Scholia on Plato's Phaedrus* 221.13–24. In similar terms, Sikeliotes prefers to regard the rhetorician Hermogenes as a "philosopher" too; *Prolegomena* 402.2–4 – see Kustas 1973: 10, note 2. Sikeliotes also adopts a pro-philosophical stance against Ailios Aristeides' views (cf. note 15 above) in his own, unedited, scholia to Aristeides' orations extant in the late eleventh-century: *Paris, BNF, gr.* 2950; Lenz 1964: 97–9 and 113–17.

[21] See also *Phil. min.* I 36.10–14 and S 110 to <Basileios Maleses>, *kritês* of Cappadocia (354.23–29), where Psellos projects a strict distinction between philosophy and rhetoric, safely distancing himself from the latter and its practitioners.

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known in Byzantium. It included exegesis of canonical texts (whether Christian or non-Christian), following the hermeneutic tradition that had its roots in Neoplatonic exegesis of Plato and Aristotle. It also included familiarity with occult practices. Finally, it referred to Psellos' status as a monk, which, after 1054, was another "philosophical" title that he could profess.[22]

This desire for universality and expansion in Psellos' self-professed intellectualism is reflected in the wide variety of topics that he covered in texts addressing his student clientele.[23] It is also reflected in the way he introduces new sources and, accordingly, new perspectives on the different bodies of knowledge with which he occupied himself. Important examples in this regard are his usage of Neoplatonic categories and hermeneutical methods, especially borrowed from Proklos (410/412–485), in order to interpret the Christian theology of Gregory of Nazianzos, as well as his reintroduction of a decidedly Roman perspective on the history of the empire while writing the *Concise History* for Michael VII Doukas.[24]

More relevant for our purposes is that Psellos' will to incorporate everything into his public image as a master of discourse led him to appropriate also rhetoric as a *profession* and not simply as a necessary but secondary discipline. The autobiographical narrative of the *Chronographia* is telling in this respect (6.36–46). After the curriculum of gradual ascent (chapters 36–40), one might not expect to encounter rhetoric again. Yet Psellos returns to rhetoric in chapter 41. In contrast to his earlier unwillingness to identify himself with it, here he states that his discourse always combines rhetoric and philosophy, a combination that, as he claims, makes him unique. Rhetoric is a fundamental constituent of the philosopher's discursive practice and not simply preparatory to philosophy. Then, after recounting his engagement with patristic writings and repeating his unmatched contribution to the Constantinopolitan revival of classical and early

[22] The references are many; some characteristic examples: *Chron*. 6.36–46 (attachment to the Neoplatonic tradition, Aristotle, and Plato); *Phil. min*. I 31.100–6 (Psellos on his own nature, insatiable for every type of knowledge); S 198 to Psephas (achievement in every conceivable field of knowledge); *Discourse on the Miracle That Occurred in the Blachernai Church* = *Or. hag*. 4.465–73 and 674 ff. and *Chron*. 6a.10–12 (occult "philosophy"); S 6 to Isaakios Komnenos (monastic habit and *philosophia*; this letter should not be dated in the years of Romanos Diogenes, as suggested by Sathas); cf. S 1 to Konstantinos, nephew of Keroularios; *Letter to Michael Keroularios*; *the Court Memorandum Regarding the Engagement of His Daughter* = *Or. for*. 4; *To Those Who Think That the Philosopher Desires to Be Involved in Political Affairs, and Because of This Disparage Him* = *Or. min*. 6.

[23] For these texts, see above pp. 6–7 and 12.

[24] For the latter text: Dželebdžić 2005; Markopoulos 2006a: 293–7. Similar expansions in the field of rhetorical theory will be examined in the next two chapters. Psellos' Neoplatonic reading of Gregory remains relatively understudied.

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Byzantine knowledge (chapters 42–3), Psellos nearly forgets his philosophical identity; his autobiographical digression concludes with three paragraphs (chapters 44–6) devoted to a disturbingly self-confident praise of his own rhetorical nature, his distinctive "natural virtue" and its enchanting effect upon Monomachos.[25]

This self-portrait is not limited to these paragraphs. Psellos returns repeatedly to his exceptional rhetorical abilities in the *Chronographia* and to his mixture of rhetoric and philosophy, the creation of a "commingled science [*symmiktos epistêmê*]," as he once calls it (K-D 223; 265.5–6).[26] It is this mixture that Psellos propagates in lectures and letters, praises in reference to close associates such as Leichoudes and Mauropous, and ascribes to his most cherished models, Symeon Metaphrastes and, especially, Plato and Gregory of Nazianzos.[27] Ultimately, when writing in the first person, whether addressing a small or a larger audience, Psellos' most frequently adopted persona is of one who perfectly unites philosophy with rhetoric: "in my soul, as if in a single mixing bowl,"[28] he writes, "I mix philosophy and rhetoric together = ὥσπερ ἐφ' ἑνὶ κρατῆρι τῇ ἐμῇ ψυχῇ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ῥητορικὴν ὁμοῦ συγκεράννυμι."[29]

[25] For a similar scene, see Psellos' *Epitaphios in Honor of the Most-Blessed Patriarch, Kyr Ioannes Xiphilinos*, Sathas IV 434.17–24, where Psellos compares Monomachos to Marcus Aurelius, "the most philosophical among emperors, who would take his notebook and frequent a teacher"; Monomachos, Psellos writes, "did something greater than the philosopher: he would often sit me on the throne and take notes [*hypegrammateue*] as I spoke." That Marcus Aurelius is mentioned in this context is reminiscent of his historiographical image as a learned emperor (cf. Psellos, *Concise History* 32) as well as the few biographical details that circulated in Byzantium in reference to Hermogenes and his advancement under Marcus; cf. Philostratos, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.577.3–23 and Anonymous, *Prolegomena to Hermogenes'* On Issues 202.21–203.26.

[26] E.g., *Chron.* 7.15–16 (placed in the mouth of Michael VI); 7.31 (projected in the reaction of a large audience); 7.34 (Psellos is proud to have offered his fatherland his *logos* and *phronêsis*). Notably, in the *Chronographia*, Psellos departs from Byzantine historiographical practices in including a large number of rhetorical speech-acts in direct or indirect speech, for about 40 percent of which Psellos is either the speaker or the addressee; see Reinsch 2009a: 28.

[27] Among the numerous examples: *Letters* S 174 and 188 to Konstantinos, nephew of Keroularios; S 182 to Ioannes Mauropous; *Theol. I* 98 (on Greg. Naz. *Or.* 43.1; Plato and mixture); *Synopsis of Rhetoric* = *Poem* 7.177–178; *Theol.* I 102.4–6; *Theol.* II 6.139–40 (the last three references on Gregory of Nazianzos); *Encomium For Kyr Symeon Metaphrastes* = *Or. hag.* 7.62–70. See also *Theol.* I 79.73–8 (a critique of the style of Maximos the Confessor, the "philosopher"); *Theol.* I 47.80–9 (a critique of Ioannes Sikeliotes, who though a "sophist" in reality, titled himself a "philosopher" and attacked such prestigious "sophists" as Synesios, Libanios, and Prokopios). Cf. *Encomium For a Certain Monk Nikolaos, Who Became Abbot of the Monastery of the Beautiful Spring on Olympos* 141–59.

[28] An allusion to Plato, *Timaeus* 41d4–6? The phrase is discussed and evoked in several instances in Proklos' *Commentary on the* Timaeus (see especially 2.163f.).

[29] *When He Refused the Title of Proto-asêkrêtis* = *Or. min.* 8.191–192. Similar examples are again numerous: *Letters* S 16, untitled; S 42 and G 16=M 4 to Aimilianos, patriarch of Antioch; S

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Two examples may further elucidate how Psellos manipulates the traditional relation of philosophy to rhetoric for the purposes of promoting himself. Both texts stem from educational practice: the first is an essay on the definition of philosophy (*Phil. min.* 1 2), while the second is a lecture in which Psellos responds to his students' desire that he explain the value of myth (*Or. min.* 25). In the former text, Psellos imagines philosophy as a "divine capacity" (*theia dynamis*; 89–90) and thus as an autonomous entity and a universal activity; philosophy, we are told, "is both in everything and outside everything" and "spins around together with the heavens," mixing all knowledge together (20–8, 46–9, and 54 with an echo of Synesios of Kyrene's *Dion*, 4.5–5.1). As a universal science, philosophy includes rhetoric, placed, as one might expect, toward the bottom of the ladder of knowledge. This is the traditional arrangement of disciplines and, for the purposes of this text, it is upheld by Psellos.[30] Simultaneously, however, Psellos allows certain nuances in the traditional classification. When he comes to define rhetoric, he imagines this inferior discipline in terms that are strikingly reminiscent of philosophy's qualities. Rhetoric too is a universalizing practice that mixes everything together – Psellos even posits a possible comparison of rhetoric with "the heaven that has its perfection in the infinity of its motion" (69–71 with 76–8). And, like philosophy, rhetoric too is autonomous. Psellos describes it with the neologism *autonomothesia* (80–4), a discipline that is regulated solely by its own principles.

Psellos' attitude in the second text, his elaborate lecture on myth (*Or. min.* 25) is bolder.[31] The text is structured strategically in two parts of equal length. In the first half (lines 1–95), Psellos feigns a strong resistance to his students' desire that he talk about myth. He, a philosopher, has by now "traversed matter and has ascended almost to the forms [*ideai*]," and thus he objects to those who want him to offer an encomium for myth and thus imitate a "sophist" like Dio Chrysostom (mentioned in l. 78; another reference to Synesios' *Dion* 2, where Synesios disparages the rhetorical creations of Dio before his conversion to "philosophy"). Then, in mid-text (96 onward), Psellos changes his course entirely and offers an

186, 187, and 189 to Konstantinos, nephew of Keroularios; K-D 35 to Pothos, *kritês* of Opsikion, son of *droungarios*; G 17 to Xiphilinos; G 21 to Konstantinos, nephew of Keroularios = *To the Prôtoproedros and Epi Tôn Kriseôn, a Close Friend, But Who Temporarily Envied Him*; *Theol.* 1 19.81–93; *On Friendship to the Nephews of the Patriarch Kyr Michael <Keroularios>* = *Or. min.* 31.1–10; *Monody in Honor of the Bestarchês Georgios the Son of Aktouarios* = K-D 1 212.13–18 and 212.25–213.1.

[30] For this hierarchical structure, see O'Meara 2012.

[31] The lecture is transmitted without title in the single manuscript, *Vatican, BAV, gr.* 672 (late thirteenth century).

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impressive defense of myth. The defense is based upon pressing further both the philosophical and the rhetorical value of myth, as advocated by late antique philosophical and rhetorical theory.

According to Neoplatonic exegesis, myth can be useful as a cover of philosophical truth;[32] while in the rhetorical manuals, myth prepared the acquisition of the skill of persuasion.[33] For Psellos, myth is more than that: more rhetorical than rhetoric and more philosophical than philosophy. Myth is imagined as an "arrogant rhetor . . . who fashions and refashions his intended meaning in whichever way he wills" and as the "foundation" (*krêpis*) of rhetoric. Simultaneously, myth is also proclaimed to be "music, superior to philosophy" (173; a strategic misreading of Socrates' final moments in Plato's *Phaedo*).[34] Whereas in the beginning of the text Psellos the "philosopher" distances himself from the inferior discourse of myth, by the end of the lecture he has elevated myth (significantly personified as the "rhetor") to unprecedented height, urging everyone to receive myth "with utter reverence" (181–8).[35]

The suggestive promotion of rhetoric in both the essay and the lecture does not amount to some philosophical, theoretical argument about the relation of philosophy with rhetoric and some novel rearrangement of the system of knowledge. As Psellos himself makes clear, his rhetorical fusion of the two disciplines serves rather his self-representational agenda. The first essay concludes with a wish that, in a world full of people practicing separate disciplines, there might be someone with the intellectual capacity to unify the different branches of knowledge, creating the "most beautiful living creature on earth" (97–104). Who else is that "someone" if not Psellos himself who repeatedly proclaims his proficiency in every type of knowledge and, especially, his mixture of rhetoric with philosophy? Similarly, in the lecture on myth, Psellos stages first his difference *qua* philosopher from his students and then his similarity *qua* rhetor with them, as he and his

[32] See Lamberton 1986 with Cesaretti 1991 for the Byzantine tradition of allegory.

[33] See p. 106 below.

[34] According to Plato's *Phaedo* (60d–61b), Socrates had a recurrent dream to "create music and work at it," which he revisited during his final moments. Initially, Socrates interpreted the dream as a mere cheer for him to continue exactly what he was doing: philosophy, "the greatest kind of music" (a phrase evoked in Neoplatonic definitions of philosophy with which Psellos would have been familiar; cf., e.g., Proklos, *Comm. on the Republic* 1.57.8–23 and 60.24–25; David, *Prolegomena* 25.19–24; Ioannes Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 10.597). Then, however, Socrates decided that the dream was urging him to practice "music" in the regular sense; hence he turned to the making of poetry (though still without "creating myths"!). By contrast, as Psellos cites the story, it is myth that is implied as "the greatest kind of music." For the episode in the *Phaedo* see Roochnik 2001. For this text of Psellos, see also Kolovou 2009.

[35] The passage is cited in full, p. 118 below.

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students meet in the ability to practice myth, that initiatory exercise in rhetoric. Again we ask; who is the personified myth/rhetor that Psellos urges his students to invite into their souls, if not someone like Psellos himself?

THE REVIVAL OF RHETORIC

That Psellos viewed himself as a philosopher but also reintegrated rhetoric into philosophy has been noticed.[36] His approach has been read either as a rhetorical stratagem or as a revival of an earlier topos. In reality, however, the insistence with which Psellos promotes the mixture of philosophy with rhetoric and the consequent value he invests in the inferior discipline for the purposes of his self-image are unique and carry a special meaning in eleventh-century Constantinople. Indeed, Psellos' rhetoricization of his intellectual persona was based on a revival; yet this was a very careful, eclectic, and creative revival of the few earlier self-representational moments when a mixture of philosophy and rhetoric was entertained.

As already noted, Byzantine rhetoricians before Psellos hesitated to identify fully with rhetoric in the first person. This stance can be partly explained by the way their primary models, namely Christian rhetors of the early Byzantine period, dealt with the matter. Take Gregory of Nazianzos, for instance. Gregory was well versed in rhetorical diction, style, and techniques, trained as he was in two of the best schools of the eastern Mediterranean at the time (Alexandria and Athens).[37] Indeed, early in his public career, Gregory of Nazianzos worked as a teacher of rhetoric, as has been convincingly argued.[38] However, he never presented himself as a rhetor; rather, maximizing earlier tropes, he consistently disparaged rhetoric as morally dangerous and pagan, "Hellenic," discourse.[39]

[36] Kustas 1973: 156–157; Anastasi 1974; Ljubarskij 2001: 348–374 = 2004: 197–224; Magdalino 1993a: 331; Kaldellis 1999: 127–154; Walker 2004; Jenkins 2006: 145–151; Bernard 2010: 186–187; Kolovou 2010.

[37] Gregory's *paideia* is reflected in the eclectic nature of his allusions and references, indebted to a variety of both rhetorical and philosophical traditions. Rhetoric: Milovanovics 2005; Papaioannou 2006b; Hägg 2006. Philosophy: Moreschini 1997: 16–18 and 22–68. For eclecticism in fourth-century rhetoricians, see also the case of Himerios, another contemporary rhetor/philosopher, on whom Völker 2003 with Richtsteig 1921. The precise curriculum of the fourth-century schools is unknown. For some recent discussions: Watts 2006; Cribbiore 2007.

[38] McLynn 2006.

[39] E.g., *Or.* 2.46 and 104; *Or.* 5.35; 27.1–2 and 9–10; 28.2; 30.1; 31.15; 33.3; 36.2; 38.5–6; 41.10; 42.22; *Against the Vanity of Women* = *Poem* 1.2.29 *passim* (esp. 3–4 and 276–86); *De vita sua* 267–9; Ruether 1969: 156 ff. For the early Byzantine tradition in general and the anti-rhetorical thrust of much patristic discourse: Cameron 1991: 15–88.

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Plate 3 The beginning of Gregory of Nazianzos' *Epitaphios* for Basil of Caesarea (*Or.* 43); Florence, Pluteus 7.32 (late eleventh or early twelfth century), f. 70 recto.

A typical example of this willed mis-recognition of rhetorical practice that came to define the Byzantine stance is Gregory's *Funeral Oration* in honor of his friend Basil of Caesarea (dated to the early 380s) – one of Gregory's longest speeches and an influential text in Byzantium (Plate 3: *Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Plut.* 7.32, 70r, late eleventh or early

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twelfth century).[40] Gregory proclaims education (*paideia*), both Christian and pagan, as "the most important quality or possession [*agathon*]" of the Christian audience that he envisions (*Or.* 43.11) and offers his own speech as an example of the power of discourse, the *dynamis* of *logos* (*Or.* 43.1, with 13, 66, 69, 76).[41] The implied "rhetoric" is here, however, recast as *logos* with the obvious semantic associations with Christ the *Logos*.[42]

Like other contemporaries,[43] Gregory identified unambiguously as a "philosopher." This is the force of his *Apologêtikos*, an extensive text set in 361 and admired by Psellos (*Or.* 2: especially sections 88, 91, and 103),[44] and also of a shorter speech, titled *On Himself and to Those Who Claim That It Was He Who Wanted the See of Constantinople* (*Or.* 36). In this latter text, set in 380 at the beginning of Gregory's bishopric in Constantinople, Gregory disassociates himself from priests who have turned the holy "stage" into a theater and from "wise men, philosophers . . . and sophists" who are "hunters of public acclaim" (2 and 11–12). What distinguishes him is his "neither theatrical nor panegyrical" but truly "philosophical" way of life, his sufferings at the hands of his enemies (3), and also his "tongue," which, though originally "trained in pagan discourse," has now been rendered by Gregory "noble" through "Christian *logoi*" (4).[45]

Another example is the slightly later Christian rhetor, philosopher, and aristocrat Synesios of Kyrene, especially his essay *Dion*, named after Dio Chrysostom, the first-century Greek rhetorician. This text was on many

[40] One of the sixteen 'Liturgical Homilies,' assigned to January 1st, Basil's feast-day, this oration was canonical in monastic and ecclesiastic circles. Read as a model for funerary discourse, it was also normative for Byzantine rhetorical practice; see Agapitos 2003. Psellos evokes this oration on many occasions; see Ljubarskij 2001: 397–8 = 2004: 248–9 with Papaioannou 2011a (notions of friendship specifically).

[41] The "power" of discourse is a commonplace in earlier rhetoric; see, e.g., the introductory statements in Dionysios of Halikarnassos' *Roman Antiquities* 1.1.3, Diodoros of Sicily's *Library of History* 1.2.5, and, especially, Hermogenes' *On Forms* 1.1. *Paideia* too was also a notion inherited from Greek rhetoric of the Imperial period; cf. Schmitz 1997; Whitmarsh 2004a: 139–158; Borg 2004. In the tenth century, Basileios the Lesser concurred with Gregory's view (*Scholia* 24.38–25.2, a note on Gregory's *Or.* 43): οὔκουν ἀτιμαστέον τὴν παίδευσιν. οὐδαμῶς οὖν περιφρονητέον, φησί, τὴν ἑλληνικὴν παίδευσιν, ἀλλὰ πονηροὺς καὶ βασκάνους καὶ ἀπαιδεύτους ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς ταύτην κακίζοντας, οἵτινες βούλονται ἀσόφους πάντας εἶναι, ἵνα μηδεὶς τὴν ἀμάθιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἀπαιδευσίαν διελέγχῃ.

[42] Cf. *Poem* 2.1.12.267–283; *Farewell Speech* = *Syntaktêrios* = *Or.* 42.6 and 12; and, especially, *Against Julian* = *Or.* 4 *passim*.

[43] Smith 1995 (Julian); Vanderspoel 1995 (Themistios).

[44] *Theol.* II 6 (on Greg. Naz. *Or.* 2.13), with extensive comments on the style of the speech (esp. lines 139–191). For further Byzantine scholia: Cantarella 1926: 5.32–7.25.

[45] Gregory uses here the metaphor of Moses transforming the bitter water of Marah into sweet drinkable water (Exodus 15), later evoked also by Psellos; Duffy 2001.

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occasions culled by Psellos[46] and was widely known among Byzantine literati.[47] Synesios' case is somewhat exceptional. Like Gregory, in public settings, Synesios professed philosophy and distanced himself from rhetoric.[48] Unlike Gregory, however, in his private correspondence with friends Synesios occasionally adopted a more daringly rhetorical stance, as he was less willing to reject completely his Hellenic background and outlook.[49] His *Dion*, a speech of self-defense, is an extensive explanation of precisely this ambivalent stance toward Hellenic rhetoric by someone who identified himself as philosopher.[50]

Synesios alludes to opponents: contemporary ascetics and fellow rhetoricians. The former claim to be "philosophers" but negate discourse entirely; the latter submit themselves to the fickle sensual desires of their audience.[51] The argument he puts forth is that, while philosophy allows one to relate to oneself and to the Divine, discourse is the tool by which the philosopher may relate to others (*Dion* 5.2 with 8.1–9.11; also 1.14, 2.2, 3.1). Like Gregory, Synesios prefers the term *logos* and, more specifically, the speech of the "civic [*politikos*]" philosopher who aims at moral instruction as opposed to the "rhetoric" and "poetry" that are addressed to the public settings of the festival or theater and seek merely to gratify audiences.[52] Unlike Gregory, Synesios advocates for a philosopher who can also appropriate the inferior

[46] See above p. 37 and below pp. 64, 73–4, 144, and 149.

[47] Of the fifty-eight surviving manuscripts of *Dion*, the earliest (*Paris, BNF, Coisl.* 249; cf. Devreese 1945: 228–9) dates to the tenth century. Its contents reveal the kinds of texts with which Synesios was associated in Byzantium and the kind of readers that he attracted – notably, several marginal scholia accompany the texts. The book begins with the works of Synesios (including his *Dion*, excluding his letters), followed by a Neoplatonic presentation of the ideal philosopher (Marinos' *Proklos or concerning happiness*), rhetorical pieces (such as brief extracts from Dionysios of Halikarnassos and orations of Aeschines and Lysias), and concludes with Synesios' rhetorical work *On Kingship*. For an eleventh-century example with contemporary scholia: *Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Plut.* 55.6 (see, e.g., ff. 45r and 47r). See further Brancacci 1985: 201–313 on the influence of Synesios' *Dion* in Byzantium. For Synesios' letters and Psellos, see pp. 135, 149, and 210–14 below.

[48] In its sharpest (indeed Platonic) terms, the polarity is established in Synesios' introduction to his speech *On Kingship*; the text is echoed in Psellos – Graffigna 2000. For Synesios' career in its socio-historical context: Cameron and Long 1993; Schmitt 2001; Rapp 2005: 156–66.

[49] In the first letter of his collection, for instance, Synesios argues that he "fathers" discourse not simply of the "solemn" philosophical kind, but also of the "vulgar" or, literally translated, "most public" rhetoric (*Letter* 1.1–5, to Nikandros); the text was evoked in Psellos, G 5.12–14 to Ioannes Doukas.

[50] The self-referentiality of the text is already recorded in its title that reads *On Dion or on leading my own life according to Dion's example*; cf. Schmitt 2001: 69–73; Harich-Schwarzbauer 2001. In the cover letter (*Letter* 154 to Hypatia), Synesios suggests that he envisioned his *Dion* as an essay on the definition of *philosophia*. For discussions of the *Dion*: Treu 1958; Garzya 1974b; Aujoulat 1992; Schmitt 2001: 37–8 and 67–143. Also Roques 2006 on Synesios' ambivalent attitude toward rhetoric.

[51] *Dion* 8.8–10 and 10.2; *Letter* 154 to Hypatia. For the opponents: Garzya 1974b; Dickie 1993.

[52] Cf. *Dion* 1.13, 3.8, and 4.1 on the "civic" discourse of the philosopher (also related to a beauty that is "ancient, according to nature, and appropriate to its subjects"; 3.3) with 3.2–5 on the theatricality of sophistic rhetoric and 1.4 and 3.5 on its relation to eroticized pleasure.

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discourse. The essay ends with Synesios' portrait of himself as a performer of discourse of all kinds (including pieces of Greek tragedy and comedy; 18, cf. 5.4).[53] Still, appropriation is the right term, as Synesios does not speak of any indissoluble mixture of philosophy and rhetoric. Throughout the text, rhetoric and philosophy remain distinct enterprises and the inferior art does not define Synesios' self-portrait. Consistently with the agendas of numerous late antique aristocrats/intellectuals such as himself, Synesios' core identity, his "divine nature" (6.1), is reserved for philosophy. Rhetoric, by contrast, is imagined as a "subordinate power" (5.2) and an "outer precinct" (5.7).

This careful negotiation of the philosopher's rhetoric was not repeated in Greek self-representational speech with the same force until the writings of Psellos. Even if the two "professions" continued to exist and thrive until at least the sixth century throughout the urban centers of the eastern Mediterranean, and even if the distinctions and tensions between "rhetors," "sophists," and "philosophers" continued to be palpable,[54] neither self-professed philosophers nor rhetors seem to have felt the necessity to justify their profession to the extent that we find it in "philosophers" such as Gregory of Nazianzos and Synesios.[55]

Psellos capitalized on Gregory's unacknowledged appropriation of rhetoric and simultaneously revived certain aspects specific to Synesios' stance.[56] Unlike anyone before him, Psellos was much more confident about the necessity of mixing philosophy with rhetoric and much more vocal in including the image of the rhetor in his public persona. By speaking of himself as well as his models as rhetor-philosophers, he rendered explicit the tacit rhetorical identity that structured the earlier tradition.

How are we to explain Psellos' stance? First, it should be made clear that there was nothing exceptional about the energy expended by Psellos in fashioning a public persona. As noted earlier, the fact that Psellos' texts survive in great quantity in later manuscripts should not mislead us. The other substantial eleventh-century oeuvre, the collection of *Vatican, BAV, gr.* 676 that Ioannes Mauropous assembled late in his life, reveals an equally

[53] Earlier in the text, Synesios argues that engagement with inferior types of discourse must happen either during the gradual process of philosophical education or, occasionally, while one is already a philosopher (4.1–3 and 9.6–10.1).

[54] Heath 2004 (esp. 73–83); Heath 2009.

[55] For more detailed discussion of Synesios, Psellos and the profession of rhetoric: Papaioannou 2012b.

[56] E.g., S 11 (242.21–5) with Synesios' *Dion* 5.2 (the necessity of discursive communication); K-D 224 to Aristenos (267.16–28) with *Dion* 3.7 ("civic" and "ancient" rhetoric); *Chron.* 6.23 with Synesios, *Letter* 1 ("purification" of discourse); S 12 (245.24–5) with *Dion* 4.2 (discursive "play").

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active attempt at self-fashioning (not identical, of course, to Psellos' self-portrait either in tenor or intensity).[57] We can safely assume that others pursued comparable strategies.

The social climate demanded self-advertisement. In contemporary Constantinople, a new aristocracy was on the rise.[58] This elite invested in the appropriation of early Byzantine Christian rhetoric, such as that of Gregory. The many expensive, illustrated books of Christian rhetoric produced in this period are a testament to this aristocratic habit.[59] This elite was also willing to encourage learned men – those who could teach and explain old rhetoric and produce new rhetoric – to work loyally in its service, praise its accomplishments lavishly, and justify its predilections for sensual pleasure and conspicuous consumption. The Doukas family and, earlier, Monomachos are the most notable examples of this new eleventh-century ruling group that attracted around them a host of learned men, a phenomenon that continued and perhaps grew larger during the Komnenian era.

Like others, Psellos was conscious of his dependence on the patronage of this ruling elite. For instance, much of his work focuses on advertising (in the hopes of recreating) the support that Monomachos gave to his intellectual pursuits. The extensive attention to Monomachos in the *Chronographia* may be explained in this way as can the three orations that Psellos produced in the time of Michael VII honoring his fellow intellectuals of the Monomachos years, Leichoudes, Mauropous, and Xiphilinos.[60] Monomachos, as Psellos put it in a letter late in his career, "all but made me a man where I was once clay = μόνον οὐκ ἐκ πηλοῦ ἄνθρωπον ἐποίησε."[61]

Patronage defined the social predicament of eleventh-century rhetors. It necessitated competition in a society that was traditionally determined by shifting networks of kinship and friendship, a remarkable social mobility, and the accompanying fragility of social positions.[62] With few exceptions,

[57] Bernard 2010: 86–8. For the codex: Bianconi 2011.

[58] For recent overviews of the Byzantine social elite: Messis 2006a: 80–2; Cheynet 2006b: I-IV; Patlagean 2007; Haldon 2009. Cf. the earlier: Angold 1984; Cheynet 1990; Kazhdan and Ronchey 1999. For court aristocracy in particular: Magdalino 2009 with further bibliography. For the rise of a new aristocracy after the reign of Basil II: Krsmanović 2001; Cheynet 2006b: I.

[59] See Spatharakis 1981 (for dated illustrated MSS) and pp. 48 and 57 below.

[60] For these texts, see pp. 12–13 above.

[61] G 35 = *Maltese* 20 to the empress Eudokia (late 1060s). The whole passage reads as follows (lines 60–5): οὐχ οὕτῳς ὁ Μονομάχος, ὃς δή με μόνον οὐκ ἐκ πηλοῦ ἄνθρωπον ἐποίησε, πᾶσι δὲ τοῖς ἄλ̣λοις ἐμόρφῳ[σεν]; οὐχὶ τῶν σ̣υγγενῶν αὐτοῦ πάντων ὑπέρτερον ἐποιήσατο; οὐχὶ φίλον μ̣ε προσηγ[όρευ]σε καὶ διδάσκαλον καὶ τῆς οἰκείας ψυχῆς ἀντιλήπτορα; καὶ τοῦτο δῆλον ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἐμὲ γραμμάτῳν̣ καὶ συγγραμμάτων αὐτοῦ.

[62] Weiss 1973; Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein 1985: 126–33; Kazhdan and McCormick 1997; Haldon 2009. Also: Mullett 1999a and Neville 2004: 66–98, on friendship and kinship respectively. For

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power and material affluence rested on the competitive love of "honor" (*philotimon* or *philotimia*; cf. *Chron.* 7.2) and the unpredictability of influence and affection.[63] As Psellos put it nicely when describing his life at the court to his friend Mauropous, "here, nothing is stable, nothing is permanent; but everything moves and changes = ἐνταῦθα μὲν γὰρ, οὐδὲν ἑστώς· οὐ μόνιμον· ἀλλὰ πάντα κινεῖται καὶ μεταβάλλεται."[64]

For rhetors and teachers, without claims to high birth and family origins, uncertainty ruled. Sudden promotions and demotions were the norm – evident in the careers of Psellos himself and almost all of his associates, such as his teacher, Ioannes Mauropous.[65] In texts, a sense of fragile authority prevails. Psellos recurrently complains about the limited influence of his rhetoric.[66] Telling also is a statement from another rhetorician/teacher, Ioannes Sikeliotes' brief autobiographical excursus in his commentary on Hermogenes. Rather bitterly, Sikeliotes presents himself as a poor and socially insignificant man, barely making a living, in search of a patron who is nowhere to be found. "Where is," Sikeliotes asks, "an emperor like Marcus [Aurelius] or Antoninus or Hadrian?"[67]

Networks of personal relations too were fragile and required much work to be sustained. Psellos' letters, of which 515 to more than 100 different addressees survive, are an unmistakable testimony to this.[68] Psellos writes again and again in order to please friends and to remind them of their personal bonds. He also mediates for others to the ruling elite and seeks to acquire its support. To the socially inferior – the poor notary, for instance,

examples on the competitive context of educational and rhetorical practice from Psellos' immediate past: Ioannes Sikeliotes, *Prolegomena* 415.13–23; Christophoros Mytilenaios, *Poems* 9, 10, 11, 13, 23, 36, 37, and 40 with Oikonomidès 1990 (= 2004: XXI); cf. Beck 1978: 123 ff.; Magdalino 1993a: 316–412; Lauxtermann 2003: 34–45.

[63] Cf., e.g., Symeon the New Theologian, *Ethical Discourses* 4.243–6, where "fame" and "honor," *doxa* and *timê*, together with "wealth," are presented as fundamental secular possessions that grant one "freedom, joy, and enjoyment."

[64] K-D 34 (54.13–14). Cf. Michael Attaleiates, *History* 20: "good fortune that comes from the emperor is of uncertain nature = τὰ τῆς δεσποτικῆς εὐδαιμονίας ἀβέβαια."

[65] On whose career, see Karpozilos 1982 and 1990.

[66] E.g., *Letters* K-D 49 to the bishop of Nikomedeia; K-D 79, untitled; K-D 85 to the *epi tôn kriseôn*; K-D 146 to <Basileios Maleses>; S 7 and 9 to the *prôtosynkellos* Leon Paraspondylos; S 198 and 199 to Psephas; G 35 = *Maltese* 20 to Eudokia.

[67] *Comm.* 444.26–445.16 and 446.24–448.15. For similar expressions of an intellectual's social insignificance or poverty: Anonymous Professor (on whom see Markopoulos 2000), *Letters* 74.12–14 with 81.1, 85.37–38, 88.5, 95.10–14, 111.5, and 112.4; Symeon Magistros, *Letter* 9.4–7 (for the letter collection[s] of Symeon see now: Pratsch 2005b); Ioannes Mauropous, *Programma on the speech on Angels* = *Poem* 28.13.

[68] Moore numbers 542 letters; I am excluding here all which are dubious, spurious, or as yet unidentified; Papaioannou 1998.

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or the traveling monk – Psellos would offer his intervention with those who held real social authority.[69] To the social superior, he provided discursive entertainment and rhetorical displays of knowledge in exchange for personal favors and material gifts.[70]

It is in this social setting that one should situate Psellos' expansive and aggressively promoted intellectual persona. His mastery of discourse was the main asset that he brought to the struggle for preferment. Along with the more traditional claim to expertise in philosophy, rhetoric acquired a remarkably prominent place, becoming a constituent feature of his self-fashioning. Unlike his models, Gregory or Synesios, and unlike most ninth- and tenth-century Byzantine learned authors, Psellos did not have the luxury of treating rhetoric as mere style and training, as an unacknowledged sociolect, a supplementary feature of high social standing shared by members of the same group. Rhetoric was for him a significantly more vital tool of social survival.

In this change of perspective, Psellos was assisted by one further feature of the fate of rhetoric in eleventh-century Constantinople, and I conclude with it. By the 1040s, when Psellos began his spectacular career, two most important developments in the history of middle Byzantine discursive culture had taken place. The first was the selection, sometime during the tenth century, of sixteen highly rhetorical homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos as sermons to be read aloud at significant feasts of the Christian church calendar – especially for the periods around Christmas and Easter.[71] The second development was that in the early eleventh century – primarily among Constantinopolitan monasteries, their

[69] Among these letters, the majority are devoted to Psellos' mediation between a client, usually of lower status (such as notaries, simple monks, poor relatives, and, occasionally, women) and a patron, usually a member of the imperial administration (such as provincial judges, the *kritai*; cf. Ljubarskij 2001: 312–24 = 2004: 154–69). Only in relatively few cases, Psellos requests a favor for himself alone; see S 51, 77, 114, 139, 171, 178, 198, 199; K-D 53, 64, 89, 95, 108, 140, and 200.

[70] A well-crafted example is Psellos' letter to Iasites, where in exchange for his friend's gift of a horse, in Greek *a-logon*, Psellos offers his discourse, his *logos*; S 171 with Bernard 2011a. Other examples: *Letters* S 3 to the emperor Romanos Diogenes; S 51 to the *praitôr* of Thrakesion Xeros; S 85 to Konstantinos, nephew of Keroularios; K-D 75 to the bishop of Parnassos; G 31, untitled. For gift-exchanges among Byzantine epistolographers: Karpozilos 1984.

[71] On Gregory's sixteen so-called 'Liturgical Homilies' (namely: *Orations* 1, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 24, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, not arranged in this order in the manuscripts), see Somers-Auwers 2002 (esp. p. 105, on the wide diffusion of this selection of Gregory's orations in the eleventh century). To the texts of Gregory we should add also selections from the sermons of John Chrysostom and Basil of Caesarea produced in the tenth century by Theodoros Daphnopates (Haidacher 1902) and Symeon Metaphrastes (*PG* 32: 1116=1381 with Fedwick 1964) respectively. As noted earlier, however, Chrysostom and Basil, while considered important rhetoricians, did not acquire the same status as Gregory in the Byzantine rhetorical tradition; see p. 17 above and p. 56 below.

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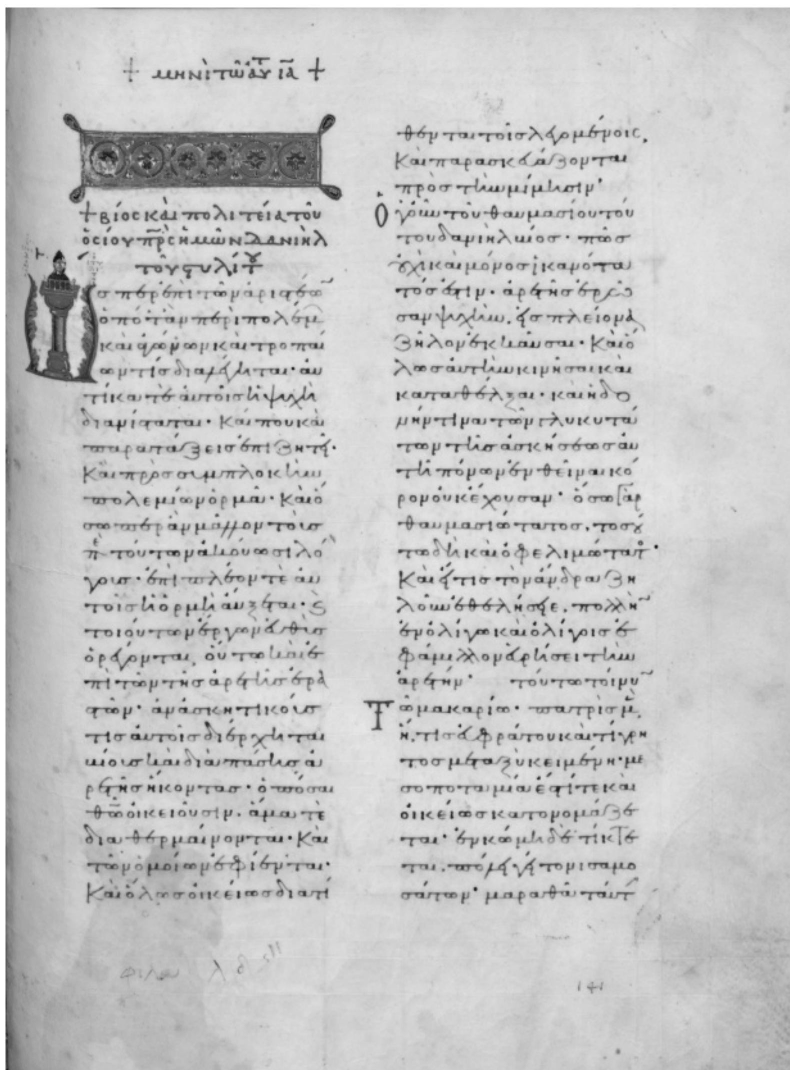

Plate 4 Symeon Metaphrastes' *Menologion*, December 11, the beginning of the *Bios kai politeia* of St. Daniel the Stylite; Florence, Pluteus 11.11 (eleventh century), f. 141 recto.

aristocratic patrons, and their affiliated persons and institutions – the texts of the Metaphrastean *Menologion* were adopted as the appropriate reading for these feasts throughout the ecclesiastical year (Plate 4). The texts included in the *Menologion*, gathered in ten volumes and

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circulating widely, were partially revised by Metaphrastes and his collaborators in a higher rhetorical register, often influenced by Gregory of Nazianzos' language.[72]

Both of these developments defined what we may call the decisive *rhetoricization* of Constantinopolitan discursive culture during the middle Byzantine period. The increased interest in Gregory's *Logoi* and Symeon Metaphrastes' *Bioi* and *Martyria* alongside similar rhetorically inflected texts meant that a large audience in places where discourse was practiced and preserved in Byzantium – the church, the monastery, the schools, as well as the court and aristocratic households – were exposed to texts of high rhetoric. These required specially trained readers/teachers who could prepare editions, explain difficult passages, and produce new texts in a similar vein when the need arose. After the tenth century and by 1204, performance rhetoric and narrative, whether hagiographical or historiographical in nature, became largely the monopoly of professional intellectuals, specialists in rhetoric.

These developments contributed to the growing self-consciousness of rhetoricians. Though being a philosopher remained the dominant persona, from the tenth century onward rhetoric too begins, albeit hesitantly, to be mentioned explicitly in the careers of learned men.[73] It is

[72] See Høgel 2002 and 2003. The *Menologion* survives in about 700 manuscripts "not including the fragments" (Høgel 2002: 11); of these more than 200 date to the eleventh century, when also most of the illustrated copies (altogether 43 survive) were produced – see Patterson Ševčenko 1990; also Hutter 2000. The citations of Gregory in the Metaphrastean collections remain to be explored. It may be noted that Symeon included in his corpus the *Life* of Gregory of Nazianzos by Gregory the Presbyter with no alterations (reading for January 25) and that the two corpora of Gregory's *Orations* and Metaphrastes' *Menologion* were meant to complement each other; cf. a note in the table of contents for the MS *Patm*. 245 (completed for the *patrikios* Pothos in 1057; cf. 10 above) which urges the reader to "look in <the book of> the Theologian" for the reading of January 18 about Athanasios the Great. For trends in hagiography that anticipated the Metaphrastean project, see various essays in Efthymiadis 2011a and Efthymiadis 2011b; cf. also Høgel 1996. For an important earlier example of highly rhetoricized hagiographical narrative, see Ps.-Nilos, *Narration*, also included with no alterations in the Metaphrastean *Menologion*. For another contemporary example, see Euthymios the Hagiorete's *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, a hagiographical narrative also circulating widely (Volk 2009: 525–81), especially in eleventh-century manuscripts, several with extensive illustration. Notably, Euthymios used extensively the Byzantine models of rhetorical diction of the tenth c.: Gregory of Nazianzos, Daphnopates' selection of Chrysostom's *Homilies*, and Ps.-Nilos, *Narration* (Volk 2009: 115–22 and Volk 2006: 484–5). In its turn, Euthymios' text influenced greatly the rhetorical diction of Metaphrastes' *Menologion* (Volk 2003).

[73] Cf., e.g., Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia* 191.22–192.13 on Leon the Philosopher (*c*. 790–after 869) who is said to have studied grammar, poetry, and then "rhetoric" and philosophy and also 446.7–9 on Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos and his care for both "rhetoric" and "philosophy." Similarly, Christophoros Mytilenaios praised a certain Niketas of Synada for being, among other things, both a "sophos" and a "rhetor" (*Poem* 27.38–9). For an earlier, ninth-c., yet isolated, example, see Ignatios the Deacon, *Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros* 149.21–6, a mention of rhetoric in a curriculum vitae that culminates with "philosophy" (150.12–15).

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in the courts of two emperors who were able rhetoricians themselves, Leon VI the Wise (866–912; emperor: 886–912) and his son Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos (905–59; sole emperor: 945–59), that, for the first time, we hear explicitly about appointment of teachers of rhetoric.[74] It is also in this period that, in biographical sketches or encomia, Gregory of Nazianzos is presented as both a philosopher *and* an accomplished rhetor.[75] Similar statements appear regarding other earlier writers.[76] Moreover, it is during the course of the tenth century that we encounter the first Byzantine writers who not only practice high rhetoric but advertise it in the first person on isolated occasions. In one of his *Letters* dated to the 940s, Niketas Magistros (*c.* 870–after 946) compared himself to Odysseus "the good rhetor" with his "force [a reference to the rhetorical technical term *deinotês*] and persuasion [*peithô*]" (*Letter* 3). Some decades later, Ioannes Geometres (*c.* 935/940–1000), in his *Letter Describing a Garden* (*Progymnasmata* 2), identified with Proteus, the prototypical image of dangerous sophistry: "if in the same way as Proteus alters his face," Geometres wrote, "I have suddenly altered the shape [*morphê*] of my discourse . . . , it is the art that demands this."[77] More significantly, in his speech *To Those Who*

[74] According to a passage from a biographical account about Niketas David of Paphlagonia, Niketas was invited by Leo to become "teacher of philosophy" or "of rhetoric" in 911; Flusin 1985 125.37–42 with Paschalides 1999: 96. And according to Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia* (446.11–12), Alexandros, bishop of Nikaia, was appointed by Konstantinos as head-master for the teaching of "rhetors" in 945; see Pratsch 2004 with Markopoulos 2004b. Such references continue in the eleventh century. "Most learned rhetors" are mentioned in documents prepared by Ioannes Mauropous for Konstantinos IX Monomachos (*Novella* 4). A (contemporary?) Nikolaos rhetor is mentioned in one of the poems of the so-called *Anonymous of Sola* (Bernard 2011b: 82–83).

[75] Niketas David of Paphlagonia, *Encomium in honor of Gregory* 3.16–26; Ioannes Geometres, *Encomium for Gregory, Our Great Archbishop and Theologian*, in Tacchi-Venturi 1893, p. 158; *Suda* (gamma.450). For Geometres' still unedited encomium for Gregory, see Tacchi-Venturi 1893. For his biography, see now van Opstall 2008: 3–14. As Geometres' various epigrams attest, he was also reading (in order of appearance in the poems) John Chrysostom, Plato and Aristotle, Porphyrios, Sophocles, Philostratos (whom he calls a "rhetor"), Libanios, Iamblichos, Theon the "philosopher", and Homer (see *Poems* 281.4–9, 284.14–22, 309.20–2, 312.9–19, 318.16–319.4, 329.16–20, 378.23–379.4).

[76] The wording, e.g., applied to Gregory of Nazianzos in the *Suda* entry ("οὗτος οὐ μόνον γραμματικὸς καὶ τὰ ἐς τὴν ποίησιν δεξιός, ἀλλὰ πολλῷ πλεῖον καὶ ἐς φιλοσοφίαν ἐξήσκητο, καὶ ῥήτωρ ἦν ἀμφιδέξιος") is also given in the biography of Apollinaris of Laodikeia (alpha.3397). See also Ioannes Geometres, *Poems* 284.11–13 (Simplikios as both "rhetor" and "philosopher") and 326.12–14 (Xenophon as "first in eloquence among the rhetors; and first in soul and mind among the philosophers").

[77] *Progymnasmata* 2, p. 9.20–5; cf. also his self-referential poem (267.22–269.19; also in van Opstall 2008, no. 211), where Geometres presents himself as "discourse that flows spontaneously = λόγος αὐτόχυτος." The figure of Proteus has usually negative connotations in Greek writing; cf. Plato, *Ion* 541d; Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 80–1; Gregory of Nazianzos, *Or.* 2.44. For a positive framing, see below pp. 101 (Dionysios of Halikarnassos) and 115 (Psellos) with Philostratos, *Life of Apollonios* 1.4.4–1.5.1 and Himerios *Or.* 68.63–70. Geometres' *Progymnasmata*: see Demoen 2001; Agapitos and Hinterberger 2006: 129–61 and 194–5.

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Scoffed At Me For My Obscurity and an Account of What Form I Followed in My Speech, Arethas (mid ninth–mid tenth century) evoked Gregory of Nazianzos as his model, cited various ancient authors, and applied categories from rhetorical manuals, in order to defend his diverse *logos* for combining a variety of forms, including aesthetic appeal (what he calls "Aphrodite") and "the leaps of Gorgias," a metaphor for excessive rhetoric: "By as many and such things, my discursive offspring is sculpted into beauty."[78]

Psellos transformed this rather hesitant affirmation of rhetoric by others in a significant set of his texts into a forceful self-portrait. His rhetorical production far exceeded the work of any other middle Byzantine author (with the exception perhaps of Symeon Metaphrastes): letters, speeches of various kinds, texts for instruction in rhetoric, rhetoricized historiography, as well as – one should add – rhetoricized hagiography which possibly included a series of encomia, reworkings of earlier *Lives* of old saints, for expanding the menologion in imitation of Metaphrastes.[79] It is no coincidence that Psellos also wrote a hagiographical encomium for Metaphrastes and devoted much discursive production to Gregory of Nazianzos with a view to molding those earlier writers in his own image: as philosopher-rhetors, naturally talented and inimitably skilled in discourse. Anxious to defend and amplify his discursive appeal, fully aware of the new potential of rhetoric in Constantinopolitan high society, and, ultimately, an exceptionally passionate reader and gifted writer, Psellos was willing to take rhetorical liberties and rhetoricize authorial identity far beyond anything we encounter in earlier Byzantine self-referential writing. He did so in practice – in letters, speeches, and narratives, where his rhetorical self struts on the stage of his writing – and also in theory, in essays on and discussions of rhetorical style to which we turn next.

[78] For a somewhat confused discussion of this text (*Scriptora minora* 17), see Kustas 1973: 84–5. For Arethas' rhetorical work: Loukaki 2007. Arethas' student Niketas David of Paphlagonia (late ninth-early tenth century) is designated as "rhetor" and "philosopher" alternately in the manuscript titles of his works. Cf. the critical apparatus in Lebrun 1997 and Moreschini and Costa 1992, with Paschalides 1999: 95–9.

[79] As has been argued recently (Makris 2009), Psellos wrote rhetorical encomia of St. John the Baptist (presented as spurious in the most recent edition: *Or. hag.* 8), Panteleemon (ed. Makris 2009:113–25), Kallinikos (unedited), Laurentios (unedited), and Prokopios (unedited).

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