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# **Created Motion in Maximus the Confessor: A Dynamicist Reading**

by

Cullan Joyce Bachelor of Theology ACU honours

Submitted in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Tasmania

October, 2010

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

Cullan Joyce

26/10/2010

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores how Maximus the Confessor understands created motion. It describes how he utilises not just one description of motion, but several. Recent literature has struggled to articulate the diversity of ways for describing motion available to Maximus. Sometimes these works have over-simplified Maximus' views. At other times the works gesture toward some important areas, but fail to go into sufficient technical detail. This study explores how Maximus' descriptions of motion play important but specific roles in his work. Accordingly, the thesis employs a strategy of closely reading texts containing key descriptions of motion, clarifying their meaning, and setting out some implications. The work begins by describing Maximus' cosmological context, and shows the importance of relating different senses of motion together. This suggests the need for more specific analyses. Chapters two and three describe a form of self-continuous motion, showing how it permeates Maximus' thought. Chapters four and five evaluate two approaches in the secondary literature. Chapter four focuses on motion as a general principle in the cosmos. Accordingly, it explores how the general account of motion emerges from a theology of creation. Chapter five analyses how personhood has been used, with some success, for describing specific instances of motion in Maximus. The sixth and final chapter examines how motion is comprised of several different processes working co-operatively. The thesis does not explicitly investigate how Maximus' views on motion might be reconstructed in contemporary contexts. Nor does it discuss the broader implications of created motion for his theology. It offers an alternative reading of this important but notoriously difficult figure of antiquity, suggesting new avenues of interpretation, as well as opening a range of topics for further research.

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