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MICHAEL PSELLUS' ANONYMOUS ENCOMIUM TO EMPEROR CONSTANTINE X DOUKAS*

Abstract: This paper analyses an addressee-less encomium devoted to Emperor Constantine X Doukas and authored by Michael Psellus, one of the most learned individuals in Byzantine history. The purpose of this paper is to place the encomium, a valuable testament of Byzantine cultural heritage, within the context of the empire's eleventh century political and social history, and to translate the document into modern English accompanied by scholarly commentary. Additionally, this paper will analyze the representation of the emperor in the speech through a comparative analysis of the encomium and Psellus' historiographical work, the *Chronographia*.

Keywords: encomium, Michael Psellus, 11th century, Constantine X Doukas, encomiastic motifs.

1. Introductory observations

The royal speech (*βασιλικὸς λόγος*), or encomium (*ἐγκώμιον*), is a special genre or type of epideictic oratory, the rules of which were prescribed by the rhetorician Menander, who lived at the turn of the fourth century CE.¹ Encomiums occupied an important place in the political, social, and cultural life of the Byzantine Empire even in its early periods,² and they were intermittently cultivated as a genre until the fall of Byzantium.³ Although they relied heavily on the heritage of classical cultures, their contents were an embodiment of Christian dogma.⁴

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¹ For more about the position of the encomium in Byzantine literature see Hunger 1978: 120–132; Jeffreys 2008: 831–833.

² Radošević 1994: 7; Radošević 1995: 7–8 and note 3 (with an overview of older literature).

³ Encomiums in the true sense of the word were not composed in the fifth and sixth century. Only one speech praising the emperor Anastasius I (491–517) written by Procopius of Gaza is known to have originated from that period (see Radošević 1993: 281). The renewal of the tradition was preconfigured in the empire's mid period with Leo the Deacon's speech of praise addressed to the emperor Basil II (976–1025), see Hunger 1978: 122; Stanković 2006: 223–226.

⁴ For more on the structure of the encomium, choice of metaphors, and thematic organization see Radošević 1982: 64; Milovanović 1979: 83.

Encomiums were one of the strongest weapons of political propaganda and were written to praise the current ruler, but with the audience hearing only what had been sanctioned by the ruler and his closest advisers. Encomiums were written in a highly learned and ornate style of Greek and were read during public ceremonies.⁵ Their content, however, was based on real rather than imagined events.⁶

The encomiums' beauty and splendor reached their peak in the literary creativity of Michael Psellus, a skilled Byzantine philosopher and rhetorician who lived in the eleventh century.⁷ Psellus' rich historiographical and literary legacy contains a large number of encomiums devoted to his patrons who succeeded one another on the Byzantine throne, starting with Emperor Constantine XI Monomachos (1042–1054) and ending with Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078). Among these are also found encomiums addressed to Constantine X Doukas (1059–1067), the founder of the Doukas dynasty.

The first and only critical collection of encomiums, composed by Michael Psellus and edited by George Dennis, saw the light of day in 1994,⁸ and although the collection contains short summaries in Latin, it deprives its readers of the manner of speech, stylistic bravado and linguistic elegance that belonged to one of the Byzantine Empire's most skilled erudites.

George Dennis leaves open the possibility that Psellus devoted two additional encomiums praising the personal abilities and moral virtues of an unnamed Byzantine ruler (encomiums 9 and 10)⁹ to Constantine Doukas, in addition to the one addressed specifically to him.¹⁰ The focus of this paper is this encomium, the tenth in the Dennis edition, and it also presents a translation of it. Translation into a contemporary language is the most effective means for introducing a document from the Middle Ages to a wider audience. The paper will also discuss the importance of encomiums in the eleventh century along with their purpose and role in the ruling ideology of the Byzantine Empire and the way Emperor Constantine X Doukas is represented in the encomium. Finally, by comparing historiographical information with that contained in the encomium, this analysis will attempt to establish to what extent conclusions can be drawn from the encomium regarding the character of Constantine X Doukas and the status of the Byzantine state.

2. Historical context, the identity of Psellus' protagonist, and attempts to date the encomium

It is important to mention that George Dennis committed an error when editing Psellus' encomiums. In the main body of the book itself the editor claims that Encomium No. 10 was addressed to Constantine IX Monomachos, while in the text of the encomium, the editor theorizes that the speech was addressed to either Emperor Isaac I Comnenus (1057–1059) or to Emperor Constantine X Doukas. Because of this, Dennis contends that

⁵ Cormack 1976: 41–60; Radošević 1982: 80.

⁶ Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 129.

⁷ Radošević 1994: 13; Stanković 2006: 227. For the education of Michael Psellus, the intellectual trends and school organization of his time see Browning 1975: 3–23.

⁸ Dennis, T. G. *Michaelis Pselli, Orationes panegyricae*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, 1994.

⁹ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 9, 111–114; no. 10, 114–117.

¹⁰ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 130–134.

Psellus composed these speeches between the years 1058 and 1067.¹¹

This dilemma regarding the identity of the individual to whom Psellus devoted the encomium necessitates a critical analysis. This problem is further compounded by the fact that, during the era in which Psellus lived and wrote, six emperors succeeded one another on the Byzantine throne: Constantine IX Monomachos, Michael VI Stratiotikos (1056–1057), Isaac I Comnenus, Constantine X Doukas, Romanus IV Diogenese (1068–1071), and Michael VII Doukas.

It should also not be forgotten that external events influencing the direction and methods of control within Byzantine state policy during the reigns of these emperors (1042–1078) were mostly the same: the Seljuk Turks attacking the eastern segments of the Empire; the Pechenegs and the Oghuz pushing into the Balkans; Normans increasingly gaining influence in Southern Italy and Sicily; and in Rome the papacy was trying to get rid of secular influence and beginning the struggle for independent investiture.¹² Considering that the Byzantine Empire did not pursue a strong or aggressive foreign policy during the middle of the eleventh century, any success in this area could have served as a legitimate cause for Michael Psellus to compose a panegyric celebrating the state's elite.

In addition, when composing panegyrics, rhetoricians mainly used a common schema and one of two basic themes around which they built the character of the basileus being praised - they either affirmed the emperor's virtues by which he had gained the right to rule (*ἀρετή*) or highlighted his noble bloodline (*γένος*).¹³ Thus it is very difficult to conclude to which of the Byzantine rulers the typical (and elementary!) motifs of the encomiums applied.

Nevertheless, in this speech to an unnamed emperor, Michael Psellus mentions the descendants of the emperor in his praises,¹⁴ so emperors lacking children can be dismissed as possible candidates for the learned rhetorician's addressee.

Constantine IX Monomachos did not have children with Empress Zoë, a member of the Macedonian royal house, and he planned to pass the crown to Nicephorus Proteon, who ruled Bulgaria at that time.¹⁵ This is a clear reason to disqualify Constantine Monomachos as a possible protagonist. The same holds for Michael VI Stratiotikos. He was sixty years old when he was chosen by Empress Theodora (1055–1056), the last legitimate heir of the Macedonian dynasty, to be her heir.¹⁶

Isaac Comnenus had two children with Empress Catherine of Bulgaria, the eldest daughter of the Bulgarian emperor Ivan Vladislav (1015–1018): a son named Manuel and a daughter named Maria.¹⁷ Manuel, however, died before his father's ascension to the throne, and Maria was a nun in the service of a monastery when Isaac abdicated and chose his successor.¹⁸

¹¹ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: 112, 115.

¹² Angold 1984: 12–33, 92–113.

¹³ Radošević 1999/2000: 24; Krsmanović-Radošević 2004: 71.

¹⁴ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116–117 (45–50).

¹⁵ Krsmanović 2001: 140 and note 249.

¹⁶ Regarding Michael VI Stratiotikos see Krsmanović 2001: 144 and note 260.

¹⁷ Krsmanović 2001: 270 and note 100.

¹⁸ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 682. Based on a description by Skylitzes Continuatus, it would appear that Empress Catherine of Bulgaria and Maria became nuns of the Monastery of Myrelaion at the same time, after the abdication of Isaac I Comnenus. *Scyl. Cont.*: 109.

Michael VII Doukas had only one son named Constantine¹⁹ with his wife, Maria of Alania, and Romanus IV Diogenes had two sons born in the purple with Eudokia Makrembolitissa: Nicephorus and Leo.²⁰

However, Constantine X Doukas and Eudokia Makrembolitissa had four sons: Michael (later Emperor Michael VII), a son whose name is not recorded (he died before his father's reign), Andronicus, Constantius (born in the purple), and three daughters: Ana, Theodora, and Zoë.²¹

Taking into account the number of children each of the rulers had during Psellus' creative period and that the rhetorician refers to the children of the ruler in this encomium as 'fertile seed, fruitful branch, giant and bountiful fruit...',²² it is highly likely that the encomium in question is devoted to Emperor Constantine X Doukas.

Further evidence supporting this hypothesis is that, in his chapter of the *Chronographia* devoted to the rule of Constantine Doukas, Psellus uses the same encomiastic motifs as in his encomium and builds his protagonist around them: He highlights the emperor's noble bloodline,²³ the personal characteristics that predestined his ascension to the throne of Constantinople,²⁴ the emperor's benevolence and love of justice,²⁵ and his keen interest in resolving legal disputes.²⁶ Additionally, Michael Psellus compares the ruler in this encomium with Moses, the ideal Old Testament leader.²⁷ The only ruler that Psellus explicitly compares with Moses in the *Chronographia* is Constantine Doukas.²⁸

Judging from the opening lines of the encomium,²⁹ it can be concluded that Psellus intended the encomium to be a short presentation in praise of the rule of Constantine Doukas. It is also possible the encomium in question was composed between the summer of 1065 and the autumn of 1066, which was between the time when the Oghuz threat to the Byzantine Empire had ended (Psellus himself mentions the event directly in this encomium)³⁰ and when Constantine Doukas fell ill.

3. Translation of the encomium

Τῷ αὐτῷ

Ὁ μὲν χρόνος τῆς δημιουργίας βραχύς, θεϊότατε βασιλεῦ, ὁ δὲ λόγος τῆς σῆς εὐφημίας πολλὸς καὶ ὄλῳ τῷ χρόνῳ παραμετρούμενος. πῶς ἂν οὖν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὸ πᾶν συλλάβοιμι; ἐρῶ τοιγαροῦν ὀλίγον τῶ ν σῶν ἀρετῶν, καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ κεφαλαίῳ, ἵνα καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τὸ εἰκὸς ἀποθῶ.

¹⁹ Polemis 1968: 60–63.

²⁰ Oikonomidès 1963: 127.

²¹ Polemis 1968, 34. Oikonomides claims Constantine X Doukas and Eudokia Makrembolitissa had another daughter called Irina, see Oikonomidès 1963: 101.

²² *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 117 (46–47).

²³ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 702; *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115 (8–11).

²⁴ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 698, 700, 706, 708; *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115 (12–20).

²⁵ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 710; *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (42–45).

²⁶ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 710, 712, 714; *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (40–41).

²⁷ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (33–36).

²⁸ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 720.

²⁹ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115 (2–7).

³⁰ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (30–41). For more on the attack of the Oghuz on the empire during the reign of Constantine X Doukas see Polemis 1968: 32; Obolenski 1991, 225; Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 134. For dating the Oghuz attack on Byzantium see *VINJ* III: 225 no. 13 (B. Radojčić).

Σοί, βασιλεῦ, καὶ τὸ πατρῶον γένος ἐπίσημον ἄνωθεν καὶ τὸ [μητρ]ῶον [οὐχ] ἦττον πρὸς τοῦτο ἀνθ
αμλλώμενον καί, τοιούτων σοὶ παραδειγμάτων ἐκ τοῦ γένους ἐφεστ[ηκότων], καλλίσιον αὐτοῦ διεξωγρά
φηςας χρώμασιν ἀνδρεία μὲν ψυχῆς ὑπερβάλλων ἐκεῖνα, μακρ[ᾶ δὲ] σωφροσύ[νη] τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀσύγκρι
τος γεγονώς, φρονήματι δὲ γενναίῳ μηδενὶ δεδωκώς ὑπερβάλλειν, δικαιοσύνης δὲ στάθμη τὴν γεωμετρικὴ
ν νικῆσας ἰσότητα. ταῦτά σε καὶ πρὸ τοῦ κράτους ὑπερφυῶς τῷ κράτει κατάλληλον ἔδειξε καὶ μετὰ τὸ κρᾶ
τος ἐκόσμησε μεγαλοπρεπῶς, ὡσπερ ἐπίγειον ἥλιον διφρ[ευτήν] τῷ σύμπαντι ἐπιτάζαντα, οὐ. τῷ σώματι
κινούμενον καὶ μετατιθέμενον, ἀλλὰ τῆς γνώμης ὀξύτητι [καί] τῷ συντ[όμ]ῳ καὶ συντόνῳ φρονήματι.

Ἔνθεν τοι τὴν οἰκουμένην διώδυσσας σύμπασαν, ἵνα μὴ λέγω τὴν [γῆν] κατὰ τῶν βαρβάρων, τοὺς
μὲν ἀναίρων, τοὺς δὲ ὄρους ἀκινήτους ἐπιτιθείς, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις ποιῶν, ἴν' ἡ σὴ πόλις ἐλευθέρῳ τρυφᾷ τ
ῷ σχήματι. ἔφριξέ σε ὁ Πέρσης διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἰδὼν, ὑπεστάλη ὁ Βαβυλώνιος, ὁ Τοῦρκος ἅπαξ μανιεῖς ἔσ
τη τῆς λύττης καὶ τὴν σὴν αἰχμὴν δέδουκε τῶν τῆς Περσίδος ὀρίων προλάμπουσαν. ἀπέσβησαν καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ
μέρη πυρσοὶ καὶ ἡ βροντῶσα τῶν βαρβάρων ἠχώ καὶ ὁ πολὺς ἐκεῖνων σεισμός καὶ ὁ κερανὸς νῦν ἄθρ
όν καὶ παρὰ δόξαν πέπανται καὶ σεσίγηται. καὶ βούλομαί τι καὶ πλεον ἐρεῖν, ἀλλὰ με οἱ πρὸς τῷ Ἰστρο
Σκύθαι ἀνθέλκουσιν, ὅλω μὲν ἔθνη ἐφ' ἡμᾶς συρρέοντες, ὅλω δὲ πλήθει τὴν γῆν ἐξάπινα ὑποδύντες. τιν
ἄ τρόπον σοῦ Μωσαϊκᾶς χεῖρας ὑψοῦντος καὶ τὸν σταυρὸν οὐ προτυποῦντος μὲν, δεικνύντος δὲ καὶ πῶρ
ρωθεν ἐπισείοντος ὡς ἅμαχον ἄμυντήριον - ἐρῶ τι καὶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων - γεγόνασι σοὶ τὰ κρύφια δάκρυα
βέλη τοῦτοις ἀπρόοπτα, καὶ πληττόμενοι μὲν ἡσθάνοντο, τὸν δὲ τῆς πληγῆς τρόπον οὐκ ἤθυσαν.

Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως. τὰ δὲ τῆς πολιτείας ὅποια; διαφορῶν λύσεις παράδοξοι καὶ δικῶν τρόποι
παραδοξότροποι. νῦν πρώτως ἀνεφύγασι τὰ ἀνάκτορα, ὡσπερ ὁ τοῦ κυρίου νυμφῶν, πλουσίους ἅμα καὶ
πένησι, καὶ ὁ ἄλλα δειλὸς σε μόνον θαρρεῖ καὶ τὸ κράτος οὐχ ὑποστέλλεται καὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης τυχ
ὼν ἅπεισι γεγηθώς. διὰ ταῦτά σε θεὸς πολὺχρον σπόρον πεποίηκε, καὶ πολὺκαρπος μὲν ἡ καλὰμ καὶ
οἶα οὐκ ἄλλη, ἀδρός δὲ καὶ πολὺς ὁ καρπὸς καὶ τὸ θέρος χρυσοῦν καὶ τῷ ὄντι βασιλικόν, καὶ εὐκλῆμ
ατοῦσα μὲν σου ἡ ἀμπέλος, οἱ δὲ βότρυες ὠραῖοι ζύμπαντες καὶ οἱ ὄμφακες καὶ οἱ περκάζοντες, καὶ ὁ
ναῖο σὺ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον καὶ τῆς καλὰμης καὶ τοῦ καρποῦ καὶ τῆς ἀμπέλου καὶ τῶν βοτρῶν, ἀσύγκριτε π
ρὸς πάντας καὶ ἀπαράμιλλε βασιλεῦ.

To the One and the Same

The time is short for public speeches, most divine Basileus, and the panegyric devoted to you is massive and ever-expanding. How could I briefly encompass everything? Therefore, I will mention only some of your virtues, and logically will do so only in broad strokes so that I may save time and words.

Your paternal line, Basileus, is both blessed and divine, and your maternal lines no less so, so they are both in competition. And with such examples amongst your kin, you have painted [your character] with ever more beautiful colors. Through the bravery of your soul you have surpassed them; through your vast wisdom you have become incomparable to others; with your sublime intellect you have let none surpass you; you have far outstripped geometric proportion with your measure of justice. All of this, even before you assumed your rule, has most assuredly pointed to you as the most fitting choice to become ruler, and these virtues have adorned you magnificently during your reign. Just like the sun at its zenith, who motionlessly commands the universe from his chariot, you command not with the movements of your body but with your acumen and quick clarity of thought.

You've traveled - not the whole of the earth, I would say - but rather all of creation itself in your campaign against the barbarians, whom you've killed. You've attacked the strong borders of others, and you've inflicted great injury on others still - all so that your city might enjoy freedom. The Persian trembled at the sight of your advances, the Babylonian withdrew, and the Turk, driven to madness, feared your shinning spear from the moment he reached the borders of Persia. Each individual torch was extinguished, as were the roaring cries of the barbarians, and their great earthquake and lightning miraculously subsided and came to a halt. And I wish I could say even more, but the Scythians of the Danube have deterred me by advancing against us with the whole of their people, drowning the land all at once with their entire populace. How you raised up your hands like Moses (Exodus 17:11), and though you did not make the sign of the cross, you showed them and waved from afar as if defending yourself unarmed. And I shall say something of the unspeakable: your tears in secrecy became invisible arrows, and the wounded felt their impact, yet did not know how.

And so this is how it is. What is the state of affairs in the country? The resolutions of disputes are

astonishing, yet the process of justice is yet even more astonishing. First, as a bridegroom of God, you opened the doors of the imperial palace to rich and poor alike, and those who were once fearful only by reason of you now show courage. And the country [you lead] does not fall back [before brutes], and those who are met with justice depart with joy. For this God made you a noble seed and a fruitful branch like no other. Vast and abundant is the fruit and golden is the harvest, and truly regal is your vine with its good branches, and all its grapes are fine, even those unripe or withered. And may your yield be greatest, from the fruit, and the vine, and the grapes, and bountiful beyond compare or contest, Basileus.

4. Composition, analysis, and commentary

The order of the thematic units in the encomium is as follows: In the introductory segment, Michael Psellus warns that he has very little time left to praise the Byzantine emperor, which is why he decides to record only the most important of the emperor's virtues (2–7). In the main segment of the speech, Psellus highlights the emperor's noble bloodline through praise of his parents (8–11). He then follows with virtues that have preordained him to take on the role of emperor (12–20). Psellus then uses a solar metaphor to describe the emperor's military successes by comparing his triumph over the barbarians with Moses's triumph over the Amalekites (21–39). In the closing segment of the encomium, a description is given of the ruler's most important contributions during peacetime. These include the resolution of legal disputes along with efforts to always be just and humane (40–45). After praising the ruler's progeny, Psellus expresses his wishes for the future happiness and well-being of the emperor and his heirs (45–53).

The structure of the encomium clearly imitates the structure of the encomiums composed by earlier rhetoricians.³¹ Given that the choice of topic is left to the rhetorician, Psellus certainly used the motifs he deemed appropriate for the current political situation,³² thereby demonstrating he was an able interpreter of Byzantine state ideology and an expert scholar of earlier works. In this encomium Michael Psellus refers to Constantine Doukas as 'the most divine Basileus' (*θειότατε βασιλεῦ*).³³ Psellus refers to him in a similar manner in the encomium that names Constantine, in which he refers to him as 'the greatest autocrat' (*μέγιστε ἀτοκράτωρ*),³⁴ and in letters addressed directly to him as 'my great lord' (*τῷ μεγάλῳ δεσπότῃ μου*) or 'my lord and basileus' (*δέσποτά μου καὶ βασιλεῦ*).³⁵ The scholar's choice of title with which to address the emperor most likely depended on his creative inspiration at the time. In the short introductory segment, Psellus highlights both the magnitude of the emperor's deeds and virtues and the inability of one short speech to cover them all.³⁶

In the encomium Psellus highlights Constantine Doukas' distinguished heritage

³¹ Regarding Menander's schema see Radošević 1982: 64; Milovanović 1979: 83.

³² Compare with Stanković 2006: 227.

³³ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115 (2–3).

³⁴ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 131 (3), 131 (14).

³⁵ *Michael Psellus, Epistulae*: no. 80 (1); no. 81 (1); no. 83 (1–2); no. 84 (2); no. 86 (1). Compare with Grünbart 2005: 241, 249. F. Lauritzen points out that in his encomiums Michael Psellus uses the term *βασιλεύς* more often than *ἀτοκράτωρ* when referring to Byzantine rulers. Regarding this, Lauritzen is of the opinion that the term *ἀτοκράτωρ* was used an adjective denoting self-control rather than as a separate title, or, in other words, the term contained both political and cultural connotations, see Lauritzen 2012: 113–125.

³⁶ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115 (2–7).

(paternal as well as maternal!).³⁷ Regarding his origins, he emphasizes in the *Chronographia* that the Doukas family is distinguished and superior, renowned and rich, and the family's origins lie in the noble Doukas family of the tenth century, which included Andronicus, Constantine, and Panterius.³⁸ This kinship is also noted by Joannes Zonaras, but he also mentions that Constantine X Doukas had a mixed and unclear relationship to the tenth century Doukas family.³⁹ It should also be noted that Psellus' encomium addressed directly to Constantine X Doukas does not mention the emperor's noble heritage.⁴⁰ It is also interesting to note that Psellus does not embellish the Doukas origins with a legendary genealogy in either in the *Chronographia* or in the encomiums.⁴¹

An integral part of the encomium analyzed here is the Byzantine ruling ideology and the juridical understanding of the medieval state hierarchy, with its ruler located at the apex.⁴² Psellus also uses solar metaphors, originally pagan motifs that became an integral part of encomiums addressed to Byzantine rulers.⁴³ In the encomium addressed to Constantine X, Psellus also indirectly compares him to the sun.⁴⁴

Comparisons between Byzantine rulers and Old Testament figures were a typical compositional element for encomiums.⁴⁵ So, using Byzantine ideological tenets as a starting point, Psellus forms a *synkrisis* (σύνκρισις)⁴⁶ between the emperor and Moses, the ideal Old Testament prophet, lawgiver, and religious leader, thereby deftly drawing a parallel between the Byzantines and the people of Israel (the chosen people!). This explicit comparison between Constantine X Doukas and Moses is one of his integral motifs in the *Chronographia* and the encomium addressed to Constantine X.⁴⁷ It is also remarkable that Psellus consistently uses the Moses motif (in his historiographical work and in the encomiums) when describing the conflict between Constantine X and the Oghuz (the Scythians!⁴⁸).

³⁷ Nicephorus Bryennius traces the ancestry of the Doukas family back to Constantine the Great, see *Nicephori Bryennii*: 67–69; while Michael Italikus traces it back to Zeus, see *Michel Italikos*: 148 (19–20).

³⁸ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 702. Unlike Andronicus and Constantine Doukas, Panterius is an unknown figure, see Polemis 1968: 9.

³⁹ *Zonaras* IV: 198. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959), the son of Leo VI the Wise (886–912) extinguished the Doukas line. Since the only surviving members of Douka family were young girls given to caretakers, Constantine X Doukas' forebears descended from a female member, which is why Constantine was not considered a full Doukas.

⁴⁰ Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 138–139.

⁴¹ Krsmanović-Radošević 2004: 90 no. 64; Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 138.

⁴² For more on the political ideology of Byzantium see Ostrogorski 1970a: 281–364; Ostrogorski 1970b: 238–262.

⁴³ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115–116 (17–19). For the pagan trope of comparing the emperor with the sun and the empress with the moon see Radošević 1987: 81; Radošević 1994: 8 and note 5; Vries – van der Velden 1996: 239–256.

⁴⁴ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 132 (35–42); Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 137.

⁴⁵ Apart from Moses, Byzantine scholars also used David, Noah, and Zerubbabel as benchmarks of virtue, see Radošević 1987: 81. For the motif of comparing Byzantine rulers with biblical heroes see Radošević 1994: 16 and note 34 (with an overview of older literature).

⁴⁶ Regarding Psellus' use of comparisons see Papaioannou 2000: 138–143; Papaioannou 2004: 87–98.

⁴⁷ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 720; *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 132–133 (51–55), 133 (70–71). Compare with Hunger 1969/1970: 27; Šaranac Stamenković 2017: 273–274 and note 20. Comparisons between Roman rulers and Moses were linked to Constantine the Great; see Radošević 1994: 16 and note 34 (with an overview of older literature).

⁴⁸ Older Byzantine authors usually used Scythians to denote Slavs, *VIINJ* I: 209 (F. Barišić). By the middle of the 11th century the term was used to refer to Pechenegs, Cumans, and the Oghuz, *VIINJ* III: no. 4 (B. Radojčić).

The segment discussing the conflict between the Oghuz and the Byzantine state during the rule of Constantine X is more or less repeated in Psellus' historiographical work. He wrote in the *Chronographia* that, upon hearing the Oghuz (the Mysi and the Triballi [Μυσῶν τε καὶ Τριβαλλῶν]) had attacked the empire,⁴⁹ the emperor decided to take command of a modest army and march against the enemy (although Psellus himself advised him not to leave court!). It was then that God performed a miracle no less wondrous than the one He performed for Moses (...καὶ παραδοξοποιεῖ τι θεὸς τῶν Μωσαϊκῶν τεραστίων οὐκ ἔλαττον). When the barbarians saw before them a more superior phalanx, they were struck by fear, scattered, and were then felled by the swords of those pursuing them.⁵⁰

The most complete accounts of the Oghuz assault on the Byzantine Empire come from Michael Attaliates, Skylitzes Continuatus and Joannes Zonaras.

The third indication was when *magistroi* Basil Apocapes and Nicephorus Botaniates were serving as eparchs of towns on the Danube, the entirety of the Oghuz people, with all of their belongings in tow, crossed the river on huge logs and boats made of branches, roots, and leather wineskins. They overcame the Bulgarians and any other soldiers they encountered, captured the commanders Basil Apocapes and Nicephorus Botaniates, and occupied the entire region. They numbered 600.000 battle-ready men and warriors (... εἰς ἐξήκοντα μυριάδας μαχητῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ πολεμιστῶν).⁵¹ One sizable group of Oghuz that had separated from the main group quickly marched through Illyricum and reached Thessaloniki and the province of Hellas itself, pillaging and amassing enormous spoils. On their way back, however, they were caught up in harsh winter weather. They abandoned all their spoils and equipment and returned to their encampments.⁵²

Although Emperor Constantine X Doukas was disturbed by the sight of the Oghuz horde, he did not rally his army or send all of his forces against the enemy. As a result, rumors began to spread throughout the empire that the emperor wanted to avoid the expense and lacked the courage stand against a superior force. Once they had assessed the size of the strong opposing army, the Byzantine elite concluded that a military victory was impossible, since the Oghuz were committed to battle, ready for war, and trained to defend and kill.⁵³ In other words, it seemed to the Byzantine elite to be impossible to rid themselves of their enemy.

At this point, the emperor sent emissaries to the chiefs of the Oghuz tribes. He tried to mislead and delay them in order to hold off their attack. He sent many enticing and expensive gifts to please the Oghuz and invited some of their chiefs to his court where he welcomed them with friendly gifts.⁵⁴ The Oghuz, however, continued to ravage the European provinces as they scoured the area for supplies, and they even started pushing into

⁴⁹ Michael Psellus in the *Chronographia* clearly uses the name Triballi to refer to the Oghuz, while the name Mysi is used to refer to the Pechenegs, see *VIIINJ* III: 225 no. 13 (B. Radojčić).

⁵⁰ *Psellus, Chronographia*: 720, 722.

⁵¹ *Atal.*: 152; *Scyl. Cont.*: 113–114. Contrary to Michael Attaliates and Skylitzes Continuatus, Joannes Zonaras in his *Chronicle* gives a more realistic number of around 60.000 battle-ready men (...ὐπὸ ἐξήκοντα χιλιάδας οἱ αἴρειν ὄπλα δυνάμενοι), see *Zonaras IV*: 199–200; *VIIINJ* III: 231 note 10 (B. Radojčić). Vasil Zlataraski explained the origins of the discrepancy, see Zlataraski 1927: 115–116.

⁵² *Atal.*: 152; *Scyl. Cont.*: 114.

⁵³ *Atal.*: 152; *Scyl. Cont.*: 114; *Zonaras IV*: 200.

⁵⁴ *Atal.*: 154; *Scyl. Cont.*: 114–115; *Zonaras IV*: 200.

Thrace and Macedonia.⁵⁵ Constantine Doukas no longer could bear the widespread protests and the rumors claiming he was a miser and had lost the war, so he left Constantinople to engage the Oghuz.⁵⁶

He set up camp with his entourage near Athiros, in a place called Choirobakchoi (...καὶ καταντικρὸ τοῦ Ἀθύρος περὶ τόπον οὕτω καλούμενον Χοιροβάκχους), where Byzantine estates were located. The garrison contained no more than a hundred and fifty men (...τῶν ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα στρατιωτῶν...). Attaliates then worriedly reports that ‘many citizens of the Byzantine Empire wondered why the emperor had marched from Constantinople with so few men to repulse such a massive force at a time when the entire eastern army needed to gather in the west’.⁵⁷

While Constantine Doukas was preoccupied with preparations for battle and discussions of battle tactics, scouts sent to the Danube returned and reported that the Oghuz had been crushed. In fact, a group of Byzantine leaders had managed to escape and spread the news that the most battle-ready Oghuz had climbed back on their boats, crossed the river, and returned to their own lands. The remaining Oghuz, depleted and at death’s door from famine and disease, clashed with the nearby Bulgarians and Pechenegs.⁵⁸ After this catastrophe, some of the Oghuz went over to the emperor’s side. They received land in Macedonia owned by the empire, and became Romanized allies and subjects of the Byzantine emperor.⁵⁹

It is also interesting to note the various authors’ perception of Constantine X’s victory over the Oghuz. According to them, it could only be attributed to God himself. Throughout the empire it was said that Constantine X Doukas was so dispirited that he ordered his army to fast along with him (...γὰρ ὡς ἀπογνοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκ πάντων, νηστεΐαν παραγγείλας τῷ τε πλήθει καὶ ἑαυτῷ). On the day the Oghuz horde appeared in front of the Byzantine camp, he ordered there to be a great litany, to which he went tearfully on foot and with a heart full of contrition.⁶⁰ In the eyes of the Byzantines, this was undoubtedly a reason to deserve God’s help in what had obviously been a hopeless situation in the country.

When the news of the total destruction of the Oghuz reached the emperor, he gave thanks to God and the Virgin Mary, and immediately set off for the capital. He met the citizens of Constantinople in awe and disbelief as they gave offerings of thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity and the Mother of God (...καὶ σῶστρα τῇ ζωαρχικῇ Τριάδι καὶ τῇ Μητρὶ τοῦ θεανθρώπου Λόγου λαμπρῶς ἐπιθύουσαν).⁶¹ The Byzantines understood this as a ‘sign from God’ (θεοσημίαν), but they attributed everything to the emperor’s awe and reverence (of the Lord!), and his virtue, piety, and initiative as a leader, which had resulted in God’s favor.⁶² Constantine X gave the inhabitants of the European provinces their well-earned recognition, believing that what had occurred was an ‘act of God’ (θεῖον ἔργον).⁶³ In other words, the Byzantine victory over the

⁵⁵ *Scyl. Cont.*: 115.

⁵⁶ *Atal.*: 154.

⁵⁷ *Atal.*: 154; Skylitzes Continuatus and Joannes Zonaras highlight here that Constantine Doukas was ‘a lover of gold and a miser’ (φειδολὸς καὶ γλίσχυρος), see. *Scyl. Cont.*: 115; *Zonaras* IV: 200.

⁵⁸ *Atal.*: 154, 156; *Scyl. Cont.*: 115; *Zonaras* IV: 200.

⁵⁹ *Atal.*: 158; *Scyl. Cont.*: 116.

⁶⁰ *Scyl. Cont.*: 115.

⁶¹ *Atal.*: 156; *Scyl. Cont.*: 115–116.

⁶² *Scyl. Cont.*: 116.

⁶³ *Atal.*: 156.

Oghuz was ‘part of God’s plan’ (στρατηγήματος τῆς θείας δυνάμεως).⁶⁴

All of this leads to the conclusion that Michael Psellus based this encomium on reality, or, more precisely, on an actual Byzantine victory against an enemy. Even though encomiastic literature was never intended to present a completely accurate representation of real events, in this case, Psellus did not deviate from any of the relevant historiographical sources. The Oghuz, who more numerous and better prepared for battle, did indeed attack the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine basileus did in fact lead a modest army against the infidels. Before the battle could begin, a battle for which the odds of a Byzantine victory seemed slim, the enemy was stopped in its tracks by disease. At this point, evidently only vaguely aware of the enormity of the situation, (and let us not forget that Doukas rallied only a hundred and fifty men instead of a strong army!), Constantine Doukas, as God’s chosen to rule a mundane empire, turned to the Almighty to help his people. Be as it may, the Oghuz were wiped out and the historical sources recorded the event as an ‘act of God,’ ‘divine intervention,’ and ‘a plan from God’s army.’ Psellus was quite clearly abiding by the rules of rhetoric by celebrating and embellishing Constantine’s contribution to the Byzantine triumph over the Oghuz.

Certainly, the historiographical sources (Psellus’ *Chronographia*, Attaliates’ *Historia*, *Chronicles* of Skylitzes Continuatus and Joannes Zonaras) and Psellus’ encomium all share a common element when describing Constantine Doukas: He was an exceptionally pious Roman ruler who earned God’s assistance by virtue of his faith and his actions.

In this encomium Michael Psellus makes skillful use of the warrior-emperor motif, which was an integral element in the structure of encomiums since the early Byzantine period. He celebrates Constantine Doukas as Christ’s ideal chosen, whose essential duty is to lead a ‘divine army’ and defend Christianity.⁶⁵ Although Psellus gives clear precedence to imperial policy in the European part of the Byzantine Empire, Psellus also noticeably mentions the emperor’s successes against the Persians and the Babylonians, or more precisely, the Turks to the east.⁶⁶

By the middle of the eleventh century the Byzantine Empire had started to lose control over all its Asian territory. Additionally, its sway over the Balkans and Southern Italy was also shaken and being tested. When he ascended the throne, Constantine Doukas had to take on an endless war on three fronts. The Byzantine Empire was on the defensive and had no army other than those in the doukatas and border katepanates. The emperor would either have to go back to conscription in the provinces and restoring long-abandoned fortresses, or he could continue to increase troop numbers by adding foreigner mercenaries⁶⁷

The most complete information regarding the Byzantine military policy in the east during the reign of Constantine X Doukas is found in Michael Attaliates’ *Historia*. The Turks were attacking Byzantine themes, including Iberia, Mesopotamia, Chaldia, Melitene, Koloneia and lands along the Euphrates River (Διὸ καὶ ἡ εὐδαίμων χώρα τῆς Ἰβηρίας ἠρείπωτο παντελῶς καὶ ἠδάφιστο, ἤδη προκατειργασμένη καὶ ἡσθηνηκυῖα καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν ἐκλείπουσά τε καὶ φθίνουσα. Συμμετελαμβάνον δὲ τοῦ δεινοῦ καὶ ὄσαι αὐτὴ παρέκειντο, Μεσοποταμία τε καὶ

⁶⁴ Zonaras IV: 200.

⁶⁵ Psellus, *Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (21–39). Regarding the motif of the warrior-emperor see Stanković 2006: 209–218.

⁶⁶ Psellus, *Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (24–27).

⁶⁷ Cheynet 1991: 69–70.

Χαλδία, πρὸς δὲ Μελιτηνὴ καὶ Κολώνεια καὶ τὰ τῶν Εὐφράτη συγκείμενα ποταμῶ). Meanwhile the Byzantine high command sent an ill-equipped, demoralized army with insufficient professional soldiers to face the enemy. The Byzantine Army was continually humiliated and pushed back, while the barbarians advanced and grew bolder, attacking the Byzantine Empire full of self-assurance. The Turkish pillaging and assault were unceasing.⁶⁸

There is no mention in Psellus' historiographical works of Byzantine military campaigns in the east during the reign of Constantine X Doukas. Perhaps Michael Psellus, who was keenly aware of the unfavorable political situation in the east, consciously avoided mentioning such a delicate topic in the *Chronographia*. An explanation may also lie in the fact that Michael Psellus wrote about the Constantine X Doukas' reign during the reign of his son, Michael VII Doukas, and wanted to avoid any mention of Constantine's responsibility for the state of affairs in the eastern provinces.⁶⁹ There is no mention of the eastern front even in Psellus encomium that addresses the emperor by name.

The motif of the glorious capital was often used in encomiums from the early Byzantine era until the fall of the empire, and Psellus made use of it in the one analyzed here.⁷⁰ Constantinople, however, is not mentioned in the encomium addressed explicitly to Constantine.

By describing Constantine Doukas as a protector of the Christian world, imbued with divine and human qualities, Psellus clearly wove courage (*ἀνδρεία*) and righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) into his character, two virtues highly valued in rulers even in guidelines dating back to the first centuries of the Common Era. Constantine X was also prudent (*φρόνησις*) and temperate (*σωφροσύνη*).⁷¹ Psellus placed special emphasis on two of his further virtues: *benevolence* and *piety*, which had also been integral motifs in encomiums dating back to antiquity. As a mediator between God and Man, benevolent and pious, the Byzantine emperor upheld God's law on earth.⁷² Psellus represents Constantine X as an ally of Christ because he was first and foremost *gentle* and *merciful*. All of these virtues also appear in the encomium addressed to Constantine X.⁷³

The righteousness of the Roman basileus, in this case Constantine X, as a basic trope of Byzantine rhetoric is also visible in the motif of the emperor's concern for the welfare of the empire's subjects. This concern was motivated by his benevolence, gentleness, and compassion. Interestingly, this motif of the righteous ruler in Psellus' encomium is also found in other historiographical sources discussing Constantine X Doukas' character. He

⁶⁸ *Atal.*: 142, 144. Jean-Claude Cheynet argues that researchers should be careful when interpreting the claims of Attaliates concerning the rule of Constantine X as he was a distinguished supporter of Nicephorus Botaniates with a hostile disposition towards the Doukas family, see Cheynet 1991: 69. Michael Attaliates' data is confirmed by Skylitzes Continuatus and Joannes Zonaras, see *Scyl. Cont.*: 112–113; *Zonaras* IV: 199.

⁶⁹ Taking into consideration the fact that Michael Psellus wrote the second part of the *Chronographia* at the behest of Michael VII Doukas, the son of Constantine Doukas, it is highly probable that the second part of the this document is an encomium of sorts devoted to the Doukas dynasty, see Lauritzen 2013: 153–157.

⁷⁰ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (24). Regarding the motif of Constantinople see Radošević 1994: 9 and note 8 (with an overview of older literature).

⁷¹ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 115 (12–14), 116 (20). Compare with Hunger 1978: 120; Radošević 1982: 77–79; Radošević 1987: 77.

⁷² *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116 (40–45). For motifs of the ruler's benevolence and piety see Radošević 1982: 78–79.

⁷³ *Psellus, Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 131 (19–23). Compare with Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 133.

was a benevolent emperor able to control his anger, one who was prudent rather than rash.⁷⁴ He refrained from the use of physical pain and harsh language; he was content to use threats; he mourned his enemies (conspirators) and punished them by confiscating their property and forcing them into exile or a monastery.⁷⁵ In other words, he never resorted to executions. When he ascended to the Byzantine throne, his first order of business was to bring justice and good rule of law.⁷⁶ In addition, he was a great benefactor and left no one empty handed, whether they were high lords and feudal landowners or lowly officials and craftsmen.⁷⁷ He was pious beyond compare and devoted to monks and the poor.⁷⁸

Based on everything presented here regarding Constantine Doukas' relationship toward his subjects, it would follow that he truly endeavored to be a good Christian ruler. Although he did not scorn material wealth and other worldly goods (on the contrary, sources describe him as a 'miserly' and a 'gold-loving' emperor),⁷⁹ it appears he did not spend as much on personal pleasures as he did on state policy: He bought peace to protect the territories of the state from external enemies and gifts for his courtiers and officers.

From an analysis of this encomium,⁸⁰ it is clear that God graced Emperor Constantine X Doukas with numerous offspring, thereby enabling the continued ascendancy of the Doukas family and their continuity as rulers. Eudokia Makrembolitissa is not praised in the this encomium, although she is in the one directly addressed to Constantine X.⁸¹ Following the rules of the genre, Psellus praises the royal offspring in that encomium as well.⁸² Indeed, Constantine gave the world sons who were 'just like his father, in both body and spirit'.⁸³

At the very end of the encomium, Psellus expresses his wish for the continuation of the Doukas dynasty, and with it his wishes for the future and well-being of the Roman people.⁸⁴ Finally, it should also be noted that the encomium analyzed here is noticeably shorter (53 lines) than one in which he is mentioned (89 lines).

5. Concluding remarks

The thematic and emotional core of the encomium analyzed here is the character of Constantine X Doukas, while its basic concept is to praise the emperor's inherent and acquired virtues. Constantine X is thus described as a courageous, just, temperate, prudent, pious, and benevolent emperor. If we exclude bravery as one of the traditional tropes of encomiastic writing, these virtues of a ruler are also found in all historiographical sources that address the reign of Constantine Doukas.

Constantine X is affirmed as a warrior-emperor, which completes the ideal image of a

⁷⁴ Psellus, *Chronographia*: 700.

⁷⁵ Psellus, *Chronographia*: 716, 720; *Scyl. Cont.*: 111–112; *Atal.*: 136, 138. Compare with *Zonaras IV*: 202.

⁷⁶ Psellus, *Chronographia*: 698; *Zonaras IV*: 198.

⁷⁷ Psellus, *Chronographia*: 712; *Scyl. Cont.*: 111.

⁷⁸ *Scyl. Cont.*: 112; *Zonaras IV*: 198.

⁷⁹ *Atal.*: 154; *Scyl. Cont.*: 112, 114, 115; *Zonaras IV*: 200.

⁸⁰ Psellus, *Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 116–117 (45–50).

⁸¹ Psellus, *Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 133 (77–78); Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 138.

⁸² Psellus, *Orationes panegyricae*: no. 14, 133 (76–77); Šaranac Stamenković 2012: 139.

⁸³ Psellus, *Chronographia*: 726.

⁸⁴ Psellus, *Orationes panegyricae*: no. 10, 117 (50–54).

Byzantine emperor and the primary defender of the Christian faith. In this encomium, Michael Psellus celebrates the very real victory of the Byzantines over the Oghuz, which was an unexpected success for the Byzantines. But he also devoted a few lines to Doukas' triumphs in other parts of the world. A comparison of the information from the encomium with information derived from historiographical sources strongly suggests that Psellus relied on reality and real accomplishments when he praises Constantine Doukas and his reign in the encomium.

The encomium that names Constantine X Doukasis but a single link in a chain of encomiastic oratory stretching from the early Byzantine period to the fall of the empire. Its function was to affirm, in every possible manner, the empire's ruling ideology. Michael Psellus propagated the idea of the divine origins of imperial rule in the Byzantine Empire and the medieval legal understanding of a state hierarchy headed by the Byzantine ruler. In so doing, he disseminated among his compatriots a traditional imperial ideology in advance of any external political threat from an enemy.

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НЕАДРЕСИРАНИ ЕНКМИОН МИХАИЛА ПСЕЛА ЦАРУ КОНСТАНТИНУ X ДУКИ

Резиме

Рад доноси енглески превод неадресираног енкомиона Михаила Псела, врсног византијског филозофа и ретора XI века. Реч је Пселовом царском говору број 10 у издању Џорџа Дениса. Будући да је Псел један од најученијих људи у византијској историји, реч је о спису од изузетне вредности за светску књижевност. Такође, Пселов енкомион, као драгоцен сведочанство византијског културног наслеђа, објашњен је и у контексту друштвене историје Царства XI века.

На основу компаративне анализе података из царског говора и историографских извора (*Хронографије* Михаила Псела, *Историје* Михаила Аталијата и *Хроника* Скиличиного настављача и Јована Зонаре) утврђено је да је Псел енкомион упутио цару Константину X Дуки. У раду је предложен период од средине 1065. до пролећа 1066. године као време настанка енкомиона.

Пселов царски говор настао је приликом прославе неког јубилеја са циљем да укратко представи и похвали владавину Константина Дуке. Тематско и емоционално средиште енкомиона јесте личност Константина X Дуке, а његова основна мисао је похвала царевих урођених и стечених врлина. Тако је Константин X описан као храбар, праведан, умерен, разборит, побожан и човекољубив цар. Константин X је афирмисан као владар ратник чиме је била заокружена идеална слика византијског цара, првобранитеља хришћанске вере. Михаило Псел прославио је конкретну победу Константина X над Узима, за сународнике неочекиван византијски успех. Но, посветио је пар стихова и Дукиним тријумфима у другим крајевима васељене.

Неадресирани царски говор посвећен Константину X Дуки само је једна од карика у ланцу епидиктичког беседништва од рановизантијске епохе до пада Цариграда. Његова функција била је да на сваки начин потврди византијску владајућу политичку идеологију. Тако је Михаило Псел пропагирајући божанско порекло царске власти у Византији и државно-правно схватање средњовековне хијерархије држава на чијем се челу налазио византијски владар, ширио међу сународницима традиционалну идеологију Царства пред било којом спољнополитичком претњом непријатеља.

Кључне речи: енкомион, Михаило Псел, XI век, Константин X Дука, мотиви говора.

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