

The Anthropic Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor

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Abstract

The present article shows the unbreakable connection between man and the created cosmos. Man, as mediator between all the divisions in creation, find themselves at the heart of the world, and have the vocation to mediate between the various levels of creation so as to deify them (*theosis*).

One of Saint Maximus's favourite concepts is *logos*, which is the attribute of any being created by God. The seal of divine Logos is on each creature, i.e. its connection with the uncreated God. The created cosmos finds its meaning and ultimate purpose in humanity. Saint Maximus thus anticipates what contemporary physics calls an anthropic principle.

Saint Maximus the Confessor (580-662) is one of the most important Byzantine theologians. His theology represents a landmark of universal thought, a moment of original synthesis, a starting point for any work written after him. He remains normative for all the branches of theological thinking, especially after the canonization of his Christology at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681). Although unsystematic, his writing is exceptionally cohesive and coherent. All the categories of his thinking are connected with one another; therefore, in order to approach one of them, one must be familiar with his entire work. The better part of his theological reflection is in the field of Christology, closely interrelated with his other favourite topics: cosmology, anthropology, and ecclesiology.

Saint Maximus' cosmology could not find an official approval by an Ecumenical Council, as was the case with his Christology, many of the theologians thus considering it as a personal development of older intuitions of predecessors such as Dionysius the Areopagite, Evagrius Ponticus and others. Thus, his theory of the divine *logoi* of creation was considered rather as a "theologumenon" than theology in the proper sense

of the word. It is the merit of contemporary Orthodox theology, and especially of the representatives of the “neopatristic” current, to have emphasized the topical and original character of Maximus’ cosmological thought. For example, in the first volume of his *Dogmatics*, the Reverend Father Dumitru Staniloae, practically the most important translator of Saint Maximus’ works into Romanian, gave a detailed presentation of the Maximian teaching on the divine *logoi* of creation. This topic is frequently dealt with by Western scholars studying Saint Maximus, so that it reached an unprecedented *akmé* at the end of the past century¹. Numerous doctoral theses, monographs or chapters, as well as hundreds of studies and introductory notes make Saint Maximus the Confessor one of the best studied and most inspiring patristic authors in contemporary theology. The present study is an attempt to emphasize the main guidelines of Saint Maximus’ cosmology by taking into consideration the most important contemporary studies. The main purpose of this approach is to emphasize the unity between cosmology and anthropology as described in St. Maximus’ work, as well as to underline the human dimension of the cosmos, the way in which man, as part of the cosmos, discovers his calling as mediator, between the visible and invisible, between matter and spirit, between the intelligible and the sensible, and lately, through Christ, between Godhead and the universe, as a clue to its deification.

The world and everything in it were brought into existence out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. This is categorically stated by Saint Maximus several times². The creation is in a complete

¹ Aidan Nichols offers a general overview upon Saint Maximus until the end of the ,80s in his book *Byzantine Gospel. Maximus the Confessor in Modern Scholarship*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993. A general bibliography can be found in Peter Van Deun, „Maxime le Confesseur: état de la question et bibliographie exhaustive” in *Sacris Erudiri*, 38, 1998-1999, pp. 485- 573. Another useful general introduction in the maximian work, as well as a biography, and bibliography, can be found in Jean-Claude Larchet, *Saint Maxime le Confesseur (580-662)*, Cerf, Paris, 2003.

² For example, he shows this in *Centuries on Love* [Char.] IV, 1, P.G. 90, 1048A: “God called all things into existence out of nothing” *Ambigua* [henceforth, *Amb.*] 7, P.G. 91, 1080A: “by his gracious will He created all things visible and invisible out of non-being” cf. St. Maximus the Confessor.

dependence on its Creator. The divine transcendency is absolute and the creatures cannot exist without their pre-existent *logoi*. In terms of nature, the distance between God and His creation is expressed by Saint Maximus through several expressions, each of them having its own history and content: διαφορά (difference), διαίρεσις (distinction, division), διάστασις (distance), διάστημα (separation, space)³. Thus, God "by His Word and by His Wisdom made all things and is making, universals as well as particulars at the proper time"⁴. Underlining the absolute difference between God and the creatures, Saint Maximus rejects the negative, pessimistic, Platonic-Origenistic view according to which, before coming into existence, the beings pre-existed, substantially united with the divine Logos. Through sin, these fallen spirits would have attracted the divine punishment, which consisted essentially of taking an inferior, corporeal form of existence. As Polycarp Sherwood showed⁵, Saint Maximus critically refuted Origenism (mainly in the *Ambigua*), in the form it had been transmitted within the monastic communities by the Evagrian tradition. Maximus did this relying also on the Dionysian view of the world, by raising the Origenist-Evagrian spirituality from its immanent human level to that of the relationship between man and God⁶. Here he develops the theme of the divine λόγοι.

On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ. Selected Writings from Maximus the Confessor, translated by Paul M. Blowers, Robert L. Wilken, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press New York, 2003, p. 55[henceforth, Blowers & Wilken].

³ A detailed analysis of these terms was made by L. Thunberg, *Microcosmos and Mediator The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, 2nd edition, Chicago, La Salle, 1995, p. 51-60.

⁴ *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1080A, Blowers & Wilken, p. 55.

⁵ P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of the Origenism*, Studia Anselmiana, Rome, 1955.

⁶ Cf. Rev. Prof. Dr. D. Stăniloae, *Translator's Introduction to Saint Maximus the Confessor, Ambigua*, P.S.B. 80, EIBMBOR, 1983, p. 11, note 6.

The divine λόγοι

"For we believe that a logos of angels preceded their creation, a logos precede the creation of each of the beings and powers that fill the upper world, a logos preceded the creation of human beings, a logos preceded everything that receives its becoming from God, and so on"⁷.

However, these *logoi* that precede the beings and the things in the world do not have an existence before actual existence; they are only meditations, thoughts of God. The *λόγος* of a being is not a substance (οὐσία), but the reason of a substance (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας); it does not subsist in itself, but in Him, it only exists *in potentiam* [in potentiality], as an yet unmanifested possibility. Although known beforehand as *logos*, a being is created by God in time at the right moment, according to a pre-established logos in the beginning of His creation. Once created, a being has a real and actual existence/subsistence, that is to say, it is substantial.

Following Dionysius the Areopagite, Saint Maximus relates the notion of the *logos* of a being to the divine will. "Λόγοι of the beings are not manifestations of the divine essence, but manifestations of the creating will of God. For this reason, Maximus names the *logoi* divine „wills” (Θελήματα)⁸, also because they represent within the beings the inscription of the divine will or God's intention regarding each being and, finally, because they show this divine purpose in the creation itself"⁹. Larchet accurately defined the *λόγος* of a being as its principle or "its essential reason, the one that fundamentally defines and characterizes it, but also its finality, the *scopos* for which a being exists, briefly its reason of being in a double meaning of principle and end of its existence"¹⁰.

⁷ *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1080A, Blowers & Wilken, p. 55

⁸ According to *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1085A; *Questions to Thalassius* [*Thal.*] 13, P.G. 90, 296A; Saint Dionysius the Areopagite *De div. nom.* V, 8, P.G. 3, 824C, at J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon St. Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1996, p. 114.

⁹ J.-C. Larchet, op. cit., p. 114-115.

¹⁰ J.-C. Larchet, *Introduction à Saint Maxime le Confesseur, Ambigua*, trad. et notes par E. Ponsoye, commentaries par le P. D. Staniloae, Paris,

Hence, the *logoi* of beings point to the principle, the meaning of the existence of the being by virtue of its relationship with the divine Λόγος, but at the same time, they also show the purpose that God had in view for each particular creature and implicitly for the world, as "nothing that came into being is perfect in itself nor has it a purpose in itself"¹¹. Saint Maximus thus relates everything to the final purpose (σκοπός) which is deification (Θεώσις) of the entire creation. However, it is grounded in the Embodiment. From the very foundation of creation, Saint Maximus sees the *logoi* of particular beings as a sort of embodiment. The mysterious presence of the divine Λόγος within the λόγοι of the beings lays the divine purpose as the foundation of the being, set beforehand in the same being, which is deification. "We see that the λόγος is not only a divine will in the sense in which it corresponds to God's creating intention through which, and according to which, God would have created at the right time the being which corresponds to this logos, and for which the *logos* constitutes the archetype or the primary model (*prototype*) of this being in its essence and its peculiarity. The *logos* also corresponds to the divine intention with regards to the destiny of this being: it defines beforehand its finality, the purpose to which it must tend and in which it will find its perfection, and this finality is to unite with God and to become god through participation. Thus, this *logos* is not only an indication of this purpose or something that orientates, guides, leads the creature towards him, but it is in God, in the divine plan (or according to God's good will) that each creature has already, potentially, fulfilled this purpose"¹².

Saint Maximus' explanations regarding the λόγοι of creation, besides the criticism of Origenism, represent a key point of his entire thought, unitary as a whole¹³. J.-C. Larchet

Suresnes, 1994, p. 20; the same definition in J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1996, p. 113.

¹¹ *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1072C, Blowers&Wilken, p. 49

¹² J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1996, p. 119.

¹³ Many authors wrote about the divine *logoi* of Saint Maximus the Confessor: I.-H. Dalmais, "La théorie des „logoi“ des créatures chez saint Maxime le Confesseur", en *Revue des sciences philosophique et théologique*,

brings important clarifications concerning the particular way in which the *logoi* are organized. Thus, each being responds in the same time to different *logoi*: to a *logos* which categorizes a particular being under a gender (γένος), to a *logos* that classifies it under a species (εἶδος), to a *logos* which defines its essence (οὐσία) or nature (φύσις) - Maximus makes a special reference here to this fundamental *logos* of the nature [λόγος τῆς φύσεως] - to a *logos* that defines its constitution (κρᾶσις), and also to some *logoi* that describe its power, its work, its passion respectively, but also its proper character according to quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, motion, stability' (*Amb.* 15, 1217AB; 17, 1228A-1229A) and to other numerous *logoi* that correspond to the multiple qualities of God.

Thus, one and the same individual corresponds not only to a single *logos*, but also to a multitude of *logoi* that are,

36 (1952), p. 244-249; P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism*, in „*Studia Anselmiana*”, no 36, Rome, 1955, p. 166-180; H.U. von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie. Das Weltbild Maximus des Bekennters*, Einsiedeln, 1961, p. 110-117; A. Riou, *Le Monde et L'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1973, p. 54-63; J.-C. Larchet, *Introduction in Saint Maxime le Confesseur, Questions à Thalassios*, translation and notes by E. Ponsoye, Paris-Suresnes, 1992, p. 10-12; Idem, *Introduction in Saint Maxime le Confesseur, Ambigua*, translation and notes by E. Ponsoye, commentaries by Rev. D. Stăniloae, Paris-Suresnes, 1994, pp. 19-24; L. Thunberg, *Microcosm an Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Chicago&La Salle, 1995, p. 72-79; Idem, *Man and Cosmos. The Vision of Maximus the Confessor*, N.Y., 1985, p. 137-143; J.P. Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, Pennsylvania, 1989, p. 139-144; J. Van Rossum, The λόγοι of Creation and Divine „energies” in Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas, in *Studia Patristica*, XXVII (1993), p. 213-217; W. Wölker, *Maximus Confessor als Meister des geistlichen Lebens*, Wiesbaden, 1965, p. 29-31, 301-314; J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1996, p. 112-123; J. Lemaître (I.Hausherr), *Contemplation chez les grecs et autres orientaux chrétiens*, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualite*, t. II (1953), col. 1818-1819, Eric D. Pearl, *Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, deification in Saint Maximus Confessor*, Diss., Yale University, 1991, p. 147-179; Assaad Elias Kattan, *Verleiblichung und Synergie.Grundzüge der biblehermeneutik bei Maximus Confessor*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2003, pp. 1-79; among the most recent and important research on this topic is Torstein Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor. A study of His Metaphysical Principles*, Unipub forlag, Oslo, 2000.

however, unified and synthesized in its own *logos*. Certain *logoi* may belong to other beings as well. In this respect, some of the *logoi* are singular or peculiar, while others are general or universal (*Amb.* 7, 1080A, 21, 1245B), so that an intellectual recapitulation in contemplation and a spiritual unification of *logoi* are possible starting from the singular to the universal, by going through different intermediate stages up to their initial or principal Cause (*Amb.* 41, 1309C). There are also *logoi* according to which the cohesion of these different *logoi* is realized within one and the same individual and which allow him to preserve his own unity within the entire universe, which, consequently, allows him to further preserve the harmony of the different constitutive parts of the cosmos and the coherence of the different rules (*nomoi*) that ensure its functioning (*Amb.* 17, 1228B-1229A, 41, 1312BD). Certain *logoi* determine the order of coexistence of creatures and their perpetuation (*Amb.* 15, 1217A). Other *logoi* define their quantitative increase or decrease, while others define their qualitative adjustments.

Consequently and in correlation to each other, certain *logoi* secure the permanence and the identity of the beings regarding their nature, their power and their work regarding the motion that affects them, and to the relationships between them respectively. In accordance with these *logoi* the beings "have an order and a permanence, they do not deviate from their natural property, neither do they change into something different nor merge." (*Amb.* 15, 1217A). Some *logoi* (reasons) have a distinctive function, so that the beings are not mistaken for each other and this function makes each being different, distinct and independent from all the others. Other *logoi* have, correspondingly, a unifying function which makes things hold together without separation and dispersion within them or between them. They are in relation with each other and increasingly united in as much as they ascend to the universal (thus, the individuals are united by the *logos* of the species to which they belong, the species are united by the *logos* of the gender to which they are linked), until they reach a supreme unity (*Amb.* 41, 131B-1313B). Thus, within creation there is an

"indivisible difference" and a "distinct peculiarity" (*Amb.* 7, 1072C)"¹⁴

The unity of λόγοι in Λόγος

We have seen that there is a certain diversity among the world's creatures, as each of them is characterized and fundamentally defined by a certain number of λόγοι. Through the λόγοι each being or thing has its own individuality, which is different from that of the others'. In the same time, as we have already seen, through λόγοι the finality of each creature - its deification (Θεώσις) - is predetermined.

The Logos or the Word of God is the One that gathers in Himself the multitude of λόγοι because in Himself, in God's eternal thought, the reasons of all creatures were determined, the world itself being made by Him (according to John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). Saint Maximus explains that "we affirm that the one Logos is many logoi and the many logoi are One. Because the One goes forth out of goodness into individual being creating and preserving them, the One is many. Moreover the many are directed toward the One and are providentially guided in that direction. It is as though they were drawn to an all-powerful center that had built into it the beginnings of the lines that go out from it and that gathers them all together."¹⁵

Within the Logos, all the *logoi* of both beings and things pre-exist. Through their actuality/configuration ["plasticization", apud Staniloae], they reveal the same work and presence of the Logos. In each creature, through its *logoi*, the entire Logos is made present and manifested. This inspires Saint Maximus to compare our contemplation of this world with the meeting between Elisabeth and Mary the Mother of God (Luke 1:39-56). In our material and bodily form, each and every one of us represents Saint John the Baptist in the womb, while the Logos is hidden in creatures as if in another womb¹⁶.

¹⁴ J.-C. Larchet, *Introduction* in St Maxime le Confesseur, *Ambigua*, Paris-Suresnes, 1994, p. 20-21.

¹⁵ *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1081 BC, Blowers & Wilken, p 57.

¹⁶ *Amb.* 6, P.G. 91, 1068 AB.

As a matter of fact each λόγος mysteriously contains the Logos to a higher or a lower degree. Here the idea of the presence of God in the world by the *logoi* in the creatures is firmly stated. This presence of the Logos links each being with God, showing it as a “portion (μοῖρα) of God because the *logoi* of our being pre-existed in God”¹⁷.

Contrary to Origen who saw a decline in corporality and materiality, Saint Maximus shows the positive value of the world, as a necessary way toward God. Thus, according to Saint Maximus, the creation of the world itself is a Revelation. It is the very natural Revelation. The essence of this Revelation is the mysterious presence of the Logos in the *logoi* of the creatures. This is considered by Saint Maximus to be an Embodiment of the Logos. He sometimes speaks about a triple Embodiment of the Logos¹⁸: in nature, in the Holy Scripture and in the historic person of Christ.

“The Word becomes thickened [...] concealing Himself mysteriously for our sakes within the *logoi* of creatures and thus He reveals Himself accordingly/analogously through the visible things as through some written signatures as a whole in His fullness from the whole of nature and undiminished in each part, in the varieties of natures as one who has no variation and is always the same, in composites, as One who is simple, without parts, in things which have their beginning in time, as the One without beginning, as the Invisible in the visible, the ungraspable in tangible things. For our sake He received to embody Himself and to incarnate within letters and deigned to be expressed in syllables and sounds (It refers to the Holy Scriptures). The purpose of all this is to draw us after Him and to gather us together in His presence within a short space of time having become one in spirit, we, who are thickened in mind.”¹⁹

Corresponding to the three Embodiments of the Logos in the creation, in Scripture and in Christ, there are three

¹⁷ *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1081C, Blowers & Wilken, p. 58.

¹⁸ *Thal.* 15, P.G. 90, 297B-300A; see also H.U. von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy. The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor.* A Communio Book, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2003, p. 292.

¹⁹ *Amb.* 33, P.G. 91, 1285D-1288A.

universal laws that govern the world: the natural law, the written law and the law of grace²⁰. The content of each law is Christ, the Logos. This proves the unity of divine Revelation, a unique, gradual discovery of the Word. The difference between the three laws lies in the intensity of the presence of the Logos in each of them. Saint Maximus does not consider revelation as a scholastic division between the natural and the supernatural, but a single manifestation of the Same Logos in three different stages. This leads him to the conclusion that "Whether one is judged or not according to the written law, it is through Christ and in Him that one will be judged."²¹ Between the three laws the relationship is not one of subordination regarding the content. This proves the importance that both the natural and the written laws have for Saint Maximus, whose conception had radically changed from that of his predecessors, Origen and Augustine: "these are two terms of equal value of a dialectics, they complete each other"²². Through each of the three laws through the manifestation of Himself He leads to Himself in His complete and secret hiddenness the whole creation"²³.

The Dynamics of creation

The cosmological conception of Saint Maximus the Confessor is highly dynamic. He develops this concept of the movement (κίνησις) of the creatures especially while refuting Origenism. According to Origen, between the creatures and God there is a certain connaturality, as they are both in a state

²⁰ *Thal.* 64, P.G. 90, 724C: „By universal laws here I mean the natural law, the scriptural law and the law of grace. For each of these laws has a peculiar mode of life and appropriate course of action, since each generates a different disposition of the will (γνώμην) for those who follow it. ”

²¹ *Thal.* 19, P.G. 90. 308C.

²² H.U. von Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 292; cf. and V.Karayiannis, *Maxime le Confesseur. Essence et énergies de Dieu*, Paris, 1993, p. 362.

²³ *Amb.* 10, P.G. 91, 1165D. About the three Laws and the divine Revelation in Saint Maximus the Confessor we recommend the above mentioned thesis of V. Karayiannis, p. 333-393; Adam G.Cooper „Maximus the Confessor on the Structural Dynamics of Revelation”, *Vigiliae Christianae*, 55, 2000, p.161-186.

of repose or rest (στάσις), in an original unity (henada). However, by satiety (κόρος) the spirits went through a movement of decline, which implied their coming into a corporeal life (γένεσις), that will be followed by their return to the original henada, at the end of times²⁴.

To Origen, the movement is, in a way, the cause of sin, and Saint Maximus at the beginning of *Ambigua* 7, summarises the Origenist viewpoint showing that “according to their opinion there once existed a single entity of rational beings. We were all connatural with God and had our dwelling place (In. 14:2) and foundation in God. Then came movement from God and from this they make it out that, as rational beings were dispersed in various ways, God envisaged the creation of this corporeal world to unite them with bodies as punishment for their former transgressions.”²⁵ There is thus the Origenist triad στάσις-κίνησις-γένεσις that is reversed by Saint Maximus into γένεσις-κίνησις-στάσις. However, this is not just a matter of a simple change of positions, because Saint Maximus changes even the meanings of these concepts, by giving them other values.

According to the Confessor, the movement is natural to all being: For the divine is unmoved since it fills all things, and everything that was brought from non-being to being is moved (because it tends toward some end)...²⁶ “The movement that is tending toward its proper end is called a natural power (δύναμις φυσικήν), or passion (πάθος), or movement passing from one thing to another and having impassibility (τὸ ἀπαθέες) as its end. It is also called an irrepressible activity (ἐνέργειαν δραστηκήν) that has as its end perfect fulfillment.”²⁷

In Saint Maximus’ system, movement is also related to the idea of purpose, of finality, because “nothing that came into being is perfect in itself, nor has a purpose in

²⁴ Cf. J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l’homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1996, p. 115.

²⁵ *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1069AB, Blowers & Wilken, p. 45-46.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 1069B, Blowers & Wilken, 46

²⁷ *Ibidem*, 1072B, Blowers & Wilken, 48.

itselfα (τὸ αὐτοτελές) ²⁸. Here Maximus' triad γένεσις-κίνησις-στάσις may be referred to within a complementary one ἀρχή-μεσότης-τέλος (beginning-principle – middle – end). Movement corresponds to and is specific for the interval between genesis (beginning) and end. Movement is a constitutive part of beings. Together with wisdom and choice it determines the final state, in accordance or not with the Creator's purpose. By these, the being determines itself toward a good existence or toward an existence against nature, which does not correspond to God's will:

"If then rational beings come into being, surely they are also moved, since they move from a natural beginning in „being" toward a voluntary (κατὰ γνώμην) end in well-being"(τὸ εἶ εἶναι)²⁹

In *Ambigua 10* Saint Maximus describes the five modes of natural contemplation (τρόπων τῆ φυσικῆς Θεωρίας)³⁰. They are in fact five out of the ten Aristotelian categories that Saint Maximus retain here: substance (οὐσία), movement (κίνησις), difference (διαφορά), union (κράσις) and stability or position (θέσις). The first three are only modes of the knowledge of God and indicate God as Creator, Provident and Judge and the last two are modes of man's deification. "Movement is indicative of the providence of beings. Through it we behold the unvarying sameness of each of the things that have come to be according to its being and form and similarly its inviolable modes of existence, and understand how everything in the universe is separated one from another in an orderly manner in accordance with the logoi in which each thing consists by the ineffable One who holds and protects everything in accordance with unity."³¹

Related to πρόνοια, κίνησις appears here as more than a simple movement of the divine towards the human³², thus

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 1072C.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 1073BC, Blowers&Wilken, p. 50.

³⁰ *Amb.* 10, P.G. 91, 1133A-1137C, Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996 [henceforth Louth], pp. 112-115.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 1133C, Louth, p. 113.

³² V. Karayiannis, *op. cit.*, p. 343: „we also remark the fact that the term πρόνοια is put in parallel with the term κίνησις and that one clarifies the

being a mode of the Revelation of God to man, a presence of God that moves the creatures from within. By this natural power, the beings tend to God, and He governs in order that this movement be directed towards the good existence with the help of the creatures' free choice.

Movement characterizes not only each being, but also the entire universe in a process of expansion (διαστολή) – contraction (συστολή): “But that which is simply called being itself is not only the being of those things subject to change and corruption, moved in accordance with change and corruption, but also the being of all beings whatever that have been moved and are moved in accordance with the reason and mode of expansion and contraction. For it is moved from the most universal kind through the more universal kinds to the forms, by which and in which everything is naturally divided, proceeding as far as the most specific forms, by a process of expansion, circumscribing its being towards what is below, and again it is gathered together from the most specific forms, retreating through the more universal, up to the most universal kind, by a process of contraction defining its being towards what is above.”³³

The duality διαστολή- συστολή that characterizes the process of expansion and contraction from a cosmological point of view, together with the Origenist-Evagrian double-concept of providence and judgement (πρόνοια καὶ κρίσις) cleansed of inherent heresies, together with the concept of movement (κίνησις) helps Maximus demonstrate how the structure of the cosmos together with the salvation plan form an anthropo-cosmical vision of Christology. “Christologically this system is expressed through an equivalent view of the “becoming thick” (παχύνεσθαι) and the “becoming thin” which

other. More than the movement of the nature of the created beings the word κίνησις means the movement of the divine towards the creation. God's manifestation within the creation proves it. This divine revelation in creation is defined as «Providence». See in Karayiannis his comments on the concept of the movement of creatures in the previously mentioned volume pp. 100-116, as well as the five modes of natural contemplation pp 338-351.

³³ *Amb. 10, P.G. 91, 1177BC, Louth, op. cit., p. 138.*

corresponds to Christ's coming into the world and His return to the Father (though from then on also as a Man and a representative of all believers and mankind). In *Amb. Io. 33*³⁴, this is most clearly linked to the idea of the threefold incarnation and also to the three general Laws of the world: the natural law, the written law and the law of grace"³⁵.

As far as the last term in Saint Maximus' triad γένεσις-κίνησις-στάσις is concerned, as we have already mentioned, it corresponds to the purpose that God assigned to His creatures - deification. The distance between the beginning and the end disappears, there is no interval (διάστημα) in the infinity that man obtains: "All movement of the things naturally moving comes to an end once they don't have any longer where to move, how or in what direction to move, for they have God as their ultimate end/terminus, Who in His quality of ultimate Cause is the edge of the infinity itself and brings to an end every movement."³⁶ We thus see that this dynamic character of the world is not associated with an autonomous understanding of it, with self-determination or with an evolution (in a Darwinian sense). On the one hand, an understanding of a static, rigid universe is avoided, and on the other, this conception is closely linked to the divine presence within creation. As we have seen, among several types of divine *logoi*, there are also some *logoi* that characterise the movement of beings. The world's dynamic is spiritually and "logically" oriented.

In the mention of a fragment from *Amb.7*³⁷ in his *Introduction to Ambigua*, the Reverend Father Dumitru

³⁴ *Amb. 33*, P.G. 91, 1285C-1288A.

³⁵ According to L. Thunberg, *Symbol and Mystery in St. Maximus the Confessor*, in F. Heinzer and C. Von Schönborn (éd.), *Maximus Confessor, Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur*, Fribourg, 1982, p. 296 and L. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of Maximus the Confessor*, Crestwood, N.Y., 1985, p. 160.

³⁶ *Amb. 15*, P.G. 91, 1217C.

³⁷ *Amb. 7*, P.G. 91, 1076CD, "It is absolutely necessary that everything will cease its willful movement toward something else when the ultimate beauty that satisfies our desire appears. In so far as we are able we will participate without being restricted, as it were, being uncontainable contained." Blowers & Wilken, p.53. *Ibidem*, 1077AB, „When we learn the essential nature of living things in what respect, how, and out of what they

Staniloae says that in fact, as long as movement is natural, it will never stop, even after man comes to rest (στάσις), because then his natural forces are not destroyed, but are perfected and receive stability in their work. This idea is very close to that of the *epektasis* in Saint Gregory of Nyssa: "Stability/Immobility in God is also movement; not a movement from a boundary towards another boundary, but a steady movement as experience of a continual renewal of the divine infinity into which we will have everything. Immobility consists of the fact that the soul no longer has any desire to move away from God towards anything else, because God is infinite, as an eternal personal source of love in His manifestation as Trinity. [...] Properly speaking, this will be an immobile mobility concentrated in the same personal infinite content, a fulfillment and an overfulfillment of any other capacity of spiritual sight"³⁸. *Everything that is natural in man will be then perfected and overfulfilled by the presence of God who "fulfills everything in everything"*³⁹.

Man, the mediator of deification

This idea of man's position, as a mediator of man in relationship to God and creation is dominant in Saint Maximus' work. It appears merely implicitly several times, being self-understood. Lars Thunberg extensively analyzed this topic in his volume *Microcosm and Mediator*, published in 1965 and then republished and updated in 1995⁴⁰.

exist, we will not be driven by desire to know more. For if we know God our knowledge of each and everything will be brought to perfection, and, in so far as possible, the infinite, divine and ineffable dwelling place (In 14:2) will be ours to enjoy." Blowers & Wilken, p. 53.

³⁸ Rev. D. Staniloae, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

³⁹ *Amb.* 31, P.G. 91, 1281C.

⁴⁰ Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund, 1965, 2nd edition: Open Court Publishing, Chicago & La Salle, Illinois, 1995. These two ideas of man as microcosm and as mediator are considered by Thunberg as defining for Saint Maximus' theological anthropology, by far one of the most elaborated if not the most elaborated of the entire patristic and post-patristic theology.

According to Saint Maximus the Confessor, man is a *mediator by nature*. His own psychic and physical constitution, due to the fact that he is created after the image of God, helps him deal with this. Also, man is a microcosm (ὀμικρὸς κόσμος)⁴¹, a world in small, recapitulating in himself the elements of the entire world, in his body and in his soul. Many fragments from the texts of the Confessor emphasize the middle position of man among the elements of creation. "He was brought into being as an all-containing workshop, binding all together in Himself. As such He has also been given the power of unification thanks to his proper relationship to his own different parts. Man was further brought into being as the last of God's creatures, because He was supposed to be a natural link between all creation mediating μεσιτεύων between the extremes through the elements of his own nature"⁴².

In Chapter VII of his *Mystagogy*, Saint Maximus analyzes the analogy between man and cosmos, showing that "The entire cosmos consisting of the visible and invisible things is man. And man consisting of body and soul is cosmos. For the intelligible things participate to the substance of the soul as the soul has the same reason as the intelligible ones. And the sensible things bear the image of the body as the body is the image of the sensible things. The intelligible things are the soul of the sensible ones and the sensible things are the body of the intelligible ones."⁴³ This excerpt categorically underlines the position of man as a microcosm, while the fact that man is a type of cosmos suggests his vocation as a mediator between the perceptible and the intelligible, although this is not explicitly stated in the text. Man's possibility to accomplish this mediation is given by the very natural unity that exists in the diversity of the two parts of the anthropological basic dualism, between the soul and the body, "for it exists a law which binds them together. In these ones there is a *logos* of a unifying

Thunberg's book remains to the present one of the most beautiful and well written studies about Saint Maximus.

⁴¹ *Ep.* 6, P.G. 91, 429D.

⁴² L. Thunberg, *op. cit.*, p.139-140, after *Amb.* 41, P.G. 91, 1305AB.

⁴³ *Myst.* 7, P.G. 91, 684C-685A.

power which does not allow to loosen their identity on the basis of their unity according to hypostasis"⁴⁴. The unity between man's soul and body is natural, as he has a compounded nature (φύσις σύνθετος), on the basis of a logos of the common nature (λόγος φύσεως) that sets the law that the above mentioned text speaks about. As we shall see, *Ambigua 41* explicitly shows that man, this microcosm, is called to mediate between the two parts of that large man (μακράνθρωπος) which is the visible and invisible universe, but this is only one of the five fundamental mediations that man is called to fulfill.

The same calling to mediation by his nature is also described in *Ambigua 10*, shown as somewhat similar to that in the previous excerpt, where only the soul is called to mediate between substance and God. "The soul is a middle being between God and matter and has powers that can unite it with both, that is, it has a mind that links the soul with God and senses that link it with matter"⁴⁵.

However, man is not a mediator between the visible and the invisible only because he belongs to the material world through his bodily form and to the spiritual world; through his soul he is a *mediator by vocation*; this is masterly shown in *Ambigua 41*⁴⁶, an excerpt that contains the essence of Lars Thunberg's thesis of 1965. From the very moment of his creation, which was the last among the stages of creation, man received from God the assignment to unify with Him through himself all the levels of creation by transcending the five divisions or polarities (διαρρέσεις) of the things existing in this vast cosmic process, and this practically coincides with the very process of deification to which man is called. The five divisions that man has to transcend are:

Between the created and uncreated nature;

Within creation, between the intelligible world and the perceptible world;

Within the perceptible world, between earth and heaven;

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, P.G. 91, 685AB.

⁴⁵ *Amb.* 10, P.G. 91, 1193D-1196A, Louth, *op.cit.* p. 147.

⁴⁶ *Amb.* 41, P.G. 91, 1304D-1316A.

Within the earth, between Heaven and the inhabited world;

Within the human nature, between man and woman.

Man's vocation was to transcend the five divisions, starting with the fifth stage, the one between man and woman. By means of a life free of passions, lived according to the common principle (λόγος φύσεως), the division into genders was supposed to be transcended, simply by revealing *the human being*. In a second stage, he was supposed to unify Heaven and the inhabited world through virtue, by way of transforming the entire earth into a heaven, and then to transcend the spatial conditions by unifying the heaven with the earth, unhindered by the body. Through a conscience and a virtue similar to that of the angels', he was supposed to unify the intelligible world with the perceptible world. "And finally, beyond all these, the human person unites the created nature with the uncreated through love (o, the wonder of God's love for us, human beings!), showing them to be one and the same through the possession of grace, the whole [creation] wholly interpenetrated by God (ὅλος ὅλω περιχωρήσας ὀλικῶς τῷ Θεῷ), and become completely whatever God is, save at the level of being"⁴⁷.

This image of a universe that reveals its vocation through man is significant for the entire patristic theology. The entire world exists for man, reveals its meaning through man: "it is not that man is a part of the cosmos, but that all the parts of the cosmos are parts of man. Man is not a microcosm sided by a macrocosm, nor is he framed within a macrocosm, but he is the actual cosmos, as he gives a complete unity and a complete meaning to all the parts of creation"⁴⁸. In this respect, Saint Maximus the Confessor's metaphysical considerations converge with the contemporary intuitions of Physics, especially with what we call today *the anthropic principle*, which has generated several controversies among contemporary scientists.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 1308D, Louth, *op .cit.* p. 158.

⁴⁸ Rev. D. Stăniloae, note 328 to Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, P.S.B. 80, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1983, p. 262.

This principle of scientific cosmology and of astrophysics has two forms. In its moderate form it states that “if the laws and the fundamental parameters of the universe had had different values, life, conscience and man could have never appeared”⁴⁹. In fact, the alteration of a single universal constant value in the universe by a tiny quantum would have made the existence of man impossible today, because there wouldn’t have been the exterior conditions for life and this happens only at a microscopic level.

At both an atomic and a cosmic level, neither the world, nor the man, could have ever existed.

In its *strong form*, the anthropic principle “leads us in fact to the hypothesis according to which not only our existence depends on the very precise adjustment of the universal laws and constants, but especially on a certain way the cosmos is built to engender life, conscience and man”⁵⁰. Here, man appears as the purpose and meaning of the universe, which exists so that man can meditate about its existence, so that he can transcend it through contemplation and can love the One that made it so perfect. “First of all the universe appears as a whole extremely well organized, an extraordinary system whose evolution reveals an increasing complexity. This Universe may, rightfully, be called anthropic as it appears to have a purpose: that of enabling the appearance of life and of man”⁵¹.

In a famous book, two British physicists, John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler develop the conclusions of the anthropic principle in several of its versions which are extremely

⁴⁹ The statement belongs to G. Bogdanoff and Igor and Grichka Bogdanoff, *Man as Aim of the Universe*, in *SCARA* (Bucharest), I (1997), no. 1, p. 117 (translation after *Paris Match*, Decembre 1994).

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 117-118.

⁵¹ Jacques Demaret in *Ibidem*, p. 118. On the anthropic principle you can also see S. Hawking, *A Short History of Time. From Big Bang to the Black Holes*, trans. Michaela Ciodaru, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1994, p. 153 sq; J. Barrow, *The Origin of the Universe*, trans. B. Merticaru, Humanitas, 1994, p. 153; P. Davies, *The Last Three Minutes. Hypothesis regarding the Final Fate of the Universe*, trans. G. Zamfirescu, Humanitas, 1994, p. 146 sq; J. Barrow, F. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, Oxford University Press, 1986; F. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality*, New York, Doubleday, 1994.

revealing for contemporary cosmology. Thus, the *Strong Anthropic Principle* is stated as follows: “The Universe must have those properties that should permit the appearance of life in it at a certain stage of its history”⁵².

This means that the laws and the constant values of nature must exist so that life in its intelligent (human) form can exist. Without its natural, complex frame, man could not exist. This view is perfectly scripturistic.

Another alternative to the anthropic principle is the following: “There is a single possible Universe, *destined* to the purpose of generating and sustaining *observers*⁵³”. This rejects the theories of the multiple universes from the quantum perspective of the observers’ existence.

Other versions presented by Barrow and Tipler:

The Participative Anthropic Principle: “The observers are necessary for the Universe to be born” (J.A. Wheeler, 1977).

The Final Anthropic Principle: “the intelligent processing of the information must appear in the Universe, and once it appeared, it will never disappear”.

The first alternative has teleological connotations, according to their finality, and their particular *scopos*, while the second one has eschatologic connotations. As it exists in the Universe in human form, life will not be destroyed, but will exist in the perspective of its perfection (transfiguration) in *eschaton*.

In the same work, other interesting conclusions are drawn, that may contradict some earlier theories of physicists or of *science-fiction* writers: in the Universe there are no other intelligent, superior forms of life similar to man. We are the only superior living beings, with a unique destiny in a Universe, on a planet “which is one of the nine planets that revolve around a star, which, in its turn, is just one of

⁵² J.D. Barrow, F.J. Tipler, *The Cosmological Anthropic Principle*, trans. W.R. Florescu, Bucharest, Ed. Tehnică, 2001, p. 41. The book of J. Barrow and F. Tipler is an important document, a representative synthesis of the new scientific cosmology that takes firmly into account the finalist perspective upon the Universe.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

approximately 10^{11} stars in the Galaxy and our Galaxy is just one of about 10^{12} Galaxies in the visible Universe"⁵⁴.

Returning to the Confessor's view upon man's vocation, we must indicate: the fall of the first man, *immediately* after his creation⁵⁵, made impossible the work of mediation he had to fulfil both by his constitution and by his vocation. Instead of uniting the things divided, his disobedience contributed to the division of those unified⁵⁶.

The accomplishment of this primordial vocation of man will be achieved by Christ as man, by His Embodiment: "And thus He fulfils the great purpose of God the Father, to recapitulate everything both in heaven and earth in himself (Eph. 1:10) in whom everything has been created."⁵⁷ Moreover, "thus God-made-man has done away with the difference and division of nature into male and female, which human nature in no way needed for generation, as some hold

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 678.

⁵⁵ According to J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1996, p. 187: "Saint Maximus is of the opinion that Adam has sinned 'as soon as he began to exist (ἀμα τῶ εἶναι)' (Thal. 59, P.G. 90, 613C; Rom. trans., FR 3, p. 325), 'as soon as he was created (ἀμα τῶ γενέσθαι)' (Thal. 61, P.G. 90, 628A, Rom. trans., FR 3, p. 337). We have seen that Maximus considered that Adam knew the heavenly condition and could have started to accomplish his vocation; he fell ἀμα, that is, not in the sense of a simultaneity, but of a short interval. This is confirmed by the fact that Maximus does not by any means consider the sin as an occasion for the soul to fall into the body or into the material world, neither a *fortiori* as the coming to existence itself in the way that origenists or some gnostics did. For him, Adam's sin is not an ontological 'mistake', but a personal one". On the original sin with Saint Maximus one can see Larchet, *op. cit.*, p. 187-207, J.-C. Larchet, Ancestral guilt according to St. Maximus the Confessor: a bridge between Eastern and Western conceptions, in *Sobornost*, vol. XX (1998), no. 1, p. 26-48, J. Boojamra, "Original Sin according to St. Maximus the Confessor", in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. XX (1976), p. 19-30 and J.C. Larchet, *Maxime le Confesseur médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident*, Paris, Cerf, 1998, pp. 77-124.

⁵⁶ *Amb.* 41, P.G. 91, 1308C.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 1308D, Louth, *op.cit.* p. 159. Thal. 60, P.G. 90, 621A, Blowers & Wilken, *op.cit.* p. 124: „And such is, properly speaking, the terminus of his providence and of the things under his providential care. In as much as it leads to God it is the recapitulation (ἀνακεφαλαιώσις) of the things He has created”.

and without which it would perhaps have been possible. There was no necessity for these things to have lasted for ever. For in Christ Jesus, says the divine Apostle, there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28)⁵⁸. Through His life as man He then united Heaven with the inhabited earth, making the entire world a place inseparable from Heaven. "Then by his ascension into Heaven, He clearly united heaven and earth and with his earthly body that is of the same nature and consubstantial with ours He entered into heaven and showed that the whole nature that can be perceived through the senses is, by the most universal logos of its being, one thus obscuring the peculiar nature of the division which cuts it into two. Then in addition to this, by passing with his soul and body, that is with the whole of our nature through the divine and intelligible ranks of heaven he united the sensible and the intelligible and showed the convergence of the whole of creation with the One according to its most original and universal logos, which is completely undivided and at rest in itself. And finally, considered in His humanity He goes to God Himself, having clearly appeared, as it is written, in the presence of God the Father on our behalf (Heb. 9:24), as a human being. As Word, He cannot be separated in any way at all from the Father; as man, He has fulfilled, in word and truth, with unchangeable obedience, everything that, as God, He has predetermined is to take place, and has accomplished the whole will of God the Father on our behalf. For we have ruined by misuse the power that have been naturally given us from the beginning for this purpose.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 1309A, Rom. trans., p. 264.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 1309B-D, Saint Maximus says the same thing in *Thal.* 48, P.G. 90, 436AB p. 181-182: "Maybe the Holy Scriptures by angles meant the different unions between separated beings that were perfected through Christ. For He united man by removing, mysteriously and in spirit, the difference between man and woman, since He had set free in both the logos of nature and uprooted those peculiarities grown up through the work of passions. He united thereafter the earth, by removing the separation between the sensible paradise and the earth we inhabit. He also united the earth and the heavens, thus showing the nature of the sensible things as a single one, gravitating around itself. He united again the world of sensible things to that of the intelligible ones proving that the nature of all created

This work of the Incarnated Logos supports a cosmic Christology that “has as foundation a cosmic anthropology and an anthropized cosmology”⁶⁰. Christ’s coming into the world is not merely apparent. It is ontologically linked to the structure of the world and of man, and this idea can be related to the problem that we have already mentioned above, that of the two previous “embodiments” of the Logos, in the *logoi* of creation and in the *logoi* of the Holy Scripture. For Maximus, this cosmic Christology becomes the foundation, the link between all the other chapters of his thinking. All of them become Christocentric and are thought of through Christ. Man’s spiritual life becomes fundamentally Christocentric. What man could not accomplish by properly using his natural abilities to co-operate with the divine grace, can now accomplish through Christ.

How can man effectively accomplish this mediation and what does it mean for him? L. Thunberg showed that the transcending of the five divisions means, for man, the accomplishing of the spiritual ascent which is usually known as being divided into three stages: πράξις, θεωρία and the mystical union with God⁶¹. The stage of practising the virtues corresponds to the first two polarities (man - woman, heaven - the inhabited world), the stage of natural contemplation corresponds to the following two (heaven - earth, sensitive - intelligible), which are followed by the uninterceded unification with God. As a matter of fact, the first four divisions are transcended by man, who thus renders the λόγοι of things actualised in him as λόγοι of the virtues that are of a more

things is one as well, all things being tightly interconnected between them, through a mysterious connective logos.”

⁶⁰ According to Archdeacon Prof. Dr. C. Voicu, *Hristologia cosmică după Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul* (Cosmic Christology according to Saint Maximus the Confessor), in vol. Diac. I.I. Ică jr. (ed.), *Persoană și comuniune. Prinos de cinstitie Părintelui Profesor Academician Dumitru Stăniloae la împlinirea vârstei de 90 de ani* (Person and Communion. Tribute to Rev. Professor Acad. D. Stăniloae at his 90 Years Birthday), Sibiu, 1993, p. 599.

⁶¹ The last Chapter „Performing the Task of Mediation”, p. 331-432, of the book of L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, an exhaustive analysis of *Ambigua 41*. Also, see L. Thunberg, *Man and Cosmos*, N.Y., 1985, p. 80-91.

spiritual nature⁶². Man's progress in virtue is the way to transcending the divisions, from the basic virtues (sensitivity, justice, courage, moderation) through wisdom and kindness which support the apatheia (ἀπάθεια) and contemplation, ending with love (ἀγάπη)⁶³, the most divine and general virtue which unifies in itself all things divided. Through virtue in general, and through love in particular, man makes the entire cosmos actual in himself⁶⁴, which becomes human to the extent that man becomes god, offering it through him to the Creator in the same movement of love.

Conclusions

In his writings, Saint Maximus the Confessor presents a particularly coherent view of the structure and the meaning of the existence of cosmos and of man. Man has a well-

⁶² Rev. D. Stăniloae, note 285 to *Ambigua*, Rom. trans., p. 221: "The logoi of the virtues are more divine than those of the things. And through these more divine logoi the virtues unify with the spiritual meaning hidden in them. This spiritual meaning of the more divine logoi of the virtues remove all the natural affection of the soul for the present things, delivering itself entirely to God.[...] In fact, as soon as they become spiritual reasons of the virtues, the divine reasons of the things can be perceived".

⁶³ cf. *Amb.* 21, P.G. 91, 1248B-1249C, rom. trans., p. 219-220. In other places, Saint Maximus categorizes virtues in other ways. However, the last stage is love (ἀγάπη), „the deifying force pre-eminently” (Rev. D. Staniloae, note 284 in the same place). And *Amb.* 41, which we have consistently cited says that the last stage of the union of the Creator with the uncreated world should have been accomplished by the first man „through love” (δι' ἀγάπης", 1308B).

⁶⁴ Within this process, all the creatures participate to the deification of man. Saint Maximus speaks about this in several places: *Thal.* 59, P.G. 96, 609A, Rom.trans., FR3, p. 321; *Amb.* 7, P.G. 91, 1092C, Rom. trans., p. 93: „În sfârșit, ca Dumnezeu însuși să devină totul în toate, pe toate cuprinzându-le și ipostaziindu-le în Sine (ἐνυποστήσας ἑαυτῶ) prin aceea că nici o făptură nu mai are o mișcare separată (ἄφετον), nepărtașă de prezența Lui, prin care suntem și ne numim dumnezei (θεοί)...”; Finally, in order that God may become all in all, comprising everything within Himself and enhypostasiating them into Himself, so that every creature might not have an independant movement and, as such, be deprived of participating to His presence through which we are and are called gods.... *Th Ec I*, 55, P.G. 90, 1104BC; *Thal.* 60, P.G. 90, 621A-C.

determined place within, through it he accomplishes his universe, his vocation (deification). Man cannot exist without his cosmic, natural frame, but neither can the world exist without its mediator, man; this conception converges with the theories of contemporary scientific cosmology (Barrow, Tipler).

In his explanations, Saint Maximus relies on the idea of the divine *logoi* of the beings through which the world is harmoniously organized. They reveal a divine presence in the cosmos (natural revelation), enabling him to speak of a true embodiment of the Logos within the beings, embodiment that precedes the following two, from the Scriptures and from the historical person of Christ. Although there were voices that refuted Saint Maximus' theory of the divine *logoi*, we believe that this can be argued only in a theology of the scholastic type marked by dualisms of the natural-supernatural type.

If there is some pretense of confirmation and a general acceptance by a common scholarly agreement of the teaching of Saint Maximus the Confessor about the divine *logoi*, we may say that there are however two historical ideas that can support this system. The first idea is the strong connection that exists between his Christology and cosmology; in this respect, his Christology remains normative for Orthodoxy, due to its canonization at the Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople, while the cosmology is incomprehensible without its Christological orientation. The second argument would be the reconsideration of the topic of the divine *logoi* in the 14th century during the Palamite disputes, as a partial assimilation of the concept of uncreated energy with that of divine *logoi*, since the two do not completely overlap⁶⁵. Being rediscovered in the previous century, the topic of God's uncreated energies became one of the most profound in Orthodox Theology.

⁶⁵See J. anRossum, „The λόγοι of Creation and Divine „energies” in Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas”, in *Studia Patristica*, XXVII (1993), p. 213-217; see also T. Tollefsen, *op.cit.* pp. 174-238; David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West. Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 206.

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