

Love that unites and vanishes: Saint Maximus the Confessor and his defense of papal primacy

Author: Jason C. LaLonde

Persistent link: <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/bc-ir:108614>

This work is posted on [eScholarship@BC](#),
Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2019

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.

Love that Unites and Vanishes:
Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Defense of Papal Primacy

Thesis for the Completion of the
Licentiate in Sacred Theology
Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

Fr. Jason C. LaLonde, S.J.

Readers:
Fr. Brian Dunkle, S.J., BC-STM
Dr. Adrian Walker, Catholic University of America

May 3, 2019

	2
Introduction	3
Chapter One: Maximus's Palestinian Provenance: Overcoming the Myth of the Greek <i>Life</i>	10
Chapter Two: From Monoenergism to Monotheletism: The Role of Honorius	32
Chapter Three: Maximus on Roman Primacy and his Defense of Honorius	48
Conclusion	80
Appendix – Translation of <i>Opusculum 20</i>	85
Bibliography	100

Introduction

The current research project stems from my work in the course “Latin West, Greek East,” taught by Fr. Brian Dunkle, S.J., at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry in the fall semester of 2016. For that course, I translated a letter of Saint Maximus the Confessor (580-662) that is found among his works known collectively as the *Opuscula theologica et polemica*.¹ My immediate interest in the text was Maximus’s treatment of the twin heresies of monoenergism and monotheletism. As I made progress with the translation, however, what most fascinated me was observing Maximus at work as a practitioner of what, using the terminology of Ignatian spirituality, we could call, “saving the proposition of the other.”

Early in his book of *Spiritual Exercises*, Saint Ignatius advises that both those Christians making as well as those directing his Exercises will benefit if they seek to save, rather than to condemn, the statements of fellow Christians.² This counsel of Saint Ignatius owes much to the sixteenth-century historical context in which his Exercises were written. Notably, the saint faced intense harassment by the Inquisition, with the orthodoxy of his methods and teaching often coming under scrutiny.³ I would contend, however, that Ignatius captures a genuine Christian

¹ See Appendix 1.

² The text of this annotation, number 22, reads as follows in the Autograph text: “Para que así el que da los ejercicios espirituales, como el que los recibe, más se ayuden y se aprovechen, se ha de presuponer que todo buen cristiano ha de ser más pronto a salvar la proposición del prójimo que a condenarla; y si no la puede salvar, inquiera cómo la entiende; y, si mal la entiende, corríjale con amor; y si no basta, busque todos los medios convenientes para que, bien entendiéndola, se salve.” [Thus, in order that both the one who gives the Exercises, as well as the one who receives them, may help each other more and be of more benefit to one another, it has to be presupposed that every good Christian ought to be more ready to save the proposition of his neighbor than to condemn it; and if he cannot save it, let him inquire how the other understands it; and, if he [the other] understands it wrongly, let him correct the other with love; and if that does not suffice, let him seek all means fitting so that, understanding the proposition well, he/she/it may be saved. (My translation.)]. The final phrase, “se salve” is ambiguous as it may refer to either the person or the proposition to be saved. Ignatius of Loyola, *Ejercicios espirituales*, ed. Cándido de Dalmases (Santander, Maliaño Cantabria, Spain: Editorial Sal Terrae, 1985), 52.

³ Cf. John O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 27-28. O’Malley recounts that Ignatius spent forty-two days in prison while he was being investigated by the Inquisition on charges that he was a member of the *alumbrados*, a sect that “extolled the seeking of spiritual perfection through internal illumination.”

attitude and a way of proceeding that is timeless through his advice concerning saving the proposition of the other. We witness this attitude, in fact, in the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to John, when Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. In that encounter, the Samaritan woman, in saying that she has no husband, seems to utter a patently false statement. Rather than condemn her statement, however, Jesus interprets her words in such a way that both what is true in her statement and the woman herself may be saved.

Maximus the Confessor likewise exhibits a certain zeal for salvaging whatever is good and true in the statements of other Christians. Hans Urs von Balthasar has illustrated, for example, how Maximus painstakingly retrieved insights from Origen into his own theological synthesis, in spite of the fact that Origen had become a name “that could no longer be mentioned in support of an orthodox idea.”⁴ Maximus critiqued Origenism with severe objectivity, but he also saved what was true and indispensable in the thought of the mighty Alexandrian. As Balthasar notes, Maximus “once again gathered the most personal thoughts of the great spiritual writer and handed them on namelessly to posterity.”⁵ Maximus rendered a similar service to Evagrius of Pontus, a pioneering theologian of monastic asceticism, whose writings were thoroughly colored by Origenism.

The letter which I have translated, *Opusculum* 20, finds Maximus engaged in multiple instances of “saving the proposition of the other.” Maximus’s friend, the priest Marinus, had purportedly written asking Maximus to clarify three texts that were being used at the time to

⁴ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Brian Daley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 127.

⁵ In his Introduction to *Cosmic Liturgy*, Balthasar comments, “So we have here an example, unique in the cultural history of the early Church, of a genuine intellectual dialogue being conducted with an earlier author, despite his condemnation (which had clearly been colored by political motives). This dialogue, conducted, not as a snobbish liberal pose, but out of responsibility to the Church, ended by revealing the opportunity, even the duty, to take hold once again of material that had been lost to the mind through suppression by the state and to make the central results of that dialogue one’s own.” *Ibid.*, 35.

bolster the nascent monothelete position. One of the contested texts was *The First Letter to Sergius* by Pope Honorius I (d. 638), a text which contained the phrase, “we confess one will [ἕν θελημα] of the Lord Jesus Christ, since manifestly our nature was assumed by the Godhead.”⁶ This was a text that would very much live in infamy for proponents of papal primacy. It was eventually anathematized by the Third Council of Constantinople, held 680 to 681. Moreover, rather than fade into the mists of history, the pope’s hapless reply to the patriarch remained a blight on Rome’s doctrinal integrity for centuries, eventually coming to be known as the *Honoriusfrage*. Some parties credited Honorius not only with abetting heresy but even named him as the inadvertent inventor of heretical doctrine.⁷ Centuries later, when the Catholic Church was promoting the doctrine of papal infallibility, Protestant and other critics cited the famous blunder of Honorius as evidence that the bishop of Rome could in no way be considered an infallible arbiter of doctrine; by contrast, proponents of papal infallibility found a ready rejoinder in Maximus’s spirited defense of Pope Honorius in *Opusculum* 20.⁸ This raises the question: why was a monk of the East so eager and adamant in defending the honor and reputation for orthodoxy of the Roman pontiff? Indeed, as Paul Blowers notes, what stands out most in *Opusculum* 20 is, “Maximus’s zeal to exonerate the deceased Pope Honorius.”⁹ Jean-Claude Larchet concurs that Maximus was thoroughly convinced of Honorius’ orthodoxy and made the greatest effort possible to give an orthodox interpretation to Honorius’ text.¹⁰

⁶ Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius*, Greek text with translation by Pauline Allen in *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 196-199.

⁷ Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13.

⁸ Edward Siecienski, “Maximus the Confessor and Ecumenism,” in *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 554.

⁹ Paul Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transformation of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 49.

¹⁰ Jean-Claude Larchet, *Maxime le Confesseur: médiateur entre l’Orient et l’Occident* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 130.

Maximus's defense of Honorius is fascinating for a number of reasons. First, it is one of the very first texts to deal directly with the heresy of monotheletism, and it reveals to us some of the texts that were initially disputed in that controversy. Secondly, as Maximus labors to give a positive interpretation to Honorius's statements concerning the will (or wills) in Christ, we see emerging Maximus's own unique Christological teaching on the absence of *gnomic* will in Christ, a point which is today one of the most commented aspects of Maximus's Christology. Thirdly, the text presents a curiosity that is difficult to resolve. After a length exposition and analysis of Honorius's *First Letter to Sergius*, in which Maximus contends that Honorius in no way denied the existence of a natural and rational human will in Christ, Maximus makes a surprise move, pulling a rabbit out of a hat, as it were. He closes *Opusculum* 20 with the story of a recent diplomatic journey to Rome by his disciple of several decades, a certain Anastasius. Anastasius reports back the contents of his parley with the members of the Honorius's curial staff who took the dictation and prepared the text of the *First Letter to Sergius*. They reveal to Anastasius that Honorius never spoke of "one will of Christ," at least never using a numerical term, but contend rather that the inclusion of the onerous phrase was a mistake of those who translated the letter into the Greek language. It is curious that this defense of Honorius, particularly the story concerning the addition of the heretical line by the translators, seems to have had little historical ramifications, at least during Maximus's lifetime and the decades following his martyrdom. The enigma of the silence regarding this story in the historical and documental record increases our interest this text.

Our primary aim in the chapters that follow will be to evaluate Maximus's relationship to Roman primacy in light of recent scholarship that has re-contextualized Maximus's life and writings and overturned many long-held notions. Of particular importance to our study is a

recognition of Maximus's roots and formation within Palestinian monasticism. As will be seen, Maximus was part of a theological circle which held the Roman see in high esteem and which had developed particularly strong ties to Rome from the time of Gregory the Great. Once we appreciate Maximus as part of this so-called Eukratas party within Palestinian monasticism, we are able to appreciate Maximus's statements in support of Roman primacy—some of the strongest to be found within the writings of the Eastern Fathers—not as the novel ideas of a maverick monk, but as expressions of traditional theological postures. Our contention is that Maximus's support of Roman primacy was part of a catholic imagination and catholic theological sensibility. We argue that Maximus does not support the Church of Rome chiefly because of Rome's excellent track record for orthodoxy, nor out of a motive of gratitude for protection from enemies, nor as part of a political-ecclesial stratagem to counter the power of Constantinople. Scholars Jean-Claude Larchet, Phil Booth, and Marek Jankowiak, among others, have proffered such interpretations.¹¹ We contend, rather, that Maximus's defense of Rome, like his theological habit of "saving the proposition of the other," is simply part of his catholic way of thinking and theologizing. He believes that the Church is built on Peter's profession of faith and also believes the Lord's promise that the Church will not fail (Matt. 16:18-19). At the same time, as the head of the ecclesial hierarchy, Rome does not merely stand alone as guarantor of the orthodox faith, but also relies on the support of the body. In this respect, in his role of ally and defender of the Roman patriarch, Maximus is an exemplar of the so-called Johannine style that Balthasar describes in *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*.¹² Maximus works

¹¹ See Chapter 3 *infra* for these interpretations.

¹² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007).

tirelessly behind the scenes to uphold an ecclesial unity grounded in the true faith.¹³ Finally, contrary to the contention that Maximus’s confidence in the Church of Rome was shaken in the final, difficult moments of his life, we argue, in fact, that Maximus remained always firmly supportive of Rome, offering as much assistance as he was able to offer from his position of exile, so that the pope might be given the resources and support necessary to remain steadfast in his confession of the orthodox faith. Maximus’s loyalty was not to an abstract orthodoxy, but orthodoxy embodied and lived in the hierarchical structure of the Church, which is “the milieu where one attains union with God, the place where deification is effected.”¹⁴

Maximus’s defense of Pope Honorius was part of a theological method that included a willingness “to save the proposition of the other,” rather than to be quick to condemn or to dismiss those suspected of error. Maximus demonstrates that he had sufficient patience to dispute over true theological issues and to make fine terminological distinctions, but he was wary of recriminations arising from those who relished quibbling about distinctions and verbal discrepancies that were not truly meaningful. My hope is that this exploration of Maximus’s attitudes vis-à-vis the papacy and consideration of his theological method may offer inspiration for our own times, in which critics of the Roman Pontiff are often quick to condemn rather than to engage in the practice of “saving the proposition of the other.” Maximus provides us with a model for ecclesial communion, wherein a historical person, the bishop of Rome, looks after the union of the Church, but is supported and defended by prayerful and thoughtful Christians. In

¹³ Balthasar notes that for Maximus contemplation leads to redeemed action in the world through “compassion (συμπαθῶς) toward one’s fellowman, which is no longer bound up in the ties of passion (ἐμπαθῶς). Maximus himself—the challenger, the comforter, the confessor—is the best example of his own teaching”; von Balthasar (2003), 334.

¹⁴ Adam Cooper, *The Body in Saint Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 116.

this model, the Church is a network of relations in which human beings together experience the deifying activity of God.

Chapter One: Maximus’s Palestinian Provenance: Overcoming the Myth of the Greek *Life*

Theologians and historians have tended to extol Maximus as a solitary figure.¹ During a “dangerous and bleak period of history,”² he stands out as a “towering figure in Orthodox tradition,”³ a “maverick monk,”⁴ whose sublime intellect enabled him to carry out an extraordinary synthesis of the best of the patristic tradition (Origen, the Cappadocians, Evagrius of Pontus, Pseudo-Dionysius). Tenacious and indomitable, he took his stand like another Saint Athanasius of Alexandria, “a pillar of iron” (Jer 1:18) *contra mundum*. He is lauded as the one who, while keeping the station of a simple monk, seemingly singlehandedly upheld the integrity of the Catholic faith against attempts at its perversion by powerful emperors and patriarchs.

Yet Maximus was by no means a self-promoter, and to better understand his positions and achievements, we must consider him not as a solitary genius, but within the network of friends and allies who both influenced him and for whom, in his self-effacing manner, he provided pivotal support. A major obstacle to uncovering a truer picture of this network of friends and allies has been the mistaken notion that Maximus was born in Constantinople of an aristocratic family and that he received an elite education at the capital in preparation for civil service. The theologians whose monumental works effected a renaissance in Maximian studies in the 20th century—Polycarp Sherwood, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Walther Völker, Lars

¹ “From time to time (and this was inherent in the structure of the Church’s constellation), a great and solitary saint—like Athanasius, Ambrose, or Maximus Confessor—strengthened the popes in their stand (Julius, even Liberius, Damasus, Martin I.” Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 272.

² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Brian Daley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 29.

³ Paul Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transformation of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2016, 1.

⁴ Von Balthasar (2003), 41.

Thunberg—all accepted the thesis that Maximus was of Constantinopolitan origin.⁵ The unquestioned consensus that Maximus was likely a monk of Constantinople began to change starting in 1973, when Sebastian Brock, a Cambridge scholar and world-renown expert in Syrian studies, published a text and translation of the *Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor*.⁶ Since that time, scholars have painstakingly reconstructed many details of Maximus’s early life and formation, offering a convincing case that Maximus was a native of Palestine and that he likely received some intellectual formation in Alexandria in connection with other Palestinian monks. Nevertheless, the myth of Maximus’s Constantinopolitan origins has remained entrenched, as is evinced by recent works that continue to tout Maximus as a scion of the Byzantine capital.⁷ As Bronwen Neil has pointed out, “the minutiae of Maximus’s provenance and peregrinations,” in the obscure early years of his career, are not of especially great interest to

⁵ The same cannot be said, it seems, of the Russian scholar Sergei Epifanovich (1886–1918). Epifanovich wrote the “first full-scale study of Maximus the Confessor, not only in Russia but in the world,” which was a master’s thesis, completed in 1913, of some 2,400 pages! Grigory Benevich explains that, “[t]he publication of Epifanovich’s thesis was aborted, due to the outbreak of the First World War and high printing costs. However, it is possible that another reason for not proceeding with publication was Epifanovich’s desire to develop his work in the light of new publications and findings, particularly the Syriac *Psogos*, the vitriolic *Life* of Maximus. A Russian translation of this was presented to Epifanovich by Brilliantov, who had a photocopy of *Codex 7192* from the British Museum.” Benevich goes on to add that one of the first scholars to call into question the reliability of the Greek *Life* of Saint Maximus was the church historian Vasily Bolotov (1854-1900) in lectures delivered between 1886-1888. Thus the issues raised here were under discussion in Russia nearly a century before they came to the attention of Western scholars. Cf. Benevich, “Maximus’ Heritage in Russia and Ukraine,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 460-479. Citations from p. 465.

⁶ Sebastian Brock, “An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor,” in *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973): 299-346.

⁷ This is especially true of the works that are accessible to a wider public. For example, in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* in the Popular Patristics Series of St. Vladimir’s Press, Robert Louis Wilken and Paul Blowers aver that Maximus was, “raised in Constantinople.” They swiftly pass over the “controversial Syriac *Life*” in a footnote. Cf. *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 13. Likewise, Luis Joshua Salés, in his introduction to the Popular Patristics volume *Saint Maximus the Confessor: Two Hundred Chapters on Theology* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2015), 15-16: “If his ease of maneuvering in the innermost Byzantine aristocratic and political circles is insufficient to establish the man’s birth into the higher echelons of Byzantine society, his astonishing knowledge of philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, natural sciences, classical literature, and patristic writings can leave precious little room to doubt that from childhood on he enjoyed an incomparably elite education to be had at that time solely within the capitaline walls.” Cf. also Adrew Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 79: “The old monk had been born in the imperial city of a distinguished family. He had been exceptionally educated at the hands of private masters...Entering the imperial civil service during the reign of Heraclius...”

scholars who are primarily concerned with “Maximus’s theology of cosmic transformation.”⁸ For our purposes, however, these minutiae are quite meaningful, as a more precise understanding of Maximus’s provenance and the early stages of his monastic career will help us to see his later defiance of Byzantine emperors and his alliance with the Church of Rome in a quite different light. Thus we will proceed to consider the sources for the biographical details of Maximus’s life and the case for Maximus’s Palestinian provenance.

While extensive documentation exists concerning Maximus’s later travels and various exiles, what we know of his origins and early biography is restricted to what can be gleaned from a limited range of sources. Aside from a very few chance remarks in Maximus’s correspondence, the available biographical materials are three recensions of the *Vita Maximi Confessoris*, commonly referred to as the Greek *Life*; the Syriac *Life* from the pen of George of Resh‘aina, a member of the clergy of Jerusalem; and various *epitomes* related to the Greek *Life*.⁹ The two *Lives* are widely disparate. The Greek *Life* praises Maximus in paeanistic, hagiographical language, whereas the Syriac *Life* curses Maximus for being the progenitor of what it sees as the dyothelete Christological “heresy.” As we have mentioned, until recently scholars have tended to accept the Greek *Life* as canonical, while the Syriac *Life* has often been dismissed as an inaccurate and vitriolic smear. Moreover, the Greek *Life* contains much that complements the image of Maximus as theological genius and noble-hearted martyr, an image that certainly resonated with the writers who effected a retrieval of Maximus’s thought in the twentieth century. As Hans Urs von Balthasar has confided, it was Maximus’s extraordinary life and Christian witness, even more than his profound theological vision, that compelled him to

⁸ Bronwen Neil, “*Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World* by Paul M. Blowers (Review)” in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 25.4 (2017), 657.

⁹ Overview in Pauline Allen, “Life and Times of Maximus the Confessor,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 4-18.

produce a study of the monk.¹⁰ The contention of the Greek *Life* that Maximus descended from noble stock seems to have resonated with writers like Balthasar and Thunberg,¹¹ as the Greek *Life* paints a certain congruence between the monk's birth from a noble family and the noble unfolding of his life in martyrdom. Even more than his birth, however, the emphasis of the Greek biographical tradition on Maximus's elite education has convinced many scholars. On this point, Thunberg argues that "all readers of Maximus will testify to the accuracy of his biographer, since the writings of the Saint show that his rhetorical and philosophical education must have been at the very highest levels of the time."¹² Jean-Claude Larchet—one of the chief defenders of the Greek *Life* and detractors of the Syriac—takes this notion even further. Citing the philosophical sophistication of Maximus's thought and his familiarity with various Neo-Platonic thinkers and with Aristotle, Larchet deduces that Maximus enjoyed the benefit of "university studies" in the capital.¹³ Given Larchet's stature among Maximian scholars, it is not surprising that his defense

¹⁰ "...[T]he course of this saint's life impressed me even more than his teaching. Once again, like Athanasius, one man was able to defend orthodox Christology against a whole empire. A Byzantine joins forces with Pope St. Martin I in Rome and finally suffers martyrdom for the true faith. This is the summit of that unity of doctrine and life which marks the whole patristic age; speculation and mysticism of the greatest subtlety are wedded to a soberly and consciously grasped martyrdom. In St. Maximus we can see in the *Catholica* what Kierkegaard found within the individual." Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Our Task: A Report and a Plan*, trans. by John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994) 43.

¹¹ Thunberg, citing the recension found in PG 90, 69A, notes that, "Maximus was of noble descent and enjoyed a devout home life." Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995): 1. Balthasar notes the same points in *Cosmic Liturgy*, 74. Although Balthasar, in his writings, emphasizes spiritual nobility over hereditary nobility, he nevertheless exhibits an ongoing fascination with the notion of nobility (he himself being descended of a noble family). For example, after an extended meditation on the "ethos of representation" as noble and "the ethos of self-fulfillment" as bourgeois in his early book of aphorisms, Balthasar comments, "The social categories here provide only a metaphor, but admittedly a very eloquent metaphor." *The Grain of Wheat: Aphorisms*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

¹² Thunberg, *ibid.*

¹³ "L'aisance de Maxime dans l'abstraction, son sens de la dialectique, l'agilité et la rigueur de son raisonnement, la précision de sa pensée, sa dextérité dans le maniement de concepts recherchés et subtils, sa capacité d'en adapter le sens à ses conceptions sont des signes auxquels se reconnaît une formation intellectuelle de haut niveau, de même que sa connaissance des néo-platoniciens et d'Aristote inclinent à penser qu'il a fait des études universitaires." Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996), 10.

of the Greek *Life* has been influential.¹⁴ We note, for example, the contention of Luis Joshua Salés, which echoes and amplifies Larchet. He opines that “[t]he breadth of [Maximus’s] knowledge possibly even indicates the famed educational curriculum of the University of Constantinople or direct and private tutoring by one of its renowned faculty.”¹⁵

The Greek *Life* fills out its portrait of the young Maximus as a *senex puer* having him enter the imperial service for a short stint as an archival secretary under the emperor Heraclius. Dissatisfied, however, with the life of the world and longing for the philosophical and hesychastic life of the monk,¹⁶ he enters the monastery *Philippikou* at Chrysopolis, across the Bosphorus Strait from Constantinople.¹⁷ Notably, according to the Greek *Life*, it is also partly fear of the nascent heresy of monotheletism that drives Maximus from civil service into the monastery.

If the Greek *Life*’s touting of Maximus’s noble hereditary background and elite Constantinopolitan education may have spoken to certain biases of modern scholars, there are additional reasons why some scholars have been reluctant to accept the counter-tradition proposed by the Syriac *Life*. Pauline Allen notes that the Syriac *Life* “has tended to polarize scholars, meeting with both negativity and unqualified acceptance.”¹⁸ The text itself, which is incomplete, exists within a section of a single manuscript held in the British museum.¹⁹ The

¹⁴ “Jean-Claude Larchet, grand connaisseur de saint Maxime, a formulé un bon nombre de réserves à propos de la Vie syriaque.” Peter Van Deun, “Développements récents des recherches sur Maxime le Confesseur (1998–2009),” *Sacris Erudiri* 48 (2009): 105.

¹⁵ Salés, 16. Alluding to Maximus’s supposed aristocratic background, Salés adds that, “any of these [educational] options was for those alone whose financial roots ranged far through and deep under the venerable city mausoleums.” *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Blowers (2016), 27.

¹⁷ Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350-850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 188.

¹⁸ Allen (2015), 13.

¹⁹ Brock, 300.

author, one George of Resh‘aina,²⁰ is clearly a theological opponent of dyotheletism. His tract is subtitled, “the history concerning the wicked Maximus of Palestine who blasphemed against his creator, and whose tongue was cut out.”²¹ He faults Maximus primarily for spreading the doctrine which acknowledges in Christ, “two wills and two energies and two minds, acknowledging everything to do with Christ to be double, apart from the matter of the persons only.”²² George claims to have learned the details about Maximus’s parentage and upbringing from a priest named Eulogios, who had learned them from another priest, Martyrios. According to the *Life*, this Martyrios cared for the boy Maximus after the death of his parents. These details are undoubtedly the most salacious and questionable of the entire document. It is claimed, for example, that Maximus is the spawn of an adulterous affair between a Samaritan linen maker and a Persian slave girl. Maximus’s father is said to have died of edema when Maximus was nine, and his mother to have died a year afterward, falling to her death from a pomegranate tree.²³ Moreover, his sister is said to have died as a child after having fallen into the grate of a hearth.

Despite the clear anti-Maximian cast of the Syriac *Life*, it would be a mistake to reject it *in toto* as a fantastical invention. After all, for a smear to be effective, it cannot be a complete forgery, especially given the fact that George was writing for an audience likely familiar with Maximus and the basic contours of his life.²⁴ Save the unflattering portrait of Maximus’s birth

²⁰ His name, in fact, appears as both GRYGWRY and as GYWRGY (Gregorios/Georgias) in the two instances where he names himself in the text. Brock chalks this up to a corruption of the spelling and posits that George/Gregory is the same person. Brock, 332.

²¹ Brock, §1, 314. In another interesting twist, the words “wicked” and “blasphemed” have been crossed out in the manuscript by a later hand. Brock speculates that this must have taken place, “at a time when Maronites were keen to rebuff charges that they were monotheletes.” Brock, 301.

²² Brock, § 9, 316.

²³ Brock, §3, 315. For an image of pomegranate trees potentially dangerous to climb, see: <https://middleeastmoments.wordpress.com/2013/10/29/the-pomegranate-tree/> (Accessed February 27, 2019).

²⁴ “...un text polémique où rien ne serait vraie de ce qu’on dit sur la personne visée manquerait son but.” Bernard Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l’histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle*, Volume 2, (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1992), 52.

out of wedlock and the occasional mocking of Maximus with derogatory names, the overall tone of the narrative is straightforward. As Brock has noted, the “narrative is on the whole remarkably matter-of-fact, having none of the usual characteristics of Lives of arch-heretics.”²⁵ It would be an odd polemical move, to say the least, for the author of the *Life* to displace Maximus’s childhood and early life from Constantinople to Palestine out of a motive of sheer disdain. Rather, there seems to be no good reason not to take George of Resh‘aina at his word. Moreover, closer investigation has revealed numerous ways in which the Syriac *Life* possesses a much stronger claim to historical reliability than the Greek *Life*.

The first point in the Syriac *Life*’s favor is that it is a much older document. Some scholars have attempted to show that the three recensions of the Greek *Life* depend upon “an *Urpassio*, or archetype,” that was composed shortly after Maximus’s martyrdom.²⁶ However, it is now generally conceded the Greek *Life* was written much at a much later date, “the earliest not sooner than the tenth century.”²⁷ This *terminus post quem* was established by the German scholar Wolfgang Lackner, who demonstrated that the details of Maximus’s birth and childhood in the Greek *Life* were in fact borrowed from a *Life* of Theodore the Studite (759-826).²⁸ Marie-France Auzépy has shown that hagiographers undertook similar attempts with Saints John Damascene, Stephen Mar Saba (the Damascene’s nephew), and Cosmas the Hymnographer, to claim these men as denizens of the capital.²⁹ Relocating these saints to Constantinopolitan terrain appears to have been a rearguard action designed to stress and re-establish the orthodoxy of New

²⁵ Brock, 300.

²⁶ Allen (2015), 11.

²⁷ Blowers (2016), 26.

²⁸ Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 145. Cf. Wolfgang Lackner, “Zu Quellen und Datierung der Maximosvita (BHG 1234),” in *Analecta Bollandiana* 85 (1967): 285-316.

²⁹ Marie-France Auzépy, “De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIII^e-IX^e siècles): Etienne le Saba’ite et Jean Damascène,” *Travaux et Mémoires* 12 (1994): 183-218.

Rome, its patriarchate, and its emperor following the embarrassing endorsement of positions that were later condemned by ecumenical councils (Nestorianism, monoenergism, monotheletism, iconoclasm). Thus the author(s) behind the Greek *Life* (and various *passions* and *epitomes*) of Saint Maximus were probably medieval Byzantines seeking to portray a continuous tradition of orthodoxy within the capital city. British scholar Phil Booth finds it quite clear, therefore, that “the account of Maximus’s origins contained within the Greek *Life* is a fabrication, a medieval attempt to sanitize a controversial figure who would in fact prove a persistent thorn in the Constantinopolitan side.”³⁰

By contrast, the Syriac *Life* can be reliably dated to the late seventh century. No argument has been brought forth to disprove the claim to authorship of the Syriac *Life* by George of Resh‘aina nor his claim to have been a firsthand witness to several of the events described therein. Thus the opinion of Brock remains sound. He writes,

...much depends on whether or not one accepts the writer’s claim to be a contemporary of Maximus. If one accepts this—and to me there seems to be no valid reason why one should reject it—then the Syriac *Life* will be a source of great importance for events of Maximus’ life and times, for it will have been composed within a couple of decades, at the most, after his death.³¹

Recent scholarship concurs with this judgment. Marek Jankowiak notes, for example, that the Syriac *Life* is, “assuredly a biased source, but one drafted by a figure contemporary [with Maximus], who knew his (anti-)hero directly.”³² Furthermore, the single manuscript which

³⁰ Booth (2014), 148.

³¹ Brock, 346.

³² “...un personnage contemporain qui connaissait directement son (anti-)héros...” Marek Jankowiak, “Essai d’histoire politique du monothélisme à partir de la correspondance entre les empereurs byzantins, les patriarches de Constantinople et les papes de Rome” (PhD diss., École pratique des hautes études, Paris, 2009) 102, fn. 336.

contains the Syriac *Life* has also been reliably dated, based in part on its other contents, to either the late seventh or the eighth century.³³

Certainly the antiquity of the Syriac *Life* speaks powerfully in its favor. Nevertheless, we now have even more reason to trust the historical reliability of this alternative tradition, thanks to the careful study which has been undertaken, using primarily the data of Maximus's *Letters*, to corroborate the claims of the Syriac *Life* on many key points. To my mind, the work of French scholar Christian Boudignon, who prepared the critical edition of Maximus's *Mystagogy*, is fully convincing with respect to this question.³⁴ His careful work to clarify Maximus's place within a sixth- and seventh-century Palestinian-Alexandrian intelligentsia has since been confirmed and expanded upon by Phil Booth in *Crisis of Empire* and Marek Jankowiak in a recent doctoral dissertation. Without delving into all of the intricacies of the *Letters* explored by Boudignon, we will summarize some key points of these findings, which allow us to situate Maximus's monastic career in its proper context. Specifically, we will consider how this recent research clarifies the questions of Maximus's education, his supposed nobility, and his role within an intelligentsia with roots in Palestinian monasticism.

According to the Syriac *Life*, Maximus was born in the village of Hesfin in the Golan and, as a young boy, was taken by the priest Martyrios to the Palaia Lavra monastery, where he came under the tutelage of the monk Pantoleon.³⁵ George informs his reader that Pantoleon was a "wicked Origenist," and that he "filled this disciple of his, Maximus, with the entire bitterness of his evil teaching."³⁶ While these lines are particularly polemical, and therefore likely to raise

³³ Christian Boudignon, "Maxime le Confesseur: Était-il constantinopolitain?" in *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek Patristic and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret*, eds. B. Janssens, B. Rosen, and P. Van Deun (Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 12.

³⁴ *Maximi Confessoris Mystagogia una cum latine interpretation*, CCSG 69 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

³⁵ Brock, §1 and 4, 314-315.

³⁶ Brock, § 6 and 7, 315.

suspicious of their veracity, it is known, nevertheless, that interest in Origenism was particularly strong in Palestine. In fact, during the reign of Emperor Justinian I (527-567) Palestinian bishops had made appeal to the Bishop of Rome through the pope's *apocrisarius* for a condemnation of Origenism.³⁷ According to Bernard Flusin, until the middle of the sixth century, Origenism was a phenomenon, "at once very widespread and very much contested in Palestine."³⁸ In addition to Origenist influences, Palestine was also home to many adherents of the ascetic theologian Evagrius Ponticus, who had first taken the habit at Jerusalem, before continuing his career in Egypt. Although, "Origen's name appears in the writings of Maximus as seldom as does that of Evagrius,"³⁹ both of these writers play a major—though often well-concealed—role in Maximus's own theology. For example, what is perhaps Maximus's best known work, the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, begins with an extended engagement with Origenist cosmology. We can conclude that Maximus's later theological preoccupations—Origenism and Evagrianism, as well as his enthusiastic interest in Dionysius the Areopagite—all accord well with the claim of George of Resh'aina that Maximus received his first formation within a Palestinian monastic milieu.

Turning to the question of Maximus's "higher studies," Boudignon contends, *pace* Larchet, that, "il n'y a pas d' 'université' constantinopolitaine,"⁴⁰ and that Maximus's intellectual

³⁷ Christoph von Schönborn, "La primauté romaine vue d'Orient pendant la querelle du monoénergisme et du monothélisme (VII^e siècle)," *Istina* 20 (1975): 477.

³⁸ Flusin, 53.

³⁹ Von Balthasar (2003), 127.

⁴⁰ Boudignon (2004), 14. The notion of a Constantinopolitan "university" had its origin in a title given to Stephen of Athens (also Stephanus of Alexandria), that of *oikoumenikos didaskalos*. Stephen was called by Heraclius to give lessons in the capital around 610. After Stephen's death, his would-be successor declined an invitation to stay in the capital and instead re-located to his native city, Trebizond. Thus there was hardly a continuous tradition that could be called "university" in Constantinople. For an alternative view, see Andrew Ekonomou, who claims that, "the University of Constantinople, which had two chairs of grammar and rhetoric in both Greek and Latin and two chairs of law both in Latin, continued to function until in or soon after the reign of Phocas in the early seventh century." Ekonomou, 12.

acuity was shaped not in the Byzantine capital, but rather in Alexandria, the renowned center of learning in antiquity. For those seeking initiation into the school of (Neo-)Platonism, Alexandria was long the customary destination.⁴¹ In Alexandria, the masters of philosophical learning received the support of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Eulogius, who was Patriarch of Alexandria from 580 to 608, provided a venue for the philosopher Stephanus of Athens to instruct young men who were under the patronage of the Church of the Theotokos of Dorothea.⁴² This Stephanus was part of the standing Alexandrian tradition of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy whose representatives included Ammonius, Elias, and John the Grammarian (Philoponus).

It is at this school of the Church of the Theotokos of Dorothea in Alexandria that we find two of the most prominent Palestinian names that we propose to associate with Maximus. These are Saint John Moschus (550 – 619) and Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem (c. 560 – 639). John Moschus recounts in his *Spiritual Meadow* how he and Sophronius, during their first sojourn to Alexandria from 581 to 584,⁴³ “went to the house of Stephanus the Sophist to study.”⁴⁴ Wanda Wolska-Conus has claimed that this “Stephanus the Sophist,” or “Stephanus the Philosopher,” according to a variant manuscript tradition, is identical to the aforementioned Stephanus of Athens.⁴⁵ While Phil Booth finds Wolska-Conus’s conclusion, “regrettably speculative,” he nevertheless concedes that Sophronius of Jerusalem possessed a firsthand knowledge of how medicine was taught in Alexandria in the sixth and seventh centuries, whether gained from Stephanus or from other teachers.⁴⁶ This knowledge of medicine is evinced throughout

⁴¹ Cf. Christian Wildberg, “Three Neoplatonic Introductions to Philosophy: Ammonius, David and Elias,” in *Hermathena* 149 (Winter 1990): 33-51.

⁴² Boudignon (2004), 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ John Moschus, *Spiritual Meadow* 77, PG 87.3, 2929D. Cited in Booth (2014), 63-64, fn. 98.

⁴⁵ See Wanda Wolska-Conus, “Stéphanos d’Athènes et Stéphanos d’Alexandrie: Essai d’identification et de biographie,” *Revue des Études Byzantines* 47 (1989): 47-59.

⁴⁶ Booth (2014), 63.

Sophronius's major work *The Miracles of Cyrus and John* wherein Sophronius makes frequent use of Hippocratic terminology and draws numerous comparisons between secular medicine and spiritual healing. Both Sophronius's knowledge of the healing arts and his philosophical acumen serve to corroborate Moschus's statement in the *Spiritual Meadow* that he and Sophronius received intellectual formation in Alexandria.

While we do not possess an equally straightforward statement from Maximus confirming his own intellectual formation in Alexandria, his *Letters* nevertheless provide strong reason to believe that he spent at least some time in the city and may have even entered there into the entourage of Moschus and Sophronius. It is also possible that Maximus became acquainted with John and Sophronius at an earlier date, perhaps in Palestine. At any rate, Maximus's correspondence demonstrates that he had a wealth of connections to figures associated with Alexandria, especially in comparison to his relatively few connections with Constantinopolitans.

There is, for example, Maximus's *Letter 17*,⁴⁷ which is addressed to "Julian, the Alexandrian Scholastic [πρὸς Ἰουλιανὸν Σχολαστικὸν Ἀλεξανδρέα]," and which also mentions Christopemptos, an Alexandrian companion of Julian, whom Maximus's hails as "his lord and most-wise Scholastic [δεσπότη μου κυρίου Χριστοπέμπτου τοῦ σοφωτάτου Σχολαστικοῦ]."⁴⁸ Maximus lauds them both as "most dear to me of all men [πάντων μοι τιμιώτατοι]."⁴⁹ After an excursus in which Maximus unfolds his two-natures Christology (in opposition to Severan monophysitism), Maximus congratulates Julian and Christopemptos for remaining steadfast in their orthodoxy. This focus on refuting monophysitism is an indication, perhaps, that the two Alexandrians were previously of a monophysite persuasion.⁵⁰ We might even speculate that the

⁴⁷ PG 91, 580C-584D.

⁴⁸ PG 91, 580C.

⁴⁹ PG 91, 584B.

⁵⁰ Jankowiak and Booth (*OHMC*), 58.

young Maximus, during the time he spent in Alexandria, was already an adherent to the Chalcedonian, two-nature Christology and that he had labored to convert others to this position. At any rate, whatever Maximus's prior interactions with Julian and Christopemptos may have been, they were extensive enough to engender a sense of loyalty on Maximus's part. For we discover in *Letter 17* that Maximus was willing to do favors for the pair and to intercede on their behalf. Maximus concludes *Letter 17* by acknowledging that he has fulfilled a request of Julian and Christopemptos to pass along a communication of theirs to "the all-blessed eparch" George. Maximus promises, moreover, that he will see the matter—the nature of which is not entirely clear—through to a good conclusion. This George was almost certainly George, the Eparch (Viceroy or Prefect) of Africa, who was a very close ally and confidant of Maximus during the latter's exile in North Africa. George the Eparch was the recipient of only one extant letter of Maximus, but plays a prominent role throughout Maximus's correspondence.⁵¹ The fact that Julian and Christopemptos made use of Maximus as an intermediary in this transaction suggests that the pair were far removed from Maximus, almost certainly in Alexandria. This is the current scholarly consensus, *pace* Polycarp Sherwood, who had located Julian and Christopemptos in North Africa with Maximus as fellow exiles.⁵²

In addition to the pair of Alexandrian Scholastics (jurists) mentioned in *Letter 17*, Boudignon cites a third Scholastic, Theopemptos, who was the recipient of a small treatise, somewhat misleadingly entitled *Quaestiones ad Theopemptum*, in which Maximus responds to a series of scriptural conundrums posed to him by Theopemptos.⁵³ Boudignon makes a

⁵¹ Larchet, introduction to Ponsoye (1998a), 56. Cf. *Letters* nos. 16, 17, 18, 44, and 45.

⁵² Larchet, *ibid.*: "Mais resident-ils encore à Alexandrie ou sont-ils réfugiés en Afrique comme le suppose P. Sherwood?...Le fait qu'ils écrivent à Maxime semble indiquer qu'ils sont éloignés du lui." Jankowiak and Booth (*OHMC*), 58: "Sherwood's contention that the correspondents are refugees in North Africa is not cogent." Cf. Boudignon (2004), 15.

⁵³ PG 90, 1393-94, with the title, "Μαξίμου μονάχου πρὸς Θεοπέμπτου Σχολαστικόν."

prosopological identification of this Theopemptos with the Theopemptos mentioned by Maximus in his *Letter* 18. This identification has been cautiously upheld by Jankowiak and Booth.⁵⁴ *Letter* 18 stands out among Maximus’s correspondence, for it is written not in his own voice but on behalf of the aforementioned George, the “all-praised Eparch of Africa.”⁵⁵ This letter forms part of the complicated affair of the monophysite nuns of the Alexandrian monasteries of Sakerdos and Amma Ioannia, an affair that would eventually find George and Maximus pitted against the imperial power in Constantinople. We will not enter into the details of that saga here, except to state that *Letter* 18 gives indication that Maximus and Theopemptos had likely formed a friendship in Alexandria prior to Maximus’s—and likely Theopemptos’s as well—flight to North Africa. This letter finds this both men in the service of George the Eparch: Maximus as scribe and theologian to the eparch and Theopemptos as George’s chosen delegate to the troublesome “nuns/ascetics in Alexandria who have fallen away from the Catholic Church.”⁵⁶

We find even more crucial evidence of Maximus’s connections to Alexandria in a telling complaint made in his *Letter* 13, addressed to one Peter the *Illustris*. Jean-Claude Larchet, among other modern scholars, has conflated this Peter the Illustrious with Peter the “general of Numidia,”⁵⁷ who, according to the record of Maximus’s trial,⁵⁸ was dispatched by Heraclius from the Exarchate of Africa to Alexandria in the year 633 with a military force in order to confront the Arab menace.⁵⁹ At first glance, the letter appears to support this identification because it opens with Maximus giving thanks for the safe conclusion of a recent sea voyage by

⁵⁴ Jankowiak and Booth in *OHMC*, 51, 54.

⁵⁵ “ἐκ προσώπου Γεωργίου τοῦ πανευφήμου ἐπάρχου Ἀφρικῆς,” PG 91, 584D.

⁵⁶ “πρὸς ἀσκητρίας ἀποστάσας τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ,” PG 91 584D.

⁵⁷ Larchet, introduction to Ponsoye (1998a), 51.

⁵⁸ Cf. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, eds., *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵⁹ Jankowiak and Booth in *OHMC*, 33.

Peter.⁶⁰ Moreover, the title *illustris* (ἰλλούστριος), though it had fallen into desuetude in the East, was one that continued to be used in the West as a military rank, and thus seems to accord with an African provenance.⁶¹ There are two problems with this, however: first, Maximus uses the honorific ἰλλούστριος with other of his correspondents and, secondly, Peter of Numidia was a general of high rank who bore the noble title *patrikios*. For this reason, Boudignon, following the suggestion of Constantin Zuckerman, posits that Peter the Illustrious is not the same person as the African general, but rather a resident of Alexandria.⁶² Indeed, as Combefis suggested in the comments found in the Migne edition, “Illustrious” was likely a mere *nomen dignitatis* for an individual of prominence.⁶³ Moreover, looking to the content of the letter, we begin to make out a pattern similar to what we have already encountered in the abovementioned letters: once again Maximus is occupied with the heresy of monophysitism and is found giving support to a friend in order to help him to hold fast to the orthodox faith and to disentangle himself from the errors of the one-nature Christology. This preoccupation makes perfect sense within an Alexandrian context. The themes of spiritual friendship and of presence and absence, which recur throughout Maximus’s correspondence, are also prominent in this letter. For Maximus, it is the orthodox faith, rather than any emotional bond or common worldly interest, that serves as the basis for true friendship. If individuals are of the same mind (*nous*) with respect to the faith, then God’s love holds them in a harmony of communion that renders even the distance of physical separation insignificant.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ PG 91, 509C.

⁶¹ Jankowiak and Booth in *OHMC*, 27.

⁶² Boudignon (2004), 16-17, citing Constantin Zuckerman, “La haute hiérarchie militaire en Afrique byzantine,” *Antiquité Tardive* 10 (2002): 169-175.

⁶³ PG 91, 509 n. *u*.

⁶⁴ PG 91, 509B.

Thus, in *Letter* 13, Maximus lays out a lengthy debunking of Severan monophysitism, in which he provides copious and exact evidence from the Church Fathers in order to bolster his position. After this remarkable exposition, the Confessor concludes with an astonishing admission. He complains to Peter that a severe lack of manuscripts where he is living has hindered him from being as precise as he would have liked to have been in his citations of the sayings of the Church Fathers with respect to the question of Christ's two natures.⁶⁵ The virtuosic ease which Maximus displays in citing the Fathers, even without having the necessary books at his fingertips, indeed speaks to what Jean-Claude Larchet termed “une formation intellectuelle de haut niveau.”⁶⁶ However, as Boudignon has highlighted, the sections of *Letter* 13 that follow provide very solid ground for supposing that a goodly portion of that formation took place in Alexandria rather than Constantinople.

Most telling is what Maximus says in closing about the texts to which Peter himself has access in Alexandria. Peter, unlike Maximus, has access to a magnificent library, viz., the collection that belongs, in fact, to Maximus's “blessed master and Father and teacher, [his] lord Abba Sophronius.”⁶⁷ Maximus lauds Sophronius through a bit of word play, qualifying him as, “a temperate (σώφρονα) and wise (σοφόν) advocate of the truth and an undefeated champion of godly teaching.”⁶⁸ He proclaims Sophronius as one who vanquishes heretics by both word and deed. But beyond all the other beautiful qualities that accrue to Sophronius, there is this: he is rich with a stockpile of divine books, and with this stockpile, he is able to enrich those who are eager to learn divine things.⁶⁹ Maximus has no doubt of Sophronius's abilities as a formator. He

⁶⁵ “...διὰ τὴν παρ' ἐμοὶ τῶν βιβλίων πολλὴν ἀπορίαν.” PG 91, 532D-533A.

⁶⁶ Jean-Claude Larchet (1996), 10.

⁶⁷ “...τὸν εὐλογημένον μου δεσπότην... Πατέρα τε καὶ διδάσκαλον κύριον ἀββᾶν Σωφρόνιον...” PG 91, 533A.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., “...πλήθει βιβλίων θείων πλουτοῦντα, καὶ τοὺς βουλομένους μανθάνειν τὰ θεῖα προθύμως πλουτίζοντα.”

is certain (εὖ οἶδα) that if Peter will expose himself to Sophronius’s instruction, then, without fail, Peter will acquire learning of the saving doctrines and “will stick to right and infallible knowledge.”⁷⁰

It cannot be definitively proven that this collection of Sophronius’s books was located at Alexandria, since in *Letter 13* Maximus proffers neither his own precise location nor that of Peter. *Letter 14*, however, which is likewise addressed to Peter the Illustrious—although title is lacking in the Migne edition⁷¹—sheds further light on the whereabouts of Peter and lets us see that he was in all likelihood a resident of Alexandria. In the letter, Maximus beseeches Peter to receive the carrier of the letter, one Cosmas, a deacon of Alexandria, who is a convert from monophysitism. This Cosmas was ordained to the order of deacon by the hands of the “God-honored Pope [τὸν θεοτίμητον πάπαν],” i.e. Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria.⁷² Maximus wants to help Cosmas to be re-admitted to the duties of the diaconate, since Cosmas has left behind the monophysite heresy. He gives Peter permission to present his letter to Cyrus. If Peter was thus an acquaintance of the patriarch and ready to receive Cosmas, we can assume that he was a resident of Alexandria. Jankowiak and Booth date *Letter 13* to c. 629-633 and *Letter 14* to 633 (given the vivid details it evokes of the Arab invasion of Egypt). This gives us grounds for supposing that the library to which Maximus directs Peter in *Letter 13* was in fact located in Alexandria. Finally, Maximus’s confidence that Peter will find the right texts there for refuting Severan monophysitism as well as his confidence in the abilities of Sophronius as a formator, makes us think that Maximus himself must have spent a significant amount of time studying the texts of this collection, perhaps under the tutelage of his monastic predecessor and mentor.

⁷⁰ Ibid., “...κομίσεσθε τὴν ὀρθὴν καὶ ἄπταιστον γνῶσιν.”

⁷¹ Jankowiak and Booth in *OHMC*, 44. “The name of the addressee, absent from Combefis’ edition, is spelled out in *Vat. gr.* 504 as Peter Illustris (ἐπιστολὴ δογματικὴ πρὸς Πέτρον Ἰλλούστριον).”

⁷² PG 91, 536A.

The location of Sophronius's library in Alexandria and Maximus's memory of it lead Boudignon to conclude that Maximus's formation took place primarily in Alexandria and not on the shores of the Bosphorus. It may be, however, that, as Booth alleges, Boudignon to some extent "underestimates the considerable and sustained intellectual sophistication of the Palestinian monastic movement,"⁷³ and thus privileges the cultural and intellectual center of antiquity as the likely site of Maximus's formation. We simply lack the historical and biographical data that would be necessary to show whether Maximus's time in Alexandria was an extended stay in which he studied assiduously under the direction of Sophronius or if it was more of a period of fine-tuning for an already impressively learned monk. The letters we have cited above suggest that in the early decades of the seventh century Maximus had already earned esteem for his theological expertise and that he had plied that expertise in converting his friends away from the monophysite heresy.

The key point for our purposes is to emphasize that Maximus was part of a monastic movement that was both highly mobile and well-connected in various places, including Alexandria. Before we look at the contours of this movement more precisely, which will help us to appreciate Maximus's attitudes with respect to Roman primacy as consonant with this movement's theological commitments, we will first look at two important objections that potentially undermine our contention that Maximus's childhood and early formation find him outside the sphere of Constantinople.

The main objection to the thesis, laid out above and supported by both the Syriac *Life* and subtle indications within Maximus's correspondence, is the claim that, prior to his entry into the monastic life, Maximus served as chief secretary (ὁ πρωτοασηκρήτης) in the administration of

⁷³ Booth (2014), 148 fn. 31.

Emperor Heraclius from roughly 610 to 614. The evidence for Maximus’s imperial service is supposed to be found in his *Letter 12* to John the Cubicularius. Moreover, Maximus’s association with this John, thought by many to be of Constantinopolitan origin as well, is supposed to demonstrate that Maximus was a well-connected player within the imperial administration. Balthasar, following Sherwood, posits, for example, that Maximus’s position at the Byzantine court, “gave him the opportunity to form cordial relationships, often personal friendships, with the most important personalities of the empire.”⁷⁴ Yet recent prosopological investigations have proven the attestation of Maximus’s imperial service to be a complete mirage.⁷⁵ *Letter 12* contains no statement referring to the role of chief secretary (πρωτοασηκρήτης). Maximus only says that, “it is better and more honorable to be last before God than to hold the first rank of honor here below before the king (or emperor [βασιλεῖ]) of those of the earth.”⁷⁶ Moreover, there is nothing in the letter that offers any evidence to suggest that Maximus at one time served as a civic official, in Constantinople or elsewhere. Rather, as Jankowiak and Booth contend with respect to *Letter 12* in their *New Date-List*: “The ‘autobiographical’ passage cited since Combefis to support the claim for Maximus’ Constantinopolitan origins and role at Heraclius’ court (PG 91, 505B7–10) is nothing of the sort: it refers to the addressee, John.”⁷⁷ Not only is the attribution of the position of chief secretary to Maximus erroneous, but we even lack proof to show that John Cubicularius and Maximus forged their relationship while at the capital. Jankowiak and Booth reveal just how flimsy the evidence is for any kind of Constantinopolitan activity in Maximus’s early career. They write,

⁷⁴ Von Balthasar (2003), 74.

⁷⁵ Booth (2014), 146.

⁷⁶ “... κρεῖτον καὶ τιμιώτερον τὴν ἐσχάτην ἔχειν παρὰ Θεῷ μᾶλλον ἠγούμενοι τάξιν, ἢ παρὰ τῷ κάτω βασιλεῖ τὰ πρῶτα φέρειν τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς...” PG 91, 505B. Andrew Louth cites this as “direct evidence from Maximus’ own works that he had once been in the service of the ‘Emperor here below.’” Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), 199 n. 6.

⁷⁷ Jankowiak and Booth in *OHMC*, 55.

The origins of that acquaintance [between Maximus and John] are nevertheless obscure. John's attachment to the imperial court in Constantinople, and Maximus' association with him, cannot be used to support the notion that Maximus was from Constantinople. John Cubicularius *is the only certain contact of Maximus at the imperial court*, and the precise nature and origins of their apparent friendship must remain unclear. Some of Maximus' letters to John can be read as attempts to ingratiate himself with a powerful contact at the court, rather than evidence of an abiding closeness.⁷⁸

It is rather surprising, therefore, to see just how much stock has been placed and continues to be placed in the myth of Maximus' Constantinopolitan origins and career at the Byzantine imperial court. As Phil Booth notes, the error that sees Maximus as Heraclius' proto-secretary is so deeply entrenched that it risks becoming canonical.⁷⁹ Melchisedec Törönen, writing in 2007, for example, even though he recognizes that the title *πρωτοασηκρήτης* dates from the mid-eighth century and therefore could only be applied to Maximus anachronistically, still insists that Maximus was "a high-ranking official in the Byzantine court where he worked as the head of the Imperial Chancellery."⁸⁰

The final datum that has been brought forward as evidence for Maximus' Constantinopolitan connections is that of his alleged nobility. The basis for a noble lineage are found within the *Disputation at Bizya*, one of the documents pertaining to the unfolding of Maximus' life in trial and banishment. The end of that dialogue describes an order from the emperor Constans II (the grandson of Heraclius). The text states,

...the consul Paul went out again to Father Maximus in Bizya, taking with him an order comprising the following formula: "We order Your Gloriousness to go to Bizya, and to bring back Maximus the monk with much honour and coaxing, both because of his age and infirmity, and the fact that he is our ancestor, and was honoured among them."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid., 24. Emphasis added.

⁷⁹ Booth (2014), 146, fn. 24.

⁸⁰ Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13. And n. 1 "Although it is very likely that Maximus was the head of the Chancellery, it is improbable that his title was *protoasekretis*, since this title only emerged in the middle of eighth century. It seems, therefore, to have been given to Maximus anachronistically."

⁸¹ Allen and Neil (2002), 106.

The main difficulty here is the conclusion of the final phrase.⁸² We note firstly that what Allen and Neil translate here as ancestor is in fact an adjective, προγονικός, and not the noun, πρόγονος, literally meaning early-born and frequently signifying an ancestor or forefather. Rather than implying that Maximus is a distant blood relative of Heraclius, the use of προγονικός in this text more likely means something like “forefather-like.” The genitive ἡμῶν, which follows, can be taken as a genitive of comparison, thus yielding the meaning: compared to us, he is forefather- or grandfather-like. This makes sense given that the emperor Constans II was fifty years Maximus’s junior. But the ending phrase, “καὶ γενόμενον αὐτοῖς τίμιον,” remains enigmatic. Boudignon, noting the Latin translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, links the pronoun αὐτοῖς with a sense carried over from the adjective προγονικός.⁸³ In this way, the phrase would mean something like, “and he was honored by our grandparents’ generation.” At any rate, neither this passage from the *Disputation at Bizya* nor a later line in the text in which Constans II offers to receive Maximus “as a father,” if Maximus will embrace the *Typos*, give any real reason to think that Maximus was part of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy.

Now that we have recalibrated our understanding of Maximus’s origins to see him as the monk who hails from Hesfin in the Golan in Palestine, we can ask how Maximus managed, “to form cordial relationships, often personal friendships, with the most important personalities of the empire,”⁸⁴ not from the center of the imperial world, as was previously thought, but amidst a series of peregrinations (*xeniteia*) and exiles that eventually took him to Old Rome where he became a great ally of the pope and exponent of Roman primacy. Essential to understanding Maximus’s connections is linking him to two of his associates whom we have already

⁸² “διὰ τε τὸ γῆρας καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν καὶ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν προγονικὸν ἡμῶν, καὶ γενόμενον αὐτοῖς τίμιον.” Ibid., 106.

⁸³ Boudignon (2004), 32.

⁸⁴ Von Balthasar (2003), 74.

mentioned: Saints John Moschus and Sophronius. Phil Booth terms this intellectual trio “the Moschan circle,” after the eldest member of the group and author of the *Spiritual Meadow*,⁸⁵ while Paul Blowers calls it “the Eukratas monastic circle,” after a surname that was occasionally applied to both John and Sophronius.⁸⁶ This group shared a common theological vision as well as roots in the monasteries of Judea. Most notably they were connected with the Palestinian Laura of Saint Sabbas, with its satellite monasteries in North Africa and Rome. Another important connection is that of the Moschan circle with the popular patriarch of Alexandria, John the Almsgiver (ὁ Ἐλεήμων, r. 606-620). Finally, Maximus’s disciple Anastasius—who would go on to share with Maximus a fate of torture and exile—stands as another key to understanding Maximus’s well-connected position within the empire. Though one might expect that Maximus, as teacher and sage, would be the one to figuratively open doors and establish connections for his disciple, it seems rather that Anastasius, who held a position within the imperial government in Alexandria, was the one who made introductions to Maximus.

⁸⁵ Booth (2014), 4.

⁸⁶ Blowers, 10. Cf. Booth (2014), 106.

Chapter Two: From Monoenergism to Monotheletism: The Role of Honorius

Maximus the Confessor is best known for his championing of the doctrines of dyoenergism and dyotheletism. His defense of Pope Honorius in *Opusculum* 20 was an early maneuver in what developed into an intense polemic against “one will” Christology. We will now briefly review the development of the related heresies of monoenergism and monotheletism and the role played, in particular, by Pope Honorius’s *First Letter* to Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople in the rise of monothelete position.

The Council of Chalcedon of 451—seen by many as *the* Christological council—had attempted to resolve the relentless dissension surrounding the question of what it means to say that Jesus Christ is “God made man.” That council rejected the extreme positions of Eutyches and Nestorius. Eutyches, a priest of Constantinople, had claimed that Christ was of one nature, a novel fusion of the divine and human. Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople and a former disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia, had emphasized the combination or conjunction (συνάφεια or οικειότης) in Christ of a separate human nature with the impassible divinity, rather than the union (ένώσις)—a term preferred by Saint Cyril of Alexandria—of the natures. While Chalcedon strove to strike a balance between the disparate theological trends of the so-called Alexandrian and Antiochene Christologies, the aftermath of Chalcedon was nevertheless a *de facto* schism between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, i.e. those Christians who accepted the definition of the council and those who rejected it. Non-Chalcedonians spurned the council primarily on the grounds that it was a betrayal of Saint Cyril of Alexandria. In addition to these Christological developments, a politically and ecclesiologically significant decision of the Council of Chalcedon was to elevate the see of Constantinople by granting it similar privileges to the see of

Rome.¹ This no doubt added to the volatility of the post-Chalcedonian era, as this move represented a downgrading of the ancient sees of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria. Palestine, Syria, and Egypt were, in fact, precisely the regions where resistance to the definition of Chalcedon (and the imperial edict enforcing it) flourished most vigorously.²

Dissension and ecclesial division in the wake of the Council of Chalcedon were not merely a theological problem, however, but an issue that affected the very well-being of the empire. As the Byzantine Empire faced mounting threats from Slav, Avar, and Persian incursions, the lack of religious unity imperiled the empire's defenses and vital integrity. Not only did non-Chalcedonians in places such as Antioch and Alexandria break away and form their own churches—with their own separate traditions, hierarchs, monasteries, saints, and hagiographies—but, in some cases, non-Chalcedonian Christians even went so far as to collaborate with the enemies of the empire, reckoning that they had better odds for survival and freedom under non-Christian powers than under a pro-Chalcedonian emperor. The threat went deeper than the strategic vulnerabilities inherent in such disloyalty. For, as Cyril Hovorun notes, “the Byzantines believed in a mystical connection between the unity of the empire and conformity of the *cultus*.”³ It was in fact a pre-Christian Roman notion that right practice of religion ensured the welfare of the state. According to this Byzantine ideology, which was a melding of old and new, the responsibility of the pious Christian emperor was to unite and safeguard the people. This he did through military leadership but also through upholding the orthodox faith.

¹ Pauline Allen, introduction, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy: The Synodal Letter and Other Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

² *Ibid.*, 4. Allen also notes that, in the sixth and seventh centuries, “the anti-Chalcedonian churches were increasingly dogged by internal divisions,” a situation reminiscent of the divisions that beset the splinter ecclesial communities that formed during the Protestant Reformation.

³ Cyril Hovorun, “Maximus, a Cautious Neo-Chalcedonian,” in *OHMC*, 111.

Facing this untenable situation of ecclesial division, the Emperor Heraclius (r. 610-641), like Justinian before him, launched a politico-ecumenical program aimed at achieving consensus concerning the Christological question. Failing that, he hoped at least to arrive at a *détente* that would allow estranged non-Chalcedonian Christians to re-enter communion with the Chalcedonian Church. A plank—though it would be an overstatement to see it as the only one or necessarily the most important—of Heraclius’s politico-ecclesial strategy was the doctrine of monoenergism, or of one activity (ἐνέργεια) in Christ. Its architect was the politically savvy Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (r. 610-638). In hitting upon the notion of a unified activity or energy in Christ, Sergius thought that he had discovered a notion that would be palatable to both sides in the disagreement over who could rightly claim the mantle of Saint Cyril of Alexandria. Moreover, discussion of activities (ἐνεργείαι) in Christ, had the advantage of not being a theological novelty, as the notion had been discussed by various Church Fathers. One of the principal leaders of the anti-Chalcedonian party, the charismatic and effective Severus of Antioch (d. 538), “was the first anti-Chalcedonian to treat expressly the problem of activities (*energeiai*) in Christ.”⁴ On the other hand, there is also evidence that the incipient roots of monoenergism lay in neo-Chalcedonian or neo-Cyrrillian circles.⁵ Thus the theme of an activity in Christ seemed to fit the bill for what Sergius and Heraclius sought: a formula that could become a rallying point for unity. Such formulae had figured prominently in ecclesial politics since Scythian monks in Rome in the sixth century, during the reign of Justin I (r. 518 – 527), promoted what became known as the Theopaschite formula, viz. that, “one of the Trinity

⁴ Allen (2009), 6.

⁵ Cf. Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 103ff.

suffered in the flesh.”⁶ The emperor Justinian took up the Theopaschite formula in his ultimately failed attempt to re-establish communion with the separated anti-Chalcedonian Church of Antioch. In their renewed attempt at attaining ever-elusive ecclesial unity, Heraclius and Sergius hoped that the formula, “one activity in Christ,” might assist to successfully bridge the differences between disputing Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christians, since, as Paul Blowers notes, the formula had the advantage of “retaining the Chalcedonian language of Christ’s two unconfused natures while refocusing the core unity of his personal agency and volition such as might prove acceptable to miaphysites.”⁷ One certainly sees here the astuteness of Patriarch Sergius, who consulted with other theologians in developing this doctrine, aimed at compromise. Nevertheless, as Pauline Allen notes, “[i]t would be a mistake...to assume that the theological implications of the monoenergist formula had been fully realized by either Heraclius or Sergius.”⁸

Initially, Sergius’s strategy of employing the monoenergist doctrine appeared to have achieved a theological *coup* for Heraclius, but that initial success dissipated quickly once Maximus’s friend and master Sophronius of Jerusalem caught wind of the formula and became alarmed at its implications. The early success for monoenergism came in Alexandria. Sergius was able to win over to the monoenergist formula Cyrus, at the time bishop of Phasis in Lazica in the Caucasus.⁹ We possess rather fascinating documentation, in the form of two short letters of correspondence between Cyrus and Sergius from around the year 626, which demonstrate plainly how Cyrus was torn away from his moderate dyoenergist leanings to embrace Sergius’s doctrine

⁶ Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

⁷ Paul Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transformation of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 43.

⁸ Allen (2009), 13.

⁹ Cf. Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* in Allen (2009), 185.

of monoenergism. It is worth noting that both Cyrus's and Sergius's letters evince immense respect for Pope Leo and his *Tome to Flavian*, which Sergius recalls, summoning the definition of Chalcedon, as the “common ‘pillar of orthodoxy.’”¹⁰ Cyrus had posited that Leo taught two activities of Christ, but Sergius rejects this assertion. Moreover, Sergius claims that none of the Fathers after Leo interpret him in this way. He therefore concludes,

Hence we have found that neither those who we know contended against pious belief on behalf of the letter we have mentioned many times [i.e. the *Tome*], nor any other of the divinely inspired spiritual teachers of the church up to the present speak of two activities in Christ our God. But if one of the more punctilious were able to show that some of our approved and God-bearing Fathers, whose teachings are established by the law in the catholic church, transmitted the affirmation of two activities in Christ, it would certainly be necessary to follow them. For there is every necessity not only of following the teachings of the holy Fathers according to their meaning, but also of using the same words as they do, and not to innovate at all in any respect.¹¹

This argument—quite pious on the face of it—convinced Cyrus, and he became henceforth the first collaborator and champion of monoenergist doctrine. In fact, it may have been his cooperation in this matter that helped Cyrus to become both the Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria and its imperial prefect or *augustalis* (r. 630 – 640).¹² At any rate, a Chalcedonian himself, Cyrus was able to reach out to monophysite Theodosian clergy in Egypt,¹³ and they celebrated the Divine Liturgy together in June of 633. On this occasion, Cyrus issued an *Announcement*, often called the *Pact of Union* or *Nine Chapters* for its nine articles of faith. The sixth of these articles, with the customary deference to Cyril that is shown throughout the

¹⁰ “ἡτις κοινῆ τῷ ὄντι ‘τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας στῆλη’ καθέστηκε.” Sergius, *First Letter to Cyrus*, in Allen (2009), 164-165.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹² Marek Jankowiak noting that Cyrus was named prefect and patriarch at the same time, cites the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, who writes that Cyrus, “attachait à un de ses pieds la chaussure rouge des empereurs, et à l’autre une sandale de moine, pour montrer qu’il avait l’autorité impériale et ecclésiastique.” Cf. Marek Jankowiak, “Essai d’histoire politique du monothélisme à partir de la correspondance entre les empereurs byzantins, les patriarches de Constantinople et les papes de Rome” (PhD diss., École pratique des hautes études, Paris, 2009), 89, citing the *Chronicle* book IX, § 8.

¹³ The Theodosians were Egyptian followers of Severus of Antioch, as the Jacobites were followers of Severus in Antioch. Cf. Allen and Neil (2002), 5.

document, anathematizes anyone who, “does not confess one Christ, one Son, from two natures, that is, from both Godhead and humanity, ‘one incarnate nature of God the Word’, according to Cyril...without confusion, without change, without alternation, or rather one composite hypostasis, which is our same Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴ Moreover, the *Announcement* famously proclaimed in its seventh article that, “one and the same Christ and Son performed things befitting God and things human by one theandric activity [μῦθ θεανδρικῆ ἐνεργεία], according to Dionysius.”¹⁵ This is the phrase that aroused deep distrust in Sophronius and that would also be condemned by the Lateran Council of 649 as a misquotation of the words of (Pseudo)-Dionysius.

It is from Sergius’s *First Letter to Honorius* of Rome (composed during the winter of 634-635)¹⁶ that we learn that Sophronius was in Alexandria at the time of Cyrus’s *Announcement* of 633 and that he protested vociferously against the inclusion of the phrase, “one theandric activity,” in the seventh article. One issue that stands out very clearly in Sergius’s letter as a major difference between him and the monk of the Moschan circle is their divergent views regarding *oikonomia* and *akribeia*. Sergius begins the letter by waxing eloquently about the amazing union [παράδοξον ἔνωσιν] that has been achieved through the painstaking efforts of Patriarch Cyrus with the formerly heretical parties, i.e. Severan monophysites.¹⁷ In what initially strike us as exaggerated terms, Sergius announces to Honorius that “[t]he Christ-loving population of Alexandria...and in addition to them almost all of Egypt, Thebaid, Libya, and the remainder of the of the provinces in the diocese of Egypt” have become again one flock, united

¹⁴ Allen (2009), *Cyrus Announcement* §6, 171.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, §7, 171-173.

¹⁶ Jankowiak (2009), 128. Jankowiak bases his dating on data previously overlooked from the anonymous prologue to Moschus’s *Spiritual Meadow*. The prior common dating was c. 633-34. Cf. Allen (2009), 30.

¹⁷ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* in Allen (2009), 187.

around the confession of “the one activity of Christ, our great God and Saviour.”¹⁸ Sergius goes on to say that he has heard rumor that Sophronius has, since this time, “been ordained leader of Jerusalem.”¹⁹ He furthermore claims that he has yet to receive the customary synodical letter from Sophronius. This could indeed have been the case, as the *Synodical Letter* that Sophronius eventually produced was of extraordinary length for a work of its genre, and may have taken some time to compose.²⁰ It is possible that Sergius, nervous about what Sophronius may have been about to unleash, penned his own *Letter to Honorius* as an attempt to pre-empt Sophronius’s offensive and to secure the goodwill of Honorius. As it would turn out, Sophronius’s *Synodical Letter* was not “an all-out declaration of war,” but rather a careful theological investigation, full of deference towards both the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome.²¹ For his part, Sergius was certainly not disdainful of Sophronius in his *Letter*. He applies to him traditional terms of honor: Sophronius is a “most holy monk [ὁ ὀσιώτατος μοναχός],” “dear-to-God [θεοφιλής],” and so forth. This makes sense, given that Sophronius was a fellow (neo-)Chalcedonian and in communion with Constantinople. Nevertheless, Sergius paints Sophronius as one who, through the rejection of *oikonomia* and insistence on “excessive wrangling over words [λογομαχία],” has torpedoed the beautiful union so carefully brought about by the pious Emperor Heraclius and the Prefect-Patriarch Cyrus. Sergius’s depiction of the

¹⁸ Ibid. Phil Booth has pointed to a number of Coptic sources that do indeed point to the phenomenal success achieved by Cyrus in bringing many non-Chalcedonians in lower and middle Egypt into union with the Chalcedonian Church. It appears, however, that threat of force by Cyrus also played a role in some of these conversions, including the conversions of entire monastic communities. Cf. Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 206-208.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “The most striking feature of the [*Synodical*] *Letter* of Sophronius is its length. Even allowing for some habitual verbosity on the part of the patriarch of Jerusalem, we have to assume that the unusually large proportions of his inaugural letter reflect the seriousness with which he regarded the dogmatic positions which he puts forward.” Allen (2009), 50.

²¹ “Malgré les craintes de Sergios, la synodique de Sophrone ne fut pas une déclaration de guerre ouverte. En termes humbles et polis, elle exhibait toute la révérence due aux patriarches de l’ancienne et de la nouvelle Rome.” Jankowiak (2009), 133.

encounter between Sophronius and Cyrus²² demonstrates the centrality of accommodation for the monoenergist strategy. He writes,

With [Cyrus] Sophronius looked into the issues of these articles of faith [i.e. the *Announcement*], and opposed and contradicted the article on the one activity, demanding that one must in every way teach the doctrine of two activities in Christ our God. In particular the most holy pope, already mentioned [i.e. Cyrus], adduced for him testimonies from our holy Fathers where they spoke here and there in some of their writings of one activity. Yet Cyrus still superfluously alleged that often, when articles of faith like these made their appearance, our holy Fathers, for the sake of gaining the salvation of more souls, appear to have used God-pleasing accommodations [θεαρέστοις οἰκονομίαις] and agreements without undermining the accuracy [μηδὲν τῆς ἀκριβείας] of the correct teachings of the church. Cyrus asserted that, since in fact at the present time too the salvation of so many myriads of people was at stake, it was imperative not to contend argumentatively at all on the subject of that article of faith because, as was already said, an expression of this kind had also been uttered by certain inspired Fathers, and the principle of orthodoxy had not been harmed by it at all.²³

Sergius goes on to say that, after his tête-à-tête with Cyrus of Alexandria, Sophronius journeyed to Constantinople where he attempted an intervention with him as well. Sophronius pleaded with Sergius for a prohibition of the phrase, “one activity in Christ.” Sergius confides to Honorius:

We thought that this was harsh. For how was it not harsh and exceedingly onerous, when it was going to undo and overthrow that entire concord and unity which had come about so well in the city of Alexandria and in all her provinces, which at no stage up to the present had accepted even the very name of our inspired and renowned Father Leo or had made mention of the holy, great, ecumenical synod in Chalcedon, while now with clear, loud voice they are proclaiming it in their divine rites?²⁴

Sergius also states that he pressed Sophronius for “testimonies” from the Fathers “which expressly and literally impart as tradition that we should speak of two activities in Christ.”²⁵ He claims that Sophronius was at a loss to produce such texts, although other sources attest that

²² Maximus the Confessor offers a much more dramatic depiction of his friend and mentor’s intervention with Cyrus in *Opusculum* 12: “Therefore the divine and great Sophronius then came to Alexandria and from the very first reading (for Cyrus had even given to him those nine impious chapters for approval) he let out a great cry of grief and poured forth torrents of tears, fervently begging, beseeching, demanding spread out on the ground at [Cyrus’s] feet, that he proclaim nothing of these things from the pulpit against the universal Church; for he said that these were clearly the impious doctrines of Apollinarius.” PG 91, 143C-D, translation in Booth (2014), 209.

²³ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* in Allen (2009), 186-187.

²⁴ Allen (2009), Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius*, 189.

²⁵ Ibid.

Sophronius composed a *florilegium* of some six-hundred anti-monoenergist citations from the Fathers. This text, however, is no longer extant.²⁶

If Sergius's intention was to convince Honorius that Sophronius was a holy and well-meaning but nevertheless meddling disrupter of ecclesial unity, then his *Letter* seems an effective work of rhetoric suited to such a purpose. At the same time, however, Sergius's *Letter to Honorius* also contains the acknowledgement that Sophronius's protests effectively foiled the imperial policy of using monoenergism as an instrument to procure ecclesial unity. Sergius admits that, within the Chalcedonian Church, discussion of one activity scandalizes some and discussion of two activities scandalizes others. Finally, he confides that he has come to a tacit agreement with Sophronius:

[I]t was decided and established that the most holy Sophronius, of whom we have spoken, should not in the future start any discussion about one or two activities, but should be content with the safe and tried-and-true correct teaching of the holy Fathers.²⁷

Not only does Sergius enjoin this silence on Sophronius, but, in a remarkably conciliatory gesture, he also orders Cyrus to cease discussing one or two activities in Christ. Sergius recapitulated this policy of silence in his *Psephos* (or *Judgment* of August 633), which was affirmed by the Emperor Heraclius, forbidding all discussion of one or two activities in Christ.²⁸ This marked the end, effectively, of monoenergist ecumenism, and shortly with the response of Honorius the debate would shift to the question of wills in Christ.

²⁶ Ibid., n. 41. Cf. Booth (2014), 211. Booth contends that Sophronius's "outright commitment to a developed 'two operations' formula at the earliest stages of the crisis, in 633, is far from self-evident." However, if Sophronius was familiar with the Alexandrian intellectual milieu described by Christian Boudignon *supra*, then he likely would have encountered the Aristotelian notion that every "nature" also possesses inherently its proper "activity." Cf. Christian Boudignon, "Maxime le Confesseur: Était-il constantinopolitain?" in *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek Patristic and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret*, eds. B. Janssens, B. Rosen, and P. Van Deun (Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 15.

²⁷ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* in Allen (2009), 193.

²⁸ Allen (2009), 29.

Pope Honorius of Rome (r. 625–638) responded to the *First Letter* of Patriarch Sergius with a letter of his own, famous, as we have noted, for containing the portentous phrase, “we confess one will of the Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁹ Although no clear date appears to have been established by scholars for this *First Letter to Sergius*, it must have been issued shortly after the reception of Sergius’s missive, which was written in the winter of 634–635.³⁰ The original Latin composition no longer survives, but only the Greek translation, which was read out at the Third Council of Constantinople of 680-81, and a later re-translation into Latin.³¹ It is significant that this exchange between Sergius and Honorius interrupted what seems to have been a rather lengthy period of “radio silence” between the Roman See and the patriarchates of the East. Honorius’s pontificate coincided with the extraordinarily lengthy exarchate of Isaac the Armenian, who was exarch of Ravenna from 625 or 626 to 643.³² At a time when the East suffered the chaos brought about by the Persian invasions, Isaac’s reign ushered in a period of relative stability for the Italian peninsula. During this time, Rome and Italy experienced “a drift to implicit or *de facto* assertion of independence from centralized imperial control.”³³ Pope Honorius was very much a part of this assertion of independence. Marek Jankowiak depicts Honorius as a forceful personality—active, decisive, even impetuous—and unafraid to exercise his prerogatives as Roman primate.³⁴ His whole pontificate, up to the moment of responding to Patriarch Sergius, was focused on the betterment of the city of Rome and on concerns of

²⁹ Allen (2009), Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius*, 196-197: “ὁμολογοῦμεν τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.”

³⁰ Jankowiak (2009), 128

³¹ Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 79.

³² Jankowiak (2009), 124.

³³ Walter Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197.

³⁴ Completing a review of Honorius’s letters, Jankowiak concludes, “C’est donc toujours le même langage vigoureux, voire âpre, la même volonté d’exercer directement la primauté romaine, et la même détermination à avoir le dernier mot qui transpire des lettres d’Honorius, si variés que soient les sujets auxquels elles sont consacrées.” Jankowiak (2009), 126.

governance of the Western churches. He showed himself in all these matters a man who did not hesitate to intervene decisively.³⁵

Honorius's decisiveness manifests itself immediately in the opening lines of the *First Letter to Sergius*. Straightaway he makes mention of Sophronius and of "certain arguments and new inventions of vocabulary," that have been introduced by the Palestinian monk and now Patriarch of Jerusalem.³⁶ Honorius has clearly been persuaded by Sergius that Cyrus is the victim here, rather than the initiator of novel doctrine, and that these innovations have been brought in by Sophronius "against Cyrus [κατὰ Κύου]."³⁷ Honorius next congratulates Sergius for his handling of the situation, that is for enjoining silence upon Sophronius (and Cyrus) with respect to discussion of one or two activities in Christ. He says, "we praise Your Brotherhood for having written with great prudence and scrutiny, excluding the new expression, which could introduce scandal to simpler people."³⁸ In the exposition that follows, it is telling that, whereas Eastern disputations over the number of activities in Christ usually focused on sayings of the Church Fathers and interpretation of these, Honorius's analysis makes use almost exclusively of citations from Sacred Scripture, with the only exception being the inclusion of a few terms of vocabulary from the Council of Chalcedon. The verdict that Andrew Ekonomou issued about Honorius's famous sixth-century predecessor Gregory the Great no doubt applies in Honorius's case as well:

...relying on Scripture alone reflects the educational poverty of the former imperial capital where, dependent upon Latin translations of whatever meager Eastern sources were

³⁵ "Les lettres d'Honorius... livrent la même impression d'une papauté sûre de soi et déterminée à faire montre de son prestige tant par son activité édilitaire à Rome—la construction de la basilique Sainte-Agnès-hors-les-Murs en est l'exemple le plus spectaculaire—que par une politique active à l'égard des Eglises occidentales. Les liens avec Constantinople semblent toutefois ténus: seules les élections papales et les agissements des exarques de Ravenne rappelaient que l'Empire demeurait le suzerain des évêques de Rome." Jankowiak (2009), 122.

³⁶ Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* in Allen (2009), 194-195: "...φιλονεκίας τινὰς καὶ νέας φωνῶν."

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

available, intellectuals like Gregory retreated to an almost complete reliance on Scripture in their writings.³⁹

Honorius's statement positing "one will" of Christ comes at the end of a passage using traditional scriptural references to affirm the *communicatio idiomatum*. We will quote the controversial statement within a fuller context:

Of course, the Godhead could neither be crucified nor have the experience of human suffering, but, through the ineffable conjunction of the human and divine nature, one can consequently make both statements: that God is said to suffer, and that the humanity *came down from heaven* (John 6:41) with the Godhead. It follows too that we confess one will [θέλημα] of the Lord Jesus Christ, since manifestly our nature was assumed by the Godhead, there being no sin in it (cf. Heb. 4:15)—the nature, of course, created before sin, not the one that was corrupted after the transgression [sc. of Adam].⁴⁰

We discover here, amidst basically standard boilerplate about the communication of idioms, the phrase that some say founded the monothelete heresy. Honorius almost certainly had no idea what he was getting drawn into with this remark—(if indeed he made it, as Maximus will argue that he did not.) Unlike the discussion of *energeiai* in Christ, will (θέλησις) had not been a traditional topic of Christological inquiry. As Cyril Hovorun explains, the category of will,

was hardly distinguishable as a self-standing category in the world of antiquity and early Christianity. Neither the adversaries nor the supporters of Chalcedon discussed the issue of the wills of Christ. Since Cyril did not use the word 'will' in a christological context, this was a brand new christological category free of any previous connotations.⁴¹

³⁹ Andrew Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 12. Marek Jankowiak comments, "...à l'inverse de [Sergius], le pape s'appuie presque exclusivement sur des passages évangéliques, au lieu de recourir aux témoignages patristiques. On a interprété cette circonstance comme une preuve de l'ignorance de la curie romaine, incapable de se servir de l'arsenal patristique dans les débats théologiques avec les Byzantins." Jankowiak (2009), 131.

⁴⁰ Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* in Allen (2009), 196-199. Allen notes that the odd term, "conjunction," usually associated with the Nestorian position is, "an editorial supplement from the Latin translation." 197, n. 50.

⁴¹ Hovorun in *OHMC*, 118. John Madden clarifies: "Questions of intention and volition had, to be sure, been the subject of lively debate since the dawn of Greek philosophizing, and rich volitional vocabularies from the Aristotelian and Stoic traditions in particular informed every discussion of the question until well after the Renaissance. *Thelēsis*, however, was not part of those vocabularies..." until the monothelete controversies of the seventh century. John Madden, "The Authenticity of Early Definitions of the Will (*Thelēsis*)," in *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur: Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1982), 61-62.

But while it had never been a Christological category, it quickly became one after Honorius's phrase was taken up almost verbatim by Patriarch Sergius in the famous *Ekthesis*, drafted by Sergius and promulgated under the signature of Emperor Heraclius in 638.⁴² The *Ekthesis* borrows the language of Honorius, in this way, saying, "Hence, following the holy Fathers closely in all things and in this too, we confess one will of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the] true God [ἐν θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ ὁμολογοῦμεν]."⁴³ This adoption of the language of Honorius by Sergius and Heraclius was probably not part of a coherent strategy. Unlike the development of monoenergism, the Byzantine emperor and patriarch had not thought to use "one will" language as an olive branch in their ecumenical dialogues with monophysites.⁴⁴ They probably had as little idea as Honorius of the potential ramifications of raising the issue of one or two wills in Christ. Rather than to promote the doctrine of one will in Christ, the main thrust of the *Ekthesis*, like the *Psephos* before it, was to squelch the controversy that had erupted as a result of the talk of one or two activities in Christ. According to the *Ekthesis*, "one activity" language was problematic because, "[t]he expression...even if it was uttered by some of the Fathers, nevertheless alienates and confuses some who hear it."⁴⁵ But the *Ekthesis* foresaw graver dangers still from "two energy" language, since,

...the expression 'the two activities' scandalizes many, on the grounds that it was uttered by none of the holy and select spiritual leaders of the church, and certainly to follow it is to uphold also two wills at variance with one another, such that while God the Word wished to fulfill the salvific suffering, his humanity resisted and opposed him with its

⁴² Allen (2009), 33. The publication date corresponded with the centenary of the death of Severus of Antioch. Cf. Allen (2009), 33 n. 107.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Sergius had no trouble in banning [monoenergism] as soon as it stirred controversy...If Monenergism was not instrumental to the success of the ecclesiastical unions formed by Heraclius with the dissident churches between 629 and 633, and was quickly abandoned when it threatened the unity of the Chalcedonian its successor, Monotheletism, played no role in the negotiations with the non-Chalcedonian churches." Marek Jankowiak, "The Invention of Dyothelitism," *Studia Patristica* 63 (2013): 337-338.

⁴⁵ Heraclius, *Ekthesis* in Allen (2009), 214-215.

own will, and as a result two persons with conflicting wills are introduced, which is impious and foreign to Christian teaching.⁴⁶

In developing this line of thought, the *Ekthesis* departed, albeit however subtly, from the stance and desires expressed in Honorius's *First Letter to Sergius*. Honorius had instructed Sergius to "travel on the *royal highway* (Num. 20:17... avoiding to the right and left the hunters' traps that lie spread."⁴⁷ The overall theme of Honorius's communication had been: *age quod agis*, that is, continue to keep the peace and do not let any useless discussion of one or two activities in Christ disturb it. In the fragments that survive of Honorius's *Second Letter to Sergius*, we find the same idea. Honorius contends that "we are not obliged to define either one or two activities in *the mediator between God and human beings* (1 Tim. 2:5), but to confess that both natures are united in one Christ in the natural union, each active and effective with the cooperation of the other."⁴⁸ Moreover, "[t]o think or allege that Jesus Christ the Lord...is or was of one or two activities is completely vain [πάνυ μάταιον]."⁴⁹ From Honorius's point of view, the discussion was idle, because Sacred Scripture, the Councils, and the *Tome* of Leo supply all that is necessary for supporting the simple assertion of orthodox faith. Thus Honorius concluded his *First Letter to Sergius* by positing that "[w]e have not received from the holy scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit [are] one or two activities, but we have learned that he acted in manifold ways [πολυτρόπως]."⁵⁰ By developing the idea that profession of two activities in Christ inevitably leads to introducing two contrary and conflicting wills in Christ, Sergius went beyond the words and intention of Honorius, and in so doing exposed himself and the emperor to

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* in Allen (2009), 199.

⁴⁸ Honorius, *Second Letter to Sergius* in Allen (2009), 206-207. The term "cooperation" is from Leo's *Tome*.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 204-205.

⁵⁰ Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* in Allen (2009), 200-201.

the coming onslaught of the anti-monothelete camp; a *lapsus*, that, as we will see had dire consequences for the stability of the Heraclian regime.

As a final note on Honorius and the rise of monotheletism, it is striking that the Pope's rejection of the notion of a hostile and sinful will in Christ bears less resemblance to the teaching of Sergius in the *Ekthesis* than it does to the developed teaching of Maximus the Confessor concerning the lack of gnostic will (γνώμη) in Christ. When Honorius claims that "we confess one will of the Lord Jesus Christ, since manifestly our nature was assumed by the Godhead," he does not appear to deny a natural human faculty of willing (θέλημα φυσικόν) in Christ. Rather, what he denies seems to be precisely the fallen mode (τρόπος) of human willing that came about as a result of sin. This fallen mode of willing is what Maximus associates with *gnôme*. As Paul Blowers explains, *gnôme* for Maximus,

evoked the fallen mode or disposition of the will in which hesitation about worthy ends had to be unlearned, as it were, in the quest for virtue. There could not have been the least such vacillation or indecision in the sinless Christ's determination to do the will of the Father, so Christ had no *gnôme*.⁵¹

Succinct as they are, Honorius's reflections on Christ's will in his *First Letter to Sergius* nevertheless tend in the same direction as Maximus's later thought. When Honorius says that Christ assumed "the nature, of course, created before sin, not the one that was corrupted after the transgression," he accords with Maximus's contention that in Jesus Christ we see not "[t]he man who is just like us," though he has fully assumed our human nature, but rather "the man we consider in the role of the Savior."⁵² Maximus, like Honorius, denies not the existence of a

⁵¹ Blowers, 165.

⁵² *Opusculum* 6 (PG 91:651) in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Paul Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 173.

human faculty in Christ, but the presence of the corruption that stems from the Fall. As Honorius explicates,

it was not the sinful nature which is *at war with the law of the mind* (Rom. 7:23) that was assumed by the Saviour. Rather he came to *seek and save the lost* (Luke 19:10), that is, the sinful nature of the human race. *Another law*, or a different or contrary will, was not *in the limbs* (Rom. 7:23) of the Saviour, since he was born above the law of the human [condition]. For as it is written: *I did not come to do my will, but that of the Father who sent me* (John 6:38), and *Not as I will, but as you will, Father* (Matt. 26:39), and there are other passages of this kind, these are not expressions of a different [or hostile] will, but of the economy of the humanity which he assumed.⁵³

Maximus would go on to teach in the same way that Christ was “a perfect man, like us except for sin alone, through which we often rebel and wrestle against God, according to our will [κατὰ τὴν θέλησιν]...But he, being free of all sin according to nature, since he was not a mere man but God made man, had nothing in opposition [to God].”⁵⁴

Could it be that the scriptural reflections of Pope Honorius were the stimulus that sparked Maximus’s own reflections on Christ’s will and led him to teach that Christ’s (human) mode of willing was non-gnomic and fully deified? Of course Maximus’s own theologizing on this topic centered on an exegesis of the scriptural accounts of Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. If this is the case, then it would help us to appreciate the role of Honorius in a very different light than as the mere hapless founder of the monothelete heresy.

⁵³ Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* in Allen (2009), 199.

⁵⁴ *Opusculum* 4, PG 91, 60B-C. Cited in Booth (2014), 267.

Chapter Three: Maximus on Roman Primacy and his Defense of Honorius

As we noted in the previous chapter, recent scholarship has overturned the standard narrative of the development of monotheletism. That narrative held that Patriarch Sergius and Heraclius, having been ultimately foiled in their attempt to reconcile, by means of monoenergism, non-Chalcedonian, monophysite Christians with the imperial Chalcedonian Church, next pivoted to monothelete doctrine in a renewed attempt at achieving unity. As we have pointed out, however, the “one will of Christ” formula initially played no role in the imperial strategy. Rather, as Phil Booth and Marek Jankowiak have shown, it was anti-monotheletism that arose first, as a response to the perceived doctrinal imprecision of the *Ekthesis*. Additionally, the anti-monothelete movement was specifically emboldened by the military failures and political disasters suffered by the Heraclian regime.

Heraclius had aimed at nothing less than a program, “of total restoration, both political and cosmological,” of the Roman *oikumene*.¹ The symbolic apex of this program came in 629 with the return and restoration of the relic of the True Cross, which the Persians had dramatically captured when they seized Jerusalem in the previous decade. At the beginning of Heraclius’s reign, Persian armies had advanced all the way to the Bosphorus and threatened the capital itself. Only the strong walls of the city and the power of the Byzantine navy saved it. Heraclius, however, soon reversed Byzantium’s losses, driving the Persians out of Asia Minor and thereby bringing about the downfall of the Persian King Khusrau II. The peace settlement of July 629 procured the return of the True Cross, which Heraclius ordered to be brought into Constantinople, “where at the Feast of the Cross on 14 September, it was elevated in an elaborate and emotive ritual at Hagia Sophia.”² Heraclius’s supporters lauded this triumph as clear

¹ Booth (2014), 155.

² Ibid., 157.

indication of divine favor for the pious emperor and his policies of unification and restoration. The Moschan circle, however, regarded imperial claims of divine sanction with skepticism. In time, the prudence of their position was vindicated as Heraclius's achievements in both ecclesial and military spheres soon began to disintegrate. Sophronius would experience firsthand the pain of the calamities that were to befall the empire. Having returned from Old Rome, where he had gone to collect the body of his master John Moschus and bring it back to Palestine for burial (as he had promised to do), Sophronius became Patriarch of Jerusalem at the end of the year 634.³ Even prior to his consecration as bishop, the first Muslim caliph, Abu Bakr, had launched a full campaign to wrest Palestine from Byzantine control, toward the end of 633. In 636, either at Yarmuk or, according to recent revisions, somewhere between Damascus and Emesa, the Muslim Arabs delivered a crushing defeat to the Byzantines.⁴ Sometime between 636 and his death in March of 639, Patriarch Sophronius, in direct negotiations with the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, surrendered the holy city.⁵ In his famous sermon on Christ's Nativity, Sophronius had opined that such atrocities amounted to "providential punishment on the (theological) sins of the empire."⁶ Maximus concurred with his master's judgment, and he was now ready to escalate the doctrinal conflict with the ecclesio-political powers of the capital. He would do so through a two-pronged approach. First, he began to expose the full consequences of monoenergism (and the attempt to silence the dyoenergist position) through the elaboration of a dyothelete Christology that was not *ad hoc* but powerfully integrated into his systematic theological vision. Secondly, in continuity with the pro-Roman stance of the Moschan circle and

³ Booth (2014), 187, 234.

⁴ Ibid., 242.

⁵ Phil Booth comments, "Although the capitulation of Jerusalem itself was of course a momentous historical event, it is nevertheless difficult to date with precision." Booth speculates that the fall of the city, "should be placed late in 636 or early in 637." Booth (2014), 242-243.

⁶ Blowers, 58.

building on the diplomatic groundwork laid by Sophronius, he worked to galvanize an alliance with the Roman See.

It was specifically in *Opusculum 20* that both of these strands—anti-monotheletism and the importance of the Roman See—began to emerge as key themes for Maximus. Phil Booth notes that “[t]he doctrine of ‘two wills’ . . . which becomes so important to Maximus’s thought, makes no explicit appearance in his extant corpus before about 640.”⁷ And Marek Jankowiak adds: “To the best of my knowledge, the doctrine of two wills was for the first time exposed in two texts written in 641: the letter of Pope John IV ([r.] 640-642) to the emperors, and the dogmatic tome of Maximus to Marinus of Cyprus, known as his *Opusculum 20*.”⁸ Between 638 when the *Ekthesis* was promulgated and the emergence of these first explicitly anti-monothelete documents, there were a number of personnel changes on the political and ecclesial scene: Honorius died in October of 638. Though elected within three days of Honorius’s passing, his successor Severinus was denied immediate imperial ratification—perhaps owing to his refusal to pledge adherence to the *Ekthesis*.⁹ Thus Severinus’s official papacy lasted only two months before he died in 640 and was succeeded by John IV. Meanwhile, Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople passed in December of 638 and was succeeded by Pyrrhus. Sophronius died in March of 639, and the see of Jerusalem, now under Muslim control, was not filled. In 640, Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria angered Constantinople through his stance of appeasement towards the Islamic invaders and was deposed in 640. Finally, in the political realm, the Emperor Heraclius died in February of 641, and a severe crisis of succession followed in his wake.

⁷ Booth (2014), 265.

⁸ Jankowiak (2013), 339.

⁹ Booth (2014), 259. This is suggested by a work of Maximus the Confessor, his *Letter to Thalassius*, preserved only in Latin in the *Collectanea* by Anatasius Bibliothecarius, PL 129, 583D–586B. Cf. Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*, 59.

What exactly was the point of the anti-monothelete polemic that Maximus launched at precisely this juncture? Marek Jankowiak portrays Maximus as something of an imperial gadfly, stirring up dissent against Constantinople for theological statements that are “now widely acknowledged to belong to the mainstream of Chalcedonian theology.”¹⁰ In an important article, Richard Price has likewise acknowledged that there was often not much of a discernible difference between the position of monoenergists and dyoenergists, monotheletes and dyotheletes.¹¹ In fact, Price has shown that in many instances dyotheletes were articulating almost identical ideas to those of the monotheletes, albeit with different semantic overtones. Monotheletes, according to Price, did not deny that Christ had a natural faculty of human will, as such a denial would have obviously contradicted the orthodox tradition and amounted to simple Apollinarism. Rather, by in speaking of one will, monotheletes were emphasizing the harmony that obtained between human and divine volition.¹² Price, however, identifies the crucial issue distinguishing the monothelete position—not from the entire dyothelete party—but from Maximus the Confessor alone. What Maximus intuited as no one before him had was the positive role played by the rational human will in assenting to the Passion. He was prepared to fight tenaciously for this idea because he was convinced that it was crucial to soteriology. By contrast, most seventh century theologians had not yet come to appreciate the role of human freedom and the merit inherent in Christ’s human Yes, a Yes particularly on display in the drama of the Garden of Gethsemane. Rather, as Price comments, “in the tradition and on both sides of the seventh-century debate, the role of the human will was constantly reduced to an instinctive,

¹⁰ Jankowiak (2013), 335.

¹¹ Richard Price, “Monotheletism: A Heresy or a Form of Words?” in *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 221-232.

¹² Price observes that, “The use of the expression ‘one will’ to mean simply harmony of will was a common usage. Take, for example, the following argument attributed to Pyrrhus in the Disputation with Pyrrhus: if will pertains to nature, as Maximus claimed, then the saints, who have one will with God. will be of the same essence with him (PG 91, 292B). Mark how here the phrase ‘having one will with God’ is understood (by a monothelete!) to mean much the same whether applied to Christ or the saints.” Price, 224.

knee-jerk reaction of the flesh, which was merely a part of the natural human energy or operation.”¹³ The Cyrillian tradition, in reaction to Nestorianism, had tended to focus on the will of the Godhead to the neglect of the will of the humanity. By divine condescension (συγκατάβασις), God allowed that Jesus should experience the weakness of the flesh, including the aversion of the lower passions to death. Thus theological reflection prior to Maximus tended to see Christ’s humanity as contributing nothing but weakness. Maximus was the first to realize the positive contribution of Christ’s human soul: the assent of the rational will of his human mind to the light of the Logos that indwelt it and to the Holy Spirit’s communication of the will of the Father. Price concludes,

the true picture... is that both the tradition inherited from the fourth century and the post-Nestorian consensus agreed on a view of Christ that did not deny him a rational will but gave it nothing to do and rarely referred to it. Whether there was talk of “one will” or “two wills” made no difference—until Maximus the Confessor came up with a new interpretation of Gethsemane and thereby of the operation of will(s) in Christ.¹⁴

Perhaps Sophronius intuited something of the positive soteriological value of Christ’s rational, human will, when he objected to the *Ekthesis* and sounded the alarm against. It was left to Maximus, however, to fully develop a coherent two-will Christology. Surprisingly, in Price’s estimation, even the Third Council of Constantinople, the ecumenical council that championed dyotheletism, lost the nuance of Maximus’s thought and reverted in the direction of the Cyrillian-Athanasian Christology, with its emphasis on the weakness of the flesh and without a clear affirmation of the rational will. Nevertheless, Price notes that although Maximus’s “solution was not adopted at Constantinople III, [it] subsequently found its way into the orthodox tradition,” thanks in particular to its appropriation by Saint John of Damascus.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., 228.

¹⁴ Ibid., 232.

¹⁵ Ibid., 231-232.

Thus it was not mere political expediency that led Maximus to launch an attack against monotheletism starting in the 640s, but a conviction that the teaching on Christ's two wills had to be affirmed as part of the deposit of the faith. For Maximus, safeguarding and upholding the orthodox faith in its integrity was a *sine qua non* for every Christian, but especially for the monk and theologian. The orthodox faith had been given by Christ himself to the Church and this faith was the means by which human beings were saved and the cosmos restored. Jaroslav Pelikan has shown that for Maximus, within the orthodox faith there exists a "dynamic interrelation" of sources of authority. Maximus believed that,

Scripture was supreme, but only if it was interpreted in a spiritual and orthodox way. The fathers were normative, but only if they were harmonized with one another and related to the Scripture from which they drew. The councils were decisive, but only as voices of the one apostolic and prophetic and patristic doctrine.¹⁶

The content of the orthodox faith, for Maximus, was beyond what could ever be defined and captured by the utterances of these, indeed, true authorities of the Church. The full content of the faith—the faith that saves—is accessible solely through worship. Yet Maximus carefully avoids a spiritualization of faith such as would seek to escape from the visible, "fleshy" structures of the Church and her liturgy into a refuge of pure gnostic contemplation. According to Hans Urs von Balthasar, Maximus was able to walk this careful line by appropriating the Christological insights of the Council of Chalcedon into his system. Just as Christ exists in an unconfused, undivided, unchanged, and unseparated union of divine and human natures, so also, according to Maximus, there is "the unconfused unity of two in one in the visible, hierarchical Church."¹⁷ Balthasar terms this Maximus's "Chalcedonian Origenism."¹⁸ It is precisely here that we should

¹⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan, "Council or Father or Scripture?: The Concept of Authority in the Theology of Maximus the Confessor," in *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of the Very Reverend Georges Vasilievich Florovsky* (Rome: Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), 287.

¹⁷ Von Balthasar (2003), 317.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

situate Maximus's thought on the primacy of the Roman Church. For Maximus, though everything is subordinate to the orthodox faith itself, this faith cannot be found apart from the real historical Church, with the hierarchical structure given to her by Christ. As Balthasar explains, the *perichoresis* between the invisible faith and the visible structures of the Church was crucial for the Confessor:

Maximus staked his life on the unity of the Church in the highest degree of her historical reality—in her unity of dogma and life, of pope and emperor, of West and East. If the *Mystagogia* sketches out the internal, mystical side of his view of the Church, this is because the Church has, in his eyes, no simply “external” aspect. Even while he is fighting for his formula of Christ's two wills in a tough but seemingly petty series of skirmishes, he always is conscious of being in the Church's inmost heart: the Catholic Church stands and falls with the undiminished humanity of Christ, and with the Church stands and falls every kind of mystical and intellectual interiority.¹⁹

Maximus recognized that the successors of Peter had been given a special charge to uphold the unity of the historical reality which is the Church, but he also realized that Rome cannot stand alone. Rather, within the dynamic interplay of authority, it was also the role of those special few like himself, blessed with keen theological vision and the gift of *gnosis*, to support the successors of the apostles and to help them to adhere to the orthodox faith. Therefore, Maximus offered his doctrinal *akribeia* first to defend the reputation for orthodoxy of the Roman Pontiff, in the case of Honorius, and then to assist Honorius's successors to exercise well their authority in defining and upholding the orthodox faith.

Certainly, Maximus's affirmations of Roman primacy—if they are all authentic—are among the strongest, if not the strongest, that can be found among the writings of Greek-speaking Church Fathers. What also makes Maximus's witness unique, as Jean-Claude Larchet noted in his seminal study of Maximus on Roman Primacy, is the fact that Maximus never

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 318.

exercised hierarchical authority as priest or bishop, but remained a simple monk his entire life.²⁰ Yet in his career as peregrinating monk, Maximus always remained close to the sources of ecclesial authority. Now that he had come to realize the full import of his doctrine of the two wills, he began to turn to those sources of authority, particularly to Rome, in order to secure “Rome’s unwavering adherence to orthodox doctrine.”²¹ It is worth noting that when Maximus launched his polemic against monotheletism and began to seek hierarchical support for his project, he was once again in North Africa. We know that Maximus had returned to North Africa (i.e. the Exarchate of Africa) by 641 at the latest.²² He was certainly in Carthage by July of 645, when he debated Pyrrhus, the monothelete ex-patriarch of Constantinople, in the debate that would later be published as the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*.²³ In a monograph on Byzantine Africa in the sixth and seventh centuries, Jonathan Conant has shown that North Africa was a region where a certain amount of religious dissent fermented. Conant contends that “the African church consistently rejected the attempts of the emperor and the Pope to arrogate to themselves spiritual authority that, from an African point of view, they did not possess.”²⁴ Nevertheless, African churchmen did embrace the legitimacy of the Roman See as a final court of appeal for theological and ecclesial disagreements. Conant notes, however, that African Christians “of the

²⁰ “Il est un des rares Pères de l’Église à avoir pris des positions nettes sur cette question avec la double particularité de n’avoir occupé aucune fonction dans la hiérarchie ecclésiastique (il resta toute sa vie simple moine), mais d’avoir eu une connaissance intime à la fois des Églises d’Orient et de l’Église d’Occident, et d’avoir eu un contact direct avec leurs représentants à l’occasions des controverses monothélite et monoénergiste...” Larchet (1998), 126. Phil Booth affirms that, “there is no indication that [Maximus] ever became a higoumen, whether at Constantinople or elsewhere,” Booth (2014), 145. On Maxius and the exercise of authority, cf. Christian Boudignon, “Le pouvoir de l’anathème; ou, Maxime le Confesseur et les moines palestiniens du VII^e siècle,” in *Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism* (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 245–74.

²¹ Booth (2014), 270.

²² Allen (2015) in *OHMC*, 14.

²³ PG 91, 288-353. Pyrrhus suffered exile from Constantinople due to his perceived role in the political intrigue that accompanied the crisis of succession after the death of Heraclius. He would later return to the capital and be re-instated as patriarch.

²⁴ Jonathan Conant, *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 439-700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 317.

sixth century betray a perception that ultimate spiritual authority lay within the orthodox church as a whole when gathered in council, whether at a provincial or ecumenical level.”²⁵ This seems to fit a pattern that we have seen of Maximus’s thought being forged within a context of controversy or opposition. In Palestine, a hotbed of Origenian and Evagrian thought, he fought against aberrant forms of Origenism. In the strongly monophysite milieu of Alexandria, he sought to persuade his friends to detach themselves from Severan Christology and to embrace the orthodox faith. From Africa, a region that prided its ecclesial independence, Maximus would proclaim the primacy of Rome and defend the reputation for orthodoxy of the successor of Peter. Though, as we will see, he would seek the support of not only of the pope but of Church council as well to confirm his teaching on Christ’s wills.

Before we return to *Opusculum* 20 and Maximus’s defense of Honorius, we will consider his explicit claims about Roman primacy and how these claims are supported by his teaching on ecclesial and spiritual hierarchy. As mentioned, there are textual difficulties inherent in these questions. For example, *Opusculum* 12, which exhibits a robust notion of Roman primacy, survives only in Latin excerpts from the ninth-century *Collectanea* of Anastasius Bibliothecarius.²⁶ Furthermore, *Opusculum* 11, which does survive in a Greek version, contains language that bears strong resemblance to certain claims of Roman pre-eminence made by Pope

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Anastasius Bibliothecarius is a fascinating figure whose life and work reveal the precarious linguistic state of affairs that obtained between new and old Rome in the ninth century. At that time, he was one of the only Western clerics with an expert knowledge of the Greek language. Sent to Constantinople to assist with the negotiations for a marriage between the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor and the son of the Byzantine emperor, Anastasius chanced to be in capital at the time when the Fourth Council of Constantinople was in its final session. Since the official papal legates to the Council did not speak Greek, he became an unofficial papal representative. What is more, the official legates, returning to Rome by sea after the Council, were robbed by pirates and lost the official *acta*. Anastasius, returning by land, brought back the only surviving copy and translated it into Latin. The Latin version is the only version that survives today. Cf. Réka Forai, “The Interpreter of the Popes: The Translation Project of Anastasius Bibliothecarius,” (PhD. Diss., Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, 2008). Jean-Claude Larchet calls Anastasius, “l’émence grise de la politique romaine.” Larchet (1998), 140 n. 67.

Nicholas I (r. 858-867), in the controversies between Rome and Constantinople before and during the Photian schism. As Adam Cooper concedes, “it is not entirely impossible that a later writer with certain sympathies towards the Roman See—perhaps even Anastasius Bibliothecarius himself—composed and inserted the fragment we have come to know as *Opusculum* 11 in the Maximian corpus.”²⁷ The nineteenth-century Jesuit scholar Arthur Lapôte made a prosopological identification between Anastasius Bibliothecarius (i.e. the papal librarian) and Anastasius the antipope to Benedict III. Réka Forai notes that prior to this identification “the controversial elements of Anastasius’ biography led to a differentiation between the demonic politician and the angelic intellectual.” If the identification is indeed correct, then we can admit that there are indeed some unseemly episodes in Anastasius’s biography, but does a checkered ecclesiastical career give us reason to suspect that Anastasius might not have been above interpolating lines into a text in order to buttress his position?²⁸ Bronwen Neil reminds us that “Anastasius was constantly employed in a propaganda war against Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople.”²⁹ Pro-papal statements from Saint Maximus would certainly have made for useful grenades to hurl in this battle. But if Anastasius had attributed to Maximus words that he did not in fact write, would he have not faced the danger of being called out for such bald forgery by Photius? Photius, after all, “was a person of great erudition and learning and a prolific writer

²⁷ Cooper, 186.

²⁸ The career highlights of Anastasius the antipope include “march[ing] on Rome with an army of supporters” in July 855 and ordering his followers to destroy frescoes of Jesus and of Mary that had been painted above the door of Saint Peter’s basilica. Granted, these frescoes had Christ and the Virgin proclaiming the anathema that had been issued against Anastasius by a council called by a rival claimant to the chair of Peter. See Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 13. More significantly for our textual question, there is some suggestion that Anastasius’s later employer, Pope Hadrian II, may have accused him of manipulating texts. Neil notes, “Hadrian was later to claim that his letters had been ‘stolen or twisted or falsified’ by his *dictator* Anastasius. *Ibid.*, 15 n. 20. However, this charge is itself shaky: Neil cites Girolamo Arnaldi who provides no source for the quotation. Cf. Girolamo Arnaldi, *Natale 875: politica, ecclesiologia, cultura del papato altomedievale*, *Nuovi Studi Storici* 9 (Rome: 1990), 69.

²⁹ Neil (2006), 26.

and collator, as witnessed by his homilies, the *Lexikon*, *Amphilochia*, *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit* and above all the *Bibliotheca*, an extensive collection of reviews of classical and Christian literature.”³⁰ Like his rival Anastasius Bibliothecarius, Photius “knew a great deal of the Maximian *corpus*.”³¹ We do have to acknowledge that Anastasius Bibliothecarius pursued an agenda with his translation projects and that he sought texts for inclusion in his *Collectanea* that would have positive “implications for papal relations with the Frankish and Greek empires in the ninth century.”³² But it would be mere speculation to accuse Anastasius not just of cherry-picking texts but in fact of falsifying or altering the texts of Maximus.

Regardless, however, of our trust or distrust of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, we have good reason to believe in the authenticity of these texts, because their “celebration of Roman preeminence forms part of a wider pattern in Maximus’ writings and those of his circle in this period.”³³ Maximus’s explicit praises and affirmations of Roman primacy are a continuation and encapsulation of attitudes shared by John Moschus, Sophronius of Jerusalem, and other associates of the Moschan circle. Beginning from the time of his defense of Pope Honorius in *Opusculum* 20 onward, that is, beginning in the decade of the 640s, we find examples of Maximus extoling the privileged position of the Roman See among the patriarchates.

One of the first of these texts is the *Letter to Thalassius*, which we previously mentioned in connection to the imperial ratification of Honorius’s successor Severinus. This is one of the texts that is found preserved only in the Latin excerpts of Anastasius’s *Collectanea*. It is found in

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Andrew Louth, “Maximus the Confessor’s Influence and Reception in Byzantine and Modern Orthodoxy” in *OHMC*, 502. Louth contends that, “[i]t is with the learned patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, that we find the first comprehensive knowledge of the Confessor in the Byzantine Empire.” The only works of Maximus that Photius was unfamiliar with, according to Louth, were, “the earlier *Amb.Io.*, most of the *Opusc.*, and a few smaller works, such as the *Exposition of Ps. 59, On the Lord’s Prayer*, and his *Mystagogy*.” Ibid. Photius’s non-familiarity with most of the *Opuscula* is notable.

³² Neil (2006), 35.

³³ Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*, 67.

the *Patrologia Latina* under the title, “Commemoration of what the Roman envoys did in Constantinople.”³⁴ Although the text does not specifically name Severinus, the circumstances described in the letter fit what is known of Severinus’s accession to the papal throne. Since the *Liber Pontificalis* dates that accession to May of 640, Maximus’s letter can confidently be dated to the same year.³⁵ In the letter, Maximus speaks of Rome as “the city most propitious to me.”³⁶ Although Rome is “pre-eminent and mother city of the Churches,” she had been compelled to “remain a widow” for a lengthy amount of time because of the issue of the delayed ratification of the duly elected pontiff.³⁷ Moreover, Maximus lauds her *apocrisarii* or papal legates as “those unwavering ministers of the, indeed, firm and unshakeable rock, that is to say, of the very great [*maximae*] and apostolic Church which is in that place”³⁸ The words that Maximus quotes from the *apocrisarii* likewise affirm that the Church of Rome is first in the clerical order and “the elder of all the Churches that are under the sun.”³⁹

Opusculum 12 is a text that dates from roughly the same time as the *Letter to Thalassius*. It is another of the texts persevered only in Latin by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. In this case, we have an excerpt from a letter addressed to the aforementioned Peter the *Illustris*, whom we located earlier as a resident of Alexandria. The issue at hand in this letter is the honor that should or should not to be accorded to the ex-Patriarch Pyrrhus of Constantinople. Pyrrhus resigned under duress and took flight to North Africa as a result of the uprising of the Byzantine general

³⁴ PL 129, 583D–586B.

³⁵ Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*, 59.

³⁶ “...quae modo ab Urbe mihi felicissima scripta sunt a quibusdam reverendis viris [...which things have just been written by very venerable men from the City most propitious to me...].” My translation. PL 129, 583D.

³⁷ “...quod hac pro causa tanto tempore manere viduam Ecclesiarum principem matrem et urbem coegissent...” PL 129, 585A.

³⁸ “...stabiles illi et firmae revera et immobilis petrae ministri, maximae videlicet et apostolicae quae illic est Ecclesiae.” PL 129, 586A.

³⁹ “...senior cunctarum quae sub sole sunt Ecclesiarum...” PL 129, 585B.

Valentine.⁴⁰ Valentine had entered a pact to support Heraclius Constantine, son of Heraclius's first wife Eudocia. Meanwhile, Pyrrhus fell from favor because he was allied to Heraclius's second wife (and niece) Martina and her children.⁴¹ The issue for Maximus, however, is not Pyrrhus's good standing, or lack thereof, with the emperor but his dalliance with monotheletism. *Opusculum* 12 dates from around 645 and concerns the prerogative of the Roman See to pass judgment even on a patriarch of Constantinople.⁴² From the letter, we glean that Rome has issued some sort of judgment of heresy against Pyrrhus. Maximus reasons therefore:

If the Roman see recognizes Pyrrhus to be not only a reprobate but a heretic, it is certainly plain that everyone who anathematizes those who have rejected Pyrrhus also anathematizes the see of Rome, that is, he anathematizes the Catholic Church. I need hardly add that he excommunicates himself also, if indeed he is in communion with the Roman see and the Catholic Church of God.⁴³

As to the question of ecclesial honor and titles (*sanctissimus* and *almificus*), these are certainly to be denied to Pyrrhus until the deposed patriarch is re-admitted to communion with the pope, because,

It is not right that one who has been condemned and cast out by the apostolic see of the city of Rome for his wrong opinions should be named with any kind of honour, until he be received by her, having returned to her, and to our Lord, by a pious confession and orthodox faith, by which he can receive holiness and the title of holy ... Let him [sc. Pyrrhus] hasten before all things to satisfy the Roman see, for if it is satisfied, all will agree in calling him pious and orthodox.⁴⁴

We note that the condition for Pyrrhus's re-admission to communion is not simply recognition of the pope's authority, but rather confession before the pope of the orthodox faith. Maximus clearly believes that the pope is endowed with a special charism to judge what is orthodox.

⁴⁰ Allen, "Life and Times of Maximus the Confessor," in *OHMC*, 6. Phil Booth posits that, "it seems clear that Pyrrhus resigned rather than being deposed." Booth (2014), 284.

⁴¹ Booth (2014), 252ff.

⁴² Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*, 63. There is disagreement about the exact dating of the letter. Polycarp Sherwood dated it before Pyrrhus's debate with Maximus at Carthage in July of 645, whereas Christian Boudignon contends that the letter must have been written afterwards. Cf. Boudignon (2007), 256.

⁴³ PG 91, 144A. Translation by Edward Siecienski in *OHMC*, 553.

⁴⁴ PG 91, 144B. Translation by Edward Siecienski in *OHMC*, 553.

Moreover, the reputation of the Roman see for orthodoxy is known to all. If the pope accepts Pyrrhus's confession as pious and orthodox, then everyone else will recognize this judgment as well. Finally, Maximus provides additional theological underpinning for such definitive authority, noting that,

For he is only wasting words who thinks he must convince or lure such people as myself, instead of satisfying or entreating the blessed pope of the most holy catholic church of Rome, that is, the apostolic throne, which is from the incarnate Son [the Word of God] himself and which, in accordance with the holy canons and the definitions of faith, received from all the holy councils universal and supreme dominion, authority, and the power over all God's churches throughout the world to bind and loose.⁴⁵

It is significant then, that, according to *Opusculum* 12, the “blessed pope” and the “apostolic see” are directly “from the incarnate Son himself.” The pope has equally received “universal and supreme dominion, authority, and the power over all God's churches throughout the world to bind and loose” from the ecumenical councils, but the pope and the apostolic see are prior, being “*ab ipso incarnato Dei Verbo.*”

It is worth observing the outcome of Maximus's showdown with Pyrrhus. Persuaded by the force of Maximus's theological reasoning in the debate at Carthage, the former patriarch recanted of his monothelete stance. He journeyed to Rome where he disavowed the *Ekthesis* by offering a *libellus* to the dyothelete Pope Theodore I (r. 642–49). This Theodore was of Palestinian origin and had connections to Sophronius and the Moschan circle.⁴⁶ According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, not only did Theodore admit Pyrrhus back into communion, but he appears to have taken the extraordinary step of acknowledging Pyrrhus as the rightful patriarch of

⁴⁵ PG 91, 144C. Translation by Edward Siecienski in *OHMC*, 553. “Nam frustra solummodo loquitur, qui mihi similes suadendos putat, et non satisfacit et implorat sacntissimae Romanorum Ecclesiae beatissimum papam, id est, apostolicam sedem, quae ab ipso incarnato Dei Verbo, sed et omnibus sanctis synodis, secundum sacros canones et terminos, universarum, quae in toto terrarum orbe sunt, sanctarum Dei Ecclesiarum in omnibus et per omnia percepit et habet imperium, auctoritatem et potestatem ligandi et solvendi.”

⁴⁶ Ekonomou, 92-98.

Constantinople,⁴⁷ a move which Phil Booth describes as “an act both of flagrant provocation towards Paul [reigning Patriarch of Constantinople] and of gross defiance against imperial will.”⁴⁸ Pyrrhus’s dramatic volte-face, however, was just as quickly reversed. In the words of the *Liber Pontificalis*, Pyrrhus “returned once again like a dog to his own vomit of impiety,” through his re-embrace of monotheletism.⁴⁹ He returned to the East and briefly succeeded in re-capturing the patriarchate of Constantinople. His second term as Patriarch lasted only a few months before he died in June of 654.

A third key Maximian text on Roman primacy, *Opusculum* 11, is also an extract from a letter, but unlike the *Letter to Thalassium* and *Opusculum* 12 it survives in a (presumably) original Greek text.⁵⁰ *Opusculum* 11 dates from sometime after the Lateran Council of 649 and prior to Maximus’s arrest and deportation to Constantinople in 653. The Lateran Council of 649 represents the culmination of the alliance between what Christian Boudignon terms the religious power of Rome and a Palestinian monastic intelligentsia.⁵¹ We do not know precisely when Maximus left North Africa to begin his sojourn in Old Rome. We do know that following his resounding defeat of the ex-patriarch Pyrrhus in the debate at Carthage Maximus became hugely influential in the North African Church. He galvanized the bishops of North Africa in opposition to monotheletism, which several of them condemned outright in letters that were later included in the Acts of the Lateran Council.⁵² Most fatefully for Maximus, the exarch Gregory, who had presided over the debate between Maximus and Pyrrhus, launched an all-out rebellion against the Byzantine Emperor Constans II (r. 641-669). The exact nature of and reasons for the rebellion

⁴⁷ *Liber Pontificalis* 74.

⁴⁸ Booth (2014), 287.

⁴⁹ *Liber Pontificalis* 75. Cf. Proverbs 26:11.

⁵⁰ PG 91, 137C–140B.

⁵¹ Boudignon (2004), 40.

⁵² Booth (2014), 287.

are unclear. It may have been spurred by the desire of the residents of North Africa to organize their own self-defense in the face of increasingly imminent Arab attacks. On the other hand, the imperial doctrine of monotheletism may have played a role. This was the accusation that Maximus would have to face during his trial in exile: that he was the one who had inspired Gregory to open rebellion. According to the Syriac *Life* of George of Resh‘aina, however, Maximus and his disciple Anastasius departed from North Africa prior to the outbreak of the rebellion, “fear of the Arabs having disturbed them,” and they made their way first to Sicily and then to Rome itself.⁵³

The Lateran Synod of 649 represented the perfect confluence of Roman papal and Palestinian monastic agendas. Its convocation was also a bold act of defiance of the Byzantine emperor. Pauline Allen explains that “[i]nstead of seeking the customary imperial approval for his elevation to the papacy, [Pope] Martin convened the Lateran Synod, secure in the knowledge that he had the support of Maximus and a huge number of eastern dyothelete monks in the cause for orthodoxy.”⁵⁴ Palestinian monasticism was particularly represented at the synod. Richard Price describes the breadth of Palestinian influence and how the monks benefited from their alliance with Rome:

[These monks] are said to have represented several monasteries: the Laura of St. Sabas in Palestine, a satellite of that same institution in North Africa and two communities of Armenians and Cilicians (perhaps, however, also comprised of ascetics from Palestine). These, however, appear as a subsection of a larger Palestinian presence, including ascetics from St. Theodosius’, Sophronius’ former coenobium. The Roman popes, therefore, now provided Maximus’ Palestinian faction both with a patriarchal mouthpiece for its doctrine and with the basic patronage which granted them their maintenance.⁵⁵

⁵³ Brock §20, 318.

⁵⁴ Allen in *OHMC*, 8.

⁵⁵ Richard Price, General Introduction to *The Acts of the Lateran Synod of 649* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 39.

From the vantage point of Rome and the other Western bishops, the participation of Palestinian monks “added to the meeting a sense of ecumenicity” and “provided the Greek theological expertise required for the detailed refutation of monoenergism and monotheletism.”⁵⁶ Most importantly, however, the theology that had been developed by the monks of Palestine, with “its celebration of Rome and simultaneous suspicion of secular interference in the Church,” provided a perfect complement to the political and ecclesiological agenda of the popes, who had long chafed at Constantinopolitan imperial dominance.⁵⁷ Most scholars today concur with the findings of Rudolf Riedinger who proved that the Greek text, rather than the Latin, was the original text of the Synod. Furthermore, most scholars also follow Riedinger in supposing that Maximus the Confessor “must surely have been himself the author (or at least have supervised the composition) of the intricate expositions of doctrine that the Acts [of the Lateran Council of 649] contain.”⁵⁸

It is in the wake of this Council of 649, that we find what is surely the most sublime and comprehensive utterance of Maximus on the subject Roman primacy. We quote this short work of *Opusculum* 11 in its entirety:

For the very ends of the earth and those in every part of the world who purely and rightly confess the Lord look directly to the most holy Church of the Romans and its confession and faith as though it were a sun of unflinching light, expecting from it the illuminating splendour of the Fathers and the sacred dogmas, just as the divinely inspired and sacred six synods (ἅγιοι ἕξ σύνοδοι) have purely and piously decreed, declaring most expressly the symbol of faith. For ever since the incarnate Word of God came down to us, all the churches of Christians everywhere have held that greatest Church there (αὐτόθι) to be their sole base and foundation (μόνην κρηπιῖδα καὶ θεμέλιον), since on the one hand, it is in no way overcome by the gates of Hades, according to the very promise of the Saviour (Mt. 16:18-19), but holds the keys of the orthodox confession and faith in him and opens the only true and real religion to those who approach with godliness, and on the other hand, it shuts up and locks every heretical mouth that speaks unrighteousness against the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁸ Ibid., ix. According to Riedinger, “der eigentliche Vater der Lateranakten war Maximos der Bekenner.” Cited in Jankowiak (2009), 263, n. 378.

Most High. For that which was founded and built by the creator and master of the universe himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his disciples and apostles, and following them the holy fathers and teachers and martyrs consecrated by their own words and deeds, and by their agony and sweat, suffering and bloodshed, and finally by their violent death for the catholic and apostolic Church of us who believe in him, they strive to destroy through two words (διὰ δύο ρημάτων) [uttered] without effort and without death—O the patience and forbearance of God!—and [so seek] to annul the great ever-radiant and ever-lauded mystery of the orthodox worship of Christians.⁵⁹

A number of scholars would like to explain away this clear and robust defense of Roman primacy by attributing the ardor of the text to its historical circumstances. This is the position of Jean-Claude Larchet, a convert to Eastern Orthodoxy. It is also the position of Phil Booth, who largely echoes Larchet on this question. As Booth notes, “Maximus had run the distinct risk of being remembered as a heresiarch within the Greek and Latin churches, to be counted alongside Nestorius as one who had divided Christ.”⁶⁰ Rome had provided Maximus with haven from the charge of heresy. It was also a refuge for the man who had repeatedly been forced to flee from the threat of barbarian violence, abandoning first Palestine, then Alexandria, and finally Carthage. Larchet and Booth view Maximus as trumpeting Roman pre-eminence partly from a motive of gratitude, but primarily because Rome had consistently upheld the orthodox faith, whereas the other patriarchates, and especially Constantinople, had failed to do so.⁶¹

Such arguments, however, bypass the clearly theological claims at the heart of *Opusculum* 11. Rome’s ability to remain steadfast in the orthodox confession of the faith is not by chance, but is entirely dependent upon the promise made by Christ in Matthew 16:18-19: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death

⁵⁹ PG 91, 137C-140B. Translation by Adam Cooper in *The Body in Saint Maximus the Confessor*, 181-182.

⁶⁰ Booth (2014), 269.

⁶¹ Thus, Larchet denies that Maximus posits an equivalence between the See of Rome and the Catholic Church. Rather, “il affirme reconnaître que l’Église de Rome, engagée dans la controverse pour défendre la foi orthodoxe la représente plutôt que l’Église de Constantinople tombée dans l’hérésie. Et ce n’est que dans la mesure où l’Église de Rome confesse la foi orthodoxe qu’elle peut être considérée comme l’Église universelle.” Larchet, introduction to Ponsoye (1998b), 74.

shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” According to Maximus’s statement in *Opusculum* 11, this promise extends specifically to the Church that is “in that place [αὐτόθι],” that is, in the place where the apostles Peter and Paul died. As Adam Cooper suggests,

We can only presume that to [Maximus’s] way of thinking, the Church in Rome holds these keys for no other reason than what was accepted universally as the Petrine connection to Rome, a connection first made explicit by Irenaeus, referred to at the Council of Sardica (c.343), developed by Leo I (440–61), and exploited from very early on through the establishment of a shrine at the Apostle’s tomb and its promotion as a holy place for pilgrimage.⁶²

Near the end of the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, an explicit connection appears to be established between Peter the apostle and his papal successors. In the passage in question, Pyrrhus, having been vanquished by Maximus in the debate, offers that he will go to Rome and offer a *libellus* of his errors (as the *Liber Pontificalis* will in fact record him as doing later). He asks only that he may be found worthy to pray at the place “of the apostolic tombs, or rather of the leaders themselves of the apostles,” and then be able “to see most holy pope face-to-face.”⁶³ If the text of *Opusculum* 11 is indeed Maximian, then it clearly demonstrates that Maximus believes the promise made by Christ to Peter extends to his successors as well, as Maximus elides Peter and the Church of Rome, making the later the one foundation and cornerstone (μόνην κρηπιῖδα καὶ θεμέλιον) of all the Churches.

We note in passing two difficulties in the text. The first is the mention of “six sacred synods (ἅγιοι ἕξ σύνοδοι).” Did Maximus believe that the Lateran Council of 649 was indeed an ecumenical council? Opinion on this question is divided. In one other text, namely, the *Dispute*

⁶² Cooper, 182-83.

⁶³ PG 91, 353. “...τῆς τῶν ἀποστολικῶν· μᾶλλον δὲ, αὐτῶν τῶν κορυφαίων ἀποστολικῶν σηκῶν προσκυνήσεως· λοιπὸν δὲ, καὶ τῆς κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πάπα, θέας.”

at *Bizya*, which is one of the documents from Maximus's trial and exile, Maximus does include the Synod of 649 as one of the "holy and approved synods [ἁγίας καὶ ἐγκρίτους συνόδους]," but he does not use the term ecumenical.⁶⁴ Richard Price argues that "the synod [of 649] could not claim the status of a true ecumenical council: Maximus the Confessor made this claim on its behalf, but the synod's own *Encyclical Letter* stops short of the same pretension, which would in any case have seemed absurd to eastern churchmen."⁶⁵ By contrast, Marek Jankowiak contends that by the design of its organizers, the Lateran Council of 649 was indeed conceived as an ecumenical council and was modeled upon the acts of the councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II (553).⁶⁶ A second unresolved question is what Maximus means when he refers to the two words (διὰ δύο ρημάτων) through which some are seeking "to destroy and annul" the true faith of Christians. Adam Cooper surmises that the reference may be to the *Ekthesis* of Heraclius and the *Typos* of Constans II. Similar to the *Psephos* and the *Ekthesis*, the *Typos* sought to staunch the debate over monotheletism. It was for his refusal to assent to the *Typos* that Maximus was exiled and suffered mutilation. The reference, however, of *Opusculum* 11 remains uncertain.

Considering Maximus's overall teaching on Roman Primacy, we find at the heart of it a dynamism such as Jaroslav Pelikan alluded to concerning the interplay of authorities (Scripture, Fathers, and Councils) in Maximus's theology. Adam Cooper explains that Maximus possessed "an understanding of a divinely instituted order of ecclesial and doctrinal authority in which the teaching of the apostles and prophets, recorded in Scripture and mediated through the Church's

⁶⁴ *Dispute at Bizya* in Allen and Neil (2002), 88-89.

⁶⁵ Price, General Introduction to *The Acts of the Lateran Synod of 649*, 67.

⁶⁶ "Maxime érige donc explicitement le synode du Latran au rang d'un concile œcuménique. Les actes du Latran confirment que tel était bel et bien le dessein de ses organisateurs. Conçus sur le modèle des actes des conciles d'Ephèse, Chalcedoine et Constantinople II, ils s'en écartent toutefois par endroits à cause de la spécificité de ce synode anti-impérial." Jankowiak (2009), 263-264.

bishops and councils, itself conveys what is constitutive for the reception of divine life. To receive their teaching is to receive them, and to receive them is to receive Christ.”⁶⁷ Maximus, who drew heavily on the theology of Dionysius the Areopagite, employs the notion of order and hierarchical rank (τάξις) throughout his theology. Cooper draws our attention to a particularly illuminating text from Maximus’s *Questions to Thalassius*. Thalassius asks Maximus to clarify a scriptural difficulty from Acts of the Apostles (2:14). In this passage, Christian disciples from Tyre urge Paul, “through the Spirit,” not to journey onward to Jerusalem. In the process of answering how it was that St. Paul did not disobey the Holy Spirit, Maximus introduces a distinction “between ‘the prophetic gift’ (τὸ προφητικὸν χάρισμα) and ‘the apostolic gift’ (τὸ ἀποστολικὸν χάρισμα). The latter is superior to the former, since it has in mind the whole divine *skopos*.”⁶⁸ Maximus explains,

Since the prophetic gift is inferior to the apostolic gift, it was not appropriate to the Word who governs the universe (τὸ πᾶν) and assigns each one his due office (τὴν ἐκάστου διορίζοντος τάξιν) for the superior to submit to the inferior, but rather for the inferior to follow after the superior. For those who prophesied through the prophetic spirit in them—not the apostolic spirit—revealed the way in which St Paul would suffer for the Lord. But he, looking only towards the divine purpose (πρὸς μόνον ἀφορῶν τὸν θεῖον σκοπὸν), regarded as nothing all that would intervene.⁶⁹

Following the logic of this passage, we can say that for Maximus, the one Holy Spirit of God, is active in Church through different ecclesial ranks and spiritual gifts (χαρίσματα). It is through these differing ranks, in fact, that the unity of the Church is preserved. Within the hierarchical structure of the Church (which comes from Christ himself), it is the Church that is found at Rome which has the most superior rank, because it is the office of the successor of Peter to look

⁶⁷ Cooper, 187.

⁶⁸ Cooper, 179.

⁶⁹ Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 29.54–66, (CCSG 7. 213–15) cited in Cooper 179.

after what is more universal, that is, the good of all the Churches. In this way, he is like Paul in that he looks towards the *skopos* which is more universal and divine.

Phil Booth, has argued that Maximus, in the very last period of his life, under the duress of trial and exile, altered his position on Roman primacy. Faced with the specter that Rome might renege on its commitment to dyotheletism and enter into communion with the unrepentant emperor and patriarchate of Constantinople, Maximus “reinterpre[ed] the promise of Christ to Saint Peter so as to guarantee not Roman power or preeminence but rather the permanence of the orthodox faith, irrespective of a particular place or institution.”⁷⁰ In the record of Maximus’s trial (the *Relatio motionis*⁷¹), Maximus’s interrogators had already raised the possibility of Roman infidelity. Maximus remained steadfast, insisting, “I’ll never be convinced that the Romans will be united with the Byzantines, unless they [the Byzantines] confess that our Lord and God by nature wills and works our salvation according to each [of the natures] from which he is, and in which he is, as well as which he is.”⁷² When still pressed as to what he will do if the Romans enter into communion with the Byzantines, without the latter confessing what Maximus believes to be the orthodox faith, Maximus grants, “The Holy Spirit, through the Apostle [Paul], condemns even angels who innovate in some way contrary to what is preached.”⁷³ Thus Maximus seems to acknowledge, at least in theory, that Rome could capitulate, but he is confident that she will not. On the other hand, Booth believes he finds a change in Maximus’s position in the *Letter of Maximus to Anastasius, His Disciple*.⁷⁴ Maximus has been pressed by Patriarch Peter of Constantinople, who writes saying,

⁷⁰ Booth (2014), 274.

⁷¹ CPG 7736. In Allen and Neil (2002), 48-74.

⁷² *Relatio motionis* §7, Allen and Neil (2002), 62.

⁷³ Ibid. Cf. Galatians 1:8: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed.”

⁷⁴ CPG 7701. In Allen and Neil (2002), 120-123.

What Church do you belong to? Constantinople? Rome? Antioch? Alexandria? Jerusalem? See, all of them are united, together with the provinces subject to them. If, therefore, you belong to the catholic church, be united, lest perhaps you devise a strange path by your way of life and you suffer what you don't expect.⁷⁵

Maximus responds:

The God of all pronounced that the catholic church was the correct and saving confession of the faith in him when he called Peter blessed because of the terms in which he had made proper confession of him. But let me learn the confession on which the unity of all the churches was effected, and if it was effected properly I shall not be estranged from it.⁷⁶

It seems to me that this statement from Maximus does not represent a departure from or a reinterpretation of his earlier position on Roman primacy. Booth and Larchet are certainly correct to insist on confession of the orthodox faith as a criterion that towers above all other considerations for Maximus. This confession of faith, however, does not exist separately from the hierarchical and historically real Church established by Christ. As Adam Cooper explains,

through the harmony created by right faith active in love, the Church's hierarchical *ordo* is the means by which each individual component in the whole structure is able to participate in its unique, unchanging centre (κέντρον). It is the means by which the whole Church with each of its members rightly confesses the true faith. It is the means by which God is manifest bodily on earth. And so it is the means also to true ecclesial communion and personal deification.⁷⁷

Maximus believes in the promise that Christ made to his Church (Mt. 16:18-19), but he is also aware of the precarity of the confession of the orthodox faith. It is not something that is automatically guaranteed, but rather it has to be safeguarded and fought for in every historical epoch. Its defense and maintenance also requires a great deal of the virtue of hope: hope precisely that Christ's promise to Peter will endure, but also that Peter's faith will not fail, but that he will strengthen his brothers (Lk 22:32). It is for this reason that rather than despairing when

⁷⁵ *Letter of Maximus to Anastasius, His Disciple* in Allen and Neil (2002), 121.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Cooper, 190.

teased with the possibility of Rome's capitulation to heresy, Maximus went to work: weak though his position in exile was, he rallied his circle to do whatever could possibly be done to support the pope and to help him cling of the orthodox confession of the faith. It is this same spirit of hope in the promise of Christ to Peter that animated Maximus's defense of Honorius in *Opusculum 20*, to which we turn again in closing

We are now positioned to understand well the reason behind the lavish hospitality that Maximus extended to Honorius in *Opusculum 20*. As mentioned, this particular letter appears to be the opening salvo of Maximus in the battle for dyotheletism. *A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor* proffers 641 as the date for the composition of this *Opusculum*. This dating is based partly on the prosopological identification of its ostensible recipient, Marinus, who is the addressee of a half dozen letters from Maximus. Jean-Claude Larchet, following the lead of Polycarp Sherwood, had placed *Opusculum 20* chronologically prior to *Opusculum 7*.⁷⁸ Recent scholarship, however, has revised the order based on what appears to be Marinus's rise through the ecclesiastical ranks: "in *Letter 20* [Marinus] is a monk; in *Opusculum 7* a deacon; and in *Opusculum 20* and the remaining texts a priest."⁷⁹ Most of Maximus's correspondence with Marinus explicitly mentions the latter's residing at Cyprus. If he was always a resident of the island, it is possible that Maximus met him there on one of his westward journeys. On the other hand, it seems that Marinus may have been in the retinue of Arcadius, the archbishop of Cyprus. Jankowiak contends that Marinus's real role in *Opusculum 20* is to deliver the treatise to his archbishop, for, "the real addressee of Maximus' letter cannot but be Arcadius, a key figure in the early stage of the Monothelite controversy."⁸⁰ Indeed, Maximus instructs Marinus at the

⁷⁸ Larchet, introduction to Ponsoye (1998a), 50.

⁷⁹ Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*.

⁸⁰ Jankowiak (2013), 338.

end of the letter, to “make these things known to the one who hierarchically is seated in the first place of our blameless and orthodox faith,”⁸¹ which seems to be a reference to Arcadius.

Arcadius had received Sophronius’s *Synodical Letter*, and there is evidence that he may have sparred with Sophronius at the Council of Cyprus c. 636.⁸² Thus a key purpose of *Opusculum 20* may have been to win over Arcadius to the dyothelete cause. Arcadius name is mentioned by Maximus in *Opusculum 12*, the letter to Peter the *Illustris*. There Maximus praises Arcadius as orthodox, along with Popes Honorius, Severinus, and John IV.⁸³

Maximus examines three texts in *Opusculum 20*: These are 1. The work *Against Daitetus* (sc. John the Grammarian) by the two-time patriarch of Antioch, Anastasius I (d. c. 599). 2. A string of citations from *Theological Oration 30* by Saint Gregory Nazianzen (c. 329-390). 3. Honorius’s *First Letter to Sergius*. According to the conceit of the letter, Marinus has made inquiries with Maximus asking for clarification of these texts. Why these particular texts? It appears that they may have figured in an encyclical letter, now lost, from Patriarch Pyrrhus of Constantinople. This encyclical was perhaps the impetus for Pope John’s own aforementioned letter to the emperors Constantine III and Heraclonas, in which the pope became, alongside Maximus, one of the first dyothelete spokespersons. Though very little is known about the content of Pyrrhus’s encyclical, Marek Jankowiak speculates that “it does not seem to have been more than a general declaration of support for the *Ekthesis*, no doubt invoking its corroboration by pope Honorius.”⁸⁴ Given the likelihood that the texts treated in *Opusculum 20* stem from this now lost encyclical of Pyrrhus and well as the fact the letter appears to pre-date the death of

⁸¹ “... ταῦτα γνώρισον τῷ ἱεραρχικῶς προκαθημένῳ τῆς ἀνωμότητος ἡμῶν καὶ ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως ...” All English quotations from *Opusculum 20* are included in the Appendix *infra*.

⁸² Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*, 56.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁸⁴ Jankowiak (2013), 340.

Archbishop Arcadius of Cyrus,⁸⁵ Jankowiak dates the letter with more precision to the summer of 641.⁸⁶

Opusculum 20 opens with a brief exhortation on the spiritual life. Maximus argues that prayer, purity of life, and detachment from heretical doctrine all inextricably linked. He then proceeds to clarify the words of Patriarch Anastasius of Antioch. His method of interpretation is fascinating. He says, essentially, that Anastasius is a fine interpreter of his own words, if one knows how to read him properly. Maximus notes how painstakingly and studiously Anastasius composed his treatise, and he even classifies Anastasius as a “divine and authoritative father” of the faith, because Anastasius rightly confesses the true faith. Maximus saves Anastasius’ statement that there is “one activity” in Christ, by concluding that Anastasius confesses that in Christ we behold an activity both one *and* two: it is one if we look to the perfect union (ἕνωσις) of the activities (ἐνεργείαι), according to the single circumincession (περιχώρησις) in Christ. It is two, if we look to the substantial difference between the activities, human and divine, in Christ. This is also confirmed by the fact that the result (ἀποτέλεσμα) of the two activities (ἐνεργείαι) is one: one work (ἔργον), one action (πράξις).

The second part of the treatise deals with a question about the human and divine wills in Christ according to Saint Gregory the Theologian. In this section, Maximus is similarly quick to defend the reputation of the esteemed Father. He argues that Gregory’s theologizing clearly stems from pious thought, even if Gregory’s expression is not as exact as one might hope for it to be. He defends Gregory against “the wholly glib and carnal-minded [who] plot to make inroads, or to speak more truly, raids [ἐπιδρομὰς, καταδρομὰς],” because for such men nothing “is so

⁸⁵ “Arcadius died between the fall of Martina (October 641 at the earliest) and the death of Cyrus of Alexandria (21 March 642).” Jankowiak (2013), 314.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

sought-after as investigating and minutely scrutinizing, from every angle, both things very well guarded as well as any space left open to them within a treatise.” This is in clear contrast to Maximus’s own habit of careful scrutiny (*akribeia*) and patience in interpreting the words of the Fathers.

In this second section, the theory of divinization (θεώσις) comes very much to the fore. Maximus hones in on a linguistic nuance: the difference between θεωθὲν and θεόθεν in the phrase, “θεωθὲν ὅλον [wholly deified].” The enclitic -θεν may be added to a noun or pronoun to denote place from which, source, or separation. Maximus’ point is that it would be a misreading of Gregory to read him as saying that Christ’s human will is merely “from God.” Rather, it is a fully divinized—but also fully human and rational—will. As we have discussed, this is a key notion in the theology of Saint Maximus: on the one hand, Christ has a fully human will. On the other, it is a will that is *not* like our simple human will, which Maximus describes as ψιλόν. This could be translated as bare, simple, naked, defenseless, or un-provisioned. The reason for this is that Christ has a will that is both “according to human nature” (καθ’ ἡμᾶς) and above, beyond, and superior to human nature (ὕπερ ἡμᾶς). Maximus describes the bare human will as a will that tends to dither. That is, it looks to the left and looks right, as it were, and often strays from the mark. By contrast, Christ’s will never veers to the left or right, but always proceeds directly to what is good, to what the Father wills. In a recent essay in *Communio*, Adrian Walker describes why it was necessary for the Savior to have this kind of will. He notes that if the Savior had the kind of bare human will that dithers, “he would be no true Savior at all. On the contrary, he would be someone in need of saving himself; he would be a mere man like us, who is not only subject to the possibility of falling, but who participates in the actual fallenness of the human

race.”⁸⁷ By contrast, according to Maximus’ notion of divinization, the deified will, θεωθέν, is always in relationship with its referent, God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, and therefore thoroughly free from every inclination to sin.

Maximus continues with this theme in the third and final section of the treatise, where he attempts his vindication of the orthodoxy of Pope Honorius I. First, Maximus notes what has already been observed: in speaking of “one will” in his *First Letter to Sergius*, Honorius was not in any way denying a natural faculty of human will in Christ. Within the pro-Chalcedonian Church, as we have observed, no one, either monothelete or dyothelete, denied the truth that Christ was of and from two natures. Therefore, Maximus takes up and stresses Honorius’s point, namely, that Jesus’s fully human will can have absolutely nothing to do with sin. Christ’s will is as far away from sin and human-reasoning-according-to-fallen-flesh as it is possible to be. A large part of the argument centers around the notion of assumption or appropriation (in the passive, προσελήφθη, of προσλαμβάνω). Christ assumed human nature, but he did not and could not assume anything that was blameworthy. Maximus quotes Honorius: “obviously our nature, and not our sin, was assumed by the divinity.”⁸⁸ Maximus’s language becomes quite tender as he describes the Savior’s compassion in choosing to assume our human nature. He compares this assimilation to the way the body is assumed by its head, or, in a more unusual analogy, the way a physician takes on the sufferings of his sick patients.

We concede that in his defense of Honorius, Maximus does not allude to the primacy of Peter among the Apostles or to any primacy of the see of Rome, although he does speak with deference and respect, calling it the great Church (μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία) of the elder Rome

⁸⁷ Adrian J. Walker, “The Freedom of Christ: Notes on γνώμη in Maximus the Confessor,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 63:1 (Spring 2016): 43-44.

⁸⁸ Cf. Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* in Pauline Allen, trans. *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy: The Synodal Letter and Other Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 196-197.

(πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης). Moreover, he does Honorius a great honor by bringing forth the mighty and irreproachable Saint Athanasius of Alexandria to defend Honorius' orthodoxy. He argues that Honorius speaks almost in union with the voice of this illustrious Alexandrian. What Honorius and Athanasius agree on, according to Maximus, is that Christ assumed a fully human natural will, since he assumed everything that was human, though he was without sin. Finally, Maximus even works in his own unique take on the rational human will in Christ, all the while affirming Honorius's words. Maximus writes,

But in the subsequent parts [Honorius] renders [his understanding of the natural human will in Christ] more clearly, as his discourse is only about the will subject to the passions, but not to define the natural will in the Savior. And that indeed, even in the natural and the human [will] [Christ] corresponded to the divine will, the will from the Father, having nothing of resistance to that different will, and giving Himself to us as a model, *He voluntarily subjected His personal will, and confirmed the will from the Father.* (Emphasis added.)

This is the key Maximian insight into the positive role played by the human soul in giving its rational and free Yes to God in the Passion.

Booth and Jankowiak have termed Maximus's defense of Honorius, "tortuous."⁸⁹

Larchet, by contrast, observes that Maximus's reading is fair and does no violence to Honorius's text or thought, even if Maximus's reading is not the most obvious one—unsurprisingly so, given Maximus's intellectual gifts.⁹⁰ What is astonishing, however, is the peculiar concluding anecdote of *Opusculum* 20. Maximus had already called upon one star witness in Honorius's defense, Saint Athanasius of Alexandria. At this point another witness comes forward in dramatic fashion: Maximus's friend of at least four decades and protégé, the Abba Anastasius (i.e. Anastasius the Disciple of Maximus), "a man adorned with both virtue and godly prudence, if ever there was

⁸⁹ Booth and Jankowiak in *OHMC*, 38.

⁹⁰ "Mais [Maxime] semble lui-même convaincu de l'orthodoxie d'Honorius et elle ne saurait être taxé de mauvaise foi dans son argumentation, bien que la lecture qu'il fait de la lettre du pape ne soit pas évidente." Larchet, introduction to Ponsoye (1998b), 33.

one.” Maximus recounts that Anastasius has just returned from Rome and brought back report of a heated dialogue there. He has heard directly from the lips of the one who took down the dictation of the *First Letter to Sergius*. This individual turns out to be a certain “most holy assessor Lord Abba John.” Later, in his *Disputation with Pyrrhus* at Carthage, Maximus will name this same Abba John as the ghostwriter of both the *First Letter to Sergius* of Honorius and the proto-dyothelite *Letter* of Pope John IV to the emperors.⁹¹ Abba John “doggedly maintained” to Anastasius “that they [the scribes] had made absolutely no mention at all in the letter by number [δι’ ἀριθμοῦ] of one will [ένὸς θελήματος].” Rather, the offending phrase was interpolated into the *Letter* by the Greek translators. Commenting on this second part of Maximus’s defense, Phil Booth opines, “Maximus, therefore, mounts a (rather desperate) double defense of Honorius’s position: in proclaiming ‘one will,’ he had in fact meant ‘two wills’; and besides, he had not said ‘one will’ in the first place.”⁹² Indeed, to follow Booth’s line of thought, if Honorius had not spoken of one will, then why, when he arrived on his fact-finding mission in Rome, did Anastasius the Disciple find the Latins “to be grieved about this and arguing their defenses”? I think, however, it not implausible that they could have been grieved and distraught over this controversy, which had erupted in the Church, and over the imputation to the pope’s orthodoxy, even if they were convinced that the pope did not utter the offending phrase (or order it to be put in writing). Moreover, it seems that we should pay attention to the qualification to “one will” in the riposte of Abba John. He does not say that Honorius never spoke of “one will,” but that the pontiff did not do so “through number.” One can imagine various ways that the pope or his assisting writers might have spoken of “the same will,” or “same intention,” that might not have included a cardinal number. One could imagine such a phrase being rendered into Greek in

⁹¹ PG 91, 328C-329C.

⁹² Booth (2014), 268.

such a way that the number one (ένὸς) was introduced, thereby giving the impression, to some less careful readers, that the pope had denied a human faculty of will in Christ. Certainly such issues of linguistic confusion and errors figure as a constant in the theological dialogue between East and West.⁹³

The story of Anastasius's exploratory mission to Rome is somewhat puzzling, to be sure, given that it is neither affirmed nor hinted at in any other contemporary sources. Jankowiak believes that the account "betrays the disarray of the first Dyotheletes."⁹⁴ Moreover, we have some evidence from another case that seems to show Maximus reconstructing events to fit his narrative. Specifically, it appears that Maximus may have twisted the meaning of a letter of the Emperor Heraclius to show that the emperor, in the languishing days before his death, disavowed the *Ekthesis*, casting blame for its failure on Patriarch Sergius. Alexander Alexakis has made a close examination of the controverted evidence, much of which survives only in fragments whose authenticity and accuracy cannot be firmly established. Alexakis's conclusion is that Maximus did indeed falsify the account of Heraclius supposed letter of conversion to Pope John IV. Rather than being a *mea culpa* and representing an embrace of dyotheletism, Alexakis argues that the fragmentary evidence shows Heraclius to have died a monothelete.⁹⁵ We know that some saints of the patristic period sometimes went to extreme measures in order to advance what they saw as the cause of orthodoxy. One thinks of Saint Cyril of Alexandria using all the means at his

⁹³ Richard Price, notes a case that occurred with Sergius's *First Letter to Honorius*: "The extant Greek text of Sergius' *First Letter to Pope Honorius*, on which we depend for our knowledge of the *Psephos*, asserts the impossibility of 'two wills' coexisting in the same subject, but the Latin version shows this should be 'two contrary wills' (ACO² II/2, p. 542, 1). In any case 'two wills' meant 'two contrary wills' for Sergius, since he would have counted two concordant wills as a single will."

⁹⁴ Jankowiak (2013), 342.

⁹⁵ Alexander Alexakis, "Before the Lateran Council of 649: The Last Days of Herakleios the Emperor and Monotheletism," *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum* 27-28 (1995-1996): 100. Alexakis adds, "unless, of course, he repented on his deathbed."

disposal to secure a favorable outcome at the Council of Ephesus.⁹⁶ It could be that Maximus took such measures in his own polemical battles. On the other hand, it could be that, at times, Maximus was simply ill-informed—a real possibility in many instances, given the challenges inherent to correspondence in his day and the supremely difficult life situations in which Maximus often found himself. Alexander Alexakis submits, however, that Maximus was not misinformed about Heraclius but crafted the story of Heraclius’s late conversion to suit his aims. He did so, firstly, according to Alexakis, to give encouragement to Constans II to reject heresy in imitation of his grandfather. But there was a second reason as well:

Maximos’ action was related to the long standing tradition of the Church Councils and especially of the Ecumenical Councils not to condemn any Emperor on the grounds of heresy. In this aspect Maximos was in accordance with what we can read in the *Acts of the Lateran Council of 649*, where Sergios already appears to be the author of the *Ekthesis* and Herakleios is silently but explicitly exonerated.⁹⁷

In other words, Maximus’s motive may have been something akin to “saving the proposition of the other.” In this case, saving the reputation of the emperor from infamy as an anathematized heretic.

⁹⁶ See for example, Saint Cyril’s *Letter 96*, “The list of gifts sent to those at Constantinople,” which seems to contain a list of items that Cyril is sending in order to bribe government officials. John McEnerney, trans., *Letters 51-110: The Fathers of the Church*, Volume 77 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 151-153.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Our search began by asking why Maximus, whom we believed to be a scion of Constantinople and well-connected to Byzantine imperial power, should pen a rather lengthy and detailed defense of a pontiff from Old Rome. Questions still linger, such as why Honorius—so vigorously defended by Maximus—suffered the fate of being condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 680-681. There are many answers to be gleaned from the vast and carefully compiled research of the last few decades, research that has re-contextualized many of the events from the ancient and early medieval worlds. In the process of sifting this cache of detailed research, scholars have overturned many of the standard narratives. To take one example, the Third Council of Constantinople has traditionally been hailed as the ultimate triumph of dyotheletism and the vindication of both Maximus's personal reputation as well as his theology. Recent scholarship, however, has demolished that neat storyline. Rather, as Richard Price notes, "Constantinople III, while condemning the monoenergists and monotheletes, did not rehabilitate [Pope] Martin I or Maximus, whose attempts to undermine the established order of church and state were still deplored."¹ This new knowledge helps us to appreciate why Honorius's reputation suffered the fate that it did, and why Maximus's defense of Honorius remained more or less ignored until it was taken up by Anastasius Bibliothecarius in a different age of controversy between East and West.

In the current paper, we have attempted to assimilate some of the new and intricate Maximian scholarship while tempering some of the new interpretations currently on offer. We have relied heavily on the works of two scholars who have recently published works on Maximus that provide us an abundance of details previously overlooked or not easily accessible

¹ Price, preface to the *The Acts of the Lateran Synod of 649*, viii.

to scholars. These works are *Crisis of Empire* by Phil Booth and the 2009 PhD dissertation “Essai d’histoire politique du monothélisme à partir de la correspondance entre les empereurs byzantins, les patriarches de Constantinople et les papes de Rome” by Marek Jankowiak. These works have the potential to radically reconfigure much thinking related to the life and times of Maximus the Confessor, as well as our understanding of the wider political and ecclesial scene of the now vanished Byzantine *oikumene*. Extensive translations of original sources by scholars such as Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil, and Richard Price likewise greatly help in this endeavor.

In current project, we have accepted many of the new conclusions. Following Sebastian Brock and the Syriac *Life of Maximus*, we now name Maximus as the Palestinian monk who hails from Hesfin in the Golan. This explains Maximus’s early familiarity with contending forms of Origenism and Evagrianism within a Palestinian monastic context. Owing to the fruits of the investigation of Maximus’s epistolary correspondence by Christian Boudignon, we noted that Maximus entered into the entourage of the so-called Eukratas or Moschan monastic circle. He likely met his mentor and theological master, Sophronius of Jerusalem (originally, Sophronius the Sophist) in the early decades of the seventh century, either at Alexandria or in Palestine. We saw that the circle of John Moschus, Sophronius, and Maximus developed a theological and ecclesial stance that was suspicious of secular interference in the affairs of the Catholic Church. Perhaps the biggest disagreement between this Moschan circle and the ecclesio-political power of Constantinople was based in theological style and method. The Moschan circle practiced irenicism whenever there was not threat to the confession of the orthodox faith. Maximus, in particular, practiced a generous policy of “saving the proposition of the other,” and undertook painstaking rehabilitations of the thought of his theological predecessors Origen and Evagrius. He showed the same generosity, even in the petty clashes and quarrels that were part of the

monoenergist and monothelete controversies. On the other hand, the Moschan circle offered an unwavering rejection to the preferred imperial policy of doctrinal accommodation or *oikonomia*, whenever the slightest threat of harm to the confession of the orthodox faith arose.

In the course of our thesis, we have tried to push back at some conclusions drawn by scholars (especially recent ones, and in some cases scholars with commitments to Eastern Orthodoxy), to downplay or explain away Maximus's teaching on Roman primacy. We reject the argument that, for Maximus, fealty to or communion with the bishop of Rome was a secondary concern. Certainly, Maximus valued the orthodox faith and its confession above all else, but for Maximus the relation between the orthodox faith and the divinely-instituted form of the Catholic Church was one of co-inherence. Just as spirit and soul, though ontologically superior, give life to the body, so the Church breathes from the confession of the orthodox faith, but that same orthodox faith cannot be rightly confessed nor can it save human beings separately from the Church—a real spiritual communion of human beings with God and one another. Another narrative that we have challenged is one that holds that the alliance between the monastic intellectuals with Palestinian origins or ties and the See of Rome was either a politically expedient wedding of convenience or based more on antipathies towards imperial power than affection for Rome. Indeed, Maximus was no mere meddling monk, but a deeply prayerful, holy, and farsighted theologian. The whole Moschan circle gives us the impression of austere men who indeed practiced the intense asceticism that they taught. There were men of deep and hard-won learning. They must have had something of an awe-inspiring effect on the princes, patriarchs, and Churchmen with whom they interacted. They put their formidable talents and God-given gifts to use for the furtherance of the good: defending true doctrine with nuance and rigor and supporting the pope of Rome.

Maximus supported the pope in the way that was proper to his office as a simple monk and gifted theologian, according to the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit and proper to his rank in the Church's *ordo*. The work that he did and the manner in which he did it have been characterized by Hans Urs von Balthasar in his *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church* as the Johannine-style within the Church. Balthasar describes this style, which finds its archetype in Jesus's Beloved Disciple, as having the primary characteristic, quite simply, of agapic love. More concretely it is a love that unites and then vanishes. Peter has the chief role of holding the Church in unity, by exercising his authority as necessary to correct the wavering flock. Peter is also the visible symbol of the Church's unity. The task of John, however, is to support Peter by laboring with prayerful love (liturgically, intellectually, through service) and through one's spirit to make present and manifest the love of God, which is the true source of unity. Maximus rendered this service to Peter and the Church—even at those times when his *akribeia* appeared to jeopardize imperial attempts at achieving union through political compromise (and at times threat of violence) and an ecclesial policy of accommodation. If this policy had won the day, it would only have achieved an ersatz unity, not the unity of love. Maximus, from a motive of love, gave his life in service and testimony to the orthodox confession of faith within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. The state trials to which he was subjected at the end of his life were not mere show trials—he had significantly undermined Byzantine ideology by siding with pope against emperor. After the second of these trials in Constantinople in 662, by imperial edict, his right hand was cut off and his tongue cut out, so that he could no longer theologize or antagonize the imperial power structure. He was exiled to Lazica, on the eastern edge of the Black Sea, and died at the fortress of Schemaris on August 13, 662.²

² Allen and Neil (2002),

Appendix – Translation of *Opusculum* 20

Note: The text I have used to make this translation is that found in volume 91 of Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca*.¹ Initially I had difficulty in determining if any translation of the text into English already exists. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the only English translations are of *Opuscula* 3 and 7 by Andrew Louth² and *Opusculum* 6 by Paul Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken.³ There is also the translation of *Opusculum* 11, from the Latin, by Adam Cooper (cited *supra*). A critical edition of the *Opuscula polemica et theologica* is being prepared by Basile Markesinis (CPG 7697), but it continues to be a work in progress. Thus the only version of the Greek text of the *Opuscula* currently available is that of J.P. Migne, PG 91.9-285. It is based on the edition prepared by the Dominican humanist François Combefis⁴ (1609 – 1679) in 1675. Emmanuel Ponsoye has translated all of the *Opuscula*⁵ and all of the *Epistles* of Saint Maximus for the *Sagesses chrétiennes* series of Les Éditions du Cerf. Andrew Louth comments that Ponsoye’s “translation is useful, given the difficulty of Maximus’ Greek, though it tends to paraphrase when faced with marked obscurity.”⁶ Bram Roosen, though treating Ponsoye quite charitably, cannot agree. He concludes his review,

[I]f this review is quite severe, it is because of the bad quality of the translation (not the introduction), and not because of some personal grudge. Everybody can (and does) make mistakes, but there are limits. E.P. clearly transgresses them and apparently not the first

¹ PG 91, 228B–245D.

² Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, (London: Routledge, 1996).

³ Saint Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, translated by Paul Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003).

⁴ Incidentally, Combefis’ publication of works dealing with the monothelite heresy were met with strong Roman opposition, as they seemed to conflict with some of the positions of Saint Robert Bellarmine.

⁵ Saint Maxime le Confesseur, *Opuscules théologiques et polémiques*, translated by Emmanuel Ponsoye with an introduction by Jean-Claude Larchet, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998).

⁶ Andrew Louth, Review of *Opuscules théologiques et polémiques*, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 50:2 (1999): 860.

time... Thus, it seems not advisable to continue translating Maximus Confessor in this manner, for such translations do more bad than good.⁷ I have tried to give a fairly literal translation and have endeavored to translate the vocabulary as consistently as possible, e.g. ἐνεργεῖα as “activity” throughout. Nevertheless the translation remains in a raw state and in need of much refinement. At this point, it represents my grappling with the Confessor’s thought more than a text that is ready for critical study by others.

Translation:

Those whose speech is adorned with the virtues, whose mind is illumined by intellectual graces, which have removed from it all forgetfulness: in the degree to which every error has been removed from their mind and they have been instructed into the mysteries of that which is hidden, so greatly do these men rouse us to imitation of Him who was revealed for us! Having exhibited this in the Holy Spirit, God-honored Father, you vie with these men with the harmony of holy methods and holier actions, you transcend great praise to the degree that you are capable of attaining perseverance. For by making the goal of the race the stretching out and ascent of reason toward the Ever-Moving Word, so that you may also transcend nature, and burst through all figures, and purely commune with the Most Pure—both according to your own withdrawal from all things and with respect to all men, and according to a perfect transformation in your way of life—the [way of life] that procures for you an unlimited advancement, according to grace—the grace that circumscribes and surpasses everything that is delimited—and that introduces you even unto the Holy of holies, to where the Forerunner, on our behalf, came into that which is ours [according to our nature], He who is beyond us, Jesus; [the way of life] that is prepared for you who actively mount up to correspond with Him through grace to proceed firmly from glory

⁷ Bram Roosen, “*Opuscules théologiques et polémiques* by Saint Maxime le Confesseur and Emmanuel Ponsoye (Review),” *Vigiliae Christianae* 54.2 (2000): 218.

unto glory, and who intelligently pass through the heavens from knowledge unto knowledge, and in the eloquent silence of hidden mystery, in complete eschewal of intellectual activities, converse with the Father of spirits in a manner beyond the plane of human knowing, having been raised up to Him supernaturally, through grace and blessed zeal for holy works, you raise up these men mentioned by me below, thereby both sympathetically extending your hand by means of a letter (along with the argument that, by means of thought, is concealed within it), and zealously prevailing [upon me] to withdraw from those who turn from God, and honor unconditionally the love alone which is of Him and which serves to unite one to Him with all one's heart, by which, as it is simple and without form, you exhort me to drive off all duplicity of appearance and concealment of position and intention, and to attain to that truly blessed and splendid grace of the blessed, which, with your most holy prayers, I may be able to accomplish, keeping far apart from easily ensnaring sin.

And since also rousing my reasoning power to work again and wishing the space of my soul to be cleared of all ignorance, you have urged me to examine [the tractate] of the most godly and great teacher of the Church of the City of God [Antioch], who bears the name of Resurrection—and who seems as if he were the great teacher of the entire world—the tractate *Against Diatetos*—but rather, to speak precisely, it should be called “[*Against*] *the Divider*,” inasmuch as [Diatetos] perfectly severs, from both God and us, through extreme change and confusion, the God-become-man for-us, who is also the Father's consubstantial Begotten One, our Lord Jesus Christ: how he says there is one activity [ἐνεργεῖα] in Him, and yet declares there are natural *activities*. Indeed, I propose him as a wise interpreter and teacher of his own term, as he defines this [activity] to be nothing else than the inseparable union of innate activities and the resulting outcome—I mean the work and the action [ἔργον, πράξις]—from these [innate

activities], thus signifying and indicating a substantially existing [activity] of these [innate activities], since an individual has shared a [common] name based on activity, as indeed [activity] is properly something particular and something general. For inasmuch as from essential activity something is revealed according its natural property [ιδιότης φυσική], it has the status of a particular, just as again that which is revealed is also of the [category] universal. For, on the one hand, it is natural for properties to share the name of the class to which they belong, and for what is universal in a substance to be predicated from particulars, but not at all to share the name, lest through this sharing of a name the universal would somehow be particularized and deemed to have the status of a particular. Indeed therefore, the outcome (as I said) of these two innate activities, that is to say, the action [πράξις], as it comprises both of these in a union, the teacher said that, as they are in themselves, they comprise one activity [ἐνεργεία], because the divine and the human are not carried out separately, but proceed connaturally from one and the same together and in union, according to the single circumincession [περιχώρησις] between them. Indeed, on account of this, he did not at all say that [Christ] has one essential activity according to his natural property; just as he does not speak, on account of the uniqueness of [Christ's] person, of one being and nature, participating in either of those [two natures] from which he is composed. For the distinction in being is also preserved by the union of the natures, preserving with itself properly as well the union of those things belonging essentially to the natures.

And declaring this in that same tractate, *Against Diatetos*, so painstakingly worked out, after giving exceptionally clearly an explanation about the natural property in relation to the activity, and of the same activity proceeding from this fittingness to work and action, he expounds thus, “Wherefore there is one activity in Christ,” and he adduces as his reason the fact that neither the divine or the human are carried out separately, “and so we affirm.” But when he

brought forward an account of the union in the [activity], teaching this about the essential difference, he says, “Let it not be that his proper character is one! For it is not the proper character of divinity and of humanity” which manifestly, according to him, is fittingly related to the natural activity. And again later on, [he says,] “but it is also wholly necessary to say besides the same of the universal: on the one hand, that the activity of things joining together from whatsoever kind of natures is one, clearly by sharing in the union and its accomplishment; on the other hand, to say that the proper character of these is one without confusion, and perhaps even that in these things space for confusion is utterly inconceivable.” Indeed therefore the father has most revealingly elucidated his own thought through these his distinctive terms, not having said that there is one essential activity in Christ, lest he introduce confusion and mixture to His parts; not an essential (hypostatic) activity on the whole, lest there be a splitting and a separation of His foremost elements, who, I affirm, is of a Father without beginning, and of an immaculate Mother. For he is hypostatically distinct, and by the things pertaining to the hypostases [of his Father and mother], he is clearly distinguished from them. But what does he say? “One by the sharing of the union and of the accomplishment,” wherefore *supra* he distinguished between “work” and “action,” having granted no loophole whatsoever either to those desiring to mix or desiring to separate, but rather warding them off, by making them know, on the one hand, what is principally according to the proper nature of humanity in Him, and on the other hand, what is of His superessential divinity; and having put them to flight, by neither separating any activity in Him nor dividing what is one. For the name of the “activity,” sharing both in the simple motion and likewise in the perceived relationship, or taken from resulting outcome, does not introduce confusion to realities, as long as the interpretation of things conceived is clear, according to which we preserve the other things of the natures having come together essentially and

inseparably, and we come to know those things which are particular of one from another without confusion through the union, and what is from the whole of both of these we come to know from the substantial existence [ὑπαρξις], neither confusing by this, nor at all separating these [natures], but obtaining a grasp of the difference of the essences [οὐσία] with respect to their definitions, and holding on tightly to the union of the one and same substance [ὑπόστασις] with [our] words.

Indeed therefore in this way, and thus through these arguments, this man—and every other man, if he be an authoritative and divine Father, as I seem to have previously written—[confesses]: one activity of Christ and two: on the one hand, looking to the union according to the nature of the activities, just as [to the union] of the [two] natures; on the other hand, looking to the essential difference of these. And thus enough of this question.

But about the interpretation of that saying of Gregory the Theologian and great herald of the [true] Church, that runs: “the utterance spoken was the expression of the human being, not of the sense according to [which he is] the Savior. For neither is His willing opposed to God, [as it is] wholly deified [θεωθὲν ὅλον].”⁸ I very much classify it as depending on a pious thought, on behalf of which and from which it was worked out by the industrious one, but in the precision of its language, a little lacking. And against this [saying], the wholly glib and carnal-minded plot to make inroads, or to speak more truly, raids [ἐπιδρομὰς, καταδρομὰς], and for them nothing is so sought-after as investigating and minutely scrutinizing, from every angle, both things very well guarded and any space left open to them within a treatise. It may indeed be that they have gotten ahold of a bare word from some place or other, from the sincere and pure thought being proffered, for the confirming and establishing both of the ensouled flesh assumed from us (that is to say, of the humanity in the Savior), and of the substantially real and natural will, from this

⁸ According to the note of Combefis, “Oratio 36, quae est 2 de Filio.”

God-inspired father saying, “For His will is wise and impregnable,” from which the substantially real difference regarding His nature, divine and from the Father, is brought to light, leaving no route open for confusion to cling to the mystery in Christ. And thus indeed from certain scribes «θεωθὲν ὅλον» is written with the accent on the penult [as θεόθεν] and not rather on the ultima, [as if] it were necessary not to introduce one will proceeding from contraries. Against us they give to understand in this way the relational and hypostatic union from the things appearing below [ὑποφαινόντων], both by grace and by dignity, and that by this the holy ones of God are principally set in motion and actualized, through their absolute inclination of the will and disposition both towards God and holy things. For the text with the accent on the ultima «θεωθὲν», does not lead to this [reality] of the substantial and natural will, the will in the Savior as of a human being—(for who is able to show it?)—and produces both the highest union and the coming together into one. For the [expression] «θεωθὲν» is of those things which happen to something, just as then both «πυρωθὲν» (ignited) and «φωτισθὲν» (illuminated), and other such words, and it wholly implies with itself that which is its referent, as is «θεοῦν» (deifying), and «φυροῦν» (igniting) and «φωτίζον» (illuminating), with which it has a relationship; as is rather not the case with «ἐκεῖθεν» (from there) and «ἐνθεν» (from which), and the logic of difference and of the highest union is affirmed. For nor is it sufficient for union for something to be *not* contrary. For every being, if it be something natural and innocent, on the one hand is not contrary to God, but on the other, is also not wholly united to Him. But what is deified is in every way and altogether united, and in no way loses its substantial difference, inasmuch as it exists without confusion in the union. But if someone will say: If no natural thing is contrary [to God], how, concerning the innate will in us—if it really happened to be this will, and not another that the father mentioned—has he also said it was not of the sort fully keeping pace with God, but [was],

“resisting often and contending”? For either it was not natural, so far as it was in contention, or it was not in contention in so much as it was natural. And it remains other as it has established in natural quality in relation to the human will in the Savior: on the one hand, if it is really the former, then it is not at all contrary; on the other hand, if it is the latter, then it is contrary. We say, however, that insofar as it is natural, it is not contrary. But insofar as it is moved by us, in an unnatural way, obviously it is contrary, and, as is often the case, resistant, and by this it capitulates to sin. For it is by this mode of movement according to abuse, but not by reason of its capacity according to nature, that it submits in transgression of law and reason; since it is both disposed and moved according to nature, even if it is not united to God, but indeed is in agreement with and not resisting [God]. For as there is no logic in nature of the sort which transgresses nature, in this way there is neither one which is beyond nature and at variance. Hence the teacher did not declare that it did not follow wholly and in all respects, but he tempered his remarks saying, “not wholly, and often,” by which he understands, “sometimes and now and then,” on account of the difficulty of raising up many individuals to virtue. For the human will in the Savior, even if it was natural, but was not the bare will [that is] in us, just as it was not the same human will, insofar as being deified it was strengthened to the utmost by the union, and by this it is rightly associated with being sinless; whereas our will is manifestly a bare will and not at all sinless, on account of its tendency to diverge from here to there and there to here, not causing the nature to be altered, but diverting its movement; or rather, to speak more truly, altering the course of the movement. And obviously, in spite of this frequently acting illogically, in no way is there a falling away from the innate rational nature in us into irrational being. There is not therefore a different will in us and a different human will in the Savior; nor is there another will, indeed according to the logic of nature, even if he is otherwise above us. For

he subsists as God, and this is expressed through the highest union towards the divine. But especially the making of each of those things in us which had been at variance to be in harmony once more according to nature, such as what was in opposition or what was set in disarray, and other such things which happen to belong to this list—and even if separating in thought in an undivided manner the natures, then subsequently adding these things to the nature—it is not at all right to include the humanity in Christ among these things. For if something is in us that is not in accord with nature, but is seen to transgress nature and reason, how, even by means of reflection and subtle speculation (so that I may speak thus) is it to associate with that nature? Nay, it is only by assumption [οικειώσις], on account of His compassion, as by the head of the whole body, and precisely as the sufferings of a sick man [are healed] by a physician; only when the God who became man on our behalf sets us free from these things. Only by the power of corporeality in Him He perfectly consumes and makes disappear utterly our [faults]. For the account of the passions is two-fold: on the one hand, it is of punishment, on the other, of dishonor; and the one hones and informs our nature, the other thoroughly debases it. It is the former therefore that as man he willingly and substantially accepted on our behalf, at the same time confirming our nature, and dissolving the condemnation which was over us; and this once more, as one who loves mankind, He associated with Himself by way of accommodation, both what is in us and what is recognized by our refractory way, so that as fire wax, or the earth's sun mist, He has consumed from us utterly; He has brought about an exchange of things indwelling, and from that He has procured us for Himself, freed from the passions and incorruptible according to the promise. Well then, it is necessary therefore, based on what is reasonable, to acknowledge favorably both the zeal and at the same time the effort of one working out carefully, from a motive of religious piety, such certainly noble things, and to summon [all] to the more precise

harmony of the words of the Fathers, because of those who calumniate good men, and who, from a motive of useless folly, do not concede that which they—however much they may wish to—are unable to grasp.

And indeed, concerning the dyad of innate wills in Christ: I do not think that Honorius, the pope of the Romans, speaking in the letter written to Sergius on behalf of one will, denies it, but rather he advocates it, and, as is reasonable, maintains it. And he says this indeed not in denial of the human and natural will of the Savior, but in saying [what he says], he brings to the fore that a will of the flesh or a reasoning power subject to the passions in no way whatsoever stems from His virginal conception and chaste birth. For the faculty of will alone, which is divine and originates from the Father, through the only begotten and sovereignly acting Son's personal taking on of the flesh, and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, acts [in Him]. And that [Honorius] indeed has this [same] notion in mind, is manifest from this: For saying that on account of the ineffable union of human and divine nature, God is even said to suffer, and humanity to have descended from heaven with the divinity, and by this to show the exchange, according to the highest joining together, of the things essentially present in each nature of the one Christ and Son, he states further, "For which reason we also confess that the will of our Lord Jesus Christ is one." How? He says, "Since obviously our nature, and not our sin, was assumed by the divinity." That is, not from sin. And he well-nigh speaks with one voice with the great Athanasius, who wrote these things against Apollinaris, the impious, "He was begotten of a woman; from the original molding, raising up to himself the form of the human being, in making a demonstration from the flesh poles apart from carnal wills and human reasonings, in an image of newness, for the faculty of will of the divinity is unique, since it is also the whole nature of divinity." For since the procession of the begetting of the Word according to the flesh happened

on our behalf; for the faculty of will did not go forth subject to the passions of the flesh or reasoning, as is observed among us, on account of pleasure prevailing after the beguiling of our race, but the divine faculty alone through, as I said, the sovereignly acting Son's personal taking on of the flesh, according to the goodwill of the Father, and the sovereign cooperation of the all-Holy Spirit, making new in himself and through himself the newly introduced mode of begetting in nature, and making for himself virginally a conception from the God-bearing and ever-Virgin Mary. So then looking into the inexpressible account of his begetting, [Honorius says]: "The will of the Lord Jesus Christ is one, since, manifestly," he says, "our nature was assumed by the divinity, and not our sin; being poles away from carnal wills and human reasonings," just as the godly Athanasius says. And [he does] not, in fact, [say] that He did not also have, as a human being himself, along with being God by nature, a human and natural will, just as [He had] a will both divine and proceeding from the Father [πατρικόν]. And next he alludes to the same thing in these words, saying, "He was conceived without sin by the Holy Spirit, and from the holy and immaculate ever-Virgin Mary, and without defilement, from the same woman, he was begotten according to the flesh." And he produces the Sacred Scripture, which makes mention of the flesh, having both words of praise and blame for it; not suggesting—may it not be!—to consider the Lord's flesh, by in its nature and being, as something different in comparison with our own; indeed, He had a firsthand knowledge of the flesh that He assumed from our being, that is to say, flesh of the same nature as our own, from the affectionate all-holy womb of the woman, the ever-Virgin and Mother of God; but [his flesh is] different [from our flesh] with respect to [ours] having sinned and [his] having nothing whatsoever of rebelliousness, precisely as we have the law in our members from transgression against the law of the spirit. "For the flesh which had been corrupt by sin (he says), was not assumed by the Savior, [the flesh] at war against the law

of His mind.” For the law of birth through offspring according to sin did not lead the way for anyone, and it was not inhering completely in anyone’s members; but the law of divine righteousness reveals to us according to a model, and what was introduced into our nature from transgression it makes disappear completely. For, “I have come,” says He, the sinless One, “to seek and to save what was lost,” that is to say, the nature gone astray [ἀμαρτήσασαν] of the human race. “For another law, or a different will, or a will contrary to the Father, has not come to be in His members.” Showing from this, not that He does not have a human and natural will, for He does not appear to have said this; but that in fact as a human being, neither according to the body through its members did he pick up any activity whatsoever transgressing nature, nor at all in His soul did he pick up any contrary or irrational motion of will in the soul, even as we do [have these things], “since He was also born above the law of human nature.”

But in the subsequent parts he renders it more clearly, as his discourse is only about the will subject to the passions, but not to define the natural will in the Savior. And that indeed, even in the natural and the human He corresponded to the divine will, the will from the Father, having nothing of resistance to that different will, and giving Himself to us as a model, He voluntarily subjected His personal will, and confirmed the will from the Father; and imitating Him faithfully, denying our own wills, and with all haste, let us fulfill the divine will, speaking thus, and even as he has written, “*That I did not come to do my will, but the will of the Father who sent me,*’ and, ‘*not what I will, but what you will, Father,*’ these things are not of a different will,” that is to say, of a contrary and resisting will, “but of the human economy having been assumed,” of the will having sympathetically claimed our things as His own. “For He said these things on our behalf, by them He gave us a model, the Teacher of piety, so that by His footsteps we might follow, and each of us might honor not his own will, but rather the will of the Lord in all things.” He does

not, therefore, as I said, perform a negation of the natural and human will [in Christ], but of the will subject to the passions and transgressing nature. And, to speak in full, he affirms the will [in Christ] free from every sin, the will that is according to our nature; he bears witness to the God-made-flesh for our sake.

And so that I may speak summarily, concerning the one will, I think that he [Honorius], in order to make it clear, brings to the fore the sole divine faculty of will of His genesis according to the flesh, and through saying, “a difference of will does not exist,” he holds that the will is not contrary or resistant, but wholly in agreement and united. For which reason whenever he says that our nature is assumed by the divine will, he is recalling the one will; and whenever [he cites] the, “*I came not to do my will,*” by adding a word into the middle, [and] omitting number, [he says,] “these things are not (he says) of a different will,” that is to say, of contrary and of an antagonistic will, from which he manifestly implies that there exist two wills in the Savior according to nature. For if He does not have a contrary will, He has a natural will insofar as He is a human being. For what is not contrary, is wholly natural, and no one will gainsay; for there is nothing in nature or in things that exist according to nature that are absolutely contrary.

It is to be feared therefore that men have often wrongly added among his own words what he [Honorius] did not write, and they contrived through the opposite of his own opinion to make the words of the man as a veil of not the best worth, and misinterpreted these according to a different sense, beyond his aim. For he has [now] an argument that pleads his cause, repelling every assault of a calumniator. And thus indeed I interpret his line of thought, as being wholly pure from all suspicion. And this has made it even more certain for me: coming back from the Elder Rome, the most devout priest, Lord Abba Anastasius, a man adorned with both virtue and godly prudence, if ever there was one; and he has reported that a great speech was made by him

in that place to the most holy men of the great Church, regarding the letter written by them to Sergius, interrogating why and how the one will had been included in it, and he found them to be grieved about this and arguing their defenses, and to the one among these same Latins who had dictated it according to his command, the most holy assessor Lord Abba John, who doggedly maintained that they had made absolutely no mention at all in the letter by number of one will, even if this now has been invented by the ones who translated this letter into the Greek tongue: It was not at all any subtle manner of speaking or digression from the natural will of the Savior according to humanity we were wishing to show, but the complete removal and the taking away of what had been set at variance in us—because of which also the war of like beings against one other is sustained—that the flesh which was assumed has been cleansed from all sin, [and we wished to show this] by the handing down of the most holy utterances and teachings of the Fathers. And, at any rate, through such words, they appear to be in agreement with those who expound matters rightly, from the point of view of my nothingness; and in such a way they confirm the defense on behalf of Honorius.

Indeed therefore that, discerning carefully, they had spoken such things in defense: I was exceedingly amazed with respect to their precision, just as much then as I was also astonished by the knavery of those altogether having the effrontery on behalf of the one [will] of idly uttering impieties, and of wanting, as is their custom both now and from of old, by certain evasions and misinterpretations, to entice those bravely fighting against them, indeed, beyond what is reasonable, to themselves, and in no way at all to make their own minds comply with another's. And therefore, having learned this, of necessity, I have made it known to you, God-honored Father, as you are held hemmed in from all sides, so that you may evade the ranks of the opposing forces, hurling vigorously with your speech and more than conquering in might by

your faith, and having the glory from that of the Only Begotten for a proclamation, and for a diadem, by grace, communion and union with Him.

But, O my most holy and honored head, make these things known to the one who hierarchically is seated in the first place⁹ of our blameless and orthodox faith, under whose wings all of us, both near and far, holily find rest, having from it as the sole foundation the blessed illumination of most holy dogmas, through which we are led by the hand to the unshaded and Fatherly light in the Holy Spirit and raised up on high, looking to Him as the originator of our salvation, and after Him who is first in our nature, and devoutly making straight the paths, we press on to the life that has been freed from all corruption, but which is sustained uncorrupt, of which even here and now we share in hope, through God-inspired prayers and through wise teachings full of the things of God, so that there also, by means of deifying meditation and by advancing in experience, we might be deemed worthy to have fellowship according to the final perfecting of all things in the same Word and God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ Jakowiak and Booth suggest that this is a reference to Marinus's archbishop, Arcadius of Cyprus.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

OHMC – *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*

Primary Sources

Allen, Pauline, trans. *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy: The Synodal Letter and Other Documents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Allen, Pauline, and Bronwen Neil, eds. and trans. *The [Greek] Life of Maximus the Confessor: Recension 3*. Strathfield, New South Wales: St. Paul's, 2003.

—. *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

—. *Scripta saeculi VII vitam Maximi Confessoris illustrantia una cum latina interpretatione Anastasii Bibliotecarii*. Corpus Christianorum series graeca, 39. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.

Blowers, Paul and Robert Louis Wilken, eds. and trans. *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003.

Brock, Sebastian, ed. and trans. "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor." *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973): 299-346.

Migne, J.-P. *Patrologia Graeca*, volume 91. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1863.

Ponsoye, Emmanuel, trans. *Saint Maxime le Confesseur : Lettres*. Introduction by Jean-Claude Larchet. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998.

—. *Saint Maxime le Confesseur: Opuscules théologiques et polémiques*. Introduction by Jean-Claude Larchet. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998.

Price, Richard, ed. and trans. *The Acts of the Lateran Synod of 649*. Translated Texts for Historians: Vol. 61. With contributions from Phil Booth and Catherine Cubitt. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014.

Salés, Luis Joshua, ed. and trans. *Saint Maximus the Confessor: Two Hundred Chapters on Theology*. Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2015.

Secondary Sources

- Alexakis, Alexander. "Before the Lateran Council of 649: The Last Days of Herakleios the Emperor and Monotheletism." In R. Bäumer et al., eds., *Synodus: Beiträge zur Konzilien- und allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte—Festschrift für Walter Brandmüller. Annuario Historiae Conciliorum 27-28 (1995-1996)*: 93–100.
- Allen, Pauline and Bronwen, Neil, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Saint Maximus the Confessor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Auzépy, Marie-France. "De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIII^e-IX^e siècles): Etienne le Saba'ite et Jean Damascène." *Travaux et Mémoires* 12 (1994): 183-218.
- von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor*. Translated by Brian Daley. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003.
- . *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*. Second edition. Translated by Andrée Emery. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007.
- . *Our Task: A Report and a Plan*. Translated by John Saward. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994.
- Blowers, Paul. *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transformation of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Booth, Phil. *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.
- Boudignon, Christian. "Maxime le Confesseur et ses maîtres: À propos du 'bienheureux ancien' de la *Mystagogie*." In *Maestro e discepolo: Temi e problemi della direzione spirituale tra VI secolo a.C. e VII secolo d.C.* Edited by Giovanni Filoramo. 326–30. Brescia: Morcelliana, 2002.
- . "Maxime le Confesseur: Était-il constantinopolitain?" In *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek Patristic and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret*. Edited by B. Janssens, B. Rosen, and P. Van Deun. Pages 11–43. Louvain: Peeters, 2004.
- . "Le pouvoir de l'anathème; ou, Maxime le Confesseur et les moines palestiniens du VII^e siècle." In *Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism: Proceedings of the International Seminar, Turin, December 2–4, 2004*. Edited by A. Camplani and G. Filoramo. 245–74. Louvain: Peeters, 2007.
- Chitty, Derwas. *The Desert A City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell and Mott, 1966.

- Conant, Jonathan. *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 439-700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Cooper, Adam. *The Body in Saint Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Croce, Vittorio. *Tradizione e ricerca: Il metodo teologico di san Massimo il Confessore*. Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1974.
- Dagron, Gilbert. *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*. Translated by Jean Birrell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Van Deun, Peter. "Développements récents des recherches sur Maxime le Confesseur (1998–2009)." *Sacris Erudiri* 48 (2009): 97-167.
- Ekonomou, Andrew. *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007.
- Flusin, Bernard. *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle*. Volume 2. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1992.
- Forai, Réka. "The Interpreter of the Popes: The Translation Project of Anastasius Bibliothecarius." Doctoral thesis. Central European University, Budapest, Hungary: 2008.
- Garrigues, Juan-Miguel. "Le martyre de saint Maxime le Confesseur." *Revue Thomiste* 76 (1976): 410-452.
- . "Le sens de la primauté romaine chez saint Maxime le Confesseur." *Istina* 21 (1976): 6-24.
- Genakopoulos, Deno. "Some Aspects of the Influence of the Byzantine Maximus the Confessor on the Theology of East and West." *Church History* 38 (1969): 150-163.
- Haldon, John. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*. Revised edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- . "Ideology and the Byzantine State in the Seventh Century: The 'Trial' of Maximus the Confessor" in *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium: Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th Annual Eirene Conference*.
- Hardin, Michael. "Mimesis and Dominion: The Dynamics of Violence and the Imitation of Christ in Maximus the Confessor." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 36 (1992): 373-385.
- Hatlie, Peter. *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350-850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

- Hovorun, Cyril. *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Howard-Johnston, James. "Byzantium and Its Neighbors." In *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*. Ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Jankowiak, Marek. "Essai d'histoire politique du monothélisme à partir de la correspondance entre les empereurs byzantins, les patriarches de Constantinople et les papes de Rome." PhD Dissertation. École pratique des hautes études, Paris, 2009.
- . "The Invention of Dyotheletism." *Studia Patristica* 63 (2013): 335-342.
- Kaegi, Walter. *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- . *Muslim Expansion and Byzantine Collapse in North Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Krueger, Derek. "Between Monks: Tales of Monastic Companionship in Early Byzantium." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20 (2011): 28-61.
- Larchet, Jean-Claude. *La divinisation de l'homme selon Maxime le Confesseur*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996.
- . *Maxime le Confesseur: médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988.
- Louth, Andrew. *Maximus the Confessor*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Madden, John. "The Authenticity of Early Definitions of the Will (*Thelêsis*)." In *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur: Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*. Edited by Feliz Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn. 61-79. Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1982.
- Neil, Bronwen. The Greek *Life* of Maximus the Confessor (BHG 1234) and its Three Recensions. *Studia Patristica* 36 (2001): 46-53.
- . *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. "'Council or Father or Scripture': The Concept of Authority in the Theology of Maximus the Confessor." In *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of the Very Reverend Georges Vasilievich Florovsky*. Edited by David Neiman and Margaret Schatkin, 277-288. Rome: Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973.

- Price, Richard. "Monotheletism: A Heresy or a Form of Words?" *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 221-232.
- Riou, Alain. *Le Monde et l'église selon Maxime le Confesseur*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1973.
- Roosen, Bram. "Maximi Confessoris Vitae et Passiones Graecae: The Development of a Hagiographic Dossier." *Byzantion* 80 (2010): 408-460.
- . "Opuscles théologiques et polémiques by Saint Maxime le Confesseur and Emmanuel Ponsoye (Review)." *Vigiliae Christianae* 54.2 (2000): 214-218.
- Sansterre, Jean-Marie. *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne*. Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1983.
- Sarris, Peter. *Empires of Faith: The Fall of Rome to the Rise of Islam, 500-700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Schatz, Klaus. *La primauté du Pape: Son histoire, des origines à nos jours*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1992.
- von Schönborn, Christoph. "La primauté romaine vue d'Orient pendant la querrelle du monoenergisme et du monothélisme (VII^e siècle)." *Istina* 20 (1975): 476-490.
- . *Sophrone de Jérusalem: Vie monastique et confession dogmatique*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1972.
- Sherwood, Polycarp. *An Annotated Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor*. Rome: Herder, 1952.
- Thunberg, Lars. *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.
- . *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*. Second edition. Chicago: Open Court, 1995.
- Törönen, Melchisedec. *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Treadgold, Warren. *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Walker, Adrian. "The Freedom of Christ: Notes on γνώμη in Maximus the Confessor." *Communio: International Catholic Review* 63:1 (Spring 2016): 29-54.
- Winkelmann, Friedhelm. *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001.

Wolska-Conus, Wanda. "Stéphanos d'Athènes et Stéphanos d'Alexandrie: Essai d'identification et de biographie." *Revue des Études Byzantines* 47 (1989): 5-89.

Zocca, Elena. "Onorio e Martino: due papi di fronte al monotelismo." In *Martino I Papa (649-653) e il suo tempo: Atti del xxviii convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 13-16 ottobre 1991*. 103-147. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1992.