

*PROCEEDINGS OF
THE XXIII WORLD CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

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It is an honor for me to be invited by Professor Boudouris to contribute this note as a kind of second introduction, in addition to his own, to this very large and impressive collection of papers that were presented at the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy in Athens in 2013. The task of compiling and ordering this huge collection has been an arduous one for all who have been engaged in it, including the editors and editorial assistants whose names are listed here, the Secretariat in Athens directed by Dr. Alexandra Zistakis, the Philosophy Documentation Center under the directorship of Dr. George Leaman, and before them all who were involved in soliciting and vetting the original contributions, not to mention the contributors themselves—a vast and productive philosophical community!

Professor Boudouris' remarks may well evoke a sense of nostalgia among those of us who participated: the Athenian venues of the Congress were as rich as imaginable in memories of Western intellectual history, while the papers included in this collection will constitute—indeed, they already constitute, in their ensemble—precious testimonials to the rich and diverse global intellectual life of philosophers in the early Twenty-first Century. The life of the human mind has been, we are reminded, a great albeit relatively brief adventure thus far (of only a few millennia of which we have any detailed records); the beautiful setting in which these papers were read was once, after all, the locus of one of that adventure's most brilliant moments.

As then-President of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), sponsor of the World Congresses, it was my privilege to preside over this one. It would be a mistake to think that, in the time period leading up to it, there were no obstacles, there was no skepticism; but in the end it was, by most accounts, a considerable success. It has always been my wish—as fantastic as some may think it to be—that, especially through such public events as this

World Congress, philosophers can, as a special sort of community, make a serious contribution through their reflections, dialogues, and other interactions to the amelioration of our *world* community. That is one way of interpreting the overall theme of this Congress, “Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life.” Even if this aspiration of mine may seem far-fetched, we might consider recalling and extending Socrates’ words, spoken near the end of Plato’s dialogue *Phaedo*, concerning the reward and hope that stem from a life of excellence and wisdom: “καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀθλοῦν καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη.”