A dubious Christological formula? Leontius of Byzantium and the anhypostasis-...
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A DUBIOUS CHRISTOLOGICAL FORMULA? LEONTIUS OF BYZANTIUM AND THE *ANHYPOSTASIS–ENHYPOSTASIS* THEORY

'THE theologian Leontius of Byzantium has always been something of a mysterious figure.'[1] Twenty-two years ago, this remark by Brian Daley opened his review article on David Evans's thesis that the sixth-century Byzantine monk Leontius developed an Origenist Christology in Chalcedonian disguise. Evans had argued that Leontius regarded Jesus Christ as the single unfallen *nous* in the primordial world of intelligible beings, who is united to the Logos by nature of being *nous* and to the flesh by God's grace.[2] According to Evans, this Origenist idea resulted in an anti-Cyrillian stance that refused 'to identify Jesus Christ's μία ὑπόστασις with the Logos himself' and instead located it 'in a *tertium quid*'.[3] For Daley, however, Leontius' Christology was less speculative. While he agreed that the Byzantine belonged to a group of monks who were interested in Origenist writings, he cited a number of passages that distinguish Leontius' thought from Origenism.[4] His own conclusion was that 'Leontius' Christ is a single hypostasis, a single concrete individual, who unites in himself the complete nature of God and the complete nature of man.'[5]

There can be little doubt that Daley thought it was time to unravel the mystery surrounding Leontius, and his intuition that the Byzantine monk did not advance beyond the Chalcedonian formula has been proven to be accurate. Yet there is more at stake than questions of historiography. The following deliberations therefore reconsider the debate over Leontius' Christology, with

[1] Brian Daley, 'The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium', *JTS*, NS, 27 (1976), pp. 333–69, at p. 333.

[2] See David B. Evans, *Leontius of Byzantium: An Origenist Christology* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1970) pp. 41 and 185. Understandably, Leontius had to conceal this view 'from his Orthodox readers', since it meant 'that Jesus Christ is not Word become flesh but Word and flesh each united to *nous*'. Ibid. p. 42.

[3] Ibid. p. 184.

[4] Daley, 'The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium', pp. 355–60. Daley admits that Leontius regards the pre-existence of Christ's humanity as a logical possibility, given God's omnipotence, even if he rejects it as counterfactual to the incarnation. See ibid. pp. 337–9.

[5] Ibid. p. 360.

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particular attention to a recent essay in which LeRon Shults has criticized the so-called *anhypostasis–enhypostasis* theory as an inappropriate way of expressing the relation of the human and divine natures in the person of Christ.[6] According to Shults, this theory 'aims to express the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has no subsistence (*an-hypostasis*) apart from the union with the Logos, but that it has its being only "in" the subsistence (*en-hypostasis*) of the incarnate Son of God.'[7] Shults's thesis consists of two parts. Firstly, he claims that the theory was not a creation of the Byzantine Leontius, as Karl Barth and many of his followers, including a number of Catholic theologians, have claimed, but 'an invention of Protestant Scholasticism'.[8] Secondly, Shults argues that this invention stands 'in serious conflict with the use of terms in patristic Christology' and has led to the obfuscation of the doctrine of the person of Christ.[9] His essay offers a history of the (mis-)interpretation of Leontius, an analysis of some key passages in Leontius' writings, and a discussion of the later theory developed by protestant scholasticism and by Barth. Shults concludes with the claim that 'one needs to search for better ways to state the mystery of the relation between the Logos and the flesh in Jesus Christ.'[10]

Shults's argument merits a closer look, since it implies not only that Leontius did not hold the theory attributed to him but that he would have rejected it as incompatible with his own Christology.[11] In this essay, we will criticize Shults's thesis and argue that the alleged invention of protestant scholasticism was in fact an interpretation of the Chalcedonian formula consistent with Leontius' own thought. Its theological point was shared, among others, by Thomas Aquinas. In the first part, we will re-evaluate Leontius' Christology and the conceptual problems with which it was confronted. In the second part, we will analyse the use of the idea of insubsistence in the Christologies of Thomas Aquinas and of protestant scholasticism in the seventeenth century. Our conclusion will be that Shults's claim of a serious terminological conflict between protestant scholasticism and patristic Christology cannot be upheld.

[6] F. LeRon Shults, 'A Dubious Christological Formula: From Leontius of Byzantium to Karl Barth', *Theological Studies*, 57 (1996), pp. 431–46.
[7] Ibid. p. 431.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid. p. 446.
[11] Ibid. p. 442.

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LEONTIUS OF BYZANTIUM AND CHRISTOLOGY AFTER CHALCEDON

It is well known that the revival of scholarship on Leontius started with Friedrich Loofs's study 'Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche',[12] which presented the first comprehensive analysis of the theology of this mysterious sixth century figure. Loofs set himself the task of enquiring, among other things, whether one can speak of a terminological progress in the understanding of the person of Christ after the Council of Chalcedon and the ensuing conflicts between defendants and opponents of its formula. He claimed that Leontius of Byzantium introduced the theory of the *enhypostasia* of Christ's human nature and thereby became a major innovator in the debate. According to Loofs, Leontius used the term *enhypostatos* to express that the human nature of Christ existed not 'in itself' but 'within something else', namely the incarnate Logos.[13]

This thesis has been corrected recently by Brian Daley and, subsequently, by Aloys Grillmeier. Daley argues that Loofs misunderstood the prefix in the term *en-hypostatos* as a localizing prefix, whereas it should be understood as the opposite of an alpha privative, so that the proper translation of the term would be 'hypostatic' or 'having a concrete existence'.[14] Grillmeier concurs with Daley and also cites more material from the time of Leontius to support the correction.[15]

[12] Loofs's study appeared in O. von Gebhardt and A. von Harnack (eds.), *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1888), pp. 1–317.

[13] Ibid. pp. 65–8.

[14] Brian E. Daley, '"A Richer Union": Leontius of Byzantium and the Relationship of Human and Divine in Christ', in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica*, 24 (1993), pp. 239–65, at p. 241. Daley presented this view already in a paper for the Eighth Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford 1979, under the title 'The Christology of Leontius of Byzantium: Personalism or Dialectics?' More recently, Uwe M. Lang has challenged this critique. He contends that the trinitarian usage of the term from the fourth century onwards suggests 'that it is not as clear as Daley suggests that the prefix ἐν- is not to be understood in a localizing sense' and that there is some evidence to the contrary. See U. M. Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos: Church Fathers, Protestant Orthodoxy, and Karl Barth', *JTS*, ns, 49 (1998), pp. 630–57, at p. 635. This essay confirms our own thesis of doctrinal continuity from the patristic era to the Middle Ages to protestant scholasticism. In addition, Mr Lang graciously provided a number of critical comments on the first part of this paper.

[15] Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Vol. 2: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*, part 2: *The Church of Constantinople in the sixth century* (London: Mowbrays, 1995), pp. 195–6. He

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Daley and Grillmeier claim that Loofs's thesis is primarily due to a false translation of a passage in Leontius' work *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* (*CNE*). In this passage Leontius introduces his famous distinction between *hypostasis* and *enhypostaton*.[16] He explains: '*Hypostasis* and *enhypostaton* are not the same, gentlemen, just as substance (*ousia*) is something other than the substantiated (*enousion*). For *hypostasis* refers to the individual, but the *enhypostaton* to the substance. *Hypostasis* defines the person (*prosopon*) through characteristic properties, the *enhypostaton*, however, defines that it is not an accident'. Here we reach the debated sentence, which reads in the Greek: '*τὸ δὲ ἐνυπόστατον, τὸ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὸ συμβεβηκὸς δηλοῖ, ὃ ἐν ἑτέρῳ ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεωρεῖται*' (our emphasis). Grillmeier translates this as: 'the enhypostasized means, however, that it is not an accident; [the latter] has its being in another and is not perceived in itself'.[17] In following Daley, he claims that Loofs wrongly attributed the phrase 'has its being in another' to *enhypostaton* instead of *συμβεβηκός*. Contrary to Loofs, Leontius wants to emphasize that the *enhypostaton*, although it is not the same as a *hypostasis*, has its own reality and is *not* an accident.[18]

Moreover, Grillmeier cites Leontius' distinction between nature (*physis*) and *hypostasis*:

> a nature is not *hypostasis*, because there is no reversal: a *hypostasis* is indeed nature, but a nature is not yet *hypostasis*. A nature admits of the definition of being (*εἶναι*), but a *hypostasis* also admits of the definition of being by itself (*καθ' ἑαυτὸ εἶναι*). The former looks to the definition

says that Loofs 'furnished the prefix *en* with its own dynamic, which expressed a direction through which two independent substances are brought together in an existential relationship'. Ibid. p. 195. See also Grillmeier's essay 'Die anthropologisch-christologische Sprache des Leontius von Byzanz und ihre Beziehung zu den Symmikta Zetemata des Neuplatonikers Porphyrios', in H. Eisenberger (ed.), *EPMHNEYMATA: Festschrift für Hadwig Hörner* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1990), pp. 61–72, at 68–9. This essay is included in Grillmeier's collection *Fragmente zur Christologie: Studien zum altkirchlichen Christusbild*, ed. Th. Hainthaler (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 1997), pp. 264–76.

[16] PG 86, 1277C13–D6. Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', pp. 439–40 provides an English translation of the entire passage PG 86, 1277C13–1280B10.

[17] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 194.

[18] Ibid. pp. 196–7. Shults never refers to the syntactical argument, although his translation catches the point. Lang points out that this understanding of the passage is confirmed by its citation in Pamphilus' treatise *Diversorum Capitum seu Difficultatem Solutio* (*c.* seventh century). He argues that Pamphilus' understanding of *enhypostaton* as the 'concretely existing' implies that its distinction from the *hypostasis* equals the distinction between the specific and the individual. See Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos', pp. 642–4, with further literature on Leontius and Pamphilus.

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of species, while the latter signifies individuality. And the former indicates the character of a general object, while the latter distinguishes what is particular from what is common.[19]

From this definition, Grillmeier says, 'it follows that the manhood of Christ would also have to be characterized as *hypostasis*. For Jesus of Nazareth is a concrete individual human being; he has his *notae characteristicae* which distinguish him as a human being from other human beings.'[20] He argues that throughout *CNE* Leontius does not realize this consequence of his distinction between nature and *hypostasis*. 'Not even once does he ask himself whether the human nature of Christ is individualized through the *idia* [of a human being].'[21] Therefore, it is difficult for him to find a satisfactory response to the charge that the affirmation of Christ's human nature leads to the idea of two *hypostases*. Grillmeier concludes 'that contrary to an *opinio communis* Leontius of Byzantium has not advanced much further'[22] than the formula of Chalcedon, which speaks of one *hypostasis* only.

Shults agrees with this result,[23] but he does not mention the conceptual problems that Grillmeier finds with Leontius' argument. If he had paid attention to this point, he would have realized that the problem also pertains to his own evaluation of Leontius. Shults argues that 'Loofs' interpretation of *enhypostaton* as referring explicitly and only to a nature that has its subsistence

[19] PG 86, 1280A3–10.

[20] Aloys Grillmeier, 'The Understanding of the Christological Definitions of Both (Oriental–Orthodox and Roman–Catholic) Traditions in the Light of the Post-Chalcedonian Theology (Analysis of Terminologies in a Conceptual Framework)', in P. Fries and T. Nersoyan (ed.), *Christ in East and West* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), pp. 65–82, at p. 80.

[21] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 193, see ibid. p. 200. On p. 193, n. 26, Grillmeier cites Leontius' definition in PG 86, 1277D ('the *hypostasis* defines the *prosopon* through characteristic properties') and two statements from the later *Epilyseis*: 1) the hypostasis is separated from what is common by this and this property (PG 86, 1928B7–11) and 2) that, which is defined by what is its own, characterizes the *hypostasis* of something (PG 86, 1928C7–9). Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos', p. 638, notes that the conceptual problem was recognized more clearly, though not solved, by Leontius' contemporary John of Caesarea, who emphasized 'that *enhypostatos*, if applied to substance, does not imply individuality that is marked off from the universal by characteristic properties'. Grillmeier, ibid. p. 64, comments that John should have replaced the term *enhypostatos* with *enousios*, since he wants to use the term 'in its fundamental meaning "to be real, actual", yet only in the sense that [Christ's human nature] is real as *ousia*, and not as *hypostasis*' (translation altered, since it falsely translates 'freilich nur' with 'certainly not').

[22] Grillmeier, ibid. p. 193.

[23] Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', pp. 437–8.

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or hypostasis in the hypostasis of another nature is doubly wrong'.[24] Firstly, he says, following Daley and Grillmeier, that *enhypostaton* 'simply refers to an essence that is in fact subsisting'.[25] Secondly, he states that the hypostasis of a nature that shares in a common being[26] with another nature

> is not *in* the hypostasis of another nature; rather that nature shares a common hypostasis with the other nature. In such hypostatic unions, each individual nature maintains its own distinct structure of being. The paradigm case is the union of soul and body, where the natures share a common subsistence ... Leontius naturally predicates *enhypostaton* of both soul and body, for each is subsistent.[27]

Shults does not consider whether the distinction between *hypostasis* and *enhypostaton* is consistent, or whether it entails further conceptual problems.[28] Nonetheless, he should have seen that Leontius' 'paradigm case' merely shows that soul and body share in one *hypostasis* but does not answer to the objection brought forward, from different angles, by Nestorians as well as miaphysites: if a human *hypostasis*, constituted as soul and body, is united with a divine *hypostasis*, it is still a human *hypostasis*, simply by existing as a human being.[29] The question remains whether it is consistent to define a *hypostasis* as comprising different natures that share in a common hypostasis and to claim that in such a sharing 'each individual nature maintains its own distinct structure of being'.[30] Evidently, the statement that two things of a different nature share in a common being while they maintain

[24] Ibid. p. 440.

[25] Ibid.

[26] The expression 'to share in a common being' is Shults's translation of PG 86, 1280A14–15.

[27] Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', p. 440.

[28] According to Lang, John of Caesarea did precisely this and thereby acknowledged the 'ambiguity in the term hypostasis', as it was used among anti-Nestorian theologians in the fifth century. Even John himself did not succeed in upholding the distinction that he achieved in his Christology, i.e., the introduction of the term *enhypostatos* to designate the existence or reality of Christ's human substance not individually but 'abstracted from the characteristic *idiomata* which constitute the individual'. Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos', pp. 637–8.

[29] See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, pp. 203–11, for a meticulous discussion of the soul–body analogy and Leontius' awareness of its limitations.

[30] Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', p. 440. A good question to discuss would be whether Leontius uses the terms 'being' and 'hypostasis' synonymously, as Shults seems to presuppose in his interpretation. Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos', pp. 644–50, argues that the decisive conceptual progress consisted in the gradual transition from an ambiguous concept of *hypostasis* as 'denoting both simple being or substance, and being on its own as an individual' to the clear distinction between *hypostasis* as existing by itself and *enhypostaton* as existing in something else, in the

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their own structure of being presents us with conceptual difficulties, which Shults neither mentions nor discusses. This is quite surprising, given that Grillmeier already commented that from *CNE* 'it emerges that (1) "nature" and *hypostasis* are not synonymous, and (2) the particular meanings of each are not gathered and contrasted with great care'.[31] It also casts serious doubts on the claim that Leontius can be called a 'creative systematizer of Chalcedon'.[32]

Grillmeier concludes that in *CNE* Leontius shows no awareness of the problem that his definition of the *hypostasis* coincides with his definition of an individual. In other words, Christ's human nature relates to an individual human being, yet Leontius wants to uphold that in relation to the incarnate Logos this human being does not possess a *hypostasis* of its own. Leontius returned to the discussion of nature and *hypostasis* in his later treatise *Epilyseis*, which is directed against the miaphysite position. Although in this work his argument remains equally unsatisfactory, it is instructive to see how he addresses the issue from another perspective and thereby runs into different problems.[33]

At first, Leontius reiterates that *hypostasis* refers to that which exists 'by itself'. As in *CNE*, he says that the properties of *hypostasis* distinguish someone (*τινά*) from others, whereas the properties of nature distinguish something (*τί*) from something else. Moreover, that which characterizes nature constitutes its substance (*ousia*). That which characterizes *hypostasis* has the *ratio* (*logos*) of accidents. Thus, if a human being is defined as living, rational, and mortal, this is the definition of its substance. A human being is characterized as hypostasis by accidents, such as form, colour, time, location, and education. All this taken together belongs to one human being. In regard to the person of Christ, Leontius concludes that he is one *hypostasis* of divinity and humanity and on account of this the properties of nature are common to both. But although everything is said about Christ as about one, 'it is neither said in the same regard nor according to the same *logos*' and thus it is not said as about one nature. In other words, statements are made about the one *hypostasis*, but 'the whole is defined according to a different reality and not as being of one simple nature but as being of different

case of Christ's humanity 'in the hypostasis of the Logos'. Ibid. p. 650. Lang credits the achievement of the technical meaning of *enhypostatos* as 'inexistence' mainly to John of Damascus.

[31] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 191.

[32] Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', p. 437.

[33] *Epilyseis* 8, PG 86, 1945A6–D6.

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and synthesized natures, which preserve their natural properties in the union'.

In contrast to *CNE*, Leontius does not employ the distinction between *hypostasis* and *enhypostaton* here. He relates nature (*physis*) to substance (*ousia*), but he does not introduce a further relation between *enhypostaton* and being. Moreover, whereas in *CNE* he also relates *hypostasis* to being, with the qualification that it means 'being by itself', he now merely says that a *hypostasis* is characterized by the *ratio* of accidents. Thus, in both cases *hypostasis* is somehow related to the individual, but in the *Epilyseis* it is also defined as being characterized by accidents. Even if we add to this Leontius' earlier definition that an accident has its being in another and is no *ousia* but is only perceived in connection with an *ousia*,[34] the relation between nature and *hypostasis* still remains unexplained.[35] On the whole, the distinction between substance and accident confuses rather than clarifies the idea of *hypostasis* and the difference between *hypostasis* and *enhypostaton*.[36]

We have seen that in *CNE* the *ratio* of the *hypostasis* coincides with the *ratio* of the individual. Yet instead of differentiating more clearly between the two, Leontius now proposes a 'weaker' concept of *hypostasis* as being characterized by accidents, probably because he wants to avoid the charge of Nestorianism, since he is debating with a miaphysite.[37] In both treatises, his main point is to argue that the properties of the natures are preserved in their union, but that in Christ there is only one hypostasis. Although he can point to the soul–body analogy to account for two natures, the question about the one *hypostasis* remains.

[34] *CNE*, PG 86, 1277D.

[35] Leontius is confronted with even greater problems when the same definitions are applied to the trinitarian and the christological debate: his definition of *hypostasis* as being characterized by accidents is hardly applicable to the *hypostasis* of the pre-existent Logos. Nevertheless, Grillmeier acknowledges that despite the remaining *aporia* Leontius addressed the question about the 'mode of the union' (τρόπος τῆς ἑνώσεως) in more depth than anyone before him. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, pp. 200–12. See also Daley, 'A Richer Union', pp. 253–60.

[36] Grillmeier cites another telling example: 'When Leontius ... says that the first special feature for *physis* is the predicate "to be", we have a more accurate statement in Severus of Antioch with his combining this predicate not with *physis* but with *ousia*, which belongs etymologically to *einai*.' Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 191.

[37] Leontius tries hard to avoid giving the impression that his views entail a Nestorian position. At times, he simply repeats the standard polemics concerning the *theotokos*. See *Epilyseis* 8, PG 86, 1944D11–1945A2.

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Thus, the dilemma that Christ's human nature is individual, while in relation to the Logos it is not a hypostasis, persists.[38]

Fortunately, the debate did not come to a halt at this point. Grillmeier has pointed out that the conceptual problems confronted by Leontius of Byzantium were dealt with more successfully by Leontius of Jerusalem, a contemporary of the Byzantine Leontius.[39] Leontius of Jerusalem understands *enhypostaton* as 'having a concrete existence', so that two natures are said to be 'enhypostasized', or realized, in one hypostasis.[40] At the same time, he suspects that the other Leontius' distinction between a *hypostasis* and something that is *enhypostaton* may come close to the idea of two hypostases. He agrees with the common belief that it does not follow that a thing is a *hypostasis* if it is not *anhypostaton*, and with the other Leontius' distinction between *hypostasis* and *enhypostaton*.[41] Moreover, he asserts that the hypostasis of Jesus of Nazareth does not exist *anhypostaton*, but he also adds that neither does it exist *idiohypostaton* (of its own), since it possesses its hypostasis only in the incarnate Logos.[42] He summarizes his theory like this:

> The two natures, we say, subsist in one and the same *hypostasis*, admittedly not as if one of the two could be in it *anhypostatically*, but rather that both can subsist in the common *hypostasis* ... whereby each of the two natures is *enhypostatic*. For in order to be something, it is necessary that this same thing is also wholly on its own. If the natures have being, they must also subsist [ὑφίστημι] and be *enhypostatic*. But because they are

[38] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 193. Daley points out Leontius' claim that 'properties' do not only pertain to individuals but also to natures. Thus, he paraphrases: 'it is the common characteristics of the species or nature that bind a group of individual hypostases into a single intelligible whole, that form and express their common essence (οὐσία)', Daley, 'A Richer Union', p. 250, with reference to *Epilyseis* 5 and 8, PG 86, 1928CD and 1945AB. The question is how does this definition relate to the case of the hypostatic union? See also the claim that 'the nature of every hypostasis is understood to be given in the common definition' (ibid.): what would be the common essence and definition of Christ's hypostasis, which exists 'in two natures'? The uniqueness of Christ's *hypostasis* poses the decisive problem. Not surprisingly, Daley eventually argues that 'every human individual is for Leontius a kind of "hypostatic union" ... of spiritual and material reality', ibid. p. 262. Thus, Christ is merely (although Daley would *not* say 'merely'!) the perfect exemplar of the human species in relation to God.

[39] Ibid. p. 276.

[40] Leontius of Jerusalem, *Contra Nestorianos* (*CN*) 2.13, PG 86, 1560A5–1565A8. L. Abramowski has identified a Nestorian treatise against which Leontius argues in this work. See Luise Abramowski, 'Ein nestorianischer Traktat bei Leontius von Jerusalem', *III. Symposium Syriacum 1980* (Rome, 1983), pp. 42–55.

[41] *CNE*, PG 86, 1277D11–13.

[42] *CN* 2.10, PG 86, 1556A.

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not independent of each other ... it is not necessary that each of the two exists on its own. Thus it is clear that the two *enhypostata* must not be *heterohypostata* (=*hypostasis* beside *hypostasis*), but are thought of as being in one and the same *hypostasis*.[43]

The individual human nature of Jesus is thus distinguished from the species of which it is a part (humanity) as well as from the *hypostasis* in which it exists (the pre-existent Logos).[44] Moreover, Leontius of Jerusalem describes the event of the incarnation as the 'transposition (*μετατιθέναι*) of one nature into another hypostasis (*εἰς ἑτέραν ὑπόστασιν*)'.[45] Thereby, 'the Logos does not assume an additional *hypostasis* in order now to attain the perfection of the *hypostasis*; he possesses only the one *hypostasis* which he had after the addition of the nature which he did not have'.[46] One divine act effects both the creation (*οὐσιώσις*) of the human nature and its unification (*συνουσιώσις*) with the divine hypostasis.[47] In this way, Christ's individual human nature is affirmed without recourse to the idea of two *hypostases*.

We have seen that Leontius of Byzantium does not understand the term *enhypostaton* as 'existing within something else'. Similarly, it would be an exaggeration to attribute to him a theory of the *enhypostasis* of Christ's human nature, as not only the previous generation of historians has done.[48] Nevertheless, his Christology articulates a unique relationship between the human nature of Christ and the Logos, which, even if he does not relate it to the term *enhypostatos*, 'one can characterize as having its existence

[43] *CN* 2.13, PG 86, 1561B8–C9. Translation by Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 285.

[44] *CN* 2.7, PG 86, 1552D–1554A9.

[45] *CN* 2.35, PG 86, 1593C12–13.

[46] *CN* 7.4, PG 86, 1768aA10–14.

[47] *CN* 4.17, PG 86, 1684B1–7.

[48] See for example, Robert V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon* (London: SPCK, 1953), pp. 316–20, cited by Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', p. 436, n.14, as an example of the Loofsian view. Yet Shults does not mention Sellers's claim that Leontius was 'summing up in a formula a Christological assertion which had been made long before his day'. Ibid. p. 319. Unlike Shults, Sellers also presents an argument for the thesis that Leontius was not a radical innovator but a 'creative systematizer of Chalcedon'. See also Bernard Sesboüé, *Jésus-Christ dans la tradition de l'Église* (Paris: Desclée, 1982), pp. 162–4. Hans Stickelberger, 'Substanz und Akzidens bei Leontius von Byzanz', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 36 (1980), pp. 153–61, argues that Leontius modified the Aristotelian distinction between *οὐσία* (substance) and *συμβεβηκός* (accident) christologically. Stickelberger adopts Loofs's flawed translation of *enhypostaton* and the thesis that Leontius formulated the idea of the *enhypostasis* of the human nature of Christ (ibid. pp. 157–9).

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or subsistence in the Logos'.[49] Still, this idea of insubsistence, which is also compatible with the traditional concept of the communication of divine attributes to the human nature of Christ,[50] does not indicate a breakthrough in the understanding of *hypostasis*. On the whole, Leontius does not advance beyond the Cappadocian concept of *hypostasis* that equates *hypostasis* and individual existence.[51]

According to Grillmeier, it was then Leontius of Jerusalem who achieved a clearer interpretation of the hypostatic union. He stated that the Logos 'hypostatically inserted (ἐνυπέστησεν) the flesh into his own *hypostasis* (τῇ ἰδίᾳ ὑποστάσει) and not into that of a simple human being'.[52] Grillmeier comments that here 'the history of a great christological concept begins': the verb ὑφίστημι/ὑποστάναι with the prefix ἐν becomes 'the technical expression for "to cause to subsist in" and in the second aorist for "to subsist in"'.[53] The theological result is the proposition that 'simultaneously with the creation of Christ's human nature, with the institution of its physical existence, it becomes subsistent in the *hypostasis* of the Word. It exists only as the existence of the Word in the world, never as a separate existence of an independent human subject.'[54] Our previous analysis shows that Leontius of Byzantium would have readily subscribed to this thesis as being solidly Chalcedonian, and he would not have been surprised that it became the standard of orthodox agreement in the subsequent christological discussions throughout the Middle Ages up until the seventeenth century. In the next part, we will discuss two prominent examples of this agreement.

[49] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 198. It should be noticed, however, that Leontius does not explicitly affirm or reject the phrase ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ ὑποστῆναι, one of Loofs's building blocks. The passage in which it occurs insists that Christ's human nature did not (pre-)exist on its own, before the union with the incarnate Logos. At this point, One Nature Christology and Two Persons Christology coincide. See also Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos', p. 641, where he mentions a charge that is brought forth by the miaphysite Severus against John of Caesarea as well as by the unknown Nestorian interlocutor of Leontius of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Leontius of Byzantium stayed away from an explanation of the above phrase. See *Epilyseis*, PG 86, 1944C–D3. Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', p. 437 does not offer an explanation either.

[50] See Grillmeier, 'The Understanding of the Christological Definitions', pp. 76–9.

[51] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 200.

[52] *CN* 5.28, PG 86, 1748D13–14.

[53] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, p. 282.

[54] Grillmeier, 'The Understanding of the Christological Definitions', p. 81, with reference to *CN* 2.7, PG 86, 1552A–1553B.

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THE IDEA OF INSUBSISTENCE IN THE CHRISTOLOGIES OF THOMAS AQUINAS AND PROTESTANT SCHOLASTICISM

At first, we turn to a consideration of Thomas Aquinas' Christology in *Summa Theologiae* IIIa. In question 2, article 2 the question arises whether 'the union of the incarnate Word [was] wrought in one person?'[55] In the response Aquinas expresses his agreement with the formula of Chalcedon and states that the one Jesus Christ is not to be divided or separated into two persons.[56] He then discusses the mode of the union and argues that in Christ 'human nature is so united to the Word that the Word subsists in it'.[57] This implies that human nature 'is more dignified in Christ than in us, for in us, existing as it were by itself, it has its own personality, whereas in Christ it exists in the person of the Word'.[58] A human nature is an individual substance, 'yet because Christ's human nature does not exist separately by itself but in something more perfect, namely in the person of the Word of God, it follows that it does not have its own personality (*non habeat personalitatem propriam*)'.[59] Finally, Aquinas explains that 'the assumed nature does not have its own proper personality, not because of the lack of something pertaining to the perfection of human nature, but because of the addition of something surpassing human nature, which is union to a divine person (*unio ad divinam personam*)'.[60] Although Aquinas does not use the technical term *enhypostaton* in these passages, his argument resembles the patristic view that Christ's human nature does not exist *idiohypostaton*.

Moreover, Aquinas maintains that 'the human nature of Christ, although it surely is a particular substance, cannot be called a hypostasis or *suppositum*, because it comes into union with something more complete, namely with the whole Christ as one who is God and man; that complete reality to which it is joined is called the hypostasis or *suppositum*'.[61] This statement emphasizes the substantial character of Christ's human nature,

[55] St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 48: 'The Incarnate Word (3a.1-6)', (New York–London: Blackfriars, 1976), p. 40.
[56] Ibid. p. 42 (q. 2, a. 2).
[57] Ibid. p. 44 (q. 2, a. 2).
[58] Ibid. (q. 2, a. 2, ad 1).
[59] Ibid. p. 46 (q. 2, a. 2, ad 3).
[60] Ibid. p. 120 (q. 4, a. 2, ad 2).
[61] Ibid. p. 50 (q. 2, a. 3, ad 2).

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by distinguishing it from the hypostasis of the God–man. Aquinas sums up the point by saying:

> the person or hypostasis of Christ can be viewed in a twofold way. On the one hand, as it is in itself, it is always simple, as is the nature of the Word too. On the other hand, it is considered under the aspect of person or hypostasis, which means subsisting in some nature, and according to this the person of Christ subsists in two natures. Hence, although there is one subsisting reality, there are nonetheless two different aspects of its subsisting. Thus, it is called a composite person, as far as one [person] subsists in two [natures].[62]

Thereby, he does not argue that the human nature of Christ subsists in the hypostasis, because for him only persons subsist.[63] Instead, he states that the one person of Christ subsists in two natures. Still, he agrees with the patristic claim that Christ's human nature does not exist as a hypostasis of its own or by itself.

Although Aquinas does not employ the terms *enhypostaton* or *anhypostaton*, his view implies the idea of the *impersonalitas*[64] of Christ's human nature. The protestant scholastics would later use this term as a coherent translation of ἀνυποστασία and reflect further upon the relation between the terms *anhypostaton* and *enhypostaton*. Moreover, when Aquinas says that Christ's human nature exists only in the person of the Word and does not have a personality of its own, he translates the patristic idea that Christ's human nature is not *idiohypostaton*.[65]

[62] Ibid. p. 52 (q. 2, a. 4): *persona sive hypostasis Christi dupliciter considerari potest. Uno modo, secundum id quod est in se. Et sic est omnino simplex, sicut et natura Verbi. Alio modo, secundum rationem personae vel hypostasis, ad quam pertinet subsistere in aliqua natura. Et secundum hoc persona Christi subsistit in duabus naturis. Unde, licet sit ibi unum subsistens, est tamen ibi alia et alia ratio subsistendi. Et sic dicitur persona composita inquantum unum duobus subsistit.*

[63] *Dicendum quod persona aliud significat quam natura. Natura enim significat essentiem speciei, quam significat definitio.* Ibid. p. 42 (q. 2, a. 2). This is true even in relation to God, although in God nature and person are not really distinct but differ only in the way they are signified: *dicendum quod, licet in Deo non sit aliud secundum rem natura et persona, differt tamen secundum modum significandi ... quia persona significat per modum subsistentis.* Ibid. p. 44 (q. 2, a. 2, ad 1).

[64] According to Karl Barth, this Latin term has often led to confusion, when it was understood as personality and not as subsistence. He argues that this (mis-)understanding entailed the claim that the term *impersonalitas* negates the individuality of the person of Christ, whereas the point of the distinction was rather to signify the determination of Christ's human nature by its union with the incarnate Word. See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), pp. 164–5.

[65] Notwithstanding this agreement, Aquinas' elaboration on the status of theological statements differs from the majority of patristic writers. It is

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This brings us to the seventeenth century and the alleged invention of the *anhypostasis–enhypostasis* theory by the protestant scholastics. On the Lutheran side, early in the century Johann Gerhard (d. 1637) offers a concise interpretation of the terminology:

> Ἀνυπόστατον has a twofold meaning. *Absolutely & simply*, that is called ἀνυπόστατον which subsists neither in its own nor in another ὑπόστασις ... but is purely negative. In this sense, the human nature of Christ cannot be said to be ἀνυπόστατον. *Relatively* & secondarily, that is called ἀνυπόστατον which does not in fact subsist in its own but in the ὑπόστασις of another; which indeed has essence yet not its own personality and subsistence. In this sense, Christ's flesh is called ἀνυπόστατος, because it is ἐνυπόστατος, subsistent in the λόγος himself.[66]

Gerhard uses the idea of insubsistence in the context of an argument against the view that Christ's human nature existed before it was taken up into the union with the Logos, but he also insists that the idea of *anhypostasia* is not to be understood '*quasi caro Christi ullo unquam tempore prorsus* ἀνυπόστατος *fuerit*'. It is a statement in regard to the *ordo naturae* and not the *ordo temporis*.[67] Gerhard seeks to emphasize that Christ's human nature never did not subsist in the hypostatic union.

Moreover, in discussing the Chalcedonian formula of one hypostasis in two unconfused natures, Andreas Quenstedt (d. 1688) follows Aquinas' argument and proposes that the terms *anhypostatos*

noteworthy that his philosophical texts about the concept of person do not distinguish between the substantial character of essence and actual substantial existence. In this perspective, a hypostatic union with an individual complete human nature cannot be conceived of. From a theological standpoint, however, Aquinas argues that although Christ's human nature possesses all the characteristics of a human being, it is not a person, not because it lacks something positive, but because something positive is added. 'Thus when it is asked what distinguishes Christ's nature, which is not a person, from the nature of Peter, which is a person, Thomas responds: the union. The nature of Peter is person, because there is no constitutive union. The nature of Christ is not person because of the union. The union is the positive reality that effects the real distinction between the two natures.' Othmar Schweizer, *Person und hypostatische Union bei Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg/CH: Universitätsverlag, 1957), p. 117.

[66] Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, denuo edidit et auxit J. F. Cotta (Tübingen, 1764), t. III, 1. IV, c. VII, q. CXII, 420: ἀνυπόστατον *duplicem habet significationem*: Absolute & simpliciter *illud dicitur* ἀνυπόστατον, *quod nec sua nec aliena* ὑποστάσει *subsistit ... sed est nihil negativum. Eo sensu natura humana Christi non potest dici* ἀνυπόστατον. Relate *& secundum quid* ἀνυπόστατον *dicitur, quod non quidem sua, sed aliena,* ὑποστάσει *subsistit, quod essentiam quidem habet, non tamen propriam personalitatem & subsistentiam; sed in alio subsistit, hoc sensu caro Christi dicitur* ἀνυπόστατος, *quia scilicet est* ἐνυπόστατος, *in ipso* λόγῳ *subsistens*. The distinction between an absolute and a relative meaning of anhypostatos and enhypostatos is already used by John of Damascus. See Lang, 'Anhypostatos–Enhypostatos', p. 649.

[67] Gerhard, ibid. 421.

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and *enhypostatos* illustrate two sides of the same coin. He explains that the Logos unites human nature with himself in his person, so that the proper hypostasis of the human nature and its place of subsistence is determined by something higher, i.e., the divine; and so too out of the *anhypostatos* comes the *enhypostatos*.[68]

Finally, David Hollaz (d. 1713) lists ἀνυποστασία as one of the individual properties of Christ's human nature and defines it as

> being without its own subsistence, since this is replaced by the divine hypostasis of the Son of God, as one far more exalted. If the human nature of Christ had retained its *own subsistence*, there would have been in Christ two persons, and thus two mediators, contrary to 1 Tim. 2:5. The reason is: since a person is formally constituted in its being by a subsistence entirely complete, the unity of person is to be determined from the unity of subsistence. Therefore, one or the other nature of those which come together in one person, must be without its own subsistence; and since the *divine* nature, which is in fact the same as its subsistence, cannot be without it, it is evident that the absence of a proper subsistence (*carentia propriae subsistentiae*) must be attributed to the *human* nature.[69]

Like Aquinas, Hollaz argues that Christ's human nature is united with something more perfect, even if he departs from Aquinas' method, by using the philosophical definition of the formal constitution of a person in his Christology. Thereby, Hollaz proposes an argument that appears to attribute a certain imperfection to Christ's human nature. Yet he hastens to correct this impression and replies that 'the perfection of an object is to be determined from essence, not from subsistence'. He continues by claiming that 'when it is considered strictly and according to itself, [Christ's human nature] does not possess its own actual subsistence (*propriam subsistentiam actu non habet*); but when it is considered in the union with the divine nature, it is rightly called ἐνυπόστατος, i.e., susbsistent in the Logos'.[70]

As far as the Reformed side is concerned, we also find a comprehensive interpretation early in the seventeenth century. By distinguishing two kinds of subsistence, Bartholomaeus Keckermann

[68] Johan Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia didactico-polemica, sive Systema theologicum in Duas Sectiones didacticam et polemicam divisum* (Leipzig, 1715), p. II, s. I, th. XXVI, 121: *Ita ut λόγος humanam naturam in suae personae unitatem recipiat, eamque ἀνυπόστατον propria hypostasi communicata in subsistendo terminet, humana vero natura terminetur & personetur, & loco subsistentiae propriae meliorem accipiat, nempe divinam, atque ita ex ἀνυποστάτῳ fiat ἐνυπόστατος Joh. 1,14.*

[69] David Hollaz, *Examen theologicum acroamaticum*, denuo edidit et auxit R. Tellerus (Stockholm/Leipzig, 1750), p. III, s. I, c. III, q. XII, 657–8.

[70] Ibid. 658

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(d. 1608/9) reaches a conclusion similar to that of Johann Gerhard and his idea of two kinds of *anhypostasis*. Keckermann claims that human nature is not a distinct person, although it is an individual, or, 'as the Logicians say', a primary substance.[71] He then continues:

> But someone may say: 'Every substantial individual subsists by itself: if therefore Christ's human nature, considered by itself, is an individual, it therefore subsists by itself.' I answer: Subsisting by itself is sometimes opposed to that which subsists in something else, & so human nature always subsists by itself, because it is a substance and not an accident, which is characterized as existing in something else. But if subsisting by itself means the same as subsisting separately, outside the union & sustenance by the other, then it is false to say that the human nature subsists by itself, since it is sustained by the Logos, to which it is united in such a way that outside the Logos it could not have existence for a moment.[72]

Far from standing in contrast to Leontius of Byzantium, this text indicates a similar failure to distinguish adequately between nature and *hypostasis*. On the one hand Keckermann emphasizes that Christ's human nature is not merely an accident, while on the other hand he says that Christ's individual humanity depends entirely on its union with the Logos and did not pre-exist. Johann Heinrich Alsted (d. 1638) explains further 'that Christ's human nature never subsisted by itself but was always an instrument ἐνυπόστατος ἐν τῷ λόγῳ',[73] but he also simplifies the issue by claiming that 'Christ is called similar to us regarding *physis*, not in regard to *hypostasis*, regarding essence, not in regard to subsistence'.[74]

A very similar definition can be found in the *Leiden Synopsis* (1625), which says

> that the Son of God, the second eternal person of the sacrosanct Trinity, assumed into the unity of his person not a pre-existent person but one

[71] Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *Systema SacroSanctae Theologiae, tribus libris adornatum* (Hannover, 1615), lib. III, c. II, 257.

[72] Ibid. 257–8: *At qui dicat aliquis, 'omne indiuiduum substantiale per se subsistit: Si ergo humana Christi natura in se considerata, est indiuiduum; Ergo per se subsistit.' Resp. per se subsistere, interdum opponi ei, in alio subsistit; & sic humana natura omnino per se subsistit; quia est substantia, non accidens, cuius est existere in alio. Si vero per se subsistere idem significet, ac separatim subsistere, extra vnionem & sustentationem alterius, tum falsum est, humanan naturam per se subsistere: quia sustentatur à Λόγῳ cui ita est vnita, ut extra eum ne ad momentum quidem consistere possit.*

[73] Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Theologia scholastica didactica* (Hannover, 1618), s. IV, c. VII, reg. II, 517.

[74] Ibid.

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ἀνυπόστατος of its own *hypostasis* or devoid of subsistence, already from the moment of conception, and made it his own; and thus this flesh has no subsistence outside the Son of God, but exists, subsists in him and is borne and sustained by him.[75]

Finally, Heinrich Heidegger (d. 1698) explains that since there is one Christ, one Mediator, one Lord, and since

things are predicated of Christ the man, which belong to God and vice versa; there must be certainly one hypostasis, one subsistent person. Either the divine nature subsists in the human or the human in the divine. That the divine nature should subsist in the human, and be sustained by it, is opposed to its infinite perfection. Therefore, the human is ἀνυπόστατος by itself (*per se*) and becomes ἐνυπόστατος in the Logos.[76]

From these examples, it becomes clear that the theologians in the era of protestant orthodoxy who work with the concepts of *anhypostatos* and *enhypostatos* use these attributes strictly in relation to the *hypostasis* of the incarnate Logos and thus on the basis of the actual subsistence of Christ's human nature in the hypostatic union. In this regard, they stand in continuity with the patristic era as well as with Thomas Aquinas. On the whole, they seek to affirm, not to deny, the subsistence of the human nature of Christ. To this end, they argue that Christ's human nature subsists due to its union with the incarnate Logos. Notwithstanding terminological nuances, the Lutheran as well as the Reformed scholastics consistently understand the term *anhypostatos* in contrast to *idiohypostatos* and not simply as the negation of being as LeRon Shults suggests.[77]

CONCLUSION

The theologians under consideration have in common an anti-Nestorian stance and therefore hold that the human nature of Christ was not *idiohypostatic*, or, in the Latin phrase, that it did

[75] *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, curavit et praefatus est H. Bavinck (Leiden: Donner, 1881), p. 243: *Filius Dei secunda S. S. Trinitatis aeterna persona, non personam praeexistentem, sed ἀνυπόστατον propriae hypostaseos seu subsitentiae expertem, jam inde a conceptionis momento assumpserit in personae unitatem, eamque sibi propriam effecerit, adeoque caro illa extra Filium Dei subsistentiam non habeat, sed in eo existat, subsistat et ab eo gestetur et sustentetur.*

[76] Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Corpus Theologiae Christianae* (Zurich, 1700), t. post., 1. XVII, th. XXXVII, 18.

[77] Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', p. 442.

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not possess a *personalitas propria*.[78] Aquinas as well as the protestant scholastics emphasize the one subsistent reality of the person of Christ, while also expressing, in various ways, the two-fold character of this subsistence. Aquinas does not employ the distinction between *anhypostatos* and *enhypostatos* but nevertheless insists that Christ's human nature does not have a *personalitas* of its own. The protestant scholastics use the patristic terms *anhypostatos* and *enhypostatos* in order to explain that Christ's human nature was ontologically grounded in the reality of the incarnate Logos. Thereby, their use of the terms does not lead to the invention of a new theory that would conflict with patristic theology. On the contrary, we have seen that the idea of the insubsistence of Christ's human nature dates back to the patristic era, and throughout the ages it has been a crucial element in attempts to untangle the conceptual knot that resulted from the formula of one person 'in two natures'.

Besides addressing the historiographical issue, our discussion also shows that if the use of the terms *anhypostatos* and *enhypostatos* has obfuscated the doctrine of the person of Christ, as Shults argues, it did so not only in the seventeenth century but already in the sixth century. The questions that ensue are (1) how far patristic theologians, whose creeds and confessions determined the outcome of the formative period of Christian doctrine, were able to provide an adequate account of the Christian faith and the belief that Jesus Christ is 'fully divine and fully human in one person',[79] and (2) how far it is the obligation of contemporary theologians to recognize possible shortcomings *within* the doctrinal tradition to which they adhere.

MATTHIAS GOCKEL

[78] The discussion of the terms *anhypostatos, enhypostatos*, and *idiohypostatos* advanced in the Latin speaking world in the middle of the twelfth century, when the first complete Latin translation of John of Damascus' compendium *De fide orthodoxa* appeared. See St John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus, ed. E. M. Buytaert (St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1955), ch. 53, pp. 197–9.

[79] Shults, 'A Dubious Formula', pp. 431 and 446.

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