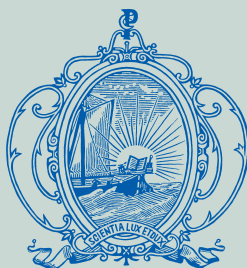# STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. LXXV

Papers presented at the Seventeenth International Conference
on Patristic Studies held
in Oxford 2015

Edited by
MARKUS VINZENT

Volume 1:

Studia Patristica
Platonism and the Fathers
Maximus Confessor

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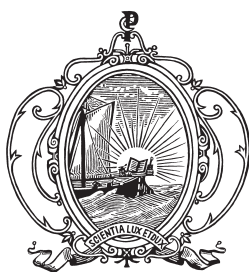
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MAXIMUS CONFESSOR

Abbreviations

AA.SS	see ASS.
AAWG.PH	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch-historische Klasse, Göttingen.
AB	Analecta Bollandiana, Brussels.
AC	Antike und Christentum, ed. F.J. Dölger, Münster.
ACL	Antiquité classique, Louvain.
ACO	Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin.
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers, ed. J. Quasten and J.C. Plumpe, Westminster (Md.)/London.
AHDLMA	Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, Paris.
AJAH	American Journal of Ancient History, Cambridge, Mass.
AJP	American Journal of Philology, Baltimore.
AKK	Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht, Mainz.
AKPAW	Abhandlungen der königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin.
ALMA	Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin du Cange), Paris/Brussels.
ALW	Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft, Regensburg.
AnalBoll	Analecta Bollandiana, Brussels.
ANCL	Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Edinburgh.
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers, Buffalo/New York.
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, ed H. Temporini *et al.*, Berlin.
AnSt	Anatolian Studies, London.
AnThA	Année théologique augustinienne, Paris.
APOT	Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. R.E. Charles, Oxford.
AR	Archivum Romanicum, Florence.
ARW	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Berlin/Leipzig.
ASS	Acta Sanctorum, ed. the Bollandists, Brussels.
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Zürich.
Aug	Augustinianum, Rome.
AugSt	Augustinian Studies, Villanova (USA).
AW	Athanasius Werke, ed. H.-G. Opitz *et al.*, Berlin.
AZ	Archäologische Zeitung, Berlin.
BA	Bibliothèque augustinienne, Paris.
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven, Conn.
BDAG	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd edn F.W. Danker, Chicago.
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Paris.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Louvain.
BGL	Benedictinisches Geistesleben, St. Ottilien.
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, Brussels.
BHL	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis, Brussels.

BHO	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis, Brussels.
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, Tübingen.
BJ	Bursians Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der klassischen Altertums-wissenschaft, Leipzig.
BJRULM	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
BKV	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. F.X. Reithmayr and V. Thalhofer, Kempten.
BKV2	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. O. Bardenhewer, Th. Schermann, and C. Weyman, Kempten/Munich.
BKV3	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter. Zweite Reihe, ed. O. Bardenhewer, J. Zellinger, and J. Martin, Munich.
BLE	Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique, Toulouse.
BoJ	Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn.
BS	Bibliotheca sacra, London.
BSL	Bolletino di studi latini, Naples.
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament, Leipzig/Stuttgart.
Byz	Byzantion, Leuven.
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift, Leipzig.
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, Berlin.
CAr	Cahiers Archéologique, Paris.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Washington.
CChr.CM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, Turnhout/Paris.
CChr.SA	Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum, Turnhout/Paris.
CChr.SG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca, Turnhout/Paris.
CChr.SL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Turnhout/Paris.
CH	Church History, Chicago.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CP(h)	Classical Philology, Chicago.
CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum, ed. M. Geerard, vols. I-VI, Turnhout.
CPL	Clavis Patrum Latinorum (SE 3), ed. E. Dekkers and A. Gaar, Turnhout.
CQ	Classical Quarterly, London/Oxford.
CR	The Classical Review, London/Oxford.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Louvain.
	Aeth = Scriptores Aethiopici
	Ar = Scriptores Arabici
	Arm = Scriptores Armeniaci
	Copt = Scriptores Coptici
	Iber = Scriptores Iberici
	Syr = Scriptores Syri
	Subs = Subsidia
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna.
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn.
CTh	Collectanea Theologica, Lvov.
CUF	Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé, Paris.
CW	Catholic World, New York.
DAC	Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. J. Hastings, Edinburgh.

DACL	see DAL
DAL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, ed. F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, Paris.
DB	Dictionnaire de la Bible, Paris.
DBS	Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément, Paris.
DCB	Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, 4 vols, London.
DHGE	Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique, ed. A. Baudrillart, Paris.
Did	Didaskalia, Lisbon.
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Cambridge, Mass., subsequently Washington, D.C.
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies, Cambridge, Mass., subsequently Washington, D.C.
DR	Downside Review, Stratton on the Fosse, Bath.
DS	H.J. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, ed., Enchiridion Symbolorum, Barcelona/Freiburg i.B./Rome.
DSp	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ed. M. Viller, S.J., and others, Paris.
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amann, Paris.
EA	Études augustiniennes, Paris.
ECatt	Enciclopedia Cattolica, Rome.
ECQ	Eastern Churches Quarterly, Ramsgate.
EE	Estudios eclesiasticos, Madrid.
EECh	Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. A. Di Berardino, Cambridge.
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Neukirchen.
EH	Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae, ed. Ueding-Kirch, 6th ed., Barcelona.
EO	Échos d'Orient, Paris.
EtByz	Études Byzantines, Paris.
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain.
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum NT, ed. H.R. Balz *et al*., Stuttgart.
ExpT	The Expository Times, Edinburgh.
FC	The Fathers of the Church, New York.
FGH	Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Berlin.
FKDG	Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Göttingen.
FRL	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Göttingen.
FS	Festschrift.
FThSt	Freiburger theologische Studien, Freiburg i.B.
FTS	Frankfurter theologische Studien, Frankfurt a.M.
FZThPh	Freiburger Zeitschrift für Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg/Switzerland.
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Leipzig/Berlin.
GDV	Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit, Stuttgart.
GLNT	Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento, Genoa.
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera, Leiden.

GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, Mass.
GWV	Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, Offenburg.
HbNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen.
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion, Missoula.
HJG	Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft, successively Munich, Cologne and Munich/Freiburg i.B.
HKG	Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Tübingen.
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen.
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik, Leiden.
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, Cambridge, Mass.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge, Mass.
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies, Cambridge, Mass.
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift, Munich/Berlin.
ICC	The International Critical Commentary of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Edinburgh.
ILCV	Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres, ed. E. Diehl, Berlin.
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin.
J(b)AC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Münster.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia, Pa., then various places.
JdI	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Berlin.
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies, Baltimore.
JEH	The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, London.
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies, London.
JLH	Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie, Kassel.
JPTh	Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie, Leipzig/Freiburg i.B.
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review, Philadelphia.
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies, London.
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period, Leiden.
JSOR	Journal of the Society of Oriental Research, Chicago.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford.
KAV	Kommentar zu den apostolischen Vätern, Göttingen.
KeTh	Kerk en Theologie, 's Gravenhage.
KJ(b)	Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, Gütersloh.
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library, London/Cambridge, Mass.
LNPF	A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, Buffalo/New York.
L(O)F	Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Oxford.
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, new (9th) edn H.S. Jones, Oxford.
LThK	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Freiburg i.B.
MA	Moyen-Âge, Brussels.
MAMA	Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, London.
Mansi	J.D. Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, Florence, 1759-1798. Reprint and continuation: Paris/Leipzig, 1901-1927.
MBTh	Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, Münster.

MCom	Miscelanea Comillas, Comillas/Santander.
MGH	Monumenta germaniae historica. Hanover/Berlin.
ML	Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, Louvain.
MPG	See PG.
MSR	Mélanges de science religieuse, Lille.
MThZ	Münchener theologische Zeitschrift, Munich.
Mus	Le Muséon, Louvain.
NGWG	Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.
NH(M)S	Nag Hammadi (and Manichaean) Studies, Leiden.
NovTest	Novum Testamentum, Leiden.
NPNF	See LNPF.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version.
NRTh	Nouvelle Revue Théologique, Tournai/Louvain/Paris.
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, Münster.
NT.S	Novum Testamentum Supplements, Leiden.
NTS	New Testament Studies, Cambridge/Washington.
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis, Freiburg, Switz.
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta, Rome.
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Rome.
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford.
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, Louvain.
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Louvain.
Or	Orientalia. Commentarii editi a Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome.
OrChr	Oriens Christianus, Leipzig, then Wiesbaden.
OrSyr	L'Orient Syrien, Paris.
PG	Migne, Patrologia, series graeca.
PGL	A Patristic Greek Lexicon, ed. G.L. Lampe, Oxford.
PL	Migne, Patrologia, series latina.
PLRE	The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, ed. A.H.M. Jones *et al.*, Cambridge.
PLS	Migne, Patrologia, series latina. Supplementum ed. A. Hamman.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis, Paris.
PRE	Paulys Realenzyklopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft, Stuttgart.
PS	Patrologia Syriaca, Paris.
PTA	Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen, Bonn.
PThR	Princeton Theological Review, Princeton.
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien, Berlin.
PW	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, ed. G. Wissowa, Stuttgart.
QLP	Questions liturgiques et paroissiales, Louvain.
QuLi	Questions liturgiques, Louvain
RAC	Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana, Rome.
RACh	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart.
RAM	Revue d'ascétique et de mystique, Paris.
RAug	Recherches Augustiniennes, Paris.
RBen	Revue Bénédictine, Maredsous.
RB(ibl)	Revue biblique, Paris.

RE	Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, founded by J.J. Herzog, 3e ed. A. Hauck, Leipzig.
REA(ug)	Revue des études Augustiniennes, Paris.
REB	Revue des études byzantines, Paris.
RED	Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, Rome.
RÉL	Revue des études latines, Paris.
REG	Revue des études grecques, Paris.
RevSR	Revue des sciences religieuses, Strasbourg.
RevThom	Revue thomiste, Toulouse.
RFIC	Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica, Turin.
RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Gunkel-Zscharnack, Tübingen
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, Louvain.
RhMus	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, Bonn.
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions, Paris.
RHT	Revue d'Histoire des Textes, Paris.
RMAL	Revue du Moyen-Âge Latin, Paris.
ROC	Revue de l'Orient chrétien, Paris.
RPh	Revue de philologie, Paris.
RQ	Römische Quartalschrift, Freiburg i.B.
RQH	Revue des questions historiques, Paris.
RSLR	Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa, Florence.
RSPT, RSPh	Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, Paris.
RSR	Recherches de science religieuse, Paris.
RTAM	Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale, Louvain.
RthL	Revue théologique de Louvain, Louvain.
RTM	Rivista di teologia morale, Bologna.
Sal	Salesianum, Roma.
SBA	Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, Basel.
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, Stuttgart.
ScEc	Sciences ecclésiastiques, Bruges.
SCh, SC	Sources chrétiennes, Paris.
SD	Studies and Documents, ed. K. Lake and S. Lake. London/Philadelphia.
SE	Sacris Erudiri, Bruges.
SDHI	Studia et documenta historiae et iuris, Roma.
SH	Subsidia Hagiographica, Brussels.
SHA	Scriptores Historiae Augustae.
SJMS	Speculum. Journal of Mediaeval Studies, Cambridge, Mass.
SM	Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige, Munich.
SO	Symbolae Osloenses, Oslo.
SP	Studia Patristica, successively Berlin, Kalamazoo, Leuven.
SPM	Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia, ed. C. Mohrman and J. Quasten, Utrecht.
SQ	Sammlung ausgewählter Quellenschriften zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Tübingen.
SQAW	Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt, Berlin.
SSL	Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, Louvain.

StudMed	Studi Medievali, Turin.
SVigChr	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, Leiden.
SVF	Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, ed. J. von Arnim, Leipzig.
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Mich.
TE	Teologia espiritual, Valencia.
ThGl	Theologie und Glaube, Paderborn.
ThJ	Theologische Jahrbücher, Leipzig.
ThLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung, Leipzig.
ThPh	Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg i.B.
ThQ	Theologische Quartalschrift, Tübingen.
ThR	Theologische Rundschau, Tübingen.
ThWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, Stuttgart.
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Stuttgart.
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift, Basel.
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.
TP	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Lancaster, Pa.
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Berlin.
TS	Theological Studies, New York and various places; now Washington, D.C.
TThZ	Trierer theologische Zeitschrift, Trier.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen, Leipzig/Berlin.
USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review, New York.
VC	Vigiliae Christianae, Amsterdam.
VetChr	Vetera Christianorum, Bari (Italy).
VT	Vetus Testamentum, Leiden.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary, Waco.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen.
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Vienna.
YUP	Yale University Press, New Haven.
ZAC	Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum, Berlin.
ZAM	Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik, Innsbruck, then Würzburg.
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen, then Berlin.
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, Leipzig.
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, Gotha, then Stuttgart.
ZKTh	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, Vienna.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, Giessen, then Berlin.
ZRG	Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte, Weimar.
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Tübingen.

STUDIA PATRISTICA

Editing *Studia Patristica*

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The proceedings of the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, held at Oxford in August 2011, was opened by a special volume with a collection of articles on late former directors of the Conference (together with W.H.C. Frend).[1] As introduction to the proceedings of the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, held at Oxford in August 2015, we chose three papers, given at the launch of the publication of the 2011 proceedings in October 2013. This was the first book launch in the history of *Studia Patristica*, but with a Conference that had been going strong since its beginnings in 1951, with 70 volumes published within almost 60 years, we considered that the time was ripe for both a small celebration and a critical reflection of how far we had come.

In this first short contribution, as current editor of *Studia Patristica*, the series in which the proceedings have appeared from the start, I would like to give an insight into how I see the nature of this series and the service its editor tries to provide to the Conference and to colleagues and friends in the field. In a second paper, Frances Young looks back at her early experience of the Conference and the proceedings when she was still a post-graduate student. How different was the meeting (and its published papers) then, from the one in the year 2003 for which she had become Chair of the Directors and was involved in editing *Studia Patristica*? In a third paper Mark Edwards develops ideas that he presented *viva voce* at the occasion of the book launch on 'the achievements and limitations of patristic scholarship', particularly in the UK, but with relevance further afield.

Having co-responsibility for the setting up of the International Conference on Patristic Studies at the University of Oxford, and bearing responsibility for the editing process of *Studia Patristica* represent forms of asceticism, detachment and humility. This joint role means receiving abstracts, in the hundreds – and this time close to one thousand –, which the directors have to assess and quite often refer back for clarifications; and initiating and calling for others to complement under-represented areas and get the content structure of the Conference into shape. For the editor, the real task begins when the papers have been delivered at the Conference event. Papers developed into articles come in,

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[1] *SP* 53 ('*Former Directors*') (2013).

this time close to 700, their authors having taken account of questions and answers, conversations during the sessions and, often more importantly, at informal meetings. Each contribution reveals the breadth and depth of what the editor does not yet know, should have looked up and could have remembered or read about. Reading unpublished research is exciting, challenging and humbling at the same time. The reading is an invitation to embark on an enormous learning curve and, therefore, the best training course one can get. One bears the responsibility to read critically, to discern between sound ideas, innovative perspectives or, sometimes, hardly sustainable claims, and still to try first to get into the mind of the author, even if the proposed article is not yet in its final form or shape. Getting back to authors with questions, notes and suggestions is the striking of a balance between being an interested reader, but without becoming an interlocutor with a vested research interest of one's own. I am not sure whether I always get this balance right, but editing is certainly a fascinating academic task, and one of the most rewarding.

Who dares to edit *Studia Patristica* has to acknowledge the vision, the work, and the achievements of the founders of both the Oxford International Conference on Patristic Studies and the first editors of the series of its proceedings. As Elizabeth Livingstone reports in her contribution to the mentioned volume on 'Former Directors', F.L. Cross (1900-1968),[2] the then Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church since 1944, was able to get Professor Kurt Aland (1915-1994) to sign as co-editor for volumes one and two of *Studia Patristica*, the first of which appeared in 1955, four years after the first Conference had been held. Both scholars have been, are still, and, as far as can be projected, will remain programmatic for the entire series. Both represent the post-war endeavour to re-build bridges between the Continent and the British Isles; between East and West, within Europe and beyond; between Anglicanism, Protestantism (in all its variations), Catholicism and Orthodoxy; between academics, clerics, independent scholars and people interested in Patristics – let me call them lay scholars.

Yet, there is another bridge that Cross and Aland represent and which has been core to the Conference and to *Studia Patristica*, namely its interdisciplinarity. Cross, who studied Philosophy and Theology at Oxford, Marburg and Freiburg, was so impressed by one of his academic teachers at Freiburg, the Jewish philosopher Edmund Husserl, that he decided to write his philosophy doctorate on him. When he defended his thesis in Oxford in 1930, Cross could not know, of course, that another pupil of Husserl, namely Martin Heidegger, who was to become rector of Freiburg University, would during the Nazi period play a crucial role in removing Husserl from his academic position. Cross' interdisciplinarity was a combination not only of Theology and Philosophy, but

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[2] See T.M. Parker, 'Frank Leslie Cross 1900–1968', in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 55 (1969), 369-75.

also of New Testament Studies and Patristics. Before organising the First International Conference on Patristic Studies Oxford, he had already organised international New Testament congresses. In this he was like Kurt Aland, the scholar who took over from Eberhard Nestle the publication of the critical edition of the Greek New Testament and was founder of the famous Münster Institute for New Testament Textual Research (now directed by Professor Holger Strutwolf, a student of Professor Martin Ritter, Heidelberg). Cross and Aland wrote important studies on the New Testament and early Christian topics. The two scholars remind us of the fact pointed out by the late Martin Hengel in his 'A Young Theological Discipline in Crisis'[3] that '"New Testament Studies" was still a young discipline', as it had 'only had its own chairs since the last third of the nineteenth century'.[4] In his inaugural lecture of 1999, Larry Hurtado pointed out that most contributions to NT studies, well into the early 20th century, 'were by scholars in OT, Systematic Theology',[5] and, as Hengel remarked, 'above all church historians'.[6] To underline the interdisciplinarity of Patristics, I could also add the history of my own chair at King's, where the Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the 1920s, Claude Jenkins, also lectured on Patristic Texts; and when, in 1930, Randolph Vincent Greenwood Tasker, who had already been Lecturer in Exegesis of the New Testament, lectured on Patristic Texts, he combined two roles, which he maintained even after WWII, when he was promoted to Professor in both fields. Similarly, in 1948 Professor Robert Victor Sellers became Professor of both Biblical and Historical Theology.

From the outset, therefore, *Studia Patristica* was intended to be a broad church, allowing for highly specialised, pastoral and interdisciplinary studies in Patristics, and also to be a springboard for young scholars to present their papers – sometimes their first papers – for publication. It is inspiring to read that in preparation of 'each Conference he [Cross] went touring [around] Europe to find out what were the trends that were surfacing in Patristic scholarship and who had interesting ideas'.[7] We have done and will continue to do whatever is possible to achieve similar goals. Today, of course, we have additional means – the Web, the Internet – but we still try to tour the globe as much as possible and to use all means to catch new approaches, concepts and ideas and, especially, to encourage young scholars to come to Oxford and present their findings. When we read, then, that Cross 'conducted a huge correspondence',

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[3] Michael F. Bird and John Maston (eds), *Earliest Christianity: History, Literature, and Theology. Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel* (Tübingen, 2012), 459-71.
[4] *Ibid.* 459.
[5] Larry W. Hurtado, 'New Testament Studies At the Turn of the Millennium: Questions for the Discipline', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52 (1999), 158-78.
[6] Martin Hengel, 'A Young Theological Discipline in Crisis', in M.F. Bird and J. Mason (eds), *Earliest Christian History*, WUNT 2.320 (Tübingen, 2012), 459-71, 59.
[7] Elisabeth Livingstone, 'F.L. Cross', *SP* 53 (2013), 5-8, 8.

'took advice on some papers', 'made his own decisions', and was 'editing where necessary and reading and sending out proofs', he was not only a pioneer in the field of peer reviewing, but left us another legacy, which became a hall-mark of his successor as editor of *Studia Patristica*, Dr Elizabeth Livingstone, namely to sustain an intensive cooperation between editor and author as between partners, and only occasionally act as decision maker. As the longest serving editor Dr Livingstone would be better placed to talk about her own experiences over the many years in which she edited the volumes 12 to 33. I myself remember her kind letter with my first submission, fully annotated not only with editorial comments, but also with very helpful scholarly remarks to get a young scholar ready for publication.

It was during Dr Livingstone's term as editor that *Studia Patristica* moved to the present publisher, Peeters Publishers in Leuven, who have added the weight of their name to the series. Peeters is one of the most respected publishing houses in the wider field of the study of religion in antiquity, with flagships such as *Le Muséon* and hundreds of other series, journals and numerous monographs. For *Studia Patristica* it is invaluable to have a personally dedicated family business as a backbone, interested not only in the economic side of publishing, but also in the meticulous editorial process of the content we publish. They provide a warm, responsive and never tiring maintenance of relations with authors, editors and directors, most visible in the dedicated in-house editor, Bert Verrept, and behind him a production team that fully understands how to edit such a complex series as *Studia Patristica*, dealing for example with numerous fonts, such as Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopian, Gothic, and Arabic. Moreover, in addition to their experience and tradition, Peeters is a publishing partner with a forward-looking and entrepreneurial spirit, who gave an immediate positive response to two more recent innovative ideas – the broadening of *Studia Patristica* to incorporate not only contributions to the International Conference on Patristic Studies Oxford, but also contributions to other Patristic gatherings[8] and specifically invited papers not held at these venues, and to start a monograph series *Studia Patristica Supplements* to allow for the publication of comprehensive studies.

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[8] So *Studia Patristica* 50 (2009), including papers presented at the National Conference on Patristic Studies held at Cambridge in the Faculty of Divinity under Allen Brent, Thomas Graumann and Judith Lieu in 2009, ed. by Allen Brent, Thomas Graumann, Judith Lieu and Markus Vinzent; *Studia Patristica* 51 (2011), including papers presented at the Conference 'The Image of the Perfect Christian in Patristic Thought' at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine, under Taras Khomych, Oleksandra Vakula and Oleh Kindiy in 2009, ed. by Taras Khomych, Oleksandra Vakula and Markus Vinzent; *Studia Patristica* 52 (2012), including papers presented at the British Patristics Conference, Durham, September 2010, edited by Allen Brent and Markus Vinzent; and *Studia Patristica* 74 (2016), including papers presented at the Fifth British Patristics Conference, London, 3-5 September 2014, ed. by Allen Brent and Markus Vinzent.

The broadening of the series went hand in hand with a critical review by the directors in the year 2009. After the transition from the sole editorship of Dr Livingstone to a varying joint editorship by Edward Yarnold and Maurice Wiles (vols. 34-38), Mark Edwards, Paul M. Parvis and Frances Young (vols. 39-43), Jane Baun, Mark Edwards, Averil Cameron and myself (vols. 44-49), the directors decided neither to give up the series altogether, nor to move it to a purely Internet-based publication of abstracts. Rather, despite the constraints of an ever more demanding, underfunded institutional academic environment, in view of the enormous increase in interest in attending and presenting at the International Conference on Patristic Studies Oxford and in publishing in *Studia Patristica*, the decision was taken to continue the series in print, and publish the abstracts on the Conference blog.[9] While the very first Conference, in 1951, had been attended by 250 people, in 2007 it attracted around 700 scholars. In 2011 the number of participants had reached more than 900, with over 500 papers being presented, and in 2015 we counted almost 1200 people attending, with close to 800 papers delivered. And while interest and numbers have grown, so too have the pressures from the global academic policy-driven machinery for peer reviewed publications. Contrary to the trend towards anonymous peer reviewing, the directors decided to continue a transparent system of collegiality and partnership, in which the editor carries the burden of telling authors not only the good news, but also the bad, in cases where papers are rejected by the peer reviewing fellow directors, and in which authors whose papers are accepted get to know and can even exchange information with the editor or with their peer reviewers, in order to improve their submissions. In almost all successful cases, submissions are returned to their authors with at least minor suggestions for corrections and improvements, and in many cases, authors are asked to substantially revise them. In each situation, they are given detailed, encouraging comments both in the margins and in the correspondence, so that the series strives to be at the forefront of Patristic Studies. Not every article, of course, aims to be, or will become the standard reference for its particular topic, but as with every publishing process, no editor knows in advance which of the contributions will be the novelty that will stand out in the nearer future and endure in the long run. Yet, in the absence of a citation index for Patristics, a brief look at journals in our field proved that what has been published in the past has had and continues to have an impact on further studies. To give one example: looking through the volume of *Vigiliae Christianae*, published by Brill in Leiden in 2012, we see quoted articles by J. Patout Burns on Augustine, published in *Studia Patristica* 22 of 1989, by Basil Studer on Origenism from as far back as *Studia Patristica* 9 of 1966, Sebastian Brock's study on Ephrem, published in *Studia Patristica* 33 of 1997, Graham Gould on Pachomian monasticism from *Studia Patristica* 30 of 1997, J. McW. Dewart

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[9] See <http://oxfordpatristics.blogspot.co.uk/>.

on the Pelagian Controversy, published in *Studia Patristica* 17 of 1982, Maurice Wiles on Nicaea, from *Studia Patristica* 26 of 1991 and D.F. Wright on Julian Apostata, an article only recently published in *Studia Patristica* 39 of 2006. Seven articles in only one volume of *Vigiliae Christianae* indicates the presence and impact that our series has on current scholarship, let alone the vital exchange that is being initiated or enriched by the four-yearly gathering of hundreds of scholars in Oxford, now also supported by both the Conference website and its blog, to which almost a hundred readers have already subscribed.

One of the most recent innovations in editing *Studia Patristica* has been the introduction of smaller special thematic volumes. In 2013 we had nine such volumes: on 'Former Directors', 'Biblical Quotations in Patristic Texts', 'Early Monasticism and Classical *Paideia*', 'Rediscovering Origen', 'Evagrius Ponticus on Contemplation', 'Neoplatonism and Patristics', 'Early Christian Iconographies', 'New Perspectives on Late Antique *Spectacula*' and 'The Holy Spirit and Divine Inspiration in Augustine'; another is to follow on Lactantius, to appear with the articles of the 2015 Conference here. This development was the logical consequence of the directors' more rigorous designing, planning and mapping of international thematic workshops – entailing longer, more specific and more detailed papers, which in the past had been mostly restricted to plenary lectures and had often been published outside *Studia Patristica*. Giving those workshops a publishing platform within *Studia Patristica*, in co-editorship with their conveners, has provided the series with a substantial increase in shared responsibility within the scholarly community, a breadth of themes, interdisciplinarity and a higher number of volumes. In addition, several workshops, the contributions of which did not account for a full special volume, have been included in other volumes, still with co-editors, introductions and even responses to articles, as in the case of 'Tertullian and Rhetoric', edited by Willemien Otten as part of *Studia Patristica* 65.

When, in 1997, I was asked to give a paper on the last day of the Conference in parallel to Archbishop Rowan Williams' lecture, I gladly accepted, not through any aspiration to be a competitor to the speaker in the parallel slot, but to reflect about the nature of our Conference. In this yet unpublished paper on 'Postcolonial Patristics' I noted the then still Eurocentric-American presence and the lack of postcolonial, gender-, socio-anthropological, literary and reception studies at the Conference, compared to the growth of Patristics around the Pacific Rim, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. And although we are still far from mirroring these new trends, we are thankful that scholars from all continents have joined us and that workshops like 'Patristic Studies in Latin America', 'Foucault and the Practice of Patristics', and 'The Genres of Late Antique Literature' have found special entries in *Studia Patristica* 62, and that the section 'Nachleben' in *Studia Patristica* 69 opens with a paper from Argentina. At the same time, despite these innovations, the old roots are not neglected – especially the

international presence of languages other than English. As a non-native speaker myself, I know the familiarity that a congress breathes when papers are given in German, as others will feel when they can speak or listen to French, Italian or Spanish. With about 10% of all articles in the 2013 series being non-English, we are not disappointed, but can surely encourage more colleagues to give their papers and submit their publications in languages other than English.

Finally, a word of thanks – without students, colleagues, speakers and authors; without past and present fellow directors, the latter being also peer reviewers; without the tremendous work behind and at the scene by the Conference organising company, especially Priscilla Frost and Richard Hart, and the Publishers, especially the Peeters brothers and Bert Verrept; without the support of the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in the University of Oxford with all its colleges, and our own institutions; but most of all, without our families and friends who contribute to, encourage and stimulate our research, we would not be where we are with the Conference and *Studia Patristica*.

Studia Patristica

Frances YOUNG, Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK

My first Oxford patristic conference was in 1967, and that was F.L. Cross' last. I remember seeing an elderly figure from a distance at the garden party. So today I feel as if cast in the role of Irenaeus claiming to have known Polycarp, a kind of bridge across generations. We are here to celebrate the publication of the papers from the 2011 conference, 60 years on from the first in 1951. So Cross, the founder, must have the primary honourable mention. The first volumes of *Studia Patristica*, which contained the papers of the second conference in 1955, he himself edited. After his death, Elizabeth Livingstone continued to organise the conference and single-handedly edited 27 volumes covering the seven conferences from 1971 to 1995. Her dedication to ensuring Cross' legacy must also have honourable mention. Of course, in the beginning Cross also established parallel conferences in biblical studies. I guess they died a death because of multiple competing academic gatherings for those interested in the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament. By contrast, the Oxford Patristic Conference has gone from strength to strength with but few direct competitors. But this very success has also contributed to the changing character of the meeting.

Apart from an obvious interest in ecumenism, two versions of Cross' motivations have reached my ears. The first is that his intention was to give an opportunity to working clergy to keep up to date in their theological studies. The second is that he wanted to keep in touch with European scholars he'd known when he himself studied in Germany. I suspect that both were of influence. To invite scholars to give papers to each other, while the less expert listened in, would account for the character of the early conferences, which also allowed for less exalted short papers to be given by anyone maintaining a little scholarship alongside clerical duties. The 1955 conference produced two volumes published in 1957 by the Berlin Academy. Papers were given by Jaeger, Daniélou, Aland, Crouzel, Gribomont and Marrou – names to conjure with. It seems there were some 30 papers from France, eight from Germany, four from Rome and a couple from Russia; and as for the UK, the Golden Triangle offered some 24, while there seem to be as many from parishes as from other UK universities, about half a dozen each (I should note that it is not entirely easy to identify these categories given the small amount of information attached to each author). It would seem, then, that this collection of papers would bear out the double motivation I've attributed to Cross, and to some extent this remained

true for a long time, interested clergy being kept on Elizabeth Livingstone's mailing list and turning up on a regular basis. But the format which allowed for that was also the key to change: for with the expansion of postgraduate education the short, offered paper became a perfect vehicle for budding graduate students, myself included. So, by contrast to 1955, when as Chair of the Directors of the 2003 conference I was involved in editing *Studia Patristica*, there were five volumes of papers rather than two, and rarely do we find one from anyone outside the academic world – a couple at most.

And, increasingly, those budding graduate students came from across the Atlantic. For the purpose of this occasion I made a quick comparative analysis of the first two volumes of 1957 and the 10 published early this century in 2001 and 2006 (*i.e.* the papers from the 1999 and 2003 conferences, 5 volumes from each). This exercise demonstrated that huge gravitational shift from Europe to North America. Present in 1955, were just four distinguished scholars based in the US, not least my erstwhile supervisor from Chicago, Robert Grant, who remained a regular participant until at least 1995. By 1999, however, almost a third of the published papers were given by people from North America and 4 years later it was well over a third. And that's without attempting to identify the graduate students from across the Atlantic at UK universities, or indeed the brain drain from here to North America.

So the first shift to note is the professionalisation of the subject in academic terms, at least as represented by the conference volumes. The second is the greater ecumenical and global reach of the conference. Yes, in 1955, there was Roman Catholic participation, particularly from France and Rome, and even a couple of papers published in the Cyrillic alphabet. But the 10 volumes for 1999 and 2003 not only show participation from Germany and Northern Europe outstripping France and a big increase from Eastern Europe, but also contingents from Australia and ones or twos from Japan, Korea, South Africa, Alexandria and Jerusalem. Scholars from Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds dilute the distinctly Anglican ambience so evident in 1955.

It is against those gravitational shifts that I turn to consider questions about content, interests and methodology – what has happened to the nature of the subject over the 60 year period we're celebrating? When I was a student in Cambridge in the 60s, the theology curriculum remained largely that of a kind of classical Anglican traditionalism: Hebrew, Greek, biblical studies, doctrine – patristic and Reformation, church history, liturgy, philosophy. All this was profoundly wedded to the methods of philology and historical criticism. The early volumes of *Studia Patristica* reflect that mindset, and the research questions which engaged people were generated by the need to produce critical editions, uncover the sources behind extant texts, consider chronological issues, reconstruct events or the development of doctrine or liturgy, or interpret particular texts or authors in the context of their time. My first conference in 1967 was little different, and these matters still occupy the bulk of the 10 volumes published early

this century. Even so, changes are evident. In 1955, a large section headed *Theologica* contained papers on various Fathers: Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, as well as topics such as Christology, the Holy Spirit, the image of God, sin and absolution, grace, nature, Eucharistic theology, *mysterion*, *etc*. 50 years later, papers on individual Fathers, being so many, appear under a multiplicity of headings, such as, *First Two Centuries*; *Clement, Origen, Athanasius*; *The Cappadocians*; *Chrysostom*; *Other Greek Writers*; *The West to Hilary*; *Augustine*; *Other Latin Writers*. Besides, they're by no means all theological in focus; while those classical theological themes, not only appear far less frequently, but when they do they seem a bit like a throwback to an older style of approach. This, I suggest, is a mark of the move away from looking to the Fathers for the origin of Anglican doctrine, to reading them as belonging to a cultural world with rather different agendas. Asceticism shows a dramatic increase, for example.

Indeed, areas of interest have broadened fairly dramatically. In the first place, Greek and Latin are no longer virtually the only languages commanding scholarly interest. It's true that Hebrew should be added to that comment about the earlier volumes: in volume I, there was a section entitled *Iudaica*, with papers on midrash, the Essenes, Qumran and Jewish sects, and in volume II a section *Iuridica*, which included a paper on dietary laws in rabbinic and patristic literature, as well as one on Jewish law and Origen. But in those 10 more recent volumes occur large sections of *Orientalia*, mostly reflecting the vastly increased interest in Syriac studies, but also represented are studies in Armenian, Georgian and Ethiopic. And the broadening has also been in time span – Byzantine studies have burgeoned, alongside increasing interest in Late Antiquity among classicists. Historians and Art historians have not only taken us to John of Damascus and beyond, a development reinforced by greater participation of scholars from Eastern Orthodox traditions, but they've also made the subject more interdisciplinary, not so focused on ecclesiastical interests. Also, the subtleties of historical reconstruction have gone way beyond the once fashionable rehabilitation of heretics, as social and political history has helped to shift perspectives on doctrinal controversies, away from merely theological or exegetical argument to a complex of factors, away from the binary opposition of 'orthodox' and 'heretical' to a much more nuanced understanding of overlapping viewpoints and shifting alliances.

But all this largely remains in the realm of critical history, philology and exposition. Patristics has not experienced the methodological challenges of hermeneutics and post-modern critical theory in the same radical way as New Testament studies. There have been odd shots across the bows – indeed, already in 1955 there was one paper addressing the hermeneutical gap between past and present, L.S. Thornton, 'St. Irenaeus and Contemporary Theology'; and I confess to having attempted myself to raise issues of post-modern criticism at the conferences of 1995 and 1999, to apparently little effect. Yet the impact of

post-modernism can be discerned in more subtle ways. Perhaps the most obvious is the feminist voice found not only in the increasing participation of women scholars, but also the focus on women's issues, their roles, their position, their influence, as well as a marked increase in papers concerned with Mariology. But there are other indicators:

– *Iudaica* no longer appears as a heading in the more recent volumes, but browse among the papers and there are many discussions of anti-Jewish traditions – post-Holocaust sensitivities have entered the field.
– There is a huge increase in papers concerned with the rhetoric – which is, I suggest, the respectable way of transferring post-modern interests in discourse and its powers, political and otherwise, into the categories of antiquity.
– Allied with that are studies which show how identities were constructed – those of one's opponents as well as one's own.

So occasional references to semiotics, which certainly occur in relation to icons and Augustine, or indeed to postcolonial criticism, which occurs in a paper on Justin's conversion, is just the visible tip of a larger iceberg. As in any other subject area, the contemporary intellectual climate tends to shape the research questions posed. Interests shift, perspectives change. The Oxford conferences and their record in *Studia Patristica* is a vital barometer of our subject area. Long may that remain the case.

The Use and Abuse of Patristics

Mark Edwards, Christ Church, Oxford, UK

The embryo of this article was a talk delivered at the launch of the eighteen noble volumes of proceedings from the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, held at Oxford in August 2011. One of these volumes (whose rapid publication we owe to the skill and industry of Markus Vinzent) was a collection of articles on former directors of the conference who are no longer alive – more precisely on six directors, together with W.H.C. Frend, an eminent scholar who corresponded freely with the board of directors but never became a member.[1] The book launch gave the contributors a further opportunity for to take stock of the achievements and limitations of patristic scholarship in the United Kingdom during the second half of the twentieth century. My own talk was an improvisation without notes, now forgotten by me and (I hope) by everyone present; at the request of Professor Vinzent, however, I am now giving written form to some of the tentative conclusions (they could hardly be styled convictions) at which I have arrived after twenty years as a director of the conference, still the largest as well as the oldest gathering of patristic scholars in the world.

I said at the time that each director had received his due. Leslie Cross, the founder of the conference, could be aptly remembered only by his former secretary Elizabeth Livingstone, who single-handedly organized the conference for over forty years. Frances Young puts questions to Maurice Wiles with the courteous assiduity that characterized his own essays in revision. Christopher Stead, who applied the philosopher's scalpel to the tender points of many Christian arguments, is honoured with an astute critique of one of his own conjectures by a philosopher, Catherine Rowett, who was also his doctoral student. The most seminal work of William Frend, the dragoman of French archaeology to his British colleagues, is reviewed by Eric Rébillard, a Francophone whose knowledge of the last fifty years of archaeological literature is no less encyclopaedic. For an appreciation of Robert Markus the current directors turned to William Klingshirn, a scholar of distinction in a field that Markus himself did much to open. As for the Olympian Henry Chadwick, so catholic in his sympathies, so indefatigably competent in so many domains of knowledge, who but Rowan Williams could write of him in an answerable style?

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[1] *SP* 53 ('*Former Directors*') (2013).

The subject of my own contribution to this volume, written in collaboration with Markus Vinzent, was J.N.D. Kelly, author of *Early Christian Creeds* and *Early Christian Doctrines*, and a director of the conference in 1971. Collating reviews of *Early Christian Doctrines* on its first appearance in 1958, I found that, faultless though it was in its realisation of the author's purpose, the book had been poorly received because its selective and teleological account of the development of doctrine was even then an anachronism in scholarly circles. Republished four times with cursory revision, the volume has none the less become a monument – some would say a mausoleum – in which many students at Oxford still take shelter when preparing for their final examination in Theology. I observed at the end that Kelly's work has not been superseded; in this article I hope to develop my argument and to show that the aspiration of modern scholarship should not be to supersede it but to establish a new conception of the subject which would destroy the purpose of any such enterprise. I write in the knowledge that study of the early church is still undertaken primarily by believers for believers, and am happy that it should be so. And I write only as a seeker and an apprentice, in the hope that among the scholars who have truly mastered the history of European thought there may be one who has time to accomplish at least one of the undone tasks that I have listed at the end.

Patristics as theology

Faculties of Theology in England have given a central place in the syllabus to patristics because it thought to provide the permanent norms of Christian reflection. There was a time in Oxford when the syllabus went no further than 461, the year in which Leo the Great acknowledged the Council of Chalcedon. The fundamental truths of Christianity – still defined, even in its obsolescence, by the Athanasian Creed – were that God subsists as a Trinity in three persons and that Christ is a single person in two natures: the laws which had established the Church of England had forbidden the application of any test of orthodoxy beyond adherence to the watchwords of Chalcedon and Nicaea, and there were thus no further subtleties to be mastered so long as the inculcation of orthodoxy was the prime object of the degree. It was the candour and erudition of Anglican scholarship, of such ardent yet unopinionated Christians as Geoffrey Lampe and Maurice Wiles,[2] that gave the death-blow to this Procrustean notion of a clergyman's duties to his own powers of reason. On the one hand, they had listened to the biblical scholars of Tübingen and Marburg, who informed that the foundations on which the dogmas of the church had been erected were far from stable. On the other hand, they argued that the intelligent Christian of the

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[2] G.W. Lampe, *God as Spirit* (Oxford, 1977); M.F. Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, 1967), 167-81; and much of *Working Papers in Doctrine* (London, 1976).

twentieth century could no longer believe what the fathers believed with regard to the age of the universe, the constitution of matter, the relation of soul to body or the malleability of the laws of nature: if, therefore, there was any cohesion between the thought of the fathers and the world in which they lived, it was self-evidently impossible for us to think with the same coherence unless we jettisoned most of their beliefs. If systematic theology was still to be part of any larger system, it could be true to the fathers only by displaying an innovative hospitality to ideas which were not grounded in apostolic revelation.

This was taking the fathers seriously, although not seriously enough for those who continued to see the business of theology as the assignation of labels rather than the construction of arguments. The practice of stigmatizing one's interlocutors as Gnostics, Arians or Nestorians is by no means dead in Anglican theology, and is exhibited even in the works of those who have studied the intellectual revolutions of the twentieth century more profoundly than Lampe or Wiles. And indeed it would be unfair to accuse them of simple atavism. The content of the orthodoxy to which they appeal is frequently elusive: the use of scripture does not follow any accredited principle of exegesis, and even the creeds appear to function as catalysts rather than articles of faith. At the other pole of the protestant world, American evangelicals have attempted to wed the Trinitarian piety of the fathers to a polarisation of faith and works to which they did not subscribe.[3] Meanwhile, Roman adepts of the *nouvelle théologie* and the liberal movements that have succeeded it have returned with fresh eyes to the literature behind the letter of the ecclesiastical formularies. They may not be prepared, like the Anglican sceptics, to suggest that 'Christology rests on a mistake'[4] or that the Holy Spirit is a personified circumlocution for the name of God; for all that, the catholicity of De Lubac is not the rigid Catholicism of the old school, for whom it is the letter, not the spirit, that giveth life.

De Lubac is the one great patrologist of the mid-twentieth century who was also a great theologian. His study entitled *Augustinianism and Modern Theology* (New York, 1969) was an erudite vindication of the thesis of his famous book, *Le Surnaturel* (Paris, 1946) that human beings have never existed, and have never been conceived in catholic thought as though they could exist, in a natural state that is wholly bereft of grace. In arguing, against Suarez, that the concept of the natural man is not to be found in Aquinas or Augustine, De Lubac turns the tables on such militant Augustinians as Baius, Jansen and Luther by convicting them of unconscious Pelagianism.[5] Engagement at close quarters with these recognised doctors of the church enables him to clarify his own thesis, which does not make human beings divine by nature – thus denying the gratuitousness of grace – but on the contrary affirms that the grace of God

[3] Thomas C. Oden, *Classic Christianity. A Systematic Theology* (San Francisco, 2009).
[4] M.F. Wiles, 'Does Christology rest on a Mistake?', *Religious Studies* 6 (1970), 1-6.
[5] *Augustinianism*, 41; 83 nn. 98, 99.

is so freely given that neither sin nor death can bar us from the supernatural
end for which we were created. The man without grace does not possess even
a counterfactual status for the Christian who regards the will of God as the sole
determinant of natural possibility. This is good patristic reasoning, as it is also
good Barthian reasoning, though in the hands of Karl Rahner, the doctrine of
ubiquitous grace assumed a form unacceptable to Barth and strange, in wording
at least, to the idiom of the fathers.[6] Rahner's use of scripture is also heavily
conditioned by the practices of current German scholarship; De Lubac, by
contrast, offered a learned and sympathetic review of early Christian approaches
to the bible in the first two volumes of his great work *L'Exégèse Mediévale*
(Paris, 1959). When we take into account the pervasive appeals to patristic
literature in his first important book, *Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du
dogme* (Paris, 1938) and the eclectic florilegium which he appended to that
volume, it would be difficult to name a theologian of modern times who has
worked so assiduously to draw the Fathers into modern conversations.

We may fairly ask, none the less, how many Christians in the modern world
have entered these conversations. *L'Exégèse Mediévale* is a historical survey,
not a theological manifesto; even the seductive illustrations of patristic criticism
which were published, in the wake of De Lubac's researches, by Jean Daniélou[7]
were not widely received as credible alternatives to the historic-critical method.
The revolt against the tyranny of this method (which has not yet acquired the
force of a revolution) was prompted by the encounter of theology with Marxist,
Freudian, structuralist and post-structuralist philosophies, none of which can be
reconciled with the axioms of the *nouvelle théologie*. The thesis of *Le Surna-
turel* continues to excite debate, but outside the narrowing circles in which the
paramount authority of Augustine is still acknowledged, theologians seem to
fear that the use of his name would only complicate a question that is already
too abstruse. And there are, we must remember, circles in which Augustine is
only a saint by courtesy – above all in the Anglican communion, where he has
always been regarded as the father of both Calvinism and Romanism, and now
has a reputation as an enemy to women and sexual freedom. There are of
course other Augustines: the Augustine of the philosophers, for example, who
furnishes a classic definition of God, invents the will or even the very notion
of the self, lays down the conditions for just war and proclaims, twelve hundred
years before Descartes, that even if I am deceived about everything else, I can-
not be deceived about my existence. And then there is the Augustine of the
theological critics of philosophy, who, far from being an Anselm, a Kant, a
Grotius or a Descartes before the fact, had the wisdom to see what they did not
see – that the truths of faith must play the role of axioms, not theorems, in a
Christian philosophy, since they are neither provable nor in need of proof. This

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[6] See especially Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* I (London, 1962), 297-349.
[7] See *e.g.* Jean Daniélou, *Sacramentum futuri* (Paris, 1950); *Bible et liturgie* (Paris, 1951).

is a figure more like the true Augustine, but not one whose acquaintance will be ardently desired outside the Barthian tradition. Modern theologians count the defence of Christianity, if not of religion itself, among their duties, and the authority of the church – a more elusive thing to Barth than to Augustine – is the very thing that sympathetic observers of religion in the modern age are most inclined to doubt.

It often seems that British theology of the modern era looks to the Fathers, or at least to the Greeks among them, as its saviours from Augustine. The most well-known essay of this kind is John Hick's *Evil and the God of Love* (London, 1968) an unwitting republication of an eighteenth-century Anglican theodicy which its author, Soame Jenyns,[8] may have derived surreptitiously from Virgil.[9] Unencumbered by the biblical notion of the fall of Adam, Virgil maintained that the hardships of agriculture were not evils, but divinely-ordained incentives to human labour and ingenuity. Irenaeus, whom Hick invokes in preference to Virgil, is not without some notion of a primal sin and a fall, but he regarded this as the venial transgression of an infant who had not yet grown to maturity. He appears to hold that God had a plan for the education of the human race through Christ which did not involve the Cross, yet he writes at times as though he could imagine no other means of moral instruction than the experience of sin. For Hick the doctrine of the fall originates with Augustine and Irenaeus is his antitype: in the theodicy to which Hick gives his names the incarnation disappears and sin becomes 'epistemic distance', to be remedied only by the gradual ripening of sympathy and virtue. Hick is not professing to offer a scholarly reading of Irenaeus – after all, it was Keats from whom he took the phrase 'vale of soul-making' – but his book has helped to propagate a false antithesis between the Greek and the Latin traditions. It has also given wide currency to a dangerous mistranslation of a passage in which Irenaeus attributes to God a desire that humanity should 'grow strong'.[10] The Victorian translator, who should have known better, rendered the Latin *convalescere* as 'recover', and was obliged to fill the logical lacuna that he had created by adding in brackets 'from the disease of sin'. Hick infers that sin was part of God's design and therefore inevitable; the translation on which he relied is still the only one in common use, and the error is repeated every four years by at least one speaker at Oxford's international conference in patristic studies.

Latin is the language in which all but a handful of passages from the last four books of Irenaeus survive. Nevertheless, he is now held up as a privileged mouthpiece of the Greek tradition by Orthodox theologians, who credit him with holding, in opposition to the supposed views of Augustine, that it is only the likeness, not the image, of God that was lost in the fall. In fact Irenaeus

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[8] Soame Jenyns, *A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (London, 1757).

[9] Virgil, *Georgics* 1.121-2: *pater ipse colendi/ haud facilem viam esse voluit.*

[10] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.38.2 at J. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (1968), 219.

speaks ambiguously, while Augustine makes his own contrast between the image and the likeness,[11] in contrast to Cyril and the Cappadocians, who (justifiably) treat these biblical nouns as synonyms. This re-adoption of a neglected ancestor exemplifies two traits which modern Orthodoxy shares with the Anglicanism of previous centuries: a belief that the longest pedigree is the best proof of a doctrine and a propensity to define its faith against that of the Roman Church. Nowadays incomplete and stochastic thinking is supposed to be the most salient, and perhaps the sole, Anglican virtue;[12] the Church of England's theologians turn to Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas for information that they could glean more copiously, and through a less tendentious filter, from Bishop Bull.

Bull affirmed the harmony of the Fathers;[13] Lossky and Zizioulas believe in setting them at odds. When the Cappadocians use the noun *prosôpon* as an alternative to hypostasis, both scholars see in this an anticipation of the modern notion of personhood, which Lossky has glossed as 'the irreducibility of hypostasis to essence'.[14] If there is good evidence for this in the actual words of the Cappadocians, the methods of citation which these authors employ will not help the reader to find it: too often it appears to be assumed that the luminous truth of a doctrine gives us a sufficient proof of its Cappadocian pedigree, and conversely that its Cappadocian pedigree is sufficient proof of its soundness. A necessary corollary of ascribing any doctrine to these great masters is the ascription of a contrary, and therefore erroneous, doctrine, to some Latin doctor, most commonly Augustine.[15] And yet it is often easier to find texts that have escaped them in Augustine than to rediscover what they purport to have read in the eastern Fathers. Augustine, for example, states in plain terms that the Godhead is identical with God himself, and hence that there is no impersonal 'stuff' of divinity prior to the three persons.[16] By contrast the Nicene

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[11] *On Diverse Questions* 51. For Irenaeus see *Against Heresies* 5.6.1, but also 4.38.3 and 5.16.1.

[12] Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities* (Cambridge, 2004) – a fine book, though one wonders whether John Pearson and James Ussher would have said so.

[13] See especially vv. 5 and 6 of the collected works of George Bull, ed. Edwards Burtin (Oxford, 1846); J.-L. Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), 344-9.

[14] V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York, 1974), 115.

[15] J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York, 1985), 41n, 44n and 88 insinuates, without expressly asserting, that westerners posit a 'naked substance' of divinity prior to the three hypostases.

[16] Augustine, *On the Trinity* 4.11.12: *ipse sua sic dici potest deitas*. For Augustine (as for his Greek predecessor Didymus in his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, translated by Jerome) the term *deus* is identical in denotation, though not in connotation, with *pater, filius, spiritus* and *substantia*. The same may be true for Zizioulas if he can infer from Nazianzen, *Oration* 29.16 that 'Father' and 'Son' are names that betoken particular 'modes of existence' or 'existential states of being': see *Being as Communion* (1985), 235-6.

Creed of 325 appears to draw a tacit distinction between the 'substance' of God the Father and his person;[17] and, while it might be invidious, it would not be absurd to charge Gregory of Nyssa with maintaining that the three persons owe their unity to the common possession of an abstract *theotês* or divinity. Orthodox writers affirm that, by grounding the unity of the three persons in the Father, they can escape this infelicitous conclusion; whether Nyssen and Nazianzen do so or not,[18] the pronouncement of Zizioulas that the whole substance of the Trinity resides in God the Father is more redolent of Tertullian than of any Greek divine.[19] No impeachment of Zizioulas as a theologian is intended here: the purpose of these comments is to illustrate the dangers to which theologians are exposed when they practice scholarship in a spirit of emulation.

It was in such a spirit, no doubt, that Thomas Torrance denounced Augustine as the father of the 'Latin heresy', which teaches that Christ assumed a fallen human nature.[20] The antidote to this error he found in the teaching of Karl Barth, whom he extolled as the latter-day heir to Athanasius. The Alexandrian patriarch was Torrance's benchmark of orthodoxy throughout his life, and he wove his teaching (even that of the spurious fourth *Oration against the Arians*) into a somewhat augmented synthesis of Cappadocian thought which he christened 'the Trinitarian faith'.[21] As an accomplished philosopher of science, he produced a book which only he could have written on the cosmological premises of Christian hermeneutics in antiquity;[22] unfortunately his lifelong hopes of effecting a reunion between the Reformed and Orthodox churches prevented him from dealing fairly with Origen, who ought of course to have been the centrepiece of any such volume. He did, however, learn to discern the merits of Augustine, and in an essay comparing him with Gregory Nazianzen, he commends them both for eschewing the typically 'Cappadocian' doctrine that the whole Godhead owes its unity to the Father.[23] Torrance, it appears, could embrace the fathers only as we enjoy the seasons, one at a time.

Contradicting Zizioulas has become a standard exercise for postgraduates, a perennial source of melancholy to the organizer of a patristic conference. All such performances have been rendered otiose by Morwenna Ludlow's lucid and judicious monograph *Gregory of Nyssa, Ancient and (Post)modern* (Oxford,

[17] This fact is simply ignored by A. Edward Siecinski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (New York, 2010), who substitutes the creed of 381 for the Nicene Symbol of 325.

[18] J. Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: the Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution', in C. Schwöbel, *Trinitarian Theology Today* (Edinburgh, 1995), 44-60, 52 goes much further than his source (Nazianzen, *Oration* 42) when he asserts that 'the One God is the Father'.

[19] Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 9.2: *pater enim tota substantia* est.

[20] T.F. Torrance, 'Karl Barth and the Latin Heresy', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39 (1986), 461-82.

[21] T.F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh, 1988).

[22] T.F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh, 1995).

[23] T.F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh, 1994).

2009). It is easy enough for an author so conversant with Gregory's works to gauge the distance between his own words and the paraphrases of those whose acquaintance with them is more desultory and whose aims are less often critical than constructive. At the same time, Ludlow does not claim that the theology of Zizioulas will be impoverished if it is found to lack any precedent in Gregory of Nyssa: his motion of personhood is sufficiently interesting in its own right to provide matter for reflection, just as (to take another of her numerous inter-locutors) John Milbank's critique of secular ideologies will not become less cogent if he is shown to be the true author of the insights that he purports to have derived by exegesis from older texts. The result is an excellent book, but one that, far from proving the value of patristics, might be thought to show that the fathers can render only cosmetic service to a modern theologian. A thinker need not be a scholar, least of all in an age that is likely to witness the funeral of the book.

Sarah Coakley's latest publication draws impartially, and in an oecumenical spirit, on both Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine.[24] Both, because they regard our present state as one of imperfection awaiting transformation, seem to her to escape the quandaries into which modern theologians have been forced by stereotypical accounts of human nature and the division of the sexes. Her discussions of both authors are perspicacious and well-informed, if not exhaustive, and she feels no need to flatter one by libelling the other. Yet academic, even academic theologians who work outside the ecclesiastical milieu, will often be struck by the hermetic character of her questions and her mode of answering them. She assumes that the reader's interest will be shaped by the debates that currently dominate Anglican synods; she assumes a common standard of ortho-doxy which is not subject to repeal or in need of defence, although its origins are historically obscure; and she can even assume that theologians pondering the role of the Holy Spirit will be assisted by a questionnaire to parishioners who have no claim to expertise beyond the occupation of an English pew.[25] There is no systematic theology here, as that term was once understood in the Church of England and no apologetic of the kind for which the Anglican tradi-tion was once renowned. This is not a criticism but the observation of a lay theologian (using 'lay' in its proper sense) for whom the academy is the chief organ of engagement with the world.

In her recent Bampton lectures,[26] Frances Young does not pretend that the dilemma of the modern theologian can be resolved by a perusal of the fathers. She tells us, indeed, that the fathers themselves adhered, so far as was possible in their own day, to the historico-critical method which is sometimes opposed

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[24] S. Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self* (Cambridge, 2013), 100-51.
[25] S. Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self* (2013), 151-92.
[26] F.M. Young, *God's Presence: A Contemporary Recapitulation of Early Christianity* (Cambridge, 2013).

in the name of faith by Christian readers of the New Testament. The commentaries of Basil and Augustine on the *Book of Genesis* serve, she concludes, as a warning against attempts to yoke the discoveries of science to a naively literal understanding of the scriptures.[27] Nevertheless, she does suggest intermittently that one motive for revisiting these early Christian texts is to reclaim forgotten tools which may be employed with profit against the hostile assumptions of modernity. In my view, such exhumations have at best a rhetorical value. The speculations of fourth-century authors on the soul's union with the body may be varied enough to demonstrate that Cartesian dualism is not an oecumenical tenet of Christianity; but if we are seeking a philosophically rigorous and scientifically cogent account of this relation, the writings of Thomas Nagel, Daniel Dennett and Donald Davidson will be more illuminating than those of Gregory of Nyssa or Nemesius of Emesa.[28] For this reason I wish to suggest in the second half of this article that, rather than co-opting the fathers into our time, the theologian must be willing to spend some time in theirs.

Patristics as a historical discipline

What I hope to have shown so far is that the survival of patristics cannot depend upon the patronage of modern theologians. For one thing, the ways of modern theologians are too often opaque to their academic peers and their lay co-religionists, and all the more so when they are most resolutely up-to-date. For another, if the debates that now engage us are incommensurable (as they surely are) with those that engaged the fathers, it makes no more sense to recruit them as our allies than to send cavalry against tanks. The thing is done none the less, and it can often be difficult even for historians to see through the conscript livery to the flesh and blood of Irenaeus or Gregory of Nyssa. I am strongly convinced, however, that it is only as historians – as resolutely unprejudiced and disinterested historians – that students of patristics can now hope to cement their position in the academy; I also believe that this holds good for every other branch of theology. It is an unnoticed paradox of the modern age that what we once called the science of divinity is now reckoned among the humanities, and the goal of humanism, as its pioneers conceived it, is the ennoblement of human thought and conduct through the imitation of all that has been well done in the past. Today this practical aim is largely obsolete: few of us profess to teach the rudiments of eloquence and virtue, though we may still

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[27] *Ibid*. 47-52.
[28] See especially *ibid*. 112-7. Since the fathers typically regarded the soul as an entity which subsists alone between the dissolution of the body and the last judgment, they cannot be wholly acquitted of dualism; nor should we wish to acquit them, if we study the observations of A.O. Lovejoy, *The Revolt against Dualism* (La Salle, Illinois, 1960).

hope to be inculcating habits of observation and reflection that will enhance both the integrity and the competence of our pupils in their subsequent careers. History, in the old sense of inquiry for its own sake, has become the master discipline, setting standards of rigour and erudition by which all the rest are appraised. We may think it regrettable that there is so much science and so little art in the researches of modern historians, but we cannot deny that, as a tribe, they surpass their predecessors in tenacity of argument, in accuracy of statement, and above all in their refusal to judge a case on half the facts.

Now the love of truth is also a moral virtue, and according to some religions the foundation of all moral virtue. We may therefore think it strange that, of all the academic disciplines, theology is the one that has most often claimed the right to dispense with ordinary canons of objectivity. We have noted that constructive theology often begins from a point that no-one outside the discipline would choose to occupy; by contrast the historian has no difficulty in identifying the data of biblical scholarship and will often admire the stringency of its methods. At the same, the historian will notice with disquiet that the sayings which a scholar is prepared to ascribe to Jesus are almost always those which the scholar himself endorses, that fantastic or anachronistic pictures of the ambient culture have been constructed to justify the removal of certain elements from the Gospel, that layer upon layer of redaction has been confidently posited on no other grounds than the critic's inability to make the text say what he wishes it to say. Classicists are puzzled to learn that, alone of all texts in antiquity, the gospels were written not by individuals but by communities, and that these communities were as discrete as modern denominations. This is not to say that other disciplines have nothing to learn from biblical criticism – ancient historians, for example, might profitably make a little more use of the hermeneutic of suspicion – but we can readily pardon the student of ancient Greek who regards the New Testament as foreign territory.

If biblical scholarship is a closed shop, the chief obstacle to progress in patristics has been the closed mind. Until the last few decades, the typical scholar in this field was a male cleric, writing partly to vindicate and partly to reform his own communion. The Anglican's task was to demonstrate that the creeds are apostolic and the papacy a corruption; the German Evangelical rehearsed a sorry tale of decadence from Paul to Luther; the Roman catholic put his faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to unfold, and go on unfolding, what was implicit in the primitive revelation. All accepted a linear narrative of the development of doctrine under inexorable forces, whether these were conceived as immanent or external. It also generally held that, with rare exceptions, those who were heretics in their own time are heretics today, and that their opinions do not repay inspection. Among past directors of the Patristics Conference, Kelly and Chadwick did little to change this, though they did much to refine the accuracy of the inherited narrative. It was Frend above all who persuaded his compatriots that politics and demography may have been no less

germane to affairs of the church in the time than in those of Aquinas and Calvin. It was Wiles who challenged the venerable arguments that were supposed to have overthrown Arius, and who showed that it was not ignorance of the bible that engendered theological dispute in the early church but the unanimous admission of its authority in every jot and tittle. It was Stead who, by examining the deep structure of Christian thought, took the study of its relation to Greek theology beyond the anecdotal. None of them worked alone or without the inspiration of others, but students of the ancient Christian world, at least in British universities, will find it difficult to name three scholars to whom they owe so great a debt.

Now in the twenty-first century it has become not only possible but usual to read Greek and Latin texts of Christian origin as classicists or historians read Greek and Latin texts of pagan origin. This does not mean that the fathers are read without reverence, any more than Plato and Aristotle are read without reverence by their modern interpreters. It means that reverence does not take the form of unqualified deference, that princes of the church who achieved a rare fusion of eloquence, piety and ratiocination are perceived to be in many respects no better than their times. Again it means that we shall extend as sympathetic a reading to those whom the church calls heretics as to those whom I have hitherto styled fathers in this essay. These terms signify only that posterity has preferred some authors to others; in themselves they need be no more laudatory or pejorative than the terms 'canonical' and 'apocryphal' in biblical studies. The application of the historian's tools to both the content and the context of early Christian literature will bring a gain in empirical knowledge, which, if all truth is one, must also bring an advance in theological understanding. A further advantage is that, as theologians have learned to read their cherished texts in this dispassionate spirit, other students of the ancient world have come to think that these texts may also be worthy of their attention. To the modern patrologist Peter Brown and Timothy Barnes are as indispensable as Wiles and Chadwick; conversely, no historian who has grown up in their shadow would follow the example of E.R. Dodds, whose seminal essay *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* is studiously indifferent to the theological premises of his Christian informants.

It may be objected that, whereas classicists spend their hours in the company of gods in whom they do not believe, theologians typically share the faith of the authors whom they study; hence they are not likely to give the same answer to the question 'Why study the past?'[29] In present circumstances, however, neither discipline would be well advised to return an answer that attributes a normative status to the writings of the dead. Nor will curiosity always suffice

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[29] Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past?* (London, 2005), 111 concurs with the argument of this article that the 'otherness' of the past must be respected if the study of it is to inform present actions.

as a motive, notwithstanding the prominence of translations from Greek and Latin in our literary reviews and the public appetite for televised excavations. The study of ancient philosophy may require an intellectual justification, which will not succeed if it limits itself to the handful of Aristotelian aphorisms that might still pass muster in a current journal. The Stagirite, with his unmatched powers of definition and discrimination, can be a seminal interlocutor in current discussions of ethics, political science and literary theory; his physics, on the other hand, is a dead letter, and to those who speak the language of Frege and Russell his ontology seems both ambiguous and antiquated. As for Plato, the fountainhead of European philosophy, what modern intelligence can assimilate his political recipes, his aesthetic puritanism, his cosmogony or his teaching on the eternity of the soul? For all that, his works have not even now become otiose; on the contrary, the fact that so keen an intellect could believe so many things that we find incredible seems to verify the thesis of Kuhn and Colling-wood that every epoch has its own moral and metaphysical axioms which give way imperceptibly, and not always explicably, to the next revolution in thought. If Plato's axioms cannot be ours, we may wonder whether ours are any more incontrovertible, and such doubts may nourish both historical empathy and seminal reflection.

So too with the fathers – using this word loosely, as the heretics too are in some sense our fathers – the academic who is also a believer will not pass off a mere paraphrase of their writings as a contribution either to scholarship or to apologetics. There are indeed some insights that could be profitably republished without a caveat: thus exegetes who were native speakers of Greek and not so far removed in time from the apostolic age were conscious of symbolic struc-tures, polyvalent idioms and dense webs of allusion that modern critics have rediscovered only under the influence of 'literary theory'.[30] But whatever is claimed for Origen's method,[31] it has the defects of its virtues, and we cannot join him in seeing a type of Christ's descent into Hades in every scriptural act of 'going down', whether the subject be Joseph in Egypt, Jeremiah in the pot-ter's shop or Job in ignominy. Again, while the modern reading of the *Song of Songs* as an amorous duet may be possible only for modern readers,[32] we may fairly suspect that Gregory of Nyssa has added more layers of occultation to the author's intended meaning than he has removed. And no-one with the most

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[30] Derrida and Barthes are invoked, but hardly imitated, in Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renun-ciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, 1999). Modern hermeneutics has its roots in Reformation controversies over the exegesis of scripture – see William Dilthey, *Hermeneutics and the Study of History* (Princeton, 1996), 33-49 – and it could be argued that the post-modernists, in their revolt against the 'traditional' methods of philology, are claiming the right to read all books as only scripture used to be read.

[31] See *e.g.* the labyrinthine monograph by M.V. Niculescu, *The Spell of the Logos* (Piscataway, NJ, 2009).

[32] See further Edmee Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God* (Oxford, 2009).

rudimentary knowledge of modern physics will embrace Gregory's conjecture that on the last day each immortal soul will reassemble the atoms of the body from which it was parted when it paid the debt of sin.

If we turn with relief (and who does not?) from our contemporaries to Gregory, it will not be because he resolves more of our difficulties, but because he offers a model for the practice of theology that we scarcely know how to emulate today. Our theories of inspiration may be trivial or tyrannical, but when pushed to their logical end they seem more often to impoverish than to enrich the natural meaning of the text. Books on religion and science proliferate, but their usual object is to put an end to hostilities not to extend the scope of theology by scientific reasoning. Scholars may be devout, but they cannot pour their devotion into expository prose without leaving a sense of discord. If we have outgrown Gregory's science and cannot endorse his theory of inspiration, the task of today's apologist will be not so much to appropriate his teachings as to perform for our time the enterprise that he performed for his – without the equivocations that disfigure some of his writings, and without the hope of an oecumenical council to eradicate dissent.

In my article on J.N.D. Kelly I opined that it would be almost impossible for a modern academic to produce a book that would supersede his *Early Christian Doctrines*. At the same time, I would say that the great desideratum in patristic studies is an approach to doctrinal history in which the heretics take their place with the orthodox in the foreground, the hinterland being reserved for those whose opinions were too trite to have any influence on the evolution of doctrine.[33] The next step will be taken when we understand the word 'evolution' to signify every outcome of controversy or doctrinal innovation, acknowledging that the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon were, in the quantitative sense, no more oecumenical than those of Basle or Trent. Such a project might be the overture to longer histories, in which, as in a Darwinian account of natural selection, each new experiment in Christian thought is treated, not as an inevitable amelioration of a defective system, but as a response to contingent changes in the social, intellectual or political milieu. We might, for example, imagine a history of apologetics from antiquity to the present, which would examine changes in the nature of the thing defended, and in the definition of the problems to be resolved. What, we might ask, were the aims of apologists in different epochs? Were they advancing defences of religion, of Christianity, or of one particular form of Christianity? How was the problem of evil conceived in

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[33] For the metaphor see M.J. Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy in the Early Church* (Farnham, 2009), 7. Reviewing this book in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010), 575- 6, Sebastian Moll appears to misunderstand the word 'hinterland' to mean 'unexplored territory'. I have cited the redoubtable monographs by Winrich Löhr and Christoph Markschies which he commends to me as though I had overlooked them, but neither of these authors has yet undertaken a history of early Christian doctrine in which the heretics share the foreground with the fathers.

different periods, and what solutions were deemed acceptable? How did Christian apologetic impinge upon, or draw new strength from similar enterprises in the Jewish and Moslem worlds?

Such a project takes us far from the ancient world, and that is as it should be, for the classicist's claim to be the trustee of our common patrimony is chimerical so long as he forgets that it was Christian scribes who preserved the works of Homer, Plato and Aeschylus and that only one Greek book – a book that Homer, Plato and Aeschylus never saw – has been widely read outside the academy. We have said that if theology is to survive it must acquire the academic probity of other disciplines; but if, I suspect, the academic pursuit of theology is essential to the perpetuation of what we call Christian culture, it may be that it will prove at last to be the water of life to these same disciplines, replenishing the wells from which it draws.

PLATONISM AND THE FATHERS

An Origenistic Reading of Plato in
Nag Hammadi Codex VI

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ABSTRACT

The Coptic version of an excerpt from Plato's *Republic* (588b-589b) in Nag Hammadi Codex VI (NHC VI,5) diverges in several ways from its Greek original. Scholars have explained these divergences by positing that the translator was incompetent, or had Gnosticizing purposes, or both. Although the Coptic translator indeed demonstrates an imperfect understanding of Plato's Greek, the most significant departures from Plato are likely due to a conscious adaptation inspired by Origen, holding that the pre-existent rational souls were created in the image of God, but lost this image when they were subsequently incarnated into human bodies. This hypothesis contributes to the understanding of the Nag Hammadi Codices not as the products of 'Gnostic' sectarians, but rather books used by Egyptian monks with Origenistic sympathies, who were indeed accused of reading apocryphal books in the controversy that erupted in the late fourth century.

Introduction

It took nearly thirty years after the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices for scholars to realize that one of the texts in codex VI (NHC VI,5) was, in fact, a garbled Coptic translation of a passage from Plato's *Republic* (book IX, 588b-589b).[2] This is the passage where, in the Greek original, Socrates asks Glaucon to imagine the tripartite soul as an image of a human, a lion, and a many-headed beast, representing respectively the rational, spirited and appetitive parts of the soul. In the Coptic version, however, the interlocutors are unnamed, and it appears that the images of the tripartite soul have been reified.

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[2] Hans-Martin Schenke, 'Zur Faksimile-Ausgabe der Nag-Hammadi-Schriften', *OLZ* 69 (1974), 235-42.

Not much has been written on the Coptic excerpt since Louis Painchaud's French edition, published in 1983,[3] except for introductions in various translations of the Nag Hammadi Codices.[4] Painchaud's introduction and commentary, together with an Italian article by Tito Orlandi,[5] can therefore be considered to constitute the *status quaestionis*, and they both consider the text to have been translated into Coptic by an Egyptian Gnostic, who superposed a Gnosticizing interpretation on his translation. Painchaud and Orlandi wrote their treatments of the text well before the influential critiques of Michael A. Williams and Karen King[6] on the term 'Gnosticism', and the time is consequently ripe to reassess the text, which is the only Coptic translation of a classical philosophical text we possess. The present contribution will follow the hypothesis of a monastic rather than Gnostic provenance for the Nag Hammadi Codices, recently argued at length by Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott.[7] In line with this paradigm, it will be argued that some of the divergences from Plato's Greek text found in the Coptic translation can be best explained with reference to Origenistic teachings popular in fourth-century Egyptian monastic milieus.

A short description of the excerpt

The short excerpt only takes up a bit over three pages near the middle of Nag Hammadi Codex VI. It starts on the middle of page 48, directly after the subscript title of the previous treatise, *The Concept of Our Great Power* (NHC VI,4), from which it is separated by a line of diples. There is a paragraphus cum corona over the first line, which together with the lack of any title might indicate that the excerpt was considered to be a sort of appendix to the foregoing

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[3] Paul-Hubert Poirier and Louis Painchaud, *Les sentences de Sextus (NH XII, 1); Fragments (NH XII, 3); Fragment de la République de Platon (NH VI, 5),* Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section "Textes" 11 (Québec, 1983), 111-61. English edition by James Brashler, 'Plato, Republic 588b-589b: VI, 5:48, 16-51,23', in Douglas M. Parrott and James Brashler (eds), *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502*, Nag Hammadi Studies 11 (Leiden, 1979), 325-39. The first edition of the text was published before it had been recognized as as a translation of Plato: Martin Krause and Pahor Labib, 'Titellose Schrift VI 48,16-51,23', in *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften aus Codex II und Codex VI*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Koptische Reihe 2 (Glückstad, 1971), 166-9.

[4] See David M. Scholer, *Nag Hammadi Bibliography*, 3 volumes (Leiden, 1971-2009).

[5] Tito Orlandi, 'La traduzione copta di Platone, *Resp.* IX, 588b-589b: problemi critici ed esegetici', *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, *Rendiconti morali*, Serie VIII, vol. XXXII, fasc. 1-2 (Rome, 1977), 45-62.

[6] Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism":* An *Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, 1996); Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, 2003).

[7] Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 97 (Tübingen, 2015).

treatises. The text ends a bit below the middle of page 51, and the ending is marked with two lines of diples. The rest of the page is blank.

There is no indication in the manuscript that Plato was the original author of the text, and indeed the first modern scholar to notice this fact was Hans Martin Schenke in 1974.[8] This reflects the disparity of the Coptic version with the Greek original. Scholarly opinions have differed as to why the Coptic version is so different from the Greek; most would admit that the translator had an imperfect understanding of both the language and the philosophical ideas of Plato, though scholars like Tito Orlandi and Louis Painchaud have pointed out – correctly in my view – that the translator does not seem to be too concerned with fidelity to the original, and instead has his own agenda to push. As already pointed out, both these scholars perceive this agenda to be Gnostic in nature.

The excerpt is taken from the *Republic*, book IX, section 588b-589b, where Socrates claims that it is better to suffer injustice than to act unjustly, and supports this assertion with reference to the tripartite soul, consisting of a rational, appetitive and spirited part. To illustrate the tripartite soul, Socrates asks Glaucon to form, *in his mind*, a single image where a human, a lion and a many-headed beast are connected on the inside of the outer appearance of a man. The Coptic version does not give any indication that this is a mere mental image, a metaphor for the tripartite soul, but instead seems to treat the three images combined into one as a hypostatized entity, in fact one created by the rulers ('archons'). This and some other significant departures from the Greek original will be treated more fully below.

An Origenistic reading of the Platonic excerpt

Plato quite explicitly employs the many-headed beast, the lion, and the human as symbols for respectively the appetitive, spirited and rational parts of his tripartite soul. However, this is not spelled out in the fragment, and it is therefore left to the reader to make this association. The key passage, in my view, for understanding the excerpt is the statement that 'the logos of the soul is an image that has no likeness'.[9] The Origenistic connotations of this phrase has so far, to my knowledge, not been pointed out. The words 'image' and 'likeness' are reminiscent of *Gen.* 1:26, and one branch of Christian exegesis, reported by Clement of Alexandria, interpreted the *Genesis* passage so that the image of God corresponds to the inner, immaterial man, while the likeness of God can only be attained at the perfection of man.[10] Origen follows suit, and

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[8] H.-M. Schenke, 'Zur Faksimile-Ausgabe', (1974), 235-42.
[9] NHC VI 48,31: ογϨικωн εмⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ειне пе пⲗоⲅос ⲛ̄ⲧψγχн.
[10] Clem., *Strom.* 2.22, 38. See Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène* (Paris, 1956).

states that the 'inner, invisible, incorporeal, incorruptible, and immortal man' was made according to the likeness of the image of God, which he identifies as Logos, the son of God,[11] but in his fallen state man has lost this image, and have 'put on the image of the evil one' (*maligni imaginem induxisse*).[12] It is by 'beholding the image of the devil' that man was made like him, that is, by sinning. When the savior saw this state of affairs he put on the image of the human (*imagine hominis assumpta*), which is the form of a servant in the appearance of a human (*formam servi accipiens in similitudinem hominum factus*). Because the savior thus humbled himself (see *Phil*. 2:6-8), those who believe in him can become 'participants in the spiritual image', and through daily progress they can regain the image of God so as to be eventually transformed to his likeness.

What this means can be seen in Origen's allegorical reading of the verse 'as man and woman he made them' (*Gen*. 1:27): The inner man consists of a male spirit and a female soul, and when the two are united they preserve the image. However, when the soul follows passions instead, it turns away from the spirit and loses the image.[13] The image is never entirely lost however, for in homily thirteen on *Genesis* we hear that the image of God is like 'a well of living water', which the Philistines, representing demonic powers, have filled with filth (*Gen*. 25:15). It has thus become the 'image of the earthly' instead of the 'image of the heavenly', but the earthly can be cleansed with the Word of God, once again making the heavenly image shine.[14]

Origen is more specific on the likeness of God, which he distinguishes from the image, in *On First Principles*: Since God first said 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness', but is then described as actually making him in the image alone, Origen supposed that 'man received the honour of God's image in his first creation, whereas the perfection of God's likeness was reserved for him at the consummation'.[15] Thus the image of God lies latent in all people, but it is only through conscious effort that the image can be made into a perfect likeness with God, and this can moreover only be fully achieved at the consummation.

Origen's allegorical interpretations were widely popular in Egypt in the fourth century, before the controversy erupted in the last years of the century. Both a city-dwelling ascetic and intellectual such as Didymus the Blind, and a desert monastic such as Evagrius testify to the influence of Origen's exegeses, but likewise the writings of Athanasius and the letters of Antony bear the imprint

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[11] Or., *Princ*. 1.2.5 and 2.6.1, referring to *Col*. 1:15 and *Heb*. 1:3.

[12] Or., *Hom. in Gen*. 1.12-3. See H. Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image* (1956), 147-79, and 217-45 for his distinction between the image and the likeness. *John* 14:9-10 is adduced for identifying the Word with the Image.

[13] Or., *Hom. in Gen*. 1.15. See *Princ*. 3.5.

[14] Or., *Hom. in Gen*. 13.3-4.

[15] Or., *Princ*. 3.6.1, trans. G.W. Butterworth, *Origen On First Principles* (London, 1936), 245 n. 6, pointing out further sources for the distinction between image and likeness: Or., *c. Cels*. 4.30; *in Ep. ad Rom*. 4.5; Ir., *Adv. Haer*. 5.6; Clem. Alex., *Strom*. 2.38.5.

of Origenism.[16] It is therefore likely that both the translator as well as any reader of our Coptic text in the fourth century would be familiar with Origenism, which was often associated with the reading of apocrypha by its detractors. It is therefore worthwhile to investigate if an Origenistic reading of the excerpt would make more sense of it than a Gnostic one.

After the first few lines, which underlines that it is better to suffer injustice than to act unjustly, we get the key sentence that introduces the leitmotif of image and likeness, as already discussed: 'The logos of the soul is an image that has no likeness'. Now, this is a far shot from Plato's Greek original, where the sentence explains that what follows is only a mental image, a metaphor: 'By forming in speech an image of the soul'.[17] This is not difficult Greek and it is unlikely that the translator has made a mistake; rather, we must be dealing with a conscious interpolation. An Origenistic interpretation would make sense here: The Logos, or rational part of the soul, is the image of God, but does not possess his likeness in the present fallen condition, as we have seen. In addition, the statement that the image has no likeness could be understood to refer to the invisibility of the original, incorporeal image.

Next, we should consider if there are other passages in the text that might bear the mark of Origenism. Lacunae make the following few lines difficult to make sense of, before we come to the passage where the utterances of the ruling powers (ⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ) become nature or living beings (ⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ), such as the Chimaera and Cerberus. They all descend, and produce forms and likenesses, and become one single likeness (NHC VI 49,4-17). It is not clear if *physis* here refers to the nature of humans or of the world. If the descent of the utterances of the archons is in fact cosmogonic, this is not without parallel in Origen. In *On First Principles*, we are told that the diversity of the world is due to the diversity of rational beings that fell, some of which are identified as the ruling powers of the world, and that 'the universe is as it were an immense, monstrous animal, held together by the power and reason of God as by one soul'.[18] The reader could easily have identified the Chimaera, Cerberus, and the rest, who descend, produce forms and likenesses, and become one single likeness, as such an Origenistic 'monstrous animal'. Consequently, if the passage is in fact

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[16] See Richard Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria* (Urbana and Chicago, 2004); Julia Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Making of a Gnostic* (Farnham, 2009); Jon F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, North American Patristic Society Patristic Monograph Series 13 (Louvain, 1988); Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992); Samuel Rubenson, 'Origen in the Egyptian Monastic Tradition of the Fourth Century', in W.A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (eds) *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 137 (Leuven, 1999), 319-37; H. Lundhaug and L. Jenott, *Nag Hammadi Codices* (2015), 238-56.

[17] Plat., *Rep*. IX 588b10: Εἰκόνα πλάσαντες τῆς ψυχῆς λόγῳ.

[18] Or., *Princ*. 2.1.3.

cosmogonic it does not necessarily reflect a 'Gnostic' myth of creation by wicked archons, but may reflect the Origenistic proposition that the world is manifold because of the diversity of the fallen souls, some of which became antagonistic 'rulers'.

Further on in the Coptic excerpt, it seems that the many-headed beast produces rough, moulded forms (πλάσματα) with effort from itself, while other likenesses are formed (πλάσσειν) with words, and that the likenesses of the lion and the humans belong to the latter category (NHC VI 49,16-35). It is unclear if the ruling powers also spoke the latter likenesses into being, as the next few lines on top of page 50 are highly lacunose. When we once more get continuous text there is an imperative and a conjunctive in the second person plural, ordering to unite the three into a single likeness, no doubt referring back to the likenesses of the many-headed beast, the lion and the human. These three are however grown together *outside* the image of the human,[19] which must mean that the likeness of the human is not identical with the image of the human (NHC VI 50,1-12). Again, utilising Origenistic hermeneutics, we can identify the likeness of the human as the fallen rational soul that has taken on the likeness of a man, whereas the image of the human inside is the spiritual latent image of God, which may attain towards the likeness of God and thus reach perfection. Thus the prelapsarian soul becomes split during the fall, and one part assumes the likeness of a human whereas the spiritual part retains the image of God. Again it is said that 'his likeness' is inside a living creature formed (πλάσσειν) in a human likeness, meaning that the threefold single likeness is inside a human body. That the outer human has been shaped (πλασσεῖν), not made, both in Plato and the Coptic excerpt, would be central for an Origenistic understanding, since Origen in his *Homilies on Genesis* underlines that the outer body in *Gen.* 2:8 has been shaped, not made, and is therefore a *figmentum*, *i.e.* πλάσμα, not an image of God as the human in *Gen.* 1:26.[20] It seems then that the anthropology of our adaptation of Plato is threefold: there is an interior image, a tripartite soul, and finally the fleshly body. This does correspond to what Origen maps out in *On First Principles*, where the will of the soul is said to be caught in the middle between the flesh and the spirit,[21] a tripartite anthropology that was of course common enough among early Christian theologians.[22]

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[19] NHC VI 50,11-2. Not 'the external image' as in Brashler's edition, which would require that ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ was nominalized. Painchaud has it right as 'à l'extérieur de l'image'.

[20] Or., *Hom. in Gen.* 1.13: *Non enim corporis figmentum Dei imaginem continent, neque factus esse corporalis homo dicitur, sed plasmatus.*

[21] Or., *Princ.* 3.4.3.

[22] See Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth and John M. Dillon (eds), *The Afterlife of the Platonic Soul: Reflections of Platonic Psychology in the Monotheistic Religions* (Leiden, 2009); George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and tripartite man in ancient Judaism, ancient philosophy and early Christianity*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neue Testament 232 (Tübingen, 2008),

As we have seen, the image of God is realized when the soul is perfectly united with the spirit, forsaking the body.

As for the soul itself, Origen broaches the possibility that it is tripartite, as Plato held, in *On First Principles*. He finds that this has scant scriptural support, but does not actually pronounce against it.[23] Elsewhere he does talk about three parts of the soul, and in the *Homily on Ezekiel* he actually identifies the rational part with the human of the vision of *Ezekiel*, the irascible part with the lion, and the appetitive part with the bull. The eagle in the vision is said to correspond to the helping power (τὴν βοηθοῦσαν δύναμιν).[24] Later the Origenist Eusebius of Caesarea would claim that the vision of *Ezekiel* was in fact the source of Plato for his tripartite image of the soul.[25] It is consequently likely that a reader steeped in either Platonism or Origenism would have recognized a reference to the tripartite soul in the three likenesses.

The Coptic excerpt departs from Plato in recommending that one should trample the likenesses of the beast as well as that of the lion, whereas Plato's recommendation was to make an ally of the lion, and to check the growth of the heads of wild beasts on the many-headed beast, while the heads of tame animals might be cultivated. The injunction in the Coptic version, to trample the likenesses, lends itself to three interpretations, which may all be valid at the same time. First, the reader who has identified the many-headed beast and the lion with respectively the desires and irascibility of the irrational soul would be likely to understand the trampling to refer to ascetic discipline. Unlike Plato's recommendation that the tame beasts should be cultivated, and the lion should be made an ally to keep the beast in check, all irrational passions are commonly decried in monastic asceticism. The passions are thus demonized and either the beast or the lion would be apt images of the devil. 'Beast' is of course a well-known designation for the adversary, and the roaring lion appears as the adversary in 1*Pet.* 5:8, a passage that Origen also refers to twice in *On First Principles*. Likewise, the *First Greek Life of Pachomius* (135) interprets Paul's statement 'I was rescued from the lion's mouth' (2*Tim.* 4:17) with the devil as a roaring lion in 1*Pet.* 5:8, who is said to roar to devour souls, meaning to lead them astray. Elsewhere in the same text, Pachomius is lauding the ascetic discipline of the young Silvanos in front of the other monks, saying that while they have bound 'the beast that wars against you' under their feet, Silvanos has wholly destroyed it (105).[26] In the same vein, the learned anchorite Diocles of the Thebaid is said to have identified irascibility as demonic and desire as bestial.[27] Evagrius Ponticus also identifies the passions with animals

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[23] Or., *Princ.* 3.4.1.
[24] Or., *Hom. in Ez.* (PG 12) 340.20-2. See also *Sel. in Gen.* (PG 12) 125.2-5.
[25] Eus., *Praep.* 12.46 on *Ez.* 1:40.
[26] I owe this reference to Lance Jenott.
[27] Pall., *Laus. Hist.* 58.3: ἐπιθυμία as κτῆνος, not θήριον.

quite often, and in the *Kephalaia Gnostica* he states that the *nous* is most characteristic of angels, irascibility of the devil, and desires of humans.[28]

Evagrius is quite striking in this regard, for he states in his *Letter to Melania* that when the soul fell and ceased being an image of God, it acquired 'the image of animals', alluding to *Rom.* 1:23: 'Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles'.[29] Although clearly speaking about idols here, Paul immediately goes on to speak about lust, and Evagrius thus links the soul's acquisition of the irrational parts during its descent with idolatry. The link is of course not merely symbolic. The irrational faculties of the soul are particularly susceptible to the influence of demons, if not somehow demonic themselves, and it is demons that create disturbing fantasies in the mind of the monk, just as it is demons that are worshipped as gods in the idolatrous cult of the pagans.[30] That is the lesson Athanasius wants to impart in his life of Antony, in the very final passage: 'The Christians who are sincerely devoted to him and truly believe in him not only prove that the demons, whom the Greeks consider gods, are not gods, but also trample and chase them away as deceivers and corrupters of mankind'.[31] The injunction to trample the likenesses might thus naturally be interpreted as a call to destroy pagan idols, which would indeed have been a pressing concern for many monks in fourth-century Egypt.

Third and finally, the injunction to trample the likenesses could have been read as an exhortation to imageless prayer, so important for the practice of Evagrius and for the Origenist controversy in the late fourth century.[32] During prayer, the monk would sometimes be distracted by thoughts that present images, and these distractions were often thought to be the result of demonic machinations. Pure prayer should avoid these images and instead the mind should be filled by light. Evagrius seems to have been influenced here by John of Lycopolis, 'the Seer of Thebes', whom he travelled to consult together with Ammonius of the Tall Brothers from Nitria.[33] In the *Historia Monachorum* John of Lycopolis is made to warn against indecent images during prayer (1.22), and he instead recommends a contemplative prayer with pure mind (1.62). It is consequently likely that some kind of imageless prayer was practiced in Upper Egypt before the time of Evagrius, and thus close in both time and space to the manuscript of our Coptic Plato. An objection to the

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[28] Evag., *Keph. Gnost.* 1.68, 3.34-5. See E. Clark, *Origenist Controversy* (1992), 77.

[29] Evag., *Ep. ad Melaniam* 9. See E. Clark, *Origenist Controversy* (1992), 73.

[30] See David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006).

[31] Athan., *Vit. Ant.* 94.

[32] See Columba Stewart, 'Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus', *JECS* 9 (2001), 173-204.

[33] Evag., *Antirrhetikos* 6.16. See C. Stewart, 'Imageless Prayer' (2001), 194.

interpretation of trampling the likenesses as imageless prayer is that only the likenesses of the lion and the beast should be destroyed, whereas one would expect true imageless prayer also to get rid of the likeness of the human. A possibility would be that the lion and the beast are considered 'second-order images', belonging to the lower realm of creation, whereas the human likeness is considered to belong to the 'first-order' images which may fruitfully be employed in contemplation in order to reach the pure imageless prayer.[34] The beast and probably the lion were spawned by the utterances of the ruling powers, in our excerpt, whereas the likeness of the human would probably have been interpreted as the rational soul, thus belonging to the noetic order. At any rate, the injunction to trample the likenesses might have been understood by a fourth- or fifth-century monastic reader as an exhortation to imageless prayer, even if this was not the original intent of the interpolation of the Coptic translator.

The remainder of the excerpt does not contain significant departures from the text of Plato, but it should be pointed out that the text would be highly conducive to monastic discipline, stating that the one who speaks and acts justly will cultivate the inner human (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος / ⲘⲪⲞⲨⲚ ⲘⲠⲢⲰⲘⲈ). A straightforward mistranslation will have increased the focus on discipline: with regards to the many-headed beast, Plato claims that one should act like a good husbandman and rear the heads of tame animals (τὰ ἥμερα) while hindering the wild ones (τὰ ἄγρια). The Coptic translator here reads instead ἥμερα as days, and the resulting sentence reads that like a good husbandman one should *daily* (ⲘⲘⲎⲚⲈ) nourish one's produce (ⲠⲈϥⲄⲈⲚⲎⲘⲀ, not found in the Greek). Also, in the Coptic excerpt it is the wild animals who hinder the good husbandman, in contrast to Plato's Greek. This brings to mind the ideal of the fastidious monk who daily follows his spiritual discipline while tormented by the attacks of wicked demons, where Plato had the husbandman checking the heads of wild animals with the lion as his ally. What started with a simple mistranslation of a single Greek word makes the translator subtly change the meaning of the whole sentence, the last one of the excerpt.

In conclusion, there are many indications that the departures from Plato in our Coptic version were not only caused by the lacking familiarity of the translator with Classical Greek and Plato's philosophical idiom, but were also conscious interpolations influenced by Origenistic teachings, which would later be denounced during the first Origenist controversy. This does not mean that the translator necessarily had *On First Principles* or the homilies of Origen lying in front of him as he completed his task, nor even that he was personally

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[34] Blossom Stefaniw, 'Evagrius Ponticus on Image and Material', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 42 (2007), 126-31.

familiar with the works of Origen. But it is likely that he worked in an environment where such teachings were prevalent, as we know to be the case in monasteries of both Upper and Lower Egypt. This strengthens the case that the Nag Hammadi Codices were likely owned by monks that were branded as Origenists, and lumped together with all kinds of heterodox Christians by such tireless heresiologists as Epiphanius of Salamis.[35]

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[35] See J.F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism* (1988), 206-18; H. Lundhaug and L. Jenott, *Monastic Origins* (2015), 263-8.

Comparing the Ethical Concerns of Plato and
John Chrysostom

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ABSTRACT

In Ancient Greek thought, a concern for ethical perfection was often expressed. Two prominent voices in present day discourses on ethics are Plato and John Chrysostom. In his *Republic*, Plato conceptualizes the ideal city where justice, or ethical perfection, prevails. Likewise, Chrysostom in his *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life* describes the life of the monastic community, wherein ethical perfection also seems to be the goal. Nevertheless, despite these striking parallels, David Rylaarsdam's *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy* laments the tendency in modern scholarship to categorize Chrysostom as a mere moralist, differing from Plato perhaps only in his Christian faith. Both figures are clearly concerned with ethical dogmata and their subsequent effects upon all aspects of the human person and life. However, the concern for ethics alone does not necessarily justify the characterization of moralist. Therefore, as it has been questioned whether both can rightly be identified as moralists, the present article investigates the ethical concerns of each, the sources from which they originate, and the purposes to which they are directed.

I. The question

In the late 4th century John Chrysostom wrote a text, *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life* (PG 47, 319-86),[1] in which he emphasized that the driving force behind Christian ethics is *eros* for the person of Jesus Christ.[2] The text is focused around a dialogue between Chrysostom and the Christian, as well as non-Christian, fathers of his age. The fathers, like all parents, naturally want what

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[1] From here on, *AOML*.

[2] *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 333: ἐπεὶ τοῖς γε ἄλλοις αὐτὸν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι ῥᾳδίως αἱρήσομεν, κἂν εὐγνώμων εἶναι ἐθέλοι, ταχέως αὐτὸν οὐ πρὸς τὸν ἔρωτα τοῦ βίου τούτου μεταστήσομεν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν τῶν δογμάτων τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν, ἀφ' ἧς ὁ βίος ἔχει τὴν ὑπόθεσιν οὗτος. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. This passage is supported by many others throughout Chrysostom's vast corpus. His homily, *Εἰς τὸ ἀποστολικὸν ῥητόν· Ὄφελον ἀνείχεσθέ μου μικρὸν τῇ ἀφροσύνῃ* (PG 51, 301-10) is also of particular importance for his understanding of the concept of *eros* in Christian life. I am greatly indebted to the excellent reference work: Hieromonk Benedict, *Χρυσοστομικόν Ταμείον ἤτοι εὐρετήριον θεμάτων των ἀπάντων του ἁγίου Ἰωάννου του Χρυσοστόμου ἐπί τῇ βάσει της Πατρολογίας του J. Migne PG καὶ της ΕΠΕ (Ἕλληνες Πατέρες της Ἐκκλησίας)* (New Skete2 Mt. Athos, 2006).

is best for their sons. However, Chrysostom charges the fathers with preventing their sons from achieving what is truly best for them, namely *eros* for Christ. The problem is simple. The sons left the cities to go to the mountains in order to become monks, as they saw this environment to be better suited to the cultivation of Christian *eros*. The fathers, though, enraged by this radical re-orientation of their sons' lives, went up to the mountains as well. They tore down the monasteries, persecuted the monks and brought their sons home. The fathers were afraid that, by choosing the monastic life, their sons had thrown away every beneficial and invaluable opportunity life had bestowed upon them. By alienating themselves from the life of the city, the sons had alienated themselves from life itself in their fathers' minds. Thus, it becomes clear that the topic of discussion in this dialogue is the nature of the healthy community. Chrysostom, on behalf of the sons and the monks, discusses with the fathers concerning the nature of the truly healthy community. It is important to note that Chrysostom's essential goal here is neither monasticism nor city-life; he simply wants the sons to live a Christian life.

So in reading the above-mentioned text, we hear Chrysostom say that *eros* for the person of Christ will instruct the Christian in the content of Christian ethics, and will inspire him or her to live in accordance with the *ethos* of Christ. We are, therefore, surprised when we read David Rylaarsdam's study on the coherence of Chrysostom's theology,[3] precisely because, as Rylaarsdam reveals in his introduction, twentieth-century theologians have characterized Chrysostom as a mere moralizer, who has little to do with theology.[4] First, we heard Chrysostom say that *eros* for Christ is the center and driving force of the Christian way of life. Then, we heard twentieth-century theologians insist that Chrysostom has little or no interest in theology. There is clearly a problem here. How can a man who says that his way of life is inspired by his love for Christ not have a significant interest in theology?

II. A comparison

In order to demonstrate the difference between Chrysostom's theology, as expressed in this text, and moralism, I would like to introduce a second figure into our analysis. This second figure is none other than Plato, whose impact on the philosophy of ethics is hard to overstate.[5] Indeed, some have famously gone

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[3] David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford, 2014), 2.

[4] Eva Hoffman-Aleith, 'Das Paulusverständnis des Johannes Chrysostomus', *ZNW* 38 (1939), 181-8, 183; Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time* (Westminster, MO, 1959), 373-89.

[5] Throughout this essay, I will reserve the terms 'philosopher' and 'philosophy' for Plato. In doing this, I in no way intend to say that Chrysostom himself did not use these terms to apply

as far as to say that the most sure general definition of the Western philosophical tradition is that it constitutes simply footnotes to Plato's thought.[6] Regardless of the validity of such assertions, it is clear that Plato has yet to be overshadowed within his discipline. Our comparison is even further justified by two highly indicative ancient texts: the one Plato's own, the other of Chrysostom. In the 6th book of his *Republic*, Plato makes his bold claim that until the time that the true *eros* of the true philosophy is, by divine inspiration, instilled within the soul, neither a person nor a state will ever reach its perfection. Thus, he is clear that *eros* must be the source of the healthy community.[7] Chrysostom, in his turn, offers a rather stark contrast between Plato – to whom he refers by name – and St. Peter in his *4th Homily on the Acts of the Apostles* (PG 60, 301-10). Having received the Holy Spirit, Peter fearlessly stands up and addresses the crowds of various peoples concerning Christ. For Chrysostom this is a prime example of the illiterate, cowardly fisherman displaying eloquence, wisdom and bravery that so greatly surpass Plato that the famous philosopher has simply fallen silent before him.[8] However, Chrysostom's contrast is not black and white, nor is his essential point clear from a first reading of the text.

Despite his derision of Greek philosophy, personified by Plato, Chrysostom nevertheless presents Peter within the same context of perfection that Plato outlined above: he has acquired the true *eros* for the true philosophy by divine inspiration. Moreover, returning to the primary text under investigation here, in the 2nd book of *AOML* Chrysostom offers yet another comparison of Plato, this time with the Syracusan king Dionysius. Characteristically, he proclaims: 'Tell me then, which of the two shone brighter in glory? Which of the two is

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to Christians and their faith. He most certainly does, on many occasions. However, for reasons of clarity and convenience, I have chosen to reserve philosophy for Plato and theology for Chrysostom.

[6] Alfred Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York, 1978), 39. See also Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford, 1995), 71, for an illuminating interpretation of Whitehead's comment.

[7] *Rep*. VI. 499b-c: οὔτε πόλις οὔτε πολιτεία οὐδέ γ' ἀνὴρ ὁμοίως μή ποτε γένηται τέλεος, πρὶν … ἢ αὐτοῖς ἔκ τινος θείας ἐπιπνοίας ἀληθινῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀληθινὸς ἔρως ἐμπέσῃ. This platonic principle is brilliantly developed and anaylzed in David Roochnik, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's Republic* (Ithaca, 2003).

[8] Ὁμιλία Δ΄ Εἰς τὰς πράξεις τῶν Ἀποστόλων, PG 60, 47: Καὶ τὸ θαυμαστόν, ὅτι γυμνῷ τῷ σώματι παρετάττοντο [sc. οἱ ἀπόστολοι] πρὸς ὡπλισμένους, πρὸς ἄρχοντας κατὰ αὐτῶν ἔχοντας ἐξουσίαν, ἄπειροι, ἄγλωττοι, καὶ ἰδιωτικώτερον διακείμενοι, πρὸς γόητας, πρὸς πλάνους, πρὸς σοφιστῶν, πρὸς ῥητόρων, πρὸς φιλοσόφων πλῆθος, τῶν κατασαπέντων ἐν Ἀκαδημίᾳ καὶ Περιπάτοις, ἐνίσταντό τε καὶ ἀπεμάχοντο. Καὶ ὁ περὶ λίμνας ἠσχολημένος οὕτως αὐτῶν ἐκράτησεν, ὡς οὐδὲ εἰ πρὸς ἰχθῦς ἀγλώττους ὁ ἀγὼν ἦν αὐτῷ· καθάπερ γὰρ ὄντως ἁλιεὺς ἰχθύων ἀφονωτέρων, οὕτω τούτων περιεγένετο. Καὶ ὁ μὲν πολλὰ ληρήσας Πλάτων, σεσίγηκεν· οὗτος δὲ φθέγγεται, οὐχὶ παρ' οἰκείοις μόνοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ Πάρθοις, παρὰ Μήδοις, παρὰ Ἐλαμίταις, καὶ ἐν Ἰνδίᾳ, καὶ πανταχοῦ γῆς, καὶ εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης. Ποῦ νῦν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὁ τῦφος; ποῦ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν τὸ ὄνομα; ποῦ τῶν φιλοσόφων ὁ λῆρος;

praised, being constantly on the lips of all?'[9] This second comparison cannot
but bring to mind the *Comparison Between a King and a Monk* (PG 47, 387-92),
which, although considered spurious,[10] yet undoubtedly represents many ele-
ments of Chrysostom's thought as testified throughout his corpus, not least in
AOML. Thus, if I may be as bold as to suggest that, to at least some degree,
Chrysostom here paints a picture of Plato with colors similar to those he uses
for the anonymous monk who is compared to a king, then the issue at hand
becomes all the more pressing. The examples cited above – and there are, of
course, many more – do not offer a clear-cut, systematic answer. They only
serve to deepen the question. If both the father of the Church and the philoso-
pher of ethics claim that *eros* is the source of the healthy community; if both
Chrysostom and Plato strove for a simple way of life, adorned primarily by
virtues; if Chrysostom himself implies that Plato was at least close to achieving
the glory available to a monk, where can they be said to differ?[11] Is Chrysostom
then just a moralizer? In order to offer an answer to this question, I will compare
Chrysostom's theological thought in this text to Plato's ethical philosophy con-
cerning justice as expressed in his *Republic*. In doing so, we will of course see
many points at which they resemble each other. However, we will also be able
to locate the qualitative difference between the two, a difference which will not
allow the theology expressed by Chrysostom to be considered simply a varia-
tion on a philosophy of ethics.

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[9] *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 339: Διονύσιον ἴσως ἀκούεις
τὸν Σικελίας τύραννον, ἀκούεις δὲ καὶ Πλάτωνα τὸν Ἀρίστωνος; Τίς οὖν, εἰπέ μοι, λαμπρό-
τερος γέγονε; τίς δὲ ᾄδεται καὶ ἐν τοῖς τῶν πολλῶν κεῖται στόμασιν; οὐχ ὁ φιλόσοφος τοῦ
τυράννου μᾶλλον; Καίτοι ὁ μὲν τῆς τε Σικελίας ἁπάσης ἐκράτει, καὶ ἐν τρυφῇ διῆγε, καὶ
μετὰ πολλοῦ τοῦ πλούτου καὶ τῶν δορυφόρων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης φαντασίας διετέλεσε ζῶν· ὁ δὲ
ἐν τῷ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας κήπῳ διέτριβεν ἄρδων τε καὶ φυτεύων καὶ ἐλαίας ἐσθίων, καὶ εὐτελῆ
παρατιθέμενος τράπεζαν, καὶ πάσης ἐκείνης τῆς φαντασίας ἐκτὸς ὤν.

[10] See Maurice Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum II* (Turnhout, 1974), 283.

[11] A quick answer can, of course, easily be given to this question. As D. Roochnik, *Beautiful
City* (2003), 14 points out, for Plato: 'In the well-functioning soul, the three forms [sc. calculation,
desire, spirit] work harmoniously. Each does its own job, which becomes the very definition of
justice. Calculation rules, desire obeys, and spirit functions as the ally of calculation. Justice, in
both city and soul, is construed as internal coherence, the absence of faction'. While Chrysostom
would obviously agree with certain aspects of Plato's concept of justice as harmony and peace,
there can be no doubt that he would prefer, and exclusively endorse, the Psalmist's expression:
'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the
city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating
the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved' (127:1-2; all passages from the Bible
are taken from the NRSV, unless otherwise indicated). Thus, where Plato is reliant on human
powers of calculation, Chrysostom will prefer divine revelation (the Psalmist's inspiration by the
Holy Spirit) and sustenance (the Lord is both the working class and the guardian class of the city
that Chrysostom recommends). The connotations and implications of this qualitative difference
constitute the subject of discussion in this article, a subject that needs as extensive and detailed a
discussion as possible in order to do it justice, to avoid simplifications or black-and-white estima-
tions of its content.

III. The one and the many

As we begin to analyze Plato's philosophy, undoubtedly the most important aspect of it is its accessibility. To whom is Plato addressing his call to philosophy? Who can participate? Before the passage from the 6th book of his *Republic* that we saw above, concerning the vital role of *eros* in perfection, Plato offers an advance qualification to his philosophy. He declares that a mass of people (πλῆθος) cannot ever have a relationship with philosophy (494a3-4). Naturally, this starkly contrasts with Christ's practice of teaching the crowds,[12] who undoubtedly contained at least a portion, if not the majority, of illiterate peasants. Even his disciples would be hard pressed to fit any normal definition of an aristocracy or élite. Thus, we discern an immediate difference in approach between Platonic philosophy and Christian theology. To which approach does Chrysostom subscribe? Perhaps this questions seems unnecessary at face value. Nevertheless, if phrased in a slightly different manner, we can recognize a familiar mode of thought: instead of philosophers, saints; instead of the many, the sinners; instead of the Idea of the Good, eternal life with Christ. So, the question for Chrysostom becomes: does he subscribe to a Christian élitism, in which only the select few have any hope of salvation?[13] In this way, such an élitism – preferring the few, philosophers or saints, to the many, sinners, who will be inevitably condemned to hell[14] – may not seem so far from Christian belief, especially if we call to mind Gregory of Nazianzen's second *Theological Oration*: '… but if there is one of those many (τῶν πολλῶν), who are unworthy of such heights and visions [sc. to follow Moses up to Mt. Sinai to converse with God], if he be wholly impure, let him not approach; it is not safe'.[15]

Indeed, Chrysostom does seem to subscribe to a somewhat élitist approach on many occasions. In his *63rd Homily on Genesis*, he refers to Joseph's longsuffering

[12] See *Matth*. 5:1-2: Ἰδὼν [sc. ὁ Ἰησοῦς] δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς…

[13] In this form, the question sounds rather familiar, bringing to mind many passages from the New Testament, not least among them: πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσιν κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί (*Matth*. 22:14). This juxtaposition of the many and the few, chosen, select who will be saved can easily – and surely has – led some Christians over the centuries to read a certain spiritual élitism into the content of their faith.

[14] Plato's élitist attitude acquires even greater significance when the reader reaches the famous myth of Er in the 10th book of the *Republic*, where as Roochnik summarizes, "… most people, all who are not philosophers, will end up in hell" (D. Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, [2003], 125). So, we have the first characteristic of Plato's philosophy of justice: instead of preaching the hope of salvation, he preaches the fear of (as Roochnik rightly points out, for most an almost certain) damnation.

[15] *Λόγος ΚΗ´ Περὶ θεολογίας*, PG 36, 28: εἰ δέ τις τῶν πολλῶν καὶ ἀναξίων ὕψους τοιούτου καὶ θεωρίας, εἰ μὲν ἄναγνος πάντη, μηδὲ προσίτω, οὐ γὰρ ἀσφαλές. In quoting this passage, I have no desire to imply that Gregory espouses the same view as Plato. On the contrary, I chose this passage precisely because Gregory's words can potentially be interpreted as such, though I believe he means something else.

and patience at being forgotten in prison by Pharaoh's chief cupbearer: 'Perhaps someone else would say to himself, if he were one of the many (τῶν πολλῶν), "What is this?"'[16] Even more pertinent is a passage from *AOML*, in which Chrysostom instructs the fathers concerning how to raise their sons: 'Let us do the same here [*sc.* ignore unfounded and irrational criticisms] not making decisions for our child based on other people's (τῶν πολλῶν) guesses, but upon a precise examination of the reasons/arguments/calculations (λογισμῶν)'.[17] Nevertheless, as we saw above, we must not rush to draw our conclusions about the point at which Chrysostom is aiming. He is not trying to elaborate a system of behavior, ethics, philosophy or anything else. He is interpreting the Bible, and in doing so, he will even now answer the present question.

IV. The idiots[18]

Approximately half way through the 3rd book of *AOML*, Chrysostom writes:

Thus, for the non-believers this is sufficient, but for the faithful, I must not only present these [*sc.* the previous] examples, but also our own [*sc.* Christian] models. What are these? Those great and holy men: the first, when literature had not yet been produced; those after them, when writing had been introduced, but as yet there was no significant rhetorical tradition; and the ones after them, when both literature and rhetoric had taken hold within society. They [*sc.* the holy men] were nevertheless inexperienced in both of these. They did not only lack training in rhetoric, but even in literature itself. And yet, they so brilliantly surpassed those mighty orators – who believe that training in the power of speech is so necessary – so as to make them look more helpless than mindless children. For when persuasion is to be found in the way a man speaks, and the philosophers, on the one hand, could not convince even one tyrant, while the illiterate hillbillies (ἰδιῶται) turned the attention of the entire world upon themselves, it becomes clear that the preeminence in wisdom belongs to them, the illiterate hillbillies, rather than those who had set out precise definitions of every single thing. Thus, true wisdom and education is nothing other than the fear of God. And don't think that I am suggesting that your children remain uneducated. Rather, if there is someone to offer them the necessary [*sc.* spiritual] education, I would not try to keep them from learning rhetoric to the fullest as well. Just as, if the foundations of the house are shaky and the whole building is ready to fall down, it is a sign of the ultimate madness and derangement to consult a plasterer for the walls, and not an architect to rebuild the house. Just so, it

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[16] Ὁμιλία ΞΓ´ Εἰς Γένεσιν, PG 54, 543: Εἶπε γὰρ ἂν ἄλλος πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἴσως, εἰ τῶν πολλῶν τις ἦν· Τί τοῦτο; Of course, there are many other examples of this distinction, even just within the homilies on *Genesis*.

[17] Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν, PG 47, 348: Τοῦτο δὴ ποιῶμεν καὶ νῦν, μὴ τῇ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπονοίᾳ, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκριβεῖ λογισμῶν ἐξετάσει τὴν περὶ τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπιτρέποντες ψῆφον…

[18] I chose 'idiots' more for the harsh, jarring effect of the word, rather than as an exact translation of the Greek ἰδιῶται.

would be an improper objection to keep the plasterer from his work if the walls are safely and securely upright.[19]

This rather long passage is crucial for the understanding of the questions posed above, and the answers to follow below. In this one passage Chrysostom highlights the essence, not only of his aims in writing this text, but of the theology expressed by him here. Thus, our questions, as posed above, are the following: 1) how does the *eros* for Christ that Chrysostom promotes differ from Plato's *eros* for the Idea of the Good; 2) as this Christian *eros* is a necessary prerequisite for salvation, is it something in which all can participate, or only the select few; and 3) what is it about Chrysostom's ethical instructions that makes them Christian, as opposed to yet another ethical philosophy?

In the *Republic*, Plato describes *Eros* – honored as a god in Ancient Greece – as a tyrant,[20] governing as a monarch in the soul[21] and forming his followers into: *drunken, erotic and melancholy* men.[22] Chrysostom, on the other hand, teaches that the god who governs in the Christian's soul instills his fear, not drunkenness, melancholy or any kind of tyranny. However, fear for Chrysostom is not necessarily a negative or unpleasant feeling; in fact, it can be one of the greatest gifts of benevolence and love God gives to those whom he

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[19] *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 368: Πρὸς μὲν τὸν ἄπιστον ταῦτα ἀρκεῖ, πρὸς δὲ τὸν πιστὸν ταῦτα καὶ τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ὑποδείγματα ἀναγκαῖον παράγειν. Ποῖα δὴ ταῦτα; Τοὺς μεγάλους ἄνδρας καὶ ἁγίους ἐκείνους, τοὺς πρώτους, ὅτε γράμματα οὐκ ἦν, τοὺς μετ' ἐκείνους, ὅτε γράμματα μὲν ἦν, ἐμπειρία δὲ λόγων οὐδέπω, τοὺς μετὰ τούτους, ὅτε καὶ γράμματα ἦν καὶ ἐμπειρία λόγων. Ἀμφοτέρων δὲ ἦσαν τότε ἄπειροι ἐκεῖνοι· οὐ μόνο γὰρ τῆς τῶν λόγων παιδεύσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς τῶν γραμμάτων ἐμπειρίας ἐκτὸς ἦσαν· ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐν αὐτοῖς τούτοις, οἷς μάλιστα ἡ τῶν λόγων ἰσχὺς ἀναγκαία εἶναι δοκεῖ, μετὰ τοσαύτης περιουσίας τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ κρατοῦντας παρήλασαν, ὡς παίδων ἀνοήτων αὐτοὺς φανῆναι χείρους. Ὅταν γὰρ τὸ πείθειν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ᾖ, καὶ οἱ μὲν φιλόσοφοι μηδὲ ἑνὸς περιγίνονται τυράννου, οἱ δὲ ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐπιστρέφωσιν ἅπασαν, εὔδηλον ὅτι παρὰ τούτοις τὰ νικητήρια τῆς σοφίας ἐστί, τοῖς ἀγραμμάτοις καὶ ἰδιώταις, οὐ παρ' ἐκείνοις τοῖς τὰ ἑκάτερα διηκριβωκόσιν. Οὕτως ἡ ὄντως σοφία καὶ ἡ ὄντως παίδευσις οὐδὲν ἕτερόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἢ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ φόβος. Καὶ μὴ μέ τις νομιζέτω νομοθετεῖν ἀμαθεῖς τοὺς παῖδας γίνεσθαι· ἀλλ' εἴ τις ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀναγκαίων παρέχοι θαρρεῖν, οὐκ ἂν ἑλοίμην κωλῦσαι καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ περιουσίας γενέσθαι. Ὥσπερ γάρ, τῶν θεμελίων σαλευομένων, καὶ πάσης τῆς οἰκίας καὶ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς κινδινευούσης καταπεσεῖν, ἐσχάτης ἀνοίας καὶ παραπληξίας ἐστὶ πρὸς τοὺς κονιῶντας, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκοδομοῦντας τρέχειν· οὕτω πάλιν ἀκαίρου φιλονεικίας, τῶν τειχῶν ἑστώτων ἀσφαλῶς καὶ βεβαίως, κωλύειν τὸν βουλόμενον κονιᾶν.

[20] 573b8: … τύραννος ὁ Ἔρως λέγεται.

[21] 575a1-2: … ἀλλὰ τυραννικῶς ἐν αὐτῷ [sc. τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ] ὁ Ἔρως ἐν πάσῃ ἀναρχίᾳ καὶ ἀνομίᾳ ζῶν, ἅτε αὐτὸς ὢν μόναρχος…

[22] 573c9-10: … μεθυστικός τε καὶ ἐρωτικὸς καὶ μελαγχολικὸς γένηται [sc. ὁ ἀνήρ]. This one statement, of course, does not encompass Plato's full understanding of *eros* even in the *Republic* alone, to say nothing of the *Phaedrus*. However, as D. Roochnik, *Beautiful City* (2003) shows rather extensively, the tyrannical and anarchic character of Platonic *eros* in the *Republic* is an absolutely essential characteristic of its manifestation and operation.

instructs.[23] A clear indication of this is given by the words of the Divine Liturgy – attributed to Chrysostom – at the point when the priest calls the people to receive Holy Communion: 'With the fear of God, with faith and with love draw near'.[24] We can see that the fear of God is not understood as a restrictive or paralyzing force, but rather the opposite. It is interpreted as a fear akin to an overpowering awe at the beauty of God, that yet draws the person ever closer. So, when Chrysostom says above that true wisdom and education is simply the fear of God, he does not mean a fear that paralyzes the soul, but rather an awe that overwhelms it at the vision of the ineffable and immeasurable wisdom and beauty of God.[25] There can be no doubt that any man who speaks of his fear of a woman in this way is in love with her, to such a degree in fact that she will most likely be the only thing with which he concerns himself. It is just this kind of *erotic*[26] relationship that Chrysostom urges his listeners to cultivate with Christ.

Though Plato would most likely insist on the disruptive nature of *eros* in the soul, he would certainly agree that its main goal is to instill a certain awe in the person who possesses it. But who is this person? As we saw above,[27] Plato maintains a rather élitist view of who is able, or allowed, to participate in philosophy. Indeed, Ps.-Galen reports in his *On the Parts of Philosophy* that Plato

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[23] *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 358: Εἶτα Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν τοσαύτης ἀπολαύοντες ἐπιμελείας τῆς παρὰ Θεοῦ, καὶ δημαγωγὸν ἔχοντες οὕτως ἄριστον καὶ γενναῖον, καὶ φόβῳ καὶ ἀπειλῇ καὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ καὶ κολάσει καὶ παντὶ τρόπῳ παιδαγωγούμενοι…

[24] *Ἱερατικόν Α΄· Ἡ Θεῖα Λειτουργία Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου* (Holy Monastery of Simonos Petra[8] Mt. Athos, 2010), 136: Μετὰ φόβου Θεοῦ, πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης προσέλθετε.

[25] *Περὶ ἀκαταλήπτου, ἀπόντος τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, πρὸς Ἀνομοίους Α΄*, SC 28bis, 1.204-12: θαυμάζομεν πάλιν τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ πέλαγος καὶ τὸν ἄπειρον βυθόν, ἀλλὰ μετὰ φόβου, ὅταν πρὸς τὸ βάθος κατακύψωμεν. Οὕτω τοίνυν καὶ ὁ προφήτης πρὸς τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ ἀχανὲς πέλαγος τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ κατακύψας σοφίας καὶ ἰλιγγιάσας, μετὰ φόβου πολλοῦ θαυμάσας ἀνεχώρησε βοῶν καὶ λέγων· Ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ὅτι φοβερῶς ἐθαυμαστώθης· θαυμάσια τὰ ἔργα σου. Καὶ πάλιν· ἐθαυμαστώθη ἡ γνῶσίς σου ἐξ ἐμοῦ, ἐκραταιώθη, οὐ μὴ δύναμαι πρὸς αὐτήν. See Moses' words to the Israelites: ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεός σου πῦρ καταναλίσκον ἐστίν, θεὸς ζηλωτής (*Deut*. 4:24). The fear of God motif has been employed in the prayers for preparation to receive Holy Communion as well: … πλαστουργέ, μὴ φλέξῃς με τῇ μετουσίᾳ· πῦρ γὰρ ὑπάρχεις τοὺς ἀναξίους φλέγον … Θεουργὸν αἷμα φρῖξον, ἄνθρωπε, βλέπων· ἄνθραξ γάρ ἐστι τοὺς ἀναξίους φλέγων (*Ἱερατικόν* [2010], 183-4). Within this context, Gregory the Theologian's words above (p. 45) can be understood, not as promoting any spiritual élitism, but as Moses warned the Israelites not even to touch Mt. Sinai because God would consume them with fire, in the same way this motif of awe and fear in the face of divine power has been transferred by Christians to the person of Christ. Moreover, when the relationship between God and his faithful is understood as an *erotic* relationship, it becomes instantly clear why God's jealousy is highlighted in the law of the Old Testament (*Deut*. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15). Any unfaithfulness is viewed in the same way *we* would view unfaithfulness from a human partner, through the lens of disappointed love, *i.e.* jealousy.

[26] It may sound somewhat strange to say in modern English, but all who are familiar with the power and dynamism of Chrysostom's texts can see that he has an *erotic* desire for Christ, in the same way that he himself says of Paul: ὁ διάπυρος ἐραστὴς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Παῦλος, ὃς οὕτως ἐτρώθη τούτῳ τῷ πόθῳ, ὥστε στένειν μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ μελλήσει καὶ διατριβῇ τῆς ἐνθένδε ἀποδημίας… (*Πρὸς Δημήτριον, περὶ κατανύξεως*, PG 47, 404).

[27] pp. 45-46.

had inscribed above the door of his school: 'Let no one uneducated in mathe-
matics enter'.[28] This undoubtedly excluded a sizable portion of the entire pop-
ulation of ancient Athens from ever even taking the first steps – at least as Plato
himself envisioned them – towards this salvific view of the Good, if only
because they did not have the means to acquire the prerequisite education.
However, as we read above, Chrysostom was perhaps most impressed and
amazed by the Apostles' success in their preaching precisely because they had
received no previous education at all. He puts this on full display by calling
them: *illiterate hillbillies* (ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται).[29] Moreover, he generalizes
this theme of a lack of classical education throughout *AOML*, in the exact same
fashion as we saw him do it above. He is not recommending that we do away
with education altogether or tear down the schools.[30] He is recommending,
though, that we get our priorities straight, which for him means putting life (in
Christ) above city (life). He considers it to be the height of irresponsibility,
negligence and downright malice for parents to fail to provide their children
with the necessary introduction to the life in Christ.[31] Since, in his view, life in
Christ is the only real life there is, failing to initiate one's own children essentially
amounts to filicide. Nor is this an education that requires special advantages
and extravagant expenditure. Anyone who wants to is free at any time to go
into the mountains, as Chrysostom himself did at a young age, and spend time
being educated by the monks, if for whatever reason such Christian education
cannot take place at home.[32] It is, therefore, abundantly obvious that far from
any Platonic élitism, Chrysostom is ready to charge with willful (spiritual)
murder anyone who does not do everything necessary to provide education in
Christ to all children in his or her care, regardless of age, abilities or resources.

And so we come to our final, most central question. We have seen many
significant differences between Chrysostom's and Plato's approaches to educa-
tion. However, these two are not the only two approaches that were ever pro-
posed. Antiquity has preserved for us innumerous approaches and opinions on
the education and ethical training of children. What is it about Chrysostom's
proposal that makes it Christian? Why is it not simply another variation on a
philosophy of ethics?

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[28] *Περὶ εἰδῶν φιλοσοφίας* 2.5: τὸ … μαθηματικὸν οὐκ ἠβούλετο [sc. ὁ Πλάτων] εἶναι μέρος
τῆς φιλοσοφίας, ἀλλὰ προγύμνασμά τι ὥσπερ ἡ γραμματικὴ καὶ ἡ ῥητορική· ὅθεν καὶ πρὸ
τοῦ ἀκροατηρίου τοῦ οἰκείου ἐπέγραψεν Ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσίτω.

[29] See *Acts* 4:13.

[30] *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 367: Τί οὖν; κατασκάψομεν
τὰ διδασκαλεῖα, φησίν. Οὐ τοῦτο λέγω, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως μὴ τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς καθέλωμεν οἰκοδομήν,
καὶ ζῶσαν κατορύξωμεν τὴν ψυχήν…

[31] See *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 351-2, where Chrysostom
offers a descriptive scale of the levels of human malice, locating such parents at the very top.

[32] See *Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν*, PG 47, 368-70, where he tells
the story of a mother who enlisted a monk as a fake private teacher for her son, so that he would
be educated in Christian life, as his father would having nothing of it.

V. Revelation

In footnote 11 above, I have offered an initial outline of the qualitative difference between Chrysostom's theology and Plato's philosophy, a difference to which everything above has been alluding. This outline was based upon the following verses from *Psalm* 127: 'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved' (1-2). It is a rather fitting verse by which to understand Chrysostom's point in this text, *AOML*, specifically since, as we read above from Chrysostom himself:

Just as, if the foundations of the house are shaky and the whole building is ready to fall down, it is a sign of the ultimate madness and derangement to consult a plasterer for the walls, and not an architect to rebuild the house. Just so, it would be an improper objection to keep the plasterer from his work if the walls are safely and securely upright.

As noted in footnote 11 above, if we maintain Plato's city-analogy from the *Republic*, then in the Psalmist's view the Lord – who obviously holds the highest place of honor – would be both the common worker and the guardian of the city. He both builds the city and protects it. In Plato's view, this means that the Lord occupies two of the three classes in society: the lowest and the highest. The Christian understanding of this passage, rather different from the Platonic one, will be the subject of this section.

The Psalmist's verses here do summarize the qualitative difference between Chrysostom's theology and Plato's philosophy. We will examine the concept further now. For purposes of clarity and convenience, the name we can give to this concept is revelation.[33] The concept of revelation applies to Plato's *Republic* in the following way: The primary, most obvious characteristic of Plato's ideal society is that it does not exist. In fact, it never existed. Plato made various courageous efforts to establish his ideal society; he even risked his life to do so, but – as Chrysostom noted above – it failed every time. So, we must keep in mind that when we speak of Plato's ideal community, we are speaking of something entirely imaginary, something that never actually became reality. It is a product of his own, formidable intellect. Chrysostom, on the other hand, does not employ his formidable intellect to this aim. He does not attempt to construct anything at all, neither a city, nor a house, nor a just human being. He asks the Lord to build his house. This may seem to be a rather inconsequential detail, but, in fact, this detail entails such a radical departure from the content of Ancient Greek philosophical thought that, when properly accounted for, it essentially does not allow for Christian theology (whether expressed by Chrysostom or anyone

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[33] Of course, I don't mean to suggest that 'Revelation' is my category; it is obviously a category I have taken from the texts of the New Testament.

else) to even be compared to philosophy, as this was perceived and practiced by the Ancient Greeks.[34]

It is beyond doubt or dispute that the Christian faith is based upon the divine revelation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, 100% human and 100% God at the same time. This, of course, is clear not only from an even cursory reading of the New Testament itself, but also from the fact that Patristic literature, in its overwhelming majority, constitutes simply commentary upon and interpretation of the divine revelation of Holy Scripture.[35] As Hadot notes in his classic work on ancient philosophy, this element of revelation and subsequent interpretation made an appearance in Greek philosophy as well, most well known in the form of the famous *Chaldean Oracles*. However, unlike the Christian revelation of the person of Jesus Christ in the flesh, the content of the Greek philosophical revelations is decidedly impersonal, as are the very systems of Greek philosophy that commented upon these oracles. Thus, while it cannot be disputed that both Greek philosophers and Christian theologians strongly advocated a life of devotion and ascetic struggle that clearly included a desire for ethical perfection, there yet remains a gaping chasm or yawning abyss separating the actual quality of the two approaches to devotion, asceticism and, consequently, ethics. Both Plato and Chrysostom, as we have seen above, advocated *eros* as the driving force behind their respective ways of life, philosophy and theology, but of the two of them, only Chrysostom can actually claim to be in love *with* someone, a *person*, as opposed to an idea or a system. The difference is much more poetically illustrated by one of the many prayers of preparation for Holy Communion: 'Christ, you have captivated me with longing, and by your divine eros you have changed me, but consume my sins with immaterial fire and make me worthy to be filled with delight in you, that rejoicing I may magnify, oh good one, your two appearances'.[36] This prayer provides a sure key for interpreting Chrysostom's insistence throughout *AOML* that life in Christ has first priority for Christians. As we saw above, Chrysostom says that true wisdom and education

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[34] I have no intention of making generalizations that essentially do not mean anything. The difference I am referring to here applies equally to Pre-Socratic, Platonic, Epicurean, Stoic and Cynic ethics alike. See Francis Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh, 1992); P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995); Stephen Everson, *Ethics*, Companions to Ancient Thought 4 (Cambridge, 1998); Dominic O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2003); Giorgos Mantzaridis, Χριστιανική Ηθική (Thessaloniki, 2004); Niketas Siniossoglou, *Plato and Theodoret: The Christian Appropriation of Platonic Philosophy and the Hellenic Intellectual Resistance* (Cambridge, 2008); Nikos Matsoukas, Ἱστορία τῆς φιλοσοφίας: Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς-Βυζαντινῆς-Δυτικοευρωπαϊκῆς. Μέ σύντομη εἰσαγωγή στή φιλοσοφία, Φιλοσοφική καὶ Θεολογική Βιβλιοθήκη 47 (Thessaloniki, 2010).

[35] See Georges Florovsky, *Revelation and Interpretation*, Collected Works I (Belmont, 1972), 17-36; P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995), 71.

[36] Ἱερατικόν (2010), 184: Ἔθελξας πόθῳ με, Χριστέ, καὶ ἠλλοίωσας τῷ θείῳ σου ἔρωτι· ἀλλὰ κατάφλεξον πυρὶ ἀΰλῳ τὰς ἁμαρτίας μου, καὶ ἐμπλησθῆναι τῆς ἐν σοὶ τρυφῆς καταξίωσον, ἵνα τὰς δύο σκιρτῶν μεγαλύνω, ἀγαθέ, παρουσίας σου.

do not consist of lessons in philosophy or rhetoric, but rather of the fear of God in the soul, a fear that does not paralyze but in fact ignites the fire of longing in the soul. This is the longing and the divine *eros* mentioned in the prayer above. Throughout *AOML* Chrysostom tells the fathers that Christ has capti-vated their sons with longing and changed them by his divine *eros*. Once we understand that this is his message, many things become instantly clear: 1) the reason why Chrysostom accuses the parents of the highest degree of human malice by not letting their sons pursue their *eros* for Christ; 2) the obvious priority that this *eros* takes for a Christian over rhetoric, philosophy or anything else; 3) that Chrysostom is not promoting some variation on a philosophy of ethics.

To continue the analogy from the *Psalms* above, Chrysostom is trying to explain to the fathers that if they do not allow Christ to build their sons' house and guard their city – *i.e.* to change their sons by his divine *eros* – then all effort is in vain. The fathers are busy trying to ensure their sons a place among the highest class in the city; they are thinking in Platonic terms of class divi-sions: guardians, helpers, workers, *etc*. They are trying, like Plato did, to create the ideal situation for their sons: whether that situation be an entire, imaginary city full of justice or, at least, a position of power and authority in the city that already exists. They do not understand that when Christ builds the house and protects the city, he does so in an absolutely *personal* way. He himself is a person and has created every person that exists. As ruler of the universe, he is in a position to offer more honor to the fathers and their sons than any city ever could, and as creator of each person individually, he does not overlook anyone who comes to him.[37] This is Chrysostom's message in this text.

VI. Conclusions

With this message in mind, we can correctly interpret what may seem to be élitist language in Chrysostom's texts (pp. 45-46). He does refer to *the many*, as well as many other tropes of ancient rhetoric.[38] However, for Chrysostom *the many* would not correspond to some uneducated or illiterate mob. He himself was preaching every day to crowds, which clearly included many uneducated and illiterate people.[39] For Chrysostom, *the many* would be a concept that, whatever its exact content, would be based upon absolutely personal criteria,

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[37] See *Matth.* 10:30; *John* 6:37.

[38] D. Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom* (2014) offers a recent and thorough analysis of Chrysos-tom's inheritance from ancient rhetorical practices.

[39] Maxwell's study of Chrysostom's congregation is exceptionally enlightening on this aspect, Jaclyn Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2006).

that is, upon Christ himself. If Joseph was not one of *the many*, it is undoubt-edly related to his own revelation to his brothers: 'Do not be afraid, for I am a man of God' (*Gen.* 50:19).[40]

We can also understand why Chrysostom is not ashamed to proclaim the illiteracy and lack of education on the part of the Apostles. As we saw above, this even becomes a cause for boasting, since Christ's divine *eros* has changed the Apostles into orators far superior to anything that ancient rhetoric ever produced. Chrysostom corroborates this claim by the fact that the Apostles overcame the Roman empire even in being martyred by it, whereas Plato could not convince even one tyrant to implement his system of justice.

Finally, and most significantly, we can discern that it is not possible for Chrysostom to be seriously considered a moralist. It is not possible to claim that he had little or no interest in theology. On the contrary, we must respon-sibly realize that everything he says springs from a personal *eros* for the person of Jesus Christ. This *erotic* relationship – completely lacking in any kind of systematization, as relationships of this kind do – is the only 'system' that we can ascribe to Chrysostom. He does not invent a philosophy of ethics, however formidable, nor does he promote himself as the founder, healer or savior of anything. He points the way to Christ and encourages all others to do the same. This is the content of Christian revelation. This is the content of the Christian faith, and this is the content of Chrysostom's message here. He is not presenting something new, something intelligent he thought up. He is presenting *someone* new, a person in whom all of humanity is made new, changed as a result of divine *eros*.[41]

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[40] This translation is my own. For some reason English translations (NRSV, NKJV, KJV) have rendered the Greek text: τοῦ γὰρ Θεοῦ εἰμι ἐγώ as: *Am I in the place of God?* The reasons for transforming Joseph's statement into a question not only escape me but the scope of this paper as well. In any case, his words are indicative of Chrysostom's message in *AOML*.

[41] See *Acts* 17:23; *Rev.* 21:5; G. Mantzaridis, *Χριστιανική Ηθική* (2004), 45-6: 'Christianity does not supplement or improve ethics … The innovation that Christianity introduces into the understanding of the ethical life is not on the social or psychological level, but on the level of anthropology or ontology. In other words, Christianity essentially does not present a new system of ethics for humanity, but a new humanity, the new person in Christ, who is called to live the new life in Christ. This person establishes his or her life upon the truth that sets one free from death, upon the truth that is not identified with knowledge, but with the life that is not conquered by death'. The translation from the original Modern Greek is my own.

Act of Vision as an Analogy of the Proceeding of the Intellect from the One in Plotinus and of the Son and the Holy Spirit from the Father in Marius Victorinus and St. Augustine

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ABSTRACT

The act of vision is an important analogy used to describe the proceeding of the Intellect from the One in the metaphysical system of Plotinus. It implies that the formation of the universal Intellect is achieved through the process of intellectual contemplation of the First Principle, the One, when the Intellect receives its independent existence as a separate divine substance. Latin Christian Platonists, Marius Victorinus and St. Augustine of Hippo, borrowed this idea from Plotinus to describe how the Son and the Holy Spirit originate from the Father. According to Victorinus, the Son is begotten by the Father (the pure divine Being) as a primary movement or life, which corresponds to the intellectual vision which has not yet perceived its object, while the Holy Spirit represents a return of this indefinite intellectual vision to the Father, thus constituting divine Intelligence, or Self-Consciousness. On the other hand, St. Augustine, for the sake of his trinitarian theology, used to construct so-called trinities of the 'external' and 'internal vision', where the first element – an object of vision or immaterial form of an object in the human mind (resembling God the Father) – is connected with the second element – so-called inner vision or gaze of the mind, which receives from it its own form (resembling the Son) – through an intention of the will, uniting these two elements and representing their mutual love (resembling the Holy Spirit). Thus, the doctrine of Plotinus was interpreted differently by both Christian thinkers to serve the needs of the Christian Trinitarian theology as a rational means to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

What do metaphysics and the theory of sensual perception have in common? How can the act of vision be regarded as the source of our metaphysical knowledge about the first principles of being? At first glance they seem to be contradictory. Nevertheless as we will demonstrate, the act of vision was a

very beneficial analogy both for later Greek philosophers and Early Christian theologians when they attempted to grasp the core of the eternal relations and processes in the highest principles of being. To prove this we will make a comparison between the metaphysical thought of Plotinus on the one hand, and Marius Victorinus and St. Augustine's on the other, trying to find similarities or dissimilarities between them.

Indeed, when Plotinus explains how the universal Intellect, or νοῦς, originates from the First Principle or the One, he often mentions the act of visual perception (τὸ ὁρᾶν, ὅρασις, θέα, ὄψις), which he in some way ascribes to the Intellect.[1] For example, in *Enneades* V 1 (10)[2] he is meditating on the question of how the Intellect is generated by the One in the following way:

How does it [the Intellect] see (πῶς οὖν ὁρᾷ)? And whom does it see (καὶ τίνα)? And how did it come into existence at all and arise from the One so as to be able to see it (ἵνα καὶ ὁρᾷ)?[3] … The Intellect is not that Good. How then does it generate Intellect? Because by its return to it, it sees (τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἑώρα), and this seeing is Intellect (ἡ δὲ ὅρασις αὕτη νοῦς).[4]

Although Plotinus is obviously speaking here of a pure intellectual contemplation, not of sensual vision, he uses such terms as τὸ ὁρᾶν ('to see') and ὅρασις ('seeing'), which have been taken from the sensual background and applied to the metaphysical process. As is further explained by Plotinus in the treatise, we can see or perceive something through the senses (αἴσθησις) or in the mind (νοῦς). The sensual vision can be compared with a straight line, since it is focused on something other than itself, while intellectual contemplation can be compared with the circle enclosed in itself.[5] Furthermore, in accordance with Aristotle's theory of sensual knowledge, in which the process of perception was regarded as a transition from the potentiality to the actuality or *entelechy*,[6] Plotinus distinguishes between the two stages both of sensual and intellectual contemplation: the potential stage and the actual one (ἡ ὄψις καὶ δυνάμει οὖσα καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ). The former corresponds to the potency of vision or cognition, which has not yet been manifested and has not received its shape (οὐ σχηματιζόμενον). The latter corresponds to the actualization (ἐνεργείᾳ ὄν) of the potency in the act of vision or intellectual cognition, which receives the form (μορφήν) from its object.[7]

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[1] See Plotinus, *Enneades* III 6, 2; V 1, 6-7; V 2, 1; V 3, 5; V 3, 11; V 4, 2; V 6, 5; VI 7, 16 *etc*.

[2] Numbers in brackets indicate the presumable chronological order of treatises according to Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*.

[3] Plotinus, *Enneades* V 1, 6, 1-2. Translation of A.H. Armstrong (London, 1984).

[4] *Enn.* V 1, 7, 1-6.

[5] *Enn.* V 1, 7, 6-9.

[6] See Aristoteles, *De anima*, 412b 27-413a 3; 415b 24; 417b 16-26.

[7] See Plotinus, *Enneades* III 6, 2, 32-41.

In fact, in the *Enneades* V 4 (7) Plotinus compares the activity of the Intellect with seeing, which in the first stage does not clearly see its object (the One), but when it perceives it, it is filled with it and receives its own form and definition, becoming Intellect in the true sense:

If, then, the generator itself is Intellect, what is generated by it must be more defective then Intellect, but fairly close to it and like it; but since the generator is beyond Intellect, it is necessary that what is generated should be Intellect. But why is the generator not Intellect, whose active actuality is thinking (ἐνέργειά ἐστι νόησις)? Thinking, which sees the intelligible (τὸ νοητὸν ὁρῶσα) and turns towards it (πρὸς τοῦτο ἐπιστραφεῖσα) and is, in a way, being perfected by it, is itself indefinite, like seeing (ἀόριστος μὲν αὐτὴ ὥσπερ ὄψις), but is defined by the intelligible (ὁριζομένη δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ). This is why it is said:[8] 'from the Indefinite Dyad and the One derive the Forms and Numbers': that is, Intellect.[9]

In *Enneades* V 2 (11) Plotinus also describes the process of the formation of the Intellect in terms of visual perception. Here he distinguishes between the two stages of this process: in the first stage the Intellect dwells in rest (ἡ στάσις) and is no more than the pure being (τὸ ὄν); in the second stage it has been set in motion, which is indefinite in the beginning, but is eventually determined by its return to the One (εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη) and contemplation of it (πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον, ἡ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα), becoming at once intellect and being (ὁμοῦ νοῦς γίγνεται καὶ ὄν).[10] In *Enneades* V 6 (24) Plotinus underlines one important detail of this process:

For thinking (τὸ νοεῖν) does not come first either in reality or in value, but is second and is what has come into being when the Good already existed and moved what had come into being to itself, and it was moved and saw (ἐκινήθη τε καὶ εἶδε). And this is what thinking is, a movement towards the Good in its desire of that Good (κίνησις πρὸς ἀγαθὸν ἐφιέμενον ἐκείνου); for the desire (ἡ ἔφεσις) generates thought and establishes it in being along with itself: for desire of sight is seeing (ἔφεσις γὰρ ὄψεως ὅρασις).[11]

Thus, according to Plotinus, the thinking process inside the Intellect is generated by its inner *desire* (ἔφεσις) to perceive the Good and to contemplate it fully. In *Enneades* VI 7 (38) Plotinus describes in detail how the Intellect moves from the indefinite desire of seeing the Good to its perfect contemplation and understanding. Here Plotinus compares the indefinite vital desire of the Intellect with the process of seeing, which has not yet seen its object and thus remains indefinite; but as the object is perceived, it gives the Intellect its full definition:

It was not yet Intellect when it looked at him (οὔπω νοῦς ἦν ἐκεῖνο βλέπων), but looked unintellectually (ἔβλεπεν ἀνοήτως). Or rather we should say that it did not ever

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[8] See Aristoteles, *Metaphysica*, A 6, 978b21-29; Plotinus, *Enneades* V 1, 5; VI 7, 17 *etc*.
[9] Plotinus, *Enneades* V 4, 2, 1-11.
[10] *Enn*. V 2, 1, 7-13.
[11] *Enn*. V 6, 5, 5-10.

see the Good (οὐδὲ ἑώρα πώποτε), but lived towards it and depended on it (ἀνήρτητο αὐτοῦ) and turned to it (ἐπέστραπτο πρὸς αὐτό), and its movement was fulfilled because it moved there and round that Good and filled Intellect, and was not just movement, but movement satiated and full (κίνησις διακορὴς καὶ πλήρης); and thereupon it became all things, and knew this in its own intimate self-consciousness and was now at this point Intellect in its fullness (νοῦς ἤδη ἦν πληρωθείς).[12]

To sum up, in Plotinus' view the formation of the universal Intellect is achieved through the process of intellectual contemplation of the First Principle, the One or the Good, when the Intellect receives its independent existence as a separate divine substance. We should also note that Plotinus expands this view to the generation of the universal Soul. For him it is also similar to an act of vision, which results in the fulfillment of the life of the Soul originated from the Intellect while seeing it:

The soul itself must be like sight (ὥσπερ ὄψιν), and what it sees (ὁρατόν) must be Intellect; before it sees it is indeterminate (ἀόριστον πρὶν ἰδεῖν), but naturally adapted to intellection (νοεῖν): so it is matter in relation to intellect (ὕλην οὖν πρὸς νοῦν).[13]

In later Neoplatonic tradition this concept was expanded to the well-known three-fold scheme or triad of *remaining – procession – reversion* (μονή, πρόοδος, ἐπιστροφή).[14] But what is more important for us is that the Plotinian approach with all its implications was borrowed by some Christian thinkers in their attempts to provide a reasonable explanation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Among these are two outstanding western Christian theologians of later 4th – early 5th cent. AD – Marius Victorinus and St. Augustine of Hippo.

Marius Victorinus, the forerunner of St. Augustine in the field of philosophical theology, was well acquainted with Plotinus' writings and was supposed to have even translated some of them into Latin.[15] His own theological treatises generally aimed at proving the consubstantiality of the Son and Holy Spirit with God the Father. To demonstrate it, Victorinus, in his first book *Against Arius* (*ca.* 358-359 AD), refers to an act of vision, in which he seeks to find something similar to the relationship between the Son and the Father:

For with God things are not as they are in bodies or in bodily things where eye is one thing, sight the other, or as they are in fire, where fire is one thing, its light another. For both eye and fire have need of something other: the eye, of a light different from itself so that from it and through it vision can take place, and the fire has need of air

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[12] *Enn.* VI 7, 16, 10-22. The similar idea can be found in *Enn.* VI 7, 17, 12-26 and V 3, 11, 1-16.

[13] *Enn.* III 9, 5, 1-3. See also VI 7, 17, 36-42.

[14] See *Enn.* III 9, 5; V 1, 6; V 2, 1; V 4, 2; V 6, 5; VI 7, 16; Porphyrius, *Com. in Parm.* 14, 16-26; Proclus, *Elem. theol.* 35 *etc.*

[15] Supposedly *Enn.* I 2; I 6; I 8; IV 4; V 2; VI 3. See P. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident: Firmicus Maternus, Marius Victorinus, Saint Augustine and Macrobe* (Louvain, 1934), 49, 77-103, 224, 228-31; P. Courcelle, *Les letters grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris, 1968), 157; P. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus. Recherches sur sa vie et ses œuvres* (Paris, 1971), I 209-10.

so that light might come from it; but the Power and Wisdom of God like vision: the power of vision has vision within it (*visionis potentia in se habet visionem*). This vision is externalized when the power of vision is in action (*operatur potentia visionis*); then vision is begotten by the power of vision and is itself its only begotten (*visio unigenita ea ipsa*), for nothing else is begotten by it. And vision encompasses the power of vision, not only within, when it is in potentiality, but above all, outside, when it is in action; so vision encompasses the power of vision. Vision is therefore consubstantial (ὁμοού-σιον) with the power of vision, and the whole is one: the power of vision is in repose, but vision is in movement; and by vision all things are made visible. Feelings are also present in vision, the power of vision remaining incapable and itself begetting vision without feeling. And the *power and wisdom* of God are God himself, and the whole is simple and one, of one same substance, together from all eternity and always from the Father, who himself is the begetter of his own existence. *Wisdom and power* are there-fore actions (*operationes*); for [apostle] now designates action as power; indeed, Paul has joined together *wisdom and power*. God is therefore the potentiality of these two things, and for that reason he is Father because they come from him. Indeed, he begets them into action and impassibly, because power and action are consubstantial (ὁμοού-σια *sunt potentia et actio*), God and the *power and wisdom* of God.[16]

Thus, Victorinus distinguishes between *the faculty* or the power of vision and *the act* or action of vision, the latter proceeding entirely from the faculty and being consubstantial with it. Then he applies this distinction as well as the mutual correlation between these two elements to the distinction and relation-ship between the Father and the Son. As we have seen, in a similar way Ploti-nus viewed the proceeding of the Intellect from the One, though according to him, the power of vision corresponds rather to the first stage of the formation of the Intellect (*the pure being* or *indefinite desire*), while the act of vision refers to the second stage, when the Intellect returns to the One by contempla-tion. On the other hand, Plotinus also finds in the One some kind of action or activity (ἐνέργεια), which is within it and dwells in repose (στάσις) and abso-lute self-identity (ταυτότης), for it is identical to its essence – it is a so-called *activity that belongs to the essence* (ἐνέργεια τῆς οὐσίας), while the Intellect is an external activity of the essence of the One – it is a so-called *activity that proceeds from the essence* (ἐνέργεια ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας), for it proceeds from the First principle and then returns to it, receiving from it its own form and becom-ing a distinct *hypostasis*, that is, an actual manifestation of the essence of the One.[17] It is worthy to note that Marius Victorinus has borrowed this doctrine of *the double activity* (διττὴ ἐνέργεια) from Plotinus and applied it to the relationship between the Father and the Son in the following way: the Father as the pure being (or 'to be'), which coincides with his essence, is *an innate action within* (*intus insita operatio*), while the Son as the pure act (or 'to act') is *an action operating externally* (*operatio [quae] foris operatur; foris apparens*

[16] Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* I 40, 5-28. Translation of M. Clark (Washington, 1981).
[17] See Plotinus, *Enn*. V 4, 2; V 1, 3.

operatio), which externalize the essence of the internal action.[18] It is also remarkable that Victorinus directly links the Plotinian doctrine of the double activity (or the double movement) with the act of visual perception. Indeed, according to Victorinus, the Father is a movement that dwells in repose and is within itself, being identical with its own essence; it is similar to the faculty or power of vision, while the Son is the same movement that is directed toward the exterior and generates understanding and self-consciousness and in this way is similar to the act of vision:

From God and from one same substance come substance and life and knowledge, and the same movement, when it is interior within itself (*intus in se est*), is the same thing as substance which, thence when it looks and turns to the exterior (*inde spectat et ut foras eminet*), that is, to work and act, is then a begetting, is then a birth. And this birth, because the movement is unique, is the only begotten Son. But this unique movement is either that life or that knowledge of which we have spoken. Indeed, it is necessary that life is movement. For all life vivifies. Whence, life is movement which, if it is existing in itself and is converted toward itself (*in se exsistens atque in se conversus*), is for itself substance; but if it looks outside (*foras spectat*), it is called movement by predominance; for movement in the interior (*intus motus*) is repose (*cessatio*): either repose in movement or movement in repose (*mota cessatio cessansque motus*). Indeed, it is necessary that from these two, I say from movement and from repose, God is both Father and substance itself because, by a quasi-community and a certain form, he is the source of the two, while being himself simple and one, and always one and alone, and, as we said above, total. This movement when it is taken and understood as movement in repose (*in cessante motu*), is God, is the Father himself, always and from eternity Father, because movement is always from substance and in substance or rather, is sub-stance itself. This same movement, when it looks to the exterior (*foras spectat*) – to look to the exterior is to be movement or motion which is precisely to will to see one-self, to think of and to know oneself (*se videre, se intellegere ac nosse velle*); but the one who sees himself (*se videt*) exists as double, and there is known the seeing and that which is seen, the one who sees being himself the one seen, because he sees himself, this turning toward the exterior is, therefore, being begotten or being toward the exterior in order to know what one is – therefore, if this movement is toward the exterior, it is begotten, and if begotten, this is the Son, the only begotten, because he is alone, he who is total act and total movement, universal and unique.[19]

It is obvious that Victorinus proposes here his own Christian interpretation of the aforementioned Plotinian doctrine of the double activity as well as the doctrine of the twofold nature of the Intellect, which is divided in itself, being both intellectual and intelligible.[20] Moreover, Victorinus goes far beyond Plotinian thought identifying the so-called 'intelligible triad' of being – life –

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[18] See M. Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* I 4, 3-10; I 12, 29-32; IV 27, 1-29, 23 *etc*.
[19] *Adv. Arium* III 2, 26-52.
[20] See Plotinus, *Enn*. V 1, 5; V 3, 5; V 3, 11; V 4, 2; V 6, 1-2; V 9, 5; VI 8, 12 *etc*.

thought (*esse*, *vivere*, *intellegere*) with three hypostases of the Holy Trinity.[21] To prove it, Victorinus also uses an analogy of the act of vision, which helps him to explain the relationship between the three elements of the triad. In fact, according to Victorinus,

There is never being without living and understanding, never living and understanding without being; this is what has already been proved. For the understanding of this reality, here is an example. Let us take sight or vision (*visum vel visionem*) in itself, in its own power and nature, existing potentially (*potentialiter exsistentem*); this is its 'to be' (*eius esse*), having the capacity to exercise vision (*potentiam habentem vigere ad videndum*) which will be its 'to live' (*eius vivere*); likewise, having the power for seeing, which is to recognize what is seen (*potentiam habentem videndo visa quaeque discernere*), which is its understanding (*eius intellegere*). These things, if they remain in potentiality, are said to be nothing other than 'to be'; they remain, as it were, in repose turned upon themselves; they do not exercise any other act than that of 'to be', being purely only vision or sight; and for that reason they must be considered only as 'to be.' But from the moment when this vision will begin to exercise the act of seeing (*operatione videndi*), the vision, then, by a kind of going out of itself – I say 'by a kind'; in fact, it neither proceeds nor departs from itself, but by the tension and exercise (*intentione ac vigore*) of its own power, which is for it to live, vision will begin to perceive all things which are found before it or before which it goes – since its own work of seeing is fulfilled, vision is henceforth the life of vision, life which, by the actuation of the visual movement, shows well that vision lives when it is only the act of seeing, pure visual sensation, without distinguishing or judging what it sees (*videre solum sine intellegentia*). We think of it this way when we consider vision alone without understanding. But since in fact this seeing, which for vision is 'to live', is not truly seeing unless it grasps and understands what it sees, this seeing is at the same time also a 'judging what one sees' (*iudicare quod viderit*). Thus in seeing is included discernment (*in eo quod est videre inest diiudicare*). If one sees, however one sees, one cannot not also discern what one sees. Therefore, as we have said, in the act of seeing is contained the act of discernment, and in the act of vision is the act of 'seeing'. Therefore there is no composition between them; what is more, they are simple; by their very 'to be', vision, seeing, and discernment are only one (*unum sunt visio, videre, discernere*). In this way also in the discerning is present the seeing, and in the seeing is present the 'to be' of vision, and, to tell the truth, there is no inherence, but by its very act of being vision, vision is to see and to discern. Thus, all are in each one, or each one is all or all are one.[22]

Thus, according to Victorinus, as in the act of vision there are three different but correlated elements: the power or faculty of vision (*visio*), which is its 'being' or basis, the act of seeing (*videre*), which is its 'life' or action, and the discernment (*dicsernere*) of both the visual object and the process of seeing, which is its inner 'understanding'; in a similar way we can distinguish between

[21] See M. Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* I 63, 11-4; III 4, 6-17, 9; IV 21, 26-8; 25, 44-5 *etc*. See also our paper for *Studia Patristica*: A. Fokin, 'The Doctrine of the 'Intelligible Triad' in Neoplatonism and Patristics', *SP* 58 (2013), 45-71.

[22] M. Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* III 4, 44-5, 31.

three hypostases of the Holy Trinity: the Being represents the Father, the Life
– the Son and the Intelligence – the Holy Spirit.[23] Consequently, as the faculty
of vision dwells in repose and preserves its potency untouched, being the source
both of seeing and discerning, in the same way the Father as divine Being
dwells in repose and begets the Son as his life, action and movement, which
corresponds to the intellectual vision which has not yet perceived its object,
while the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father through the Son, repre-
sents a return of this indefinite intellectual vision to the Father, thus constitut-
ing divine Intelligence. Furthermore, as the human soul can discern between
the faculty of vision, the act of seeing and the perceived object and bind them
together, in a similar way the Holy Spirit unites the Father and the Son together
in perfect divine self-knowledge or self-consciousness. Finally, as in the act of
vision all its elements are united without confusion and separation, in the same
way three hypostases of the Holy Trinity are consubstantial and inseparable
from each other.

These conclusions drawn by Marius Victorinus, under the direct influence
of Plotinus's metaphysical thought, permit us to say that he was the first Chris-
tian theologian who proposed such an interpretation of the act of vision that
can be successfully used to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity viewed
as the triad of being, living and understanding. Another interpretation of the
theory of visual perception can be found in the writings of his famous contem-
porary and 'disciple', St. Augustine of Hippo.

Indeed, St. Augustine, with his strong inclination towards introspection, tries
to base his mature trinitarian theology not on the metaphysical theories, as
Marius Victorinus did, but rather on a careful analysis of the internal structure
of the human soul and its perception of both the external and internal world.
In his treatise *On the Trinity* (*ca*. 400-425 AD) he considers a number of
so-called 'psychological trinities' sequentially, in which he seeks for similari-
ties between God's image and its divine prototype. Among these are trinities
which were derived from an analysis of the act of visual perception. In doing
this Augustine relies on presumable conformity between the 'inner man' (*homo
interior*), *i.e.* human soul with its powers, and the 'outer man' (*homo exterior*),
i.e. human body with its senses:

No one doubts that, as the inner man is endowed with understanding (*intelligentia*),
so the outer man is endowed with bodily sense (*sensu corporis*). Let us endeavor,
therefore, to discover, if we can, any trace at all of the Trinity even in this outer man,
not that he himself is also in the same way the image of God (*qualecumque vestigium
Trinitatis*).[24]

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[23] See *Adversus Arium* III 4, 6-11; III 4, 39-46; III 7, 1-15. See also *Adversus Arium* I 63.11-1;
IV 21.26-8; 25.44-5 *etc*.
[24] Augustinus, *De Trinitate* XI 1, 1. Translation of S. MacKenna (Cambridge, 2002).

After having considered two famous 'psychological trinities' of *mind –
knowledge – love*[25] and *memory – intellect – will*,[26] which belong entirely to
the 'inner man', St. Augustine turns to the 'outer man' and distinguishes
between the two trinities, which have the same basic structure as the psycho-
logical trinities mentioned above. The first trinity is called by him the trinity
of 'external vision' (*visio externa*), and the second trinity – the trinity of 'inter-
nal vision' (*visio interna*),[27] because for Augustine, as well as for Plotinus, the
corporeal vision is very similar by nature to the intellectual cognition.[28] First
of all, Augustine distinguishes between the three elements of the act of visual
perception: the bodily object perceived (*ipsa res quam videmus*), the act of
vision (*visio*), and the mind's attention (*animi intentio, intentio voluntatis*).[29]
According to him, the vision is produced by both the visible thing and the one
who sees it (*ex visibili et vidente gignitur visio*). Indeed, when we intend to see
something, that has certain visible form (*species visibilis*), our sense of sight
is affected by the impressions made by that thing (*imago impressa*), and is
informed by it (*informatio sensus, sensus formatus*).[30] This process is impos-
sible without attention of the mind or intention of the will (*intentio voluntatis*)
that unites the visible object and its image in the human soul. And although all
the three elements of the act of vision differ one from the other and have
diverse nature, they altogether establish a kind of unity:

Since this is so, let us recall how these three, though differing in nature, may be fitted
together into a kind of unity, namely, the form of the body that is seen, its image
impressed on the sense, which is vision, or the sense informed, and the will of the soul
which directs the sense to the sensible thing and keeps the vision itself fixed upon it.
The first of these, that is, the visible thing itself, does not belong to the nature of a liv-
ing being, except when we see our own body. But the second belongs to it in such a
way that it arises in the body and through the body in the soul, for it arises in the sense,
which is neither without the body nor without the soul. The third, however, is proper
to the soul alone, because it is the will. Although the substances of these three, there-
fore, are so diverse, yet they form together such a unity, that the first two, namely, the
form of the body that is seen and its image which arises in the sense, that is, the vision,
can hardly be separated from each other, except when reason intervenes as a judge.
The will possesses such power in uniting these two that it moves the sense to be formed
to that thing which is seen, and keeps it fixed on it when it has been formed.[31]

In addition to their unity and diversity, Augustine finds some other similari-
ties between the trinity of 'external vision' and the Holy Trinity. First of all,

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[25] *De Trin.* VIII 10, 14; IX 3, 3.
[26] *De Trin.* X 11, 17.
[27] *De Trin.* XI 9, 16.
[28] See *De Trin.* XI 1, 1; XV 3, 5; see also Plotinus, *Enn.* V 1, 6-7; V 3, 5; V 6, 5; VI 7, 41 *etc*.
[29] *De Trin.* XI 2, 2.
[30] *De Trin.* XI 2, 3-4.
[31] *De Trin.* XI 2, 5.

the visible object produces in our visual sense an immaterial image or form (*imago, forma*) that is similar to it. For Augustine it resembles to some extent the eternal and incorporeal generation of the Son from the Father as his perfect image, although there are also many dissimilarities between them. Indeed, according to Augustine,

Hence, the parent, as it were (*quasi parens*), of that vision, that is, of the form which arises in the sense of one who sees (*formae quae fit in sensu cernentis*), is the form of the body (*forma corporis*) from which it arises. But yet the latter is not a true parent, and consequently the former is not a true offspring. For the vision is not completely begotten by the form of the body alone, since something else is applied to the body in order that it may be formed by it, namely, the sense of the one who sees.[32]

We need to note that for Augustine it is not the faculty of seeing, as it was for Marius Victorinus, that resembles God the Father, but the form of the object that is seen, just as for Plotinus the One was not only a source of the existence of the Intellect, but also a cause of the completeness and fullness of its thought. We may say that in this regard Augustine's view is closer to Plotinus'. On the other hand, in the act of vision Augustine, as well as Victorinus, also finds something that resembles eternal procession of the Holy Spirit. But if for Victorinus it was the discernment (*dicsernere*) of both the visual object and the process of seeing (as it were the 'understanding' of vision), for Augustine the third element of the act of vision is will (*voluntas*), which combines both the sight and the visible object together. By its spiritual nature and uniting function it is similar to the Holy Spirit, who as a mutual Love unites the Father and the Son:

The will, therefore which combines both this quasi-parent and this quasi-offspring (*voluntas quae utrumque conjungit*) is more spiritual (*magis spiritualis*) than either of the two. For that body which is seen is not at all spiritual. On the other hand the vision, which takes place in the sense, is indeed mingled with something spiritual, because it cannot take place without the soul. But the whole is not so, since that which is formed is a sense of the body. Hence, the will, which combines both, is known to be more spiritual, as I have said, and, therefore, it begins in this trinity to suggest as it were the person of the Spirit… It does not proceed, therefore, from the body, as though this were its parent, nor from the vision or form, which is in the sense, as though it were its offspring. For before the vision arose, there already was a will which directed the sense to the body in order that it might be formed by seeing it; but yet it was not satisfied. For how could that satisfy which was not yet seen? But satisfaction means that the will is at rest (*placitum autem quieta voluntas est*). And, therefore, we cannot speak of the will as the quasi-offspring of the vision, because it was before the vision, nor as the quasi-parent, because it was formed and expressed, not by the will, but by the body that was seen (*ex viso corpore formata et expressa est*).[33]

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[32] *De Trin.* XI 5, 9.
[33] *De Trin.* XI 5, 9.

Augustine's concept of will and its role in the act of vision, as well as its correlation with the Holy Spirit, remind us of Plotinus's concept of an inner desire (ἔφεσις) of the Intellect for the One, which generates its thought, as well as the will instigating the process of seeing in the act of visual perception, for, according to Plotinus, 'desire of sight is seeing'.[34] This indefinite desire or attraction of the Intellect for the One is a inner motive power that incites the Intellect to contemplate the One and to generate thought, just as in Augustine's trinity of the 'external vision', where the will directs the sense towards the visible object. On the other hand, in Plotinus' view the One (or the Good) itself attracts the Intellect, just as the visible object attracts our sight and produces vision.

If we now turn to consider Augustine's second trinity, or the 'inner trinity' (*trinitas interior*),[35] because it describes the act of inner vision, we find it very similar to the first trinity, but having the more spiritual character and thus deeper resemblance of the Holy Trinity. Indeed, this trinity also consists of three elements:

For even when the form of the body that was perceived corporeally has been taken away, yet a likeness of it remains in the memory, to which the will may again turn its gaze in order to be formed by it from within, as the sense was formed by the sensible body that was presented to it from without (*formetur intrinsecus*). And so that trinity arises from memory, inner vision, and the will, which unites both (*ex memoria, et interna visione, et quae utrumque copulat voluntate*). And when these three are drawn together (*coguntur*) into unity, then from that combination (*coactu*) itself, they are called thought (*cogitatio*). In these three there is no longer any diversity of substance. For that sensible body is not there, which is wholly different from the nature of a living being; nor is the sense of the body formed there in order that vision may arise; nor does the will itself act so as to move the sense to be formed to the sensible body, and keep it fixed upon that body when it has been formed. But the place of that bodily form, which was perceived from without, is taken by the memory, retaining the form which the soul absorbs into itself through the bodily sense; and the vision that was without, when the sense was formed by a sensible body, is succeeded by a similar vision within (*intus similis visio*), when the eye of the mind is formed from that which the memory retains and absent bodies are conceived; and the will itself, as it moved the sense to be formed to the body that was presented to it from without, and combined both of them when it had been formed, so in the act of remembering it causes the eye of the mind to turn back to the memory, in order that it may be formed by that which the memory retains, and that there may be a similar vision in thought (*sit in cogitatione similis visio*).[36]

All of the three elements of the act of inner vision – *memory*, *inner vision*, and *will* – belong to the human soul and have one and the same spiritual substance,

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[34] *Enn.* V 6, 5, 9-10.
[35] *De Trin.* XI 7.11.
[36] *De Trin.* XI 3, 6; see XI 7, 11-2.

constituting a close unity, although the function of each element remains different:

And what the intention of the will (*voluntatis intentio*) is towards a body that is seen, and the vision to be combined with it in order that out of the three a kind of unity may arise there, even though they differ in nature, that the same intention of the will is towards combining the image of the body, which is in the memory (*imaginem corporis quae est in memoria*), and the vision of thought, that is, the form which the eye of the mind has taken into itself when it turns to the memory. Thus here too a certain unity may be brought about from three (*quaedam unitas ex tribus*), not now distinct by a difference in nature, but of one and the same substance (*unius ejusdemque substantiae*), because this whole is within and this whole is mind.[37]

There are many other similarities between the trinity of inner vision and the Holy Trinity. First of all, the inner vision, or the 'gaze of thought' (*acies cogitantis*), is generated by the form of an object, impressed in the memory, as if the one were a parent, and the other an offspring, which for Augustine is similar to the generation of the Son from the Father.[38] Furthermore, the function of the will in the act of inner vision reminds Augustine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as their mutual Love. Indeed, the will to remember proceeds both from the memory, retaining images impressed in it, and the inner vision, and combines both (*voluntas copulatrix quasi parentis et prolis*), being itself neither a parent nor an offspring but a third, so that there is a close unity made up from three.[39] As we have mentioned above, this function of the will in the act of both external and internal vision resembles, to some extent, the Plotinian concept of desire, that plays an important role in the generation of the Intellect from the One.

To summarize, the act of vision was metaphysically interpreted by Plotinus to describe the formation of the universal Intellect, which is achieved through the process of intellectual contemplation of the First principle, the One, when the Intellect, instigated by the inner desire of the Good, moves towards it, perceives it and understands it fully, becoming a separate divine substance. Later on Latin Christian Platonists, Marius Victorinus and St. Augustine of Hippo, borrowed this idea from Plotinus to describe how the Son and the Holy Spirit originate from the Father. According to Victorinus, the Son is begotten by the Father (the pure divine Being) as a primary movement or life, which corresponds to the intellectual vision which has not yet perceived its object, while the Holy Spirit represents a return of this indefinite intellectual vision to the Father, thus constituting divine Intelligence, or Self-Consciousness. On the other hand, St. Augustine, to clarify internal relations between the three persons of the Holy

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[37] *De Trin.* XI 4, 7; see XI 7, 12.
[38] *De Trin.* XI 7, 11.
[39] *De Trin.* XI 7, 12; see also XI 11, 18; XI 9, 16.

Trinity, constructs so-called 'trinities' of the 'external' and 'internal vision', where the first element – an object of vision or immaterial form of an object in the human mind (resembling God the Father) – is connected with the second element – the inner vision or gaze of the mind, which receives from it its own form (resembling the Son) – through an intention of the will, uniting these two elements and representing their closest connection (resembling the Holy Spirit). Thus the metaphysical doctrine of Plotinus was interpreted differently by both Christian thinkers to serve the needs of the Christian Trinitarian theology as a rational means to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Aflame in Love:
St. Augustine's Doctrine of *amor* and Plotinus' Notion of *eros*

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ABSTRACT

St. Augustine was the Christian Platonist *par excellence* of antiquity. This article highlights the church father's Christian Platonism by demonstrating that his doctrine of love from *De Trinitate*,[1] particularly in his depiction of the ascent to God, contains numerous correspondences to Plotinus' doctrine of *eros*. It will take a brief look at the general major similarities and pinpoint the most salient differences between the two thinkers concerning the theme love. Lastly, it will raise the question, 'How can we characterize Augustine as a "Christian Platonist"?'

Augustine's main treatment on love in *Trin*. VIII-X deals with his analysis of the human mind as *imago Trinitatis*. Here he recognizes a trinity composed of the mind itself, *mens*, its knowledge *notitia* and its love *amor*. Thus, the element of love here is intricately intertwined with the element of knowledge. Plotinus also treats the subject of love in relation to knowledge (*e.g. Enneads* V 3.10[2]) but the two elements are not fused so tightly together as in Augustine's *Trin*. Therefore, for the sake of the inquiry of this article, Augustine's treatment of the theme of love will require an artificial incision from the element of knowledge to the extent this is possible. Of importance to mention here is the fact that Augustinian scholarship has established a clear borrowing of Plotinus' epistemology in Augustine's account of the ascent in *Trin*.[3] So an interesting question arises: if the element of knowledge is fused with the element

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[1] *De Trinitate*, CChr.SL 50: books I-XII and 50A: books XIII-XV. *Saint Augustine, The Trinity. De Trinitate*, Introduction, translation and notes E. Hill O.P., editor J.E. Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine*. Part I – Books Volume 5 (New York, 1st printing 1991; 9th printing 2002).

[2] *The Enneads: Plotinus with an English translation* by A.H. Armstrong in Six Volumes (London, 1967, 1989). Includes the Greek text: Henry-Schwyzer.

[3] Some of the key researchers who have done extensive studies on the subject are, *i.e.* J. Pépin, 'Le tout et les parties dans la connaissance de la *mens* par elle même (*De Trin*. X,3,5-4,6)', in J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *God und sein Bild – Augustins* De Trinitate *im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung* (München, 2000), 105-26, 108, 112. This consensus is also recognized by these researchers who have continued Pépin's studies: *i.e.* M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin suivi de Plotin face aux Gnostiques* (Paris, 2006); L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge, 2010), *e.g.* 150 n. 29, 295; J. Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus, Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in* De Trinitate (Hamburg, 2000), 24-55; C. Horn,

of love in *Trin.* and if Augustine borrowed so profusely from Plotinus' episte-mology, how did he deal with Plotinus' notion of love, namely *eros*? I have been unable to locate any studies which have provided a sufficient or even a complete answer to this inquiry.[4]

The focus of this article is how both authors deal with love on the human level which will lead to the ascent by means of love to the Godhead. Both thinkers associate love with desire, both of which are forces which drive the human soul to God,[5] in response to a calling of the Creator to the creation to return to it.[6] The brevity of the communication on which this article is based does not permit the space for a thorough comparison of Augustine and Plotinus' doctrines of love.[7] For this reason as well, the interest here will be on Augus-tine's doctrine of love from *Trin.* and not from his whole oeuvre.

For all practicalities, we will begin with a brief sketch of their views on the Godhead, as far as this is relevant to the queries of this study. For both thinkers,

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'Selbstbezüglichkeit des Geistes bei Plotin und Augustin', in J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *God und Sein Bild* (2000), 81-103.

[4] In contrast to the great quantity of scholarly literature comparing Augustine and Plotinus' conceptions of self-knowledge (such as those listed in the above note), I have found almost no studies delineating Augustine's dependency on Plotinus' notion of *eros* for his conception of love in *Trin.* VIII-X. A few scholars have marked the connection explicitly. The most extensive study is that of J. Rist, *Augustine Deformed, Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition* (Cambridge, 2014), 64-5. Other publications on Augustine's doctrine of love in particular in *Trin.* and in reference to the influence of notion of *eros* of Plotinus: J. Rist, 'Love and Will around *De Trinitate* XV 20 38', in J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *God und Sein Bild* (2000), 205-18, 210; *id.*, *Ancient Thought Baptized* (New York, 1994), 148-202; R.J. Teske, 'Augustine's inversion of 1John 4:8', *Augustinian Studies* 39 (2008) 49-60. Teske describes Augustine's conception of love in de *Trin.* The influence of Plotinus is mentioned but not the notion of *eros*; J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei. A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (Eugene, Oregon, 2007; previous editions: 1938, 1991).

[5] On the Greek and Latin terminology of 'love': Plotinus' Greek terms are: ἔρως, ἀγάπη and φιλία (*e.g. philia*, *Enn.* VI 7.14.20 / *agápê*, *Enn.* V 8.15, 16.12-4). See J. Rist, *Eros and Psyche Studies in Plato, Plotinus and Origen* (Toronto, 1967). Rist identifies *agápê* in Plotinus as a veritable *erôs* (76-86). A. Pigler concurs, *Plotin une métaphysique de l'amour. L'amour comme structure de monde intelligible* (Paris, 2002), 28. In Plotinus, the term ἔρως is also synonymous with the terms he uses to express 'desire' such as ἔφεσις, πόθος, ὄρεξις and ὁρμή. R. Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin: contribution à l'histoire des idées religieuses aux premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1923), 53-66; Plotinus' usage of these terms contain differences, but the differences are strongly nuanced and sometimes negligible. Arnou explains these in more detail. Augustine's terminology for the English word 'desire' are: *appetitus*, *con-cupiens*, *cupiens*. For the word 'love': *amor*, *dilectio* and *caritas*. These are generally synonymous and used interchangeably by Augustine. In *De civitate Dei* XIV 7 (CChr.SL 47-8) Augustine explicates that these three terms in the Scriptures have synonymous meanings. See T.J. van Bavel, 'Love', in A.D. Fitzgerald e*t al.* (eds), *Augustine through the Ages* (Cambridge and Grand Rapids, 1999), 509-16; D. Dideberg, in C. Mayer *et al.* (eds), *Augustinus-Lexikon* (Basel, 1999-2006) (vol. 1: 1986-1994): 'Amor', 294-300; 'Caritas', 730-43; 'Dilectio', 435-53.

[6] *E.g.*: Plotinus, *Enn.* V 3.17.15-40; VI 7.23.1-5; Augustine: most explicitly in *Confessions* I 1.1, XII 2.4.

[7] See my forthcoming dissertation: *St. Augustine: The Human Mind as Divine Image, Augustine's Relationship to Plotinus' Philosophy* (2016).

the Godhead is the origin of all love.[8] In a nutshell, Augustine's conception of the Holy Trinity consists of the following: God is the Father, who brought forth God the Son and the Holy Spirit, who, in turn, is a product of love between the Father and the Son. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity form a perfect unity and are equal; as a whole the Godhead is eternal, immaterial and immutable. The Incarnation of the Son of God as Jesus Christ is included in the unity of equality.[9] Augustine asserts that God is Love and Good (*Trin.* VIII 2.3-end), but he mostly associates divine Love (and Will) with the Holy Spirit.[10] Because of the equality of all three divine Persons, the entire Trinity is considered a Godhead of Love. The Trinity in its entirety, Augustine posits, is not fathomable to human knowledge (*Trin.* XV 7.13).

Plotinus' depiction of divine love entails predominantly the first two of the three hypostases in his cosmology which make up the Godhead.[11] The first hypostasis, the One or the Good, is the origin of everything. Beyond Being and Form, it is essentially indescribable, thus incomprehensible or beyond the conception of human thought. Having no predicates besides the Good (*Enn.* V 3.13-14.16), the One cannot be considered Love itself; yet it is the origin of love because of the attractive and charming force which it radiates (*xaris*) which incites one to desire it and fall in love with it (*Enn.* VI 7.35). The second hypostasis is the divine Intellect, *Nous*, who is the origin of Being, Life and the intelligible world of eternal Ideas. The love of the *Nous* for its source, the One/Good, is echoed in humans' experience of love. This will be further illustrated in the exposition below on Plotinus' notion of *eros*. The third hypostasis, the divine Soul, plays a less significant role in love yet serves as an intermediary of *eros* between the One, the *Nous* and human souls. The three hypostases are hierarchically ordered; the third, the Soul, makes up the lowest divine level, as it is closest to matter and therefore possesses a lesser degree of Being, unity and simplicity. All three are immaterial, eternal, unchangeable and transcendent to this world.

There are a few correspondences between the conceptions of both thinkers which are directly relevant to the inquiries here and therefore require a brief mentioning; namely between Augustine's conception of the Holy Trinity and Plotinus' first hypostasis, the One. Both are ultimately incomprehensible to humans, beyond human thought and language. There are of course numerous differences in their conceptions of the Godhead, such as the hierarchy in Plotinus' system of hypostases which contrasts with the equality of the Godhead in Augustine's thought. Another aspect concerning divine love merits our attention: despite the fact that both thinkers designate the One and the Holy Spirit

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[8] Aug., *Trin.* XV 17.31; Plotinus, *Enn.* VI 8.15.
[9] *I.e. Trin.* I 4.7, II 18.35, III 2.7, IV 20.28, 21.30, 22.31, *etc.*
[10] *Trin.* XV 17.31, 18.32, 19.37.
[11] *E.g. Enn.* V 1. All English translations utilized here are Armstrong's.

as 'givers of love',[12] Plotinus' first hypostasis shares no common characteristics with the Holy Spirit in Augustine's doctrine. The purpose here is to ascertain the major similarities and differences within the doctrine of love in the thought of both authors, as we will now proceed to do. Below are short, general summaries of the essence of Plotinus' and Augustine's doctrines of love, from the human perspective while ascending to God. These are not intended to be comprehensive.

Plotinus' notion of *Eros*[13]

Plotinus articulates *eros* as a force which derives from the ultimate source, the One, the first hypostasis.[14] Love is transmitted through the Godhead, respectively to the divine Intellect and Soul, as a substantial nature *(ousias)* (*Enn*. III 5.3-4) and further to individual souls and their experiential world. This inherently active, but mostly dormant force of love in humans, can be awakened by the experience of beauty on the physical level of sense perception. Plotinus describes *eros*, as a life, a brilliance or grace which makes itself desirable and without which, beauty would be cold and inert (VI 7.22, 24). Plotinus also taught that love is light and that the soul is awakened by this light at the perception of beauty.[15] Human love is inspired by physical beauty in an object or person which seems indefinable. On this level of love, there is a presentiment of infinity, of the One or Good, which surpasses all Form and Thought. The soul is primarily moved unconsciously by her love for the Good (VI 7.15-25).

The experience of *eros* begins with the experience of the lover for the beloved. Yet being captivated at the physical beauty of the beloved, is according to Plotinus, not the fullest kind of love which can be realized (I 6):

For since the soul is other than God but comes from him, it is necessarily in love with him and when it is there (LZ: unified with the One), it has heavenly love, but here (LZ: in material existence), love becomes vulgar … the soul then in her natural state is in love with God and wants to be united with him (*Enn*. VI 9.9.26-30, 34-5).

Eros, as a divine force, drives human desire upwards to experience divine love. It moves the lover beyond human love because human love is merely an image of true love (VI 9.9.39-47). The soul desires to experience love even

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[12] *E.g. Enn*. VI 7.22.19-20 and *Trin*. XV 17.31.

[13] Plotinus explores the conception of superhuman love, *eros*, in three main treatises: *Enn*. III 5, VI 7 and VI 5.10; on Plotinus' doctrine of love: *e.g.*: J. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (1967); *id.*, *Augustine Deformed* (2014); R. Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu* (1923); A. Pigler, *Plotin L'Amour* (2002); P. Hadot, *Plotin ou la simplicité du regard* (Paris, 1993, 1997, 2010), 71-109.

[14] *E.g. Enn*. VI 8.15.1-5; VI 7.14; VI 7.22.20.

[15] *Enn*. V 3.17.15-40, VI 7.22, 26-end.

further. Ultimately, she longs for union with the indefinite goodness of the One, which can only be realized in a higher level of consciousness (VI 7.15-25).

In order to reach the ultimate summit of love, the soul must first pass through the realm of the *Nous* and the eternal archetypal Forms. Hence, in order to intensify the experience of Love, the human soul needs to actualize her intellect, that is, to pursue the cultivation of its highest region. This entails exercising the mind in order to activate an intuitive, immediate grasping of the archetypal Ideas, Forms and Truth. *Eros* urges the soul to desire to see the eternal and unchangeable Forms more purely so that one's love not only becomes intensified but truer. In effect, the soul's initial desiring of physical beauty leads to the longing for the more intense beauty in the divine Intellect.[16]

The spectacle of divine Beauty in the world of Forms, with their inexplicable charm *xaris* radiated from the One, bedazzles the soul (VI 7.22.21). At this stage, the intellect enflames with love and the birth of true love takes place.

For there in the realm of the Intellect is true delight and the greatest satisfaction, the most loved and longed for, which is not in the process of becoming or movement, but its cause (LZ: the One) is what colours and shines upon and glorifies the intelligibles. (VI 7.30.30-2)

Desire, as an extension of *eros*, is also what initially conceives higher thought (V 6.5). One's longing for divine knowledge, is fulfilled by a vision of God which can increase with intensity. Attaining this vision and rising up to the ultimate source is the goal of life (III 8.5-7).

The experience of love by the human soul in the realm of the *Nous* mirrors the divine Intellect itself when it came into existence from the One. Plotinus describes the inception of the Intellect as an 'expression' or 'utterance' (*Logos*) of the One. The Intellect longed to know its source and turned to the One. When it was touched by it, it became drunk – as with nectar – with love and joy at this immediate contact without the presence of Thought and Ideas (VI 7.35.24-5). In falling in love, it went out of its mind as it were, carried off to the One (VI 7.36.15-20, esp. 19). Plotinus depicted the human intellect as understanding itself as an image or trace of the *Nous*, imitating the Intellect's amorous and ecstatic contemplation of the One (as the Loving Intellect), while at the same time fascinated by the divine Life and Thought in itself (as the Thinking Intellect).

Eros as a dynamic movement which desires ultimate consummation of its love for beauty, is not truly gratified at the level of Intellect. When the beauty

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[16] 'When anyone, therefore, sees this light, then truly he is also moved to the Forms and longs for the light which plays upon them and delights in it, just as with the bodies here below, our desire is not for the underlying material things but for the beauty imaged upon them. For each is what it is by itself; but it becomes desirable when the Good colours it, giving a kind of grace to them and passionate love (*erôs*) to the desirers. Then the soul, receiving into itself an outflow from thence, is moved and dances wildly and is all stung with longing and becomes love' (*Enn.* VI 7.22. 1-10).

of the thinking Intellect and its Forms fills the human intellect with love, the soul[17] realizes that this Beauty is actually just a resemblance of the highest Good (VI 7.15.9). Progressively the soul increases in likeness (*homoioteta*) of the divine, first of the Intellect, then of the One. By making oneself as inwardly beautiful as possible, Plotinus states, a person can prepare himself for receiving the One and the truest love. Hence, once in the realm of the Intellect, in order to advance higher to the One, one must let go of all reason, Form and intellect. 'For this, since it (LZ: the One) is beauty most of all, and primary beauty, makes its lovers beautiful and lovable' (*Enn*. I 6.7.30).

Plotinus uses human love (love for each other) as a metaphor for the mystical union.[18] When the One appears to the human soul, human love then disappears. In complete union with the One, there is nothing between the soul and the One, they are both one, no longer two. Two lovers in the world below imitate this in their will and desire to be united (VI 7.31). The human experience of the One is similar to the soul's experience of the *Nous*, only a momentary but not a definite unification or deification (VI 7.34-5). Plotinus described this as quiet ecstasy or bliss (VI 9.11).

Augustine's depiction of *amor*[19]

Augustine's discussion of the theme of love in *Trin*. VIII begins with an exploration of how the force of love plays a role in the human mind, specifically in the human image of God, *the imago Dei* or *Trinitatis*, which is the highest part of the soul, or the intellect.[20] Thus he begins in book VIII by describing how one can love God and how God is intelligible. God is love and the source and origin of all human love. God is Light, Truth, God is 'Good'. This 'Good' serves as criteria for our judgment. God as Love and Good can be contemplated in the eternal Forms. Hence by turning to God, the human being becomes good (*Trin*. VIII 2-6). Augustine designated Christ the Son generally

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[17] As with Augustine, Plotinus depicted the rational soul as the higher part of the soul. The summit being the intellect which bears a completely immaterial consciousness. Its orientation is to what is higher than the soul: the divine and the divine Ideas. See note 21.

[18] *Enn*. VI 7.34.5-16; IV 4.2.27-8; VI 9.9.39.

[19] There is much literature on Augustine's doctrine of love. The most classic works on Augustine's doctrine of love are J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei* (2007); I. Bochet, *Saint Augustin Le Désir de Dieux* (Paris, 1982); T.J. van Bavel, 'Love' (1999). See also on the element love in *Trin*. in P. van Geest, *The Incomprehensibility of God: Augustine as a Negative Theologian* (Leuven, 2010), 101-6, 138, 170-4.

[20] Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei/Trinitatis* contains many aspects of Plotinus' philosophy of the human intellect which is likewise designated as an image of God – an image of the divine Intellect. See also in *civ. Dei* X 28, 32. M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin* (2006), 53-4; L. Zwollo, *St. Augustine* (forthcoming).

as Wisdom (VII 1.1-3.6) in whom the eternal Forms exist (*e.g.*: VI 10.11-2) and the Holy Spirit as divine love (*e.g.*: XV 18.31).

Further, Augustine explores why we love another person (*Trin*. VIII 6.9). This is because we see in another that she/he is just. Augustine states that what we love (or should love) in others is something immaterial and invisible. Like the Form Good mentioned above, the Form *Iusticia* is an eternal Idea, with no material counterpart. By loving the Form Justice – which is the equivalent of loving God, as in the Form Good – a person can become just.[21] It appears here that 'being just' for Augustine involves honesty towards oneself and fairness towards others. He adds that we can see the perfect Form Justice without being perfectly just ourselves. By contemplating this Form we are able to see the degree of 'being just' in ourselves and can also love others for having this trait – or at least for their potential to become just. Augustine recommends this as one of the ways we can love ourselves as well as others – to love one's neighbor as oneself.[22]

Augustine's objective in *Trin*. VIII is to explain the triads in the inner man in which love and knowledge were the key elements.[23] These two elements reflect in a vague way the divine consciousness, love and knowledge of the divine Trinity. Moreover, the elements love and knowledge in the *imago Trinitatis* derive from God who is Wisdom and Love as represented by the second and third Trinitarian Persons. To demonstrate that the Holy Trinity can be reflected in the human spirit, Augustine writes: '… oh but you do see a Trinity, if you see charity' (VIII 8.12). Augustine illustrates this with an intramental triad: *amans – quod amatur – amor* (the lover [as subject], that what he loves [as object] and love itself). The latter serves as the binding factor between the two. He then invents a new triad: I, as lover – my neighbor, the other – God. In both triads God or Love itself is the binding or unifying principle. One's love for another is equivalent to loving God because God is the source of all love. Our love for each other depends on God's gift of charity to us (VIII 8.12).

In describing the element love on the human level, he writes:

What else is love, therefore, except a kind of 'life' which binds and seeks to bind some two together, namely the lover and the beloved? … It remains to ascend even further and to seek for those higher things, insofar it is granted to man. (VIII 10.14)

Further in *Trin*. IX-X, Augustine explains how self-love connects the mind to self-understanding or self-knowledge. Love and knowledge form an interdependent

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[21] Augustine's definition of being just: 'That man is just which knowingly and deliberately, in life and in conduct, gives each man what is his own … in order to owe no man anything but to love one another (*Rom*. 13:8). And how is one to cleave to that Form (Justice) except by loving it?' (*Trin*. VIII 6.9).

[22] 'True love then is that we should live justly by cleaving to the truth … And if man is full of love, what is he but full of God?' (*Trin*. VIII 7.10).

[23] See the article of Colten Cheuk-Yin Yam, 'Augustine's Intention in Proceeding from '*mens, notitia, amor*' to '*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*', *SP* 98 (2017), 327-39.

relationship with and in the mind, thereby forming a unity – a unity dimly mirroring the unity of the Holy Trinity. Love binds knowledge to the mind. For instance, when something is learned which is considered worthwhile, it will be retained because it pertains to the perfect, universal beauty of the Form (which exists in Christ) that is contemplated and loved (X 1.2). Truth and God are beautiful (VIII 3.4, 6.9, 7.10); as such, loving them binds them to oneself.

Love is actualized in the intellect when one's focus is able to shift from the self to God (XI 6.10, XII 4.4, XIV 2.4). This shift occurs by the manifestation of God's will and grace. The Holy Spirit pours love and longings into human hearts which motivates the soul to search for God, the source of all love. God's love binds us to others (XV 18.31). In the same line of thinking, one can only love (and know) oneself through (knowing) God's love. Thus, in experiencing God's love, self-love and love for others flow into each other. It is as if Augustine intended them to be indistinguishable. Augustine asserts that the search for God and God's love should be never-ending, one always finds God and experiences divine love which nourishes the longing to search further (XV 28.51). If one's self-love were to be actualized, one's self-love would transform to love for others, to loving one's neighbor (actualization here means becoming more and more an image of God, entailing activating one's intellect, the highest part of one's soul). One's love will then lead to doing good for others, instead of acting solely for the sake of self-benefit (XII 9.14).

General correspondences

In these two seemingly distinct expositions on love, there are marked similarities. Only a few general major points will be mentioned here.

In their depictions of the ascent to God, both thinkers advocate that the experience of love will lead to intellectual vision – a completely immaterial consciousness oriented to the divine in which the Forms or Ideas are contemplated. Love is actualized in intellectual vision. For Plotinus, the source of love is beyond Intellect and the Ideas and lies in the range of utter incomprehensibility of the One. As already mentioned, the aspect of incomprehensibility of the Godhead applies to Augustine's doctrine of Trinity, which is the ultimate source of all love and beauty as well (*Trin.* VI 10.12). 'Love itself' is essentially transcendent divine love, the true object of soul's desire. True gratification can only be found by dwelling in God's eternal, immutable abode of perfect love, peace and immortality. The pursuit of love and truth are thus intricately connected.

Love, as a force driven by desire, is endowed to humans by the Godhead. Humans are unable to love without the love of God itself. Augustine writes:

Man has no capacity to love except from God. That is why he says a little later: 'Let us love because he first loved us' (1*Jn.* 4:19). The apostle Paul also says: 'The love of

God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us' (*Rom.* 5:5). (Trin. XV 17.31)

Plotinus expresses the same thought in this way:

But there comes to be the intense kind of love for them (the Forms), not when they are what they are, but when, being already what they are, they receive something else from there beyond … there is need of another light for the light … in them to appear. (*Enn.* VI 7.21)

True love and true beauty exist in God and are co-extensive.[24] God is the origin of all beauty.[25] True love is strongly associated with loving what is Good. God is ultimate Good.[26] One could see God intelligibly in the eternal Forms.[27] Love is associated with becoming good and becoming godlike which is effectuated by progressively contemplating the Forms.[28]

The force of love is motivated by the experience of beauty on the sense level which carries one upwards. Love and desire, when steered properly by the individual will, that is, by turning one's focus upward to the source and primary cause of all existence, drives one back to God. Turned to temporal things of matter or physicality, love could easily degrade into sin and evildoings.[29] Augustine and Plotinus are greatly preoccupied with articulating sacred longings.[30]

For both thinkers, love is a purely spiritual (immaterial) substance which can be known in oneself or in one's mind only when one is involved in the activity of loving something or someone. The actualization of this love is realized by loving immaterial things or souls in an incorporeal manner.[31] Love is expansive and hence discontent with the limitations of transient beauty as object of desire.[32] Plotinus expresses this in the following way: 'And as long as there is anything higher than that which is present to it, it naturally goes on upwards, lifted by the giver of its love'. (*Enn.* VI 7.22.20)

If the individual is willing and capable of focusing on God – or on the immaterial invisible objects of love, she/he is pulled upwards by love itself which leads to the Godhead. Love in itself leads to self-knowledge, to knowledge of God and the purification of the soul. In this process, the soul becomes good

[24] *Trin.* VIII 3.4; *Enn.* I 6, V 8.
[25] *Trin.* VIII 3.4, 6.9, 7.10, XV 2.3, 4.6.
[26] *Trin.* VIII 3.4, 4.5; *Enn.* VI 7.20.
[27] *Trin.* VIII 9.13; *e.g. Enn.* VI 7.21.
[28] *E.g. Trin.* VIII 2.6; 6.9, XV 16.26; *Enn.* VI 7.15: God as Form; *Enn.* VI 7.25: desiring the Good to become Good and become god: Form makes matter good; *Enn.* VI 7.27-8: Virtue associated with Form, as standard of judgment.
[29] *E.g. Trin.* XII 9.14-10.15; *Enn.* IV 8.4-5.
[30] *E.g. Trin.* IV 21.31; XII 14.22 ; *Enn.* VI 7.22.1-10.
[31] Augustine attributed the strength for becoming celibate to God's grace, *Conf.* VIII 27-30.
[32] Augustine prayed to God in *Trin.* XV 28.51 that he would never stop desiring and loving God. Plotinus illustrated that the love experienced in the union with the One, longed to go even further, even though there was nothing further than the One (*Enn.* III 5.7.7-26; VI 7.22.15-22).

and gradually more godlike. Love and desire are the driving forces behind acquiring all kinds of knowledge.[33] Thus the source as well as the goal of one's personal human love for both Augustine and Plotinus is transcendent divine love.[34] The pursuit of such makes one happy and awakens the desire to share this love and expand it.

Major differences

The correspondences listed above are plentiful. However, if we were to analyze these more closely, we would indeed uncover numerous gray areas or overlaps, in which minor differences occur. What we are interested in, now, is pinpointing the stark, black/white differences, as this is the real challenge.

The first difference has to do with the Godhead, represented as divine love. For Augustine, the Son of God, Christ, had become a real person of flesh and blood, exemplifying the life of a human on earth, in his suffering of injustice.[35] He sacrificed himself, for the sins of the world, out of his love for the world. He exemplified what a human was destined to become: a Perfect Image of God. Christ's life on earth was a model of virtuous, selfless living; and a model of how to resurrect and become immortal (*Trin.* I 6.10) and godlike in the afterlife.[36] The Son's further mission within the Holy Trinity, together with the Holy Spirit, was to bring human souls to contemplation of God – to an experience of God's love.[37] In Augustine's view, the whole Trinity loves and cares for its creation (*Trin* I 10.20). But the three hypostases in Plotinus' philosophy did not incarnate nor did they play a direct salvific role in redemption. Nor were they involved in a direct way with loving their creation.[38] Thus what was missing for Augustine in Plotinus' conception of the Godhead was an explicit human or personal redemptive element in the Godhead of Love, Christ.[39]

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[33] *Trin.* VIII and *Enn.* V 6.5.

[34] *Trin.* XV 17.31; *Enn.* VI 7.33.27-30.

[35] *E.g. Trin.* XII 10.13; XIII 16.21.

[36] *Trin.* IV 2.4, 4.7, VII 1.1.

[37] *Trin.* I 8.16-8, 1.9. 10.20; XIII 19.24.

[38] E. Emilsson: '… the notion of the divine in major thinkers in the Christian tradition, such as St. Augustine, has indeed been heavily coloured by Plotinus' notion of Intellect. We should however be on our guard in transferring features of the Christian God to the Intellect. The latter, for instance, lacks all the personal characteristics of the former', *Plotinus on Intellect* (Oxford, 2007), 5. On the other hand, Plotinus mentions that the One gives undiminishing love to all which is beneath it (*Enn.* VI 7.22.20). See also note 42.

[39] As Augustine himself informs us in *civ. Dei*, Platonism and Christianity do indeed have much in common (VIII 1-19, IX 10-23, X 1-2, 9-32, XX 25-8). Augustine also tells us in *Conf.* VII 9.13, that an eternal Son of God – Word of God as Creator – was represented in Plotinus' philosophy. We can identify this as Plotinus' second hypostasis, the divine Intellect. L. Zwollo, 'Plotinus Doctrine of the *Logos* as a Major Influence on Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis', *Augustiniana* 60 (2010), 3-4, 235-61; M. Fattal, *Plotin chez Augustin* (2006), 53-4.

The second major difference in the ascent to God by love was that Plotinus considered human love – or love for others – to be more of a metaphor, not necessarily a recommendation. A true philosopher did not require human relationships to bring her or him to the true love of God.[40] But in Augustine's view, loving others, as in the commandment 'Love your neighbor', was closely intertwined with the experience of God's love. He even went so far as to equate God's love with loving others. He also stressed the importance of loving others as Christ loved us.[41]

A third difference in Augustine's view of love was his emphasis on the association of love with Justice. In Plotinus' and Plato's philosophies of ethics, the divine Idea, Justice, was connected to the Idea of the eternal Good. Contemplating divine Justice played a prominent role in becoming a virtuous person (*Enn.* I 2.6). Yet, Augustine articulated that in order for humans to achieve peaceful relations and indeed behave charitably towards each other, the Idea of Justice must be understood as closely associated with the divine Love. Augustine says, like Plotinus, we must love God, who is absolute Good, Love and Justice. Yet, the church Father emphasizes further than Plotinus that in order to become a more perfect image of God, Justice should also play an important role in human relations. We must not only love others for their goodness, but also for their love of justice, in the sense of their honesty and fairness. Moreover, Christ represented ultimate Justice and Charity in his unfailing forgiveness of sins. Christ is our model of Love and Justice.[42]

For Plotinus and Augustine, true actualized love was spiritual in the sense of being non-physical. The fourth major distinction between the two thinkers is that Augustine gave more expression to spiritual love than Plotinus, by stressing the importance of friendships; by joining people together in communal living, in monastic life or as a church, all striving together for the improvement and healing of the soul.[43] Augustine envisioned a collective redemption.[44] In *Conf.* IX 10.24, Augustine even described one of his ascents to divine Light as a communal experience with his mother Monica at Ostia. He also described the faithful as belonging to a communion with angels and saints.[45] On the other hand, Plotinus' depictions of the ascent tended to be one of the lone contemplator, in intimacy only with the god who possessed him, which was either the divine Intellect or the One.[46]

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[40] *E.g. Enn.* I 3.20, VI 9.11, VI 8.15.

[41] J. Rist: '… the love of human persons seems to have no privileged status in the Platonic tradition', *Ancient Thought Baptized* (1994), 160.

[42] *E.g. Trin.* IV 2.4, 3.6, XV 17.31.

[43] *E.g Trin.* I 2.4; IV 9, *Conf.* XIII 34.49.

[44] *Trin.* IV 7.11, 9.12, 11.14.

[45] *Trin.* IV 11.14, VIII 8.12.

[46] *E.g. Enn.* I 6.7, VI 9.11. This does not however imply that Plotinus was an advocate of self-isolation or individualism, for these were sins in his view. Augustine followed Plotinus in

How can a Christian be a Platonist?

These four examples of the major demarcations between Augustine's and Plotinus' doctrines of love reveal something significant about Augustine's Christian Platonism. Augustine was indeed a Platonist – he was a disciple of Plotinus.[47] Yet, he made necessary corrections to Plotinus' notion of *eros*: he expounded that there must be a human or personal element of Love in the Godhead, as exemplified in Christ's life on Earth and his personal relationship with human souls. Love for others must come to the foreground, as a natural outcome of a loving union with God. Further, in order to facilitate human relations, one must love Justice and instill it in oneself. He added a social context in the striving for redemption through love, to provide support for the faithful in supplementing Christ's support of us.

Thus, Augustine defended the superiority of Christianity by expounding that the Christian doctrine of the human image of God actually contained the best parts of Plotinus' philosophy: its epistemology, the account of the ascent, the contemplation of the eternal Ideas and God's wisdom. Above all, like Plotinus, he asserted that love, as the basis of all existence, was also the driving force to the ascent to God, as well as the basis of redemption. As such, Augustine combined the strongly interior-oriented philosophy of love of Plotinus with the exterior-oriented message of Christ's Love and Wisdom, with the expression of love towards other human beings and the world.[48]

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asserting that one must first return to oneself in order to return to God. But in ultimately seeking unification with God, one lets the old self go and obtains a more truer self. Plotinus' conception of sin entailed turning away from God and forgetting one's origin (*e.g. Enn.* IV 8.5, V 1.1). Augustine endorsed the same conceptions.

[47] Augustine definitely read the works of Plotinus' student Porphyry and in doing so, he borrowed some ideas or formulations from him. However, I would find it infeasible to ever claim that Augustine was a disciple of Porphyry. In Augustine's appraisal of Platonism in *civ. Dei*, he demonstrates a rabid opposition to theurgy and attributes to Porphyry its entrance into Platonism (VIII 17). On the other hand, in spite of the fact that Augustine deems Platonism as insufficient for entering the Heavenly Jerusalem, all Augustine's remarks about Plotinus in *civ. Dei* – as well as about Plato – are predominantly positive.

[48] J.P. Kenney, 'Faith and Reason', in D.V. Meconi and E. Stump (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2014), 275-91, 252-75, 288-90.

Augustine on Recollection between Plato and Plotinus

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ABSTRACT

This article traces the metamorphoses of Augustine's notion of Platonic *anamnesis*, with a special view of the issue implied in his *Retractationes*, namely whether Augustine favoured the concept of a recollection of intelligible objects beheld in the past, or whether he regarded these objects as constantly available for the embodied soul, and if so, in what sense. When compared with Plato and Plotinus (the difference between the two is discussed in the introduction), Augustine turns out to have abandoned a certain kind of rigid Plotinism in favour of the Platonic recollection of past knowledge; eventually he settled for a concept close to that of Plotinus. The following issues, however, set them apart: the motif of the intelligibles in the memory endangered by oblivion as an indication of an ontological difference between the soul and its intelligible contents, the *anamnesis* of beauty, and, finally, the notion of the recollection of past beatitude held individually in each soul or shared as the heritage of Adam's race – an idea which Augustine considered at first and later rejected.

'Again, in a certain place, I said that "without a doubt, those well versed in the liberal disciplines bring out, in learning, the knowledge buried in oblivion within them and, in a certain sense, dig it out". But I disapprove of this also. For it is more credible that even those who are ignorant of them, when properly questioned, reply truly concerning certain disciplines because the light of eternal Ratio by which they perceive those unchangeable truths is present to them, as far as they are able to grasp it. So it is not because they knew these things at some time or other and have forgotten them, as it seemed to Plato or men like him'.[1]

This is a correction Augustine provides in his *Retractations*, written towards the end of his life, in order to revise one of his first works, *Soliloquies*, from

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[1] *Retr.* I 4,4 (CChr.SL 57, 15): *Item quodam loco dixi quod 'disciplinis liberalibus eruditi sine dubio in se illas oblivione obrutas eruunt discendo et quodammodo refodiunt.' Sed hoc quoque inprobo. Credibilius est enim propterea vera respondere de quibusdam disciplinis etiam imperitos earum, quando bene interrogantur, quia praesens est eis, quantum id capere possunt, lumen rationis aeternae, ubi haec immutabilia vera conspiciunt, non quia ea noverant aliquando et obliti sunt, quod Platoni vel talibus visum est.* English translation Mary I. Bogan, Saint Augustine, *The Retractations*, The Fathers of the Church 60 (Washington, D.C., 1968), 18 (modified).

his Cassiciacum period, where the words quoted above defend Platonic *anamnesis* applied to the contents of the liberal arts.[2] Platonic recollection of the contents of the liberal arts, especially the mathematical and logical ones, is to be replaced, as Augustine maintains in the final period of his life, by the presence of eternal *Ratio*, which illuminates every man. What exactly this revision means and what it was that led Augustine to adopt it is not so easy to tell. One of the first scholars to deal with this issue characterised Augustine's development as a journey from Platonic *anamnesis* to Plotinus' notion of illumination.[3] However, there were others who maintained that Augustine abandoned Plotinus' concept and adopted the Platonic accentuation of memory.[4] Further discussions were concerned with whether the illumination described only the formal structure of human knowledge,[5] or was also related to its contents (this dispute was already known in the Middle Ages).[6] Another issue is whether together with Platonic *anamnesis* Augustine also accepted the notion of the pre-existence of the soul in his youth,[7] or whether he modified this teaching in terms of some kind of apriorism.[8] Finally, the question can be asked whether Augustine's position can aptly be characterised as the 'memory of the present',[9] or whether he maintains some reminiscence of past beatitude, albeit forgotten.[10]

It is somewhat confusing that eternal *Ratio* whose presence replaced in *Retractationes* the Platonic *anamnesis*, is mentioned by Augustine as early as his *Soliloquies*, together with the notion of the divine light in which the intelligible

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[2] *Sol*. II 20,35 (CSEL 89, 95): *… disciplinis liberalibus eruditi … sine dubio in se illas oblivione obrutas eruunt discendo et quodam modo refodiunt.*

[3] See Bernard Kälin, *Die Erkenntnislehre des hl. Augustinus* (Sarnen, 1920), 81.

[4] See Klaus Winkler, 'La théorie augustinienne de la mémoire à son point de départ', in *Augustinus Magister. Congrès international augustinien, Paris, 21-24 septembre 1954*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1954), I 511-9; similarly also James V. Lowe, *Platonic Recollection and Augustinian Memory* (Madison, Ann Arbor, 1986); the way Augustine differs from Plotinus is also discussed by Beatrice Cillerai, *La memoria come capacitas Dei secondo Agostino: unità e complessità* (Pisa, 2008).

[5] Such was the opinion of Etienne Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1931), 87-137.

[6] The discussion is summarised by Johannes Hessen, *Augustins Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1960), 84-98; Roland H. Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington, 1969), 94-124.

[7] So Etienne Gilson, *Introduction* (1931), 94-5; Robert J. O'Connell, 'Pre-existence in Augustine's Seventh Letter', *REAug* 15 (1969), 67-73; *id*., 'Pre-existence in the Early Augustine', *REAug* 26 (1980), 176-88.

[8] So Régis Jolivet, *Dieu soleil des esprits: La doctrine augustinienne de l'illumination* (Paris, 1934), 115-26; Rudolf Allers, 'Illumination et vérités éternelles: Une étude sur l'a-priori augustinien', in *Augustinus Magister* (1954), I 477-90; Lope Cilleruelo, 'Pro memoria Dei', *REAug* 12 (1966), 65-84; Gerard O'Daly, 'Did St. Augustine Ever Believe in the Soul's Pre-existence?', in *id*., *Platonism Pagan and Christian: Studies in Plotinus and Augustine* (Aldershot, 2001), Nº IV; similarly also *id*., *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (London, 1987), 199-207.

[9] So E. Gilson, *Introduction* (1931), 100, 113, 133-4; and many others.

[10] See Roland J. Teske, 'Platonic Reminiscence and Memory of the Present in St. Augustine', *The New Scholasticism* 58 (1984), 220-35.

contents can be seen.[11] Just as the sun illuminates things visible by sight, so does this hidden God, says Augustine in his *Soliloquies*, illuminate the contents with which the liberal arts deal.[12] In other words, the idea of the intelligible light that makes it possible to behold the contents pertaining to it is clearly not a late alternative to Platonic *anamnesis*, but a notion Augustine maintained consistently,[13] one which might or might not be related to the 'recollection' of these contents.[14]

Even the intelligible light, however, can be traced back to Plato, specifically the allegory of the sun from the *Republic*, where the relationship between the truth, knowledge and the good is compared to that between the light, the eye and the sun. Here, too, the light – *i.e.* the good – is essential in that it enables the eye to behold the truth of the intelligible contents.[15] Although Augustine was well aware of the Platonic origin of the idea,[16] he was also able to find Christian support for it, specifically the prologue to the fourth gospel, which mentions the 'true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world' (*John* 1:9).[17] In this respect, says Augustine, the Platonists 'agree with the gospel'.[18]

The focus of this analysis, however, is not the theory of illumination itself and its origins,[19] but the metamorphoses of Augustine's theory of Platonic *anamnesis*. As his path cannot be followed in its entirety here, I will concentrate on its main stages, especially with a view of the issue implied in his *Retractationes*, to wit, whether Augustine favoured the concept of a recollection of intelligible objects beheld *in the past*, or whether he regarded these

[11] *Sol.* I 1,3 (CSEL 89, 5): *Deus intellegibilis lux, in quo et a quo et per quem intellegibiliter lucent, quae intellegibiliter lucent omnia.* Similarly *Sol.* I 13,23 (CSEL 89, 35) on truth: *Lux est quaedam ineffabilis et incomprehensibilis mentium.*

[12] *Sol.* I 8,15 (CSEL 89, 23-4).

[13] See also *De b. vita* 4,35 (CChr.SL 29, 84); *De div. quaest. LXXXIII*, 46,1 (CChr.SL 44A, 73); *De lib. arb.* II 13,36,142 (CChr.SL 29, 262); *Ep.* 120,1,10 (CSEL 34, 713); *De Gen. litt.* XII,31,59 (BA 49, 434-6;); *De civ. Dei* XI 27 (CChr.SL 48, 347)*; De Trin.* XII 15,24 (CChr.SL 50, 378; quoted below, n. 95); on the *Confessions*, see below*, n. 91. On the theory of illumination, see R. Jolivet, *Dieu soleil* (1934).

[14] The co-occurrence of both theories in Augustine's early works is argued for in Robert Miner, 'Augustinian Recollection', *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), 435-50. An attempt to trace both in *Conf.* X (although neither of the notions is explicitly present here) can be found in Luca Castagnoli, 'Liberal Arts and Recollection in Augustine's Confessions X (ix 16–xii 19)', *Philosophie Antique* 6 (2006), 107-35, 125 and 127.

[15] See Plato, *Resp.* VI 18-20, 507b-509d.

[16] *De civ. Dei* X 2 (CChr.SL 47, 274): … *Plotinus asserit sensum Platonis explanans.*

[17] See *e.g. Conf.* IX 4,10 (CChr.SL 27, 139). In this context, Luigi F. Pizzolato also mentions Ambrose of Milan's hymn *Splendor paternae gloriae*, known to Augustine from his youth; see Luigi F. Pizzolato, 'Il De beata vita o la felicità nel tempo', in *id. et al.* (eds), *L'opera letteraria di Agostino tra Cassiciacum e Milano* (Palermo, 1988), 31-112, 101-2.

[18] *De civ. Dei* X 2 (CChr.SL 47, 274): … *consonans evangelio.*

[19] On this issue, see Roland H. Nash, 'Some Philosophic Sources of Augustine's Illumination Theory', *Augustinian Studies* 2 (1971), 47-66, who, apart from Plato, also deals with Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias; however, the teachings of the latter were mediated to Augustine by Plotinus.

objects as constantly available for the embodied soul, and, if so, in what sense. For the sake of appreciation of how Augustine's answer (or answers) differs from those of his predecessors, I will begin by discussing the difference between the positions of Plotinus and Plato himself in this respect.

I. Plato and Plotinus on *anamnesis*

Plato

In Plato's dialogue *Meno*, the idea of *anamnesis* is first introduced as a follow-up to the Orphic or Pythagorean notion of *metempsychosis*, invoking 'priests and priestesses' and even Pindar's verses.[20] In Socrates' interpretation of this religious-poetic compilation, the soul has knowledge of 'all and everything' because it has seen all things during its journey 'here on earth and in the underworld'. By 'having recalled' – or 'having been reminded of' (ἀναμνη-σθέντα)[21] – one thing it can discover everything else because nature is 'akin'.[22] This form of *anamnesis* is thus based on the soul's recollection of its past knowledge, but it remains unclear whether it was gained in the previous lives of the soul 'here on earth' or during its stays 'in the underworld', or (most probably) both. On the other hand, it seems indisputable that this teaching in the religious vein is just a point of departure for Plato towards a further – and in terms of its content somewhat different – exposition.

Recollection (ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι), introduced in a dialogue with Meno's slave on the area of a square double the size of a given square, is, as Socrates puts it when speaking about the slave, 'recovery of knowledge, in himself and by himself' (ἀναλαμβάνειν αὐτὸν ἐν αὑτῷ ἐπιστήμην).[23] It seems that what Plato emphasises here is not the temporal aspect of recollecting something that used to be present, but finding knowledge in oneself, namely recovering one's own 'knowledge', not just a 'right opinion'. His answer to the question of whether the knowledge was acquired at some specific moment or whether it

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[20] *Meno* 81a10-c4. On the sources of the whole passage, see Richard S. Bluck, *Plato's Meno* (Cambridge, 1961), 274-88, 61-75.

[21] Harold Tarrant points out that the crucial expression ἀναμνησθέντα in *Men.* 81d2 does not have to mean only *having recalled*, but rather *having been reminded*, *i.e.* by another; see Harold Tarrant, *Recollecting Plato's Meno* (London, 2005), 46-9.

[22] *Meno* 81c5-d5: Ἅτε οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός τε οὖσα καὶ πολλάκις γεγονυῖα, καὶ ἑωρακυῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πάντα χρήματα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι οὐ μεμάθηκεν· ὥστε οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ ἄλλων οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀναμνησθῆναι, ἅ γε καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο. ἅτε γὰρ τῆς φύσεως ἁπάσης συγγενοῦς οὔσης, καὶ μεμαθηκυίας τῆς ψυχῆς ἅπαντα, οὐδὲν κωλύει ἓν μόνον ἀναμνησθέντα – ὃ δὴ μάθησιν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι – τἆλλα πάντα αὐτὸν ἀνευρεῖν, ἐάν τις ἀνδρεῖος ᾖ καὶ μὴ ἀποκάμνῃ ζητῶν· τὸ γὰρ ζητεῖν ἄρα καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν.

[23] *Meno* 85d6-7.

was always possessed (ἤτοι ἔλαβέν ποτε ἢ ἀεὶ εἶχεν)[24] is quite clearly in favour of the latter: 'all the time' (τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον), *i.e.* when it was embodied, and even when it was not, the soul has true opinions which may be awakened into knowledge.[25] This latent knowledge does not seem to include only mathematics, but also the knowledge of ideas as 'all things that are'[26] (for example, the idea of virtue, which was the aim of the dialogue with Meno).

It turns out that in terms of the issue we are concerned with here, the notion of *anamnesis* in the *Meno* is far from clear. The extent to which Plato is serious about recollection as actualisation of *past* knowledge (as the Orphic or Pythagorean introduction mentioned above suggests) and to which 'recollecting' is just a metaphor for *inner* evidence enabled by the constant presence of true opinions in the soul, i.e. some kind of an a priori facility,[27] is almost impossible to determine. Although the course of the dialogue indicates progress from the former interpretation to the latter, Plato undoubtedly maintained the immortality and repeated incarnation of the soul, which is why the former interpretation cannot be ruled out either. The only thing Plato's Socrates claims to be certain of is that we must endeavour to keep inquiring; everything else is less certain and less important.[28]

In the *Phaedo*, Plato's effort to link the notion of *anamnesis* with the immortality of the soul becomes an explicit goal. However, by means of *anamnesis*, one can only demonstrate the pre-existence of the soul with some conviction, but not its immortality,[29] and even this can only be true if a recollection of the ideas is conceived of as a recollection of *past* actual knowledge in the temporal sense. This seems to be what Plato has in mind when he has Socrates say:

Then it must, surely, have been before we began to see and hear and use other senses that we got knowledge of the equal itself, of *what it is*, if we were going to refer the equals from our sense perceptions to it.[30]

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[24] *Meno* 85d9-10.

[25] *Meno* 85d12-86a11.

[26] *Meno* 86b1-4.

[27] In this respect, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, for example, made a plea that the Platonic recollection be 'purged of the error of pre-existence' in order to make it clear that 'the soul virtually knows those things, and needs only to be reminded (*animadversion*) to recognize the truths' (Gottfried W. Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique* 26, ed. Michel Fichant [Paris, 2004], 197-8; English translation George R. Montgomery, *Discourse on Metaphysics and the Monadology* [Buffalo, 1992], 32). The mythical framework of the notion of *a priori* knowledge is also discussed in recent literature; see R.E. Allen, 'Anamnesis in Plato's Meno and Phaedo', *The Review of Metaphysics* 13 (1959), 165-74, 170; Gregory Vlastos, 'Anamnesis in the Meno', in Jane M. Day (ed.), *Plato's Meno in Focus* (London, 1994), 88-111, 102-5; H. Tarrant, *Recollecting Plato's Meno* (2005), 39-43.

[28] *Meno* 86b-c.

[29] This is what both of Socrates' partners in the dialogue point out; see *Phaedo* 77a-c.

[30] Plato, *Phaedo* 75b4-7: Πρὸ τοῦ ἄρα ἄρξασθαι ἡμᾶς ὁρᾶν καὶ ἀκούειν καὶ τἆλλα αἰσθάνεσθαι τυχεῖν ἔδει που εἰληφότας ἐπιστήμην αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἴσου ὅτι ἔστιν, εἰ ἐμέλλομεν τὰ ἐκ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἴσα ἐκεῖσε ἀνοίσειν. English translation David Gallop, Plato, *Phaedo* (Oxford, 1975), 22.

In the discussion that follows, Socrates even comes to the conclusion that the soul acquired the knowledge of the equal (and other ideas) before it was born; it lost the knowledge when it was born and now it regains it (ἀναμιμνή-σκεσθαι).[31] Unlike in the *Meno*, here Socrates does not consider the possibility that at least 'true opinions' are 'always' present in the soul and may become knowledge. As in the *Meno*, nevertheless, he says that a recollection means 'regaining knowledge belonging to us' (οἰκείαν ἐπιστήμην ἀναλαμβάνειν);[32] moreover, he also emphasises the assumption of actual knowledge which we possessed at some former time and which we regain (ἐκείνας ἀναλαμβάνομεν τὰς ἐπιστήμας ἅς ποτε καὶ πρὶν εἴχομεν).[33]

As in the *Meno*, we cannot be sure of the extent to which Plato himself regards this argumentation as convincing. An 'argument from *anamnesis*', as this passage is usually called, is introduced by Cebes, a student of Philoloaus, a Pythagorean philosopher, and the Pythagorean character of this exposition is undisputable. As the *Phaedo* develops, it turns out that the immortality of the soul will require another argument. More distinctly than in the *Meno*, where the religious frame-work was merely a starting point, *anamnesis* is linked here with the pre-existence of the soul, *i.e.* with the notion of *past* actual knowledge of what we recall during the *anamnesis*. It is probably not a coincidence, though, that this topic is not introduced by Socrates himself, but by his Pythagorean friends.

The knowledge of ideas which precedes the incarnation of the soul and which is a distinct prerequisite for its incarnation as a human soul is an explicit theme in the *Phaedrus*. Even here, however, it is set in a mythical framework, which raises doubts about its actual significance. In his palinode to Eros, Socrates gives a vivid account of how a soul, having reached the end of the world, watches a procession of gods and tries – as much as the unruly horses and crowds of other souls allow it – to catch at least a fleeting glimpse of the ideas. Having fallen into the flesh, the soul can recall what it has beheld when it is stimulated by sense perception in the way it recalled the equal when it encountered equal things in the *Phaedo*).[34]

In the *Phaedrus*, such *anamnesis* is described in two ways: first of all, as a recollection of beauty itself, the brightest of all ideas: the soul can recall it (ἀναμιμνῃσκόμενος) when it sees beauty on earth,[35] namely the beauty of another human being, which will incite an erotic *aporia*.

At the same time, however, Socrates mentions *anamnesis* in the conclusion of his account of Adrasteia's law of reincarnation in order to explain why only

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[31] *Phaedo* 75e2-7.

[32] *Phaedo* 75e5-6.

[33] *Phaedo* 75e4-5.

[34] On the role of sense perception with respect to anamnesis in both dialogues, see Norman Gulley, 'Plato's Theory of Recollection', *CQ* 4 (1954), 194-213.

[35] Plato, *Phaedrus* 249d5-6.

a soul which has beheld ideas, *i.e.* what truly is, can become incarnate as a human being. In this – not entirely clear – passage, human beings understand 'according to' *eidos*, which comes out of a 'plurality of perceptions and is made into a unity by reasoning'. In other words, it is a result of a certain kind of abstraction. Nevertheless, Plato immediately goes on to add that it 'is a recollection (ἀνάμνησις) of those things which our souls beheld aforetime'.[36]

It follows that in addition to the ideas which the soul recalls, a general concept must be introduced, which is formed by abstraction and, at the same time, stands for the *anamnesis* of ideas. A recollection thus does not entail the presence of ideas, but a general concept created by the anamnetic-abstractive process. Whether or not we take literally Plato's account of the *temporal* anteriority of the understanding of ideas, it is quite evident that in the passages mentioned above, a 'recollection' of ideas does not overcome the lack of their presence for the embodied soul, but only means a creation of general concepts unifying sense perceptions by means of mental abstraction.

In his other works, where, however, *anamnesis* is not mentioned, Plato still maintains that there is a certain way in which even the embodied soul can acquire knowledge of ideas. In the almost mystical ascent to the idea of beauty,

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[36] *Phaedrus* 249b6-c4: δεῖ γὰρ ἄνθρωπον συνιέναι κατ' εἶδος λεγόμενον, ἐκ πολλῶν ἰὸν αἰσθήσεων εἰς ἓν λογισμῷ συναιρούμενον· τοῦτο δ' ἐστιν ἀνάμνησις ἐκείνων ἅ ποτ' εἶδεν ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ συμπορευθεῖσα θεῷ καὶ ὑπεριδοῦσα ἃ νῦν εἶναί φαμεν, καὶ ἀνακύψασα εἰς τὸ ὂν ὄντως. '[M]an must understand according to so-called *eidos*, which, coming out of a plurality of perceptions, is made into a unity by reasoning; and such understanding is a recollection of those things which our souls beheld aforetime as they journeyed with their god, looking down upon the things which now we suppose to be, and gazing up to that which truly is' (English translation after Gerrit J. de Vries, *A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato* [Amsterdam, 1969], 146, and Reginald Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus. Translated with Introduction and Commentary* [Cambridge, 1952], 86, modified). The *eidos* acquired by means of abstraction is also a recollection of what truly is, *i.e.* ideas; without the recollection it would probably not be possible to carry out the process of abstraction. In any case, the 'so-called *eidos*' must be different from ideas as it is created by means of both abstraction and *anamnesis*. If we want to avoid this conclusion and consider the *eidos* as an idea, then it seems odd that the *eidos* is created by means of both abstraction and *anamnesis*. That is why some scholars modify the text so that the agent of the abstraction is not the *eidos* itself, but a human being (by reading ἰόντ' instead of ἰὸν in line 249b7). See R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* (1952), 86: '… man must needs understand the language of Forms (<τὸ> κατ' εἶδος λεγόμενον, Heindorf's conjecture), passing (ἰόντ', Badham's conjecture) from a plurality of perceptions to a unity gathered together by reasoning…' Another modification of the quotation is concerned with <τὸ> κατ' εἶδος λεγόμενον, which can also be translated as 'to understand what is said according to *eidos*'. What is said (a general concept), but not the *eidos* itself, is then created by means of abstraction from sense perceptions and by a recollection of ideas. This interpretation also regards the general concept as different from the ideas. Eventually, even the interpretation that understands the *eidos* as a 'general concept', not what is said according to it, comes to a similar conclusion. 'What is said' would then be different from the idea and the general concept (in this interpretation, the *eidos*), namely the expression of the general concept (see Hans F.A. von Arnim, *Platos Jugenddialoge und die Entstehungszeit des Phaidros* [Stuttgart, 1914; reprint Amsterdam, 1967], 198-9; G.J. de Vries, *A Commentary on the Phaedrus* [1969], 146).

into which Socrates was introduced by a Mantinean priestess, the soul pro-
ceeding from the knowledge of the physical and spiritual beauty suddenly
glimpses 'the beautiful itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν).[37] But it is mainly in his account
of the education of the ideal rulers (of the soul and of the state) in his *Republic*
that Plato, by means of the three famous analogies, deals with the knowledge
of ideas. In the analogy of the sun, the truth contemplated by an intellectual
insight in the light of the idea of the good is compared to things seen in the
light of the sun, presumably still during this life.[38] By the same token, in the
analogy of the line, dialectic, having descended to the idea of the good, works
with ideas and examines their relationships.[39] And finally, a prisoner dragged
from Plato's cave can, after some practice with shadows and reflections, see
the things themselves (ὕστερον δὲ αὐτά) illuminated by the sun, and even the
sun itself 'in its own place' (αὐτὸν καθ' αὑτὸν ἐν τῇ αὑτοῦ χώρᾳ), which
again represents the idea of the good as the source of the truth and intellectual
insight.[40]

   This concept of the actual knowledge of ideas, not a mere recollection of
ideas no longer available to the soul, differs significantly from the passages
from the *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* discussed above. The issue of the extent
to which this programme represents an alternative to the previous, distinctly
more modest, account based on *anamnesis*,[41] and to which the two can be regarded
as compatible, or even organically connectible parts of a single conception,[42]
does not need to be addressed here. What is worth noting in this respect is the
fact that among the many interpreters who pursued a single path of knowledge
starting with anamnesis and culminating with the seeing of ideas we can also
find Plotinus.

Plotinus

   Despite the Platonic inspiration, the way Plotinus conceived of (or experi-
enced) the anchoring of the individual soul in the Intellect and its capacity to
behold the contents sets him somewhat apart from Plato. Nevertheless, even

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[37] *Symp*. 211d3.

[38] *Resp*. VI 19, 508d4-508e6.

[39] *Resp*. VI 21, 511c1-2: 'moving on through ideas to ideas and ending with ideas' (εἴδεσιν
αὐτοῖς δι' αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτά, καὶ τελευτᾷ εἰς εἴδη). For the whole passage, see 511b6-c2.

[40] *Resp*. VII 2-3, 516a5-c5.

[41] The difference between the two conceptions is accentuated by Ludwig C.H. Chen, who
argues that *anamnesis* is not a method leading to the knowledge of ideas, but a distinctly more
'pessimistic' alternative of Plato's epistemology, in which the knowledge of ideas is reserved to
the non-embodied soul. See Ludwig C.H. Chen, 'Acquiring Knowledge of the Ideas in the
Phaedo', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 133 (1990), 52-70; *id*., *Acquiring Knowledge of the
Ideas: A Study of Plato's Methods in Phaedo, the Symposium and the Central Books of the
Republic* (Stuttgart, 1992).

[42] See Carlo E. Huber, *Anamnesis bei Plato* (München, 1964), 543-5.

Plotinus includes Platonic *anamnesis* into his account: in his opinion, it has two sources: first, acquaintance with beauty, and second, the impressions of ideas in the soul which come from the Intellect.

As early as his first treatise 'On Beauty' I 6(1), Plotinus draws on a certain kind of *anamnesis* from the *Phaedro*, namely a recollection of the idea of beauty initiated by the beauty seen in this world: the soul, says Plotinus, is by nature linked with the intelligible realm, and when it sees beauty, with which it is affiliated, it 'returns to itself and remembers itself and its own possessions'.[43] Later on, Plotinus will return to *anamnesis* based on beauty several times, often in order to justify the beauty in this world and its anagogic role. [44]

Another type of *anamnesis*, based on impressions from the Intellect, is presented, for example, in the treatise 'On Virtues', I 2(19).[45] Here Plotinus states that the soul has impressions of what is seen (ideas), but it must make them active by turning its attention (προσβαλεῖν) to that which they are impressions of. This Platonic notion is complemented by several other motifs: similarly to Plato, Plotinus explicitly argues that what is seen (the ideas) is present in the soul as some kind of impressions (τύποι).[46] According to Plotinus, however,

[43] *Enn.* I 6(1),2,10-1: ἀναφέρει πρὸς ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἀναμιμνήσκεται ἑαυτῆς καὶ τῶν ἑαυτῆς. Translations from Plotinus after Arthur H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1966-1988).

[44] As Plotinus reminds the Gnostics, the beauty in this world inspires awe and evokes its model. Similarly, the beauty of a face carries one 'there' (*i.e.* to the intelligible world), and in a picture one recollects the truth of what it represents (εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἔρχονται τοῦ ἀληθοῦς); from this experience, disturbance and love arise (see *Enn.* II 9[33],16,43-56). In the mysterious conclusion to the treatise 'On What Are and Whence Come Evils' I 8(51) there is a mention of 'images of beauty to remind' the soul (εἰδώλοις τοῦ καλοῦ εἰς ἀνάμνησιν συνῶσιν), probably to remind it of the good from which the evil borrows the images. As Plotinus points out, 'because of the power and nature of good' evil is not 'only evil', but it binds the soul 'in a sort of beautiful fetters' (δεσμοῖς τισι καλοῖς), which have an anamnetic power (see *Enn.* I 8[51],15,23-8). Also, in his late treatise 'On Love' Plotinus says that from earthly beauty one comes to a recollection (εἰς ἀνάμνησιν … ἐλθοῦσιν) of its archetype, which is why earthly love is worshipped as an image; when it does not inspire the recollection, it may be mistaken for the archetype (see *Enn.* III 5[50],1,34-6). A recollection of the archetype of beauty does not entail any disrespect for its earthly image, but, on the contrary, this image inspires awe as the 'creation and plaything' (ἀποτέλεσμά τι … καὶ παίγνιον) of the archetypal love (see *Enn.* III 5[50],1,60-2).

[45] *Enn.* I 2(19),4,18-27: Τί οὖν τοῦτο; Θέα καὶ τύπος τοῦ ὀφθέντος ἐντεθεὶς καὶ ἐνεργῶν, ὡς ἡ ὄψις περὶ τὸ ὁρώμενον. Οὐκ ἄρα εἶχεν αὐτὰ οὐδ' ἀναμιμνήσκεται; Ἢ εἶχεν οὐκ ἐνεργοῦντα, ἀλλὰ ἀποκείμενα ἀφώτιστα· ἵνα δὲ φωτισθῇ καὶ τότε γνῷ αὐτὰ ἐνόντα, δεῖ προσβαλεῖν τῷ φωτίζοντι. Εἶχε δὲ οὐκ αὐτά, ἀλλὰ τύπους· δεῖ οὖν τὸν τύπον τοῖς ἀληθινοῖς, ὧν καὶ οἱ τύποι, ἐφαρμόσαι. Τάχα δὲ καὶ οὕτω λέγεται ἔχειν, ὅτι ὁ νοῦς οὐκ ἀλλότριος καὶ μάλιστα δὲ οὐκ ἀλλότριος, ὅταν πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπῃ· εἰ δὲ μή, καὶ παρὼν ἀλλότριος.

[46] What Plotinus has in mind is not material impressions (the imprint of a seal in wax), which is how the preservation of an impression was conceived of by some Stoics, following the metaphor we can find in Plato and Aristotle, but an immaterial image. See Plato, *Tht.* 191c-e; Aristotle, *De mem.* 1,450a27-32; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* VII 372-3 (= *SVF* I 64 for Zeno's account). On Plotinus' 'dematerialisation' of this notion, see Riccardo Chiaradonna, 'La conoscenza dell'anima discorsiva: Enn. V 3 (49) 2-3', in Maria Di Pasquale Barbanti and Daniele Iozzia (eds),

the soul contains not only the impressions, but also the things themselves; these are 'lying apart (ἀποκείμενα) and unilluminated (ἀφώτιστα)' until the soul is illuminated by the Intellect. The Intellect is 'present' to it, but it remains 'alien' until the soul 'turns itself' (ἐπιστραφεῖσα, ἐπιστρέφεται *etc*.)[47] and 'looks towards it'. In addition to the *anamnesis* enabled by the impressions, Plotinus also acknowledges illumination (φωτισθῇ) by the Intellect, which awakens the affinity between the soul and the Intellect and actualises the presence of things themselves, not only their impressions.

A very similar path can be found in the treatise V 3(49): starting from the impressions of the Intellect in the soul which make the *anamnesis* possible,[48] Plotinus brings the soul to a perfect self-knowledge, which pertains to the Intellect and in which the soul participates. Even though this ascent of the soul into the Intellect is also regarded as a culmination of the anamnetic process[49] (which is why he refers to the 'feathered' soul from the *Phaedrus*),[50] Plotinus repeatedly speaks of the necessity of illumination by the Intellect.[51] Nevertheless, he makes a distinction between an illumination in which the soul discovers the contents of the Intellect as its own and a vision of the unfathomable light itself. If it achieves such vision, Plotinus' soul sees the light by the light itself as the innermost core it would reach if it could 'take away everything'.[52]

Anima e libertà in Plotino (Catania, 2009), 36-64, 57-64; *id*., 'Plotinus' Account of the Cognitive Powers of the Soul: Sense Perception and Discursive Thought', *Topoi*, DOI 10.1007/s11245-011-9114-7 (online 20.11.2011, no pagination), part 4.

[47] See *Enn.* I 2(19),4,16-8.

[48] *Enn.*V 3(49),2,7-14.

[49] That is why Riccardo Chiaradonna distinguishes between two kinds of *anamnesis* in Plotinus: the *anamnesis* of the *traces* of the Intellect, which is carried out by the discursive soul, and the *anamnesis* of the forms of the Intellect in the way they present themselves to the non-embodied part of the soul; see R. Chiaradonna, 'La conoscenza dell'anima discorsiva' (2009), 64 n. 59; *id*., 'Plotinus' Account of the Cognitive Powers of the Soul' (2011), part 4; similarly also Edward W. Warren, 'Memory in Plotinus', *CQ*, N.S. 15 (1965), 252-60, 256.

[50] *Enn.* V 3(49),4,7-13. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 249d5-7, *i.e.* the account of the soul and the loss of the wings which had enabled the soul to participate in the beatific vision in the company of gods; the soul may become 'feathered' (πτερῶται) again when it sees beauty on earth and recalls the true beauty it has once seen.

[51] *Enn.* V 3(49),3,11. *Ibid.* 8,22-31.

[52] Plotinus, *Enn.* V 3(49),17,33-8: καὶ τοῦτο τὸ τέλος τἀληθινὸν ψυχῇ, ἐφάψασθαι φωτὸς ἐκείνου καὶ αὐτῷ αὐτὸ θεάσασθαι, οὐκ ἄλλου φωτί, ἀλλ' αὐτό, δι' οὗ καὶ ὁρᾷ. Δι' οὗ γὰρ ἐφωτίσθη, τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὃ δεῖ θεάσασθαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἥλιον διὰ φωτὸς ἄλλου. Πῶς ἂν οὖν τοῦτο γένοιτο; Ἄφελε πάντα. On Plotinus' notion of the illumination of the soul by the Intellect and its participation in the vision of the light of the One by the light of the Intellect, see Andrew Smith, 'Image and Analogy in Plotinus', in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 27 (2011), 1-19, 11. As Smith puts it, 'light', according to Plotinus, is not a mere metaphor or analogy (which links all the levels of Plotinus' universe while keeping them separate), but very often a unifying principle which cuts across all the levels (see *ibid.* 13-9). Similarly, also Werner Beierwaltes, 'Plotins Metaphysik des Lichtes', *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 15 (1961), 334-62.

Unlike Plato, Plotinus maintains that things themselves are present *in the soul* while, at the same time, he points out the essential role of illumination, which cannot be provided by the soul even though it may depend on the conversion of the soul or its will. Although Plotinus, drawing on Plato, also speaks of 'memory', he does not see a necessary connection between this concept and that which is not present but temporally anterior. In this respect, Plotinus is quite explicit.[53]

In the treatise 'On the Problems of the soul' *Enn.* IV 3(27), in which Plotinus enquires after the subject of memory, we learn that memory does not pertain to timeless entities, and therefore, strictly speaking, not even to the soul. It is true that the soul must make active (ἐνεργεῖν) what is part of its nature; this activisation was called 'memory and recollection' (μνήμην καὶ ἀνάμνησιν) by the ancient scholars. This, however, is a different kind of memory, one which does not include time. In other words, in addition to a memory which includes time, Plotinus also recognises this actualisation, or 'memory and recollection', which is not related to anything temporally anterior.[54]

The interpretation of Platonic *anamnesis* as 'actualisation' or 'awakening' appears elsewhere as well.[55] It is not a mere 'recollection' of something currently not present that we used to know in the past, but drawing one's attention to something that is always present in the soul. In other words, it is not an act of memory, but the actualisation of intellectual vision.[56]

[53] On the way Plotinus excluded memory from the contemplation of the Intellect in which the soul participates, and for a more detailed analysis of the passages quoted here, see Riccardo Chiaradonna, 'Plotin, la mémoire et la connaissance des intelligibles', *Philosophie antique* 9 (2009), 5-33. On Plotinus' concept of memory and reinterpretation of Platonic *anamnesis*, see also Emile Bréhier, *La philosophie de Plotin* (Paris, 1928), 71-5; Henry J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology: His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul* (The Hague, 1971), 80-99; Luc Brisson, 'La place de la mémoire dans la psychologie plotinienne', *Études platoniciennes* 3 (2006), 13-27; Cristina D'Ancona, 'Plotino: memoria di eventi e anamnesi di intelligibili', in Maria M. Sassi (ed.), *Tracce nella mente: Teorie della memoria da Platone ai moderni* (Pisa, 2007), 67-98.

[54] Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 3(27),25,27-33: Οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ ψυχὴν φατέον μνημονεύειν τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον οἷον λέγομεν τὸ μνημονεύειν εἶναι ὧν ἔχει συμφύτων, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ἐνταῦθά ἐστιν, ἔχειν καὶ μὴ ἐνεργεῖν κατ᾽αὐτά, καὶ μάλιστα ἐνταῦθα ἡκούσῃ. Τὸ δὲ καὶ ἐνεργεῖν ἤδη – ταῖς ἐνεργούσαις ἃ εἶχον μνήμην καὶ ἀνάμνησιν προστιθέναι ἐοίκασιν οἱ παλαιοί. Ὥσθ᾽ ἔτερον εἶδος μνήμης τοῦτο· διὸ καὶ χρόνος οὐ πρόσεστι τῇ οὕτω λεγομένῃ μνήμῃ.

[55] For example, in *Enn.* IV 6(41),3 it is stated that the soul, being in the middle between the sensibles and the intelligibles, can access the latter when it 'arrives at memory of them' (εἰς μνήμην ἐλθοῦσα); however, Plotinus goes on to add immediately that the soul knows them by 'being them in a way' (τῷ αὐτά πως εἶναι): it may access them through a kind of awakening (οἷον ἐγείρεσθαι), passing from potentiality to actuality (ἐκ δυνάμεως εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἰέναι), see *Enn.* IV 6(41),3,10-6. As far as the good is concerned, Plotinus even says that it is no recollection (ἀνάμνησις) at all: it is present, but present to someone in his sleep (κοιμωμένοις πάρεστι), see *Enn.* V 5(32),12,11-4.

[56] *Enn.* IV 4(28),5,1-5: Κἀκεῖνα νῦν αὐτὴ ἡ δύναμις, καθ᾽ ἣν τὸ μνημονεύειν, εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἄγει; Ἢ εἰ μὲν μὴ αὐτά ἑωρῶμεν, μνήμη, εἰ δ᾽ αὐτά, ᾧ κἀκεῖ ἑωρῶμεν. Ἐγείρεται γὰρ τοῦτο οἷς ἐγείρεται, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ὁρῶν περὶ τῶν εἰρημένων.

As far as Plotinus' soul remains part of the Intellect even when it is embodied, it cannot access the contents of the Intellect with its memory. More precisely, the soul 'is and becomes what it remembers' (οὗ μνημονεύει, ἐκεῖνό ἐστι καὶ γίνεται).[57] Moreover, the soul ascending towards the Intellect can see all the contents – including itself, inasmuch as it is contained in the Intellect[58] – it can see them all together, not one thing after another retaining the previously seen in its memory.[59]

When the soul 'put itself into time' (ἑαυτὴν ἐχρόνωσεν),[60] it also withdrew in time from the contemplation of the contents of the Intellect, and, therefore, it can recall them, or have them in 'memory' (μνήμη . . . τῶν ἐκεῖ).[61] Such a 'recollection', however, as we have already seen, is just the beginning of the anamnetic ascent towards what the soul anchored in the Intellect really is.[62]

As I have tried to show, although Plotinus mentions *anamnesis* or the memory of ideas (the contents of the Intellect) several times, what he has in mind is not just a *past* contemplation or a recollection of something *not present*. On the contrary: he maintains that the soul, despite partially putting itself into time, remains rooted in the Intellect even after becoming embodied. For that reason, the contents of the Intellect are fundamentally accessible to the soul, even though the soul is mostly not aware of them. In Plotinus' account, the awareness resembles an awakening or a conversion of its attention rather than a recollection of something that is no longer present. This revision which Platonic *anamnesis* undergoes in Plotinus' conception seems to be crucial to the understanding of the development of Augustine's approach to the issue.

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[57] Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 4(28),3,6.

[58] See Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 4(28),2,11.22: ὅταν αὐτὸν νοῇ, πάντα ὁμοῦ νοεῖ … πάντα γὰρ αὐτός ἐστι καὶ ἄμφω ἕν. For the whole passage, see IV 4(28),2.

[59] See *Enn.* IV 4(28),1,11-20: Εἰ δὲ καί, ὥσπερ δοκεῖ, ἄχρονος πᾶσα νόησις, ἐν αἰῶνι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν χρόνῳ ὄντων τῶν ἐκεῖ, ἀδύνατον μνήμην εἶναι ἐκεῖ οὐχ ὅτι τῶν ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλως ὁτουοῦν. Ἀλλὰ ἔστιν ἕκαστον παρόν· ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ διέξοδος οὐδὲ μετάβασις ἀφ' ἑτέρου ἐπ' ἄλλο. … Τί οὖν κωλύει καὶ ταύτην (τὴν ψυχὴν) τὴν ἐπιβολὴν ἀθρόαν ἀθρόων γίγνεσθαι;

[60] Plotinus, *Enn.* III 7(45),11,30.

[61] Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 4(28),3,4. See *e.g.* also *Enn.* IV 4(28),4,7-10. On the 'epistemological' and 'moral' role of *anamnesis* in Plotinus, which – as far as the temporalised soul is concerned – resembles Plato's conception, see John McCumber, 'Anamnesis as Memory of Intelligibles in Plotinus', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 60 (1978), 160-7.

[62] See *e.g.* also *Enn.* IV 7(2),12,8-10: Ἥ τε δὲ παρ' αὐτῆς ἐκ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ θεαμάτων κατανόησις αὐτοεκάστου καὶ ἐξ ἀναμνήσεως γιγνομένη πρὸ σώματός τε αὐτῇ δίδωσι τὸ εἶναι… *Enn.* IV 8(6),4,28-31: ἀρχὴν λάβῃ ἐξ ἀναμνήσεως θεᾶσθαι τὰ ὄντα … ἔχει γάρ τι ἀεὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον ὑπερέχον τι.

II. Augustine between Plotinus and Plato

Self-Revision in De ordine

What makes our exposition somewhat difficult is the fact that Augustine's earliest notion of the recollection of the intelligible contents or their constant presence is only known to us through his own self-revision or the 'first retraction'[63] as it occurs in the dialogue *De ordine*. Augustine has his young disciple and friend Licentius give an account of a theory he himself had taught him but abandoned in the meantime. The theory took for granted that God is always present to a sage, which is why he does not turn his memory to the intelligible contents of the liberal arts (mainly the mathematical ones).[64] Memory only deals with passing things[65] and is not concerned with the part of the soul which may be called 'sage', but the subservient part (also called a 'servant').[66] The 'master' (*i.e.* the part of the soul which is linked with the intelligible contents), as Licentius argues, does not require memory because the intelligible contents are constantly available to him.[67]

The theory rejected in *De ordine* seems to be a rigid version of Plotinism:[68] it does not take into account the idea that Plotinus' soul is not merely a part of the Intellect, but – as temporalised – it must also ascend to it. Such a complex notion of the soul, which makes Plotinus' thinking difficult to grasp and fascinating at the same time, is so simplified in Licentius' account in *De ordine* that it almost becomes a caricature.

[63] See Jean Guitton, *Le temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et Augustin* (Paris, 1933), 201.

[64] *De ord.* II 2,6-7 (CChr.SL 29, 109-10): *Quibus autem est memoria necessaria nisi praetereuntibus et quasi fugientibus rebus? Ille igitur sapiens amplectitur deum eoque perfruitur, qui semper manet nec exspectatur, ut sit, nec metuitur, ne desit, sed eo ipso, quo vere est, semper est praesens. … – Quam sententiam eius cum admiratione considerans recordatus sum id ipsum aliquando me breviter illo audiente dixisse.*

[65] See Aristotle, *De mem.* 1, 449b15: ἡ δὲ μνήμη τοῦ γενομένου.

[66] *De ord.* II 2,6 (CChr.SL 29, 109). Later, in *De mus.* I 4,8, Augustine does not grant the Intellect memory either, arguing that even animals capable of imitation have it; in another passage of the same work, however, he speaks of memory which retains 'movement to God' which enables intellectual knowledge (see *De mus.* VI 12,36).

[67] *De ord.* II 2,7 (CChr.SL 29, 110): *Quid, inquit, memoria opus est, cum omnes suas res praesentes habeat ac teneat? Non enim vel in ipso sensu ad id, quod ante oculos nostros est, in auxilium vocamus memoriam. Sapienti igitur ante illos interiores intellectus oculos habenti omnia, id est deum ipsum fixe immobiliterque intuenti, cum quo sunt omnia, quae intellectus videt ac possidet, quid opus est quaeso memoria?*

[68] The Plotinian character of Licentius' theory from *De ord.* II 2,6 (quoted above, n. 64 and 67) was pointed out by K. Winkler ('La théorie augustinienne' [1954]) and B. Cillerai (*La memoria* [2008], 38-48). Olivier du Roy shows a similarity of this passage with *Enn.* V 1(10),4,21-5 (see Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* [Paris, 1966], 123). Nevertheless, Gerard O'Daly is certainly right in his protests that Licentius' theory does not do justice to Plotinus (see Gerard O'Daly, 'Memory in Plotinus and Two Early Texts of St. Augustine', in *id.*, *Platonism Pagan and Christian* [2001], Nᵒ III).

Platonic anamnesis

Arguing against Licentius' theory, Augustine in *De ordine* emphasises the role of memory in the liberal arts;[69] by that he probably does not mean a mere capacity to remember what we have learnt from our teachers,[70] but, above all, memory in the sense of Platonic *anamnesis*. In the passage from Augustine's *Soliloquies*, quoted above, we learnt about the 'bringing and digging out' of the contents of the liberal arts 'buried in oblivion'.[71] The early dialogue *De beata vita* mentions a 'recollection of the sweet homeland', initiated by 'certain signs' which people may or may not follow and set out to the 'port of philosophy'.[72] It also gives an account of a 'recollection of God', which makes it possible to search for God and is incited by 'some kind of encouragement' from the truth itself.[73] At the same time, this God is presented here as a 'mysterious Sun' which illuminates us from within and which is the source of all true things.[74] In his outline *De immortalitate animae*, Augustine mentions the presence of the contents of the eternal *Ratio* in the soul, even though they may be forgotten.[75]

A very clear statement can be found in Augustine's reply to his philosophical friend Nebridius (to whom, just like Licentius, he had taught a lot about Neoplatonic philosophy). Here Augustine distinctly rejects the notion of a constant presence of the intelligible contents which invokes Plato against Plato himself, and advocates recollection of a *past* vision of non-passing things (*illam visionem esse praeteritam*).[76]

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[69] *De ord.* II 2,7 (CChr.SL 29, 110).

[70] This is how Licentius understands his statement; see *De ord.* II 2,7 (CChr.SL 29, 110).

[71] *Solil.* II 20,35 (CSEL 89, 95). Quoted above, n. 2.

[72] *De b. vita* 1,2 (CChr.SL 29, 65): … *quaedam signa respiciunt et suae dulcissimae patriae quamvis in ipsis fluctibus recordantur*. On the motif of the beloved intelligible homeland, see Plotinus, *Enn.* I 6(1),8,16.

[73] *De b. vita* 4,35 (CChr.SL 29, 84): *Admonitio autem quaedam, quae nobiscum agit, ut deum recordemur, ut eum quaeramus, ut eum pulso omni fastidio sitiamus, de ipso ad nos fonte veritatis emanat.*

[74] *De b. vita* 4,35 (CChr.SL 29, 84).

[75] *De immort.* 4,6 (CSEL 89, 107): *Sed cum vel nos ipsi nobiscum ratiocinantes vel ab alio bene interrogati de quibusdam liberalibus artibus ea, quae invenimus, non alibi quam in animo nostro invenimus…, manifestum est etiam inmortalem esse animum humanum et omnes veras rationes in secretis eius esse, quamvis eas sive ignoratione sive oblivione aut non habere aut amisisse videatur.*

[76] *Ep.* 7,1,2 (CSEL 34, 14): *Nonnulli calumniantur adversus Socraticum illud nobilissimum inventum, quo adseritur non nobis ea, quae discimus, veluti nova inseri, sed in memoriam recordatione revocari, dicentes memoriam praeteritarum rerum esse, haec autem, quae intellegendo discimus, Platone ipso auctore manere semper nec posse interire ac per hoc non esse praeterita. Qui non adtendunt illam visionem esse praeteritam, qua haec aliquando mente vidimus; a quibus quia defluximus et aliter alia videre coepimus, ea nos reminiscendo revisere, id est per memoriam.* 'There are some who attack that noble Socratic invention in which it is asserted that the things which we learn are not presented to us as something new, but are recalled to our mind by recollection. These critics say that memory is only of past events, but that the

It is along these lines that the dialogue with Evodius unfolds in *De quantitate animae*, in which Augustine openly advocates the theory of learning as recollection of the liberal arts which the soul brings along with it. Evodius asks: 'Why does the soul not bring with it some art, if it is eternal?' To that, Augustine replies that in his opinion, the soul 'has brought every art, so that to learn is nothing else than to recall and remember (*reminisci et recordari*)'.[77]

The notion of *anamnesis* in Augustine's early works, according to which the knowledge of the intelligible contents is *temporally* anterior, is very close to Platonic anamnesis. Given that Augustine links *anamnesis* mainly, if not exclusively, with the contents of the liberal arts, we can see a connection between his conception and the *Meno* (it cannot be either proved or disproved whether Augustine had direct access to the dialogue; it is very probable, however, that he knew Cicero's summary).[78] As I have tried to point out above, it is not clear to what extent Plato himself regarded *anamnesis* literally as the recollection of *past* knowledge and to what extent he employed the Pythagorean-Orphic sources to give an account of the a priori structure of the soul, which enables the soul to gain mathematical knowledge, or the knowledge of the universal. Augustine, similarly to many other interpreters of the teaching, took it literally; it is, therefore, very probable that he linked this interpretation of *anamnesis* with the notion of the pre-existence of the soul as well[79] (a notion which, even upon his consecration as a priest and bishop, he regarded as something worth considering, although he did not favour it any more).[80] It was probably the last teaching he later felt the need to dispute, which is why he also had to somewhat depart from the Platonic version of *anamnesis*. For such a revision, Plotinus' conception, with which Augustine became acquainted in his youth, was very convenient, even though it had to be modified in the light of the Christian faith.

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things we learn by our intellectual understanding, on the authority of Plato himself, remain always, cannot be destroyed, and therefore cannot become past. They do not realise that the contemplation in which we have seen these things by our mind is past: we left them behind us, when we began to take note of other things and in a different manner. Therefore, we recall these things by means of recollection, *i.e.* by memory' (English translation Wilfred Parsons, Saint Augustine, *Letters*, vol. 1 = The Fathers of the Church 12, 15, modified).

[77] *De quant. an.* 20,34 (CSEL 89, 173): *Magnam omnino, magnam et qua nescio utrum quicquam maius sit, quaestionem moves, in qua tantum nostrae sibimet opiniones adversantur, ut tibi anima nullam, mihi contra omnes artes secum adtulisse videatur nec aliud quicquam esse id, quod dicitur discere, quam reminisci et recordari* (English translation John J. McMahon, Saint Augustine, *The Immortality of the Soul and other Writings* [Washington, D.C., 1947] = The Fathers of the Church 4, 97 modified).

[78] In *De Trin.* XII 15,24 (CChr.SL 50, 377-8) Augustine summarises the content of the dialogue with Meno's slave; quoted below, n. 95. See Cicero, *Tuscul.* I 24,57-8. That is why Pierre Courcelle argues that Augustine's knowledge of Platonic anamnesis is based on this source exclusively; see Pierre Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident: de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris, 1943), 158.

[79] See *Ep.* 7,2,5 (CSEL 34, 16-7); 7,3,7 (CSEL 34, 18). On this issue, see the discussion above; n. 7 and 8.

[80] See *De lib. arb.* III 20,57,193-21,59,200 (CChr.SL 29, 308-10); *Ep.* 143,6 (CSEL 44, 255).

The inner teacher

In *De magistro*, Augustine's dialogue with his son Adeodatus, Augustine seems to have completely abandoned the theory of the recollection of a past vision of the intelligible contents. Here he posits a divine teacher that dwells in the soul ('in the inner man'[81]) and shows it these contents. This 'truth' itself is available for every rational soul; the degree of the learning, however, depends on the will of the soul.[82]

This theory surely follows up on the notion of God as light from Augustine's *Soliloquies*; at the same time, however, it is very close to 'illumination' as we know it from his *Retractationes*, not only in terms of the analogy with outer light and the ensuing metaphor of intellectual vision for which the truth provides the light, but also with respect to the vision of the intelligible contents as *present* (*i.e.* not hidden because of oblivion).[83] A very similar concept can be found in Augustine's early works and also in Plotinus, who spoke of the necessary illumination of the soul by the Intellect as well, even though Plotinus' Intellect was not identified with the 'inner teacher'.

Things themselves in the memory

What also sets Augustine apart from the rigid kind of Plotinism which he had taught Licentius is the experience of the weaknesses of the human soul – not only the moral one, but also the epistemological and ontological ones.

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[81] On the notion of 'the inner man' (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος, resp. ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος), which is of both Platonic and New Testament origin (Plato, *Resp*. IX, 589a7-b1; and *Rom*. 7:22; 2*Cor*. 4:16; *Eph*. 3:16, respectively), see Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford, 2000), 47-9.

[82] *De mag.* 11,38 (CChr.SL 29, 195-6): *De universis autem, quae intellegimus, non loquentem, qui personat foris, sed intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus veritatem, verbis fortasse ut consulamus admoniti. Ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus* (see *Eph.* 3:16-7)*, id est incommutabilis dei virtus atque sempiterna sapientia* (see 1*Cor.* 1:24)*, quam quidem omnis rationalis anima consulit, sed tantum cuique panditur, quantum capere propter propriam sive malam sive bonam voluntatem potest. Et si quando fallitur, non fit vitio consultae veritatis, ut neque huius, quae foris est, lucis vitium est, quod corporei oculi saepe falluntur, quam lucem de rebus visibilibus consuli fatemur, ut eas nobis quantum cernere valemus, ostendat.*

[83] *De mag.* 12,40 (CChr.SL 29, 197-8): *Cum vero de iis agitur, quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce veritatis, qua ipse, qui dicitur homo interior, illustratur et fruitur; sed tunc quoque noster auditor, si et ipse illa secreto ac simplici oculo videt, novit quod dico sua contemplatione, non verbis meis. Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo vera dicens vera intuentem; docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis; itaque de his etiam interrogatus respondere posset.* In his dialogue with Adeodatus, Augustine mentions memory as well, but it is along the lines that words uttered by other people remind us of the things themselves which are given to us by our memory prodded by the words (*De mag.* 1,2: CCh.SL 29, 159). This, however, as it is argued in the dialogue, only applies to things already known to us, not unknown ones (*De mag.* 11,36: CChr.SL 29, 159).

Augustine's soul, as we learn in his *Confessions*, finds the contents of the liberal arts in itself, but as they are scattered and hidden (*remota et retrusa … sparsa et neglecta*),[84] the soul must gather them by thinking and by concentrating its attention keep them at hand, or they will sink into oblivion again.[85] The contents of the liberal arts are, according to Augustine, in the memory, and yet, they are there as the 'things themselves' (*res ipsas*),[86] not represented by their images or 'impressions'. By this seeming contradiction, Augustine may be indicating a different relationship between the soul and the intelligibles than the one we know from Plotinus.

When he speaks about the 'gathering' or 'collecting' (*conligo, cogo*) of the contents of the liberal arts, which is thinking (*cogito*),[87] Augustine probably means that the soul cannot grasp its own structure, and every insight is immediately endangered by a fall into the abyss of oblivion: 'The mind is too narrow to grasp itself' (*animus ad habendum se ipsum angustus est*).[88]

Such 'collecting' of the soul's own logical or mathematical structure is actually similar to the recollecting of past events in that it is a cognitive effort which the soul carries out in itself, even though it may be aided from the outside.[89] Similarly, finding in oneself, *i.e.* finding one's own knowledge, not

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[84] *Conf.* 10,17-8 (CChr.SL 27, 164).

[85] *Conf.* X 11,18 (CChr.SL 27, 164): *Quocirca invenimus nihil esse aliud discere ista, quorum non per sensus haurimus imagines, sed sine imaginibus, sicuti sunt, per se ipsa intus cernimus, nisi ea, quae passim atque indisposite memoria continebat, cogitando quasi conligere atque animadvertendo curare, ut tamquam ad manum posita in ipsa memoria, ubi sparsa prius et neglecta latitabant, iam familiari intentioni facile occurrant. Et quam multa huius modi gestat memoria mea quae iam inventa sunt et, sicut dixi, quasi ad manum posita, quae didicisse et nosse dicimur.*

[86] *Conf.* X 9,16 (CChr.SL 27, 163): *Hic sunt et illa omnia, quae de doctrinis liberalibus percepta nondum exciderunt, quasi remota interiore loco, non loco; nec eorum imagines, sed res ipsas gero. Nam quid sit litteratura, quid peritia disputandi, quot genera quaestionum, quidquid horum scio, sic est in memoria mea, ut non retenta imagine rem foris reliquerim…*

[87] *Conf.* X 11,18 (CChr.SL 27, 164): *Quae si modestis temporum intervallis recolere desivero, ita rursus demerguntur et quasi in remotiora penetralia dilabuntur, ut denuo velut nova excogitanda sint indidem iterum – neque enim est alia regio eorum – et cogenda rursus, ut sciri possint, id est velut ex quadam dispersione colligenda, unde dictum est cogitare. Nam cogo et cogito sic est, ut ago et agito, facio et factito. Verum tamen sibi animus hoc verbum proprie vindicavit, ut non quod alibi, sed quod in animo conligitur, id est cogitur, cogitari proprie iam dicatur.* An etymological relation between *cogo* and *cogito* was already presupposed by Varro, although he interpreted it in a slightly different way: *Cogitare a cogendo dictum: mens plura in unum cogit, ut eligere possit* (Varro, *De ling. Lat.* VI 6,43, ed. Pierre Flobert, Varron, *La langue latine* [Paris, 1985], 22).

[88] *Conf.* X 8,15 (CChr.SL 27, 162).

[89] *Conf.* X 10,17 (CChr.SL 27, 164): *Unde et qua haec intraverunt in memoriam meam? Nescio quomodo; nam cum ea didici, non credidi alieno cordi, sed in meo recognovi et vera esse approbavi et commendavi ei tamquam reponens, unde proferrem, cum vellem. Ibi ergo erant et antequam ea didicissem, sed in memoria non erant. Ubi ergo aut quare, cum dicerentur, agnovi et dixi: 'Ita est, verum est', nisi quia iam erant in memoria, sed tam remota et retrusa quasi in cavis abditioribus, ut, nisi admonente aliquo eruerentur, ea fortasse cogitare non possem?*

someone else's (although it was guided by Socrates' questions and geometrical drawings) was the core of *anamnesis* for Plato as well, and seems to have remained crucial for Augustine even after he departed from the theory of *anamnesis* as the recollection of past knowledge.

Unlike Plato, however, Augustine in his *Confessions* does not find the contents of the liberal arts by means of recollection or memory, but *in the memory*, although he does not maintain any more that they were acquired through a past vision and although the memory does not contain only the 'impressions', but the things themselves. This is a remarkable combination of Plato's and Plotinus' theories: both authors speak about the finding of the intelligible contents by means of memory. Moreover, Plotinus believes that these contents are present in the soul, but he will definitely not place them in the memory, which only contains their 'impressions'. Unlike Plato, Augustine probably does not advocate past knowledge which we recollect. Unlike Plotinus, however, he does not maintain that the soul is so firmly rooted in the divine Intellect that it can find itself as part of the Intellect; the soul cannot see the contents of the Intellect as its own or see them altogether at once (on the contrary, it must make an effort to 'gather' them together). Perhaps it is this distance at which Augustine's account of memory aims, namely the distance which separates the soul from the divine Intellect and which cannot be surmounted by a mere concentration of one's attention or by 'taking away everything'. The abyss of oblivion which keeps endangering the soul seems to indicate not only a lack of concentration on the part of the soul, but also an ontological difference between the soul and the Intellect – some kind of essential self-obscurity which is typical of the soul.

In *Confessions* X, Augustine was looking for his God – and he did not find him in the memory, either, but, as he puts it, 'far above me' (*in te supra me*),[90] probably in the way of light in which the 'things themselves' can be seen[91] or an inner teacher[92] who shows the things themselves to him, but is not one of them.

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[90] *Conf.* X 26,37 (CChr.SL 27, 174-5): *Ubi ergo te inveni, ut discerem te? Neque enim iam eras in memoria mea, priusquam te discerem. Ubi ergo te inveni, ut discerem te, nisi in te supra me?*

[91] In the conclusion of Book Ten of the *Confessions*, in which he summarises his investigation of memory, Augustine addresses God as *lux … permanens, quam de omnibus consulebam, an essent, quid essent, quanti pendenda essent: et audiebam docentem ac iubentem. Conf.* X 40,65 (CChr.SL 27, 190-1). In the *Confessions* and in other works as well, God is regarded as spiritual light; see *e.g. Conf.* VII 10,16 (CChr.SL 27, 103); IX 4,10 (CChr.SL 27, 139); X 34,52 (CChr.SL 27, 185); XI 11,13 (CChr.SL 27, 200); XI 15,18 (CChr.SL 27, 203); XI 23,30 (CChr.SL 27, 209); XII 18,27 (CChr.SL 27, 229-30); in several places, the light of the truth is mentioned as well; see *Conf.* XII 26,36 (CChr.SL 27, 236); XII 28,38 (CChr.SL 27, 238); XIII 18,23 (CChr.SL 27, 254).

[92] See *Conf.* IX 9,21 (CChr.SL 27, 146); X 31,46 (CChr.SL 27, 180); XI 8,10 (CChr.SL 27, 199).

More profound depth of memory

In the fifteenth book *De Trinitate*, memory, too, contains not only 'everything that we know, even if we do not think of it' (in other words, what we have thought of 'we again leave in our memory'),[93] but also all the intelligible contents even before we recalled them from our memory for the first time (*ubi hoc etiam primum cum cogitaremus invenimus*). They come out of this 'more profound depth of our memory' (*abstrusior profunditas nostrae memoriae*) by thinking, similarly to how the Word is begotten from the Father in the divine Trinity.[94] Although memory is mentioned here as well, Augustine does not seem to mean that through recollection we return to something that was once present, but is not present now.

On the contrary, he explicitly rejects this version of Platonic anamnesis in the twelfth book *De Trinitate*.[95] His own words make it possible to conclude that not only does he refuse to accept the theory of learning as recollecting knowledge from one's past life in this world (as outlined in the *Meno*), but he also makes a distinction between the intelligible contents to which the intellective soul is 'subjoined' (*subiuncta*) on one hand, and the incorporeal light, in which the contents can be seen (*in quadam luce sui generis incorporea*) and to which the soul is akin.[96] The intelligible contents, however, probably do not dwell in the memory of the soul, or at least they do not dwell there exclusively, because Augustine now distinguishes between the glimpse of eternal reasons (*rationes*), which is arrived at very rarely, and its transformation into some kind

[93] *De Trin*. XV 21,40 (CChr.SL 50A, 517-8).

[94] *De Trin*. XV 21,40 (CChr.SL 50A, 518): *Sed illa est abstrusior profunditas nostrae memoriae ubi hoc etiam primum cum cogitaremus invenimus et gignitur intimum verbum quod nullius linguae sit tamquam scientia de scientia et visio de visione et intellegentia quae apparet in cogitatione de intellegentia quae in memoria iam fuerat sed latebat, quanquam et ipsa cogitatio quamdam suam memoriam nisi haberet, non reverteretur ad ea quae in memoria reliquerat cum alia cogitaret.*

[95] *De Trin*. XII 15,24 (CChr.SL 50, 377-8): *Unde Plato ille philosophus nobilis persuadere conatus est vixisse hic animas hominum et antequam ista corpora gererent, et hinc esse quod ea quae discuntur reminiscuntur potius cognita quam cognoscuntur nova. Retulit enim puerum quemdam nescio quae de geometrica interrogatum sic respondisse tamquam esset illius peritissimus disciplinae. Gradatim quippe atque artificiose interrogatus videbat quod videndum erat dicebatque quod viderat. Sed si recordatio haec esset rerum antea cognitarum, non utique omnes vel pene omnes cum illo modo interrogarentur hoc possent; non enim omnes in priore vita geometrae fuerunt cum tam rari sint in genere humano ut vix possit aliquis inveniri. Sed potius credendum est mentis intellectualis ita conditam esse naturam ut rebus intellegibilibus naturali ordine disponente conditore subiuncta sic ista videat in quadam luce sui generis incorporea quemadmodum oculus carnis videt quae in hac corporea luce circumadiacent, cuius lucis capax eique congruens est creatus.*

[96] This, at least, is the purport of Plato's analogy of the sun, which was discussed above: the light and the eye are not identical with the sun, although they are 'sunlike' (ἡλιοειδῆ), and neither is the truth or knowledge identical with the good, although they are 'boniform' (ἀγαθοειδῆ), *i.e.* like the good. See Plato, *Resp*. VI 18-20, 507b-509d.

of 'transitory thought' (*cogitatio transitoria* or *transiens*) in the form of the liberal arts.[97] The soul, similarly to Plotinus' soul, apparently finds in the memory only some traces of the intelligible contents, through the contemplation of which it may transcend itself.

In addition to the revision of his *Soliloquies* mentioned above in the introduction, Augustine's *Retractationes* also comments on the passage in *De quantitate animae* in which he explained to Evodius that the soul had brought along with it all knowledge of the liberal arts. It is also here that Augustine speaks about the intelligible contents which the soul grasps with an intellectual insight (*intellegentia*). However, the Platonic terms 'recalling' and 'remembering' (*recordari*, *reminisci*) are not rejected completely: Augustine only points out that they must not entail any temporal anteriority of knowledge, *i.e.* the preexistence of the soul (whether embodied or non-embodied, here or elsewhere).[98]

Although Augustine retains the notion of anamnesis, just as he keeps on referring to 'memory', we can see that he no longer means temporally anterior knowledge of things which are not present now. On the contrary, what he has in mind, similarly to Plotinus, is knowledge of what is present and to which the soul blocks or makes its own path; however, it is not identical to the soul, but superior to it.

Return to Plotinus?

What clearly differentiates Augustine from Plotinus in terms of *anamnesis* is mainly Augustine's lasting emphasis on memory and its depth. I believe that this concept concentrates all of Augustine's experience of a soul which is opaque to itself – which is what eventually sets him apart from Plotinus despite all the inspiration.

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[97] *De Trin*. XII 14,23 (CChr.SL 50A, 376): *Ad quas mentis acie pervenire paucorum est, et cum pervenitur quantum fieri potest, non in eis manet ipse perventor, sed veluti acies ipsa reverberata repellitur et fit rei non transitoriae transitoria cogitatio. Quae tamen cogitatio transiens per disciplinas quibus eruditur animus memoriae commendatur ut sit quo redire possit quae cogitur inde transire.*

[98] *Retr*. I 8,2 (CChr.SL 57, 22): *In quo libro illud quod dixi 'omnes artes animam secum attulisse mihi videri, nec aliud quidquam esse id quod dicitur discere quam reminisci ac recordari', non sic accipiendum est, quasi ex hoc adprobetur animam vel hic in alio corpore vel alibi sive in corpore sive extra corpus aliquando vixisse, et ea quae interrogata respondet, cum hic non didicerit, in alia vita ante didicisse. Fieri enim potest, sicut iam in hoc opere supra diximus, ut hoc ideo possit, quia natura intelligibilis est et connectitur non solum intelligibilibus, verum etiam immutabilibus rebus, eo ordine facta, ut cum se ad eas res movet quibus conexa est vel ad se ipsam, in quantum eas videt, in tantum de his vera respondeat. Nec sane omnes artes eo modo secum attulit ac secum habet; nam de artibus quae ad sensus corporis pertinent, sicut multa medicinae, sicut astrologiae omnia, nisi quod hic didicerit non potest dicere. Ea vero quae sola intellegentia capit propter id quod dixi, cum vel a se ipsa vel ab alio fuerit bene interrogata, et recordata respondet.*

Apparently, Plotinus' embodied soul is also somewhat confused and in the beginning, it has to rely on the 'impressions' from the Intellect, its illumination, and the *anamnesis* of beauty. However, being the 'image' of the Intellect, the soul can find itself as part of the Intellect; it can even transcend the Intellect and 'leave behind' and touch the One as its own core. Augustine's soul is fundamentally stray, as it were, and opaque to itself, and it can never quite overcome this condition of a soul that has strayed into sin (not just an embodied one) but through the incomprehensible divine mercy. Perhaps it was this experience as well that Augustine enclosed in his account of the depth of our memory, in which the soul is always opaque to itself, and in his 'divine Ratio', in whose light the soul is capable of seeing the contents of the memory (although it should be noted that the theory of illumination is not dependent on Augustine's doctrine of grace).

The other striking difference which sets Augustine apart from his two predecessors is their conception of *anamnesis* based on beauty. Even though Augustine ponders aesthetic delight in his early works several times, his examples are not related to the beauty of human beings, which might evoke the idea of beauty, but works of visual and musical art, which exhibit a mathematical structure and its contiguity with the structure of the human soul.[99] More precisely, they exhibit the human knowledge of a standard which is 'above our minds' and by which the symmetry of bodily objects is judged.[100] If we were to relate this notion to the theory of *anamnesis* (Augustine himself does not do so explicitly), it would be concerned not only with intelligible beauty which is evoked by beautiful things,[101] but also with the proportion of parts and its adequacy to the human soul: this adequacy reveals our knowledge of equality, which is not accessible to the senses (it is noteworthy that Augustine speaks in terms of 'equality', *aequalitas*, similarly to how Socrates spoke about ἰσότης or αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον in the *Phaedo*).[102]

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Augustine considered another type of *anamnesis*, different from those of his predecessors, namely a kind of recollection of the paradisiacal beautitude which either pertains to each soul individually or is passed on in the human race. This is the type of *anamnesis* which makes the

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[99] See *De ord.* II 11,33-4 (CChr.SL 29, 126-7); *De vera rel.* 30,54-31,57 (CChr.SL 32, 222-4); *De mus.* VI 10,26 (BA 7, 418); *De mus.* VI 13,38 (BA 7, 442).

[100] *De vera rel.* 30,55-6 (CChr.SL 32, 223-4).

[101] See *De ord.* II 14,39 (CChr.SL 29, 129); II 15,42 (CChr.SL 29, 130); II 19,51 (CChr.SL 29, 135).

[102] See *De vera rel.* 30,55-31,57 (CChr.SL 32, 223-4); *De mus.* VI 12,34 (BA 7, 432). The similarity of the last passage to Plato's *Phaedo* (74a ff.), in which a knowledge of 'equality' is exemplified, is rightly pointed out by J.V. Lowe, *Platonic Recollection* (1986), 104. It is not generally assumed, however, that Augustine read the lost translation of this dialogue by Apuleius, as maintained by Prosper Alfaric, *L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin: Du Manichéisme au Néoplatonisme* (Paris, 1918), 231 with n. 5. On this issue, see P. Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques* (1943), 158.

human heart seek and does not allow it to rest (which is as Socrates would like to have it in the *Meno*); but, in the latter case, it is a collective memory, as it were, propagated in the sons of Adam. This idea, pondered in the *Confessions*,[103] was later abandoned in *De Trinitate*, where Augustine deemed the experience – if it exists – as hopelessly forgotten. As Augustine puts it, the soul 'remembers' the unchangeable and eternal God, but not because He passes or because it had known Him before it entered this world, but because it finds in itself an 'impression' of His light. The divine light thus not only illuminates the contents scattered in the soul so that they could be gathered by thinking, but it is also a 'book' (*liber lucis*) of rules impressed upon the soul.[104]

Augustine's path from rigid Plotinism through Platonic anamnesis to a more differentiated and partially Christianised Plotinus (this is how we could tentatively characterise Augustine's development in a nutshell) thus mainly turns out as a succession of attempts to explain what it is that corresponds to the divine light in the illuminated soul: is it the constant presence of the intelligible contents, a half-forgotten recollection of these contents, a disorderly and hard-to-access storage of these contents in the memory, or just their fleeting 'translation' in the memory of the soul? I believe that each of these answers is interesting in itself; moreover, their chain reveals Augustine's thinking in its constant transformation, which may well illustrate the degree of philosophical inspiration and intellectual independence of his restless spirit.

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[103] *Conf.* X 20,29 (CChr.SL 27, 171): *Nescio quomodo noverunt eam (scil. beatam vitam) ideoque habent eam in nescio qua notitia, de qua satago, utrum in memoria sit, quia, si ibi est, iam beati fuimus aliquando, – utrum singillatim omnes, an in illo homine, qui primus peccavit, in quo et omnes mortui sumus et de quo omnes cum miseria nati sumus.* James McEvoy remarks on this passage: 'It is in the universal desire for happiness that the presence of the absent, transcendent God is to be "discovered"'. James McEvoy, 'Does Augustinian Memoria Depend on Plotinus?', in John J. Cleary (ed.), *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism* (Leuven, 1997), 383-96, 387. Already in *De lib. arb.* II 9,26,103 (CChr.SL 29, 254) Augustine mentions the 'impressed notion' of beatitude and wisdom.

[104] *De Trin.* XIV 15,21 (CChr.SL 50A, 450-1): *Domini autem dei sui reminiscitur* (see *Deut.* 8:14). *Ille quippe semper est, nec fuit et non est, nec est et non fuit, sed sicut numquam non erit ita numquam non erat. Et ubique totus est, propter quod ista in illo et vivit et movetur et est* (see *Acts* 17:28), *et ideo eius reminisci potest. Non quia hoc recordatur quod eum noverat in Adam aut alibi alicubi ante huius corporis vitam aut cum primum facta est ut insereretur huic corpori; nihil enim horum omnino reminiscitur; quidquid horum est oblivione deletum est. Sed commemoratur ut convertatur ad dominum* (*Ps.* 21[22]:28), *tamquam ad eam lucem qua etiam cum ab illo averteretur quodam modo tangebatur. Nam hinc est quod etiam impii cogitant aeternitatem et multa recte reprehendunt recteque laudant in hominum moribus. Quibus ea tandem regulis iudicant nisi in quibus vident quemadmodum quisque vivere debeat etiamsi nec ipsi eodem modo vivant? Ubi eas vident? Neque enim in sua natura, cum procul dubio mente ista videantur, eorumque mentes constet esse mutabiles, has vero regulas immutabiles videat quisquis in eis et hoc videre potuerit … Ubi ergo scriptae sunt, nisi in libro lucis illius quae veritas dicitur unde omnis lex iusta describitur et in cor hominis qui operatur iustitiam non migrando sed tamquam imprimendo transfertur, sicut imago ex anulo et in ceram transit et anulum non relinquit?*

Augustine and Deification.
A Neoplatonic Way of Thinking

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Abstract

The theme of deification tends to be considered as a watershed between Eastern and Western theology. Western theology has always insisted on the necessity of grace, of the indispensable role of the sole Mediator. It has also insisted on the sinfulness of human mankind, on the fact that we are no longer the beings we once were before the Fall. Therefore, if deification was really possible, it was only so by the grace of God. This theme of divine grace was also to be considered to be the leading structure in the whole of Augustine's theology (Carol Harrisson, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology, an Argument for Continuity* [London, 2006]). Grace was at the beginning, already in the *De diuersis quaestionibus*, grace was in the end, in the *Opus imperfectum*. However, is the argument a convincing one? Are we bound to accept that Augustine's whole theology is about grace and that deification is only possible if considered *sub gratia Christi*?

Kirstin Hennesy, in a fascinating article on the influence of De Régnon, published in the *Harvard Theological Review*, starts her outline with the opening-lines of the speech of Marc Antony, in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, writing: 'I come not to bury De Régnon but to praise him'.[1] As you know, Marc Antony pronounced these words shortly after the murder of Caesar, Brutus being still alive. Apparently, Hennesy adopts the role of Marc Antony, considering that De Régnon has also been killed and that possibly his murderers are still with us. Who then killed De Régnon? Hennesy does her utmost not to accuse any-one (certainly not Michel Barnes, 'for Barnes is an honourable man'), yet it seems as if she suggests a kind of conspiracy, a tragedy, is befalling us. A tragedy concerning the killing mistakes of even modern research, mistakes that push us to blame an innocent victim. Which ought to make us aware of the fragility of our interpretations and of the possibility that research sometimes has a hidden goal: if De Régnon was falsely accused, why was he charged with something he never did? Apparently, the accusation is not about the historical truth but about the needs of modern theology.

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[1] Kirstin Hennesy, 'An Answer to De Régnon's Accusers: Why we should not speak of his Paradigm', *HTR* 100 (2007), 179-97.

Which indeed brings me to the notion of *deification* in Augustine, a theme also heavily discussed in modern theology, though Augustine mentions the word only 18 times. What does it mean and why has its study become so popular in recent times[2]? The publications of especially Norman Russel[3] and David Meconi[4] do highlight many aspects of the Augustinian concept of deification. Despite these recent publications, research has stuck to the lines developed by Bonner in his famous article from 1986.[5] What he concluded, and what since then has been confirmed, is that the Augustinian concept of deification has its roots in the biblical and neoplatonic heritage,[6] that it focusses on participation and that it represents a gift bestowed by grace and adoption. We may become gods, but only by the grace of the one who deifies. In the words of Augustine: 'For it is clear that when He calls us gods, He deified us by grace, we are not born of his substance'.[7] Implying that the process of deification represents also a justification and as such deification is an integral part of the Augustinian soteriology. However, this salvation is not accessible to all, it is strictly reserved to those belonging to the church and even within that holy community, only given to the *electi*. Finally, deification can only be reached in the afterlife. To sum up, deification seems to be a term used to highlight once again the omnipotence of God's grace. Even Meconi, insisting on deification as the perfection of creation, remains faithful to the idea that men is integrated in the *totus Christus* by the grace of the Holy Spirit, thus weaving together the strands of Christology and Trinity.

However, some questions remain and they concern in particular this heavy emphasis on soteriology. Is it then correct to suppose that the metaphor of deification is nothing more than just another emphasis on the importance of grace? Is it correct to consider once again the notion of grace to be the decisive element in Augustinian thought? (Though I apologize for this perhaps over-simplified question).

Indeed, the Augustinian vocabulary might show us some other directions than those leading to the notion of grace. When Augustine starts his discussion of deification in *Enn. in Ps.* 146, a sermon which is very difficult to date, but that must have been written before 420, his first argument is about the incomprehensibility

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[2] See, *e.g.* Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity And The Forming Of The Augustinian Soul* (Oxford, 2013).

[3] Norman Russel, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford, 2004).

[4] David Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, D.C., 2013). And *id.*, 'Becoming Gods by Becoming God's: Augustine's Mystagogy of Identification', *AugStud* 39 (2008), 61-74.

[5] Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', *JTS* 37 (1986), 369-85.

[6] The classical Roman heritage and its notion of deification, seems to be left aside. See Spencer Cole, *Cicero and the rise of Deification at Rome* (Cambridge, 2013).

[7] *Enn. in Ps.* 49,2: *Manifestum est ergo quia homines dixit deos ex gratia sua deificatos, non de substantia sua natos.*

of God.[8] Stating that God has to pour Himself out into us (*infundat se*),[9] because we fail to reach Him. Secondly, because our intelligence is limited and therefore strongly opposed to God's unlimited intelligence, we are not capable to grasp Him of course, we can only participate in Him. Yet behold, this participation is not meant to say that we can lay hands on a part of God. Participation has nothing to do with parts or shares in and of God. That would be contrary to the idea of his unity. A unity which in fact has a particular characteristic: though it is a unity and though it is one, it does not equal a number. Even more, it cannot be counted: *numerari non potest*, something underlining God's incomprehensibility. Therefore, it is impossible to explain how everything that can be numbered, our manifold reality, participates in the One and Only, what Augustine calls here: the *unius simplicis*. What therefore is remarkable in this passage is that Augustine uses an ordinary *topos* about God's incomprehensibility in order to link the notion of number to that of intelligence and its limits. That is the relation he tries to develop further. Not only God cannot be numbered, you can also say that his intelligence is without number: *intelligentiae eius non est numerus*, a wordplay with the words of *Psalm* 146.[10] But even then, he has not finished. After this quotation, Augustine proceeds and explains that everything in our reality can be counted and that is what numbers are for. But the number itself is absolutely uncountable: *numerari numerus nullo pacto potest*. So God is the One who cannot be numbered, whose intelligence has no number, but who is even the notion that cannot be ac-counted for. He is the *unus simplex*.[11] An argumentation built on three references to the notion of number.[12] And to be clear, this last striking phrase, *numerari numerus nullo pacto potest*, certainly recalls the Plotinian description of the One in *Enneads* VI 5,4: 'It is not counted at all'. Plotinus even added in *Enneads* VI 7,15 that the One, being not a number whilst it would be predicable, is offering from itself what it does not possess itself: the number. In the same tone of voice, Augustine continues, after having posited that the number itself cannot

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[8] *Enn. in Ps.* 146,11: *Magnus Dominus noster. Impletus est gaudio, eructauit ineffabiliter: nescio quid dicere non ualebat; et cogitare quomodo ualebat?*

[9] *Ibid.*: *Atque utinam infundat se uobis, et ubi nos deficimus, quia ipse potens est, ipse illustret mentes uestras, ut sciatis quid sit: intellegentiae eius non est numerus.*

[10] See Aug., *In Ioan. Eu.* Tr. 39,4.

[11] *Enn. In Ps.* 146,11: *Quis ergo explicat quomodo sint participes unius simplicis multi?*

[12] The text in which he explains this argument is a beautiful one: *Et intellegentiae eius non est numerus? Atque utinam infundat se vobis, et ubi nos deficimus, quia ipse potens est, ipse illustret mentes uestras, ut sciatis quid sit: intellegentiae eius non est numerus. Uidetis enim, fratres; numquid est numerus arenae? Nobis non est, deo est: cui capilli capitis nostri numerati sunt, et arena numerata est. Quidquid ergo infinitum mundus iste complectitur, etiamsi homini, non tamen deo: parum dico, deo; angelis numeratum est. Intellegentiae eius non est numerus. Excedit omnes numerarios intellegentia eius, numerari a nobis non potest. Ipsum numerum quis numerat? Numero numerantur quaecumque numerantur. Si quidquid numeratur, numero numeratur; numeri non potest esse numerus, numerari numerus nullo pacto potest.*

be numbered, saying: 'What then is next to Him, where does he make what he made, for it is said "that in measure, number and weight thou hast disposed"'.[13] An allusion on the divine Threeness, a number, which at the same time remains equal to the One that is no number: the One God is offering from Himself what he does not possess himself: the number.

So what we have is a passage about deification where Augustine is having himself inspired by the Neoplatonic definition of the One, not being a number (it cannot be counted at all) but being the principle of simplicity. In the words of Augustine: *unus simplex*. Secondly, that the phrase *intelligentiae eius non est numerus* recalls the Nous, because it understands the One who is not a number. Finally, the fact that Augustine does not speak of a creating God, but of the one God pouring Himself out in the multitude of mankind, seems at least to be a purely Neoplatonic vocabulary, not to say more.

What Augustine describes in this sermon, is not a kind of participation in which man and God share the same substance. No question of an ontology breaching the gulf between God and man. But no question neither of a divine grace raising man to the height of the infinite presence of the divine. No, God pours Himself out into mankind. So, what we see, is a sophisticated play on numbers, reality, substance and infinity, culminating in the conclusion that the number itself cannot be numbered. Hence, the ultimate reality outnumbers our intelligence, but at the same time it remains intimately linked to the world of numbers, who form the realm of our understanding. Yet, it would be simplifying to present this continuity in terms of an ontology. But it would also be a failure not to observe that this passage is at odds with the doctrine of grace. On the contrary, there seems to be no common ground between the theology of grace and this theology of numbers.

How does Augustine continue? Somewhat further in this sermon, he observes that men should remain within a certain similitude with God. I they do not, they ought to reform themselves. The word he uses is *reformare*. How can men reform themselves? By confessing and by doing good works.[14] These good works have to be looked after, because God also grants you to realize them, as human beings have been created in his image. This image must be a rational image, otherwise you cannot call upon God: *non nouit anima inuocare deum, nisi sola rationalis*. And: *rationale animal te deus fecit*.[15] So, *image* becomes a pivotal element in the process of deification. Can this notion help us to analyse further the continuity we observed between God and man without calling it a continuity in ontological terms?

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[13] *Enn. in Ps.* 146: *Quid ergo est apud deum, unde fecit omnia, et ubi fecit omnia, cui dicitur: omnia in mensura, et numero, et pondere disposuisti.*

[14] *Ibid.*: *Unde, inquit, reformabimur? quando reformabimur? Incipite Domino in confessione. Post confessionem quid? Sequantur bona opera.*

[15] *S.* 126, 2,3.

Discussing once again deification in another sermon, *Enn. in Ps*. 49, Augustine explains that men can have a similitude with God but no equality. For the one who deifies, can only be God by himself and not by participation. So even deified, we are not God's equals, we only resemble Him and our deification is realised by the grace of adoption, not by the nature of birth (*naturae generantis*). Here we seem to be back in the well-known scheme of deification functioning as an element in the doctrine of grace and insisting on the difference between God and men. Yet, again things might be more complicated. Indeed, there is no equality between man and God. But, as Augustine says in *De Trin*. X 12,19,[16] we have to ascend to that essence whose unequal image we are, yet image (*impar imago sed tamen imago*). So, there is a kind of twofold nature in the image: it is not what it reflects, yet it is. With another metaphor, *De Trin*. XIV 15,21: the signet ring leaves an image in the wax and yet it remains unchanged in the ring.[17] Again, the wax is not what it reflects, yet it is. The wax however, is vulnerable and can be damaged. Implying it has to be renewed. Surprisingly, in *De Trinitate* it is not only grace that is considered to be the renewing force. In XIV 8,11, he starts by saying that it is by the very quality of being God's image that the image is capable of participating in God[18] Apparently, a strong relation always subsists, even without grace. This idea culminates in XIV 14,20, where he writes 'the image of God is in itself so powerful that it is capable of cleaving to Him whose image it is'.[19] Again, the relation seems to be very strong, even without mentioning the element of grace. Yet, some lines later he seems to choose another tone of voice when he insists on the fact the image has to be reformed by its Creator. It is not able to reform itself in the same way as it realised its own deformation. So, here we have a relation that does not subsists without an intervening God. Well then, can either possibilities be true, on the one hand that we can reform ourselves and on the other that we have to be reformed?

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[16] *De Trin*. X 12,19: *Iamne igitur ascendendum est qualibuscumque intentionis uiribus ad illas summam et altissimam essentiam cuius impar imago est humana mens sed tamen imago?*

[17] *De Trin*. XIV 15,21: *Vbi ergo scriptae sunt, nisi in libro lucis illius quae ueritas dicitur unde omnis lex iusta describitur et in cor hominis qui operatur iustitiam non migrando sed tamquam imprimendo transfertur, sicut imago ex anulo et in ceram transit et anulum non relinquit?*

[18] *De Trin*. XIV 8,11: *Nunc uero ad eam iam peruenimus disputationem ubi principale mentis humanae quo nouit deum uel potest nosse considerandum suscepimus ut in eo reperiamus imaginem dei. Quamuis enim mens humana non sit eius naturae cuius est deus, imago tamen naturae illius qua natura melior nulla est ibi quaerenda et inuenienda est in nobis quo etiam natura nostra nihil habet melius. Sed prius mens in se ipsa consideranda est antequam sit particeps dei et in ea reperienda est imago eius. Diximus enim eam etsi amissa dei participatione obsoletam atque deformem dei tamen imaginem permanere. Eo quippe ipso imago eius est quo eius capax est eiusque esse particeps potest, quod tam magnum bonum nisi per hoc quod imago eius est non potest.*

[19] *De Trin*. XIV 14,20: *Qua in se imagine dei tam potens est ut ei cuius imago est ualeat inhaerere.*

I do think so, if we read in this same paragraph, *De Trinitate* XIV 16,22, that the image according to which we have to be reformed is none other than the image that created us.[20] The model and its reflection continue to be in a mutual relation. Augustine does not say that the reflection participates in a higher reality, he tries to make clear that it is the reflection that proves the existence, the presence and the truth of the model. If the reflection becomes more clear, then it is due to its model in a way. But it would be exaggerating to call this influence an element of grace. Rather it reminds us of the younger days of Augustine, when he wrote in the *Soliloquia* that a picture can only be true if that what it represents is false. What you see on a picture is not a true horse, but a false one.[21] Yet the image is true. The same goes for a mirror: if the man reflected in the mirror was not only an image and therefore false, it could not be a true image.

Conclusion, there is an inner dynamic in the notion of image that has little to do with the notion of grace. It rather is comparable to the notion of number, that cannot itself be numbered. Image cannot be imagined itself without depriving it from its own character: it would become an original instead of being an image. The image however, is the presence of the absent, it is the reflection making true the existence of the model, it is the shadow making visible the elusiveness of pure light. If that are the dynamics of image, they definitely are also the characteristics of deification. Deification would then be the restoration of the image, not only due to grace, to Christ, but mainly to be considered as a number finally reflecting in a perfect way the One that is no number.

I return to Hennesy. She warned us against oversimplifications. I would like to add that even in times when grace seems to have become the basic tenor of his thoughts, Augustine still is able to think about a multifaceted notion like deification in a purely Neoplatonic way. Deification was a nearly biblical term he could use rightly in order not to become imprisoned in the too rigid schemes of Pauline theology, in order to continue his own philosophical research.

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[20] *De Trin.* XIV 16,22: *Nolite conformari huic saeculo sed reformamini in nouitate mentis uestrae, ut incipiat illa imago ab illo reformari a quo formata est; non enim reformare se ipsam potest sicut potuit deformare.*

[21] *Sol.* II 10,18: *Quo pacto enim iste quem commemoraui, verus tragoedus esset, si nollet esse falsus Hector, falsa Andromache, falsus Hercules, et alia innumera? Aut unde uera pictura esset, si falsus equus non esset? Unde in speculo uera hominis imago, si non falsus homo?*

The Analogical Methodology of Plato's *Republic* and Augustine's *De trinitate*

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Abstract

This article argues that the analogical argument employed by Augustine in *De trinitate* (the soul-God analogy) is formally identical to the analogical argument employed by Plato in the *Republic* (the city-soul analogy). The similarities between these two analogies, however, have received insufficient attention in the secondary literature. My goal is to fill this lacuna. I first provide a summary of the analogical methodology of these two works, and I then proceed to translate these two analogies into one analogical argument form, showing that they are formally equivalent. I then differentiate these two analogies from other analogical arguments by focusing on their exploratory and programmatic character. This differentiation helps to capture the uniqueness of these two analogies, to understand their function, and, ultimately, to appreciate more fully the consonance between Augustine's methodology and Plato's.

Two of the greatest works to have come down to us from Greek and Latin literature – Plato's *Republic* and Augustine's *De trinitate*, respectively – employ an analogy in arguing for their thesis. I argue that there is a shocking number of similarities between these two analogies. But these similarities have been insufficiently discussed in the literature.[1] To rectify this oversight in the scholarship, this article compares Augustine's use of analogy in *De trinitate* (the soul-God analogy) to Plato's in the *Republic* (the city-soul analogy). After briefly summarizing the role of the city-soul analogy in Plato's *Republic* and the role of the soul-God analogy in Augustine's *De trinitate*, I will compare the two, showing that they are formally – *viz.*, logically – identical. I will then discuss the peculiar features of these analogies (or this one analogical form), attempting to show how they differ from standard, garden-variety analogies in their capacity to function as epistemic tools for inquiry, and also how they differ from standard

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[1] I have only come across one other discussion of the parallel between these two works, and it is quite brief: in *Person, Grace, and God* (Grand Rapids, 2007), Phillip A. Rolnick notes that Augustine's soul-God analogy in the second half of *De trinitate* is similar to Plato's city-soul analogy in *Republic* 368c-e (29). He then notes, without any justification, that Augustine knew the Republic 'well'. In contrast, I intend to give a formal, logical analysis of the similarity between the analogical methodologies of these works, and then to show how these analogies differ from standard analogies and other analogical arguments.

analogical arguments. This discussion helps in our understanding of Augustine's and Plato's methodology in these works, and provides a better understanding of the similarity between the two authors.

The city-soul analogy

The standard account of Plato's *Republic* tells of a well-ordered, three-class city ruled by illustrious philosopher kings who have undergone the rigorous training that qualifies them for rulership, despite none of them wanting to rule. But this standard account often forgets that Kallipolis, the beautiful city of Plato's *Republic*, is not an end in itself. Socrates does not construct this city in speech in order to demonstrate the best political institution, but to facilitate the understanding of justice in the soul, which is then used to argue for justice's advantage over injustice (368c-369c).[2] To get a better grasp of the city's role in understanding the soul, let us recap the main argument of the *Republic*.

After Socrates ostensibly refutes Thrasymachus' claim in Book 1 that it is better to be unjust than just, Glaucon remains unpersuaded by Socrates' argument (357a-b). Glaucon decides to restate Thrasymachus' thesis more forcefully, in the hopes that Socrates will then refute Glaucon's version. Accordingly, Glaucon proceeds to argue for injustice over against justice, claiming that the unjust person is happier than the just person (358b-367e). Once Glaucon's encomium of injustice is complete, Socrates remarks on the difficulty of responding and notes that first the nature of justice in the soul needs to be established, for what justice is is unclear (368c). Socrates likens the inquiry to someone being asked 'to read little letters from afar', when those same letters happen to be written elsewhere in a larger font, and suggests reading the larger letters instead of the smaller ones (368c-d).[3] These little letters represent the soul and the bigger letters represent the city. Since both city and man can be just, and since the city is bigger than one man, it is alleged that Socrates and his companions can use the letters of justice writ large on a city in order to understand, by way of analogy, the smaller letters of justice in the soul (368e-369a).[4]

So Socrates constructs a city in speech, Kallipolis, and then compares it to various other regimes.[5] Since Kallipolis and Tyranny are polar opposites *qua* justice (Kallipolis being the most just and Tyranny being the least just), they

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[2] I provide in-text citations of Plato's dialogues, following the Stephanus pagination, for ease of reference.

[3] Quotations follow Allan Bloom's translation (New York, 1991).

[4] See 434d-435b for another summary of the method.

[5] Kallipolis is constructed in Books 2-4 (Socrates says it has been 'founded' [using a perfect participle: ὠικισμένη], at 427d), and the regimes and their respective analogues are compared in Books 8-9.

are juxtaposed to find out which city is happier overall (576d-e). Unsurprisingly, Tyranny is said to be the most miserable city, while Kallipolis is said to be the happiest (578b).[6] Heeding the city-soul analogy, Socrates infers that the justly-ordered soul, which is analogous to Kallipolis, is happier and thus better than the unjustly-ordered soul, which is analogous to Tyranny (580c; 587b). Socrates has thus reached his conclusion: justice offers a greater advantage than injustice. Through the city-soul analogy, Socrates has persuaded his interlocutors of the nature and effects of justice in the soul, in order, finally, to refute injustice and redeem justice.

The soul-God analogy

The second half of *De trinitate* is concerned with coming to love God.[7] But how, Augustine asks, can one love what one does not know (8.6)? He quickly notes that something believed can be loved (8.6), but then questions whether God, specifically God as Trinity, can even be believed (8.8). The *sine qua non* of belief in a particular proposition seems to be some sort of prior intelligibility of the concepts employed therein (8.7-9). So the difference between possibly believing in a proposition about God and possibly believing in a proposition that uses ordinary concepts is that we already have some sort of prior knowledge of the latter with which to understand the proposition (8.7). Belief in the proposition 'England is cloudy', for instance, is possible because the concepts employed therein are intelligible: we have a prior conception of the concepts 'cloudy' and 'England'. In Augustine's words, we 'just know' what such things are (8.7). But with a proposition like 'God is Trinity', we have no prior framework with which to understand, for neither the concept of 'God' nor the

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[6] Though there is some correlation, note that the point is not that the tyrant of the Tyranny is more miserable than the philosopher king of Kallipolis, but that the Tyranny as a whole, which is analogous to an unjustly-ordered soul, is more miserable than Kallipolis as a whole, which is analogous to a justly-ordered soul. On the importance of this, see G.R.F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* (Chicago, 2003), esp. 85-109.

[7] Augustine seems to make this normative: 'We *should* seek the good of the soul', which is God; and, since seeking the good is loving the good, we *should* love God (8.4, my emphasis). Quotations of *De trinitate* follow Edmund Hill's translation (Augustine, *The Trinity*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A translation for the 21st Century [Hyde Park, 1991]). I elide the references to this work – such that 8.3.4 becomes 8.4 – and provide in-text citations for ease of reference. I think the implicit imperative to love God (and its corollary: to do whatever one must do to love God) can be construed as one of the main themes of *De trinitate*. As Mary T. Clark states, one of the 'three main objectives' of Augustine's writing of this work was 'to convince his readers that salvation and spiritual growth are connected with knowing themselves as images of the Triune God, from whom they came and toward whom they go, with a dynamic tendency to union realized by likeness to God who is Love' ('*De Trinitate*', in Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann [eds], *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* [New York, 2001], 91-102, 91).

concept of 'triune-ness' is immediately pellucid. It is fairly simple, of course, to conceive of the concept 'trinity',[8] but the Trinitarian God is no ordinary trinity (8.8). What we are looking for here, rather, is Triunity – a consubstantial Trinity. So 'from what likeness or comparison of things known to us', Augustine asks, are we 'able to believe, so that we may love the as yet unknown God' (8.8)? This will be a dominant theme throughout the second half of *De trinitate*: finding a proper 'likeness' through which to understand what triunity is, and whether it is possible. But what likeness is appropriate for such a task?

Augustine finds an answer in *Gen.* 1:26-7: 'Let *us* make man according to *our* image and likeness … And *God* made the man according to *his* image'.[9] Most of his predecessors thought that the plural possessive pronoun referred to one of two things: either (1) the Father and the Son *or* (2) the Father and the angelic beings who helped to bring about God's decree.[10] But Augustine diverges from tradition and interprets the pluralized language to mean that the human soul, or the highest part of it, is made in the image of the Triune God (12; 14.25). It seems, then, that Augustine has found the appropriate likeness through which to inquire into triunity. This has striking implications for Augustine's psychological and theological epistemology: like Plato's Kallipolis, the soul's triune likeness to the Triune God becomes the epistemic means to analogical understanding of the Triune God (14; 15.3).[11] Thus, after establishing

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[8] That trinity, Augustine says, can be understood simply 'by flashing three fingers' (8.8).

[9] Though *Gen.* 1:26-7 is not thoroughly analyzed until Book 12, and not given its full treatment until Book 14, the second half of *De trinitate* (Books 8 and 9-15) seems to revolve around it. Notice how Augustine mentions the image twice in Book 7 (7.5 and 7.12) and then devotes Book 8 to 'turning within' (see T. Hill's 'Introduction', 25-6 and 55-6, as well as his 'Introductory Essay on Book VIII', 237-40, in *The Trinity* [1991], for a discussion of Book 8's pivotal role in moving the discussion of *De trinitate* inward. Also see Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De trinitate* [New York, 2008], 276, for the insight that the image of God 'encapsulates' Book 8, as it is mentioned in 7.12 and 9.2). Books 9-11, the so-called psychological books, seek to find various mental trinities in order to locate the one most similar to the Triune God. The *target* of the inquiry (the Triune God) is established at 9.1, and the *source* through which analogical knowledge of the target is to be acquired is established at 9.2. These oddly placed analyses of *Gen.* 1:26-7 and the methodological interpretations of *Rom.* 1:20 and 1*Cor.* 13:12 (mainly in Books 13-5) adduced in support of them seem to be the justification for the reflexivity of the inquiry begun in Books 8 and 9. We can perhaps explain the lack of order by noting that Augustine never got a chance to edit this book, feeling compelled precipitously to finish and publish it in its entirety after the first twelve books were stolen and published without Augustine's knowledge (see the 'Prefatory Letter', in T. Hill, *The Trinity* [1991], 63). See M. Clark, '*De Trinitate*' (2001), 92, for Augustine's claim that the theft impeded his revision of earlier chapters (she cites *Letter* 11). I suspect we would have a leaner and better-ordered text if Augustine had had the chance to edit it.

[10] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, The Christian Tradtion: A History of the Development of Doctrine 1 (Chicago, 1971), 197.

[11] Compare Augustine and Plato on this point: The image 'is likely to be easier' and 'more familiar for our mind … to examine' than the actual triune God (9.2). 'So then, perhaps there would be more justice in the bigger and it would be easier to observe closely. If you want, first

the likeness of God and soul – because the latter is made in the image of the former – Augustine proceeds to examine the quality of triunity in the soul, in order to glean insight into the Triunity of God: 'We lingered over the creature which we ourselves are from the ninth to the fourteenth book in order to descry if we could the invisible things of God by understanding them through those that have been made' (15.10).[12] He finds, after numerous investigations, that it is possible to conceive of a triunity of the mind (*mens*) in its remembering, willing, and thinking of itself. For, in order to conceive of oneself, one must desire to conceive of oneself, and oneself must be present in one's memory to be conceived. That is, in reflexive thought one's understanding is turned towards the image of oneself in one's memory, and one's will to understand oneself mediates this noetic action (14.9-14). But this all takes place in *mens*: one substance, if you will, functioning in three capacities. Three, here, so long as one is actively thinking of oneself, *is* one.

Though Augustine later notes several dissimilarities between this and the Triunity of God (*e.g.* 15.39),[13] the analogy has nevertheless fulfilled its task.[14] Through his soul-God analogy, Augustine inquired into the possibility of triunity (15.45, 49-50). It was thus established that the triunity necessary to believe in God is possible, making God's Triunity possible, which thus makes the belief necessary to love the Triune God possible (15.5).[15]

The logic of the analogies

Clearly there are some similarities between the two analogies. To formalize my discussion of this similarity, allow me to introduce some terminology used in contemporary philosophical discussions of analogies.[16] Let the term 'target

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we'll investigate what justice is like in the cities. Then, we'll also go on to consider it in individuals, considering the likeness of the bigger in the *idea* of the littler' (368e-369a). Like Plato, Augustine's examination of the Triune God starts with an examination of the triune soul *because* the triune soul is made in the image of the Triune God.

[12] He appeals to *Rom.* 1:20 here.

[13] Namely, that triunity is a quality *in* the mind, while Triunity *is* God, and God is Triune always, whereas *mens* is triune only when it is actively conceiving of itself. For further discussion, see Book 15.

[14] M. Clark, '*De Trinitate*' (2001), 99.

[15] Augustine's summary in Book 15 of the main points of his inquiry in Books 8-14 seems to confirm that one of the motivations for the inquiry was to understand triunity, in order that we can believe in the possibility of, and thus love, the Triune God: 'Then I urged that an effort should be made to understand the nature … and here at last our minds began to perceive some kind of trinity or trio' (15.5).

[16] This section has profited from my reading of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*'s article on analogies (Paul Bartha, 'Analogy and Analogical Reasoning', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Fall 2013 Edition], ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/reasoning-analogy/>).

domain' refer a domain about which one is inquiring, and let the term 'source domain' refer to the domain through which one hopes to acquire analogical knowledge of the target domain. For example, suppose that a plumber, before building a new plumbing system designed for a 25,000 square foot apartment complex, constructs a PVC model of that system at 1:500 scale, in order to ascertain the structural soundness of the system. This PVC model is a source domain through which the plumber hopes to acquire knowledge about some quality – structural soundness – in the target domain.[17]

Applying this to Augustine's *De trinitate* and Plato's *Republic*, it seems clear that both authors seek a particular quality in a target domain. For Augustine seeks to learn more about the Triunity of God (and whether triunity is possible) and Plato seeks to learn more about justice in the soul (and whether it makes one happier than injustice). They then claim that there is another domain, a source, that happens to bear the likeness of the target domain. Based on the likeness between source and target domains, Augustine and Plato both suggest that the target's unclear quality may have a clearer analogue in the source. They thus suggest that an inquiry into the analogous quality in the source might be sufficient to learn something about the sought quality in the target.

If we translate this methodology into the propositions of an argument, we can easily see that both analogical procedures take the following form:

(1) There is an unclear quality in a target domain, about which the author is seeking knowledge.
(2) There is a source domain that bears the likeness of the target domain.
(3) Qualities are more easily discerned in source domains than they are in the target   domains.
(4) Any quality in a target domain likely has an analogue in its corresponding source domain.[18]
(5) The unclear quality that the author is seeking in the target domain thus likely has a clearer analogue in the source domain.
(∴) Therefore: Examining the clearer quality in the source domain may help the author to understand its unclear analogue in the target domain.

This argumentative form applies equally to the *Republic* and *De trinitate*: the analogical methodology of Plato's *Republic* and Augustine's *De trinitate* is formally identical.

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[17] This example comes from P. Batha, 'Analogy and Analogical Reasoning'.

[18] This is an assumption that both authors are skeptical of, and each question it to varying degrees (see Plato, *Republic*, 368d, 427e, though he hardly emphasizes the limits of the analogy like Augustine does in Books 14 and 15 of *De trinitate*). The underlying thought seems to be that the source would no longer be *like* the target if a sufficient number of the target's qualities failed to obtain in the source. Nevertheless, both inquiries proceed as if they were in fact the same (until Books 14 and 15 in *De trinitate*, where the dissimilarities are discussed).

One might object that the above represents all analogical arguments, and thus that, while it is true that Augustine and Plato use a formally identical analogy, all analogical arguments are formally identical, and thus the similarity between the two is trivial. I would respond that there are several features that Plato's and Augustine's analogies share that differentiate them from standard analogical arguments. In short, unlike other analogical arguments, Augustine's and Plato's are *exploratory* analogies that take a *programmatic* form.

By 'exploratory', I mean that the nuances of the targeted quality are not already known. This is represented by premise (1)'s interest in an *unclear* quality in the target domain. This helps to distinguish the argument from what is typically called a 'heuristic analogy', an analogy that seeks to answer a question.[19] For there is an important difference between Augustine's and Plato's analogies on the one hand, and the heuristic analogy of the plumber offered above on the other. The plumber examines the source domain to see *whether* it contains a particular quality: the inquiry begins with a known or clear quality (structural soundness), but it is unknown whether or not that quality obtains in the target domain. By contrast, Augustine and Plato begin with an *unclear* quality and seek to learn more about it. Heuristic analogies thus have different purposes than those of Augustine and Plato, who seek to learn what the target quality is *like*.[20]

The next differentiating factor, I think, is what is partially responsible for the unique character of these works. A programmatic analogy is an analogy that helps to shape a discipline, or to guide a particular inquiry. Thus, Augustine's and Plato's analogies seem programmatic insofar as they take on a life of their own, guiding the inquiry from book to book – as if the analogy itself, and not the author, is in control of what comes next.[21]

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[19] What I am calling an 'exploratory analogy' is a subset of a heuristic analogy, for it too seeks to answer a question. However, the differentiating features of exploratory analogies help to distinguish Augustine's and Plato's analogies from standard forms of analogical arguments.

[20] Augustine, of course, is also seeking to learn whether Triunity is possible, which would make his inquiry partially heuristic, but he seems clearly also to be inquiring into the nature of triunity, which, obviously, is not clearly known.

[21] For example, both Augustine and Plato devote considerable time to finding the proper source through which to approach their target (Augustine in Books 9-11 and Plato in Book 2). They decide to use an analogy, but then need to find the proper analogue of the target domain. This quest for an analogue, for a source domain, leads Plato to discuss the City of Pigs and the City of Luxury in Book 2, and Augustine's quest for a proper analogue leads him to consider a potential trinity of Love in Books 8 and 9. Further, since the city has classes, Socrates and his companions need to think about what those classes are analogous to (eventually settling on parts of the soul [*Republic*, 434-5]), while Augustine, after finding the procession of an inner word in the human soul, wonders if it might be partially analogous to the procession of the Word proper (*De trinitate*, 15.21-6, esp. 15. 22).

Conclusion

Augustine's *De trinitate* and Plato's *Republic* are two of the most famous and important works of Latin and Greek literature. They have shaped theological and philosophical discussions ever since they were written. Both works, famously, use an analogy in arguing for their thesis. I have argued that these analogies are profoundly similar – indeed, that they are formally identical. I have also attempted to articulate what it is about these analogies that makes them unique: how, that is to say, they differ from other analogical argument forms. Though this similarity between the two works may be coincidental, it would be interesting to consider whether Augustine had access to Plato's city-soul analogy through an intermediary source, perhaps Cicero's *De re publica* or a commentary on one of Plato's works.[22] But that would require another paper. Here I hope only to have articulated what it is about these analogies that distinguishes them from other analogical arguments, and what it is that makes them so similar to each other.

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[22] When I presented this paper at the 17th International Conference on Patristic Studies at Oxford, I devoted a section to Cicero's potential role as an intermediary source for Augustine's knowledge of this analogy. Although no extant section of Cicero's *De re publica* appears to contain a discussion of the city-soul analogy, there are several fragments that suggest a context germane to such a discussion. I am not sure whether there is enough evidence to support this claim, and I do not have the space here to substantiate it further. I thus leave the possibility open, and hope to return to it again in another paper.

Maximus Confessor

Maximus the Confessor and Constans II:
A Punishment Fit for an Unruly Monk

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ABSTRACT

Byzantium experienced a major crisis in the seventh-century AD; they were losing significant territories to Arabic forces and Christian followers to Islam. Moreover, Emperor Constans II (r. 641-668) was being opposed within his own empire regarding Christological issues from Pope Martin (r. 649-655) and Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662), who defied his *Typos* and attended the 649 Lateran Council. Thus, both men were exiled and punished as a result of their unruly nature. In this article, I compare the two trials of Martin and Maximus, showing that Maximus' unprecedented three exiles and amputations were more than a reflection of the seventh-century crisis. I argue that Maximus' punishment was not just a reflection of his time, but that Constans II exercised his religious authority in punishing Maximus, who called his divine nature into question. Maximus was sent into exile three times, which alluded to a return to the desert, just like Saint Anthony and Athanasius earlier. Scholars argue that Pope Martin's punishment was made a public spectacle; similarly, I argue that Constans II tailored Maximus' punishment to correct the 'unruly' monk following both secular and monastics laws.

From 655 AD until his death in 662, Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662) was tried twice and exiled for his Christological position.[1] He advocated dyothelitism, which emphasizes two wills and two natures in Christ; this stance contradicted the position the emperor, and the Church, held in monothelitism, one will in Christ.[2] Maximus gained Mediterranean fame for his position in his public debates with prominent figures, such as the ex-Patriarch Phyrrhus of Constantinople (r. 638-641), who declared that Maximus won, and in Pope Martin's (r. 649-655) convening of the 649 Lateran Council, where they condemned

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[1] George Berthold, *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings* (Mahwah, 1985), 5-7. Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 1996), 3-6.

[2] Adam Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Oxford, 2005), 10-7. Lars Thunberg and A. Allchin, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 1995), 95-101. Thomas A. Watts, 'Two wills in Christ?: Contemporary objections considered in the light of a critical examination of Maximus the Confessor's Disputation with Pyrrhus', *The Westminster Theological Journal* 71 (2009), 455-87.

monothelitism.[3] The 649 Council created huge waves, since this directly rejected Emperor Constans II's imperial decree in the *Typos*, which specifically stated that no one should debate Christology in the empire lest one would suffer a heavy secular punishment.[4] In 653 Pope Martin was arrested in Rome and brought to Constantinople for trial.[5] Maximus followed suit in 655 AD.[6] Although the two were put on trial for similar accusations of treason, Martin and Maximus had very different punishments and their authors depicted them rather differently.

Scholarship on Maximus the Confessor has recently exploded concerning his theology and interactions within the Church and State. For example, Allen and Neil provided the first translation of Maximus' *Letters from Exile* in 2002, which discusses in detail his trials and punishments.[7] Booth in 2014 has superbly shown how Maximus, with others like Sophronius and Moschus, helped redefine the role of the holy man in the seventh century and where the Church fit into the Empire.[8] According to Booth, these seventh-century monks were a major reason why theological reforms occurred, which were linked to sacramental theology. Others, such as Haldon, have contextualized Maximus, showing how politically linked his punishments were given the seventh-century crisis.[9]

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[3] Marcel Doucet, *Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus: Introduction, texte critique, traduction, et notes*, PhD Dissertation, 1972. Maximus also wrote his *Theological and Polemical Opuscula* from 626-649, which also would have promoted his cause and caused tension with the Emperor and Patriarch.

[4] Richard Price (trans.), *The Acts of the Latern Synod of 649* (Liverpool, 2014). Also, see Alexandros Alexakis, 'Before the Lateran Council of 649: the last days of Emperor Herakleios and Monotheletism', *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum 27* (1995/96), 93-101. P. Conte, *Il Synodo Lateranense dell'ottobre 649: Collezione Teologica 3* (Vatican, 1989). Also, see Johannes Borjesson, 'Maximus the Confessor's knowledge of Augustine: an exploration of evidence derived from the acta of the Lateran Council of 649', *SP* 68 (2013), 325-36. Adam Cooper, 'St. Maximus the Confessor on priesthood, hierarchy, and Rome', *Pro Ecclesia* 10 (2001), 346-67.

[5] Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius the Librarian* (Turnhout, 2007), 73. Also, see Jean-Claude Larchet and Emmanuel Ponsoye (trans.), *Maxime le Confesseur: Lettres* (Paris, 1998).

[6] Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (trans.), *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford, 2002).

[7] For Maximus in Exile, P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002). Also, John F. Haldon, 'Ideology and the Byzantine State in the seventh century and "trial" of Maximus Confessor', in *Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th International Eirene Conference* (Praha, 1985), 87-91. Also, see Pauline Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy: The Synodical Letter and other Documents* (Oxford, 2009). For *Vita Maximi,* see PG 90, 104D-105C.

[8] Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2014). Also, see Maximus, *Mystagogia* PG 91, 658-719, where Maximus also does not recognize the Emperor's divine role in the Byzantine Liturgy. For earlier scholarship on the role of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, see Peter Brown, 'The rise and function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80-101.

[9] J. Haldon, 'Ideology of the Byzantine State' (1985), 87-91. Also, John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1997), 324-9.

Finally, the new *Oxford Handbook on Maximus the Confessor*, among other things, provides a new chronology for his life.[10]

In this article, in a manner similar to Booth and Haldon, I will argue that Maximus the Confessor's punishments reflect the contemporary seventh-century crisis between Church and Empire. I will build upon their arguments and other scholarship by fleshing out what the *Letters from Exile* tell us about the roles of monks in the seventh century as seen in Maximus' situation. As the *Letters from Exile* were written from the Orthodox, or rather dyothelite, perspective, an analysis of this account will demonstrate how they viewed Maximus and Constans II. In the process, I will argue that Constans II, from the Orthodox perspective, was seen as tailoring his punishments to correct the 'unruly monk' by imposing his religious authority on him, which gave the author the opportunity to showcase Maximus' monastic virtues.[11] This view differs from how Pope Martin's suffering was depicted, as mirroring the Passion of Jesus Christ. I will flesh out where the *Letters from Exile* show what acting like a monk meant and where the narrator highlights how Maximus' situation was different than others.

Pope Martin

First, to contextualize Maximus' trials and punishments, I will briefly discuss Pope Martin's situation, which will highlight the differences in the religious themes their narrators' utilized. Scholars have argued that Constans II made Martin's trial a public spectacle.[12] First, Pope Martin was arrested in Rome under Constans II's command, imitating Jesus' arrest before his disciples. Then, Martin was taken to Constantinople, where he was put on trial. Martin was brought to the Hippodrome, where like Jesus before Pilate, Martin pleaded

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[10] Mark Jankowiak and Phil Booth, 'A new date-list of the Works of Maximus the Confessor', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook on Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 19-83.

[11] For past scholarship of the early monastic movement and 'unruly' monks, see Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* (Berkeley, 2002); Also, see Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and a Heretic* (Oxford, 2004), appendix. Also, although Maximus the Confessor is referred to as '*abba*' in the 649 Lateran Council, there is no other evidence suggesting that he was in fact an abbot, since this title was used generally to show respect to spiritual fathers as well, as in this case. Thus, in following Andrew Louth's interpretation of abba, I will treat Maximus as a monk here and not an abbot.

[12] Bronwen Neil, 'Commemorating Pope Martin I: his trial in Constantinople', *SP* 39 (2006), 77-82. Also, see Bronwen Neil, 'From *tristia* to *guadia*: the exile and martyrdom of Pope Marin I', in Johan Leemans (ed.), *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity: Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter* (Leuven, 2010), 179-94. Also, see Richard Price (trans.), *The Acts of the Lateran Synod of 649* (Liverpool, 2014). Also, see *Narrationes de exilio sancti Martini* BHL 5592. Also, see B. Neil, 'Commemorating Pope Martin I' (2006).

his case before Constans II. Next, Martin was found guilty of treason and was paraded down the streets of Constantinople in chains with the executioner walking before him – detailed imagery that mirrors the Passion of Christ.[13] Finally, in a very dramatic and pre-determined fashion, the Patriarch Paul II (r. 642-653) pleaded for Martin's life at the very last second before the possible deathly blow. Paul II then abated Martin's punishment to exile instead of execution.

Although the imagery of imitating Jesus' Passion is common in Christian literature, the actual events are authentic as told to us from the contemporary biographer. As scholars argue, if Martin's trial was a public spectacle, then this demonstrates that the emperor and his patriarch were working together in punishing Martin, since they both had a role in the execution scene.[14] Moreover, other dyothelite advocates before Martin were exiled to Chersonesus, which further demonstrates the customizing in this case. This example clearly demonstrates how the narrator of Pope Martin's *Life* employed imagery of Jesus' Passion to discuss the bishop of Rome's trial. Moreover, the author also used the image of the wicked Pontius Pilate in depicting Emperor Constans II. Similarly, I argue the narrator of Maximus' *Letters from Exile* utilized monastic virtues in discussing his trial and punishments.

Maximus' trial and punishment

The first evidence the account demonstrates about the seventh-century role of monks is seen as Maximus docked at Constantinople. Upon arriving in Constantinople, ten imperial guards escorted him from his boat to the palace, completely stripped of his clothes, shoes, and material possessions (mostly books).[15] This scene immediately sets the tone of treatment of Maximus the Confessor with humility. In stripping the monk of all his possessions, Constans II and Paul II were depicted working on two levels. First, they removed all his 'heretical' dyothelite evidence, which Constans II and Paul II tried to suppress in the *Typos*. Second, early monastic rules, such as *Saint Basil's Rule*, which these monks followed, does not allow monks to own personal possessions, which these items are.[16] Thus, this is an early example of the emperor imposing his religious authority over these 'unruly' monks. A good monk was humble and pious, and knew his place in society and only owned things communally.[17]

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[13] B. Neil, 'Commemorating Pope Martin I' (2006), 81-2.

[14] *Ibid.* 77-9.

[15] P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 49.

[16] Basil the Great, *Asketikon 8*-9. See Anna Silvas (trans.), *The Asketikon of St. Basil the Great* (Oxford, 2005), 186-92.

[17] D. Caner, *Wander, Begging Monks* (2002), 243-8.

The next piece of evidence is discussed in the *Relatio motionis*, the record of the trial, which also demonstrates what acting like a monk meant. In section five, Anastasius, Maximus' long-time disciple, was brought into the courthouse for questioning before the Senate.[18] A senator asked Anastasius, if Maximus denounced Pyrrhus, the prior Patriarch, and Anastasius answered softly: 'Nobody honored Pyrrhus as my superior did'.[19] Anastasius was ordered to speak up in his response but did not, 'and because he didn't consent to be deprived of the respectful way of talking that is fitting for monks, he [Emperor] ordered him to be beaten by those standing by; and by punching him they rendered him half-dead'.[20]

This passage shows Constans II punishing Anastasius for not speaking like a monk. Anastasius was disobedient and did not listen to his superiors as he should have, so Constans II ordered that he be punished. However, this violence was not what contemporary Church regulations stated. According to the 451 Council of Chalcedon, monks were subordinated to bishops, not to the emperor *per se*.[21] Moreover, monastic rules, such as *Saint Basil's Rule*, states that monastic superiors should correct their own unruly monks and abbots, which the emperor and the patriarch did not follow either.[22] As his religious authority was disrespected and later called into question, so too did he have to punish these monks to impose his spiritual power. Yet, again and again, these monks maintained their monastic humility and patience in undertaking these beatings.[23]

Violence similarly results in Maximus' testimony. He was first accused of grand treason, which he successfully defended.[24] In fact, this charge was never mentioned again in the trial records. Then, Maximus was asked if he considered the Emperor a priest and he responded saying:

No, he isn't, because he neither stands beside the altar, or after the consecration of the bread elevates it with the word: '*Holy things for the holy*'; nor does he baptize, nor

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[18] P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 59-61.

[19] *Ibid.* 58-9: ... ἀπεκρίνατο ἠρεμαίᾳ τῇ φωνῇ τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ὅτι 'Οὐδεὶς ἐτίμησεν Πύρρον ὡς ἐτίμησεν ὁ ἐπιστάτης μου.

[20] *Ibid.* 59: Καὶ κελεύεται κράξαι. Καὶ ἐπειδὴ οὐ κατεδέξατο τῆς πρεπούσης μοναχοῖς εὐλαβοῦς φωνῆς ξενωθῆναι, κελεύει τυπτηθῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν παρεστώτων· καὶ πυγμαῖς αὐτὸν βαλόντες, ἡμιθανῆ πεποιήκασιν.

[21] 451 Ecumenical Council, *Canon* IV: Τοὺς δὲ καθ' ἑκάστην πόλιν καὶ χώραν μονάζοντας, ὑποτετάχθαι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, καὶ τὴν ἡσυχίαν ἀσπάζεσθαι, καὶ προσέχειν μόνῃ τῇ νηστείᾳ καὶ τῇ προσευχῇ, ἐν οἷς τόποις ἀπετάξαντο προσκαρτεροῦντας· μήτε δὲ ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς μήτε βιωτικοῖς παρενοχλεῖν πράγμασιν, ἢ ἐπικοινωνεῖν, καταλιμπάνοντες τὰ ἴδια μοναστήρια, εἰ μήποτε ἄρα ἐπιτραπεῖεν διὰ χρείαν ἀναγκαίαν ὑπὸ τοῦ τῆς πόλεως ἐπισκόπου.

[22] Basil the Great, *Asketikon* 27-8; A. Silvas, *The Asketikon* (2005), 228-30.

[23] Basil the Great's *Asketikon* similarly discusses themes of self-control, humility, and patience in rules such as 13, 16, 17, 19, and 41.

[24] The accusations for betraying Egypt, Alexandria, Pentapolis, Tripolis, and Africa to the Saracens; P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 48-9.

perform the rite of anointing, nor does he ordain and make bishops and presbyters and deacons; nor does he anoint churches, nor does he wear the symbols of priesthood, the pallium and the Gospel book, as [he wears the symbols] of imperial office, the crown and purple.[25]

Thus, in challenging the emperor's divine and religious role, Maximus was physically punished in the courthouse. In following the 451 Chalcedon canons and *Saint Basil's Rule*, Maximus was punished for not responding as a monk should, since he challenged his superiors.[26] Of all of Maximus' answers, according to the Orthodox narrator, this angered the senators and emperor the most, as it was his only response that resulted in violence in the first trial. Thus, in accusing the emperor of not having religious authority in the Church, the emperor and the patriarch were seen as trying to reform Maximus with punishments that asserted their spiritual authority.

Further evidence that suggests that the emperor was interested in imposing his religious authority over Maximus is seen in his debates with Theodosius.[27] As scholarship has shown, the Emperor and the Patriarch wanted to win Maximus over to their side.[28] Thus, Maximus was asked in his debates with Theodosius and in his second trial if he would recant and repent. The goal of the debates was to see if Maximus would commune with the See of Constantinople, which equates to accepting the religious authority of the Patriarch and the Emperor – as opposed to asking if he would participate with the See of Rome or the Church overall.[29] As this was the main question that his accusers asked him in his debates and second trial, it is apparent that these exiles were meant to reform his theological differences. Again, for not acting like a monk in submitting to his superior, Maximus was beaten by his interrogator, Theodosius.[30] Here, Theodosius admits that canonical matters are settled differently, meaning without the aid of monks. In fact, in this debate with Theodosius, in Maximus' own words, he compares his suffering to Job and Joseph, again highlighting his

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[25] *Ibid*. 56-7: Οὐκ ἔστι πᾶς βασιλεὺς Χριστιανὸς καὶ ἱερεύς; Καί εἶπας, Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ γὰρ παρίσταται θυσιαστηρίῳ, καὶ μετὰ τὸν ἁγιασμὸν τοῦ ἅπτου ὑψοῖ αὐτὸν λέγων, Τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις. Οὔτε βαπτίζει, οὔτε μύρου τελετὴν ἐπιτελεῖ, οὔτε χειροθετεῖ, καὶ ποιεῖ ἐπισκό-πους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ διακόνους, οὔτε χρίει ναούς, οὔτε τὰ σύμβολα τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐπιφέρεται, τὸ ὠμοφόριον καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ὥσπερ τῆς βασιλείας, τὸν στέφανον καὶ τὴν ἁλουργίδα.

[26] 451 Council of Chalcedon, *Canon* IV; Basil the Great, *Asketikon*.

[27] P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 76-119.

[28] B. Neil, 'Commemorating Pope Martin I' (2006), 77.

[29] P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 80-1: Θεοδό-σιος· Παρακαλεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης δι᾽ ἡμῶν μαθεῖν παρὰ σοῦ, διὰ ποίαν αἰτίαν οὐ κοινωνεῖς τῷ θρόνῳ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.

[30] *Ibid*. 110-1: Καὶ ἀναστὰς ὁ ἐπίσκοπος εἶπεν· 'Οὕτως οὐκ ἔδει γενέσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι μόνον παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀπόκρισιν, καὶ εἰσελθεῖν καὶ ἀναγγεῖλαι τῷ δεσπότῃ ἡμῶν τῷ ἀγαθῷ. Τὰ γὰρ κανονικὰ πράγματα ἑτέρῳ διοικοῦνται τρόπῳ'.

perseverance. He also compares Constans II to Satan, which is different from Martin's trial, since Constans II was seen as Pontus Pilate.

And finally, one cannot discuss Maximus the Confessor's punishment without mentioning his amputated 'blasphemous' tongue and hands. In the final trial for not recanting and repenting, Maximus' hands and tongue were cut off for being blasphemous.[31] The humility imposed on him in being tortured and being paraded around the twelve sections of the city demonstrates the political message the emperor wished to portray regarding those who rejected his spiritual authority.[32] Again, as exile was seen as the severest acceptable punishment for a high-ranking Church official, these mutilations were personalized for Maximus and his companions as they were beyond the norm.

Maximus the Confessor's exiles

Maximus's exiles also highlight Constans II's attempt to elicit monastic virtues and subordination in the unruly monk. Here, as I will demonstrate, the author emphasizes how unique these exiles were in discussing their conditions, which reflect monastic themes and virtues.

After the first trial, Maximus and his companions were sent into exile.[33] Naturally, exile has a long tradition in the Church. Exile was the severest acceptable punishments that a Church leader could impose on another high-ranking Christian figure without seeming tyrannical.[34] For example, famous individuals, such as Athanasius (d. 373) and Nestorius (d. c. 450), were exiled for their theological positions.[35] However, Maximus' exiles were different.

The narrator emphasizes that Maximus was led into forced exile, being fully accompanied by military units.[36] Moreover, Maximus, instead of being sentenced to live in another monastery in exile, like Nestorius, was kept in military cells in fortresses and camp prisons. He was forced to walk with the pace of

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[31] *Ibid.* 118-9: βλάσφημος.

[32] For other mutilations in Byzantium, see Cyril Mango (trans.), *Nicephorus* (Washington, D.C., 1990), 73; Also, see Marcus Rautman, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire* (New York, 2006), 30-1.

[33] Although penitential pilgrimages were used in the late antique and medieval periods, Maximus the Confessor's is much different, which this section will discuss. For penitential pilgrimages, see Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700-1500* (Basingstoke, 2002), 44-77. Also, see John Ure, *Pilgrimage: The Great Adventure of the Middle Ages* (New York, 2006), 5-16.

[34] Eric Fournier, 'Exiled bishops in the Christian Empire: victims of imperial violence?', in Harold A. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (Aldershot, 2006), 157-66. Fournier on 160 states: 'Exile was the most severe punishment to which a Christian emperor could sentence a bishop, without appearing as a persecutor to other bishops'.

[35] See S. Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria* (2004), 296-300. Also, see David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore, 1998), 1-17.

[36] P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 72-3.

the army, being exiled to wherever they were going. Also, Maximus and his two disciples were constantly separated in imprisonment and in exile; they were separated to think about their actions. Monastic rules, like *Saint Basil's Rule*, demonstrates that one must deal with wickedness and vices by assigning a remedy for it, such as separating murmurers in this case.[37] The desert fathers, such as Evagrius (d. 399) and Pachomius (d. 348), provided similar remedies for vices for their loquacious monks.[38] These forced exiles with the army and military confinement are also very different than contemporary exiles in highlighting Maximus' tailored punishment.

In contextualizing these exiles, one can also see how unique Maximus' living conditions were. For example*, Justinian's Novels* states that monastic imprisonment could be used as a means to punish the upper-echelon and high-profile criminals, which Pope Martin and Maximus clearly were.[39] In this type of sentence, criminals would live the rest of their lives in a monastic community, following the order's practices.[40] However, this approach would not work for Maximus. Throughout his life, Maximus lived in monasteries, which resulted in their current situation.[41] Moreover, monastic imprisonment could potentially give Maximus access to a library and scriptorium, which undoubtedly could cause more debates and issues if he continued to promote his theological position. So, Constans II and Paul could not use this model.

Instead, they kept a watchful eye on Maximus and his two disciples, forcing exile on them in the form of accompanying a military march.[42] Moreover, their monastic cells were turned into solitary military ones, which would allow them to reflect on their demons and vices. This imagery mirrors the *Life of Anthony*, as he spent years living in an abandoned military fort to fight his demons.[43] The travel of over 200 kilometers would also have been difficult on Maximus for he was older than 65 at the time, far beyond the general travelling demographic;[44] this onerous travel also highlights Maximus' perseverance and humility. Therefore, in discussing and contextualizing Maximus' exiles, it is apparent that they were customized so that the emperor could assert his religious authority over Maximus.

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[37] Basil the Great, *Asketikon* 29 and 6-7; A. Silvas, *The Asketikon* (2005), 230-1 and 178-86.

[38] See Evagrius, *Praktikos* and Pachomius, *Rule of Pachomius*.

[39] Julia Hilner, 'Monastic imprisonment in Justinian's Novels', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007), 205-37. Also, see Susan Wessel, 'The formation of Ecclesiastical Law in the early Church', in Wilfred Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington (eds), *The History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law to 1500* (Washington, D.C., 2012).

[40] J. Hilner, 'Monastic imprisonment in Justinian's Novels' (2007), 205-7.

[41] A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (1996), 11-2.

[42] P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (2002), 72-3.

[43] Athanasius, *Life of Anthony* 12-4.

[44] Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy* (Cambridge, 2001), 166-8; Mark Handley, *Dying on Foreign Shores: Travel and Mobility in the Late-Antique West* (London, 2011), 37-49; also see Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (London, 2000).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have discussed the seventh-century roles of monks as seen in Maximus' *Letters from Exile*. As seen in his trials, Maximus was beaten several times for not acting like a monk. Moreover, his exiles were unique and customized compared to other contemporary and historical Church exiles, given the political atmosphere.

As opposed to Pope Martin's *Life,* the themes from *Letters from Exile* reflect the differing tiers or levels of imagery; for example, in connecting the Pope's suffering to Jesus as opposed to Maximus' with monastic virtues. In depicting Maximus's suffering to monastic virtues, the narrator demonstrates how Maximus peacefully and humbly stood up against the emperor. Although the *Letters from Exile* showed that the Emperor viewed Maximus as 'unruly', which justified his punishments in the former's eyes, the monastic themes overall paint a final picture of the pious Maximus, Confessor and Martyr, who opposed him in the proper way.

Finally, by focusing on Constans II and his spiritual authority, the narrator leaves little doubt that the religious accusation against Maximus was the real reason for his tortures – that the secular accusations held no support. The narrator also depicts Constans II in a bad light, as he is simply portrayed as trying to win over Maximus to his See of Constantinople, since no theological discussions or disputes about the dyothelite stance were mentioned in the trials with the emperor present. By ignoring the dyothelite disputes, the author leaves little doubt that Maximus' Christology is correct and that the emperor was simply being a tyrant.

The Evagrian Roots of Maximus the Confessor's
Liber asceticus

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ABSTRACT

The little scholarly attention (*e.g.*, Irénée-Henri Dalmais) that has been given thus far to Maximus the Confessor's early work *Liber asceticus* as an independent text has tended to distance it from the influence of Evagrius Ponticus. In this article, I will argue instead that Evagrian ideas form the basis upon which Maximus constructs his highly praised Christological and Scriptural synthesis of ascetic theology. Passages from Evagrius' *On Thoughts* and *Praktikos* provide the terms and ideas that Maximus uses to elaborate a view of Christian life as an imitation of Christ in fulfilling the commandment of love of God and neighbour. Moreover, Maximus' focus on understanding the working of divine providence in the purpose of the Incarnation and his massive deployment of Scripture to combat ascetic lethargy are efforts that fit precisely within the range of tasks assigned by Evagrius to the gnostikos, the advanced monastic teacher. The entire text of the *Liber asceticus*, then, operates within a reworked but discernibly Evagrian framework, in which Maximus fulfils the role of an Evagrian gnostikos.

Maximus the Confessor's *Logos Askētikos*, or *Liber asceticus*, has been called a synthesis unequaled in Greek patristics[1] and 'one of the most captivating works of all Christian spiritual literature'.[2] Yet there are few studies of the text in its own right beyond the two articles from which these two assessments have been taken: Irénée Dalmais' ground-breaking 1953 study, and Pablo Argárate's 2008 essay. Otherwise the text is relegated to footnotes or, at most, a few pages in a larger argument.[3] This oversight demands remedy. I will attempt to contribute to that remedy by considering what Maximus set out to

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[1] Irénée-Henri Dalmais, 'La doctrine ascétique de S. Maxime le Confesseur: d'après le *Liber Asceticus*', *Irenikon* 26 (1953), 17-39, 31.

[2] Pablo Argárate, '"*Car mes iniquités dépassèrent ma tête*": Les fonctions du texte biblique dans la section katanyktique du *Logos Asketikos* de Maxime le Confesseur', in *Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11-13 October 2006*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 6 (Leiden and Boston, 2008), 17-36, 17.

[3] See, *e.g.*, Demetrios Bathrellos, 'Passions, Ascesis, and the Virtues', in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 287-306. See also Christian Boudignon, '"How Am I to Love the One Who Hates Me?" Love for One's Enemy, Persecution and Human Rights in Maximus the Confessor', in *Quest for a Common Humanity: Human Dignity and Otherness*

accomplish in the *Liber asceticus* and where it fits into the monastic tradition – in particular, how Maximus used Evagrian ideas at crucial points to form his argument.

The *Liber asceticus* is a fairly short work, about 1000 lines in Greek, presented as a dialogue between an elder monk and a brother. Its genre is somewhat unusual among Maximus' works and seems designed not simply to report or relate but to produce an effect on the (presumably monastic) reader, as it does on the brother. The text is divided into four sections, each beginning with a question posed by the brother: 1) what was the purpose [σκόπος] of the Incarnation, which the elder answers by appeal to the Creed, leading to a description of salvation as the imitation of Christ in love of God and love of neighbors and enemies;[4] 2) how to acquire sobriety [νῆψις], leading to a discussion on self-control, love, and prayer;[5] 3) 'why, father, do I have no compunction [κατάνυ-ξις]?' leading not to a give-and-take as before but to a series of lengthy and threatening Scriptural quotations with interspersed commentary;[6] and 4) in tears, the brother asks: 'I beg you, tell me, what should I do?' The elder offers hope and a promise of divine mercy, again in the voice of Scripture.[7] Scholarly attention has focused primarily on the first, Christological section, as I will for the most part.

I. Christ the model

If space permitted, I would first discuss the presence of Chalcedonian and Neo-Chalcedonian Christology in the *Liber asceticus*. Suffice it to say: it is present, but very quietly. Maximus' primary interest here is soteriological: 'This then was the Lord's purpose, that as a human He obeyed the Father until death, for our sake, keeping the commandment of love'.[8] I proceed then to the question of the imitation of Christ in keeping the commandment of love.

If we look for precedents in the monastic tradition for Maximus' portrayal of monastic life – and indeed Christian life as a whole – as an imitation of Christ, we will find hints in Evagrius and the *Apophthegmata*. But when Irénée Hausherr wrote in 1948 about the imitation of Christ in Byzantium, he chose two exemplars from before the 14th century: Maximus and Isaiah of Scetis, a fifth-century

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in the Religious Traditions of the Mediterranean, Studies in the History of Religions 134 (Leiden and Boston, 2011), 199-218.

[4] Maximus the Confessor, *Maximi Confessoris Liber Asceticus*, edited by Peter Van Deun, CChr.SG 40 (Turnhout, 2000), lines 2-3.

[5] Maximus, *Liber*, 330-1.

[6] Maximus, *Liber*, 467.

[7] Maximus, *Liber*, 852-6.

[8] Maximus, *Liber*, 243-5.

monk who brought the Egyptian tradition to Palestine.[9] Hausherr intended his exemplars to be variegated in space and time; writing 25 years before Brock's publication of Maximus' Syriac *Vita* proposing Palestinian origins,[10] he didn't realize that he was placing Maximus squarely in a Palestinian monastic tradition of imitation of Christ, begun by Isaiah and continued by Barsanuphius.[11] Like them, Maximus in the *Liber asceticus* focuses on Christ as a model; like them, he keeps his Christological doctrinal commitments quiet and refers instead to the Creed;[12] perhaps like them, he meant his work to be read by Christologically diverse audiences. Unlike them, he supported Chalcedon.[13]

But that is not the only difference. The focus of Isaiah's imitation of Christ is the monk's ascent to the Cross, where he reaches the peak of asceticism and recovers the humanity of Adam seen in Christ.[14] Barsanuphius repeats the phrase: 'Ascend to the Cross'.[15] Maximus, on the other hand, focuses on Christ's struggle to keep the commandments in the face of temptations. Why? Where did he find this focus?

The answer is Evagrius. The first temptation faced by Christ was, Maximus explains, in the desert, where Satan provoked Him against the love of God. 'Knowing that there are three things by which everything human is shaken – I mean, food, possessions, and glory – and through which he always leads a person down to the depths of destruction, by these three the devil tempted Him in the desert. Our Lord proved stronger than them, and He ordered the devil to get behind Him [ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν κρείττων φανεὶς εἰς τουπίσω χωρεῖν τῷ δια-βόλῳ προσέταττε]. Such then is the mark of love for God'.[16] This, as is already well known,[17] derives from a passage at the beginning of Evagrius' *On Thoughts*:

Among the demons who set themselves in opposition to the practical life, those ranged first in battle are the ones entrusted with the appetites of gluttony, those who make to

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[9] Irénée Hausherr, 'L'imitation de Jésus-Christ dans la spiritualité byzantine', in *Mélanges offerts au R.P. Ferdinand Cavallera doyen de la faculté de théologie de Toulouse à l'occasion de la quarantième année de son professorat à l'Institut Catholique* (Toulouse, 1948), 231-59, 237.

[10] Sebastian Brock, 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor', *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), 299-346.

[11] See I. Hausherr, 'L'imitation' (1948), 237-45. See also Alois Grillmeier and Theresia Hainthaler, *The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451-600*, translated by Marianne Ehrhardt, Christ in Christian Tradition 2.3 (Oxford, 2013), 96-108.

[12] See A. Grillmeier, *Churches* (2013), 96, 102, 106.

[13] See A. Grillmeier, *Churches* (2013), 121-2.

[14] See I. Hausherr, 'L'imitation' (1948), 242-5; see also Isaiah of Scetis, *Ascetic Discourses*, translated by John Chryssavgis and Pachomius Penkett, Cistercian Studies Series 150 (Kalamazoo, 2002), 107, *etc*.

[15] See A. Grillmeier, *Churches* (2013), 108. See also Barsanuphius and John, *Correpondance*, edited by François Neyt and Paula De Angelis-Noah, 3 vols. (Paris, 1997-2002), 2.21-2, 45.21-2, 48.62-3, 345.22, 351.7-8, 567.39-41.

[16] Maximus, *Liber*, 193-9.

[17] See, *e.g.*, Peter Van Deun, *Maximi Confessoris Liber Asceticus* (2000), 25 n. 197/9.

us suggestions of avarice, and those who entice us to seek human esteem … But our Lord proved stronger than them, and He ordered the devil to 'get behind him' [ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν κρείττων φανεὶς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω χωρεῖν τῷ διαβόλῳ προσέταττε]. Through these things he teaches us too that it is not possible to drive away the devil, unless we have shunned these three thoughts.[18]

Thus it is from Evagrius that Maximus derives his sense of the first temptation to be faced in ascetic life and its Christological foundation. The difference is that, for Evagrius, Christ faces these temptations as typical of human life, and thus gives an example of ascetic victory for all. Maximus' perspective is, for lack of a better term, *larger*: Christ faces these temptations because they are temptations against the commandment to love God, and that commandment is constitutive of human existence.

The parallel is interesting but might not amount to much were it not for something that has, to my knowledge, not been noticed in Maximus' description of the second struggle – that against the temptations opposed to the love of neighbor. In Christ's life, this takes place against the Pharisees and scribes, through whom the devil acts to provoke Him to hatred. When Maximus discusses Paul as an imitator of Christ and thus a parallel model for the monk, he describes the second temptation thusly: 'Against those who war to stir up hatred, who therefore rouse the more negligent [ἀμελεστέρους] against the pious, that, being tempted through them, the [pious] may hate them and transgress the commandment of love – again by deeds, [Paul] indicated to us the manner of victory'.[19] This passage, too, seems to derive from Evagrius, though rather more loosely: in the fifth *kephalaion* of the *Praktikos*, while he is still establishing the themes of the entire work, he writes: 'The demons fight directly against anchorites; but in the case of those who practice virtue in monasteries or in communities they equip the more negligent [ἀμελεστέρους] among the brothers with their weapons'.[20] Not only is there a verbal echo, the substance of the claim is the same: demons use 'more negligent' human beings (*i.e.*, the ascetically incompetent) as tools in their warfare against humanity. This Maximus appropriates.

Also from Evagrius, Maximus draws the understanding that this temptation offered by the negligence and bitterness of others is a temptation specifically against love. In *Ad Eulogium*, Evagrius writes: 'Do not turn the usage of irascibility instead to one that is contrary to nature, so as to become angry with

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[18] Evagrius Ponticus, *Sur les pensées*, edited by Paul Géhin, Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, SC 438 (Paris, 1998), 1.1-4, 17-25. Translation by Robert E. Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (Oxford, 2003), 153-4, modified.

[19] Maximus, *Liber*, 274-8.

[20] Evagrius Ponticus, *Traité pratique ou le moine*, edited by Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, 2 vols., SC 170-1 (Paris, 1971), 5.1-3. Translation by R.E. Sinkewicz, *Evagrius* (2003), 97.

your brother by imitating the serpent … The gentle person, even if he suffers terrible things, does not abandon love'.[21] Gentleness, a premiere virtue in Evagrian asceticism, is simply love that endures social strife, rebuke, and slander,[22] which are all discussed in the *Ad Eulogium*,[23] and indeed throughout Evagrius' works.[24] This is *precisely* Maximus' view of love of neighbor in the *Liber asceticus*.

In sum, this magnificent Christological portrayal of asceticism in Maximus' *Liber asceticus* is not, as Dalmais said, a work of 'evangelical purity' in which Maximus restores a Christian core of love to Evagrian intellectualism.[25] It is, rather, a Christological asceticism built on two Evagrian pillars: Christ's temptation in the desert as the fundamental human ascetic struggle, and the on-going temptation against love by demons working through the 'more negligent' of human beings. What Maximus has done, simply, is to take these ideas, correlate the latter with Christ's life as clearly as Evagrius had already done with the first, and correlate the first with love as clearly as Evagrius had already done with the latter, setting both then within the framework of the two greatest commandments and a loosely Irenaean soteriological framework. A marvelous accomplishment and a development of Evagrius – not a rejection.

II. The *skopos* of the Incarnation

This much I take to be fairly straightforward, given our knowledge of Maximus' debt to Evagrius and our increasing appreciation of the complexity of Evagrius' thought. I would like to make another proposal, somewhat more tentative: not only the Christological section but indeed the entire work is best understood in an Evagrian frame. To do this, I must go back to the first question posed and the key to the whole text: what is the *purpose* [σκόπος] of the Incarnation?

For Maximus, as Dalmais rightly notes, it is 'a work of love'.[26] As such, it may be best understood in the context of a phrase Evagrius uses to capture the monks' understanding of God's work of love: the *logoi* of providence. These *logoi*, as described by Luke Dysinger, are 'glimpses of the complex process

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[21] Evagrius Ponticus, *Tractatus ad Eulogium*, 11/10, edited in E.R. Sinkewicz, *Evagrius* (2003), 310-33, 316. Translated in *ibid*. 37.

[22] See Bathrellos' argument, following Polycarp Sherwood, on the difference between Evagrian gentleness and Maximus's love, in D. Bathrellos, 'Passions' (2015), 293.

[23] See Evagrius, *Eulogium*, 4/4, 5/5, 16/17, 17/18, 25/26.

[24] See, *inter alia*, Evagrius Ponticus, *Talking Back: A Monastic Handbook for Combatting Demons*, translated by David Brakke, Cistercian Studies Series 229 (Collegeville, 2009), 5.28, 5.37, 5.41-2, 5.61. See also Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholies à l'Ecclésiaste*, SC 397 (Paris, 1993), 23-4.

[25] I.-H. Dalmais, 'Doctrine ascetique' (1953), 31-2, 37.

[26] *Ibid*. 39.

God employs to draw the *logikoi* back into union with himself'.[27] In short, it is a way of understanding the world and all that occurs within it – even oppressive and abusive acts that tempt against love of others – as acts of providential love.[28]

Maximus adopts this perspective explicitly later in the *Liber asceticus* when he describes the patient endurance of social vice and hatred not as an imitation of Christ but as training [παίδευσις] sent by God: thus the monk who understands providence does not blame the person who gives offense, but looks to God who sent the offense for a reason.[29]

What makes this interpretation particularly tempting is that knowledge of Christ's purpose, in Maximus' *Liber asceticus*, serves the same ascetic role as the Evagrian *gnostikē*, the growing knowledge of God's creation and activity that includes knowing the difficult *logoi* of providence. When the elder tells the brother that only those who renounce the world can truly love others, the brother protests that he *has* renounced the world and he *still* hates people who irritate him.[30] The elder adds that renunciation is useless unless accompanied by knowledge – knowledge of Christ's *skopos*.[31] Evagrius, too, stresses that ascetic excellence is not enough to overcome certain temptations in the *praktikē*, especially those pertaining to one's motives; only growth in knowledge can truly undermine them.[32] The knowledge of God's purpose allows the brother's ascetic effort to reach its own *skopos*, as is the case in Evagrian asceticism with the knowledge of God's creation and the divine purposes within it.

III. Maximus the gnostikos

The one who teaches these things, for Evagrius, is the *gnostikos*, the learned monk – the elder, in Maximus' *Liber asceticus*. Which brings me to a final point. The idea that the *skopos* of the Incarnation bears relation to Evagrius' *logoi* of providence may allow us to address a difficulty with the *Liber asceticus*: the absence of 'natural contemplation' [θεωρία φυσική], which occupies so large a place in Evagrius' framework and, indeed, in Maximus' *Capita de caritate*. The *Liber asceticus*, rather, prescribes self-control and love for ascetic struggle, and then jumps straight to prayer as communion with God. Is there, then, no place for 'natural contemplation' in the *Liber asceticus*?

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[27] Luke Dysinger, *Psalmody and Prayer in the Writings of Evagrius Ponticus* (Oxford, 2005), 171.

[28] See *ibid.* 185.

[29] Maximus, *Liber*, 373-400.

[30] Maximus, *Liber*, 100-3, 160-7.

[31] Maximus, *Liber*, 167-73.

[32] See Evagrius, *Pensées*, 30. See also Evagrius, *Traité pratique*, 32, 79.

There is. In fact, the entire text is dominated by it. Among the primary tasks of a *gnostikos* trained in natural contemplation are, for Evagrius, knowing the ins-and-outs of Scripture and providence, so as to be able to help all who ask about their lives or reading.[33] This is *precisely* what the elder does in the *Liber asceticus*: he interprets the working of providence, especially in Christ's life and with regard to love of neighbor; and he effectively employs Scripture at great length in the third and fourth sections of the dialogue to move the younger monk to compunction and hope. The entire text is a pastoral exercise in natural contemplation.

Moreover, in doing this the elder is accomplishing for himself what he guides the brother towards: the imitation of Christ. The elder notes that Christ came to accomplish four things: to give an example; to teach the commandments of love; to make promises of heaven to those who keep the commandments; and to threaten with punishment those who do not keep them.[34] Likewise, there are four sections in the *Liber asceticus*: one on the imitation of Christ's example; one on how to keep the commandments through sobriety; one on the heart-piercing threats of Scripture; and one on the consoling promises of Scripture. The elder has simply, like a wise Evagrian *gnostikos* who knows how to adapt to the circumstances of each person, reversed the last two sections: otherwise, the text itself reproduces the works of Christ. It looks to Christ, imitates Christ, inscribes Christ.

Which is simply to say, Maximus' elder has fulfilled the role given by Evagrius to the *gnostikos*, who 'looking always to the archetype [Christ], tries to inscribe the images [human beings], disregarding nothing that pertains to the profit of the fallen'.[35]

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[33] See Evagrius Ponticus, *Le gnostique ou à celui qui est devenu digne de la science*, edited by Antoine and Claire Guillaumont, SC 356 (Paris, 1989), 15-20, 28.

[34] See Maximus, *Liber*, 17-20.

[35] Evagrius, *Gnostique*, 50. See Robin Darling Young, 'Evagrius the Iconographer', *JECS* 9 (2001), 53-71.

Proclus' Doctrine of Participation in Maximus the Confessor's *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50

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ABSTRACT

In the *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50, Maximus states that there are two kinds of works that belong to God: one which corresponds to beings having a temporal, finite beginning, and one which corresponds to perfections of beings which have no beginning and are therefore eternal. Maximus labels the latter as participated beings (ὄντα μεθεκτά) and the former as participating beings (ὄντα μετέχοντα), with God transcending both as their cause. The structure of God-as-cause, participated beings, and participating beings matches Proclus' three-fold structure of participation with the ontological categories of unparticipated, participated, and participating. While Maximus borrows the basic language and structure from Proclus, he makes certain minor but significant differences, particularly in how the participated beings both relate to their source in God and in their status of existence. This article thus sets out to analyze 1.48-50 in the general context of the *Centuries of Theology*, considering how Maximus conceives of the ontological distinctions between God and God's works. A comparison with Proclus' understanding of participation follows, particularly from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23, which succinctly states the three-term distinction of participation. The resulting comparison shows that Proclus' framework of participation is flattened for Maximus, where the participated works represent multiple properties distinct in kind from the unparticipated, while God fits analogously in the status of the unparticipated. The underlying ontology supports Maximus' implicit denial that such participated entities represent distinct divinities, as they do for Proclus, while Maximus' assertion of God's transcendence is still secured with the ontological distinction between the participated works and their unparticipated cause.

Introduction

St Maximus the Confessor has been considered in his various uses and applications of Neoplatonism, in good part thanks to his appropriation of Pseudo-Dionysius.[1] With this in mind, some passages of interest stand out in the *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50 (PG 90, 1100C-1101B), where Maximus

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[1] See, for instance, Carlos Steel, 'Maximus Confessor on Theory and Praxis. A Commentary on Ambigua Ad Johannem VI (10) 1-19', in Thomas Bénatouïl, Mauro Bonazzi (eds), *Theoria, Praxis, and the Contemplative Life After Plato and Aristotle* (Leiden, 2012) and Stephen Gersh,

employs a three-term scheme of participation between God and his eternal and temporal works.[2] This has striking parallels to Proclus' developed doctrine of participation involving three elements, between the unparticipated, participated, and participating entities in a given order. While the passage in Maximus has been considered in light of its ties to St Gregory Palamas' famous doctrine of the essence (οὐσία) and energies (ἐνέργειαι) of God, no analysis has been made of the influence and reception of Proclus in this passage. In this article I wish to set out a close comparison between the two figures' frameworks, beginning with an analysis of the *Centuries of Theology* passage followed by an overview and comparison with Proclus' division of participation in his metaphysics. While Maximus essentially adapts the same framework from Proclus, he makes certain, crucial changes in the structure by simplifying the hierarchy of participated beings and allowing multiple participants to share in the same participated property. Perhaps more interesting is Maximus' implicit denial of self-subsistence to participated entities, which is in contrast to Proclus' view that participated entities are self-subsistent in their superiority to participants and simultaneous distinction from the unparticipated source. This may be why Maximus can deny divinity to the participated entities, unlike Proclus, and implicitly maintain that they are mediated, participable aspects of God – perhaps the most striking difference one can see in Maximus' view of participation compared to Proclus'.

Maximus' framework of participation in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50

Centuries of Theology 1.48-50 forms a particular grouping within the whole work which is concerned with what constitutes being a work of God, what kinds of works exist, and in what sense God is related to those works. 1.48 introduces two particular kinds of works that belong to God:

For the worthy it should be sought out how certain things are fit to be understood as works which God began in creation, and again certain things which God did not begin. For if he rested from all works which he began to produce, it is clear he did not rest from those which he did not begin to produce. At no time then: the works of God, on the one hand, which began to be in time are all participating beings, just as the different essences of beings. For they have non-being prior to their own being; God was at some

From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition (Leiden, 1978).
    [2] Prior studies of these passages (that I am currently aware of) are John Demetracopoulos, 'Palamas Transformed: Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction Between God's "Essence" and "Energies" in Late Byzantium', *Bibliotheca* 11 (2011), 263-372, 279 n. 46; David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West* (Cambridge, 2004), 189-90; and David Bradshaw, 'Maximus the Confessor', in Lloyd Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2012), 816-7. While Proclus is briefly mentioned in these, there is no focused comparison of the concepts.

point, when beings which participate were not. But the works of God which did not happen to begin to be in time are participated beings, which participating beings partake according to grace: just as with goodness, and everything of goodness if it is embraced by account. And simply all life, immortality, simplicity, immutability, and infinity; such things are contemplated in an essential way around him. Those are also works of God, and they did not begin in time. (1100C-D)[3]

Ζητητέον τοῖς σπουδαίοις, τίνα καθήκει νοεῖν εἶναι τὰ ἔργα ὧν ἤρξατο τῆς γενέσεως ὁ Θεός· καὶ τίνα πάλιν, ὧν οὐκ ἤρξατο. Εἰ γὰρ πάντων κατέπαυσε τῶν ἔργων, ὧν ἤρξατο ποιῆσαι, δῆλον ἐκείνων οὐ κατέπαυσεν, ὧν οὐκ ἤρξατο ποιῆσαι. Μήποτε οὖν, ἔργα μὲν Θεοῦ χρονικῶς ἠργμένα τοῦ εἶναί ἐστι, πάντα τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα· οἷον αἱ διάφοροι τῶν ὄντων οὐσίαι. Τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὄν, ἔχουσι αὐτῶν τοῦ εἶναι πρεσβύτερον. Ἦν γάρ ποτε, ὅτε τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα οὐκ ἦν. Θεοῦ δὲ ἔργα τυχὸν οὐκ ἠργμένα τοῦ εἶναι χρονικῶς, τὰ ὄντα μεθεκτά, ὧν κατὰ χάριν μετέχουσι τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα· οἷον, ἡ ἀγαθότης, καὶ πᾶν εἴ τι ἀγαθότητος ἐμπεριέχεται λόγῳ. Καὶ ἁπλῶς πᾶσα ζωὴ, καὶ ἀθανασία καὶ ἁπλότης καὶ ἀτρεψία καὶ ἀπειρία, καὶ ὅσα περὶ αὐτὸν οὐσιωδῶς θεωρεῖται· ἅτινα καὶ ἔργα Θεοῦ εἰσι, καὶ οὐκ ἠργμένα χρονικῶς.

The main concern Maximus sets out in the beginning is that God is perpetually working even if he 'rested' in completing the creation of beings in time. It is within the specification of this aim that Maximus states the two kinds of divine works which God carries out: those which have a created beginning in time (works from which God rested) and those which are characterized by not having a beginning (ἄναρχος) in time (works from which God continually does not rest). Of particular note is Maximus' focus on the essences (οὐσίαι) of beings as belonging to the former category of works which have a beginning, since they are conditioned by non-being (τὸ μὴ ὄν) as their origin. Not only is the generation of these beings temporal but so also the essences of these beings. This would preclude an understanding of such essences as participated, eternal properties in the way transcendent Forms would be for a Platonist, particularly for Proclus. By contrast the other kinds of works which are eternal and outside time are perfections correlated to 'goodness' (ἡ ἀγαθότης) and all other properties that have goodness in their definition: the properties of life, immortality, simplicity, and infinity,[4] as mentioned in the following line. Maximus calls these participated beings (μεθεκτά) while referring to created beings having a beginning as participants (μετεχόντα) of these timeless properties. In this the division between being a participant and being participated lies in whether such a being or property is temporal or eternal. A participant being called 'good', 'living', or even having 'being' is so not in virtue of itself but in virtue of its

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[3] All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[4] Maximus' prioritization of 'goodness' (ἀγαθότης) over the other attributes reflects a common Neoplatonic theme of the Good's priority over all other attributes. See for instance Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 8 (Dodds 8.29-30): 'All that in any way participates the Good is subordinate to the first Good, which is nothing other than good' (πάντων τῶν ὁπωσοῦν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μετεχόντων ἡγεῖται τὸ πρώτως ἀγαθὸν καὶ δ' μηδέν ἐστιν ἄλλο ἢ ἀγαθόν).

participation in the timeless works corresponding to those terms. *Centuries of Theology* 1.50 makes this clearer:

And those which did begin in time are, and are said to be this, by participation of those things which did not begin in time, wherefore they both are and are said to be. For all living things and immortal things, both holy and virtuous things, God is the craftsman: for he transcends the essence of all that can be understood and spoken. (1101B)

Καὶ τὰ μὲν ἠργμένα χρονικῶς, τῇ μετοχῇ τῶν οὐκ ἠργμένων χρονικῶς εἰσι καὶ λέγονται τοῦθ᾽ ὅπερ καὶ εἰσὶ καὶ λέγονται. Πάσης γὰρ ζωῆς καὶ ἀθανασίας, ἁγιότητός τε καὶ ἀρετῆς, δημιουργός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός· ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν γὰρ πάντων τῶν τε νοουμένων καὶ λεγομένων ἐξῄρηται.

By implication, both participated and participating works fall in the category of what can be understood and spoken, which further confirms the sense of God's transcendence as denying any attribution of positive properties or names which comes from the domain of either participated or participating beings. In this, God transcends all beings and being itself, where the works have the account of being predicated to them.[5]

1.48 presents a paradox where Maximus says that the participated works are contemplated 'in an essential way' (οὐσιωδῶς) around God (περὶ αὐτόν).[6] Initially this suggests some form of identity between God himself and the participated works, which is at odds with the implication that God has no positive, and therefore essential, attributes. The use of περί can either suggest spatial imagery (*e.g.* the moon as 'around' the earth) or conceptual relation (*e.g.* speaking of rationality 'concerning' or 'in relation to' man). The latter usage is suggested with Maximus relating the participated works essentially to God, but God's absolute transcendence over all things 'infinitely infinite times' (ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως) (1.49, 1101A)[7] implies the former usage with ontological separation. The dual-sided ambiguity of the term would fit with the intermediate status that the participated works have between God in himself and the created, participating works: to the degree the participated works are eternal and preexist the creation of beings in time, they are related closely to God who is also eternal; yet insofar as the participated properties of 'goodness' and so on are

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[5] See Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.49, 1101A.

[6] The phrase περὶ αὐτόν in relation to God recurs in earlier Fathers, for instance Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 2.89, 102, 582, *etc.* See D. Bradshaw, 'Maximus the Confessor' (2010), 817.

[7] The language of ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως is also found in Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 1 (Dodds 2.10-1), albeit in a case where Proclus states that nothing can be made up 'from infinitely infinite things' (ἐξ ἀπειράκις ἀπείρων). See also Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.1-2, 4, where God is described as, among other negative attributes, beyond 'essence, power, and act'. This corresponds to a general Neoplatonic description of the One as beyond the same triad of essence, power, and act (see *e.g.* Proclus, *Commentary on Parmenides* 1070.15-1071.3 [Cousin], 1070.13-1071.3 [Steel]). This is further proof that Maximus is working closely within a Neoplatonic framework for discussing God's transcendence and causal relation.

works of God and are participated by beings in time, they are distinct and separate from God. The aspect of essential relation in the former case can be further clarified with Maximus' statement at the end of 1.48 that the participated works 'have God most solely as the eternal generator of [their] being' (οἷα τὸν Θεὸν ἔχουσα τοῦ εἶναι μονώτατον ἀϊδίως γεννήτορα) (1101A). While the phrasing explicitly denies that the participated works come from any other source than God, it also suggests that they are not self-generated and self-subsisting in the same way as the created works. Because of this, the participated works are directly correlated to God even if still ontologically distinct from God. One can see evidence for this later in 1.54 when Maximus speaks of 'being' and 'life' as properly belonging to God, where in partaking of these properties one 'becomes God by deification' (οἷα καὶ αὐτὸς γενόμενος τῇ θεώσει θεός) (1104B). Thus, a given entity's participation in 'life' or 'being' is not correlated to separate, self-subsisting principles, 'Life' and 'Being', but rather directly to God-as-life and God-as-being.[8] This further confirms the participated works' status as intermediaries between God and created beings.

Centuries of Theology 1.49 raises another, initial problem for the presentation we have so far had of the participated works pre-existing created beings. The participated works are here said to be immanent, having been 'implanted for created beings according to grace, as much as some infused power' (κατὰ χάριν τοῖς γεγονόσιν ἐμπέφυκεν, οἷα τις δύναμις ἔμφυτος) (1101A). Yet if the participated works are supposed to be eternal and separate according to their nature from 1.48, it is not clear how they can be simultaneously immanent. The first half of 1.49 gives an implicit answer when it establishes God as transcending all beings, both participated and participating, while at the end the timeless works' immanence in created beings is used as a reason to say that those works, through their immanence, have 'clearly proclaimed God in all things' (τὸν ἐν πᾶσι ὄντα Θεὸν διαπρυσίως κηρύττουσα) (1101A).[9] The participated works then appear to have two aspects: either in their association with God as transcendent, and therefore belonging 'solely' to God, or in their relation to created beings as immanent powers. Created beings which have the properties of 'goodness' and 'being' then have those properties as received 'powers' caused

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[8] On this, Maximus is following Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 181.16-9, with the divine names correlating to the same entity, God, and not to separate divine entities: 'We do not say that the Good is one thing, Being another, Life another, and Wisdom another, neither that there are many causes and other divine beings productive of different entities subordinated and existing in relation to one another, but that they are the wholly good processions of a single God and the divine names by which we call him by ourselves' (οὐκ ἄλλο δὲ εἶναι τἀγαθόν φησι καὶ ἄλλο τὸ ὂν καὶ ἄλλο τὴν ζωὴν ἢ τὴν σοφίαν, οὐδὲ πολλὰ τὰ αἴτια καὶ ἄλλων ἄλλας πρακτικὰς θεότητας ὑπερεχούσας καὶ ὑφειμένας, ἀλλ᾽ ἑνὸς θεοῦ τὰς ὅλας ἀγαθὰς προόδους καὶ τὰς παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ἐξυμνουμένας θεωνυμίας). See Stephen Gersh, 'Ideas and Energies in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite', *SP* 15 (1984), 297-300, 300.

[9] See also, *e.g.*, Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.82, which further develops how and why God transcends 'all that can be understood and spoken'; cf. 1.83, 2.2 (1125C); 2.3.

by the participated works in their distinct aspect as timeless and pre-existing. This balances off the claim of transcendence for God with the affirmation of God's immanence through the timeless works' transcendent and immanent activity on created beings.

Proclus' framework of participation

Proclus' three-term framework for participation is established most succinctly in his *Elements of Theology*, Proposition 23, which states:

All that is unparticipated gives existence to the participated from itself, and all participated entities reach upwards to unparticipated entities.

For the unparticipated, having the status of a monad since it belongs to itself and not to another, and since it transcends the participants, generates entities that are able to be participated. For either it will stand barren by itself – and then not have honor – or it will give something from itself. Then that which receives participates, and that which is given has existence as participated. (Dodds 26.22-9)

πᾶν τὸ ἀμέθεκτον ὑφίστησιν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὰ μετεχόμενα, καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ μετεχόμεναι ὑποστάσεις εἰς ἀμεθέκτους ὑπάρξεις ἀνατείνονται.

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀμέθεκτον, μονάδος ἔχον λόγον ὡς ἑαυτοῦ ὂν καὶ οὐκ ἄλλου καὶ ὡς ἐξῃρημένον τῶν μετεχόντων, ἀπογεννᾷ τὰ μετέχεσθαι δυνάμενα. ἢ γὰρ ἄγονον ἐστήξεται καθ' αὑτό, καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν ἔχοι τίμιον· ἢ δώσει τι ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τὸ μὲν λαβὸν μετέσχε, τὸ δὲ δοθὲν ὑπέστη μετεχομένως.

Here, Proclus takes for granted that, for any given number of individuals sharing a property, the source of that property generates entities or principles which proximately impart their common effect in the participants. Whereas a more traditional Platonist framework admits of two terms – multiple participants correlated to one participated entity or Form – Proclus thinks participation in one source necessitates intermediate, participated principles which each correspond with their respective participants.[10] For instance, each living body participates in the property of self-movement through its proximate particular soul, while each particular soul related to its body is generated from the monadic, unparticipated principle of Soul, which is the source of the property of self-movement. Under this description the unparticipated has a one-to-many relationship with the participated, while the participated has a one-to-one relationship to the participant: the unparticipated Soul produces multiple, particular souls which act as immediate causes of life to all living bodies, while the individual participated soul produces its effect in one particular living body.

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[10] See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23, Dodds 26.30-28.7.

Within this general three-term framework, Proclus makes a further distinction with the participated intermediary's relation to its participant: each participated entity is self-complete and self-constituted, and thus separate from its participant, while the participated generates its effect in the participant as an immanent power.[11] From the previous example, each particular soul stands as self-complete in relation to the living body, while it also generates an immanent power in the body which brings about the manifested effect of life, or self-movement, in that body. As Proclus states in *Elements of Theology* Prop. 81: 'All that is separately participated is present to the participant through an unseparated power which it implants' (πᾶν τὸ χωριστῶς μετεχόμενον διά τινος ἀχωρίστου δυνάμεως, ἣν ἐνδίδωσι, τῷ μετέχοντι πάρεστιν) (Dodds 76.12-3). As was the case with the participated term playing an intermediary role between the unparticipated and participants, so Proclus also posits an intermediate power in the participant which makes the separately participated entity's effect manifested. Thus within the participated-participant relationship Proclus has a further intermediary principle with the immanent power which manifests the final effect in the participant.

Perhaps more important in the comparison with Maximus is addressing how Proclus characterizes the distinction between participated and unparticipated entities. As *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23, showed, the unparticipated corresponds to what belongs to all, while the participated corresponds to what belongs to one individual or participant. But how does Proclus justify this ontological distinction in the first place? The end of Prop. 23 provides an answer with the participated's characterization:

Every participated entity, belonging to that through which it is participated, is secondary to that which is equally present to all and has filled everything from itself. For that which is in one is not in the others; while that which is present to all alike, so that it may illuminate all, is not in one but before all. ... But that which is in all would be divided into all, and again would require another principle to unify the divided; and further all would no longer participate the same principle, but this one and that another, through the unity being divided. (Dodds 26.30-28.4)

τὸ δὲ μετεχόμενον πᾶν, τινὸς γενόμενον ὑφ' οὗ μετέχεται, δεύτερόν ἐστι τοῦ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως παρόντος καὶ πάντα ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ πληρώσαντος. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ ὂν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐκ ἔστιν· τὸ δὲ πᾶσιν ὡσαύτως παρόν, ἵνα πᾶσιν ἐλλάμπῃ, οὐκ ἐν ἑνί ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ τῶν πάντων. ... ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐν πᾶσιν ὄν, μερισθὲν εἰς πάντα, πάλιν ἄλλου ἂν δέοιτο τοῦ τὸ μερισθὲν ἑνίζοντος· καὶ οὐκέτ' ἂν τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετέχοι πάντα, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἄλλου, τὸ δὲ ἄλλου, τοῦ ἑνὸς μερισθέντος.

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[11] See *ibid.* Prop. 64, Dodds 60.20-2: 'Every original monad gives substance to two series: one of self-complete substances, the other of irradiated things which acquire their substance in others' (πᾶσα ἀρχικὴ διττὸν ὑφίστησιν ἀριθμόν, τὸν μὲν αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων, τὸν δὲ ἐλλάμψεων ἐν ἑτέροις τὴν ὑπόστασιν κεκτημένων).

Proclus characterizes each participated entity as being divided and distinct from each other, so that what one individual participates is different in an essential way from any other participated entity.[12] The unparticipated functions as a source for all participants by being absolutely identical with itself in a way that negates all difference or division implied with the collected set of participated entities. The unparticipated thus unites within itself the multiple, distinct participated entities by its pure unity – whether as the kind, Soul, or also the transcendent Form of 'man'.[13] This requirement for absolute unity as a prior ground to the multiple, distinct participated terms is why Proclus emphasizes the status of the participated terms' source as unparticipated, while the participated principles fulfill the role of an intermediary in conveying their common attribute, derived from the unparticipated, to the participants.

Comparing Maximus with Proclus

By comparison to Proclus' elaborate layout and description of participation, Maximus' *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50 only gives us a sketch for his framework of participation. A basic parallel nevertheless exists between both frameworks insofar as Maximus also employs the same kind of a three-term division from Proclus in his division between God-as-transcendent, the participated, timeless works (μέθεκτα, or μετεχόμενα), and the participating, created works (μετέχα).[14] Maximus does not ascribe the term, 'unparticipated' (ἀμέθεκτον), to God in 1.48-50,[15] although his description of God as transcending the participating and participated works fits the same description of the unparticipated transcending both kinds of entities from Proclus.[16] The pre-existence of the participated works before created, participating beings mirrors Proclus' statement that participated entities exist separately and in themselves before their participants. More proximately, this may correspond to Proclus' Prop. 63 in the *Elements of Theology*: 'Every unparticipated entity gives existence to two orders of participated beings: one in those which participate at some time, another in those which participate always and by their nature' (πᾶν τὸ ἀμέθεκτον διττὰς

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[12] Proclus specifies this distinction in terms of either species, for non-material entities (like souls), or number for material forms (like the enmattered form of 'man'). See *Commentary on Parmenides* 819.20-2 (Cousin), 819.14-6 (Steel); *Commentary on Timaeus* I 446.24-6.

[13] See Proclus, *Commentary on Parmenides* 850-2 (Cousin, Steel).

[14] Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50, and the rest of the *Centuries* generally use only μέθεκτον to refer to participated entities. Proclus primarily uses μετεχόμενον, although in places like *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 63, Dodds 60.5, he uses the latter term interchangeably with the former (Dodds 60.1-2). Otherwise in the case of Prop. 63, neither term appears to differ in meaning from the other.

[15] On doing a word search in Migne's *Patrologia Graecae*, no mention of ἀμέθεκτον can be found in the *Centuries of Theology* or anywhere in the rest of Maximus' corpus.

[16] See also Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 75.

ὑφίστησι τῶν μετεχομένων τὰς τάξεις, τὴν μὲν ἐν τοῖς ποτὲ μετέχουσι, τὴν δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀεὶ καὶ συμφυῶς μετέχουσι) (Dodds 60.1-3). For Proclus, all things which temporally participate in some property depend on a prior, eternally existing order of participated principles. To this degree Maximus has a similar idea with the participated works as existing eternally before they can be partaken by temporal beings.

Just as Maximus has two different descriptions of the participated works as either transcending or being immanent in their participants, Proclus also holds that participated entities which exist separately produce an immanent power in their participants which brings about the final effect from the participated entity. Similarly, Maximus speaks of the timeless works in *Centuries of Theology* 1.49 as an 'infused power' (τις δύναμις ἔμφυτος) which manifests the properties of the participated works – or as Maximus explicitly says afterward, they have 'clearly proclaimed God in all things' (τὸν ἐν πᾶσι ὄντα Θεὸν διαπρυσίως κηρύττουσα) (1101A). The description of 'infused power' also matches Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 81, which speaks of the separately participated 'implanting' (ἐνδίδωσι) a non-separate power in the participant.[17]

Given that Maximus employs the same general framework, some important differences from Proclus should be noted. While Proclus speaks of participated entities as having a one-to-one correspondence with their respective participants, this contrasts with *Centuries of Theology* 1.48's presentation of each participated work being correlated with multiple participants: for instance, multiple beings having the property of goodness participate in the one participated work of 'goodness'.[18] In this respect Maximus simplifies the framework by not including a separate intermediary between participated 'goodness' and an individual having the received property of 'goodness', as would analogously be the case from *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23. At the same time Maximus follows Proclus in *Centuries of Theology* 1.49's description of an intermediary power generated in each participant from the participated source, where the power implicitly links the separately participated source with the participant. In Maximus' case the separately-existing, participated source for a given property is common to all participants of that property, and not just one as with Proclus.

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[17] Consider also Maximus' distinction between the participated and participating in terms of being either contingent (ποτέ) or without beginning in time (οὐκ ἠργμένα χρονικῶς) in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48 (1100D), which parallels Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 63 (esp. Dodds 60.4-11), where the unparticipated produces two sets of participated entities: those which are always (ἀεί) participated, and those which are contingently (ποτέ) participated.

[18] See *Centuries of Theology* 1.50, 1101B, where Maximus describes 'all good things and goodness itself; and all beings and being itself manifestly beforehand happen to be works of God' (καὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ πάντα, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγαθότης· καὶ τὰ ὄντα πάντα, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ὀντότης, Θεοῦ προδήλως ἔργα τυγχάνουσιν). The balance between 'all [X] things and [X] itself' can be seen to correspond to participated beings with the given property, X, and the participated principle, 'X' itself.

This leaves an open question with how to place God in the analogous role of the unparticipated for Maximus. Whereas the unparticipated for Proclus is related to its corresponding participated entities as being one of that kind – for instance, unparticipated Soul is one in kind with the participated souls it produces – it is initially not clear how God is related to the participated works as a source in Maximus' framework: what God is productive of is not simply one kind of thing (divinity, for instance) for the participated works, but rather goodness, life, being, and so on, which differ in kind from what God is in himself. While this phrasing indicates an explicit difference between the two figures, in a certain sense Maximus still follows Proclus: as shown earlier with *Centuries of Theology* 1.54, one's participation in the properties of 'being' and 'life' to their full degree implies becoming 'God by deification', since they properly belong to God in himself.[19] One way to characterize this under Proclus' framework is that Maximus' participated works are united in kind under the property of divinity or deity, which is located in God as the source, while the participated works are differing manifestations under the same character of divinity. In one way this also matches Proclus' understanding of all things ultimately being characterized as manifestations of unity, which is found in the transcendent first principle of the One.[20] More proximately, Proclus' doctrine of the henads might better fit the comparison,[21] where the henads stand as intermediate, participated principles of oneness between the One-itself and all beings: for instance, behind the unparticipated monad of Soul stands a henad responsible as the proximate source of Soul's unity; similarly for Being, there is a henad for Being's unity; and so on. To the degree that the henads are different aspects of the One-itself, Maximus' notion of the participated works as aspects of God would also fit.[22] At the same time a certain *proviso* is needed: whereas Proclus calls the henads 'gods' and therefore separate deities, Maximus denies this to the participated works in *Centuries of Theology* 1.50 with his strong emphasis on God as the 'craftsman' (δημιουργός) of both created and timeless works.

One extra difference to note between Maximus and Proclus is the ontological status of the participated entities. For Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 64's description of the first order of participated entities as 'self-complete' (αὐτοτελῶν) indicates self-subsistence and ontological separation from the participants and

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[19] Maximus the Confessor, *Centuries of Theology* 1.54, 1104B.

[20] See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 5.

[21] I would like to thank Kevin Corrigan for this suggestion, which has also been pointed out in Pseudo-Dionysian studies (*e.g.* Timothy Riggs, 'Erôs, the Son, and the Gods as Metaphysical Principles in Proclus and Dionysius', *Dionysius* 28 [2010], 97-130).

[22] Of course, even here the comparison breaks where Proclus speaks of the henads as ineffable and beyond positive description, like the One itself (see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 115, 118). This would indicate another 'flattening' of horizons under Maximus' framework, where Being-itself and the henad of 'Being' are collapsed in one participated work of 'being', as with Life-itself and the henad of 'Life' into the work of 'life', *etc*.

the unparticipated source.[23] As seen earlier, the separate existence of the participated entities makes possible the distribution of a given property in the participants, where Proclus characterizes this pre-existence in terms of the principle's self-subsistence. Comparing with Maximus, while the participated works have pre-existence in relation to the participating works, the former do not appear to have a self-subsistent status in the same way. Maximus states in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48 that whereas God 'rested' (κατέπαυσε) from the works which have a beginning in time, God did not rest from the works which have no beginning – that is, the participated works. The previous passage of *Centuries of Theology* 1.47 provides some context for this 'rest', where the resulting product or work from which God rested has its own self-determined movement and activity.[24] While this applies for the participating, created beings in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48, this is not the case for the participated works. If Proclus' description of the participated entities as self-complete implies being self-determined, this constitutes another difference for Maximus where this is not the case. The former allows Proclus to call the henads, which are participated aspects of the One, separate gods, since they are self-complete and in this respect separate from each other and their source in the One.[25] By contrast, the denial of being self-determined, and therefore self-complete, for Maximus' participated works would be reason to deny the attribution of separate deity to them, which follows on Maximus' emphasis that such works essentially pertain to God as their sole source.

Conclusion

Overall, Maximus' adaptation of Proclus on participation is rather simplified even though the basic structure is in place. Where Proclus employs his framework of participation in positing multiple layers of reality between the first

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[23] Dodds 60.31-62.2: 'Accordingly those substances which are self-complete, while by their discrimination into a manifold they fall short of their original monad, are yet in some wise assimilated to it by their self-complete existence; whereas the incomplete not only as existing in another fall away from the monad which exists in itself, but also as incomplete from the all-completing monad' (trans. Dodds, lightly modified) (αἱ μὲν οὖν αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις, διὰ τὴν εἰς πλῆθος διάκρισιν ἠλαττωμέναι τῆς ἀρχικῆς αὐτῶν μονάδος, διὰ τὴν αὐτοτελῆ ὕπαρξιν ὁμοιοῦνταί πῃ πρὸς ἐκείνην· αἱ δὲ ἀτελεῖς καὶ τῷ ἐν ἄλλοις εἶναι τῆς καθ' αὑτὴν ὑφεστώσης καὶ τῷ ἀτελεῖ τῆς πάντα τελειούσης ἀφεστήκασιν).

[24] See *Centuries of Theology* 1.47 1100B-C: 'For God rests from his natural activity in each being by which each of them moves naturally. He rests when each being, having obtained the divine energy in due measure, will determine its own natural activity with respect to God' (trans. Berthold) (Παύεται γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων τυχὸν φυσικῆς ἐνεργείας, καθ' ἣν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων φυσικῶς κινεῖσθαι πέφυκεν, ὁπόταν ἕκαστον τῆς θείας ἀναλόγως ἐπιλαβόμενον ἐνεργείας, τὴν κατὰ φύσιν οἰκείαν περὶ αὐτὸν ὁρίσῃ τὸν Θεὸν ἐνέργειαν).

[25] See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 114.

principle, intelligible entities, entities of soul, and material being, Maximus gives a more flattened, straightforward hierarchy in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50. This may be why Maximus, unlike Proclus, does not hold that each participated entity belongs to the same kind – that is, being, life, goodness, and so on – except insofar as they share in the common property of divinity, or rather as participated aspects of God. In this, perhaps the crucial difference from Proclus lies in Maximus' denial of self-subsistence to the participated works in their eternal, pre-existing aspect. On the one hand this move blocks calling the participated works separate divinities, as Proclus would with the participated henads, but then how these participated works subsist otherwise is not clear if they are still distinct from God in his absolute transcendence.[26] Nevertheless, Maximus' affirmation of the participated works as intermediaries fills a requirement similarly seen in Proclus' framework, where they mediate properties derived from one transcendent source to participating individuals. In Maximus' case with the *Centuries of Theology*, they fill the conceptual background to explain the language of deification and how things become perfected by God through participation.[27]

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[26] For instance, Proclus would say that a thing has subsistence either as a power in its prior cause, as constituting itself as a separate existence, or as immanent in the resulting product (see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 65). While the middle category of self-subsistence is denied, it is unclear where Maximus might place the participated works-as-pre-existing, particularly if he wishes to maintain the transcendence of God in a way that denies any identity with the participated works. In terms of later developments, D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West* (2004), 189-90 points out a parallel with Gregory Palamas' distinction between God's essence (οὐσία) and energies (ἐνέργειαι). Maximus' framework may perhaps lead in this direction, particularly if 'rest' is denied to God's 'works' (ἔργα) in their eternal aspect, as seen earlier. If Maximus is taken as a faithful interpreter of Ps.-Dionysius in this area, *pace* S. Gersh, 'Ideas and Energies in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite' (1984), 300, this might constitute a new ontological category for the participated entities, insofar as their ontological status is modified from Proclus while still yet distinct from God in himself.

[27] Special thanks to Peter Adamson, Kevin Corrigan, Alan Brown, Augustine Casiday, Denis Walter, Daniel Watson, and Dimitrios Vasilakis for their feedback and suggestions for this article.

The 'Divisions of Nature' in Maximus' *Ambiguum* 41?

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ABSTRACT

In this article I deal with a problem concerning the 'divisions of nature' in Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum* 41. These 'divisions' are five categories that describe how creatures differ from one another and God in natural, *physical* ways. Later, Maximus discusses the way that the human person may follow Christ to mediate between these divisions. This becomes problematic however as the ascetic practice associated with this mediating power occurs within a sphere we usually define as 'ethical'. In conflating these physical and ethical dimensions it becomes unclear how our actions can overcome and unite the physical differences described in Maximus' 'divisions of nature'. In this article I demonstrate how this problem may be overcome by using Maximus' own logic of division and unity within this very *Ambiguum*. It is shown that Maximus does not see these two spheres of 'physical' and 'ethical' as separate. The ethical is part of the natural trajectory of the physical. Maximus is simply talking about the natural world and the way in which it moves towards its Creator. I build upon Tollefsen's work on universals and Cvetković's on circle and radii analogy in order to support this position. Finally, I suggest that we ought to think of Maximus' 'divisions of nature' in this *Ambiguum* rather as 'divisions and unity of nature', since physical differences also promise the possibility of movement of all creation toward unity with God.

In this article I will deal with a problem concerning the 'divisions of nature' that a modern theologian may come across when reading Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum* 41. In this ambiguum Maximus describes five ways in which creatures differ from God and one another. The differences are natural, physical differences which are overcome by the ascetic, mediating activity of human beings. This becomes problematic, however, as this ascetic practice occurs within a sphere we usually define as 'ethical'. In conflating these 'physical' and 'ethical' dimensions it becomes unclear how our actions can overcome and unite the physical differences described in Maximus' 'divisions of nature'. This is a problem that in modern parlance we describe as a naturalistic fallacy, since it conflates descriptive language with normative activity. In my article I will demonstrate how this is not a problem. I do this by using Maximus' own logic of division and unity within this very ambiguum. It will be shown that Maximus does not see these two spheres of 'physical' and 'ethical' as separate, but rather as distinctions within time contained in a single subject matter. To make this

point, I draw on Torstein Tollefsen's work on universals and Vladimir Cvetković's work on geometrical analogies in Maximus the Confessor.

To begin with, let us look at these divisions. In *Ambiguum* 41, the five categories Maximus describes divide nature as follows: (1) uncreated and created, (2) intelligible and sensible, (3) heaven and earth, (4) paradise and the inhabited world, (5) male and female.[1] In each division we have a link to the former division. In every instance the latter category in each division is divided further in the next step. So the uncreated is split into intelligible and sensible, the sensible is split into heaven and earth, the earth is split into paradise and the inhabited world, and the inhabited world is mediated between by the human, who is split into male and female. Maximus' divisions are not arbitrary but form a kind of branching tree that defines the primary differences that he believes exist between all natures.

Shortly after this, we read that the role of the human person is to follow Christ in becoming a mediator between these divisions:

In order to bring about the union of everything with God as its cause, the human person begins first of all with its own division, and then, ascending through the intermediate steps by order and rank, it reaches the end of its high ascent, which passes through all things in search of unity, to God, in whom there is no division.[2]

Maximus goes on to say that the human 'achieves this through the perfect knowledge, as I said, of its own *logos*, in accordance with which it is. Then, by a way of life proper and fitting to Saints, the human person unites paradise and the inhabited world to make one earth...'[3] Maximus then leads us back up through the divisions of nature for a second time, describing how at every stage, each of the five categories can be united by the life that the human person lives. Each *physical* difference is overcome by practical ethical means, like in the above instance where the earth is made one 'by a way of life proper and fitting to Saints'. When I use the word 'physical' here I mean it both in its contemporary usage as that which is material, and in so far as it relates to the word *physis*, since these are *natural* divisions. So this term refers to the present state in which we find and describe the universe around us. In the above quotation Maximus is describing what he believes to be the original mediating powers of the human that have been lost through sin, but are restored in Christ. We see this vividly portrayed in *Ambiguum* 41 as Maximus gives us a third repeat of all these divisions in nature, save this time describing the ways that these have already been united by and brought together in Christ.[4] We then get a fourth repeat of the divisions describing how the mediating power of Christ

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[1] Maximus, *Amb*. 41, PG 91, 1304D-1305B. English translation from Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London, 1996), 156-7.

[2] Maximus, *Amb*. 41, PG 91, 1305C. Trans. A. Louth, *Maximus* (1996), 157.

[3] Maximus, *Amb*. 41 PG 91, 1305D. Trans. A. Louth, *Maximus* (1996), 157.

[4] Maximus, *Amb*. 41 PG 91, 1309A-C. Trans. A. Louth, *Maximus* (1996), 159-60.

restores this ability to the human by uniting us and all divisions to Himself.[5] In this way the power to mediate as Christ does is restored to us and we are, by grace, able to reach toward virtue and consent to its presence within us.[6] The power of mediation that is restored is one deeply rooted in the ascetic realm of learning to love, having faith and receiving grace. In so far as this is a sphere that concerns the way in which humans decide to live, I am calling these activities 'ethical'. In *Ambiguum* 41, Maximus moves from a physical description of the cosmos, to saying that somehow, by our ethical living, we can bring these physical divisions into unity. This conflation of physical and ethical dimensions presents a problem for the modern theologian seeking to make use of Maximus' thought. It becomes unclear in what way our actions can overcome and unite these biological differences described in Maximus' divisions of nature.

For Maximus, however, I do not think this is a problem at all, and the means to resolving our difficulty lie within *Ambiguum* 41 itself. Maximus holds that differences in nature remain distinct, but need not be divisive or at odds with one another. This also goes for our current problem. Descriptive, physical definitions are not separate from normative, ethical claims. The normative is instead a potential, future path that may be chosen by the descriptive subject. The subject we describe now, should it choose to take such a path, can look like the normative picture too. So our normative and ethical claims are distinct from each other when considering a subject from within time. They are united when our present way of living is brought in line with the ethical trajectory which we can chose to align ourselves with. I will demonstrate how this problem is overcome firstly by briefly thinking about how Maximus perceives universals, and how realistically he can make claims about humans that extend to other creatures. Secondly, I go on to illustrate how our problem resolves into two distinct claims about one subject that can be brought into unity. The former point I make with reference to the work of Torstein Tollefsen and in the latter I use Vladimir Cvetković's work.

Firstly, let us look at universals as categorisation of the biological world. For Maximus, whenever we describe differences between creatures, we are also stating a degree of similarity between them. Earlier I described Maximus' divisions as branches on a tree. Often our taxonomical descriptions favour this hierarchical analogy when describing natural categories. Recent work done by Tollefsen challenges this hierarchical image. Tollefsen instead suggests that we think of Maximus' universals as more a horizontal system in which 'each particular and each species mirror the whole class they belong to'.[7] He emphasises

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[5] Maximus, *Amb*. 41 PG 91, 1309D-1312B. Trans. A. Louth, *Maximus* (1996), 160.

[6] Maximus, *Myst*., PG 91, Ch. 24, English translation from George Berthold, *Maximus the Confessor, Selected Writings* (London, 1985), 207.

[7] Torstein Tollefsen, *The Concept of the Universal in the Philosophy of St Maximus* (Helsinki, forthcoming).

that it is better to think of universals as whole concepts rather than fractured composites.[8] Every time we conceive of a particular, the universals that particular partakes of it is entirely embodied in that particular (and in every other particular that we identify with this universal).[9] For example, it is not as though there is something else to the universal of dog-kind that we are not seeing when we look at a particular dog. A particular dog is most fully a dog, even though it may look very different to another dog. Each universal is represented fully in every particular instance. Expressions of genera, species and particulars are a way of talking about the differences but also the similarities that exist between all parts of creation. Universals enable us to talk about a genuine unity of particulars in species and of species in genera that is more than just semantic. Whenever we use a universal term we mean it to express unity between some things, and distinction from others. In the very act of describing the divisions in nature, Maximus is also expressing the way in which they are united. Universals always unite when compared to another difference. Our biological categories are not simply arbitrary linguistic titles, but are descriptive of the similarities we have found in all things around us, including ourselves. There is biological identity between all these creatures that is distinguished by a matter of degrees. There is actually a very close unity between all things on our planet that often seems neglected when we instead focus on the separateness of every single particular. For Maximus, the world seems to be a balance of real, distinct creatures, bound in relation to one another and united by the properties they share. Maximus' divisions of nature are not just divisions but also universals of unity, and descriptive not just of biological difference but also of the way in which all things naturally coinhere. *Physical* descriptions of the universe already point toward unity and the Creator.

Secondly, let us think about physical and ethical in relation to Maximus' cosmology. I think we can map them onto the following ideas:

Vladimir Cvetković proposes the circle and radii analogy, to which Maximus alludes a number of times,[10] as an image of the relationship between universals and particulars. He suggests that we think of particulars as points arrayed on the circumference of a circle, who are connected to the centrepoint of this circle by radii. Along these radii we find the universals that express differences and commonalities between particulars. The centrepoint of this circle, towards which all particulars and universals alike are drawn and held in place, is God the Logos. 'Thus', Cvetković writes, 'the individual beings by following their

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[8] *Ibid.* (forthcoming).
[9] See *ibid.* (forthcoming).
[10] Maximus, *Amb* 7, PG 91, 1081C. English translation from Robert Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, Paul Blowers and Robert Wilken (trans.) (New York, 2003), 57; Maximus, *Myst*. PG 91, Ch. 1. Trans. G. Berthold, *Maximus* (1985), 187; Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge* PG 90, 2.4. Trans. G. Berthold, *Maximus* (1985), 148.

natural logos converge toward other human beings by discovering that they share the same humanity or creatureliness, but these are just stations on the movement along the radius toward the centre of the circle which is God'.[11] When considering universals and particulars alongside Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi*, we can see the way in which statements about particular creatures are never isolated from the *potentiality* that they have in their *logoi*. For Maximus, the reality of things as they are now, is not divided from the spiritual potential they have in moving toward the Logos.

Each particular creature possesses a *hypostasis* that is who they are now. Every creature also possesses a *logos*, which is the perfect unchanging idea or hope that God has for the life of that creature.[12] In order to realise this *logos*, a creature has to choose to turn towards it and God. It has to bring its mode of life (*tropos*) into alignment with that perfect vision of its life that God has for it.[13] We can make a comparison then between our *logos* as the theoretical, ethical path we wish to align ourselves with, and our *tropos* as the actual enactment of those ethics, that allows our physical, material bodies to be brought in line by our choice to act in accordance with God's will.[14] Physical and ethical in this way are not two different spheres, but rather about how a physical subject may choose to act in an ethical way. There is the way we, in our material bodies, are living at present, and there is our ethics. There is what we are and what we may become. The distinction between physical and ethical then is not a division but a distinction between what currently is and what potentially may come to be. The normative force of the latter is still retained, in that so long as one desires to align oneself to one's *logos,* there is a practical imperative to choose it in preference over others. In this regard the distinction between the physical and ethical is always useful to distinguish. However, unity between the two is now conceivable as bringing our current way of living (*tropos*) into line with a good way of living (*logos*).

Cvetković's proposed use of the circle and radii analogy is a particularly apt model for this purpose, since it already rolls the relations of *logoi* to creatures together in Christ and paints a picture that captures both particular existence and trajectory toward Christ. Furthermore it also illustrates the way that universals are instances of simultaneous unity and distinction, as elaborated by Tollefsen. The simultaneity of who we are is expressed in the points about the

[11] Vladimir Cvetković, 'Maximus the Confessor's Geometrical Analogies', in P. Pavlov and S. Tanev (eds), *Orthodox Theology and the Sciences* 6 (2013), 246-79.

[12] Maximus, *Amb*. 7, PG 91, 1085A-1085B. Trans. R. Wilken, *Cosmic* (2003), 61-2.

[13] On the difference between capacity to do a thing, and mode of operation by choice (*tropos*) see Maximus, *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* PG 91, 293A. English translation from Joseph Farrell, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (Pennsylvania, 1990), 10.

[14] Also see this interpretation of *logoi* as necessity and *tropos* as freedom in Nikolaos Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology. Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, 2010), 94.

circle's circumference, while the radii themselves form the trajectory of who we can be when we allow ourselves to be gathered to the centrepoint who is Christ. Christ, the centre of the cosmos reaches through the last division of nature and makes deification through grace possible for the united cosmos.

My solution, then, is that we consider the distinctions of physical and ethical to be differentiations of time concerning one subject. There is a way of talking about what *is*, and of what *may come to be* when a subject moves in line with its *logos*. Within the context of Maximus' cosmology, there is also a sense of timelessness to the concept of the ethical, especially if we tie it to the idea of *logos*. This is the ethical path, which God wishes us to take and which he always wished we would take. It is a single, entire concept, even if to us in our lives it seems like a linear set of choices. This means that we can also talk about the ethical as being in our past and as something we have deviated from or tried to live in accordance with, as well as always being something that we wish to turn to. My overall point remains however, that the physical is that which we may bring in line with the ethical. Like all creaturely divisions described in *Ambiguum* 41, these two distinctions are brought together in Christ, so that our mode of being (*tropos*) becomes identical to our *logos*, which is a reflection of Christ Himself who brought together human *tropos* and *logos* in living a perfect human life in accordance with God's will. Our ethical activity, as mediating humans, determines the way in which creatures move in future, because we are deeply connected to them, as is visible when we think in terms of universals. What we choose then, cannot help but be an extension of who we, and the entire cosmos, are at present. Even in the delineation of a 'division' in nature, we are also talking about unity. To talk of difference is always to acknowledge some similarity, and in Maximus' understanding it is the way humans choose to live, in light of such differences and similarities, that determines the unity of the cosmos in Christ.

Gethsemane Revisited:
Maximos' *Aporia* of Christ's γνώμη and a
'Monarchic Psychology' of Deciding

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Abstract

Maximos the Confessor seems to present us with a problem by first affirming and then denying a gnomic will in Christ, while stressing that 'what is not assumed is not healed'. A way out of this *aporia* is offered by two other elements from his writings: the stages of the willing process and the metaphor of the soul as city. Maximos dinstinguishes more or less ten stages in the process of willing, which I tend to associate primarily with the discursive reason (λόγος). While Christ could be said to exercise his human will by proceeding through all these stages without backtracking or skipping one of them, fallen man goes through some of them several times and some not at all. The difference is thus quantitative. At the crucial 'moral' stage of decision-making (named διάθεσις, disposition, by Maximos), Christ and the saints engage in prayer and decide on a higher level, that of the intellect (νοῦς): 'Through the medium of reason, they raised up to the level of intellect their power of sensation (αἴσθησις). Here the difference with fallen human beings, who have not acquired yet firm habits of action and contemplation, is qualitative. In *Question to Thalassios* 49, the Confessor illustrates the ideal way of human willing by presenting the νοῦς as king ruling the city of the soul, who has as his chief court officials λόγος (reason), ἐπιθυμία (desire) and θυμός (anger). Applied to Christ's agony in Gethsemane, this would mean that Christ received from his senses (the level of αἴσθησις) the natural desire not to die. He even formulates it is as an uttered request to the Father. Ascending from the rational level to the noetic level, however, He decides to keep his natural will fully aligned with His divine will. This decision is then passed on below to reason, which says 'not as I will, but as You will' and further down to His body directing it to go to His disciples.

Introduction

The Agony in the Garden is the favourite biblical passage of Maximos the Confessor to show that Christ was in full possession of a divine and a human will. In his 7th *Opusculum*, he writes:

For that he has by nature a human will, just as he has an essentially divine will, the Word himself shows clearly, when, in the course of the economy that took place for our sake, he humanly begged to be spared from death, saying, *Father, if it be possible,*

let the cup pass from me (*Matth.* 26:39), in order to manifest the weakness of his own flesh. (…) [H]e was in truth and properly a human being: to this his natural will bears witness in his plea to be spared from death that took place in accordance with the economy. (…) [H]e shows that all that matters is a perfect verification of the will of the Father, in his saying as a human being, *Not mine, but your will be done*, by this giving himself as a type and example of setting aside our own will by the perfect fulfilment of the divine, even if because of this we find ourselves face to face with death.[1]

François-Marie Léthel has pointed out that, until Maximos presented his 'solution', the refusal of the cup was seen as a mere 'natural movement of the flesh'.[2] This instinctive human reaction was overcome and it was the Son, that is Christ as God, who confirms the common will of the Trinity by accepting the cup. Such a portrayal of the events in Gethsemane is, however, problematic because it suggests an opposition within the person of Christ, between an (albeit embryonic) human will and a 'divine and omnipotent'[3] will. So, it is no surprise that attempts were made to deny this opposition. Apart from the political reasons for placating the non-Chalcedonians (which we will not go into), the monotheletes had a point in trying to reconcile the apparent intra-personal conflict within the Word Incarnate. Maximos vehemently opposed their solution of assuming one will in Christ. Instead, he raised Christ's human will into a fully-grown natural will, which at first resists death. This natural human desire results in the conscious utterance *let the cup pass from me*. Then the object of the human will of Christ changes and he takes the 'rational decision'[4] of accepting the cup by saying *your will be done*. By thus ascribing both consciously uttered wishes to Christ as man, Maximos took away the suggestion that the human and the divine will oppose each other.

The Confessor had to pay a price for his solution, because now it appears that Christ's human will is wavering: first he asks not to die and then he accepts to die. This sounds like deliberation, but Maximos immediately denies this: 'But this will is not at all deliberative (γνωμικόν), but properly natural, eternally formed and moved by its essential Godhead to the fulfilment of the economy'.[5] While Maximos discerns in ordinary human beings both a natural and a deliberative (γνωμικόν) will, he states that the Word Incarnate lacks the

[1] PG 91, 80CD; trans. Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London, 1996), 184-5.

[2] François-Marie Léthel, 'La Prière de Jésus à Gethsémani, dans la controverse monothelite', in Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (eds), *Maximus Confessor, Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980* (Fribourg, 1982), 207-14, resp. 212 and 211. Léthel is supported in this analysis by Richard Price who writes: 'Was the role of the rational will in accepting the passion appreciated by the orthodox? The answer, broadly, is No – until Maximus the Confessor, writing in the mid-seventh century', see his 'Monotheletism: A Heresy or a Form of Words?', *SP* 48 (2010), 221-32, 229.

[3] *Ibid*. 230, quoting from the definition of the faith of Constantinople III.

[4] F.-M. Léthel, 'La Prière' (1982), 212, quoting Marcel Doucet's unpublished thesis.

[5] PG 91, 81D; trans. A. Louth, *Maximus* (1996), 186.

latter type of willing. Maximos presents us thus with an *aporia*: how can Christ be human if he has no deliberative or gnomic will (γνώμη)? Or in Blowers' words: 'But here is the rub – and I am certainly not the first to point it out. Does this reversal in his Christology, this denial of γνώμη in Christ, do justice to the drama of Gethsemane?'[6]

This problem may have contributed to the fact that Maximos' 'solution' was not fully adopted by the dyothelete Council of Constantinople of 680/1, which did take over unequivocally Maximos' rejection of monotheletism. However, regarding the important Maximian 'innovation' of making Christ's rejection of death a rational and conscious object of his human will, the council was less forthright and stuck to the 'old' interpretation of seeing it as a mere reflex action. Richard Price has shown this by analysing the documents relating to the council and the edict of the emperor Constantine IV, confirming the decrees of the council. He concludes: 'In all, Constantinople III achieved no advance over the monothelete interpretation of Gethsemane'.[7]

A century later, John of Damascus reopens the debate about Christ's possession of a gnomic will by admitting a γνώμη in the Trinity and then applying it christologically. 'If γνώμη can be understood narrowly in terms of being disposed toward a common end or object willed (τὸ θελητόν), it is possible to redeem the presence of a gnomic will shared by the two natural wills, divine and human, within Christ's composite hypostasis'.[8] This should not surprise us, because language and terminology change, certainly in the case of the will, an aspect of human psychology that was still being elaborated.[9] Maximos himself identifies 28 different biblical and patristic usages of γνώμη. 'Modern lexicons confirm the word's pliability, being variously translated "mind", "will", "purpose", "intention", "inclination", "opinion", "character", and more'.[10] In *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, Raymond Laird provides another translation in his chapter 'Mindset (γνώμη) in John Chrysostom', in which he notes that mindset is a habit (ἕξις) of the soul according to Chrysostom.[11] The meaning of words are subject to definition and convention and – in the case of polemics – ploys. Fr Demetrios Bathrellos writes: 'It seems that Maximus's opponents had chosen the epithets "gnomic" and "proairetic" as specifications of the one will of Christ (…) [O]ne of Maximus's strategies was to deny his

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[6] Paul M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus on Gnomic Will (Γνώμη) in Christ: Clarity and Ambiguity', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 63 (2012), 44-50, 47.

[7] R. Price, 'Monotheletism' (2010), 231; see *ibid*. 232, 'but [Maximos' solution] subsequently found its way into the orthodox tradition'.

[8] P.M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus' (2012), 48.

[9] See John A. Madden, 'The Authenticity of Early Definitions of Will (Thelêsis)', in F. Heinzer and C. Schönborn (eds), *Maximus Confessor* (1982), 61-79.

[10] P.M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus' (1982), 45.

[11] (Oxford, 2015), 206.

enemies any word that could be used to specify Christ's allegedly one will'.[12]
As 21st-century theologians we run the risk of ending up in the fog of a gnomic
war which involves only vaguely knowing the position of the monotheletes[13]
and guessing at the motivation of Maximos to redraw battle lines.

In this article I will try to avoid being drawn into a war of words. Instead,
I use the more modern notion of decision and attempt to answer succinctly the
following three questions regarding Christ's acceptance of the cup:

1. When is the decision taken?
2. By what is the decision taken?
3. How is the decision taken?

As point of departure I take the above-mentioned Maximian solution of see-
ing Christ's initial refusal of the cup as a conscious and rational utterance of
his human will, which he subsequently reverses. Occasionally, I rely on John
Damascene to unpack the Chinese boxes[14] from which Maximos' insights need
to be gleaned.

At the back of my mind is the fundamental tenet of Gregory Nazianzen,
repeated by modern theologians,[15] John Damascene[16] and Maximos[17] himself:
'What is not assumed is not healed'.[18] Before quoting these words of his
beloved teacher in his disputation with Pyrrhos, Maximos explains that Adam
in the Garden of Eden willingly contemplated eating and then having willed
(θελήσας) ate (thus taking a conscious decision as Christ did in the Garden of
Gethsemane). The will is therefore the first to be subject to passion in us (πρω-
τοπαθὴς ἐν ἡμῖν ἡ θέλησις). Maximos continues by claiming that his oppo-
nents deny that Christ assumed in the incarnation the human faculty of willing
and that thus, according to them, we are not relieved of our sins and thus not
saved.[19] Therefore, it was of paramount concern to Maximos that Christ's human
will is not defective.

Finally, as Maximos says above, Christ gave himself 'as a type and example'.
He made the words of his private prayer to the Father known to his disciples,
'teaching (παιδαγωγῶν) us to prefer the divine will to ours'[20] and – I would add

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[12] Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology
of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2004), 151.

[13] See for example R. Price, 'Monotheletism', 227 (2010): 'Even the miaphysite champion
Severus of Antioch admitted 'two wills' in Christ at Gethsemane'.

[14] See Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos* (Crestwood, NY, 1985), 29.

[15] *E.g.*, P.M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus' (1982), 44.

[16] *Exp. Fid.* 62, ed. Bonifatius Kotter, PTS 12 (Berlin and New York, 1973), 157.

[17] *DP*; PG 91, 325A.

[18] *Ep.* 101; PG 37, 181C.

[19] *DP*; *ibid.*

[20] *Exp. Fid.* 68, ed. Kotter, 168; trans. Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and
Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford and New York, 2002), 176.

– *how* we ought to decide. This lesson continously needs to be learned, just as we still are busy at fully grasping the workings of our human psychology, which is basically the same as 2000 years ago (as is our physiology). In this respect we are contemporaries of the disciples and of Maximos the Confessor.

When is the decision taken?

The answer to this question is quite simple. Assuming that Christ changes the object of his human willing according to the Maximian solution, the time of decision is between the two clauses of the prayer. In the Matthean rendering this is the raised point in παρελθέτω ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω.

Maximos has more to say about the temporal element of the human willing process. In the *Disputation with Pyrrhos*, just before the passage mentioned above, he explains that the faculty of self-determination (αὐτεξουσιότης) works in God super-essentially (ὑπερουσίως), while in the angels the habit/ state (ἕξις) and the execution go hand in hand (συντρεχούσης τῇ ἕξει τῆς προχειρήσεως), not leaving room for an interval of time (παρενθήκην ὅλως χρόνου μὴ παραδεχομένης). However, in human beings there elapses time between the habit/state and the execution (χρονικῶς τῆς ἕξεως ἐπινοουμένης τῆς προχειρήσεως). To my mind, this interval coincides with the drama being played out by Christ in front of us during the Agony in the Garden, assuming that the execution of the definitive objective starts with the utterance *your will be done*.

I think that within the semantic range of ἕξις the difference between how Christ decides humanly and how fallen human beings decide can be situated. In Christ, obedience to the will of his Father is a stable state, while in normal human beings it is an unstable habit, that we continuously need to work on. Aristotle defines ἕξις, departing from its literal meaning of 'having', more as the second type (using the example of health) and links it to disposition (διά-θεσις).[21] According to Maximos' *Mystagogia*, the habit of contemplation (θεω-ρητικὴ ἕξις; associated with the intuitive intellect, νοῦς) and the habit of action (πρακτικὴ ἕξις; associated with the discursive reason, λόγος) provide stability to the human soul in its progression towards deification.[22] In my previ-ous contribution to *Studia Patristica*, I have described habits as 'patterns of behaviour that have turned unconscious to use a modern psychological term that is not part of the patristic vocabulary. They therefore do not require full attention of intellect and reason. Habits seem to be short-cuts of the full process

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[21] See *Met.* 5.1022b.
[22] See *Myst.* 4, ed. Christian Boudignon, CChr.SG 69 (Turnhout, 2011), 20-1.

of willing'.[23] It seems problematic to ascribe habits in this sense to Christ, because that would imply ignorance on his part.[24] The difference between ἕξις in Christ as man and ἕξις in fallen human beings could therefore be described as *qualitative*. It is Christ's stable state to which we should train our unstable habits. In the context of the terms ἕξις, γνώμη and διάθεσις, a triad that often occurs together in Maximos' oeuvre,[25] he regularly uses qualifiers expressing firmness to indicate what we should aspire to. For example, he writes that, in order to unite with God, the human soul should imitate His unchangeable (ἄτρεπτον) and beneficent essence and activity (ἐνεργείας), 'by means of its steadfastness in the good and its unalterable habit of choice' (διὰ τῆς ἐν τῷ καλῷ παγίας καὶ ἀμεταθέτου κατὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν ἕξεως).[26]

There is more to be said about the temporality of decision making. Maximos has analysed the process of human willing process and divided it into stages in *Opusculum* 1 and his *Disputation with Pyrrhos*.[27] In the latter list (unfortunately he does not provide much description of the stages) he adds the stage of disposition (διάθεσις) and this is the last outline we have of his analysis of the stages of willing:

For that which is by nature rational has as its natural ability the rational appetite (ὄρεξις) proper to it. This is called the faculty of will (θέλησις) of the noetic (νοερᾶς) soul. It is according to this that we consider (λογιζόμεθα) when willing, and in considering, we wish (βουλόμεθα) what we will. And when willing, we also inquire (ζητοῦμεν), examine (σκεπτόμεθα), deliberate (βουλευόμεθα), judge (κρίνομεν), are disposed towards (διατιθέμεθα), choose (προαιρούμεθα), initiate (ὁρῶμεν) and use (κεχρήμεθα).[28]

The addition of the stage of διάθεσις is very significant. It comes between judgment (κρίσις), which, together with the preceding stages, appears to be more of a rational nature and choice (of means, προαίρεσις), which seems more practical and preparing the execution. John Damascene fully adopts Maximos' sequence of stages, connecting to the stage of διάθεσις (disposition) γνώμη.

After the Damascene has given his reading of Maximos, he remarks that irrational beings are impulsed directly from appetite (ὄρεξις) to action (πρᾶξις).[29] In contrast, rational beings use reason (λόγος) and are self-determining

[23] 'Willing in St Maximos' Mystagogical Habitat: Bringing Habits in Line with One's *logos*', *SP* 68 (2013), 295-301, 297.

[24] See R. Price, 'Monotheletism' (2010), 228: 'which after the condemnation of the Agnoetae in the sixth century, was never taken literally'.

[25] See Michael Bakker, 'Maximus and Modern Psychology', in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 533-47, 533.

[26] *Myst.* 5, ed. C. Boudignon, 23; trans. George C. Berthold, *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings* (New York, 1985), 191.

[27] Resp. PG 91, 21D-24A and PG 91, 293BC.

[28] (Modified) trans. Joseph Farrell, *Free Choice in St Maximus the Confessor* (South Canan, PA, 1989), 123.

[29] *Exp. Fid.* 68, ed. Kotter, 91.

(αὐτεξουσίως). He then reproduces Maximos' list of ten stages from the *Dis-putation*, replacing the first stage of concept (λόγος) [30] with appetite (ὄρεξις) and the final stage use (χρῆσις) with act (πρᾶξις): Αὐτεξουσίως οὖν ὀρέγεται καὶ αὐτεξουσίως βούλεται καὶ αὐτεξουσίως ζητεῖ καὶ σκέπτεται καὶ αὐτε-ξουσίως βουλεύεται καὶ αὐτεξουσίως κρίνει καὶ αὐτεξουσίως διατίθεται καὶ αὐτεξουσίως προαιρεῖται καὶ αὐτεξουσίως ὁρμᾷ καὶ αὐτεξουσίως πράττει.[31]

John goes on to stress that in the Lord there is no deliberation (βουλή), choice (προαίρεσις) or gnomic will (γνωμικὸν θέλημα), because there is no ignorance. In his concern about Christ being all-knowing he mirrors Maximos, who says to Pyrrhos:

[T]hose who say that there is a γνώμη in Christ, as the inquiry demonstrates, teach him to be merely a man, deliberating in a manner proper to ourselves, having ignorance, doubt, and opposition, since one only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt. We have by nature an appetite for that which is good in a particular way, this comes about through inquiry and counsel. Because of this, then, the gnomic will is fitly ascribed to us, being the mode of the employment (of the will), and not its principle of nature: otherwise, nature itself would change innumerable times.[32]

Does this mean that Christ does not go through the impressive sequence of ten stages reproduced by John? I do not think so, because that would rob Christ of a free and self-determining human will. Rather, I think that Christ performs all of them, but at the speed of light (in the drama of the Agony they are pro-tracted for 'pedagogical' purposes) and – very important: without backtracking.

The problem with us human beings is thus that we go to and fro between the ten stages of the willing process, because we doubt about our appetite: we do not know what we want. Christ, who as human being is all-knowing, can proceed straight to what I consider the deciding stage of διάθεσις/γνώμη/ἕξις. The dif-ference between Christ's human will and ours with regard to the stages of the willing process is thus of a *quantitative* nature: we oscillate between appetite (ὄρεξις) and judgment (κρίσις) before the deciding stage. After a decision has been taken we can also hesitate between the stages of choice of means (προαί-ρεσις) and action (πρᾶξις), often needing an impulse (ὁρμή) from outside and sometimes even going back to the examining and deliberating stages. Moreover, we sometimes resemble irrational animals by skipping stages and proceeding straight to action, without deliberating and really deciding. For Christ this is all one-directional movement, consisting of the ten steps.

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[30] See René-Antoine Gauthier, 'Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humaine', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954), 51-100, 82. I would be inclined to use as noun rather Evagrian λογισμός.

[31] *Exp. Fid.* 36, ed. Kotter, 91.

[32] *DP*; PG 91, 308CD; trans. Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (Leiden, 2008), 134.

To my mind, the only way to reconcile the axioms of 'what is not assumed is not healed' and 'in Christ there is no ignorance' is to say that Christ goes through all the stages of willing. In fact, Maximos expressly says that these stages are part of human natural willing: 'It is according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν), as I have said, that this rational desiring (λογικῶς ὀρέγεσθαι) is present to us – that is – this willing (θέλειν) and considering (λογίζεσθαι) and wishing (βούλεσθαι) and inquiring (ζητεῖν) and examining (σκέπτεσθαι) and deliberating (βουλεύεσθαι) and judging (κρίνειν) and being disposed (διατίθεσθαι) and choosing (αἱρεῖσθαι) and initiating (ὁρμᾶν) and using (κεχρῆσθαι).[33] Finally, we see the steps being executed during the Agony in the Garden: Christ starts with the perfectly natural appetite (ὄρεξις) not to die which as wish goes through the stages up to διάθεσις. At this deciding stage this proposal is not accepted and he proceeds to execute the alternative objective which is decided upon: to drink the cup.

By what is the decision taken?

Now let us consider what part of the human nature of Christ takes the decision to drink the cup. Above, I already mentioned the two candidates that stand out: intuitive intellect (νοῦς) and discursive reason (λόγος). Throughout his oeuvre Maximos indicates the different functions of intellect and reason. In, for example, his *Centuries on Love*, he writes: 'A pure intellect (νοῦς) sees things correctly. A trained reason (λόγος) puts them in order'.[34] And *Amb.* 15 shows how the synthesizing activity of the νοῦς (νόησις, translated as 'intuition' below) relates to the analytical working of the λόγος and the receptive function of the senses: 'Through the mediating power of reason (λόγος), [anyone] conducts the forms and figures perceived by the senses (αἰσθήσεως) toward their manifold inner principles (λόγους), and concentrates the manifold diversity of the principles that are in beings (discovered through the power of reason) into a uniform, simple, and undifferentiated intuition (νόησις)'.[35]

I tend to associate reason with a horizontal axis of cognitive(-behavioural) therapy and intellect with a vertical axis of transpersonal and depth psychologies.[36]

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[33] *DP*; PG 91, 293C. I have followed the emendation of exchanging βουλεύεσθαι and βούλεσθαι by Marcel Doucet in *Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* (Diss. Université de Montréal, 1972). PG seems to suffer from a scribal error here, because in other lists of the stages, wishing comes before deliberating (which makes more sense).

[34] *Car*. 2.97, ed. Aldo Ceresa-Gastaldo, *Massimo confessore. Capitoli sulla carità* (Rome, 1963), 142.

[35] Ed. and trans. Nicholas Constas, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers: the Ambigua, Volume 1*, DOML 28 (Cambridge, MA and London, 2014), 362-3.

[36] See M. Bakker, 'Maximus and Modern Psychology' (2015), 533-47.

This spatial metaphor is borrowed from Maximos, who presents the triad of νοῦς (intellect), λόγος (reason) and αἴσθησις (sensation) as the psychological framework within which the ascent takes place from sensible world to the noetic world. We will turn to this triad while answering the third question.

While the six stages until διάθεσις ('decision') and the three that follow can be associated with reason (λόγος), I tend to link the crucial stage of deciding with the intellect (νοῦς). Following a long established tradition, Maximos regards reason as the sense for hearing and intellect as the sense for seeing.[37] The faculty of vision brings us to the following fundamental insight of Fr Andrew Louth:

Iris Murdoch at one point observes that 'freedom is not strictly exercise of the will, but rather the experience of accurate vision which, when this becomes appropriate, occasions action' (Murdoch 1970, 67). From this point of view deliberation is what we fall back on when our vision is clouded or confused: it is a measure of our lack of freedom, not the signal exercise of freedom.[38]

Fr Andrew is thus not inclined to equip the Maximian Christ with a Kantian type of will, which by following the right procedure comes to the right moral decision. This calculating approach of the will and of decision making may be typical of modern man, but is probably not how Maximos viewed man.[39] Because Christ's contemplative habit (θεωρητικὴ ἕξις, linked with νοῦς, see above) is firm, he can see in a fraction of a moment the route of the 'economy' (*cf.* the first quotation in the Introduction) which lies ahead of him. Through his 'uniform, simple, and undifferentiated intuition (νόησις)' he can reconcile the principle (λόγος) of his humanity, which resists his own death with the *logos* of his incarnation that aims to save humanity (if I am permitted to use *logos* in this way).

The merits of noetic activity are underlined in *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* by the psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist, who compares νοῦς (intellect) and λόγος (reason) in his chapter on the Enlightenment. He writes that according to Plato, νοῦς (which he associates with the right hemisphere of the brain) is characterised by intuition. The primacy of νοῦς is due to the fact that reason (left hemisphere) is founded on it. 'Kant is commonly held to have reversed these priorities'.[40]

Inspired by the last two lines of McGilchrist's book ('I have a high regard for metaphor. It is how we come to understand the world'), I will now try to contrast the workings of (post-)Kantian decision-making with Maximian decision-making by using a metaphor of my own. The former may be compared to a parliamentary

[37] See *Amb*. 21; ed. and trans. N. Constas, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers, Volume 1* (2014), 428-31.

[38] A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (1996), 62.

[39] See Ian A. McFarland, 'The Theology of the Will', in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus* (Oxford, 2015), 520.

[40] (New Haven and London, 2010), 330-1.

republic where the different parties try to convince each other by the power of reason, and where debate may go on for a long period; the parliament may even decide to send back proposals to be deliberated again in (sub-)committees. The latter is like a kingdom where the wise monarch decides by himself about proposals, which are carefully prepared by his able and loyal court officials.[41]

This picture of a 'monarchic psychology' coincides with the image of an idealized Roman or Byzantine emperor and is used by Maximos when he offers his exegesis on king Hezekiah in *Q.Thal* 49.[42] The Confessor adapts Plato's metaphor of the city as soul by interpreting king Hezekiah as intellect (νοῦς), while making the reasoning power (λογιστικόν) his chief court official together with the irascible (θυμικόν) and desiring (ἐπιθυμητικόν) faculties of the soul. If we apply this metaphor to Gethsemene, the following scene unfolds:

Chief court official Logos receives reports (from the senses) that the kingdom is threatened by annihilation, finds them reliable and presents to king Nous the proposal to take evasive measures. King Nous hears the case and (like king Hezekiah) goes into prayer; that is, he turns to Emperor Nous (= the heavenly Father).[43] The king then receives the order not to defend the kingdom and obeys by giving Logos the corresponding order, who passes this on to the subjects of the king.

How is the decision taken?

The short answer to this question is: by praying. Christ takes his decision during prayer, which John of Damascus, echoing Evagrius, describes as 'an ascent (ἀνάβασις) of the intellect to God'.[44] While discussing the Agony in the Garden in 'The Theology of the Will', Ian McFarland expresses this vertical movement as follows: 'The drama in Jesus' story is thus triggered by the challenge of obedience to God's call rather than the temptation to disobedience: Jesus is not struggling *against* the power of sin, but *for* the upward call of God'.[45]

Prayer as an upward movement fits the stage of διάθεσις, which Jean-Claude Larchet calls the moral stage, where the γνώμη intervenes and where the person

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[41] See 'Every government – for it is good to draw on examples from our own life to point to the truth of the realities that are above us, has distinctive insignia…' in *Amb*. 32, ed. and trans. Nicholas Constas, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers: the Ambigua*, *Volume 2*, DOML 29 (Cambridge, MA and London, 2014), 362-3.

[42] Eds. Carl Laga and Carlos Steel, *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium I, Quaestiones I–LV*, CChr.SG 7 (Turnhout, 1980), 351-77. See 2*Chr*. 32:2-4 LXX and M. Bakker, 'Maximus and Modern Psychology' (2015), 540.

[43] 'The intellect, then, mingles with the Intellect (νοῦς οὖν νοῖ μίγνυται), and the intellect holds a place midway between the pureness of God and the denseness of flesh', in *Exp. Fid*. 62, ed. Kotter, 158.

[44] *Exp. Fid*. 68, ed. Kotter, 167.

[45] I.A. McFarland, 'Theology of the Will' (2015), 527.

'inclines towards good or evil, virtue of vice, for or against his nature's *logos* and ultimately for or against God'.[46] While the other nine stages of rational deliberation and practical execution can be situated in the horizontal plane associated with reason (λόγος), the crucial stage of decision-making (διάθεσις) consists of a vertical movement to the noetic level. The problem, so to speak, is solved not at the level of discursive (dualistic) reasoning, but that of unitary noetic vision.

This 'solution' (probably evidence itself of an overly rational tendency to construct a consistent system out of the Maximian corpus) fits nicely with Maximos' 'solution' of raising Christ's human will from the level of instinctive movements to the rational level. Admittedly, Maximos does not mention directly the ascent from αἴσθησις (sensation) to λόγος (reason) to νοῦς (intellect) in the context of Gethsemane (as far as I know), but this triad occurs elsewhere in his writings. Perhaps the role of the νοῦς as sovereign spiritual subject of the soul that has final word in matters of life and death was so obvious for a pre-Kantian theologian such as the Confessor, that he did not mention it in this context. In *Amb*. 10, Maximos describes how the triad functions:

[T]he intellect (νοῦς) should think only of God and His virtues, and should cast itself in a manner beyond knowledge into the unutterable glory of God's blessedness; that reason (λόγος) should become the interpreter and singer of the things understood by the intellect, and should speak rightly about the modes that unify them; that sensation (αἴσθησις) should be ennobled by reason, so that when imagination perceives the various potentials and actualities that exist in the universe, it can proclaim (as much as possible) the principles of being to the soul.[47]

Interestingly, the outcome of recent psychological experiments seems to deprecate the role of conscious reasoning during decision making: 'When faced with complex decisions such as where to work or where to live, do not think too much consciously. Instead, after a little initial conscious information acquisition, avoid thinking about it consciously'.[48] Translated to our spatial metaphor this means: go from the horizontal axis to the vertical one.

Finally, is there a complement to the upward movement? Yes, what 'is grasped by intellection' (νοήσει καταλαμβάνεται)[49] is transmitted to the level of discursive reasoning (ἐν τῷ διαλογιστικῷ). This may result in spoken word (προφορικὸν λόγον)[50] expressing a decision such as *Not mine, but your will be done*.

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[46] In *Saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 2003), 144.

[47] Ed. and trans. N. Constas, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers, Volume 1* (2014), 168-71.

[48] Ap Dijksterhuis, 'Think Different: The Merits of Unconscious Thought in Preference Development and Decision Making', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87, no. 5 (2004), 586-98, 598.

[49] Maximos, *Opusc. de anima*; PG 91, 353D.

[50] *Opusc*. 1; PG 91, 21D.

Natural and Gnomic Willing in Maximus Confessor's
Disputation with Pyrrhus

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a fresh analysis of Maximus Confessor's doctrine of natural and gnomic willing in his late *Disputation with Pyrrhus*. In juxtaposition with varying scholarly interpretations, the article argues that, according to this textually problematic work, Christ's natural human will includes the full process of decision-making that Maximus carefully analyzes, but not the sinful and passion-laden version of that process, which Maximus finally comes to call 'gnomic willing', or γνώμη. It also opposes the fairly common view that Christ's human will cannot be gnomic for the structural reason that he lacks a human hypostasis, an interpretation which agrees with neither Miaphysite, Strict Chalcedonian nor Maximus' Neo-Chalcedonian metaphysics.

Maximus Confessor is justly celebrated for his doctrine of Christ's two wills – the belief that Christ possesses a fully-functioning, natural human will in addition to the divine will – which Maximus advanced for the better part of two decades against the claims of state-sponsored Monothelitism.[1] Yet, for all its importance in Eastern and Western Chalcedonian traditions, there is a surprising range of opinion among scholars as to what Maximus means by natural willing in Christ's case, and, conversely, what he means by the 'gnomic' sort of willing that Christ does not possess. Not least among the questions involved is whether Christ's human will includes the complex process of decision-making known to the rest of humankind, or a recognizable version of it, and whether we are to imagine that Christ made moral decisions in any serious sense.[2] The matter holds considerable implications for Christology, soteriology, and ascetical practice.

Among his pathbreaking works on Maximus in the 1950s, Polycarp Sherwood wrote a much-cited history of Maximus' use of the term γνώμη.[3]

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[1] On the political dimensions of Maximus' struggle, see now Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 52 (Berkeley, 2013).

[2] Noted recently by Paul M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus on Gnomic Will (γνώμη) in Christ: Clarity and Ambiguity', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 63 (2012), 44-50, 50.

[3] St. Maximus the Confessor, *The Ascetic Life, The Four Centuries on Charity*, trans. and annotated by Polycarp Sherwood, Ancient Christian Writers (Westminster, MD, 1955), 58-63.

Sherwood's account reveals that, prior to the Monothelite controversy, Maximus in fact used the term in a neutral sense, to mean a tendency or habit of mind, equally applicable to the pure mind of Christ as to an unrepentant sinner. Only after the *Tome to Marinus* (c. 640-41)[4] did Maximus define γνώμη in purely negative terms, as the sort of willing that Christ does not possess. This much scholars have tended to agree on ever since, and it remains uncontroversial today.

As for the meaning of γνώμη in Maximus' late works, however, scholarly opinions diverge. Sherwood argues that Maximus reversed his earlier view, ultimately teaching that Christ does not possess the deliberative process of making moral choices that Maximus once believed he did.[5] On this reading, Christ's human will is real and 'natural', but it does not involve anything like the complex process of decision-making known to the rest of humanity. Secondly, Sherwood aligns the distinction between gnomic and natural willing with a sharp contrast between hypostatic existence and general human nature, so that γνώμη belongs only to the individual hypostasis and not to human nature as such. Since Christ does not possess a human hypostasis, the suggestion that he could exhibit gnomic willing is therefore 'incompatible with the hypostatic union' structurally speaking.[6] Sherwood's explanation of Maximus' late doctrine of γνώμη has proven extremely influential. Beginning with the 1961 revision of Hans Urs von Balthasar's landmark study of Maximus,[7] a number of scholars have adopted or corroborated Sherwood's conclusion that Maximus does not believe Christ made deliberative human choices, as well as his exclusive distinction between natural and hypostatic predications.[8] Many,

[4] Sherwood dates the *Tome* to 642. Polycarp Sherwood, *An Annotated Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor* (Rome, 1952), 51. However, it was more likely written in 640 or 641: Marek Jankowiak and Phil Booth, 'A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 19-83, 47-8.

[5] P. Sherwood (trans.), *The Ascetic Life* (1955), 60.

[6] *Ibid.* 62. Notably, Sherwood is here condensing the *DP* with *Opusc.* 16 and 1.

[7] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners*, 2nd rev. ed. (Einsiedeln, 1961); the first edition was published in 1941, prior to Sherwood's works on Maximus.

[8] Including the critical edition and commentary on the *DP* by Marcel Doucet, *Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* (Diss. Université de Montréal, 1972), 392-3: Christ's human will cannot have included all of the phases that Maximus outlines, as Balthasar noted; Guido Bausenhart, *'In Allem uns gleich außer der Sünde': Studien zum Beitrag Maximos' des Bekenners zur altkirchlichen Christologie. Mit einer kommentierten Übersetzung der 'Disputatio cum Pyrrho'*, Tübinger Studien zur Theologie und Philosophie 5 (Mainz, 1992), 151-3; Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, The Early Church Fathers (London, 1996), 62; and Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1996), 241: Christ's will excludes all deliberation and choice properly speaking, which are among the results of the fall.

too, have agreed that Maximus' late doctrine of gnomic willing signals a reversal of his earlier views.[9]

Yet these have not been the only voices. In arguably the most perceptive study of Maximus in the twentieth century, Lars Thunberg argues, by contrast, that gnomic willing refers not to the mechanical process of decision-making per se, but to the fallen character of human willing. Thunberg proposes, moreover, that Maximus did not change his mind nearly to the extent that had been alleged, but merely shifted his terms, using 'natural will' in his late works to mean what he formerly called γνώμη, and giving γνώμη its new, purely negative meaning.[10] Thunberg's judgments have been repeated by George Berthold,[11] Demetrios Bathrellos,[12] and David Bradshaw,[13] among others.

Maximus' full doctrine of Christ's natural human will and the contrasting notion of gnomic willing came only in his late works, most famously in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (*DP*). As the range of scholarly views suggests, there are a number of interpretive challenges associated with this text. While the *DP* purports to give a verbatim account of Maximus' public debate with the former patriarch of Constantinople in Carthage in July 645, the text appears to have been written at least a decade later, by either Maximus or one of his associates. Despite the fact that the reported outcome was confirmed by Pyrrhus' recantation of his former views in Rome after the event,[14] we should refrain from assuming that the text faithfully represents his views, or even Maximus' in every detail, without corroborating evidence. Most of the studies mentioned above give a synthetic assessment of Maximus' doctrine, fusing his teaching in the *DP* with that found in other texts. Given the unique character of its composition, transmission, genre, and rhetorical construction, a good deal can

[9] P.M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus' (2012), 44, reports a firm scholarly consensus around such matters.

[10] Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Lund, 1965); 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1995), 213-5. The latter point is observed as well by Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century*, The Medieval Mediterranean 77 (Leiden, 2008), 135.

[11] Maximus the Confessor, *Selected Writings*, trans. and notes George Berthold, intro. Jaroslav Pelikan, pref. Irénée-Henri Dalmais, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, 1985), 124 n. 79, referring to *DP* 312A.

[12] Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2004), 149-51: γνώμη and προαίρεσις here refer to the passion-ridden quality of human willing, rather than to the process of deliberation and decision-making as such, which Jesus does naturally.

[13] David Bradshaw, 'St Maximus the Confessor on the Will', in Maxim Vasiljevic (ed.), *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection: Proceedings of the Symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, Belgrade, October 18-21, 2012* (Belgrade, 2013), 143-57, 145 and 155: Maximus' use of γνώμη and προαίρεσις in his late works is different from that in earlier texts, and he includes within Jesus' natural will the whole decision-making process of choosing among various goods; in agreement with D. Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ* (2004), 151 n. 302, 191.

[14] According to the Roman *Book of Pontiffs* 75. P. Booth, *Crisis of Empire* (2015), 286 n. 36.

be gained from reexamining the *DP* independently of Maximus' other works, at least as a first stage of reassessment. Despite its problematic condition, the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* contains the clearest expression of Maximus' doctrine, and, for better of worse, it was taken as his definitive statement on the matter by the time of John of Damascus, who helped to transmit Maximus' understanding of human willing to later Eastern and Western traditions.

Natural willing

Maximus' chief aim in the *DP* is to argue that Jesus possesses a distinct and fully-functioning human will, in addition to the divine will, against the prevailing Monothelite orthodoxy. In 638 Emperor Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople published the *Ekthesis*, which decreed that there is only 'one will of the divinity of Christ and of his humanity', as Maximus summarizes it (288C).[15] In Maximus' view, the notion of a single divine-human will in Christ threatens basic Christian doctrine with the dual problem of divine passibility and Christological docetism: for to deny Christ a human will implies that God went about from place to place like a limited creature, and that Jesus is less than fully human (289B). Accordingly, Maximus champions the doctrine of Jesus' two wills as a defense of the incarnation of Christ. Since no one in the controversy disputes that Jesus possesses the divine will, Maximus' focus is on the presence and nature of his human will and its relation to the divine will. Following these initial remarks, Maximus' main argument comes as a series of responses to objections posed by Pyrrhus, making up roughly the first third of the text (288B-309A). In order to understand Maximus' position, it is important that we follow their exchange closely.

The first question that Pyrrhus poses is whether a Christ with two wills could still be a single being of figure (εἷς) – a notion central to orthodox theology since the second century and the focal point of the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria and all who adhered to his teaching.[16] Maximus affirms that Christ is indeed a single figure whose unity remains undivided; nevertheless, he insists that if the one Christ has two natures, as the Council of Chalcedon decreed, then he must also have two natural wills and operations (289BC).

Pyrrhus objects, secondly, that the presence of two wills would entail two willing subjects (two 'willers', θέλοντας). In reply, Maximus denies that there

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[15] *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, PG 91, 288-353. All translations are my own. I have benefited from existing translations by Marcel Doucet, 'Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus' (1972), 619-97; Joseph P. Farrell, trans., *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of Our Father among the Saints Maximus the Confessor* (South Canaan, PA, 1990); and Brian E. Daley (unpublished).

[16] On which see Christopher A. Beeley, 'Response to Brian Daley and Paul Gavrilyuk on *The Unity of Christ*', *ScotJTheo* 68 (2015), 356-65, 357.

must be a one-to-one correspondence between wills and willing agents, given that the orthodox have long confessed that there are three subjects or persons (πρόσωπα), but only one will, in the Trinity. A plurality of wills is therefore not incompatible with Christ's singularity as an existing agent (289D-292A).

Shifting tactics, Pyrrhus objects thirdly that two wills in a single person would conflict with one another. Maximus replies that any contrariety would have to come either from nature or as a result of sin. But since God is the creator of all natures, there cannot be any natural conflict between God and any creature; nor can there be any conflict on account of sin, since Jesus was sinless. Conflict between Christ's two natural wills is therefore ruled out (292B).

Fourth, Pyrrhus questions whether willing belongs to nature at all. Maximus simply asserts that it does, and Pyrrhus grants the point for the time being (292B).

The next three objections give rise to the first of Maximus' two major definitions of natural willing. Pyrrhus objects, fifth, that since God and the saints share a single will, according to the tradition, then, if willing is natural, God and the saints must share a single nature, which is absurd (292B). And sixth, since humans regularly will different things from one another, they must have different natures and even change their natures with their changing wills, which is also absurd (292D). Maximus replies that, in order to understand situations like these, it is necessary to recognize that willing involves four distinct things:

1. The willing subject, or one who wills (ὁ θέλων, the 'willer').
2. The will itself (τὸ θέλημα, ἡ θέλησις, τὸ θέλειν) as a faculty, capacity, or activity that belongs to nature. Sometimes these terms refer to the will as a faculty or capacity in general, while at other times they denote the multi-stage process of willing in a more active sense.
3. The manner in which one wills (τὸ πῶς θέλειν), particularly in the moral sense of whether one wills the good or not, or righteous versus sinful willing.
4. The aim or object of one's willing (τὸ θελητόν). Sometimes in Scripture or in everyday speech this is what is meant by the term 'will' (τὸ θέλημα). (292D)

Maximus stresses that each of these terms functions in a different way, and to confuse them can lead to doctrinal error. For example, the will (τὸ θέλημα) belongs to the willing subject (ὁ θέλων) by nature, or essentially (οὐσιωδῶς), and as such is internal to the one who wills; however, the object of one's will (τὸ θελητόν) – the thing that one aims to do – is external (ἐκτός) to the willer. For this reason, two different subjects can will the same thing, in terms of outcome, without thereby sharing the same natural will, and this is how we should understand Pyrrhus' example of God and the saints. Similarly, the manner in which one wills (τὸ πῶς θέλειν) – the quality of our willing, including its righteousness or sinfulness – does not belong to the willing subject by nature alone, but to the particular way (τρόπος) in which each individual (ὑπόστασις)

makes use of his or her natural faculty of willing. Accordingly, the ways in which we each will, our particular choices and motivations, can differ considerably, even though all humans share the same natural capacity of willing; and even though the objects of our willing come and go, the faculty of willing always remains (292C-293B). In addition to answering Pyrrhus' fifth and sixth objections, this analysis is meant to support the fourth point as well, that willing is natural (292D).

Pyrrhus' seventh objection draws out Maximus' second major definition, which focuses on the natural basis of willing and the multi-stage process that completes it. If willing is natural, Pyrrhus asks, then it must be necessitated (ἠναγκασμένον), in the ancient sense of involuntary or caused from without, in which case Christ could not possess a human will, since his movement was purely voluntary. Maximus retorts that nothing natural is necessitated, *i.e.*, dictated from without, in the case of either God or created rational beings. Maximus then offers this definition of the will's rootedness in human nature: 'Whatever is rational by nature has rational desire as a natural capacity, which is called the 'will' of the noetic soul' (293B). All angels and humans, in other words, possess a will by nature, which is the innate desire of the soul in its highest respect.

Yet willing-as-rational-desire is not the full picture, for Maximus immediately adds a description of the complex process that leads to actual decision-making:

According to this [rational desire], when we will, we reckon; and when we will, as we reckon we form a wish – and when we will, we search and consider and deliberate and judge and are inclined toward and make a choice and move toward and use [things] (293C).[17]

Maximus' description of natural human willing begins with desire and includes the full deliberative process of decision-making. Nowhere in this account does he mention negative or sinful varieties of willing, or give any hint that the mechanics of natural willing are compromised and could not apply to Christ. Maximus stresses the point in the next sentence:

It is *according to nature*, as I have said, that this rational desiring is present to us – in other words, this willing and reckoning and deliberating and searching and considering and wishing and judging and inclining toward and choosing and moving toward and using [things] (293C, ital. added).[18]

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[17] Καθ᾽ ἣν θέλοντες λογιζόμεθα· καὶ λογιζόμενοι, θέλοντες βουλόμεθα. Καὶ θέλοντες ζητοῦμεν, σκεπτόμεθά τε καὶ βουλευόμεθα, καὶ κρίνομεν, καὶ διατιθέμεθα, καὶ προαιρού-μεθα, καὶ ὁρμῶμεν, καὶ κεχρήμεθα, accepting Doucet's emendation of ὁρῶμεν to ὁρμῶμεν: 'Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus' (1972), 549, on *Disp. Pyrrh.* 293C3, with D. Bradshaw, 'St Maximus the Confessor on the Will' (2013), 145 n. 6.

[18] Κατὰ φύσιν δὲ ἡμῖν, ὡς εἴρηται, προσόντος τοῦ λογικῶς ὀρέγεσθαι, ἤγουν θέλειν, καὶ λογίζεσθαι· βουλεύεσθαί τε καὶ ζητεῖν, καὶ σκέπτεσθαι, καὶ βούλεσθαι, καὶ κρίνειν, καὶ διατίθεσθαι, καὶ αἱρεῖσθαι, καὶ ὁρμᾶν, καὶ κεχρῆσθαι.

Our concern here is less with the meaning of each particular stage than with the fact that Maximus includes the entire process in his definition of natural human willing.[19] Unlike the willing of God or angels, Maximus later comments, human willing takes time, so that we can determine what the intention of our habits will be (ὡς χρονικῶς τῆς ἕξεως ἐπινοουμένης τῆς προχειρή-σεως, 325A). Having established that the complex process of discernment and decision-making properly belongs to the function of natural willing, Maximus concludes, '*The things that are natural* for noetic [beings] are not subject to necessity' (293C, ital. added). The fact that Christ possesses natural human and divine wills, therefore, in no way means that he lacks voluntary movement, as Pyrrhus had supposed (293D-296A). That Maximus concludes his account with reference to Christ confirms that the multi-stage description he has just given, including the stages of deliberation (βούλευσις) and choice (προαίρεσις), applies to natural willing per se such as Christ possessed it. Pyrrhus reiterates this conclusion in his next statement: 'Your account has shown with great clarity that there are natural wills in Christ' (296A). Maximus' argument in these sections is seamless and straightforward.

As a coda to these definitions, Maximus adds a final comment on the fundamental choices involved in natural willing, as they relate to the origin and finitude of the human condition. Because the things that exist come to be from nothing, they have an inherent capacity for existence versus non-existence, a natural impulse (ὁρμή) toward what sustains life and a revulsion from what would destroy it. If the Word truly became human, Maximus reasons, then Jesus too must have had the natural impulse to preserve his human life (297B). He would not be fully human if he did not possess the dynamic activity of willing that distinguishes between what leads to life and what leads to death and acts accordingly. Jesus exemplified this discerning choice most notably in the Garden of Gethsemane. By experiencing the fear of death and seeking to avoid the cross, before finally submitting to God's higher plan for him, Jesus displayed 'our natural capacity to strive after being' (297D). At this point Pyrrhus concedes Maximus' argument for the presence of a natural human will in Christ (301D).

According to the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, Maximus holds that natural human willing is rooted in rational desire; it involves four key aspects (the willing subject, the will, the manner of willing, and the object willed); and it includes a multi-stage process of investigation, deliberation, judgment, and

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[19] 'Will *qua* rational desire is the master faculty governing the entire process that leads to intentional action'. D. Bradshaw, 'St Maximus the Confessor on the Will' (2013), 145. For a discussion of the various stages, see R.A. Gauthier, 'Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humain', *RThAM* 21 (1954), 51-100; M. Doucet, 'Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus' (1972), 355-74; L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* (1995), 219-26; P.M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus' (2012), 45-6.

choice, quite apart from the enslaving force of sin and the passions. Given his positive account of the mechanics of natural willing, it is not surprising that Maximus happily applied the terms προαίρεσις and γνώμη to Jesus for many years, before altering their meaning in the throes of the Monothelite controversy.

Gnomic willing

Now that he has established the presence of a natural human will in Jesus, Maximus turns to address the opposite question: what sort of willing Jesus does not possess. A rejoinder from Pyrrhus occasions the change of subject. Appealing once more to the good intentions of the Monothelites, Pyrrhus claims that, in confessing one will, they simply meant to uphold Christ's unity. Maximus asks Pyrrhus what they call Christ's single will. Pyrrhus replies 'gnomic' (γνωμικόν), which Maximus takes to be a derivative of γνώμη (308B). It appears that certain Monothelites were willing to concede two natural wills in Christ so long as they were understood to be controlled by a single 'gnomic will' proper to Christ's hypostasis.[20] But Maximus will have none of it. He signals once again that the Monothelites' position is basically Monphysite,[21] and proceeds to offer his own, alternative account of gnomic willing.

The question of whether and how Maximus changed his views on gnomic willing has occasioned a number of scholarly theories since the 1950s, yet a consensus seems to be emerging. Judging from the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* and other works from the mid-640s, Maximus deliberately shifted the meaning of these terms for polemical reasons.[22] As Sherwood first observed, for most of his career Maximus had used the term γνώμη to refer to one's general moral tendency in the process of willing, which applies to Christ as much as any other person. However, around 645 Maximus changed his meaning rather drastically. In order to distinguish his doctrine of Christ's two wills as sharply as possible from the single 'gnomic' will of the Monothelites, Maximus gave γνώμη a uniformly negative meaning and denied that Christ's will is gnomic in any sense. This polemical motivation is visible in the way he begins his discussion of gnomic willing in the *DP*: 'When *they* speak about γνώμη in Christ…'; and in the first point of his argument, which is to deny that there can be a distinct

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[20] See Maximus, *Opusc.* 1.12AB, discussed below, and the comments of Joseph P. Farrell, *Free Choice in St Maximus the Confessor* (South Canaan, PA, 1989), 119. C. Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom* (2008), 134.

[21] It stems from 'the disciples of Severus [of Antioch]' (τοῖς ἀπὸ Σεβήρου, 308A).

[22] See below for evidence from *Opuscule* 1. On Maximus' polemical motivation for changing the meaning of γνώμη, see D. Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ* (2004), 151-2; Horovun, *Will, Action and Freedom* (2008), 134; and D. Bradshaw, 'St Maximus the Confessor on the Will' (2013), 155 and 157.

gnomic will governing Christ's divine and human wills, as the Monothelites proposed, since one will cannot derive from another (308C, ital. added). In recognition of the term's altered meaning, Maximus issues several disclaimers about the fluidity of language and the multivalence of γνώμη in particular. He notes that the term is problematic on account of its multiple meanings in the earlier fathers – and, we should add, in his own works as well[23] – and cautions that, since γνώμη has at least twenty-eight different meanings in Scripture and tradition, we can understand a given instance only by careful attention to its context (312A-C).

Maximus goes on to define what he now takes γνώμη to mean ('as this inquiry has shown', 308D); his treatment of gnomic willing is for the most part confined to a single paragraph (308C-309A). Gnomic willing is the deliberative inclining of the will with which we are all too familiar (βουλευτικῶς διατι-θέμενον καθ' ἡμᾶς): the sort that is beset by ignorance and doubt and is 'pulled in opposite directions' (ἀντικείμενα), rather than deliberating unam-biguously (ἀναμφιβόλου βουλεύεται, 308D) as Christ does, or as Adam before the fall did. Earlier Maximus had described the way that humans go about the activity of willing under the influence of sin: the goods of nature 'drag around' (προσηγεῖται) the will as if by force; whereas, in Jesus' case, even his hunger and thirst were 'willing' (297D). The gnomic wills of fallen human beings, being unable to choose the good freely, are tossed about by the choices that present themselves, under the sway of sin and the passions. This account of gnomic willing substantially repeats the view that Maximus has long held of the human condition after the fall. In his early works Maximus reflects extensively on the plight of human souls besieged by passions and divided from themselves and one another, and in his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* he identifies this very quality as the factor that distinguishes our wills from Jesus'.[24] Echoing this earlier theme, Maximus comments in the *DP* that our wills were the first thing to succumb to the passions in Adam's fall: 'Since Adam heard, saw, and ate willingly, then the will was the first thing in us that became subject to passion (πρωτοπαθὴς ἐν ἡμῖν ἡ θέλησις)' (325A).

Consequently, those who allege that there is γνώμη in Christ (according to Maximus' new understanding of the term) are implying that Christ is a mere human (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον) who deliberates in the conflicted way that we do (308D). Because all human beings exist under the sway of sin and have gno-mic, rather than naturally-functioning wills, only the incarnate Lord, whose human existence is liberated and divinized by the hypostatic presence of his divine being, is free of the oppressive distortion that Maximus now calls γνώμη. Jesus 'subsists divinely by virtue of his very existence [as the incarnate Son] (θεϊκῶς ὑποστὰς αὐτῷ εἶναι)', and in him a supernatural manner of

[23] P. Sherwood (trans.), *The Ascetic Life* (1955), 61.
[24] *Or. Dom.*, CChr.SG 23, p. 34; L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* (1995), 215.

living (τρόπος) joined what was naturally human to its own rationale (λόγος), which gives him a natural propensity toward the good and aversion to the bad as a human being (309A). Jesus does not deliberate in ignorance, doubt, and inner conflict about the good like we do, but he makes righteous choices, and experiences even the vicissitudes of life, such as hunger, thirst, and the fear of death, naturally and with perfect freedom (297D-300A). Jesus has always chosen good over evil,[25] Maximus adds, because he 'possessed the good from his [human][26] nature' (309A). On account of his divine identity, Jesus' human nature is purified and re-enabled to function according to its natural goodness, free of gnomic inhibition and confusion, just as other humans will operate when we are no longer enslaved by sin.

Despite the way that certain passages in the *DP* may appear when read in isolation, Maximus is not arguing that Jesus' human will lacks the deliberative process of decision-making outlined above. If one were to point, for example, to Maximus' statement that Jesus does not will the good 'by having inquired and deliberated (ζητήσας καὶ βουλευσάμενος)' about it (309A), or to his remark that, if Jesus had a single, gnomic will, that would mean that he was a mere human who inclines his will by deliberation (βουλευτικῶς διατιθέμε-νον) toward things of which he is in doubt (308CD), one would be appealing to a truncated version of Maximus' position. For in each case Maximus adds a crucial qualifier: Jesus does not deliberate *like we do* (καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς), plagued by moral ignorance, doubt, and inner conflict that results from being in the grip of sin and passion (308D-309A). It is not the time-bound process of decision-making that is the problem, but the distorted character and the resulting derailments of fallen human wills. As a result of Maximus' account in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* and surrounding texts, the newly redefined γνώμη becomes a fixed term in later Greek Christian tradition for the sort of enslaved willing that Christ became human in order to liberate and divinize.

Other late *opuscula*

Maximus' definition of natural versus gnomic willing in the *DP* is generally corroborated by other *Opuscula* written before and after the original debate. Two works from a few years earlier show Maximus' previous definition of γνώμη gradually beginning to change. In *Opuscule* 3 (c. 640-643),[27] Maximus

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[25] Drawing from a remark by Basil of Caesarea on *Isaiah* 7, in his commentary on the 44th *Psalm*, according to Maximus. The quotation from Basil has not been identified.

[26] The fact that Maximus is referring to Jesus' human nature is clear from the discussion that immediately follows, where he affirms that the virtues are equally present in the nature of all human beings (309BC).

[27] M. Jankowiak and P. Booth, 'A New Date-List' (2015), 61.

continues to define γνώμη neutrally, as the intention of one's individual will, whether good or bad, and he reiterates the contrast between fallen human willing and the pure will of Christ. In contrast with the fallen will, which is divided by the passions, Jesus' natural disposition to will 'is moved and shaped by his divine will' – it is 'completely deified', in Gregory Nazianzen's phrase, on whom Maximus is here commenting – with the result that Christ redeems human nature from the sway of 'the passions to which it had been condemned as a result of sin' (*Opusc.* 3.48AB). In *Opuscule* 7, the *Tome to Marinus* (c. 640-641), however, Maximus begins to shift his terms. At first γνώμη is neutral: no nature, nor even one's 'intention' (γνώμη), could resist the cause of nature as long as it stands in agreement with the λόγος of nature (*Opusc.* 7.80A); yet our wills, unlike Christ's, are 'inclined to every evil' as a result of the serpent and distorted as a result of the fall (80B). Then Maximus gives the term the negative sense that he will champion in the *DP*: Christ's human will is not gnomic, but is properly natural and constantly moved by its essential Divinity (*Opusc.* 7.81CD).

In two works written closer to the time of the *DP*, Maximus' final is position evident. In *Opuscule* 25 (post-643),[28] Maximus warns of the difficulties that are bound to come with shifting language. It is a mistake, he says, to fixate on particular words rather than to discern their meanings, an admonition that he will repeat in the *DP*. Finally, in *Opuscule* 1 (645-46),[29] Maximus defines a number of Greek terms pertaining to the will as part of his response to the heightened polemical situation (12C-21C). Because his opponents have characterized Jesus' single divine-human will as 'gnomic and prohaeretic', Maximus gives these terms a solely negative meaning (12AB).[30] Γνώμη is now 'the arrangement of our desire' in a way that is pulled, torn, and swayed by passion, from which the wayward choices of προαίρεσις then arises (17C). When Maximus makes the well-known statement 'therefore, willing is not choosing (οὐκ ἔστιν οὖν θέλησις ἡ προαίρεσις)' (13A), he means not simply that we should not reduce the complex phenomenon of human willing to the single step of making a decision, but that we should avoid confusing the process of decision-making as we experience it under the sway of sin with the natural and unfettered condition of human willing.[31]

[28] Preferring M. Jankowiak and P. Booth, 'A New Date-List' (2015), 62, over P. Sherwood, *The Ascetic Life* (1955), 44, who gives 640.

[29] P. Sherwood, *ibid.*, 53. M. Jankowiak and P. Booth, *ibid.*, 49, allow 643-46.

[30] Maximus had recently applied προαίρεσις to Christ in *Qu. ad Thal.* 42.29D-31A, written sometime prior to 634. Jankowiak and P. Booth, *ibid.*, 29.

[31] M. Doucet, 'Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus' (1972), 392; J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme* (1996), 240.

Conclusion

Judging from the account given in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, Maximus has not made a great reversal from his earlier position on deliberative human willing, either in Christ or in fallen humanity. When he extends his doctrine to respond to Monothelitism in the 640s, he vigorously defends the place of human willing in Christ, in all of its natural functioning, while also distinguishing it from the fallen condition of willing that humans experience in Adam, which he now calls γνώμη. In denying γνώμη to Christ, Maximus is making the traditional argument that Christ's human willing possesses a different moral quality from ours, rooted in his holy desire and his constant ability to perceive and choose the good; Maximus is not denying the mechanics of willing as such. As Thunberg observed,[32] the new development is Maximus' shift of terms, not a change of mind.

More persistent, however, and arguably more misleading, is the claim that Maximus denies gnomic willing to Christ on the grounds that the human hypostasis is inherently gnomic.[33] Such an idea is foreign to Maximus' metaphysics, and the texts do not support this interpretation. Maximus subscribes to the view, shared by both the arch-Chalcedonian Leontius of Byzantium and his Miaphysite opponent Severus of Antioch, that there are no non-hypostatic natures, either for God or for creatures.[34] Accordingly, natural human willing is always hypostatic, both in Christ's case, for whom the divine Son provides the hypostasis, and in the perfected Christian saint, who wills the good as a human hypostasis purified and divinized by Christ.[35] Given that all humans are

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[32] L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* (1995), 214-5.

[33] See, *e.g.*, L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* (1965/1995), 216: Christ lacks gnomic willing probably because it indicates human individuality, whereas Christ represents all humanity; G. Bausenhart, *'In Allem uns gleich außer der Sünde'* (1992), 156-7; A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (1996), 61; and D. Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ* (2004), 160-1, who counters that Christ's human will is indeed particular, while nevertheless upholding the same structural connection between gnomic willing and human hypostatic existence. The most extreme recent version of this idea is that of Ian McFarland, '"Naturally and by Grace:" Maximus the Confessor on the operation of the will', *ScotJTheo* 58 (2005), 410-33, 419-20, 427; *id.*, 'The Theology of the Will', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus* (2015), 516-32, 521-2: Jesus lacks gnomic willing because he is not subject to the exigencies of time and history, even as a human being, since his hypostasis is provided by the divine Son of God; accordingly, 'nature simply is the locus of willing'; whereas 'the gnomic will is for Maximus a function of hypostasis', 'Naturally and by Grace' (2005), 428-9.

[34] On the two, rather different definitions of the relationship between nature and hypostasis in Leontius of Byzantium – the confusion of which caused much trouble in the subsequent centuries – see Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven, 2012), 288-91.

[35] L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* (1995), 217: personal existence (ὕπαρξις) stands in a constant relationship to the sphere of nature (φύσις) and should not be too sharply separated from it. Doucet likewise cautions that Maximus' denial of γνώμη to Christ is not due to the fact

subject to the sin of Adam, gnomic willing is indeed reflective of our hypostatic existence *apart from Christ's redeeming grace*, but not necessarily or permanently so. Hypostatic human existence is not by definition excluded from divinized, natural willing – far from it. As Maximus argues throughout his works, the whole purpose of Christ's incarnation was to enable human beings – human hypostases – to will naturally, just as he does.

that he lacks a human hypostasis, structurally speaking, since for Maximus the common nature of humanity is made singular in the individual hypostasis, 'Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus' (1972), 392.

A Three-Nativities Christology?
Maximus on the *Logos*

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ABSTRACT

Maximus the Confessor often adopts a Dionysian approach to divine names. This apophatic approach does not construe the names in any way that might diminish the transcendence of the ineffable, divine essence above all created categories. However, Maximus' treatment of the Christological title *Logos* requires him to interpret the title as indicating a participation by the creatures and their *logoi* to the divine *Logos*. The *Logos* is neither an apophatic title nor a shared divine name, but is appropriated to the second person and has practical consequences for understanding the unity of the created order. In *Ambiguum* 7, Maximus self-consciously struggles with this tension between his apophatic approach and the importance of Christ as the single *Logos* containing the many *logoi* (PG 91, 1081B-D). The logic of this text provides insight into how Maximus can hold these two commitments together. This communication will examine *Ambiguum* 7 as a single text in which Maximus confronts most clearly the seeming tension between his commitment to Dionysian theology and *Logos* theology. It will show how Maximus coordinates his kataphatic Christological statements and his apophatic exaltation of the divine essence, offering a better framework for reading Maximus's conception of the Spirit's economic work in salvation and the development of Trinitarian theology.

Torstein Tollefsen, while identifying the foundational link for Maximus the Confessor between Christology and cosmology, explicitly identifies a three-fold incarnational scheme – in the cosmos, in the Scriptures, in Jesus.[1] More than three categories may be needed to organize the ways in which Maximus sees Christ present or embodied in the world – church, Christian, Eucharist, and virtues all could be added to the list. He writes, 'For the *Logos* of God, God himself, always and in all things wills to work the mystery of embodiment'.[2] Maximus' extensively uses the concept of the *Logos*. These two linked concepts of *Logos* and incarnation are central to Maximus' worldview. Here I focus on how the interplay between them suggests a cosmic 'nativity' of Christ

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[1] Torstein Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 2008), 66. That Christ is incarnate in the Scripture is attested elsewhere including Aidan Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel: Maximus the Confessor in Modern Scholarship* (Edinburgh, 1993), 36.

[2] Rough translation of 'Βούλεται … μυστήριον', PG 91, 1084D.

as *Logos*. And, I compare this hypothesis against Maximus' seventh *Ambiguum* to John.

Michel Barnes adapted the language of 'two "nativities"', used by the Fifth Ecumenical Council, to identify a strand of pre-Nicene Latin Christology. Authors such as Novatian, Cyprian, and Lactantius distinguish between the Son's primordial expression – or 'nativity' – from the Father and the Son's temporal nativity in the traditional human sense (of 'nativity').[3] Maximus may not have been familiar with the writing of Barnes's figures or his language, but would have known well, if indirectly, a similar dual 'nativity' approach present in Origen's Christology.[4] Origen emphasizes the importance of differentiating the Father from the Son; the Son is the Father's image, wisdom, and *Logos*.[5] For Origen, wisdom and the language of *Proverbs* 8 receive greatest emphasis. But all these 'two "nativities"' approaches identify a differentiation of Son from Father other than in the Son's human incarnation. To use the language of *Col.* 1:15, the invisible Father begets a visible Son to reveal himself.[6]

From a Nicene Christian perspective, the problem with this type of approach is that it risks suggesting a difference in nature between the Father and Son. That the Son's nature as Son is to be an image or *Logos* does not fit neatly with Nicene consubstantiality and smacks of Arian subordination.[7] Maximus is known as a self-conscious defender of the conciliar tradition and is in no way attempting to undermine Nicene, eternal, ineffable generation of the Son from Father, a generation which introduces no change in nature. Thus, if Maximus deploys something like the cosmic nativity of the pre-Nicene era, it is not a second nativity, but a third.[8] Maximus clearly affirms the human nativity of the Son. Maximus affirms the eternal generation of the consubstantial Son. Maximus may find a way to safely retrieve something like the cosmic nativity of Origen and the pre-Nicene period.

Unlike the subjects of Barnes's two nativities analysis, Maximus does not place the three 'nativities' in clear textual relief alongside one another. It does

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[3] Michel René Barnes, 'Latin Trinitarian Theology', in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *Cambridge Companion Trinity* (Cambridge, 2011), 72.

[4] For the argument that Maximus is clearly aware of Origen's arguments and Scriptural support see Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism* (Rome, 1955), 89-90.

[5] Origen, *De principiis*, trans. G.W. Butterworth (Eugene, OR, 1936).

[6] Origen is but one particular instantiation of *Logos*-theology in the Christian and non-Christian philosophic world. Tollefsen offers a summary of other theories of *Logos* expression, T. Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (2008), 23-39, esp. 35.

[7] Aidan Nichols attributes this Origen-Arius connection to the work of Pierre Piret, A. Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel* (1993), 28.

[8] Eric Perl uses the phrase 'cosmic incarnation' in Eric David Perl, *Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, Deification in Saint Maximus Confessor* (Ph.D., New Haven, CT, 1991), 301.

not fit his purposes,[9] and even if he tried, any comparison among three varied objects – particularly theological concepts – are rarely as sharp as those between two specific objects (A Trinitarian faith cannot operate only in dualistic logic for mere convenience). For clarity, before turning to the text, I would like to define what would constitute a 'three nativity' approach. First, the ineffable God must utilize a cosmic principle (Maximus prefers *Logos*-language, Origen prefers wisdom-language) operating in creation that is knowable. Second, this intelligible expression must be God.[10] Beyond loyalty to relevant biblical and conciliar texts, one point of such a cosmic expression is to reveal God in creation; that can only happen if both the revealer and revealed are truly God. Third, this expression must be appropriated strongly to the second person so that this cosmic expression is not of the Godhead generically, but a nativity of the Son.[11] Fourth, making this a difficult prospect, Nicene commitments require that the identification of the Son with this cosmic expression cannot introduce a distinction in nature between Father and Son.

The confusion prompting *Ambiguum* 7 is Gregory the Theologian's comments from *Oration* 14 which include the phrase 'portion of God' (μοῖραν ... θεοῦ). Maximus is concerned that the wording has been taken to advocate for a primordial *henad* – even while Origen is not explicitly mentioned. Maximus wishes to correct anyone holding either the notion that created motion results from a fall from an original divine rest or the belief that human souls and bodies were created separately from each other. Given Origen's axiomatic demand that the end and beginning are identical, Maximus' initial response in the first third of the text covers anthropology (specifically will) and eschatology more than cosmology. Humanity seeks rest, but cannot possibly fall from God if rest is obtained. With the worst excesses of Origenist cosmology exposed, the middle third of the text makes a positive case for God's creative intent through an exposition of *Logos* theology and *logoi* doctrine. Humans can be portions of

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[9] Maximus's theology often comes out of ascetic treatises, Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 1996), 47.

[10] I avoid using the word 'emanation' for this expression, not because it is not likely a good conceptual fit, but because it would require a great deal of clarification or definition and overwhelm the limited scope of this investigation. Perl's work has a number of sections that would suggest emanation is appropriate, such as E.D. Perl, *Methexis* (1991), 8, 22, 120, 138.

[11] Eric Perl makes this point quite forcefully in his work and this investigation's conclusions come so very close to his that I should offer a number of his conclusions verbatim to give full information on this point, even if his work was not the direct impetus for my investigation. Looking at *Ambiguum* 7, Perl writes 'Maximus goes beyond Dionysius and follows Origen when he locates the logoi not in God simpliciter, but specifically in the Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity', E.D. Perl, *Methexis* (1991), 172. Also, he specifically refers to the Son as the hypostasis of creation (*ibid.* 214). He also writes 'Christ alone is real' (*ibid.* 53) and 'Christ is the 'one created thing which truly exists' (*ibid.* 281). All of these statements summarize what I take to be a very similar point – Christ's function as Logos goes beyond his human incarnation or the unified Trinitarian action. Christ is incarnate in the cosmos itself.

God if they each follow their proper *logos*, which has always existed in the one *Logos* and in God. The final third of the text is concerned with the remainder of the Gregory passage. Gregory is not describing a primordial fall leading to physical creation, but the reality of human misery due to the fall. Maximus uses biblical texts to expound that humanity was created body and soul, in motion, and chose to forsake God's plan. The focus, in assessing a 'three nativities' understanding, is the central, positive arguments using *Logos* theology (1077c to 1089d).

The first criterion is the belief in an ineffable God who creates using a knowable principle. A weak or token form of acceptance is relatively common in Christian thought, but a strong acceptance of this criterion makes creation itself a revelatory event as a hidden God makes something known. Maximus' long-established credentials as an interpreter of the Dionysian corpus make clear his strong view of divine ineffability.[12] Early in this *Ambiguum*, Maximus briefly contrasts the qualified and passible movement (κίνησις πάθους) with the impassibility (ἀπαθές) and immobility (ἀκίνητον) of God (1073b). Later, God is extolled as beyond being (ὑπερούσιον), immeasurable (ἄμετρον), and unqualified (ἄσχετον); God is beyond all categories (1081b).

At the outset of the middle section, Maximus specifies that God created by means of *Logos* and wisdom (1077c). The individual *logoi* are discernible using reason (θεωρητικόν) and even the single *Logos* that unifies them, according to Maximus, is discernible in creation itself. Eschatologically, all the *logoi* will be known by all minds (1077a). The *Logos* is manifest (δεικνύμενον) and multiplied in all things (1080b).[13] More than a generic or light affirmation of a scriptural theme of *Logos* or wisdom, Maximus is making a strong contrast between the ineffable nature of God and the revelatory and manifest emanation from God in the *Logos*.

The second criterion to discern a 'three nativities' approach is the revealed principle of creation must be God. The above cited declaration of the *Logos*' manifestation appears immediately following an affirmation of the *Logos*' nature as unutterable (ἄφραστον) and inconceivable (ἀκατανόητον) (1080a). Given the tradition, Maximus need not emphasize this point. However, the logical necessity of this criterion for Maximus' argument makes his embrace of it quite clear. The entire reason for engaging in this exposition of *Logos* theology is to defend Gregory's 'portion of God' language. The logical flow is that the redeemed follow their proper *logoi*, those *logoi* are the single *Logos*, and therefore those following their own *logos* participate in God and can be

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[12] A. Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel* (1993), 218.

[13] When Dionysius wished to deploy emanation concepts, he typically used manifestation language, Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, Studien zur Problemgeschichte der antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophie 8 (Leiden, 1978), 54.

referred to as parts of God or even God. So, necessarily, the *Logos* must be God in this argument.[14] Maximus emphasizes the preexistence of all the *logoi* in God, strongly suggesting that the revealed *Logos* (which includes all the *logoi*) is uncreated and eternal. If the God-*Logos* distinction is not a Trinitarian distinction of nature (dealt with below), some other type of distinction is at play. Palamite systems offer one developed way to speak of this other type of distinction between God's eternal nature and knowable realities alongside the nature eternal and divine; something at least *like* a Palamite move is required to make sense of Maximus on this point.[15] Maximus uses energy language in this *Ambiguum* (1076c), but not in a decisive way to resolve any confusion here.[16]

The third criterion is that this expressed principle must be specifically and strongly appropriated to the Son.

Maximus was well aware of a *Logos* theology that would stop short of this criterion. The Dionysian corpus reflects a theology in which the ineffable God expresses himself into creation without ceasing to be transcendent. *Logos* describes one appropriate aspect of that expression and is an appropriate name for God because God transcends all knowable wisdom (*Divine Names* 7.4). Yet, Dionysius would apply a principle of names that would not permit an understanding of a Christological title of *Logos* (or of wisdom, or of power) which would introduce a meaningful distinction among persons of the Trinity. Christ can rightfully appropriate the divine title of *Logos*, but should not be thereby be confused with a particular divine expression, emanation, revelation, or operation except in the traditional sense of his incarnational mission.[17]

Maximus seems to reject this Dionysian apophatic principle.[18] However, better understanding Maximus' multifaceted approach to the Son's economic mission of incarnation, may show that he is simply expanding Dionysius' more limited exception for the incarnation.[19] In this *Ambiguum*, Maximus describes

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[14] E.D. Perl, *Methexis* (1991), 151.

[15] Tollefsen argues that this is the appropriate reading, T. Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (2008), 139, 220. Louth similarly sees Maximus as the outworking of the earlier Fathers, A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (1996), 27. Sherwood implies a connection but explicitly passes on attempting to relate the *logoi* and divine energy, P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism* (1955), 180. Daniel Haynes argues at length that Palamas separates what Maximus holds closely together, Daniel Haynes, *Grace and Metaphysics in Maximus Confessor* (Ph.D., University of Nottingham, 2012), 25.

[16] Thunberg suggests this exact passage is 'open to misunderstanding', Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (2nd ed.; Chicago, 1995), 229.

[17] Aiden Nichols (in summarizing Pierre Piret's influence on Maximus scholarship) summarizes that Maximus resists the otherwise common temptation to equate the Son and Spirit with particular divine action in creation, A. Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel* (1993), 68.

[18] Eric Perl reaches a similar conclusion in E.D. Perl, *Methexis* (1991), 172.

[19] If 'creation is incarnation', then the exception is broad indeed (*ibid.*, 212).

the *Logos* by writing, 'who is naturally and hypostatically the *Logos* of God and of the Father, as the principle and cause of all things' (1077c). Continuing, Maximus quotes from *Colossians* 1, much like the 'two nativity' pre-Nicene theologies did before him, but does not directly cite the image language here. The passage is not clear enough by itself. Maximus is far more emphatic about the identity of the Son and *Logos* when he states 'the substance of each virtue is the *Logos* of God' and continues, citing 1*Cor.* 1:30, to make it explicit that this is our Lord Jesus Christ (1081c). Unfortunately for this analysis, he returns to his main theme of deification before he can explain further.[20] A final text that ties not just the title but also the function of *Logos* to the Son appears in the context of a discussion of eschatological knowledge. Maximus likens our mind, reason, and spirit to the great *Nous*, *Logos*, and Spirit (1088a).[21] If this is indeed a Trinitarian statement, it echoes the type of inter-Trinitarian distinction that characterized 'two nativity' Christologies.

Yet, while Maximus can use that language of crisp distinction, he is thoroughly Nicene and committed to the Son's consubstantiality with the Father, thus meeting the fourth criterion. Elsewhere, he is fluid in interchanging Father, Son, or God generically in contexts where one wishing to utilize a Father-Son (or God-*Logos*) distinction to bear argumentative weight would attend more to the distinction (such as 1077c-1080b). At one point, Maximus explicitly affirms his Nicene and Dionysian credentials by mentioning the apophatic theology of the *Logos* (ἀποφατικῆς τοῦ Λόγου θεολογίας) which affirms the *Logos*' transcendence, but proceeds almost immediately to bracket that line of thought in order to return to the manifestation of the *Logos* (1081b). Maximus is explicitly affirming both the transcendent, eternal sameness of Father and Son, while simultaneously emphasizing and utilizing an important distinction between the divine nature and the *Logos*.

Maximus' fluidity is admirable and fitting to his theological culture.[22] Yet, the logic implies a system that can, with some appropriate theological trepidation,

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[20] Christ taking on wisdom could refer to either this alleged cosmic incarnation or simply to the human growth of Jesus Christ, which is more clearly suggested by the context.

[21] Based on *Ambiguum* 61, Sherwood notes Maximus' notion that the Father ideates, Son effects, Spirit perfects, P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism* (1955), 66. Melchisedec Törönen provides a full listing of passages in which he finds a similar Trinitarian formula, Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 2007), 77 n. 39.

[22] Daley makes the strongest statement (if on a different issue) by saying effectively that any paradox in Maximus reflects the heart of the Christian tradition, Brian E. Daley, 'Apokatastasis and "Honorable Silence" in the Eschatology of St. Maximus the Confessor', in Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (eds), *Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur (Fribourg, 2-5 september 1980)* (Fribourg en Suisse, 1982), 330-9, 339. However, he is not alone in rebuking modern attempts to preclude Maximus's more mysterious or paradoxical approach to these issues. See also A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (1996), 26 and S. Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena* (1978), 18, 107, 175. Paul Blowers makes the case for Maximus' expansive exegetical strategy

be explored if never exhausted. If one can deploy both a *Logos* Christology that harkens back to Origen and pre-Nicene theologians and the apophatic Nicene theology of the Dionysian corpus, then Christ must be the expressed *Logos* in creation without negating his eternal divinity. The answer lies in Maximus' expansive understanding of Incarnation. The eternally consubstantial Son (eternal nativity, 1) in being economically sent by the Trinity to become incarnate before creation (human nativity, 2) also assumed a special economic relationship to the divine expression of wisdom, will, and order (cosmic nativity, 3). The Son is God by nature but assumes a full human nature in hypostatic union, but also assumes God's creative emanation in a particular way – that may remain equally mysterious as the other two nativities.

As a practicing Christian theologian, this investigation serves to point out the need to carefully consider the three-fold Christology that the Christian tradition may require and be more self-conscious, intellectually honest, and explicit about which strands of Christology we are deploying or emphasizing. This narrow project also has ramifications for my broader dissertation project attempting to identify how Maximus can successfully use two seemingly contradictory Trinitarian grammars (particularly in pneumatology). However, even from the historical perspective, further investigation along these lines can help clarify how Maximus manages to safely canonize difficult elements of Origen or Pseudo-Dionysius in an orthodox context.[23]

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in regard to any particular element in Scripture, Paul M Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the Quaestiones ad Thalassium* (Notre Dame, IN, 1991), 143, 188, 228.

[23] Nichols echoes Jarislov Pelikan in making a similar point about specifically Maximus' function as an interpreter of the Dionysian corpus, A. Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel* (1993), 220. Sherwood sees this happening in this *Ambiguum* particularly as Maximus clarifies Denys, P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism* (1955), 173.

Plagued by a Thousand Passions – Maximus the Confessor's Vision of Love in Light of Nationalism, Ethnocentrism, and Religious Persecution

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ABSTRACT

Modern ressourcement of Maximus the Confessor's (579/80-662 AD) thought has been explored within a wide range of academic disciplines and specific areas of interest including theology, cosmology, psychology, ecology, interreligious dialogue, gender issues, and LGBTQ issues. These explorations seek to gain insight from his writings and demonstrate Maximus' appeal to a broad readership. One area that has received less attention is Maximus' vision of love within his ascetic context and how it might provide insight into the causes of particularly volatile forms of nationalism, ethnocentrism, and religious persecution. I argue that Maximus' understanding of desire within his vision of love does provide insights and raise questions about the sources of these three areas. Toward the end of this study, while I aver discussing challenges for specific Christian communities, I explore briefly ways Maximus' vision challenges complacent responses of Christian love.

Scope of the investigation

There is a focused body of scholarship that probes Maximus' understanding of the passions.[1] This literature analyzes Maximus' contribution to the ascetic tradition of the Christian East and it's longstanding reflection on how the ascetic should respond to desire and what positive role, if any, it plays in the divine redemptive process. However, my interest here is to highlight how desire relates to Maximus' overall goal of fulfilling the commandments of love – to love God, neighbor and enemy – and what his work might unveil about the nature of the three areas highlighted above. In this investigation, I focus on examples in *Ascetic Life* and *Four Centuries on Love* rather than synthesizing Maximus' vision of love and his understanding of desire or the passions from

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[1] For a helpful overview and bibliography see Demetrios Bathrellos, 'Passions, Ascesis and the Virtues', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 2015), 287-306. Another helpful source not included in the above bibliography is Norman Russell's section on Maximus in *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York, 2004), 235-95.

across his works. I have narrowed the scope even further to only a few specific insights within these two early works even though many others could be explored. Finally, the goal of this analysis is by no means meant to be a comprehensive review of either Maximus' vision of love and desire nor an exhaustive comparison of his late antique context and the modern era. The modern outworkings of nationalism, ethnocentrism, and religious persecution as constructs of difference are complex and volatile requiring sober and careful treatment. Likewise, Maximus' milieu and its understandings of difference are also complex. Consequently, this analysis aims at the modest goal of raising awareness of Maximus' vision of love and desire and how it might provide insight into a larger discussion about difference and the causes of more extreme responses in the three areas I have enumerated.

Working definitions

To begin this discussion requires that I come to terms with modern definitions and Maximus or, at least, his era regarding the topics of this investigation. The first of these is 'desire' or 'the passions' (τὰ πάθη). For Maximus, passion or desire is neutral but liable to temptation. This is less evident in the *Ascetic Life* where the dominant picture is one in which the passions are depicted as an obstacle to love of God, neighbor and enemy and an emphasis is put on renouncement of lust for material (*i.e.* money, possessions) and social goods (*i.e.* status, fame). However, in a key area in the *Life*, Maximus explains that in order to perfectly devote the mind to God, those parts of the human being that are the source of desire or passion are not to be eradicated but to be transformed so that they possess the virtues of love, self-mastery, and prayer.[2] Maximus, in the *Centuries on Love*, is more explicit about a positive explanation stating that these same parts when properly aligned within ascent produce a love of God and love neighbor and when carefully and consistently practiced become perfect love (τελεία ἀγάπη).[3] In the same work, he goes so far as to call love – a blameless or holy passion.[4] Even ἔρος has its place within this schema and Maximus uses the term to describe the intellect's intense focus on union with God.[5] Elsewhere, Maximus describes desire as a natural movement

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[2] Maximus, *Ascetic Life*, *Maximi confessoris liber asceticus*, ed. Peter Van Deun, Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 40 (Leuven, 2000), 355-64.

[3] Maximus, *Four Centuries on Love* 2.48, *Massimo Confessore: Capitoli Sulla Carità,* ed. A. Ceresa-Gastaldo, Verba Seniorum 3 (Rome, 1963), 52. Maximus is clear that divine love is not an unassailable state – it is liable to the temptation of vainglory and offense and therefore is maintained through consistent proactive love and humility. See for example *Four Centuries on Love* 1.53, 58, 3.83-90, 4.19, 87 (VS 3, 68, 70, 184-6, 200, 232).

[4] Maximus, *Four Centuries on Love* 3.67, 71 (VS 3, 174-8).

[5] Maximus, *Four Centuries on Love* 1.10, 2.47-8 (VS 3, 52, 116).

(κίνησις) toward something (usually God) that can be distracted by temptation or coopted for selfish reasons and consequently deemed 'against nature'.[6] Modern conceptions of desire are heavily influenced by an intersection of philosophy, psychology, and ethics and usually begins with a review of philosophical literature commencing with Aristotle and the way desire or passion is understood within the context of philosophical anthropology up to modern day. This discussion often includes a review of the theories of how desire comes about and its relation to other items such as belief, intention, and decision-making.[7] Rather than review this literature I simply point toward a recent definition that captures a good deal of reflection regardless of the theory. Desire is 'those wants and urges that are intricately linked to motivation, pleasure, and reward'.[8] This definition is not irreconcilable with Maximus' understanding. However, Maximus' understanding entails a teleological concern that colors how and why desire can be deemed 'natural' or 'against nature'. I should note here that this definition highlights how 'desire', for both Maximus and modern studies, goes beyond sexual desire or the physiology of sexual desire even though this concern has dominated modern studies and desire-related studies in Early Christianity.

Also at the outset, I acknowledge that the three areas I have chosen are all conceptual moving targets whose definitions have a certain amount of disputed territory. With these caveats in mind, I suggest the following workable definitions. *Nationalism* can be defined as 'the process of forming and maintaining nations or nation-states'.[9] *Ethnocentrism* can be defined as 'a tendency by members of an ethnic group to privilege their group above all others and to judge outsiders according to the group's own values and ideas'.[10] *Religious persecution* can be defined specifically as intentional persecution based on internal or external religious differences.[11] Each of these can result in physical or psychological harassment, systematic disempowerment, and social marginalization. I want to tentatively suggest that these three areas share a common

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[6] Maximus, *Difficulties to John* 7, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers: The Ambigua*, Volume 1, ed. Nicholas Constas, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 28 (Cambridge, 2014), 74-82. Compare also *Four Centuries on Love* 2.16 (VS 3, 52).

[7] For a good overview see Wilhelm Hofmann and Loran F. Nordgren (eds), *The Psychology of Desire* (New York, 2015).

[8] *Ibid*. 5.

[9] Wayne Norman, 'Theorizing Nationalism (Normatively): The First Steps', in Ronald Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany, 1999), 51-66, 58. I have benefited here from the work of Norman's article but also the larger set of works collected in Beiner. Nationalistic sentiments can be based on a wide spectrum of social phenomenon and ideas from dedication to specific principles of governance, to an allegiance to particular religion or loyalty to an ethnic group.

[10] Umberto Melotti, 'Ethnocentrism', in Guido Bolaffi, Raffaele Bracalenti, Peter Braham and Sandro Gindro (eds), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity & Culture* (London, 2003), 107.

[11] This definition is an amalgam of ideas based on 'Persecution', in H. Victor Condé (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Human Rights in the United States*, Vol. 1 (Amenia, 2011), 180.

feature that in their extreme forms, difference; whether based on ethnicity, nationality or religion, is used to justify hate and violence. The causes of these three attitudes are often attributed loosely to ignorance of some kind or another. My broad question is first, what within these three areas causes difference to move from the arena of rigorous debate and persuasion to hate and violence? Secondly, what might Maximus' understanding of desire within his vision of love unveil about these causes?

I. Preliminary historical considerations

There are a couple of important preliminary remarks that I would like to make before I proceed to Maximus' vision of love in the two aforementioned works. Firstly, there are some specific differences between the modern era and that of Maximus. The terms I defined above and the question of their causes pose problems for scholars dealing with modern life and even in the best case scenario only loosely fit the discourses of difference in the late sixth and early seventh-century milieu of Maximus. For example, difference was often expressed along the binary lines of 'civilized' and 'barbarian' or 'orthodox' and 'heretic' and could refer to someone outside or within one's ethnic and linguistic group.[12] However, much like today, these ancient designations were used to

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[12] A common way to describe difference in the ancient world is found in maps or ethnographs describing tracts of earth as the land of a certain people and usually accompanied by some story of their beginnings. Difference was often described in terms of 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. The latter term understood as superior to the former. These categories could reach across ethnic and linguistic groups so that it was possible for the outside observer to describe someone in an alien culture as either 'civilized', or 'barbarian'. The definition of ethnocentrism fits these circumstances well but there is a noticeable lack of fixity that is often associated with modern concepts like 'race'. See Patrick J. Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', in Glen. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar (eds), *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, 1999), 107-29. Many scholars have suggested that the concept of race, at least as it is conceived of in modern times, did not exist. Ethnicity can include not just surface biological difference such as the color of skin but cultural, linguistic and regional attributes. There is substantial literature that highlights how modern conceptions of race cannot be substantiated as a substantive genetic difference resulting in an intractable difference between 'races' or separate 'species' but rather are social constructions based on visible differences. The origins of race as a construct are often tracked back into the Enlightenment era and located in the dual impulses of science, especially genetics, and theological justifications for slavery. See George M. Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton, 2002), especially 15-48. Locating *nationalism* is problematic. Some scholars acknowledge that the late antique Roman Empire was a kind of proto-nation-state housing multiple ethnic groups but sharing a common identity. Others question to what extent there really was a common identity. Yet, at least among the elite of the Empire, one can sense a clear distinction between 'the Romans' and 'the barbarians', enough, at least to loosely fit a broad definition of nationalism but more closely a kind of ethnocentrism and elitism. For a brief review of these various views and especially how the conceptions of 'Roman' and 'barbarian' functioned as a discourse of the elite see Ioannis Stouraitis, 'Roman Identity in Byzantium: a critical approach', *BZ* 107 (2014),

justify a spectrum of activities including violence, disempowerment, and social marginalization. So, while I acknowledge that the designations used to express alterity in Maximus' day do not strictly fall along the exact same lines they would for modern society, they nevertheless appear to serve the same function. So what is Maximus' vision of love and what might it say about the causes of the three areas above? In order to answer this question, I will now move on to an analysis of the *Ascetic Life* and *Four Centuries on Love*.

II. Maximus' insights on love in *Ascetic Life* and *Four Centuries on Love*

The *Liber asceticus* or *Ascetic Life* is a dialog between an old man (ὁ γέρων) and a brother (ὁ ἀδελφός) who is presumably younger. The terminology used to refer to these two participants concisely indicates that this imagined dialog takes place within an ascetic context. Yet, from the start, Maximus suggests an awareness of a larger audience discussing areas of life common to all Christians. So, while the ascetic community may be the primary audience, his explanation of the Christian life is made palatable for non-ascetics.[13] The dialog is a rationale for the Christian life as a life of loving God, neighbor and enemies and the old man's responses to the young man's queries reflected a sustained biblical basis for a process of spiritual ascent that gives room for this kind of life. The *Ascetic Life* focuses on two main examples – the apostle Paul but, more

175-200. For the changing status of various people groups who came in contact with the Roman Empire see P.J. Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity' (1999).

Finally, *religious persecution*, especially during the time of Maximus, is visible. The ongoing tensions between various groups who identified as Christian, especially miaphysites and dyophysites, and even intra-party disputes meant that religious persecution in either the form of intentional physical violence or disempowerment and social ostracization was a constant reality. Violent forms of persecution were recognized as problematic politically if not morally while disempowerment and social ostracization were preferable ways of dealing with religious difference. One's standing within the Empire, which was at least officially pro-Chalcedonian during Maximus' day, meant that an official, whether ecclesial or imperial, was closely monitored. Further consideration should be given to the fate of various religious groups during the numerous invasions of the Byzantine Empire in the century in which Maximus lived. No less than three different conflicts – those with the Persians, tribes from Eastern Europe, and finally, the Arab Muslims – threatened to diminish the Empire. Religious groups often had to negotiate an existence under their new overlords. Some groups branded as heretical or problematic by the Empire welcomed invaders, who lessened imperial scrutiny and allowed a limited but slightly more predictable existence. For a brief overview of the Byzantine Empire during Maximus' life see Walter E. Kaegi, 'Byzantium in the Seventh Century', in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 2015), 84-105 and a lengthier study on intersection of imperial policy and various Christian groups see John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church, 450-680 AD*, Church History 2 (Crestwood, 1989).

[13] See Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, The Early Church Fathers (London, 1996), 23, 35 and Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 52 (Berkeley, 2014), 182-5.

importantly, Jesus Christ. Other biblical characters, including King David and several prophets, also make brief appearances. Maximus, through the old man, envisions the process of ascent as a journey from wily passions displayed by fickle love for God and preferential love of neighbor and enemies to rightly focused passions fixed on love for God and non-preferential love of neighbor and enemies. The tools of this purifying and transformative process are renouncement, watchfulness, attention to the purpose (σκοπός) of the incarnation and the practice of the virtues especially prayer which serves as a focal point for both the intellect and one's desire.

From a structural perspective, the *Life* has two major halves. Both halves are sprinkled with questions from the younger brother but two main questions frame each half. The first half is the response of the older man to the first question: 'What is the purpose of the incarnation?' The second half, dependent on the first, is the old man's response to the question: 'Why don't I have compunction?' The insight that this article will focus on in relation to the three areas of my investigation can be found in the first major half of the dialog and concerns the wisdom the old man expects his younger counterpart to garner from focusing his attention on the incarnation. The old man's response to the first question is found in successive subsections each revealing more detail about what specifically can be understood about the purpose of the Lord's incarnation (ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς τοῦ Κυρίου ἐνανθρωπήσεως).

The initial summary draws from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (381 CE) and is a review of the divine-human relationship beginning with creation. The old man then relates humanity's subsequent fall into increasingly degenerative sin despite God's continued care and concern. This dire situation is then addressed when the only-begotten Son who is 'the eternal Word and God from God' appears to humanity. As a human being, he lives a heavenly manner of life, defeats sin through obedience to the Father, sheds light upon the minds of human beings and gives commandments, threats, and promises. He ascends back to the Father, and then the Holy Spirit is given as a pledge of life, enlightenment, and holiness for the soul – a help for those attempting to keep the commandments.[14] In this instance, the old man's response gives the broad lineaments of the human-divine relationship within salvific history and highlights how the Trinitarian persons cooperate in the purpose of the incarnation and its fulfillment.[15]

In a second section, again addressing the purpose of the incarnation, the old man highlights the incarnate life of the Son focusing on his temptation in the desert, his baptism and subsequent conflict with the Pharisees in his ministry

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[14] Maximus, *Ascetic Life* (CChr.SG 40, 7-31).

[15] What is notable about not only this section but Maximus' vision in the *Ascetic Life* in general is the way he illustrates the Trinitarian persons as the beginning, means and end of Christian life and especially how he correlates the activities of the Holy Spirit to those of the Son showing how the indwelling Spirit appropriates the work of the incarnate Son to the baptized.

and death.[16] The result is what the old man describes as a paradoxical war in which Christ, through his love in life and weakness in death, defeats death, and overcomes the devil's purpose of propagating hate. In this second instance, Maximus zooms in on the incarnate life of the Son and focuses specifically on how he responds throughout his life and death to temptation and hate and thereby fulfills the commandments to love God, neighbor and enemy. Jesus does not retaliate nor respond in kind. Instead, he responds in love. For Maximus, this love does not exclude confronting the Pharisees' error but rather includes it, joining it with forgiveness.

Finally, in a third section, Maximus highlights a double solidarity that the ascetic should attempt to attain. The first solidarity is with fellow human beings and is birthed out of an awareness of the ascetic's own temptation and weakness with hate and exacting revenge when one's desire for fame, honor, money or other material or worldly goods is spurned.[17] According to the old man and presumably Maximus, it is these temptations and weaknesses for worldly pleasures that are the reason why human beings go to war with one another. The ascetic should acknowledge these temptations and weaknesses and likewise that his or her fellow human beings are liable to the same temptations and vulnerable to the same diabolical tactics. In turn, this knowledge should engender forgiveness and non-retaliation. The second solidarity is with God and is born out of being 'aware' or 'knowing' the Lord's and his Apostles' purpose, mainly, 'to love humanity and have sympathy when they fall and to fight evil demons unrelentingly by means of this love'.[18] The crux for this call for solidarity is an expectation that ascetics imitate the weakness and humility of Christ, who is both God and human, so that, like Paul, they can discover a power that manifests Christ within the human person and thus the love God desires.

The main obstacle, as the old man sees it then, is misplaced desire and ignorance of the true purpose of the incarnation. The young man admits often and with despair how he is unable to accomplish the things the old man says, all the while admitting their truth. In one poignant section, the younger brother asks who can follow the commandments with so many at hand. The old man responds that it is 'the one who imitates the Lord and follows in his footsteps'.[19]

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[16] Specifically, the Son resists temptation, rejects hate and fulfills the commandments of love – to love God, neighbor and enemies – essentially showing how God fulfills his own command of love. The focus here is on the Son's resolve to resist the temptations of the devil in the desert showing his love of the Father. Yet he also shows his perseverance in society by responding to hate with love even forgiving his mockers at his crucifixion and thus demonstrating his love of neighbor and enemy.

[17] Maximus, *Ascetic Life* (CChr.SG 40, 311-7). Maximus' way of saying this is in the negative 'not be unaware' (μή ἀγνοεῖν) and is paired with the positive 'to know' (γνῶναι). The editor of the critical edition Van Deun highlights a possible allusion to 1*Cor*. 2:11 for the former.

[18] Maximus, *Ascetic Life* (CChr.SG 40, 311-23, 430-66).

[19] Maximus, *Ascetic Life* (CChr.SG 40, 50-1).

The young man, exasperated, asks, 'and who is able, Father, to imitate the Lord. For the Lord was God even though he became man. I am a sinful man, enslaved by a myriad of passions. So, how am I able to imitate the Lord?'[20] In a sagacious response, the old man replies that no one who is enslaved to the passions can imitate the Lord; only those who have renounced everything can receive power to imitate him and do his commandments.

Eventually, the old man will condense these commandments, as does Jesus in the Gospels, to loving God and loving neighbor and enemies. As the dialog continues and the young man's questions require that the old man expound each step of this process, a similar trope occurs – the old man states bluntly that God does not command the impossible but then states that it is impossible unless one keeps in mind the purpose of the incarnation. The effect is that the young man is slowly corralled toward an admission of his own weakness, fearfully submitting to God in humility where he finds the grace and power to live this life. In other words, he is led through the very process of ascent the old man has been rehearsing reordering his passions and focusing his intellect through the virtues of love, self-mastery, and prayer. It is no coincidence that the dialogue ends in prayer and doxology.

I now come to the *Capita de caritate* or *Four Centuries on Love* where Maximus builds on the basic foundation of Christian life presented in the *Ascetic Life*. As the name suggests, the *Four Centuries* are a collection of four sets of one hundred sayings. The prologue to the *Four Centuries* includes a direct reference to the *Ascetic Life* linking the two works to a recipient name Elpidius of which we know little.

There are several themes that are important to Maximus in the *Four Centuries* that fit into his overall purpose of demonstrating how one travels through the stages of ascent and reaches the heights of deification in perfect love which, as in the *Ascetic Life*, means love of God and loving both neighbor and enemy like God. I highlight three themes here that are immediately relevant to my investigation but by no means exhaust Maximus' concerns. The first theme betrays his concern to underscore the irreducible ontological space between God who is uncreated and creation and how, if they are so dissimilar, they can interact. Specifically, he is concerned to show how creatures are able to exist and be deified if they are entirely dependent on a transcendent God. This theme is a response to Origenist cosmology, which had muddied the metaphysical waters by suggesting that human beings had begun and would end their existence in a complete identity of essence, power, activity and knowledge with God.[21] A second theme betrays another concern of Maximus – the importance

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[20] Maximus, *Ascetic Life* (CChr.SG 40, 52-5).

[21] The third century especially focuses on this theme (VS 3, 144-92), but see also 4.1-15 (VS 3, 144-200). Polycarp Sherwood's study of Maximus' *Difficulties* is still foundational and he highlights that unity in the Origenist scheme revolved around essence (οὐσία), power (δύναμις)

of integrating both practice and knowledge to become a fully mature member of the baptized. Finally, a third theme is the explicit argument that if one wants to be perfect in love one must imitate God since he is love. To not love means to not know God. This process can be shorthanded thusly, what God is by nature; love, human beings can become by grace in cooperation with their will. Throughout the process of ascent and more explicitly than in the *Ascetic Life*, the Trinity is shown to be the beginning, means, and end of Christian life.

In the *Four Centuries*, Maximus articulates a process of ascent that is similar to that seen in the *Ascetic Life* but describes in more depth the activity of contemplation (θεωρία). This activity serves as a means of understanding God's wisdom and providence through creation (natural contemplation) and then through theological reflection culminates in a direct experience of God's presence through prayer. In both the *Ascetic Life* and the *Four Centuries*, prayer is the place of deification – where the mind is rapt in love and experiences God's luminous and abiding presence. This presence assists in the transformation and changing of the soul to be like God – in other words, to love like God. In the *Four Centuries*, Maximus adds to his earlier theme of double solidarity an explicitly ontological dimension. I will look at two passages from the *Four Centuries* that show how Maximus builds on these earlier insights from the *Ascetic Life*.

In *Century* 1.25, Maximus describes both God's nature and activity, stating, 'God, who is by nature good and without passion, loves all equally as his work ...'[22] However, the implementation of love differs according to the person's moral condition distinguished as either virtuous (ἐνάρετος) or base (φαῦλος).[23] The virtuous, because of their good will, are made to imitate God while the base are shown mercy and chastised in the hope that they will convert. Similar to the *Ascetic Life*, the call for an equality of love is not a call for a kind of naïve uniformity of action but rather action that demonstrates God's sustained care according to the needs of the person and God's purposes.[24] Maximus then describes the one who imitates God as 'those who by their will are good and without passion love all men equally'. They do so because they recognize a common nature regardless of the moral condition of the Other. Yet, like God,

and activity (ἐνέργεια), but this list should have also included knowledge (γνῶσις) which is clear from Maximus' writings and the canons of the Council of Constantinople (553 AD). See P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism*, Studia Anselmiania 26 (Rome, 1955) and more recently Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, 'The Foundation of Origenist Metaphysics', in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (2015), 149-63.

[22] Maximus, *Four Centuries on Love* 1.25 (VS 3, 58).

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] Brock Bingaman draws attention to God's accommodation to humanity in Maximus' overall corpus in *All Things New: The Trinitarian Nature of the Human Calling in Maximus the Confessor and Jürgen Moltmann,* Princeton Theological Monograph Series 213 (Eugene, 2014), 128-9.

their love accommodates the person's moral condition. There are several ways Maximus builds on his earlier understanding in this passage, however; what I want to draw attention to is the explicit ontological basis of his argument – the common nature of humanity – not just common temptation and weakness. Notice also, what God is by nature, those who imitate him must do by choice and an exertion of their will. Nevertheless, just as in the *Ascetic Life*, it is later explained that this choice and exertion of will are assisted and empowered by the grace of Triune God.[25]

Century 2.29 and 30 further expands the metaphysical aspect of his vision of love. In this case, Maximus explains the necessity of both knowledge (γνώσις) and action (πρᾶξις) in order to mature in the life of love and the power inherent in doing so. In 2.29, Maximus demonstrates this link by examining faulty knowledge of the Trinity. In this instance, the Tritheists and their theology come under scrutiny. Maximus draws on two phrases from the *Gospel of John* to uncover the Tritheist's inability to properly confess the unity and distinction of the Father and Son, which, by implication, means they do not love (worship) him properly. In 2.30, Maximus plays on the concepts of unity and distinction again in order to describe humanity but he is careful – avoiding the same words so as not to imply that God and humanity are exact ontological equivalents. Nevertheless, he highlights how despite clear differences between human beings, the one who is perfect in love, 'considers all human beings equal and is equally disposed towards all'. Those who have such love, 'have gotten the better of the tyranny of their passions and look to the one nature of human beings'. Maximus then adds another rational alluding to *Col*. 3:18, which focuses on the reality of living within an ecclesial existence stating 'for in him there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, slave nor free but all and in all is Christ'.[26] In summary, he demonstrates that regardless of whether one is inside or outside of Christ – equal love is necessary despite difference. Maximus uses the concepts of unity and distinction within natural and theological contemplation to show that the unity of nature should result in an equivalent practical response – equal love despite clear distinctions. To ignore this knowledge leads to problematic praxis in worship of God and human interaction.

Thus, Maximus conjoins a call in the *Ascetic Life* for love birthed out of solidarity with fellow human beings according to their shared experience of temptation and weakness with a call for equal love birthed out of recognition of their singular nature and on a common metaphysical feature of divine and human life – union and distinction. In both works, God serves as the primary example of imitation and in both cases the failure of love toward neighbor or enemy implicates the ascetic in a lack of love for God and a lack of understanding God's purposes.

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[25] Maximus, *Four Centuries on Love* 4.77 (VS 3, 228).
[26] Maximus, *Four Centuries on Love* 2.30 (VS 3, 106).

III. A brief extrapolation of Maximus' vision of love concerning nationalism, ethnocentrism, and religious persecution

Maximus' writings on love, I think, raise interesting questions about the origins and psychology of the three areas I have highlighted for my investigation. Before I move on, let me summarize some cogent aspects of Maximus' thought specifically on human conflict. Firstly, for Maximus, the origin of human conflict is a problem of *desire* not simply of ignorance. Desire is ultimately meant to be set upon the Uncreated beauty of the Trinity and grow into mature love not obsessed with worldly concerns nor with the fashioned beauties of creation useful, good and enjoyable though they may be. Tension is set when desire is wrongly directed at creation and the goods of worldly life are desired above love of God and others. The tension is then compounded by a diabolical agent whose primary goal is to entice humanity toward selfishness and reaches the breaking point when it leads to conflict and ultimately hateful, damaging and improper interactions with other human beings and God.

So, what would be the cause of nationalism, ethnocentrism and religious persecution from a Maximian perspective? Here I must make clear that I am extrapolating from Maximus' thought since he does not address nor could he address modern and specific cases of these three phenomena. In light of Maximus vision, the source of all three of these areas would likely be laid at the feet of misplaced and malfunctioning desire that in turn leads to self-centeredness or self-love and is complicated by fear and arrogance stemming from ignorance of others, self, God and God's purposes.

Conclusion

Maximus' engagement with the nature of human conflict brings into focus very specific questions about modern discourse concerning nationalism, ethnocentrism, and religious persecution. Specifically, the definitions and causes of these three areas are complex and the grievous practices and atrocities that can and do result from them cannot always or only be reduced simply to ignorance or backwardness. Public discourse often only scratches the surface of this complexity at times fixated on groupthink and pooled ignorance as the key cause. Maximus' vision questions this fixation and asks his audience to rigorously examine individual desire as another main source of conflict alongside individual or communal ignorance. Specifically, this might mean that while values and identity-based conflicts may arise out of stereotypes and ignorance, there may be more basic human impulses linked to economic and social goods that are significant contributing factors. Indeed, we can imagine cases in which ignorance is alleviated but malfunctioning desire remains resulting in extremes instances of nationalism, ethnocentrism, and religious persecution. For Maximus,

knowing is not enough but must lead to the transformation of desire resulting in solidarity, forgiveness and proactive love. From a modern perspective, this insight is not entirely new and more research both in the social sciences and in modern theology is beginning to look more closely at the role of desire in human life.[27] However, the diagnostic quality of Maximus' vision of ascent cautions glib acknowledgments of ignorance or wrongly placed desire. For Maximus, a superficial acknowledgment is not sufficient to stay hate and retaliation but requires renouncement, watchfulness and perception of where specifically one's ignorance lies and sober engagement with the process of redirecting one's desire. Public discourse does not always specify where exactly ignorance hides nor discern why hate and anger follow it even when it is alleviated.

Finally, for Christian communities, Maximus' vision provides a salient critique to complacent love based on biblical examples and a longstanding tradition of reflection on union with God. In Maximus' vision of love, the young man who is plagued by a thousand passions characterizes complacent love and is unable to love God, neighbor or enemy. If I were to extrapolate this insight, Maximus would see the cause of Christian complacency in areas like nationalism, ethnocentrism, and religious persecution as a result of not only ignorance but also misdirected desire. In the first instance, ignorance is not exclusively born from groupthink but an ignorance of God, self, and a solidarity shared with fellow human beings in their temptation, weakness, and need of God's mercy especially in light of the divine-human history told within the biblical narratives. It is also born of misdirected and malfunctioning desire, devoid of humility and the empowerment of the Triune God, which results in selfishness, fear, hate, and violence. Ultimately, to not understand the necessity of following the divine command of love is to not understand God nor the purpose of the incarnation. In Christian contexts, this would likely serve a more striking rebuke than indictments of some unspecified ignorance, backwardness or a lack of political and social savvy.

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[27] A recent exploration can be found in the first volume of Sarah Coakley's systematic theology *God, Sexuality and Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge, 2013).

The Priesthood in Maximus the Confessor

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ABSTRACT

Based on some of Maximus' writings this article describes how the Confessor understood the ministerial priesthood of the New Testament: its differences with the pagan and the old testament priesthood; its being based on the mistery of Christ through the imprinting of God's seal into the soul of the priest; its task of gathering together the God's people, attracting this people to its own virtue. These teachings of the Byzantine monk are considered from the perspective of the relationship between Christian sacramental rites and spiritual struggle and progress, in order to underline how both dimensions converge.

The thought of Maximus the Confessor synthesizes previous patristic theology, and, located in an early stage of the Byzantine period, is one of the sources that nourished Eastern Christianity. Although Maximus does not give us extensive and deep reflections on the priesthood, nevertheless he describes it in various passages. In *Relatio motionis*, the Confessor offers one of those descriptions when explaining that the Emperor is not competent to determine the dogma of the Church because he is not a priest:

He is not (competent), for neither does he stand at the altar, nor after the consecration of the bread does he elevate it saying: 'Holy things for the holy'. Nor does he baptise or perform the rite of chrismation, or ordain and make bishops and priests and deacons; nor does he anoint churches, or wear the symbols of the priesthood, the pallium (the 'omophorion') and the Gospel book, as the crown and the purple robe (are symbols) of kingship.[1]

Cooper has studied the doctrine of Maximus on the priesthood, considered as a hierarchical reality structuring the Church and making it the place where man can find God and enter into communion with him.[2] It is interesting, however,

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[1] *Relatio motionis*, in *Scripta saeculi VII vitam Maximi Confessoris illustrantia una cum latina interpretatione Anastasii Bibliothecarii iuxta posita*, ed. by Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil, CChr. SG 39 (Turnhout, 1999), 27, 183-90. See Luis Granados, *La synergia en San Máximo el Confesor. El protagonismo del Espíritu Santo en la acción humana de Cristo y del cristiano* (Siena, 2012), 560-1.

[2] See Adam G. Cooper, 'St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome', *Pro ecclesia* 10 (2001), 346-67.

to draw out other aspects of these texts. How important is the sanctity of the priest when he administers the sacraments? Or what is the relationship between the grace granted by the sacraments and the spiritual progress obtained by means of ascetical struggle?

I. The priesthood in the history of salvation

In *Quaestiones et dubia*, 40, Maximus explains why the priests of Christ do not marry, while for the priests under the Mosaic law it was permissible. He says: 'Because the priesthood of the gospel is believed to arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not after the order of Aaron; and it is not written that Melchizedek had a wife. Therefore, necessarily, the bishops, who exercise their priesthood after that order, do not come close to women'.[3]

According to the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, there are many features that link the figure of Melchizedek with Christ as a priest;[4] Maximus transfers this parallel to the Christian priest. The text is a bit ambiguous. At the beginning it states that all the priests of the New Testament are bound to celibacy, but then proceeds to specify that the obligation affects only the bishops, without explaining the contradiction that this statement implies. We can guess that there was a general law, the negligence of which was not tolerated when a bishop was involved.[5] The Confessor described these three priesthoods in other texts.

Thus, *Capita de caritate*, 2, 21, reads:

He who anoints his mind for the sacred contests and drives bad thoughts from it (ὁ πρὸς τοὺς ἱεροὺς ἀγῶνας ἀλείφων τὸν νοῦν καὶ τοὺς ἐμπαθεῖς λογισμοὺς ἀπελαύνων ἀπ' αὐτοῦ) has the characteristics of a deacon (διακόνου λόγον ἐπέχει); of a priest, however, if he illuminates it with knowledge of beings and utterly destroys counterfeit knowledge (ὁ εἰς τὴν γνῶσιν τῶν ὄντων φωτίζων καὶ τὴν ψευδώνυμον γνῶσιν ἐξαφανίζων); and of a bishop, finally, if he perfects it with the sacred myrrh of knowledge of the worshipful and Holy Trinity (ὁ τῷ ἁγίῳ μύρῳ τελειῶν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς προσκυνητῆς καὶ ἁγίας Τριάδος).[6]

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[3] Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἡ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἱερωσύνη κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ γενέσθαι πιστεύεται καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρών, Μελχισεδὲκ δὲ γυναῖκα ἐσχηκέναι οὐκ ἀναγέγραπται, ἀναγκαίως ἄρα καὶ οἱ κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ τάξιν ἱερατεύοντες ἐπίσκοποι γυναῖκας οὐ προσίενται, *Maximi Confessoris quaestiones et dubia*, ed. José H. Declerck, CChr.SG 10 (Turnhout, 1982), 7, 7-12.

[4] *Heb.* 7:3: 'Having no father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, is likened to the Son of God, remains a priest forever'.

[5] Stefan Heid, *Celibacy in the Early Church. The Beginnings of a Discipline of Obligatory Continence for Clerics in East and West* (San Francisco, 2000), 305-11, discusses the Justinian legislation on priestly celibacy and concludes that celibacy was demanded from the clerics and that this requirement was particularly strong in the case of bishops.

[6] See *Capita de caritate* 2, 21, in *Massimo Confessore. Capitoli sulla carità*, a cura di Aldo Ceresa-Gastaldo (Roma, 1963), 100.

Maximus refers to the priest's influence on the intellect through a symbolic interpretation of the caracteristic liturgical activities of the three degrees of priesthood: diaconate, presbyterate and episcopate. The influence attributed to each grade is based on the Evagrian doctrine of the three degrees of the spiritual life – practical philosophy, natural contemplation and theology[7] – a doctrine which the Confessor mentiones often in his works. It is, therefore, somewhat contrived, but the skill with which the allegorical method is applied allows us to understand clearly the relationship between the symbol and its meaning. The deacon annointed the catechumens for exorcism before their baptismal immersion,[8] thereby preparing them for spiritual battle; he plays his role as he prepares the faithful for holy battle and the rejection of their passionate thoughts. The presbyterate's task is to instruct the faithful in the homily; this embodies the function to enlighten the intellect of the faithful with the knowledge of beings, a reference to natural contemplation of the *logos* of each reality. The bishop was the minister of the sacrament of confirmation, which carries the candidate to perfection through the anointing with holy oil; this embodies to bring others to the height of spiritual perfection, which consists in the knowledge of the Holy Trinity. We find a precedent to Maximus in Pseudo-Dionisius who attributes to the deacon the mission of purifying those who approach priests in a dirty state, to the priests the power to illuminate these people, and to the bishop the power to bring them to perfection.[9]

Maximus believes that the priest's ministry to the faithful is successful when it has the following characteristics. First, if the teachings about the ascetical struggle moves them to order their passions. Second, when the priest teaches them to know beings correctly and to reject false science. Third, when he leads them to the perfection of the knowledge of the Trinity. Maximus sees in these three dimensions of the spiritual life the content of grace that the faithful receive from the ordained ministers in their three hierarchical levels. This surpasses a formalistic view of the reception of the sacraments.

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[7] See Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Lund, 1965), 354-5, who quotes *Centuria Gnostica* 1, 10 (PO 28.1, 20).

[8] See *Cirillo e Giovanni di Gerusalemme. Le catechesi ai misteri*, a cura di Antonio Quacquarelli, CTP 8 (Rome, 1977), 62 n. 7. Epiphanius of Salamis (*Panarion* 79, 3) and *Constitutiones apostolicae* 3, 15-6, indicate that deaconesses administered to women this part of the rite.

[9] See *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 5, 6-7 (PG 3, 508). Walter Völker, 'Der Einfluß des Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita auf Maximus Confessor', in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zur Patristik, Erik Klostermann zum 90. Geburtstag dargebracht* (Berlin, 1961), 331-50, 342, indicates, as L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator* (1965), 354-5, that the influence of Evagrius is perceptible here. Likewise, he says that though Maximus shares with Pseudo-Dionysius the reference to the three degrees of the priesthood, he differs from the latter because he does not explain their activity from the sacraments, but from the degree of piety. See also *St. Maximus the Confessor. The Ascetic Life. The Four Centuries on Charity*, ed. Polycarp Sherwood (Westminster, Maryland, and London, 1955), 254 n. 96.

Ideally, we should also touch on *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 45 and 36, which refer to the old Testament priesthood, and *Ambigua* 10 (PG 91, 1141D-1145A), which describes the priesthood of Melchizedek. The limits of a short article, however, do not allow us to elaborate on these Maximian considerations. Here we can only say that in these passages Maximus comments again on priestly figures in which he emphasizes aspects of their ascetical life through allegory. Thus, the Confessor explains the New Testament priesthood, the Old Testament priesthood and the pagan priesthood of Melchizedek, respecting the sacramental, sacrificial and spiritual contexts that characterize them respectively.

II. The priest is imprinted with the seal of God whom he manifests on earth

Maximus sent *Epistula* 21 to the bishop of Cydonia.[10] The Confessor praises him because he knew how to imitate Christ, by means of the knowledge of the mystery of God which he had previously attained. According to this mystery, God incarnated has joined the limited and unlimited being in himself, so that the limited can be manifested by the unlimited and vice versa, while in both He remains identical to himself and transcendent. The bishop of Cydonia, Maximus continues, 'wisely submitted himself to God meekly, as the wax is submitted to a seal, and having received Him, printed inside totally, was made a clear imitation of divine beatitude' (ἐμφρόνως ἑαυτὸν κηροῦ δίκην, ὥσπερ σφραγίδι τῷ Θεῷ εὐείκτως ὑπέθηκεν, ὃν δι'ὅλου εἰς τὸ βάθος ἐντυπωθέντα δεξάμενος, ἀρίδηλον μίμημα τῆς θείας ἑαυτὸν κατέστησε μακαριότητος). Since from his priestly dignity the bishop lowered himself to the basic level of Maximus' human nature, and raised Maximus' meanness to the height of the bishop's dignity through knowledge, so that each manifests the other reciprocally and remains identical to himself, he has implemented the nature of the 'priesthood, which God established through the imposition of hands to represent him on earth, to ensure that he may not cease being seen bodily and that his mysteries may not cease appearing to those with eyes to see' (ὡς τὴν ἱερωσύνην ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ γῆς ἀνθ'ἑαυτοῦ χειροτονήσας προὐβάλετο. Ἐφ᾽ ᾧτε καὶ σωματικῶς ὁρώμενος, καὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ μυστήρια τοῖς ὁρᾶν δυναμένοις μὴ διαλίπῃ φαινόμενα). He concludes that the bishop of Cydonia, by asking Maximus what he teaches, manifests his humility in such a clear way as to bring sinners to achieve a conversion to Christ.[11]

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[10] *Saint Maxime le Confesseur. Lettres*, ed. by Jean-Claude Larchet, Emmanuel Ponsoye (Paris, 1998), 45, date the letter in 626-8.

[11] See *Epistula* 21 (PG 91, 604B-604D). J.-C. Larchet, E. Ponsoye, *Lettres* (1998), 45, claim that the content of the letter is 'un subtil compliment où la personne de l'évêque et sa fonction sacerdotale sont présentés comme étant à l'image du Christ'.

The text unfolds five ideas. Jesus Christ unites his divine dignity to human humbleness in the economy, while he remains the same. The bishop of Cydonia has received a configuration with Christ, letting God conform him to himself, as wax is molded by a seal. Receiving that configuration, the bishop has also joined the priestly dignity to the humbleness of the sinful human condition, although he remains the same. Thus, he embodies the definition of the priesthood, that is, the means chosen by God to put someone on earth in his place so that this person makes God visible. Imitating the abasement of Christ, the priest is the ambassador of Christ before men and obtains their conversion. It is possible to perceive the logical concatenation of these ideas, which are based on the foundation of the Christian priesthood in Christ, the mediator, affirm that this participation in the mediation of Christ is given to man by a liturgical rite, which leads the priest to imitate the abasement of Christ, and describe the purpose for which God has willed the priesthood as a visible representation on earth of his mysteries, that is, to give continuity to the mission of Christ who calls everybody to conversion.[12]

The description of the unification of the high and low by God follows the logic of Chalcedonian theology, which attributes Christ's unity to his person and the diversity to the two natures joined to each other in that person. Nestorian theology instead limits the mediation of Christ to a local approach; and the Monophysite theology, at least in its most extreme form, thought that his humanity disappeared, absorbed by the divinity, so that the latter might work through the former. These doctrines manifest the way in which both schools conceived of the priesthood.[13]

The seal of God in the priest is described with the metaphor of the mark imprinted on the wax.[14] In the image, the term σφραγίς designates the imprint left by the seal; the *Traditio Apostolica* and other authors use this term to describe the signing – an anointing – which is the core of the rite of priestly ordination.[15] Maximus often affirms that God is inaccessible but manifests himself through different mediations, which make him accesible to men, *i.e.*, creation, Holy Scripture, and especially Christ and the saints who are made like

[12] According to Jean-Miguel Garrigues, Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, Alain Riou, 'Le caractère sacerdotal dans la tradition des Pères grecs', *Nouvelle revue théologique* 93 (1971), 801-20, 820, Maximus unifies in this letter the partial teachings on the priesthood offered by the preceding authors, harmonizing the liturgical, functional, ontological and dynamic aspects.

[13] J.-M. Garrigues, M.-J. Le Guillou, A. Riou, 'Le caractère sacerdotal dans la tradition des Pères grecs' (1971), 809-14, explain the Antiochian and the Alexandrian concepts of the priesthood.

[14] There is a polemic between Joseph Lécuyer, *Le sacrement de l'ordination. Recherche historique et théologique*, Théologie historique 65 (Paris, 1983) and André de Halleux, 'Grégoire de Nazianze témoin du "caractère sacerdotal"?', in *Patrologie et œcuménisme. Recueil d'études*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 93 (Leuven, 1990), 693-709, 703-8, that is beyond our research subject.

[15] See *Hippolytus Romanus. La tradition apostolique*, ed. Bernard Botte, SC 11 (Paris, 1968), Chapter 8, pages 59-61. The passage is studied by J.-M. Garrigues, M.-J. Le Guillou, A. Riou, 'Le caractère sacerdotal dans la tradition des Pères grecs' (1971), 801-3.

him and who reveal Christ through their behaviour.[16] In these instances, however, he does not use the liturgical term but others.

This liturgical setting unfolds in an existential imitation of the abasement of Christ.[17] The bishop of Cydonia performs this abasement asking Maximus what he already knows, to make Maximus realize his ignorance, lowering himself to the level of Maximus. In this way, Maximus expresses that the priest's life must follow the ontological transformation that ordination has operated in him.[18]

Through the imposition of the hands, the priest is placed by God as his representative on earth to make his mysteries visible.[19] The term χειροτονέω means both 'to choose' and 'to order', both meanings deriving from the basic sense 'to extend the hand'. In this liturgical context the meaning 'to order' looks more appropriated.[20] When he talks about the representation of the mysteries, Maximus seems to allude to the liturgical ceremonies.[21] The Confessor, in fact, describes the liturgy as a representation of the mysteries that the Church offers to the contemplation of the faithful. In *Quaestio ad Thalassium*, 63, 39-44, Maximus says that this representation 'perfects those who love the spectacle of its mysteries, retaining the pupil of their intellect impassive and firm' (συντηρεῖ δὲ τοὺς τῶν κατ'αὐτὴν μυστηρίων φιλοθεάμονας, ἀπαθῆ καὶ ἀρευμάτιστον τὴν κόρην τῆς αὐτῶν διανοίας φυλάττουσα), and that this is just one of the means by which the Church acts; others include her proclamation of the truth to unbelievers, and her consoling discourses to the suffering.[22] The *Mystagogia* contains countless descriptions of the deeper meaning of the solemn and evocative rites of the Eastern liturgy.

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[16] See *Ambiguum* 7 (PG 91, 1076 AC) and 21 (PG 91, 1249 BC), and *Epistula* 2 (PG 91, 400 CD), referring to righteousness; *Epistula ad Thomam* (PG 91, 1033A) says that Gregory of Nazianzus and Dionisius the Areopagite, being like Christ, made him present to others.

[17] According to L. Granados, *La* synergia *en S. Máximo el Confesor* (2012), 562, Maximus thinks that 'the Eucharistic elevation (by the priest in the Eucharist) does not stop at the revelation of the Holy, but involves the union of the priest to the obedient self giving of Christ'.

[18] J.-M. Garrigues, M.-J. Le Guillou, A. Riou, 'Le caractère sacerdotal dans la tradition des Pères grecs' (1971), 820, state: 'C'est dans l'abaissement volontaire à la suite du Serviteur Souffrant que le prêtre, ministre de la réconciliation, "prend sur la terre la place du Fils de Dieu, moyennant quoi, dit saint Maxime, Dieu ne cesse pas d'être vu corporellement" et l'efficacité de ses sacrements devient manifeste dans l'actualité même de la conversion des hommes, quand il "engendre en eux un grand salut"'.

[19] According to A.G. Cooper, 'St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome' (2001), 353, this is the central idea of the notion of priesthood that the letter contains.

[20] See J.-M. Garrigues, M.-J. Le Guillou, A. Riou, 'Le caractère sacerdotal dans la tradition des Pères grecs' (1971), 819. We cann't exclude the meaning 'choose', because bishops were often chosen by vote.

[21] Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor. Holy Flesh wholly Deified* (Oxford, 2005), 173, quotes this letter as one of the texts that better express the Maximian notion of the evangelical priesthood, and says that it must be understood in a liturgical context.

[22] *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium LVI-LXV*, ed. Carl Laga, Carlos G. Steel, CChr.SG 22 (Turnhout, 1990), 147.

The faithful who receive the embassy of the priest of Christ are invited to peace with God, laying down any confrontation caused by sin. The text of *2Cor*. 5:20 moved authors such as St John Chrysostom or St Cyril of Alexandria to expose their doctrine on the priesthood.[23] Maximus places the priest's role as ambassador of Christ alongside his task of making Christ present in the liturgy. The faithful who receive the embassy are called to be reconciled to God. Thus, Christ's work of mediation, in which he humiliates himself to elevate man, is now continued by his presence in the priest.

III. 'To gather the scattered children of God into one' (*John* 11:52)

In *Epistula* 28,[24] St. Maximus writes to John, bishop of Cyzicus. The threat of invasion had hung over the diocese, and many of the faithful had been taken to safer territories.[25] Once the threat had passed, the Confessor asked the bishop to gather his scattered faithful. Maximus starts his praise stating that John has performed well his duty 'of being an imitator of God's goodness on earth according to the grace of the episcopate that He has given to him' (τῆς θείας ἐπὶ γῆς κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσάν σοι χάριν τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης, τίμιε Πάτερ, μιμητὴς εἶναι λαγὼν ἀγαθότητος), 'without leaving unfullfilled any feature of the behaviour that characterize this grace, but keeping each one intertwined with the other continuously' (οὐδένα τῶν χαρακτηριζόντων αὐτὴν τρόπων ἀπληρωτὸν εἴασας, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἀλλήλοις ἐφεξῆς συνομαρτοῦντας ἔχων). 'You strive, Maximus adds, to adorn the mystery of the episcopate in the dress of the virtues, woven from the top by the Spirit' (τῷ ἄνωθεν ἐξυφασμένῳ διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος χιτῶνι τῶν ἀρετῶν ἐσπούδασας καλλοπίσαι τὸ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης μυστήριον).[26] And then he goes on to explain that since unifying God's children is a feature of divine goodness, those who were exiled far from the diocese should also return to that unity, thus preventing the devil from dividing

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[23] See Ioannes Chrysostomus, *In secundam epistulam ad Corinthios* 5, 20 (PG 61, 477-8), and Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *In II Corinthios* (PG 74, 944 BD), quoted by J.-M. Garrigues, M.-J. Le Guillou, A. Riou, 'Le caractère sacerdotal dans la tradition des Pères grecs' (1971), 806-8 and 811-2.

[24] See *Epistula* 28 (PG 91, 620D-621C). J.-C. Larchet, E. Ponsoye, *Lettres* (1998), 28-31, think that these letters were written between the years 626 and 632, and note that they express Maximus' desire to return to the monastery of St. George in Cyzicus, where he lived from 624 to 626.

[25] J.-C. Larchet, E. Ponsoye, *Lettres* (1998), 216 n. 2, identifie this danger with the Arabic invasion.

[26] L. Granados, *La* sinergia *en S. Máximo el Confesor* (2012), 162-5, quotes and comments *Quaestiones et dubia* 25, CChr.SG 10, 22, 13-7, and *Quaestio ad Thalassium* 4, in *Maximi Confessoris Quaestio ad Thalassium*, ed. Carl Laga, Carlos G. Steel, CChr.SG 7 (Turnhout 1980), 61, 15-6. 17-9. In the first text the tunic of Joseph was the intertwining of his virtues, for which his brothers bowed before him. In the second the seamless tunic of the Lord that the soldiers did not divide is the fabric of the virtues, woven from the top by the Holy Spirit.

the Church, with the result that the bishop may say with Christ: 'Here I am with the children whom you have given me' (*Gen*. 33:5):

Strive 'to gather the scattered children of God into one' (*John* 11:52), for this too is a mark of the divine goodness. And since you are head of the precious body of the Church of God, join its members with one another through the harmonious design of the Spirit. As herald of the divine teachings call them with a loud voice, establishing those far and those near, and bind them to yourself with the indissoluble bond of the Spirit's love.[27]

The bishop, therefore, is called by the grace received to imitate on earth the divine goodness, embodying various modes (τρόποι) of behavior. And unifying the Church is one of those features, which, according to Maximus, Christ performed. Cooper, therefore, correctly stated that the letter stresses the task of unifying the Church that is the duty of the bishop.[28] But it is also worth stressing that Maximus praises the bishop because he adorns the episcopate with the virtues, and thus Maximus manifests his appreciation for the effort to live in a manner worthy of the ministry.

In *Epistula* 30, Maximus returns to ask the bishop of Cyzicus to put an end to the exile of those who were away from the diocese in preventing a military invasion. Now Maximus directs his words to John's compassion. Some claim that, as fire has the power to draw to itself the underlying material, God also attracts those who want to obey his laws and who strive to live a pious life, 'and declaring the priesthood to be a picture which, in image-form, suitably portrays what it represents, they assert that it too, by the equally gracious law of compassion, draws up to God all who are under the same nature' (ὥσπερ ἐνυκόνι γραφὴν εὐφυῶς τὴν μίμησιν ἔχουσαν ὑπάρχειν λέγοντες τὴν ἱερωσύνην, καὶ αὐτὴν τῷ ἴσῳ κατὰ τὴν χάριν συμπαθείας νόμῳ, πάντων ἑλκτικὴν εἶναι τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτὴν φύσιν διαγορεύουσι). Since John 'was fortunate to bear on earth the image of God' (ταύτην [...] ἐπὶ γῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν εἰκόνα ἔχων λαχών), Maximus asks him to exercise this same mercy, taking back with him those who were exiled for fear of the coming invasion of enemies, because the danger of the invasion has ceased, and so to put an end to the harsh conditions of that exile. The Confessor asks John to remember him in his prayers to Christ, who kindly listens to the requests of unworthy men, and finishes by reminding him that if John benevolently hears the requests of one that is unworthy, he will be converted by the grace of the Spirit into another Christ to those who see him.[29]

The priesthood is described in this letter as an office which obliges those who exercise it to foster pity for others, which attracts to itself and unifies.[30]

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[27] *Epistula* 28 (PG 91, 621B).
[28] See A.G. Cooper, 'St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome' (2001), 351-2.
[29] See *Epistula* 30 (PG 91, 624D-625D).
[30] See A.G. Cooper, 'St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome' (2001), 352, who finds in *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 1,1; 1,5; 2,3 precedents of the expression 'interpreters

This unifying function is central to the thought of the Confessor, for salvation is understood as the recovering of the unity of nature that was broken by sin.[31]

In *Epistula* 31, the Confessor asks John, Bishop of Cyzicus, to provide accomodation for the nun, Eudoxia, and the priest, George, and to implement the unifying role that characterizes the priesthood as an imprint of God on earth. This unification consists in drawing others into one's knowledge, charity and peace, virtues in which the cognitive, concupiscible and irascible powers of the soul reach their perfection. These virtues have been granted to those who were introduced by the bishop in the mysteries, in order to be exercised in dealing with God. In this way, John puts into practice the mission of the priest, which is to be deified and to deify. As usual, Maximus also asks John for prayers, this time stating that the departure of Eudoxia and George make his situation more painful.

The description of John's priesthood is meaningful:

Just as the sun's rays suitably attract to it the healthy gaze which naturally delights in the light and imparts its own brightness, so also the true priesthood – being through all a visible representation of the blessed Godhead to those on earth – draws to itself every soul of devout and divine habit and imparts its own knowledge, peace and love, so that having borne each faculty of the soul to the final limit of its proper activity, it may present to God those sacramentally initiated by it as deified through all. For the goal of the rational activity of the soul is the true knowledge; of the concupiscible, charity; of the irascible, peace; as the goal of the true priesthood is to be deified and to deify around. For the natural use of our reason is to seek God; and we received the desire to long for God; and irascibility was given to fight just for him (for God). Further on, the goal of the search is the true knowledge; and of desire, a continuous and ardent charity; and of divine fighting, the peace that surpasses all knowledge.[32]

The priest exercises the office of attracting to his own deified state, for it is the mark of the blessed divinity for those on earth. Maximus repeats what was said in two previous letters, 28 and 30. This attraction is unfolded into a triple

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of the divine mysteries'. 'Picture in image-form' of the Lord's Passion is the expression with which *Catechesis of Jerusalem* 2, 5, describes the nature of baptism by immersion.

[31] See *Epistula* 2 (PG 91, 400D-401B).

[32] Ὥσπερ ἀκτὶς ἐπισπᾶται προσηνῶς τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν ὄψιν κατὰ φύσιν προσχαίρουσαν φωτί, καὶ τῆς οἰκείας λαμπρότητος μεταδίδωσι· οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀληθὴς ἱερωσύνη χαρακτὴρ οὖσα διὰ πάντων τῆς μακαρίας θεότητος τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς, πᾶσαν ψυχὴν κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν φιλόθεόν τε καὶ θείαν ἐφέλκεται πρὸς ἑαυτήν, καὶ τῆς ἰδίας μεταδίδωσι γνώσεως, εἰρήνης τε καὶ ἀγάπης· ἵνα πρὸς τὸ πέρας τῆς οἰκείας ἐνεργείας ἑκάστην τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνέγκασα δύναμιν, Θεῷ παραστήσῃ διὰ πάντων θεωθέντας τοὺς ὑπ'αὐτῆς μυσταγωγουμένους. Τέλος γὰρ τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν λογικῆς ἐνεργείας, ἡ ἀληθὴς γνῶσίς ἐστι· τῆς ἐπιθυμητικῆς δέ, ἡ ἀγάπη· τῆς δὲ θυμικῆς, ἡ εἰρήνη· ὥσπερ καὶ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἱερωσύνης, τὸ διὰ τούτων θεοποιεῖσθαί τε καὶ θεοποιεῖν. Ἐφ' ᾧ γὰρ ζητεῖν τὸν Θεὸν ἔχομεν φυσικῶς τὸ λογίζεσθαι, καὶ αὐτὸν μόνον ποθεῖν τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἐλάβομεν, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἀγωνίζεσθαι μόνον τὸν θυμὸν ἐκομισάμεθα. Τέλος δὲ τῆς μὲν ζητήσεως, ἡ ἀληθὴς γνῶσίς ἐστι· τοῦ δὲ πόθου, ἡ διηνεκὴς καὶ διάπυρος ἀγάπη· τῶν δὲ θείων ἀγώνων, ἡ πάντα νοῦν ὑπερέχουσα εἰρήνη (*Epistula* 31; PG 91, 624D-625B).

movement towards his own knowledge, peace and charity. The Confessor shows that the priest must possess these virtues to accompany his own priesthood. They are important because the deification of those who are initiated by him into the mysteries is an achievement of those same habits. This is the content of being deified and to deify, which is the activity of the priest. This description comes from Gregory of Nazianzus.[33] The priest offers to God those who have reached knowledge, peace and charity. This offering of the faithful to God by the priest recalls *Quaestio ad Thalassium* 45, 14-23 and the idea of the royal priesthood of the faithful.[34] Cooper rightly points out the mediating role of the priest in this letter: the priest reveals God to those on earth, and leads the initiated into the mysteries to God. Cooper underlines the importance of the notion of deification in this passage.[35] The Byzantine author contends that in those three virtues we find the proper purpose of the activity of the powers of the soul. Therefore, the deification of man brings about an improvement of humanity itself. He describes this in Aristotelian terms – potency and act, God as final cause – but also in Platonic ones, especially in his reference to the three faculties of the soul: the rational, irascible and concupiscible power.

Conclusions

The Confessor explains the difference between the Christian priesthood, which administers the sacraments and continues the mission of Christ, and both the priesthood of the Mosaic Law and that of Melchizedek. Maximus analyzes in depth the Christological roots of the priesthood, the sacramental and existential configuration with Christ, the mediator, and the liturgical and kerygmatic aspects of the priestly mission. And, lastly, he focuses on the priest's vocation to be a promoter of the unity of the church. With regard to the question about the relationship between the liturgical or ritual dimension and the ascetical aspects of the sacramental life, Maximus likes to say that the priest should be worthy of the grace of the priesthood he has received. *Exempli gratia*, Maximus claims that, consistent with the seal imprinted in his soul by ordination, the priest must humble himself; he praises those who adorn the priesthood by putting

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[33] See *Oratio* 2, 73, in *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours 1-3*, ed. Jean Bernardi, SC 247 (Paris, 1978), 186, 17-8.

[34] Irénée-Henri Dalmais, 'Mystère liturgique et divinisation dans la mystagogie de saint Maxime le Confesseur', in Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (eds), *Epektasis. Mélanges Patristiques Offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), 55-62, 56, quotes this passage from the *Epistula* 31, to prove that those who participate in liturgy receive the gift of participating in the mystery of unity lived by Christ, a mystery that has a cosmic signification, but that is also perceptible in the effort to live a charity whose most characteristic feature is to forgive the enemy.

[35] See A.G. Cooper, 'St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome' (2001), 352-3.

on the vestment of virtues woven by the Holy Spirit; he says that the task of unifying the people must be carried out with a compassionate heart; he affirms that the priest must come to possess understanding, peace and charity. He also says that those who receive the sacraments do not participate in a purely formal gesture. Instead, this reception entails detachment from earthly goods and the attainment of true knowledge of nature and of the Trinity. Further, each faithful must reconcile himself with God when he receives the word of the priest who calls him to conversion. The introduction into the mysteries is fulfilled when the priest draws the faithful into his own knowledge, charity and peace, thereby unifying the faithful with himself and offering them to God. The Confessor proposes a sacramental practice full of content which demands deification of the priest – his mission is to be deified and to deify – and communicates this deification to the faithful.

When Action Gives Way to Passion:
The Paradoxical Structure of the Human Person
according to Maximus the Confessor

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ABSTRACT

In his Dispute with Pyrrhus, Maximus the Confessor expressly rejected the commonly held notion that, in contrast with the divine nature, which is all act, human nature is characterised by passivity. On the other hand, Maximus also held that the act that finally deifies human beings is not their own, but divine. Human nature has its own proper activity, but this activity has its limit in 'rest', or the attainment of the object of desire, at which point deification is received or 'suffered'. This tension between human activity and passivity in the path towards fulfilment suggests a paradoxical structure of the human person, according to which 'natural activity' plays only a partial role. Rather the human person is only complete within an interpersonal, theandric dynamic marked by both giving and receiving, self-determination and ecstatic self-surrender, action and passion.

Near the beginning of his provocative 1893 thesis on human action, Maurice Blondel referred to the perennial temptation we all face 'to unload human acts of their incomprehensible seriousness and their mysterious reality…'[1] In the following exegetical and reflective analysis of a well-known passage in Maximus's *Dispute with Pyrrhus*, I would like to explore how the Christological controversy over the question of one or two activities in Christ – in which, historically speaking, Maximus played a pivotal and definitive role – might touch upon a far-reaching anthropological question concerning the profound and paradoxical character of human action in general. This question in turn is suggestive for shedding further light on a problem that underscores all of Christian and indeed human morality, namely, the collaboration of human and divine actions towards human fulfilment. Put another way, I want to discover whether Maximus' insights on human *energeia* in Christ help us to articulate a non-competitive account of human and divine freedom. Such an account, I believe, is of pressing need in the area of contemporary moral theology, which tends to

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[1] M. Blondel, *Action (1893): Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice*, tr. O. Blanchette (Notre Dame, IN, 2003), 16.

be dominated by two related deficiencies, namely legalism and extrinsicism.[2] Both in their own way fail adequately to address a most fundamental human dilemma, a dilemma which again Blondel, in deep harmony with the kind of Christian wisdom possessed by the greatest Church fathers, perceived with such perspicacity over a century ago: 'Man aspires to be a god: to be god without God and against God, [or] to be god through God and with God…'[3] With this dilemma in mind, I shall investigate the Maximian passage in question and try tentatively to discern what it can teach us.

Maximus' *Dispute with Pyrrhus*, the former Palestinian monk and deposed patriarch of Constantinople, took place in July 645, probably in Carthage.[4] It is now commonly recognised that the 'verbatim' account of this event was composed some 10 to 20 years later, not by Maximus himself, possibly in two or more redaction stages, and almost certainly with a new and somewhat distinct polemical agenda in mind.[5] Nonetheless, in the way that Plato's *Dialogues* are still accepted as reflecting the views of Socrates, for working purposes I accept here that the account of the *Dispute* more or less accurately conveys to us the essence of the dialogue as it unfolded.[6]

The passage in question occurs towards the end of the dialogue, in the section in which discussion has turned from the question of wills in Christ to the question of activities or *energeiai*. Maximus has just asserted the metaphysical co-ordination of *energeia* with *ousia* and *physis*. This is the fundamental ontological principle underscoring his whole Christology.[7] If Christ is of the same *ousia* as the Father, he is also of the same *energeia*. The implication is that if Christ possesses a human *ousia* or *physis*, he also possesses a human *energeia* or activity.[8]

It is at this point that Pyrrhus says: 'We do not say "one activity" in order to exclude the human activity, but because when [the human activity] is contrasted

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[2] See L. Melina, J. Noriega, J. Pérez-Soba, *Camminare nella luce dell'amore. I fondamenti della morale cristiana* (2nd edition; Siena, 2010).

[3] M. Blondel, *Action (1893)* (2003), 328.

[4] The dispute is referred to in the record of Maximus' trial as having taken place 'in Africa and Rome': *Relatio Motionis* §6 in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford, 2002), 60-1.

[5] See J. Noret, 'La rédaction de la *Disputatio cum Pyrrho* (CPG 7698) de Saint Maxime le Confesseur serait-elle postériere à 655?', *Analaecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999), 291-6; R.W. Strickler, *A Dispute in Dispute: Forgery, Heresy, and Sainthood in Seventh-Century Byzantium* (Master's Thesis, University of Kentucky, 2013); P. Van Deun, 'Maximus the Confessor's Use of Literary Genres', in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 274-86, 281-2.

[6] 'Maximian authorship is highly problematic, although the text reflects his theological views well'. P. Van Deun, 'Maximus the Confessor's Use of Literary Genres' (2015), 282.

[7] See this principle elaborated prior to the monothelite controversy in *Amb.Th*. 5.1-50 in B. Janssens (ed.), *Maximi Confessoris Ambigua ad Thomam una cum Epistula Secunda ad Eundem*, CChr.SG 48 (Leuven, 2002), 19-20.

[8] *DP* (PG 91, 349B). References follow the Migne edition, although I have also consulted the texts of M. Doucet (Montreal, 1972) and D. Pospelov (Moscow, 2004).

with the divine activity, it is said to be passive [πάθος]'.[9] On inspection, it appears that this statement faithfully expresses the impulse of the imperially mandated monoenergist position which by this time had become a pivotal issue. Much like the miaphysite Christology of the Severan tradition, and not unlike the so-called 'Logos-sarx' Christology of Apollinaris centuries before, mono-energism reflects an approach above all concerned to preserve the unity of Christ's person, to ascribe – in laudable Cyrillian fashion – all the actions and passions depicted of Christ in the Gospels to one single subject.[10] The main anal-ogy used to illustrate the Logos-sarx relationship in this tradition was the union between soul and body in a human being. In this relationship the body depends utterly on the soul for its existence, and is animated and moved by its life principle in all its actions: it has no movement or action of its own as such. Applying this conception to Christ, the relationship of the Logos to his humanity was primarily seen to be one of an active (divine) subject acting on, in, and through a passive (human) 'instrument' (ὄργανον), a key term of Athanasian Christology.[11]

In the 7th century, in his letter to Pope Honorius, prompted by Sophronius of Jerusalem's dissent from the 633 Pact of Union, Patriarch Sergius of Constan-tinople had expressed the matter in almost identical terms:

Just as our body is governed, and ordered, and subject to our intellectual and rational soul, so too in the case of Christ the Master his whole human constitution always and in every case was led by the Godhead of the Logos and divinely moved.[12]

Similarly, in the words of the *Ekthesis* (also composed by Sergius and published in 636 by Emperor Heraclius):

At no time did Christ's rationally ensouled flesh separately and on its own initiative perform its natural movement in a manner contrary to the command of God the Word hypostatically united to it, but God the Word himself decided when and how and to what extent.[13]

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[9] *DP* (PG 91, 349C).

[10] On the closeness of Cyril's Christology to that of Apollinaris on this question, see P. Gal-tier, 'Saint Cyrille et Apollinaire', *Gregorianum* 37 (1956), 584-609; A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451),* tr. J. Bowden (rev. edition; London, 1975), 329-43; F. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to its Literature and its Background* (London, 1983), 259-63; T.J. Carter, *The Apollinarian Christologies: A Study of the Writings of Apollinarius of Laodicea* (PhD thesis, Heythrop College: University of London, 2007), 280-5.

[11] Anatolios' caution against reducing the Athanasian *organon*-concept to purely analytical terms, and missing its primarily 'functional' and 'epistemological' dimensions, is noteworthy, but to my mind does not exclude its analytical overtones in the original texts. See K. Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of his Thought* (London, 1998), 70-3.

[12] P. Allen (ed. and trans.), *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh Century Heresy: The Syno-dical Letter and Other Documents* (Oxford, 2009), 190 (my translation).

[13] *Ibid*. 214. On the dating of the *Ekthesis*, see the reference to Janowiak's work in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (2015), 5.

What these expressions exhibit in common is an anxiety to avoid any formulation that might seem to open up in Christ a possible conflict between divine and human activity. Operating with what might be called a competitive view of the relation between divine and human action, its protagonists can only think of divinity and humanity in dialectical terms, as opposites in competition, that threaten to cancel each other out. Human nature, possessed of certain characteristic propensities, must in Christ therefore be fully instrumentalised and brought into harmony to the divine will, lest it rebelliously function as a second principle of activity. However, in giving this account of Christ's unity, monoenergist Christology undermines not only the reality of God's real solidarity in our human condition, but also the truly redemptive quality of Christ's human acts *as human* and in turn the affirmation of our possible participation or fellowship in them *as humans*. G.L. Prestige once eloquently expressed this problem as it appeared in Apollinarianism:

In the person of the Redeemer, the flesh is incapable of making either any response to divine leading, or any resistance to temptation; it is forcibly saved under the iron hand of the divine spirit … In the persons of those whom Christ came to save, who know the reality of the moral struggle and the power of temptation, how can the saving strength we need be imparted to us by a Saviour who not only is sinless … but never was even really tempted, and therefore never really conquered sin on the stricken battlefield of the human heart?[14]

Similarly for Pyrrhus, as for any representative of 'Heraclian Neo-Chalcedonianism',[15] the idea of two activities or two wills in Christ cannot but imply an internal opposition or contradiction. His position almost exactly echoes Apollinaris: 'It is impossible for two wills to exist together in one person without opposition'.[16] The only solution that presents itself, therefore, is to credit Christ's humanity with a purely passive, instrumental function. And indeed, compared to God who is pure activity, human nature is surely pure *pathos*, or at least, this is apparently how it should be, docile to God and malleable to his sovereign will.

Well, as we know, Maximus responds to this assertion with virtual ridicule. Allow me to reproduce the exchange:

M: Following this rationale, those who say 'one nature' are not denying the human nature, but since it stands in contrast to the divine nature, it is accordingly said to be passive [παθητική].

P: How so? Didn't the Fathers define human motion as passive [πάθος], in contrast to the divine activity?

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[14] G.L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* (London, 1958), 112.

[15] I borrow this epithet from C. Hovorun, 'Maximus, a Cautious Neo-Chalcedonian?', in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (2015), 112-5.

[16] *DP* (PG 91, 292A). See Apollinaris: 'There cannot co-exist two minds with opposing wills in one and the same subject'. *Fragment* 150, in G.L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* (1958), 110.

M: God forbid! For generally speaking nothing that exists in juxtaposition is either known or defined by comparison with its opposite. Otherwise the two things will be found to be reciprocally causative. For if it is because divine motion is an activity, human motion is passive [πάθος], then it certainly follows that because the divine nature is good, human nature is evil.[17]

Here we see that Maximus rejects any proposal that would suggest that in Christ the divine nature overwhelmed the characteristic operations of the human nature. In particular, he rejects the use of dialectic or oppositional contrast as a means of defining the human sphere relative to God. The dynamisms proper to divine action and human action must not be understood as competing forces.

From this brief exchange on this point, it would be tempting to conclude that Pyrrhus, intellectually out of his depth, had been soundly and adequately rebuffed. Maximus is surely right in rejecting the deposed patriarch's proposal of a purely passive humanity in Christ. Yet in insisting on the integral activity of Christ's human nature in this polemical context, was Maximus perhaps himself guilty of inadvertently inclining towards a Nestorianising Christology – not a thorough-goingly heretical version, let us say, but one more along the lines for instance of Karl Rahner's once wished-for 'orthodox Nestorianism'? In this version of Nestorianism, the concern is above all to avoid confusing the divine and human spheres in Christ, to give each its proper due, to delineate the respective properties with almost mathematical precision.

Is there where Maximus would lead us? In fact, I would suggest that we can justify Maximus' statement to Pyrrhus only by qualifying it with reference to the Confessor's wider theological anthropology. For in Maximus' teaching we find a much more subtle and paradoxical dynamic at work: human nature is characteristically passive or receptive in at least two ways: first, by virtue of its creation from nothing. Along with all other creaturely beings, it is marked by being moved, by a contingent metaphysical dependence upon a gratuitous communication of being. The second way is by virtue of its properly infinite goal and end, which it accomplishes not by actualising any natural potential, for which it has none, but again by receiving it entirely as gratuitous, un-elicited gift, so that the human person enters finally into his or her proper fulfilment not by any kind of natural activity, but precisely by the cessation of natural activity. In short, the key characteristic feature of human *energeia*, evident in both its origin and goal, is *pathos*.[18]

What within the immediate context of the *Dispute with Pyrrhus* would give us reason to qualify Maximus' position along these lines? First of all, the very

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[17] *DP* (PG 91, 349CD).

[18] On the earlier provenance of this theme in 4th century Alexandrian Christology, see Adam G. Cooper, 'The Gift of Receptivity: St Athanasius on the Security of Salvation', in Doru Costache, Philip Kariatlis, Mario Baghos (eds), *Alexandrian Legacy: A Critical Appraisal* (Newcastle, 2015), 93-109.

next exchange. There Maximus clearly concedes *pathos* to be the characterising motion or *energeia* of human nature. Nothing created by God or after God is 'self-productive or self-moved'. But this passible quality possessed of everything creaturely is not a consequence of any opposition to God, but is intrinsic precisely to its having been created by God.[19] In other words it is in its positive relatedness to God, its constitution as being-from-God and being-towards-God, that human nature unfolds itself in an essential receptivity and surrender to divine action. Prior to and inherent within all human activity is a suffering, a being acted upon, but not in the sense of imposition, but in the sense of the experience of a gift, a promise, an invitation. And with a bit of reflection, most people can arrive at this phenomenological intuition. As Blondel put it, most people 'know that they do not find within themselves either the origin, or the subsistence, or the end of their action'.[20] It is not difficult to sense that '[a]t the source of our acts, some mysterious unknown escapes us…'[21]

Yet there are times when Maximus seems to be in two minds, perhaps because the paradoxical nature of the dynamic he is trying to describe refuses reduction to the terms of his debate. For precisely in the aforesaid 'unfolding' of human nature in receptivity and surrender to divine action lies its proper, natural activity! On the one hand Maximus claims that everything human in Christ unfolds in a supernatural, transcendent manner. 'The natural properties of the will are present in him, but not in exactly the same manner as they are with us. For while he genuinely grew hungry and thirsty, he did so not as we do, but voluntarily, in a transcendent manner. In the same way he was also genuinely afraid, yet not as we are, but in a way that is beyond us'.[22] Yet when Pyrrhus asks whether the flesh of Christ was not at every stage moved by the command of the divine Word united to it, Maximus rebukes him for dividing Christ. Maximus explains himself by distinguishing between what pertains to Christ, and what pertains to the saints. Moses and David are moved by God first as by an extrinsic force: their receptivity to divine activity is fruit of a purifying ascesis, itself commanded by the divine Word. With Christ, by contrast, the receptivity of his humanity to divine activity is as it were effectively interior to its initial generation and ontologically prior to the actuation of any natural potential or inclination. Whatever activity issues from Christ by virtue of his human nature does so always and already in an entirely supernatural way.[23]

Yet here, once again, the difficulty Maximus finds in asserting human *energeia* in Christ without reference to its total qualification by the divine *energeia* says something not just about Christ but about the paradoxical structure of

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[19] *DP* (PG 91, 352AB).

[20] M. Blondel, *Action (1893)* (2003), 303.

[21] *Ibid*. 304.

[22] *DP* (PG 91, 297D-300A).

[23] *DP* (PG 91, 297AB).

every human person, indeed, of all created reality, as simultaneously active and passive: active by reception, receptive by action. Modally speaking, the situation with Christ is different from that of the saints. But the *logos* of his humanity is no different from theirs, and the underlying paradox identical. But it is not difficult to illumine this paradox with passages throughout the Confessor's writings.

Take, for example, a number of texts in his *Responses to Thalassius*. In *Response* 59, Maximus is explaining the passage in 1*Peter* 1:10-1 in which the biblical prophets' investigative inquiry and interpretative activity seem at odds with their dependence upon the interior prophetic witness of the Holy Spirit. Maximus is concerned to affirm that the gratuity involved in the Holy Spirit's activity in a person in no way leaves that person's natural powers unengaged. 'For it is incorrect to say that grace alone by itself effected in the saints knowledge of the mysteries apart from their receptive natural powers of knowledge'.[24] Then again, we should not think that knowledge of such mysteries simply follows from the exercise of natural human powers 'apart from the grace of the all-holy Spirit'. For otherwise 'the visitation of the Spirit to the saints would prove superfluous, in no way working in and with them for the manifestation of the truth'.[25] Here we see that both receptivity and activity imply and presuppose each other, though Maximus seems to end up attributing a certain prevenience to receptivity. Inasmuch as the faculties of human inquiry have been harmed by sin, they require the freeing and purifying power of God's gracious initiative to become effectively operational. 'It is obvious … that the grace of the Spirit in no way leaves the natural faculty unengaged, but rather grace begins to make the natural faculty – which had been left unengaged by the use of modes contrary to nature – active again…'[26]

A still more radical affirmation of the primacy of receptivity occurs in the very next response. Here Maximus compares two ways of knowing divine things: the one rational, which Maximus characterises by the terms *logos* and *noesis*, and the other experiential, characterised by the terms 'experience' (πεῖρα), 'perception' (αἴσθησις), and, most broadly, 'participation' (μέθεξις). In this case, it is not just a matter of giving priority to one form or of arranging them in the right order. Rather Maximus asserts a mutual exclusivity between the two. *Peira* and *aisthesis* represent forms of direct knowing or experience that cannot co-exist with rational knowledge of God. This direct experience, achieved 'through a participation by grace', renders conceptual knowledge completely redundant.[27] As Miquel once demonstrated in a rich study on this

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[24] *Q.Thal.* 59.28-31 in C. Laga and C. Steel (eds), *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium* vol. 2, CChr.SG 22 (Leuven, 1990), 45-7.

[25] *Q.Thal.* 59.35-40 (CChr.SG 22, 47).

[26] *Q.Thal.* 59.95-100 (CChr.SG 22, 51).

[27] *Q.Thal.* 60.63-93 (CChr.SG 22, 77-9).

topic, only by suffering divine things (πάσχων τὰ θεία), by actually experienc-
ing them, can one know them intimately, directly, and truly.[28] Any other kind
of knowledge is hardly worth the name. Thunberg called this reciprocity
between activity and passivity a 'dialectical synergism', whose interaction is
modelled on the interpenetration between the divine and human natures in
Christ.[29] I hesitate to affirm the descriptor 'dialectical', for it seems to take us
back towards the competitive account of the divine and human in Christ
espoused by Pyrrhus. Thunberg's point however is that the model yields two
dimensions in human receptivity. One, 'the most important element', since it
governs how we relate to God in deification, appears purely passive. The other
involves a certain kind of 'subtle cooperation', a 'passive activity', a giving way
or letting be that allows a 'reciprocal interplay' between human and divine
activities.[30] Portaru seems to be closer to the mark in speaking of two distinct
but continuous degrees of participation, the first involving a kind of 'active
energeia' in this life, the second a 'passive *energeia*' in the next.[31]

The *Ambigua to John* further articulate what we might call an all-embracing
metaphysics of divine-human exchange in which creaturely *pathos*, innovated
afresh by Christ, 'manifests a paradoxical, wondrous power' such that 'being
acted on' it comes to 'act outside the limits of its own laws'.[32] Again and again
this paradoxical dynamic of activity and passivity functions as a controlling,
structuring motif for Maximus' elaborations on ontology, Christology, soteriology,
and spiritual progress. God, the uncaused cause of all beings, is both desire and
desired, love and beloved, active subject and passive object, moving himself
by arousing movement in others, 'thirsting to be thirsted for, desiring to be desired,
loving to be loved.'[33] In the economy of the incarnation, Christ 'actively performs
and passively suffers the things of nature in a manner beyond nature…'[34] The
redemptive activity of the cross shines out most visibly 'in the inactivity and
mortification of those who have been nailed to it'.[35]

It is true that deification by grace and rebirth by the Spirit rest in some way
on self-determining choice and ascetic transformation.[36] Similarly, the redemptive
conversion of unwelcome and involuntary sufferings depends on their deliberate

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[28] P. Miquel, 'Πεῖρα: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire de l'expérience religieuse dans l'œuvre de Maxime le Confesseur', *SP* 7 (1966), 355-61.

[29] L. Thunberg, 'Spirit, Grace and Human Receptivity in St. Maximus the Confessor', *SP* 37 (2001), 608-17, 608.

[30] *Ibid*. 609 and 616-7.

[31] M. Portaru, 'Gradual Participation according to St Maximus the Confessor', *SP* 68 (2013), 281-93.

[32] *Amb.Io.* 42 (PG 91, 1341D) in N. Constas (ed. and trans.), *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers* vol. 2, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 172 (my translation).

[33] *Amb.Io.* 23 (PG 91, 1260BC; Constas, 6).

[34] *Amb.Io.* 31 (PG 91, 1280B; Constas, 48).

[35] *Amb.Io.* 32 (PG 91, 1284A; Constas, 56).

[36] *Amb.Io.* 42 (PG 91, 1345D; Constas, 180).

appropriation with humility and thanks.[37] Still again, the Saviour can only be received into our lives in proportion to our faithful practice of God's commands.[38] And yet there is no cause and effect relation between virtue and grace. While the virtues do not proceed from anything but a willing will, they are nonetheless not human deeds but 'the works of God'.[39] Just as being itself is communicated to us as sheer and total gift, unanticipated and unpredicted, so eternal well-being 'by no means exists as a natural potential within beings, nor does it follow by necessity from the willing of free choice'.[40] Deification is all donation. There is in created human nature no 'receptive potential' of any kind that prepares the ground for it or that functions as some kind of Rahnerian 'supernatural existential'. If there was, deification would no longer be gratuitous 'but the manifestation of an activity in accordance with some natural power'.[41] Paradoxically bringing nature's potential and free will's restless activity to a halt, deification – received by a capacity that is itself supernaturally given by an 'undisclosed' [ἀνέκφαντος] modality – can only be suffered in a state of overwhelming and God-wrought surrender, for having been moved and finally come to rest in the perfect end that is without end, it belongs to creatures 'to suffer by experience that which is without definition'.[42] In the presence of such a gift, within the origin from which our own freedom arises, desire receives its complete deiform shape and so infinitely expands under the spell of its lover. Here alone, where free will can no longer move or be moved, lies true freedom![43]

At the beginning, I set myself the task of discovering whether Maximus' insights on human *energeia* in Christ help us to articulate a non-competitive account of human and divine freedom. While Maximus sometimes goes so far as to employ rather far-reaching competitive and dialectical formulations, in light of the overall evidence it seems to me that the key to understanding his account lies in the way Maximus envisions Christ making *pathos*, which we have seen is the determinative characteristic of human *energeia*, the singular path to a really divine life. It is as though the *pathos* written into human nature

[37] *Amb.Io.* 53 (PG 91, 1372D; Constas, 236).

[38] *Amb.Io.* 53c (PG 91, 1373CD; Constas, 238-40); cf. *Amb.Io.* 60 (PG 91, 1385A; Constas, 262); *Th.Oec.* II 76.

[39] *Q.Thal.* 5.9-12 in C. Laga and C. Steel (eds), *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium* vol. 1, CChr.SG 7 (Leuven, 1980), 65.

[40] *Amb.Io.* 65 (PG 91, 1392AB; Constas, 276-8).

[41] *Amb.Io.* 20 (PG 91, 1237A) in N. Constas (ed. and trans.), *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers* vol. 1, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 408-10; also *Opusc.* 1 (PG 91, 33A-36A). On the western Catholic doctrine of deification, see Adam G. Cooper, *Naturally Human, Supernaturally God: Deification in Pre-conciliar Catholicism* (Minneapolis, 2014).

[42] *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91, 1073B; Constas, 84-6); see also *Cap.* XV 7 (PG 90, 1180C); *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91, 1076C; Constas, 90); *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91, 1088D; Constas, 112-4); *Amb.Io.* 15 (PG 91, 1217C; Constas, 368-9); *Amb.Io.* 65 (PG 91, 1392B-D; Constas, 279); *Q.Thal.* 22.93-8 (CChr. SG 7, 141).

[43] *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91, 1073CD; 1089BC; Constas 86-88; 114-6).

and the structure of the cosmos typifies, as a kind of metaphysical lesion, God's own passion and cross. 'All visible things need a cross', says Maximus, for only in this way can they receive the efficacious imprint of salvation.[44] With this remark Maximus echoes an old Irenaean meditation: in so far as he stamps upon all things the visible form of his cross, God's Son is crucified in them, forging a communion with them in his life-giving death.[45] Any attempt to know God, to live the truth and do what is right that refuses this path of *pathos*, this call from within our own being to live from and within the wound of love, is bound to short-circuit, to fall short of the ecstasy that properly traces the way to human fulfilment.[46] It is characteristic of 'the blessed passion of holy love', by which we joyfully suffer the divine *energeia* to penetrate and fill the pathos of our being, to diffuse and liquefy the idolatrous self.[47] Although Maximus felt the need later to ensure he was not misunderstood, this is precisely what he meant in *Ambiguum* 7 when he asserted that our destiny is reached when 'through all there is only one sole activity, that of God and of those worthy of God, or rather of God alone, who in a manner befitting his goodness wholly interpenetrates all who are worthy'.[48] Enfolded within the pioneering *pathos* of the incarnate Lord, impassioned and captivated by the nuptial embrace of the divine Lover, man becomes God, human *energeia* at last wholly transparent to the one and only glorious activity of its maker.

Which brings me back to Blondel. Blondel would have been horrified by any attempt to use his philosophy to minimise the moral and metaphysical gravity of human action. Action, in his view, 'is indelible'. The consequences of human action 'unfold to infinity, in space and time, as if to reveal the interior energy of action through the visible extent of its effects'. Moreover, 'a fatality weighs on our conduct which, for being less obvious, is all the more dreadful'.[49] Our actions do more than just define us. They come to constitute a metaphysical rock that even God cannot, and will not step over.

But this is precisely why *pathos*, suffering, receptivity is the key to our redemption. Because only in pathos is the way open for human action to surpass itself and enter into God. To refuse this suffering, to reject its mortifying transfiguration, is not to live, but to die. 'Not to be changed, for man, is the death of action. Hence he will be able to live only by being reborn, so to speak, in the labor of a new childbirth and by opening himself up to another action than his own'.[50]

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[44] *Th.Oec.* I 67.

[45] Irenaeus, *Demon.* I 34. See further H. Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (London, 1963), 46-68.

[46] *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91, 1073D; Constas, 88).

[47] See *Car.* III 66.

[48] *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91, 1076C; Constas, 90); see *Opusc.* 1 (PG 91, 33AB).

[49] M. Blondel, *Action (1893)* (2003), 306-7.

[50] *Ibid.* 329.

Body and Soul Immovably Related:
Considering an Aspect of Maximus the Confessor's
Concept of Analogy

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Abstract

The thesis of this article is that Maximus Confessor attempted to relate the disciplines of Trinitarian Theology, Christology and Anthropology according to an analogical method in order to create an overarching synthesis. Past scholarship has elaborated this fact for the distinction of λόγος and τρόπος. Maximus makes this distinction operational in all of the areas of his thought. Since the λόγος of divine nature is one, Maximus, due to his use of this principle of the λόγος in Christology and Anthropology, was required to show that the human nature also consisted of one λόγος. I argue that for him, the human being or more precisely the unity of body and soul can be understood in the light of the inseparable relationship of the divine persons in the Trinity. Integrating Christology into his analogical method as well, Maximus does not refrain from using the human composite as a paradigm for Christ's unity of natures, but adds an important difference: there is natural or necessary correspondence or analogy between body and soul, yet free and voluntary analogy between Christ's divine nature and his human nature. Maximus' concept of analogy is thus visible in the interaction or interpenetration of soul and body in the human person, of Christ's divine and human natures, as well as of God and creation. Through such interaction and mutual self-gift, which constitute analogy, we can glimpse something of the Trinitarian life of divine goodness, which is for Maximus the cause of creation.

1. The λόγος-τρόπος distinction

When writing on Maximus the Confessor it is immensely helpful to look at the thought and historical developments unfurled in the 6th century AD. Not only can this look at the past deliver a wider context for Maximus' thinking, it also provides a starting point for research on the major and programmatic intentions of Maximus in his fight against the Monotheletists and Monenergists. Severus of Antioch is still a theological factor in Maximus' time, although he also uses him as a foil wherewith he examines his contemporaneous opponents. The major milestone in the 6th century, the 5th ecumenical council of Constantinople held mostly under the auspices of emperor Justinian, who attempted to unify the warring factions of Chalcedonians, Neo-chalcedonians, Monophysites

and Nestorians.[1] The formula *unus ex trinitate crucifixus est* set the task of relating Trinitarian Theology and Christology for theologians who strived to remain orthodox and a host of arguments revolved around this central point.[2] Maximus put a solution forward that could be termed 'analogical'.

Using the Word 'analogy' in describing the Confessor's thought, one might easily be charged with an imprecision. This term is loaded with so many different connotations that it is hard to determine its precise meaning for Maximus. For this reason, I will first state preemptively that I use the term 'analogy' to describe a fundamental congruity in Maximus' thought between Trinitarian Theology, Christology and Anthropology. Upholding this congruity against his opponents was a fundamental concern also of Leontius of Byzantium, who fought against the view that terms carry different meanings in Trinitarian Theology and Christology (θεολογία and οἰκονομία).[3] Maximus would claim that terms such as nature or person used in either of these fields do not carry the exact same meaning. However, they are not simply equivocal, but stand in a cause-effect or archetype-image relation, as Maximus says in *Letter* 6.[4] According to our reading, Maximus claims that there is no sameness, but a similitude between God and the world as well as an infinite difference. This similitude he describes as the echo of the voice of the Logos in creation.[5] The philosophical mind is even able to reason (λογίζομαι) from the movement of the human person to the moving cause, God. According to the new date-list by Jankowiak/Booth, *Letter* 6 was written c. 628 AD.[6] This puts it very close to the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, which were written before 633/4.[7] There we find further illustration of Maximus' understanding of the close relationship between Trinitarian Theology, Christology and Anthropology.

As an example of past research on this question we can turn to the distinction of λόγος and τρόπος. There we have an example of the interplay between the

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[1] Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, vol 2/2, Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert*, unter Mitarbeit von Theresia Hainthaler (Freiburg im Breisgau, 2004), 333-59.

[2] Justinian related both subjects himself in his *edict* of 551 (CPG 6885): See *ibid*. 446-9.

[3] See Leontius von Byzanz, *Epilyseis (Solutiones Argumentorum Severi)*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, *Leontii Byzantini opera omnia*, Patrologia Graeca 86.2 (Paris, 1865), [hence-forth cited as *Epil*.], 1921B.

[4] See Maximus Confessor, *Epistolae*, ed. Franc Combefis and Jacques Paul Migne, *Maximi Confessoris opera omnia*, Patrologia Graeca 91 (Paris, 1865), [henceforth cited as *Ep*.], 428C-429C. Even though here Maximus uses the word ὁμονύμως to describe the God-world relationship, he is clearly thinking of more than mere equivocity when he qualifies the term along the lines of a participation of the world in God.

[5] *Ibid*. 429B-C.

[6] Marek Jankowiak and Phil Booth, 'A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor', in Pauline Allen and Neil Bronwen (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 19-83, here 31-2.

[7] *Ibid*. 28-9.

different disciplines within Theology. Different scholars have stated that the correlation of λόγος and τρόπος was used in Trinitarian thought as well as in Christology and Anthropology both prior to Maximus as well as by Maximus himself.[8] Originating in the Trinitarian controversy, the distinction was used in the 4th century by Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Caesarea and Ps.-Basil., *Adv. Eun. IV-V*, then later by Ps.-Justinus. Gregory uses the distinction against Eunomius, in order to safeguard the unity of the λόγος of the divine substance, whereas the different τρόποι of generation signify the different hypostases in the Trinity.[9]

Ps.-Basil. is in *Adv. Eun. IV* less concerned with the manner of generation, since he uses the term τρόπος τῆς ὑπαρξέως for the Father as well, who is not generated. The key meaning is not the way of origination, but the way of relation (τρόπος τῆς σχεσέως), so that origination and relation become more or less synonymous in the Trinitarian context. Interestingly, Ps.-Basil. uses the term τρόπος for the humanity of Christ as well, when he puts the virginal way of origination of Christ next to Adam's, Eve's and Abel's way of originating.[10]

If we concede that ὕπαρξις and ὑπόστασις are synonymous at that time, then Gregory of Nyssa applies the concept of τρόπος τῆς ὑπαρξέως to the virginal birth of Christ as well.[11] He, therefore, already has this transference of Trinitarian terminology to Christology, even though it is far from the technical usage Maximus makes of it.[12]

One could say that Maximus takes up this transference or analogy of terminology preceding him and develops it into a technical form in his thinking. He could have taken a cue for this technical usage from Leontius of Byzantium, who demands a congruent terminology in the whole discipline of theology and compares the usage of the term φύσις in Trinitarian Theology, Christology and Anthropology to the sides of an equilateral triangle, which stand in a strictly proportional relation to each other.[13] Maximus would also apply this congruity

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[8] See Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism*, Studia Anselmiana 36 (Rome, 1955), 155-64; Felix Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn als Mensch. Die Struktur des Menschseins Christi bei Maximus Confessor*, Paradosis. Beiträge zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur und Theologie 26 (Fribourg, 1980), 32-58.

[9] *Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium I-II*, ed. Werner Jaeger, Gregorii Nysseni opera I (Leiden, 1960), 170,2-12 (§§495-7).

[10] *Ps.-Basilius von Caesarea, Contra Eunomium*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, *Basilii Caesareae Cappadociae Archieposcopi opera omnia quae exstant vel quae sub eius nomine circumferuntur*, Patrologia Graeca 29 (Paris, 1857), 681B.

[11] *Gregor von Nyssa, Antirrheticus adversus Apolinarium*, ed. Friedrich Müller, Gregorii Nysseni opera III,1 (Leiden, 1958), 223,23-224,3.

[12] See F. Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn* (1980), 57.

[13] See *Leontius von Byzanz, Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, *Leontii Byzantini opera omnia*, Patrologia Graeca 86.1 (Paris, 1865), 1292C-D. More precisely the three sides of the triangle stand for the nature of the Father, of the Logos and of the flesh respectively.

to the distinction of λόγος and τρόπος. However, he differs significantly in the metaphysical framework with respect to Leontius. One could even say, as Heinzer and von Balthasar did, that Maximus' Christological method is a systematic application of Trinitarian terminology.[14] Further down it will become clear that Maximus implements Trinitarian terminology in Anthroplogy as well.

Maximus applies the distinction of λόγος and τρόπος to Christ respectively his human nature, as can be seen from a classical passage in *Ambiguum* 42.[15] There, Maximus says the following:

Πᾶσα γάρ, καθόλου φάναι, καινοτομία περὶ τὸν τρόπον τοῦ καινοτομουμένου πράγματος πέφυκεν, ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ τὸν λόγον τῆς φύσεως γίνεσθαι, διόπερ ὁ μὲν λόγος καινοτομούμενος φθείρει τὴν φύσιν, οὐκ ἔχουσαν τὸν καθ' ὃν ἐστι λόγον ἀραδιούργητον, ὁ δὲ τρόπος καινοτομούμενος, φυλαττομένου δηλαδὴ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν λόγου, θαύματος ἐνδείκνυται δύναμιν, ὡς τὴν φύσιν ἐνεργουμένην τε καὶ ἐνεργοῦσαν ὑπὲρ τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἀποδεικνὺς δηλονότι θεσμόν. Λόγος δὲ φύσεως ἀνθρωπίνης ἐστὶ τὸ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα καὶ ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς εἶναι τὴν φύσιν καὶ σώματος, τρόπος δὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ ἐνεργεῖν καὶ ἐνεργεῖσθαι φυσικῶς τάξις ἐστίν, ἀμειβομένη τε πολλάκις καὶ ἀλλοιουμένη, τὴν δὲ φύσιν ἑαυτῇ παντελῶς οὐ συναμείβουσα.[16]

The λόγος of nature, and here specifically of human nature cannot be changed, whereas the τρόπος is a malleable component. In order to make useful the λόγος-τρόπος distinction for Christology and Anthropology, Maximus has to overcome the 'Platonic' obstacle of treating the human being as consisting of two natures as opposed to the one divine nature of Christ, and he has to make clear how they should be considered one synthetic nature, consisting of soul and body so as to keep in line with the Chalcedonian teaching of two natures in Christ. Only then can he have a proper congruence between the one divine nature of Christ and the one created nature of the human being in the spirit of Leontius of Byzantium.[17] The strength Maximus sees in the λόγος-τρόπος distinction is precisely that it affords Christological language the possibility of balancing difference and unity: Difference of natures and unity of

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[14] See F. Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn* (1980), 58.

[15] Maximus Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua. Volume II*, ed. Nicholas Constas, 2 vols., Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 29 (Cambridge, MA and London, England, 2014) [henceforth cited as *Amb. (Constas II)*], 172,12-25 (PG 91, 1341D).

[16] Translation by N. Constas: 'Every innovation, generally speaking, takes place in relation to the mode of whatever is being innovated, not in relation to its principle of nature, because when a principle is innovated it effectively results in the destruction of nature, since the nature in question no longer possesses inviolate the principle according to which it exists. When, however, the mode is innovated so that the principle of nature is preserved inviolate it manifests a wondrous power, for it displays nature being acted on and acting outside the limits of its own laws. Now the principle of human nature is that it consists of soul and body, and this nature consists of rational soul and body, whereas its mode is the order whereby it naturally acts and is acted upon, frequently alternating and changing, without however in any way changing nature along with it'.

[17] Rejecting that the two natures of Christ are one composite nature follows from that. See *Ep.*, 515C-524D.

person. However, this Chalcedonian balance only holds for Maximus if the unity of the human nature can be shown. Otherwise we have three λόγοι in Christ. This leads us from the λόγος-τρόπος distinction to the question of the unity of human nature and the relation (σχέσις) of body and soul as the condition of the possibility of an analogical method.

2. Unity of body and soul

Leontius of Byzantium and Anastasius I of Antioch, both living in the 6th century AD, pinpoint the unity of the human nature on the logical level. The one definition of man, a rational and mortal being, can be predicated of many individuals. The features of rationality and mortality are lumped together in the definition, but there is no satisfying ontological explanation of their unity, even though Leontius describes the predicability of the one definition of many as a kind of participation of the individuals in the one nature of the species.[18] Other than that there is the mere mention of a relation (σχέσις) of body and soul without a clear account of their union, simply the *fact* of the union is thereby expressed. The same term appears already in Nemesius' treatise *On the Nature of Man*, where he probably takes it over from Porphyry.[19]

Maximus clearly stands in the stream of this tradition (which can be gauged from his terminology in *Amb*. 7 and 42) without, however, taking the same logical approach to the unity of human nature as Leontius and Anastasius did. On the contrary, he takes the ontological or, shall we say, the theological approach, thereby developing the concept of the σχέσις of body and soul. Polycarp Sherwood's dictum fits here as well as it matches the context of the distinction of λόγος and τρόπος, in which he uttered it: 'The distinction put in this way makes operative a whole range of Aristotelian doctrine in the service of theology – as to the Trinity, as to the Economy, as to anthropology'.[20] Criticizing the σχέσις of body and soul as some sort of accidental relation, where it is up to the soul to be in communion with the body, Maximus rejects the Platonic notion of an independent soul, relating to the body only as a lover to the beloved, as Nemesius seems to have put it.[21] Maximus on the other hand defines this relation much more strictly as immovable, respectively unchangeable (ἀκίνητος):

Ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν τοιγαροῦν ἡ σχέσις, ψυχῆς λέγω καὶ σώματος, ὡς ὅλου εἴδους ἀνθρωπίνου μερῶν ἀναφαιρέτως νοουμένη, παρίστησι καὶ τὴν ἅμα τούτων γένεσιν, καὶ

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[18] See *Epil.*, 1917B. He merely follows Porphyrius' *Isagoge* here.

[19] See Heinrich Dörrie, *Porphyrios' 'Symmikta Zetemata'*, Zetemata. Monographien zur klassischen Altertumswissenschaft 20 (München, 1959), 10.

[20] P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua* (1955), 161.

[21] Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, ed. Morani, *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig, 1987), 41,16-9.

τὴν κατ᾽ οὐσίαν πρὸς ἄλληλα διαφορὰν ἀποδείκνυσιν, οὐδὲν καθ᾽ οἷον δήποτε τρόπον τοὺς κατ᾽ οὐσίαν αὐτοῖς ἐμπεφυκότας παραβλάπτουσα λόγους. Οὐκ ἔστιν οὖν ὅλως σῶμα δυνατὸν ἢ ψυχὴν εὑρεῖν ἢ λέγειν ἄσχετον. Θατέρῳ γὰρ ἅμα συνεισάγεται τό τινος εἶναι θάτερον· ὥστε εἰ προϋπάρχει θατέρου θάτερον, ὡς τινὸς προσυπακουστέον. Ἡ γὰρ σχέσις ἀκίνητος.[22]

In this passage we find Maximus affirming that body and soul together make up the one human species containing an essential relation which cannot be thought of without its parts. Here he lists one feature of a composite nature which he also mentions in *Ep.* 13: the simultaneous coming into being of all parts.[23] The genius of the Maximian synthesis is that he claims the unity of the species while at the same time keeping the difference of the parts, again with the help of the λόγος-τρόπος distinction. As opposed to Christology and Christ's parts, here he fuses the parts of the human being into the one λόγος of a composite human nature, so that soul can never be said or thought of without body, because a soul always belongs to a certain body – a very Aristotelian idea. This he would not allow in Christology where he clearly differentiates between the two natures. Here we have the point of difference then in the analogy between Christ and the human being's unity: Christ's unity is a voluntary one, whereas man's unity is a natural unity, an unchangeable relation of body and soul.[24]

Interestingly, when we contextualize this concept, we find the word σχέσις accompanied by the adjective φυσική in Anastasius I of Antioch's writings in a Trinitarian sense.[25] As I would like to argue, there is a clear connection

[22] Maximus Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua. Volume I*, ed. Nicholas Constas, 2 vols., Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 28 (Cambridge, MA and London, 2014) [henceforth cited as *Amb. (Constas I)*], 141 (PG 91, 1101C). Trans. N. Constas: 'Thus the relation of the two, by which I mean soul and body, as the whole human form whose parts can be separated only in thought, reveals that both come into being simultaneously, and demonstrates their essential difference from each other, without violating in any way whatsoever the principles of their respective substances. For this reason it is inconceivable to speak of (and impossible to find) the soul and body except in relation to each other, since each one introduces together with itself the idea of the other to which it belongs. Thus, if either were to exist before the other, it would have to be understood as the soul or the body of the other to which it belongs, for the relation between them is immutable'.

[23] *Ep.*, 13, 517A.

[24] This already von Balthasar has seen: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie. Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners* (Einsiedeln, 1961), 239-43. See also *Ep.* 13, 525D-528B, where Maximus explains the difference between a composite hypostasis und a composite nature. In 528B he spins Leontius' yarn of a logical unity of body and soul in the human species further by explicitly claiming that the composite character is part of human nature itself, precisely because it is commonly said of all human beings. He also turns Leontius' argument on its head, by showing that what is commonly said is what constitutes the nature, and not the other way round that what can be said to be one by logical predication and common appearance does not necessarily have to be so in nature. As he says in 529B, the parts of a composite nature come into being simultaneously; the synthesis is a result of creation.

[25] *Anastasius I of Antioch, De orthodoxa fide orationes* V, ed. Stergios N. Sakkos, *Anastasii I Antiocheni opera omnia genuina quae supersunt* (Thessaloniki, 1976) [henceforth cited as *ek. dogm.*], 26,15-23.27.

between φυσική and ἀκίνητος in Maximus' thought. If ἀκίνητος signifies unchangeability as much as immovability, then it corresponds to the λόγος of nature, which remains unchangeable, as we have seen. Having established this interrelation, we could assume without proof that Maximus has read this passage in Anastasius and drew inspiration from this concept of an unchangeable relation for his anthropology. Yet did he also relate the term σχέσις ἀκίνητος to the Trinity? When looking at the immediate context, Maximus relates the Trinity to the structure of the human being earlier in *Amb.* 7, where he treats Gregory of Nazianzen's point that just as the Trinity consists of νοῦς, λόγος, πνεῦμα, so does the human being. Here is the quote from Nazianzen:

Ἤιδει γάρ, ὡς εἰ πρὸς ὃ ἔχομεν ουσίᾳ τε καὶ λόγῳ τὰς ἐμφάσεις κατὰ λόγον καὶ φύσιν εὐθυπορήσαιμεν ἁπλῇ προσβολῇ, καὶ ἡμεῖς, πάσης τῆς οἱασοῦν ζητήσεως χωρίς, περὶ ἣν μόνην ἐστὶ τὸ πταίειν καὶ σφάλλεσθαι, θεοειδῶς κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν τὰ πάντα εἰσόμεθα, μηκέτι δι' ἄγνοιαν τῆς περὶ αὐτὰ κινήσεως ἀντεχόμενοι, ὡς Νοῖ τῷ μεγάλῳ καὶ Λόγῳ καὶ Πνεύματι τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦν τε καὶ λόγον καὶ πνεῦμα, μᾶλλον δὲ ὅλῳ Θεῷ ὅλους ἑαυτοὺς ὡς ἀρχετύπῳ εἰκόνι προσχωρήσαντες.[26]

The second part of this quote is of importance. Gregory, in an almost Augustinian fashion, relates the human being's faculties to the Trinity according to the archetype-image relation of God and man. As we see here, Maximus had the relation of Trinitarian Theology and Anthropology in plain sight when writing *Amb.* 7, down to the level of the concrete parts that constitute the human being. Crucially, in *Amb.* 24 Maximus explicitly relates the term σχέσις ἀκίνητος to the relation between the Father and the Son. Another supporting piece of the thesis that the term σχέσις had a Trinitarian connotation for Maximus can be gleamed from his use of it in the exposition of the *Our Father*.

Εἰ δὲ ἀεὶ ὤν, ἀεὶ καὶ πατήρ ἐστι καὶ βασιλεύς, ἀεὶ ἄρα καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον οὐσιωδῶς τῷ Πατρὶ συνυφεστήκασιν, ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὲ ὄντα καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ φυσικῶς ὑπὲρ αἰτίαν καὶ λόγον, ἀλλ' οὐ μετ' αὐτὸν γενόμενα δι' αἰτίαν ὕστερον· ἡ γὰρ σχέσις συνενδείξεως κέκτηται δύναμιν, τὰ ὦν ἐστί τε καὶ λέγεται σχέσις, μετ' ἄλληλα θεωρεῖσθαι μὴ συγχωροῦσα.[27]

The σχέσις understood in this way binds the Father and the Son together so that they necessarily belong to each other and leaves no room for a temporal

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[26] *Amb. (Constas I)*, 110 (1085D-1088A). Transl. N. Constas: 'For he knew that if we were to progress simply and in a straight course, in accord with reason and nature, toward that which is reflected in our substance and intellect, without any kind of searching whatsoever (for only in searching is there the possibility of stumbling and going astray), we too, as much as is possible for us, would know all things in a Godlike way, no longer being held back in ignorance by the motion that envelops them, because our intellect, reason (logos), and spirit will have drawn near to that great Intellect, Logos, and Spirit, indeed our whole self will have returned to the whole God as an image to its archetype'.

[27] Maximus Confessor, *Expositio orationis dominicae*, ed. Peter Van Deun, CChr.SG 23 (Turnhout, 1991), 41,250-42,257 (PG 90, 884C).

posteriority or anteriority of one of the relates, just as with the relation of body and soul. We can adduce further similarities: As the Father naturally generates the Son, so the soul brings life to the body. And as the Son reveals the Father, so the body reveals in his movements the movement of the soul. The simultaneity of body and soul was one of the main concerns of Maximus in his refutation of the Origenists. Considering that all thinking in that age needed to make use of commonly acknowledged paradigms for substantiating any claims, what better place to look for an analogical simultaneity of 'parts' than in the Trinity and the relation between the Father and the Son?

3. Comparing composite human nature and Christ's composite hypostasis in terms of analogy

In *Ep*. 13, tentatively dated by Jankowiak/Booth to 629-633,[28] Maximus speaks of the analogy between the simultaneous parts of a composite nature by using the Greek term ἀναλογία. We have to give the whole passage for the sake of intelligibility:[29]

Ὁ δὲ μὴ κατὰ πρόσληψιν σαρκὸς ὁμολογῶν ἀτρέπτως ἐνανθρωπῆσαι τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγον, οὐδὲν τῶν εἰρημένων κατ᾽ οὐδένα τρόπον ἀληθῶς ὁμολογεῖν δυνήσεται. Πῶς γὰρ εἰ μὴ προϋπῆρχεν ἀνάρχως ὁ Λόγος, κατὰ θέλησιν σάρκα προσέλαβε κατ᾽ οὐσίαν διάφορον; ἐφ᾽ οὗ μάλιστα, καθάπερ οἶμαι, κυρίως ἡ τοῦ ἑτεροφυοῦς λέγεται γεγενῆσθαι κατὰ πρόσληψιν ἕνωσις· ὡς μόνου τε καὶ μόνως ἀπαθῶς τε καὶ ἀληθῶς προσλαβόντος τὸ ἑτεροούσιον, καὶ ἄτρεπτον ἑαυτὸν παντὶ λόγῳ τε καὶ τρόπῳ φυλάξαντος καὶ ἀπλήθυντον, καὶ τὸ προσληφθὲν ἀναλλοίωτον· ὅπερ ἀμήχανον ἐπὶ τῆς γενητῆς γενέσθαι φύσεως· ἐφ᾽ ἧς ἅμα τῇ γενέσει τῶν μερῶν, εἰς ὅλου τινὸς κατ᾽ εἶδος συμπλήρωσιν, κατὰ τὴν ἀθρόαν πρὸς ἄλληλα συνδρομήν, πᾶσα γίνεσθαι πέφυκε σύνθεσις, ἴση κατὰ τὸ ὅλον τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα τῶν μερῶν ἀναλογίαν φυλάττουσα· καθάπερ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῶν ἔχει, καὶ τῶν ὅσα σύνθετον ἔχειν τὴν κατ᾽ εἶδος ἔλαχον φύσιν.

Maximus opposes the composite hypostasis of Christ and the composite nature of human beings and other composites. The composite hypostasis of Christ is the result of a free assumption of human nature by the divine Son, who pre-exists in the divine nature as one divine person of the Trinity. By assuming a human nature he keeps his identity as divine Son and freely acts as such. The concept of a composite hypostasis of course has its prehistory during the 6th century AD with proponents such as Justinian and Leontius of Jerusalem, who saw the usefulness of this concept for the theopaschitic formula. As for Maximus, this free hypostatical synthesis allows for a posterior existence of one of its parts, whereas a natural synthesis necessitates the synchronous generation of its parts, a completion of a new species as well as, importantly,

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[28] M. Jankowiak and P. Booth, 'Date-List' (2015), 33-4.
[29] *Ep*. 13, 532A.

a 'natural-necessary' analogy or congruity between all the parts of the composite whole.

Apparently, the composite nature is set apart from the composite hypostasis by Maximus due to the lack of 'analogy' between Christ's human nature and his divine nature as parts of a whole. However, the main difference between the two syntheses should be rather obvious: one is free, the other is involuntary - natural. The embodied soul possesses certain bodily faculties that correspond to (literally: are analogous to) the activities of the soul. Maximus makes that explicit in the next passage of *Ep.* 13:[30]

Ἐφ᾽ ἡμῶν γὰρ ἀναλογούσας ἡ ψυχὴ ταῖς οἰκείαις ἐνεργείαις τὰς φυσικὰς ἔχει τοῦ σώματος δυνάμεις, ὡς δεκτικοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ὄντος διὰ τὴν αὐτῆς ἀθρόαν ἅμα τῇ σαρκὶ πρὸς τὸ εἶναι γένεσιν. Ὁ δὲ Θεοῦ Λόγος, κατ᾽ οὐδένα λόγον ἢ τρόπον ἀναλογούσας ἔχων ταῖς οἰκείαις κατὰ φύσιν ἐνεργείαις τῆς ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ προσληφθείσης φύσεως τὰς δυνάμεις· οὐ γὰρ μετρεῖται φύσει τὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν· οὐδὲ τι τὸ παράπαν ἐν τοῖς οὖσίν ἐστι κατὰ φύσιν αὐτοῦ δεκτικόν.

The point here, in my view, is not that there is no analogy at all between God and the world, but that the correlation or analogy between body and soul belongs to the natural realm and is necessary or unchangeable. The soul is given over to the body, which is able to receive and 'comprehend' the activity of the soul due to the simultaneous coming into being of both body and soul, just as much as the body is handed over to the soul, which possesses the body and is acting within it. The divine nature of Christ however, is not necessarily entering into such a relation with created nature, because Christ's divine nature is supernatural and transcends such a necessary and reciprocal implication in created nature, which cannot measure or comprehend the supernatural.[31] If we would equate natural respectively necessary analogy with analogy proper in Maximus, then all analogy seems necessarily 'unfree' and the concept would be useless for trying to describe the relation between God and the world.

It seems, though, there is some kind of revelatory, 'free' analogy between divine and human nature for Maximus as Christ forms a free synthesis of both

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[30] *Ibid.* 532B.

[31] I take issue here with M. Jankowiak's and P. Booth's description of Maximus' rejection of a (*notabene*: necessary!) correspondence between Christ's divine faculties and the faculties of his assumed nature as 'unguarded' and 'imprecise'. Rather, Maximus seems to be countering Sergius' view uttered at the Union of Alexandria 633 and in his letter to Pope Honorius 633 that there exists an analogy between Christ's two natures and the human being, whereas the human body is understood mostly as an instrument of the soul. Analogically, the human nature of Christ is considered a passive instrument moved by the divine nature and therefore lacks a 'proper' energy. Apparently, then, Maximus in *Ep.* 13 attempts to qualify Sergius' use of the anthropological paradigm. See Karl-Heinz Uthemann, 'Das anthropologische Modell der hypostatischen Union. Ein Beitrag zu den philosophischen Voraussetzungen und zur innerchalkedonischen Transformation eines Paradigmas', in *id.*, *Christus, Kosmos, Diatribe. Themen der frühen Kirche als Beiträge zu einer historischen Theologie*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 93 (Berlin, 2005), 166-8.

natures in his person. We find several indications in Maximus' texts that *firstly* he does indeed use the word 'analogy' to describe the relationship between God and the world and *secondly* he does not refrain from using the body-soul composite as a paradigm for the same relation, even though we saw its 'involuntary' character.[32] We will adduce some textual evidence for both points without claiming to be exhaustive at all. In fact we will only review some passages in the *Ambigua* for reasons of space.

Regarding the first point (using the term 'analogy' to describe the relationship of God to the world), *Amb.* 35 is probably the clearest statement of Maximus on this point:[33]

Τὸν πολλάκις εἰρημένον μέγαν ἐρωτήσας περὶ τούτου καὶ σοφὸν γέροντα δηλοῦν ἔφη διὰ τούτων τὸν μέγαν καὶ θεοφόρον Γρηγόριον τὸ τὸν αὐτὸν Θεὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ μόνον, οἷα δὴ ἕνα κυρίως ὄντα, μηδὲν ἑαυτῷ τὸ παράπαν συνεπινοούμενον ἔχοντα κατὰ τὴν φύσιν διάφορον, ἐν ἑαυτῷ τε μόνον ἔχοντα τὴν ἀπερινόητον, ἄναρχόν τε καὶ ἄπειρον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον μονιμότητα, ἐξ ἧς 'κατὰ ἀπειρόδωρον χύσιν' ἀγαθότητος τὰ ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος παραγαγεῖν τε καὶ ὑποστήσασθαι, θελῆσαι καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀναλόγως τοῖς ὅλοις καὶ τῷ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀχράντως μεταδοῦναι τὴν πρὸς τὸ εἶναι καὶ διαμένειν ἑκάστῳ χαριζόμενον δύναμιν.

The last part is important for us: Due to an all-giving outpouring of goodness God freely wants to give himself analogically to all and to each by giving each the power to be and to remain. Further down he continues:[34]

κατὰ τὸν ἅγιον καὶ θεοείκελον μέγαν Διονύσιον τὸν Ἀρεοπαγίτην φάσκοντα, 'τὸ ἓν ὑμνητέον ἐπὶ Θεοῦ, τῷ πάντων ὑπεξαιρεῖσθαι, εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἀγαθότητι παραγαγόντα τήν τε τῶν νοητῶν πᾶσαν διακόσμησιν καὶ τὴν τῶν ὁρατῶν εὖ πρέπειαν, ἀναλόγως ἑκάστῳ τῶν κτισμάτων κατά τινα λόγον ἀπόρρητον σοφίας ἀμειώτως ἐνυπάρχειν, καὶ μηδενὶ τρόπῳ τὸ σύνολον πάλιν κατέχεσθαι, τοῖς μὲν κατὰ περιττὴν ἀγαθόδωρον χύσιν, τοῖς δὲ μέσως, τοῖς δὲ τὸ κατά τι γοῦν ἐξεικονίζειν αὐτὸν δύνασθαι.' Καὶ τοῦτο ἂν εἴη τυχόν, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀφροσύνην, 'τὸ χεῖσθαι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὁδεύειν,' τὸ τὸν ἕνα Θεὸν ἀναλόγως πρὸς τὰ δεκτικὰ τῇ μεταδόσει τῶν ἀγαθῶν πληθύνεσθαι.

Against the expectations of a reader of *Ep*. 13, here the creatures are able to comprehend, or, rather receive the divine gifts (one might add: just as the body is able to receive the soul), even though God himself is not in any λόγος or τρόπος contained by or bound up with creation (whereas the soul and the body form the one λόγος of human nature). Likewise, God is fully present in all creatures in an analogical way according to the λόγος of his wisdom. The specific principle of this kind of analogy between God and the world seems to be the

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[32] Considering the possibility of applying this analogy to the Christological context, Maximus would be more neo-chalcedonian than Justinian, who discards its use by Cyrill. See A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus, vol 2/2* (2004), 471.

[33] *Amb. (Constas II)*, 68 (1288D).

[34] *Ibid*. 68-70 (1289A-B).

goodness and the freedom of God, who gives himself fully to creation without being identified or swallowed up by it. Without question, Maximus draws inspiration for this thought from Gregory of Nazianzen and Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite. However, Maximus clearly uses the word ἀναλόγως in a wider sense than in *Ep*. 13.

Gregory, as we have seen, may also be the source of inspiration for the second point we would like to argue for: using human nature as a paradigm for the relationship the world has to God.[35] Indeed Maximus does so in *Amb*. 7, where he uses terminology similar to *Amb*. 35, in order to explain the body-soul relationship and then claims that it reveals something about the higher mystery of Christianity:[36]

Εἰ δὲ τῆς νοερᾶς ψυχῆς ὡς ἀνθρώπου ὑπάρχει τὸ σῶμα ὄργανον, δι᾽ ὅλου δὲ τοῦ σώματος ὅλη χωροῦσα ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ ζῆν αὐτῷ κινεῖσθαι δίδωσιν, ὡς ἁπλῆ τὴν φύσιν καὶ ἀσώματος, μὴ συνδιατεμνομένη ἢ συναποκλειομένη αὐτῷ, ἀλλ᾽ ὅλῳ καὶ ἑκάστῳ τῶν αὐτοῦ μελῶν, ὡς πέφυκεν αὐτὴν ὑποδέχεσθαι κατὰ τὴν φυσικῶς ὑποκειμένην αὐτῷ δεκτικὴν τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτῆς δύναμιν, ὅλη παροῦσα τὰ διαφόρως αὐτῆς δεκτικὰ μέλη ἀναλόγως πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἓν εἶναι σῶμα συντήρησιν ἐπισφίγγει, ὁδηγείσθω ἐπὶ τὸ μέγα καὶ ἄρρη τὸν τῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν μακαρίας ἐλπίδος μυστήριον, ἐκ τῶν μικρῶν καὶ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς τῶν μεγάλων καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἀγεννῆ λαβὼν τὰ εἰκάσματα, ὅστις ἀπαγῆ καὶ εὐκράδαντον περὶ τούτων ἔτι τὴν διάνοιαν κέκτηται.

What he means by this Christian mystery he has explained earlier in *Amb*. 7: the hypostatic union leading to the Church as the body of Christ, of which we are members whom Christ unifies and harmonizes with himself as the soul does with the body in the spirit:[37]

Τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν, νῦν δὲ φανερωθὲν διὰ τῆς τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ ἀληθινῆς καὶ τελείας ἐνανθρωπήσεως, τοῦ ἑνώσαντος ἑαυτῷ καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν ἀδιαιρέτως τε καὶ ἀσυγχύτως τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν, καὶ ἡμᾶς διὰ τῆς ἐξ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡμετέρας νοερῶς τε καὶ λογικῶς ἐψυχωμένης ἁγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκός, ὥσπερ δι᾽ ἀπαρχῆς ἑαυτῷ συμπηξαμένου, καὶ ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ εἶναι κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωπότητα καταξιώσαντος, καθὼς προωρίσθημεν πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν αὐτῷ εἶναι μέλη τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ψυχῆς τρόπον πρὸς σῶμα ἐν πνεύματι συναρμολογοῦντος ἑαυτῷ καὶ συμβιβάζοντος.

Having established some understanding of one aspect of the concept of analogy for Maximus we have to ask lastly how the two applications of the concept (God-world, soul-body) relate to each other. On first glance, the difference between free and unfree analogy seems straightforward. Considering it more closely however, this difference seems so fundamental that it is hard to refrain

[35] Maximus quotes Gregory's phrase from *Oration* 2, which is quite explicit: 'What God is to the soul, the soul is to the body'. See *Amb*. 7 *(Constas I)*, 120 (1092B-C).
[36] *Ibid*. 7, 134 (1100A-B).
[37] *Ibid*. 7, 130 (1097B).

from judging both forms of analogy to be equivocal and exclusive. However, if the analogy of body and soul is simply a natural and 'mathematical' proportion, then how can this kind of analogy describe the relation of the soul impressing upon the body and expressing within it the soul's higher faculties, which are reason and, most importantly for Maximus, free will culminating in virtues of different degrees? And what does such a proportion have to do with God's free creation and revelation? As a passage from *Amb.* 21 will show, this impression and expression of the virtues is precisely the task of the soul, which has to 'logify' the senses of the body with the help of reason in order to become familiar with and see into the spiritual λόγοι of things:[38]

Οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ κινουμένη τε σοφῶς καὶ ἐνεργοῦσα καθ' ὃν καὶ ἔστι καὶ γεγένηται θεοτελῆ λόγον, τῶν μὲν αἰσθητῶν χρησίμως διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀντιλαμβάνεται, τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς πνευματικοὺς λόγους οἰκειουμένη, τὰς δὲ αἰσθήσεις αὐτάς, λογισθείσας ἤδη τῇ τοῦ λόγου περιουσίᾳ, ὥσπερ ὀχήματα λογικὰ προσίεται τῶν αὐτῆς δυνάμεων, αὐτὰς δὲ τὰς δυνάμεις ταῖς ἀρεταῖς συνάπτει, καὶ ἑαυτὴν διὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν τοῖς ἐν αὐταῖς θειοτέροις λόγοις, οἱ δὲ θειότεροι τῶν ἀρετῶν λόγοι τῷ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀφανῶς κεκρυμμένῳ πνευματικῷ νῷ, ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς νοῦς τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀρεταῖς θειοτέρων λόγων, πᾶσαν τῆς ψυχῆς ἣν ἔχει πρὸς τὰ παρόντα *φυσικήν τε καὶ προαιρετικὴν σχέσιν* διωθούμενος, ἁπλῆν ὅλην ὅλῳ δίδωσι τῷ Θεῷ, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς ταύτην δι' ὅλου περιλαβὼν μετὰ τοῦ συμπεφυκότος αὐτῇ σώματος ἀναλόγως αὐτὰ ἐξομοιοῖ ἑαυτῷ, ὥστε δι' αὐτῆς ὅλης ἀπεριγράφως ὅλον φαίνεσθαι δύνασθαι, τὸν μηδαμῶς τινι τῶν ὄντων καθ' ὁτιοῦν ἐξ αὐτοῦ φαίνεσθαι φύσιν ἔχοντα.

Here Maximus speaks again of God analogously making the soul and body of the human being similar to himself and appearing wholly within the soul that gives himself to him without himself being contained or manifested completely by any being. The italicized passage makes the point that the soul's relation to present beings, which we assume include the body, is both natural as well as free and up to the soul to be shaped and corrected. The natural and unchangeable aspect of the relation of body and soul does not exclude the human being's fundamental freedom. On the contrary, this analogical relation allows for the interplay of inner agency and outward bodily expression, forming the very basis of loving communication and self-gift between human beings. Thus, for Maximus, freedom and nature (τρόπος and λόγος!) do not exclude but, rather, entail each other.[39]

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[38] *Ibid.* 21, 434 (1249B-C) (my italics).
[39] We could adduce a passage from the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, where he makes precisely this point: *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, ed. Franc Combefis and Jacques Paul Migne, *Maximi Confessoris opera omnia*, Patrologia Graeca 91 (Paris, 1865), 293B-296A. Maximus was perhaps not the author of the *Disputatio* himself, as several researchers such as Jaques Noret, Christian Boudignon and others have remarked. See especially Jacques Noret, 'La rédaction de la 'Disputatio cum Pyrrho' (CPG 7698) de saint Maxime le Confesseur serait-elle postérieure à 655?', *Analecta Bollandiana: Revue critique d'hagiographie* 117 (1999), 291-6. However, the disputation seems to accurately portray the thought of Maximus.

His concept of 'analogy' includes both aspects of 'mathematical - proportional' necessity as well as freedom of self-expression and is coherent when applied to body and soul as well as God and world. As we said, for Maximus the outpouring of divine goodness in creation seems on the natural level to be most accurately expressed through the natural and free self-gift of the human person through the mutual interpenetration of her soul and body. Analogically, Maximus terms this interaction of the parts of a whole in Christology the περι-χώρησις of Christ's human and divine natures. In the incarnation, the starting point is again the divine goodness termed φιλανθρωπία, which Christ expresses in his person. Again, on the Trinitarian level, the free self-gift of the Father, who expresses himself fully or analogically in the Son, reveals the nature of God, which is one with his freedom.

We hope to have shown the plausibility of the thesis that the Confessor consistently refers all the areas of Theology, Christology and Anthropology to each other on the basis of what we could call an analogical method. With this hermeneutical principle in place it is possible to glimpse a way towards a solution of other questions in Maximus' thought – fertile grounds for future research.

Deification and the Workings of the Body:
The Logic of 'Proportion' in Maximus the Confessor

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ABSTRACT

'Proportion' (ἀναλογία) is one little examined term that Maximus the Confessor often chooses to elucidate his doctrine of deification. The aim of this article is to introduce Maximus' notion of proportion, and to highlight that it is most basically a biological rather than a theological tool: a tool, that is, for describing the workings of the body. In this way, when Maximus describes deification as a reality that unfolds 'proportionally', he paints a picture of a body, the body of Christ, taking shape. The article will introduce Maximus' doctrine of deification by pointing out how Maximus always comes at the doctrine by means of qualification: singularly defining what it is not (a transformation of a creature's 'essence' or 'nature') before variously describing what it is (a transformation of a creature's tropos). Maximus selects a notion of 'proportion' as one apt description of deification's 'tropological' reality, a description of particular interest for its metaphorical connection with the body. After this introduction, the article will trace the history of the Christian logic of proportion, pointing out its origin in Paul's discussion of the formation of Christ's body. The rest of the article will be taken up examining some crucial passages in which Maximus pinpoints a number of ways in which his logic of proportion describes deification by recourse to its primary role as a means for describing the body's workings.

> *From what are small and human things,*
> *one will derive no mean images of what is great and beyond us.*[1]

Maximus the Confessor was, in the summary of one scholar, the first theologian to attempt to elucidate 'deification' (θέωσις) as a 'theological topic in its own right'.[2] Throughout this great effort – that lasted Maximus' long monastic career – the following imaginative option kept occurring to him: deification works a bit like a body. Maximus made this claim numerously but subtly,

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[1] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambig.* 7.39, trans. modified from Nicholas Constas (ed. and trans.), *Maximos the Confessor, On Difficulties in the Church Fathers: the* Ambigua, vol. 1, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (henceforth DOML) 28 (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, 2014), 134-5.

[2] This is the summary of Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2006), 1.

cashing it out in a vocabulary that does not catch the eye and that ostensibly has nothing to do with the body whatsoever. 'Proportion' (ἀναλογία) is the central term and concept here. It is a concept that Maximus is everywhere pleased to depend on when unravelling the mystery of deification. But it is also a concept whose primary usefulness, for the Confessor, lies in what we might call 'biology': clarifying how bodies work, grow, and stay alive. When Maximus says that deification unfolds according to a logic of 'proportion', his aim is to explain deification with recourse to the example of the body and its workings. As far as I have found, this 'proportion'/body logic is an aspect of Maximus' thought that remains unidentified in the scholarly literature, and the task of this article is to introduce it, identify its origin in Paul, and point out some key examples.

The difficulty of deification and the solution of the body

In Maximus' works deification, or 'becoming God', is a wide concept. It is the goal and progress to which every sort of transformative divine interaction with creatures contributes, and it is the reality towards which the themes and turns of the Confessor's thought always end up pointing.[3] Consequently Maximus gives no single positive definition of deification. However, he is singularly clear about what deification is *not*. He offers one consistent caveat about deification, from which can be constructed a minimal, negative definition of Maximus' doctrine: namely, deification entails a creature 'becoming God' *not* on the level of its 'essence' (οὐσία) or 'nature' (φύσις).[4] For Maximus, any natural or essential transformation would be impossible, on the one hand, because of the impenetrable ontological gap between finite created natures and the infinite uncreated divine nature,[5] and, on the other, because any change of

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[3] The enormous range of theological themes that 'deification' entails for Maximus have been elucidated at great length by Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime Le Confesseur*, Cogitatio fidei 194 (Paris, 1996). Larchet gives a breakdown of the variety of 'deification' words that Maximus uses, and the number of times each of them occurs. The noun θέωσις (seventy-seven times) and the verb θεόω (forty-four times) are the most common vocabulary by far (*La divinisation* [1996], 60, footnote 334). As Carl Mosser points out, it was Maximus who popularised this particular vocabulary of deification, which was coined by Gregory Nazianzen, ('Deification: A Truly Ecumenical Concept', *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought* 30 [2015], 8-14, 11).

[4] *Qu. Thal.* 22, CChr.SG 7: 139, 141; *carit.* 3.25, PG 90, 1024BC; *qu. dub.* 61, CChr.SG 10, 48; *ambig.* 7.26, DOML 28, 112; *ambig.* 20.2, DOML 28, 408-9; *ambig.* 41.5, Nicholas Constas (ed. and trans.), Maximos the Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers: the* Ambigua, vol. 2, DOML 29 (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, 2014), 108-9. J.-C. Larchet has emphasised Maximus' insistence on this point (*La divinisation* [1996], 589-94). The claim that creatures can never share the 'nature' of God goes back at least to Clement and Origen of Alexandria (N. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification* [2006], 121, 136-7, 149-50).

[5] *Ambig.* 7.19, DOML 28, 100-1; *ambig.* 71.6, DOML 29, 322-3.

essence or nature equates, in his eyes, to the destruction of that essence or nature.[6] In light of this, negative, definition it is clear that whatever numerous phenomena deification might include, it is fundamentally and primarily a difficult, paradoxical, or 'apophatic' reality.[7] This makes Maximus think hard about what are the least misleading ways to talk about deification positively. His resolution is to speak of deification in a way that, as Larchet has acutely pointed out, follows the rules of one his favourite and most industrious distinctions: *logos-tropos*. To spell this out: Maximus settles on a select number of consistent positive descriptions of deification – of varying biblical heritage, philosophical heritage, or imaginative purchase – all of which qualify that deification involves a transformation of a creature's 'mode' or 'way' of existence, its *tropos*, and not a transformation of its natural or essential existence, its *logos*.[8] Here are some examples of such descriptions of deification and its utterly 'tropological' character. Maximus suggests that when creatures 'become God', it is not being the same as God; it is 'acting' (ἐνεργῶν) the same (or having the same 'action' (ἐνέργεια).[9] Or again, it is not like possessing; it is like 'sharing' (or 'participating': μετέχων, μεταλαμβάνων, and cognates).[10] It is not being another person; it is living with another person, indwelling their 'place' (τόπος)[11] or 'position' (θέσις).[12] It is not like being twins; it is like being a 'copy' (εἰκών) of an 'archetype'.[13] It is not being perfect yourself; it is

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[6] *Ambig*. 42.26, DOML 29, 172-5.

[7] Such is the language Maximus can use to name the utter difference between creaturely and divine essence: 'God is apophatically [ἀποφατικῶς] separated from all existing things according to his essence [κατὰ … τὴν οὐσίαν]' (*qu. dub*. 173, CChr.SG 10, 120).

[8] Jean-Claude Larchet, 'The Mode of Deification', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 341-59, 342-4.

[9] *Ambig*. 7.12, DOML 28, 90-1; *qu. Thal*. 59, CChr.SG 22, 55; *myst*. 24, CChr.SG 69, 66. See J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation* (1996), 545-53, 563-7.

[10] For example: 'God is apophatically [ἀποφατικῶς] separated from all existing things according to his essence [κατὰ … τὴν οὐσίαν] … But according to his providential emanation he is participated [μετέχεται] by many things' (*qu. dub*. 173, CChr.SG 10, 120, my trans.); 'what God is according to essence [κατ᾽ οὐσίαν] the creature might become by participation [κατὰ μετουσίαν]' (*carit*. 3.25, PG 90, 1024BC, my trans.); 'One receives communion and identity with him by participation [κατὰ μέθεξιν] through likeness, by which the human is considered worthy to become God from out of a human' (*myst*. 24, CChr.SG 69, 58, my trans.). See J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation* (1996), 600-1.

[11] *Cap. theol*. 1.68, PG 90, 1108C; *qu. Thal*. 61, CChr.SG 22, 105. For more on Maximus' image of 'place', see Marius Portaru, 'The Vocabulary of Participation in the Works of Saint Maximus the Confessor', in Octavian Gordon and Alexandru Mihăilă (eds), *Via lui Nabot / Naboth's Vineyard – studia theologica recentiora* (Cluj-Napoca, 2012), 295-317, 298-9.

[12] *Myst*. 21, CChr.SG 69, 48; *myst*. 24, CChr.SG 69, 66; *ambig*. 20.2, DOML 28, 408-9. See J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation* (1996), 601-3.

[13] *Myst*. 24. CChr.SG 69, 65; *qu. Thal*. 8, CChr.SG 7, 77; *ambig*. 7.12, DOML 28, 90-1; *ambig*. 7.25, DOML 28, 110-1; *ambig*. 21.5, DOML 28, 444-5. Parallel to this image is Maximus' suggestion that, when united with God the Word, human nature does not change but becomes a 'mirror' or 'reflection' of the Word (*ambig*. 10.41, DOML 28, 212-3).

resting on someone else's 'perfections', his 'beauty' and 'goodness'.[14] It is not what one is owed; it is given 'graciously' (κατὰ χάριν).[15] Along with these examples, Maximus offers other 'tropological' definitions of deification,[16] and scholars have noticed that they often overlap or are roughly synonymous, pointing to a single reality.[17] In short, Maximus resists settling upon a single theoretical definition of deification and its 'tropological' character, and instead spreads out the burden of definition and explanation amongst a variety of options, which point to each other and intertwine to form a single picture.

One ingredient in this picture is especially basic to Maximus' thought and especially full with imaginative power. It is a formulation that runs as follows: when creatures 'become God', it is not an unqualified union; it unfolds in a way that suits or, in Maximus' terms, it unfolds 'in proportion' (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν) to the creature's condition. I will call this Maximus' 'logic of proportion', after its most common term: ἀναλογία, 'proportion'. Put simply, by this

[14] Maximus speaks of 'participating' in divine 'perfection' (*ambig.* 10.93, DOML 28, 296-7), in divine 'beauty' (*ambig.* 10.2, DOML 28, 152-3) and in divine 'goodness' (*cap. theol.* 1.48, PG 90, 1100D; *ambig.* 7.21, DOML 28, 102-3; *ambig.* 7.38, DOML 28, 132-3; *qu. Thal.* 60, CChr.SG 22, 78; *ambig.* 10.23, DOML 28, 184-5; *ambig.* 63.2, DOML 29, 272-3; *qu. dub.* 180, CChr.SG 10, 123). Maximus sometimes summarises the perfections as 'the things around God' (*cap. theol.* 1.48, PG 90, 1100D; *carit.* 1.100, PG 90, 981D-984A).

[15] The clearest expression of this is *ambig.* 20.2, DOML 28, 408-11. See also *myst.* 24, CChr. SG 69, 66; *ambig.* 7.22, DOML 28, 104-5; *qu. dub.* 61, CChr.SG 10, 48; *qu. dub.* 180, CChr.SG 10, 123. See J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation* (1996), 594-600. Incidentally, Maximus employs this caveat – κατὰ χάριν – to qualify the potentially misleading claims about 'becoming God' found in the Bible, namely, 2*Pet.* 1:4 ('we become sharers in the divine nature [φύσις]', *ep.* 24, PG 91, 609C/*ep.* 43, PG 91, 640BC), and *Ps.* 81[82]:6 ('you are gods', *ambig.* 20, DOML 28, 408-9). On the important role this latter verse played in the early development of the patristic doctrine of deification, see Carl Mosser, 'The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of *Ps.* 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification', *JTS* 56 (2005), 30-74.

[16] J.-C. Larchet (*La divinisation* [1996], 600-8) points out that 'mode' (τρόπος) itself, along with 'state' or 'habit' (ἕξις) and 'quality' (ποιότης), are amongst the other caveats that Maximus employs to resist the notion of deification as a natural or essential transformation.

[17] There is an overlap between 'participation', 'grace', and 'activity', for example: 'the one who is able to act well and does so is truly God by grace and participation [κατὰ χάριν καὶ μέθεξιν], since he has taken on in good imitation the activity and identity of God's own well-doing' (*myst.* 24, CChr.SG 69, 68, my trans.). A more common overlap is that between 'participation' and 'grace': 'the deification that will be given to the worthy, since it is beyond nature [ὑπὲρ φύσιν], perfects those who participate [μετόχους] into gods from men, by grace [κατὰ χάριν]' (*qu. dub.* 61, CChr.SG 10, 48, my trans.); 'God will be wholly participated [μετεχόμενος] by whole human beings … Man will remain wholly man in soul and body, owing to his nature [διὰ τὴν φύσιν], but will become wholly God in soul and body owing to the grace [διὰ τὴν χάριν] and splendour of the blessed glory of God' (*ambig.* 7.26 DOML 28, 112-3]). Scholars have also highlighted that in Maximus 'participation' and divine 'activity' are closely intertwined, Marius Portaru, 'Classical Philosophical Influences: Aristotle and Platonism', in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook* (2015), 127-48, 136-7, and that divine 'activity' and 'grace' are often synonyms, J.-C. Larchet, 'The Mode of Deification' (2015), 350-1; Torstein Theodore Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York; Oxford, 2008), 208, 220; M. Portaru, 'Classical Philosophical Influences' (2015), 142.

logic, God and creatures are compatible according to the creature's ἀναλογία, its likeness, or nearness, or fittingness to God – a currency that Maximus also expresses with synonyms of ἀναλογία, like δύναμις ('capacity'), μέτρον ('measure'), and τάξις ('rank').[18] Here is an example of Maximus using this logic to tackle the fundamental difficulty of deification: that the nature of God and the nature of creatures are utterly incompatible:

[T]he location of the saved will be God himself, who is unlimited, undivided, and infinite, 'becoming all things to all men' [1*Cor*. 9:22] in proportion to their righteousness [κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς δικαιοσύνης], or rather granting himself to each person according to the measure [κατὰ τὸ μέτρον] of what they have consciously undergone in this world for the sake of righteousness…[19]

Humans achieve deification not by attaining the boundless nature of God, but according to the 'proportion' of their appropriateness to God – here, their 'righteousness'.

What is so interesting about this, or so imaginative? If anything, from this passage, the logic of proportion looks anodyne, abstractly claiming that divine and creaturely compatibility follows a contract: God is present in me to the degree that I am righteous, or have faith, or am virtuous, or whatever – hardly a very graceful way in to the mystery of deification. But in fact, in Maximus' mind, the logic of proportion is not an abstract logic of reciprocity. Rather, it is most fundamentally a description of the mechanisms of a very concrete and lively reality: the body. This becomes evident as Maximus continues the sentence where we left him. God grants himself to each 'in proportion', Maximus says:

… just as the soul shows itself by acting in the body's parts according to the capacity [κατὰ τὴν … δύναμιν] underlying each part, binding the parts through itself to keep the body in existence, and keeping them under control to keep it alive.[20]

To strip this passage to its basic form: 'Deification works in proportion like this, just as the body works in proportion like that'. This is an argumentative trope that recurs in Maximus, and from it the following conclusion can be drawn: when Maximus employs the language and logic of proportion (almost always to describe divine and creaturely communion, or deification) the body and its workings are at the front of his mind as a favourite clarifying image.[21]

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[18] This is a very lightly studied theme in Maximus scholarship. As far as I can find, the only scholarly summaries of Maximus' concept of 'proportion' are the following: J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation* (1996), 647-52, and Antoine Lévy, *Le Créé et L'incréé: Maxime Le Confesseur et Thomas d'Aquin: Aux sources de la Querelle Palamienne*, Bibliothèque Thomiste 59 (Paris, 2006), 174-7, 200-1.

[19] *Qu. Thal*. 61, CChr.SG 22, 105, my trans.

[20] *Qu. Thal*. 61, CChr.SG 22, 105, my trans.

[21] This is not a theme explored by Adam Cooper in his monograph, *The Body in St Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2005).

In the passage above, and elsewhere, Maximus considers that the logic of proportion fittingly describes deification by primarily describing the distribution of the soul's animation in the body.[22] This is just one among a number of topics of bodily constitution and function (human and non-human) that the logic of proportion can invoke for Maximus. Elsewhere, he uses different examples to help parse different transformations that deification involves.

A brief history of the Christian logic of proportion

We will consider some of these examples, but first one must ask why such a strong link between the logic of proportion and the logic of the body should pertain in Maximus' mind, and presumably in the minds of some of his readers. At least one reason is very clear: the logic of proportion, in its Christian parlance, originated in the context of a biblical discussion of the body. To get to bottom of this, therefore, it is important to outline the logic's origins.

The logic of proportion and its vocabulary wind their way to Maximus in two distinct traditions, one originating in Paul, the other in Aristotle. More than anybody before him, Maximus adopted both traditions of 'thinking according to proportion', and they merge together somewhat in his thought. They are still distinguishable, however. To summon again his favourite philosophical distinction, the Pauline tradition is concerned with τρόπος, 'mode', the Aristotelian with λόγος, 'nature' or 'principle'. In the former case, the logic of proportion clarifies how a creature's changing 'mode' of existence – including its level of virtue, knowledge, faith, and righteousness – shapes its relation and interaction with God. In the latter case, 'proportion' clarifies how a creature's fixed created 'nature' determines its interaction with God. One could say that the former is a tool for describing ascetical endeavour, the latter for describing metaphysics. Only Maximus' use of the Pauline, ascetical tradition of the logic of proportion will concern me here, and this for three reasons: it is more prominent in his thought than the Aristotelian metaphysical tradition; Maximus draws upon the Pauline and not the Aristotelian tradition to describe deification; and, in the origins and development of the Pauline tradition, we find the crucial link with the body, along with links to eschatological reasoning that pave the way for Maximus' application of this logic to the topic of deification in particular.

All I will say about the Aristotelian strand is that it emanates from a single clause in a discussion of homonymity in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6, where Aristotle says that two different things may both be called 'good' 'by way of

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[22] For other places where Maximus applies to deification the analogy of the soul's proportional presence in the body, see *qu. Thal.* 2, CChr.SG 7, 51; *ambig.* 7.26, DOML 28, 112-3; *ambig.* 7.31, DOML 28, 120-1; *ambig.* 7.37, DOML 28, 130-1; *ambig.* 7.39, DOML 28, 134-5; *ambig.* 31.9, DOML 29, 50-3.

proportion' [κατ᾿ ἀναλογίαν]. This logic was amplified by his Neoplatonic commentators, most clearly Proclus, into a metaphysical scheme for understanding the structure the cosmos, a scheme that was inherited by Dionysius.[23] In turn, Maximus inherited it from Dionysius, as he says himself:

He [God] brought forth beings out of nothing and endowed them with existence, and also willed to impart himself without defilement to them in a manner proportionate [ἀναλόγως] to all and to each, bestowing upon each the power to exist and remain in existence, according to the great and godlike saint, Dionysius the Areopagite…[24]

Maximus here refers to *Divine Names* 2.11. Thanks to his Dionysian heritage, then, Maximus could on occasion speak of 'proportion' as a structuring feature of God's distribution of the cosmos, describing different creatures' fixed and natural reception of existence from God.[25] Before Dionysius, Gregory Nazianzen offers an earlier Christian metaphysical logic of proportion that Maximus knew well. Gregory says, in orations that Maximus would have been familiar with, that the cosmos is ranked 'in proportion [κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν] to its nearness to God',[26] with the angels and other creatures of more lofty 'proportion' being the closest, and most lavishly illuminated by God's light.[27] However, the Neoplatonic development of Aristotle's logic of proportion occurred after Gregory's time, so passages like these must be Gregory's own metaphysical riffs upon the Pauline logic of proportion, to which we now turn.

The language of ἀναλογία (*Rom.* 12:6), along with μέτρον (*Rom.* 12:3, *Eph.* 4:13, *Eph.* 4:16), was used by Paul to explain how believers make up the 'body' of Christ, and this must explain at least in part why Maximus links the logic of 'proportion' to the workings of the body. Paul's language was transformed into a principle of Christian philosophy when Origen interpreted *Rom.* 12:6, on the Spirit's distribution of gifts among Christ's body: 'We have *charismata* that differ according to the grace given us; if prophecy, in proportion to faith

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[23] For detailed accounts of this heritage, see Jean-François Courtine, *Inventio Analogiae: Métaphysique et Ontothéologie*, Problèmes et controverses (Paris, 2005), 158-215, and Alain de Libera, 'Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être', *Les Études Philosophiques* 3/4 (1989), 319-45. On ἀναλογία in Dionysius see Vladimir Lossky, 'La notion des « analogies » chez Denys le Pseudo-Areopagite', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-Age* 5 (1930), 279-309.

[24] *Ambig.* 35.2, DOML 29, 68-71. See also *ambig.* 7.16, DOML 28, 96-7.

[25] For other instances where Maximus uses the Aristotelian, metaphysical logic of proportion to talk about the structure of the cosmos and its relation to God, see *qu. Thal.* 51, CChr.SG 7, 395; *carit.* 3.46, PG 90, 1029C; *ambig.* 7.16, DOML 28, 96-7; *ambig.* 20.4, DOML 28, 414-5; *ambig.* 33.2, DOML 29, 62-3; *ambig.* 35.2, DOML 29, 68-71. J.-C. Larchet says that Maximus liberates the language of 'proportion' from its hierarchical context in Dionysius, and avoids the suggestion that 'proportion' is a natural feature of a creature that would predetermine its capacity for grace and deification (*La divinisation* [1996], 648). However, in these passages, Maximus does expressly follow Dionysius in assigning static 'proportions' to creatures by nature.

[26] *Or.* 34.8, SC 318, 212-3, my trans.

[27] *Or.* 28.4, SC 250, 108; *or.* 28.31, SC 250, 172.

[κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως]'. Origen read this verse as a summary of his own wider, also Pauline, conception that one's level of spiritual maturity, in faith or virtue, conditions how one receives from and encounters God in general.[28] He therefore understood Paul to be saying that the Spirit bestows all *charismata* – and not just prophecy – 'in proportion to the faith' of each member of the body. Moreover, Origen considered this verse a summary of 1*Cor.* 12, with its much more elaborate account of the collaboration of Christ's body.[29] Origen's interpretation of *Rom.* 12:6[30] – which saw 'proportion' as the governing principle of the Spirit's distribution of grace and the assembly of Christ's body, and which coupled the concept with the lengthier treatment in 1*Cor.* 12 – caught on among his Alexandrian successors,[31] and it eventually passed to Maximus.[32] However, the Pauline logic of proportion did not always maintain its original Pauline context. The phrase and logic of *Rom.* 12:6 that Origen highlighted was innovated by his successors into a generic rule for all kinds of divine interaction with creatures.[33] In fact, even before Origen this Pauline language and logic had departed from its Pauline context, to elaborate a different theme: eschatology. As far as I am aware, Clement of Alexandria was the first to make this move. The Pauline language of 'proportion' was, for him, a means of navigating questions raised by the image of the 'many rooms' of God's kingdom in *John* 14:2.[34] Origen followed Clement,[35] and Origen's successors followed him.[36] Gregory Nazianzen is one example. In *Oration* 27,

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[28] Origen often grounds this conception in Paul's analogy of different kinds of food: milk for spiritual infants, and meat or solid food for the spiritually mature (1*Cor.* 3:1-3 and *Heb.* 5:12-4). For a summary of Origen's application of this imagery, and his polemical context, see Judith Kovacs, 'Echoes of Valentinian Exegesis in Clement of Alexandria and Origen: The Interpretation of 1 Cor. 3, 1-3', in Lorenzo Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana Octava* (Leuven, 2004), 317-29.

[29] *Comm. in Rom.* 9, 3.2-3, SC 555, 98-101.

[30] Origen employs the phrase from *Rom.* 12:6 in the same way on numerous other occasions: *comm. in Rom.*, fr. 25, A. Ramsbotham, 'The Commentary of Origen on the Epistle to the Romans II', *JTS* 13 (1912), 357-68, 359; *exp. in Pr.*, PG 17, 228A; *fr. in Jo.*, GCS 10, 493; *or.* 16.2, GCS 3, 337; *comm. in Mt.* 11.14, GCS 40, 58.

[31] See for example Gregory Nazianzen, *or.* 27.8, SC 250, 90, and *or.* 32.11, SC 318, 108-11; Basil of Caesarea, *comm. in Is.* 2, PG 30, 121B.

[32] The best example is *qu. Thal.* 29, CChr.SG 7, 211-3.

[33] For a very generic application, see Didymus the Blind: 'Out of goodness God gives himself, since the created nature is incapable of seeing him lest he give himself to be contemplated, "in proportion of the faith" [*Rom.* 12:6] of each' (*gen.*, SC 244, 232, my trans.).

[34] See for example, *str.* 6.14.108, GCS 15, 486: ἄλλης αὐλῆς καὶ μονῆς ἀναλόγως τῆς πίστεως κατηξιωμένα. For more on 'proportion' as a tool for eschatological reasoning in Clement, see Raoul Mortley, 'Ἀναλογία chez Clément d'Alexandrie', *Revue des Études Grecques* 84 (1971), 80-93, 83-5.

[35] For 'proportion' as a vocabulary for talking about eschatological inheritance in Origen, see *princ.* 4.3.10, SC 268, 378-9; *princ.* 2.11.6, SC 252, 408-11; *hom. in Lev.* 14.3.1, SC 287, 234-7; *hom. in Jos.* 10.1, SC 71, 270-1; *hom. in Jos.* 23.4, SC 71, 462-7.

[36] For example, even Methodius of Olympus, who disagreed variously and vigorously with Origen, adopted the phrase from *Rom.* 12:6 to describe the different kinds of salvation God offers to different people (*symp.* 7.3, SC 95, 184).

which Maximus knew and commented on in *Difficulty* 13 and 14, Gregory reasons that there are 'many rooms' in God's house because 'there are different patterns of life and avocations' which 'lead to different places "according to the proportion of faith" [*Rom.* 12:6]'.[37] Surely it is this history of eschatological reasoning 'according to proportion' that leads to Maximus' emphasis that proportionality is a logic of deification, that 'deification is bestowed proportionately [ἀναλόγως]'.[38]

As the inheritors of Clement and Origen innovated upon their logic of proportion, for eschatological thinking or in other contexts, the original Pauline theme of the body was not often preserved. One exception is Gregory of Nyssa, who brought the logic of proportion to numerous theological discussions whilst also improvising on the original Pauline context of the body. His *Commentary on the Song of Songs* offers good examples of this. Here Gregory considers the logic of 'proportion' to be illuminating for theological discussion in so far as it describes phenomena of the body, like breastfeeding,[39] smell[40] and other senses,[41] maturation of the human body and of fruit,[42] and the biological progression and events of a woman's life.[43]

Maximus summarises the Pauline/Alexandrian tradition of the logic of proportion. Following many before him, he adapts the logic of proportion into a logic of eschatology, or rather of deification,[44] along with all the transforming interactions between God and man that deification involves.[45] But he also keeps at the front of his mind the original Pauline context of the body, preserved by

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[37] *Or.* 27.8, *SC* 250, 88-91, trans. in Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, trans. by Frederick J. Williams and Lionel R. Wickham, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 'Popular Patristics' Series (Crestwood, NY, 2002), 31. See also, *or*. 30.4, SC 250, 232-3; *or.* 14.5, PG 35, 864B; *or* .19.7, PG 35, 1049CD; *or.* 32.33, SC 318, 152-4.

[38] *Qu. Thal.* 22, CChr.SG 7, 141.

[39] *In Cant.* 1, GNO 6, 33.

[40] *In Cant.* 3, GNO 6, 91.

[41] *In Cant.* 4, GNO 6, 117.

[42] *In Cant.* 3, GNO 6, 96-7; see also *instit.*, GNO 8.1, 44-5.

[43] *In Cant.* 15, GNO 6, 460-1.

[44] *Cap. theol.* 2.88, PG 90, 1168AB; *myst.* 7, CChr.SG 69, 35; *qu. Thal.* 22, CChr.SG 7, 141; *ambig.* 48.3, DOML 29, 216-7; see also the passages in footnote 22. On the cognate eschatological theme of the distribution of the inheritance of the kingdom of God, see *cap. theol.* 2.93, PG 90, 1169AB.

[45] For example, Maximus uses the logic and language of proportion to clarify: the Holy Spirit's distribution of grace (*qu. Thal.* 29, CChr.SG 7, 211-3; *qu. Thal.* 54, CChr.SG 7, 255), Christ the Word's presence to believers (*cap. theol.* 2.13, PG 90, 1131A; *cap. theol.* 2.27, PG 90, 1137AB; *or. dom.*, PG 90, 897A; *qu. Thal.* 25, CChr.SG 7, 161; *ambig.* 21.15, DOML 28, 444-5; *ambig.* 47.1-2, DOML 29, 206-11; *myst.* 24, CChr.SG 69, 68), sharing in God through virtue (*ambig.* 10.85, DOML 28, 280-1; *ambig.* 21.10, DOML 28, 434-5), different ways of reading scripture (*cap. theol.* 1.97, PG 90, 1122C-1124A; *myst.* 10, CChr.SG 69, 39), and epistemology (*qu. dub.* 168, CChr.SG 10, 117; *qu. Thal.* intr, CChr.SG 7, 21; *ambig.* 10.64, DOML 28, 254-7; *ambig.* 21.16, DOML [28, 444-7).

writers like Gregory of Nyssa. He adapts the logic of proportion to the context of deification by first taking it to describe various biological processes carried out by the body. Let us, then, consider three examples of how, for Maximus, the logic of proportion offers bodily processes to interpret the theological quandaries involved in deification.

Four examples of the logic of proportion as a logic of the body

In one of his *Questions and Doubts*, Maximus calls upon the logic of proportion to grapple with the ways of divine mercy and forgiveness. In the course of this discussion, he reveals that this logic is only theologically useful because of its more primary role as a means of describing a process of the body, in this case, the body's ability to receive different substances from outside itself – like air, light, and sound – without getting them confused:

While the mercy of God is balanced, it is also fittingly circumscribed … [J]ust as we have an optical, auditory, and respiratory ability and these things do not receive all the air or the light or the sound … but in proportion to the ability that is present in each [κατὰ τὴν ἀναλόγως προσοῦσαν δύναμιν ἑκάστῳ], each participates according to their ability; thus, also the mercy of God grants both forgiveness and grace according to the quality of the underlying disposition of each one.[46]

By saying that humans receive mercy from God 'in proportion', Maximus does not claim to encompass the question with a neat theory of reciprocity, but rather suggests a metaphor – that is, an image from a different context that reveals the truth about the issue at hand. The metaphor in this case is of the body's activity: mercy is something that humans *sense* or *breath*, as if they were eyes or lungs. Presumably, Maximus thinks that this metaphor of the body might lead the reader towards promising and hopeful conclusions about God's mercy. Perhaps, just as light is good and serviceable for an eye and not for a lung, so is the mercy that God gives each person supremely good for them; or, just as ears and eyes do not fight for sense-data, so is there no competition amongst humans for God's mercy; or – most importantly – maybe divine mercy, like sound or air, has no shortage. In brief, one can see from this passage that Maximus considers the logic of proportion a resource of bodily metaphors which lend themselves to theological reasoning.

In the remaining three examples, Maximus reveals that he finds this connotation of the body particularly felicitous for reasoning about *deification*, or union with God and Christ, and its fundamental difficulty that it can never take place on the level of nature or essence. During the introduction to his *Questions*

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[46] *Qu. dub.* 102. CChr.SG 10, 77, trans. modified from *St. Maximus the Confessor's Questions and Doubts*, trans. by Despina Prassas (DeKalb, Ill., 2010), 97.

to Thalassius Maximus suggests that the logic of proportion tackles the problem of how the divine Word whose 'nature' is infinite can accommodate himself among finite natures:

Now the divine Word is like water: to those whom he waters, as if they were plants of all kinds, and shoots, and different living things, to those he shows himself proportionately (ἀναλόγως) through knowledge and through practice of the virtues, and then he appears like a fruit, according to the quality of each one's virtue and knowledge, and makes his home in different ways on different people. For, on account of his natural infinity, he is never tied down by one thing, or held and imprisoned within a single manifestation.[47]

Here Maximus claims that the logic of proportion reliably describes union with the Word in so far as it describes the biological phenomenon of drinking – or rather, watering plants (perhaps Maximus is developing the image from *Matth.* 5:45 of God sending rain on all kinds of people, good and bad). Maximus suggests that one might begin to understand and make conclusions about how the simple, infinite Word can accommodate himself amongst diverse and finite humanity, by considering how boundless water can find a finite home by causing a garden of different plants to flourish.

In parallel to this image of watering or drinking, another bodily process to which the logic of proportion can refer is eating. In our third example, from one of his *Chapters on Knowledge*, Maximus applies this metaphor to approach the following question about 'the kingdom of God', or 'deification': 'Some people wonder what the state will be like of those deemed worthy of perfection in the kingdom of God: whether it will involve progress and change or a fixed sameness'. His answer is as follows:

One might sensibly answer with the example that in the life of the body there is a twofold reason for food, namely, the growth and sustenance of those who are fed. For we are fed for growth until we reach the maturity of the body's stature, and then … the body is no longer fed for growth but for sustenance. Well, in the same way there is a twofold reason for the soul's food. For while it grows it is fed with virtues and contemplations, until it no longer passes among all the things that exist and arrives at 'the measure [τὸ μέτρον] of the stature of the fullness of Christ' [*Eph.* 4:13]. When it reaches this point, it stops its progress of increase and growth through mediating things and, without any mediation, is given food beyond intellection, and thereby beyond growth. This is a form of incorruptible food whose purpose is to sustain the godlike perfection granted to the soul and to manifest the food's infinite splendours. And in this way, as eternal wellbeing comes to indwell it, the soul becomes God by participating in divine grace…[48]

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[47] *Qu. Thal.* intr, CChr.SG 7, 23, my trans.
[48] *Cap. theol.* 2.88, PG 90, 1165D-1168A, my trans.

The soul's progression towards deification depends upon its 'measure' [μέτρον], and here Maximus cites *Eph.* 4:13, a passage by Paul that invokes the logic of proportion in the context of 'building up Christ's body' (*Eph.* 4:12). Maximus plays upon Paul's theme of bodily growth to suggest that the differences in stature amongst souls in the kingdom of God can be accounted for when one considers that a soul's deification results from a progressing spiritual diet, just as the body eats different appropriate foods on its journey to maturity. Maximus goes on to say that not only the soul but the body too will have a 'proportionate participation in deification' (ἡ ἀναλογοῦσα μέθεξις τῆς θεώσεως).[49] And by applying the logic of proportion to the body as well as the soul, he presumably suggests that the body also might be fed by God in a way that first grows or transforms it and then sustains it in a new kind of life.[50]

The Confessor's most original topic for unfolding the language of 'proportion' is Christ the Word's embodiment in the believer, or the believer's transformation into Christ. The bodily connotation that normally accompanies such discussions is, again, eating.[51] In *Difficulty* 48, however, this connotation becomes more complex. Here Maximus comments on Gregory Nazianzen's words: 'Whatever is a fleshly and nourishing part of the Word … will be eaten and given up to spiritual digestion'.[52] As in the passage from *Questions to Thalassius*, Maximus tackles the paradox of how the one Word can diversely share himself amongst humans. Maximus' answer is, in summary, that the Word 'has made himself edible and participable in proportion to each person [ἀναλόγως ἑκάστῳ]'.[53] Different people of different capacities receive the one Word in proportion – that is they feast upon his body, choosing those parts that they resemble and can best digest.[54] 'For example', Maximus says, 'the eyes shall be partaken of by whosoever beholds creation spiritually … Of the knees let him partake who providentially bends down in compassion to those who … are weak in faith', and so on.[55] Maximus then presses the image of the body further: the body's eating involves the body's consequent *formation*. In the same way,

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[49] *Cap. theol.* 2.88, PG 90, 1168A.

[50] That in its state of deification the body will still be recognisably a body yet transformed, see *ambig.* 7.26, DOML 28, 112-3. For the polemical context in which Maximus honed his views on this issue, see Grigory Benevich, 'Maximus the Confessor's Polemics against Anti-Origenism: *Epistulae* 6 and 7 as a Context for the *Ambigua Ad Iohannem*', *RHE* 104 (2009), 5-15.

[51] Some other instances include: *cap. theol.* 2.88, PG 90, 1165D-1166B; *qu. Thal.* 35, CChr. SG 7: 239-41; *or. dom.*, CChr.SG 23, 59.

[52] *Or* 45.16, PG 36, 645A, cited by Maximus in *ambig.* 48.1, DOML 29, 212-3.

[53] *Ambig.* 48.7, DOML 29, 220-1, trans. modified.

[54] I am cautious about labelling this passage 'eucharistic' because of Maximus' wider reticence on the subject of the Eucharist. For one attempt to identify Eucharistic references in the Confessor's thought see Lars Thunberg, 'Symbol and Mystery in St. Maximus the Confessor', in Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (eds), *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime Le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 Septembre 1980* (Fribourg, 1982), 285-308.

[55] *Ambig.* 48.6, DOML 29, 218-21.

Maximus reasons, when believers eat of Christ's body they are consequently diversely 'transformed' into Christ, and collaboratively form his body:

[The Word] transforms into himself [μεταποιῶν πρὸς ἑαυτόν] by the Spirit those who partake of him, leading and transposing each of them into the place and position in the body's frame of the part that was spiritually eaten by them, so that out of his love for mankind the Word who is in all things yet is alone beyond nature and mind, takes on substance in these deeds.[56]

In this instance, Maximus' logic of proportion expresses the not-quite-scientific thesis that 'you are what you eat'. By invoking this thesis of the body's workings, the logic of proportion clarifies not only how diverse humans receive the one Christ diversely and in a way that suits them, but also how Christ's body takes form amongst them.

Conclusion

It has by now become clear that for Maximus deification works 'in proportion', which, following Paul, means that deification works like a body. Maximus invokes the logic of proportion as one amongst many other means for qualifying deification as a non-essential transformation, of a creature's *tropos*, not *logos*. But the logic of proportion ranks above these other descriptions of deification by virtue of the elaborate imagery conjured from its enduring connotation of the body, a connotation that stimulates and leads Maximus' imagination in complex and productive ways. By comparison, he seems to have little imaginative fluency in some of the other concepts he uses – like 'participation' and 'activity' – that are often privileged in scholarship. Let me end by suggesting that if images of the body – sensing, nourishing, growing – play in Maximus' mind when he thinks of deification 'according to proportion', then one might validly summarise and appropriate his doctrine of deification in richer terms by going along with his train of thought. Like a body, deification is a vehicle of improbable growth and transformation, from unlikely seeds to magnificent fruits, in Maximus' image. Like a body, deification is a shared organism, accommodating diverse members with what best suits and most delights them: songs for ears and air for lungs, as Maximus pictures it. Or finally, like a body, deification ends in resurrection, eating at Christ's table and finding a new body in Christ.

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[56] *Ambig*. 48.7, DOML 29, 220-3, trans. modified.

Recontextualizations of Maximus the Confessor in Modern Christian Theology

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ABSTRACT

The theological legacy of Maximus the Confessor East and West was generated fore-most by his enormous role in the monothelete crisis and the perception of his crucial role in framing a 'Neo-Chalcedonian' Christology, but also by the magnitude of his Christocentric cosmology, soteriology, and ascetical doctrine. His legacy in the Christian East began in earnest with the work of John Damascene, and in the West with John Scottus Eriugena. The present study, however, focuses rather on three exemplary retrievals of Maximus in modern theology: Sergei Bulgakov's critical appropriation of Maximian ideas of God, creation, Christ, and human freedom; Hans Urs von Balthasar's integration of Maximus' achievement into the cultivation of his 'theo-dramatic' interpretation of creation and redemption; and the contested use of Maximus in the work of John Zizioulas and other Eastern Orthodox thinkers to develop notions of theological Personalism. These recontexualizations of Maximus in new theological cultures say much about the breadth of the Confessor's thought and are good examples both of the risks and the promise of modern patristic retrieval.

Fresh interpretation and recontextualization of Maximus the Confessor in the Christian East did not begin in earnest until at least a century after his death. The delayed reaction to his theological and christological achievement resulted from the lingering air of controversy over his leadership of a well-organized monastic dissent against imperially-sponsored monotheletism, which had resulted in his multiple trials, exiles, and eventual death in Lazica (662). Certainly imperial embarrassment over his demise was a key reason that Maximus' name was left out of the decrees of the Council of Constantinople of 680-681 even though the council vindicated his christological position. Rehabilitation began in earnest with the work of another monastic dissident, John Damascene, who used Maximus extensively without mentioning him by name – although this omission is not out of a fear of offending imperial powers since John often does not expressly name his patristic sources.

Newer studies have continued to appear on Maximus' Eastern *Nachleben* – in Middle Byzantine scholasticism, in the Hesychast Controversy, in later traditions of Byzantine monasticism and the heritage of the *Philokalia*, and in the so-called 'Neo-Patristic Synthesis' pioneered by Georges Florovksy, Dumitru

Staniloae, and others in the last century.[1] The same is true of Maximus' Western legacies. New studies have shed light on Anastasius Bibliothecarius' attempt under Pope Nicholas I in the ninth century to resurrect Maximus as an Eastern adjudicator of the Roman primacy,[2] and on John Scotus Eriugena's substantial reinterpretation of Maximus' christocentric cosmology.[3] Edward Siecienski, in particular, has critically reappraised the disputed legacy of Maximus in the Filioque Controversy.[4] Antoine Lévy, Juan Miguel Garrigues, and other Roman Catholic historical theologians have also produced fruitful, if sometimes contested, comparisons between Maximus and Aquinas on issues such as the relation between grace and nature.[5]

My own purpose here, however, is not to rehearse this scholarship but to profile three distinctive case studies of the recontextualization of Maximus in modern theology East and West. Each has its own targeted themes and strategies of retrieval. And each exemplifies the attempt to draw out a *sensus plenior* of Maximian theology in the interest of critical *ressourcement*. All the cases, moreover, qualify more as engagements-in-progress than as finalized endeavors, and are couched within projects much larger than the appropriation of Maximus' authority or insights.

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[1] See the overviews and analyses in Paul Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World* (Oxford, 2016), 287-328; also Maximos (Nicholas) Constas, 'St. Maximus the Confessor: The Reception of His Thought in East and West', in Maxim Vasiljević (ed.), *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection: Proceedings of the Symposium on St. Maximus the Confessor, Belgrade, October 18-21, 2012* (Alhambra, CA, 2013), 25-53; Andrew Louth, 'Maximus the Confessor's Influence and Reception in Byzantine and Modern Orthodoxy', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 500-15; Deno Geanokoplos, 'Maximus the Confessor and His Influence on Eastern and Western Theology and Mysticism', in *Interaction of the 'Sibling' Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Italian Renaissance (330-1600)* (New Haven, 1976), 133-45; Grigory Benevich, 'Maximus' Heritage in Russia and Ukraine', in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (2015), 460-79; Joshua Lollar, 'Reception of Maximian Thought in the Modern Era', *ibid*. 564-80.

[2] See Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed., reprinted (London, 2013), 191-3; Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout, 2006), 5-9, 11-34; Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford, 2002), 32-5.

[3] See esp. Catherine Kavanagh, 'The Impact of Maximus the Confessor on John Scottus Eriugena', in P. Allen and B. Neil (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (2015), 480-99.

[4] *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (New York, 2010); *id.*, *The Use of Maximus the Confessor's Writing on the Filioque at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439)*, Ph.D. dissertation (Fordham University, New York, 2005).

[5] See *e.g.* Antoine Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé: Maxime le Confesseur et Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 2006); Juan Miguel Garrigues, *Le dessin divin d'adoption et le Christ rédempteur à la lumière de Maxime le Confesseur et de Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 2011); *id.*, 'L'énergie divine et la grâce chez Maxime le Confesseur', *Istina* 19 (1974), 181-204; *id.*, 'La personne composée du Christ d'après Maxime le Confesseur', *Revue Thomiste* 74 (1974), 181-204.

I. Sergei Bulgakov and Maximus's Doctrines of God, Creation, Christ, and Human Freedom

The Russian émigré and former Marxist Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) inherited from earlier Slavophile theologians and writers like Ivan Kireevsky and Vladimir Soloviev a deep admiration for the religious humanism of Maximus in the culturally turbulent period before, during, and after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Amid the seemingly apocalyptic circumstances of his time, Bulgakov surpassed his predecessors in recovering specific theological and especially cosmological insights from Maximus and other patristic authorities. Meditating afresh on God as transcendent and yet radically present, Bulgakov turned to the apophaticism of Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus, and his interpretation in interesting ways anticipated Jean-Luc Marion's more recent reading of them. Bulgakov embraced the principle that the resourcefulness and power of God are paradoxically revealed only if 'God' is envisioned as beyond all being or essence or thought, as the 'nothing' (NO-thing / no-THING) who is pure fullness and generosity, approachable only through the theological virtues of faith and love and through worshipful silence.[6]

This de-ontologized, apophatic theology served for Bulgakov to explode the illusion of cosmic pantheism and pave the way forward for reinterpreting the relation between Creator and creation, allowing room for his own controversial Sophiology and doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. His Sophiology is far too complex to detail here, but if I may wager a summary, it imagines the divine Wisdom (Sophia), separate from the Word (Logos), as constituting the 'nonhypostatic divinity in God',[7] the spiritual and feminine 'Other' immanent in God and concretized in the created cosmos as 'All-Unity' becoming 'All-Multiplicity'.[8] Bulgakov suggests that whereas earlier patristic thinkers, particularly Origen, had fatefully failed to distinguish divine Wisdom (Sophia) from the Logos, sometimes (as with Athanasius) throwing all the weight of cosmology onto Christology, Maximus achieved a breakthrough with his doctrine of the *logoi*, the purposive 'principles' implanted in all created things. Though Bulgakov acknowledges that writers like Maximus were not consciously anticipating his Sophiology, the *logoi* could legitimately be understood as conceived by Sophia, even equated with her as the divine ideas or prototypes for created things. Bulgakov explicitly says that '[Maximus'] 'logology' is essentially a sophiology',[9] or an 'applied sophiology'.[10] The *logoi* embody the divine 'All' that is the world's 'content' if

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[6] *Unfading Light: Contemplations and Speculations*, trans. Thomas Allan Smith (Grand Rapids, 2012; original Russian edition, 1917), 125-30, 270-1.

[7] *Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, 2002; Russian edition, 1945).

[8] Specifically here, I am referencing *The Lamb of God*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, 2008; Russian edition, 1933), 126-7.

[9] *The Lamb of God* (2008), 126 n. 6.

[10] *Bride of the Lamb* (2002), 16.

not its 'being' as such,[11] and are the meeting point of divine Sophia and crea-
turely Sophia.

In retrospect, Bulgakov's sophiological reading is an adventurous interpreta-
tion of Maximus' own dialectical perspective on the immanence of the *logoi* both
in God and in creation,[12] but risks contradicting the Confessor outright by
locating the *logoi* in the non-hypostatic Sophia rather than in the hypostatic
Logos. He unfortunately does not comment, to my knowledge, on Maximus' bold
claim that the *logoi* are not only 'in' the Logos, and he in them, but that the Logos
'is' the *logoi*,[13] clearly emphasizing that the Word, who is also Wisdom, person-
ally bears the dynamics of unity and multiplicity in creation. Indeed, as in Atha-
nasius and Irenaeus before him, the very coherence of the doctrine of creation *ex
nihilo* for Maximus lies from the outset in Christology, and more expressly in the
fullness of the mystery of divine incarnation.[14] Bulgakov is nonetheless much
closer to Maximus, in my judgment, where he himself positively ties Christol-
ogy to creation, such as when he deduces that the culmination of the incarna-
tion, the cross of Christ, the highest expression of divine sacrificial love for
God's 'other' (*thateron*), 'was not only eternally pre-established at the creation
of the world, but … also constitutes the metaphysical essence of creation'.[15]

Meanwhile, in another connection too, the apophatic theology of Dionysius
and Maximus proved useful to Bulgakov by granting needed existential and
epistemic space for the interplay of divine and creaturely freedom that factored
so significantly into his own theological anthropology and ethics. Bulgakov
embraced the Dionysian-Maximian principle of the super-essential Creator's
'ecstasy' of love in creating and sustaining the world,[16] and though he does not
expressly mention Maximus as his source, he conveys a compatible portrait of
the ecstasy in terms of the Creator's 'playfulness' in and toward the creation.
Bulgakov, much like Maximus, emphasizes that this is not the mere play of an

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[11] *Ibid*. 126.

[12] The question of whether the *logoi* are uncreated (energies) or created has been heavily
debated in Maximus (see P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* [2016], 112-4). Bulgakov knows
the problem but does not see it as resolved by the Fathers: 'In connection with this [the *logoi* or
'prototypes'] there arises a fundamental question, which, however, is not understood as such in
patristics itself, and therefore does not find an answer for itself there: the question of how one
should properly understand the relation of these prototypes of the world to the Logos, and then
to the Divine Sophia and the creaturely Sophia. In particular, do these ideas have a divine and
eternal character? Do they refer to divine being? Or are they created ad hoc, so to speak, as the
ideal foundation of the world, as "heaven" in relation to "earth"? In other words, is it a question
here of the Divine Sophia or of the creaturely Sophia? All these questions and uncertainties do
not have a precise and clear answer in the appropriate patristic texts, just as, in general, patristic
thought does not distinguish these elements of the problem' (*Bride of the Lamb* [2002], 16-7).

[13] *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 35 (CChr.SG 7, 239).

[14] For fuller analysis, see P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), 102-9.

[15] *Unfading Light* (2012), 181-6, quoted at 185; 343-4.

[16] *The Lamb of God* (2006), 126-7, 128.

arbitrary omnipotence, but a playful *kenôsis* that takes its delight in the reciprocal playfulness-*qua*-freedom of created beings,[17] their free and creative participation in the joyful divine play. Perhaps not surprisingly, the difference is that Bulgakov ascribes this divine playfulness principally to the intradivine Sophia, whereas Maximus attributes it to the Logos with particular reference to his incarnation.

That said, Bulgakov certainly recognized that crucially for Maximus, Jesus Christ, the Logos incarnate, is the one in whom creaturely human freedom is modeled and truly liberated to virtuous exercise. Looking to Maximus on this issue, he revisited the technical aspects and precise nuances of his Christology in the context of the seventh-century monothelete controversy. He specifically takes up Maximus' distinction between 'natural will' and 'gnomic will', which had already been taken up by John Damascene in the eighth century and Photius in the ninth.[18] Judging the battle between monotheletes and dyotheletes a purely 'academic' affair, Bulgakov disputes Maximus' grounding of will in 'nature' rather than 'person', suggesting that this drove an ontological wedge between nature and the 'life of the spirit', 'the living and inseparable unity of person and nature', since 'there is no impersonal nature or natureless personality. They can be separated and even opposed only in the abstract'.[19] Because gnomic will represents the concrete freedom of the spirit, Bulgakov vigorously disclaims Maximus' denial of a gnomic will in Christ. If Christ's human will is purely 'natural, instinctively linear, and infallible', how can it be genuinely free existentially? Effectively it has been subsumed, in a quasi-monophysite sense, into the immutable divine will.[20] On this point, Bulgakov clearly believed, as did Nikolai Berdyaev before him,[21] that Maximus had grossly fallen short of the ideals of spiritual freedom so cherished in the Slavophile tradition and so vital to Russian Christian faith in the new Soviet era.

II. Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Theo-Dramatic Interpretation of Maximus

Unlike Bulgakov, the prolific Swiss Roman Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) composed a monumental monograph on Maximus

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[17] *Unfading Light* (2012), 343-4; see Maximus, *Ambigua ad Johannem* 71 (PG 91, 1408C-1416D). On the theme of divine play in Maximus, see Paul Blowers, 'On the "Play" of Divine Providence in Gregory Nazianzen and Maximus the Confessor', in Christopher Beeley (ed.), *Re-Reading Gregory of Nazianzus: Essays on History, Theology, and Culture* (Washington, D.C., 2012), 183-201.

[18] See P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), 293-5.

[19] *Lamb of God* (2006), 74-88, quoted at 77.

[20] *Ibid*. 78-81, quoted at 78-9.

[21] See his *The Destiny of Man*, trans. Natalie Duddington (New York, 1960), 187-8.

in two editions, *Kosmische Liturgie* (1st ed. 1941), which has profoundly influenced interpretation of the Confessor in the West. And yet von Balthasar's recontextualization of Maximus goes well beyond this relatively early work, and we can observe real development in his thinking from the time of *Kosmische Liturgie* to the later use of Maximus in his massive theological trilogy. *Kosmische Liturgie* arises from the period of von Balthasar's intense devotion to *la nouvelle théologie* and its patristic *ressourcement*, and reflects as well his early interests in German Idealism and especially Hegel. As Werner Löser rightly points out, von Balthasar's passion was to demonstrate the transcending unity and originality of Maximus' patristic synthesis against the image of him as a mere compiler of earlier traditions.[22] Hoping to reconstruct Maximus' theological tableau of the world and its history, von Balthasar uses Hegelian dialectic throughout the *Kosmische Liturgie*. With Maximus' historical persona itself, he plays off of the dialectical opposition between the larger-than-life hero of christological orthodoxy and the 'humble monk' with no pretense of authority.[23] Von Balthasar also directly compares the dialectical and synthetic projects of Maximus and Hegel, and does not shy away from using anachronism for rhetorical force:

Maximus looks straight in the eye of Hegel, who clearly derived his synthetic way of thinking from the Bible – more precisely from the anthropological antitheses of the Old Testament and from that between the Bible and Hellenism, as well as from the reconciling synthesis of Christ, understood principally from a Johannine (and thus, in effect, from an Alexandrian) perspective. The difference is that the theological starting point in Hegel is kept in the shadows, while in Maximus it remains luminously open: everyone recognizes that his ontology and cosmology are extensions of his Christology, in that the synthesis of Christ's concrete person is not only God's final thought for the world but also his original plan.[24]

What is more, von Balthasar argues, Maximus transcends Hegel in providing the synthesis between the highest intuitions of Eastern and Western religion:

By elevating both the contemplative quest for freedom from desire, characteristic of Buddhism and Gnosticism, and the drive to construct a titanic synthesis, characteristic of Hegel, into Christian love, Maximus finds the 'higher midpoint' for both approaches. Like the Buddha, he calls for an attitude toward creatures that has freed itself from self-seeking, from passion, from worldliness, but he interprets it in a Christian way as the love demanded by the Sermon on the Mount, a love like God the Father's for all creatures, both good and evil. Like Buddha and Hegel, he calls for a power of the

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[22] *Im Geiste des Origenes: Hans Urs von Balthasar als Interpret der Theologie der Kirchenväter* (Frankfurt a.M., 1976), 181-212. See also J. Lollar, 'Reception of Maximian Thought in the Modern Era' (2015), 568-71, for a more basic summary of von Balthasar's approach to Maximus.

[23] *Kosmische Liturgie*, 3rd ed., trans. Brian Daley as *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco, 2003), 29-30.

[24] *Ibid*. 207.

critical and synthetic intelligence that comes within a hair's breadth of pure idealism, but he situates it, too, within the sustaining power of love: more precisely, in the redeeming love of Christ, whose self-emptying indifference and conceptual openness are revealed to be – far more deeply than with Hegel or in the abstract quest for Nirvana – the almighty power that preserves the individual and personal by elevating it into the divine.[25]

Brian Daley has noted the idiosyncrasy and the risk in von Balthasar's collusion of the grand synthetic projects of Maximus and Hegel. 'The ever-present danger', says Daley, 'is a gnosis, an idealism that refuses to take seriously and to value reverently the finite, ontologically dependent concrete reality of individual things'.[26] Von Balthasar seems to have anticipated the accusation of imposing a universalizing *Geist* onto Maximus' panoramic cosmic theology. Already in *Kosmische Liturgie*, he exalts Maximus precisely for having treated 'universal being' not as simply the higher-ranking ground of particular being, but 'as something supported from below, something always newly brought into being (γένεσις) from particularity'.[27] The primacy and centrality of the incarnation, and of the historical particularity of Jesus of Nazareth in Maximus' cosmic theology, made this imperative. Referencing this deep and pervasive christocentrism, von Balthasar writes,

All this may seem very abstract and unpromising, but the constant repetition of this, the most universal law of being, remains nonetheless the great achievement of Maximus the Confessor. Not only did he construct here an apologia for finite, created being in the face of the overwhelming power of the transcendent world of ideas; the application of this principle to the relation between God and the world, in the hypostatic union, finally assures the world itself – even in, and precisely because of, its difference from God – a permanently valid claim to being and to a 'good conscience'.[28]

While von Balthasar never retracted his early interpretation of Maximus, his treatment of the Confessor evolved with his own theological enterprise. Already in *Kosmische Liturgie* are the rudiments of a more distinctly *theo-dramatic* reading of Maximus, a transition from largescale metaphysical reflection on Christ as the 'concrete universal' to more sobering meditations on the cosmic tragedy of sin,[29] the raw ambiguity of historical existence,[30] and Christ's kenotic identification in the unfolding tragic drama of humanity to restore and renew creaturely freedom.[31] Von Balthasar began to produce the first part of

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[25] *Ibid.* 282-3.
[26] Translator's Foreword to *Cosmic Liturgy* (2003), 18; see J. Lollar, 'Reception of Maximian Thought in the Modern Era' (2015), 570.
[27] *Cosmic Liturgy* (2003), 159, 238.
[28] *Ibid.* 239.
[29] *Ibid.* 129-205.
[30] *Ibid.* 188-96.
[31] *Ibid.* esp. 263-75.

his theological trilogy, the aesthetics sequence entitled *Herrlichkeit* (*The Glory of the Lord*), in 1961, the same year as his revised edition of *Kosmische Liturgie*. Interestingly, while Maximus occasionally features in this series, there is no concentrated treatment such as is given to comparable thinkers like Irenaeus, Augustine, or Dionysius the Areopagite. But in another work from the same period mid-career, *Mysterium Paschale* (1970), Maximus factors in von Balthasar's exegetical contemplation of the kenotic 'destiny' of Jesus in the Gospels, the incarnation as 'ordered to' the cross. The shift here has focused from breathtaking images of the cosmic Christ to the stark specter of the Father's 'abandonment' (ἐγκατάλειψις) of the Son, which mirrors the triune Creator's original sacrificial love for the creation.[32] Von Balthasar is here concerned as well to exonerate Maximus and other Greek patristic theologians from the charge of teaching a purely 'physical' redemption undermining the primacy of the cross.

But it is in von Balthasar's *Theo-Drama* series, the second component in his trilogy, that Maximus reappears rather more prominently.[33] Here he becomes an archetypal model of 'dramatic soteriology', where we must understand Jesus Christ principally as the protagonist of the interaction of infinite divine freedom and finite human freedom that lies at the heart of the mystery of creaturely deification. As von Balthasar writes,

If Maximus' portrayal of the reciprocal immanence of finite and infinite freedom seems somehow undramatic, we must remember two things: first, that the *analogia entis* (the irreducible 'otherness' of created nature) excludes any kind of fusion or confusion in this ever-intensifying reciprocal interpenetration: each increase in 'divinization' on the part of the creature also implies an increase of its own freedom. This guarantees the abiding and ever-increasing vitality of the dramatic relationship between God and the creature. Second … finite freedom, once it has been redeemed and liberated, is now in danger of being able to utter a heightened No, even to the extent of making a total and irrevocable refusal of grace…[34]

Maximus accordingly factors into von Balthasar's re-description of Christian discipleship in terms of the implication of believers, the calling of the faithful to become the latest *dramatis personae* in the still-unfolding eschatological

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[32] See *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (Grand Rapids, 1990), 21-2, 78, citing Maximus, *Capita de caritate* 4.96 (PG 90) on divine abandonment, and *Capita theological et oeconomica* 1.66 (PG 90, 1108A-B) on the specter of the Passion as the key to knowing the *logoi* of creation and Scripture. Already on the dramatic 'necessity' of Christ's fate, see *Cosmic Liturgy* (2003), 201-3. On these themes in Maximus, see further P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), 226-34.

[33] For Maximus' appearances in this series, see P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), 322 n. 155.

[34] *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 4: *The Action*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco, 1994; German edition, 1980), 383.

Christo-drama, growing vocationally into their own roles in the performance of freedom and virtue.[35]

Maximus' importance to von Balthasar's overall work is difficult to epitomize, and I have provided here only a cursory description of its evolution in the direction of a more theo-dramatic reading of the Confessor. In general, however, Maximus served von Balthasar's urgency for an integrative theology that cut across the divides between systematic, philosophical, and biblical theology, and that carved out vital places for ethical performance and for mystical contemplation and liturgical experience of the divine transcendentals of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth. In a period in which much Christian theology in the West was growing skeptical of summas and metanarratives, seeming to become more compartmentalized and gravitating toward 'theologies of' this and that, Maximus' christocentric cosmic drama consistently inspired von Balthasar's unapologetic aspiration to articulate an embracing interpretation of the created universe as an expression of God's own freedom and kenotic love.

III. John Zizioulas and the Debate over 'Nature' and 'Person' in the Retrieval of Maximus for Contemporary Orthodox Theology

Personalist philosophy and theology have long played a role in modern Eastern Orthodox thought, having roots not only in the 'Neo-Patristic Synthesis' pioneered by Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Dumitru Staniloae, John Meyendorff, Kallistos Ware, and others, but also in the earlier Russian Christian Personalism descended from the likes of Dostoyevsky, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Sergei Bulgakov.[36] More recently John Zizioulas, less so Christos Yannaras, have become the preeminent exponents of Orthodox Personalism, garnering an impressive following both of critics and devotees.

Controversy over Zizioulas' work has intensified in view of his high profile among Orthodox theologians in the West, and commensurate alienation from

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[35] On this integration of believers/communities into the drama of Christ, see *Theo-Drama*, vol. 2: *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco, 1990; German edition, 1976), 62-89, also 173-334 (on infinite and finite freedom in theo-dramatic context); *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3: *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco, 1992; German edition, 1978), 122-48, 263-461, 513-4, 532-5.

[36] For an excellent synopsis of the development of Personalism in modern Orthodox thought, including the work of Zizioulas and Christos Yannaras, see Jean-Claude Larchet, *Personne et nature: La Trinité – Le Christ – L'homme* (Paris, 2011), 207-33. See also Alexis Torrance, 'Personhood and Patristics in Orthodox Theology: Reassessing the Debate', *Heythrop Journal* 52 (2011), 700-7; Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Personhood and Its Exponents in Twentieth-Century Orthodox Theology', in Mary Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology* (Cambridge, 2008), 232-45; Paul Ladoceur, 'Treasures New and Old: Landmarks of Orthodox Neopatristic Theology', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 56 (2012), 206-9.

some Orthodox theologians in the East. In the West, his popularity has extended well beyond Orthodox audiences where he has had appeal for some who, rightly or wrongly, consider his work a healthy alternative to 'onto-theology' and a promising means to relate trinitarian and christological doctrine to the 'communion of persons' within the Church. Already in God himself, Zizioulas argues, freedom is personal and arises from the person of the Father rather than from God's essence, and conditions God's freedom in relation to creation. The Trinity of divine Persons '… *makes God free from the necessity of his essence*; had it not been for the Trinity God would require an eternal creation in order to be free to reach beyond his essence, and then he would bind himself necessarily and eternally to creation'.[37]

Zizioulas places a very high premium on the breakthrough of Greco-Roman 'essentialist' theology and cosmology achieved by the Greek Fathers.[38] Maximus the Confessor plays an enormous supporting role in Zizioulas' project of building a neo-patristic cosmology to substantiate his ecclesiology and Eucharistic theology. He posits that for Maximus, as already for the Cappadocian Fathers, 'nature' and 'person' are together constitutive of true 'being',[39] but ultimately 'person' (ὑπόστασις) and 'mode of existence' (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) have *causal* priority to nature and are what make something to 'exist' as such.[40] Zizioulas leans his argument particularly on certain relatively late technical definitions in Maximus, such as his declaration that the Fathers before him had defined 'nature' (φύσις) purely as the 'genus of many members' and 'essence' as the 'natural being of many and different hypostases'.[41] 'Nature' for Maximus has no concreteness whatsoever, and functions, says Zizioulas, solely 'to relate hypostases to each other, to make them relational'.[42] It is *hypostasis* that vitalizes freedom and preempts the 'necessity' or ontological harness associated with nature. In Zizioulas' further judgment, Maximus' Christology demands

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[37] 'Trinitarian Freedom: Is God Free in Trinitarian Life?', in Giulio Maspero and Robert Wosniak (eds), *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh, 2012), 197; see *id.*, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York, 1985), 42; *id.*, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London, 2006), 131-77. Zizioulas' deference to Greek patristic sources for this relational Trinitarianism has come under substantial criticism. See esp. André de Halleux, 'Personnalisme ou essentialisme trinitaire chez les Péres cappadociens?', in *Patrologie et œcuménisme: Recueil d'études* (Louvain, 1990), 215-68; Lucian Turcescu, '"Person" versus "Individual", and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa', *Modern Theology* 18 (2002), 97-109.

[38] See esp. *Being as Communion* (1985), 27-65.

[39] See his 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor', in M. Vasiljević, *Knowing the Purpose of Creation through the Resurrection* (2013), 86-7, 88.

[40] *Being as Communion*, 41-2 and nn. 36-7.

[41] *Opusculum* 26 (PG 91, 276A), cited by J. Zizioulas, 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor' (2013), 89.

[42] 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor' (2013), 90.

the priority of person to nature as definitive not only for the revised Christian ontology but also for the mystery of deification as *personal* adoption (υἱοθεσία).[43]

Zizioulas' claims here have incurred considerable criticism.[44] In the case of his use of Maximus, critics – especially Jean-Claude Larchet and Nikolaos Loudovikos (and here I must include myself) – have targeted both his reading of modern existentialism into an ancient writer and his deficient understanding of the Confessor's fuller conception of 'nature'. Somehow, in Zizioulas' reading of Maximus, nature is supposed to be elemental, inextricably tied up with person, but there is no discernable emphasis on their ontological simultaneity and mutual integrity. Person enriches nature but Zizioulas cannot see from Maximus conversely how nature enriches person. While rightly noting that Maximus has no interest in a concept of *pura natura*,[45] since created nature is always implicated in an existential history, a horizon of relations and interactions among particular beings, Zizioulas obfuscates Maximus' thinking on nature especially on two crucial points.

First, regarding the Confessor's well-developed teaching on the *λόγοι of nature*, he insists that the *logoi* have less to do with nature than with the underlying personal love of the Creator-Logos for his creatures; the *logoi* thus refer solely to nature as already 'personalized'.[46] This view appears *prima facie* compelling, but on closer inspection not only drives an unnecessary wedge between the logos of nature (λόγος φύσεως) and the person's mode of existing (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως), but also fails to see that nature is itself the ground and resource, as it were, of the Creator-Logos' abiding activity in binding together particular beings in communion. Both Larchet and Loudovikos have rightly noted from Maximus that the *logoi* of created beings encode the relational complexion and vocation of each individual creature at the level of *nature*.[47] The logos of each creature, moreover, intrinsically intersects with the multiple *logoi* of other creatures, not only guaranteeing the integrity of each one but projecting the teleological coherence of the whole of created nature, the universal and the particular.[48] Maximus interprets Jesus' statement in *John* 5:17 – 'My Father is working still, and I am working' – precisely as the Creator's ongoing providential labor of preserving, forming, and guiding creatures on the basis of the

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[43] *Ibid*. 93-100.

[44] For substantial bibliography of the various scholarly responses to, and criticisms of, Zizioulas's Personalism, see J.-C. Larchet, *Personne et nature* (2011), 222-4 nn. 77-8.

[45] 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor' (2013), 98-9.

[46] *Being as Communion* (1985), 97; *Communion and Otherness* (2006), 19-32, 64-8, 72-3.

[47] J.-C. Larchet, *Personne et nature* (2011), 246-8; N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Crestwood, NY, 2010), 53-194.

[48] See esp. *Q. Thal.* 48 (CChr.SG 7, 341); also J.-C. Larchet, *Personne et nature* (2011), 247-8; N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology* (2010), 123-8.

logoi of *nature* that were simultaneously and perfectly preconceived in the divine Logos.[49] The *logoi* of nature remain ontologically fixed in the Logos, and yet, insofar as they are the perpetual staging-points of his live activity, and interface with what Maximus (like Evagrius) identifies as the '*logoi* of providence and judgment',[50] they 'flex', eschatologically speaking, to the will of the Creator-Logos in drawing the diverse creation toward solidarity and unity. In other words, they provide the very conditions for intimate personal communion among creatures and between creatures and Creator. Loudovikos insists from Maximus that the 'dialogical reciprocity' of creatures has its matrix in nature, which itself is nothing other than 'the totally concrete incarnation of divine will',[51] the very embodiment of the Creator's desire for perfect intercommunion in and with creation. Further, Loudovikos challenges Zizioulas' focus on the Eucharist purely as the communion *of persons* by indicating how, already for Maximus, Eucharistic communion and mutual gift-giving among creatures arise from the depths of created being itself.[52]

A second and cognate point of controversy surrounds Zizioulas' rather routine equation of nature and 'necessity', be it the *ontological* necessity implied by Greek essentialist theology and cosmology or the *biological* necessity constraining human nature after the Adamic fall. Hypostatic freedom supposedly breaks through these constraints, and despite Zizioulas' own caveats about the purposefulness of nature, the residual effect of his argumentation is that nature must be trumped, as it were, by personhood.[53] Both he and Christos Yannaras thereupon read Maximus' notion of 'ecstasy' (ἔκστασις) as the person's breaking free from or beyond nature.[54] But the struggle against Greco-Roman essentialist ontology was not a consuming issue for Maximus as perhaps it was for his predecessors. Zizioulas and Yannaras accurately identify a sense in Maximus of nature as *biological* necessity to the extent that he occasionally uses 'nature' in connection with its postlapsarian condition (κατάστασις; περίστασις),[55] and 'law of nature' with reference to fallen humanity's inexorable subjugation to

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[49] *Q. Thal.* 2 (CChr.SG 7, 51).

[50] On the '*logoi* of providence and judgment', see Maximus, *Amb. Jo.* 10 (PG 91, 1133C-1136A); *ibid.* 34 (1288B); *ibid.* 37 (1297A); *ibid.* 67 (1400A); *Q. Thal.* 53 (CChr.SG 7, 431); *ibid.* 54 (CChr.SG 7, 457); *ibid.* 64 (CChr.SG 22, 239). See also N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology* (2010), 88-93.

[51] 'Hell and Heaven, Nature and Person: C. Yannaras, J. Zizioulas, D. Staniloae and Maximus the Confessor' (Unpublished paper), 28.

[52] *A Eucharistic Ontology* (2010), 195-210.

[53] See Loudovikos' criticism of Zizioulas' perspective on nature in 'Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position', *Heythrop Journal* 48 (2009), 1-16.

[54] J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (1985), 46-7, 63; Christos Yannaras, *Person and Eros*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, MA, 2008), 5-23, 41, 142-5, 262-7.

[55] *Amb. Jo.* 6 (PG 91, 1068A, B); *ibid.* 50 (1368C); *ibid.* 45 (1353C); *ibid.* 53 (1373A). On human nature being 'stunted' (κολοβουμένη) by the fall, see *Q. Thal.* 65 (CChr.SG 22, 279).

pleasure, pain, and death in its struggle to survive and thrive.[56] The problem is that neither Zizioulas nor Yannaras, in their zeal to exalt authentic personhood and to avoid interpreting salvation as mere physical redemption, regularly takes into account Maximus's dialectics of 'nature', how he closely insinuates nature as the theatre and horizon of creatures' graced movement toward God, and nature as sheer vanity and vulnerability apart from the indwelling and empowering Logos-Christ.[57]

To his credit, Yannaras is more in line with Maximus himself in describing creaturely ecstasy still as *nature's own potential* to 'stand outside' itself in relation to God, such that the personal (gnomic) can still reveal *nature's own* deeper aspiration, in the light of Christ having fulfilled nature's ecstatic potentiality by inaugurating a new *tropos* of human nature.[58] In a quite compelling way, Yannaras also dramatizes the 'erotic' dimension of ecstasy and personal communion. Citing Maximus, he calls *erôs* a truly natural as well as personal faculty that overcomes the 'oblivion of non-relation' and empowers authentic, ecstatic love.[59]

On the whole, Larchet's basic criticism that Zizioulas and Yannaras have read contemporary existentialist Personalism into Maximus still carries some weight.[60] Zizioulas has strongly pushed back against this criticism, and at times conceded the danger of having the Confessor fight modern theological or philosophical battles that were not in his purview.[61] The debate has remained strong not because of a lack of shared concerns or of a passion for patristic retrieval but precisely because Zizioulas, Yannaras, and their major critics are seeking to extrapolate a 'relational ontology' from Maximus on different grounds.

IV. Conclusion

The three case studies I have presented here by no means exhaust the array of contemporary theological recontextualizations of Maximus. Elsewhere I have profiled, for example, some important recent retrievals of Maximus in ecological theology and in moral philosophy (specifically virtue ethics).[62] In retrospect, the appeal to Maximus in contemporary theology makes in itself for an excellent case study in the dynamics of patristic retrieval and *ressourcement*. Bulgakov, von Balthasar, and Zizioulas each in his own way reveals both the risks in, and

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[56] *Q. Thal*. 21 (CChr.SG 7, 129): τῷ περιστατικῷ νόμῳ τῆς φύσεως.
[57] On this dialectics, see P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), 201-6.
[58] *Person and Eros* (2008), 258, 262-3, 268-9.
[59] *Ibid*. 144-5.
[60] See *Personne et nature* (2011), 226-43.
[61] *E.g.* 'Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor' (2013), 103.
[62] P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), 324-8.

promise of, merging horizons and cultivating conversation between ancient and modern thought. Bulgakov risks distorting Maximus by subsuming him into his Sophiology, and yet ironically he still sets in relief important elements of the role of divine Wisdom in the Confessor's own cosmology, and his reading of Maximus has lately inspired the work of the ecological theologian Willis Jenkins.[63] Von Balthasar risked merging the projects of Maximus and Hegel, and yet redeemed the value of Maximus's contemplative and theological 'theory of everything' for a whole new age, and I myself, in a new book on Maximus, have capitalized on his later, theo-dramatic reading of the Confessor.[64] Zizioulas has risked contorting Maximian ontology, and yet few can deny that elements of the personalism of both Zizioulas and Yannaras have gone far to re-energize interest in Maximus across ecumenical-ecclesiological lines. New retrievals are bound to appear, but my expectation is that the built-in risks will continue be outweighed by the benefits of fresh engagements.

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[63] See W. Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (New York, 2008), 110ff, 191ff.
[64] See P. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor* (2016), esp. 6, 82-3, 101-2, 114-9, 127, 141-2, 163-4, 200-11, 222-4, 233-4, 242-3, 247-50, 319-23.