That Creation is Incarnation in Maximus Confessor
Jordan Daniel Wood

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Jordan Daniel Wood
Advisor: Boyd Taylor Coolman, PhD

Abstract

This dissertation argues that Maximus conceives the logic of creation from nothing as the logic of the divine Word's historical Incarnation. It first studies the peculiar features of Maximus's Neochalcedonian christology in order to understand what he means by "Incarnation" (Chapter 1). It then discovers this same logic operative in Maximus's protology (Chapter 2) and eschatology (Chapter 3). I therefore conclude that Maximus's declaration, "The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and in all things" (*Amb* 7.22), ought to be interpreted literally.

Nicht jedwedem ist gegeben, das Ende zu wissen, wenigen, die Uranfänge des Lebens zu sehen, noch wenigeren, das Ganze vom Ersten bis zum Letzten der Dinge zu durchdenken.

~ F.W.J. von Schelling, *Die Weltalter*

In hac autem consideratione est perfectio illuminationis mentis, dum quasi in sexta die videt hominem factum ad imaginem Dei. Si enim imago est similitudo expressiva, dum mens nostra contemplatur in Christo Filio Dei, qui est imago Dei invisibilis per naturam, humanitatem nostram tam mirabiliter exaltatam, tam ineffabiliter unitam, videndo simul in unum primum et ultimum, summum et imum, circumferentiam et centrum, *alpha et omega*, causatum et causam, Creatorem et creaturam, librum sciliet *scriptum intus et extra;* iam pervenit ad quandam rem perfectam, ut cum Deo ad perfectionem suarum illuminationum in sexto gradu quasi in sexta die perveniat, nec aliquid iam amplius restet nisi dies requiei, in qua per mentis excessum requiescat humanae mentis perspicacitas *ab omni opere, quod patrarat.*

~ St Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* VI.7

ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἶπα· Θεοὶ ἐστε; εἰ ἐκείνους εἶπεν θεοὺς πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφὴ, ὃν ὁ πατὴρ ἡγίασεν καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι Βλασφημεῖς, ὅτι εἶπον· Υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμι;

~ John 10.34-6

αὐτου γὰρ ἐσμεν ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.

~ Ephesians 2.10

Βούλεται γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος καὶ Θεὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐνσωματώσεως ἐνεργεῖσθαι τὸ μυστήριον.

~ Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua ad Iohanem* 7.22

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Acknowledgments

Incredible how something so mean as a dissertation can reveal so much about weighty matters like divine munificence. That's evident enough when I try to recall all those who have instructed, chided, and cheered me throughout my theological formation—all to my gain. Their mostly unsung succor is for that very reason more the Lord's. Here I acknowledge those more or less directly linked to this project and leave the rest to their reward.

Thanks first to my committee. John Betz, one of those rare interlocutors in academic theology whose generosity and intelligence actually allows iron to sharpen iron. Paul Blowers, whose expert and cautious guidance bears a most amazing attribute— joviality. Fr. Brian Dunkle, SJ, the most meticulous, exacting, and wildly indulgent reader I've known. And especially to Boyd Taylor Coolman: his intellectual and personal hospitality to me and to my family has made this work a true labor of love, a thing of joy. That ability, I suspect, must be the mark of a truly good man.

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Abbreviations

Maximus's works

Lib. ascet.	*Liber asceticus*
Quest. et dub.	*Quaestiones et dubia*
CC	*Capita de charitate*
CT	*Capita theologiae et oeconomiae*
Ep	*Epistula* 1-45
Opusc	*Opuscula theologica et polemica*
Amb	*Ambigua ad Thomam et Iohanem*
QThal	*Quaestiones ad Thalassium*
Exp. Orat. Dom.	*Expositio orationis dominicae*
In psalm 59	*Expositio in psalmum* 59
Myst	*Mystagogia*
Pyr	*Disputatio cum Pyrrho*

On Maximus

MC	*Actes du symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur*
TOHMC	*The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*
ACMC	*The Architecture of the Cosmos*

Others

ACO	*Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*
PG	*Patrologia graeca*
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*
CCSG	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca*
LSJ	*A Greek-English Lexicon*
Lampe	*A Patristic Greek Lexicon*

Introduction

Topic & Thesis

John Scotus Eriugena attributes many insights to Maximus Confessor, above all insight

into the riddle of the world's procession from God. So Eriugena writes in the preface to

his *versio Latina* of Maximus's *Ambigua ad Johannem*:

> to mention a few of many points, [Maximus most lucidly explains] in what way
> the Cause of all things, who is God, be both a simple and manifold One: what sort
> of procession there be—and here I mean the multiplication of divine Goodness
> through all things that are—which descends from the summit all the way down,
> first through the general essence of all things, then through the most general
> genera, then through less general genera, still further through more specific
> species right into the most specific species, even into differentia and properties.
> And again, concerning the same divinity, we see what sort of reversion of
> Goodness there be—I mean the gathering together, through those same grades,
> from the things that exist in infinite diversity and multiplicity right up to that
> simplest unity of all things, which is in God and which God is. So [we see] that
> God is all things and all things are God. And [we understand] indeed in what way
> this divine procession into all things is called ἀναλυτικὴ, that is, unraveling, but
> reversion [is called] θέωσις—deification.[1]

Maximus taught Eriugena how the sheen of God's ineffable transcendence most glisters

when we see that and how God and world are "one and the same."[2] And to see this you

need the crucial lens Maximus cuts: the "primordial reasons" of all things not only find

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[1] Eriugena, *JOANNIS SCOTI VERSIO AMBIGUORUM S. MAXIMI*, praef., my translation; CCSG 18, 3-4, ll.25-37: "Exempli gratia, ut pauca de pluribus dicam, quomodo causa omnium, quae Deus est, una sit simplex et multiplex; qualis sit processio, id est multiplicatio divinae bonitatis per omnia quae sunt, a summo usque deorsum, per generalem omnium essentiam primo, deinceps per genera generalissima, deinde per genera generaliora, inde per species speciales usque ad species specialissimas per differentias proprietatesque descendens; et iterum ejusdem divinae videlicet, bonitatis qualis sit reversio, id est congregatio, per eosdem gradus ab infinita eorum quae sunt variaque multiplicatione usque ad simplicissimam omnium unitatem, quae in Deo est et Deus est, ita ut et Deus omnia sit et omnia Deus sint. Et quomodo praedicta quidem divina in omnia processio ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΗ dicitur, hoc est resolutio, reversio vero ΘΕΩΣΙΣ, hoc est deificatio."

[2] Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.17, O'Meara 161-3: "Proinde non duo a se ipsis distantia debemus intelligere deum et creaturam sed unum et id ipsum."

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their eternal ground in the Word of God, they "are the very [Word] Himself."[3] God and world are identical because the one Word is both.

I share Eriugena's conviction that with Maximus dawned what may be the profoundest insight of the patristic tradition into the peculiar role the Word plays in God's creative act, the Word who remains consubstantial with Father and Spirit even as he descends into and as the generation of all things. I stand with Eriugena too when he says of the God-world relation—more exactly, how God and world are identical and distinct in the Word—that "there is no more profound question than this that seekers after the truth should investigate."[4] I sympathize still more when Eriugena, dumb before "the manner and reason of the establishment of all things in the Word," finally sighs, "let the one speak who can; myself, I confess I do not know."[5] In yet a final way I follow Eriugena: just here, where the trail runs cold, I look to Maximus.

A broad and systematic question animates my study: does the historical Incarnation of the Word disclose anything about the fundamental God-world relation, and if yes, what? I pose this question to Maximus, who, if the genre of ἐρωταπόκρισεις much of his oeuvre assumes offers any indication, would not glibly eschew this ζήτημα.[6] That this question motivates the study does not mean the study can resolve it, of course. But it might make a start. I take up another of Maximus's practices, though without his ingenuity, in hunt of his answer: I comment texts in Maximus which are, I think, misread,

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[3] Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.7, O'Meara 76-7: "omnia in verbo dei non solum aeterna verum etiam ipsum {verbum} esse." Surely significant, Eriugena overtly credits this precise insight to Maximus's *Ambiguum* 7.

[4] Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.7, O'Meara 70-1.

[5] Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.16, O'Meara 144-5.

[6] On this genre in Maximus, see Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the* Questiones ad Thalassium (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1991) and Peter Van Deun, "Maximus the Confessor's Use of Literary Genres," in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (hereafter *TOHMC*), eds. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 275f.

or at least read shallow. So the systematic question becomes an exegetical one too. I ask it thus: what is the relation between creation and Incarnation in Maximus?

I argue that Maximus conceives creation as divine Incarnation. More precisely, creation and Incarnation are identified in Maximus because they bear the same logic. To those familiar with Maximus or his modern commentators, this may appear a prosaic thesis. Many have spoken of the intimate link in Maximus's theology between his Neochalcedonian christology and his conception of the world.[7] Who among those who've read it could forget that breathtaking declaration, this dissertation's epigraph: "The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and in all things"?[8] And yet I contend that not only has recent scholarship on Maximus moved noticeably away from taking this cosmic Incarnation as literal Incarnation—where literal means in the technical sense of christology proper, i.e. according to the very logic of the Incarnate Word—but that Maximus's readers have seldom taken him literally here, even his first and greatest in the West, Eriugena.[9]

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[7] Already in 1915 Sergei Leontevich Epifanovich, the first major modern scholar of Maximus, identified Maximus's unique genius in his application of the Incarnation to virtually every other dimension of existence; see the discussion in Joshua Lollar, "Reception of Maximian Thought in the Modern Era," in *TOHMC*, eds. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 565-7.

[8] *Amb* 7.22, PG 91, 1084c-d: "Βούλεται γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος καὶ Θεὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐνσωματώσεως ἐνεργεῖσθαι τὸ μυστήριον."

[9] So Eric D. Perl, "Metaphysics and Christology in Maximus Confessor and Eriugena," in *Eriugena: East and West – Papers of the Eighth International Colloquium of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies*, eds. Bernard McGinn and Willemien Otten (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1994), 253-79. And rightly so, since Eriugena openly denies the similarity of creation and the historical Incarnation (*Periphyseon*, III.17, O'Meara 162-3).

Status huius quaestionis[10]

I begin with one exception, and this I call "the Perl phenomenon." Eric Perl's 1991 dissertation on Maximus at Yale was never published and yet is often cited, still today.[11] A very brief distillation of his argument appears, in published form, in just the first half a 25-page essay.[12]

What makes Perl a phenomenon, though, is his actual argument. His study examines the philosophical dimensions of "participation" (μέθεξις) in Maximus. Participation—basically the ancient problem of the One and the Many (hence Perl begins with a meditation on Plato's *Parmenides*)—is the philosophical *locus classicus* of the God-world relation. And yet Perl's avowed self-restriction to matters philosophical does not prevent his careful reading of Maximus to lead where Maximus always leads—to the Incarnate Word. Having surveyed "participation" in thinkers like Plotinus, Proclus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Dionysius, Perl elucidates Maximus's Neochalcedonian christology and its conceptual convergence with and transfiguration of the metaphysical doctrine of participation.[13] Perl discerns in Maximus's technical use of *enhypostasia* or "enhypostatization" the christological equivalent to and warrant for "perfect

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[10] This section unfolds strictly in light of my own thesis. It is no generic survey of modern scholarship, of which there are several adequate reports. In chronological order: Polycarp Sherwood, "Survey of Recent Work on St. Maximus the Confessor," *Traditio* 20 (1964): 428-37; the tendentious one from Marcel Doucet, "Vues récentes sur les 'métamorphoses' de la pensée de saint Maxime le Confesseur," *Science et Esprit* 31.3 (1979): 269-302; Aidan Nichols, O.P. *Byzantine Gospel: Maximus the Confessor in Modern Scholarship* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), esp. the "Appendix: The Rediscovery of Maximus: A Brief History of Maximian Scholarship," 221-52; Andrew Louth, "Recent Research on St Maximus the Confessor: A Survey," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42 (1998): 67-84; Peter van Deun, "Maxime le Confesseur: état de la question et bibliographie exhaustive," *Sacris Erudiri* 38 (1999): 485-573; idem, "Développements récents des recherches sur Maxime le Confesseur (1998-2009)," *Sacris Erudiri* 48 (2009): 97-167; and now Lollar, "Reception," 564-90, and Élie Ayroulet, "La réception de Maxime le Confesseur à l'époque contemporaine," *Théophilyon* 21.1 (2016): 71-90.

[11] Eric D. Perl, "Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, and Deification in Saint Maximus Confessor," (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Yale, 1991). See Louth's cautious but eager anticipation of Perl's doctoral thesis (Louth "Recent Research," 81-2).

[12] Perl, "Metaphysics and Christology," cited at n.9.

[13] Perl, "Methexis," ch. 6 on "Participation and Incarnation" (esp. 184ff.).

participation."[14] A provocative upshot: "perfect participation" in God, since this describes

the ultimate *telos* of human deification, means that the destiny of created being is to

become enhypostasized in the Word:

> This hypostatic union of God and creation, the identity of identity and difference,
> is the one mystery precisely because, as the uttermost explanation of all reality, it
> cannot itself be explained in terms of anything else.... The distinction between
> hypostasis and nature enables [Maximus] to accept the perfect identity and perfect
> difference of God and the world, and the perfect identity of these. Thus in
> ontology enhypostasization allows him to avoid both the monist and the dualist
> tendencies of the theory of participation, just as in Christology it allows him to
> avoid both monophysitism and Nestorianism. Instead of undermining the
> metaphysical theory in attempting discursively to escape the paradox, Maximus
> exalts it as the supreme mystery.[15]

Perl's view reaffirms Balthasar's that Maximus makes Neochalcedonian

christology "a fundamental law of metaphysics."[16] But the claim that the Word

enhypostasizes the world moves well beyond Balthasar. Perl himself seems not to have

seen this, and indeed I sense a certain ambiguity for just this reason. Perl exceeds

Balthasar precisely where he thinks himself at one with Balthasar. Enhypostatization or,

to drop the barbarism for now, Incarnation, is actually *not* "perfect participation," at least

if participation here is conceived (Neo)platonically. Christ's human nature did not

participate his hypostasis, not even perfectly. The relation between Christ's person and

either of his natures surpasses participatory (Perl) and analogical (Balthasar) logic. So

Perl does follow Balthasar in two ways: he sees that Neochalcedonianism and its

flowering in Maximus opens new metaphysical logic—the logic of "person" and

"perichoresis" (taken from trinitarian theology and applied to the God-world relation)

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[14] Perl, "Methexis," 205.
[15] Perl, "Methexis," 210-11.
[16] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, 3rd ed., transl. Brian Daley, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003 [orig: 1941, 1961, 1988]), 70.

rather than that of "essence" or "nature"[17]—and he makes of this logic a cosmological principle. "Perfect participation," Perl thinks, codifies Maximus's achievement, first discerned by Balthasar. But Perl also edges toward a more direct application, something like a *formal* one, of Christo-logic to the whole God-world relation. Only thus can he pronounce what never lights upon Balthasar's tongue: that God and world should enjoy "hypostatic union."

Modern Maximus scholars often cite but never follow Perl's work in its core claim.[18] In fact modern Maximus scholarship has moved conspicuously *away* from Perl during the two and a half decades since. Take for instance Törönen's opening argument, endorsed by Louth, that far too much has been made of the "Neochalcedonian logic" of "union" and "distinction" in Maximus, since, of course, these were perennial *topoi* in both Greek philosophy and Christian theology long before Chalcedon.[19] And yet the scholarly consensus contra Perl has never, as far as I know, offered a direct engagement and refutation of his principal thesis. How then to explain the phenomenon that Perl's audacious thesis has both commanded the attention of scholars to such a degree that it's still cited in its unpublished form, and yet the essential theme of its melody has apparently fallen on deaf ears? Maximus studies have played three other notes and these, I think, compose a harmony dissonant with Perl's and my own. Surveying these situates this dissertation among the scholarly literature.

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[17] See Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 64, 113, and esp. 153f.

[18] Nor do scholars who cite Perl do so mainly in demurral. The only monograph in the past several decades to treat my specific topic agrees that Perl's dissertation "represents a major contribution to the Maximus literature"; see Torstein Theodore Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 17.

[19] Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 1-6; and Andrew Louth, "St Maximos' Doctrine of the *logoi* of Creation," *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010), 80.

1. *Analogizing Maximus: Balthasar recruits Maximus for the analogy of being*. In both its 1941 and 1961 recensions Balthasar's crowning patristic achievement, *Kosmische Liturgie*, dons a double laurel: it remains "a fountainhead and continuing inspiration of modern Maximus scholarship,"[20] and many consider it perhaps the decisive moment of retrieval for Balthasar's own constructive theology.[21] Below I say more about Balthasar's general approach to Maximus and why I share it. Here I want to suggest that Balthasar retrieved Maximus to discover in him the definitive justification for the *analogia entis* between God and world, where "definitive" means, to meet Barth's obsessive concern, "christological."[22] He also needed to dissipate that great spectral nimbus hovering about so much modern theology, the harrowing shade of German idealism, Hegel's above all. It's no accident that Balthasar opens his book on Maximus with reference to Franz Anton Staudenmaier's attempt to recruit elements of Eriugena's thought to contend with "the pantheism of Hegel."[23] Balthasar chooses Maximus. And he

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[20] Daley, "Translator's Foreward," *Cosmic Liturgy*, 15; similarly Ayroulet, "La réception," 72-3.

[21] So Cyril O'Regan, "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval: Post-Chalcedonian Symphonic Theology," *Gregorianum* 77.2 (1996), 237: "Balthasar remains perfectly clear that Maximus is without equal. Maximus does not simply repeat; he fundamentally exceeds, both in the specific historical domain of post-Chalcedonian theology, as well as in his potential as a contemporary critical resource"; see too Mark A. MacIntosh, *Christology from Within: Spirituality and the Incarnation in Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1996).

[22] It's now pretty well acknowledged that Barth's rejection was of a piece with his wider repudiation of natural theology, which explains the accompanying vehemence in both the rejection of analogy in the *Dogmatics* and the acerbic contrapuntal tract against Brunner's natural theology, called *Nein!*. That Barth was chiefly exercised about theological epistemology (faith and reason) also explains his acceptance of both Balthasar's and Söhngen's concession that the *analogia entis* must find final epistemic justification in an *analogia fidei*; see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*. Transl. Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992 [1951]) 31, 37, *passim*; and Gottlieb Söhngen, "Analogia fidei: Gottähnlichkeit allein aus Glauben?" *Catholica* 3 (1934): 113-36; idem, "Analogia fidei: Die Einheit in der Glaubenswissenschaft," *Catholica* 4 (1934): 176-208. For Barth's acceptance of these proposals see his "Gespräche in Princeton I," 499, cited in Kenneth Oakes, "The Question of Nature and Grace in Karl Barth: Humanity as Creature and as Covenant-Partner," *Modern Theology* 23.4 (2007): 615. And for an updated and charitable account of these and related matters, see John R. Betz, "Translator's Introduction," in *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*. Translated by John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014 [1932]), 74f.

[23] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 29.

does so for the same reason that makes Maximus a fitting riposte to Barth: "Maximus looks straight into the eye of Hegel," recognizes a kindred christological instinct to synthesize created contraries, but outstrips Hegel by insisting that Chalcedon's Definition govern every synthesis. Indeed, any reader of Maximus "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]

And so Maximus's maxim, the watchword that speaks always the final word in Christian metaphysics, is "unconfused" (ἀσύγχυτος).[25] That natures human and divine, created and uncreated, coalesce in the "unconfused union" achieved by and in the person of Christ—this for Balthasar constitutes the dogmatic justification for the *analogia entis* between God and world. It justifies, I mean, what often falls to doubt (particularly when the "Asiatic" religious mood predominates): that the finitude of the world, its infinite difference from God, must forever perdure in all its individuality and diversity, even and especially in its apical union with the one God. In Christ Creator became creature and yet remained Creator; therefore creature will remain creature when it becomes, in a sense, Creator. Sublation need not spell obliteration. Hypostatic union justifies, indeed valorizes, the analogy of being. And I say "justifies" deliberately. One way I disagree with Balthasar emerges precisely here: for Balthasar, despite momentary lapses, Maximus derives from Chalcedonian Christology the *epistemic justification* for the true God-world relation, an analogical concinnity of the two natures in Christ; for me Maximus there divines the peculiar, *metaphysical form* of creation itself, a logic that

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[24] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 207.
[25] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 49, 63, 126, *passim*.

insists an analogy between infinitely incommensurable natures holds only within a deeper identity of those natures in and as a divine hypostasis, in and as the Word.

Balthasar flatly denies that any "higher" or "deeper" identity obtains in the God-world relation, and again recruits Maximus's authority for the point.[26] Maximus becomes the most valiant defender of analogy because he found a way to speak of the permanent integrities of God and world in an atmosphere threatening their collapse, beset as it was by Neoplatonism, Origenism, and the ascetic flight from the world. Christ unites without confusion—behold the definitive truth that gives the lie to every illicit elision, every seduction toward the "original sin" of metaphysical identity![27] Incarnation verifies that *analogia entis* is the one inviolable rule of Christian metaphysics.[28] Balthasar's recruitment of Maximus cannot but cast a long shadow over any kind of identity thesis when seeking Maximus's deepest insight into the God-world relation.[29]

2. *Platonizing Maximus: Sherwood calls for study of "participation" in Maximus*. Balthasar made substantial revisions to the first edition of his Maximus opus (1941), largely in response to criticisms from the other great Maximus scholar of the era, the Benedictine monk Polycarp Sherwood. The gap between the two lay mostly in method. On essentials they were at one.[30] They also agreed on what required closer scrutiny in Maximus: his reliance on the Cappadocians and Dionysius, the exact nature of sixth-century "Neochalcedonianism" and Maximus's use of it, and so on. Sherwood's

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[26] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Volume III: Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, transl. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992 [1978]), 221-22.
[27] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Retrieving the Tradition: The Fathers, the Scholastics and Ourselves," *Communio* 24 (1997): 347-96 (transl. Edward T. Oakes, S.J. [Orig: 1939]), 354.
[28] Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory: Volume II: Truth of God*. Translated by Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004 [1985]), 315-16.
[29] I have not included here the important work of Lars Thunberg, whose basic vantage is that of Balthasar's. See his *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1995).
[30] Sherwood, "Survey of Recent Work," 428.

important 1964 review essay pled for a more pressing task: "A study on 'participation',"

he wrote,

> would serve to clarify what is, perhaps, the acutest problem in Byzantine theology: the relation of the finite to the infinite, of the created to the uncreated, not so much in the moment of creation as in the moment of deification.[31]

Here he commended Dalmais's concern to investigate "participation" in Maximus with

the express aim to define "divinization by grace...without falling into pantheism."[32]

This was wise counsel. Notice, though, the parameters fixed from the outset: to

grasp the God-world relation in Maximus you should analyze the concept of

"participation"—a concept whose lineage reaches deep into times past and extends

widely across various thought worlds— and you should focus on eschatological union,

and you should do so taking care to avoid "pantheism," a term that apparently requires no

exact definition.[33] Sherwood's call, whatever its limitations from my vantage, has

certainly borne fruit. An interesting and lively debate about whether "participation" is

even a proper concept in Maximus, and if so, what it means, has transpired for the good

of all in the Maximus guild. I don't rehearse it here.[34] Rather, I take issue with what

appears to be a governing assumption within the debate and without: you must seek the

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[31] Sherwood, "Survey of Recent Work," 435.

[32] Sherwood, "Survey of Recent Work," 436, citing Dalmais's notice on Balthasar's second edition in *Vie Spirituelle* 107 (1962): 318.

[33] Douglas Hedley, "Pantheism, Trinitarian Theism and the Idea of Unity: Reflections on the Christian Concept of God," *Religious Studies* 32.1 (1996): 61-77. It's striking to recall, though Hedley does not, that Schelling had already diagnosed and lamented this tendency already in 1809; see F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*. Translated with an introduction by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006 [1809]), 11: "It is an undeniably excellent invention that with such labels [as 'pantheism'] entire viewpoints are described all at once. If one has found the right label for a system, the rest falls into place of itself, and one is spared the effort of examining what is characteristic about it more meticulously. As soon as such labels are given, with their help even one who is ignorant can pass judgment on the most thought-through matters."

[34] Torstein Tollefsen, "Did St Maximus the Confessor have a Concept of Participation?" *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 618-25, which is a retort to Larchet's view that Maximus lacks a proper concept of "participation"; see his *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 601f. I'm sympathetic to Larchet, on which see Ch. 2.

essential contours of the God-world relation in Maximus under the horizon of "participation." At first blush this seems a promising way forward. This, not only because the relation of God and world restates the classic question about how the Many participates the One—a problem Plato's *Parmenides* articulates in its acutest form, as the Neoplatonists knew[35]—but also because participation is of course a partly biblical concept (2 Pet 1.4: ἵνα...γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως).[36]

Participation as such is not the problem. The problem arises when we imagine that participation *exhausts* the God-world relation. More than anyone, Maximus challenges this assumption precisely because he always discovers that the contours of the cosmos are those of Christ. This dissertation tries to follow him in that identification. Said differently, Maximus problematizes the *final* adequacy of "participation" because if creation itself is divine Incarnation, then we must find a way to understand that and how Maximus's proper christology really *is* his metaphysics or cosmology. Christ, I mean, must be the paradigm of creation, the perfect microcosm of the world. And *prima facie* this identification means that the truth of the doctrine of Christ must be the truth of the doctrine of creation.

Hence the question becomes: does participation describe the *peculiar* logic of the Incarnate Word? No. Many have appreciated, and appreciate anew today, that the period of christological debates before and after Chalcedon straight through Maximus's time needed to forge new theological and philosophical concepts.[37] Concepts like *person* or

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[35] Carlos Steel, "Beyond the Principle of Contradiction? Proclus' 'Parmenides' and the Origin of Negative Theology," in *Die Logik des Transzendentalen: Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, ed. Martin Pickavé (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 594-99.

[36] See Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

[37] Balthasar himself often mentions these developments, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 64, 113, 153, etc. Some of the most interesting recent work in this vein comes from Johannes Zachhuber; see his "Christology After

hypostasis, *enhypostasia*, and Maximus's original use of *perichoresis* in technical

Christology pose significant problems for any facile claim that christology and

cosmology converge in a concept like participation. We have only to ask, as I did before:

Do we say that Christ's human nature participated his person? Certainly not. Not only

would that insinuate a species of Nestorianism or adoptionism (since it implies natural

separation between Christ's humanity and his hypostasis), but it makes little

(Neoplatonic) sense to say a nature participates a *hypostasis*: the latter just *is* the concrete

instance of the former.[38] Or clearer still: Does perichoresis mean participation? Not if it

will remain orthodox in any historical and systematic sense: contra Origen, the Son (and

the Spirit) does not participate the Father.[39]

   And yet the drift of Maximus's thought moves the reader to posit the most direct

correspondence between the Neochalcedonian logic of Christology and the logic of

creation—the logic of God's relation to the world he spoke into existence. We've already

seen Balthasar do so. Nearly everyone does. Two more examples, though, nicely

illustrate the problem with making participation the governing concept for the God-world

relation on the one hand, and then making Christ the paradigm of that relation on the

other.

   Torstein Tollefsen's *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor*

is the most recent monograph-length treatment of this study's topic. There he agrees with

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Chalcedon and the Transformation of the Philosophical Tradition: Reflections on a Neglected Topic," in *The Ways of Byzantine Theology*, ed. Mikonja Knezevic (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2015), 89-110.
   [38] Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 216, is therefore right to say that in Christology proper the hypostatic identification of human and divine natures "makes participation possible." That's to say, "participation" is *not* the sufficient or whole description of created and uncreated natures in the domain of technical christology.
   [39] Origen, *Comm. in Jo.*, 2.17-18; see David L. Balas, "The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen's Thought: Christian Transposition of a Theme of the Platonic Tradition," in *Origeniana: premier colloque international des études origéniennes*, eds. Henri Crouzel, Gennaro Lomiento, and Josep Rius-Camps (Bari: Istituto di letteratura cristiana antica, 1975), 263-5.

Balthasar and Thunberg (against Törönen and Louth, it seems) that the presence of the four famous Chalcedonian adverbs in Maximian metaphysics, especially "unconfused" (ἀσυγχύτως), flows from Maximus's original insight that "the same ontological logic...governs the relation between the uncreated and the created being in incarnation as well as in participation."[40] Recall, though, that these adverbs refer to the relations between Christ's two *natures*: united but unconfused, distinct but inseparable. Chalcedonian adverbs describe an essential or natural logic, a logic that obtains within and among metaphysical natures. This is why, I think, Tollefsen relaxes his initial claim that Christ is the paradigm of creation.[41] The mystery of Christ is not the same as that of creation after all. Hypostatic union is "the mystery *par excellence*" because it is "not a nature-union"—unlike participation, where higher and lower beings *share* the content of natures to different degrees of intensity and determination, that is, in different modes: a man, an angel, and the divine Logos are all rational by nature. Just *how* they are is what differs. (And the Son is rational to an infinitely higher degree exactly because he is by nature reason itself). A telling passage near the end of Tollefsen's chapter on participation in Maximus:

> In His historical Incarnation as Jesus Christ, the Logos becomes immanent, but He does not become participated by His human nature, nor does He, as God, participate His own humanity. On the other hand, the Incarnation makes participation possible. Therefore, the human nature of Christ is deified *by participation* in the divine activity.[42]

But how is that divine activity participated by Christ's humanity? Spy the sequence here: in the historical Incarnation (christology proper) the person of the Word

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[40] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 191. Paul M. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 136, has now also sided with these commentators against Törönen on this point.
[41] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 205.
[42] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 216.

becomes immanent in a mode that exceeds participatory logic (creation proper), since here humanity does not participate the divine person, nor does divinity participate humanity; indeed the deeper identification of both natures in the one hypostasis is the very condition of any participation between the two natures; therefore, he concludes, Christ's human nature is deified by participating the divine activity. But isn't everything that preceded this conclusion the *whole condition* of deification here? Wouldn't it be more correct to say that Christ's human nature is deified given *two* conditions, [1] by participating the divine activity, and that this very participation is only possible because [2] this same human nature is identical to the divine person? And isn't it precisely this final and deepest condition—hypostatic identity—that makes *this* participation peculiarly *Christo*-logical? I can see only one way to comprehend Tollefsen's affirmation that for Maximus Christ is "the paradigm" of creation, and it's Balthasar's too: he must mean (and we'll soon see that he does), that Christ only *verifies* or confirms or gives epistemic credence to an idea already articulated in basic Platonic metaphysics. Balthasar calls this idea "analogy of being," Tollefsen calls it "participation." Neither means that Maximus's Neochalcedonian christology describes the very *same* logic of the God-world relation.[43] I will.

As a final example I return to Perl. I have already implied that his concept of "perfect participation" retains the parameters set by the classical concept of metaphysical "participation." Perl differs from Balthasar, Tollefsen, and others because he accents the identity-pole of participation while they the difference. Now, he does deny that this

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[43] Balthasar and Tollefsen represent the general current nearly all have followed, often expressing this current in the clearest ways. For instance, the final parts of Felix Heinzer's important work bind Maximus's Christology and cosmology under the concept of "Exemplarität." This is of course the same logic as analogy or participation. See Felix Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn als Mensch: Die Struktur des Menschseins Christi bei Maximus Confessor* (Freiburg: UFS, 1980), esp 171ff.

results in mere identity, since, for instance, he thinks perfect participation does *not* entail

the obliteration of created nature as such. That constitutes his sole reply to the charge of

pantheism.[44] But what happens to created hypostases?[45] Are they preserved in the

consummation of "perfect participation"? Their absence in Perl's account of Maximus's

eschatology suggests their final absence too, at least *qua* created hypostases. Perhaps they

return to God the Word, are enhypostatized in him, and so persist only as primordial

powers or *logoi*. Then the Logos alone (with the other divine persons) would remain *in*

actu, a divine hypostasis now also the sole instantiation of a generic "created nature"—a

rather vexing abstraction, and one that rings more Evagrian.[46] But that's to speculate,

since Perl says no more. We have only the lingering suspicion Perl's intuitions might be

better served by parting with participation, at least where its Neoplatonic strictures prove

too strict: precisely in christological thought.

3. *Minimizing Maximus: the tendency to subject Maximus to Thomas Aquinas*. A

final cacophonous note sounds from the 1970s. Comparison of Maximus to Thomas dates

(in the modern period) from the start of the twentieth century,[47] but the seventies saw a

concerted effort to bring the two into accord on all essentials. This démarche, led by the

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[44] Perl, "Metaphysics and Christology," esp. 260-1. So he rightly characterizes deification as the "enhypostatization" of creature in the Word, as when "the creature receives God the Word as its hypostasis" (260). He also calls this "perfect participation in God" (260). Since participation is the natural relation between effect and cause, here creature and Creator, then we would seem to be precisely where Maximus sees an annihilation of hypostasis: two beings with the same nature, say, by "perfect participation," could never become identical in hypostasis and remain two (cf. *Ep* 15, PG 91, 549b).
[45] That Maximus emphasizes the deification of human *persons* or hypostases rather than just human *nature* was especially pressed by W. Völker, *Maximus Confessor als Meister des geistlichen Lebens* (Wiesbaden: Fisteiner, 1965); see Lollar, "Reception," 573; and Ayroulet, "La réception," 78.
[46] Evagrius, *Ep. fidei* (the *Great Letter to Melania*) 5, on which see Ch. 3, sec. 3.4.
[47] H. Straubinger, "Die Lehre des Patriarchen Sophronius von Jerusalem über die Trinität, die Inkarnation und die Person Christi. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung in ihren Hauptpunkten zugleich verglichen mit den Sätzen des hl. Thomas," *Der Katholik*, 3rd series, 35 (1907): 81-109; 175-98; 251-65. Nichols, 224, concludes from this that Dominican interest in Maximus is "by no means a merely formalistic *démarche* of the Thomistic revival, for real parallels exist."

Dominican Juan-Miguel Garrigues, had some merit.[48] It became controversial due to the grandiose claims these Dominicans championed. Garrigues put it this way:

> A dire vrai, l'un est le précurseur de l'autre: tout aussi bien, le second a rejoint et systématisé les vues les plus fondamentales du premier et l'intelligence théologique de son oeuvre présuppose l'arrière-plan patristique, plus spécialement maximien, retrouvé à travers et par-delà saint Jean Damascene.[49]

We've no reason to detail the many contentious points this judgement evokes. Larchet and Thunberg have done that well enough.[50] Important here is how this rapprochement strategy dictates what is possible, or impossible, for Maximus to say about the God-world relation.

An example. In recent years, Antoine Lévy undertook the Dominican charge. He is significant both because he carries on the Thomist negotiation with Maximus, and also because he does so over the heart of the matter: the relation between "created" and "uncreated."[51] Lévy's work has much to commend it. He puts Thomas in direct conversation with Maximus rather than, say, with Palamas's Maximus.[52] This allows him to embed Maximus within the Greek patristic and Greek philosophical contexts of his own day, a move that revitalizes the possible exchange between the two estranged luminaries.[53] For Lévy this reveals a Maximus very favorable to Thomism. Maximus and

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[48] Alain Riou's work, for example, is quite useful. See his *Le monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1973).

[49] Juan-Miguel Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur: la charité, avenir divin de l'homme* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1976), 7.

[50] Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 73-80 (and *passim*); see Ayroulet, "La reception," 81-82, for a concise account of the controversy since the seventies.

[51] Antoine Lévy, O.P., *Le créé et l'incréé: Maxime le Confesseur et Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 2006). He recently edited a volume dedicated to similar themes: *The Architecture of the Cosmos: St Maximus the Confessor, New Perspectives*, eds. Antoine Lévy, Pauli Annala, Olli Hallamaa, and Tuomo Lankila. Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft 69 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola, 2015).

[52] This is the tack taken by Anna N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).

[53] This alludes to another important advance Lévy makes on his predecessors: he does not think, as Garrigues had, that Thomas had any real meaningful exposure to Maximus's thought. John of Damascus is no substitute for Maximus, and indeed the frequent Dominican fancy that John sufficiently mediates

Thomas differ only in perspective, not in content. Between them there is a "coïncidence doctrinale parfaite,"[54] and "le rapport créé / incréé se déclinait identiquement" in each's system. The two systems are "isomorphiques."[55] True, Maximus surveys the God-world relation from a "ktizo-centric" lookout, whence he sees only a mysterious energy pouring forth into (and as) creation from an utterly ineffable divine essence; and Thomas takes a "ktisto-centric" vantage, ever attentive to the created intellect's strain to apprehend anything that exceeds its own laws. Different viewpoints demand different articulations, though the thing seen—God's totally free, totally *supernatural* relation to the world—remains the very same.[56]

Lévy claims that Maximus's *logoi*-talk amounts to Neoplatonic talk of *energeia* (activity) and *skhesis* (relation). So when Maximus says God creates the world through the Logos's condescension as and in the world's *logoi*, he repeats the Neoplatonist Simplicius's doctrine that the One (or any higher principle) "proceeds into external realities by means of relation." And so,

> Nous comprenons que, tout en restant incréé, l'*energeia* de Dieu est *ici* saisie comme une conséquence de l'être-en-relation du monde, de la *skhesis* de toutes choses à un Dieu qui reste *là* visé selon son *energeia* simple et absolue.[57]

That's to say, Maximus conceives the essence-energy distinction in God in terms of Neoplatonic emanation, specifically the doctrine of double activity. On this view

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Maximus to Thomas the West only betrays a palpable unfamiliarity with Maximus's own spirit and genius. See Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé*, 120-3.

[54] Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé*, 422.

[55] Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé*, 280.

[56] Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé*, 422. He even goes as far as denying, with Garrigues, that Maximus thinks the historical Incarnation was predestined regardless of sin (430-1). In other words, just where Maximus seems most original—when he claims Incarnation is the ground and goal of the world (e.g. *QThal* 2, 22, 60)—he's really just agreeing with Thomas, who permits and prefers the contrary (*ST* III, a. 1, q. 3, *resp*).

[57] Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé*, 181. The immediate context is deification by grace, but Lévy's whole argument is that there is but one logic in the "three unions"—in creation (protology), in virtue (being-in-act), in deification (eschatology).

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causality comprises two distinct, inseparable acts, an interior and an exterior.[58] A higher principle "first" is what and how it alone *is*, and only "then," simply by being what it is, does it emanate the creative energy that becomes the ground and cause of lower effects. Maximus, Lévy argues, construes God's "essence" as the first act, his energy the second.[59] Since therefore Thomas tends to view the God-world relation more in terms of the second act—and how else given his starting point "from below"?—while Maximus more the first (or both), then the two merely pronounce the same thing in different registers. And what they say is clear enough: the created and the uncreated are related as effect to cause, as more limited natural power (*esse determinatum*) to the less determinate act of its causal principle, as participating to participated, as at once (graciously) alike and infinitely different—as analogous.

4. *Metaphorizing Maximus: obvious speculative perils*. The three preceding notes, though different in provenance, compose one melody. They share a bass clef as old as Eriugena's lyrical praise of Maximus. Together they replay the assumption that Maximus cannot mean what he often says. For his part, Eriugena never says Maximus did not, for

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[58] For the classic statement of Neoplatonic "double act," see Plotinus, *Enn.* V.4 [7] 2; cf. Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson, "Remarks on the Relation between the One and Intellect in Plotinus," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), esp. 278-81; and Christian Rutten, "La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin," *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 146 (1956): 100-106.

[59] Torstein Theodore Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), appears to adopt the much more philosophically problematic view (one not even Neoplatonists would approve) that God's creative activity might be conceived as following Aristotle's logic of first and second *energeia*. That is, the divine ideas are in God from eternity as "God's capacity to create," and then actualized "in the creative act itself.... This would be Aristotle's second *energeia*" (96, on Gregory Nyssen here, but applied to Maximian *logoi* at 125). Despite Tollefsen's assurances (e.g. 101), I cannot see how this does not fall prey to either horn of the following dilemma: [1] either Aristotelian first/second act does really describe God's act of bring creatures into participation in God's own activity, but then we have something like an unactualized potency in the very essential power of the simple God— which seems absurd; [2] or God's act of creation—of sharing the divine *energeia* with participants—is *not* unqualifiedly Aristotelian exactly because it implies no inner perfection of the divine power as such, but then we'd just have the boilerplate Neoplatonic doctrine of double activity—which renders the technical application of Aristotelian first/second act unnecessary and even inappropriate here.

instance, literally mean that creation is Incarnation. But Eriugena himself makes a point to deny the identification in his own speculative thought.[60] Cyril O'Regan rightly says that Balthasar is forced to take all talk of "becoming God" in Maximus "to be metaphorical."[61] Tollefsen insists that when Maximus says creation is "Incarnation" (ἐνσάρκωσις, ἐνσωμάτωσις, etc) we have a "metaphorical usage of the term."[62] And yet Maximus himself *never* makes such qualifications. Our reasons for doing so must therefore lie elsewhere, something beyond simple exegesis. To cite an interested bystander:

> Although...in an extravagant moment, Maximus does seem to claim that deification causes such a fundamental change of status, the logical and theological problems entailed in such a claim are enormous – unless, of course, it is taken as hyperbolic doxology to the sanctifying power of the Almighty.[63]

Anna Williams here articulates the only two options when faced with Maximus's identification of creation and Incarnation, and also the deciding factor. We either take Maximus's "extravagant" moments as nothing more than "hyperbolic doxology" or we take him at his word and see where that leads. Almost everyone, I've tried to show, has taken the former road. And the deciding factor has often been exactly "the logical and theological problems entailed." They are indeed "enormous." I myself have already raised some with respect to Perl's view, though I broadly endorse it. If the world is destined to be enhypostasized in the Word as was Christ's human nature, what becomes of created hypostases as such? Or, as Louth once objected to Perl, if we take Maximus's claims of a God-world identity in too straightforward a manner (as, say, the way we do in

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[60] See n. 9.
[61] O'Regan, 241.
[62] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 67, 80, 135; idem, *Activity and Participation*, 122.
[63] Williams, 89.

christology), wouldn't this number him among the Origenist *isochristoi*?[64] Are we really all Christ?

Even so, this study takes the second path. Yes, the speculative worries must and will be addressed, and this in concert with a thorough reading of Maximus's entire oeuvre. It's a path Maximus scholarship has in many ways abandoned. Some openly eschew the relevance of technical *Christo*-logic in Maximus's cosmology (Törönen, Louth). Some permit it only as epistemic validation of and metaphorical expression for some otherwise self-standing participatory metaphysics (all the rest). These are but different forms of evading the seriousness of Maximus's own words. Few if any today take Maximus at his word that "The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and in all things" (*Amb* 7.22).

But, I ask, is this not a worthwhile undertaking? Don't Maximus's own pronouncements invite such a risk? Is it really so obvious a metaphor when Maximus says Adam's original, *natural* vocation was to show that God and man are "one and the same [ἕν καὶ ταὐτὸν δείξειε] by the state of grace, the whole man wholly pervading the whole God [ὅλος ὅλῳ περιχωρήσας ὁλικῶς τῷ Θεῷ], and becoming everything that God is, without, however, identity in essence [κατ' οὐσίαν ταὐτότητος]"?[65] Or when Maximus ceaselessly stresses the perfect *symmetry* between God's Incarnation and our deification? To the same extent "God by condescension is and is called man,"[66] He makes "humans gods and sons of God."[67] And this because God wills to be "united with those who

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[64] Louth, "Recent Research," 82: "something I find utterly incredible." I treat this in Ch. 3 generally, and in sec. 3.2. in particular.
[65] *Amb* 41.5, PG 91, 1308b, and *Amb* 7.37, PG 91, 1097b.
[66] *Amb* 7. 22, PG 91, 1084c.
[67] *CT* 2.25, Salés 122-3.

become Gods, and by His goodness makes all things His own."[68] Is Maximus indulging metaphor or pious hyperbole when he extols Melchizedek as the paradigm of our final unification with God in the most extravagant terms? Melchizedek "was deemed worthy to transcend time and nature and to become like the Son of God," so that "he became by grace what the Giver of grace is by nature."[69] Benign so far, but then he explains what "by grace" entails for Melchizedek's union:

> [Melchizedek] was begotten of God through the Word in the Spirit by grace, so that he now bears within himself, unblemished and fully realized, the likeness of God [τοῦ...Θεοῦ τὴν ὁμοίωσιν], for birth creates identity between the begetter and the begotten [ἐπεὶ καὶ πᾶσα γέννησις ταὐτὸν τῷ γεννῶντι πέφυκεν ἀποτελεῖν τὸ γεννώμενον].[70]

And then:

> he becomes without beginning or end [cf. Heb. 7.3] [γέγονε καὶ ἄναρχος καὶ ἀτελεύτητος] ...but possesses only the divine and eternal life of the Word dwelling within him [μόνην δὲ τὴν θείαν τοῦ ἐνοικήσαντος Λόγου], which is in no way bounded by death.[71]

So deification "by grace" is supernatural indeed, but only because Melchizedek's ascent into God is *also* the Word's descent into him, and the Word comes bearing divine properties. No wonder, then, that Maximus also says of the deified: "the Word...gazes out from within them."[72] No surprise either that he dares to outstrip the classic image-to-likeness schema for deification: when we in "in reception of the archetype" become "images of Christ," we further "become one with Him through grace (rather than being a

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[68] *Amb* 7.27, PG 91, 1088c.
[69] *Amb* 10.42, PG 91, 1137c-d.
[70] *Amb* 10.44, PG 91, 1140d.
[71] *Amb* 10.48, PG 91, 1144c.
[72] *Amb* 10.41, PG 91, 1137c.

mere simulacrum), or even, perhaps, become the Lord Himself, if such an idea is not too onerous for some to bear."[73] That might well sound "isochrist" tones, but there it is.[74]

Maximus can say all this about our end because of what he says about the God-world relation as a whole: creation is Incarnation. That's why creation's final union with God requires both our ascent and God's *descent*.

> For they say that God and man are paradigms of each other, so that as much as [τοσοῦτον] man, enabled by love, has divinized himself for God, to that same extent [ὅσον] God is humanized for man by His love for mankind.[75]

Creation is Incarnation first and last and betwixt. Maximus calls this "the whole mystery of Christ" (τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστήριον), known and willed by God from before the foundation of the world: "all the ages as well as the things in these very same ages have received in Christ their ground and goal of being."[76] He calls this "the principle of condescension" (συγκαταβάσεως λόγῳ) and formulates it thus: "Just to the extent that he contracted us for himself into union with himself, to that same extent he himself expanded his very self for us through the principle of condescension."[77]

This short spate of passages, though dense, justify the suspicion that "creation is divine Incarnation" moves beyond metaphor. And if more than metaphor, then God's creative act is also an act of self-identification with that creation–indeed, his becoming the world is the world's very generation while he yet retains the full integrity of his divinity. And if God in the Word identifies himself with the world, then the God-world relation bears a deeper and different identity than whichever unity obtains between

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[73] *Amb* 21.15, slight modification: "καὶ ταὐτὸν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον κατὰ τὴν χάριν ἢ ἀφομοίωμα, τυχὸν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος, εἰ μὴ φορτικὸς ὁ λόγος τισὶν εἶναι δοκεῖ...."
[74] On all this, cf. Ch. 3, sec. 3.2.
[75] *Amb* 10.9, PG 91, 1113b.
[76] *QThal* 60, CCSG 22, 75, my translation: "ἐν Χριστῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τὸ τέλος εἰλήφασιν"; cf. *Amb* 41.9.
[77] *Amb* 33.2, my translation: "τοσοῦτον ἡμᾶς δι' ἑαυτὸν πρὸς ἕνωσιν ἑαυτοῦ συστείλας, ὅσον αὐτὸς δι' ἡμᾶς ἑαυτὸν συγκαταβάσεως λόγῳ διέστειλεν."

created and uncreated natures (like analogy or participation or the limitation of act by power). What kind of identity? Just here the "enormous" systematic problems return. But if we take Maximus seriously that creation is Incarnation, even the specter of crude pantheism starts to fade.

Consider one point, which both terminates the *status quaestionis* and commences this study's attempt to follow the second path mentioned above. Maximus's polemic against Origenism contains a slew of arguments, most of which scholars have long known.[78] I find it extremely significant that none notice just how Maximus describes the Origenist "henad" preexisting in union with God. Though Origenists like Evagrius did get the metaphysics of motion wrong, that being created necessarily entails being *moved*, I think Maximus divines a deeper flaw in the way Origenists conceive the whole God-world relation, beginning to end. He opens his famous refutation of Origenism with a concise description of Origenist protology: we rational beings were once "a unity of rational beings, by virtue of which we were *connatural* with God [τῶν λογικῶν ἑνάδα καθ' ἣν συμφυεῖς ὄντες Θεῷ]."[79]

Maximus's fundamental issue with Origenists cannot simply be that they posit a primordial and illicit God-world identity. We have seen, and this study lays out in further detail, that Maximus too conceives a God-world identity.[80] No, it's not the fact *that* Origenists conceive an identity, but *how* they do. And I suspect Maximus sees too that Origenism fails to grasp in metaphysics what every heresy fails to grasp in christology. In all cases the essential mistake is to misconceive the precise sort of identity that underlies

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[78] Polycarp, Sherwood, O.S.B. *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* (Romae: Orbis Catholicus, Herder, 1955); Pascal Mueller-Jordan, "The Foundation of Origenist Metaphysics," in *TOHMC*, 149-63.
[79] *Amb* 7.2, PG 91, 1069a.
[80] *Amb* 41 (cited above), *QThal* 22 (SC 529, 264-5), *passim*.

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all difference. And in all cases the sole antidote becomes that logic disclosed only in a rigorous and faithful apprehension of the Incarnate Logos. And so Maximus, about thirty paragraphs after his indication that Origenists conceive a natural identity between God and their "henad," announces his own version of that God-world identity (here seen from its final perfection): "When this happens, *God will be all things in everything* [1 Cor 15.28], encompassing all things and enhypostasizing them in Himself [πάντα περιλαβὼν καὶ ἐνυποστήσας ἑαυτῷ]."[81]

Maybe Maximus's intensely technical christology is also his intensely technical cosmology after all. Maybe his idiosyncratic emphasis in christology about how the historical Incarnation, understood by Chalcedon's lights, reveals an entirely *new* and previously inconceivable kind of *identity* called "hypostatic" between created and uncreated natures[82]— maybe this really is the very same way he conceives the God-world relation. Maybe for Maximus creation is Incarnation, and Incarnation, creation. Maybe *creatio ex nihilo* is *creatio ex deo*, and that because *creatio* is *Deus ex Deo*. If this selective survey of the scholarly literature has shown anything, it's that such a thesis cannot rest solely on the level of textual exegesis. Past exegesis of Maximus has never floated free from doctrinal concern, especially around this question. And that's as it should be.

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[81] *Amb* 7.31, PG 91, 1092c. Perl, "Metaphysics and Christology," 260-1; idem, "Methexis," 209, rightly emphasizes the striking usage here of the technical *enhypostasia* in an expansive metaphysical context. Louth, "Recent Research," 82, registers a bizarre reticence to take this passage very seriously.
[82] Maximus, *Amb* 5.5.

Method and related matters: historical theology

Theology is the noun "historical" modifies. "Historical theology," if it be anything other than history or systematic (or moral, or fundamental, etc.) theology, cannot forget that theology is its substance, history its quality. My focus on Maximus, one of the brightest luminaries in the Greek patristic era, surely makes this study *historical*. It will therefore traffic in word studies, intertextual connections (patristic and philosophical), liturgical context, the Greek monastic lifestyle, and all the rest as they seem relevant. The noun "theology" does not justify shoddy analysis of the sources in their infinitely complex settings. But neither does understanding a text historically amount to theology, even if the text speaks theologically.

Bernard Lonergan puts it thus: the historian aims to comprehend "texts," not necessarily the "objects" these texts refer to. The "objects" themselves belong to systematic theology.[83] The difference here, as Lonergan also knows, is not that history merely reports while theology (or philosophy) constructs or comprehends.[84] True, the rise of historical consciousness in the modern era initially induced a decidedly von Rankean, positivist outlook in academic history—"wie es eigentlich gewesen!"[85] Positivists meant for history to replicate the method of the natural sciences in order to replicate their putative success too. That view died, and not simply under the knife of postmodern

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[83] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990 [1971]), 168.

[84] Whether you move in the discipline of history from experience (research), to understanding (interpretation), to judging (history), to deciding (dialectics), or go back in theology proper from deciding (foundations), to judging (doctrines), to understanding (systematics), and again to experience (communications) – you are always taken up into the "spiral" of a "self-correcting process" that derives from our natural desire to know. That is, when we try to understanding *anything* – whether "texts" in history or their "objects" in theology – we're always spinning round the hermeneutical circle of parts to whole to parts to whole (*Method*, 159, 191-4, 208f., *passim*).

[85] See the nice summary of Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1-2.

philosophy and critical theory. The hard sciences themselves know better than to indulge any simplistic subject-object partition. In his 1957 Gifford lectures, Werner Heisenberg found occasion to ramify quantum theory into broader realms, a theory he had discovered nearly thirty years prior. His ten theses, apparently forgotten in many university halls today, say plainly: "Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is a part of the interplay between nature and ourselves; it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning."[86] Since "methods and object can no longer be separated from each other," Heisenberg concludes thus: "*the scientific world-view has ceased to be a scientific view in the true sense of the word.*"[87] And if so in natural science, certainly in history.[88]

Still more in historical *theology*. I seek more than Maximus's meaning; I seek the truth he means. Historical theology cannot limit itself to simple repetition or observation. It can suspect an author of inconsistency. It can ask whether an author's view is true or false, even *more* or *less* true than the author herself did or could know. Theology wants divine truth. And divine truth, who is the frolicsome Word playing in ten thousand places (to pair Maximus with Gerard Manley Hopkins), can always surface in words whose original intent was not the fullness of that infinite Word—for words were first the Word's before they were any author's.

We must permit historical theology to ask luminaries a question they might not have asked themselves, or at least not in precisely the same terms. I think O'Regan means

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[86] John Lukacs, "History and Physics, or the End of the Modern Age," in *Historical Consciousness: The Remembered Past* (New York: Routledge, 2017 [1994]), 273-315.
[87] Lukacs, 287; Heisenberg's emphasis.
[88] This is why Thomas Kuhn's book has become a classic in the humanities; see his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1962]).

this by calling Balthasar's method "thick retrieval."[89] To *retrieve*, you must first *listen* to the author in his or her own voice. That's just good conversation etiquette.[90] But the retrieval, the conversation, is *thick*, admittedly saddled with the questioner's own worries and wonders. It's thick too because what the questioner thinks she hears from her bygone interlocutor she must herself comprehend, judge, and communicate in today's idiom. There's nothing light or blithe about this enterprise. Nor is it unworthy or impertinent.

Happily Balthasar's method appears to have made a comeback in Maximus studies today. Paul Blowers make free use of Balthasar's "theodramatic" categories in his recent and impressive presentation of Maximus.[91] Some younger scholars have even offered defenses of the *kinds* of questions Balthasar asked. Many once worried that Balthasar's method transgresses by anachronism. Can you really ask Hegel's questions of Maximus? Ayroulet takes a convincing and optimistic view: "Mais plutôt que d'accuser la lecture balthasarienne d'être anachronique, ne peut-on pas voir en elle la preuve de la force d'inspiration et de créativité dont est porteuse la pensée maximienne?"[92] Lollar (and Ayroulet) concedes the obvious perils involved in bringing modern concerns to Maximus's feet, but also warns that we "be equally cautious with ready dismissals and charges of anachronism lest we miss an essential component of von Balthasar's interpretation of Maximus, namely, his performance of him."[93] I confess accord with these. And so I characterize this dissertation's basic approach with Ayroulet's words:

> Entretenir avec les textes de Maxime une relation vivante, se laisser inspirer par eux et progresser ainsi à son tour dans sa propre intelligence de la foi. Voilà

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[89] O'Regan, "Thick Retrieval," 237, 258.
[90] Here I'm influenced by Marc Bloch's "observe" vs. "relay" distinction; see his *The Historian's Craft: Reflections on the Nature and Uses of History and the Techniques and Methods of Those Who Write It* (Toronto: Random House, 1953 [1944]), esp. 141f.
[91] Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor*.
[92] Ayroulet, "La réception," 74.
[93] Lollar, "Reception," 570.

l'objectif de cette méthode, que l'on souhaiterait être celle d'une théologie spéculative et systématique pour Maxime le Confesseur.[94]

Structure and argument

My method also dictates the presentation of this study. Its superstructure initiates a three-part conversation, though, of course, I converse implicitly at every step and moment. The three macro-level movements are: *my question* (introduction), *Maximus's answer* (chapters 1-3), *my systematic reflection* on that answer in the context certain trends in modern theology (Conclusion and later study).

Really this study begins a three-way conversation more than a dialogue. Besides Maximus, I've chosen to make Balthasar an ongoing interlocutor. This for four reasons. First, Balthasar himself placed Maximus at the center of Catholic systematic theology last century. The survey above gave some details of that recruitment, but there's much more to say. Second, Balthasar's questions are mine. He too sought a peculiarly Christian metaphysics, and did so by trying to make christology cosmology. Third, Balthasar's influence on Catholic theology remains to this day rivaled by few. And last, I share his method. If then I can contribute anything to modern systematic theology through historical retrieval of Maximus, Balthasar (and his sympathizers) seems an obvious interlocutor on the modern landscape.

Chapter 1 begins my presentation of Maximus's answer to the question of the God-world relation. Maximus calls Christ (not just God, as in Dionysius) "the beginning, the middle, and the end" of the world.[95] We must first go to the middle where that beginning and end have come upon us, to Jesus of Nazareth. This chapter reviews the

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[94] Ayroulet, "La réception," 89.

[95] *QThal* 22.2. With Dionysius he calls God the "beginning, middle, and end" of creation (*DN* 5.8; *CT* 1.10), but also attributes this specifically to "our Lord Jesus Christ" (*QThal* 22.6).

many important contributions to an understanding of Maximus's Neochalcedonian Christology, but does so with an eye to what exactly "divine Incarnation" means for Maximus and how it comes to describe cosmology. Its main question is: why and how does Maximus stress the copula in the statement that the person of Christ *is* the two natures? A rubric emerges by which we might better perceive Maximus's Incarnation-talk elsewhere, what it means for him to say God *is* world. Put curtly, my argument reduces to a basic syllogism:

> Major premise: three distinctive elements of Maximus's "Christo-logic" properly define "Incarnation" (chapter 1);
>
> Minor premise: these three elements properly define his cosmo-logic too—both his protology (chapter 2) and eschatology (chapter 3);
>
> Conclusion: therefore "Incarnation" means in cosmology what it means in christology.

Next comes the beginning. **Chapter 2** comprises the first of two treatments of the Maximus's famous *logoi* doctrine. Save Perl, no one has tried to read the *logoi* in a straightforward application of Neochalcedonian logic to metaphysics proper. This I do here in protology. I take interest in how Maximus conceives of God's emanation or movement of condescension into and as creation. I put his own originality in relief by showing how he differs from John of Scythopolis, Neoplatonism generally and Dionysius in particular, and Alexandrian-mediated Stoicism—and yet all the while he retains the essentials of each. How he does so states this chapter's task. Its conclusion is that creation's subsistence is the Word's own hypostasis, the Word kenotically given as the "is" of all things visible and invisible.

My second run at the *logoi* doctrine comes from the other direction, from eschatology. So **Chapter 3** treats the role of the *logoi* in Maximian deification. The governing question here is: what does Maximus mean when he saws we "become God *by grace*"? Most subject Maximus either to Thomas or earlier patristic precedents on this point, as even Balthasar did, to imply that becoming God "by grace" somehow means we're less divine than Christ is, since he is God by nature. Indeed many of Maximus's statements about our final union with God verge far nearer to Origenist views than to that of Thomas. But if Maximus means to claim that our eschatological identity with God is also God's kenotic and personal identity with us, how can he avoid the Origenist sin of finally obliterating created hypostases? I assay a retort in this chapter too, and conclude that Maximus's cosmology follows Pauline ecclesiology—since, for Maximus, Christ's Body is (potentially) both Church and world. Here "analogy" takes on altogether jarring and different senses than we're used to encountering in much modern theology. Here it implies a *symmetry* between God and the world grounded in hypostatic identity (like Christ's natures).

I organize these chapters around this dissertation's main epigraph, *Amb* 7.22: "Βούλεται γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος καὶ Θεὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐνσωματώσεως ἐνεργεῖσθαι τὸ μυστήριον." The "mystery" the Word wills to achieve in all things and in all times is not something other than the historical Incarnation, the hypostatic union, where the created and the uncreated become and concretely are "one and the same." Maximus speaks of the "mystery according to Christ" as the goal and even the very ground of all creation.[96] Nowhere does he qualify it or make a distinction between

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[96] *QThal* 60.2-4, CCSG 22, 73-7. Other instances where Maximus uses "mystery" to mean specifically the deed wrought in the historical Incarnation: *Amb* 7.36-8; *Amb* 10.52; *Amb* 31.9 (also our

different kinds of "mystery," as if, when it comes to the Word's presence in and identity with all creatures, we're talking about something qualitatively different from the mystery of the Word's human life. And indeed, as I seek to show in the coming chapters, we have sufficient reason to think the contrary. The "mystery" God the Word wills to actualize in all creation is just what Maximus says it is: "his Incarnation."

Hence my entire dissertation can be read as an attempt to interpret this one statement, in all its starkness. I can put it down thus, where the italicized portion of the epigraph corresponds to what the respective chapter tries to interpret at length and in detail:

Chapter 1 seeks what the "mystery" means:
"The Word of God, very God, wills that *the mystery of his Incarnation* be actualized always and in all things."

Chapter 2 seeks what the Word "in all things," the Logos's creative procession, means:
"*The Word of God, very God*, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and *in all things*."

Chapter 3 seeks what sort of actualization of the Word is to come about in creation's perfection:
"The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation *be actualized* always and in all things."

I conclude the study with a recapitulation of the argument and my initial responses to two objections (one historical, one systematic). Mostly I can but promise further exploration of what the results presented here might mean for Maximus studies in particular and Christian theology in general. In many ways this dissertation's main success, if any success it achieve, is to clear the exegetical ground for Maximus's more arresting insights to bud forth for careful scrutiny by modern theologians—many of the

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deification); *Amb* 41.2 (also the primordial plan for humanity); *Amb* 42.5 (explicitly mixed with our origin and end), 17, 25, 29; *Amb* 71.3; *QThal* 22.3, CCSG 7, 137 and 22.8, CCSG 7, 143 (also our deification); *QThal* 42.4, CCSG 7, 289 (also a mystery "about me"); *QThal* 59.6, CCSG 22, 51; *QThal* 61.11, CCSG 22, 101 (also our baptism); *Myst*. 5, CCSG 69, 23-4, *passim*.

very insights that so captivated Eriugena centuries ago. At least in the West, these have fallen on deaf ears or on no ears at all. My contention is that Eriugena and Balthasar were right to perceive in Maximus an especially illuminating contemplative of the God-world relation, but that neither sufficiently realized just how right—and provocative—Maximus was.

Chapter 1

The Middle: Christo-logic

Introduction (1.1) – Neochalcedonianism and its discontents (1.2) – Maximus's fine point: hypostatic identity (1.3) – Hypostatic identity generates natural difference (1.4) – Perichoresis in christology: a new mode of unifying natures in act (1.5) – Incarnation: event discloses logic, logic applies solely to fact (1.6) – Conclusion (1.7)

Chapter contention

In Maximus the logic of Incarnation emerges solely from the fact of the Incarnation; the logic's source and applicability are just as peculiar as the logic itself. Any logic other than this is not properly a divine "Incarnation" at all.

And so this chapter attempts to interpret: "The Word of God, very God, wills that *the mystery of his Incarnation* be actualized always and in all things."

1.1 – Introduction

This chapter has three goals. Principal is [1] to define what Maximus means by "Incarnation" in christology proper. What counts as a divine Incarnation? What are the criteria? Doing so introduces a subordinate goal: [2] I catalog and emphasize three original features of Maximus's christology, each of which scholars have remarked but have never to my knowledge explicated as a coherent whole. These three signature characteristics, I mean, form and disclose a deep, logical development of the Neochalcedonian doctrine of Christ. Together they form *one* signature. And yet tracing and reading this signature does more than clarify Maximus's christology; it also [3] reveals why and how this christology proves relevant to cosmology. Clearer: Maximus's three original accents in christology constitute a "Christo-*logic*" (as I call it to distinguish

my view from mere "Christo-centrism") that immediately implicates cosmology, specifically the doctrine of creation from nothing. His precisions about God's Incarnation in the middle of history elucidate God's act of creation at history's beginning, middle, and end.

Most of this chapter performs [2] in order to achieve [1], with [3] indicated along the way when germane. In fact this chapter only prepares the soil for the fuller harvest of [3], which occurs in the following two chapters.

1.2 – Neochalcedonianism and its discontents

It's fairly certain that "Neochalcedonianism" names a real and identifiable development in the history of christology.[1] It's certain too that the exact criteria which made a "Neochalcedonian" thinker in the late patristic era required further precision over the past century since the label first surfaced in scholarship. When Joseph Lebon proposed the term "Neochalcedonian," he appended two general criteria: first, that a Neochalcedonian interpret Chalcedon through Cyril of Alexandria; second, that he employ a sophisticated "scholastic" conceptual apparatus derived from the philosophical schools in order to construct a coherent science of Christ.[2] These have since been refined.[3] And there's yet another certainty: Maximus too merits the title "Neochalcedonian," even if cautiously.[4]

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[1] So Alois Grillmeier, S.J., "Der Neu-Chalkedonismus: Um die Berechtigung eines neuen Kapitels in der Dogmengeschichte," in *Mit ihm und in ihm: Christologische Forschungen und Perspektiven* (Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 374 (cf. 382): there are "so viele unterscheidende Merkmale" that prove "Neochalcedonianism" designates a distinct reality; so too Brian E. Daley, S.J., *Leontius of Byzantium: Complete Works* (Oxford: OUP, 2017), 2-3.

[2] Joseph Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien* (Louvain, 1909), 522.

[3] Marcel Richard, "Le néochalcédonisme," *Mélanges de sciences religieuses* 3 (1946), 156-61, intervened to question the utility of these overly broad criteria. He observed, for instance, that recourse to Cyril was possible for known "strict Chalcedonians" like Hypatia at the synod of 532 (159), and partly because Cyril's own thought was mediated through Chalcedon's judicious sanctioning of *certain* Cyrillian texts, less stringent ones, many of which floated about in various post-Chalcedon *florilegia* (158). These

I do not here rehearse the history of Neochalcedonian christology and its crucial players. That's well-worn terrain.[5] Nor do I chart all the points where Maximus converges with other Neochalcedonians.[6] Instead I focus on what seems to be the single solid criterion everyone agrees qualifies "Neochalcedonianism," for good or ill: the conscious attempt to define or précis a distinct logic of Chalcedon's "one hypostasis or person."[7] After a brief survey of this development, I underline important criticisms of Neochalcedonianism. These criticisms, though issuing from concerns perhaps particular to an earlier generation of scholars, remain mostly unacknowledged even as their ripples eddy in Neochalcedonian and Maximian waters today. They exercise notable influence on how Maximus is and has been read, I think, and indeed pose fundamental challenges to this dissertation's argument at its ground-zero—in christology proper. Such criticisms appear still more significant, too, when we realize that it's precisely the tendencies they worry at that Maximus exacerbates with his own signature contributions to christology.

1. *Defining "hypostasis".* It was far from evident that Cyril's christology had any chance at concinnity with Chalcedon's. Among several apparent divergences, an obvious

criteria's boundaries fall so wide that they demarcate nothing more than simple "Chalcedonianism" (160). Richard's own proposed criterion was that a Neochalcedonian insists on the dialectical use of both "miaphysite" and "diphysite" formulae as the only secure method to express Chalcedon's true meaning. This too has been qualified: Grillmeier applies Richard's criterion only to "extreme neo-Chalcedonians," while "moderate neo-Chalcedonians" like Leontius of Jerusalem and the Emperor Justinian seek only to "supplement" Chalcedon's Definition with Cyril's uncompromising statements (esp. the twelfth anathema appended to his *Third Letter to Nestorius*) without making an absolute injunction to use the *mia physis* formula; cf. Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 434.

[4] Cyril Hovorun, "Maximus, a Cautious Neo-Chalcedonian," in *TOHMC*, 106-24; Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 112-14, invokes Grillmeier's "extreme Neochalcedonianism," which seems right.

[5] See esp. Siegried Helmer, *Der Neuchalkedonismus: Geschichte, Berechtigung, und Bedeutung eines dogmengeschichtlichen Begriffes* (unpublished dissertation: Bonn, 1962).

[6] Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthopology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 36-48.

[7] Helmer, *Der Neuchalkedonismus*, 69.

one was that while Cyril could sometimes use *physis* and *hypostasis* as synonyms,[8]

Chalcedon's Definition demanded their conceptual distinction:

> we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin Mother of God, as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single hypostasis...[9]

Hypostasis alone is "one" in Christ, the natures "two." Nature and hypostasis therefore differ. How? Chalcedon merely intimated the ways. What it did say, though, was enough to identify at least one salient feature of each distinct logic: Cyril's restive insistence on Christ's subjective *singularity* ("one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ") is calibrated to the one person or hypostasis; Christ's perfect and natural *symmetry* ("consubstantial with the Father...consubstantial with us"), to the two natures or essences.

This distinction worked well enough in Cappadocian trinitarian theology, where the divine essence names "the common" or "universal" and the divine hypostasis "the

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[8] Cyril of Alexandria, third anathema of his *Third Letter to Nestorius* ("two hypostases"?)—though Grillmeier thinks this wrongly interpreted by John Grammaticus (*Christ*, II/2, 59)

[9] Tanner 85-6, slightly modified: "ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκομεν, τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι, θεὸν ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τὸν αὐτόν, ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν κύριον μονογενῆ, ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως γνωριζόμενον, οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνῃρημένης διὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν, σῳζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ἰδιότητος ἑκατέρας φύσεως κὰ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης."

particular" or "proper."[10] That last constitutes the first definition of "hypostasis." But can we really just transfer those conceptual correlations to the Son's economy? Replicating this distinction in christology became the great challenge for pro-Chalcedonians, just as undermining it became the chief concern for anti-Chalcedonians like Severus of Antioch.[11]

Consider one of Severus's more penetrating attempts.[12] Defenders of Chalcedon claim Christ had two natures, divine and human. But is, say, Christ's human nature "specific" or "individual"?[13] If specific—that is, "universal" in the sense that it appears wholly and equally as the essence of many individuals—then the reality of Christ's human nature just is the whole of human nature along with every individual human; indeed, "the Holy Trinity itself is [therefore] incarnate in the whole of humanity, that is

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[10] So Basil the Great's *Ep* 214 (*Ad Terentium Comitem* 4; PG 32, 789a-b), a favorite among Neochalcedonians: "If we must also say what seems right to us, we will say this: essence has the same relationship to hypostasis that the universal has to the particular [ὅτι ὃν ἔχει λόγον τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον, τοῦτον ἔχει ἡ οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν]. For each of us participates being through the common principle of essence, and are this or that particular being by the characteristics what cling to it [τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ἰδιώμασιν ὁ δεῖνά ἐστι καὶ ὁ δεῖνα]"; cited (for instance) at Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* (florilegium), Test. 1 (Daley 180-1, his translation modified).

Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 54-61 discusses the use of this and other Cappadocian texts by John Grammaticus. For the successes and problems consequent upon the development of the Cappadocian "classical theory" of how to relate universal and particular being, see Johannes Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). And for a nice overview of the philosophical issues animating the patristic reception of Porphyry's understanding of "individual" and "essence," see Christophe Erismann, "L'Individualité expliquée par les accidents: Remarques sur la destinée 'chrétienne' de Porphyre," in *Compléments de substance. Etudes sur les propriétés accidentelles offertes à Alain de Libera*, eds. C. Erismann and A. Schniewind (Paris: Vrin, 2008), 51-66.

[11] So Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE*, prol.; PG 86, 1276cd (Daley 128-131); *Epil*. 3; PG 86, 1921c-1925b (Daley 276-83); *passim*. For Severus this distinction is illicit only in christology. He was perfectly content to deploy it in theology proper (Trinity); cf. Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 146.

[12] The following narration owes much to Johannes Zachhuber, "Christology after Chalcedon and the Transformation of the Philosophical Tradition: Reflections on a Neglected Topic," in Mikonja Knezevic (ed.), *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy* (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2015), 98-106; see also Charles Moeller, "Le Chalcédonisme et le néo-chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VIe siècle," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 1, eds. Alois Grillmeier, S.J., and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg, 1951), 642, 694-8.

[13] Leontius's Severan opponent states it like this: "When the Logos assumed human nature, did he assume it as understood generically, or as in an individual [Φύσιν ὁ Λόγος ἀναλαβὼν ἀνθρωπίνην, τήν ἐν τῷ εἴδει θεωρουμένην ἢ τὴν ἐν ἀτόμῳ ἀνέλαβεν;]?" (PG 86, 1916d-1917a; Daley 270-1); and later: "Did he assume an individual nature, then [Τὴν τινὰ οὖν ἀνέλαβε φύσιν;]?" (PG 86, 1917b, Daley 272-3).

the human race."[14] If individual—that is, the "concrete particular" who is *that* human—then that human nature just is its own hypostasis (recall here the Cappadocian correlation of hypostasis to particular): a regress to Nestorianism. Since Neochalcedonians promoted the complete *and real* integrity of two natures in Christ, Severus here asks after the principle that allows Christ to be at once *really* two and *really* one. Doesn't maintaining Chalcedonian's strict symmetry of real natures imply Christ's human nature is itself individuated (and so concrete—lest we toy with an abstract, merely conceptual human essence[15])—has, that is, its own particular reality that is *not* the one subject, One of the Holy Trinity? For, as every party agrees, "there is no [real] nature without a hypostasis."[16] Two real natures = two hypostases. Whatever the shortcomings of Severus's own christology,[17] his incisive interrogation here raises a problem not often detected even by those deftly at work on its resolution[18]: how do Christ's two natures

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[14] Severus of Antioch, quoted at John Grammaticus, *Apol.* 14.8 (Richard).

[15] Hence Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE*, prol., PG 86, 1276a, Daley 128-9, quotes Nonnus, who calls both Nestorians *and* miaphysites "opposite kinds of docetist [Ἐναντιοδοκήτας]" (which is also a part of this work's fuller title).

[16] Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 1, PG 86, 1277b (Daley 132); cp. Maximus, *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 205a-c.

[17] Zachhuber, "Christology after Chalcedon," 102-3, notes (following John Grammaticus) how Severus's stress on the "particular" pole of the ontological continuum of (abstract) universal to (concrete) particular implied Christ's *divinity* along with his humanity might be so particularized that it implied tri-theism on the side of divinity—a move a later miaphysite, John Philoponus, seems to have made.

[18] Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil.* 1, PG 86, 1917a-d, does not appear to grasp the fundamental issue. He is content to reply that the human nature "in" Christ "is the same as the species," and so presents no special difficulty as regards his individual distinction from other human beings. This simply assumes that hypostasis is different from species (or the universal essence) rather than argues for it; it ignores, for instance, whether or not the universal species is somehow *changed* or qualified *as* that particular individual. Zachhuber, "Christology after Chalcedon," 99, flags other pro-Chalcedonians who take a similar line (John Grammaticus and Anastasius of Antioch).

Leontius of Jerusalem's a still more provocative case: he can use the very same objection *against* Severan miaphysites (*Adv. Mon.* [*Aporiae*] 53 [cf. 61], PG 86, 1797d; Gray 212-13), and yet quite clearly affirms—as Maximus will too—that Christ's two natures were *both* universal ("from two natures") *and* particular or individual ("in two natures")—though he never explains how this is so; cf. *Adv. Mon.* [*Aporiae*] 58, PG 86, 1800d-1801c; Gray 216-19. His polemic underscores the Severan indulgence of the phrase "out of two natures," and turns their own attack back on them: are these two "prior" natures universal or particular? If the former, then (at least) the humanity whence Christ came was merely conceptual, not actual; if the latter, the miaphysites themselves become Nestorians!

attain concrete particularity or individuality if Christ's hypostasis remain one? What is the principle of individuation operative in the Incarnation?

A second definition of "hypostasis" arose among the Neochalcedonians, and with it some promising ways to navigate Severus's dilemma. Quite early they adopted the first (Cappadocian)[19] definition, "the distinguishing properties" characterizing an individual. Now they added another: "that which exists in itself" (τὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ ὑπάρχον, or other variants). A fairly seismic metaphysical tremor, not least because of its obvious move away from Platonic realism where more universal species and genera like "man" and "the intelligible" came ever prior *in actu* before their individual instances.[20] The two definitions often appear together. So Leontius of Jerusalem,

> And this sort of "hypostasis" is said more directly and properly than all the previous: as if, with respect to the determinate combination [i.e. bundle of properties], it is also what has been marked off by a *recognized property* from all those of the same species and of different species, [what] manifests the individual subject which *is in itself* a certain separation and distinction of indistinct essences in order to [constitute] the number of each person.[21]

There's more: this second definition of hypostasis moves beyond (the Porphyry-mediated) Aristotle, too. In that tradition it is the "bundle of characteristics," and for

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[19] For an early, effortless implementation of Cappadocian trinitarian definitions in christology, cf. (a text attributed to) Eulogius of Alexandria, *Frag. Dogm.*, 2944d-2945a; Charles Moeller, "Textes 'monophysites' de Léonce de Jérusalem," *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses* 27 (1951): 470, assigns this fragment to John Grammaticus.

[20] See ch. 2, sec. 2.3; cf. Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 203. Think of Plotinus's Three Hypostases (*En.* V.1). We might see the second definition, therefore, as one viable development of the Cappadocian rejection of (Neo)Platonic "particular natures"; see Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos* III/1, 23 (cited at Zachhuber, "Christology after Chalcedon," 96); cf. too Leontius of Jerusalem, *Adv. Mon.* [*Aporiae*] 53, PG 86, 1797d (Gray 212-13), whose commitment to the idea that "particular natures" are only achieved or perfected in concrete existence makes him scoff at the thought of Christ's natures "as vainly having in potentiality what they'll never achieve in actuality [καὶ νοοοῖντ' ἂν οὑτωσὶ ἀεί τε ἀτελεῖς καὶ μάτην ἔχουσαι τοῦτο δυνάμει, εἰς ὃ οὔποτε ἥξουσιν ἐνεργείᾳ]."

[21] Leontius of Jerusalem, *Adv. Nest.* II, PG 86, 1529d, my emphasis: "Λέγεται δὲ κυριώτερον καὶ οἰκειότερον πάντων ἡ τοιαύτη ὑπόστασις, ἅτε πρὸς τῇ συστάσει καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πάντων τῶν τε ὁμοειδῶν καὶ τῶν ἑτεροειδῶν κατὰ τὸ ἰδικὸν γνωριστήριον, κεχωρισμένον δεικνύειν τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἄτομον, τόδε τι καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἀπόστασίς τις οὖσα καὶ διορισμὸς ἀδιορίστων οὐσιῶν εἰς τὸν κατὰ πρόσωπον ἀριθμὸν ἑκάστου."

many the bundle of *accidents*, that "characterize" or "distinguish" an individual.[22] Hence

the first definition. That made sense because it preserved the universal essence of, say,

the shared divinity between Father and Son, or of the Son's shared humanity with us.

Accidents particularize, but they don't tinker with essences as such.[23] But neither do

hypostases *qua* hypostases—the entire burden of the Neochalcedonian articulation of the

two logics (of nature and of hypostasis) in christology. The second definition, I mean,

now sees *the hypostasis itself*—here the eternally singular, divine Son—as what grounds

the concrete existence, and so the particularity or individuality, of the nature assumed; for

while that nature did not preexist, *he* did. As the other Leontius (from Byzantium) put it:

"the hypostasis does not simply or even primarily signify that which is complete, but that

which *exists for itself*, and secondly that which is complete; while the nature signifies

what *never exists for itself*, but most properly that which is [formally] complete." And the

second definition includes the first: it is into this "principle of hypostasis" (τὸν τῆς

ὑποστάσεως λόγον) that the distinguishing "characteristics" of that hypostasis are

assumed.[24] Both definitions of hypostasis comprise its two metaphysical functions, which

are necessary and proper to it: hypostasis [1] grounds and [2] individualizes. These are

necessary at least in Christo-logic, since Christ's particular human nature only "had its

hypostasis in the Logos," was real solely as *his* reality, and his reality is his very person

constituted from eternity by the Father's generation.[25]

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[22] Erismann, "L'Individualité expliquée par les accidents," 51-66.

[23] Erismann, "L'Individualité expliqué par les accidents," 57, of Gregory of Nyssa: "Il est donc nécessaire que leur [the divine hypostases'] individualité s'explique par un élément non essentiel, en l'occurence des propriétés. Le modèle porphyrien offre un explication valable...L'adoption du modèle porphyrien est la contrepartie nécessaire et fondamentale de l'interprétation de l'*ousia* comme une entité commune. La fameuse distinction *ousia*/*hypostasis* requiert un élément exogène."

[24] Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil*. 8, PG 86, 1945a; Daley 308-9.

[25] Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil*. 8, PG 86, 1944c, slightly modified: "ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ ὑποστῆναι." This is ultimately why I think Richard Cross's proposal, though certainly right that Leontius supports

So then, Neochalcedonians retained the first definition of "hypostasis" ("the particular, characterizing properties") and appended the second ("what exists in itself"). And this latter not only differs from Platonic but also from Aristotelian metaphysics, since the "hypostasis" that exists in itself, here the Son, is definitely *not* individuated by accidents or matter. But now we have introduced a new metaphysical principle of the subject; we require, that is, a principle of the subject that makes this subject the most fundamental, *positive* metaphysical fact, and yet is neither a more contracted instance of universal nature nor any sort of spatio-temporal bundle of accidents. According to this bit of Christo-logic, *we require a positive principle that individuates and particularizes, which is utterly indifferent to—and so completes and actualizes—the universal (nature) and particular (idioms) in and of every real being.* If, that is, we want to follow the Neochalcedonians, and Maximus too, and make the individuating principle of Christ's flesh the same as that of every individual; make Christo-logic, cosmo-logic.[26]

2. *Criticisms*. Important scholars have openly lamented the conflation of hypostasis's two definitions. Charles Moeller, and Grillmeier too, discerned here an illicit and "dangerous unification" of what had been kept judiciously discrete up until the end of

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something like the concept of in-subsistence, does not account for the precise principle of individuation in the Incarnation; see his, "Individual Natures in the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium," *JECS* 10.2 (2002): 245-65, esp. 256-8. But, of course, for Leontius (as for most) the Son's singular property comes already and only through his eternal generation from the Father, not through any set of accidents; e.g. *CNE* 4, PG 86, 1285d; Daley 144. I do not mean to deny that Christ's humanity *had* accidents in the proper sense (time, place, skin color, bodily figure, even style of human thinking and communicating), only that these *caused* or *achieved* his individuality. They *expressed* it.

[26] Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil*. 8, PG 86, 1940b, Daley 300-1: "I am so far from saying that God the Word is united to our [manhood] by the law of nature, that I am not even prepared to say that the union of the human soul with its own body is experienced naturally [τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἑαυτῆς σῶμα συνάφειαν φυσικῶς]." Then follows a striking declaration still about every human soul: in all cases "the mode of union [which is the same as the Word's with his own humanity] rather than the principle of nature [οὐκ ὁ λόγος τῆς φύσεως] contains the great mystery of religion"; for Maximus, see ch. 2, sec. 2.2.

the fifth century: *theologia* (Trinity) and *oikonomia* (Incarnation).[27] Christological infelicities aside, Moeller lauds Cyril and Severus of Antioch for at least grasping that concepts or terms in these separate domains must also retain separate definitions.[28] Chalcedon indeed forced reflection on the difference between nature and hypostasis in christology proper, but the misstep many took— however understandable *prima facie*— was to flee to Cappadocian trinitarian terminology for uncritical succor.[29] Moeller means principally Nyssen's definition of *hypostasis*, "distinguishing characteristics," more than the second definition, "that which exists according/in itself." He contends that only the second was necessary and that the first should have been abandoned "résolument."[30]

Why? Recall Severus's dilemma: was Christ's human nature universal or particular? This trap springs only if you define *hypostasis* as the "distinguishing characteristics" that constitute a concrete, particular instance of a nature or essence (it doesn't yet matter whether this "essence" is Aristotelian or Neoplatonic). So if Christ's human nature is universal, then it lacks particularity and must simply comprise the whole lump of humanity; Christ would have assumed every human being. If his human nature is particular, then it bore a hypostasis after all that made it the concrete "this" that it was. Neochalcedonians, Cyrillian at heart, had to reject this latter option as plain Nestorianism, while the first was sufficiently strange and therefore void. But now, warn Moeller and others, Neochalcedonians were beguiled by a seductive resolution. They

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[27] Already at Moeller, "Le Chalcédonisme et le neo-chalcédonisme," 644, 676, but cf. esp. idem, "Textes 'monophysites'," which blames the "monophysite contamination" on Leontius of Jerusalem; see Grillmeier, "Der Neu-Chalkedonismus," 377-8. Prestige had already decried an "exaggerated assimilation of the theory of the Trinity to that of the Incarnation" (226), but for quite different reasons than Moeller and Grillmeier. And he too located the mistake in sixth-century thinkers like the two Leontii, and views Maximus as subsequently and similarly errant (233); see G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*.

[28] Moeller, "Textes 'monophysites'," 468 n. 3.

[29] Moeller, "Textes 'monophysites'," 470, identifies John Grammaticus as the first violator.

[30] Moeller, "Textes 'monophysites'," 470-1.

were led to say—and Leontius of Jerusalem here appears first and worst of the

perpetrators[31]—that the human nature's individuating characteristics or "hypostasis" just

are the very properties of the Word's eternal hypostasis.[32] The Word's very person makes

his humanity both real *and particular*. Behold the "monophysite virus" injected into

Neochalcedonian christology: now Christ's humanity cannot even be conceived apart

from the distinguishing characteristics that make the Word who and how He is divinity.

For Moeller, putatively inspired by Thomas Aquinas, this whole line of thought collapses

the individual integrity of Christ's humanity, since it is no longer a formal whole in itself

thought apart from the Word's singularity:

> Autrement dit encore, sans le savoir peut-être, au lieu de limiter strictement le rôle de l'union hypostatique à la subsistance de la nature humaine conçue **comme un tout**, Léonce [of Jerusalem] frôle *le mélange* de l'humain et du divin: les propriétés concrètes, particularisantes (Ιδιώματα άφωρίστικα) qui font de la nature humaine du Christ une réalité vivante, douée d'une vie psychologique qui est réelle et non point un trompe-l'oeil, ne subsistent pas *directement* dans l'hypostase du Verbe, mais dans la *nature* humaine concrète du Christ. **C'est la nature qui subsiste**. Si elle n'a pas d'hypostase humaine, ce n'est pas parce qu'elle serait dépourvue de caractères individuants, mais parce qu'elle ne peut un seul instant subsister à part, 'par elle-même'. Elle subsiste *ontologiquement* dans l'hypostase divine. C'est par **l'intermédiaire** de cette subsistance de la nature que les propriétés existent dans le Christ homme.[33]

It was the "awkward," unreflective use of the Cappadocian trinitarian definition of

"hypostasis" in christology that inflicted monophysitism upon Neochalcedonianism.[34]

Abandon the first definition ("individuating properties") and retain the first

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[31] Moeller, "Textes 'monophysites'," 471-4, takes special issue with Leontius's precision that it was the Word's *property*, not just his *hypostasis*, that became "most composed" in the historical Incarnation.

[32] Moeller, "Chalcédonisme," 701: "on a l'impression que les propriétés concrètes de la nature humaine de Jésus se combinent avec les propriétés concrètes de l'hypostase du Verbe au sein de la Trinité."

[33] Moeller, "Textes 'monophysites'," 475, his emphasis, my embossing; cf. *idem*, "Chalcédonisme," 703.

[34] So Grillmeier, "Der Neu-Chalkedonismus," 378 n. 34: "Dieser Monophysitismus ist freilich mehr aus der Hilflosigkeit in dem Gebrauch der Definition des Gregor von Nyssa las aus wirklich monophysitischer Tendenz zu erklären."

("subsistence" or "that which exists in itself")—that is Moeller's antidote. But notice

how his proposal already indulges the very language Neochalcedonians meant to resist:

when we rightly conceive Christ's humanity apart from his person, then we see that it is

itself "a whole" *before it is Christ*. The Word's hypostasis, as mere "subsistence," flips

the existential switch that grants concrete being to an already conceived, distinct whole.

More, for Moeller it's the nature as a whole that initially subsists, as it were, in the

Word, and only "then" do its particular properties (again, already and separately

conceived) subsist in the Word's own subsistence. Last comes the astounding claim any

Neochalcedonian, Maximus above all, would have abhorred: the "subsistence" of

Christ's whole humanity is "the intermediary" of its particular properties. The concrete

person and the concrete humanity of Christ are so distinct, at least formally or

conceptually, that they must now relate through an intermediary—the phantom

"subsistence" of the whole or abstract human nature as opposed to or different from the

subsistence the Word *is*. Here arises precisely the kind of hidden Nestorianism

Neochalcedonians suspected and loathed.

Why palaver over an obscure scholarly trend? Because, obscure though it be,

what is decided (or undecided) about these more conspicuous Neochalcedonian trends

fixes the parameters for what's possible or desirable to say about the fundamental relation

between creation and Incarnation. A fault line already divides: conceptually and formally,

the *fact* that Christ takes up even this human nature, *his*, I mean, cannot in any way

qualify or define or characterize its metaphysical content—what it is in power and how it

will be in act. That's to say, *even the possibility (and certainly the actual creation) of*

Christ's individual human nature cannot be primordially linked to his very act of

Incarnating into and as that human nature. That creation is not Incarnation takes precedence here over the potentiality and actuality of Christ's very flesh. Already the two tiers (nature and grace) of a certain Thomism,[35] or, deeper still, the "real distinction" between *esse* and *essentia* adopted in the high Middle Ages, emerge as the absolutely inviolable *Grundprinzip* of all creation, even of Christ's self-creation in Mary's womb.[36] But if we wish to grasp Maximus, this won't do.

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[35] Karl Rahner, "Jesus Christ—The Meaning of Life," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 21, 214: "Pure Chalcedonism was always suspicious that the other soteriology [Neochalcedonianism's] would covertly evolve from a communication of properties (of the two natures) into an identity of properties (of both)." Neochalcedonian christology has borne its most bitter fruit in modern soteriology, where the proposition that "God suffers" is taken "in such a way that this affirmation forges an identity between subject and predicate, the eternity of the divinity and the suffering of the humanity" (214). Death and finitude, Rahner reminds, "belong only to the created reality of Jesus; they are located on *this side of the infinite distance* between God and what is created" (214, my emphasis). Rahner's critique fails to distinguish properly between the logic of nature as opposed to that of hypostasis. Perhaps some modern theologians say what Rahner styles the Neochalcedonian "interpretation" of Christ's work—that suffering and death apply "to the divinity itself." But no actual Neochalcedonian said that. The innovation demanded by the fact of Christ is precisely one of conceiving new relations between subject and predicate, since in christology the "subject" is not primarily logical; *he* is rather the most fundamental ontological fact of both sets of predicates, the very positivity that *enables* that dual, otherwise contradictory predication. See Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil*. 8, PG 86, 1944b, Daley 306-7: "For the one hypostasis and one persona can receive opposite and contradictory predicates [τὰ ἐναντία καὶ τὰ ἀντικείμενα κατηγορήματα δέχεσθαι] together and in the same subject; but the one nature, as we have said, which can produce contraries [τὰ ἐναντία], cannot at one time come to be contradictory to itself [τὰ ἀντικείμενα ἑαυτῇ]." Mere talk about "this side" of an "infinite distance" between Christ's two natures does not yet register what makes the mystery of Christ mysterious: the fact that Christ's own singular subjectivity is not only indifferent to such "distance," but is its very condition. Cf. too Maximus, *Amb* 2.4.

[36] Balthasar consistently reads Maximus's christology as anticipating but never quite attaining Thomas's "real distinction." He detects some troubling ambivalence just where Moeller and Grillmeier did: when Maximus retains the trinitarian definition of "hypostasis" alongside the more appropriate one, "subsistence." See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*. Translated by Brian E. Daley, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003 [1961]), 64, 113. Aaron Riches, *Ecce Homo: On the Divine Unity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 13, also suggestively links the twentieth-century longing for an "orthodox Nestorianism" in some circles (e.g. Rahner) with the "modern Latin doctrine of *natura pura*" (e.g. Steven A. Long, Lawrence Feingold): "The integrity of nature, on this latter view, is safeguarded by its natural perfectibility *in se*, and so in a manner essentially separable from the order of grace. The convertibility of the doctrine of *natura pura* with a quasi-Nestorian logic of *separatio* lies in the way proponents of *natura pura* insist on deriving the 'species' of the human creature wholly from the 'proximate, proportionate, natural end' of a 'purely natural' human nature, *fully divested from the history of salvation*" (my emphasis). That is, the desire to conceive the entirety of human nature apart from any *fact*—even in christology—at least formally parallels broader conceptions of a strict, two-tiered God-world relation.

I discern in Maximus three features proper to "hypostasis" as it relates to nature. A hypostasis is *irreducible* to, *inseparable* from, and *indifferent* to the nature it is.[37] This section lingers over the first and last features; the second comes more so in the next on the concept of "the enhypostatic" (sec. 1.4). Together these help describe just what sort of identity obtains between different natures in a single hypostasis—in Christ, the identity of infinitely different natures, the created and the uncreated.

1. *Irreducibility* (or *positivity*). Like all Neochalcedonians Maximus insisted on the convertibility of terms in matters trinitarian and christological.[38] This univocity spans the two mysteries and reinforces the Chalcedonian distinction between οὐσία-φύσις and ὑπόστασις-πρόσωπον. The former pair predicates the common or universal, the latter the proper or particular. That's a bit of tried traditional wisdom, of mainly Cappadocian deposit:

> On the one hand, according to the Fathers the essence and the nature (for they say that these are the same thing) are common and universal, i.e. generic. On the other, the hypostasis and the person (for these too, they say, come to the same) are proper and particular.[39]

That partition came hewn from solid dogmatic stone: were there no strict correlation of nature to commonality and hypostasis to property, the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity would implode. "My account," Maximus declares, "will dare to speak of the greatest: even with respect to the first, anarchic, efficient Cause of all beings, we do not

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[37] See "An Analytic Appendix" for a more concise schematic.

[38] *Pyr* 201-2; *Opusc* 13, PG 91, 145a-149a.

[39] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 545a (cp. 548d): "Κοινὸν μὲν οὖν ἐστι καὶ καθολικὸν, ἤγουν γενικὸν, κατὰ τοὺς Πατέρας, ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἡ φύσις· ταυτὸν γὰρ ἀλλήλαις ταύτας ὑπάρχειν φασίν. Ἴδιον δὲ καὶ μερικὸν, ἡ ὑπόστασις καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν· ταυτὸν γὰρ ἀλλήλοις κατ' αὐτοὺς ταῦτα τυγχάνουσιν." Maximus then cites Basil three times and Gregory Nazianzen twice in justification—all explicitly trinitarian passages.

contemplate the nature and the hypostasis as identical to one another."[40] God's very being

proves and determines that these two logics of nature and hypostasis—and they are

logics, they bear distinctive principles (*logoi*)[41]—are inseparable yet irreducible to one

another.[42]

So follows a familiar deduction: if a person in the Trinity differs by hypostasis

alone, and if a hypostasis is always what makes proper or individuates[43] (or, as the first

definition had it, "characterizes"), then the Son's hypostasis exists by an ineffable

principle, an ineffable act of the Father.[44] The Son is *who* he is, is himself in all his

personal distinctiveness, right there in the heart of the eternal Trinity. Few would deny

this: vintage post-Constantinople (381) orthodoxy. But again, as with the earlier

Neochalcedonians, fewer still grasp the fairly massive implications this holds for the

concept of individuation in the Incarnation. The Son is already the singular hypostasis he

is "prior" to his personal human existence in the historical Incarnation. And this divine,

personal identity was certainly no product of some descending, generic-to-specific

"contraction,"[45] i.e. an individual among other roots of Porphyry's tree. Divinity is

common, but it is no genus. Still less could Aristotle's individuation by accidents apply,

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[40] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 549cd. The Three differ by the idioms ingenerate (Father), generated (Son), and procession (Spirit).

[41] This will be evident across Maximus's texts, but consider one of his terser formulations (though some doubt its authenticity) at *Opusc* 26, PG 91, 264b: "Ὅτι ἡ μὲν φύσις εἴδους λόγον μόνον ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις καὶ τοῦ τινός ἐστι δηλωτική."

[42] *Amb* 1.3; cf. *CC* 2.29. So Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité*, e.g. 45-6: "la pensée de Maxime le Confesseur, concernant le Christ Jésus et la Sainte Trinité, s'exerce selon les rapports logiques de l'union et de la différence comme de l'identité et de l'altérité, qu'elle se réfère aux réalités de l'hypostase et de l'ousie, comprenant la volonté raisonnable et l'opération volontaire, et qu'elle témoigne de la correspondance des dogmes trinitaire et christologique de l'Eglise."

[43] See "An Analytic Appendix."

[44] *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 249c.

[45] *Amb* 1.3: "For the Monad is truly a Monad: it is not the origin of the things that come after it, as if it had expanded after a state of contraction, like something naturally poured out and proliferating into a multitude, but is rather the *enhypostasized* being of the consubstantial Trinity [ἀλλ' ἐνυπόστατος ὀντότης ὁμοουσίου Τριάδος]."

for the rather sane reason that God has no accidents at all.[46] The person of the Son, *that man* Jesus, the hypostasis he is, subsists by some other principle of individuation. If he is "not an individual" in Porphyry's sense, as Maximus reads Cyril to say,[47] this is exactly because "being individual" is for the Son an intra-trinitarian act which bears its own unique principle (rather than the species-principle of genus plus differentiae, or some variety of the bundle principle). Yet this is also the very principle of Christ's human subsistence, lest it be not the very Son in flesh. And so in the Incarnation the divine principle of individuation extends to the created order itself: what alone is one in Christ, hypostasis, subsists in (and indeed grounds) his telluric life by a hitherto unconceived individuating principle, one irreducible to the principle of either of his natures[48] and yet, of course, also inseparable from them. In the Trinity and in Christ—or, in God *ad intra* and *ad extra*—Maximus divines the surest warrant for distinguishing and describing the

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[46] *Amb* 17.12; *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 249a; et al.

[47] *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 204a. Jean-Claude Larchet, "Hypostase, personne, et individu selon saint Maxime le Confesseur," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 109 (2014): 52, while right to deny that this text implies any absolute opposition between "individual" and "person," nevertheless wrongly infers that "il est question de l'*hypostase composée* du Christ qui constitue un cas unique d'une hypostase qui unit deux natures. En tant que Dieu-homme, le Christ n'est pas un membre d'une essence ou d'une nature, ou encore un genre uniques qui comporteraient une multiplicité d'individus." For Maximus, that Christ's composed person is not properly an individual derives from the way he is *person*, not, as Larchet claims, "du fait précisément qu'elle est composée" (55). If the fact of being a composed hypostasis excludes that hypostasis from individuality, then every human person, which is also a composed hypostasis (since body and soul are "homo-hypostatic" essences in man; cf. *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152a-b), would likewise not be an individual. The point is rather that when Christ makes himself the identity of natural extremes, he *is individual* in a way more fundamental than any logical determination of species and differentiae, since, of course, he was a *hypostasis* already "before" he was human, and indeed, divinity is neither a genus nor species. Every hypostasis, in fact, is in itself more fundamental than the way it is individual, since individuality (in a Porphyrian schema) properly "refers back" to the species it is by nature, as Maximus indicates here. That's why he can define "hypostasis" or "person" as what possesses "the delimitation of individuality in themselves [i.e. hypostasis and person], but not [possessing] by nature the predication among many [i.e. hypostasis and person do not have the 'common idioms' of nature or essence]," *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152a, my translation.

[48] Nature and hypostasis are so clearly irreducible to each other that Maximus can even say that *each* of Christ's natures, *qua* natures, "lacks its own proper hypostasis"; *Opusc* 13.7.

two logics of nature and hypostasis. In fact, he contends, failure to do so constitutes precisely the rotten root of otherwise opposed christological heresies—no small matter.[49]

In christological controversy, everything comes down to the "mode of union."[50] Here you must discriminate the two logics. It's here too that Maximus perceived basic agreement between Nestorians and monophysites of every sort. Whether two natures require two hypostases, or one hypostasis one nature, a tight correspondence between nature and hypostasis assumes that the mode (and so product) of the Incarnation must bend to "natural laws," to how *any* concrete synthesis supposedly occurs in nature.[51] Neither party sufficiently conceived hypostasis in its own positivity, as bearing a logic distinct from nature. Especially flagrant was the miaphysite concept of Christ's "composed nature," "the acropolis of Severus's reasonings."[52] For Severus Christ's one nature still retained something of a human "quality," and so is rightly considered "composed."[53]

Maximus tenders three arguments to the contrary.[54] First, the union of Christ's two natures becomes involuntary. It would have occurred, that is, with just as little intent involved as, say, the union of my body and soul: neither willed union with the other. Second, this union is simultaneous. Since neither "part" of Christ's one composed nature could really be what it is outside of that concrete whole (again, think human body and soul), either Christ's flesh must enjoy co-eternity with the Word, or the very Word did not exist until birthed by the Virgin. Last and most significant, this union would complete

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[49] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 493c.
[50] Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 200-211; Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 209, 245-6.
[51] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 300; cf. n. 48.
[52] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 296; Ponsoye 154-5.
[53] *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 256a-b; *Ep* 13, PG 91, 516d-524b.
[54] All from *Ep* 13, PG 91, 296 sq.

or perfect both parts united. Christ would need both parts to achieve the whole he is, by nature. His becoming would therefore be subject to a law or *logos* greater than either of his parts on their own, a *logos* corresponding to the perfected whole as such. Maximus defies all three necessary features of Severus's single "composed nature," and thereby denies "Christ" names any kind of *natural* "whole" at all. And yet he is indeed the whole of these parts. More, "this very one is the limit, the principle [λόγος], and the law of every composed nature."[55]

A composed hypostasis, not a composed nature—this is Maximus's line.[56] Not without controversy.[57] Much of the worry, I think, comes from a failure to think through the two distinct logics of hypostasis and nature *and then* their peculiar relation (total indifference). The idea of a "composed hypostasis" is clear enough: it signifies that concrete whole apart from which its proper parts [or natures] could not subsist, and therefore a whole irreducible to yet and constituted by its parts.[58] Here we come upon a metaphysical axiom in Maximus, one grounded, we've seen, in the Trinity and now Christ: because both hypostasis and nature name positive features of all being—that is, distinct logics or dimensions of being in their own right—they also act as the necessary, reciprocal condition for one another (this will become clearer in sec. 1.4).[59] Christ the hypostatic "whole" is the sole and fundamentally positive oneness of divine and human natures. Their oneness, their identity, just is their existential *fact* in *this* instance, in

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[55] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 517b, my translation: "Οὗτος γὰρ πάσης συνθέτου φύσεως ὅρος τε καὶ λόγος καὶ' νόμος."

[56] First proposed by Leontius of Jerusalem; see Nicholas Madden, OCD, "Composite Hypostasis in Maximus Confessor," *Studia Patristica* (1993): 186.

[57] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 105, says Balthasar squirmed about it.

[58] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 484b, my translation: "For [this one rightly] confesses with the Fathers that the unconfused [natures] from which Christ is composed remained on account of the difference preserved. Apart from the one hypostasis, these realities that differ from each other in their natural principle could never exist, and you could never in any way know them separately [from the hypostasis]."

[59] Cf. too "An Analytic Preface," 3-4.

Christ. But the instance or hypostasis as such presents nothing natural, no formal or essential content of its own, which is precisely why it avoids all the absurdities of Severus's "composed nature."[60] Christ *qua* hypostasis contains absolutely no natural content that might in any sense stand in tension with another nature (still less any contrast): as nature's condition, hypostasis pretends no natural relation to nature at all, necessarily so. "Behold the paradox," says Maximus, "to contemplate a composed hypostasis without thereby predicating a composed nature of that hypostasis, as if of a species."[61]

2. *Indifference*. Hence Maximus's answer to Severus's dilemma. Are Christ's two natures universal or particular? For Maximus, both.[62] How? Recall hypostasis's two definitions or functions.[63] Hypostasis is the "this" which [1] grounds and [2] individuates what it is. The composed hypostasis of the Word, then, makes his natures simultaneously real and particular. In Christ divinity and humanity are single and factual—indeed, are a single fact or event (not a nature, which apart from its fact is nothing at all). Again, the singularity of a hypostasis bears its own positive principle, and yet this principle is decidedly not natural. The Son's hypostasis is therefore an existential fact which stands in no tension with nature, and for this very reason it can receive utterly different natures without diminishing them (hypostasis in itself possesses *nothing* to oppose any nature).

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[60] So *Ep* 15, PG 91, 552c, where Maximus claims even the body-soul analogy supports the point that the hypostatic "idiom," the individuality of a particular *instance* of something, is exactly where and how essential different realities attain "mutual identity": "...καθ' ὃν τὰ διαιροῦντα θάτερον τῆς κατ' οὐσίαν οἰκείας καινότητος ἰδιώματα, κατὰ τὴν ἅμα τῷ εἶναι πρὸς ἄλληλα σύνοδον, ποιεῖται χαρακτηριστικὰ τῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν συμπληρουμένης μίας ὑποστάσεως· καθ' ἣν **ἡ πρὸς ἄλληλα θεωρεῖται ταυτότης**, τὴν οἰανοῦν μή δεχομένη διαφοράν."

[61] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 517c, my translation: "ὃ καὶ παράδοξον, ὑπόστασιν σύνθετον θεᾶσθαι, χωρὶς τῆς κατ' εἶδος αὐτῆς κατηγορουμένης συνθέτου φύσεως."

[62] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 557c, my translation: "Hence Christ possessed both the common and the particular of those parts from which he was composed [Οὐκοῦν ἑκατέρου τῶν ἐξ ὧν συνετέθη μερῶν ὁ Χριστὸς εἶχε, τό τε κοινὸν καὶ τὸ ἰδικόν]."

[63] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 557d-560a; cf. "An Analytic Appendix."

The Word's reception of these natures is their very subsistence,[64] but it is indeed *his* reception; he, I mean, receives divine and human natures in his own distinctive way, his individual style, in the very concreteness of his own hypostasis—in his "this," if you will. Their "personal identity" in him just *is* their concrete particularity.[65]

Now reappears that principal worry over Neochalcedonian christology, that the Son's own eternal property individuates his human flesh. But this point proves essential for Maximus. It discloses the Incarnation's very logic, its very possibility:

> All this announces the true principle (*logos*) of the divine economy, of the Incarnation. For the idioms by which his flesh differed, distinguishing him from us—by these his flesh possessed identity with the Word according to hypostasis. And the idioms by which the Word differed from the Father and Spirit, distinct as Son—by these he preserved the monadic identity with the flesh according to hypostasis. No principle (*logos*) whatever divides him.[66]

The point here, not entirely unique to Maximus,[67] is that the only thing the Son "has" that can be one with a nature infinitely different from his divinity is *himself*, his hypostasis; for his hypostasis certainly differs from the Father's and from divinity as such. This hypostasis is already "individualized" by his unique generation, already a distinct person in the Godhead. Therefore the Son, who is very God, becomes one with human nature

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[64] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 553d: "He made Himself a perfect man, assuming a rational and noetic flesh that took nature and hypostasis in Him, that is, being and subsistence, accordingly simultaneous with the Word's very conception [ἐν αὐτῷ τήν τε φύσιν λαβούσης καὶ τὴν ὑπόστασιν· τουτέστι, τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὸ ὑφεστᾶναι, κατ' αὐτὴν ἅμα τοῦ Λόγου τὴν σύλληψιν]"; *Ep* 12, PG 91, 468a: "From her [i.e. Mary] He united flesh to Himself according to hypostasis, consubstantial with us, animated by a rational and noetic soul, not pre-hypostasized for even the twinkling of an eye, but in Himself, God and Word, that flesh received both 'to be' and 'to subsist' [ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Λόγῳ, καὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ὑποστῆναι λαβοῦσαν]." See sec. 1.4.

[65] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 556b, my translation: "he revealed himself in the unicity of his person absolutely without difference, unified to the supreme degree by the personal identity of His own parts among them [ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα κατ' ἄκρον προσωπικῇ ταυτότητι τῶν οἰκείων μερῶν διαπαντὸς ἑνιζόμενον]." Notice that the "personal identity" is not some third thing, as if the "parts" were identical by the law of transference. It is *their* identity, where they are completely and invariably *one thing*.

[66] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 560ab; my translation.

[67] Leontius of Byzantium, *Epil*. 25, PG 86, 1909c-d (Daley 327-9): "for by the distinguishing characteristics which divides him from the Father, he is joined to the flesh, just as by the natural property which joins him to the Father he experiences difference from the flesh; and as he is one nature with the Father because of the sameness of nature, so he is *not* one nature with the flesh, because of its natural and unchanging character, even in union with the Word."

only by instancing it in and as himself—by becoming the existential fact or event of both natures at once and as one. So while his divinity unites him to the Father and his humanity to us (by nature), he only receives these two natural unities, Chalcedon's two "consubstantialities," because of and in his hypostatic distinction from hypostases of both divine and human natures.[68] That hypostatic determination stands indifferent to nature is precisely what makes it wholly hospitable to nature.

A proper discrimination of the two logics, then, produces this clever circumvention of Severus's dilemma: since it belongs to a hypostasis's principle to characterize and particularize, and to a nature's principle to communize and universalize—an "individual nature" names a nature's power and actuality *in a personal mode*. A nature in that mode is no mere abstraction. That particular mode still bears the mode and quality proper to the nature as such.[69] That's to say, nature in a personal mode remains a universal nature; it really actualizes and so displays properties common to all other individuals of the same kind (e.g. rationality in Paul is still the same essential rationality in me—however modally dimmer in me!). And yet the very mode that concretizes these universal features is itself always individual, always of a certain person.[70] The positivity and total indifference of person to nature—its distinctive logic— makes it possible for Christ to possess both a universal and particular human nature.

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[68] Eric D. Perl, "Metaphysics and Christology in Maximus Confessor and Eriugena," in *Eriugena: East and West – Papers of the Eighth International Colloquium of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies*, eds. Bernard McGinn and Willemien Otten (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1994), 258-9.

[69] *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 248c-249a.

[70] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 102-3, rightly observes that "the personal" and "mode" are crucially linked but not identical. Maximus's resolution of the universal-vs.-particular flesh dilemma intimates his broader metaphysical view, inspired by Nemesius and perhaps Theophrastus, that both particulars *and universals* are created in time (*Amb* 7.16; 10.83, 101; Constas, vol. 1, 489, n. 57)—a view Tollefsen notes "seems strange" against "the background of Neoplatonic thought" (*Christocentric*, 87). Perhaps this strange view finds its more immediate background in christology proper. I discuss the reciprocal creation and perfection of particulars and universals at sec. 2.3 and 4.3, respectively.

Maximus helpfully clarifies all this when he confronts a monenergist proposal meant to mollify strict dyenergists like him. Since, they argue, an activity belongs properly to a person *qua* agent, and since Christ was undoubtedly one person, he therefore possessed only one "hypostatic activity." Maximus thinks not. He responds to Theodore of Raithu's version:

> For [Theodore] obscured and in a certain sense destroyed the principle for these things [i.e. hypostasis and nature] by assigning to the person *qua* person the activity that characterizes the nature, rather than [assigning to the person] the 'how' and the 'what sort of mode' of its [i.e. nature's] fulfillment [οὐχὶ τὸν πῶς καὶ ὁποῖον τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν ἐκβάσεως τρόπον]. In this way one recognizes the difference between those acting and those acted upon, possessing these with or against nature. For each of us acts principally as *what* we are rather than as *who*— that is, [we act] as man. And as *someone*, say Paul or Peter, he gives expression to the mode of the activity typified by him through impartation, perhaps, or by progress in this way or that according to his dispositive judgment. Hence, on the one hand, one recognizes difference among persons in the mode of conduct [ἐν μὲν τῷ τρόπῳ...κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν], and on the other, invariability in the *logos* of the natural activity. For one is not more or less endowed with activity or reason [ἐνεργὴς ἢ λογικός], but we all have the same *logos* and its natural activity.[71]

Positivity and indifference of person: positive, and so it determines ("expresses" and "typifies") the peculiar mode of its nature; indifferent, so it perfectly preserves its nature's universal principle ("one is not more or less," "we all have the same *logos* and its natural activity").

The person of Christ is the principle of individuation.[72] Just because his hypostasis relates indifferently to nature, it can welcome his human universality and particularity: it asserts no natural determination that then qualifies either pole of nature's modal determination, universal or particular, as if it were itself some principle of nature

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[71] *Opusc* 10; PG 91, 136d-137a; my translation.

[72] Madden, "Composite Hypostasis in Maximus Confessor," 188: "This gives us an astonishing insight into the mystery of the Incarnation; the flesh is truly the flesh of the only-begotten son of God; all its individual traits are determined by his eternal personality and they reveal it. This extends to every dimension of his being and life as man. It marks his style...the subsistence of the Logos is the principle of individuation of his humanity as well as of its union with him." See to Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn*, 133-9.

legislating one mode in place of the another. So he grounds and determines his own

humanity; he must therefore precede both its universal and particular dimensions. Now

consider this: in Christ's case, at least (for now), Maximus sees no need for some other

grounding and individuating principle—to take sides, as it were, on the great debate over

immanent and transcendent universals.[73] Christo-logic relieves that sort of pressure. It

must.

At length we arrive at an anticipated claim: Maximus openly denies that any

Porphyrian principle of individuation, either Neoplatonic or Peripatetic, applies in the

Incarnation.[74] Curiously enough, he suspects Severus of just this.

> And if he does not confess these [two natures], but really confesses the qualities
> alone, it is clear that, obliterating the natures, he teaches that Christ is an
> assemblage of qualities [ποιοτήτων ἄθροισμα τὸν Χριστὸν] just as we know the
> natures of material things to be: really established in a material substrate
> [ὑποκειμένῳ μέντοι τῆς ὕλης συνισταμένας], yet not contemplated in the sole and
> simple qualities, as indeed he depicts Christ. And that's why he calls him a
> composed nature—that, obviously, and does not conceive another fashioned and
> composed from simple qualities. For, out of whatever things he says the
> difference is, of these plainly is the union too. For the difference is not of those
> things while the union is of others, but [both] are of the very same things and not
> of others.[75]

A somewhat elliptical passage, but the basic claim's clear enough: it is wrong to conceive

the "compositeness" of Christ in terms of nature or quality (itself of a concrete nature).

Either fails to the degree that it virtually reduces Christ's "unity" to an assemblage of

qualities around one material substrate. That is, Christ would be "one" and so

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[73] See Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD: A Sourcebook: Volume 3: Logic and Metaphysics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 128-63.

[74] Cf. *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 248b-c, my translation: Here Maximus argues that, "for the divine Fathers," the concepts of "quality," "property," and "difference" do "not rest upon being received by a certain substrate [οὐκ ἐπί τινος ὑποκειμένου λαμβανομένη], that is, by an essence or nature but upon those things contemplated in the essence, and indeed really those things in the hypostasis [καὶ μέντοι γε τῶν τῇ ὑποστάσει θεωρουμένων]." Just before this he ascribes such a view to "those outside," an allusion that, along with the vague description of the position, is sufficiently broad to encompass the whole Porphyrian-inspired tradition.

[75] *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 256ab; my translation.

"individuated" by matter, such that we really only have one concrete nature ("that's why he calls him a composed nature") modified by the addition of accidents or qualities in the way a material substrate suffers alteration of its various qualities. Thus the subtle polemic of the last lines: whatever differs—for Severus, merely qualities—is also what is united in Christ; and if the qualities alone differ, then the qualities alone can be united, and that in the only conceivable way an "assemblage of qualities" is ever united—in a material substrate. But a material substrate, as is clear (and as Maximus affirms in the next paragraph), is among the most divided unities. Maximus argues this is the best sort of unity Severus can conceive and remain consistent.[76]

Successful or not, this argument nicely illustrates Maximus's rejection of the Porphyrian principle. A positive principle of hypostasis, Christ himself, and not some posterior assemblage of characteristics, grounds and individuates Christ's created nature.[77] He makes himself two.[78] In fact, to state the deeper insight, only such a principle proves Christ truly one.

3. *Identity*. In Christo-logic "hypostasis" names an individual positivity whose principle stands in a relation of utter indifference to the nature(s) it is. Its positivity and indifference are the exact properties that permit it to exist *as* the single, concrete fact of

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[76] Or else, if "quality" works differently, as Maximus agrees "nature" does as it relates to hypostasis, he awaits to be stupefied by the explanation! Cf. *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 256b.

[77] This becomes in Maximus a *general* metaphysical rule for every concrete, individual existence; cf. *Amb* 17.5, and ch. 2, sec. 2.3.

[78] If one were to posit another principle of individuation besides the Son's very self—say, individuation by accidents or a particular nature (or some combination of both)— that principle would be just as *constitutive* or *causal* for Christ's flesh as Christ himself. This co-causal principle would not only co-determine the *esse reale* of Christ's flesh, but its particularity too. It would therefore cease to be true that the Son *alone* determines his own real and individual flesh. And if his flesh derives from elsewhere, even ever so slightly, then we might rightly wonder whether it at least partially "subsists" as or attains subsistence by another reality—that is, hastily put, in a sense derives from another *hypostasis*. Here we have, I think, a major reason Neochalcedonians, and Maximus in particular, saw any attempt even to "conceive" of Christ's flesh *apart from Christ himself* as capitulating to Nestorian "scission"; cf. *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 80.

two incommensurable natures—to be their identity. Hypostasis is a *mode of union*, to reprise the Neochalcedonian conviction.

Maximus (like Leontius) thinks this true even in the case of the human person.[79] The body-soul analogy, it's true, had by Maximus's time a somewhat fraught legacy. Apollinarius made much of it, as did Cyril. It was a miaphysite favorite.[80] Quite obvious why: a human person is a synthesis of two distinct natures, body and soul, and yet completes one nature, the human. So too in Christ. Divine and human natures, though two, attain concrete identity as one composite nature. Maximus confronts the analogy's force in a way that seems, *prima facie*, counter-intuitive. Rather than, say, stress the inevitable dissimilarity to Christ's case, an exceptional one, Maximus *extends* the logic of Christ to the anthropological analogy itself. Even the body-soul unity in an individual human person does not yet constitute their true identity.[81] They remain—even right there in *that* person—essentially distinct in principle, that is, by nature, a fact anyone "grasps clearly enough."[82] True, once they subsist and converge in a concrete person, they enjoy relative commonality even on the level of nature: both are temporal, both mutually affecting,[83] and both are, of course, natures.[84] Theirs is no absolute difference, as with

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[79] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 277; Ponsoye 136-7: "Hypostatic unity is just as valid for Christ as it is for man." For Leontius of Byzantium see n. 26.

[80] Severus of Antioch, *Ep* 10, PO XIII, 202-3.

[81] Madden, "Composite Hypostasis in Maximus Confessor," 176-7, though he misses that the "achievement" was not just Maximus's, but had already been advanced, for instance, by Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 4, PG 86, 1285d-1288a; see Daley, "'A Richer Union,'" 250-8, 262.

[82] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 277; soul's nature, for instance, comprises invisibility, incorporeality, relative transcendence of space, even (perhaps) everlastingness—none of which belongs to the principle of body. And the reverse: corruptibility, mortality, visibility, material complexity, irreducible spatiality—these are natural to body, not soul.

[83] Soul acts through body as through "an instrument," say, to perceive and receive sensations (*Pyrr* 187); soul unifies body (*Amb* 7.37); soul partially mediates virtue to body (*Amb* 10.2); body can restrain soul (*Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64c).

[84] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 277: again, together body and soul constitute one nature, "human." Though this names a genus marked by "a constitutive difference" from other species, it nowhere exists *as such*. It comes

qualities (which are "mutually-eliminating": triangular excludes circular, death negates life, etc.). Theirs is difference by "antinomy," a difference that "accepts separation" but only within a more fundamental community.[85]

Once, I said, body and soul unite in an individual, *then* they achieve relative union in distinction. Only when real and really united, when they are brought into permanent "reciprocal relation" (τὴν εἰς τὸ πρός τι ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀναφορὰν δέχεται) by the singular event of a person's historical birth (notice the anti-Origenism here)—only then do they receive each other in asymmetrical, essential union.[86] And so even in the case of a human person, two natures find relation, actuality, and identity in hypostasis alone. More exactly: because their identity lies solely in the person, *therefore* they retain their natural difference in principle.[87] Conceiving the human "whole" this way releases nature from having to achieve real identity between differing natures. Neither my soul nor my body, nor some kind of natural mediation between them, generates *me*—the concrete "I" who just *is* this body and this soul in this unity. Precisely here the analogy between anthropology and christology truly obtains[88]: the singular identity of hypostasis, the only positivity that exists for itself (hypostasis's second definition), makes possible and actual the concrete union of my body and soul (first definition)—and because of hypostasis's absolute indifference as the real identity of each, these natures, relieved of that burden (of achieving their own mutual identity), can preserve the universal principle that makes

only in its individuals, in, that's to say, instances that themselves presuppose a prior subject, i.e. a hypostasis.

[85] *Opusc* 17, PG 91, 115; Ponsoye 231. We might say they are *analogous*.

[86] *Amb* 7.40; 10.57; *Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64c.

[87] *Amb* 7.43: because the "whole" of a human individual is the *hypostasis* alone, it "reveals that both come into being simultaneously, and demonstrates their essential difference from each other, without violating in any way whatsoever the principles (*logoi*) of their respective substances."

[88] Cf. Karl-Heinz Uthemann, "Das Anthropologische Modell der Hypostatischen Union bei Maximus Confessor," in Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn, *Maximus Confessor: Actes du symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur: Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980* (Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1982), 223-33.

them what they are. The hypostasis itself is a mode of union that grants absolute identity

to essentially different realities. Only here, only in this way, do they receive "identity

with one another."[89]

And if this be so in the human case, *a fortiori* in Christ's. A human body and soul,

once generated, still relate to one another naturally. They fit together *qua* nature(s). They

form one nature, the human. But Christ *qua* hypostasis—indeed, any hypostasis *qua*

hypostasis, we've seen—is no genus, no species, no nature at all. In fact he's no mere

individual for the same reason, if, that is, "individual" signify the formal relations of the

nature a hypostasis instances.

> I hasten to add that Christ's composed person is not properly an individual [οὐδὲ
> ἄτομον κυρίως]. For [his composed person] possesses no relation to the division
> that goes from the most generic genus down through other subaltern genera all the
> way to the most specific species, finally proceeding into him, to that property
> defining [him]. Whence and for this reason, according to the most wise Cyril, the
> name 'Christ' does not carry the power of definition, since it is not a species
> [εἶδός] predicated of many differing in number, nor obviously is it the essence of
> something. For he is not an individual referring back to a species or genus; nor is
> he circumscribed by these according to essence. Rather, [he is] a composed
> hypostasis making identical to a supreme degree, in himself, the natural
> distinction of the extremes, even leading [these] into one by the union of [his]
> proper parts.[90]

Mark how the passage ends: with Christ's hypostasis as the identity "to a supreme

degree" of "the extremes," his two utterly incommensurable natures. That last part is

crucial. Christ's case differs from the body-soul analogy not because in the latter the

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[89] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 552c: "ἡ πρὸς ἄλληλα θεωρεῖται ταυτότης." Cf. n. 60 for full quotation. This
insight about hypostasis as nature's sole concrete identity is for Maximus a general law of metaphysics
derived, so I think, from Christo-logic. Hypostasis (again, not a material substrate or an assemblage of
properties as such) alone names the concrete identity of differing natures. Maximus often formulates this
precisely as a principle: "homo-hypostatic" realities (e.g. body and soul) *must* differ in essence/nature,
while "hetero-hypostatic" realities (e.g. individual humans) *can* be united in essence/nature (*Opusc* 14, PG
91, 152a; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 552b-c); or, "union according to hypostasis" applies to "realities of differing
essences," while "union according to essence" applies to "realities of differing hypostases" (*Opusc* 18, PG
91, 216a).
[90] *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 204a; my translation; cf. *Ep* 12, PG 91, 277-9.

natures form parts of a one hypostatic whole; it differs because his parts are *absolutely different* from each other. Created and uncreated natures share nothing by nature.[91] In fact, *because* they attain identity only in Christ's person, they remain entirely different by nature.[92]

Now we've come to the final and most urgent reason Christo-logic distinguishes the two logics of hypostasis and nature. Hypostatic logic, as the only licit logic of mediation between created and uncreated natures, becomes the logic of salvation (cf. Eph 2.16). Christ's person is the only place where divinity and humanity can be really, positively, invariably one: "it is therefore clear that, according to the one hypostasis that these [natures] achieve, the parts absolutely do not differ in any way."[93] He is not simply their "conjunction" or "composed nature" (Severus's natural fusion); he is their identity (ταυτότης). And it's not muddled thinking to say so.[94] It would be muddled, indeed heretical, *not* to, as Cyril knew.[95] (After all, Nestorius was anything but unclear in his thinking; his fault lay not in clarity of thought, but in failure to conform that thought to the matter itself, the fact of Christ). Anything less than concrete identity is less than true union, less than our salvation. He, as the determinate positivity that is also utterly

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[91] *Amb* 10.58; *Pyr* 29.

[92] A subtle point Maximus makes, for instance, before Pyrrhus, who was himself quite stunned by it: "PYRRHUS: There is nothing, then, which the natures and natural properties have in common [κοινόν]? MAXIMUS: Nothing, save only the hypostasis of these same natures. For, just in this way a hypostasis was the very same, unconfusedly, of these same natural properties [Ὥσπερ γὰρ ὑπόστασις ἦν ὁ αὐτὸς ἀσυγχύτως τῶν αὐτῶν φυσικῶν]"; see too *Amb* 4.8.

[93] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 324; Ponsoye 181.

[94] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 234-5, and Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 36, hesitate translate ταυτότης as an unqualified "identity." But Eric D. Perl, *Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, and Deification in Saint Maximus Confessor* (unpublished Ph.D. diss, Yale, 1991), 190-1, rightly resists: "Maximus is not content to speak of hypostatic 'union' (ἕνωσις) in Christ, which could suggest a mere co-presence of two natures 'in' a single hypostasis, but rather insists on the hypostatic and personal *identity* (ταυτότης) of the two natures.... True union demands not a mere juxtaposition or joining of two things; rather, in a union there must actually be *one* of something, one same thing which each of the terms united is" (190-1).

[95] Cyril, cp. 11th with 12th anathema. Cf. sec. 1.5 below.

indifferent (and so totally hospitable) to uncreated and created nature alike—he alone mediates between them exactly as the impossible possibility of their real identity: "So in this way he is mediator, according to hypostasis, for those parts from which he is composed: *he comprises the interval of the extremes in himself* [ἵνα ᾖ καθ' ὑπόστασιν μεσίτης τοῖς ἐξ ὧν συνετέθη μέρεσι· τὴν τῶν ἄκρων ἐν αὐτῷ συνάπτων διάστασιν]."[96]

Christo-logic in Maximus, then, comes to this: total symmetry of natures, total identity of person, and the total indifference of identity and symmetry which Christ is. Any other logic fails to describe the peculiarity of Christ. Bathrellos, for instance, inspired by Florovsky's idea of a christological "asymmetry" between Christ's divine person and his two natures in union,[97] finds Maximus's talk of Christ's "composite hypostasis" slightly disturbing: this, along with "the exceedingly symmetrical parallelism between Christ and man...seems to contradict the insistence that in Christ the hypostasis is divine."[98] If, Bathrellos worries, we stress the symmetry of natures *and then* identify Christ's very person with both natures ("composite" = natures, "hypostasis" = person), as Maximus often does, then we might stumble unawares into Nestorianism. Bathrellos labors to save the concept by distinguishing the dimensions, as it were, of Christ's one hypostasis: the "material" aspect designates Christ's in his two natures, and here it's proper to call his hypostasis "composite"; but the "personal" aspect is the preexistent

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[96] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 556a; my translation and emphasis. The acute eye accustomed to reading Gregory of Nyssa will notice the striking use of *diastasis* here. Though its christological use appears already in Leontius of Jerusalem, *CN* II.14, PG 98, 1568b: "...πῶς μετὰ τὸ ληφθῆναι, ἤγουν ἐν ἀλλήλοις μεῖναι τό τε ληφθὲν καὶ τὸ λαβὸν, παραμένειν ἐν αὐτοῖς δύναται, καὶ σώζεσθαι ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἑκατέρου διάστασις, ὅπερ συνίστησι τὴν ὑπόστασιν;"

[97] Georges Florovsky, *Collected Works*, *vol. 9*: *The Byzantine Fathers of the Sixth to the Eighth Century*, ed. Richard s. Haugh, trans. Raymond Miller, Anne-Marie Döllinger-Labriolle, and Helmut Wilhelm Schmiedel (Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 231.

[98] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 115. He thinks this a problem endemic to Neochalcedonianism itself. His worries are those of Moeller, Grillmeier, et al. (cf. sec. 1.2), which is especially evident in his hesitations over and criticisms of the Neochalcedonian identification of Christ himself as individuating principle of his flesh (51).

Logos himself, improperly called "composite."[99] Now, the thesis runs, Maximus distinguishes (in practice—he lacks these categories) these aspects of Christ's hypostasis, and so we need not suspect him of compromising the Son's true oneness when speaking of the Son's "compositeness" with regard to his two natures. His truest oneness lies in "the personal" dimension of his—well, person.[100]

Something's amiss in all this. Bathrellos appears to make a distinction within the hypostasis itself. Viewed as "the end-product of the union of the two extremes," he assures us, "'hypostasis' does *not* mean, strictly speaking, the 'person' (which is identical with the Logos), but *the one reality* in which the two natures are united."[101] What exactly is this "one reality" that differs from the very "person" of the Son—from the Son himself? It's as if the "material" hypostasis (*qua* two natures) is somehow in tension with the "personal" hypostasis, the *true* Word. Bathrellos concludes just so: "Maximus has rightly been very careful to keep these two aspects of the mystery of the hypostasis of Christ *in complementary tension*."[102] How could these two aspects of Christ's one hypostasis stand in any relation at all? Any relation, and certainly any tension, necessarily implies "two" somethings or someones related. To avoid one alleged Nestorianism, must we risk another?

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[99] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 105-7. He also speaks of the "formal" aspect, which indicates the fact that the hypostasis its particular idioms to both natures and so makes them, as it were, the same *qua* particular. Bathrellos claims inspiration for these categories from Heinzer (*Gottes Sohn*, 81-2), though he admits to altering them. A major, and I think significant difference, is that Heinzer makes no special aspect for "the personal" in Christ.

[100] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 106: "Maximus integrates successfully the asymmetry on the level of 'personal' hypostasis (which is divine) with the symmetry on the level of the two (divine *and* human) natures, whose unity constitutes the 'material' hypostasis."

[101] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 105, my emphasis.

[102] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 106-7, my emphasis.

The governing assumption, I fear, is not altogether uncommon.[103] It is that Christ the Logos, because he preexists in his divinity, is somehow more divine than human—as if what preexists is more his than what he becomes. Bathrellos finds support in this passage from Maximus:

> Thus even though we say 'one and two' of the same, we do not say these in the same way of this 'one and the same.' In one way, according to the principle of nature, [we say] 'two' of those things from which the union occurred. For we do not know God the Word as identical to His own flesh *by nature* [κατὰ τὴν φύσιν]. Yet in another way, according to the principle of hypostasis, we say 'one.' For we *have* known God the Word as identical to His own flesh *by hypostasis* [κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν]. Therefore we do not mindlessly fuse the natures into one hypostasis by refusing to speak of Christ's natural difference, lest we introduce mutual alteration between the Word and the flesh. Nor again do we insanely divide [Christ] into two self-subsistences, assigning difference to the very principle of hypostasis, lest we refuse our own salvation.[104]

Bathrellos rightly notes that Maximus here targets Apollinarian christology. While the Son is God "according to nature," he is man "according to hypostasis," not nature. But we should unlearn Bathrellos's lesson—"there is a dissimilarity between Christ and man [i.e. the body-soul analogy] due to the fact that *the person in Christ is identical only to the Logos*, who exists prior to his humanity"[105]—for, as we saw, Maximus senses the force of the anthropological analogy to lie in just the opposite point: even a human hypostasis *qua* hypostasis is no more or less identical to either of its natures, body or soul. Hypostasis's indifference removes any need to distinguish its different "aspects." It suffers no tension with any nature, certainly not with its own natures, and even less with itself. More serious still, "assigning difference to the very principle of hypostasis," as the

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[103] See, for instance, Richard Cross, "*Homo Assumptus* in the Christology of Hugh of St Victor: Some Historical and Theological Revisions," *JTS* 65.1 (2014): 62-77, esp. 74-77, for Duns Scotus's criticisms of Hugh's strong emphasis on the "identity" (not just sameness) of the Word with his flesh: since Christ came to be and the Word did not, "Christ and the Word are not identical" (Cross, "*Homo Assumptus*," 77).

[104] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 493b-c, my translation; cf. *Opusc* 24, PG 91, 147, which makes the same point.

[105] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 106, my emphasis.

last line here warns, seems to deny that Christ himself—that divine Son from eternity—is ever truly one with his humanity. Very God must be just as identical to his human nature as he is to his divine, "lest we refuse our own salvation."

The mode of union is not simply its product.[106] When Maximus denies the Word is human "according to nature" and yet is so united to his divinity, he means to deny identity with humanity occurs by a natural mode, not that the product itself is somehow less naturally human. The Word Incarnate is human by nature. Maximus very often calls Christ "double-natured,"[107] and thinks his unqualified identity with both is salvation.[108] This states the entire mystery of hypostatic identity, of the economy: "Christ is each according to nature."[109] In Christ the divine Son is no more divine than he is human, no more God than man, no more uncreated than created.

The tendency to think Christ's "person" (or an "aspect" of it) as some prior or deeper reality than his human nature actually explains, I think, one of Maximus's signatures: to the Neochalcedonian confession of Christ "out of two natures" (ἐκ δύο φύσεων) and "in two natures" (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν), he frequently appends the Antiochene phrase, "*is* two natures" (αἱ φυσεῖς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός).[110] By now we see why. In Christo-

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[106] More properly, the Son's own hypostasis is both mode and product. A supernatural mode of union (hypostatic union) generates a product, in and as *concrete reality*, which is nothing other than the mode that generated it. Again, this is possible only because the hypostasis, though *positive* (irreducible to nature), is still not, as some conceive it, "something alongside its own proper parts [ἄλλο τι τὸ ὅλον εἶναι παρὰ τὰ αὐτοῦ οἰκεῖα μέρη], from which and in which it consists" (*Opusc* 9; PG 91, 117c; my translation).

[107] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 468c; *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 252b; *Amb* 5.24; 10.57.

[108] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 468a-c, my translation: "the same is consubstantial with the Father according to divinity, and the same is consubstantial with us according to humanity, double in nature or essence. Thus He is mediator of God and human beings, and so it is necessary for Him to preserve the natural properties of the things mediated, to exist as both [τῷ ὑπάρχειν ἀμφότερα]."

[109] *Opusc* 9, PG 91, 117d, my translation.

[110] Pierre Piret, S.J., "Christologie et théologie trinitaire chez Maxime le Confesseur, d'après sa formule des natures «desquelles, en lesquelle et lesquelles est le Christ»," in *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*, eds. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1982), 215-22.; Madden, "Composite Hypostasis in Maximus Confessor," 183, notes its Antiochene provenance; Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 108, corrects Piret's claim

logic you cannot have absolute identity apart from absolute difference. Divine and human nature stand in no essential relation to one another, no tension or asymmetry; they have nothing natural in common at all. To effect their unqualified union, they must not. Hypostasis, itself a positivity which bears no natural relation to either nature—since it is itself no nature, of course, apart from its nature(s)!—is sufficiently indifferent to become their concrete identity while exerting not a modicum of pressure on either nature in the process. Failure to speak of the Word's simultaneous, unqualified identity as and of both natures—(NB: He *is* both, but not as some third "thing."[111] The Incarnation is not a case of transitive identity: it's not "A=B, B=C, therefore A=C," but "A [hypostasis]=B/C [natures]" where the "/" itself only obtains because there's nothing transferable in "A" as such to either "B" or "C" as such: therefore as both in *this* way, he is their "is" in a way transitivity simply cannot conceive)—this spells failure to speak most "properly" of the mystery of Incarnation.[112]

Natural and hypostatic logics enable each other. Nature never needs to answer for identity between different natures (especially absolutely different ones); hypostasis never for identity between concrete individuals (as with a crass "mixture"). Their ineffable discrimination within God himself—to come full circle—grounds the Son's ability, in his own hypostasis, to become the very ground of both concrete identity and essential difference between what he eternally is and what he becomes. So Christ is the ground,

that Maximus was the very first to formulate these three together into one phrase—it was Leontius of Byzantium—but notes too that Maximus was the first to make this "formula an oft-repeated way of referring to Christ."

[111] Cf. n. 106.

[112] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 573a; my translation: "For we recognize Him after the union as a whole of the parts that compose Him. For Christ has nothing else to show that He is than what He preserves and what we call Him—than the perdurance after the union of the parts that compose Him in His being. For not only is Christ *out of* these, but He is also *in* these, and what's still more proper to say, He *is* these [Οὐ μόνον γὰρ ἐκ τούτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τούτοις, καὶ κυριώτερον εἰπεῖν, ταῦτά ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός]."

possibility, and actuality (in the historical Incarnation) of three identities at once: [1] natural identity with Father and Spirit (divinity); [2] natural identity with human persons (humanity); [3] hypostatic identity in himself (second definition of hypostasis).[113] Hypostatic logic, properly distinguished from natural logic, emerges as the condition for the possibility of natural difference to exist at all. In his economy the Son himself "made the union and distinction of the extremes [οἷς τὴν πρὸς τὰ ἄκρα ἐποιεῖτο ἕνωσιν καὶ διάκρισιν]." The Son proved to be more himself, more one, exactly to the extent that he preserved natural difference *as* their singular identity: "By preserving [the natures]" his hypostasis "preserved itself, and by conserving them it conserves itself...if one ceases, the other is effaced in confusion."[114]

Balthasar called Maximus's Christ the (supposedly Hegelian) "identity of identity and nonidentity."[115] We can be more precise (and likely more Hegelian): Christ is the *hypostatic* identity of *natural* identity and *natural* difference. He himself, his very person, became an "is" otherwise unthinkable between created and uncreated nature, and yet his becoming that "is" is the ground and possibility of the most absolute natural difference. We might say that the Incarnation makes absolute natural difference thinkable for the first time in human thought. Hypostatic identity names the actuality, the fact of the very difference between God and man. If we were to get hasty and extend Christo-logic to creation itself, we might even say this: the Son's hypostatic identity manifests, *is*, the very mode of *creatio ex nihilo*.

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[113] *Opusc* 7, PG 91, 36-7: "In such a way that by this double nature, He is congenital by essence to the extremes and conserves the natural difference of His parts one from the other: by the unicity of the person, He has a perfect identity in His parts and possesses the hypostatic difference for His parts as single and unique, and, finally, He is perfect in both respects by natural and essential invariance, flawless regarding them, I mean [the parts that make up] the extremes; the Same at once God and man."

[114] *Opusc* 8, PG 91, 49-50, Ponsoye 160-1.

[115] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 122.

1.4 – Hypostatic identity generates natural difference

That bit of speculative haste invokes an exegetical dispute, albeit indirectly. The dispute concerns a concept, a single term, even, present in Maximus too: τὸ ἐνυπόστατος.[116] Behind the term lies a long and labyrinthine history, and a primarily theological one.[117] It first emerges, it seems, "in Christian circles in Origen's time or shortly before," chiefly in trinitarian controversy to emphasize the concrete reality or distinct subsistence of the Son and Spirit.[118] In the early development of trinitarian thought ἐνυπόστατος, ὑπόστασις, ἐνουσία, and οὐσία "were absolutely convertible"[119]: all meant to deny (against modalists) that the second and third divine persons *qua* distinct persons were "without hypostasis" (ἀνυπόστατος). At length the Word is described not merely as a λόγος προφορικός ("an expressed word") or λόγος ἐνδιάθετος ("an inner word"), but the ἐνυπόστατος Λόγος ("the really subsistent Word").[120]

Problems arise when pro-Chalcedonians, heirs to the Cappadocian-Chalcedonian legacy that distinguishes *ousia* and *hypostasis*, begin to employ the term ἐνυπόστατος to describe the metaphysical status of Christ's human nature. They did so to dissolve an already familiar objection raised by both Severans and Nestorians: since there is "no nature without hypostasis [ἀνυπόστατος]," Chalcedon's "two natures" entail two

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[116] See "An Analytic Appendix."

[117] Benjamin Gleede, *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος from Origen to John of Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 183.

[118] Gleede, *Development*, 17-19, who also notes that these earlier sources (esp. Origen) tend to link *enhypostatos* with certain christological passages in the NT (1 Cor 1.24, 30; Jn 1, 14.6; Heb 1.3) in order to combat modalism. U.M. Lang, "Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos: Church Fathers, Protestant Orthodoxy and Karl Barth," *JTS* 49.2 (1998): 635, sees that *enhypostatos* (as later in John Damascene), while never predicated of the Father, could be of both Son and Spirit (e.g. the spurious epistle of Pope Felix, *Collectio Sabbaitica VIII*, *Ep Felicis altera*; ACO III, 21.12-16); hence he wonders if even here a "locative" sense to the prefix intimated that Son and Spirit originate from Father—subsist "in" the Father, as it were—whereas the Father in no other.

[119] Gleede, *Development*, 41. For instance, Athanasius, *Ep ad Afros* 4.3 (AW II/8, 329): "Ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις οὐσία ἐστὶ, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο σημαινόμενον ἔχει ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν"—later an important passage for those denouncing the Chalcedonian discretion of *hypostasis* and *ousia*; cf. Gleede, *Development*, 54.

[120] E.g. Socrates, *H.E.* II.19; cf. Gleede, *Development*, 26-41.

hypostases.[121] From John Grammaticus on,[122] Neochalcedonians countered that since

Christ's humanity never had "subsistence" (τὸ ὑφεστηκέναι) or "distinct existence" (ἡ

ὑπόστασις) apart from the Word, the Word's own hypostasis just *is* his humanity's. His

humanity is indeed "not without hypostasis," but neither does it have its *own* (separate)

hypostasis. It is ἐνυπόστατος to the degree it subsists in the Word's hypostasis, but

ἀνυπόστατος in itself.[123]

But now *enhypostatos* means quite the contrary of what it meant in earlier

trinitarian theology: then it signified a hypostasis, a distinct subsistence in its own right

(Son and Spirit), here a nature or essence that has *no* distinct subsistence in itself, but in

another (Christ's human nature in his person). The dispute arises with this last claim.

Friedrich Loofs argued in 1887 that Leontius of Byzantium distinguished a hypostasis

from an enhypostatized essence in a novel way, namely in Aristotelian terms[124]: as

"second substance" is to "first substance," so stands the enhypostasized essence to its

hypostasis.[125] This implied that Christ's human nature, as *enhypostatos* (second *ousia*),

possessed a quasi-accidental ontological relation to Christ's person akin to an "essential

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[121] For the Severan use of this polemic, see Severus of Antioch, *Or. 2 ad Nephalium*, CSCO 119 [120], 16.11-15 [13.1-5], and Lang, "Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos," 636. A Nestorian can wield it the same way: cf. Leontius of Jerusalem, *Contra Nestorianos* II.14, PG 86, 1568a.

[122] John Grammaticus, *Apol*. IV.3-6, CCG 1, 55.

[123] Justinian, *Edictum rectae fidei*, Amelotti 144.29-146.12; idem, *Adv. Tria Capitula*, PG 86, 997b; and esp. the remarkable passage from Leontius of Jerusalem, *CN* II.14, PG 86, 1568a-c, for instance, ll.3-7: "καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐν ἰδιαζούσῃ ὑποστῆναι, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ τοῦ Λόγου ὑποστάσει ὑφεστηκέναι τὸ ἀνθρώπινόν φαμεν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἐξ ἀρχῆς· οὔτε μὴν ἁπλῶς τὴν τοῦ Λόγου νῦν ὑπόστασιν, ὡς Λόγου μόνον οὖσαν ὑπόστασιν νῦν οἴδαμεν· ἐπειδὴ σὺν τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ συνυφέστηκεν ἐν αὐτῇ τῶν ὁμουσίων ὁ Λόγος μετὰ τὴν ἄφραστον αὐτοῦ ἕνωσιν." Cf. too Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 436. These texts do *not* explicitly link ἐνυπόστατος with the idea that Christ's humanity subsisted only in his hypostasis. That's to say, the in-subsistence principle Loofs ascribes to Leontius of Byzantium is present here indeed, but not described with the precise term ἐνύποστατος (cf. Gleede, *Development*, 1).

[124] The locus classicus is Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 1, especially as (uncritically) paired with *Epil*. 8.

[125] Friedrich Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1887), 68.

quality."[126] It also implied that the activity of Christ's human nature, its existential integrity, was somehow "absorbed" (*aufnimmt*) into the divine, since its concrete actuality was dominated by the *divine* hypostasis as its sole primary substance.[127]

"One can hardly interpret Leontius worse than Loofs did"—thus thundered Grillmeier.[128] Inspired by Brian Daley,[129] and, as far as I can see, by a worry over a creeping monophysitism similar to what motivated earlier criticisms of Neochalcedonianism, Grillmeier proposes that *enhypostatos* as applied to Christ's flesh means simply "real" or "subsistent." Leontius and others, they argue, do not with this word proffer an account of *how* Christ's human nature subsisted, just *that* it did so, and never apart from Christ himself. The etymology of the prefix *en-* indicates (solely?) the contrary of the *an-*prefix, an alpha-privative, so that, say, while accidents are *anhypostata*—not really subsistent in themselves—the flesh of Christ is *enhypostatos*—concrete, real, subsistent.[130]

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[126] Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 68: "so wird hier offenbar, dass schon bei Aristoteles die ποιότητες οὐσιώδεις eine Mittelstellung einnehmen zwischen den Substanzen und Qualitäten.... An diesen Fehler [of judging essential qualities as still quasi-Platonic, self-subsisting "essences" only partially present in an individual] knüpft die Theologie unserers Verfassers an...."

[127] Cf. Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 67, who, though unable to detect in Leontius's own illustrations which of Christ's two natures is ἐνυπόστατον, seems nevertheless to expect that one has to be, and that this one would therefore be absorbed by the other.

[128] Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 198.

[129] Grillmeier, *Christ*, II/2, 194-5. Daley gave a communication on the topic in 1979, which he's yet to publish. He does, though tender the thesis in "'A Richer Union,' 241-3, and recently in the introduction to *Leontius of Byzantium*, 73-5.

[130] An awkward aspect of Grillmeier's and Daley's position comes in precisely this contrast, though, especially as it relates to Leontius: *per* earlier usage, *anhypostatos* names realities not subsistent *in themselves*, like accidents, and *enhypostatos* those that do subsist *in themselves*, like the Son and Spirit. But Leontius explicitly denies that enhypostatic natures—here Christ's humanity—subsists *in itself*, and reserves this definition exclusively for *hypostasis as opposed to enhypostatic nature* (*CNE* 1, PG 86, 1277d, Daley 132; *Epil*. 8, PG 86, 1945a-b, Daley 308). In other words, as already with the long philosophical tradition debating the in-subsistence of accidents and species in individuals, it's hard here to imagine that Leontius is *not* also intimating *modes* of subsistence; so Gleede, *Development*, 69-99. In fact, it's not entirely without warrant to read this very passage from Leontius as at least implying some sort of in-subsistence theory, since the major parallel evoked just after is the relation of figure to body: body is never "without figure," but that does not mean it's reducible to figure; it only means that figure is always found "*in* the body" (*CNE* 1, PG 86, 1280a, Daley 134-5). The obvious implication is that Christ's human

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I said this whole dispute concerns Maximus really but "indirectly." For two reasons. First, more recent scholarship has shown, decisively to my mind, that Daley's etymological argument about what the prefix *en-* must always mean is certainly overstated.[131] The single and magisterial monograph on the subject by Benjamin Gleede proves that Leontius did instigate the crucial change—a clear distinction between *enhypostatos* and *hypostasis*—which issued in what he calls the "distinction tradition." This tradition self-consciously linked the in-subsistence of Christ's humanity—that it began to exist only *in* his hypostasis—with the concept (and term) of that nature's *enhypostatic* existence. And, second, Maximus stands firmly in, indeed *exemplifies*, precisely this tradition. In this tradition "a translation [of ἐνυπόστατος] as 'hypostatically realised', 'enhypostatic' or 'enhypostasized' (as adopted especially by Maximus-scholars) would be preferable to the rather misleading 'hypostatical' or, even less precise, 'real.'"[132]

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nature, the *enhypostatos*, likewise only occurs *in* his hypostasis. It's especially significant that Leontius selects *figure* (τὸ σχῆμα): unlike "forms," which Platonists conceived having some sort of self-subsistence apart from finite individuals, figures, *precisely as essential properties of bodies alone* (not, say, of intelligible ideas), must subsist only and ever *in* bodies.

[131] Lang, "Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos," 633. Lang's article shows that Loofs's in-subsistence theory, as well as its explicit linkage to *enhypostatos*, is definitely assumed by John Damascene; see esp. *Dialectica fus.* 45, 17-22, discussed at Lang, *op. cit.*, 649-50. Another reason Daley's and Grillmeier's thesis fails, one not often noted, is that it would have us believe Leontius and his pro-Chalcedonian successors utterly failed to muster a convincing or even relevant argument against their immediate opponents: after all, the Nestorian second "hypostasis" that bore a human nature, and even the Severan "human quality" that perdured after the union—both of these could just as easily be "real" and "subsistent." That's to say, the whole point of distinguishing *hypostasis* from *enhypostatos* was to specify the *mode* of union and its concrete product, not to make the simple (and earlier) assertion *that* Christ's humanity possessed mere reality; cf. Leontius, *CNE* 1, and Maximus, *Ep* 15; PG 91, 557d-560a.

[132] Gleede, *Development*, 185. Lang, despite his own bid for John Damascene's originality here, already noticed that Maximus conceives the *enhypostatic* nature of Christ's humanity as precisely its singular in-subsistence in the Word, and therefore declared (operating under Daley's/Grillmeier's thesis about Leontius) that Maximus can "even be said to have anticipated the Loofsian misreading" (Lang, "Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos," 643 n. 60). Lang's and especially Gleede's work validates earlier Maximus scholarship (Perl, Larchet, Riou) against Törönen's uncritical acceptance of Daley's thesis, a thesis that, for the former, has been "conclusively argued" (101). I find Törönen's candor refreshing: he perceives that if the in-subsistence theory held in Maximus's christology, it would imply, as Perl claimed, that the mode of

More significant still, Gleede identifies two novelties in Maximus's own use of the term. The first has to do with its trinitarian meaning. He can occasionally mean it in an earlier, more traditional sense: the Word is "really, personally distinct."[133] But he also uses it with the same sense it carries in christology:

> For the Monad is truly a Monad: it is not the origin of the things that come after it, as if it had expanded after a state of contraction, like something naturally poured out and proliferating into a multitude, but is rather the *enhypostasized* being of the consubstantial Trinity [ἀλλ' ἐνυπόστατος ὀντότης ὁμοουσίου Τριάδος]. And the Trinity is truly a Trinity, not the sum of a divisible number....but the *enessentialized* existence of the tri-hypostatic Monad [ἀλλ' ἐνούσιος ὕπαρξις τριυποστάτου μονάδος]. The Trinity is truly a Monad, for such it is [ἐστίν]; and the Monad is truly a Trinity, for as such it subsists [ὑφέστηκεν], since there is one Godhead that is monadically and subsists trinitarianly [οὐσά τε μοναδικῶς καὶ ὑφισταμένη τριαδικῶς].[134]

Enhypostatos here refers to the divine, monadic, consubstantial *essence*. A crucial feature of the "distinction tradition," recall, was that the *enhypostatos* differs from *hypostasis* insofar as the former designates an οὐσία, what is common and universal *in* the hypostasis. So the two terms are "not convertible," as Maximus (following Leontius) said: hypostasis is all that nature is, not the reverse.[135] And the "tri-hypostatic Monad" has "existence" only as *enousios*, empowered and enacted as and through the consubstantial, divine essence.[136] That *enhypostatos* here responds to *enousios*: that the

[133] *Amb* 7.15: "would he not also know that the many logoi are the one Logos, seeing that all things are related to Him without being confused with Him, who is the essential and personally distinct Logos of God the Father [ἐνούσιόν τε καὶ ἐνυπόστατον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς Θεὸν Λόγον...." There may be some resonances here of Lang's point about the possibility intra-trinitarian origin implied in the prefix (cf. n. 118), but certainly of the older sense, "personally distinct *from/of* the Father." An exhaustive list of references at Gleede, *Development*, 141 n. 497.

[134] *Amb* 1.3, modified.

[135] *Opusc* 23, PG 91, 264a-b.

[136] Cp. *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 205b-c, where in a christological context Maximus says "the *enhypostasized* is clearly the *en-existenced*, and the *en-existenced* is what participates essential and natural existence [τὸ ἐνυπόστατον δηλοῖ τὸ ἐνύπαρκτον· ἐνύπαρκτον δὲ ἐστι τὸ οὐσιώδους καὶ φυσικῆς μετέχον ὑπάρξεως]." He means here to refute those who would take Christ's two activities to imply two *actors*. No, the power to act is inherent in nature, not in the hypostasis as such. Again, nature and hypostasis are

former refers to essence and the latter to hypostasis (three, of course)—just so Maximus manages to make christological and trinitarian terms *more* univocal than they already were in Neochalcedonian idiom.[137]

The second novelty constitutes a development of the in-subsistence theory itself. Maximus, Gleede observes, has a conspicuous penchant for λαμβάνειν ἐν when articulating the in-subsistence formula: Christ's flesh "takes" or "receives" subsistence or hypostasis in the very Word. And not only subsistence, but τὸ εἶναι or τὴν φύσιν: in the Word's hypostasis humanity receives not simply reality, but actualization as the nature it is.[138] More precisely, Christ's human nature received concrete existence in the Word's own subsistence, yes, but also its very origin or the principle by which it is what it is. In Mary the Word becomes the seed of his own conception and gestation, the existence and natural formation of his own humanity.[139]

> Thus, "though He was beyond being, He came into being," fashioning within nature *a principle of generation* and a *different* mode of birth [γενέσεως ἀρχὴν καὶ γεννήσεως ἑτέραν [Wis 7:5] τῇ φύσει δημιουργήσας], for He was conceived having become the seed of His own flesh, and He was born having become the seal of the virginity of the one who bore Him, showing that with respect to her mutually contradictory things truly exist together. For she herself is both virgin

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inseparable, but still distinct. Because these differ even in their inseparable and indifferent identity as *one*, it is yet possible for *one* hypostasis to possess *two* natures—and with these *two* powers corresponding to *two* activities. In the case of the Trinity the quantities are reversed, but the principle remains unchanged: there we have *three* hypostases that possess (in a unique manner, yes) *one* nature, and so three actors perform one act. In Christ one actor performs two acts. In both cases no actor acts except through nature, and no nature subsists except in hypostasis.

[137] Gleede, *Development*, 142: "This enables Maximus to apply the distinction between ὑπόστασις and ἐνυπόστατος also to trinitarian theology and to establish a univocal technical use of it in trinitarian and Christological contexts."

[138] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 553d; so too *Ep* 12, PG 91, 468a-b: "From her [i.e. Mary] He united flesh to Himself according to hypostasis, consubstantial with us, animated by a rational and noetic soul, not pre-hypostasized for even the twinkling of an eye, but in Himself, God and Word, that flesh received both 'to be' and 'to subsist' [ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Λόγῳ, καὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ὑποστῆναι λαβοῦσαν]. cf. Gleede, *Development*, 151.

[139] *Amb* 2.2: "The Word of God is whole, complete essence (for He is God), and He is whole, undiminished hypostasis (for He is the Son). Having *emptied Himself*, He became the *seed* of His own *flesh*, and being thus compounded by means of His ineffable conception, He became the hypostasis of the flesh He assumed"; cf. *Ep* 15, PG 91, 553d; *Ep* 19, PG 91, 344.

and mother, innovating nature by a coincidence of opposites, since virginity and childbearing are opposites, and no one would have imagined from nature their combination [ὧν ἐκ φύσεως οὐκ ἄν τις ἐπινοηθήσεται σύμβασις].[140]

The mode of union is the mode of both of the Son's generations, and both modes simply are him. Scarcely was there a starker reprisal of Chalcedonian symmetry. And yet this symmetry—of births, modes of existence, natures—as before, prove possible and actual only by and because of hypostatic identity. That is, *because* these attain identity solely in the singular hypostasis of the Word, they can *therefore* retain all their own, natural properties undiminished. Nature, and indeed the very origin which births it in both divine and human modes, never answers for its own subsistence or actuality: for it is only actualized in his hypostasis—only ever *enhypostatos*. As divine nature subsists *in* God, so human nature subsists *in* Mary. Rather, because it is so in God, so it is in Mary.[141]

So now we specify two elements of Maximian Christo-logic: in the Incarnation, hypostatic identity [1] enables and [2] generates absolute natural difference. There in Christ we perceive not just the "conjunction" or even "union" of natural extremes, but in fact "the generation of opposites [τῇ τῶν ἐναντίων γενέσει]."[142] Were these natures not hypostatically identical, neither they nor their opposition would exist at all.[143]

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[140] *Amb* 5.13, modified.

[141] Gleede, *Development*, 154: "In reinterpreting the 'property of sonship' as a mode of existence, the identity between Christ qua second hypostasis and qua hypostasis of the two natures becomes much more plausible, as it is not so much a second generation, clearly different from the first, which marks off Christ's hypostasis, but the formally divine actualisation of the human natural properties—the very same way of actualisation which also applies to the divine ones.... Maximus makes it absolutely clear that individuality cannot be constituted by one or several accidents… but only by a biographical process in its entirety constituted—according to Cappadocian premises—primarily by its origin."

[142] *Amb* 5.14.

[143] It's even true, though scandalous to some (Gleede, *Development*, 188; Lang, "Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos," 646), that the divine nature itself is *anhypostatos*. So *Opusc* 13.7, PG 91: "Just as you say one sole essence because of the consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity, and because of hypostatic alterity [you say] three hypostases, in the same way because of the essential alterity of the Word and the flesh, you say two essences, and by the fact that **each lacks its own proper hypostasis**, you say one sole hypostasis." Lang thinks the "damaging consequence" of this view (found too in the earlier *De sectis*, VII.2, PG 86, 1241b) is that it implies that even the divine nature did not subsist on its own from all eternity. Given the

1.5 – *Perichoresis in christology: a new mode of unifying natures in act*

But those two elements of Christo-logic remain quite formal. They specify that Christ is the generation and preservation of two incommensurable, natural principles, of their absolute difference *in principle*.[144] Natural principles, though, are the principles of natural activities.[145] So Christ's person possesses two natures, each with its own principle of activity. When he acts, doesn't he unfold two activities? And if two activities, doesn't this imply that Christ is two *in actuality*? Just here Neochalcedonianism felt a certain pressure to stay true to its Cyrillian convictions. Uthemann has rightly argued that monenergism and (soon after) monothelitism were understandable (though not inevitable) developments of Neochalcedonianism itself.[146] Maximus championed another possibility. And yet his was no simple rejection of monenergism. Maximus's alternative, also a signature contribution to christology proper, grew, I think, from a deep appreciation for what fundamentally motivated the insistence on "one activity." He, for the first time in

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Neochalcedonian commitment to univocity in trinitarian and christological concepts, that's precisely the point: there is no tetrad in the Trinity, therefore the Trinity itself grounds and exemplifies the logics of nature and hypostasis. Not even divine nature subsists in itself.

[144] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 546b-c, where Maximus admits that "certainly according to a certain principle and mode, because of the hypostatic identity, that is, the one hypostasis according to which there is no possible difference, Christ is one [πάντως κατά τινα λόγον τε καὶ τρόπον, διὰ τὴν ὑποστατικὴν ταυτότητα, ἤγουν τὴν μίαν ὑπόστασιν, καθ' ἣν διαφορὰν οὐ δύναται, ἓν ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός]." But the *logos* and *tropos* of this oneness are themselves *one* principle and mode—the Logos's own hypostasis (which is also a filial mode from eternity)—not, against Severans, one *natural* principle; in Christ abide two natural principles (546c-d); cf. *Ep* 15, PG 91, 572b; *Amb* 5.11; *Amb* 10.3; *Pyr* 35, PG 91, 297d-300a, *passim*.

[145] *Amb* 5.2, Hence the sense of a thing's *logos* as the natural *potential* of its actualization, as when λόγος responds to ἐνέργεια; cf. *Amb* 10.90.

[146] Karl-Heinz Uthemann, "Der Neuchalkedonismus als Vorbereitung des Monotheletismus: Ein Beitrag zum eigentlichen Anliegen des Neuchalkedonismus," *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997), 408, my emphasis: "Hier wird das eigentliche Anliegen der Monenergeten deutlich; sie wollen mit dem Begriff der ἕνωσις und darum der μία ὑπόστασις *mehr als nur einen formalen, unanschaulichen Sinn verbinden*. Damit stehen sie in der Wirkungsgeschichte des Neuchalkedonismus und seines Ringens um das Auffüllen des chalkedonischen Hypostasebegriffs." Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 53, disagrees with Uthemann because "there is no necessary connection between accepting that Christ has a divine hypostasis, on the one hand, and monothelitism [with monenergism implied] on the other," but Uthemann's claim implies only a real and conceivable (not a necessary) connection between Neochalcedonian one-hypostasis christology and these later heresies, with, as he argues, Maximus's dyothelite christology representing still another (413).

Christian thought, made the peculiar logic of *perichoresis* the summit of Christo-logic.[147]

This has not gone unnoticed.[148] What has, it seems, are this innovation's precise

metaphysical implications.

The monenergist impulse seems clear enough: since Christ is one person, he is

one agent, and a single agent enacts a single activity uniquely its own. Christ, though two

in principle, must be one *in actu*. Here lay Pyrrhus's concern. After a lengthy dispute

about Christ's wills, Pyrrhus, erstwhile patriarch of Constantinople, tenders a thesis about

the prior question of Christ's two activities (relevant, of course, since willing is a natural

activity of rational beings): Christ possessed one "hypostatic activity."[149] One person

entails one activity. Maximus rejects this, not least because it would require three

activities of the one Trinity (here again the trinitarian-christological univocity!).[150] He

then offers an alternative proposal outfitted with a venerable analogy: *in actu*, Christ's

activities unite in "their complete interpenetration into each other," like the burning cut

and the cutting burn of a red-hot blade.[151] Pyrrhus immediately, "But the *agent*, is it not

one?" Maximus concurs. A bit later Pyrrhus sharpens his criticism: "It does not

necessarily follow that since he operates dually, he has two activities."[152] But even in

union, Maximus follows, an activity must correspond to a nature, so that a single activity

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[147] An important inspiration for Maximus derives, of course, from the christological use of the term at Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep* 101, SC 208, 48 (translation from Harris, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 55, slightly modified): "Just as the natures are mixed, so also the names pass reciprocally (περιχωρουσῶν) into each other by the principle of natural co-affinity (συμφυίας)." But see Stermmer, "PERICHORESE," 17: "Zu einem tragenden theologischen Terminus wird περιχωρεῖν erst bei Maximus Confessor im 7. Jahrhundert."

[148] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 23-36; Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur*, 136-7; Stemmer, "PERICHORESE," 17-19; Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 57-9.

[149] *Pyr* 162.

[150] Something unthinkable after Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Ablabium*.

[151] *Pyr* 170, PG 91, 337c-340a; cf. *Ep* 19, PG 91, 345; *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 189d. Origen already likened the "red-hot sword" to the Word's Incarnation; cf. *Princ* 2.6.6. I discuss below how Maximus's use differs.

[152] *Pyr* 177, PG 91, 340b-c.

"dually" effected still implies a single (if composite) nature—an especially flagrant offense with respect to Christ's two natures, "since in general no mediator exists between the created and the uncreated."[153]

Pyrrhus pivots: "Do you not accept and agree with those who say that *the effect* of Christ's works *is one activity*?"[154] An evident motive: Pyrrhus wants to ensure that Christ's dual natures yet issue in one concrete reality, one actuality—in "the effect" (τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα).[155] Is Christ *really* one after all? Maximus notes a subtle distinction between "inner" and "outer" acts that appears to register the force of the underlying concern: "we are not discussing," he clarifies, "things external to Christ, but about things within Christ himself, that is, about the natural principle of Christ's essences, whether he was defective from the union or remained without defect."[156] The distinction is akin to Plotinus's doctrine of "double activity." An interior act perfects the very nature of the agent (or hypostasis), like thinking perfects intellectual nature; an exterior act is the separate effect issuing forth *from* that interior act, like walking on a beach presses spoors into the sand.[157] Maximus stresses the former: he wants to secure the perfect, undiminished actuality interior to each of Christ's natures. Their exterior effects are another matter.

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[153] *Pyr* 182, PG 91, 341a, Farrell slightly modified: "ἐπειδὴ μέσον κτιστῆς καὶ ἀκτίστου οὐδεμία ὑπάρχει τὸ σύνολον."

[154] *Pyr* 183, PG 91, 341b, my emphasis.

[155] Uthemann, "Der Neuchalkedonismus als Vorbereitung," 399, notes that Anastasius of Antioch preferred to conceive Christ's *energeiai* in terms of their "effect," and that this slips toward a monenergist emphasis on the (pre)dominance of divine activity in Christ. See too Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 7, PG 86, 1297c, Daley 162-3: "our dispute is rather about the product of union [τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος τοῦ ἐκ τῆς ἑνώσεως], and whether it is about things themselves [τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτῶν] or simply about the words referring to them."

[156] *Pyr* 184, PG 91, 341b-c, Farrell modified: "οὐ γὰρ περὶ τῶν ἔξω Χριστοῦ ἐστι ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Χριστῷ· τουτέστι περὶ τοῦ φυσικοῦ τῶν οὐσιῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγου, εἴτε ἐλλιπὴς ἐκ τῆς ἑνώσεως, εἴτε ἀνελλιπὴς μεμένηκε."

[157] Cf. Plotinus, *En*. V.4 [7] 2. The walking-to-footprint analogy comes from Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson, "Remarks on the Relation between the One and Intellect in Plotinus," in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 283.

Pyrrhus brandishes a second goad, one Maximus often felt—the putative weight of authority. Both Dionysius and Cyril seem to teach one activity in Christ: Dionysius speaks of "a certain new theandric activity" of Christ, Cyril of "the single, congenital [συγγενῆ] activity made manifest through both [natures]."[158] Now Maximus reprises his original proposal, that what's "new," in Dionysius's terms, and what effects this unprecedented "congenital activity," in Cyril's, is precisely the new mode in which Christ's two natures relate *in actu*, the new way they are qualified in hypostatic union:

> But if this newness [of Christ's "theandric activity"] is a qualitative one [ποιότης], then it does not mean one energy. Instead, it signifies both the new and the ineffable mode of the manifestation of Christ's natural activities—the ineffable manner of the *perichoresis* of Christ's natures into each other, and that manner of life that was proper to His humanity which, being foreign and paradoxical, is unknown to the nature of beings, and [signifies] the mode of exchange proper to the ineffable union.[159]

Maximus plainly admits that the *perichoresis* of Christ's natures (in context, these natures *in act*) "is unknown to the nature of beings,"—is, he indicates, something utterly unthinkable apart from "the ineffable union." But what exactly is so new about this "mode of exchange"?

In *Opusculum* 5, a short but suggestive text, Maximus registers and rejects three conciliatory proposals of the monenergists, three ways, that is, to confess Christ's activities were in a certain sense "one and two"[160]: [1] divine activity overwhelms and dominates the human; [2] divine activity uses the human as "an instrument"; [3] there is

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[158] *Pyr* 186-9; cf. *Opusc* 7, PG 91, 85d-88a; *Opusc* 8, Ponsoye 163-4; *Amb* 5.19. Cf. Dionysius, *Ep* 4 (*ad Gaium*), Heil and Ritter, 161.

[159] *Pyr* 192, PG 91, 345d-348a, Farrell modified: "Εἰδὲ ποιότης ἐστὶν ἡ καινότης, οὐ μίαν δηλοῖ ἐνέργειαν, ἀλλὰ τὸν καινὸν καὶ ἀπόρρητον τρόπον τῆς τῶν φυσικῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνεργειῶν ἐκφάνσεως, τῷ ἀπορρήτῳ τρόπῳ τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλας τῶν Χριστοῦ φύσεων περιχωρήσεως προσφόρως, καὶ τὴν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον αὐτοῦ πολιτείαν, ξένην οὖσαν καὶ παράδοξον, καὶ τῇ φύσει τῶν ὄντων ἄγνωστον, καὶ τὸν τρόπον τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀπόρρητον ἕνωσιν ἀντιδόσεως."

[160] Marek Jankowiak and Phil Booth, "A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," *TOHMC*, 64.

one composite activity, the divine and human functioning as parts. The last first, and quickly. Maximus retorts that a "composed activity" carries the same absurdities as a "composed nature," since the former derives from the latter: it would be "simultaneous" and "involuntary," and it would itself be a *species* of activity that other individuals of that same composed nature would perform ("a plethora of Christs").[161] Of the second Maximus asks: this instrumental causality, is it natural or fabricated? If natural, then it would be "synchronous" (σύγχρονον) "like body and soul." That is, as with Severus's "composed nature," we'd have to say that neither agent nor instrument ever existed apart from one another.[162] If fabricated, Maximus sees only Nestorianism or Apollinarianism: if the two activities are not unified *naturally*, then the agent and instrument either exist in relative separation from each other as wholes (Nestorius), or else in a whole where the agent assumes the role of superior over the governed and inferior, so that while "this [instrument] is not always moved," it yet "appears to be taken up and moved by the hand of the actor" (Apollinarius).[163]

It's in his rejection of the first proposal, I think, that Maximus betrays his fundamental conviction about the unity of Christ's two activities. Even if the divine activity dominated the human in Christ, that divine activity would still itself suffer some degree of extrinsic qualification. The relation between the dominating and the dominated, Maximus observes, "has to do with things relative to another [τῶν Πρός τι]," and such things "always introduce, together, in themselves, things [by nature] mutually implicative

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[161] *Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64d-65a.
[162] *Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64c: "then we ourselves would call divine nature created, or the body uncreated."
[163] *Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64c.

[τὰ ἀντιδιαιρούμενα]."[164] This is an Aristotelian point. Aristotle commences his disquisition on the category of relation by noting that "all relatives are said having correlatives [ἀντιστρέφοντα],"[165] and, after discussing a number of examples, concludes that such correlatives naturally come into being "simultaneously."[166] The basic issue, unremitting here as ever, is that even natural dominance *in actu* still conceives a *natural* relation, as if the two activities were set in a certain tension, the divine claiming a superior degree of being what both at some (specific or generic) level are.[167] Asymmetrical relation is still a natural relation; indeed, it *must* be if degrees of dominance be discerned at all. Once again, Maximus knows no such asymmetry in Christ:

> And then, if you speak of one activity according to domination, such that the human [activity] is denied because it is dominated, you introduce *diminution to both* [μείωσιν αὐταῖς εἰσάγετε]. For the one that dominates is always also itself among suffering things, since it too is dominated by the dominated [καὶ αὐτὸ γὰρ κρατεῖται ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπικρατουμένου]. Even if it's to a lesser degree, the [dominating] is yet certainly dominated, just as gold, for example, dominates the silver or the copper alloyed with it: here it is itself dominated, even if to a lesser extent... since this has to do with *the degree to which it has been mixed* [ὅτι κατά τὴν ποσότητα τὴν προσμιγεῖσαν].[168]

What is new in Christ's actual existence, then, is this: two incommensurable natures (*logoi*), bearing their proper powers (*dynameis*) and activities (*energeiai*), which indeed express their proper *modes* of being (*tropoi*)—all of these are found in a singular and real identity (*hypostasis*), and in such a manner (*perichoresis*) that they perdure

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[164] *Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64a.

[165] Aristotle, *Cat*. VII, 6b29.

[166] Aristotle, *Cat*. VII, 7b15: "τὰ πρός τι ἅμα τῇ φύσει εἶναι." Cf. Roueché, "Handbook," 96 (=262. ll. 178-9).

[167] Hence the passive sense of ἀντιδιαιρέω, here "τὰ ἀντιδιαιρούμενα" or "mutually-implicative," which means "to be opposed as the members of a *natural* classification" (LSJ, s.v.); see Aristotle, *Cat.* XIV, b34.

[168] *Opusc* 5, PG 91, 64a-b, my translation.

utterly "without diminution," untarnished and unqualified *in se* even as they interpenetrate *in re*.

This last is perhaps most astonishing against the backdrop of Neoplatonic metaphysics. Christo-logic must finally reject one standard account of "vertical causality" (which obviously funds the monenergist proposals here), in two ways: in Christ, unlike in Neoplatonic emanation, [1] higher and lower modes of activity interpenetrate each other *in both directions*, and yet [2] remain *perfectly whole* in their natural (interior) power, act, and mode.

Neoplatonism could never abide such confusion. Plotinus's doctrine of "double activity," a valiant attempt to combine Aristotelian and Platonic logics of act (horizontal and vertical, respectively), proscribes any symmetrical penetration between higher and lower level of being.[169] Asymmetry, sure. The classic problem of participation just was the problem of how *distinct* existences might ultimately be one, and how that One reality, whatever and however it be, could be wholly present to the manifold.[170] But as Proclus insists near the start of his *Elements of Theology*, although the One is wholly present to all as the very unity of the manifold, each instance of the manifold is itself "both one and not-one."[171] Higher beings, superior causes (and certainly the One), are "self-sufficient in essence and activity," and by that very self-sufficiency emanate inferior existences that depend on the higher for "completeness."[172] The essence or nature of every effect

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[169] Cf. Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation into the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 27-44.

[170] Plato, *Parm*. 131b-c (the problem of the Sail Cloth); Plotinus, *En*. VI.4-5 (basically a commentary on the *Parm*., on the One's undiminished omnipresence to all things, even to body). Cf. A.C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 98-110; and Gurtler M. Gurtler, "Plotinus and the Platonic *Parmenides*," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 32.4 (1992): 443-57.

[171] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 2, Dodds 3.

[172] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 9, Dodds 10-11: "Πᾶν τὸ αὔταρκες ἢ κατ' οὐσίαν ἢ ἐνέργειαν κρεῖττόν ἐστι τοῦ μὴ αὐτάρκους ἀλλ' εἰς ἄλλην οὐσίαν ἀνηρτημένου τὴν τῆς τελειότητος αἰτίαν."

(pre)exists in its cause "in a primary mode" (πρώτως), and in this effect "in a secondary mode" (δευτέρως). Hence no effect—with its proper nature and activity—is ever simply identical to the cause, lest there be no discernible procession at all. But, and here lies the crucial matter, it's also impossible that there be "nothing in common or identical in both," lest the effect "not arise from [the cause's] existence."[173] What makes an effect an effect is that it possesses a nature and power identical to its cause, but in a more determinate, lesser mode. Hence it is "like" its cause.[174]

So *modal asymmetry* characterizes the entire structure of vertical causality: the whole cause obtains in its effect in the effect's proper mode (procession), but never is the whole effect *qua* effect in the whole cause—since, of course, the whole effect is always in the whole cause "in a primary mode" (remaining), and, should it return to that whole cause, would simply *be* the cause itself, assume its proper mode (reversion).[175] Hence Iamblichus, in reply to Porphyry's aversion to the idea that certain gods are assigned certain locales or elements, repurposes the asymmetrical structure of participation in order to defend theurgical uses of finite media (certain temples, certain words, certain materials, etc.). Just as sunlight "proceeds throughout the totality of existence" yet

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[173] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 18, Dodds 20-1. So arises Proclus's famous three moments of participation: τὸ ἀμέθεκτον ("the unparticipated," the superior cause in its proper mode), τὸ μετεχόμενον ("the participated," the whole presence of the superior cause in the effect according to the effect's proper mode), τὸ μετέχον ("the participating," the effect *qua* distinct/proceeded from what it has identical to its superior cause); cf. Proclus, *El. Theol.*, props. 23-4, Dodds 26-9. See too Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 150-1, for the necessary "vertical" and "horizontal" orders of existence (hypostases).

[174] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, props. 75, 77, 78; cf. Iamblichus, *De myst*. I.18; Dionysius, *DN* 5.2. I refer here to an idea already developed in Plotinus, that vertical causation consists in the limitation of a higher, interior act by (or in the mode of) a lower power. See Gary M. Gurtler, "Plotinus on the Limitation of Act by Potency," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 7 (2009): 1-15.

[175] Iamblichus, *De myst*. I.19 Proclus, *El. Theol.*, props. 66-74.

remains in its own prior mode, so too with the divine nature, which, admittedly, stands in

"no relation of symmetry" to its participants below.[176] More:

> In respect of entities which are homogeneous in essence and potency, or indeed of the same species or genus, it is possible to conceive of some type of encompassing or direct control; but with regard to such beings as are completely and in all respects transcendent, how in this case can one properly conceive of any *reciprocal interchange*, *or total interpenetration*, or circumscription of individuals, or encompassing of localities, or anything of the sort?[177]

And yet the Incarnation discloses just this: the divine Son's hypostatic identity

with a nature infinitely different from his own divinity generates a lower (human) nature

with its native powers, and when he acts through both his divine and human natures—

precisely because *he* is the "is" of both in power *and act*—these otherwise

incommensurable activities penetrate one another *symmetrically and wholly*.[178] In fact

Dionysius, as Maximus reads him, precluded the possibility of understanding the

Incarnation in terms of vertical causality and so cracked the door onto a deeper

perception of that event:

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[176] Iamblichus, *De myst*. I.9, Dillon 40-1: "εἰ γὰρ οὐδείς ἐστι λόγος οὐδὲ σχέσις συμμετρίας οὐδὲ οὐσίας τις κοινωνία οὐδὲ κατὰ δύναμιν ἢ ἐνέργειαν συμπλοκὴ πρὸς τὸ διακοσμοῦν τοῦ διακοσμουμένου...."

[177] Iamblichus, *De myst*. I.9, Dillon 40-1: "Πρὸς μὲν γὰρ τὰ ὁμοφυῆ κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ἢ δύναμιν ἢ καὶ ὁμοειδῆ πως ὄντα ἢ καὶ ὁμογενῆ δύναταί τις περίληψις ἢ διακράτησις ἐπινοεῖσθαι· ὅσα δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐξῃρημένα τοῖς ὅλοις παντελῶς, τίς ἂν ἐπὶ τούτων **ἀντιπερίστασις ἢ δι᾽ ὅλων διέξοδος** ἢ μεριστὴ περιγραφὴ ἢ κατὰ τόπον περιοχὴ ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων ἐπινοηθείη ποτ᾽ ἂν ἐν δίκῃ;" Cf. too Plato, *Tim*. 52c-d, cited at Chapter 2, n. 63.

[178] Christians, of course were attracted to the Stoic notion of "interpenetration" or "mixture," which with them was but a strange bit of *physics*: two bodies can occupy one another in the same space and time and still preserve their proper characteristics; so Peter Stemmer, "PERICHORESE: Zur Geschichte eines Begriffs," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 27 (1983): 10-13. Neoplatonists, though, appropriated this term purely to *intelligible* realities that enjoy an incorporeal indivisibility; so L. Abramowski, "συνάφεια und ἀσύγχυτος ἕνωσις als Bezeichnung für trinitarische und christologische Einheit," in *Drei christologische Untersuchungen* (1981), 70: "Dies ist also die 'geziemende' Weise, von Einheit auf der Ebene des Geistigen zu sprechen." Cf. Proclus, *In Parm*, Cousin 754; idem, *El. Theol*., prop. 176 (on intellectual forms in intellect), Dodds 154-5: these "all interpenetrate all [φοιτᾷ πάντα διὰ πάντων]," are "mutually implicit, interpenetrating one another in their entirety [ὁμοῦ ἐστι καὶ ἐν ἀλλήλοις, ὅλα δι᾽ ὅλων φοιτῶντα ἀδιαστάτως]." Stoics and Neoplatonists alike conceive the logic of *perichoresis* only among entities on the same, horizontal, metaphysical plane; they simply pick different planes. So when Maximus (following Nazianzen) applies *perichoresis* to Christ's two natures, he's doing something unparalleled: he makes *perichoresis* a relation between the cause and the effect, the divine and the human, the superior and the inferior, God and man.

'How,' you ask, 'is Jesus, who is beyond all things, ranked together with all men at the same level of essential being?' But here He is not called 'man' insofar as He is cause of men, but as being that which in the entirety of its essence is truly man.[179]

Note the stress on *entirety* of essence (κατ' οὐσίαν ὅλην). Maximus does, and then takes the crucial step from whole essence to whole power and act: "The only valid proof that this 'essence' is present in its 'entirety'...is its natural constitutive power, which one would not be mistaken in calling a 'natural activity,' properly and primarily characteristic of the nature in question."[180]

How does this surpass the logic of vertical causality? Recall: because the Word's hypostasis bears divine nature, power, and activity from eternity; and because this very hypostasis is the "is" that generates his own human nature with its own power and activity; and because he is both at once—therefore he himself is the downward emanation, as it were, that causes or generates the inferior mode proper to his human nature *in actu*. His own higher power (divine) is present to his own lower power (human) in a way that requires no natural mediation whatever.[181] In Christ divinity and humanity *each retain its own mode* in the same, positive identity of his hypostasis. That hypostasis, precisely because it is both positive and yet not a *tertium quid* alongside the natures, relieves both natures of any contrast, any tension, any asymmetrical ratio, any pressure for one mode to give way to another in order for distinctive actualities to be. The vertical, asymmetrical relation of cause and effect implies "a shallow difference," not the absolute

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[179] Dionysius, *Ep* 4.

[180] *Amb* 5.2.

[181] *Amb* 5.20, slightly modified: "If, then, the mode of union [ὁ τῆς ἑνώσεως τρόπος] preserves the principle of distinction, the expression of the saint is a circumlocution...since in nature and in quality the essential principle of the united natures is in no way diminished [μεμείωται] by the union. Nonetheless it is not, as some would have it, 'by the negation of the two extremes that we arrive at an affirmation' of something in the middle, for there is no kind of intermediary in Christ that could be the positive remainder after the negation of two extremes." Constas, vol. 1, 476 n. 18, provides the citation, which comes from Pyrrhus's *Dogmatic Tome*, ACO II 2, 2, 608.

natural difference enabled by hypostatic identity.[182] The sole mediator of Christ's natures

is Christ's own hypostasis, and since his mediating hypostasis *is* their mutual identity,

they are immediately present to and in one another, in each's entirety.[183] Again

commenting Dionysius:

> "And in a manner beyond man, he truly became man," since he maintained the modes (which are above nature), along with the principles (which are according to nature), united and unimpaired. The conjunction of these was beyond what is possible, but he for whom nothing is impossible became their true union [ἀληθὴς γενόμενος ἕνωσις], and was the hypostasis in neither of them exclusively, in no way acting through one of the natures in separation from the other, but in all that he did he confirmed the presence of the one through the other, since he is truly both.[184]

1.6 – Incarnation: event discloses logic, logic applies solely to fact

Daley characterizes Leontius of Byzantium's distinctive approach to christology: the task

is not to scrutinize divinity or humanity "in themselves," unmoored in abstraction, but

rather "to look at the 'fact' of Christ, as faith perceives him—the fact of a single

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[182] See *Ep* 12, PG 91, 472d-473b, my translation. Here Maximus openly rejects "the mere mention of difference" exactly because it can imply, as vertical causality often does, a simple *modal* contraction or difference of *one* essence. This passage is worth quoting in full: "Necessarily, however certain things differ, there lies every [sort of] difference. And where the possibility of difference is perceived, there certainly exists the things that differ. For there are such things that in a certain way indicate one another. Thus causes and effects [τὰ αἴτια καὶ τὰ αἰτιατὰ] refer to one another as they are perceived to have the same essence. For if the differing essence, *qua* cause, produces in Christ the difference of the natures from which He is constituted, then certainly the difference emerges clearly as an effect of the natural otherness of the things united, that is, as [if] from a particular cause. Indeed it is natural, as I said, for such things to indicate one another, such that if one is referenced, this always confesses by necessity the other too; or one denied, the other does not appear either. Therefore it is necessary to say 'two,' lest we introduce a shallow difference [ἵνα μὴ ψιλὴν τὴν διαφορὰν εἰσάγωμεν]. And it's for this reason alone that we use number: the manifest difference of the things concurring remained preserved after the union, though not [a difference] of things divided. In this way [we have] an easier and truer semantic expression for disclosing the difference of the concrete realities rather than 'confirming' these realities by the mere mention of 'a difference.'"

[183] This explains the subtle but profound way Maximus modifies the comparison of the two activities of body and soul to Christ's divine and human activities. Unlike the monenergist proposal, where the soul's act instrumentalizes the body's, Maximus specifies that the Son first *becomes* the power of the inferior nature, and *then* actualizes it in its own right. Again the point is to remove any *natural* mediation; So *Amb* 5.8 (slightly modified): "And He did these things...moving willingly the assumed nature that truly had become and is called His own, in the way that the soul independently and naturally moves the body that is native to it [αὐτουργικῶς ψυχῆς δίκην φυσικῶς τὸ συμφυὲς σῶμα κινούσης], or to speak more precisely, He Himself, without change, truly became what human nature is, and in actual fact fulfilled the economy on our behalf."

[184] *Amb* 5.17, slightly modified.

individual's being both God and a man—and to reflect on the 'mode of union'."[185] So too for Maximus.[186] When Paul Blowers appropriates Jean-Luc Marion's idea of "the saturated phenomenon" in order to describe "the saturating power of revelation," he means, I think, that the concrete *event* of Christ so overwhelms us with revelatory brilliance that only that event could have unraveled the mystery which, *in* its very revelation, proves still darker to our gaze.[187]

Hence a final "feature" of Maximus's Christo-logic, one, though, that does not quite form a last link in the logical chain. It's more a feature of the whole logic. It is this: because we had first to apprehend the peculiarity of Christ's two activities to glimpse the peculiarity of the person behind them—and indeed to perceive the whole "mode of union" which was for us "new"[188]—then the logic derived from this event must be as peculiar as the event itself. Maximus thinks that prior to the fact of the historical Incarnation very little could have been known about how God might realize the end of the universe, which is union with him. Only at the event of Christ's Transfiguration did Moses and Elijah (and so all who came before) first learn not just *what* and *how* union occurs, but that this very *what* and *how* was, prior to the Christ facing them, itself shut up in impenetrable mystery:

> [Moses and Elijah learned] that the fulfillment of God's ineffable plan for the
> universe, contained within His divine dispensations [ἐπ' αὐτῇ θείων οἰκονομιῶν],

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[185] Daley, "'A Richer Union,'" 261 and 245. Cf. Leontius of Byzantium, *CNE* 7, PG 86, 1297c, Daley 162; *Epil* 8, PG 86, 1940b-c, Daley 300-1. In both texts "product" translates ἀποτέλεσμα—the very thing Pyrrhus sought to force into a monenergist framework during his dispute with Maximus.

[186] A major difference between them, I think, comes only in the degree to which each thinker applies reflection on the fact of Christ to the fact of the whole world. This I discuss in ch. 2.

[187] Paul M. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World*, 136-7; see too his, "The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ as 'Saturated Phenomenon' and as Key to the Dynamics of Biblical Revelation in St. Maximus the Confessor," in *What is the Bible? The Patristic Doctrine of Scripture*, eds. Matthew Baker and Mark Mourachian (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 83-101.

[188] *Amb* 5.13; *Amb* 7.37 *Pyr* 192, PG 91, 345d-348a.

was completely beyond the comprehension of beings. All that could be known was His great providence and judgment, through which the universe is led in an orderly manner to an end [τέλος] known in advance only to God. No one else knew what it would be, or how it would take place, or what form it would take, or when it would occur; the only ones who in truth knew simply that it *would* take place were the saints.[189]

The very incomprehensibility of God's union with the world was incomprehensible before Christ.

Christo-logic does not amount to an informed guess about the nature of things, their beginning and end. Its necessary source is the event of God's Incarnation. When, for instance, he was seen strolling atop the water, speaking a cure, or, above all, dead and resurrected[190]—only when we behold the peculiar mode of these whole and simultaneous and interpenetrating activities proper to incommensurable natures, only then are we granted intellectual vision[191] into the logic of God's own identity with what he is infinitely not by nature. And so Maximus ceaselessly proclaims revelation of Christ's person comes *through* his parts: "he revealed himself in the unicity of his person...by the personal identity of his own parts."[192]

> What and who will He be known to be—He who is not subject to change—if this could not be confirmed by the works He performs naturally? And how will He be confirmed in His oneness—as out of and in and indeed as [the natures]—if He remained motionless and without activity?[193]

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[189] *Amb* 10.82; cf. *Amb* 7.37, *Amb* 10.49, *QThal* 22 and 60. See ch. 2.

[190] *Amb* 4.8.

[191] Faith, I note, is not ultimately separate from intellectual insight, since for Maximus perfected faith is "the true knowledge" (γνῶσις ἀληθὴς); cf. *CT* 1.9, PG 90, 1085c-d (cp. *Amb* 10.2). See my, "Both Mere Man and Naked God," 125-6.

[192] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 556b, my translation: "ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα κατ' ἄκρον προσωπικῇ ταυτότητι τῶν οἰκείων μερῶν διαπαντὸς ἐνιζόμενον." See too *Ep* 12, PG 91, 286: "we know that he is through his parts"; *Opusc* 8, PG 91, 49.

[193] *Amb* 5.12, slightly modified: "Τί τε καὶ τίς ὑπάρχων γνωσθήσεται, μὴ πιστούμενος οἷς ἐνήργει φυσικῶς, ὅπερ ἐστὶ μὴ τρεπόμενον; Πῶς δὲ πιστώσεται καθ' ἓν τῶν ἐξ ὧν, ἐν οἷς τε καὶ ἅπερ ἐστὶν ἀκίνητος μένων καὶ ἀνενέργητος;"

Hypostatic identity is an event. The identity of the Son's hypostasis with natures uncreated and created, that identity lived out in time and space, *in concreto*—precisely there first dawned the real identity and difference of created and uncreated nature. Should you want to penetrate the mystery of God's creation, you must do so by looking upon the mystery of God's Incarnation. (That last implication, at any rate, will occupy us next chapter.)

The event is the singular "mode of the Lord's activities," his earthly existence. We perceive Christo-logic through this fact, in this order: activities reveal powers, powers reveal natures, natures reveal an ineffable and previously unthought identity between two realities that, on the level of nature, remain ever and absolutely different.[194] The concrete "mode of exchange" Christ effects within himself is the very mode he is from eternity, and so his historical acts ultimately disclose *him*, his person.[195]

And, to complete the revolution of Christo-logic, what's finally dazzling about him is that he is and in this event becomes the only real and absolute identity of absolute (natural) difference. This is why, even for Maximus the Greek, the interpenetration of cross (death) and resurrection (life) reveal the deepest truth about the mystery of God's relation to the world. Precisely there you *must* say "suffering God," in the most intensely literal sense. Precisely there, on the cross, you *must* say "God suffered" and "died," for, as Cyril and Gregory Nazianzen knew, just here the truth of the Word's identity to both natures strains most. Here too, at length, is where we learn to differentiate person from

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[194] *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 109, Ponsoye 229: "For it is not possible, divine or human nature, to perceive a difference outside of their essential activity. For that which defines a reality is properly the **logos** of its **essential power**. This latter removed, so too vanishes **the subject**. That's why we recognize them naturally conserved in the incarnate Word. One shows itself through the projection of divine [traits] into the flesh, the other [by the projection of the flesh] into His sovereign **power**. In this way we recognize the **natures too**, out of which the essential **activities** exist, through these [activities]."
[195] *Amb* 5.24; *Pyr* 28-31, 192.

nature in their respective positivity, inseparability, and indifference—for the divine

nature did not die, but *God* did:

> Saint Gregory said these things so that we might not out of ignorance ascribe the properties of the person to nature [τὰ τῆς ὑποστάσεως κατηγοροῦντες...τῆς φύσεως] and, like the Arians, unwittingly worship a God who by nature is susceptible to suffering.[196]

The basic discretion between hypostasis and nature demanded by Chalcedon was itself only revealed in the "fact of Christ," above all in the event where death and life interpenetrated in the one God. And from that discretion the entire logic followed.

1.7 – Conclusion

"The Incarnation to Maximus means precisely the hypostatic union of divine and human nature."[197] Undoubtedly. This chapter tried to specify further what this union means and entails. It did so by identifying three elements or moments in Maximus that together articulate a "Christo-logic." They are:

1. *Hypostatic identity* is the only real sameness differing natures can attain.

2. *Generation* of created nature and its very difference from the uncreated comes in this hypostatic identity.

3. *Perichoresis* is the mode of relation between these incommensurable natures in act.

A fourth "feature" is that these three elements form a *logic* known only from an *event*. That event was the historical Incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, who, in and as himself, actualized all three in a single earthly existence. So:

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[196] *Amb* 2.4.
[197] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 21.

*4. Objective Christo-logic becomes subjectively grasped only through its singular actualization, above all in the Son's death and resurrection.

On Maximus's own terms, therefore, I think it misleading to describe an event as "an Incarnation" or to call some metaphysical doctrine "christological" unless it actually bears the same logic as the very event which disclosed that peculiar logic. If, to take a clear example, Tollefsen (or Balthasar) is right that when Maximus describes the cosmos as divine Incarnation he's simply indulging in a bit of "metaphor"[198]; and if in fact this metaphor signifies exactly the vertical causality whose validity Maximus *rejects* in christology proper—then Maximus's statements depicting creation as Incarnation would appear to be not only metaphorical, but quite obfuscating.

They might be. It remains for me to argue the contrary. That requires investigating whether Maximus's "Christo-logic" really appears in his cosmology, in his understanding of creation. So the following chapters correspond to specific elements in the Christo-logic: if Maximus inscribes creation with *this* logic, the "is" in "God *is* world" must signify [1] the Word's hypostatic (not natural) identity to created nature, which [2] generates the principles (*logoi*) and corresponding powers of all creatures—so chapter 2. Then these creatures would be destined for [3] a *perichoretic* union of their own creaturely modes and activities with that of God's—so chapter 3. Then, finally, the entire logic of creation—protology and eschatology—must be [*4] just as peculiar *an event* as the historical Incarnation itself, or even, perhaps, creation must be that very event—so a future study. As a question: does the peculiarity of Christo-logic, disclosed in a particular event at history's middle, really describe the peculiar onto-logic at history's beginning and end?

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[198] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 67, 80, 135; for Balthasar, see Cyril O'Regan, "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval: Post-Chalcedonian Symphonic Theology," *Gregorianum* 77.2 (1996): 241.

Chapter 2

The Beginning: *Logoi*, pt. 1 — Word Becomes World

Introduction (2.1) – Unqualified descriptions of creation as Incarnation (2.2) – First qualification: no natural mediation between God and world (2.3) – Second qualification: the Logos becomes logoi*, not ideas (2.4) – Third qualification: the* logoi *of created hypostases (2.5) – The Word proceeds: one act, two modes (2.6) – Conclusion (2.7)*

Chapter contention

The peculiarities in Maximus's protology or account of *creatio ex nihilo*[1] correspond to the first two elements of Christo-logic. The Word [1] becomes hypostatically identical to the causative principles (*logoi*) of all created nature, and so [2] generates created nature.

And so this chapter attempts to interpret: "*The Word of God*, *very God*, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and *in all things*."

2.1 – Introduction

"The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and in all things."[2] I aim in this chapter and the next to argue that this assertion means what it says. And so I try to trace how it shapes Maximus's distinctive view of God's creation of the world. I do so by reading Maximus's doctrine of the *logoi*—a

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[1] It's true that not every protology provides a doctrine of creation from nothing, or, at least, one need not imply the other (as they don't in Origen, for instance, though he has both). For reasons I hope will become clear as this chapter progresses, these two cannot be separated in Maximus (cf. *Amb* 7.16, where they intertwine). Not only, I mean, does Maximus's protology provide a Christian doctrine of creation, but creation from nothing itself betrays a distinctive logic. This chapter aims to describe this logic as Christo-logic, as Maximus himself indicates (*inter alia*) at *QThal* 22 (CCSG 7.141): beginning, middle, and end are one ultimately because "our Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning, middle, and end of all past, present, and future ages."

[2] *Amb* 7.22, PG 91, 1084c-d, my translation: "Βούλεται γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος καὶ Θεὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐνσωματώσεως ἐνεργεῖσθαι τὸ μυστήριον."

doctrine Andrew Louth has called a "lonely meteorite" in the Christian tradition[3]—as the metaphysical inscription of the Christo-logic detailed last chapter. The *logoi* or metaphysical "principles" of all things define, generate, and sustain every conceivable difference and identity in creation, from the integral identity and proper difference of an individual subject (or hypostasis) to the arboreal network of generic and specific unities and differentiae (or natures).[4] Of each being and the whole cosmos, then, the *logoi* disclose the beginning and end of God's creative act. So we can approach the *logoi* from two distinct (though inseparable) vantages: protologically, they describe God's creation of the world from nothing; eschatologically, God's perfection of the world—its deification. This chapter treats the former, the next the latter.

I argue this chapter's contention—that the first two elements of Christo-logic explain the (rather peculiar) protological role of the *logoi*—in three basic steps. First, I open with several passages where Maximus describes divine creation as divine Incarnation; the identification is not my own (sec. 2.2). Then I challenge the adequacy of (especially Platonic) "participation" to do justice to Maximus's view of creation. Maximus does speak of participation, and nearly all modern commentators rest content to

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[3] Andrew Louth, "The Reception of Dionysius in the Byzantine World," in *Re-Thinking Dionysius the Areopagite*, 63. Not that Maximus lacked any precedent for the *logoi* doctrine: Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*. 2nd ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 73 n. 157, mentions the Stoics, Origen, Augustine (*rationes seminales*; e.g. *De div. quaest.* 83), Evagrius, and Dionysius (and his commentator John of Scythopolis), from whom "Maximus has received a more positive influence." Louth knows these too, but he rightly doubts any of them really approximate to the sort of meta-structural principle this doctrine becomes in Maximus. Indeed none, I think, evince Maximus's peculiar emphases as detailed in this chapter and the next.
[4] On the *logoi* doctrine's application to Porphyry's Tree in Maximus, see *Amb* 41.10; and Torstein Theodore Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 81-92; Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 140. That the *logoi* in a thing bear its efficient, formal, and final cause is clear from texts like *Amb* 21.5, but see secs. 2.4-5 below.

take it as a basically Neoplatonic way of describing the God-world relation.[5] But I

identify and describe three qualifications of participation-talk that suggest a still more

fundamental logic at work in his account of creation (secs. 2.3-5). Last, I collate the

results of these qualifications into an overview of Maximus's logic of creation (sec. 2.6),

and conclude that this logic corresponds to what I've already identified as Christo-logic

(sec. 2.7).

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[5] Polycarp Sherwood, "Survey of Recent Work on St. Maximus the Confessor," *Traditio* 20 (1964): 435, simply solicited studies of "participation" in Maximus's thought; Balthasar preferred to stress *analogy*, and often equated this to some version of participation (cf. my Introduction). Some recent commentators have tried to answer Sherwood's call, sometimes with slight provisos: Antoine Lévy, *Le créé et l'incréé: Maxime le Confesseur et Thomas d'Aquin: Aux sources de la querelle Palamienne* (Paris: Vrin, 2006), 129-32 and esp. 158-191, summons Simplicius's idea of *sunergeia* by relation (a refined version of Plotinus's theory of double act); Torstein Tollefsen, "Did St Maximus the Confessor have a Concept of Participation?" *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 618-25; idem, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); Marius Portaru, "Gradual participation according to St Maximus the Confessor," *Studia patristica* 54 (2012): 281-94; Clement Yung Wen, "Maximus the Confessor and the Problem of Participation," *The Heythrop Journal* 58 (2017): 3-16; Stephen Clarke, "'Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places': The Relationship of *Logoi* and *Logos* in Plotinus, Maximus, and Beyond," 1-18 (unpublished talk); Jonathan Greig, "Proclus' Doctrine of Participation in Maximus the Confessor's *Centuries of Theology* I.48-50," *Studia Patristica* 75 (2017): 137-48.

I say "nearly all" because of three exceptions: [1] Eric D. Perl, *Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, and Deification in Saint Maximus Confessor* (Unpublished Ph.D. diss, Yale, 1999), 195-7 and 205; idem, "Metaphysics and Christology in Maximus Confessor and Eriugena," in *Eriugena: East and West – Papers of the Eighth International Colloquium of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies*, eds. Bernard McGinn and Willemien Otten. (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1994), 253-79, wants to speak of Maximus's distinctly christological understanding of the God-world relation as "perfect participation." It's evident that I share many of Perl's intuitions, but, as I say in the Introduction, I think his commitment to a prior *philosophically* defined idea of "participation" prevents him from seeing his brilliant intuitions through. [2] Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 600 (cited below at n. 62), doubts Maximus had a clear "doctrine" of participation at all; [3] Marius Portaru, "The Vocabulary of Participation in the Works of Saint Maximus the Confessor," in *Naboth's Vineyard*, eds. Octavian Gordon and Alexandru Mihaila (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2012), 295-317, offers an "anthropological lecture" of Maximian participation that tries to avoid either a denial of participation (Larchet) or a basically Neoplatonic view of it (Perl, Tollefsen—I think Perl's view especially is more complicated; see my Introduction above).

Many of these scholars do *claim* important differences between Maximus and Neoplatonists on the God-world relation. In general I confess sympathies with the brief remarks of Stephen Clarke, whose proximate interlocutor is Balthasar: "I don't deny that there may be differences. The problem is to locate them. I have similar qualms even about Tollefsen's much better informed account: in saying that Maximus manages a Christian *alternative* to Neo-Platonist metaphysics, he leaves me very uncertain what exactly the *alternative* consists in" (5).

2.2 – Unqualified descriptions of creation as Incarnation

That creation is divine Incarnation is a claim Maximus actually makes. We saw it at *Amb* 7.22, my epigraph.[6] And at first blush he doesn't appear to mean something different from what he means when he speaks of the historical Incarnation. They bear the same logic. An initial indicator that this is so: Maximus moves seamlessly between the Word's Incarnation in world and in Mary without the slightest proviso. It's an important point, especially because Maximus's commentators—from Eriugena to modern scholarship[7]— routinely insert qualifications of their own, ones quite absent from Maximus's texts. Sometimes this takes the anodyne form of quotation marks around "Incarnation" when applied to the act (beginning and end) of creation.[8] Others come cleaner: Maximus's talk of creation as "incarnation" is clearly "metaphorical," obviously not intended to evoke the literal mode of the Word's personal presence in and as Jesus Christ.[9] This section treats five passages where Maximus more or less explicitly says creation is Incarnation.

1. *Amb* 33. In a passage as brief as it is celebrated, Maximus offers three explanations for Gregory Nazianzen's remark, "The Logos becomes thick" (Ὁ Λόγος παχύνεται).[10] It refers, first, to the Word's historical Incarnation, when he "deemed it worthy to 'become thick' through His presence in the flesh [διὰ τῆς ἐνσάρκου αὐτοῦ

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[6] Again, "mystery" in Maximus always refers at least to the historical Incarnation; see my Introduction and for more references in Maximus's corpus see the note at Constas's introduction to *QThal* 49, n. 157.

[7] Cf. my Introduction.

[8] See the more hesitant discussion of Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy: An Investigation into the "Questiones ad Thalassium"* (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1991) 120-122; and his, *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 166, on which see n. 16.

[9] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 67; idem, *Activity and Participation*, 122. Cf. my Introduction.

[10] Gregory Nazianzen, *Or*. 38.2, "On the Nativity," cited at *Amb* 33.1.

παρουσίας]."[11] The Word also "becomes thick" in human words, in language, and that is

Maximus's third instance.[12] The second occupies us here:

> Or that, having ineffably encrypted Himself in the *logoi* of beings for our sake, He is obliquely signified in a proportionate way through each of the things seen, as if through letters—a most complete whole together in the wholes, and a whole according to each particular, whole and undiminished, the undifferentiated in the differences and always self-same, the simple and uncomposed in the composites, the one without origin in the things subject to origin, and the unseen in things seen, and the untouchable in things grasped.[13]

Consider three features. The first is an obvious insistence on the integrity of wholes, both

of the Word in the *logoi* and of the beings themselves. A union or synthesis that leaves

undiminished the nature and mode of the things synthesized—this recalls the third

element of the Christo-logic discussed last chapter (i.e. perichoresis of modes and acts in

Christ),[14] and it will become more central next chapter on the deification of the world.[15]

Second, it is the Word "Himself," not, say, the divine essence as such or God as the most

indeterminate power of all things,[16] who is encrypted in and as the *logoi* of created

beings. It's his person or hypostasis, you might say; it's *him*.[17] Hence a final feature:

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[11] *Amb* 33.2, PG 91, 1285c, slight modification.

[12] *Amb* 33.2, PG 91, 1285d-1288a. I treat this aspect more fully and especially as it relates to speech about God in my essay, "Both Mere Man and Naked God: The Incarnational Logic of Apophasis in St Maximus the Confessor," in *Maximus the Confessor as a European Philosopher*, eds. Sotiris Mitralexis, Georgios Steiris, Marci Podbielski, and Sebastian Lalla (Eugene, OR: Cascade), 110-30.

[13] *Amb* 33.2, PG 91, 1285d, my translation: "ἢ ὅτι τοῖς τῶν ὄντων ἑαυτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς ἀπορρήτως ἐγκρύψας λόγοις ἀναλόγως δι' ἑκάστου τῶν ὁρωμένων ὡς διά τινων γραμμάτων ὑποσημαίνεται, ὅλος ἐν ὅλοις ἅμα πληρέστατος, καὶ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον ὁλόκληρος, ὅλος καὶ ἀνελάττωτος, ἐν τοῖς διαφόροις ὁ ἀδιάφορος καὶ ὡσαύτως ἀεὶ ἔχων, ἐν τοῖς συνθέτοις ὁ ἁπλοῦς καὶ ἀσύνθετος, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑπὸ ἀρχὴν ὁ ἄναρχος καὶ ὁ ἀόρατος ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἁπτοῖς ὁ ἀναφής."

[14] See sec. 1.5.

[15] See sec. 3.4.

[16] As in Plotinus, *En*. VI. 9 [9] 8.

[17] This point will reappear in sec. 2.4. But here I notice that of Maximus's many modern commentators, Paul Blowers indulges Maximus's own insistence most lucidly: "the Confessor's primary analogy to convey the condescension of the Word into the *logoi* of creatures (*and* of Scripture, *and* of the virtues) is the incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth. In reality this is *not an 'analogy' at all since it is precisely the Logos* 'destined...before the foundation of the world' to become the incarnate and sacrificial Lamb (1 Peter 1:19-20) who originally contained the *logoi* and *willingly* communicated his presence to creatures through them" (Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy*, 166, my emphasis; cf. similarly his "From Nonbeing to Eternal Well-Being: Creation ex nihilo in the Cosmology and Soteriology of Maximus the

Maximus never qualifies the second and third Incarnations—in world and words—in a way that makes them unlike the first, the historical Incarnation. Indeed this *ambiguum* closes with something like the fundamental axiom underwriting each Incarnation, what Maximus calls the "principle of condescension" (συγκαταβάσεως λόγῳ)[18]: "to the degree that, for His own sake, He contracted us in view of union with Himself, to that same degree He Himself, for our sake, expanded His very self through the principle of condescension."[19] Creation's most fundamental metaphysical principles, then, are instances of the Word's own "expansion"—a theme I take up later (sec. 2.4).

2. *QThal* 60. This passage forms the centerpiece of my final chapter, but I note it here because of how striking it is. Thalassius asks Maximus to interpret 1 Peter 1.20, which calls Christ "a pure and spotless lamb, who was foreknown before the foundation of the world, yet manifested at the end of time for our sake."[20] Who exactly, Thalassius

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Confessor," in *Light on creation: Ancient Commentators in Dialogue and Debate on the Origin of the World*, eds. Geert Roskam and Joseph Verheyden [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017], 177). This remarkable observation—that the "analogy" between historical and cosmic Incarnation is no mere analogy—commits Blowers to the thesis that for Maximus the Word's condescension in the *logoi* of creation, in Jesus, in Scripture, and in the deified are "eschatologically simultaneous" (cf. Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy*, 163, and his, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World* [Oxford: OUP, 2016], 137-40). But as I noted in the Introduction, analogy—and particularly its *denial*—says much less about simultaneity and much more about the *mode* of Christ's presence in these Incarnations. Anyone who believed in divine omnipresence should not have had a problem with the idea that divinity dwelled in the man Jesus, even to a peculiarly concentrated degree, in the same mode that the One cause of all things dwells in all its effects. Indeed Athanasius tendered that exact argument (*De incarnatione verbi dei* 42), which others after him like Gregory of Nyssa would have the keen sense to qualify: Gregory reprises Athanasius's argument that moves from divine omnipresence in creation to his presence in the man Jesus, but also admits that "the manner in which God is present in us is not the same as it was in that case," namely in Jesus' (*Or. cat.* 25). Christological controversies from Nicaea to Chalcedon (and beyond, really) were rather concerned to *differentiate* the way God was present in Jesus Christ from the way he is present elsewhere. And so the truly astounding insight, one Blowers seems to intimate, is that Maximus rethinks not just how God is present in Jesus in order to distinguish this presence from God's presence in the cosmos, but that he then reintroduces *this mode* of presence as the potential mode the Word might be present in the cosmos itself.

[18] *Synkatabasis* often describes the historical Incarnation, both in Maximus and the Cappadocians. Cf. *Amb* 4.4, 7.22, 42.3.

[19] *Amb* 33.2, PG 91, 1288a: "τοσοῦτον ἡμᾶς δι᾿ ἑαυτον πρὸς ἕνωσιν ἑαυτοῦ συστείλας, ὅσον αὐτὸς δι᾿ ἡμᾶς ἑαυτὸν συγκαταβάσεως λόγῳ διέστειλεν."

[20] Quoted at *QThal* 60, CCSG 7.73, from the translation of Blowers and Wilken, p. 123.

wonders, foreknew the Incarnation? The Trinity, that's who.[21] But what is foreknown,

exactly—that's more interesting. Maximus pairs this verse with Colossians 1.26, where

"the great Apostle" mentions "the mystery hidden from before the ages," which is,

Maximus declares, "the mystery according to Christ" (τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστήριον).[22]

This mystery refers "clearly" to the historical Incarnation. Maximus recapitulates it with

characteristic density:

> This [mystery] is clearly the ineffable and inconceivable union of divinity and
> humanity according to hypostasis, which leads the humanity into identity with the
> divinity in every way through the principle of hypostasis, and effects one
> composed hypostasis from both [natures], without thus inducing the slightest
> diminution of their essential difference according to nature....[23]

The mystery signifies the Word's economy, which means precisely that God

becomes in person and by nature what He is not by nature—and so preserves both natures

entirely.[24] This union "into identity," he just said, names the very union God foreknew

and for which He created all things. Notice what Maximus is *not* saying here. He does not

mean that creation merely sets the stage for the unrepeatable union between divinity and

humanity that occurred in first-century Palestine, as if the fullest realization of the

"mystery according to Christ" were restricted to a single climactic moment in creation's

history (though there's indeed a certain primacy to that event).[25] Here and elsewhere

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[21] *QThal* 60.7, CCSG 7.79.

[22] *QThal* 60.2, CCSG 7.73. Blowers and Wilken translate this as "the whole mystery of Christ," which is also apt. And notice that Col 1.27 goes on to state explicitly what this "mystery" is: "Christ in you" (ὅ ἐστιν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν). Maximus never quotes this second half of the sentence. Still I suggest that the rest of his response essentially explicates this very idea.

[23] *QThal* 60.2, CCSG 7.73, my translation: "Τοῦτο προδήλως ἐστὶν ἄρρητός τε καὶ ἀπερινόητος θεότητός τε καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἕνωσις, εἰς ταὐτὸν ἄγουσα τῇ θεότητι κατὰ πάντα τρόπον τῷ τῆς ὑποστάσεως λόγῳ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα καὶ μίαν ἀμφοτέρων ἀποτελοῦσα τὴν ὑπόστασιν σύνθετον, τῆς αὐτῶν κατὰ φύσιν οὐσιώδους διαφορᾶς μηδεμίαν καθοτιοῦν ἐπάγουσα μείωσιν."

[24] *QThal* 60.3, CCSG 7.73-5: "Ἔπρεπε γὰρ τῷ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων καὶ γινομένῳ φύσει κατ' οἰκονομίαν ὅπερ οὐκ ἦν καὶ ἑαυτὸν ὅπερ ἦν κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ὅπερ γέγονε φύσει κατ' οἰκονομίαν ἄτρεπτον διασώσασθαι."

[25] *Pace* Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation*, 122: "Why should we speak of the embodiment of divine Forms as an incarnation or embodiment of the *Logos*? According to Maximus we should understand

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Maximus clearly avers that the realization of the "ineffable union" effected in Christ is the *very same* destined for all humanity, for and in every person.[26] The claim grows stronger still:

> For because of Christ, or rather the mystery according to Christ, all the ages and everything in those same ages have received the beginning and the end of their existence in Christ.[27]

Every creature receives the very principle (ἀρχή) and end (τέλος) of *its own* existence in Christ. "Principle," of course, in both philosophical and patristic literature, signifies a metaphysical origin, often the efficient, formal, and final causes (or all at once) of a thing.[28] Here Maximus locates that metaphysical principle not just in the preexistent Logos, but, recalling one of Origen's more daring moves—in the Word *Incarnate*.[29] The

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it this way because the creation and salvation of the world is knit together in one single divine purpose, exclusively bound up with the great mystery. The creation of the world is the first step towards the fulfilment of God's plan. Even though the *Logos* Himself is not hypostatically present in created essences or natures, the *logoi* defining them and delimiting their natural capacity represent Him in relation to them. They are His patterns for creatures." I'll take issue with equating the *logoi* and Forms below (secs. 2.4-5). Here the problem comes with the qualification—one Maximus never makes—that the Word is not "hypostatically present in created essences," that's to say, that when Maximus first identifies the "mystery according to Christ" with the historical hypostatic union *and then* applies this to the very principle (ἀρχή) and purpose (τέλος) of all creation—he must have surreptitiously modified the meaning of "mystery according to Christ" in the latter case. On this reading there's something like a gradual immanence of the Word in creation: creation from nothing is "the first step" and so a lesser degree of immanence, the historical Incarnation the perfection (or indeed a qualitatively different mode) of that immanence.— My Conclusion flags the abiding question of how the historical Incarnation can at once retain metaphysical primacy and yet be actualized (cf. *Amb* 7.22, cited above) in all creation.

[26] *QThal* 60.3, CCSG 7.75: the "mystery according to Christ," the hypostatic identity of humanity and divinity, is "the preconceived divine purpose of the beginning of beings [τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν ὄντων], which, were we to define it, we would say it is the preconceived *telos* for the sake of which all things are, which itself is for the sake of nothing else. In view of this end, God introduced the essences of beings." Elsewhere Maximus specifies that "had man united created nature with the uncreated through love...he would have shown them to be *one and the same* by the state of grace" (*Amb* 41.5, PG 91, 1308b, my emphasis), and that the "power" to effect this union "was given to us from the beginning by nature for this purpose [τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς φυσικῶς ἡμῖν πρὸς τοῦτο δοθεῖσαν δύναμιν]" (*Amb* 41.9, PG 91, 1309d). See Chapter 3, sec. 3.2.

[27] *QThal* 60.4, CCSG 7.75, my translation: "Διὰ γὰρ τὸν Χριστόν, ἤγουν τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστήριον, πάντες οἱ αἰῶνες καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς αἰῶσιν ἐν Χριστῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τὸ τέλος εἰλήφασιν."

[28] Origen's Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, of course, constitutes the most obvious patristic example (see citations in next note too). Maximus himself very often uses ἀρχή in just this sense: e.g. *Amb* 5.12; *Amb* 10.37, 57, 73, 96; *Amb* 23.2; *Amb* 40.3, PG 91, 1304b; *Amb* 46.4, PG 91, 1357b; *Amb* 65.2, PG 91, 1392c; *Amb* 67.4; *QThal* 59, CCSG 7.61-3; *CT* 1.48-50, *passim*.

[29] Origen, *Hom. in Gen.* 1.1; *Comm. in Jo.* 1.17-19, 22. Cf. Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy*, 141, for Origen, and 146-53 for Gregory of Nyssa.

very event of the historical Incarnation is in some sense the event that grounds (not just perfects) creation itself.[30]

   3. *CT* 1.66-7. These two short "chapters" resolve a set of meditations that portray the soul's gradual deification in terms of Christ's passion, burial, and resurrection (1.59-67). Whatever interpretive risks I court by summoning texts of this genre, their intensely contemplative character makes them more, not less, interesting for my purposes, since it's precisely the *mystery* "according to Christ" that is for Maximus the mystery of creation, as we just saw.[31] Writes Maximus,

> The mystery of the Word's Incarnation bears the power of all the enigmas and types according to Scripture, as well as the science of all created things sensible and intelligible. And whoever knows the mystery of the cross and tomb knows the *logoi* of those created beings just mentioned. And whoever is initiated into the ineffable power of the resurrection knows the principal purpose for which God gave hypostasis to all things.[32]

   Notice that the principles of the Word's embodied existence—here the Triduum[33]—just are the principles of creation (as they were at *Amb* 33). The Incarnation's "power" is actualized at the apex of mystical ascent, where, as Maximus

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[30] See the preliminary remarks at the Conclusion.

[31] The date and habit of composition confirm that these supposedly more "spiritual" texts are at least as relevant for understanding Maximus's more "speculative" theology. The *Centuries on Theology and Economy* (*CT*) were likely composed soon after the *Ambigua to John* and (or at least in tandem with) the *Questions to Thalassius*, perhaps between 632 and the summer of 633; see Jankowiak and Booth, "A New Date-List," 30, and Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* (Romae: Orbis Catholicus, Herder, 1955), 106-9, and Salés, "Introduction," 24. Maximus seems to have had a peculiar talent for transposing content he had worked out in a more dialectical, question-answer context (*erotapokriseis*) into the more contemplative mood of the chapters or centuries genre; see Salés, "Introduction," 25, and 26, where he names an especially relevant example: the *tantum-quantum* principle (where human deification and divine Incarnation indicate two aspects of the same reality) codified in *QThal* 22, for instance, undergirds all of Maximus's works, *CT* included.

[32] *CT* 1.66, PG 90, 1108a-b, my translation: "Τὸ τῆς ἐνσωματώσεως τοῦ Λόγου μυστήριον, πάντων ἔχει τῶν τε κατὰ τὴν Γραφὴν αἰνιγμάτων καὶ τύπων τὴν δύναμιν, καὶ τῶν φαινομένων καὶ νοουμένων κτισμάτων τὴν ἐπιστήμην. Καὶ ὁ μὲν γνοὺς σταυροῦ καὶ ταφῆς τὸ μυστήριον, ἔγνω τῶν προειρημένων τοὺς λόγους· ὁ δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως μυηθεὶς τὴν ἀπόρρητον δύναμιν, ἔγνω τὸν ἐφ' ᾧ τὰ πάντα προηγουμένως ὁ Θεὸς ὑπεστήσατο σκοπόν."

[33] Maximus treated the activities of Christ's life earlier, identifying them with the "rectification [or righteousness] of the commandments" that he enacted and that the human soul must too through virtue, the *sine qua non* of knowledge (and then deified knowledge); cf. *CT* 1.59.

teaches here and elsewhere, the rational soul's natural motions and activities come to rest

in their proper limits.[34] At that point, he continues,

> Only the Word exists, in Himself, just as He reappeared after He had been raised
> from the dead possessing all the things from Himself according to
> circumscription, since nothing at all possesses familiarity with Him by a natural
> relation. For the salvation of the saved occurs by grace, not by nature.[35]

Two features. Creation's culmination—like its "origin" (ἀρχή) and principles (λόγοι)—

bears the logic of Christ. That means the identity between humanity and divinity that

deification by grace achieves is, just like the Risen Lord, a hypostatic identity (see

Chapter 3). This broader feature points up a second subtle but utterly crucial mark:

creaturely perfection realizes *no natural relation* between God and creature. And yet

there arises a concrete relation of identity.[36] The denial of any natural relation or

"familiarity" (οἰκειότητα) between God and world (or One and Many) constitutes both a

distinctive element of Christo-logic and, we'll see, of Maximus's view of divine

creation.[37]

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[34] *CT* 1.47, PG 90, 1100; *QThal* 22, CCSG 7.141; *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 33b.

[35] *CT* 1.67, PG 90, 1108, my translation: "ὁ Λόγος μόνος ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ὑπάρχων, ὥσπερ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγηγερμένος ἀναφαίνεται, πάντα κατὰ περιγραφὴν ἔχων τὰ ἐξ αὐτοῦ, μηδενὸς φυσικῇ σχέσει τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἰκειότητα τὸ σύνολον ἔχοντος. Κατὰ χάριν γὰρ, ἀλλ' οὐ κατὰ φύσιν, ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν σωζομένων σωτηρία."

[36] Again, see Chapter 3, sec. 3.2. But quote here too a key passage I'll take up there: it was Adam's vocation from the outset to realize in himself the identity between created and uncreated nature, to show them "to be one and the same by the state of grace [ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν δείξειε κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν τῆς χάριτος]" (*Amb* 41.5, PG 91, 1308b). What exactly "by grace" indicates is, of course, the really pressing question, which I reserve for the next chapter.

[37] For its role in Christo-logic, see Chapter 1, sec. 1.4; for its relation to divine creation, see below, sec. 2.3. The denial of any sort of natural "familiarity" holds particular interest, since both Origen and Gregory Nyssen sought to "Christianize" this Stoic doctrine—which is, I add, yet another way of speaking about rational beings' participation in the divine Logos; cf. Ilaria Ramelli, "The Stoic Doctrine of Oikeiosis and its Transformation in Christian Platonism," *apeiron* 47.1 (2014): 116-140, esp. Origen's claim that those who are "familiar with God" might be called "parts of the Father" (οἰκεῖοί τε ἄνθρωποι οἱ μὲν τῷ πατρί, μερίδες ὄντες αὐτοῦ) at *Comm. in Jo.* 2.3.32 (cited at Ramelli, "The Stoic Doctrine of Oikeiosis," 124). Maximus's *logoi* doctrine addresses exactly this sort of claim, found too in Gregory Nazianzen, and so *must* explain how we are "portions of God" in a completely *non-natural* way; see *Amb* 7.1, and sec. 2.4 below. And for Maximus, the way such "familiarity" between created and uncreated comes about is precisely in the hypostatic union; see *Amb* 41.9, PG 91, 1312a: "οἷς ὡς μέρεσι καθ' ἕκαστον τὸ ἑκάστῳ καθόλου συγγενὲς οἰκειωσάμενος ἄκρον κατὰ τὸν προαποδοθέντα τρόπον...."—which is then realized in us

4. *Amb* 41. I return to this *ambiguum* in a bit more detail next chapter, but, again, it's too weighty to neglect here. It's where Maximus explicates his famous five divisions of being,[38] the first of which is the division of "the uncreated nature from the whole of created nature."[39] Early on Maximus makes the odd remark that unlike the other divisions (e.g. sensible/intelligible, heaven/earth), this first division between uncreated and created natures, though excluding "union in a single essence," bears no name among the seers who contemplate nature. That's to say, "what it is that distinguishes creation from God" is not itself some sort of natural division, not a kind of natural *principle* or *logos* that clearly demarcates the "created" category from the "uncreated."[40] The very act of creation—God's act of producing a nature or essence in no way common with His own—demands a mode otherwise inaccessible to natural contemplation or human philosophy.

God intended that the very divisions wrought in creation's beginning be surpassed in its perfection, specifically in humanity. Adam was to render even created and uncreated natures "one and the same"—a rather provocative point.[41] For now observe that Maximus then narrates how the Word's historical Incarnation actualized or "recapitulated" (in biblical terms[42]) this final sublation of every division, which signifies both the origin and purpose of creation: Christ initiated "the universal union of all things

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through sacrament and liturgy, as at *Myst*. 17, PG 91, 696a, where "those who are worthy will receive intimate familiarity with the Word of God [τὴν πρὸς τὸν Λόγον καὶ Θεὸν οἰκείωσιν]," and *Myst*. 24, PG 91, 709c.

[38] So very dear, for instance, to Eriugena, *Periphyseon* III.1-17.

[39] *Amb* 41.2, PG 91, 1304d: "τὴν διαιροῦσαν τῆς ἀκτίστου φύσεως τὴν κτιστὴν καθόλου φύσιν."

[40] *Amb* 41.2, PG 91, 1305a: "For they say that whereas God in His goodness created the splendid orderly arrangement of all beings, it is not immediately self-evident to this orderly arrangement who and what God is, and they call 'division' the ignorance of what it is that distinguishes God from creation. For to that which naturally divides these realities from each other, and which excludes their union in a single essence (since it cannot admit of one and the same definition), they did not give a name [Τὴν γὰρ φυσικῶς ἀλλήλων ταῦτα διαιροῦσαν, μηδέποτε δεχομένην τὴν εἰς μίαν οὐσίαν ἔνωσιν, ὡς τὸν ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν μὴ δυναμένην ἐπιδέξασθαι λόγον, εἴασαν ἄῤῥητον]."

[41] *Amb* 41.5, PG 91, 1308b. See Chapter 3, sec. 3.2.

[42] Eph 1.10, cited at *Amb* 41.6, PG 91, 1309a; see esp. *Amb* 7.37, which betrays many of the same points as our text here.

in Himself."[43] The exposition forms a chiasm: Maximus introduces the five divisions from the highest (created/uncreated) to the lowest (male/female), laments Adam's failure to unite them, and then reviews how Christ overcame each in reverse order.[44] What's truly remarkable, though—particularly in light of the odd point at the start about how the *logos* of the creative act has gone unnamed—is the immediate conclusion Maximus draws from the historical Incarnation:

> And *He recapitulated in Himself*, in a manner appropriate to God, *all things*, showing that the whole creation is one, just as another human being, completed by the mutual coming together of all its members, inclining toward itself in the wholeness of its existence, according to one, unique, simple, undefined, and unchangeable idea: that it comes from nothing. Accordingly, all creation admits of one and the same, absolutely undifferentiated *logos*: that its existence is preceded by nonexistence.[45]

Incarnation discloses the principle of *creatio ex nihilo*. Maximus extends Irenaeus and even Origen quite a bit further here: like them he maintains that we glimpse creation's purpose in Christ alone, but beyond them he sees too that Christ affords the very principle and mode of creation from nothing—creation's *archê*, as he put it in *QThal* 60.[46] No wonder, then, that when Maximus replays Dionysius's depiction of *creatio ex nihilo* as *creatio ex Deo*, he does so while linking the divine ecstasy of creation to the Word's play

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[43] *Amb* 41.7, PG 91, 1309a.

[44] *Amb* 41.2 (introduction of five divisions), 3-5 (human vocation to unite all five), 6 (Fall), 7-9 (Christ's success).

[45] *Amb* 41.9, PG 91, 1312a-b, slightly modified: "θεοπρεπῶς *τὰ πάντα εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀνεκεθαλαιώσατο* [Eph 1.10], μίαν ὑπάρχουσαν τὴν ἅπασαν κτίσιν δείξας, καθάπερ ἄνθρωπον ἄλλον, τῇ τῶν μερῶν ἑαυτῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα συνόδῳ συμπληρουμένην καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν νεύουσαν τῇ ὁλότητι τῆς ὑπάρξεως, κατὰ τὴν μίαν καὶ ἁπλῆν καὶ ἀπροσδιόριστον, τῆς ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος παραγωγῆς καὶ ἀδιάφορον ἔννοιαν, καθ᾽ ἣν ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις ἐπιδέξεσθαι δύναται λόγον παντελῶς ἀδιάκριτον, τὸν οὐκ ἦν τοῦ εἶναι πρεσβύτερον ἔχουσα."

[46] For Maximus's "Neo-Irenaean" approach to protology, see Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor*, 102-8.

in the historical Incarnation.[47] Nor should it surprise that Maximus can quite comfortably describe creation itself in eucharistic terms.[48]

5. *Amb* 6. He also describes creation in Marian terms. Here Maximus braves a remark at once profound and unsolicited. He aims principally to explain that and how Gregory Nazianzen means something different by "dragging down" and "binding," that these indicate different levels of spiritual progress (of virtue and contemplation). The former designates a person who might experience momentary lapses from contemplating God, a sort of infrequent backslider. The latter—this person does not merely suffer the occasional glance away from the vision of God, but has desisted from even the ascetic labors necessary to secure virtue, the very condition of contemplation.[49] So far, so monastically practical.

At one point, though, when Maximus commends the necessary transformation of the soul's "irrational powers" (anger and desire) into the power of love and joy, he appears spontaneously moved to offer a short meditation on the conditions of the soul's deification—that is, on the sensible world, how it can guide us through "reason" and

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[47] *Amb* 71.2-4 (historical Incarnation as an instance of the Word's "play"), 6 (citing *DN* 4.13). See below, sec. 2.4.

[48] *Amb* 35.2, where Maximus interprets Gregory Nazianzen's claim that creation "was necessary" and the "effusion of the Good" as God's "impartation" of Himself, a word often used to describe the distribution of the Eucharistic bread (cf. Lampe, μεταδίδωμι, s.v.): God "uniquely possesses within Himself an inconceivable, eternal, infinite, and incomprehensible permanence, from which, by virtue of an 'ever-giving effusion' of goodness, He 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 to wholes and to each, bestowing upon each the power to exist and to remain in existence [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]"—and again: "Perhaps, then, this, as far as my foolishness allows me to see, is what is meant by the 'effusion of the Good' and its 'progress,' namely, that the one God is multiplied in the impartation of good things proportionately to the recipients [τὸ τὸν ἕνα Θεὸν ἀναλόγως πρὸς τὰ δεκτικὰ τῇ μεταδόσει τῶν ἀγαθῶν πληθύνεσθαι]." Cf. too *QThal* 35.—It's true, though, that Dionysius also uses these terms to describe the One-Being's "self-impartation" and "self-multiplication" to participating beings or effects (*DN* 2.11), and yet does not obviously intend a sacramental meaning. See Chapter 3, sec. 3.1.

[49] *Amb* 6.5, PG 91, 1068c.

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"intellect" ultimately into this "joy." Joy, he recalls, was precisely John the Baptist's reaction when both he and Christ were still in the womb. And in this world, we're in the womb too:

> For many people this may be a jarring and unusual thing to say, though it's true nonetheless: both we ourselves and the Word of God, the Creator and Master of the universe, exist in a kind of womb, owing to the present condition of our life. In this sensible world, just as if He were enclosed in a womb, the Word of God appears only obscurely, and only to those who have the spirit of John the Baptist. Human beings, on the other hand, gazing through the womb of the material world, catch but a glimpse of the Word who is concealed within beings [τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐγκρυπτόμενον... Λόγον].... For when compared to the ineffable glory and splendor of the age to come, and to the kind of life that awaits us there, this present life differs in no way from a womb swathed in darkness, in which, for the sake of us who were infantile in mind, the perfect and super-perfect Word of God, who loves mankind, became an infant.[50]

Here again we meet the link between cosmic and historical Incarnation. In the former the Word "is concealed" or "encrypted in beings," quite as He was in the *logoi* of our first text (*Amb* 33). Now, were the world's Marian figure an isolated characterization, then perhaps we might safely bypass it as a colorful way making a simple point about God's immanence in creation. And yet, as we'll see later this chapter and in the next, the idea proves a common one which takes many forms: the very Logos of God dwells within us, whether through reason, "which lives like a child within us"[51]; or through virtue, which is "the natural seed of the Good" in our nature[52]; or through grace, when "Christ Jesus becomes his own proper lamb" for those who are "able to contain and

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[50] *Amb* 6.3, PG 91, 1068a-b, modified: "Ἐν μήτρᾳ γάρ (κἂν εἰ τραχὺς ὁ λόγος ὡς ἀτριβὴς τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἀλλ' οὖν ἀληθής), καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος ἐσμέν, ὁ τοῦ παντὸς ποιητὴς καὶ δεσπότης, ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ τῆς ζωῆς καταστάσει, ὁ μὲν ἀμυδρῶς ὡς ἐν μήτρᾳ καὶ μόγις τῷ αἰσθητῷ τούτῳ κόσμῳ διαφαινόμενος, καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς κατὰ Ἰωάννην τῷ πνεύματι, οἱ δ' ἄνθρωποι ὡς ἐκ μήτρας τῆς ὑλικῆς περιστάσεως, κἂν ποσῶς τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐγκρυπτόμενον διαβλέποντες Λόγον.... Πρὸς γὰρ τὴν ἄφατον τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος δόξαν τε καὶ λαμπρότητα καὶ τὴν τῆς κατ' αὐτὸν ζωῆς ἰδιότητα μήτρας οὐδὲν διαφέρει ζόφῳ περικεχυμένης συγκρινομένη ἡ παροῦσα ζωή, ἐν ᾗ δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς νηπιάσαντας ταῖς φρεσὶ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος τέλειος ὢν καὶ ὑπερτελής, ὡς φιλάνθρωπος, ἐνηπίασεν."

[51] *Amb* 38.2, PG 91, 1300a: "ἐν ἡμῖν νηπιάζοντος θειοτάτου λόγου," which he also identifies with "the form of Christ" (τὴν χριστοειδῆ κατάστασιν) that is our "state."

[52] *Amb* 7.21.

consume him"[53]—He who at creation's beginning "concealed the knowledge of Himself in each of the rational substances *as their first power*,"[54] and who is therefore activated and indeed born in every deified soul at creation's end.[55]

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These texts show that Maximus both identifies divine creation as an act of divine Incarnation, and that he never qualifies this in a way that would make the mode of the Word's presence in the world's womb somehow different from His presence in Mary's.[56] Yet this remains an argument from silence, however much this silence gives pause. And it should give us pause. This silence murmurs, if only because, as I tried to show last chapter, there *is* a distinctive—indeed qualitatively different—logic involved in Maximus's christology contrasted with, say, your typical Neoplatonic vertical or emanative logic.[57] Hypostatic union differs, for instance, from standard versions of Platonic participation. So the question becomes: do the distinctive elements of Christo-logic appear in Maximus's theology of creation? If Maximus's unqualified declarations are more than metaphor, then Christo-logic determines the entire God-world relation. Talk of "participation" (understood Neoplatonically) cannot account for his unique protology or eschatology.

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[53] *Amb* 47.2, PG 91, 1360d.

[54] *Amb* 48.2, PG 91, 1361a, modified, emphasis mine: "Ὁ πᾶσαν μετὰ σοφίας φύσιν ὑποστήσας Θεὸς καὶ πρώτην ἑκάστῃ τῶν λογικῶν οὐσιῶν δύναμιν τὴν αὐτοῦ γνῶσιν κρυφίως ἐνθέμενος...." That the "God" here specifically refers to the Word of God is clear from the rest of the *ambiguum*, which grapples with the sense in which the Word was a "slain Lamb from before the foundation of the world."

[55] *Amb* 10.25, PG 91, 1125a, modified: "For to those in whom He is born, the Word of God [Πέφυκε γὰρ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγος οἷς ἂν ἐγγένηται] naturally nullifies the movements of the flesh, and restrains the soul from inclining toward them, filling it with the whole power of true discernment."

[56] Note that I've not here included any passage that contains the *tantum-quantum* principle, i.e. that human deification is just as much and simultaneously a divine Incarnation—even though I think those texts comprise some of the most compelling instances of creation as divine Incarnation (viewed from its perfection). On that pervasive principle in Maximus, see Larchet, *La divinisation*, 376-82; and Chapter 3, sec. 3.2.

[57] Chapter 1, sec. 1.5.

Scholars that heed Maximus's participation language tend to assume its essential logic is something very like Neoplatonic participation, as I've noted.[58] There is of course some merit to this. Dionysius weighs heavily on Maximus, as does 1 Peter 2.4 on the entire tradition of Christian Platonism, and I do not wish to stave it off as if something insidious would thus be injected into otherwise pure Christian marrow.[59]

And yet it must be said that even in the philosophical milieu the logic of "participation" was never so monochrome. It could mean quite different things, especially beneath different horizons of the God-world relation. Stoics, for instance, who outstripped even Aristotle in their rejection of a preexistent realm of Platonic Ideas, still spoke of "participation" between particulars and the universal cosmic bond, the Logos.[60] And luminaries in the high Neoplatonic tradition like Proclus know that vertical participation is not sufficient to account for the ontological character of at least the highest beings, the divine henads: they also are what they are because of their *horizontal* relation among themselves, a relation more like perichoresis than participation.[61]

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[58] See n. 5 above.

[59] E.g. Nicholaos Loudovikos, "Being and Essence Revisited: Reciprocal Logoi and Energies in Maximus the Confessor and Thomas Aquinas, and the Genesis of the Self-referring Subject," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 72.1 (2016): 129, too glibly accuses Aquinas (as opposed to Maximus) of a "non-biblical metaphysics of participation." For a convenient critique of the modern (and indeed Enlightenment Protestant) tendency to conceive the history of Christian thought as "a series of accommodations" between "self-enclosed philosophies and the Gospel," see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 390-2.

[60] Strobaeus, I.136, 31-137, 6; *SVF* 1.65; Long & Sedley 30A, summarizes how Stoics rejected the self-subsistence of universals or "common concepts," as they called them, and repurposed Platonic "participation" to make the point: "what we 'participate in' is the concepts [καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐννοημάτων μετέχειν ἡμᾶς]." And yet Stoic "participation" was not merely nominal. So Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1085C-D; *SVF* 2.444; Long & Sedley 47G: "They say that earth and water sustain neither themselves nor other things, but preserve their unity by participation in a breathy and fiery power [πνευματικῆς δὲ μετοχῇ καὶ πυρώδους τὴν ἑνότητα διαφυλάττειν]; but air and fire because of their tensility can sustain themselves, and by blending with the other two provide them with tension and also stability and substantiality [τόνον παρέχειν καὶ τὸ μόνιμον καὶ οὐσιῶδες]." For early Stoics, then, what's "participated" is the divine principle *within* all things rather than some prior, self-subsistence realm of paradigms.

[61] Cf. Chapter 1, n. 178.

It's even plausible that Plato penned his *Parmenides* to test the adequacy of his own solution to the One-Many dilemma, to expose, that is, the deceptive ease with which "participation" might shirk restive problems internal to any monotheistic account of the God-world relation.[62] And it's rather striking that just after Plato has the young Socrates mock Zeno's confidence in the concept of "participation" to elucidate the One-Many relation—who, after all, really denies that whatever is not the One must be in some sense many *and* one (i.e. participates the One's oneness)?—he raises a single possibility that would seem to him a veritable marvel: "But," says Socrates, "if [Zeno] demonstrates that that which is One is *itself* many, and in turn that the many is One, then I will be astonished at that."[63] Plato himself knew that an instance where the One *becomes* one of the Many (and the reverse) would constitute something quite beyond his account of participation.

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[62] If, after all, you posit several gods or metaphysical first principles for the diversity of things, then you sense far less the problem of the One and the Many. But if, as Eriugena later brilliantly exposes (*Periph*. III.14), you reject a Manichaean dualism (or any absolute dualism) and yet hold to *creatio ex nihilo*, it becomes eminently difficult to grasp how real "otherness" can emerge from a single source— particularly if you're Christian and you believe this otherness is meant to endure *even in the final union of all things, where God is "all in all"* (1 Cor 15.28), i.e. if true union with the one God occurs through the resurrection of the body. In this sense the God-world problem proves far more difficult for Christians and Jews than, say, for Neoplatonists like Plotinus, who, though similarly mystified about how any modal otherness might have emerged from the one (*En*. V.1.1-2), nevertheless do not have to confront the more prickly point of how this finite (and bodily) otherness could possibly endure in the return to the immaterial, simple One.—These kinds of observations rightly lead to the conviction that monotheistic "creation" and Neoplatonic "emanation" do not significantly differ from one another, and indeed share many of the same seemingly insurmountable problems; cf. Fernand Brunner, "Création et émanation: Fragment de philosophie comparée," esp. 43-7.

[63] Plato, *Parm*. 129b-c: "ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ὅ ἐστιν ἕν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο πολλὰ ἀποδείξει καὶ αὖ τὰ πολλὰ δὴ ἕν, τοῦτο ἤδη θαυμάσομαι"; cf. too the more general remark about the obscure nature of the world's "receptacle" (the "place" where the icon, Becoming, comes to be and be like the model, Being), at *Tim*. 52d: "so long as one thing is one thing, and another something different, neither of the two will ever come to exist in the other so that the same thing becomes simultaneously both one and two [ὡς ἕως ἄν τι τὸ μὲν ἄλλο ᾖ, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο, οὐδετέρῳ ποτὲ γεγενημένον ἓν ἅμα ταὐτὸν καὶ δύο γενήσεσθον]."

So yes, Maximus employs the language of participation.[64] But can we assume he simply means what, say, Plotinus or Proclus mean by it? I doubt it.[65] The next three sections raise three qualifications to the God-world relation in Maximus (secs. 2.3-5). The latter two (2.4-5) focus on protology, on features of Maximus's *logoi* doctrine that exceed standard accounts of participation. Together these qualify participation talk such that the logic at work corresponds to Christo-logic. They suggest, I mean, that Maximus circumscribes participation logic within a view of divine creation as divine Incarnation. And so it's Christo-logic that ultimately determines the sense of whatever concepts he borrows to describe the God-world relation, including the very idea of participation.[66]

2.3 – First qualification: no natural mediation between God and world

One of the starker features of Maximus's Christo-logic is that there obtains absolutely no common quality between created and uncreated natures. The Word's hypostasis alone

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[64] Portaru, "The Vocabulary of Participation," 296, notes (against Larchet) that the vast range of "participation" language occurs in all but two of Maximus's works.

[65] And here I think we can appreciate Larchet's earlier (and unique) judgment about "participation" in Maximus: "Maxime parle parfois assez clairement d'une divinisation par participation, avec des expressions diverses et sans développer à ces occasions une doctrine précise de la participation, ou du moins sans indiquer comment précisément il conçoit cette notion"; cf. Larchet, *La divinisation*, 600. Tollefsen has challenged this characterization, e.g. at "Did St. Maximus the Confessor have a Concept of Participation?," 624, and yet, other than a few minor additions, I do not see how Tollefsen differs significantly from what Larchet already emphasized as the import of Maximus's participation-talk—that it insists on "la distance qui subsiste entre la nature de l'homme divinisé et la nature divine elle-même" (600).

[66] We could of course cite Wittgenstein here: "the meaning of a word is its use." This approach has already been fruitfully performed in a similar context: so C. Kavin Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 2: "To study the Christians and the Stoics is thus to realize that relating their traditions must take account of the fact that difference in the meaning of words is tied to difference in life." Or later, at 249: "To recognize that the meaning of words changes with the changes in the wider grammar in which they occur is simultaneously to see that the reembedding of words from one interpretative framework into another is not the translation and appropriation of insights but transformation or transfiguration. As Wittgenstein might have said, 'See how high the seas of language run here!'" And later again, at 260–261: "Christians have been treasure hunting. The treasures they find are the words in the Stoic texts, not the 'thoughts' that are somehow independent from the Stoic grammar in which thoughts have their shape and meaning—and that can somehow be transported from one grammar to the other without a change in meaning. I am committed, that is, to the view that we cannot think about language in the same way after Wittgenstein. There is no such thing as a word-meaning or language 'as such'."

links and unifies them *in actu*.[67] It's significant, then, that Maximus accuses Greek philosophy and Origenism of precisely this error: both fail to grasp that God and creation share nothing essential or natural whatever. Maximus does grasp it, indeed revels in it as the truth of *creatio ex nihilo*, and this portends a major modification to typical understandings of participation. First Maximus's accusation, then a word on how it qualifies participation.

Maximus critiques the way (he thinks) Greek philosophy conceives the God-world relation.[68] His charge goes something like this. Only God or "the divine essence" brooks no contrary, yet creatures do and must.[69] Creatures receive that and all they are. God is and is what he is from himself. And "to speak more truly," Maximus presses, God "transcends" the very things he "is," like existence and goodness and wisdom. Or rather he is what he is a completely incomprehensible way, self-subsistently—which is at bottom a mere negation: God does not receive what God is.[70] Whereas all that creatures have, even existence itself, they have "by participation and by grace."[71] But the very fact that they *receive* being means that creaturely being stands in opposition to "not-being." I have being, but I didn't always. Therefore in fact and in thought non-being negates my concrete being. It's not just my "existence" (ὕπαρξις, nearly like *esse*), notice, that courts

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[67] *Pyr* 28-31; *Amb* 5.20; Chapter 1, secs. 1.4-5.

[68] *CC* 4.2, Caresa-Galstaldo 194: "children [or disciples] of the Greeks [Ἑλλήνων παῖδες]." In his translation of *CC*, Balthasar glosses that the "Greek" views Maximus refutes here might be found in the philosopher Ammonius Hermeiou (*c*.500), whose "Lehre von der Gleichewigkeit der Weltsubstanz mit Gott war nochmals...in Alexandrien aufgebracht," and "von seinen christlichen Schülern Zacharias Rhetor (PG 85, 1011-1144) und Johannes Philoponus...widerlegt worden," and also notes that Evagrius had also begun his *Kephalaia Gnostica* (1.1, 4) with the assertion that nothing stands in opposition to God. See his *Kosmische Liturgie*, 2nd ed., 452-3 n. 2.

[69] *CC* 3.28, Caresa-Gestaldo 156: "Ἡμεῖς δὲ μόνην λέγομεν τὴν θείαν οὐσίαν μὴ ἔχειν τι ἐναντίον."

[70] *CC* 3.27, Caresa-Galstaldo 156, cf. Sherwood 178: "Ὁ μὲν Θεὸς ὡς αὐτοΰπαρξις ὢν [note the paradox of juxtaposing those two concepts] καὶ αὐτοαγαθότης καὶ αὐτοσοφία, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀληθέστερον εἰπεῖν καὶ ὑπὲρ ταῦτα πάντα."

[71] *CC* 3.27.

a contrary and so fixes a great ontological distance between God and me. My very "essence" (οὐσία, *essentia*)[72] also admits of "privation." No such privation or contrary opposes "true essence," God's, while contrariety is "proper to being by participation."[73]

Hence Maximus's problem with the Greeks. They "maintain that the essence of all beings eternally coexists with God and that they have only their qualities from Him," since, in their view, "essence has no contrary" and "contrariety is found only in the qualities around the essence."[74] Maximus suspects Greek metaphysics of essential monism: "essence" is the very same in all things, only the qualities or modes change— more or less of this or that property or configuration of properties. And so the world's diversity and vertical, variegated structure (the Many) are but the myriad qualitative determinations of a single, truly real essence (the One). Maximus subtly concedes something to this view. He agrees that "true essence" admits no contrary. But he refuses to grant that this applies to *created* essence. Here "created" signifies precisely whatever is brought to essence and existence from nothing, from the divine will and knowledge.

The lesson Maximus draws from *creatio ex nihilo* is not—as it is for much contemporary theology—that God might not have created anything at all. Maximus never says that, quite the reverse, actually, here and elsewhere.[75] He means rather to insist, as the word "coexists" (συνυπάρχειν) implies, that God's creative power can produce from

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[72] See "An Analytic Appendix" for a brief survey of Maximus's use of this term—especially its christological transformation.

[73] *CC* 3.29, Caresa-Galstaldo 156-8, my translation: "οὕτω καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν στέρησίς ἐστι τοῦ ὄντος, οὐ τοῦ κυρίως δὲ ὄντος· οὐκ ἔχει γὰρ ἐναντίον· ἀλλὰ τοῦ κατὰ μέθεξιν τοῦ κυρίως ὄντος."

[74] *CC* 3.28, Caresa-Galstaldo 156, Sherwood 178, modified: "Οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἐξ ἀϊδίου λέγοντες συνυπάρχειν τῷ Θεῷ τὴν τῶν ὄντων οὐσίαν, τὰς δὲ περὶ αὐτὴν ποιότητας μόνον ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐσχηκέναι, τῇ μὲν οὐσίᾳ οὐδὲν λέγουσιν ἐναντίον, ἐν δὲ ταῖς μόναις τὴν ἐναντίωσιν εἶναι."

[75] *CC* 3.29, Caresa-Galstaldo 158, Sherwood 178, lightly altered: "It depends on the power of Him who truly is whether the essence of things should ever be or not be; and *His gifts are without repentance* [Rom 11.29]. Therefore it both ever is and will be sustained by His all-powerful might [Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἔστιν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔσται τῇ παντοκρατορικῇ δυνάμει διακρατουμένη], even though, as was said, it has non-being as contrary." Cf. *Amb* 42.15; see below, sec. 2.6.

itself an essence or nature utterly other than its own. Or, to reprise earlier concepts, the God without contrary creates contrariety itself.[76] When God creates he does not simply modify himself, his essential being, and thus produce something of himself in a new mode or determination. "He is Creator not of the qualities but of the qualified essences," as Maximus puts it.[77] God has no counterpart; nothing could complete or compliment or even relate in any way to his very essence *qua* "the true essence."[78] That's exactly why Maximus thinks the Greeks slight "the all-powerful Goodness" of God when they do not accept a creation at once from God and essentially nothing like him.[79] That he can do it— at this we're "astounded."[80] That he unstintingly wills it—just so we perceive "His infinite goodness."[81] How can this occur? We've only hints here: when God created he "sent forth His eternally pre-existent knowledge of beings." And in fact, creation just is that knowledge receiving an essence, which, because received, admits a contrary (not-being), and because a contrary, is not God's at all.[82] Creation from non-being comes by God's eternal will and knowledge. And these, Maximus later specifies, are the *logoi* of all things.

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[76] This term, "coexist" (used at both *CC* 3.28 and 4.6), signifies a metaphysically simultaneous relation of two "parts" that together constitute a greater "whole." When the parts relate naturally, the consequent "whole" is a form. Maximus often wields this point against Origenist "preexistence of souls," namely, that since the soul and body of a concrete individual together constitute the individual "whole" or "nature" of that individual, then they must share the same origin lest they be subject to essential change and destruction (i.e. not really *be* the parts of *that* whole)—they must "coexist"; cf. *Ep* 15, PG 91, 557d; *Amb* 7.40-3, 42.9-13 and 25.

[77] *CC* 4.6, Caresa-Galstaldo 196, Sherwood 193, slight modification: "Ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸν παντοδύναμον ἐγνωκότες Θεόν, οὐ ποιοτήτων, ἀλλ' οὐσιῶν πεποιωμένων δημιουργὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι φαμεν."

[78] Maximus makes the same point when he says God essentially "without relation" (ἄσχετος); cf. *Amb* 10.58, 15.9, 20.2, 41.10.

[79] *CC* 4.2, Sherwood 192.

[80] *CC* 4.1, Sherwood 192.

[81] *CC* 4.3, Sherwood 192.

[82] *CC* 4.4, Caresa-Galstaldo 194, Sherwood 192-3: "Τὴν ἐξ ἀϊδίου ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὁ Δημιουργὸς τῶν ὄντων προϋπάρχουσαν γνῶσιν, ὅτε ἐβουλήθη, οὐσίωσε καὶ προυβάλετο."

Maximus critiques Origenism similarly. Many rightly see that Maximus corrects Origenist cosmology by reconfiguring its metaphysical triad.[83] Where the Origenist myth had rest (*stasis*), motion (*kinesis*), and only then becoming (*genesis*), Maximus reversed the sequence to initial *genesis*, historical *kinesis*, and final *stasis*. Origenism's was a tale about how rational beings originally enjoyed perfect unity (*henad*), suffered a tragic fall into bodily multiplicity upon their failure to desire God alone, and, through the Word's economy, will regain their truest (if obscured) desire—oneness "in spirit" with the God who is spirit.[84] Maximus heartily agrees that God is the highest and most natural object of desire for rational creatures. He makes this exact point a premise in some of his most biting polemic against a preexistent henad.[85] And, frankly, at least compared to Origen himself, Maximus's insistence that whatever receives being cannot be on the same metaphysical plane as God constitutes a point of *agreement* between them.[86]

But Maximus divines a deeper issue than any of this. Beyond and beneath a faulty metaphysics of motion, he sees the perennial problem of how, exactly, God can relate to what is both from him alone and yet not him.[87] So yes, Maximus agrees that God and

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[83] Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, 92-102.

[84] That's a summary of how Maximus seems to have viewed (contemporary versions of) Origenism, as evinced at *Amb* 7.2-7, 15.10-11, 42.13-14. For a sympathetic survey of the good reasons Origen adopted some form of a preexistent henad of rational beings—mostly to do with Christian theodicy rather than Platonic poisoning—see Peter W. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity: The Descent of the Soul in Origen and Plato," *HTR* 108.4 (2015): 594-620.

[85] Cf. esp. *Amb* 7.5. Maximus repeatedly affirms our natural desire for God: *Amb* 48.2, *Pyr* 33, *passim*.

[86] Origen, *Princ* 2.9.2, Görgemanns & Karp 402-4, Butterworth 130: "But since these rational beings, which as we said above were made in the beginning, were made when before they did not exist, by this very fact that they did not exist and then began to exist they are of necessity subject to change and alteration. For whatever may have been the goodness that existed in their being, it existed in them not by nature but as a result of their Creator's beneficence. What they are, therefore, is something neither their own nor eternal, but given by God [*non naturaliter inerat sed beneficio conditoris effecta. Quod sunt ergo, non est proprium nec sempiternum, sed a deo datum*]." See too Mueller-Jourdan, "The Foundation of Origenist Metaphysics," 159.

[87] Hence the logical structure of *Ambiguum* 7 runs as follows. It turns on Maximus's identification of two distinct (though related) features of Origenist protology (*Amb* 7.2): [1] that it posits a "connatural" relation to God, and [2] it places "becoming" (*genesis*) after both the primordial unity (*stasis*) and fall from

world do not simply share the same metaphysical plane (in essence or in quality/mode). So the question becomes: is their relation in any sense a *natural* one? Maximus thinks Origenism falters here precisely to the extent it does conceive the God-world relation as somehow a natural one. That's how he subtly characterizes Origenist protology when disputing an Origenist interpretation of Gregory's remark that we "are a portion of God that has flowed down from above."[88] Such would be a "facile interpretation,"

> which in fact is derived largely from the doctrines of the Greeks. According to the opinion of these people, there once existed a unity of rational beings, by virtue of which we were connatural with God [τήν τέ ποτε οὖσαν...τῶν λογικῶν ἑνάδα καθ' ἣν συμφεῖς ὄντες Θεῷ], in whom we had our remaining and abode. In addition to this they speak of a 'movement' that came about....[89]

Origenism thinks we were (and are) "connatural" with God. This was Maximus's issue with "the Greeks" too.[90] Origenist protology, "after the manner of the Greeks...mixed together the immiscible."[91] That is, it tends to forge a natural or essential relation between, on one side, beings whose very nature (not simply their mode) dictates a limited and self-contained process of actualization, and, on the other, God, whose nature not only is but transcends infinity itself.[92] For Maximus—and we'll see this in greater relief next

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God (*kinesis*). Most, we've seen, focus on the second feature, which does indeed come first in Maximus's response (*Amb* 7.3-14). But just after this disquisition on the metaphysics of motion comes Maximus's *logoi* doctrine (*Amb* 7.15ff.), which is not simply another way of stating the earlier points about genesis and motion. Rather it responds most directly to the first and distinct feature of Origenist protology—namely the precise relation between God and the world—in such a way that avoids positing a natural relation and yet still retains a relation of *identity* between them (*Amb* 7.21 and 7.31).

[88] *Amb* 7.1 = *Or*. 14.7.

[89] *Amb* 7.2.

[90] Cf. the note of Constas, vol. 1, 478 n. 2.

[91] *Amb* 15.10.

[92] *Amb* 15.8, PG 91, 1220a: the potential and perfection of a creature's *natural* movement is already given, and so already delimited, in its concrete nature (what Maximus called "qualified substances" at *CC* 4.6). Therefore the actualization of every created nature necessarily terminates in a concrete, finite, limited *fact* or thing done. Take the soul. "Its potentiality [δύναμιν] is the intellect, its motion [κίνησιν] is the process of thinking, and its actuality [ἐνέργειαν] is thought [τὸ νόημα], as well as of the thinker and the thing thought about, since it [i.e. the concrete fact of the thought] limits and defines the relationship of the two poles that frame the entire process." Thus is the "form of motion that obtains among all beings." And yet created motion's necessarily dynamic, polarized, and diachronic realization does not finally mean creaturely motion has as its end something other than God. It means that though creaturely motion "will

chapter—there is absolutely no *natural* relation between created and uncreated natures *qua natures*.[93]

These passages betray Maximus's debt to the "closed world" view of creation articulated by his Christian forbearers in general and to fourth-century Nicene theology in particular.[94] For Maximus, Greek metaphysics and Origenism alike seek to relax the radical difference between the nature of God and world.[95] "May divinity and humanity never become essentially identical, so that no created thing might be consubstantial and connatural with the divinity [ὁμοφυὲς καὶ ὁμοούσιον]! For we know that only an insane mind says these are consubstantial by nature."[96] But, as we saw last chapter, this poses a major obstacle for any Neoplatonic version of participation. Proclus, for instance, regards it as plain nonsense to say there is "nothing in common or identical in both" participated and participant, cause and effect, because that would amount to denying any causal or dependent relation between them at all.[97] Indeed, it appears that the very heart of participation requires *some* sort of essential or natural commonality between the two, lest

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come to an end in the infinity that is around God," this end is not the divine essence (that would imply, once again, *some* sort of "natural" relation between soul and God), for "infinity is around God, but it is not God Himself, for He incomparably transcends even this" (*Amb* 15.9).

[93] Cf. *Amb* 20.2, 65.2. The keen reader senses here an unresolved tension in Maximus: he seems to maintain that the rational creature simultaneously possesses God as its final, natural object of desire, and yet lacks a primordial, natural relation that would foster such a desire; see Chapter 3, sec. 3.3.

[94] Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy*, 54-8..

[95] So Mueller-Jourdan, "The Foundation of Origenist Metaphysics," 160: Maximus "radically differs from the Origenian system in regard to the conception of created substance (οὐσία)....for Maximus the concept of substance depends on this Aristotelian background which radically rejects any form of pre-existence for rational beings, a characteristic of Platonism." But Maximus also departs from Aristotle because he insists on "the simultaneity of creation of soul and body" (rather than Aristotle's post-existence of soul), so that for Maximus "there is one unique world" (161).

Is this fair to Origenism? A thorny issue, to be sure, especially while scholars like Casiday and Ramelli attempt to salvage Evagrius's thought from the wreckage wrought by Constantinople II (553). However that falls, I note here that Origenist thought suffered similar accusations long before Maximus. Pope Theophilus of Alexandria, *Festal Letter of 402*, warned that Origenists teach that "our soul is thus of the same nature with God"; cf. Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique*, 100-1. Canons 13-15, associated with Constantinople II, similarly target so-called "Isochrist" Origenism; cf. Price, vol. 2, 286.

[96] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 565d, my translation.

[97] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, props. 18, Dodds 20-1, and 30. See Chapter 1, sec. 1.5.

the entire notion of "likeness" among stratified levels derived from the One dissolve entirely (a notion, of course, very dear to patristic doctrines of deification).[98] Put another way, Neoplatonic participation works precisely because higher and lower beings *share* a common essence (or essential property or essential power) and yet differ in mode, that is, in *how* they possess and instantiate that essence.[99] If, as Maximus contends, between created and uncreated natures no natural link of any sort abides, how could participation ever get underway at all?

We might imagine Maximus to be among the most extreme advocates of *creatio ex nihilo* in Christian tradition.[100] There's certainly truth to it. And indeed it's fairly typical to characterize patristic conceptions of creation like this: God posits an "outside" reality alongside himself, an "other" that, precisely because it is created solely by divine will rather than by divine nature (and so unlike the Son's generation from Father), is wholly "dissimilar" to God's nature.[101] At least concerning the divine essence itself, Maximus may not even tolerate that much. A similar-dissimilar relation, after all, obviously presumes common qualities. How then to bridge the "great chasm" Gregory of

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[98] Proclus, *El. Theol*., props. 32, 78-9 (Plotinus's double-act theory), *passim*. See Johannes Hirschberger, "Ähnlichkeit und Seinsanalogie vom platonischen Parmenides bis Proklos," in *Philomates: Studies in the Humanities in Memory of Philip Merlan* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), 57-74.

[99] Proclus, *El. Theol*., prop. 97. This is why even Proclus (prop. 114) will not speak of the henads' "participation" in the One: you can't say, strictly speaking, that the One has anything in common with lower realities (even the henads or Intellect), because, as Plotinus already claimed, the One has nothing at all (*En*. VI.8 [39] 7); so Christian Guérard, "La Théorie des Hénades et La Mystique de Proclus," *Dionysius* 6 (1982): 77. So Neoplatonism too comes to its own qualification of participation-talk. But of course that only exacerbates the problem participation meant to resolve, and indeed explains nothing about how the One's very mode (of not "being" any mode at all) comes to produce *other* modes of being which, unlike the One, do possess their own proper and determinate modes (and therefore could never, for instance, cause all that the One causes; cf. *El. Theol*., props. 1-2, 78).

[100] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 152-3, though he errs in his further claim that Maximus's "predominantly Western style of thought"—an extreme emphasis on *ex nihilo*—means he "can only conceive of final divinization as a perfecting of what has been created finite." Next chapter shows it's in fact much more than finitude's perfection, and, oddly, this results precisely from what Balthasar correctly observes: "it is Christology that will decide the issue" (153).

[101] Florovsky, "Creation and Creaturehood," 46-8.

Nazianzus surveys, which "separates the whole of nature that has come into being...from that which is uncreated and at rest"?[102] When Maximus quotes this passage, he answers it with another from Dionysius: God, from the "overflow of His intense love for all things, *goes out of Himself*...to be in all according to an ecstatic and supraessential power which is yet inseparable from Himself."[103] That captures Maximus's conviction too, precisely when he brandishes his *logoi* doctrine against Origenist protology. "We consider" that "all things...come into being *from God* [τῶν ἐκ Θεοῦ γενομένων...ἡ γένεσις]."[104] So *creatio ex nihilo* entails an indomitable gap between the nature of God and world, but, simultaneously, that the world's creation is God's becoming out of himself—*creatio ex Deo*. How both?

2.4 – Second qualification: the Logos becomes logoi, *not ideas (the participated)*

If Neoplatonic participation adequately explained the God-world relation, you might expect the fundamental creative principles or *logoi* of all creatures to be the eternal Ideas or Forms participated by all things. Then the "procession" from One to Many would occur precisely *as* cascading iterations of more determinate or qualified essences, the egressive "limitation of act by power" that establishes every effect's hypostasis as a mixture of the One and not-One (i.e. as a determinate complex of variously participated higher principles).[105] Maximus's *logoi* do generate the species and forms of created hypostases as well as the very individuality of each hypostasis. They make all things

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[102] Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 41.12 (= *Amb* 71.6, PG 91, 1413a).
[103] Dionysius, *DN* 4.13 (= *Amb* 71.6, PG 91, 1413a-b), my emphasis.
[104] *Amb* 7.6, my emphasis.
[105] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, props. 1-2, 78-9, *passim*.

"related to" God (though not by a natural relation).[106] But they are not themselves Forms or Ideas, and not once does Maximus identify them as such.[107]

He might have. John of Scythopolis (*sedit* 536-*c.*548) was the first commentator of the Dionysian corpus.[108] Maximus would later add his own scholia to John's, which led to a long history of conflating the two under Maximus's name.[109] John is also the first to identify Dionysius's *logoi* and "paradigms" with the preexistent "forms" and "ideas" in the mind (or Logos) of God.[110] For John a Dionysian *logos* is "an idea, that is, a paradigm," "an eternal production of the eternal God which is complete in itself."[111] This definition points up the precarious station divine ideas occupy. As eternally complete *productions* (ποίησιν αὐτοτελῆ ἀίδιον) they are not the divine essence, but as eternal with and internal to God they are not quite creatures either. They are "thoughts of God," and

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[106] *Amb* 7.15, PG 91, 1077c: "τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν τῶν πάντων ἀναφορᾷ." It's hard to miss the Eucharistic tones of ἡ ἀναφορά; see Lampe, *s.v.*

[107] Balthasar, "The Problem of the Scholia to Pseudo-Dionysius," 376, notices this, though he routinely elides the *logoi* with "ideas"; see e.g., Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 116-21. Maximus does not even retain the language of "paradigm," even when he cites a Dionysian text that does; cf. *Amb* 7.24 (cp. *DN* 5.8) and *QThal* 13—in both instances Maximus prefers Dionysius's "divine wills." It might matter too that Gregory Nazianzen had openly maligned "Plato's Ideas" at *Or.* 27.10.—This section and the next (secs. 2.4-5) have appeared in shorter form at Jordan Daniel Wood, "Creation is Incarnation: The Metaphysical Peculiarity of the *Logoi* in Maximus Confessor," *Modern Theology* 34.1 (2018): 85-92.

[108] Translation from Paul Rorem and John C. Lamoureaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus: Annotating the Areopagite* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Though Sergius of Reshaina likely composed his sizeable introduction before John's more comprehensive edition; see Istvan Perczel, "The Earliest Syriac Reception of Dionysius," *Modern Theology* 24.4 (2008): 557-71.

[109] This tale of concealment was exposed only last century, principally by Balthasar, "The Problem of the Scholia to Pseudo-Dionysius," translated as an appendix in *Cosmic Liturgy*. Beate Regina Suchla is still in the process of sorting out all the details. See her "Das Scholienwerke des Johannes von Skythopolis zu den Areopagitischen Traktaten in seiner Philosophie – und theologiegeschichtlichen Bedeutung," in *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident: Actes du Colloque International Paris, 21-4 septembre 1994*, ed. Ysabel de Andia (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 155-65; eadem, *Corpus Dionysiacum IV/1, Ioannis Scythopolitani prologus et scholia in Dionysii Areopagitae librum 'De divinis nominibus' cum additamentis interpretum aliorum*. Patristische Texte und Studien 62 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); and Rorem & Lamoureaux, 2.

[110] Rorem & Lamoureaux speak of "John's obsessive linkage of the two words 'idea' and 'paradigm'," about 14x in ten different scholia (88). Only once does John specify that these ideas are found in Logos (*SchDN* 353.3), and this because the text at hand concerns why God is called "Logos" (*DN* 7.4). But there's nothing special about it being the Word who contains these ideas.

[111] John of Scythopolis, *SchDN* 329.1 (on *DN* 5.8); Rorem & Lamoureaux, 222 (PG 4, 329A).

though not worshipped as very God,[112] they are nothing other than him. They constitute

the stuff of God who is "pure mind":

> Since God is also the creator of beings, he will think them in that which does not
> yet exist. But he is the archetype of this universe. And these things he thinks not
> by receiving types from another, but by himself being the paradigm of beings.
> Thus, he is neither in a place, nor are things in him, as if in a place. But he has
> them, in so far as he has himself and is one with them – since all things, on the
> one hand, exist together and exist in the indivisible in him; and since, on the other
> hand, they are distinguished indivisibly in the indivisible. Accordingly, his
> thoughts are beings, and these beings are forms.[113]

These forms or ideas are like the "incorporeal matter of the things which participate in

those ideas."[114] So for John the *logoi* are the preexistent ideas that result from God's

simple act of thinking himself, the Forms participated variously by creatures.[115]

Not for Maximus. "Who," after contemplating the latent unity undergirding the

"infinite natural differences" in creation, would "fail to know the one Logos as many

logoi, indivisibly distinguished amid the differences of created things," and conversely,

that "the many *logoi* are one Logos, seeing that all things are related to Him without

being confused with Him"?[116] The one Logos "is manifested and multiplied

[πληθυνόμενον]" in and as the *logoi* of all beings.[117] They preexist "in" and "with

Him,"[118] ineffably pre-contained in Him from eternity.[119] Through the "creative and

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[112] John of Scythopolis, *SchDN* 329.1 and 332.1.

[113] John of Scythopolis, *SchDN* 320.3 (on *DN* 5.6); Rorem & Lamoureaux, 220.

[114] John of Scythopolis, *SchDN* 316.4; Rorem & Lamoureaux, 219.

[115] John even says that the *logoi* are "a [single] nature" that together have one *logos* and cause, though still in God (*SchDN* 353.3; Rorem & Lamoureaux, 230). They are like the most common nature of which particular creatures are but more determined and circumscribed instances. As we'll see, this is strikingly similar to the Plotinian Intellect. It again confirms that John's *logoi* are overwritten by the logic of formal causality.

[116] *Amb* 7.15, PG 91, 1077c: "οὐχὶ πολλοὺς εἴσεται λόγους τὸν ἕνα Λόγον, τῇ τῶν γεγονότων ἀδιαιρέτως συνδιακρινόμενον διαφορᾷ, διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν πρὸς ἄλληλά τε καὶ ἑαυτὰ ἀσύγχητον ἰδιότητα; Καὶ πάλιν ἕνα τοὺς πολλούς, τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν τῶν πάντων ἀναφορᾷ δι' ἑαυτὸν ἀσυγχύτως ὑπάρχοντα, ἐνούσιόν τε καὶ ἐνυπόστατον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς θεὸν Λόγον, ὡς ἀρχὴν καὶ αἰτίαν τῶν ὅλων, *ἐν ᾧ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα....*"

[117] *Amb* 7.16.

[118] *Amb* 7.19; *QThal* 13.2.

sustaining procession [πρόοδον] of the One to individual beings," "the One is many." And through "the revertive, inductive, and providential return of the many to the One," "the many are the One."[120] So the Logos is the *logoi* and the *logoi* the Logos.

Plotinus said the same.[121] The Intellect, the second of the three primary hypostases,[122] "is like one great complete *logos* embracing them all," embracing, that is, the *logoi* of the highest intelligible realities down to the *logoi* of particular "living beings" (i.e. particular souls). And these *logoi* are "what the Intellect wills and is [ὅ θέλει νοῦς καὶ ἔστι]." Intellect is therefore "one and many."[123] One and many, because intellectual power is the power to receive the form of the object known and so become identical to that object in actuality.[124] So when Intellect contemplates the *logoi* of all things—themselves the productive principles issuing from Intellect's struggle to image the

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[119] *Amb* 7.16.

[120] *Amb* 7.20.

[121] Two reasons to compare Plotinus's *logoi*. First, the few scholars open to putting Maximus in conversation with Neoplatonic philosophers (a good idea in my view) tend not to discern important differences between Maximus and Plotinus, especially their versions of the *logoi*; see Tollefsen's remark at n. 135. Second, as others have noticed, there's relatively little to compare when it comes to say, Evagrius's *logoi*, which already function (at least in "second contemplation" of visible realities) less as the primordial and creative foundation of the single world and more as God's providential means for intellects in a given age (*aeon*) to ascend from number and bodily division and re-identify with the "substantial knowledge" the Trinity is; cf., e.g., *KG* 1.27, 5.16 and 27, 6.75, and Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica'*, 110. For a brief survey of Evagrian *logoi*, see Luke Dysinger, O.S.B, "The *Logoi* of Providence and Judgment in the Exegetical Writings of Evagrius Ponticus," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 462-71.

[122] Plotinus, *En.* V.1.

[123] Plotinus, *En.* VI.2 [43] 21. That the Intellect "wills" these *logoi* is enough to undermine any facile claim that Maximus's (and Dionysius's) *logoi* differ from Plotinus's because the former are voluntarily elected principles (*pace* Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation*, 114). Plotinus actually has an entire treatise on the One's free will in making all things, where he depicts the One (as did Plato himself at *Tim* 29e-30a) generating intellectual causes "as he himself willed" (*En.* VI.8 [39] 18). The hackneyed contrast between voluntary creation and necessary emanation, astonishingly widespread in its acceptance among contemporary Christian thinkers, requires comprehensive reappraisal. Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, had no qualms identifying the two: see Harry Wolfson, "The Identification of *Ex Nihilo* with Emanation in Gregory of Nyssa," *HTR* 63 (1970): 53-60. See too the helpful remarks of Jean Trouillard, "Procession néoplatonicienne et création judéo-chrétienne," in *Néoplatonisme. Mélanges offerts à Jean Trouillard*. Cahiers de Fontenay, nn. 19-22 (Fontenay-aux-Roses: École Normale Supérieure, 1981), 79-108, esp. 83-9.

[124] Aristotle, *De an.* III.4-5.

imageless One[125]—it becomes identical to them. Intellect's very nature comprises the

perfect union of "otherness" (ἑτερότης) and "sameness" (ταυτότης), and that forms the

ground of all creaturely "difference" (διάφορα).[126] Plotinus's Intellect is the *logos* that

generates difference by self-identifying with many *logoi*. Quite like Maximus, it

appears.[127]

Recall though that for Plotinus the divine Intellect is not the One. There can be no

difference in the One, since to be different is to be other than one. The One somehow

possesses all created beings beforehand, yet "in such a way as not to be distinct [μὴ

διακεκριμένα]: they are distinguished on the second level, in the *logos* [ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ

διεκέκριτο τῷ λόγῳ]."[128] Creatures gain their definitional difference by *not* being the

One, that is, in the Intellect's *logoi*. Ever since Clement and Origen firmly planted the

logoi of creatures in the Second Person of the Trinity, the Word and Wisdom,[129]

Christians were obliged to waver here. After Proclus's proliferation of causal

intermediaries (the henads),[130] Dionysius again pressed the Christian point: "the whole

good processions and the Names of God, celebrated by us, are of one God."[131] If the

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[125] *En.* III.8 [30] 6-7.
[126] *En.* VI.2 [43] 21. The διάφορα of magnitudes, figures, qualities, and material division are specified in this text.
[127] This short review of Plotinus's notion of the *logoi* as Intellect shows the limitations of Larchet's narration of how Maximus's *logoi* differ from Plato's Ideas: "selon Maxime, le Verbe, qui a créé le monde, s'est référé aux *logoi* qui étaient contenus Lui [*sic*]; tandis que selon Platon, les Idées que le Démiurge a pris comme modèles pour produire le cosmos étaient extérieures à lui"; Larchet, "conception maximienne," 282.
[128] *En.* V.3 [49] 15, slightly modified. See Asger Ousager, "Sufficient Reason, Identities and Discernibles in Plotinus," *Dionysius* 21 (2003): 232.
[129] Clement of Alexandria, *Strom* IV.25; Origen, *Princ* 1.2.2; *Jo* 1.22.
[130] *El. Th.*, props. 113-116. Neoplatonists after Proclus largely returned to Plotinus's simpler threefold schema; see Cristina D'ancona, "Plotinus and later Platonic philosophers on the causality of the First Principle," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*. Ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 377-8.
[131] *DN* 5.2: "ἑνὸς θεοῦ τὰς ὅλας ἀγαθὰς προόδους καὶ τὰς παρ' ἡμῶν ἐξυμνουμένας θεωνυμίας" (Parker, 74, slightly modified; Suchla, 181).

Christian Creator is *sole* cause of the many, he becomes, in the creative act, One and many.

Maximus identifies God the Logos (not the Father, not the Spirit) with the creaturely *logoi*, so this must mean that the Word is somehow both one and many in such a way that it transcends the logic of Neoplatonic procession (which is the logic of participation from above, as it were).[132] He speaks of the Word's "procession" (πρόοδον) into all beings, true.[133] But we should not take this to imply what it must if this were Neoplatonic procession, namely, either [1] that this procession somehow diminishes the Word (making the Logos essentially subordinate to the One) so that the "identity" of Logos and *logoi* obtains only "by derivation,"[134] or [2] that the very Word is not really identical to creaturely *logoi* after all (as Plotinus's One is not essentially Intellect-*logos*).[135] No, this procession of One Word to manifold world proves at once a vertical

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[132] Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), argues that Maximus "is perhaps the first thinker in the Neoplatonic tradition to tackle the problem [of procession] head-on," though he doesn't seem to think Maximus offers anything more than does Dionysius.

[133] *Amb* 7.20.

[134] The first instance in *Amb* 7 of the Logos-*logoi* copula appears *along with* a declaration of the consubstantiality of Logos and Father (*Amb* 7.15). Cp. Proclus, *El. Th.*, prop. 18: "Thus the character as it pre-exists in the original giver has a higher reality than the character bestowed: it is what the bestowed character is, but is not identical with it, since it exists primitively and the other only by derivation [ἀλλ' οὐ ταὐτὸν ἐκείνῳ· πρώτως γὰρ ἔστι, τὸ δὲ δευτέρως]. For it must be that either the two are identical and have a common definition [ἕνα λόγον ἀμφοτέρων]; or there is nothing common or identical in both; or the one exists primitively and the other by derivation.... It remains, then, that where one thing receives bestowal from another in virtue of that other's mere existence, the giver possesses primitively the character which it gives, while the recipient is by derivation what the giver is [τὸ μὲν εἶναι πρώτως ὃ δίδωσι, τὸ δὲ δευτέρως ὃ τὸ διδόν ἐστιν]" (Dodds, 20-1). Only an identity by derivation is possible where participation among stratified levels of nature—a metaphysics of "more or less" like in kind (e.g. prop. 9)—is the only conceivable relation. Maximus too knows that in this way we are "not the same" (*Ep.* 6; ταὐτόν).

[135] *Pace* Törönen, 132, who perceives in the "creation song" of C.S. Lewis's Aslan an apt analogy for Maximus's *logoi*: "The connection between the creatures and the creator is presented in this figure as different musical notes. With the notes everything seems to proceed, as the young observer puts it, 'out of the Lion's head'. Yet, it is clear that this is not a process of emanation but an act of creation. It is *not* the Lion, as it were, unfolding into creatures." But for Maximus it is *precisely* the Lion-Logos who unfolds in the "creative and sustaining procession of the One to individual beings" as their *logoi* (*Amb* 7.20), who, as he says elsewhere, "expanded himself" into all multiplicity (*Amb* 33.2; PG 91, 1288A: "ἑαυτὸν...διέστειλεν"; cf. *Amb* 22.3).

and a horizontal one. It's a vertical descent and yet remains the same hypostasis.[136] It's a

horizontal multiplication and yet no inner perfection of any hypostasis.[137]

In fact, if we really wish to find philosophical precedent for that type of causal

procession, let's look not to Neoplatonism but to Stoicism. Consider one ancient

summary:

> The Stoics made god out to be intelligent, a designing fire which methodically
> proceeds towards the creation of the world, and encompasses all the seminal
> principles [τοὺς σπερματικοὺς λόγους] according to which everything comes
> about according to fate, and a breath pervading the whole world, which takes on
> different names owing to the alterations of the matter through which it passes.[138]

The same problem besets Maximus's use of the Neoplatonic center-radii-circle image (*Amb* 7.20; *CT* 2.4; *Myst.* 1). Some take this is a straightforward adaptation of Neoplatonic procession, which Maximus received from Dionysius (*DN* 5.5-9); so Perl, *Methexis*, p. 171, and Torstein T. Tollefsen, "Christocentric Cosmology," in *TOHMC*, 310-11. But Maximus's use *must* differ to the extent that the hypostasis of the Logos, unlike, say of the Plotinian One, does not itself simply remain when proceeding, as the center-point in the expanding circle. The Word himself *expands*.

[136] Not only does Maximus specify this at *Amb* 7.15 ("ἐνούσιόν καὶ ἐνυπόστατον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς Θεὸν Λόγον"), but he later adds that this procession is emphatically *not* that of the ineffable divine nature (*Amb* 7.20: "ὡς ὑπερούσιος, οὐδὲ ὑπό τινος οὐδαμῶς καθ᾽ ὁτιοῦν μετέχεται"). Again, consider *Amb* 61.3, PG 91, 1385d-1388a: "But the tent is also an image of the totality of creation, intelligible and sensible, which God the Father as Intellect (*Nous*) conceived, and which the Son as Word created, and which the Holy Spirit brought to completion." Not only is the Father Intellect here (rather than the Son, as required by a Son = Intellect view), but it's distinctively the Son/Word who executes the creative act—a notion that, whatever potential problems, must at least mean that creation "in the Word" is really linked to his *distinctive* personhood.

[137] I therefore cannot agree with Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 88 who sees little substantive difference between Plotinian and Maximian *logoi*: "The Plotinian Intellect contemplates the Forms as its thoughts, and there is unity because what contemplates (subject) and what is contemplated (object) are the same. Of course, this is the case with God and His divine wisdom expressed in the [Maximian] *logoi* as well." That for the Maximus the *logoi* in no way complete or actualize the one nature of the Logos distinguishes his doctrine quite clearly from Neoplatonic *logoi*. Again, contrast Syrianus, *in Metaph.* 106, 26 – 107,1 (cited at Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators,* vol. 3, 146—full citation at n. 170): "And, being complete, [Intellect] thinks everything. So nothing that has real being is left out of the essence of the Intellect, but it always situates the Forms (*eide*) in itself. They are not different in it and in its essence, but complete its being and bring to everything productive (*poietike*), paradigmatic and final cause. For it creates as Intellect, and the paradigms exist as Forms and are productive through themselves and their own goodness."

[138] Aetius, *Plac.* I.7; *SVF* 2.1027; Long & Sedley 46A: "οἱ Στωικοὶ νοερὸν θεὸν ἀποφαίνονται, πῦρ τεχνικὸν ὁδῷ βαδίζον ἐπὶ γενέσει κόσμου, ἐμπεριειληφός < τε > πάντας τοὺς σπερματικοὺς λόγους καθ᾽ οὓς ἅπαντα καθ᾽ εἱμαρμένην γίνεται, καὶ πνεῦμα μὲν ἐνδιῆκον δι᾽ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, τὰς δὲ προσηγορίας μεταλαμβάνον κατὰ τὰς τῆς ὕλης, δι᾽ ἧς κεχώρηκε, παραλλάξεις." Compare this to Maximus, *Amb* 10.52.

And not only does the Stoic Logos-god contain all "seminal principles within," but, as "the seminal *logos* of the cosmos,"[139] this Logos "brings forth [the world] from himself"[140] and simultaneously "comes to be in its parts."[141] The Stoic Logos does not proceed into the *logoi* of all things through declension.[142] In every *logos* dwells the same Logos whose very identity constitutes both the universal identity *and* the particular difference of all beings.[143]

Now compare all this to an ostensibly odd feature of Maximian protology. There's another "movement" besides procession and return in Maximus, "expansion" and "contraction."[144] Maximus knows a "principle and mode of expansion and contraction," the "simple essence" that pervades and binds all genera, species, and individuals into a single world.[145] We've similar ideas in Stoic physics.[146] More striking still, the Word "expands His very self" into and as the creative *logoi*.[147] And so the Word's "procession" (*Amb* 7) and "expansion" (*Amb* 33) ultimately name the same creative movement, the way God brings the world from nothing, from himself.[148]

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[139] Diogenes Laertius, 7.135-6; *SVF* 1.102 and 2.580; Long & Sedley 46B; cp. the discussion of *Amb* 6 above at sec. 2.2.

[140] Diogenes Laertius, 7.137: "ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ γεννῶν."

[141] Origen, *Cels*. IV.41; *SVF* 2.1052. I have rendered "ἐπὶ μέρους" in the plural, partly because the immediate context implies it: Origen's critique of the idea that God has a body. For Origen this must mean the Stoic god is, among other absurdities, composed of parts: "οὐδὲ γὰρ δεδύνηνται οὗτοι τρανῶσαι τὴν φυσικὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοιαν, ὡς πάντη ἀφθάρτου καὶ ἁπλοῦ καὶ ἀσυνθέτου καὶ ἀδιαιρέτου" (ibid.).

[142] Plotinus, *En*. V.1 [10] 6, for instance, teaches that Intellect's *logos* is not Intellect itself, but the hypostasis of Soul that derives from Intellect. Plotinus evinces a conspicuous tendency to separate and stratify a hypostasis and its *logos*, so that the *logos* appears "always as an expression of the preceding level respectively." Indeed, "it would seem that Plotinus is concerned to avoid any expression that might be taken as a step" in the direction of equating them; so Graeser, *Plotinus and the Stoics*, 35 (cf. 41).

[143] Sedley, "The Stoic Theory of Universals," 89.

[144] Cf.Tollefsen, *Christocentic*, 78.

[145] *Amb* 10.89, PG 91, 1177b-c: "κατὰ διαστολὴν καὶ συστολὴν λόγῳ τε καὶ τρόπῳ."

[146] Cp. Galen, *Nat. fac*. 106.13-17; *SVF* 2.406; Long & Sedley 47E; and Philo, *Quod deus sit immut.* 35-6; *SVF* 2.458; Long & Sedley 47Q.

[147] *Amb* 33.2, discussed above at sec. 22., text 1.

[148] Maximus notes two *wrong* ways to understand the expansion of Word into world. [1] It is a real multiplication of hypostases *and* essences, a real "other," as it were, from God. Thus the Word's expansion "through the principle of condescension" (*Amb* 33.2) differs from the intra-trinitarian generation of the Son,

Two crucial features emerge from this comparison. Both distinguish Maximus and the Stoics from Neoplatonic participation/procession. First, each retains the order or sequence of Neoplatonic procession *without* a gradual, vertical chain of self-subsistent intermediaries. The One Word certainly "preexists" the manifold cosmos.[149] And yet, unless the very Word becomes the undiminished, immanent, and personal presence in and as the principles of everything, there's no cosmos at all. Second, this more "horizontal" creative procession does *not* preclude some version of a vertical, cosmic hierarchy. The point is rather that this hierarchy emerges *from within* the sole world that subsists—the cosmos. In neither Stoicism nor Maximus do we come upon a "world of ideas" akin to

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which motion does not imply a different *essence* from the Father's. The "Monad," he says, "is not like the origin of the things that come after it, as if it had expanded after a state of contraction, like something naturally poured out and proliferating into a multitude" (*Amb* 1.3, PG 91, 1036b). And this, of course, is one way Maximus's creative Word-expansion diverges from Stoicism. [2] It is not a fragmentation of the Word (either in person or in essence): the Word proceeds "without expanding disparately into the infinite differences of the beings in which He exists as Being." And yet, Maximus marvels, the Word truly becomes wholly, indivisibly, and personally present as the *logos* of what's "common" and "individual" in every single thing and in the whole of all things—"truly *all things in all* [1 Cor 12.6, 15.20; Eph 1.23]" (*Amb* 22.3).

[149] Here we must exercise due care and precision when predicating "preexistence" of the Word. To say the Creator Word "preexisted" obviously cannot refer to an existence *prior* to creation in some sort of sequential sense, since creation is the generation of temporal sequence itself. Better to distinguish two uses of the suffix "pre-" in talk of the "pre-existent" or "pre-Incarnate Word"—a phrase John Behr confesses he has "yet to encounter in the Fathers" (cf. his *John the Theologian and His Pascal Gospel*, Pref., 4 [pre-pub. ms.]). First, there is the straightforward, serial, temporal sense that would signify the Word's presence and activity "before" the first century CE. The Word has indeed "existed" prior to that century; it's not as if he had to wait until his conception in Mary in order to be at all. But this sense immediately implicates and indeed gives way to a second, less heeded one: the "beyond," "transcendent," or simply "non-" existent nature of the Word's divinity. In this sense the "pre-" in the affirmation, "the Word preexists the world," in no way indicates an episode (or infinite episodes) that preceded his human existence. It means rather that the Word's divine nature is without origin or beginning, and is therefore not subject to temporal existence as such (Maximus often simply refers to this as divine "eternity," or even his being prior to eternity itself; e.g. *CC* 3.28). But both of these predications, note well, are (necessarily) *of Christ's natures*. He himself, his person or hypostasis, supposes both by nature. Therefore it's more correct to say: the Word, God by nature, exists in every temporal moment (including those before the first century) as the God who does not properly "exist" at all; and yet the selfsame Word, man by nature, *only* exists from the first century forward. Still more proper, given the deification of the Word's humanity that renders even creatures "without origin" (*Amb* 10.48), we must come to say: the *very same Word* born in the "middle" of time and thus marked by the properties acquired in that birth (his Jewishness, his biological DNA inherited from Mary, etc.)—through the interpenetration of human and divine nature in himself—that very Word is present and "exists" in every age *and "there" too bears the existence of his earthly life*.

Platonic forms.[150] Rather, both envision only the eternal Word and the temporal world, which together form a single subsistent cosmos because the Word is both at once.[151] The Word constructs the very world of ideas from within this world. Stoicism can "combine pantheism and cosmic hierarchy"[152] precisely because when their Word processes, he remains the Word he is, and, being himself in and as the world, he gives "form and figure to every particular thing [εἰδοποιεῖν ἕκαστα καὶ σχηματίζειν]."[153] Maximus uses these exact terms:

> What are these *logoi* that were first embedded within the subsistence of beings, according to which each being is and has its nature, and from which each was formed [εἰδοπεποίηται], shaped [ἐσχημάτισται], and structured, and endowed with power, the ability to act, and to be acted upon...?[154]

The *logoi* are not separately subsistent, participated forms. They are the personal Logos crafting all things from within.[155]

So then, the second qualification to participation logic comes from the side of the participated. The *logoi*, which are the Word's self-willed procession as the "infinite identity" of all things[156]—of their most generic kind to their most individual difference, and of the manifold relations among all universals and particulars—are not participated

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[150] *Pace* Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 120-1, though he's correct in his immediate point that there exist no "unrealized possibilities" in Maximus's Word; cf. Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 76, 88, *passim*.

[151] See above, sec. 2.2, text 4.

[152] Thomas Bénatouïl, "How Industrious can Zeus be? The Extent and Objects of Divine Activity in Stoicism," in *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, ed. Ricardo Salles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33.

[153] Plutarch, *St. rep*. 1054B; *SVF* 2.449; LS 47M, slightly modified; cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixt*. 18-27; *SVF* 2.1044.

[154] *Amb* 17.7, PG 91, 1228A-B, slightly modified: "Τίνες οἱ ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων τῇ ὑπάρξει πρώτως ἐγκαταβληθέντες λόγοι, καθ᾽ οὓς καὶ ἔστι καὶ πέφυκε τῶν ὄντων ἕκαστον, καὶ εἰδοπεποίηται, καὶ ἐσχημάτισται, καὶ συντέθειται, καὶ δύναται, καὶ ἐνεργεῖ, καὶ πάσχει..."; see too *Ep* 15, PG 91, 561D, where Maximus specifies that the divine power causes each being by "emplacing" (ἐνθεμένης) "a *logos* in each creature which is constitutive of being (τοῦ εἶναι συστατικὸν)."

[155] No contradiction arises, therefore, between the fact that the *logoi* are not themselves forms and yet perform the task of formal causality: they are indeed "archetypical *logoi*" (*QThal* 55, SC 554, 234), but the fully subsistent "archetype of divine and true life" is also "still to come" (*Amb* 71.10, PG 91, 1416c: "τὴν μέλλουσαν...ἀρχετυπίαν).

[156] *Amb* 65.2.

forms. They do not subsist in themselves or in some separate realm. They subsist in only

two realities: eternally, in and *as* the very hypostasis of the Word; and simultaneously, in

and *as* the very principles that cause and sustain the entire world.[157]

2.5 – *Third qualification: the* logoi *of created hypostases (the participants)*

Now consider participation from the opposite vantage, from the side of the created

individuals or hypostases—the participants. We meet a qualification from below, as it

were. You might state it like this: one reason participation, an activity, cannot account for

the whole creative act (and so the whole God-world relation) is that it cannot explain the

creation of the positivity of participants as such, the actors. A picture captivates us:

> The creation of the world...is to bring God's eternal knowledge of beings into a
> temporal dimension. Beings have their design in the *logoi*, and creation is
> precisely this, that entities are called into the temporal sphere...of participation in
> God's activity in accordance with these designs.[158]

But if participation names the "sphere" into which God's creative act moves the beings

he has always had in mind, how could the dynamics of that very sphere explain a

movement *into* that sphere, into itself? How do you get a participant "before"

participation? Or how is there participation "before" participants? The movement into

participating God must itself precede and (and so exceed) participation, lest we coil

ourselves into a circular argument. The circle would run thus: creation is the transitive

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[157] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 77, correctly observes that the *logoi* "are not identical either with the essence of God or with the existence of things in the created world," but sees in this principally (and vaguely) "an apophatic tendency" allied to "an anti-pantheistic tendency." I suggest more: the *logoi* are both uncreated and the foundation of creation because, as we saw with the historical body of Jesus Christ, the Logos himself, in his ineffable economy, proves to be both uncreated and created *by nature*—and indeed, he becomes the concrete *identity* of both (cf. Chapter 1, sec. 1.4). Again the basic distinction (not separation) between the logic of hypostasis and essence, even and especially in the Trinity's case, ought to matter here in protology too, lest it be utter nonsense to speak of the *Word*'s personal role in creating all things (as at *Amb* 7.15).
[158] Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation*, 129; cf. 29-30 (on Plotinus) and 117 (on Dionysius).

movement from nonbeing into participating God (Tollefsen's "sphere"); but that very movement is itself a participation in God; therefore creation is participation in participation—a senseless assertion.[159]

Matters worsen if you believe with Maximus that individual participants *qua* hypostases bear their own distinctive, whole, existential positivity. That idea, we saw, results inexorably from the basic distinction between nature and hypostasis in Maximus's Christo-logic.[160] But it exacerbates the problem of participation "from below" because now a hypostasis, which bears absolutely no formal content as such, still bears *some* sort of positivity that requires a causal act which *intends that very individual*. Now, for Maximus a hypostasis *simpliciter* is an effect in its own right, with its own integrity, rather than just the fleeting residue of ever more contracted, higher, subsistent forms or ideas. All this becomes clearer if we return to Maximus's *logoi* doctrine, this time from the perspective of the participants these *logoi* ground and effect.

A thing's *logos* comprises and establishes the whole ontological continuum of its nature, power, and activity.[161] So there is a *logos* of each participated nature (one of angels, one of human beings, and so on) and a *logos* of each individual's way of participating its nature(s), and these together constitute an individual creature's own prescribed *logos*.[162] A *logos* indeed for every branch of Porphyry's tree: the *logos* of a

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[159] This is not a problem for Neoplatonists, at least not with respect to participation in Intellect by its lower participants. Lower hypostases are nothing but modified or qualified permutations of Intellect's own essential activity. So Neoplatonists have a perfectly reasonable way of explaining the movement from Intellect's hypostasis to lower participations in it: participants in Intellect were never *separate* from the "sphere" of Intellect's activity, since they essentially *are* Intellect. Their departure or procession from Intellect is actually a move into *lesser* activity, not a move from non-activity to activity. Lower hypostases = participations. Cf. Proclus, *El. Theol.*, props 1-2.

[160] Chapter 1, sec. 1.3.

[161] *Amb* 15.5; cf. *CT* 1.3.

[162] *Amb* 7.16: through the Word God creates and continues to create "universals as well as particulars" (τὰ καθόλου τε καὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον). Maximus is clear that an individual's *logos* establishes

genus allows it to exist "as a whole indivisibly and really in the whole of those things subordinate to it," while the *logos* of a particular is contained by the *logoi* of "what is universal and generic."[163] The preexistent *logos* of an individual creature necessarily includes its formal content, what sort of thing it is, up to the most generic level. Its "*logos* of being" makes it the sort of thing that *is*.[164]

More often Maximus invokes the *logoi* to secure the integrity of creaturely difference. This certainly includes the difference of natural genera and species, and even the categorical distinctions embedding a creature in space and time—all of which contribute to the unique identity of that creature, something close to Porphyry's "bundle of properties."[165] Close, but not quite. Maximus knows a still deeper individuality, the difference of the differing thing itself. For "if we wish to have a complete knowledge of things," he says, "it is not enough to enumerate the multitude of characteristics," that is, "whatever is around the subject." But it's "absolutely necessary that we also indicate what is the subject of these characteristics, which is the foundation, as it were, upon which they stand."[166] No creature simply "coincides in its essence with what is and is called the assemblage of characteristics that are recognized and predicated of it." The inmost identity of the individual creature "is something different from these characteristics," something "which holds them all together, but is in no way held together

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its simultaneous participation in many levels of being, from its species to its highest genera ("common being"): in the concrete individual are wrought "many and sundry unifications of things separated," like many "angles" converging at a single point (*QThal* 48.17, CCSG 7, 341).

[163] *Amb* 41.10-11.

[164] *Amb* 7.22; *Amb* 41.10, *passim*. For "being" (οὐσία) as the most universal genus of creatures, as well as how this diverges from Aristotelian-Porphyrian conceptions, see Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 97, and Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 140.

[165] Cp. Porphyry, *Isag.* (CAG 4.1.7) with *Amb* 17.5-6; cf. *Amb* 7.15,19 and *Amb* 22.2. The differentiating role of *logos* is especially clear in Christological discussions; cf. *Amb* 36.2, and below.

[166] *Amb* 17.5: "...ἀλλὰ δεῖ πάντως καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον τούτοις, θεμελίου τρόπον ἐφ᾽ ᾧ ταῦτα βέβηκε."

by them" and so "is not derived from" or "identical with them."[167] The *logoi* together carve out the individual difference of the differing thing—quite Platonic. But Maximus also attributes a *logos* to the difference of the individual as such, what he calls the "*logos* of hypostasis." Whereas a thing's "nature" "comprehends the common *logos* of being," its "hypostasis" "comprehends also the *logos* of being for that very individual."[168] A creature's preexistent *logos* grounds its identity as *that* individual—none of which should surprise, given Maximus's Christo-logic.

We can appreciate Maximus's originality here if we contrast his *logoi* to Plotinus's particular forms, especially since the two are often equated.[169] Richard Sorabji has rightly observed that Plotinus's concept of particular or individual forms "can provide no help with the differentiation of *persons*, since the individuals in question are *souls*."[170] A particular soul is a fixed nature, more precisely a preexistent form, which contains as *logoi* the potential for "all the individuals it animates in succession." These *logoi* permit reincarnation. The same soul can now be Socrates and later Pythagoras.[171] It's true that Plotinus cannot conceive the relation between an individual and its form in *simply* formal terms, "as portraits of Socrates are to their original."[172] The *logoi* of a soul (indeed the *logoi* of the whole world soul) shuffle down, as it were, into the material realm, and by their "unequal predominance" together with matter constitute an individual. The mother transmits now these *logoi*, now those, the father these, now those; certain *logoi*

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[167] *Amb* 17.6.

[168] *Opusc.* 26, PG 91, 264a: "Ὅτι ἡ μὲν φύσις τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον κοινὸν ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις, καὶ τὸν τοῦ καθ' ἑαυτὸ εἶναι."

[169] Perl, *Methexis*, 148 n. 2. This appears to be assumed by Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 88; Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 116-17, *et al*.

[170] Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD: A Sourcebook: Volume 3: Logic and Metaphysics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 362. For what follows see 362-7.

[171] *En.* V.7 [18] 1; Armstrong, 223.

[172] *En.* V.7 [18] 1; Armstrong, 225.

predominate during this particular time period, others at another, still others at this place, others elsewhere—myriad individual combinations *ad infinitum*.[173] A circuitous route, sure, but where individuals are generated by *logoi* "the difference must [still] be linked with the form."[174] An individual preexists only as a potency of its particular form. Just to the extent it is an *individual*, it is not its form. And so, as Proclus insists, it is not known by Intellect before the individual comes to be.[175]

Maximus agrees that an individual *qua* hypostasis is unknowable. A hypostasis certainly *possesses* form, bears a particular nature, but it's not itself form. No form, no intelligible content. Again, a "nature" has to do with "a *logos* of form," and while a hypostasis as such lacks formal content, it still has a *logos* of some kind.[176] Of what kind? Of *no* kind, for a "*logos* of hypostasis," by definition, names no *formal* principle at all. This goes for every creaturely hypostasis. Since "every divine energy indicates through itself the whole God, indivisibly present in each individual thing, according to the *logos* through which that thing exists in its own way [ἐν ἑκάστῳ καθ' ὅνπερ τινὰ λόγον ἐστὶν ἰδικῶς]," then no mind can fathom "precisely how God is whole in all things commonly, and in each being in an irreducibly singular way [ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων ἰδιαζόντως]." Intellects "are incapable of understanding even the lowermost creature in terms of the

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[173] *En.* V.7 [18] 2, V.9 [5] 12; cf. Proclus, *El. Th.*, prop. 206.

[174] *En.* V.7 [18] 3; Armstrong, 229: "συνεζεῦχθαι δεῖ τῷ εἴδει τὸ διάφοραν"; cf. Proclus, *El. Th.*, 194.

[175] *PT* 1.21, 98, 16-19, Saffrey-Westerink. Proclus adds two arguments against the preexistent potency of an individual *qua* individual: [1] if an individual's own preexistent idea is also its cause, and if that idea is eternal, then this would imply the eternal fixity of the individual—a manifest absurdity (*in Parm.* 824, 12 f.); [2] if an individual's own preexistent idea is precisely its *paradigm*, then this entails it to be always a paradigm *of* the individual. But then the individual must always be so that its idea is always paradigm. But the individual is obviously not eternal, *ergo etc*. (*in Parm.* 824, 23 ff.).

[176] *Opus.* 26, PG 91, 264b: "Ὅτι ἡ μὲν φύσις εἴδους λόγον μόνον ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις καὶ τοῦ τινός ἐστι δηλωτική."

logos of its being and existence."[177] In each thing's *logos* God is, as Scripture attests, truly "all things in all" (1 Cor 12.6, 15.20; Eph 1.23)—from its most common participation (Being itself) to what is most particular (hypostasis).[178] Where some saw only intelligible dearth Maximus glimpsed the fundamental mystery that every single creature is: the *logos* of what is by definition unintelligible—the hypostasis, the concrete participant[179]—God foreknows "as only he knows how."[180] There, where "the intellect finds nothing to grasp," where formal procession can account for nothing of what's truly subsistent—the individual—there one encounters one phenomenon at its most palpable: "divine power."[181]

All this explains why Maximus never says creatures participate their *logoi*. A creature's *logos* is the principle "by which" it participates divine perfections (Being, Goodness, Immortality, etc.). It is *how* a creature participates at all, not *what* it participates.[182] More, an individual's *logos* of hypostasis not only facilitates participation, but, as we've seen, establishes the participant herself. Maximus can even say that we "receive participation."[183] My *logos* is the preexistent principle that determines what I

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[177] *Amb* 22.3, modified.

[178] Jean-Claude Larchet, "La conception maximienne des énergies divines et des *logoi* et la théorie platonicienne des Idées," *Philotheos* 4 (2004): 281: that each existent has its own individual *logos* "fonde en Dieu même la diversité du monde créé et la singularité de chaque être."

[179] Balthasar too noticed in Maximus this play of the "negative identity" and "positive identity" of the individual, but, as far as I can see, he did not expressly link these aspects to the *causation* of a created hypostasis as such: he says only that the "negativity" means every creature comes from nothing and is not God, and the "positivity" that every creature is yet held in being by God "through his relationship to them" (*Cosmic*, 68). My point here is that the very negative positivity of a hypostasis evades every metaphysical relation, and that this relation, whatever it is, must "keep" a thing in being in an utterly unique and mysterious way. Maximus thinks that way – not just that *fact* – has indeed been revealed in Christ, in all its proper mystery.

[180] *QThal* 2 (SC 529, 158); cf. *Amb* 7.19.

[181] *Amb* 17.10. I think this is why Maximus tends to transition straightaway from the creation of *hypostases* to amazement at God's "power" and "wisdom"; cf. *Ep* 13, PG 91, 299; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 325; *Amb* 7.19 (cited below at n. 180); *Amb* 35.2 (here he cites Dionysius in support; *DN* 9.2); *Amb* 48.2.

[182] *Amb* 15.5. So too Perl, *Methexis*, 52-9; followed by Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 174.

[183] *Amb* 7.21 (PG 91, 1084A): "εἰληφὼς πρὸς τῷ εἶναι καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέθεξιν φύσει ἀγαθόν"; cp. *Myst* 24 (PG 91, 704D).

participate and the *I* that participates.[184] It's God predetermining and pre-establishing the *power* to be *me*—my nature and my person.[185]

2.6 – The Word proceeds: one act, two modes of activity

Participation in Maximus has now received three vital qualifications. [1] The world's essence enjoys no kind of natural mediation with or relation to divine essence; [2] the *logoi* that establish the world's essence are the Word himself and not participated forms or ideas that subsist own their own; [3] participants *qua* hypostases cannot come to be, cannot receive their concrete positivity, through participation (understood Neoplatonically as the formal, successively determinate limitation of higher acts by lower powers). What then is the divine act of creation? And what can "participation" signify in this mightily qualified schema? This penultimate section limns a brief but instructive portrait of what sort of ontology emerges from the protology we've considered. Doing so, I hope, will offer some preliminary answers to these abiding questions.

Observe two characteristics of this portrait. First, divine creation is a single and inevitable act. Second, this one act generates two infinitely different natural modes (and so their very difference, too).

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[184] *Pace* Perl, *Methexis*, 153: "A logos is no more than the presence of the participated in the participant," and 163: "Because the hierarchy is continuous from Being down to the logoi of particulars, there is no difference between a creature's having a logos and its participating in the perfections." The presence of the participated, if what's participated is an energy or perfection (*CT* 1.48-50) or even a created universal (*Amb* 7.16), can only be present as that creature's particular *form* (cf. Proclus's "whole-in-part" at *El. Th.*, props. 72-4). A Maximian hypostasis and its *logos* cannot be present as form. However the *logos* of hypostasis be immanent, it's not simply through the transcendence-immanence dialectic of participated and participating forms.

[185] *Amb* 7.19: "in the wisdom of the Creator, individual things [ἕκαστα] were created at the appropriate moment in time, in a manner consistent with their *logoi*, and thus they received in themselves actual existence as beings [τὸ εἶναι τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ λαμβάνῃ]. For God is eternally an active creator, but creatures exist first in potential, and only later in actuality [Ἐπειδὴ ὁ μὲν ἀεὶ κατ' ἐνέργειάν ἐστι Δημιουργός, τὰ δὲ δυνάμει μέν ἐστιν, ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ οὐκ ἔτι], since it is not possible for the infinite and the finite to exist simultaneously on the same level of being."

1. *One inevitable act*. Maximus conceives the act of creation in both aorist and present tense. Wisdom 9.1 (and Jn 1, Col 1, etc.) say God "created" or "made" all things, yet in John 5.17 Jesus says: "My father continues to work even now, and I too am at work."[186] Maximus thinks this indicates two moments of a single creative act. God "completed" or "fulfilled" the foundational *logoi* of creatures "all at once" (ἄπαξ),[187] and these, we already know, constitute the *power* of every creature to be who and what and at all.[188] But the actualization of these powers, the arboreal "extension of the ages"—these imply that God continues to create at every moment.[189] The *logoi* of identity and difference, the very lineaments of created being, show themselves "one in power" though they "assume a different and multi-modal activity."[190] Creation is a work of the entire Trinity, to be sure, but a work carefully distributed: the Father "approves" (εὐδοκῶν), the Son "actualizes it from himself" (αὐτουργῶν), the Holy Spirit "completes" (συμπληροῦντος) the roles of both.[191] And I must note *en passant*: Maximus uses exactly the same schema to describe the act of the historical Incarnation.[192]

I mentioned above that Maximus thinks divine creation inevitable. He could never agree with Florovsky, for example, that "the world could have not existed."[193] Here

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[186] Jn 5.17 (as cited at *QThal* 2, SC 529, 158): "ὁ πατὴρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι."
[187] *QThal* 2, SC 529, 158.
[188] *Amb* 7.19, 10.90, 42.14, 65.2.
[189] *Amb* 46.4, PG 91, 1357a-b, where, once again, this act of creation comes by the Word's condescension to become the very power of each and all: "He deigned to vary the modes of His presence so that the good things He planted in beings might ripen to full maturity, until the ages will have reached their appointed limit [συγκαταβατικῶς ἐφεῖναι τὰς ἀκτῖνας ἀνεχόμενος, ποικίλαι τοὺς τρόπους ἀξιώσας πρὸς τελεσφόρησιν ὧν τοῖς οὖσιν οἰκείων κατέσπειρεν ἀγαθῶν μέχρι τῆς πάντων ἀποπερατώσεως τῶν αἰώνων]. At that point He will *gather together* the fruits of His own *sowing*...."; cf. too *Amb* 7.16.
[190] *Amb* 10.37, modified.
[191] *QThal* 2, SC 529, 160.
[192] *QThal* 60, SC, 569, 88; *Comm. in Or. dom.*, CCSG 7, 51.
[193] Florovsky, "Creation and Creaturehood," 45, 51; again, starkly put at 57: ""In a sense, it would be 'indifferent' to God whether the world exists or not—herein consists the absolute 'all-sufficiency' of God, the Divine autarchy.... The might of God and the freedom of God must be defined not only as the power to create and to produce but also as the absolute freedom *not to create*."

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Maximus's doctrine appears more or less diametrically opposed to Florovsky's, since the latter confuses creation's inevitability with its self-sufficiency and then accuses such a view of "introducing the world into the intra-Trinitarian life of the Godhead as a co-determinant principle."[194] Maximus rather thinks a supposed *indeterminacy* on God's part toward the world would itself introduce another principle into God, a shadow side, as it were, to God's utterly unhinged and aleatoric will. Strange to say it, but Maximus even considers this among the most offensive implications of Origenism, and indeed links it to Manichaeanism.[195] It's the Origenist myth, Maximus notices, which imagines God having to "react" to the downward inclination of the primordial souls and so create something he never intended to create—bodies. Not only would this mean attributing to sin (as an essential condition) the beauty of the corporeal cosmos, it would imply the merest possibility that there might arise *logoi* or "wills" in God he did not intend from eternity, from the goodness of his nature. Maximus doesn't even consider this line. To him one thing's surest of all: "the purpose of God, who created all things, must be changeless concerning them."[196] Ultimately it's the Word's Incarnation that defines for us God's unwavering and irrevocable disposition toward creation—that reveals God is "truly Creator by nature."[197] And so Maximus upholds a venerable thread of tradition that

His main argument is creation's inherent instability and lack of self-sufficiency. But to deduce pure contingency from instability is to think creation apart from the nature of the Creator. The issue is not whether creation *depends* on God, but whether God is the sort of God who could not but give himself as the source of what wholly depends on him. Even the strictest emanationist, after all, admits that finite beings depend on higher principles.

[194] Florovsky, "Creation and Creaturehood," 56.

[195] *Amb* 42.16. This association was made in a general way at Constantinople II; cf. Evagrius Scholasticus, *H.E.* IV.38.

[196] *Amb* 42.15; PG 91, 1329C.

[197] *QThal* 60.8, SC 569, 90: "For it was truly necessary that He who is by nature the Creator of the essence of beings Ἔδει γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸν κατὰ φύσιν τῆς τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας δημιουργὸν] should have also been, through Himself, the Author of the deification of beings by grace. In this way the Giver of well-being might also show Himself the Dispenser of the grace of eternal well-being."

affirms the "sublime necessity" of divine creation,[198] rarely defended in contemporary theology with the exception of another great Russian theologian and Florovsky's master, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov.[199]

2. *Two infinitely different natural modes*. In *CT* 1.48-50 we come upon a schema of participation that appears obviously Neoplatonic. Any determinate thing (τι) is qualified by (at least) the predicate "to be," and any such thing is a "work of God."[200] Works of God come under two categories: those that "began" and those that "did not begin" or, more precisely, works generated "temporally" (χρονικῶς) and those "eternally" (ἀϊδίως). Temporally effected works designate "all participating beings [τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα], such as the different essences of beings."[201] Works produced eternally—the second type—are "participated realities" (τα ὄντα μεθεκτά) that participants participate "by grace."[202] This latter category of divine works comprises participated realities like "all life, immortality, simplicity, immutability, infinity," and

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[198] Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy*, 173-8. He cites Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.22.3; Athanasius, *Contra gent.* 35; Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. catech.* (GNO 3.4:17, l. 5-18, l. 4). I add Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 38.9, cited at *Amb* 35.1, PG 91, 1288d: "But since this did not suffice to Goodness—to move solely within self-contemplation—it was necessary that the Good should overflow and make progress, so that a greater number of beings would benefit." Maximus comments with no fuss over the talk of necessity, and even adds a touch by citing Dionysius's "ever-giving effusion" of divine goodness that proceeds from an "incomprehensible permanence" within God himself; *Amb* 35.2, cp. *DN* 9.2.

[199] Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, transl. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008 [orig: 1933]), 120: "God needs the world, and it could not have remained uncreated. But God needs the world not for himself but for the world itself. God is love, and it is proper for love to love and to expand in love…. Otherwise, absoluteness itself becomes a limit for the Absolute, a limit of self-love or self-affirmation, and that would attest to the limitedness of the Absolute's omnipotence -- to its impotence, as it were…. And if it is in general possible for God's omnipotence to create the world, it would be improper for God's love not to actualize this possibility, inasmuch as, for love, it is natural to love, exhausting to the end all the possibilities of love…. God-Love needs the creation of the world in order to love, no longer only in his own life, but also outside himself, in creation."—Read this alongside Maximus's remark at *Amb* 10.119: "For it was on the highest logoi of God accessible by man, namely, His goodness and love, that they rightly concentrated their vision, and it was from these that they learned that God was moved to give being to all the things that exist."

[200] *CT* 1.49, PG 90, 1101, Salés 70: "Πᾶν τὰρ εἴ τι τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον ἔχει κατηγορούμενον, ἔργον Θεοῦ τυγχάνει."

[201] *CT* 1.48, Salés 70-1, slightly modified.

[202] *CT* 1.48, Salés 70-1.

even "being itself."[203] And the God who works "incomprehensibly eludes infinitely all beings, participating and participated."[204]

Three levels, then: God the unparticipated,[205] his eternal works (participated), and his temporal works (the participants). A rather neat and apparently straightforward (if simplified) appropriation of Neoplatonic participation, Proclus's in particular.[206] But notice some oddities. Maximus calls both types of divine works "beings" (τὰ ὄντα). Fine enough for participants generated in time, but what to say about "beings" eternally wrought? This might recall Proclus's henads, causal mediators who share a single essence but effect different participants. Jonathan Greig has recently given the lie to this ostensible parallel, since, of course, Proclus's henads are whole, "self-subsistent" hypostases.[207] God's eternal works, though they have being, are nowhere called hypostases, and indeed this would violate Maximus's first qualification denying any natural mediation between created and uncreated essences (sec. 2.3).[208]

Tollefsen argues that the "being" of God's eternal works puts Maximus in opposition to the Dionysian priority of Good over Being: "For Maximus, then, Goodness embraces the other activities and is itself embraced by Being."[209] That is, Tollefsen conceives the "being" of participated works as itself an instance of participation. I noted

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[203] *CT* 1.48, Salés 70-1: "πᾶσα ζωὴ καὶ ἀναθανασία καὶ ἁπλότης καὶ ἀτρεψία καὶ ἀπειρία," and *CT* 1.50, Salés 72: "αὐτὴ ἡ ὀντότης."

[204] *CT* 1.49, PG 90, 1101, Salés 70-1: "Πάντων τῶν ὄντων καὶ μετεχόντων καὶ μεθεκτῶν ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως, ὁ Θεὸς ὑπερεξῄρηται."

[205] Cf. *Amb* 42.15.

[206] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, esp. prop. 63, Dodds 60-1: "Every unparticipated term gives rise to two orders of participated terms, the one in contingent participants, the other in things which participate at all times and in virtue of their nature."

[207] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 64, Dodds 60: "αἱ...αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις." See Greig, "Proclus' Doctrine of Participation," 12-13.

[208] If eternal works of God were neither Trinitarian nor created hypostases (in time), then would seem to form a mediating term that mediates by possessing qualities from both extremes, as it were. As we saw at sec. 2.3, though, Maximus faults "the Greeks" for exactly this, that they conceive difference as gradual qualification of one primal essence or reality.

[209] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 164.

before some metaphysical problems with this line of thought, but here an exegetical point

suffices: the participated works of God *include* "being itself."[210] Being itself *is*. Whatever

the "is" of being itself, therefore, it cannot derive from participation. For what "being"

would "participated being itself" participate? All that subsists above, we saw, is "true

being" never participated—the divine essence.[211] So what constitutes the "being" of

God's eternal works?[212] Or, since the participated works are also the one God,[213]

reformulate it thus: how can the imparticipible God become participible in his eternal

works?

A hint: Maximus says here that the participated (eternal) works have "by grace

been implanted in originated beings [temporal works/participants], as if a kind of

implanted potentiality, loudly proclaiming that God is in all beings."[214] Once more we

sense Neoplatonic reverberations. Proclus too teaches that separately participated realities

are "present to the participant through an inseparable potency which it [i.e. the

participated] implants."[215] This power subsists in the participant alone, and yet, as the

transference point of participation between higher act and the lower internal act, it is the

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[210] *CC* 1.50, Salés 72: "αὐτὴ ἡ ὀντότης." Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 164, seems to sense the tension, but remarks only that this passage (1.50) does not mention the "being" of this list of "works." But surely, as he himself goes on to assume, they belong to the same class as those in *CT* 1.47-8; indeed, three (Goodness, Immortality, Life) appear in both lists. They are therefore also participated *beings*, and so "Being itself" is a participated *being*.

[211] Mentioned even here at *CC* 1.49, and at 1.50, Salés 72: "ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν γὰρ πάντων τῶν τε νοουμένων καὶ λεγομένων ἐξῄρηται." See above, sec. 2.3.

[212] Greig, "Proclus' Doctrine of Participation," 14 n. 35, seems right to say that the "being" of God's eternal works constitutes "a new ontological category for the partcipated entities, insofar as their ontological status is modified from Proclus while still yet distinct from God himself."

[213] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 161, rightly observes: "If we read *Cap. gnost.* 1.47 in connection with 1.48 it seems a quite reasonable interpretation to hold that the divine works without beginning (1.48) are collectively identified as the divine activity (ἡ θεία ἐνέργεια, 1.47)."

[214] *CT* 1.49, Salés 70-1: "τὸ δὲ κατὰ χάριν τοῖς γεγονόσιν ἐμπέφυκεν, οἷα τις δύναμις ἔμφυτος, τὸν ἐν πᾶσι ὄντα Θεὸν διαπρυσίως κηρύττουσα." It's obvious from later passages that such "implanted powers" are the *logoi* of beings; see esp. *Amb* 17.7 and 21.8.

[215] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 81, Dodds 76-7: "Πᾶν τὸ χωριστῶς διά τινος ἀχωρίστου δυνάμεως, ἣν ἐνδίδωσι, τῷ μετέχοντι πάρεστιν."

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"medium" of the two terms.[216] But again the comparison is deceptive. Not only are Maximus's "participated realities" *not* themselves hypostases, but the "power" within participants must furnish them the power to be more than *what* they are; it must also grant the power to be *who* they are, that is, to be *hypostases*. And hypostases exceed form in Maximus, we just saw (sec. 2.5). But Proclus's implanted "power"—and this is the crucial point—rehearses the very mechanism we've seen both essential to Neoplatonic participation and yet proscribed by Maximian *logoi*. It's a power that emanates solely as a qualified and more determinate instance of the higher and "more perfect actuality" of its cause.[217] In other words, this "power" is the cause's natural activity in a lesser mode. A Maximian *logos* does not emanate by a process of formal modification or participation— indeed we've seen it *establishes* that very process—but rather in a still more fundamental, more mysterious way.

All these oddities and divergences make good sense if we make proto-logic Christo-logic. This very text (*CT* 1.49) intimates the way: it begins with the God who infinitely transcends both participated and participating works, and then resolves in the assertion that this "power" implanted within each participant is both God's participated work *and that it heralds God himself in all beings*. That's to say, we have here the divine *procession* into all beings, and this "power" names the term of that procession. God's eternal works dwell within me as my very power to be all I am, and they do so because

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[216] Proclus, *El. Theol*., prop. 81, Dodds 76-7. That's a very compact way of describing the Neoplatonic principle of "limitation of [higher] act by [lower] power," though the isolation of a "medium" is Proclus's touch.

[217] Proclus, *El. Theol*., esp. props. 77-8.

God himself dwells within.[218] Maximus specifies the peculiar character of this procession in *Amb* 7:

> When, however, we exclude the highest form of negative theology concerning the Logos—according to which the Logos is neither called, nor considered, nor is, in His entirety, anything that can be attributed to anything else, since He is beyond all being [ὡς ὑπερούσιος], and is not participated in by any being whatsoever [οὐδὲ ὑπό τινος οὐδαμῶς καθ' ὁτιοῦν μετέχεται]...the one Logos is many logoi and the many are One [πολλοὶ λόγοι ὁ εἷς Λόγος ἐστὶ καὶ εἷς οἱ πολλοί]. According to the creative and sustaining procession of the One to individual beings, which is befitting of divine goodness, the One is many [τὴν ἀγαθοπρεπῆ εἰς τὰ ὄντα τοῦ ἑνὸς ποιητικήν τε καὶ συνεκτικὴν πρόοδον πολλοὶ ὁ εἷς]. According to the revertive, inductive, and providential return of the many to the One [τὴν εἰς τὸν ἕνα τῶν πολλῶν ἐπιστρεπτικήν τε καὶ χειραγωγικὴν ἀναφοράν τε καὶ πρόνοιαν]...insofar as the One gathers everything together, the many are One.[219]

The *logoi* are and issue from the Logos becoming the causal principles of the world. They institute both participant and participated, which is to say they effect a single activity in two infinitely different natural modes. And though these modes disclose one divine act that constitutes "a single world," they are themselves infinitely different by nature.[220] Divine creation, therefore, is a non-natural (or supra-natural) procession of the Word that generates an essence utterly different from the divine. And yet these same *logoi* bear within and make accessible to creatures "the infinite divine activities of God,"[221] which, as *CT* 1.49 just said, are implanted within us. Here's the marvel: somehow the *logoi* introduce the eternal works of divine essence (participated) into created essence (participants), though the latter enjoys no *natural* mediation with that same divine essence. Somehow the *logoi*, I mean, make the imparticipable God participable in a way that exceeds any natural process.

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[218] Cf. too *Amb* 10.102.
[219] *Amb* 7.20, PG 91, 1081b-c.
[220] *Amb* 17.8.
[221] *Amb* 22.2.

Wasn't that exactly the logic of Incarnation? The second person of the Trinity, the Word, condescended to make himself identical to human nature, and that act was the very creation of that human nature (sec. 1.3). And yet, because created, his human nature bore nothing *natural* in common with his divinity, only the positive identity of his own hypostasis (sec. 1.4). Hypostatic identity generated natural difference along with their respective powers and modes. And these powers, recall, when reduced to concrete actuality in the doings of Christ's historical life, proved that the proper modes of infinitely different natures can *interpenetrate* one another, whole in whole, in perichoretic union (sec. 1.5). His existence revealed that "divine and human activity coincided in a single identity."[222] The "mode of exchange" between Christ's two natures was itself not natural for the simple reason that it was his *person* alone that united them.[223] And so, though Maximus might indulge participation talk even in a christological context,[224] his fundamental logic comes ever to this: hypostatic identity generates infinite natural difference, and the consequent modes of each nature, when perfected, interpenetrate one another *symmetrically* rather than, say, "by derivation."[225]

I therefore contend that the "being" attributed to the eternal mode of God's creative activity is the "tri-hypostatic existence" of the divine essence (itself imparticipable).[226] That explains why eternal works are at once "beings" and not self-

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[222] *Amb* 5.19, slightly modified.
[223] *Amb* 5.20.
[224] *Amb* 36.2, my emphasis: "It was not so amazing...for God to bring into communion with Himself, through the *infusion of breath*, the first formation of human nature...granting to that *likeness* a share of the divine beauty *according to His image*—as it was for Him to deign to draw near to it after it had been stained, and ran from Him....and to enter into intimate communion with it, and **to partake of what was inferior** [καὶ τοῦ χείρονος μετασχεῖν], and to heighten the miracle by means of a paradoxical union with things utterly beyond mixture with Him."
[225] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 18, quoted above at n. 132.
[226] *Amb* 1.2-3.

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subsistent (*anhypostatos*), namely, because they are hypostasized in the Word.[227] It also explains how those works can retain their proper mode even while "implanted" in the participant's created nature, which still possesses its own infinitely different mode. These modes, that is, are brought into a single subsistence with one another without the slightest modal diminishment—without tinkering with their *logoi*. And those sorts of conditions and characteristics only make sense if they bear the very logic which obtained between created and uncreated natures in Christ himself.

No wonder Maximus dares describe the *logoi* of created beings as "the body of Christ."[228] When he meditates on John 1.14, "the Word became flesh," and then considers other scriptures that speak of Christ's blood and bones, he begins, as always, at the historical Incarnation and then goes cosmic: "The super-essential Word and Creator of all beings, wishing to come into [created] essence, bore the natural *logoi* of every sensible and intelligible being along with the inconceivable intellections of his own divinity." Because of this Incarnation, writes Maximus, we must contemplate the *logoi* of

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[227] So "virtue," which Maximus numbers among the "eternal works," is, a scholiast (not likely Maximus) says in one place, "enhypostasized" in the deified, which is how Maximus can say "God continually becomes man" in all the deified; cf. *QThal* 22, schol. 8. This remark also helps elucidate why Maximus appeals to the role of virtue in deification to illustrate his *logoi* doctrine at *Amb* 7.21-23: because the Word (with the Father and Spirit) enhypostasizes God's "eternal works" (like virtue), and because the Word makes himself identical to our *logoi*, then the actualization of our *logoi* is simultaneously the Word's actualization of his works—indeed himself—in us.
— Cp. too *Amb* 10.41, modified, where the Word is the "is" of creatures: "Through this act of contemplation the saints gathered up the aforementioned modes into one, and they shaped within themselves, to the extent possible, the absolutely unique principles, which, with the different forms of virtues, totally fills the substance of the world of the willing mind, having passed beyond not simply the *logoi* of beings, but also the *logoi* of the virtues themselves, or rather with these *logoi* they arrived at the One who is beyond them all...to the Word who is beyond being and beyond goodness, out of Whom and Who *is* being for these [being and goodness] [καὶ εἰς ὂν οὗτοι καὶ ἐξ οὗ τὸ εἶναι τούτοις ἐστὶν ὑπερούσιον καὶ ὑπεράγαθον Λόγον]."
[228] *Amb* 54.2, PG 91, 1376c, lightly altered: "The 'body' of Christ is either the soul, or its powers, or sensations, or the body of each human being, or the members of the body, or the commandments, or the virtues, or the *logoi* of created beings, or, to put it simply and more truthfully, each and all of these things, both individually and collectively, are the body of Christ [ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ κοινῇ, ταῦτα πάντα καὶ τούτων ἕκαστόν ἐστι τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ]." For more on Maximus's theology of Christ's Body, see Chapter 3, sec. 3.5.

sensible creatures "as flesh to eat," and the *logoi* of intelligible creatures "as blood to drink," and the unbroken bones "the *logoi* concerning his divinity."[229] In other words, once more the *logoi* of creation—*creatio ex nihilo*—just are the logic of Christ. It's the Word's prior act of self-identification with created essence that generates it at all, that grounds the participants and makes God's own activity participable (since it is not by essence). After a reflection at length on what it means to consume Christ, Maximus draws all these threads together:

> But who would be able to enumerate all the aspects of God our Savior, which exist for our sake, and according to which *He has made Himself edible and participable to all* in proportion to the measure of each [καθ' ἃς ἐδώδιμον ἑαυτὸν καὶ μεταληπτὸν ἀναλόγως ἑκάστῳ πεποίηκεν]?.... Proper and profitable communion in these is attained by those who assimilate each member in light of the spiritual meaning signified by each. In this manner, according to that holy and great teacher, the Lamb of God 'is eaten, and given up to spiritual digestion,' assimilating to Himself, through the Spirit, *those who partake of Him* [μεταποιῶν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τῷ Πνεύματι τοὺς μεταλαμβάνοντας], for He guides and transposes each one to the place in the body that corresponds to the member that was spiritually eaten by him, so that in a way befitting His love of mankind *the Word becomes the essence in concrete wholes, the very Word who alone is above nature and reason* [ὥστε φιλανθρώπως τὸν ἐν τοῖς ὅλοις Λόγον τοῖς πράγμασιν οὐσίαν γίνεσθαι τὸν μόνον ὑπὲρ φύσιν καὶ λόγον].[230]

2.7 – Conclusion

I've contended in this chapter that Maximus's *logoi* doctrine, protologically considered, differs in crucial respects from Neoplatonic participation, and that these anomalies indicate that the act of divine creation corresponds to the first two elements of Christo-logic. The anomalies are three:

> 1. *Creatio ex nihilo* means uncreated and created natures share absolutely no natural principle, quality, power, or mode, and so their relation cannot be described as a *natural* procession from higher, less determinate to lower, more

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[229] *QThal* 35.2, SC 529, 374-5.
[230] *Amb* 48.7, PG 91, 1365b-c, my modifications and emphasis.

determinate modes of the same essence.

2. And yet there is a procession from one to many, but it's specifically the Logos who makes himself hypostatically identical to the *logoi* of the created world and so generates it. Thus the activity of the essentially imparticipable God becomes participable through the only possible medium: the Word's person.

3. The Word's procession penetrates deeper than formal principles (the *logoi* of natures) to establish the non-formal identity of creaturely hypostases as such (the *logoi* of hypostases). It grounds, that is, the very participants who then participate the eternal works the Word bears in himself, *in them*.

[1] and [2] match the first two elements of Christo-logic, in reverse order. Christo-logic's first element dictates that the only concrete identity must be hypostatic (not natural)—this occurs at anomaly [2]. The second element says that very hypostatic identity is the fundamental cause of essential difference, as with the enhypostatization of Christ's humanity—this explains [1].

This latter observation is no mere surmise. Maximus says it aloud. If Maximus faults Greek philosophy and Origenism for failing to conceive a relation between God and world that's not some sort of *natural* relation (which would demand a procession according to the logic of *natures* or *essences*), he himself does not fail to conceive a real relation in its place, indeed, a relation of hypostatic identity.

> The aim is that 'what God is to the soul, the soul might become to the body,' and that the Creator of all might be proven to be One, and through humanity might come to reside in all things in a manner appropriate to each, so that the many, though separated from each other in nature, might be drawn together around the one nature of man [τὰ πολλὰ ἀλλήλων κατὰ τὴν φύσιν διεστηκότα περὶ τὴν μίαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἀλλήλοις συννεύοντα]. When this happens, *God will be all things in everything* [1 Cor 15.28], encompassing all things and **hypostasizing them in Himself** [πάντα περιλαβὼν καὶ ἐνυποστήσας ἑαυτῷ], for beings will no longer possess independent motion or lack any portion of God's presence [καὶ τῆς ἄμοιρον παρουσίας]...we are, and are called, *Gods*, **children of God**, the **body**, and **members of God** [Eph 1.23, 5.30], and, it follows, 'portions of God,' and other such things, in the progressive ascent [ἀναφορᾷ] of the divine plan to its

final end.[231]

As I said at the outset of this chapter, to verify that Christo-logic is truly creation's logic in Maximus, we have to approach his *logoi* doctrine from both the beginning (protology) and the end (eschatology). Do *all* the elements of Christo-logic play out to the very end of the God-world relation, to the fullness of the creative act? We've seen hypostatic identity and infinite natural difference in protology, at the beginning. If, though, Christo-logic should determine the final form of the God-world relation, then it must evince what we saw was the crown of that logic: perichoresis of natural modes and activities (already suggested by [3] above). It does, as it happens, and it's next chapter's task to show how.

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[231] *Amb* 7.31, modified, my emphasis.

Chapter 3

The End: *Logoi*, pt. 2 — World Becomes Trinity

A longer introduction (3.1) – Human vocation: hypostatic identity of created and uncreated natures (3.2) – God by grace: an innate and supra-natural process (3.3) – Perichoresis, the logic of deification (3.4) – Christ's Body and analogy (3.5) – Conclusion (3.6)

Chapter contention

The completion of the creative act, the deification of the world, assumes and showcases the third element distinctive of Christo-logic: perichoresis *in actu* of created and uncreated natures/modes. Reading the eschatological script of the *logoi* according to Christo-logic explains extreme features of Maximian deification, and indeed proves them necessary. Thus the world's deification is the actualization and perfection of the Word's cosmic Incarnation, the very Word in whom Father and Spirit dwell entirely.

And so this chapter attempts to interpret: "The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation *be actualized* always and in all things."

3.1 – A longer introduction

Save his contribution to the monothelite controversy, Maximus is perhaps best known for his doctrine of deification. It "represents the true climax of the patristic tradition."[1] So it makes sense that several scholars have studied this theme in great detail, crafting, as it were, veritable compendia of Maximus's entire thinking on the subject.[2] I make no such

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[1] Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 8.

[2] Especially Walther Völker, *Maximus Confessor als Meister des geistlichen Lebens* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1965); Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Cerf, 1996); Elie Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image: Réflexions sur un concept clef de la doctrine de la divinization de saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 2013); and also Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 262-95.

attempt here. I seek rather if and how Maximian deification means what it must if it's to be the perfection of creation *as Incarnation*.[3] The last chapter argued that Maximus's *logoi* doctrine presents a protology that bears the first two elements of Christo-logic: the *logoi* name [1] the Word's hypostatic condescension in becoming identical to the creative principles of created nature, a self-identification that [2] generates that very nature. Now to see if the third element—perichoresis of natural modes and activities—appears in Maximus's eschatology.

Before that, a brief review Christo-logic's three elements and their relations. The Word's hypostasis names the only concrete, positive, and real identity of infinitely different natures (created and uncreated), an identity that is itself the condition for the possibility of infinite natural difference as such. Next Christo-logic requires a third element tailored to meet the monenergist challenge. Suppose we grant one hypostasis and two natural principles (or *logoi*) with their respective powers—what then happens as these two natural powers reduce to the *activity* of a single personal existence? How do they remain distinct in natural power and mode and activity and yet describe a single unified reality or actuality? Maximus replied with one of his own christological signatures—the perichoresis of Christ's activities. True to its proximate trinitarian provenance, perichoresis here has two necessary features. It indicates an interpenetration of otherwise infinitely different natural modes and activities, such that (i) the whole integrity of each remains undiminished, and (ii) the whole of each utterly pervades the

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[3] Thus I simply assume but do not linger over the concrete means of human deification—both subjective (ascetical discipline, virtuous deeds) and objective (sacraments, especially the Eucharist). I do not entirely neglect them. Rather they emerge when directly pertinent to the task at hand. That task is to trace the "architecture" or ontological structure, as it were, of the fact and event of creaturely deification. Doing that proves creation's end follows the logic of Christ. For the subjective and objective means of human deification, see mainly Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 231-432; Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 399-436 (sacraments) and 437-94 (asceticism); Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 286-92.

whole of the other so that there is no sense in which the consequent reality is *positively and separately* two. Perichoresis of activities crowns Christo-logic as its third and final element [3], its peculiar mode of actuality.[4] And—to recall the truly crucial point—this final element assumes the prior two elements as necessary conditions. Because the second person of the Trinity, the Word, *is* himself the "is" of both natures and their attendant modes, powers, and acts—only thus do his two natural activities concretely exist. And since the selfsame hypostasis just is their concrete existence—so that their sole existential mediator is the Word himself—those activities cannot but finally exist as essentially distinct yet really one—as "whole in whole" in actuality.[5]

And so this final chapter must establish that Christo-logic's third element also describes the completion of God's act of creating the world. Does the perichoresis of infinitely natural modes and activities characterize the world's deification? Do the *logoi*, the principles of creation itself, prescribe an eschatological existence in a perichoretic mode of actuality?

Discerning this third element may in fact prove the most convincing bit of evidence that Maximus conceives creation as Incarnation—more persuasive, even, than the presence of the first two elements presented last chapter. After all, Neoplatonism in general and Dionysius in particular say things that sound very like Maximus's protological descriptions of the Logos-*logoi* relation.[6] An example from Dionysius:

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[4] Chapter 1, sec. 1.5.

[5] Remember that this "actuality"—the "composite hypostasis" of Christ which is itself the *result* of the economic processs—cannot in principle indicate an actuality that's in any way natural. It's neither a mere Aristotelian reduction of natural potency to act, nor a mere Neoplatonic declension of higher act to lower act in accordance with the lower natural power. The composite Christ's concrete, historical, positive existence includes and exceeds both kinds of activity. See Chapter 1, sec. 1.5

[6] On Dionysius's language of the One's self-distribution in creating (or emanating) all things, see the remarks of Eric D. Perl, "Hierarchy and Participation," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 68.1 (1994): 17-20, and his *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany,

God's mode of "being" is properly "super-essential," but since that same God gifts being "to beings and produces whole essences," then

> that 'Being-One' is said to be multiplied in the production [or derivation] of all beings from Itself, remaining no less Itself and One in this multiplication, being unified [with all beings] according to this procession and utterly full even in division—[all this] due to Its separation from all beings in Its super-essential mode, even in Its unitary production of all whole things [or of the universe] and in the unstinted effusion of Its undiminished communications.[7]

As this passage illustrates ("separated from all things in Its super-essential mode"), Dionysius indulges "self-multiplication" talk while preserving the more Neoplatonic "modal dualism," if you will. God creates all things from himself, yes, and so in some sense "distributes" himself in creation. But as far as I can see this never disposes Dionysius to claim that God's "super-essential" mode of being and a creaturely mode of being are simultaneously present to one another as "whole in whole."[8]

In fact, when Dionysius turns to the matter at hand—to our deification and filiation as "sons of God"—he hastens to add that "there is not an exact likeness between effects and causes." Two reasons: "on the one hand, the effects possess *potential* images of the causes," and on the other, "the causes in themselves remain separate and

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N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007), 17-34. I discussed similar expressions in Maximus in Chapter 2, sec. 2.4.

[7] Dionysius, *DN* 2.11, Suchla 136, my translation: "Οἷον ἐπειδὴ ὤν ἐστιν [Exod 3.14] ὁ θεὸς ὑπερουσίως, δωρεῖται δὲ τὸ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσι καὶ παράγει τὰς ὅλας οὐσίας, πολλαπλασιάζεσθαι λέγεται τὸ ἓν ὂν ἐκεῖνο τῇ ἐξ αὐτοῦ παραγωγῇ τῶν πολλῶν ὄντων μένοντος οὐδὲν ἧττον ἐκείνου καὶ ἑνὸς ἐν τῷ πληθυσμῷ καὶ ἡγωμένου κατὰ τὴν πρόοδον καὶ πλήρους ἐν τῇ διακρίσει τῷ πάντων εἶναι τῶν ὄντων ὑπερουσίως ἐξῃρημένον καὶ τῇ ἑναίᾳ τῶν ὅλων προαγωγῇ καὶ τῇ ἀνελαττώτῳ χύσει τῶν ἀμειώτων αὐτοῦ μεταδόσεων." As De Andia notes at SC 578, 404 n. 2 (following Hadot especially), "Les commentateurs néoplatoniciens du *Parménide* identifient le τὸ ἓν ὂν au νοῦς." This recalls how Dionysius, even while hewing quite closely to Neoplatonic forms here, yet applies Christian pressure by insisting that it is *the very same God* who is at once the super-essential One, the "Being-One" (typically "Nous" for Neoplatonism), and the oneness of derived/emanated being (ἓν ὢν)—an equation that seems indeed "paradoxale," as De Andia says (405 n. 6).

[8] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 256, applies the following feature of Neoplatonic participation to Dionysius too: "for participation (μέθεξις) emphasizes that an inferior cannot possess a superior entire," from Lucas Siovanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 72.

established above the effects *according to the principle of their own origin*."[9] Principle or

logos, itself granted by origin or beginning, determines the inviolable modal boundaries

of a being's activity. Those bearing superior principles, and certainly the divine principle

itself, remain ever in their own mode and interior activity even as they are present to their

derived effects according to the latter's own modality. Hence a great Dionysian axiom:

"For though the Trinity is present to all things, not all things are present to the Trinity."[10]

I said Dionysius never affirms the simultaneous and whole presence of created

and uncreated modalities to one another. That's not entirely true. He acknowledges one

exception that proves the rule: the Incarnation. Mark again the context. This concession

comes as he's rehearsing what we've already seen and called "modal dualism," which is

of course ingredient to the dynamics of Neoplatonic emanation or participation.[11] He

reprises a standard trope in the long Platonic tradition. The causal "archetype" remains

one and the same even as it is "imprinted" on its many participants, like a signet ring's

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[9] Dionysius, *DN* 2.8, Suchla 132, my translation and emphasis: "Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστιν ἀκριβὴς ἐμφέρεια τοῖς αἰτιατοῖς καὶ τοῖς αἰτίοις, ἀλλ'ἔχει μὲν τὰ αἰτιατὰ τὰς τῶν αἰτίων ἐνδεχομένας εἰκόνας, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ αἴτια τῶν αἰτιατῶν ἐξήρηται καὶ ὑπερίδρυται κατὰ τὸν τῆς οἰκείας ἀρχῆς λόγον."

[10] Dionysius, *DN* 3.11, Suchla 138, my translation: "Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ [i.e. the Trinity] μὲν ἅπασι πάρεστιν, οὐ πάντα δὲ αὐτῇ πάρεστι." In context, it's true, Dionysius is commending the necessity of "pure prayer," which, if rightly executed, "then we are present to the Trinity" (Suchla 138). But of course it's the *character* of that mutual presence that's in question. Dionysius does not here elaborate on that state, but he does appear to proscribe one possibility: "But to say that [the Trinity or the Good] is in all beings is to stand removed from the infinity above and embracing all things." Finite and infinite modes remain separate even in prayerful "union."

[11] Plotinus, *En.* 1.2 [19] 2, identifies two senses of metaphysical "likeness" (ἡ ὁμοίωσις). [1] There is a "likeness" between two things that "derive their likeness equally from the same principle [ὅσα ἐπίσης ὡμοίωται ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ]." Call this the likeness of metaphysically similar effects. [2] Then there is the "likeness" where "one thing is like the other, but the other is primary, not reciprocally related to the thing in its likeness and not said to be like it [τὸ μὲν ὡμοίωται πρὸς ἕτερον, τὸ δὲ ἕτερόν ἐστι πρῶτον, οὐκ ἀντιστρέφον πρὸς ἐκεῖνο οὐδὲ ὅμοιον αὐτοῦ λεγόμενον]." Call this the likeness of metaphysically non-reciprocal (i.e. different) cause and its effect. In this latter sense, Plotinus warns against understanding "likenes" as sharing the same form. Rather, the cause differs (and is not symmetrically related) because the cause possesses "another" form than the effect. And, as context makes plain (e.g. the "extended" vs. "intelligible" house of the paragraph before this one), this form exists with different properties, less determinate qualities, i.e. in a different essential mode. Vertical "likeness" between cause and effect therefore comes about "in a different way [κατὰ τὸν ἕτερον τρόπον]," namely in a *non-reciprocal* way. Modal asymmetry proves again the very logic of Neoplatonic emanation and participation.

seal pressed upon waxes of varying consistencies. The trope denies that participants

differ from their archetype because of the archetype itself. That difference is instead a

modal one: it's due to what is proper to derived essences, and, of course, to the extent

these participants actualize their own receptivity to the archetype. So while the seal

"gives all of its very self to each," it is "the participants' own difference that makes those

imprinted dissimilar to the one, whole, and selfsame archetype."[12] "But there is a

difference," Dionysius follows,

> between the divine activity that acts towards us in a manner befitting the Good,
> and the fact that the super-essential Word wholly and truly took became
> essentialized for us, and enacted and suffered many eminent, exceptional things
> from his divine activity in a human manner.[13]

That's to say, as Maximus interprets Dionysius to teach elsewhere, because the Word

became wholly man in a way *unlike* the way cause "becomes" effect by procession,

Christ's divine activity *wholly* manifests itself in his human activity.[14] The difference is

that Dionysius appears to think this an isolated instance; Maximus does not.

On my reading Maximus agrees with Dionysius both that the Incarnation

introduces something new and that this innovation cannot consist in a sameness or

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[12] Dionysius, *DN* 2.6, Suchla 129, my translation: "Τούτου δὲ οὐχ ἡ σφραγὶς αἰτία, πᾶσαν γὰρ ἑαυτὴν ἐκείνη καὶ ταὐτὴν καὶ ἑκάστῳ ἐπιδίδωσιν, ἡ δὲ τῶν μετεχόντων διαφορότης ἀνόμοια ποιεῖ τὰ ἀπομόργματα τῆς μιᾶς καὶ ὅλης καὶ ταὐτῆς ἀρχετυπίας." The trope derives, of course, from Plato himself: *Theat.* 191c-d, 194c-e, 196a-b; *Tim.* 50c. For the law of "all in all, each according to its own mode," see Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 103, and the remarks of Jean Trouillard, "Procession Néoplatonicienne et Création Judéo-Chrétienne," 91.

[13] Dionysius, *DN* 2.6, Suchla 130, my translation: "Διακέκριται δὲ τῆς ἀγαθοπρεποῦς εἰς ἡμᾶς θεουργίας τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐξ ἡμῶν ὁλικῶς καὶ ἀληθῶς οὐσιωθῆναι τὸν ὑπερούσιον λόγον καὶ δρᾶσαι καὶ παθεῖν, ὅσα τῆς ἀνθρωπικῆς αὐτοῦ θεουργίας ἐστὶν ἔκκριτα κὰ ἐξαίρετα."

[14] So Dionysius, *Ep* 4, Heil and Ritter 161—discussed at *Amb* 5.19. See chapter 1, sec. 1.5. De Andia, SC 578, 388 n. 1, suggests that even in the exceptional case of the Word's Incarnation Dionysius tends to conceive the divine activity according to the more familiar logic of the limitation of (higher) act by the modality of (lower) power, and that this might differ from Maximus's later christological concerns: "les *acta et passa Christi* relèvent, selon Denys, de son action divine (théurgie) en tant qu'elle s'exerce d'une manière humaine. Denys ne distingue pas deux volontés dans le Christ, comme Maxime le Confesseur, mais, comme dans la *Lettre* 4 à propos de la θεανδρικὴ ἐνέργεια...il *qualifie* son action divine d'une *modalité* humaine."

confusion at the level of essence or the "*logos* of origin," as Dionysius phrased it (*DN* 2.6, cited above). Rather the newness disclosed in the Incarnation issues in a perichoresis of modal activities grounded in hypostatic identity (as distinct from natural identity). Therefore Maximus's view of the God-world relation does not simply negate Dionysius's (or Neoplatonism's) but exceeds it according to Christo-logic. If, at the world's end, the Word "embraces and hypostasizes all things in himself,"[15] and if enhypostastization makes possible a new mode of concrete relation and mediation among differing natures— between infinitely differing natures, even—then Maximus can conceive cosmo-logic as Christo-logic without repudiating Dionysius's core convictions concerning *natural* metaphysical relations. Hypostatic identity and perichoresis of modes opens upon a new horizon, as it were, for Christian metaphysics, and thus a new possibility for contemplating the logic of creation as the logic of Christ.

And so this chapter completes the task of tracing the three elements of Christo-logic in Maximus's cosmo-logic. It demonstrates that and how the third element is fundamental to creation's perfection, its end. Two lines of evidence prove this. The first is textual. Maximus explicitly evokes perichoresis and its distinctive features to describe creaturely deification—and was indeed the very first to do so.[16] But there's also significant conceptual evidence. There are several aporiae or extreme tendencies in Maximian deification that we can explain and even expect if we read them by christological canons. Three in particular:

> 1. Maximian deification aims for the very hypostatic *identity* between created and uncreated natures that Christ's historical Incarnation accomplished.

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[15] *Amb* 7.31, modified.
[16] One obviously senses Cappadocian "mixture" language here (e.g. *Amb* 10.35, 41, etc.), but see the references at Chapter 1, sec. 1.5, n. 148.

2. Human deification or becoming "God by grace," as Maximus often phrases it, is both utterly non-natural and yet *innate* or "implanted" within human nature from creation.

3. Deification of individual humans is simultaneously incorporation into Christ's one Body, and this is really what it means to speak of our "analogous" relation to Christ (and his to us)—not that we are similar to him within ever greater dissimilarity, but that we are him in our own personal ways.

Christo-logic as a whole, perichoresis as its crown, explains all these apparently "hyperbolic"[17] components of Maximian deification and in fact renders them plain sensible.

I begin with the first two aporiae, namely that the ground and goal of deification is hypostatic identity (3.2) and that it's a process simultaneously innate and supra-natural (3.3). I then linger over passages where Maximus evokes perichoresis as the logic of actual or experienced deification—a most reasonable result if creation is Incarnation (3.4). At length I return to the third aporia, that the perichoretic logic of deification becomes for Maximus the logic of Christ's own Body, at once individual and cosmic, such that perfected creation's "analogous" relation to its creator actually presupposes its hypostatic identity with him (3.5).

3.2 – Human vocation: hypostatic identity of created and uncreated natures

Maximus never thinks the world's end apart from the historical Incarnation of the Son, apart from Christ.[18] That event, and that event alone, has definitively disclosed the "plan"

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[17] Anna N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 89.

[18] Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy: An Investigation into the "Questiones ad Thalassium"* (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1991), 118: "In Maximus' thought, however, the transcendent Logos is never conceptually separate from the *historical* Incarnate Christ." Juan-Miguel Garrigues, "Le dessein d'adoption du Créateur dans son rapport au Fils d'après s. Maxime le Confesseur," *MC*, esp. 178-9, tried to argue that Maximus held to a basically scholastic view of God's "antecedent will" which did *not* include the historical Incarnation (or indeed the divine economy entire), since Maximus supposedly assigns the

or "purpose" or "scope" or "end" of God's creative activity.[19] And since *that* event discloses the end of *all* creatures, it follows that the end of the world is hypostatic identity between God and the world.

In *QThal* 60—a *locus classicus* of Maximus's supra-lapsarian christology—Maximus identifies the "mystery hidden from the ages" that "has now been manifested" (1 Pet 1.20) with the "pure and spotless lamb, Christ," who "was foreknown before the foundation of the world" (Col 1.26). It's clear that "Christ" here comprises at once the historical (particular) and cosmic (universal) achievement of a single mystery, "the mystery according to Christ," which he defines as "the ineffable and incomprehensible union according to hypostasis of divinity and humanity" that brings created and uncreated natures "into perfect identity."[20] And it's in *this very identity*—the one wrought in history from conception in Mary's womb to cross to resurrection to ascension—that every being (not just the man Jesus') "receives its beginning and end."[21] I quote at length Maximus's

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latter to God's "consequent will" in response to human sin. This view has been disproved, for instance, in the lovely essay by Artemije Radosavljevic, "Le problème du 'présupposé' ou du 'non-présupposé' de l'incarnation de dieu le Verbe," *MC*, 193-206, who correctly insists that Maximus constantly makes our deification depend specifically on the *hypostatic identity* between created and uncreated nature achieved in the historical Incarnation (200, 204-5), which means that no posterior human action (sinful or not) could serve as the presupposition for Christ. It's quite the reverse. See too Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 221-4; Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 162.

[19] *Exp. Orat. Dom.* Prol., CCSG 23, 28-9; *Amb* 7.37; *Amb* 41.2, 6; *Amb* 42.29; *QThal* 22.2-4, CCSG 7, 137-9; *QThal* 60.3, CCSG 22, 75, etc.

[20] *QThal* 60.2, CCSG 22, 73: "Τοῦτο προδήλως ἐστὶν ἄρρητός τε καὶ ἀπερινόητος θεότητός τε καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἕνωσις, εἰς ταὐτὸν ἄγουσα τῇ θεότητι κατὰ πάντα τρόπον τῷ τῆς ὑποστάσεως λόγῳ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα".

[21] *QThal* 60.4, CCSG 22, 75: "Διὰ γὰρ τὸν Χριστόν, ἤγουν τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστήριον, πάντες οἱ αἰῶνες καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς αἰῶσιν ἐν Χριστῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τὸ τέλος εἰλήφασιν." That's to say, I do not find in Maximus any grounds for a final union of creation with God that somehow circumvents—or ever could have circumvented—the precisely *historical* identity achieved in Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed the scriptural passage under discussion appears to proscribe this: it is "the pure and spotless lamb" who is foreknown (1 Pet 1.20), the lamb slain since before the foundation of the world (Rev 13.10). Where and when else is the Lord slain if not *in that time and place*, on first-century Golgotha? What's really striking is that Maximus claims this particular event, "Christ" in whom every conceivable polarity attains hypostatic identity, is "the fulfillment of God's foreknowledge" (*QThal* 60.4, CCSG 22, 77: "ἥτις ἐν Χριστῷ ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν χρόνων φανερωθεῖσα γέγονεν, πλήρωσιν δοῦσα τῇ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ἑαυτῆς"; and esp.

insistence on this point (that the concrete end of the historical Incarnation and all creation

is the very same), since its full import often goes unheeded:

> This is the great and hidden mystery. This is the blessed end for which all things
> were brought into existence. This is the divine purpose conceived before the
> beginning of beings, and in defining it we would say that this mystery is the
> preconceived goal for the sake of which everything exists, but which itself exists
> for the sake of nothing, and it was with a view to this end that God created the
> essences of beings. This is, properly speaking, the limit of providence and of the
> things preconceived, according to which occurs the recapitulation into God of the
> things made by God. This is the mystery that circumscribes all the ages, and
> which reveals the grand plan of God, a super-infinite plan infinitely pre-existing
> the ages an infinite number of times. The essential Word of God became a
> messenger of this plan when He became man, and, if I may rightly say so,
> revealed Himself as the innermost depth of the Father's goodness while also
> displaying in Himself the very goal for which creatures manifestly received the
> beginning of their existence.[22]

That "very goal" toward which all things were made reemerges in a passage

considered last chapter, which serves here as overture for this entire chapter. In *Amb* 41

Maximus recounts his five natural divisions of being only to say that it has always been

humanity's (Adam's) vocation to unite these in itself, even the first and highest division

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60.8: God did not "foreknow" Christ "as what He was in Himself by nature, but as what He manifested
when, in the economy of salvation, He later became man on our behalf").

    This introduces the possibility—one which has grounds, I think, in parts of Maximus's corpus—of
a fundamental or primordial reciprocity between God's eternal self-knowledge (cp. *QThal* 56.7) and the
particularities of historical events, yet not in such a way that the former simply *determines* the latter (lest
there be no true reciprocity at all). From this vantage the Word himself, through his creative condescension
as the *logoi* of creation (cf. *CT* 1.66-7—historical and cosmic at once!), would be the identity that grounds
such a reciprocity. Then creation would prove an inevitable "result" of God's self-knowledge even while it
does not possess any "simultaneous" or "co-eternal" (that is, natural) relation to the divine essence itself (as
ruled out by texts like *QThal* 60.9, CCSG 22, 81; *Amb* 15.9 and 11; *Ep* 13, PG 91, 532a-b). I reserve this
for a chapter I have planned for the book.

[22] *QThal* 60.3, CCSG 22, 75, slightly modified: "Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ μέγα καὶ ἀπόκρυφον μυστήριον.
Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ μακάριον, δι᾽ ὃ τὰ πάντα συνέστησαν, τέλος. Τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν ὄντων
προεπινοούμενος θεῖος σκοπός, ὃν ὁρίζοντες εἶναί φαμεν προεπινοούμενον τέλος, οὗ ἕνεκα μὲν τὰ πάντα,
αὐτὸ δὲ οὐδενὸς ἕνεκεν· πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ τέλος ἀφορῶν τὰς τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεὸς παρήγαγεν οὐσίας. Τοῦτο
κυρίως ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς προνοίας καὶ τῶν προνοουμένων πέρας, καθ᾽ ὃ εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἡ τῶν ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ
πεποιημένων ἐστὶν ἀνακεφαλαίωσις. Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ πάντας περιγράφον τοὺς αἰῶνας καὶ τὴν ὑπεράπειρον
καὶ ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως προϋπάρχουσαν τῶν αἰώνων μεγάλην τοῦ θεοῦ βουλὴν ἐκφαῖνον μυστήριον, ἧς
γέγονεν ἄγγελος αὐτὸς ὁ κατ᾽ οὐσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος καὶ αὐτόν, εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν, τὸν
ἐνδότατον πυνθμένα τῆς πατρικῆς ἀγαθότητος φανερὸν καταστήσας καὶ τὸ τέλος ἐν ἑαυτῷ δείξας, δι᾽ ὃ τὴν
πρὸς τὸ εἶναι σαφῶς ἀρχὴν ἔλαβον τὰ πεποιημένα." For the meaning of predicating "pre-existence" of the
Word, see Chapter 2, sec. 2.4, n. 149.

between created and uncreated natures. Indeed man, "like a most efficient workshop sustaining all things," has "by nature the full potential to draw all the extremes into unity" because of "his characteristic attribute of being related to the divided extremes through his own parts."[23] The human being intrinsically relates to and therefore can unify all five divisions. Take the second. Even if malformed or not yet properly actualized, a human being is already body and soul (and hence related to the second division between sensible and intelligible)—already, that is, potentially *greater* than either as their unity.[24] So too was Adam already somehow related to both created *and* uncreated natures, the first division. I return below to what it could possibly mean that Adam "naturally" bore such a relation to divinity (sec. 3.3). But we spy a hint in the next line: "Through this potential, consistent with the purpose behind the origination of divided beings, man was called to achieve within himself *the mode* of their completion, and so bring to light the great mystery of the divine plan."[25] Actualization of the divine mystery occurs in the metaphysical field of *modes*, not in (natural) principle.

From this context sounds the overture:

And finally, in addition to all this, had man united created nature with the uncreated through love (oh, the wonder of God's love for mankind!), he would have shown them to be *one and the same* by the state of grace, the whole man pervading the whole God, and becoming everything that God is, without, however, identity in essence, and receiving the whole God instead of himself, and obtaining as a kind of prize for his ascent to God the absolutely unique God, who is the goal of the motion of things that are moved, and the firm and unmoved stability of things that are carried along to Him, and the limit (itself limitless and

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[23] *Amb* 41.2, PG 91, 1305a-c: "πᾶσαν ἔχων δηλαδὴ φυσικῶς ταῖς τῶν ἄκρων πάντων μεσότησι διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὰ ἄκρα πάντα τῶν ἰδίων μερῶν σχετικῆς ἰδιότητος τὴν πρὸς ἔνωσιν δύναμιν.

[24] Hence Basil Studer, OSB, "Zur Soteriologie des Maximus Confessor," *MC*, 242, rightly comments: "In ähnlicher Weise versteht Maximus die in der Menschwerdung Gottes erfolgte Erneurerung der Naturen als Aufhebung von Gegensätzen."

[25] *Amb* 41.2, PG 91, 1305b, slight modification and my emphasis: "δι' ἧς [ref. δύναμις] ὁ κατὰ τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς τῶν διῃρημένων γενέσεως συμπληρούμενος τρόπος ἔμελλε τοῦ θείου σκοποῦ τὸ μέγα μυστήριον ἔκδηλον δι' ἑαυτοῦ καταστῆσαι."

infinite) of every definition, order, and law, whether of mind, intellect, or nature.[26]

This passage plays four significant themes. First, deified Adam would have achieved an *identity* between created and uncreated natures, would have proved them "one and the same" (ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν). And yet this would be no "identity in essence" (χωρὶς τῆς κατ' οὐσίαν ταὐτότητος)—a qualification Maximus systematically makes,[27] and one, of course, we should expect from Christo-logic.[28] Indeed how could there ever occur natural identity with divinity as such, which is, as the end of this passage again affirms, properly above "nature" however conceived?[29] Second and despite the insistence on non-natural identity, the potential for attaining such identity is in some sense *innate* to the human person (here Adam). This passage's context made this plain.[30] Third, the identity in deification names a "state" or "condition" brought about *by grace* (κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν τῆς χάριτος). And finally, this non-natural but concrete identity whose potential reverberates within human nature like an innate calling or commission realized by grace alone—this

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[26] *Amb* 41.5, PG 91, 1308b-c, my emphasis: "Καὶ τέλος ἐπὶ πᾶσι τούτοις, καὶ κτιστὴν φύσιν τῇ ἀκτίστῳ δι' ἀγάπης ἑνώσας (ὢ τοῦ θαύματος τῆς περὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας) ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν δείξειε κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν τῆς χάριτος, ὅλος ὅλῳ περιχωρήσας ὁλικῶς τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ γενόμενος πᾶν εἴ τί πέρ ἐστιν ὁ Θεός, χωρὶς τῆς κατ' οὐσίαν ταὐτότητος, καὶ ὅλον αὐτὸν ἀντιλαβὼν ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Θεόν, καὶ τῆς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἀναβάσεως, οἷον ἔπαθλον, αὐτὸν μονώτατον κτησάμενος τὸν Θεόν, ὡς τέλος τῆς τῶν κινουμένων κινήσεως, καὶ στάσιν βάσιμόν τε καὶ ἀκίνητον τῶν ἐπ' αὐτὸν φερομένων, καὶ παντὸς ὅρου καὶ θεσμοῦ καὶ νόμου, λόγου τε καὶ νοῦ, καὶ φύσεως ὅρον καὶ πέρας ἀόριστόν τε καὶ ἄπειρον ὄντα."

[27] *Amb* 7.9; *QThal* 22.4, CCSG 7, 139; *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 57a-d; *Ep* 6, PG 91, 429a; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 565d.

[28] Chapter 1, sec. 1.3; Chapter 2, sec. 2.3.

[29] *Pyr* 139, PG 91, 325a, for example, states that "nature" is predicated of God only "super-essentially" (ὑπερουσίως).

[30] I add here two more vocation-statements from this *Ambiguum*, loose bookends of our passage: [1] *Amb* 41.3, PG 91, 1305b-c, slightly modified: God introduced man "last among beings—like a kind of natural bond mediating between the universal extremes through his parts, and bringing into one reality through himself things that by nature are separated from each other by a great distance [οἱονεὶ σύνδεσμός τις φυσικὸς τοῖς καθόλου διὰ τῶν οἰκείων μερῶν μεσιτεύων ἄκροις, καὶ εἰς ἓν ἄγων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πολλῷ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἀλλήλων διεστηκότα τῷ διαστήματι]; [2] *Amb* 41. 9, PG 91, 1309c-d: Christ, in the historical Incarnation, accomplished what Adam was originally meant to, namely "having completed the whole plan of God the Father for us, who through our misuse had rendered ineffective the power that was given to us from the beginning by nature for this purpose [καὶ τελειώσας πᾶσαν βουλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῶν ἀχρειωσάντων τῇ παραχρήσει τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς φυσικῶς ἡμῖν πρὸς τοῦτο δοθεῖσαν δύναμιν]."

identity, I note, reduces *in actu* in the form of a *perichoresis* of natural activities, divine and human (ὅλος ὅλῳ περιχωρήσας ὁλικῶς τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ γενόμενος πᾶν εἴ τί πέρ ἐστιν ὁ Θεός). Those four themes recapitulate the entire logic of Maximian deification: we become identical to God in all but essence; we possess the innate power to do so; we realize this power through and in grace alone; and we concretely manifest it in and as the complete interpenetration of created and uncreated qualities, modes, and activities.

The contours of Maximian deification derive from and trace those of the Word's deified humanity. Now, granted, Christ's flesh did not undergo the process of deification in the way ours does and will.[31] But that's a question of deification's *how* not *that* or *what*, a question of process rather than product. It is certainly the case that the humanity the Word assumed was deified from its conception, while ours must become deified.[32] And yet even here the two ways of deifying created flesh share a crucial feature: neither is natural. I suspend this point until next section (3.3). The main matter for now is that Maximus thinks the historical Incarnation, the ground and goal of creation, notates the themes of creaturely deification. Maximian deification signifes a non-natural "identity" between created and uncreated nature.

No surprise, then, that Maximus everywhere keys this identity to Christ, the incarnate Word and Son of God. His identity, the one wrought in the historical Incarnation, is ours too in deification.[33] To become God we must become Christ—for no

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[31] *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 36a-b.
[32] *Amb* 3.3; *Amb* 42.25.
[33] So *QThal* 22, schol. 1, CCSG 7, 143 (likely by Maximus himself): "The union according to hypostasis of the Word with the flesh revealed the ineffable purpose of the divine counsel in that it did not mix the divine essence with the flesh, but rather showed forth one hypostasis of the Word even in His becoming flesh, so that the flesh might both remain flesh according to its essence and become divine according to the hypostasis [Ἡ πρὸς τὴν σάρκα τοῦ λόγου καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν ἕνωσις τὸν ἀπόρρητον τῆς θείας βουλῆς ἐφανέρωσε σκοπὸν ἐν τῷ μὴ φῦραι τῇ ἑνώσει τῆς σαρκὸς τὴν οὐσίαν, μίαν δὲ δεῖξαι κἂν τῇ

other mediator exists between God and man, creator and creation.[34] Here we come upon some of Maximus's most provocative expressions, many of which do not just say we become "identical" to God in some nondescript sense, but rather that we become Christ himself.

Actually this identity claim *is* surprising. It is, I mean, if you draw back a little and consider the rather hostile atmosphere surrounding such a doctrine—particularly given its possible prominence and fate in the Origenist tradition.[35] Whether Origen and Evagrius themselves propagated or at least prepared the grounds for the later "isochrist" crop of sixth-century Origenism,[36] the latter proved particularly toxic to anti-Origenists of

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σαρκώσει τοῦ λόγου τὴν ὑπόστασιν, ἵνα καὶ μείνῃ σὰρξ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἡ σὰρξ καὶ γένηται θεία κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν]"; so too *QThal* 40, schol. 2, CCSG 7, 275 (likely by Maximus himself).

[34] *Pyr* 182, PG 91, 341a.

[35] See István Perczel, "St Maximus on the Lord's Prayer: An Inquiry into His Relationship to the Origenist Tradition," in *ACMC*, 221-78, who convincingly argues that Maximus's *Or. dom.* evinces at least structural similarities to the so-called "isochrist" strand of Origenism—legitimate similarities that Maximus's later Syriac (Maronite) opponents would interpret (illegitimately) as indices of a *dogmatic* or theological isomorphism between Maximus and condemned Origenism.

[36] Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique*, 155, thinks Evagrian Origenism led quite naturally to isochristist eschatology: "L'expression 'égaux du Christ' ne se rencontre pas dans Evagre, mais l'idée correspondante est bien présente" (he cites *KG* 3.72, 4.51, 5.81, for instance). Recent scholars have questioned the adequacy of this line; see, e.g., Augustine M.C. Casiday, "Deification in Origen, Evagrius, and Cassian," in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition / Origene e la tradizione alessandrina: Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27-31 August 2001*, eds. Lorenzo Perrone, P. Bernardino, and D. Marchini (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 995-1001 (esp. 999); and his *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus: Beyond Heresy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), esp. Chs. 7 and 8; consult too the scattered remarks of Ilaria L.E. Ramelli in her commentary and translation, *Evagrius's Kephalaia Gnostika: A New Translation of the Unreformed Text from the Syriac* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), esp. the Introduction, lxv, and the comments on *KG* 6.14, where she inserts quotation marks around one statement to make it the position of a phantom interlocutor rather than Evagrius's own. I rather think that both Ramelli and Casiday's recovery efforts, though laudable in places, are often wrong to the extent that they do not appreciate what "catechrestic" predication allows Evagrius to say and not say—that is, the sort of "improper" predication that results from standard Platonic participation, where what's proper to the participated (the Logos, say) can improperly be said of the participant (Christ, say). Such predication preserves a two-subjects christology while indulging a certain elision on occasion (*KG* 3.1-3). This seems to be exactly the claim at *KG* 4.18, 6.14, 6.16, 6.18, and 6.79 especially, and so I think Constantinople II got it right in the eighth canon, which identifies and condemns this practice. But I reserve a fuller discussion for another day.—The main point here is that if Origen (esp. at *Princ* 2.6.4) and Evagrius *can* and were read as dividing "Christ" (a separate soul or intellect) from the Word (who is, particularly in Evagrius's theology, consubstantial with Father and Spirit), then isochrist eschatology becomes at once more palatable and more extreme: the former, since our equality with Christ in deification is simply an equality with (the highest, true) fellow creature, and the latter since the final

the period. We know little more than what the calque suggests: some (not all)[37] sixth-century Origenists held that our eschatological destiny was to become "equal to Christ," united to God as much as he.[38]

In 552, the year before the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) convened, Theodore, bishop of Scythopolis, addressed a *Libel* against Origenist errors to the Emperor Justinian and to the four Eastern Patriarchs. It promulgates twelve anathemas, nine of which simply restate Justinian's own from his 543 edict. Three appear original to Theodore. These reflect the dawning sense among anti-Origenists that Origenism's enduring appeal, and so its fundamental challenge, lay not simply in its speculative protology or eschatology but rather in its compelling christology—especially of the "isochrist" variety.[39] One of the three added anathemas reads:

> If anyone should say, think, or teach that we will become equal to Christ our Savior and God who was born of the holy and ever-virgin Theotokos; and that God the Word must be united to us as he was to the animate flesh that he assumed from Mary according to essence and hypostasis—let him be anathema.[40]

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fusion of Christ's intellect with the numberless Trinity implies the dissolution of all hypostases along with that one (e.g. *KG* 2.17; see too can. 14 of Constantinople II, Price, vol. 2, 286).

[37] Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique*, 151 n. 91, mentions another Origenist faction called "the Protoctists" who, in an effort to "conserver au Christ une certaine supériorité," believed that Christ was "created" (*ktistos*) before all other intellects (*protos*); this helped them reject an original henad destined for restoration in a final apokatastasis.

[38] Evagrius Scholasticus (6th cent.), *H.E.* IV.38, PG 86, 2780a (my translation), cites from a collection of "blasphemous statements" made by Origenists of the New Laura, not far south of Jerusalem. It quotes the bishop of Caesarea and erstwhile confidant of Emperor Justinian, Theodore of Ascidas, as saying: "If even now the Apostles and martyrs work wonders and enjoy such high honor, what restoration remains for them in the [coming] restoration except to become equal to Christ [Εἰ νῦν οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ μάρτυρες θαυματουργοῦσι, καὶ ἐν τῇ τοσαύτῃ τιμῇ ὑπάρχουσιν, ἐν τῇ ἀποκαταστάσει εἰ μὴ ἴσοι γένοιντο Χριστῷ, ποία ἀποκατάστασις αὐτοῖς ἐστιν;]?"; cf. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Cyriacus* 12, 229.32-230.10.

[39] Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique*, 119, 147ff.

[40] Theodore of Scythopolis, *Libel*, Cap. 11, PG 86, 236a, my translation: "Εἴ τις λέγει, ἢ φρονεῖ, ἢ διδάσκει ἐξισοῦσθαι ἡμᾶς τῷ Σωτῆρι ἡμῶν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ τεχθέντι ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀεὶ παρθένου Μαρίας, καὶ μέλλειν καὶ ἡμῖν ἑνοῦσθαι τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον, ὡς τῇ Μαρίας προσληφθείσῃ ἐμψυχωμένῃ σαρκὶ κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ καθ' ὑπόστασιν· ἀνάθεμα ἔστω." Cf. Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique*, 151 n. 91.

Nearly a year later, Justinian's own letter to the Council takes up and even expands a little on this charge. He urges the swift condemnation of those who teach that all men, dissolute and deified alike,

> will enjoy the same union with God that Christ too enjoys, just as in their preexistence, with the result that there will be no difference at all between Christ and the remaining rational beings, neither in substance nor in knowledge nor in power nor in operation.[41]

Two of the anti-Origenist canons associated with Constantinople II evince the same concern. Anathema be anyone who says all rational beings "will be united to God the Word in just the same way as the mind they call Christ" (can. 12), or if "anyone says that there will not be a single difference at all between Christ and other rational beings," neither in "substance," "knowledge," "power," nor "operation" (can. 13)!—much as Justinian had it.[42]

These constitute powerful witnesses to the growing worry over the isochrist eschatology of certain Origenists. They're anxious about Christ's uniqueness or primacy among rational creatures, which tends to evaporate into sheer oneness at the edges of creation, at the beginning and end of all things.[43] This anxiety will even linger in later Maronite (Syrian monothelite) polemics against Maximus.[44] I note here just two relevant

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[41] Justinian, *Ep ad conc.* (553), Price, vol. 2, 282-3; Greek text is from Georgius Monachus *Chron.* II, de Boor 631: "...ἀποκαθισταμένου δηλονότι καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ διαβόλου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν δαιμόνων εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ἑνάδα καὶ τῶν ἀσεβῶν καὶ ἀθέων ἀνθρώπων μετὰ τῶν θείων καὶ θεοφόρων ἀνδρῶν καὶ τῶν οὐρανίων δυνάμεων καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐξόντων ἕνωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ὁποίαν ἔχει καὶ ὁ Χριστός, καθὼς καὶ προϋπῆρχον, ὡς μηδεμίαν εἶναι διαφορὰν τῷ Χριστῷ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ λογικὰ παντελῶς οὔτε τῇ οὐσίᾳ οὔτε τῇ γνώσει οὔτε τῇ δυνάμει οὔτε τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ."

[42] *ACO* IV.1, 248-9; Price, vol. 2, 286.

[43] Even Leontius of Byzantium, a notorious "Origenist" to detractors like Cyril of Scythopolis (*Vita Sabas* 72, 74, 83-6), wanted to maintain Christ's uniqueness, as did many "protoctist" Origenists (cf. n. 37); see Brian Daley, "The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium," *JTS* 27.2 (1976): 343.

[44] See still Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique*, 176-82, for more on Simeon of Kennesrin's anti-Maximus polemic; and Perczel, "St Maximus on the Lord's Prayer," esp. 234, where a passage from Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle* (12th cent.) reads: "[And these monks of the New Laura said that] Christ will not be superior to us in anything and, just as he is God, so also we will be transformed to become gods" (Perczel's translation).

features common to Justinian and the canons. First, the fundamental concern is one familiar to Neochalcedonian orthodoxy—the *mode* of union. The "way" the Word is united to Christ in isochrist thought seems to assume some essential relation or mode, since the christology targeted portrays "Christ" as a human "mind" separate from the Word, who then becomes that mind only to absorb it in the end (can. 12: "the kingdom of Christ will have an end"). Obviously Maximus sides with the canons here: no essential or natural identity, ever. Second, although Theodore of Scythopolis had specified a mode of union either "according to essence or hypostasis," the latter is absent in Justinian and the canons. Essence, knowledge, power, and activity are said to differ between Christ and the saints—but not according to hypostasis. Maximus, I show below (sec. 3.4), actually agrees that deification does not imply our *absorption* into the Word's hypostasis; we are not obliterated for the sake of hypostatic identity. And yet it's notable that this precision (i.e. "according to hypostasis") disappears in the official condemnations.[45]

Now consider the following passages from Maximus. In *Amb* 21 Maximus strives to resolve what appears to be an evident historical error or rare slip-up in one of Gregory of Nazianzus's orations. Gregory refers to "John, the forerunner of the Word"—naturally John the Baptist (Mt 3.1-3; Jn 1.23)—but then attributes to him a line from John the Evangelist (Jn 21.25).[46] Rather than concede misattribution, Maximus reads Gregory's remark to invite the hearer into Gregory's own spiritual interpretation of Scripture's literal expression.[47] Gregory means what he says, namely that John the Evangelist, "by

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[45] In fact, it's the last two forbidden "identities"—namely that by "power" or "activity"—that seem to pose the greatest *prima facie* challenge to Maximian deification, since Maximus openly asserts that the "activity" of deification is solely divine—to the point that he later had to clarify that and how this does not mean eschatological monenergism. See *Amb* 7.12 and *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 33a-36a.
[46] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 28.20 = *Amb* 21.1.
[47] *Amb* 21.2.

means of his Gospel, is forerunner of a greater and more mystical Word."[48] Then ensues

an elaborate meditation on how Scripture, especially the four Gospels (and especially

John's), correspond to and coalesce with the four elements that constitute the physical

cosmos, and how all these together reveal the Word within them.[49] The last third of this

ambiguum pivots to the "inner cosmos," as it were, the soul seeking union with God.

Maximus notices how the Word who inhabits things external to us also dwells silently

within our own souls. There he longs to cooperate, as grace, with our labors in virtue,

labors by which our soul—in a stunning expression—grants "hypostasis" to the virtues

themselves.[50]

 After another meditation on our deification from this more interior vantage—

above all how love is the greatest unifying power we have[51]—Maximus culminates his

lengthy lucubration with a traditional trope: our deification glides along a trajectory of

increasing intensity from the primordial "image of God" to ever-greater "likeness" to

him.[52] Now, Maximus can comfortably and occasionally wield this trope in its traditional

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[48] *Amb* 21.3: "ὅτιπερ καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ μέγας εὐαγγελιστὴς ἐν τῷ κατ᾽ Εὐαγγελίῳ πρόδρομός ἐστι τοῦ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ μηνυομένου μυστικωτέρου καὶ μείζονος Λόγου."

[49] *Amb* 21.5-8.

[50] *Amb* 21.8, my emphasis: "Moreover, [the soul] will unite the four general virtues like elements in a synthesis, and by means of the intellect will frame a world that will be completed by the spirit, since *the soul endows each virtue with subsistence through the actualization of its own inner potentials in relation to the senses* [κατὰ συμπλοκὴν μέντοι τῆς πρὸς τὰς αἰσθήσεις τῶν αὐτῆς δυνάμεων ἐνεργείας ἑκάστην ἀρετὴν ὑποστήσασα]"; cf. too *Amb* 10.3. Stunning, because Maximus defines creation itself in very similar terms – *QThal* 22.2, CCSG 7, 137: "He who brought all visible and invisible creation into being solely through the momentum of His will [Ὁ πάσης κτίσεως, ὁρατῆς τε καὶ ἀοράτου, κατὰ μόνην τοῦ θελήματος τὴν ῥοπὴν ὑποστήσας τὴν γένεσιν]"; or *QThal* 51.2, CCSG 7, 395: "Having granted existence to the entire visible creation [Τὴν ὁρωμένην ἅπασαν φύσιν ὁ θεὸς ὑποστήσας]."—The point here is that lower modes of existence—the circumscribed, finite modes of created effects—are valorized *in themselves* to such a degree that Maximus can view their "completion" and participation in virtue as some sort of positive actualization of virtue itself. It's as if virtue *gains* something, in some sense (not in any natural sense, clearly), by its realization in our finite mode of life.

[51] *Amb* 21.9. For more on these intervening passages, especially as they touch on analogy and perichoresis, cf. below, sec. 3.5.

[52] Gen 1.26-7. So Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 9.87; Evagrius, *Letter to Melania* 62, *Letter to Anatolius* 18, 61; Diodochus of Photice, *De perf.* 89.

sense.[53] But not here. Here, inspired by Heb 10.1, he sets it on a more lateral or historical trajectory that moves from shadow to image to truth—all of the one Word, of course. He assigns the Word's "shadow" to the Old Testament (represented by John the Baptist), his "image" to the New Testament (represented by John the Evangelist), and his "truth" our future union with him in deification. "The Gospel," writes Maximus, "possesses the image of true things" to come,

> And it is through this image that those who choose the pure and undefiled life of the Gospel, through their strict exercise of the commandments, take possession of the likeness of the good things of the age to come, and are made ready by the Word through the hope that they will be spiritually vivified *by their reception of the archetype* of these true things, and so become living images of Christ, or rather *become identical to Him through grace (rather than being a mere simulacrum)*, or even, perhaps, *become the Lord Himself*, if such an idea is not too onerous for some to bear.[54]

We've seen pretty clearly why this might be "too onerous for some to bear."[55] It rings isochrist, and it's significant that Maximus himself anticipates an unsettling effect—as in fact he does on several occasions around this theme.[56] But it's not simply that Maximus here trespasses onto Origenist plots. The logic, even the wording, of this passage might seem curiously transgressive to those expecting a more Platonic or

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[53] *CC* 3.25; *Amb* 7.21; cf. *QThal* 53.3 and 6.

[54] *Amb* 21.15, PG 91, 1253d, my modifications and emphasis: "Τὸ δὲ Εὐγγέλιον εἰκόνα κέκτηται τῶν ἀληθῶν...δι' ἧς τοὺς τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἑλομένους ζωὴν ἀκραιφηνῆ καὶ ἀκίβδηλον διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐντολῶν ἀκριβοῦς ἐργασίας, τὴν τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν ὁμοιότητα κτησαμένους, ἑτοίμους ὁ Λόγος δι' ἐλπίδος καθίσησι τῇ παραδοχῇ τῆς τῶν ἀληθῶν ἀρχετυπίας ψυχωθῆναι καὶ γενέσθαι ζώας εἰκόνας Χριστοῦ, καὶ ταὐτὸν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον κατὰ τὴν χάριν ἢ ἀφομοίωμα, τυχὸν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος, εἰ μὴ φορτικὸς ὁ λόγος τισὶν εἶναι δοκεῖ."

[55] Some of Maximus's greatest predecessors who were not obviously "Origenists" after the manner of Evagrius appear noticeably reticent about overstating the character of our deification. Gregory of Nazianzus, as noted by Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 224, nowhere quotes 2 Pet 1.4. Even if Russell overstates the matter when he says, "For the Cappadocians, deification never went beyond a figure of speech" (13), his basic view that the Cappadocian anti-Eunomian polemic applied peculiar pressure on how and to what degree they spoke of our *theosis* seems right, at least for Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus. (Gregory of Nyssa is more complicated). Those pressures are much less urgent in Maximus, and this, in part, explains why his "realistic" view of deification seems in several respects like a return to Origen's.

[56] *Amb* 7.12 ("if I may put it this way," after saying God perichoretically penetrates the deified); *Amb* 10.9 ("if it be permitted thus [εἰ θέμις τοῦτο εἰπεῖν]," in the midst of stating the *tantum-quantum* principle); *QThal* 53.3 ("if one may be permitted to put it this way," while saying we become God's "mirror" in deification); etc.

Dionysian description of deification. Consider two features: the archetype's *downward motion* and the image's *identity that supersedes likeness*.

[1] At least in this passage the archetype, the Word, does not merely hover in a purely ideal modality only to be approximated by its permutations, confined as they are to spatio-temporal vicissitudes. No. Union with the archetype is simultaneously the archetype's own advent in the imitator. This downward condescension of archetype to image derives, as Élie Ayroulet has recently and cogently shown, from a distinctly Aristotelian rather than Platonic conception of the archetype-image relation. Aristotle thinks a work of art—a poem or play, say— achieves its completion solely in its reproduction or imitation in the onlooker, so that the archetype-image relation enjoys a kind of "existential simultaneity": the archetype possesses the power of this act *in itself*, to be sure, but attains actuality only *in the imitator*.[57] Clearly Maximus does not mean the Word's divine essence as such is realized only in the image or imitator. But there's more to God, we've seen, than the divine essence as such. And this "more"—the person of the Word (or any of the Three)—is what allows and even requires if not an essential, still *a real* sense in which the divine archetype must condescend in order to complete the "truth that is to come," the deification and perfection of all creation. In fact Maximus seems to detect exactly this concern, and immediately goes on to say:

> For even though He Himself is always the same, and is beyond all change or alteration, becoming neither greater nor lesser, He nonetheless *becomes all things to everyone* [1 Cor 9.22, 12.6, 15.28; Eph 1.23] out of His exceeding goodness: lowly for the lowly, lofty for the lofty, and, for those who are deified through His

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[57] Aristotle, *Po.* 1453b11, for instance, which Ayroulet also correlates with the metaphysics of first and second *ousia* at *Cat.* 2a 11-23; so Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 42: "Dans le platonisme, les Idées archétypales existent en soi et précèdent dans l'existence les images qui en sont les copies, que ce soit dans le monde sensible ou dans l'art qui imite le sensible. Chez Aristote, au contraire, il semble que le prototype n'existe pas en tant que les mais seulement dans la μίμησις actualisée dans l'image." She says Aristotle's view implies "une simultanéité existentielle entre le modèle et l'image" (77), and applies this insight to Maximus later (148, 296). See below, sec. 3.4.

grace, He is God by nature, and Deity beyond all knowledge as God beyond God.[58]

Incarnation demands that God, by essence immutable and remaining in himself, can yet really, in person, identify himself with lowly creatures in such a way that he who cannot be essentially completed by any finite creature is in fact realized in those very creatures.[59] Christo-logic even holds that God shows himself all the more transcendent by nature precisely to the extent that he becomes truly identical to created nature in person.[60] The two distinct yet inseparable logics of nature and hypostasis prove once more to open new possibilities, this time for our deification. We don't just receive the activities or qualities of the transcendent archetype according to our natural or finite mode; we receive the archetype itself.[61]

[2] The archetype condescends into the imitator to make the two "the same" (ταὐτὸν)—a claim already familiar from *Amb* 41. But the really amazing feature here is

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[58] *Amb* 21.16, PG 91, 1256b: "Ὡσαύτως γὰρ ὑπάρχων ἀεὶ δι' ἑαυτόν, καὶ μηδεμίαν παραδεχόμενος ἐξ ἀλλοιώσεως μεταβολήν, οὔτε τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον, *πᾶσι πάντα γίνεται δι' ὑπερβολὴν ἀγαθότητος*, ταπεινὸς τοῖς ταπεινοῖς, ὑψηλὸς τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς, καὶ τοῖς δι' αὐτὸν θεουμένοις ὁ φύσει Θεὸς καὶ πᾶσαν θεότητος ἐκβεβηκὼς ἔννοιαν ὡς ὑπέρθεος."

[59] Though, as Maximus says, "by its nature the uncreated cannot be contained by any created thing" (*Amb* 10.78), he also says: "for He knows how to be contained by creation" (*Amb* 10.59)—both affirmations come in the course of Maximus's meditation on the Transfiguration, which revealed that God's power is such that he can "become a type and symbol of Himself, presenting Himself symbolically by means of His own self" (*Amb* 10.77); see too *Myst.* 5, CCSG 69, 23-4, discussed below (sec. 3.3), where the mutual interpenetration with Christ we enjoy in deification means that "Jesus my God and Savior," "is completed through me who am saved ['Ἰησοῦν μὲν τὸν ἐμὸν Θεὸν καὶ Σωτῆρα συμπληρωθέντα δι' ἐμοῦ σωζομένου]."

[60] *Amb* 5.5. See my, "'Both Mere Man and Naked God': The Incarnational Logic of Apophasis in St Maximus the Confessor," in *Maximus the Confessor as a European Philosopher*, eds. Sotiris Mitralexis, Georgios Steiris, Marcin Podbielski, and Sebastian Lalla (Eugene: Cascade, 2017), 110-30.

[61] Constas's rendering (at *Amb* 21.15, vol. 1, 445, my emphasis) of "ἑτοίμους ὁ Λόγος δι' ἐλπίδος καθίσησι τῇ παραδοχῇ τῆς τῶν ἀληθῶν ἀρχετυπίας ψυχωθῆναι" as "and are made ready by the Word through the hope that they will be spiritually vivified *by their union with the archetype*" is imprecise: it does not indicate the directionality of the union itself. Certainly Maximus can also employ the Platonic, vertical direction of image to archetype (*Amb* 7.25, where it's the image that "approaches" the archetype). But here he reverses it: the Word prepares the deified for "the reception of the archetype [i.e. the Word himself]," where "reception" (ἡ παραδοχή) can mean the "reception of a seed/sperm" (LSJ, s.v.; ref. Oribasius, *Coll. medic.* 22.7.1) or even the "reception of a person" (Lampe, s.v., IV)—both highly relevant senses, as we'll see below at sec. 3.3.

how Maximus qualifies and presses into this identity: we do not, by grace, remain "a mere simulacrum," but "become the Lord Himself." Becoming Christ achieves an identity that surpasses that of a "simulacrum," an ἀφομοίωμα. That's an important word, and to exceed it more significant still. Not only does this outstrip Proclus's henads, described in just those terms.[62] It even threatens to outdo Dionysius's own definition of deification: "theosis is the likeness [ἀφομοίωσίς] to and union with God, as far as possible."[63]

Since Dionysius's definition comes from a liturgical and sacramental context, it's fitting that our next set of passages treat the identity with Christ that occurs through the sacraments, especially baptism and the Eucharist. In *Amb* 42 Maximus faces the following difficulty. Gregory of Nazianzus identifies three human births—"from bodies, from baptism, and from the resurrection"—but later adds a fourth, more mysterious one: "the original and *vital inbreathing* [Gen 2.7; Wisd 15.11]."[64] Why? What follows is an elaborate theory of humanity's original becoming (*genesis*) as distinct in mode from its post-lapsarian becoming (*gennesis*), both of which Christ assumes in his act of becoming man. An interesting and relevant disquisition, to be sure,[65] but it's the question Maximus himself raises late in this *ambiguum* that most concerns us here. He notices and asks why

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[62] Proclus, *Theol. Plat*. VI.3.

[63] Dionysius, *E.H.* 1.3, Heil and Ritter 66, ll.12-13, my translation: "ἡ δὲ θέωσις ἐστιν ἡ πρὸς θεὸν ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἀφομοίωσίς τε καὶ ἕνωσις."

[64] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 40.2 = *Amb* 42.1.

[65] This *ambiguum*, along with *QThal* 61, raises the acutest questions about how the historical Incarnation relates to time itself. So, for example, while Maximus correlates Gregory's three births to Maximus's own triad of being (=physical birth), well-being (=birth through virtue and baptism), and eternal well-being (birth through resurrection), such that they appear to track along with the historical and existential life of human beings pretty much in sequence (*Amb* 42.12), it's also clear that in Christ these are all one event—these along with the fourth primordial "inbreathing." Hence these births prove to be differing "modes," distinguished only "in thought" (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) (*Amb* 42.33). I must reserve this matter for a future study.

Gregory links baptism to the Incarnation.[66] He answers by invoking the image-likeness trope. But again this quickly takes on a more extreme sense:

> Those who interpret the divine sayings mystically...say that man in the beginning was created *according to the image of God* [Gen 1.27], surely so that he might be born of the Spirit in the exercise of his own free choice, and to acquire in addition the *likeness* by the keeping of the divine commandment, so that the same man, being by nature a creation of God, might also be Son of God and God through the Spirit according to grace [ἵνα ᾖ ὁ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος πλάσμα μὲν τοῦ Θεοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, Υἱὸς δὲ Θεοῦ καὶ Θεὸς διὰ Πνεύματος κατὰ χάριν].[67]

How can Maximus move seamlessly from "likeness" to identity? Consider two aspects of Maximus's reasoning here, both of Irenaean vintage. First there's the more "subjective" concern, you might say, to respect human freedom even when we have to do with realizing humanity's natural vocation. Nearly everywhere Maximus treats baptism he stresses its *voluntary* character—as if birth by baptism surpasses bodily birth to the extent that the former is freely elected, the latter not.[68] This recalls Irenaeus's response to the question why God did not make us gods from the very beginning: "so that no one might think him invidious or less than most excellent," God "graciously granted a great good to human beings, and made them like himself, [that is,] possessing their own power."[69] Irenaeus implies that a creature unfree would already be a creature unlike God. For Maximus baptismal birth, which makes us God's adopted children, is how we freely answer our vocation; and indeed it's ultimately how we cooperate in our own primordial generation.

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[66] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or*. 40.2 = *Amb* 42.1: "τὴν δέ, τῇ σαρκώσει καὶ τῷ βαπτίσματι, ὅπερ αὐτὸς ἐβαπτίσατο."

[67] *Amb* 42.31, slightly modified.

[68] Cf. esp. *QThal* 61.11.

[69] Irenaeus, *Haer*. 4.38.4, SC 100/2, my translation: "quamvis secundum simplicitatem bonitatis suae hoc fecerit, ne quis eum putet invidiosum aut impraestantem" (ll. 98-100), and "Secundum enim benignitatem suam bene dedit bonum et similes sibi suae potestatis homines fecit" (ll. 105-7).

Then there's the more "objective" theory, Irenaeus's recapitulation (indebted to Eph 1.10), which stipulates that Christ heals and saves (preserves) all things by remaking and re-sourcing them in himself.[70] But notice what this becomes when combined with the Neochalcedonian precisions about "hypostatic identity" detailed in Chapter 1.[71] Where are all these things "summed up" and stitched together if not in the *person* of Christ? So when Maximus says, as he does soon after this text, that "He who is by God essence and the Son of God by nature was baptized for our sake, voluntarily subjecting Himself to the spiritual birth of adoption," he intimates, I think, that all human "adoption" by the Spirit (through baptism) subsists directly in the one who recapitulated it in himself—in the composed hypostasis of Christ.[72] Christ becomes and is, in very principle (*logos*), the identity of human regeneration—the universal principle active in every individual adoption by grace:

> On account of my condemnation, the Lord first submitted Himself to Incarnation and bodily birth, after which came the birth of baptism received in the Spirit, to which He consented for the sake of my salvation and restoration by grace or, to put it more precisely, *my re-creation* [ἀναπλάσεως]. In this way God joined together *in me* the principle of my being and the principle of my well-being, and He closed the division and distance between them that I had opened up, and through them He wisely drew me to the principle of eternal being, according to which man is no longer subject to carrying or being carried along.[73]

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[70] Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.21.3, for instance. On Irenaeus's idea of recapitulation, see Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 97-116. On Maximus's programmatic or methodological debt to Irenaeus, see Paul M. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 102-8.

[71] Chapter 1, sec. 1.3.

[72] *Amb* 42.31.

[73] *Amb* 42.32, my emphasis: "Σάρκωσις οὖν καὶ σωματικὴ πρότερον τῆς ἐμῆς ἕνεκα κατακρίσεως ἐπὶ τοῦ Κυρίου παρηκολούθησε γέννησις, καὶ οὕτως ἡ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἐν Πνεύματι παραλειφθεῖσα ἐπηκολούθησε γέννησις, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐμῆς κατὰ χάριν σωτηρίας καὶ ἀνακλήσεως ἤ, σαφέστερον εἰπεῖν, ἀναπλάσεως· οἷα συνάπτοντος περὶ ἐμὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ τόν τε τοῦ εἶναί μου λόγον καὶ τὸν τοῦ εὖ εἶναι, καὶ τὴν γενομένην παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ τούτων ἐνοποιοῦντος τομὴν καὶ διάστασιν, καὶ διὰ τούτων πρὸς τὸν τοῦ ἀεὶ εἶναι λόγον σοφῶς συνελαύνοντος, καθ᾽ ὃν οὐκέτι τὸ φέρειν ἔστι καὶ φέρεσθαι περὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον."

For Maximus the power implanted or nascent in baptism must be nursed to fullness by a person's own deeds.[74] And no deed's more effective than receiving the Eucharist. On the two occasions in his *Mystagogy* Maximus remarks on the "holy communion" of the synaxis—however curtly and cryptically[75]—he makes bold to speak of "identity" with God through Christ. After the "Our Father," which sustains our adoption as God's offspring, we hymn the "One is Holy," an ancient chant about Jesus Christ,[76] which makes us "like him by participation in an indivisible identity according to each one's power."[77] Later Maximus warns his readers against laxity in attending the divine liturgy exactly because, there and then, the Holy Spirit's grace is present "in a special way," a grace that "transforms [*metapoiousan*] and changes [*metaskeuazousan*] each person who is found there and in fact remolds [*metaplattousan*] him in proportion to what is more divine in him and leads him to what is revealed through the mysteries which are celebrated"—even if the participant herself "does not feel this" because she's but an infant in Christ, unable to perceive what's really occurring.[78] And what's occurring is this:

> By holy communion of the spotless and life-giving mysteries we receive both fellowship with him by participation through likeness, and identity, by which man is deemed worthy to become God out of man.[79]

More precisely, identical to God because identical to Christ:

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[74] *QThal* 6.2; *QThal* 61.11.

[75] Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor*, 191-3.

[76] See *Myst.* 21, and the note in Berthold, *Maximus Confessor*, 223 n. 112.

[77] *Myst.* 13, CCSG 69, 42, slightly modified: "τῇ χάριτι θεωθέντας, καὶ κατὰ μέθεξιν πρὸς αὐτὴν ὁμοιωθέντας τῇ κατὰ δύναμιν ἀδιαιρέτῳ ταυτότητι." On "analogy" or, here, "according to each one's power," see below, sec. 3.5.

[78] *Myst.* 24, CCSG 69, 55-6.

[79] *Myst.* 24, CCSG 69, 58, slight change: "διὰ δὲ τῆς ἁγίας μεταλήψεως τῶν ἀχράντων καὶ ζωοποιῶν μυστηρίων, τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν κατὰ μέθεξιν ἐνδεχομένην δι' ὁμοιότητος κοινωνίαν τε καὶ ταυτότητα· δι' ἧς γενέσθαι θεὸς ἐξ ἀνθρώπου καταξιοῦται ὁ ἄνθρωπος."

Then we shall pass from the grace which is in faith to the grace of vision, when our God and Savior Jesus Christ will indeed transform us into himself [μεταποιοῦντος ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν δηλαδὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] by taking away from us the marks of corruption and will bestow on us the archetypical mysteries which have been represented for us through sensible symbols here below.[80]

Maximus's mention of the "Our Father" (*Myst*. 13) recalls his formal commentary on that prayer. Here again we find identity claims. Maximus's principal premise is that the Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray for the "good things that are themselves actualized from the Word incarnate."[81] There are seven "good things."[82] The second and third pertain here. The Incarnation grants humanity "equality in honor with the angels" (third) and "adoption in grace" (fourth).[83] Adoption and participation in divine life surpasses even angelic equality to the extent that it makes us equal to God. This occurs, once more, because in the historical Incarnation the Word "makes Himself edible—as He Himself knows how," and thus "mixes with a divine quality those who eat for their deification, since He both is and is clearly called Bread of Life and of power."[84]

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[80] *Myst*. 24, CCSG 69, 59, slightly modified. Cf. too *Amb* 50.3, where the Eucharist is *also* celebrated "in the future age of the divine promises," where, "without any mediation we will eat the most sublime Word of Wisdom—and being transformed with respect to Him, we will become Gods by grace [τὸν ἀκρότατον ἀμέσως ἐσθίοντες τῆς Σοφίας Λόγον, πρὸς ὃν μεταποιηθέντες κατὰ χάριν θεούμεθα]." Portaru, "The Vocabulary of Participation in the Works of Saint Maximus the Confessor," 303, glosses Maximus's language in these texts: "A term that should be noted is the verb μεταποιέω, which designates a profound transformation of human being by grace.... Since the context is the receiving of Eucharist, I believe these images *must be understood literally, not metaphorically*" (my emphasis). He doesn't elaborate.

[81] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 3 (cf. 1), CCSG 23, 40, slightly modified.

[82] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 1, where they're enumerated: [1] theology (i.e. knowing God as Trinity); [2] adoption in grace; [3] equality of honor with the angels; [4] participation in eternal life; [5] the restoration of nature; [6] the abolition of sin; [7] the overthrow of evil's tyranny and deception. There does appear to be an order to these that follows a similar logic of the "two ages" of Incarnation and deification in *QThal* 22: phenomenologically, as it were, both history and individual biographies unfold from 7 to 1; eschatologically, from 1-7; and of course christologically, both directions at once.

[83] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 2, CCSG 23, 33: "Ἰσοτίμους δὲ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις τοὺς ἀνθρώπους πεποίηκεν." An idea precious to Evagrius, *De orat*. 113; Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 239.

[84] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 2, CCSG 23, 34, greatly modified; here's the fuller citation: "Ζωῆς δὲ θείας ποιεῖται μετάδοσιν, ἐδώδιμον ἑαυτὸν ἐργαζόμενος, ὡς οἶδεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ τοιαύτην αἴσθησιν νοερὰν εἰληφότες, ὥστε τῇ γεύσει ταύτης τῆς βρώσεως εἰδέναι κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθῶς *ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ*

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We have here exactly the same logic of participation operative last chapter in Maximus's protology.[85] [1] the Word condescends to identify his person with created nature, which generates that nature; [2] the Word's generative self-identification with created nature opens to the latter a "new," non-natural mediation or relation by which to participate the "good things" or "eternal works" of the divine nature; [3] and so participation through this supra-natural mediator—namely the hypostasis of the Word—can lead to otherwise inconceivable modes of perfection and real relation between God and world: a single perichoretic or a "whole in whole" modality of two infinitely different modes and acts. So here:

> [1] [Christ] sets in movement in us an insatiable desire for himself who is the Bread of Life, wisdom, knowledge, and justice. When we fulfill the Father's will he renders us similar to the angels in their adoration, as we imitate them by reflecting the heavenly blessedness in the conduct of our life. [2] From there he leads us finally in the supreme ascent in divine realities to the Father of lights wherein he makes us sharers in the divine nature by participation in the Spirit according to grace, [3] through which we receive the title of God's children and *become, ourselves [still] wholes, clothed with the whole and very author of this same grace, without limiting or defiling him who is Son of God by nature*, from whom, by whom, and in whom we have and shall have being, movement, and life [cf. Acts 17.28].[86]

κύριος, ποιότητι θείᾳ πρὸς θέωσιν μετακιρνῶν τοὺς ἐσθίοντας, οἷα δὴ σαφῶς *ζωῆς* καὶ δυνάμεως *ἄρτος* καὶ ὢν καὶ καλούμενος." Cf. Origen, *Hom. in Lev.* 16.5; *Comm. in Jo.* 20.35, *passim.*

[85] Chapter 2, sec. 2.6.

[86] *Exp. Orat. Dom.* 5, CCSG 23, 70, my modifications and emphasis: "...καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτόν, *ἄρτον ὄντα ζωῆς* σοφίας τε καὶ γνώσεως καὶ δικαιοσύνης, κινοῦντος ἡμῶν ἀκορέστως τὴν ὄρεξιν καὶ τῇ πληρώσει τοῦ πατρικοῦ θελήματος τοῖς ἀγγέλοις ὁμολάτρας ἡμᾶς καθιστῶντος, τῇ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀγωγῇ τὴν ἐπουράνιον εὐμιμήτως ἐμφαίνοντας εὐαρέστησιν, κἀκεῖθεν πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροτάτην τῶν θείων ἀνάβασιν, πρὸς *τὸν Πατέρα τῶν φώτων*, ἐνάγοντος, καὶ *θείας* ἀπεργαζομένου *φύσεως κοινωνοὺς* τῇ κατὰ χάριν μεθέξει τοῦ Πνεύματος, καθ᾽ ἣν *τέκνα θεοῦ* χρηματίσομεν, αὐτὸν τὸν ταύτης αὐτουργὸν τῆς χάριτος καὶ κατὰ φύσιν τοῦ Πατρὸς Υἱὸν **ὅλον ὅλοι** δίχα περιγραφῆς ἀχράντως περικομίζοντες, ἐξ οὗ καὶ δι᾽ οὗ καὶ ἐν ᾧ τὸ εἶναί τε καὶ κινεῖσθαι καὶ ζῆν ἔχομέν τε καὶ ἕξομεν]."

—In fact the logic emerges if you simply trace the order of Maximus's scriptural allusions as they appear:

[1] The Middle: The Word becomes incarnate
    i. Christ gives himself as "the Bread of Life" (Jn 6.35, 48)
    ii. and descends from the "Father of lights" (Ja 1.17)

So exactly does the logic of our deification conform to the logic of Christ, that Maximus

can even apply a classic passage on Christ's kenosis (Php 2.6) directly to the deification

of our soul, and from there make some incredible claims:

> [The soul] becomes a radiant abode of the Holy Spirit and receives, if one can say
> it, the full power of knowing the divine nature insofar as this is possible. By this
> power there is discarded the origin of what is inferior, to be replaced by that of
> what is superior, while the soul, *equal to God* [ἴσα θεῷ--Php 2.6] keeps inviolable
> in itself by the grace of its calling the hypostasis of the gifts that have been given.
> By this power [or: "according to this hypostasis"], Christ is always born
> mysteriously and willingly, becoming incarnate through those who are saved. He
> causes the soul which begets him to be a virgin-mother who, to speak briefly,
> does not bear the marks of nature subject to corruption and generation in the
> relationship of male and female.[87]

We could adduce several other passages that make identity-claims like those

canvassed here.[88] Instead I terminate this catalogue to consider how Maximus could get

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[2] The End: The Word's Incarnation induces our deification
    iii. Therefore we're empowered to become "sharers in the divine nature" itself (2 Pet 1.4)
    iv. and this takes the specific form of filiation, of receiving the Son through the Spirit as
    "children of God" (Jn 1.12, 11.52; Rom 8.16, 12, 9.8; Php 2.15; 1 Jn 3.1-2, 10, 5.2)
[3] The Beginning: The Word *Incarnate* is thus shown to become the very principles of creation
    v. since Maximus here substitutes "Christ" and "Son" for the vaguer "in Him" of Acts
    17.28
    vi. hence, too, Maximus claimed earlier that "the same divine food" wrought in Christ
    was available to Adam (*Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 60).

[87] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 50, slightly modified: "...ὡς Πνεύματος ἁγίου παμφαὲς οἰκητήριον, ὅλην δεχόμενον, εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν, τῆς θείας φύσεως κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῆς γνώσεως, καθ᾽ ἣν ἡ μὲν τῶν χειρόνων ἀπογίνεσθαι, τῶν δὲ κρειττόνων ὑφίστασθαι πέφυκε γένεσις, ἴσα θεῷ τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ τὴν χάριν τῆς κλήσεως ἄσυλον φυλαττούσης ἐν ἑαυτῇ τῶν δωρηθέντων καλῶν τὴν ὑπόστασιν· καθ᾽ ἣν ἀεὶ θέλων Χριστὸς γεννᾶται μυστικῶς, διὰ τῶν σωζομένον σαρκούμενος καὶ μητέρα παρθένον ἀπεργαζόμενος τὴν γεννῶσαν ψυχήν, οὐκ ἔχουσαν, ἵνα συνελὼν εἴπω, κατὰ τὴν σχέσιν, ὥσπερ *ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ*, τὰ γνωρίσματα τῆς ὑπὸ φθορὰν καὶ γένεσιν φύσεως." I favor the rendering, "according to this hypostasis," as I argue below at sec. 3.3.

[88] *QThal* 59.8, CCSG 22, 53, explicitly defines the "likeness" of the fully deified as "the received [and] actualized identity to the very one who is participated by participants through likeness [ἡ κατ᾽ ἐνέργειαν πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ μετεχόμενον τῶν μετεχόντων δι᾽ ὁμοιότητος ἐνδεχομένη ταυτότης]" (modified)— on which consult Portaru, "The Vocabulary of Participation in the Works of Saint Maximus the Confessor," 316; *QThal* 25.5, CCSG 7, 163, says the human intellect attains "identity with God by grace [τῆς πρὸς θεὸν κατὰ χάριν ταὐτότητος]," and indeed identity with "the Divine Intellect," the Father himself; *Amb* 20.7, claims that in the state of grace we are "like and equal to God [ὅμοιον Θεῷ καὶ ἴσον, ὡς ἐφικτόν, τῇ χάριτι κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν]"; *Amb* 31.4, says the gift of grace makes us "equal in honor to the Father [ἰσότιμον τῷ Πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐκ χάριτος δωρεάν]"; and *QThal* 29.5, especially schol. 4, CCSG 7, 217, which, though probably not by Maximus himself, yet dares to say the very thing Theophilus of Scythopolis condemned: that Paul, because he "became another Christ," was indeed "united to Him according to hypostasis [ἑνωθῆναι σπεύδων τῷ Χριστῷ κατὰ τὴν ἐν εἴδει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὑπόστασιν]"!

away with such statements, particularly given the deep concern around Origenist isochristism. Notice, first, that Maximus had before him other authorities whose writings brandished similar convictions, authorities not obviously of the Origenist stock. Take the simple but vigorous Christ-devotion of the Macarian homilies—an influence Maximus definitely suffered.[89] There you read that "the heavenly Image, Jesus Christ, now mystically illumines the soul" of the saint from within;[90] that "perfect Christians" who by grace receive the "heavenly anointing" that makes of them "sons and lords and gods" must be "bound and held captive, crucified and consecrated" with Christ[91]; that we are like "burning lamps" lighted from a single flame, "the Son of God," such that when we're anointed with the same oil and enkindled with the same fire as Christ himself "we should become Christs—of the very same essence and of one body, as it were"[92]; that even as one Body there's no need to think our bodies melt away at the resurrection, since "all are being transformed into a divine nature, becoming christs and gods and children of God [εἰς θεϊκὴν γὰρ φύσιν ἅπαντες μεταβάλλονται, χρηστοὶ, καὶ θεοὶ, καὶ τέκνα Θεοῦ γενόμενοι]"[93]; and that, reminiscent one of Maximus's sentiments above, God dispatched the Scriptures as letters beckoning human beings to "receive the celestial gift out of the hypostasis of God's divinity," which is "immortal life," or simply, "Christ."[94]

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[89] For the Macarian legacy in Maximus, see esp. Marcus Plested, *The Macarian Legacy: The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 213-54; and Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 241-5.

[90] Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom*. 2.5, PG 34, 468a.

[91] Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom*. 17.1, PG 34, 624c: "Οὗτοί εἰσι καὶ υἱοὶ, καὶ κύριοι, καὶ θεοὶ, δεδεμένοι, ἠχμαλωτισμένοι, βεβυθισμένοι, ἐσταυρωμένοι, ἀφιερωμένοι"; cf. the *Great Letter*, Maloney 258-9.

[92] Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom*. 43.1, PG 34, 772b-c, my translation and slight modification: "ἵνα τῷ αὐτῷ ἐλαίῳ, ᾧ αὐτὸς ἐχρίσθη, καὶ ἡμεῖς χρισθέντες γενώμεθα Χριστοὶ, τῆς αὐτῆς, ὡς εἰπεῖν, οὐσίας καὶ ἑνὸς σώματος."

[93] Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom*. 34.2, PG 34, 745b, my translation.

[94] Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom*. 39.1, PG 34, 761c-d, my translation: "λάβωσι δωρεὰν οὐράνιον ἐκ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ...ἧς ἄνευ ἀδύνατόν ἐστι ζωῆς ἀθανάτου τυχεῖν, ἥτις ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστός." Cp. *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, cited at n. 87.

Maximus exemplifies the vitality of this tradition. So too, of course, was he shaped by his affinity for the (especially Evagrian) Origenist legacy, both directly and as it animated the Cappadocians.[95] And yet I think Maximus's courage about identity between the saints and Christ (and so God) is not entirely explicable as a mere epiphenomenon of various traditional compounds. He had *dogmatic* reason for such fortitude, too. That's to say, Maximus's developments of and extra burnishes to Neochalcedonian christology—especially Christo-logic's discrimination between hypostatic and essential logics, and the new modal possibilities this distinction entails—allowed him (to cop Perczel's helpful description) to retain a "structural isomorphism" to isochrist Origenism even as he infused it with the dogmatic content of (his brand of) Neochalcedonianism.[96]

And this constitutes, I suggest, the great significance of Maximus's celebrated *tantum-quantum* (or τοσοῦτον-ὅσον) principle.[97] This principle prescribes that to the *same* degree that God became man in the historical Incarnation, we become God in deification. Here we've moved beyond the Irenaean-Athanasian axiom that God became human that humans might become gods.[98] That axiom posits an intimate *causal* link between Incarnation and deification. But the *tantum-quantum* principle, which Maximus

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[95] On these Origenist influences see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, 3rd ed., transl. Brian Daley, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003 [orig: 1941, 1961, 1988]), 115-136; Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, Herder, 1955); and Paul M. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 1-3, 67-8, and 222-3, who's recently suggested that there's yet more to recognize in Maximus's debt to Origenism. On the Cappadocian influence on Maximus, see George Berthold, "The Cappadocian Roots of Maximus the Confessor," in *MC*, 51-9.

[96] Perczel, "St Maximus on the Lord's Prayer," 239-40, 271.

[97] Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 376-82; Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 32-3.

[98] Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.pref.; Athanasius, *De incarn. Verb.* 54.3. Maximus of course began here (cf. *Lib. ascet.* 43) and so maintained it throughout his corpus; see Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 376.

inherits but forges into a veritable *Grundprinzip*,[99] commends something like a *formal* and even "mutually proportional" relation between them.[100]

Mark two features of this principle. First, it is not an abstract axiom. Axiomatic, sure, but it couldn't be *less* abstract, really, since one of its terms is precisely the historical Incarnation of the Word. Even when Maximus emphasizes the cooperative work of the soul in the process of its deification, the referent and measure is the historical Christ-event:

> He gives adoption by giving through the Spirit a supernatural birth from on high in grace, of which divine birth the guardian and preserver—along with God—is the free will of those who are thus born. By a sincere disposition it cherishes the grace bestowed and by a careful observation of the commandments it adorns the beauty given by grace. And by emptying itself of the passions *it takes on divinity to the same degree that the Word of God willed to empty himself in the incarnation ["economically"] of his own unmixed glory in being reckoned and truly becoming human.*[101]

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[99] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 29.19 = *Amb* 3.1: "...because He deigned to take on your thick corporeality, consorting with the flesh through the medium of the intellect—and God on earth became man, for it (i.e., the flesh) was blended with God, and He became one, because the stronger predominated, so that I might be made God to the same extent that He was made man [ἵνα γένωμαι τοσοῦτον Θεὸς ὅσον ἐκαῖνος ἄνθρωπος]."—Though not cast in the same technical formal, the central idea *tantum-quantum* expresses—a fundamental reciprocity between creaturely *ascent* to (and as) God and God's *descent* to (and as) creature—finds precedent in lesser known crooks of the Alexandrian tradition. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, wrote: "For the Word of God is intelligible [νοερός], according to which the image of the mind [νοῦς] is seen in the human being alone, by which also the good man is deiform and dei-similar [θεοειδὴς καὶ θεοείκελος] in his soul, *and God, in turn, is anthropoform* [ἀνθρωποειδής]. For the form of both is the mind [ὁ νοῦς], by which we are fashioned"; *Strom.* 6.9.72.2, my emphasis, but translation's taken from David I. Litwa, "'I will become Him': Homology and Deification in the Gospel of Thomas," *JBL* 133.2 (2015): 446. Of course Maximus could never brook a *natural* relation between God and the deified mind after the manner of Clement here and Origen at times (*Princ* 4.4.9), though some of his influences appear to have held a similar view; cf. Dirk Krausmüller, "Human Souls as Consubstantial Sons of God: The Heterodox Anthropology of Leontius of Jerusalem," *JLARC* 4 (2010): 43-67. But this only further substantiates my principal point: Maximus's Neochalcedonian christology allowed him to eschew and replace the *dogmatic* content of these parts of the tradition while retaining and even exacerbating (since hypostatic identity is stronger than the formal identity among stratified levels of nature) their *structure* or *thought-forms.*

[100] Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 381, citing François Brune, *Pour que l'homme devienne Dieu*. 2nd Ed (Saint-Jean-de-Braye, 1992), 332.

[101] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 2, CCSG 23, 32-3, my modifications and emphasis: "Υἱοθεσίαν δὲ δίδωμι, τὴν ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἄνωθεν διὰ Πνεύματος ἐν χάριτι δωρούμενος γέννησιν, ἧς σὺν θεῷ φυλακή τε καὶ τήρησις ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν γεννωμένων προαίρεσις, διαθέσει γνησίᾳ τὴν δοθεῖσαν στέργουσα χάριν καὶ τῇ πράξει τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐπιμελῶς τὸ κατὰ χάριν δοθὲν ὡραΐζουσα κάλλος καὶ **τοσοῦτον** τῇ κενώσει τῶν παθῶν

Little doubt that the final line refers to the historical person of Christ.[102] That matters because, as Maximus reminds just before another *tantum-quantum* passage, the only way the Word becomes man at all is in his own hypostasis.[103] Hypostatic identity remains ever the *sine qua non* of the *communicatio idiomatum* in Christo-logic.[104] You don't get *any* degree of exchange without the real, factual identity sustaining and indeed generating that very created nature whose qualities the Word assumes. You certainly don't get the supreme degree of communication wrought and displayed in the Word's kenosis unto death. If our reception of the fullness of God is in any sense less than God's assumption of the fullness of man in the Word's historical, hypostatic identity to human nature (particular and universal), then this principle, as it's systematically expressed, falls into sheer nonsense.[105]

The second feature: since we become truly and wholly God to the same degree the Son became truly and wholly human;[106] and since we remain ourselves whole while becoming the whole God (see below, sec. 3.4); then the Word still incarnates, still *gains bodily existence*, in the ongoing mutual assimilation between God and man—what

μεταποιουμένη θεότητος, **ὅσον** ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ Λόγος, τῆς οἰκείας ἀκραιφνοῦς δόξης οἰκονομικῶς ἑαυτὸν κατὰ θέλησιν κενώσας, γενόμενος ἀληθῶς κεχρημάτικεν ἄνθρωπος."

[102] See Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 376-7 for others, esp. *QThal* 64.33, CCSG 22, 237.

[103] *Amb* 3.3, my emphasis (citing Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or*. 29.19): "Through the flesh, which by nature is passible, He manifested His infinitely immeasurable power, for 'it'—obviously the flesh—was 'blended with God and He became one, the strong side predominating,' precisely because it was assumed by the Word, *who deified it by identifying it with His own hypostasis* [ὑποστατικῇ ταὐτότητι κυρίως αὐτὴν τοῦ προσλαβόντος Λόγου θεώσαντος]."

[104] Chapter 1, sec. 1.5.

[105] So Perczel, "St Maximus on the Lord's Prayer," 241: "The measure of appropriation of the godhead by men equals the measure of the acquisition of human nature through the self-emptying of the Word of God; in fact there is no quantitative difference; men through grace, acquired through their acts of free will, become just as much God as God the Word through the free act of his self-emptying had become entirely man." Perczel prefers to explain this by invoking Aristotle's principle of "substance," which prescribes that "substance does not admit the concept of more or less" (*Cat*. 5, 3b33-4a9) (240, 247), so that Maximian deification requires the Word to dwell within the deified "substantially and not only operatively or energetically" (241). This edges very close to my own interpretation (see below, sec. 3.3): since the Word's hypostasis is the very principle for created hypostases (and their natures), then the Word is personally present as a supra-natural power in every creature (as their *logoi*).

[106] *Amb* 7.22.

Maximus calls the "ages" of deification.[107] Thus emerges a profound characteristic of Maximian deification, namely the symmetry and even mutual conditioning or fulfillment between God's becoming creature and the creature's becoming God. "Au plan mystique de l'accomplissement personnel de l'homme," Larchet writes,

> elles [deification and Incarnation] deviennent même réciproquement dépendantes et se conditionennt mutuellement, puisque non seulement l'homme devient dieu relativement à l'humanisation de Dieu, mais encore que Dieu, par une manifestation suprême de Son amour, devient homme relativement à la divinisation de l'homme en tant qu'Il S'incarne mystiquement en chaque personne divinisée.[108]

That this reciprocal fulfillment occurs "mystically" doesn't make it any less concrete or extreme; rather more so, since, of course, the historical Incarnation itself is the greatest and source of all mysteries.[109] The *tantum-quantum* principle therefore posits the profoundest possible identity between Incarnation and deification—that both achieve the complete perichoresis of created and uncreated natures that's possible solely in the Word's person. He himself becomes the continuity of extremes so that realities infinitely different by nature can *now*, in a totally supra-natural manner, become each other's terms as if they were on the same metaphysical mode of existence. The deified "as wholes," writes Maximus,

> were deemed worthy to be wholly intermingled through the Spirit with the whole of God, and thus were *clothed* (so far as humanly possible) in the whole *image of the heavenly man* [1 Cor 15.49], and to the extent [τοσοῦτο] that they drew to themselves the manifestation of God, to that very same degree, if it be permitted thus, they were drawn to God and united to Him [εἰ θέμις τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, ὅσον ἑλχθέντες αὐτοὶ τῷ Θεῷ συνετέθησαν]. For they say that God and man are paradigms of each other, so that as much as man, enabled by love, has divinized himself for God, to that same extent God is humanized for man by His love for mankind; and as much as man has manifested through the virtues God who is

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[107] *QThal* 22.4, CCSG 7, 137-9.
[108] Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 381-2.
[109] *Amb* 42.17, 29; see my Introduction.

invisible by nature, to that same extent man is rapt by God in mind to the unknowable.[110]

But more on the God-world reciprocity in sec. 3.5.

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I've tried to establish two basic points in this section. First, Maximus depicts deification as achieving an identity between God and the world, however fraught that idea's legacy was before him. And second, this identity is the very same as that wrought in the historical Incarnation, hypostatic identity. Yet everywhere and always Maximus qualifies deific identity as a product of grace, as we first heard in the overture (*Amb* 41). Maximus's own iteration of Dionysius's definition of deification runs: "the work of theological mystagogy is to establish one *by grace* in a state of being like God and equal to God"—where "grace" and "equal," note well, are Maximus's.[111]

But doesn't the former vitiate the latter? If "by the state of grace" I become "one and same" as God and "everything that God is, *without, however, identity in essence*"[112]—then can I really say my eschatological identity with God is *identity* in any meaningful sense? Doesn't "God by grace" instead of "God by nature" finally just mean

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[110] *Amb* 10.9, modified: "καθ' ὃν ὁλικῶς πρὸς Θεὸν συναχθέντες, ὅλοι ὅλῳ Θεῷ ἐγκραθῆναι διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἠξιώθησαν, ὅλην *τοῦ ἐπουρανίου* κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώποις *τὴν εἰκόνα φορέσαντες* καὶ τοσοῦτο ἕλξαντες τῆς θείας ἐμφάσεως, εἰ θέμις τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, ὅσον ἑλχθέντες αὐτοὶ τῷ Θεῷ συνετέθησαν. Φασὶ γὰρ ἀλλήλων εἶναι παραδείγματα τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τοσοῦτον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸν Θεὸν διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν ἀνθρωπίζεσθαι, ὅσον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν τῷ Θεῷ δι' ἀγάπης δυνηθεὶς ἀπεθέωσε, καὶ τοσοῦτον ὑπὸ Θεοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ νοῦν ἁρπάζεσθαι πρὸς τὸ ἄγνωστον, ὅσον ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὸν ἀόρατον φύσει Θεὸν διὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν ἐφανέρωσεν."

[111] *Amb* 20.7, slightly modified: "ἔργον...τῆς δὲ θεολογικῆς μυσταγωγίας ὅμοιον Θεῷ καὶ ἴσον, ὡς ἐφικτόν, τῇ χάριτι κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν ποιῆσαι."

[112] *Amb* 41.5, cited above at n. 26. Even the great Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 487, tends to give this sense: "Il y bien alors, appropriées par la personne, communication à la nature qu'elle hypostasie, par le biais des vertus, non pas des propriétés essentielles de Dieu...non pas de la nature même de Dieu (de sorte que l'homme ne devient pas Dieu Lui-Même, n'acquiert pas avec Dieu l'identité d'essence), mais des énergies divines, le fidèle devenant ainsi dieu par participation, par position et par grâce."

"never quite God"? What does grace mean to Maximus? This immediately evokes another aporia. Its resolution, I'll propose, resolves these larger objections too.

3.3 – God by grace: an innate and supra-natural process

The aporia of deifying grace comes to this: grace is a power primordially present *in* human nature, and yet it activates a completely supra-natural process and state. I study both in reverse order and then propose a resolution according to Christo-logic.

1. *Grace is not a natural power*. I hope to have said enough in the previous two chapters to make this point evident and expected: if creation's logic is Christ's, then there is *never* a question of essential or natural identity (or even relation) between God and world. Hypostatic logic completely relieves nature of that burden. And so just as we observed Maximus tender some rather unequivocal remarks along those lines in protology,[113] so here in eschatology. There at the beginning of the God-world relation Maximus openly denied any natural relation—however mollified through modal declension—between God's eternal, participated "works" and their historical participants. Here at creation's end, where "actual identity" occurs, no less, no natural mediation exists between nature and grace.[114]

At times Maximus expresses this infinite difference in nearly formulaic pairs correlated to discrete spheres.[115] Or he can distinguish the "three laws"—the natural, the

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[113] Chapter 2, sec. 2.3
[114] *QThal* 59.8, cited at n. 88.
[115] *CC* 3.25, Caresa-Gestaldo, 154: God, because he is extremely goodness, communicates four "divine properties" to rational creatures: "being and ever-being, goodness and wisdom [τὸ ὄν, τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν, τὴν ἀγαθότητα καὶ τὴν σοφίαν]." The first two God allots "to the essence [τῇ οὐσίᾳ]," the last two "to the gnomic receptivity [τῇ δὲ γνωμικῇ ἐπιτηδειότητι]," or simply, to human progress in freely appropriating the virtues. The first two correspond to "to the image" of God in us from the beginning, the last two "to the likeness" achieved unto eternity. And these three pair-sets reduce neatly to the most general one: "The one

written, and the gracious.[116] Still another schema springs from his *logoi* doctrine, where

the common *logos* of all rational beings makes them exist according to three modes:

"being, well-being, and eternal-being."[117] Each successive mode assumes those prior,

such that the prior modes bear in potency what the next mode actualizes—sort of. A

complication arises between the second and third modes, nature (which for rational

creatures includes a volition faculty) and grace:

> And the first [mode] contains potential, the second activity, and the third, rest
> from activity. This means that the principle of being, which by nature possesses
> only the potential for actualization, cannot in any way possess this potential in its
> fullness without the faculty of free choice. That of well-being, on the other hand,
> possesses the actualization of natural potential only by inclination of the will, for
> it does not possess this potential in its totality separately from nature. That of
> eternal-being, finally, which wholly contains those that precede it (that is, the
> potential of the one, and the activity of the other), *absolutely does not exist as a*
> *natural potential within beings, nor does it at all follow by necessity from the*
> *willing of free choice.* (For how is it possible for things, which by nature have a
> beginning and which by their motion have an end, *to possess as an innate part of*
> *themselves* that which exists eternally and which has neither beginning nor
> end?)[118]

Rational being, a created essence, possesses a power actualized through will; when that

power is elected, it is. So the first and second modes relate more or less as potency to act.

They imply each other in principle. Not so with the third mode, eternal well-being, grace.

[i.e. image/essence/being] is by nature, the other [i.e. likeness/freedom/goodness-wisdom] by grace [τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, ὁ κατὰ χάριν]."

[116] *QThal* 19.2, 64.34, *passim*; see Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy*, 117-21; Karayiannis, *Maxime le Confesseur*, 290-340; and see the still very good discussion of the natural and scriptural laws in Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 291-314.

[117] Much discussed, but see especially the helpful discussion in Alain Riou, *Le monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1973), 89. Clearly this schema is a protracted version of the one at *CC* 3.25; cf. too *Amb* 7.10.

[118] *Amb* 65.2, my slight modifications and emphasis: "Καὶ τὸν μὲν πρῶτον δυνάμεως, τὸν δὲ δεύτερον ἐνεργείας, τὸν δὲ τρίτον ἀργίας εἶναι περιεκτικόν. Οἷον, ὁ μὲν τοῦ εἶναι λόγος μόνην φυσικῶς ἔχων τὴν πρὸς ἐνέργειαν δύναμιν, αὐτὴν πληρεστάτην δίχα τῆς προαιρέσεως τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἔχειν οὐ δύναται παντελῶς· ὁ δὲ τοῦ εὖ εἶναι αὐτὴν μόνην γνωμικῶς ἔχων τῆς φυσικῆς δυνάμεως τὴν ἐνέργειαν, αὐτὴν ὁλόκληρον τὴν δύναμιν τὸ σύνολον χωρὶς οὐκ ἔχει τῆς φύσεως· ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἀεὶ εἶναι τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ καθόλου περιγράφων, τοῦ μὲν τὴν δύναμιν, τοῦ δὲ τὴν ἐνέργειαν, οὔτε φυσικῶς κατὰ δύναμιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐνυπάρχει παντελῶς, οὔτε μὴν ἐξ ἀνάγκης τὸ παράπαν θελήσει προαιρέσεως ἕπεται. (Πῶς γὰρ τοῖς ἀρχὴν κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τέλος κατὰ κίνησιν ἔχουσαν οἷόν τε ἐνεῖναι τὸ ἀεὶ ὂν καὶ ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος οὐκ ἔχον;)."

If rational nature's concrete end were an automatic outcome of its own power—even of the volitional power proper to it—then that end would come by nature and not by grace. The end of creation proves just as supra-natural as its beginning. Creation's edges, as it were, cannot by definition be *natural*. Then they would not be given or created in any meaningful sense. And if not natural, then their brute facticity evidently does not concretize through any natural relation to the source of that truth, God. The *logos* of divine infinity, as Maximus says near the end of this passage, could never be "an innate part" of a rational creature's *logoi*.[119]

So severe is Maximus about grace's *supra*-natural character, that some of his statements might make even the most stolid two-tiered Thomist blush. A creature's ecstasy and "experience" (πεῖρα) in deification, both significant motifs in Maximus,[120] stem precisely from the conviction that our union with God happens by no natural medium at all. Certainly not through any *potentia obedientialis*. Watch how Maximus glosses Gregory of Nazianzus's mention of "the things [Paul] experienced" when rapt to the third heaven (2 Cor 12.2):

> a name is indicative of grace when man, who has been obedient to God in all things, is named 'God' in the Scriptures, as in the phrase, *I said, you are Gods* [Ps 81(82).6], for it is not by nature or condition [οὔτε κατὰ φύσιν οὔτε κατὰ σχέσιν] that he has become and is called 'God,' but he has become God and is so named by placement and grace. For the grace of divinization is completely unconditioned, because it finds no faculty or capacity of any sort within nature that could receive it, for if it did, it would no longer be grace but the manifestation of a natural activity latent within the potentiality of nature. And thus, again, what takes place would no longer be marvelous if divinization occurred simply in accordance with the receptive capacity [εἰ κατὰ δεκτικὴν δύναμιν φύσεως ἡ θέωσις ἦν]. Indeed, it would rightly be a work of nature, not a gift of God, and a

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[119] Cp. *CC* 1.100.
[120] On "ecstasy" see Polycarp Sherwood, OSB, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism*, 128-54; on "experience" see Pierre Miquel, "Πεῖρα: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire de l'expérience religieuse dans l'oeuvre de Maxime le Confesseur," *Studia Patristica* 7 (1966): 355-61.

person so divinized would be God by nature and would have to be called so in the proper sense. For natural potential in each and every being is nothing other than the unalterable movement of nature toward complete actuality. How, then, divinization could make the divinized person go out of himself [ἐξίστησιν ἑαυτοῦ], I fail to see, if it was something that lay within the bounds of his nature.[121]

Becoming God by grace names a process activated neither by nature nor by "condition" or "relation" (σχέσις). Not by nature, since then we'd be "God by nature." And not by relation—say, as the simultaneous relation between my body and soul (both essentially different) makes them naturally fit for each other.[122] In the process and deed of deification there's no natural fit at all.[123]

Nor is there in the "experience" of deification. Maximus knows two kinds of knowledge, "relative knowledge" (τὴν...σχετικήν) and experiential or participative knowledge. Relative knowledge "is based on reasoning and concepts [ὡς ἐν λόγῳ μόνῳ κειμένην καὶ νοήμασιν]," similar to what many would call theoretical today.[124] This grace is not, and does not provide. Rather, "there is knowledge that is true and properly so

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[121] *Amb* 20.2: "...χάριτος δὲ , ὅταν 'Θεὸς' ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λόγοις ὀνομάζηται, ὁ διὰ πάντων ὑπήκοος Θεῷ γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος, κατὰ τό, Ἐγὼ εἶπα, Θεοί ἐστε, οὔτε κατὰ φύσιν οὔτε κατὰ σχέσιν ἔχων τὸ εἶναι καλεῖσθαι 'Θεός,' ἀλλὰ κατὰ θέσιν καὶ χάριν γενόμενός τε καὶ ὀνομαζόμενος· ἡ γὰρ χάρις τῆς θεώσεως ἄσχετός ἐστι παντάπασιν, οὐκ ἔχουσα τὴν οἱανοῦν δεκτικὴν ἑαυτῆς ἐν τῇ φύσει δύναμιν, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔτι χάρις ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν φυσικὴν δύναμιν ἐνεργείας φανέρωσις. Καὶ οὕτω γε πάλιν οὐκ ἔσται παράδοξον τὸ γινόμενον, εἰ κατὰ δεκτικὴν δύναμιν φύσεως ἡ θέωσις ἦν. Φύσεως γὰρ ἂν εἰκότως ἔργον, ἀλλ' οὐ Θεοῦ δῶρον ἡ θέωσις ἔσται, καὶ δυνήσεται καὶ φύσει Θεὸς ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι καὶ κυρίως προσαγορεύεσθαι. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο καθέσηκεν ἡ κατὰ φύσιν ἑκάστου τῶν ὄντων δύναμις ἢ φύσεως πρὸς ἐνέργειαν ἀπαράβατος κίνησις. Πῶς δὲ καὶ ἐξίστησιν ἑαυτοῦ τὸν θεούμενον ἡ θέωσις, εἰ τοῖς ὅροις τῆς φύσεως αὐτὴ περιείληπτο, συνιδεῖν οὐκ ἔχω."

[122] *Amb* 7.40-3. I flagged in Chapter 1, sec. 1.6, that monenergists proposed something similar for the divine-human activity in Christ, and that Maximus rejected it because it would introduce a "mutual conditioning" even among inferior and superior modes of existence, such that the consequent "activity" would imply a composed power from a composed nature (*Opusc* 5).

[123] Even in *Opusc* 1, where Maximus has to clarify what he meant by saying that "the grace of the Spirit" conquers the deified soul to the point that "it has God alone acting within it" with "only one sole energy, that of God and of those worthy of God, or rather of God alone"—even then he doubles down on his denial of any natural power on our part in the work of deification: "But deification does not come about from our natural powers; it is not in our control. For in nature exists no *logos* of the things above nature" (*Opusc* 1, PG 91, 33c, my translation).

[124] *QThal* 60.6, CCSG 22, 77; here Maximus defines "reasoning about God" (λόγος περὶ θεοῦ) as "the use of the analogy of beings in the cognitive contemplation of God [τὴν ἐκ τῶν ὄντων ἀναλογίαν τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ γνωστικῆς θεωρίας]."

called, which is gained only by actual experience [τὴν...ἀληθινὴν ἐν μόνῃ τῇ πείρᾳ κατ᾽ ἐνέργειαν]—without reason and concepts—and provides, by grace through participation, a whole perception of the One who is known [ὅλην τοῦ γνωσθέντος κατὰ χάριν μεθέξει παρεχομένην τὴν αἴσθησιν]."[125]

The whole mystery of this passivity, this "suffering of divine things,"[126] is that what's suffered is something utterly without relation to our nature, something that occurs without any part of our essence—body, soul, intellect—anticipating it. *And yet it occurs*, is a concrete experience, a fact, an event, a most palpable happening wherein the entirely impossible transpires: "according to a simple union, without relation and beyond all thought, on the basis of a certain unutterable and indefinable *logos*, which is known only to the One who grants this ineffable grace to the worthy, that is, it is known only to God and to those who in the future will come to experience it."[127] Experience is immediate. Nothing intervenes as arbiter or hybrid or unifying third term of a triad—at least nothing related by or within the essential order.

God himself is the medium. Therefore and once more, right here at another of creation's edges, its end, the logic exceeds that of Neoplatonic participation or the limitation of act by power.[128] Consider only three characteristics of deific passivity. First, the deifying act is suffered by the saint, not performed by her. And yet, second, that's precisely why her deification is infinite: it happens to and in her according to no natural principle of her own that would legislate limits or hew its activity to any determinate

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[125] *QThal* 60.5, CCSG 22, 77.
[126] *Myst.* 5, CCSG 69, 29; cp. *DN* 2.9, Suchla 134.
[127] *Amb* 15.9: "κατὰ τὴν ἁπλῆν ὡς ἄσχετον καὶ ὑπὲρ νόησιν ἕνωσιν, καί τινα λόγον ἄρρητόν τε καὶ ἀνερμήνευτον, ὃν μόνος οἶδεν ὁ τὴν ἄφατον ταύτην χάριν τοῖς ἀξίοις δωρούμενος Θεός, καὶ οἱ ταύτην ὕστερον πείσεσθαι μέλλοντες."
[128] Already established with respect to Christ (sec. 1.5) and creation from nothing (sec. 2.3-4).

proportion.[129] "And we will become the very thing that is not in any way the outcome of our natural capacity."[130] The concrete "that" and "there" of deification—the state of *that* deified person—is itself as restricted by the natural (finite) *mode* of that person as divine infinity. Which is to say, not at all. Here a certain Thomist reading stumbles:

> For no created thing is by its nature what effects deification, since it cannot grasp God. For this is the property of divine grace alone, that is, to grant the gift of deification proportionately (*analogos*) to created beings, brightly illumining nature by a light that transcends nature, making nature [to be] beyond its own proper limits through the excess of divine glory.[131]

Deification is not a supernatural mode *of* a creature's natural activity. It's not a created activity or mode at all. In deification, rather, a person's natural mode and act receive a relation to God's totally unlike that of mode to act, however high the new heights reached by the latter's proportions.[132] *Super*-natural for Maximus does not mean "some degree higher than what's natural." It means *not* natural at all, a mode and state operative above nature of whatever level—a process and result for which nature could never answer.

Deification is a process that occurs according to another logic, Christ's.[133] After all,

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[129] *QThal* 22.7, CCSG 7, 141: "For then passivity will transcend nature, having no principle (*logos*) limiting the infinite divinization of those who passively experience it [Ὑπὲρ φύσιν γὰρ τότε τὸ πάθος ἐστὶ καὶ μηδένα λόγον ἔχον ὁριστικὸν τῆς ἐπ᾽ ἄπειρον τῶν τοῦτο πασχόντων θεουργίας]."

[130] *QThal* 22.7, CCSG 7, 141: "ἐκεῖνο γινόμενοι ὅπερ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν δυνάμεως οὐδαμῶς ὑπάρχει κατόρθωμα."

[131] *QThal* 22.7, CCSG 7, 141, modified: "Θεώσεως γὰρ οὐδὲν γενητὸν κατὰ φύσιν ἐστὶ ποιητικόν, ἐπειδὴ μηδὲ θεοῦ καταληπτικόν. Μόνης γὰρ τῆς θείας χάριτος ἴδιον τοῦτο πέφυκεν εἶναι τὸ ἀναλόγως τοῖς οὖσι χαρίζεσθαι θέωσιν, καὶ λαμπρυνούσης τὴν φύσιν τῷ ὑπὲρ φύσιν φωτὶ καὶ τῶν οἰκείων ὅρων αὐτὴν ὑπεράνω κατὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς δόξης ποιουμένης."

[132] "Proportionately" or "analogously" (ἀναλόγως) here carries a peculiar sense; cf. below, sec. 3.5.

[133] So *Amb* 5.11, PG 91, 1052b, modified, where Maximus interprets Dionysius's christological sense of "super-nature" in explicitly Neochalcedonian terms: "The coming together of these two natures constitutes the great mystery 'of the Jesus' natural logic, which is supra-natural' [*DN* 2.9], and shows that both the difference of the activities and their union are preserved intact, the former understood to be 'without division' in the natural principle of what has been united, while the latter are 'known without confusion' in the unified mode of the Lord's activities" [ἡ σύνοδος τὸ μέγα 'τῆς ὑπερφυοῦς Ἰησοῦ φυσιολογίας' ποιησαμένη μυστήριον, σωζομένην ἔδειξεν ἐν ταυτῷ τὴν διαφορὰν τῶν ἐνεργειῶν καὶ τὴν ἕνωσιν, τὴν μὲν 'ἀδιαιρέτως' ἐν τῷ φυσικῷ θεωρουμένην λόγῳ τῶν ἡνωμένων, τὴν δὲ 'ἀσυγχύτως' ἐν τῷ μοναδικῷ 'γνωριζομένην' τρόπῳ τῶν γινομένων]." Christ's "singular mode" is the actualized supernatural state, which includes three elements at once: [1] a single hypostasis as the ground of identity; [2] two

Maximus also says the Word's historical Incarnation happened "in a supernatural mode."[134] And surely that mode wasn't a matter of qualifying the degree (in this case to a lesser one) of any nature's mode or activity. That supra-natural mode was *him*, his very hypostasis.[135] Indeed, so far is "the whole Christ" from being a state negotiated by any natural or modal settlement between created and uncreated natures, that the fact of Christ demonstrates how the person of the Word "truly is beyond all humanity *and divinity*."[136]

Christo-logic abides no modal hybrid, even when (and indeed because) infinite natural modes and acts become one actuality. Nature need never mediate between a higher and lower version of itself. This is not because Maximus simply hadn't yet

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distinct natural principles; [3] two wholly interpenetrating activities of those natures (cf. *Amb* 5.14). There is no need for a supernatural habit or mode in Christ's humanity. His own person, no modal hybrid, mediates, identifies, and preserves distinct the two infinitely different natures, both in principle and in activity.

[134] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 532b-c, my translation and emphasis: "But the Word of God did not possess the activities and powers proper to the nature he assumed by any principle or mode corresponding to that [i.e. to the principle naturally binding body and soul at birth]. For the supra-natural is not measured out to nature, nor does there exist in beings any natural capacity at all receptive of it [i.e. the supra-natural]. Therefore he is most singular in his assumption of a rationally and intellectually animated flesh, ineffably willing to become man; and, *qua* being and pre-being, possessing the power [to do] all things, he renovated the natures *by a supra-natural mode* so that he might save [preserve] man [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 μετραῖται φύσει τὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν· οὐδὲ τι τὸ παράπαν ἐν τοῖς οὖσίν ἐστι κατὰ φύσιν αὐτοῦ δεκτικόν. Ἄρα μονώτατος κατὰ πρόσληψιν σαρκὸς λογικῶς τε καὶ νοερῶς ἐψυχωμένης, θέλων ἀρρήτως γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος· ὡς ὢν καὶ προὼν, καὶ πάντα δυνάμενος· τῷ ὑπὲρ φύσιν τρόπῳ τὰς φύσεις καινοτομήσας, ἵνα σώσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπον]." The entire logic runs just so: [1] the *process* (in either principle or mode) of Incarnation is in no sense natural; [2] yet the Word himself, in hypostasis, became human and *in that way* possessed powers and activities natural to human nature; [3] and since he possessed them thus, in that "supra-natural mode" of assumption, *therefore* their modality has been preserved and renewed; that is, they take on an existential modality that need not pass through their own proper (natural) modality. Christo-logic conceives a supra-natural process where "supra-natural" means nature—*either human or divine* (created or uncreated)—is completely relieved of having to achieve the result by its own principles or modes.—cf. too *Ep* 19, PG 91, 593a.

[135] See Chapter 1, sec. 1.2. Thus I agree with Lars Thunberg, "Spirit, Grace, and Human Receptivity," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 612, that the deified *hexis* or "state" in Maximus "should not at all be identified with supernatural *habitus* in a Thomistic sense," since this state comprises no modal hybrid, but rather the total, simultaneous actualization of both divine and human modes in the deified person. Again, nature never bears the burden of accounting for deification. See too Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 604.

[136] *Amb* 37.8, PG 91, 1296c-d, slightly modified. Here's the whole statement: "Therefore the Word in whom the universe is gathered is beyond the truth, and also, insofar as He is man and God, He truly is beyond all humanity and divinity [Ὑπερ ἀλήθειαν ἄρα ὁ πρὸς ὃν τὰ πάντα συνάγεται Λόγος, καὶ αὖθις, ὡς ἄνθρωπος καὶ Θεὸς ὑπάρχων, καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ὢν ἀληθῶς ἀνθρωπότητα τε καὶ θεότητα]."

developed the necessary categories to elucidate grace's presence in and perfection of nature. It's rather that the logic of Christ does not and cannot permit any mediator but the Word.[137] Supra-natural modality just is that of divine economy—of Incarnation.[138] When you behold Christ rightly, you do not perceive created (human) nature outfitted by grace with a super-added mode that imbues this nature with the power to attain otherwise unnatural (divine) proportions. No, what you behold is far more magnificent because simultaneously far more symmetrical and identical: whole humanity and whole divinity, each wholly possessed of its natural powers perfected in and manifested through whole activities, so completely indifferent to one another that they completely interpenetrate *exactly as they naturally are*—and all this because they are he.[139] There exists no supra-natural mode outside Christ's hypostasis.

Hence a final characteristic of deification's passivity: the permanence of created nature (and mode and activity) in immediate union. The hypostasis, the Word, plays non-natural mediator between infinitely different natures and therefore establishes a naturally *im*mediate identity between them. Hypostatic identity is the only way a finite nature can be identical to the infinite without simply being obliterated by it. And so Christo-logic is the logic of deific "ecstasy" and "experience": when the saint suffers immediate union with God, the very medium through which such an identity occurs is simultaneously the

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[137] And so we've returned to the critiques of Neochalcedonian christology, namely that it lacks "created grace" as a mediator between the person and flesh of Christ; see Chapter 1, sec. 1.2.

[138] *Pyr* 33, PG 91, 297d-300a: "Καὶ καθόλου φάναι, πᾶν φυσικὸν ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ, συνημμένον ἔχει τῷ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ λόγῳ καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ φύσιν τρόπον· ἵνα καὶ ἡ φύσις διὰ τοῦ λόγου πιστωθῇ, καὶ ἡ οἰκονομία διὰ τοῦ τρόπου." This is why Maximus conceives the historical Incarnation as the *means* for every miracle and sacrament; see *Amb* 42.17 and 29.

[139] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 565b, where Maximus concludes from the fact that the essential principles of both Christ's natures remained totally untouched (ἀναλλοίωτος) "after the union" that this means neither "transgressed the limit of its own essence with respect to its other."

medium that preserves the saint's own created nature.[140] That's why the natural activity

of the saint's nature is "not suppressed," Maximus assures, though it indeed ceases or

stabilizes in its limit.[141] We do not receive the divine activity of grace through our nature

at all. The "sole, super-essential power capable of deifying" does come to be [true] "of

those deified."[142] Just here we glimpse grace's miraculous work. Grace makes divinity's

entire and proper activity—including the mode of that activity[143]—the saints' very own,

even as it leaves nature's proper mode and activity entirely intact. Grace is not nature,

first and last.[144]

2. *Grace is an innate power*. And yet somehow this non-natural, deifying power

(and activity) exists "inscrite dans la nature de l'homme comme une vocation."[145] If two-

tiered Thomists could blush a bit over Maximus's rigid partition between nature and

grace, now even the *nouveaux théologiens* might incline to temper his claim about

grace's universal presence in nature. Again contemplating Melchizedek:

> And you must not think that no one else can have a share in this grace simply
> because Scripture speaks of it solely with respect to the great Melchizedek, for in
> all human beings God has placed the same power that leads naturally to salvation
> [Πᾶσι γὰρ ἴσως ὁ Θεὸς τὴν πρὸς σωτηρίαν φυσικῶς ἐνέθηκε δύναμιν], so that

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[140] Miquel, "Πεῖρα: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire de l'expérience religieuse dans l'oeuvre de Maxime le Confesseur," 358, rightly notes that because Maximus clearly distinguishes his sense of "experience" or experiential "knowledge" from both typically Aristotelian (*episteme*, *aisthesis*) and Platonic (*logos*, *noesis*) unitive modes, Maximian experience "est donc un mode de connaissance tout à fait original." I suggest the originality derives from Christo-logic, which uniquely furnishes an immediate identity beyond and preservative of natural potencies and acts.

[141] *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 33c-d: "Οὐκ ἀνεῖλον...."

[142] *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 33d-36a.

[143] *Amb* 5.14; cf. below, sec. 3.4.

[144] Maximus never qualifies grace as "created." Indeed he explicitly calls grace "uncreated" at *Amb* 10.44 when commending Melchizedek's supra-natural birth through grace as the great paradigm of human deification: "Therefore the great Melchizedek is said to be *without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life*, just as our God-bearing fathers have truly said, that is, not on account of his human nature, which was created out of nothing, and by virtue of which he had both a beginning and an end, but on account of divine and uncreated grace [τὴν χάριν τὴν θείαν καὶ ἄκτιστον], which exists eternally and is beyond all nature and time, for it is the grace of the eternal God, and it was solely by this that he was begotten—wholly and willingly [καθ' ἣν δι' ὅλου μόνην ὅλος γνωμικῶς γεννηθεὶς]—and solely from this that he can now be known" (slightly modified).

[145] Ayroulet, *De l'Image à l'image*, 261.

anyone who wishes is able to lay claim to divine grace, and is not prevented, if he so desires, from becoming a Melchizedek, an Abraham, or a Moses, and from simply transferring all the saints to himself, not by exchanging names or places, but by imitating their manner and way of life.[146]

Grace is a power equally "implanted" in all. It's innate, present from the beginning *in potentia*. Given Maximus's near obsessive discrimination between nature and grace above, how can he make of grace a germ so thoroughly inseminated in nature that its accessibility proves as universal as human nature itself? In no uncertain terms: Maximus is saying that grace, which configures the rational soul through virtue to the point that "the Holy Spirit of God naturally becomes its intimate companion, and fashions it into a divine image, according to the likeness of the Spirit's own beauty" so that the soul "lacks nothing of the attributes that belong by nature to the Divinity"[147]—he's saying that the power of *this* grace lay dormant in nature itself, always and everywhere.

Grace and its effects therefore do not come to us from without. At first blush this might not seem so. Take baptismal grace. Maximus assigns it a particular moment. Baptism is "when each person received the grace of adoption."[148] 1 John 3.9 claims the one born of God sins no more because "God's seed remains in him [ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει]." Maximus argues that this "seed" takes root at baptism and blooms

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[146] *Amb* 10.46: "Μὴ νόμιζε δὲ ταύτης τινὰ ἀμοιρεῖν τῆς χάριτος, ἐπειδὴ περὶ μόνου τοῦ μεγάλου Μελχισεδὲκ ὁ λόγος αὐτὴν διωρίσατο. Πᾶσι γὰρ ἴσως ὁ Θεὸς τὴν πρὸς σωτηρίαν φυσικῶς ἐνέθηκε δύναμιν, ἵνα ἕκαστος βουλόμενος τῆς θείας μεταποιεῖσθαι χάριτος δύνηται, καὶ θέλων Μελχισεδὲκ γενέσθαι καὶ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Μωϋσῆς, καὶ ἁπλῶς πάντας μεταφέρειν εἰς ἑαυτὸν τοὺς ἁγίους, μὴ κωλύηται, οὐκ ὀνόματα καὶ τόπους ἀμείβων, ἀλλὰ τρόπους καὶ πολιτείαν μιμούμενος."

[147] *QThal* 1.1.2, CCSG, 7, 9-11, slight modification: "ὃν [i.e. 'reason,' *logon*] καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ ἅγιον, καλῶς ταῖς ἀρεταῖς διαπλασθέντα, πρὸς συμβίωσιν πέφυκεν ἄγεσθαι καὶ θεῖον ἄγαλμα τῆς καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν ὡραιότητος αὐτοῦ κατασκευάζειν μηδενὶ τῶν προσόντων φυσικῶς τῇ θεότητι κατὰ τὴν χάριν λειπόμενον."

[148] *QThal* 61.11.

thereafter through the believer's voluntary praxis in cooperation with the Spirit.[149] It would appear, then, that the Spirit does not arrive until the time of baptism.

Not so. Elsewhere Maximus tries to reconcile one scriptural passage that says the Spirit is present to all things (Wisd 12.1) and another that the Spirit absconds from the impure (Wisd 1.4). Here Maximus portrays an unbroken and gradual presence of grace within nature. He narrates three stages. If we work backward the thread becomes very clear. [3] For those who "through faith have inherited the divine and truly divinizing name of Christ," the Spirit is present "as one creating the adoption given by grace through faith."[150] The Spirit is "productive of wisdom" (σοφίας ποιητικὸν), working through the pure to induce virtue.[151] [2] For those under the Law, the Spirit convicts hearts and foretells the coming salve for their soul's ongoing wounds, the Christ.[152] [1] But for everyone and all, the Spirit, who providentially permeates "all things with His power,"

> stirs into motion the natural inner principle of each [ὅτι θεὸς καὶ θεοῦ πνεῦμα κατὰ δύναμιν προνοητικῶς διὰ πάντων χωροῦν καὶ τὸν ἐν ἑκάστῳ κατὰ φύσιν λόγον ἀνακινοῦν] through which He leads a man of sense to consciousness of whatever he has done contrary to the law of nature, a man who at the same time also keeps his free choice pliant to the reception of right thoughts arising from nature. And thus we find even some of the most barbarous and uncivilized men exhibiting nobility of conduct and rejecting the savage laws that had prevailed among them from time immemorial.[153]

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[149] *QThal* 6.2.
[150] *QThal* 15.4, CCSG 7, 101-3: "καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς τὸ θεῖον καὶ θεοποιὸν ὄντως ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ κληρωσαμένοις διὰ τῆς πίστεως...ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς δημιουργικὸν τῆς κατὰ χάριν διὰ τῆς πίστεως δοθείσης υἱοθεσίας."
[151] *QThal* 15.4.
[152] *QThal* 15.3.
[153] *QThal* 15.2, CCSG 7, 101. Cf. Constas 127 n. 3, who notes that *anakinein* ("to stir") "in the Platonic tradition describes the awakening or arousing required for the soul to grasp or recollect innate knowledge. The word is employed extensively by Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite."

"Consequently," he goes on, "the Spirit is in all things in a simple way," awakening and succoring powers already universally implanted in every creature.[154] Grace's immanence to and actualization within all creation appears rather like the Word's own birth: by Mary's delighted consent, the Spirit elicits a totally supra-natural power *from within* the Virgin herself in order to conceive and gestate the Lord—but more of that anon.

The principal point for now is that grace's deifying power already indwells everything from creation's dawn. Two more themes everywhere linked to grace further substantiate this account. Consider faith first. Faith for Maximus is always a power.[155] Its end or final deed is "the salvation of souls."[156] It is the root of all union with God—the first contact and caress, as it were.[157] Through it the Spirit births virtue, actualizes in the soul every divine property, indeed "hypostasizes" an immediate unity with God—for faith "is the hypostasis of things hoped for," as Heb 11.1 says.[158] That's why the knowledge (of God) faith affords outstrips intellection and dialectic[159]: its power is the subjective condition for that unmediated experiential knowledge we considered before, rather like knowing a person, face-to-face recognition. And this power is "an innate good" (ἐνδιάθετον ἀγαθὸν), the invisible kingdom of God within (cf. Lk 17.21) that assumes form through virtue and practice of Christ's commandments. Therefore "faith is not outside us," but already given within the intellect, awaiting actualization:

> If, then, the kingdom of God is actualized faith, and if the kingdom of God brings
> about an unmediated union of God and those in His kingdom, faith is clearly
> demonstrated to be a relational power, or a relationship that effectively realizes in

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[154] *QThal* 15.5, CCSG 7, 103, modified: "Ἔστιν οὖν ἐν πᾶσι μὲν ἁπλῶς, καθ᾽ ὃ πάντων ἐστὶ συνεκτικὸν καὶ προνοητικὸν καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν σπερμάτων ἀνακινητικόν."

[155] This is one reason he completely rejects the idea that faith alone can save, namely that faith must be actualized in and *as* works; cf. *Lib. ascet.* 34, *CC* 1.39, etc.

[156] *QThal* 59.8.

[157] *QThal* 33.3, 54.22-3.

[158] *QThal* 33.2; cf. 51, schol. 4.

[159] *QThal* 51.7 (cf. schol. 7), 59.4; *Myst.* 5 and 24; *CC* 3.99.

a manner beyond nature the unmediated, perfect union of the faithful with the God in whom they have faith.[160]

Faith names the supreme subjective power objectively given to all by grace alone,[161] which (always with love's succor[162]) opens an *immediate* relation to divine power in a way that once again circumvents Neoplatonic limitation of act by power. God gifts faith directly and *as* God himself, in the very act of creation. Faith is ours to vitalize, to thicken by deed.

And so it is with virtue, a primary way faith takes flesh. Although "virtue itself" (as opposed to its instances) numbers among those "works of God" eternally subsisting in him by nature and which we participate by grace,[163] Maximus baldy states they are "natural things" (φυσικαί) for us too. When he says this to Pyrrhus, the latter wonders why then virtue isn't equally manifest among all humans and why we must undertake ascetic struggle to acquire it at all. "Asceticism," Maximus retorts,

> and the toils that go with it, were devised simply in order to ward off deception, which established itself through sensory perception. It is not [as if] the virtues have been newly introduced from outside, for they inhere in us from creation.... Therefore, when deception is completely expelled, the soul immediately exhibits the splendor of its natural virtue.[164]

In another place Maximus even calls knowledge and virtue "powers of the rational soul" (δυνάμεις ὄντας ψυχῆς λογικῆς). But he does so, significantly, only as these arise from

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[160] *QThal* 33.2, CCSG 7, 229, slightly modified: "Εἰ δὲ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργουμένη πίστις ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν αὐτὴν βασιλευόντων ἄμεσον πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ποιεῖται τὴν ἕνωσιν, ἡ πίστις ἀπεδείχθη σαφῶς ὑπάρχουσα δύναμις σχετικὴ ἢ σχέσις δραστικὴ τῆς ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἀμέσου τοῦ πιστεύοντος πρὸς τὸν πιστευόμενον θεὸν τελείας ἑνώσεως."

[161] *QThal* 51, schol. 5: "For faith is the beginning of good things among human beings, before which we have nothing to offer."

[162] *CC* 1.32.

[163] *CT* 1.50.

[164] *Pyr* 89, PG 91, 309c: "Ἡ ἄσκησις, καὶ οἱ ταύτῃ ἑπόμενοι πόνοι, πρὸς τὸ μόνον διαχωρίσαι τὴν ἐμφυρεῖσαν δι' αἰσθήσεως ἀπάτην τῇ ψυχῇ ἐπενοήθησαν τοῖς φιλαρέτοις· οὐ πρὸς τὸ ἔξωθεν προσφάτως ἐπεισαγαγεῖν τὰς ἀρετάς· ἔγκεινται γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐκ δημιουργίας.... ὅθεν καὶ ἅμα τελείως διακριθῇ ἡ ἀπάτη, ἅμα καὶ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἀρετῆς τὴν λαμπρότητα ἐνδείκνυται ἡ ψυχή."

the *logoi* planted in nature, the principles according to which knowledge and virtue "exist and subsist."[165]

That's significant because the link to the *logoi* both exacerbates and begins to resolve the restive aporia we've been studying. That aporia claims grace is simultaneously a supra-natural and innate power in created nature. Virtue, for instance, a work of grace, is both "against" (or "over") nature and "un mouvement inné de la nature."[166] The *logoi* intensify the apparent contradiction because they are *divine*—indeed, bear the very divinity within them[167]—and yet are, just as grace was said to be, "implanted" or "placed in" nature in the very act of its creation from nothing.[168] Thus Maximus glosses the unbroken "bones" of the Word:

> and after the manner of bones, which are constitutive of blood and flesh, the *logoi* of His divinity, which transcend all intellection, exist within beings and create—in a manner beyond our cognition—the essences of those beings, and preserve them in existence, and are constitutive for all knowledge and all virtue.[169]

The *logoi* of creation are how divine and uncreated grace exists as a supra-natural power in nature. They establish faith's first and immediate contact with divine knowledge. They are and possess the power that makes God's eternal works—by essence imparticipable—participable by his finite works.[170] They institute the mode of deific union.[171] The general "*logos* of nature" constitutes the open threshold between a rational

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[165] *Amb* 10.3: "λόγους, καθ' οὓς πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ γνῶσις ἐστι καὶ ὑφέστηκεν, ὡς δυνάμεις ὄντας ψυχῆς λογικῆς."

[166] *Amb* 10.42 (Τῇ φύσει γὰρ ἡ ἀρετὴ μάχεσθαι πέφυκε), 44; cp. *Amb* 20.4. Quote from Hausherr, *Philautie*, 141.

[167] *Amb* 10.102; *Amb* 21.5 (they bear the "cause of all" in themselves) or 21.8 (the *logoi* are the principles "in which God is concealed and silently proclaimed").

[168] *Pyr* 214, PG 91, 352ab: "τὸν δημιουργικῶς αὐτοῖς ἐντεθέντα παρὰ τῆς τὸ πᾶν συστησαμένης αἰτίας λόγον"; *Amb* 17.7: "Τίνες οἱ ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων τῇ ὑπάρξει πρώτως ἐγκαταβληθέντες λόγοι."

[169] *QThal* 35.3, CCSG 7, 239-41: "καὶ ὀστέων δίκην συστατικῶν αἵματος καὶ σαρκός, καὶ οἱ πάσης ἐπέκεινα νοήσεως περὶ θεότητος λόγοι, τοῖς οὖσιν ἐνυπάρχοντες, τὰς τῶν ὄντων ἀγνώστως καὶ ποιοῦσι καὶ πρὸς τὸ εἶναι συνέχουσιν οὐσίας, καὶ πᾶσαν γνῶσιν καὶ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν συνιστῶσιν."

[170] Chapter 2, sec. 2.6.

[171] E.g. *Amb* 41.6.

creature's finite nature and the infinite works of God; if she would but join her will in love to that *logos*, she would have the Logos himself.[172] Nature's *logos* is the mediator because it is "a law both natural and divine" (ὃς καὶ νόμος ἐστὶ φυσικός τε καὶ θεῖος).[173] And that, I suggest, reveals the logic that explains and even necessitates the anomaly grace is.

3. *Grace is the Logos, as logoi, bearing and immediately presenting divinity from within nature.* Christo-logic, I propose, explains why divine grace is a power and activity utterly without natural relation to our own essential power and activity, and yet lies everywhere as nature's profoundest depths—the cause of its power and promised perfection. The anomaly of grace describes the actualization of the Word within created nature, the very Word who has already made himself hypostatically identical to created nature's proper power and thereby generated it at all. The Logos is the *logoi*.[174]

In the *logoi* the Logos offers his own person as the immediate link between uncreated and created power. That's why grace's source and logic are the Logos's *historical* Incarnation:

> But the Lord set forth the manifest might of His transcendent power, having hypostasized an unchanging birth in the nature of the contrary realities by which He Himself experienced. For by giving our nature impassibility through His Passion, relief through His sufferings, and eternal life through His death, He restored our nature, renewing its habitual dispositions by means of what was negated in His own flesh, and through His own Incarnation granting it that grace which transcends nature, by which I mean divinization.[175]

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[172] *Amb* 7.22.
[173] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 65-6.
[174] Chapter 2, sec. 2.4.
[175] *QThal* 61.6, CCSG 22, 91, modified: "τὴν δὲ τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δυνάμεως ἰσχὺν δήλην κατέστησεν, τῶν οἷς αὐτὸς ἔπασχεν ἐναντίων **ὑποστήσας τῇ φύσει τὴν γένεσιν** ἄτρεπτον· διὰ πάθους γὰρ τὴν ἀπάθειαν καὶ διὰ πόνων τὴν ἄνεσιν καὶ διὰ θανάτου τὴν ἀΐδιον ζωὴν τῇ φύσει δούς, πάλιν ἀποκατέστησεν, ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ κατὰ σάρκα στερήσεσι τὰς ἕξεις ἀνακαινίσας τῆς φύσεως καὶ διὰ τῆς ἰδίας σαρκώσεως τὴν ὑπὲρ φύσιν χάριν **δωρησάμενος** τῇ φύσει, τὴν θέωσιν."

Grace inhabits nature as the personal Word. The condition or *hexis* of the deified soul is in fact Christ's personal stamp, his stability, his character, himself.[176] He "hypostasizes" what he experiences. Therefore what he experiences—the entire existential range of human nature ("the contrary realities," pleasure and pain, etc.)—simultaneously comes to be possible at all and possible to be perfected, by no natural mediation, in identity with the divine activity.[177]

Maximian virtue proves once more an illuminating case. Its character makes no sense unless the Word condescends to become the immediate and real identity of virtue in two infinitely different natural modes.[178] Recall that Maximus summons human growth in virtue as another way to grasp his *logoi* doctrine. Just before the famous passage (*Amb* 7.22) he repeats what we saw in the *Dispute with Pyrrhus*, that virtue is natural because it is entirely present in all human beings—never "more or less" universally there in power.[179] Here he specifies why that's so. It's worth quoting at length:

> The essence in every virtue is the one Logos of God—and this can hardly be doubted since the essence of all the virtues is our Lord, Jesus Christ, as it is written: *who was made for us by God wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption* [1 Cor 1.30].... Which is to say that anyone who through fixed habit participates in virtue, unquestionably participates in God, who is the substance of the virtues. For such a person freely and unfeignedly chooses to cultivate the natural seed of the Good, and has shown the end to be the same as the beginning,

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[176] Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 282-4.

[177] This articulates from an eschatological vantage the very logic we observed last chapter from a protological one—namely, that the "edges" of participation cannot themselves by explained by participation. There the power to be at all—to be a *participant*—preceded (ontologically) the actual participation between participated and participant. Here the power to be a created *nature* precedes the power of that nature's proper and actual perfection by grace. In both cases the edges are established by the *logoi*, and in both cases only their identification with the hypostasis of the Logos explains their peculiar functions *as edges*. At the beginning, the Word condescends to make himself identical to what he's not by nature, created, and so generates created nature. At the end, the Word assumes creation's perfection even while remaining what he is by nature, uncreated, and so deifies created nature. At neither edge is it a matter of natural mediation. But that's exactly why both edges completely exceed nature and effect realities known to be naturally impossible and even absurd.

[178] See Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 323-30, for a classic overview of Maximus statements in this vein

[179] Cited at n. 164.

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and the beginning to be the same as the end, or rather that the beginning and the end are one and the same [μᾶλλον δὲ ταὐτὸν ἀρχὴν οὖσαν καὶ τέλος]...for it is from the beginning that he received being and participation in what is naturally good [εἰληφὼς πρὸς τῷ εἶναι καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέθεξιν φύσει ἀγαθόν].... Having completed his course, such a person becomes God, receiving from God to be God, for to the beautiful nature inherent in the fact that he is *God's image*, he freely chooses to add the *likeness* to God by means of the virtues, in a natural movement of ascent through which he grows in conformity to his own beginning.[180]

Track the logic closely. I recount it in reverse order of its appearance in this passage, which is the typical order of its phenomenological appearance in human life, if you will. Virtue inheres in human nature such that the ascetic ascent from image to likeness reveals virtue's hidden and hitherto buried beauty.[181] To cultivate that virtue—to reduce it to concrete deed by free choice—is to participate God himself. Indeed, existential, historical, *horizontal* acts of virtue somehow perform what's normally regarded as the more ontological, metaphysical, and *vertical* act of reverting to one's beginning (*arche*), which is also one's end (*telos*). Thus Origen favored a metaphysical axiom, "the beginning is like the end," which expresses the latter.[182] Maximus reprises and actually intensifies it here to emphasize the singular identity of beginning and end, the very identity ubiquitously latent within nature as the power of virtue—of deification.[183]

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[180] *Amb* 7.21: "Εἰ γὰρ οὐσία τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἀρετῆς ὁ εἷς ὑπάρχειν Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ μὴ ἀμφιβέβληται–οὐσία γὰρ πάντων τῶν ἀρετῶν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ὡς γέγραπται· *ὃς ἐγενήθη ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ σοφία, διακαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμὸς καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις* [1 Cor 1.30].... πᾶς δηλονότι ἄνθρωπος ἀρετῆς καθ' ἕξιν παγίαν μετέχων ἀναμφηρίστως Θεοῦ μετέχει τῆς οὐσίας τῶν ἀρετῶν, ὡς τὴν κατὰ φύσιν σπορὰν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ γνησίως κατὰ προαίρεσιν γεωργήσας καὶ ταὐτὸν δείξας τῇ ἀρχῇ τὸ τέλος καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῷ τέλει, μᾶλλον δὲ ταὐτὸν ἀρχὴν οὖσαν καὶ τέλος...τὴν μὲν ὡς ἐκεῖθεν εἰληφὼς πρὸς τῷ εἶναι καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέθεξιν φύσει ἀγαθόν...ἐξανυσας δρόμον διὰ σπουδῆς, καθ' ὃν γίνεται Θεός, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ Θεὸς εἶναι λαμβάνων, ὡς τῷ *κατ' εἰκόνα* φύσει καλῷ καὶ προαιρέσει τὴν δι' ἀρετῶν προσθεὶς *ἐξομοίωσιν* διὰ τῆς ἐμφύτου πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν ἀρχὴν ἀναβάσεώς τε καὶ οἰκειότητος." Cf. too *In Psal. 59*, Blowers 278.
[181] Cf. *Amb* 10.8; *Amb* 42.5; *QThal* 53.3. An idea especially dear to Athanasius, of course; cf. *De inc. verb.* 41-3.
[182] Origen, *Princ* 1.6.1.
[183] Polycarp Sherwood, OSB, "Maximus and Origenism: ΑΡΧΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΛΟΣ," *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten Kongreß* (München, 1958), 5-7, though surely there's more to say than that Maximus rejects "cosmogonic" speculation about a primordial henad and instead favors "participations in

This identity is Jesus Christ. How so? Maximus reads the Apostle literally and metaphysically: "by God he was made for us wisdom" means for Maximus that the Word "was made" universal wisdom and virtue—indeed all the participated works of God—in just the way he "was made" at all, that is, by Incarnation,[184] by making his hypostasis the "is" of what he is not by nature in order to make that nature both be and be his in a single creative act. Clearly Maximus has Christo-logic in mind here. In the preceding paragraph he explicitly distinguishes the Word's divine essence from his hypostasis precisely in order to claim that the Logos—this hypostasis considered apart from divinity—is identical to the logoi.[185] The divine essence as such could never become anything, let alone created. But Jesus Christ can and did—here "the essence of all the virtues" (οὐσία γὰρ πάντων τῶν ἀρετῶν). A truly remarkable claim, especially when you realize what Maximus is *not* saying. He does not mean that Christ "as Word," say, is the self-subsistent exemplar participated piecemeal by lesser participants. He might have easily taken this route. In this very passage (in the first ellipsis) he evokes the standard distinction between "Wisdom itself" (αὐτοσοφία) and specific instances of wisdom, "a wise man" (σοφὸς ἄνθρωπος), and initially identifies Christ with the former.[186] But then "Wisdom itself" appears entirely inherent within the participant, still, mind you, the very wisdom and virtue essentially identified with Christ's person. Wisdom's vertical,

the Word" (7), since, of course, Maximus has no qualms speaking of the Logos-*logoi* procession in a properly protological sense; cf. Chapter 2, sec. 2.4.

[184] So Larchet, *La divinisation*, 485, describes the saint's actualization of virtue in direct connection with that virtue as hypostasized in Christ's flesh: "une véritable appropriation ontologique des vertus qu'Il manifeste en plénitude dans Son humanité et qui sont elles-même les propriétés divines dont Il a rendu participante, par toute l'oeuvre de Son économie, la nature qu'Il a assumée."

[185] *Amb* 7.20: "When, however, we exclude the highest form of negative theology concerning the Logos—according to which the Logos is neither called, nor considered, nor is, in His entirety, anything that can be attributed to anything else, since He is beyond all being, and is not participated in by any being whatsoever—when, I say, we set this way of thinking aside, *the one Logos is many logoi and the many are One*" (my emphasis). See Chapter 2, sec. 2.3.

[186] *Amb* 7.21. Maximus uses the term προσδιωρισμένως to indicate a qualified, particular kind or case; cf. so Aristotle, *De an.* II.2, 414a23.

downward movement into its participants is Christ's own, and it yields a feature totally

foreign to standard philosophical models of participation: when the soul consumes the

"lower members" of Christ's body, through virtue "it completely forms within it the

whole Word who became flesh."[187]

 We saw last chapter that God is participable only because the Word deigns to

bring down his proper (divine) activity with his own person (since divinity is no abstract

thing), joining that activity to the nature he becomes according to hypostasis. Now here,

when the lower, finite nature's own power reduces to act—a human soul's, say—it

"mixes" with the divine activity fully present within itself.[188] The deified soul participates

an interior activity whose power is not its own by nature, yet entirely present because it

belongs by nature to the Word within that soul, the Word who has given himself to be the

concrete identity of two infinitely different natures—to be their *logoi* while also

remaining himself in nature and person. So when that soul actualizes its power in its

proper (human) mode, the Word assumes *that* particular mode of created nature too. In

that sense the Word *gains* a modal instance or iteration he did not actually possess before,

since every instance bears a character and modality as individual as the person who

"typifies" it.[189] You "lavishly show forth in yourself," writes Maximus to Thomas, "by

means of the marvelous mixture of opposites—God incarnated in the virtues."[190]

 Or consider another individual, Melchizedek. Maximus does intently, we've seen,

and in doing so resplendently illustrates grace's Christo-logic. He makes his start from

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[187] *Amb* 48.6, my emphasis: "καὶ παντάπασιν ἀμόλυντον μετὰ τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν σάρκα διατηρῶν, καὶ ὅλον ἀπαραλείπτως αὐτῇ τὸν Λόγον ταῖς ἀρεταῖς διαμορφῶν σάρκα γενόμενον."

[188] *Amb* 10.41.

[189] *Opusc* 10, PG 91, 136d-137a; cf. Chapter 1, sec. 1.3.2 ("Indifference").

[190] *Amb ad Thom.*, prol. 2, slight modification: "πολυτελῶς τῇ καλῇ μίξει τῶν ἐναντίων ἐν σεαυτῷ δεικνὺς τὸν Θεὸν ταῖς ἀρεταῖς σωματούμενον"; cf. esp. *Amb* 47.2 (proper to Paul), discussed below at sec. 3.4.

Scripture itself, which cavalierly asserts that Melchizedek was "without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life [Ἀπάτωρ καὶ ἀμήτωρ καὶ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν, μήτε τέλος ζωῆς ἔχων]."[191] Maximus thinks this indicates Melchizedek's deified state. God made him "worthy to transcend time and nature and to become like the Son of God," that is, "he became by grace what the very Giver of grace is by essence."[192] What Melchizedek, a human person, was by nature of course included things like having a temporal beginning and end, wielding dialectic to ascertain the truth of creatures, and so on. But what he becomes by grace comprises nothing less than the entire set of divine properties, undiminished. Grace, specifically "divine and uncreated grace" (τὴν χάριν τὴν θείαν καὶ ἄκτιστον), makes Melchizedek's own what he is not by nature. And it manifestly must be *uncreated* grace: if grace were created it would no longer be divine—at least not *modally* divine—and Maximus reads Scripture and the Word's economy alike to aim at nothing less. Therefore only that grace which exists "eternally and is beyond all nature and time" renders Melchizedek "begotten" of God.[193]

Like Father like son:

And so transcendentally, secretly, silently, and, to put it briefly, in a manner beyond knowledge, following the total negation of all beings from thought, he entered into God Himself, and was wholly transformed [ὅλος ὅλῳ ποιωθείς τε καὶ μεταποιηθείς], receiving all the qualities of God, which we may take as the meaning of *being likened to the Son of God* [ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ Υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ] *he remains a priest forever* [Heb 7.3]. For every saint who has made exemplary progress in beauty is thereby said to be a type of God the giver. Consistent with this principle, the great Melchizedek, having been imbued with divine virtue, was deemed worthy to become an image of Christ God and His unutterable mysteries, for in Him all the saints converge as to an archetype, to the very cause of the

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[191] *Amb* 10.42, 44.
[192] *Amb* 10.42, slight modifications: "χρόνου καὶ φύσεως ὑπεράνω γενέσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθῆναι τῷ Υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατηξιώθη," and "οἶος αὐτὸς ὁ δοτὴρ τῆς χάριτος κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπάρχων πιστεύεται."
[193] *Amb* 10.44: "καθ' ἣν δι' ὅλου μόνην ὅλος γνωμικῶς γεννηθείς."

manifestation of the Beautiful that is realized in each of them, and this is especially true of this saint, since he bears within himself more prefigurations of Christ than all the rest.[194]

Observe first that Maximus here defines "likeness" (again from ἀφοίωμα) as "receiving all the qualities of God." We've already attended to Maximus's rather strong sense of deific likeness (sec. 3.2). There and here you almost get the sense that deific "likeness" signifies something closer to the way the Word is "image of God" (Col 1.15) or "the exact character of the Father's hypostasis" (Heb 1.3)—which is to say, not by modal qualification.[195] This more extreme sense emerges, in fact, in a passage just before the one at hand:

> the divine Melchizedek unfolded his intellect to the divine, beginningless, and immortal rays of God the Father, and was begotten out of God through the Word in the Spirit by grace, so that he now bears within himself, unblemished and fully realized, the likeness of God the begetter, for every birth creates identity between the begetter and the begotten [ἐπεὶ καὶ πᾶσα γέννησις ταὐτὸν τῷ γεννῶντι πέφυκεν ἀποτελεῖν τὸ γεννώμενον].[196]

Maximus reveals here what "by grace" means: to be born *from* God, *in* the Spirit, and *through* the Word, to such a degree that an "identity" obtains between the person become God and God. Grace forges an identity with God through the Word.

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[194] *Amb* 10.45: "καὶ ὡς ἐξῃημρημένως, κρυφίως τε καὶ σεσιγημένως, καὶ συνελόντα εἰπεῖν, ἀγνώστως, μετὰ πᾶσαν τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων ἀφαίρεσιν κατὰ νοῦν εἰς αὐτὸν εἰσδὺς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ ὅλος ὅλῳ ποιωθείς τε καὶ μεταποιηθείς, ὅπερ τό, *ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ Υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς* ὑπεμφαίνειν δύναται. Πᾶς γὰρ τις τῶν ἁγίων, οὗτινος κατ᾽ ἐξαίρετον ἀπήρξατο καλοῦ, κατ᾽ αὐτὸ καὶ τύπος εἶναι τοῦ δοτῆρος Θεοῦ ἀνηγόρευται. Καθ᾽ ὃ σημαινόμενον καὶ οὗτος ὁ μέγας Μελχισεδὲκ διὰ τὴν ἐμποιηθεῖσαν αὐτῷ θείαν ἀρετὴν εἰκὼν κατηξίωται Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων αὐτοῦ μυστηρίων, εἰς ὃν πάντες μὲν οἱ ἅγιοι συνάγονται ὡς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ αὐτῶν τοῦ καλοῦ ἐμφάσεως αἴτιον, μάλιστα δὲ οὗτος, ὡς τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων πλείους ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρων τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰς ὑποτυπώσεις."

[195] Cp. *Amb* 7.38, where being created "similar" to God (ἑαυτῷ ὁμοίους) means we're imbued with "the exact characteristics" (ἀκριβῆ γνωρίσματα) of divine goodness.

[196] *Amb* 10.44, slightly modified: "ὁ θεῖος Μελχισεδέκ, πρὸς δὲ τὰς θείας καὶ ἀνάρχους καὶ ἀθανάτους τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ἀκτίνας τὸν νοῦν ἀνεπέτασεν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ τοῦ Λόγου κατὰ χάριν ἐν Πνεύματι γεγέννηται, καὶ σῶαν καὶ ἀληθῆ ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρει τοῦ γεννήσαντος Θεοῦ τὴν ὁμοίωσιν, ἐπεὶ καὶ πᾶσα γέννησις ταὐτὸν τῷ γεννῶντι πέφυκεν ἀποτελεῖν τὸ γεννώμενον."

That this identity comes *through* the Word explains a second unique feature of grace's logic. It's another we've seen before, at work especially in the *tantum-quantum* principle. Deification names a simultaneous, double movement of our ascent into God and God's into us—indeed, that our ascent *is* God's into us and the reverse. The passage above (10.45) describes our ascent: all the saints converge on Christ "as to an archetype." But even here you can discern the downward movement: Melchizedek "bears *within himself*"—so that his "self" still endures and indeed houses the manifold "prefigurations" of Christ. A few paragraphs later we find that the *descent* was all along the condition for ascent:

> whoever casts aside this present life and its desires for the sake of the better life – will acquire the *living, and active*, and absolutely unique *Word of God*, who through virtue and knowledge *penetrates to the division between soul and spirit*, so that absolutely no part of his existence will remain without a share in His presence, and thus he becomes without beginning or end, no longer bearing within himself the movement of life subject to time, which has a beginning and an end, and which is agitated by many passions, but possesses only the divine and eternal life of the Word dwelling within him, which is in no way bounded by death.[197]

At length we see how Melchizedek won the heights he did—even becoming "without beginning" (ἄναρχος), a predicate Maximus usually reserves exclusively for the divine essence itself.[198] Our ascent cannot occur except as an ascent *into the divinity already innately present in us*. The Word first dwells in us that we might in him. For there is no

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[197] *Amb* 10.48: "...τὴν παροῦσαν ζωὴν μετὰ τῶν αὐτῆς θελημάτων τῆς κρείττονος ἕνεκεν προϊέμενος, *ζῶντα δὲ καὶ ἐνεργοῦντα*, μονώτατον τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ *Λόγον* κέκτηται, *διϊκνούμενον* κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ γνῶσιν *ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος* [Heb 4.12], καὶ μηδὲν τὸ παράπαν τῆς αὐτοῦ παρουσίας ἄμοιρον ἔχει, γέγονε καὶ ἄναρχος καὶ ἀτελεύτητος, τὴν χρονικὴν μηκέτι φέρων ἐν ἑαυτῷ κινουμένην ζωήν, τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος ἔχουσαν καὶ πολλοῖς δονουμένην παθήμασι, μόνην δὲ τὴν θείαν τοῦ ἐνοικήσαντος Λόγου καὶ ἀΐδιον καὶ μηδενὶ θανάτῳ περατουμένην."

[198] *Amb* 7.7; *Amb* 10.97-8; *Pyr* 182, PG 91, 341a.—Note that Maximus once again shows himself completely willing not only to repeat but to intensify an idea with a controversial legacy (as he was with isochrist claims): the cult of Melchizedek knew some significant extremes, which worried many. Here I'm indebted to Justin Shaun Coyle's observations.

divinity, no "divine and eternal life," that is not precisely "of the Word dwelling within" (τοῦ ἐνοικήσαντος Λόγου).[199]

Now too we can glimpse the distinctively Maximian sense of a theme dear to Origenism, the birth of the Word in the deified soul.[200] It bears the unmistakable marks of Christo-logic. Observe its first two elements (hypostatic identity generates infinite natural difference): the Logos condescends to identify his person to created nature; he becomes the *logoi* of all and each. That includes the *logos* of every human being. This generates the human being, nature and person. Indeed it's the "hypostasis of [divine] gifts,"[201] the person of the Word, that constitutes the (natural) potency of that human person's being, well-being, and eternal well-being—that is, the entire existential continuum of that person, beginning, middle, end.[202] The Word's person remains divine by nature even as it becomes this human being's natural power and principle. So now the Word bears two principles within that person (the divine and *this* human's) along with their respective natural modes and activities. Obviously the indwelling Word's divine nature is always and infinitely actualized as such; it awaits no further reduction to act. But the Word's human nature does remain in potency in each human being, indeed *is* that person's whole potency.[203] And since the Word is as much *that* human nature as he is divine, that human

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[199] Cp. *QThal* 15.5, CCSG 7, 103, which the Spirit's "deifying indwelling" (τῆς αὐτοῦ θεωτικῆς ἐνοικήσεως) depends explicitly on those who are "in Christ." The Spirit is in the deified soul because the Spirit is wholly in the Son, and the Son is in that soul. Cf. below, sec. 3.5.

[200] Origen, *Hom. in Jer*. 9.4, *Hom. in Luc*. 22.3, *Hom. in Num*. 23; Evagrius, *KG* 6.39; cf. A.K. Squire, "The Idea of the Soul as Virgin and Mother in Maximus the Confessor," *Studia Patristica* (1966): 456-61, esp. 460.

[201] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 50, slightly modified.

[202] *QThal* 22.6, CCSG 7, 139.

[203] As created and finite by nature, this must be so: every created thing *must* move from potency to act, as Maximus's famous metaphysics of motion dictates; cf. *Amb* 7.3-14; Sherwood, *The Early Ambigua*, 96-102.

nature's actualization (its gradual, freely elected perfection through a person's proper and integral activity) is his too.

And so we can take Maximus's statements literally here: "Christ is always born mysteriously and willingly, becoming incarnate in those who are saved."[204] This is our adoption, how we become God's children. As it was in the historical Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, who dwells perichoretically (wholly) in the Son is "the one creating" (δημιουργικὸν) the Son's birth in and as us.[205] In fact, so exactly does our deification hew to Christo-logic, the birth of Christ in our soul even retains the basic causal reciprocity that obtained between Christ and his mother:

> The mother of the Word is the true and unsullied faith. Just as the Word, who, as God, is by nature the creator of His mother who gave birth to Him according to the flesh, and made her His mother out of love for mankind, and accepted to be born from her as man, so too the Word first creates faith within us, and then becomes the son of that faith, from which He is embodied through the practice of the virtues. And it is through faith that we accomplish all things, receiving from the Word the graces necessary for salvation. For without faith, through which the Word is God by nature and a son by grace, we have no boldness of speech to address our petitions to Him.[206]

The very Word becomes "a son by grace" in *our* adoption. That's how identical he is to us, to our individual finite essences, powers, modes, and activities. He really does

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[204] *Exp. Orat. Dom.* 4, CCSG 23, 50; cited above at n. 87.

[205] *QThal* 15.4, CCSG 7, 101-3: "καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς τὸ θεῖον καὶ θεοποιὸν ὄντως ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ κληρωσαμένοις διὰ τῆς πίστεως...ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς δημιουργικὸν τῆς κατὰ χάριν διὰ πίστεως δοθείσης υἱοθεσίας."

[206] *QThal* 40.8, CCSG 7, 273: "Μήτηρ δὲ τοῦ λόγου καθέστηκεν ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ ἀμόλυντος πίστις. Ὡς γὰρ τῆς τεκούσης αὐτὸν κατὰ σάρκα μητρός, ὡς θεός, ὑπάρχει κατὰ φύσιν δημιουργὸς ὁ λόγος, ἣν ἐποιήσατο μητέρα διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν, ἐξ αὐτῆς ὡς ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι καταδεξάμενος, οὕτως ἐν ἡμῖν πρότερον τὴν πίστιν δημιουργῶν ὁ λόγος ὕστερον γίνεται τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν πίστεως υἱός, ἐξ αὐτῆς κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν ταῖς ἀρεταῖς σωματούμενος, δι' ἧς πάντα διανύομεν, παρὰ τοῦ λόγου λαμβάνοντες τὰ πρὸς σωτηρίαν χαρίσματα. Χωρὶς γὰρ τῆς πίστεως, ἧς καὶ θεὸς κατὰ φύσιν ὑπάρχει καὶ υἱὸς κατὰ χάριν ὁ λόγος, οὐδεμίαν ἔχομεν παρρησίαν τὰς πρὸς αὐτὸν ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις." See too *QThal* 53.4, CCSG 7, 435, where speaks of *our* birth from Christ in the Spirit—deification is simultaneously our birth from Christ and his from us.

"become flesh" in our virtue (not merely in some abstract realm where "Virtue" lives).[207]

One time Maximus praises his addressee for "always conceiving and bearing the pious *logos* of your understanding, which is like a womb made capable by grace of manifesting the supra-natural Word." And the Word manifests because he *increases*. "By your generous dispositions, which were born from your heart," writes Maximus,

> you nourish the Word in accordance with right praxis and contemplation—as if from breasts—and you nurse along the Word to growth in the abundance of pious conceptions and modes [of life] so that, paradoxical as it sounds, his own growth becomes the deification of the very mind that nourishes him.[208]

Just as the Virgin's own free power to bear and birth the Word was itself a power given by the Word, so too is grace's. When the Mother consented, the Word became his own seed in her in an utterly supra-natural way.[209] And when I consent to the Word's invitation, coursing as it does through creation's very veins as the *logoi*[210]—*mine* too— then the Word realizes himself in me, assumes my own nature and mode in its every general and particular dimension. This then names the greatest issue of grace's Christo-logic:

> Jesus my God and Savior, *who is completed through me who am saved*, brings me back to himself who is always filled to overflowing with plenitude and who can never be exhausted. He restores me in a marvelous way to myself, or rather to God from whom I received being and toward whom I am directed, long desirous of attaining well-being. Whoever can understand this by having had the experience of these things will completely come to know in clearly having recognized his own dignity already through experience, how there is rendered to the image what is made to the image, how the archetype is honored, what is the

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[207] *CT* 2.37, Salés 132-3: "Ἐν μὲν πρακτικῷ τοῖς τῶν ἀρετῶν τρόποις παχυνόμενος ὁ Λόγος γίνεται σάρξ"; cf. *QThal* 1.2.2.

[208] *Ep* 19, PG 91, 592a-b, my translation: "καὶ κύουσαν ἀεὶ τὸν εὐσεβῆ λόγον καὶ τίκτουσάν σοῦ διάνοιαν· ὡς τοῦ ὑπὲρ φύσιν Λόγου κατὰ χάριν κοιλίαν ἀποφανθεῖσαν χωρητικὴν...Καὶ μὴν κατὰ τὰς σὰς παγίας ἕξεις τὰς ἐκ τῆς σῆς καρδίας ἐκδιδομένας, αἷς μαστῶν δίκην κατά τε τὴν πρᾶξιν καὶ τὴν θεωρίαν διατρέφεις τὸν Λόγον, τῇ χορηγίᾳ τῶν εὐσεβῶν νοημάτων τε καὶ τρόπων συναυξανόμενον· καὶ παραδόξως εἰπεῖν, τὴν οἰκείαν αὔξησιν τοῦ διατρέφοντος νοῦ ποιούμενον θέωσιν."

[209] *Ep* 19, PG 91, 592c-d (he became his own seed); recall too the description of the *logoi* as the Word's insemination into the womb of the world at *Amb* 6, discussed at Chapter 2, sec. 2.2.

[210] *Amb* 21.8.

power of the mystery of our salvation, for whom it was that Christ died, and finally *how we can remain in him and he in us*, just as he said (Jn 15.4).[211]

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That last opens upon the logic of the actual, deified state—perichoresis. I return to that shortly. But I want to terminate this discussion of the aporia of grace as the indelible index of its Christo-logic by lingering a bit over one of Maximus's favorite expressions for our deification. He likes to say we become God "by position" (θέσει).[212] The expression κατὰ θέσιν can refer to adoption, the legal rather than biological mode of gaining a child.[213] That idea's certainly present in Maximus, but, as Larchet observes, θέσει likely does not take that as its principal sense, not least because Maximus often employs another (biblical and technical) term for "adoption."[214] Both, of course, indicate a process opposed to nature, something non- or supra-natural: θέσει opposes φύσει, for instance.[215]

But θέσει expresses more than the process's character. When a fact or state results from a process that occurs "by position," it tells you something remarkable about that

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[211] *Myst.* 5, CCSG 69, 23-4, my slight modification and emphasis: "Ἰησοῦν μὲν τὸν ἐμὸν θεὸν καὶ σωτῆρα συμπληρωθέντα δι᾽ ἐμοῦ σωζομένου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπανάγει, τὸν ἀεὶ πληρέστατόν τε καὶ ὑπερπληρέστατον μηδέποτε ἑαυτοῦ ἐκστῆναι δυνάμενον, ἐμὲ δὲ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐμαυτῷ θαυμαστῶς ἀποκαθίστησιν, μᾶλλον δὲ θεῷ, παρ᾽ οὗ τὸ εἶναι λαβὼν ἔχω, καὶ πρὸς ὃν ἐπείγομαι, πόρρωθεν, τὸ εὖ εἶναι προσλαβεῖν ἐφιέμενος· ὅπερ ὁ γνῶναι δυνηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ παθεῖν, τὰ λεγόμενα εἴσεται πάντως, γνωρίσας ἤδη κατὰ τὴν πεῖραν ἐναρχῶς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἀξίωμα, πῶς ἀποδίδοται τῇ εἰκόνι τὸ κατ᾽εἰκόνα, καὶ πῶς τιμᾶται τὸ ἀρχέτυπον, καὶ τίς τοῦ μυστηρίου τῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας ἡ δύναμις, καὶ ὑπὲρ τίνος Χριστὸς ἀπέθανε, πῶς τε πάλιν *ἐν αὐτῷ μεῖναι* δυνάμεθα καὶ *αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν*, καθὼς εἶπεν"; the image and archetype phrases come from Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 1 and 4.

[212] *Myst.* 5, PG 91, 677; 21, PG 91, 697a; 24, PG 91, 712a; *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 33c; *Amb* 20.2, PG 91, 1237a; cf. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 601-3.

[213] LSJ, ἡ θέσις, s.v., III; Lampe, s.v., IV.

[214] Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 602 n. 308: "Certains traducteurs rendent ce terme par adoption: mais cette traduction n'est acceptable que pour le composé υἱοθεσία que Maxime utilise par ailleurs et qui se réfère à une filialité non pas possédée par nature, mais acquise ou conférée par institution, autrement dit qui désigne proprement l'adoption filiale."

[215] Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 601-2.

very state, too. What comes to be "by position" is a state or fact *just like* the fact that comes to be by nature. Becoming God by position, you might say, makes us just as much God as God is by nature (i.e. *tantum-quantum* principle). "By grace," which also means "by position," does not make us less God just because the process is utterly supra-natural. Thus Maximus can gloss the christological claim of Col 2.9:

> In Christ, on the one hand, who is God and Word of the Father, the whole fullness of divinity dwells by essence in a bodily manner. But in us the fullness of divinity dwells *by grace* at the moment we gather within ourselves every virtue and wisdom—such that, to the extent possible for a human being, nothing in any way lacks in the true imitation with respect to the archetype. For it is not unfitting that, *by the principle of position*, the fullness of divinity dwells in us too, a fullness consisting in various spiritual contemplations.[216]

The *logos* of "position" describes the way grace makes the whole divinity inhabit us just as much as Christ. The process is not natural. But the outcome exists *in fact* just as if it were.

I think that another, more distant horizon might illumine Maximus's affinity for θέσει: ancient Greek prosody (right pronunciation).[217] There we encounter a fairly direct replication of Maximus's use. More evidently than in any other of its contexts, "by position" in prosody immediately opposes "by nature." The Alexandrian grammarian Dionysius Thrax (d. 90 BC), whose *Ars grammatica* marked the first systematic grammar treatise and would become "a text-book in the schools of the Roman Empire,"[218] allots two categories of instances where one must pronounce long syllables. "A long syllable may come about in eight ways," he writes, "three by nature and five by position [Μακρὰ

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[216] *CT* 2.21, Salés 120, my translation: "Ἐν μὲν τῷ Χριστῷ, Θεῷ ὄντι καὶ Λόγῳ τοῦ Πατρός, ὅλον κατ᾽ οὐσίαν οἰκεῖ τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς· ἐν ἡμῖν δὲ κατὰ χάριν οἰκεῖ τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος, ἡνίκα πᾶσαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀθροίσωμεν ἀρετὴν καὶ σοφίαν, μηδενὶ τρόπῳ, κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, λειπομένην τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἀληθοῦς ἐκμιμήσεως. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπεικὸς κατὰ τὸν θέσει λόγον καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν οἰκῆσαι τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος τὸ ἐκ διαφόρων συνεστηκὸς πνευματικῶν θεωρημάτων."

[217] LSJ, ἡ θέσις, s.v., VII.

[218] Davidson, "The Grammar of Dionysios Thrax," 326.

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συλλαβὴ γίνεται κατὰ τρόπους ὀκτώ, φύσει μὲν τρεῖς, θέσει δὲ πέντε]."[219] You

pronounce a long syllable "by nature" when, for instance, the syllable contains a long

vowel or diphthong (these are already long by nature), and "by position" when, say, the

syllable ends in two consonants or is followed by a double consonant (as with ἔξω—"ξ" a

result of the palatal stop "χ" before "σ"). In fact, to pronounce "by position" seems not to

yield any exact, universal rule precisely to the extent that it's not natural. Or, to put it

another way, a general rule in prosody condenses by convention *rather than* by the very

essence of the syllables themselves. Syllables come arranged, and pronunciation

introduces yet another level of ordering. Prosody deals with the direct deed wrought and

performed by the speaker in concert with generations of other speakers. From prosody,

Dionysius thus teaches, we learn "the art of the reader."[220]

I don't claim direct textual dependence here, but the picture conjured proves

compelling enough to take seriously. Maximus does sometimes evoke θέσει in a prosodic

register. Those who consume the Eucharist "can be *and be called gods by position

through grace* [δύνασθαι εἶναί τε καὶ καλεῖσθαι θέσει κατὰ τὴν χάριν θεούς]."[221] The

deified receive the "name" of God,[222] and the mysteries to be revealed in that final state

which transcends every written and spoken word will then sound forth as "a masterly

articulated speech [ὡς πρὸς τρανὸν λόγον]."[223] Deification by grace and "by position,"

then, delightfully expresses that supra-natural process according to which the very Word

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[219] Dionysius Thrax, *Ars gramm.* VIII, Uhlig 17, l.4; Davidson 330.
[220] Dionysius Thrax, *Ars. gramm*. II, Uhlig 6, l.7-8; Davidson 327: "ἐκ δὲ τῆς προσῳδίας τὴν τέχνην."
[221] *Myst*. 21, PG 91, 697a, slightly modified.
[222] *Amb* 20.2.
[223] *Amb* 21.16; see too *In Psal. 59*, Blowers 274: the Christ shows "the principles of his deeds to be living principles, more sonorous than any audible voice" (i.e. in the deeds of the deified).

who dwells within and takes manifest form in all creatures makes those very creatures *in fact* what they could never be "by nature"—divine.

That we become identical to and equal with God through Christ and in the Spirit—this describes a literal, actual state of the creature's *being* God, though, unlike God, that creature certainly had to *become* him.[224] That supra-natural process transpires solely by the "art of the reader": the Word is the reader, and what he reads is himself in and as us, in and as the *logoi*.[225] In them he enunciates himself *as* us by convention, utterly free of every natural necessity. Yet what is spoken is no less him. We are short by nature, and likely less. But in the *logoi*, creation's "scripts,"[226] the Word masterfully speaks us long and thereby reveals the sublime art he is. We become the Word when we willingly give ourselves to be pronounced by, in, and as him.

> Blessed therefore is the one who through wisdom has actively made God man in himself, who has brought to fullness the inception of this mystery, and who passively experiences becoming God by grace, for this experience will never come to an end.[227]

3.4 – Perichoresis, the logic of deified creation

Recall that passive experience characterizes the existential state of Maximian deification. The meditation on Melchizedek begins: "This, I think, is what that wondrous and great

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[224] *Myst*. 24, CCSG 69, 65-66, modified. Here Maximus applies the words of the father from the parable of the prodigal son—"Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours" (Lk 15.31)—directly to the deified soul, and concludes: "According to each's ability, they have become by position in grace what God is and is believed [to be] by nature and by cause [Τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ἐν χάριτι θέσιν ἐνδεχομένως ὑπάρχοντες ὅπερ ὁ θεὸς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν καὶ αἰτίαν καὶ ἔστι καὶ πιστεύεται]."

[225] *Amb* 10.31; *Amb* 21.7; *Amb* 33.2.

[226] Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor*, 113.

[227] *QThal* 22.8, CCSG 7, 143: "Μακάριος οὖν ὁ μετὰ τὸ ποιῆσαι διὰ σοφίας ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν θεὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τοῦ τοιούτου μυστηρίου πληρώσας τὴν γένεσιν, πάσχων τὸ γενέσθαι τῇ χάριτι θεός, ὅτι τοῦ ἀεὶ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι πέρας οὐ λήψεται."

man, Melchizedek...knew and learned through experience [γνοὺς καὶ παθὼν].”[228] What

did he experience? The preceding paragraph strains to depict it:

> Having been wholly united with the whole Word, within the limits of what their
> own inherent natural potency allows...they were imbued with His own qualities,
> like the clearest of *mirrors* [Wisd 7.26], they are now visible only as reflections of
> the undiminished form of God the Word, who gazes out from within them, for
> they possess the fullness of His divine characteristics, yet none of the original
> attributes that naturally define human beings have been lost, for all things have
> simply yielded to what is better, like air—which in itself is not luminous—
> completely mixed with light.[229]

The term *perichoresis* lacks here, but not its logic. In Chapter 1 (sec. 1.5) and in

the introduction to this chapter (sec. 3.1) I noted two characteristics of perichoresis. First

it describes a union of two distinct wholes that retain their integral identities even as they

exist as one and the same reality. This feature betrays perichoresis's remote provenance

in the idea of "mixture" in Stoic physics.[230] I leave "wholes" ambiguous since of course

what the two "wholes" are depends on the context. In the Trinity the wholes are

persons.[231] In Christ they refer to his natures or, more exactly, to his natural activities.[232]

Second, these wholes interpenetrate every part of each other to the point that a *modal and

actual symmetry* emerges.

That last characteristic definitely distinguishes perichoretic logic from, say,

Neoplatonic emanative or participative logic. For the latter, I've already remarked, the

Plotinian doctrine of double activity necessitates a *modal asymmetry* in order to explain

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[228] *Amb* 10.42, slightly modified.

[229] *Amb* 10.41, PG 91, 1137b-c, modified: "καὶ ὅλοι ὅλῳ κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν τῆς ἐνούσης αὐτοῖς φυσικῆς δυνάμεως ἑνωθέντες τοσοῦτον ἐνδεχομένως ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐποιώθησαν, ὥστε καὶ ἀπὸ μόνου γνωρίζεσθαι, οἷον ἔσοπτρα διειδέστατα, ὅλου τοῦ ἐνορῶντος Θεοῦ Λόγου τὸ εἶδος ἀπαραλείπτως διὰ τῶν θείων αὐτοῦ γνωρισμάτων φαινόμενον ἔχοντες, τῷ ἐλλειφθῆναι μνδένα τῶν παλαιῶν χαρακτήρων, οἷς μνηύεσθαι πέφυκε τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, πάντων εἰξάντων τοῖς ἀμείνοσιν, οἷον ἀὴρ ἀφεγγὴς φωτὶ δι᾽ ὅλου μετεγκραθείς."

[230] Diogenes Laertius, 7.151; *SVF* 2.479; Stemmer, "PERICHORESE," 13.

[231] *CT* 2.1; *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 2, CCSG 23, 31-2.

[232] August Deneffe, "Perichoresis, circumincessio, circuminsessio: Eine terminologisches Untersuchung," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 47.4 (1923): 501-2.

why anything proceeds at all and yet remains essentially related to its superior, self-subsistent cause.[233] If therefore Christo-logic culminates precisely in an actuality or existential reality whose logic is perichoretic; and if that logic is creation's too; and if deification is creation's actual culmination—then it follows that deification's logic must also prove perichoretic.

It does, incontrovertibly. Unlike anyone before him,[234] Maximus makes perichoresis the intractable and entire logic of a deified creature's concrete state.[235] He employs the technical term to describe that state, in both its verbal and noun forms.[236] A creature's deification occurs "through the grace of the Spirit" and manifests "God alone acting within it"—not, Maximus carefully clarifies, in a way that the creature's natural power and activity vanishes. It's rather that God "in a manner befitting His goodness wholly interpenetrates all who are worthy [ὡς ὅλον ὅλοις τοῖς ἀξίοις ἀγαθοπρεπῶς περιχωρήσαντος]."[237] "Unconfused union," sometimes thrown about abstractly in the

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[233] I treat this at some length at Chapter 1, sec. 1.5, but see too Maximus's diagnosis of Greek metaphysics at Chapter 2, sec. 2.3.

[234] As others rightly notice, Maximus could readily find the broad contours of this move in Gregory of Nazianzus, who waxes Stoic in both christology and soteriology; cf. *Or*. 29.20, and esp. *Or*. 30 (esp. 6), which Maximus cites at *Amb* 2.3 and 3.5; see too Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 57. I court my own suspicions that Maximus derived much from Gregory of Nyssa's christological polemics against Apollinarianism, but that would require another study.

[235] So 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'* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1992), 180-1, who describes the actual "identity" achieved in the perichoretic state thus: "sie ist keine abstrakt zusammengefügte, sondern eine nur in der konkreten Vermittlung als Beziehung vollzogene. So wird der Mensch—in einem wahren geschichtlichen Werden—er selbst im Selbig-werden mit dem, was er glaubt."

[236] According to Deneffe, "Perichoresis," 502, Maximus's very use of the noun form seems strikingly original: "Es ist hier [at *Pyr*, PG 91, 336d] seit 11 Jahrhunderten wohl das erstemal, daß das Hauptwort περιχώρησις wieder bei einem griechischen Schriftsteller erscheint"; cf. *QThal* 59.8, CCSG 22, 53, for another use of the nominal form.

[237] *Amb* 7.12.

literature,[238] retains its exact christological meaning even in our deification. It designates actual perichoresis grounded in hypostatic identity:

> In assuming both of these for our sake, God renewed our nature, or to put it more accurately, He made our nature new, returning it to its primordial beauty of incorruptibility through His holy flesh, taken from us, and animated by a rational soul, and on which He lavishly bestowed the gift of deification, from which it is absolutely impossible to fall, being united to God made flesh, like the soul united to the body, wholly interpenetrating it in an unconfused union [δι' ὅλου περιχωρήσασαν ἀσυγχύτως κατὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν].[239]

Perichoresis's two signature traits crop up again and again. Whether or not the technical term appears, the idea that the deific state involves the "whole" God in the "whole" creature and the reverse—"whole in whole, wholly"—suffuses Maximus's oeuvre.[240] But it's the modal symmetry, the second trait, which really reveals perichoretic logic at work. This symmetry shows us that the deific state consists in two simultaneous, vertical movements (both realized horizontally)—God's descent and our ascent. Both transgress Neoplatonic participation. They make it so that the very mode (and act) of divinity descends into the finite mode (and act) of the creature just as much as the latter ascends into divinity's; that both modes exist as one reality; and that even in this single

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[238] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 63-4, who makes perichoresis into the *analogia entis* with its emphasis on the "ever-greater difference" of Creator and creature. On that, see below, sec. 3.5, n. 315.

[239] *Amb* 42.5, PG 91, 1320a-b, slight modification.

[240] *Pyr* 128, PG 91, 320d: "ἡ δι' ὅλου περιχωρήσασα αὐτοῖς χάρις τοῦ Πνεύματος"; *Amb* 7.10: "γένηται ὅλον ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ ἐραστῷ καὶ ὑφ' ὅλου περιληφθῇ, ἑκουσίως ὅλον...ἵν' ὅλον ὅλῳ ποιωθῇ τῷ περιγράφοντι...ὡς ἀὴρ δι' ὅλου πεφωτισμένος φωτὶ καὶ πυρὶ σίδηρος ὅλος ὅλῳ πεπυρακτωμένος";*Amb* 7.26 (become wholly God in whole body and whole soul); *Amb* 21.10 (whole soul in whole God); *Amb* 22.3 (whole God in common and individual realities); *Amb* 31.8 (whole God assumes the whole deified man); *Amb* 48.7, PG 91, 1365c (Word in "the essence of concrete wholes"); *Amb* 65.3, PG 91, 1392c-d (whole God abides in whole being of the worthy); *QThal* 2.2 (whole God contemplated in whole of the worthy); *Myst*. 21, PG 91, 697a (whole God wholly fills those who consume Eucharist, "leaves no part of them empty of his presence"); *Myst*. 23, PG 91, 701b-c (God penetrates soul completely, transforms it into himself); *passim*.

reality both modes perdure entirely undiminished—neither's natural power limits the other's act.[241]

Consider God's descent. God does not come to be in a deified person in the way a Platonic cause dwells in its effect. Indeed, what would it mean to say such a cause "comes to be" in anything, since such a "coming to be" just *is* the effect—the procession "out of" the cause that differentiates effect from cause in the first place?[242] If there is any sense in speaking of the cause's "coming to be" in its effect, this would either amount to pure metaphor or pure Aristotelian efficient causality (where potency terminates its act in the passive recipient). The second cannot by itself explain God's creative act because God's proper mode and activity naturally precede all effects (divinity's *natural* activity isn't completed in created effects, not even in their perfection).[243] The first is possible. But it would obviously violate Christo-logic. That "God became man"—a finite effect— is no mere metaphor. And yet Maximus claims God "comes to be" in the deified.

Take for instance how he adjudicates two apparently contradictory scriptures. The Apostle John says "God is light" (1 Jn 1.5). But two verses later he exhorts, "If we walk in the light, *as He is in the light*" (1 Jn 1.7). What does it mean to say God both *is* and *is in* light? Maximus answers:

> God, who is truly light according to His essence, is in those who "walk in Him" through the virtues, so that they too truly become light. Just as all the saints, who on account of their love for God become light by participation in that which is light by essence, so too that which is light by essence, on account of its love for man, becomes light in those who are light by participation. If, therefore, because of virtue and knowledge we are in God as in light, God Himself, as light, is in us who are light. For God who is light by nature comes to be in that which is light by

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[241] In other words, the deific state presumes and actualizes the aporia of grace, which the *tantum-quantum* principle claims too.

[242] Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 18; cf. Chapter 1, sec. 1.5.

[243] An absolutely essential issue of Maximian *ex nihilo*; cf. Chapter 2, sec. 2.3.

imitation, just as the archetype [comes to be] in the image.[244]

Two important points here. First, Maximus does wield the "by essence" vs. "by participation" distinction. We've ostensibly to do with vertical, Platonic (or exemplarist) causality. But then, second, the archetype does a most un-Platonic thing: it *descends* or "comes to be" or even "becomes" (γίνεται) participated light (i.e. light in a qualified or finite mode). There is no hint that this is metaphor. Quite the opposite, really, and for two reasons. For one thing, the context of the second scripture ("as He is in the light") clearly refers to Jesus Christ.[245] And then Maximus assigns a clear motive to Light's descent, namely "on account of its love for mankind" (διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν)—a motive everywhere linked to the Word's historical Incarnation.[246] The logic of descent here is not Platonic. Nor is it simply the Aristotelian logic of the archetype's realization in the imitator— which we've seen before at *Amb* 21.15.[247] It's both at once. It's Christo-logic. It's the *tantum-quantum* principle. It's a claim that in the deified person God descends and "becomes" the very participated mode (and activity) of that person, all while retaining the divine mode unmuted and unqualified and unmediated.

Maximus underscores that last claim fairly often. I mean the claim that when God descends he continues to bear and to be in the complete modality proper to the divine essence. Rational creatures are never truly free (or rational) "until the law of nature is

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[244] *QThal* 8.2, CCSG 7, 77, modified: "Ὁ κατ' οὐσίαν ἀληθῶς φῶς ὑπάρχων θεὸς ἐν τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν περιπατοῦσίν ἐστιν, ἀληθῶς φῶς γενομένοις. Ὥσπερ οὖν τὸ κατὰ μέθεξιν φῶς, ὡς οἱ ἅγιοι πάντες διὰ φιλοθεΐαν ἐν τῷ κατ' οὐσίαν γίνονται φωτί, οὕτω τὸ κατ' οὐσίαν ἐν τῷ κατὰ μέθεξιν φωτὶ διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν γίνεται φῶς. Ἐὰν οὖν ἐσμεν κατὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν γνῶσιν ὡς ἐν φῶτι τῷ θεῷ, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ θεός, ὡς φῶς, ἐν φωτί ἐστιν ἐν ἡμῖν. Ὁ γὰρ φύσει φῶς ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ μιμήσει γίνεται φωτί, ὡς ἐν εἰκόνι ἀρχέτυπον."

[245] The whole verse: "Ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτὸς ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας" (1 Jn 1.7; SBLGNT).

[246] *Amb* 41.5; *Amb* 48.7; *Amb* 53.3; *QThal* 40.8; etc.

[247] Above, sec. 3.2.

completely swallowed up by the law of the Spirit, just as the death of the wretched flesh

will be swallowed up by life everlasting, that is, not before *the entire image* of the

unoriginate kingdom is clearly revealed, mimetically manifesting in itself *the entire form*

of the archetype."[248] Christ's "form" comes to be in every deified person. And to

emphasize that it is *not* limited to finite nature's mode, Maximus calls it "unvarying."[249]

Now consider our ascent. In Maximian deification we behold "the whole man

pervading the whole God" (ὅλος ὅλῳ περιχωρήσας ὁλικῶς τῷ Θεῷ).[250] Again in a

celebrated passage on deification—a kind of catena of its definitions—Maximus makes

the splendid remark that the "true revelation of the object of one's faith is the ineffable

perichoresis with that object according to the proportion of one's faith."[251] What's

remarkable is that he indexes the degree of God's self-revelation (descent) directly to the

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[248] *QThal* 55.18, CCSG 7, 499, my emphasis: "ἕως ἂν καταποθῇ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ πνεύματος τελείως ὁ τῆς φύσεως νόμος, καθάπερ ὑπὸ ζωῆς ἀπείρου σαρκὸς δυστήνου θάνατος, καὶ πᾶσα δειχθῇ καθαρῶς ἡ τῆς ἀνάρχου βασιλείας εἰκών, πᾶσαν ἔχουσα τοῦ ἀρχετύπου διὰ μιμήσεως τὴν μορφήν." Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 239, rightly notes that *morphe* here recalls Php 2, and so "L'idée principale est que le Christ a pris notre 'forme' pour nous puissions prendre la sienne." Once more Christo-logic alone permits the extreme claim about the descent (and perichoresis) of the divine mode in the deified; cf. also *CT* 2.21.

[249] *Exp. Orat. Dom.* 4, CCSG 23, 46-7, modified: "ἵνα γένηται τῆς θείας χαρακτὴρ βασιλείας, ὡς ἐφικτόν ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ, φέρων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τοῦ φύσει κατ' οὐσίαν ὡς ἀληθῶς μεγάλου βασιλέως Χριστοῦ κατὰ τὴν χάριν ἀπαράλλακτον τὴν ἐν Πνεύματι μόρφωσιν"; cf. too *Exp. Orat. Dom.* 5, CCSG 23, 70, and *Amb* 10.41, cited at this section's outset. The qualifier "as much as possible for man" might seem to contradict my claim about modal limitation. But, given Maximus's fairly constant insistence on the *wholeness* of the divine mode and activity in deified persons, we should not take this qualification to mean that divine activity is *limited* to the natural human mode as such. I offer two interpretations: [1] given this text's anarticular construction, we could easily read it as referring to the *individual* human person, "as much as is possible for *a* human person." This would then refer to the individual *expression* of the wholly present divinity—how, I mean, that deified hypostasis uniquely modalizes (excuse the barbarism) *both* the natures it bears (human and divine). I discuss this a bit more below as "analogy" (sec. 3.5); [2] it could refer simply to the limits of human modality as concerns *expressing* the divine activity. Christ's human deeds, for instance, do not always and in all ways *express* (to a rational onlooker) what is yet present entirely. Not only is this because divinity is infinite in itself (and so not obviously expressible to a finite degree), but also because what it means to "express" is itself relative to the one perceiving what's expressed. It may well be, for instance, that there is another way of perceiving divinity's infinite modality as it is really present in deified creation. But that perception would have to transcend every notion of perceiving, knowing, and therefore "expressing," precisely to the extent that the perception transcends subject/object limitations. I think Maximian "ecstasy" and "experience" aims at exactly this, but if that's so then such a state would be necessarily inexplicable (as at *QThal* 9.2).

[250] *Amb* 41.5, PG 91, 1308b-c.

[251] *QThal* 59.8, CCSG 22, 53, modified: "ἀληθὴς δὲ τοῦ πιστευθέντος ἐστὶν ἀποκάλυψις ἡ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ πίστεως ἄρρητος τοῦ πεπιστευμένου περιχώρησις."

degree that we—as individual persons—penetrate God (ascent).[252] God dwells wholly in the deified person *because* the deified person dwells wholly in God, and the reverse.[253] Chalcedon's symmetry recurs in the deified state as the latter's logic.

And this is indeed Chalcedon's symmetry. Which is to say it's a modal and actual symmetry grounded in and made possible by Christo-logic. Modal perichoresis never floats free of hypostatic identity. And that's because only the Word's hypostasis can be and so establish the non-essential identity of realities infinitely different by essence. Hypostasis names a non-natural, existential positivity that—precisely because it's *not* natural in itself—is in no way limited to natural relations or modes in order to bring creatures to be at all and to be one with him. Hypostatic identity relieves nature from having to achieve such identity. Therefore it circumvents standard philosophical negotiations between created and uncreated natures, finite and infinite modalities, how these can or must be identical to and distinct from each other. Witness again Maximus's precisions about actual and modal perichoresis in Christ:

> "And in a manner beyond man, He does the things of man," according to a supreme union involving no change, showing that *the human energy is conjoined with the divine power* [συμφυεῖσαν δεικνὺς τῇ θεϊκῇ δυνάμει τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην], since the human nature, united without confusion to the divine nature, is *completely interpenetrated by it* [ἡ φύσις ἀσυγχύτως ἑνωθεῖσα τῇ φύσει δ' ὅλου περικεχώρηκε], with absolutely no part of it remaining separate from the divinity to which it was united, having been assumed according to hypostasis. For 'in a manner beyond' us, the 'Word beyond being truly assumed our being,' and joined together the transcendent negation with the affirmation of our nature and its natural properties, and so became man, *having united His transcendent mode of existence with the principle of His human nature* [τὸν ὑπὲρ φύσιν τοῦ πῶς εἶναι τρόπον ἔχων συνημμένον τῷ τοῦ εἶναι λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως], so that the ongoing existence of that nature might be confirmed by the newness of modes of existence, not suffering any change at the level of its inner principle, and thereby

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[252] So Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 58: "Notice how created beings are said to penetrate into the divine, as it were, from below, even though it is brought about from above by God's activity."

[253] *Amb* 7.21-2.

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make known His power that is beyond infinity, recognized in the generation of opposites.[254]

The three italicized parts illustrate the exact Christo-logic of perichoresis: *because* of their hypostatic identity,[255] which puts divine and human principles and powers into immediate union (so circumventing limitation of act by power), *therefore* the modes and activities of both natures can entirely interpenetrate each other. They're free from the finality of any essential restriction. Christ's modal and actual perichoresis reveals a new existential possibility, what Maximus just before this passage simply calls "the unified mode of the Lord's activities."[256]

Notice too how Maximus introduces here a deeper trinitarian ground of christological perichoresis: since Christ's person is the second person of the Trinity and since he truly identifies himself with the created mode of his human flesh, it's rightly said that the Word "united His transcendent mode of existence" to the very "principle of his human nature." That "mode of existence" is of course the "tri-hypostatic mode" of the divine essence itself, namely the *personal* perichoresis of Father and Son and Spirit.[257] Because Christ reveals himself through the unbroken perichoretic mode of his human and divine modes and acts (he walks divinely on water, and heals humanly with the spoken word); and because such perichoresis derives solely from Christ's hypostatic identity as both natures; and because hypostatic identity can be distinguished from essential identity only if hypostasis and essence bear different logics even in God; and because these logics differ in God only as inseparable and *essentially* one in a single mode of existence that *is*

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[254] *Amb* 5.14, slightly modified and emphasized.
[255] It's clear enough here that "union" and "being united" happens according to hypostasis, but see *Amb* 5.7 where it's explicitly stated in a similar context (perichoresis of Christ's modes).
[256] *Amb* 5.11, modified.
[257] *QThal* 28.5, CCSG 7, 205-7; *Amb* 67.10, PG 91, 1400d-1401a.

three persons—therefore, Maximus concludes, only the economy, Incarnation, could have taught true theology, God's "mode of existence" (τὴν πῶς ὕπαρξιν), the Trinity.[258]

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All this raises a major objection to my thesis, though. If hypostatic identity grounds modal perichoresis in our deified state too, doesn't our deification imply our personal obliteration? In Christ, that is, there is but *one* hypostasis which is the identity of the two natures. But in me, say, if the same hypostatically-grounded perichoresis of modes should occur, either "I" (my hypostasis) simply becomes "him" (Christ's hypostasis), or he comes actually to reside *in* me. Not the former, at least not if we wish to avoid the Origenist problem of eschatological absorption.[259] And not the latter if we're to maintain Neochalcedonian Christo-logic—for then there would be *two* hypostases in my deific state. In that case wouldn't Maximian deification, precisely to the extent it's christological, prove Nestorian?[260]

Before I reply, I note two historical points in order to intensify the objection. The first is that several had flagged and rejected the idea of personal perichoresis between created and uncreated hypostases, which a certain Origenism did seem to enjoin in a way that entailed the destruction of the former as such.[261] Some of Maximus's traditional

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[258] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 40-1 and esp. 54, where he refers to this revelation as "the understanding of God in the light of Christ" and "the new proclamation of truth" (ἅπερ φεύγων ὁ κατὰ Χριστὸν λαμπρύνεται λόγος, λέγω δὲ Χριστοῦ λόγον, τὸ καινὸν κήρυγμα τῆς ἀληθείας).

[259] See Canon 14 of Constantinople II; Price, vol. 2, 286.

[260] Such are the objections that I think Perl's reading, otherwise right, cannot finally resolve. See my Introduction.

[261] Evagrius, *Ep. fidei* (or *Great Letter to Melania*) 5: "just as the nature of the human mind will be united to the nature of the Father, as it is his body, thus the names 'soul' and 'body' will be absorbed in the persons of the Son and the Spirit, and remain continually one nature and three persons of God and his image, as it was before the Incarnation and as it will be again, also after the Incarnation, because of the unanimity of wills." Ramelli, *Evagrius's Kephalaia Gnostika*, xxxix, denies that Evagrius intends here the obliteration of individuals. She interprets the "unanimity of wills" as indicative of the final state, which would seem to suggest individual wills in concert with the Trinity's. The problem is that Evagrius sees volitional union as the *means*, not the *end*, of eschatological union, as he states in the very next section:

authorities repudiated it. Diadochus of Photice, for instance, wrote that the even though

baptism forges a strong personal link between soul and Spirit, that soul cannot contain

"two persons" (*prosopa*) because of its "simple form."[262] And the Macarian homilies

worry at the status of individuals after the general resurrection:

> All things will become light. All are immersed in light and fire and are indeed
> changed, but are not, as certain people say, dissolved and transformed into fire so
> that nothing of their nature remains. For Peter is Peter, and Paul, Paul, and Philip
> is Philip. Each person in his proper nature and hypostasis remains, yet filled by
> the Spirit.[263]

Maximus actually agrees with what's motivating these cautions. He doesn't desire the

annihilation of created hypostases any more than they.[264]

And yet the second point is that Maximus *does* seem to think perichoresis of

persons characterizes the deific state. Our opening text spoke of "the undiminished form

of God the Word, who gazes out from within" the saints, and did so, as with the Macarian

homily, in the context of describing an eschatological oneness wherein all things mix

with the divine light.[265] Or in a passage that drifts in quite a different direction than

Diadochus's above, Maximus lauds Dionysius and Gregory of Nazianzus whose

excessive wisdom showed that they "set aside a life conformed to nature" and "occupied

themselves with the essence of the soul and so took hold of the living, unique Christ,

who—to say what is even greater—became the soul of their souls." Thus identified with

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"But in time the body, the soul and the mind, because of the changes of their wills, will become one entity" (*Ep. fidei* 6). Cf. too Timothy of Constantinople (against the Messalians), no. 11, PG 86, 49c; cf. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 245.

[262] Diadochus of Photice, *De perf.* 78, PG 65, 1195d (in Latin); cf. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 246.

[263] Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom.* 15.10, PG 34, 481c-d, slightly modified: "καὶ ὅλα γίγνονται φωτοειδῆ, ὅλα εἰς φῶς καὶ πῦρ βάπτονται, καὶ μεταβάλλονται, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ, ὡς τινες λέγουσιν, α᾽ναλύεται καὶ γίνεται πῦρ, καὶ οὐκέτι ὑφέστηκεν ἡ φύσις. Πέτρος γὰρ Πέτρος ἐστὶ, καὶ Παῦλος Παῦλος, καὶ Φίλιππος Φίλλιπος· ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ φύσει καὶ ὑποστάσει μένει πεπληρωμένος τοῦ Πνεύματος."

[264] See esp. *Opusc* 1, PG 91, 25a-28a, and *CT* 2.83-4.

[265] *Amb* 10.41, cited at n. 229.

Christ, the words they penned "were authored, not by them, but by Christ, who by grace has exchanged places with them."[266]

In a text flanked on both sides by deific perichoresis, Maximus adduces "conjecturally" the character of that state. It eludes all conception and description, of course. It's a state that surpasses our original "participation in goodness" and relies directly on the Son's historical Incarnation to come about. There, at the decisive moment of his earthly sojourn and recapitulation of human nature, the Son "typifies our own [voluntary subjection] in himself" (αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τυπῶν τὸ ἡμέτερον) when he cries, "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matt 26.39). The Son's subjection to the Father hypostasizes the full potential of our own subjection to God. We therefore can become by grace (as we saw with its aporetic process) what the Son is by nature, but only because he first became by nature what we are. Now our nature, unimpeachably united to and "characterized" by his personal mode of existence[267]—personal perichoresis with Father and Spirit—possesses the conditions that allow us to receive the Trinity's existential mode, by grace no doubt. I think that's why Maximus immediately equates the Son's

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[266] *Amb ad Thom*, prol. 3, slightly modified: "καὶ τῇ ἀποθέσει τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ζωῆς ψυχῆς οὐσίαν πεποιημένων, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ζῶντα μονώτατον τὸν Χριστὸν ἐσχηκότων, καὶ τὸ δὴ μεῖζον εἰπεῖν, ψυχὴν αὐτοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς γεγενημένον καὶ διὰ πάντων ἔργων τε καὶ λόγων καὶ νοημάτων πᾶσιν ἐμφανιζόμενον ὡς ἐντεῦθεν ἐκείνων μὲν οὐκ εἶναι πεπεῖσθαι τὰ προταθέντα, Χριστοῦ δέ, τοῦ κατὰ χάριν αὐτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ὑπαλλάξαντος." Cf. Gal 2.20 and Eph 3.17 (as Constas indicates), and *Pyr* 128, PG 91, 320d.

[267] *Ep* 44, PG 91, 644b, my translation: "Behold the most mysterious of all mysteries: very God, because of love, really became a man according to the assumption of rationally and noetically living flesh, unchangeably receiving into himself the passions of nature so that he might save man and give himself as a pattern of virtue for us human beings—he, a living icon of benevolence and love for himself and among others, capable of baffling everyone with respect to the owed exchange [καὶ τὸ δὴ πάντων μυστηρίων μυστηριωδέστατον, αὐτὸς Θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἀγάπης ἀληθῶς κατὰ πρόσληψιν σαρκὸς νοερῶς τε καὶ λογικῶς ἐψυχωμένης γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος, καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάθη τῆς φύσεως ἀτρέπτως καταδεξάμενος, ἵνα σώσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ δῷ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἡμῖν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ὑποτύπωσιν, καὶ τῆς εἰς αὐτόν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους εὐνοίας τε καὶ ἀγάπης εἰκόνα ζῶσαν, δυσωπῆσαι πάντας δυναμένην πρὸς ὀφειλομένην ἀντίδοσιν]"; the stronger sense of "characterized" for ὑποτύπωσιν comes from and is defended by Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 282-4.

self-offering with the Apostle Paul's own, citing Gal. 2.20: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."[268]

These texts suggest that Maximus took the same sort of risk by affirming personal perichoresis in deification as he did with "isochrist" identity statements. But if any doubt lingers, one passage in particular settles the matter. It portrays nearly the contrary to what the Macarian homily did above. In *Amb* 47 Maximus interprets Gregory's figurative reading of the Passover, especially this line: "We need not be suprised that, first and foremost, a lamb is required in each and every house [κατ' οἶκον ἕκαστον]."[269] This short *ambiguum* is itself an excellent performance of perichoretic logic, where our ascent through Christ—through our incremental ascent to his body, then to his mind, finally into his divinity—appears seamlessly and simultaneously as Christ's descent into us—like an immolated "lamb" for each to ingest and so become. Maximus resolves his own meditation like this:

> Thus it happens that *each* of us *in his own rank* [1 Cor 15.23]...sacrifices the Divine Lamb, partakes of its fleshes, and takes his fill of Jesus. For to each person Christ Jesus becomes his own proper lamb, to the extent that each is able to contain and consume Him. He becomes something proper to Paul, the great preacher of the truth, and again, something distinctively proper to Peter, the leader of the apostles, and something distinctively proper for each of the saints, according to the measure of each one's faith, and the grace granted to him by the Spirit, to one in this way, and to another in that, so that Christ is found to be wholly present throughout the whole of each, *becoming all things to everyone* [1 Cor 9.22].[270]

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[268] *Amb* 7.11: "Καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν [i.e. Christ in Gesthemane] ὁ θεσπέσιος Παῦλος, ὥσπερ ἑαυτὸν ἀρνησέμενος καὶ ἰδίαν ἔχειν ἔτι ζωὴν μὴ εἰδώς· ζῶ δὲ οὐκ ἔτι ἐγώ· ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός."

[269] *Amb* 47.1 = Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 45.14.

[270] *Amb* 47.2, PG 91, 1360d-1361a: "οὕτως καὶ τὸν θεῖον ἀμνὸν ἕκαστος ἡμῶν...τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι...θύει τε τὸν ἀμνὸν καὶ μεταλαμβάνει τῶν αὐτοῦ σαρκῶν, καὶ ἐμφορεῖται τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Ἑκάστου γὰρ ἴδιος γίνεται ἀμνὸς Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ὡς ἕκαστος χωρεῖν τε καὶ ἐσθίειν αὐτὸν δύναται· ἴδιος Παύλου τοῦ μεγάλου τῆς ἀληθείας κήρυκος, καὶ ἰδιοτρόπως ἴδιος τοῦ ἀκροτάτου τῶν ἀποστόλων Πέτρου, καὶ ἰδιοτρόπως ἑκάστου τῶν ἁγίων κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ πίστεως καὶ τὴν ἐπιχορηγουμένην χάριν τοῦ Πνεύματος, ᾧ μὲν οὕτως, ᾧ δὲ οὕτως εὑρισκόμενος ὅλος καὶ ὅλῳ, πᾶσι δὲ πάντα γινόμενος."

Here is Maximus's astounding claim: when the whole God, in and as Christ, becomes "the whole of each," this whole includes the very person of the one deified. His language is strong and exact. Christ Jesus "becomes the *proper* lamb *of each*," so that he becomes, literally rendered, "a proper *of Paul*" (ἴδιος Παύλου) and what's "distinctively proper *of Peter*" (ἰδιοτρόπως ἴδιος τοῦ...Πέτρου) and precisely "in the proper mode *of each*" (ἰδιοτρόπως ἑκάστου). It's not just that Christ accommodates himself to the personal preferences or abilities of each—though deification includes that too (more on "analogously" in the next section). He becomes the very "proper" that distinguishes Paul's person from Peter's, and each from all.[271] Christ becomes their very hypostatic difference, the property that makes each the person he is.

Maximus's pregnant statements here anticipate my response to the objection about obliterating created hypostases. It runs roughly thus. Maximus takes a hard line on Platonic ideas. He doesn't have them.[272] He does have eternal "divine works" that are participated, but, as we saw last chapter, these are not self-subsistent and are participated only within the peculiar conditions of Christo-logic.[273] More, Maximus holds the fairly idiosyncratic but somewhat predictable view (given his position on Platonic ideas) that universals are created and consist and indeed "subsist" *in* particulars.[274] There is no such thing in Maximus's thought as a generic or universal created "nature" existing

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[271] Recall the first definition of "hypostasis" in Neochalcedonian christology, derived from Basil the Great, *Ep* 214: "essence has the same relationship to hypostasis that the universal has to the particular [ὅτι ὃν ἔχει λόγον τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον, τοῦτον ἔχει ἡ οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν]" (cited fully at Chapter 1, n. 10); for Maximus's use of this definition, see *Ep* 15, PG 91, 545a, and "An Analytic Appendix."

[272] See my, "Creation is Incarnation: The Metaphysical Peculiarity of the *Logoi* in Maximus Confessor," *Modern Theology* 34.1 (2018): 82-102.

[273] Chapter 2, sec. 2.6.

[274] *Amb* 7.16 (particulars and universals created); *QThal* 48.17, CCSG 7, 341 (universals united in individual instances as if "at corners" in a grand edifice); *Amb* 10.83 (universals and particulars mutually causative) and esp. 10.101 (universals "subsist in the particulars [τὰ καθόλου ἐν τοῖς κατὰ μέρος ὑφέστηκεν]"). Cf. Torstein T. Tollefsen, "The Concept of the Universal in the Philosophy of St Maximus," in *ACMC*, 85, 87, 90.

somewhere other than in the created hypostases that bear and exemplify it.[275] There is no world but the historical one.

This view of universals has hugely significant soteriological implications. That's because Christ, as Larchet rightly argues, assumed *universal* human nature just as much as a particular one; assuming one is assuming the other, really.[276] He therefore assumed (and continues to assume) *all* human particulars, every human person, since universal humanity does not exist separately from the sum of human individuals. So Maximus reads Gregory's remark that Christ "bears the whole of me in Himself" to mean "He bears the totality of human nature [τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν φύσιν ὁλόκληρον]."[277] Indeed Christ "as man is the *first fruits* of our nature in relation to God the Father, and a kind of *yeast that leavens* the whole *mass of humanity* [Rom 11.16, Maximus adds τοῦ ὅλου]," so that his own personal death and resurrection becomes the universal power of humanity's— every human being's—resurrection. Those perfected in Christ are "*natural outgrowths of His resurrection*."[278]

How does this address the objection? Because universal created nature subsists only in particular created hypostases, Christ cannot identify himself with created nature

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[275] Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 161, deserves credit for recognizing this fundamental reciprocity between universal and particular being in Maximus, which is "an original philosophical contribution" drawn from Chalcedon. But then Balthasar seems to read this reciprocity as implying the basic contingency of the *logoi* (he calls them "ideas")—which, however useful this might be against Hegel, cannot be Maximus's meaning here (163).

[276] Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 365-74, e.g. 365: "Bon nombre de passages de l'oeuvre de Maxime indiquent que pour lui la divinisation de la nature humaine du Christ affecte la nature humaine tout entière et atteint immédiatement et concrètement tous les homme." Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 103 n. 19 disagrees sharply, but offers no rationale and certainly never explains how his own view—that Christ assumed only a particular nature that "laid the foundation" for the rest of humanity's deification—coheres with Maximus's clear articulation of the ontological and existential reciprocity of universals and particulars.

[277] *Amb* 4.4.

[278] *Amb* 31.9-10, quoting Rom 6.5: "*σύμφυτοι γενήσονται καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ.*" Cf. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 374, for how Maximus thus subscribes and enhances the traditional, "physicalist" view of salvation.

without also identifying himself with every individual creature. Maximus's *logoi* doctrine already taught us as much. In everything there is a "*logos* of the common [essence or nature]" and a "*logos* of hypostasis."[279] Both condition each other. The *logos* of a created hypostasis constitutes a particularly arresting display of divine power because it is a fundamental and immanent causal principle which no process of declension by formal or modal qualification can illumine. I am the person I am, but "I" names a *non*-natural mode (hypostasis bears no natural content) that yet instances or "typifies" nature in an utterly unrepeatable, inexplicable way.[280] My person's "ability" to typify or affect at all discloses the existential positivity of hypostasis as such. A hypostasis, like a black hole, is that inconceivable reality whose gravity is yet sensed in the way it pushes and pulls nature, as it were. Personal style marks every instance of universal nature. And yet you can't speak of that style without predicating *natural* qualities (intelligent, loving, hospitable, beautiful, well-formed, etc.). You can only speak a *proper name*: "It's very *Paul* to say or do this or that." That distinction, that property, that irrepressible yet inexpressible positivity that a person is—it's exactly this that, since it too is created, *has a principle* or *logos* as such. And it's this that God, in Christ, also *becomes*. The Logos is the *logoi*—all of them.[281]

And if the Logos, Christ, has identified himself with even the principle of a created hypostasis as such—and so generated it—then he has become the very power of

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[279] Chapter 1, sec. 1.3.
[280] *Opusc* 10, PG 91, 136d-137a.
[281] *Amb* 17.10: "When endeavoring to look deeply into these *logoi* of the things mentioned above, or even into one of them, one is left feeling completely debilitated and speechless, for the intellect finds nothing to grasp, except for the divine power"; *Amb* 22.2: "for it provides the intellect with no means of understanding how God—who is truly none of the things that exist, and who, properly speaking, *is all things*, and at the same time beyond them—is present in the logos of each thing in itself [οὐκ ἔχων νοῆσαι πῶς ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἑκάστου λόγῳ], and *in all* the logoi together, according to which *all things* exist."

that person to become who and how (not just what) she is. As she actualizes her personal

potency (always through and with her natural potency, of course), which exists in her

personal *logos* and which the Logos became, the Logos assimilates her body as his own

too: "taking a body in a variety of ways, as only he knows, in each of the saved."[282]

Personal perichoresis is the eventual mode of existence that has already been prepared in

the very act of the Logos becoming the *logoi*. It's certainly divine Incarnation, for the

Word assumes universal created nature. But it must also climax in a state of personal

perichoresis, for created nature subsists only in created hypostases. When the Word

became a creature, then, he planted the very *mode* of his personal existence into the

principles of all creation—the potential for every creature's personal interpenetration of

and by the Three. For the whole Father and the whole Spirit are in the whole Son who is

Christ, and in Christ alone the *logoi* live.[283]

3.5 – Christ's Body and analogy

Maximus seems to conceive this entire schema of creation as Incarnation as basically just

good Pauline theology. You don't have to rush to Plato or the Stoics for the idea that the

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[282] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 59: "καὶ δι' ἑκάστου τῶν σωζομένων ποικίλως, ὡς οἶδεν αὐτός, σωματούμενον."
    [283] *QThal* 60.7, CCSG 22, 79; cp. *CT* 1.66-7.

world is God's body.[284] Col. 3.11, for example, plainly states that "Christ is all things and in all things."[285] The Logos is the *logoi*, first and last.

It's no accident that Maximus punctuates his *logoi* treatise (*Amb* 7) with scriptural citations, especially from Paul about the Body of Christ. After a lengthy explication and defense of the *logoi* as the proper way to read Gregory's remark that we are "portions of God," Maximus repairs to crucial New Testament texts to make some rather amazing claims of his own. Watch how Maximus embosses these texts around his bold eschatological portrait of all things *enhypostasized* in Christ. I quoted it near the end of last chapter, but we must read it again:

> The aim is that 'what God is to the soul, the soul might become to the body,' and that the Creator of all might be proven to be One, and through humanity might come to reside in all things in a manner appropriate to each, so that the many, though separated from each other in nature, might be drawn together around the one nature of man. When this happens, *God will be all things in everything* [1 Cor 15.28], encompassing all things and enhypostasizing them in Himself, for beings will no longer possess independent motion or lack any portion of God's presence, and it is with respect to this presence that we are, and are called, *Gods* [Jn 10.35], *children of God* [Jn 1.12], the *body*, and *members of God* [Eph 1.23, 5.30], and, it follows, 'portions of God,' and other such things, in the progressive ascent of the

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[284] Plato, *Tim*. 30b-d (the world as one Living Creature, "τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ζῷον ἔμψυχον ἔννουν"), which is itself a second god "generated" by the highest God called "Father"; cf. *Tim*. 34b: "θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐγεννήσατο." The Stoic claim is obviously much stronger, since there the God whose body the cosmos is, is no second god, but the one divine Logos; see Diogenes Laertius, 7.137; *SVF* 2.526; LS 44F. Maximus's *Logos*-cosmology affirms both at once—namely that the one Logos who is himself the *logoi* of the world (Stoic claim) is both a second, generated God (Timaeus claim) and yet essentially the one and only God (consubstantial with Father and Spirit).

[285] See *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 55 (slightly modified), where Maximus summons Col. 3.11 in particular even though he's commenting Gal. 3.28: "'But Christ is all things and in all things,' creating by what surpasses nature and the Law, the form of the kingdom which has no beginning, a form characterized, as has been shown, by humility and meekness of heart. Their concurrence shows forth the perfect man created according to Christ [ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστός, διὰ τῶν ὑπὲρ φύσιν καὶ νόμον τὴν τῆς ἀνάρχου βασιλείας δημιουργῶν ἐν Πνεύματι μόρφωσιν, ἥν, ὡς ἀποδέδεικται, πέφυκε χαρακτηρίζειν καρδίας ταπείνωσις καὶ πραότης, ὧν ἡ σύνοδος τέλειον τὸν κατὰ Χριστὸν κτιζόμενον ἀποδείκνυσιν ἄνθρωπον]." Both scriptural passages are similar, and it's also true that Col. 3.12 mentions two major themes Maximus wants to treat here, "humility" and "meekness." But the Colossians text also makes a stronger claim about our oneness than Gal. 3.28. And Col. 3.11 more lucidly presents perichoretic logic: Christ is everything and in everything (whole in whole), *therefore* you are one with each and yourself: "the perfect man created according to Christ."

divine plan to its final end.[286]

Creation's contours appear ever more like a continuous human nature or Body, the personalized bond of all things sundry by nature, whose unifying power is that of a divine person who assimilates and "makes all things his own" such that none of what he assumes—even other human bodies—suffers violation in principle though it's certainly transposed into (perichoretic) mode.[287] The world comes to be like a Seed that generates the very womb in which it gestates. It's born again and again as the particular seed of this or that creature, and, because it retains all it has hypostasized, gains in each actualized creature a new member of its Body.[288]

At the apex of his reflection on the *logoi*, Maximus summons scripture once more: "the basic argument [proves to] be more persuasive when supported by the inspired words of Scripture, in particular those of the holy blessed apostle Paul."[289] He follows by quoting Pauline texts extensively, Ephesians especially. He chooses them to link the world's *logoi* to Christ's ecclesial Body and his "recapitulation" of every creature into that Body. A selective sampling:

> *and He has put all things under His feet and has made Him the head over all things for the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all things in*

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[286] *Amb* 7.31, modified: "'ἵν' ὅπερ ἐστὶ Θεὸς ψυχῇ, τοῦτο ψυχὴ σώματι γένηται,' καὶ εἷς ἀποδειχθῇ τῶν ὅλων Δημιουργός, ἀναλόγως διὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος πᾶσιν ἐπιβατεύων τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ εἰς ἓν ἔλθῃ τὰ πολλὰ ἀλλήλων κατὰ τὴν φύσιν διεστηκότα περὶ τὴν μίαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἀλλήλοις συννεύοντα *καὶ γένηται τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς ὁ Θεός*, πάντα περιλαβὼν καὶ ἐνυποστήσας ἑαυτῷ, διὰ τοῦ μηδὲν ἔτι τῶν ὄντων ἄφετον κεκτῆσθαι τὴν κίνησιν καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἄμοιρον παρουσίας, καθ᾽ ἣν καὶ *Θεοὶ* καὶ *τέκνα* καὶ *σῶμα* καὶ *μέλη* καὶ 'μοῖρα Θεοῦ' καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτά ἐσμεν καὶ λεγόμεθα τῇ πρὸς τὸ τέλος ἀναφορᾷ τοῦ θείου σκοποῦ."

[287] So *Amb* 7.27: "What could be more desirable to those who are worthy of it than deification? For through it God is united with those who have become Gods, and by His goodness makes all things His own." But this assimilation comes in a perichoretic mode: "These examples, drawn from nature, demonstrate persuasively that there is no higher summit or culmination for created beings [τῶν ὄντῶν κεφάλαιον] apart from that in which their natural elements remain inviolate."

[288] *Amb* 6.3; treated at Chapter 2, sec. 2.2.

[289] *Amb* 7.36.

every way [ends Eph 1.17-23].[290]

And:

> *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love* [from Eph 4.11-16].[291]

Maximus adduces from all these exactly how we become "one and the same" (ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν) with God—the very goal of creation announced in our overture (*Amb* 41.5):

> [These words show] that we are the *members* and the *body of Christ*, and that we constitute *the fullness of Christ God* [Eph 1.23], who *fills all things in every way* according to the plan *hidden in God the Father before the ages* [Eph 3.9], with the result that [or "the *skopos* being"] we are being *recapitulated into Him* [Eph 1.10] through His Son and our Lord and God Jesus Christ. For *the mystery hidden from the ages* [Col 1.26] and from all generations has now been revealed through the true and perfect Incarnation of God the Son, who united our nature to Himself according to hypostasis, without division and without confusion. In and through His holy flesh—which He took from us, and which is endowed with intellect and reason—He has conjoined us to Himself, as a kind of *first fruits*, making us worthy to be one and the same with Him, according to His humanity, since we were *predestined* before the ages [Eph 1.11-12] to be in Him as the members of His body. Just as the soul unifies the body, He joined us to Himself and knit us together in the Spirit, and He leads us *to the stature of the spiritual maturity according to His* [i.e. Christ's] *own fullness* [Eph 4.13].[292]

We are "one and the same" with God "according to his humanity" (κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωπότητα). For Maximus Paul himself teaches that our deification is God's

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[290] *Amb* 7.36 = Eph 1.17-23: "καὶ πάντα ἔδωκεν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκε κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἥτις ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου."

[291] *Amb* 7.36 = *Eph* 4.11-16: "ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστός, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἁφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ᾽ ἐνέργειαν ἑνὸς ἑκάστου μέλους τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ."

[292] *Amb* 7.37: "ὅτι καὶ *μέλη* καὶ *σῶμα* καὶ *πλήρωμά Χριστοῦ* ἐσμεν τοῦ *τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι πληρουμένου Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, κατὰ τὸν *πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ ἀποκεκρυμμένον* σκοπὸν *ἀνακεφαλαιούμενοι εἰς αὐτὸν* διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. *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, καὶ *εἰς μέτρον* ἄγοντος *ἡλικίας πνευματικῆς τοῦ κατ᾽ αὐτὸν πληρώματος*."

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Incarnation. Last chapter we saw that the Word's protological condescension in identifying his person with the world's *logoi* is itself the condition for the possibility of any participation in his divine activity. He brings down in person what is imparticipable in essence. But since hypostatic *identity* alone establishes creation's power to participate God, it must *also* and simultaneously reveal a necessary condition in the other direction, as it were: God grants "hypostasis" to creation by identifying himself with it in the Word's hypostasis.[293] God creates by assuming a Body. Therefore the Body he assumes is creation—its process (*logoi*) and perfection (modal perichoresis). And since he identifies himself in person with what he creates by nature, and since what's created is necessarily in motion (*Amb* 7.3-14), then creation's existential movement into ever more perfect actuality is the Word's too. That the world is literally Christ's Body is the deepest ground for Maximus's bold, systematic insistence on the God-world reciprocity.[294]

> For inasmuch as He came to be below for our sakes...it follows that we too, thanks to Him, will come to be in the world above, and become gods according to Him through the mystery of grace, undergoing no change whatsoever in our nature...the world above will again be filled, with the *members of the body* being gathered together *with their head*...filling *the body of Him who fills all in all*, which fills and is filled from all things.[295]

Christ's Body grows, is knitted together, gains modal iterations, precisely through and as every member of the cosmos. His own person lies at the base of every creature as its individual and generic *logoi*, and yet he never relinquishes the *individual* body he assumed from Mary and *is*. Here we approach admittedly bizarre and nearly incomprehensible claims. That's as it should be, of course, and it's why we saw Maximus

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[293] See above, n. 50.

[294] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, everywhere assumes and celebrates this reciprocity. I've tried to root it firmly and precisely in Christo-logic.

[295] *Amb* 31.9. So too *Amb* 31.10, slightly modified: "In fact, [the world above] has already been filled in Christ, and will be filled again in those who become according to Christ, when they, who have already *shared in the likeness of His death* through their sufferings, *shall come to be natural outgrowths of His resurrection* [Rom 6.5: σύμφυτοι γενήσονται καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ]."

press the point that the final deific state can really only be known by experience. Obviously the same might have been said for the very idea that God became man—and yet we're forced to say something about it, even if with a strained voice speaking cracked words and concepts. Bear that in mind now at the world's end. Its logic is just as enduringly mysterious and necessarily articulated as Christ's at the middle.

> The body of Christ is either the soul, or its powers, or sensations, or the body of each human being, or the members of the body, or the commandments, or the virtues, or the *logoi* of created beings, or, to put it simply and more truthfully, each and all of these things, both individually and collectively, are the body of Christ [ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ κοινῇ, ταῦτα πάντα καὶ τούτων ἕκαστόν ἐστι τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ].[296]

Everything is his Body. Even "the body of each human being" is Christ's Body. "Every man," Maximus resumes just after this passage, "who possesses an addition of faith and knowledge, and who is augmented by the modes of virtue.....is a spiritual Joseph [of Arimathea], able to receive the body of Christ and bury it properly, placing it in the niche that faith has hewn in his heart, *by grace making his own body as the body of Christ* [τὸ τε σῶμα τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ὡς Χριστοῦ σῶμα διὰ τὴν χάριν]." So grows "the mystical body of Christ."[297]

Christ's actual recapitulation of the entire world into and as his Body reveals "that the whole creation is one, just as another human being, completed by the mutual coming together of all its members."[298] Maximus frequently evokes the whole human person to depict the world's deification.[299] He likes to say God will become to us as the soul is to

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[296] *Amb* 54.2, PG 91, 1376c, slightly modified.
[297] *Amb* 54.2, PG 91, 1376d-1377a, my emphasis.
[298] *Amb* 41.9, slightly modified: "θεοπρεπῶς *τὰ πάντα εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀνεκεθαλαιώσατο* [Eph 1.10], μίαν ὑπάρχουσαν τὴν ἅπασαν κτίσιν δείξας, καθάπερ ἄνθρωπον ἄλλον, τῇ τῶν μερῶν ἑαυτῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα συνόδῳ συμπληρουμένην καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν νεύουσαν τῇ ὁλότητι τῆς ὑπάρξεως."
[299] Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor*, 36-48, esp. 48 on the "three human beings" (scripture, cosmos, individual person) of *Myst* 7.

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the body, for instance.[300] But given Maximus's christological account of the human person—where body and soul are at once essentially different and yet never concretely whole outside of the unifying positivity of a hypostasis—we must contend with two significant features of Christ's Body.

First, hypostatic identity grounds and conditions whatever else we might say about elements within Christ's Body. A person's parts, even her essential parts (body and soul), do not exist at all or together as a real, existential whole except *as* her.[301] Maximus distinguishes the "principle of becoming" from the "principle of essence" (Οὐχ ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρ γενέσεως καὶ οὐσίας λογός) to make just this point.[302] The latter has to do with a thing's natural "what" (τί) and "how" (πῶς), the former with its existential "when" (πότε) and "where" (ποῦ) and, most significantly, "its reciprocal relation" (πρὸς τί ἐστιν).[303] That's to say, the *logoi* of various essences only generate their respective realities through *particular* individuals—the individual human being, say, who bears an entire complex of spatio-temporal-personal relations by birth. The consequent and concrete "coexistence" and "reciprocal relation" of a hypostasis's natural parts is the *logos* that generates "the completion of a single human being."[304] In Christ's Body, then, to the degree it is at least potentially the entire cosmos, we should contemplate the various relations among his members (every creature) as predicated upon his single hypostasis. He is the very *logos*

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[300] *Amb* 7.26 (which begins to say God will be to the soul what soul is to body, but finally says God will be wholly throughout soul and body alike); cp. *Amb* 10.48, and esp. *QThal* 2.2.

[301] Cf. Chapter 1, sec. 1.4, for the christological shape of this anthropology.

[302] *Amb* 7.42; *Amb* 42.25 (for the christological justification).

[303] *Amb* 7.42.

[304] *Amb* 42.10 ("Ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ εἶναι λαμβάνουσα κατὰ τὴν σύλληψιν ἅμα τῷ σώματι πρὸς ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου συμπλήρωσιν ἄγεται), 13 ("συνύπαρξιν").

that unifies all things and grounds the reciprocal relation or basic symmetry between all Christ's parts, even his created and uncreated natures.[305]

Second, all Christ's parts will finally assume his own personal perichoretic mode of actual existence even while remaining distinct in their own *logoi*. Here Maximus sounds most Stoic. In *Amb* 17, for instance, he marvels at length at how the *logoi* can even "constitute a single world" at all. This consideration moves him forthwith to wonder at our own bodies, at "this complexion of opposites blended together in a synthesis,"[306] which

> brings things separated by nature into an amicable community, subduing, by virtue of the mean, the severities of the extremes, leading each to inhere within the other without the loss of integrity [καὶ χωρεῖν δι' ἀλλήλων ἀλυμάντως], but rather preserving the elements of the synthesis, which is the *perichoresis* of one extreme in the other by virtue of the blending [τὴν τῶν ἄκρων κατὰ τὴν κρᾶσιν εἰς ἄλληλα περιχώρησιν].[307]

Stoics evidently thought that a certain process of "mixture" (κρᾶσις) could allow two or more bodies to occupy the same physical space without obliterating any parts' "own essence" or "proper hypostasis" or "qualities."[308] Maximus too, it seems, but only

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[305] If we were to pursue this insight, we would have to consider the possibility that the Word's birth from Mary, just as much as his generation from the Father, is the "when" and "where" of the entire world.

[306] *Amb* 17.8, slightly modified: "ἡ τῶν ἐναντίων κατὰ τὴν κρᾶσιν διὰ συνθέσεως συμπλοκή."

[307] *Amb* 17.8, slightly modified.

[308] Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixt.* 216.28-31: "τὴν γὰρ δύο ἢ καὶ πλειόνων τινῶν σωμάτων ὅλων ἀντιπαρεκτασιν ἀλλήλοις οὕτως, ὡς σώζειν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ μίξει τῇ τοιαύτῃ τήν τε οἰκείαν οὐσίαν καὶ τὰς ἐν αὐτῇ ποιότητας, λέγει κρᾶσιν εἶναι μόνην τῶν μίξεων." And a bit later at 217.32-36, he cites the body-soul "mixture" in a human being to show how even though the soul still "has its own hypostasis [τὴν ψυχὴν ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν ἔχουσαν]," it "entirely pervades the body [δι' ὅλου τοῦ σώματος διήκειν]." See Stemmer, "PERICHORESE," 11-13. Obviously terms like "hypostasis" do not carry the exact meaning in early Stoics as they do in Maximus. Chrysippus here, in Alexander's report, seems to use it to emphasize the soul's superior existential stability; even though it *receives* the body, it bears its own essence (so that essence and hypostasis are still more or less equivalent). And yet the degree of terminological and conceptual convergence, especially here in *Amb* 17, between Maximus and Stoics is still impressive; so Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 58. It's worth asking why Maximus can repair back (wittingly or not) to more Stoic forms of thought even while denying essential Stoic tenets, say, divine corporeality. My study implies that the careful recognition and distinction of "hypostasis" from "essence" under christological pressures reopens the possibility that another, non-essential dimension of existence

because something else—namely a hypostasis—relieves nature from having to achieve the kind of "whole" that would permit such *perichoresis* among the parts. And in Christ's Body, which is one with itself and with all other entities exactly because his hypostasis is the identity of his parts, those parts can preserve their whole integrity *and* interpenetrate one another. Indeed, as they become both more themselves and more he who sustains them by subsisting as them, they *must* so pervade each other as they are "gathered together with their Head" and "become one flesh" (Col 1.18; Eph 5.30-1).[309]

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These two traits of Christ's Body explain how "analogy" in the deific state retains its distinctly Pauline sense. That's to say, according to the Christo-logic of our deific state, which is also the body-logic of Christ, analogy does *not* preclude hypostatic identity. The former presumes the latter. True, Maximus very often qualifies the process of deification by saying it occurs "analogously" or "in proportion" to the person deified. Many have read this to imply something like what "by grace" is supposed to imply—that our deification makes us still a bit *less* God than Christ is, even his own humanity.[310]

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(hypostasis) might perform some similar existential funcations Stoics thought only some kind of underyling bodily-yet-divine substance could—which they too could call "Logos."

[309] *Myst*. 24, CCSG 69, 59-60, slight modification: "Thus the holy church, as we said, is the figure and image of God inasmuch as through it he effects in his infinite power and wisdom an **unconfused union from the various essences of beings, attaching them to himself as creator to their highest point**, and this operates according to the grace of faith for the faithful, joining them all to each other **in one form** according to a single grace and calling of faith [Ἔστι μὲν οὖν ἡ ἁγία ἐκκλησία τύπος, ὡς εἴρηται, καὶ εἰκὼν τοῦ μὲν θεοῦ, διότι ἦν ἐργάζεται κατὰ τὴν ἄπειρον αὐτοῦ δύναμιν καὶ σοφίαν περὶ τὰς διαφόρους τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας ἀσύγχυτον ἕνωσιν, ὡς δημιουργὸς κατ᾽ ἄκρον ἑαυτῷ συνέχων, καὶ αὐτὴ κατὰ τὴν χάριν τῆς πίστεως εἰς τοὺς πιστοὺς ἀλλήλοις ἑνοειδῶς συνάπτουσα]." See too *Amb* 21.14, where Maximus coyly intimates that Gregory may have attributed John the Evangelist's words to John the Baptist according "to a more mysterious" reason, namely that any saint can "exchange places" with another because the same Word comes to be in all the saints.

[310] E.g. Loosen, *Logos und Pneuma im begnadeten Menschen bei Maximus Confessor* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941), 50-9.

Renzces and Ayroulet, for instance, suggest two ways the deified person's union with God is analogous to Christ's.[311] There is "la divergence essentielle" between Christ and ourselves, and then "les différences entre les hommes dans leur mode personnel de collaboration à la réalisation de leur divinisation."[312] I return to the second shortly, which seems right to me. But the first falters. It does to the extent that we deduce from an absolute *ontological* difference between created and uncreated essences the impossibility of their concrete and *real* identity.[313] In this way it rehearses the error of christological "asymmetry" familiar from Chapter 1, but from the opposite vantage.[314] If Christ was there conceived as in some sense "more" divine than human, here we are thought more human than divine. This would of course make nonsense of Maximus's claim that the identity wrought in our deific state is the very one achieved in the historical Incarnation—a conviction then crystalized and intensified in the *tantum-quantum* principle (sec. 3.2). It elides too the distinction between process and product or state, so that the necessity of our *becoming* God is misread as our perpetual failure to *be* him (sec. 3.3). And, last, this sort of "analogical difference" also assumes that modal perichoresis amounts to the kind of "reciprocity" that might obtain, say, between two magnetic poles, one smaller (us) and one much bigger (God). But as I've stressed time and again, modal

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[311] Philip Gabriel Renczes, *Agir de Dieu et liberté de l'homme: Recherches sur l'anthropologie théologique de saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, Cerf, 2003), 349-54; Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 285, 293-4.

[312] Ayroulet, *De l'image à l'Image*, 285.

[313] And to complicate matters, both authors deduce the ontological difference from the *gnomic* mode of a person's natural volition; so Renczes, *Agir de Dieu*, 351: "Nous avons déjà envisagé la γνώμη comme circonstance d'une divergence essentielle de la divinisation de l'homme par rapport à celle de la nature humaine du Christ dans l'union hypostatique." But as a mode destined to give way to the utterly natural and immediate willing of the lover for the beloved, the fact that Christ lacks a *gnome* (*Pyr* 85-7) indicates only a difference of *process*, not of *essence* (lest Christ not be *personally* human). I therefore follow Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme*, 239-47, who rightly argues that the absence of a gnomic mode in Christ evinces only the completion of the deified state of his humanity. For a useful summary of the soteriological issues involved, see Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor*, 242-6.

[314] Chapter 1, sec. 1.5.

perichoresis finds its ground solely in hypostatic identity and so culminates in complete, actual symmetry (sec. 3.4).[315] As Christo-logic dictates, there is no asymmetrical relation between created and uncreated natures for the obvious reason that they share no natural relation at all. And yet, by and as God's grace, the Word becomes the hypostatic identity and essential symmetry in a single concrete reality, his Body.

We fare better with the second sense of "analogous" deification. Each person, each created hypostasis, does in fact differ from Christ and from one another in principle. Not essentially (as regards Christ's humanity), but according to each's individual *logos* of hypostasis. It's significant that nearly every time Maximus speaks of "analogy" or "proportion" in deification, it's "in proportion" to *each individual* deified.[316] And yet an individual *logos*, we've seen, is the Logos too. Each person is a member of the Word's

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[315] Renczes, *Agir de Dieu*, 353-4, speaks of "l'*unité analogique* de la périchorèse dans l'agir," which he claims predominates even in Christ himself: "[Maximus's mention in *Amb* 7 of] une seule opération 'divine-humaine' ne peut être conçue que de manière analogique: à la manière de la périchorèse de la nature divine et humaine dans le Christ, cette opération unique exprime *le concours des deux opérations vers la même finalité dans la proportion qui convient* sans que l'une signifie l'annihilation de l'autre" (his emphasis);—Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 63-4, reduces Maximus's great and ultimately costly christological tenacity to a defence of Christo-logic understood in terms of asymmetrical analogy: "From the moment that Chalcedon, in its sober and holy wisdom, elevated the adverbs 'indivisibly' (ἀδιαιρέτως) and 'unconfusedly' (ἀσυγχύτως) to a dogmatic formula, the image of a reciprocal indwelling of two distinct poles of being replaced the image of mixture. This mutual ontological presence (περιχώρησις) not only preserves the being particular to each element, to the divine and the human natures, but also brings each of them to its perfection in their very difference, even enhancing that difference. Love, which is the highest level of union, only takes root in the growing independence of the lovers; the union between God and the world reveals, in the very nearness it creates between these two poles of being, the ever-greater difference between created being and the essentially incomparable God. Maximus defended the formula of Chalcedon, even with his blood, out of a deep insight into this difference."

—Here "analogical" and "perichoretic" seem synonymous. But either "analogy" bears perichoretic logic—and so cannot be asymmetrical; or else perichoresis analogy's—and so the "newness of modes" putatively achieved in Christ simply follows the standard logic of the relation between a natural cause and its effect (an asymmetrical relation, however greater the difference; see sec. 3.1 above)—the very thing Maximus consistently denied; so *Pyr* 192, PG 91, 345d-348a; *Amb* 5.1-2. So Jonathan Bieler, "Body and Soul Immovably Related: Considering an Aspect of Maximus the Confessor's Concept of Analogy," *Studia Patristica* 75 (2017): 223-35, appears to assume their synonymity in christology, anthropology, and trinitarian theology. He says, for instance, that the Father "expresses himself fully or analogically in the Son" (235). Unlike earlier scholars who also equate perichoresis and analogy, Bieler differs to the extent his reading privileges (wittlingly or not) the former over or in the latter.

[316] *Qu. et dub.* 102, CCSG 10.77: "κατὰ τὴν ἀναλόγως προσοῦσαν δύναμιν ἑκάστῳ"; *Amb* 10.85; *Amb* 21.4; *QThal* 29.2.

Body. Analogy, the "logic of proportion," therefore emerges as a body-logic.[317] That was just how Paul used it,[318] and others too.[319]

If that's so, then analogy in deification, as in any body, actually demands both hypostatic identity (for no body subsists as a real whole except as a hypostasis) and a perichoretic symmetry among any and all its parts. That includes its "extremes," created and uncreated natures. And so I recognize two senses of eschatological "analogy" in Maximus.

First, it means that I am and manifest the Word of God in my own personal way. This holds generally for every creature, actually.[320] "Each person," writes Maximus,

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[317] Luke Steven, "Deification and the Workings of the Body: The Logic of 'Proportion' in Maximus the Confessor," *Studia Patristica* 75 (2017): 241: "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."

[318] Cf. *QThal* 29.2, CCSG 7, 211, where Maximus quotes Rom. 12.6: "according to the proportion of one's faith [κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως]"; see too Steven, "Deification and the Workings of the Body," 243-6, on the Pauline tradition of "proportion" as it was transmitted through the Christian Alexandrian tradition (Clement, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa), and 249: "for Maximus deification works 'in proportion', which, following Paul, means that deification works like a body."

[319] So Stefan Dienstbeck, *Die Stoa der Stoa* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 198-99, registers due caution about eliding the Stoic stress on the "identity" between individual entities (esp. the human being) and the universal essence to a relation of polarity: "Missverstanden wäre dieser Komplex, wollte man ihn als ein polares Verhältnis beschreiben, in dem das Eine seinem Teil bzw. insgesamt seinen Teilen gegenüberstände." He continues: "Kosmisches Sein und Einzelnersein stehen in wesensmäßiger Identität, *nicht weil sie strukturanalog wären*, sondern weil sie tatsächlich als wesensidentisch zu bestimmen sind. Dem tut auch der individuelle Zuschnitt im Wesen der Einzelentitäten keinen Abbruch. Vielmehr bestätigt die Strukturidentität, dass Wesensidentität *nicht durch Differenz in der Verfasstheit verlustig geht*. Gerade als Einzelnes befindet sich das Einzelne mit der Struktur von allem in Wesensidentität" (my emphasis). Again, Maximus's concept of "essence" obviously differs from the earlier Stoic one (and from many others). But the *form* or shape of the Stoic view of the God-world relation resonates rather strongly with Maximus's. Replace "essence" with the Word's "hypostasis," and this becomes apparent enough. The Stoic Logos pervades every individual entity and thus sustains and unites all *by being the universal, immanent bond of all*, through procession. Stoics could even admit that so long as you concede that one Logos runs through all as the sole, concrete identity of the world, then yes, at that point you might admit that each individual thing is pervaded by (as tenor) and so manifests that Logos "to a greater" or "lesser degree (ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη δι᾽ ὧν μὲν μᾶλλον, δι᾽ ὧν δὲ ἧττον)—"just like the soul in us"; Diogenes Laertius, 7.138-9 = *SVF* 2.634. Cp. for instance, *Amb* 35.2 and *Amb* 48.7, where the Logos "becomes the essence in concrete wholes."

[320] *QThal* 51.8-15, canvasses an array of creatures—the Sun, eagle, deer, serpent, turtledove—in order to contemplate their own *ways* of exemplifying "the divine wisdom invisibly contained in created beings" (πᾶσαν ἐκκαλύπτων ἐν ἑαυτῷ κατὰ τὸν βίον τῆς ἐμπερομένης ἀοράτως τοῖς οὖσι θείας σοφίας τὴν μεγαλοπρέπειαν); *Amb* 51.15, CCSG 7, 403. So too *Amb* 33.2, where the Logos "is obliquely signified in proportion to each visible thing [ἀναλόγως δι᾽ ἑκάστου τῶν ὁρωμένων], as if through certain letters."

"according to his own power, and according to the grace of the Spirit that is granted to him with respect of his worthiness—has Christ in him, and in proportion to him, leading him through increasing mortifications to ever more sublime ascents."[321] Just "as the soul reveals itself as active in the parts of the body according to the capacity underlying each part," so too do I manifest the Word's divine activity and person in me "analogously" to my power, my desire, my love, my passion.[322]

That last text points up a second sense of analogy. Again, I can only manifest the Word who has become all that I am in principle (all my *logoi*) because he has made every creature himself, his Body. Analogy is a two-way channel, a true symmetry. In fact, the Word *becomes analogous to me*.[323] Since he can become in person what he is infinitely not by (divine) nature, the Word makes himself the hypostatic, concrete identity of every creature precisely *as* that creature (its natural and hypostatic modes—its entire finitude). So it is with a human hypostasis and its body: I am as much my finger as I am my hair, as I am my heart, as I am my eyes.[324] My toe only *is* to the degree it *is me*. If, then, as we've

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[321] *Amb* 47.2: "ἕκαστος...κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν, καὶ τὴν κατ' ἀξίαν χορηγουμένην αὐτῷ τοῦ Πνεύματος χάριν τὸν Χριστὸν ἔχων ἀναλόγως ἑαυτῷ τὰς ὑψηλὰς διὰ τῆς πρὸς πάντα νεκρώσεως ἀναβάσεις ποιούμενον"; cf. *QThal* 59.8, CCSG 22, 23; *Amb* 10.31 and 85; *Myst* 13, CCSG 69, 42; etc.

[322] *QThal* 61.14, CCSG 22, 103: "*πᾶσι πάντα γινόμενος* [1 Cor 9.22] κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς δικαιοσύνης, μᾶλλον δὲ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῶν μετὰ γνώσεως ὑπὲρ δικαιοσύνης ἐνταῦθα παθημάτων ἑαυτὸν ἑκάστῳ δωρούμενος, καθάπερ ψυχὴ σώματος μέλεσι κατὰ τὴν ὑποκειμένην ἑκάστῳ μέλει δύναμιν ἑαυτὴν ἐνεργοῦσαν ἐκφαίνουσα." The Body-cosmos logic can even portray eschatological judgment; see just before this, *QThal* 61.13, CCSG 22, 103.

[323] *Amb* 21.4: "Since the same Christ is flesh and spirit, He becomes the one or the other analogous to the form of knowledge [ἐπειδὴ γὰρ σὰρξ καὶ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ὁ αὐτὸς κατὰ τὴν ἑκάστῳ τῆς γνώσεως ἀναλογίαν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο γινόμενος]; *Amb* 48.7: "He has made Himself edible and participable to all in proportion to the measure of each [καθ' ἃς ἐδώδιμον ἑαυτὸν καὶ μεταληπτὸν ἀναλόγως ἑκάστῳ πεποίηκεν]." Even the Spirit (as wholly in the Son) exists in an analogous way in each of his gifts; so *QThal* 29.2, CCSG 7, 211: "[Isa 11.1-3] used the word 'spirits' to name the activities of one and the same Holy Spirit, because the actuating Holy Spirit exists proportionately in all of its activities whole and without diminishment [ἀλλ' τὰς ἐνεργείας τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος πνεύματα καλέσας διὰ τὸ πάσῃ ἐνεργείᾳ ὅλον ἀνελλιπῶς ὑπάρχειν ἀναλόγως τὸ ἐνεργοῦν ἅγιον πνεῦμα]."

[324] Lop off an appendage—it's still *mine*. It still bears a distinctive relation as proper to the hypostatic "whole" *I* am, the relation bore through the "principle of becoming" at my birth. The fact that I don't need it to endure (i.e. it's not an *essential* attribute) doesn't mean it's *less* mine or *less* me. To think so is simply still to think according to the logic of essence, so that "accidental" and "essential"

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seen, we are "members" of Christ's Body, then it follows that he is *us* in just that way—

hypostatically.

Only thus, I submit, do Maximus's extreme pronouncements on the God-world

symmetry make any sense. God and man "are paradigms of each other"—we read that

before.[325] We can also read in Maximus that the Incarnate Word, because he is truly and

really man, taught us in deed and even in word that a human person can become God's

own model:

> And for God he makes himself an example of virtue, if one can say this, and invites the inimitable to come imitate him by saying [καὶ τῷ θεῷ καθίστησιν ἑαυτὸν ἀρετῆς ἐξεμπλάριον, εἰ τοῦτο θέμις εἰπεῖν, πρὸς μίμησιν ἑαυτοῦ τὸν ἀμίμητον ἐλθεῖν ἐγκελευόμενος, λέγων], 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' He summons God to be to him as he is to his neighbors.[326]

The Word identifies himself with us and thus generates us. But his primal self-

identification with all creation and its every creature does not dissipate after awhile, but

perdures into every mode and actuality—even, stunningly, in the very heart of finitude,

our suffering.

> For the Word has shown that the one who is in need of having good done to him is God; for, he says to us, as long as you did it for one of these least ones, you did it for me—and God himself says this!—then, he will much more show that the one who can do good and who does it is truly God by grace and participation because he has taken on in happy imitation the energy and characteristic of his own doing good. *And if the poor man is God, it is because of God's condescension in becoming poor for us and in taking into himself the sufferings of*

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characteristics also name the primary ways wholes relate to parts (and the reverse). But in Maximus's christology, and I dare say in any Chalcedonian christology, Christ's *hypostasis* is itself the "whole" of the parts which are themselves essential wholes. This part-whole relation—that between the two natures and their hypostasis—cannot therefore follow any logic restricted to the logic of essences (as "accidents" and "essences" are). In other words, possession and identification *must* converge in Christo-logic. If Christ's physical body is "simply" *his* body rather than *him* (as well), then I cannot see how "God died" retains anything like what Cyril and Neochalcedonism strive to uphold: the concrete (not natural) identity of that one who died and the thing that died—that humanity, that body-soul unity, that punctured flesh. So it is with God and the world, on my reading.

[325] *Amb* 10.9, cited in full at n. 110.
[326] *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 4, CCSG 23, 64-5, slight modification.

each one sympathetically and "until the end of time," *always suffering mystically through goodness in proportion to each one's suffering*. All the more reason, then, will that one be God who by loving human beings in imitation of God heals by himself in a God-fitting way the sufferings of those who suffer and who shows that he has in his disposition, in due proportion, the same power of sustaining Providence that God has.[327]

Analogy in Christ's Body means inconceivable symmetry. The Word becomes analogous to me—even *suffering* and *dead* me! It was exactly his own brutal death on the cross that finally revealed God's ineffable modality as a trinity of hypostases in and as one divine essence (Christo-logic's two logics). We saw that in Chapter 1.[328] Discerning and following through the distinction between those logics has at length led us to this mystery, which is indeed the same:

> In accordance, then, with one of the aforementioned contemplations, whereby we are crucified with Christ [τῷ Χριστῷ συσταυρούμεθα], let us endeavor, for as long as we are in this world, to propitiate the Word who is crucified together with us [τὸν συσταυρούμενον ἡμῖν ἱλεώσασθαι Λόγον].[329]

That's Paul, of course (Gal 2.20; Col 1.24).

3.6 – Conclusion

This chapter has gone to great lengths to show that and how Maximian deification demonstrates the Christo-logic of the world. The Word of God has made his own person

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[327] *Myst.* 24, CCSG 69, 68-9, modified: "Εἰ γὰρ θεὸν ὁ Λόγος τὸν εὖ παθεῖν δεόμενον ἔδειξεν – *ἐφ᾿ ὅσον γὰρ ἐποιήσατε, φησὶν, ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε·* θεὸς δὲ ὁ εἰπὼν, πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὸν εὖ ποιεῖν δυνάμενον καὶ ποιοῦντα, δείξειεν ἀληθῶς κατὰ χάριν καὶ μέθεξιν ὄντα θεὸν, ὡς τὴν αὐτοῦ τῆς εὐεργεσίας εὐμιμήτως ἀνειλημμένον ἐνέργειάν τε καὶ ἰδιότητα. Καὶ εἰ θεὸς ὁ πτωχὸς, διὰ τὴν τοῦ *δι᾿ ἡμᾶς πτωχεύσαντος* θεοῦ συγκατάβασιν καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ ἑκάστου συμπαθῶς ἀναδεχομένου πάθη καὶ μέχρι τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τοῦ ἐν ἑκάστῳ πάθους ἀεὶ δι᾿ ἀγαθότητα πάσχοντος μυστικῶς, πλέον δηλονότι κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα λόγον ἔσται θεὸς ὁ κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν τὰ τῶν πασχόντων πάθη δι᾿ ἑαυτοῦ θεοπρεπῶς ἐξιώμενος καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τῷ θεῷ κατ᾿ ἀναλογίαν τῆς σωστικῆς προνοίας κατὰ διάθεσιν ἔχων δεικνύμενος δύναμιν"; cf. *Amb* 4.9, where Maximus remarks that besides the need to cleanse humanity of sin, another motive for the Word's Incarnation was that he wanted "to experience" our obedience (cp. *QThal* 61.6); and *Cap. X*, where Maximus notes the psychological benefit of knowing that God himself suffers with us—on which see, Portaru, "The Vocabulary of Participation," 307, who knows no ancient precedent for this idea.
[328] Sec. 1.6.
[329] *Amb* 53.7, PG 91, 1376b.

the identity of the God and the world. That names the primordial principle and goal of creation (3.2). And that identity grounds and reduces to modal perichoresis between God and every creature, a total symmetry that makes what's proper to God "improperly proper" to creation and the reverse (3.4).[330] We thus become identical to God not just in principle, but in our eschatological, existential, concrete state. And so while we *become* God by an utterly supra-natural process—"by grace"—we along with the world prove no less God in fact (3.3). For we are his Body (3.5).

Just as the Lord's particular body welcomed the "whole Father" and "the whole Spirit" into itself, which the Son had "actualized in himself"[331] (κατ' αὐτουργίαν)—so too will the whole world, his mystical Body, become and manifest the Trinity.

> One and the same *logos* will be seen in all things.... In this way, the grace that deifies all things will manifestly appear to have been realized—the grace of which God the Word, becoming man, says: "My father is still working, just as I am working" [Jn 5.17]. That is, the Father bestows His good pleasure on the work, the Son actualizes it in himself, and the Holy Spirit essentially completes in all things the good will of the former and the work of the latter, so that the one God in Trinity might be "through all things and in all things" [Eph 4:6], being wholly contemplated in proportion to each of those made worthy by grace, and wholly complete through the whole of them, in the same way that, in each and every member of the body, the soul exists naturally and without diminution.[332]

There, in the Son's one Body, not only will the Trinity be present to all things, as Dionysius said. All things will be, by grace, the Trinity.

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[330] See Conclusion below.

[331] *QThal* 60.7, CCSG 22, 79; *Exp. Orat. Dom*. 2, CCSG 23, 31-2; cf. *Amb* 61.2-3.

[332] *QThal* 2.2, CCSG 7, 51, slightly modified: "ἀλλ' καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐφ' ὅλων θεωρηθήσεται λόγος...καὶ οὕτως ἐνεργουμένην τὴν ἐκθεωτικὴν τῶν ὅλων ἐπιδειξηται χάριν· δι' ἢν γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ὁ θεὸς καὶ λόγος φησὶν *ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι,* ὁ μὲν εὐδοκῶν, ὁ δὲ αὐτουργῶν, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οὐσιωδῶς τήν τε τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπὶ πᾶσιν εὐδοκίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτουργίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ συμπληροῦντος, ἵνα γένηται διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσι εἷς ὁ ἐν τριάδι θεός, ἀναλόγως ὅλος ἑκάστῳ κατὰ χάριν τῶν ἀξιουμένων καὶ ὅλοις ἐνθεωρούμενος, ὡς ὅλῳ καὶ ἑκάστῳ μέλει τοῦ σώματος δίχα μειώσεως ἐνυπάρχει φυσικῶς ἡ ψυχή."

Conclusion

Recapitulatio

In this study I have tried to justify and to perform a literal interpretation of Maximus's declaration that, "The Word of God, very God, wills that the mystery of his Incarnation be actualized always and in all things" (*Amb* 7.22). I admit that the justification lies mostly in the success of the performance. There is of course some *prima facie* warrant for this performance in the very fact that Maximus himself never qualifies this statement (or the many others I've documented and discussed throughout) in the way nearly all his later commentators do. Not once does Maximus say, for instance, that the "mystery" of the Word's Incarnation into all the world differs from the mystery wrought in Jesus Christ. Maximus never says the Word is somehow more or differently immanent or present in Christ than he is in the *logoi* of every creature—even though many had and would after.[1] As far as my exegetical argument goes, that's a negative point in my favor.

But I also pursued two positive and more substantive points. On the one hand I tried to show that Maximus thinks the logic of creation as the logic of Christ. On the other I showed how this identification accounts for and even necessitates many of the putatively hyperbolic or extreme aspects of Maximus's thought (especially on deification). In the first instance, I can state my argument as three contentions. For Maximus, [1] God's Incarnation in the middle of history bears a logic that differs from all

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[1] Some might adduce against this claim *Amb* 46.4, PG 91, 1357a-b: "He deigned to vary the modes of His presence so that the good things He planted in beings might ripen to full maturity, until the ages will have reached their appointed limit [συγκαταβατικῶς ἐφεῖναι τὰς ἀκτῖνας ἀνεχόμενος, ποικίλαι τοὺς τρόπους ἀξιώσας πρὸς τελεσφόρησιν ὧν τοῖς οὖσιν οἰκείων κατέσπειρεν ἀγαθῶν μέχρι τῆς πάντων ἀποπερατώσεως τῶν αἰώνων]. At that point He will *gather together* the fruits of His own *sowing*...." But my claim is that the Word must be fundamentally identical to what he is not by nature in order even to vary himself in and through that very nature. Again, Christ's human flesh—considered according to its natural properties—presented his person in accordance with those properties. This doesn't exclude his hypostatic identity to that very nature, which *then*, as it were, disclosed him. Hypostatic identity actually grounds natural expression; the latter presupposes the former.

other conceptions of vertical causality, especially Neoplatonism's; call this "Christo-logic" (Chapter 1); [2] the peculiarities of Christo-logic appear in and adequately describe creation's peculiarities: its beginning *ex nihilo* (Chapter 2) and end in deification (Chapter 3); and [3] since, therefore, Christo-logic constitutes the literal meaning of "Incarnation," and since that same logic is creation's—then "creation is Incarnation" is literally true in Maximus.

As I made this somewhat rigidly linear case, I had numerous occasion to garner credibility for my interpretation by showing how it explains many basic anomalies in Maximus's thought. If God, in and as the Word, can make himself hypostatically identical to what he infinitely differs from by nature; and if that basic element of Christo-logic applies to the entire God-world relation—then this resolves the apparent contradiction between the assertion that while uncreated and created natures bear absolutely no common property, created nature proceeds from uncreated nature alone (secs. 2.3-6). This is precisely the lesson Eriugena learned from Maximus, however awkwardly he might have applied it. Again, if Maximus really conceives creation as Incarnation, then his famous *tantum-quantum* principle—which claims that in deification we become God to the *same* extent God became human—is not only audacious, but literally true (sec. 3.2). Or take his doctrine of grace. Maximus says that grace is at once a power whose act has no relation to our nature whatever, and yet innate to every created nature. But if that power is the very Word in creatures, the Word who makes himself identical to creatures even as he still bears his divine properties—and so becomes the supra-natural and sole medium between us and divinity—then the apparently nonsensical aporia dissolves (sec. 3.3).

Respondeo

And yet, as I indicated in the Introduction, I suspect that most interpreters of Maximus

shrink from reading him literally not so much from exegetical but from systematic or

even dogmatic worry. So I terminate this study by raising two possible systematic

objections to the exegetical thesis I've defended. Doubtless there linger many more. I'm

surer still that what I say here will not fully meet even the two at hand. Nevertheless, it

seems worthwhile at least to identify these objections, if only to expose their own

unreflective presumptions.

> *1. Your entire procedure has unfolded as if the historical event of the Incarnation were a mere specimen from which one might extract a more universal "logic" and apply willy-nilly any- and everywhere. Doesn't this totally undermine the primacy of Christ? Have you not reduced Jesus to just one case among many others? Haven't you rendered Christ an abstract principle?*

As the argument now stands, I concede. Chapter 1 isolated the three necessary elements

of Christo-logic and Chapters 2 and 3 sought them at creation's beginning and end. My

presentation of Maximus's Christo-logic runs rather like extracting the Pythagorean

theorem from one right triangle: Christ merely illustrates what's true of every other

Incarnation.

But no: I deny that Christ is a formal principle applicable to other instances.

"Christ," we heard Maximus say, doesn't name a genus. But neither does "Christ" name

an "individual."[2] That is a crucial point, especially here. Maximus denies both genus and

individual of Christ because both presume Christ can be adequately conceived according

to the logic of substance or nature (which, it's true, happens to predetermine the very

form of basic predication: "X is Y," where Y names some qualification of the subject *qua*

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[2] *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 204a—here Maximus makes both denials; cf. Chapter 1, sec. 1.3.

instance). If you say "Christ is a genus," then you make the sheer fact of Christ an abstract principle or form. If you say "Christ is an individual," where "individual" denotes a mere instance of some formal principle, then you do the same, oddly enough, but from the bottom-up. The fact of Christ reduces to a mere instance of some repeatable, higher principle.

Perhaps this is why many prefer to make Christ an exception to (rather than the rule of) creation.[3] That, they think, is the best way to protect his primacy. Only as an exception is Christ exceptional. But that very judgment presumes some canon of "exceptionality," doesn't it? It appears to know the conditions that must obtain for Christ to be the exception he is. It presumes, for instance, that what is "exceptional" bears a contrary relation to what is repeatable, as a particular is particular precisely to the extent it is not universal. Thus it seems even to presume some kind of antagonism between particularity and universality, the unrepeatable and the repeatable, the primary and the rest. But when Maximus denies that Christ expresses either genus or individual, he means precisely to deny that *any* formal judgment adequately accounts for "the whole mystery of Christ." Christ is no form or nature or essence, neither mere principle nor mere instance. That doesn't mean he isn't at least these: he obviously bears a form (two or three, depending on how you count) and is a particular instance (in first-century

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[3] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory: Volume II: Truth of God*, transl. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004 [1985]), 312, after asserting the uniqueness of the Christ event, continues: "Christology is not concerned with the general relationship between God and the creature distinguished by their immeasurable distance from each other"; and Cyril O'Regan, "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval: Post-Chalcedonian Symphonic Theology," *Gregorianum* 77.2 (1996): 240-1, simply asserts that the hypostatic union cannot apply to creatures because they are "constitutionally unable to replicate the hypostatic union," so that "the difference between the human and the divine remains absolute." The latter point is moot, since, of course, even in the historical Incarnation the difference between the human and the divine remains absolute—indeed hypostatic union generates this very difference, I observed (sec. 1.4). Why exactly, then, being created (a quality of *nature*) makes it "constitutionally" impossible to be uncreated too—to be God—remains far from clear, and actually seems beside the point according to Maximian Christo-logic.

Palestine). But his "is" entails more. It entails *him*, his hypostasis. Therefore Christ is neither mere individual nor mere genus because the genus-individual relation is purely formal, and Christ is more than either of his forms or natures. If, then, you assert that the mystery of Christ *must be* unrepeatable in order to be exceptional, that just means "exceptional" here still means particular. But particularity is a formal relation and thus not the final or even the main criterion of Christ's exceptionality. Rather Christ is exceptional precisely because he can *be* both universal and particular in his own person. That really shouldn't surprise. If his "composed hypostasis" is the identity "to a supreme degree" of the greatest imaginable "extremes"—of created and uncreated natures—then it's not so remarkable that Christ is also the very identity of all merely created particularity and universality. He therefore does not need to be unrepeatable to be exceptional, and indeed his very exceptionality lies the fact that the very mystery he *is* is repeatable in a non-formal way in all creation.

Hence a fascinating possibility, one I only intimated in this study (cf. secs. 1.7 and 2.2): that Christ's conception in Mary is the very event of the world's creation from nothing. Maximus says that the historical Incarnation is not just creation's telos or purpose, but its very "ground" or metaphysical principle (ἀρχή).[4] This raises the difficult question of how God's creative act relates to time itself. That, of course, I must postpone for a future study of the relevant passages in Maximus.[5] But I note here that it does not appear any more problematic to conceive the world's metaphysical beginning (i.e. the

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[4] *QThal* 60.3-4.
[5] I have planned a chapter to succeed what is here Chapter 3, which I might tentatively call, "Jesus Christ: the Beginning, Middle, and End of the Ages." Among the most relevant texts in Maximus's corpus are *Amb* 42 (on Christ's four "births" and their relations) and *QThal* 61 (on Adam's introduction of "another birth" into human nature). Both texts struggle to articulate the relationship between God's providence and judgment of the world—major Origenist themes—and indeed to subsume them into the historical Incarnation itself.

event through which all events unfold) as grounded in Christ's conception than it does to conceive it, say, in the nano-second the astrophysicist's "singularity" was supposedly disrupted to ignite a Big Bang. In both cases the issue remains exactly how the infinite can produce the finite, the eternal the temporal. Yet only in the former instance, in Mary's womb, are we dogmatically obligated to affirm precisely their hypostatic oneness. God's creative activity is not bound to produce the world's temporality from its temporal beginning. It's at least worth considering whether it comes in and as Christ himself, in whom "all the ages and the beings existing within those ages received their beginning and end."[6] And, in fact, Catholics already confess strange things about time's relation to the historical Incarnation. Anywhere and everywhere the Mass is celebrated the first-century, Jewish Body of our Lord appears for our consumption. Thus we participate here and now in the same sacrifice, the same historical event that transpired two-thousand years ago. Or recall Mary's Immaculate Conception. It is an effect of a cause that wouldn't take place for 46-49 years *after* it, namely by "the merits of Jesus Christ" won on the cross.[7] If the *ordo salutis* wrought by the Incarnation need not respect chronological strictures, I cannot see why the *ordo entis* must. Surely both are the work of the Trinity.

If, therefore, the principle of *creatio ex nihilo* is manifest and actualized in the very event of the historical Incarnation, then Christ would prove so primary that the truth of his mystery would occur both particularly and universally—indeed, he would be the fundamental, concrete identity of every formal principle and every possible instance. A more exceptional reality is difficult to conceive.

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[6] *QThal* 60.4, CCSG 22, 75-77: "Διὰ γὰρ τὸν Χριστόν, ἤγουν τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστήριον, πάντες οἱ αἰῶνες καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς αἰῶσιν ἐν Χριστῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τὸ τέλος εἰλήφασιν."
[7] Pope Piux IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854): DS 2803, quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §491.

2. Doesn't your position fundamentally contradict the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed? "Begotten, not made," it says, and yet you say that the Word is identical to what is made and is thus made. Is your identity thesis just muddled thinking? Or is it a species of idolatrous pantheism? Or is it a furtively Platonic or Origenist theopanism, neither of which can abide the perdurance of creation's integrity in the eschaton? Whichever, don't you, like all these, finally elide the very ontological gap the Christian doctrine of creation (rooted in Nicaea) must maintain at all costs?

No. I rather take my thesis to be the basic, straightforward sense of the Creed. The same "Unbegotten Son of God" who was "begotten, not made" also "was made man" (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα/*homo factus est*). If to be human is to be made, and if Christ was human, then Christ was obviously made.

The Word of God is both unmade and made. Being made or not are essential predicates. That is, "created" and "uncreated" qualify natures.[8] They're predicated of hypostases only to the extent that hypostases are really identical to the natures of which "created" and "uncreated" are predicated. And so the Word, the second person of the Trinity, "*made* himself man."[9] It's clear that he is himself both subject and object, agent and recipient. If someone wished to "clarify" this statement by adding, say, a *secundum humanitatem*, that would be correct. But it would not be the whole truth of Christ. The whole Christ is the hypostasis that is both created and uncreated natures in a way no essential predicate can capture, since, of course, Christ's hypostasis is the concrete identity of both natures. And if he is the "is" of both natures, then whatever logic forbids one nature's abstract predicate from being properly predicated of the other nature cannot really and finally forbid this of Christ. It can indeed properly forbid it—but that's of little consequence since Christ names a fact that exceeds what's naturally proper.

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[8] *Amb* 41.2.

[9] *Amb* 42.11: "τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἀνθρώπινον ἐδημιούργησεν, ἢ ἑαυτὸν ἀτρέπτως κατὰ πρόσληψιν σαρκὸς νοερῶς τε καὶ λογικῶς ἐψυχωμένης, δι' ἡμᾶς ἑκουσίως, ὡς παντοδύναμος, **δημιουργήσας ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον**."

Maximus's Christo-logic—and arguably Chalcedon's—actually requires what we might call "properly improper predication." In John 20.17, for example, Christ speaks of "your God and my God, your Father and my Father." Maximus knows that "when I contemplate the difference of the natures, and mentally conceptualize their distinction [τὴν αὐτῶν κατ' ἐπίνοιαν ποιοῦμαι διάκρισιν]," Christ says these things improperly according to nature.[10] For "the Father is neither the God of the Word nor the Father of the flesh." And yet the "whole" hypostasis of the Word is both God and flesh. The fact of Christ demands a "reversal" or "inversion" "'with respect to what may be properly said' [κυρίως] and what may 'not properly be said' [οὐ κυρίως]."[11] Abstract natures admit of what's generally "proper" to predicate in a given case. But, Maximus affirms, it's the "unconfused reality" (τὴν ἀσύγχυτον ὕπαρξιν) of the created and uncreated natures—which the whole Christ is—that makes it proper to predicate improperly[12]; to say of one and the same reality, for instance, that it is both mortal and immortal, passible and impassible, created and uncreated. In principle the first predicate cannot be predicated of what the second is predicated of. But Christ's truth is no mere principle—not even the principle of his Godhead. It's not muddled thinking, then, to say that in Christ "God created himself" any more than it's muddled to say "God died." In fact, if all we said was "God created himself *according to his human nature*," and said nothing much more, then we'd fall rather swiftly into muddled thinking of another sort. There is no such *thing*, after all, as an "according to human nature." There is only the one God-man Jesus Christ.

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[10] *Amb* 27.3.
[11] *Amb* 27.3. The inner quotations come from Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or* 30.8, where Gregory discusses John 20.17.
[12] *Amb* 27.4.

So then, the only way it's either idolatrous pantheism or Origenist theopanism to affirm the literal truth of "God is the world" is if it's already assumed that creation is not Incarnation. For if creation is Incarnation—if, that is, creation's logic is Christ's—then what is naturally improper to predicate of the world says as little of the world's whole truth as the fact that corpses do not rise from the dead tells us the truth of Christ's resurrected flesh. In other words, overly quick and unreflective labels like "pantheist" or "theopanist" are just so many ways to assume that creation could never be Incarnation. But assumption is not argument, of course.

As for the supposed ontological "gap" wrought by fourth-century Nicene theology, much of what I've said should suffice. I add this: too many have concluded from the great labor Nicene theologians undertook first to make an absolute distinction between created and uncreated natures, and then to push the Son on the latter side of the divide, that Christianity's profoundest genius was exactly to recognize this absolute natural difference between God and the world.[13] This story misses the fairly evident reverse implication of firmly fixing the Son on the side of the uncreated: that same Son, very God, is also a *creature*. No truly Chalcedonian Christo-logic can fail to notice that the more you make Christ's two natures differ, the more you must simultaneously admit the utterly new way God was identical to "being created." Making the Son very God also makes very God a creature. Total symmetry in natural principle, utter identity in concrete

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[13] So Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1982), 18, 33, *passim*; and Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 286-8. I don't claim that individual Nicene theologians clearly emphasized this reverse implication of making the Son very God. Indeed, in the face of Eunomius's theology, it's likely they didn't, or at least didn't emphasize it too much. But I leave that for others to decide (especially about Gregory of Nyssa). Rather my claim is that someone like Maximus, who did his thinking on the far side of Nicaea, Chalcedon, and the highly developed Neochalcedonianism he himself perfected, could not avoid perceiving this, especially under Cyril of Alexandria's great weight. My point is also that this perception is systematically right.

fact, modal and actual perichoresis in final condition—anything less is, by the canons of Christo-logic I've detailed in this study, one-sided to the point of distorting the truth of the matter. By my lights, Christianity's genius is rather that it conceives the most absolute natural difference between God and the world only *through* their ineffable and hypostatic identity, such that neither created nor uncreated nature need forfeit anything of its own modal or essential integrity in the final union of all things, when "God is all in all" (1 Cor 15.28). That is what Maximus finally teaches us: that God, precisely in order to "save" or "preserve" even the most apparently incidental attribute of every last created being, must really *be* all things.

"What is not assumed is not saved." That principle does not apply simply to my abstract "nature." It applies to *me*. How could I be saved unless he were I? To create at all, from beginning to end, God must become me, you, everyone and everything, the entire world and all its denizens—"always and in all things."

An Analytic Appendix

Near the start of Maximus's *Dispute with Pyrrhus*, once Patriarch of Constantinople and monenergist-monothelite proponent, Maximus inveighs against conceptual obscurity in christology. His recommendation is fairly intuitive: define your terms.

> To state something and not first to distinguish the different meanings of what is being said invites confusion, and ensures that what is under investigation remains obscure, which is foreign to a man of learning.[1]

Maximus counseled his own habit. A number of his *epistola* and *opuscula* are mere lists of definitions: "Various definitions" (*Opusc* 14/*Add*. 21), "Definitions of Distinction" (*Opusc* 17), "Definitions of Union" (*Opusc* 18), "Definitions of the Will" (*Opusc* 26b/*Add*. 24), "Definitions of Activity" (*Opusc* 27/*Add*. 25), "On Quality, Property, and Difference, to Theodore, Priest in Mazara" (*Opusc* 21)—and so forth. Often too Maximus inserts analytic definitions of crucial concepts in the course of extended dogmatic and polemical argumentation.[2] So important were precise definitions for grasping Maximus's thought that either he himself or some astute reader attached logical compendia to his corpus, short chapters on the ὅροι of Aristotelian categories and Porphyry's *quinque voces*—sometimes even outfitted with diagrams mapping the subtle relations among them.[3]

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[1] *Pyr.* 11.

[2] At *Ep* 12; PG 91, 484a, for instance, Maximus offers a formal definition of "relational union" (σχετική ἕνωσις) as part of his polemical interpretation of Cyril's "one nature of the Word Incarnate"— namely, that *this* sort of union is what Cyril meant to forfend; cf. too *Ep* 15; PG 91, 561a, where appear definitions of "difference" (διαφορά) and "identity" (ταυτότης) concluding a dense section on Christ's assumption of noetic flesh.

[3] Mossman Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974): 61-76; idem, "A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logical Terminology," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantanistik* 29 (1980): 71-98. Roueché doubts that even the two manuscripts explicitly attributed to Maximus are original to him, but still thinks it likely that these "were found among his papers after his death" (Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts," 63). Tollefsen rightly thinks it also likely that later editors "considered these logical texts a useful tool in understanding [Maximus]" (Tollefsen, *Christocentric* 15).

And so I furnish here a restricted list of significant terms, ones which my argument takes up again and again. The list derives mainly from Maximus's own *Opusc* 14, though I supplement it with a few other significant terms. It serves two purposes. First, it's a reference guide the reader may find useful at various points throughout the argument. Chapters 1 and 2 especially rely on Maximus's technical use of these terms, and so it seems helpful to be able to repair back to this list when things get dicey. Second, this list constitutes something like a general (not exhaustive) optics of Maximian metaphysics. Here you see the fundamental principles isolated and related in the form of an esquisse. This courts the liability, true, of extracting the principles from their native soil where they flourish organically (in christology proper, for instance). And yet doing so, I hope, also trains the reader's eye to detect these principles when she comes upon them in their natural habitat—in the thick, often vexing density of christological and trinitarian metaphysics. Bones and flesh *together* make a living being. Here lie the bones; we saw them live earlier.

Essence (οὐσία) or **nature** (φύσις). "The same thing."[4] Always in Maximus correlated to the "common" (κοινόν) and "universal" (καθόλου).[5] These disclose "what" something is, rather than simply "that" or "how" or "who" it is. A specific "nature" or species is a genus (τὸ γενικόν) with differentiae (e.g. man or angel), and this specification has its own principle (*logos*) that makes it *what* it is and no other.[6] In this Aristotelian and Porphyrian

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[4] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 149b.
[5] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 149b; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 545a, 548d; *Ep* 12, PG 91, 447a; *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 197cd; *passim*.
[6] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 528ab.

sense, an "essence" or "nature" is also a "form" (εἶδος).[7] Though these are always *in themselves* "universal" or "common" or a "form"—which therefore must be known in several individuals[8]—Maximus does know "proper" or "individual" or even "particular" natures.[9] But a nature is not particularized or individualized *in itself*. It must be so determined by another, positive, metaphysical principle—that of hypostasis.

Hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) or **person** (πρόσωπον). "The same thing."[10] Always in Maximus correlated to the "particular" (μερικόν) and "proper"—or better, the "idiomatic" (ἴδιον)[11]—though not simply *reducible* to particularity or an individual assemblage of properties.[12] These disclose first "that," then "how," and most fundamentally (for rational beings) "who" one is.[13] A hypostasis is therefore the concrete existent, the existential *fact* of *this or that* single being; it bears no formal or essential content as such.[14] Unlike nature, hypostasis "exists in itself."[15] In the singularity of hypostasis both particularity and concrete existence are a single fact. But the *fact* of a singular is not yet its *principle* (cf. "logoi" below). Hypostasis is not the *principle* of individuation, but the thing

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[7] *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 249a; *Opusc* 23, PG 91, 264b; *Opusc* 26, PG 91, 264b; *Pyr* 166-7; *Amb* 7.42.
[8] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 149b: "in no degree ever defined by one sole person [μήποτε καθοτιοῦν ἑνὶ προσώπῳ περιοριζόμενα]."
[9] Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 104-5.
[10] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152a; cf. the wealth of citations in Jean-Claude Larchet, "Hypostase, personne, et individu selon saint Maxime le Confesseur," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 109.1-2 (2014): 36-41.
[11] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152a; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 454a.
[12] *Amb* 17.5-6.
[13] *Opusc* 10, PG 91, 137a: "For each of us acts principally as *what* we are rather than as *who*—that is, [we act] as man. And as *someone*, say Paul or Peter, each gives expression to the mode of the activity [Ὡς γάρ τι ὢν προηγουμένως, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὥς τις ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐνεργεῖ· τουτέστιν, ὡς ἄνθρωπος· ὡς δὲ τις, οἷον Παῦλος ἢ Πέτρος, τὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας σχηματίζει τρόπον]...."
[14] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152a; *Opusc* 26, PG 91, 264a.
[15] *Opusc* 26; PG 91, 264a; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 557d: "For a hypostasis is what subsists distinctively in itself [Τὸ γὰρ καθ᾽ αὐτὸ διωρισμένως συνεστώς ἐστιν ὑπόστασις]."

individuated. A hypostasis stands "before" or "under,"[16] as it were, any *sign* of its distinctive existence; indeed it just *is* this or that distinctive existence. Maximus presses this point with special vigor in christology, where predicating number of Christ (e.g. "two natures," "one person") reveals nothing about the thing numbered except that there's something there to be numbered. The referent already *is* by some prior principle— however and whatever it is—before it's recognized: especially so for an *singular* existent, which is first *there*, then numbered.[17] In sum, "hypostasis" *as such* bears at least five distinctive features:

[1] It is always associated with the *particular*, proper, and idiomatic (as opposed to the common, universal, and generic).

[2] It provides no formal, essential, or natural content; its content is *not predicable*.[18]

[3] It is nevertheless a *positive* ontological and existential reality; it *determines* "to be" (τὸ εἶναι) and "nature/essence" as their irreducible, most *singular* determination.[19] This determination itself betrays two properties:

[3.1] "Hypostasis" *unifies* realities that differ essentially. In this sense it's considered the concrete "whole," a determinate unity of essentially distinct realities.[20]

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[16] So *Ep* 12, PG 91, 477a, where "hypostasis" (the topic at hand here) stands synonymous to "underlying subject": "So too every quantitative number of things differing, according to the *logos* of 'how to be' or of 'how to subsist' [κατὰ τὸν τοῦ πῶς εἶναι, ἢ τὸν τοῦ πῶς ὑφεστάναι λόγον], is [a number] that indicates the difference of the underlying subjects [τῶν ὑποκειμένων] and does not introduce relation." As I indicate in Chapter 1, Maximus also *distinguishes* "hypostasis" (esp. Christ's) from the Aristotelian "underlying subject": "hypostasis" *replaces* the latter in Maximian metaphysics (cf. *Amb* 17.5).

[17] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 513b: Number does not make an individual; number merely "names" what comes only by "divine wisdom and power"—distinct, idiomatic entities.

[18] *Ep* 12, PG 91, 489d: "the particular [of Christ's composed hypostasis] imparts nothing whatever to the generic [τοῦ δὲ ἰδίου τὸ σύνολον λόγου τῷ γενικῷ μεταδιδοῦνος οὐδέν]"; cf. *Amb* 17.4-5.

[19] This point emerges most plainly in christology, where the flesh of Christ receives both its concrete existence *and* particular way of being from the Son's very hypostasis (*Ep* 12, PG 91, 468a; cf. Ch. 1.3); but cf. too the more general pronouncement at *Amb* 10.91: "I will not address the fact that the very being of beings itself [αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι τῶν ὄντων] does not exist simply or without qualities, but in a particular way [or: "has a *how* 'to be'"], which constitutes its first form of delimitation." Recall, in relation to this latter passage, that the "how" or mode of being ultimately derives from the hypostasis and its proper principle (cf. "mode" below).

[20] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 151a-b; *Opusc* 18, PG 91, 216a; *passim*.

[3.2] "Hypostasis" *distinguishes* an individual *in concreto* from every other. So   arises a typical definition of hypostasis, "an essence with idioms."[21] So it is, too,   that the "hypostatic principle" (not strictly the hypostasis itself) is the deepest   ground of absolute "difference."[22]

[4] It is the basic existential *fact*, but is not itself the principle of singular (or specific) facts. It *has* an eternal principle that makes it such.[23]

[5] It never exists separate from an essence or nature, so that although it does not itself possess predicable or formal content (2), it is *not actual* except through and "in" some nature (see "in-natured" below); for nature bears the *powers* for actuality (e.g. Paul exists only as man, and as man he is actual only through the powers proper to his human nature—will, reason, sensation, etc.).

__Together__, "nature/essence" and "hypostasis/person" constitute the two most fundamental elements in Maximus's metaphysics—from Trinity to Christ to human beings to the cosmos. In no case does an abstract nature or hypostasis as such exist, though each bears a principle as such. Every real thing is a tapestry woven with these two ontological threads. Concisely: though separate in principle, nature/essence and hypostasis/person are everywhere *irreducible* to, *inseparable* from, and *indifferent* with respect to each other. Irreducible, since their respective principles differ completely (nature = common; hypostasis = singular). Inseparable, since neither can exist without the other. Indifferent, since in their real inseparability (i.e. in a concrete unity) neither's principle or consequent mode suffers any diminution whatever. All three features surface here as indicated:

It is plain that a nature could never at any time be without a hypostasis, though nature is not hypostasis: that which is not without hypostasis is not itself contemplated as a hypostasis, since these are not convertible [**irreducible**]. For, on the one hand, the hypostasis *is* in every way also a nature, just like the figure is in

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[21] *Ep* 13, PG 91, 528a-b; *Ep* 15, PG 91, 557d.
[22] *Opusc* 21, PG 91, 249c.
[23] *Opusc* 23, PG 91, 264a: "ὅτι ἡ μὲν φύσις τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον κοινὸν ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις, καὶ τὸν τοῦ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸ εἶναι." Tollefsen rightly observes this distinction goes for both universals and particulars (and, I'd add, for hypostases); cf. Tollefsen, *Christocentric*, 81-92, esp. 92.

every way a body. For a hypostasis cannot be perceived without a nature, just as, again, a figure or color [cannot be perceived] without a body [**inseparable**]. On the other hand, a nature is *not* in every way also a hypostasis. For the nature bears the principle of being common, but the hypostasis has also the principle of being in itself. And the nature bears only the principle of species, but the hypostasis manifests the certain 'someone' too [**indifferent**].[24]

Principle (λόγος) and **Mode** (τρόπος). *General senses*. Both terms carry a broad and

plastic conceptual range. *Logos* can mean an "account"[25] or (as in Plato) "definition,"[26]

"word," "discourse," "reason," "motive," "immanent rationality," "principle."[27] The latter

especially pullulates in Maximus. His famous doctrine that all things are created by and

bear their proper *logoi* quite clearly accents the causal or metaphysical sense.[28] Note even

here, though, the rather loose sense of "principle." There is a "principle" for everything.

Every creature is *what* it is through its essential or natural or formal principle, which is

common to every member of that species. But there is also a principle of every hypostasis

as such.[29] In both cases an alteration of a thing's principle spells its obliteration.[30] A

logos in this sense, then, is what grounds the unbroken identity or integrity of that for

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[24] *Opusc* 23, PG 91, 264ab: "Ὅτι φύσις μὲν οὐκ ἂν εἴη ποτὲ ἀνυπόστατος, οὐ μὴν ἡ φύσις ὑπόστασις· οὐδὲ τὸ μὴ ἀνυπόστατον εἰς ὑπόστασιν θεωρεῖται. Ἐπειδὴ οὐδὲ ἀντιστρέφει. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὑπόστασις, πάντως καὶ φύσις· ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ σχῆμα, πάντως σῶμα. Οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ ὑπόστασιν νοῆσαι ἄνευ φύσεως· οὐ δὲ πάλιν σχῆμα ἢ χρῶμα ἄνευ σώματος· ἡ δὲ φύσις, οὐ πάντως καὶ ὑπόστασις. Ὅτι ἡ μὲν φύσις, τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον κοινὸν ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις, καὶ τὸν τοῦ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸ εἶναι. Ὅτι ἡ μὲν φύσις εἴδους λόγον μόνον ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις καὶ τοῦ τινός ἐστι δηλωτική."
[25] *Ep* 15, PG 91, 549c.
[26] Plato, *Ep* 7, 342b.
[27] Lampe, λόγος, s.v.
[28] *Amb* 7.16; cf. Ch. 2.
[29] *Opusc* 23 (n. 24 above); *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152b (my emphasis): "And hypostatic difference hits upon *a principle* according to which the otherness of the assemblage of properties contemplated in the common essence—[an otherness] that divides one from another by number—*makes* the multitude of individuals [Ὑποστατικὴ δὲ διαφορά, τυγχάνει λόγος, καθ᾽ ὃν ἡ κατὰ τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ἐνθεωρουμένων ἰδιωμάτων τῷ κοινῷ τῆς οὐσίας ἑτερότης, τέμνουσα κατ᾽ ἀριθμὸν ἄλλον ἀπ᾽ ἄλλου, τὴν τῶν ἀτόμων ποιεῖται πληθύν]."
[30] *Amb* 42.29 (natural principle); *Ep* 15, PG 91, 549b (hypostatic invariability).

which it is principle.[31] In this sense too a *logos* is the immanent, logical *structure* that determines what's possible for universal and particular being. Hence it appears in close relation to (or as determinative of) a thing's *power* or even *potency*, that by which an agent first *is* and then *acts*.[32]

Tropos too stretches. It bends flexibly much like the English "way," "manner," or "mode." A thing's *tropos* is the *way* it is, *how* it exists in fact. Yet this "how" does not always refer to a concrete reality or to some dimension of it. Maximus can speak of the "five modes" of contemplation,[33] the "modes" of divine providence and judgment,[34] the "mode" of Christ's union,[35] the "mode of exchange" between His natures (not the same as the "mode of union"), and so on.[36] The latter crystalizes the point well enough: though there is but one "unified mode of the Lord's activities," which itself manifests the hypostatic "mode of union," each of Christ's natures still retain the mode proper to its essential principle.[37] Mode, like principle, receives conceptual determination solely from what it's the mode *of*.

Two important relations. [1] *Logos-tropos*. Here we have an axiomatic pair in Maximus's thought. Its likely provenance is Cappadocian-inspired trinitarian theology.[38] God is one by virtue of His λόγος οὐσίας ("principle of essence"), three by His τρόπος

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[31] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 153b: "Identity is indistinguishability, according to which the *principle* of the thing signified possesses utter singularity, [which is] recognized to differ in no sense [Ταυτότης ἐστὶν ἀπαραλλαξία, καθ' ἣν ὁ τοῦ σημαινομένου λόγος τὸ πάντη κέκτηται μοναδικὸν, μηδενὶ τρόπῳ διαφορᾶς γνωριζόμενον]."

[32] *Amb* 2.5 (of Christ's human agency); *Amb* 7.19 (preexistent *logoi* establish τὰ δυνάμει, which will by divine ordinance come into ἐνεργείᾳ).

[33] *Amb* 10.35-41.

[34] *Amb* 10.20.

[35] *Amb* 5.20; *Ep* 12, PG 91, 492a ("mode of economy");

[36] *Amb* 5.24; *Pyr* 28-31, PG 91, 296c-297a; 192, PG 91, 345d-348a.

[37] *Amb* 5.11 (singular "mode"); 5.17 (plural "modes").

[38] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, 155-166.

ὑπάρξεως.[39] The former, principle, obviously signifies what is common to divinity. The latter, mode, especially to the extent that it connotes *how* divine person comes to be—its characteristic *origin*[40]—indicates the real distinction of hypostases in God.[41] Notice the link to nature (=common, *logos*) and hypostasis (=proper, *tropos*). It therefore comes as no surprise that Maximus perceives this pair too, first manifest in God Himself, permeating all creation. So he insists that a miracle, for instance, does not innovate the natural *principle* of a thing lest that thing desist as *what* it essentially is. No, instead the *mode* corresponding to that nature alters, *how* it persists and acts in concrete existence.[42] Water did not *mutate* into wine, we might say, but the very water began to *behave* identically to wine, to take on a wine-*mode* (i.e. qualities like color and taste). Yet water it remained *in principle*, for God never destroys what He wills to be, and a thing's *logos* is precisely God's will for it.[43] So too in christology: Christ preserves the *principles* proper to each of His natures, though their *modes*, now in hypostatic union with one another, are both natural *and* "supernatural." [44]

[2] *Person-mode.* Though person or hypostasis everywhere corresponds to what Skliris calls "the hypostatical order of particularity,"[45] the order of individual modalities,

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[39] Gregory of Nyssa, *C. Eun.* III.6.14, is a *locus classicus* for this pairing.

[40] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, 161, notes that while Gregory Nyssen and Basil only applied τρόπος ὑπάρξεως to the Son and Spirit—for these persons, unlike the Father, have origin—subsequent theologians linked it to the Father too in a negative way: the "how" of His existence is precisely that, as "the unoriginated originator," He receives no "how" from another.

[41] *Amb* 1.4; cf. *Amb* 10.39 and Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, 164. And yet even here *logos* and *tropos* do not simply follow a rigid equation of *logos*=unity, *tropos*=trinity. Maximus calls the "principle" that constitutes the divine Monad "the principle of essence or of 'to be' [μονάδα μὲν κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας, ἤτοι τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον]," but also names a "principle" for the divine Trinity: "the principle of *how* to exist and subsist [τριάδα δὲ, κατὰ τὸν τοῦ πῶς ὑπάρχειν καὶ ὑφεστάναι λόγον]" (*Myst* 23, PG 91, 700d-701a; my translation).

[42] *Amb* 42.29.

[43] *Amb* 7.24; *Amb* 42.13-16.

[44] This is very much the operative principle in Maximus's rebuttal of monenergism; cf. *Pyr* 192, PG 91, 345d-348a. See esp. Ch. 1.5.

[45] Skliris, "'Hypostasis,' 'Person,' 'Individual,' 'Mode,'" 445.

person and mode are not simply reducible to each other.[46] Especially clear is *Opusculum*

10. Here Maximus criticizes the idea that we should attribute Christ's activity strictly and

directly to His hypostasis:

> For he obscured and in a certain sense destroyed the principle for these things [hypostasis/person vs. essence/nature] by assigning to the person *qua* person the activity that characterizes the nature, rather than [assigning to the person] the 'how' and the 'what sort of mode' of its [i.e. nature's] fulfillment [οὐχὶ τὸν πῶς καὶ ὁποῖον τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν ἐκβάσεως τρόπον], according to which one recognizes the difference between those acting and those being acted upon, possessing these with or against nature. For each of us acts principally as *what* we are rather than as *who*—that is, [we act] as man. And as *someone*, say Paul or Peter, he gives expression to the **mode of the activity** typified by him through impartation, perhaps, or by progress in this way or that according to his dispositive judgment [κατὰ γνώμην]. Hence, on the one hand, we recognize difference among persons in **the way of conduct** [ἐν μὲν τῷ τρόπῳ...κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν], and on the other, [we recognize] invariability in the **logos** of the natural activity. For one is not more or less endowed with activity or reason [ἐνεργὴς ἢ λογικός], but we all have the same logos and its natural activity.[47]

Summary. We can now discern several discrete (though really inseparable)

metaphysical elements of a concrete person.[48] This thumbnail presumes all the features

detailed above.

> [1] a *principle* of person is the immanent cause and ground of
> [2] the concrete *person* (hypostasis), which itself must possess
> [3] a universal *essence*/nature/species bearing its proper principle (hence power),
and
> [4] the person imbues this essence with the *individual determination* she is, which
> [5] instances this universal essence in a *singular mode of activity*, and
> [6] this activity is simultaneously universal (*qua* natural) and individual (*qua*
personal)

Nature and hypostasis, universal and particular, *logos* and *tropos*—these pairs must

converge to establish any existent. And it's not simply that each term of a pair must

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[46] Bathrellos, *Byzantine Christ*, 103.

[47] *Opusc* 10, PG 91, 136d-137a; cf. *QThal*, Introduction, PG 90, 249c (each person fulfills her own singular "mode" of the passions, for they exist only "in us," i.e. in individual agents).

[48] I here deliberately bracket the controversy over whether there are grounds for detecting a modern "personalist" precedent in Maximus's theological anthropology. This list, I repeat, treats only some important metaphysical *principles*, not—and I'm convinced this is where the debate *should* go—the singularity of the concrete human person that *results* from these principles.

couple, like two atoms in a covalent bond; each individual configuration (and indeed the whole cosmos) presupposes a bonding of the bond pairs themselves. It's as if the pairs shared the same "electronegativity" (=divine will and power manifest as each thing's constitutive *logos*) and that this very sameness just *is* the concrete, hypostatic "whole" of every being. The final two terms intimate this interpenetration of metaphysical binaries.

En-hypostasized (τὸ ἐνυπόστατον). This is an essence or nature or species considered *in* the individual hypostasis as that hypostasis's very own essence. In fact, Maximus openly states that essences *only* exist in this way: you never find an abstract nature floating about. And so he employs a couplet many have claimed never surfaces in the Fathers: "The fact that a nature is *not without hypostasis* [τὸ μὴ ἀνυπόστατον] does not make it a hypostasis, but *in-hypostasized* [ἐνυπόστατον]."[49] An en-hypostasized reality is a nature or essence as it exists singularly in an individual, and, though it retains its universality[50] (all individuals that belong to it possess and perform its common properties), it exists in no other way. A concise definition:

> An enhypostasized reality is what is common according essence or form, which really subsists in the individuals under it and is not contemplated in mere thought. Or again, an enhypostasized reality is what, along with another reality that differs according to essence, co-constitues and co-subsists for the composition and

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[49] *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 205a: "τὸ μὴ ἀνυπόστατον, οὐχ ὑπόστασιν εἶναι τὴν φύσιν ποιεῖ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνυπόστατον." For many the alleged absence of the *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* couplet in the Fathers or at Constantinople II discredits the pedigree Barth claimed for the doctrine; so F. LeRon Shults, "A Dubious Christological Formula: From Leontius of Byzantium to Karl Barth," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 431-46. Riches, *Ecce Homo*, 110, though an adherent of the doctrine, still repeats the thesis that this "couplet appears nowhere in the Fathers." That the noun form, *enhypostasia* or *enhypostasis*, never appears poses no real problem here, especially since the adjectives are frequently (as here) *substantive*; that is, they function grammatically as nouns.

[50] So *Opusc* 16, PG 91, 205b: the "enhypostasized reality," since it is a nature *in concreto* ("the en-existenced reality"), in *this* way alone "participates essential and natural existence."

generation of one person and one hypostasis; and it is never recognized by itself.[51]

En-essenced (τὸ ἐνουσίον). Conversely, no hypostasis really exists except as possessing and therefore actualizing itself *in* a nature. This is the "en-natured" or "en-essenced." A hypostasis cannot be the individual instance of some*thing*—a "what" and "how"—unless it is the instance *of* a universal essence. Peter is not at all if he is not *human* by nature, while, to juxtapose the previous term, there is no real "human nature" that is not actually a Peter or Paul or Mary. If a nature manifests itself only in and through its immanent presence in individuals, a person subsists only as the subject that determines and expresses her nature in her proper, unrepeatable way.[52] Another concise definition:

> An en-essenced reality is not only what is contemplated possessing in itself the assemblage of idioms, according to which it is known as something [distinguished] from another—but also what really possesses the common of the essence.[53]

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[51] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 150b-c: "Ἐνυπόστατόν ἐστι, τὸ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν κοινὸν, ἤγουν τὸ εἶδος, τὸ ἐν τοῖς ὑπ᾽ αὐτὸ ἀτόμοις πραγματικῶς ὑφιστάμενον, καὶ οὐκ ἐπινοίᾳ ψιλῇ θεωρούμενον."

[52] *Opusc* 16, PG, 91, 205b: "In this way too, the fact that hypostasis is not without essence does not make it [identical to] an essence, but proves it *en-essenced*, so that it is not identical to a mere property, but rather we know the property with the one [hypostasis that] is properly in it [i.e. in the nature];" *Opusc* 23, PG 91, 261c: "For these [i.e. the "en-hypostasized" and "en-essenced"] do not possess existence *in themselves*, but are always contemplated around the hypostasis." Cf. *Opusc* 16, quoted at n. 47.

[53] *Opusc* 14, PG 91, 152a: "Ἐνούσιόν ἐστι τὸ μὴ μόνον ἐνθεωρούμενου ἔχον ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἄθροισμα, καθ᾽ ὃ ἄλλο ἀπ᾽ ἄλλο γνωρίζεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς οὐσίας πραγματικῶς κεκτημένον."

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