



VERITAS

Maximus the Confessor  
as a European Philosopher

EDITED BY

*Sotiris Mitralaxis, Georgios Steiris,  
Marcin Podbielski, and Sebastian Lalla*

The study of Maximus the Confessor's thought has flourished in recent years: international conferences, publications and articles, new critical editions and translations mark a torrent of interest in the work and influence of perhaps the most sublime of the Byzantine Church Fathers. It has been repeatedly stated that the Confessor's thought is of eminently philosophical interest. However, no dedicated collective scholarly engagement with Maximus the Confessor *as a philosopher* has taken place—and this volume attempts to start such a discussion. Apart from Maximus' relevance and importance for philosophy in general, a second question arises: should towering figures of Byzantine philosophy like Maximus the Confessor be included in an overview of the European history of philosophy, or rather excluded from it—as is the case today with most histories of European philosophy? Maximus' philosophy challenges our understanding of what European philosophy is. In this volume, we begin to address these issues and examine numerous aspects of Maximus' philosophy—thereby also stressing the interdisciplinary character of Maximian studies.

“This groundbreaking volume correctly identifies an odious convention in the division of disciplines: while major thinkers such as Augustine or Aquinas self-evidently make their way into being part of philosophy's legacy, equally major thinkers that are categorized as ‘religious’ are exiled to the hermetically sealed domain of theology, even if their contribution to classical philosophical problems is unique, pertinent, and most fecund. The book at hand delivers on its promise of reclaiming Maximus the Confessor for philosophy and of recognizing his oeuvre as a critical contribution to its history; as such, it is one of those endeavors that contribute to nothing less than a paradigm change.”

—GRIGORY BENEVICH, *The Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities*

“This rich and diverse set of essays goes far in demonstrating not only the depth and nuance of Maximus the Confessor's philosophical theology in its own context but its relevance to a wide array of contemporary theological concerns. They indicate very well why the study of Maximus has experienced a profound renaissance in the past several years, as this is a thinker whose stature matches the far more studied figures of Augustine and Aquinas. From metaphysics to theological anthropology, from apophaticism to ethics, this collection is a fine contribution to the expanding research on Maximus and will further generate interest in the Confessor among historical theologians, philosophers, and scholars from a wide variety of disciplines.”

—PAUL M. BLOWERS, *Emmanuel Christian Seminary at Milligan College*

**Sotiris Mitralaxis** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the City University of Istanbul and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Winchester.

**Georgios Steiris** is Assistant Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

**Marcin Podbielski** is Editor-in-Chief of *Forum Philosophicum*, an international journal for philosophy, and teaches philosophy at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow, Poland.

**Sebastian Lalla** is Assistant Professor (*Privatdozent*) at the Freie Universität Berlin's Institute of Philosophy and Guest Professor of Philosophy at the National University of Mongolia.

COVER ART copyright©Fotis Varthis. Used by permission.  
COVER DESIGN: JIM TEDRICK

[www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com)

 **Cascade Books**  
An Imprint of WIPF and STOCK Publishers

ISBN 978-1-4982-9558-1



9 781498 295581

# Maximus the Confessor as a European Philosopher



# Maximus the Confessor as a European Philosopher

EDITED BY

*Sotiris Mitralaxis*

*Georgios Steiris*

*Marcin Podbielski*

*Sebastian Lalla*



CASCADE Books • Eugene, Oregon

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR AS A EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHER

Copyright © 2017 Wipf and Stock. All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical publications or reviews, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from the publisher. Write: Permissions, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 199 W. 8th Ave., Suite 3, Eugene, OR 97401.

Cascade Books  
An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers  
199 W. 8th Ave., Suite 3  
Eugene, OR 97401

[www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com)

PAPERBACK ISBN: 978-1-4982-9558-1  
HARDCOVER ISBN: 978-1-4982-9560-4  
EBOOK ISBN: 978-1-4982-9559-8

*Cataloguing-in-Publication data:*

---

Names: Mitralaxis, Sotiris, editor. | Steiris, Georgios, editor. | Podbielski, Marcin, editor. | Lalla, Sebastian, editor.

Title: Maximus the Confessor as a european philosopher / edited by Sotiris Mitralaxis, Georgios Steiris, Marcin Podbielski, and Sebastian Lalla

Description: Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017 | Series: Veritas | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: ISBN 978-1-4982-9558-1 (paperback) | ISBN 978-1-4982-9560-4 (hardcover) | ISBN 978-1-4982-9559-8 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: subject | subject | subject | subject

Classification: CALL NUMBER 2017 (print) | CALL NUMBER (ebook)

---

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2017

To Fr. Andrew Louth,  
with gratitude for his pioneering work  
in the study of Maximus the Confessor





## Contents

*List of Contributors xi*

*Editorial Note on Abbreviations xiii*

*List of Abbreviations xv*

*Introduction xxi*

### PART I. FIRST PHILOSOPHY: ONTOLOGY/METAPHYSICS

1. “Eschatological Teleology,” “Free Dialectic,” “Metaphysics of the Resurrection”: The Three Antinomies That Make Maximus an Alternative European Philosopher 3

*Dionysios Skliris*

2. A Metaphysics of Holomerism 24

*Torstein Theodor Tollefsen*

3. Being Moved: St. Maximus between Anaxagoras and Kierkegaard 35

*John Panteleimon Manoussakis*

4. The System of Relations as a Pattern of Historicity in the Metaphysics of St. Maximos the Confessor 55

*Smilen Markov*

5. An Introduction to Aristotle’s Theory of Motion as a Precursor to Maximus’ Understanding of Motion 65

*Michail Mantzanas*

6. Maximus’ Theory of Motion: Motion κατὰ φύσιν, Returning Motion, Motion παρὰ φύσιν 73

*Sotiris Mitralaxis*

PART II. EPISTEMOLOGY: KNOWLEDGE, APOPHATICISM,  
AND LANGUAGE

7. "A Greater and More Hidden Word": Maximos the Confessor and the  
Nature of Language 95

*Fr. Maximos Constas*

8. Both Mere Man and Naked God: The Incarnational Logic of Apophasis  
in St. Maximus the Confessor 110

*Jordan Daniel Wood*

9. Roots of Scientific Objectivity in the *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 131

*Michael Harrington*

10. The Theo-Phenomenology of Negation in Maximus the Confessor  
between Negative Theology and Apophaticism 140

*Natalie Depraz*

PART III. ANTHROPOLOGY: HUMAN NATURE, ETHICS,  
AND THE WILL

11. St. Maximos' Distinction between λόγος and τρόπος and the Ontology  
of the Person 157

*Andrew Louth*

12. The Conceptual Apparatus of Maximus the Confessor and Contempo-  
rary Anthropology 166

*Georgi Kapriev*

13. The Face of the Soul, the Face of God: Maximus the Confessor and  
πρόσωπον 193

*Marcin Podbielski*

14. The Philosophical Basis of Maximus' Concept of Sexes: The Reasons  
and Purposes of the Distinction between Man and Woman 229

*Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska*

PART IV. MAXIMUS IN DIALOGUE: FROM ANTIQUITY  
TO CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

15. Analogical Ecstasy: Maximus the Confessor, Plotinus, Heidegger, and  
Lacan 241

*Nicholas Loudovikos*

16. Man as Co-creator: Reflections on the Theological Insights of St.  
Maximus the Confessor within a Contemporary Interdisciplinary  
Context 255

*Stoyan Tanev*

17. Ἀντεξούσιος Activity as Assent or Co-actuality? Compatibilism,  
Natural Law, and the Maximian Synthesis 272

*Demetrios Harper*

18. Creation Anticipated: Maximian Reverberations in Bonaventure's  
Exemplarism 284

*Justin Shaun Coyle*

19. The Oneness of God as Unity of Persons in the Thought of St. Maximus  
the Confessor 304

*Vladimir Cvetković*

20. Seeking Maximus the Confessor's Philosophical Sources: Maximus the  
Confessor and al-Farabi on Representation and Imagination 316

*Georgios Steiris*

Appendix: Philosophy and Theology—the Byzantine Model 333

*Georgi Kapriev*

Index 337



## Contributors

**Fr. Maximos Constas** is Senior Research Scholar at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, in Brookline, Massachusetts.

**Justin Shaun Coyle** is a doctoral candidate in historical theology at Boston College, Massachusetts.

**Vladimir Cvetković** holds a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Belgrade and is currently an independent researcher in Göttingen, Germany.

**Natalie Depraz** is Professor of Philosophy at the Université de Rouen, France.

**Fr. Demetrios Harper** holds a doctorate in theology from the University of Winchester, UK, at which he is currently a Visiting Research Fellow.

**Michael Harrington** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Georgi Kapriev** is Professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” in Bulgaria.

**Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland.

**Sebastian Lalla** is Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the National University of Mongolia and *Privatdozent* at the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

**Fr. Nicholas Loudovikos** is Professor of Dogmatics and Chair of the Department of Theological and Pastoral Studies at the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki, Greece, Honorary Research Fellow at the

University of Winchester and Visiting Professor at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, UK.

**Fr. Andrew Louth** is Professor Emeritus of Patristic and Byzantine Studies at Durham University, UK.

**Fr. John Panteleimon Manoussakis** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Honorary Fellow of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University.

**Michail Mantzanas** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens.

**Smilen Markov** is Assistant Professor at the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria.

**Sotiris Mitralaxis** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the City University of Istanbul and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Winchester, UK.

**Marcin Podbielski** is Editor-in-Chief of *Forum Philosophicum*, an international journal for philosophy, and teaches philosophy at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow, Poland.

**Dionysios Skliris** holds a doctorate from the Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines of the University of Paris (Sorbonne-Paris IV), France.

**Georgios Steiris** is Assistant Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

**Stoyan Tanev** is Associate Professor at the Innovation and Design Engineering Section of the University of Southern Denmark, Odense, and Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski,” Bulgaria.

**Torstein Theodor Tollefsen** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oslo, Norway.

**Jordan Daniel Wood** is a doctoral candidate in historical theology at Boston College, Massachusetts.