

**Jasmina Šaranac Stamenković**

*Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš*

*University of Niš, Center for Byzantine-Slavic Studies – Serbia*

*e-mail: j.saranac@gmail.com*

## **PSELLOS' EPISTLE (ΤΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΥ) ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΑ ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΚΑΝ: THE BYZANTINE BASILEUS ARCHETYPE OF GOD ON EARTH\***

**Abstract:** *The paper analyses the letter No. 29 in the edition by E. Kurtz and F. Drexel, which was addressed to the emperor Constantine X Doukas by Michael Psellos. On the basis of the comparative analysis of data from the mentioned epistle and the Holy Scripture, it is shown that the main theme of Psellos' letter was to draw a parallel between the Roman emperor, the ruler on Earth and God, the ruler of the Heavenly Kingdom.*

**Key words:** *epistolography in the Byzantine Empire, Michael Psellos, 11<sup>th</sup> century, Constantine X Doukas, Holy Scripture*

During the long history of the Byzantine Empire, epistolography was particularly practiced within the circles of the Roman intelligentsia. In the period when the literary genres were strictly obeying the form and pattern, the Byzantine epistle had a somewhat individual character.<sup>1</sup> After dealing with prescribed literary conventions, on the one hand, and imperial absolutism on the other, a writer of epistles would instil into a certain epistle all of his talent and erudition, and, in the end, he would give a personal mark to the epistle.

Epistles were mostly addressed to the Roman intellectual elite and they were read in public, in front of educated listeners.<sup>2</sup> This also dictated the style of the letters. It depended on the high position occupied by the addressee on the Byzantine hierarchal social scale and the content of the epistle.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it depended on the character, education and skills of the writer himself.

The following characteristics of the Byzantine epistle singled out as important and highly valued: the laconic way of expression, or, in other words, conciseness (*βραχυλογία*), clarity (*σαφήνεια*) and grace (*χάρις*), that is, the elegance of style.<sup>4</sup> As in other Byzantine literary genres, the epistolography also gladly used antique and Biblical motives.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Миловановић 1979, 64.

2 Радошевић 1998b, 177. Margaret Mullett, in her *Rhetoric, Theory and the Imperative of Performance: Byzantium and Now*, has paid special attention to Roman audience for which the literary works were intended, see Mullett 2002, 151–170.

3 Радошевић 1998a, 34.

4 Радошевић 1991, 158–159. The last feature of an epistle (*χάρις*) is simultaneously one of the central theological terms. *χάρις* is a Greek word for God's grace (LXX Ex 11,3; 3,12) that is abundantly bestowed upon men by Christ (*Jn* 1,16-17; *Rom* 5, 15-20; *Gal* 1,6.15...). Theologically educated

In the Byzantine Empire letters were first and foremost used for communication among friends, that is, for nurturing and strengthening friendships (*φιλία*).<sup>6</sup> Some Byzantine letters are solely a stylistic exercise and the indicator of scholarly achievements of an epistolographer. However, through allusions and metaphors, the letters were also used for transferring certain messages.<sup>7</sup>

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Within the rich literary legacy of Michael Psellos, a brilliant Roman scholar of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, there is a preserved epistolographic collection consisting of letters addressed to emperors who successively occupied the throne during Psellos' lifetime and work. The focus of research in this paper refers to Psellos' letter No. 29 in the edition by E. Kurtz and F. Drexel addressed to one of the emperors of the Doukas dynasty.

*(Τοῦ αὐτοῦ) πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα τὸν Δούκαν*

*Ὁρᾶς, ὅπως κατατολῶ σου, θεϊότατε βασιλεῦ, καὶ οὔτε σου τὸν ὑπερφαῖ κύκλον δέδοικα οὔτε σου τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ψυχῆς πέφρικα. ἀλλὰ πολλὰκις σοι δημηγόρος ἐφέστηκα. εἰ γὰρ καὶ καταπλήττεις τῷ ἀπαραμίλλῳ κάλλει τῶν ἀρετῶν. ἀλλ' ὡς θεὸς εὐμενῆς καὶ ἴλεως ἔστηκας· καὶ σοῦ τις δειλιῶν τὸ τῆς λαμπηδόνης ὑπερφυῖες καὶ ἀτεχνῶς μύων τὰ ὄμματα θαρῶρει πως τὴν ἐπιείκειαν. αὕτη γοῦν κάμει πολλάκις δημηγόρον ποιεῖ καὶ ὑποχωροῦντα ἐφέλκεται καὶ ὑποστελλόμενον ἡρέμα ἐπάγεται.*

*Δύο γοῦν ἐπὶ σοὶ ἀπέραντα κατανενόηκα πέρατα. ὕψος καὶ βάθος, τὸ μὲν φρονήσεως, τὸ δὲ ταπεινώσεως. ἀλλ' ὅτε μὲν εἰς τὸ ὕψος ἀνανεύσω τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἰλιγγιῶ καὶ σκοτοδιניῶ καὶ οὐκ ἔχω. πῶς ἂν ἐναντιώσω σου τῷ ἀπειρῷ φωτί· ὅταν δὲ εἰς τὸ βάθος τῆς σῆς μετριοφροσύνης ἐγκύψω ὡσπερ εἰς ἀχανὲς πέλαγος. μικροῦ δεῖν ἐξίσταμαι τῶν φρενῶν καὶ οὐκ ἔχω. πῶς ἂν ἐμαυτὸν ἐπιστηρίζω. ἵνα σου θεασωμαι τὰ ἀθέατα. ὃ ἀρρήτου συγκράσεως. ὃ εὐμελοῦς τῶν ἐναντίων μίξεως. ἐξήτασαι μετὰ ἀγγέλων ταῖς τῶν ἀρετῶν ἀστραπαῖς καὶ τεθέασαι μετὰ ἀνθρώπων τῷ ἀλύπῳ τῶν σῶν ἡθῶν καὶ ἡμέρῳ χρήματι· ἔστηκας ὡσπερ ἐν κέντρῳ τοῖς ἀνακτορικοῖς σημεῖοις καὶ τὸν πάντα κύκλον περιοδεύεις τῆς οἰκουμένης· ἴστασαι τοῖς Ἀραβῶν ἀντιπρόσωπος, πρὸς τὴν Περσικὴν ἠγρόνισαι δύναμιν· ἀναστέλλεις τὸ βάρβαρον θράσος, εἶτα δὴ πρὸς τὴν ἐσπέραν χωρεῖς ἢ μᾶλλον ἐν ταῦτῳ καὶ περιπλεῖς τὸν Εὐφράτην καὶ παραπλεῖς ἀμεταθέτως τὸν Ἰστρον. ὃ βραχιόνων ὑψηλῶν καὶ στερρόν. ὃ μεγέθους ἀπειρου φύσεως. ἦνῶσαι τῷ θεῷ, ταῖς τοῦ νοῦ περιωπαῖς ἐφάνης ἐπὶ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς πόλεως. τῇ περιγραφῇ τοῦ σώματος οὐ περιγράφει σε ἡ τοῦ ἡλίου ἀνατολή. ἀλλ' ἔχει καὶ ὁ τῆς ἐσπέρας κύκλος. καὶ δέδοικε μὲν σε ἐν τοῖς ἄκροις ὁ βάρβαρος, θαρρόνυμεν δὲ σε ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τῆς μεσότητος. οὐ λέληθας ἡμᾶς προϊστάμενος ἡμῶν ἀπορρήτοις βουλευμάσι καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄλων προστασίαν ἀναζωννύμενος.*

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Byzantine epistolographers, pursuing *χάρις* as an indispensable feature of their epistles, implied also the theological dimension of epistolography as a means of conveying or participating in God's grace by pondering at various theological issues and motifs in their epistles. In the case of Psellos, these motifs were usually used in his correspondence with Emperors, emphasizing their functional parallels with the Christ – the provider of grace.

5 Grünbart 2005, 78–103.

6 Grünbart 2005, 113–123. The concept of friendship was complex in the Byzantine Empire during the 11th century. It included the “elements of role-model friendships from the classic literature, but also the rough reality of the political life, in which friends were allies and followers as much as soul mates,” see Kazhdan – Constable 1982, 28. About the concept of friendship in the Byzantine Empire see Mullett 1988, 3–24; Mullett 1999, 166–184. Michael Psellos praised friendship as the highest form of human relations. His letters contain detailed definitions of friendship, and real caring for friends, see Tinnefeld 1973, 151–168. About Psellos' understanding of friendship see Любарский 1978, 117–124.

7 Радошевић 1991, 155.

οἶδαμέν σου τὰ κρύφια σκέμματα, ἐπιστάμεθά σου τὰς ἀπορρήτους βουλὰς. εἶπω τὸ μείζον; καὶ αὐταὶ σου αἰ νυκτεριναὶ πρὸς θεὸν δεήσεις ὡσπερ ἀστραπαὶ τινες ἔλαμψαν. καὶ ὅσον λανθάνειν ἐπέιγη, τοσοῦτόν σε φρυκτωρεῖ θεὸς καὶ καταφανῆ πᾶσι καθίστησιν. ὦ τοῦ θαύματος. οὔτε τῶν ὑψηλοτέρων ἀφέστηκας οὔτε τῶν ἐλαττόνων ἡμέληκας. ἀλλ' ἐν ταύτῳ τοῖς τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐντρυφᾶς πόνοις. καὶ συντρυφᾶν ἡμῖν οὐκ ἀπαξιοῖς, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀσπίδα διὰ τῆς ἀριστερᾶς προβαλλόμενος διὰ τῆς δεξιᾶς κοινωνεῖς ἡμῖν τοῦ συσσιτίου. καὶ κρατήρα φιλοφροσύνης ἰστᾶς, ὑπὲρ οὗ χεθήσεται σοι ἄνωθεν ὁ θεῖος κρατήρ καὶ οὐράνιος. καὶ πληρωθεῖς τῆς νοερᾶς εὐφροσύνης καὶ συνεστιαθείς θεῷ, πληρούμενος τῆς τε ἀμβροσίας ὁμοῦ καὶ τοῦ νέκταρος.

*To Emperor Doukas*

*I am acquainted, oh divine basileus, with what kind of courage I step in front of you. I am neither scared of your glaring halo, nor I tremble for your generosity, but I have many times publicly spoken in your favour. And even though you dazzle with the incomparable beauty of your virtues, you are still as gentle and graceful as God. And who would dare, while fearing your miraculous glow and coyly turning their eyes away, to describe your gentleness? Since it was gentleness that led me many times into publicly supporting you; and when I started to move away (sc. from you), it would draw me (sc. to you) and when I withdrew it would calmly pull me back (to you).*

*In you, I have perceived two infinite dimensions. Height and depth – the former in your reasoning and the latter in your calmness. And when I raise my head to see the height (sc. of your reason), my head spins and dark sets (sc. in front of my eyes), so I feel lost. How can I be able to look into your infinite light? And when I lean over the depth of your good reasoning, it is as if I am drifting over the open sea, I'm about to lose my senses and disappear. How will I keep myself to see all that which cannot be seen? Oh unspeakable mixture! Oh harmonious union of opposites! The angels have questioned the lightning of your virtues and people have seen mercy in your acts and your generosity for (sc. human) needs. You stand in your royal palace as in a centre (sc. of the universe) and you encircle the entire universe. You confront the Arabs, you fight the Persian army. You suppress the arrogance of barbarians, either when you progress towards the West or you sail the Euphrates and unstopably flow along the Danube. Oh (sc. man), with your strong hands held high. Oh (sc. man) whose nature's size is undetermined. You are united with God, rising above our city (sc. Byzantium) by your elevated mind. The look of your body cannot describe the sunrise, but it can show the evening circle. And the Barbarian was afraid of your hands, while we received courage from your shoulders. You did not forget us, although you represent us in the unsaid plans and you veiled yourself with our protection. We know your secret thoughts, we are familiar with your unsaid plans. Should I continue? And these night prayers of yours to God have lightened up like (sc. night) lightning. And as much as (sc. you think) it is necessary to keep (sc. your prayers) unnoticed, that much you are enlightened by God and (sc. they) become clear to all. Oh, wonder! You neither departed from the highest ones, nor you neglected those of us who are small, but you enjoyed the effort you had made for our benefit. And by making this effort you did not renounce us, but you raised the shield in your left arm while using the right one to share the meal with us. And you are holding the cup of mildness which is filled from above by the divine and heavenly chalice. Shall you be filled with mental joy and shall you eat at the God's table, full of both ambrosia and nectar.*

### Comments

On the basis of the data which is provided by Psellos' epistle No. 29 in the edition by E. Kurtz and F. Drexel, it is clear that it represents, in a certain sense, an encomium to one of

the rulers from the Doukas dynasty. In accordance with that, its basic subject was the celebration of the Basyleus' personality.

Michael Psellos dedicated the aforementioned letter to "emperor Doukas" [(*Τοῦ αὐτοῦ*) *πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα τὸν Δούκαν*].<sup>8</sup> This could mean that the addressee is either Emperor Constantine Doukas (1059–1067), or Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078), the first-born son and the heir of Constantine Doukas. Being that the epistolographer builds up the character of his hero using the same motifs which are characteristic for the emperor Constantine X in *Chronographia* and the imperial speeches (and they refer to the success in the battlefield, and courage, righteousness, moderation, benevolence, piety and philanthropy of the emperor),<sup>9</sup> it can rightly be concluded that Psellos addressed the given epistle to Constantine X Doukas himself.<sup>10</sup>

The compositional structure of this letter is the following: in the introduction, Michael Psellos notes that he is not afraid of the emperor's nature, which is benevolent and merciful. On the contrary, the epistolographer freely expresses himself in public, while emphasizing that it has always been for the benefit of the emperor (41.25–26 – 42.1–7).

In the central part of the epistle, the writer praises emperor's virtues. They include reason, calmness and courage. Besides this, Psellos speaks positively about the emperor's military politics concerning the three Byzantine fronts (42.8–25).

In the concluding part, the epistolographer points out the emperor's modesty, piety and philanthropy, which is particularly expressed in his care for the subjects of the Empire. On the one hand, as the God's chosen one on Earth, Doukas defends the Roman people from the external political enemies. On the other hand, he equally shares his table with his fellow citizens, thus showing that everyone is equal in front of God (42.25–30 – 43.1–12). Finally, due to the instilled Christian virtues, Psellos wishes for Constantine X to eat at God's table (43.12–14).

It is certain that the composition of the given letter relies on the patterns of imperial speeches which Michael Psellos, as an excellent proponent of the emperor's will and state ideology, composed for Constantine X Doukas.<sup>11</sup>

Michael Psellos starts the letter *in medias res*, without any polite addressing. At the very beginning, he points out his remarkable learnedness which he has "many times" (*πολλάκις*) put into the service of encomiums, his literary works, in order to propagate the character and the merits of the Emperor Constantine Doukas. Psellos skilfully uses a universal place of denying the personality of the writer in relation to the virtues and acts of the ruling emperor, a mandatory motif of the encomium literary genre. However, encouraged by the beauty of the emperor's virtues (generosity, gentleness, grace) he dared to compose speeches for him, and therefore save them from oblivion in this way, although unworthy of the emperor's grandeur and rule.

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8 *Psellos, Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 41<sup>24</sup>.

9 *Psello, Cronografia* II, 296; 306–308; 310; 312; *Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 9, 113<sup>44–45</sup>–114<sup>46–53</sup>; *Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 10, 115<sup>12–18</sup>–116<sup>19–20</sup>; 116<sup>40–45</sup>; *Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 14, 131<sup>14–26</sup>–132<sup>27–30</sup>. Although some of the aforementioned virtues of Constantine Doukas represent the traditional *topoi* of imperial speeches – wisdom (*φρόνησις*), fairness (*δικαιοσύνη*), moderation (*σφροσύνη*) and courage (*ἀνδραγα*) – Michael Psellos insists on them in all of his sources in which he writes about Constantine X. Psellos does not describe Emperor Michael VII Doukas in this manner neither in *Chronographia*, nor in his encomiums.

10 Cf. Polemis 1968, 33 and n. 41; Любарский 1978, 113; Karpozilos 1984, 27 and n. 88, 91; Grünbart 2005, 138, n. 10.

11 The pattern of imperial speeches was determined during the transition from the 3rd to 4th century A.D. in the treatise by Menander Rhetor, see Hunger 1978, 88. About the compositional structure of the encomium in detail see Радошевић 1982, 64.

It is obvious that, in the introductory part, Psellos uses two common elements of imperial speeches. It refers to solar metaphoric related to the ruler cult<sup>12</sup> and traditional Roman ideology according to which the emperor of the Byzantine Empire is the image and body of God on Earth.<sup>13</sup> As the Sun shines on Earth, in the same way Doukas shines with the beauty of his virtues and lights the Byzantines.

In the imperial speech No. 9 in the edition by G. Dennis, Michael Psellos emphasises God's help in the war against the enemies, by comparing Constantine X with the Sun.<sup>14</sup> However, in the encomium No. 14, in the edition by Dennis, there is no explicit use of the comparison between Constantine Doukas and the Sun. Still, by describing the attack by Oozo onto the Byzantine territory, he compared Barbarians with the clouds which come from the West trying to cover the Empire, that is, the emperor (i.e. the Sun) who rules it.<sup>15</sup>

In the central part of the letter, Psellos describes the virtues of Doukas, referring to the New Testament, thus speaking of the "elevation" (*ὑψος*) of Constantine's mind and the "depth" (*βάθος*) of his calmness.<sup>16</sup> In the *Epistle of the Saint Apostle Paul to Ephesians* there are all four measures of Christ's virtues: width, length, height and depth (*τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μήκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος*).<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it is certain that the epistolographer compares Constantine X with Jesus Christ, son of God; this time (Michael) Psellos does that indirectly.

Michael Psellos emphasizes the emperor's concern for his subjects, expressed through his generosity, alluding to the *Book of Exodus* in which he claims that seeing God has deadly consequences for a man.<sup>18</sup> In the *Gospel according to John* there is the same claim that God has never been seen by anyone and that this is not possible.<sup>19</sup> The interesting fact is that, in this instance, a learned court rhetorician directly compares himself with Moses and Emperor Constantine X with God. That is why it should be taken into account that an explicit comparison of Emperor Constantine X with the Old Testament's religious leader Moses is one of Psellos' routine motifs in *Chronographia* and in imperial speeches dedicated to Constantine X.<sup>20</sup>

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12 Psellos, *Scripta minora* II, βρ. 29, 42<sup>3-5</sup>. Solar metaphoric in imperial speeches, one of the pagan motifs which became an inseparable part of encomiums addressed to Roman Christian emperors, originated from the speeches of the early Byzantine era. About the pagan topos of encomiums referring to the comparison of Byzantine emperors with the Sun and the empresses with the Moon, see Радошевић 1987, 81; Радошевић 1994, 8 and n. 5; Vries – van der Velden 1996, 239–256. Therefore, for example, in the encomium No. 19 in the edition by Dennis, Michael Psellos compares Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes with the Sun, and the Augusta Eudokia Makrembolitissa, his wife, with the Moon: *Ποῦ ποτε ἀπαίρεις ὁ λαμπρότατος ἥλιος, ὁ μέγας τῆς ἀληθείας φωστήρ; πῶς δὲ καὶ καρτερεῖς τὴν τοῦ κόσμου σελήνην ἀπολιπὼν, ὅφ' ἢς ἐφωτίσθης καὶ ἦν φωτίσεις λαμπρότερον;* [Where do you go, the brightest Sun (sc. Emperor Romanos), the great beacon of truth? How do you bear to be far from the Moon (sc. the Empress Eudokia), which shines on me and which you enlighten even more?], see Psellus, *Orationes panagyricae*, No. 19, 180<sup>2-5</sup>. The comparison of emperors with the Sun, and the empresses with the Moon was also used by the writers from the Roman states which were created after 1204. In a letter by John Apokaukos addressed to Maria Doukas, the wife of a ruler Theodore Doukas of Thessaloniki (1215–1230), she is compared with the Moon and her husband with the Sun, see Целебџић 2008, 129.

13 Psellos, *Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 42<sup>3</sup>. About the political ideology of the Byzantine Empire see Острогорски 1970a, 281–364; Острогорски 1970b, 238–262; Острогорски 1970c, 263–277.

14 Psellus, *Orationes panagyricae*, No. 9, 113<sup>21-41</sup>.

15 Psellus, *Orationes panagyricae*, No. 14, 132<sup>35-42</sup>.

16 Psellos, *Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 42<sup>8-9</sup>.

17 Eph 3,18.

18 Psellos, *Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 42<sup>16-18</sup>. LXX Ex 33,20

19 Jn 1,18

20 Psello, *Cronografia* II, 314; Psellus, *Orationes panagyricae*, No. 10, 116<sup>33-36</sup>; Psellus, *Orationes*

The fact that Constantine X Doukas was generous is confirmed by the following Psellos' statement in *Chronographia*: "the emperor did not let anyone go empty-handed, neither high ranking dignitaries, nor those dignitaries of the lower rank, nor lower ranking clerks and craftsmen."<sup>21</sup>

The epistolographer writes in an obvious flattering manner about the way in which the Byzantine emperor, without leaving the imperial palace, expanded the borders of oecumene, thanks to the success of his armies on the Danube and the Euphrates. According to Psellos, Doukas defeated the Arabs and the Persians.<sup>22</sup> It is most certain that the rhetorician uses an archaic name for the Seljuk Turks – Persians.<sup>23</sup>

The information that Michael Psellos provides in *Chronographia* about the military politics of Constantine X Doukas are contradictory. He states that Doukas was very dedicated to the problems of military organization, and that, therefore, he surpassed other emperors in that regard, and that "not just once, he successfully accomplished tough military obligations and crowned his head with victory wreaths."<sup>24</sup> Also, in the imperial speeches No. 9, No. 10 and No. 14 in the edition by G. Dennis, Psellos described Constantine X Doukas as the expert in military skills and strategy.<sup>25</sup>

However, in a different part of *Chronographia*, Michael Psellos states that Constantine X has pursued military policy of the Byzantine Empire in a bad way. Although he finds excuses for the emperor by pointing out that the negative attitude of Doukas towards the army has been the fault of his advisors who flatter him, Psellos emphasises that it is such attitude of the emperor towards his soldiers that led to the collapse of the Roman state.<sup>26</sup> Historiographic scriptures of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (*The History* by Michael Attaleiates, *Chronicle* by Skylitzes Continuatus, *Chronicle* by John Zonaras) confirm Psellos' testimony about the poor military policy of Emperor Constantine X Doukas.<sup>27</sup>

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*panagyricae*, No. 14, 132<sup>51</sup>–133<sup>52–55</sup>, 133<sup>70–71</sup>. It should be pointed out that, in the imperial speech No. 21 in the edition by G. Dennis addressed to Romanos IV Diogenes, Michael Psellos indirectly compares him to Moses, see *Psellos, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 21, 185<sup>12</sup>, 186<sup>13–14</sup>. However, in the same speech, the rhetorician also compares Diogenes with Jesus Navin and Jesus Christ, see *Psellos, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 21, 186<sup>13</sup>, 186<sup>24–25</sup>. Being that this speech is interwoven with Biblical motifs, it seems likely that Psellos uses Moses as one of the Biblical heroes for comparing him with Romanos Diogenes and not as a motif which is characteristic for the aforementioned emperor.

21 *Psellos, Cronografia* II, 306.

22 *Psellos, Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 42<sup>20–21</sup>.

23 It was not unusual that Roman writers use archaic names for peoples. Thus, for example, John Kinnamos, a Byzantine historian of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, most often refers to the Serbs as the Dalmatians, the Hungarians as Huns and Peons, and the Seljuk Turks as Persians, see *Византизм* IV (2007<sup>2</sup>): 3 (J. Калић).

24 *Psellos, Cronografia* II, 294.

25 *Psellos, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 9, 113<sup>21–41</sup>; *Psellos, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 10, 116<sup>21–39</sup>; *Psellos, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 14, 132<sup>27–30</sup>; 132<sup>50–51</sup>–133<sup>52–60</sup>.

26 *Psellos, Cronografia* II, 308–310. When it comes to Psellos' contradictory statements in two different sources regarding the same question, it is certain that all of his sentences "are used within specific contexts, support that thesis which is being defended at the moment and rarely represents an unconditional claim per se." Psellos' presentation is "always directed towards a certain goal or agenda, and it always puts too much effort into proving an idea or hypothesis." Therefore, the context in which certain claim is presented should always be taken into account first, and then it can be evaluated whether that claim represents a personal attitude and opinion of the writer." See Миловановић 1979, 25.

27 *Atal.*, 60; *Scyl. Cont.*, 112–113; *Zonaras* IV, 199. Despite the poor assessment of the military policies of Constantine X Doukas in historical sources, Jean-Claude Cheynet points out that this emperor managed his army well: noted Byzantine officers continued their service to the state (except for those who were retired!); besides this, only those officers who distinguished and proved themselves were promoted, which

Continuing with syncrisis, by comparing the Byzantine ruler and the Most High, Michael Psellos uses the Old Testament's expression of "highly raised arms" (*ὁ βραχιόνων ὕψηλῶν*) of Constantine Doukas.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, he associates him with Yahweh who fought for the Jews in the holy war, that is, the God-warrior: *ἐγὼ Κύριος καὶ ἐξάξω ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς δυναστείας τῶν Αἰγυπτίων καὶ ρύσομαι ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῆς δουλείας καὶ λυτρώσομαι ὑμᾶς ἐν βραχίονι ὕψηλῶ.*<sup>29</sup> Viewed from this perspective, the emperor-warrior Constantine X Doukas, firm in his faith, was its defender and a consistent follower of Christian principles. This is particularly reflected in his modesty: Doukas does not pray in front of his subjects, but he prays at night, which is more honest. Thereby, Psellos compared once more Doukas with Jesus, alluding to the *Gospel according to Luke* and Jesus' prayer at the Mount of Olives.<sup>30</sup>

Psellos uses the motif of Constantinople,<sup>31</sup> an inevitable motif of panegyrics, in order to show that Constantine Doukas is truly worthy of the Roman throne and that he is the legitimate heir of Constantine the Great, the founder of the capital city of the Byzantine Empire. Doukas is protecting a Christian, Constantine's city from the invasive attacks of godless Barbarians.

Another interesting fact is that Michael Psellos mentions Constantinople in only one of the four speeches related to Constantine X Doukas which he wrote for this ruler (speeches No. 9, 10, 14 in the edition by G. Dennis and the so-called minor encomium in the speech No. 8 in the same edition).<sup>32</sup> Thus, in the imperial speech No. 10 in the edition by Dennis, Michael Psellos states that Constantine Doukas has crossed the entire universe in his conquest against the barbarians: "he has slain some, he has attacked others, while he has brought upon some other evil deeds to the third ones," and it has all been done so that "his city (sc. Constantinople) can enjoy freedom."<sup>33</sup>

The question which remains open is what Psellos refers to in the analysed epistle when he speaks about "untold plans" (*τὰς ἀπορήτους βουλὰς*) and "secret thoughts" (*τὰ κρύφια σκέμματα*) of Constantine X Doukas!<sup>34</sup> It is possible that in this way Psellos alludes to certain moves of Constantine Doukas harmful to the Byzantine Empire, which some of his subjects held against him. This could mean that the epistolographer defends the ruler in his letter, with an explanation that these are in fact secret plans of the state authorities which are not or cannot be officially presented or explained at the moment of Psellos' writing of the epistle. However, the aforementioned can only be interpreted as the modesty of the ruler. Although Constantine X does not want for others to know about his pious deeds, they are impossible to hide. Namely, it is righteous that the emperor who is true to his faith should enjoy recognition for his good deeds. Therefore, Michael Psellos wishes for Emperor

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indicated the principle of good management of affairs, Cheynet 1991, 69.

28 *Psellos, Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 42<sup>24</sup>.

29 *LXX Eph* 6,6.

30 *Lk* 22, 39–46.

31 *Psellos, Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 42<sup>25–26</sup>. The motif of Constantinople was often used in encomiums starting from the early Byzantine era until the fall of the Byzantine Empire. About the motif of Constantinople see Радошевић 1982, 70–72; Радошевић 1987, 72–73, 82; Радошевић 1994, 9 and n. 8.

32 Шарапац Стаменковић 2016, 53. By way of illustration, the idea about the elevated imperial capital of the Romans is present in three out of four Psellos' speeches which he wrote for addressed to Romanos IV Diogenes. For Romanos Diogenes, he composed encomiums No. 18, 19, 20 and 21 in the edition by George Dennis. The motif of Constantinople is present in the first three aforementioned imperial speeches.

*Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 18, 176<sup>26</sup>; *Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, бр. 19, 180<sup>2–9</sup>, 181<sup>18–24</sup>; *Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, No. 20, 183<sup>14–19</sup>; 184<sup>39–49</sup>.

33 *Psellus, Orationes panagyricae*, 116<sup>21–24</sup>.

34 *Psellos, Scripta minora* II, No. 29, 43<sup>2–3</sup>.

Constantine X to be rewarded for perseverance in his faith, as one of the approved disciples of Christ, and thus he should eat at the God's table.

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The analysed data from the Psellos' letter No. 29 in the edition by E Kurtz and F. Drexl, lead to the conclusion that its basic motive was to draw a parallel between the Roman emperor Constantine X Doukas who rules the Empire on Earth and his archetype – God, the ruler of heaven. This claim is supported by numerous quotes from the Holy Scripture.

It is a confirmed fact that Michael Psellos composed eight letters for the emperor Constantine X Doukas. Besides the analysed epistle No. 29 in the edition by E. Kurtz and F. Drexl, there are letters No. 188 and 202 in the same edition, as well as the epistles No. 48, 52, 74, and 137 in the edition by K. N. Sathas.<sup>35</sup> Although the epistles No. 52, 74 and 137 in Sathas' edition have been interwoven with the occasional biblical motif, it is noticeable that the elements from the Holy Scripture are dominant in the letter No. 29 in the edition by E. Kurtz and F. Drexl. Therefore, it seems possible that Michael Psellos composed the epistle No. 29 in the aforementioned edition for the occasion of a certain religious holiday.

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35 Шаранац Стаменковић 2016, 136 (with the overview of the earlier sources). Being that there is no critical edition of Psellos' letters addressed to the Byzantine emperors, it is possible that among the unaddressed letters there are some which are composed for Constantine Doukas. Therefore, it is very difficult to conclude how many letters (and which ones) there are and when Michael Psellos sent them to Emperor Constantine X.

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**ПСЕЛОВА ПОСЛАНИЦА (ΤΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΥ) ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΑ ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΚΑΝ:  
ВИЗАНТИЈСКИ ВАСИЛЕВС, АРХЕТИП БОГА НА ЗЕМЉИ**

Упоређивањем података из писма број 29 у издању Е. Курца и Ф. Дрексла које је Михаило Псел, врсни ромејски филозоф и ретор 11. века, упутио цару Константину X Дуки и Светог писма, утврђено је да је основна тема Пселовог писма била паралела између византијског цара, владара Земље и његовог архетипа Бога, владара небеског царства.

Пселова посланица представља, у одређеном смислу, изван енкомион Константину X Дуки. Њена основна тема била је похвала василевсове личности. Поред тога, композиција разматраног писма ослања се на схеме царских говора које је Михаило Псел саставио за Константина X Дуку. Тако Псел користи обавезне мотиве енкомијастичког књижевног жанра: опште место порицања пишчеве личности пред врлинама и делима цара Константина X, соларну метафорику везану за владарски култ и традиционалну ромејску идеологију према којој је византијски цар слика и прилика Бога на Земљи.

Иако је експлицитно поређење цара Константина Дуке са старозаветним верским вођом Мојсијем један од Пселових незаобилазних мотива *Хронографије* и царских говора посвећених Константину X, интересантно је то што је у анализираној посланици дворски учењак себе индиректно упоредио с Мојсијем, а цара Константина X с Богом.

Како елементи из Светог писма доминирају у писму број 29 у издању Е. Курца и Ф. Дрексла, чини се могућим да је Михаило Псел саставио разматрану посланицу поводом неког верског празника.

