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AN ATTEMPT AT CLARIFYING MAXIMUS THE CONFESOR'S REMARKS ON (THE FATE OF) SEXUAL DIFFERENCE IN *AMBIGUUM 41*

ABSTRACT

Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum 41* contains some rather atypical observations concerning the distinction of sexes in the human person. There is a certain ambiguity as to whether the distinction of the sexes was intended by God and is 'by nature' (as found in *Genesis* and asserted by most Church Fathers) or a product of the Fall. Namely, Christ is described three times as "shaking out of nature the distinctive characteristics of male and female", "driving out of nature the difference and division of male and female" and "removing the difference between male and female". Different readings of those passages engender important implications that can be drawn out from the Confessor's thought, both eschatological implications and otherwise. The subject has been picked up by Cameron Partridge, Doru Costache and Karolina Kochanczyk–Boninska, among others, but is by no means settled, as they draw quite different conclusions. The noteworthy and far-reaching implications of Maximus' theological stance and problems are not the object of this paper. In a 2017 paper I attempted to demonstrate what Maximus exactly says in these peculiar and oft-commented passages through a close reading, in order to avoid a two-edged Maximian misunderstanding: to either draw overly radical implications from those passages, projecting decidedly non-Maximian visions on the historical Maximus, or none at all, as if those passages represented standard Patristic positions. Here, I am revisiting this argument, given that the interest in what the Confessor has to say on the subject seems to be increasing.

KEYWORDS

Maximus the Confessor, gender, body, male, female, sexual difference, nature

Introduction

Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum 41* includes certain rather interesting remarks concerning sexual difference, which have attracted the attention of the contemporary debate on gender and patristics. In 2017 I had published a short note on the problem of sexual difference in Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum 41* (Mitralaxis 2017); this was neither the first nor the last examination of

Maximus' peculiar and rather untypical arguments in *Ambiguum* 41, an aspect of Maximian thought with which numerous scholars have engaged in their studies (some of which will be indicatively cited below). Rather than offering a comprehensive and analytical presentation or exhausting the considerable body of scholarship on Maximus or gender in late antiquity, I had merely attempted a close and brief reading of what *Ambiguum* 41 actually *says* on the matter, rather than what I think *about* it.

Overcoming Sexual Difference in *Ambiguum* 41

Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum ad Ioannem* 41¹ mainly concerns Maximus' fivefold cosmological division to be overcome by humanity through Christ, and contains a number of quite uncommon assertions concerning sexual difference, which may seem not to be in complete harmony with other passages in the *Ambigua*; for example, the assertion that the human person, following Christ, "shakes out of nature the distinctive characteristics of male and female" (*Amb. 41*: PG91, 1305C), "drives out of nature the difference and division of male and female" (*Amb. 41*: 1309A), and "removes the difference between male and female" (*Amb. 41*: 1309D). Apart from the treatments of gender, marriage, and cognate themes by classic Maximian scholars such as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Lars Thunberg among many others, and apart from Adam Cooper's study (Cooper 2005) dedicated to the Maximian conception of the body, a number of scholars have explicitly taken up this particular question, i.e. the challenge posed by the peculiarity of *Amb. Io. 41*'s passages: Cameron Partridge, in his dissertation *Transfiguring Sexual Difference in Maximus the Confessor* (Partridge 2008), Doru Costache in two articles (Costache 2013; 2014), and Karolina Kočańczyk-Bonińska in a book chapter (Kočańczyk-Bonińska 2017), as well as Dionysios Skliris (Skliris 2017). Emma Brown Dewhurst has also hinted at the subject in her dissertation (Brown Dewhurst 2017) and is currently working on a more comprehensive exposition thereof (including her paper here in *Filozofija i Društvo*). However, interpretations of what the Confessor exactly means in these passages differs considerably – and different interpretations entail different *implications*, some of which could be quite striking and of interest not only to Maximian and Patristic philosophical anthropology, but also to fields such as gender studies, as Partridge has demonstrated. In the main section of this short paper, I will simply attempt a close reading of these particular passages, without comparing them to other Maximian passages concerning (gender and) sexual difference or to secondary literature: I shall focus on those passages *exclusively*.²

1 "The natures are innovated, and God becomes man" (Maximos the Confessor 2014: 2:102–112).

2 In this close reading much is owed to Prof. Torstein Tollefsen (University of Oslo), Dr Sebastian Mateiescu (University of Bucharest), Dr Vladimir Cvetkovic (University of Belgrade), Prof. Christophe Erismann (Universität Wien/University of Lausanne), and Prof. Susumu Tanabe (Galatasaray University), with whom these passages have been

The big question is whether, in the context of Maximus' vision, sexual difference will be eschatologically retained (albeit transformed) or abolished – this is a debatable question despite the clarity of *Gal 3:28*, which enumerates sexual difference among other *social*, not natural or ontological, differences (like slave and free, Jew and Gentile) which are not present in Christ. Another question is whether sexual difference is prelapsarian or lapsarian, i.e. natural or a corruption-related effect of the Fall; while *Genesis 1:27* and *5:2* are quite clear on this, advocating the former, it is quite startling that this can be seen as a debatable question in Maximus.³

Concerning the context: thematically, *Ambiguum 41* focuses mainly on cosmological and ontological themes. To quote Costache's presentation thereof,

the argument of *Amb.Io. 41* develops in roughly five parts, namely, the prologue and the list of five divisions, which describe the whole of reality from the horizon of the created and the uncreated down to the human being (*Amb. 41: 1304D–1305A*); the project of the five unions, beginning from the narrowest point represented by humankind to end with the culminating synthesis of the created and the uncreated (*Amb. 41: 1305A–1308C*); the fall, its divisive nature, and the five syntheses accomplished by Christ (*1308C–1312B*); the factors that make unification possible (*Amb. 41: PG 91,1312B–1313B*); and the interpretation of the initial Gregorian saying that serves as a pretext for the chapter (*Amb. 41: 1313C–1316A*) (Costache 2014, 360–61).

The five cosmological divisions are: (a) the created–uncreated distinction, (b) the distinction between the intelligible and the sensible, (c) between heaven and earth, (d) between paradise and the inhabited world, and finally (e) the division into male and female (*Amb.Io. 41, §1–2*). These divisions are to be bridged by humanity after Christ in reverse order, so that the divine economy can be fulfilled.

In order for the proposed reading to take place, working definitions (not void of oversimplification) of key terms are in order:

- For Maximus, the *logoi of natures* are the uncreated *wills, intentions, and utterances* of God for created beings.
- *Substances* and *natures* are, of course, created, meaning that they belong to the second part of the first cosmological and ontological division.
- *Nature* and *according to nature* mainly and usually refer to a creature's *prelapsarian* state. (The Fall, a basic ontological term for Maximian ontology, need not necessarily be *historically* understood here for Maximus' *Weltanschauung* to be coherent; after all, the Confessor comments that the Fall takes place *simultaneously* with the creation of the human being [ἄμα τῷ γενέσθαι, *QThal 61*], whichever the implications or the potential contemporary interpretations of that might be).

discussed in a Maximian workshop at the Halki Seminary on the island of Halki/Heybeliada (May 2016).

3 Cameron Partridge traces Gregory of Nyssa's influence on Maximus as far as this issue is concerned in the second chapter of his thesis. Cf. Partridge 2008: 23–72.

The brevity of this paper dictates that only the crucial passages themselves be studied here: sexual difference is the *first* division to be transcended by the human person (it being the *last* cosmological division) after Christ who has first achieved this. In a tribute to the Ambiguum's own logic, let us start from the last passage:

[1] Thus He [Christ] united, first of all, ourselves in Himself through removal of the difference between male and female, and instead of men and women, in whom this mode of division is especially evident, He showed us as properly and truly to be simply human beings, thoroughly formed according to Him, bearing His image intact and completely unadulterated, touched in no way by any marks of corruption. (*Amb.Io.* 41.9.10–18, transl. Conostas 2014)⁴

There is a distinction in Maximian thought between *difference* and *division*, in which certain differences will be eschatologically retained, but *not* as divisions. It is crucial to see that this is *not* what Maximus proposes here concerning the transcendence of sexual difference in Christ and, by extension, the eschatological state of humanity: it is the *difference*, διαφορά, itself that is removed, not merely the division. The second passage:

[2] In this way [i.e. by becoming man by virgin birth], He [Christ] showed, I think, that there was perhaps another mode, foreknown by God, for the multiplication of human beings, had the first human being kept the commandment and not *cast* himself down to the level of irrational animals by misusing the mode of his proper powers—and so He drove out from nature the difference and division into male and female, a difference, as I have said, which He in no way needed in order to become man, and without which existence would perhaps have been possible. There is no need for this division to last *perpetually*, for in *Christ Jesus*, says the divine apostle, *there is neither male nor female* [Gal 3:28]. (*Amb.Io.* 41.7.6–16, transl. Conostas 2014)⁵

Sexual difference, “the difference and division into male and female” (τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἄρρην καὶ θῆλυ διαφοράν τε καὶ διαίρεσιν – note the use of both ‘difference’ and ‘division’ together) and not only a misuse of that difference for post-lapsarian sexual reproduction, was “driven out from nature” by Christ [τῆς φύσεως ἐξωθούμενος].

4 *Amb.Io.* 41.9.10–18, original Greek text from (Conostas 2014): “[...] καὶ πρῶτον ἐνώσας ἡμᾶς ἑαυτοῖς ἐν ἑαυτῷ διὰ τῆς ἀφαιρέσεως τῆς κατὰ τὸ ἄρρην καὶ τὸ θῆλυ διαφοράς, καὶ ἀντὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, οἷς ὁ τῆς διαιρέσεως ἐνθεωρεῖται μάλιστα τρόπος, ἀνθρώπους μόνον κυρίως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ἀπέδειξε κατ’ αὐτὸν δι’ ὅλου μεμορφωμένους καὶ σώαν αὐτοῦ καὶ παντελῶς ἀκίβδηλον τὴν εἰκόνα φέροντας, ἧς κατ’ οὐδένα τρόπον οὐδὲν τῶν φθορᾶς γνωρισμάτων ἄπτεται [...]”

5 *Amb.Io.* 41.7.6–16, original Greek text (Conostas 2014): “ὁμοῦ τε καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ δεικνύς, ὡς οἶμαι, τυχόν ὡς ἦν καὶ ἄλλος τρόπος τῆς εἰς πλῆθος τῶν ἀνθρώπων αὐξήσεως προεγνωσμένος Θεῶ, εἰ τὴν ἐντολήν ὁ πρῶτος ἐφύλαξεν ἄνθρωπος καὶ πρὸς κτηνωδῶν ἑαυτὸν τῷ κατὰ παράχρησιν τρόπῳ τῶν οἰκειῶν δυνάμεων μὴ κατέβαλε, καὶ τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἄρρην καὶ θῆλυ διαφοράν τε καὶ διαίρεσιν τῆς φύσεως ἐξωθούμενος, ἧς πρὸς τὸ γενέσθαι, καθάπερ ἔφην, ἄνθρωπος οὐδόλως προσεδείθη, ὧν δὲ ἀνευ εἶναι τυχόν ἐστι δυνατόν. Ταῦτα εἰς τὸ διηνεκῆς παραμεῖναι οὐκ ἀνάγκη. Ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, φησὶν ὁ θεῖος ἀπόστολος, οὔτε ἄρρην οὔτε θῆλυ.”

While this difference and division does not need to last perpetually, it *is/was* part of humanity's *nature*, and not simply a post-lapsarian consequence.

[3] This is why man was introduced last among beings—like a kind of natural bond mediating between the universal extremes through his parts, and unifying through himself things that by nature are separated from each other by a great distance—so that, by making of his own division a beginning of the unity which gathers up all things to God their Author, and proceeding by order and rank through the mean terms, he might reach the limit of the sublime ascent that comes about through the union of all things in God, in whom there is no division, completely shaking off from nature, by means of a supremely dispassionate condition of divine virtue, the property of male and female, which in no way was linked to the original principle of the divine plan concerning human generation, so that he might be shown forth as, and become solely a human being according to the divine plan, not divided by the designation of male and male (according to the principle by which he formerly came into being), nor divided into the parts that now appear around him, thanks to the perfect union, as I said, with his own principle, according to which he exists. (*Amb.Io.* 41.3.1–19, transl. Conostas 2014)⁶

Now the reference is to humanity and the human person, after Christ—not Christ himself. Let us try to ‘unlock’ this:

- [i] Man [is to] *completely* shake off from nature [...] the property of male and female⁷ (the property, not only the *division* retaining a *difference*).
- [ii] (which in no way was linked to the original principle of the divine plan concerning human generation),⁸
- [iii] so that he might be shown forth as and become solely a human being according to the divine plan,⁹
- [iv] not divided by the designation of male and male¹⁰
- [v] (according to the principle by which he formerly came into being).¹¹

6 *Amb.Io.* 41.3.1–19, original Greek text (Conostas 2014): “Τούτου δὴ χάριν ἔσχατος ἐπεισάγεται τοῖς οὖσιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, οἷον εἰ σύνδεσμός τις φυσικὸς τοῖς καθόλου διὰ τῶν οἰκείων μερῶν μεισιτεύων ἄκροις, καὶ εἰς ἐν ἄγων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πολλὰ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἀλλήλων διεστηκότα τῷ διαστήματι, ἵνα τῆς πρὸς Θεόν, ὡς αἴτιον, τὰ πάντα συναγούσης ἐνώσεως ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας πρότερον ἀρξάμενος διαιρέσεως καθεξῆς διὰ τῶν μέσων εἰρμῶ καὶ τάξει προβαίνων, εἰς τὸν Θεὸν λάβῃ τὸ πέρας τῆς διὰ πάντων κατὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν γινομένης ὑψηλῆς ἀναβάσεως, ἐν ᾧ οὐκ ἔστι διαιρέσεις, τὴν μηδαμῶς ἠρητημένην δηλαδὴ κατὰ τὸν προηγούμενον λόγον τῆς περὶ τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου θείας προθέσεως κατὰ τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ ἄρσεν ἰδιότητα τῆ περὶ τὴν θεῖαν ἀρετὴν ἀπαθεστάτη σχέσει πάντη τῆς φύσεως ἐκτιναζάμενος, ὥστε δειχθῆναι τε καὶ γενέσθαι κατὰ τὴν θεῖαν πρόθεσιν ἄνθρωπον μόνον, τῆ κατὰ τὸ ἄρσεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ προσηγορία μὴ διαιρούμενον, καθ’ ὃν καὶ προηγούμενος γεγένηται λόγον τοῖς νῦν περὶ αὐτὸν οὖσι τμήμασι μὴ μεριζόμενον, διὰ τὴν τελείαν πρὸς τὸν ἴδιον, ὡς ἔφην, λόγον, καθ’ ὃν ἔστιν, ἔνωσιν.”

7 Κατὰ τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ ἄρσεν ἰδιότητα πάντη τῆς φύσεως ἐκτιναζάμενος.

8 Τὴν μηδαμῶς ἠρητημένην δηλαδὴ κατὰ τὸν προηγούμενον λόγον τῆς περὶ τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου θείας προθέσεως.

9 ὥστε δειχθῆναι τε καὶ γενέσθαι κατὰ τὴν θεῖαν πρόθεσιν ἄνθρωπον μόνον.

10 τῆ κατὰ τὸ ἄρσεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ προσηγορία μὴ διαιρούμενον.

11 καθ’ ὃν καὶ προηγούμενος γεγένηται λόγον.

The property of male and female *is* a part of nature, which is to be ‘shaken off’ by mankind following Christ. (By ‘nature’ Maximus usually refers to the pre-lapsarian state as well.)

This part of nature was [ii] not foreseen (a) in the *logos* of humanity’s nature/substance – meaning that God did *not* intend for sexual difference to exist *at all* and this would be a product of the Fall (contrary to Genesis, that is) – or (b) *was* foreseen, but *not* in the *logos* of human *generation*. Could this mean that only human *generation*, i.e. sexual reproduction, is post-lapsarian, sexual difference itself being pre-lapsarian?

The phrasing in [ii] suggests the latter, which would be much more mild, scriptural and ‘mainstream’ than the former.

However, this changes in [iii]: here, divine intention (θεία πρόθεσις for humanity, practically synonymous with the humanity’s *logos*) dictates human persons *without the very property of male and female*, not only without their sexual reproduction.

One objection could be that θεία πρόθεσις in [iii] refers to God’s providence and economy and *not* to humanity’s *logos*. But this is not the case, as is made apparent in the phrasing of [v]: there, the extinction (“completely shaking off / πάντα ἐκτιναξάμενος”) or rather inexistence of sexual *difference* (as we end up with ἄνθρωπον μόνον), and not only of sexual reproduction at the level of the *logos* of humanity, καθ’ ὃν καὶ προηγουμένως γεγένηται – i.e., not only an eschatological perspective, but a past reality pertaining to humanity’s coming into being. Does the property of sexual difference exist at the level of *nature* (as [i] and the other passages would indicate), but not at the level of *logos of nature*, and if yes, how?

As we can see, the problem here is that Maximus, an indispensable Confessor for the Christian Churches, does not only assert that sexual difference *itself* (and not only sexual division or reproduction), will not endure the *eschatata*, thus going beyond standard interpretations of Gal 3:28, but he also goes on to assert that the differentiation between male and female is not even part of humanity’s *logos* of nature, of God’s prelapsarian (or rather a-lapsarian) will and intention for humankind—quite contrary to Genesis.

The most noteworthy implications of this theological stance (and, apart from Patristic and philosophical anthropology, I name gender studies as an example), as well as its problems, are beyond the scope of this paper, which has a narrower focus. Here I am simply trying to demonstrate *what does Maximus exactly say* in these peculiar and oft-commented passages, in order to avoid a two-edged Maximian misunderstanding—which would either draw overly radical implications from those passages, projecting definitely non-Maximian visions on the historical Maximus, or none at all, as if those passages represented standard Patristic positions. As far as contemporary discussions of *Ambiggum 41* are concerned, the pressing question, to which the next section is dedicated, would be: where should we draw the line of anachronism in reading Maximus today?

Contemporary Readings and the Limits of Anachronism

Ambiguum 41 is by no means the *only* source from which one may extract an accurate reflection of Maximus' anthropology and/or understanding of sexual difference – far from it. And it is indeed true that a sizeable *caveat* lies in the need to understand Maximus' choice of words in their historical and wider intellectual context, not to mention the context of Maximus' own 'system' and thought. At the same time, it cannot be negated that Maximus' emphatic and intentional (given their repetition) phrases such as “shaking out of nature the distinctive characteristics of male and female”, “driving out of nature the difference and division of male and female” and “removing the difference between male and female” are not quite characteristic of mainstream Christian patristic and late antique thought, in spite of the fact that ‘potential interlocutors’ may be found in the thought of Gregory of Nyssa and others. It is indeed this element that has driven scholars to offer the most varied interpretations to Maximus' remarks on sexual difference in *Ambiguum 41*, with the spectrum spanning from trying to ‘explain them away’ – by arguing that these truly untypical remarks are indeed fully compatible with the patristic mainstream or that they simply advocate marriage between a man and a woman – to arguing that they are closer to contemporary idea(l)s of gender fluidity or transgenderism – as in the case of Partridge's dissertation, for example.

Projecting any of those options onto the historical Maximus would, of course, amount to serious anachronism (which Partridge, among others, carefully avoids). However, the fine points of the history of ideas and of the evolution in the use of terms cannot lead us to the conclusion that Maximus *did not mean anything at all* with his emphatic, intentional and repeated statements; that Maximus could not have meant to say *this in particular* (whatever that might be, within the wide spectrum highlighted above) cannot mean *that Maximus did not intend to say anything*. While Maximus' remarks are not to be read *literally* in the sense that contemporary biblical literalism ascribes to the term, thinking that a seventh-century ascetic could provide solutions for twenty-first-century anthropological debates *mot à mot*, it would be perhaps imprudent to overlook their bizarre texture simply because they do not fit in the convenient boxes we are used to in our day-to-day engagement with patristic and late antique texts.

Conclusion

As I have tried to argue in this paper, Maximus *does indeed* quite clearly state, in the context of his cosmological *and* soteriological vision –since the human person is both ‘microcosm’ *and* ‘mediator’– that, following Christ, the human person is to *completely* shake off from nature the property (and not only the division or difference) of male and female, a property not included in the original human *logos*. Without doing so, and being still “divided by the designation of male and male”, the human person cannot “be shown forth as and become

solely a human being according to the divine plan". And since sexual difference *is* a part of nature *today*, the change called for is also a change *at the level of nature* (in the metaphysical sense the word bears in the Maximian vocabulary) so that the original natural plan and human *logos* as articulated before this intrusion of sexual differentiation – *contra* Genesis – may be repristinated. On top of that, the eschatological state is not to include sexual difference *itself* and not merely sexual division or reproduction, according to Maximus' own exposition. Yes: these Maximian assertions in the context of both his metaphysical anthropology and his cosmology are anything but standard. Yet, as far as what Maximus *says* (or rather, writes) is concerned, that's about it.

Apart from what Maximus *says/writes*, what *exactly* does Maximus *mean* by that, given its clear and not merely apparent inconsistency with his age's mainstream Christian witness? Confidently and conclusively answering this question is not within our purview, if we are to remain true to the historical Maximus. Admittedly, it is easier to show what the seventh-century ascetic *did not* quite mean – from explaining the eschatological *retainment* of sexual difference and asserting that this difference is in accordance with humanity's *logos* to endorsing contemporary gender fluidity or same sex relationships. However, what the historical Maximus meant is only part of the story. The study of patristic and late antique texts is not limited to an exercise in philology (hence journal titles such as *Philosophy and Society*). Intelligently drawing from pre-modern sources in order to argue on contemporary issues is indeed desirable, to the extent that untenable anachronistic distortions are not asserted, i.e. to the extent that the claim of bringing forth a faithful facsimile from the distant past is not raised. Were this not to be desirable, notions such as 'political theology' or even 'theological ethics' (in today's world) would be vacated of any meaning whatsoever. And, case in point, arguing that there were seminal voices in the Christian past whose witness would be wholly incompatible with the particular form 'gender essentialism' has taken during modernity would not be at all more anachronistic than arguing that this particular form of understanding of sexual difference echoes the unified and undifferentiated witness of the Christian past. If one desires to get creative, (emphatic, intentional, and repeated) remarks such as those by Maximus in *Ambiguum* 41 indeed abound with potential implications for today's world, the scope of which should by all means be wildly and creatively debated on the basis of a close reading of the philosophical Church Father's text - and on terrains other than that of patristic philology proper. After all, it is indeed the One sitting on the throne that says "Behold, I make all things new".

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Pokušaj preispitivanja primedbi Maksima Ispovednika (o sudbini) polnih razlika u *Nedoumici* 41

Apstrakt:

Neodoumica (*Ambiguum*) 41 Maksima Ispovednika sadrži neka prilično netipična zapažanja u vezi sa razlikom među polovima u ljudskoj ličnosti: postoji određena dvosmislenost u pogledu toga da li je razlika među polovima Božija namera, to jest da li je ona „po prirodi“ (kao što je to starozavetna knjiga *Postanja* i većina crkvenih otaca tvrdi) ili je ona proizvod pada, pošto je Hristos tri puta opisan kako „izbacuju iz prirode osobenosti muškog i ženskog pola“, „istiskuje iz prirode razliku i podelu na muško i žensko“ i „uklanja razlike između muškog i ženskog“. Različita čitanja tih odlomaka rađaju važne implikacije koje se mogu izvući iz Ispovednikove misli, kako eshatološke tako i druge. Bavljenje ovom temom su, između ostalih,

odabrali Kameron Partridž, Doru Kostake i Karolina Kočanžik – Boninska, ali ni na koji način ona nije rešena, jer su formulisani sasvim drugačiji zaključci. Značajne i dalekosežne implikacije Maksimovog teološkog stava, kao i njegovi problemi, nisu predmet ovog rada. U radu iz 2017. godine pokušao sam detaljno da demonstriram šta Maksim tačno kaže u ovim neobičnim i često komentarisanim odlomcima, kako bi se izbegao dvosmerni maksimovski nesporazum – koji bi iz tih odlomaka povukao previše radikalne implikacije, projektujući definitivno ne-maksimovske vizije na istorijskog Maksima ili pak projektujući gotovo nikakve vizije, uzimajući te odlomke kao standardna patristička stanovišta. Ovde, ponovo preispitujem ovaj argument, s obzirom na to da se čini da interes za ono što Ispovednik kaže na tu temu ne splašnjava, već raste.

Ključne reči: Maksim Ispovednik, rod, telo, muško, žensko, polna razlika, priroda