

Guest Editors' Note

Sotiris Mitralaxis, Georgios Steiris

We are most thankful to *Forum Philosophicum*, and its Editor-in-Chief Marcin Podbielski, for the invitation to act as guest editors in a special issue dedicated to looking at Maximus the Confessor from a *philosophical* perspective—by which we mean both the philosophical efflorescence of Maximus' thought per se, approached within its historical context, and the attempt to find Maximian solutions to contemporary philosophical problems or to engage Maximus' thought in dialogue with modern philosophy. In many ways, this special issue is a sister volume to the book *Maximus the Confessor as a European Philosopher* (Eugene: Cascade / Wipf & Stock, forthcoming later in 2016). Both form parts of a sustained attempt at highlighting Maximus the Confessor's relevance for philosophical inquiry, without denying the explicitly theological nature of his thought in doing so. Believing that there is much philosophical fecundity in this approach, we remain with the hope that it will be continued.

Our issue begins with JACK LOUIS PAPPAS' "Otherwise than Identity, or Beyond Difference: Maximus the Confessor and the Hypostatic-Transfigurement of Fundamental Ontology," in which the author juxtaposes Maximus' treatment of subjects like temporality, relation, finitude, and historicity in *Ambiguum* 7 and 10 with aspects of Heidegger's thought. In taking inspiration from Maximian thought in order to address modern and contemporary concerns in philosophy, Pappas claims that in Maximus one can find the seeds of solutions to otherwise challenging problems emerging later in the history of philosophy. Following this, TY MONROE analyzes Maximus' approach to divine and human knowledge, comparing it to Evagrian notions and thus demonstrating Maximus' originality. Then comes EMMA BROWN DEWHURST's "The Ontology of Virtue as Participation in Divine Love in the Works of St. Maximus the Confessor"; here, the author shows how virtue is "ontologized" in

Maximus' thought, particularly in the context of deification, thus portraying an alternative Maximian virtue theory that is markedly different from modern virtue theory, with which it could engage in dialogue. The task of approaching Maximus *as a philosopher* takes an interesting turn in the next paper. In this, DOUGLAS A. SHEPARDSON attempts a contradistinction of the trial of Socrates, as portrayed in Plato's *Apology*, and the trial of Maximus, as depicted in *Relatio Motionis*, examining the historical context of each trial, the defense speeches themselves, and the function of those trials in the public sphere—arriving at a series of similarities and hinting at the possibility that perhaps those similarities were deliberate ones, in which case *Relatio Motionis'* medieval authors *wanted* the depiction of Maximus' trial to be reminiscent of Socrates'. The Maximian part of this issue is concluded with CULLAN JOYCE's "Unity, Interdependence, and Multiplicity in Maximus the Confessor: An Engagement with Heidegger's Topology," in which Maximus is again compared with Heidegger, this time with respect to the implications of the notion of *topos* for experience.

In interdisciplinary terms, scholarly interest in the Confessor's thought is currently clearly on the rise, bringing together scholars involved in Classics and the study of Late Antiquity, theology, Byzantine studies, and the history of ideas, among others. However, while the philosophical *elements* of Maximus' thought are always acknowledged in those fields, the discipline of philosophy, academically understood, has not yet fully embraced the Confessor as a standard, if you will, object of inquiry. We hope that the diversity of the issue's papers will serve to demonstrate the different perspectives from which engaging with Maximus' philosophy can be most fruitful, and that he will soon be clearly discernible in the tesserae that make up the mosaic of the history of European philosophy.