The books five and seven of the Chronographia contain some striking parallels between the two deposed and blinded emperors of the eleventh century, Kalaphates and Diogenes. The aim of this article is to consider whether these parallels are real historical facts or products of fabrication. Then, it will move on to examine how the two emperors are treated by Psellos within a context that takes into account the aspects of his political thought.

Key words: Michael Psellos, Chronographia, Romanos IV Diogenes, Michael V Kalaphates, Parallels.

The impression of the scholarly and literary outputs of Michael Psellos on modern historians and philologists can be reflected on the statement of K. N. Sathas who refers to him as “the last coronet of Hellenic philology”.1 The most exquisite of them is considered to be the Chronographia that combines autobiographical with historical, political, philosophical, religious, and rhetorical elements. In assessing the functions and character traits of the eleventh-century emperors the author displays his value as a court adviser.

The focus of attention in this article will be the books five and seven of the Chronographia which describe the rules of two deposed and blinded emperors Michael Kalaphates (1041–1042) and Romanos Diogenes (1068–1071) respectively.2 Their comparative study reveals some interesting parallels that suggest the

1 Μιχαήλ Ψελλός Ιστορικοί λόγοι, επιστολαι και άλλα άνεκδοτα, ed. K. N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη, vol. 5, Paris 1876, 35.
need for caution. I shall begin my investigation with the juxtaposition of the parallels, and then I shall examine their factual accuracy in other sources, laying great emphasis on the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates and the *Synopsis Historion* of Ioannes Skylitzes. I shall then consider how these two emperors are treated by Psellos within a context that takes account of the latter’s political interests. My method will be to split each of books five and seven into two sections by drawing a dividing line at the point where the ordeal of Kalaphates and Diogenes began and resulted in their brutal blinding [§5.40, §7b.42].

What follows is my own summary of the relevant events:

**Michael V Kalaphates**

1. John the Orphanotrophos and his brothers placed their nephew Michael at the feet of Zoe taking solemn oaths that he should be a ruler only in name following her orders.4

2. Kalaphates was aspirant to the throne since he was promoted to the rank of Caesar. He wished to share power either with someone unimportant or with no one at all.5

3. All relatives and government officials were immediate objects of suspicion to the emperor who removed their privileges and banished his uncle John the Orphanotrophos.6

**Romanos IV Diogenes**

Eudokia awoke her sleeping son Michael to let him know that his future stepfather was bound by a written agreement. According to that, Diogenes should be subservient to him, not a ruler.4a

The reason for Romanos’ military expeditions to Anatolia is associated with his ambition to rule the empire on his own without anyone else’s assistance.5a

Diogenes, who suspected everyone around him, (i.e., advisers or officials of state) stopped paying attention to their suggestions and relied on his own judgement exclusively.6a

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4 Psellos, §5.4.4–12, “τὸν παῖδα τιθέασι καὶ ἐπιρρήτουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς ποσι...καὶ πείσαντες ὡς ὅ μὲν ἀδελφόδους τοῦ τῆς βασιλείας καὶ μόνου ὄνοματος τετέχεται...καὶ εἰ μὲν βούλεται αὐτῇ τῶν ὠλών ἀνθέχεται, εἰ δ’ σύν, ἐγκελεύεσθαι τοῦτο τῷ καὶ ἐπιτάξαι καὶ ὡς ἀργυροπήρῳ βασιλεῖ χρήσθαι, ἀρρήτους τε ταύτῃ ὄρκους ὁμνύσει καὶ τὴν καθ’ ἱερῶν δόντες πίστιν ἔθρασιν ὀλὴν εὐφύς.”

4a Psellos, §7b.8.4–7, “Αὐτόστασον ἐφ’ (i.e., Eudokia) κάλλιστε μοι τῶν υἱῶν καὶ βασιλεῖ, καὶ δέξαι τὸν πατριῶν ἀντὶ πατρός, οὐκ ἄρχοντος, ἀλλ’ ὑπείκοντος, τοιοῦτον γάρ σοι τούτον ἐν γράμμασιν ἢ μὴτιρ ἐδέσμησεν.”

5 Psellos, §4.28.13–16, “Ἐπείδῃ γὰρ εἰς τὴν τοῦ καίσαρος τύχην ἀνεληλύθησε, οὗ βραχὺν ἐνέμεινεν χρόνων, καὶ τὸ σχῆμα τῆς βασιλείας ἐαυτῷ καὶ τοῦτο λεληθὼς εἰδολοποιοῦν, καὶ οὐν προχαράττων ὅπερ ὑστερον ἑγὼ κατέξασθαι”; ibid., §5.9.18–20, “κοινωνεῖν δὲ αὐτῷ τοῦ κράτους μικρὸν μὲν ἢ μηδένα τῶν ὀπάντων ἐβοῦλετο.”

5a Psellos, §7b.11.7–8, “Ὁ δὲ ἐβοῦλετο μὲν αὐταρχεῖν καὶ τὸ κράτος τῶν πραγμάτων ἐχεῖν μονοπάττος.”


4. His popularity amongst the citizens of Byzantium emboldened Kalaphates to treat Zoe as a prisoner. Shortly afterwards he exiled her and made her a nun.7

Having imagined that the results of the first two campaigns increased his popularity Diogenes treated Eudokia as a captive of war. He could have also banished her, if he so desired.7a

5. The civil rising from the exile of Zoe forced Kalaphates to seek refuge in the Stoudios monastery and wear the garb of a suppliant. His humbled situation excited all those who were present at the incident.8

When Diogenes failed to regain power after his defeat at Mantzikert, he surrendered to Andronikos Doukas and got dressed with a monastic garment. His humiliation gave a lot of pleasure to all eyewitnesses.8a

6. Kalaphates petitioned the clerics who witnessed his capture to guarantee his safety. Despite the promises he was given, he failed to prevent his own ultimate blinding.9

Despite the intervention of some priests who had been assigned to reconcile Diogenes with the new government, the former ruler did not escape the blinding.9a

1. The oath of Kalaphates to Zoe is also repeated by the other eleventh-century writers Attaleiates and Skylitzes;10 but they make no reference to any agreement between Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Diogenes. However, there exists archaeological evidence to add considerable importance to the testimony of Psello. The coins and seals of the period tend to verify the constitutional inferiority of Diogenes to Eudokia’s sons by her first marriage with Constantine X Doukas (i. e., Michael, Andronicos, and Constantios).11

2. The ambition of Kalaphates to take sole control of government since he was a Caesar is not found in other historical texts. In regard to the motives of Diogenes’ military campaigns, Attaleiates does not discern any selfishness at all, but

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7 Psellos, §§17.2–7, “Ωδὲν τὰ μὲν πρῶτα παρηγκονιζότο γενέσθαι καὶ ἀπεστρέφετο ... τειχῆρη τε οἷα δὴ πολεμίμα τιρῶν, καὶ φρουρὰ καταλαμβανόνων ἀτιμοτάτη”; ibid., §§5.21.10–12, “-appointedεὶν τοὺς βασιλείους καὶ εἰς μίαν τούτων δὴ τῶν πρὸ τῆς Πόλεος νύσσων καθίζειν”.

7a Psellos, §§7b.18.1–3, “ silenced τὸν μὲν ἀγαθόν τὸν τοῖς πρὸς τῆς Πόλεος ἀπαγαγεῖν θελήσειν .

8a Psellos, §§35.8–10, “τὸ το σχήμα μεταβαλλόν, ἰκέτου σχήμα μεταλαμβάνει καὶ πρόσφαιρος. Ὡς δὲ δὴ θῆλον ἐγένει τούτω τῇ Πόλει, εὐθὺς αἰρέται πᾶσα ψυχή...τὸ δ’ ὅσον δῆμως καὶ ἀγοραίον χορὸς τὸ συνίστασαν καὶ ἐπιτραγὼν τοὺς γεγονόσιν .

8a Psellos, §§7b.41.12–18, “Οἱ δὲ τὸ μοναδικὸν τέως ἐπενδύσασθαι σχήμα παρεκκελεύνοντο, ...ἐξάγουσι τὸν φρουρίον καὶ πρὸς τῶν Ἀνδρόνικων μεθ’ ὅσης ἄν εἶποι τῆς τῆς περιχαρίας ἀπαγογοῦν .”

9 Psello, §§4.5.5–10, “ἐκείνῳ πᾶσαι γοηράς ἀφίνεται φωνῆ πρὸς τὴν ιερὰν ποίμιν ἀπέβλεπαν, προσλαμβανόμενης μὴ ἐκπεεσθέν τῶν ἐπίδον, μηδὲ προσπεφυγόσας θεῶ ἐκέθεν ἀπελαθήναι πληρῶς καὶ οὐ καὶ μὲ πλείους πρὸς τὸ ἐκείνων πάθος ἐνυσσωτῆσαν, καὶ ἐναντιωθήσεσθαι μὲν τῆς του καιροῦ φορῆ παντάπασιν οὐκ ἐτόμησαν .

9a Psellos, §§7b.37.4–7, “Ἀνδράσι δὲ γοην Ἰερατικαὶ καὶ εἰρηνοποιοῖς ψυχὴ τοὺς περὶ τῆς φιλίας λόγους πιστεύει, καὶ γράμματα πρὸς τῶν πολέμιον ἃ. ὅ., Diogenes ἐγχειρίζεται πάν μὲν ὅτιον ὑπεχονύμενα .”

10 Skylitzes, 416; Attaleiates, 9.

ascribes them to the “zeal for vengeance” which proved superior to the pleasures of rule. Attaleiates’ statement is also repeated by the Continuator of Skylitzes whose further explanations come to question the account of Psellos. The latter sees the wars as an opportunity for the new ruler to enhance his reputation as a strategist, for he had no notable achievements in his career. We learn however from the Continuator that Diogenes, while serving as a *doux* of Serdica, had been awarded the title of *vestarches* by Constantine X Doukas for his victories against the Pechenegs.

3. The texts present two versions of the dismissal of relatives and other dignitaries from influential positions. Attaleiates, following Psellos’ account, directly implicates Michael Kalaphates in the event. Skylitzes, on the other hand, asserts that Zoe was the one who banished the Orphanotrophos and his brothers before she proclaimed her adopted son emperor. Yet, his testimony raises doubts as to whether the empress was truly able to do this, considering that she had been sidelined from the centre of government since the reign of Michael IV Paphlagon. We must remark here that the portrait of Kalaphates, as sketched by Skylitzes, is not that of a ruler who is highly suspicious of his uncles. Rather, he seems to have much confidence in their advice. Concerning Diogenes, the *Historia* of Attaleiates does not provide details adequate to verify the position of Psellos on the emperor’s behaviour. Although the chronicler Constantine Manasses talks about the excessive suspiciousness of Diogenes, he has no independent knowledge of the facts.

4. Apart from Psellos, Skylitzes also highlights the confinement of Zoe, but only in the section devoted to the rule of Paphlagon. Thus, we cannot say with certainty if his successor, Kalaphates, continued those measures that his uncles had taken against her. We have to note, however, that the account of Skylitzes generally portrays Kalaphates as irresolute and unable to act on his own initiative.

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13 Η συνέχεια της Χρονογραφίας του Ιωάννου Σκυλίτση, ed. E. Th. Tsolakes, Thessaloniki 1968, 121 (= Skylitzes Cont.).
15 Skylitzes, 416–417. The proclamation of Michael V in the morning following the death of Michael IV Paphlagon indicates that his succession was prearranged, and therefore it was not dependent on the will of Zoe. (J. Wortley, John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057, intro. J.-C. Cheynet — B. Flusin, notes, J.-C. Cheynet, Cambridge 2010, 391, n. 4).
16 Skylitzes, 417, identifies the Orphanotrophos and his brother Constantine as those who advised their nephew to remove Zoe from power before he suffers the fate of Michael Paphlagon and Romanos Argyros.
18 Skylitzes, 392, mentions that the Orphanotrophos had replaced all her eunuchs and her maidservants with others of absolute trust. Also he had positioned guards to superintend her, and she was not allowed to do anything without his own approval.
Attaleiates on the other hand says nothing about the supposed treatment of the two women as prisoners of war. His sole reference to the relationship of Eudokia with Diogenes aims to destroy Psellos’ assertion of her confinement and inform his readers about the strong feelings of love that she had for her husband.19

5. The mob’s excitement of seeing the two emperors dressed in black is not verified by other contemporary historians. Of much interest is the case of Diogenes in which traces of the communication between the Chronographia and the Historia are visible clearly. Unlike Psellos, Attaleiates states that the former emperor’s surrender caused feelings of fear and pity amongst the eyewitnesses considering how easily his situation changed.20 The polemic of the two authors is also unveiled further down when Diogenes was led in front of the commander of the imperial army, Andronikos Doukas. There is a striking similarity to how Andronikos and, earlier, Alp Arslan treated their captive in the Chronographia and the Historia respectively.21 Nevertheless, the objectives of Psellos and Attaleiates are very different: the first intends to magnify the exploit of Andronikos, while the second to praise Diogenes for his valour at the battle of Mantzikert in 1071, a virtue that even Alp Arslan acknowledged to him.

6. The information about Michael V and Constantine, the nobelissimos, to be dragged away from the altar by the furious mob with the monks to stay mere onlookers of the episode is found in the Chronographia only. Moreover the inconsistent accounts of Psellos and Attaleiates do not help to draw a safe conclusion about the role of the priests in the negotiations between the newly established government of Michael Doukas and the fallen emperor Diogenes. Psellos claims that some clerics had been delegated to reconcile the two sides before the outbreak of the civil war.22 Attaleiates, on the contrary, places their intervention as guarantors of Diogenes’ own safety just after the cessation of the hostilities.23 His version might be closer to the truth. We may suspect that Psellos distorts his account, because he was possibly involved in the blinding of Diogenes.24 Also it is worth mentioning that the twelfth-century chronicler Ioannes Zonaras, who draws on both Psellos and Attaleiates, follows the narrative of Attaleiates at that point.25

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19 Attaleiates, 107. Also, D. Krallis, Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos, 176.
20 Attaleiates, 129.
21 Without showing any arrogance, Andronikos and the sultan displayed a kindly attitude to Romanos and invited him at the dinner table (Psellos, §7b.41; Attaleiates, 122).
22 Psellos, §7b.37. We must say here that the historian Nikephoros Bryennios, who draws on Psellos, makes a reference to the intervention of some delegates, yet he does not provide any specific information about them (Nicephori Bryennii Historiarum libri quattuor, ed. P. Gautier, CFHB 9, Brussels 1975, 129).
23 Attaleiates, 131; Skylitzes Cont., 154.
To recapitulate: Of the six parallels between Kalaphates and Diogenes, only three common points are found: A) the oath of allegiance to the two empresses, B) their public appearance wearing monastic garments, and C) their blinding. Since the other parallels are not confirmed by Skylitzes or Attaleiates, we can infer that they might have been products of fabrication. In confining my analysis to the *Chronographia*, I shall offer below some observations about how Psellos distorts his account of these emperors to accord it with the political aspects of his thought.

In the first section of book five the author’s use of language reflects his severe criticism of Kalaphates’ acts of aggression against Zoe. On this basis, he is called: θηρ (beast) [§5.17.13], ἀθλιώτατος (most wretched man) [§5.21.2], ἀλ-λότριος (parvenu) [§5.21.5], δεινός (terrible) [§5.23.3], ἄλτιρίος (sinful) [§5.26.8], πονηρός (malicious) [§5.32.4], and δυσγενής/δυσγενέστατος (mean/meanest) [§5.26.14, §5.21.6]. To those we can add the thirteen references to his despotic rule describing him as τύραννος, τυραννεύων, τυραννικός (tyrant/tyrannical).26 It is significant that such expressions are completely absent from the relevant section of the seventh book. There is a sole reference to Diogenes as δεινός ἄνηρ (terrible man) [§7b.34.15], but it relates to his armed uprising against Michael VII Doukas (1072) and not to his attitude towards Eudokia. It is more likely that if both the empresses had been forced to live in confinement, then Psellos would have treated those two men on equal terms; yet this is not confirmed in the above remarks.

With that in mind, an important question has to be met here: is Psellos’ account affected by the mistreatment of Zoe and Eudokia? In other words, is his concern about the empresses genuine? The context of the *Chronographia* does not support such a theory. In book three Psellos, though he has no direct knowledge of Romanos Argyros’ demise, sounds sure that Zoe was involved in the case [§3.26]. Hence, he fully justifies Michael IV Paphlagon’s pretence at gratitude to her (i. e., Zoe’s second husband) in the fourth book [§4.6].27 On this account, it is not irrational to suspect that the author might agree with the dismissal of Zoe, but he does not wish to openly conflict with public opinion at that point. As for Eudokia, she is also treated with contempt in the text, because her marriage with Diogenes posed a serious threat to the rights of Psellos’ pupil, Michael Doukas [§§7b.4–7]. This is strongly felt in the passage that describes her exile. The writer protects Michael VII Doukas against any possible charges ascribing the deposition of Eudokia to the political circumstances of the times [§7b.30]. The same reason is given

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26 Psellos, §§5.15.6; §§5.23.25; §§5.26.2, 18; §§5.32.5, 16; §§5.33.2; §§5.36.1, 3, 5; §§5.38.1, 11; §§5.43.2.
27 J. N. Ljubarskij, Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψέλλου, Athens 2004, 321, notes that Michael V’s attitude towards Zoe is, in fact, identical to that of the previous rulers (i. e., Romanos Argyros and Michael Paphlagon) she enthroned.
later to explain the decree that was issued for Diogenes’ blinding in the *Chronographia*.

The second section of book five narrates the events that took place after the popular uprising against the exile of Zoe. Kalaphates took refuge in the Stoudios monastery to save his life. Psello — he too was there as a consultant of a guard commander — tells us that he had gone along with the mob having no sympathy for Kalaphates until then [§5.40].

This is the moment that the ungrateful emperor is literally transformed into a helpless victim. Once Psello saw the terrified Kalaphates clung to the holy altar, his eyes filled with tears and his anger at him dissolved completely. Then, he presents Kalaphates to confess in tears that his misfortune was a divine retribution for his sins [§5.43]. A. R. Dyck has argued that the emperor could not have had the clarity of thought to make such a confession under the threat of severe punishment. Furthermore, A. Kaldellis maintains that Psello lies when he ascribes the overthrow of Kalaphates to divine intervention. On this account, he suggests that the reference to Providence must be taken as “a poetic image and a joke”. It is true that Psello rarely alludes to any supernatural occurrence in the book. Having belief in human independence he explains incidents and catastrophes under the laws of nature.

What follows in the sequence of events is the *prooimion* of the blinding of Kalaphates with his uncle, the nobelissimos Constantine. The furious mob, violating the right of their asylum, dragged them out of the altar. The fearful men pinned their hopes of saving their lives on the monks who were present, but did not dare (οὐκ ἔτολμησαν) to stop the multitude [§§5.44–45]. The human drama is powerfully unfolded in the text highlighting the despair and anguish of the victims. Whereas the nobelissimos endured his ordeal with tremendous courage, Kalaphates was paralyzed with fright and screamed with pain when his eyes were removed [§§5.47–50]. Psello calls into play his rhetorical powers to evoke the sympathy of his readers for the unfortunate emperor. He uses a tragic style of writing to deflect their attention from the synthesis act-retribution and turn it to the

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28 J. B. Bury, *Roman Emperors from Basil II to Isaac Komnénos*, The English Historical Review 4 (1889) 257–258, surmises that Zoe “was probably a troublesome and meddlesome old woman.” Bury moreover suggests that Zoe’s exile should be assessed as part of Michael V’s wider plan to radically reform the political system of the state. Yet, the new ruler did not achieve his aspiration because his ideas were presumably repellent to conservative elements. Actually, the short duration of the reign of Kalaphates prevents us from drawing a firm conclusion about his political orientations.


31 Psello, §5.46, states that the blinding of Kalaphates was orchestrated by supporters of Theodora (she lived in confinement, but returned to the palace shortly after the riot broke out on 19th April). They did this for fear that Zoe (i. e., Theodora’s sister), might re-establish Kalaphates on the throne.
imminent drama in which repentance and confession are not followed by atone-
ment and absolution.32

The circumstances are completely reversed in the second section of the sev-
enth book. In a plain description devoid of emotional elements, the author ex-
plains the reasons for the blinding of Diogenes. Although he feigns moral shock,
hes takes the view that the constraints of government have to be placed above the
dictates of Christianity. Because of this, he justifies the blinding as political ne-
cecessity lest Diogenes regains the throne and takes reprisals against his conspira-
tors [§7b.42]. Evidently Psellos was afraid that Eudokia would get Diogenes back
to Byzantium in order to restore her power that was in danger continuously after
she married him.33 The author’s strong aversion to Diogenes makes sense in ear-
lier sections too. He says that he stood amazed at hearing the name of the no-
bleman whom Eudokia had chosen for husband [§7b.7]. The political lobbyists
would henceforth plot against the new ruler given that his authority posed a seri-
ous threat to their personal ambitions.34

That was the political climate once Diogenes launched the crucial campaign
against the Turks in 1071. In all likelihood, he was acquainted with the whispered
rumours spread through the palace that his earlier campaigns were treated as a fi-
asco by the conspirators [§§7b.13, 17]. Accordingly, he sought a decisive victory
over the Seljuks to put down all opposition. A great triumph would enhance his
reputation amongst the inhabitants of the capital and guarantee his power. That
would put him in a suitable position to exile or imprison his political antagonists.
Perhaps he did not try to topple them earlier lest the populace might rise in revolt,
as had happened in the reign of Kalaphates. If Diogenes had eventually defeated
the sultan, the political career of Psellos would have probably finished. But what
if he had returned to the palace after his eight-day captivity in the enemy camp?
Psellos was one of the prime suspects in the treachery of Andronikos Doukas, the
Caesar’s son, whose retreat from the battlefield at Mantzikert decided the fate of
the army and of the emperor himself. It is probable that Diogenes would have

32 Unlike Psellos, Skylitzes and Attaleiates provide a plain and very unemotional account of
that occasion. They do refer to the anger of the mob, but not to the feelings of Kalaphates and his un-
cle. Skylitzes attaches importance to the substance of the events, while Attaleiates wants to pass a
warning to the next generations. His wish is that the blinding of the two men may act as a deterrent to
those who might be tempted to transgress the bounds of acceptable behaviour towards their benefac-
tors (Skylitzes, 420–421; Attaleiates, 14).
33 To marry Diogenes, Eudokia broke her written oath to her former husband Constantine X.
The text of her oath has been published by N. Oikonomidès, Le serment de l’impératrice Eudocie
34 Apart from Psellos, who wanted to promote his own interests with the enthronement of Mi-
ichael Doukas, the Caesar John Doukas aspired to retain the imperial crown for his family. Moreover,
the patriarch John Xiphilinos would like to retaliate against Eudokia who had deceived him into be-
lieving that she would marry his son, or nephew, Bardas (Skylitzes Cont., 123; Zonaras, 686–687).
Also, it must be born in mind that Diogenes had another son by his first marriage, Constantine
(Bryennios, 207), to succeed him to the throne, and as such cease the continuance of the Macedonian
dynasty.
used any means within the law to inflict the capital punishment on Psellos who had been an experienced figure of political imminence.

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Мићаило Вук Калата — Роман IV Диоген: 
текстуалне паралеле у хронографији Мићаила Псела

Да би се разумело Пселово гледање на Калатеа и Диогена, поделили смо његово излагање на сektije које показују са којом вештином он употребљава изворни материјал да би читајево мишљење поистоветио са сопственим. У петој књизи, емоционални елементи дотерују опис изгнања царице Зоје зато што аутор не жели да се супротстави јавном протесту који је обезбедио њен повратак у палату (§ 5.22). Мало даље, Псел прича о Калатовом судбини са емоционалним набојем, да би распало осећања народа против његовог ослепљења и против монаха који нису покушали да тај чин спрече. Обрнуто, у књизи седмој нарација је потпуно лишена емоција. Уместо тога, пажња је окренута разлозима Диогеновог ослепљивања и Евдокијиног протеривања. То би могло да објасни зашто је интервенција клирика стављена раније у Хронографију. Мићаило Дука их је послао да понуде одређене предлоге Диогену, али је овај одговорио оружаном побуном против нове владе. Пселово становиште је, дакле, одређено политичким чиниоцима. Он је избио на површину као дворанин за владавине Калатове који је увидео квалитете младог правника и довође га у палату. Царево збацивање ставило је изненада тачку на Пселове даље амбиције у вези са успоном у ministarsки ранг. Дакле, пре Диогеновог доласка на престо Псел је био веома утицајан политичар. После тога, његов положај постаје неизвестан. Политичка тензија између њих двојице претвара се у борбу за живот и смрт. Евентуална царева победа против Алп Арслана 1071. донела би нестанак Пселове политичке моћи. Према томе, књига седма Хронографије у ствари одражава ауторове емоционалне страхове пред будућношћу. Тако можемо да закључимо да Псел употребљава исте разлоге због којих је Калат био ослепљен да окрене своје читаоце против Диогена, најнеумољивијег непријатеља у читавој његовој каријери.