

Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics**Michael Psellos****Publication Date**

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Michael Psellos on Literature and Art

A BYZANTINE
PERSPECTIVE ON
AESTHETICS

MICHAEL PSELLOS

EDITED BY CHARLES BARBER AND STRATIS PAPAIOANNOU

Michael Psellos
on Literature and Art

Michael Psellos in Translation



Miniature portrait of Michael Psellos and his pupil Michael Doukas, Ms Pantokrator 234, fol. 254 (12th century). © Holy Monastery of Pantokrator, Mount Athos. Used with permission.

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A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics

edited by

CHARLES BARBER

and **STRATIS PAPAIOANNOU**

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Note to the Reader

The present volume is the third in the project *Michael Psellos in Translation*, following two earlier works: *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*, edited by Anthony Kaldellis (2006) and *Psellos and the Patriarchs: Letters and Funeral Orations for Keroullarios, Leichoudes, and Xiphilinos*, translated by Anthony Kaldellis and Ioannis Polemis (2015). Like those volumes, this one too is the result of a collaborative effort. It is divided into two parts, the first devoted to Psellos' literary theory and the second to his visual aesthetics; Stratis Papaioannou was responsible for the review and writing of Part 1, and Charles Barber for Part 2; the names of the two editors or those of further contributors have been further identified in the chapters.

We have neither followed nor imposed absolute rules for the rendition of Psellos' demanding Greek into English, though we have generally attempted to err on the side of the literal meaning. We have also tried to create some consistency in the translation of recurrent rhetorical terms. The most important and common among these are cited also in their original Greek form within square brackets [], and have been gathered in a "List of Rhetorical Terms" at the end of the book. When necessary, though rarely, Greek terms have been simply transliterated and explained with a footnote.

Square brackets are used also for line and page numbers as well as for necessary explanatory remarks or simply supplementary words for the sake of clarification. Angle brackets < > have been employed either (a) to indicate words that have been added by editors of the Greek originals in places where

a lacuna in the text has been identified or (b) to include words and phrases that were deemed necessary to complete the meaning in English.

The names of most Byzantine persons have been transliterated into English, thus: Psellos and not Psellus, Ioannes Sikeliotes and not John of Sicily, and so forth.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the many contributors to this volume for their efficiency and patience, the two anonymous reviewers who provided much useful commentary, as well as Stephen Little, our editor at the University of Notre Dame Press, for supporting this project; Matthew Dowd undertook the copy-editing of the book and we are grateful for his exemplary work. The editors would also like to thank the Center for Hellenic Studies for allowing us to include in this volume slightly revised versions of Elizabeth A. Fisher's introductions to and translations of Psellos' *Encomium for Kyr Symeon Metaphrastes* and his *Discourse on the Miracle that Occurred in the Blachernai Church*, which are also available at: <http://chs.harvard.edu/wa/pageR?tn=ArticleWrapper&bdc=12&mn=5478>.

Stratis Papaioannou would also like to thank: Dr. Byron MacDougal who, with utmost care, precision, and adeptness, reviewed the English as well as the translations of Part 1; the Classics Department at Brown University for generously funding the project; David Konstan, who commented on the translation of several passages, and Ioannes Polemis, who read the critical edition of the *Letters*, as both offered precious suggestions; and Charis Messis, who, with his usual wisdom, discussed the contents of the book at various stages of its creation.

Charles Barber would like to thank: the University of Notre Dame and Princeton University for the sabbatical leaves that made work on this project possible.

Abbreviations

Psellos' Texts

Chronographia edited by D.R. Reinsch, *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*. 2 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.

Concise Answers to Various Questions edited by L.G. Westerink, *Michael Psellus, De omnifaria doctrina*. Utrecht: J.L. Beijers, 1948.

Concise History edited by W.J. Aerts, *Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis 30. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990.

Criscuolo 1990 edited by U. Criscuolo, *Michele Psello, Epistola a Giovanni Xifilino*. Byzantina et Neo-Hellenica Neapolitana 1. Naples: Bibliopolis, 1973; new ed., 1990.

Discourse Improvised . . . about the Style of the Theologian edited by (a) P. Levy, *Michael Psellus: De Gregorii Theologi caractere iudicium, accedit eiusdem de Ioannis Chrisostomi caractere iudicium ineditum*, 46–63. Diss. Straßburg; Leipzig: R. Noske, 1912. (b) A. Mayer, “Psellos’ Rede über den rhetorischen Charakter des Gregorios von Nazianz.” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 20 (1911): 27–100, at 48–60. Both editions are cited: the paragraph number refers to the paragraph divisions in Levy’s edition, while the numbers refer to the lines in Mayer’s edition.

Encomium for his Mother edited by U. Criscuolo, *Michele Psello: Autobiografia; encomio per la madre*. Naples: D'Auria, 1989.

G Letters: edited by P. Gautier, "Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées." *Revue des Études Byzantines* 44 (1986): 111–97, at 126–97.

K-D Letters: edited by E. Kurtz and F. Drexl, *Michael Psellus: Scripta minora magnam partem adhuc inedita II, Epistulae*. Orbis romanus, biblioteca del testi medievali a cura dell' Università cattolica del Sacro cuore 5.2. Milan: Società editrice "Vita e pensiero," 1941

K-D I Various texts: edited by E. Kurtz and F. Drexl, *Michael Psellus: Scripta minora magnam partem adhuc inedita I, Orationes et dissertationes*. Orbis romanus, biblioteca del testi medievali a cura dell' Università cattolica del Sacro cuore 5.1. Milan: Società editrice "Vita e pensiero," 1936.

Maltese Letters: edited by E. V. Maltese, "Epistole inedite di Michele Psello." *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* III 5 (1987): 82–98 and 214–23; 6 (1988) 110–34.

On John Chrysostom edited by P. Levy, *Michael Psellus: De Gregorii Theologi caractere iudicium, accedit eiusdem de Ioannis Chrisostomi caractere iudicium ineditum*, 92–98. Diss. Straßburg; Leipzig: R. Noske, 1912.

On the Different Types of Style of Certain Writings edited by J. F. Boissonade, *Michael Psellus de operatione daemonum cum notis Gaulmini: Accedunt inedita opuscula Pselli*, 48–52. Nürnberg, 1838. Repr. Amsterdam: A. M. Hakker, 1964.

Or. for. edited by G. T. Dennis, *Michael Psellus: Orationes Forenses et Acta*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1994.

Or. fun. I edited by I. Polemis, *Michael Psellus: Orationes Funebres*, vol. 1. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.

Or. hag. edited by E. A. Fisher, *Michael Psellus: Orationes Hagiographicae*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1994.

Or. min. edited by A. R. Littlewood, *Michael Psellus: Oratoria Minora*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1985.

Or. pan. edited by G. T. Dennis, *Michael Psellus: Orationes Panegyricae*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993.

Phil. min. I edited by J. M. Duffy, *Michael Psellus: Philosophica Minora I*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1992.

Phil. min. II edited by D. J. O'Meara, *Michael Psellus: Philosophica Minora II*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1989.

Poem. edited by L. G. Westerink, *Michael Psellus: Poemata*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1992.

S Letters: edited by K. N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη: Συλλογή ανέκδοτων μνημείων τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἱστορίας, V; Μιχαήλ Ψελλοῦ ἱστορικοὶ λόγοι, ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνέκδοτα, 219–523. Venice: Phoinix, 1876 = Paris: Libraires-Éditeurs, 1876. Repr. Athens: Γρηγοριάδης, 1972.

Sathas IV and V Various texts (excluding the letters), edited by K. N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη: Συλλογή ανέκδοτων μνημείων τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἱστορίας IV; Μιχαήλ Ψελλοῦ ἑκατονταετηρὶς Βυζαντινῆς ἱστορίας (976–1077). Venice: Phoinix, 1874; and Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη: Συλλογή ανέκδοτων μνημείων τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἱστορίας, V; Μιχαήλ Ψελλοῦ ἱστορικοὶ λόγοι, ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνέκδοτα. Venice: Phoinix, 1876.

Theol. I edited by P. Gautier, *Michael Psellus: Theologica I*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1989.

Theol. II edited by L. G. Westerink and J. M. Duffy, *Michael Psellus: Theologica II*. Munich: K. G. Saur, 2002.

To One Asking “Who Wrote Verse Better, Euripides Or Pisides?” edited by A. Dyck, *Michael Psellus, The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius*, 40–50. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986.

What Is the Difference between the Texts Whose Plots Concern Charikleia and Leukippe? edited by A. Dyck, *Michael Psellus, The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius*, 90–98. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986.

Other Commonly Cited Works

BHG F. Halkin. *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, with an *Auctarium* and a *Novum Auctarium*, 5 vols. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957–84.

Lampe G. W. H. Lampe. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961–68.

LSJ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 8th ed. (Oxford, 1897); rev. 9th ed., H. S. Jones, R. McKenzie, et al. (1925–40); supplements by E. A. Barber et al. (1968) and R. Renehan (1975, 1982); with a revised supplement (1996).

ODB A. P. Kazhdan, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

For all other abbreviations, we have followed the *ODB*.

General Introduction

Stratis Papaioannou

Though Michael Psellos is a towering figure in the history of Byzantine letters, his theoretical and critical reflections on literature and art are little known beyond a circle of specialists. Modern readers know Psellos primarily for his *Chronographia*, a history of eleventh-century Byzantine emperors and their reigns, an international Byzantine “best seller” with its fourteen translations into modern languages since 1874.¹ Yet Psellos also excelled in describing as well as prescribing practices, rules, created objects, and creative subjects of literary discourse and visual culture. The present volume introduces precisely this aspect of Psellian writing to a wider public. The aim is to illustrate an important chapter in the history of Greek literary and art criticism, and thence to contribute to the history of premodern aesthetics.

To this purpose, we have gathered together thirty Psellian texts, all of which are translated—some partly, but most in their entirety—into English; in the case of a group of Psellian letters, a new edition of the Greek original is also offered. The majority of the works are translated for the first time in any modern language, and several of them have found their first sustained discussion here. We have grouped them in two separate sections, which roughly correspond to two areas of theoretical reflection that are associated with the modern terms of “literature” and “art.” What these terms mean in a Byzantine

1. See Moore 2005: 445–57 for the bibliography of studies and translations (until the year ca. 2000); recent new edition by Reinsch 2014.

context, and for Psellos specifically, is explained in the relevant introductions to the two sections. In these introductions, the reader will also find general discussions of what kinds of texts we have selected and where these texts belong within Psellos' oeuvre as well as within the wider Byzantine tradition in terms of content, context, and literary form.

What are presented in this book are indeed two different collections brought together (somewhat deceptively, we might acknowledge) under the headings of literature and art. Modern readers are accustomed to link these two fields to each other as they consider them (along with other activities such as theater and music) as parallel and related expressions of human creativity and leisurely entertainment, pleasure, and pastime—in other words, the modern commonsense understanding of *aesthetic* experience.

The actual Byzantine connection is somewhat different. All the essays fit the requirements—and indeed several of them represent exquisite specimens—of what in Byzantium would have been regarded as rhetoric and philosophy, ῥητορική and φιλοσοφία. The two terms denoted, respectively, high discursive style and high discursive knowledge, representing the apex of Byzantine education and erudition. Together, the two disciplines covered almost all aspects of linguistic expression and learning in Byzantium. And they were “high” both because of the specialized training they required and because of their perceived social status. Though not all Byzantine professional rhetors/philosophers could hope to enjoy high social and economic benefits, acquaintance with rhetoric and philosophy as practices was frequently a prerequisite for high social distinction.

The selected texts in both sections also converge in their concern for *aesthetic* experience, in the more literal meaning of *sensuous* perception of material form. They intersect, that is, in their emphasis on the creation, manipulation, experience, and understanding of what may be termed cultured sense perception, whether in words or in images. As such, these texts display views, attitudes, and ultimately *tastes* regarding what is thought to be beautiful as well as moral, appealing as well as mentally and psychologically effective in texts and artistic objects.²

The underlying theory of literary and visual taste, the theory of aesthetics, that is—by which word we do not mean here any systematized theory or

2. See further Papaioannou 2013: 29–50 (on rhetoric and philosophy) and *passim*.

neatly defined separate field of thought—is not Psellos’ alone. As is perhaps always the case with aesthetics, his aesthetic too addresses a set of expectations that are indebted both to earlier traditions of writing and thinking about literature and art as well as to contemporary ideas and practices—in this case, those of the Constantinopolitan social elite to which Psellos belonged. The details of this nexus of intellectual tradition and eleventh-century Constantinopolitan social and intellectual aristocracy will be illuminated by the collection of texts and the discussions that follow below.

Michael Psellos (1018–1078)

One of the most prolific and popular medieval Greek authors, Psellos has been regarded as everything from a typical Byzantine courtier to a protagonist in the history of Byzantine culture. A total of 1176 titles (among them 500 letters as well as 163 spurious works) are attributed to him in impressively numerous manuscripts, and an immense modern bibliography deals with his life and works.³

He was born to a middle-class family in the Constantinopolitan suburb Ta Narsou, at a time when Constantinople, and the empire ruled by its imperial court, had reached a peak in economic, political, military, and cultural impact on the Mediterranean, Balkan, and wider European and Middle Eastern worlds. His surname, perhaps a personal designation, denotes someone who “lisps.” Starting at the age of five, he began his education in grammar, orthography, and Homeric poetry. At eleven, he continued with rhetoric and then philosophy, studying together with future friends under several teachers (including Ioannes Mauropous, another notable intellectual figure of the century). This education provided entry to provincial administration and then imperial bureaucracy. By 1041, Psellos became secretary in the imperial court—an untitled poem can be set in this context (*Poem.* 16). Around 1043, he came to the

3. This outline of Psellos’ biography follows closely Papaioannou 2013: 4–14, which contains further references and bibliography. See further Volk 1990: 1–48; Ljubarskij 2001=2004; Kaldellis 2006: 1–28; and Karpozilos 2009: 59–75. See also the biography offered in Reinsch 2014: ix–xvi. See also Kaldellis 1999; Barber and Jenkins 2006; Lauritzen 2013; and Pappioannou 2013 (a modern Greek, updated version is in preparation). All Psellian ergo-graphy and bibliography before 2000 is gathered in Moore 2005.

attention of emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos (1042–1055)—two of his earliest texts are an encomium for Monomachos, occasioned by the failed revolt of Georgios Maniakes (1043; *Or. pan.* 2) and a funeral poem for Monomachos' mistress Maria Skleraina (*Poem.* 17; ca. 1045).

Under Monomachos' patronage, Psellos' career blossomed, his wealth increased, and his social network was enlarged. From this time on, his primary function was that of teacher, public orator, and impromptu court advisor and mediator. He remained an unofficial court "secretary" drafting documents and operating on behalf of an increasingly large number of associates and clients (as is evident from a number of his letters).

For his teaching, he was given a new title created especially for him, likely around 1045: ὑπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων. The term translates as the "consul of the philosophers" and indicates something like "the chief of the teachers" who taught in essentially private schools, supported partly by the state. Psellos prided himself on this title as well as on his international fame as a teacher; for example, he attracted students of southern Italian (Ioannes Italos; see *Or. min.* 18 and 19) and Georgian descent (Ioane Petric'i). He also tutored the nephews of the patriarch Michael Keroularios (1005/1010–1059) with whom Psellos had a turbulent relationship (see Kaldellis and Polemis 2015: 11–22, 37–128), and, later, taught Theophylaktos Hephaistos (1055–1107), the future archbishop of Ochrid.

Things changed in the 1050s, both in Psellos' private and public life. His biological daughter Styliane died around 1052; a good marriage for his adoptive daughter Euphemia fell through, likely in 1053; and his mother, Theodote, died in late 1054 (the relevant texts are translated in Kaldellis 2006). Along with friends (such as Mauropous), he also fell out of favor with Monomachos. He was "forced" to become a monk at a monastery in Bithynia, changing his lay baptismal name Konstantinos (or Konstas for short) to a monastic one, Michael.

He quickly returned to Constantinople in 1055 and would remain there until his death, continuing to work as a teacher, speaker, and advisor, but apparently without the luster of his Monomachos years— even if he accrued more titles (*proedros*, *prōtoproedros*, and *hypertimos*). His association with the imperial family of the Doukai provided the most significant context for his literary and social activity during this period. The son of Konstantinos X Doukas and Eudokia Makrembolitissa, the future emperor Michael VII

(1071–1078), was his student—their relationship is commemorated in the only portrait of Psellos we possess from a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century manuscript (Athos, Pantokratoros 234, f. 254r). After various ups and downs in his political influence, Psellos likely died in 1078—if we are to accept information reported in Michael Attaleiates’ *History* (though the issue is far from settled).⁴

Apart from official documents and a large number of letters of recommendation and intervention, his oeuvre may be divided (though the division is often lost in the texts themselves, as already noted above) into what he termed insistently (a) ῥητορικὴ and (b) φιλοσοφία: the former referring to literarily wrought works for public performance or private communication and the latter designating texts for the purposes of teaching that took the form of poems, letters, lectures, compilation of excerpts, and essays. These texts usually addressed a circle of close friends, associates, students, and patrons that he acquired throughout his career. The most important of these were the following: the emperors Konstantinos IX Monomachos and Michael VII Doukas, the *kaisar* Ioannes Doukas (?–ca. 1088; thirty-seven of Psellos’ letters are addressed to him, as well as a funeral oration for his wife, Eirene: K-D I 21 dated to the mid-1060s), and Konstantinos, the nephew of Keroularios (seventeen letters; *Or. min.* 31; *Or. for.* 5; see also the very lengthy hagiographical oration on Michael Keroularios: *Or. fun.* 1 with Kaldellis and Polemis 2015: 49–128).

Psellos taught everything from basic grammar, Homeric poetry, and Aristotelian logic to Hermogenian rhetoric and Neoplatonic philosophy, and wrote on nearly every subject (from medicine to law and from vernacular expressions to occult sciences)—most of these texts are gathered in *Theol.* I and II, *Phil. min.* I and II, and *Or. min.*, and several of these are translated below. Psellos aggressively expanded the curriculum, in terms of both method and the authoritative texts that were to be studied, commented upon, and revised. His most important contribution in this respect is the use of pre-Byzantine rhetorical aesthetics and Neoplatonic hermeneutics (especially those of Proklos, 410/412–485) for the interpretation of the rhetoric and theology of

4. Reinsch (2014: xvi) perhaps too readily accepts that Psellos must have died in 1076.

Gregory of Nazianzos (329/330–ca. 390), to whom Psellos devoted numerous texts; three of them are included in the present volume (*Discourse Improvised . . . about the Style of the Theologian*; *Theol.* I 19 and 98).

For Monomachos, Psellos composed instructional poems in fifteen-syllable *politikos* verse (*Poems* 1, 2, 3, 4, 6) and a first redaction of his relatively popular *Concise Answers to Various Questions* (= *De Omnifaria Doctrina*). For Michael VII, he wrote several more instructional pieces (*Poem* 7 on rhetoric is translated in this volume), revised several of the earlier poems and the earlier *Concise Answers*, and wrote the *Historia Syntomos*, a compendium of biographical vignettes of Roman rulers from Romulus to Basil II with a decidedly Roman perspective on the history of the empire.

His rhetorical production includes: several encomia for emperors (most importantly Monomachos: *Or. pan.* 1-7; S 115); a rather peculiar mixture of a legal document combined with panegyrical speech pertaining to the so-called Usual Miracle in Blachernai (*Or. hag.* 4, written in July 1075—also in the present volume); funeral orations—notable among them are two lengthy pieces on Konstantinos Leichoudes (*Or. fun.* 2) and Ioannes Xiphilinos (*Or. fun.* 3), both completed after August 1075 (translated in Kaldellis and Polemis 2015); lengthy and rhetorically elaborate letters (five of them in the present collection); short playful pieces (e.g., an *Encomium of Wine*: *Or. min.* 30); several texts of self-defense, including an invective poem against a monk Iakobos in the form of a hymnographical *kanôn* (*Poem* 22); hagiographical texts in the mode of Symeon Metaphrastes; and, of course, the texts on literary and visual aesthetics presented below.⁵

Somewhere between rhetoric and instruction, encomium and classicizing history lies his most renowned text: the *Chronographia*, which is primarily a history of a series of Byzantine emperors from Basil II to Michael VII. In its present, incomplete form, the text ends with the description of Ioannes Doukas who was clearly an (if not *the*) addressee of the work in its last version. Yet, the *Chronographia* was written and revised in stages (the earliest evidence points to 1057) for a small, though fluid, group of addressees (particularly members of the Doukas family). Though it survives in essentially one manuscript (Paris, BNF, gr. 1712; twelfth century), this brilliantly textured

5. Psellos also wrote icon-epigrams, though none survives (except perhaps *Poem* 33); cf. K-D 211, translated as *Letter One* in this volume.

narrative exerted influence in twelfth-century historiography and has been Psellos' most popular text among modern scholars.⁶

Psellos' texts (including the *spuria*) are transmitted in approximately 765 manuscripts; about a third of these manuscripts date from the twelfth through to the fourteenth century. However, the transmission is uneven. We do not possess a collection of his works that dates to his lifetime or reflects his editorial choices. And only a few texts circulated in a somewhat wide number of manuscripts (works of popularizing knowledge, such as some of his *Poems*).⁷ The rhetorical works—often highly self-referential, with an emphasis on aesthetic pleasure, emotion (*pathos*), and Hellenism—survive in relatively few manuscripts. Nevertheless, these texts reached an influential audience among the educated elite during the twelfth century (the princess and historian Anna Komnene, 1083–ca. 1150–55, is important in this respect) and then again in the late thirteenth century. The three most important Psellos manuscripts betray these later Byzantine readers: Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Plut. gr. 57.40 (early twelfth century); Paris, BNF, gr. 1182 (likely commissioned by Eustathios of Thessalonike in the late twelfth century), and Vatican, BAV, gr. 672 (late thirteenth century, before July 1293; for this date cf. Pérez Martín 2012: 171; the manuscript was produced perhaps in the circle of the rhetor Manuel Holobolos—on this see below pp. 222 and 231n33)—they are also the primary witnesses for the texts of our collection.

Psellos' most important modern readers/editors were Leo Allatius (Chios 1586–Rome 1669) and Konstantinos Sathas (Athens 1842–Paris 1914), followed by a host of scholars who worked on the protean and prolific Psellos. It is in their footsteps that we offer the present book.

6. For the immediate audience and reception of the *Chronographia*, see Reinsch 2013; see further the introduction to the new edition in Reinsch 2014: xvi–xxxii.

7. His *Poem* 1, on the inscriptions of the Psalms, survives in the earliest dated manuscript with Psellian works: Harvard MS Gr. 3, a psalter dated to 1105—Psellos' poem in ff. 1r–7v: Στίχοι πολιτικοὶ τοῦ μακαριωτάτου ὑπερτίμου τοῦ Ψελλοῦ ἐφερμηνευτικοὶ τῶν ἐπιγραμματῶν τῶν ψαλμῶν. On this manuscript, see Kavrus-Hoffmann 2010a: 82–102.

PART ONE

On Literature: Rhetoric and Λόγοι

Introduction to Part One

Stratis Papaioannou

Texts and Contexts

The fifteen texts that follow comprise the full corpus of Psellian works that provide theoretical reflections on literary discourse in a sustained fashion. Together, they offer a good introduction not only to Psellos' literary aesthetics, but also to Byzantine rhetorical theory in general.

We begin with a series of five introductory summaries and collections of excerpts that deal with technical matters of rhetorical style, all of which are based on pre-Byzantine, Greco-Roman handbooks of rhetoric. The first two review the most important such handbook in Byzantium: Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric*.¹ The third text summarizes Dionysios of Halikarnassos' popular *On Composition*, while the fourth is based on a less common text, Longinos' *Art of Rhetoric*. The fifth, titled *On Tragedy*, deals with a somewhat marginal topic in middle Byzantine literary theory, ancient drama, reviving again earlier, antiquarian material.

Essays of rhetorical criticism devoted to specific authors and literary texts come next. The first two, *On the Different Styles of Certain Writings*

1. This is the Byzantine title given to four treatises attributed to Hermogenes (second c. CE): *On Issues* (Περὶ στάσεων), *On Invention* (Περὶ εὐρέσεως), *On Forms* (Περὶ ἰδεῶν), and *On the Method of Force* (Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος); in Byzantine manuscripts, these treatises were usually prefaced by Aphthonios' *Preliminary Exercises* (Προγυμνάσματα, fourth c. CE), forming a unified manual. Interestingly, at least as far as we can tell, Psellos did not write on Aphthonios. Cf. further below pp. 16–17, 21.

(text no. 6) and *The Styles of Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nyssa* (no. 7), examine swiftly and comprehensively a large number of earlier authors and provide us with a brief panorama of the Byzantine rhetorical canon. The texts numbered 8 and 10 focus with greater detail on Gregory of Nazianzos and John Chrysostom respectively, the two most important authors of the Byzantine canon; these two authors alone, it should be remembered, are preserved in what is the largest group (in numbers; though excluding lectionaries) among the manuscripts that survive from the middle Byzantine period. Texts 11 and 12 are comparisons of major texts/authors with regard to versification (Euripides vs. the Byzantine poet Georgios Pisides) and romantic narrative (the novels of Achilles Tatios and Heliodoros).

Three further sections (9, 13, 14) complete the collection. These are somewhat *sui generis* in the history of Byzantine literary criticism and rhetorical theory. The first, no. 9, consists of two lectures that Psellos delivered in front of his students. Both texts deal with specific phrases from Gregory of Nazianzos' *Orationes*. The primary focus of such Psellian lectures, of which a large number have survived, was philosophical interpretation of the theological content of Gregory's speeches. Nevertheless, Psellos often departs from his main task and comments on the style of Gregory's rhetoric. The two lectures translated below are exceptional in devoting most of their space to precisely such rhetorical analysis.

Text 13 is in essence a hagiographical encomium that praises the sanctity of Symeon Logothetes or Metaphrastes, an author who flourished during the second half of the tenth century and who is mostly known for his *Menologion*. The latter was an immense and remarkably popular collection of earlier saints' *Lives*, the majority of which were rewritten by Metaphrastes and his team in a rhetorical fashion. Unlike other Byzantine hagiographical eulogies, Psellos' evaluation of Symeon focuses again on Symeon's rhetoric and his exceptional narrative skills. It thus promotes a saint who is saintly first and foremost on account of his literary achievement.²

The *Encomium for the Monk Ioannes Kroustoulas* (no. 14) is the most singular text in the present collection, though thanks to its theme it forms a pair with the eulogy of Symeon that precedes it. Addressing a small audience of

2. On this point, see Papaioannou 2013: 158–62.

friends, the *Encomium* describes in effusive learnedness the recital of an accomplished contemporary public reader by the name of Ioannes Kroustoulas in the Constantinopolitan church of Theotokos in the Chalkoprateia neighborhood. Psellos recounts and elaborates on the reading techniques of the apparently famous monk who recited—indeed performed (as Psellos suggests)—narrative texts from the *Menologion*, most likely that of Symeon Metaphrastes. This is the single detailed description that we possess about an activity that was rather common in middle Byzantine urban as well as monastic churches.

As we move from summaries and collections of excerpts to applied rhetorical theory and criticism, different aspects of Psellos' approach to literary aesthetics become evident. This variation is occasioned both by different functions and different contexts or audiences. The former group of texts contains succinct compilations of teaching notes that were produced in the context of Psellos' instruction—either of individual tutees or larger groups. Here, Psellos works as a compiler who rearranges earlier material for his students, and possibly also for his own use as teacher. Somewhat similar is the function of several texts in the second group, though here Psellos puts forth material that he has digested and rewritten according to his own individual tastes and preferences. Lastly, the two *Encomia* on Symeon and Kroustoulas reflect Psellos' role not so much as a teacher but as an intellectual who writes for colleagues, friends, and associates. For them, Psellos creates an image of himself as the most knowledgeable and eloquent voice of their (as he suggests) *shared* aesthetics by capitalizing on and indeed superseding all the principles of rhetorical skill elaborated in the previous set of texts.

Though most of the actual details of addressee, date, location, immediate circulation, and publication are forever lost to us (for each text, see the relevant introductions), we can plausibly imagine these texts being read or heard, individually or in small groups, primarily by Psellos' students and then also by his close friends and colleagues. As we can deduce from a variety of indications, the students were the sons or nephews of the middle and high Constantinopolitan and perhaps also provincial aristocracy who came to study with him. They often remained his "disciples" when they progressed in their careers and joined

a second, more intimate circle of friends and colleagues, people who, like Psellos, prided themselves on advanced literacy and learnedness.³

These initial readers but also (quite likely) Psellos himself lie behind the relatively few manuscripts that preserve the texts included in the present volume. Though no eleventh-century, that is, contemporary manuscript survives, the collections that these students, associates, and possibly Psellos created during his lifetime were inherited and then rearranged and copied by twelfth-century readers, often descendants of families contemporary to Psellos.⁴ The two most important manuscripts in this respect are: Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Plut. gr. 57.40 (**L**) (early twelfth century) and Paris, BNF, gr. 1182 (**P**) (late twelfth century). From their arrangement we can decipher *collections* of lectures as well as of essays preserved as such.⁵

Before placing Psellos' texts in the wider discursive tradition to which they belong, it should be noted that the series of texts on rhetorical theory translated below does not cover every single Psellian utterance on literature. Such comments can be found in a much wider set of Psellian writings. We find, for instance, several relevant side-remarks in his *Chronographia*, his public lectures and orations, and his private correspondence—on, for instance, the value of digressions in historiographical narrative (*Chronographia* 6.70), the notion of rhetor as creator (*Epitaphios in Honor of . . . Xiphilinos*; *Or. fun.* 3.22.58–95),

3. It is not the place here to examine either Constantinopolitan school life or Psellos' networks of students and friends in any detail; see Bernard 2014: passim with relevant discussions and the earlier bibliography.

4. See the discussion in Papaioannou 2013: 250–67.

5. These collections include several of the fifteen texts translated below as well as many of the texts in the second part of this volume that deal with visual aesthetics. More specifically, the “educational” texts are gathered together in folios 101r–168r of **L** (several more are dispersed in ff. 202v–283v) and also, though not in the same sequence, in **P**, especially in quires 5 to 17 and 21 to 29 (= ff. 258r–319v, 1r–32v, and 42r–108v). This sequence of the folios in **P** may seem out of order. However, the quires of the ms. have been rearranged some time after the creation of the ms., and several of them have been lost. In its original ordering, the relevant folios, 258r–319v, 1r–32v, and 42r–108v correspond respectively to the following, complete, quires: 5 to 13, 14 to 17, and 21 to 29; see Gautier 1986: 58. Quires numbered 35–36 and 38–43 in the manuscript (= 151v–188v) contain further texts from Psellos' teaching activity, though they are not grouped together as consistently as in the earlier quires, but are intermixed with other kinds of texts that belong to Psellos' activity as performer/rhetor (speeches, funeral orations, etc.).

or the distinction between oral communication and writing (*Letter S 11*).⁶ Such passages are so numerous that if we were to include all of them, this volume would grow to unyielding proportions.

Relevant also are an important number of Psellian essays and treatises on the preparatory discursive sciences of grammar and logic or the science of music, a field related to aesthetics.⁷ We also encounter several allegorical, that is, philosophical and theological, readings of literary texts—such as Psellos’ allegories on Homer (*Phil. min.* I 42–47).⁸ Though these texts are to some extent pertinent to the ideas and reading practices associated with the phenomenon of discourse, they too have been omitted from this volume. As will be explained below, the principle of selection has been to include only those Psellian writings that are preoccupied with discourse as “literature” and neither regulate aspects of discursive knowledge in general nor dissect literary texts and forms for the purpose of elaborating philosophical theories (as is the case with Psellos’ texts in the allegorical mode).

The Tradition

As readers proceed through this collection, they will increasingly encounter the resounding voice of Psellos who introduces his own aesthetics rather than merely reproducing or complying with expectations determined by tradition. Indeed, as will become apparent, a defining feature of the texts that follow is

6. See Papaioannou 2010 on *Chronographia* 6.70; Papaioannou 2013: 79–80 on the *Epitaphios* of Xiphilinos; and Papaioannou 2004 as well as Messis and Papaioannou, forthcoming, on S 11. See also the side-remarks in Psellos’ treatise on a phrase from “everyday speech” (ed. Sathas V 537–41; cf. Moore 2005: 398–99) about five different types of style that people imitate (those of epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, satyr play, and Aesopic fables) and about the “magnificent” diction of Menander as opposed to the rather “vulgar and mad after women” style of Aristophanes (Sathas V 538.12–23).

7. For listing and bibliography, see Moore 2005: 397–401, 410–11 (six works pertaining to matters of grammar, such as etymology and metrics); also 478–81 (on *Poem* 6, a very popular verse introduction on grammar); see also 404 (item 1011) for an unpublished essay “Περὶ ἐγκωμίου συνθήκης”; 232–52 (numerous works on logic); and 312–13 (one text on music).

8. Moore 2005: 266–71; cf. Cesaretti 1991: 29–123. For other Psellian exercises in allegorical interpretation, see the works listed in Moore 2005: 264–65, 271–72, 397–99.

the degree in which Psellos inserts himself in his own writing. Simultaneously and perhaps paradoxically, as we transition from summaries and collections of excerpts to Psellian essays and reach the last text, the encomium of Kroustoulas, which happens to be also the most individual of all—in form, content, and execution—the density and complexity of references and allusions to earlier texts increases.

Psellos' relation to the earlier tradition of literary aesthetics is thus intricate. From a certain perspective, the corpus of texts in this volume is representative of the wider Byzantine tradition of literary theory—which Psellos apparently knew well. This tradition was based on three late antique/early Byzantine registers of discursive thought:

- (a) rhetorical handbooks—dominant among them was the aforementioned *Art of Rhetoric* of Hermogenes (second c. CE), prefaced by Aphthonios' *Preliminary Exercises* (Προγυμνάσματα) (fourth c. CE)—commentaries on Hermogenes and Aphthonios, and shorter technical treatises;
- (b) Neoplatonic (third–sixth c. CE) commentaries on Plato's dialogues, which combined stylistic analysis with philosophical hermeneutics; and
- (c) scholia, often in the form of marginal notes, on classical and postclassical rhetorical texts (from Homer—who, for Byzantine readers, belonged to the rhetorical tradition—to Demosthenes, and from Ailios Aristides to Gregory of Nazianzos).⁹

During the middle Byzantine period preceding Psellos, this earlier tradition was expanded in at least two significant ways. The first was the application of Hellenic rhetorical theory to the reading of Christian rhetorical practice and, especially, the promotion of Gregory of Nazianzos' *Orations* (partly in place of Demosthenes) as the best model for the explication of Hermogenian aesthetics.¹⁰ The second was the rediscovery of alternative theoretical models beyond Aphthonios and Hermogenes for the understanding of discursive

9. On these different forms of discursive science in Byzantium, see S. Papaioannou, forthcoming, "Aesthetics." See also Hoffmann 2006, Agapitos 2008, and Conley 2009.

10. In Ioannes Sikeliotēs' outstanding commentary of Hermogenes' *On Forms*, passages from Gregory's *Orations* consistently replace examples from Demosthenes (Walz 1834: 80–504); cf. Conley 2003 and Papaioannou 2013: 56–63.

sive phenomena; this is evident, for example, in tenth-century manuscripts that preserve such rhetoricians as Dionysios of Halikarnassos.¹¹

Psellos' summaries of Hermogenes and Dionysios, his promotion of Gregory of Nazianzos as the ideal rhetor, his Neoplatonic readings of Gregory's theology, and his readings in a wide array of texts that included earlier material that had previously been relegated to obscurity are thus well explained in view of the immediate Byzantine tradition. After all, Psellos engaged directly with the extensive Byzantine exegetical work on the corpora, for instance, of Hermogenes and Gregory of Nazianzos.¹²

Yet Psellos also departs from the tradition, both by omission and by expansion. Certain earlier types of literary theoretical reflections are absent from his writings. For instance, Psellos does not write detailed commentaries on any canonical text—either of rhetorical theory or of rhetorical practice. This was an activity that seemed to characterize all other Byzantine professional rhetoricians like himself—from Ioannes of Sardeis (ninth c.) and Ioannes Geometres (tenth c.) to Ioannes Tzetzes (twelfth c.), Eustathios of Thessalonike (twelfth c.), and Maximos Planoudes (late thirteenth–early fourteenth c.). Nor does he deal with the mere basics—there is no engagement with Aphthonios, for instance. Psellos, that is, does not get to the nitty-gritty of other Byzantine teachers; and he is no philologist, in the narrow sense of the word.

Simultaneously, Psellos outdoes tradition. Though earlier writers, like Patriarch Photios (ninth c.), Arethas (tenth c.), or Ioannes Sikeliotes (ca. 1000) were well-versed in both Neoplatonic philosophy and Greco-Roman rhetorical theory, no one combined them as creatively as we will observe Psellos doing in his texts that follow. Furthermore, though earlier writers too (especially Photios) were not preoccupied exclusively with distant, “ancient” models of rhetoric but also displayed their interests in contemporary literature, no one engaged with recent rhetorical production like Psellos does—especially with respect to Symeon Metaphrastes. Finally, no one articulates as poignantly as Psellos an aesthetics of discourse that does not submit the pleasure of reading and the creativity of stylistic form to either moral or ontological constraints. At that, Psellos comes very close to expressing a purely *literary* understanding of discourse.

11. See, e.g., Aujac 1974.

12. See *Theol.* II 6 164–74 (on Greg. Naz. *Or.* 2.13). On his attitude toward exegetes of Gregory, see pp. 151–52 below.

Literature

But what is “literature” and “literary” in the essays that follow? As is perhaps clear from all the aforementioned, literature signifies something different than merely that type of writing that capitalizes on formal or imaginative creativity, in poetry and fiction, and serves primarily the needs of pleasure and entertainment.¹³ The prescription of patterns for public declamation (mostly judicial and advisory speech-making) and of rhetorical virtues such as “clarity” and “force”—the pillars of the Hermogenian system of thought—are not among the chief features of modern literary theory, if they feature at all. Nor would sermons and narrative that praise ideal models of Christian behavior and expand on theological concepts (such as the works of Gregory of Nazianzos and Symeon Metaphrastes) be categorized as literature in a modern bookshop, let alone be considered the apex of literary production.

The terms that Psellos—and his tradition—use for literature are telling in themselves: rhetoric and discourses, ῥητορική and λόγοι. Both cover a much wider spectrum of texts that only to a small extent overlaps with modern “literature.” Rhetoric refers to a type of style or a register of language (in terms of syntax, composition, and vocabulary) that can be used for all kinds of discourse—including those that capitalize on stylistics and aim primarily at entertainment. *Logoi* include any text that may be informed by rhetoric and elaborates some form of knowledge—from history and (religious) biography to philosophy and science.

Yet these terms, rhetoric especially, *do* also converge with what we understand as literature. First of all, like literature today, rhetoric and “discourses” usually required advanced literacy and access to education and, moreover, designated activities, skills, and knowledge that carried social meaning. They were, that is, cultural capital available to and controlled by a professional and sometimes social elite, and pursued by those who wished to access or influence the Byzantine ruling elite by means of that cultural capital. More importantly for our purposes here, rhetoric like literature today was often linked with discourse and texts that were solely focused on *aesthetics* (style, form, and pleasure) rather than, as would be proper for *logoi* in general, ethics and learning. In theoretical reflections about rhetoric and discourses—

13. See Todorov 1973.

which is what the texts of this volume essentially are—we detect precisely an attempt, whether conscious or unconscious, to defend, explain, and even, in Psellos’ case, *promote* this aesthetic dimension of rhetorical *logoi* and thus to pronounce purely literary theory.

In the introductions to the texts that follow, we have highlighted the various ways in which this Psellian approach is sought; nevertheless, two major aspects can be mentioned here.¹⁴ The first pertains to Psellos’ emphasis on the emotive nature and power of discourse, on how, that is, discourse expresses the author’s emotions, represents the emotive worlds of characters, and incites affect—in Greek *πάθος*—in readers and listeners. This maximization of emotion, rather than its control, corroborates a general trend in Psellian thought, which is the avoidance of introducing moral principles in aesthetic judgment. Unlike many of his predecessors and many comparable contemporaries in neighboring cultures (writing in Latin or Arabic),¹⁵ Psellos is rarely concerned with delimiting *ethical* writing and *ethical* reading. Instead, beauty and pleasure, form and performance, materiality and emotionality usually take precedence in his rhetorical theory.

The second aspect relates to Psellos’ view of the production of discourse or “authorship”—to put it in a single term that does not, however, exist in either classical or Byzantine Greek.¹⁶ Through a series of asides, comments, and sustained statements, Psellos identifies the rhetor as the individual, autonomous, and primary agent of discourse, the one who *creates* discursive form without the intervention of divine inspiration or, even, the oppression of rhetorical tradition. And, while the author is configured as creator—and not merely as an imitator of God, nature, or model rhetors—his discourse is not reduced to mere expression of his character, emotions, or ideas. Rather, Psellos also stresses the performative and theatrical nature of the discursive game and thus envisions an author who can also become an actor of many masks in his own writing, a *literary* author, that is.

14. For a more detailed account with references and relevant bibliography, see Papaioannou 2013: 27–128. For earlier approaches, see Ljubarskij 1975 and 2001: 348–68 and 509–11 (= 2004: 197–217 and 379–82), as well as Milovanović 1979.

15. See Papaioannou 2013: 91.

16. On the subject, see now Pizzone 2014.

1 *Synopsis of the Rhetorical Forms,* based on Hermogenes' *On Forms*

Translated with introduction and notes by Stratis
Papaioannou

Introduction

The *Synopsis of the Rhetorical Forms* is presented as a letter addressed to an anonymous student. It survives in Psellos' main manuscript, the late twelfth-century Paris, BNF, gr. 1182, but has been preserved also anonymously in a post-Byzantine manuscript, Moscow, GIM, Sin. gr. 303 (sixteenth–seventeenth c.), and its apograph.¹ In the Paris manuscript, the text is placed together with Psellos' summary of Dionysios of Halikarnassos' *On Composition* (*On Literary Composition*: this volume, Part 1, no. 3), along with a few other similar treatises that derive likely from Psellos' teaching activity. Followed in the present volume by a longer piece (*Poem 7*) below, the *Synopsis* has been set first in our collection because together the two pieces provide a concise introduction to Hermogenes' corpus, the fundamental handbook of high rhetorical theory in Byzantium.

There is, in fact, nothing particularly Psellian about this short text. Similar summaries of Hermogenes' *On Forms*, produced by teachers of rhetoric, circulated in Byzantine manuscripts before and after Psellos. The earliest version of such a summary has been re-edited recently by Michel Patillon in his

1. Moore 2005: 403–4.

monumental new edition of the Hermogenian work (Patillon 2008–12: 4:235–54: *Synopses of the On Forms*). Patillon located the composition of the anonymous *Synopsis* in the context of the original unification of the Hermogenian corpus—or the *Art of Rhetoric* as the Byzantines referred to it—during the course of the fifth century and, in its later middle Byzantine version, during the ninth century. As is well known, the corpus included, in this sequence, the following five “principal” works: Aphthonios’ *Preliminary Exercises* (Προγυμνάσματα) and four treatises attributed (the second and fourth wrongly) to Hermogenes, *On Issues* (Περὶ στάσεων), *On Invention* (Περὶ εὐρέσεως), *On Forms* (Περὶ ιδεῶν), and *On the Method of Force* (Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος).² Simultaneously, as Patillon argues, the corpus was rounded off with introductions and summaries that systematized Hermogenes’ complex system of rhetorical-theoretical thought. It thus included such anonymous texts as a *Preface to the Art of Rhetoric* or the *Synopses of the On Forms* as well as a few other brief treatises.³ The anonymous *Synopsis*, which serves as a model for the Psellian work, is first attested in manuscripts of the tenth century. From the same context, we also possess a lengthy commentary of *On Forms* by Ioannes Sikeliotes, a teacher and rhetorician, active around the year 1000.⁴ At the end of each chapter devoted to each of the Hermogenian *Forms*, Sikeliotes provides a concise summary, titled Σύνοψις;⁵ if we were to put together all these summaries by Sikeliotes, they would create a similar review to that offered by Psellos.

Following these models, Psellos’ letter arranges the system of Hermogenes’ stylistic virtues or, what we might call, effects of style in the following way. The seven basic *Forms* [ιδέαι] are presented in this order:

- (1) Clarity [σαφήνεια] and its two subcategories: Purity [καθαρότης] and Distinctness [εὐκρίνεια]
- (2) Grandeur [μέγεθος] which is divided into Solemnity [σεμνότης], Asperity [τραχύτης], Vehemence [σφοδρότης], Brilliance [λαμπρότης], Vigor [ἄκμη], and Amplification [περιβολή]
- (3) Beauty [κάλλος]

2. For a discussion of the contents of the Hermogenian texts, see the introduction to the next essay by Jeffrey Walker in this volume; for Aphthonios, see Kennedy 2003 and, especially, Patillon 2008–12, vol. 1.

3. Patillon 2008–12: 1:v–xxxiii.

4. On Sikeliotes, see now Papaioannou 2015 with further bibliography.

5. Sikeliotes, *Comm.* 173.7f., 203.13f., 249.25f., etc.

- (4) Rapidity [γοργότης]
- (5) Sincerity [ἀληθινὸς λόγος] and its subcategory, Sternness [βαρύτης]
- (6) Character [ἦθος] and its own subdivisions: Simplicity [ἀφέλεια]; Sweetness [γλυκύτης]; Pungency [δριμύτης]; and Moderation [ἐπιείκεια]
- (7) Force [δεινότης], the culmination of all the virtues

The order differs slightly from the sequence of the Forms in Hermogenes' treatise (and its original *Synopses*), where Character follows Rapidity—perhaps a result of sloppy review on Psellos' part. Following Hermogenes, each of these Forms are then dissected according to eight categories (notably the last four deal primarily with what we might call prose rhythm):

- (1) Thoughts [ἐννοίας]: content appropriate for each style
- (2) Method [μέθοδος]: modes of presentation, arrangement, composition, and narrative
- (3) Diction [λέξεις]: choice of words and expressions
- (4) Figures [σχήματα]: particular stylistic devices⁶
- (5) Cola [κῶλα]: clauses; that is, semantic units of about seven to ten syllables
- (6) Composition [συνθήκη]: arrangement of words within sentences
- (7) Cadence [ἀνάπαυσις]: the ending of phrases and sentences
- (8) Rhythm [ῥυθμός]: the rhythmical patterning of entire sentences

Here too, our treatise is not as rigorous as similar texts. Psellos leaves out a great deal of information. Occasionally, he (or the later scribes) makes mistakes (see, e.g., note 13 below). Yet the treatise serves its purpose. The interested student could acquire a quick review of the basic Hermogenian categories or, better said, a basic reference to the study of the Hermogenian magnum opus, since Psellos' text—just like the next text in our collection (*Poem. 7*)—presupposes an extensive and direct engagement with Hermogenes' *On Forms* (and, one might add, detailed *commentaries* of it).

Editions and translations. The text has not yet been edited on the basis of all the existing manuscripts. The two earlier editions, based on different testimonies,

6. On Byzantine theory of rhetorical “figures” see now Valiavitcharska, forthcoming.

have been employed here, since they complement each other (Walz 1833 and Bake 1849: 147–50; numbers in square brackets indicate pages in the latter's edition). I have also consulted the Russian translation (Miller 1975: 158–60). For convenience, I have added in parentheses the corresponding paragraphs in Hermogenes' work that Psellos summarizes. The descriptions of subcategories of the major Forms have been indented. Finally, annotation has been rather selective. The interested reader should consult the detailed notes offered by Patillon's recent edition of *On Forms* (2012) and also the comments included with the following text translated in the present volume (especially lines 353–517). It should be noted that I have followed Patillon's translation and thus departed greatly from Wooten's (1987) often problematic English rendering of *On Forms*.

Synopsis of the Rhetorical Forms

Translation in collaboration with Christopher M. Geadrities

As you requested, I am writing this letter to you so as to offer a most concise summary, an art in miniature,¹ of the rhetorical forms. Let me begin with the first things first.

Clarity [σαφήνεια; *On Forms* 1.2²]

Clarity, since it is a general type [γένος],³ is divided into two forms: Purity [καθαρότητα] and Distinctness [εὐκρίνειαν].

Purity [καθαρότης; 1.3]

Purity contains thoughts [έννοίαις] which are entirely ordinary and in no way profound [1.3.1–3]. Method [μέθοδον]: plain narration of the subject matter that admits nothing extraneous [1.3.4–8]. Diction [λέξιν]: without figurative expressions, but with rather ordinary words [1.3.9]. Figure [σχῆμα]: the simple sentence [τὸ κατ' ὀρθότητα]⁴ [1.3.10–16]. Cola [κῶλα]: short, resembling *kom-*

1. Τεχνύδιον: a handbook. See also the discussion in the next essay of this volume.
2. Subsequent citations omit the title of Hermogenes' treatise; all citations are from the edition of Patillon 2012.

3. In the Aristotelian sense of *genus*.

4. As opposed to the oblique construction (πλαγιασμός), which involves the presence of a genitive absolute, subordination, etc.

mata [1.3.17].⁵ Composition [συνθήκην]: indifferent to hiatus [1.3.18–21]. Cadence [ἀνάπαυσιν]: iambic, trochaic, and with similar metrical ending [1.3.22–25].

Distinctness [εὐκρίνεια; 1.4]

Distinctness has those thoughts that announce their subject and lead the speech back to its starting point; those that formulate the arrangement of the topics that will be discussed; and those that provide a transition from one topic to another [1.4.4–7]. Method: presenting the subjects in natural order [1.4.8–9]. Figures: grouping topics together; also separating them and enumerating them [1.4.11–16]. Diction, cola, composition, cadence, and rhythm [ῥυθμόν]: the same as those used in Purity [1.4.11–17].

Grandeur [μέγεθος; 1.5]

Grandeur is divided into Solemnity [σεμνότητα], Asperity [τραχύτητα], Vehemence [σφοδρότητα], Brilliance [λαμπρότητα], Vigor [ἄκμήν], and Amplification [περιβολήν].

Solemnity [σεμνότης; 1.6]

The thoughts of Solemnity are (a) those that concern God,⁶ when spoken of as God; (b) those that concern divine matters—for example, the seasons, and the revolution of the universe; (c) those notions or such matters that are divine by nature, but are encountered primarily in human affairs—for example, the

5. For the distinction of the longer unit of a colon (containing seven to ten syllables) from the shorter unit of the *komma* (up to six syllables), see “Hermogenes,” *On Invention* 4.4: τὸ μὲν ἀπὸ τεττάρων καὶ πέντε συλλαβῶν μέχρι τῶν ἑξ κόμμα ἐστὶν τὸ δὲ ὑπὲρ τὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀκτὼ καὶ δέκα καὶ ἐγγίζον ἤδη τῷ τριμέτρῳ καὶ μέχρι τοῦ ἡρωικοῦ προχωροῦν κῶλον γίνεται. An anonymous Byzantine commentary (which survives, among other mss., in the eleventh-c. Paris, BNF, gr. 2977, an important collection of rhetorical theory), suggests larger figures, perhaps reflecting middle Byzantine practice: *komma*, up to nine syllables or three words; colon, seven to sixteen syllables or “more than three words” (Anonymous, *Prolegomena to a Comm. on Hermogenes’ On Invention* 822.12–823.5, ed. Walz 7.2). Cf. Valiavitcharska 2013: 111.

6. Rather than “gods” as in Hermogenes and also the original *Synopses*.

soul, justice, self-restraint, and other similar things; [155] (d) those thoughts that concern great and noble <human> deeds [1.6.1–11]. Methods: commanding declarations given without hesitation; also allegories⁷ [1.6.12–15]. Diction: words that are extensive⁸ [1.6.16–23]. Figures: the simple sentence and the insertion of personal judgments [ἐπικρίσεις] [1.6.24–29]. Cola: rather short [1.6.30]. Composition: with hiatus; dactylic, anapestic, and spondaic [1.6.31–34]. Cadence: such that it makes the speech spondaic or dactylic, but without metrical ending [1.6.35–37].

Asperity [τραχύτης; 1.7]

Asperity includes such thoughts as those used by persons of inferior status when they censure superiors [1.7.5–12]. Method: to censure openly [1.7.13]. Diction: both the metaphorical and the inherently harsh⁹ [1.7.14–15]. Figures: commands, questions, refutation [1.7.16–18]. Cola: rather short and more like *kommata* [1.7.19]. Composition: with hiatus, without rhythm, and irregular [1.7.20–21].

Vehemence [σφοδρότης; 1.8]

Vehemence contains thoughts that censure and refute persons of inferior status [1.8.1–4]. Method: directness [1.8.5]. Diction: the sort that invents words according to the subject matter [1.8.6]. Figure: *apostrophe*¹⁰ and pejorative statements [1.8.7–9]. Cola: *kommata* and rather the sort that pause after individual words [1.8.10]. Composition, cadence, and rhythm: the same as those of Asperity [1.8.11].

Brilliance [λαμπρότης; 1.9]

Brilliance contains those thoughts that make the speaker full of confidence, or, rather, they are the sort of thoughts in which he is confident [1.9.4–6].

7. This is the only instance where Hermogenes refers to “allegory,” by which he seems to indicate metaphors and images applied to divine persons or matters.

8. They require, that is, a wide open mouth in their pronunciation; Hermogenes notes that such words are especially those that include the phonemes α and ω.

9. By which Hermogenes seems to mean repetition or excessive presence of voiceless plosive consonants in particular (π, τ, κ).

10. Direct questions, addressed to the opponent.

Method: speaking without hesitation and relating illustrious deeds in a more illustrious fashion [1.9.4–10]. Diction: solemn [1.9.11]. Figures: direct denials, lack of connectives [ἄσύνδετον], subordination [παραγισμὸν], employment of detached phrases [ἀποστάσεις] [1.9.12–17]. Use of long cola [1.9.18]. The rest is like that used in Solemnity.

Vigor [ἄκμή; 1.10]

The thoughts and methods of Vigor are the same as those of Asperity and Vehemence, while its figures, cola, composition, cadence, and rhythm are like those used in Brilliance.

Amplification [περιβολή; 1.11]

The thoughts characteristic of Amplification admit something extraneous to the argument [156], or add the genus to the species, or add something which is undefined to that which is defined, or add the whole to the part. They also include speaking about the matter in a way that is not plain, inverting the order of affairs, and using parenthetical statements [1.11.3–14]. The following are rather a matter of method: the inversion of the order of facts, the parenthetical statement, the expansion made in reference to quality, and the placing of the confirmations of a statement before the statement [1.11.15–21]. There is no diction characteristic of Amplification, unless someone would say that it is synonymous expressions [1.11.22–28]. Figures: enumeration, the enumerative figure [τὸ ἀπαριθμητικόν], the introduction of arguments in order of importance, suppositions, partition, subordination, run-on constructions, employment of detached phrases, copulative constructions involving negation, the inclusion of many thoughts in one sentence, or the insertion of parenthetical statements [1.11.29–59].

Beauty [κάλλος; 1.12]

The form of Beauty is indivisible. It does not have its own characteristic thoughts or method. Figures: clauses with an equal number of syllables [παρισώσεις], repetition of a word at the beginning of a colon [αἱ κατὰ κῶλα

ἐπαναφοραί], counterturn [ἀντιστροφή],¹¹ climax [κλιμαξ],¹² negations, the division of paired thoughts, *hyperbaton*,¹³ novel expressions, and repetition of a word in different forms [1.12.11–39]. Cola: rather long¹⁴ [1.11.40–44]. Composition does not admit hiatus [1.11.45–47].

Rapidity [γοργότης; 2.1]

The form of Rapidity is also indivisible. It does not have its own characteristic thoughts, but its method is the use of rapid objections [2.1.4–6]. Figures: incidental remarks by insertion,¹⁵ run-on constructions, lack of connectives in sequence of *kommata*, swift variation, and rapid¹⁶ interweaving [συμπλοκαί] [2.1.7–29]. Composition: without hiatus [2.1.32–34]. Cadence: ends in a trochee, and is not stable [2.1.35].

Sincerity [ἀληθινὸς λόγος; 2.7]

Sincerity is also indivisible. Thoughts: simple and moderate. Method: the expression of indignation and the other emotions, without revealing in advance whatever¹⁷ might be employed, and without maintaining their sequence

11. For this figure, that involves the repetition of the same word in the same position of the subsequent colon; see the definition of Ioannes Sikeliotes (*Comm.* 335.17–24): ἀντιστροφή γὰρ λέγεται ἡ διὰ τὸ στρέφειν τὸν ῥήτορα τὴν αὐτὴν λέξιν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ τοῦ δευτέρου κώλου· ἡ διὰ τὸ ὥσπερ ἀντιπρόσωπα ἀλλήλων εἶναι τὰ αὐτὰ σχήματα· ἔχει δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ σχῆμα ὁ Θεολόγος· “καίτοι, κἂν εἰ τοῦτο ἦν, οὐπω δῆλον ὥσπερ Ἑλληνικὸν ἦν” [*Against Julian* = *Or.* 4.103]· καὶ “εἴπερ τοῖς συνθέτοις τὸ εἶναι μόνον συνθέτοις” [*On the Theophany* = *Or.* 38.7], καὶ “Ἀβραὰμ οὐκ ἔγνω ἡμᾶς· καὶ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἐπέγνω ἡμᾶς” [*Farewell Speech* = *Or.* 42. 3].

12. Hermogenes’ example of this rare figure is Demosthenes, *On the Crown* = *Or.* 18.179: οὐκ εἶπον μὲν ταῦτα, οὐκ ἔγραψα δέ· οὐδ’ ἔγραψα μὲν, οὐκ ἐπρέσβευσα δέ· οὐδ’ ἐπρέσβευσα μὲν, οὐκ ἔπεισα δέ.

13. For this figure, see now Chiron 2010.

14. Emending here μικρότερα to μακρότερα, following the text of Hermogenes.

15. Reading ἐξ ἐπεμβολῆς ὑποστροφή instead of ἐξ ἐπιστροφῆς ἐπεμβολή; cf. Anonymous, *Synopses of the On Forms* 10.5 (with Patillon’s relevant critical apparatus).

16. Emending here τραχεῖαι to ταχεῖαι, following the text of Hermogenes.

17. Reading ὅ,τι instead of ὅτι. We would like to thank one of the reviewers for this correction.

[2.7.4–27]. Diction: harsh [2.7.28–31]. Figures: piteous appeals, sudden outbursts, apostrophe, and insertion of personal judgments [2.7.32–44]. Composition, cadence, and rhythm: like those found in Vehemence; in piteous appeals [157], however, these should be simple [2.7.45].

Sternness [βαρύτης; 2.8]

Sternness is not a style that is observed in and of itself, rather it comprises Simplicity [ἀφελείας], Moderation [ἐπιεικείας], and other forms related to Character [ἠθικῶν]. Thoughts: reproachful [2.8.1–2]. Method: the use of irony [2.8.3–14]. Figure: hesitation when discussing things that are agreed upon [2.8.15–16]. Sternness does not include the other six parts,¹⁸ but rather obtains them from the forms related to Character [2.8.19].

Forms related to Character [ἠθικαὶ ἰδέαι; 2.2]

Simplicity [ἀφέλεια; 2.3]

Simplicity is one of the forms related to Character. Thoughts: those of naïve characters,¹⁹ or irrational animals and plants [2.3.1–16]. Methods: those used in Purity as well as redundancy with respect to the division into parts [2.3.17–18]. Diction: idiomatic expressions—for example: “to brother [ἀδελφίζειν]”²⁰ [2.3.19–20]. Figures and cola: those used in Purity [2.3.21]. Composition: rather simple and loose [λελυμένη] [2.3.22]. Cadence: stable [βεβηκυῖα] [2.3.23].

Sweetness [γλυκύτης; 2.4]

Sweetness is separate from Simplicity. Thoughts: mythical, those close to mythical narratives, things that please our senses, and those that add rational intent to things that have no free will [2.4.1–18]. Methods: those of Purity

18. I.e.: diction, figures (in Hermogenes the “hesitation . . .” is included in the discussion of method), cola, composition, cadence, and rhythm.

19. Among whom, Hermogenes (2.3.4) includes infants, women, rustic farmers, and simple-minded harmless people.

20. Isocrates, *Aegineticus* 30.

[2.4.19]. Diction: simple and rather poetic [2.4.20–30]. Figures: those of Purity [2.4.31]. Composition: avoids hiatus [2.4.32]. Cadence: that of Solemnity — that is, stable. Rhythm: like that of Simplicity [2.4.33].

Pungency [δριμύτης: 2.5]

Pungency is also separate from Simplicity. Thoughts: superficially profound [2.5.1]; whenever a word indicates a concept literally even though it is not its proper meaning [2.5.2–8]; the use of words that sound similar [2.5.9–10]; the use of puns [τὸ ἐκ παρονομασίας] [2.5.11–12]; and when we add more metaphorical expressions after having used a metaphor [2.5.13–15].

Moderation [ἐπιείκεια: 2.6]

Moderation belongs also to the category of Character. Thought: showing oneself at a disadvantage willingly, and granting some advantage to one's opponent [2.6.1–7]. Method: not speaking vehemently against your opponent [2.6.8–23]. The rest: as in Purity and Simplicity [2.6.24].

Force [δεινότης: 2.9]

This too is an indivisible form.²¹ Thoughts: the paradoxical, the profound, the powerful [158], and all of those that create Grandeur. Method: the sort that is appropriate for all such thoughts as well as any that produce Grandeur. Methods in discourse that is not Forceful, but appears to be such:²² those characteristic of Simplicity and Character. Diction [of Forceful discourse that both is and appears to be such]: very dignified and metaphorical. In the discourse that does not seem to be Forceful, but is such: the diction is simple and according to character [2.9.29–33]. The form of Force, which seems to be forceful but is not, has the most power with respect to its diction [2.9.34–37]. The figures, cola, composition, cadence, and rhythm [of Forceful discourse that both is and appears to be such] are like those found in Grandeur.

21. Following his model (Anonymous, *Synopses of the On Forms*), Psellos focuses on the various aspects of Forceful discourse “that both is *and* appears to be such” [2.9.18–28], but adds features of Forceful discourse “that is, but does not appear to be such” [2.9.29–33], and of Forceful discourse “that is not, but appears to be such” [2.9.34–37].

22. Following here the edition in Walz.