Durham E-Theses

Maximus the Confessor & the Trinity - The Early Works

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ABSTRACT

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In this study, I will argue that Maximus the Confessor's (580-662 CE) engagement with the ascetic concerns and the theological controversies of the sixth and seventh century helped develop his early works toward a unique and distinctively Trinitarian articulation of Christian life and post-Chalcedonian theology. In the *Liber asceticus,* Maximus illustrates the Trinity as the beginning, means and end of Christian life, highlighting baptism, the Spirit's appropriation of Son's activities to the baptized, how the incarnate Son serves as the example of love and interweaves Trinitarian prayer into the dialogue's appeal for mercy. Using the *Liber* as a baseline (Ch. 1), Chapter 2 places his Trinitarian grammar for Christian life in its ascetic context demonstrating areas of continuity but also its unique contribution.

The subsequent chapters then track this grammar's development by analyzing the increased complexity, sparked by his engagement with various concerns and controversies, displayed in *Capita caritate* (Ch. 3)*, Quaestiones et dubia* and *Epistula 2* (Ch.4). The last section of Ch.4 provides a context for his engagement of pro-Chalcedonian theology and its development in *Opusculum* 13.

In the *Capita,* Maximus' engagement with Origenism underscores the irreducible difference between God and creation yet also how they are sustained, preserved and deified through participation. His engagement with demonstrates the necessity of joining θεωρία and πρᾶξις, giving an early glimpse of union and distinction in his Trinitarian theology. Finally, what was only illustrated in the *Liber,* is made explicit through a robust explanation of contemplation and prayer.

In *Quaestiones*, Maximus begins to fix his terminology for the stages of ascent. Additionally, while continuing to engage with Origenism, he introduces more technical language for the incarnation, utilizes the *Logos/*λόγοι doctrine for ascent and applies the λόγος/τρόπος distinction for the Trinity. Then, in *Ep.* 2, he integrates these new features from *Quaestiones* into his description of ascent and the incarnation. Finally, in *Op.* 13, Maximus departs from his earlier concern for ascent yet, like his other early works, reveals engagement with a specific controversy – miaphysitism.

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR & THE TRINITY –THE EARLY WORKS

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS*

BBTT	Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations
CCSO	Corpus Christianorum Orientalia
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
PG	Patrologia graeca
PO	Patrologia orientalis
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SP	Studia Patristica
ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum.* Eds. Eduard Schwartz, Johannes Strauss and Rudolf Schieffer *et. al*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1960-1984.
CCT Vol. #/Part #	Grillmeier, Alois *et al. Christ in Christian Tradition.* 5 Vols. 1965-2013.
CD 1	*Corpus Dionysiacum I: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De nominibus.* Ed. Beate Regina Suchla. Patristische Texte und Studien 33. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990.
CD 2	*Corpus Dionysiacum II: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae,* Eds. Günter Heil and Adolf M. Ritter. Patristische Texte und Studien 36. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*

Maximus' Works (Alphabetic Order)

Abbreviation	Latin Title
Amb.	*Ambigua ad Iohannem (6-70) et Thomam (1-5)*
Cap. car.	*Capita caritate*
Cap. gno.	*Capita gnostica* or *Capita theologica et oecomenica*
Ep.	*Epistulae*
Op.	*Opuscula theologica et polemica*
Qua. dub.	*Quaestiones et dubia*
Qua. Thal.	*Quaestiones ad Thalassium*
Or. Dom.	*Expositio orationis Dominicae*
Lib. asc.	*Liber asceticus*
Myst.	*Mystagogia*
Disput. Pyh.	*Disputatio cum Pyhrro*
Disput. Biz.	*Disputatio Bizya*
Vita Grc.	*Vita Graeca*
Vita Syr.	*Vita Syriaca*

* With a few exceptions abbreviation and citation follows the standards of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies.*

DECLARATION

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to Durham University or any other university for a degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To Tara, Belén, and Ian

Ἀγαπήσωμεν ἀλλήλους, καὶ ἀγαπώμεθα ὑπὸ Θεοῦ

- Liber asceticus §42

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I will argue that Maximus the Confessor's (580-662 CE) engagement with the ascetic concerns and the theological controversies of the sixth and seventh century helped develop his early works toward a unique and distinctively Trinitarian articulation of Christian life and post-Chalcedonian theology. This articulation ultimately paved the way for his celebrated Trinitarian grammar for the incarnation. As this description suggests, despite being unique and distinctive, Maximus' theology builds upon a set of traditions and theological trajectories that had long been in the making. His theology is unique, then because he interacts with various aspects of Trinitarian traditions and trajectories, each of which had discrete historical developments, in order to address issues related to Origenism and miaphysitism.[1] By following a broadly chronological approach to Maximus' writings and unpacking his increasingly complex engagement with these concerns, traditions and trajectories, this study will highlight two Trinitarian grammars that are significant to him while providing both a historical context and an opportunity to see his development.

This study cannot touch on every aspect of Maximus' Trinitarian thought nor on every text where he mentions the Trinity. Such an endeavor would entail a recapitulation of the history of numerous aspects of Trinitarian doctrine in the post-Chalcedonian era and its engagement with the theology of the fourth and early fifth centuries. Furthermore, it would involve detailed determinations of whether Maximus' theology has drawn from those earlier sources, some of which he surely read, or any number of intermediate sources. Instead, I will

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[1] Throughout this study I use the prefix *mia-* rather than *mono-* to describe the Christological debates surrounding Christ's nature (*miaphysitism*), activity (*miaenergism*) and will (*miathelitism*). My reasons for doing so are pragmatic and historical. One does not find the compound terms μονοφυσίτης, μονοενέργητος and μονοθέλητος in Maximus' writing even though he argues that each does ultimately reduce Christ to only one nature. In fact, one does not find the compound words using the *mia* prefix either. Instead, Maximus and those he dialogs with often use the word μία as an adjective and only occasionally use μόνη. The compound words using the *mono* prefix, at least those referring to Christ's will and activity, seem to be later developments. See, Daniel Larison, *Return to Authority –The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2009).

focus on Maximus' early works up to 626/7 CE. This is intentional since much of the work on Maximus' doctrine of God is often pulled from his later works. Rather than drawing a synthetic representation across his writings, I delve into those key Trinitarian themes that Maximus develops within his account of ascetic life. Concomitant with this account are his engagements with various doctrinal controversies. I attempt to deal with both in order to trace out a broad set of concerns, traditions and trajectories that demonstrate both his distinctive articulation and aspects of continuity. A consequence of focusing on Maximus' early works is recognition that to suggest *a* grammar for Maximus' Trinitarian thought at this early stage must give way to a set of grammars that address specific issues. It will not be until later that Maximus will draw these together to form what may be considered one consistently applied theological grammar.

Justification of Research

Why another monograph on Maximus? Within the last 35 years, Maximian studies have experienced a surge in interest, considered by many to be a ripe fruit that can be harvested for the ressourcement of varying theological agendas. Despite this marked increase of interest, there is no monograph in English-speaking scholarship on Maximus' Trinitarian thought. Maximus' theology and personality became a subject of interest in English-speaking scholarship only since the middle of the last century through the work of Polycarp Sherwood. In the introduction to his third publication on Maximus, a translation of *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate,* Sherwood gave a helpful and brief description of Maximus' doctrine of God explained in two sections. One section focused specifically on the divine nature itself and a subsequent section discussed God as Triune. In the first section, he highlighted aspects of theological parlance that Maximus utilized or adjusted from Gregory of Nazianzus, Evagrius and Pseudo-Dionysius in order to describe God's simplicity, goodness, and infinity.[2] The second section posited five areas: "(1) assertion of the fact . . . (2) The reference of the Trinity to negative theology . . . (3) Nature and person in the Trinity and Christ . . . (4) the relations of the persons of the

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[2] Polycarp Sherwood, *St. Maximus the Confessor: The Ascetic Life, The Four Centuries on Charity* (New York: Newman Press, 1955), 29-32.

Trinity to the Incarnate Dispensation . . . (5) Traces of the Trinity."[3] It was the last of these; "traces of the Trinity" and its relation to negative and natural theology that was to be a source of disagreement between Sherwood and Hans Urs von Balthasar.[4] Sherwood's brief description was a synthetic representation of Maximus' thought and most of the information he marshalls does not come from the works he translated but from Maximus' later corpus.[5] Other authors, in introductions and brief studies, have given some attention to his Trinitarian theology since then, describing his thought in general as a 'Trinitarian Christocentrism" or noting how his "Chalcedonian logic" is dependent on the Trinitarian terminology and distinctions of Chalcedon and the Cappadocian Fathers.[6] Here we can see a trend of viewing his Trinitarian thought through his Christology, a tactic likely inspired by Maximus' own famous phrase from *Expositio orationis Dominicae.*[7] These provide suggestive beginnings for a more thorough study of Maximus' Trinitarian thought and a context for the present study.

I should also note several smaller studies by Brian Daley, Andrew Louth, John Madden and Felix Heinzer which touch on aspects of Maximus' Trinitarian theology but admittedly only cover it in relation to specific areas of his thought and like Sherwood's presentation tend to pull from Maximus' later works.[8]

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[3] Sherwood, *St. Maximus*, 32-45.

[4] Sherwood, *St. Maximus*, 34-35; 37-45; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor,* translated by Brian E. Daley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 104-105; 26, 101.

[5] Sherwood does not draw upon the *Liber Asceticus* at all and only sparsely cites *Capita Caritate* and *Epistula 2.* Much of his synthesis focuses on the *Ambigua, Quaestiones ad Thalassium* and *Opuscula* with scattered references to *Expositio orationis Dominicae* and *Mystagogia*.

[6] George Berthold, *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings*, ed. and transl. by George Berthold, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 7-9. Louth, *Maximus,* 49-51. See also Berthold's "The Cappadocian Roots of Maximus the Confessor," in *Actes du Symposium du Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*, eds. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn. Paradosis 27 (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 51-59.

[7] Maximus, *Or. Dom.,* (CCSG 23:87-89): "For indeed by becoming flesh the Word of God teaches us θεολόγια because he shows forth in himself the Father and the Holy Spirit."

[8] Brian E. Daley, "Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus on the Trinity" in *The Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church*, ed. Khaled Anatolios, Holy Cross Studies in Patristic Theology and History (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014) ; Andrew Louth, "Late Patristic

Despite the absence of an extensive study in English, one might object that there are studies in French. Therefore, learn French and you have your desire.[9] However, Pierre Piret's *Le Christ et la Trinité,* while very helpful and lucid, is also a synthetic study. It does not always demonstrate clear connections with the traditions the Confessor drew on and even though one can find instances where he discusses parallels and influence, he does not show how Maximus' thought develops throughout his writing career. This later point is clearly brought out when, as with Sherwood, one looks closely at where he draws his primary texts. The focus, almost without exception, is on the *Ambigua* and later Christological writings (*Opuscula* and *Epistulae, Disputatio cum Pyhrro*). The earlier writings seem to serve no prominent place in establishing a reference point for Maximus' doctrine of God.[10]

Piret's exceptional review of the literature up to the point of his own study does reveal a constant back and forth between Catholic and Orthodox castings of Maximus' Trinitarian thought. This is particularly the case as it relates to the skirmishes over the *filioque* and whether or not Maximus embraces the concept of μοναρχία and what effect that acceptance might have on the debate. His review of the state of the question also unveils how Maximus'

Developments on the Trinity in the East," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, eds. Gilles Emery & Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 138-151; Nicholas Madden, "Maximus on the Holy Trinity and Deification," in *The Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 100-118; Feliz Heinzer, "L'explication trinitaire de l'economie chez Maxime le Confesseur," in *Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre, 1980,* eds. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn, Paradosis 27 (Fribourg: Editiones universitaires), 159-172.

[9] Pierre Piret, *Le Christ et La Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur,* Théologie Historique 69 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1983) deals with this topic most directly. One could also cite Juan Miguel Garrigues' 1976 *Maxime le Confesseur: la charité avenir divin de l'homme* whose last chapter, "L'avènement de l'amour trinitaire", is suggestive and cites the *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate* more often. However, it is also a synthetic study and often interprets earlier texts in light of ideas expressed later in Maximus thought. This same kind of analysis can be observed in Alain Riou's treatment of seven references to the *Liber* and *Capita* in his 1973 *Le monde et L'église selon Maxime le Confesseur.* Another suggestive section in Jean-Claude Larchet's 1996 study *La divinization de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur*, entitled, "La participation du Saint-Esprit au projet trinitaire de la divinization de l'homme et à se realization par l'économie du Verbe incarné," 383-384, cites neither the *Liber* or *Capita.* My citation for Larchet's study, originally published by Cerf in the Théologie historique series (38), follows the 2009 reprinted version which is under a different series, Cogitatio Fidei 194.

[10] There are only two references to *Liber asceticus* and three to *Capita caritate.*

Trinitarian thought is often a secondary or tertiary issue and lacks relation to the larger historical-theological context in which the Confessor writes. It is as if Maximus is either championing the fresh winds that will inspire Vatican II as an example of a new synthesis inspired by Thomas Aquinas or an Orthodox contemporary championing Gregory Palamas' distinction between essence and energies. While Maximus' theology certainly has bearing on these issues and authors rightly have historical justification for investigating him through those lenses, he knows nothing of the later state of these debates. Consequently, while Maximus is universally recognized as a great synthesizer, rarely are the traditions he draws upon for his Trinitarian thought parsed out beyond some relation to "Cappadocian" or "Chalcedonian" thinking. Nor do these accounts go much beyond an analysis of how his thought can defend or contradict later theological tradition.

If we were to add to Piret's review recent scholarship, the trend has been more philosophical in nature. In what ways did Maximus answer philosophical questions or, a more basic question: did Maximus receive formal philosophical training? If he did, what was it and to what extent does he adopt and adapt it? Is Maximus' portrayal of the Trinity an answer to the classic problem of the one and the many and how does he articulate their relation using the grammar of participation? These are excellent questions but have been problematized in part by debate over whether Maximus is to be seen as a monk from Constantinople, following the Greek recensions of his life, or from Palestine following the Syriac life.[11] Not to mention there is no small issue in determining mediating influences. Maximus comes at a stage in Christian tradition where many "philosophical" doctrines or parallels could just as easily be found within that tradition. Finally, there is a more fundamental question: what do modern authors mean when they say "Platonist", "Neoplatonist" or "Aristotelian" in relation to the ideas or persons they review? Do such designations mean direct influence and sourcing, mediated influence or something as banal as parallel

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[11] The latest entry in this debate is Philip Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity,* Transformation of the Classical Heritage 52 (Berkley: University of California Press, 2014). Booth argues vigorously for Maximus to be located in Palestine and as a close associate of Sophronius and John Moschus.

thought? While we may acknowledge that Maximus is not a Vatican II proponent or a Palamite defender, has he now become another victim of Harnack's "philosophy on the soil of the Gospel"?

A second objection to another monograph may be that there are numerous works that deal with Maximus' Christology and those have already noted Maximus' "triadology" in relation to it.[12] As the title to Piret's study itself suggests, there *is* a connection to be seen between these two areas of his theology. Surely this material touches on Maximus' Trinitarian thought. This is a legitimate objection especially since after Piret's study there is much literature which explicitly connects Trinitarian theology with Christology. The Son is one of the Trinity, so it can be said, and to talk about his incarnation surely would mean touching on Trinitarian theology. Yet when one scrutinizes this literature, it tends, as stated above, to attribute Maximus' Trinitarian expressions to "Chalcedon" or "the Cappadocians" and then follows a well-established canon of writers from after Chalcedon to Maximus' own day in order to narrate how he stands in relation to "neo-Chalcedonian" and "Cyrillian" Christology. This group usually includes Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius of Jerusalem, the conciliar decisions of Constantinople 553 CE and at times other figures like John the Grammarian, Sophronius and even Justinian. These studies have proven very helpful for providing a broader context that earlier studies lacked. However, for the purposes of understanding Maximus' Trinitarian thought, much of this literature centers too narrowly on the issues of miaenergism and miatheletism

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[12] The first to note this with some comment was Hans Urs von Balthasar in the first edition (1941) of *Kosmische Liturgie* and republished in subsequent editions (second edition, 1947 and third edition, 1988) but see now *Cosmic Liturgy*, 212-213. Marcel Doucet's Ph.D. dissertation, "Dispute de Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus: introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes," (PhD diss., Université de Montréal, 1972) and was followed by Heinzer, "L'explication trinitaire," 160 and Pierre Piret's "Christologie et théologie trinitaire chez Maxime le Confesseur, d'après sa formule des natures «desqueelles, en lesquelles et lesquelles est le Christ», 220 in the same work who then published his book in 1982. In English, this was first noted with some comment by Joseph P. Farrell: *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of Our Father Among the Saints* (South Canaan: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1990), xxx and then by Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 99-114, 130-140, 160; Melchisedec Törönen in *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 47-48; and Cyril Hovorun in *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century,* The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1500 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 156-158.

and not broader Trinitarian questions or providing a convincing historical context that accounts for why Maximus has come to see the force of connecting θεολόγια and οἰκονομία.

Another reason, voiced by Polycarp Sherwood in his earliest work, still haunts discussions about Maximus' Trinitarian thought. In the foreword to his study on Maximus and Origenism, Sherwood laments that so little work has been done to put Maximus in his own context, stating others "have written of his doctrine, and written well, but taking here a text, there a text on which to build their structure."[13] In the last ten years, many well-written studies have sought to investigate and describe various aspects of Maximus' thought. As a result, Sherwood's complaint has been satisfied by focused studies on the various *vita* of Maximus, the last stages of his life, his role at the Lateran council of 649 CE, his place in the history of miaenergism and miathelitism, his relation to "neo-Chalcedonianism", and most recently Maximus' relation to John Moschus and Sophronius in the context of a struggling Byzantine Empire.[14] Some work has also been done on Maximus' relation to Evagrius, Pseudo-Dionysius, the Cappadocians, and Origen.[15] However, it still remains that there is very little on what Maximus may have inherited or adopted from the post-Chalcedonian milieu in regard to his Trinitarian thought. There could be various reasons for this, but there are two I would like to highlight here.

[13] Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism,* Studia Anselmiania 26 (Herder: Orbis Catholicus, 1955), vii.

[14] For example, Booth, *Crisis of Empire*; Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom*; *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile,* ed. & transl. by Pauline Allen & Bronwen Neil (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Rudolf Riedinger, "Die Lateransynode von 649 und Maximus der Bekenner," in *Maximus Confessor: actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980*, 51-59. Eds. Felix Heinzer and Christoph von Schönborn, Paradosis 27 (Fribour: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 111-121. In regard to Maximus' relation to Neo-Chalcedonianism, see Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor,* 2nd ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 21-48 and Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ.*

[15] Berthold, "The Cappadocian Roots," von Balthasar, *"Die Gnostischen Centurien"* in *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners,* Zweite Auflage (Einsiedeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1961); Beate Regina Suchla, *Die sogenannten Maximus-Scholien des Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum*, Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philogische-historisch Klasse 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) but a thorough bibliography for Maximus and the Dionysian *scholia* can be found in the English translation of *Kosmische Liturgie,* von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy,* 359-387.

The first reason is that only a few authors have attempted to dedicate entire works to the development of theology within this period with any depth and they are usually accompanied by a general ambivalence toward what the Council of Chalcedon did or did not accomplish.[16] The period, in general, is characterized as "scholastic" and would lead the casual reader to think it is merely obsessed with proof texts of earlier Fathers and laboriously written definitions. These descriptions surely make this period an unappealing object of research and discourage understanding a much more complex era, one in which participants sought to navigate several traditions and came up with creative ways of doing so. Another more telling reason, as I hinted at above, can be seen in the assumption that Trinitarian thought has simply given way to Christological controversy, an assumption which still dominates the presentation of this period. This is based on an observable shift in theological discussion between the Council of Constantinople 381 CE up to that of

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[16] I am thinking here primarily of Aloys Grillmeier's multi-volume work in *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* (Christ in Tradition) but note here again the focus on Christology. Also, Patrick T. R. Gray's *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451-553)* and his various articles on the changes in post-Chalcedonian theological argumentation, Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St. Maximus the Confessor,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Louth's "Late Patristic Developments," 138-151 which treats the era as a whole. However, there are also various studies done on Tritheism and individuals such as Severus of Antioch, Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius of Jerusalem, Justinian and others. See Ian Torrence, *Christology After Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite*, transl. with introd. & notes by Ian Torrance (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1998); Brian Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium,* (forthcoming); Patrick T. R. Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem: Against the Monophysites: Testimonies of the Saints and Aporiae*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Kenneth Paul Wesche, *On the Person of Christ: The Christology of Emperor Justinian,* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991); Rifaat Y. Ebied, Albert Van Roey & Lionel R. Wickham, *Peter of Callinicum: Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, Orientalia Lovaniensia 10 (Leuven: Department Oriëntalistiek, 1981), Albert Van Roey & Pauline Allen, *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century,* Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 56 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1994), Uwe M. Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century: A Study and Translation of the* Arbiter, Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense. Études et documents Fascicule 47 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), S. N. Sakkos, ἈΝΑΣΤΑΣΊΟΥ Αʹ ἈΑΝΤΙΟΧΕῚΣ ἍΠΑΝΤΑ ΤᾺ ΣΩΖΌΜΕΝΑ ΓΝΉΣΙΑ ἜΡΓΑ (Thessaloniki, 1976); Karl-Heinz Uthemann, "Des Patriarchen Anastasius I. von Antiochen Jerusalemer Streitgespräch mit einem Tritheiten," *Traditio* 37 (1981), 73-108. For the history of the Church see John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church, 450-680 AD,* Church in History 2 (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990) and William H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

Chalcedon 451 CE. However, through this study of Maximus, it becomes apparent that too great a separation between these two contexts (Trinity and Christ, what eventually is designated θεολόγια and οἰκονομία) creates theological problems that Maximus along with other pro-Chalcedonians will confront. Similarly, it also generates problems for scholarship as it attempts to give an accurate presentation of the subjects that mattered to the participants of this era. I cannot fully address the latter part of this critique in the present study, however, in a small but hopefully significant way I attempt to shore up the historical context precisely around the interaction between these two loci: θεολόγια and οἰκονομία.

Along these lines, besides the narrowing of scholarship on issues of "monotheletism" and "monoenergism" during Maximus' life, I want to suggest that the historical narratives of the post-Chalcedonian era tend to locate the concern of participants too narrowly on whether Cyril can be reconciled to Chalcedon. When one steps back and lays aside the often repeated assumption that Trinitarian controversy gave way to Christological controversy, I would suggest this era reveals something much more multifaceted that has direct relation to the doctrine of the Trinity and the legacy of the Trinitarian grammar of the fourth century as established by "the Cappadocians", Cyril, Athanasius and subsequent pro-Chalcedonian authors. Some scholars have said as much, but this phenomena needs to be brought from the background to the foreground, from mere assertion to demonstration, from the footnotes to the main narrative. When this is done, I argue that Maximus' Trinitarian theology falls in line with a determinable trajectory. In light of this, rather than label his Trinitarian thought as "Christocentric", it may be more apt to regard his account of the incarnation as Trinitarian.

Method of Study

How will I approach this investigation? My first task will be to use the *Liber asceticus* as a baseline in order to show how his engagement with ascetic concerns within his portrayal of ascent is already richly and distinctly

Trinitarian and indeed presents us with his primary Trinitarian grammar.[17] This grammar is forged in the context of giving a rational for Christian life and ascent. Next, I review a set of ancient authors in order to highlight how Maximus' baseline fits within a broader ascetic context in order to show how his Trinitarian account of ascent bears continuity with and distinction from this context. From that point, I will attend to how Maximus' Trinitarian thought develops through *Capita caritate, Ep. 2, Quaestiones et dubia* up to *Opusculum* 13. Using the baseline, I will identify layers of complexity and development that are successively added to his account of ascent and which reveal his engagement with specific ascetic concerns and the controversies of Origenism, Tritheism, and miaphysitism. The last work, *Op.* 13 departs from the context of ascetic concerns and gives us a look at Maximus' articulation of pro-Chalcedonian theology. Importantly, it gives us a look at another distinct grammar for talking about the Trinity. By "complexity" I mean to indicate more developed or new aspects of his account of ascent that were either more simply stated in his baseline or only briefly accounted for but which receive more explanation and attention in later works. Regardless of whether this increased complexity is the result of sensitivity to his audience or a development of his thinking, I argue that *his writings* bear an unmistakable increase in complexity which can be tied to specific ascetic concerns and controversies. Consequently, when I speak of "development" it is to this increase in complexity that I am speaking. In this study, I make regular and intentional use of the terms "grammar" and "trajectory". By "grammar" I mean a determinable "way of speaking" for Maximus that has become a consistent feature of whatever subject he is talking about. Therefore where earlier studies may have referred to a

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[17] According to Sherwood's *Annotated Date List*, there are several works ascribed to Maximus that were written before, by or in 626 C.E He lists with certainty *Epistulae* 2, 3 and 4; *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate* (by 626 C.E.) and *Expositio psalmum LIX* (626 C.E.) and with less certainty *Epistula* 6 (before 624/625), *Epistula* 10 and *Opusculum* 17 (by 626 C.E.) and *Quaestiones et dubia* (626 C.E.). Although, one should note that while in the chronological index he does not give any special note about the certainty attached to *Ep.* 2, in his annotation for the same letter, he simply suggests it is *perhaps* the earliest writing giving more of a range than a certain date suggesting "sometime before the controversies", referring to miaenergism and miathelitism. In this study, when referring to his "early works", this is the set of writings I mean to designate.

"logic" in Maximus' thought I hope to indicate both the logic or principle thus named and the language used to communicate it. My use of "trajectory" is found in historical sections and is meant to highlight how a set of ideas, strategies or grammars regarding a specific topic successively developed as they ran their course through the period under investigation.

How do the role of genre, Maximus' intentions and his audience relate to my conception of "complexity" and "development"? The works covered in this investigation are representative of several of the genres Maximus utilizes in his overall corpus. The genres represented in the early works include letters (ἐπιστολαί such as *Ep.* 2), centuries (κεφάλια such as *Capita caritate* and *Op.* 13) and question-response (ἐρωταποκρίσεις such as *Quaestiones et dubia*). This latter genre is often utilized as a means of commenting on Scripture and earlier Christian authorities. The *Liber asceticus* falls within range of the question-response genre as can be seen by the title usually associated with it (Λόγος ἀσκητικὸς κατὰ πεῦσιν καὶ ἀπόκρισιν) but differs in several ways. Firstly, unlike other question-response pieces by Maximus, it does not comment on Scripture or specific texts of earlier Christian authorities. Rather it explains the purpose of the incarnation as the rationale for the ascetic and Christian life. Secondly, while there are questions and responses, these are firmly planted in a sustained and imagined dialog between an old man and a younger brother.

With the exception of *Op.* 13, all of the works listed above explicitly intend to deal with ascent within the ascetic and Christian life and bear many of the same themes. The *Liber asceticus*, *Capita caritate* and *Ep.* 2 tackle this life through the lens of love discussing questions and areas regarding its activities, goals and means in relation to the human person and God. *Quaestiones et dubia* does so by commenting on difficulties from both earlier Christian authors and the Scriptures. These difficulties are prompted by ascetic concerns and Maximus consistently interprets them in an anagogical manner seeking to teach his audience about various aspects of ascent and how it can be understood and engaged.

Central to his conception of ascetic and Christian life across the genres of these earlier writings is an understanding and articulation of the activities of God and specifically how the incarnate Son provides the basis and renewed

opportunity for human imitation, transformation, and experience of God's love within a process of ascent. Despite the variety of recipients for the works covered, this aspect remains a consistent and principal goal in his writings.[18] A comparison of a larger set of his writings suggests that his audience, some of whom were Roman officials, monks and nuns does not prevent Maximus from including elements of his ascetic vision even if the main purpose of the work is not the ascetic life.

Now I turn to *Op.* 13 where Maximus writes specifically about the location of identity or difference within the Trinity and incarnation, the relation of this identity and difference within the Trinity and the incarnation and the correlation of key ontological terms οὐσία, φύσις, ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον within that discussion. These items either do not occur in his earliest writings or occur only sporadically and not together.

For example, *Liber asceticus* discusses the Trinity but does not use some of the basic ontological terms nor discuss the unity of the Godhead and the difference of the persons and how they are related. Maximus discusses briefly the fact that there is union and distinction within the Trinity in *Capita caritate* 2.29 but does not correlate it with the other areas I listed in *Op.* 13. The *Liber* and the *Capita* do not utilize the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction for either descriptions of the Trinity or the incarnation and does not detail much how the two natures of Christ come together. *Quaestiones et dubia* utilizes the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction to describe the Trinity as both one according to the principle of being and three according to manner of subsistence but does not correlate it with the terms φύσις, ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον. Additionally, it uses some technical language to describe how the two natures of Christ come together. Finally, *Ep.* 2 integrates this technical language for the incarnation and the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction into Maximus' overall vision of love and yet it unlike the *Quaestiones et dubia* the distinction is not extended to the entire Trinity. The treatment of those items I have listed above in *Op.* 13 receives inconsistent

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[18] Paul Blowers makes as similar observation in relation to Maximus' scriptural exegesis in *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* in *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of* Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 7 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 13-15.

articulation within Maximus' ascetic vision, and *Op.* 13 does not incorporate λόγος/ τρόπος distinction. These ideas, both those in Op. 13 and the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction are often cited as central to Maximus' theology and yet this kind of detailed and technical language does not form a consistent grammar in the earliest writings despite shared contexts, genres, and purposes.[19]

Compare these with some later works – centuries, question and response, and commentaries – such as the *Ambigua*, *Mystagogia*, and *Expositio orationis dominicae,* which bear the central intention of dealing with ascent within the ascetic and Christian life and the difference is striking. Each of these consistently displays focused and detailed descriptions of the Trinity that have a remarkable resemblance to concepts articulated in *Op*. 13 and also include the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction. In fact, *Mystagogia*, *Expositio orationis dominicae,* and the *Ambigua* have very similar sections that draw on this language.[20] The most efficient explanation for this difference and the sporadic usage in the earliest writings of key concepts would be that Maximus' earliest writings and their way of speaking functioned as a substrate upon which he built increasingly

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[19] Törönen, *Union and Distinction,* 47-59. Törönen identifies basic rules that Maximus follows for his discussions of the Trinity and Christ in Chapter 3 of his book. Specifically, he draws attention to *Ep.* 15 (PG 91.545A), where Maximus correlates key ontological terms with identity and difference or union and distinction. Maximus earliest writings are not cited. Sherwood notes the importance of the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction in *Earlier Ambigua* 155-165 and *St. Maximus,* 35-37. In this last reference Sherwood cites *Cap. car.* 4.9 as application of the λόγος/ τρόπος distinction but a closer look reveals that Maximus is making a distinction between God who is simple οὐσία and creatures who have a composite οὐσία with accidents (συμβεβηκός). Von Balthasar also notes the importance of these concepts to Maximus' theology in his section on terminology in *Cosmic Liturgy*, 216-235*.* The only reference to Maximus' earliest works is *Cap. car* 4.9 favoring the *Opuscula,* later *Epistulae, Ambigua, Disputatio cum Pyhrro* and *Mystagogia.* Piret notes the importance of these concepts to Maximus' theology in *Le Christ et la Trinité*, 379-397.

[20] Maximus, *Myst.* 23 (CCSG 69:52.839-54.868), *Or. Dom* (CCSG 23:53.440-54.467). Compare also longer discussions in *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 10 in *On Difficulties of the Church Fathers: The Ambigua*, Vol. 2, ed. & transl. by Nicholas Constas, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 151-342, *Ambigua ad Thomam* 1-5 (CCSG 48:24.105-33.284), *Ep*. 12 (PG 91.460A-509B), *Ep*. 15 (PG 91.543C-576D), *Op*. 3 (PG 91:48B-49A; 56C) and 7 (PG 91.69B-89B). *Capita gnostica* also has a focused section that covers the same conceptual ground but without some of the technical language, see *Capita gnost.* 2.1 (PG 90.1124D-1125C).

more complex and technical accounts. The addition of layers to this substrate, prompted in his writing by dealing with specific ascetic concerns, is what I call "development." This imagery is intentional because it captures how his earlier grammar is not replaced by the later grammar but subsumed.

Chapter 1 Summary

In the first chapter, I show how Maximus' language about God in one of his earliest works, the *Liber asceticus*, is already richly Trinitarian. Maximus uses the incarnation as a reference point for the ascetic life and for Christian life in general. His account of the incarnation is purposely couched in Trinitarian terms and the resultant ascetic vision also has a Trinitarian texture. I will show that his portrayal of ascetic life highlights how the Holy Spirit appropriates the incarnate Son's work to the baptized while also offering that life as the prime example of love. While Maximus illustrates how the Trinity is the beginning, means and ultimate goal of the ascetic life, he does not explicitly state it. Instead, he focuses on how the Trinitarian purpose, intention or aim (σκοπός) of the incarnation should form a life of love.

Chapter 2 Summary

In order to more clearly see how Maximus' Trinitarian theology fits within his ascetic context, it is important to review some significant precedents. The authors in this section are almost universally accepted as either having been read or having influenced Maximus' ascetic theology. My purpose for reviewing this material is to help locate Maximus in his ascetic context and to show how certain features of his Trinitarian thought and ascetic vision are unique. My goal is not to show influence but rather continuity and discontinuity within the broader ascetic tradition.

Chapter 3 Summary

Once the baseline is established and has been placed in context, I can begin to show how Maximus develops his themes beginning with the *Capita caritate.* In the *Capita*, Maximus builds further on themes he discussed and illustrated in the *Liber* with the most noticeable refinement being his extended discussion on both practical and contemplative aspects of ascetic life. In these

capitula, the Trinity is explicitly identified as the source, means and end of the Christian life. In particular, the Holy Spirit's appropriation of the Son's activities to the baptized gives the help and means by which to live the practical life and focus the mind on θεωρία and prayer. This is a process of purification where thought, intention and action are cleansed from pretense, false perception, and falsely-placed desire and refocused on the Trinity as love. The result is that the ascetic mirrors divine simplicity in prayer and is prepared to experience the Trinity in a more direct fashion. This creates an *ethos* that generates a life of love, which is maintained by a constant awareness of living out that love.

Part of this presentation of the ascetic life involves a proper understanding of creation and creator and finds expression in Maximus' early anti-Origenist engagement. This concern resulted in an emphasis on the transcendence of God and concerted reflection on the nature of creation and deification. This discussion should be viewed as part of the overall process of weeding out false perceptions of reality, specifically, creation's relationship with its Creator and how human beings are deified. As Sherwood noted in his study, *The Earlier Ambigua,* the terms οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια are important to this discussion but I will show why this triad of terms should likely be seen a causal sequence and that an equally important term is γνῶσις.[21] These terms will continue to be a source of reflection and affect the way he talks about his Trinitarian theology from this point forward. Finally, in this chapter I look at a text in which Maximus talks about Tritheism and attempt to account for why this shows up in his writings. I suggest that this engagement is an early example of the logic or grammar of union and distinction but is primarily concerned with showing the necessity of drawing together γνῶσις and πρᾶξις.

Chapter 4 Summary

In the first section of Chapter 4, I briefly discuss *Quaestiones et dubia* and *Ep.* 2. Both of these works display features discussed in the *Liber* and *Capita caritate.* In *Quaestiones et dubia,* Maximus begins to employ more technical language for Christ and for the first time uses the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in

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[21] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua,* 103-125.

an explanation of the Trinity. In *Ep.* 2, Maximus continues to employ this technical language and explicitly uses the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in tandem with the *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine to describe how Christ heals humanity's divided ways by providing the means for which its λόγος and τρόπος can be one through love*.*

In the second section of this chapter, I attempt to deal with *Opusculum 13* and what it reveals about Maximus' understanding of pro-Chalcedonian argumentation. In order to do this, however, I must review or retell some of the features of pro-Chalcedonian theology leading up to the Council of Constantinople 553 CE and Maximus. This retelling will help highlight how a specific trajectory took shape that talked about the Son in the context of an already established Trinitarian grammar. Once this is accomplished, I attempt to show how *Opusculum* 13 demonstrates how Maximus can be located within this trajectory.

While I have tried to be attentive to necessary details, this study is by no means exhaustive. I also recognize that the approach I have chosen – to use Maximus' early thought as a baseline – runs the risk of suggesting that what I uncover is all there could possibly have been, as if somehow Maximus could not have had a much fuller understanding than what I have presented in any one work. I do not think that needs be the case and, whatever risk there may be in my approach, I hope it is worth the reward of tracking how Maximus' writing exhibits successive layers of complexity surrounding his account of ascent and especially his account of the Trinity. As I have mentioned above, there is no shortage of studies that provide a synthetic analysis and so by showing development in his writing I hope to provide more insight into his engagement with particular issues. Finally, I cannot wholly avoid Sherwood's censure since this study looks at Maximus' writings through the lens of what it might or might not say about his Trinitarian thought and only covers some of Maximus' vast theological and historical context. However, I would suggest Maximus' Trinitarian theology is at the core of his thought, and its concerns can be seen to drive much of his development throughout his life. This is especially the case when placed on the backdrop of late sixth and seventh-century theological activity. I attempt to draw on the scholarship that has appeared in the last 50

years and purposefully place Maximus' Trinitarian thought in its post-Chalcedonian context in a way that surpasses what others were able to do. Yet even in this review I must admit that there is a breadth of material that cannot wholly be treated here. In most cases, I follow the dating found in Sherwood's classic study although for at least one work I suggest a later date.[22]

Challenges in Maximus' Writings

Before I move on, it will be helpful to point out some significant challenges that confront my investigation into Maximus' understanding of the Trinity particularly as it relates to the idea of development. I will begin with a section that deals specifically with dating and the idea of development. Subsequent sections will sketch out areas regarding language, influence and Maximus' account of ascent and the virtues.

When talking about "development" it is important to establish dates if only to determine whether writings happened before or after one another. Already, however, the issue of dating Maximus' works is problematic. A number of studies in the last decade have suggested that Sherwood's dating of some letters should be rethought. The latest entry is this shift can be found in Booth's, *Crisis of the Empire,* who also covers the studies of Marek Jankowiak and Christian Boudignon.[23] In general, the texts I cover here are not affected by these studies although I would agree with Jean-Claude Larchet and Booth that *Op.* 13 should likely be disassociated from other works where Maximus' mentions a dispute with Severian bishops concerning energies and wills.[24] I have chosen only a subset of Maximus' overall corpus – his early works up to 626/7 CE. According to Sherwood, these could include *Episulae* 6, 2, 3, 4, 10 and

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[22] The work in question is *Ep.* 2. For Sherwood's dating see § 6, 7, 8 in his *Annotated Date-List,* 25.

[23] Booth, *Crisis of the Empire,* 163-169.

[24] Booth, *Crisis of the Empire,* 150 (esp. note 44) and Larchet's introduction to *Opuscules théologiques et polémiques*, transl. and notes by Emmanuel Ponsoye, Sagesses chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 19-32. I would like to thank Phil Booth for alerting me in January 2014 of a new annotated date-list by himself and Marek Jankowiak in the forthcoming Oxford Handbook on Maximus. At the time I completed my study, the new handbook had yet to come out and so my dates are consistent with Sherwood's date-list and the changes discussed in Booth's *Crisis of Empire* with recognition that my study may need to be updated once the new handbook is available.

Liber asceticus, Capita caritate, Expositio Psalmum LIX, *Quaestiones et dubia* and *Opuscula* 17 and 13. But even in this subset, the investigation is fraught with uncertainty. Recent studies have shown that *Ep.* 4 and 10, often thought to be early works should likely be dated later; *Ep.* 4 around 632 CE and *Ep.* 10 around 630/631 CE.[25] Sherwood himself notes his uncertainty about *Ep.* 6, *Op.* 13 and 17 but nevertheless locates them as early. A similar problem accompanies *Ep.* 2, and its dating depends more on its use of a particular phrase that became problematic during the miaenergism and miathelite controversies.[26] *Quaestiones et dubia* is also listed as uncertain but likely by 626 CE.

In my study, I do not cover *Expositio Psalmum LIX, Ep.* 3*, Ep.* 6 and *Op.* 17 which I think present no distinct information related to the Trinity that differs from the *Liber, Capita caritate* or *Ep.* 2.[27] What is left then, after the redating of Ep. 4 and 10 and exclusion of the three works just mentioned, is *Ep.* 2*, Liber asceticus, Capita caritate*, *Quaestiones et dubia* and *Op.* 13. With the absence of more refined dates for these writings, my tactic was to look at the increased complexity of ascent particularly the presence of ideas that are often cited as important from his later writings. Since the *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate* are closely tied together by Maximus himself and it is broadly agreed that the *Liber* is an early work, I have chosen to start with the *Liber* in order to establish a baseline. As a result, I have consciously treated the works in their order of complexity starting with *Liber asceticus,* then moving to *Capita caritate, Quaestiones et dubia, Ep.* 2, and *Op.* 13. I have determined that *Opusculum* 13, which Sherwood thought to be written early in his journey to Africa in either 626 or 627 CE on the island of Crete, should remain at the end of this progression despite its uncertain date. This is because, unlike the other early

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[25] See Booth, *Crisis of Empire,* 163-169.

[26] Sherwood notes that *Ep.* 2 is *perhaps* the earliest work because of "will" language, noting how it bears similarity to *Ambiguum* 7 (PG 91:1076C) where Maximus states, "there is, through all, one solitary ἐνέργεια of God and those worthy of God". In *Ep.* 2, it is "one will and intention with God and one another". (*Ep.* 2: PG 91:396C).

[27] *Ep.* 3 for example uses λόγος, τρόπος language in a way similar to *Ep.*2 for ascent yet does not interweave this same language into his discussion of the incarnation and does not explicitly name or discuss the Trinity. Based on the argument of complexity I offer shortly, it fits well between *Quaestiones et dubia* and *Ep.* 2.

works, its subject matter does not address ascent but specifically the issues of unity and plurality within the Trinity and the incarnation. This concern to address unity and plurality in the Trinity *and* the incarnation *together* and *in relation* to one another does not show up in any of his earlier works even though there are brief forays into union and distinction in the Trinity and Christ separately and within the context of ascent. Additionally, there is no discussion of wills or energies but an attempt to locate unity and distinction using the terms φύσις and ὑπόστασις along with οὐσία and πρόσωπον which is typical of pro-Chalcedonian engagement with miaphysitism. I will discuss how Maximus' thought in *Op.* 13 fits this engagement more in Chapter 4. As a consequence, I think it represents the introduction of another kind of writing for Maximus – writing that is crafted toward his encounters with miaphysitism that begin during his flight toward Africa. Admittedly, the relation of complexity and date is not, by necessity, a one-to-one relationship. Maximus could have edited his writings, or may have intentionally made some writings less complex and others more so. As a result, when looking at complexity, writings may only appear to be earlier or later. Maximus himself notes that he (re)ordered the *Ambigua* putting the later set *ad Thomam* before those *ad Iohannem.*[28] However, I think there would need to be more evidence like this in order to entirely discount a relation between the noticeable increase of complexity, not only in subject matter but engagement with sources, from the *Liber* and *Capita* to these other writings.

If the *Liber* is allowed to function as a baseline and *Op.* 13 remains at the end of this progression then it is only *Quaestiones et dubia* and *Ep. 2* whose order remains to be established. Based on their complexity and similarity to the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, I think both *Quaestiones et dubia* and *Ep.* 2 represent pieces that were written after the *Liber* and *Capita caritate,* but before *Op.* 13*.* This judgment is based on his treatment of themes and ways of speaking that do not appear in his account of ascent or the Trinity in the *Liber* and *Capita caritate,* especially in areas one would expect based on later writings. These

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[28] See the brief discussion and notes in Maximos the Confessor, *On Difficulties of the Church Fathers: The Ambigua,* Vol. 1, ed. and transl. by Nicholas Constas, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), viii, ix and §26 in Sherwood, *Annotated Date List,* 31-32.

items include the λόγος/τρόπος distinction with reference to the Trinity, *the Logos*/λόγοι relationship in relation to ascent, more technical language for the incarnation and the incorporation and consolidation of ideas for ascent such as whole and parts, particular and universal, and union and division. These same ideas are more developed and present together in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* in ways that they are not in any of the earlier writings*.* From the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* forward this synthesis becomes more commonplace and matures into a consistent theological grammar.

Dating aside, there are other reasons that Maximus' writings can be a challenge that have more to do with the content itself. It is not without reason that some scholars have noted the profuse nature of Maximus' Trinitarian thought in his writings. One reason this is the case is his generous application of the same concepts and terminology to describe the Trinity and created reality. One could note here Louth's observation of Maximus' "Chalcedonian logic" extending the observations of an earlier generation (i.e. von Balthasar, Sherwood and Thunberg) and more recently the "logic of union and distinction" as proposed by Törönen.[29] One does not have to buy into the "pan-Chalcedonianism" to agree that this grammar is profuse and fluid between Trinity, Christ, ascent and creation as is evinced in works like the *Ambigua* and *Mystagogia.*[30] Sometimes these features can seem unintentional although more often than not Maximus suggestively and intentionally employs them. There are several reasons why this is the case. Maximus, like many other pagan and Christian authors, viewed the relationship between the divine and the human

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[29] Louth, *Maximus Confessor,* 49-51. Melchisedec Törönen has investigated this concept in *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). I agree with Törönen's assessment that while Chalcedon is an important force in Maximus' theology, it is not the only force. Part of my argument is that Maximus' Trinitarian theology is fed by a confluence of anti-Origenist concerns, other distinct ascetic concerns and a specific reading of Chalcedon through the theological developments in the sixth and early seventh centuries. Törönen has already noted the latter's influence on Maximus through Leontius of Byzantium and Justinian (*Union and Distinction,* 2) but does not discuss it at length. I will discuss in more detail how the post-Chalcedonian context fed into Maximus' Trinitarian theology in Chapter 4.

[30] Törönen coins this phrase to describe the way Van Balthasar, Sherwood and Thunberg presented Chalcedon as the centerpiece of not only Maximus' Christology, but all his theology, *Union and Distinction,* 2-5.

worlds as that between type and archetype— a microcosm— and, as Thunberg and Louth have highlighted, Maximus also uses an inversion of this concept by casting humanity and Christ as a macrocosm. [31] Therefore, there are often attempts to relate them in ways that mirror one another. The modes of language he must use in order to describe this relationship are also complex. Like other authors during his time, he utilizes imagery that requires his audiences to stretch their conception of the relationship of created realities and God as simultaneously analogous, symbolic or figural while at the same time striving to preserve God's utterly ineffable essence. Again, the *Ambigua* and *Mystagogia* reflect these features rather well. Finally, Maximus understands the Trinity to be actively working in creation, and so we find the persons of the Trinity or more broadly, God, referred to throughout his account of the cosmos and ascent. The goal is to see God in all, through all and for all. Judging by scholarly comments, he seems to have succeeded.

There are yet more complex features, however, that can hamper an investigation into Maximus' Trinitarian thought and can be found in the way he conceives and describes the ascent of Christian life. Part of the difficulty lies in the scarcity of research that attempts to give a *comprehensive* account of Maximus' conception of ascent, especially how it might have developed throughout his writings and how it relates to known influences such as Diadochus, Mark the Monk and even Evagrius. For Evagrius, Viller and Hausherr's works are commonly cited even though there has been extensive criticism brought by von Balthasar, Sherwood, and Thunberg. To navigate these criticisms requires gleaning an assortment of different arguments throughout these authors' writings some of which are made in footnotes or, not being the main point, are made in passing as part of a larger discussion. As others have

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[31] Louth quotes the English translation of Dumitru Stăniloae's *Teologia dogmatica ortodoxa— The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology,* translated and edited by Iaon Ionita and Robert Barringer, (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994), 4-5, (but see also 147-148, 179-180) and builds on this theme to argue for humanity's priestly and thus 'interpretative' role in the cosmos. His contribution, entitled "Man and Cosmos in St. Maximus the Confessor," can be found in *Toward an Ecology of Transfiguration: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Environment, Nature, and Creation,* eds. John Chryssavgis and Bruce V. Foltz (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2013), 60-62. Thunberg also discusses briefly what he terms the "*makranthropos*-idea", see *Microcosm and Mediator,* 140-141.

noted, a new and focused study would be welcome. However, this should not be taken to mean there are no valuable studies on any aspects of Maximus' vision of ascent only that there remains to be focused research that connects the scattered criticisms of earlier research, tracks his development and accounts for all the moving parts of his vision.[32] To give just one example, there is a discernable increase in detail between a work like *Liber asceticus* and later works like *Ambigua ad Iohannem* and *Mystagogia* that is unaccounted for. Part of this growing complexity could be Maximus' sensitivity to his audience's needs and requests or even a concern to ease his audience into more detailed and complex accounts. However, it could also indicate that Maximus is incorporating new concepts and ideas. A case in point is the use of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction, which is rare in his earlier writings but comes to play a prominent role in descriptions of the Trinity, Christ and human beings in later writings. I hope to address this particular example since it affects his Trinitarian thought, but the larger issues still remain. While I do not think the incorporation of new ideas at various phases of his writings represents a drastic revision of his earlier accounts, it nevertheless could indicate the influence of specific traditions, authors and Maximus' own concern to work out earlier seeds of thought.

In addition to the lack of a comprehensive study, each movement of ascent, upon closer inspection, contains themes found in other movements. An example is γνῶσις and πρᾶξις. In one of several accounts of ascent, Maximus splits ascent into two movements –πρακτική and θεωρητική, with πρᾶξις and γνῶσις as the main subjects. However, Maximus, as early as the *Capita caritate,* and perhaps earlier, discusses a kind of knowledge (φρόνησις) that is gained in

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[32] Recent studies have focused on the transformation of desire and Maximus' understanding of natural contemplation. See for example, Joshua Lollar, "'To See into the Life of Things': The Contemplation of Nature in Maximus the Confessor's *Ambigua* to John," Vol. 1 & 2, (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2011), Paul Blowers, "The Dialectics and Therapeutics of Desire in Maximus the Confessor, *VC* 65.4 (2011), 425-451. The most detailed study to date is that of Lars Thunberg in *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor,* 2nd ed. (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1995). However, I would suggest that there is still more going on than even Thunberg's extensive study accounts for. Lollar's study is helpful as an in-depth investigation into the development of the contemplation of nature and attempts to place Maximus within preceding theological and philosophical traditions. Although Lollar's study fills in important details, he does not attempt to give a comprehensive study of Maximus' entire vision of ascent. Blowers' work highlights areas of engagement with Gregory of Nyssa.

the first movement while πρᾶξις continues into the second movement. Maximus'
concern to emphasize the joining of both γνῶσις and πρᾶξις throughout ascent
creates a kind of fractal quality to his description. As the levels of detail are filled
in for each movement, one can discern elements from earlier movements.[33] One
side-effect of this feature is that it appears as though he confuses means and
goal, subject and object and later τρόπος and λόγος.[34]

 Finally, another reason why Maximus' Trinitarian theology can be a
challenge is the knotty issue of influence. Maximus' place in the history and
theological heritage of late antique Christianity comes after numerous
significant councils and after quite a few theological/ascetic luminaries. In other

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[33] For example, in the *Liber* there is noticeable movement from ignorance to γνῶσις of
God, suggesting the standard bipartite account. However, in the *Capita caritate,* this is filled in
further. The baptized move from mere knowledge and false knowledge to genuine knowledge
and then, by the end of ascent, to knowledge of the Trinity. This falls in line nicely with
descriptions of the mind as "impure", "pure", and "perfect" (*Cap. car.* 3.34, 1.33, 3.99). There is a
noticeable absence, however, of "perfect knowledge" even though he does discuss perfect love
and perfect mind. This caveat is understandable in light of statements that distinguish between
God's attributes, which are knowable, and his οὐσία, which is unknowable (cf. *Cap. car.* 1.100).
This understanding of γνῶσις suggests a tripartite account, which is confirmed by other explicit
citations (cf. *Cap. car.* 1.86, 94). While technically speaking πρᾶξις refers to πρακτική, Maximus
insists there is a kind of γνῶσις that results from πρᾶξις— φρόνησις. Conversely, genuine
γνῶσις is possessed only when it is joined with πρᾶξις, specifically love. Likewise, θεωρία that
neglects πρᾶξις cannot lead to genuine γνῶσις and thus aborts knowledge of the Trinity. A
similar phenomenon accompanies other aspects of ascent where Maximus not only suggests
that each concept can be found in a particular movement but will also describe that concept
through the lens of another movement. This "fractal" quality accompanies various aspects of
ascent and is reinforced by similarly fractal literary techniques (cf. the concepts of illumination
and the commandments in *Liber asc.* §1 and 2).

 In attempting to put words to the kind of literary technique Maximus is using and his
understanding of various aspects of ascent, I was unable to find a precise ancient or modern
technical term. Consequently, I have chosen the term "fractal". In using this term I mean to
invoke the attributes of fractal art, which exhibit a particular structure or design on the macro-
level, and then, when a particular section of that level is inspected more closely, it reveals a
similar structure or design on each successive micro-levels. Other kinds of literary techniques
become a means of shaping the interrelated aspects of ascent. For example, in *Cap. car.* 1.2-3, a
chiasm is obvious at the conceptual level, but Maximus also switches the words used for those
concepts from static nouns (fear of God springs from faith) to verbs and attributive participles
(the one who has faith fears punishment). His use of the chiastic structure in tandem with
changing nouns to verbs and verbal forms reinforces syntactically and grammatically a point he
makes often in the *Capita caritate* – the virtues must become active in the soul if the mind is to
have true love and genuine knowledge of God.

[34] Prassas notes this difficulty in the introduction to her translation of *Quaestiones et
Dubia,* see *St. Maximus the Confessor's Questions and Doubts, transl.* with introduction and notes
by Despina D. Prassas (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 34.

words, there are plenty of materials to serve as potential sources. The task would be easier if he held to modern citation conventions but such expectations are foisting standards on an age when part of the value of theological and ascetic writing was the author's ability to resonate a broader tradition authentically, not citation practices. This resonance is much easier to accomplish by echoing language or taking pieces from authors established in this tradition. This does not mean the Maximus never attributes important ideas to his predecessors. His favorite sources to cite are Gregory Nazianzus, Ps.-Dionysius and later Cyril of Alexandria. More often than not he is very forthcoming when he is drawing on these three but there are more difficult influences to untangle and even Gregory and Ps.-Dionysius become problematic when Evagrius comes into the picture. For example, Maximus view of ascent, which has been almost unquestionably attributed to Evagrius, can find surprising parallels in Gregory of Nazianzus or Ps.-Dionysius that if investigated, could lessen Evagrian influence. This is further complicated by the fact that Evagrius had a close relationship with Gregory. Might his account of ascent depend not mainly on Evagrius but also be influenced by Gregory and Ps.-Dionysius in ways beyond just speaking of God's transcendence? The problem is compounded by the fact that there are sources that he draws upon which he does not always name such as Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius, Origen and Leontius of Byzantium. As a result, determining influence becomes an issue of sorting out not just a one-to-one point of correspondence, but an entire network of potential influences and their cumulative effect on each other and then on Maximus.

To sort out such a problem would take a study or several studies that consider not only Maximus and one of these authors but Maximus and his network of sources and influences. This might be done by discerning a priority of authors in his writings, determining areas in which one author or set of authors predominate or perhaps demonstrating more clearly how those around him may have directly influenced his thought. For my investigation, I have chosen not to tackle the issue of influence but rather to demonstrate how Maximus fits into a broader set of traditions. Particularly regarding the ascetic tradition, I have opted to highlight parallel concerns and ways of tackling those concerns by earlier authors and then compare them with Maximus. To this, I

dedicate an entire chapter to help distinguish distinct lineaments of Maximus'
baseline thought as represented in the *Liber*. Other areas concerning how
Maximus engages aspects of tradition are dealt with as needed.

CHAPTER 1

Maximus' Trinitarian Grammar for Christian Life in the *Liber Asceticus*

As I mentioned in the introduction, Pierre Piret's *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur* is one of the only major works dedicated to wrestling with Maximus' Trinitarian thought and there are few references in his work to the *Liber asceticus* or *Capita caritate*. Likewise, Sherwood's earlier analysis of the *Liber* and *Capita,* in which he gave a brief description of Maximus' doctrine of God, was entirely drawn from passages outside the *Liber* and contained only a few references to the *Capita.* Furthermore, his presentation gave very little sense of movement or development, the exception being Maximus' involvement in the miaenergist and miathelite controversies. Overall, contemporary scholarly literature in the English-speaking world has spent little time exploring Maximus' thought in the *Liber* especially for the purpose of analyzing what it might disclose about Maximus' Trinitarian theology. In contrast, this chapter will use the *Liber* to establish a baseline for Maximus' Trinitarian thought. I want to argue that within this early work Maximus establishes a Trinitarian grammar for Christian life. This grammar illustrates, rather than stating directly, the Trinity as the beginning, means and goal of human life. This is demonstrated in several ways: 1) a description of baptism, 2) a particular articulation of divine appropriation – how the Trinitarian persons work in concert, 3) a Trinitarian presentation of the loving, incarnate life of the Son within salvation history, and 4) by illustrating Trinitarian prayer. Maximus' understanding of divine appropriation is displayed: a) through his portrayal of the Spirit appropriating the activities of the Son to the baptized, and b) how ascent allows the baptized to properly participate in and manifest the presence of the Triune God.

In the next chapter, a review of his predecessors uncovers areas of continuity around shared concerns. However, it also reveals how Maximus' account of ascetic and Christian life presented in the *Liber* is distinctive in the Greek East because of its portrayal of the incarnation as exemplifying and shaping love in the life of the baptized. I argue that when his vision placed

within the context of earlier Greek ascetic writers, it represents a striking synthesis of Christian life in Trinitarian terms. I will return to an analysis of Maximus' writings in Chapter 3 when I look at *Capita caritate.* Finally, in Chapter 4, I analyze *Quaestiones et dubia*, *Epistula* 2 and *Opuscula* 13 and thereby round out my review of his early writings. In the *Capita,* Maximus continues his Trinitarian account of Christian life explicitly stating what he only illustrates in the *Liber* while continuing to expand on other areas within a more complex account of ascent. Finally, he will also add several new ways of speaking as a result of engaging Origenism and Tritheism. In the last three works I cover, Maximus begins to solidify terminology for the stages of ascent, continues to engage Origenism and introduces several important distinctions and technical terminology for Christ and the Trinity. With the exception of *Op.* 13, Maximus uses the Trinitarian grammar he exhibits in the *Liber* as a framework on which to carefully integrate his engagement with these controversies and the new terminology he employs.

To give a full treatment of Maximus' view of ascent in Christian life and how it relates to previous articulations is beyond the scope of this study. However, I hope to draw out how his view of ascent is influenced by his understanding of the interaction of the Trinitarian persons and also how the Trinity fits into his overall conception of ascent. Similarly, I want to reemphasize that, in this chapter, I am not attempting to touch on everything Maximus says about the Trinity but only his main themes as a way to uncover his grammar for Christian life.

Like many other ascetic writers, Maximus highlights virtue and union with God as the goal of the ascetic life. This life is pursued by disciplining one's body and mind in order to attain ἀπάθεια, which in turn allows the ascetic to focus on the activities of meditation, contemplation, and prayer. Maximus is well-versed in this perspective, but his own account exhibits a distinctively Trinitarian flavor and demonstrates a concerted effort to deal with epistemological issues within the rubric of love and God's activity. Key to this process is a series of movements that involve γνῶσις and ἄγνοια — knowing, unknowning or ignoring and being aware. This process, at its core, is meant to redirect the powers of the soul away from the pleasures of material existence to

the delights of divine love thereby reintegrating the parts of the soul so that the baptized can love God and fellow human beings. As ascent progresses, the perceptibility of God's indwelling becomes more evident, and the human being matures until perfect love is reached. Maximus' goal in the *Liber asceticus* is to give a basic rationale for this life and an outline of its workings. In order to do this, Maximus draws on quite a lot of imagery from the both testaments of Scripture and echoes phrases of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

On this last point more should be said. A quick comparison of the *Liber* with the *Capita caritate* reveals that Maximus avoids technical language in the former, only using terms for which he can give biblical support and examples. For example, the term ἀπάθεια, which does not occur in the writings of the New Testament nor the *Septuagint,* is used three times in two sentences towards the end of the *Liber* but renouncement and warnings against "material-mindedness" is fully supported by references to Jesus' sayings in the Gospels and exhortations against the "flesh" from the Pauline epistles.[1] Likewise numerous formulations of the scriptural commands to love God, neighbor, and enemy are represented and bolstered with references to Jesus' actions in order to enjoin love and forgiveness of one's enemy. An indicative example can be found when Maximus deals with the concept of νῆψις. In one section, Maximus succinctly sums up the activities of the ascetic life linking a series of ideas and their scriptural support together in order to demonstrate biblical grounding for the term but enlists the apostle Paul as an example of its practice.[2] Likewise, the virtues of love, self-mastery, and prayer all receive biblical support through both prescriptive texts and descriptions of biblical characters who are meant to serve as indicative examples.[3] Of the four major sections of the *Liber*, all receive

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[1] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §44 (CCSG 40:117.1003-119.1017). Ἀπάθεια in this section is the fruit of repentance, which in turn is the forgiveness of sin. Perfect ἀπάθεια is achieved when the ascetic is no longer swept away by the passions and thus perfectly forgiven of sin. In §45 (CCSG 40:119.1020-1022), this maturation of ἀπάθεια is the result of "despising transient things so that because of them we do not fight with human beings, thus transgressing the commandment of love and falling from love of God."

[2] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §18 (CCSG 40:39.328-41.354).

[3] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §19-26 (CCSG 40:41.355-53.466).

similar treatment.[4] Pablos Argárate, while investigating the use of Scripture in the third section where the old man addresses the younger brother's lack of contrition (κατάνυξις), notes that overall there are at least 156 citations of the Bible more than half occurring in the third section. Maximus pulls examples and texts from both testaments to give his account of the ascetic life.[5] Argárate concludes that the *Liber* is "d'une certaine perspective une meditation biblique prolongeé."[6] While the *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine receives no direct treatment, Maximus' preferred way of referring to Scripture in the *Liber* as either a λόγος or λόγοι is suggestive and it is tempting to call to mind Maximus' later explanation of both Scripture and creation as containing the λόγοι that draw the mind toward the *Logos* in *Ambiguum* 10, *Capita gnostica,* and *Quaestiones ad Thalassium.*[7] If Maximus' portrayal of the Christian life is intentionally placed on a biblical foundation and is also purposefully Trinitarian, this suggests that his Trinitarian portrayal of this life is equally based on his reading of the *Septuagint* and the New Testament.

§1.1 *Overview of Liber Asceticus*

In a sense, *Liber asceticus* functions as an introductory work, which spares the reader from a whole range of technical terminology that Maximus will use later and gives the basic lineaments of not only ascetic life but Christian life. Virtually all the material discussed in both the *Liber* and *Capita caritate* could be applied by non-monks as well as monks.[8] Maximus, through a dialogue

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[4] Argárate suggests the major sections are §1-15, 16-26, 27-39 and 40-45, see Pablos Argárate, "«*Car mes iniquites dépassèrent ma tête*»: Les fonctions du texte biblique dans la section katanyktique du *Logos Asketikos* de Maxime le Confesseur," in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11-13 October 2006*, eds. Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 25-34. Sherwood suggests three sections §1-26, 27-39, 40-45, see *St. Maximus,* 99.

[5] Argárate, "Les fonctions du texte biblique," 27.

[6] Argárate, "Les fonctions du texte biblique," 34.

[7] Argárate draws attention to Maximus manner of citing in the *Liber,* see "Les fonctions du texte biblique," 24 n. 37.

[8] Louth comes to a similar conclusion, listing *Ep. 2* and Maximus' concern to show the importance of baptism in *Capita gnostica* 1.87 as evidence, see *Maximus,* 35. Booth argues for a similar broadening of Maximus' audience based on a concern to address the shifting fortunes of

ascetic communities caused by political and economic pressures in the Late Antique Roman Empire. He highlights similar concerns in Sophronius and John Moschus and also cites for all three a growing concern to reconcile ascetic and sacramental areas of Christianity in order to interpret and persevere through the Persian and Arab incursions and the internal tensions of the Empire, see Booth, *Crisis of the Empire,* 182-185.

In the *Liber,* there are several additional pieces of evidence that reveal tensions within the ascetic community and point in the direction of an attempt by Maximus to broaden his audience. None of these are conclusive by themselves but they do indicate a concern that precedes Maximus' *Mystagogia, which* Booth draws upon for his argument. Not enough is known about the recipient of both the *Liber* and *Capita caritate,* Elpidius, to help in this regard. However, based on Maximus address to him as "*Pater*", he may well have overseen an ascetic community or at least, as Ceresa-Gestaldo notes, it may mean he was a monk and superior to Maximus (*Cap. sulla car.*, 49 n. 1). A significant piece of evidence that points to a broader audience is the way Maximus uses the life of Christ, especially his temptation. In *Liber asceticus* §10-13 (CCSG 40:23.174-31.254)*,* Jesus' temptation begins in the desert and continues into "society", suggesting that Maximus is concerned to show how asceticism could and should be lived out by those in society while at the same time addressing how monks should handle interactions within community. In the same work*,* Maximus addresses the created goodness of food, possession, relatives, money and even fame. However, as a result of the human obsession with them, he confronts them as distractions that enslave human attention and steal it away from God. Therefore, they must be renounced. However, in §23 (CCSG 40:45.401-47.417), he permits their use according to the needs of the body but not as a source of complete satisfaction and pleasure. Renunciation, then, does not mean a complete abandonment of their use but rather the relinquishment of an ownership selfishly exercised for one's pleasure.

In *Cap. car.* 4.66 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 222)*,* Maximus makes a similar statement about the inherent goodness of the list of items mentioned above, but this time explicitly highlights "having children" and states he does not forbid such things but forbids immoderation, thinking of things passionately and corrects irrationality. It seems difficult to explain why Maximus might address having children in communities that were expected to be celibate unless he was either correcting misguided ascetic complaints, expected a wider audience or both. In 4.67 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 222)*,* Maximus distinguishes between commandments of love and free-will gifts which he assigns to various ascetic practices. This could be interpreted as simply confronting vainglory within ascetic communities but could also point to Maximus' awareness of a broader readership. The centrality of following the commandment of love, a main theme in the *Liber* and *Capita caritate*, for everyone strengthens this sentiment. Similarly, Maximus will make statements that intimate he is addressing Christian life in general and not specifically the life of monks.

Another example in the *Lib. asc.* is the general conception of salvation. The old man states, "but the Lord, knowing that for the Christian the observation of these [commandments] is not sufficient for perfection said, 'Truly I say to you that if your righteousness does not far exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you might not enter into the kingdom of heaven,'" *Lib. asc.* §30 (CCSG 40:63.552-556). Yet, another example ties both baptism and the commandments together early on in the *Lib. asc.* §2 (CCSG 40:7.32-9.48) suggesting the commandments are for all the baptized not just ascetics. Finally, Maximus' correspondence with those who were not monks, such as the example given by Louth in John Cubicularius; a member of the imperial court in Constantinople, bears similar concerns as those touched upon in the *Lib. asc.* Taken together, these examples demonstrate that Maximus, at the very least, has a concern to confront vainglory on the part of his fellow ascetics but also strongly supports that he is addressing Christians living outside the confines of monastery or cave.

between an old ascetic and a presumably younger brother, gives us the seeds from which he will develop themes in the *Capita caritate.* This dialogue is shaped by the younger man's initial question, "What is the purpose of the incarnation?" In the *Liber asceticus,* Maximus' answer to this question is found in the way he speaks of the Trinity as the beginning, means and goal of human life. This understanding is illustrated in his account of Christian life rather than explicitly stated. One way Maximus accomplishes this is through his portrayal of divine appropriation or how he conceives of the actions and activity of the divine persons together. This portrayal plays out in two arenas. The first arena is by explaining how the Holy Spirit applies or continues the work of the Son in the life of the baptized. The second arena is the process of ascent itself and how it is a necessary *habitus* for properly participating in and manifesting God's presence. A second way he accomplishes this is with a Trinitarian presentation of the incarnate Son's life as an example of love to be imitated. Finally, this grammar is illustrated through Trinitarian prayer, which Maximus displays rather than prescribes or explicitly discusses. Maximus interleaves two of these three ways of speaking to present the Trinity as the beginning and goal of the Christian life while imitation of the Son's activities and the Holy Spirit's appropriation of those activities to the baptized are the means of participating and manifesting the divine life. In this first section, I will give a brief overview of the *Liber* and then in subsequent sections address each of the ways this grammar plays out as described above. In order to facilitate an easier reading between the older critical edition by Cantarella and Sherwood's translation which both use section numbers and the new critical edition by Van Deun, which uses line numbers, I have used both in my citation and provided a table in the Appendix that correlates them.[9]

An important framework for understanding how Maximus' portrayal of Christian life is Trinitarian is recognizing that he sees it as response to God's commands, primarily through imitation (μίμησις/ μιμέομαι) of God but also of

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[9] The current critical edition is *Liber Asceticus*, ed. Peter Van Deun, CCSG 48 (Turnhout: Brepols-Leuven, 2002). The older critical edition is *S. Massimo confessore: la mistagogia ed altri scritti*, ed. Raffaele Cantarella, Testi cristiani con version italiana a fronte, introduzione e comment 4 (Firenze: Testi cristiani, 1931).

the saints. Christian life as imitation is understood within the context of Scripture's history of the divine/human relationship, especially as it relates to dealing with the problem of alienation as a result of sin. Maximus gives this history in brief in the first main section of the dialogue (§1) where it is recounted in response to the initial inquiry of the young man. Specifically, the old man tells of humanity's transgression in paradise, God's providence despite humanity's downward spiral into despair and ends with the incarnation, ascension and giving of the Holy Spirit. The sub-section on the incarnation is the most lengthy and focuses on the Son's activities through the incarnation that are then continued by the Holy Spirit for the baptized who "struggle to keep his commandments for their salvation".[10] It is the Son in the incarnation that shows the deiform way of life and then the Holy Spirit who is sent to appropriate the activities of the Son to the believer. The material from this point forward is essentially the continued dialogue between the old man and the younger man over how to understand and engage this struggle and live this life (§2-40). The exception is the very last sections §41-45, which are directed toward the reader(s) but nevertheless follows the sentiment of the dialogue.[11]

In section, §2, the Christian life begins with obedience to Matthew 28:19-20a and thus baptism is accomplished in the name of the "deifying" Trinity. The old man enjoins the younger man that the baptized join true faith along with all Christ's commands.[12] These commands, as the young man discovers after expressing concern at their number, are accomplished through imitation of the Lord and the power he provides. This power can only be received through struggling against "invisible enemies" and separation from worldly passions.[13] Yet the young man is still distraught at the number of commands in light of his poor memory and so the old man notes that they are encapsulated in the

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[10] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:5.7-7.31): τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίας φυλάξαι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ.

[11] From §41 (CCSG 40:107.912) onward Maximus uses exhortation language "let us" and ends §45 (CCSG 40:119.1018) and the book with "brothers, let us . . ." Sherwood notes this as well, see *St. Maximus,* 247 n. 189.

[12] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §2 (CCSG 40:7.32-9.48).

[13] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §3-5 (CCSG 40:9.49-15.91).

commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your strength and all your mind and your neighbor as yourself" which are in sharp contrast with loving material things especially "mammon".[14] Food, money, possessions, fame and relatives are all created by God as good and should be used in service to him. Yet hate is driven by lust for material possessions and an obsession with worldly concerns. As a result, war is fought both within and with others over these things.[15] The war within must be fought and in order to engage it successfully means to fight against hate and the passions. This requires not just faith but fulfilling Christ's commands as summed up by the citations of the various biblical formulations of loving God and loving neighbor.[16] Calling upon Johannine language, the old man highlights the direct relationship between loving God and loving one another.[17] Maximus, in several instances in the dialogue, has the old man state that God does not command what is impossible. At first he does this to highlight how the struggle to love must mean to love one's enemies but then later repeats a similar statement when discussing ceaseless prayer.[18] However, as the dialogue continues, he insists that to do these things one must be graced with an understanding of the σκοπός of the incarnation.[19]

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[14] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §6 (CCSG 40:15.92-109).

[15] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §7 (CCSG 40:17.110-122). Maximus cites as the main objects of the passions food, money, possessions, reputation and relatives.

[16] Maximus strings together various formulations of this command sometimes citing them from the Gospels explicitly, other times simply alluding to them: cf. Mark 12.30 and *Lib. asc.* §6 (CCSG 40:15.97-99); John 14.15, 15.12 and *Lib. asc.* §7 (CCSG 40:17.123-126); Matt. 5.44 and *Lib. asc.* §8 (CCSG 40:19.146-21.148); Matt. 22.37-40 and *Lib. asc.* §10 (CCSG 40:25.183-185).

[17] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §7 (CCSG 40:17.122-19.131).

[18] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §8, 19, 24-25, 9 (CCSG 40:19.139-21:160; 41.355-360; 49.430-466, 23.167-173).

[19] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §9 (CCSG 40:23.167-173): Ἀδύνατόν τινα ἀγαπῆσαι ἐκ καρδίας τὸν θλίβοντα, κἂν τῇ ὕλῃ τοῦ κόσμου ἔδοξεν ἀποτάξασθαι, ἐὰν μὴ τὸν **σκοπὸν** τοῦ κυρίου ἐν ἀληθείᾳ γινώσκῃ· ἐὰν δὲ τοῦ κυρίου αὐτῷ **χαριζομένου** δυνηθῇ γνῶναι καὶ σπεύδῃ κατ᾽ αὐτὸν περιπατεῖν, δύναται ἐκ καρδίας ἀγαπῆσαι τὸν μισοῦντα καὶ θλίβοντα, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐγνωκότες ἠγάπων, [emphasis is mine].

The theme of love now becomes a central lens through which one views the Son's incarnate life during his temptation "in the desert" but also during his sojourn in "society" especially in relation to the Pharisees and scribes. Christ, in both arenas of human life, is presented as *the* example of love and, therefore, represents the believer's response to God. His example is then fleshed out within the main portion of the dialogue between the old man and the younger brother.[20] Christ's war is fought with love against hate and the instigator of hate—the Devil.[21] He succeeds in keeping the commandment of love, which results in conquering the devil, crowning himself with resurrection, and renewing the old Adam. The elder enjoins the younger man to have the same mind as Christ, quoting Philippians 2.5.[22] He then highlights the voluntary character of Christ's actions even though it led to his death. By being conquered voluntarily (ἐκουσίως), he conquered the devil and his tyranny. By being crucified in weakness, he made dead death and the one who had the power of death.[23] The old man highlights this victory now by shifting attention to the Apostle Paul who boasted in his weakness so that the power of Christ might dwell in him and recognized that his wrestling was not with flesh and blood but against "invisible enemies". Like Christ, Paul suffers and yet in the midst of it finds power and victory responding, as Jesus did, with love.[24] At the end of this tour through the lives of Jesus and Paul, the young man acknowledges the truth of the old man's words and adds a few of his own observations about the love of Jesus— he shows both love and sympathy at the cross through forgiving his enemies. He then asks for prayer so that he may know perfectly the Lord and Apostles' σκοπός and may be able to be "sober-minded" (δυνηθῶ νήφειν) in temptation.[25]

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[20] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §10-12 (CCSG 40:23.174-29.242).

[21] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §12 (CCSG 40:27.215-29.221). Maximus reemphasizes that this war is not fought against fellow human beings but against Satan citing Ephesians 6.12 and alluding to 6.11, 13-17.

[22] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §12 (CCSG 40:27.221-29.242).

[23] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §13 (CCSG 40:29.243-31.251).

[24] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §14-15 (CCSG 40:31.252-35.295).

[25] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §16 (CCSG 40:35.296-311).

What ensues from §17-26 is what it takes to be "sober-minded" (νήφειν) and a careful presentation of how concern for earthly things is overcome by meditation on divine Scripture and the development of the virtues.[26] In order to progress in love and fully devote oneself to God, one must pursue the virtues of love (ἀγάπη), self-mastery (ἐγκράτεια) and prayer (προσευχή). The last of these, prayer, is presented as a grace and one which allows the mind to be joined with God and become Godlike (θεοειδὴς).[27] This term "deiform" alludes to Maximus' initial description of Christ's life in §1, which he stated "traced out a deiform way of life," (πολιτείαν ἡμῖν θεοειδοῦς ζωῆς ὑποδειξας).[28] There is, however, no extended discussion on how to conceive of prayer as both a virtue and a grace.

Within this larger section, Maximus spends much of §19-23, demonstrating how these three virtues accomplish their task of taming anger, quenching lust and presenting the mind, naked (γυμνός), to God.[29] This nakedness is in relation to thoughts (τά νοήματα) about things (τά πράγματα), specifically anything that is not God. Focusing on this last virtue, Maximus states that occasional prayer does not meet the final goal of a habit of divine love (ἕξις τῆς θείας ἀγάπης) but must be ceaseless, as suggested by the Apostle Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5.17.[30] Maximus explains, "For prayer is unceasing, when the mind is held in great awe and passionate devotion to God, when it always hangs on hope in him, when it is confident in him in all things, in both those things which it does and those things which happen to it."[31] Hope here is presented as one of the means by which full devotion perseveres in the midst of an active life

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[26] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §17-26 (CCSG 40:35.311-53.466).

[27] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §24 (CCSG 40:49.423-426): ἡ δὲ χάρις τῆς προσευχῆς τῷ Θεῷ συνάπτει τὸν νοῦν, τῷ δὲ Θεῷ συνάπτουσα, χωρίζει πάντων τῶν νοημάτων. Τότε οὖν ὁ νοῦς γυμνὸς αὐτῷ προσομιλῶν, θεοειδὴς γίνεται.

[28] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:7.17).

[29] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §19-23 (CCSG 40:41.355-47.417).

[30] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §24-26 (CCSG 40:47.418-53.466).

[31] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §25 (CCSG 40:49.437-51.441): Ἀδιάλειπτος γάρ ἐστι προσευχή, τὸ τὸν νοῦν ἔχειν ἐν εὐλαβείᾳ πολλῇ καὶ πόθῳ προσκείμενον τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ ἀεὶ ἀποκρέμασθαι καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν θαρρεῖν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς τε ἔργοις καὶ τοῖς συμβαίνουσιν. The command to pray ceaselessly is at the end of §24 (CCSG 40:49.428-430).

and circumstances. The Apostle Paul, mirroring Christ, serves as an example of someone who is able to pray ceaselessly despite his activities or whatever befalls him. It was with this disposition that he perceived God's love despite tribulation (Romans 8.35, 38) and bore with such tribulation "so that also the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (he gives the full quotation from 2 Corinthians 4.8-10).[32] Finally, Maximus relates this disposition directly to other saints who rejoiced despite their tribulations so that they might come into "the habit of divine hope" and concludes the section with Paul glorying in his weakness so that the power of Christ might dwell in him.[33] Maximus, by emphasizing the constant practice of the activities surrounding virtue, illustrates that ascent has a cumulative effect producing a "state" or "habit of divine hope". This hints at an eschatological feature of ascent, but most clearly shows it is a process of maturation that can be aborted or reengaged.

After the younger man has realized that he lacks virtually everything he needs to understand and know the σκοπός of the incarnation, he is distraught over his own lack of contrition (κατάνυξις).[34] What follows in the rest of §27 on into §39 is a tour through "divine Scripture" that is meant to incite the fear of God and ends with a prayer for mercy. The strategy seems to work, and the young man is struck with contrition acknowledging his sins with the language of Psalm 37.5. His cry is met with a reference by the old man to Matthew 19.25-26 "With human beings salvation is impossible; but with God all things are

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[32] Maximus uses διακείμενος to indicate Paul's state or disposition in §25 (CCSG 40:51.441). This, along with repeating the statement from Colossians 3.5, is meant to echo the end of *Lib. asc.* §12 where the old man quotes Paul's command from Phil. 2.5: «*τοῦτο φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ . . .* » and the beginning of §13 where he ties Paul's power in weakness with Christ's crucifixion in weakness resulting in the defeat of death and Satan. In this portrayal Christ's death is tied directly to the tribulations and weaknesses experienced by the baptized both of which, if endured, result in power. The list of activities here is prompted by the brother's inquiry concerning how it is possible to pray ceaselessly and yet remain active in other aspects of life.

[33] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §26 (CCSG 40:53.458-464): Διὰ τοῦτο ταῖς θλίψεσιν ἀεὶ ἔχαιρον πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, ἵνα εἰς ἕξιν ἔλθωσι τῆς θείας ἐλπίδος, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἔλεγεν ὁ ἀπόστολος· «Ἥδιστα οὖν καυχήσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ· διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς, ἐν στενοχωρίαις ὑπερ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι.» Maximus has in mind here 2 Cor. 12.9, 10.

[34] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §27 (CCSG 40:53.467).

possible," and is quickly followed with another, shorter tour through the Scripture that emphasizes God's mercy in the face of sin.[35]

In the last section §41-45, Maximus addresses his audience directly. It begins by drawing conclusions from the vast survey of God's judgment and mercy given from both the "Old and New Testaments". Like the σκοπός of the incarnation, the knowledge to be gained from the Scriptures is not only the fear of God but also his gentleness and φιλανθρωπία.[36] This section ends with exhortations and finally a doxology, ". . . let us hymn, together with the angels, our Lord Jesus Christ to whom at the same time with the Father [and] together with the Holy Spirit be the glory and the power, now and forever and into eternity. Amen."[37]

As can be seen from the overview above significant indication that Maximus means to emphasize the Trinity in the ascetic life is the way he identifies and incorporates the divine persons within his recounting of the incarnation and the way, at key points, he draws attention to the Trinity in the Christian life. Maximus' scriptural usage highlights points in salvation history, the life of Christ and the process of ascent where discussion of the divine persons becomes acute. For Maximus, the incarnation includes not only that point when the Son becomes human, but his entire life, including baptism and the ways the incarnate Son obeys the command of love and will return to sit at the right hand of the Father. Baptism, the beginning of Christian life, is in the name of the "deifying Trinity". Prayer, the height of that life is portrayed as an important activity for deification and is more generally illustrated with a Trinitarian plea for mercy. Everyday struggles against temptation and the passions are portrayed as a choice between being a temple of Christ and the Spirit, or devils; between being sons of the Father or sons of Hell. One overcomes these by the work and help of the Spirit and Christ, both sent to help the baptized live a life of love not only through an indwelling presence but

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[35] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §40 (CCSG 40:99.852 -101.858).

[36] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §41 (CCSG 40:107.912-14).

[37] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §40 (CCSG 40:123.1042-1044): σὺν ἀρχαγγέλοις ὑμνήσωμεν τὸν κύριον καὶ θεὸν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος ἅμα τῷ Πατρὶ σὺν τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων ἀμήν.

through the example of Christ's life. As I will show in Chapter 2, investing aspects of Christian life with attention to the Trinity is not necessarily unique to Maximus but the way he executes his vision and illustrates it Trinitarian texture, indeed, that the way he demonstrates the Trinity as beginning, means and end is distinctive.

In this portrayal, there is a sense in which love is seen as both the means and the goal of ascetic and Christian life. As one learns to grow in love towards God, it is possible to come to a habit of hope and ceaseless prayer, which enables power in weakness, self-mastery and ultimately growth in love for neighbor. There is a sense in which all the virtues seem to function in this same way. How is this possible? How can the goal also be the means? The answer to this is hinted at in the aforementioned phrase "habit of divine hope" and likewise in the discussion of ceaseless prayer. These are goals but the only means by which they become a habit or ceaseless is by continuing to do them. Thus, if one wants to be a genuine believer, then according to Maximus, one must continue to imitate Christ until Christ is made manifest in the believer's life.

The framing of the Christian life in *Liber asceticus,* from the surprise expressed by the old man at the brother's ignorance concerning the σκοπός of the incarnation, to his lack of contrition, to a plea for God's mercy and his eventual expression of contrition, suggests Maximus is tackling here something he states rather tersely later in the *Capita* –it is not good enough to be a monk outwardly, one must be a monk inwardly.[38] Thus, the practice of asceticism must be done with the internal orientation fixed on the σκοπός of the incarnation, which is love. In order to mature one must learn to love both God and fellow human beings despite whatever afflictions are faced. However, frequently encountering the impossibility of this task, the young man anxiously queries his older counterpart realizing that the only way to accomplish this is by appealing to God's mercy and love. Both the maturation through practice and the impossibility of the task by one's self are an important feature for understanding Maximus' view of ascent. This overview gives us only a brief taste of the *Liber,* but already the main themes I listed at the beginning of this

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[38] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.50 (*Cap. sulla Car.*, 214).

chapter are visible. In the next four sections, I will focus on specific areas within the *Liber* in order to investigate and demonstrate each theme. In following section (§1.1.2), I will cover the first pericope in order to show two-thirds of this sequence – how the Trinity is the beginning and means of Christian life and its relation to a particular understanding of divine appropriation. In the second section (§1.1.3), I will show the later third – how Maximus sees the Trinity as the end or goal of the Christian life. Finally, in the last two sections (§1.1.4 and 1.1.5) I will show the importance of ascent for participation in, the manifestation of the presence of the Trinity, and one area where Trinitarian prayer is illustrated.

§1.1.2 *The Trinity as Beginning and Means of Christian Life & Divine Appropriation*

Even though there are several places that are suggestive for further study of the Trinity as beginning, means and end of the Christian life and divine appropriation, there are two areas I want to look at more closely. The first pericope is located at the beginning of the dialogue and the second is found a few sections later. Both of these are in response to the question, "what was the σκοπός of the incarnation?"[39] In the first response, Maximus follows the question with a short reply of surprise from the old man since he knows the brother hears the symbol of faith every day. When he is queried further the old man gives a confession-like response. As Van Deun notes in the critical edition, Maximus appears to be echoing phrases from the creed of Constantinople 381 CE.[40] This language assists the narrative flow of the old man's response and provides scaffolding on which Maximus hangs his own additions which are mainly allusions to scriptural language with some direct quotation.[41] The

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[39] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:5.1-2).

[40] CCSG 40:247. The phrase are: ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς τοῦ Κυρίου ἐνανθρωπήσεως ἡ ἡμετέρα ἦν σωτηρία (CCSG 40:5.5-6) . . . ὁ μονογενὴς τοῦ Θεοῦ Υἱός (CCSG 40:5.13) . . . ὁ ἐκ Θεοῦ Θεός (CCSG 40:5.14) . . . σαρκωθεὶς ἐκ Πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ τῆς ἁγίας Παρθένου (CCSG 40:7.16-17) . . . καὶ εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνελθών, καὶ ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Πατρὸς καθεσθείς (CCSG 40:7.25-26). Van Deun only notes CCSG 40:5.5-6, 7.16-17, 25-26.

[41] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:5.5-7.30). For example, Van Deun notes phrases taken from 2 Tim. 3.13, Luke 1.79, Heb. 2.14 and I Cor. 15.22.

overall effect is an abbreviated salvation-history. The σκοπός of the incarnation is "for our salvation" as a response to humanity's transgression in paradise and fall into sin and death. Additionally, it is the "the only begotten Son of God, the eternal Word, God of God, the fount of life and immortality" who "enlightened us who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, having become flesh by the Holy Spirit and the holy virgin . . . ," and who "ascends to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father."[42]

There are several notable aspects of this narrative. The first is that all the persons of the Trinity make an appearance; however, the activities listed focus on those of the Son and the Spirit within the σκοπός of the Son's incarnation (ἐνανθρώπησις). Here we can note some similarities and differences in the activities of the Son and the Spirit as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.1.

Comparison of the activities of the Son and the Spirit in *Liber asceticus* §1[a]			
Section	**Son**	**Section**	**Spirit**
5.14	. . . ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας . . .	7.26-27	. . . [τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατέπεμψεν] εἰς ἀρραβῶνα τῆς ζωῆς
5.15-7.16	. . . *ἐπέφανεν ἡμῖν τοῖς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένοις* . . .	7.27-28	. . . καὶ εἰς φωτισμὸν . . . [τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν] . . .
7.16-17	. . . σαρκωθεὶς ἐκ Πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου . . .	- - -	- - -
7.17	. . .καὶ πολιτείαν ἡμῖν θεοειδοῦς ζωῆς ὑποδείξας . . .	7.28	. . . καὶ ἁγιασμὸν τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν . . .
7.17-20	. . . καὶ ἐντολὰς ἁγίας δεδωκώς, καὶ βασιλείαν οὐρανῶν ἐπαγγειλάμενος		. . . καὶ εἰς βοήθειαν τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίας

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[42] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:5.6-7.26).

	τοῖς κατ᾽ αὐτὰς πολιτευομένοις, καὶ κόλασιν αἰώνιον τοῖς παραβαίνουσιν ἀπειλήσας, . . .	7.28-30	φυλάξαι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ.
7.20-26	. . . παθὼν τὸ σωτήριον πάθος, καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάς, τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς ἀναστάσεως καὶ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς ἡμῖν ἐχαρίσατο, τὸ κατάκριμα δι᾽ ὑπακοῆς λύσας τῆς προγονικῆς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ *τὸ κράτος τοῦ θανάτου θανάτῳ καταργήσας, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως ἐν αὐτῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται·* καὶ εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνελθών, καὶ ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς καθεσθείς, . . .	- - -	- - -
7.26-27	. . . τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατέπεμψεν . . .	- - -	- - -

a The Greek text is taken from CCSG 40:5.14-7.30.

While Maximus uses the language from the symbol of faith to structure the narrative, he also carefully casts the relationship between some of the activities of the Son and Spirit as complementary. The Son sends (κατέπεμψεν) the Spirit, who continues activities the Son accomplished within the incarnation in the Christian life.[43] For example, the Son is the source (ἡ πηγὴ) of life, and the

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[43] Although the subject of κατέπεμψεν can safely be identified as the Son, Maximus is not attempting to purport a doctrine of *filioque*. He does not use ἐκπορεύεται. Instead, Maximus' intent in using the compound verb καταπέμπω, which does not occur in the New Testament, is likely to signal that the Son, whom he has stated "ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father", is sending down the Spirit in accord with the use of πέμπω (send) in John 15.26, 14.26 and 16.7. Later in his life, Maximus answers several accusations against Latin theology in *Opusculum* 10 concerning its understanding of the source and relation of the Son and the Spirit. For a helpful and thorough recent study see A. Edward Siecienski, "The Authenticity of

Spirit is sent as a deposit of life (ἀρραβῶνα τῆς ζωῆς). Also, the Son in his incarnation enlightens (ἐπέφανεν) humanity and sends the Holy Spirit as illumination (φωτισμὸν) for the soul. Again, the Son gives the commandments while the Holy Spirit is given as help (βοήθειαν) for those who are attempting to fulfill them. As a result, Maximus, by addressing the question of the σκοπός of the incarnation, shows how the Son and Spirit accomplish its *telos.* Maximus' concern in aligning these concepts is to address God's *activities* concerning the incarnation specifically and he does not, at this point, seem interested in expounding an in-depth confession of the Trinity's ontological constitution. However, following the creed of 381 CE, the use of "God of God" along with "only-begotten Son of God" and "the eternal Word" are used. These descriptors "of God" and "eternal" attached to the titles "God", "only-begotten Son" and "Word" demonstrate the Son's divinity and consubstantiality with the God.[44]

What is remarkable, however, is what is not here. There is no use of ontological terms like οὐσία, ὁμοούσια, φύσις or ὑπόστασις that are so indicative of his later presentations of the Trinity. The Father has only a brief mention at the end of this section where it states that the Son is "seated at the right of the Father".[45] It could also be that Maximus sees "God" as referring to all three persons although this is slightly ambiguous since the descriptor "of God" which was used for the Son could refer either to the Father or simply relate the Son to divine nature of the Godhead. The source of divinity or μοναρχία is not directly touched on. Either way, the titles and descriptors used to name the Son demonstrate a way of speaking garnered from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed and the New Testament that is meant to show his divinity and consubstantiality with the Father. The Spirit here receives no explicit designation as consubstantial but does share common activities with the Son.

The broadest common activities; meaning, those shared amongst the persons of the Trinity and are exclusive to divinity, are the making of humanity

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Maximus the Confessor's *Letter to Marinus*: The Argument from Theological Consistency, *VC* 61 (2007), 189-227 but more importantly his *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[44] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:5.13-14).

[45] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §1 (CCSG 40:7.26).

and subsequent providence after their transgression in paradise. This providence culminates in the Son taking on flesh and ends with the sending of the Spirit. However, as the table above shows there are kinds of activities that are not shared. For example, while the Son and Spirit both participated in the event of the incarnation, the Spirit's unique role is in Christ's conception while the Son's role is to become incarnate, live the incarnate life, and send the Holy Spirit. These activities can also be deemed inseparable based on their mutual involvement but also on the fact that what is appropriated to the life of the baptized by the Spirit is predicated on what the Son has accomplished in his incarnation. So in relation to the Christian, the Son and the Spirit exhibit common and inseparable activities but in regard to the activities of the ὑποστάσεις toward each other and how the common activity of providence takes place through the incarnation there is discernable difference. This way of portraying the activities of God gives us a baseline for how Maximus correlates the activities of the Son and Spirit in the life of the Christian but also shows how the Trinity is both the ground and means of that life. This basic grammar Christian life is Trinitarian and depends on a specific understanding of how divine appropriation functions in salvation history and in the life of the baptized.

In the next chapter, I will show how in several places in his writings, Evagrius appeals to the common activity of "revealing" the Father as an argument for the consubstantiality of the Son and Spirit. It may well be that Maximus has a similar rationale for tying so closely the activities of the Son and Spirit, especially as it relates to illumination. If the Son is consubstantial and the Spirit continues or completes the activities of the Son, then the Holy Spirit must also be seen as consubstantial. However, there is not enough in these opening lines to know whether the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and Son, something Maximus surely believes, is in view or whether tying these activities closely together is only a result of his concern to show them at work in Christian life.

§1.1.3 *Incarnate Son's Life as End or Goal of Christian Life*

In this section, I demonstrate how Maximus conceives of the Son as end or goal of the Christian life. By "end" I mean to communicate that the Son serves as an example of the *ethos* and *telos* of Christian life that must be imitated. This end can be simply summarized as love, but there are nuances that I hope to bear out. The *ethos* of the Son as love is a practical goal of daily life, but it is put within a framework that aims toward a consistent habit or state – a deiform way of life. While the incarnate Son tends to be the particular focus of this theme, Maximus intentionally illustrates it within a Trinitarian framework. This is accomplished by an explanation of Jesus' baptism that names the persons of the Trinity and highlights the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Son. His portrayal also demonstrates how God fulfills his own command of love as the incarnate Son even while there is language that describes Christ as obeying the Father. I now turn to the second pericope in the *Liber* where the young man again probes his elder regarding the σκοπός of the incarnation. In this particular exchange, the younger brother is at the point of despair in his attempt to understand how to love and old man is ready to explain further what is meant by the σκοπός of the Lord. He responds again in a confessional tone,

> Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, being God by nature, also stooped down to become a man because of [his] love of humanity (διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν), 'was born of a woman, born under the law' according to the divine apostle, so that as a man, after having kept the commandments, he might overturn the ancient curse of Adam. Therefore the Lord, having known that the entire law and the prophets hang on these two commandments from the law—You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself—sought eagerly to keep them as a human being from beginning until the end.[46]

Maximus frames the entire aim of the incarnation within the framework of God recapitulating his own command of love as a human being. This recapitulation undoes the disobedience of the first Adam and its consequences –

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[46] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §10 (CCSG 40:21.178-23.186).

namely deception and death. The old man continues and will go on to recount Jesus' baptism,

> When [the Devil] saw him at his baptism, accompanied by the Father's testimony, receiving as a man also the Holy Spirit who is of the same kind, and after he [Jesus] went into the desert in order to be tempted by him, he [the Devil] waged his entire war against him. . .[47]

While in the desert, Jesus faces temptation in the same areas the old man had earlier highlighted as necessary renouncements for the baptized: food, money, fame. Christ succeeds in overcoming these temptations and demonstrating his love for God.[48] The old man then describes Jesus interactions with the scribes and Pharisees after he returns to society. They are portrayed as being spurred on by the devil to persecute Jesus in order to compel him to transgress God's commandment of love. Jesus, however, in responding to this "paradoxical war", "not only teaches the ways of life but also demonstrates the heavenly manner of life" and so overcomes their hatred through his love and secures victory over the devil and thus victory over death through his own death in weakness.[49] The σκοπός of the devil, to entice Jesus against loving God and neighbor, fails.[50] Maximus ends §12 with the full quotation of Phil. 2.5-11 and then in §13 states plainly,

> Therefore this was the σκοπός of the Lord, that he might obey the Father unto death as man on our behalf, keeping the commandment of love and that, in another way, he might ward off the devil by suffering from him those who were being acted on by him; the scribes and the Pharisees. In this way, he conquered him who hoped to conquer by being voluntarily conquered and rescued the world from his domination.[51]

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[47] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §10 (CCSG 40:25.187-192).

[48] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §10 (CCSG 40:23.174-25.199).

[49] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §12 (CCSG 40:27.215-29.242).

[50] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §11-13 (CCSG 40:25.199-31.254).

[51] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §13 (CCSG 40:29.243-31.2).

The combination of both Phil. 2.5-11 and its subsequent explanation gives additional biblical content to the concept of the σκοπός of the Lord and its orientation toward the mind. Maximus is giving support for another common concept within ascetic thought — φρόνησις — by citing Paul's command "Τοῦτο φρονείσθω . . ." and by calling attention to the larger context of the verse in which the verb is used three times. The term in the context of Phil. 2.5-11 is, like σκοπός, another word for "purpose" or "intention" but can also mean "practical wisdom", "thoughtfulness", and "prudence". The use of these terms underscores aptly how the σκοπός of the Lord, which is God's love of humanity especially in the life of the incarnate Son, becomes an example of the *ethos* and *telos* of the Christian life. Maximus' restatement of the importance of the incarnation suggests that there is something more that is to be learned from it over and above the fact that it gives knowledge about how the Son loved in his incarnate life.

In fact, Maximus does give us more information in another section (§17). Striving against the passions and attentiveness (μελέτη) to the examples of Christ and his apostles is meant to help the ascetic clearly grasp the devil's thoughts (τὰ νοήματα). This allows for a sober and compassionate assessment of others who, like the ascetics themselves, are being tempted. Thus, pardon (συγγιγνώσκω) is the means by which one avoids responding to the devil's contrivance to hate. Through this attentiveness, the intention of God's incarnation can be known; it is "to love human beings and have sympathy for them in their failures and to war ceaselessly with evil demons through love."[52] The use of both ἀγαπᾶν and συμπάσχειν (love and sympathy) is meant to echo §16 where the brother reflects on Christ's response to those who participated in his beating, mocking and crucifixion (Lk. 23.24, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.").[53] When viewed in the context of the opening list of activities, it is clear that part of the illumination of which Maximus speaks is the σκοπός of the incarnation. Additionally, to know this σκοπός is not only to

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[52] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §17 (CCSG 40:23.174-25.199): καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἀνθρώπους ἀγαπᾶν καὶ συμπάσχειν αὐτοῖς πταίουσι, τοῖς δὲ πονηροῖς δαίμοσιν ἀδιαλείπτως διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης πολεμεῖν.

[53] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §16, 17 (CCSG 40:35.296-39.327).

see the revelation of God's love in the incarnate Son and how he demonstrated a love of God and neighbor that must be imitated but it is also self-knowledge in light of God's mercy. These two realities combined are meant to produce solidarity with fellow human beings, which in turn puts one in solidarity with God and his love.

To summarize, Jesus fulfilled the first commandment (love the Lord your God) during his temptation in the desert and the second commandment (love your neighbor as yourself) when he returned to civilization or society (ἡ οἰκουμένη).[54] Maximus balances this by emphasizing Christ's restraint as a human being in the desert which demonstrates his love for God. Then he emphasizes Christ as God, who knows Satan's plans, is good by nature, and loves despite persecution and death in society which demonstrates complete obedience in love for neighbor. In both the desert and society then, the incarnate Son succeeds in fulfilling the commands of loving God and loving neighbor even enemies and thereby serves as an example of Christian life and thus reveals the σκοπός of the incarnation. His example, reinforced by other biblical characters, demonstrates how God's providence through the incarnation should produce a sympathetic and merciful solidarity with one another that recognizes one's own temptations and failings. It should also produce a solidarity with God the Son which understands and emulates Christ's war against hate and the devil and his love for God, neighbor, and enemy.

I want now to look more closely at Maximus' portrayal of Christ's baptism in §10 in order to show an additional way that he illustrates the incarnate Son's life in a Trinitarian context. In §1, the second person of the Trinity was referred to as the "only begotten Son of God", "God of God", and "eternal Word". There the descriptors served to portray the Son as God and consubstantial with the Father. In §10, where the old man recounts Jesus' baptism, the role of the Father and the consubstantiality of the Spirit come to the foreground. Jesus "receives the testimony of the Father" and the Holy Spirit

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[54] The concern to show the viability of an ascetic life both in monastic settings and in "society" can also be discerned in John Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow*. See Booth, *Crisis of the Empire,* 125-126.

from heaven. Maximus also uses here the first instance of a specifically ontological term, stating Jesus is "by nature God". Maximus will make such brief statements elsewhere stating Christ is "by nature good" (§12, 40) and "God and Master" (§43). The reference here to the Spirit as "of the same kind" (τὸ συγγενὲς) serves much the same purpose as the language from §1 signaling the consubstantiality Spirit with the Son and in a broader sense that the Spirit is divine. Again, Maximus does not use a term one would expect, like ὁμοούσια but chooses one that has biblical usage, yet the effect is still same, the Son and Spirit are of the same nature and that shared nature is divine.[55] Maximus also highlights that Jesus is not only God but also good by nature. The implication being that because he is God and good by nature he will respond with love. But why highlight the consubstantiality of the Son and Spirit and not also the Spirit with the Father?

In the history of interpretation surrounding Jesus' baptism, there was a precedent for emphasizing the consubstantiality of the Son and Spirit. In the theological controversies intervening the councils of Constantinople 381 CE and Chalcedon 451 CE, Cyril of Alexandria, writing against Theodore of Mopsuestia, emphasizes the Spirit as consubstantial with the Son during the Christological debates of early fifth century. For Cyril, in both his commentaries on the Gospels and his correspondences, this tactic served to guard against diminishing Christ's divinity. Jesus in his baptism had no need of anything from the Holy Spirit that he did not already possess as the Son. Instead, as Cyril argues, Jesus receives the Spirit "as one of us" so that the Spirit may renew and "be rooted" to human nature.[56] Jesus' baptism serves as a convenient place to tackle the consubstantiality of the Spirit and the Son and indeed Trinitarian theology but for Cyril it was also a means of addressing the divinity of Jesus and sparked reflection on passages elsewhere in the Gospels that drew attention to the Spirit's involvement in the incarnate Son's earthly ministry. In fact, Cyril paints

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[55] The term in the New Testament is often translated "relative" or "kinsmen", cf. Mark 6.4, Luke 1.58, 2.44, 14.12, 21.16, John 18.26, Acts 10.24, Rom. 9.3, 16.11, 21.

[56] Cyril, Commentarii in Iohannem, 2.1 in Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis Evangelium: Accedunt fragmenta varia necnon tractatus ad Tiberium diaconum duo Vol 1., ed. Philip Edward Pusey (Oxford: Claredon, 1872), 184.

an entire picture of salvation history around the loss and re-reception of the Holy Spirit, the latter accomplished in Jesus' baptism. This description depends on a particular explanation of the shared events of the Son and the Spirit throughout the Son's incarnate life.[57] Maximus neither here in *Liber* nor elsewhere, casts God's economy of salvation in this way. The closest he comes to such a formulation is later in *Ambiguum* 42 where he will suggest that humanity's prelapsarian manner of birth was by the Spirit and, because of the incarnation, can once again be achieved by the Spirit.[58] However, for both Cyril and Maximus, as we have seen, there is a conception of common and inseparable divine activity, which nevertheless allows each person to act in a distinguishable way in a particular event or towards one another. Maximus cites no one in the *Liber* outside biblical authors and, in general, does not cite Cyril as freely as he does Gregory Nazianzus or Ps.-Dionysius until much later in his writings.[59]

Although Maximus may have read Cyril's commentaries at this stage of his writings, as well as the literature surrounding the Third (431 CE) and Fourth (451 CE) Council, Cyril's influence could have equally been mediated through

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[57] This is part of the conclusion reached by Daniel A. Keating in his very helpful study entitled, *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). This relationship is explained most clearly when Cyril comments on Jesus' baptism in his *Commentarii in Iohannem,* 2.1 (Pusey, *in D. Joannis Evangelium* Vol.1, 174-190) and also in his commentary on the various references to the Spirit's involvement in Christ's ministry in Luke's Gospel. See, for example, Homily 2 for explanations of Jesus' Baptism (Luke 3.21-23) in *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke,* translated by R. Payne Smith, (Studion Publishers, 1983), 78-81, of Jesus being full of the Spirit in Homily 12 (Payne, *Gospel of Saint Luke,* 85-87) where Cyril casts the purpose of the incarnation in the terms discussed above (Luke 4.1), of Jesus returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit who is consubstantial with the Son (Luke 4.14) in Homily 12 (Payne, *Gospel of Saint Luke,* 91), of Jesus' quotation of Isaiah 61 (Luke 4.18) also in Homily 12 (Payne, *Gospel of Saint Luke,* 92-95) and finally of Jesus rejoicing in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10.27) in Homily 65 (Payne, *Gospel of Saint Luke,* 277-78).

[58] Maximus, *Ambiguum* 42 (*The Ambigua,* 180.31-186.33: PG 91.1345C-1349A).

[59] On this see Keating's work but also Brian Daley's helpful, "The Fullness of the Saving God: Cyril of Alexandria on the Holy Spirit", in Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (eds.), *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003), 113–48 and in the same volume Marie-Odile Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity according to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and Its Recapitulation into the Unity of Divinity," 75-111.

the work of the second Council of Constantinople (553 C.E.). A key issue in the Three Chapters controversy was Theodore of Mopsuestia's interpretation of the Spirit's role in Christ's life— a subject on which Cyril dedicated one of his anathemas and which received intense review at the fourth and fifth session of the Fifth Council. [60] To demonstrate Maximus' dependence on this literature would entail a comparison of Maximus and the work of the Council of 553 CE. While I touch on this in later chapters, I will forego such an investigation here so as not to distract from the overall goal of the chapter which is to provide a baseline of Maximus' Trinitarian theology. Finally, given his focus on love and the activities of the Son and Spirit, it is surprising that Maximus does not cite 1 John 4:8. However, his focus on the activities of the incarnate Son as the goal of Christian life (love of God and others), his persistent inclusion of language that draws attention to the common activities of the persons of the Trinity along with phrases that signal their consubstantiality gives his account of the incarnation and, therefore the Christian life, a distinctively Trinitarian flavor.[61]

§1.1.4 *The Power of Christ, the Fruit of the Spirit - The Importance of Ascent for the Manifestation of the Presence of the Triune God*

In this section, I will show how the process of ascent, as it relates to the concepts of power, indwelling and fulfilling the commandment of love, is important for participation in and the manifestation of the presence of the Triune God. These concepts demonstrate how Maximus' underlying assumption of the unity of divine action plays out within ascent. After a brief review of an earlier section regarding power, I will analyze several pericopies in the latter

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[60] It also received an anathema in Justinian's *Edictum rectae fidei* (canon 11) in *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians,* 2nd ed., ed. Eduard Schwartz, Legum Iustiniani Imperatoris Vocabularium Subsidia II (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1973), 150.26-152.13. See also the *Acts of the Council of Constantinople 553, Volume One: General Introduction, Letters and Edicts Sessions I-IV*, transl. with intro. and notes by Richard Price, Translated Texts for Historians 51 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 145, 225-370. Hereafter cited Price, TTH 51.1.

[61] Felix Heinzer also notes the Trinitarian character of the Maximus portrayal of the incarnation in "L'explication trinitaire de l'économie," 159-172. Heinzer draws attention to the numerous Trinitarian descriptions of the incarnation throughout Maximus' work but does not include Maximus' portrayal of the incarnation and its employment as the source and goal of Christian imitation from *Liber asceticus.*

part of the *Liber* (§27-45) which tie all these ideas together. The latter part of the *Liber,* §27-45 can be sub-divided into several sections. The first is the lengthy survey through "Divine Scripture" that addresses the young man's concern for his own lack of contrition (§27-39). This section ends with a prayer for mercy. The second section is another, shorter, survey that addresses the young man's contrition and anxiety over his sins (§40-41). The last section summarizes what knowledge was gained through both surveys and then addresses the audience directly by giving an extended exhortation (§42-45). This section ends with a doxology. There are many passages in each section that are ripe for investigation, but I will look at just a couple texts that bear out the importance of ascent for the participation and manifestation of the presence of the Triune God. In my final section (§1.1.5), I will look at the prayer offered in §37-39.

As the old man has argued throughout the *Liber*, ascent – defined as the activities of renouncement and attentiveness to the σκοπός of the incarnation and the pursuit of the virtues – is important in order to fulfill one's *telos*, which is mature love. For Maximus, it is in light of one's weakness and God's love and sympathy that the σκοπός of the incarnation is truly understood, and power (δύναμις) is made available for Christian life. The devil may have the power of death, but the Son conquers death through his own weakness and gives power to be crucified to the world and to imitate him in love.[62] Maximus addresses the issue of power several times throughout the *Liber,* and it is usually conjoined with several ideas. The first idea is renouncement. As stated in §3, one must leave all and follow Christ and then Christ gives power to imitate him and do his commandments.[63] In this instance, Paul serves as an example of someone who walks "not according to the flesh but according to the spirit." David also serves as an example. The second idea is that of weakness. In the overview, I briefly reported how at the end of §13 Maximus talks about Christ's weakness. There Christ's "weakness" (ἀσθένεια) was not retaliating against the instigation of the devil through the Scribes and Pharisees. This was itself a victory but when he

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[62] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §3-4, 10, 13 (CCSG 40: 11.56-70, 25.187-188; 29.243-251).

[63] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §3 (CCSG 40:11.56-60).

was crucified "he killed death" and "rendered impotent the one who holds the power of death," through his weakness. [64] Afterward, the old man states, Christ crowned himself with the resurrection. Later, the young man recapitulates this section stating that the baptized "have been graced" (χαρισάμενος) with victory over "the devil and his rulers" by the risen Christ who also "loosed the power of death and offered the whole world his resurrection unto life."[65]

As noted before, there is a transition from the example of Jesus to that of Paul. The transitional statement is a commentary on 2 Corinthians 12.9, "Paul, in himself, was weak and boasted in his weakness so that the power of Christ might dwell in him."[66] Like Jesus, Paul realizes he is fighting "invisible" enemies and recognizes the need to fight this battle with the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of hope, the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit.[67] Paul does not retaliate but instead he drives out the passions and perseveres in the commandment of love. Thus he "conquers evil with a good imitation of the Savior."[68] Maximus use of the examples of Jesus and Paul suggests that "weakness" here means something like voluntary passivity, suffering or non-retaliation. It is through this "weakness" that a battle is fought and won against the devil and demons who wish to incite hate and pleasure by appealing to the passions for material concerns. A reference to the indwelling power of Christ taken from 2 Cor. 12.9 is found twice. Once at the end of §13 and again at the end of §26 and provides an *inclusio* for old man's explanation of how one comes to know *perfectly* (τελείως) the σκοπός of the Lord. The process takes the baptized through pursuance of sober-mindedness (νῆψις), attentiveness, fear of God and the knowledge all of which can be possessed through the pursuit of the virtues and, when done consistently, leads to the habit of hope.

[64] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §13 (CCSG 40:31.249-251).

[65] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §16 (CCSG 40:35.296-311).

[66] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §13 (CCSG 40:35.296-311).

[67] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §14 (CCSG 40:35.296-311).

[68] Maximus, *Lib asc.* §15 (CCSG 40:35.296-311).

It is tempting, based on this portrayal, to identify Maximus' conception of the indwelling power of Christ directly with the Holy Spirit because of earlier statements about the Holy Spirit as pledge, enlightenment, sanctification and help in §1. This is especially the case since these activities are paired with that of the Son. One could be tempted, for example, to take the statement Maximus makes in §42, that "the Lord has shown the means of salvation and given the power to become sons of God," as meaning that imitation of Christ's love is the means while the Holy Spirit is the power.[69] Yet, Maximus does not make an explicit connection between the Holy Spirit and power. However, Maximus' way of making connections can sometimes be found through the linkage of key ideas and their biblical support. In the case of the Spirit and the indwelling power of Christ, there is a complex of ideas linked through biblical images and concepts that clearly demonstrates correlation even though explicit identification is elusive.

These linkages are essentially a grouping of biblical texts that describe the divine activity and presence within Christian life and can be seen in his discussion of four ideas. I will briefly list these below then provide an example in the following paragraphs where they all meet. The first idea Maximus discusses is the contrast between flesh and spirit and is rooted in passages from the Pauline letters of Galatians and Romans. However, many modern biblical commentators have been ambivalent about whether "spirit" in this contrast is meant to signify the Holy Spirit or something else. On the surface, a similar problem presents itself in translating some of Maximus' uses.[70] So, while this is suggestive, it may not immediately provide clarity on whether the power of the indwelling Christ and the Spirit can be directly correlated. However, part of his

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[69] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §42 (CCSG 40:115.979-981): Ἰδοὺ ἐχαρίσατο ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος τρόπον σωτηρίας, καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ἐξουσίαν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι τέκνα Θεοῦ· καὶ ἐν τῷ θελήματι ἡμῶν ἐστι λοιπὸν ἡ σωτηρία ἡμῶν.

[70] See for example *Lib. asc.* §4 (CCSG 40:11.67), §41 (CCSG 40:109.927), §45 (CCSG 40:119.1022-121.1023). Several authors comment on this feature of Maximus and conclude that Maximus does in fact mean to connote the Holy Spirit even if every instance of *spirit* does not denote the third person of the Trinity. See for example Josef Loosen, "Logos und Pneuma im begnadeten Menschen bei Maximus Confessor," (PhD diss. Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 1940), 95.

employment of this contrast is an explanation of what it means to live by the Spirit, which encompasses for Maximus a range of texts that talk about the fruit of the Spirit, sonship, being temples of God, being born of the Spirit and, finally, the Spirit being taken away from human beings. These are more explicit in the identification of the term πνεῦμα with the Holy Spirit and are taken variously from New Testament texts like Gal. 5.22-25, Rom. 8:14, 1 Cor. 3.16, John 3.6 and Gen. 6.3. Another more explicit use is in his discussion of "indwelling". As noted above Maximus utilizes 2 Cor. 12.9 twice. The key verb in these passages is ἐπισκηνόω with the prepositional phrase ἐν αὐτῷ. Beyond these two uses, though, this *exact* language is not used of Christ himself or the Spirit but rather only for the power of Christ. There are cases, however, where Maximus does us "ἐν" or the dative case without a preposition to describe similar concepts of indwelling. Thirdly, Maximus describes in several places how the life of Christ or the fruit of the Spirit are made manifest in the human person drawing on language from 2 Cor. 4.8-11 and Gal. 2.20.[71] Finally, Maximus also discusses the role of the commandments in this process of making manifest the life of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit. All of these ideas helpfully come together in one section toward which I now turn.

The ideas above coalesce in a particular subsection (§31-37) in the third major part of the *Liber* (§27-39). Section 27 begins a courtroom-like setting harkening back to the dramatic prophetic scenes in such books like Amos or Isaiah. The old man brings the charges and the evidence in §27-33 suggesting that the reason why the brother and "we" do not have contrition is a result of the lack of the fear of God. This turn in the dialogue from characters addressing each other to addressing the audience with the first person plural adds to this section's intensity but also introduces a shift from the dialogue between the two men toward a direct appeal to the readers. He begins with a series of biblical scenes spanning Moses, biblical prophets, to Daniel, Psalms and Ecclesiastes before turning to a combination of sayings from Jeremiah, Isaiah, Paul's letters, Jesus' sayings in the Gospels and the creed of 381. Echoing a similar statement made about baptism at opening of the *Liber*, he states at the end of §30 that "the

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[71] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §34 (CCSG 40:75.649-652); §25 (CCSG 40:51.448-53.455).

Lord knew that merely keeping these [commandments of Moses] is not enough for Christian perfection."[72] Instead, the old man quotes Matthew 5:18 and 20, stating one's "righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of heaven."[73] Consequently, like Jesus and his disciples, there must also be a "genuine love for all human beings" if the baptized are to sanctify both soul and body and attain true love for God.[74] The old man moves on to a section of mourning in §31 that extends to the first part of §32 before moving to a direct interrogation that extends to the first part of §34.

This section is insightful because it demonstrates where Maximus locates failure in the Christian life in relation to its goal. Within the first part of the interrogation, there is a section that discusses the Spirit,

> Are we not negligent of the Savior's commandments? Are we not entirely filled-full of every evil? Are we no longer temples of God but instead temples of idols? Are we, instead of being filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with evil spirits? Are we not calling on God as Father pretentiously? Are we not, instead of being sons of God, being sons of hell?

Here there is a close correlation between being temples of "God", "being filled with the Spirit" and "being sons of God". Additionally, the Spirit, beings sons and temples of God and the commandments have been brought together to imply that the "negligence of the commandments" indicates an absence of God's presence and relationship. In the next section (§33), there is more interrogation but, in addition to rhetorical questions, it involves some commentary. Here, Maximus brings these ideas together in a way that makes their relationship even clearer. He connects being led by the Spirit, citing Rom. 8.14, to being sons of God. Then he states that those being led by the Spirit are made evident from the fruit of the Spirit (ἐκ τῶν καρπῶν τοῦ Πνεύματος δῆλοί εἰσιν), citing Gal. 6.22-23. The old man then laments that these things are not seen "in us" and

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[72] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §30 (CCSG 40:63. 552-554).

[73] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §30 (CCSG 40:63. 554-556).

[74] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §30 (CCSG 40:63.548-65.561).

explains that things are like what begets them therefore that which is born of the Spirit, should be spirit, citing John 3.6. Yet, "we" are flesh and desire against the Spirit and "so rightly we hear from him 'My Spirit will not remain in these human beings because they are flesh.' How then, can we entirely obey as Christians when we do not have anything of Christ in us?"[75]

In this subsection, Maximus ties obedience to the commandments with being led and born of the Spirit as evinced from the fruit of the Spirit. He ends by inferring that these things serve as evidence of having Christ "in us". Again we see the activity of the Spirit and the Son closely correlated. Particularly, the reference to Genesis 6:3 suggests it not just the fruit of the Spirit, being led by the Spirit or being born by the Spirit but also the Spirit's indwelling that is in view. Additionally, it is clear is from the biblical language Maximus uses and the lament from the old man that the divine persons are correlated in a way that draws an important inference. The neglect of the commandments infers a lack of the Spirit, a lack of relationship with the Father and a lack of Christ "in us". The presence of the three divine persons are correlated and the manifestation of the Son and Spirit from within hinges on engaging the struggle against "invisible" enemies and the passions which culminates in fulfilling the commandments of love.

This becomes more lucid as the old man continues. The interrogation that began in §33 is briefly interrupted by an objection echoing James 2.14: "I have faith and for me faith in him is enough for salvation." The objection is quickly met with another reference from James but this time from 2.19 ("the devils also believe and tremble") and 2.17-18 ("Faith without works is dead by itself"). The old man then resumes his interrogation stating

> "How do we believe in him? Surely we believe him concerning future
> things, yet we do not believe him concerning present and transitory
> things and for this reason are we not mixed-up with material things even
> living by the flesh and waging war against the Spirit?"

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[75] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §33 (CCSG 40:71.618-73.638).

He ends his interrogation here but then gives a positive exhortation highlighting the kind of response those who truly imitate Jesus and do his commandments have,

> But those who believe Christ in truth and those who have him dwelling wholly in themselves through the commandments speak thusly, 'And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me and that which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.'[76]

The old man returns again to the issue of suffering and not-retaliation referencing 1 Cor. 4.12-13which is followed by a saying from Jesus regarding one's response to enemies from Luke 6.27-28. He concludes, stating, "from both words and deeds, the one who works in them—Christ—is made manifest (ἐφανεροῦτο)."[77] From both this section and §33, it is clear that is not just the power of Christ that indwells but Christ himself.

These sections demonstrate that there is a clear and significant correlation of ideas involving the presence of Christ and the Spirit, relationship with the Father and whether the commandment of love is fulfilled or not. In fact, Maximus goes so far as to describe Christ as "dwelling wholly" in them through the commandments. Yet it is not just Christ but the Spirit and relationship with the Father that is in view. Moreover, both Christ and the Spirit find expression in the baptized: Christ's through the words and deeds of those who truly believe and the Spirit through fruit. To follow the commandments means to be led by the Spirit and ultimately when the commandments are lived out to have Christ wholly dwelling in them. Likewise to have desires contrary to the Spirit means the Spirit cannot remain in them and raises the question of whether anything of Christ is within. A cursory glance suggests that the fulfilling of the commandment serves as both the evidence of Christ's indwelling and the means. However, the presence of adverbs such as "truly", "wholly", "accurately",

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[76] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §34 (CCSG 40:75.647-652).

[77] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §34 (CCSG 40:75.659-77.660).

"genuinely", "all" suggest Maximus views salvation as a continual progression and process of maturation concerning which I have already discussed above.[78]

To summarize, for Maximus when the baptized do not fulfill the commandment of love, it also means they do not evince being temples of God, being filled with the Spirit or having God as a Father. In order to be clear about the consequences of not fulfilling the commandment of love, he adds that this means they do not evince having the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, being sons of God, being born of the Spirit, or having anything of Christ within. Furthermore, it means Christ does not wholly dwell within. Conversely, to fulfill the command of love is a demonstration of being sons of God, is evident from the fruits of the Spirit and manifests Christ. This is a thoroughly Trinitarian way of explaining how engaging ascent demonstrates one's participation in and manifestation of the presence of God.

How this plays into his understanding of the roles of the Son and Spirit and the relation between the indwelling of Christ and Spirit is not, in this work, fully fleshed out. The concern for suffering and non-retaliation was highlighted earlier where "weakness" was a pre-requisite for the indwelling power of the Christ and we see similar language concerning suffering and non-retaliation here even though the term for weakness is not present. All of this is suggestive yet these examples do not equate the indwelling power of Christ to the person of the Spirit nor is the indwelling of Christ himself and that of the Spirit himself equated. All that can be concluded with surety at this point is that they are closely correlated so much so that to not evince the presence of one divine person excludes the presence of the other two. Other sections are less explicit but display similar language. In one section, Maximus again highlights Christ's role as an advocate in relation to the Father, and when Christ is sought, he loosens the bands of wickedness. When Maximus explains what this looks like, he uses language much like the beginning of the dialogue where he described

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[78] Beginning in §43 through to §45 Maximus use adverbs and various adjectives to emphasize 1) the extent of one's giving of oneself (completely: ἐξ ὁλοκλήρου, CCSG 40:115.982), 2) how the baptized are to hope in their Lord (all: πᾶσαν; only: μόνον, CCSG 40:117.989-990), 3) how they are to love (everyone: πάντα ἄνθρωπον; from the soul: ἐκ ψυχῆς, CCSG 40:117.992), 4) the quality of their ἀπάθεια (perfect: τελείαν, CCSG 40:119.1012); and, 5) how they are to repent (genuinely: γνησίως, CCSG 40:119.1017).

the activities of the Son and Spirit who give life, illumination, and help to those struggling against the passions yet in this instance there is no explicit reference to the Spirit.[79]

This will not be the last time Maximus brings these ideas into close proximity but until I review further examples from his writings, how exactly Maximus sees the appropriation of the Son's activities by the Spirit in the context of the indwelling of Christ or the Spirit must remain an open question. What can be said is that Christ himself and thus his power both indwell the baptized. Likewise, the baptized are meant to be temples and sons of God, filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, manifest the fruit of the Spirit and finally have the Spirit in them. These concepts, along with the importance Maximus places on devotion to God, demonstrate how imitation of the Son's love exhibited in the incarnation fulfill not only the goal of loving neighbor but loving God himself. The fact that the example of Christ and devotion to God are given central importance shows that love toward God is the utmost priority and one which is inextricably bound to loving one's neighbor. The pursuit of both occurs together, and both commandments are fulfilled when Christ is imitated. Yet, the constant reminder of the challenges gives space for Maximus to emphasize the place of weakness, suffering and the necessity of possessing the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit. In the pursuit of fulfilling the commandments, weakness is embraced, and Christ's power is able to make love mature. The result is that Christ along with the fruit of the Spirit are made manifest through the believers' words and deeds.

§1.1.5 *A Plea for Triune Mercy – Illustration of Trinitarian Prayer*

In this last section, I will look at an additional way Maximus uses Trinitarian grammar for the Christian life. In this case, I will analyze more closely the old man's prayer for mercy toward the end of the *Liber* (§37)*.* I should state again that Maximus does not explicitly prescribe this language but rather illustrates it through the prayer of the old man. This prayer is not

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[79] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §41 (CCSG 40:111.935-115.967).

haphazard but is carefully crafted on the basis of God's name and intentionally enlists each person of the Trinity.

In the previous section, I talked about how the old man lamented the contrast between the ideal garnered from biblical imagery of the baptized and their actual state— full of sin and without Christ in them. This lament signaled a turning point in the *Liber* because it is there that the dialogue shifts to a direct address to the reader. Once the old man's assessment of their actual state reaches its climax, he addresses the consequence. The result of such hypocrisy is captivity to "savage devils" and their ruler.[80] This amounts to "having trampled the Son of God underfoot and having regarded the blood of his covenant as unclean."[81] The section (§37-39) ends with a prayer for mercy that names each of the persons of the Trinity.[82]

As can be expected, Maximus draws on biblical allusions and quotation to structure the old man's prayer. Language from Daniel 3, Psalm 78 and Isaiah 63 and 64 help frame each appeal but also ground the prayer primarily on God's concern for his name although concern for the Apostles, Prophets, Fathers, Patriarchs and the holy Church are also given a supplemental role. The prayer begins with a series of allusions brought together from an exilic text (Daniel 3.32) and carries over the theme of exile and covenant from quotation above:

> Yet, in the end, do not hand us over for the sake of your name, O Lord,
> nor scatter your covenant, and do not withdraw your mercy from us—
>> For the sake of your mercies, our Father in heaven,
>> and for the sake of the affections of your only-begotten Son,
>> and for the sake of the mercy of your Holy Spirit.
> Do not remember our former lawlessness,
>> but let your mercies swiftly capture us in advance
>> since we are exceedingly poor.
> Help us God our Savior.
> On account of the glory of your name, O Lord, deliver us

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[80] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §32-34 (CCSG 40:67.581-77.669).

[81] Cf. Hebrews 10.29

[82] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40: 766-815).

and forgive our sins on account of your name . . . [83]

The prayer begins by using the title "Lord" and it is clear that the prayer is addressed to the Father through the use of the pronoun "your" when referring to the only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit. It is for the sake of the Father's mercies (οἰκτιρμούς), his only-begotten Son's affections (σπλάγχνα) and his Holy Spirit's mercy (ἔλεος) that the plea appeals. While these three terms are used specifically for each divine person here, a search through the rest of the *Liber* does not reveal a strict rule by which Maximus assigns them. For example, ἔλεος is used several times throughout the prayer and is just as well assigned to the Father as it is to the Spirit. Later, it is the Father's "holy name" that is upon the baptized from the beginning along with the name of his only-begotten Son and his Holy Spirit.[84] This appeal is likely meant to echo the Trinitarian formula used in baptism and cited in §2. The basis of the last line "deliver us and forgive our sins" is not only for the glory of his name nor the name itself but as further reading suggests, also because of "the [Son's] precious blood", the Son's "holy Apostles and Martyrs who poured out their own blood on behalf of his blood" and "the Holy Prophets, Fathers and Patriarchs who strove to be well-pleasing to your [Father's] holy name."[85] Another request is made based on the Father's "goodness" (ἀγαθότης) asking that, "the mystery administered to us for our salvation by the only-begotten Son might not become a judgment upon us."[86] Yet another request, based on the Father's "great mercy" (κατὰ τὸ μέγα σου ἔλεος) and "multitude of mercies" (κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν σου), asks him not to "loathe our unworthiness" so that they might "draw near without

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[83] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40:91.766-775): Ἀλλὰ μὴ παραδῷης ἡμᾶς εἰς τέλος διὰ τὸ ὄνομά σου κύριε, καὶ μὴ διασκεδάσῃς τὴν διαθήκην σου, καὶ μὴ ἀποστήσῃς τὸ ἔλεός σου ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν, διὰ τοὺς οἰκτιρμούς σου, Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ διὰ τὰ σπλάγχνα τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Υἱοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ ἁγίου σου Πνεύματος. Μὴ μνησθῇς ἡμῶν ἀνομιῶν ἀρχαίων, ἀλλὰ ταχὺ προκαταλαβέτωσαν ἡμᾶς οἱ οἰκτιρμοί σου κύριε, ὅτι ἐπτωχεύσαμεν σφόδρα. Βοήθησον ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν· ἕνεκεν τῆς δόξης τοῦ ὀνόματός σου κύριε ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ ἱλάσθητι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου . . .

[84] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40:95.804-806): . . . ἀλλὰ σύ κύριε, Πατὴρ ἡμῶν, ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς· ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς τὸ ὄνομά σου τὸ ἅγιον ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἐστι, καὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου σου Πνεύματος.

[85] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40:93.779-783).

[86] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40: 93.786-89).

condemnation and be considered worthy of the protection of your only-begotten Son".[87]

The prayer clearly identifies the source of many, if not all, aspects of the life for the baptized. From forgiveness of sins, hope, salvation, protection and help to making known the schemes of one's adversaries to delivering them from their own machinations, the baptized cannot rely on their own name or their own righteousness and are unable to overcome opposition by themselves. It is the Lord who is powerful.[88] His name is called upon because he is "the one who works all in all."[89] Maximus, through this prayer, attempts to clear away any sense of self-righteousness, shoring up any remaining doubt with yet another section drawn from Isaiah 63.15-19 to describe the sober realities of their condition and then follows it with Isaiah 64:1-12 which calls upon Yahweh to act on their behalf.[90] Maximus' use of one of the rare places in the *Septuagint* where God is addressed as "Father" ties in well with the argument based on God's "name" and the naming of the three divine persons. While the Spirit is only mentioned twice, both instances are in the context of the other two divine persons. The prayer is addressed to the Father, yet the requests call forth the same actions that were named as significant areas of need for the baptized and were earlier assigned to the Son and the Spirit. These are not and cannot be found in the baptized but instead are requested from the Father for the sake of the Son or received from the Son himself. Specifically, the language which highlights each divine person's compassion and mercy and how "from the beginning the name of the Father, Son and Spirit is upon us" illustrates aptly how the Trinity is beginning, means, and end and highlights how Maximus can conceive a unity of action while still being able to distinguish differences in those actions and roles.

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[87] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40:93.790-794): . . . μὴ δὲ βδελύξῃ ἡμῶν τὴν ἀναξιότητα, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς κατὰ τὸ μέγα σου ἔλεος, καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν σου παράγαγε τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἀκατακρίτως προσελθόντες κατενώπιον τῆς ἁγίας σου δόξης, ἀξιωθῶμεν τῆς σκέπης τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Υἱοῦ . . .

[88] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37, 39 (CCSG 40:93.795-796; 99.846-847).

[89] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37 (CCSG 40:95.797-798).

[90] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §37, 38 (CCSG 40:95.799-838).

Conclusion

 In this chapter, I attempted to use the *Liber asceticus* as a way to establish a baseline for Maximus Trinitarian thought. I have demonstrated how this early work is already robustly Trinitarian and whose main theme – the Trinity as beginning, means and goal of the ascetic life – provides a Trinitarian grammar for Christian life. This can be seen in how Maximus holds out the incarnate life of the Son as the example of the *ethos* and *telos* of Christian life but also in how he pairs the activities of the Son and Spirit at several places within the *Liber* as a way to show the means of that life. This demonstrated Maximus' conception of the common activities of the persons but also an inseparability of action. Yet, despite these common and inseparable activities, there was still space for distinct roles and differentiation in how those activities were enacted. Additionally, the divine persons were often correlated, and their divinity and consubstantiality affirmed by the use of titles and descriptors such as τὸ συγγενὲς. The pairing of the Son and Spirit in the presentation of the incarnation at the beginning of the *Liber* highlighted the activities of the Son and Spirit in relation to the baptized. After this initial section, there were two additional ways this was displayed. The first way was in a complex of ideas that showed a close correlation with the indwelling power of Christ and activities of the Spirit. It was not always clear whether the power and indwelling of Christ could be equated with the Holy Spirit. Regardless, the result of pursuing renouncement, imitation of the incarnate Son and the virtues was to manifest Christ and the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer until mature love was established. Finally, another way it was illustrated, and one which drew many of these ideas together, was a prayer for mercy towards the end of the *Liber*.

 All of these features demonstrated Maximus' intentional Trinitarian grammar for the Christian life. Baptism, imitation of the life of the incarnate Son, the pursuit of the virtues and pleas for mercy were all formulated around or addressed to the Trinity and highlighted divine appropriation within Christian life. This grammar, in and of itself, is striking but perhaps equally striking is what does not appear. There was no use of the λόγος/τρόποςdistinction for the Trinity or Christ which was to play such an important role later in Maximus' theology. Likewise, there was no use of Chalcedonian language nor the

Logos/λόγοι doctrine in relation to Christ although there was a clear use of earlier creedal material. There was also no sustained reflection on divine simplicity nor even union and distinction as it relates to the Trinity even though, in places, Maximus showed a concern to express consubstantiality. Additionally, there was no in-depth treatment of contemplation (θεωρία) nor, more specifically, of θεολόγια. Consequently, contemplation of the Trinity was not presented as a goal of ascent in the *Liber* even though the Trinity as experienced in prayer was portrayed in heightened language. Given the absence of a full-blown presentation on contemplation, it is not surprising that Maximus displayed none of the qualifications about the knowability of God's nature that he employed later. Knowledge of God in the *Liber* was restricted to the perceptibility of God's presence in the life of the baptized and what could be garnered from the symbol of faith and "Divine Scriptures". However, Maximus did show that he viewed the activity of prayer as a grace which involved driving away mental images in an expectation of joining to and conversing with God which in turn transformed the mind to be Godlike (θεοειδὴς).[91] I will explore, in the third chapter, how Maximus also envisioned θεολόγια as a grace and how the indwelling presence of God was related to prayer and θεολόγια in *Capita caritate*. While contemplation (θεωρία) was not spoken of explicitly in the *Liber,* there was a significant place given to the mind and its activities. Additionally, the term ἀπάθεια was only used three times in one section of the *Liber* and was correlated with despising transient things in favor of love for neighbor and God. While the example of Christ demonstrated these features, the term itself along with related terms such as the adjective ἀπαθής or adverb ἀπαθῶς were not used to describe God or any of the divine persons and their actions. As I stated earlier, even though Maximus highlighted many important Gospel passages on love, he nowhere cited 1 John 4.8 ("God is love"). Maximus' baseline shows that he had a particular way of referring to the divine persons and describing their activity especially as it related to Christian life. We must await later writings to hear Maximus reflect directly on Trinitarian theology but already we see a

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[91] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §24 (*CCSG* 40:47.418-49.430).

strong tendency to locate the Son and his incarnation in the context of the other divine persons and actions.

CHAPTER 2

Ascetic Context of Maximus' Trinitarian Grammar for Christian life

As I mentioned in the introduction, in order to demonstrate the distinctive aspects of Maximus' ascetic thought, it would be necessary to review earlier ascetic authors. It is to this review that I now turn. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Maximus' distinctiveness lies not so much in the ascetic concepts he employs but rather how he hangs these concepts on his account of the incarnate Son's life as an example of love, how he pairs the Son and Spirit's activities in that account and ultimately how his conception of ascent is intentionally Trinitarian. Despite his distinctiveness, Maximus is not as explicit or clear as other ascetic authors in some areas. One example that was already explored in Chapter 1 is how the concepts of indwelling Christ and indwelling Spirit can be understood side-by-side. When appropriate, I will draw out some of these areas as well.

My first task will be to lay out areas of comparison from each of the authors I review here. After I have drawn these brief sketches, I will summarize some observations about the ascetic context in general and then dive into a comparison of Maximus with these ascetic writers. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by highlighting Maximus' distinctive contribution but also aspects of his thought that are not represented in the *Liber* either in part or *en toto*. In Chapter 3, I will return to Maximus' writings to look briefly at *Capita caritate*.

Some challenges lay before me in this part of the study, not the least of which is who to choose from in the vast ascetic tradition and what themes to focus on. In an effort to narrow the scope of this chapter, I have chosen to focus on only a few writers who wrote during the late fourth and fifth century and who are recognized as having influenced Maximus directly or through a broader tradition. They are Evagrius, Ps.-Dionysius, Diadochus and Mark the Monk. My review will end with a brief look at the literature contemporary with Maximus before delving into specific areas of comparison.

The second challenge is more difficult. As I stated in the last chapter, Maximus' avoidance of some technical language and his attempt to ground the ascetic life using thoroughly biblical concepts and examples creates a unique

problem. For example, when looking at an ascetic like Evagrius, the term ἀπάθεια is very important yet Maximus' use of the term is concentrated in one small section towards the end of the *Liber* that can easily be overlooked. However, the concepts associated with the term, such as the shedding of both the passions and impassioned thoughts about material things and material existence, were clearly present in the *Liber*. In line with this concern, the goal of the review is not an exhaustive history of the ascetic tradition on all fronts nor is it a concerted effort to draw out direct lines of influence between authors. While my initial choice of concepts in this chapter was based on themes I saw were important to Maximus in the *Liber*, I have had to broaden that set in order to allow for variance between authors. This broader focus I think is justified because not all the concepts appear using the same language nor serving the same exact purpose as they do for Maximus. Probing a broader set of ideas allows for a variance of language and purpose and gives a higher probability of finding areas of comparison. I will focus my attention then on the following concepts 1) love and ἀπάθεια, 2) the knowledge of God, and 3) the activity of the divine persons or God in general in Christian life. By knowledge of God, I mean to include not only what an author thinks can be known of God but also how God's presence can be perceived and how that knowledge is gained. When it seems helpful, I will draw out parallels between authors, but these parallels should not be mistaken as arguments for direct influence.

As I have noted several times, the term ἀπάθεια appears sparsely in the *Liber* and, in fact, could have been totally absent without damaging Maximus' presentation. However, Maximus will eventually use the term and related words in *Capita caritate* and elsewhere more freely. It was these later uses that Lars Thunberg in his work, *Microcasm and Mediator,* compared with a broad survey of the term from writers before Maximus. Contrasting him specifically with Evagrius, he concludes that Maximus' conception of ἀπάθεια is closer to what is found in other Christian writers because it is "so closely associated with the positive activities of love."[1] As I noted in Chapter 1, Maximus does not explicitly

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[1] Lars Thunberg, *Microcasm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor,* 2nd edition, (Chicago: Open Court 1995), 308 but see the larger section 299-309*.* Thunberg does not discuss the uses of ἀπάθεια in the *Liber* choosing a synthetic approach from

use the term to describe God even though the example of the incarnate Son clearly demonstrates some of the activities associated with the term's use in the later part of the *Liber*. As a result, despite its sparse usage, I have included it as one of the concepts to review. While some of the authors I cover here overlap with Thunberg's study, I offer several more. With those authors who do overlap with his study, I hope to relate their views to the broader set of issues outlined above.

Finally, my presentation of other ascetic writers in this chapter is synthetic, meaning I draw from across their writings or from a general depiction of their writings and compare it with Maximus' baseline Trinitarian thought in the *Liber.* Admittedly, this may seem like comparing apples to oranges or a blossom to a fully mature fruit but if the distinctive character of Maximus thought is already visible in his earlier work (in his baseline) when compared with the entire set of writings from any one of these ascetic authors then my point is still made. In later chapters, I will explore ways in which Maximus thought slowly gathers different ways of speaking and expands ideas only mentioned or illustrated in the *Liber.* I do not think these new ways of speaking contradict his baseline but rather allow him to explore more deeply various aspects of ascent and theology.

§2.1 *Ascetic Context of Maximus' Early Life*

Something should also be said about Maximus' ascetic context. Maximus' two major *vitas,* the Syriac and Greek, each offer their own challenges especially when trying to ascertain his actual ascetic environment. The Greek recensions borrow from another ancient author's biography, Theodore the Studite, in order to fill in the Confessor's earlier life and follow a typical hagiographical approach

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uses in *Capita caritate, Capita gnostica, Ad Thalassium* and *Epistula* 1*.* Thunberg does not attempt to draw parallels or show influence from other writers on Maximus. Of the writers he reviews (Clement, Origen, Ps.-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius) Clement of Alexandria seems to bear the closest affinity highlighting, as Maximus will, the concept's close relationship to love and it being something that should be imitated because God himself is ἀπαθής. Von Balthasar, commenting on Maximus' *Capita gnostica* 2.98, sees aspects of Evagrius and Ps.-Macarius in Maximus' use of this term but has similar reservations about attributing the entirety of it to Evagrius, see *Kosmische Liturgie 2 ed.*, 557-58.

of purporting noble origins and court activity in Constantinople.[2] This account places him in the court of Heraclius as the Emperor's first secretary until his decision to pursue the ascetic life in Chrysopolis across the Bosporus. In light of the well-documented attempt in the Greek recensions to supply the Studites' early years for Maximus', it cannot dependably be drawn upon for his early life. Other documents, among which are some that play into the making of the Greek *vita,* give accounts of Maximus' later life and are still considered essential to understanding his trials, exiles, and death.[3]

The incomplete Syriac *vita* provides another, less flattering, account of his origins and early life.[4] In this account, Maximus is the son of an adulterous relationship between a Samaritan and Persian slave girl and is situated in Palestine. He eventually becomes a monk and disciple of the Origenist Pantaleon at the *Palaia Lavra*. The Syriac *vita* goes out of its way to provide a detailed account of Maximus' early family life, the author explicitly citing his sources but is hampered by a hostile tone. There is a seamless transition between Maximus' early life which ends with his discipleship under Pantaleon and the mentor's death and the Confessor's activities related to Sophronius at the Cypriot Council of 636 CE. This indicates a rather lengthy period of time which is compressed into a couple of lines. Within these lines is enough time for significant travel and makes any absolute statement about Maximus' inability to be associated with monastic communities or activities elsewhere problematic. Given this large gap, and *vita's* clearly pejorative quality, it seems unwise to invest more into it than can be corroborated from other evidence. Some scholars have strongly

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[2] There are three recensions of Maximus' Greek *vita* along with various biographical materials. There are also materials in Slavic and Georgian. For a thorough discussion see *The Life of Maximus the Confessor (Recension 3),* ed. and transl. by Bronwen Neil & Pauline Allen, Early Christian Studies 6 (St. Pauls Publication, 2003) and *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile*, ed. and transl. by Pauline Allen & Bronwen Neil, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For a recent review of the Georgian versions of Maximus' life see Leila Khoperia, "Maximus the Confessor: Life and Works in the Georgian Tradition," in *Maximus the Confessor in Georgia*, Iberica Caucasica 3 (London: Bennet & Bloom, 2009), 25-48.

[3] For texts and translations see Allen & Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions.*

[4] For the Syriac life see, Sebastian Brock, "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor," in *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1973), 299-346.

argued that there is enough corroborated to embrace Maximus as monk of
Palestine rather than Constantinople.[5] The Palestinian milieu was tortured by
long-standing disputes over the orthodoxy of Origenism and between Origenist
groups. These groups eventual entanglement with the pro and anti-
Chalcedonian conflict under Justinian provides a fitting context for Maximus'
knowledge of Origenism and a rationale for why he might write against it while
participating in a ground-level resistance against miaphysitism.[6] Additionally,
others have noted the overlapping influence of both Antioch and Alexandria on
Palestine and their connections with Persia, which easily gives a plausible
account of his access to and extensive knowledge of ascetic authors and
philosophical fluency.[7] Until a clearer account can be made either from new
evidence or a convincing reconstruction, a patchwork of dates and accounts are
the best we can do to fill in the exact details of Maximus' early life. From this
author's perspective, Palestine is increasingly becoming a more suitable context
for Maximus even while aspects of the Syriac *vita* may be treated with suspicion.

§2.2 *Evagrius of Pontus*[8]

Evagrius' influence on Maximus' ascetic thought was noted very early by
modern scholarship and he has much to say about the three areas I identified as
important points of comparison with Maximus' baseline Trinitarian though in
the *Liber.*[9] Maximus distinctiveness in relation to Evagrius is, as a suggested in

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[5] Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 140-185.

[6] For this see Daniel Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis' Monastic Biographies as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism* (Roma: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 2001) and TTH 51, 270-286.

[7] *CCT* 2/3, 82-83; 169-183.

[8] In this section, I have attempted to look through the critical texts for Evagrius and cite as specifically as possible. However, in some instances I was simply unable to get my hands on the critical texts and so rely on the range and citation provided by either Sinkewincz or Casiday.

[9] For more in-depth studies of Evagrius' thought, see Robert E. Sinkewincz, *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Augustine M. Casiday, *Evagrius Ponticus*, The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2006) and Julia S. Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Making of a Gnostic*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).
     In 1930, Marcel Viller outlined nine areas where Maximus was thought to have been influenced and this same article is still cited as necessary reading for the relationship between

the opening paragraphs of this chapter, not in the concepts per se, but how he fits them together and (re)defines them. In some cases, Evagrius is much more explicit than Maximus about the connection between the Son and the Spirit and their role in ascent which is likely a result of his late fourth century milieu. In fact, Maximus' distinctiveness in relation to Evagrius does not even lie in formulating a Trinitarian grammar for ascent but rather how Maximus uses the narrative of the incarnate Son's life as an example of the *ethos* and *telos* of a Christian life of love. A quick note here regarding Evagrius' *Capita gnostica*: any references taken from *Cap. gnost.* are based on the S₂ Syriac translation, which follows the general consensus that it is more reliable than the S₁.[10]

§2.2.1 Ἀπάθεια & Love

Evagrius does tie love and ἀπάθεια together. In one passage, he states plainly that love springs from ἀπάθεια.[11] Love is the result of progressive discipline towards ἀπάθεια and the victory of the ascetic through the passage of virtue in the practical life.[12] This practical life revolves around separating oneself from a love of self and anything else that may distract from love of God, be they thoughts, memories, dreams or demons.[13] Ἀπάθεια comes from

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the two ascetics. Viller's study was published in two parts. The first part was Marcel Viller, "Aux Sources de la Spiritualité de S. Maxime: Les œuvres d'Evagre le Pontique," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 11 (April 1930), 156-184 and then by the same name and volume number (July 1930), 239-268. The nine areas are 1) Psychology, 2) The Common Distinction between the Active Life and the Gnostic Life, 3) The Tripartite Division of the Spiritual Life, 4) The Order of the Virtues in the Active Life, 5) The Πρακτική: The Active or Practical Life. Πάθος and Ἀπάθεια, 6) The Causes of Good and Bad, 7) Ἀγάπη and Γνῶσις, 8) The Five Θεωρίαι and 9) The Series of Austerities and Successive Purifications.

[10] See the critical edition *Les Six Centuries des "Kephalia Gnostica" de Évagre le Pontique: Édition Critique de La Version Syriaque Commune et Édition d'une Nouvelle Version Syriaque, Intégrale, avec une Double Traduction Française,* ed. Antoine Guillaumont, PO 28.1 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1958).

[11] Evagrius, *Practicus,* 81 (SC 171:670). Cf. also *Tractatus ad Eulogium* §22 (PG 79.1124C) where Evagrius states that love is the bond of impassibility and expunges the passions.

[12] Evagrius, *Practicus* 58-60, 81, 84 (SC 171:636-640; 670; 674).

[13] Evagrius, *Excerpts* 10-12, in Joseph Muyldermans, *A tranvers la tradition manuscrite d'Évagre le Pontique. Essai sur les manuscrits grecs conserves à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris,* Bibliothéque du Muséon 3 (Bureaux du Muséon: Louvain, 1932), 86.

prudence and is produced by the grace of God.[14] It is the glory and light of the soul.[15] Love of God as the goal of the practical life is accomplished by not loving worldly things and leads towards knowledge of God.[16] Faith begins love, which terminates in knowledge of God.[17] He also states that God is love, and although Evagrius never states explicitly that God is or has ἀπάθεια, such a conclusion can be inferred from his conception of humanity as being renewed in the image of God.[18] This idea of image leads Evagrius to draw out two related ideas. The first idea is that one ought to love the image as the archetype. The related implication is that, because humans are fellow-images of God, they should treat each other with love.[19] Consequently, in several places Evagrius grounds the *ethos* of the ascetic to these two principles.[20] The test of this love is keeping Christ's commandments, which includes hospitality and generosity toward other ascetics.[21] The test of ἀπάθεια is centered explicitly on one's attitude towards worldly things; their mental representations and one's response to the demonic temptations wrought through them.[22] For Evagrius, there is a priority of love. Thus, in tandem with positive statements about loving others, we see warnings against excessive concern for others including angels who might

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[14] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 1.37; *Sententiae ad monachos* 68 in Hugo Gressmann "Nonnenspiegel und Mönchsspiegel des Euagrios Pontikos," *Texte und Untersuchungen* 39 (1913) 152-165. I was unable to view for myself Gressmann's work and so rely on the range provided by Sinkewincz.

[15] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 1.81 (PO 28: 55 S$_2$).

[16] Evagrius, *Practicus* 84 (SC 171:674).

[17] Evagrius, *Sententiae ad monachos* 3 (TU 39: 152-165).

[18] Evagrius, *Tractatus ad Eulogium* §22 (PG 79.1124C)*.

[19] Evagrius, *Practicus* 89 (SC 171:680-688).

[20] Evagrius, *De oratione* 121-125 (Sinkewicz, *Greek Ascetic Corpus,* 206); *Tractatus ad Eulogius* 24.25-26 (Sinkewicz, *Greek Ascetic Corpus,* 51-52).

[21] Evagrius, *Capita paraenetica* 3.20. I was unable to find a single critical edition of these short sentences*. Here I use the numbering of Sinkewicz (*Greek Ascetic Corpus,* 232), cf. *Gnomica I*: *Sexti Pythagorici, Clitarchi, Evagrii Pontici sententiae,* ed. Antonio Elter (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1892), 54 (listed as 68). See also *Tractatus ad Eulogium* §25-26 (PG 79.1125C-1128C) and *Capita gnostica,* 5.38; 6.44.

[22] Evagrius, *De malignis cogitationibus* 20 (SC 438: 222-224); *Practicus*, 56, 58, 60, 64 (SC 171: 630-632; 636; 640; 648).

distract from love of God.[23] In prayer, Evagrius will also give a role to love (ἔρως) stating that through 'supreme love' the impassible habit of the state of prayer "carries off to an intelligible height the philosophic and spiritual mind."[24] This evidence clearly shows that Evagrius values love in the ascetic life and its function as a path towards knowledge of God in prayer. Elsewhere, he states pragmatically that equal love towards all is impossible but nevertheless suggests that one ought to relate to all with ἀπάθεια, lack of resentment and a lack of hatred.[25] While reviewing a series of excerpts from various ancient authors, Joseph Muyldermans identified a set as Evagrian; two of which are relevant to this discussion.[26] The first excerpt is simply "treat others as you want to be treated," which is thought to be taken from the *Sententiae Sexti* but could just as easily be a restatement of scriptural data or of his already mentioned conception of human beings in the image of God.[27] The second excerpt states,

> The distinguishing features of perfect love are loving one's enemies—for he says, 'Love your enemies; benefiting those who hate you—for he says, 'Do well to those who hate you'; praying for the unrighteous—for he says, 'Pray for those who despitefully use you'; not only giving measure for measure, but doing good instead—for he says, 'Conquer evil with good' rejoicing in a neighbour's successes, commiserating in his failures and abiding with him in both—for he says, 'Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep'; teaching the unlearned and leading them by the hand into salvation; giving mercy in cheerfulness of heart to those in need; making discordance of sinners one's own and thus

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[23] Evagrius, *De oratione* 112; *Rerum monachalium rationes* 5-7. Cf. also *Sententiae ad virginem* 7.

[24] Evagrius, *De oratione* 52 (PG 79.1177).

[25] Evagrius, *Practicus* 100 (SC 171:710). Cf. also *Tractatus ad Eulogium* 19 (PG 79.1117C) where Evagrius suggest attitudes and actions towards others when warring against fornication.

[26] Amongst this group were also sayings from Gregory of Nazianzus, Maximus the Confessor, Ephrem and Diadochus.

[27] Evagrius, *Excerpts* 59 (Muyldermans, *tradition manuscrite d'Évagre le Pontique*, 92; transl. Casiday, Evagrius, 179-180). Cf. *Sexti sententiae* 210 (*Gnomica* 1: 15).

grieving and lamenting over them and fervently propitiating God as if for one's own sins; and laying down one's soul for one's friends. These distinguishing features of perfect love make a man into an imitator of Christ; and with refined dinner companions and the like is a wandering and false shadow of love. [28]

The combination of themes, scriptural citation and allusion expressed in this excerpt finds no exact correspondence in any other of Evagrius' works. Unlike his other works, it goes beyond concern for other ascetics and does not explicitly base love on the fact that human beings are in the image of God. It is not qualified by any concern for distraction and frames the ascetic life within the context of imitation of Christ not just obeying Christ's commands. This imitation is located specifically around loving one's enemies and concern for the well-being of one's neighbor. There is no explicit tie between ἀπάθεια, Christ or God and consequently while perfect love is seen as a goal, it is not explained in relation to ἀπάθεια.

These examples do show that love and ἀπάθεια have a place in his ascetic teaching; however, my synthetic approach may give the impression that love is an often talked about subject. In reality, his thoughts on love are scattered throughout his works, and one can easily go through many pages in between examples. In terms of the quantity of material he writes for ascetics, much of it is concerned with virtues, vices, γνῶσις, ἀπάθεια and what could be termed a "psychology of temptation". Thus, his ideas concerning love, because of their place in his scheme of spiritual teaching and their connection with ἀπάθεια, are important but they nevertheless receive less real estate.

§2.2.2 *Knowledge of God*

In Evagrius' conception of the knowledge of God, I come to a much more difficult subject and one with a rather long history of debate. I will briefly attempt to sketch out why it has been problematic and then delve into specific examples. The main difficulty lies in disentangling the various ways Evagrius,

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[28] Evagrius, *Excerpts* 69 (transl. in Casiday, *Evagrius,* 179-180; Muyldermans, *tradition manuscrite d'Évagre le Pontique*, 94). The Scriptural texts are Lev. 19.18; Matt. 19.19, 22.39, Mk. 12:31, 33, Lk. 10:27, Ro. 13.9; Gal. 5.14, Ja. 2.8.

particularly in his *Capita gnostica*, envisions the relationships between the concepts of *unity, Christ, monad, Trinity* and *knowledge,* especially the problematic idea of *essential knowledge.* In several places, Evagrius asserts that *essential knowledge* is either Trinity or Christ (or is in Christ) and that the νοῦς can receive this knowledge.[29] This formulation could easily be taken either as a sort of assimilation of the mind into essential knowledge or the indwelling of Christ and Trinity in the mind.[30] The former interpretation plays more clearly into hands of the Origenist myth of the henad of rational beings. When it comes to descriptions of Christ, the term "unity" is often used as a descriptor.[31] In *Cap. gnost.,* he favors talking about the incarnation as Christ who has in him the Word of God (or unity) – expressions that could undoubtedly result in accusations of a double-subject Christology. [32] Additionally, his style of denying something and then offsetting that denial in subsequent statements could just as easily have appeared provocative in later centuries as Christological language continued to be refined. For example, in one passage he begins by baldly stating, "Christ is not connatural with the Trinity. Indeed, he is also not essential knowledge, but he alone always has essential knowledge inseparably in him." He then ends the passage stating,

> However, Christ, I mean to say, the one who has come with God the Word and in the spirit is the Lord, is inseparable from his body, and by that union he is connatural with his Father since he is also essential knowledge.[33]

Elsewhere he states one cannot separate Christ into two subjects ("not two sons" or "two christs") and that the body of Christ is connatural with ours

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[29] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 3.3, 5.48, 6.28, 29, 30 (PO 28: 101, 197, 229 S₂).

[30] In one passage, Evagrius seems to discuss this directly suggesting that the νοῦς bears the likeness of God, not because it is essential knowledge, but because it is receptive of essential knowledge, see *Capita gnostica* 6.73 (PO 28:247, 249 S₂).

[31] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 4.18 (PO 28:143 S₂).

[32] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 4.18, 6.79 (PO 28:143, 251 S₂).

[33] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 6.14 (PO 28:223 S₂).

along with his soul but "the Word which is in him is essentially coessential with the Father."[34]

Sherwood, on comparing Maximus and Evagrius, identified that the reason why humans were receptive to knowledge of the Trinity according to Evagrius was because they are found in his image—they have an innate capacity to perceive the Triune God.[35] This actually should be more specific. It is the νοῦς, according to Evagrius, in human beings that is able to receive knowledge of God. Evagrius makes a point of saying that corporeal existence lacks the ability to see, know, receive or be united with the Trinity, thus the reason he calls for the νοῦς to be made naked and perfect.[36] This is the location of the image of God for Evagrius and is what can receive the Trinity.[37] Corporeal nature is only receptive of the wisdom of God since it is created and can be received through the contemplation of nature. Evagrius is making a strong distinction between the image of God, which is located in the νοῦς and is receptive of Christ who is essential knowledge as is the Trinity and the νοῦς in its body. In addition, despite what he states about the mind being able to receive essential knowledge (Christ, Trinity) he continues to make standard pro-Nicene assertions that one cannot know God's nature.[38]

Julia S. Konstantinovsky tackles these issues at length in *Making of a Gnostic* and suggests that recognizing the different contexts of the Cappadocian's debate with Eunomius and Evagrius' writing to ascetics does much to alleviate a perceived conflict regarding how and what about God can be known. There are several more pieces of relevant evidence that could be added to the discussion. In light of past debate that suggests Evagrius did not have enough of an apophatic sensibility, the first piece of evidence is that Evagrius' focus on imageless prayer *is* an apophatic qualifier to knowledge of God. It

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[34] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 6.16, 79 (PO 28:223, 251 S2).

[35] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua,* 137-139.

[36] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 3.6, 3.11-13, 3.15, 3.30 (PO 28:101, 103, 111 S2).

[37] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica* 3.32 (PO 28:111 S2).

[38] Evagrius, *Capita gnostica*, 5.51, 62, 63, 79 (PO 28: 199, 203, 205, 211 S2). These assertions are entirely overlooked by Thunberg. Compare also *Capita gnostica* 3.80-81 (P0 28: 131 S2).

acknowledges that materiality, material experiences, and memories or representations of them are not God and must give way to another kind of contemplation. As Sherwood notes, Evagrius understands the image of God in human beings as granting them the ability to perceive the creator, specifically the Trinity, but it should be noted that this knowledge is given by God through an experience with him. Thus, he does not shy away from saying that the gnostic can have a "substantial knowledge" of God. There is a tension between an affirmation that God's nature is not knowable and this "substantial knowledge" of God available in prayer. We may well be dealing with a distinction between two different senses of γνῶσις; one which focuses on discursive thought and another which focus on the experience of phenomena, but Evagrius does not make it a point to name and describe this distinction.

§2.2.3 *Trinity in Ascetic Life & More on the Knowledge of God*

In this section, I will look at a notable theme in Evagrius' spiritual writings – the role of the Trinity in ascetic life. While some of the same issues from the previous subsection are revisited, I will look more closely as some specific examples that relate the Trinity to other areas of Evagrius' conception of ascetic life including contemplation and knowledge of God. It should be noted that while Maximus presents love of God as both the *ethos* and *telos* of ascetic life in the *Liber,* the Trinity is not presented as a goal of contemplation. The closest we have in that regard is God addressed in Trinitarian prayer and the suggestive language of the baptized being made deiform. Maximus will eventually present the contemplation of the Trinity as a goal in the *Capita caritate* and in later writings. Evagrius talks about the Trinity in ascetic life in several ways that bear some parallel to Maximus, particularly as it relates to giving a role to the Son and Spirit in ascent. This is seen in references to the Spirit and the pairing of the Son and Spirit in revealing the Father. Evagrius is much more explicit about this than Maximus is in the *Liber*.

In several of his letters, Evagrius gives us a rather clear picture of his pneumatology. In his *Epistula fidei,* Evagrius sets out to defend himself against the charge of Tritheism. To do this, he shows how the Son is divine and of the same substance as the Father and then moves on to demonstrate the same

status for the Holy Spirit. Several things are worth noting about his argument. Firstly, Evagrius makes an argument for the shared power and activity of the persons as an indication of their equal divine status. Here he suggests that Scripture presents three creations: the transition from non-existence to existence, the transformation from worse to better, and the resurrection of the dead. Concerning these he states, "In them, you will find the Holy Spirit co-operating with the Father and the Son."[39] As support he gives examples of the shared activity of the persons in the first creation, based on Ps. 32.6; in baptism, based on 2 Cor. 5.17 and Matthew 28.19; and in the resurrection, based on Phil. 3.11. The last few sections argue that the Holy Spirit is God based on 1) his indwelling in Christians as described in 1 Cor. 6.19 by equating the phrase "temple of the Holy Spirit" with "temple of God", 2) his knowledge with an allusion to 1 Cor. 2.11, and 3) a series of conflated images that link concepts and words found throughout Scripture such as "sword of Spirit'' and "the Word", based on Eph. 6.17; "the Son" and "the Father's hand", based on Ps. 117.16 and Ex. 15.6; and lastly "the Holy Spirit" and "the finger of God" based on Lk. 11.20 and Mt. 12.28.[40]

Finally, there are several areas in the letter where Evagrius, in passing, mentions the role of the persons of the Trinity in the spiritual life. In an argument meant to show that holiness is an essential characteristic and not something added to God, he states, "but the font of holiness, from which every reasoning creature is made holy in proportion to its virtue, is the Son and the Holy Spirit."[41] In another section discussing the importance of certain doctrinal truths, Evagrius states that "the Holy Spirit all the while protects our understanding, so that we do not fall from one idea while grasping another; and while focusing on the theology, we despise the incarnation (τῇ θεολογίᾳ προσέχοντες τῆς οἰκονομίας καταφρονῶμεν); and our incompleteness become

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[39] Evagrius, *Epistula fidei* §11 in *Basilio di Cesarea. Le lettere, Volume I*, ed. Marcella Forlin Patrucco, Corona partum 11 (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1983), 106.6-7, transl. Casiday, *Evagrius,* 55.

[40] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §11 (*Le lettere I*, 106.6-110.40).

[41] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §2 (*Le lettere I*, 90.45-46, transl. Casiday, *Evagrius,* 48).

impiety."[42] In this case, the Holy Spirit functions as a guardian of a Christian's coherent understanding of two distinguishable aspects of doctrinal truth.

Unlike the *Ep. fid.*, it does not appear that Evagrius gives too much direct attention to the Holy Spirit in his other ascetic writings.[43] However, to say that Holy Spirit is completely absent would be inaccurate. In his *Epistula ad Melanium* (*Ep.* 64)*,* Evagrius gives a detailed picture of contemplation in the ascetic life. He employs several elaborate metaphors throughout the letter, many of which are meant to show how one thing reveals another. One of these metaphors revolves around the constitution and function of letter-writing itself. The letter communicates the love and intention of the author. In this metaphor, creation is seen as a letter and exists "through his [God's] power and his wisdom (that is, by his Son and Spirit)."[44] Throughout the rest of the letter, the Son and Spirit are often referred to as "power" and "wisdom" or, as in *Ep. fid.,* "hand" and "finger". Wisdom and Power are the "signs" through which the Father's love is made known. Likewise rational beings are "signs" through which the Son and Spirit are known. Because of this "we must eagerly advance by them toward, and come to understand, things invisible."[45] In this instance, there is a chain of revelation whereby creation and rational beings are signs of the Son and Spirit, and the Son and Spirit are signs of the Father. This chain is the means by which the ascetic proceeds in contemplation.

Another elaborate metaphor uses the relationship between mind, soul and body to explain how the Spirit and Word make known both the Father and the human mind to itself. The human mind is the "body" of the Spirit and Word, which in turn reveals the "mind" or the Father.[46] The human mind cannot know

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[42] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §3.50-53 (*Le lettere I*, 92.50-53, transl. Casiday, *Evagrius,* 49-50 with some changes).

[43] Jason Scully, "Angelic Pneumatology in the Egyptian Desert: The Role of Angels and the Holy Spirit in Evagrian Asceticism," 292-295.

[44] Evagrius, *Epistula ad Melanium* (*Ep.* 64) §5, 6 (Wilhelm Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912), 612/613.187bβ-188aα; transl. in Casiday, *Evagrius,* 65). The section numbering for this letter are from Casiday, *Evagrius,* 64-77.

[45] Evagrius, *Ep.* 64 §12-13 (Frankenberg, *Euagrius,* 614/615.188bβ-189aα; transl. in Casiday, *Evagrius,* 67).

[46] Evagrius, *Ep.* 64 §15 (Frankenberg, *Euagrius,* 614/615.189aβ-616/617.189bβ).

the Father like the Father knows himself, but the Son and Spirit can make him known to the human mind.[47] The human mind is receptive to this because, "the mind is alone amongst all the creatures and orders in being the true form that is receptive of the knowledge of the Father, for it 'is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator'."[48] The ability of the Son and Spirit to make known the Father rests on their shared essence.[49] Likewise the Son and the Spirit are able to make the human mind know itself since they are the "soul" of the human mind. This laborious metaphor is hard to follow even in the Greek and is likely one of the pieces of his work that was misinterpreted by later Origenist movements. For example, one could easily mistake what he says here as meaning that the human mind is of the same essence as the Father and is the reason why, through the Spirit and Word, it will return to a connatural state per the Origenist myth. However, Evagrius qualifies what he says in the next sections of letter, which makes clear that there is a divide between created existence and the nature of the Father, Son, and Spirit.[50] There are two notable items in his presentation. Firstly, the entire rationale behind Evagrius' conception of human ability to have knowledge of God is that the human mind is

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[47] Evagrius, *Ep.* 64 §15-17 (Frankenberg, *Euagrius*, 614/615.189a*β*-616/617.189b*β*). In the latter part of §15 he states that the Father through the mediation of his Spirit acts in the mind. For the lacunae in §17, 24, 25 of Frankenberg's edition and the last part of the letter (§33-68) see Gösta Vitestam, "Seconde partie du traité qui passe sous le nom de 'La grande letter d'Evagre le Pontique à Mélanie l'Ancienné' publiée et traduite d'après le manuscript du British Museum Add. 17192," in *Scripta minora Regiae Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis 1963-1964,* no. 3 (Lund: CWK Glerrup, 1964), 6-29.

[48] Evagrius, *Ep.* 64 §16, 19 (Frankenberg, *Euagrius,* 614/615.189b*α*-616/617.189b*α*; 616/617.189b*β*-190a*α*; transl. in Casiday, *Evagrius,* 67).

[49] Evagrius, *Ep.* 64 §19 (Frankenberg, *Euagrius*, 616/617.189b*β*-190a*α).*

[50] Evagrius, *Ep.* 64 §22-25 (Frankenberg, *Euagrius,* 616-617.190a*α*-190b*β*). In §26-30 of the letter, even though he suggests that the joining of the minds to the Father will not increase or decrease the one nature and three ὑποστάσεις of the Trinity and that these minds had a temporal creation, his description of their final state could easily be taken as support for later 'Origenist' ideas. Konstantinovsky's conclusion that Evagrius' language is "uncomfortable" in relation to modern and ancient formulations but can nevertheless be shown within "orthodox" understandings seems a fair assessment (*Making of a Gnostic,* 153-178). Yet given his language, writing style and elaborate use of metaphor, it is understandable why it was problematic; either because it was interpreted in ways that eventually were deemed Origenist and condemned or because it continued to fit so uncomfortably within what were considered orthodox descriptions of Christ, deification and the *eschaton* in sixth and seventh century.

"being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator" through the work of the Son and Spirit who make known the Father. Likewise, the Father is said to act in the mind by his Spirit. Secondly, the human mind is able to come to self-knowledge through the Son and the Spirit. Evagrius does not discuss in these passages the role of faith but elsewhere makes clear the beginning of the journey toward knowledge of God is faith.[51] Knowledge, for Evagrius, is based on the image of God within human beings and God's activity through the Son and Spirit. As we will see, Maximus will touch on similar issues but will revise their relationships.

In the next few paragraphs, I hope to show how Evagrius sees the work of Trinity in various aspects of ascetic life. For, Evagrius there are three basic stages to this life: 1) the practical life, 2) natural contemplation, and 3) prayer. Within the practical life, Evagrius envisions not an ascetic on their own but someone who accomplishes ἀπάθεια and love, despite temptations, with the help of God. In some places the Holy Spirit or God, in general, is a helper who produces zeal, gives rest or grants prayer.[52] Already, here, we see movement from practical to the latter to stages of ascent. More specifically we find references to persons of the Trinity. In this context, for example, the Spirit acts in two ways. The first way is by the Spirit speaking through Scripture. In a few places, Evagrius will say the Spirit speaks and then follows this with a quotation from Scripture.[53] The second way is related; the Spirit often helps evaluate the ascetic's thoughts and actions through the medium of Scripture.[54] This self-awareness, however, is not the only kind of knowledge available. Likewise, teaching and knowledge, which are contained in wisdom, are also granted as a

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[51] Evagrius, *Ep. ad Anatolium* (= *prol. ad Practicum*, SC 171: 490.45-492.51)

[52] Evagrius, *De oratione* 58 (PG 79.1180); *Scholia in Ecclesiasten* 29 (Eccl. 4.11; SC 397: 108); *De malignis cogitionibus* 9 (SC 438: 184.45-46), cf. *Institutio sive Paraenesis ad monachos (recensio brevior)* (PG 79.1237C).

[53] Evagrius, *De malignis cogitationibus,* 18, 37 (SC 438: 214-216; 280-284).

[54] Evagrius, *De malignis cogitationibus* 7, 18, 37 (SC 438:174-176; 214-216; 280-284); cf. *Capita gnostica* 3.77.

gift of the Spirit.[55] Sharing a similar concern that was expressed in his letters, he states the necessity that right doctrine about the Spirit be taught.[56] While the correlation between the Son and the Spirit is not as strong in his ascetic writing as it is in texts that are concerned with specific theological issues, there are areas where it is assumed and are most lucid in his comments regarding the biblical conception of adoption and sonship.[57]

On the last stage, prayer, more can be said. Evagrius has a place for a Trinitarian understanding of prayer based on a tradition of exegesis on the *Pater nostra*.[58] While commenting on Matthew's version of the prayer, Evagrius, like Gregory of Nyssa, interprets the request "your kingdom come" as a request for the Holy Spirit.[59] Again, in a latter section of the prayer he comments that the phrase "for yours is the power" refers to the Son and the phrase "and the kingdom" refers to the Holy Spirit.[60] In *De oratione,* Evagrius adds to his exegesis stating that those who seek to pray should ask God, who is the giver of

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[55] Evagrius, *Scholia in Proverbia* 101 (Prov. 8.10-11; SC 340: 200); *Expositio in Proverbia Salomonis* 88.17-18; *Practicus* epil. (SC 171:712); *Scholia in Ecclesiasten* 42 (Eccl. 5.17; SC 397: 138).

[56] Evagrius, *Scholia in Proverbia* 249 (Prov. 22.28; SC 340: 344-346); *Expositio in Proverbia* 106.23 cf. *Capita gnositica* 2.69.

[57] Evagrius, *Scholia in Proverbia* 101 (SC 340: 200), 163 (*Prov.* 17.17; SC 340:260), 169 (*Prov.* 17.25; SC 340: 264), 210 (*Prov.* 20.9; SC 240: 306); *Expositio in Proverbia Salomonis* in Constantin von Tischendorf, *Notitia editionis codicis bibliorum Sinaitici auspiciis Imperatoris Alexandri II. susceptae: accedit catalogus codicum nuper ex oriente Petropolin perlatorum : item Origenis Scholia in Proverbia Salomonis : partim nunc primum partim secundum atque emendatius edita* (Lipsiae: F.A. Brokhaus, 1860), 88.17-18, 96.17, 101.21. In order to consistently cite Tischendorf's edition I give first the page number and then the line(s). There is another set of uses that are suggestive and observable in the numerous wordplays on the Ephesian's phrase "sword of the Spirit which is the word of God". However, Evagrius often has scripture in mind rather than the God the Word as he will at times use ῥῆμα instead of λόγος, see *Scholia in Proverbia* 9 (*Prov.* 1.13; SC 340: 100); 275 (*Prov.* 24.22: SC 340: 370); *Expositio in Proverbia Salomonis* (Tischendorf, *Notitia editionis,* 78.2, 110.1).

[58] Evagrius, *Expositio orationis dominicae*; P. de Lagarde, *Catenae in Euangelica Aegypticae* (Göttingen: Hoyer, 1886), 13.

[59] Evagrius and Gregory of Nyssa base their interpretation on a textual variant that eventually did not make up the main text of the prayer in current critical editions of the New Testament. Gregory, Evagrius and Maximus use this references as an opportunity to make the prayer more explicitly Trinitarian. The relation between the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit is not without precedent elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Romans 14.17).

[60] Evagrius, *Expositio orationis dominicae* (de Lagarde, *Catenae,* 13).

prayer (ὁ διδούς εὐχὴν).[61] In this instance, there are two lines of the prayer, "hallowed be your name" and "your kingdom come" which he states are the Holy Spirit and the only-begotten Son. He then comments that the Father desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth implying the Spirit and the Son. In the next few lines, he ties theology with prayer and then adds that the Holy Spirit visits those who pray and, if he finds them praying to him in love for truth, he will take away all images and representations and urge them on to a love for spiritual prayer.

In this state of pure prayer, Evagrius warns of the temptation of "localizing" God and having notions of God as an object that leads to potential vainglory. Divinity is "without quantity and without form". Even though the passions are no longer an issue, demons can beset the mind and tempt it into thinking that its own manifestations of the divine are God himself. It should be noted that the only place where Evagrius uses the names of the persons of the Trinity in *De oratione* is at the very end of his section on demons, which directly precedes the section on true prayer. Elsewhere he simply refers to "God" or the "Lord". This suggests that Evagrius goes beyond just asserting that the ultimate part of spiritual ascent is simply God but God as Trinity. Prayer is not only an address to God but a purgative and unifying process where one experiences God as Trinity.

This understanding of Evagrius' asceticism and its relationship to the Trinity is confirmed by a study done by Gabriel Bunge on several key terms that appear in Evagrius' *Capita gnostica* and *Epistula fidei*.[62] In the 1989 study, Bunge investigated the use of the terms ἑνάς καὶ μονάς and μονάς in the *Ep. fid.* and noted the discrepancy between the Greek manuscripts and the Syriac translation. Bunge concluded that the reordering of the Syriac terms used for ἑνάς καὶ μονάς, where the Greek is consistent throughout, is an unintentional scribal error.[63] This is confirmed when he compares the Greek fragments of *Cap.*

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[61] Evagrius, *De oratione* 58 (PG 79.1180). In a similar statement in *Tractatus ad Eulogius* 28.30, Evagrius gives the same advice alluding to Romans 8.26.

[62] Gabriel Bunge, "Hénade ou Monade? Au Sujet de Deux Notions Centrales de la Terminologie Évagrienne," *Le Muséon* 102.1 (1989), 69-91.

[63] Bunge, "Hénade ou Monade?", 74.

gnost. with its two major Syriac translations: S₁ and S₂. By comparing a variety of Greek witnesses, Bunge furthermore came to the conclusion that S₁ replaces Evagrius' genuine terminology. The result is that the new terminology collapses several distinct ideas associated with the Greek terms into one idea – a *méprise fatale* – that ultimately results in "shocking" Christological conclusions and "un sens *intolérablement panthéiste*," where the mind becomes one with the very substance of divinity.[64] Bunge suggests that the S₁ could represent an Isochrist reading of Evagrius and is similar in flavor to translations of Mar Babai.

More important for my study here is that Bunge goes on in the article to attempt a preliminary set of meanings for Evagrius' use of the Greek phrase ἑνας και μονάς and μονάς by itself. By comparing the use of the ἑνας και μονάς in *Ep. fid.* and *Cap. gnost.*, now properly out from under the problems posed by the inconsistent Syriac of S₁, Bunge finds the phrase is a kind of synonym for the Holy Trinity, one term accenting the absolute unity of the divine essence while the other implies the persons of the Trinity.[65] Μονάς by itself, however, is found in the discussion of three specific themes. An important theme is that of unity *with* the Trinity or as Bunge terms it "un *état d'être*". Therefore, despite being distinct from the phrase ἑνας και μονάς, the term μονάς by itself is related since ἑνας και μονάς signifies God as Trinity whose unity draws together his creatures.[66] His is example is from *Ep. fid.* 7.54-56 where Evagrius states, "For, since God is one, he unifies all having come to be in each and number is lost in the sojourn of the monad."[67] This passage is preceded by a quotation of John 17.21 where Jesus prays that his followers be one in himself and the Father even as he and the Father are one. Earlier in the letter, Evagrius discusses in detail how exactly God is one suggesting that his unity is non-numerical, since number is assigned to material and circumscribed natures.[68] It would seem, based on these texts, that Evagrius is stating God's sojourn (ἐπιδημία) produces

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[64] Bunge, "Hénade ou Monade?", 78-80.

[65] Cf. Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §3.19-31 (*Le lettere I*: 90.19-92.31).

[66] Bunge, "Hénade ou Monade?", 81-82.

[67] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §7.54-56 (*Le lettere I*: 102.54-56).

[68] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §2.17-46 (*Le lettere I*: 88.17-90.46).

a unity in or with ascetics that is akin to his own non-numerical unity and by implication immaterial.

Yet, it is important to put this in the context of the letter. Evagrius, throughout the letter, is defending the consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and does so by asserting an identity of essence (§2.1-21). The place where this quote is found is in the context of a set of sayings by Jesus, which Evagrius tells us have been used as evidence of the subordination of the Son (§4-9). Evagrius' response to these Scriptural texts gives a revealing look into his understanding of Christ and one that fits well with the *Cap. gnost.* as does his use of the Greek terms Bunge investigated.[69] Like the *Cap. gnost.*, there are statements that initially look very problematic and for similar stylistic and theological reasons. Evagrius is concerned to highlight the difference between the Word and the material existence that he indwells.[70] However, in the letter it is clear that this is an advantage to humanity since they must find a means to get to immaterial knowledge. It means that Christ, who is the Son and who "for our sakes" took on material existence, can, through his indwelling, resurrect the mind toward immaterial contemplation and direct it to recognize the Word's status as part of the ἐνας καὶ μονάς or, as he states elsewhere, part of the Trinity.[71] Like the *Cap. gnost.*, this strained way of speaking certainly could and probably did appear to later readers as threatening a single-subject understanding of Christ. Taken together with the areas discussed above about the Holy Spirit, Evagrius' defense of both the Son and Spirit as ὁμοούσια with the Father deeply affects his description of their role in ascent. As Bunge states "On n'aura donc pas tort d'appeler *la spiritualité d'Évagre une mystique radicalement trinitaire*."[72]

§2.3 *Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite*

Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite has long been seen as a significant source for Maximus, but surprisingly few full length studies have been done to show

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[69] Bunge, "Hénade ou Monade?", 82-83.

[70] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §4.14-15 (*Le lettere I*: 94.14-15).

[71] Evagrius, *Ep. fid.* §4.16-23; 7 (*Le lettere I*: 94.16-23; 98.1-102.64).

[72] Bunge, "Hénade ou Monade?", 83.

exactly how Maximus has appropriated his thought. Some notable exceptions in English and French scholarship arose in an early debate around how Maximus appropriated Ps.-Dionysius' concept of ἔκστασις and whether this concept was compatible with Evagrius' concept of ἐκδημία.[73] Sherwood concluded this debate affirming that Maximus had drawn from both but not uncritically. In addition, he agreed with von Balthasar that these two ideas could be complementary. According to Sherwood, Maximus chose to use Ps.-Dionysius' concept of the good and the "going out" of the soul toward God but not in the "full Dionysian sense of an irrational, supra-rational estrangement of the mind in the divine darkness," but rather an "outgoing of the volitive power, which effects the final gnomic harmony of unity and love."[74] Likewise, much has been made about the relationship between the Areopagite's and Maximus' conceptions of the limitations of language and their consistent appeal to God's transcendence. Yet, in the *Liber,* this language is absent. Knowledge of God in the *Liber* revolves around the perceptibility of God's indwelling presence and what can be ascertained from the symbol of faith and the narrative of Scripture rather than on questions concerning whether or not one can know or what can be known about God's essence.

Even less has been done on the Areopagite's Trinitarian and Christological thought, much scholarship choosing instead to focus on his language of transcendence or how Ps.-Dionysius supports or subverts current philosophical and theological discussions. An exception here is the role his infamous phase concerning Christ's "theandric energy" played in miaphysite argumentation with pro-Chalcedonians in the years following the Council of Chalcedon. While a thorough study would be preferable, I will attempt to touch

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[73] This debate was started with Viller's study on the relationship between Maximus and Evagrius and continued with Hausherr, Sherwood and von Balthasar. The end result is summed up in Sherwood's affirmation of von Balthasar in *St. Maximus* where he states that the two concepts are compatible; however, Maximus does not take them over uncritically. There are also some notable exceptions in Andrew Louth, "The Reception of Dionysius Up to Maximus the Confessor," in *Re-Thinking Dionysius the Areopagite,* eds. Sarah Coakley, Charles M. Stang (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 43-70.

[74] Sherwood, *St. Maximus,* 96.

on some of the main lineaments of his thought concerning the key areas of study I enumerated at the beginning of the chapter.

§2.3.1 *Ἀπάθεια*

Ps.-Dionysius does have much to say about the Trinity and the knowledge of God but rarely uses ἀπάθεια/ἀπαθῶς. The overall conception of ascent in Ps.-Dionysius can be viewed through the lens of liturgy and "hierarchy" conceived as a means to union with God and likeness of God rather than a series of barriers to him.[75] To say that he rarely uses it, however, does not mean it is unimportant. In *De ecclesiastica hierarchia,* where the Areopagite expounds the liturgy and gives accompanying θεωρίαι for how the rites symbolize divine realities, ἀπάθεια is listed as the desired "state" (ἕξις) along with endurance for those who "will be at the same time, at their highest point of divinization, a temple and attendant of the divine Spirit."[76] Earlier in *De ecclesiastica*, it is those who are being made perfect that are "adorned with the human and deiform ἀπάθεια toward contraries."[77] Ps.-Dionysius, in referring to contraries, is echoing an earlier discussion in which he stated that those who wish to have communion with the One cannot live a life divided by those things that are contrary to it.[78]

A similar use, in an equally similar context of heightened ascent, can be found in both *De divinis nominibus* and *De caelesti hierarchia.*[79] Perhaps the most striking use is found in *De caelesti* 2.4. In this section, Ps.-Dionysius is arguing that everything can assist in contemplation provided that what is perceived by the senses (τό αἰσθητός) is understood in a different way than intellectual realities (τά νοερά). As an example, he discusses how anger can often be perceived as the result of irrationality from passionate impulsiveness but when understood in relation to intellectual realities it must mean a "rational

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[75] Ps.-Dionysius, *De cael. hier.* 3 (*CD 2*:17-20).

[76] Ps.-Dionysius, *De eccl. heir.* 3.7 (*CD 2*:86).

[77] Ps.-Dionysius, *De eccl. heir.* 2.3.8 (*CD 2*:78).

[78] Ps.-Dionysius, *De eccl. heir.* 2.3.5 (*CD 2*:76).

[79] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 1.4 (*CD 1*:114, 115); *De cael. heir.* 7.1 (*CD 2*:28).

and relentless state in deiform and unchanging foundations."[80] Likewise desire (ἐπιθυμία), for those who are irrational, is "a thoughtlessness and materiality from an inborn movement or friendship with those things which change, uncontrollably taking place as a passionate craving and irrational predominance of bodily desire . . ."[81] For those that are intellectual it is "a divine desire for immaterial things which are beyond reason and the mind; an unwavering and unceasing yearning for the simple and impassible contemplation (ἀπαθοῦς θεωρίας) of the super-essential."[82] This is striking because it is the language of desire that frames ascent but nevertheless leads to impassible contemplation. Clearly, ἀπάθεια and the language of desire are compatible. The key, it seems, is for the Christian to decide towards who/what each of these things is directed and understanding the adjustments necessary when speaking of divine realities.

In a similar vein, Ps.-Dionysius later suggests that the attribution of the senses to incorporeal realities in the Scriptures indicate something real about heavenly beings and the divine. The sense of sight, for example, suggests that, "heavenly beings have an ability of discerned upward motion and in turn have a gentle, pliant, non-resistant but quickly moving, pure and impassibly open reception of the divine lights."[83] Finally, in *Ep.* 9, Ps.-Dionysius refers to the passive element of the human soul (τὸ ἀπαθὲς τῆς ψυχῆς) and in *Ep.* 10 he refers to some who are already with God despite being in the midst of humanity "fitted with all impassibility, divine names, holiness and every other good thing."[84] All of these examples focus on ἀπάθεια as a desired goal for human beings. There is no explicit affirmation of God as ἀπαθῶς nor that ἀπάθεια as a goal should be pursued on the basis that it is an attribute of God let alone illustrated by the Son's incarnate life. Nor is there an explicit connection of ἀπάθεια and love as we saw with Evagrius. For my study, this means I will need to cover love in Ps.-Dionysius in an additional section (§2.2.3). While it is likely

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[80] Ps.-Dionysius, *De cael. heir.* 2.4 (*CD 2:*14).

[81] Ps.-Dionysius, *De cael. heir.* 2.4 (*CD 2:*14)

[82] Ps.-Dionysius, *De cael. heir.* 2.4 (*CD 2:*14).

[83] Ps.-Dionysius, *De cael. heir.* 15.3 (*CD 2*:53).

[84] Ps.-Dionysius, *Ep.* 9.1.2 (*CD 2*:198); *Ep.* 10 (*CD 2*:209).

that Ps.-Dionysius, like Clement, may have understood these connections, he does not choose to make them explicit. In several instances, above, however, there is a clear understanding that language about emotion or aspects of creation indicate aspects of divine or heavenly realities and while indicating something real, must nevertheless be understood in a qualified manner.

§2.3.2 *Knowledge of God – Language, Knowledge & Prayer*

One of the dominant themes in Ps.-Dionysius is his concern for language, specifically those names applied to God from Scripture. All of his major works and several of his letters are concerned to show how certain titles contained in Scripture or phenomena observed in creation indicate something about the invisible realities of God and the heavenly hosts while simultaneously maintaining that God is above them. To review this at length would require a much fuller study, however, I want to focus on several aspects of Ps.-Dionysius thought found mostly in *De divinis nominibus* but also several ideas in his *De mystica theologia.*

The first of these ideas has to do with how Ps.-Dionysius frames his task. In *De divinis nominibus,* he states that his main goal is to explain the divine names as found in Scripture. Yet before he gets started, he cites Scripture itself, 1 Corinthians 2.4, as means of encouraging a particular way that the task be done,

> 'not in the persuasive words of human wisdom but in a demonstration,' from Spirit-moved theologians (τῆς πνευματοκινήτου τῶν θεολόγων), 'of power' by which we are united, unutterably and unknowably, with things unutterable and unknowable by a union far superior to our rational and intellectual power and activity.[85]

Here, as both Rorem and Louth point out, "theologians" are the Scriptural authors themselves.[86] Similarly, "divine words" often means the words of Scripture themselves. Later, he will make a similar call in which he invokes

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[85] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 1.1 (*CD 1*:108.1-5)

[86] Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 7 and Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite,* Outstanding Christian Thinkers (Continuum: London, 1989), 26.

prayer to the Trinity as the source of good (ἡ ἀγαθαρχική) and beyond good (ἡ ὑπεράγαθος). This is seen as a necessary step when drawing near to God and when being initiated into his good gifts. He explains that even though the Trinity is transcendent and present everywhere, not everyone is present to it. The initiated are present to the Trinity when they "invoke it in all-holy prayers, with an untroubled mind and with a suitability (ἐπιτηδειότης) for divine union."[87] He subsequently qualifies the idea of location since the Trinity is "beyond all things and is infinitely able to contain all things."[88] Ps.-Dionysius proceeds to explain how prayer actually draws the initiated toward God rather than bringing God toward them using the example of someone climbing a rope or a boat being pulled toward the rock to which it is anchored. He concludes,

> Therefore it is necessary to lead, before everything and certainly before theology (θεολογία), with prayer, not for the purpose of pulling [toward us] that power which is present everywhere and nowhere, but so that with divine memorials and invocations we entrust ourselves to him and are united with him.[89]

The Areopagite shows in these two texts, first of all, a concern to understand the source of and proper approach to the task of theology. It is sourced in Scripture since no one would dare speak of the transcendent one with their own words, but behind that lay God himself who through Scripture and his good gifts allows union with himself. Secondly, theology is a multi-layered concept. On one level, a "theologian" is not only a scriptural writer but also those who reflect on Scripture. Likewise, theology is not only what is contained in Scripture but reflection upon Scripture. In this sense, it is a means toward union with God and finally must give way to silence or praise. On another level, theology is also the encounter of the theologian with God himself

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[87] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 3.1 (*CD 1*: 138.8-9). Cf. Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 9.4 (*CD 1*:210.18) where the same root term is used in relation to "participation" (μετέχειν) and 9.10 (*CD 1:*214.4).

[88] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* (*CD 1*: 138.11-12).

[89] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 3.1 (*CD 1*:139.13-16).

through Scripture and is itself portrayed as union with God. The proper context of theology is prayer, especially with an untroubled mind.

The language observed in Evagrius' writings concerning γνῶσις as the end goal is replaced by union in Ps.-Dionysius. However, before too much is made of this, it should be noted that Evagrius conceives of γνῶσις as having *essential knowledge* indwelling the human mind. However, the fact that Evagrius identifies *essential knowledge* with Christ and the Trinity suggests he sees ascent as a union of God and the mind. The extent of this union can continue to be debated without discarding this feature of his thought. Ps.-Dionysius and Evagrius then see the end goal as union with God. Both authors also see the role of prayer and the activity of the Spirit as important features to Christian life, particularly as it relates to theology. The Areopagite chooses a grammar whose main way of speaking is found in the language of desire, love and union while Evagrius chooses a grammar that is more fluent in the language of γνῶσις. For Evagrius true γνῶσις is union with God found in theology as a heightened movement within prayer. Part of the process of prayer and theology is an unknowing in order to know. For Evagrius, this means imageless prayer so that one's own thoughts of God are not mistaken for God himself. As was seen in *Capita gnostica,* this is mixed with assertions that God's οὐσία is unknowable. Ps.-Dionysius sees three movements within theology. The first movement is affirmation, which recognize the symbolic role that Scripture and creation play in telling us about God. The second movement is negation, which recognizes the uniqueness of God in relation to creation and, therefore, the need to deny exactly those things which symbolize him. The final movement is the denial of negations which is variously portrayed as silence, a belonging to that which is beyond everything or praise but which invariably means escaping the confines of thought so that one "knows beyond the mind by knowing nothing."[90] If his thought is synthesized from both *De mystica theologia* and *De divini nominibus,* then this third movement is union with God. The stark contrast between Evagrius and Ps.-Dionysius is exactly over the use of the words γνῶσις/ἄγνοια. Evagrius uses a union-oriented meaning of knowledge in which ignorance or

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[90] Ps.-Dionysius, *De myst. theol.* 1.2 (*CD 2*: 141-145).

unknowing is portrayed as something negative except in stripping oneself from images in prayer. The Areopagite, on the other hand, uses several senses of knowing/knowledge and ignorance/unknowing to describe both negative and positive aspects of ascent. While the Areopagite chooses to remain in the realm of desire, love and union he is not beyond a certain awareness that union of knower and known or ignorant and unknowable is a superior kind of knowledge than simply knowing about a thing.

§2.3.3 *Love & the Language of Desire*

Another significant theme in Ps.-Dionysius is his concern to extend the language of desire to the divine. In fact, Ps.-Dionysius in several places sees the need to address how such provocative language can be applied to the divine and his discussion in *De divinis nominibus* enters into one of his most prolonged arguments for how to interpret scriptural language, eventually even prompting a discussion of theodicy.[91] Ἔρως and ἀγάπη are discussed and in so doing we get a sense of how he understands their relationship with knowledge of God. Firstly, from the side of creation, Ps.-Dionysius understands these to be natural aspects of human existence that are meant to drive the soul toward divine things terminating in God himself. Thus, while these can be (mis)applied toward created things, they are meant to be a unifying impulse toward God. From the side of God, one of his celebrated attributes is his love for humankind, his φιλανθρωπία, displayed most clearly in the incarnation.[92] Love and desire are placed alongside the term Ps.-Dionysius states is preeminent for God; τὸ ἀγαθόν/τἀγαθόν.[93] Specifically in the section discussing love and desire, Ps.-Dionysius consistently uses the phrase τὸ κάλον καί τὸ ἀγαθόν.[94] Another key argument to this section though is the affirmation of God as Source and Cause such that anything that can be said to be or have life must be sourced or caused by God. He is the source of every source (1.3). In relation to love, this is also the case. God is the source of love but he is also the object of love and ultimately the

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[91] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 4.10-35 (*CD 1*:154-180).

[92] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 1.4 (*CD 1*: 113).

[93] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 4.1 (*CD 1*: 155.8-162.5).

[94] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 4.10-17 (*CD 1*: 155.8-162.5).

means by which all longing for what is loving, beautiful and good are fulfilled
(4.12-17). Ps.-Dionysius, in one of several attempts to anticipate his critics, then
delves into why evil exists if in fact God is the source, object and means of love,
beauty, and goodness (4.18- 35). By comparison, Maximus' understanding of
God's love through the incarnation, his φιλανθρωπία, is not in and of itself
unique and even his description of the incarnate Son as "by nature good" is not
necessarily striking.

§2.3.4 *Trinity in Christian Life*

In *De divini nominibus,* Ps.-Dionysius demonstrates how the names or
titles given to God are understood in relation to his divinity. There are several
aspects to this argument some of which I have already touched on above, but I
want to focus specifically on how this affects his Trinitarian thought. Firstly, Ps.-
Dionysius has an extended argument where he deals with the classical problem
of the relation between the whole and its parts or the one and the many. Ps.-
Dionysius states that elsewhere he has argued that there are some titles given to
God in the Scriptures that are to be understood as applying to the entire
divinity, but there are others that express distinctions such as Father, Son, and
Spirit. Ps.-Dionysius labors to explain that this means whatever is true of the
entire divinity must be participated in by each of its parts.[95] As evidence of this
argument, he draws attention to the common activities and titles of the divine
persons and ends the scriptural portion of his argument with Jesus own words
from John 16.15 and 17.10.[96] In another section, he states that he had discussed
the divine unions and differentiations found in Scripture in his *Theological
Representations* and goes on to say that even those things revealed in Scripture
only grant a share of what the divine is – "[t]heir actual nature, what they are
ultimately in their source and ground, is beyond all intellect and all being and all
knowledge."[97] Yet Scripture states that "The Father is the originating source of
the Godhead and that the Son and the Spirit are, so to speak, divine offshoots,

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[95] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 2.1-3 (*CD 1*:122.1-126.2).

[96] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 2.1(*CD 1*:122.1-124.15).

[97] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 2.7 (*CD 1*: 131.5-6, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,*
63).

the flowering and transcendent lights of divinity. But we can neither say nor understand how this could be so."[98] As if to drive this home, he states toward the end of the treatise,

> And the fact that the transcendent Godhead is one and triune must not be understood in any of our typical senses. No. There is the transcendent unity of God and the fruitfulness of God, and as we prepare to sing this truth we use the names Trinity and Unity for that which is in fact beyond every name, calling it the transcendent being above every being. But no unity or trinity, no number or oneness, no fruitfulness, indeed nothing that is or is known can proclaim that hiddenness beyond every mind and reason of the transcendent Godhead which transcends every being.[99]

Despite this presentation, there are places in Ps.-Dionysius' portrayal that leave the impression that there is a oneness that is above the threeness which is the true object of ascent. One such section is found in 1.4 where he states,

> And so all these scriptural utterances celebrate the supreme Deity by describing it as a monad or henad, because of its supernatural simplicity and indivisible unity, by which unifying power we are led to unity. We, in the diversity of what we are, are drawn together by it and led into a godlike oneness, into a unity reflecting God.[100]

However, this is followed by an assertion that the Scriptures also describe God as Trinity "for with transcendent fecundity it is manifested as 'three persons.'"[101] In fact, it is not only the unity of God that is a source but so also the

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[98] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 2.7 (*CD 1*: 132.1-4, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,* 64).

[99] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 2.7 (*CD 1*:230.6-14, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,* 129).

[100] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 1.4 (*CD 1*:112.10-14, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,* 51). Cf. also the end of 2.11 (*CD 1:* 137.5-13).

[101] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 1.4 (*CD 1*:112.14-113.1, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,* 51).

persons impart "fatherhood", "sonship" and "perfection".[102] In this last instance, Ps.-Dionysius gives his standard caveat stating,

> In reality there is no exact likeness between caused and cause, for the caused carry within themselves only such images of their originating sources as are possible for them, whereas the causes themselves are located in a realm transcending the caused . . .[103]

These examples show how the activities of God either seen through his oneness or threeness serve as cause of particular things within the created realm, which are nevertheless not exactly the same as God. This discussion bears some likeness to areas in Evagrius where he highlights the oneness of God, as seen in Jesus prayer, as the basis for the unity for all. For both Evagrius and Ps.-Dionysius "henad and monad" indicate the Trinity. For Ps.-Dionysius, all of creation is sourced and caused by God even unity and multiplicity because this is found in God himself. However, this also creates potential problems for him and prompts him to give a detailed account for evil.

In the *Liber,* Maximus does not go beyond establishing the consubstantiality of the persons and giving an illustration of divine appropriation through his description of the activities of the Son and Spirit in the Christian life, the life of the incarnate Son and Trinitarian prayer. The issue of the relation between oneness and threeness of God is not in view, nor is there concern to address language and attribution in light of God's transcendence. Additionally, the role of divine simplicity as a unifying power in ascent is also not within Maximus' purview although it could be argued Maximus assumes it. Regardless, these issues will eventually become part of his understanding of ascent.

§2.4 *Macarian Connections*

Due to the exigencies of providing a background for Maximus within this investigation, it was necessary to delineate a limited set of authors otherwise

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[102] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* (CD 1:132.5-13, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,* 64).

[103] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* (CD 1:132.14-17, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works,* 64).

one could credibly review a long series of authors all the way back to the New Testament period or even further following an extensive chain of ideas, terms and concepts. Since my goal has been to investigate Maximus' Trinitarian thought, my selection of authors for this chapter was based on those who were often identified as significant within Maximus' ascetic context and touch on some aspect of Trinitarian thinking. Initially, I choose to limit this as far back as Evagrius, interacting with earlier authors on an as needed basis, but upon more sober counsel, I found it necessary to include a brief exposé on another author that looms in the background of Maximus' broad ascetic context and who in many areas gave language to and initially framed longstanding ascetic concerns – Ps.-Macarius or Macarius-Symeon. The challenge of discussing Ps.-Macarius in relation to Maximus lies in several areas, not least of which is the complex manuscript tradition of the Macarian writings themselves and the obscure details of the author, especially in relation Messalianism.[104] Fortunately, a series of careful studies explore not only these aspects but more importantly the impact of the author on subsequent ascetics. [105] As I stated in the introduction, my goal in reviewing various ancient authors is not to establish influence, but rather to locate Maximus' baseline grammar for the Christian life as portrayed in the *Liber asceticus* within its ascetic context in three areas: 1) love and ἀπάθεια, 2) knowledge of God and 3) activity of the divine persons in the Christian life. In light of the work already done in the above cited studies and rather than attempt to surpass this earlier scholarship, my tactic in this brief section is to lean heavily on the work of Plested to give a synthetic presentation of the three areas listed above and then to assimilate aspects of Plested's study in later sections and chapters. For fuller treatment of Ps.-Macarius, his

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[104] On the manuscript tradition see Hermann Dörries, *Symeon von Mesopotamien. Die Überlieferung der Messalianischen "Makarios"-Schriften*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen 55 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1941).

[105] These studies are Marcus Plested, *The Macarian Legacy: The Place of Macarius in the Eastern Christian Tradition*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Klaus Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus. Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte*, Forshungen zur Kirchen- und Domengeschichte 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) and Columba Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart': The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

connection with Messalianism and the broad reach of the Macarian writings, I point the reader to more thorough studies done by Plested, Fitschen, and Stewart.

In 2004, Marcus Plested published his 1999 doctoral thesis originally titled *The Place of Macarian Writings in the Eastern Christian Tradition to AD 700*. The new title *The Macarian Legacy: The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition* captures even further the careful handling required to describe the relationship between Ps.-Macarius and later authors. The study was conducted in two-parts. The first part, spanning chapters 1-4 investigated the background of the Macarian writings, including their historical context, their themes and concepts, their relation to the Cappadocians, especially Basil and Gregory of Nyssa and tackles the often-made dichotomy between Macarian and Evagrian spiritualties. The second part contained chapters 5-8 and analyzed four more sets of writings in order to establish how the Macarian legacy has influenced, both directly and indirectly, their various visions of ascetic spirituality, especially in areas related to the Messalian controversy. The authors of these writings were Mark the Monk, Diadochus of Photikē, Abba Isaiah and Maximus the Confessor. Plested delineated areas of influence when clear evidence was available but focused on how significant themes and concepts were later sustained within ascetic traditions. In relation to Maximus, he highlighted eleven areas which demonstrate either direct or indirect connections with Ps.-Macarius.[106]

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[106] In Chapter 8 entitled, "Maximus the Confessor," (213-254) these areas are 1) Transfiguration, 2) The Incarnation of the Logos, 3) The Depiction of the *Imago Dei*, 4) Baptism, 5) Free Will, 6) Language of Sense and Experience (Πεῖρα and αἴσθησις), 7) Πληροφορία and 8) The Heart, 9) Love and Ecstasy (Ἀγάπη, ἔρως and ἔκστασις), 10) The Passions and *Apatheia*, and 11) The Soul as Church. Plested also provides a helpful review of scholars who have explored how Maximus interacted with the Macarian tradition. There he suggests several who see the Macarian tradition mediated through Diadochus including Juan-Miguel Garrigues' 1976 *Maxime le confesseur: la charité, avenir divin de l'homme* and Alain Riou's 1973 *Le Monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur* while Jean-Claude Larchet's 1996 *La Divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur* argues for a more direct role. Louth, in his 1996 introduction to the translation of Maximus' works, highlights the Confessor's debt to the Macarian homilies citing the phrase "earth of the heart" in *Op*. 17 and Maximus' conception of the knowledge of God as πεῖρα. Likely because of the introductory nature of the piece, Louth does not provide specific evidence from Ps.-Macarius. Instead, he points the reader to the *index fontium* of the CCSG and Miquel Pierre's ""Πεῖρα: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire de l'expérience religieuse dans l'oeuvre de Maxime le Confesseur." As Plested notes, this claim was criticized by Thunberg who

§2.4.1 *Love & Ἀπάθεια*

In relation to the theme of love and ἀπάθεια, Plested notes that Ps.-Macarius, much like Evagrius, has a negative evaluation of the passions.[107] Ps.-Macarius denies that they are integral to humanity's original creation and describes them as "alien" or "counter-natural", a theme shared by Maximus and Gregory of Nyssa.[108] Additionally, ἀπάθεια is liable to the neglect and carelessness of the individual which strikes at any conception that it is an unassailable state – a Messalian theme.[109] A common understanding within the Macarian corpus is that Christ serves as an example for ascetic imitation especially in the context of enduring suffering. More specifically, there is evidence that Christ and the Spirit *as ἀπαθής* are justification for the ascetic to endure suffering and remain undistracted by pain or pleasure.[110]

§2.4.2 *Knowledge of God*

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cited an overall lack of evidence for Macarian influence and suggested that the Macarian phrase may be "isolated" in Maximus works and "commonplace" within patristic tradition. Plested's study fills the *lacuna* of evidence left by Louth and directly addresses Thunberg's criticism showing that the contested phrase is not commonplace in patristic tradition and is also not an isolated instance in Maximus but rather is one of the strongest evidences of direct input (239-241).

[107] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 250, 251. This is also shared with Mark the Monk and Diadochus. See Plested, *Macarian Legacy*, 251 and below.

[108] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 250, 251 (cf. Maxmus, *Disput. Pyh.* 309B-312A). In this section, Plested notes Maximus' broader understanding of the passions as movement that can be both against nature and useful to the spiritual life citing *Cap, Car.* 2.16, *Amb.* 7 and *Qua. Thal.* 1. In one example, Plested notes Maximus' phrase "blameless passion of holy love" in *Cap. Car.* 3.67 (cf. also 236). See also a similar phrase in *Cap. Car.* 3.70 (*Cap. sulla Car.*, 176) where Maximus contrasts a "blameworthy passion of love" (Πάθος ἀγάπης ψεκτὸν) with a "praiseworthy passion of love" (πάθος ἀγάπης ἐπαινετὸν). In both instances of this positive valuation, the passion of love binds the mind to divine things. Plested also suggests that Maximus' positive evaluation has earlier representation in Ps.-Dionysius and Abba Isaiah.

[109] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 24. There are several lists of propositions from Timothy of Constantinople and John of Damascus that are often cited as of key importance. On these lists, see Fistchen, *Messalianismus und Antimesslaianismus,* 69-86 and also the helpful correlation, synopsis and analysis of the lists in Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart*, 241-281.

[110] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 36-38. In one of his homilies, Ps.-Macarius makes a connection between the Savior as ἀπαθής and the ἀπάθεια of the worthy. See Collection 1, *Logos* 40.1.1-2 in Heinz Berthold, *Makarios/Symeon, Reden und Briefe, Die Sammlung I des Vaticanus Graecus 694 (B)*, 2 Vols., Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 55, 56 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973). See also a similar reference in 40.1.14 to the Spirit.

In the area of knowledge of God, Ps.-Macarius' writings bring into sharp focus the problems with overgeneralizing and dichotomizing the Evagrian and Macarian conceptions of spirituality. Ps.-Macarius describes the central aspect of humanity as the heart and yet understands this to include the νοῦς which governs the whole person. [111] As a consequence of the Fall of Adam, the ascetic task is to purify oneself so as to become worthy of being fully indwelt by the Holy Spirit and Christ. Beginning with baptism and moving toward spiritual struggle as a result of the coexistence of sin and grace, this purification is achieved by the activity of the Holy Spirit and the soul working in tandem to participate in the suffering and glory of Christ.[112] The intellect is meant to be purified so that through prayer it may experience the light of Christ, harkening back to the Taboric light of the Transfiguration. This purification and cooperation take place in both individual and corporate contexts through prayer and liturgical acts such as the Eucharist.[113] For Ps.-Macarius, there is not a complex and staged portrayal of contemplation in the same way as Evagrius and thus the tenor of knowledge of God is expressed in highly experiential terms and focuses on participating in and manifesting the presence of God.[114]

§2.4.2 *Activity of the Divine Persons*

The activity of the divine persons in Ps.-Macarius can be seen in the way both the Son and Spirit grace the ascetic life and dwell within the worthy to imitate and manifest Christ.[115] This is the purpose of the incarnation and is a key part of what Plested considers to be Ps.-Macarius "Trinitarian dynamic of salvation."[116] Within Ps.-Macarius' language of indwelling, there is mutuality; God gives himself to dwell in humanity, but humanity finds it purpose and focus

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[111] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 32-35.

[112] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 35-38, 42, 43.

[113] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 38-42. Compare also Plested's discussion of Maximus and Ps.-Macarius on the Transfiguration, 218-223.

[114] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 44, 45.

[115] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 44-45.

[116] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 42-45.

in God.[117] Yet there is a clear distinction between creation and creator bridged by God's love.[118] In the context of the fourth century, affirming the divinity of the Spirit, the incomprehensibility of God and the place of both negative and positive theology all find a place in the Macarian vision and provide important connections to the Cappadocians especially Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.[119] The Spirit and the Son are both spoken of as indwelling and acting on the ascetic yet there seems to be no conscious effort to explain how both can be said to indwell the human person which may have contributed to the rise of some of the questions I will review in Mark the Monk. Grace and the Spirit mutually imply one another – a connection also seen in Diadochus.

In several ways then, Ps.-Macarius writings give us a ground level look as issues that will consistently be discussed by ascetic communities. Within the struggle to understand and describe the dynamics of grace and sin, the activity and presence of God within ascetic life became a significant topic and, at least initially, drove much of the reflection on how God purifies his people so that he can dissipate the effects of the Fall and make space to fully indwell his people. This nexus of ideas continued to be a source of reflection for Mark the Monk, Diadochus and Maximus to whom I now turn

§2.5 *Diadochus of Photikē*

Over the last 50 years, numerous authors have noted similarities between the Bishop of Photikē (c. 400-487 CE) and Maximus, but only a few have endeavored to give a substantial account of his influence. Edouard des Places in his introduction to the critical edition of Diadochus in 1966 mentions similarities but then only cites some observations made by von Balthasar. Then in 1980, he compiled all the disparate references to similarities between Maximus and Diadochus up to that point but did not necessarily argue for their

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[117] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 31.

[118] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 31.

[119] Plested, *Macarian Legacy*, 50-57. There is a long standing debate about the relationship between Ps.-Macarius *Epistula magna* and Gregory of Nyssa's *De instituto Chrisitano* which Plested interweaves into his discussion (see 49ff.)

influence on Maximus.[120] Another short study was done by Nicholas Madden in 1989 looking specifically at the pair's understanding of αἴσθησις νοερά.[121] Since the late 1980s, several other scholars have noted similarities between the two authors but not necessarily devoted space to a detailed discussion.[122] As I have shown in other authors up to this point, these themes are present but at times not explicit or not explicitly related to one another. In Diadochus, we come closer to a linkage between ἀπάθεια and love, knowledge of God and the Trinity within Christian life. As a result, rather than have separate sections for each of the areas I listed in the introduction I will treat them within one section.

In the writings attributed to Diadochus, there are only ten instances of ἀπάθεια in its various forms. His very first definition in *Capita centum de perfection spirituali* states that faith is "an impassible reflection concerning God."[123] In the same set of definitions, knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) is "to be unaware of oneself in being amazed at God" while love is defined as "growth in affectionate regard toward those who insult us."[124] This definition of knowledge is notable because it draws together several aspects of Diadochus conception of ascetic life. The first aspect is being "unaware," literally, to be "ignorant of" or "ignoring" (ἀγνοεῖν) oneself. The second aspect is being captivated by God. The

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[120] Edouard des Places, "Maxime le Confesseur et Diadoque de Photicé" in *Maximus Confessor, Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980,* eds. Felix Heinzer & Christoph Schönborn, Paradoxis 27 (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 29-35.

[121] Nicholas Madden, "*Aisthesis neora* (Diadochus-Maximus)," *SP* 23 (1989): 53-60.

[122] See for example, Andrew Louth's entry for Maximus the Confessor in *Patrology: The Eastern Fathers from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to John of Damascus (†750),* eds. Angelo Di Berardino, Institutum Patrisiticum Augustinianum (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2006), 149 and his *Maximus the Confessor*, The Early Christian Fathers (London: Routledge, 1996), 25, 26, 35.

[123] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* proem.1 (BBTT 8:12). Des Places original 1943 critical edition, SC 5, was reprinted in 1966 with revisions and additions and then again in 1997 with additional correction and is still helpful for the *Visio* and *Oratione.* Despite some doubt expressed about authorship, these works continue to be attributed to Diadochus. For the critical edition of his *Capita* see *One Hundred Practical Texts of Perception and Spiritual Discernment from Diadochos of Photike,* ed. Janet Elaine Rutherford with translation and commentary, Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 8 (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, Institute of Byzantine Studies, the Queen's University of Belfast, 2000).

[124] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* proem.1. Ermatinger is probably right to translate ἔννοια as "consideration" in *Following the Footsteps of the Invisible: The Complete Works of Diadochus of Photikē,* transl. Cliff Ermatinger, Cistercian Studies 239 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010), 67.

verb ἐξίστημι is notable because it serves to underline the ignorance of self and the focus on God; the phrase could just as easily be translated 'in departing for God'. Knowledge in this sense is an unknowing of created things in order to know God. This departing for God is described with very vibrant language exploiting the various terms for love, friendship and affection (ἀγάπη, φίλος, φίλια) and desire (θέρμη, ἐπιθυμία, σφοδρός, ἔρως, πάθος).[125] This dual concern is reinforced by Diadochus' reading of John 3.30 (he must be exalted, but we must be diminished), which contrasts the one who has affection for one's self and one's own glory with the one who has affection for and love of God and his glory. This humility results in being made a friend to God (οἰκειωθῶμεν). His first *capitulum* capsulizes this sentiment, stating that faith, hope and above all love are to guide θεωρία. Faith and hope "thoroughly teaches [us] to look down upon the good things which are visible" and "love along with these joins together the soul with the virtues of God by tracking the unseen with intellectual perception."[126]

The Messalian background is important for understanding Diadochus' writings and seemed to revolve around, among other things, what exactly it is baptism accomplishes particularly in light of post-baptismal sin.[127] From Diadochus' writing, we are informed that one solution proffered for the struggle within Christian life was that in the baptized both Satan and the Holy Spirit warred for possession of the soul. Diadochus goes to great lengths to argue that this is an untenable account maintaining that the Holy Spirit entirely displaces evil from the soul and chases it off to realm of the body.[128] As a result, any internal struggle is an issue of the will, not an issue of competition between the

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[125] Diadochus*, Capita centum,* 13, 14 (BBTT 8:22, 24).

[126] Diadochus*, Capita centum,* 1 (BBTT 8:14).

[127] The best study on Messalianism in English is still Columba Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart'* but see the more recent and thorough investigation of Klaus Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus. Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte*, Forshungen zur Kirchen- und Domengeschichte 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) and the helpful discussions in Plested's, *The Macarian Legacy.*

[128] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 82 (BBTT 8:112-114). Plested notes in Diadochus' response a critique of Ps.-Macarius' solution to this issue in *Macarian Legacy,* 150-153.

indwelling of both Satan and the Holy Spirit.[129] The Holy Spirit takes up
residence at baptism and at first the presence of grace is perceptible to the heart
in relation to the redirecting of desire toward God and then as one's freedom
and will are given over to remembering and keeping the commandments, it
becomes perceptible to the external senses of the heart. Finally, when all the
virtues are bound to the baptized, "grace illumines the entirety of one's nature
with an even deeper perception," (τὴν πᾶσαν αὐτοῦ βαθυτέρᾳ τινὶ αἰσθήσει
περιαυγάζει φύσιν).[130] The interaction within this process between the Spirit
and the baptized trains the soul to discern God's presence and yet even at the
beginning stages when the soul cannot perceive it, grace is working.[131]

Involved in this process are three distinct gifts of the Spirit: γνῶσις,
σοφία, and θεολογία. Γνῶσις binds human beings to God through experience
(πείρα) but does not involve speaking about things nor of the divine.[132] Σοφία is
similar but involves the additional activity of speech. Diadochus warns that
when someone does not have true γνῶσις, they should not speak. Nor should
they speak "when richly shown upon by the kindness of the Holy Spirit" since
the soul is in the midst of exulting in the glory of God.[133] Only after γνῶσις is
gained from such experience in faith and through love should it be spoken of
and only as God grants it.[134] True spiritual discourse, then, is free of vainglory,
humble and changes the entire soul into the love of God and allows the mind to
remain in the movements of θεολογία.[135] Θεολογία is also a divine gift and
according to Diadochus, "nothing kindles and moves the heart toward [God's]

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[129] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 78, cf. also 29 (BBTT 8:104-106, 38-40).

[130] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 4, 28-30, 74, 77, 85, 89 (BBTT 8:14-16, 36-40, 98-100,
102-104, 120, 128-130).

[131] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 69, 76, 77, 85 (BBTT 8:92, 100-102, 102-104, 120).

[132] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 9 (BBTT 8:18): Ἡ μὲν γὰρ γνῶσις πείρᾳ τὸν ἄνθρωπον
συνάπτει τῷ θεῷ, εἰς λόγους τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν ψυχὴν μὴ κινοῦσα. Διὸ καί τινες τῶν τὸν
μονήρη φιλοσοφούντων βίον φωτίζονται μὲν ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς ἐν αἰσθήσει, εἰς λόγους δὲ θείους οὐκ
ἔρχονται.

[133] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 8 (BBTT 8:18).

[134] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 9 (BBTT 8:18).

[135] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 7, 10, 11 (BBTT 8:16, 20).

love like θεολογία."[136] There is ambiguity here as to what exactly θεολογία is. Is it the soul's experience of God through Scripture, through the words of the wise or is it a kind of mystical experience with God? In one sense, it accompanies the ascetic by preparing them to despise affections toward earthly life, illumining them with "the fire of change for which they are also made partakers of the ministering spirits."[137] Additionally, it appears to be a virtue, which rears the mind on the sayings of God (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ) thus betrothing it to God the *Logos* for marriage.[138] Θεολογία in this conception, then, is a not just discourse about God but rather the passionate exchange of discourse between the beloved soul and its lover the Word of God. Whether this exchange happens via an experience through Scripture or something else is not always made clear, an ambiguity that may be intentional. However, Diadochus does have a significant role for Scripture and its proper interpretation in evaluating other kinds of experiences. This is evinced by his concern for the proper interpretation of Scriptural passages that seemed to have been significant in the Messalian controversy.[139]

For Diadochus, there is a concern for rightly discerning all spiritual experiences. This is developed, as stated above, through gaining true γνῶσις, wisdom and theology—the experience of God, which attunes the mind to discern good from evil. One way this plays out is when the baptized attempt to discern the reasons and sources of good and evil within, but it is also affects the evaluation of specific kinds of experience such as dreams and visions. Diadochus concern with the latter is illustrated clearly in the way he categorically warns against obeying φαντασίαι This broad category includes dreams (ὄνειροι) and visions (ὀράματα), especially visible signs of God's

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[136] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 67 (BBTT 8:88).

[137] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 67 (BBTT 8:88).

[138] Diadochus, *Capita centum*, 67 (BBTT 8:88).

[139] For example, in *Capita centum* 67, at the height of the process of ascent, Diadochus inserts the phrase "through the holy prophets" which suggest the prophetic witnesses within Scripture. In addition to his normal appeal to Scriptural texts, there is an important section in the latter part of his *Capita* focused on countering Messalian misunderstandings of scriptural passages, see *Capita centum,* 80, 82, 83, 84 (BBTT 8:108-110; 112-114; 116-118; 118).

invisible glory.[140] On the other side of this issue, is also a concern to properly understand an apparent abandonment by God. For Diadochus, there are two types of abandonment (παραχώρησις). The first kind is for education (παιδευτική) and occurs when grace hides itself in order to spur the baptized on to greater devotion, discernment, and humility. Here Diadochus uses the image of a mother and a child. The second kind of abandonment is a turning from (κατὰ ἀποστροφήν), where God abandons the soul to hopelessness, faithlessness, anger and folly. Both are meant to turn the soul toward God.[141]

From the above description, it is already evident that at each stage of ascent the activity and role of the Holy Spirit is prolific in Diadochus' writings. This feature is likely a response to Messalian teachings and is especially the case in terms of baptism. Unlike Evagrius, however, the joining of the Son and the Spirit by the titles Word or Wisdom and their functioning together to reveal the Father is absent. A chain of revelation based on consubstantiality and common and inseparable actions is absent. The concept of one person of the Trinity making known another is briefly mentioned in a passage where the incarnate Son makes known the Father likely alluding to the Gospel of John.[142] This discussion in Diadochus' *Visio* is in the context of queries regarding John the Baptist's experience of Jesus baptism. However, it is clear that the divine persons have specific roles. The Spirit is given the predominant role in the purification of the mind and senses, the molding and preserving of the ascetic toward the good and the illumination of the ascetic towards knowledge and θεολογία. The concept of indwelling is exclusively cast in reference to the Spirit (rather than the Spirit of Christ, Christ or the concept of adoption/sonship) as

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[140] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 36-41 (BBTT 8:48-56).

[141] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 85-87 (BBTT 8:120-126). Maximus deals with this in *Capita caritate* 4.96. There he identifies four kinds of abandonment (ἐγκατάλειψις): 1) a seeming abandonment (δοκοῦσα ἐγκατάλειψις) so that the Lord might save those who had been abandoned, 2) Another for trial (ἡ πρὸς δοκιμήν) as seen in the lives of Job and Joseph so that they become pillars of prudence (σωφροσύνη) and courage (ἀνδρεία), 3) a third for paternal education (ἡ πρὸς παίδευσιν πατρικήν) as seen in the life the apostle so that he might guard with humility the superabundant grace, and finally, 4) another corresponding to a turning away (κατὰ ἀποστροφήν) as provided for the "Jews" that they might repent. Maximus, like Diadochus, sees the purpose of abandonment as salvific "full of divine goodness and wisdom".

[142] Diadochus, *Visio* 21 (SC 5 175.15-176.2).

Diadochus attempts to confront the Messalian view that grace/Holy Spirit can dwell in the heart along with evil/Satan/demons.

Ἀπάθεια, though having a place in Diadochus conception of ascent, is not tied to God explicitly in a way that it provides an example of the ascetic life and gives way to speaking about the role of the Spirit to train the soul's sense of taste.[143] In Evagrius, love sprung from ἀπάθεια, yet according to Plested, he reserved love to the practical life and natural contemplation.[144] Diadochus reverses the connection suggesting ἀπάθεια is the consequence of love, but there are also instances in which the effects of ἀπάθεια purify and transform the soul's desire into mature love.[145] While there are instances when Diadochus directly ties love of neighbor (or enemies) to love of God most of his writings in the *Capita* are spent discussing the process of the soul's redirection of desire toward God and the role of grace throughout. This focus is much more prevalent in Diadochus than it is in Evagrius and, as we shall see, in Mark as well. As Plested notes, Diadochus understanding that ἀπάθεια does not rid the soul of its need to war against temptation and is connected with love is shared with both Ps.-Macarius and Evagrius.[146]

§2.6 *Mark the Monk*

Robert L. Wilkens and Paul Blowers, in their translation of select texts from Maximus, are careful not to attribute direct influence of Mark and his reflection on baptism on Maximus suggesting rather that Maximus own discussion of baptism in *Ad Thalassium* 6 "echoes the wisdom of this earlier tradition and brings to it his own fresh insights."[147] Mark, like Diadochus,

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[143] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* 35, 72, 74 (BBTT 8:46, 96, 98-100). In this instance Diadochus attribute ἀπαθής and ineffability (ἄρρητος) to the Spirit.

[144] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 246.

[145] Plested also notes the reversal in *Macarian Legacy,* 165-166. In *Capita centum,* 17 (BBTT 8:28) the crux of the soul's transformation from desire for pleasure to perfect love is a journey through fear and ἀπάθεια. See also *Capita centum,* 89 (BBTT 8:130).

[146] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 165-166.

[147] This influence is either by his own admission or by noted by modern scholars. Blowers and Wilken are careful not to attribute direct influence of Mark on Maximus. However, in regard to baptism, they do suggest that, in *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 6, Maximus "echoes the wisdom of this earlier tradition and brings to it his own fresh insights," see *Cosmic Mystery,* 40.

confronts Messalianism in his writing and thus reflects specifically on the presence of God in the baptized and more widely on what baptism accomplishes. Yet, Mark also addresses issues of how to understand the language of "indwelling" that is attributed to both Christ and the Spirit in a way that is much more explicit than Maximus. Mark values ἀπάθεια and even attributes it to Christ in his anti-Nestorian writings. Additionally, Mark portrays the ascetic life as practicing the God's commandments and capsulized in the commands to love God and love neighbor. The role of the Spirit is vitally important in this life as is the grace he brings and the way in which the process of ascent is meant to make manifest the indwelling of Christ. Already, an affinity to Maximus' conception of ascetic life is observable but there are still discernable differences.

§2.6.1 *Ἀπάθεια, Love & the Doctrine of God*

The concept of ἀπάθεια in Mark while present is not a main theme in his writing. Instead, Mark displays a mind that is concerned with the relationship between faith, grace, πρᾶξις and knowledge. Particularly in his three works *De lege spirituali, De his qui putant se ex operibus justificari*, and *Consultatio intellectus cum sua ipsius anima,* he is concerned with confronting an overconfidence in one's external ascetic practices and mere knowledge as opposed to faith, grace and true knowledge gained through the genuine practice of God's commandments.[148] The ability to endure affliction is the mark of a genuine ascetic.[149] In these ascetic writings, Mark uses ἀπάθεια only a couple of times. Two are found in *Ex operibus justificari.* The first use states that stillness taken together with long-suffering, humility, vigilance and self-control in prayer helps the ascetic attain ἀπάθεια.[150] The second describes the person who has attained it and that its attainment does not exempt one from experiencing affliction either for himself or on account of his neighbor.[151] He shares with Ps.-

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[148] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 6 (SC 445:132).

[149] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 115, 125, 128, 142, 156 (SC 445:164, 166, 168, 176, 180).

[150] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 28 (SC 445:138).

[151] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 123 (SC 445:166).

Macarius and Evagrius the theme that ἀπάθεια is not permanent state but rather dependent on the watchfulness and actions of the individual.[152] The third occurrence in *Consultatio* is a reference to the use of gold and possessions. They, in and of themselves, do not cause harm. Only their impassioned abuse causes harm. Thus, it is possible that "someone who is rich without passion (ἀπαθῶς) can be pleasing to God, as were holy Abraham, Job, and David."[153] While ἀπάθεια does not play a central role in his explanation of these concepts, it is clear he still expects it to be part of the process. It is also worth commenting on Mark's conception of prayer as the "mother of all virtues", the most valuable of which is love.[154] So in his ascetic writings while love and ἀπάθεια are brought into proximity through prayer, Mark does not necessarily go as far as Evagrius to explicitly state that love is the final product of ἀπάθεια.

The last set of references to ἀπάθεια are found in Mark's treatise; *De incarnatione sive Adversus Nestorianos*. In section 26 and 27, Mark argues that Christ took on the passions without passion (ἀπαθῶς) in order to defend theopaschite expressions such as God died, or God suffered.[155] Using the example of fire and gold, he points out that if it is possible for created things to both suffer something and yet remain what they are, how can it be put past God to do the same. Mark both here and in later occurrences emphasizes that the attribution of these phrases to God are made of him as a human being, not in his divinity.[156] Ἀπάθεια clearly has a role to play in Mark's Christology and while it is not discussed at length it is also an expectation of the ascetic life. However, he does not, like Evagrius, draw together love and ἀπάθεια nor make an explicit appeal to God or Christ's ἀπάθεια as an example to be imitated.

§2.6.2 *Trinity in Christian Life*

Although we may safely assume Mark sees God as Trinity, only *De baptismo* contains direct references. The sixth and seventh *quaestio et responsio*

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[152] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 111-112, 120.

[153] Mark, *Consultatio intellectus cum sua ipsius anima,* 3.4-6 (SC 445:220).

[154] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 33, 35 (SC 445:139).

[155] Mark, *De Incarnation sive Adversus Nestorianos,* 26, 27 (SC 455:280-282).

[156] Mark, *De incarnatione,* 34 (*SC* 455:290-292). Cf. also 36-37 (SC 445:292-294).

records the question, "Therefore who does the one who is baptized receive? Christ or the Spirit? For sometimes you ask Christ to dwell [in you] and sometimes the Holy Spirit."[157] The answer states that because the Spirit is "of God" and "of Christ" both are received through him. The seventh question continues this line of questioning querying whether the Spirit is the Trinity. The answer,

> We do not say he, as only one person, is the Trinity but since there is no separation of the Father and the Son, then, for this reason, we confess the Trinity is in him according to his divinity. For just as the Son and the Spirit are in the Father and, again, the Father and Spirit are in the Son, so also the Father and the Son are in the Spirit — not in a confusion of the three ὑποστάσεις but in its union of one will and divinity so that whether we confess the Father as consisting of only one part or the Son or the Spirit, we confess with one name the Trinity . . .[158]

In relation to baptism, the sixth question has warrant from biblical texts as the answer itself implies.[159] The seventh question can be seen as a natural follow-up and reveals a certain tension between expressing the unity and plurality of the Trinity. In ascetic contexts, there is a clear precedent that the goal of the ascetic pursuit is to see Christ and the Spirit wholly indwell the human person. Yet, as we saw with Ps.-Macarius, whether or how one might articulate both indwelling simultaneously was left open. According to Mark, in one respect it could be said that when one has the Spirit, one also has the Father and the Son. As he suggests, this is because each of the ὑποστάσεις has the same will and divinity.[160] In the context of sixth century debates, this issue was raised repeatedly through the question, how can only the Son be incarnate? In miaphysite circles, this was answered variously with an appeal to the term φύσις and the fact that it could indicate a particular nature. Pro-Chalcedonians tended to emphasize that even though perfect divinity was fully possessed by

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[157] Mark, *De baptismo,* 6 (SC 445:348).

[158] Mark, *De baptismo,* 6 (SC 445:350).

[159] Cf. Romans 8.8-15.

[160] Mark, *De baptismo,* 7 (SC 445:350-352).

each ὑπόστασις only the ὑπόστασις of the Son was incarnate. It is unclear whether, in addition to the question on baptism, Mark may be throwing his hat into this debate. While he writes against Nestorianism, scholars have continually questioned whether he should be seen as a fifth or sixth century author.[161] Regardless, this text gives us an example of how questions about the relationship between Trinitarian plurality and unity could be raised specifically in reference to the Holy Spirit and God's indwelling presence. As we will see later, Maximus will take on this concern both within his ascetic writing and within his works against miaphysitism.

In regard to the relation of God to Christian life beyond the considerations reviewed above, Mark has more to offer us. At the beginning of *De lege spiritali,* Mark states, in a way that parallels Ps.-Dionysius, that God is "the beginning, middle and end of everything good and it is impossible to do good or believe unless by Jesus Christ and [the] Holy Spirit."[162] While Mark does not frame this in quite the same terms of "procession" and "return" as does Ps.-Dionysius, there is a shared concern to show the Christian life is sourced in and aimed toward God. In the second *capitula,* he makes this more explicit stating, "Everything good is given by the Lord and the one who believes thusly will not lose it. The steadfast faith is a strong tower and Christ becomes all things for the one who believes." [163] The ideas expressed in the first text are filled in further throughout the rest of the work. Mark points out the origins of virtue and the importance of right intentions in order to fulfill the commandments of God. The second statement, however, finds less expression. Given the background of Evagrius, we might expect such a statement to lead toward a pairing of Christ and the Spirit throughout the work but this does not seem to be Mark's concern. Instead, he disperses statements throughout that show either the Spirit or God in general as being the source of something. [164] Mark does not attempt to pair

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[161] For a discussion on the dating of Mark see *Counsels on the Spiritual Life: Volumes One and Two,* transl. with commentary and notes by Tim Vivian & Augustine Casiday, Popular Patristics Series 37 (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009), 15-26.

[162] Mark, *De lege spirituali* 1 (SC 445:74).

[163] Mark, *De lege spirituali* 2 (SC 445:74). Cf. *De lege spirituali* 47 (SC 445:86).

[164] For example, peace is said to be a result of the "activity of the Holy Spirit," *De lege spirituali* 193 (SC 445:124); helping in word or deed as a result of "the grace of God at work," *De*

the activities of the Son with those of the Spirit or vice-versa except to describe the indwelling as that of the Spirit, of grace or of Christ.

§2.6.3 *Knowledge of God & the Activity of the Spirit*

In order to get at what Mark says about the knowledge of God and the Holy Spirit, it is important to remember his main concern is to confront two related issues: 1) Grace and works, and 2) what baptism accomplishes. If Mark's works report to us an accurate reflection of the teachings of Messalianism or, at the very least, struggles within the ascetic community then they give us another portrait of communities that questioned the function of ascetic struggle in the life of faith and exactly what it is that happens to the human person when he or she is baptized. The effect of Mark's concern to answer these questions is that he does not give a detailed structure of spiritual ascent but instead focuses his attention on how things get accomplished in Christian life: who does what and what is at stake if this is not properly understood? This emphasis means that Mark does not spend much energy giving us an explicit framework of ascent like Evagrius' tripartite approach. However, this does not mean he did not have one in mind, only that it is not his main concern in the writings we have. Given this emphasis, I will center my discussion on Mark's conception of the Christian life as related to baptism. In the next few paragraphs, I will give a concise description of his conception of knowledge and how the Holy Spirit acts within this framework.

Mark sees baptism as accomplishing something real and lasting. This lasting reality depends entirely on the activity of God. The opening *capitula* in his *De lege spirituali* states, "Firstly, we see that God is beginning, middle and end of everything good. It is impossible to do or believe the good except in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit."[165] Within this framework, faith itself is sourced in Christ and the Holy Spirit. The result of this faith is grace, particularly the dwelling of Christ in the human person. At this point, the Christian is set free,

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lege spirituali 76 (SC 445:92); God as the source of virtue in *De lege spirituali* 40 (SC 445:86); perfection of virtue hidden in the cross of Christ in *De lege spirituali* 29 (SC 445:82); Christ as the one who gives tears and spiritual sight in *De lege spirituali* 12 (SC 445:76).

[165] Mark, *De lege spirituali* 1 (SC 445:74).

and is able to choose between doing good and doing evil.[166] The law of liberty, which replaces the law of death, enjoins the Christian to do good, not because it earns anything, but out of a thankful recognition of the love of God. This law of liberty are the commands given after baptism which are Christ's commands, the most comprehensive of which is loving God and neighbor.[167] Obedience to Christ's commands allows the hidden grace in the Christian to become more perceptible.[168] Mark contrasts mere knowledge and true knowledge in this context as related to the ability to put into practice Christ's commands. Πρᾶξις then becomes the avenue of knowledge as revealed through Christ's commandments.

We might ask further, what exactly is the ascetic to learn while following the commandments? This is made difficult since Mark tends to describe the effect of true knowledge rather than the content of knowledge itself. Mark gives us some clues, which can be ascertained in his distinction between true knowledge and mere knowledge. As was already pointed out the difference between these two is one of πρᾶξις, but what can be learned is found in various descriptions of true knowledge and his teaching with regard to afflictions. Mark cautions against expecting to know too much about God's judgments beyond acknowledging that God is worthy of faith, because only God knows how to fit everything together, and, regardless of circumstances, God is working.[169] Consequently, true knowledge teaches to have faith in God.[170] Additionally, true knowledge teaches a resignation towards circumstances, particularly when one faces affliction because of hope in God's activity.[171] Therefore, a sign of knowledge is perseverance and not accusing others over one's own misfortunes.[172] Endurance to these wrongs is "in proportion to their faith,"

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[166] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 56 (SC 445:146) and *De baptismo*, 17 (SC 445:386-396).

[167] Mark, *De baptismo,* 2 (SC 445:298-304), *Ex operibus justificari,* 211 (SC 445:196-200).

[168] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 85 (SC 445:156).

[169] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 59, 60 (SC 445:148).

[170] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 74 (SC 445:152).

[171] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 46 (SC 445:144).

[172] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 53 (SC 445:146).

(κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως).[173] This true knowledge, just like faith, is a gift of God as Mark states "Grace upon grace: True knowledge is given to human beings by God, above all it teaches those who partake of it to believe in the one who has given [it]."[174] Yet we are given more direction elsewhere. In the penultimate *capitula* of *Ex operibus justificari* (210) Mark states,

> Every word of Christ manifests (ἐμφαίνει) God's mercy, righteousness and wisdom and their power rushes into those who gladly listen through their hearing. For this reason the unmerciful and unjust, listening unwillingly to the wisdom of God, were not able to know [it] but even crucified him for speaking. Therefore let us see if we also listen willingly to him. For he said, "The one who loves me and keeps my commandments will also be loved by my Father and I will love him also, and I will manifest (ἐμφανίσω) myself to him." Do you see how he has hidden his self-manifestation (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐμφάνειαν) in his commandments?[175]

He continues by explaining that the most comprehensive of all the commandments is love of God and love of neighbor which is sustained through abstinence (ἀποχή) towards material things and the stilling (ἡσυχία) of one's thoughts. Thus, the Lord commands not to worry. Otherwise seriousness of sin might not be taken into consideration and cleansing cannot take place. If the place of pure nature (τὸν τόπον τῆς καθαρᾶς φύσεως) is not found then, the Christian will not see the "inner dwelling-place of Christ" which is the Christian himself. Mark enjoins his audience to seek out this dwelling place through prayer so that whether in this life or at death "the Master of the house might open the door to us and not say, as a result of [our] negligence, 'I do not know where you are from.'"[176] Mark's understanding of the ascetic life suggests that the commandments contain God's self-revelation, but obedience to them also

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[173] Mark, *De lege spirituali,* 44 (SC 445:86).

[174] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 74 (SC 445:152).

[175] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 210 (SC 445:196).

[176] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 211 (SC 445:198.23-24).

contains our self-revelation.[177] This revelation of God and self-revelation leads the Christian toward a perception and understanding of their status as dwellings of God. Thus, the function of self-revelation is to discover our true nature as dwellings of Christ. This is reminiscent of Evagrius and his dual emphasis on self-knowledge and knowledge of God.

This is confirmed at the end of *De baptismo* (*quaestio et responsio* 17) when Mark argues that whatever else ascetic struggles for obedience to Christ's commands produce, the ascetic finds nothing more or, at least, is able to find only that which he or she has already received through baptism; that is, Christ. As a prooftext Mark quotes the Letter to the Galatians 3.27 and states, "Christ being perfect God, gives the gift of the Spirit perfectly to those who have been baptized."[178] Mark is concerned to point out that within self-knowledge and obedience to Christ commands the ascetic finds Christ dwelling in him or her and that this grace is not of the ascetic's doing but rather "it is revealed (ἀποκαλυπτομένην) and manifested (ἐμφανίζουσαν) to us in proportion (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν) to the practice of the commandments, causing in us an advance of our faith."[179] Mark goes on to quote the Letter to the Ephesians 4.13 underscoring the "fullness of Christ" as the goal of this advancement. He emphasizes this again stating, ". . . this was already hidden in us, being by him and for him."[180] He then ends with what could be a citation from Romans 11.34-36, which emphasizes the inability of human beings to know the mind of God or give him gifts and therefore how all things are from him, through him and to him.[181]

In this discussion regarding the perceptibility of grace, Mark the Monk places less emphasis on the redirection of desire as seen in Diadochus and more often formulates his answer by stating that an assurance of grace is had in

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[177] Cf. for example *De lege spirituali* 28, 32, 30 (SC 445:82).

[178] Mark, *De baptismo,* 17 (SC 445:394.86-87).

[179] Mark, *De baptismo,* 17 (SC 445:394.88-396.89).

[180] Mark, *De baptismo,* 17 (SC 445:396.90-94).

[181] Mark, *De baptismo,* 17 (SC 445:396.94-98). Cf. Also, Isaiah 40.13.

proportion to the keeping of the commandments.[182] As we saw above this means a progressive manifestation of Christ in the life of the baptized. Likewise in Mark's writings, there is a concern to confront those who to want to perceive grace *before* being active in the commandments. Mark will have none of this kind of reasoning stating tersely in one place, "Some say: 'We are unable to do good unless we palpably receive the grace of the Spirit.' Yet, those addicted to the inclination of the pleasures, like people without help, are forever asking for this power."[183] To add to his cutting criticism Mark adds in the next *capitulum*, "Grace has been mystically given to those who have been baptized in Christ," yet it is "active in proportion to the practice of the commandments," (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἐργασίας τῶν ἐντολῶν).[184] Indeed, the Lord himself is "hidden in his own commandments and correspondingly (κατ' ἀναλογίαν) is found by those who seek after him."[185] Yet, despite a ceaseless and secret grace, ultimately, "it is for us to do good or not to do good according to [this] power."[186] Those who do not recognize the indwelling of Christ are "worthless".[187] This issue and several others witnessed to in Mark's *De baptismo* give us evidence of what was at stake in his quarrel with Messalian teaching. It was not simply a matter of discouragement as a result of the presence of sin after baptism or a question of whether baptism was effectual; there was also an issue of shifting responsibility for one's spiritual life to something or someone other than oneself.[188] Mark's writings in this regard and in his overall attempt to confront vainglory suggest; that, in addition to understanding the sources of and reasons for the presence of evil in the lives of the baptized, there is an equal

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[182] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari*, 85 (SC 445:156).

[183] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari*, 55 (SC 445:146).

[184] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari*, 55 (SC 445:146).

[185] Mark, *De lege spirituali,* 191 (SC 445:124). Cf. also *De lege spirituali*, 131 (SC 445:108).

[186] Mark, *Ex operibus justificari,* 56 (SC 445:146).

[187] Mark, *De lege spirituali*, 25 (SC 445:80).

[188] Amongst other things, Mark's argument highlights how his inoculators are attempting to argue that Adam's transgression allows them to remove some responsibility for their sins. Mark argues that the reason they sin is because they choose to and that the only thing inherited from Adam's sin is death, *De baptismo* 10-13 (SC 445:362-376).

concern to identify the sources of and reasons for good and to tread a path between these two poles in order to ensure the perfection of baptism and God's grace but equally to enjoin the baptized to take responsibility for their spiritual progress albeit under the auspices of grace. In regard to this latter issue, Mark and to some extent Diadochus both seek to highlight the working of God as initiating, helping within and responding to ascetic struggle. Thus, asceticism as a reciprocal set of responses between God and the baptized uncovers the reality of one's baptism or more specifically the indwelling presence of the God.[189]

Finally, I want to note several aspects of Mark's writings in relation to Evagrius. Mark, like Evagrius, does not take the time to articulate a positive place for desire or passion in his writings. Again, this does not necessarily mean that he does not conceive of its positive role only that, beyond highlighting the value of love, he does not focus on its redirection as much as he emphasizes the shedding of the passions, faith in affliction and obedience to the command of love or as he puts it the "law of liberty".[190] Even *De baptismo,* where he dedicates a large portion his discussion to the freedom of the will, the discussion is predominantly cast in terms of choice rather than desire. I might note also the internal orientation of Mark's conception of the ascetic life, which is much like that of Evagrius. The knowledge one seeks is ultimately a perceptible manifestation of Christ's indwelling.

§2.7 *Ascetic Literature in the Mid-Fifth & Sixth Century*

In this section, rather than look specifically at each ascetic in-depth, I want to note some broad similarities and differences in literary style and emphasis for several authors from the mid-fifth to sixth centuries. In the post-Chalcedonian era, there seems to be an observable trend in the literary approach of ascetic material. An early work, *Asceticon of Abba Isaiah,* while not a theological treatise does deal with theological topics within ascetic contexts particularly as it relates to Christ's reestablishing postlapsarian human nature

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[189] Mark, *Consultatio* 4 (SC 445:406-410).

[190] For example, Mark assumes a positive role in *De lege spiritali* 182 (SC 445:122) but does not articulate it with the same about of detail as Ps.-Dionysius or Diadochus.

to its prelapsarian state.[191] Important for the author is the Cross of Christ, a rubric under which to understand ascent as imitation.[192] The life of Christ then is funneled through the crucifixion.

However, as one traverses the period rather than the terse centuries seen in the previous authors reviewed or the material in the *Asceticon* there is a turn or perhaps return to styles that are dominated by dialogue within embedded narratives. These dialogues are reminiscent of those seen in earlier ascetic writing like the *Apophthegmata patrum* and the *Vita of Antony*. The contents of these narratives are often the acts of particular ascetics and how they serve as examples or whose miracles demonstrate the validity of a theology that is often unexplained but clearly assumed. Some examples of this come from the early to mid-fifth century in the *Epistulae* of Barsinuphius and John.[193] These letters do not contain much explicit theological argumentation, instead there is discussion about ascetics being troubled by heretical teaching and asking advice about what to do along with miracles that demonstrate the validity of the pro-Chalcedonian stance without necessarily delving into theological specifics. The Trinity is to be believed and worshipped but the incarnate Son rarely serves as an example to be imitated, nor is there a fully developed ascetic vision of ascent being proffered. Later, in the sixth century, the tales of John Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow* and hagiographies of Sophronius of Jerusalem (*Account of the Miracles of Saints Cyrus and John* and the *Life of John the Alsmgiver*), while serving as a kind of polemic against anti-Chalcedonians, do not by delve into theological specifics as much as illustrating a kind of superior *ethos*.[194]

Another contemporary of Maximus, John Climacus departs from this trend but only partially. Climacus embeds narratives amongst terse sayings rather than dialogue and resolves to use both the lives of exemplary ascetics

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[191] A similar theme is noted by Hainthaler in Dorotheus of Gaza in *CCT* 2/3, 109-110.

[192] *CCT* 2/3, 93-101. See also *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses,* transl. with intro. and notes by John Chryssavgis and Pachomias (Robert) Penkett, Cistercian Study Series 151 (Kalamazoo: Cisercian Publications, 2002), 23-28.

[193] *CCT* 2/3, 101-108.

[194] *CCT* 2/3, 121-122, but see also Philip Booth's *Crisis of Empire.*

and short centuries about theological and ascetic realities to shape his vision of ascent in *Scala paradisi*. There he states that "A Christian is an imitator of Christ in thought, word, and deed, as far as humanly possible, and he believes rightly and without blame in the Holy Trinity."[195] The *Scala* fleshes this statement out in several directions. Hainthaler draws attention to the centrality of "the metaphor of sporting competition" for ascetic life taken from Paul's letters and how Christ's "gentleness" or "meekness" (πραΰτης) serves as an example to be imitated. Yet there are only allusions to events and no extended description of Christ's life that demonstrate Christ's humility.[196] Likewise, John has only brief statements about what to believe "rightly and without blame" about the Trinity (Trinity in Unity and *vice-versa*) although evincing a concern to locate himself as a pro-Chalcedonian in a way that Maximus does not in the *Liber*.[197] Love is the goal of the ascetic life but this life is seen mainly through the lens of angelic imitation, itself an achievement in synthesizing previous traditions.[198] Despite differences and in light of similarities, John's work is much closer in literary style and concern to that of Maximus' *Liber* and *Capita caritate.*

§2.8 *Summary Observations of Ascetic Background*

Concerning the key areas I have reviewed, many of the authors have something important to say. Often ἀπάθεια is listed or assumed as an important intermediate goal toward union with God. Love, like ἀπάθεια and understood as either ἔρως or ἀγάπη, is also seen as an important goal. However, with the exception of a few instances in Evagrius and Diadochus, it is almost exclusively cast in terms of God's love for humanity through the incarnation and consequently the love we should have toward God; there is not an explicit and sustained discussion of love toward neighbor. According to Ps.-Dionysius, God's love is in fact what draws our love toward him. Knowledge of God is often

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[195] John, *Scala,* §1 (PG 88:633B). Translation take from *John Climacus: On the Ladder of Divine Ascent,* transl. by Colm Luibheid & Normal Russell (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1982), 74.

[196] *CCT* 2/3, 125-126.

[197] *CCT* 2/3, 126-127.

[198] On this see, Johnathan L. Zecher, "The Angelic Life in Desert and Ladder: John's Re-Formulation of Ascetic Spirituality," *JECS* 21.1 (2013), 111-136.

acknowledged as impossible on one level, usually the level of nature or οὐσία, but possible in terms of union. Both the intermediate goal of ἀπάθεια and redirecting of desire through love toward God bring the Christian into a loving knowing of the divine.

In Evagrius, the Son and the Spirit work together to reveal the Father and the mind to itself. In all of these authors the work of the Holy Spirit is recognized both in the inspiration of the Scriptures but also as bearer of grace and help for the Christian. The Spirit both indwells the baptized and helps them in their pursuit of ἀπάθεια and love. For Diadochus and Mark the activity of grace whether recognized or not is always at work. For Diadochus the presence of God is perceptible inasmuch as the baptized redirect their desire toward God in θεολογία, conceived as a spiritual conversation between the soul as bride and her beloved the Word. For Mark, the indwelling Christ is made manifest in proportion to obedience to his commandments to love God and neighbor.

In the midst of these concerns was scattered evidence of lingering Trinitarian questions. As evinced in Mark the Monk, this took form in the question, is it Christ or the Spirit who actually indwells the soul? This gave opportunity for Mark to explore how it can be said that the Trinity indwells the baptized as a result of the shared divine nature but also because each divine person can be described as "ἐν" one another. More broadly, though, it raised the issue of the relation between the threeness and oneness of God, which Ps.-Dionysius demonstrated in his concern to present the Christian life as a return to the simplicity of God. My investigation in fact seems to suggest that these three areas – how God is known, the perceptibility of God's presence, and the relation of God's oneness and threeness – were concerns that continued to crop up in ascetic literature. To this can be added the protracted debate between the miaphysite and Pro-Chalcedonian communities concerning Christology, which I will discuss more in the later chapters, and is not entirely unrelated.

§2.9 *Maximus in Light of the Authors Reviewed*

§2.9.1 *Love & Ἀπάθεια*

What exactly is Maximus' unique contribution? Maximus' distinctive presentation of the Christian life lies less in the concepts involved than in the

way he puts them together. Love, ἀπάθεια, knowledge of God and calls for imitation can all be found within the writers reviewed with various levels of emphasis. Maximus puts a high premium on the incarnate Son's earthly life in a way that is not found in these same writers. This narrative, an amalgam of the 381 CE symbol of faith and biblical texts, and the *sustained* reflection on the σκοπός of the Lord within the rubric of love as a source of imitation is in stark contrast to the authors reviewed. For Maximus, imitation means being like Jesus and other biblical examples in loving God by renouncing anything that might distract or take place of loyalty to him in order to devote oneself fully to him. For Evagrius, love and ἀπάθεια are linked with loving God, neighbor and enemy but there is little real estate used to flesh this out or to describe a redirection of desire in the same way as Diadochus or Ps.-Dionysius do. For Ps.-Macarius, as for Maximus, love is what drives the ascetic through all stages of ascent into prayer.[199] Maximus subsumes both the redirection of desire and ἀπάθεια under obedience to the commandments of love, drawing parallels with Mark the Monk's extolling of the two greatest commandments. Maximus' most distinctive feature then is his portrayal of the incarnation as God not only sending the Son as a result of φιλανθρωπία but also the incarnate Son's earthly activities as fulfilling his own command of love and it being served up as the primary *ethos* and *telos* for Christian life.

§2.9.2 *Knowledge of God*

Evagrius gives a significant role to self-reflection but whereas he focuses most of this activity on seeing the brilliance of one's own mind as the place of God, Maximus, in *Liber Asceticus*, views self-reflection as an opportunity to see one's self in light of God's mercy which in turn is meant to encourage solidarity with one's neighbor and solidarity with God's love toward humanity. Evagrius also views creation as a place where the wisdom of God can be perceived but not God's nature. The mind is the place where the union of essential knowledge (Christ or Trinity) and the mind takes place. Maximus also has a place for Evagrius' language within his wider corpus as will be seen in *Capita Caritate,*

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[199] Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 247.

but it in the *Liber* the focus is mainly on knowing God's love and the perceptibility of God's presence.

Maximus' portrayal of the knowledge of God can be seen primarily in his description of the σκοπός of the incarnation. There it is God's love and in particular God's love of humanity through the incarnate Son's life that is to be pursued. Yet this knowledge has a double-effect. It highlights God's disposition and action toward humanity but also spurs self-reflection. Maximus is more explicit than other writers that knowing the σκοπός of the incarnation not only reveals God as good and loving but also reveals the ascetic's own need of mercy, which consequently leads to sympathy and mercy toward others. Similarly, knowledge of God is viewed under the rubric of a perceptible manifestation of God's presence. This way of expressing knowledge of God finds more parallels in Ps.-Macarius, Diadochus and Mark the Monk than Evagrius although an argument could be made that seeing the brilliance of the mind is akin to a perceptible manifestation of God's presence.

In the *Liber,* Maximus lays out no explicit apophatic caveat for knowledge of God although his description of prayer as helping the mind become "naked" by withdrawing it from all other thing can be found in Evagrius. Surprisingly then, there is no appeal to the Areopagite or Gregory of Nazianzus although the language of desire as a means of describing ascent is already perceptible and highlighting the attributes of "good" and "love" in relation to God are also key concepts for the Areopagite.

§2.9.3 *Trinity in Christian Life*

The coupling of the activities of the Son and Spirit is also reminiscent of Evagrius. However, whereas Evagrius' major emphasis is found in a sustained apologetic for the divinity of the Son and Spirit based on their role of revealing the Father and the mind to itself, Maximus comes at this from the opposite direction. He demonstrates the divinity of Son and Spirit through titles and descriptors that communicate consubstantially and illustrates how the activities of the Son in the incarnation are common to how the Spirit acts towards Christians. Maximus does not mention where he might have picked up this way of talking about the Son and Spirit. This kind of portrayal is not displayed by

either Diadochus, Mark or Ps.-Dionysius but as I explored briefly in Chapter 1 there are examples of this kind of pairing in Cyril of Alexandria and echoes of it in Gregory Nazianzus. Ps.-Macarius demonstrates a concern to highlight the divinity of the Spirit and the ontological gulf between creation and creator but the Trinitarian dynamic is expressed mainly in the way in which the Son and Spirit indwell and are manifested in the ascetic life.

Ps.-Dionysius draws attention to the simultaneous value and caution that be observed when applying language such as "good" and "love" to God. Concerning the latter, Ps.-Dionysius is concerned with giving a defense of such language and how it can be used of God. Maximus also highlights God who is "good by nature" and whose φιλανθρωπία becomes an opportunity for self-reflection and solidarity. Similarly, there is a shared teleological and eschatological architecture between Maximus, Ps.-Dionysius and Mark the Monk all of whom see God as the beginning, middle and end of Christian life. The cosmic aspects of this will become more prominent in Maximus' later writings. Beyond these three points, Maximus' similarity with Ps.-Dionysius is less obvious in the *Liber* than with other authors. This will change significantly as Maximus continues in his writing career precisely in the area of cosmology.

Both Diadochus and Ps.-Dionysius give a significant place for language of love and desire. However, Maximus joining together of ἀπάθεια and its related concepts with ἀγάπη fits more closely with Diadochus. However, Maximus at this point does not include ἔρως in the *Liber* instead ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω is the primary word set used will others such as πόθος, σχολάζω and ἐπιθυμητικῶς, make a supplemental appearance [200] For Diadochus the reorientation of desire is related more to activity of the Spirit. Maximus sets love, as revealed in the Biblical narrative, as the primary rubric of God and Christian activity and develops it at greater depth in relation to Christ and biblical examples. Maximus, like Diadochus, is concerned to show the place of the Spirit; yet, Diadochus does not tie the Spirit's activities to those of the Son's incarnation in such an explicit way. While Maximus contains several sections in the *Liber* that show the

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[200] For πόθος see §25 (CCSG 40: 51.439.). For σχολάζω see §18, 19 (CCSG 40: 41.354; 41.356-7, 364) and for ἐπιθυμητικῶς see §7 (CCSG 40: 19.130).

activities and importance of the Spirit, Diadochus concentrates his efforts on tying the grace of Christian life whether hidden or apparent with the Holy Spirit. This feature in Diadochus is also a theme in Mark the Monk and Ps.-Macarius. Maximus does not tie grace and the Holy Spirit so closely together in the *Liber* even though he places grace or being graced as central to the Christian life. In the *Capita caritate,* Maximus will bring these ideas together. Diadochus, in an effort to focus the mind's activities and remember its experiences with God, focuses prayer on meditation on and the verbalization of Christ's name: "Lord Jesus".[201] Maximus refines this and gives more detailed content for reflection on God's past mercy by focusing the mind on the σκοπός of the incarnation, highlighting it as an object of memory, meditation, and imitation.

Ps.-Macarius, Diadochus and Mark find love as an important mark of Christian life. However, Maximus' explanation of how Christ fulfills the command of love as God and human and his intent that Christ's example ground the teleological goal of ascetic life exactly in love toward the Father and love toward neighbor is unique. In terms of conceiving of Christian life as baptism and then the giving of the commandments, the sum of which are the commandments to love God and neighbor, Mark and Maximus show remarkably similar concerns. Yet, again, it is Maximus' ability to envision a thoroughly Trinitarian texture of Christian life, through his description of the activities of the divine persons within his extended portrayal of the incarnation of the Son as fulfilling the command of love that stands out within the ascetic literature reviewed. For Maximus, the beginning of the Christian life is found in faith in the Trinity and baptism in the name of the Trinity. God is means by virtue of the

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[201] Diadochus, *Capita centum,* §30, 31, 59, 61 (BBTT 8:40, 42, 72, 74, 76, 78) On this aspect of Diadochus teaching see Rutherford, BBTT 8, 5; Ermatinger, 30-35 and Kallistos Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Diadochus of Photice," *Thyateira: A* Festschrift *for Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain,* ed. George Dragas (London: Thyateira House, 1985), 557-568. Ware offers a broader tradition in which the Jesus prayer had developed variously into 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me' or "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." In light of these variations, Maximus' emphasis on being attentive to the σκοπός of the incarnation (i.e. the love and mercy of God as exemplified in the Son's incarnation) and his emphasis on prayer as a means of focusing the mind on a dual solidarity with humanity and God suggests Maximus may be drawing on several of these traditions. However, as Ware notes, the dating of some of these variations is hard to secure and consequently it is difficult to see how Maximus fits into a narrative of their development, "Jesus Prayer", 561-62.

Spirit's appropriation of the Son's activities to the life of the baptized. God is goal in that love of God is cast in terms of a full and undistracted devotion culminating in prayer while imitation of the Son's love in the incarnation with the help of the Son and the Spirit becomes an example of how love of God and neighbor must be lived out despite the circumstances of life. When mature, this life manifests Christ and the fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion

In the *Liber asceticus,* Maximus lays out his understanding of the ascetic and Christian life. In his portrayal, the Spirit and the Son play an important role in shaping this life into one that wholly displays love of God, neighbor and enemy. Yet parallels in the areas of love, ἀπάθεια, knowledge of God, divine activity and literary usage with the lengthy list of personalities that fill his era require a close investigation in order to locate exactly where his distinctive contribution lies and how he could have said anything distinctive even if he wanted to. In the end, it is Maximus ability to synthesize these various aspects into a sustained reflection on the incarnation of the Son that demonstrates his distinct contribution. When looking at Maximus immediate context, there was an attempt during the mid-fifth to sixth centuries to experiment with literary styles in order to find a way of broaching the topics of theology, politics and ascetic practice without engaging in full-scale theological or political argumentation. Narratives are used to demonstrate the validity of a theological position without directly confronting theological specifics. However, John Climacus and Maximus attempt to synthesize ascetic practice and theology in such a way that to deny one aborts the other. As Sherwood stated long ago, Maximus' "originality and strength" in confronting Origenism was his ability not just to deny their theological position but envision another reality.[202] This strategy offered a surrogate theology and spirituality that disallowed or inoculated against positions he deemed problematic. For Maximus, this would not be a surrogate but a truer vision attained through the process of ascent and graced by the Trinity. In light of these literary developments, Maximus' originality, while still distinctive, can nevertheless be located as a product of

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[202] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, 91.

that period's experimentation – a literary environment that intentionally sought to find ways of engaging theology, politics and ascetic practice outside of direct argumentation choosing instead illustration and appeals to a superior, often supernatural, *ethos*. Consequently, Maximus' distinct contribution in the area of literary usage is not found in partaking of this period's experimentation. Rather, it is found in the focus of his dialogue on the narrative of salvation history, specifically on the life of the incarnate Son along with biblical characters to demonstrate a superior *ethos* (love) rather than angels, other ascetics or even just the crucifixion.

An investigation into Maximus' long context, rather than dull his distinctiveness, allows its details to be even more striking even though it uncovers shared concerns around the areas of love, ἀπάθεια, knowledge of God and divine activity. He chooses dialogue and uses the narrative of salvation history, specifically the Son's incarnate life as an example to be imitated. He focuses on love of God, neighbor, and enemy inextricably linking them. The theme of love, by itself, is not without ascetic precedent. However, its *sustained* illustration through Christ's love of God in the desert, love of neighbor in society and love of enemy at the Cross and his stress on how reflection on this narrative should produce solidarity with other human beings and God is unmatched. The appeal to *ethos* is demonstrated in the σκοπός of the incarnate Son and his Apostles whose power comes from weakness and, for the baptized, through the presence of the Triune God. He avoids controversial language instead focusing on what, by then, would have been standard Trinitarian descriptions of consubstantiality and attempts to correlate the activities of the divine persons in the life of the baptized in order to illustrate the divine φιλανθρωπία and the Trinity as their beginning, means and end.

CHAPTER 3

Building on the Baseline:

Maximus, Θεωρία & Seeing Things Clearly

In the prologue to the *Capita caritate,* there is what has been considered clear evidence of the work's close relationship with the *Liber* and thus an early dating. The early dating was universally accepted by earlier scholars, although there have been several proposals about how early.[1] In this chapter, I will investigate the *Capita caritate* and draw attention to how Maximus further builds on his Trinitarian grammar for Christian life and introduces some new vocabulary and grammar. This new vocabulary and grammar involves a more robust view of ascent, especially contemplation (θεωρία), and an engagement with Origenist and Tritheist theologies. In the last two chapters, I reviewed Maximus' *Liber asceticus* and his ascetic context in order to show areas of shared concern and detail his distinctive contributions. I showed how Maximus' grammar for Christian life illustrated the Trinity as beginning, means, and end. This was exhibited in his discussion of baptism, a particular articulation of divine appropriation, a Trinitarian presentation of the incarnate life of the Son as an example of love and prayer with Trinitarian language. His articulation of divine appropriation was observed in the activities of the Son and the Spirit at the beginning of the *Liber* and the life of incarnate Son as an example to be meditated on and emulated. On this last point, I showed how his articulation of the Son as an example of love was unique not only in relation to Evagrius but distinctive in relation to many earlier ascetic writers. Maximus' description of the σκοπόςof the incarnation and its relevance to Christian life is already richly Trinitarian.

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[1] Maximus, *Cap. car.* (*Cap. sulla car.,* 48): ". . . πρὸς τῷ περὶ ἀσκητικοῦ βίου λόγῳ καὶ τὸν περὶ ἀγάπης λόγον πέπομφα τῇ σῇ ὁσιότητι, πάτερ Ἐλπίδιε . . ." As Sherwood notes in his *Annotated Date-List*, 26, Joseph Pegon suggested sometime between 618-25 CE (SC 9:24). Sherwood follows von Balthasar in dating the work by 626 and bases his decision on Maximus' complaints about the lack of books the Confessor would have needed in order to write his compilation, an observation Pegon himself makes. Aldo Ceresa-Gestaldo did not offer any new date in his critical edition *Massimo Confessore, Capitoli sulla carità*, Verba seniorum 3 (Rome: Editrice Studium, 1963) which I use throughout the chapter.

There are certain challenges to investigating the *Capita* since Maximus engages two major issues that require some explanation and background: 1) Origenism, and 2) Tritheism. I have chosen to deal with their background within each section rather than dedicate a separate chapter to their investigation. The chapter is broken down into two major sections. The first section (3.1) is an overview of the *Capita caritate,* which provides a much-needed context for discussing smaller passages. The second section (3.2) and its subdivisions treat areas of development, refinement of and connection between the several ways Maximus expressed his Trinitarian grammar for Christian Life in the *Liber.* Section 3.2.1 shows a refinement of Maximus' conception of imitation as a goal of Christian life in the *Liber.* Section 3.2.2 demonstrates how Maximus expands the activities of the mind by discussing θεωρία and locates the Trinity explicitly as its goal. In section 3.2.3, I show how Maximus draws together how the Spirit appropriates the activities of the Son and correlates the indwelling of the Spirit with the indwelling of Christ to manifest the presence of God. Finally, new areas of engagement are brought out in section 3.3: his engagement with Origenism (3.3.1) and Tritheism (3.3.2) which build up and refine his grammar as Trinity as beginning, means and end. In the following paragraphs, I will delineate what can be expected in the *capitula* that I cover before I delve in to a closer analysis of each text and its background.

There are several places in the *Capita* where Maximus fills in and connects the two major themes already found in *Liber asceticus. Capitulum* 1.25 will serve as my starting point and explores how Maximus further develops the concept of imitation as the means of learning how to love. This concept, already found in the *Liber*, illustrated how the Trinity was means and end and is found throughout the *Capita.* The primary example for imitation being God and Christ while secondary examples are the saints and angels. *Capita* 1.86-100 will give an example of Maximus' more dense account of ascent touching on what he sees as possible to know about God and how Maximus sees the Trinity as the goal of ascent. Finally, in 4.69-73, I will give an example of how these areas are drawn together within his understanding of divine appropriation and connects the concept of God as means and the perceptibility of God's presence.

After reviewing areas where Maximus further develops concepts from the *Liber,* I will investigate two places where he develops a new sub-theme and consequently a supplemental vocabulary and grammar. The first instance where Maximus provides a supplemental vocabulary and grammar is in order to clarify the relationship between God and creation in contrast to Origenist cosmology in 3.21-36 and 4.1-15. The second instance demonstrates reflection around the oneness and threeness of God and its relation to γνῶσις and πρᾶξις in 2.24-36. As I noted in the previous chapter, both of these issues did not register in the *Liber.*

In his dealings with Origenist thought, Maximus explains the genesis, movement and *telos* of creation, especially human beings. Maximus' understanding of God as Creator and the consequences of this reality affect the way he conceives of ascent.

This is especially the case in regard to knowledge of God and what it means to be one with God. In the *Liber*, Maximus described union with God as "the mind joining with God through the grace of prayer" (ἡ δὲ χάρις τῆς προσευχῆς τῷ Θεῷ συνάπτει τὸν νοῦν) and complemented this with the language of desire, in one place explicitly basing this on the issue of will. Any deeper reflection on how to describe this union was absent. Maximus, drawing on the irreducible distinction between Creator and created, will assert that God's nature is unknowable. The epistemological consequences that follow mean that, while union with God is a possible and desired goal, human knowledge of God is simultaneously chastened and experiences awe and deification.[2] This "awe" is variously described by Maximus later as "eternally moving repose" or "immoveable eternal movement," and is prompted by his understanding of God as "boundless" (ἡ ἀπειρία).[3] In *Capita caritate*, Maximus describes God using this term but does not describe the soul's eternal fixed movement or satiety in God.[4] Despite Maximus' engagement with Origenist

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[2] Maximus, *Cap. car.,* 1.100, 2.6, 3. 97, 4:1-2 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 88, 92, 190, 194).

[3] Maximus, *Myst.* §19 (CCSG 69: 47.745-751).

[4] For more on this aspect of Maximus' thought see Paul C. Plass, "'Moving Rest' in Maximus the Confessor," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 35 (1984), 177-190, Paul M. Blowers, "Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Concept of 'Perpetual Progress'," *VC* 46.2 (June 1992),

thought in the *Capita,* there are several features that are absent when one compares it with the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*. These include his arguments against the Origenist conception of satiety, its subsidiary discussion of movement, a detailed explanation of the *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine, and the λόγος/τρόπος distinction. Instead, Maximus focuses specifically on the core issue of the irreducible difference between Creator and creation and what this means for knowledge of God and for some aspects of participation in God. Ultimately, this further shapes the theme that the Trinity is beginning, means, and end by providing a metaphysical language to clarify how this is the case.

There are two chief places where Maximus comments on the differences between creation and God and the consequences of this difference: in 3.21-36 and in 4.1-15. These will provide an opportunity to explore this new sub-theme and its supplemental vocabulary and grammar. Thunberg, in his analysis of Maximus' cosmology in *Microcosm and Mediator*, listed eight aspects from 4.1-14, but rather than discussing them within the context of the *Capita* or the Confessor's early writings, he used them as jumping points for exploring these aspects throughout Maximus' other writing in an effort to present an overall synthesis.[5] *Capita caritate* 3.21-36 did not receive the same treatment, and so much of my discussion will focus on those *capitula* while 4.1-15 will be utilized to complement my discussion.

Maximus explains this distinction first in relation to knowledge/knowing (γνῶσις/γιγνώσκω) and then participation (μετοχή) using a set of terms that Sherwood highlighted in his study on the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*: οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια.[6] Notably, Sherwood did not reference the *Capita caritate* when describing Maximus' refutation of Origenism nor when reviewing earlier instances of the triad of terms listed above, focusing instead on *Amb.* 7, 15, *Capita gnostica* and other later writings. This sub-theme – the irreducible distinction between God and creation – is of central significance to Maximus in this work. It is not significant simply because scholars have judged that it

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151-171 and Blowers, "The Dialectics and Therapeutics of Desire in Maximus the Confessor," *VC* 65 (2011), 425-452.

[5] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator,* 49-50.

[6] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua,* 103-123.

underlies Maximus' theology as an implicit assumption, but because Maximus himself makes a conscious and overt effort to highlight this distinction and explain its consequences – consequences that affect his view of Christian life and ultimately the Trinity.

A second area of new vocabulary and grammar that shows itself briefly is reflection on the oneness and threeness of God or more specifically union and distinction. *Capitula* 2.24-36 give the first example of Maximus discussing the relations of union and distinction in the Trinity and how θεολόγια is related to his view of humanity. This demonstrates how Maximus' view of the constitution of the Trinity affects his view of theological anthropology drawing together both love of God and neighbor and thus shaping the goal of Christian life. Noticeably absent is the λόγος/τρόπος distinction and, like the *Liber*, any detailed Christological language that might be considered controversial. This leads me to my final chapter where I deal briefly with *Ep.* 2, areas in *Quaestiones et dubia* in order to focus most of the remaining chapter on the context and review of *Opusculum* 17 which thereby rounds out my investigation of Maximus' Trinitarian thought in his early works.

§3.1 *Overview of Capita Caritate*

In the prologue to *Capita caritate,* Maximus clearly links his four centuries on love to the *Liber asceticus* and while the main themes of *Liber* are given further treatment, he also gives more detail to his view of ascent. It will be helpful to have an understanding of how the *Capita caritate* is structured thematically. The *Capita caritate* contains four centuries. The first two centuries begin with very focused definitions. The first century begins with a definition of love and spends the remaining *capitula* fleshing out various aspects of it: its source, examples, the things that prevent it, and the things that encourage it. The second century begins with a definition of prayer and spends the remaining *capitula* addressing kinds of prayer, the conditions for prayer, and the struggles of prayer. The third century begins with statements about the "rational use of things and thoughts" and goes on to distinguish between kinds of knowledge and knowing (how God, the angels and human beings know), kinds of thought (impassioned/compounded, simple), various levels of love and various kinds of

motivations for love. Finally, the fourth century begins with the awe experienced during contemplation of the divine and goes on to explain how to maintain perfect love, a true sense of the nature of things, and above all union with God.

The introductory *capitula* of each century, as I have described them above, suggest that each century may actually be the progressive movements Maximus expects the baptized to travel through during their ascent toward God. These movements fall along the lines of the virtues of love, self-mastery and prayer as discussed in the *Liber.* For example, the first century corresponds to the virtue of love while prayer is discussed in the second century. However, in the second century, Maximus suggests that there are two "uttermost states" of prayer.[7] One type of prayer occurs with practical things (τοῖς πρακτικοῖς) and springs from fear of and hope in God. The second type of prayer occurs with contemplative things (τοῖς θεωρητικοῖς) and springs from an intense longing for God and total purification. Clearly, the first type was illustrated in the *Liber.* According to this scheme, if the *Capita* are following a progression then prayer should appear twice and in fact, after the third century, which evinces a concern for self-control, the description of awe that begins the century echoes some of the same features as the second state of prayer Maximus described in 2.6.

If this assessment is correct then Maximus' *Capita caritate* are meant to guide the reader through spiritual ascent and reveals how Maximus can use concepts like love, self-control and prayer on more than one level describing them not only as states or virtues but also processes drawn together until the ultimate effect of genuine love and union with God is possessed. Yet despite the fact that each of the centuries focus on the concept or virtues that introduce it, the subsequent *capitula* often cover similar issues dealt with in other centuries, particularly when it comes to the passions and the struggles of the ascetic life, albeit from the perspective of the introductory theme. In using the virtues this way, we come face-to-face with an example of Maximus' fractal treatment of ascent mentioned in the introduction. I now turn to a treatment of the various

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[7] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.6 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 92).

sections of *Capita caritate,* but having this framework in mind will help locate the thrust of Maximus' concerns.

§3.2 *Maximus Building, Refining & Connecting – Trinity as Beginning, Means, and End & Divine Appropriation*

§3.2.1 Capitulum *1.25: God's Example as Goal of Imitation & Imitation as Possession of God Himself*

In this section, I will show how Maximus builds on his baseline of Trinitarian grammar for Christian life as it relates to imitation. In the *Capita caritate,* Maximus builds on this baseline's rationale for love by applying the term ἀπαθὴς to God and finally by identifying God as love per 1 John 4.8. This new application of terms is paired with an appeal to the common nature of humanity and by describing the quality of the love called for.

In *Liber asceticus,* Maximus drew attention to the example of the Son, who becomes a man because of God's love for humanity. God fulfills his own command of love in the life and death of Jesus Christ. This kind of love which suffered abuse and affliction but maintained love towards enemies through prayer and even in the act of rebuke is seen as the primary battleground of the Christian life. In order to win this war, one must continue to love like Christ despite one's circumstances. This was accomplished by understanding the σκοπός of the incarnation which focused on God's mercy toward one's self and encouraged the baptized to have the same response toward fellow human beings. In other words, one must possess a solidarity with humanity according to common weakness and temptation as well as a solidarity with God in showing sympathy and mercy. As might be expected, Maximus continues the themes he began in the *Liber* in the *Capita caritate*. However, he now adds another set of ideas that supplement his rationale for love. In *Capita caritate*, Maximus still grounds the necessity of love on the common experience of weakness, but he draws attention to humanity's common nature along with imitation of God's nature as good *and* impassible (ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς). This is slightly different than his rationale in the *Liber* where there is no mention of humanity's common nature nor a focus on God as ἀπαθὴς. Whereas there was an appeal to common activities of humanity in temptation and weakness joined

with the imitation of Son's nature, as good and expressed through his loving activities, there is now added an appeal to humanity's common nature.

In the *Capita,* these ideas first cross our path in 1.24 where Maximus discusses almsgiving. If someone wants to imitate God when giving alms for bodily needs, then there should be no discrimination on the basis of someone's moral status but distribute "to all equally according to their need". This should be the case even though one might prefer those who make good choices.[8] Maximus bases this call for imitation on God's own merciful doings, a similar sentiment found in the *Liber,* although noticeably here there is a more general appeal to God rather than specifically the incarnate Son*.* In the following *capitulum,* Maximus underscores God as good *and* without passion along with an appeal to the common nature of humanity. The implication is that God's impartial love flows not only from his goodness but also from his status as ἀπαθής. He states,

> Just as God, being by nature good and without passion, loves all equally as his works but glorifies the virtuous inasmuch as they are also familiar with his will and, because of his goodness, shows mercy on the bad and corrects them with discipline in this world. So also the one who is good by his will and without passion loves all human beings equally, the virtuous because of their nature and good choices and the bad because of their nature and sympathy, showing mercy [on them] as though they were passing by without sense and in darkness.[9]

This succinct set of statements draws together several strands that are important throughout *Capita caritate.* The first strand is the distinction between God's nature as ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς and human beings becoming ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς by an exertion of their will or intention (ἡ γνώμη). God's will falls in line

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[8] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.24 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 56).

[9] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.25 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 58): Ὥσπερ ὁ Θεὸς φύσει ὢν ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς πάντας μὲν ἐξ ἴσου ἀγαπᾷ ὡς ἔργα αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν ἐνάτερον δοξάζει, ὡς καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ οἰκειούμενον, τὸν δὲ φαῦλον δι' ἀγαθότητα ἐλεεῖ καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ παιδεύων ἐπιστρέφει· οὕτω καὶ ὁ τῇ γνώμῃ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐξ ἴσου ἀγαπᾷ, τὸν μὲν ἐνάρετον διά τε τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν ἀγαθὴν προαίρεσιν, τὸν δὲ φαῦλον διά τε τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν συμπάθειαν, ἐλεῶν ὡς ἄφρονα καὶ ἐν σκότει διαπορευόμενον.

with his nature. What is seen in God's nature and will is meant to be reflected in the human will with the same result – equal love for all. For the virtuous receive glory and the bad receive correction. In this conception, correction and discipline are not antithetical to God's love but its very expression. When the human will falls in line with God's will, the Christian is ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀπαθὴς. Maximus will expand more on how he understands this in *Cap. Car.* 3.21-36. In the *Liber,* imitation was based on God as good and merciful but in the *Capita caritate* the concept ἀπαθὴς is added and easily becomes an example for human ἀπάθεια in ascent. This connection remains implicit in the *Liber* but now becomes explicit. It should also be noted that God's love and the concept of ἀπαθὴς are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the way the passage is written highlights that the reason God is able to love so thoroughly and equally is because he is good *and* without passion. If we supplement this statement with the concepts found in the *Liber*, it could be stated that God does not have a selfish or needy lust for material possessions nor is he obsessed with worldly concerns and therefore is able to love impartially.

The second strand is the shared nature of humanity, which provides an additional rationale for love. Whereas in the *Liber* this was based on a recognition of the shared experience of temptation and weakness in tandem with God's activities and nature displayed in the incarnation, Maximus adds an additional focus on the common nature of humanity in contrast to the disposition of their will or choices.

The third strand is the concise way Maximus describes the kind of love God desires: it must be love for all equally (πάντα ἐξ ἴσου). Often in the *Capita,* πάντα is accompanied by ἄνθρωπος to make this point even clearer. Perfect love is constantly found in the context of loving all human beings equally.[10] This love must be proactive, positive, equally distributed, and consistent.[11] Maximus uses this formulation no less than ten times in six *capitula* in the first century and twice more in two *capitula* in the second century.[12]

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[10] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.61 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 72); 1.71 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 76); 2.48, 49 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 116). For instances where this is not the case cf. *Cap. car.* 1.75 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 78).

[11] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.40; 2.49, 50 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 62, 116, 118).

[12] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.17, 24, 25, 61, 71; 2.10, 30 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 56, 58, 72 76, 94, 106).

This further distinguishes Maximus from Evagrius, who viewed loving all equally as a practical impossibility.[13] This way of defining the kind of love God desires and its grounding in a shared nature finds no parallel in Diadochus or Mark. Something like what Maximus does here can be found in Evagrius who grounded the necessity of love on humanity's status as the image of God. The logic goes that because the archetypical image (Christ) is loved, so then should those in his image also be loved. In the *Capita,* Maximus never articulates the matter in this fashion but the logic behind it bears a loose similarity. The force of the logic in Evagrius' statement falls on the archetype and image of the archetype relationship, but an important assumption is that all humanity bears equally the image of the archetype. Maximus will expand on these ideas further, tying them again to the first strand but in a slightly different way in 2.24-36. Suffice it to say, Maximus has built on his conception of love and his way of grounding love in a shared solidarity with God and fellow human beings.

At this point it is worth exploring whether, in addition to the new ways of talking about the kind of love that is imitated and its grounding in the realities of human and divine nature, Maximus continues to call for a love that imitates the Son's incarnate activities of love for neighbor just as he did in the *Liber.* Is it simply "God" or does he name the divine persons. In fact, Maximus does use the titles "Son" or "Christ", especially when abuse, suffering, and affliction are in view and often in calls for an equal love for all.. There are several places, however, where Maximus uses simply "to imitate", "imitation" or "God-imitation" (μιμέομαι, μίμησις or θεομίμητος) without explicitly using the πάντα ἐξ ἴσου formulation.[14] A good example of this is found in 4.55 where Maximus states,

> The one who loves Christ surely imitates him as far as it lies in his power. For example, Christ never ceased from doing good to human beings and, having been treated with ingratitude and blasphemed, he was patient and, having been struck by them and murdered, he endured reckoning

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[13] Sherwood notes this in his introduction to his translation. It should be noted though that Maximus does make a concession towards Evagrius in *Cap. car.* 4.82 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 230).

[14] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.55, 90; 3.33 (in reference to angels) (*Cap. sulla car.,* 216, 234, 158).

evil to no one whatsoever. These three things are the work of love towards our neighbor, apart from which the one who says he loves Christ and has gained his kingdom deceives himself. "The one who says to me," he states "Lord, Lord, will not enter into the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father." And again he says, "The one who loves me will keep my commandments," and so on.[15]

It is not enough for the ascetic to refrain from evil for the sake of the commandment. They must also do good, even as repayment for evil. There is a similar way of discussing love and commandments here that mirrors Mark's concern. Maximus bases imitation on Christ's example hinting that the domain of imitation is on the level of will with the statement "as far as it lies in his power" and appeals neither to humanity's shared nature nor God's nature as ἀπαθὴς or ἀγαθὸς as he does in the texts reviewed above (1.25 and 4.55). It would seem that when suffering is in view so also is the incarnate Son even though the title "Son" is rarely used often making way for the title "Christ". Maximus can also use simply the title "God" along with suffering. In 4.90, Maximus states,

> God alone is good by nature and the one who imitates God is alone good by will. For [his] aim (σκοπός) is to join the wicked to himself, who is by nature good, so that they might become good. For this reason, though being reviled by them, he blesses, though being persecuted, he endures, though blasphemed, he entreats, [and] though murdered he makes intercession. He does everything in order that he might not fall from the aim (τοῦ σκοποῦ) of love, which is our God himself.[16]

In this case, Maximus draws together the idea of imitation with "God" but then gives the list of things suffered that often accompanies the title "Christ" or "Son". Additionally, while the will is underscored as the domain of imitation it is also his joining (συνάψαι) with the wicked that allows them to become good and serves the reason why he, presumably the incarnate Son, endured suffering

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[15] *Cap. car.* 4.55 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 216).

[16] *Cap. car.* 4.90 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 234).

so that he would not fall from the σκοπός of love, which is God himself. In this formulation, a common activity of God and Christ is love but the term itself is identified with God. In the context of the *Liber* and in light of these other texts, love is a common and inseparable activity, at least between the Son and "God" but also a defining characteristic of God. Whereas, in the *Liber,* Maximus does not equate love with God as in 4.8, Maximus now makes this link explicit in the quote above and elsewhere (1.38 and 4.100).

An important aspect of imitation is that the will's own σκοπός be directed toward love of God rather than some other purpose. Thus, activity and suffering in and of themselves do not garner God or his kingdom, but rather only when activity is done, and suffering endured because of Christ and according to his example.[17] Maximus demonstrates in these passages how pursuing imitation of God fulfills not only the teleological goal of loving one's neighbor but also brings the ascetic to the ultimate goal of love of God. This means "possessing" God himself (4.100 cf. 1.38). In this way, love can be seen as both a means and a goal. Maximus refines this further by identifying the final goal of love with God himself incorporating 1 John 4.8.

Maximus' integration of an argument based on the nature of God as ἀπαθὴς and the shared nature of humanity to support his call for a specific kind of love within the rubric of imitation allows love to be understood as both a means and goal. This is a unique aspect of Maximus' thought, especially when compared with the writings of Evagrius, Diadochus, Mark or Ps.-Dionysius. Diadochus seems to be his closest parallel, drawing a distinction between what God is by nature and what humanity can become via attention to God.[18] In one passage in *Capita centum* (15)*,* Diadochus, touches on both love of neighbor and love of God but despite the profuse use of affective language, love is almost

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[17] Maximus makes this point in the third century (3.47, 48). There are three examples where cognate words for imitation are not used but imitation is communicated using the phrase κατὰ Χριστὸν in 1.37, 3.47, 4.30 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 62, 164, 206). Finally, there is the concept of likeness (*homoiōsis*) to God, but I will discuss this more in the section on 3.21-36 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 152-160).

[18] Diadochus, *Capita centum* 2, 3 (BBTT 8:14) Diadochus gives a definition of love "an increase of affection toward those who are insulting". The closest he comes to Maximus in his conception the imitation of Christ can be seen in 51, 64, 91 (BBTT 8:64, 82-83, 134).

entirely framed in reference to God with none of the same kind of parity

Maximus attempts to bring concerning active love toward neighbor.

Additionally, there is no grounding for love in the shared nature of humanity.

These could simply be because these authors assume as much and do not see

the sense in stating it, but that Maximus is emphatic on this point only allows his

thought to stand out more in comparison to writers in his own milieu. There is

some evidence for a similar configuration of ἀπάθεια, love and imitation in

Clement of Alexandria.[19] Specifically, on the theme of love, there is also much

paralleled in Maximus' concern for love in Origen's prologue to *Commentaria in

canticum canticorum* where the imitation of Christ plays a significant role in his

thought. Even, in this case, Maximus differs by giving a central place to the

pairing of love and ἀπάθεια, the latter of which is not a significant theme in

Origen.[20] Finally, the *Liber* demonstrated the divine love through the activities

of the divine persons, especially through the incarnate Son. The *Capita* takes this

further, and both demonstrates these same activities and explicitly identifies

God as love. Thus, the Trinity is the beginning, means, and end of Christian life

because God is love.

§3.2.2 Capitula *1.86-100: Trinity as Goal of Ascent*

I have already shown how the imitation of God leads to the possession of

God through Maximus' unique way of describing love as both means and goal.

This imitation deals specifically with one's relationship to neighbor in the

context of love for God. Maximus also relates the concern for love of God and

love of neighbor to aspects of the human person as part of his overall goal of

union with the Trinity. In this section, I will show how the Trinity can be seen as

a goal of contemplation and prayer, but to do so requires some understanding of

Maximus' view of ascent within the *Capita caritate.* An important corollary to

the Trinity as the goal of ascent is also what Maximus perceives is attainable

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[19] Thunberg, in his short study on the matter of ἀπάθεια, also found early examples of
this same theme in Clement of Alexandria. Maximus distinctive take on this may be unique
within his own milieu but could very well be the result of going back to earlier sources, see
Microcosm and Mediator, 299-309.

[20] Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de dieu chez Origène,* Theologie 34 (Aubier:
Éditions Montaigne, 1956), 222-232.

knowledge of God. Consequently, in tandem with a brief overview of how he locates each of the parts of the human person to his conception of ascent, I will also look closely at how Maximus describes knowledge of God through θεωρία and prayer. A closer look at these concepts in *capitula* 1.86-100, will allow me to show further how Maximus' grammar for Christian life is shaped by the Trinity and thus Trinitarian.

In his tripartite understanding of the human person, hinted at already in *Liber asceticus,* Maximus envisions that love of God corresponds to the ἐπιθυμητικόν part of the soul while love of neighbor corresponds to the θυμικόν part of the soul.[21] These in turn correspond to the virtues of love (ἀγάπη) and self-mastery (ἐγκράτεια). When these are united by the λογιστικόν toward the virtue of prayer, they come to ἀπάθεια where lust (ἐπιθυμία) abounds and changes into divine desire (θεῖος ἔρως) and anger (θυμὸς) is refined into divine love (θεῖα ἀγάπη).[22] When this becomes a habit (ἕξις), the baptized have reached perfect love.[23] Such heights, however, are precarious so Maximus will often give advice on how to maintain this habit and warns against vainglory.[24]

Much of the first century continues to detail how to develop ἀπάθεια, love for God and, by consequence, love for one's neighbor. However, toward the end of the century (1.85-100) Maximus ventures into a denser account of his idea of ascent. Sherwood notes how the last 15 *capitula* (1.85-100) are meant to form a series that deals specifically with the pure mind.[25] While Sherwood does

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[21] On this this tripartite distinction see Blowers, "Gentiles of the Soul: Maximus the Confessor on the Substructure and Transformation of the Human Passions," *JECS* 4.1 (1996), 73-75 and Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 104-112, 169-207 and 259-266. Maximus also gives a bipartite distinction τὸ λογιστικόν/τὸ παθητικόν the latter of which includes τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν and τὸ θυμικόν. In *Liber asceticus,* Maximus does not describe these as part of the ψυχή and only the first two appear while *nous* is used rather than λογιστικόν. He simply lists θύμος, ἐπιθυμία, νοῦς as those things that the virtues tame, quench and separate (ἡμερόω, μαραίνω, χωρίζω) to support the mind's journey toward God (*Lib. asc.* §19, CCSG 40:41.355-364).

[22] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §19-26 (CCSG 40:41.355-53.466); *Cap. car.* 2.48 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 116).

[23] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §19-26 (CCSG 40:41.355-53.466); cf. *Cap. car.* 1.1, 4.75, 4.91 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 50, 226-228, 234).

[24] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 3.84, 4.79-80 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 184, 230).

[25] Sherwood suggests the larger pericope is 1.85-100 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 82-88), see *St. Maximus*, 252 n. 79.

not provide a reason other than the recurring theme of pure mind, I agree that these last *capitula* form a progression that details the mind's successive journey toward God. This is in part because of the repeated presentations of ascent, the first of which occurs in 1.85 and appears as simply a bipartite possession of ἀπάθεια and flight to the "knowledge of the heavenlies".[26] Then in 1.86, there is a tripartite presentation and finally in 1.94 and 1.97 there is a four-part presentation. Each gives more detail and looks at ascent from a slightly different angle, but all the presentations are related to the mind.

The first presentation in 1.85 highlights the importance of ἀπάθεια for the mind. The second arrangement in 1.86 highlights the importance of continuing toward contemplation and knowledge. In 1.94, Maximus describes the successive activities necessary to arrive at a knowledge of the Trinity and the fourth describes specifically the pure mind and what it dwells on. The intervening *capitula* fill out these presentations. These terse bipartite and tripartite presentations are repeated throughout the *Capita.* Several of the explicit references to the "Holy Trinity" (ἀγίας τριάς) are found in these presentations of ascent and are always found at the end of the progression.[27] These provide a continual reminder of the goal of the ascent and how various kinds of activities fit within it. While imitation of the incarnate Son was called for and an orientation toward the Trinity was illustrated in the *Liber,* placing knowledge of the Trinity at the end of this progression gives Maximus' account of ascent further complexity. Likewise, they provide an additional Trinitarian texture to the *Capita*. Several examples are notable and are worth exploring before I move on since they provide an important context for 1.86-100.

In 2.21, Maximus inserts ecclesial titles into a tripartite description of the mind's ascent drawing a comparison between the title and the ascetic himself. Maximus starts with the deacon (διακόνος) "who anoints the mind for sacred contests and who drives away from himself impassioned thoughts". He then moves to presbyter (πρεσβυτέρος) who "illumines [the mind] with regard to the knowledge of the things which exist and destroys knowledge falsely so-

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[26] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.85(*Cap. sulla car.*, 82).

[27] Cf. for example *Cap. car.* 2.4,

called" and then ends with the bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) who "perfects with holy myrrh the knowledge of the worshipped and holy Trinity."[28] This tripartite division and the roles described are similar to those in Ps.-Dionysius' *De ecclesiatica hierarchia* 5. Ps.-Dionysius uses λειτουργός, ἱερεύς, ἱεράρχης and although Maximus uses a different set of titles the progressive tasks of purifying, illuminating and perfecting are the same.[29]

A second example, in 4.47, is instructive since it gives us an idea of how Maximus understands doctrines or dogmas (δόγματα) and faith within ascent. There he states, "The Christian philosopher is in these three things: in the commandments, in the δόγματα and in faith. The commandments separate the mind from the passions. The δόγματα introduce it to the knowledge of the things which exist and faith [introduces it] to the θεωρία of the holy Trinity."[30] His explanation here reveals how δόγματα and faith relate to his tripartite distinction and also demonstrates how, though δόγματα gives a broad scope of knowledge, it is faith that enables the contemplation of the Trinity. A similar explanation is found just before the 1.86-100 in 1.77 where Maximus places the δόγματα in a bipartite description of ascent stating, "Through the commandments, the Lord fully perfects those who have been laboring at them as ἀπάθεια while through the divine δόγματα he graces them with the light of knowledge."[31] He follows this with a description of the scope of δόγματα in 1.78:

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[28] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.21 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 100).

[29] Ps. Dionysius, *De eccl. heir.* 5.3 (*CD 2*: 106). Maximus' description of the διακόνος is the one who anoints (ὁ ἀλείφων). In Ps.-Dionysius, it is the priest (ἱερεύς) that anoints with oil although the λειτουργός purifies and leads the initiates up to this point. Maximus' description of the πρεσβυτέρος, however, shows how he can view illumination as a kind of purification. Maximus' description could signify that by his time the deacon anointed with oil even though formal task of baptism was left to the priest and/or bishop. Ps.-Dionysius also mentions myrrh along with the sacraments of the σύναξις in *De eccl. heir.* 5.3 as "providing a perfecting knowledge of the divine workings and that it is through this that there is effected both the unifying uplifting toward the divinity and the most blessed communion with it," (*CD 2*:106, transl. by Luibheid in *Complete Works*, 235-236).

[30] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.47 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 212).

[31] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.77 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 78): Διὰ μὲν τῶν ἐντολῶν ὁ Κύριος ἀπαθεῖς τοὺς ἐργαζομένους αὐτὰς ἀποτελεῖ· διὰ δὲ τῶν θείων δογμάτων τὸν φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῖς χαρίζεται.

they are either about God, visible and invisible things or providence and judgment.

Taken together, these examples show how Maximus conceives of θεωρία. However, these examples also paint a picture of Maximus' understanding of the role of faith and God in the movement of ascent. Within θεωρία, especially when the divine δόγματα are in view, grace and faith play an important role. The second movement of ascent according to the tripartite division, therefore, is a reflection on God, creation and their relationship where there is either false knowledge or δόγματα accessed by faith and grace. Likewise in the first movement the goal is freedom from passions and it is the commandments or rather obedience to the commandments that allows this to happen but it is God's role to perfect their work into ἀπάθεια. This is affirmed elsewhere where God, as in the *Liber*, is described as a help in the Christian's battle against the passions. These instances of Maximus' various formulations are examples of how he can present ascent from a variety of perspectives whether it be actions, virtues or kinds of knowledge, but also demonstrate how in all three movements God's role perfects and graces the baptized as they continue in ascent toward the ultimate goal of the Holy Trinity. With this context in mind, I know turn to 1.85-100.

In 1.85, Maximus provides an analogy using the flight of a sparrow to describe the minds difficulty with the "knowledge of the heavenlies" if it does not have ἀπάθεια. In 1.86, Maximus gives us the first tripartite presentation of ascent and describes it in three movements: freedom from the passions → contemplation of creatures → knowledge of the Trinity.[32] Perfection in the first movement (freedom from the passions) allows the mind to be pure, and it is able to reflect on things without being impassioned by them (1.87). Once the baptized are free of the passions, prayer can commence as the mind is drawn by the beauty of knowledge in spite of demonic activity (1.88-91). In the next century (2.5), Maximus will further detail that this first stage, which he calls, 'ἡ πρακτικὴ μέθοδος' does not "completely free the mind from passions so that it can pray without distraction." It only liberates the mind from hate and self-

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[32] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.86 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 82).

indulgence. Instead, it must receive in succession (διαδέχονται) spiritual contemplations that allow the mind to escape forgetfulness and ignorance. Only then is it able to pray as needed.[33] In 1.92, Maximus explains that joining the virtues with knowledge allows the ascetic to see things in proper perspective; to see them "according to their nature clearly" and, therefore, determine how to use them properly.[34] A sign that one has reached the highest degree of ἀπάθεια is that thoughts are simple and not impassioned (1.93).[35]

The next presentation of ascent, in 1.94, now makes an appearance and underscores a successive "stripping off" that the mind accomplishes through various activities,

> The mind strips off the passions through the exercise of the
> commandments and through the spiritual contemplation (θεωρία) of
> visible things [strips off] the impassioned thoughts of things and through
> the knowledge of things unseen [strips off] the contemplation (θεωρία)
> of the visible and this [is stripped off] through knowledge of the Holy
> Trinity.[36]

In this *capitulum,* the second movement (contemplation of creatures) is now further subdivided into two distinct movements – the spiritual contemplation of visible and invisible things. Both of these movements are meant to provide knowledge and are to be joined to the practice of the virtues. It has already been shown how the acquiring of δόγματα is an important goal in this movement and permits the baptized to "seeing things clearly". However, how exactly this is the case has not been made clear. The next series of *capitula* (1.95-97) give more specific content to the kind of knowledge that is to be

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[33] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.5 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 90).

[34] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.87-93 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 84, 86). Maximus will also discuss the importance of both knowledge and love often emphasizing the necessity of both πρᾶξις/ἀγάπη and θεωρία/γνῶσις. For example, later in the fourth century, Maximus addresses knowledge without love and its potential dangers of vainglory. The consequence is aborted knowledge, see *Cap. car.* 4.56-62 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 170, 173).

[35] Maximus gives this further treatment in 3.42-43.

[36] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.94 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 84, 86).

gathered from the contemplation of visible and invisible creation but not before examining God's role in the process.

Maximus begins in 1.95 with a simile that compares the sun's rising, when it reveals itself and everything its illumination touches, with the "Sun of Righteous", which "when it rises on the pure mind, reveals the λόγοι of all things that have been and will be." Whatever it is the ascetic is supposed to learn, the mind is assisted by the "Sun of righteousness". This title "Sun of righteousness" is prolific in theological literature and is at times directly tied to Malachi 4.2.[37] A notable parallel can be found in Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 11.114 and Gregory of Nazianzus' *Or.* 45 where the title emphasizes the Son's role in illumination.[38] Konstantinovsky discusses this phrase in relation to Evagrius, but it should be noted that the phrase can be found in Diadochus, Ps.-Dionysius, Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa and Origen.[39] Regardless of who Maximus might be drawing on, the title gives a clear indication that God, likely the Son, is the source of this illumination but only goes part way in explaining how he affects pure vision.

The next *capitula* (1.96-99) give us an initial idea of what can be known of God and what the source of this knowledge is. Firstly, there is a negative statement: God is not known from his οὐσία. Unlike the *Liber*, Maximus incorporates here a caveat about knowing God. Despite the fact that the Trinity is the beginning, means, and goal toward which desire is redirected, there is something that cannot be known – his οὐσία. Yet, initially, he does not explain why. God *is* known, however, from his great works (μεγαλοεργία*)* and his providence (πρόνοια) of existing things. These serve as a mirror through which the baptized perceive his infinite goodness (ἀγαθότης), wisdom (σοφία) and power (δύναμις) (1.96).[40] Maximus restates the four-part presentation of ascent again in the next *capitulum* (1.97) but this time from the perspective of thought.

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[37] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.95 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 86). Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum, homilia 5* (Wernerus Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera,* Vol. VI), 147.18.

[38] Clement, *Protrepticus* 11.114 (SC 2 2nd ed.:182-183); Gregory, *Or. 45* (PG 36:641, 645).

[39] Konstantinovsky, *Making of a Gnostic,* 97.

[40] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.96 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 86).

"The pure mind is found either in the simple ideas of human things, in natural contemplation of visible or invisible creation or in light of the Holy Trinity."[41]

In the following two *capitula,* Maximus divulges what may be gained through the contemplation of visible and invisible creation. Within visible creation the mind searches in order to find their natural λόγοι, or what is signified by them or their cause (1.98). For invisible creation, the mind searches their natural λόγοι, the cause of their becoming, the things which correspond to them and what providence and judgment concerns them (1.99). These taken together show that regardless of how the λόγοι are defined, the intermediate goal is to see God's goodness, wisdom, and power through creation and that this recognition serves as a means to see their cause. The successive stages of contemplation and the knowledge gained from them are meant to draw the mind toward their cause. It is likely that Maximus means to infer that their cause is God but conspicuously absent in the *Capita caritate* is an explicit affirmation of God as "Cause". God is affirmed as Creator, infinite and infinite substance (4.9), Word, Spirit, and holy Trinity but never explicitly as "Cause". This title, which was important to the Areopagite, will play largely in Maximus' description of God in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*. Maximus does identify divine simplicity as the reason why the mind must travel from the plurality of created existence through their λόγοι to the one simple God. He does, however, note the effect of focused attention on creation and God on the observer. In 3.97, he notes how the mind is naturally shaped and transformed by and toward what it contemplates, but "when it has come to be in God, it becomes entirely without form and without figure. For by contemplating he who is simple, [the mind] becomes simple and wholly luminous." [42] Nor is there an explicit reference to the λόγοι of creation being drawn together into the divine *Logos*. Maximus does,

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[41] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.97 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 86).

[42] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 3.97 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 190): Δεχόμενος ὁ νοῦς τὰ τῶν πραγμάτων νοήματα, πρὸς ἕκαστον νόημα μετασχηματίζεσθαι πέφυκε· θεωρῶν δὲ ταῦτα πνευματικῶς, πρὸς ἕκαστον θεώρημα ποικίλως μεταμορφοῦσθαι· ἐν δὲ Θεῷ γενόμενος, ἄμορφος πάντη καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος γίνεται· τὸν γὰρ μονοειδὴ θεωρῶν, μονοειδὴς γίνεται καὶ ὅλος φωτοειδής. Maximus is careful here using the preposition πρὸς instead of the more familiar εἰς or accusative for the verbs μετασχηματίζω and μεταμορφόω to indicate the mind being shaped by objects of contemplation rather than becoming identical with them.

however, echo a sentiment similar to Areopagite's concerning the aesthetics of knowledge in 1.90 and later in 2.77.

Finally, after a detailed progression from 1.85-1.99, in 1.100 Maximus describes the final goal of ascent,

> Having come to be in God, [the mind] searches first, the λόγοι concerning his essence (οὐσία). Yet inflamed by passion, it does not find consolation from those things proper to Him. For it is equally without means nor acceptable for any kind of nature to do so. However, it does receive consolation from those things concerning him, I mean, above all the things concerning eternity, boundlessness and limitlessness, goodness, wisdom and power as Creator, provider and judge of existing things. And this alone is able to be apprehended about him by all—his boundlessness. And knowing nothing itself [is] to know beyond [the] mind, as the theologians Gregory and Dionysius say somewhere.[43]

While the entire set of *capitula* from 1.85 to the end of the first century form a progression, these three final *capitula* are meant to be taken together and are dependent on one other. The statement of the subject (the mind) in 1.98, is not restated but assumed in 1.99 and 100. In other presentations of ascent, the Trinity is at the end of the progression, and so we might expect to find a reference here either to any one of the divine persons or the whole Trinity, but an initial reading does not make this immediately apparent. Maximus simply uses the title "God".

The first phrase (Ἐν δὲ Θεῷ γενόμενος) is important to Maximus, and he repeats it elsewhere within similarly heighten contexts and affirms Sherwood's observation that it is at the height spiritual life. [44] This experience is not only

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[43] Maximus, *Cap. car.* (*Cap. sulla car.,* 88): Ἐν δὲ Θεῷ γενόμενος, τοὺς περὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ πρῶτον λόγους ζητεῖ μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ πόθου φλεγόμενος, οὐκ ἐκ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν δὲ παραμυθίαν εὑρίσκει· ἀμήχανον γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ ἀνένδεκτον πάσῃ γενετῇ φύσει ἐξ ἴσου. Ἐκ δὲ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν παραμυθεῖται, λέγω δὴ τῶν περὶ ἀϊδιότητος, ἀπειρίας τε καὶ ἀοριστίας, ἀγαθότητός τε καὶ σοφίας καὶ δυνάμεως δημιουργικῆς τε καὶ προνοητικῆς καὶ κριτικῆς τῶν ὄντων. Καὶ τοῦτο πάντη καταληπτὸν αὐτοῦ μόνον, ἡ ἀπειρία· καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ μηδὲν γινώσκειν, ὑπὲρ νοῦν γινώσκειν, ὥς που οἱ θεολόγοι ἄνδρες εἰρήκασι Γρηγόριός τε καὶ Διονύσιος.

[44] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 1.100 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 88), 2.26 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 102); 2.100 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 142); 3.97 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 190).

where the ascetic perceives the attributes of God but also receives those attributes like a transfusion of light. It is deification.[45] While the *Liber* briefly described the naked mind becoming deiform as a result of joining with (τῷ Θεῷ συνάπτει) and conversing with God (αὐτῷ προσομιλῶν), here the mind finds consolation (παραμυθεῖται), not in his οὐσία but in his boundlessness, goodness, wisdom, and power.[46] There is some question about how exactly to understand what Maximus says here. Does he mean "having come to be with God", "having come to be in God"? If the latter is correct, in which sense should it be taken? A review of the texts in the *Capita* do not necessarily shed any light on this, and so this must remain an open question until the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* where Maximus discusses explicitly how human beings participate in God. This discussion begins in the *Capita* but does not draw on this specific language in order to describe the dynamics of participation as it relates to ontology.

While Maximus clearly encourages contemplation and knowledge of the Trinity, he is emphatic that λόγοι concerning God's οὐσία, variably referred to as οἱ κατ' αὐτὸν is unknowable. While "reasons" may be an applicable meaning for λόγοι in reference to visible and invisible creation, it makes less sense in relation to God. "Ground" or "principle" or even a more literary meaning such as "definition", if it is to be understood similarly in each context, seems to be a more likely meaning. Maximus states that created nature is not only without means (ἀμήχανον) of finding encouragement from his οὐσία but it is unacceptable for it to do so (ἀνένδεκτον). Maximus contrasts the two phrases οἱ κατ' αὐτὸν and οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν. These phrases are translated variously but it seems likely neither is meant to communicate location as much kind of knowledge based on the relation of the subject to the object: what God is himself and what is known about God by others. This seems to be most consonant with the distinction he has already made in 1.96 and the one he attempts to make in 1.100. He is, therefore, not attempting to refer to a physical location or even location of accidents relative to their substance but the source of perspective (God himself or someone else). This is further reinforced by double use of

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[45] Sherwood, *St. Maximus,* 21, 252 n.79. Cf. *Cap. car.* 2.26, 100; 3.97 and a similar phrase παρίστησι τῷ Θεῷ in 3.44, 4.86.

[46] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* §24 (CCSG 40).

preposition περὶ in the phrases "Ἐκ δὲ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν. . ." and ". . . λέγω δὴ τῶν περὶ . .".[47] Translations that use language of location suggest (perhaps unintentionally) that the list of attributes Maximus enumerates are somehow revolving around him. Maximus makes this distinction in order to highlight what may or may not be known about God within contemplation and prayer. If the *capitula* in this section are synthesized the distinction is between knowledge based on apprehension of God's μεγαλοεργία and πρόνοια which is accessible to created beings and apprehension of his οὐσία which is accessible only to God himself. The ineffability of God's οὐσία and knowing God from his activities is something that had become a standard maxim of theology and emphasized in Neo-Platonic philosophy.[48] Theologically, it can be witnessed to not only in the debates between Eunomius and the Cappadocians Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus but is an affirmation that can be found in Evagrius, Ps.-Dionysius, Cyril of Alexandria, Severus of Antioch. [49] Maximus makes no explicit mention here of the persons of the Trinity although Sherwood sees such a reference in the listing of "goodness", "wisdom", and "power" in 1.96. These three similarly appear in 1.100. While this is possible, Maximus does not make such a connection explicit here or anywhere in the *Capita caritate.*[50]

The possibility though is greatly increased when an observation made by Sherwood is taken into consideration. The contrasted phrases, οἱ κατ' αὐτὸν and οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν, are found in Gregory's *Oration* 38.7 and 45.3 (*PG* 36.317B = *PG* 36.625A) where Gregory is emphasizing how God is "beyond all our notions of time and nature" and is only "grasped by the mind alone, but in a very dimly

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[47] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 1.100 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 88).

[48] Ilaria Ramelli, "The Divine as Inaccessible Object of Knowledge in Ancient Platonism: A Common Philosophical Pattern across Religious Traditions," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75.2 (April 2014), 167-188. There are aspects of this article with which I disagree, nevertheless it well observes the phenomenon across the spectrum of pagan, Jewish and Christian authors of appealing to the unknowable οὐσία of the divine while affirming what can be known from divine activities.

[49] The importance of this distinction has been noted in relation to the development of Pro-Nicene theology in the fourth century; see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)*,* 282-283.

[50] Cf. Maximus, *Cap. Car* 4.2, 3. (*Cap. sulla car.,* 194).

and limited way; he is known not *directly but indirectly*."[51] Likewise, the list of attributes Maximus associates with the latter phrase (οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν) follows closely Gregory's discussion in sections 7-9 of *Or.* 38 and 45.3-5(PG 36.317B-321A = PG 36.625A-629B), including the correlation of "boundlessness" (ἀπειρία) with "eternity" (ἀΐδιος) and "limitlessness" (ἀοριστία) and its affirmation as the sole apprehendable attribute.[52] Gregory, in his discussion, describes creation as a result of Goodness. The angelic and heavenly powers having been conceived by Goodness, and this conception is fulfilled by his Word and perfected by his Spirit.[53] In this description, "Goodness" seems to correlate with the Father although Gregory does not explicitly connect the two titles. After angelic and heavenly powers the creation of the material world followed and thus "mind" and "sense" serve as able receptors for the invisible and visible worlds both of which are heralds of the work (μεγαλοεργία) of the Creative Word (δημιουργός Λόγος) and which are ultimately brought together in the creation of humanity (*PG* 36.629A- 631B). Gregory likewise will go on to speak not only of the creation of the κόσμος but also of his care and salvation of it through the incarnation. Maximus had, in 1.96, stated that God cannot be known in his essence (οὐσία) but could be known from his work and his providence of created things (ἐκ τῆς μεγαλουργίας αὐτοῦ καὶ προνοίας τῶν ὄντων). Maximus subsumes the activities of creation, providence, and judgment under goodness, wisdom, and power.

The way this is formulated suggests two ways of deciphering creation. On one level, God is known as boundless with the corresponding affirmation of his eternity and limitlessness. On another level, it speaks of God as three perceived in goodness, wisdom and power through the activities of caring and judging creation. Later in the *Capita* Maximus will state, "God, existing from

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[51] Gregory, *Or.* 38.7 (PG 36.317B; SC 358:114). The translation may be found in *Gregory Nazianzus*, transl. Brian E. Daley, The Early Church Fathers, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 120 [*emphasis mine*].

[52] "Ἀεί or ἀΐδιος , ἀπειρία, and ἀοριστία in *Or.* 38.7 and 8 (PG 36.317B; 320A, B: SC 358.114-120). Ceresa-Gestaldo, (*Cap. sulla car.,* 89 n. 42) gives us another reference in Maximus' *Ep.* 2 (*PG* 91.400D) and also notes von Balthasar's reference to Ps.-Dionysius *Ep.* 1-5 (CD 2:156-163).

[53] Gregory, *Or.* 38.9 (PG 36.320B-C: SC 358.118-120).

eternity, creates when he wants, by his Word and Spirit because of his infinite goodness."[54] This second phrase is slightly different and tells of the problem of applying the formula goodness = Father, Wisdom = Son, and Power = Spirit too rigidly. If applied strictly the passage would read, "God created . . . by his Word and Spirit because of his infinite Father." However, it is God's goodness and so while in this particular *capitula* (4.4) goodness may not unequivocally mean Father the distinction between God and his Word and Spirit allows for the term to connote the Father. Thus from these two *capitula* and with Gregory's oration in the background, it seems Maximus means to suggest a correlation between goodness, wisdom, and power and the Father, Son, and Spirit even though there is not an explicit correlation between the titles and elsewhere it is not applied as strict formula. There is also an interesting phenomenon here which Maximus will later take the time to address – the oneness and threeness of God reveal each other. Following Maximus understanding in 1.86-100, within contemplation of creation, the activities of the divine persons in tandem with the λόγοι reveal God; however, within prayer God is revealed as unbounded but also as goodness, wisdom, and power. This feature of his thought and the process of contemplating the λόγοι and by doing so perceiving God being revealed as one and three will be developed further in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem.*

The very last phrase in 1.100 is instructive: Maximus sees a common teaching from Gregory and Dionysius concerning the relation between ignorance and knowing. In light of the material already covered from the *Liber* and earlier *capitula,* Maximus likely means here an ignorance, ignoring and unknowing of all created things complemented by a loving knowing of God whose essence is unknowable. There is here a confluence of Evagrius, Ps.-Dionysius, and Gregory Naziaznus both in how he articulates his theology but also in the language used. I will briefly attempt to parse out these various influences.

Dionysius' literary role, in 1.100 is to give language to the divine side of the ascetic's ἀγνοία. The Areopagite's *Ep. 1* contains the phrase: αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπὲρ

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[54] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.4 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 194).

νοῦν καὶ οὐσίαν ὑπεριδρυμένος, αὐτῷ τῷ καθόλου μὴ γινώσκεσθαι μηδὲ εἶναι, καὶ ἔστιν ὑπερουσίως καὶ ὑπὲρ νοῦν γινώσκεται.[55] This is joined with the already stated ἄγνοία of creation that parallel's closely the concerns of both Evagrius and Diadochus in their understanding of ἀπάθεια. In order to see things clearly, one must unknow these things according to lustful passions. There is, then, in Maximus, several senses in which unknowing and knowing are applied. In terms of unknowing/ignorance, it is applied to both creation and God. This concern can be subdivided into desire and knowledge which are connected. In one sense, the ascetic must ignore attachments to material things, including one's self, in favor of God. This in turn allows the ascetic to unknow former ways of viewing these things in favor of perceiving their true nature and use. At the same time there is an acknowledgment of our ignorance of God's οὐσία, a perpetual ignorance in the face of an infinite God and an unknowing of false conceptions about God so the baptized may be encouraged (παραμυθεῖται) from knowing his activities and experiencing God as the Father, Son, and Spirit. The entrance to this journey is by faith toward the development of love for God and human beings through prayer and self-control resulting in union with God and deification. The structure of ascent as described here by Maximus, stresses the importance of both ἄγνοία and γνῶσις within the context of ἀγάπη.

This progression of *capitula* demonstrates how Maximus presents a more robust understanding of contemplation and its relation to the journey toward union with God in prayer. The various presentations of ascent that place the Trinity at the end of this journey give an explicit expression of the Trinity as *telos* of Christian life. Additionally, Maximus' conception of the relation between oneness and threeness and the inaccessibility of the Trinity's οὐσία shapes what is expected and sought within his view of ascent. The incorporation of these items gives further texture to his already established Trinitarian grammar for Christian life. Yet these items are not just a more Trinitarian styling that he places over the Trinitarian grammar he presented in the *Liber.* They give a more robust picture of what takes place in prayer and becomes part of the core of his teaching concerning the ascetic life. Maximus' conception of ascent is robust and

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[55] Dionysius, *Ep.* 1 (*CD* 1:157).

draws together various aspects of the tradition he has inherited to address the issues of knowledge and desire and their relation to God and creation.

§3.2.3 Capitula *4.69-78: Means of Ascetic Life & the Manifestation of God's Presence*

In century four, there are ten *capitula* which exhibit a marked concern for one of the ways Maximus portrays God as means in the *Liber*: participation and manifestation of the activities of God in the Christian life. These *capitula,* however, focus specifically on the perceptibility of the presence of God in the Christian life. They are an example of an early answer by Maximus to issues that had long become established questions within the ascetic community regarding sin and the presence of God within the Christian. Historically, these questions were brought to a head in the Greek East through the rise of Messalianism and their account of why Christians sin despite having been baptized and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Judging by the various responses in Ps.-Macarius, Diadochus and Mark the Monk, these questions continued to hold the attention of ascetic communities up until the time of Maximus. Thus, while this is the first time Maximus will touch on this subject with the explicit purpose of addressing the questions of perceptibility, it is not the last time and it is important for this study because it in this vein the Maximus touches on the presence of God in the life of the baptized with special reference to Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Maximus to a large extent follows the trajectory laid out by the three writers mentioned above. Maximus, however, includes the redirection of desire under the rubric of practicing the commandments of loving God and loving people. So in a way that is not prevalent in Mark, Maximus draws on the language of desire. This he likely draws from Diadochus although it must be noted that Ps.-Macarius, Ps.-Dionysius and both Gregorys (Nyssa and Nazianzus) also used this language to describe the Christian life. Maximus' writings also show marked similarity concerning the indwelling of God becoming increasingly manifest in proportion to one's spiritual ascent. This is seen most vividly in *Expositio orationis dominicae,* where he heightens this

theme with the language of incarnation.[56] At this stage of Maximus' writing, however, we have only gone part way towards this heighten language. As was evident in *Liber Asceticus*, Maximus portrays the life of the baptized as an appropriation of the Son's activities to the believer through the Spirit, utilizing the language of indwelling. Additionally, he also discusses the manifestation of Jesus' indwelling power in the body drawing on the language of 2 Corinthians 4.8-10 and 12.9, 10. Yet these two themes, similar as they are because of the concept of "indwelling" do not seem to come together explicitly in the *Liber.* In *Capita* 4.69-78 we see much of Diadochus and Mark's concerns and means of confronting them woven together.

Capitulum 4.69 opens the foray into these concerns by addressing the suppositions of "some of the brothers", (Τινὲς τῶν ἀδελφῶν . . .) and the concern here, as Maximus tells us, is that, "they think they are outside the gifts of the Holy Spirit."[57] Maximus' response is noticeably less abrasive in comparison to Mark, yet shares the same rationale. Firstly, Maximus cites a neglect of practicing the commandments as the problem. This negligence is "why they do not know that the one who has an unadulterated faith in Christ possess in themselves all the divine graces together."[58] The second reason is broader and is put in the first person plural. In this case, he cites "idleness" (ἀργία) in active love for God, which would bring to light the divine treasures (θησαυρός) "in us", as another cause for their false suppositions.[59] Maximus here contrasts inactivity with activity and correlates them with internal and external realities, and perception. Those who are active in love make known the treasures in them. Those who are not active in love are unable to see themselves clearly, thinking these gifts are external to their lives.

What follows is a series of *capitula* that calls upon no less than nine biblical passages, using both the scriptural language and images, to highlight how the baptized must pursue purification by the commandments, specifically

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[56] Maximus, *Or. Dom.*, 4.391-8, 554-9 (CCSG 23:50, 59). Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 223-226 notes the connection of this theme with Ps.-Macarius.

[57] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.69 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224).

[58] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.69 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224).

[59] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.69 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224).

love, in order to come to see and manifest the indwelling presence of God.[60] The series is connected by two parallel chains of words. One chain focuses on describing the internal aspect of the baptized: "in himself" (4.69) → "heart" (4.70)→ "field" (4.71) → "heart" (4.72)→ "mind/heart" (4.73) → "mind" (4.74-77).[61] *Capitula* 4.69-72 focuses on purification through the commandments, love and self-mastery and then in 4.73 the identification of "mind" with "heart" is made.[62] Then in 4.74-76 the means by which this call is fulfilled is explained through an explanation that echoes the *Liber* where love of God leads to self-mastery over the passions and love of neighbor leads to opposing anger. In 4.76, there is another call for the cleansing of the mind, and the consequent result is that the baptized will be able to see the indwelling Christ. The second parallel chain focuses on what is meant to be found or what becomes perceptible when the process of purification takes place. Starting in 4.69 up to 4.76 the progression runs as follows: "Holy Spirit's gifts of grace" → "divine graces" → "divine treasures within" → "Christ" → "treasures of wisdom and spiritual knowledge" → "God" → "Lord" → "indwelling Christ".[63] Maximus emphasizes that these are hidden, waiting to be found, perceived, seen, or revealed through active love. In 4.70 and 4.73, Maximus states that it was through "faith" and "the grace of holy baptism" that specifically Christ had come to dwell in the heart or mind.[64] In *capitulum* 4.70*,* Maximus draws together two scriptural texts, Ephesian 3.17 and Colossians 2.3, to fill in more specifically the idea of "treasure" stating,

> If, according to the Divine Apostle, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him then the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in our hearts.[65]

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[60] See the discussion of similar texts in Ps.-Macarius and their connection to Maximus in Plested's, *Macarian Legacy*, 238-242

[61] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.69-77 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224-228).

[62] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.73 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 226).

[63] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.69-76 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224-228).

[64] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.70, 73 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224, 226).

[65] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.70 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 224).

These treasures are made manifest to the heart "in proportion to each one's purification through the commandments."[66] In *capitulum* 4.71, alluding to Matthew 13.44, Maximus admonishes that this treasure "hidden in the field of your heart" is obscured because of idleness. Instead, of understanding its value and pursuing it, "nearby things" are pursued but turn out to be nothing more than "thorns and prickles".[67] In 4.72, Maximus utilizes Matthew 5.8: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God".[68] Since God is hidden in the heart of those who believe, they will see him and the treasures in him when they purify themselves through love and self-mastery with an ever-increasing clarity of vision. It is clear in this *capitulum* that Maximus is connecting the title "God" with Christ from 4.70-71. Maximus in the next *capitulum* (4.73) ties this more directly with selling one's possessions and giving alms. By doing so, the body is no longer the locus of attention but the baptized can focus on the purification of their mind, "For these things, which stain the mind do not allow it to see the indwelling Lord in it through the grace of baptism."[69] Maximus in 4.74 now weaves in the theme of love stating that the Scriptures name the virtues "ways" (ὀδοί), the greatest of which is love. He quotes 1 Corinthians 12.31 and correlates this "more excellent way" with a description that echoes his very first definition of love from century one – a preference for eternal things over material and temporal things. Building upon this thread, he aligns the commandments of love in the next *capitulum* (4.75) with aspects of the soul asserting that "love for God withstands lust (ἐπιθυμία) persuading it to exercise self-mastery in regard to the pleasures while love for neighbor withstands anger (θυμός) and makes the baptized despise fame and possessions." He then interchanges Christ, his audience and the commandments to love God and neighbor into the story of the Good Samaritan stating, "These are the two denarii which the Savior gave to the innkeeper so that he might take care of you." He continues with an exhortation, "but do not show yourselves as

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[66] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.70 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 224).

[67] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.71 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 224).

[68] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.72 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 226).

[69] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.73 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 226).

ungrateful by colluding with the robbers, lest you be found beaten again and no longer half-dead but [actually] dead."[70] To remind us of the matter at hand, Maximus in *capitulum* 4.76 exhorts his audience to cleanse their minds of anger, the remembrance of wrongs and shameful thoughts so that they will be able to know the indwelling of Christ. In *capitulum* 4.77, Maximus lists a series of activities and experiences had by the baptized that are meant to demonstrate the reality of God's indwelling. I quote it in full here:

> Who illumined you with the faith of the holy, worshiped and consubstantial Trinity? Or who made known to you the incarnate *dispensation* (τὴν ἔνσαρκον οἰκονομίαν) of one of the Holy Trinity? And who taught you the λόγοι concerning the natures of incorporeal beings or those concerning the beginning and consummation of the visible world? Or [those] concerning the resurrection of the dead and eternal life? Or [those] concerning the glory of the kingdom of the heavens and the dread of judgment? Was it not the grace of Christ dwelling in you, that is, the pledge of the Holy Spirit? What is greater than this grace? Or, what is better than this wisdom and knowledge? Or, what is more sublime than these promises? If then we are idle and negligent and do not cleanse ourselves from the passions which defile us and blind our minds, so that we are able to see the λόγοι of these things more clearly than the sun, then we should blame ourselves and not deny the indwelling of grace.[71]

This set of *capitula* concludes with a reminder that the same God "who promised eternal goods" and gave "the pledge of the Holy Spirit also commands the cultivation of life so that the inner man, being freed from the passion, might begin from this point the enjoyment of these goods" (4.78).[72]

These *capitula* are an indicative example of Maximus addressing the long-standing issue of the perceptibility or rather lack of perceptibility of God's presence in the baptized. Through this discussion Maximus demonstrates that

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[70] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.75 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 226, 228).

[71] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.77 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 144).

[72] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.78 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 228).

the Trinity is beginning, means, and goal of ascent but also that it is through ascent that one properly participates and manifests this reality. Maximus plaits together several groups of ideas through his exegesis of texts from Colossians, Ephesians, Matthew, and I Corinthians and his already established means of discussing ascent. Maximus, like Diadochus, does not see this as an issue of an internal war between an indwelling of Satan and the Holy Spirit but rather an issue of active love. Likewise, key to the perceptibility of God's gifts or indwelling is the redirection of desire through love of God and neighbor. Yet when he chooses to talk about how this perceptibility works in relation to ascent he chooses a formulation much like Mark's: it is in proportion to one's purification *via the commandments of loving God and neighbor*.[73] The cleansing brought about by this reorientation of desire through self-mastery, which "makes all things clean", and the more excellent way of love, allows the hidden treasure of Christ himself and all the wisdom and knowledge in him to be seen.[74]

Up to 4.76 it is tempting to suspect that Maximus is once again taking us through the process of ascent as he has done elsewhere in the *Capita* (i.e. 1.86-100). The material in 4.69-76 seems to fall within Maximus' description of πρακτική and so 4.77 and 4.78 might well take us into θεωρία. This initial

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[73] While commenting on a large swath of texts across Maximus' corpus, Plested underscores the overarching Macarian tenor of the Confessor's understanding of the heart but also notes connections with Origen in *capitula* 4.73, *Macarian Legacy*, 239-242. As he observes elsewhere, the Macarian imagery surrounding the close association between the heart and the intellect or its identification and the heart's place in the process of ascent can be found in Diadochus and Mark the Monk, *Macarian Legacy*, 106-107, 126, 136-137, 154-155 (esp. no. 60), 157-158. In these specific *capitula* (4.69-78), Maximus draws on this imagery and shows evidence of parallels with Ps.-Macarius and Mark the Monk. For example, the idea that one's progress is in proportion (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν or κατ' ἀναλογίαν) to love or other aspects (i.e. grace, faith, desire, virtue) of Christian life can be found variously in Ps.-Macarius and Mark the Monk. Diadochus retains the idea but does not use this Greek construction. Its origins can be found in the New Testament (Ro. 12.6) as "in proportion to faith". This exact construction can be found in Ps.-Macarius and Mark the Monk (cf. the discussion in *Macarian Legacy,* 87-89) alongside other formulations. In comparison to Ps.-Macarius and Diadochus, one of Mark's constructions is unique to him – "in proportion to the working of the commandments" (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἐργασίας τῶν ἐντολῶν), identifying "the commandments" with loving God and loving neighbor (*De lege spirituali* 28; *Ex operibus justificari* 56; *De baptismo* 5, 9, 17; cf. also *De lege spirituali* 151, *Ex operibus justificari* 210, 211). Maximus' echoes this phrasing and identification in several of these *capitula* (4.67, 69, 4.70) but adds loving enemies.

[74] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.73 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 226).

impression seems to be confirmed since much of the content of 4.77 has to do with illumination and knowing. Additionally, in light of Maximus' use of a confession-like structure at the beginning of *Liber asceticus,* a similar set of elements can be observed in these *capitula*. *Capitulum* 4.77 begins with the Trinity moves on to the incarnation, creation, resurrection, eternal life, and eternal destiny. Yet there is missing here an account of the fall and Christ's ascension. Furthermore the inclusion of "faith in the holy, worshipped, consubstantial Trinity" and "the λόγοι concerning the incorporeal beings" echoes earlier presentations that places faith, the investigation of the λόγοι and providence and judgment in the second and third movements.[75] In either case, what is significant is Maximus' emphasis on who or what accomplishes this illumination. Maximus' answer is the grace of the indwelling Christ, the pledge of the Holy Spirit. In this case the grace spoken of (as in 4.72) is the indwelling Christ; however, there is, in a way similar to Diadochus, a correspondence between these phrases such that they serve as metonyms for one another.

Like *Liber asceticus,* there is a close pairing of the Son as Christ and the Spirit. In this case, though their identities as indwelling realities are virtually interchangeable, whether the phrase "indwelling Christ" or "the pledge of the Spirit" is used the consequence is the same – both illuminate the mind. However, the *capitula* that discuss the Holy Spirit, 4.69, 77 and 78 form an *inclusion* which suggests that, while Maximus sees their reality as interchangeable, he still delineates that it is the Spirit which applies or mediates the presence of Christ. Virtually everything that Maximus has placed in the second stage of θεωρία is listed here. The only thing lacking is a direct identification of these things as θεολογία and prayer. Maximus means to demonstrate to his audience that if they have these things then they have not only the gifts or wisdom and knowledge of Christ but God himself. In this sense, God, specifically in the indwelling of Christ/pledge of the Spirit, is not only the goal of contemplation but also the one who initiates and illumines the mind toward their reality.

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[75] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.77 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 228).

This is confirmed in another *capitulum* where Maximus shows that the activities of contemplation, theology, and prayer fulfill Paul's admonition in Galatians 5.16.[76] Similar to the previous *capitula*, it is the one who possesses perfect love who can say, "Lord Jesus, in the Holy Spirit," fulfilling what Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12.3.[77] This intertwining of scriptural texts regarding the Holy Spirit and the activities of the later stages of ascent follow a distinction he makes in the third century between image and likeness and demonstrates that his use of this distinction goes beyond the purpose of answering earlier Origenist conceptions of it and serves to regulate his descriptions of ascent in general. However, for Maximus there is a broader concern, akin to Mark, to demonstrate that every part of Christian life depends on God and that within ascent it is not simply those things that are designated as "by grace" that require God and specifically the Holy Spirit's action but also the πρακτική and indeed all of life.[78] The ascetic life and, more broadly, the Christian life from this perspective is an attention to one's own heart through purification of the virtues and attainment of knowledge in an effort to see God, specifically to see the indwelling Christ – the pledge of the Holy Spirit that was received through faith and the grace of baptism.[79] This all plays out on the field of God's grace to humanity through being, well-being, and eternal being. Loosen comes to a similar conclusion stating, "Die Entfaltung des Gnadenlebens durch Tugend und Erkenntnis unter dem Einfluß des Pnuema ist Erscheinen des einwohnenden Christus."[80] The reality of the Triune life is only properly participated in and

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[76] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.64 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 220).

[77] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 4.39 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 210).

[78] Maximus, *Cap. car.,* 2.38, 39 (*Cap. sulla. car.,* 110, 112).

[79] Maximus expounds further the interaction and synergy between the human person, the Holy Spirit and grace in several there places in his corpus. *Qua. Thal.* 6 (CCSG 7:69-71), where Maximus explains the grace of baptism, is often cited in this regard and mention is often made of connections with Ps.-Macarius, Diadochus and Mark the Monk. Larchet, for example gives considerable space to the theme of synergy and baptism, see *La divinization de l'homme*, 409-424, where he gives citations for the three authors listed above, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus. See also, Plested, *Macarian Legacy,* 35-40, 81-90, 150-156, 230-232; Blowers & Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mystery,* 38-43, 103, 104 and Garrigues, *La charité, avenir divin de l'homme*, 188, 116-119.

[80] Josef Loosen, "Logos und Pneuma in begnadeten Menschen bei Maximus Confessor," PhD. diss. (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 1940), 128.

manifested, indeed, perceptible within the purview of love pursued in a graced ascent. Otherwise, the baptized are blind to their own true status as indwelt by God and his grace.

God serves as not only an example of goodness and loves through the incarnate Son's life as in the *Liber* but also through God's ἀπαθῆ, goodness, and love. The Trinity serves as the goal of an affective union whereby the entirety of human desire, led by the mind successively through creation and illumined by the Spirit, finds its place with God and is encouraged by his activities. Finally, the means of this process, the field of play so to speak, is one of grace where participation in love leads to a manifestation of an already existing grace. This process is described in terms of love and indeed as Maximus points out in the last *capitulum,* if love is possessed so is God since God is love. Love, indeed the Triune God, can be seen as the beginning, means, and end of Christian life. Maximus brings all the activities of Christian life and its sources under this rubric. To put it simply, in the *Capita caritate* and *Liber asceticus,* Maximus envisions love correlated with the Trinity as the unifying theme for the various concerns of philosophy and theology.

§3.3 *Maximus Engagement with Origenism & Tritheism*

§3.3.1 *Capitula 3.21-36*: *The Irreducible Distinction of God and Creation in Maximus' Early Anti-Origenist Thought*

There are several *capitula* that can be identified as "anti-Origenist" and in this section I will demonstrate how they offer a new sub-theme. While serving to elucidate a cosmological and metaphysical basis for ascent, they also refine how God serves as beginning, means, and end. However, to accomplish this means briefly investigating some context for Origenist theology and the theology itself particularly as it was represented in the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Therefore, before I begin my analysis of specific passages, I discuss in the following paragraphs how Origenist theology, while a clear issue for Maximus, can also be seen in a broader philosophical context. Then, I briefly give a more specific historical context for the passages reviewed. Finally, I briefly discuss the literary context of these passages, in part to bring to mind the earlier review of

the flow of the *Capita* but also to locate what Maximus is doing within his conception of ascent.

While Maximus has Origenist thought here in mind, I want to suggest that Maximus' critique can equally be seen as a criticism of philosophical accounts of life. This is not necessarily new but putting Origenist thought alongside a broader current of philosophical thinking helps provide a broader context for understanding Maximus' thought. It had long been an accusation that Origenism itself was the result of the influence of Greek pagan philosophy. Whether or not this is accurate in the end is worth study, but I think this question often overshadows a more straightforward observation – that the philosophy of Maximus' time was indeed concerned with a more "spiritual" outlook and consequently often framed philosophical questions regarding cosmology and epistemology from this perspective. Maximus surely would have known this regardless of whether he had a formal education or not. There are plenty of materials available about pagan philosophy within Christian circles that he would not have had to go far to encounter it. Proving this is beyond the scope of my study here, but I raise it only to suggest that Maximus, while writing against Origenist tendencies in ascetic communities, may just as likely have been inoculating his audience against a broad spiritual movement in philosophy.

Yet even my description here may be over-simplified, especially in light of research that suggests Maximus is writing against and adapting the thought of John of Philoponus, a miaphysite philosopher.[81] A common element in both Origenist and philosophical movements was the immanence of the divine, which could be conceived as dispersed throughout the spectrum of existing beings. Thus, the origin and goal of being is to go out from and return to the divine. This

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[81] Gregory Benevich, "John Philoponus and Maximus the Confessor at the Crossroads of Philosophical and Theological Thought in Late Antiquity," in *Scrinium Vol. 7-8: Ars Chrisitan. In memoriam Michail F. Murianov (21.XI.1928-6.VI.1995). Part One,* ed. by R. Krivko, B. Lourié & A. Orlov (Piscatway: Gorgia Press, 2011-2012), 102-130 and "Maximus Confessor's Polemics Against Tritheism and His Trinitarian Teaching," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 105.2 (2012), 595-610 and finally Torstein, Theodor Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought,* Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83-132.

is accomplished not only in a moral sense but also in an ontological sense.[82] For the Christian to retain any of this would mean articulating it in a way that preserved the hard-fought distinction between created existence and God but also explaining how it is that God is immanent and able to be participated in – how to see God as in whom, through whom and for whom all things exist.[83] In John Philoponus, we see exactly this debate between Christian and Neo-Platonic conceptions on the eternity of matter although lacking any extensive attempt to address deification.[84] Maximus, in his "anti-Origenist" material in *Capita caritate* and later in his *Ambigua ad Iohannem* and *Capita gnostica,* demonstrates exactly this desire to maintain the tension between God's utter transcendence and personal accessibility in deification.

In these next paragraphs, I will provide a specific, historical context for Maximus' discussion of Origenist theology. Some of this discussion will be familiar to scholars of Maximus, having been covered by previous authors. However, I hope to draw attention to Maximus' interest in distinguishing kinds of γνῶσις in his discussion and its relation to the triad Sherwood discovered was important for Maximus' engagement. My goal, therefore, in providing this historical context is to fill in some areas where Sherwood's discussion stopped or aspects of Maximus' engagement that he did not notice. In particular, I will discuss the role of γνῶσις in relation to the triad οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια and why these terms were important to Origenism and were rejected by Fifth Council.

In *capitulum* 3.21, Maximus begins by addressing what God knows about himself in contrast to "Holy Powers". This is a rather odd starting point at first

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[82] Eric Perl, in his Ph.D. dissertation, highlights these aspects in relation to Neo-Platonic thought but also draws a distinctions between "Origenist" theology which differed from Neo-Platonic thought in describing the henad of rational being as actually pre-existent in God whereas the Neo-Platonic cycle suggest that the effect exists in its cause becoming differentiated upon procession (*Methexis, Creation, Incarnation,* 231-232). He goes on to say against Sherwood and others that Maximus "genuinely expresses the same philosophical insight into creation as the Neoplatonic cycle," in his doctrine of the *logoi* (232-233).

[83] cf. 1 Cor. 8.6, Heb. 2.10, Gal. 3.28, Col. 3.11, Eph. 4.4.

[84] John writes against Proclus in *De Aeternitate Mundi contra Proclum.* For a discussion of how this debate provides a context for understanding Maximus' arguments see Joshua Lollar, "To See into the Life of Things," 332-354.

and seems a disjunctive topic in relation to what has just preceded it. How does knowing what God knows about himself help develop self-control within ascent? However, when viewed alongside the evidence of Origenist thought available at the Council of Constantinople 553 CE, Maximus' need to cover this material becomes clearer. Several pre and post-conciliar documents report that part of Origenist cosmology entailed asserting that human souls pre-existed as either minds or Holy Powers united to the monad, but upon being fully satisfied with the divine, they grew cold in their love for God and thus became souls. As part of their punishment, they fell into various instantiations of material existence within which they would migrate until returning to the monad. According to this cosmology, the original state of these minds was as a henad that possessed an "identity of οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια through their union with and γνῶσις of God the Word."[85] Notable here is the role of γνῶσις as the means by which an identity of οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια is accomplished. Elsewhere, the restoration of these minds to the henad is likewise described as an identity of οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, and γνῶσις. The first three of these terms have been reviewed by Sherwood and Von Balthasar at length.

In looking for antecedents of the first three terms (οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια), Sherwood reviews several instances within the writings of Iamblichus and Proclus and then moves on to Ps.-Dionysius and John Scythopolis commentary concluding that it is of Aristotelian origin and has made its way into the "Neoplatonic heritage", although he does not give any citations of Aristotle.[86] Upon looking for other antecedents, one finds that the triad is actually quite prolific. Even a cursory search through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* uncovers usages in Aristotle's *Metaphysica* and in the works of his commentators Alexander Aphrodisias, Simplicus, John Philoponus as well as

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[85] *Concilium* 553, canon 2 (*ACO* 4.1:248).

[86] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua,* 103-106. For Iamblichus he gives the ninth question of *De Mysteriis* and from Proclus *Elements of Theology,* proposition 169 and *De malorum substantia* §40-44. The latter he ties to Ps.-Dionysius *Divine Names* 4.23 where a discussion bearing similarity to the ninth question of *De Mysteriis* ensues about the evil nature of demons. In addition to this discussion Sherwood cites *Celestial Hierarchy 11.2* where the Areopagite suggests that these three are divine intelligences and *Divine Names* 4.1 where he describes them as hypostasized substances.

Plotinus who discusses it in *Enneads* 5 and 6 as does Proclus in his commentaries on Plato and Damascius in his *De principiis.*[87] This would suggest that, at the very least, the discussion starting with Aristotle was certainly continued and that the terms played into the ongoing problem of unity, multiplicity, and causation.[88] Outside philosophical treatises, Galen touches on

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[87] I searched for the terms οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια in their nominative, genitive, dative and accusative forms. The following are but a sample of vetted uses and the editions searched in the TLG: Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1042B, 1050B, 1071B, 1088B in *Aristotle's Metaphysics,* 2 Vols., ed. W.D. Ross Reprinted and corrected (Oxford:Claredon Press, 1924); Alexander Aphrodisias, *Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria* in *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria,* ed. M. Hayduck, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1891), 545.36-38, 551.6-7, 555.26, 565.17-18, 592.36-37, 689.7, 804.30-32, *Aristotelis topicorum libros octo commentaria* in *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in Aristotelis topicorum libros octo commentaria,* ed. M. Wallies, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 2.2 (Berlin: Reimer, 1891), 432.1; Plotinus, *Enneades* 5.3.5, 5.3.12, 5.9.5, 5.9.10, 6.2.5, 6.6.9, 6.7.37 in *Plotini opera* 3 Vols., ed. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, Museum Lessianum. Series philosophica (Leiden: Brill, 1951-1973); Porphyry, *Platonis Timaeum commentaria,* frag. 75 in *Porphyrii in Platonis Timaeum commentariorum fragmenta,* ed. A.R. Sodano (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1964); Simplicus, *Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria* in *Simplicii in Aristotelis physicorum libros octo commentaria* 2 Vols., ed. H.Diels, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 9 & 10 (Berlin: Reimer, 1882, 1895), 9.96.7, 9.148.21-22, 9.271.5-6, 10.820.30-31, 10.826.27-29; John Philoponus, *Aristotelis libros de generatione et corruption commentaria* in *Ioannis Philoponi in Aristotelis libros de generatione et corruption commentaria*, ed. H. Vitelli, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 14.2 (Berlin: Reimer, 1897), 14.2.44.27-29, *In Aristotelis libros de anima commentaria* in *Ioannis Philoponi in Aristotelis de anima libros* commentaria, ed. M. Hayduck, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 15 (Berlin: Reimer, 1897), 15.15.30-31, 15.209.34-35, 15.352.10-11, 15.519.19-20, 15.523.26-27, 15.523.34-35, 15.538.22, 15.540.10-12, 16.365.28-30, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* in *Ioannes Philoponus. De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum,* ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963), 250.11-12, 254.20-21; Proclus, *Platonis Alcibiadem I* in *Proclus Diaodochus. Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato,* ed. L.G. Westerink (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1954), 84.16-17, *Platonis Timaeum commentaria* in *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum commentaria* 3 Vols., ed. E. Diehl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1965), 2.125.12-13, 2.306.15-17, 3.335.24-25; Damascius *De prinicipiis* in *Damascii succesoris dubitationes et solutions* Vol. 1, ed. C.É. Ruelle (Paris: Klincksieck, 1889), 131.19, 20, 132.2, 3, 14-15 135.6-8, 137.1-2, 138.2-4, 14-15, 142.23, 143.8-11, 20-21 26-27, 195.13-14, 309.19-21, 311.23-25, 312.2-3 and *In Parmenidem* in *Damascii succesoris dubitationes et solutions* Vol. 2, ed. C.É. Ruelle (Paris: Klincksieck, 1899), 101.13-15, 26 in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae,* s.v. "^ουσια*, ^δυναμ*, ^ενεργ*," accessed October 19, 2014, http://www.tlg.uci.edu/.

[88] A very helpful explanation of the debate up until the time of Maximus, particularly as it related to Damascius, Proclus, and Iamblichus is found in Sara Ahbel-Rappe, *Damascius' Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Damascius (480-550 CE) is one of the latest to be suggested as the author of the works attributed to Dionysius the Aeropagite. See, Carlo Maria Mazzucchi, "Damascio, Autore del Corpus Dionysiacum, e il dialogo Περι Πολιτικης Επιστημης," *Aevum: Rassegna di scienze storiche linguistiche e filologiche* 80.2 (2006), 299–334. Regardless of whether this evaluation is able to stand under further scrutiny, Damascius' work, *De Principiis,* bears enough similarity to the

the term.[89] In Christian circles of the fourth century, the terms show up in numerous places but especially in Trinitarian theology as a means of understanding how it is that God can be known if not by οὐσία.[90] In this instance, the terms are seen as causal not simply sequential. The activity (ἐνέργεια) of God in creation, as an exercise of his δύναμις, flows from his οὐσία and gives access to knowledge about God albeit, as Gregory Nazianzus noted, in a limited way. Likewise, the sequence was applied to the persons of the Trinity as pro-Nicenes attempted to explain the designation of the Son as the power (δύναμις) of God and yet maintain his consubstantiality. This resulted in explanations of various kinds of causality.[91] While Gregory of Nazianzus dealt with how this language could be used and the Son still be understood as consubstantial, eventually Basil and Athanasius would apply the entire sequence to the Godhead in discussions of the Son and the Spirit.[92] The Father, Son, and Spirit have the same οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια and thus the causal sequence became a way of designating consubstantiality. As appealing as many

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issues discussed by the Aeropagite, Maximus and the supposed Origenist doctrines to be worthy of a more thorough investigation.

[89] Galen *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* Book 11 in *Claudii Galeni opera Omnia,* Vol. 11, ed. C.G. Kühn (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 577.14-578.1 and *Qoud animi mores corporis tempermenta sequantor* in Claudii Galeni Pergameni scripta minora Vol. 2, ed. G. Helmreich, J. Marquardt & I. Müller (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1967), 774.17-19, *De theriaca ad Pisonem* in *Claudii Galeni opera Omnia,* Vol. 14, ed. C.G. Kühn (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 14.225.13-226.1 in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae,* s.v. "^ουσια*, ^δυναμ*, ^ενεργ*," accessed October 19, 2014, http://www.tlg.uci.edu/.

[90] Pamphilus, *Diversorum capitum seu difficultatum solutio, Quaestio* 2, 9 and 11 (CCSG 19: 142.176-180; 187.11-14; 204.104-205.115); *Council of Ephesus ACO* 1.1.7.51.34, Ps.-Athanasius *Sermo in annutiationem deiparae* 2, 5, (PG 28:920B; 924A); Cyril, *De sancta trinitate dialogi* (SC 231:350.29-352.44), *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali trinitate* (PG 75:521B, 577B 608C), Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* (Wernerus Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* Vol. 1.), 1.1.244.2.

[91] See for example the study on Gregory of Nyssa by Michel R. Barnes, "The Background and Use of Eunomius' Casual Language," *Arianism After Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts,* eds. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1993), 218- 222.

[92] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 29.15 (PG 36.92B-93A: SC 250.208) discusses the relation of οὐσία and ἐνέργεια in response to Eunomian denials of the Son's consubstantiality based on a specific understanding of causality. Maximus will eventually comment on this text in *Ambigua* 26. For a discussion of the shift of language in Basil and its use by both Athanasius and Basil for the defense of the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy,* 197-198, 211-218.

of the philosophical and theological sources are, there does seem to be a more ready explanation. The terms appear in a letter of Justinian to the bishops that had gathered before the Fifth Council in 553 CE and later in its anathemas precisely as part of the description of the Origenist myth surrounding the henad of rational beings. The pertinent sections of the letter read,

> . . . they assert that there were minds without any number or name, with the result that there was a henad of all rational beings through identity of substance and operation and through power and their union with and knowledge of God the Word. . . [93]

> . . . and that all will be raised again to the same henad and become minds (as they were in their pre-existence), when indeed the devil himself and other demons are restored to the same henad, and when impious and godless human beings will be with godly inspired men and the heavenly powers and will enjoy the same union with God that Christ too enjoys, just as in their pre-existence, with the result that there will be no difference at all between Christ and the remaining rational beings, neither in substance nor in knowledge nor in power nor in operation."[94]

Later, in canons *2* and *13* of the Council, the terms appear again,

> 2. If anyone says that the origin of all rational beings was incorporeal and material minds without any number or name, with the result that there was a henad of them all through identity of substance, power, and operation and through their union with and knowledge of God the Word, but that they reached satiety with divine contemplation and turned to what is worse, according to what the drive to this in each one corresponded to, and that they took more subtle or denser bodies and were allotted names such that the powers above have different names just as they have different bodies, as a result of which they became and

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[93] Justinian, *Epistola ad sanctum concilium* in *Georgii monachi Chronicon*, Vol. 2, ed. Carolus de Boor, Bibliotheca scriptorium graecorum et romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1904), 630.18-21 and translation from *The Acts of Constantinople 553*, vol. 2, transl. by Richard Price, Translated Texts for Historians 51 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 282. Hereafter cited Price, TTH 51.2.

[94] *Epistola,* (*Chronicon*, 2.631.15-25, transl. by Price, TTH 51.2, 282-83).

were named some cherubim, some seraphim, and others principalities, powers, dominations, thrones, angels and whatever heavenly orders there are, let him be anathema.[95]

13. If anyone says that there will not be a single difference at all between Christ and other rational beings, neither in substance nor in knowledge nor in power over everything nor in operation, but that all will be at the right hand of God as Christ beside them will be, as indeed they were also in their mythical pre-existence, let him be anathema.[96]

These few excerpts show clearly how the triad worked within the scheme of the Origenist cosmology. Rational beings are minds that have an identity of substance, power, and operation. Through satiety, all fell except for one, which became Christ. Those that fell became the various created powers and beings both visible and invisible. Canon 8 and 9 in the canons of 553 seem to further address issues raised in Justinian's *epistula* regarding the relationship between the mind that did not fall and becomes Christ and God the Word. God the Word is only Christ "catachrestically" linked with the unfallen mind such that "the Word is called Christ because of this mind and this mind is called God because of the Word. . ."[97] From these, we can already get a sense of the movement, which becomes so important to Maximus' treatment of the Origenist myth later in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem.*

Canon 7 of 553 contains more detail on another theme that does not appear in *epistula* and makes a less coherent appearance in canon 4 of 543. This theme discusses how Christ, who became king and Creator, redeems all rational beings. In this account Christ, who is united to God the Word before all ages and passes through each level of existence,

> . . . took on various bodies and received various names, becoming all
> things to all, among angels and angel, among powers a power, and among

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[95] *Acta concilium oecumenium Constantinopolitanum* (553), canon 2 in (*ACO,* 4.1, 248-249,* transl. Price, TTH 51.2, 284).

[96] *Acta*, canon 13 (*ACO,* 4.1, 248-249, transl. by Price, TTH 51.2, 286). This theme continues in canons 14 and 15.

[97] *Acta*, canon 8 and 9 (*ACO,* 4.1, 248-249).

the other orders or genera of rational beings took on appropriately the form of each, and then like us partook in flesh and blood and became for human beings a human being.[98]

Canon 8 strongly affirms that the Logos is God and consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one of the Holy Trinity and is the one who became incarnate.[99] In the earlier eighth canon of 543, there is recorded more of the consequence of this fuller picture: mainly, that God's power is finite, and creation is coeternal with God.

Sherwood rightly points out the importance of the triad οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια but seems to miss the equal importance of the term "knowledge" (γνῶσις). The history surrounding the time between the first canons of 543 and later literature is helpful. Price notes an increased focus on Christological issues between the *epistula ad synodum Origene* and later anathemas of 553 and the earlier condemnation of 543.[100] Within this ten-year span, changes within the Origenist party seem to have taken place. In order to understand this, and how it is relevant to our topic, some history will need to be reviewed. First, the condemnation of the three chapters by Theodore of Mopsuestia was, as Price outlines, a result of attempts to reconcile the miaphysites.[101] In Palestine, where support for Theodore was strong and within this broader imperial activity the conflict between anti-Origenists and pro-Origenists played out. Eventually the Origenists themselves experienced internal tensions between *Prōtoktists,* which seemed to have retained the view that Christ would ever be superior to the saints as first created (πρωτόκτιστος), and the *Isochrists* (Ἰσόχριστοι), who held that the saints would attain equality with Christ. The *Prōtoktists* were accused of posing a quadrinity because they added another person to the Trinity. The *Prōtoktists* sought support against the *Isochrists* and eventually won the favor of Justinian.[102] Price suggests that they did this by drawing out the aspects of the

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[98] *Acta*, canon 13 (*ACO,* 4.1, 248-249, transl. by Price, TTH 51.2)

[99] *Acta*, canon 8 (*ACO,* 4.1, 248-249)

[100] Price, TTH 51.2, 278-279.

[101] Price, TTH 51.2, 277-280; TTH 51.1, 20, 122-129.

[102] The source of much of this narrative is Cyril of Scythopolis see Daniel Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis' Monastic Biographies*

Isochrists' Christology that most resembled Nestorianism and reluctantly agreed to condemn Theodore's chapters against Cyril.[103] Regardless of whether this portrayal is accurate it shows how Christology came to be a more important issue as time went on.

So, from the canons of 543, 553 and Justinian's *epistula* there can be discerned a clear narrative structure to the Origenist myth: primordial unity → fall → creation of material existence → descent of the Logos for redemption → shedding of material existence → return to primordial unity. This narrative shows how bound up in the Origenist cosmology the issue of Christology is. They are virtually inseparable. This is in part because of the linkage of the unfallen mind with God the Word. On both ends of this cosmology, there is a unity of οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, and γνῶσις with Word. It is also because the return to primordial unity is accomplished by the *Logos* who, united with the mind and becoming Christ, takes on all the various forms of existence between the Monad and human beings. In light of Trinitarian theology of the fourth century where the triad of terms was a way of communicating consubstantiality, it is not surprising that these affirmations were condemned specifically over the issue of how to describe creation's, particularly human, union with God.

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as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism (Roma: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 2001)*, 190-200.

[103] Price, TTH 51*, 2.277-280. A problem for this way of explaining how Nestorianism and Origenism eventually were tied together at the Council is that it seems as if the issue between the two opposing Origenist sides is on the eschatological end of their cosmology; whether the saints and Christ will be equal or not. The Conciliar anathemas cut at the entire Origenist cosmology. The constant affirmations that Christ is one of the Holy Trinity, creator and God (anathemas 6, 7, 8) would cut as much against the *Prōtoktists* position as those which anathematize the equality of rational beings with Christ at consummation of all things (anathemas 13, 14, 15). In order to agree with the decisions of the council the *Prōtoktists* would not only have to condemn Theodore's chapters, but also disavow their entire cosmology. While this is not impossible, it creates a slight problem for both Price and Hombergen because it seems as if such an about face by the *Prōtoktists* would have gained the attention of Cyril of Scythopolis and perhaps been the source of some gloating. It seems more likely that the *Prōtoktists* cosmology differed in more areas than eschatology and perhaps allowed them to align themselves with Justinian. Hombergen rejects Brian Daley's suggestion that Origenists were lumped together by Neo-chalcedonians (Hombergen, *Second Origenist Controversy,* 190-198). He opines that the *Prōtokrists* had a closer affinity to the *Antiochene* tradition while the *Isochrists* were sympathetic to miaphysite Christology but does not make a detailed comparison.

In light of this overall picture, it seems that if Maximus wanted to challenge the Origenist cosmology he would need to take several steps. Primarily, there must be a demarcation between created and uncreated existence but one that gives an account of unity and diversity both as it relates to the one God and diverse beings but also as it relates to union with God. Another step would entail addressing how the *Logos* redeems not only human existence but also the cosmos. To accomplish the first task the terms οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια must be dealt with on the level of time via the other two triads (γένεσις-κίνησις-στάσις/ἀρχή-μεσότης-τέλος) as Sherwood suggests. But there must also be an attempt to deal with how γνῶσις fits in this picture. Consequently, he must primarily deal with these terms since they are reported to have been used by the Origenists. In the *Capita,* Maximus does not explicate a *Logos/logoi* doctrine as much as he assumes it, nor does he directly tackle some of the other issues such as the issue of satiety, movement, or Christology.[104] Instead, Maximus tackles issues that allow him to highlight God's transcendence in relation to knowledge, participation and the triad of terms οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια.

These texts give background for why Maximus places such emphasis on the relationship between γνῶσις, ἀγνοία, and even ἀγάπη and suggests that already at this early phase of writing Maximus is concerned with Origenist teaching particularly as it was divined from Evagrian spirituality.[105] Important to the development of self-control/mastery is the ability to perceive and understand clearly one's self and created beings in relation to God.

If, as was asserted earlier, self-control is the dominant theme of the third century of *Capita cartitate* and this means understanding the true nature of things and the proper use of material existence, then it should come as no

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[104] Maximus' strategy takes another step in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* commenting on texts that allows him to discuss the challenges of knowledge of God by highlighting both Gregory and Ps.-Dionysius' chastening of theological language. Additionally, he deals with the cosmological dimensions of Christology and soteriology calling on what has been called his "Chalcedonian logic" to demonstrate how Christ is the union of creation and thus achieves salvation as mediator. He also deals with the sequence οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια as it relates to creation and the Trinitarian persons.

[105] Maximus, *Cap. Car.* 3.3 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 144).

surprise that there are *capitula* that deal specifically with the contemplation of various kinds of existence. This plays directly into Maximus' conception of ascent where the contemplation of visible and invisible things is meant to develop not only a discernment of right uses (2.17) but understanding divine judgment and providence according to God's salvific purposes (1.99; 2.36-46, 99; 3.33). This includes explaining various kinds of love (blessed, blameworthy, praiseworthy, self-love; 3.67, 71) and their various motivations and also different kinds of thought (impassioned or bare; 3.42, 43) and kinds of knowledge (mere or joined with blameless love; 3.66-67). It is also helpful to remember here Maximus' conception of the δόγματα, which are concerned with God, visible and invisible creation, and also God's providence for and judgment of them (2.78). It should also come as no surprise that in the third century there is a focused and straightforward comparison of God and his creatures in 3.21-33.[106] Maximus is dealing with δόγματα and how to see creation rightly in relation to God.

With this background in mind, it is easier to locate the concern of Maximus' "anti-Origenist" arguments. Maximus' overall goal is to distinguish clearly between God and his creation. He does this in these thirteen *capitula* by highlighting the irreducible ontological gulf between God and his transcendent existence and that of his creatures and their dependent existence. As a result he successively explains this difference using the key concepts discussed above: γιγνώσκω in 21-23, γιγνώσκω and οὐσία (or φύσις) in 22 and 24, οὐσία (or ὕπαρξις) in 25-27, οὐσία and δύναμις in 28, δύναμις, γνῶσις and εἶναι in 29-32, γνῶσις, δύναμις and ἐνέργεια in 33 and ἐνέργεια (or ἐνεργέω), δύναμις, φύσις in 34-36.[107] Also, Maximus begins this discussion with God and the Holy Powers (3.21-22) and ends with the human body in 3.36 having discussed in ontological

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[106] Sherwood also notes that these 13 *capitula* are to be seen as a distinct group, see n. 150 on 3.21 on pages 258 and 259. In general I agree with Sherwood's summary of them but I would extend his observation concerning 3.21-24, 27, 28—that they are meant to distinguish God from his creatures—to the entire set. Additionally, I would add that Maximus' goal to emphasize this distinction is why he feels the need to explain how it is that creation interacts with God.

[107] Maximus uses various metaphysical terms here (οὐσία, φύσις, ὕπαρξις, εἶναι, ὑπάρχω), not just οὐσία and I think Maximus uses them with the same purpose: to describe what a thing is.

order rational and intellectual creatures (human and angels) and their relation to God in 3.23-29, creation and the relation between created things in 3.30-33, and finally the tripartite aspects of humanity in 3.34-36. Maximus is carefully considering the various kinds of existence, their relation to each other and to God and highlighting how and in what way they exist and what that means concerning their participation in Him. This observation also helps make sense of why Maximus is determined to assert that God's being has no contrary. If God's οὐσία allows contraries then it means that he is not only ontologically on the same plane as his creation and, therefore, cannot grant to creatures being and eternal being but it also means he is liable to moral vacillation (3.28-30). While God is αὐτοΰπαρξις, αὐτοαγαθότης, and αὐτοσοφία, created existence by virtue of its dependent status takes on these things only through participation and grace. They, therefore, are liable to contrary qualities such as being and non-being, ignorance and knowledge, virtue and vice. They are evil or good in proportion to their will (βούλησις), judgment (γνώμη), and activities (ἐνέργεια).[108]

Beyond the ontological consequences of this distinction are the effects it has spiritual life, particularly as it is conceived as deification. Maximus, therefore, is concerned to show how created existence participates in God and so must deal with the issue of γνῶσις as related through οὐσία and the very constitution of created existence. Maximus, in 3.21, clearly distinguishes how God knows and how his creation knows. Only God knows his own essence. Likewise, he knows his works through his Wisdom through which and in which he made all things. Natures endowed with reason, even Holy Powers, know God only by participation (μετοχή and μετέχω). Maximus caveats this with the statement that God is beyond participation and with a *capitulum* (3.23) that emphasizes the difference between how the human mind works in knowing and how God knows. The mind takes up (ἀναλαμβάνει) comprehension of created things within itself despite their existence outside the mind. This is not the case with God who is "eternal, infinite and boundless and has graced (χαρισαμένου)

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[108] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 3.27 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 156), 29 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 156, 158); 3.34-36 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 160).

creation with being (τὸ εἶναι), well-being (τὸ εὖ εἶναι), and eternal being (τὸ ἀεὶ εἶναι)."[109] Maximus' point would seem to be that, as Creator, God has a unique means of knowing. God knows creation as Creator through his Wisdom through whom and in whom they have been made. Whereas created rational beings contemplate creation and its λόγοι via the senses and the intellect in order to garner practical wisdom (τεχνική σοφία) which ultimately points to God, God's knowledge is more intimate and completely unmediated.

To make the point even more lucid, Maximus states that the knowledge rational beings possess is non-subsistent (ἀνυπόστατον). This is likely aimed at Evagrius' conception of essential knowledge. As I pointed out earlier this concept may not have meant the same thing to Evagrius as it had to either Origenists or their accusers but nevertheless had the potential to be seriously misunderstood. The description of knowledge, participation and being as being 'taken up' or 'graced upon' points to a unique need of creation to be dependent upon something outside itself for its existence and knowledge. Maximus has taken the transcendence of God to its logical epistemological conclusion: even knowing is experienced differently by God.

Maximus emphasizes this further, describing God as beyond participation and his knowledge depending solely on himself. If the divide between created and Creator is such that even their knowledge is not of the same quality, exactly how is it that creatures know and participate in God at all? Maximus addresses this difficulty by suggesting that they know God simultaneously through the contemplation of his creation and through participation. The latter he approaches by two means. Firstly, he emphasizes the kind of existence endowed by God as either being, well-being, or eternal being. Human beings and angels are given an aptitude or suitability (ἐπιτηδειότης) for well-being while the other two, being and eternal being, are free gifts (3.24). It is God who graces (χαρισαμένου) all three kinds of existence to beings (3.23) and it is solely by his will (βούλησις) and power (δύναμις) that these "incontrovertible" free gifts are given (3.24, 3.28).

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[109] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 3.23 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 152),

This distinction is laid over another in 3.25 made between image (εἰκών) and likeness (ὁμοίωσις) and is related to a list of four of God's ἰδιώματα— τὸ ὂν, τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν, ἡ ἀγαθότης and ἡ σοφία. Maximus relates these directly to humanity suggesting that being and eternal being, as part of humanity's οὐσία, are an image of God's being and eternal being. Likewise, goodness and wisdom in humanity are a likeness of God's goodness and wisdom. These are God's by nature and made humanity's by grace. The utilization of this distinction is central to Maximus' argument of showing how created rational beings participate in God on two levels. One level is by οὐσία concerning their existence and its duration and on another level, concerning God's goodness and wisdom, is determined by a human's γνωμική ἐπιτηδειότης which, as was noted above, is also an aspect of οὐσία but nevertheless does not automatically result in participation in God's likeness. As a response to humanity's gnomic suitability, they are graced with goodness and wisdom. Noticeably, absent in this discussion is the λόγος/τρόπος distinction.

Eric Perl, in dealing with a similar formulation later in *Ambiguum* 7, suggests that the seemingly contradictory sets of concepts that state God cannot be participated in, followed by an affirmation that creation must participate in order to exist and be in union with God can be understood as an attempt by Maximus to overcome the dangers of monism and dualism and attempting to articulate an acceptable account of identity and difference. Monism would collapse participation into an identity of creation and Creator as seen in the Origenist cosmology. Dualism would create and unbridgeable gap between Creator and creation making participation at any level near impossible. Perl suggests that at least one way Maximus overcomes this is by accepting participation in God but distinguishing between creation and deification. Creation occurs in the move from non-existence to existence creating the necessary difference between Creator and creation while deification occurs in the voluntary exertion of will by rational beings toward unity with God.[110]

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[110] Perl, *Methexis, Creation, Incarnation,* 221-233. Perl suggests that Maximus ultimately solves this issue not by actually denying the Neoplatonic conception of remaining or rest (μονή) but the Origenist's conception utilizing the doctrine of the λόγοι. However, there are other aspects that should be taken into consideration in order to give a full picture at this early stage of his writing. For example, if creation is dependent on God for existence and that occurs

Maximus seems to mean that God is beyond participation in that rational beings do not by *fiat* determine whether they participate in God. Even deification, which Maximus explicitly states involves the suitability of the will, must ultimately be graced by God in response to that suitability. The difference between creation and Creator means that participation is up to God albeit a very gracious God who grants both being and will even though it allows of contraries.[111]

These *capitula* (3.21-36) focus their attention on the differences of creation from God in relation to knowledge and moral vacillation. This includes a description of the constitution of rational beings. Another set of "anti-Origenist" *capitula* in century four (4.1-14) focus how to conceive of God and his ability to create and sharpens further how his constitution differs from that of creation. God's ability to create and care for creation is through his consubstantial Word and Spirit and is a source of awe (4.1-2). There is a concern here to stem speculation into why God created when he did except to say that his creation was done when he willed to give substance to his eternally

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through participation, is the participation continuous or is creation give enough self-sufficiency to be on its own? If this is done by an appeal to the λόγοι doctrine, how does Maximus address this issue in the *Capita caritate,* where no detailed λόγοι doctrine appears? In 4.4, Maximus states that God sets forth and gives οὐσία to his "eternally pre-existent knowledge (γνῶσις)" and two *capitula* later he denies any pre-existence of not only their essence (οὐσία) but also their qualities (ποιότητες). The latter phrase does not rule out a doctrine of the λόγοι, especially the way Perl explains the Neoplatonic doctrine of a cause carrying its effect. However, it would seem that in the *Capita caritate,* either because of reserve or by virtue of the development of his thought, he does not employ the λόγοι doctrine to solve the problem of participation. In the *Capita,* the λόγοι, while they can be tracked back to God, are not identified with the *Logos* and are not part of Maximus' grammar of participation. In *Cap. car.* 3.27 and 3.28, Maximus presents a solution suggesting that participation is continuous in that God sustains the cosmos through his ἐξουσία. Thus, creation of humanity, including its will, is a gift and God's sustenance of the cosmos provides enough space for human freedom; allowing the will to move the rational soul from creation to a suitability for deification (the redirection of desire), which is then graced by God (cf. 3.25,28, 4.10). This I think provides a better account of how Maximus solves the issue in the *Capita caritate.* To give this more detail and ultimately to locate this within his later explication of the λόγοι doctrine which does become part of his grammar of participation, would require explaining what Maximus means by ἐξουσία and ultimately how he locates the term in relation to the casual sequence οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια. Perl rightly sees the role of choice in Maximus (Perl, *Methexis, Creation, Incarnation,* 234-237) but at times does not consistently portray how Maximus sees all three modes (being, well-being, eternal well-being) as sustained by God's ἐξουσία and thus ultimately dependent on God's grace.

[111] Maximus similarly states this in 4.10 and 13 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 198).

pre-existent γνῶσις (4.3-5). Instead, one must seek the cause of creation. Here is the closest that Maximus comes in the *Capita* to associating the term "cause" with God himself or perhaps the Word. Despite this description, Maximus states creation is not, as the "Greeks" suppose, eternal and is a composite of οὐσία and qualities (ποιότητες) and not free from change (4.6, 9). In 4.7, Maximus asserts again that God is not knowable only through θεωρία of the things about him (τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸ) not through the things proper to him (τοῖς κατ᾽ αὐτό). In contrast to creation, the Holy Trinity is "infinite essence", "all-powerful (παντοδύναμος)", "Creator of all things", "without habits" (ἕξεις) or "aptitudes" (ἐπιτηδειότητες) and "is alone simple (ἁπλῆ), uniform (μονοειδὴς), without qualities (ἄποιος) peaceable (εἰρηναία) and without faction (ἀστᾰσίαστος)".[112] It's likely these last two terms are echoes of a common critique of Greek gods by Christian authors.

Finally, two new ideas are introduced. Maximus states that it is only God that is participated in, while rational beings both participate in being and well-being and share or communicate (μεταδίδωσι) well-being. To clarify, Maximus states in 4.12 that incorporeal beings communicate well-being through speech, action and being contemplated while corporeal beings are only contemplated. Maximus' discussion in 3.25 stated clearly that it is God who makes common (ἐκοινοποίησεν) both being and eternal being but graces well-being through participation (κατὰ μετουσίαν). Thus, Maximus is not denying communication to God as much as he is denying participation amongst creation. The only one able to be participated in is God, everything else communicates. In this conception, participation is superior to communication and participation only occurs between creation and its God. This, it seems to me, is another cut at the Origenist conception of the cosmos, by eliminating any progressive ontological participation with other fallen minds on the way toward unity with the Monad. He ends this series by stating that evil is not a substance (4.14). The emphasis in these *capitula* is God's ontological difference from creation and the dependence of created existence on God's will.

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[112] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.8, 9 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 196, 198).

Maximus' focus in both these sets is to clearly delineate the differences of Creator and creation. This is accomplished by addressing the terms οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, and γνῶσις and addressing how participation occurs. These differences run all the way down to the very way each "knows" and interacts and are a consequence of the differences in their very existence. God is present as beyond and infinite, with no contraries and self-existent (3.27).[113] In contrast, everything humanity possess or could possess, both image and likeness, are given by God. God is utterly transcendent while creation is utterly dependent on him. These texts present us with a new sub-theme and broaden Maximus purview of ascent from just the baptized to creation. In the *Capita,* he is concerned to show how creation which is irreducibly distinct from God participates in God and only God and lays out humanity's potential for deification which is predicated on God's irrevocable gifts but nevertheless depends on its fulfillment in the interaction between God's grace and human will. The human will, seeking to gain the likeness of God in wisdom and goodness, finds its goal in prayer and is perfected in its goal of imitation of Christ through maintaining a habit of love.

In significant ways, these developments and refinements reinforce and shape themes I have already covered in the *Liber*. God is not only the beginning of Christian life, but he is the beginning of all life as Creator. Likewise, while grace is a consistent refrain within ascent, it also significantly characterizes God's entire interaction with creation seen not only in its journey of love toward deification but in its creation. This distinction allows the first major theme, Trinity as beginning, means and end, to be possible since participation requires genuinely distinct subjects and yet allows for a kind of interaction that goes beyond basic communication to genuine participation based not only on nature but also will. These distinctions are a foundational part of Maximus' understanding and become part of the grammar he will utilize for his theology, affecting the way he describes cosmology, ascent and eventually assists in his ability to delineate issues in later "Christological" debates.

§3.3.2 Capitula *2.24-36: Theology, Trinity & the Hard Ways of Love*

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[113] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 3.27 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 156),

In *Capita caritate* 2.24-36, Maximus again uses a series of *capitula* to give us an idea of progressive ascent. In this case, Maximus pulls together not only γνῶσις and πρᾶξις, but also discusses explicitly the relation of the divine persons of the Father and the Son in response to "Tritheism". The explicit naming of Tritheism initially is odd especially when one reviews both the *Liber* and the rest of the *Capita* and finds no other heresy named even though it is clear Maximus is confronting "Origenist" theology. Thus, my review of this series of *capitula* will address two concerns. The first concern is how these *capitula* explain Maximus' conception of theology and its relation to love. I will argue that there is here an instance of Maximus illustrating the importance of γνῶσις (conceived as θεολόγια) and πρᾶξις (displayed in love) together by drawing attention to proper Trinitarian theology and mirror aspects of that theology in his anthropology. The second concern addresses why Tritheism specifically is used as a kind of case study for θεολόγια in his illustration. I will argue that while Maximus' main concern is to address the relationship of γνῶσις and πρᾶξις, he does so by illustrating how the Tritheism of his own day raises real theological, anthropological and ethical issues. It will be important for this argument to briefly review Tritheism, and so I will explore its contours by drawing together several important studies.

Maximus begins this set of *capitula* with an aspect of the practical life (2.24-26) that eventually leads to a discussion of θεολόγια (2.26-29) and finally to perfect love (2.30). The first *capitulum* is a statement about the various kinds of words (λόγοι) given by the Lord: commandments (ἐντολαί), δόγματα, threats (ἀπειλαί), promises (ἐπαγγελίαι) (2.24). It is because of these words that the Christian has kept hard (σκληράς) ways citing Psalm 16.4 (LXX Ps. 17.4). He then lists specific hardships (σκληραγωγίαι) of ascetic discipline (i.e. fasting, vigils, service to others) and its harsher consequences (i.e. disgrace, torture, death). The reward of self-mastery, if these ways are followed, is ἀπάθεια which gives rise to discernment (διάκρισις). Meanwhile, the reward of faith is knowledge which gives rise to love for God (2.25). The next *capitulum* (2.26) is more specific stating that the mind that has successfully accomplished the practical life (πρακτική) progresses toward prudence or practical wisdom (φρόνησις) and likewise the contemplative life (θεωρητική) progresses towards

knowledge (γνῶσις). Prudence allows for a discernment of virtue and vices and knowledge uncovers the λόγοι of incorporeal and corporeal creation. Maximus continues,

> Then at that moment when [the pure mind] is deemed worthy of theological grace, having traversed through all the aforementioned things by the wings of love and comes to be in God, it will carefully examine the *logos* concerning him (τὸν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον) through the Spirit as much as is humanly possible.[114]

Maximus regards θεολόγια as a grace presumably given by God or more specifically, as the latter part of the *capitulum* suggests, by the Spirit. In light of other areas I have explored, this is not unexpected. The Spirit was seen to be important in continuing aspects of the Son's activity in the *Liber* and has been shown to be intricately related with the indwelling of Christ. Both of these function as a means of illumination of oneself, creation, and ultimately God. In a way he did not in the *Liber*, though, Maximus here and later in 4.77 underscores the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the heights of contemplation, which again can be seen as the height of prayer. Elsewhere Maximus correlates the Spirit with the activities of contemplation θεολόγια and prayer stating that this is what the Apostle Paul meant in Galatians 5.16 when he commanded "Walk in the Spirit."[115] This is further evidence of how the Trinity, specifically the Holy Spirit, serves as a means of Christian life.

In the critical text, Ceresa-Gestaldo notes a variant toward the end of 2.26, where he chooses περὶ αὐτοῦ instead of περὶ αὐτόν.[116] However, given the earlier use of this language in 1.100 where Maximus used the phrase to indicate those λόγοι that can be known of God, I would have to disagree and favor περὶ αὐτόν. This reading is supported in the next *capitulum* were we find the same play of prepositional phrases that he made in 1.100. Here, when one is about to

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[114] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.26 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 102).

[115] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 4.64 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 220).

[116] Ceresa-Gestaldo, *Cap. sulla car.,* 102. While περί with the genitive can carry the same meaning as περί with the accusative, I think περὶ αὐτόν would be more consistent with Maixmus' other uses.

theologize (Θεολογεῖν μέλλων) the Christian is enjoined not to seek the λόγος proper to him (μὴ τοὺς κατ' αὐτὸν ζητήσῃς λόγους) since the human mind nor any other thing after God can find it. Rather one should search the λόγοι concerning him (τοὺς περὶ αὐτόν), carefully examining those λόγοι concerning his "eternity, boundlessness and limitlessness, and [concerning] goodness, wisdom and power as Creator, provider, and judge of existing things."[117] Here as in 1.100 we are met with both attributes of God but also titles that suggest the Trinity.

The next *capitulum* (2.28), states that it is a powerful man who combines γνῶσις with πρᾶξις. To do so sets the three aspects of the soul aright and allows the man to "give wings to his mind and depart toward God."[118] This *capitulum* echos 2.25 where ascent is dealt with in terms of self-mastery and faith. Both of these demonstrate how when ascent is pursued γνῶσις and πρᾶξις come together to engender love (ἐγκράτεια → ἀπάθεια → διάκρισις; πίστις → γνῶσις → ἀγάπη). In 2.29, Maximus then turns to two scriptural sayings from Jesus and exegetes them in contradistinction to "Tritheist" understandings of God. The first citation is John 10.30 ("I and the Father are one") which Maximus states "means the identity of essence," (τὸ ταὐτὸν τῆς οὐσίας σημαίνει) while John 10.38 shows "the inseparability of the persons" (τὸ ἀχώριστον δηλοῖ τῶν ὑποστάσεων.).[119] Maximus then contrasts this with "Tritheist" teachings which either suggest there are three Gods and origins by adhering to the Son's coeternality with the Father but denying that he is begotten of him or by denying the Son's coeternality altogether. The implication being the first "Tritheist" strategy denies the inseparability of the ὑποστάσεις while the second denies the identity of οὐσία. Maximus then calls upon Gregory Nazianzus to demonstrate that both one God and three ὑποστάσεις must be confessed. "Since," he states quoting Gregory, "God is divided yet indivisible . . . and joined together yet divisible." He concludes,

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[117] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.27 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 102, 104).

[118] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.28 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 104).

[119] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.29 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 104, 106).

For this reason, the division and the unity are a paradox. Yet why is it a paradox, if just as a human being is both united to and separated from [another] human being so also the Son is [united to and separated from] the Father and nothing else?[120]

The next *capitulum* (2.30) states that perfect love and the highest ἀπάθεια views humanity from the perspective of "one nature" and "in Christ". There is a conflagration of ideas here from Galatians 3.28 and Ephesians 1.23. Consequently, categories such as "one's own and someone else's", "one's self and another", "faithful and unfaithful", "slave and freeman", and "male and female" are mitigated by the realities of a common human nature and by being in Christ. Therefore, the one who possesses such love "considers all equally and is equally well-disposed toward all."[121] This *capitulum* is another example of Maximus' conception of perfect love resulting in an equal consideration of human beings. Earlier, equal love was grounded in both God's goodness and ἀπάθεια and because the baptized have the same nature as other human beings. What is different here, however, is that this equal love is given an additional grounding in the idea that human beings can be "in Christ."

This conflagration of scriptural texts will become an important concept for Maximus' later writings especially in the much celebrated and discussed *Ambiguum* 41. However, the proximity of these ideas concerning the unity of human nature despite difference and those so similarly reviewed in the previous *capitulum* concerning the Trinity should also be considered. While the connection between the Trinity and humanity is not explicitly made, when taken within the broader concerns of this series of *capitula*, Maximus appears to be giving an example of what he has already stated to be an important aspect of ascent – the joining of πρᾶξις and θεωρία. Θεολόγια as a subset of θεωρία or perhaps better stated, its peak, is explored in his discussion regarding the unity and distinction displayed in the Trinity. The interesting question at the end of 2.29 is suggestive in light of 2.30. What does Maximus mean by this question? Given the broader context of the *Capita*, it seems unlikely that he means to infer

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[120] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.29 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 104, 106).

[121] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.30 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 106).

that the constitution of human beings and God are exactly the same. Yet he does seem to be drawing some parallels. Maximus is careful in these two *capitula,* refusing to use parallel ontological terms (οὐσία in 2.29 and φύσις in 2.30). The only parity of terms is "one".

A shared nature deserves shared treatment despite the variety of distinctions. In the case of the Trinity, this means shared worship. Maximus does not mention worship here, but clearly the point is to maintain a proper understanding of God. In the case of humanity, especially when seen "in Christ", unity of nature means equal treatment in love. If this is the case then ascent is not purely a progression from πρᾶξις on to θεωρία; rather, they are coterminous. Contemplation of the divine and created realities has practical consequences. Clear vision regarding the δόγματα of the Trinity grants clear vision of the δόγματα of humanity with ethical consequences. Ascent is the proper *habitus* for approaching God but also for gaining a clear understanding of θεολόγια and the ethical life.

Maximus' train of thought here also bears marked affinity with Ps.-Dionysius. Ps.-Dionysius, conceiving of God as the source of unity, saw God's unifying power as drawing together humanity "into a godlike oneness, into a unity reflecting God."[122] Maximus, in this instance, portrays unity as inherent to things of the same nature but also because they are found "in Christ". Maximus will build on the ideas found in 2.24-30 later in the *Quaestiones et dubia, Ambiguum* 7 and *Mystagogia* 1 where he is much more explicit with how he understands the relation between Trinity and anthropology, unity, and distinction. Regardless, Maximus can see a common concern to address the "logic of unity and distinction" in both Ps.-Dionysius and Gregory, specifically from the perspective of Trinitarian theology.

The quotation of Gregory in 2.29 harkens back to *Or.* 39 in which the unity and distinction of the Trinity are discussed, but the same ideas can be found in other orations.[123] Gregory Benevich, in a study done specifically on this

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[122] Ps.-Dionysius, *De div. nom.* 1.4 (CD 1:112.14).

[123] Törönen in his work *Union and Distinction* discusses the concepts of union and distinction in relation to the Trinity in the second part of his study (ch. 3-5), but does not treat this passage, focusing much-needed attention on Maximus untranslated letters and *Opuscula.* He does, however, highlight Sherwood's footnote on the passage while commenting on *Op.* 13 in

capitula, notes that in there are actually several quotations from Gregory's orations 20, 25 and 39 drawn together. In addition to a word-for-word phrase from *Or.* 20 that is also cited by Justinian in his *Edictum rectae fidei,* Maximus follows Gregory's argumentation closely in his main explanation of the two errors of Tritheism.[124] Using these quotations, he suggests that Maximus is directly confronting two versions of Tritheism one represented by Damian in his debate with Peter Callinicum and another by John Philoponus. In this first version, Damian attempts to confront Tritheism but instead fails to properly distinguish between a property of a divine ὑπόστασις (ἰδιότης) and the ὑπόστασις itself. John Philoponus' theology was developed specifically around a theory of universals and particulars that valued highly Aristotle's discussion of first and second substances. For Philoponus, this meant seeing first substances as particular and real while second substances were universal and perceived only in the mind. Initially, one might grant that Philoponus is not interested in denying universals their own reality, only their reality apart from particulars. However, several witnesses seem to make clear Philoponus means to deny their actual existence favoring a kind of conceptualism over realism.[125] This included an equation in which φύσις and ὑπόστασις are near equivalents and an affirmation that a ὑπόστασις with its qualities constitutes an entirely different species.[126] Both of these versions of Tritheism in miaphysite communities were criticized by pro-Chalcedonians. As Benevich points out, Photius of Constantinople records Eulogius' criticism of both although does not name

order to point out that the Tritheism Maximus has in mind is that of John Philoponus (Törönen, *Union and Distinction,* 65).

[124] Benevich, "Maximus Confessor's Polemics Against Tritheism and His Trinitarian Teaching," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 105.2 (2012)600, 603-604. Benevich, also notes how the direct quotation is also reproduced in Justinian's, *Edictum rectae fidei.*

[125] The best witness actually seems to be Damian whose *Epistula Synodica* is preserved by Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle*, see Christophe Erismann, "The Trinity, Universals, and Particulars: Philoponus and Roscelin," *Traditio* 63 (2008), 293 and the same quote in Uwe M. Lang, "The Tritheist Controversy of the Sixth Century," in *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church,* eds. D. Vincent Twomey & Lewis Ayres (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 99.

[126] For two recent and helpful studies on Philoponus' theology see Christophe Erismann, "The Trinity, Universals, and Particulars," 277-305 and and Uwe M. Lang, "The Tritheist Controversy of the Sixth Century," 79-99, but also CCT 2/3, 268-280.

Damian directly. Likewise, and also mentioned by Benevich, Sophronius of Jerusalem's catalogs two versions of Tritheism. One represented by John Philoponus, Conon and Eugenius and another which he calls "minor Tritheism" (μικρά τριθεῖα) represented by Peter the Syrian (Callinicum) and Sergius the Armenian. Interestingly, Damian makes his list but is not called a Tritheist but a "new Sabellius".[127]

Behind the use of these quotations, Benevich, suggests several motives. Firstly, to strike at the identification of ὑπόστασις with ἰδιότης as found in Damian but also to exonerate Gregory whose, perhaps more ambiguous formulations, were used to support Damian's stance. Likewise, at first blush Maximus' account does not demonstrate any specific knowledge of Philoponus' theology but on closer examination can be seen to address the concerns raised by Philoponus' teaching. Maximus' question at the end of the *capitula,* Benevich suggests, is actually a subtle criticism of an analogy offered by Philoponus. In this analogy, human beings are described as one substance in thought, yet many men in reality. Consequently, there is a single God in thought only, yet in reality three consubstantial ὑποστάσεις.[128]

Benevich notes a similar analogy made by Gregory of Nyssa in *Ad Ablabium* but also draws attention to *Ad Graecos* where Gregory explicitly denies the application of particular substance to the divine persons.[129] While stating that, properly speaking, three men must be called three persons, Gregory does not state that since "man" is one, God must be one in exactly the same way.[130] Gregory of Nazianzus more explicitly denies the applicability of the analogy since, when speaking of humanity, its unity is in thought only while with God the unity is substantive.[131] Benevich rightly states that Maximus never

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[127] Sophronius, *Epistula synodica ad Sergium Constantinopolitanum*, §2.2.5, 2.6.1 in *ACO2* 2.1. but now also with English translation and critical text in *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy: The* Synodical Letter *and Other Documents,* intro., texts, transl. and comm. by Pauline Allen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 80, 142-144.

[128] Benevich, "Against Tritheism," 607.

[129] Benevich, "Against Tritheism," 604-605. For Gregory of Nyssa, see n. 35 on these pages.

[130] Benevich, "Against Tritheism," 605 n. 35.

[131] Gregory, Or. 31.15 (PG 36.149A-C: SC 250: 304). Benevich notes this, ("Against Tritheism," 606 n. 35) but see the discussion concerning this "principle of parity" in Christophe

makes this exact analogy but to state that Maximus does not draw attention to God as a kind of type or figure of union and distinction in humanity would ignore not only *Mystagogia* 1 but also the series of *capitula* reviewed here especially 2.29 and 2.30. Interestingly, when Maximus later explicitly cites how the Church is a type of God in *Mystagogia* 1, he does not mention the one nature of humanity but instead draws out the unity, despite diversity, of persons "in Christ".

Benevich also attempts to give some historical background for Maximus' engagement with Tritheism offering three hypotheses. The first option finds Maximus writing against John Philoponus, which he states is universally cited in relation to this *capitula*. However, this seems unexpected since the *Capita* is not "dedicated to Trinitarian theology" or "dogmatic polemics".[132] The second option is that both Sophronius and Maximus saw the relationship between miaenergism and Tritheism and so Maximus incorporates it. Here he cites Lang's study which ties miaenergism and Tritheism. Yet, he notes, the *Capita* came long before the miaenergist crisis.[133] The third option is that Maximus means to meet problems posed by an unnamed set of Tritheists, whose thought nevertheless was important to engage for pro-Chalcedonians.[134] In this case, he suggests perhaps there is some group within the pro-Chalcedonian community that may be struggling with these concepts and need some help articulating them.

I offer another explanation, which I hope meets some of the questions raised by Benevich's study. The placement of this passage is, as I have presented it, towards the end of a section that intends to highlight the importance of joining together θεωρία and πρᾶξις. I suggest that Maximus, in order to illustrate this point, gives a "real life" example in order to show it affects not only love of God but also love of neighbor. Yet, if the entirety of Benevich's exegesis of 2.29 is taken into consideration, Maximus is far too careful for this to

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Erismann, "The Trinity, Universals, and Particulars: Philoponus and Roscelin," *Traditio* 63 (2008), 277-305.

[132] Benevich, "Against Tritheism," 596.

[133] Benevich, "Against Tritheism," 596-597.

[134] Benevich, "Against Tritheism," 597.

be merely a heuristic example. Maximus does not use an obscure, antiquated example but rather reaches into a contemporary debate regarding the Trinity. It is a real and live problem, and Maximus means to show why. If part of ascent is accomplishing a "durable state of vision" which sees God and creation rightly, then understanding the Trinity, which lies in the realm of θεωρία or more specifically θεολόγια, will have consequences for πρᾶξις.[135] In this particular passage, the Trinity properly understood reveals a unity with distinction and the implication is that the Father, Son and, by extension, the Spirit are divine and, therefore, worshiped as the One God. The next passage, 2.30, follows a similar line of thinking, pointing out that the one who is perfect in love looks beyond difference to discern the one nature in all human beings and thus "is equally well-disposed toward all". This is further reinforced by an appeal to a conflagration of Galatians 3:28 and Ephesians 1:23 where difference is swallowed up "in Christ".[136]

Tritheism is the only heresy that Maximus specifically names in either the *Liber* or *Capita caritate.* Tritheism by his day, as has been noted by many, was usually associated with the later writings of John Philoponus, despite having a more complex history in miaphysite communities that antedate the philosopher's involvement.[137] It has been said that Tritheism for pro-Chalcedonian authors was not of great concern.[138] In one sense, this seems to be an accurate assessment since there is a general lack of pro-Chalcedonian sources addressing the issue as if it were an imminent danger to pro-Chalcedonian communities. It rarely ever seems to be an issue raised *between*

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[135] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 3.69 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 176).

[136] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.30 (*Cap. sulla car.,* 106).

[137] For this history see Albert Van Roey, "La controverse trithéite depuis la condemnation de Conon et Eugene jusqu' à la conversion de l'eveque Elie," in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, 487-497 (Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker, 1982); Albert Van Roey, "La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugéne (557-569)," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 16 (1985), 141-165 and Albert Van Roey and Pauline Allen, *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century,* Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 56 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994) and for John Philoponus in particular see Uwe Michael Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century: A Study and Translation of the Arbiter, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Études et documents Fascicule* 47 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

[138] Allen & Van Roey, *Monophysite Texts, 105.*

pro-Chalcedonians. However, in another sense this determination seems to overlook some basic connections pro-Chalcedonian authors themselves make with miaphysite communities in mind and evidence of its concern in the very heart of Byzantium.[139] Only 20 years before Maximus is born, Tritheism had become enough of a concern that Theodosius, the miaphysite patriarch of Alexandria who had been exiled and living in Constantinople, felt the need to address it within his host city.[140] Likewise, there is evidence that pro-Chalcedonian leaders presided over debates between Tritheist groups.[141] Why, if they have no particular interest in it?

An excellent example of pro-Chalcedonian engagement can be found in the corpus of Anastasius I, who served twice as the pro-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch from 558-570 and 593-599 CE. One of his works entitled, *Adversus eos qui in divinis dicunt tres essentias,* portrays a dialog between an obviously pro-Chalcedonian "orthodox" protagonist and an anti-Chalcedonian Ἀκοινώνητος antagonist. Despite the title, nearly the entire dialog involves a debate about whether Christ has one or two natures and whether those natures persist after the incarnation.[142] It is only after nearly three-quarters of the dialog has passed that issues specific to the Trinity begin to take center stage. When he does finally address these issues, he identifies the same metaphysical issue underlying both Tritheism and miaphysite Christology: the lack of a clear and consistent understanding of and language for the relationship between what is what is one and what is many. Especially significant in the discussion is how to understand and locate the term φύσις within the range of ontological

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[139] Allen and Van Roey, *Monophysite Texts* lists Ps.-Leontius (*Liber de sectis, PG* 86.1231-1234), Timothy of Constantinople (*De iis qui ad ecclessiam accedunt, PG* 86.44), Sophronius, *Epistula synodica,* (Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem,* 65-157). Other helpful studies include Giuseppe Furlani, *Sei Scritti Antitriteistici in lingua siriaca,* PO 14.4 (Paris, 1920) and Hubert Martin, "La controverse trithéite dan l'empire byzantine au Vie sièle," PhD. diss. Louvain, 1953.

[140] Van Roey and Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, 105-107, 122-143.

[141] Uwe M. Lang, "The Tritheist Controversy of the Sixth Century," in *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church,* eds. D. Vincent Twomey & Lewis Ayres (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 81-82.

[142] The two most significant works done on Anastasius I are Stergio N. Sakkos, *ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΟΥ Α' ΑΝΠΟΧΕΙΑΣ ΑΠΑΝΤΑ: ΤΑ ΣΩ ΖΟΜΕΝΑ ΓΝΗΣΙΑ ΕΡΓΑ*, (Thessalonike, 1976) and Karl-Heinz Uthemann, "Des patriarchen Anastasius I. Von Antiochien Jerusalemer Streitgespräch einem Tritheiten (CPG 6958)," *Traditio* 37 (1981), 73-108.

terms available for both Christ and the Trinity. In Anastasius I's eyes, to confront one means to uncover the other and to address either is to tackle the same metaphysical ambiguity.

Does the appearance of Tritheism in pro-Chalcedonian writings mean that the author is attempting to confront miaphysite Christology? For Anastasius I, this seems to be the case, and there is some evidence that an analogous imperial strategy was used as well, although for more political reasons. Meyendorff, in tracking the Tritheism of this period, suggests that Heraclius' cousin, Nicetas adjudicated between the miaphysite communities of Alexandria and Antioch on the issue of Tritheism in order to unify the adherents of his empire and gain support against Persian invasion.[143] These, and activities like it, were not always received with the greatest appreciation by pro-Chalcedonians.[144] Returning again to Sophronius, for example, it should be noted that he goes out of his way in his catalogue of heresies to point out several personalities associated with the trouble of Tritheism referring specifically to names prominent within miaphysite communities.[145] All of this suggests that Tritheism, while it may not have been an imminent danger within pro-Chalcedonian communities, was nevertheless a concern since theologically it highlighted problematic areas within miaphysite Christology and politically because, if it could be addressed, then it might give room for theological compromise and political unity during an era of constant war.

With this in the background, is Maximus tackling Tritheism as a way to get at miaphysite theology? I would suggest that given the background it is likely that Maximus is using real life Tritheism, found in miaphysite communities, to illustrate the necessity of clear theological thinking and its consequences. Maximus uses Tritheism to draw out the necessity of aligning θεωρία/θεολόγιαand πρᾶξις/ἀγάπη for the proper love of God and love of

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[143] John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions. The Church 450-680 AD* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 275-276. Meyendorff sees the presence of the Emperor's cousin Nicetas as likely playing a key role in the reconciliation of the miaphysite communities of Antioch and Alexandria.

[144] Booth, *Crisis of Empire,* 104-105. See especially notes 65 and 66.

[145] Sophronius, *Epistula Synodica* §2.2.4-2.2.5, 2.6.1 (Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem*, 78-83, 137-145 [142-143].

humanity. This maxim plays out in real life suggesting that if one's theology of the Trinity is amiss, like that of miaphysite Tritheism or more generally miaphysitism, so will one's love for humanity and those "in Christ". While other pro-Chalcedonians were quick to point to Tritheism as the Trinitarian consequence of miaphysite Christology, Maximus adds to the critique an anthropological and ethical appraisal. Maximus, perhaps for the first time in his writing, deals with the concepts of union and distinction specifically within the context of Trinitarian theology. From this perspective, it seems less a philosophical problem than it is a theological insight that Maximus will eventually apply to that problem. This theology becomes a means of illuminating an analogous reality in humanity and introduces a new theme into Maximus' grammar suggesting another way that the Trinity is both goal by virtue of being the goal of contemplation but also means by providing illumination about the joining of θεωρία and πρᾶξις and specifically about union and distinction.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how Maximus has built on his baseline Trinitarian grammar for Christian life that I identified and contrasted in chapters one and two. Several of the *capitula* show how he has developed and refined his thought regarding the Trinity as end; specifically as the goal of ascent and imitation. For imitation, this means rooting God's equal love not only in his goodness but also in his ἀπαθῆ. His *capitula* on the Trinity as the goal of ascent entailed a fuller description of ascent specifically θεωρία/θεολόγια and the activities of contemplation in relation to created reality and God himself. Maximus' assertion that God cannot be known in his οὐσία but can be through his activities will continue to inform and shape his theology and his descriptions of ascent. His loose correlation of those activities with the divine persons was also noted. Elsewhere, Maximus made more explicit the connection between the Spirit as means of illumination and the perceptibility of God's presence in the baptized. In fact, whenever the concept of illumination is found, the Spirit's role and activities quickly follow usually with a correlation to Christ's indwelling. Finally, through an analysis of Maximus' engagement with Origenism and Tritheism, I showed how Maximus supplement his grammar for the Trinity as

beginning, means, and end. By highlighting the irreducible distinction between Creator and creation, Maximus shows how the Trinity can be beginning, means, and end while avoiding ontological confusion and allowing space for genuine interaction and participation. Maximus, through his theological insight concerning union and distinction, draws out the problems of miaphysite Tritheism and miaphysitism more generally and contributes his own distinctive judgment to an often made pro-Chalcedonian critique.

CHAPTER 4

Transition, Synthesis & a New Grammar for Trinity & Christ

In this final chapter, I cover the last three of Maximus' works written before, by, or in 626/627 CE: *Quaestiones et dubia, Ep.* 2 and *Op.* 13. As I stated in the introduction, the first two works I suggest are written after *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate* but before *Op.* 13. In these works, Maximus is in a period of transition, synthesis, and discovery, building on his earlier work but also incorporating new technical vocabulary to his already established Trinitarian grammar for Christian life. After a brief overview of each section, I will cover *Quaestiones et dubia* (4.1) and *Ep.* 2 (4.2) briefly before looking closely at *Op.*13 (4.3). This last section requires some background on Maximus' pro-Chalcedonian context and so before I analyze his work, I will explore the traditional canon of authors in an attempt to give a nuanced presentation of the issues.

In *Quaestiones et dubia*, Maximus employs the literary style of *quaestio-responsio* in order to tackle scriptural and patristic ἀπορίαι but more importantly it reveals an even broader set of sources upon which he draws. While there are many areas that could be explored, I will review 1) areas where Maximus adds some complexity to his presentation by continuing to utilize and refine language and concepts used in the *Liber* and *Capita,* but will 2) focus primarily on issues related to Maximus' direct reflection on Trinitarian thought. Here, finally, we see Maximus apply not only technical language regarding Christ but also the application of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction to the Trinity as a way of discussing what is three and what is one.

In *Epistula* 2, I will explore how some of the refinements observed in *Quaestiones et dubia,* along with how the λόγος/τρόπος distinction and technical language for Christ are synthesized with his already established Trinitarian grammar for Christian life.

Finally, in *Opusculum* 13, I will explore how Maximus engages a particular stream of pro-Chalcedonian theology and how it shapes his conception of the relationship between the Trinity and Christ presenting us with a new grammar for talking about both. This will require delving into

Maximus' background, which I hope to accomplish by tracking a particular saying from Gregory of Nazianzus *Epistula prima ad Cledonium* (*Ep.* 101) in the post-Chalcedonian period. While *Op.* 13 only introduces Maximus' engagement with this trajectory, I will attempt to provide a basic sketch from which the mature themes celebrated by other scholars from his later works can be located.

§4.1 *Transition: More Questions and New Answers in* Quaestiones et Dubia

§4.1.1 *Overview*

In this part of the chapter, I will look at Maximus' engagement with various issues in *Quaestiones et dubia* related to the Trinity.[1] In many ways, this work is like a set of brief sketches and notes - a transitional piece where Maximus first deals with questions that he will develop later in the *Ambigua.* It is, for example, the first time he deals with the ἀπορία found in Gregory of Nazianzus' *Or*. 23.8.[2] This judgment is based partly on the themes he explores and his engagement with earlier concepts such as the λόγοι and γνῶσις as mediated through the nexus of faith, *praxis*, *theōria,* and Trinity. In this regard, he begins to clearly explain the relationship between the *Logos* and λόγοι and identify God, particularly the Father, as Cause. He is not as focused on refuting Origenist ideas as he was in the *Capita,* although there are several questions that clearly have that tenor. Taken together, these suggest that it was written after the *Capita* and is among the last of the early writings before his major wrestling with Origenism in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem.* Perhaps the most telling evidence, however, is his engagement with the λόγος/τρόπος distinction. While Maximus touches on the λόγοι in *Capita caritate,* the λόγος/τρόπος pairing does not occur even in places one might expect it, such as a discussion of the Trinity (2.29, 4.8) and the distinction between image and likeness in humanity (3.25) nor the constitution of created beings (4.8, 9). Similarly, his account of the incarnation

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[1] The critical edition is *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones et dubia,* ed. José H. Declerck *CCSG* 10 (Turnhout: Brepols-Leuven, 1982). The most recent English translation with introduction and notes is *St. Maximus the Confessor's Questions and Doubts,* transl. Despina D. Prassas (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010) and contains an excellent bibliography for its study.

[2] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §105 (CCSG 10:79-80). Maximus deals with it again along with a similar saying from Gregory's *Or.*29.2 (PG 36.76A-C: SC 250.178-180) in *Ambiguum* 1 (CCSG 48:6-7)

in the *Liber*, which affirmed Christ as God and human by nature, lacked the technical language he uses later in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem.* Maximus engages all three of these items in *Quaestiones et dubia* and from this point forward will usually utilize them as part of his standard presentation of the ontological constitution of the Trinity, Christ, and creation.

Before I begin a closer readings of specific passages, I want to state that I do not attempt to treat every reference to God or the Trinity in *Quaestiones et dubia* but will review only a selection of passages that give a taste of how Maximus builds or refines his Trinitarian grammar for Christian life or signal potential emphases in latter phases of writing. Prassas, for example, has in her 2010 translation touched on the importance of several themes: *Logos/*λόγοι and θεωρία /πρᾶξις. Both of these will be discussed here but from a slightly different perspective. There is a nexus of themes surrounding the activities of the Son and the Spirit, those of *theōria* and *praxis* and how this relates to sources of γνῶσις. Likewise, there is another set of concepts surrounding *Logos/*λόγοι which make a distinction that will be important to later phases of writing. While the exact *sitz im leben* of the work remains unclear, Maximus' writing fits a mind that is in transition from the ideas expressed in the *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate* toward the more focused and detailed anti-Origenist arguments of the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* and his major scriptural treatise *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*. As Prassas notes, there is no argument in *Quaestiones et dubia* regarding the Origenist triad στάσις, κίνησις, and γένεσις but there is an engagement with the exegetical writings of Origen, Evagrius, and Didymus the Blind as well as a clear attempt to work out the relationships involved in the two themes she named.[3]

§4.1.2 – *Refinements & Clarification of Trinity as Beginning, Means, and End*

§4.1.2.1 *Ascent & Descent of the* Logos *& God as Cause*

In this brief section, I have two goals. The first goal is to show how Maximus now explicitly names God as Cause. The second goal is to show how he

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[3] Prassas, *Questions and Doubts*, 14-16.

also conceives of ascent using a more detailed account of the *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine. These lay inchoate in the *Capita caritate,* but now become explicit. They also signal how Maximus is adding another layer of complexity to his description of ascent and its relation to God.

In *Quaestio* 64, Maximus interprets a set of questions taken from Proverbs 30.4:

> . . . Who ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered together the winds to [his] bosom? Who has smashed together water in [his] clothing? Who keeps the uttermost parts of the earth? What is his name?[4]

Maximus' exegesis of this text gives him an opportunity to reflect on the purpose (σκοπός) of humanity. Commenting on the first question, he discusses how human beings were meant, "to ascend in desire to their Cause" and then, "descend to created things that are after the Cause", and when they have been "properly examined with knowledge to raise them up to their maker."[5] The verb for "examined" is ἐπισκοπέω and easily sets up the reader to anticipate the next section which discusses how, when humanity failed in their role, Jesus Christ as a "second Adam" recapitulates this ascent and descent first in his humanity and then in his divinity and then ascends again with both his humanity and divinity. This ascent and descent are presented as an example of how ascent must be pursued.

The next section relies on the rest of the quote from Proverbs to explain how "descending" into created things means gathering together "the winds in his bosom" through the examination of the λόγοι of beings. As a result, once one has gathered the diverse λόγοι "in the productive and contemplative part of the heart, he births the one *Logos* of God. For the many λόγοι of beings is drawn together into one."[6] Maximus ends his response by correlating other areas of the passage with what he calls the "ethical parts of philosophy."[7] I want to draw attention to how Maximus has linked together explicitly several ideas that were

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[4] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §64 (CCSG 10:50.1-3).

[5] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §64 (CCSG 10:50.4-8).

[6] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §64 (CCSG 10:51.27-28).

[7] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §64 (CCSG 10:51.33): . . . ἐν τῷ ἠθικῷ μέρει τῆς φιλοσοφίας . . .

only embryonic in his earlier presentations of ascent. The first explicit link is the title "Cause" with God. Specifically, Jesus' ascent is described as "moving toward the Cause". This could easily be understood as referring to the Father. Maximus does not explicitly correlate the title "Father" with "Cause" here but, if the incarnate *Logos* is moving toward the Cause, the inference is that this Cause is the Father. This is not without precedent. As Maximus suggests, these movements mirror the incarnation. Additionally, since the Son ascends to the right hand of the Father, it makes sense that once contemplation finds its goal in the *Logos,* and the *Logos* is seen as God then the mind goes together with him, in him or through him to the Father.[8] While in earlier presentations of ascent Jesus served as an example of love and ascent, his activities were not described as "moving toward the Cause" but instead as obedience to the Father in his keeping of the commandments of love. Even more though, this set of movements shows the way in which ascent and contemplation depend on the activities of the divine persons to reveal or lead the mind to one another.

The second explicit link is between the λόγοι and the *Logos*. In *Capita caritate,* the λόγοι drew the mind toward their cause and towards recognizing God's goodness, wisdom, providence, and judgment, whereas in this case Maximus states they are drawn together to the one *Logos*. I do not mean to say that Maximus could not or did not have this relationship in mind before, only that here he makes this connection explicit. Maximus links the idea of "bosom" with "navel" to draw out that image of birth, which is meant to describe the process of the λόγοι coming together to "birth" the one *Logos* of God. Already, Maximus is using language that ties several themes together: the contemplation of the λόγοι and the manifestation or, in this case, "birth" of God as *Logos* in the human person. This last phrase is not as clear as the translation might suggest. In the *Liber,* Maximus uses the title "The Eternal Word" and attaches the relative clause "who is of God the Father" which makes a clear identification of the term λόγος with the title "Son". In the *Capita,* his uses are equally clear (4.3, 3.2) and yet in neither of these early works does he describe the gathering of the λόγοι

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[8] The same or similar movements are stated elsewhere in §142 (CCSG 10:101), §I.68 (CCSG 10.155-158), §136 (CCSG 10.97).

into one – the *Logos*. So, a natural question would be: does Maximus mean the second person of the Trinity or something less heightened like God's one principle? Elsewhere in *Quaestio* 48, Maximus makes a similar statement using the image of chain mail to describe how the λόγοι are linked together toward the "one".[9] Here "one" lacks the genitive phrase "of God" although the inference by way of ellipsis is one λόγος. A similar ambiguity initially accompanies *Quaestio* 53, where Maximus states "Nature having being united to the λόγος has held all knowledge," but, later, λόγος is clearly identified as the "Lord, who having become incarnate [and] has summed up all things in himself, measured out these λόγοι."[10] Yet the initial phrase does not contain the genitive "of God". However, there are places that make the connection clear. For example, in *Quaestio* 105, there is a clear identification of the title "*Logos* of God" with the "Son", thus making explicit the identification of the phrase with the second person of the Trinity.[11] Likewise, when one takes into consideration Maximus' statements that equate doing the commandments with having or possessing God in the *Capita* additional *quaestiones* can be added as support.[12] In later literature, particularly *Ambiguum* 7, this linkage is made equally clear.

Yet there is still a slight ἀπορία. If Maximus has inferred the Cause as the Father and the λόγοι draw the mind to the birthing of the *Logos* there still remains the corresponding movement of ascent to the Cause, which the incarnate *Logos* exhibits. Maximus does not elaborate on this movement here. Nevertheless his explanation, because it highlights the life of the incarnate *Logos*, demonstrates a Trinitarian texture since it is understood that he is ascending to the Cause – the Father. Maximus in the *Liber* and *Capita* already suggested that the Spirit's illumination is an extension of the activities of the Son's incarnate life. Here the λόγοι lead to the *Logos,* who will lead to the Father. Ascent and illumination depend on the activities of the Son and Spirit.

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[9] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §48 (CCSG 10:44.7-8; 11-13).

[10] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §53 (CCSG 10:44.7-8; 11-13).

[11] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §105 (CCSG 10:79.22-23). Compare §55, 111, 190 (CCSG10:45.1-11; 82.1-8; 131.1-132.45)

[12] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §142, 166 (CCSG 10: 101.1-21; 116.1-5).

In *Quaestiones*, Maximus has built and refined his conception of ascent in relation to God. Firstly, he does this by explicitly using the title "Cause" for God, likely the Father, and secondly, through his description of the λόγοι being drawn into one – the *Logos*. Thirdly, he does this by utilizing language that shows not only how fulfilling God's commandments leads to a manifestation of the *Logos* in the human person but also contemplation of the λόγοι. However, it is not clear that the perceptibility of God's presence is the source of his reflection as much as explaining the means by which the baptized experience this reality. This language will find further expression in his later writings, particularly *Expositio orationis Dominicae* and *Ambigua ad Iohannem.* These small changes show how Maximus has incrementally added clarity to his description of God and how they shaped his language for ascent. God is beginning and end because the Father is Cause. Likewise, God is the goal of the contemplative stage of ascent because the Word is the locus of the λόγοι and when this stage has run its course results in a realization of the one *Logos* in the human person. Finally, Jesus Christ as the *Logos* exemplifies this ascent and descent and so serves as a source of imitation.

§4.1.2.2 *Trinity & Participation Revisited* – Quaestio *3.1: The Image of God & God's Οὐσία & Ἐνέργεια*

In this section, I look at Maximus' continued reflection on issues surrounding the activity of God in the human being's journey toward union with him. Specifically, God functions as the means of human life because he provides the basis for existence and deification through participation.

In *Quaestio* 3.1, Maximus addresses what it means for human beings to be made in the image and likeness of God from Genesis 1.26 and why in 1.27 being made in God's likeness is absent. Maximus' response to the first part of the question is that the image of God is located in the soul as part of its οὐσία. What is given (δέδωκεν) is incorruptibility, immortality, and invisibility (ἡ ἀφθαρσία, ἡ ἀθανασία, τὸ ἀόρατον) along with self-governance and self-determination (τὸ αὐτοδέσποτον καὶ αὐτεξούσιον).[13] Those things that correspond to the likeness are "impassibility (ἀπάθεια), meekness, longsuffering and the rest of

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[13] I follow Prassas' translation of αὐτοδέσποτον as it fits the context of the discussion much better than the lexical entry of "self-mastery".

the characteristics of God's goodness all of which are indicative of God's activity."[14] To address the second question, Maximus restates the correlation that those things κατ᾿ εἰκόνα are from God's οὐσία while those καθ᾿ ὁμοίωσιν are characteristic of his activity (ἐνέργεια). The latter, however, are not immediately given to the soul but are reserved for its self-determining will (ταῦτα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ αὐτεξουσίῳ ἀφῆκε γνώμῃ) awaiting its maturity when the soul establishes itself in God through the imitation of the "God-befitting characteristics of virtue" (τῶν θεοπρεπῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς γνωρισμάτων).[15] Maximus' exegesis of the text suggests that verse 27 only records the beginning of this process while God awaits humanity's response before it is granted likeness with him giving an eschatological dimension to the creation account.

A quick comparison with *Cap. car.* 3.25 might suggest Maximus has changed his conception of the human constitution and participation based on his explanation of the image and likeness pairing. In the *Capita,* it was being and ever-being that were given to the οὐσία and goodness and wisdom to likeness. However, a closer reading shows that Maximus carries forward several ideas. All of the characteristics (τὰ γνωρίσματα) given to the οὐσία or φύσις of humanity – incorruptibility, immortality, and invisibility – can be seen to align with being and eternal being while those given in response to the self-determining will – ἀπάθεια, meekness, longsuffering – can be aligned with the goodness and wisdom of *Cap. car.* 3.25. The trigger for God's giving of these things according to likeness is still the same, although here instead of "by the fitness of will" (τῇ γνωμικῇ ἐπιτηδειότητι), Maximus uses "by our self-determining will," (τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ αὐτεξουσίῳ . . . γνώμῃ).[16]

However, Maximus' description in the *Quaestiones* does make some things more explicit and even adds aspects that were not in his previous account. For example, Maximus states that the soul is what receives those things κατ᾿ εἰκόνα θεοῦ while in the *Capita* it is ἡ λογικὴ καὶ νοερὰ οὐσία to which God

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[14] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §3.1 (CCSG 10: 170.11-13): . . . ἡ ἀπάθεια, τὸ πρᾶον, τὸ μακρόθυμον καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῆς ἀγαθότητος τοῦ θεοῦ γνωρίσματα, ἅπερ πάντα ἐνεργείας θεοῦ εἰσιν παραστατικά.

[15] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §3.1 (CCSG 10: 170.18).

[16] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §3.1 (CCSG 10: 170.16).

communicates (ἐκοινοποίησεν) his divine attributes (τὰ θεῖον ἰδιωμάτὰ). This terminology, like the list of characteristics, is not entirely out of place. The soul, specifically, is the place of the rational and intellectual οὐσία. What Maximus makes more explicit is that self-determination and self-governance, as "imagings" (εἰκονίσματα) of the divine, are also given to the soul. Taking both the *Capita* and *Quaestiones* together, this means the "self-determining" will is as much a gift of God as being and eternal being. The most significant addition is Maximus' distinction between those things that are "imagings" of the οὐσία of God and those things that are indicative (εἰσιν παραστατικά) of God's ἐνέργεια. The former are given without human action, the latter "anticipate the maturity of the human being" specifically their imitation of virtue. This imitation in the *Capita* and the *Liber* is primarily of Christ or God and secondarily of biblical examples. Here, perhaps because it deals with the creation of humanity in the Genesis text, Maximus highlights simply God's ἐνέργεια. In the *Capita caritate,* all of the τὰ θεῖον ἰδιωμάτὰ are an image or likeness of God's οὐσία. In *Quaestiones*, however, only the first set are aligned to God's οὐσία while the later are aligned with God's ἐνέργεια. Is this merely another reformulation of the same idea or does this distinction demonstrate Maximus' further reflection on the terms οὐσία, δύναμις, and ἐνέργεια? How does he understand the relationship between these terms? Does this affect his Trinitarian theology? At this point, it is unclear, however, that human beings mirror or unite with God's ἐνέργεια – a theme he will utilize in *Ep.* 2 and eventually *Mystagogia* 1. Regardless, these slight differences in language show that Maximus is continuing to reflect and perhaps refine his account of participation.

§4.1.2.3 *Θεολόγια – Prayer, Death, & Coming to be in God*

In this section, I want to cover briefly four texts that show ways Maximus reflects on theology. In the *Capita*, theology and theological truth were a grace and activity associated with the illumination provided by the Spirit. The *Liber* portrayed illumination as an extension or appropriation of the activities of the Son – a notion preserved, at times, in the ambiguous correlation of the indwelling Christ and Spirit in the *Capita.* Maximus continues using the language of illumination and grace to characterize the activities of the Spirit, but these

references are scattered throughout the *Quaestiones* and are not concentrated in one particular passage.[17] Also, because God's οὐσία is unknowable and because human knowledge is attained differently than God's, it is through his μεγαλοεργία that human beings perceive his goodness and wisdom. God's unknowability and irreducible difference from creation shape the way he conceives of ascent and the theological enterprise. Theology in this presentation is not only reflection on the Trinity in creation but also depends on the gracious and illuminating activities of the persons of the Trinity. In *Quaestiones*, Maximus refines this idea further. I will comment on each of the passages below and then discuss in what ways they help refine his previous portrayals.

In *Quaestio* 46, Maximus presents an interpretation of the character of Zacchaius and his interaction with Jesus from Luke 19:1-10. Maximus' tactic, which Blowers has shown to be typical of the Confessor's exegesis, is to explain the scene and it details in a way that provides "new insights into the dynamics of the ascetic life."[18] In the first part of the passage, Maximus uses the scene to discuss the stages of ascent, using Zacchaius' ascent and descent from the tree as a response to the *Logos* and as a way to discuss the process of moving from repentance, to a redirection of desire to "intense prayer". In the second part, he makes this connection more dense and technical stating,

> The passage speaks of the active, the natural, the theological and of prayer.
> For prayer is higher than theology. For the one theologizes about the
> divine from those things that had come to pass but the other joins the soul
> to God himself unknowably and ineffably.[19]

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[17] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §31, 142, 163, 180, 191, I.28, I.3, II.7 (CCSG 10:26.1-10; 101.1-21; 114.1-21; 123.1-16; 132.1-134.63; 147.1-148.20; 138.1-139.13; 166.1-10). A notable exception is 191, which I will discuss below.

[18] Paul M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of* Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 7 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 52-56.

[19] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §46 (CCSG 10:39.21-25): Ἤ τὴν πρακτικὴν λέγει καὶ φυσικὴν καὶ θεολογικὴν καὶ εὐκτικήν· ἡ γὰρ εὐκτικὴ τῆς θεολογίας ἐστὶν ὑψηλοτέρα· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν γεγονότων τὸ θεῖον θεολογεῖ, ἡ δὲ αὐτῷ συνάπτει ἀγνώστως καὶ ἀπορρήτως τὴν ψυχὴν τῷ θεῷ.

In the *Capita*, the exact relationship between θεολόγια and prayer could initially seem unclear because of the heightened language used of both. For example, in the *Capita*, prayer was consistently cast as both the end goal of intellectual focus and the redirection of desire (cf. *Cap. car.* 2.6). Θεολόγια was consistently described as the height of the contemplation. For example, Maximus uses heightened language like "being in God" to describe the searching out of the λόγοι concerning God.[20] Likewise, this language from *Capita caritate* 1.100 was also used to talk about θεολόγια in *capitula* 2.26-27 – having come to be in God, one examines through the Spirit the λόγος concerning God (τὸν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον) as opposed to God in himself (κατ᾽ αὐτὸν). This was followed by the exact same list of items that can be known about him that appeared in *capitulum* 1.100. Similar language was also used for prayer. In *capitulum* 2.6, the supreme state of pure prayer for the contemplative life occurs when the soul is completely captivated by God and "when it is moved by the λόγοι concerning God, it receives pure and clear reflections."[21] Despite the equally heightened language, prayer is a natural movement *from* θεολόγια. In *capitulum* 3.46, contemplation, θεολόγια and prayer are all subsumed under the Apostle Paul's command in Galatians 5:16 to "walk by the Spirit"*.* These activities are distinct but nevertheless an interlinking progression associated with the Spirit. Whereas the *Capita* description of θεολόγια and prayer could lead one to think they are one and the same, *Quaestiones* makes such an equivocation improbable. In light of this material, it is likely that *Quaestio* 46 is not disparaging θεολόγια as simply unnecessary talk about God from the past but rather is pointing out that θεολόγια is a distinct movement on the way to a higher goal – prayer.

Quaestio 46 also shows another way that Maximus can portray ascent. Here there is a four-part presentation the πρακτική, the φυσική, the θεολογική, and the εὐκτική. This formulation is more common in *Quaestiones* and at times the first term is replaced by πραγματική or ἠθική and will continue in his

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[20] Maximus, *Cap. car* 2.26, 1.100 (*Cap. sulla car.*: 88, 102, 104)

[21] Maximus, *Cap. car.* 2.6 (*Cap. sulla car.*: 92). Maximus' language here intentionally plays off of the pluriform meanings of both λόγος and ἔμφασις. The latter meaning "reflection" as in a mirror or water but also "outward appearance", "exposition", "explanation" and "meaning".

descriptions in the *Ambigua ad Iohannem.*[22] The first three terms corresponds with the earlier *Capita* presentation of πρακτική, θεωρία φυσική, θεωρία τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος except that prayer is now distinctly named at the end of the progression.

The second text is *Quaestio* 173. Maximus sets out to answer briefly what Eph. 1:23b ("the fullness of the one who fills all things with all") means. The first part of the response makes a clear distinction between God and creation according to essence, suggesting he is "by negation excluded from all beings" and is followed by a statement that his essence, ". . . cannot be spoken of, thought of, or participated in at all by anyone. Yet he is participated in by many according to a providential going forth, and they also fill him."[23]

Maximus now turns to explain how this can be the case by expounding a succinct account of the λόγοι doctrine. Everything exists according to its λόγος and the λόγοι exist in God, are members of God and have a place in God. When someone moves in accordance with their λόγος that person comes to exist in God and fulfills "their own place and dignity in the body of Christ as a member who works usefully."[24] Not moving in accordance with their λόγος results in a "rightly paid eternal penalty."[25]

This particular passage gives us several ways in which Maximus refines his understanding. Firstly, Maximus uses the term ἀποφατικῶς. While in the *Capita,* Maximus clearly uses apophatic statements favoring alpha-privatives, he did not explicitly identify this approach with the term ἀπόφασις or ἀποφατικῶς. Here he consciously identifies it as such. The appearance of the term is more common in *Quaestiones* and the pairing of the terms ἀπόφασις and κατάφασις *(*or at least καταφασκόμενον) will occur in *Quaestio* 190 but is more developed in the *Ambigua,* specifically *Ambiguum* 10. Maximus consciously

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[22] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §17*,* 29, 31, 58, 167, 192 (CCSG 10:13.1-16.91; 24.1-25.44; 26.1-10; 46.1-7; 116.1-11; 134.1-135.16).

[23] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* § 173 (CCSG 10: 120.4-7): οὔτε γὰρ λέγεται, οὔτε νοεῖται, οὐδὲ μετέχεται οὐδαμῶς ἀπό τινος· κατὰ δὲ τὴν προνοητικὴν πρόοδον ὑπὸ πολλῶν μετεχόμενος, ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ πληροῦται.

[24] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §173 (CCSG 10:120.10-12).

[25] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §173 (CCSG 10:120.14).

identifies the irreducible difference between Creator and creation with the term *apophasis*. This difference is according to essence, and the result is that the divine cannot be wholly delimited by either speech or thought, nor participated in at will by creatures. Participation is on God's terms according to his "providential going forth". This last phrase can be understood in light of the *Capita* where God's giving of his divine attributes and power were identified as the means by which he sustained created beings. Significantly, Maximus does not equate the *Logos* with the λόγος of each created being purposely placing the qualifying terms "its" (ἑαυτοῦ) and "own" (ἴδιος). Each being has its own λόγος.

The last two texts are *Quaestiones* 190 and 191, both of which touch on the biblical narrative leading up to and describing the transfiguration.[26] Thus, I will analyze each before explaining how they refine Maximus' conception of θεολόγια. In *Quaestio* 190, Maximus attempts to navigate an apparent discrepancy between Mark 9.1 and Matthew 16.28, both of which record Jesus stating to the Apostles that some will not "taste death". However, the condition attached to this statement differs slightly. Mark states "until they see the kingdom of God come with power" while Matthew states "until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Maximus interprets these differences in three ways. The first way is as a foreshadowing of the transfiguration that is soon to follow in both texts and is given by the *Logos* of God who "is not circumscribed" by the events of history, is "active everywhere", and "shines forth justice like light from a sun."[27] The transfiguration itself served as a foreshadowing of a glorious eschatological future.[28] The second way is as a means of understanding ascent. The transition between each stage of ascent is cast as a death. So, the transition from the πρακτική to θεωρία φυσική is a death to *praxis* toward being at rest. The transition from θεωρία φυσική to the Cause of all things is by the death of *theological negation* (διὰ τῆς θεολογικῆς ἀποφάσεως / τῇ κατὰ ἀπόφασιν θεολογίᾳ) which he further explains takes place when,

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[26] On Maximus' explanation of the Transfiguration here and in his other works and its relation to Ps.-Macarius see Plested, *Macarian Legacy*, 216-223.

[27] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §190 (CCSG 10:131.6-8).

[28] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §190 (CCSG 10:131.13-15).

. . . the transfigured Lord will disclose himself, no longer by making a
positive statement from an affirmation of the things that are but
disclosing by theological negation the inaccessible secret of his divinity.[29]

The third way is by setting the two conditions at the end of two poles to
show eschatological fulfillment as a result of Christ being both God and human.
The Markan condition, using the title "Son of Man", points to Christ's humanity
while the Matthean condition "until they see the kingdom of God come with
power" indicates his divinity since as Son of God "he had eternally possessed
glory" but also shows how the eternal kingdom was only present in power (ἐν
δυνάμει) but not in activity (ἐνεργείᾳ).[30]

Finally in *Quaestio* 191, Maximus investigates the transfiguration. In this
case, Maximus begins by seizing on another discrepancy between Luke's
account and that of Matthew and Mark concerning the number of days leading
up to the transfiguration in order to highlight aspects of ascent. He then
comments on why it was only Peter, James, and John that accompanied Jesus,
using their names to show that the virtues of faith, hope and love are necessary
to ascend with the *Logos* up the "mount of theology".[31] The transfiguration itself
then comes to center stage and Maximus, as in the previous *quaestio,* comments
how affirmation is left behind and the *Logos* is,

. . . therefore no longer counted as God, and holy and king and other such
things by affirmation but by negation he is counted as beyond God and
beyond holy and all things because of [his] pre-eminence.[32]

Maximus then draws attention to Christ during his transfiguration
successively interpreting Christ's face as the "hiddenness of his οὐσία", his body
as "the οὐσία of the virtues", and his clothes as "the words (ῥήματα) of Scripture
and the workings of the cosmos that have been produced and received being
from God."[33] Both Scripture and creation witnesses to a beauty that is ultimately

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[29] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §190 (CCSG 10: 132.29-32)

[30] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §190 (CCSG 10:132.43-45).

[31] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §191 (CCSG 10:133.10, 20).

[32] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §191 (CCSG 10:134.43-46).

[33] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §191 (CCSG 10:134.47-48; 53-55; 55-57).

from the Creator but must be interpreted "by the contemplation of the Spirit" and "by the removal of the deception because of sense".[34]

In this text, Maximus is pushing the contingency and limitation of language further by calling the *Logos* beyond God and beyond holy. Likewise, Maximus interprets the transfiguration by seeing the virtues, the Scriptures and creation in or on Christ himself. This particular interpretation will be repeated and expanded in *Ambiguum* 10. Important as well is how Maximus continues to incorporate the Spirit as the means by which contemplation and discernment are accomplished. While there is no tight pairing of activities here as was seen in the *Liber* and *Capita* the role of the Spirit in ascent remains significant.

All four of these texts show ways that Maximus' conception of theology and ascent are refined and clarified. Prayer and θεολόγια are distinct movements but nevertheless interrelated parts of the same process of ascent. Discussing God's transcendence is now consciously identified as ἀπόφασις and is placed in contrast to "making affirmative statements". Likewise, Christ as the *Logos* becomes the touch point for the virtues, the Scriptures, and creation and is discerned by the Spirit. Θεολόγια is not just reflection on the Trinity in creation and the Scriptures but depends on acknowledging the irreducible distinction between God and creation and the illuminating activity of the Spirit concerning the *Logos.*

§4.1.3 *Technical Language for Trinity & Incarnation*

Perhaps the most noticeable difference when looking at Trinitarian theology between the earlier *Liber* and *Capita* is the use of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction. In this section, I will first briefly look at *Quaestio* 1.34 where Maximus speaks specifically about the relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit and then look more closely at his use of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in *Quaestiones*, and end with a brief discussion of new technical language for the incarnation.

§4.1.3.1 *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, & the Father as Cause*

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[34] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §191 (CCSG 10: 134.57-63).

In *Quaestio* 1.34, Maximus tackles a question similarly found in Mark the Monk concerning the ascription of the Holy Spirit as "of God" and "of Christ", except that the focus is on the relationship between the Son and Spirit. Specifically, he addresses why Christ cannot be said to be of the Spirit in the same way that the Son is said to be of the Father and why is it that "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" are both used. Maximus' reply is to give the analogy of νοῦς, λόγος, and φωνή, "Just as the νοῦς is the cause of the λόγος so [it is] also of the πνεῦμα yet through the intermediate λόγος. So also, it cannot be said that the λόγος is from the φωνή nor the Son from the Spirit."[35] Maximus here argues for the Father as the cause of the Son and the Spirit, yet the latter is through the intermediate *Logos*. The causal relationship only works in one direction, and so the Spirit cannot be said to be the cause of the Son. One could argue here that in the incarnation the Spirit serves as an intermediate cause of Christ's humanity, but the question confines the issue to the way the Father causes the Son and Spirit. The analogy certainly has its limitations but regardless, it shows how Maximus is attempting to deal with the relationship between correlation and cause seeking to preserve the Father as the sole cause of both Son and Spirit.

§4.1.3.2 *The Λόγος/Τρόπος Distinction & Technical Language for the Trinity*

Before I go too far into investigating the λόγος/τρόπος distinction, it will be helpful to outline the terms and concepts used in this section. The first set of concepts is the *Logos*/λόγοι nexus of ideas. Several studies have been done to determine what exactly the λόγοι are and their relationship to the *Logos*.[36] It has also been look at from the perspective of participation since Maximus expounds

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[35] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* 1.34 (CCSG 10:151.1-7): Ὅτι οὐ δύναται λέγεσθαι ὁ Χριστὸς πνεύματος καθάπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, ὅτι λέγεται ⟨ἀ⟩διαφόρως πνεῦμα θεοῦ καὶ πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ.

Ὥσπερ ἐστὶν αἴτιος τοῦ λόγου ὁ νοῦς, οὕτως καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος, διὰ μέσου δὲ τοῦ λόγου· καὶ ὥσπερ οὐ δυνάμεθα εἰπεῖν τὸν λόγον εἶναι τῆς φωνῆς, οὕτως οὐδὲ τὸν υἱὸν λέγειν τοῦ πνεύματος.

[36] Irénée Henri Dalmais, "La Théorie des «Logos» des Créatures chez s. Maxime le Confesseur," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 36 (1952), 244-249. Andrew Louth, "St Maximos' Doctrine of the *logoi* of Creation," Studia Patristica 48 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 77-84.

the doctrine most thoroughly in *Ambiguum* 7 while commenting on how, as Gregory Nazianzus states, human beings can be considered "portions of God".[37] Despite the attention these concepts have received separately, the relationship between the *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine and the λόγος/τρόπος distinction has received less reflection. The *Logos* is the Son, as we saw in the opening response of the old man in the *Liber*. The λόγοι and their relationship with the *Logos* is a much more difficult task to ascertain. The λόγοι can be any number of items in created existence that when drawn together point toward God and, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, the Word. These can be words of Scripture, δόγματα, or God's μεγαλοεργία of creation. From the stance of cosmology, the concept draws out several aspects of rational beings. The first aspect is teleological. The λόγος defines the purpose of each created thing which ultimately finds its goal in the *Logos.* Reaching this goal though is not automatic; it depends on the will choosing love. The second aspect is ontological and, in addition to defining a thing's purpose, also defines what a thing is — ὁ τοῦ εἶναι λόγος — its nature. While these aspects are distinguishable, they are nevertheless the one λόγος of each created thing and so are inseparably linked. This *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine is related to the λόγος/τρόπος distinction but is not identical. This distinction can be found in a variety of contexts in *Quaestiones* but from a metaphysical standpoint the distinction emphasizes ὁ τοῦ εἶναι λόγος, which is one, while ὁ τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπος can be many. Maximus will eventually correlate φύσις and οὐσία with ὁ τοῦ εἶναι λόγος, and ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον with ὁ τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπος. However, when looked at from the perspective of ascent, the function of the λόγοι is always the same in θεωρία φυσικά — it draws the mind back to the *Logos* and ultimately the Father as Cause.

In his early works such as the *Liber Asceticus* and *Capita Caritate*, Maximus does not employ the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in his explanation of the Trinity. When we come to *Quaestiones et dubia* it is a different story. There

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[37] Polycarp Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua*, 166-180; Eric Perl, "Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, Deification in Saint Maximus Confessor," Ph.D. Diss. (Yale University, 1991); Torstein Theodor Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) and also *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

are places where Maximus utilizes this distinction in regard to meaning. For example in *Quaestio* 129, Maximus explains the sorrow that God and the saints experience and suggests that, while the word "sorrow" is one (Εἷς οὖν ὁ λόγος τῆς λύπης), it takes on many ways of being disposed (πολλοὺς ἐπιδέχεται τρόπους διαθέσεων).[38] This example shows that Maximus can apply the distinction to meaning. However, Maximus also begins to apply the distinction to the Trinity. In *Quaestio* 105, Maximus treats for the first time in his writing, Gregory's *Or.* 23.8 in which there is a discussion of movement from monad to dyad and then to triad regarding the Trinity. Maximus, in this *responsio* already interprets the passage along the lines of the mind's movement from the oneness to the threeness of the Trinity rather than viewing this as a metaphysical development within God. This move of the mind, Maximus says, is done by God himself who moves the mind to reflect on him as γενεσιουργὸν (author of existence) from the οὐσία of existing things but also "mystically teaches us the manner of existence of the more than ineffable Godhead from some symbols corresponding with existing things."[39] Maximus reinforces divine agency in the next few lines utilizing variants of the verb κινέω to emphasize that it is the Holy Godhead itself that moves the mind toward knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of itself and of its "extraordinary manner of existence."[40] Maximus then explains how the threeness of God is discerned. A Trinity is suggested because "being (τὸ ὄν) itself is not without wisdom and life."[41] Wisdom is the Son and Word of God while life is the Holy Spirit. The last sentence gives the example of the human soul which Maximus states is made in the image of God and is perceived in three things: mind, λόγος and spirit. Maximus, while attempting to address the ἀπορία, is also demonstrating how the mind, when moved by God, cannot only perceive God as one but also as three. A similar

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[38] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §129 (CCSG 10:94.1-95.20).

[39] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §105 (CCSG 10:79.9-12): Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τῶν ὄντων τὸν γενεσιουργὸν ἐννοοῦμεν, οὕτω καὶ τὸν τρόπον τῆς ὑπάρξεως τῆς ὑπεραρρήτου θεότητος ἔκ τινων τῶν κατὰ τὰ ὄντα συμβόλων μυστικῶς διδασκόμεθα . . .

[40] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §105 (CCSG 10:79.15): . . . τὸν τρόπος τῆς ὑπερφυοῦς αὐτῆς ὑπάρξεως.

[41] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §105 (CCSG 10:79.21-21): . . . αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν οὐκ ἔξω σοφίας καὶ ζωῆς ἐστιν . . .

concern can be seen in *Quaestio* 136, where the question of what nature can tell of the Trinity is addressed directly. This *quaestio* forgoes highlighting any scriptural or patristic ἀπορία and asks, "Is it possible to find a natural proof concerning the Holy Trinity?" Maximus answers,

> All beings are believed to be in three ways, in essence, in difference and in life. On the one hand, from the principle of essence of beings we believe there exists some essence who is the Father. On the other hand, from the difference of beings there is wisdom, that is to say, the Son. For wisdom imparts to each nature its suitable distinctive character. Then from life there is the Holy Spirit. Yet things of God are and are spoken of as subsistent but with created things they are a contingent attribute.[42]

 These passages are helpful for several reasons. Most importantly, *Quaestio* 105 gives us the first evidence of Maximus applying the λόγος/τρόπος distinction explicitly to the Trinity. It also shows another example of how Maximus understands the image of God and relates it analogously to the Trinitarian persons. Whereas in *Capita caritate,* Maximus related the image of God to being and eternal being here he relates it to the ὑποστάσεις of the Trinity although what exactly this entails for him, especially his anthropology, he does not explain. Finally, in relation to ascent we find that God reveals himself as one and three and both of these aspects can be discerned from created things. Firstly, the oneness of the Godhead is perceived, indicating the existence of an author and then the threeness since wisdom and life are correlative with being. The Father is not specifically named in Maximus' *responsio*, however, based on the alignment of the Son with "wisdom" and the Spirit with "life", it seems as if "being" could easily be aligned with the Father. This is made clearer when *Quaestio* 106 is taken into consideration. Yet Gregory does not utilize the

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[42] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §136 (CCSG 10:79.21-21): Πάντα τὰ ὄντα ἐν τρισὶν τρόποις εἶναι πεπίστευται, ἐν οὐσίᾳ, ἐν διαφορᾷ, ἐν ζωῇ· καὶ ἐκ μὲν τοῦ τῆς οὐσίας τῶν ὄντων λόγου τὸ εἶναί τινα οὐσίαν πιστούμεθα, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ· ἐκ δὲ τῆς διαφορᾶς τῶν ὄντων τὴν σοφίαν, τουτέστιν τὸν υἱόν—σοφίας γὰρ τὸ ἀπονεῖμαι ἑκάστῃ φύσει τὴν πρόσφορον ἰδιότητα, καὶ εὐκρινῆ καὶ ἄφυρτα καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν καὶ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ διατηρεῖν ἕκαστον τῶν γεγονότων—ἐκ δὲ τῆς ζωῆς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. Ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ ταῦτα ἐνυπόστατα εἰσὶν καὶ λέγονται, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν κτισμάτων συμβεβηκότα.

λόγος/τρόπος distinction in the passage Maximus reviews, nor does it play a prominent role in his description of the Trinity in the same way it would for Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.[43]

At various points in this investigation I have suggested that there are areas where Maximus later uses the λόγος/τρόπος distinction for Trinity, the incarnation, and creation in ways that he does not in either the *Capita* or the *Liber.* Here I will review a few of these examples to show how later this distinction becomes central. A helpful example is the discussion of the constitution of human beings, which in *Capita caritate* did not resort to the λόγος/τρόπος distinction. In the *Ambigua ad Iohannem*, one finds this distinction utilized universally for all created things including discussions of the soul and body in *Ambiguum* 42 and for creation, incarnation and salvation in *Ambiguum* 36.[44]

I will delve briefly into *Ambiguum* 36 in order to demonstrate how this language is developed in relation to similar areas from the *Liber* and *Capita.* In this *Ambiguum*, Maximus discusses humanity's initial creation where God first brought humanity "into communion with himself through in-breathing" and through "sharing (μεταδιδόντα) with the likeness the divine beauty according to the divine image".[45] In this instance, human nature did not obtain unity with God according to "mode, principle either of οὐσία or ὑπόστασις according to which all beings universally are seen to exist" but in the incarnation unity is achieved when the Word is "united to it in a union according to ὑπόστασις" wherein human nature "receives its subsistence in a divine manner".[46] This is done without change on the level of essence where difference with the divine nature is maintained. In just these brief phrases, Maximus can clearly be seen using the λόγος/τρόπος distinction to discuss the constitution of all beings but particularly human beings. Likewise, he describes the incarnation using the

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[43] Sherwood, *Earlier Ambigua,* 156-161.

[44] Maximus, *Amb.* 42 in *On Difficulties of the Church Fathers: The Ambigua*, Vol. 2, ed. & transl. by Nicholas Constas, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 70, 72: PG 91 1321C-1325B).

[45] Maximus, *Amb.* 42 (*The Ambigua* 2, 70: PG 2189B)

[46] Maximus, *Amb.* 42 (*The Ambigua* 2, 72: PG 91:1289C).

same language and adds the technical terminology "according to ὑπόστασις." Maximus thus demonstrates two ways of explaining human nature using the image/likeness distinction but also λόγος/τρόπος distinction. Although Maximus does not explicitly say so here, one can correlate image with λόγος and οὐσία and likeness with τρόπος and ὑπόστασις.[47]

§4.1.3.3 *Technical Language for the Incarnation*

Finally, in this section I want to draw attention briefly to the use of an important phrase καθ' ὑπόστασιν. Maximus uses this phrase at the end of a *Quaestio* 59. The passage Maximus comments on is taken from Proverbs 24:16a (. . . a righteous person will fall seven times and rise again. . .). Maximus discusses how despite human nature falling seven times, Christ, who alone is righteous, "raised it, having been moved by an unspeakable love of humanity, uniting our nature to himself according to ὑπόστασις."[48] The phrase "union according to ὑπόστασις" initially seems like it could be easily identified as an appropriation of Chalcedonian language yet this exact phrase is not found in the definition of Chalcedon but can be found in Justinian's *Edictum rectae fidei.* There it serves as part of a multi-pronged strategy to utilize a Trinitarian grammar to identify the ὑπόστασις of Christ as that of the Son and encourage the use of "one composite ὑπόστασις" over against the miaphysite "one composite φύσις".[49] Maximus has no such strategy here but simply uses it as a way to understand how human nature is united to the Son. He does not use the phrase anywhere else in *Quaestiones* yet it does signal more engagement with the material of the Fifth Council. In the *Liber* and *Capita*, Maximus uses non-controversial language: Christ is both God and human and this what allows him

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[47] Maximus makes similar statements elsewhere see *Amb.* 42 (*The Ambigua* 2, 124: PG 91 1316D-1317A).

[48] Maximus, *Qua. dub.* §59 (CCSG 10:47.18-20): . . . ταύτην ἀφάτῳ φιλανθρωπίᾳ κινηθεὶς ἀνέστησεν ὁ κύριος, αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν ἐνώσας ἑαυτῷ καθ' ὑπόστασιν.

[49] Justinian, *Edictum* (*Drei dogmatische Schriften,* 132:23-24, 28; 138:36; 146:7; 156:29); canon 4 (148:35); canon 12 (152:19). The phrase "one composite ὑπόστασις" and the similar phrase "one composite Christ" is often put in direct contrast with "one composite φύσις" or "one φύσις", see 136:13; 144:21-23; 144:36-146:3 and canon 4 (148:29-36). In canon 4, Justinian draws together both sets of phrases. I will discuss this strategy more in the last section of this chapter.

to demonstrate a "heavenly manner of life" - to be an example of and, therefore, the means and ends of love. Here the incarnation of the Son raises human nature by uniting that nature to himself according to ὑπόστασις.

Quaestiones et dubia is transitional piece between the earlier *Liber asceticus* and *Capita caritate* and the expansive *Ambigua ad Iohannem*. This is based partly on the absence of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction, even when we might have expected it, in the *Liber* and *Capita* and the fact that it takes a central role in descriptions of the Trinity, incarnation, creation, and salvation in the *Ambigua,* Maximus' later scriptural and liturgical commentaries and importantly in his Christological treatises. This is bolstered by evidence of a more developed *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine, where the λόγοι of creation are drawn back to the *Logos* and the explicit identification of God as Cause within *Quaestiones et dubia*. Additionally, it is supported by the fact that Maximus, while not specifically citing works that contain the distinction of λόγος/τρόπος, explicitly engages various works by Cyril, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, authors whom Sherwood notes either developed or utilize this distinction.[50]

§4.2 Epistula *2 – Shedding the Thorns of Selfish Existence through Christ the Door to the Unapproachable Beauty of the Trinity*

Epistula 2 stands as one of Maximus' most celebrated works. In this letter, Maximus builds on ideas he has discussed in both the *Liber* and the *Capita*

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[50] Prassas in *Questions and Doubts,* 21 gives us a list of some of the sources Maximus explicitly cites, including Ireneaus, Basil of Caesarea and Cyril of Alexandria. Gregory of Nyssa can also be added to this list, see *Qua. dub.* §19, 57, 96. The appearance of these authors only goes a small way toward showing that Maximus begins to take hold of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction and integrate it into his thinking by demonstrating his exposure to the authors that used it. Sherwood lists several authors who use the terms but only Basil and Gregory pair the phrases λόγος οὐσίας with τρόπος ὑπάρξεως together (*Earlier Ambigua,* 153-164). However, tenuous his earlier knowledge may be, it is clear that by the controversies of miaenergism and miathelitism Maximus has read and commented on texts that would give him exposure to the distinctions use for Trinity and specifically Christ. Prassas also argues for Maximus' reading of and incorporation of Didymus the Blind's style, suggesting that Maximus is attempting to fill a literary hole left by the condemnation of Origen, Didymus and Evagrius since 553 CE. This seems plausible since there is evidence that the writings of the three condemned authors were read together within monastic communities. I might refine it further by saying that despite their condemnation these authors continued to be read and so rather than filling a literary vacuum, Maximus recognizes the need for an alternative and, in his mind, more orthodox reading of long treasured questions and commentary. Maximus utilization of Origen, Evagrius, and Didymus thus shows that he recognized their influence and attempted to incorporate their material with the benefit of hindsight.

caritate but also interweaves new vocabulary in order to frame his account of Christian life. He does this by utilizing the more technical language for Christ I drew attention to in *Quaestiones et dubia.* Also, while he employed the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in *Quaestiones*, it was not connected with his descriptions of Christ nor was it integrated into an account of how Christ exemplifies a new manner of subsisting that can heal humanity's divided and evil ways. Maximus does so in *Ep.* 2, constructing a vision of Christian life which gathers together so many of areas I have already explored under the rubric of love and God as beginning, means, and end. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss briefly the dating of *Ep.* 2, give a short overview of the letter's way of describing ascent and then look closely at several specific areas that employ the new vocabulary discussed above.

§4.2.1 *Dating of* Ep*. 2*

Why have I placed *Ep.* 2 in the later part of this early period? In the introduction, I stated that by "early works" I mean those works written before, by, or in 626/627 CE. In the absence of a more refined set of dates, I offered the sequence: *Liber asceticus, Capita caritate, Quaestiones et dubia, Epistula* 2 and *Opusculum* 17. One might object that *Epistula* 2 should be considered earlier than the *Liber* based on Sherwood's comments which base the dating of the letter on the use of "will" language, although already I must point out that Sherwood stated that "perhaps" Ep. 2 may be his earliest work.[51] The reasoning goes that the presence of will or activity language must suggest an early date since Maximus would have avoided such language until he openly opposed miaenergism and miathelistism in 640 CE. Yet the criteria of "will" or "activity" language seems to me to be more of a guideline than an absolute rule. For example, Maximus does not use the questionable phrases "one will" or "one activity" in the *Liber* or *Capita caritate* although one can find texts that point in this direction (*Cap. car.* 4.90, 4.38, 4.55). The *Liber,* in fact, does not use γνώμη and contains only one non-controversial instance of θέλημα.[52] Based on the absence of this language and the reason described above, why couldn't these

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[51] Sherwood, Annotated Date-List, 25.

[52] Maximus, *Lib. asc.* § 42 (CCSG 40:115.981).

works equally be written during the middle period of his life? Yet even a casual reading of these two works reveals a level of complexity and the use of distinctive features, which are not the same as those from 628 CE onward, especially around similar topics and contexts. Additionally, if the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* has a similar phrase revolving around ἐνέργεια in 628-630 CE, why couldn't the use of "will" in *Ep.* 2 indicate that it be written from at least the same period, especially since the controversies concerning Christ's wills come *after* those concerning ἐνέργεια? It seems to me, then, that dating cannot be established simply on whether this language appears or does not appear. I have suggested that another criteria may be the complexity of his thought in tandem with the absence of particular concepts, especially those that appear later in similar contexts, can assist in the ordering of his earlier works even though more precise dates still remain elusive. In the remaining parts of this section, I will review some of the areas of complexity that can be seen in *Ep.* 2 and highlight aspects that do not appear.

§4.2.2 *Overview*

In his praise of love, Maximus constructs an account of human existence around several interrelated ways of speaking and processes. The first and most important is a continued portrayal of God as love. The second is that, as love, God is both means and goal of the Christian life. These have already been observed in the *Liber* and *Capita.* Thirdly, existence, in general, is portrayed as consisting of a principle of being and a manner of subsisting. The principle of being not only defines what a thing is but also bears in itself the potential for its ultimate *telos* according to God's will. In terms of processes, one finds throughout *Ep.* 2 a progression of things coming to unity from separation. Thus, the *telos* of a habit of divine love is reached and fulfilled in loving God and loving others. This can be understood variously as 1) an aligning or a unity of λόγος and τρόπος, 2) living according to the λόγος or νόμος of nature, 3) a unity of γνώμη, θέλημα, κίνησις, and βούλησις, or 4) what is divided into parts becoming simple. The series of scenes Maximus creates around these ideas is a forceful presentation of love and thus God as beginning, means, and end.

§4.2.3 *The Separation of Self-Love to the Wholeness of Divine Φιλανθρωπία: Maximus Account of Ascent in* Ep. *2*

A central theme that runs through *Ep.* 2 has to do with humanity being parted or whole and finding unity through love. Maximus utilizes both verbs and adjectives to emphasize the "partedness" of human existence based on the word group μερίς/μεριστός/μερίζω while expressing the goal of "wholeness", "oneness", or "unity" with the words ὅλος, εἷς, σύν (as a verbal prefix), and ἑνόω. The contrast here emphasizes separation and unity rather than union and distinction both of which are found together later in *Ambiguum* 41. Maximus uses this contrast when speaking about humanity under the influence of the devil and self-love. In this condition, human beings may share one nature but their τρόπος is diverse, and their divergent wills separate them from one another. Humanity was deceived and distracted into self-love and in its manner of subsistence was scattered, parted and divided so that human beings came in conflict not only with each other but with God and their own intended principle of being. This separation is a result of their inclination. Yet since the Maker of all things in his φιλανθρωπία came as man and lived a life of love, he offers a new manner of being. Thus, humanity must choose to imitate this new manner of being, aligning both their principle of being and their manner of being so that they are one. The incarnation makes possible a healing of this separation and allows for one λόγος and τρόπος to characterize humanity. This unity is achieved by a voluntary imitation of God's activities of love. The Word leads the baptized to the Father. Then the Word, who is the way of truth and door through which one must enter to behold the Holy Trinity, heals their division.[53] In *Quaestiones*, I suggested that the divine appropriation meant that the persons reveal one another. The Spirit, in particular, allowed the contemplation of the Son and the Son as *Logos* leads the baptized to the Father as Cause. Here again we see the Word leading to the Father and indeed being demonstrated as the door to the beauty of the Trinity. This is only a half-step away from Maximus' celebrated statement in his *Expositio orationis Dominicae*.[54]

Within this account, Maximus is found using the more technical language that was but briefly used in *Quaestiones*. In two places, he states that God or the

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[53] Maximus, *Ep.*2 (PG 91:404A).

[54] Maximus, *Or. Dom.,* (CCSG 23:87-89): "For indeed by becoming flesh the Word of God teaches us *theologia* because he shows forth in himself the Father and the Holy Spirit."

Maker of nature "without change united this [human nature] to himself according to ὑπόστασις."[55] While this was only mentioned once in *Quaestiones,* it was nevertheless significant since it described how Christ "raised" human nature. In *Ep.* 2, the phrase is similarly used sparsely yet becomes the centerpiece of explaining how God, through love, gathers to himself and makes whole a fragmented nature. Louth notes the use of one of the Chalcedonian adverbs (ἀτρέπτως).[56] I would quickly add that there is only one adverb rather than the full set and Maximus does not dwell much on it, emphasizing the effect more than giving an expanded comment on union and distinction in relation to Christ nor union and distinction in relation to the divine nature and the divine persons. The focus is on separated and whole human nature, the latter of which Christ is an example serving as "the door" to "the unapproachable beauty of the holy and royal Trinity".[57]

As I have pointed out at various times in my investigation, Maximus in both his descriptions of humanity and God does not use the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in *Capita caritate* exactly in those places one would expect him to if compared to similar contexts in later works (i.e. *Cap. car.* 3.21-28; 4:1-15). He is satisfied with simply talking about λόγος and φύσις/οὐσία. The distinction does not make an appearance in the *Liber* either. It would seem reasonable to see a similar level of engagement with these concepts in *Ep.* 2, if it was from this same period, especially since all three touch on the same subject (i.e. love and ascent). In this letter, the use of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction first appears in relation to the commandments and the virtues (PG 91:396D). In this case, Maximus incorporates the "parted" terminology as a way to serve the role of τρόπος while λόγος serves the role of "unity". Divine love draws together "the particular (μερικός) commandments toward a universal (πρός τόν καθόλου λόγον) principal." Yet the λόγος/τρόπος terminology itself soon becomes a central distinction. In the same sentence, Maximus suggest that universal principle is that "by which all things are uniformly (μονοειδῶς) contained according to

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[55] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:397B): ἀτρέπτως ἑαυτῷ καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν ταύτην [φύσιν] ἑνώσας, and (PG 91:404B): ἑνώσας ταύτην [φύσιν] ἀτρέπτως ἑαυτῷ καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν.

[56] Louth, *Maximus,* 87, 205, n. 8.

[57] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:404A).

[God's] good pleasure and from which he gives of himself in many ways (πολυτρόπως) according to his οἰκονομία."[58] These two brief sentences show Maximus utilizing several sets of terminology interchangeable – universal/particular, λόγος/τρόπος and mono-/poly- prefixes.

In another example, the distinction is used to describe how the virtues serve as part of love's power aligning one's τρόπος through an exercise of the will toward its one true λόγος. Maximus makes explicit that in order to come to what is simple and the same one must become simple and the same and it is in this process that one's λόγος and φύσις are preserved.[59] This plays off of several other themes in the *Capita* where Maximus recognizes that, since human beings have a common nature, they also share a common λόγος and so through an exercise of their will toward love, they become one with each other and with God and can be described as being both in each other and in God.[60] Indeed, it is at the level of τρόπος that there is "inequality and difference in will".[61] This overall process has several effects. It makes the human being whole with one's self, with others, and ultimately with God so that "in him, they are contemplated together and ascend toward him as cause and maker. . ."[62] Likewise, deification takes place, and God is made manifest in human beings.[63] Remarkably, Maximus does not extend the λόγος/τρόπος distinction nor his whole and parts language to a robust discussion of the Trinity as he will in *Mystagogia* 23.[64]

In *Ep.* 2, Maximus shows a synthesis of newer terminology witnessed to in *Quaestiones* hung on the scaffolding of his established Trinitarian grammar from the *Liber* and the *Capita.* While Maximus does not apply the λόγος/τρόπος distinction with full force to a description of the Trinity, he does show how he is already incorporating a set of ideas that all mean to make this distinction a central part of his overall framework for describing ascent. The use of language

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[58] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:393C).

[59] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:400B, D-401A).

[60] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:400B).

[61] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:396D, 400A).

[62] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:400A-B).

[63] Maximus, *Ep.* 2 (PG 91:400B, 401B-C, 405A; 400D-401B).

[64] Maximus, *Mystagogia* 23 (CCSG 69: 52.839-54.868).

from the Fifth Council (καθ' ὑπόστασιν) albeit not the full set of adverbs, the limited application of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in *Ep.* 2 and the lack of either of these in the *Capita Caritate* and the *Liber* suggest that the letter is perhaps not the earliest but should instead be seen shortly before the time Maximus begins to use the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in earnest and nearer to the *Ambigua ad Iohannem* (628-630 CE). In fact, it is in both sets of *Ambigua* that the Chalcedonian language, the language from the Fifth Council and the use of the λόγος/τρόπος for creation, Christ and Trinity converge*.*

§4.3 Opusculum *13's New Grammar – Maximus' Engages Miaphysitism*

§4.3.1 *Pro-Chalcedonian Context & Gregory of Nazianzus'* Ep*. 101.18-21*

In this section, I will show that Maximus' direct exposure to miaphysitism opens a door to literature and ways of framing issues surrounding Trinity and Christ that are garnered from the period of 518 to 553 CE culminating in the work of the Fifth Council. This period saw intense efforts by Justinian and many others to solve the theological and political issues that had arisen as a result of the fallout following the Council of Chalcedon. While pro-Chalcedonian authors varied in their approaches, there are discernable parallels such that a particular trajectory for dealing with Christological issues by appeal to Trinitarian grammar can be observed. The theology of this trajectory and ways of contextualizing these issues become part of Maximus' way of viewing things and eventually will be applied against miaenergism and miathelitism. Firstly, I will discuss aspects of the historiography of the post-Chalcedonian era, then I will give a short overview of the theological activity of the 518-553 period and finally I will show how Maximus has adopted and adapted this trajectory in *Op.* 13.

In the literature about the post-Chalcedonian period, there are several commonly stated assumptions that in themselves rarely receive direct investigation. I want to highlight two as a way of introducing this section and the post-Chalcedonian era. The first assumption is that the adherents of this era drew upon the Trinitarian theology of "the Cappadocians" in order to solve

Christological problems.[65] This is usually accompanied by the citation of one of several places where Basil of Caesarea defines the terminological distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις and is usually followed by an explanation of how a particular author from this period was able or unable to move beyond Basil's definition of ὑπόστασις.[66]

For Grillmeier, specifically, Basil is too "materialistic" in his approach and understanding and he and his associates' description of ὑπόστασις/πρόσωπον is too impersonal focusing on "what" rather than "who". This judgment is extended to all the Cappadocians, and he connects this thinking with Stoic philosophy.[67] However, according to Grillmeier, though the Cappadocians may have brought in these concepts "they remain Platonists, above all, in their analysis of 'spiritual being'".[68] This was the inheritance of the pro-Chalcedonians but because of its supposed problems is considered their "greatest handicap".[69] Severus and the supposed Cyrillian tradition "escaped this problem by wanting to use the Basilian teaching about ὑπόστασις only for θεολόγια, not for οἰκονομία."[70] To put the critique more clearly, the supposed problem of Basil's definition for both the Trinity and Christ is that it does not deal with how the concrete individual is derived from the definition of ὑπόστασις. It is only Gregory that begins to go this direction, but none of the Cappadocians finish the work.[71] It is in this last statement that Grillmeier draws attention to the text I cover here from Gregory's *Ep*. 101.18-20, suggesting that Gregory resorts to an "extremely simple linguistic means" when he describes the relationship between "unity in Christ and the difference of the natures" by pointing out a "reverse" relationship with these same concepts in the Trinity.

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[65] *CCT* 2.2 430.

[66] Grillmeier for example consistently complains that Basil's conception of ὑπόστασις is too material (*CCT* 1, 2.2) and that it restricts or even traps those who attempt to utilize it (CCT 2.2, 200, 299, 309, 508). Patrick Gray objects to this characterization of Leontius of Jerusalem, *Defense of Chalcedon,* 130-131.

[67] *CCT* 1, 372.

[68] *CCT* 1, 372.

[69] *CCT* 2.2, 278.

[70] *CCT* 2.2, 278, cf. 505.

[71] *CCT* 2.2, 505.

This is the extent of Grillmeier's presentation of Gregory's role during the post-Chalcedonian era. While in several places he footnotes some usage of Gregory's *Ep.* 101, it is not always about lines 18-20 nor is there a consistent monitoring or articulation about how it helped formulate important strategies for pro-Chalcedonian theology.[72] He does not note it in Leontius of Jerusalem nor even its importance in Severus' exchange with Sergius.

Several other authors are worth noting. A critique similar to that of Grillmeier concerning Basil's conception of ὑπόστασις is carried forward by Bathrellos when he covers the pro-Chalcedonian Christology of the Sixth century. In particular, he chides John of Caesarea for attempting to apply the "Trinitarian" definition to "Christology."[73] As he states it, John, "reduces personhood to particularity."[74] Patrick Gray, similar to Grillmeier, notes the attempts by John of Caesarea and the Leontius of Byzantium and even Leontius of Jerusalem to use the "Cappadocian definitions" but does not cite either Basil's *Epistulae ad Amphilicum* or Gregory's *Epistula prima ad Cledonium*.[75] Likewise in his monograph *Leontius of Jerusalem* he does not note the importance of Gregory's saying to Leontius' theology nor the historical comparison the Jerusalemite attempts between miaphysitism and Apollinarianism based on that same saying. Even more recent treatments of the era can be said to move beyond assumption and to completely dismiss its importance. Christopher Beeley, in his *Unity of Christ,* goes so far as to say,

> The fabled 'Cappadocian solution' to the Trinity which distinguishes
> between nature and hypostasis and thus resolves intractable problems of

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[72] *CCT* 2.2, 73 n. 158 concerning Gregory's use of "*synapheia*", 76 n. 167 concerning Gregory's "assumption" language, 78 n. 179 concerning a florilegium which contains the phrase "*anthropos kyriakos*", 192 n. 23 where he notes to compare part of Gregory's saying from 18-20 to a section in Leontius of Byzantium's *Epilysis* (PG 86.1945A-D). The most substantial footnote is n. 99 on 56-57 where he notes John of Caesarea's use of Gregory's saying and Severus' intentional, according to Grillmeier, obfuscation of his meaning.

[73] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 37.

[74] Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 37.

[75] Patrick Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon,* 116, 118, 131, 160.

Trinitarian metaphysics, is largely the invention and retrojection of Leontius of Byzantium.[76]

This evaluation completely misses the importance Basil's and Gregory's sayings had for several important pro-Chalcedonians and for the role Gregory's saying served within Cyril's own defense of his theology at the Council of Ephesus 431 CE which is repeated at the Council of Chalcedon 451 CE. In fact, as I will show below, the usage of these sayings was considered such a threat that Severus and his successors are consistently presented as offering objections throughout the era. It seems then that the assumption that Trinitarian theology was used to tackle Christological problems has had meager and at times begrudged evidence provided, mostly through Basil and a few times through Gregory by Grillmeier and Gray only to be repeated or dismissed by later scholars. I want to suggest that the assumption bore some truth but that there is more evidence to be considered. When it is, I suggest that several strategies can be identified that grew up around Basil and Gregory's sayings which represent a forceful trajectory that cannot be dismissed as one ancient author's hopeful reconstruction nor simply classified as Trinitarian theology solving Christological issues.

The second assumption is a very broad presentation that debates about Trinitarian theology, by the Fifth and Sixth century, have simply given way to Christological controversies.[77] On one level, these two assumptions are understandable. The Cappadocians' Trinitarian theology as a heritage of theology, in general, informs what has now become a debate about Christ specifically. However, when one looks closely, these two affirmations are nearly contradictory. If the Trinitarian theology of a previous generation is the source of solutions for Christology then how can that era not equally be considered to

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[76] Christopher Beeley, *Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 286.

[77] Brian E. Daley gets at exactly this point and even cites Gregory perhaps inspired by his work on Leontius of Byzantium in "The Persons in God and the Person of Christ in Patristic Theology," *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Fourth Patristic Conference, Maynooth 1999,* ed. D. Vincent Twomey & Lewis Ayres (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 9-64. Daley only covers this ἀπορία in historiography up to the time of Cyril but I would suggest it can be extended up through the Sixth century.

be about Trinitarian theology? Even further, if Christ is one of the Trinity then
how can these kinds of descriptions be maintained without thoughtful caveats?
These questions, I argue, hit closer to the issues of this era rather than the first
two assumptions. The theological activity of the post-Chalcedonian era was not
simply about how theologians easily and without hesitation applied the
Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians to explaining the incarnation but was
fixated on whether doing so was even valid. Thus, while one's faithfulness to
Cyril and Chalcedon was surely a clear touch point, this era tackled broader
issues of theological heritage.

In order to flesh this out and briefly sketch the strategies of various
author's during this era, I will not primarily follow citations of Basil's saying but
will look closer at another saying that often finds its way into footnotes but is
not cited as playing a significant role in this era's theology. I will attempt to
show briefly how a particular text from Gregory of Nazianzus' *Ep.* 101.18-21
became prominent in the theological argumentation during the era of 518-553
CE to the extent that it became a paradigm for viewing and understanding the
relation between Trinitarian theology and explanations of the incarnation.[78] It

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[78] Here I cite Gregory's saying from SC 208: 44, 46 with a translation. I have preserved
the Greek phrases in some cases as they will be important in the following discussion. Here is
the Greek text:

18. Εἴ τις εἰσάγει δύο Υἱούς, ἕνα μὲν τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρός, δεύτερον δὲ τὸν ἐκ τῆς
μητρός, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτόν, καὶ τῆς υἱοθεσίας ἐκπέσοι τῆς ἐπηγγελμένης τοῖς ὀρθῶς
πιστεύουσι. 19. Φύσεις μὲν γὰρ δύο Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος, ἐπεὶ καὶ ψυχὴ καὶ σῶμα· υἱοὶ δὲ οὐ δύο,
οὐδὲ Θεοί. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα δύο ἄνθρωποι, εἰ καὶ οὕτως ὁ Παῦλος τὸ ἐντὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ
τὸ ἐκτὸς προσηγόρευσε. 20. Καὶ εἰ δεῖ συντόμως εἰπεῖν, ἄλλο μὲν καὶ ἄλλο τὰ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Σωτὴρ
(εἴπερ μὴ ταὐτὸν τὸ ἀόρατον τῷ ὁρατῷ καὶ τὸ ἄχρονον τῷ ὑπὸ χρόνον), οὐκ ἄλλος δὲ καὶ
ἄλλος· μὴ γένοιτο. 21. Τὰ γὰρ ἀμφότερα ἓν τῇ συγκράσει, Θεοῦ μὲν ἐνανθρωπήσαντος,
ἀνθρώπου δὲ θεωθέντος, ἢ ὅπως ἄν τις ὀνομάσειε. Λέγω δὲ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο, ἔμπαλιν ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς
Τριάδος ἔχει. Ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος, ἵνα μὴ τὰς ὑποστάσεις συγχέωμεν· οὐκ ἄλλο δὲ καὶ
ἄλλο, ἓν γὰρ τὰ τρία καὶ ταὐτὸν τῇ θεότητι.

Translation: If anyone introduces two sons, one from our God and Father and a second
from a mother but not one and the same [son], they will also be deprived of the adoption that
was promised to those who believe rightly. For there are two natures – God and human, since
there is both a soul and a body, but not two sons, nor gods. For there are not two human beings
here, just as also [there are not] when Paul names the "inner" and the "outer" [parts] of the
human being. And if it must be said concisely, the things from which the Savior is are ἄλλο and
ἄλλο, since the unseen and timeless are not identical with the seen and that which is under time,
but [they are] not ἄλλος and ἄλλος. May it never be! For each of the two are one by the
commixture. On the one hand, God became human and on the other humanity has been deified,
or in whatever way someone would assert it. But I say ἄλλο and ἄλλο; the inverse is held for the

was often found in tandem with Basil's definition of οὐσία and ὑπόστασις and its usage was likely prompted by Cyril's citation of it at the Council of Ephesus 531 CE. After being recorded in the minutes in 531 CE, it then was recited and recorded again at Chalcedon 451 CE.[79]

§4.3.1.1 *John of Caesarea – The Tendering of the* Παράδειγμα

The first development I was able to discover in regard to Gregory's saying was on the pro-Chalcedonian side. John of Caesarea, writing to a miaphysite audience in his *Apologia concilii Chalcedonesis* (c. 515-518 CE), does not cite the saying explicitly but nevertheless quotes and exploits it to suggest that the relationship between plurality and unity in Christ is inversely related to that of the Trinity.[80] In the build up to this section of his argument, he draws in the saying from Basil of Caesarea's *Ep.* 214 where it is explained that when speaking of the Trinity οὐσία indicates what is common or general (τὸ κοινὸν) and ὑπόστασις what is particular (τὸ ἴδιον). John, using this logic, then attempts

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Trinity. For on the one hand there is ἄλλος and ἄλλος so that we do not confuse the ὑποστάσιες, but on the other there is not ἄλλο and ἄλλο. For the three are one and the same in the Godhead.

[79] The text from Ephesus 431 CE can be found in *ACO* 1.I.2, 43-44. The Greek text as reviewed at Chalcedon can be found in *ACO* 1.I.7, 93. A translation can be found in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, Vo1. 1, translated with introduction and notes by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), pp. 173-7. See also Price and Gaddis' notes on this section, p. 297 n. 339.

[80] Grillmeier, *CCT* 2/2, 24-25; 52-72. Marcel Richard judges this work, against earlier assessments by Lebon and de Halleux, as the result of a synod in Alexandria between 514 and 518 CE. He bases his conclusion on 1) a note that appears in the margin of one of the fragments in the manuscript tradition, and 2) a description of the synod's work found in a letter by Philoxenus. For the discussion see CCSG 1: vi-xii.

John's *Apologia* is found mostly in quotations preserved by Severus in *Liber contra impium Grammaticum,* which contains three orations. Richard provided a Latin translation of the Syriac in CSG 1. The Syriac can be found in CSCO 93, 101, 111. There are, however, six (I-VI) fragments preserved in the Greek *Doctrina Patrum* from Eulogius, which are also given in CCSG 1. Richard identified these as John's by crosschecking them with the Syriac. All of the Greek extracts from the *Doctrina Patrum* can be identified either in part or in total with Syriac extracts from Severus' orations except I, V and VI. Fragment I begins the argument cited by Severus in Fragment II. Fragment V is attributed to John based on the use of two phrases ὑπόστασις χαρακτηριστική and ὅ ἐστι. Fragment VI is attributed to him based on its affinity with Fragment V and the employment of a scriptural reference from John 1.14 which is used in the same fashion in John's *Capitula XVII Contra monophysitas* (CCSG 1:xviii-xxv.) Richard was not able to find Fragment V cited by Severus. However; Severus' objection to John's use of Gregory's saying is a clear indication of his knowledge of this part of John's argument, see *Contra impium Grammaticum, Or.* III.12 (CCSO 45:225).

to consolidate terms so that φύσις and οὐσία essentially indicate what is general while ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον indicate what is particular. [81] In the section where he quotes Gregory's saying, he suggests that Trinitarian doctrine, in particular, the correlation of unity and plurality in the Trinity along with its key ontological terms, should serve as a paradigm (παράδειγμα) for understanding "the οἰκονομία of Christ".[82] In the same section, he argues for a consistent transferability of language between Trinity and Christ and replaces φύσις with ὑπόστασις when utilizing Cyril's μία φύσις formula in order to explicitly highlight that the ὑπόστασις of which he speaks is none other than that of the Word.[83] So, according to John, while for the Trinity there is one οὐσία and three ὑπόστασις, inversely in Christ, there are two οὐσία and one ὑπόστασις. The key ontological language stays consistent but, the location of the unity and plurality is inversely related. In the course of his argument, John must deal with the way Cyril, Athanasius and, other Fathers use these terms.[84]

It is clear that John's strategy is an attempt to interpret Christological issues with direct reference to the Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians. However, Basil is not the only Cappadocian drawn upon nor is there ignorance about the problems associated with Cyril, Athanasius and other authors' use of key ontological terms. There are several aspects of his argument that are important to note. One aspect is his attempt to use Trinitarian theology as a context or, as he puts it, a παράδειγμα, for understanding the incarnation. For the latter, John uses the term οἰκονομία, but as my review of this era illustrates,

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[81] John, *Apologia,* I.2.I.1-15; I.2.III.1.63-2.79 (CCSG 1:49, 51).

[82] John, *Apologia Concilii Chalcedonesis,* I.2.V.228-246. (CCSG 1:56-57). Compare also a similar assertion on who the subject of the incarnation is earlier in the work, *Apologia,* I.1.21-22 (CCSG 1:11): *Igitur, cum dixit "unam naturam Dei Verbi" unum illum de Trinitate intelligendum praebet, qui est hypostatica persona Verbi, eum qui Patri consubstnatialis est, utpote eandem genitoris sui substantiam possidents.*

[83] This seems to go against several accounts of John of Caesarea by Gray and Bathrellos. Gray suggests that John does not identify the subject of the incarnation. Bathrellos suggests John reduces personhood to particularity and then denies the particular idioms of human nature. Yet the quote above cuts against both criticisms since it is clear that John identifies the personal subject and ὑπόστασις of the incarnation as the Word.

[84] John, *Apologia* I.1.21-22; I.2.6.202-205 (CCSG 1:11, 55).

θεολόγια comes to designate the former and the pair will be used together.[85] The tactics John uses to employ this strategy is to assign φύσις on the side of οὐσία and πρόσωπον on the side of ὑπόστασις by an appeal and development of Basil's saying. Once this terminology is consolidated, he utilizes Gregory's saying to argue for the transferability of terms between the two contexts and that the relationship between unity and plurality in each context should be seen as inversely related. In the ensuing years, others would use a remarkably similar strategy although it is unclear whether he is a direct influence of these subsequent authors.

§4.3.1.2 *Severus of Antioch – Surrounded by Grammarians*

Severus, in his response to John, quickly identified the reference from Gregory of Nazianzus' letter to Cledonius but argues that John has misused it and interprets John's consolidation of terms as an attempt not only to sneak in two natures and thus two subjects but also means that John's understanding of οὐσία results in Jesus assuming the entire human race.[86] Severus states that οὐσία is divisible and appeals to God's transcendence to show the futility of human language for describing God. He then cites *Or.* 38 where Gregory celebrates the assumption of the human nature exclaiming, "O new mingling! O paradoxical blending! The one who is comes to be, and the uncreated is created!"[87] By calling on this last quotation, while not explicitly making the

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[85] The post-Chalcedonian era is not when these two areas of theology are assigned the terms θεολόγια and οἰκονομία but the issue of their relation certainly becomes prominent. For forays into how these two terms came to designate distinct areas of theology see Gerhard Richter, *Oikonomia der Gebrauch des Wortes Oikonomia im Neuen Testament, bei den Kirchenvätern und in der theologischen Literatur bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), and Brian E. Daley, "Boethius' Theological Tracts and Early Byzantine Scholaticism," *Mediaeval Studies* 46 (1984), 158-191.

[86] Severus suggests that John has misunderstood and misused Gregory countering that he should understand Gregory's dual φύσεις language as controlled by the idea "from which" or "out of two there is one" found in Ep. 101.20 (SC 208:44) and *Or.* 38 (SC 358:132.25-134.1). See Severus, *Contra impium Grammaticum, Or.* III.12, 23 (CSCO 45:224-225, 50:20-21). On the accusation that John wants him to accept that Christ assumed the entire human race see *Or.* II.17, 22 (CSCO 58:152, 187-188). A translation of parts of Severus' response can be found in Pauline Allen and C. T. R. Hayward, *Severus of Antioch,* The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2004), 59-106.

[87] The quotation of Gregory is from *Or. 38* (SC 358:132.25-134.29: PG 36.325B-C): Ὦ τῆς καινῆς μίξεως! ὦ τῆς παραδόξου κράσεως! ὁ ὢν γίνεται, καὶ ὁ ἄκτιστος κτίζεται . . ." It can

point, Severus indicates that something new and extraordinary has happened through the incarnation.

Severus would go on to use the exact same saying from *Ep.* 101 against a fellow miaphysite, Sergius. In this instance, he argues that some terms cannot be used in exactly the same manner for both Trinity and Christ since they are "diametrically opposed."[88] It is likely that the term he interprets to indicate a "diametrically opposed" relationship is the same term (ἔμπαλιν) John highlighted from Gregory's saying to indicate the inverse quality of unity and plurality between Christ and Trinity. Yet Severus clearly uses the saying with different effect. In this case, the term Sergius attempts to transfer from the Trinity is συμφυΐα. Sergius seeks to use this term in exactly the same way for both the Trinity and Christ –a term for unity. Severus, however, will not allow it and suggests that, for Christ, it must mean a composite of natures, in which the marks of each nature are preserved (but not two natures), but for the Trinity it cannot mean composition but must mean "a community of ousia and identity of divinity."[89] Severus' critique in this context clearly identifies issues with transferring certain terms between θεολόγια and οἰκονομία but it is puzzling that he could not see how other terms, particularly φύσις and ὑπόστασις, could be transferred. His caution is likely prompted by his complex understanding of

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be found in Severus' *Contra impium Grammaticum, Or.* III.37 (CSC 50:235) toward the end of a larger section where Severus explains further how to understand Gregory, Cyril and other authors' two-nature language.

[88] While Severus' Greek for this correspondence is lost, we are fortunate that one of the manuscripts reveals that the translator was interested in notating the meaning of the term translated "diametrically opposed". In fact, the Syriac of this term is simply a transliteration of the Greek term "διάμετρος". Ian R. Torrance in his translation of the correspondence translates a note from the Syriac translator in the margin of one of the manuscripts, "A diameter is where there are two things which confront each other in a primary sense, as is the case of the position at full-moon, when the moon is on the eastern side of the sky and the sun in the western," see Iain R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch & Sergius the Monophysite,* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 1998), 186, esp. n. 90. While this gives us no definitive indication of whether Severus himself intended "antithetical", "inverted", or simply "opposite", it demonstrates that Severus attempted to allude to imagery to describe the relation between Christ and Trinity and thus went beyond simply reproducing the term ἔμπᾰλιν.

[89] Severus, *Epistula secunda ad Sergium* (CSCO 119: 126; trans. Torrance, *After Chalcedon,* p. 186). For a plausible explanation for how Severus conceives this is possible see Roberta Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 9-11.

the relation between φύσις, ὑπόστασις, and οὐσία. Sergius himself shows signs of frustration in the exchange from what he feels is an inconsistent use of οὐσία, ὑπόστασις, and φύσις.[90]

Amongst pro-Chalcedonians, the strategy employed by John of Caesarea was continued and took on additional issues related to a two-nature conception of Christ. These issues mirrored similar problems dealt with in the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century such as whether applying number or counting divides its subject, whether oneness disallows of distinction, and whether φύσις is a synonym for οὐσία, or ὑπόστασις for πρόσωπον.[91]

§4.3.1.3 *Leontius of Jerusalem – Gregory Saying & the Select Fathers*

In Leontius of Jerusalem's *Liber contra Monophysita* (Pt. 1: *Testimonia* and Pt. 2: *Quaestiones,* c. 536-538 CE), two tactics are joined to John's strategy of placing issues related to Christ within a Trinitarian grammar.[92] In addition to Gregory and Basil, Leontius marshalls a gantlet of "select Fathers" to serve as a context for interpreting Cyril's theology. Additionally, several times Cyril's *Epistulae ad Succensum* play a central role in demonstrating how each nature is found to remain after the union. This same set of letters was also used by John and focused on Cyril's explanation that the term "incarnate" in the phrase "one incarnate nature" meant to indicate the human nature while "one . . . nature" referred to his divine nature.[93] His efforts are much more straightforward, and it is clear that Leontius is utilizing a shared assumption that when these Fathers

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[90] Sergius, *Epistula prima ad Seuerum* (CSCO 119:71-72), *Epistula secunda ad Seuerum* (*Ep.* 2) (*CSO* 119:99-100), *Epistula tertia ad Seuerum* (CSCO 119:151-152). In this last citation, Sergius quotes Basil's distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις and Cyril's discussion in *Ep.* 46 concerning how the term "one" can be predicated of things that are simple by nature or composite.

[91] Bathrellos in *Byzantine Christ*, 38-39, suggests that John of Caesarea's work "falls into oblivion" and is not taken up by other pro-Chalcedonians. While there are aspects of John's thought that needed work, the tactic of pairing Basil's saying with Gregory's was not abandoned, neither was the consolidation of terms with φύσις/οὐσία on one side and ὑπόστασις/πρόσωπον on the other, nor attempts to utilize Trinitarian theology as a way to tackle issues when describing the incarnation.

[92] For the dating, circumstances and critical text of Leontius' treatise see Patrick T. R. Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem: Against the Monophysites:* Testimonies of the Saints *and* Aporiae, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[93] Sergius highlights this pro-Chalcedonian argument in his complaints against Severus.

are properly understood they are not at variance with one another in their meaning.[94] He applies this assumption in an effort to show that if the miaphysite interpretation of Cyril's explanation of the incarnation is correct, then Cyril himself is in conflict with other great luminaries of the Church. This is not merely a rhetorical strategy for Leontius; it serves as a hermeneutical strategy for reading Cyril. In addition to serving as part of Leontius' theological hermeneutic, Gregory's saying also highlights the affinities of miaphysite theology with the theology of Apollinarius. In this vein, Leontius draws out how the historical conflict between Apollinarius and Gregory was precisely over Gregory's two nature understanding of Christ and heresiarch's own one nature formulation.[95] Leontius quotes Apollinarius in order to demonstrate how he used the terms φύσις and πρόσωπον interchangeably. Leontius rebuts, "Yet the divine persons (πρόσωπα) are three, and there is one nature (φύσις) for which the understanding of the incarnation (οἰκονομία) is the inverse of this, as Gregory the Theologian says."[96] Like John, Leontius explicitly states that πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις can indicate the same thing.[97] Elsewhere Leontius confronts the confused theology of the Trinity that would result if φύσις and ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον were taken as equivalent—one would be found in the company of Arius. In another passage from *Quaestiones*, he attempts to use a shared premise that the Son is distinguished from the Father according to ὑπόστασις as the starting point for a set of syllogisms that show how the affirmation of the two natures does not divide Christ but distinguishes the Word from his flesh. He ends the section by citing a "Father" who states that "the words of the mystery of Christ are inversely held for the Holy Trinity."[98] He later

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[94] Leontius Jer., *Testimonia,* 1849D (Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 63). The phrase "the select Fathers" (οἱ ἔκκριτοι πατέρες) is used several times in his *Testimonia,* see 1816C, 1817A, 1849D (Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 60, 62, 104). Gray discusses this argument in *Leontius of Jerusalem,* 25-28. See also, Gray's "The Select Fathers': Canonizing the Patristic Past," SP 23 (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1989), pp. 21-36.

[95] Leontius Jer., *Testimonia*, 1864B-1872A (Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 118-128).

[96] Leontius Jer., *Testimonia,* 1869B-1869C (Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 126).

[97] Leontius Jer., *Testimonia* 1869C. (Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 126).

[98] Leontius Jer., *Quaestiones* §18 (1780D; Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 180), §34 (1789D-1792A; Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 198), §35 (1792A, B; Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 198), compare also §51 (1797B, C; Gray, *Leontius of Jerusalem*, 210).

extends this discussion to explain how number (ἀριθμός) can be used to distinguish without dividing.

Leontius shares a similar strategy with John of Caesarea. However, his tactic enlarges the patristic context pulling on other authors to demonstrate how the miaphysite interpretation of Cyril's language would put him in conflict numerous ecclesial luminaries. He highlights the importance of the transferability of language between Christ and the Trinity but furthers the tactic by drawing out the consequences of confusing this language for both Christ and the Trinity. In this case, he uses the example of Apollonarius and Arius. Likewise, he appeals to the inverse relation of unity and plurality between Christ and Trinity in Gregory's saying and applies it to support his tactic of arguing for how things can be distinguished but not divided.

§4.3.1.4 *Leontius of Byzantium – Solutions, Syllogisms & Gregory's Sayings*

Leontius of Byzantium presents the most extensive theological development of Gregory's saying in tandem with Basil's saying from both *Ep.* 214 and *Ep.* 236. In *Triginta capita contra Seueri*, Leontius presents as series of syllogisms based on the inverse logic of Gregory's saying to support the counting and continued existence of the two natures of Christ after the union. Additionally, Leontius comments on the two phrases from Gregory's saying stating that ὁ ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος serves as a pronoun (ἀντωνυμία) of ὑποστάσεις and τὸ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο as a pronoun (ἀντωνυμία) of φύσεις.[99] In his *Solutio argumentorum a Seuero objectorum,* Leontius also gives us a possible look at how miaphysite theology had developed Severus' thought. In several places, one can hear echoes of Severus' initial objections that some terms cannot mean the same thing for both Trinity and Christ and an appeal to the "newness" of the incarnation. In the *Solutio,* these objections have become a blanket principle such that in one context (θεολόγια) the terms φύσις, οὐσία, and ὑπόστασις have distinct meanings but in the οἰκονομία they are equivalent and this is because the natures have been "instituted anew" and therefore their definitions have also.[100] To support this conclusion, the dialogue's miaphysite antagonist cites

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[99] Leontius Byz., *Triginta capita contra Seueri, Capitula* 11-13 (PG 86B.1904A, B).

[100] Leontius Byz., *Solutio* (PG 86B.1921B).

the use of these terms in Cyril and Athanasius.[101] Leontius rejects this explanation and while acknowledging the variance of language nevertheless affirms that Cyril and Athanasius intent was clear.[102] Finally, Leontius, perhaps in response to Severus' objections to the transferability of union language, states that the union for both Trinity and Christ is "more unifying" than those that divide and "richer" than those that confuse preserving identity (τὸ ταὐτόν) on one level and otherness (τὸ ἕτερον) on another although inversely.[103]

§4.3.1.5 *Justinian & the Imperial Employment of Gregory's Saying*

Justinian's own works also bears some remarkable parallels to the ideas already found in John, and both Leontii.[104] However, he moves away from explicitly citing the latter part of Gregory's saying to support the inverse logic of θεολόγια and οἰκονομία and favors the first part of the saying. Despite this shift, he continues to apply the logic of latter part of the saying. Justinian will continue to use Gregory's saying explicitly in other ways. For example, he uses it to highlight the validity of enumerating the two natures and uses a historical comparison that is similar to that found in Leontius of Jerusalem's work to highlight the affinity of Apollinarian theology with miaphysite theology and the conflict of both with Gregory.[105] To tackle the transferability of language he

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[101] Leontius Byz., *Solutio* (PG 86B.1924C-D).

[102] Leontius Byz., *Solutio* (PG 86B.1925A-B).

[103] Leontius Byz., *Solutio* (PG 86B.1940C-1941C).

[104] The two works that were reviewed were *Contra monophysitas* and *Edictum rectae fidei.* I will focus on *Contra monophysitas* in this section but I do note instances of uses from the *Edictum* in the footnotes. On the dating of these documents see Price, TTH 51.1, 122-3. The critical text is *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians,* 2nd ed., eds. Eduard Schwartz, Mario Amelotti, Rosangela Albertella, and Livia Migliardi Zingale*, Legum Iustiniani imperatoris vocabularium, subsidia* 2 (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1973). For ease of citation the section numbers from the critical text are used along with the page number and line.

[105] Justinian discusses the exposure and theology of the Apollinarian forgeries of Athanasius, Julian and Jovian as well as the known writings of Apollinarius and Timothy and contrasts them with Athanasius, Cyril, Gregory and others to show that Severus is the "successor of Apollinarius". The sections dealing with the forgeries and exonerating Athanasius are §70-82 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 28.9-46.21). The main contrast stretches from §82-167 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 32.23-64.9) but he begins the section on forgeries by placing the responsibility for the term "composite nature" at the feet of Apollinarius §58-70 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 24.34-28.8). The reference to Severus as Apollinarius' successor is in §150 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 54.27) but the critique is expanded to all those whose theology share affinity with him §67 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 26.29). Justinian does not use σύνθετον in reference to ὑπόστασις in *contra Monophysitas.* A

administers two new tactics. The first tactic is subtle but occurs in the way he frames his *confessio* at the beginning of his *Contra monophysitas* where he begins with a Trinitarian confession that ends with a description of the Son and transitions into the incarnation using the same terms he has just introduced to explain the incarnation.[106] This description highlights that the subject of the incarnation is the ὑπόστασις of the Son. He then interweaves parts of Gregory's saying to show that while there are two natures this does not mean two sons.[107] What was initially a set of arguments built on the semantic distinctions of Gregory's saying, becomes a deeper literary principle. Justinian uses the confession of Trinitarian theology as a linguistic context— a grammar— for discussing Christ. In this section, he illustrates rather than arguing the consistency of terminology between θεολόγια and οίκονομία. The second tactic was to draw upon Cyril's own Trinitarian theology expressed in the *Thesaurus* in tandem with the Trinitarian theology of Gregory and Basil as an additional context for interpreting Cyril's explanation of the incarnation.[108] Justinian is also concerned to highlight the biblical data that leads to his own explanation of Christ and casts the Fathers as authorities because of their skill in interpreting this same biblical data.[109] While Leontius of Byzantium had developed Gregory's

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large portion of his argument is devoted to refuting "one composite φύσις" and showing its affinity with Apollinarianism. The closest he comes is positing that there is one composite Christ, see *Contra monophysitas,* §70 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 28.10). The language of "one composite Christ" or "composite Christ" is continued with more frequency in the *Edictum* and leads up to his endorsement of "one composite ὑπόστασις*," Edictum* (*Schriften Iustinians,* 132.14-16; 134.29-31; 136.13-14; 144.21-23; 144.36-146.3; 148.32-36). See Price's discussion of this language in TTH 51.1, 124-8.

[106] Justinian, *Contra monophysitas,* §2-3 (*Schriften Iustinians,* 6.26-8.16). A similar tactic is used at the beginning of *Edictum rectae fidei* (*Schriften Iustinians,* 130.13-136.4)*,* but within the section on the incarnation he is explicit about what positions he is arguing against.

[107] Justinian, *Contra monophysitas,* §5 (*Schriften Iustinians*, 8.25-35). Compare his discussion of Gregory's use of the terms "φύσεις" and "δύο" from *Ep.* 101.19 in his *Edictum rectae fidei.* In this instance, Justinian argues that enumeration can be applied to show the difference of natures in Christ but condemns it use as meaning two πρόσωπα following Gregory's censure (*Schriften Iustinians,* 140.15-142.12).

[108] Justinian, *Contra monophysitas,* §173; 176-7(*Schriften Iustinians*, 66.9-11; 66.30-68.22).

[109] An example of this is can be seen in *Contra monophysitas,* §169-173. (*Schriften Iustinians,* 64.28-66.11) but throughout the work he highlights Scriptural references and their interpretation by the "Fathers".

saying into a compelling set of arguments and syllogisms, Justinian demonstrates remarkable skill in drawing the various arguments that grew up around the saying together and funneling it into a portrayal that attempts to highlight a portrayal of the incarnation that is faithful representation of scripture, the Fathers, Cyril and ultimately Chalcedon's intention.

In the interim between Justinian and his contribution to Council of Constantinople and Maximus, these arguments and Gregory's saying can variously be found. One finds Gregory's saying, for example, applied in a range of places. John Climacus in his *Divine Ladder* appeals to the inverse location of plurality and unity in the incarnation and the Trinity as an analogy of quietness and obedience.[110] Towards the end of a long correspondence in the Tritheist debate between Peter and Damian, one finds the same saying.[111] Pamphilus also writes briefly against Tritheists in *Quaestio* 11 of his *Diuersorum capitum* but also exhibits similar features with Justinian, not citing Gregory's saying directly but adopting such terms as one of the Trinity, composite ὑπόστασις and utilizing Basil's letters to do the work of defining ὑπόστασις in distinction from φύσις.[112] While the work is meant to address questions specifically about Christ, Pamphilius consistently places the question within a Trinitarian context illustrating how the language from the Trinity is transferable to the divine οἰκονομία.[113]

Another important figure between the council and Maximus is Sophronius of Jerusalem. In *Crisis of Empire,* Booth posits that Maximus was an intimate in a circle of ascetics around John Moschus, which included Sophronius.

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[110] John Climacus, *Scala paradisi* §27.85 (PG. 88.1117A).

[111] Michael the Syrian, *Chronnicle,* Bk. 10, Ch. 26 in *Chronique de Michel Le Syrien: Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199),* Vol. 2, ed. and transl. by J.-B.Chabot (Paris: Ernest Lerourx, 1901), 388. Michael the Syrian reports this in his Chronicle as part of the Synod hosted by Nicetas between the patriarchs Athanasius of Antioch and Anastasius of Alexandria.

[112] For example see, Pamphilius, *Diuersorum capitum seu difficultatum solutio,* §1.106-131 (CCSG 19:132-133) and §7.93-98 (CCSG 19:176-177) for the use of Basil's letters and see §6, 7, 8 (CCSG 19:155-172, 173-177, 178-186) for the utilization of "one of the Trinity" which he sometimes interchanges with "one of the holy and worshipped Trinity", and for "composite ὑπόστασις".

[113] For example see Pamphilius, *Diuersorum capitum,* §7, §10, §11 (CCSG 19:173-177, 194-200, 202-212). See also *CCT* 2.3, 144-150.

John Moschus, in his *Spiritual Meadow,* rather than arguing over terms and definitions in favor of a pro-Chalcedonian explanation of the incarnation illustrates its power by telling stories of miraculous healings and events done by those who held true to its faith. As Booth points out in the introduction and subsequently discusses throughout his book, this literary tactic that uses stories and contexts to show the correctness of pro-Chalcedonian theology and, eventually, as a critical response to imperial attempts at theological and political compromise, was in used by John and Sophronius.[114] In the context of this rhetorical strategy and especially in the political and theological context of Sophronius' frustration over imperial activity, Sophronius' *Epistula synodica* can be seen applying a similar tactic as that found in Justinian's *Contra monophysitas.* Trinitarian theology, uncontroversial on the surface, becomes the linguistic context for discussing his portrayal of the incarnation and illustrates the importance of consistent use of terminology for both θεολόγια and οἰκονομία by highlighting how the ὑπόστασις that becomes incarnate is that of the Son.[115] Certainly, one would expect his letter to contain a confession of faith but despite its effusive praise for Sergius the Bishop of Constantinople, it equally betrays a letter that was meant as veiled critique of the theological innovations of the Constantinopolitan See. Booth's review of the letter only confirms this further and his analysis shows how sharp the critique would have been. Perhaps it was not so veiled.[116]

§4.3.1.6 *Summary of Gregory's Saying & the Post-Chalcedonian Era*

The relation of this all this material to Maximus is important not only as a way of explaining some of his arguments but also toward providing a context for his rhetorical and hermeneutical strategy. The use of Gregory's saying in tandem with Basil's saying, Cyril's *Epistulae ad Succensum* and *Thesaurus*

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[114] Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 1-6.

[115] Sophronius, *Epistula synodica* §2.2 -2.3(*Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy*: *The Synodical Letter and Other Documents,* ed. & transl. with intro. and commentary by Pauline Allen, Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 74-118.

[116] Booth, *Crisis of Empire,* 234-237 and also Allen's assessment of the letter in *Sophronius of Jerusalem*, 44-46 where she also notes its similarity with Justinian *Edictum* and its unsurprising rejection.

demonstrate a much broader set of issues than is usually discussed for this period. It shows that the garnering of patristic witnesses was as much about reconciling variant language and theologies that grew up around them as it was about bolstering one's arguments with recognized authorities. In addition, it unveiled a disagreement about whether or not, and how, Trinitarian understandings of key metaphysical terms could be applied consistently to Christ. The relationship between θεολόγια and οἰκονομία was not as nearly as settled as is sometimes portrayed in the literature of this period and it could be argued that while the controversies following the Council of Chalcedon were sparked by ambiguities concerning Chalcedon's faithfulness to Cyril, by the middle of the sixth century it had morphed to include questions about Cyril's faithfulness to the Trinitarian theology of Gregory and Basil, indeed, all the "select Fathers" and ultimately his own Trinitarian theology. The correspondence between Severus and Sergius serves as evidence that the concern was found not only in rapprochements between pro-Chalcedonian and miaphysite communities but within miaphysite communities themselves. An additional witness in this regard is the conflicts within miaphysitism over Tritheism. As noted in the study by Uwe Lang, this debate started very similarly over how to reconcile variant language in patristic texts concerning the key ontological terms οὐσία, φύσις, and ὑπόστασις. He argues that one significant impetus behind John Philoponus' attempts to articulate his later Tritheist position was an attempt to present a seamless theological passage for miaphysites between θεολόγια and οἰκονομία and involved delving into the various conceptions of particulars and universals.[117] The success of framing or perhaps reframing the debate by pro-Chalcedonians and its imperial employment through the Council of Constantinople 553 CE seemed formidable but, as might be expected, was only marginally successful in winning back miaphysite leaders and churches.

§4.3.2 *Maximus, Trinity, Christ &* Opusculum *13*

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[117] Uwe M. Lang, "Patristic Argument and the Use of Philosophy in the Tritheist Controversy of the Sixth Century," in *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Fourth Patristic Conference, Maynooth 1999*, eds. D. Vincent Twomey & Lewis Ayres (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 88.

So how does Maximus fit into this tradition? Unfortunately, as I have chosen to focus on Maximus' early writings, a full investigation of his engagement with this broader context and its trajectories must remain for a future study. However, the last text from the early period that I focus on, *Op.* 13, is in itself an importance witness. I have translated the text in full and will parse out its various sections but first some preliminary observations. Thus far in my investigation it is notable that at least two of the major theologies that Maximus confronts during his lifetime "Origenism" and "miaphysitism" were both dealt with at Constantinople 553 CE. I have already shown how Maximus has engaged this material in relation to Origenism, and additional interaction was hinted at through some descriptions of Christ ("one of the Trinity" and "according to ὑπόστασις"). Absent thus far are other indicators such as Justinian's "composite ὑπόστασις", an appeal to the inverse logic of θεολόγια and οἰκονομία and consequently the transferability of language between the two. It is likely that Maximus has read this material, but his engagement has, at least in relation to explanations of the incarnation, stayed on uncontroversial grounds. Maximus has used the concepts of composite and incomposite before but they served in both the *Capita caritate* and the *Quaestiones et dubia* as a contrast between God, who is incomposite, and humanity, indeed all of creation, which is composite.[118] However, this language was not applied to discussions about the relation between Christ's two natures. In *Op.* 13 this changes and, if indeed this is the earliest work against miaphysitism, we see a much fuller picture of Maximus' conception of the incarnation on metaphysical grounds.

Maximus' occasion for this piece had long been conjectured to be meetings he refers to concerning a dispute with Severian bishops on the island of Crete in *Op*. 3.[119] Larchet and Booth suggest that because these debates discussed the wills and energies of Christ and *Op.* 13 does not, this connection is tenuous. Despite his divergence from Sherwood's suggested date, Larchet still

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[118] Maximus, *Cap. car* 2.8, 9 (*Cap. sulla car.*, 92-94) and *Qua. dub.* §13 (CCSG 10:10-11).

[119] *Op.* 3 (PG 91.49B-C). An example of this connection is Louth, *Maximus*, 195, n. 11.

locates the piece sometime between 626-627 CE.[120] Indeed, *Op.* 13 does not

mention wills or energies but, as will be shown below, does reflect an

engagement with pro-Chalcedonian strategies against miaphysitism. I would

add that this seems to fit the timespan 626-633 CE where Maximus writes

several pieces against miaphysitism before the *Psephos* of 634 and his

subsequent thoughts about it in *Ep.* 19 to Pyrrhus.[121] Amongst these pieces are

Op. 18, *Ep.* 17, and *Op.* 5. *Opusculum* 18, dated sometime in the 626-633 CE

period, is a set of short definitions and as Sherwood states is an investigation

into the issue of union. These, Sherwood notes, are reminiscent of a similar list

by Leontius of Byzantium.[122] Of particular interest is "union according to

ὑπόστασις", which I have already suggested Maximus likely garnered from

reading materials from the 553 council.[123] *Opusculum* 5, which Sherwood dates

by 633 CE, seems to be his earliest direct investigation into miaenergism and is

dated slightly before the *Psephos*.[124] It essentially writes against three

formulations of how the two ἐνέργειαι come together in Christ, all of which for

Maximus create problems. This work does not display any of the strategies I

have investigated above but provides a date around which he would have

needed to engage this material. *Op.* 18 then seems suggestive but another work,

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[120] See Larchet's introduction to *Opuscules théologiques et polémiques*, transl. and notes by Emmanuel Ponsoye, Sagesses chr*étiennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 19. See Sherwood's dating in *Annotated Date-List*,

[121] In addition to *Op.* 13, there are several pieces written specifically against miaphysitism and, according to Sherwood, fall within the timespan stated above : Op. 18 (626-633 CE, Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List,* 30; Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit,* Berliner Byzantinistiche Studien 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 56), *Ep.* 17 (by 633, Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List,* 30 but note Larchet's objection in the intro to *Lettres,* transl. and notes by Emmanuel Ponsoye, Sagesses chrétienes (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 55), *Op.* 5 (by 633, Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List*, 37; Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit,* 72-73). For the *Psephos* see Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit,* 73-74. For *Ep.* 19 see Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List,* 37-39 and Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit,* 77.

[122] *Op.* 18 (PG 91.213A-216A) See, Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List,* 30 and Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit,* Berliner Byzantinistiche Studien 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 56.

[123] *Op.* 18 (PG 91.213A, 216A).

[124] Op. 5 (by 633, Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List*, 37; Winkelmann, Der monenergetisch-monotheletische Streit, 72-73).

Ep. 17, is also dated by 633. Larchet suggests, while criticizing Sherwood's dating for this letter, that Maximus discusses miaphysitism well into the miaenergist and miathelite period.[125] While this is certainly true, the strategies Maximus uses to confront both in later writings depend on readings from pro-Chalcedonian authors and Maximus does display at least one of these strategies in *Ep.* 17. Maximus' reading strategy for Cyril's "one incarnate nature of God the Word" is one I have suggested was regularly employed by pro-Chalcedonian authors. This strategy was based on Cyril's own *Epistulae ad Succensum* and while Maximus could have simply read Cyril's letters, when he employs this interpretation he says it is not only Cyril's exegesis but that of patristic tradition.[126] While this could be an empty claim, it is more likely that Maximus has in mind the pro-Chalcedonian strategies I have reviewed above and would have depended on the same sets of readings that would have produced *Op.* 13. Thus, *Ep.* 17 along with *Op.* 18 in the 626-633 CE time span display an engagement with the pro-Chalcedonian writings against miaphysitism that was not present in other early writing but whose strategies were called upon during the miaenergist and miathelite writings. This does not even take into consideration significant works such as the *Expositio orationis dominicae,* both sets of *Ambigua* and *Mystagogia* all of which were written in 628-634 CE and demonstrate an engagement with his "Chalcedonian logic" and more technical language for the incarnation. This provides a context for *Op.* 13, and I argue shows that while it may not be a product of the meetings reported in *Op.* 3, it certainly need not be dated late. I will now examine Op. 13.

According to Sherwood's dating, the earliest direct interaction with miaphysitism can be seen in *Op.* 13 (PG 91:145A-149A) who dates it to about 626/7.[127] Here is the translation:

1. Arius confesses three ὑποστάσεις but denies the oneness and does not speak of the Holy Trinity as ὁμοούσια. Sabellius, confesses the oneness but denies the threeness. For he speaks of Father and Son and Holy Spirit

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[125] Sherwood, *Annotated Date-List,* 30; Larchet, *Lettres*, 55.

[126] *Ep.* 17 (PG 91.381D-384A).

[127] Sherwood, Annotated Date-List, 27.

as the same [ὑπόστασις]. However, the Church of God confesses the oneness and proclaims the threeness. Macedonius was an elder similar to Arius. For he presents the Holy Spirit as a creature, but the Church extols the Holy Spirit as ὀμοούσια with the Father and the Son and how strongly it affirms [him] as God! Likewise, for one of the Holy Trinity, Nestorius also speaks of the natural difference but does not confess the union for he does not speak of it as done according to ὑπόστασις. Also, Eutyches, on the one hand, confessed the union, but, on the other hand, denied the distinction according to οὐσία leading to the confusion of the φύσεις. However, the Church maintains both the unity according to ὑπόστασις because he is undivided and maintains the distinction according to οὐσία because he is unconfused.

2.   How does the utmost union have both identity and difference? There is the identity of οὐσίαι and the difference of πρόσωπα and *vice-versa*. Such as there is for the Holy Trinity, on the one hand there is an identity of οὐσία and, on the other hand, a difference of πρόσωπα. For we confess one οὐσίαand three ὑποστάσεις. Also, for a human being, on the one hand, there is an identity of πρόσωπον and a difference of οὐσίαι — the soul is of one οὐσία and the flesh of another. It is equally so for Christ, the Master. On the one hand, there is an identity of πρόσωπον and a difference of οὐσίαι. For while being one πρόσωπον, that is to say, ὑπόστασις, one οὐσία is divine, and the other is human. For just as it is impossible to confess the union of the Holy Trinity and not promulgate the difference, so it is also entirely necessary to proclaim both the union and the difference for one of the Holy Trinity.

3. For just as neither difference or union are signified by the same phrases but, difference, by speaking of the three ὑποστάσεις, and the union, by confessing the one οὐσία, so also for one of the Holy Trinity. The difference is confessed through pointing out the two φύσεις and the union by means of proclaiming the one composite ὑπόστασις.

4. Just as we anathematize Arius, not for proclaiming the difference according to ὑπόστασις for the Holy Trinity, but because he does not speak of the natural union, so also we anathematize Nestorius, not for

making known the natural difference for Christ but because he does not speak of the union according to ὑπόστασις.

5. Just as we anathematize Sabellius, not for proclaiming the natural union for the Holy Trinity but because he does not speak of the difference according to ὑπόστασις, so we anathematize Eutyches not for speaking of the union according to ὑπόστασις for Christ but because he does not make known the natural difference.

6. It is not necessary to speak of the difference according to ὑπόστασις of the Holy Trinity nor the natural difference for one of the Holy Trinity in perception but to apprehend it by the eyes of the mind. Also, how can you promulgate the three ὑποστάσεις by the difference according to ὑπόστασις for the Holy Trinity and not promulgate two φύσεις in one ὑπόστασις for one of the Holy Trinity by the natural difference?

7. Just as you can say there is one οὐσία because of the ὁμοούσια of the Holy Trinity and three ὑποστάσεις because of the ἑτεροϋπόστατον, so speak of two οὐσίαι because of the ἑτεροούσιον of the Word and the flesh and of one ὑπόστασις because [each nature] is not hypostasized on its own.

8. Just as there is one essence for the Holy Trinity [and] we do not speak about a confusion of the three ὑποστάσεις nor, since there are three ὑποστάσεις, do we speak about a division of the one essence, so for one of the Holy Trinity as one hypostasis we do not speak about a confusion of his two φύσεις nor as two φύσεις do we speak about a division of the one ὑπόστασις.

9. The one who does not say for Christ that there is the union according to ὑπόστασις because of the two different φύσεις is a Nestorian and the one who does not speak of the natural difference in the union according to ὑπόστασις is a Eutychian. However, the one who proclaims the union according to ὑπόστασις and the natural division for one of the Holy Trinity holds fast the royal and blameless faith.

10. Therefore the one who says there is both difference and union for Christ, neither destroys the difference nor confuses the union. For the Divine Cyril anathematizes those who, because of the difference, destroy the

union according to ὑπόστασις and the ecumenical synod anathematizes those who, because of the union according to ὑπόστασις, destroy the natural difference for one of the Holy Trinity.

This text has remarkable parallels with the writings of both Leontius of Byzantium and Justinian yet there is no mention of Gregory nor of Gregory's saying. In the first *capitulum*, just as we saw with other pro-Chalcedonians, the passage begins with a discussion of the Trinity, specifically Trinitarian heresies contrasted with the teachings of the Church. It then moves, using the same ideas of union and distinction in contrast to confusion and separation, to discuss heresies concerning Christ, or as the passage states "one of the Holy Trinity" another moniker of Justinian's writings and the Fifth Council. The latter part of the *capitulum* clearly shows that Maximus is using οὐσία and φύσις interchangeably and, as a result, means to highlight the transferability of language when speaking of the Trinity or Christ. This tactic is reinforced throughout by the series of the conjunctions "Just as . . . so also" (ὥσπερ . . . οὐτῶς) seeking also to highlight the subject of the incarnation through the persistent use of "one of the Holy Trinity".

The second *capitulum* discusses the "utmost union". The phrase refers to the union of the Trinity as is clear from the following sentences, but it can be conceived "inversely". Importantly, the phrase το ἔμπαλιν makes an appearance and is used to indicate an inverse relationship between identity and difference in relation to the key ontological terms οὐσία and πρόσωπον. Using the example of the Trinity and then of the human constitution, Maximus moves to Christ, arguing for an analogous balance of difference and union for both Trinity and Christ. The union of both contexts preserves an identity and difference but does not fall into either a confusion or division. This focus on union and the concepts of difference and identity has its closest parallels with Leontius of Byzantium's *Solutio* and as far as I was able to discover has no parallel in Justinian. For the Trinity, the difference is on the level of the ὑποστάσεις, while the identity is found on the level of οὐσία. For the human being the identity is on

the level of πρόσωπον and the difference on the level of οὐσία.[128] For Christ, identity is on the level of πρόσωπον and difference on the level of οὐσία. His short statement identifying πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις as equivalent terms is an indicative feature pro-Chalcedonian argumentation reviewed in the authors above. A word that seems to be unique to Pamphilius, ἰδιοϋπόστατος, also occurs here and hints that Maximus may have also drawn on his works.[129]

Finally, the reference to the ὑπόστασις as "composite" is paralleled in Justinian and Constantinople 553. In fact, it seems to go into a great deal of detail in order to demonstrate exactly where the points of difference and union are located in both contexts, attempting to portray a middle path between the Trinitarian heresies of Arius, Sabellius and Macedonius and the heresies of Nestorius and Eutychius concerning the understanding of the incarnation. This feature mirrors both Leontius of Jerusalem and Justinian. There is no mention of Severus, which goes a small way towards suggesting that this was meant to serve as an agreement between miaphysites and pro-Chalcedonians. If that is the case, it might also explain the absence of any mention of Gregory of Nazianzus, especially in those areas of the text where it seems like a direct citation would have been easier, and why instead there is an attempt to shows these ideas are faithful to the "Divine Cyril". A move away from citing Gregory's saying to address the transferability of language was already observed in Justinian. Perhaps in order get beyond wrangling over more than one Father at a time, he is not named here at all.

What this text demonstrates is a profound engagement with the broad tradition and trajectory of the pro-Chalcedonian literature reviewed. So much so that he can use the strategies and knowingly avoid its patristic source. If Maximus wrote this text en route to Africa, where did he come upon the necessary texts? It would require not only the literature of the Council of 553 CE

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[128] Maximus will eventually qualify this example in the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho.* Pyrrhus objects assigning ἐνέργεια to φύσις stating that if that were the case then the human being would have two ἐνέργειαι since human beings are made of both body and soul. Maximus rejoinders that there is a distinction between unity κατ᾽ εἶδος of the human being and unity κατ᾽ οὐσίαν of soul and body (PG 91.336A-D).

[129] Maximus, *Op.* 13 §7 (PG 91.148C). For ἰδιοϋπόστατος see Pamphilius, *Diuersorum capitum,* §10.117 (CCSG 10:200), cf. also §5.28, 40; §7.84-85 (CCSG 10: 154, 176).

itself, which Maximus has likely already read but also literature that was not included with conciliar documents such as Leontius of Byzantium's writings. Regardless, Maximus has now delved directly and deeply into issues surrounding miaphysite and pro-Chalcedonian theologies. Maximus' engagement here must go beyond the label "Chalcedonian logic" and be seen to represent a broad engagement of the trajectories of post-Chalcedonian theology which clearly included not simply assuming the use of Trinitarian theology to address understanding the incarnation but arguing for it.

Interestingly, there are some similarities to his earlier works, even though the context differs. Maximus has already begun to use "union according to ὑπόστασις" in *Quaestiones* and *Ep.* 2 but in *Op.* 13 the term "composite" is added. Likewise, as I pointed out in Chapter 3, he refers to Christ briefly in the *Capita* as "one of the Trinity". Maximus in both works also demonstrates a concern to locate Christ within a Trinitarian framework although noticeably without the technical language seen in *Quaestiones* and *Ep. 2* and without reflection on how to locate the unity and plurality of both Christ and Trinity in relation to one another. This suggests that his deep engagement begins in *Op.* 13. However, even in this case, not all the pieces are found together. The λόγος/τρόπος distinction is absent in this *opusculum*. In later works, such as *Mystagogia* and *Exposition orationis dominicae* he will use it for the Trinity but it appears clearly in reference to *both* Christ and the Trinity *as well as* in relation to the ideas seen in *Op.* 13 in the *Ambigua ad Thomam* and *Op.* 3.[130]

As a consequence of the scope of my study, I cannot give a thorough review of later writings. I can say that Maximus will eventually display several more features from this broader pro-Chalcedonian trajectory. For example, in *Epistula* 12, Maximus displays the full array of strategies and tactics that were reviewed in *Op.* 13 above. By the time of the *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, Maximus has refined his argument against miaphysitism and extended it to miathelitism and miaenergism, identifying the same theological problem with all three – an ambiguity over how to understand what is "natural" and what is "hypostatic"

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[130] *Myst.* 23 (CCSG 69:52.839-54.868), *Or. Dom.* (CCSG 23:53.440-54.467), *Ambiguum* 1.3-4 and 5.11-23 (CCSG 48:24.105-33.284), *Op.* 3 (PG 91:48B-49A; 56C).

and a refusal to allow the transferability of language and principles between θεολόγια and οἰκονομία.[131] As noted in the introduction, several scholars have noted Maximus ability to place Christological issues in the context of Trinitarian theology and looked to examples in the Cappadocians and others but draw no attention to the intervening years between the Council of Chalcedon and Maximus where so much energy was spent exactly over the relation between θεολόγια and οἰκονομία.

Yet one searches in vain to find a direct reference to Gregory's saying in Maximus' writing, even though many of the strategies for which it was employed are observably reproduced and advanced by him. It is clear that Maximus has read Gregory's *Ep.* 101, at least by the time of the *Ambigua ad Iohannem,* since he uses the term περιχώρεσις as a way to describe the relationship between the two natures of Christ in a way that is uniquely witnessed to by Gregory's letter.[132]

Conclusion

In these three works, Maximus has built on and drawn together several ways he talked about the Trinity as beginning, means, and end but also embarks on new ground. In the *Liber,* Maximus established as grammar that illustrated the Trinity as beginning, means, and end of the Christian life, specifically through, baptism, prayer, how the activities of the Son and Spirit are correlated and how the life of the incarnate Son served as the primary example of love. Accounts of the Trinity in the *Capita* drew on Gregory's and the Areopagite's language to highlight transcendence and union and distinction but focused on placing this way of speaking within ascent. On this scaffolding, the *Capita* also interwove language that added other layers of complexity. This language

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[131] Maximus, *Disput. Pyh.,* (PG 91.289D, 292A and 336D, 337A). See also, *Vita graecae*, li. 352-361 in Brownen Neil & Pauline Allen, *The Life of Maximus the Confessor (Recension 3)*, Early Christian Studies 6 (Strathfield: St Pauls Publications, 2003), 66.

[132] See Maximus' use of the term: 1) for the *energeiai* of Christ in *Ambiguum 5* (CCSG 48:27.153), 2) for deification, a) "whole man pervading the whole God" in *Ambiguum* 41 (*The Ambigua 2,* 108: PG 91:1308B; transl. Constas, *The Ambigua* 2, 109), b) God "wholly interpenetrating those who are entirely worthy" in *Ambiguum* 7 (*The Ambigua* 2, 90; PG 91:1076C), 3) for the grace of the Spirit (*Disput. Pyh.,* 320D) d) for the two natures of Christ themselves (*Disput. Pyh.,* 345D-348A) and by proxy through an example of reason and thought (*Disput. Pyh.,* 337C-D).

revolved around issues related to Origenism, drawing a sharp contrast between Creator and creation while still maintaining participation in God based on his grace. In *Quaestiones*, the λόγος/τρόπος distinction provided more technical language for locating oneness and threeness in the Trinity but also continued the emphasis on the illuminating and helping activities of the Holy Spirit and briefly used more technical language for how the two natures of Christ came together. Here too Maximus refined and clarified language for his *Logos/*λόγοι doctrine and his conception of θεολόγια. The appearance of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction in *Quaestiones* signaled a watershed for Maximus as it would be applied not only to the Trinity but then more fully to Christ and humanity in *Ep.* 2 and later served as a key distinction for his descriptions of creation, Christ, and Trinity.

In *Ep.* 2 the λόγος/τρόπος distinction and the *logos*/λόγοι doctrine are integrated into Maximus' baseline grammar being applied to Christ and his salvific work and describing other ways that God as love is the beginning, means, and end of Christian life. Here, God makes whole the fragmented existence of human beings, specifically through the example of Christ and the alignment of a person's τρόπος to its λόγος in love. In tandem with this integration, there is a growing use of more technical language for Christ likely based on his reading of materials from the Fifth Council rather than just Chalcedon.

In *Opusculum* 17, the processes of ascent that had so characterized his earlier works are absent and Maximus reflects consciously and directly on the relationship between Trinity and Christ. Union, identity and difference and their inverse relationship in Christ and Trinity become an occasion for him to reflect again on union and distinction. Despite this connection, the works polemical context allows this language to take shape as yet another grammar for the Trinity. Noticeably absent is an explicit use of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction, although Maximus likely has it in mind.

The Trinitarian grammar for Christian life presented and developed in the *Liber, Capita, Quaestiones* and *Ep. 2*, and the grammar found for Trinity and Christ in *Op*. 13 are two distinct ways Maximus wrote about the Trinity. The first grammar was developed within the context of explaining ascent and had added

layers of complexity that grew out of his engagement with Tritheism, Origenism, and a broader set of works in *Quaestiones.* The second grammar developed out of engagement with post-Chalcedonian theology in light of miaphysite activity. These will not always appear in mutually exclusive works, and one must be cautious that the differing contexts not suggest that Maximus has abandoned one in favor of the other. However, the absence of earlier themes in *Op.* 13 (especially the λόγος/τρόπος distinction) and the lack of a similar articulation of Christ and Trinity in earlier works, strongly suggest that each should be seen as distinct. It is not until later works that both ways of speaking become synthesized within his larger vision of the cosmos.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have sought to lay bare Maximus' Trinitarian thought in his early writings up to 626/7, an often-neglected set of writing in earlier portrayals of his doctrine of God. My thesis has been that Maximus' engagement with the ascetic concerns and the theological controversies of the sixth and seventh century helped develop his early works toward a unique and distinctively Trinitarian articulation of Christian life and post-Chalcedonian theology. This articulation can be discerned in two distinct grammars. The baseline Trinitarian grammar for Christian life was found in the *Liber.* In subsequent writings (*Capita, Quaestiones* and *Ep.* 2), it grew increasingly complex through engagements with Origenism, Tritheism, a broader set of writings witnessed to by *Quaestiones* and ascetic concerns such as the workings and perceptibility of the God in the human person. These sets of concerns and engagements were met with his synthesis drawn from other traditions, ascetic writings, celebrated authors, and the symbols of faith.

Specifically, the *Liber* offered a distinct explanation of the rationale of ascent and Christian life, which centered on loving God, neighbor and enemies. In this account, the Trinity was illustrated as beginning, means, and end. Baptism was in the name of the deifying Trinity and served as the beginning of the Christian life. The incarnate Son's life served as an example of love and therefore a means and goal of ascetic life. Also, important to his vision was highlighting the common nature of the divine persons and thus a common set of actions. Particularly, with the Son and Spirit, these actions were inseparable yet allowed for distinct roles and activities within the divine expression of φιλανθρωπία. Additionally, it also gave a framework for explaining the Spirit's appropriation of the activities of the incarnate Son to the baptized. The Trinitarian texture of Christian life was also exhibited through the old man's prayer for mercy. As a result of a comparison with previous ascetic writers in Chapter 2, Maximus' distinctiveness was located in his conception of the incarnate Son who fulfills the command of love and whose example serves as the means and goal of Christian life.

His baseline grammar continued in the *Capita* with some refinements but was also augmented by making explicit what was only inferred or illustrated in the *Liber.* Additionally, Maximus also tackled issues related to Origenism and Tritheism. His enhancements were visible when Maximus gave a more robust explanation of the activities of contemplation and prayer. The Trinity served as the ultimate goal of these activities and the Spirit become an important means of accomplishing their task of redirecting desire and knowledge toward love. While this was illustrated in the *Liber* through meditation on the σκοπός of the incarnation and calls for ceaseless prayer, the stages of contemplation received focused attention in the *Capita.* Additionally, the quality of love that was to be imitated was supplemented by Maximus' description of God as not only good but ἀπαθής. This meant that God's love was equal towards all and thus served as an example of the kind of love that the baptized should strive to emulate. While the *Liber* illustrated the Trinity as beginning, means, and end through the actions of the divine persons, especially the love of the incarnate Son, the *Capita* enhanced this illustration by directly stating God is love per 1 John 4:8. As a result of his engagement with Origenism, the differences between creation and Creator were brought out, especially as it related to the terms οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, and γνῶσις. Despite this irreducible difference, Maximus still offered a portrayal of participation that allowed for existence and deification. Maximus also engaged Tritheism, using it as means to demonstrate the importance of integrating γνῶσις and πρᾶξις under the rubric of love and gives an early example of his reflection on union and distinction in the Trinity.

In *Quaestiones et dubia*, the appearance of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction signaled an important moment in his theology, especially as it related to the Trinity. Furthermore, this distinction and the more technical language for Christ – where the natures are united "according to ὑπόστασις" – revealed his engagement with a broader set of sources. Maximus begins to fix his language for the stages of ascent while continuing to refine his conception of θεολόγια, the *Logos*/λόγοι doctrine and his understanding of God as cause.

In *Ep.* 2, Maximus further synthesizes the developments and refinements that were begun in *Quaestiones.* This synthesis exhibited more use of the technical terminology for the incarnation and toward an extensive use of the

λόγος/τρόπος distinction for ascent and the incarnation. Maximus demonstrates how love and, in particular, God as love heals humanity's divided nature through the incarnation. It could be argued that of the two grammars presented in this thesis, his articulation of the Trinity as love and as the beginning, means, and end of Christian life is his most unique contribution.

Finally, I ended with a retelling of the context of *Op.* 13 and its brief analysis. This remarkable text, which has a close affinity with the language and theology of Leontius of Byzantium, unveiled a focused engagement with the pro-Chalcedonian theology that fed the Fifth Council. While there were certain affinities between the grammar he developed in his accounts of ascent and what was found in *Op.* 13, the text's deep engagement suggested that its grammar be seen as distinct. Maximus embraced this new grammar and used it to ground his conception of Christ as being two-natures and one composite ὑπόστασις. His argument locates and argues for the inverse relationship between the plurality and unity in θεολόγια and οἰκονομία and consequently for the transferability of ontological terms.

The various concerns, traditions and trajectories covered in this investigation have all fed his early writings and supplied the general lineaments of his theology. His thought will be further developed during his stay in Africa and later in his life. Using the *Liber* as a baseline and observing how each of these works displays increasing layers of complexity, allowed a fascinating look into how Maximus' engagements with Origenism, Tritheism, ascetic concerns and miaphysitism shaped his theology. These engagements were eventually what allowed him to expand his vision of the Trinity as love and as beginning, means, and end into an increasingly cosmological vision. This vision would capture the attention of generations to come and provided the basis for his continued fight against miaphysitism and his eventually struggle against miaenergism and miathelitism.

APPENDIX

Table A.1 Correlation of Conterella's & Sherwood's Numbering with CCSG 40

Conterella's & Sherwood's Numbering of *Lib. asc.*	CCSG 40	Conterella's & Sherwood's Numbering of *Lib. asc.*	CCSG 40
§1	1-31	§24	418-430
§2	32-48	§25	430-455
§3	49-63	§26	456-466
§4	63-70	§27	467-523
§5	70-91	§28	523-530
§6	92-109	§29	530-547
§7	110-131	§30	548-561
§8	132-160	§31	562-581
§9	160-173	§32	581-618
§10	174-199	§33	618-638
§11	199-215	§34	639-669
§12	215-242	§35	669-677
§13	243-254	§36	678-716
§14	254-271	§37	717-815
§15	271-295	§38	815-838
§16	296-311	§39	838-851
§17	311-327	§40	852-911
§18	328-354	§41	912-967
§19	355-364	§42	968-981
§20	365-373	§43	982-1002
§21	373-380	§44	1003-1017
§22	380-400	§45	1018-1044
§23	401-417		

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