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# On the issue of irony in Michael Psellos's encomium on Michael Keroularios

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As is well known, the most conspicuous feature in Michael Psellos's manifold literary works is the fact that the authorial self constitutes their focal point.<sup>1</sup> According to the argumentation of Stratis Papaioannou in his unpublished PhD thesis entitled "Writing the *Ego*. Michael Psellos's Rhetorical Autography", Psellos develops on the basis of traditional rhetorical and philosophical theories an individual rhetorical and aesthetic theory of the textual self as an artistic creation of the author.<sup>2</sup> Text and

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance my earlier monograph dealing with Psellos's self-display in his *Chronographia*: E. Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos. Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005. (Serta Graeca; 20), especially 66–97. For complete recent bibliography (since 1998) on Michael Psellos and his works, see <http://proteus.brown.edu/psellos/8126>.

<sup>2</sup> E. N. Papaioannou, *Writing the Ego: Michael Psellos's rhetorical Autography*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Vienna, 2000. See also idem, "Der Glasort des Textes: Selbstheit und Ontotypologie im byzantinischen Briefschreiben (10. und 11. Jh.)," in W. Hörandner, J. Koder, and M. Stassinopoulou (eds.), *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposium Vierzig Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien. Im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger (Wien, 4.-7. Dezember 2002)* (Byzantina et Neograeca Vindobonensia 24; Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004) 324–336; idem, "Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and the Self in Byzantine Epistolography," in W. Hörandner and M. Grünbart (eds.), *L'épistolographie et la poésie épigrammatique: Projets actuels et questions de méthodologie. Actes de la 16e Table ronde du XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines* (Dossiers byzantins 3; Paris: Centre d'études Byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2003) 75–83.

Since the present article was written as long ago as spring 2011, I would like to add at this point Papaioannou's recently published monograph based on the initial

textual self are directed towards exteriority and appearance rather than inwardness, while the notions of mixture (*mixis*) and change (*metabole*)<sup>3</sup> represent the ideal virtues of text and textual self alike. Thus, Psellos's aesthetic of the textual self as implemented by means of rhetoric displays a performative character.

In the sense of the textual representation of the authorial self as described by Papaioannou, Psellos constructs for himself in several passages of his works the image of a hybrid creature which has a share in the divine sphere of the pure spirit, as well as in the sphere of corporeality,<sup>4</sup> possesses intelligence, as well as feelings,<sup>5</sup> incorporates "masculinity", as well as "femininity".<sup>6</sup> Not only philosophy and the devotion to God as an expression of the spirit are his field, but also the communication of the spiritual by means of literature and what the Byzantines call ρητορικὴ.<sup>7</sup> Not pure, self-centered intellectuality is his ideal, but life

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concept of his doctoral thesis: *Michael Psellos. Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge [et al.]: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> On the notion of change (*metabole*) see also E. N. Papaioannou, "Από τη ρητορικὴ στη λογοτεχνία: ἡ ἔννοια τῆς μεταβολῆς στον Μιχαὴλ Ψελλό και ἡ ἀναβίωση τῆς μυθοπλασίας," in E. Chrysos (ed.), *The Empire in Crisis? Byzantium in the Eleventh Century (1025–1081)* (Διεθνὴ Σύμπόσια 11; Athens: Hellenic National Research Foundation, 2003) 473–482.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. C. N. Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi*. Athens – Paris: Maissonneuve [et al.], 1876. V, ep. 207, 505–513, here 506, 2–3; 506, 13–15 = *Michele Psello. Epistola a Michele Cerulario. A cura di Ugo Criscuolo. 2. ed. riveduta e ampliata*. Naples: Bibliopolis, 1990. (Hellenica et Byzantina Neapolitana; 15). 22, 20–21: ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο αὐτὸ ὅπερ εἰμί, φύσις λογικὴ μετὰ σώματος; *ibidem*, 22, 32–35: Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι ὁμολογῶ, ζῶν ἀλλοιωτὸν καὶ τρεπτόν, ψυχὴ λογικὴ χρωμένῃ σώματι, κρᾶμα καινὸν ἐξ ἀναμύστων τῶν συνελθόντων.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Sathas, V, ep. 72, 307, 22–24: Ἐδεῖ με γὰρ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπαγγελλόμενον [...] μόνῃς τῆς χρυσῆς σειρᾶς ἐξηρτηῆσθαι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; *ibidem*, 308, 5–7: οὐ γὰρ Σκύθης εἰμί τὴν ψυχὴν, οὐδ' ἀπὸ δρυός, ἢ πέτρας γεγένημαι, ἀλλὰ φύσεώς εἰμι τῆς ἀπαλῆς βλάστημα, καὶ τοῖς φυσικοῖς πάθει μαλακίζομαι.

<sup>6</sup> See Sathas V, ep. 72, 307, 25–26: Ἄλλ' ἐγὼ πρὸς μὲν τὰς μαθήσεις ἀρρενωπότερον διάκειμαι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν φύσιν θῆλῆς εἰμι· (cf. E. N. Papaioannou, "Michael Psellos's Rhetorical Gender," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 24 [2000] 133–146; *idem*, "Feminine Physis in Michael Psellos's Literary Work," *Twenty-Fifth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference: Abstracts, The University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 4–7 November 1999* [Washington, D.C., 1999] 103).

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. one of Psellos's letters to Leon Paraspondylos, in which the author reproaches

in the human community.<sup>8</sup> Not an ascetic lifestyle and uncompromising consistency at any price correspond to his concept of correct living, but the ideal of the πολιτικὸς ἀνὴρ who communicates with his fellow humans, responds to them in a proper manner and adapts his behaviour each time to the particular circumstances and interlocutors.<sup>9</sup>

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the addressee for not answering his letters, ed. Sathas V, ep. 9, 238, 20–28: Μήποτε ἄρα, θεία ψυχῇ, σὺ μὲν τὴν ἀσώματον οἶδας διάλεκτον καὶ διὰ τῶν νοημάτων συγγίνῃ τοῖς νοητοῖς, ἡμεῖς δὲ μάτιν γλώσση καὶ πνεύματι χρώμεθα καὶ γράμμασι τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς σοι γνώμας ἐνσημαίνόμεθα; ἰδοὺ γάρ σοι τὰς πάσας μετῆλλαξάμην φωνάς, βαρβαρίσας, ἐλληνίσας, ἀττικίσας, ἴν' εἰ μὴ ταύτη, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη ἢ τῇ ἑτέρᾳ ἀνθομιλήσεις καὶ ἀντιφθέγγαιο, σὺ δ' ἄρα ἐλελήθεις ἑτέρους λόγους εἰδὼς ἀπλοῦς τε καὶ ἀσυνθέτους καὶ μὴ οὖς αὐτοὶ ἴσμεν, τοὺς ἐξ ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων φημί·

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Psellos's encomium on John Mauroπους, in which the author tries to stir the *laudandus* from his resolve to resign from his position as metropolitan of Euchaita, ed. Sathas, V, 166, 14–16 = *Michaelis Pselli orationes panegyricae*. Ed. George T. Dennis. Stuttgartiae [et al.]: Teubner, 1994. 173, 830–832: ἔοικας δέ μοι οἰεσθαὶ τὸν ἐφ' ἡσυχίας βίον αὐτόχρημα ὀμιλίαν τε πρὸς θεὸν εἶναι καὶ ἐπιτυχίαν κρειττόνων, καὶ λογισμῶν ἑπαρσιν ἢ ἀνάπαυσιν; *ibidem*, ed. Sathas, V, 165, 17–20 = ed. Dennis, 172, 798–800: ὄστ' εἰ μὲν εὖ ἔχων σώματος, ἐρρῶσθαι φράσας τοῖς πράγμασι, τὴν μετὰ τῶν πολλῶν ἐκκλίνεις διατριβὴν, ἐντολὴν ἀθετεῖς, καὶ νόμον καταφρονεῖς ἰερῶν.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, Psellos develops in his *Chronographia* (VIa 8) with reference to the head of government during the reign of empress Theodora, Leon Paraspondylos, a theory of the different conditions of souls and associates the man of public affairs with the soul which keeps the middle course between passionlessness and submission to passions, while he describes absolut unworldliness as an unrealistic ideal (*Michele Psello. Imperatori di Bisanzio [Cronografia]. Introd. di Dario Del Corno. Testo critico a cura di Salvatore Impellizzeri. Commento di Ugo Crisculo. Trad. di Silvia Ronchey. II [Libri VI, 76–VIII]*. Milano: Mondadori, 1984. 160–162): Τρεῖς γὰρ μερίδας ταῖς τῶν ψυχῶν προσαρμόζω κατανοῶν καταστάσεις [...] εἰ μὲν γὰρ τὴν μέσσην στάσα ζωὴν μεγαλοπαθείας τε καὶ πολυπαθείας, ὥσπερ ἐν κύκλῳ τὸ ἀκριβὲς κέντρον αἰροῖτο, τὸν πολιτικὸν ἀπεργάζεται ἄνθρωπον, οὔτε θεία τις ἀκριβῶς γενομένη ἢ νοερά οὔτε φιλοσώματος καὶ πολυπαθῆς; [...] εἰ δὲ τις τῶν πάντων ὑπερκῦσαι δυνηθεῖ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τῆς νοερᾶς ἐπ' ἄκρον σταῖ ζωῆς, τί κοινὸν αὐτῷ καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι; [...] ἀναβήτω γὰρ ἐπ' ὄρος ὑψηλὸν καὶ μετέωρον καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων στήτω, ἵνα φωτὶ καταλάμπωται μείζονι, ἀπόστροφον ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀπότροφον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καταστήσας; εἰ δ' οὐδεὶς τῶν πάντων τῆς φύσεως τοσοῦτον κατεκαυχῆσάτο, εἰ πολιτικὰς ὑποθέσεις τυχὸν οὗτος πολιτευθεῖ, πολιτικῶς μεταχειριζέσθω τὰ πράγματα, μηδὲ ὑποκρινέσθω τὴν τοῦ κανόνος εὐθύτητα [...]. See also Psellos's encomium on Konstantinos Leichoudes, ed. Sathas, IV (1874), 388–421, here 413, 17–20: οἱ μὲν οὖν ὑπερπετόμενοι τὸν ἀέρα χαίρετῶσαν ἢ ἐρρέτῶσαν, ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ τῶν συμπαθεστέρων ταττοίμην, καὶ αἰτίαν ἔχομι τοῦ μὴ τελέως φιλοσοφεῖν, ἢ τοῦ ἀναλλαγῆς δεδόχθαι καὶ

On the other hand, some of Psellos's rivals in the shark tank of the Byzantine centre of power correspond according to Psellos (but to some extent also confirmed by other sources) to the contrastive image of the rigorous, uncompromising type of human being, who at least creates the impression of belonging only to the higher spiritual sphere.<sup>10</sup> This applies among others on Michael Keroularios, patriarch of Constantinople in the years 1043–1058, as Jakov Ljubarskij has correctly pointed out in the relevant chapter of his monograph entitled “Personality and Works of Michael Psellos”.<sup>11</sup>

Michael Keroularios (born between 1005 and 1010) was an ambitious person, who already as a young court official strove after political power.<sup>12</sup> At the incidence of the conspiracy against emperor Michael IV Paphlagon in 1040, Keroularios was the contender for the throne.<sup>13</sup> While

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πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ἀσυμπαθῆς; Psellos's encomium on Michael Keroularios, ed. Sathas, IV 319, 7–11: τὸ γὰρ πάντη πρὸς ἅπασαν σχέσιν ἀπαθές τε καὶ ἀμετάκλητον, δέδουκα μὴ ἀναλγήτου ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ μὴ φιλοσόφου ἔργον εἶη καὶ ἀποτέλεσμα· οὕτω γὰρ παρ' οὐδενὶ τὴν τοιαύτην φιλοσοφίαν διέγνωνκα, εἰ μὴ παρ' ὄσοις ἡ φύσις ἀπότομος πρὸς τὰς συμπαθείας ἐκ πρώτης ἐγγεγόνει καταβολῆς; *ibidem*, 329, 29–31: οὕτω τριῶν οὐσῶν τῶν πρὸς ἀρετὴν φερουσῶν ὁδῶν, καὶ τῆς γε τρίτης ἢ μέσης τῶν ἄλλων ἀκριβεστέρας καθεστηκυίας καὶ παρὰ τοῖς κρείττοσι τῆς μείζονος εὐφημίας ἀξιουμένης [...].

<sup>10</sup> This is for instance the case of Leon Paraspondylos, see J. N. Ljubarskij, *H προσωπικότητα και το ἔργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού. Συνεισφορά στην ιστορία του βυζαντινοῦ ουμανισμοῦ. Μετάφραση: Αργυρώ Τζέλεσι*. Athens: Kanakē, 2004. 140–149 (Original edition: J. N. Ljubarskij, *Michail Psell. Ličnost' i tvorčestvo. K istorii vizantijskogo predgumanizma*. Moscow: Nauka, 1978); E. de Vries-van der Velden, “Les amitiés dangereuses: Psellos et Léon Paraspondylos,” *Byzantinoslavica* 60 (1999) 315–350; E. Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos*, 98–102; D. R. Reinsch, “The venomous praise. Some remarks concerning Michael Psellos's letters to Leon Paraspondylos.” To be published in the papers of the International Workshop on Psellos's Letters held in Oxford, 6th–7th November 2010.

<sup>11</sup> J. N. Ljubarskij, *H προσωπικότητα και το ἔργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 125–140. On patriarch Keroularios's personality and his relationship to Psellos see also Ugo Criscuolo, “Πολιτικός ἀνὴρ: Contributo al pensiero politico di Michele Psello”. *Rendiconti della Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e belle Arti, Napoli* n.s. 57 (1982) 129–163, here 144–155.

<sup>12</sup> See F. Tinnefeld, “Michael I. Keroularios, Patriarch von Konstantinopel (1043–1058). Kritische Überlegungen zu einer Biographie”. *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 39 (1989) 95–127, here 99.

<sup>13</sup> See Psellos's encomium on Michael Keroularios, ed. Sathas, IV, 303–387, here 314;

Keroularios was in prison because of his involvement in this conspiracy, he became a monk forced by circumstances.<sup>14</sup> He stayed away from the palace, until in 1042 Konstantinos Monomachos was proclaimed emperor. Keroularios sought and actually gained the favour of the new ruler, who granted him his previous post at court again<sup>15</sup> and soon raised him to an even higher position.<sup>16</sup> A little later, when the patriarch of Constantinople, Alexios Studites, died (in 1043), Keroularios succeeded him to the patriarchal throne at the instigation of emperor Konstantinos Monomachos, who managed to assert his will against the resistance of the clergy.<sup>17</sup> Once the headstrong Keroularios became patriarch, he followed his own independent course with respect to his imperial supporter, whenever he deemed it necessary. Consequently, he also dared to tangle with declared imperial favourites as for example Michael Psellos, whose influence on emperor Monomachos was great.<sup>18</sup> Keroularios even suspected Psellos of being an antireligious philosopher and for that reason forced him to submit an orthodox confession of faith.<sup>19</sup>

It is not clear when exactly Psellos and Keroularios got to know each other, but presumably they met already as young court officials.<sup>20</sup>

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cf. *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum. Rec. Ioannes Thurn.* Berolini [et al.]: De Gruyter, 1973. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae; 5: Series Beroliniensis). 412, 78.

<sup>14</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 321; cf. F. Tinnefeld, “Michael I. Keroularios”, 99–100.

<sup>15</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 324.

<sup>16</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 325, 5–8; cf. F. Tinnefeld, “Michael I. Keroularios”, 100 note 38.

<sup>17</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 326; cf. F. Tinnefeld, “Michael I. Keroularios”, 100 note 41.

<sup>18</sup> See F. Tinnefeld, “Michael I. Keroularios”, 101 note 45.

<sup>19</sup> A. Garzya, “On Michael Psellus’ Admission of Faith”. *Epetēris Hetaireias Byzantinōn Spoudōn* 35 (1966/7) 41–46.

<sup>20</sup> Psellos recalls that he discerned the patriarch’s true character “from the beginning” (see Psellos’s letter to Keroularios edited by G. Weiss, “Forschungen zu den noch nicht edierten Schriften des Michael Psellos.” *Byzantina* 4 [1972] 9–52, here 46, 15–18: ἐγὼ σε ὁμοῦ τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἶδον καὶ ἐπιτεθαύμακα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ὡσπερ ἀνάθημά σοι προσαρτώμενος ἦν καὶ εἰτόμην καὶ περιεῖπον πρὸς τὸ σὸν ἦθος ἀνακρινώμενος) and tells about his acquaintance with Keroularios’s elder brother (see Psellos’s letter to Keroularios’s nephews, ed. Sathas, V, ep. 208, 522) who died before 1041 (see Sathas,

Shortly after Keroularios had become patriarch, the honorific title of “consul of philosophers” was bestowed upon Psellos. At the same time, Psellos functioned as a tutor to the nephews of the patriarch. As a result, contact between Psellos and the patriarch must have been inevitable.<sup>21</sup> Considering the difficult relationship between patriarch and emperor, as described by Psellos in his later encomium on Keroularios,<sup>22</sup> the conclusion seems to immediately suggest itself, that Psellos’s own position as an imperial favourite was not exactly easy with regard to the patriarch either.<sup>23</sup> According to Jakov Ljubarskij, a passage of Psellos’s encomium on Keroularios referring to emperor Konstantinos Monomachos (Sathas, IV, 355, 26 – 356, 18) bears witness to tensions between the philosopher and the patriarch as early as during Monomachos’s reign.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, a letter of Psellos to Keroularios (Sathas, V, ep. 160, 414–416) dating to the reign of empress Theodora, the successor of Monomachos, illustrates the tense relationship between the two men. Finally, when Keroularios’s claims to political power led to his deposition by emperor Isaak I Komnenos in 1058, nobody else but Psellos was commissioned by the emperor to compose the prosecution speech against the patriarch – which was eventually never delivered, since Keroularios died before he could be put on trial (on January, 21st 1059).<sup>25</sup> This speech contains

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IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 320). Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 128.

<sup>21</sup> On the relationship between Psellos and the patriarch during the reign of emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos see Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 332, 339, 355, 368. Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 128.

<sup>22</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 326, 334, 341, 357. Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 128.

<sup>23</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Michael Keroularios, 355, 26 – 356, 18. Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 128–129.

<sup>24</sup> Psellos’s statements on his relationship to Keroularios entailed in this passage seem according to Ljubarskij (*Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 129–130) to be confirmed by similar statements of the author in two letters of his, dating from emperor Monomachos’s time: in a letter to Keroularios himself (ed. Sathas, V, ep. 159, 412–414), as well as in a letter to the patriarch’s two nephews (ed. Sathas, V, ep. 208, 513–523) to whom Psellos was a tutor.

<sup>25</sup> See J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 135; F. Tin-



invented heavy charges against the patriarch, to the end that the emperor would be in this way able to declare him officially deposed, for the patriarch refused to abdicate of his own accord. Ljubarskij discerns in Psellos's prosecution speech against Keroularios the consequence and "the last stage of an old enmity".<sup>26</sup>

Psellos expresses explicitly his real, hostile feelings towards Keroularios in a rhetorical writing in the form of a letter (Sathas, V, ep. 207, 505–513 = Epistola a Michele Cerulario. Ed. Criscuolo). It is not known when and under what circumstances it was composed.<sup>27</sup> Concerning the style of this writing, Ljubarskij has already pointed out that it is designed as an ironical comparison between Psellos's own and Keroularios's personality. Thus, Psellos conveys the impression of praising Keroularios while belittling himself. Keroularios is according to Psellos a heavenly, angelic creature of an immovable and immutable disposition. Psellos, on the contrary, is only a human being with a body and with the faculty of reason and therefore a mutable, unsteady creature.<sup>28</sup> The two of them were fundamentally different characters, mountains, seas, and continents stood between them.<sup>29</sup> Keroularios's lineage was noble, whereas Psellos's lineage was humble.<sup>30</sup> Keroularios obtained wisdom effortlessly, whereas Psellos acquired knowledge of philosophy and

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nefeld, "Michael I. Keroularios", 122–123; D. Krallis, "Sacred Emperor, Holy Patriarch: A New Reading of the Clash between Emperor Isaakios I Komnenos and Patriarch Michael Keroularios in Attaleiates' History." *Byzantinoslavica* 67 (2009) 169–190. For the edition of the text of Psellos's prosecution speech against Keroularios see below, note 30.

<sup>26</sup> See J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 139.

<sup>27</sup> See J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 132.

<sup>28</sup> Ed. Sathas, V, ep. 207, 505–513, here 506, 13–15 = ed. Criscuolo, 22, 32–35. Cf. above, note 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ed. Sathas, V, ep. 207, 507, 15–18 = ed. Criscuolo, 24, 69–72.

<sup>30</sup> Ed. Sathas, V, ep. 207, 507, 19–508, 5 = ed. Criscuolo, 24, 73–90. Cf. Psellos's prosecution speech against Keroularios: *Michaelis Pselli scripta minora: magnam partem adhuc inedita. Ed. recognovitque Eduardus Kurtz. Ex schedis eius relictis in lucem emisit Franciscus Drexl. I: Orationes et dissertationes*. Milan: Società Editrice "Vita e Pensiero", 1936. (Orbis Romanus; 5). 232–328, here 318, 24–319, 6 = *Michaelis Pselli orationes forenses et acta*. Ed. George T. Dennis. Stuttgartiae [et al.]: Teubner, 1994. Or. 1, 1–103, here 93, 2558–94, 2570.

rhetoric only by means of intensive studies. Keroularios looked upon literature as being useless, whereas Psellos attached great importance to it. Keroularios was a polemic misanthropist, whereas Psellos was a philanthropist full of compassion and so forth.<sup>31</sup> By means of comparison between their respective characters, Psellos effectively depicts Keroularios as an uneducated, intolerant, authoritative and unsociable person.

Such comparison between Psellos and Keroularios follows a recurring, stereotypical pattern of antithesis between two specific types of persons, which is very common in Psellos's works: that is, the antithesis between the "spiritual" and the "worldly" type of person.<sup>32</sup> The "spiritual" type is austere, obstinate, rigid, and inexorable. He spurns all external and earthly things, he is directed towards the internal and the divine, while he places no value on his fellow humans, neither on friendship nor on culture or education. In contrast, the "worldly" type is flexible, adaptive, humane, and an admirer of literature and rhetoric. This second type of person corresponds to Psellos's ideal.

A similarly negative image of Keroularios is being conveyed also in Psellos's letter to the two nephews of the patriarch by means of an unfavourable comparison of Keroularios to his deceased elder brother, the father of the letter's addressees.<sup>33</sup> Keroularios's negative image shines even through the encomium composed later by Psellos in commemoration of the departed patriarch possibly by order of emperor Konstantinos X Doukas (reigned 1059–1067) who was married to Keroularios's niece,<sup>34</sup> Eudokia Makrembolitissa. As can be gathered from the

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<sup>31</sup> Ed. Sathas, ep. 207, *passim* = ed. Criscuolo, *passim*.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 133–134. Also in his encomium on his mother, Psellos describes himself in contrast to his mother's ascetic ideal as a "worldly" type of person who loves secular learning passionately: Sathas, V, 3–61. 54, 5 to the end = *Michele Psello. Autobiografia: encomio per la madre. Testo crit., introd., trad. e commentario a cura di Ugo Criscuolo*. Naples: D'Auria, 1989. 144, 1685 to the end.

<sup>33</sup> Sathas, V, ep. 208, 513–523, here 521–523. A similar comparison between the two brothers is also found in Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 310, 12–312, 26. Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 246.

<sup>34</sup> His sister's daughter, see Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 381, 1–2: *καὶ τὴν ἀδελφιδὴν κόσμον βασιλείων προητοίμασας*.

encomium itself, it was delivered on the occasion of the annual memorial in honour of the late Keroularios introduced by his successor to the patriarchal throne, Konstantinos Leichoudes.<sup>35</sup> As Ljubarskij observes, the praise for Keroularios expressed by Psellos in this encomium of course does not reflect the author's honest feelings towards the patriarch, but simply conforms to the rules of the literary genre in question and bows to the pressure of the current circumstances.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, according to Ljubarskij's further argumentation, the encomium contains several clear hints at the real, misanthropic and polemic character of Keroularios, as it had been described by Psellos earlier in his polemic letter to the patriarch (Sathas, V, ep. 207, 505–513 = *Epistola a Michele Cerulario*. Ed. Criscuolo).<sup>37</sup> Psellos remarks for instance in referring to Keroularios's occupation with rhetoric, that the patriarch did not place value on the external beauty of discourse, but rather on the presence or absence of philosophical qualities in it, such as truth and firmness (310, 5–9).<sup>38</sup> This remark is in its turn to be understood as a hint at the severity of Keroularios's character. Elsewhere, Psellos remarks that emperor Konstantinos Monomachos, who made to everybody a charming and sweet-tempered impression, appeared to be sorrowful and anxious every

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<sup>35</sup> Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 381, 14–19: Τοῦ δὲ μετὰ σὲ θείου θύτου καὶ ἱεροῦ θύματος, τῆς μεγάλης τῶν κρειττόνων σάλπιγγος καὶ πάντα περιηούσης τὰ πέρατα, πῶς ἂν τις τὴν περὶ σὲ μεγαλοψυχίαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν ἐνδείξαιτο; ὃς δὴ τῶν πάντων ταῖς ἀρεταῖς ὑπερκείμενος παραχωρεῖ σοι τοῦ πρωτείου καὶ τελευτήσαντι, καὶ ἐτησίους τιμᾶ πανηγύρεσι, τοῦτο τοῖς πᾶσι νομοθετῶν καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ποιῶν. Ljubarskij (*Η προσωπικότητα καὶ τὸ ἔργο του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ*, 367) ascribes the introduction of the annual memorial in honour of Michael Keroularios erroneously to emperor Konstantinos Doukas thereby citing a passage of the encomium (Sathas, IV, 380, 23–27) which actually refers to emperor Isaak Komnenos and his remorse for having exiled Keroularios.

<sup>36</sup> J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα καὶ τὸ ἔργο του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ*, 245–247.

<sup>37</sup> Psellos points out the same negative character features of Keroularios in his prosecution speech against the patriarch with respect to the accusation of ἀδιαφορία, that is “culpable indifference about conduct”. See Michaelis Pselli scripta minora, edd. Kurtz – Drexl. I 315, 19 – 321, 10 = *Michaelis Pselli orationes forenses et acta*. Ed. Dennis. Or. 1, 90, 2464 – 96, 2634. Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα καὶ τὸ ἔργο του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ*, 139–140.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα καὶ τὸ ἔργο του Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ*, 246.

time he met Keroularios (325, 10). Apparently, the author implies it was the patriarch's behaviour that provoked such reaction on the part of the emperor. Keroularios's virtues enumerated by Psellos in the encomium in a laudatory manner (pp. 330–333), as for instance austerity, steadfastness and the like, are exactly those qualities distinctive of the “spiritual”, obstinate and rigid type of person. Subsequently, Psellos touches openly upon the fact that Keroularios behaved during his lifetime in an uncompromising and irascible manner.<sup>39</sup> Those are exactly the character flaws of Keroularios criticised emphatically by Psellos earlier in his polemic letter to him (Sathas, V, ep. 207 = *Epistola a Michele Cerulario*. Ed. Criscuolo, 27, 170 – 28, 185; 29, 223 – 30, 229). However, Psellos explains in the encomium, in conformity with the rules of the genre, that the patriarch aimed by this kind of behaviour to teach discipline to people (342, 14 – 343, 5).

The discrepancy between the forced praise of Keroularios and the negative opinion Psellos in reality had about him comes out clearly in that passage of the encomium, where Keroularios is being compared to his elder brother to whom Psellos gives preference in a subtle manner:<sup>40</sup> Keroularios was according to Psellos more fervent than his brother regarding religion, he behaved towards others in an unfriendly and severe manner, whereas his brother's behaviour was charming and friendly. Keroularios's prudence was excessive, whereas his brother's prudence was tempered. Keroularios's speech was cultivated, whereas his brother's speech was elaborate. Keroularios's attire and lifestyle were plain, whereas his brother was fond of luxury. Keroularios strove to live against nature, whereas his brother was married and father of children. Keroularios's brother was directed towards the earthly world and placed value on secular learning, whereas Keroularios had dismissed all earthly things and had devoted himself to the divine.

Ljubarskij discerns a flagrant inconsistency between Keroularios's real character and the ideal image Psellos draws of him in some pas-

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<sup>39</sup> Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 342–344, especially 342, 16–17: βάρυς καὶ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἔμμονος.

<sup>40</sup> Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 310–312, cf. J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 246.

sages of the encomium under the pressure of the rules of the genre.<sup>41</sup> For instance, Keroularios, who was actually described as uncouth and unsociable in comparison to his brother, a few passages later suddenly mutates into a friendly and charming person supposed to incorporate the exact opposite of the rigid misanthropist.<sup>42</sup>

“I know that those who confront desires with so much hostility are sweating due to the strain and are grumpy in other ways as well. Their eyes are dry, their brows are grimly frowned and they avoid communication and familiar contact with other people completely. Although Keroularios himself had been an ascetic person, his manner was nonetheless full of charming kindness. His speech was pleasant and resembled drinkable water, the look in his eyes was friendly and his spirit was full of joy. He had struggled to gain passionlessness and thereby he had turned smooth. He did not complain about those things he had combated with, but he rejoiced in the spiritual qualities he had gained.” (My own translation – E. B.)

The obvious inconsistency of this praise is in Ljubarskij’s opinion not intended by the author: Psellos tried to conform to the rules of the encomium, but in the end he was not able to “adapt” Keroularios’s sinister personality in a proper manner to the ideal image prescribed by the encomiastic genre.<sup>43</sup>

However, it is well known that the literary form of the encomium could be indeed used ironically in the manner of blame disguised as praise.<sup>44</sup> This emerges basically from surviving encomia on “unworthy”

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<sup>41</sup> J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 247.

<sup>42</sup> Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 332, 15–24. Cf. D. C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony*. London: Methuen, 1969. 73: “Misrepresentation, or false statement: the author asserts what is known to be false and relies upon the reader’s or listener’s prior knowledge for the contradiction.”

<sup>43</sup> J. N. Ljubarskij, *Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού*, 247: “Φαίνεται πως ο Ψελλός δεν μπορεί να αρνηθεί εντελώς τα εγκωμιαστικά κλισέ, αλλά την ίδια στιγμή δεν μπορεί και να «προσαρμόσει» απολύτως τον ήρωά του σε αυτά. Τα αντιφατικά στοιχεία ανάμεσα στο ιδανικό σχήμα και τον αληθινό Κηρουλάριο μένουν να συνυπάρχουν στα πλαίσια ενός και του αυτού έργου, και είναι ορατά με γυμνό οφθαλμό.”

<sup>44</sup> On this kind of manifestation of irony see for instance D. C. Muecke, *The Compass*

subjects, as for instance the louse or the flea.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the rhetorical piece by emperor Julian from the year 363 entitled *Antiochikos* or *Misopogon* provides a well known illustrative example for the ironical use of the encomiastic genre.<sup>46</sup> In this case, emperor Julian reacts by means of literature to the scoffing verses the Antiochenes had directed against his lifestyle and appearance. According to his purpose, Julian inverts the genre of the praise of a city and makes of it instead the blame on a city, and in a double manner at that: on the one hand, by employing irony while ostensibly justifying and confirming the reproaches of the Antiochenes against him, and on the other hand, by using explicit invective (especially in the second part of the speech) combined with interweaved ironical passages on his own allegedly uncouth appearance and barbaric taste, justifiably despised by the delicate, effeminate, and sensual Antiochenes.<sup>47</sup> A further example for the inversion of the encomiastic genre is to be found in the satirical dialogue entitled *Timarion* from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> According to the argumentation of Margaret

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*of Irony*, 67.

<sup>45</sup> See e.g. H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*. Munich: Beck, 1978. (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft: Abteilung 12, Byzantinisches Handbuch; 5). Vol. I, 131–132.

<sup>46</sup> *L'Empereur Julien: Oeuvres complètes, tome II-2e partie. Discours de Julien Empereur: Les Césars – Sur Hélios-Roi – Le Misopogon. Texte établi et traduit par Christian Lacombrade*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1964; *Giuliano Imperatore: Misopogon. Edizione critica, traduzione e commento a cura di C. Prato e D. Micaella*. Rome: Ed. dell'Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1979. (Testi e commenti; 5); *Die beiden Satiren des Kaisers Julianus Apostata (Symposion oder Caesares und Antiochikos oder Misopogon), griechisch und deutsch mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Index von Friedhelm L. Müller*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998. (Palingenesia; 66).

<sup>47</sup> D. R. Reinsch, "Eine Satire als Inschrift am Torbogen? Der Misopogon: Ein angebliches „Edikt“ Kaiser Julians", in S. Kotzabassi – J. Mavromatis (eds.), *Realia Byzantina*. Berlin – New York: De Gruyter, 2009. 247–251, here 248–249.

<sup>48</sup> *Pseudo-Luciano, Timarione. Testo critico, introduzione, traduzione, commentario e lessico a cura di R. Romano*. Naples: Università di Napoli, 1974. (Byzantina et neo-hellenica neapolitana; 2); *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI–XV: Il patriota, Caridemo, Timarione, Cristoforo di Mitilene, Michele Psello, Teodoro Prodromo, Carmi ptocoprodromici, Michele Haplucheir, Giovanni Catrara, Mazaris, La messa del glabro, Sinassario del venerabile asino. A cura di Roberto Romano*. Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1999. (Classici Greci) (Classici UTET) 99–175.

Alexiou in a path-braking paper, the at first sight seriously meant eulogistic depiction of the *dux* of Thessalonike in *Timarion* is actually upon scrutiny of its intertextual references to be interpreted as ironical. In our case, a sophisticated, ambiguous author such as Michael Psellos is forced by circumstances to compose an encomium on a declared enemy of his, a person he had clearly described in earlier works (for instance in the polemic letter Sathas, V, ep. 207 = *Epistola a Michele Cerulario*. Ed. Criscuolo) as a negative character, intellectually inferior to himself. In my opinion, it is only to be expected that such an author in such a situation would deliberately take prompt advantage of the encomiastic genre's ironic potential.<sup>49</sup>

Considering the specific circumstances under which Psellos's encomium on Keroularios was composed, it is of course understandable that the employment of too explicit an irony would be unwise, since the speech was delivered in the presence of emperor Konstantinos Doukas and his wife, empress Eudokia, who happened to be Keroularios's niece.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, the author's ironic stance towards his subject makes itself felt for the attentive reader or listener as early as in the introduction to the encomium (pp. 303–305). Psellos, who is otherwise notoriously confident in his rhetorical skills, here ostensibly disparages himself while employing the *topos* of modesty in an exaggerated manner. In this way, he prepares the reader or listener subtly for the fact that in the course of his encomium on Keroularios also the negative traits of the *laudandus* will come to the fore:<sup>51</sup>

“In former times, artful speech was superior to the facts and these were presented by means of rhetoric as better than they actually were. Nowadays, however, the greatness of achievements surpasses the art of speech and the sublime is being apparently diminished by rhetoric. For that reason, I feel anxious and take up the present encomium without any

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<sup>49</sup> Also Ugo Criscuolo had pointed to the ironic character of Psellos's encomium on Keroularios: “Osservazioni sugli scritti retorici di Michele Psello”. *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3 (1982) 247–255, here 252–254.

<sup>50</sup> See Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 380, 27 – 381, 10.

<sup>51</sup> Sathas, IV, encomium on Keroularios, 304, 9–19. In a later passage of the encomium, Psellos appears much more confident of the power of rhetoric: *ibidem*, 338, 15–30.

confidence, in fear of bringing about the exact opposite effect than the one I intend to. I am afraid that my speech might fall short of the idea you listeners have of the one to be praised here and also of the truth of the wonders related to him (for so I should better say) and that in this way his achievements might appear diminished to posterity and also that you, who happen to know the man well, might gather the exact opposite assessment of him than the one you expect to.” (My own translation – E. B.)

In summary, it can be stated that in the encomium on Keroularios, it is again the authorial textual self created by Psellos that is presented as the “worldly”, versatile, adaptive, and philanthropic type of person, similar to the one created of himself earlier in the polemic letter Psellos had addressed to Keroularios (ed. Sathas, V, ep. 207 = *Epistola a Michele Cerulario*. Ed. Criscuolo). According to Psellos, this ideal type of person places on intellectuality and spirituality the same appreciation as on corporeality. He is open-minded and interacts with his environment and his fellow humans. His moral values are not dogmatic but tolerant, his worldview is not totalitarian but liberal. In contrast, Psellos’s political opponent, Michael Keroularios, is being repeatedly stylised as the exact opposite of this ideal, that is as the “spiritual”, rigid, uncompromising, and misanthropic, type of person. As a consequence, Psellos considers himself to be intellectually superior to his opponent and for that reason he is confident enough to treat Keroularios with irony. For that purpose, he employs such devices as the subtly unfavourable comparison of Keroularios to his brother, the ostensible praise of Keroularios for qualities which the author had elsewhere dismissed as being definitely negative or even the assignment to Keroularios of positive qualities the author had elsewhere clearly stated Keroularios did not possess, the direct invective against Keroularios being cushioned immediately afterwards, the feigned self-disparagement of the author concerning his ability to treat his subject adequately and so forth. On a more specific level, irony provides Psellos with a means to criticise Keroularios for the discrepancy between his aspirations of gaining political power and his unworldly and misanthropic attitude. On a more general level, irony provides the author with a tool to plead for liberality and intellectual flexibility.

In his monograph entitled “The Compass of Irony” from the year



1969, Douglas Colin Muecke describes the intellectual and moral stance of the ironist with words reminding of the profile of the “worldly” type of person as praised by Psellos. Conversely, Muecke’s description of those who provide the arrows of irony with a target reminds of the “spiritual” type of person as criticised by Psellos:<sup>52</sup>

“We live in a world which imposes upon us many contradictory pressures. Stability is a deep human need, but in seeking stability we run the risk of being imprisoned in the rigidity of a closed system, political, moral, or intellectual. [...] Those who close their eyes to the ambivalences of the human condition – the proponents and adherents of systems, the sentimental idealists, the hard-headed realists, the panacea-mongering technologists – will naturally find an enemy in the ironist and accuse him of flippancy, nihilism, or sitting on the fence.

Though some ironists may be guilty of these charges, irony is properly to be regarded as more an intellectual than a moral activity. That is to say, the morality of irony, like the morality of science, philosophy, and art, is a morality of intelligence. The ironist’s virtue is mental alertness and agility. His business is to make life unbearable for troglodytes, to keep open house for ideas, and to go on asking questions.”

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<sup>52</sup> D. C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony*, 247.

