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ELENA BEDREAG
ȘTEFAN BOSOMITU
ELENA FIREA
ANDREI IOAN LAZĂR
FLORIN LEONTE
ZAHARIA-SEBASTIAN MATEIESCU
CORNEL MICU
COSMIN UNGUREANU

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New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania
www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro
Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74

# ZAHARIA-SEBASTIAN MATEIESCU

Born in 1983, in Horezu

PhD. in Philosophy, University of Bucharest (2011)
Dissertation: *The Concept of Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics*

Researcher, Center for the Logic, History and Philosophy of Science,
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest

Guest researcher at the Research Master Programme "History and Philosophy of Science" (2009-2010)

Several publications on Methaphysics, Theology, Philosophy of Science
Participation to conferences, both in Roamnia and abroad

# THE INTERPRETATION OF MIRACLES IN THE THOUGHT OF SAINT MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

**Abstract**: The goal of this paper is to come up with an interpretation of miracles based on the thought of the Byzantine theologian Saint Maximus the Confessor (580-655). The thesis championed here is that Maximus' conception of the dyothelite dogma of Christ's two energies and wills provides us with a consistent interpretation of miracles from both a theological and philosophical point of view. The argument shows that by following Maximus' conceptual tools for the formation of the dyothelite dogma together with some of his reflections about miracles one can consistently interpret miracles as the change of the modes of existence of beings.

**Keywords**: Maximus the Confessor, miracles, laws of nature, Fathers of the Church, theology, Patristic philosophy.

## Introduction

The topic of miracles is one of the most interesting and provoking themes of reflection. Both theologians and philosophers have tried to explain or at least to interpret miracles, their relationship with faith, the logic of bringing testimonies for them or their connection with the laws of nature. This last topic of miracles and laws of nature will concern us here for this continues to puzzle our minds with deep questions: how to make sense for both miracles and for the validity of human knowledge too? What is it happening with the nature of objects when miracles take place? Is our knowledge still valid if we cannot explain miracles by natural causes? There are no universal accepted answers to these questions, and the present approach aims at contributing to this by coming up with an interpretation of miracles based on the conceptual tools of the Christian dogma of Christ's two energies and wills. Therefore, my aim in this work is to provide an answer to these questions by reconstructing some of the philosophical and theological ideas of Saint Maximus the Confessor, the

author of this dogma.[1] If I were to express my main objective here I would say that it is to come up with a consistent theological and philosophical interpretation of miracles by referring to the invaluable reflections of Saint Maximus the Confessor. Such a work is desirable for to my knowledge, there is no successful recent attempt to explain miracles such that both fundamental theological and philosophical principles remain preserved.[2] Moreover, although some of Maximus' scholars remarked that he can have a proper interpretation of miracles, none of them made any attempt to uncover it and the present work aims at fulfilling this gap.[3]

Revered both in the Eastern and Western Christianity, Maximus the Confessor (580-655) is one of the most important Byzantine saints and theologians, whose writings constituted the basis for the dyothelite dogma of Christ's two wills and energies. Maximus was born in Constantinople in 580 AD, educated there, and then at the age of thirty briefly held a high position in the civil service - first secretary in the imperial chancellery - in the Emperor Herakleios' new administration.[4] But within a few years he left the court and become a monk, traveling in different places from North Africa to Rome. The context of this flee was marked by the Persian invasion in the Byzantine Empire in the 610's and 620's, which had the effect of disclosing the religious vulnerability of Byzantine Christianity in the Eastern provinces. In those parts, the Council held in Chalcedon in 451 was widely regarded as the 'Great Apostasy' for having relinquished from the details of the teaching of St. Cyril of Alexandria, who was universally acknowledged as a great theological figure in the East by Maximus' time. The sixth century had witnessed several attempts for the harmonization of those who rejected Chalcedon, but all remained unsuccessful. The Persians took profit of this insecure social and religious context and in the 620's reached a religious settlement with the Christians, patriarch of Antioch including, from the newly-conquered territories that recognized those who refused to accept Chalcedon. The religious authorities in Byzantium quickly replied to this frightening situation by proposing a Christological compromise for the Christians from the Eastern provinces: they accepted the Chalcedonian statement of the two natures in one person of Christ, but claimed that the one person was manifest in a single divine-human activity (energeia) and will. It was against this idea of a single activity or power and will of Christ, called the monothelite dogma that Maximus started a forceful fight that lasted until the end of his life. He became so important a voice in Byzantium such that everybody was praying him to

abandon for a while his views for the search of peace in the Empire, but Maximus strongly opposed this. In 646, after many debates and writings issued against Monothelism, he went to Rome where he took part in the Council from Lateran (649), ruled by the Pope of Rome Martin I, which condemned Monothelism. This strongly irritated the imperial government in Constantinople and both the Pope and Maximus were arrested and taken there. Martin was tried, condemned and exiled to the Crimea where he died. Maximus was himself tried and exiled for several times and in the end he was condemned as a heretic – the Byzantine authorities cut his tongue and right hand. After approximately twenty years, the orthodox confession of Christ's two natural wills, for which they had given their lives, was vindicated at the Sixth Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople in 680-681.

As I will show in this paper, Maximus' arguments for the dyothelite dogma are based on a specific philosophical and theological approach. My claim is that one can come up with a Maximian interpretation of miracles as the *changing of the modes* (*tropoi*) of being by relying on the conceptual apparatus used by Maximus in the formation of the dogma of the two wills. Therefore, my aim here is to show how a theological dogma can provide us with very useful philosophical conceptual tools for interpreting miracles and thus, I hope, the philosophical relevance of the theology of this great Father of the Church, Maximus the Confessor, will be once more uncovered.

I split the argumentation in two parts: part I-*Ousia*, *Dunamis* and *Energeia* in Theology, and part II-The Meaning of Miracles. Each part follows the same red line, that is, the discussion of three fundamental concepts for the history of philosophy and of theology, namely *ousia*, understood as *being* (substance) or *essence*, *dunamis*, understood as *power* or *capacity* and *energeia*, understood as *activity* or *operation*. Without the grasp of the subtle relationship between dunamis and energeia and also that between ousia (substance or essence)-logos-mode (*tropos*), I think it is very hard to understand the interpretation of miracles proposed here.

In the first part I show how the Christian theologians in the first centuries used one traditional philosophical interpretation of dunamis and energeia in order to express the relationship between God the father and God the Son. I will work out few details of this theological approach down to its Christological relevance highlighted in the 7th century by Maximus the Confessor, who used the concepts dunamis and energeia for expressing what later become the dogma of Christ's two natural

wills. These reflections are very important because they provide us with the conceptual basis for the interpretation of miracles presented in the last section. Here I detach from Maximus' approach the elements for constructing a consistent interpretation of miracles and laws of nature from both a theological and a philosophical point of view. As I will show bellow, the key of this achievement will lie in the recognition of both the difference and the relationship between power and activity and the idea that the innovation of beings can take place by the change of their mode of existence (*tropos tes hyparxis*).

## I. *Ousia-Dunamis-Energeia* in Theology

### Theological Considerations

The commencement of my theological inquiry has to do with the concept of dunamis (power-capacity) applied to the Christian God. The starting point consists of the well known dispute between 'homoians' and 'heterousians', who were providing different answers to the fundamental question whether God the Son has the same essence that is 'is homousion or not' with God the Father. On the one side, Arius and Eunomius were famous supporters of the difference between the Son and the Father, while the Cappadocian Fathers were committed to the 'homousious' thesis that is the Son has the same being with the Father. Eunomius' basic tenet was to make equivalence between God's property of being ingenerated or without cause and His essence. Any other property or name applied to God Eunomius takes to be tantamount with God's property of being unproduced. The basic postulate of this view is that God's simplicity constrains us to accept ingeneracy as God's true essence. Any other property applied to God essentially would destroy God's simplicity. Thus, God cannot give birth to the Son because that would count as a second property among His ingeneracy and the simplicity of God's essence would be altered by it. Secondly, Eunomius uses the term 'energeia', that is, activity and not power/dunamis for denoting God's property of productivity, while the results of this activity are called *erga*. Thus, if we were to summarize Eunomius' stance, we can follow the next scheme: i) God's eternal essence; ii) eternal essence = eternal activity; iii) the world is not eternal; hence, iv) there is no divine eternal activity. If, for example, God is productive in creating the world,

and if God's essence is eternal, then His activity of creating the world must be eternal too, Eunomius would like to say. But this is contrary to what the Bible says that the world has a beginning.

Both Gregory of Nyssa and Basil the Great wrote intensively against Eunomius' theology. One of the many arguments fostered by Gregory of Nyssa refers to the significance of names. For Gregory of Nyssa the names refer not to the essence of an existent but to its distinctive powers. At the basis of Gregory's view lies his conception of the absolute transcendence of God's essence. As most of his fellows, Gregory was committed to apophaticism or to the statement of the absolute limits of the human mind in knowing God's essence. In accordance to this, God is approachable only through his powers or properties but not through his essence. Consequently, God's names as unbegotten, so much invoked by Eunomius in his arguments or powerful or begotten etc can only refer to his powers but not to His essence *per se*, as Eunomius would like to think.

Eunomius' philosophy commits itself to another major assumption, namely that each activity (energeia) has just one single result. Since the Son cannot be equal with the Father due to its begotteness, he is certainly God's first product, Eunomius says. After, him, the production of the Holy Spirit, of angels and of the creation follows. In Eunomius' thought, each of God's products is hierarchically ordered in accordance with a hierarchy of God's activities. But against this, Gregory of Nyssa adduces some physical examples recalling us of a similar discussion of dunamis in the Presocratics but also very suggestive for the forthcoming discussion of miracles: fire's activity, for example, can have different results, says Gregory, "for it softens bronze, hardens mud, melts wax, and destroys flesh. Similarly, the Sun's power of warming has different effects as well, which vary according to the power of that receiving the effect."[5]

Thus, Gregory has argued that one cause can have many different effects, all depending on the receptive being. Gregory believes that he has shown by his examples of fire and the sun that Eunomius' invoked one-to-one correspondence between energeia and ergon cannot be true, but he does not deny that there is a continuity of nature in the causal chain. He argues, instead, that there is a correspondence between the power and the being. Gregory's understanding of the relationship between nature and power is that the latter is the expression of the distinctive characteristic(s) of the former. The moral of Gregory's argument is as follows: since both the Father and Son manifest the same power(s), they must share the same nature for "the same power(s) belong to the same

nature."[6] The best examples of the relationship between a nature (physis) and its power (dunamis), where the power makes known the nature, are fire and heat, and ice and cold. Gregory twice compares fire and its powers heat, as well as ice and its power cold, to the divine nature and its powers. He argues that just as the power heat is a certain indicator of fire, so too the power providence, which both the Father and the Son possess, is a certain indicator of a common nature. In each case the power is the basis for our recognition of the identity of nature, since "identical powers mean identical nature."[7] And similarly, the argument applies in the case of the Holy Spirit.

Although I have closely followed Barnes' *The Power of God…* in this account of Gregory's argument based on God's dunamis or power I, on the contrary, do not want to privilege Gregory's power-type argument over his energeia-type argument.[8] Actually, one has to recall here that arguments based on energeia entered the Trinitarian debates with the *Letters to Serapion* of St. Athanasius the Great. Athanasius reacted to a group of Arians who were forcefully arguing against the divinity of the Holy Spirit. His argument relies on identifying many passages in the Scriptures where it is mentioned that the three divine persons have the same works or that they have a joint work: "The Apostle does not mean that the things which are given are given differently and separately by each person, but that what is given is given in the Trinity, and that all are from one God."[9] Therefore, Athanasius strategy is to argue from the same energeia to the same ousia and hence energeia is seen as "revelatory of ousia".[10] Part of Eunomius' arguments is directed exactly against this type of union between energeia and ousia. One of Eunomius' remarks is that the Father, as begetter, possesses the energeia of begetting uniquely and hence the two persons do not have the same energeia in common. Consequently, the reasoning back from energeia to ousia will have the end result of collapsing on two ousiai, one for Father and one for Son. An important reply to this came from St. Basil the Great, who distinguished between knowledge on *whatness* of a thing and *how* a thing is. In the light of this distinction, the fact that the Son is from the Father does not tell us something about the ousia of the Son but about how this being is.[11] This *how* of the being is also called the mode of existence (*tropos tes hyparxis*) and as I will argue in the sequel, it represents one of the fundamental contributions of the Fathers to the philosophical language. For Maximus the Confessor it will represent the key for the explanation of miracles.

Coming back to St. Gregory of Nyssa's energeia-type objections against Eunomius, the strategy used by Gregory is to force Eunomius into a paradox. The dilemma reconstructed runs as follows: either the Son is coming from an energeia deprived of an ousia as its source and hence the Son is paradoxically generated from something non-substantial or the energeia stems from an ousia and the Son has the same nature as the begetting ousia. Gregory is very clear here that there can be no being without hypostasis, which is probably one of the most important ontological principles of the Cappadocians and of Maximus afterwards.[12] We thus observe a triad made of *ousia-dunamis-energeia* which lurks at the back of the philosophy of the Fathers. In general, their arguments for the identity of ousia of the three divine persons go back either directly, from the same energeia to the same ousia or from the same dunamis to the same ousia. The relationship between the three concepts is a very subtle one: one the one hand, the Cappadocians are all committed to the absolute transcendence of the essence of God and implicitly to the absolute limits of the human mind in knowing it. On the other hand, what can be grasped is the natural energeia of God, which comes down to us. The relationship between *ousia-dunamis-energeia* is that of manifestation - the later always manifest the previous one in this sequence, while there is no gap between them and still, the ousia is seen as the source of the chain. The triad as such occurs in Galen and in Philo of Alexandria. Galen thinks of the organ, with its specific faculty or capacity and the energeia of that organ understood as coming from the faculty: "… the faculty (dunamis) is the cause of the activity (energeias), but also, accidentally… it is the cause of the effect… and so long as we are ignorant of the essence of the cause which is operating, we call it a faculty".[13] A better expression of Galen's implicit agnosticism with regard to the use of the triad can be found in the subsequent relevant passage:

> Everyone knows that we possess souls, for all see plainly the many things that are performed through the body-walking, running, wrestling and the many varieties of perception…But because they do not know exactly what the cause of these things is, they assign it a name on the basis of its capacity to do what it does.[14]

Philo of Alexandria was probably among the first who used the triad in a theological context. He thought of God's attributes as Powers which are only made available to the human mind through their activities: "But

while in their essence they (Powers) are beyond your apprehension, they nevertheless present to your sight a sort of impress and copy of their activity (energeias).[15] Similar considerations can be found in the Pagan literature dealing with the energeiai of the demons but most importantly, they occur in Iamblichus and Proclus, the last one recently considered a source of Maximus the Confessor's ideas on the triad.[16] Although I am not persuaded by Lauritsen's arguments for a Proclean Maximus, it is important to acknowledge Proclus' influence *via* Denys the Areopagite.[17] However, it is worth quoting for the moment a passage from Iamblichus, bearing a striking similarity with Maximus' account of the triad:

> To perceive and make clear the dunameis of demons is easy enough. We attain to a perception of them through their energeiai, of which the dunameis are the immediate mothers; for a dunamis is median between an ousia and an energeia, put forth from the ousia on the one hand, and itself generating the energeia on the other.[18]

As I will argue below, it is exactly this triad that we will encounter in Maximus' ontology and in his explanation of miracles. The connections between Patristic philosophy and ancient Greek philosophy are multi-faced here. On the one hand, the triad bears an Aristotelian input since it comprises the idea of activity of a dunamis but this meaning of energeia was overcome by Aristotle in the favor of energeia understood as actuality.[19] Philo, Galen, Iamblichus and Proclus added to this the idea of ousia as a source of the triad and as the previous quoted passage from Iamblichus shows, the intricate relationship between these concepts asks us to commit ourselves to apophaticism in what concerns the knowledge of the essence and to the reality of both the dunamis and the energeia. As I will show, in Maximus' view this ontological status of both dunamis and energeia is quite paradoxical and it cannot be maintained without the action of the divine *logoi* implanted by God in each creature. As shown above, the Cappadocians themselves used the triad in theological arguments and Maximus will make references to them in order to support his own interpretation. He will also heavily rely on the works of Denys the Areopagite, as the following quotation proves:

> … the great Denys corrects the monk Gaius with these words, teaching that the God of all, as Incarnate, is not simply said to be man, but is himself truly a man in the whole of his being. The sole, true proof of this

> is its natural constitutive power (dunamis), and one would not err from the truth in calling this a natural energy properly and primarily characteristic of it, being a form-enduing movement that contains every that is naturally added to it, apart from which there is only non-being, *since, according to this great teacher, only that which in no way is without movement or existence*. (my emph., S. M.)[20]

This passage shows the importance of dunamis and energeia in Maximus' thought. I will develop this in the sequel, paying great importance to the constitutive role of the two concepts in defining the essence of beings. But I will start uncovering their role in the Christological debates concerning the dogma of Christ's wills and natural energies.

**Christological considerations**

An interesting question will be now to reflect on a very deep Christological issue, namely, how to think of Christ's natural energies and wills? The phenomenology of Christ is certainly interestingly enough as he is both God and man. An intense discussion occurring in different periods in the first Byzantine centuries dealt with the puzzling problem of Christ's natural energies. As we saw above, the theology of the Fathers maintained the intimate connection between nature or substance/ousia and natural energy. What should we expect of Christ's person: did he have two natural energies and wills corresponding to his two natures or did the divine will overcome the human will of Christ, as the monothelite interpretation maintains?

Sources of Monothelism go back at least to Appollinarius of Laodicea and Nestorius. Both these authors praised the existence of a single *divine* energy for Christ because of the way they conceived of the embodiment of God. Among many of Appolinarius' arguments one of them concerns his interpretation of the consequences of the Fall, where Appolinarius defines human person as being a totally sinful creature. This obviously implies that God cannot embody Himself into a sinful person and hence Christ as a historical person is a person deprived of its essential human features, that is, of its sinful mind.[21] Hence Christ can have just one single natural energy. Another argument launched by Appolinarius starts from more abstract principles, namely from the idea that two principles of thinking and willing instantiated in one single person would fight one against each other. As Bathrellos puts it,

> If there were in Christ two minds, a divine and a human, an opposition between them would be bound to occur due to the unavoidable mutability of the latter. This mutability seems to be mutability from the good, and this is why it results in the human mind's opposing by its will the immutable divine mind.[22]

Therefore we again see how Appolinarius' pessimistic attitude towards the human person forces him to claim one single energy and implicitly one single divine will for the person of Christ.

The attitude that characterizes the other great representative of early Monothelism, Nestorius, is one focusing on the union between the divine and human in Christ. Because of his way of thinking of the person or hypostasis as a mask (prosopon) or manifestation and not as a self-subsisting entity, Nestorius did not accept a proper union between the two natures. Rather, the word hypostatis is taken by Nestorius and by his fellow Theodore of Mopsuestia, as synonym with nature (physis) and person is reserved to the expression of the external manifestation of this nature.[23] In other words, the picture we receive from these authors is that Christ's human nature is just an instrument of God's intentions and thus its natural energy and will are only endowed with an ethical but not an ontological status.[24]

When one comes to the picture of Monothelism in the seventh century it is much more difficult to summarize it in just few lines. Two crucial moments, already mentioned above, have marked the passage from old Monethelism to the new one issued in the 7th century: the teachings of St. Cyril of Alexandria and Council of Chalcedon. Cyril paid great effort to support the true union between the divine and the human nature into the hypostasis of Christ. He publicly argued against Nestorius and issued some anathemas against Nestorianism.[25] The Archbishop of Alexandria praised the union of the two natures and speaks in terms of a dyophysite Christology: "It may be seen, then, that he (the Word) grants the glory of the God-befitting operation (energeias) to his own flesh, while, on the other hand, he appropriates the things of the flesh…"[26] However, Cyril also used the formula 'one incarnate nature of God the Logos' and this made him a sustainer of Monophysitism and implicitly of Monothelism in the eyes of some of his fellows. The Council of Chalcedon (451) however was influenced by the great personality and acknowledged authority of the dyophysite Cyril. The Council condemned Eutyches' Monophysitism and proposed the famous formula 'one in two natures' for describing the relationship between Christ's hypostasis and his natures.[27] But as I have pointed out above, the different parts of the Empire

were not fully persuaded of these achievements.[28] At the theological level, Severus of Antioch was a strong anti-Chalcedonian voice. He relied on the old interpretation of hypostasis as synonym with nature. The union between the divine and the human is not granted by him with a proper ontological status but it is rather seen as a 'brotherhood' union.[29] Moreover, Severus opposed to the Chalcedonian formula 'one in two natures' for he thought that number two has as a proper function, namely that of dividing. Maximus will develop in his *Opuscula Theologica et. Polemica*[30] as well as in his Letters[31] a forceful argumentation against Severus and a penetrating explanation of the non-divisive role of the numbers. He will also devote some of his most important writings against Monothelism and Monoenergism.[32] It is worth summarizing the central theses championed by the Monothelits in different periods of time: [33]1. will is ascribed to hypostasis; 2. two opposing wills in the same person are impossible; 3. will and the object of will are confused; 4. the faculty of will and its employment are confused; 5. will is synthetic; 6. nature and hypostasis are confused; 7. the human will is moved by the divine will; 8. the human will is appropriated; and 9. will is gnomic (i. e. intentional).

The line of the Monothelite argumentation is the ascribing of operation or energeia and subsequently of will to hypostasis, in perfect similarity with Eunomius' ascribing of unbegotten to the hypostasis of the Father. Contrary to this and in fair continuity with the tradition that Maximus knew very well, he on the contrary, links operation or energeia with dunamis or power and consequently with ousia and not with hypostasis. The result of this is that the Monothelits will deny any active role of the human will in Christ as principle 7 expresses above and thus, they will ascribe to God a constraining activity upon human will. The key to Maximus' argument is the affirmation that Christ is not other than the two constituent natures 'from which and in which he exists', and that he wills in a correspondingly dual way, each nature having a corresponding will:

> But, following all the holy Fathers in this as in all things, we say: since the God of All has himself become man without change, it follows that the same person not only willed appropriately as God in his godhead, but also willed appropriately as man in his humanity.[34]

Maximus explains in what really consists of this connection between will and nature, by defining will as an 'appetitive power or dunamis' of a being/nature:

> It is said that the natural will, i. e. the faculty of will, is an appetitive power of being according to nature which maintains all the essential attributes and properties of nature. For by this natural will the essence is naturally compelled and desires the being, life and motion proper to it by sense and intellect: its own natural and full being. Being voluntary in itself, and the sustainer of all that is comprised by it, the nature is established, continuing in the logos of its being, according to which it is and becomes appetitive.[35]

I take profit here of this last quote for highlighting a point of which I think can be interesting for us as moderns: what deserts to be mentioned is that for Maximus and his companions, the human will is not equivalent with free choice as we as moderns would like to think of it. As we have seen, the will is nothing than a natural power of an existent - free choice is the actual exercise of this natural power activating only in deliberating upon what is in our power of deliberation, as the following quote shows:

> … others define natural will to be a rational and vital appetite, while free choice is a deliberative appetite of those things within our power [dunamis]. Therefore, the faculty of will is not free choice since the simple faculty of will is a certain rational and vital appetite, while free choice is a concourse of appetite, deliberation and judgment.[36]

As moderns, we tend to say that we are free when we can choose between different possibilities. I am inclined to say that I am free whenever I can choose, for example, between eating an apple or eating an orange. But for Maximus and for the Fathers of the Church he closely follows, freedom must be placed at the level of will and not at the level of choice. Maximus would tell you that you are free in the sense that you can follow in your decisions the logos of your being as implanted by God in you or on the contrary, you can act against it, as Adam and Eve actually did. The Confessor explicitly states that the mechanism of deliberating entered men after the Fall as it is only with the fall that men willed something else than the Good in itself, which is God. And in their loose of their natural and intimate connection with God, the first men had to struggle from then onwards to decide on what is good or not for themselves. Now, Maximus' would like us to answer the following question: What type of will did Christ himself have as long as He became human too? The answer is not hard to give for Maximus: Christ, as God, has the entire knowledge of the Good, being Himself that Good. Therefore, there is no sense for us to think of Him as deliberating on what to do, on what action is better to

pursue. In conclusion, He has two natural wills, corresponding to His two natures, divine and human, but He lacks any gnomic or deliberative will:

> It is not possible to say that this (Christ's will) is a gnomic will, for how it is possible for a will to proceed from a will? Thus those who say that there is a *gnome* in Christ, as the inquiry demonstrates, teach him to be merely a man, deliberating in a manner proper to ourselves, having ignorance, doubt, and opposition, since once only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt.[37]

Maximus' argument for the existence of two natures, respectively two natural wills in Christ had to face not only well known Monothelits as Severus or before him, Nestorius. It equally had to accommodate to our common sense because we never properly see these two wills as activities of the two natural powers in Christ but only one single result of these wills. Maximus however is careful in distinguishing between acting and willing and the act done or the deed willed:

> For the natural will is the power that longs for what is natural and contains all the properties that are essentially attached to the nature. In accordance with this to be disposed by nature to will is always rooted in the willing nature. For to be disposed by nature to will and to will are not the same thing, as it is not the same thing to be disposed by nature to speak and to speak. For the capacity for speaking is always naturally there, but one does not always speak… So being able to speak always belongs to the nature, but how you speak belongs to the hypostasis.[38]

The result of the two actions of Christ is however clearly one: the actions of Christ are the actions of a single person. But for Maximus, there is a clear distinction to be drawn between the natural level and the hypostatic or the personal level. So far as activity and will as processes are concerned, they belong to the natural level: activity, and in the case of rational creatures, will - as a process - proceeds from nature, it is bound up with the movement that belongs to nature. But so far as result is concerned, activity and will are an expression of the personal; "they express the particular way or mode (tropos) in which a nature moves to other natures."[39] Thus Maximus' idea that dunamis and energeia, and for rational beings, rationalized energeia in the form of will belong to nature or essence, while the particular way of working these natural properties belong to the hypostasis: "This is why there is only one God, Father, Son,

and Holy Spirit. For there is one and the same essence, power, and activity (energeia) of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and no one of them can exist or be conceived without the others."[40]

In conclusion, the fact that Christ acts as one person should not confuse us to think that he lacks His two natural and essential wills or activities. This is why in his *Dogmatic tome to Marinus,*[41] Maximus argues that Cyril's expression *mia physis* has been wrongly associated with a Monophysite stance and he provides some arguments meant to sustain that the Archbishops' theology was a diophysite approach in its kernel. Maximus also aptly remarks that the Areopagitic expression of 'one new *theandric* energy' has been mistakenly interpreted as 'one (single) *theandric* energy', with the term 'new' skipped from it. This was done in order to falsely suggest that Christ has just one single energeia, the divine one, which has superseded the human one.[42] The Confessor's favorite metaphor for expressing the joint operation of two different natures refers to the action of cutting and burning effected by a heated sword: "If the operation of the sword and that of the fire are both mutually united, yet we observe that the fire's effect is burning and iron's effect is cutting".[43] The example if somehow imperfect for in Christ's case the type of effects by which we observe the divine energeia are miracles and thus the effects must be supernatural and not from the same category as with the case of the hardened sword. However, the metaphor is very suggesting in the sense that the triad *ousia-dunamis-energeia* should not be use for defining just Christ's person but also any other being, as I will argue in the sequel.

## II. The Meaning of Miracles

### The *Logoi* of Beings

It is now the time to articulate the elements of Maximus' dogma of the two wills of Christ and to prove that they compose a framework that allows for a sound explanation of miracles. The first element is one that I have already mentioned above, that of *logos* of being. In Maximus' view, every being is endowed by God with a *logos* which has the function of preserving the identity of that being. Maximus defines the essence of a being as follows: "Essence and nature are the same for both are predicated of what is common and universal among many and numerically distinct things, and they are never limited to any individual person."[44]

The *logoi* are possessed by God from the eternity[45] and their role is to provide the ratio or principle for each being or essence.[46] Their function is to give the definition and the constitution of a nature. The logos preserves the identity of a given nature by which it can be distinguished from other natures. Since there is a multitude of beings, all arranged in different kinds, there are also many correspondent logoi. All these logoi exist in a supra-unitary way in God's mind even before the creation of the world and God knows them before the creation of things will take place.[47] These logoi are sometimes identified following Denys the Areopagite with God's thoughts or wills (actually this has also a Stoic and Neoplatonic origin).[48]

The significance of the Maximian doctrine of the logoi is twofold. The logoi have the status of models or paradigms after which all beings were created. Also, they function for safeguarding the identity of the essence of every entity as existing in many different categories or natural kinds/species. The Maximian image of the sensible world is that of a Heraclitean continuous change which force upon all beings a dynamics of change and alteration.[49] But in contradistinction to Aristotle, who struggled for preserving the identity of beings in this alterable world by using the couple potentiality/actuality,[50] St. Maximus takes a more Neo-platonic path by endowing the logoi with the job of bringing forth the stability of beings.[51] And the means for achieving this goal is the conception of beings as grouped in different species/natural kinds and categories, the identity of which is defined by the divine logoi. Thus, the divine providence can be seen in this work performed by the logoi in saving the distinction and implicitly the stability of each being as part of a natural kind or species.[52]

As we saw above, some of the citations containing Maximus' explanation of Christ's two natures and natural wills show us Maximus' understanding of will as a natural power or dunamis, bearing a constitutive role for human nature. The following two quotes prove that Maximus' conception of dunamis and energeia as constitutive and defining elements of human being can be equally extended for all the other objects in the world: "The idea of natural power is the definition of substance, by nature characterizing all which it is naturally inborn."[53]And also, "The only true declaration of a substance is its natural constituent power... "[54] Therefore, the logos and the dunamis of each being are intimately linked by Maximus, as we saw it was the case with Gregory of Nyssa who used the triad: ousia-dunamis-energeia. One should observe here that Maximus is using the term natural will for natural and constitutive power or dunamis only for rational beings, such as God or men-otherwise he is

most of the time using the general term dunamis and energeia, which is valid for all existents. The Byzantine theologian considers these natural powers or dunameis as the essential attributes or properties that define the specificity of each being, thus placing it in different natural kinds or species: "Every being whatsoever possesses a constituent difference (diafora): its congenital motion; this, taken together with the genus, forms the definition of the subject, by which the *that it is* and the *what it is* is accurately made known..."[55] It seems that Maximus uses the concept of essential difference in a sense which is close to Porphyry's form-making and constitutive difference issued by him in his famous Isagoge, an introduction to Aristotle's categories used as a kind of text book by all philosophers in the first Byzantine centuries.[56] As constitutive or essential, the differences define what is the common aspect of beings. The difference 'rational' is common to all individual men, establishing them as one species. However, species are identical in genus, as all men are also animals. Maximus speaks about the logoi as defining both each particular being but also the more general, like species and genus - the logoi themselves seem to be more general as we advance towards the top of the Porphyry's three, where the general categories of being are displaced. Thus each logos defines a genus or species or safeguards the identity of each such category by keeping undisturbed the link between the categories and their constitutive dunameis or properties. My fundamental claim here is that in the inseparability between the logos and dunamis we have the true expression of I think is Maximus' concept of *law of nature*: the relationship between species or genus and their distinctive properties or dunameis. This relationship is elevated to the status of law of nature as is preserved unchanged by the logos that God implanted in every being and that keeps undisturbed the intimate relationship between substances and their properties. It would thus be very interesting what miracles would mean as we now have a concept of laws of nature!

But before getting into this, let me add another fundamental idea of the Confessor - he seldom remarks that we never find in existence bare species or genus - we never meet the species of man but we only meet this or that man, that is only individuals/particulars and not the natural kinds themselves.[57] This should not mean that these categories lack being, I hope what I said so far made transparent Maximus' true commitment to the full ontological status of the species and natural kinds. This should also come as a consequence of his commitment to the

full ontological status of dunameis, because I have pointed out already that it is these dunameis which express the true distinction between beings. Maximus' point however is that these categories exist as instantiated in particulars - thus, they never exist in themselves but only as occurring in a particular existent being. Following Porphyry and implicitly Aristotle, Maximus defines these natural kinds or species as universals as they are predicable of many individuals. For example, about all the individuals in this room we can predicate a common property, their rationality for instance, but we can't predicate each individual of something else, that is we can't predicate the individual John of something else because nobody else is this particular John. 'Animality' or 'rationality' is common and thus universally applied to many individuals, but 'Johness' is common only to John and not to somebody else - this is why we call him a particular being. Referring to a definition of individuals shared by all philosophers, Maximus explicitly says that the specificity of a particular is that it cannot be in something else that is, it cannot be predicated of something else:

> An individual is, according to the philosophers, a collection of properties, and this bundle cannot be contemplated in another; according to the Fathers, such are Peter or Paul, or someone else, each of whom is distinct from other men by virtue of their own personal properties.[58]

The concept of particular and that of genus or species have an intimate connection in Maximus' system for the universals always exist for Maximus as for Aristotle as instantiated particulars. This instantiation of universals further requires some other clarifications. As species and genus are made of dunameis and as the former exist only as instantiated in particulars, the dunameis themselves must exist somehow as instantiated in something else. And indeed, Maximus takes these dunameis as being themselves instantiated in individuals under the form of activities or operations (energeiai). That is, this or that individual man instantiates the species of man and its essential properties or dunameis manifest themselves through his activities or operations/energeiai. Let me put this in the following way. We neither find in existence the natural kind of fire but only this or that particular fire nor do we witness the existence of fire's essential dunamis in itself, that is heat in itself, which is fire's dunamis, but only this or that particular heat, with its specific intensity or brightness. And this or that particular heat Maximus calls energeia of fire, that is, activity or operation of fire. However, even if the world consists of individuals

and their many essential activities or operations, Maximus, with many occasions, pays much effort to preserve the distinction between dunamis/power and energeia/activity, because, as we already have seen above, it is one thing to have the capacity to will or to speak and a different one to actually will or speak.

The two elements, dunamis/power and energeia/operation are tightly connected by a relationship of dependence: power depends on activity in the sense that in existence we only find individuals with their particular activities, but also activity depends on power as its ontological source:

> For of that of which we do not have the power, we have neither the activity which is the fulfillment of the natural power. Activity then depends on power, power on substance. For activity is from power, and power from and in substance.[59]

This difference between power and activity will prove itself to be fundamental for the forthcoming interpretation of miracles. The power of each being will be preserved intact by the logos which defines the identity of that being, while its mode of existing or of operating will be changed. Thus, one the one hand, miracles preserve the essence of each being by leaving intact the dunameis which define its identity as saved by the logos of being. On the other hand, miracles will change the particular mode of existing or operating of such and such a particular being.

**Miracles**

Describing Christ's miraculous walking on water, Maximus, following Denys the Areopagite, gives us the elements of how to understand Christ's theandric activity and his miracles, implicitly. Witness Maximus' own words:

> And he [Christ] performs human activities in a way beyond the human: dispassionately instituting afresh the nature of the elements by degrees. For clearly water is unstable, and cannot receive or support material and earthly feet, but by a power beyond nature it is constituted as unyielding. If then with unmoistened feet, which have bodily bulk and the weight of matter, he traversed the wet and unstable substance, walking on the see as on a pavement, he shows through this crossing that the natural energy of his own flesh [humanity] is inseparable from the power of his divinity.[60]

Maximus highlights here the main elements of his argumentation for his dyothelite position: on the one hand, there are certain signs for Christ true humanity as he does all activities common to humans: walking, eating, crying etc. And on the other hand, he works some activities which are far beyond human capacity, walking on water, healing people, rising from death etc. The only difficulty lies in the fact that Christ always shows his divine activity *qua* man, thus showing himself as a paradoxical creature rather than as God. But Maximus' formal explanation for this paradoxical unitary action of Christ contains the key for his understanding of miracles. Maximus says:

> He [Christ] assumed being in a mode beyond being, and performed human activities in a way beyond the human, but he shows in both the *newness of the modes* [tropoi] preserved in the constancy of the natural logoi, without which no being is what it is... For the Word beyond being truly assumed our being for our sake and *joined together the transcendent negation with the affirmation of nature* and what is natural to it, and became man, having linked together the way [mode-tropos] of being that is beyond nature with the logos of being of nature (my emph., S. M.).[61]

We now have here concentrated Maximus' whole idea of miraculous: a miracle is a joining together of the transcendent negation with the affirmation of nature. The negation is achieved by the changing of the mode of being (tropos hyparxis) and the affirmation of nature by the preservation of the essence of each being by the action of its characteristic logos which keep intact the constitutive power (dunamis) of each being. In this sense we can say that Maximus' view on miracles is a paradoxical one since it represents a union between what is natural (the essence) and what is supra-natural (the new mode of being).

When Christ miraculously walks on water neither the essence of water nor Jesus' human nature is affected. Rather, what happens here is that Christ shows a mode of being human different from the one we are accustomed with. In Maximus' own words, Christ unifies a supra mode of being with his assumed human nature which commonly has a common mode of being.[62] He shows his human nature in his stepping on water, because walking is a property characteristic of human nature. But the way or mode of doing this action is completely strange to our human powers. Therefore a miracle is equivalent with the change of one's entity mode of existence with another mode or better said, with a supra mode. Thus

miracles are not to be explained as many philosophers or theologians try by just invoking human limits in knowing the true laws by which God actually works the miracles. Also, miracles should not be taken as simple breaking with the laws of nature, a fact that Maximus takes to be contradictory for God as He maintains the creation through his will or logoi, which are perfect and immutable. The miracle is thus in itself a paradoxical union between what is natural and what is supra-natural, between a being preserved in its limits by its constitutive logos and a mode that can vary through God's action into nature. What is left to us here is to make an effort for the understanding of the concept of mode of existence or tropos because it is only through its change that miracles can take place, as Maximus often emphasizes:

> Generally speaking, all innovation is manifested in relation to the mode of the thing innovated, not to its natural principle (logos). The principle, if undergoes innovation corrupts the nature, as the nature in that case does not maintain inviolable the principle according to which it exists. The mode thus innovated, while the natural principle is preserved, displays a *miraculous power*, (my. emph., S. M.) in so far as the nature appears to be acted upon, and to act, clearly beyond its normal scope.[63]

**The Mode of Existence**

The following passage is very suggestive for Maximus' understanding of the notion of mode:

> As being some thing, not as being some one, each of us principally operates, that is as a man; but as some one, as Peter or Paul, he gives form to the mode of action - more or less intensively, this way or that he determines it as he wills. Hence in the mode the changeability of persons is known in their activity, [while] in the logos the inalterability of natural operation [is known].[64]

Thus the mode is simply the expression of our personal mark, reflected in each moment in the particularity of our use of our natural energy. We use our constitutive powers as activating our wishes, as thinking or physically moving ourselves, that is, as being active in many different ways. But the way of wishing or move is so different from person to person such that it is unique to everyone. As a matter of fact, the concept of mode

of existence is a technical one in theology. "It is no shame to admit an ignorance, without danger, of the mode of the Holy Ghost's existence", said Basil the Great in his Contra Eunomium[65] with few centuries before Maximus, thus showing us the theological not only the Christological or ontological relevance of the concept of mode of existence. The same parlance was common to all Cappadocian Fathers and also to others like Pseudo-Basil-Dydimus, Amphilochius, Leontius of Byzantium, etc. They employed the term mode of existence also for referring to God's ingeneracy or to the unspoken generation of the Son from the Father. The core of these reflections consists of discerning properties of the divine persons from the divine essence itself by using the concept of mode. The generation or ingeneration of God applies itself not to the essence of God but it refers to the three divine persons. More exactly, these features mark the specific *mode of existence* for each of the divine persons: God, the Father, exists as a principle for the other two persons, God the Son exists as begotten and the Holy Sprit's particular way of being is that of proceeding from God the Father. Thus, one can say that the only way God "exercises" his divinity in an absolute and perfect manner is given by his mode of entering in a relation of love between a Father, a Son and Spirit. The remarkable aspect of these three specific modes of being of the divine essence is that these modes encapsulate absolute perfection and uniqueness. The question that now comes to mind is whether the mode of existence for men works the same as we have seen it works for God? Maximus' answer, already stated above, will be negative - if God's modes of being are absolute and perfect and thus unchangeable, the mode of existence for every created being is changeable:

> The principle of human nature is to exist in soul and body... but its mode [tropos] is the scheme in which it naturally acts and is acted upon, which *can frequently change or undergo alteration* without changing at all the nature along with it (my. emph., S. M.).[66]

And the miracle is nothing else than this modification of the natural mode of existence of a particular being with a super-natural mode of existence. As the following quote shows at length, this fact is valid for every natural being not only for Christ's human person:

Such is the case for every other created thing as well, when God, because of his providence over what he has preconceived and in order to demonstrate his power over all and through all things, desires to renew it with respect to its creation.

We see this precisely in the magnificence of miraculous signs and wonders that God performed from on high. God acted on this principle of innovation when he translated the blessed Enoch and Elijah from life in the flesh, subject to corruption, to a different form of life (2 Kg 2:11, Gen 5:24), not by altering their human nature, but by changing the mode and domain of action proper to their nature. He did the same when he made water engulf the wicked men who had established themselves on the earth in such great numbers, while enabling the first sailor Noah and the wild animals appearing with him in the ark to survive unharmed (Gen 6:5-8:22). He did the same when he honored his great servants Abraham and Sarah with a son beyond their age, beyond the alleged limits and natural time of childbearing (Gen 17: 15-17; 18: 9-15; 21: 1-7)... God set fire to the burning bush without it being consumed in order to call his servant (Ex.3:2) and gave water the quality of blood in Egypt (Ex. 7:17) without denying its nature at all, since the water remained water by nature even after it turned red...So too with any of the rest of the alleged divine deeds in the promised land and in many lands... (and) in company with all of these achievements, and yet after them all, God fulfilled for our sake the truly mystery for which and through which God fulfilled for our sake the truly new mystery of his incarnation... Here again, God innovated human nature in terms of its mode, not its principle, by assuming flesh mediated by an intelligent soul...[67]

This last passage clearly states Maximus' commitment to the general validity of the idea that miracles occur through modes-changing. It could have been thought so far that the explanation of miracles by invoking the change of modes is valid only for those miracles referring to the person of Jesus. But the last quote explicitly states that all miracles generally take place by the change of the mode of being of each 'object' submitted to God's action. The change of the mode of being is actually a much richer concept in Maximus' approach. For example, Maximus emphasizes in many passages that the fall of Adam and Eve was meant by God as a change in their mode of exercising their humanity. As Louth puts it, In Maximus' thought "the result of the Fall is not that natures are distorted in themselves, but rather that natures are misused: the Fall exists at the level not of logos, but of tropos".[68] Speculatively as it may be, I claim that Adam and Eve never witnessed a miracle in the Garden of Eden as their mode of being and the mode of existence for each other being was already super-natural. Only the Fall effected a change of their mode of existence, that state of existence that we call today as 'the natural'. Consequently, Christ's Second Advent

and the destruction of the world must be nothing than a change of the natural mode of existence for each being into the supra-natural one God intended for us from the beginnings. In other words, both the Fall and the Second Advent interfere with the mode of acting/operating of one's being essential powers/dunameis. Thus, the change of the mode of existence represents not only the key of Maximus' interpretation of miracles but also the central tool for his understanding of the ontological consequences of the Fall and of Christ's embodiment.

## Conclusions

The goal of this paper was to provide an interpretation of miracles based on the theological and philosophical reflections of Saint Maximus the Confessor. I have started out by discussing the fundamental role played by dunamis and energeia in Theology, together with their correlative, ousia. I have briefly described the significance of energeia and dunamis as they occurred especially in the 4th century theological debates concerning the relationship between the essence (ousia) of God and the three divine persons. My aim was to highlight the strict connection between energeia and dunamis with the ousia of God operated by the Cappadocians, a view fully embraced by Maximus the Confessor himself. I have tried to articulate this last idea in a short presentation of the Christological debates issued in the 7th century by the Monothelite camp, one the one side, and Maximus, on the other side.

The last part disclosed the most important conceptual tools of Maximus' dyothelite dogma for coming up with a consistent interpretation of miracles. Miracles have been thus defined as the change of the *mode of being* (*tropos tes hyparxis*), a change which leaves intact the identity of each being, while it alters its way of operating or exercising its essential properties. I have exemplified this with Christ's miraculous walking on water but I think its validity can be extended to most of the miracles reported by the Bible. To give another relevant example, the miracle with the burning of the bush witnessed by Moses can be similarly explained: fire is exercising its essential property of burning in a different or supra-mode due to God's intervention. Fire remains fire in this miracle but the mode in which it operates its essential attribute of heating is changed. Thus, the miracle concerns the change of the mode of being/operating while the logos preserves the identity of that being as expressed through its essential dunamis. Obviously, this mechanism can do no work of

explanation in a system of thought deprived of the essential elements of Maximus' dyothelite dogma: ousia, dunamis, energeia, logos, hypostasis/particular and mode of being and implicitly, where God is not granted with the power of effecting a change of the mode of existence.

It seems to me that modern science works only with two of these six concepts, namely with particulars and their dunameis and hence it shows us that the laws of nature can be uncovered without any commitment to the whole conceptual apparatus used by Maximus the Confessor. For example, a fundamental theory in physics as quantum mechanics successfully works just with particles treated as individuals/particulars and their properties represented by mathematical operators. This can suggest that from the point of view of modern physics most of Maximus' conceptual tools form a redundant superstructure with no ontological relevance and the natural solution would be its submission to Occham's razor. A paradox however is now disclosed: despite the fact that quantum mechanics' simple ontological setup is enough for the description of the laws of the quantum world, there is no absolute criterion for deciding between the multiple interpretations of this theory, all being approximately equally valid.

In conclusion, it should come as no surprise if the two domains, science and theology, clash and this especially in what concerns the interpretation of miracles. In the end, one of the big lessons one should draw from this is that theology itself is committed to a specific ontological view and man is free to embrace it or to abandon it in the favor of the one issued by modern science or to come up with a third option. However, I think the present reconstruction of Maximus' interpretation of miracles as modes-changing can be seen as a strong candidate for a consistent interpretation of miracles not only from a theological but also from a philosophical point of view.

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## NOTES

1 To my knowledge, none of the scholars working on Maximus the Confessor so far tried to reconstruct Maximus' interpretation of miracles. However, the idea championed in this paper that Maximus refers to miracles as the change of the mode (tropos) of beings is mentioned without being followed by any detailed discussion in P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism*, Pontifical Institute, 1954, p. 60 and in J. C. Larchet, *La divinization de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, CERF, 1996, pp. 141-150.

2 R. Swinburne's attempt is probably the most important one in the last years but I think it is too demanding from a theological point of view – conceiving of miracles as simply non repeatable exceptions from the laws of nature he thus forces upon God the demand of not repeating a miracle in very similar circumstances. However, the Bible seems to contradict this: just recall that Peter the Apostle miraculously walks on water and so he closely repeats Christ's miraculous stepping on water. Moreover, Swinburne's approach seems to be immune to any critique as it takes profit of the arbitrary way of defining the conditions of similarity; see for details, Swinburne, R. (ed.), *Miracles*, Macmillan, 1989.

3 See note 2 above.

4 I closely follow here the biography of Maximus as presented by A. Louth in his *Maximus the Confessor*, Routledge (1996: pp. 3-17).

5 I rely here on M. R. Barnes' analysis in *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Catholic University of America Press., 2001, p. 278. and ch. 1 for the link with the Presocratics.

6 Idem.

7 Ibid., p. 281.

8 The argument based on energeia is also widely used by St. Basil the Great in his proofs of the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

9 Cited in Bradshaw, D., *Aristotle East and West*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 155.

10 Idem.

11 See Basil the Great, Contra Eunomium, 1.15 and the explanations provided by Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 158.

12 Gregory of Nyssa, Contra Eunomium, 1.253.

13 Galen, Nat. Fac. 1.4 apud. Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 58.

14 Galen, Subst. Nat. Fac., apud. Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 59.

15 Philo of Alexandria, Spec. Leg. I.47-49, apud. Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 63.

16 F. Lauritzen, *Pagan Energies in Maximus the Confessor: The Influence of Proclus in Ad Thomam 5*, Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 52 (2012) 226-239.

17 See H. D. Saffrey, *New Objective Links between Pseudo-Dyonisius and Proclus* in D. O'Meara, 'Neoplatonism and Christian Thought', The Catholic University of America (1982, pp. 65-74).
18 Iamblichus, Commentary to Alcibiade, Fr. 4, apud. Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 136, ff. 42.
19 See for details Bradshaw, op. cit. ch. 1 and Tollefsen, T., *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, Oxford University Press, 2012, ch. 1.
20 St. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, 1048 A, translated in Louth, op. cit., p. 170.
21 See D. Bathrelos, *Person, Nature and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 12-13.
22 Ibid., p. 13.
23 Ibid., p. 19.
24 Ibid., p. 22.
25 See Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, Brill, (2009) and Bathrellos, op. cit., p. 25.
26 Apud. Hans van Loon, op. cit., p. 276.
27 See ibid. and Bathrellos, p. 28-29.
28 See above the Introduction.
29 See Bathrellos p. 51.
30 Patrologia Greaca (PG), vol 91, 9-353.
31 PG 91, 363-645.
32 See Maximus' Ambigua (Amb.), Opuscula (Opusc.), and Letters in PG 90 and 91.
33 These nine principles of Monothelism are taken from Michael E. Butler, *Hypostatic Union and Monotheletism: The Dyothelite Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, PhD Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1993, p. 73.
34 Disputatio 297a-b, translated in J. P. Farrel, T*he Disputation with Pyrrhus of our Father among the Saints Maximust the Confessor*, Saint Tikhons Seminary Press, 1990, p. 16.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Disputatio 308c-d, translated in Farrell, op. cit., p. 123.
38 Opusc. 3.
39 Louth, op. cit., p. 57
40 Maximus the Confessor, Chapters on Knowledge, II,1, translated in Berthold, G. C., *Maximus the Confessor, Selected Writings*, Paulist Press, New York, 1985, p. 148.
41 Opusc. 7, 88a.
42 Ambigua ad Thomam, 5.

43 Disputation 341b, translated in Farrell, op. cit., pp. 61-2.
44 Opusc. 14, translated in Butler, op. cit., p. 142.
45 Amb. 7.
46 For Maximus' theory of the logoi see L. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press,1985, esp. ch. 3-5, M. Törönen,, *Union and Distinction in the thought of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford University Press, 2007, ch. 8, and especially T. Tollefsen, *The Christological Cosmology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford University Press, 2008, chapters. 2 and 3, where the theory of the logoi is compared with exemplarism, with the main components of Plato's theory of ideas and the Stoic conception of the *rationes*.
47 Amb. 7, PG 91: 1081a-b.
48 See Amb. 7 and Ad Thal. and Tollefsen 2008, op. cit.
49 Amb. 10.
50 For details about the Aristotelian approach see for example Piere Aubenque, *La problèe de l'être chez Aristotle*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1962.
51 Amb. 10.
52 Idem.
53 Idem, apud. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 113.
54 Amb. 5 in Sherwood, p. 114.
55 Amb. 7.
56 See for details Tollefsen 2008, p. 100.
57 Idem.
58 Opusc. 26.
59 Opusc. 1-33 B7-C2
60 Amb. 5, 1050-1051 A, translated in Louth, op. Cit., pp. 171-2.
61 Amb 5, 1053 A-B, translated in Louth, op. cit., p. 173.
62 Idem.
63 Amb. 42, 1431 D1-1341 D1-6, translated in P. M. Blowers&R. L. Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mistery of Jesus Christ. Selected writings from Saint Maximus the Confessor*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 2003, pp. 89-90.
64 Opusc. 10, translated in Butler, op. cit., p. 130.
65 For rendering the history of the concept of mode of being I here follow Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 155-166. For the relationship between mode of existence and hypostatis in Maximus see Heinzer, F., *Gottes Sohn als Mensch*, Universitäsverlag Freiburg, Schweiz, 1980, esp. pp. 117-141 and pp. 171-178. For some interesting critical remarks concerning the association of hypostasis with mode of existence, see Larchet, op. cit., pp. 141-151.
66 Amb. 42, 1041 D-1044 A, translated in Blowers&Wilken, op. cit., p. 90.
67 Amb. 42, 1344 A-1345A, translated in Blowers&Wilken, op. cit., pp. 90-91.
68 Louth, op. cit., p. 56.

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