



The Topoi they are A-Changin'

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As the Bob Dylan inspired title ought to suggest, this editorial is meant to announce some significant changes in how this journal will be run in years to come. It will soon become apparent that many of these new policies are, in fact, old traditions reframed in different guises: that is, the novelties we are about to introduce are very much in line with *Topoi*'s original rationale and mission, thus long-time readers of the journal will see them more like organic developments in a well-ordered editorial evolution, rather than as sudden upheavals or unexpected turnabouts. Nonetheless, these changes will have an impact on how *Topoi* operates, so it is worth spending some time describing and justifying each of them in turn. There are four steppingstones in the future course of the journal: a new permanent thematic section, a new associate editor to take care of it, a subsequent renewal and restructuring of the editorial board, and the adoption of Springer's Thematic Collections format for all future issues of *Topoi*.

1 A New Section on "The Philosophy of Argument"

Although *Topoi* always refrained from stably associating with any specific philosophical theme or school, as per its rationale and mission, a marked interest in philosophy of language and epistemology emerged since its very inception, with many seminal thematic collections devoted to these areas of philosophical inquiry over the years. However, it is only recently that a more specific interest in the philosophy of argument—understood, broadly, as a philosophical reflection over reasoning and disagreement, as well as their shape and quality in actual argumentative practices—has begun to emerge in our editorial plans, with multiple issues

explicitly devoted to such topics. The variety of approaches and themes that characterized these issues is in keeping with the journal's tradition of fostering debate and showcasing multiple points of view, as the following list of argumentation-related issues clearly attest:

- 35/2 (2016), "Virtues and Arguments", guest edited by Andrew Aberdein and Daniel Cohen.
- 37/1 (2018), "Reasoning, Argumentation, and Critical Thinking Instruction", guest edited by Frank Zenker.
- 38/4 (2019), "Practice/s of Giving Reasons", guest edited by David Godden and Chris Campolo.
- 40/2 (2021), "Evidence, Expertise and Argumentation in Evidence-Based Medicine", guest edited by Fabrizio Macagno and Carlo Martini.
- 40/5 (2021), "Adversariality in Argument", guest edited by John Casey and Katharina Stevens.
- 40/5 (2021), "Disagreement: Perspectives from Argumentation Theory and Epistemology", guest edited by Patrick Bondy and David Godden.

This blossoming interest in the philosophy of argument on the pages of *Topoi* suggests two considerations. On the one hand, there is an obvious need for a publishing outlet of thematic collections in this area of philosophy, a need that the many, excellent journals currently active on argumentation theory (*Argumentation*, *Informal Logic*, *Argument & Computation*, *Argumentation & Advocacy*, *Journal of Argumentation in Context*, to mention just the most prominent ones) do not yet properly satisfy. On the other hand, *Topoi* is perceived by a growing set of argumentation scholars as an excellent venue for such collections, possibly due to its very nature: there is indeed increasing awareness of the importance of making argumentation more relevant for philosophy in general, instead of framing it as a specialty concern for a smaller group of scholars, no matter how competent and active in the field they are. *Topoi* is ideally positioned to help in that regard, and that is probably the reason why it came to be so attractive for philosophers interested in editing thematic collections on argumentation.

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All of this happened quite spontaneously, once again consistently with *Topoi*'s traditional commitment to helping those who help themselves: or, to formulate the point with greater philosophical panache, “looking for what is blossoming and thriving, occasionally betting on what might—partly through our attention—‘begin’ to blossom and thrive” (quoted from the aims and scope section of the journal). Now it is time to take stock of these tectonic shifts in how the philosophy of argument is covered in our journal, and ask ourselves: “Can we do more? Should we?”.

The answer is a resounding “yes” on both counts. Other philosophical journals published by Springer have already trodden similar paths: *Synthese* comes to mind, which in 2004 launched a new thematic section on Knowledge, Rationality, and Action, edited by Wiebe van der Hoek. We will be following the same course, but with a different focus: starting from our next issue in 2023, *Topoi* 42/2, we will launch a new section of the journal, devoted to “Philosophy of Argument” (PoA, from now on) and supervised by its own dedicated associate editor (more on that later). The first issue of this new section will include two thematic collections, which provide an excellent illustration of the type of contributions we look forward to publishing there: one on “Norms of Public Argument: A Speech Act Perspective”, guest edited by Marcin Lewiński, Bianca Cepollaro, Steve Oswald, and Maciej Witek, and another on “Argumentation and Politics”, guest edited by Lilian Bermejo-Luque and Javier Rodríguez-Alcázar. Moving forward, the aim is to have about two issues per year dedicated to the PoA section, roughly alternating with more traditional issues of *Topoi* on other areas of philosophical interests: in both cases, the format will remain true to the journal's mission, that is, including only thematic collections on specific topics.

This new course will not change much for philosophers that do not work on argumentation, since their access to the journal, both as readers and as potential authors or guest editors, will remain unaffected. Instead, the PoA section should be a welcome development for any argumentation scholar—indeed, for any scholar interested in how varieties of disputes and inferences can be understood and critiqued by applying philosophical concepts and methods—by providing a steady stream of thematic collections on their area of interest. The obvious corollary is that we expect these scholars to be on the lookout and take advantage of this new opportunity: not only making sure to submit their work to the many argument-related CFPs that we will be issuing in years to come, but also proposing their own thematic collections for PoA to its dedicated section editor—a notable scholar in the field, which I am now happy to introduce to our readers.

2 A New Associate Editor for the PoA Section

As of January 2023, we welcome a new associate editor to *Topoi*, who will be supervising the PoA section: Marcin Lewiński of the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal. He is a well-renown scholar in argumentation theory, notable not only for his academic contributions, e.g., his seminal work on multi-party polylogues, but also for his dedication to broaden the scope of argument studies beyond their traditional boundaries: both by exploring new interactions with pragmatics and communication studies (significant, in this regard, his recent work with Mark Aakhus, which resulted in their joint monograph *Argumentation in Complex Communication. Managing Disagreement in a Polylogue*, CUP 2023), and by toiling to ensure greater prominence for argumentation theory within the broader philosophical debate, notably in the philosophy of language.

This latter commitment is well documented by his curriculum: back in 2013, Lewiński was one of the founding members of the European Conference on Argumentation (ECA, <https://ecargument.org/>) and chaired its very first edition in Lisbon (2015); more recently, he coordinated a large-scale networking project to create and manage a European Network for Argumentation and Public Policy Analysis (APPLY, <https://publicpolicyargument.eu/>), funded by the EU-sponsored COST Association and active from 2018 to 2023, which successfully involved hundreds of argumentation scholars, as well as researchers from different areas that are nonetheless relevant to foster our understanding of public discourse. Similar initiatives are crucial to increase the impact of argument studies for philosophy in general, since they help revealing deep connections with other areas of philosophical inquiry, such as philosophy of language, (social) epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, and legal studies, just to mention a few.

It is precisely this combination of scholarly prominence and outreach commitment that makes Marcin Lewiński ideally suited to act as section editor of PoA: under his supervision, this new section of *Topoi* will be sure to thrive and attract a variety of collections relevant for the study of argumentation, as an integral part of philosophical reflection. Scholars active in this area, as well as philosophers interested in argumentation more broadly, are welcome to contact the newly appointed PoA section editor to propose ideas for future thematic collections.

3 Renewal of the Editorial Board

In order to mirror the new structure of the journal, we are in the process of renewing *Topoi*'s editorial board: some of the current board members will be asked to continue in their task, others will be replaced, and new scholars will

be invited to join; more importantly, moving forward the journal's editorial board will be divided in two sub-sets, one dedicated specifically to the new PoA section, the other in charge of the regular issues of the journal. Such a renewal is currently ongoing; thus, the new board will start their work only from the next issue, i.e., *Topoi* 42/2, where it will be listed for the first time.

This gives us the opportunity to clarify the somewhat peculiar role of *Topoi*'s editorial board members: due to its very nature, the journal delegates a significant number of tasks to the guest editors that oversee each thematic issue, whereas supervising their work is typically left to the editor-in-chief—and to the associate editor, from now on. This implies that board members are rarely involved in the daily running of the journal. However, they still have key responsibilities to fulfill: besides having a say in the overall editorial plans for *Topoi*, they are expected to actively seek out interesting topic for future thematic collections of the journal, as well as scouting for suitable scholars to assign as guest editors for such issues. This gives them a rather unique role, halfway between trend-setters and head-hunters, since it offers the opportunity to shape the future of their own areas of scholarly interest. It is with this explicit mission in mind that the new members of *Topoi*'s editorial board are currently being selected, and we look forward to revealing the identity of the full team in the next issue.

4 *Topoi*, aka Thematic Collections

In recent years, more and more Springer journals have started taking advantage of a relatively new option offered by the publisher: i.e., Thematic Collections. A thematic collection, as the name implies, is constituted of a series of articles on a common theme: what makes it different from the more traditional concept of “special issue” is that Thematic Collections are not, in principle, tied to a single issue, and not even to a single journal. This has important implications: the most radical ones concern the possibility, for a given thematic collection, to be spread across different issues of the same journal, or even across various journals; more fundamentally, though, all thematic collections exist online independently from whatever issue (or issues) they will appear in print on.

This independence offers crucial benefits to both guest editors and authors, with respect to good-old-fashioned special issues: with the latter format, single accepted papers were published as Online First quite promptly, yet one had to wait for completion of the whole issue to see the full picture, therefore the hard work of guest editors was barely acknowledged until very late in the editorial process. In contrast, Thematic Collections become visible as soon as their call for papers is circulated, they remain accessible

throughout all stages of the editorial process, and they get populated by accepted papers on a first-in-first-out basis: this increases dramatically the visibility of all submissions, as well as immediately giving guest editors the credit they are due—and rightly so.

In short, there are many reasons to approve of Thematic Collections, as an editorial tool to make special issues more flexible and visible. No other journal is better suited to appreciate this than *Topoi*, by the way: the nature of our journal defines it as an *ante litteram* version of the very idea of Thematic Collections, with its systematic devotion to focusing each issue on a specific topic, assigning such topic to guest editors that are expert on the subject matter, and ensuring that topics are selected across the whole spectrum of philosophical areas and traditions. This is the bread and butter of any thematic collection, thus it should surprise absolutely no one that *Topoi* will now transition completely to the new format: that is, all ongoing and forthcoming issues of *Topoi* will be Thematic Collections. This means that they will still appear in print in one of the volumes of the journal, of course, yet they will be accessible much earlier than usual, via a dedicated online page to the corresponding Thematic Collection.

This new procedure fits much better the intended format, scope, and mission of *Topoi*: readers can already check how it would look like here, <https://link.springer.com/journal/11245/collections>, where all currently active Thematic Collections for *Topoi* are listed. Many more will be added over the next few months, and we are confident that the greater visibility and flexibility granted by this solution will further stimulate contributions to the journal—both in terms of new proposals for Thematic Collections, and as increased submissions to the existing calls.

5 Conclusions: Change and Continuity

As advertised, this editorial announces multiple changes in how *Topoi* is going to be managed in years to come: a new section on “Philosophy of Argument”, a new associated editor, Marcin Lewiński, to take care of it, a corresponding renewal of the editorial board (to be finalized by next issue), and a full transition to the Thematic Collections system, which is already operational.

In spite of all this turmoil, the prevailing feeling should be one of familiarity: philosophical approaches to argument had already gained prominence in the editorial plans of the journal in recent years, and the domain is in need of a high-profile publication venue for well-focused collections of scholarly essays; the choice of the new associated editor and the renewal of the editorial board are in keeping with the rationale and the tradition of the journal; last but not least, *Topoi* was entirely made of Thematic Collections well

before the format was given a specific name by the publisher, thus here the alleged “change” is more a matter of updating the journal’s procedures to the new affordances of online publishing.

This seamless integration of change and continuity bodes well for *Topoi*’s future: instead of having cause to fear a rejection crisis of the new elements introduced in the journal’s structure, we have good reasons to expect significant improvement in *Topoi*’s capacity to fulfill its scholarly mission. Once again, this is true to the journal’s original imprint, as codified more than 40 years ago in the words of its founding editors, Enrico Maria Forni and Ermanno Bencivenga: “*Topoi*’s main assumption is that philosophy

is a lively, provocative, delightful activity, which constantly challenges our received views, relentlessly questions our inherited habits, painstakingly elaborates on how things could be different, in other stories, in counterfactual situations, in alternative possible worlds”. Or, to put it more succinctly: “to boldly go where no philosopher has gone before!”—hopefully together with every scholar interested in joining us on this new trek of *Topoi*’s intellectual voyage.

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