

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

GEORGIOS DIAMANTOPOULOS<sup>1</sup>

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

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

## Introduction

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Theology, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Email: vgeorgios\_diamantopoulos@yahoo.gr.

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

<sup>3</sup> Edited by Gautier (1989); Westerink and Duffy (2002).

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>5</sup> Walter (2017, 16–17).

<sup>6</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019).

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

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

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

In *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier<sup>7</sup> Psellos interprets the biblical passages which refer to people and places involved in the preparation of the Last Supper. He focuses on the man carrying a jar of water, the master of the house,<sup>8</sup> where the Last Supper would take place and on the village on the other side.<sup>9</sup> In this *Theologicum* one can see that Psellos has if not a negative, at least a critical attitude towards the previous interpretive tradition of the examined passages.

---

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

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

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

He presents an introduction<sup>10</sup> consisting of two parts, where important elements are found. The epilogue<sup>11</sup> contains equally essential theoretical positions of Psellos on interpretation, as well.

### ***1. 1 Criticism for Failure and μαντεία***

In the **first part** of this introduction,<sup>12</sup> according to Psellos, many people have tried to find out who the master of the house was. Most of them, in fact, reached an old age looking for an answer as to who is the one who holds the jar and which is the village, where he would do the service. Psellos refers to the previous interpreters with descriptions that show a negative or even an ironic attitude. By referring to the deep old age, he wants to emphasize on the failure of the interpreters so far as it is a long process, where one reaches the end of his life without result. Eventually, since their efforts failed, according to Psellos, they speculated. To describe this, he says that they made a rough guess<sup>13</sup> to find the meaning of the names. At this point, Psellos mentions their interpretations, which I will discuss below. He also criticizes these interpreters for arguing with each other by challenging each other. That is why he will not refer to them much.

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

As a matter of fact, I have not been able to find the interpretations mentioned and criticized by Psellos in the patristic exegesis. For the host<sup>14</sup> he mentions Nathanael or Zacchaeus.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, I found that all the exegetes up to Psellos interpret this person allegorically, that is symbolical or anagogical<sup>16</sup> without mentioning anything about Nathanael and Zacchaeus.<sup>17</sup> For the bearer

---

<sup>10</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 3–45 Gautier.

<sup>11</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–128 Gautier.

<sup>12</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 3–15 Gautier.

<sup>13</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 8 Gautier: καταμαντεύομενοι.

<sup>14</sup> *Ev. Marc.* 14: 14; *Luc.* 22: 11 Aland et al.

<sup>15</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 13–15 Gautier.

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

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

of the jar Psellos mentions<sup>18</sup> Simon the Leper.<sup>19</sup> The patristic interpretations in this case are also anagogical<sup>20</sup> apart from the case of Alexander Salaminus.<sup>21</sup> As for the village, he mentions<sup>22</sup> Nazareth, Galilee, or Bethlehem. Nevertheless, I have never found such an interpretation. What is important, on the contrary, is that the exegetical tradition seeks in the word κώμην, in the events before the entry into Jerusalem,<sup>23</sup> only anagogical interpretations<sup>24</sup> and not ἱστορία,<sup>25</sup> that has to do with geographical location. The same conclusions are drawn, if we accept<sup>26</sup> that Psellos' phrase εἰς τὴν ἀπέναντι κώμην refers to the word "city" (πόλιν) in the narrations about the preparation of the Last Supper:<sup>27</sup> here<sup>28</sup> too there is no geographical location but only an anagogical interpretation.

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

<sup>18</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 10–13 Gautier.

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

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

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

<sup>22</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 7–10, 38–39 Gautier.

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 8.

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

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

<sup>26</sup> See footnote 8.

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

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

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

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

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

This is also evident from the fact that in the *Theologica* there is extensive use of the *Oracula Chaldaica*<sup>32</sup> and the *Commentaria in Oraculis Chaldaicis* of Proclus (or related works of Psellos<sup>33</sup>). Although Psellos to some extent seems

<sup>29</sup> Liddell, Scott and Jones (1996, 900).

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

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

<sup>32</sup> Edited by des Places and Segonds (1996). See also Majercik (1989).

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

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

### 1. 1. 3 Who are the Anonymous καταμαντευόμενοι?

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

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

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

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

## ***1. 2 Proclus' Criticism and the Church Fathers***

### *1. 2. 1 Proclus and the Church Fathers*

In the beginning of the **second part** of his introduction<sup>41</sup> Psellos makes a remarkable comparison: He considers that the interpreters who were engaged in the search for historical truth of people's and places' names suffered

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

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

<sup>41</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 16–45 Gautier.



something similar to the Greek philosophers who tried to interpret a passage in Plato's *Timaeus* on the people of the dialogue,<sup>42</sup> especially the name of the fourth absent.<sup>43</sup> Psellos refers to some of the names that have been proposed<sup>44</sup> and promotes Proclus as a model, who in his *Commentaria* to Plato's *Timaeus* criticized all these interpretations.<sup>45</sup> Psellos refers also elsewhere in the *Theologica* to Proclus and to his *Commentaria* as a model of hermeneutic theory and practice.<sup>46</sup> According to Psellos, who adopts the interpretation of Proclus,<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Pl. *Ti.* 17a 1–5 Burnet.

<sup>43</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 16–19 Gautier.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>48</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 22–23 Gautier.

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

### 1. 2. 2 Proclus and Psellos' Contemporary Exegetes

In the following section<sup>50</sup> Psellos makes an interesting return to the present: He teaches us that there are similar exegetes in his time, whom he has met personally, who produce such speeches. Psellos criticizes them with the same sharpness using, firstly, the verb φοιτῶσι, which means not only “frequent” but also “spring up”<sup>51</sup> and, secondly, a passage from Synesius,<sup>52</sup> which he uses with irony.<sup>53</sup> He also accuses them of boasting for having done too much about one of those things for which there is silence in the Bible.

He then<sup>54</sup> cites specific examples of his contemporaries' interpretations that seek historical data in the biblical passages, namely the origin of Moses' staff,<sup>55</sup> the material of Aaron's rod<sup>56</sup> and the species of Eden's tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>57</sup> Psellos mocks the exegetes in this case as well, stating that they chatter with myriads of speeches.<sup>58</sup> He stresses that his criticism is valid, even if such interpretations were given by Fathers such as Oecumenius, Gennadius I Constantinopolitanus and Hesychius Hierosolymitanus.<sup>59</sup> In fact, he states that he feels great shame for these interpretations.<sup>60</sup> Although Psellos characterizes the Fathers as superior to him,<sup>61</sup> the very fact that he refers to them with such emotions and in the plural<sup>62</sup> shows a rather derogatory attitude towards them. It also shows us that he treats them as groups, to which the whole relevant patristic tradition can belong. Here, too, it is obvious that there is a strongly critical attitude of Psellos towards the patristic hermeneutics and interpretations as a whole, at least as far as literal, or “historical” interpretation is concerned. In this case, Psellos refers to them by name.

---

<sup>50</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–26 Gautier.

<sup>51</sup> See, e. g., Lampe (1961, 1487).

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

<sup>53</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–24 Gautier.

<sup>54</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 25–31 Gautier.

<sup>55</sup> *Ex.* 4: 2; 7: 9 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

<sup>56</sup> *Nu.* 17: 16–26 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

<sup>57</sup> *Gen.* 2: 9; 3: 3 Rahlfs and Hanhart.

<sup>58</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 29 Gautier.

<sup>59</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 31–32 Gautier.

<sup>60</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 30–31 Gautier.

<sup>61</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 31 Gautier: τῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς.

<sup>62</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 32 Gautier: Οἰκουμένιοι καὶ Γεννάδιοι καὶ Ἡσύχιοι.

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

His reference to the contemporary interpreters shows that Psellos indeed until now has been referring to the exegetical past, in other words, the Fathers. The turn to the present, however, should not deceive us: If we pay attention to the reasoning of Psellos we will discover that his contemporaries are also connected in his mind with the interpretive tradition of the past. Firstly, he compares them with the ancient philosopher-interpreters; but he had already compared the latter to the Fathers, therefore his contemporaries belong to the category of interpreters based on the ancient tradition.<sup>63</sup> Also, the examples of the contemporaries' bad hermeneutical search that he mentions (e. g. maple or walnut tree for Aaron's rod), can be found in the patristic exegesis<sup>64</sup> which proves that Psellos identifies the contemporaries with the patristic interpretation. The identification with the Fathers is seen even more clearly in the continuation of the passage, where Psellos parallels his contemporaries and groups them together with Fathers. Although I was not able to find any of the interpretations, which Psellos mentions, in these Fathers (Oecumenius, Gennadius, Hesychius), in my opinion it is safe to assume that he mentions these names because he wants to show that his opponents support the context of the patristic tradition. This conclusion is essential for the contextualization of Psellos' criticism, as I will present in the second chapter.

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>65</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 32–34 Gautier.

<sup>66</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 34 Gautier.

He also implies aesthetically negative categories. Psellos considers the attempt to search for the historical truth to be meaningless, especially when it is projected as a revelation of a mystery and for this, he declares that he will not follow such a course.<sup>67</sup> In addition, his note that his opponents present these ceremonies to uninitiated<sup>68</sup> is important. In other words, he criticizes them for not properly preparing their listeners, which implies that he does. Therefore, according to him the interpretation presupposes a kind of initiation and at the same time has a private character.<sup>69</sup>

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

At this point Psellos introduces a language of ceremony through which he criticizes his opponents. But here too<sup>70</sup> and in other works he uses for himself a sacramental language for interpretation, with its central axis being the concept of the hierophant of the Eleusinian Mysteries,<sup>71</sup> which shows that he wants to suggest something more groundbreaking. He considers the interpretation as a ceremony based on his own perception: Psellos presents himself as the one who can reveal hidden mysteries, a perception that we also find in his *Allegorica*.<sup>72</sup> His formulation is somehow enigmatic: He declares that he will not publish what has been covered, in contrast to his opponents, but he will reveal the spirit hidden in the letter.<sup>73</sup> He obviously means that he will not deal with the historicity of the text, especially regarding its silence about people and things, as his opponents do, but with its spiritual meanings.

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

---

<sup>67</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 35 Gautier.

<sup>68</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 34 Gautier.

<sup>69</sup> However, see Lauritzen (2013) and Diamantopoulos (2019, 810).

<sup>70</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 35–37, 44–45 Gautier.

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

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

<sup>73</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 35–37 Gautier.

<sup>74</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 36 Gautier: ὡς ἀεὶ ποιεῖν εἴωθα.

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

In the continuation of the text<sup>77</sup> he appears more compromising, stating that he accepts some of the geographical designations for the village or some of the names for the master of the house or the carrier of the jar, which are accepted by his opponents. He thinks that maybe one failed, while another one found the name. He states that he cannot blame everyone in the same way and that he can accept the historical interpretation (*ιστορούμενα*) of some of them.

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

In each case he separates his position from the contemporary interpreters and through them from the patristic interpretation stating that his main task is to fasten his students to the ceremonies,<sup>80</sup> through which he will begin to reveal the mysteries of the spirit considering it useless to deal with what the others did<sup>81</sup>.

## 2. Why? Contextualization

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

---

<sup>75</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 44 Gautier.

<sup>76</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–128 Gautier.

<sup>77</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 38–45 Gautier.

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. 1 Psellos' Silence about Maximus Confessor**

What exactly does Psellos mean by spiritual meanings is shown in the continuation of the text,<sup>82</sup> where he makes an allegorical interpretation based on Maximus the Confessor<sup>83</sup> whom he does not name.<sup>84</sup> I would like to examine this silence. Firstly, it should be noted that when Psellos mentions Maximus by name in the *Theologica* on issues of interpretive theory and practice, he usually criticizes him,<sup>85</sup> as I have already mentioned. One could assume that he does not want to support Maximus as an exegete, so he presents as his own interpretation the one based on Maximus. However, I believe that there is a deeper background in this silence, which does not only have to do with his critical attitude that we find in the other cases of his anonymous reference to the Fathers.

### *2. 1. 1 Maximus Confessor's Protection*

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

---

<sup>82</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 46–116 Gautier.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

His third goal in his other works<sup>96</sup> is to invoke him for his involvement with philosophy wanting to show that the Fathers also accept the philosophical research.<sup>97</sup> In other words, he tries to reconcile the philosophical method with the method of the mystics. Psellos, one might assume, if this is true here as well, is trying to show Maximus' agreement with Proclus, to whom he refers by name in the second part of his prologue.

---

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

<sup>89</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 36 Gautier.

<sup>90</sup> Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. I*, paragraphs 2–5, 13 Darrouzès.

<sup>91</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 600–87, 725).

<sup>92</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 94–127, 596–97).

<sup>93</sup> About Maximus' hermeneutics see Berthold (2006); Blowers (2015).

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

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

<sup>96</sup> Psell. *Ep.* 202 67–72 Papaioannou.

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



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

In the *Theologica*, however, Psellos goes one step further, by finally trying to reject him as an interpreter and to promote his own method of interpretation. We reach this conclusion exactly through the anonymous use of Maximus when we compare it with the sources he explicitly mentions. It is important to mention at this point that Maximus also refers to the Bible's silence about people and places:<sup>98</sup> He too, like Psellos, does not make a historical discussion about what the names are, on the contrary he interprets anagogically.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, Psellos explicitly invokes Proclus as an example of avoiding historical interpretation. Speaking of an interpretation that seeks the spirit, he ultimately implies something different in relation to Maximus. Psellos presents Proclus to be an advocate of the higher contemplations in interpretation,<sup>100</sup> that is, he promotes him as a theorist of anagoge instead of Maximus. One could assume that Psellos considers Proclus as the theoretical teacher of Maximus. But in hermeneutic practice as well, that is in the anagogical interpretation, he ultimately follows Proclus, as it is clear from *Theol.* 1. 78 Gautier.<sup>101</sup> There Psellos interprets a passage of Gregorius Nazianzenus<sup>102</sup> using passages from the *Commentaria in Platonis Timaeum* of Proclus, which concern the search for the fourth absent, quoted in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier.<sup>103</sup>

It is important that he uses the neoplatonic henology<sup>104</sup> to interpret the numbers from Gregorius' passage which is under interpretation. Maximus has now been completely eradicated from the interpretive praxis. What matters here is not just that he uses Proclus in the interpretation, but the specific text, which he invoked in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier as a theoretical model of anagogical interpretation.

---

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

<sup>99</sup> Max. *Qu. Thal.* 3, 2–70 Laga and Steel.

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

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

<sup>102</sup> Gr. Naz. *Or.* 41 4, 433C Migne.

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

<sup>104</sup> See for the neoplatonic henology Halfwassen (2006); Cürsgen (2007).

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

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

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

---

<sup>105</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 107–9 Gautier.

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

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

<sup>108</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 78, 113–117 Gautier.

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>114</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23–24 Gautier.

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

### 2. 2. 1 *Nicetas Stethatos*

This would certainly concern Stethatos, who dealt systematically with hermeneutics and interpretation.<sup>116</sup> The fact that Psellos turns against Stethatos can also be assumed from the fact that the latter is the only one in his time to systematically deal with the forbidden tree of paradise, regardless of its genre<sup>117</sup> to which Psellos refers as an example of the search for the historical truth. Obviously, Psellos' reference to the extensive research on this tree, which comes to point of defining its species, is an ironic allusion to Stethatos, as in his treatise *De paradiso* he examines thoroughly, albeit allegorically, the facts about this tree. Psellos' use of the term speechmakers (λογοποιοί) to describe his contemporary opponents, whom he met,<sup>118</sup> confirms this hypothesis, as Stethatos presents his work on paradise as an oration.<sup>119</sup> Psellos is likely to turn against Stethatos the accusations made by the latter against him for obsession with the letter, to which I referred above. At the same time, with the use of Maximus, he does not appear as his direct opponent.

### 2. 2. 2 *Patriarch Michael Kerullarios*

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

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

---

<sup>116</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019).

<sup>117</sup> Nic. Steth. *Parad.* Darrouzès.

<sup>118</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 23 Gautier.

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

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

<sup>121</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 411–41).

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>123</sup> See on him Diamantopoulos (2019, 411–26, 619–28).

<sup>124</sup> Nic. syn. *Ad Steth.* I Darrouzès, *Ad Steth.* II Darrouzès.

<sup>125</sup> Nic. syn. *De Az.* Pavlov.

<sup>126</sup> Nic. syn. *De Az.* 3, 95–152 Pavlov.

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

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

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

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

<sup>127</sup> Nic. syn. *De Az.* 3, 97, 115, 145, 150 Pavlov.

<sup>128</sup> Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. II*, p. 232, 12–15 Darrouzès.

<sup>129</sup> Nic. *Steth. Ad Greg. IV 2*, 1–6 Darrouzès.

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

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

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

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

Psellos now speaks clearly in ritual terms in relation not only to the priesthood but also to the sacred places associated with it and who is allowed to enter them. He refers to Nadab and Abihu who were set on fire when they offered profane fire,<sup>132</sup> and to Uzzah, who died when he touched the Ark of the Covenant<sup>133</sup> to liken his fears of what might happen to him if he proceeded to interpret. The reference to the fire that burns the unworthy refers to a fire, which burned the brothers, because they used profane and not God's fire to offer incense.<sup>134</sup> This reference of Psellos may be a hint of his use of profane philosophy in the interpretation of the Bible and the patristic texts, for which he ironically expresses his fears towards the administration of the Church and the mystics that led the interpretation at that time. This is a further indication that Psellos accepts a philosophical and not mystical method when he speaks about deeper or higher meanings. As I have already mentioned, Stethatos strongly rejected this method.<sup>135</sup>

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

---

<sup>131</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–28 Gautier.

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

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

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

<sup>135</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 238–62, 596–97).

<sup>136</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 123–28 Gautier.



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

### 2. 2. 3. 2 *Psellos' κοσμικόν Altar*

Furthermore, Psellos characterizes his third altar as κοσμικόν. His invocation of a "worldly" altar according to the terminology of Apostle Paulus,<sup>138</sup> in which –according to Psellos– the entry is allowed to those who come from the world,<sup>139</sup> refers directly to the distinction of laymen and clergy. Through this reference Psellos simply makes fun of the power of the clergy and the mystics by giving them the responsibility of interpreting the deeper meanings, while he himself as a layman<sup>140</sup> expresses a restraint and a recognition of the status, the order and their authority, an attitude of Psellos that is also found elsewhere.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, I would accept a second reading of the psellian passage: Paulus with the phrase "worldly" may refer to the first altar or in general to the two holy places of the Tabernacle, which were entered only by the priests or the High Priest. He characterizes it as κοσμικόν, meaning earthly, in comparison with the heavenly altar that Christ set up.

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

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

<sup>138</sup> *Heb.* 9: 1 Aland et al.

<sup>139</sup> *Psell. Theol.* 1. 1, 124–27 Gautier.

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

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

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

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

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

I will show below the importance of the obsession with a strictly three-level positioning in Psellos' thought and I will explain why he insists on this structure. I will refer here to the nature of this altar. Perhaps it symbolically means the place of the Tabernacle, on the atrium, before the Holy and Holy of Holies, where there was an altar (of the holocausts) officiated by the priests, but access to the laity was allowed, when, for example, they touched the victim.<sup>145</sup> However, Psellos makes an effort to establish a new symbolic altar, different from the Holy and the Holy of Holies, without any direct dependence on the atrium of the Tabernacle, wanting to claim the authority and exaltation of the laymen scholars, of the philosophers<sup>146</sup> where interpretation finds its essence.

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

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

---

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

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

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

<sup>147</sup> Psell. Theol. 1. 1, 125 Gautier: ἐμφιλοχωρήσω.

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

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

The positioning of the faithful in the temple in three categories was of great importance, as it symbolized this three-stage concept. Stethatos claimed an upgraded second position in the temple area for the monks, near the sanctuary, as symbols of contemplation of nature and the third position<sup>149</sup> for the laity, as symbols of practical philosophy. Only the monks, having passed the stage of πρακτική, can secure the contemplation without falling into arrogance,<sup>150</sup> therefore only they were entitled to see the Liturgy, even from the soleas,<sup>151</sup> but together with the lower clergy.<sup>152</sup> The right to the view of the Liturgy symbolized the right to the secret contemplation and interpretation. The laymen intellectuals, considering that πρακτική φιλοσοφία was not required, demanded the occupation of the position of the monks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is therefore no coincidence that Psellos also refers here in *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier to the sanctuary (ἐγὼ πῶς αὐτὸ εἰσέλθω τὸ ἄδυτον<sup>154</sup>), to certain issues such as architecture, the sacred places of the temple, who is allowed to enter them, and the question of the position of the laity. It is also no coincidence that he uses the infinitive προσεγγίσειν, meaning to approach, to declare his supposed piety in view of the curtain of the sanctuary.<sup>155</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>153</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 749–67).

<sup>154</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 121–22 Gautier.

<sup>155</sup> Psell. *Theol.* 1. 1, 117–18 Gautier: δέδοικα προσεγγίσειν τῷ παραπετάσματι.

<sup>156</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 389–91, 399–410, 779–81).

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

based on the patristic exegetical tradition<sup>158</sup> and followed the Church Fathers' anagoge. This of course includes Maximus the Confessor.

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

### **2. 3 Psellos' μαντεία and Mysticism differ**

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

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

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

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

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

He refers<sup>162</sup> to the discussion about the divine light, treated by Symeon the New Theologian and Nicetas Stethatos, as parallel to references in *Phil. Min. 2. 38*. It is important that Lauritzen too accepts a connection with Stethatos and the mystics as a reason for the use and preoccupation of Psellos with the *Oracula Chaldaica*, although he does not imply any rivalry. Lauritzen also refers to Psellos’ *Oratio forensis 1*,<sup>163</sup> where references to the *Oracula Chaldaica* abound, considering that they reflect the interest of the time for them. He accepts that Psellos identifies in the *Oratio forensis 1* the monastic practice of some monks from Chios as paganism. Psellos attacks them by comparing their methods with the pagans of the *Oracula*.<sup>164</sup>

In addition, Lauritzen thinks<sup>165</sup> that Psellos presented the *Oracula Chaldaica* without any syllogisms, as self-evident truths, something that does not fit the

---

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

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

<sup>162</sup> Lauritzen (2019, 553–54).

<sup>163</sup> Lauritzen (2019, 554).

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

<sup>165</sup> Lauritzen (2019, 555–56).

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

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

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

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Diamantopoulos (2019, 202–27).

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

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

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

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

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

## **3. Conclusions**

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

---

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

<sup>171</sup> Diamantopoulos (2019, 560–61).

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



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

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

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

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

---

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

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

However, Psellos' conflict with the Patriarch and Stethatos is deduced mainly through the epilogue of *Theol.* 1. 1 Gautier. Psellos states there ironically that he hesitates to enter the hermeneutical sanctuary to seek for deeper meanings and he leaves this responsibility to the clergy. He will stay at a third altar reserved for the laymen. However, this concerns not only the Patriarch and his court. I concluded that through the reference to the third altar and by giving an ambiguous meaning to this altar through the adjective *κοσμικός* Psellos doubts both the Patriarchs' and Stethatos' authority. His main goal is to deconstruct<sup>174</sup> the latter's mystical hierarchy. In this hierarchy the laymen take a third, remote place as symbols of those who still need purification, the second is occupied by the monks as symbols of those who contemplate the creation and the first belongs to the clergy, who symbolize the mystical theologian. Stethatos claimed with this concept, that only the mystical theologian standing at the first or even at the second place receives revelations of meanings in the interpretation after his purification through asceticism and being's contemplation. These three places are related to the church buildings' architecture which explains Psellos' use of architectural terminology (*ἄδυτον*). Psellos seeks through his concept of a third altar to the promotion of the laymen philosophers and their rational hermeneutics as the absolute authority. Therefore, the criticism of the Church Father's anagoge as obsession with the letter aims at Stethatos and his supporters. Psellos also presents himself as a hermeneutical authority.

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

---

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

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

- Alexander Salaminus. *Laudatio in apostolum Barnabam*. [Alex. Sal. Barn.] Edited by P. van Deun. *Hagiographica Cypria. Sancti Barnabae Laudatio auctore Alexandro monacho*. Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 26, 83–122. Turnhout: Brepols 1993.
- Andreas Cretensis. *Oratio IX*. [Andr. Cr. Or. 9] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 97, 986–1018. Paris: Migne, 1865.
- Athanasius Alexandrinus. *Dicta et Interpretationes paraboliarum Evangelii* [spurium]. [Ath. *Dicta et interp.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 28, 711–74. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Athanasius Alexandrinus. *Homilia in illud: Profecti in pagum est e regione, invenientis pullum alligatum* [dubium]. [Ath. *Hom. in Mt. 21: 2*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 28, 169–86. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Caesarius Nazianzenus. *Dialogi*. [Caes. Naz. *Dial.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 38, 852–1190. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Canones Concilii in Trullo*. [C. in Tr.] *Concilium Constantinopolitanum A. 691/2 in Trullo habitum (Concilium quinisexum)*. Edited by H. Ohme. *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* 2. 4. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.
- Cyrillus Alexandrinus. *Commentarius in Is*. [Cyr. Is.] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 77, 9–1450. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Cyrillus Alexandrinus. *Homilia paschalis XVII*. [Cyr. *Hom. pasch. 17*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 77, 767–90. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Cyrillus Alexandrinus. *In ramos palmarum* [spurium]. [Cyr. *Hom. div. 13*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 77, 1049–72. Paris: Migne, 1859. [= Eulog. palm. q. v.]
- Epiphanius Constantiensis. *Homilia 6* [spurium]. [Epiph. *Hom. 6*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 43, 501–506. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Eulogius Alexandrinus. *Sermo in ramos palmarum*. [Eulog. *Palm.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 86b, 2913–38. Paris: Migne, 1865.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus. *Orationes 32–45*. [Gr. Naz. *Or.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 36, 173–664. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. *De vita Mosis*. [Gr. Nyss. *V. Mos.*] Edited by J. Danielou. *Grégoire de Nyse. La vie de Moïse*. Sources chrétiennes 1 ter. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968<sup>3</sup>.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. *In baptismum Christi*. [Gr. Nyss. *Bapt. Chr.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 46, 577–600. Paris: Migne, 1858.
- Joannes Chrysostomus. *Homilia in illud: Exiit qui seminat* [spurium]. [Chrys. *Hom. in Lc. 8: 5*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 61, 771–76. Paris: Migne, 1859.
- Joannes Chrysostomus. *Homilia in Matthaëum LXXX*. [Chrys. *Hom. in Mt. 80*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 58, 723–30. Paris: Migne, 1862.

- Joannes Chrysostomus. *In sanctum pascha (sermo 6) [spurium]*. [Chrys. *Pasch.* 6] Edited by P. Nautin. *Homélie pascales*. Vol. 1. Sources chrétiennes 27, 117–91. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1950.
- Maximus Confessor. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*. [Max. *Qu. Thal.*] Edited by C. Laga and C. Steel. *Maximi Confessoris opera, quaestiones ad Thalassium*. Vols. 1–2. Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 7, 22. Turnhout: Brepols, 1980, 1990.
- Michael Psellos. *Epistulae*. [Psell. *Ep.*] Edited by St. Papaioannou. *Michael Psellus: Epistulae*. Vols. 1–2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana 2030. Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2019.
- Michael Psellos. *Oratio forensis 1*. [Psell. *Or. for.* 1] Edited by G. T. Dennis. *Michaelis Pselli orationes forenses et acta*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 2–103. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1994.
- Michael Psellos. *Oratoria minora*. [Psell. *Or. Min.*] Edited by A. R. Littlewood. *Michaelis Pselli Oratoria Minora*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1985.
- Michael Psellos. *Philosophica minora*. [Psell. *Phil. Min.*] Edited by J. M. Duffy and D. J. O’Meara. *Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora*. Vols. 1–2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner, 1989, 1992.
- Michael Psellos. *Theologica*. [Psell. *Theol.*] Edited by P. Gautier, L. G. Westerink, and J. M. Duffy. *Michaelis Pselli Theologica*. Vols. 1–2. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. München-Leipzig: Teubner, 1989, 2002.
- New Testament: *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini and B. M. Metzger. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012<sup>28</sup>.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *Centuriae*. [Nic. Steth. *Cap.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 120, 851–1010. Paris: Migne, 1864.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *De paradiso*. [Nic. Steth. *Parad.*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 154–227. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *De vitae limite*. [Nic. Steth. *Limit. Vit.*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 366–411. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *Epistula ad Gregorium I*. [Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. I*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 246–60. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas Stethatos. *Epistula ad Gregorium IV*. [Nic. Steth. *Ad Greg. IV*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 280–91. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Nicetas synkellos. *Contra Latinos de Azymis*. [Nic. syn. *De Az.*] Edited by A. Pavlov. *Критические опыты по истории древнейшей греко-русской полемики против латинян*, 135–45. Sankt Petersburg 1878.
- Nicetas synkellos. *Epistula ad Nicetam Stethatum I*. [Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. I*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 230–31. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.

- Nicetas synkellos: *Epistula ad Nicetam Stethatum II*. [Nic. syn. *Ad Steth. II*] Edited by J. Darrouzès. *Nicétas Stéthatos : Opuscules et Lettres*. Sources Chrétiennes 81, 232–34. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1961.
- Old Testament: *Septuaginta*. Edited by A. Rahlfs and R. Hanhart. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006<sup>2</sup>.
- Oracula Chaldaica*. [Or. *Chald.*] Edited by É. des Places and A.-P. Segonds. *Oracles Chaldaïques avec un choix de commentaires anciens*. Collection des Universités de France. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996<sup>3</sup>.
- Edited and translated by R. Majercik. *The Chaldean Oracles: text, translation, and commentary*. Studies in Greek and Roman religion 5. Leiden-New York: Brill, 1989.
- Origenes. *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*. [Or. *Jo.*] Edited by C. Blanc. Origène : Commentaire sur Saint Jean. 5 vols. Sources Chrétiennes 120, 157, 222, 290, 385. Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1966, 1970, 1975, 1982, 1992.
- Origenes. *Commentarium series in Mt. (Lat.)*. [Or. *comm. ser. 1–145 in Mt.*] Edited by E. Benz and E. Klostermann. *Origenes Werke. Elfter Band: Origenes Matthäuserklärung II: Die lateinische Übersetzung der commentariorum series*. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 38. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933.
- Plato. *Phaedo*. [Pl. *Phd.*] Edited by J. Burnet. *Platonis opera*. Vol. 1. Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900 (repr. 1967).
- Plato. *Timaeus*. [Pl. *Ti.*] Edited by J. Burnet. *Platonis opera*. Vol. 4. Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902 (repr. 1968).
- Proclus. *Commentaria in Oraculis Chaldaicis*. [Procl. *In Or. Chald.*] Edited by É. des Places and A.-P. Segonds. *Oracles Chaldaïques avec un choix de commentaires anciens*. Collection des Universités de France, 206–12. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996<sup>3</sup>.
- Proclus. *Elementatio theologica*. [Procl. *El. theol.*] Edited by E. R. Dodds. *The Elements of Theology, A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963<sup>2</sup>.
- Proclus. *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*. [Procl. *In Ti.*] Edited by E. Diehl. 3 vols. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1906.
- Suidae Lexicon*. [Suid.] Edited by A. Adler. Lexikographi Graeci. Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare. Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1938.
- Synesius Cyrenensis. *Epistulae*. [Synes. *Ep.*] Edited by A. Garzya. *Synésios de Cyrène, Correspondance: Lettres I–CLVI*. Vols. 2–3. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000.
- Titus Bostrensis. *In ramos palmarum* [spurium]. [Tit. Bost. *Palm.*] Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*. Vol. 18, 1263–78. Paris: Migne, 1857.

## Secondary Sources

- Angold M. "Imperial renewal and orthodox reaction: Byzantium in the eleventh century." In *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries: Papers from the Twentieth-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St. Andrews, March 1992*, 231–46. Edited by P. Magdalino. Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publications 2. Aldershot-Hampshire: Variorum, 1994.
- Angold M. *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995 (repr. 2000).
- Angold M. *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A political history*. London-New York: Longman, 1997<sup>2</sup>.
- Angold M. "The Autobiographical Impulse in Byzantium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 225–57.
- Angold M. "The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1118" In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Vol. 4. 2, c. 1024–c. 1198, 217–53. Edited by D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Angold M. "Belle Époque or Crisis? (1025–1118)." In *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, 583–626. Edited by J. Shepard. Cambridge-New York-Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Athanassiadi P. "Byzantine Commentators on the Chaldaean Oracles: Psellos and Plethon." In *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, 237–52. Edited by K. Ierodiakonou. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.
- Barber Ch. and Papaioannou S. (trans.) *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics*. Michael Psellos in translation. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.
- Berthold G. C. "Maximus Confessor: Theologian of the Word." In *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity. With Special Contributions by Various Scholars*, 942–71. Edited by Ch. Kannengiesser. Vol. 2. The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1. 2. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Blowers P. M. "Exegesis of Scripture." In *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*. 253–73. Edited by P. Allen and B. Neil. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Cesaretti P. *Allegoristi di Omero a Bisanzio: ricerche ermeneutiche (XI–XII secolo)*. Ricerche. Milano: Guerini, 1991.
- Chrestou K. P. «Η επίδραση τοῦ Πρόκλου Διαδόχου στὸ φιλοσοφικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ.» *Βυζαντινά* 25 (2005): 117–75.
- Cürsgen D. *Henologie und Ontologie: Die metaphysische Prinzipienlehre des späten Neuplatonismus*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007.
- Delli E., « Le *Timée* chez Michel Psellos. Pluralité d'approches, influence de Proclus et problématique de l'âme. » In *Lectures médiévales et renaissantes du Timée de Platon*, 27–63. Edited by B. Bakhouché and A. Gallonier. Les philosophes médiévaux 62. Leuven-Paris-Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2016.
- Diamantopoulos G. *Die Hermeneutik des Niketas Stethatos*. Münchner Arbeiten zur Byzantinistik 3. 1–2. Neuried: Ars-Una [now Utzverlag], 2019.

- Halfwassen J. *Der Aufstieg zum Einen: Untersuchungen zu Platon und Plotin*. München-Leipzig: Saur, 2006<sup>2</sup>.
- Kaldellis A. *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 68. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 1999.
- Kaldellis A. "The Date of Psellos' Theological Lectures and Higher Religious Education in Constantinople." *Byzantinoslavica* 63 (2005): 143–51.
- Kaldellis A. *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kaldellis A. "Byzantine philosophy inside and out: Orthodoxy and dissidence in counterpoint." In *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*, 129–51. Edited by K. Ierodiakonou and B. Bydén. Papers and monographs from the Norwegian Institute at Athens 4. 1. Bergen: The Norwegian Institute at Athens, 2012.
- Kampianaki Th. "Sayings Attributed to Emperors of Old and New Rome in Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*." In *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, 311–25. Edited by N. S. M. Matheou, Th. Kampianaki and L. M. Bondioli. *The Medieval Mediterranean Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1500* 106. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016.
- Kannengiesser Ch. *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity. With Special Contributions by Various Scholars*. Vols. 1–2. *The Bible in Ancient Christianity* 1. 1–2. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Kazhdan A. "Alexander the Monk." *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 1 (1991): 60.
- Kearney P. J. "Altar in the Liturgy. 2. In The Bible." *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 1 (2003<sup>2</sup>): 319–20.
- Krausmüller D. "Establishing Authority in Eleventh-Century Constantinople: Inspiration and Learning in the Writings of Niketas Stethatos." In *Networks of Learning: Perspectives on Scholars in Byzantine East and Latin West, c. 1000–1200*, 107–24. Edited by S. Steckel, N. Gaul and M. Grünbart. *Byzantinische Studien und Texte* 6. Wien-Berlin-Münster: LIT, 2014.
- Krausmüller D. "An embattled charismatic: assertiveness and invective in Niketas Stethatos' *Spiritual Centuries*." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 44. no 1 (2020): 106–23.
- Lampe G. W. H. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
- Lauritzen F. "Psellos the Hesychast. A Neoplatonic reading of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (Theologica I.11 Gautier)." *Byzantinoslavica* 70. no 1–2 (2012): 167–79.
- Lauritzen F. "Psellos and neo-Platonic mysticism. The secret meaning of the Greek Alphabet (Opus. phil. I 36, 335–642)." In *Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, 29–43. Edited by H. Seng. *Bibliotheca Chaldaica* 3. Heidelberg: Winter, 2013.
- Lauritzen F. "The Renaissance of Proclus in the Eleventh Century." In *Proclus and his Legacy*. Edited by D. A. Layne and D. D. Butorac. *Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.* 65, 233–39. Berlin-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017.

- Lauritzen F. «Psello e gli oracoli caldaici.» In *Dialoghi con Bisanzio: spazi di discussione, percorsi di ricerca: atti dell'VIII Congresso dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini (Ravenna, 22–25 settembre 2015)*, 549–56. Edited by S. Consentino, M. E. Pomeroy and G. Vespignani. Vol. 2. Quaderni della Rivista di Bizantinistica 20. 2. Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2019.
- Lauritzen F. “An Orthodox and Byzantine Reception of the *Elements of Theology*.” In *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, 19–31. Edited by D. Calma. Vol. 2: Translations and Acculturations. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic tradition. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021.
- Lewy H. *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*. Collection des Études Augustiniennes 77. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2011<sup>3</sup>.
- Liddell H. G., Scott R. and Jones H. S. *A Greek-English Lexicon [...] with a revised supplement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996<sup>9</sup>.
- Lourié B. « Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur: L'origine de l'Hérésie des Physéthésites. » *Scrinium* 4 (2008): 201–27.
- Louth A. *Denys the Areopagite*. Outstanding Christian thinkers. London-New York: Continuum, 1989 (repr. 2001).
- Maltese E. V. «Michele Psello, commentatore di Gregorio di Nazianzo: note per una lettura dei *Theologica*.» In *Σύνδεσμος: Studi in onore di Rosario Anastasi*, 289–309. Vol. 2. Catania: Fac. di Lettere e Filosofia, Univ. di Catania, 1994 [= *Gregorio Nazianzeno teologo e scrittore*, 227–48. Edited by C. Moreschini and G. Menestrina. Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di Scienze Religiose in Trento 17. Trento: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1992].
- Maltese E. V. «La teologia bizantina nell'undicesimo secolo fra spiritualità monastica e filosofia ellenica.» In *Storia della Teologia nel Medioevo*, 555–87. Edited by G. D'Onofrio. Vol. 1, Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1996.
- Miles G. “Living as a Sphinx: Composite Being and Monstrous Interpreter in the ‘Middle Life’ of Michael Psellos.” In *Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment*, 11–24. Edited by D. Kambaskovic. Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind, 15. Heidelberg-New York-London: Springer, 2014.
- O' Brien P. T. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. The Pillar New Testament commentary. Michigan-Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010.
- O' Meara D. J. “Psellos' *Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles* and Proclus' lost Commentary.” In *Platonismus und Esoterik in byzantinischem Mittelalter und italienischer Renaissance*, 45–58. Edited by H. Seng. Bibliotheca Chaldaica 3. Heidelberg: Winter, 2013.
- O' Meara D. J. “Michael Psellos.” In *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 165–81. Edited by S. Gersh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Oikonomou I. B. *Παραδόσεις αρχαιολογίας της Παλαιστίνης και Βιβλικής θεσμολογίας*. Athen, 1992.
- Op de Coul M. “Aspects of Paideia in Synesius' *Dion*”. In *Synesios von Kyrene: Politik-Literatur-Philosophie*, 110–24. Edited by H. Seng and L. M. Hoffmann. Byzάντιος: Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.



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

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