Proclus' Doctrine of Participation in Maximus the Confessor's Centuries of Theology I 48-50

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ABSTRACT

In the *Centuries of Theology* 1.48–50, Maximus states that there are two kinds of works that belong to God: one which corresponds to beings having a temporal, finite beginning, and one which corresponds to perfections of beings which have no beginning and are therefore eternal. Maximus labels the latter as participated beings (ὄντα μεθεκτά) and the former as participating beings (ὄντα μετέχοντα), with God transcending both as their cause. The structure of God-as-cause, participated beings, and participating beings matches Proclus' three-fold structure of participation with the ontological categories of unparticipated, participated, and participating. While Maximus borrows the basic language and structure from Proclus, he makes certain minor but significant differences, particularly in how the participated beings both relate to their source in God and in their status of existence. This article thus sets out to analyze 1.48–50 in the general context of the *Centuries of Theology,* considering how Maximus conceives of the ontological distinctions between God and God's works. A comparison with Proclus' understanding of participation follows, particularly from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23, which succinctly states the three-term distinction of participation. The resulting comparison shows that Proclus' framework of participation is flattened for Maximus, where the participated works represent multiple properties distinct in kind from the unparticipated, while God fits analogously in the status of the unparticipated. The underlying ontology supports Maximus' implicit denial that such participated entities represent distinct divinities, as they do for Proclus, while Maximus' assertion of God's transcendence is still secured with the ontological distinction between the participated works and their unparticipated cause.

Introduction

St. Maximus the Confessor has been considered in his various uses and applications of Neoplatonism, in good part thanks to his appropriation of Pseudo-Dionysius.[1] With this in mind, some passages of interest stand out in the *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50 (PG 90, 1100C-1101B), where Maximus

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[1] See, for instance, Carlos Steel, 'Maximus Confessor on Theory and Praxis. A Commentary on Ambigua Ad Johannem Vi (10) 1-19', in Thomas Bénatouïl, Mauro Bonazzi (eds), *Theoria, Praxis, and the Contemplative Life After Plato and Aristotle* (Leiden, 2012) and Stephen Gersh,

employs a three-term scheme of participation between God and his eternal and temporal works.[2] This has striking parallels to Proclus' developed doctrine of participation involving three elements, between the unparticipated, participated, and participating entities in a given order. While the passage in Maximus has been considered in light of its ties to St Gregory Palamas' famous doctrine of the essence and energies of God, no analysis has been made of the influence and reception of Proclus in this passage. In this article I wish to set out a close comparison between the two figures' frameworks, beginning with an analysis of the *Centuries of Theology* passage followed by an overview and comparison with Proclus' division of participation in his metaphysics. While Maximus essentially adapts the same framework from Proclus, he makes certain, crucial changes in the structure by simplifying the hierarchy of participated beings and allowing multiple participants to share in the same participated property. Perhaps more interesting is Maximus' implicit denial of self-subsistence to participated entities, which is in contrast to Proclus' view that participated entities are self-subsistent in their superiority to participants and simultaneous distinction from the unparticipated source. This may be why Maximus can deny divinity to the participated entities, unlike Proclus, and implicitly maintain that they are mediated, participable aspects of God – perhaps the most striking difference one can see in Maximus' view of participation compared to Proclus'.

Maximus' framework of participation in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50

Centuries of Theology 1.48-50 forms a particular grouping within the whole work which is concerned with establishing what constitutes being a work of God, what kinds of works exist, and in what sense God is related to those works. 1.48 introduces two particular kinds of works that belong to God:

For the worthy it should be sought out how certain things are fit to be understood as works which God began in creation, and again certain things which God did not begin. For if he rested from all works which he began to produce, it is clear he did not rest from those which he did not begin to produce. At no time then: the works of God, on the one hand, which began to be in time are all participating beings, just as the different essences of beings. For they have non-being prior to their own being; God was at some

[2] Prior studies of these passages (that I am currently aware of) are John Demetracopoulos, 'Palamas Transformed: Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction Between God's "Essence" and "Energies" in Late Byzantium', *Bibliotheca* 11 (2011) 263-372, 279, n. 46; David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West* (Cambridge, 2004), 189–90; and David Bradshaw, 'Maximus the Confessor', in Lloyd Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2012), 816–7. While Proclus is briefly mentioned in these, there is no focused comparison of the concepts.

point, when beings which participate were not. But the works of God which did not happen to begin to be in time are participated beings, which participating beings partake according to grace: just as with goodness, and everything of goodness if it is embraced by account. And simply all life, immortality, simplicity, immutability, and infinity; such things are contemplated in an essential way around him. Those are also works of God, and they did not begin in time. (1100C-D)[3]

Ζητητέον τοῖς σπουδαίοις, τίνα καθήκει νοεῖν εἶναι τὰ ἔργα ὧν ἤρξατο τῆς γενέσεως ὁ Θεός· καὶ τίνα πάλιν, ὧν οὐκ ἤρξατο. Εἰ γὰρ πάντων κατέπαυσε τῶν ἔργων, ὧν ἤρξατο ποιῆσαι, δῆλον ἐκείνων οὐ κατέπαυσεν, ὧν οὐκ ἤρξατο ποιῆσαι. Μήποτε οὖν, ἔργα μὲν Θεοῦ χρονικῶς ἠργμένα τοῦ εἶναί ἐστι, πάντα τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα· οἷον αἱ διάφοροι τῶν ὄντων οὐσίαι. Τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὄν, ἔχουσι αὐτῶν τοῦ εἶναι πρεσβύτερον. Ἦν γάρ ποτε, ὅτε τά ὄντα μετέχοντα οὐκ ἦν. Θεοῦ δέ ἔργα τυχόν οὐκ ἠργμένα τοῦ εἶναι χρονικῶς, τὰ ὄντα μεθεκτά, ὧν κατὰ χάριν μετέχουσι τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα· οἷον, ἡ ἀγαθότης, καὶ πᾶν εἴ τι ἀγαθότητος ἐμπεριέχεται λόγῳ. Καὶ ἁπλῶς πᾶσα ζωή, καὶ ἀθανασία καὶ ἁπλότης καὶ ἀτρεψία καὶ ἀπειρία, καὶ ὅσα περὶ αὐτὸν οὐσιωδῶς θεωρεῖται· ἅτινα καὶ ἔργα Θεοῦ εἰσι, καὶ οὐκ ἠργμένα χρονικῶς.

The main concern Maximus sets out in the beginning is that God is perpetually working even if he 'rested' in completing the creation of beings in time. It is within the specification of this aim that Maximus states the two kinds of divine works which God carries out: those which have a created beginning in time (works from which God rested) and those which are characterized by not having a beginning (ἄναρχος) in time (works from which God continually does not rest). Of particular note is Maximus' focus on the essences (οὐσίαι) of beings as belonging to the former category of works which have a beginning, since they are conditioned by non-being (τὸ μὴ ὄν) as their origin. Not only is the generation of these beings temporal but so also the essences of these beings. This would preclude an understanding of such essences as participated, eternal properties in the way transcendent Forms would be for a Platonist, particularly for Proclus. By contrast the other kinds of works which are eternal and outside time are perfections correlated to 'goodness' (ἡ ἀγαθότης) and all other properties that have goodness in their definition: the properties of life, immortality, simplicity, and infinity,[4] as mentioned in the following line. Maximus calls these participated beings (μεθεκτά) while referring to created beings having a beginning as participants (μετεχόντα) of these timeless properties. In this the division between being a participant and being participated lies in whether such a being or property is temporal or eternal. A participant being called 'good', 'living', or even having 'being' is so not in virtue of itself but in virtue of its

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[3] All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[4] Maximus' prioritization of 'goodness' (ἀγαθότης) over the other attributes reflects a common Neoplatonic theme of the Good's priority over all other attributes. See for instance Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 8 (Dodds 8.29-30): 'All that in any way participates the Good is subordinate to the first Good, which is nothing other than good' (πάντων τῶν ὁπωσοῦν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μετεχόντων ἡγεῖται τὸ πρώτως ἀγαθὸν καὶ δ᾽ μηδέν ἐστιν ἄλλο ἢ ἀγαθόν).

participation in the timeless works corresponding to those terms. *Centuries of Theology* 1.50 makes this clearer:

And those which did begin in time are, and are said to be this, by participation of those things which did not begin in time, wherefore they both are and are said to be. For all living things and immortal things, both holy and virtuous things, God is the craftsman: for he transcends the essence of all that can be understood and spoken. (1101B)

Καὶ τὰ μὲν ἠργμένα χρονικῶς, τῇ μετοχῇ τῶν οὐκ ἠργμένων χρονικῶς εἰσι καὶ λέγονται τοῦθ' ὅπερ καὶ εἰσὶ καὶ λέγονται. Πάσης γὰρ ζωῆς καὶ ἀθανασίας, ἁγιότη-τός τε καὶ ἀρετῆς, δημιουργός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός· ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν γὰρ πάντων τῶν τε νοουμένων καὶ λεγομένων ἐξῄρηται.

By implication, both participated and participating works fall in the category of what can be understood and spoken, which further confirms the sense of God's transcendence as denying any attribution of positive properties or names which comes from the domain of either participated or participating beings. In this, God transcends all beings and being itself, where the works have the account of being predicated to them.[5]

1.48 presents a paradox where Maximus says that the participated works are contemplated 'in an essential way' (οὐσιωδῶς) around God (περὶ αὐτόν).[6] Initially this suggests some form of identity between God himself and the participated works, which is at odds with the implication that God has no positive, and therefore essential, attributes. The use of περί can either suggest spatial imagery (*e.g.* the moon as 'around' the earth) or conceptual relation (*e.g.* speaking of rationality 'concerning' or 'in relation to' man). The latter usage is suggested with Maximus relating the participated works essentially to God, but God's absolute transcendence over all things 'infinitely infinite times' (ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως) (1.49, 1101A)[7] implies the former usage with ontological separation. The dual-sided ambiguity of the term would fit with the intermediate status that the participated works have between God in himself and the created, participating works: to the degree the participated works are eternal and pre-exist the creation of beings in time, they are related closely to God who is also eternal; yet insofar as the participated properties of 'goodness' and so on are

[5] See Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.49, 1101A.

[6] The phrase περὶ αὐτόν in relation to God recurs in earlier Fathers, for instance Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 2.89, 102, 582, *etc.* See D. Bradshaw, 'Maximus the Confessor' (2010), 817.

[7] The language of ἀπειράκις ἀπείρως is also found in Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 1 (Dodds 2.10-1), albeit in a case where Proclus states that nothing can be made up 'from infinitely infinite things' (ἐξ ἀπειράκις ἀπείρων). See also Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.1-2, 4, where God is described as, among other negative attributes, beyond 'essence, power, and act'. This corresponds to a general Neoplatonic description of the One as beyond the same triad of essence, power, and act (see *e.g.* Proclus, *Commentary on Parmenides* 1070.15-1071.3 [Cousin]). This is further proof that Maximus is working closely within a Neoplatonic framework for discussing God's transcendence and causal relation.

works of God and are participated by beings in time, they are distinct and
separate from God. The aspect of essential relation in the former case can be
further clarified with Maximus' statement at the end of 1.48 that the partici-
pated works 'have God most solely as the eternal generator of [their] being'
(οἷα τὸν Θεὸν ἔχουσα τοῦ εἶναι μονώτατον ἀϊδίως γεννήτορα) (1101A).
While the phrasing explicitly denies that the participated works come from any
other source than God, it also suggests that they are not self-generated and
self-subsisting in the same way as the created works. Because of this, the par-
ticipated works are directly correlated to God even if still ontologically distinct
from God. One can see evidence for this later in 1.54 when Maximus speaks
of 'being' and 'life' as properly belonging to God, where in partaking of these
properties one 'becomes God by deification' (οἷα καὶ αὐτὸς γενόμενος τῇ
θεώσει θεός) (1104B). Thus, a given entity's participation in 'life' or 'being'
is not correlated separate, self-subsisting principles, 'Life' and 'Being', but
rather directly to God-as-life and God-as-being.[8] This further confirms the par-
ticipated works' status as intermediaries between God and created beings.

  Centuries of Theology 1.49 raises another, initial problem for the presenta-
tion we have so far had of the participated works pre-existing created beings.
The participated works are here said to be immanent, having been 'implanted
for created beings according to grace, as much as some infused power' (κατὰ
χάριν τοῖς γεγονόσιν ἐμπέφυκεν, οἷα τις δύναμις ἔμφυτος) (1101A). Yet if
the participated works are supposed to be eternal and separate according to their
nature from 1.48, it is not clear how they can be simultaneously immanent. The
first half of 1.49 gives an implicit answer when it establishes God transcending
all beings, both participated and participating, while at the end the timeless
works' immanence in created beings is used as a reason to say that those works,
through their immanence, have 'clearly proclaimed God in all things' (τὸν ἐν
πᾶσι ὄντα Θεὸν διαπρυσίως κηρύττουσα) (1101A).[9] The participated works
then appear to have two aspects: either in their association with God as trans-
cendent, and therefore belonging 'solely' to God, or in their relation to created
beings as immanent powers. Created beings which have the properties of
'goodness' and 'being' then have those properties as received 'powers' caused

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  [8] On this, Maximus is following Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 181.16-9, with the divine
names correlating to the same entity, God, and not to separate divine entities: 'We do not say that
the Good is one thing, Being another, Life another, and Wisdom another, neither that there are
many causes and other divine beings productive of different entities subordinated and existing in
relation to one another, but that they are the wholly good processions of a single God and the
divine names by which we call Him by ourselves' (οὐκ ἄλλο δὲ εἶναι τἀγαθόν φησι καὶ ἄλλο
τὸ ὂν καὶ ἄλλο τὴν ζωὴν ἢ τὴν σοφίαν, οὐδὲ πολλὰ τὰ αἴτια καὶ ἄλλων ἄλλας παρακτικὰς
θεότητας ὑπερεχούσας καὶ ὑφειμένας, ἀλλ' ἑνὸς θεοῦ τὰς ὅλας ἀγαθὰς προόδους καὶ τὰς παρ'
ἡμῶν ἐξυμνουμένας θεωνυμίας). See Stephen Gersh, 'Ideas and Energies in Pseudo-Dionysius
the Areopagite', *SP* 15 (1984), 297-300, 300.
  [9] See also, *e.g.*, Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.82, which further develops how and why
God transcends 'all that can be understood and spoken'; see 1.83, 2.2 (1125C); 2.3.

by the participated works in their distinct aspect as timeless and pre-existing. This balances off the claim of transcendence for God with the affirmation of God's immanence through the timeless works' transcendent and immanent activity on created beings.

Proclus' framework of participation

Proclus' three-term framework for participation is established most succinctly in his *Elements of Theology*, Proposition 23, which states:

All that is unparticipated gives existence to the participated from itself, and all participated entities reach upwards to unparticipated entities.

For the unparticipated, having the status of a monad since it belongs to itself and not to another, and since it transcends the participants, generates entities that are able to be participated. For either it will stand barren by itself – and then not have honor – or it will give something from itself. Then that which receives participates, and that which is given has existence as participated. (Dodds 26.22-9)

πᾶν τὸ ἀμέθεκτον ὑφίστησιν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὰ μετεχόμενα, καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ μετεχόμεναι ὑποστάσεις εἰς ἀμεθέκτους ὑπάρξεις ἀνατείνονται.

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀμέθεκτον, μονάδος ἔχον λόγον ὡς ἑαυτοῦ ὂν καὶ οὐκ ἄλλου καὶ ὡς ἐξῃρημένον τῶν μετεχόντων, ἀπογεννᾷ τὰ μετέχεσθαι δυνάμενα. ἢ γὰρ ἄγονον ἐστήξεται καθ' αὑτό, καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν ἔχοι τίμιον· ἢ δώσει τι ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ τὸ μὲν λαβὸν μετέσχε, τὸ δὲ δοθὲν ὑπέστη μετεχομένως.

Here, Proclus takes for granted that, for any given number of individuals sharing a property, the source of that property generates entities or principles which proximately impart their common effect in the participants. Whereas a more traditional Platonist framework admits of two terms – multiple participants correlated to one participated entity or Form – Proclus thinks participation in one source necessitates intermediate, participated principles which each correspond with their respective participants.[10] For instance, each living body participates in the property of self-movement through its proximate particular soul, while each particular soul related to its body is generated from the monadic, unparticipated principle of Soul, which is the source of the property of self-movement. Under this description the unparticipated has a one-to-many relationship with the participated, while the participated has a one-to-one relationship to the participant: the unparticipated Soul produces multiple, particular souls which act as immediate causes of life to all living bodies, while the individual participated soul produces its effect in one particular living body.

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[10] See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23, Dodds 26.30-28.7.

Within this general three-term framework, Proclus makes a further distinction with the participated intermediary's relation to its participant: each participated entity is self-complete and self-constituted, and so separate from its participant, while the participated generates its effect in the participant as an immanent power.[11] From the previous example, each particular soul stands as self-complete in relation to the living body, while it also generates an immanent power in the body which brings about the manifested effect of life, or self-movement, in body. As Proclus states in *Elements of Theology* Prop. 81: 'All that is separately participated is present to the participant through an unseparated power which it implants' (πᾶν τὸ χωριστῶς μετεχόμενον διά τινος ἀχωρίστου δυνάμεως, ἣν ἐνδίδωσι, τῷ μετέχοντι πάρεστιν) (Dodds 76.12-3). As was the case with the participated term playing an intermediary role between the unparticipated and participants, so Proclus also posits an intermediate power in the participant which makes the separately participated entity's effect manifested. Thus within the participated-participant relationship Proclus has a further intermediary principle with the immanent power which makes manifest the final effect in the participant.

Perhaps more important in the comparison with Maximus is addressing how Proclus characterizes the distinction between participated and unparticipated entities. As *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23 showed, the unparticipated corresponds to what belongs to all, while the participated corresponds to what belongs to one individual, or participant. But how does Proclus justify this ontological distinction in the first place? The end of Prop. 23 provides an answer with the participated's characterization:

Every participated entity, belonging to that through which it is participated, is secondary to that which is equally present to all and has filled everything from itself. For that which is in one is not in the others; while that which is present to all alike, so that it may illuminate all, is not in one but before all. ... But that which is in all would be divided into all, and again would require another principle to unify the divided; and further all would no longer participate the same principle, but this one and that another, through the unity being divided. (Dodds 26.30-28.4)

τὸ δὲ μετεχόμενον πᾶν, τινὸς γενόμενον ὑφ' οὗ μετέχεται, δεύτερόν ἐστι τοῦ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως παρόντος καὶ πάντα ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ πληρώσαντος. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ ὂν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐκ ἔστιν· τὸ δὲ πᾶσιν ὡσαύτως παρόν, ἵνα πᾶσιν ἐλλάμπῃ, οὐκ ἐν ἑνί ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ τῶν πάντων. ... ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐν πᾶσιν ὄν, μερισθὲν εἰς πάντα, πάλιν ἄλλου ἂν δέοιτο τοῦ τὸ μερισθὲν ἑνίζοντος· καὶ οὐκέτ' ἂν τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετέχοι πάντα, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἄλλου, τὸ δὲ ἄλλου, τοῦ ἑνὸς μερισθέντος.

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[11] See *ibid*. Prop. 64, Dodds 60.20-2: 'Every original monad gives substance to two series: one of self-complete substances, the other of irradiated things which acquire their substance in others' (πᾶσα ἀρχικὴ διττὸν ὑφίστησιν ἀριθμόν, τὸν μὲν αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων, τὸν δὲ ἐλλάμψεων ἐν ἑτέροις τὴν ὑπόστασιν κεκτημένων).

Proclus characterizes each participated entity as being divided and distinct from each other, so that what one individual participates is different in an essential way from any other participated entity.[12] The unparticipated functions as a source for all participants by being absolutely identical with itself in a way that negates all difference or division implied with the collected set of participated entities. The unparticipated thus unites within itself the multiple, distinct participated entities by its pure unity – whether as the kind, Soul, or also the transcendent Form of 'man'.[13] This requirement for absolute unity as a prior ground to the multiple, distinct participated terms is why Proclus emphasizes the status of the participated terms' source as unparticipated, while the participated principles fulfill the role of an intermediary in conveying their common attribute, derived from the unparticipated, to the participants.

Comparing Maximus with Proclus

By comparison to Proclus' elaborate layout and description of participation, Maximus' *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50 only gives us a sketch for his framework of participation. A basic parallel nevertheless exists between both frameworks insofar as Maximus also employs the same kind of a three-term division from Proclus in his division between God-as-transcendent, the participated, timeless works (μέθεκτα, or μετεχόμενα), and the participating, created works (μετέχα).[14] Maximus does not ascribe the term, 'unparticipated' (ἀμέθεκτον), to God in 1.48-50,[15] although his description of God as transcending the participating and participated works fits the same description of the unparticipated transcending both kinds of entities from Proclus.[16] The pre-existence of the participated works before created, participating beings mirrors Proclus' statement that participated entities exist separately and in themselves before their participants. More proximately, this may correspond to Proclus' Prop. 63 in the *Elements of Theology*: 'Every unparticipated entity gives existence to two orders of participated beings: one in those which participate at some time, another in those which participate always and by their nature' (πᾶν τὸ ἀμέθεκτον διττὰς

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[12] Proclus specifies this distinction in terms of either species, for non-material entities (like souls), or number for material forms (like the enmattered form of 'man'). See *Commentary on Parmenides* 819.20-2 (Cousin), 14-6 (Steel); *Commentary on Timaeus* I 446.24-6.

[13] See Proclus, *Commentary on Parmenides* 850-2.

[14] Maximus, *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50, and the rest of the *Centuries* generally use only μέθεκτον to refer to participated entities. Proclus primarily uses μετεχόμενον, although in places like *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 63, Dodds 60.5, he uses the latter interchangeably with the former (Dodds 60.1-2). Otherwise in the case of Prop. 63, neither term appears to differ in meaning from the other.

[15] On doing a word search in Migne's *Patrologia Graecae*, no mention of ἀμέθεκτον can be found in the *Centuries of Theology* or anywhere in the rest of Maximus' corpus.

[16] See also Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 75.

ὑφίστησι τῶν μετεχομένων τὰς τάξεις, τὴν μὲν ἐν τοῖς ποτὲ μετέχουσι, τὴν δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀεὶ καὶ συμφυῶς μετέχουσι) (Dodds 60.1-3). For Proclus, all things which temporally participate in some property depend on a prior, eternally existing order of participated principles. To this degree Maximus has a similar idea with the participated works as existing eternally before they can be partaken by temporal beings.

Just as Maximus has two different descriptions of the participated works as either transcending or being immanent in their participants, Proclus also holds that participated entities which exist separately produce an immanent power in their participants which brings about the final effect from the participated entity. Similarly, Maximus speaks of the timeless works in *Centuries of Theology* 1.49 as an 'infused power' (τις δύναμις ἔμφυτος) which manifest the properties of the participated works – or as Maximus explicitly says afterward, they have 'clearly proclaimed God in all things' (τὸν ἐν πᾶσι ὄντα Θεὸν διαπρυσίως κηρύττουσα) (1101A). The description of 'infused power' also matches Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 81 speaking of the separately participated 'implanting' (ἐνδίδωσι) a non-separate power in the participant.[17]

Given that Maximus does employ the same general framework, some important differences from Proclus should be noted. While Proclus speaks of participated entities as having a one-to-one correspondence with their respective participants, this contrasts with *Centuries of Theology* 1.48's presentation of each participated work being correlated with multiple participants: for instance, multiple beings having the property of goodness participate in the one participated work of 'goodness'.[18] In this respect Maximus simplifies the framework by not including a separate intermediary between participated 'goodness' and an individual having the received property of 'goodness', as would analogously be the case from *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 23. At the same time Maximus follows Proclus in *Centuries of Theology* 1.49's description of an intermediary power generated in each participant from the participated source, where the power implicitly links the separately participated source with the participant. In Maximus' case the separately-existing, participated source for a given property is common to all participants of that property, and not just one as with Proclus.

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[17] Consider also Maximus' distinction between the participated and participating in terms of being either contingent (ποτέ) or without beginning in time (οὐκ ἠργμένα χρονικῶς) in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48 (1100D), which parallels Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 63 (esp. Dodds 60.4-11), where the unparticipated produces two sets of participated entities: those which are always (ἀεί) participated, and those which are contingently (ποτέ) participated.

[18] See *Centuries of Theology* 1.50, 1101B, where Maximus describes 'all good things and goodness itself; and all beings and being itself manifestly beforehand happen to be works of God' (καὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ πάντα, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγαθότης· καὶ τὰ ὄντα πάντα, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ὀντότης, Θεοῦ προδήλως ἔργα τυγχάνουσιν). The balance between 'all [X] things and [X] itself' can be seen to correspond to participated beings with the given property, X, and the participated principle, 'X' itself.

This leaves an open question with how to place God in the analogous role of the unparticipated for Maximus. Whereas the unparticipated for Proclus is related to its corresponding participated entities as being one of that kind – for instance, unparticipated Soul is one in kind with the participated souls it produces – it is initially not clear how God is related to the participated works as a source in Maximus' framework: what God is productive of is not simply one kind of thing (divinity, for instance) for the participated works, but rather goodness, life, being, and so on, which differ in kind from what God is in himself. While this phrasing indicates an explicit difference between the two figures, in a certain sense Maximus still follows Proclus: as shown earlier with *Centuries of Theology* 1.54, one's participation in the properties of 'being' and 'life' to their full degree implies becoming 'God by deification', since they properly belong to God in himself.[19] One way to characterize this under Proclus' framework is that Maximus' participated works are united in kind under the property of divinity or deity, which is located in God as the source, while the participated works are differing manifestations under the same character of divinity. In one way this also matches Proclus' understanding of all things ultimately being characterized as manifestations of unity, which is located in the transcendent first principle of the One.[20] More proximately, Proclus' doctrine of the henads might better fit the comparison,[21] where the henads stand as intermediate, participated principles of oneness between the One-itself and all beings: for instance, behind the unparticipated monad of Soul stands a henad responsible as the proximate source of Soul's unity; similarly for Being, there is a henad for Being's unity; and so on. To the degree that the henads are different aspects of the One-itself, Maximus' notion of the participated works as aspects of God would also fit.[22] At the same time a certain *proviso* is needed: whereas Proclus calls the henads 'gods' and therefore separate deities, Maximus denies this to the participated works in *Centuries of Theology* 1.50 with his strong emphasis on God as the 'craftsman' (δημιουργός) of both created and timeless works.

One extra difference to note between Maximus and Proclus is the ontological status of the participated entities. For Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 64's description of the first order of participated entities as 'self-complete' (αὐτοτελῶν) indicates self-subsistence and ontological separation from the participants and

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[19] Maximus the Confessor, *Centuries of Theology* 1.54, 1104B.

[20] See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 5.

[21] I would like to thank Kevin Corrigan for this suggestion, which has also been pointed out in Pseudo-Dionysian studies (*e.g.* Timothy Riggs, 'Erôs, the Son, and the Gods as Metaphysical Principles in Proclus and Dionysius', *Dionysius* 28 [2010], 97-130).

[22] Of course, even here the comparison breaks where Proclus speaks of the henads as ineffable and beyond positive description, like the One itself (see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 115, 118). This would indicate another 'flattening' of horizons under Maximus' framework, where Being-itself and the henad of 'Being' are collapsed in one participated work of 'being', as with Life-itself and the henad of 'Life' into the work of 'life', *etc*.

the unparticipated source.[23] As seen earlier, the separate existence of the participated entities makes possible the distribution of a given property in the participants, where Proclus characterizes this pre-existence in terms of the principle's self-subsistence. Comparing with Maximus, while the participated works have pre-existence in relation to the participating works, the former do not appear to have a self-subsistent status in the same way. Maximus states in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48 that whereas God 'rested' (κατέπαυσε) from the works which have a beginning in time, God did not rest from the works which have no beginning – that is, the participated works. The previous passage of *Centuries of Theology* 1.47 provides some context for this 'rest', where the resulting product or work from which God rested has its own self-determined movement and activity.[24] While this applies for the participating, created beings in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48, this is not the case for the participated works. If Proclus' description of the participated entities as self-complete implies being self-determined, this constitutes another difference for Maximus where this is not the case. The former allows Proclus to call the henads, which are participated aspects of the One, separate gods, since they are self-complete and in this respect separate from each other and their source in the One.[25] By contrast, the denial of being self-determined, and therefore self-complete, for Maximus' participated works would be reason to deny the attribution of separate deity to them, which follows on Maximus' emphasis that such works essentially pertain to God as their sole source.

Conclusion

Overall, Maximus' adaptation of Proclus on participation is rather simplified even though the basic structure is in place. Where Proclus employs his framework of participation in positing multiple layers of reality between the first

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[23] Dodds 60.31-62.2: 'Accordingly those substances which are self-complete, while by their discrimination into a manifold they fall short of their original monad, are yet in some wise assimilated to it by their self-complete existence; whereas the incomplete not only as existing in another fall away from the monad which exists in itself, but also as incomplete from the all-completing monad' (trans. Dodds, lightly modified) (αἱ μὲν οὖν αὐτοτελεῖς ὑποστάσεις, διὰ τὴν εἰς πλῆθος διάκρισιν ἠλαττωμέναι τῆς ἀρχικῆς αὐτῶν μονάδος, διὰ τὴν αὐτοτελῆ ὕπαρξιν ὁμοιοῦνταί πῃ πρὸς ἐκείνην· αἱ δὲ ἀτελεῖς καὶ τῷ ἐν ἄλλοις εἶναι τῆς καθ᾽ αὑτὴν ὑφεστώσης καὶ τῷ ἀτελεῖ τῆς πάντα τελειούσης ἀφεστήκασιν).

[24] See *Centuries of Theology* 1.47 1100B–C: 'For God rests from his natural activity in each being by which each of them moves naturally. He rests when each being, having obtained the divine energy in due measure, will determine its own natural activity with respect to God' (trans. Berthold) (Παύεται γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων τυχὸν φυσικῆς ἐνεργείας, καθ᾽ ἥν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων φυσικῶς κινεῖσθαι πέφυκεν, ὁπόταν ἕκαστον τῆς θείας ἀναλόγως ἐπιλαβόμενον ἐνεργείας, τὴν κατὰ φύσιν οἰκείαν περὶ αὐτὸν ὁρίσῃ τὸν Θεὸν ἐνέργειαν).

[25] See Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 114.

principle, intelligible entities, entities of soul, and material being, Maximus gives a more flattened, straightforward hierarchy in *Centuries of Theology* 1.48-50. This may be why Maximus, unlike Proclus, does not hold that each participated entity belongs to the same kind – that is, being, life, goodness, and so on – except insofar as they share in the common property of divinity, or rather as participated aspects of God. In this, perhaps the crucial difference from Proclus lies in Maximus' denial of self-subsistence to the participated works in their eternal, pre-existing aspect. On the one hand this move blocks calling the participated works separate divinities, as Proclus would with the participated henads, but then how these participated works subsist otherwise is not clear if they are still distinct from God in his absolute transcendence.[26] Nevertheless, Maximus' affirmation of the participated works as intermediaries fills a requirement similarly seen in Proclus' framework, where they mediate properties derived from one transcendent source to participating individuals. In Maximus' case with the *Centuries of Theology*, they fill the conceptual background to explain the language of deification and how things become perfected by God through participation.[27]

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[26] For instance, Proclus would say that a thing has subsistence either as a power in its prior cause, as constituting itself as a separate existence, or as immanent in the resulting product (see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 65). While the middle category of self-subsistence is denied, it is unclear where Maximus might place the participated works-as-pre-existing, particularly if he wishes to maintain the transcendence of God in a way that denies any identity with the participated works. In terms of later developments, D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West* (2004), 189-90 points out a parallel with Gregory Palamas' distinction between God's essence (οὐσία) and energies (ἐνέρ-γειαι). Maximus' framework may perhaps lead in this direction, particularly if 'rest' is denied to God's 'works' (ἔργα) in their eternal aspect, as seen earlier. If Maximus is taken as a faithful interpreter of Ps.-Dionysius in this area, *pace* S. Gersh, 'Ideas and Energies in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite' (1984), 300, this might constitute a new ontological category for the participated entities, insofar as their ontological status is modified from Proclus while still yet distinct from God in himself.