ΟΕΛΛΗΝ ΘΣ ΚΥΛΛΗΝΣ Ο ΕΛΛΗΝ ΑΡΙΣΤΟ ΤΕΛΗΣ Ο ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΣ Ο ΕΛΛΗΝ ΠΛ ΦΙ

Aristotle in Byzantium

edited by Mikonja Knežević

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Contents

Logoi, Porphyrian Tree, and Maximus the Confessor's Rethinking of Aristotelian Logic

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The rediscovery of Maximus the Confessor by western scholarship in the mid twentieth century led to a straightforward examination of Aristotelian elements in his works. Scholars such as Hans Urs von Balthasar[1] and Polycarp Sherwood[2] rushed to link Maximus with Aristotle, either by claiming direct influence in regard to the former's views on movement or regarding the essence – energy distinction, or by suggesting that Maximus refutes the Stagirite's stances on providence, or on the eternity of the world. Although there were a few isolated voices that denied Aristotle's direct influence on Maximus,[3] the question of their relationship was not thoroughly examined until the nineteen-nineties. Thus, scholars such as Eric Perl, Andrew Louth, and Torstein Tollefsen argued convincingly that the Aristotelian elements in

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1. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie: Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbildes bei Maximus Confessor*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1941.

2. Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St Maximus the Confessor*, Rome: Herder, 1955.

3. Endre von Ivanka, "Der philosophische Ertrag der Auseinandersetzung Maximus des Bekenners mit dem Origenismus," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 7 (1958), 23-49; Werner Völker, "Zur Ontologie des Maximus Confessor," in: D. Bichel (Hrsg.), *Und fragten nach Jesus: Beiträgt aus Theologie, Kirche und Geschichte. Festschrift für Ernst Barnikol zum 70. Geburtstag,* Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1964, 57-79.

Maximus's works derive from Aristotle's Neoplatonic commentators rather than from Aristotle himself.[4] While Perl points to Proclus and Athenian Neoplatonists as possible sources for Aristotelian ideas in Maximus,[5] Louth suggests the possible influence of Christian Aristotelian commentators of Alexandria on Maximus.[6] Tollefsen goes a step further indicating that the best way to discern Aristotelian doctrines in Maximus is to engage with writings of those who had a direct impact on Maximus's life, such as Stephanus of Constantinople, the last head of the Alexandrian academy and a philosophy professor at the court of Heraclius.[7] Although since then both Maximian scholarship and scholarship focused on the Christian Neoplatonism of the Alexandrian Academy have had an enormous development, it is no less difficult to discern the channels through which Aristotle's ideas penetrated Maximus's works. Generally speaking there are three groups of possible Aristotelian sources in Maximus: pagan, Patristic, and Christian Neoplatonic sources. In the first group are placed pagan authors ranging from Alexander of Aphrodisias to Simplicius, whom Maximus might have known through certain *florilegia* and logical *compendia*. The second group consists of Patristic authors such as Origen, the Cappadocians, and Nemesius of Emesa, who already adopted some Aristotelian elements from Middle and Neoplatonism and transformed them in accordance with their own purpose. In the third group are placed Christian Neoplatonists from Alexandria such as John Philoponus, David, Ilias, and the aforementioned Stephanus, who all wrote commentaries on Aristotle's books and, as Tollefsen suggests, these commentaries might have been brought by Stephanus to Constantinople, where Maximus was during the second decade of the seventh

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4.   Eric D. Perl, *Methexis: Creation, Incarnation, Deification in Saint Maximus the Confessor,* (PhD. diss.), Yale University, 1991; Andrew Louth, "'St. Denys the Areopagite and St. Maximus the Confessor: A Question of Influence," *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993), 166-74. Torstein Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor. A Study of his Metaphysical Principles*, (PhD. diss.), University of Oslo, 2000,

5.   Perl, *Methexis,* 124.

6.   Andrew Louth, "Recent research on St. Maximus the Confessor: A survey," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42, 1, 1998, 67-84, particularly 74.

7.   Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology* (2000), 19.

century.[8] Nevertheless, recent studies almost completely dismiss a direct engagement of Maximus with Aristotle's writings, allowing only for the possibility that Maximus had a grasp of the platonized Aristotle or Aristotle "Transformed."[9]

Our focus in the course of this article will be on the first group of sources and specifically on Maximus's engagement with Aristotelian logical categories exposed in Porphyry's *Isagoge* in the hierarchical form of genera and species, commonly known as the Porphyrian tree. Modern Maximian scholarship has paid considerable attention to the Porphyrian tree model, considering it as an adequate device to structure the created reality in Maximus. While the Porphyrian tree model as a traditional logical tool has been successfully used in dealing with the problems of the one and many, of the whole and parts, and of universals and individuals, its application to Maximus's vision of ontological reality requires a fundamental rethinking of its basic terms. I intend in the first part of this article to point to some problems that have already arisen in the application of the Porphyrian tree to Maximus's work: one regarding the difference between the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic understanding of the participation of lower degrees into the higher degree of beings, and another concerning the relationship between genera and species on the one hand, and divine providence on the other hand. In the second part of my article I will introduce a new scheme of genera and species divisions, more consistent with Maximus's work. This new scheme proposes a unification or an overcoming of differences between lower levels of being (species) not on the higher level of being (genera), but at the same level of being (species) through middle terms. Before I embark on this task I intend to briefly familiarize the reader with the usage of the Porphyrian tree in the philosophical tradition, as well as with its application to Maximus's thought in contemporary scholarship.

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8.   Torstein Theodore Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 91-92.
9.   Marius Portaru, "Classical Philosophical Influences: Aristotle and Platonism," in. Pauline Allen & B. Neil, *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015, 128-148: 134-136.

1. The Porphyrian Tree and the Problems That Arise from its Application to Maximus's Thought

The Porphyrian tree is one of the most persistent models that structure reality in accordance with a logical scheme, an indispensable tool for understanding reality in terms of Aristotelian logic. In his work *Isagoge* (4, 21 - 5, 9) or *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories*, Porphyry presents reality as a tree-like scheme, in which the root of the tree symbolizes the supreme genus, i.e. being or substance, and the branches, divided into pairs on the basis of differentiae, represent intermediate genera, species, and specific species.[10] The final branches represent the number of individuals, which derive from the specific species on the basis of differentiae. As iconic representation of the content of this passage from Porphyry's *Isagoge,* the Porphyrian tree became popular during the Middle Ages.

Maximus's name is linked to Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Porphyrian tree in a number of Greek and Slavonic medieval manuscripts. In the Slavonic *Florilegium of Prince Sviatoslav* from the tenth century, three texts of introductions to Porphyry's *Isagoge* were ascribed to Maximus.[11] Similarly, the thirteen century Vatican and Vatopedi monastery codices, published by Mossman Roueché, included texts of Aristotelian-Porphyrian logic that were erroneously considered as Maximus's work.[12] Some passages from Maximus's own writings, such as *Ambiguum* 10,37 (PG 91, 1177bc), *Variae definitiones* (PG 91, 149ff) and *Unionum definitiones* (PG 91, 214ff), seem to substantiate the claim that his view on created reality may be explained by means of the Porphyrian tree, by bearing resemblance to the logical compendia attributed to Maximus. Logical compendia were widely copied during the Middle Ages, together with the Porphyrian tree diagram, which is one of the most widespread diagrams in the medieval monastic literature. Thus, almost identical

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10. Porphyrii *Isagoge*, (Commentaria in Aristotelem Greaca), Berlin: Reimer, 1887, 4: 1, 4.14–20.

11. Slobodan Žunjić, *Dijalektika Jovana Damaskina u vizantijskoj i srpskoj filozofiji*, Beograd: Otačnik 2012, 94-95, n.68.

12. Mossman Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974): 61-76; and Id., "A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logical Terminology," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980): 71-98.

diagrams of the Porphyrian tree from Vatopedi's logical compendia falsely attributed to Maximus (Codex Athos Vatopedi Graeca, 57) may be also found in other Greek and Slavonic manuscripts, in which they are associated with Theodore of Raithu's *Praeparatio* or John Damascene's *Dialectica.*

ἡ οὐσία διαιρεῖται

εἰς σῶμα καὶ ἀσώματον
τὸ σῶμα

εἰς ἔμψυχον καὶ ἄψυχον
τὸ ἔμψυχον

εἰς αἰσθητικὸν καὶ ἀναίσθητον
τὸ αἰσθητικόν

εἰς ζῷον, ζῳόφυτον, φυτόν
τὸ ζῷον

εἰς λογικὸν καὶ ἄλογον
τὸ λογικόν

εἰς θνητὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον
τὸ θνητόν

εἰς ἄνθρωπον, ἵππον, βοῦν
ὁ ἄνθρωπος

εἰς Πέτρον, Παῦλον, Ἰωάννην, καὶ τοῦς λοιπούς
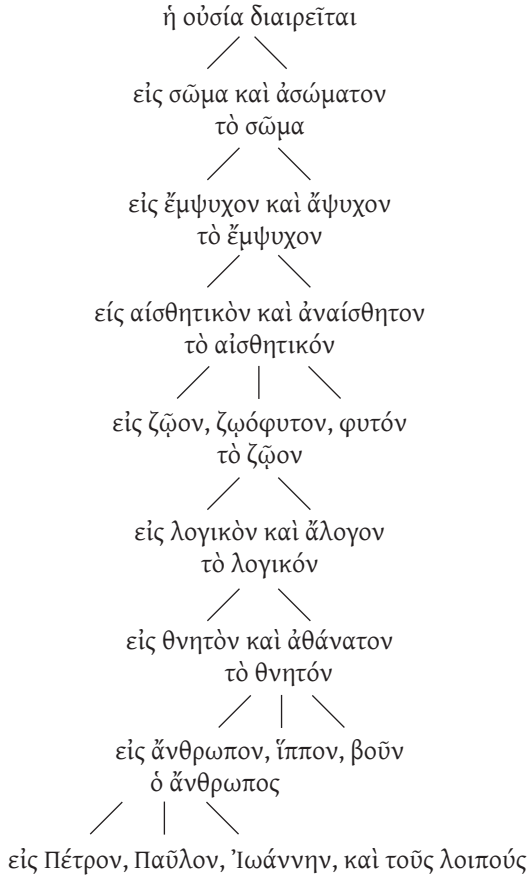
Figure 1. Codex Athos Vatopedi Greaca 57, 1, 260, 13th century

Now I will turn to modern Maximian scholarship in order to explore how Maximus's ideas were explained by means of the Porphyrian tree. Since Roueché has published the texts, consisting of logical compendia and a handbook of Aristotelian-Porphyrian logic,[13] found among Maximus's writings, numerous Maximian schol-

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13.   Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century," 67-75.

ars have hastened to structure the Confessor's perception of created reality in accordance with the Porphyrian tree. By arguing for the pyramidal doctrine of unity in Maximus, Perl was among the first scholars who proposed to structure Maximus's *logoi* in line with Porphyrian tree. For Maximus, the *logoi* are eternal divine intentions about the world and are used by the Logos of God as principles for the creation of the world. Maximus distinguishes between *logoi* of being, which are believed to consist of *logoi* of individual beings, *logoi* of species and genera, and the universal *logos* of being, and *logoi* of providence and judgment, which preserve the unity of beings with God and their specific identity respectively. According to Perl, the Logos of God is the highest universal, containing all *logoi*, from the highest created genera to the particulars and their accidents.[14] By its participation in universals, every individual being participates in the Logos of God.[15] However, Perl's application of the Porphyrian tree to Maximus immediately provoked reactions. Tollefsen refuted Perl's stance that the Logos of God is the highest universal, arguing that the Logos of God holds together all *logoi* of universals and particulars and as such he is the personal divine center of all creation.[16] In his assessment of Tollefsen's position, Melchisedec Törönen challenged the entire application of the Porphyrian tree to the Logos – *logoi* theme, claiming that this connection is due to the double identification of the *logoi* with Platonic forms, and of the Platonic forms with species, whose final result is the identification of the *logoi* with species.[17] In his reply to Törönen's criticism, Tollefsen denied his direct identification of *logoi* with the taxonomy of the cosmological immanent order, stating that the *logoi* as divine conceptions of beings become act of will "when" God creates the cosmos.[18] According to Tollefsen, although the *logoi* are ontologically different realities from the genera and species, they served God as paradigms for creating the latter. In spite of all the unconvincing points that may be de-

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14. Perl, *Methexis,*169.
15. Perl, *Methexis,* 170.
16. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 91-92.
17. Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 138.
18. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 87, n. 70.

tected in the application of the Porphyrian tree to the structure of reality, Tollefsen still allows for the possibility that the Porphyrian tree may illustrate Maximus's idea of a real hierarchic relatedness of every being at least in principle, if not in detail.[19]

In my opinion, the Porphyrian tree should not be abandoned as a deficient tool for explaining Maximus's view on the Logos – *logoi* relationship, although its strict application may cause more problems than solve the existing ones. Nevertheless, one needs to be aware of some elements, missing from the picture, but being indispensable for understanding how the structure of the *logoi* functions. The first and crucial element is the Logos of God, while the other elements are other *logoi* that differ from the *logoi* of universals and the *logoi* of particulars, such as *logoi* of providence and judgment, or *logoi* of well-being, eternal being, and eternal well-being. I will deal with these issues in the next two subheadings respectively.

a) Porphyrian Tree and the Logos of God

The question whether the Logos of God is part of the Porphyrian tree or not has already caused disagreements between Perl and Tollefsen as I have pointed above. By assuming that the Logos of God contains all *logoi*, Perl concludes that he must then be the highest universal, because both the *logoi* of genera and species (being, life, animal, horse) and the *logoi* of individuals (Bucephalus) participate in Him.[20] Therefore, Perl has decided to include the Logos in the whole picture of the Porphyrian tree. Tollefsen refutes Perl's stance that the Logos is the highest universal, although by following Maximus's text he argues that the Logos contains all *logoi*.[21] However, in spite of the claim that the Logos contains all *logoi*, Tollefsen denies the possibility of participation in the Logos.[22] Tollefsen substantiates his arguments of the unparticipated nature of the Logos with Proclus's distinction between the "unparticipated," the "participated," and the "participants," claiming that the Logos as the highest cause remains "unpartici-

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19. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 109-110.
20. Perl, *Methexis,* 169-170.
21. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 92.
22. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 217.

pated."[23] Since for Tollefsen the Logos is an unparticipated reality, it would make sense to imagine that he is excluded from any structure of the Porphyrian tree.

I have argued elsewhere[24] against Tollefsen's claim, and for the possibility of a threefold participation in the Logos (through participation in the *logoi* as the wills of the Logos about the creation, through participation in the Church as the body of the incarnate Logos, through full participation or eschatological identity with the Logos of God in likeness) and I do not want to elaborate on this topic further. My intention is to point to different concepts of participation used by these two authors, one Aristotelian and another Neoplatonic. In a series of articles on the topic of participation, Dmitry Biriukov has argued that the Patristic authors dealt with three different concepts of participation: Platonic, which allows for the possibility of difference in nature between the participated and the participating entity; Aristotelian, which allows only for participation between beings of the same nature or essence; and Neoplatonic, which is a combination of the previous two.[25] The Neoplatonic concept of participation developed by Proclus implies the triad of "unparticipated," "participated," and "participating" beings, in which the dialectical pair "unparticipated – participated" is applied to beings of different nature or essence, and the pair "participated – participating" to beings of the same nature.[26]

If this logic is applied to Perl's and Tollefsen's concepts of the Porphyrian tree we can see that the former relies on the Aristotelian concept of participation, while the latter is fond of the Neoplatonic one. Perl assumes in his reasoning that the Logos of God and the *logoi* as His wills and intentions about the creation are of

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23. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 215.
24. Vladimir Cvetkovic, "Maximus the Confessor's View of Participation Reconsidered," in: D. Haynes (ed.), *A Saint for East and West: Maximus the Confessor's Contribution to Eastern and Western Christian Theology*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, forthcoming.
25. Dmitry Biriukov, "Hierarchies of Beings in the Patristic Thought: Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, and the Palamites," *Scrinium* 10 (2014), 281-304; Dmitry Biriukov, "Hierarchies of Beings in the Patristic Thought: Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite," in: M. Knežević, *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2015, 75-76.
26. Biriukov, "Hierarchies of Beings," (2015), 77.

the same nature, since thought and acts, as the activities of the divine essence, cannot be different in nature from the essence. Therefore, being of the same nature as the Logos, all *logoi* participate in him. The strict application of the Aristotelian concept of participation that permits only the participation of less universal beings (species) in more universal beings (genera) and not the other way around, led Perl to conclude that since the Logos is participated in by all *logoi,* it is at the same time the highest universal.

Contrary to Perl and on the basis of Dionysius the Areopagite's identification of the supra-divine life as unparticipated, and divine procession and energies (being, goodness, life or wisdom) as participated, [27] Tollefsen supposed that Dionysian supra-divine life is the Logos of God and thus unanticipated by anything, including the *logoi.* Moreover, since the *logoi* as being the divine wills for creation are not God as He is in Himself, they might have the same status as the beginningless works of God, which are participated.[28] For Tollefsen, the Logos of God as God in Himself is of a different nature from His *logoi*, which although remain uncreated are the principles of an ontologically different reality. Therefore, the Porphyrian tree drawn in accordance to Tollefsen's model will exclude the Logos of God because the strict Aristotelian-Porphyrian classification of particulars and universals includes only beings of the same nature or essence.

I agree with Perl that the Logos of God is a participated entity, participated by the *logoi* of beings. However, in my opinion only those beings that accustom themselves to their particular *logoi*, participate in the Logos through these *logoi.*[29] I do not think that Perl had this kind of double participation in mind, because in the application of Aristotelian logic individual beings by nature participate in certain species or genus (e.g. John is both human and alive) without making a decision to assimilate their individual *logoi* to universal *logoi.* Maximus would not approve of this automatism of participation in the Logos that the Aristotelian model

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27. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 200.
28. Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 166.
29. *Ambiguum* (*Amb.*) 7, PG91, 1080C; *Quaestiones et dubia* 173, in: J.H. Declerck (ed.), *Maximi confessoris quaestiones et dubia,* Corpus Cristianorum Seria Greaca 10, Turnhout: Brepols, 1982.

implies, because the process of salvation would be then inevitable.

Although in my opinion Tollefsen's argument regarding the Logos as an unparticipated entity is not applicable to Maximus's case, I agree with Tollefsen that the Logos is not the highest universal, because he relates equally to both universals and particulars. Therefore, due to the complexity of His relationship with the *logoi,* it would be difficult to include the Logos in the picture of the Porphyrian tree. I think that it is more relevant for the present discussion to examine the role of other *logoi*, such as the *logoi* of providence and judgment, which are not like the *logoi* of beings, (i.e. *logoi* of universals and individuals) graphically included in the Porphyrian tree.[30]

b) *Porphyrian Tree and Providence*

For Maximus, God is the beginning as creator, the middle as provider, and the end as judge.[31] The *logoi* of being, which pertain to God as creator, are transcendent and steadfastly fixed in God before they come to being.[32] Different to the *logoi* of being, the *logoi* of providence and judgment are immanent and dialogical principles in created beings that shape the relationship between them and God as provider and judge. By adhering to the *logoi* of providence and judgment, the created beings preserve the sameness (or unity) of all created beings among themselves and with God and the otherness (or difference) of each of them and from God respectively.[33] Thus, the Porphyrian tree is able to illustrate the divine wisdom or state of wisdom, which is revealed as an ontological structure of *logoi* of creation united in one logos of being, but it is not able to describe how the universal and individual *logoi* are dependent on the *logoi* of providence and judgment. The later *logoi* do not reveal the divine wise design, but rather the philosophy (or love of wisdom) of creation expressed as the inclination of individual rational beings to act in accordance with their proper *logoi*.[34]

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30. *Amb.* 10, PG91, 1133D.
31. *Capita theologica et œconomica* 1.10; *Amb.* 10, PG91, 1133B.
32. *Amb.* 7, PG91, 1081A.
33. *Amb.* 10, PG91, 1133D-1136A.
34. *Amb,* Prol. PG91, 1032A. Cf. also Michael Harrington, "Creation and Natural Contemplation in Maximus the Confessor's Ambiguum 10:19," in M. Tres-

In his *Ambigua ad Ioannem*, Maximus tackles the questions of the relationship between the Logos, the *logoi*, and providence, as well as between universals, particulars, and providence. Following Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus argues that many *logoi* are one Logos according to one revertive and inductive return and providence (ἐπιστρεπτική τε καί χειραγωγική ἀναφορά τε καί πρόνοια).[35] Similarly, relying on Nemesius of Emesa, Maximus claims that God exercises His providence on both universals and individuals.[36] In *Ad Thalassium* 2, Maximus elaborates further the connection between the *logoi* of particulars and universals and providence, placing them in the context of his well-known triad of "being" – "well-being" and "eternal well-being," as well as the deliberate inclination (γνώμη):

> God, as He alone knew how, completed the primary principles of creatures and the universal essences of beings once for all. Yet He is still at work, not only preserving these creatures in their very existence but effecting the formation, progress, and sustenance of the individual parts that are potential within them. Even now in His providence He is bringing about the assimilation of particulars to universals until He might unite creatures' own voluntary inclination to the more universal natural principle of rational being through the movement of these particular creatures toward well-being, and make them harmonious and self-moving in relation to one another and to the whole universe.[37]

As it has been earlier indicated in regard to Perl's understanding of participation, the process of the assimilation of the partic-

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chow, W. Otten & W. Hannam (eds.), *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr. Robert D. Crouse*, Leiden, Boston: Brill 2007, 191-212, 208; Vladimir Cvetković, "Wisdom in Maximus the Confessor Reconsidered," in D. Bojović (ed.), *Proceedings of the Conference "St. Emperor Constantine and Christianity"* Niš: Centar za crkvene studije 2013, vol. 2, 197-215, 200-202.

35. *Amb.* 7, PG91, 1081A.

36. *Amb.* 10, PG91, 1189C.

37. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Q.Thall.)* 2, in C. Laga & C. Steel (ed.s) *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, Corpus Cristianorum Seria Greaca 7, Turnhout: Brepols, 1980. The English translation in Paul M. Blowers and Robert L. Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ. Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, New York, Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003, 99-100.

ulars to universals is not automatic, but it requires both the act of divine providence and voluntary acceptance by an individual.[38] This practically means that the particular individual has to respond positively or negatively to the appeal of divine providence to conform his/her individuality to the universal categories of humanity, sensibility, rationality, or creatureliness. The positive response would consist of the compliance of the personal will to the divine will or, as Maximus calls it, a "voluntary surrender of the will" (ἐκχώρησις γνωμική).[39] As I have argued somewhere else,[40] voluntary surrender is not the denial of one's own will, but rather the compliance of one's will with the laws of the nature.[41] However, the human deliberate will (γνώμη) is not the actualized capacity of determination, but just a way of using our capacity of willing in order to achieve self-determination.

Thus, the human choice to self-determine or self-affirm his/her own personhood on the basis on his/her own individuality or the individual logos would be contrary to nature and therefore sinful, because such self-determination does not fulfill the purpose of this particular human being.[42] This relates in practice to particular human being's attempt to self-affirm his/her own personhood on individual or socially constructed attributes. The individual attributes may be identified with physical, psychological, and intellectual properties or accidents that one person possesses, in the Aristotelian sense. Sometimes the physical attributes that a group shares become socially constructed categories, such as race or gender. For Maximus, the differences acquired "by birth and

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38. *Ep.* 1, PG 90, 368D. See also Grigory Benevich, "Maximus the Confessor's Teachings on God's Providence," in: P. Annala, O. Hallamaa, A. Lévy, T. Lankila and D. Kaley (eds.)*, St. Maximus the Confessor - The Architecture of Cosmos*, Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Seura, 2015, 28-46: 37.

39. *Amb.* 7, 1076AB. Maximos the Confessor, *Difficulties in the Church Fathers*, vol. 1, 88-89.

40. Vladimir Cvetkovic, "'All in all' (I Cor 15, 28): Aspects of the Unity between God and the Creation according to St. Maximus the Confessor," *Analogia* 2/1 (2017), 13-28: 24-25.

41. *Disputatio cum Pyrrhus*, PG 91, 292D-293A.

42. Grigory Benevich, "God's Providence and Human Personhood," 2007, 8. The paper available at: http://sr21.physics.auth.gr/Human_Person/Dialogue/Benevich_working_paper.pdf

appearance, by nationality and language, by customs and age, by opinions and skills, by manners and habits, by pursuits and studies, and by reputation, fortune, characteristics, and connections,"[43] may serve as a basis to establish the individual's own personality, but by being particular and not universal these categories should be assimilated to the universal notion of humanity. By overcoming all particular differences that exist in the human nature and by assimilating his or her individual logos to the logos of specific species, i.e. the logos of humanity, a particular human being complies his/her own will with the divine will, which is expressed through the laws of creation as well as through the divine providence. By acting in conformity with the divine will the human being attains his/her own well-being and it is led further by divine providence to eternal well-being.

However, it should be also noted that the human being might attempt to affirm his/her own identity not only on the basis of particularities, but also on the basis of lower universals such as specific species, species, or even genera. Good examples for personal identity constructions are modern humanisms, which propose the unification of human race in the abstract idea of humanity, or the contemporary environmental movements, which advocate the unification of universe in the idea of all-inclusive sensible nature. Every attempt to specify only one aspect of created nature, particular or universal and to perceive it as the exclusive principle for affirming human identity would be erroneous for Maximus. According to Maximus, the individual human being should comply his own particular and universal *logoi* with the Logos of God in order to establish his/her own identity on the principle of God-human union. Therefore, a human being should not only assimilate his/her own particular properties or accidents to the universal *logoi*, but they should also assimilate the *logoi* of human, sensible, rational, and created nature to the Logos of God.

The purpose of the logos of providence is to lead particular human beings through the particular and universal *logoi* of being

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43. *Mystagogia* 1.4, in C. Boudignon (ed.), *Maximi Confessorris Mystagogia*, Corpus Cristianorum Series Greaca 69, Turnout: Brepols 2011, 13. Translation of George C. Berthold from Maximus the Confessor, *Selected Writings*, London: SPCK, 1985, 187.

towards the final union with the Logos of God and its role is to preserve the universe in accordance with the *logoi* of which it consists.[44] On the contrary, the *logos* of judgment preserves the sameness and natural identity of each particular being. Therefore, in his *Ambiguum* 10.19 Maximus identifies the *logoi* of being, providence, and judgment with being, movement, and difference.[45] Consisting of *logoi* of particulars and universals, the logos of being is for Maximus the teacher of theology, because the wise order of beings reveals the knowledge of God as creator. The movement of creation from particular *logoi*, over universal *logoi* to the Logos of God indicates the divine providence over the universe. This movement is regulated by the logos of providence, which holds the whole creation and every single being within the unity with God and among themselves. Finally, the divine judgment instructs us in the difference in creation and it is regulated by the logos of judgment, which preserves the natural identity of each particular being in accordance with its *logoi* of being.

By comparing the structure of the Porphyrian tree, which consists of genus, differentia, and species, with Maximus's triadic structure of *logoi* of being, providence, and judgment, one can draw certain parallels. The species may correspond to the logos of being, because both species and the logos of being are defined by genus and differentia and the *logoi* of providence and judgment respectively. The genus may correspond to the logos of providence, because it points to the movement or assimilation of particulars and lower universals (species) in the highest universals (genus). Finally, the differentia may correspond to the logos of judgment, because both notions indicate the difference and preserve the specific identities of species or individuals. This is of a loose identification because the process of assimilation of the lower universals (species) in the higher (genus) in the Porphyrian tree is logical reasoning, while the assimilation of particular *logoi* in the lower and higher universal *logoi* and the Logos of God is an ontological process in which the unification or assimilation is not a product of sound reasoning, but of both the divine providence and the freedom of a particular human person to enter the unity with God.

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44. V. Cvetkovic, "Wisdom in Maximus the Confessor Reconsidered," 200.
45. *Amb.* 10,19; 1133AB.

Therefore, the human essence is the product of the relationship between the *logoi* of the particular and universals as much as the divine essence is the product of the relationship between the divine persons.

However, this external context is not the only point of departure, because there are some elements in Maximus's reasoning that undermine completely the Aristotelian logic. For example, the strict application of Aristotelian categories would require to pair genus with specific differentia in order to obtain a species. By pairing rational beings (genus) with immortality (differentia) one defines human beings as mortal rational beings (species) and by pairing rational beings (genus) with immortality one defines angels as immortal rational beings. Similarly one defines angels as bodiless rational beings in order to differentiate them from humans who are rational beings with bodies. The problem that might appear is that the categories such as mortality or immortality and materiality or immateriality cannot be exclusively and uniformly applied to humans or angels. For example, how to reconcile the Christian belief that Adam was created for immortality and then he experienced death, or that Christ was born as mortal, and then through =His death He achieved immortality, with the logic that defines human nature in terms of mortality. Similarly, angels are defined as bodiless rational beings, but since they occupy certain positions in relations to God that imply a form of materiality, their immateriality is thus questioned.

I will attempt to solve these problems in the next chapter of this article by proposing a new kind of Porphyrian tree, more consistent with Maximus's work, which does not define a species by genus and differentia, but rather by middle terms that unites two or more differentia in one species.

2. A New Porphyrian Tree:
Maximus's Rethinking of Aristotelian Logic

As it has been already mentioned above Maximus describes the relationship between Logos and *logoi* by two reciprocal movements: the movement of procession of one Logos to many *logoi* and the movement of return of many *logoi* to one Logos, led by divine

providence.[46] Maximus borrows the pair "procession" – "return" from Dionysius the Areopagite,[47] who is in this regard indebted to Proclus and other Neoplatonist philosophers. Relying on Neoplatonic, or specifically on the Proclean system,[48] Dionysius maintains that the divine processions from the One produce intelligible and visible hierarchies,[49] which consist of two enneads further divided into three triads, while the movement of reversion or return is the movement of these hierarchies back to the One.

Maximus adopts the Dionysian imagery of divine processions into hierarchies and the corresponding return of these hierarchies back to God, but follows the more Neopythagorean symbolism of numbers than the Neoplatonic one, he substitutes two enneads (divided into three triads) present in Dionysius with two decades further divided into two pentads.[50] In his *Mystagogia*, Maximus describes how God, which is Truth by His divine essence and Good by divine activity, creates a fivefold ladder that consists of two pairs. The products of the procession from the divine essence are: enduring knowledge, knowledge, contemplation, wisdom, and mind. A similar procession from the divine activity creates: faith, virtue, action, prudence, and reason. Thus, these two processions constitute five pairs that may be designated as psychological: enduring knowledge – faith, knowledge – virtue, contemplation – action, wisdom – prudence and mind – reason.[51] The process of return is the movement of these pairs back to their source, but this movement does not follow the same trajectory of divine processions. Namely, the unification of the processions does not take place in God, but at every level of reality. This means that the mind does not revert back to wisdom, and further to contemplation, knowledge and enduring knowledge, nor does the reason return to prudence, followed by activity, virtue and faith in order to reach God as their source. The return or, as Maximus designates it, the "gathering"

46. *Amb.* 7, (PG91: 1081A).
47. Dionysius the Areopagite, *Divine Names* (*DN*), 5.8.
48. Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 162-5, in: E.R. Dodds, ed., *Proclus Elements of Theology,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
49. Dionysius the Areopagite, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (*EH*), 5,2.
50. *Mystagogia* (*Myst.*), 5 (CCSG 69, 27,419-429).
51. *Myst.* 5, (CCGS 60, 27).

(*synodos*) is through the middle terms: mind and reason gather into rational mind, wisdom, and prudence into prudent wisdom; activity and contemplation into active contemplation; virtue and knowledge into virtuous knowledge; and enduring knowledge and faith into faithful and unchanging knowledge. Therefore, the decade is reduced to a pentad and the unity of the soul with God is achieved through rational mind, prudent wisdom, active contemplation, virtuous knowledge, and faithful and unchanging knowledge. This process implies that the unity of the created elements on the lower levels preconditions the unity of the elements on the higher levels, and both unities are attained through the middle terms between two different, but not necessary contradictory realities.

Let us now look at the second hierarchy, which apart from implying a difference between terms, also includes some sort of opposition. In *Ambiguum* 41, Maximus describes the creation as the process of cosmological procession into five pairs. The first pair is uncreated and created. While under the term "creation" one can understand the divine works that have beginning, the uncreated nature, apart from the divine essence, relates to the beginningless works of God, such as goodness, all life, immortality, simplicity, immutability, and infinity.[52] One may distinguish in the created nature, the nature perceived by the mind and the nature perceived by senses. The nature perceived by the senses is further divided into heaven and earth, which consists of paradise and the inhabited world (*oikumenê*). Finally, the living beings that inhabit the world are divided into male and female or man and woman, in the case of human beings.[53] Maximus points out that the unification of these distinctions was the task of Adam, who by failing to fulfill this task made the distinctions the basis for the divisions in the created nature. By taking Adam's role Christ overcomes these divisions in the following way: by the immaculate birth from the virgin He unites man and woman, by living on earth in the resurrected body He unites the inhabited world with paradise, by His ascension into heaven he unites earth and heaven, by passing in the body and soul through the intelligible orders of heaven, He unites the sensible and intelligible nature, and finally, by sitting

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52. *Cap. teol.* 1.48, PG 90: 1100d.
53. *Amb.* 41, (Constas 2, 110-113,1309AD)

at the right side of the Father, He unites the created with uncreated nature. What Christ has done is to actually unite the extremes in the middle or mean terms. On the level of humanity He unites a set of mutually exclusive terms. By divine intervention, Mary the Mother of God conceives and gives birth, while remaining a virgin. By stripping humanity of sexual differences, Christ recreates the paradisiacal condition, in which procreation did not potentially include copulation and labor and He opens the possibility for a genderless humanity as the middle term between man and woman. By the second unification between the inhabited world and paradise He overcomes the differences between corruption and mortality on the one side and immortality on the other,[54] and He shows a way toward the paradisiacal *oikumenê* as a middle term between mortality and immortality. By His ascension into heaven, Christ unifies heaven (or the sky) and earth into one sensible nature. Thus, all the divisions that exist on this level of reality, such as the division between the rational (human beings) and irrational (animals, plants) nature, or between the animate (humans, animals, plants) and inanimate (stone, planets, fire, water) are overcome in one and single sensible nature. Maximus goes a step further and also questions the laws of sensible nature:

> [H]aving united heaven and earth through a life identical in virtue in every manner with that of the angels (as much as this is humanly possible), he would have made the sensible creation absolutely identical and indivisible with itself, not in any way dividing it into places separated by distances, for he would have become nimble by means of the spirit, without any corporeal weight holding him to the earth, and thus proceed unhindered in his ascent to the heavens, for his intellect would no longer behold such things, but hasten purely to God, and in the wisdom of his gradual ascent to God, just as if he were traveling on an ordinary road, he would naturally overcome any obstacles standing in his way.

According to Maximus, the very category of space undergoes a transformation. Thus, the space itself is transformed from the space perceived as extension and traversed by the movement of physical objects, to the space perceived as potentiality, in which

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54. *Amb.* 41, (Constas 2, 114-115,1312A)

the movement of the whole creation is directed towards God as the final goal. This level of reality may be identified with the heavenly earth and it corresponds to the above-mentioned level of active contemplation in the movement of gathering.

By passing in the body and soul through the intelligible orders of heaven, Christ abolishes the division between the sensible and intelligible nature. On this level not only is the division between the sensible and intelligible nature abolished, or humans and angels so to speak, but also the division between knowledge and ignorance, because the knowledge of all creation is revealed through the divine *logoi*.[55] This means that the knowledge of God will be achieved through direct experience and not as a product of intellectual and sensible perception.[56]

Finally, on the last level of reality, symbolized by Christ's placement "at the right hand of the Father," the created nature is united with the uncreated nature and it receives all the attributes of the latter, except for the identity of essence. Thus, the whole creation, and human beings in particular, will on this level overcome the limits imposed on their mind, reason, and nature through definition, order, and law.[57] The future union of created and uncreated nature is already realized in the Incarnate Logos or the God-man, although in His case He owns His divinity by essence, and not by grace, as the deified people and God-humans.

Since according to Maximus's taxonomy of beings all the divisions or extremes that exist in nature such as male-female, mortal-immortal, rational-irrational or animate-inanimate, sensible-intelligible, and created-uncreated have been reconciled not by assimilation in the *logoi* of higher universals, but by unification in the middle or mean terms, it would be pertinent to ask whether the essence undergoes certain changes by being unified in the middle term. As it is obvious from what has been already said, Maximus introduces two decades of five pairs on the so-called psychological and cosmological levels, and each of these two decades are reduced to pentads by the unification of the extremes in the middle terms. However, when he describes the on-

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55.   *Amb*. 41, (Constas 2, 106-107,1305D -1308A)
56.   *Thal*. 60, (CCSG 22), 78.
57.   *Amb*. 41, (Constas 2, 108-109,1308BC)

tological level instead of ten categories or five pairs he describes the extraction of essence into five ontological categories: the most generic genus, generic genera, species, most specific species, and individuals.[58] Since it is already assumed in the previous discussions on the subject of the Porphyrian tree by Perl and Tollefsen that these universals and particulars correspond with the *logoi* of universals and particulars, the question arises as to whether these *logoi* of universals can be identified with the middle terms or not. If one identifies the universal *logoi* with the middle terms, then every level of cosmological and psychological reality should correspond to the particular or universal *logoi.* Thus, Peter or Paul as bearers of individual *logoi,* should be genderless by nature, which is not the case. Similarly, the identification of the logos of specific species with the life characterized by both mortality and immortality will just create confusion. However, maybe these two examples are not adequate because they point to realities that are not created by God but are rather the consequences of Adam's fall. Thus, the distinctions between the inhabited world and paradise and male and female that existed in paradise only in potentiality, became fully realized as divisions by his fall.[59] These dichotomies, such as the dichotomy between the soul and body that exists in human beings, are given as examples of how two different natures may be successfully united. They should serve as models to Adam to unite the differences that existed by nature, such as the dichotomies between the animate and inanimate, the sensible and intelligible, and the created and uncreated nature. Thus, the *logoi* of species may correspond to the natural divisions in the sensible nature (on rational and irrational or animate and inanimate nature) and to the divisions in the ineligible nature, but not to the middle terms that are achieved by uniting the natural extremes. The *logoi* of generic genera are not the middle terms between the sensible and intelligible natures, but the principles of their independent existence. Similarly, the logos of most generic genus is not a middle term between the created and uncreated nature, because

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58. *Amb.* 10,37, (Constas 1, 288-289,1177C)
59. V. Cvetkovic, *Transformation*, 199. See also Paul M. Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 284.

this will imply that the union between God and humanity or created world is a natural union. Since the union between the uncreated and created nature does not have its own logos, it is not the natural union. Therefore, the middle terms should be, as Maximus suggests, considered as a mixture of natural opposites,**60** and not universal *logoi.*

There are two more conclusions that might be drawn from Maximus's works about the mixtures of extremes. In the *Ambiguum* 17, Maximus indicates that diametrically opposed things are not united by the preexisting intelligible principles or *logoi*, but by the innumerable modes (*tropoi*), which are divided and united both in thought and actuality in itself and with all the others.**61** The unifying activities on each level of reality are not dependent on the nature or universal *logoi*, but rather on these modes. Therefore, the middle terms are not the expressions of nature, but rather of the modes that unify opposite or different natural principles. In order to function as the middle term, the mode should imply the movement of existing nature or natural principle toward the opposite nature. Thus, in marriage man is directed toward woman and woman toward man and the achieved marital union reconciles the differences between male and female, and paradoxically leads every human being toward genderless and sexless humanity. On every level of reality, the appropriate mode directs the movement toward the opposite natural reality or universal logos: the inhabited world towards paradise, the earth towards heaven, the sensible nature towards intelligible nature, and the created nature towards uncreated nature. Therefore, by the appropriate mode of existence, human nature tends toward the opposite and by uniting itself with the opposites in the middle term it ascends to the next level of reality.

The second conclusion relevant for our topic may be drawn from the work *Unionum Definitiones*, in which Maximus proposes definitions for different kinds of unions. He argues that the union according to essence takes place when it comes to different hypostases, the union according to hypostasis takes place when it comes to different essences, and the union according to the rela-

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60. *Amb.Th.*, Prolog (Constas 1, 2-3,1032A)
61. *Amb.* 17, (Constas 1, 390-391,1228D)

tionship (σχέσις) takes place when different volitions (γνώμη) are united in a single will (θέλημα).[62] All three modes of union are relevant for our discussion of the application of the Porphyrian tree on Maximus's logoi, because the union according to essence relates to the assimilation of the individual *logoi* and *logoi* of species in the more generic *logoi*, the union according to hypostasis pertains to the union of different natures, such as soul and body, and union according to relationship refers to the submission of the human will to the divine will. Two or more individuals of the same nature are united in the same essence. The laws of this union are also applicable on universals, because two or more species or genera are united in one genus. The realities of different natures cannot be united in one essence, but rather in one hypostasis. Thus, body and soul, male and female, mortal and immortal, intelligible and sensible, created and uncreated are united in hypostasis, that is a person, no matter whether human or divine. This means that only a person may unite the extremes in the middle terms in its own personality. Finally, by bending their different volitions (γνώμη) to one single or natural will (θέλημα), two or more individuals create the union of relationship. It is mentioned above that human beings use their capacity of willing (γνώμη) in order to achieve their self-determination. Only by submitting their individual volitions to the will of God and divine providence are human beings capable of entering into relationship with God and to ascend the ladder of extremes on their way to God. This union according to relationship implies that the particular human being acts in accordance with the *logoi* of providence and judgment and the logos of well-being, which are nothing else than the wills of God for His creation.

The Porphyrian tree is the most appropriate model for explaining the union according to essence, because both the particulars and universals (or their *logoi*) are of the same nature. Although another two unions consist of elements that the Porphyrian tree includes, such as the natural extremes in the form of differentia, they cannot be adequately explained by this taxonomic mod-

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62. *Unionum definitiones*, PG 91, 214. Cf. Peter van Deun, L'Unionum definitiones (CPG 7697, 18) attribué à Maxime le Confesseur: étude et édition du traité, *Revue des études byzantines* 58, 2000, 123-147: 145.

el. Apart from the movement of the essence along the trunk and branches of the Porphyrian tree, which follows the *logoi* of universals, Maximus also introduces the notion of mode (*tropos*), which regulates the unification of *logoi*, and the notion of hypostasis, which is the acting subject, or the one who deliberately chooses the mode of unifying its own *logoi*. This mode determines whether a particular human being acts in accordance with or against nature. However, acting according to nature does not mean affirming its own identity according to the elements that particular human beings possesses, such as specific gender, body, or rationality. By choosing the natural forms that possess, and by abandoning the opposite of natural forms, the human being fails to unite existing natural differentia in his hypostasis and thus, his/her usage of nature becomes unnatural.

The question of the proper actualization of one's own nature in the union brings us back to Aristotle and to the topic of how Maximus rethinks Aristotelian categories. It is possible to draw an analogy between three kinds of unions mentioned by Maximus with unions according to genus, formula, and number that are present in Aristotle.[63] Maximus's union according to essence corresponds to Aristotle's union according to genus because essence and genus of different individuals are one and the same, while these individuals differ among themselves on the basis of their accidents. Similarly, unions according to hypostasis or formula are analogous to one another, because both relate to the indivisibility of the certain subject, for example man. Unions according to relationship and number may also correspond one to another, because something formed by means of relationship is one in number and not, for example, one in genus or formula. Like Maximus, Aristotle might maintain that apart from the assimilation of individuals and species to generic genus, the process of unification includes other forms too.

The problem appears when an individual being, subsumed under a certain genus, actualizes its own nature. For Aristotle this is a straightforward process, because the actualization of natural potentiality includes the end in itself,[64] although for Maximus, as

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63. *Metaphysics*, Δ, 1016a24ff.
64. *Metaphysics* Θ, 1048b18ff.

Tollefsen argues, this end stays out of the framework of pure natural potential internal to a being.[65] Tollefsen identifies the end with deification, claiming that the natural consummation of deification is not natural because it is not in the power of created being as such. I would go a step further from Tollefsen and argue that the unification of the extremes in the middle terms on each level of "natural" taxonomy by a human being also includes some powers, which are beyond the potential of human beings, such as divine providence. Therefore, only by having one will with God, can the individual human being, by mode of its action or existence, unite things divided by nature into indivisible entities. This process then forms all three unions: union according to essence with other individuals, union according to hypostasis of essentially different realities, and union by relationship with God though the unification of wills.

Conclusion

The application of the Porphyrian tree to Maximus the Confessor has become a constant in contemporary scholarship. However, many questions regarding similarities between Maximus's structure of *logoi* and the Porphyrian hierarchy of universals have remained unanswered. In the course of this article I attempted to answer the question of the relationship between the Logos and the hierarchically structured *logoi*, as well as to propose some new solutions for the assimilation of lower universals into the higher universals. First, by relying on the difference between the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic understanding of participation of lower degrees into the higher degrees of beings I have shown that the Logos of God cannot be understood as the highest participated universal, because it is of a different nature than the created essence. It cannot be identified with unanticipated reality, because all the *logoi* participate in Him through the process of return and providence. I have included the *logoi* of providence and judgment into the examination in order to show that the identity of the created order as a whole is regulated by the logos of providence and the sameness of each particular being by the logos of judgment.

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65.   Tollefsen, *Christocentric Cosmology*, 115.

An analogy drawn between psychological and cosmological hierarchies on the one hand and ontological hierarchy on the other hand has demonstrated that Maximus unifies the extremes that exist at the five levels of reality by means of middle terms. The middle terms are not *logoi* of nature, but the modes of existence of the *logoi* in one hypostasis or a person. Similar to the individuals who are assimilated in universals through the union according to essence, the opposite natures are reconciled in middle terms through the union according to hypostasis. This means that the hypostasis is a bearer of individual and universal *logoi* that are reconciled by the proper mode of existence. The proper mode of existence requires a third kind of union, a union according to relationship, in which the different human volitions are reconciled in compliance with the divine will. Although the three kinds of union in Maximus correspond to union by genus, formula, and number in Aristotle, the difference is that in Maximus these unions are not attained only by the actualization of being's natural potentials like in Aristotle, but are granted as the divine response to human activities. All these arguments lead to the conclusion that the application of the Porphyrian tree and Aristotelian logical categories in general is restricted only to one aspect of Maximus's structure of *logoi*, the aspects that relate to union according to essence. The other two unions that are essential for understanding Maximus's doctrine of *logoi*, such as the union of the opposite natures in one hypostasis, or the union of different volitions in one single will cannot be described by the Porphyrian tree.