

СВЕТИ ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН И ХРИШЋАНСТВО I



СВЕТИ ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН И ХРИШЋАНСТВО
SAINT EMPEROR CONSTANTINE AND CHRISTIANITY

С благословом Његовог преосвештенства
Епископа нишког др Јована

Штампање зборника *Свети цар Константин и хришћанство* омогућила је
Канцеларија за сарадњу са црквама и верским заједницама

THE CENTRE OF CHURCH STUDIES

**SAINT EMPEROR CONSTANTINE
AND CHRISTIANITY**

VOLUME II

**International Conference
Commemorating the 1700th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan
31 May – 2 June 2013**

**Editor
Prof. Dragiša Bojović, Ph.D.**

Niš, 2013.

ЦЕНТАР ЗА ЦРКВЕНЕ СТУДИЈЕ

**СВЕТИ ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН
И ХРИШЋАНСТВО**

ТОМ II

**Међународни научни скуп поводом 1700. годишњице Миланског едикта
31. мај – 2. јун 2013.**

**Уредник
проф. др Драгиша Бојовић**

Ниш, 2013.

**Покровитељ научног скупа
Његова светост Патријарх српски господин Иринеј**

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САДРЖАЈ

Бранко Горгиев <i>ПОЈАМ СВЕТОГ У АНТИЦИ И РАНОМ ХРИШЋАНСТВУ</i>	11
Branko Gorgiev <i>THE CONCEPT OF THE SACRED IN ANTIQUITY AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY</i>	27
Слађана Ристић-Горгиев <i>РАНО ХРИШЋАНСТВО И СТОИЦИЗАМ</i>	29
Slađana Ristić Gorgiev <i>EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND STOICISM</i>	41
Gábor Kendeffy <i>ENDURANCE AND TOLERATION: CONCEPTIONS ELABORATED AND CHALLENGED IN LACTANTIUS' THEOLOGY</i>	43
Габор Кендефи <i>ПОДНОШЕЊЕ И ТОЛЕРАНЦИЈА: КОНЦЕПЦИЈЕ ИЗЛОЖЕНЕ И ИСПИТАНЕ У ЛАКТАНЦИЈЕВОМ БОГОСЛОВЉУ</i>	53
Christophe Erismann <i>OF THE SAME ESSENCE. CHRISTIAN THEORIES OF THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN SPECIES IN THE CENTURY OF CONSTANTINE</i>	55
Кристоф Ерисман <i>ЈЕДНОСУШНИ. ХРИШЋАНСКЕ ТЕОРИЈЕ О ЈЕДИНСТВУ ЉУДСКЕ ВРСТЕ У КОНСТАНТИНОВОМ ВЕКУ</i>	64
Нежа Зайц <i>ПО ПУТЈАМ ПОИСКА ПОТЕРЈАННОГ НАСЛЕДНИКА КОНСТАНТИНА ИЛИ ОСНОВОПОЛОЖЕНИЕ ГЛУБОКО ЛИЧНОЙ ЭСТЕТИКИ</i>	65
Нежа Зајц <i>ПРОБЛЕМ КОНСТАНТИНОВОГ НАСЛЕДНИКА. ПОЧЕЦИ ЈЕДНЕ ДУБОКО ЛИЧНЕ ЕСТЕТИКЕ</i>	80
Eirini Artemi <i>EMPEROR CONSTANTINE AND THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIANITY FROM HIS AUTOCRACY TO THE SECOND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL</i>	85
Ирини Артеми <i>ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН И ХРИШЋАНСКА ТЕОЛОГИЈА ОД ЊЕГОВОГ САМОДРЖАВЉА ДО ДРУГОГ ВАСЕЉЕНСКОГ САБОРА</i>	96
Valentina Gulevska <i>THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS – DISPUTE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND HELLENISM</i>	97
Валентина Гулевска <i>ФИЛОЗОФИЈА КАПАДОКИЈСКИХ ОТАЦА – РАСПРАВА ИЗМЕЂУ ХРИШЋАНСТВА И ХЕЛЕНИЗМА</i>	103

Serafim Seppälä <i>CAPPADOCIAN VISION OF BEAUTY: THE EMERGENCE OF BYZANTINE AESTHETICS</i>	105
Серафим Сепала <i>КАПАДОКИЈСКА ВИЗИЈА ЛЕПОТЕ: ПОЈАВА ВИЗАНТИЈСКЕ ЕСТЕТИКЕ</i>	115
Norbert Widok <i>GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS AND CONSTANTINOPLE – THE NEW ROME</i>	117
Норберт Видок <i>ГРИГОРИЈЕ НАЗИЈАНЗИН И КОНСТАНТИНОПОЉ – НОВИ РИМ</i>	131
Дражен Н. Перић <i>ОБОЖЕЊЕ ЧОВЕКА КАО ОХРИСТОВЉЕЊЕ ПО КАЗИВАЊУ СВЕТОГ ГРИГОРИЈА БОГОСЛОВА</i>	133
Dražen N. Perić <i>HUMAN DEIFICATION AS CHRISTIFICATION ACCORDING TO ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN</i>	143
Здравко Пено <i>ТРИЈАДОЛОГИЈА СВ. НИКИТЕ РЕМЕЗИЈАНСКОГ У КОНТЕКСТУ ПОСТНИКЕЈСКОГ БОГОСЛОВЉА</i>	145
Zdravko Peno <i>THE TRIADODOLOGY OF ST. NICETAS OF REMESIANA IN THE CONTEXT OF POST-NICEAN THEOLOGY</i>	156
Anna Zhyrkova <i>PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE CHALCEDONIAN LOGIC – THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST OF PAGAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE 4TH CENTURY</i>	157
Ана Жиркова <i>ФИЛОСОФИЈА ИЗ ХАЛКИДОНСКЕ ЛОГИКЕ – ХРИШЋАНСКО УСВАЈАЊЕ ПАГАНСКЕ ФИЛОСОФИЈЕ У 4. ВЕКУ</i>	169
Andrey Darovskih <i>CHRISTOLOGICAL DOGMA OF CHALCEDON AND SOURCES OF THE PHRASE ἀσύγχυτος ἕνωσις IN NEMESIUS' TREATISE "ON THE NATURE OF MAN".</i>	171
Андреј Даровски <i>ХРИСТОЛОШКА ДОГМА ИЗ ХАЛКИДОНА И ИЗВОРИ СИНТАГМЕ ἀσύγχυτος ἕνωσις У НЕМЕСИЈЕВОЈ РАСПРАВИ О ПРИРОДИ ЧОВЕКОВОЈ</i>	180
Dmitry Biriukov <i>NICHOLAS OF METHONE AND HIS POLEMICS AGAINST PROCLUS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EARLY BYZANTINE THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT</i>	181
Дмитриј Бирјуков <i>АРИЈАНСКЕ ДЕБАТЕ ДРУГЕ ПОЛОВИНЕ 4. ВЕКА КАО ДЕБАТЕ О УНИВЕРЗАЛИЈАМА</i>	188
Torstein Theodor Tollefsen <i>DOES THE COSMOS HAVE A BEGINNING? JOHN PHILOPONUS AND ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR AGAINST PROCLUS</i>	189

Торстеин Теодор Толефсен <i>ЈОВАН ФИЛОПОН И СВЕТИ МАКСИМ ИСПОВЕДНИК О ПАРАДИГМИ СТВОРЕНОГ СВЕТА</i>	196
Vladimir Cvetković <i>WISDOM IN ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR RECONSIDERED</i>	197
Владимир Цветковић <i>ПРЕИСПИТИВАЊЕ КОНЦЕПТА МУДРОСТИ КОД СВ. МАКСИМА ИСПОВЕДНИКА</i>	215
Adalberto Mainardi <i>THE FIGURE OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT IN RUSSIAN ORTHODOX THOUGHT (19TH-20TH CENTURY)</i>	217
Адалберто Маинарди <i>ЛИК КОНСТАНТИНА ВЕЛИКОГ У РУСКОЈ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЈ МИСЛИ (19-20. ВЕКА)</i>	227
Mariana Bodnaruk <i>THE POLITICS OF ART: CONSTANTINE AND AUGUSTUS</i>	229
Маријана Боднарук <i>ПОЛИТИКА У УМЕТНОСТИ: КОНСТАНТИН И АВГУСТ</i>	244
Alberto Ferreira <i>ST. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT AND ST. HELENA IN ST. VICENT FERRER'S CATALAN SERMON ON POPE SYLVESTER</i>	251
Алберто Ферейро <i>СВЕТИ КОНСТАНТИН ВЕЛИКИ И СВЕТА ЈЕЛЕНА У КАТАЛОНСКОЈ БЕСЕДИ О ПАПИ СИЛВЕСТРУ СВЕТОГ ВИНСЕНТА ФЕРЕРА</i>	265
Boris Stojkovski <i>THE LIFE OF SAINT CONSTANTINE THE GREAT BY THE BOLLANDISTS</i>	267
Борис Стојковски <i>ЖИТИЈЕ СВЕТОГ КОНСТАНТИНА ВЕЛИКОГ ПО БОЛАНДИСТИМА</i>	276
Manolis G. Varvounis <i>THE EMPEROR SAINT CONSTANTINE IN GREEK FOLK RELIGIOUS TRADITION</i>	277
Манолис Г. Варвунис <i>СВЕТИ ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН У ГРЧКОЈ НАРОДНОЈ ВЕРСКОЈ ТРАДИЦИЈИ</i>	290
Αθανάσιος Αγγελόπουλος, Ηλίας Μογλενίδης <i>Ο ΜΕΓΑΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ (ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΕΙΟΣ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΤΟΠΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ</i>	291
Атанасиос Ангелопулос, Илиас Могленидис <i>ΚΟΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝ ΒΕΛΙΚΙ У ГРЧΚΟЈ ΤΟΠΟΓΡΑΦΙЈИ</i>	303
Виктор Савић <i>ИМЕНА КОНСТАНТИНОВА ГРАДА У СРПСКИМ СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНИМ ЋИРИЛИЧКИМ ИЗВОРИМА</i>	305

Viktor Savić <i>THE NAMES OF CONSTANTINE'S CITY IN SERBIAN MEDIAEVAL CYRILLIC SOURCES</i>	322
Marijana Vuković <i>CONSTANTINE AS "JUST A MAN": MODELING AN IMAGE OF AN EARTHLY RULER IN EASTERN CHRISTIAN HAGIOGRAPHIES</i>	323
Маријана Вуковић <i>КОНСТАНТИН КАО „ПРАВИЧНИ ЧОВЕК“: ОБЛИКОВАЊЕ СЛИКЕ ЗЕМАЉСКОГА ВЛАДАРА У ИСТОЧНИМ ХРИШЋАНСКИМ ХАГИОГРАФИЈАМА</i>	329
Жарко Петковић <i>РИМСКИ ПРОВИНЦИЈСКИ НАМЕСНИЦИ И ЛЕГАТИ У ДЕЛИМА ХРИШЋАНСКИХ МУЧЕНИКА</i>	331
Žarko Petković <i>ROMAN PROVINTIAL GOVERNORS AND LEGATES IN THE WRITINGS OF CHRISTIAN MARTYRS</i>	340
Александар Е. Наумов <i>ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ В ДРЕВНЕСЛАВЈАНСКОЈ ПИСЬМЕННОСТИ</i>	341
Александар Наумов <i>ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ У СТАРОСЛОВЕНСКОЈ КЊИЖЕВНОСТИ</i>	350
Monica White <i>VENERATION OF ST. CONSTANTINE IN PRE-MONGOL RUS</i>	351
Моника Вајт <i>ПОШТОВАЊЕ СВ. КОНСТАНТИНА У ПРЕМОНГОЛСКОЈ РУСИЈИ</i>	362
Зоран Ранковић <i>СЛОВО ЈЕВТИМИЈА ТРНОВСКОГ О ЦАРУ КОНСТАНТИНУ У ЈЕДНОМ СРПСКОМ ЗБОРНИКУ</i>	363
Zoran Ranković <i>A SERMON BY ST. EVTIMIY OF TRNOVO ON TSAR CONSTANTINE THE GREAT IN A SERBIAN CODEX</i>	370
Љиљана Јухас-Георгиевска <i>ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН У СРПСКОЈ КЊИЖЕВНОСТИ СРЕДЊЕГ ВЕКА</i>	371
Ljiljana Juhas-Georgievska <i>EMPEROR CONSTANTINE IN SERBIAN MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE</i>	385
Драгиша Бојовић <i>ДАВИД И КОНСТАНТИН – СРПСКА РЕЦЕПЦИЈА ПРЕДАЊА О СВЕТИМ И ВЕЛИКИМ ЦАРЕВИМА</i>	383
Dragiša Bojović <i>DAVID AND CONSTANTINE – SERBIAN RECEPTION OF TRADITIONS OF SACRED AND GREAT EMPERORS</i>	397

Весна Пено <i>ХИМНЕ У ЧАСТ СВЕТИХ ЦАРА КОНСТАНТИНА И ЦАРИЦЕ ЈЕЛЕНЕ У ХИЛАНДАРСКИМ МУЗИЧКИМ РУКОПИСИМА</i>	399
Vesna Peno <i>HYMNS GLORIFYING ST. EMPEROR CONSTANTINE AND EMPRESS HELEN IN THE MUSICAL MANUSCRIPTS FROM HILANDAR</i>	409
Злата Бојовић <i>КОНСТАНТИН ВЕЛИКИ У ЛЈЕТОПИСУ ЦРКОВНОМ АНДРИЈЕ ЗМАЈЕВИЋА</i>	441
Zlata Bojović <i>CONSTANTINE THE GREAT IN THE CHURCH CHRONICLE BY ANDRIJA ZMAJEVIĆ</i>	424
Мелина Рокаи <i>„КОНСТАНТИН И КРИСП“ – ШКОЛСКА ДРАМА СУБОТИЧКЕ ГИМНАЗИЈЕ У ХВИИ ВЕКУ</i>	425
Melina Rokai <i>“CONSTANTINE AND CRISPUS” – AN 18TH CENTURY SCHOOL DRAMA OF SUBOTICA HIGH SCHOOL</i>	429
Емил Иванов <i>РАИНОХРИСТИЈАНСКА САРКОФАЗНА ПЛАСТИКА ОТ КОНСТАНТИНОВИЈА ПЕРИОД. НЕЙИИЈАТ ПРОИЗХОД И НЕЙНОТО РАЗВИТИЕ</i>	433
Emil Ivanov <i>РАНОХРИШЋАНСКА СКУЛПТУРА У САРКОФАЗИМА ИЗ КОНСТАНТИНОВОГ ДОБА. ЊЕНО ПОРЕКЛО И РАЗВОЈ</i>	441
Branka Cusa, Raffaella Brumana, Giorgio Bezoari <i>INNOVATIVE GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS FOR THE COMPREHENSION AND VALORIZATION OF HISTORICAL ITINERARIES. THE CASE STUDY OF MEDIANA, RESIDENCE OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT</i>	443
Бранка Цуца, Рафаела Бумана, Ђорђо Безоари <i>ИИОВАТИВНИ ГЕОГРАФСКИ ИИСТРУМЕНТИ ЗА РАЗУМЕВАЊЕ И ВАЛОРИЗАЦИЈУ ИСТОРИЈСКИХ ПУТЕВА. СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА МЕДИЈАНЕ, ПРЕБИВАЛИШТА КОНСТАНТИНА ВЕЛИКОГ</i>	457
Iva Kaić, Vinka Bubić <i>ORATORIUM A AND OTHER 4TH CENTURY CHRISTIAN BUILDINGS IN SALONA</i>	463
Ива Каић, Винка Бубић <i>ORATORIUM A И ДРУТЕ ХРИШЋАНСКЕ ЗГРАДЕ У САЛОНИ ИЗ ЧЕТВРТОГ ВЕКА</i>	473
Anthousa Papagiannaki <i>IMPERIAL PORTRAITURE AND THE MINOR ARTS IN THE ERA OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT</i>	479
Антуса Папађанаки <i>ЦАРСКИ ПОРТРЕТИ И ПРИМЕЊЕНА УМЕИНОСТ У ДОБА КОНСТАНТИНА ВЕЛИКОГ</i>	492

Anna Paranou <i>THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE THE GREAT: IDOLATER OR CHRIST? THE CASE OF THE COINAGE</i>	493
Ана Парану <i>ЦАР КОНСТАНТИН ВЕЛИКИ: ИДОЛОПОКЛОНИК ИЛИ ПОМАЗАНИК? СЛУЧАЈ КОВАНОГ НОВЦА</i>	507
Глигор Самарџић, Соња Стаменковић <i>НАЛАЗИ НОВЦА КОНСТАНТИНА ВЕЛИКОГ И ЊЕГОВИХ СИНОВА У МУЗЕЈУ ХЕРЦЕГОВИНЕ У ТРЕБИЊУ</i>	515
Gligor Samardžić, Sonja Stamenković <i>ROMAN COIN FINDINGS FROM THE PERIOD OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT AND HIS SONS IN THE MUSEUM OF HERZEGOVINA IN TREBINJE</i>	524
Јадранка Мишић-Пејовић <i>РАЗВОЈ ТЕХНИКЕ МОЗАИКА У НИШКИМ САКРАЛНИМ ОБЈЕКТИМА – ОД ХРИСТОГРАМА НА МЕДИЈАНИ ДО ЦРКВЕ СВЕТИХ ЦАРА КОНСТАНТИНА И ЦАРИЦЕ ЈЕЛЕНЕ У НИШУ</i>	527
Jadranka Mišić Pejović <i>DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOSAIC TECHNIQUE IN SACRED OBJECTS OF NIŠ – FROM THE CHRISTOGRAM IN MEDIANA TO THE CHURCH OF SS EMPEROR CONSTANTINE AND EMPRESS JELENA IN NIŠ</i>	541
Аксинија Џурова <i>КУЛТЪТ КЪМ СВЕТИТЕ КОНСТАНТИН И ЕЛЕНА В СВЕТЛИНАТА НА ОТКРИВАНЕТО (ОБРЕТЕНИЕТО) НА ЧЕСТНИЯ КРЪСТ (ВЪРХУ МАТЕРИАЛ ОТ СТЕННАТА И ИКОННА ЖИВОПИС НА БАЛКАНИТЕ)</i>	543
Аксинија Џурова <i>КУЛТ СВ. КОНСТАНТИНА И ЈЕЛЕНЕ У СВЕТЛУ ОТКРИВЕЊА ЧАСНОГ КРСТА (НА ОСНОВУ МАТЕРИЈАЛА ФРЕСАКА И ИКОНА НА БАЛКАНУ)</i>	559
Eleni Vlachopoulou <i>DEPICTING SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN ON CHURCH GOLD EMBROIDERED VESTMENTS: THE CASE OF THE ARKADI MONASTERY'S COLLECTION IN CRETE</i>	573
Елени Влахополу <i>СЛИКЕ СВ. КОНСТАНТИНА И ЈЕЛЕНЕ НА ЦРКВЕНОЈ ОДЕЖДИ ОПТОЧЕНОЈ ЗЛАТОМ. СЛУЧАЈ ЗБИРКЕ МАНАСТИРА АРКАДИ НА КРИТУ</i>	586
Nikolaos Graikos, Georgia Graikou <i>NEWER DEPICTIONS OF THE STS. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN IN CHURCHE OF HELLENIC SPACE IN THE 19TH CENTURY: CULTURAL, DEVOTIONAL, AND ICONOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS</i>	595
Николаос Граикос, Георгиа Граику <i>НОВИЈИ ПРИКАЗИ СВЕТОГ ЦАРА КОНСТАНТИНА И СВЕТЕ ЦАРИЦЕ ЈЕЛЕНЕ У ЦРКВАМА НА ПОДРУЧЈУ ГРЧКЕ (XIX ВЕК). КУЛТУРОЛОШКА, КУЛТНА И ИКОНОГРАФСКА ПИТАЊА</i>	606

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WISDOM IN ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR RECONSIDERED

Abstract: *The article aims to elucidate the role and the function of wisdom in the work of Maximus the Confessor. This polyvalent term occurs frequently in Maximus' works and it links various fields of his thought, i.e. aretology, cosmology, epistemology, and eschatology, in a single theological vision. Maximus employs the notion of wisdom in his explanation of several interdependent processes such as the practice of virtues and the natural contemplation that lead to salvation as the appropriation of wisdom in its fullness. Moreover, Maximus connects these two practices with the divine activities of providence and judgment on the one hand, and the function of human cognitive faculties of mind and reason on the other hand. The divine revelation of wisdom and the corresponding human appropriation of wisdom taken together are reflected in the unity of God and man, in which man fully realizes the image of God.*

Key words: *wisdom, practice of virtues, natural contemplation, providence, judgement, reason, mind, logoi of creation*

In his article "Wisdom in St. Maximus the Confessor,"¹ Marcus Plested stressed several important aspects of this multifaceted and multivalent notion of Maximus. One of the most important aspects for the present study is related to Maximus' distinction between the contemplative and practical wisdom. Plested refers to the prologue to the *Ambigua to Thomas*, where Maximus distinguishes between wisdom, and "the beauty of wisdom" as knowledge in practice. Furthermore, by pointing to several passages from *Ambiguum* 10, Plested substantiates his claim that true philosophy as love for wisdom is erroneous if it is not at the same time both practical and intellectual.² It seems that Plested has tackled a very important, yet, according to Michael Harrington, a seriously neglected link between the practice of virtues and natural contemplation in Maximus. By remarking that the modern Maximian scholarship, represented by P. Sherwood, L. Thunberg, and J.-C. Larchet, has devaluated the natural contemplation at the expense of the practice of virtues, Harrington concluded that "for all three authors, the practice of virtues is the essential and enduring step to knowledge of, and union with God, while natural contemplation

¹ Marcus Plested, "Wisdom in St Maximus the Confessor," *Studia Patristica* 42 (2006), 205-209.

² Plested, "Wisdom in St Maximus," 206.

constitutes either an optional, or a merely introductory stage in this process.”³ The alleged negligence of such an important theme in Maximus has inspired Harrington to prove further that the natural contemplation is *sine qua non* for deification.

The question then arises as to whether it is possible for Maximian scholarship to neglect the contemplative aspect of love for wisdom, and at the same time to overstate its practical counterpart as Harrington claims. Thus, the aim of the present study is to elucidate the role of wisdom in Maximus in relation to both the practice of virtues and natural contemplation.

By following the example of Plested, I intend to look first at the prologue of *Ambigua to Thomas*:

“The beauty of wisdom is knowledge in practice, or practice filled with wisdom, the distinctive mark of which is the design of divine providence and judgment, since it is filled with both. In accordance with this design, by interweaving the intellect with sense perception through the Spirit, you have shown truly how God is wont to make man according to the image of God (Gen. 1.27). You have established a renowned wealth of goodness, lavishly demonstrating in yourself, by means of a comely mixture of opposites, God embodied in virtues, to whose self-emptying you have achieved a certain symmetry by an exalted imitation, and have not disdained to descend even unto me, seeking those things of which you already have experiential knowledge.”⁴

It seems that this opening of Maximus’ address to Thomas, pregnant with meanings instead of clarifying what wisdom really is, further complicates the whole issue. Thus, the elucidation of the notion of wisdom certainly requires an interpretation of the new elements such as practice filled with wisdom, providence and judgment, intellect and sense perception through the Spirit and the image of God that Maximus brings to the fore. All these notions constitute, or more precisely, are constituted by the idea of wisdom.

The Practice of Virtues

Since Maximus refers first to the beauty of wisdom as the practice of virtues, one may assume that this aspect is a departure point in his architecture of wisdom. In the *Second Letter to Thomas*, Maximus explains explicitly the link between wisdom and virtues:

³ Michael Harrington, “Creation and Natural Contemplation in Maximus the Confessor’s *Ambiguum* 10:19,” in: Michael Treschow, Willemien Otten & Walter Hannam (eds.), *Divine creation in ancient, medieval, and early modern thought: essays presented to the Rev’d Dr. Robert D. Crouse*, Leiden, Boston: Brill 2007, 191-212, 196.

⁴ *Ambiguum ad Thomam*, prol., 9-18, in: Bart Janssens (ed.), *Maximi Confessoris Ambigua ad Thomam una cum Epistula secunda ad eundem*, Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 48 (=CCSG 48), Turnhout: Brepols, 2002, 3: Σοφίας δὲ κάλλος ἐστίν, γνώσις ἔμπρακτος, ἢ πράξις ἔνσοφος, ὣν ἐστι χαρακτήρ, ὡς δι’ ἀμφοῖν συμπληρούμενος, ὁ τῆς θείας προνοίας καὶ κρίσεως λόγος, καθ’ ὃν αἰσθήσει τὸν νοῦν συμπλέξας διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος, ἔδειξας ὡς ἀληθῶς πῶς ὁ θεὸς κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ποιεῖν πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπον, τὸν τε πλοῦτον τῆς ἀγαθότητος κατέστησας γνώριμον, πολυτελῶς τῇ καλῇ μίξει τῶν ἐναντίων ἐν σεαυτῷ δεικνὺς τὸν θεὸν ταῖς ἀρεταῖς σωματούμενον. οὐ τῷ ὕψει συμμετρήσας μιμήσει τὴν κένωσιν, ἕως ἐμοῦ κατελθεῖν οὐκ ἀπηξίωσας, ἐκεῖνα ζητῶν ὡν πεπονηθῶς ἔχεις τὴν εἶδησιν. The English translation of Joshua Lollar from Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua to Thomas and Second Letter to Thomas*, Corpus Christianorum in Translation, Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010, 47-48.

“They say that virtue is the real instantiation of wisdom, and that wisdom is the essence of virtue. Thus, the manner of life of those who practice contemplation is an unwavering demonstration of wisdom, and the principle of contemplation of those engaged in the practical life is the firmly established foundation of virtue.”⁵

By considering only the first sentence, one may conclude that wisdom is manifested only by the virtues in their essence. This may inspire one to perceive virtue not only as necessary, but also as the most exclusive step toward wisdom. Harrington attributes such a view to the aforementioned scholars of Maximus. However, already in the second sentence Maximus challenges this view by claiming that the logos of contemplation (λόγος τῆς θεωρίας) is the solid basis for virtues. Thus, the development of virtues necessitates contemplation, just as the virtuous life is a prerequisite for contemplation. Nevertheless, wisdom is demonstrated in both the beauty of wisdom as practice of virtues, and the greatness of the creation as fruits of contemplation, but it is not exhausted through these activities. For Maximus, these two equally cherished activities “are the source of the pure mixture of the worthy ones with God in union.”⁶ Wisdom is revealed in much greater extent in the union with God, than in the contemplation and the practice of virtues. Thus, the spiritual advancement toward the union with God is not a two-stage process, but it rather consists of three stages. Maximus describes these three stages of salvation as stages of virtue, knowledge, and theology.⁷ The first requires courage and chastity in the practice of virtues, the second requires righteousness or the right discernment in natural contemplation, while the third requires the full perfection of wisdom. Maximus places these three stages in the context of his exegesis of the Transfiguration by identifying the first stage with Elijah, the second stage with Moses, and the third stage with Christ.⁸

Moreover, for Maximus the initiation in the logos of the divine unity represented here by Christ is accompanied by other two *logoi*, those of providence and judgment that are associated with Moses and Elijah, respectively. Thus, one may conclude that the practice of virtues is closely connected with judgment, the natural contemplation with the providence, and the unity with divine being as true theology with the full perfection of wisdom. It further requires the elucidation of theology in the context of providence and judgment.

Providence, Judgement, and Theology

It has been already emphasized by Hans Urs von Balthasar that the natural world, contemplated in the light of revelation, is a source of wisdom for Maximus.⁹

⁵ *Epistola Secunda ad Thomam* (=Ep. sec. Th), prol., 5-8, CCSG 48, 37; Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua to Thomas and Second Letter to Thomas*, 77.

⁶ *Ep. sec. Th.*, prol. 12-13 (CCGS 48, 37); Maximus, *Ambigua to Thomas*, 77.

⁷ *Capitulum theologicorum et oeconomicorum duae centuriae* (=Cap.theol.) II, 16; PG 90, 1132C. The English translation of George C. Berthold in: Maximus the Confessor, *Selected Writings*, (Classics of Western Spirituality), London: SPCK 1985, 151.

⁸ *Cap. theol.* II, 16. See also *Ambiguum ad Joannem* (=Amb) 10, 31; PG 91, 1168AD.

⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003, 61.

The wisdom revealed through the creation is the source of our knowledge about God:

“We do not know God from his being but from his magnificent works and his Providence for beings. Through these as through mirrors we perceive his infinite goodness, and wisdom and power.”¹⁰

A few lines below this passage, Maximus clarifies that the divine attributes knowable to human beings are divine goodness, wisdom, and power by which God creates, governs, and judges beings.¹¹ In *Ambiguum* 10:19, Maximus exposes further the theme of divine knowability in the context of the five modes of natural contemplation: being, movement, difference, mixture, and position.¹² The first three categories provide the knowledge of God as the fashioner, provider, and judge, while the other two educate us in virtue and in assimilation with God. For Maximus, being is the teacher of theology, because it reveals the knowledge of God as the creator. The movement of creation indicates the divine providence over the universe, while the divine judgement instructs us in the difference in creation. The role of providence is to preserve the unvarying sameness of each of the things in the universe, and to preserve the universe in accordance with the *logoi* of which it consists. According to Maximus, the role of providence is to hold the whole creation and every single being within the unity with God and among themselves. As the judgment is indicative of difference, the role of judgment is to preserve the wise distribution of beings, “in accordance with which each of the things that come to be, in connection with the *logoi* in accordance with which it exists, has an inviolable and unalterable constitution in its natural identity.”¹³

By considering the whole creation from the points of view of position and difference, Maximus introduces wisdom in the entire scheme. If the creation is beheld from the point of view of position, the five modes of contemplation are reduced to three domains of contemplation that correspond to earth, heaven, and what is in between.¹⁴ The contemplation of earth is to be found within the domain of natural philosophy, the contemplation of the people who live between earth and heaven is in the domain of ethical philosophy, and finally, the theological philosophy deals with the heaven. These three modes of philosophy resemble the above-mentioned three stages that lead to salvation: of virtues, of natural knowledge and theology. Moreover, by considering the creation from the point of view of difference, Maximus reduces these three modes of contemplations that deal with earth, heaven, and what is in between, to two modes of contemplation that are wisdom and philosophy. Wisdom is focused on heaven as something that contains everything, and philosophy is dealing with beings that are contained by heaven. While wisdom “circumscribes and receives in a way divinely fitting the above-mentioned reverent forms and encloses within itself the hidden and natural meanings of the others,” philosophy “holds together

¹⁰ *Capitulum de charitate* (=De char.) I, 96; PG 90, 981c. The English translation of George C. Berthold in: Maximus the Confessor, *Selected Writings*, (Classics of Western Spirituality), London: SPCK 1985, 45-46.

¹¹ *De char.* I, 100.

¹² *Amb.* 10, 1133AB.

¹³ *Amb.* 10, 1133D; Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 110.

¹⁴ *Amb.* 10, 1136C.

character and inclination, activity and contemplation, and virtue and knowledge, drawing them up by an intimate relationship to wisdom as cause.”¹⁵

It is a valuable Harrington’s remark that the difference between wisdom and philosophy is actually the difference between the state of wisdom and the love of wisdom.¹⁶ The state of wisdom is the order revealed in the structure of creation, while the love of wisdom represents the inclination of individual rational beings to act in accordance with their proper *logoi*, and thus by fulfilling the purpose of their existence to fit themselves in the divinely design.

As it has been already mentioned, wisdom is revealed in the ontological structure of *logoi* of creation that are united in one *logos* of being, which in the final instance leads to the divine Logos. Therefore, Maximus claims that many *logoi* are the Logos of God due to His converting and hand-leading transference and providence (ἐπιστρεπτική καὶ χειραγωγική ἀναφορά τε καὶ πρόνοια).¹⁷ Wisdom or the state of wisdom reveals the perfect unity of creation, without confusing their parts, and at the same time it preserves the distinctions between the beings, without separating or dividing them one from another.¹⁸ By his insistence on the term “undivided” (ἀδιαίρετος), Maximus preserves the unity of the *logoi* among them, and with the one Logos, while by the insistence on the term “unconfused” (ἀσύγχυτος), he establishes all the beings as unique.

Unlike wisdom, which is transparent in its fullness, the love of wisdom, or philosophy, is wisdom in *via*. The true philosophy always tends to attain the divine wisdom. As Maximus describes the whole process of the transformation of love of wisdom into the state of wisdom is by uniting the practical with the contemplative faculties in each rational being. Thus, by uniting the practical aspects of philosophy such as character (ἦθους), activity (πράξεώς), and virtue (ἀρετῆς) with the contemplative aspects of philosophy such as inclination (γνώμης), contemplation (θεωρίας), and knowledge (γνώσεως), the lover of wisdom appropriates the state of wisdom. The gnoseological process of transforming philosophy into wisdom is at the same time the ontological process of preserving the mode of existence in consistency with the natural *logos*.¹⁹ Therefore, Andrew Louth argues that the ascetic struggle, which recovers the dispassion that enables us to practice natural contemplation, prevents the mode (*tropos*) to run counter to its fundamental *logos*.²⁰ While the creation of the universal essences which are designed according to universal *logoi* bears the stamp of divine wisdom, the providence over the individual rational beings attains the state of wisdom when the personal inclination of these beings is reconciled

¹⁵ *Amb.* 10, 1136CD: τὴν μὲν ὡς περιεκτικὴν καὶ πάντας θεοπροπῶς τοὺς εὐσεβεῖς ἐπ’ αὐτῆς λεγομένους ἐπιδοχόμενῃ τρόπους, καὶ τοὺς περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐντὸς ἑαυτῆς μυστικούς τε καὶ φυσικούς περικλείουσιν λόγους, τὴν δὲ ὡς ἦθους καὶ γνώμης, πράξεώς τε καὶ θεωρίας, καὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ γνώσεως συνεκτικὴν, καὶ οἰκειότητι σχετικῆν πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν ὡς αἰτίαν ἀναφερομένην. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 114.

¹⁶ Harrington, “Creation and Natural Contemplation,” 208.

¹⁷ *Amb.* 7, 1081C.

¹⁸ *Amb.* 7, 1077C.

¹⁹ *Amb.* 5, 99-104 (CCSG 48, 3). Also PG 91, 1052A.

²⁰ Louth, *Maximus*, 57-58.

with their particular *logoi*. Thus, in his *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 2, Maximus explains how God as Creator and Provider directs the multiplicity of the created beings toward the general *logos* of being, revealing the wise architecture of the creation:

“God, as he alone knew how, completed the primary principles of creatures and the universal essences of beings once for all. Yet he is still at work, not only preserving these creatures in their very existence, but also effecting the formation, progress, and sustenance of the individual parts that are potentially within them. Even now in his providence he is bringing about the assimilation of particulars to universals until he might unite a creatures’ own voluntary inclination to the more universal natural principle of rational being through the movement of these particular creatures toward well being, and make them harmonious and self-moving in relation to one another and to the whole universe. In this way there shall be no intentional divergence between universals and particulars. Rather, one and the same principle shall be observable throughout the universe, admitting no differentiation in the individual modes according to which the created beings are predicated, and displaying the grace of God effective to deify the universe.”²¹

In order to understand how Maximus defines universals and particulars, one needs to recall the passage from *Ambiguum* 10:37, where Maximus describes the movements of expansion (*διαστολή*) and contraction (*συστολή*). The process of expansion (*διαστολή*) is downward movement from the most general *logoi* of being and nature, and subsequent *logoi* of highest genus (*γενικώτατον γένος*), intermediate *genera* (*γενικώτερα γένη*), species (*εἶδη*), specific species (*εἰδικώτατα εἶδη*),²² to the *logoi* of individuals (*ἄτομα*) and accidents (*συμβεβηκότα*). The process of contraction is the reverse movement directed upward, beginning from individuals, passing through generals and ending with the *Logos* of God. Torstein Tollefsen rightly remarks that the movements of expansion and contraction do not only offer the solution to the problem of the relationship between universals and individuals, but they also establish an ontologically constitutive relation or an ontological arrangement.²³ It is possible to conclude from the previous passage from *Ad*

²¹ *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* (=Thall.) 2, 7-22 in: Carl Laga & Carlos Steel (eds), *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 7, Turnhout: Brepols, 1980, 51 (also PG 90, 272ab): Τοὺς μὲν πρώτους τῶν γεγονότων λόγους ὁ Θεὸς καὶ τὰς καθόλου τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας ἄπαξ, ὡς οἶδεν αὐτός, συμπληρώσας, ἔτι ἐργάζεται οὐ μόνον τὴν τούτων αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸ εἶναι συντήρησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν κατ’ ἐνέργειαν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς δυνάμει μερῶν δημιουργίαν πρόοδόν τε καὶ σύστασιν, ἔτι μὴν καὶ τὴν διὰ τῆς προνοίας πρὸς τὰ καθόλου τῶν μερικῶν ἐξομοίωσιν, ἕως ἄν, τῷ κατὰ φύσιν γενικωτέρῳ λόγῳ τῆς λογικῆς οὐσίας διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὸ εἶναι κινήσεως τῶν μερικῶν τὴν ἀυθαίρετον ἐνώσας ὁρμήν, ποιήσειεν ἀλλήλοις τε καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ σύμφωνα καὶ ταυτοκίνητα, μὴ ἐχόντων τὴν γνωμικὴν πρὸς τὰ καθόλου τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους διαφοράν, ἀλλ’ εἰς καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐφ’ ὅλων θεωρηθήσεται λόγος, μὴ διαιρούμενος τοῖς τῶν καθ’ ὧν ἴσως κατηγορεῖται τρόποις, καὶ οὕτως ἐνεργουμένην τὴν ἐκθεωτικὴν τῶν ὅλων ἐπιδείξεται χάριν· The English translation in Paul M. Blowers and Robert L. Wilken (eds.), *On the Cosmic Mystery of Christ*, Crestwood, NY.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 2003, 99-100.

²² *Amb.* 10, PG 91, 1177C. The English translation in Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, London: Routledge, 1996, 138.

²³ Torstein Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor*, [PhD

Thalassium 2, that Maximus describes exactly the movement of contraction. In this movement directed by the divine providence, God assimilates particulars to universals, leading them toward the most general *logos* of being, and through it to the Logos of God. When the multiplicity of universal and practical *logoi* is united in the general *logos* of being, God deifies the universe by uniting it with Him. By the divine providence God gathers and directs the multiplicity of *logoi* toward the union with Him. However, the way of gathering the universal *logoi* differs from the way of gathering the particular *logoi*. While the universal or generic *logoi* are held together by wisdom (σοφία), the particular *logoi* are held together by prudence or sagacity (φρόνησις):

And simply, to speak concisely, the *logoi* of everything that is divided and particular are contained, as they say, by the *logoi* of what is universal and generic, and the most universal and generic *logoi* are held together by wisdom, and the *logoi* of the particulars, held fast in various ways by the generic *logoi* are contained by sagacity, in accordance with which they are first simplified, and releasing the symbolic variety in the actions of their subjects, they are unified by wisdom, receiving congruence making for identity from the more generic. For the wisdom and sagacity of God the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ, who holds together the universals of beings by the power of wisdom, and embraces their complementary parts by the sagacity of understanding, since by nature he is the fashioner and provider of all, and through himself draws into one what is divided, and abolishes the war between beings, and binds everything into peaceful friendship and undivided harmony, both what is in heaven and what is on earth (Col. 1:20), as the divine Apostle says.²⁴

We need to recall the previous quotation from *Ad Thalassium 2* in order to explain the different means that Christ uses to preserve the universe and hold it together. Thus, the universal *logoi* revealed by the universal essences are created at the beginning. They are structured in the pyramidal hierarchy, which has at its base the multiplicity of specific species (εἰδικώτατα εἶδη), while on the top is the most universal *logos* of being. The place of every member, meaning every universal *logos*, is strictly determined in this structure, and it is not possible to make any transgressions of such an order. The relationship between different generic *logoi* and also between each *logos* and the whole, reveals the wisely structured creation. Thus, the universe reveals the wisdom as its source.

dissertation], Oslo, 2000, 101. See also Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor*, 2008, 78.

²⁴ *Amb.* 41, 1313AB: Καί ἀπλῶς, ἵνα συνελών εἶπω, πάντων τῶν διηρημένων καί μερικῶν οἱ λόγοι τοῖς τῶν καθόλου καί γενικῶν, ὡς φασι, περιέχονται λόγοις, καί τούς μέν τῶν γενικωτέρων καί καθολικωτέρων λόγους ὑπό τῆς σοφίας συνέχεσθαι, τούς δέ μερικῶν ποικίλως τοῖς τῶν γενικῶν ἐνισχημένους ὑπό τῆς φρονήσεως περιέχεσθαι, καθ' ἣν ἀπλούμενοι πρότερον, καί τήν ἐν τοῖς πράγμασι τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις ἀπολύοντες συμβολικὴν ποικιλίαν, ὑπό τῆς σοφίας ἐνίζονται, τήν εἰς ταυτότητα τοῖς γενικωτέροις συμφυῖαν δεξάμενοι. Σοφία δέ τοῦ Θεοῦ καί Πατρός καί φρόνησις ἐστίν ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ὁ καί καθόλου τῶν ὄντων συνέχων τῇ δυνάμει τῆς σοφίας, καί τὰ συμπληρωτικά τούτων μέρη περιέχων τῇ φρονήσει τῆς συνέσεως ὡς πάντων φύσει δημιουργός καί προνοητής, καί εἰς ἕν ἄγων τὰ διεστώτα δι' ἑαυτοῦ, καί τόν ἐν τοῖς οὔσι καταλύων πόλεμον, καί πρὸς εἰρηνικὴν φιλίαν τὰ πάντα καί ἀδαιρέτον συνδέων ὁμόνοιαν, τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καί τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καθὼς φησιν ὁ θεῖος Ἀπόστολος.

The role of prudence and sagacity is displayed in dealing with the particular *logoi* or the *logoi* of particular rational beings that come to being in the course of time. Prudence differentiates from wisdom since it is not involved in fashioning the universal hierarchically determined structure, but rather it “unites creatures’ own voluntary inclination to the more universal natural principle of a rational being.”²⁵ Thus, by respecting the freedom of individual rational beings, Christ assists them by divine grace to follow their natural *logoi*, which leads them toward the unity with the Logos as the centre of all *logoi*. This synergy between the divine prudence and voluntary inclination of the particular rational beings is demonstrated in the practical and natural philosophy, which tends to transform itself to wisdom. Harrington argues that “Maximus seems to think of this philosophy more as a refinement of desire than a form of understanding.”²⁶ In my opinion, the philosophy is founded on two equally important intellectual capacities, one of mind, and another of reason, and there is no progress toward the divine if these capacities are not fully realized. Therefore, giving the priority to one capacity over another may endanger the whole process of transforming the love for wisdom into the state of wisdom. The next step, therefore, would be to elucidate the particular roles of reason as the processor of sense perception, and its link with the mind.

Reason and Mind

According to Maximus the human soul possesses two intellectual capacities by which it is moved toward God, one of mind, and another of reason.²⁷ In his *Mystagogia* 5, Maximus describes in detail these two intellectual capacities. Thus, the mind is the contemplating agency of the soul, which leads to God manifested in His essence as Truth, while the reason is the active agency of the soul leading toward God manifested as Good in his activities.²⁸ Both movements pass through certain stages before attaining the final goal.

The mind (*νοῦς*) rests in wisdom (*σοφία*), since wisdom is the power (*δύναμις*) of mind and the mind is wisdom in potency. The habit (*ἔξις*) of mind is contemplation (*θεωρία*), while the act or activity (*ἐνέργεια*) of mind is knowledge (*γνώσις*). The wisdom as the power of mind leads to contemplation, which becomes the habit of mind. By exercising the contemplation as a habit, the mind acquires knowledge, which is its activity. One may perceive the three states of mind, i.e. wisdom, contemplation, and knowledge not necessarily as subsequent stages, but also as simultaneous and deeply interconnected, since the mind is led by its power (*δύναμις*), habit (*ἔξις*) and activity (*ἐνέργεια*) to the next level. By actualizing its potency in wisdom, by discovering its habit in contemplation, and by performing its activity in knowledge, the mind ends in enduring knowledge (*ἄλυστος γνώσις*).²⁹ The enduring

²⁵ *Thall.* 2, 14-16 (CCSG 22, 51). Blowers & Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mystery*, 100.

²⁶ Harrington, “Creation and Natural Contemplation,” 207.

²⁷ *Amb.* 10, 1112D-1113A; *Mystagogia* 5, 2-3 PG 91, 673BD.

²⁸ *Myst.* 5, 3-4, 673CD.

²⁹ *Myst.* 5, 8-9; 676C-677A.

knowledge is “the perpetual and unceasing movement” of wisdom, contemplation, and knowledge as potency, habit, and activity of the mind, around God as the Truth (ἀλήθεια).

Several issues characterize this final stage, in which the mind experiences something completely new. Maximus introduces the reader into this new state by claiming that the mind moves toward “the knowable which transcends knowledge.” Maximus moves beyond this “apophatic” figure, which denies the possibility of knowing God, by relying on the argument of Gregory of Nyssa regarding the divine infinity and the *adiastemic* nature of God.³⁰ According to Maximus, the enduring and everlasting knowledge becomes circumscribed (περιγραφόμενον) as the ultimate knowable, or the Truth.³¹ Since the mind, according to Maximus, gains knowledge about a certain object by recognizing the definition or circumscription of this object, one may expect that the knowledge of God is possible by circumscribing Him by the mind. However, for Maximus, although God is knowable, He transcends knowledge. The knowledge of all created beings is possible due to their limited natures. Thus, in order to know a certain object, one should circumscribe it by the mind, or determine its borders, content, and purpose. When the mind passes from the limited and thus created natures, to the unlimited nature of God, it cannot find any border in Him where to stop, and to conclude something about His essence by distancing itself from Him. Therefore, the mind continues to move within the divine infinity and it constantly gains knowledge of God, which is eternal, and which never ends or passes into memory. In this manner, God, who is knowable, at the same time transcends discursive knowledge. God as the truth is the final destination of mind and by this final truth the mind’s essence, power, habit, and activity are determined.

The next intellectual activity is that of reason, which in similar fashion like the mind passes through several phases. The faculty of reason is not contemplative like it is the case with the mind, but it is rather practical. Reason (λόγος) possesses its potency in prudence (φρόνησις), since the power of reason is prudence. The habit of reason is reflected in action (πράξις), while the activity of reason is virtue (ἀρετή). The inward and unchangeable bond of prudence, action, and virtues as the power (δύναμις), habit (ἔξις) and activity (ἐνέργεια) of reason generates faith (πίστις). Faith leads reason further forward to God as Good (τὸ ἀγαθόν), where it finally rests.³²

Both mind and reason know God, but the former knows Him as the Truth, while the latter knows Him as the Good. However, Maximus remarks that by the grace of the Holy Spirit and its own work, every soul can unite the mind with reason into reasonable mind, wisdom with prudence into prudent wisdom, contemplative with practical activity into an active contemplation, knowledge with virtues into virtuous knowledge, and finally, faith with enduring knowledge into enduring knowledge which is faithful and unchangeable.³³ Thus, at the end it is possible to

³⁰ Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium* I, 363 (Gregorii Nysseni Opera I, 134 Jaeger); *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei* (Gregorii Nysseni opera III/1, 51 Mueller).

³¹ *Myst.* 5,9; 677A.

³² *Myst.* 5, 10-11; 677CD.

³³ *Myst.* 5, 13; 680A.

reduce the decade of the aforementioned categories of mind and reason to the monad that is God, but also it is possible to expand the monad into a decade. The expansion of the monad into a decade symbolically corresponds to the activities of God in the created world.

In Maximus' epistemological architecture wisdom again holds the prominent place. Wisdom is not the possession of mind,³⁴ but it rather constitutes the mind since as the power of mind it provides the possibility for contemplation to gain knowledge and enduring knowledge of God as Truth. Moreover, for Maximus, the manifestation and the act of wisdom are prudence.³⁵ Therefore, wisdom reveals the link that exists between the God's being and his energy. Wisdom empowers the mind to discover the divine essence as simple, unique, one, identical, indivisible, immutable, impassible, all-seeing, and fully eternal, and thus to acknowledge God as the truth. At the same time, wisdom manifested through prudence as the utilization of virtues reveals God as Good by acknowledging his creative, providential, and judging energies.³⁶

Moreover, Maximus claims that intellectual capacities were interwoven through the Spirit of God. Thus, wisdom is the result of the divine grace caused by the activity of the Holy Spirit in human beings:

“As the fashioner of wisdom, he [the Holy Spirit] resides in those who have been purified in body and soul through proper ascetical utilization of commandments; he dwells in them as his own through simple and spiritual knowledge, and imprints in their minds inviolate understanding of unspeakable things, which leads to deification.”³⁷

Maximus claims that the Holy Spirit is present in those who properly direct the natural inclinations of their intellectual and rational capacities. The proper ascetical utilization of commandments or the practice of virtues is the right employment of the rational capacity, while the mind's appropriation of simple and spiritual knowledge is the result of the correct usage of the intellectual faculty. This confirms the stance of the three-stage development that leads from the practice of virtue and natural contemplation toward the union with God, described here as the Holy Spirit's indwelling God's people.

Maximus explains that the activities of God in the created world actually affect various human capacities:

“The grace of the Holy Spirit does not effect the wisdom in the Saints without the mind, which receives it, nor the knowledge without receptive power of reason, nor faith without announcement through mind and reason of the future things and so far not known by anyone, nor gifts of healing without natural philanthropy, nor any other gifts without receptive disposition and power for each of them. Neither will man receive any of these listed (gifts) by his natural capacity, without the divine power that gives them.”³⁸

³⁴ Harrington, “Creation and Natural Contemplation,” 208.

³⁵ *Myst.* 5, 15; 680B.

³⁶ *Myst.* 5. 4, 673CD.

³⁷ *Thal.* 15, 35-40 (CCSG 7, 103).

³⁸ *Thal.* 59, 55-64 (CCSG 22, 47-48).

By commenting on this, and the passage from *Ad Thalassium* 63,³⁹ Plested claims that wisdom is the unifying action of *energeia* of the Holy Trinity and it is not only associated with the Son.⁴⁰ His claim is correct in confirming that Maximus holds that the divine energies equally belong to all three divine persons. Moreover, the example that Plested quotes from *Ad Thalassium* 63 proves that the Holy Spirit accords the perfection of the divine activity, which springs from the Father, and passes through the Son. However, Plested's identification of wisdom with divine energy is contestable. In my opinion, wisdom is the effect of the joint endeavor of the divine and human activities. This joint endeavor may be twofold, that is, at the level of practice of virtues, and at the level of natural contemplation. Maximus refers to the former throughout his works.⁴¹ Thus, in *Ambiguum* 7 Maximus claims that by practicing virtues human beings acquire the likeness of God that they add to the already inherent goodness of the image.⁴² Divine creative and providential activity is here joined with the human activity of practicing virtues and both lead to goodness. This is also evident in the above quoted passage from *Ad Thalassium* 59, where Maximus holds that there is no divine grace of knowledge without the receptive power of reason. The grace does work through the already created channels, such as mind, reason or natural philanthropy as a response to the human endeavor to utilize its natural abilities properly. Thus, by working together with the divine grace, the human reason, whose proper or natural activity is virtue, leads to virtuous knowledge.

The second unity of the divine and the human activities is at the level of natural contemplation. For Maximus the grace of God perfected by the Holy Spirit is the response to the naturally exercised human capacity of contemplation that leads first to the acknowledgment of the divine wisdom in fashioning and providing the creation, and then to the recognition of God the Creator and Provider as the hypostasis of wisdom. In *Ambiguum* 10:35, Maximus describes the whole process of natural contemplation pursued by the Saints:

“So therefore when the Saints behold the creation, and its fine order and proportion and the need that each part has of the whole, and how all the perfect parts have been fashioned wisely and with providence in accordance with reason that fashioned them, and how what has come to be is found to be not otherwise than good beside what now is, and is in need of no addition or subtraction in order to be otherwise good, they are taught from the things he has made that there is One who fashioned them.”⁴³

The natural contemplation is the process in which the mind first recognizes in each of the created things its particular *logos*, and next, it realizes how these particular things are connected in one harmonious order that are fashioned in accordance to the

³⁹ *Thal.* 63, 219-227 (CCSG 22, 219): “[The Holy Spirit] accords perfection through luminous, simple, and complete wisdom of those found worthy of *theosis*, bringing them by all means and ways to the cause of beings... It is in her [wisdom] that they come to know themselves through God and God through themselves, with no wall or some such thing being interposed. For there is nothing interposed between wisdom and God.” The English translation is by Marcus Plested.

⁴⁰ Plested, “Wisdom in St Maximus the Confessor,” 208.

⁴¹ *Cap.theol.* I, 13; *Thal.* 53 (CCSG 22, 435-37); *Amb.* 37 (1345D).

⁴² *Amb.* 7, 1084A. Blowers & Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mystery*, 59.

⁴³ *Amb.* 10, 1176B. Louth, *Maximus*, 136-7.

general *logoi* and the most general logos of being. Finally, in the process of epistemological contraction the minds of the Saints arrive to the One, who is the fashioner of the creation, the Logos of God. Maximus describes the relation between the created things and their particular *logoi*, as well as the relations between the particular *logoi* and the wholeness of creation that is the most general logos of being, using the adverb ‘wisely’. The capacity of the mind to recognize the divine wisdom in the harmonious order of creation is boosted by the divine grace. Thus, the mind itself becomes the agent of wisdom. Moreover, the divine grace uplifts the mind toward God, who is wisdom by his being, and not by the participation in wisdom. The whole process of contemplation, which consists of the contraction of many *logoi* to one general logos of being, and of the recognition of God as the cause of this general logos, represents the synergy between the divine creative, providential, and judging activities, and the human activity of contemplation. Moreover, the mind’s proper contemplation of the divine activities leads further to the acknowledgment of certain attributes of God such as simplicity, uniqueness, oneness, indivisibility, immutability, etc.

The wisdom cannot be the energy of God as Plested claims, but rather effect of the cooperation between the divine activities and the corresponding natural response from the side of the creation. Maximus describes the whole process of attaining wisdom and goodness as appropriation of the qualities, which are already inherent to human beings. He explains this as adding the acquired likeness to God through the practice of virtue and the natural contemplation to the image of God, which already exists in every human being. Therefore, he applies the terminology of the image of God when he addresses Thomas as somebody who has “shown truly how God is wont to make man according to the image of God.” The next step in our analysis will be the elucidation of Maximus’ usage of the terms image and likeness in relation to wisdom.

Image, Likeness, and Wisdom

Maximus is persistent in his linking of the cognitive abilities of the human being to the notions of image and likeness:

“The one who has illuminated his mind with divine thoughts, who has accustomed his reason to honor ceaselessly the Creator with divine hymns, and who has sanctified his sense with uncontaminated images has added to the natural beauty of the image the voluntary good of likeness.”⁴⁴

For Maximus, likeness of human beings to God in voluntary goodness is the result of the properly exercised cognitive capabilities, while the image of God in human beings, described as natural beauty, is the natural disposition inherent to all human beings. The terms image and likeness have biblical origins.⁴⁵ By following the biblical statement, Maximus maintains that God created the human being according to

⁴⁴ *Cap. theol.* I, 13; Maximus, *Selected Writings*, 131.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Gen* 1.26 (LXX): “God said, let us make humankind according to our image and according to likeness.”

His image and likeness by attributing being and eternal being (εἶναι καὶ ἀεὶ εἶναι; τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν) to human essence to resemble His image, and goodness and wisdom to human likeness to correspond to the same characteristics in the divine being:

“In bringing into existence a rational and intelligent nature, God in his supreme goodness has communicated to it four of the divine attributes by which he maintains, guards, and preserves creatures: being, eternal being, goodness, and wisdom. The first two of these he grants to the essence, the second two to its faculty of will; that is, to the essence he gives being and eternal being, and to the volitive faculty he gives goodness and wisdom in order that what he is by essence, the creature might become by participation. For this reason he is said to be made “to the image and likeness of God:” to the image of his being by our being, to the image of his eternal being by our eternal being (even though not without a beginning, it is yet without an end); to the likeness of his goodness by our goodness, to the image of his wisdom by our wisdom. The first is by nature, the second by grace. Every rational nature indeed is made to the image of God; but only those who are good and wise are made to his likeness.”⁴⁶

Prior to Maximus, Dionysius the Areopagite described creation as the process in which God endowed every created being with concrete gifts such as being, life, wisdom, and other gifts of all-creative goodness. Dionysius is more concrete in the *De divinis nominibus* 5.2, where he claims that good, being, life, and wisdom are good processions of God.⁴⁷ Maximus follows Dionysius in this respect, but he adopts the Dionysian idea of divine gifts in a slightly different form. Firstly, Maximus replaces the term “Life”, meant as eternal Life by Dionysius,⁴⁸ with the term eternal being (τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν). Secondly, Maximus employs the four divine gifts: being, eternal being, goodness and wisdom in an anthropological context. Thus, according to Maximus, by creating man in accordance with His image and likeness, God attributed being and eternal being to the human essence to resemble His image, and goodness and wisdom to the power of human will or inclination in order to resemble the divine likeness. Thirdly, Maximus expresses the gifts of goodness and wisdom as subsumed under the power of human will by the generic term “well-being” (τὸ εὖ εἶναι). Thus, he forms the triad “being” – “well-being” – “eternal well-being,” which is the *leitmotif* of his entire work. By replacing the terms “Goodness” and “Wisdom” with “well-being” Maximus follows Dionysius too, because Dionysius uses the term “well-being” as the

⁴⁶ *De char.* III, 25. (PG 90, 1024 B.C.): Τέσσαρα τῶν θείων ιδιωμάτων συνεκτικά καὶ φρουρητικά καὶ διασωστικά τῶν ὄντων δι' ἀκραν ἀγαθότητα ἐκοινοποίησεν ὁ Θεός, παραγαγὼν εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὴν λογικὴν καὶ νοερὰν οὐσίαν τὸ ὄν, τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν, τὴν ἀγαθότητα καὶ τὴν σοφίαν. Τούτων τὰ μὲν δύο τῆ οὐσία: παρέσχε τὰ δὲ δύο τῆ γνωμικῆ ἐπιτηδειότητι καὶ τῆ μὲν οὐσία τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν τῆ δὲ γνωμικῆ ἐπιτηδειότητι τὴν ἀγαθότητα καὶ τὴν σοφίαν, Ἐνα ἀπερ ἐστὶν αὐτὸς κατ' οὐσίαν, γίνηται ἢ κτίσις κατὰ μετ' οὐσίαν. Διὰ ταύτην κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν Θεοῦ λέγεται γεγενῆσθαι καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα μὲν, ὡς ὄν, ὄντος καὶ ὡς ἀεὶ ὄν, ἀεὶ ὄντος εἰ καὶ μὴ ἀνάρχως, ἀλλ' ἀτελεύτητος καθ' ὁμοίωσιν δέ, ὡς ἀγαθός, ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὡς σοφός, σοφοῦ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, ὁ κατὰ χάριν. Καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα μὲν πάσα φύσις λογικὴ ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν δέ, μόνοι οἱ ἀγαθοὶ καὶ σοφοί.

⁴⁷ *De divinis nominibus* (=DN) 5.2, PG 3, 816C.

⁴⁸ DN 6.1, 825C.

product of the procession of goodness in various passages of his works.⁴⁹

For Maximus the human being is an icon of God in actuality, since being and eternal being are already present in it, while attaining the likeness belongs to human potentiality. The goal of every human being is to acquire all four divine gifts and thus to attain the full identity with God in image and likeness. Maximus explains the whole process of acquiring likeness in the following passage from *Ad Thalassium* 59:

“The salvation of souls is the end of faith (1.Pet. 1.9), and the end of faith is the true revelation of the object of faith. The true revelation of the object of faith is coinherence (interpenetration) of the object of faith in every faithful, proportional to his faith, and the interpenetration of the Object of faith is the return of the faithful to the beginning at the end. The return of the faithful to the beginning at the end is the fulfillment of the desire, and the fulfillment of the desire is the ever-moving rest of those who desire around the desired one. The ever-moving rest is the permanent and unceasing pleasure of the desired, and the permanent and unceasing pleasure of Him is the participation in supernatural Divine goods. The participation in the supernatural Divine goods is likeness of the participants to the participated, and the likeness of the participants to the participated is the actualization of the expected identity of the participants with the participated. The actualized identity of the participants with the participated is the deification of those who are worthy of deification.”⁵⁰

By participating in the supernatural divine goods such as goodness and wisdom, participants acquire the likeness not of the supernatural goods themselves, but of the one who possesses these goods as his attributes, that is the Logos of God, Christ Himself. Therefore, the participation in the divine goods is the participation in the likeness of God. By attaining identity with God, human beings also attain identity with his attributes of goodness and wisdom, and not the other way around.

In *Mystagogia* 21, Maximus interprets symbolically the liturgical moment in which human beings attain the divine identity or the image and likeness of God:

“The profession “One is Holy” and what follows, which is voiced by the people at the end of the mystical service, represents the gathering and the union beyond reason and mind which will take place between those who have been

⁴⁹ DN 4.2, 696C; 5.8. 821D; *De Coelesti Hierarchia* 13.4, PG 3, 304D; *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* 1.3, PG 3, 373D.

⁵⁰ *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 59, 122-141 in: Carl Laga & Carlos Steel (eds), *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 22, Turnhout: Brepols, 1990, 53: Σωτηρία δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν κυρίως ἐστὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως· τέλος δὲ πίστεως ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πιστευθέντος ἀληθῆς ἀποκάλυψις· ἀληθῆς δὲ τοῦ πιστευθέντος ἐστὶν ἀποκάλυψις ἢ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἐν ἐκάστῳ πίστεως ἄρρητος τοῦ πεπιστευμένου περιχώρησις· περιχώρησις δὲ τοῦ πεπιστευμένου καθέστηκεν ἢ πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν κατὰ τὸ τέλος τῶν πεπιστευκῶν ἐπάνοδος· ἢ δὲ πρὸς τὴν οἰκίαν ἀρχὴν κατὰ τὸ τέλος τῶν πεπιστευκῶν ἐπάνοδος ἐστὶν ἢ τῆς ἐφέσεως πλήρωσις· ἐφέσεως δὲ πλήρωσις ἐστὶν ἢ περὶ τὸ ἐφετὸν τῶν ἐφιεμένων ἀεικίνητος στάσις· ἀεικίνητος δὲ στάσις ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦ ἐφετοῦ διηνεκῆς τε καὶ ἀδιάστατος ἀπόλαυσις· ἀπόλαυσις δὲ διηνεκῆς καὶ ἀδιάστατος ἢ τῶν ὑπὲρ φύσιν θείων καθέστηκεν μέθεξις· μέθεξις δὲ τῶν ὑπὲρ φύσιν θείων ἐστὶν ἢ πρὸς τὸ μετεχόμενον τῶν μετεχόντων ὁμοίωσις· ἢ δὲ πρὸς τὸ μετεχόμενον τῶν μετεχόντων ὁμοίωσις ἐστὶν ἢ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ μετεχόμενον τῶν μετεχόντων δι’ ὁμοιότητος ἐνδεχομένη ταυτότης· ἢ δὲ τῶν μετεχόντων ἐνδεχομένη κατ’ ἐνέργειαν δι’ ὁμοιότητος πρὸς τὸ μετεχόμενον ταυτότης ἐστὶν ἢ θέωσις τῶν ἀξιουμένων θεώσεως· The English translation is mine.

mystically and wisely perfected by God and the mysterious oneness of the divine simplicity in the incorruptible age of the spiritual world.”⁵¹

It is evident that the process of deification gains a new dimension, which is beyond any rational and intellectual knowledge. Therefore, Maximus emphasizes that the union with the divine is beyond reason and mind, but at the same time he stresses that just those who are mystically and wisely perfected by God may enter this union. For Maximus, those who are mystically and wisely perfected by God are the people who acquired wisdom that lies in all the things by searching through mystical initiation for their Creator.⁵² By being initiated into the divine mysteries, and by acquiring wisdom about the orderly creation, human beings transcend their cognitive powers of reason and mind. Thus, they gain knowledge of the future union with God that is not mediated any longer by the human cognitive powers. As it is mentioned above, the new kind of knowledge that appears as ineffaceable or enduring reveals not only the image of God in man, but also the nature of the future union:

“The enduring knowledge, whose spiritual gyration around God’s infinitude is unconditioned and beyond mind, images in its unconditionality the more than infinite glory of the truth. The voluntary imitation of the divine wisdom and goodness brings as its reward the mind’s longing for, and glorious attainment of, likeness to God, in so far as this is possible for man.”⁵³

The enduring knowledge as an unmediated experience of God through the spiritual gyration around His infinitude, establishes the everlasting link between God and the contemplating mind, which is already transformed into wisdom. As it has been stated above, Maximus maintains that the being and the eternal or everlasting being are divine gifts inherent to human nature. While it is undisputable that the existence of human beings is contingent upon the gift of being, it is not so evident how the everlasting life constitutes human existence. For Maximus, the everlasting or eternal being of human beings is realized through the everlasting activity of human contemplation of God as Truth, as well as by the appropriation of the divine goodness and wisdom by the human faculty of will. The eternal existence of human beings that consists of their everlasting contemplation of the divine being is exclusively in the power of God, while the appropriation of the divine goodness and wisdom completely depends on the human will.⁵⁴ Moreover, Maximus maintains that the new state of the contemplative union, and the union of wills between God and the human being

⁵¹ *Myst.* 21, PG 91, 696d – 697a: Ἡ δὲ κατὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς μυστικῆς ἱερουργίας παρὰ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ γινομένη τοῦ "Εἷς ἅγιος" καὶ τῶν ἐξῆς ὁμολογία τὴν ὑπὲρ λόγον καὶ νοῦν πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῆς θείας ἀπλότητος κρύφιον γενησομένην τῶν μυστικῶς τε καὶ σοφῶς κατὰ Θεὸν τετελεσμένων συναγωγὴν τε καὶ ἔνωσιν δηλοῖ, ἐν τῷ ἀφθάρτῳ τῶν νοητῶν αἰῶνι καθ' ὃν τῆς ἀφανοῦς. Maximus, *Selected Writings*, 203. Berthold’s translation is slightly revised.

⁵² Cf. *Capitulum Quinques Centenorum* (=Cap. 1-5) II, 28; PG 90, 1232A: ὅτι πρὸς τῆς ἐν ὅλοις σοφίας, ἔδει πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ τῶν ὄλων μυσταγωγίαν ἡμῶν κινεῖσθαι τὴν ἔφεσιν.

⁵³ *Cap.* 1-5, II, 88; 1253B.C.: Ἡ ἀληστὸς γνώσις, ἀόριστον ἔχουσα περὶ τὴν θείαν ἀπειρίαν τὴν κατὰ νοῦν ὑπὲρ νόησιν κίνησιν, εἰκονίζει διὰ τῆς ἀοριστίας τὴν ὑπεράπειρον δόξαν τῆς ἀληθείας· ἡ δὲ τῆς κατὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν σοφῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐθαίρετος μίμησις, τιμὴν φέρει τὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν τοῦ νοῦ κατὰ τὴν διάθεσιν ἀρίδην, ὡς ἔστι δυνατόν, ἐξομοίωσιν. Slightly revised English translation of G.E.H. Palmer, Kallistos Ware & Philip Sherrard (eds.), *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, Vol. 2, London: Faber and Faber 1981, 206.

⁵⁴ *De char.* III, 27; PG 90, 1025A.

supersedes the original divine glory, expressed among other things in the creation of man according to the image of God. By voluntary imitating God in goodness and wisdom, the human being attains divine likeness, which extends the original glory of God, reflected in his activities. Thus, the voluntary response from the side of human being not only in reflecting the image of God in him/herself but also in appropriating the divine likeness, explains Maximus' description of Thomas as the one who has "shown truly how God is wont to make man according to the image of God."⁵⁵ The ultimate eschatological union of God and the human being was the purpose of creating man in accordance with the divine image and likeness. Since the image is consisted of the being, and the eternal being, and the likeness of the well-being, the ultimate union reveals the eternal well-being as the mixture of the divine gift of eternity and the human appropriation of wisdom and goodness. Thus, the wisdom preserves the original order of creation in the God-human union by fulfilling the pre-eternal plan of creation.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it may be argued that there are not many notions in Maximus, like the notion of wisdom, which essentially involve every important aspect of his theological thought. Therefore, my original intention was to show how wisdom is connected with Maximus' theology of divine creative and providential energies, with his cognitive theory, the notions of image and likeness, and the union with God.

Firstly, by following Harrington I attempted to demonstrate that human beings acquire wisdom by two equally constitutive practices, the practice of virtues, and the natural contemplation, but also that the full appropriation of wisdom is not exhausted by these two processes. Thus, I argued that the full appropriation of wisdom is not only the proper inclination of the human being toward its logos of being, nor the acknowledgement of the wise design of the creaturely order, but rather the voluntary union with the Creator of the world as the true source of wisdom.

Secondly, I countered Plested's claims that wisdom is the divine energy by arguing that, considered from the perspective of the creation, the wisdom is rather the effect of the cooperation between the divine activities and the corresponding natural response from the side of the creation. The divine activities by which God exercises His wisdom create the universe through the establishment of the general essences of being once and for all, and exercise providential care for the particular beings.

Finally, I argued that wisdom, as the guiding principle toward the union with God, remains active after the complete fulfillment of the image and likeness of God in man. Wisdom is slightly shifting its role from the principle that leads created beings toward the unity with God, to the principle that preserves the identities of the created order incorporated in God.

⁵⁵ *Amb. Th.*, Prol. 12-13, (CCSG 48, 3).

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**ПРЕИСПИТИВАЊЕ КОНЦЕПТА МУДРОСТИ
КОД СВ. МАКСИМА ИСПОВЕДНИКА**

Рад је имао за циљ да осветли улогу и функцију мудрости у делу Максима Исповедника. Овај поливалентан термин често се јавља у Маскимовим делима, у вези са различитим областима о којима је размишљао, тј. у аретологији, космологији, епистемологији и есхатологији, увек као део јединствене теолошке визије. Максим користи концепт мудрости у свом објашњењу неколико међузависних процеса као што су практиковање врлина и природна контемплација која води спасењу кроз прихватање врлине у њеној целокупности. Уз то, Максим повезује ове две праксе са божанским активностима и провиђењем, с једне стране, као и са функцијом когнитивних способности људског ума и разума са друге. Божанско откривење мудрости и одговарајуће људско прихватање мудрости, узети заједно, рефлектују се у јединству Бога и човека, где човек у потпуности испуњава слику Божју.